



2016 HIGHLIGHTS

- Inclusive field trips that complement curriculum for all learners.
- Hands-on adventures in learning.
- Community partnerships formed that will support future environmental endeavors.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The mission of Bridges Public Charter School is to provide an exemplary educational program that includes all students. The school's developmentally appropriate, student- and family-centered educational approach nurtures students to expand their developmental skills, in order to build a foundation for life-long learning. Bridges, the name of the school, symbolizes an inclusive learning community that builds bridges of understanding, awareness, and support by connecting children and families who have a variety of different needs, cultures, and backgrounds. Bridges believes that inclusive education is beneficial to all students. Inclusion builds compassionate relationships among students, develops self-esteem in individuals, and develops the awareness that everyone has strengths and challenges.



"The task of organizing environmental learning experiences for an entire pre-K to third grade elementary school seemed nearly impossible to me at first. So much to do with virtually no time, and a snow storm to further delay efforts! The uniquely special program offered at Bridges added to my challenge. The student population, spread out between three buildings, is all-inclusive, with a wide range of varying abilities, special needs, and accommodations. However, collaborating with coworkers and paying close attention to detail made the effort a success! I was very impressed with the Washington Youth Garden's ability to differentiate the experiences for our students. We were even able to split our groups so that all students were exposed to a developmentally appropriate, hands-on learning experience that reinforced classroom lessons." – Kimberly Reddick, English Language Learner teacher K-3, Bridges PCS





ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

The Bridges environmental literacy program is closely aligned with Next Generation Science Standards life science content. In kindergarten, students study food origins and how animals and plants need food, water, and air to survive. Grade 1 students explore light and sound in nature by designing solutions to human problems by mimicking how plants use external parts for survival. In grades 2-3, students develop models that mimic the function of animals pollinating plants or a habitat where some organisms can survive. These classroom lessons are complemented with experiences at the Washington Youth Garden, where students learn about food and nutrition, plant parts, and honeybees and pollination.

NEXT STEPS

In summer 2016, the curriculum team will work to implement more of the Next Generation Science Standards into the Bridges curriculum. The school will expand to include grade 4 in the 2016-17 school year, and the hope is for the older students to steward the recycling program by creating banners and posters to make the program more visible and fun. Bridges also plans to incorporate classroom jobs and environmental clubs to motivate students. Finally, partnership with REAL School Gardens will assist our new garden coordinator with organizing pre-K through grade 4 class schedules to work in the garden by creating new spaces and bolstering science lessons with environmental learning experiences in the fall.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The most important step is getting the team onboard.
- When overwhelmed, three big words: Utilize Your Team! Big problems become much smaller when we ask for help.

