

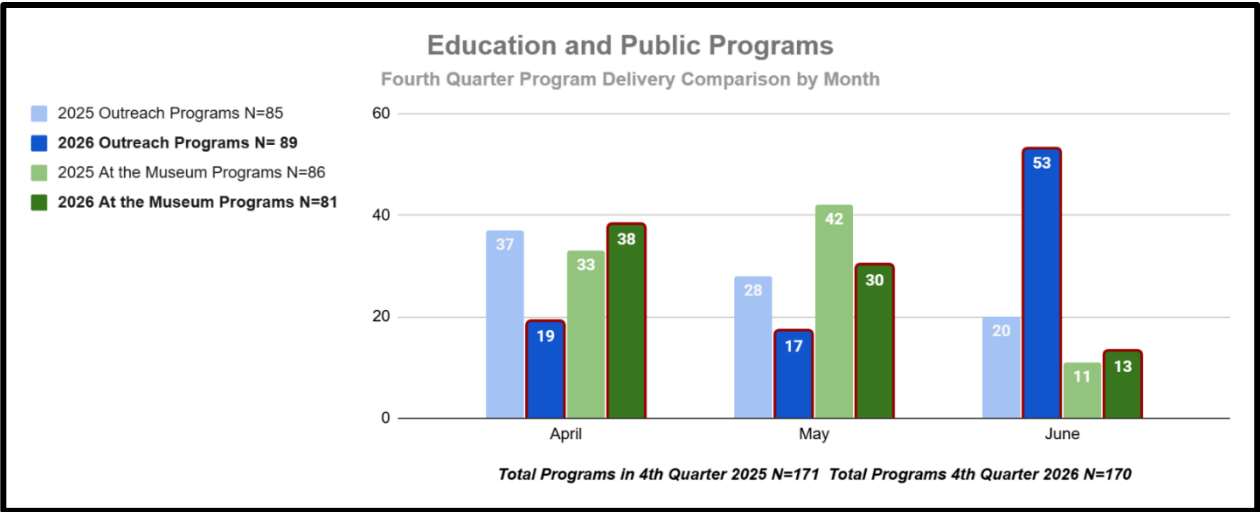
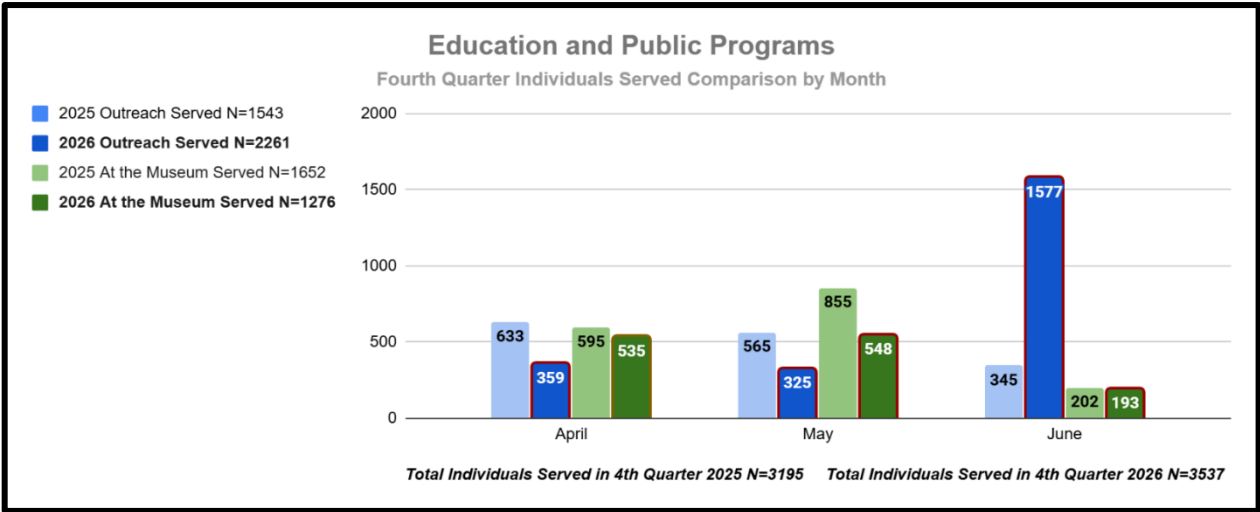
VMNH Board of Trustees Education and Public Programs Committee

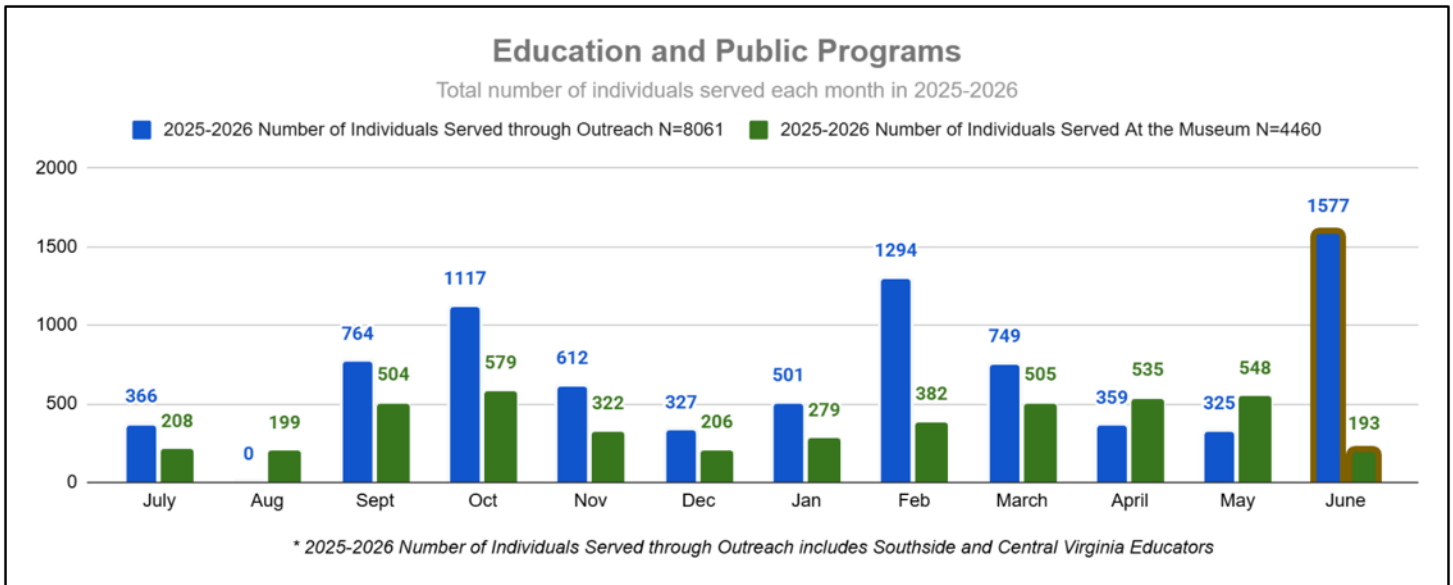
August 15, 2026, 9:00AM, VMNH

Agenda

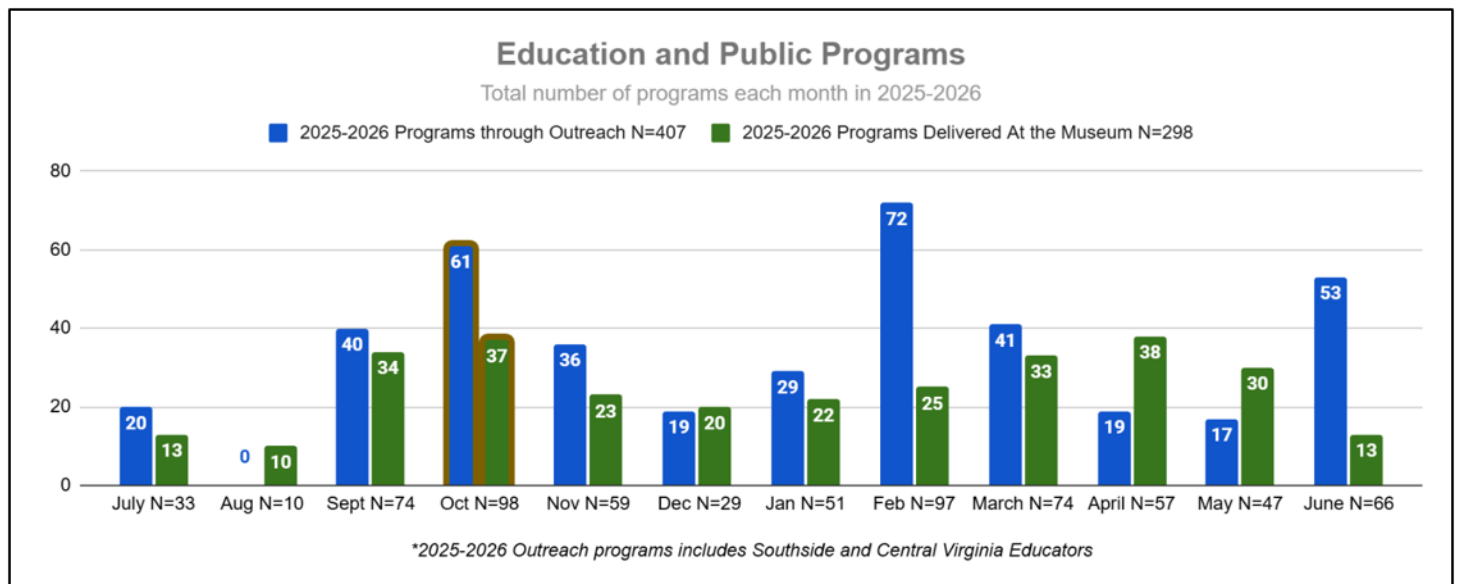
- Welcome and Introductions
- Approval/review of [October 30, 2025](#) and [May 16, 2026](#) meeting minutes
- Education Updates-
 - Quarterly Numbers Served - (graphs attached)
 - At-the Museum highlights – educational activities for Reptile Festival, Homeschool Science and Engineering Academy year wrap-up, kick-off of summer adventure camps
 - Outreach highlights – wrap-up of scholarship programs with schools, partnered with Dr. Pritchard for education program at Piedmont VA Community College (Charlottesville), kick-off of programs with libraries across the state for their “Unearth a Story” Summer Reading Program
 - FY 2025-2026 Education Department Year-End Report and assessments (graphs attached)
- Department Updates:
 - Served as judges for Hardin Reynolds Memorial School (Patrick County) Science Fair
 - Ms. Deatherage presented a Project WILD/Project Learning Tree workshop (environmental education curriculum) for formal and informal teachers in Danville. Ms. Brim and Ms. Sechrist participated and are now certified in the curriculum.
 - Homeschool Science and Engineering Academy Open House scheduled for August 12 as launch for the next school year
 - FY27 budget received from Martinsville City (requested \$10,815 and received \$10,382) and Henry County (requested \$35,000 and received \$27,075)
- Exhibit Updates with Ms. Dougherty

Numbers Served Data on Pages 2 and 3





For the year 2025-2026, June 2026 saw the highest number of individuals served.



For the year 2025-2026, October 2025 saw the highest number of programs delivered.

Education & Public Programs Committee

VMNH Board of Trustees

Thursday, October 30, 2025, 3 PM

Fully remote meeting

Present: Mr. Nathan Sanford (Chair)
Ms. Cathy Hincker (BOT)
Ms. Emma Ito (BOT)
Ms. Christy Deatherage (Education Manager)
Ms. Annabelle Sechrist (Educator)
Ms. Jordan Brim (Educator)
Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director)
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (Staff)

Not Present: Ms. Lauren Hall (BOT)
Ms. Gail Vogler (Foundation)

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Christy Deatherage welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 3:00 PM. Museum educators Annabelle Sechrist and Jordan Brim introduced themselves to the committee. It was determined that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sanford made a motion to approve minutes from August 9, 2025, May 17, 2025, and November 16, 2024. Ms. Ito seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

EDUCATION UPDATES

- Ms. Deatherage noted that the contact numbers look robust, and the education department is now fully staffed with programming in full swing. Ms. Deatherage showed pictures of Dino Festival featuring an interactive activity developed in collaboration with Dr. Adam Pritchard. This was a very well received activity.
- The team has recently completed STEM programing for all Danville City 5th graders who visited the museum within the span of two weeks.
- The staff is currently conducting a Virginia Master Naturalist Program which is a statewide program. VMNH is a host for a local chapter consisting of about 40 people. Christy is the chapter advisor, Ms. Brim is chapter basic training chair, and Ms. Sechrist

is enrolled in the class. Classes are held each Monday evening. Topics are presented by subject area specialists from the museum and around the commonwealth. Graduation is in December.

- The outreach educator providing programming in the Waynesboro area is working to make regional connections. She provided programming in a couple of elementary schools in the previous quarter.
- The museum has three small greenhouses on the property, two of which are utilized by other groups, and one of which is being used by our home school group to grow lettuce. Students planted seeds and each week are measuring growth. They will take the lettuce home in December. Additional soil experiments will begin in January.
- The Jean S Adams Education Pavilion has been used numerous times for programming, outdoor student lunch, and teaching area. Teachers have been very appreciative of the new space.
- Staff continue to take advantage of professional development opportunities with Ms. Sechrist earning the *Certificate of Interpretive Guiding*.
- Ms. Deatherage reminded the committee that the educators will be attending and presenting at the Virginia Association of Science Teachers in November. Their topic will be: The Power of Real, Utilizing Museum Specimens to Deliver Powerful Programming.
- Ms. Deatherage noted the recent upgrades to the technology in uncovering VA: Carmel Church Quarry which included installation of a large TV monitor and a looping slide show have been well received by teachers and repeat visitors.

In summary, Mr. Sanford, mentioned his appreciation of the healthy programming trends and noted it was great to see the new staff and level of engagement.

GRANT UPDATE

Ms. Deatherage stated that we have not heard from our \$10,000 Monogram Food Loves Kids grant renewal. This grant provides scholarships for classroom programming and aids with support for our science festivals.

With nothing further to report and no further business, Mr. Sanford adjourned the meeting at 3:32 PM.

The next meeting of the Education and Public Programming Committee will be on Saturday, February 7, 2026, at 9:00 AM.

**Board of Trustees
Education Committee
Saturday, May 16, 2026, 9 AM
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Distance Learning Classroom, In-Person only**



MINUTES

The Education Committee of the Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees held their quarterly meeting in-person at 9:00 AM on Saturday, May 16, 2026.

BOT MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Nathan Sanford (Chair) Ms. Lauren Hall
Ms. Cathy H. Manion Dr. Mindy VanDevelder

BOT MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Emma Ito

OTHERS PRESENT: Ms. Christy Deatherage (Education Manager)
Ms. Lila Dougherty (Exhibits Manager)
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (Minutes)

WELCOME

Ms. Christy Deatherage opened the meeting at 9:00 AM with a welcome and opportunity for introductions. A quorum was present for business to be conducted.

EDUCATION UPDATES

Ms. Deatherage reported very strong numbers of students served in the third quarter. Quarterly comparison data indicated an increase in both programs delivered and individuals served in 2026. Ms. Deatherage reviewed other activities supported by education staff during the quarter.

- Hands-on table and craft activity during Bug Day event
- Several scout sleep overs and programs
- Manned an immersive experience for guests at the Starlington Gala event

Ms. Deatherage highlighted the activity of off-site educators and noted the opportunity to serve all areas of the Commonwealth.

Ms. Deatherage informed the board that education staff will be collaborating with the Virginia Library System this summer presenting 45 programs at 17 sites across the Commonwealth. This is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness about the museum. Board members offered suggestions such as giving passes to summer program participants and creating a “passport” for children who attend several programs. It was noted that local Teachers for Tomorrow programs often look for volunteer opportunities during the summer which may fit nicely with the mission of both organizations. Additionally, some school divisions promote the opportunity to earn a community service sticker to be added to high school diplomas, which may appeal to some students.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Ms. Anabelle Sechrist was recently appointed to the Martinsville City Tree Board as the museum's liaison.

The Virginia Master Naturalist SW Piedmont Chapter along with museum staff worked to revitalize the garden in front of the museum with native species plants. Additional projects are on the horizon such as cleaning out the monarch waystation and replanting the garden strip between the parking lot and the front patio.

EXHIBIT UPDATES

Ms. Dougherty shared information about some of the exhibit work completed in the previous quarter.

- The VA 250 exhibits were completed including a new case in the lobby and additional cases in the Hall of Ancient Life and Virginia Waterways.
- Work on the Young Explorer's Center continued through the ideation process, gathering of technical specifications from firms, and developing a cohesive theme.
- Renovation of the Library space and hallway included painting and securing contracts for new flooring and new lighting.
- The Waynesboro library display was revitalized.
- The Waynesboro outreach trailer was outfitted with new exhibit materials.
- Reptile Festival T shirt design was extremely popular and sold out!

DISCUSSION

Ms. Manion and Dr. Vandevelder suggested a seed exchange or giveaway next spring. Possibly to coincide with Mother's Day.

Ms. Deatherage reminded the committee that in addition to the Library programs, staff would be busy with multiple week-long summer camps for various ages. There are still some scholarships available for these camps.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 9:44 AM.

The next meeting of the Education Committee will be held:

Saturday, August 15, 2026, at 9:00 AM.