



GREEN AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS

KGHS Update

Winter 2012

KEEC & Paris Independent Launch Feeding Bodies & Minds Garden Project



Members of the Paris Independent School Garden Task Force pose in the garden that will produce food for school cafeterias and serve as an outdoor classroom.

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The Kentucky Environmental Education Council (KEEC), parent agency of the KGHS program, and the Paris Independent School District have partnered to implement a district-wide school garden project.

The “Feeding Bodies & Minds” project, funded through a grant awarded to KEEC by the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, will enable students and staff to expand an existing garden space located at the Paris Independent Middle and High School campus and create a master plan for the garden that will integrate maintenance and use of the garden into school district policy. Teachers will also participate in professional development so that they can feel comfortable using the garden as an outdoor classroom.

KEEC staff will document the project in order to create a model

process for how school gardens can be implemented and sustainably maintained at other schools participating in the KGHS program.

“School gardens and other special projects are often administered by a single teacher. Unfortunately, if that teacher leaves the school or fails to get the support of facilities staff, the project often falls into disrepair,” stated KEEC Executive Director Elizabeth Schmitz.

“We intend to create a School Garden Master Plan template for voluntary use by schools and districts around the state that will foster their ability to create school garden programs with longevity and integration throughout the curriculum and the community. We think that gaining school and district-wide involvement from all stakeholders and documenting a model process for how gardens

can become sustainable over the long term are essential pieces of the puzzle.”

To ensure the school garden project receives support from all stakeholders, Paris Superintendent Gary Wiseman has named six students (two from each school), five teachers, a facilities management employee, an after-school program manager, and the food services manager to the School Garden Task Force (see photo). Wiseman also plans to appoint representatives from the Paris Independent School Board and the community.

Teachers and students will use the KGHS program as a framework for their participation in the project. The natural fit for this garden project is the Health and Safety category in KGHS.

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Continued: Feeding Bodies and Minds Garden Project

The students serving on the task force will coordinate the work of their peers in collecting data in the school cafeteria through observation and surveys to identify fruits and vegetables that could be grown on site and added to the current school lunch menu. The students will then present their data to the district food services staff and other members of the task force. The task

force and food services staff will create a timeline to detail the fruits and vegetables to be planted, maintained, harvested and used in the school cafeteria and larger community.

“Not only will we use this garden to provide fresh produce to students and families in the school community; we will also train teachers to use this

garden space as an outdoor learning area. Research shows that students learn well from hands-on lessons that incorporate the environment, and students benefit anytime a lesson incorporates physical activity, such as gardening...this project is a win-win for everyone involved,” stated Wiseman.

ARRA Energy Conservation Grant Program Ends in Success

In October 2009, the KEEC received \$214,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant funding. The funding was used to support the expansion and implementation of the KGHS program and the creation of the Kentucky Environmental Literacy Plan (approved for Kentucky Department of Education implementation by the Kentucky Board of Education in December 2011).

To expand support to schools participating in the KGHS program, KEEC staff developed a new online school profile system and offered grant funding of up to \$800 to students and teachers implementing energy conservation projects at their schools. Funding in the amount of \$33,085 was disbursed for 58 projects to schools across the state for a wide variety of projects.

“I am very pleased with the quality of projects I have seen students taking the lead on at their schools. These grants have made it possible for students to implement projects that otherwise would not have been completed, and have really encouraged energy conservation efforts and student involvement at all levels of the school community,” said KGHS Coordinator Merin Roseman.

Popular grant projects included the installation of vending misers and timed power strips, compact fluorescent bulb exchanges, the installation of bike racks and rain barrels, and the implementation of recycling programs.

“I am very thankful to the Department of



Students and teachers at Portland Elementary ride their bikes to school to conserve energy. The school received bike racks to encourage fuel conservation.

Energy Development and Independence for supporting our agency with the funding to give to these schools. The funding has allowed the KGHS program to grow in exciting ways. We will continue to look for funds that will allow us to provide such mini-grants to KGHS schools in the future,” stated KEEC Director Elizabeth Schmitz.

Through the projects, students have learned how to save energy in traditional ways, such as by addressing phantom loads with timed power strips, and also how energy can be conserved in less conventional ways. For example, students at Montessori Middle School of Kentucky (Fayette) installed rain barrels to water their school gardens. By not using potable water (which requires energy to treat and pump), they are saving energy and money at their school. The students are also taking what they have learned and applying it to their homes and families. [Click here](#) to see a

video of students explaining the project.

Students at Portland Elementary (Jefferson) decided to save energy by providing bike racks that would encourage students and staff to ride bikes to school. To encourage students to continue riding their bikes, the school is holding a “Ride Your Bike to School Day” once a week (weather permitting). Currently, an average of 10 students ride their bikes per day and an average of 25 have participated on each “Ride Your Bike to School Day”. The project has helped improve air quality at the school, reduced vehicle idling, and conserved fuel.

“Most importantly, [the students] found that even elementary school students can make a difference and their voices will be heard and taken seriously. They have been empowered,” said Portland Elementary teacher Brenda Stokes.

Kentucky Signs on to Green Ribbon Schools Program

In November 2011, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) announced it will participate in the U.S. Department of Education's (USDOE) Green Ribbon Schools Program (GRS).

The GRS program is the first comprehensive federal program that will recognize schools demonstrating exemplary achievement in the three pillars of the program. The GRS pillars are: the school has a "net zero" environmental impact, the school

environment has a "net positive" impact on the health and performance of students and staff, and 100 percent of the school's graduates are environmentally and sustainability literate.

To be designated a Green Ribbon School, a school has to meet these criteria, or the school must demonstrate progress toward them.

All Kentucky public schools are eligible to

submit an application. It is important that districts and schools coordinate their efforts as KDE will accept a maximum of one application per school district for consideration. KDE will then send a maximum of three nominations to USDOE. Applications from schools must be submitted to KDE by Feb. 17, 2012.

Schools and districts interested in applying should visit the [Kentucky Green Ribbon Schools Program webpage](#).

Announcements & Events

2012 KGHS-KYNEED Youth Summit & Awards Luncheon

The 2012 KGHS Summit has been set for May 2, at the Frankfort Convention Center. Registration for the event will be handled differently this year. KGHS and KY NEED will partner to create a single registration package for schools participating in either or both programs. Registration forms will be emailed to teachers in March.

The deadline for KGHS submissions to count toward 2012 awards is **March 23**.

KGHS Online School Profiles

Teachers are encouraged to check their school status as soon as possible. Online profiles display

school submissions and award levels in the KGHS program. To receive your school profile username and password, send a request to the [KGHS coordinator](#). Knowing your school's status is especially important as the KGHS Summit approaches. The KGHS coordinator will work with schools to ensure that they receive credit for submissions and the correct award between now and March 23.

Energy Saving Grant Reports Deadline Extended to Feb. 15, 2012

Schools that received an Energy Saving Grant from KGHS must submit a report through their school's online profile. Schools should review their SMART forms and grant applications that were submitted for their project to determine what to include in their reports.

The KGHS coordinator will send specific information requests to teachers if report information is omitted. Schools should use the following list as guidance. All reports should include the

following information:

- An estimate of energy saved by the project,
- A description of what students learned from the project about energy conservation,
- The numbers of students and community members impacted by project, and
- A photo of students working with grant materials.

If you have questions about your report, contact the [KGHS coordinator](#).

If reports are not submitted, federal grant officers may choose to conduct a site audit of the school to verify completion of the energy conservation project.

KGHS Update Newsletter Expansion

KEEC, the parent agency of the KGHS program, will begin publishing a newsletter this spring. KGHS Update will be included as an insert in the new KEEC newsletter.



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Kentucky Green & Healthy Schools (KGHS) is a service learning and student-centered program that empowers students and staff to move their school toward becoming safer, healthier and more environmentally sustainable. This inquiry-based program uses the entire school grounds as a learning laboratory for students. All grade levels of all existing schools (and even schools in the process of being built) are invited to join KGHS! To participate, [click here](#).



KGHS is a joint program of the Kentucky Department of Education and the [Kentucky Environmental Education Council](#).

[Click here](#) to sign up for this seasonal newsletter.

Would you like to see your school featured in the KGHS Update? Contact the KGHS coordinator by [clicking here](#).



KGHS is the recipient of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds distributed through the Kentucky Department of Energy Development and Independence.