

# WHS GREEN SCENE



May 2024  
Stay Green and Read Online!



Check out the WHS Green Scene to learn more about how Whitehouse School's Garden became a Certified School Wildlife Habitat.

*Our staff and students continue to work collaboratively to promote GREEN actions!*

*(Read all about us and click [here](#) to see recent Earth Day videos created in computer class.)*



# From Your Principal...

Dear WHS Friends and Families:

Whitehouse School has been consistently honored at the state (Silver certification through the Sustainable Jersey Schools program) and national levels (U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School Award). These fine distinctions are largely due to the tireless efforts of Mrs. Wendy Reardon (cover page). Recently Mrs. Reardon worked with the H.S.A. and had our garden certified as an official School Wildlife Habitat through the National Wildlife Federation. Keep our school's focus on eco-friendly behaviors and work with preserving our environment have been well-supported in our district, in addition to the greater school community.

- We were approached in 2019 by New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy's Office. Mrs. Murphy wanted to visit Whitehouse School because she was impressed with our efforts at preventing climate change. During her visit, she spoke of the negative impact that single-use plastic bags have on our environment. Then, in 2020, we were invited to be in her video with Governor Murphy and Vice President Al Gore, as we announced that New Jersey is the first state in the nation to have Climate Change education incorporated across the academic standards in the curriculum. [Click [here](#) to see the video!]
- Now, in 2023, Whitehouse School proudly remains the face of Governor Murphy's Climate Change Education website. [Click [here](#) to see it!]
- As described on the cover, this year, we re-certified as a Silver Level school and became one of the few schools in the state to earn a Digital Schools Star through the Sustainable Jersey Schools program!
- We reached the highest possible tier through the Raritan Headwaters Association as we became a *Watershed Level River-Friendly School*. The sign is next to our walkway.
- We received the National Wildlife Federation Eco-Schools USA Silver Award.
- As we continue our green mission, we want to keep you informed as we share our programs and facility augmentations. We are grateful for the \$5000 Investors Bank grant that allowed us to enhance one of our courtyards for outdoor learning!
- Last summer, Girls Scouts rejuvenated the WHS Sensory Garden. They cleaned-up the area by repurposing select perennials, splitting ornamental grasses, etc. They also constructed a Mindfulness area, which consists of a sitting nook with a custom-made bench and a privacy partition. Other sections of the garden were enhanced with a free-standing rain chain and different wind chimes. Lastly, the white borders on the outdoor map were repainted.
- Over the years, we have received several small grants in the amount of \$2,000 each, sponsored through PSE&G and supported by Sustainable Jersey Schools and the New Jersey Education Association. The money was utilized to purchase water bottle refilling stations. Staff members and students have had cold, filtered water available AND are able to reduce waste by using less plastic disposable water bottles.
- We truly enjoy our longstanding partnership with the Rutgers Master Gardeners. We have been using two tumbling composters and if we fill them, we will switch over to the one constructed by our Master Gardeners. It is a hand-built, three-compartment composter made by repurposing wooden shipping pallets. The options help us to make the process more efficient and effective when all grade levels work to grow vegetables, fruits, and plants in our school garden. We also have a rain barrel so we can utilize its collected water in our vegetable and flower gardens.
- Each morning, our Head Custodian, Mr. Jimenez, raises the American flag & also displays the appropriate outdoor air quality flag based on official weather updates.

As we continue to seek ways to reduce our environmental impact, we are determined to try to change behaviors that better serve and sustain our environment. Thank you in advance for your support. If you would like to contribute in any area, please let us know.

Warmly,  
Dr. Ann T. DeRosa



# Earth Day Celebration



**Earth Day** is an annual event celebrated on April 22. Students in all grade levels celebrated Earth Day by creating various projects. You will find some of these projects showcased in this newsletter.











**Mrs. Schlosser's Kindergarten Class**



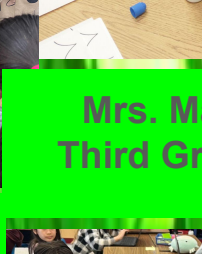
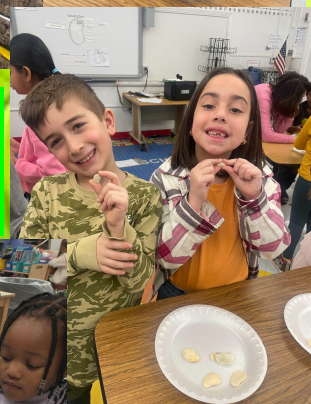
**Mrs. Gallagher's First Grade Class**



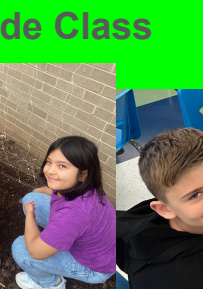
**Mrs. Kostelansky's First Grade Class**



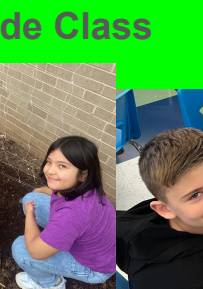
**Mrs. Painter's Kindergarten Class**



**Mrs. Majowka's Third Grade Class**



**Mrs. Petersen's Third Grade Class**





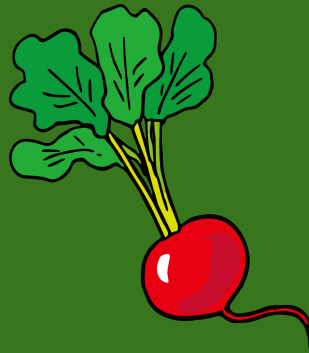
**Kindergartners help  
spread seeds  
at recess!**



**Mrs. Painter's Class  
created games & crafts  
with recycled materials to  
celebrate the Earth!**



## **First Graders Planted Seeds with the Rutgers Master Gardeners**



**Each first grade class studied how to grow seeds successfully.  
They also made necklaces with radish seeds to observe the germination  
process.**



The second grade classes completed a “Soil Shake Up”. In this activity, the students will take soil samples, place them in a jar with water, then shake. The soil will settle out in different layers. Sand, being the largest and heaviest soil particle, will settle at the bottom of the container first.

**Mrs. Yukniewicz’ Class**



Third Grade classes discussed how to reduce, reuse & recycle. Students made promises to the Earth to do better. Some classes used reusable materials from their trash & recycling bins to create a collaborative flower garden. Additionally, the Township graciously continues to provide all third graders with two trees to plant at home to commemorate Earth Day.



**Mrs. Razza’s Class**



**Mrs. Majowka’s Class**



**Miss Petersen’s Class**



**Student Voice is a leadership program offered to third graders who express an interest in helping WHS with various school-wide efforts including our Green Initiatives.**



**Recycling Committee**



**Promote & Educate Team**



**Composting Committee**



**Parent Academy: Master Gardener Presenters**

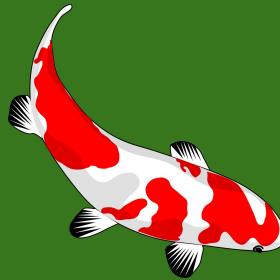




In Art Class, first graders learned about the different endangered birds of New Jersey. Students were asked to choose an endangered bird and create a sculpture using model magic. They researched the bird's nest to determine what is used to create it. Students utilized sticks, grass, and other objects with a paper bag to build a nest.



In Ms. Obiedzinskis' Class, students how we can use upcycled materials to make something new. Students made koi fish using toilet paper rolls, tissue paper, and paper.



In Music class, students have been learning about ways that musicians can celebrate nature and even help the environment. We experienced the talented performers from the Norwegian Ice Music Festival, who create "ICE-struments" from blocks of ice and perform inside an igloo! We examined other groups, like Stomp, who use junk and recycled items as instruments. Students enjoyed watching performances by both groups and thought about how they could make their own instruments using everyday items found at home or in the natural world!



**Ice Music**



**Stomp**



In Spanish class, kindergarten and first grade learned about recycling plastic and paper.



**Mrs. Schlosser's Class**



**Mrs. Mielke's Class**

The second and third graders learned about the 3R's of the environment: recycle, reduce and reuse. They also wrote about ideas to protect the environment.



**Mrs. Yukniewicz's Class**



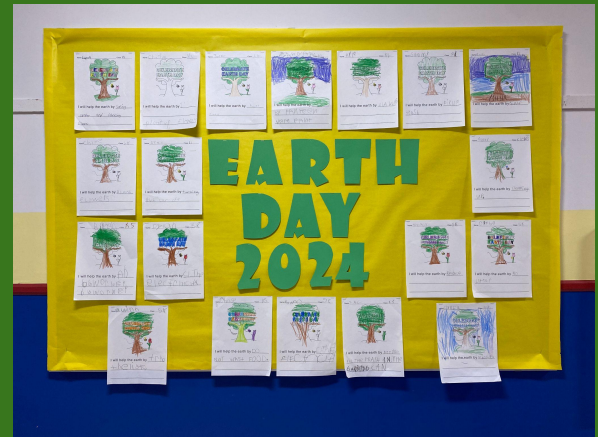
**Mrs. Majowka's Class**



**In the Library, all students will be able to participate in a Book Swap, a sustainable way to get “new-to-you” books for summer reading. Stay Tuned for details...**

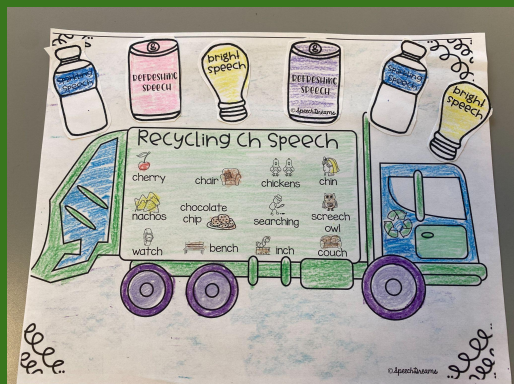


**For Earth Day, Kindergarteners discussed the many books in the WHS Library which explore environmental issues and how they can help our Earth.**





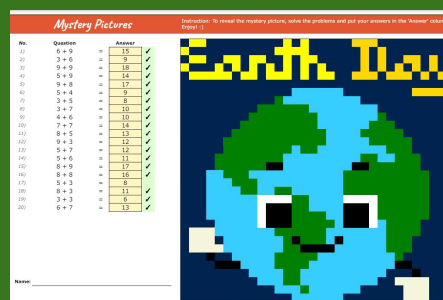
Speech and Language Therapy students participated in a variety of activities which were individualized to meet each student's goals while having fun learning about our Earth!



In the Computer Lab, each grade level completed a variety of STEM activities to learn how to protect our planet.



**First Graders designed Robots to help our planet.**



**Second Graders practiced math facts to celebrate Earth Day!**



Click [here](#) to view Earth Day Videos from each class at WHS.

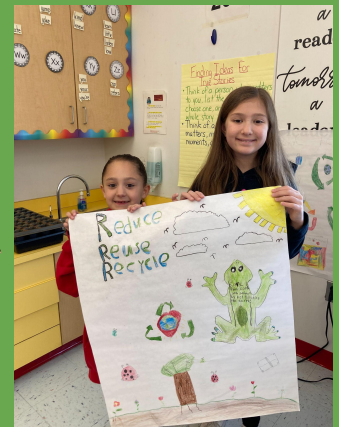


# P.E. classes get active to help the Earth...



Students participated in a Litter Pick Up Game. The yarn balls represent litter. Students traveled down to one end of the gym where they picked up one piece of “garbage” at a time using the pool noodles.

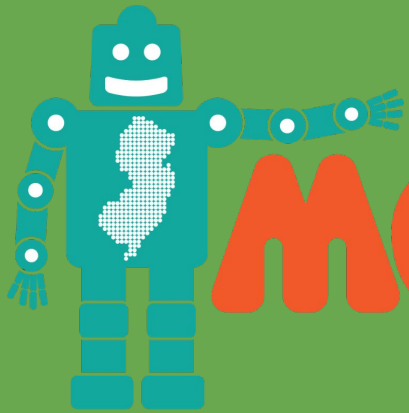
The Green Team Club learned the value of upcycling. Team members focused on taking things from around the house that would normally get thrown away and turning them into something useful. Students also shared our school’s recycling programs through posters.



The Green Team students have had a great time exploring our school as well, taking notice of all the different kinds of plants and animals we have living in our community.



WHS celebrated New Jersey Makers Day by using reusable materials to create a “One-Man-Band” for our thematic unit, Mary Poppins...



New Jersey

MAKERS DAY



## WELCOME TO MAKERS DAY!

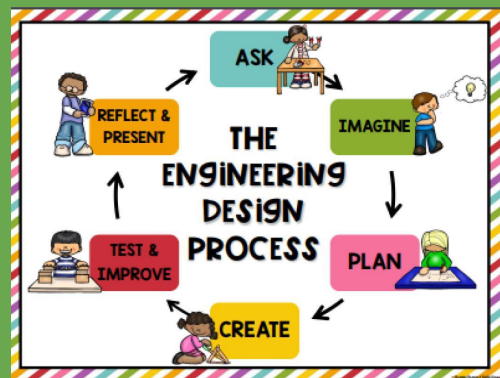
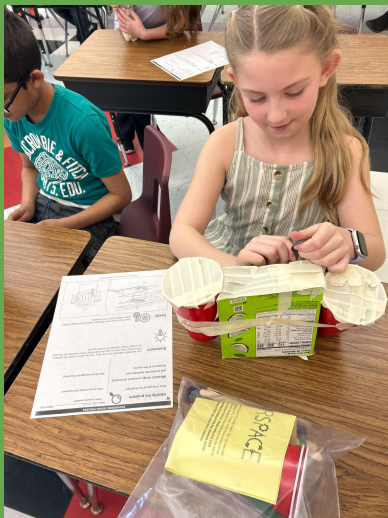
Dear Master Makers,

On Makers Day we use our creativity and engineering skills to create something that can help solve a problem. In class you read the book Mary Poppins. In the movie version there is a character named Bert, who is a One-Man-Band! Can you work together to create your own one man band?

From,  
Mrs. Martinez

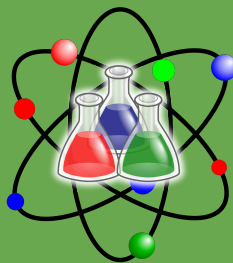
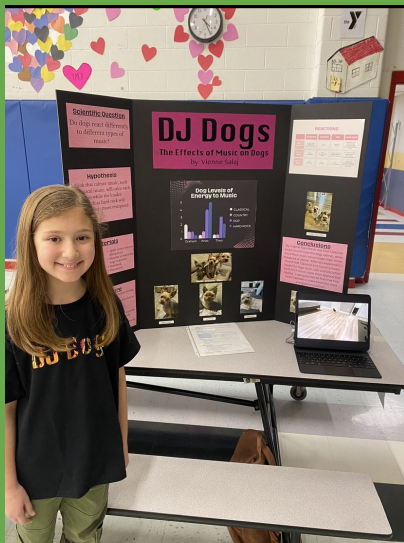
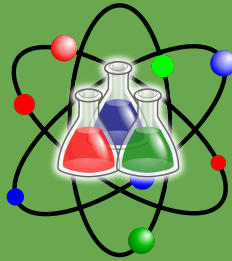
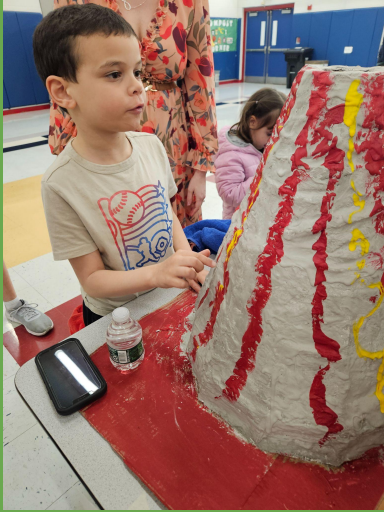


Click [here](#) to see Mrs. Yukniewicz' Class perform!





The theme of this year's Science Fair, again, was "Going Green" and we encouraged students to choose science or engineering topics that support our green initiatives at WHS.





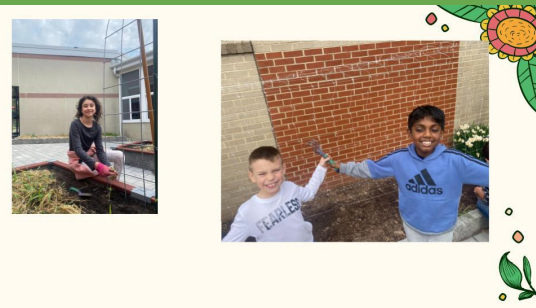
# Our partnership with the Rutgers Master Gardeners continues to grow and thrive...



**Kindergartners planting alfalfa sprouts.**



**First Graders planting onions & lettuce**



**Second & Third Graders planting for our big Harvest Day in June.**



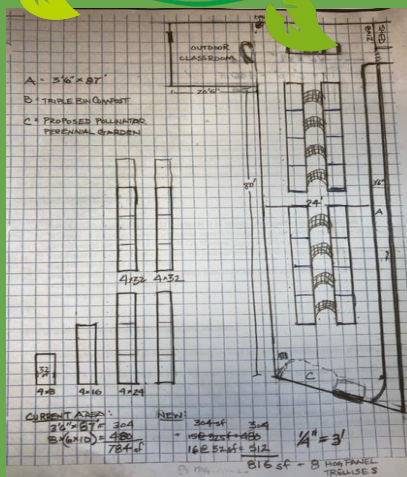
# Check out our newly renovated Garden!

A special thank you to our amazing Rutgers Master Gardeners, Mrs. Laurie Fischer & Mrs. Kathy Rohrabacher, for their design expertise. They sketched out a dream garden. We were able to work with our Business Administrator, Mr. Jason Bohm, to get the capital project funding for this spectacular upgrade. Then, Arvin's Landscaping & Garden Center stepped in and the real magic began! Our new garden beds should last for at least 25 years. You will notice that they are narrower and more child-friendly for students. The children should have an easier time physically reaching when they are planting and harvesting our crops. Each bed is also equipped with a built-in drip irrigation system on a timer. We installed vertical trellises that form arches down the middle aisle. It will be quite a tremendous sight and a great place to grow snap peas! The new pavers transform the whole area into a luxurious outdoor learning space fit for a college campus! We are so grateful and plan to utilize our new setting to its greatest potential.

## BEFORE



## DURING

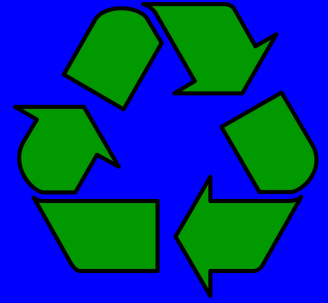
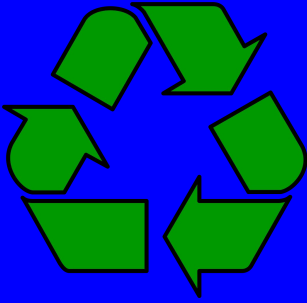


## AFTER





# WHS Bags-to-Benches



## Whitehouse School's Bags to Benches



### How Can You Help???

Send in your plastic from home. Students may bring it to school and place it in the dedicated recycling bin. Plastic must be clean and dry. Empty out any food or residue.

Grade 3 Student Voice is partnering with the Readington Township Environmental Commission. Our goal is to collect 500 lbs of plastic by August. If we do, WHS will earn a Trex bench for the Sensory Garden!

Help WHS save the Earth ... and earn a bench!

## Challenge Accepted!



Grocery bags



Bread bags



Bubble wrap



Dry cleaning bags



Newspaper sleeves



Ice bags



Plastic shipping envelopes



Ziploc & other reclosable food storage bags



Cereal bags



Case overwrap



Salt bags



Pallet wrap & stretch film



Wood pellet bags



Produce bags

Any questions, please reach out to: [lyukniewicz@readington.k12.nj.us](mailto:lyukniewicz@readington.k12.nj.us) or [vzanardi@readington.k12.nj.us](mailto:vzanardi@readington.k12.nj.us)



# **“New” Whitehouse School Recycling Initiatives**

## **What you can recycle at WHS...**

<b>Printer Cartridges</b>	<b>Writing Utensils</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ink cartridges</li><li>• Toner cartridges &amp; drum units</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crayons</li><li>• Pens &amp; markers</li><li>• Wooden &amp; mechanical pencils</li></ul>

## **Where you can recycle at WHS...**

Please drop off all recyclables in the correct bins located outside of the Computer Lab (Room 133).

 **Staples**

**Recycling made**



**WHS has recycled over 40 toner cartridges and over 200 markers and crayons in the 2023-2024 School Year**



The nonprofit group Astronomers Without Borders (AWB) has partnered with Whitehouse School to collect and recycle gently used eclipse-viewing glasses.

The glasses will be sent to underserved communities and schools around the world to use during future solar eclipses.



Glasses will be sent to Astronomers without Borders  
for reuse worldwide during future eclipses!



The 3rd Grade EmPowered Team  
has collected over 150 glasses.



**WE ARE STILL COLLECTING GLASSES.  
YOU CAN DROP THEM OFF OUTSIDE  
THE COMPUTER LAB (ROOM 133)**

**DONATE  
ECLIPSE GLASSES**





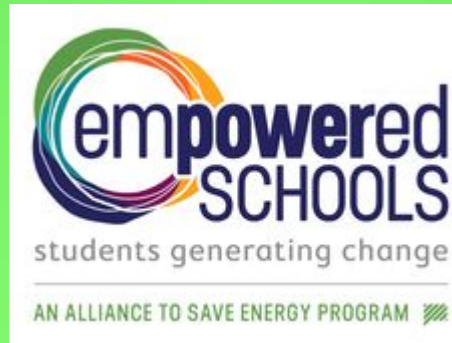
**Whitehouse school continues to be a NJ school with Silver Level Certification. Only 34 schools in NJ out of 158 are certified at the Silver Level.**

**In addition, WHS was 1 of 13 schools in the state to earn the Digital Schools Star!**

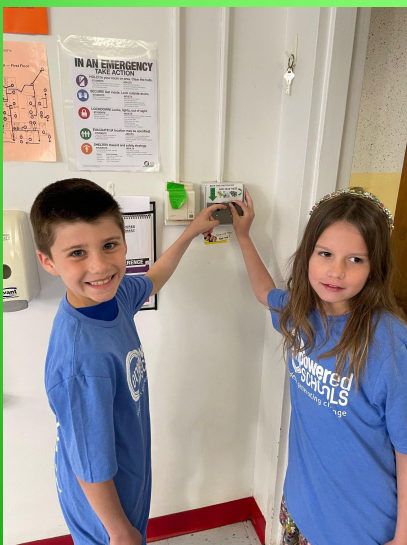
A Digital Schools Star embraces the mindful implementation of effective digital learning and communication tools, resources and practices. Star schools document their successful digital learning strategies in the action areas of leadership, learning practices, technology access, school culture and climate and student learning to qualify for star recognition.



## Several third grade classes at Whitehouse School Participated in the Empowered Schools Program...



**The Alliance to Save Energy believes that students have the power to create a culture of energy efficiency in their schools & communities. In K-12 educational facilities, student engagement is key to accessing behavior-based energy savings. Empowered with STEM-based efficiency training, hands-on experience, and results to show for their work, students become ambassadors for energy conservation in the classroom.**



**Students turn off one light switch to save energy and money.**



**Mr. Grant's EmPowered Team determining whether our classroom has "right lighting".**

# Whitehouse School Garden is a Certified Wildlife Habitat



**Wildlife habitat gardens are a haven for local birds, butterflies, and other wildlife.**

A certified wildlife habitat provides food, resources, and shelter for the animals and insects that live in our area. By turning our school garden into a safe haven, with food options, water, and nurseries for the local wildlife, we are helping conservation efforts that protect creatures and our planet..



# Water Bottle Filling Station

**WHS has water bottle filling stations  
for students and staff!**



**Did you know that every hour Americans throw away 2.5 million plastic bottles?**

Using a reusable water bottle is an easy way to reduce waste in a landfill and help protect the environment. By continually producing more bottles, we utilize a tremendous amount of energy and resources. The benefits of a reusable water bottle are two-fold. First, we preserve the environment by creating less pollution. Second, we help humankind by reducing the toxins that are released during plastic production. This results in a cleaner, healthier world.

# “No Idle Zone”

**HELP US HELP THE ENVIRONMENT**



Our district has adopted anti-idling Policy # 7471. It states that buses and motor vehicles are not permitted to have their engines on when they are stopped or parked.

The policy is meant to help reduce harmful emissions that pollute the air. (There are a few exceptions during extreme weather conditions.)

Thank you in advance for your cooperation as you assist us.



# Outdoor Air Quality



How much pollution is in the air today? You can find out by simply looking at the flagpole. Our school has adopted the Air Quality Flag Program which means we will fly brightly colored flags to show how clean the air is each day. The flags correspond to the colors of the Air Quality Index ([www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov)). The AQI is a program for reporting daily air quality. It tells you how clean or polluted your air is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for you.

The good news is the Air Quality Flag Program helps protect students' health. On green and yellow days we will encourage students to be outside and moving. When air quality is orange or red, it is still OK to play outside, but we will encourage kids to take some breaks and to do activities that might involve walking and jogging, instead of running and sprinting. If the flag is purple, we will play inside that day. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is promoting the Air Quality Flag Program with schools in many U.S. cities and we are proud to be involved. For more information on the Flag Program, go to [www.airnow.gov/flag](http://www.airnow.gov/flag).