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| **Policy #1- Content Authority and Credentialing**ISE organizations and projects can play a very significant role in supporting a variety of STEM education efforts, but crafting a policy that fairly determines the credibility of institutions and projects, and what type of support is most appropriate, may be difficult. Some sort of gatekeeping is essential—however, what form should that take, and who should be involved? How can the process resist political, social, and other non-educational pressures? How do you address these issues in your institution/project? |  | **Policy #2- Evaluation and Student Assessment**Evaluation and assessment have long been a part of both formal and informal education, but the methods and rationale for which they are undertaken are largely unrelated across the formal-informal divide. What are the policies and expectations of funders and formal education partners for evaluation and assessment that you have encountered in your own work? What collective efforts should be made within the informal sector to respond to those policies and expectations? |
| **Policy #3 - Formal Education Systems**The National Science Teachers Association has a position statement articulating the need for sustained links between informal institutions and schools. Should informal education institutions develop complementary policy statements regarding the various intersections of formal and informal education? If so, what aspects of the relationship should those policies address and why? Would a statement like this benefit your institution/project? |  | **Policy #4 - Funding**Public, philanthropic, corporate, and individual funding policies clearly affect informal science programs and evaluation in profound ways—for example, in catalyzing or discouraging partnerships between ISE providers and other areas, such as formal education or research science. And within informal science institutions, pricing models, rules about how much funders may influence content, and other policies can all affect the accessibility, quality, and impact of programs. Given the current economic climate, how can we protect ourselves from vulnerability and where are there untapped opportunities for sustainability? What is your institution/project doing? |
| **Policy #5 - Linkages to Other Large-Scale Belief Systems**There is an enormous awareness in ISE circles that some widely held assumptions and beliefs about the world often play out in opposition to very robust theories of science. While there is no inherent conflict between belief systems and products of the scientific method, the underlying prejudices and information gaps on both sides of the argument speak to opportunities for, and challenges to, ISE educators to speak to the lack of conflict. Given this atmosphere, should public understanding of scientific processes and the discipline of objective observation become a higher priority on the ISE agenda than scientific discovery? How do you prioritize STEM knowledge, process, and values in your own work? |  | **Policy #6 - Science in Everyday Life/Popular Culture**Popular culture is the expression of society’s ideas, attitudes and perspectives. Engaging the public with science through popular culture media like movies, television, theater, and social networking breaks the barriers of C.P. Snow’s “two cultures” (art and science) and can stimulate people to think about issues in science in a non-threatening, enjoyable environment. Has your institution/project waded into this territory in search of relevance? What policies should guide us from infringing on the field’s core values of integrity, authenticity, and trust? |
| **Policy #7 - Connections to Science**The ISE ideal of connecting the public with science and scientists is at a critical juncture. Its success or failure partially depends upon understanding current funding trends and policy decisions that either support or hinder connections among existing informal science providers, STEM practitioners and the public. Are there untapped opportunities to strengthen these connections? Have you encountered threats in your work that may weaken them? |  | **Policy #8 - Journalism, Media, and Science Writing**Is new media the message? Gatekeepers of media are keeping science off the page and off television (For every 5 hours of news on CNN there is about 1 minute of STEM coverage). ISE policy must include financial and technical support for professional quality ISE outreach media directly to journalists, bloggers, podcasters, etc. What are some strategies for fostering complementary collaboration between your own work, ISE writ large, and media reporters and editors? |
| **Policy #9 - Institutions Devoted to Public Understanding of, or Engagement with, Science**Policies, both formal written policies at different governmental levelsand at institutional levels, and informal unwritten policies at institutional levels, have huge influences on what ISE organizations/projects do and how effective we are at doing what we think we do best—involving people of all ages in scientific content, process, and values. But what can we communicate from our evaluations, assessment, and research to help guide and shape policies that will better support our work? And how can we preserve the integrity of our work in the face of shifting policies, such as “Educate to Innovate” or “Race to the Top”? |  |  |