



Secretary of Education Names COUNCIL ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT a 2014 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School District Sustainability Awardee

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Acting Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality Mike Boots joined U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to announce that COUNCIL ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT in Newtown, PA is among the 2014 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools District Sustainability Awardees.

COUNCIL ROCK was nominated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as its Green Ribbon Award recipient after submitting their application in the fall. 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 existence in our buildings, and our students and staff have found many ways to make it fun and to incorporate our larger community."

The Green Ribbon School Award honors schools for their work in three main areas: 1 – Reduced environmental impact and energy efficiency, 2 – Positive impact on the health and performance of students and staff, 3 – Effective environmental and sustainability education.

Here are just some of the efforts for which Council Rock was honored:

- Council Rock has an Energy Star rating of 84% and has saved millions through energy management over the last several years.
- New building projects and renovations incorporate best-practices for storm runoff management and environmentally efficient building and engineering.
- Approximately eight acres of District land have been converted to natural growth areas and wildflower gardens. This reduces environmental impact and costs of mowing while promoting additional natural habitat in suburban areas. Each acre of meadow reduces the consumption of fuel and emissions, thus reducing the district's carbon footprint; additionally the district realizes a cost savings of approximately \$6,400 annually.
- Wellness programs, including integrated pest management, air quality, moisture control, and chemical management, promote healthy lifestyles for staff and students.
- Science, technology, education and math (STEM) curriculum focuses on environmental and sustainability education in grades K – 12.





- Elementary students plan their own organic gardens, donating the food to local homeless shelters, while high school students are involved with the NASA space program and the Art Department uses recycled materials to create pieces of art.
- The district hosts a summer program called Camp Invention that focuses on environmental efforts and the annual district Science Night includes students, professionals and senior citizens to focus on science and the environment.
- Students have access to a wide variety of environmental clubs and career programs that focus on the environment.

“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 Science Curriculum Coordinator Renee Devlin, who submitted the district’s application for the award. “Our motto has been to think globally and act locally. 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. Today, there’s not only a district team but each of our 15 schools has a Green Team, as well. Those Green Teams really drive our schools efforts to focus on environmentally healthy efforts and choices.” “Going green” has done more than save dollars,” said Devlin. “It has engaged 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.”

Forty-eight schools 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. In addition, **nine** school districts were honored for the District Sustainability Award. Duncan and Boots made the announcement at the U.S. Department of Education, in Washington, DC. Secretary Duncan also announced a new post-secondary nomination category will be added to the school and district awards for the coming year.

More information on the federal recognition award can be found [here](#). Resources for all schools to move toward the three Pillars in which the 2014 honorees are exemplary can be found [here](#). For more detailed information on Council Rock’s environmental efforts, please visit www.crsd.org and click on Green Schools Award.

