

PART B: Summary of Green Schools Activities

Going green is more than just filling recycle bins and teaching units on sustainability. Last year, Forest Hill became a Green School of Promise. This year, it was clear that more needed to be done in order to fulfill that promise. To accomplish this, it was important to include more members of the faculty and student body in the process. This started by sending key staff members to the Green Schools awards ceremony in 2014, allowing them to experience what the program was all about. Others attended one of the Green School orientation meetings. With more staff members on board, it was decided that transforming our school into a top rated Green School would require a multi-year approach. This concept defined our approach to each of the categories within this application.

Forest Hill Community High School is faced with many challenges. The student population includes 61% Hispanic, 18% White and 18% African American. Ten percent are English language Learners (ELL), and 80% are eligible for free and reduced lunch. Reading and writing skills are one of the biggest hurdles for graduation. Though there are challenges, we feel that all students, teachers and staff can do their part to make our school more environmentally friendly. Implementation of concepts such as picking up trash during lunch, or recycling have been difficult, but progress has been made. Introducing environmental literacy sources within the curriculum of non-science classes is also an established goal. These initiatives are finding traction and beginning to take shape.

Part of the solution is to make the student body feel like they have a connection to the natural world. Enhancing the school grounds is a core component of this process. This year it was important to establish a home base for outdoor education in the Environmental Academy Garden, including a newly installed solar pavilion, additional vegetable beds, and a re-claimed pond and native plant garden. We are also continuing to plant cypress trees in the hopes of establishing them within the school's retention pond. Five different teachers have used this re-imagined space, including English and science classes.

Making students feel like they are part of the solution is another component to our journey as a green school. Recycling is now a part of the regular environmental classes and the Environmental club. Combined, this includes almost two hundred students in the process. The vegetable garden is being managed by multiple groups within the school including the Culinary Academy and regular environmental classes. Through the Environmental club, more students have access to service projects such as beach clean-ups and natural area work days. Events such as our upcoming Walk on the Green Side, and The Great American Clean-Up will also help to draw a wider school focus on the Green Schools process.

If Forest Hill is going to gain momentum as a green school, we need the support of our community. This year, new partnerships have been built between The Palm Beach Zoo, and Palm Beach Atlantic University. These programs have conservation and sustainability at their heart and have the opportunity to affect many students on our campus.