

DMPS One of Five to Receive the Governor's Iowa Environmental Excellence Award

Thursday, June 27th, 2013

Environmental honors continue to roll in for Des Moines Public Schools, as today the school district was recognized as one of the 2013 recipients of the Governor's Iowa Environmental Excellence Award. The award, presented to the district by Governor Terry Branstad, is the premier Iowa environmental honor and recognized DMPS for its district-wide environmental and sustainable strategies and tactics. It is the third major environmental award DMPS has received this year.

"It is always rewarding to showcase and celebrate the innovation Iowans exhibit in creating new jobs and protecting our natural resources," said Governor Branstad.

In addition to rewarding important efforts to improve Iowa's natural resources, Governor Branstad noted that highlighting success stories benefits other businesses and organizations in the state.

"In every aspect of what we do, providing the best opportunities for our students is a daily goal," added Superintendent Tom Ahart. "I am proud that we are a national model for other school districts on this issue, and have a solid record of proven strategies for the smart use of our resources."

"Our students and community deserve the best, and our energy efficiency and environmental efforts are based upon that approach," said Bill Good, COO of Des Moines Public Schools. "We take the optimization of our financial and environmental resources seriously as proven by our state and national recognitions."

This is the second year in a row that Des Moines Public Schools has earned three major environmental and sustainability awards. In March, the school district repeated its recognition as Energy Star Partner of the Year by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In April, the U.S. Department of Education presented DMPS with another Green Ribbon School award in recognition of district-wide environmental practices and curriculum programs. Last year, DMPS earned a special recognition Iowa Environmental Excellence Award for energy efficiency; this year's top honor is for the district's overall efforts.

The Governor's Iowa Environmental Excellence Award honored DMPS for the following reasons:

Des Moines Public Schools is committed to being an environmental leader; efforts span multiple areas including reducing environmental impact and costs, improving student and staff health and providing effective environmental and sustainability education. All renovations to school buildings are carefully planned and include sustainability projects that maximize the return on investment. In 2012, DMPS upgraded four schools to geothermal heating and cooling systems, bringing the total number of schools in the district using geothermal up to 33. Instead of replacing carpet, the concrete subfloor is polished and sealed, providing years of maintenance-free use. Water retention is addressed in every renovation plan, and rain gardens have been installed at several schools. Landfill waste has been reduced and recycling efforts have increased district-wide. DMPS has begun testing for lead, a plan is in place for asbestos management and the district conducts radon tests in all buildings, though only required to do so in preschool classrooms.

Finally, DMPS is implementing ground-breaking initiatives in environmental and sustainability education, incorporating these concepts into all grade levels. DMPS teachers partner with bio-renewable scientists at Iowa State University to stay informed on the latest STEM-industry developments. The district also participates in Symbi to educate and inspire students about renewable energy, sustainable technology and green products. DMPS has introduced AP Environmental Science at five high schools, and the cutting-edge Iowa Energy and Sustainability Academy operates out of Central Campus.

Other recipients of the Environmental Excellence Award were:

- City of Clinton
- Lennox Industries, Inc., Marshalltown
- RDG, Des Moines
- Rathbun Land and Water Alliance, Centerville

For more information about the Governor's Iowa Environmental Excellence Awards, go to www.iowadnr.gov/eeawards.

The awards are sponsored by the Governor's Office, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, the Iowa Department of Economic Development, the Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Iowa Waste Reduction Center.

