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NYC Public Schools to Integrate Sustainability Themes Into Lesson Plans

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[CELF](#) and NYC Department of Education Kick Off Pilot Program

Helping Teachers Build [Sustainability Concepts](#) Into Overall Curricula.

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The Children's [Environmental Literacy Foundation](#) (CELF), in partnership with the New York City Department of Education ([NYC DoE](#)), today kicked off a [pilot program](#) to help New York City (NYC) public schools bring more [sustainability](#) and environmental themes into its K-12 lesson plans. The year-long program, [CELF Leadership Training](#) in Sustainability Curriculum and Assessment, officially commenced this morning at The New School's Union Square campus in Manhattan, where roughly 40 teachers and administrators representing six NYC public schools gathered for a two-day training workshop.

CELF Executive Director Katie Ginsberg stated that specifically, over the next 12 months, CELF's curriculum experts will work directly with teachers and administrators of the six selected schools to help them integrate sustainability concepts into their existing curricula across a wide range of subjects.

CELF and the NYC DoE selected the pilot program's participating schools from a competitive pool of applicants, each having made measurable progress towards sustainability literacy. The six schools are: MS 88/Peter Rouget MS in Brooklyn, PS 308/Clara Caldwell MS in Brooklyn, Academy for Environmental Leadership in Brooklyn, PS/IS 50 Vito Marcantino School in Manhattan, IS 204/The Holmes School in Long Island City and PS 307/Pioneer Academy in Queens.

Speaking to the type of work CELF will be doing with the schools, CELF Executive Director Katie Ginsberg said, "Our professional development trainers will be helping educators from these six schools develop intellectually-stimulating ways to bring sustainability concepts to life for their students using a curriculum framework to do so in an organized and systematic way."

Providing examples, Ginsberg stated how CELF's instructors might help a school that has completed facilities retrofits and improvements to identify and articulate related learning opportunities across subjects. Instructors might also help teachers identify the sustainability content in their lessons and coordinate teaching using "big ideas" that run through the entire course, such as systems thinking and interconnectedness.

She continued, "The result of our work will be students who are more engaged in and excited about learning, and who also have attained a high level of environmental literacy."

Ginsberg announced that John Shea, Chief Executive Officer of NYC DoE's School Facilities Division, is a special guest at the event. Having overseen a number of successful programs for the division that have dramatically lowered the city's school facility energy consumption and costs, Shea will discuss how schools engage the school community to respect not only one another but also the school environment both indoors and outdoors.

In reference to the pilot program Shea stated, "I commend the participating schools for their leadership in environmental literacy. We've long known that our school buildings and facilities make a significant impact on our environment. Arming our students with the education they need to be stewards of sustainability will serve the school community well as a society, both now and in the future."

More About the Pilot Program

The initial two-day CELF training will provide training and curriculum development expertise demonstrating how Education for Sustainability (EfS) supports 21st Century educational goals and enhances efforts in STEAM subjects (science, technology, engineering, the arts and math). Educators will gain strategies to connect EfS principles to their subject areas and grade levels and will learn how to use the CELF EfS integration framework in order to map sustainability concepts across their curriculum. Additionally they will learn best practices in EfS student assessment based on the CELF student performance indicators rubric.

As part of the year-long program, partner schools will receive regular on-site support throughout the 2012-2013 school year. In return, the schools will provide CELF and the NYC DoE with implementation reports and student work products that will become available to the community at large.

The program is supported by independent funds, including funds from Wells Fargo Capital Finance's Good Works Program, and is provided free of charge to each of the selected schools. To further support and expand the program, CELF is actively seeking additional funds from corporations and foundations, particularly those committed to environmental literacy and sustainability. For more information on sponsorships, contact Ginsberg by phone at 914-238-4743 or by email at katie@celfeducation.org.

About The Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELf): Founded in 2003 and based in Chappaqua, NY, CELF was created to promote awareness of the importance of sustainability education and to help schools and school districts make sustainability an ongoing part of education. To achieve this, CELF provides consulting services for schools and school districts, training for teachers and administrators and sustainability education programs for students. A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, CELF works with all kinds of schools—urban, suburban and rural, public and private. For more information go to: <http://www.celfeducation.org>.

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