



For Immediate Release:

April 22, 2013

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CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS AWARDED NATIONAL GREEN RIBBON SCHOOL DISTINCTION

US Department of Education Honors Schools for Environmental and Sustainability Efforts

HARTFORD, CT— Three Connecticut schools have been named Green Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education for their efforts to incorporate environmental and sustainability education into classroom instruction, increase energy efficiencies while lowering associated costs, and promote the health and wellness for students and staff.

The three Connecticut schools designated as Green Ribbon Schools are:

- Barnard Environmental Studies Magnet School, New Haven;
- Environmental Sciences Magnet School at Mary Hooker in Hartford;
- Common Ground High School, New Haven.

The three Connecticut schools were among 64 schools from 29 states and the District of Columbia to receive this honor. This is the second year of the Green Ribbon School award program and the first year Connecticut nominated schools for consideration.

“We applaud today’s honorees on their well-deserved distinction and are grateful to the Connecticut Green LEAF School team for its stewardship of the nomination process,” said Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor. “By elevating students’ environmental consciousness and understanding, today’s honorees are imbuing students with the spirit of sustainability and, at the same time, helping to prepare them for the jobs of the future. The comprehensive approaches demonstrated by the award recipients provide a model for how greening school facilities can reduce costs, mitigate environmental impacts, and improve health and wellness for students and staff.”

“As these three schools are demonstrating, a focus on sustainability can improve the quality of education, benefit the health of our students, and reduce operating costs by taking advantage of energy efficiency,” said Daniel C. Esty, Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. “It’s clear from the results at these three pioneering schools that addressing environmental issues can be much more than an academic exercise.”

“The Malloy Administration is committed to exploring and implementing the best environmental practices in the design and construction of public facilities in this state,” said Commissioner Donald DeFronzo, Acting Commissioner of the Department of Construction Services. “Over the last few years we have implemented the LEED principles in a number of state projects and are happy to recognize those principles in these local school projects as well. We commend the schools in the Green LEAF program for their recognition as some of the best environmentally-designed and built schools in our state.”

"The students and staff of Connecticut's Green Ribbon Schools are poised to reap the many benefits of going green, which include decreased obesity, lower risk for asthma and other illnesses, and increased attendance," said Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Jewel Mullen. "By focusing on healthy eating, physical activity and indoor air quality, these Green Ribbon schools are setting the standard for schools across Connecticut and the nation for creating healthy and productive learning environments. We congratulate them for achieving this important distinction."

In February, the Connecticut State Department of Education nominated the three schools for this federal distinction based on recommendations and guidance from the Connecticut Green LEAF School program, a collaborative effort led by the Connecticut Departments of Construction Services, Education, Energy and Environmental Protection, and Public Health, along with more than 25 other state educational and environmental organizations.

The Connecticut Green LEAF School program supports Connecticut schools in providing effective environmental and sustainability education, improving the health, and wellness of their students and staff and reducing their environmental impact and costs. LEAF stands for “Leading, Educating, Achieving and Fostering green, healthy schools for all.” The program celebrates and recognizes those Connecticut schools making progress toward sustainability. For more information, please visit www.ctgreenschools.org/ctgreenleaf.htm.

Schools that demonstrate significant progress in the Connecticut Green Leaf Program will be eligible for nomination for the federal Green Ribbon Schools award in 2014. Updated criteria for the federal designation will be released over the summer.

About Barnard Environmental Studies Magnet School, New Haven

Barnard serves students from pre-K to grade 8, addressing 4 key environmental themes, including: fresh water, energy, migration, and Long Island Sound. The school has a strong network of collaborative partners, including universities, environmental groups and other agencies. Programs at Barnard include lessons with the West River Park and Nature Center, an urban garden and community service. Barnard's program is located in New Haven in a LEED Gold building. For more information, please visit <http://www.newhavenmagnetschools.com/index.php/barnard>

About Common Ground High School, New Haven

Common Ground High School, founded in 1997 as the nation's first environmentally themed public charter school, provides an integrated curriculum to its students. Programs include an urban garden that produces 7,000 pounds of fresh food on a 20-acre site. Both the garden and the animal husbandry programs serve as educational opportunities, with many schools visiting the farm. Student-led

initiatives are encouraged, and include rainwater recapture, school lighting improvements, recycling, and composting. For more information, please visit <http://commongroundct.org>

About Environmental Sciences Magnet School at Mary Hooker, Hartford

Environmental Sciences Magnet School at Mary Hooker (ESM) is located in Hartford, in a new LEED Platinum building. School programs include a planetarium, butterfly vivarium, greenhouse, aquatics lab, and organic garden. Students from 43 towns in pre-K through grade 8 learn about environmental science throughout the grades, including in-service learning projects. For more information, please visit <http://www.environmentalsciencesmagnet.org/>

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