

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT

### 2017-19 HIGHLIGHTS

- Provided experiential environmental science experiences for students at all grade levels (pre-K to grade 8). Partners included the Anacostia Watershed Society, Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant, NatureBridge, and Audubon Naturalist Society, to increase student knowledge of real-world environmental issues and provide opportunities to cooperatively seek possible solutions to environmental problems.
- Planted a pollinator garden, which remains healthy. The initial drivers of the project created a video diary to provide necessary information for the on-going support of the program.
- Built a greenhouse on site to house seedlings for the spring planting season.

### ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The mission of the Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy Public Charter School is to implement a high-performing day school that provides a challenging academic program in a supportive, parentally involved, and diverse learning environment to enable each student to achieve academic success, talent, and positive social development. As an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy takes an approach to learning that is global in scope. The school encourages students at all levels to utilize their creativity, research and end-to-end critical thinking skills to solve real-world problems. By working collaboratively within their local communities and the global community at large, students are more likely to develop actionable solutions to environmental problems that impact us all.



“ I can attest from a firsthand basis the effect that the environmental literacy program has had on our school. Students are more knowledgeable about where their food comes from, the importance of keeping the Chesapeake Bay clean, and the deliciousness of homegrown herbs and vegetables! I look forward to the partnership growing and thriving throughout the year for our students and faculty.”

– Sanjay Singh, assistant principal, Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

The environmental literacy program at Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy is designed to provide high-quality educational experiences that are closely aligned with Next Generation Science Standards. Environmental literacy directly aligns with the school's IB Transdisciplinary Theme, "How the World Works." As an important aspect of the school community, environmental literacy provides additional opportunities for students to gain firsthand knowledge about critical environmental concerns. All students, from pre-K through grade 8, work in tandem with community partners to gain a deeper understanding of environmental concepts and the role that they can play in positively impacting the world around us. Each year, students work on a variety of grade-specific projects. Themes explored include: plant and animal life cycles, sun's energy, wildlife habitats, the recycling, regional watersheds, honeybees and pollination, plant life, wildlife habitats, food/nutrition, and community gardening.

### NEXT STEPS

Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy will continue to implement the Next Generation Science Standards in the curriculum. Students in grades 4 through 8 will be more strategic in leveraging the learnings of previous students by referencing the outcomes of research projects, school audits, and reviewing finding contained in student-generated video diaries. The school will also continue to collaborate with its community partners to reinforce classroom lessons with field experiences.

Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy will also create additional mechanisms for students to acquire more responsibility for numerous environmental science projects. Suggested projects include: an energy/community audit on a year-over-year basis, to track trends over time; maintain a lunchroom recycling process to minimize food waste; maintain the seedling planting in the greenhouse; create and maintain a worm garden for our garden's soil; and food-to-table harvesting.

### LESSON LEARNED

- Continue to infuse technology in classroom instruction.
- Continue to reference previous initiatives/projects, reminding all students of the key aspects of environmental science.

