

Good Afternoon, My name is Katy Levine and I am testifying in support of [HB 1102](#), as a parent with two children in Montgomery County Public Schools.

The Green School program has great potential to significantly reduce Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) environmental impact by encouraging schools to be more sustainable, and to provide educational and sustainable practice opportunities that support students in taking meaningful action. In these ways, the green school program supports meaningful change now and also positions students to continue to make meaningful change in the future.

The Green School program also has farther reaching impact, including mental health and academic benefits. Studies show that exposure to nature positively impacts wellbeing and also academic achievement. Separately, climate change anxiety is an increasing concern. A recent study highlighted in Yale Sustainability suggests that collective action may be a buffer against climate change anxiety for young adults. Sara Lowe, of Yale School of Public Health, published a research paper “finding that anxiety about climate change was linked to symptoms of depression only in those NOT engaged in group activities to address global warming.”

The great potential of the Green School program can only be met if it becomes easier for schools to become active, strong green schools. This includes facilitating idea sharing, and implementation logistic sharing, between teachers. As a very small example, recently I met a teacher at an MCPS school that has robust sustainability programming. The teacher was able to share with me some tips for success and materials, including sustainability tips that her school’s students incorporate into morning announcements and a list of books she is working on adding to the school library, and I can share these ideas and materials with my student’s school to consider implementing. Ideally this type of idea and resource sharing should be much, much easier.

I believe [HB 1102](#), to provide funding to MAEOE to update its Green Schools website, will help MAEOE make its website a resource that more effectively facilitates the sharing of ideas, implementation tips, and learnings that will help more schools become active and strong green schools, thereby helping MCPS reduce its environmental impact and benefit more students.

Thank you for your consideration.

Resources

Climate Change Anxiety

- *Yale Experts Explain Climate Anxiety*, Yale Sustainability: <https://sustainability.yale.edu/explainers/yale-experts-explain-climate-anxiety#:~:text=Last year, Lowe co-authored,activities to address global warming.>
- *As climate changes, climate anxiety rises in youth*, CBS News: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/climate-change-anxiety/>

Children and Nature Network has an extensive number of resources. Here are links to a couple of their valuable infographics:

- *Nature Can Improve Academic Outcomes*, Children and Nature Network: https://eadn-wc04-796033.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/CNN20_BNAAcademicOutcomes_23-3-25.pdf

- *Nature Can Improve Health and Wellbeing*, Children and Nature Network: https://eadn-wc04-796033.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/CNN20_BNHealth-and-Wellbeing_23-3-24.pdf
- *Nature Play Can Encourage Care For The Earth*, Children and Nature Network: https://eadn-wc04-796033.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/CNN20_BNNatureChampions_23-3-24.pdf
- *Green Schoolyards Can Improve Academic Outcomes*, Children and Nature Network: https://eadn-wc04-796033.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CNN_2016GSY_AcadOut_d7-23-3-24.pdf
- *Green Schoolyards Can Provide Mental Health Benefits*, Children and Nature Network: https://eadn-wc04-796033.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CNN_2016GSY_MentalHlth_23-3-24.pdf