

BLS YouthCAN Green Schools Vision

www.blsyouthcan.org

Fall 2012



The students in the Boston Latin School Youth Climate Action Network or *BLS YouthCAN* want to educate our community about sustainability and provide a model for how our entire school system can integrate education for sustainability, save energy, and green their facilities while cultivating youth leaders and engaging students broadly in service-learning. Most youth green groups focus on greening their own facility, but BLS YouthCAN has developed a successful model for greening schools across Massachusetts, all fully documented on the YouthCAN website (www.blsyouthcan.org) for easy replication by other schools. The website provides evidence of measurable impact, and helps demonstrate the power of youth-leadership for sustainability.

Our initiatives include: extensive energy savings (200,000+ KWh/year in 2011); a waste management program (waste reduced 50%); facilities improvements program (vegetative roof, salad bar, garden, food-waste trial); renewable energy (28 panel PV array); teacher trainings & curriculum development (50+ educators trained to integrate sustainability lessons), school-wide teach-ins involving 40-50 classes annually and a youth network of 20 member groups in Massachusetts.

Our most ambitious and innovative project is a state-of-the-art Shared Green Roof, designed by YouthCAN students and a local architect, with contributions from a youth task force representing youth from across the City that YouthCAN brought together. Our shared Green Roof project proposes a community-learning center where students and educators in Massachusetts will learn about sustainability in an interactive, hands-on facility with design features specifically created to inspire the big picture, systems thinking needed for sustainability.

We are very proud of how much support we been able to generate in the community, and among school department and city and state officials for this project. Many substantial elements of the project are already well underway in the form of our ground-level pilot programs that are aimed at demonstrating the sort of programs we will eventually provide on the Shared Green roof when it is completed.

YouthCAN projects have received national and international attention (*Today Show*, *Les Respirations*), and won numerous awards including the President's Environmental Youth Award, an EPA Merit Award, the Eco Schools USA Green Flag Award, and the Samsung 2012 Sustainable Energy Award.

Our outreach, partnerships, Climate Summit at MIT, Energy Audit training program, summer garden camp, and school wide improvements programs provide a proven record of youth-empowerment, leadership, and service-learning that successfully advances energy and sustainability measures far beyond our own walls. Five youth-led energy audits at other schools resulted from our 2011 youth audit training program alone.

As the oldest school in the USA, BLS YouthCAN has leveraged the high visibility, large-scale initiatives that we implement in the community as a means of inspiring others to make the same kind of energy saving and sustainability changes that we are making. YouthCAN students lead the way on all sustainability initiatives at BLS and in the broader community. We've also developed substantial implementation structures, including significant partnerships among our faculty, food services, facilities, administration and alumni, other schools, non-profits, businesses, the Superintendent and Mayor, and other city and state officials, both for the Shared Green Roof project and for the ground-level projects that BLSYC already has in place to demonstrate the need and efficacy of our programs and long-term vision (eg our Youth Green Jobs/Energy Audit Training program is supported by 4 energy companies, 3 energy non-profits, 2 youth leadership programs, and 2 colleges, all volunteering to deliver our free audit-training program to students from other schools.)

We've engaged custodians and administrators to help carry out our projects. We stipend educators for help advising students on various projects. For example, faculty are working to develop and organize curriculum related to our PVs, our waste management program, and our energy model and audit process, including comparative energy data from the five schools receiving the 5K energy-saving implementation budgets. We have also collected sustainability curriculum developed by more than 50 teachers over the course of the two Summer Institutes for Educators that YouthCAN hosted.

Our adult Advisory Board provides ongoing advice on Shared Green Roof project development, marketing, budget, project management, aligning educational goals, and pricing and analysis models. Please support YouthCAN and help further our important sustainability goals.

**Thank you,
BLS YouthCAN - Fall 2012**