



**For Immediate Release:** April 22, 2015

**Contact:** Charles B. Pyle, Director of Communications, (804) 371-2420  
Julie C. Grimes, Communications Manager, (804) 225-2775

## Four Virginia Schools Earn National Green Ribbon Awards

Three Virginia public schools and one private school were honored today as national 2015 Green Ribbon School award winners. The U.S. Department of Education program recognizes energy efficient and environmentally friendly schools that promote environmental awareness, community engagement and student wellness.

The four winning schools — with highlights from their award applications — are as follows:

- Bassett High School, Henry County — Bassett High reduced electric consumption by 30 percent resulting in a cost savings of \$367,676 over five years. The school's career and technical education offerings include a nationally recognized horticulture program.
- Coles Elementary School, Prince William County — Coles Elementary partnered with the private sector and non-profit organizations to create nine school gardens watered with recycled water. The school nutrition program includes "no paper days" and dining by natural light on "lights off Fridays."
- Crozet Elementary School, Albemarle County — Crozet Elementary achieved an annual savings of \$6,000 through composting and use of mixed-waste recycling. Student-created outdoor learning spaces, gardens and habitats promote environmental stewardship and connect the school to Western Albemarle High's environmental studies program.
- The Steward School — Instruction and cross-curricular activities at the suburban Richmond private school incorporate wellness, sustainability, watershed experiences, ecology, engineering and biomimicry. The school's community outreach includes presentations featuring leading authors on ecology and nature.

"The earth-friendly practices and hands-on environmental learning experiences woven into the instructional programs of these schools provide opportunities for students to make a difference as young people today and in the future as thoughtful and engaged citizens," Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples said.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Managing Director of the White House Council of Environmental Quality Christy Goldfuss announced the winners as part of Earth Day celebrations. Nationally 58 schools, 14 school districts and nine postsecondary institutions — including the University of Virginia — were honored and will receive green display banners and be invited to send a delegation to a June recognition ceremony in Washington, D.C.

The Green Ribbon School program was created in 2011. Stony Point Elementary in Albemarle County and Magna Vista High in Henry County — which earned Green Ribbon awards in 2013 — were the last Virginia schools recognized through the program.

Governor Terry McAuliffe today announced the Virginia Environmental Literacy Challenge, a voluntary initiative to encourage outdoor experiences for students and green projects.