



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2023 HONOREES



U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Highlights From the 2023 Honorees

Office of Communications and Outreach

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Term
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AP	Advanced Placement
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CTE	career and technical education
ED-GRS	U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
FY	fiscal year
GHG	greenhouse gas
HVAC	heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
IAQ	indoor air quality
IB	International Baccalaureate
IPM	integrated pest management
K	kindergarten
LED	light-emitting diode
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
pre-K	prekindergarten
STEAM	science, technology, engineering, the arts, and math
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and math
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture





Introduction

Origins of the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools program

In 2011, key leaders from the Campaign for Environmental Literacy, the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Earth Day Network led some 80 national and state-based nonprofit organizations to request that the U.S. Department of Education (ED) honor schools for their sustainable facilities, health practices, and effective environmental education. The award that evolved from this petition, U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS),¹ has had a significant effect on the green schools movement and allowed ED a platform to address school facilities, health, and the environment.

These leaders ultimately assisted ED in developing a consensus definition of a green school, featuring what came to be known as the Three Pillars of the award:

Pillar One: reducing environmental impacts, such as waste, water, energy, greenhouse gases, and transportation, encompassing the areas of school facilities, grounds, and operations;

Pillar Two: improving health and wellness by promoting a healthy physical environment (including aspects such as air quality, contaminant control, moisture control, pest management, daylighting, and acoustical and thermal comfort) and student and staff wellness practices (such as healthy school food and outdoor physical activity); and

Pillar Three: offering effective environmental and sustainability education, including civic learning, green careers, and STEM connections.

How the ED-Green Ribbon Schools recognition award functions

Annually, state education officials voluntarily participate by nominating their top schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions based on their achievement in ED's three pillars. Although ED provides some suggestions to state educational agencies to help them document nominees' work in the three pillars, ultimately, states have flexibility in their selection and nomination, so long as they document progress for each nominee in all of the pillars. ED then uses the award to communicate honorees' promising practices and the helpful resources they successfully employ to the nation's schools.

Growth of the ED's infrastructure and sustainability work

Over time, ED added several components to the initial school award, including recognition of school districts, early learning centers, and postsecondary institutions, as well as a state education authority official's award. Building on the success of the recognition award, ED developed ED Infrastructure and Sustainability, a small section within the Office of Communications and Outreach, which has, over time, heard and responded to the need for ED to develop expertise on environment, climate, and infrastructure as they relate to schools. In this

¹ ED's award is called "U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools" and includes "District Sustainability Award" and "Postsecondary Sustainability Award" categories. "Green Ribbon Schools" without the "U.S. Department of Education" is not ED's award, but instead is a separate program overseen by another organization.





way, ED Infrastructure and Sustainability has come to serve as ED’s voice with federal agencies and other partners; advise senior ED officials and policymakers; and respond to stakeholder and public requests on these subjects. It has also allowed ED to address emerging key issues for schools as they relate to infrastructure, including climate adaptation, environmental and social justice, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program’s outreach also has grown, along with its engagement functions to offer a nearly annual Green Strides Tour spotlighting clusters of honorees around a theme and, through a partnership with the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council, a Green Strides School Sustainability Resource Hub, <https://greenstrides.org/>. ED Infrastructure and Sustainability now includes a [homepage](#), a monthly [newsletter](#), and social media ([Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)) to get the word out to schools about the three pillars, providing information about resources, programs, grants, and webinars, as well as other initiatives.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools by the numbers

With the 2023 cohort, some 542 schools, 108 districts, and 62 postsecondary institutions have received an ED-GRS award (see Table 1). In this case, higher numbers do not necessarily indicate broader influence. ED-GRS was never intended to *certify* thousands of schools. It is not a certification program, but is rather intended as a recognition award. Each year, state educational agencies are invited to nominate up to five early learning through 12th grade school or district candidates and one postsecondary institution. These examples allow ED to highlight many innovative practices throughout the country. Institutions — whether school, district, or postsecondary — are eligible to receive this award only once, and award recipients always must state their designation with the year in which they were honored. Once ED has highlighted an institution’s practices, it is useful to move on to highlighting other, diverse examples. Schools nominated from districts that already have won the award should demonstrate achievements above and beyond those previously honored in the district application.

Table 1. Number of U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School honorees by year and type*

Year	Schools	Districts*	Postsecondary*	Total
2012	78	N/A	N/A	78
2013	64	14	N/A	78
2014	48	9	N/A	57
2015	58	9	14	81
2016	47	15	11	73
2017	45	9	9	63
2018	45	6	6	57
2019	35	14	4	53
2020	39	11	5	55
2021	30	5	5	40
2022	27	5	4	36
2023	26	11	4	41
Total	542	108	62	712

*The District Sustainability Award was added in 2013 and the Postsecondary Award in 2015.





Number of ED-GRS participating states

Despite the exciting efforts that ED has highlighted with this recognition award, there is still work to be done to improve school facilities, health, and environmental engagement. On average, approximately 26 states voluntarily nominate candidates annually for this award (see Table 2). ED does not have a mechanism for highlighting the practices of green schools in the remaining states where state education agencies choose not to nominate. Additionally, the number of participating states has been steadily declining, as have the number of applicants to participating states.

Table 2. Number of nominating authorities for U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools by year*

Year	Number of Participating Nominating Authorities
2012	30
2013	32
2014	30
2015	30
2016	27
2017	29
2018	26
2019	28
2020	27
2021	20
2022	19
2023	18

*All states, territories, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and the Bureau of Indian Education are invited to nominate.

Contributing to the development of a unified definition of a green school

A key contribution of the ED-GRS award is believed to be that, to some degree, it has brought various agencies and organizations together toward a common definition and meaning of a green school. Rather than one organization using the term “green school” to denote an energy-efficient school, another to refer to institutions offering environmental and sustainability learning, and a third to indicate environmental health or wellness practices, there has been a convergence such that a green or sustainable school must encompass all three pillars. Many stakeholders nationally also use the term “whole-school sustainability” to encompass these efforts that are cross-operational and interdisciplinary. In this way, the three pillars are utilized as the basis of other school sustainability frameworks. There continue to be initiatives that focus squarely on one segment of this work; however, it usually is with the stated understanding that they form part of a broader three-pillar effort.

A spotlight for school facilities, health, and environment innovations

In 2011, the term “green school” was a relatively unknown concept across much of the country. Today, there is a growing understanding of what this work entails, in part, because of ED’s efforts annually to illustrate this work with the concrete practices of its honorees. ED’s oversight of this award has offered the agency an opportunity to address and engage on such issues as school infrastructure and operational costs; environmental health and school wellness practices;





nutritious, local, and student-grown school food; and hands-on, outdoor, environmental, civic, and sustainability learning, among other related topics. The award also has allowed ED to highlight unique local, state, and national partnerships and projects where sustainability efforts intersect with equity.

A significant effect with a limited budget and innovative collaboration

Despite the historical limited availability of funds at ED for school sustainability, the award has facilitated collaborations and connections, as well as disseminated resources. For example, both ED-GRS and Green Strides have enabled ED to share the many programs for schools offered by counterparts at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. departments of Agriculture, Interior, and Energy; and collaborators across the for-profit and nonprofit private sectors.

In the same way that ED works more effectively across a broader range of federal agencies as a result of the award, some state education agencies also are collaborating in exciting ways with state health, environment, and energy agencies to select their nominees. The private sector, both for-profit and nonprofit, also has gotten involved at the federal, state, local, and school levels, working with schools and governments. Through this collaboration, ED's recognition award has become a tool to get various parties working better together for the benefit of students across the nation.

Green schools are successfully serving disadvantaged populations

Annually, 30% to 65% of ED-GRS school honorees have served majority-disadvantaged student populations, as measured by free and reduced-price lunch, Title I², and minority populations in these honorees. While this is, in part, due to award criteria design, which asks states to ensure that at least one of their nominees is in a disadvantaged community, state nominations have substantially exceeded this minimum requirement. The high rate of honorees that serve majority-disadvantaged student populations demonstrates that, contrary to some misconceptions, "green school" status can be achieved by any school. In fact, it may be that school districts are concentrating their healthy, sustainable school facilities and learning work where it is most needed — in underserved communities. With ED-GRS-designated schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions providing better education to traditionally underserved students, it may be that green school practices are a tool to generally advance equal access to a quality education for all students.

A green school does not need to be newly constructed

To ensure that the award highlights diverse examples of sustainability, the competition assesses candidates based on resources available to them, rather than in comparison to each other. In fact, the award has, over the years, highlighted many older school constructions engaged in low-cost, but highly effective, retrofits and behavioral change. All of these are steps that any school community can undertake, without a new construction, that is designed specifically to be resource efficient and environmentally healthy. In this way, the award has

² Title I schools have high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families.





helped to educate the public about the broad applicability of green school practices in both old and new buildings.

Creating incentives for multiple pipelines for sustainability improvements by all schools

Another important consequence of the award has been the refinement of various national and state-specific green school programs that the award has spurred. States have realigned preexisting state green school programs, created new ones, and now recognize runners-up beyond those they nominate to ED, in order to create pathways to the national award, broaden recognition within individual states, and provide incentives for more change.

The 2023 cohort

This year’s selectees were confirmed from a pool of candidates voluntarily nominated and exhaustively reviewed by 18 state education authority implementation teams. While selection processes vary from state to state, members of several state agencies, as well as outside experts, often comprise selection committees. At the federal level, we have selected 24 schools, 11 districts, and four postsecondary institutions that demonstrate promising practices to reduce environmental impact, improve health, and ensure that students learn through the most hands-on, engaging means possible (see Table 3).

Table 3. 2023 honorees by type

Total honorees	41
Schools	24
Nonpublic schools	3
Charter schools	2
Magnet schools	2
Districts	11
Institutions of higher education	4
Disadvantaged-serving schools	23

The diversity of U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools, District Sustainability Awardees, and Postsecondary Sustainability Awardees and the range of their work demonstrates that any school, district, or postsecondary institution can take steps to improve the sustainability, health, and climate-impact of school facilities; ensure nutrition and fitness practices for a lifetime of wellness and productivity; and engage students in real-world environmental learning. Notably, two-thirds of the 2023 honorees come from schools and districts that serve students from disadvantaged communities (institutions of higher education not included in disadvantaged communities identification), the highest percentage in any year of the award.

Schools use sustainability in context to teach important civic values and skills that encourage students to grow into responsible, compassionate, and contributing citizens. Furthermore, working with dynamic environmental, social, and economic systems from an early age nurtures precisely the type of thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills that careers of the future require. This is the case whether these students graduate from green career and technical programs, college preparatory schools, community colleges, or liberal arts colleges.





It is with tremendous pleasure that we present the 2023 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools, District Sustainability Awardees, and Postsecondary Sustainability Awardees. These honorees are ensuring that their students learn to live, learn, and play with sustainability and health in mind — not as an afterthought, but as an integral part of everything they undertake.

The innovative practices of the 2023 Green Ribbon award winners are described in the remainder of this report. We also invite you visit www.ed.gov/green-ribbon-schools/awards and to learn more about their innovative practices.





Director's Award

The Director's Award celebrates an individual's exemplary efforts to administer ED-GRS in their state. Specifically, the ED-GRS Director's Award recognizes a state education agency official who does the most to advance green schools. ED is delighted to honor Alexandria Roe, vice president for capital planning and budget of the University of Wisconsin (UW) system as the 2023 recipient of the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Director's Award.

Alexandria's leadership and dedication has been integral to ED-GRS' postsecondary success in Wisconsin, where she established a statewide postsecondary ED-GRS nominating committee in 2015. From this structure, Alexandria has overseen a robust competition with a clear application process and extensive outreach to all schools in Wisconsin, regardless of affiliation. She thoroughly supports applicants, resolves questions, and provides guidance on best practices. These efforts are grounded in Alexandria's passion for quality educational environments and in-depth knowledge of the programs and features of each of the universities in Wisconsin. Alexandria has taken the time to help each campus highlight its unique strengths and identify the impacts that they have for their environment, students, and communities.

Alexandria has made the advancement of sustainability on Wisconsin campuses a priority, including by hiring a systemwide sustainability coordinator. Under her leadership, each UW system school now has a sustainability administrator as well. Her effective communication with campus leadership has encouraged chancellors to engage in the higher education sustainability conversation with experts across their own campuses. It is not surprising then, that this enthusiasm for the award has generated friendly sustainability competition and collaboration amongst University of Wisconsin campuses and led to the most postsecondary honorees of any state.

ED-GRS is grateful to have Alexandria as a leader in Wisconsin and an example to higher education authorities across the country.



Alexandria Roe, vice president for capital planning and budget, University of Wisconsin system





2023 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Awards

Alabama

Shades Mountain Elementary School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Hoover, Alabama

District: Hoover City Schools

Type and School Level: Public; Elementary

Demographic: 49% free and reduced-price lunch eligible

Enrollment: 326 students

Summary of Achievements:

When Shades Mountain Elementary School (SMES) students were concerned about their carbon footprint, school officials and Alabama Power partnered with them to complete an audit of the school's HVAC, insulation, and lighting. Based on the results of this audit, SMES updated its building automation system and installed a new cooling tower. In 2022, SMES worked with parents and local partners to design and install an outdoor space complete with nature trails, a butterfly garden, rain barrel water collection, and raised garden beds. At SMES, classroom units are equipped with outside air dampers, and the school's maintenance personnel implement IPM and purchase green cleaning products. In 2018, water bottle filling stations with automatic sensors were installed, and all student restrooms were equipped with auto stop water faucets. SMES has Safe Pedestrian Routes and a no idling policy, and buses are equipped with diesel particulate filters. The school has reduced paper by transitioning to paperless assignments, and partners with Crayola ColorCycle to recycle markers. Students in K-5 experience an immersive curriculum, integrating math, science, and technology, that includes outdoor learning activities in the pollinator and vegetable gardens and schoolwide citizen science learning. The cafeteria uses locally sourced food and reduces food waste by hosting a share table. In July 2022, SMES began a partnership with The Walking Classroom, allowing for classes of students to "walk, listen, and learn" using pre-programmed Walk-kits housing 168 standard embedded podcasts.



Shades Mountain Elementary students participate in the annual elementary track meet hosted by the Hoover High School track team.





Alabama

Gulf Shores City Schools

Honoree Profile:

Location: Gulf Shores, Alabama

Type and School Level: Public; Early Learning, Elementary, Middle, High

Demographic: 46% free and reduced-price lunch eligible

Enrollment: 241 students

Summary of Achievements:

Gulf Shores City Schools (GSCS) serves students in pre-K to grade 12, nearly half of whom are from underserved communities, as measured by free and reduced-price lunch count. GSCS is adjacent to a state park and a wetland. Accordingly, the district has established a sustainability focus that encourages teachers to take students outside and explore the local environment. GSCS promotes environmental education through its Science by the Shore sustainability curriculum and through its Aquaponics, Gulf Coast Ecology, and Marine Science career academies. Students learn by doing with electric cars, water quality testing, outdoor classrooms, and sand dune restoration. History courses include explicit instruction about climate change, along with possible solutions. The district summer camp partners with the local state park to host guided hikes, kayaking, bicycling, cooking classes, and recycled materials fashion shows. GSCS reduced energy and water use by replacing lighting and air conditioning systems, adding motion sensor, low-flow, and hands-free switches and fixtures, installing solar, and utilizing well and reclaimed water. GSCS oversees a “bike train” to safely escort students to school and is home to multiple “bike barns” that house 30 bikes each and are used for biking field trips to nearby beaches, wetlands, and lagoons. The district has replaced buses with models that reduce emissions from transportation by 90%. GSCS offers locally grown vegetables in the cafeterias, hosts an Eat a Rainbow Week, and sponsors walking and running clubs. Standing desks and yoga clubs are available to all staff and students. Health class offerings include lifeguarding, sports medicine, paramedics, and emergency services. Students cultivate produce in raised beds, greenhouses, and hydroponic towers and labs, with much of this food being used in the district’s three cafeterias. GSCS practices closed-loop systems by composting food waste and using the finished compost in the on-site garden.



Gulf Shores City Schools students design, build, and race electric cars.





California

Jefferson Elementary School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Carlsbad, California

District: Carlsbad Unified School District

Type and School Level: Public; Elementary

Demographic: 54% free and reduced-price lunch eligible

Enrollment: 448 students

Summary of Achievements:

Jefferson Elementary School (Jefferson) is an IB school serving students from transitional kindergarten through fifth grade in the Carlsbad Unified School District (CUSD). Through a CUSD school board-approved facility master plan, Jefferson recently replaced heating, cooling, lighting, and water systems to increase energy efficiency and conserve resources, resulting in a 14.1% reduction in energy use from January 2020 to January 2022. Jefferson planted native, drought-tolerant landscaping to reduce water use and installed bioswales, 50-gallon rain barrels, rain chains, and rain



Jefferson Elementary School students compost garden waste.

grates to improve rainwater capture, leading to a 59.3% reduction in combined water use from January 2020 to January 2023. In 2019, Jefferson began participating in the Sage Garden Project to support the school in forming its four gardens and nutrition program, developing a 3,000-square-foot garden and a 400-square-foot chicken coop. The program provides students with weekly nutrition and cooking classes using ingredients from the garden to deepen their understanding of healthy food choices and the science of cooking. Jefferson oversees a program to educate students on appropriately recycling and composting food waste for use in the school's gardens. In 2022, Jefferson launched Walk, Roll, Ride to School Wednesdays. It has also started a walking school bus program, installed a locked bike area, and is piloting a new program to reduce idling vehicles during school pickup and drop-off. Jefferson develops effective environmental and sustainability education through the IB Primary Years Programme and project-based, hands-on learning. Students participate in programs such as the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program Internship to help students apply their learning from the classroom. Students in this internship study the effect of stormwater pollutants from the school site on the local waterways and develop solutions to reduce pollutants entering storm drains. All grade levels at Jefferson participate in the Kids for Peace program, including programs such as the 2022-23 Kind Coins for our Ocean campaign that focuses on the effects of ocean pollution.





California

Santiago STEAM Magnet Elementary School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Lake Forest, California

District: Saddleback Valley Unified School District

Type and School Level: Public; Elementary

Demographic: 44% free and reduced-price lunch eligible

Enrollment: 506 students

Summary of Achievements:

Santiago STEAM Magnet Elementary School (Santiago STEAM) develops high-quality project-based learning units to give students the agency to develop real-world solutions for issues directly affecting their school site. Student-developed and -led initiatives include waste diversion and conservation efforts guided by research and collaboration with local experts. The school is improving decades-old infrastructure with upgrades in water-efficient fixtures, LED indoor/outdoor lighting, and efficient and healthy heating and ventilation. Volunteer-led initiatives have ranged from the installation of aerators on all sinks, to native gardens that include bioswales and soil remediation, to the restoration of a three-quarter acre parcel with wildlife habitat and ecological learning spaces. Santiago STEAM has reduced waste through strategies such as a Green Parent Teacher Association policy, including equitable low- or no-waste events and programming, and the diversion of 70 tons from the landfill by using reclaimed materials for the construction of outdoor learning environments. All students partake in a positive behavior reinforcement program that recognizes good behavior with rewards such as serving as a recycling helper or lights-out leader or participating in a campus cleanup day, picnic lunch with a friend or teacher, or outdoor class sessions. Each classroom has two full-length windows with views of nature and two doors with access to an open-air courtyard. Students have a fluid boundary, meaning that in many cases, they are welcome to step outside for a breathing break or take a moment in nature to re-center and find focus. Due to the project-based focus of the school, business professionals frequently make guest appearances and hold sessions related to project units. Recent examples of visitors include inventor-entrepreneurs, engineers, wildlife biologists, botanists, and Tribal leadership. At Santiago STEAM, the entire local community comes together to support best ecological practices.



Santiago STEAM Magnet Elementary School students turn compost in their bin.





California

Redwood High School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Redwood City

District: Sequoia Union High School District

Type and School Level: Public; High

Demographic: 73% free and reduced-price lunch eligible

Enrollment: 218 students

Summary of Achievements:

Redwood High School (RHS), an alternative continuation high school, serves 11th and 12th grade students who request a smaller learning environment or who may need to recover credits. In 2018, the school was remodeled with many intentional design choices in sustainability and energy efficiency, including on-site solar, water-wise plumbing fixtures, and energy-efficient heating and ventilation systems. The campus installed drip irrigation systems and multiple bioswales, and native and drought-tolerant plants contribute to a documented 74.5% reduction in outdoor water use. The school uses Safe Routes to School funding to provide a fully stocked on-site bike shed with an employee who teaches students about bike maintenance. The school developed a purchasing policy to encourage the use of environmentally preferable products. RHS features a three-quarter-acre organic food forest, complete with a greenhouse, a student designed and built chicken coop, a compost system, and an outdoor classroom built to support students across disciplines, ages, and experience levels. A creek runs through campus, providing opportunities for community engagement and lessons on water quality. Through partnerships, RHS benefits from an outdoor education fellow, who works full time managing the school garden and coordinating the integration of environmental science into the school's curriculum. Culinary arts students use food from the school's food forest to prepare their dishes. RHS provides students with extensive counseling services, mentorships, and initiatives to boost students' achievement and change student trajectories as they relate to whole child health and wellness. RHS's Redwood Environmental Academy Leadership Program is an interdisciplinary



Redwood High School biology students assess the plants that they have been growing in their hydroponics systems, comparing growth across various planting mediums.

program that integrates history, culinary arts, and environmental sciences courses to embody environmental values. RHS administrators and teachers established a green team that meets monthly to collaborate on sustainability initiatives. A local youth group called Youth vs. Apocalypse holds weekly club meetings during lunchtime to engage students in climate action and environmental justice.





California

Bellarmine College Preparatory

Honoree Profile:

Location: San Jose, California

Type and School Level: Private; High

Enrollment: 1,640 students

Summary of Achievements:

Bellarmine College Preparatory (Bellarmine) is a private, Jesuit school in San Jose. Since 2010, Bellarmine's new construction and renovation projects have met LEED Gold certification standards for including innovative and educationally sustainable approaches. The school generates energy on-site using 466 photovoltaic panels and uses a natural gas cogeneration system to heat its pool and showers while generating electricity from the heat of combustion. Bellarmine maintains excellent environmental health by maintaining an IPM plan, choosing safer and more sustainable pesticide and herbicide alternatives, and prioritizing air filtration and circulation practices in all buildings. In 2017, Bellarmine adopted its sustainability mission to guide the school's curricular, programmatic, and student service offerings. As a result, Bellarmine has implemented several high-priority initiatives, such as composting and recycling for waste diversion, offering students healthier food options, and building an organic garden to donate the harvest to local food pantries. The school builds student environmental literacy with its sustainable engineering projects in its Maker Lab and AP Environmental Science courses. Between the two courses, almost every student participates in some form of environmental literacy education. In addition, students engage in several community engagement activities that bring the learning to life, including building water capture and solar generation devices for developing countries. Bellarmine works to give all stakeholders a voice in a more sustainable school and environment with community engagement groups, including the faculty/student Green Team, ecologically based community service activities, and a student Sustainability Club.



Bellarmine College Preparatory Garden Club participants collect water in rain barrels for use in their garden.





California

Moreno Valley Unified School District

Honoree Profile:

Location: Moreno Valley, California

Type and School Level: Public; Elementary, Middle, High

Demographic: 79% free and reduced-price lunch eligible

Enrollment: 31,609 students

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS:

Moreno Valley Unified School District (MVUSD) serves over 31,500 students in pre-K through 12th grades. In 2010, the MVUSD school board adopted an environmental education policy that recognizes that its schools play a crucial role in educating students about the importance of the environment and in preparing them to be stewards of natural resources. In 2018, MVUSD introduced the Junior Scholars Program as part of a mandatory curriculum for middle school students, including a semester where students solve real-world problems. Past projects include working on solutions to pollution in the ocean, hydraulic vehicles, climate change, and environmental degradation. Ecological clubs and field trips also support environmental and sustainability learning on campus and in the community. In 2020, MVUSD created an energy specialist manager (ESM) position, and this employee is responsible for optimizing the use of the HVAC, irrigation, and other energy-using systems. The ESM connects with every school and teacher to share energy conservation, health, and educational resources. Fifteen of the district's 42 sites have on-site solar energy generating systems. School sites employ such water conservation techniques as rainwater harvesting, xeriscaping, drip irrigation, and retention ponds. MVUSD's transportation department transitioned its fleet of diesel buses to electric and responsible fuels, including 42 electric school buses, 28 compressed natural gas buses, and 31 propane buses. MVUSD provides elementary school students with additional fresh fruits and vegetables as a snack outside of regular meal service, using funding from the USDA Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Seventeen of the district's 42 schools have one or more on-site gardens maintained by students, staff, or families. Several of these gardens are used for environmental science, STEAM, language arts, and social and emotional learning. Some sites offer a 100-mile club, whereby students come to campus before school to run around the track for rewards.



Moreno Valley Unified School District features electric school buses and charging stations





Connecticut

Mill Hill Elementary School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Southport, Connecticut

District: Fairfield Public Schools

Type and School Level: Public; Elementary

Enrollment: 368 students

Summary of Achievements:

Mill Hill Elementary School (MHES) formed its Green Team in 2019, when it became a CT Green LEAF School, following a rigorous self-assessment process. Many of its initiatives have focused on waste management, including food recovery, Trex plastic bag recycling, composting, and carton recycling. Through a partnership with the Sustainable Fairfield Task Force, MHES works to ensure ongoing townwide collaboration with these efforts. MHES serves as a leader and mentor for other schools in its district. For example, MHES piloted a composting program that is set to launch districtwide next year. Pesticides are not used on school grounds. The entire school was renovated in 2021, and now includes solar panels, an efficient HVAC system that features MERV (minimum efficiency reporting value) 13 filters, low-flow toilets, and motion sensed lighting. MHES has trained school bus drivers to turn off their engines while waiting to load and unload students at school, with the Green Team actively engaged in the school's No-Idling Awareness campaign. The school employs a full-time school nurse, social worker, and psychologist. MHES is located along the Long Island Sound between Mill River and Sasco Brook, a strategic natural location with a diverse and fragile ecosystem that encourages the school to prioritize environmental and water literacy. Sustainability is integrated throughout the school curriculum and incorporated into different student competitions and contests throughout the year, including Invention Convention, Odyssey of the Mind, and Reflections. The school's Outdoor Ecological Learning Environment (OELE) is used by classes and supervised after-



Third graders at Mill Hill Elementary School enjoy a warm sunny day learning at the outdoor classroom.

school activities. It is an ecologically restorative space that features an outdoor classroom with natural tree stump seating, native plants, and an organic vegetable garden. Teachers enjoy using the OELE as an outdoor learning lab to support experiential learning about the natural environment. The vegetable garden is managed by the after-school enrichment gardening class and cared for by Green Team volunteers when school is out of session. In the art and nature after-school enrichment class, students explore topics in sustainability through art-based projects that use a variety of natural mediums and craft materials.





District of Columbia

Francis L. Cardozo Education Campus

Honoree Profile:

Location: Washington, D.C.

District: District of Columbia Public Schools

Type and School Level: Public; Middle, High

Demographic: 99% free and reduced-price lunch eligible; 99% minority

Enrollment: 640 students

Summary of Achievements:

The Francis L. Cardozo Education Campus (Cardozo) is a Title I middle and high school serving primarily Black and Latino students. Cardozo's campus features a 1917 building that underwent a \$130 million renovation and was reopened LEED Gold certified in 2013. Outdoor learning and appreciation for nature are foundations of Cardozo life. The campus includes skylights, LED motion sensor lighting, an 18,197-square-foot green roof, and systems designed to efficiently reduce energy consumption. Twenty-five percent of the electricity is supplied by a wind power purchase agreement, with the remaining 75% offset by 100% Green-e® renewable energy credits. All classrooms and administrative rooms have recycling bins that are emptied weekly by the student recycling team. The consistency and effectiveness of Cardozo's recycling program have earned it citywide recognition. All students receive free and nutritious daily breakfast and lunch in the school cafeteria. Students in the Social Justice class recently advocated for healthier and more appetizing meals, resulting in school menu improvements. The school garden is used by teachers to explore food justice and urban gardening. Students in the Mighty Greens Garden Club, in collaboration with local nonprofit, City Blossoms, maintain the garden, which features rain barrels, raised beds, and outdoor learning space. Students have engaged the community by educating elementary students on recycling, creating videos on climate change, and performing air quality studies. Teachers have developed lesson plans on environmental literacy, reducing waste, and watershed management that they have then presented to other science teachers. A Wilderness Leadership and Learning Program teaches self-sufficiency and teamwork and engages students in outdoor experiences such as camping, kayaking, and water quality monitoring.



Student and staff members of the Cardozo Garden Club engage in food preparation.





District of Columbia Georgetown University

Honoree Profile:

Location: Washington, D.C.

Type and School Level: Private; Four-year College/University

Enrollment: 20,935 students

Summary of Achievements:

Georgetown University is committed to addressing critical sustainability challenges in its local and global communities. The university established the Georgetown Office of Sustainability in 2013 and is currently working on an ambitious sustainability plan, anticipated to be completed in 2023. The University is pursuing broad-based, practical approaches to sustainability, including dramatically reducing GHG emissions, increasing the energy efficiency of campuses, reducing waste, and providing sustainable transportation for students, faculty, and staff. Georgetown's campus features three "green roofs" on campus buildings, has bioswales, is certified as a bee-friendly habitat, and will soon be opening a food-producing garden. Georgetown is a co-creator of the Wellbeing Project, a coalition of higher education institutions and social change organizations whose mission is to support the well-being of social changemakers. Building on years of collaboration with the other members of the coalition, Georgetown conducts interdisciplinary research on inner well-being, social change, and education to help prepare the next generation of social change leaders. Beginning this year, the Wellbeing Project is partnering with the Earth Commons — Georgetown's hub for environmental and sustainability innovation, research, and education — to address ecological belonging as an essential aspect of environmental change. Georgetown's Core Pathways program allows students to fulfill their core requirements while examining climate change through an interdisciplinary lens. Students take seven-week classes worth 1.5 credits each, and both the sciences and humanities are represented to foster an appreciation for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of climate change. Georgetown also centers environmental and sustainability learning in all its schools, with a particular emphasis on STEM literacy for all, encouraging interdisciplinarity, and incorporating equity into environmental discussions.



The Earth Commons' global performance project, "We Hear You — A Climate Archive" by Caitlin Nasema Cassidy (Georgetown University class of 2011) and playwright Jacob Hirdwall debuted at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on March 18, 2022.





Florida

Arbor Ridge K8 School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Orlando, Florida

District: Orange County Public Schools

Type and School Level: Public; Elementary, Middle

Demographic: 48% free and reduced-price lunch eligible

Enrollment: 783 students

Summary of Achievements:



Arbor Ridge K8 School students explore and observe the school grounds on a nature walk during science class.

In 2019, Arbor Ridge K8 School (Arbor Ridge) recognized a need for sustainability education in youth, and the impact an education institution can have on the resiliency of both local and global communities. Arbor Ridge is a School of Excellence in its district's annual Green Schools Recognition Program and has won multiple awards for water conservation and having a schoolwide culture of sustainability. The school builds upon energy-efficient light fixtures and low-flow water fixtures, with signage around the school to encourage resource conservation. Arbor Ridge's school gardens include eight raised bed vegetable gardens, a wildflower garden, a butterfly garden, and a multi-unit hydroponics garden. Students grow and harvest fresh produce and share the bounty with other students, teachers, and families. Multiple departments and utility companies work together to ensure Arbor Ridge has good IAQ and is free from contaminants and pests. Arbor Ridge has a Cross-Age Buddies program, which pairs an older grade level student with a younger student to serve as a mentor, and Trust

Day, where students are paired with unfamiliar students to learn to work together on teamwork challenges. Teachers and staff take advantage of Wellness Wednesday, where a fitness instructor coaches fun workout sessions. For local environmental issues, students are empowered to take action by writing letters to local representatives to share and encourage solutions. For example, the second grade enrichment classes learn about environmental disasters in history, then discuss the events, and create posters to retell the information and include green topics in the grade-level newsletter. Arbor Ridge hosts many schoolwide environmental events, such as an Eco Fair at their Family Fun Night, Water Week during Earth Month, Trick or Trash conservation events, and campus cleanups. The teachers and staff, who lead sustainability initiatives on campus, attend professional development opportunities and bring back their knowledge to the rest of the school.





Florida

Stone Lakes Elementary School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Orlando, Florida

District: Orange County Public Schools

Type and School Level: Public; Elementary

Demographic: 36% free and reduced-price lunch eligible; 60% minority

Enrollment: 627 students

Summary of Achievements:

Stone Lakes Elementary School (SLES) has a set of core beliefs that school staff integrate into their learning experiences, designed to provide students with the education and drive to provide sustainable solutions to various challenges they may face in this world. The school's agriculture program not only provides students with the opportunity to grow and care for crops and livestock, but also creates a seamless pathway for the agriculture programs in subsequent middle and high schools. Agriculture education provides a hands-on and highly engaging experience for all students that incorporates a wide variety of skills, including reading, math, science, social studies, and critical thinking. SLES emphasizes sustainability education with field trips, visits with local partners, and after-school 4-H and Green Team activities, such as the food waste boot camp. Students are involved in and lead every sustainability project on campus, including recycling, composting, walk or bike to school days, and energy conservation. The school's butterfly garden is a prime example of collaborative efforts, where students, staff, families, community volunteers, and businesses all play an integral role in its development. This garden space includes a Little Free Library and outdoor classroom that classes use while studying plants and pollinators. SLES promotes health and wellness with an advisory committee and special events such as Mindful Mondays and morning announcements for Wellness Wednesday Tips. The school uses energy management software to monitor water and energy use.



Stone Lakes students and their teacher tend to the campus poultry as part of the agriculture program.





Florida

Oak Ridge High School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Orlando, Florida

District: Orange County Public Schools

Type and School Level: Public; High

Demographic: 99% free and reduced-price lunch eligible; 93% minority

Enrollment: 2,460 students

Summary of Achievements:

Oak Ridge High Schools' (ORHS) student-led initiatives have created a culture where students are excited to be a part of the solution for local and global environmental issues. ORHS's Environmental Science Club, inspired by the AP Environmental Science course, has a distributed leadership model in which students support each other while working on sustainability initiatives. During a project analyzing the school's waste, students found that a lot of the waste contained edible food. This discovery led students to engage the sustainability manager and cafeteria manager to develop a Food Share Table and food donation programs. ORHS students helped build a garden at the local elementary school to counter food insecurity. The school supports communitywide wellness through its School Health and Wellness Advisory Committee, Student Assistance and Family Empowerment Program, and student-led yoga sessions and wellness events. ORHS has leveraged Earth Week to highlight interdisciplinary learning connected to STEM, host a competition about the importance of math in science, and play environmental trivia activities led by the history department. Students use plastic bottles collected from Wednesday recycling to create a weekly lunchtime arts activity in the courtyard, which is then shared with the community. ORHS has been recognized by their district's Sustainability Department for conserving water and energy through actions such as lighting updates, energy efficient appliances, low-flow toilets, and encouraging safe routes to school.



Students at Oak Ridge High School practice yoga for student stress relief during testing periods.





Florida

Palmer Trinity School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Miami, Florida

Type and School Level: Private; Middle, High

Enrollment: 780 students

Summary of Achievements:

Palmer Trinity School is located on almost 60 acres of tranquil, beautiful open space in Palmetto Bay, Florida, an area south of Miami. Through an extensive academic program and stimulating extracurricular activities, students at Palmer Trinity develop character, global awareness, environmental stewardship, and critical thinking skills. In 2014 Palmer Trinity built upon its existing sustainability efforts to establish a director of environmental stewardship position, with the goal of overseeing all aspects of development for the environmental sustainability and outdoor education curriculum and cocurricular activities. In 2017, Palmer Trinity School established the Palmer Trinity Sustainability Plan, which became the school's roadmap for building and operating a healthier, more sustainable campus community. The sustainability plan is organized around five core topics: emissions and energy, campus operations, nature and ecosystems, health and well-being, and culture and learning. As of 2023, the Environmental Stewardship Program at Palmer Trinity includes 22 environmental initiatives, four experiential education travel experiences, four dedicated spaces for environmental education and STEM, two environmental action clubs (middle school and upper school), and a sustainability task force. The dedicated spaces include an aqua lab, living garden, Pine Rockland Butterfly Garden, and STEM lab. The school uses the campus as a tool for education through efforts such as the Trees of Palmer Trinity Book, which allows students, faculty, and visitors to explore campus and learn to identify its exceptional multitude of trees. The school uses environmentally preferable cleaners to reduce the community's exposure to toxic chemicals and high efficiency air filters to improve IAQ. Palmer Trinity works with its food service provider to promote and offer smart, healthy food choices and to offer vegan and vegetarian dishes. The school offers courses on energy, environment, and sustainability from life science in sixth grade to IB Environmental Systems and Societies in the Upper School. The curriculum is aligned with travel experiences in sixth, seventh, and ninth grades as part of the Experiential Education Program.



Scientific Inquiry class Palmer Trinity students snorkel in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.





Illinois

Prairie Trails School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Mount Prospect, Illinois
District: River Trails School District 26
Type and School Level: Public; Early Learning
Demographic: 35% minority
Enrollment: 181 students

Summary of Achievements:

Prairie Trails School serves the preschool and kindergarten students in River Trails School District 26. In 2021, major renovations were completed at Prairie Trails, making it a net-zero energy renovated school that also meets the Passiv Haus International US+ Source Zero standard. The building's solar panels offset 100% of the school's electricity needs. The building features an innovative variable refrigerant flow system of heating and cooling, which saves energy and ensures comfortable and conducive learning conditions. The renovation also included layered insulation to the building's walls, LED lighting, low-flow toilets, and permeable pavers in the parking lot. The school emphasizes materials resource conservation, with strategies that include using compostable trays in the school lunch program and composting kitchen food scraps. A multipurpose room, used for physical education and lunch, features skylights that allow natural light and soundproofing panels. An innovative feature is the natural playground, built using displaced soil from the renovation projects, that promotes cognitive, emotional, and physical growth while supporting an integrated curriculum and provides teachers with an outdoor teaching environment that includes several quiet and comfortable areas. The school has a green cleaning policy and uses only Green Seal products. The kindergarten curriculum includes important STEAM units, where students learn about plants, animals, and weather and how they impact the world. The Prairie Trails School site serves as a learning hub



for environment and sustainability for the school district's older students. Not only does Prairie Trails School educate young students in the conventional sense, but it also educates the larger community about how buildings can meet net-zero objectives.

Prairie Trails students enjoy their time on the school's natural playground that is designed to feature natural elements to promote cognitive, emotional, and physical development while supporting an integrated curriculum.





Illinois

Huntley Community School District 158

Honoree Profile:

Location: Algonquin, Illinois

Type and School Level: Public; Early Learning, Elementary, Middle, High

Enrollment: 8,548 students

Summary of Achievements:



Huntley Community School District 158 has dump and recycling stations at elementary buildings that help increase recycling and reduce liquid waste.

The vision of sustainability and environmental awareness that has come to define Huntley Community School District 158 (Huntley 158) began nearly 14 years ago. The district prioritizes energy efficiency, which has led to an annual reduction in energy costs by more than half. Huntley 158 manages demand control ventilation, temperature, and air pressure and modulates energy consumption in relation to occupancy load across buildings. In fall 2020, Huntley 158 “flipped the switch” on the largest solar energy installation on school district property in Illinois. The project now produces clean, renewable energy to fuel all district buildings. Huntley 158 installed interactive solar kiosks in each building,

which allows every student, staff member, and community member to digitally interact with the district’s solar initiative and learn about their impact. Huntley 158 is electrifying its transportation fleet by acquiring four all-electric buses and plug-in hybrid minivans and by installing electric vehicle infrastructure fueled by the solar array. Within the food services department, Huntley 158 has implemented food-sharing tables, recycling and liquid waste sorting stations, bulk condiment stations, and reusable trays and has eliminated milk straws. Students and staff receive lessons and professional development that focus on tools to regulate behavioral and emotional wellness. Students in grades K-12 participate in diverse curriculum offerings that are based on ecology, socio-political knowledge, environmental issues, problem-solving skills, environmentally responsible behaviors, and hands-on experiences. These topics are addressed through interdisciplinary STEM curriculum at the elementary level, Project Lead the Way courses in middle school, and engineering and global academies and AP Environmental Science in high school, while students in the 18-22 transition program use a tower garden to grow fresh, nutrient-rich foods. Students across grade levels have engaged in service projects that facilitate tree planting in the community, fundraised for clean water in Uganda, and established beneficial new practices through recycling and ecology clubs.





Indiana

Carmel Clay Schools

Honoree Profile:

Location: Carmel, Indiana

Type and School Level: Public; Early Learning, Elementary, Middle, High

Enrollment: 16,520 students

Summary of Achievements:

Carmel Clay Schools (CCS) has a comprehensive and distributed model of responsibility that infuses a sustainability ethic into every aspect of the district culture. The District Strategic Plan prioritizes the expansion of environmental initiatives through continuous improvement in the design, construction, and maintenance of all facilities; ongoing refinement of the efficiency of daily operations; and the implementation of energy-saving measures in each department that produce positive results for the environment and save money. Smart technology includes auto shutoff for lights, water, and computers throughout the district. Environmentally preferable cleaning products are used in every building. To date, the transportation department has replaced 24 gas-powered buses in its fleet with alternative-fuel vehicles and recently added the first total-electric school bus in Indiana. School campuses include native plants and grasses, bike trails, water features, rain gardens, water collection barrels, community gardens, and outdoor learning labs. School cafeterias compost meal preparation waste. Since 2005, the district has supported the CCS Green Team, a network of parents, staff, and students at each of the 15 school campuses



To improve students' overall wellness in Carmel Clay Schools, school lunch choices include many fresh fruits and vegetables — some from student-grown gardens.



Carmel Clay Schools' landscape plans include rain gardens with native plants and grasses to help with irrigation and runoff around the buildings.

who have a passion for encouraging habits and initiatives that protect the environment. In its 11th year, the annual communitywide holiday lights recycling drive has collected over 11 tons of light strands for recycling. The K-12 curriculum includes opportunities for students of all ages to explore the impact of humans on the natural environment through courses from Project Lead the Way to AP Human Geography. The district Wellness Center provides a convenient, no-cost option to employees for acute, preventative, and wellness-focused primary care.





Indiana

Purdue University

Honoree Profile:

Location: West Lafayette, Indiana

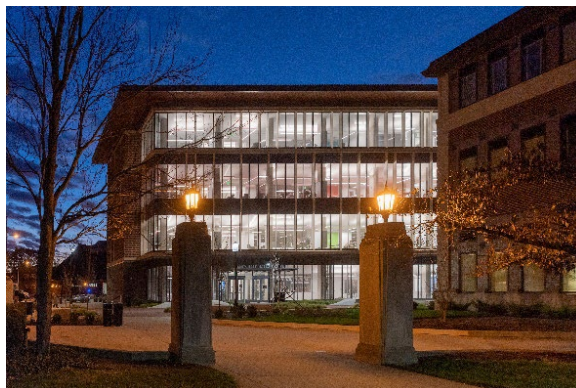
Type and School Level: Public; Four-year College/University

Enrollment: 38,000 students

Summary of Achievements:

In April 2020, Purdue University (Purdue) launched a Physical Facilities Sustainability Master Plan that consists of 13 actionable and measurable goals across five major categories: energy, water, materials, buildings, and grounds. Purdue University grew by more than 2.3 million square feet from FY 2011 to FY 2022; however, the university was able to reduce its domestic water use by 27% and its energy use intensity by more than 10% over the same time frame.

Purdue has partnered with Duke Energy to jointly explore the feasibility of using advanced nuclear energy to meet the campus community's long-term energy needs. The campus has diverted over 50,000 tons of materials through recycling, composting, and reuse over the past decade. Purdue's Consultant's Handbook contains guidelines in a vast array of areas impacting indoor or outdoor environmental quality, including thermal and moisture protection, openings, furniture, HVAC air cleaning devices, and exterior site furnishings. Since 2014, Purdue has added 6.75 miles of bicycle infrastructure. Over the past three years, Purdue has planted 1,882 trees on campus and has been a Tree Campus USA for 13 consecutive years. Horticulture



Construction on the Chaney-Hale Hall of Science, one of Purdue's most recent LEED-certified facilities, was completed in 2020.



The second annual Purdue Day of Service in 2022 rallied volunteers from the university and local community to plant 325 trees in Horticulture Park on the Purdue West Lafayette campus, up from the 62 trees planted at the inaugural event in 2021.

Park, a 24-acre forested park provides a vital space for outdoor physical activity and serves as a "living laboratory" for applied student learning. Purdue's Institute for a Sustainable Future has nearly 250 faculty affiliates across 45 university departments who engage in sustainability research. In 2022, Purdue offered more than 45 courses directly focused on sustainability and nearly 170 more that are inclusive of sustainability. Several Purdue departments and student organizations collaborate to plan events and activities to promote sustainability initiatives, including Earth Week.





Iowa

Iowa City Community School District

Honoree Profile:

Location: Iowa City, Iowa

Type and School Level: Public; Early Learning, Elementary, Middle, High

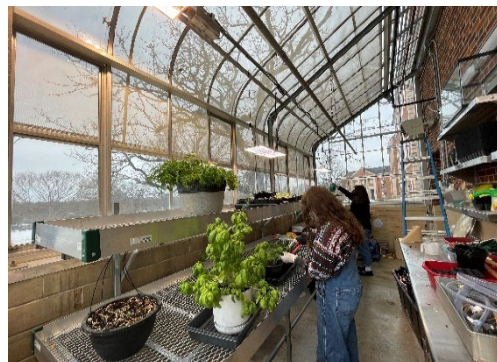
Demographic: 41% free and reduced-price lunch eligible; rural

Enrollment: 14,972 students

Summary of Achievements:

Iowa City Community School District (ICCSA) consists of 29 schools located in five different cities and serves over 14,000 students. ICCSD's systemic approach to GHG reduction is outlined by the district's 2019 Resolution to Address Climate Change and Facilities master plan, which includes an inventory of GHG emissions and reduction strategies. ICCSD's 2030 emissions target was achieved in 2021 due to efficiency projects and an increase in MidAmerican Energy's, the district's energy provider, renewable energy generation. Twenty-five of the 29 ICCSD schools operate on geothermal systems, providing 100% of these buildings' heating energy needs.

ICCSA's IPM program is facilitated by a district coordinator and has resulted in the successful elimination of most pesticide applications and 100% pesticide-free turf areas at all elementary schools. ICCSD works with Field to Family, an organization that connects local farmers with schools through their food hub, to source thousands of pounds of local products annually for the school nutrition program. Every sixth grader in the district participates in a weeklong "School of the Wild" program to learn about the environment firsthand in an outdoor "classroom" that features prairie, lakes, and forests. All secondary students are required to take the Earth and Space Science course, and a portion of this course is dedicated to learning about sustainability and how our actions impact the earth. Environmental and sustainability education is embedded in not only the AP Environmental Science course but also social studies, geography, world languages, and language arts curriculum at the secondary level. ICCSD administers a prairie initiative that has converted 1-5 acres of turf grass to prairie and pollinator spaces annually. In addition, ICCSD works to increase tree canopy under the district's tree canopy initiative and to offer outdoor classrooms, ADA accessible playgrounds, and outdoor musical instruments.



Iowa City Community School District's City High Sustainability Club students work in the school greenhouse.





Kentucky

Cardinal Valley Elementary

Honoree Profile:

Location: Lexington, Kentucky

District: Fayette County Public Schools

Type and School Level: Public; Elementary

Demographic: 85% free and reduced-price lunch eligible; 89% minority, 70% English language learners

Enrollment: 554 students

Summary of Achievements:



Cardinal Valley Elementary fifth graders enjoy sorrel grown in their school garden and use binoculars to locate local wildlife.

Cardinal Valley Elementary (CVE) is a community school serving over 550 students from preschool through fifth grade. CVE is the only dual language program in Kentucky that encourages native Spanish speakers to become bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish. During renovations, CVE was designed to be an energy-efficient facility that has a myriad of effective architectural components, including solar tubes and sensors that turn off lights in empty classrooms. The exterior features permeable pavers, a large tree canopy, native plants, and a school garden fertilized by the product of the district's only

schoolwide composting program. The garden space includes 25 raised beds, a monarch butterfly waystation, a large native plant garden, an art mural, two apple trees, multiple berry-producing bushes, and composting. In addition to participating in composting and gardening, students conduct energy audits and waste audits and participate in litter and creek cleanups. At no cost to families, CVE offers two free fruit or vegetable snacks a week for each student, healthy snacks for after-school activities, and a weekend food backpack program for students experiencing food scarcity. Teachers at CVE collaborate on environmental and sustainability education throughout the curriculum, especially the full-time science teacher and the library media instructor. CVE's after-school enrichment program offers solutions-oriented sustainability projects, such as building levels that can hold water, connecting circuits to make electricity flow and do work, and making cars from recyclable materials that are powered by balloons.





Kentucky

Mary G. Hogsett Primary School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Danville, Kentucky

District: Danville Independent Schools

Type and School Level: Public; Early Learning, Elementary

Demographic: 79% free and reduced-price lunch eligible

Enrollment: 365 students

Summary of Achievements:

Mary G. Hogsett Primary School (Hogsett Primary) is a preschool-first grade school that has worked to create a healthy community for its students. In 2018-19, Hogsett Primary completed a building remodel that included water and energy efficiency updates that resulted in a 30% decrease of electrical usage over the same time period. Hogsett Primary reduces waste through food share tables, reusable trays and utensils, and recycling. Students are taught to ride scooters, tricycle taxis, and tricycles, and Hogsett Primary supports initiatives to improve transportation safety and encourage active transportation. The school grounds include a natural playground, picnic tables, and an outdoor classroom. The school also has a full-time nurse and counselor, two licensed clinical therapists, and a child psychiatrist contracted to work with students at school, all at no cost to families. The art teacher is trained as an art therapist and conducts art therapy lessons with students daily. Hogsett Primary staff have ongoing, job-embedded training in trauma-informed care. The staff work with families to understand each child's unique needs and any Adverse Childhood Experiences. The school's Families First office supports families to eliminate any barriers to learning, including food, housing, and health needs. An IAQ assessment summary completed in August 2022 found that the outdoor ventilation, air filtration, and exhaust systems were meeting expectations and state standards. Hogsett Primary has in-depth interdisciplinary units of study with students that prioritize inquiry-based learning with community connections. Science is not isolated as a subject on the master schedule but is the avenue through which students learn many subjects. Students study birds, trees, weather, and other environmental topics while they are learning and applying literacy, social studies, mathematics, social and emotional, habits of character, and art skills. These in-depth studies include fieldwork on campus and at local environmental sites. Students have experience being stewards to the local community by planting native trees and shrubs to mitigate runoff and installing and maintaining bluebird houses.



Mary G. Hogsett early learners play on the natural playground that features locally-sourced tree stumps and boulders.





Louisiana

Park Forest Elementary Creative Sciences & Arts Magnet School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Baton Rouge, Louisiana

District: East Baton Rouge Parish Schools

Type and School Level: Public, Magnet; Elementary

Demographic: 99% free and reduced-price lunch eligible

Enrollment: 478 students

Summary of Achievements:

Park Forest Elementary Creative Sciences & Arts Magnet School (Park Forest) is a Title I school where a Creative Smart Lab and Renewable Energy Lab feature STEM-based lessons to educate students on renewable energy and on water and energy conservation. Students experience different types of gardening, from the traditional raised garden bed to aeroponic garden towers inside of the lab. The vegetables chosen for the garden beds are directly connected to standards and important concepts for student learning.

Through the USDA, all students receive a free, nutritious lunch as well fresh fruit and vegetable snacks. Southern

University Agriculture has partnered with Park Forest physical education classes to host student health and nutrition classes. Park Forest uses “Agriculture in the Classroom” to apply authentic, agricultural-based content as the context to teach core curriculum concepts in science, social studies, language arts, and nutrition. The entire magnet staff attends professional development trainings and conferences throughout the year to broaden teachers’ perspectives about project-based learning. A Project Lead the Way grant is another curriculum source that is providing the students of Park Forest with project-based learning opportunities. At least one teacher from each grade level has attended a NEED (National Energy Education Development) Project



Students at Park Forest Elementary Creative Sciences & Arts Magnet School harvest okra.



Students at Park Forest Elementary Creative Sciences & Arts Magnet School participate in hydroponic gardening.

professional development session. Park Forest has reduced its overall energy consumption by over 40% compared to a 2015 baseline. The school was renovated after a 2016 flood and now features LED and motion sensor lights and faucets, programmable thermostats, increased insulation, and water bottle filling stations. Students and staff worked with partners to revitalize the landscaping of the school. Community partners help to educate families about how to conserve energy through simple actions that protect the environment and save families on electricity costs.





Maryland

Watershed Public Charter School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Windsor Mill, Maryland

District: Baltimore County Public Schools

Type and School Level: Public, Magnet; Elementary

Demographic: 78% minority

Enrollment: 282 students

Summary of Achievements:



Watershed Public Charter School students and community members learn from Department of Natural Resources personnel during a sunfish release at Patapsco Park.

Watershed Public Charter School (Watershed) in Baltimore County takes its role as the only nature-based public school in the county seriously. Its mission, to provide an interconnected learning environment where hands-on exploration and creative expression foster the learning process, is evident in Watershed's daily practices. Watershed students grow into environmental stewards who assume leadership on environmental sustainability efforts at the school, including by monitoring building water and electricity usage. Despite an increase in enrollment from 2019 to 2022, Watershed reduced its energy use by over 42% and water consumption by 60% over that period. It has also cut solid waste in half since 2019, in part by implementing a comprehensive composting program, a share table, and trash-free lunches. Thanks to two large cisterns, harvested rainwater is used for irrigation purposes for the school micro-farm and gardens. Watershed students and staff collaborate with the community to plant trees, influence mowing practices on the campus, and inspire students on green career pathways. Families report that their household behaviors are, in turn, influenced by student learning in several areas, including by planting native species, reducing home water use, and encouraging more outdoor time. The Watershed

curriculum centers on environmental sustainability by infusing the state's environmental literacy standards into learning experiences and getting students outdoors every day, including in rain and snow, to farm, care for chickens, monitor water quality, engage in mindfulness in nature, and maintain pollinator, rain, and vegetable gardens, as well as the small campus orchard. Faculty make use of five outdoor classrooms, including stream, two micro-farm, rain garden, and meadow classrooms. All Watershed staff attends environmentally focused professional development every year.



Watershed Public Charter School kindergarten students explore the campus as a part of their map making project.





Maryland

Queen Anne's County Public Schools

Honoree Profile:

Location: Centreville, Maryland

Type and School Level: Public, Rural; Early Learning, Elementary, Middle, High

Enrollment: 7,447 students

Summary of Achievements:



Students in Queen Anne's County Public Schools analyze macroinvertebrates to determine ecological health.

Queen Anne's County Public Schools (QACPS) is situated on Maryland's rural Eastern Shore. QACPS has taken a strong stance in ensuring all campuses have water management plans with systems in place to protect water quality due to its proximity to the Chesapeake Bay. In fact, all campuses have bioswales and retention ponds. Over 20% of the district's total electrical consumption is met from ground-mounted solar arrays. Nearly 50% of schools in the district are equipped with geothermal systems, and all 14 schools have received recognition as ENERGY STAR Leaders. Two school sites are LEED certified. QACPS has invested in alternative transportation and has begun to replace its aging fleet of vehicles with electric and hybrid electric vehicles. QACPS has instituted policies that embrace the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model to enhance the health of students, visitors, and staff members. The school district uses green cleaning products and practices and participates in a farm-to-school program featuring a Maryland Homegrown School Week. Outdoor learning opportunities abound, and environmental education is infused inextricably within the district's curriculum. Environmental education programming is vertically articulated from kindergarten through high school and

emphasizes stewardship-based and civic education projects. The QACPS environmental literacy plan outlines how each grade level explores and engages in relevant environmental issues within their schoolyard habitats and the surrounding regions. Civic engagement encompasses the preservation of the local environment and the restoration of the bay, watershed awareness, pollinator garden projects, recycling drives, and beach cleanups. QACPS is currently installing outdoor classrooms at each of its eight elementary schools that will include a covered pavilion and be ADA compliant.



Students in Queen Anne's County Public Schools collect water samples from the inlets surrounding Horn Point in Cambridge, Maryland.





Massachusetts

Boston Public Schools

Honoree Profile:

Location: Boston, Massachusetts

Type and School Level: Public; Early Learning, Elementary, Middle, High

Demographic: 85% minority

Enrollment: 48,777 students

Summary of Achievements:

Boston Public Schools (BPS) serves 48,777 students in grades pre-K-12 in 119 schools across 132 buildings. As a city agency, BPS follows the City of Boston's 2019 Climate Action Plan. Led by the Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Program, BPS has made investments and progress in drinking water quality, IAQ, outdoor teaching and learning, zero waste, STEM and climate change education, and sustainable transportation. The BPS Drinking Water Access Initiative is installing and testing some 1,400 filtered bottle refilling stations across all BPS schools. BPS launched a pioneering IAQ monitoring initiative, accompanied by a live public dashboard where users can observe real-time IAQ levels in all BPS schools. As of school year 2022-2023, BPS Transportation will only purchase electric buses when buying new buses, instead of diesel or propane, with plans to transition to a fully electric fleet within the next 10 years. BPS has contracted a Facilities Condition Assessment, a detailed analysis that will produce a larger, in-depth dataset of building conditions and make recommendations for repair, replacement, and renovation. BPS renovated 106 school kitchens within a four-year period, 81 of which now support on-site meal preparation and cooking. The BPS trash contract includes language for the hauler to pay for BPS recycling equipment and contribute support for zero waste education in schools, including up to 10 school waste audits annually. Climate science at Boston Public Schools is addressed continuously in pre-K-12 through the curricular offerings aligned to the state frameworks, leveraging the district's 38 outdoor classrooms. BPS has 79 active school gardens and a district outdoor teaching and learning manager. Departments are working to integrate environmental justice into literacy units. Twenty-eight BPS schools, representing 35 BPS teachers, participated as 2020-2021 Green Team Schools with the Massachusetts Department of Education, an interactive education program that empowers students and teachers to help the environment.



Boston Arts Academy, which opened in September 2022, is 100% electric and is targeting LEED gold certification.



Boston Public Schools receives the first two of its 20 new electric school buses.





Missouri

Patrick Henry Downtown Academy

Honoree Profile:

Location: St. Louis, Missouri

District: Saint Louis Public Schools

Type and School Level: Public; Elementary

Demographic: 99% free and reduced-price lunch eligible

Enrollment: 201 students

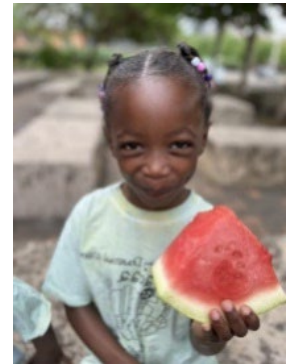
Summary of Achievements:

Patrick Henry Downtown Academy (Patrick Henry) is a neighborhood elementary school serving 201 students, all of whom live well below the poverty line. The Patrick Henry school building is more than a century old, and the school community has been able to navigate the challenges this presents by participating in utility rebate programs. These programs have allowed the school to upgrade to all LED lighting, replace the boiler, optimize the HVAC system, replace windows, and install water bottle filling stations. Through the Academics in Motion zones, the school has been able to provide movement minutes to any child in any classroom, with an average of 140 minutes a day of student movement. All classrooms are equipped with a calming corner to promote mental health and wellness, as well as a movement corner to promote physical health. In 2019, Patrick Henry established a school Green Team; its



A second grader at Patrick Henry Downtown Academy helps weed the garden beds to prepare them for planting.

efforts have spanned school garden volunteerism, wellness policies, and healthy nutrition. Patrick Henry is located within a food desert, where the closest and most-utilized place to purchase food, for most families, is a gas station. Students plant, tend, harvest, and prepare all produce as part of a class. Sustainability education is a mainstay at Patrick Henry. Every student receives a well-balanced breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. With a set time for formal garden instruction and all teachers encouraged to use outdoor spaces, the accessible garden and outdoor learning space serve as classrooms for all students, teachers, partners, and community members. Through a partnership, the school received access to an outdoor learning kit, which is a science, math, and environmental studies curriculum that includes hands-on learning and physical activities. Patrick Henry's students have informal educators — senior citizens who live in nearby public housing — who visit the school throughout the year to bolster gardening skills and techniques.



Patrick Henry students receive a free fresh fruit or vegetable daily as part of a nutritious snack program.





Pennsylvania

Hillendale Elementary School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania
District: Unionville-Chadds Ford School District
Type and School Level: Public; Elementary
Demographic: Rural
Enrollment: 393 students

Summary of Achievements:



Hillendale students explore native plants in the meadow and certified Monarch Waystation.

Hillendale Elementary School (Hillendale) is a bustling kindergarten through fifth grade school. In 2013, it piloted a stormwater management project on the campus, planting over 600 trees and thousands of native plants, creating a woodland path, establishing a pollinator meadow, constructing a trail that links these elements together, and filling these spaces with environmental education signage. Hillendale reduces environmental impact and costs by tracking energy data through the ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager portal and working with the district's sustainability committee on more sustainable lighting, HVAC equipment, and procurement. Hillendale offers a wide variety of curricular and extracurricular wellness activities and opportunities for both students and faculty, including clubs, wellness days, and fitness challenges. During the 2022-23 school year, staff embarked on a multiyear commitment to learning best practices in teaching about and within nature in their outdoor classrooms, in partnership with Stroud Water Research Center. The school has three formal and several additional outdoor classroom spaces utilized daily by the school community. Both indoors and outdoors, Hillendale's staff provides students with interdisciplinary environmental and sustainability learning opportunities embedded into the kindergarten through fifth grade curriculum. The unique campus and homegrown curricula help students learn about varied ecosystems. Hillendale partners with many local organizations to provide environmental and sustainability education programming, such as field trips, and to improve the campus' environment with cleanups and restoration projects.



Hillendale students learn about ecosystems at one of the school's storm water basins.





Pennsylvania

California Area School District

Honoree Profile:

Location: Coal Center, Pennsylvania

Type and School Level: Public; Early Learning, Elementary, Middle, High

Demographic: Rural; 59% free and reduced-price lunch eligible

Enrollment: 968 students

Summary of Achievements:



California Area School District students have access to electric scooters.

California Area School District (CASD) coordinates activities within the district and with local partners that reduce environmental impact, energy use, and food waste; conserve water; introduce sustainable transportation; and increase recycling. CASD uses a multitiered system of progressive educational approaches to teach strategies to reduce environmental impact. Strategies used throughout the district include a five-phase program to reach 100% of K-12 students with recycling instruction, a farm-to-school collaboration, and edible gardens. CASD is also incorporating artificial intelligence to solve global/local problems, purchasing solar-powered transportation for campus use, and incorporating outdoor, year-round play with water-saving design. The Moonshot Project, a grant-funded and district-facilitated program, works to provide students with nutrition and improved access to healthy foods in and out of school. Using the on-site chickens for eggs, honey from the district apiary, and its aquaponics facility for healthy greens and fish, the Moonshot Project pairs the expertise of a paraeducator and cafeteria staff with the

healthy eating educational needs of students. Through the life skills program, students receive instruction on safe practices in the kitchen and learn cooking skills. CASD focuses on the health and wellness of students and staff through their dog therapy program, goat-scaping project, and outdoor fitness after school and during summer school. The Chill Project created two rooms to serve all students and employees to be used for reducing stress. CASD installed permeable surfaces in outdoor child play spaces, which reestablished a more natural hydraulic balance and reduced runoff. Post-COVID improvements in air quality, use of outdoor learning spaces, remediation of any moisture, and a clear cleaning and maintenance schedule were developed as part of the Return to School Plan and are now consistent procedures in all day-to-day operations.



California Area School District students participate in beekeeping and honey collection.





Pennsylvania

West Chester University

Honoree Profile:

Location: West Chester, Pennsylvania

Type and School Level: Public; Four-year College/University

Demographic: 24% Pell recipients

Enrollment: 17,275 students

Summary of Achievements:

West Chester University (WCU) has commitments to environmental, social, and economic sustainability and outlines the strategies it takes to achieve these in both its Climate Action Plan and its Strategic Plan. Since 2010, WCU has cut energy costs by millions of dollars, lowered per capita carbon emissions by more than a third, and significantly reduced the environmental impacts of its campus operations. WCU has large geo-exchange heating and cooling systems that allow energy efficient, low carbon temperature control in over 40% of campus building space. The campus also features ground and roof solar arrays, and WCU purchases renewable energy credits. All new design and construction on campus is required to meet LEED Silver building standards. WCU piloted pre-consumer food scraps composting programs with its dining services department, composting 37 tons of food scraps in the most recent year. Dining services works with student organizations and the university's Sustainability Council to reduce food waste, compost food scraps, and limit the use of single-use, noncompostable containers and utensils. Custodial services purchases janitorial paper products from certified sustainable paper sources and over half of cleaning products from green certified products vendors. Staff responsible for building and grounds maintenance collaborate with faculty and students to realize the idea of the campus as a "living laboratory and creative canvas" by giving tours of facilities, such as the university's geothermal pumphouse; outdoor areas, which include four organic gardens; and the 125-acre Gordon Natural Area. More than three-quarters of WCU's academic departments offer courses focused on environmental, social, and economic sustainability, with 195 individual courses offered that explicitly focus on or include such concepts. Two academic minor programs, open to students from any discipline and college at the university, dive into sustainability and draw from class options across the campus to address environmental, humanitarian, and economic challenges through classroom activities and applied projects that emphasize broad, interdisciplinary knowledge, leadership, and tools. The Brandywine Project for Sustainability Education conducts workshops and offers stipends to faculty members who are committed to effectively integrating sustainability concepts into course syllabi.



West Chester University student volunteers paint the garden toolshed with a design created by an Art + Design professor.





Rhode Island

East Providence High School

Honoree Profile:

Location: East Providence, Rhode Island

District: East Providence School District

Type and School Level: Public; High

Demographic: 45% free and reduced-price lunch eligible; 38% minority

Enrollment: 1,672 students

Summary of Achievements:

East Providence High School is the culmination of a five-year effort by the East Providence community to transform one of the state's oldest and most impaired facilities into a first-of-its-kind 21st century learning environment. The new school, benchmarked in EPA Portfolio Manager for energy and water use, has a score of 86 and was constructed to Collaborative for High Performance Schools - Northeast standards. The facility features LED fixtures, daylighting, efficient HVAC systems, bioretention areas, pervious surfaces, and six electric vehicle charging stations. Meters were incorporated into the design of the school to provide students and staff with real-time energy and water consumption data, which is displayed through an interactive panel in the main entry corridor. Built-in recycle bins are located in every section of the building, and the school uses environmentally preferable cleaning products. The cafeteria sources local produce, highlighted through special events such as Apple Crunch Day and Harvest Meal Day. The school's three greenhouses use soil, hydroponic, and aquaponic systems. These assets provide science students with the opportunity to cultivate a variety of crops that are then harvested and used by CTE culinary students to create quality meals for purchase by staff and the residents of East Providence. Students take part in bay and state park learning and restoration work field trips. They may also enroll in AP Environmental Science or an environmental science pathway to engage in unique experiences, designed to promote the study of the environment, and to learn about environmental career pathways. The school has two full-time nurses, two social workers, and a psychologist, and a group called "the herd" helps to promote a positive school environment.



East Providence High School features built-in recycling station.



East Providence High School features electric car charging stations and permeable pavers in the parking lot.





Rhode Island

Jamestown School Department

Honoree Profile:

Location: Jamestown, Rhode Island

Type and School Level: Public; Elementary, Middle

Enrollment: 420 students

Summary of Achievements:

Jamestown School Department (JSD) is committed to energy efficient facilities and education that cultivates environmental stewardship. Over the past few years, JSD has completed facility renovations and replacements of buildings' management, mechanical, and energy systems to be more efficient. The renovations included the installation of a solar carport canopy at the Melrose School and solar roof arrays at the Lawn School. Recent changes to ventilation systems provide healthy IAQ. The district hosts bike to school days annually to encourage active transportation and safe routes to school. JSD's Wellness Committee and parent teacher organization offer a variety of programs for students and staff, such as team walking challenges and outdoor learning workshops. JSD has developed great relationships with local community partners to engage and utilize community resources to enhance STEAM and environmental literacy experiences for students. All students participate in composting and "Worm Wednesday" in the school cafeterias. In the classroom, students learn about climate change and pollution through hands-on learning at the Great Creek and Fort Getty Park. Students in K-8 explore on a regular basis the beach and marsh that are within walking distance to the school grounds. Students at every grade level participate in hands-on environmental and sustainability education, ranging from investigating their school's solar projects, composting, planting trees at local farms, and tending the schools' raised garden beds. Science classes cultivate crops in the district's hydroponics lab and school garden beds. The middle school English language arts curriculum includes an investigation into the impact plastic has on the environment.



Jamestown School Department is home to both rooftop solar arrays and a solar carport.





Virginia

Little Tree Huggers Preschool

Honoree Profile:

Location: Leesburg, Virginia

Type and School Level: Independent; Early Learning

Enrollment: 12 students

Summary of Achievements:

Little Tree Huggers (LTH) Preschool is a bilingual, nature-based preschool where students learn the importance of environmental stewardship by participating daily in aspects of farm operations, from caring for rescue animals to planting seeds in the garden. LTH established a wildlife sanctuary around a fully restored, 3-acre, mid-19th century farm complex that has been recognized for its extensive wildlife habitat and riparian conservation areas, all of which have been planted and maintained by students, staff, and parents. Each spring, students work the compost they have prepared into the school's vegetable and flower gardens, plant seeds for the next crop, and tend the garden through harvest. They harvest fruit crops grown on-site and participate in making meals and preserves. LTH's curriculum has students engaging in movement 500 or more minutes, five days a week, and muscle strengthening daily, with such activities as climbing and carrying water. LTH installed geothermal heating and cooling, a 48-panel solar array, generating approximately 16,000 kilowatt hours of energy annually, as well as various other energy efficiency solutions, making LTH carbon neutral. LTH reduces its materials use by building 90% of all play and outdoor instructional areas with repurposed or recycled materials, making 80% of all classroom projects with repurposed or recycled materials, and composting all food waste on-site. LTH has created an ecologically balanced campus that requires virtually no watering. Numerous rain barrels and rainwater troughs are installed around the property, and rainwater is used for the school and farm. LTH leverages its environmental and sustainability curriculum to conduct outreach to the community, showcasing the incorporation of sustainability features to positively impact both the environment and the school's bottom line.



Little Tree Huggers students engage in plentiful outdoor physical activity through farm tasks and play.





Virginia

Freedom High School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Woodbridge, Virginia

District: Prince William County Public Schools

Type and School Level: Public; Early Learning, High

Demographic: 99% free and reduced-price lunch eligible; 95% minority

Enrollment: 2,298 students

Summary of Achievements:

Freedom High School (Freedom) is a Title I school serving approximately 2,350 students; over 75% of families are economically disadvantaged. Since 2012, Freedom has seen a 25.1% cost avoidance in utility costs, representing \$1.6 million over 10 years from energy management programs and initiatives. In December 2022, the school district finalized a solar power purchase agreement to install on-site solar on Freedom facilities. The solar panel system will consist of a 1.360 kilowatt array and will offset approximately 60% of the current electrical consumption of the building. Four water bottle filling stations provide students and staff with the ability to refill reusable water bottles. In school year 2021-22, Freedom hosted a Mental Health and Wellness Expo where the public was invited to learn about living healthy; participate in a Zumba class; and receive free medical/dental screenings, informational pamphlets, wellness tips, and more from dozens of vendors. Freedom special education students run a lunch service called “The Bistro,” whereby they learn about nutrition and devise healthy lunch offerings. Students make the menus, go to the store, and cook the meals. Over 100 students are part of Freedom’s Center for Environmental & Natural Sciences program in which students take advanced and AP coursework across all academic disciplines. Students participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities, including community service, and become involved with business and community partnerships that enhance their understanding of environmental and natural sciences. They meet weekly to take part in hands-on sustainability learning activities, such as school building energy and waste audits, germinating seeds, hatching chicks, managing recycling, collecting litter, composting experimentation, and learning about Freedom’s stormwater retention pond. Students also engage in STEM activities, such as designing water filtration systems, a native garden, and solar cars. Students across the curriculum enjoy time in



Freedom High School students collect water quality data on the storm management pond.

Freedom’s outdoor learning spaces, including gardens and a greenhouse, as well as during field trips to state parks.





Washington

Pioneer Elementary School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Gig Harbor, Washington
District: Peninsula School District
Type and School Level: Public; Elementary
Enrollment: 512 students

Summary of Achievements:

From design to build, sustainability and efficiency have been a focus of the Pioneer Elementary School (PES) facility, operations, and learning model. PES is a “repurposed facility,” built with sustainable materials and floor-to-ceiling windows. It is designed to maximize and track both energy and water use with LED fixtures, occupancy and natural light sensors, efficient HVAC units, low-flow fixtures, timed faucets, and water bottle filling stations. The school purchases electricity provided by hydroelectric dams. PES uses environmentally preferable cleaning products, follows an IPM plan, uses two propane-powered buses, and continues to pursue other alternative energy bus options. Classroom teachers incorporate frequent breaks that include both movement and mindfulness. PES built a 4,000-square-foot covered outdoor play area, allowing students to access fresh air and play, even in the worst rainstorms. The school’s STEAM project-based learning model facilitates lessons that have local relevance and student agency at every grade level. Topics range from the importance of pollinators to the human impact on biodiversity to changing patterns in our climate to maintaining clean watersheds. The school has a dedicated STEAM makerspace and innovation room. PES engages experts, takes learning outdoors, and fosters service projects to support students to pursue their personal interests. In collaboration with partners, such as Harbor Wildwatch and Pierce County Conservation, PES staff plan and deliver content integrated units that promote critical thinking about local and global environmental problems to engage in meaningful solutions. The school recently received a grant to implement composting, build a campus greenhouse, and extend learning time in the garden.



Students catch frogs in the Pioneer Elementary School garden as part of a biodiversity project.





Washington

Chief Leschi Schools

Honoree Profile:

Location: Puyallup, Washington

Type and School Level: Public, Rural; Early Learning, Elementary, Middle, High

Demographic: Rural; 54% free and reduced-price lunch eligible; 97% Native American

Enrollment: 686 students

Summary of Achievements:



Students at Chief Leschi Schools build clay models of the salmon life cycle before seeing the actual hatching and growing process.

Chief Leschi Schools, serving 97% Native American students, uplifts the traditional ways of the Puyallup people in their belief that “all natural things are our brothers and sisters. They have things to teach us if we are aware and listen.” The district restored and improved Lake Leschi, the on-campus wetlands, to create a powerful outdoor learning space that inspires students and helps them see their connection to the land. Much of the restoration work was completed by students themselves, so they can apply the environmental and sustainability concepts they learn in the classroom. Connecting the classroom to the environment and careers encourages students to continue to steward the land. The district conserves water by collecting rainwater to supply the tanks of their on-campus salmon hatchery. Leschi culinary classes maintain a composter and have built an indigenous culinary garden where students grow many of the ingredients they use in class and for guest visitors’ meals on campus. All science instruction includes content about climate science, and the environmental science course, which is the capstone of the CTE natural resources

pathway, includes lessons and activities about political advocacy. Both elementary and secondary schools have a “place of thinking” room, a place for students to self-regulate and process emotions while learning coping skills and other social success strategies. Students benefit from a team of mental health professionals, behavior specialists, and elders, giving students confidential access to staff who bring culturally relevant support to the school community. Leschi also has prepared a significant HVAC upgrade that will improve efficiency by 98%. In the interim of that upgrade, the district concentrates on conservation education measures and purchases some renewable energy. All students are given a reusable water bottle at the beginning of the year to use at the water bottle filling stations.





Wisconsin

Browning Elementary School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

District: Milwaukee Public Schools

Type and School Level: Public; Elementary

Demographic: 93% free and reduced-price lunch eligible; 98% minority

Enrollment: 259 students

Summary of Achievements:

In 2003, Browning Elementary School's (Browning) campus was relocated in order to serve a neighborhood that was previously busing students across Milwaukee Public Schools. Since then, the Browning school community has mobilized to bring underutilized spaces to life, brought in supportive partners with programming and resources, and built capacity for new systems and practices to live out a green dream. Browning has recently upgraded to an energy efficient HVAC system and has partnered with a civil engineering firm to install a stormwater vault underneath the school's playground. Browning focuses on planting native and water-efficient landscaping and uses preparation methods for road salt to protect local water bodies. The school has also upgraded to water bottle refilling stations and regularly composts landscape and garden waste for use in future gardening. Wanting to bring back the sense of the community and identity what was lost during recent redevelopment, Browning leveraged the Safe Routes to School program to increase safety measures and collaboration in the neighborhood. The Walking School Bus



A Browning Elementary School student takes time to feed the fish as she and her peers learn about life cycles and aquaponics.



Students from Browning Elementary work with a master agriculturist from the Housing Authority to support mutual partner Teens Grow Greens in their efforts toward food security.

program integrated the school with the surrounding community, addressing attendance and morale among students and staff, while promoting healthy habits. Exploring ecotherapy and methods toward wellness has also been vital for community buy-in. Revitalizing the greenhouse with updated equipment and technology allowed the school to develop partners to educate both staff and students on how to sustain programming, offer access to healthy food, and provide hands-on STEM experiences. The greenhouse became a shared space accessible to the whole community, in addition to school day programming. Students have learned about aquaponics, composting, solar dehydration, urban agriculture, and food justice.





Wisconsin

Eagleville Elementary Charter School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Eagle, Wisconsin

District: Mukwonago Area School District

Type and School Level: Public, Charter; Elementary

Enrollment: 109 students

Summary of Achievements:



Fifth grade students at Eagleville Elementary Charter School teach families about the creek.

Eagleville Elementary Charter School (Eagleville) focuses on building environmental literacy and stewardship through a community approach, involving students, staff, families, and other stakeholders. All Eagleville students and staff participate in reducing waste through composting, recycling, and eliminating the use of plastic and paper in the cafeteria. In school year 2021-22, Eagleville successfully recycled over 4,000 pounds of materials. Eagleville has worked to reduce outdoor air pollution through a no-idling policy and combining two bus routes to increase efficiency. They have taken energy efficiency measures, such as installing LED lighting and occupancy sensors and upgrading HVAC systems and kitchen equipment. Eagleville landscaping uses ecologically friendly

methods like rainwater harvesting for irrigation, reduced fertilizer application, and water-efficient or native plant landscaping. Eagleville believes in a whole school approach to health and wellness, providing healthy snacks, educating students on locally grown food, and offering whole school walking or running events in the school forest. This approach includes weekly social and emotional learning lessons and a comprehensive pupil services support team. Students make daily use of the school gardens, school forest, and access to Jericho Creek to obtain hands-on experiences with the natural environment. Whole school STEM activities teach students problem-solving, teamwork, and how to solve real-world environmental or sustainability issues. Students use literature both in individual classrooms and in the One Book, One School program to learn about advocacy and environmentalism. Eagleville partners with the local community to share expertise on gardening, water health, and recycling. Students share their knowledge with families through events such as Parent Creek Day, STEM Fair, and Maker Fair.



All classes at Eagleville Elementary Charter School have the opportunity to snowshoe through the school forest and grounds during the winter months.





Wisconsin

Forest Edge Elementary School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Fitchburg, Wisconsin
District: Oregon School District
Type and School Level: Public; Elementary
Enrollment: 426 students

Summary of Achievements:

Forest Edge Elementary School (FES) encompasses a green and healthy school culture in a variety of ways, both independently and as a part of the community. FES is the first verified net-zero energy school in Wisconsin, offsetting all of its energy needs with on-site generation, as well as the largest net-zero verified education project in the nation. The building itself is a study in conservation, with its 1,704 solar panels, 90 geothermal wells, “smart” windows, and green roof ledges. FES implements environmental health practices and procedures, including utilization of green cleaning products, energy recovery ventilation systems to bring in fresh air for use in the HVAC system, and improved IAQ



Over 1,700 solar panels produce energy at Forest Edge Elementary School in Fitchburg, Wisconsin.

to prevent exposure to asthma triggers. A student leadership group has a “Green and Healthy” subcommittee that educates their peers in recycling practices to divert as much waste from landfills as possible. FES has multiple outdoor learning spaces for students and staff to work and engage with the outdoors a minimum of two hours per day. FES has a full-time naturalist on staff who uses the forest edge, pollinator gardens, courtyards, outdoor story walks, and outdoor classroom daily for environmental education. Groups of students spend ample time in the edible garden space building beds, planting vegetables and herbs, composting garden waste, and harvesting produce to take home. Students also maintain the water and feeding cycle of a hydroponic system, giving them an up-close opportunity to learn about the nutrients and sunlight necessary to grow food indoors year-round. FES encourages students to bike or walk to school by providing ample bike racks around the building, safe pathways, and special events to incentivize active transportation. All students have physical education every other day.



Forest Edge Elementary School students proudly display their harvested produce, including green beans, tomatoes, and herbs.





Wisconsin

Tamarack Waldorf School

Honoree Profile:

Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Type and School Level: Private; Early Learning, Elementary

Demographic: 58% free and reduced-price lunch eligible; 66% minority

Enrollment: 230 students

Summary of Achievements:

Tamarack Waldorf School is a private, diverse, urban school serving 230 students from early childhood through eighth grade. The school's pedagogy is rooted in experiential, process-based learning. Students are encouraged to explore the environment that they live in and find ways to help their community, such as hosting a neighborhood litter cleanup. Students spend up to three hours each day outside or engaged in physical activity, exploring Milwaukee's lakefront, river walk, or other natural and urban spaces or working in the school's garden. The students maintain the school garden, which allows them to grow and harvest their own food. Tamarack Waldorf School has improved the efficiency of its 1919 building by upgrading to LED lights, installing water bottle filling stations, adding low-flow toilets and automatic sensors to conserve water, closely monitoring energy and water usage, and creating a routine to turn off lights and close windows when classes are held outside instead of indoors. Additionally, the school strives to improve IAQ by preventing exposure to asthma triggers and using higher quality, low chemical supplies for cleaning as well as natural supplies for students to use. Each classroom has a HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) purifier; the school is inspected monthly for pests; and the facilities committee conducts, at a minimum, an annual walk-through to inspect the school for mold and other maintenance needs. The whole school has an active role



Students at Tamarack Waldorf School participate in sack races at the school's fall festival.



Tamarack Waldorf School upper grades students complete a 5-mile hike from school to Lake Michigan and return via the Milwaukee Riverwalk.

in recycling, reducing waste, reusing items, and composting. Tamarack Waldorf School involves the students' families in sustainability by encouraging families to use reusable lunch containers and water bottles, contribute to a clothing and outdoor gear swap, volunteer to be on the school's Green Team, and participate in a monthly parent/child nature class. Future strategic plans for the school include reinstating the farm-to-school program and building an environmentally sustainable building and green spaces.





Wisconsin

Unified School District of De Pere

Honoree Profile:

Location: De Pere, Wisconsin

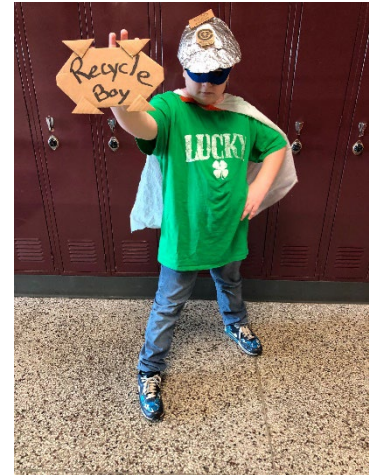
Type and School Level: Public; Early Learning, Elementary, Middle, High

Enrollment: 4,498 students

Summary of Achievements:

The Unified School District of De Pere (USDD) has six schools housing approximately 4,500 pre-K to 12 students. USDD facilities emphasize resource conservation by opting for clean energy when upgrading HVAC systems, including geothermal and passive solar energy sources; prioritizing stormwater management with the application of ice treatments and outdoor athletic complex enhancements; and replacing outdoor light fixtures with LED lighting. Native plantings minimize the need for maintenance and fertilizing, while USDD composts landscape and garden waste. The district installs water bottle filling stations to conserve water and reduce plastic waste and implements share tables and composting to reduce food waste. Schools promote active transportation with bike to school days and bike rodeos. At one school, the walk and roll to school participation is so great that only two buses are required to serve over 500 students.

Therapy dogs provide unconditional support for students needing a calming friend, numerous schools partner with Fuel Up to Play 60 to engage elementary students as leaders in nutrition and fitness, and USDD regularly offers kickboxing and yoga classes for staff. Nutrition services also benefit from farm-to-school programming. Physical education and extracurricular offerings include skiing, curling, rafting, and snowshoeing. Through a unique partnership with five other school districts and Cooperative Educational Service Agency 6, the jointly funded 450-acre Fallen Timbers Environmental Education Center provides students with rich environmental education field and classroom opportunities. District buildings feature outdoor learning spaces, greenhouses, and vegetable gardens. Environmental education is incorporated across all subjects and grade levels, as well as through specific courses such as ecology, health, and agriculture and activities such as LEAD club, National FFA (Future Farmers of America) Organization, and field trips to a local dairy farm.



As part of Earth Week celebrations in De Pere Schools, students create Reduce, Reuse, Recycle costumes made from things they find around their house.



De Pere High School students measure stream width and flow patterns as part of their ecology class.





Wisconsin

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

Honoree Profile:

Location: Platteville, Wisconsin

Type of Honoree: Postsecondary Institution

Type and School Level: Public; Four-year College/University

Demographic: Rural; 23% Pell recipients

Enrollment: 6,773 students

Summary of Achievements:



University of Wisconsin-Platteville students process maple syrup at Mound Nature Area.

The University of Wisconsin-Platteville established their Sustainability Office in fall 2012. The University's Strategic Plan includes a directive to "create a culture of sustainability." Equity is at the heart of the university's sustainability initiatives: 24% of students are lower income and more than 10% are underrepresented minorities. From 2008 to 2020, the university reduced its landfill waste by 34% and total source energy consumption by over 14%. The university discontinued use of coal in its central heating plant in 2020 and constructed a 2.4-megawatt solar array, which is designed to offset electricity use by 15%, reduce annual energy costs by \$211,000 and CO₂ emissions by 2,300 tons, and is the largest array owned by a Wisconsin state agency. The waste minimization program, textbook rental program, energy efficiency investments, natural land management, and free public bus all help lower costs for students, while reducing harmful environmental impacts. UW-Platteville has over 200 acres of natural recreation areas within 5 miles of campus used by a wide array of intramural sport teams and Division III athletic teams. The university has robust diversity, equity, and inclusion programming, offers free counseling services to students, manages its grounds and buildings to create a safe environment, serves nutritious and locally grown foods in its dining halls, and offers several employee wellness programs. Not only are nine degrees offered in environmental and sustainability-related fields (including Sustainable and Renewable Energy Systems and Social and Environmental Justice, among others), but 56% of academic departments offer courses with a sustainability component. Interdisciplinary programs, such as the Dairy Innovation Center and the IDEA Hub, and multitudes of place-based and applied learning opportunities help build cross-campus collaborations that further enrich student sustainability experiences.

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University of Wisconsin-Platteville students collect field samples for their freshwater biology class in the shallows of the Mississippi River.





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