

Chester School District Green Team 2016-2017 Annual Report

Note: This annual report was presented to the board at June 19, 2017, and included in the minutes of the meeting

We established the Chester School District Green Team during the 2016-2017 school year. Since its establishment in December 2016, the Green Team has played an important role in making the Chester School District more sustainable. Composed of 19 members, the Green Team is made up of individuals that represent the District Board of Education Office, Black River Middle School, Bragg Intermediate School, Dickerson Elementary School, the Chester Board of Education, and the Chester Community, all integral pieces to the workings of the Chester School District. Please see the letter from the Superintendent for a list of all members.

The Green Team has met a total of four times since its organization. The meeting dates for the Chester School District Green Team are as follows: December 8, 2016, April 18, 2017, May 25, 2017, and June 14, 2017. During these meetings, the Green Team discussed the progress of current projects and proposed new and innovative projects to complete either in the 2016-2017 school year or the years to come.

Since its creation, the Chester School District Green Team has been active in both the schools and the Chester community promoting sustainable living. The Green Team was able to place “Hello Goodness” vending machines in each of the schools. The PepsiCo based machines offer healthy snacks and beverages. These products are healthier alternatives to those typically found in vending machines. The Environmental Clubs at Bragg Intermediate School and Black River Middle School teamed up with the Green Team to complete a few projects. They hosted an electronics recycling program for the community to properly dispose of their unwanted

electronics, participated in Earth Day activities, and filled and donated backpacks for less fortunate children. The Green Team paired with the Gifted and Talented Program to complete a Community Awareness Campaign for the Environment. At the district level, the team encouraged green purchasing and set the initiatives to purchase recycled paper, green certified cleaning supplies, and equipment, and energy efficient equipment and electronics. The District, with Green Team support, has successfully eliminated the use of printed paper for payroll through an employee portal, budgets, and purchasing. They also eliminated the paper used for parent and student communications by using an electronic backpack on the school's web pages for notifications, the PowerSchool Portal for grades and report cards, and Blackboard for notifications and communications. The Board of Education adopted three new sustainability policies; a green purchasing policy, green cleaning policy, and a wellness policy. We also established a staff wellness program was. This program included movement initiatives that offered yoga classes, spin classes, and walking challenges, health screenings, organic and healthy food purchasing and discounts, speakers and programs on healthy eating, and the distribution of health and wellness information.

The goals that the Green Team has established for the 2017-2018 school year cover a wide variety of sustainability topics. The Green Team plans to increase professional development on sustainability and green activities throughout the learning process. Creating sustainable learning centers in all of the schools as well as engaging in more student-driven sustainability activities is a goal for the next year. There are plans to increase community involvement in green initiatives. The Chester School District Staff Wellness Program is set to grow to include a running club and weight management support. The Green Team plans to host a Wellness Fair that will be open to all staff, student, families, and community members. This fair

will allow for attendees to learn about wellness and what is involved in leading a healthy lifestyle. There are plans to increase green purchasing throughout the district and the utilization of green products in the food service. Another goal is to establish a water bottle initiative to encourage the use of reusable water bottles to aid in eliminating some plastic water bottles used each day within the Chester School District. We plan to collaborate with the local Shoprite's Dietician for the upcoming year. The goals and priorities set for the upcoming school year will aid in the Chester School District's quest in becoming a healthier, greener, more sustainable school district.

Based on what the Chester School District Green Team has done since its establishment this past year, the Green Team has been successful in establishing itself amongst the schools and community. The Green Team has been able to accomplish many projects since it began and had set strong goals for the upcoming school year. The success of the first few months of this program has shown that there is a strong want for the schools to become more sustainable and to promote healthy lifestyles for all those within it.

Respectfully Submitted by:

 Date 6/19/2017

Melissa Simmons, Business Administrator