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NYSED Office of Facilities Planning Newsletter

Carl T.Thurnau, P.E. Coordinator Green Ribbon Schools Edition - July2015

Special Green Ribbon Edition

Special Green Ribbon Honoree Articles

- Bethlehem Central Middle School, Delmar, New York
- Hampton Bays Elementary School, Hampton Bays, New York
- P.S. 97—Hubert Humphrey School, Staten Island, New York
- Anne Hutchinson Elementary School, Eastchester, New York



2016 Green Ribbon Schools: Application Now Open

New York State is participating in the fifth year of the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS) program. PreK-12 public and nonpublic schools are invited to apply to the New York State Education Department Office of Facilities Planning for this national recognition.

The purpose of ED-GRS is to inspire schools to strive for 21st century excellence, by highlighting promising practices and resources that all can employ. To that end, the award recognizes schools that:

1. Reduce environmental impact and costs;
2. Improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff; and
3. Provide environmental education, which teaches many disciplines, and is especially good at effectively incorporating STEM, civic skills, and green career pathways.

Encouraging resource efficient schools allows administrators to dedicate more resources to instruction rather than operational costs. Healthy schools and wellness practices ensure that all students learn in an environment conducive to achieving their full potential, free of the health disparities that can aggravate achievement gaps. Sustainability education helps all students engage in hands-on learning, hone critical thinking and collaboration skills, learn many disciplines, and develop a solid foundation in STEM subjects. It motivates postsecondary students in many disciplines, and especially those underserved in STEM subjects, to persist and graduate with sought after degrees and robust civic skills.

We have made some significant changes to the application process that we hope will increase participation by making the process more user friendly and technologically current. We are making additional efforts to reach out and encourage schools to become more green and for more schools to participate in the New York State Green Ribbon Schools program. Participation may ultimately lead to recognition and award by the US Education Department Green Ribbon Schools program.



2016 Green Ribbon Schools: 2016 Application Now Open (cont.)

We would like to encourage all schools that may have submitted applications between 2012 and 2015, and not been named an ED-GRS honoree during one of those cycles, to consider re-applying to NYSED for this recognition award. We are confident that schools have continued to make progress in the ED-GRS Pillars in the last several years.

Some changes to the application process for the 2016 cycle are:

- ◆ Earlier availability for access to the Application Guide and Online Application giving schools more time to complete the application
- ◆ Availability to access the online application from any computer, providing more flexibility to complete portions of the application
- ◆ The application will remain open until the application deadline, even if the applicant submitted the application. This will allow applicants the ability to continue updating their application right up to the deadline for submission.
- ◆ Once the applications are scored, and nominees sent to US-ED, the applications will be re-opened so schools can continue to modify their applications for the next cycle. This will allow flexibility to work on the application throughout the year.

We believe the above changes will encourage applicants to use the application process as a self-assessment tool for improving energy efficiency and waste reduction; providing integrated environmental health practices that improve health and wellness of schools, students and staff; and providing effective environmental and sustainability education.

For more information about the New York State **Green Ribbon Schools** program, visit our web site at: www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/GreenRibbonSchools.html.

For more information about ED-GRS, visit the federal web site at: www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/index.html.

You can follow NYSED on **Facebook** and **Twitter** to find out more about schools making 'green strides'.

2012 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Honoree Bethlehem Middle School Delmar, New York

Bethlehem Central Middle School is committed to equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary for overcoming obstacles in their future. This school emphasizes that the choices humans make every day affect the overall health of the planet, and constantly ask students to be conscious of what they consume, whether energy, food, or water.

Bethlehem Central Middle School also seeks to provide the infrastructure for students to make good, environmentally conscious decisions. During the morning announcements on Tuesdays and Thursdays, students from each homeroom are asked to empty their blue paper recycling buckets into large totes that are located in central points of the building. Teams of students are in charge of weighing these totes and logging the data. At the end of the month, the school TV station announces the amount of paper the school recycled and the environmental benefits of these savings, including number of trees saved, gallons of water conserved, and amount of pollution avoided.

In addition to the school's recycling efforts, Bethlehem Central underwent renovations in 2006 and subsequently measured a 35 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions between 2009 and 2010. A comprehensive control system monitors the energy production of the school's two-kilowatt solar array, which is installed on the school library and helps to power the school facilities. Bethlehem Central minimizes its water use by using grey water for irrigation before potable water, and by conducting annual audits to prevent or eliminate leaks. Bethlehem Central earned the ENERGY STAR award in 2010 with an energy performance score of 78.

Also, an organic school garden, with over 1,500 square feet of raised beds, can be found on campus, supplying fresh produce to the school's cafeteria.



2012 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Honoree Hampton Bays Middle School

Since this school's opening in 2008, minimizing the school's carbon footprint and maintaining energy and cost efficiency have been top priorities along with ensuring that all students receive a first-class education.

The school is the first LEED Silver certified building in the state of New York, and contains many energy-saving features like a dual heating system that consumes oil or natural gas depending on which resource is most cost-efficient at the time, and waterless urinals and sensors in all restroom sinks, which account for nearly 100,000 gallons of water in savings each school year.

In addition to sustainable design, Hampton Bays Middle School's integrated health and nutrition efforts have led to a direct positive correlation to improved health and performance for its students and staff.

Through MyNutriKids.com, parents have access to their child's food choices in the cafeteria, and the school's "Guest Chef" program features healthy entrees prepared by local chefs using fresh, locally grown ingredients. Also, all students participate in a sustainability curriculum and college and career planning units for "green collar" careers in family and consumer sciences and technology. All students sign the school's "Green Pledge," and the EARTH club shares a weekly "green minute," highlighting current sustainability initiatives. Many of the school's clubs participate in the ongoing partnership with Cornell University Cooperative Extension to promote interdisciplinary and intergenerational engagement in the Good Ground Community School Garden, a space that is shared with the elementary school and community members, who rent beds to grow flowers and vegetables.



**2013 U.S. Department of Education
Green Ribbon Honoree
P.S. 97—Hubert Humphrey School
Staten Island, New York**

To elementary students at Hubert H. Humphrey PS 57, learning about the environment and working to save it go hand in hand. The diverse population of the Title I school – of which 100 percent is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch – partners with Million Trees NYC to work in a neighborhood park to care for trees, conduct summer pond clean-ups, and collect water quality data for the EPA.

Along with two other schools, Margaretville Central – which is located in upstate New York – and Eltingville Lutheran – which is local -- PS 57 participates in science-based Catskill Watershed programs that share curriculum about the importance of protecting the state’s communal watershed. Led by teachers including a 2012 EPA Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators honoree, students are immersed in project-based learning that explores energy conservation, climate change, and ecological restoration. After student-run teams collect and weigh recyclables, for example, teachers use the collected data in computer, math, and literacy lessons.

Using the knowledge they gain from national programs, like Eco-Schools USA, Cool the Earth and the Green Schools Alliance Green Cup Challenge, students lead conservation initiatives that enhance building upgrades to reduce the school’s environmental impact, cut its greenhouse gas emissions, and save up to 28 percent on energy usage since 2008. Approximately 30 percent of the school’s solid waste has been diverted from landfills due to high-quality composting and recycling programs.

Grow NYC, Grow to Learn, and Green Thumb work with PS 57 students in their 7,350 square foot outdoor garden to plant and grow produce for the school cafeteria. While the garden provides a valuable resource for teaching students about nutrition, the school also partakes in Farms for City Kids, through which students spend a week at a Vermont farm to learn about sustainable agriculture, and healthy eating and cooking.



2014 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Honoree Anne Hutchinson Elementary Eastchester, New York

Anne Hutchinson School (AHS)'s mantra is "Kindness Follows Caring." Goals of reducing costs and impact on the environment, as well as improving student and staff health while providing effective environmental education, have served as an impetus for a paradigm shift in the way AHS operates as a school community.

Going green is not a trend, but a lifestyle change that has resulted in the creation of the Anne Hutchinson composting, gardening, and recycling program, initiated in January of 2012. As a result, fewer garbage bags are used overall at the school, and an estimated 500 to 1,000 pounds per week of food scraps and non-recyclable items are diverted from the trash. The composting, gardening, and recycling program has improved the health of students and staff members. Side by side, teachers and students break a sweat tending to the 400-square-foot vegetable garden, 500 square feet of mixed gardens, and 2,000 square-foot wild perennial butterfly garden.

Parents are invited to participate in classroom cooking activities, which feature the latest bounty from the organic harvest. Some organic harvest items are provided to the food service program, and local senior citizens have been invited to partake.

AHS engaged in an energy performance contract which resulted in a 64 percent reduction in electricity consumption in one year, and will save 215,000 gallons of water per year.

AHS supports the health and wellness of students through the physical education program, which features the use of fitness journals used to help manage obesity and develop students' understanding of fitness. All students are asked to take an exercise pledge, in which they commit to exercising on a daily basis.

