



John Burroughs Elementary School



District of Columbia
Office of the State
Superintendent of Education

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT

2017-19 HIGHLIGHTS

- Burroughs Elementary School began offering FoodPrints programming for pre-K 3 through grade 2 classes, which integrated gardening, cooking, and nutrition education into the curriculum. This increased student ownership of the school garden, environmental awareness, and healthy habits for students and the school community.
- The school launched composting and recycling efforts, which include organics hauling and onsite compost bins. Through the Department of General Services (DGS), Burroughs Elementary has earned the *DCPS Recycles!* Honor Roll recognition, won the DGS Recycle Right Competition for the Highest Performance Award in 2017 and 2018, and serves as an Ambassador School for the program.
- Burroughs Elementary developed a science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) Framework, which includes school-wide guidance on planning teaching and learning experiences for all students and provides environmental literacy, engineering and design, hand-on experiments in the STEM lab and outdoor classroom, and field trips.
- For three consecutive years (2017-19), the school received the Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) “Established” STEM School recognition.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Burroughs Elementary is the home of the Raging Rams where students come with curiosities and leave with confidence. Nestled in the heart of Ward 5 in the Brookland neighborhood, Burroughs Elementary is a Title 1 school that serves approximately 270 students with a wide range of talent and abilities in pre-K 3 through grade 5. STEM is the foundation at Burroughs Elementary, and it is the only “Established” STEM elementary school in DCPS recognized by OSSE. Learning is facilitated through a school-wide focus on data-driven instruction and hands-on exploratory projects, which enables students to experience rigorous content through collaboration with stakeholders and local partnerships. Staff believe that with an abundant amount of care and support, Burroughs Elementary scholars can achieve at the highest levels.



“ Participating in the environmental literacy program has made a huge impact on staff, students and parents.

Our students have explored environmental issues, planted, harvested and cooked nutritious foods, investigated the quality of our soil, planted trees and have become student activists by writing to the mayor and DC Council about securing long-term, sustained city funding for FoodPrints. Many of our early childhood parents came to learn more about FoodPrints and are now volunteering each month. The environmental literacy program has been an integral part in helping Burroughs Elementary fuel students’ creativity and foster their curiosities.”

– Kristina Kellogg, assistant principal, Burroughs Elementary School



ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

As a STEM-focused school, Burroughs Elementary has implemented environmental literacy through enhanced instruction and programming from various partnerships. Burroughs Elementary has focused on strategic planning to align environmental teaching and learning experiences with Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core State Standards, 21st Century skills and partnership engagement for each grade level. Students in grades pre-K 3 through grade 2 participate in FoodPrints. Through this program, students learn gardening, cooking, and nutrition education in the STEM lab, outdoor classroom, and garden. Second graders explore natural processes through hands-on classroom activities, such as making recycled paper and visiting a recycling station with the Audubon Naturalist Society. Third graders engage in meaningful integrated lessons in the STEM lab through EcoRise. Fourth graders explore the local watershed on a boat ride on the Anacostia River with Living Classrooms. Fifth graders conduct pH, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium tests on the soil in the school garden to determine soil quality for produce with the Alice Ferguson Foundation. They also investigated potential sources of air pollution, the species and health of trees on the school grounds with Casey Trees and Clean Air Partners. Fifth graders planted trees, too. Each year, students share their findings from projects and experiences with partnerships at the Burroughs Elementary School STEM Expo.

NEXT STEPS

Teachers will continue to plan STEM-integrated experiences for students to include real-world connections and field trips. Burroughs Elementary's administration will ensure continuous STEM professional development for new and returning teachers and educational aides, who will then serve as additional resources and share STEM best practices with the school community. To extend and enhance the current STEM Framework by seeking out new partnerships and grant opportunities to support funding for current and future STEM programming. Students and staff will also complete a STEM survey, the results of which will guide student engagement, resources, teaching, and learning initiatives. Burroughs Elementary will begin the application process for the 2019-20 school year to earn "Platinum" STEM status recognition from OSSE.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Educate all stakeholders about the impact of environmental literacy in elementary grades at the beginning of the school year to support the overall vision and mission.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to advocate for environmental issues of their interest to incorporate in the curriculum.
- Create a team of teachers, administrators, parents, community members and students that are all bought into the vision to support planning, grant writing and events.

