

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT

### 2017-19 HIGHLIGHTS

- Aligned authentic, engaging activities with DC Prep’s existing curriculum so minimal changes to the curriculum resulted in great outcomes for students in kindergarten to third grade science instruction.
- Created a temporary school garden that was investigated, built, and maintained by DC Prep-Anacostia Elementary kindergarten to second grade scientists, with the support of their teachers and families.
- Focused planning to make field trips more meaningful helped students have a better understanding of their surrounding environment and their impact on it.

### DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL

DC Prep’s Anacostia Elementary Campus (AEC) opened in 2015 with preschool and pre-K and has added a grade each year to include third grade by the 2019-20 school year. Currently, DC Prep AEC has a total 314 students in preschool through second grade. DC Prep AEC’s population is composed of 93 percent Black, non-Hispanic students, 4 percent Hispanic/Latino students, and 4 percent Multiracial students. Located in Historic Anacostia, the new campus is located less than a mile from the Anacostia River. All students in kindergarten through second grade have a dedicated science block for 30-45 minutes a day. This curriculum was re-written in 2016 to be fully aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards.



“The environmental lessons and shifts have brought the science curriculum alive for our students. We used to do a lot of observations from books or pictures. Actually exploring and investigating in our community has made a world of a difference for our scientists.”

– Derrick Skipper, kindergarten/grade 1 science teacher, DC Prep-Anacostia Elementary



## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

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The overarching goal for DC Prep AEC's environmental literacy program is to make current programming more authentic through the construction of a school garden. When the school moved to its new campus in August 2017, there was no garden present, but some small spaces to build a garden. During the 2018-19 school year, students from grades K-2 investigated the different spaces around the campus where a garden could thrive. Toward the end of winter/early spring, all students planting seeds to be sprouted in the building. These seeds/sprouts will be planted across the proposed garden spaces on Earth Day 2019, and students will continue to make weekly observations of which space is best for a permanent structure. By the end of the 2018-19 school year, students will select where to build a school garden. With staff and family support, the garden will be built over summer 2019 so kindergarten through grade 3 students can create and maintain a permanent garden at the school.



## NEXT STEPS

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Now that students, teachers, and families are invested in environmental literacy, DC Prep AEC plans to make its school garden a permanent structure in the school building. In fall 2019, DC Prep AEC will build its permanent structures based on the student investigation from the prior spring. All students in kindergarten through grade 3 will be responsible for maintaining the garden in some capacity in alignment to their current science units. Through creating and maintaining a school garden, the school hopes the benefits will be two-fold. First, DC Prep AEC hopes to bring more authentic science lessons to its daily science programming in kindergarten through grade 3. Then, DC Prep AEC hopes to build deeper understanding in environmental literacy that continues to push students to be advocates for our Earth outside of the school walls.



## LESSONS LEARNED

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- Know where you are and get specific on how you can launch from there.
- Be patient. The little changes will eventually make a huge difference.
- Bring it alive. There are authentic experiences everywhere you look. These are the best ways to invest your students, teachers and families.