

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT

2017-19 HIGHLIGHTS

- Awarded \$38,000 in grants for projects to enhance and expand the school's garden, and to provide professional development for teachers.
- Established partnership with World Wildlife Fund and DC Health Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) department to conduct food waste audits of lunchroom and pilot nutrition education/food waste reduction lessons for third graders.
- Almost 800 students benefitted from two years' worth of environmental education through environmental literacy partnerships.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Eagle Academy PCS-Congress Heights is a science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)-focused, early childhood school in Ward 8 that provides an innovative academic program to young children, from pre-K 3 through grade 3. The school educates each child through a holistic approach that includes health and social services. The program for all age levels focuses on readiness skills using developmentally appropriate activities with an emphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics through the arts. Most Eagle Academy PCS-Congress Heights students come from a community with the highest rate of poverty in Washington, DC. As such, Eagle Academy's leadership works closely with students and their families to identify their academic, health and daily living needs.



“Visiting the Washington Youth Garden was a fantastic experience for my kindergarten students. This experience provided my children with valuable knowledge of how fruits and vegetables are grown. They enjoyed tasting fresh-grown vegetables. Since I am looping with my students to first grade, I look forward to visiting the garden this spring so they can grow their knowledge even more.”

— Sequilla Robb, grade 1 teacher, Eagle Academy PCS-Congress Heights



ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

For the past two years, Eagle Academy focused on three main goals:

- Students and staff will learn and implement environmentally conscious ways of living and learning.
- Students and staff will gain an appreciation for the natural environment near and far.
- Students and staff will gain an understanding of from where their food comes.

All grade levels participate in environmental learning experiences with environmental literacy partners, as well as additional trips to farms, zoos, and nature centers. Eagle Academy resurrected its school garden program with curriculum resources and garden materials purchased with a Budding Botanist grant from KidsGardening.Org and Klorane Foundation, and received an OSSE School Garden Grant that will support further development of the school's garden and outdoor classroom area. Through partnerships with the World Wildlife Fund and DC Health, as well as Casey Trees, Eagle Academy third grade students are working to beautify the Congress Heights campus through tree plantings and implementing school-wide waste reduction initiatives.



NEXT STEPS

Eagle Academy has worked to build teacher capacity around environmental and outdoor education. At the kindergarten through grade 3 levels teachers now have resources when planning instruction that provide them with opportunities to integrate environmental education with Common Core State Standards, as well Next Generation Science Standards across their teaching schedule. Additionally, teachers have been provided with a database of low-cost and/or free environmental education field trips when planning field experiences.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Timing is important. The program needs to be launched early in the school year when enthusiasm amongst staff and students is at its highest.
- Staff buy-in is key. Identify staff members who are enthusiastic to be part of a "Green Team" that can help spread the message of environmental consciousness to staff from top to bottom (central office, administration, and custodial staff).
- Getting kids on board helps get their teachers and staff on board. When teachers see that their students are excited about initiatives, it motivates teachers to participate.