



The Grace School

For Immediate Release

Contact: Kate Murphy

Regan Communications

401-808-4649

kmurphy@regancomm.com

U.S. Secretary of Education Names The Grace School at Meeting Street a 2020 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School

Washington, D.C. – April 23, 2020 - The U.S. Department of Education announced today that The Grace School at Meeting Street in Providence is among the 2020 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools award honorees.

“The Grace School is honored to receive this very prestigious award,” said Margaret Knowlton, Director of School Age Programs. “Being recognized as an U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School highlights all of the important practices and beliefs that we value as a school community. It is important that all of our students understand that they have something to contribute to this world, and being responsible for the environment, whether by using a refillable water bottle, planting and harvesting vegetables or recycling crayons, has a positive impact on making our world a healthier and better place for all.”

Since opening in 2007, the vision of The Grace School has been to become a leader in inclusive education for students in kindergarten through grade 8. Serving a population that includes 32 percent of students enrolled in special education, the school’s curriculum was designed, not only to exceed grade level learning standards, but also to develop students’ awareness and responsibility for the natural environment, as well as compassion for people of all abilities.

The Meeting Street campus in Providence, where The Grace School is located, was built on 10 acres of brownfield, that was remediated to residential standards in 2006. Working with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, this space is now home to a campus that is comprised of more than 40 percent green space. Students of all abilities learn in a building that was designed with conservation and education in mind. In 2014, 338 solar panels were installed, which produce about 86 kW, accounting for 12 percent of The Grace School’s power usage and saves approximately \$12,000 annually.

Construction of a new wing has brought many energy-saving features. The increased number of windows and skylights in hallways and classrooms allow natural light to permeate the space. The LED cloud lighting responds to the natural light, making it often unnecessary for the use overhead lighting. Zoned lighting areas in the classrooms allow teachers to have more control over the amount of light needed at any given time.

Since installing water bottle filling stations in 2019 throughout the school, the equivalent of over 27,000 water bottles have been saved. Students are also engaged in green initiatives, including a bottle recycling program; sorting plastics at lunch; collecting paper to be shredded and batteries to be recycled; and Styrofoam trays and plastic utensils were replaced with reusable trays and silverware.





The Grace School

Outside, the green space includes an accessible playground, walking paths, and outdoor classroom space, where students conduct observations of the plants and wildlife for science. The Seedlings Club, for students in grades K–2, meets in the spring to plant seedlings for the school’s raised bed garden and care for the plants until the end of the school year. Over the summer and into the fall, students attending the extended school year program tend the gardens and have a chance to experience tastes of different herbs and vegetables.

Across the country, 39 schools, 11 districts, and five postsecondary institutions are being honored with the prestigious Green Ribbon School designation for their innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, improve health and wellness, and ensure effective sustainability education. Forty-five percent of the 2020 honorees serve a disadvantaged student body.

About The Grace School

The Grace School is a K-8 private school located on the Meeting Street Campus in Providence, RI. This is a place of academic excellence, where highly trained, dedicated educators inspire creativity, nurture gifts, and encourage perseverance in every child.

The Grace School is the only fully inclusive K-8 school in the nation. In addition to providing education to all students, with and without special needs, in the same learning environment, all enrichment activities and programs are developed and supported by staff, so that all students, regardless of their abilities, can participate if they want to. This includes but is not limited to chorus and drama programs, various after school enrichment classes, and middle school clubs. For more information, visit www.thegraceschool.org.

About Meeting Street

Founded in 1946, Meeting Street compassionately and innovatively empowers children and their families to thrive by fostering the development of the whole child. Meeting Street’s vision is to be a national leader in child development, education, research and training. Today, Meeting Street works with over 7,000 children and families annually with campuses located in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, through its core programs: Early Intervention, Early Head Start, Healthy Families America, Early Learning Center, Pediatric Outpatient Rehabilitation Services, The Grace School, The Carter School, and The Schwartz School. For more information about Meeting Street visit www.MeetingStreet.org.

