



**CONNECTICUT
GREEN LEAF
SCHOOLS**

P R E S S R E L E A S E

**EVENT WITH STATE COMMISSIONERS, HARTFORD
MAYOR AND SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT
MARY HOOKER SCHOOL, 440 BROADVIEW TERRACE,
HARTFORD**

**State Honors Green Schools for Encouraging
Healthy Students and Environmental Education**
*Connecticut Green LEAF Schools in Hartford and New Haven
Nominated for National Honors*

The initial success of Connecticut's Green LEAF Schools program – designed to create “green” and healthy schools – was celebrated today by state officials, environmental groups, and educational organizations supporting the initiative.

During a ceremony at Hartford's Environmental Sciences Magnet School at Mary Hooker, three early participants in Green LEAF Schools were recognized for their nomination for the federal Green Ribbon School Award as a result of their accomplishments under the program. The three schools are: Mary Hooker of Hartford, as well as Barnard Environmental Studies Magnet School and Common Ground High School, both of New Haven.

Connecticut's Green LEAF Schools is a collaboration of the Connecticut Departments of Education, Energy and Environmental Protection, Public Health, and Construction Services, as well as more than 25 environmental and educational organizations. The program is focused on effective environmental and sustainability education for students, improved health and wellness of students and staff, and reduced environmental impact and cost of buildings. All Connecticut public and private schools, grades K-12, are eligible to participate.

Schools that show significant progress in the Green LEAF program can be nominated for the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Award program. In 2013, 89 schools from 31 states were nominated – including the three from Connecticut. Winners will be announced on April 22, 2013. This is the first year that Connecticut has participated in the national Green Ribbon Award program.

The Green LEAF Schools program has also been named one of the top 10 “green” schools programs in the nation by the U.S. Green Building Council’s Center for Green Schools.

At today’s event, two schools signed a letter of commitment begin the process of receiving CT GreenLEAF recognition. These schools are: Two Rivers Magnet High School, Hartford and Medical Professions and Teacher Preparation Academy in Windsor.

"We congratulate each school being recognized today for creating healthier, enriching, and more sustainable learning environments for their students," said Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor. "Green building standards and strategies create school environments which enhance students' learning experience and teach them the importance of building a sustainable future. Incorporating environmental and sustainable concepts into the curriculum has the potential to increase student engagement, especially in STEM fields."

“The Green LEAF Schools Program supports many of the key goals of the CT DEEP – effective environmental education, reduced environmental impact and energy efficiency,” said DEEP Commissioner Daniel C. Esty. “The three schools we are recognizing today are already serving as a model for others and we look forward to continuing to work with our other state agency partners to provide the support that other schools need to head down this positive path.”

"Creating healthy school environments, improving nutrition and expanding exercise opportunities are important public health priorities and goals the Green LEAF Schools program strives to achieve," stated DPH Commissioner Dr. Jewel Mullen. "DPH is pleased to be a partner in this statewide collaborative initiative to encourage Connecticut schools to take a more holistic approach to 'going green' by linking health, the environment, and education."

“DCS Deputy Commissioner Pasquale Salemi stated that “[t]he Green LEAF program recognizes some of the best environmentally-designed and built schools in our state. Along with our partners at the state Departments of Education, Public Health, and Energy and Environmental Protection, we commend these districts for their efforts and look forward to supporting these principles around the state in the years to come.”

“I am thrilled that the Connecticut Green LEAF Schools program is recognizing The Environmental Sciences Magnet School at Mary Hooker for its accomplishments in raising student achievement, improving health and energy efficiency,” said Hartford Schools Superintendent Christina Kishimoto. “Today’s acknowledgment validates the considerable work that went into designing Mary Hooker’s green school curriculum and our overall focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), which are a source of great pride for our district.”

“This is a tremendous and much-deserved honor for Barnard Environmental Magnet School,” New Haven Superintendent of Schools Dr. Reginald Mayo. “Principal Crocco and his team at Barnard do an amazing job of weaving environmental lessons about sustainability, conservation and recycling into a curriculum that teaches students about reducing our carbon footprints and inspires them to love science. I thank Connecticut’s Green LEAF Schools for recognizing Barnard with this award.”

“Because Common Ground’s mission is to develop the next generation of leaders dedicated to creating a sustainable future, being recognized by the State of Connecticut as a Green Leaf School is especially meaningful, said Melissa Spear, Executive Director, Common Ground High School, Urban Farm and Environmental Education Center. “This recognition acknowledges the hard work of students and staff who have dedicated themselves to making our site a model of sustainable environmental practice, to developing a demanding academic curriculum that has sustainability at its heart, and to cultivating habits of healthy living both at school and within the community at large.”

Background Information

About Connecticut Green LEAF School Program

The Connecticut Green LEAF School program supports Connecticut schools in providing effective environmental and sustainability education, improving the health, and wellness of their students and staff and reducing their environmental impact and costs. LEAF stands for “Leading, Educating, Achieving and Fostering green, healthy schools for all.” The program is a collaborative effort led by the Connecticut Departments of Construction Services, Education, Energy and Environmental Protection, and Public Health, along with more than 25 other state educational and environmental organizations. The program celebrates and recognizes those Connecticut schools making progress toward sustainability. The Connecticut Green LEAF School program will also support the nomination of a select group of schools to the U.S. Department of Education’s Green Ribbon School program. For more information, please visit www.ctgreenschools.org/ctgreenleaf.htm.

About Barnard Environmental Studies Magnet School, New Haven

Barnard serves students from pre-K to grade 8, addressing 4 key environmental themes, including: fresh water, energy, migration, and Long Island Sound. The school has a strong network of collaborative partners, including universities, environmental groups and other agencies. Programs at Barnard include lessons with the West River Park and Nature Center, an urban garden and community service. Barnard’s program is located in New Haven in a LEED Gold building. For more information, please visit <http://www.newhavenmagnetschools.com/index.php/barnard>

About Common Ground High School, New Haven

Common Ground High School, founded in 1997 as the nation’s first environmentally themed public charter school, provides an integrated curriculum to its students. Programs include an urban garden that produces 7,000 pounds of fresh food on a 20-acre site. Both the garden and the animal husbandry programs serve as educational opportunities, with many schools visiting the farm. Student-led initiatives are encouraged, and include rainwater recapture, school lighting improvements, recycling, and composting. For more information, please visit <http://commongroundct.org>

About Environmental Sciences Magnet School at Mary Hooker, Hartford

Environmental Sciences Magnet School at Mary Hooker (ESM) is located in Hartford, in a new LEED Platinum building. School programs include a planetarium, butterfly vivarium,

greenhouse, aquatics lab, and organic garden. Students from 43 towns in pre-K through grade 8 learn about environmental science throughout the grades, including in-service learning projects. For more information, please visit <http://www.environmentalsciencesmagnet.org/>

About U.S. Green Building Council's Best of Green Schools 2012

The Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council hosts the “Best of Green Schools” list, which recognizes top educational institutions and individuals across the country for embracing environmental initiatives. The Best of Green Schools 2012 list highlights schools, districts, individuals and communities working toward the common goal of healthy, high-performing learning places for all. The Best of Green Schools 2012 list recognizes the hard work being done across the country and honors the heroes and shining examples of the green schools movement. For more information visit <http://centerforgreenschools.org/bestof2012>

For more
Information
Contact:

Dennis Schain, 860-462-3468
Cyndy Chanaca, (860) 424-3219

March 14, 2013