

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# GreenRibbonSchools



## Highlights from the 2015 Honorees



U.S. Department of Education - 400 Maryland Ave, SW - Washington, DC 20202  
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## 2015 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

### Ohio

#### **Berea City School District, Ohio**

*Outdoor education program allows students to teach each other*

Berea City School District (BCSD) has taken proactive steps to reduce environmental impact and operating costs; improve students' and staff members' health; and provide effective environmental and sustainability education through several focused initiatives related to operations, wellness, health, and environmental education.

The district has actively implemented strategies to reduce environmental impact, GHG emissions, waste production, and transportation energy use. Working with Cenergistic, the school district was recognized with the District Energy Stewardship Award for environmental stewardship including decreased carbon emissions and natural resource conservation. Grindstone Elementary School within the district has qualified for LEED Gold certification. The district has joined in the Clean Fuel Initiative, one of several steps that the transportation department has taken to use cleaner-burning, low-emissions high performance clean diesel. BCSD also had partnered with EcoChem Alternative Fuels to thoroughly clean its fuel storage tanks prior to the delivery of its supply of diesel. Other steps the transportation department has taken include more efficient bus routing and use of GPS monitoring system to increase efficiencies.

The district has instituted changes to reduce waste handling. In the past, the buildings and grounds department rented a 40-yard dumpster, used for all types of district garbage that was collected throughout the year. On average, the district would have sent up to six dumpsters of trash directly to landfill. Now, the district separates out general recyclables from refuse, and all yard waste is shredded and composted for use in the community garden.

The district was recognized in the USDA HealthierUS Schools Challenge at the Bronze level. The district is a long-standing partner of the world-famous Cleveland Clinic for several of its health initiatives, such as Eat Right at School District and Be Food Safe School District. Recently, BCSD launched a comprehensive wellness program that is incentivized through an online tool called Vitality, an interactive and personalized wellness program that makes it easy for staff to participate in health screenings, identify goals, and track wellness and fitness progress. In the 2012-2013 school year, BCSD made a commitment to increase the amount of physical education courses required in each grade. The ninth-grade fitness course, a





requirement for all students, is an introduction to the foundations of physical education with emphasis on cardiovascular and core fitness training, water safety, and lifestyle fitness activities. BCSD continues to refine the curriculum to incorporate and integrate the tenets of a well-developed health and physical education program.

BCSD has made a commitment to the students and community to provide authentic experiences to promote environmental and sustainability education for students and the greater learning community. Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated throughout the curriculum in grades kindergarten through 12, and BCSD has developed educational programs and opportunities that promote conservation and environmental practices across grade levels. This includes specialized programs such as environmental clubs and environmental science courses. Camp Mi-Bro-Bri is a weeklong outdoor education program for all sixth graders. Coe Lake Outdoor Science Education is a Certified Wildlife Habitat and program through which high school students teach elementary students about the environment.

The environmental education curriculum is inquiry-based and pays particular attention to scientific practices including questioning, developing and using models, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, using mathematics and computational thinking, constructing explanations and engaging in argument, and applications based on evidence. Elementary students have meaningful outdoor experiences specific to their curriculum, usually investigative or experiential projects that engage students in critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making. Over 83 percent of BCSD students scored proficient or better on the state science education assessments in 2013.

Advanced course options provide curricula that demonstrate the connection between classroom content and college and career readiness, particularly to postsecondary options that focus specifically on environmental and sustainability fields, studies, and careers for the following courses: Biology, AP Biology, Physics, AP Anatomy and Physiology, Environmental Science, AP Environmental Science, Project Lead the Way Biomedical, and Pre-engineering. Project Lead The Way, in particular, is a rigorous and innovative STEM education curricular program offered through a Polaris and BCSD partnership.



