

CHARGE
OCEAN EXPLORATION ADVISORY BOARD
SUBCOMMITTEE on OCEAN EXPLORATION EDUCATION

Since the NOAA ocean exploration program was established in 2002, the office has operated an education program to promote ocean literacy and to provide educators with resources about ocean exploration for use in the classroom. The NOAA ocean exploration program authorizing statute, enacted in 2009, directs NOAA to establish a “coordinated national ocean exploration program” and “seek to facilitate coordination of . . . outreach and education programs to improve public understanding of ocean and coastal resources.” The NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research (OER) strategic plan includes a goal to “encourage the next generation of ocean explorers, scientists, and engineers” through education.

This subcommittee of the Ocean Exploration Advisory Board (OEAB) will conduct a review of the OER education program and make recommendations to OER and the NOAA Administrator regarding the effectiveness of the program to date, whether OER should consider adopting new approaches to pursuing its education objectives under the OER Strategic Plan and the NOAA Education Strategic Plan, and what performance metrics would be most useful in measuring program effectiveness.

The subcommittee will prepare a report for OEAB consideration by 30 June 2018.

In particular, the subcommittee will:

1. Review briefly the history of the program; its evolution; its leverage of other marine education efforts; and how well it has cultivated its partnerships inside and outside of NOAA;
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of OER’s approach of working through aquariums and informal science centers to deliver professional development workshops to educators;
3. Evaluate the quality and value of the ocean exploration education materials OER has produced;
4. Explore the potential for new partnerships to extend the reach and impact of OER’s education programs;
5. Recommend strategies and approaches to increase the effectiveness of the OER education program and materials, with particular emphasis on reaching underserved and underrepresented communities in support of the relevant parts of the OER strategic plan; and,
6. Describe best practices and metrics that will help OER to monitor, assess, and adapt its education activities as conditions change and opportunities arise.