

## National Marine Educators Association

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*Written Intervention on behalf of NMEA Board of Directors and Members*

Ocean Literacy is central to all ocean solutions, including the overarching theme of UNOC3: “accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean.” Just a few weeks ago, the Ocean Literacy World Conference took place in Venice, Italy. Based on results from a global survey, a draft document was reviewed by attendees, resulting in the [Venice Declaration for Ocean Literacy in Action](#) - a living document to influence inclusion of Ocean Literacy in UNOC3 and serve as a global Ocean Literacy framework moving forward. The introduction states, “The ocean is the lifeblood of our planet, producing more than half of the oxygen on planet Earth, regulating our weather and climate and underpinning the water cycle which makes life on land possible. The ocean provides sustenance; it is a space for fun and recreation, and it supports our mental and physical health. The ocean's well-being is inseparable from our own. As our understanding of marine ecosystems improves, so does our awareness of the impact that our behavior has on the ocean's health. This interconnectedness underscores the critical role of Ocean Literacy in shaping a sustainable future and for the success of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.” The National Marine Educators Association (NMEA) has been a global leader in Ocean Literacy for 20 years.

Founded in 1978, NMEA is an influential member-based organization of classroom teachers, informal and non-formal educators, university professors, scientists, and more from around the world working to make known the world of water, both fresh and salt. One of NMEA’s Key Focus Areas is Advancing Ocean Literacy. As a leader in Ocean Literacy since its inception, NMEA co-created resources including *Ocean Literacy: The Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts of Ocean Sciences for Learners of All Ages*; *Ocean Literacy Scope and Sequence for Grades K–12*; and *Alignment of Ocean Literacy to Next Generation Science Standards* (NGSS). NMEA, with financial support from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), published the Decade-endorsed action *A Handbook for Increasing Ocean Literacy: Tools for Educators and Ocean Literacy Advocates* (2021).

Additionally, NMEA is a lead partner in USA Blue Schools. USA Blue Schools is part of the All-Atlantic Blue Schools Network, connecting schools from Atlantic countries to raise ocean literacy and citizenship for a sustainable world. The Blue School approach increases ocean awareness and inspires students, educators, and citizens from different countries to deepen their connection with the ocean. By promoting critical thinking, experiential learning, and community-based projects, students are encouraged and supported to translate their knowledge into positive action to ensure a healthy future ocean.

The soul of our organization is our annual conference. NMEA’s UN Ocean Decade-endorsed conferences refer to aspects of all seven Decade Outcomes and 10 Decade Challenges. Challenge 10 in particular - restoring humanity’s relationship with the ocean - is the heart of NMEA’s mission.

The Challenge 10 white paper implores society to “ensure that the multiple values and services of the ocean for human wellbeing, culture, and sustainable development are widely understood, that society-ocean connections are strengthened, and that there is increased motivation, capability, and opportunity

for people across all sectors of society, to make decisions and behave in ways that ensure a healthy ocean.” Furthermore, “success...will be evidenced through a culture shift in the ocean community leading to implicit understanding that ocean threats are an outcome of human behavior. This will require a shift in the way that ocean science, in the broad sense as defined in the Decade, is formulated, practiced, and communicated to ensure that all sectors of society have strengthened emotional connections with the ocean, and understand the vital role that the ocean plays in human and planetary well-being, including climate stability. All members of society across regions, sectors, and scales will have increased motivation, capability, and opportunity to make decisions and behave in ways that ensure a healthy ocean.”

NMEA reiterates and fully supports the following statement from the Venice Declaration: “We urge the governments of France and Costa Rica, as co-hosts of [UNOC3], as well as all UN Member States and all other stakeholders and interested parties, to place Ocean Literacy at the forefront of the conference agenda.”