

Part B: Summary of Boynton Beach High School Green School Activities 2014-2015

Boynton Beach Community High School has engaged in a unique web of interconnected green school activities this school year. We have engaged all teachers, all students, and all support staff in an interdisciplinary effort to create and implement green activities, raise awareness of green initiatives on and off campus, improve our school habitat, create new and functional outdoor learning areas, and inspire an appreciation and respect for nature.

During this school year, administrators approved and created an Agricultural Science class whose primary goals were to build our first ever school garden and allow passionate students to become green ambassadors through projects on conservation, energy use, and sustainability. Funds for the garden were provided by a large conservation foundation that also provided funds for students to learn about Florida conservation at the Palm Beach Zoo. The edible, organic, sustainable garden has not only taught students healthy eating and important agricultural skills, but its harvests provide organic, nutrient rich ingredients that our culinary academy students use to learn to prepare in healthy and creative ways. Our agriculture-culinary partnership is unique and invaluable as students in both programs have a real and hands-on understanding of food from seed to table and a deep knowledge of the benefits of organic and sustainable methods. We have included the staff community as well by providing any teacher who asks with a sample of our nutrient rich kale, cabbage, and a variety of herbs. We shared our gardening success with them during a professional development day, which ignited the interest of many staff who have since become part of the team that manages the garden during and after school hours.

The school garden has involved many students outside the Agricultural class as well, and we have actively included ESE and ESOL classes in all aspects of gardening during their own class periods as well as with an after-school club on Thursday afternoons. Our Agriculture and club students have united as a team that they have termed Tiger ACT – Agriculture & Conservation Team. The name was generated because students felt that their main goal was not simply awareness, but to influence members of our school community to act toward being more environmentally friendly. The team has taken on other projects, including water and energy conservation and awareness, restoration of outdoor areas, composting, green fundraising with our Adopt-a-Garden initiative, and reducing litter. The ESE students that are part of Tiger ACT have led our recycling efforts, acquiring and placing bins in all classrooms, collecting from the bins twice a week, and organizing the deposit of recycled materials.

Our staff has united in our green school goals this year with their support of our campaigns, involvement in recycling, utilization of the garden for outdoor learning, and inclusion of many green topics in curriculum across subjects. In math, students will be utilizing the garden to take measurements and calculate area as well as analyzing statistics on crop yields compared with seeds planted as they prepare for EOCs. In reading, students are using articles aimed at going green and now have an outdoor learning environment in which to read on their own. In art, students prepared original artwork on water conservation and environmental stewardship that was on display at community art shows. Students from all subjects have engaged in field studies at local nature centers, beaches, and zoos.

Boynton Beach High School has garnered community partners in our green school endeavors, and we are actively soliciting more. Home Depot of Boynton Beach has been an incredible partner, providing us with as many seeds as we could want as well as seed starter kits, seedlings, and organic soil. They have also committed to having staff members volunteer in the garden this year. Our teen leadership classes work with the Community Caring Center of Greater Boynton Beach to engage in green community service focused on health and hunger, and the Agriculture students will be volunteering in their urban farming project. We have expanded a partnership with Education Rocks to build an outdoor classroom with native plants and informational signs that is scheduled to be built this semester and unveiled in May 2015. Our Art department has officially partnered with Resource Depot to turn trash into art, and the organization has visited classrooms several times already. We are inviting the local Boynton Beach Community to join us for an Earth Day event and fundraiser to support and showcase our green efforts on April 25, 2015 that will include green tours of our campus and samples of seed-to-table healthy dishes.