

Lincoln Middle School and ASTI Named Green Ribbon Schools

Both Lincoln Middle School and the Alameda Science and Technology Institute (ASTI) were named “Green Ribbon Schools” at a ceremony with State Superintendent of Schools Tom Torlakson on Monday.

The Green Ribbon Schools program honors schools, school districts, and institutes of higher education for excellence in resource efficiency, health and wellness, and environmental and sustainability education.

“Green Ribbon schools are leading the way in resource conservation, health and wellness, and environmental literacy,” Torlakson said in a press release. “California won’t reach our smart and ambitious climate goals without the public sector — and especially without public schools— leading the way.”

The two schools were honored for a wide range of “green activities,” including school gardens, recycling programs, anti-bullying programs, and leadership opportunities for students. A listing of just some of each school’s green programs is attached to this press release.

Both schools attained the “Gold Level” of the awards program, meaning they scored a 75% or more on the rubric. Last year ASTI made it to the Silver Level.

Bay Farm School received both the state and federal Green Ribbons in 2016.

“I am thrilled that two more of our sites have been designated as Green Ribbon schools,” Superintendent Sean McPhetridge said. “As a school district situated on an island, we are aware daily of the need for healthy oceans, reduced litter, robust habitats, and reducing climate change and sea level rise. I am grateful to the hard work and profound commitment of our teachers, parent volunteers, and students in creating and growing these environmental programs at their schools. They are leading the way in teaching our district and our community to be better stewards of the environment on which we depend.”

Some highlights of **ASTI's** programs include:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 5 metric tons (31%) between 2015 and 2017 by diverting food scraps and compostable paper from the landfill.
- Using sheet mulching and drip irrigation to reduce water usage, fundraising for rain barrels to collect water from rooftops, and installing planters to soak up rain rather than having it run off into the streets.
- Replacing large swaths of blacktop with planter boxes.
- Converting 100% of the school's landscapable grounds into ecologically beneficial uses. These areas include an organic vegetable garden, a green house, a seating area, an orchard, a compost area, a milkweed patch to attract monarch butterflies, and a living willow fedge. Students use these areas for lessons and hands-on labs in biology, green club activities, to interact with wildlife and fauna, and for socializing with peers.
- Integrating environmental topics such as climate change and social justice into classes such as English, History, Biology, and Spanish.
- Opportunities to take environmentally themed elective classes at College of Alameda, such as Environmental Control Technology, The Financial Case for Clean Energy, Indoor Air Quality & Building Envelope, Native Plant ID & Culture, Global Climate Change, and Sustainable Urban & Regional Planning.
- Supporting an active Green Club that maintains the garden and volunteers with Ploughshares Nursery, the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Community Action for Sustainable Alameda, and Alameda Point Collaborative.
- Maintaining a successful recycling and compost system.
- Encouraging a "no-bullying" culture that relies on restorative justice rather than punishment to help students learn non-confrontational ways of interacting.

Some highlights of **Lincoln Middle School's** program include:

- A one-acre Nature Area, which is used for science education, including plant and weather observations, tidal monitoring, and modeling physics concepts, as well as art lessons and literary experiences.
- An Outdoor Development Class, through which students learn hands-on skills for landscaping and building projects, as well as manage the school's waste-sorting efforts.
- Status as an Ocean Guardian School, through which Lincoln students remove invasive plants, install native plants, pick up litter along the bordering wetlands and shoreline, and report the results to NOAA.
- Participation in the International Carbon Footprint Challenge, as well as plans to have each student participate in a personal climate change mitigation project in which they will calculate and try to reduce their carbon footprint.
- 63% of the students walk or "roll" (bike, scooter, or skateboard) to school.
- A school garden program that includes lessons on sheet mulching and composting, as well as growing and cooking organic vegetables.
- A reduction of its landfill trash from 14 cubic yards per week (2010) to 8 cubic yards per week (2017). The school has also increased its organics collection to four cubic yards per week. This has resulted in the prevention of 6 metric tons of greenhouse gases.
- An Environmental Science elective that includes collecting data on the shoreline and reporting it to the NOAA, as well as giving presentations to the PTA, Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Meeting, and Alameda Earth Day Festival.
- A water bottle filling station that has helped eliminate the need for 21,800 single use plastic bottles.
- Robust anti-bullying programs.