



Hearst Elementary School



District of Columbia
Office of the State
Superintendent of Education

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT

2017-19 HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 90 percent of students participated in an in-classroom experience or field trip with a partnering organization that provides exposure to environmental literacy topics.
- In the 2017-18 school year, Hearst Elementary recycled more than 2,000 markers through Crayola's ColorCycle initiative. The school's goal for the 2018-19 school year is to match or beat this number.
- With the development of Hearst Elementary's Energy Captain team, students now play an active role in promoting energy conservation in the school building.
- Pre-K and grade 2 are welcoming back the partnering organization Audubon Naturalist Society for the second year in a row for their Salad Science and Garbology programs.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hearst Elementary is committed to providing all students with a rigorous curriculum integrated with exposure to the arts. The school is also committed to ensuring that Hearst Elementary is responsive to the needs of its diverse learners. The school's goals are to improve student learning, partner with families to support students, and provide the staff with a community that supports their professional learning.

Hearst Elementary truly believes in honoring the whole child and its staff and students work hard to ensure that they are growing minds every day. In 2016, Hearst Elementary defined its core values: Resilient, Inclusive, Service-Oriented, and Empowered. The school continues to redefine its art; music; science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); Spanish; library; and health/physical education programs to ensure students are participating in rich experiences.



“Last year, the second grade participated in the Audubon Naturalist Society's Garbology Program. Students learned how different types of waste affect our local watershed, the Potomac River. Then, students participated in the Worms at Work lessons in which they observed how worms compost newspaper and lettuce. The worms lived in the classroom for two weeks as students made sure they received enough food and water to survive. Through both activities, students were able to engage with hands on activities and saw how their actions could affect the community and living things.”

— Megan Burleigh, grade 2 teacher, Hearst Elementary





ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

The goal of Hearst Elementary's environmental literacy program is to provide students with in-classroom and out-of-classroom experiences that provide exposure to a variety of environmental topics. The school partners with several organizations to support its work, including the Washington Youth Garden, Casey Trees, the Anacostia Watershed Society, and Audubon Naturalist Society.

Hearst Elementary is in the early stages of developing school-wide initiatives in which students can take a more active role in promoting environmentally-friendly practices in the school building. For example, the first grade leads the ColorCycle initiative, a program to recycle markers with Crayola. Students learn about recycling and the damaging effects of filling landfills with plastic, provide a decorated collection box for each classroom, and collect used markers every month. Families also regularly send markers in from home to support this school initiative. Hearst Elementary also has the new Energy Captain team that works with students from each grade level.

NEXT STEPS

Hearst Elementary plans to begin implementing Finger Food Fridays in the cafeteria to reduce plastic utensil waste. The school also will continue developing of the Energy Captain program, in which students are responsible for making sure their classroom is incorporating energy-friendly practices.



LESSONS LEARNED

- The environmental literacy leads should support teachers with the scheduling or in-classroom and out of classroom experiences.
- Analyze your building's current environmental practices and see where improvements can be made and how students can get involved in these changes!
- Take notes on the resources near your school, there are many low cost or free experiences that are close by (example: University of the District of Columbia's rooftop garden).

