

PRESS RELEASE

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ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR TWO SUSTAINABLE NEW JERSEY BRONZE CERTIFICATION RECIPIENTS



Pictured are (from left to right) Essex County Freeholder At-Large Patricia Sebold, Daniel Delcher of West Caldwell Tech, Amy Deiboldt of South Mountain Elementary School, Alyna Jacobs, Principal of South Mountain Elementary School, and District 3 Freeholder Janine G. Bauer. PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON.

(Newark, NJ) – On March 14, 2018, the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored South Mountain Elementary School and West Caldwell Tech High School for receiving Bronze Certifications from Sustainable New Jersey.

Freeholder At-Large Patricia Sebold of Livingston and District 3 Freeholder Janine G. Bauer of South Orange presented Commendations to South Mountain Elementary School Principal Alyna Jacobs and West Caldwell Tech Green Team Council Coordinator and Agriculture Science Instructor Daniel Delcher.

South Mountain Elementary School undertook the certification with intention of improving the school's sustainability, reducing waste, and educating the students on the importance of conserving resources while caring for their local environment. The school implemented over 150 points of action in the two-year certification process, including a kindergarten gardening program, a new air quality monitoring system, and the elimination of all disposable plastic water bottles from school functions.

West Caldwell Tech calculated its school's carbon footprint and started a behavior based change project to get teachers and students to turn off the lights when they left the room. Students also ran a school-wide recycling program focused on paper, bottles, and cans. Students worked together in Culinary Arts and Agriculture courses to compost food waste and yard/garden waste.

To create further changes, the school's Administration switched copy paper purchases to 30% Recycled Copy Paper. The school's agriculture science program converted their greenhouse to hydroponic vegetables and established an outdoor garden. The vegetables and herbs that are grown were used in the Culinary Arts program and Cafeteria for student lunches, encouraging students to make the connection from farm to table.

The West Caldwell Tech students also conducted a biodiversity study of the school grounds and constructed, installed, and maintained birdhouses, bird feeders, and squirrel feeders. The Sustainability Team used the Energy Star Portfolio Manager to track the school's gas and electric use. The school also established a wellness committee to develop programs and events for students to promote physical and mental health. The wellness committee also conducted a School Health Assessment based on CDC guidelines and determined areas of strength and weakness in school health.

Both schools worked to create healthy environments that students could thrive in and make long-lasting environmental changes that will affect future generations of students. The Board celebrated the achievements of South Mountain Elementary School and West Caldwell Tech and hopes to recognize additional Essex County schools for their environmental advancements in the future.

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