



MALCOLM X ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT



District of Columbia
Office of the State
Superintendent of Education

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

- Students truly enjoyed visiting the Washington Youth Garden and learning about garden basics, pollinators, and compost.
- Grade 4 students learned a lot through the American shad restoration project and are excited to lead the next group.
- In close collaboration with the Department of General Services, we have researched cafeteria waste patterns and established plans to start a successful recycling program next year.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Malcolm X Elementary is located in the District's Ward 8 and serves 250 students from grades pre-K 3 through grade 5. Malcolm X is a designated priority school where the staff and community partners are working hard to bridge the gap for their students. The environmental literacy efforts in conjunction with the school garden coordinator have encouraged students to explore and learn from their local environment. The students now have a greenhouse garden area, recycling program, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programs in place to utilize for the upcoming school year.



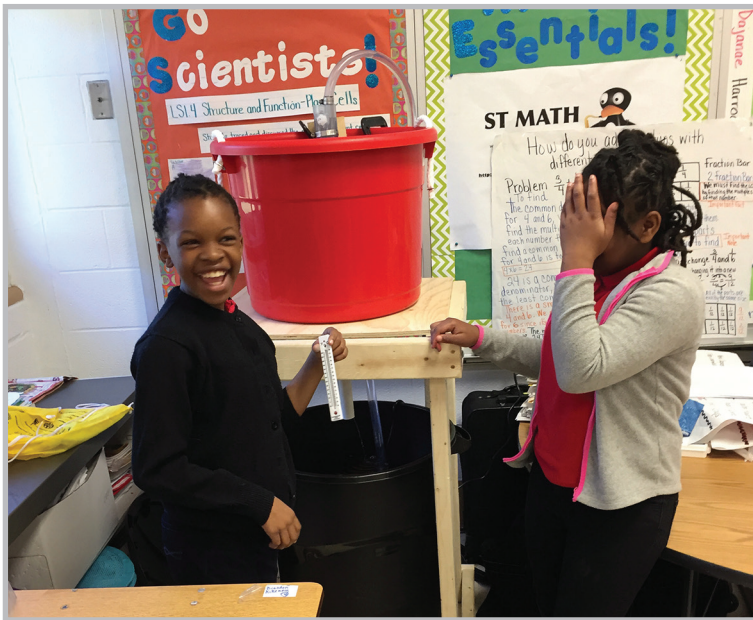
"The environmental literacy program extended the reach and the scope of farm-to-cafeteria learning to reach every student at the school. Instead of the school garden only belonging to a few classes who chose to participate, each class was given the opportunity to learn about their local environment in unique ways."

— Katie Harvey, school garden coordinator,
Malcolm X Elementary



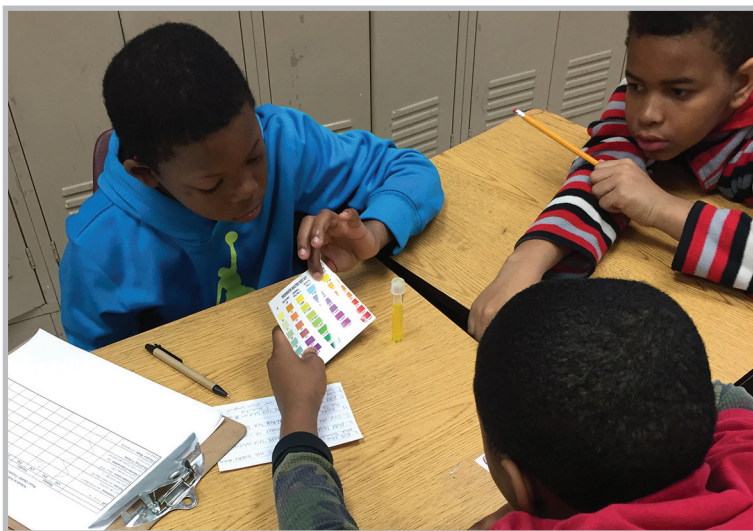
ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

This year at Malcolm X the main goal of the Environmental Literacy Program was to expose students to their local environments and spark their interest in conservation. Students at Malcolm X learn about the basics of environmental systems, but the Environmental Literacy Program provided resources for the students to gain first-hand experiences. Students in grades K-3 visited the Washington Youth Garden and returned to school energized to work on their own school gardens. In addition, grade 4 students who participated in the American shad restoration project were eager to learn about the life cycles of the shad and how their own everyday actions affect the Anacostia River. Grade 5 students will set up the recycling program next year. Overall, the students were thrilled to leave the classroom and learn in an open environment that encouraged exploration and experimentation.



NEXT STEPS

Next year, Malcolm X is looking forward to focusing on its school garden and school recycling program. With the school's greenhouse completed and an irrigation system in the works, the garden should be fully producing in the fall. Now that teachers are familiar with resources available to them and types of lessons they can teach outside, students will be allowed more experiential hands-on STEM lessons. Next year, one of the teachers will be STEM-certified and is excited to use the garden as an outdoor learning area. The students who participated in the American shad restoration project are looking forward to leading the next class by providing them with advice and guidance. As grade 5 students, they also will lead the recycling program and litter clean up to help keep trash out of the Anacostia.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Start with a clear plan, but be flexible after students' interests evolve.
- Aim to have projects connect everyone (office staff, teachers, afterschool programs, parents) in order to have a successful change in school culture toward environmental issues.
- Take advantage of all the resources provided by outside organizations.