



## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT

### 2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

- All classes engaged in an environmental literacy activity aligned with their curriculum.
- Held the first outdoor “Brightwood Bunches” in which classes were paired to plant flowers to decorate the school garden.
- Created a network-wide task force to support environmental literacy in the upcoming school years.

### ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Center City Public Charter School (PCS) develops the whole child by offering a wide array of arts and enrichment classes both during and after school. The Brightwood campus has built a safe, inclusive atmosphere by adopting the philosophy of restorative practices as its approach to culture and discipline. This culture allows us to hold students to the highest of academic expectations, creating a space where excellence is the norm and making mistakes is part of the educational journey. Inclusion specialists work hand-in-hand with general education teachers to differentiate instruction and provide individualized supports to students. The school also offers the ESL After the Bell program, which provides targeted academic support to English learners after school. The rich enrichment offerings engage students in learning and foster their social, emotional, and physical development. Center City PCS offers band, vocal music, a dance company, an annual school musical, and a variety of sports teams. These opportunities support the belief that students learn best when the school is focused on educating the whole child.



“I am so impressed by how my students have embraced this idea of sustainability. It has been such an adventure to see them get involved, and get passionate about our Earth. I hope that we can continue to be changemakers in schools, and then even more so in our community!”

– Samantha Novak, Middle School Science Teacher,  
Center City PCS - Brightwood

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

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All students, pre-K 3 through grade 8, have the opportunity to engage in at least one environmental field trip per year, whether exploring the watershed or a visit to a local farm. Through these experiences, students learn the importance of taking care of the planet and the impacts that humans have on the environment. Pre-K starts by introducing the environment, including plants and animals. As students get older, they begin to understand the small things individuals within a community can do to take care of the planet, such as reducing plastic consumption by switching to reusable water bottles and bringing bags to the grocery store. In middle school, students learn about bigger human impacts on the environment, including deforestation, burning fossil fuels, and other contributions to climate change caused by big companies and the larger human population. At the end of the year, middle school students hold an Environmental Literacy fair in which they shared what they learned with younger grade levels and families. Students teach lessons about sustainability and lead activities with families to make and take home, such as produce bags from recycled t-shirts, green cleaning products, and reusable beeswax food wraps.



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### NEXT STEPS

Center City PCS plans to build out its Environmental Literacy Program in the next few years. The first step is to leverage a group of teachers across the six campuses to determine ways environmental literacy can be further embedded into the curriculum. The six campuses also have plans to improve outdoor learning spaces, which will include adding spaces for gardening and other outdoor learning opportunities. Center City PCS hopes to have a more consistent recycling and composting program throughout all campuses to decrease the amount of trash produced. All schools will work to create an environmental team with students, staff, and families responsible for these efforts.

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### LESSONS LEARNED

- Start small. It is way easier to get buy-in from staff when you have a successful first project.
- By leveraging strengths from everyone – from the physical education teacher to a kindergarten class with big ideas – we have the best chance to make an impact.
- Don't be afraid to try. The only thing worse than doing something wrong, is doing nothing at all!

