



GRADES OF GREEN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**GRADES OF GREEN CERTIFICATION PILOT PROGRAM
MANHATTAN BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
MARCH 4, 2015**

This report is a summary of Phase I of the Grades of Green Certification Pilot Program in the Manhattan Beach Unified School District. Thanks to a sponsorship by MBUSD, Grades of Green had the opportunity to further our mission to inspire and empower the students in Manhattan Beach to care for the environment. Through individual Eco-Consultation Reports and the development of Grades of Green Certification standards, the schools were acknowledged for their green accomplishments to date. We hope the Reports and Certification serve to incentivize and guide the schools to implement even more sustainability initiatives.

We are all aware of the tremendous environmental challenges facing our planet. Grades of Green's goal is to change the course of our future by making environmental protection second nature in young minds today. We seek to inspire the environmental stewards of tomorrow, while making their environment cleaner today. Greening schools has the added benefit of saving schools money, decreasing absences and raising test scores. By piloting a Certification Program with Grades of Green, MBUSD can set the standard for sustainable practices and environmental responsibility in schools across the nation.

PHASE I RECAP

Eco-Consultations

Phase I consisted of an Eco-Consultation at each of the eight Manhattan Beach Unified School District (MBUSD) schools followed by delivery of an individualized Eco-Consultation Report to each school. The purpose of the Eco-Consultations was to gather information and establish baseline metrics in regards to environmental programs and sustainability. This baseline will be used to gauge progress for MBUSD schools as they implement Grades of Green Activities.

During each Eco-Consultation, Grades of Green team members toured each school and met with the school principal, Grades of Green Chair(s), Food Service Director, Plant Manager, and student green leaders to collect data about current green programs. Critical baseline metrics were gathered in regard to all aspects of environmental stewardship, including water and energy conservation, and the reduction of waste, emissions, and toxins.

Eco-Consultation Reports

After the Eco-Consultations were complete, each of the 8 schools received an individualized, comprehensive report outlining their current Green Activities, recommendations for enhancing these efforts, and suggestions for additional Green Activities they could implement that align with their needs and interests based on feedback from school stakeholders. Green Activities were broken down into six areas: Energy, Water, Emissions, Toxins, Waste, and Earth.

Each report included a chart listing all current and recommended Grades of Green Activities and summarized a Grades of Green Certification level for each school, more fully explained below.

Green Council

The other component of Phase I was contributing to the creation of and participation in the district-wide Green Council. Chaired by the Superintendent and PTA Council, this committee provides a forum for discussing district-wide green efforts and developing a green master plan for the district. The Green Council has been established and now meets quarterly. It includes representatives from seven of the eight MBUSD schools (primary and secondary), a school principal, MBUSD Energy Specialist, MBUSD Director of Maintenance and Operations, MBUSD Director of Food and Nutrition Services, City Environmental Programs Manager, City Public Works, and representatives from Grades of Green, Waste Management, Growing Great and the Beach Cities Health District. The first meeting of the Green Council took place October 20, 2014. One of the initial goals of the Council was to assist in the District seeking nomination for the National District Green Ribbon Award. Data gathered by Grades of Green during the Eco-Consultations was utilized to complete portions of the Green Ribbon application.

OVERARCHING GOALS

- Establish baseline metrics for all schools
- Clarify best practices for Green Activities
- Develop Certification guidelines to acknowledge and incentivize schools
- Determine structures for sustainability of green activities
- Create culture of environmental stewardship district-wide
- Promote Green Ribbon readiness
- Design action plan for supporting schools with implementation of recommended Green Activities going forward

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

VALUE OF BASELINE METRICS

- Starting point to gauge progress (quantifiable data; i.e. amount of landfill waste produced at lunchtime and campus wide; percentage of students walking, wheeling or carpooling to school; percentage of kids bringing reusable lunch items to school)
- Establish foundation for building Green Activities and best practices
- Enable accurate assessment of service levels (i.e. waste hauler pick-up schedules)

GRADES OF GREEN CERTIFICATION LEVELS

For the past six years Grades of Green has been researching the best practices for the Green Activities we offer on our website to schools, to insure kids are being inspired and empowered to care for the environment and to realize the positive impact their actions have on the environment. Each school was evaluated to determine their compliance with best practices for Green Activities. A Grades of Green Certification level was awarded based on the number of Green Activities currently practiced at each school:

- **BRONZE:** 5 activities
 - Pacific ES (9)
 - Pennekamp ES (8)
 - Mira Costa HS (6)
 - Manhattan Beach Preschool (5)
- **SILVER:** 10 activities
 - Robinson ES (14)
 - Meadows ES (10)
 - MBMS (10)
- **GOLD:** 15 activities
- **PLATINUM:** 20 activities
 - Grand View ES (20)
- **EARTH CHAMPION:** 25 activities

BEST PRACTICES ACROSS GREEN ACTIVITIES

- Grades of Green Chair is identified and publicized; along with Chairs for distinct Grades of Green Activities (i.e., Trash Free Lunches)
- Green Activity is well-outlined and key players, resources and goals identified
- Impacted players (i.e. teachers, custodians) are consulted and provide input
- Feedback loop is in place
- Progress/outcomes of green activity are evaluated and used to guide forward action

COMPONENTS NEEDED FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- **Adult Green Team**
 - Staff Advisor to lead Earth Club (Successful structure at GV with Science Specialist leading club)
 - Lunch supervisors participate in/support sorting (included in job description).
 - Maintenance staff educated on all green efforts: recycling, composting, e-waste programs, etc.
 - GOG Chair is a permanent PTA position, as are Chairs for all Green Activities at school (i.e. Trash Free Lunch Chair).
 - Staff Advisor to GOG Chair to insure quick feedback from staff about programs.
 - Permanent structures with signage for trash sorting.
- **Student Green Team**
 - Earth Club is established and tasked with specific components of school's environmental agenda.
 - Green Rep on Student Council to lead specific efforts. Best scenario is that Green Rep is a member of or attends meetings of the Earth Club, to keep efforts coordinated between Earth Club and Student Council. Green Activities are student led whenever possible – e.g., grade level volunteers to help monitor sorting at lunchtime, water and energy usage; student compost team to manage onsite compost care.

- **Liaison to Green Council (GOG Chair)**
 - Keep current on district goals and district wide programs
 - Communicate district’s green agenda to school community
- **Annual reeducation for campus community sustainability**
 - Kick off assembly at start of school to refresh students and staff on all green efforts, such as lunchtime sorting, recycling, and “green” classrooms campus wide.
 - Educational flyers and Earth Tips circulated to families via school online newsletter to support green efforts at school and home.
 - Training custodial and lunchtime staff on green “policies and procedures” (i.e. sorting, recycling, role of adult and student green teams)

GREEN RIBBON READINESS

- During the Eco-Consultations Grades of Green gathered data on the following topics:
 - Waste Reduction: In-class recycling, trash free lunch, composting
 - Data was used to calculate diversion, recycling rate
 - Emissions Reduction: Alternative transportation, walk to school programs
 - Toxin Reduction: Cleaning supplies and paper usage
 - Water Reduction: Native gardens and other water conservation efforts
 - Energy Reduction:
 - Earth (other):
 - Elements of environmental education and outdoor learning;
 - Civic engagement
 - Environmental clubs
 - 3R Eco-Lessons

FORWARD ACTION PLAN: GRADES OF GREEN AND MBUSD

MBUSD funding covered Phase I, outlined above. Now that Phase I is complete, MBUSD has the option of retaining Grades of Green for Phase II. As outlined in our initial proposal, Phase II consists of helping each school build student-led programs of their choice to continue the process of fulfilling established Grades of Green Certification guidelines. As part of Phase II, all campuses would undergo right-sizing of waste hauler service to realize district-wide cost savings. To accomplish these objectives, Phase II programming could include the following:

- **Grades of Green Assembly** at each elementary school and MBMS at the start of each school year. The assembly is tailored to each school. Students are taught about waste reduction, conservation of resources, and how to use their lunchtime sorting stations properly. Other green programs at the school may be highlighted and reviewed. To bring the messaging and lessons from the assembly to life, our Grades of Green team stays on site through lunchtime to support the students as they sort waste. Team members educate kids about which items belong in each container, play “Trashy Trivia” games and reward students with hand stamps. Lunchtime supervisors and parent volunteers are also trained on proper use of the sorting station and how best to support the kids.

- **Consultation Services** at each school to assist with implementation of recommended Grades of Green activities. Examples of support include:
 - Coordinating introduction of Waste Management's Food Waste program at Meadows and Pennekamp to further reduce landfill waste.
 - Supporting enhancements to sorting stations and trash free lunch programs
 - Coordinating energy and water conservation contests
- **Right sizing** trash service at each school. This entails Grades of Green working with each school, Waste Management, MBUSD and the City to evaluate waste production at each site and to adjust trash service accordingly to realize cost savings for the District.
- **Lunchtime sorting support** by Grades of Green volunteers

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of Phase I, the schools in MBUSD are poised to make great strides towards becoming even greener and achieving higher levels of Grades of Green Certification.

Additional programming will not only inspire and empower more students, it will support MBUSD's bid for the Green Ribbon, save money for the district through waste reduction and right-sizing, and keep MBUSD on the cutting edge of environmental responsibility and stewardship.

Grades of Green would welcome the opportunity to discuss details of Phase II and continue our partnership with MBUSD to achieve these goals.

CONTACT YOUR GRADES OF GREEN TEAM:

JAN DUNBAR

JanD@gradesofgreen.org

ROBYN MURPHY

RobynM@Gradesofgreen.org

NICOLE GRUCKY

NicoleG@gradesofgreen.org

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OUR VISION MAKING
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OUR MISSION TO INSPIRE
& EMPOWER KIDS
AND THE BROADER SCHOOL
COMMUNITY TO CARE FOR THE
ENVIRONMENT