



District of Columbia  
Office of the State  
Superintendent of Education

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT

### 2017-19 HIGHLIGHTS

- Developed and maintained a school-wide composting and recycling program in the cafeteria and classrooms.
- Recognized by the Department of General Services with the DCPS Recycles! 2018 Honor Roll with Distinction Award.
- Participated in the FoodPrints program, preparing healthy foods and exploring in the school garden.
- Established a dedicated “Green Team” composed of teachers, students, and parents to help with recycling and other environmental projects.
- Provided meaningful environmental education experiences to students across all grade levels.

### ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Marie Reed Elementary School is a welcoming community of learners that serves 455 students in pre-K 3 through grade 5. Located in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, DC, the Marie Reed Elementary community values diversity, equity, social-emotional learning and strong family engagement. The school regularly celebrates the cultures and languages from the many different countries represented in the student body. Marie Reed Elementary is an arts-focused school that understands the value of having a strong learning community. Faculty and staff are committed to having high expectations for all students and focus on providing quality, age-appropriate instruction to make learning fun and engaging.



“Our involvement to create an environmental literacy program has coincided with the renewal and modernization of our 40-year-old school building, which has provided numerous hands-on learning opportunities. Thanks to experiences afforded through the program, our students are practicing recycling and composting throughout the school, exploring the impact of trees and landscaping with Casey Trees, and are generally more aware of the impact they have on their environment.”

– Katie Lundgren, principal, Marie Reed Elementary School



## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

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Fully modernized in 2017, Marie Reed Elementary now has a green, state-of-the-art building with sustainable features that can be used as teaching tools. The school prides itself on its bountiful school garden with an operational rain barrel, various outdoor classroom spaces, and a fully functional teaching kitchen. The FoodPrints program has a meaningful impact in the school. All students learn about nutrition and gardening. Marie Reed Elementary's robust school-wide recycling and cafeteria composting program has been an ongoing success. Students and staff are dedicated to reducing landfill waste. An enthusiastic team of custodians, teachers, and students ensures that recyclables are being sorted and managed properly. Students in pre-K through first grade use their senses to learn about plant life cycles. In second grade, students observe a class worm bin over a two-week period to understand how food is broken down in the soil. Fourth grade students experience a boat trip on the Anacostia River and investigate the American shad restoration program. Grade 5 students work with Clean Air Partners and Casey Trees to test air quality in the community.



## NEXT STEPS

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Marie Reed Elementary's goal is to educate all stakeholders about the importance of leading a sustainable life. The school strives to maintain a culture of wellness and responsibility. Staff will refine and adjust the school's recycling/composting program, use its outdoor spaces as teaching tools, and build on student interest for learning about the environment. Marie Reed Elementary will create a vision for expanding our garden and utilizing all available outdoor space. The school will continue to collect data and submit an application to become a Green Ribbon School, a recognition from the US Department of Education, which is given to schools that have sustainable environmental practices.

## LESSONS LEARNED

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- Create a team of teachers, staff, students, and families who are interested in environmental issues to help the school become more sustainable and connected to the environment.
- Collaborate with local organizations in the community or parent groups to help support this important work.
- Recruit and train student-helpers to be stewards and caretakers of recycling at your school.
- Generate enthusiasm for environmental education in the school community by communicating important issues effectively.