

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

- Grade 4 students went on an interpretive boat ride down the Anacostia River with Living Classrooms. Many of the students had never been on a boat before and learned all about their local watershed. Students left the river with a first-hand experience of what challenges their watershed faces and an appreciation for the living things it sustains.
- With the help from a new partnership with FoodPrints, Kimball's garden received a much needed revitalization. Students will now be able to plant and harvest vegetables in raised beds, which now include a timed drip irrigation system.
- Kimball is introducing environmental science into its S.T.E.A.M. (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) curriculum. Students will rotate through a term of science classes with an environmental lens, learning about the living things on the planet and the important task of taking care of them all.



ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kimball Elementary School is a strong community of passionate teachers and curious students. Kimball is a 40/40 Focus School on the rise. While there is not always time for sciences at Kimball, teachers have found ways to include science lessons throughout the year. Kimball's students from pre-K through grade 5 consistently demonstrate their curiosity and eagerness to learn about the world around them. Kimball is located on Minnesota Avenue SE and abuts Fort Dupont, a national park. Kimball students love to take advantage of these grassy and wooded spaces in the middle of a busy city. In addition to the outdoors, students have grown increasingly interested in harvesting and cooking with nutritious foods straight from the school garden. Once a month, Kimball families and staff have the opportunity to "shop" together at the school's Joyful Market through Martha's Table. These markets bring the school community together while students show off their cooking skills and serve healthy free samples to classmates, families, and staff.

"Environmental literacy programming reaches Kimball scholars in ways we have not seen before. The students have the opportunity to experience subjects rather than just reading about them. From overnight trips to Hard Bargain Farm to boat trips on the Anacostia, our students experience parts of their local environment they do not encounter every day. The largest change that I have seen in students occurs at recess time outside. After environmental learning experiences, students show a much deeper curiosity in living things. Whether a fifth grader is contemplating the activities happening in a nearby moth's nest, or a 3-year-old is trying to find the best way to help ants bring objects back to their homes, the students are noticeably more curious and interested in the natural world around them."

– Peter Bailey, technology coordinator,
Kimball Elementary



ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

Kimball is at the beginning of its environmental literacy efforts. Through the FoodPrints program, Kimball students will begin learning about plants and the health benefits of eating nutritious snacks and meals. Students of all ages are able to shop at the school's monthly Joyful Markets, facilitated in part by the older students. Occasional trips to visit the nearby police horses capture the minds of preschool students as they learn how people and animals work together. Students in grades K-2 explore the world of insects through stories and lessons in pollination. Grade 3 students will have the opportunity to learn about the habitats of different woodland creatures, and experience these places when they visit Woodend Nature Sanctuary. Grade 4 students discover watersheds and the importance of keeping these vital environments clean and sustainable for both humans and animals. Finally, grade 5 students spend three days at Hard Bargain Farm Environmental Center, experiencing all different components of natural life and what it means to live symbiotically with the environment. Students in grades 3-5 also will learn natural science through an environmental lens during their S.T.E.A.M. specials course.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Speak to the teachers. General education teachers spend the most time with students and are often looking for new and exciting subjects to teach their students, or field trips to bring a lesson to life. Many teachers do not even realize how much they are already teaching that involves environmental science. The teachers will have the most knowledge on how to implement the program.
- Start small. It is overwhelming to attempt a full environmental education reform at once. It can also be disappointing depending on the physical barriers that are out of your control (e.g., old building, lack of available teaching time, limited funding). Instead, do what you can with what you have and keep an eye out for grants and free opportunities.
- Find staff members who have a passion for the environment. There are plenty of staff members in every building who would love to have a more positive impact on the planet. These staff members may not be traditional teachers, but can be a huge help. For example, the head custodian expressed a strong interest in taking students on a field trip to a recycling plant to show them why they should separate their waste. Unless you ask around, you will miss these opportunities and the important input from others.

