

# BUCKS COUNTY Courier Times

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## Council Rock only PA district to win national award

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Council Rock has been named a 2014 Green Ribbon School District by the U.S. Department of Education.

Council Rock is one of 57 private and public schools or school districts in the country to receive this year's award, and is the only honoree from Pennsylvania.

The announcement of the environmental award was made Tuesday afternoon by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Mike Boots, acting chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

## GreenRibbonSchools



The schools and districts were honored for "their exemplary efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, promote better health and ensure effective environmental education, including civics and green career pathways," the two federal officials said in the announcement of the awards.

Council Rock Superintendent Mark Klein said staff, students, parents and community members have enthusiastically embraced the district's environmental programs and efforts.

"It's truly become a part of our culture and is a priority in education and operations," he said. "It's a part of our everyday

## Ladybugs send-off, A3

existence in our buildings, and our students and staff have found many ways to make it fun and to incorporate our larger community."

Among the initiatives that earned the award for Council Rock were:

■ New building projects and renovations that incorporate best practices for storm water runoff management and environmentally efficient building and

See AWARD, Page A2

## Award

*Continued from Page A1*

engineering;

■ The conversion of turning about eight acres of school district land to natural growth areas and wildflower gardens to reduce environmental impact and mowing costs;

■ Wellness programs, including integrated pest management, air quality, moisture control and chemical management, that promote healthy lifestyles for staff and students;

■ Various policies that have saved millions of dollars in energy costs over the last several years;

■ A science, technology, education and math (STEM)

curriculum in all grades that focuses on environmental and sustainability education; and

■ Student access to a wide variety of environmental clubs and career programs.

"The biggest change for Council Rock over the last few years has been that environmental awareness has branched out from being part of the science curriculum to a way of thinking for nearly all of our classes and activities," said Council Rock science curriculum coordinator Renee Devlin, who submitted the district's application for the award.

"Nearly a decade ago, we forged partnerships with local community members and businesses to promote environmental responsibility and sustainability and

created our first green team," she continued. "Today, each of our schools has a green team, and they have engaged our students to look at their schools, communities and homes through new eyes. We are educating a generation that cares about and understands how to help protect our future."

Boots said this year's honorees are models for other schools to follow.

"The schools and districts being honored today are taking smart, innovative steps to reduce environmental impacts and teach students the kinds of sustainable practices that they can carry with them into their homes and future careers," he said.

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