



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Communications and Community Outreach
6901 Charles Street Towson, MD 21204
443.809.5908 (English) 443.809.7801 (Español) www.bcps.org

FOR RELEASE: July 6, 2023

[BCPS press releases are available online](#)

Watershed Public Charter School earns \$1.27 million U.S. Department of Energy grant

Funds will be used to lessen the school's carbon footprint

Towson, Md. – Watershed Public Charter School has been awarded a \$1.27 million Renew America's Schools grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. The funds will be used to make energy improvements at the environmentally focused school.

Baltimore County Public Schools is one of only 24 school districts nationally to benefit from the first round of Renew America's Schools grants. The federal grants program received more than \$5.5 billion in requests from 236 school districts across 48 states and two territories.

"I am so proud that a Baltimore County school will benefit from this grant program," said BCPS Superintendent Dr. Myriam Yarbrough. "Our students, staff, and community care deeply about creating and maintaining healthy environments in our schools and in our communities and the larger world. We look forward to seeing the ways that Watershed will be transformed by this grant and what we can learn from their environmental leadership."

With its grant funds, Watershed seeks to improve its learning environment, improve air quality and health outcomes for students and staff with asthma, lower energy costs, and shrink the carbon footprint of the school by becoming more energy efficient. Project components include:

- Upgrading the HVAC systems to improve energy efficiency and classroom comfort.
- Adding occupancy, vacancy, and daylight harvesting sensors to the school's LED lighting system to save energy.
- Replacing exterior doors to better insulate and secure the building.

- Installing a solar canopy over the parking lot as well as solar panels on the roof.
- Installing two electric vehicle charging stations for staff and public use.

“I am so thankful that the Watershed Board prioritizes lessening the carbon footprint that our building has on the environment,” said Watershed Principal Lori Widney. “This grant will help our students not only have a cleaner, greener school building but will increase their hands-on learning through their exploration of the latest technology in green sustainable energy. Coupled with our 2023 US Department of Education Green Ribbon School honor, we are continuing the mission and vision of Watershed and extending our impact to the community.”

Watershed Executive Director Jessie Lehson added, “It is incredible that we have received this grant from the U.S. Department of Energy so that Watershed can improve the learning environment of our students. We are especially excited about the solar installation that will cover our parking lot to create clean energy for Watershed and the surrounding community.”

In April, Watershed was named a 2023 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School. This upcoming school year, the public charter school will serve 330 students in Grades K-6. The school’s curriculum focuses on environmental sustainability and the natural world. Environmental concepts and the Maryland E-Literacy standards are infused throughout lessons. Students engage in open-ended multidisciplinary projects that allow them choice and to impact their campus. As a result, Watershed has decreased its solid waste production by 50 percent, water usage by 60 percent, and electrical usage by 42 percent since 2019.

#

[Baltimore County Public Schools](#), the nation’s 22nd largest school system, is focused on raising the bar and closing gaps to prepare our students for the future. Thanks to innovative and talented leaders, teachers, staff, and students, BCPS celebrates [many honors](#).