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VDOE Nominates Four Virginia Schools for National Green Ribbon School Awards

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is nominating three public schools and one private school for 2015 national Green Ribbon School awards. 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 nominated 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 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.
- 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.

"I congratulate these schools for their earth-friendly practices and for providing students with opportunities to make a difference — locally and globally," Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples said.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan will announce the 2014-2015 Green Ribbon School award winners on Earth Day, April 22. The winning schools will receive green display banners and will 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 Henrico County — which earned Green Ribbon awards in 2013 — were the last Virginia schools recognized through the program.

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