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Queen Anne's County Public Schools Honored Among
2023 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

August 8, 2023

Queen Anne's County Public Schools (QACPS) a 2023 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School, was honored in a ceremony Tuesday, August 8th, in Washington, D.C. QACPS was recognized for their innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs, promote better health, and ensure effective sustainability and environmental education. Representatives received sustainably crafted plaques and banners in recognition for their achievements. Queen Anne's County Public Schools was nominated by the Maryland Department of Education.

Queen Anne's County Public Schools is actively committed to minimizing environmental impact and costs within its extensive facilities. QACPS houses two LEED-certified schools, Sudlersville Middle School being LEED Gold certified and Stevensville Middle School LEED Silver certified. Their comprehensive environmental approach extends to geothermal systems in six out of fourteen schools, and they've earned accolades like the 2009 Energy Star Leader 20% Reduction Award, recognizing their high-performing buildings.

Diversified conservation and recycling efforts are actively expanding across various QACPS departments. Transitioning to more sustainable transportation, they're replacing old vehicles with electric and hybrid electric alternatives. Water conservation measures involve constructing swales, managing runoff, water testing, and implementing low-flow technology. QACPS prioritizes student and staff health through district-wide environmental health programs, encompassing building operations and an overarching environmental management system. Moreover, they've aligned their policies with models like the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) framework, focusing on holistic student development and compliance with nutritional standards.

QACPS emphasizes academic proficiency while incorporating outdoor and environmental education. They've developed a PreK-12 environmental literacy plan, partnering with local entities to instill environmental awareness in students. Their efforts culminated in gaining the 2022 Harris Wofford Common Good Award, recognizing outstanding work in youth community service. The achievement of Maryland Green School Certification for all fourteen schools exemplifies their dedication. These endeavors are enriched through sustained professional development, ensuring teachers are well-equipped for outdoor and environmental education. Furthermore, QACPS is establishing outdoor classrooms across elementary schools, with accessible pavilions and technology to enhance learning. This holistic approach showcases their commitment to cost-efficient sustainability, wellness, and innovative education methods.

Superintendent Patricia Saelens
"As a district, we could not be prouder of the hard work and dedication staff has demonstrated in the efforts to build a true foundation for a sustainable future. Queen Anne's County has and will continue to lead the way for a brighter tomorrow."

Supervisor of Instruction, Michael Page
"It was an honor to represent QACPS at the national level. The ceremony was an amazing event that highlighted Queen Anne's County Public Schools efforts to build a more sustainable future."

On hand for the event at the U.S. Department of Education were White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Brenda Mallory and U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education Cindy Marten. Henry McKoy, director of the Office of State and Community Energy Programs for the U.S. Department of Energy and Janet McCabe, deputy administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also congratulated the honorees for their efforts. The Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council offered a reception on Capitol Hill following the event. In addition, numerous agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Energy, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration offered events throughout the week to connect honoree representatives with more resources and honor their achievements in whole school sustainability.

At the event, 26 schools, 11 districts, and four postsecondary institutions were honored for their innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs, promote better health, and ensure effective environmental education. Attendees participated in sessions facilitated by national leaders in school sustainability, and had the opportunity to share their own school/district/IHE's practices.

The honorees were named from a pool of candidates nominated by 18 states. The list of all selected schools, districts, colleges, and universities, as well as their nomination packages, can be found here. A report with highlights on the honorees can be found here. More information on the federal recognition award can be found here. Resources for all schools to move toward the three Pillars can be found here.

The attached image is of Loredana Valtierra policy advisor in the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development for the U.S. Department of Education, Michael V. Page of QACPS Department of Curriculum and Instruction, and Cynthia "Cindy" Marten the Deputy Secretary for the U.S. Department of Education.