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West Hartford Schools Commit To Connecticut Green LEAF Schools Program

June 11, 2013 | By JULIE STAGIS, jstagis@courant.com, The Hartford Courant

WEST HARTFORD — The [school district](#) is the first in the state to have all its school principals commit to the Connecticut Green LEAF Schools program, which promotes increased environmental and sustainability education and health and wellness efforts, according to a news release from the town.

The state departments of education, energy and environmental protection, public health and construction services joined with more than 30 environmental and educational organizations to form the program. LEAF stands for "Leading, Educating, Achieving and Fostering green, healthy [schools](#) for all." All 16 West Hartford school principals signed commitment letters.



All 16 West Hartford School principals have committed to Connecticut's... (Courtesy of West Hartford...)

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"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, offering schools [resources](#) and supports to help them improve in these areas," according to the news release.

"It's really great framework for highlighting what we're already doing and getting us where we want to go," said Catherine Diviney, the energy specialist for the town and schools.

Diviney said the schools' "[green](#)" efforts will be benchmarked over the summer so they can "try to hit the ground running next year."

Bristow Middle [School](#) Principal Andrew Morrow said the program was "a natural extension of the work that we've been doing in our classes and with kids."

"Bristow has an extensive solar cell array on our roof; we have gone to great lengths with our greenhouse and our garden to involve kids in not only beautifying our campus, but really connecting with nature," he said.

According to Morrow, "the big benefit for us is just the awareness."

"It's a way of continuing to put conservation and being good shepherds of the community in the forefront," he said.

The state can nominate up to four Green LEAF schools each year for nomination to the U.S. department of education's Green Ribbon School program, which recognizes "schools that have made significant progress in reducing their [environmental](#) impact, improving student and staff health, and providing effective environmental education," according to the Green LEAF brochure.

For more information, visit <http://www.ctgreenschools.org/ctgreenleaf.htm>.

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