



The Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative Is Expanding Services

With support from the Pisces Foundation and other generous donors and contributors, the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative is developing a **new set of services to support and expand the practice of place-based stewardship education in Michigan's K-12 schools and communities.**

Since 2007, the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI) has been working through regional hubs to support place-based stewardship education (PBSE) in Michigan schools. Hubs provide consistent, high-quality support for PBSE and create a community for their participating educators and partners. But hubs are not easy to establish or cheap to operate, and many places are not yet ready to establish one.

The new services will expand the GLSI infrastructure to permit us to **work effectively in regions not yet served by a hub and to better support the broad PBSE community.** Our one-year planning effort was carried out with our hubs and four partner organizations: the Center for Great Lakes Literacy; the Michigan Alliance for Environmental and Outdoor Education; the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; and the MiSTEM Network. As a team, we reviewed current conditions, challenges, and opportunities for PBSE in Michigan; reflected on our respective organizations' goals and capacities; and considered potential designs for extending services while staying true to what we know is necessary to support PBSE in schools and communities.

Read on to learn about our plans, then share your reactions at a meeting or as written comments. See how on page 3.

Startup Services

This list of proposed services and supports was developed through internal discussions; dialogue and consultation with our partners; research on strategies to “scale up” established programs; and a public survey conducted in spring 2022. These services will be the first offered through the expanded GLSI. Additional services are planned to follow.

Professional learning

- **“Introduction to PBSE,”** a brief online professional learning opportunity suitable for a mixed audience of teachers, administrators, community partners, and other interested audiences. This offering is focused on the “why” of PBSE and the key tenets of place-based education.
- **“PBSE Virtual Institute,”** a 12-18 hour virtual offering conducted over a 4-8 week period in the afternoons or evenings, with fall and winter cohorts. This will be an efficiently designed version of the popular summer institutes offered by GLSI hubs, intended to support novice place-based educators or those seeking a refresher.
- **Educator Subscriptions** will combine, for a fixed fee, the PBSE Virtual Institute experience, topical learning events over the course of the school year, the support of a “PBSE Guide,” and (where funds permit) a mini-grant to fund a PBSE project. PBSE Guides will be involved in the PBSE Virtual Institutes, will help participating educators develop school-community partnerships, and will be available for individualized consultation with participating educators.

Community building

- Through a new **web-based platform**, the GLSI will organize professional learning and will also enable communication and networking for participants and the broader PBSE community. We envision a platform that permits person-to-person communication as well as discussion groups.
- Virtual **“unconferences”** will be offered to further encourage relationship building among PBSE practitioners and supporters from the environmental, K-12, higher education, governmental, and philanthropic sectors. In the “unconference” model, participants propose topics at the start of the event. For those topics garnering interest, subgroups meet and carry out discussions of their own design and choosing. In our first year, we anticipate offering one or two 2-3 hour events of this type.
- The GLSI’s **semiannual, multiday conference** will continue to serve as the GLSI’s marquee event for in-person community-building and learning about PBSE.

Partnerships, collaboration, and expansion

- The GLSI looks forward to announcing additional services to be carried out with our **partners** in this work.
- A formal training and consulting service for the establishment of **new GLSI hubs**, in Michigan and beyond, is in development and will be deployed as part of this expansion effort.

Steps to Launch

The GLSI's new infrastructure is about **connecting people who want to improve and advance place-based teaching and learning to the support, services, and community they need to do that.**

Whether it's a professional learning event or series, an online community of people who are interested in a particular topic, a consultation with a PBSE Guide, help with finding a community partner or funding, or an unconference for expansive new thinking, the GLSI believes that community building is the key to better, broader, and more sustained PBSE practice. Over time, we imagine that those who engage with the GLSI through this infrastructure will play a lead role in shaping its evolution.

In the coming months, we will be engaged in the intense work of finalizing and piloting new professional learning opportunities, selecting and implementing a Web-based platform, collaborating with partners for broader service and impact, and seeking the funding needed to offer these services in a manner that is affordable for participants and their schools and districts.

Feedback and Questions

Have thoughts or questions?

We want to hear from you!

Attend a virtual feedback session:

October 21, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Zoom: [Link here](#)

Meeting ID: 828 8882 6952

Passcode: newGLSI1

October 25, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Zoom: [Link here](#)

Meeting ID: 860 9847 4057

Passcode: newGLSI2

These are informal, drop-in/drop-out sessions.

Or **send** written comments:

[Click here for our feedback form](#)

greatlakesstewardship.org