

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT

### 2017-19 HIGHLIGHTS

- Hosted Salad Science for preschool and pre-K students.
- Successfully launched the EcoRise program for students in grades 2 and 3.
- Began the framework for a school garden program for all students.
- Visited the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens to learn about watershed science.

### DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL

DC Prep-Edgewood Elementary is located in the Edgewood community. The school's mission is "to bridge the educational divide in Washington, DC by increasing the number of students from underserved communities with the academic preparation and personal character to succeed in competitive high schools and colleges." DC Prep-Edgewood Elementary enrolls students in preschool to grade 3 and engages them in rigorous academics alongside character education programs. All students receive 45 minutes of science instruction daily that is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards. Students also receive daily music, art, physical education, reading, and math instruction. This well-rounded selection sets the foundations for students to be successful in the next chapters of their lives.



“The environmental literacy program has been amazing! The kids really love it and they are learning a lot. They're learning about sustainability, how things grow and it's all hands-on. It's been a great addition to DC Prep.”

— Jillian Deibel, elementary science teacher, DC Prep-Edgewood Elementary Campus



## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

The environmental literacy program at DC Prep-Edgewood Elementary School was started in 2016. This program progresses through each grade level and is integrated into the students' science courses. In preschool, students participate in Audubon Naturalist Society's Salad Science program, where they learn about where their food comes from and how to grow it. In kindergarten, students begin to learn about how to grow a school garden and how things grow. Students learn how worms compost soil and plant seeds, and students also learn about the parts of plants and why we need to take care of our Earth. Second grade students deeply understand the changes in our Earth, and why it is important to be stewards for our planet. Second graders also take a trip to the school garden to plant seeds. In third grade, "Preppies" understand the life cycles of the plants they planted in the year prior. They also deeply engage in the EcoRise curriculum to continue their learning about stewardship.

## NEXT STEPS

To build on the work completed last year, DC Prep-Edgewood Elementary would like to deepen its work with the school's garden. The school wants to have more students outside more often and contribute to the building of the school garden. DC Prep-Edgewood Elementary wants to create more hands-on experiences for students and families through this school garden. In order to do this, the school will be organizing volunteer hours after school to help create materials and remove existing trash and weeds from the garden, as well as hosting material drives. This is done with the hope of building the school community and increasing investment in environmental literacy. After the garden is prepped, all students will participate in the planting process.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Getting support is crucial for success. You cannot do this alone; you must have support of your colleagues and administration. It is so much easier when other people are on board.
- Start small. Beginning an entirely new program from scratch can be challenging. When you start small with more manageable pieces, things can be easier to implement. As you go on year by year, you can slowly add more to the programming.
- Be clear with what you want to do. Create a plan and stick with it. Without clarity, it can be hard to know what your next step should be. Make sure that you detail all of the steps needed to bring your vision to life.

