



## KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### NEWS RELEASE

No. 15-044

April 22, 2015

### MEDIA CONTACT:

Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 | Cell: (502) 330-5063 | E-mail: [nancy.rodriquez@education.ky.gov](mailto:nancy.rodriquez@education.ky.gov)

## **KENTUCKY SCHOOLS NAMED NATIONAL GREEN RIBBON WINNERS**

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Two Kentucky public schools and one postsecondary institution are among 81 schools, districts and postsecondary institutions nationwide that have been recognized for their promising efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, promote better health, and ensure effective environmental education, including civics and green career pathways.

Bryan Station Middle School (Fayette Co.) and Royal Springs Middle School (Scott Co.) – were named 2015 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools. The program honors schools that are exemplary in reducing environmental impact and costs; improving the health and wellness of students and staff; and providing effective environmental and sustainability education, which incorporates STEM, civic skills and green career pathways.

In addition, Western Kentucky University (WKU) was among nine colleges and universities honored by the U.S. Department of Education with the Postsecondary Sustainability Award, in the first year of that award category.

The schools and universities will be honored at a Washington, D.C. ceremony in June.

In announcing winners, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan lauded the honorees for embodying strong examples of innovative learning and civic engagement.

“These honorees are compelling examples of the ways schools can help children build real-world skillsets, cut school costs, and provide healthy learning environments,” Duncan said.

In the last 10 years, Bryan Station Middle School has reduced energy consumption by 40 percent and water consumption by 29 percent. Students participate in a year-round wellness class, and are involved in the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Program. The 6th grade science program is expanding its aquaponics program in partnership with an urban farm located in Lexington and the Green Club maintains a vegetable garden and promotes environmental problem solving initiatives like the school’s anti-idling program.

Royal Springs Middle School’s energy consumption has been reduced more than 30 percent from 2009 to 2013, while water consumption has been cut by 13 percent. Royal Springs also creates a culture and daily practice that promotes physical health. Many teachers incorporate outdoor education opportunities through their classes.

(more)

Visit our website at <http://www.education.ky.gov>

Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/kydeptofed](http://www.twitter.com/kydeptofed) and Like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/kydeptofed](http://www.facebook.com/kydeptofed)

## Page 2 – Green Ribbon School winners

Extra-curricular activities go beyond traditional sports teams to include Kickball Club, Hiking Club, Girls on the Run, Race for the Cure and the Energy and Environment Club. The environment, student and staff health, and an awareness of sustainability are embedded throughout the curriculum and daily practices of this school include a recycling program and tree-planting projects.

Commissioner of Education Terry Holliday encouraged more Kentucky schools and districts to take steps to go green like the honorees.

“This is a win-win-win for students, schools and districts,” he said. “Students learn valuable lessons about the environment, become environmental stewards and are exposed to 21st-century career options; schools provide a healthier place for students to learn and educators to teach; and districts save thousands of dollars in energy costs – money that then is available to support teaching and learning in the classroom.”

The WKU Office of Sustainability was created in 2008, and since then has reduced energy use on its main campus by 25 percent. The school has improved access to fresh, local, healthy food by supporting the Community Farmers Market, a mobile farmer’s market and the Farm to Campus program. This year Western became a certified Arboretum and is one of six postsecondary institutions in Kentucky that are part of the Tree Campus USA program. WKU offers the only master’s program in Social Responsibility and Sustainable Communities, and the only master’s in Business Administration Certificate in Sustainability in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

“I am delighted that Western Kentucky University has been nationally recognized as one of the first postsecondary Green Ribbon Schools,” CPE President Robert King said. “Not only is WKU a good steward of the environment, their sustainability practices have cut energy costs, allowing them to reinvest in campus programs and services. These are the kinds of practices all universities should emulate.”

Encouraging resource-efficient schools allows administrators to dedicate more resources to instruction rather than operational costs. Healthy schools and wellness practices ensure that all students learn in an environment conducive to achieving their full potential. Sustainability education helps all students engage in hands-on learning, hone critical thinking skills, learn many disciplines and develop a solid foundation in STEM subjects.

Kentucky has participated in the voluntary Green Ribbon Schools program since its inception in 2011. Schools are encouraged to participate in the Green Ribbon Schools Program in the 2015-16 school year. For more information on the nomination process, check the [Green Schools page](#) on the Kentucky Department of Education website. More information on the Green Ribbon federal recognition award can be found [here](#). Resources for all schools to move toward becoming green schools can be found [here](#).

###

Visit our website at <http://www.education.ky.gov>

Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/kydeptofed](http://www.twitter.com/kydeptofed) and Like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/kydeptofed](http://www.facebook.com/kydeptofed)