

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT

2017-19 HIGHLIGHTS

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

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.

In 2013, 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. The school continues to encourage students to make healthy and informed decisions for themselves and the world around them.



“Environmental literacy is embedded into the mission and values of Yu Ying. However, our programming has been greatly enhanced over the past few years by our involvement in so many projects and opportunities for our students to engage in with our community partners. These projects have given us a great foundation for continuing to develop as a school.”

— Sarah Harris, grade 5 teacher and founder, Washington Yu Ying PCS



ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROGRAM

At Yu Ying, learning about our environment is woven into IB Primary Years Program (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 our world. Kindergarteners study worm bins and vermiculture, planting and growing, and observe hens in the fall and chicks in the spring on the Yu Ying campus. First and second graders learn about adaptation of living things and the ecosystem of the school’s pond. In third grade, students assess all of 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 our responsibilities toward the environment. Yu Ying plans to review and revise the school’s science curriculum using the Next Generation Science Standards to ensure that objectives build logically across the grade levels. Yu Ying will also keep developing its outdoor spaces to provide a variety of learning experiences for students. The fifth graders will finish establishing a new native forest garden in the school’s Founders Forest, and plant additional trees with Casey Trees. Yu Ying will also improve its composting program by including all classrooms in addition to the lunchroom.

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 at the heart of environmental projects.

