



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kentucky Schools Recognized for Environmental Efforts During Earth Day Ceremony

First Lady joins other state officials in marking progress, Earth Week

Frankfort, Ky. (April 15, 2014) -- Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear and First Lady Jane Beshear marked Earth Week in Kentucky today by congratulating several schools for efforts in energy conservation. The Governor earlier proclaimed April 15-22, 2014, as Earth Week in Kentucky.

"We need our young leaders of today to be just as involved in Earth Day 2014 as their counterparts were in 1970 when we celebrated the first Earth Day," Gov. Beshear said. "That's why it is important to recognize the work that our students are doing in the classroom with programs like Green and Healthy Schools. Our students are becoming game changers and we should encourage them to continue."

In ceremonies at the Kentucky Capitol, Mrs. Beshear recognized the following schools for their environmental related achievements, including:

- Wellington Elementary, Fayette County – Wellington was recognized as a Green Ribbon school for ensuring its students are aware of how to help the environment and are dedicated to sustaining a "green" school. Wellington, one of Fayette County's most energy efficient schools, has a student and teacher-led sustainability team that monitors and holds their school accountable for its sustainability initiatives. The Green Ribbon Schools program of the U.S. Department of Education recognizes the highest performing green and healthy schools in the nation. Third-grade teacher and Green Ribbon School Advocate Brittany Phillips accepted the award.
- Farnsley Middle School, Jefferson County – Farnsley was recognized as a Kentucky Green and Healthy School (KGHS). KGHS is a project-based and student-centered

program that empowers students and staff to move their school toward becoming safer, healthier and more environmentally sustainable. Farnsley principal Linda Hudson and teacher Marsha Buerger accepted the award.

- West Hardin Middle School, Hardin County – West Hardin has been recognized as a Model Green and Healthy School. Model schools serve as mentors to other KGHS schools, and continue their school improvement projects above and beyond the required nine categories. For the second consecutive year, West Hardin Middle School was recognized as a MKGHS for revisiting at least one category during the school year and completing at least one new project. Science teacher Leslie Meredith accepted the award for West Hardin.

Marsha Buerger, seventh-grade science teacher at Farnsley Middle, said her two favorite projects involved energy, and health and safety. “For the health and safety project we worked on planting a garden in our outdoor classroom,” said Buerger. “This project helped us learn about the many steps it takes to create a garden and also the many problems that arise.

“My students learned how to work as a group by dividing the labor and cooperatively using their different skill sets; about the different requirements needed for different plants; that vegetables come from the ground -- not the store; that vegetables are relatively easy to grow, taste good and are good for you.

“They also learned that hard work and focus produces results,” she added.

For the energy project, students researched ways the school could save energy. “They became leaders,” said Buerger. “The main thing that students learned from completing all these projects is that they can make a difference that they have a voice, and that by experiencing success they gain confidence in completing future endeavors,” said Buerger.

“Instilling the importance of healthy eating and environmental awareness at an early age will help our students incorporate those values later in life,” said Mrs. Beshear. “I’m proud of the many healthy and energy efficient projects that teachers across Kentucky are incorporating in to their curriculum and I congratulate all of today’s recipients for their outstanding ‘green’ projects and accomplishments.”

The theme of today’s event – healthy schools, healthy environment – is part of Gov. Beshear’s efforts to improve the health of all Kentuckians. The governor launched [kyhealthnow](#) last month as an aggressive and wide-ranging initiative to significantly reduce incidence and deaths from Kentucky’s dismal health rankings and habits. It builds on Kentucky’s successful implementation of health care reform and uses multiple strategies, like healthy foods and a clean environment, over the next several years to improve the state’s collective health.

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