



## TYLER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT



District of Columbia  
Office of the State  
Superintendent of Education

#### 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

- Tyler Elementary launched a paper and cardboard recycling program with an Earth Day Recycling Box-decorating Contest. Each class participated by decorating a box to use as their paper-recycling container. Winners received parfaits made with local produce.
- Taking inventory of current environmental topics taught and field trips taken created space for teachers to discuss teaching practices and determine what environmental topics must be added to create a vertically aligned environmental literacy curriculum.
- For the first time, Tyler Elementary offered FoodPrints programming for all classes, which integrated gardening, cooking, and nutrition education into the curriculum and greatly increased student ownership of the school garden.

#### ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Tyler Elementary School, part of District of Columbia Public Schools, is located in Ward 6 near Eastern Market and is home to more than 500 Tyler Tigers from grades pre-K 3 to grade 5. Tyler's student population is composed of 76 percent black, 12 percent white, and 10 percent Latino or Hispanic. Tyler is a Title 1 school with 99 percent of students eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch. The school offers three programs: Spanish Dual Language, Creative Arts, and Special Education. Special subjects include music, physical education, health, world language, and media.



"While we did some amazing things at Tyler this year, what meant the most to me was when I heard our students teaching others 'to wait to pick that veggie until it was ready' or 'to put that paper in the recycling receptacle, not the garbage.' They learned and understood that the choices they make have an impact on them and our planet. I have no doubt, with the continuation of this environmental literacy program, students' knowledge will increase and they will become the advocates to create the greatest impact."

— Victoria Willis, grade 1 teacher, Tyler Elementary





## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

Tyler is in the beginning phases of developing an environmental literacy program. One major project for the school includes recycling paper and cardboard in all classrooms and school areas. If students are taught beginning in pre-K 3 about the importance of reducing, reusing, and recycling paper, they will become strong examples of stewards of the environment by grade 5. As teachers work to increase, collaborate, and vertically align what environmental topics are being taught within each grade level, students will gain necessary knowledge about all areas of environmental literacy by the time they leave elementary school. One of the school's goals is to provide teachers with the resources, materials, organizations, programs, and field trips to effectively teach in a way that is meaningful to students. FoodPrints is one program that has been successful in helping Tyler students understand the importance of taking care of the environment.

### NEXT STEPS

Next year at Tyler, there will be one common environmental school goal: recycling paper and cardboard. Before school starts, the Department of General Services will offer professional development for teaching students how to recycle and why recycling is important for the environment. There will be new recycling bins in every classroom. Large recycling bins also will be located at the end of the hall on each floor for easy access. Bilingual signage will be created and posted on the recycling receptacles, so all students and adults will know what goes in each receptacle. Individual grade levels will continue to think about, plan and develop environmental lessons that fit with their units and areas of studies. This also will provide purpose and meaning behind grade-level field trips and eliminate overlaps or gaps between grade levels. FoodPrints will continue at Tyler next year, with an effort to have all classes participate. A greater focus will be made to involve teachers in the planning and enlist at least two parent volunteers in each class.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- Personal desire and commitment is essential. It will be time consuming, but it's important.
- Create a team to help. Teachers, administrators, and parents can be great supports.
- Build on the strengths of your teachers and address the weaknesses step by step.
- Be patient. The little changes will eventually make a huge difference.

