



Ipswich Middle/High School Honored Among 2019 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

September 25, 2019

Director of the Campaign for Environmental Literacy James L. Elder and Manager of the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council, Phoebe Beierle joined Assistant U.S. Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education Frank Brogan and Acting Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Neil A. Jacobs today to congratulate Ipswich Middle/High School on their achievements at a ceremony at the U.S. Department of Commerce in Washington, D.C.

Ipswich Middle/High School was nominated by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The school was recognized for its ongoing commitment to the environment and sustainability through programs initiated by engaged students and the school department. Programs included:

- The installation of four “hydration stations” around the Middle/High School paid for through the fundraising efforts of the High School Environmental Club and the Middle School Green Team;
- A student-led audit of waste generated at the Middle/High School which led to negotiations with the waste removal provider to increase the number of compost bins and add an additional pick-up day;
- An annual district-wide “Bike to School” event to encourage alternative methods of transportation to school;
- Strengthening environmental curiosity and awareness through an annual two day canoe trip down the Ipswich River to study the natural habitat of the river, perform water-quality tests, and to learn ways in which to conserve the natural landscape of Ipswich;
- Student participation at the Coastal Science Conference for 22 years running;
- An innovative STEAM project at the Middle School where students created a mini-golf style putting green that uses math concepts like angle and equations, while also addressing environmental concerns like the use of pesticides and fertilizers and maintaining habitats;
- The construction of a school garden which produces vegetables and fruits harvested by the students and food service workers for direct consumption in school cafeterias; and
- Offering sustainability courses and units throughout the district that allow students to work both individually and in groups to tackle local sustainability issues such as analyzing wind turbine data, feasibility studies for solar panels, the reduction of straw use townwide, the creation of art using recycled materials, internships with the Town Recycling Coordinator, the construction of a hydroponic station and advocacy to amend the local plastic bag and Styrofoam Town Bylaw.

According to Ipswich Superintendent, Dr. Brian J. Blake, “the best part of this award is the recognition that it was completely student driven under the guidance of teacher Lori Lafrance. I’m very proud of our students and staff working to improve our school and community environments.”



At the event, 35 schools and 14 districts were honored for their innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs, promote better health, and ensure effective environmental education. In addition, four colleges and universities were honored with the Postsecondary Sustainability Award. A state education official was also recognized for his efforts to advance school sustainability in the state of Minnesota. Representatives from selectees received sustainably crafted plaques in recognition of their achievements.

The honorees were named from a pool of candidates nominated by 28 states. The selectees include 25 public schools, including three magnet schools and two charter schools, as well as 10 nonpublic schools. Over a third of the 2019 honorees serve a disadvantaged student body.

View the [list](#) of all selected schools and districts and [summaries](#) of each of the 53 honorees. More information on the federal recognition award can be found [here](#). Resources for all schools to meet the criteria for the award can be found [here](#).