

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT

2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

- Through several International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB PYP) units of inquiry, all students learned about the environment and the connections to the natural world.
- Garden Arts program incorporated visual arts and environmental education.
- Partnerships with community organizations enhanced the curriculum and provide resources.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Washington Yu Ying Public Charter School combines the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum framework with a Mandarin immersion program. The school was founded on the belief that bilingualism develops a greater ability to understand and communicate with other cultures, in addition to positioning students to succeed in an increasingly globalized world. As an IB World School, Yu Ying aims to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. Yu Ying received the US Department of Education's Green Ribbon School recognition, which acknowledges the school's commitment to providing an educational environment that incorporates health, wellness, and sustainability practices into day-to-day school operations, such as recycling, composting, and reusable cleaning supplies for every classroom. The school continues to encourage students to make healthy and informed decisions for themselves and the world around them.



“At Yu Ying, we aim to foster reflective thinkers who understand the importance of our environment and our role in caring for it as global citizens. Whether it is exploring nature through hands-on learning in Garden Arts or reflecting on the impact our choices and habits have on the planet, students have ample opportunities to engage with and understand the world around them in a meaningful way.”

– Kristen Peck, Third Grade English Lead Teacher,
Washington Yu Ying PCS

“Environmental literacy allows early-age kids to engage in hands-on, outdoor learning experiences that involve discovery, inquiry, and problem-solving. Kids take actions that help them learn to respect, restore, protect, and sustain the health and well-being of human communities and environmental systems. For example, our living and nonliving things unit is a wonderful unit for preschool-aged children to explore nature, and it also allows them to learn to ask questions about the world around them, because it's real, hands-on, and children love nature.”

– Na Xian, Pre-K 3 Chinese Lead Teacher,
Washington Yu Ying PCS

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

At Yu Ying, learning about the environment is woven into IB PYP units of inquiry from pre-K 3 through grade 5. Students engage in units under the themes “Sharing the Planet” and “How the World Works,” in addition to “How We Express Ourselves.” Yu Ying’s Garden Arts program encourages students to see the many connections between visual arts and artists and the natural world. Students also learn about the school’s environmental impact in the English and Chinese classrooms. In pre-K, students learn about growing healthy food right in the school’s gardens, and the insects that inhabit the world. Kindergarteners study worm bins and vermiculture, planting and growing. First and second graders learn about adaptation of living things and the ecosystem. In third grade, students assess all the ways the school tries to be environmentally responsible and suggest new ways to improve the school’s systems. Fourth graders focus on renewable energy sources, and fifth graders cap off their experiences with a two-night field trip to a local national park to learn about the local watershed and how to protect it.

NEXT STEPS

Environmental literacy is built into the curriculum framework of the school. Yu Ying is committed to providing hands-on, real-world experiences for students to help them build their understanding of their place in the world and the responsibilities toward the environment. Yu Ying plans to review and revise the outdoor spaces to provide a greater variety of resources for environmental engagement for students and is working on establishing sponsorship with a corporate sponsor to support growth and development of the outdoor learning environment.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Ensure that your school’s mission reflects a commitment to environmental education.
- Identify teachers, administrators, parents, and other community members who are interested in being part of environmental efforts.
- Establish authentic ways for students to be at the heart of environmental projects.

