



## Miner Elementary School



District of Columbia  
Office of the State  
Superintendent of Education

### ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT

#### 2019-20 HIGHLIGHTS

- Planned field trips for kindergarten and first-grade classes to the Washington Youth Garden (postponed due to COVID-19) to ensure environmental experiential learning experiences for every student.
- Implemented the recycling and papermaking program from the Audubon Naturalist Society for second-grade students.
- Developed a plan for school-wide education to support reducing waste through cafeteria composting and school-wide recycling initiatives.
- Continued family and staff support for outdoor spaces and experiences, including advocacy for green space during the playground redesign planning process, purchase of composting containers for hands-on learning, and maintenance of both gardens before and throughout school closure.

#### ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Myrtilla Miner Elementary School is nestled at the intersection of the Rosedale and Capitol Hill neighborhoods in Ward 6. It serves a historically black community, with increasing numbers of non-black students (primarily white). In the last few years, Miner has become a community school with a growing list of community and nonprofit partners providing services and resources for families and students. The Miner community is in the process of learning about and implementing restorative justice practices throughout the school. Miner has strong parent involvement school-wide, including a PTO, Equity Team, and Pre-K Parent Committee (which specifically supports our pre-K program of nine classes).



The programming offered will help students at all grade levels understand how they can have a positive impact on the environment, at school and at home!”

- Ashley Luttmer, pre-K teacher, Miner Elementary School

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

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Miner Elementary has a strong foundation for its environmental literacy program. The campus includes the large Peace Garden adjacent to the K-5 playgrounds and soccer field, a sensory garden in the pre-K playground, a new outdoor classroom and elements in each garden to support outdoor learning. The school hosted a Food Corps member in the 2019-20 school year who led garden and food-based lessons with K-5 students and supported the Garden Club in its second year of afterschool programming. Staff members have attended OSSE's Institute for Garden Based Teaching, and staff and parents participated in the RiverSmart Schools programming from 2017 to 2019 (which provided the Early Childhood Education sensory garden). In the last few years, Miner has implemented a cafeteria composting program with limited grade levels. In 2019-20, the school scheduled the following environmental literacy programming:

- Pre-K: Compost/worms with the Audubon Naturalist Society
- Grades K-1: Soil and Compost field trip at the Washington Youth Garden
- Grade 2: Recycling and papermaking with Audubon Naturalist Society (implemented winter/spring 2020)
- Grades 3-4: Boat trip with Anacostia Watershed Society
- Grade 5: Cleaner Air, Tree by Tree with Casey Trees and Clean Air Partners



## NEXT STEPS

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Due to the early closure of school buildings, most students' hands on environmental literacy experiences were cancelled. The Green Team (composed of interested staff members) had begun discussing how to begin recycling appropriate classroom waste in response to the overwhelming desire expressed throughout the school for such a program. The Green Team had also begun to investigate the challenges to implementing cafeteria composting schoolwide, but had not yet done a thorough analysis. Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency, it is likely that the experiential education, recycling, and composting efforts will be impacted for the 2020-2021 school year. The school looks forward to implementing the programs, whether in person or through distance learning, and finding ways to safely reduce the amount of trash we create at school.

## LESSONS LEARNED

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- Be flexible and creative in implementing new programs and procedures, especially in light of the pandemic.
- Embrace families as partners in environmental education, as some have been spending more time outdoors since schools closed.
- Capitalize on energy among staff for environmental programs, which can be organized into collective action!

