

# PRESS RELEASE

## **Manhattan Beach Unified School District**

325 S. Peck Ave.  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Carolyn Seaton, Executive Director, Educational Services  
Manhattan Beach Unified School District  
310-318-7345 ext.5989

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Grand View Elementary Named One of 78 U.S. Green Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education**

**Manhattan Beach, CA, April 24, 2012**

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, together with White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson, announced on Monday that Grand View Elementary in the Manhattan Beach Unified School District is among 78 schools named U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools. California is among 29 states and D.C. with schools receiving the first-ever awards.

The Green Ribbon Schools program is a federal recognition program under the U.S. Department of Education that was announced by Secretary Duncan in September 2011 to recognize schools that save energy, reduce costs, feature environmentally sustainable learning spaces, protect health, foster wellness, and offer environmental education to boost academic achievement and community engagement. Honored schools exercise a model approach to creating “green” environments through reducing environmental impact, promoting health, and ensuring a high-quality environmental education to prepare students with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and sustainability concepts needed in the growing global economy.

“Science and environmental education play a central role in providing children with a well-rounded education that prepares them for the jobs of the future,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. “Green Ribbon Schools demonstrate compelling examples of the ways schools can expand their coursework while also helping children build real world skill sets, cut school costs, and provide healthy learning environments.”

Under Principal Rhonda Steinberg’s leadership, Grand View Elementary School has become a beacon of green light in the Manhattan Beach Unified School District. Among its many impressive green accomplishments, Grand View has:

- Harnessed the talents of Grades of Green parent docents who have taught all Grand View students about the four Rs—reducing, reusing, recycling, and rotting
- Reduced lunch trash from approximately thirty bags per day to just two bags
- Implemented comprehensive school-wide recycling and composting programs
- Embraced the “Walking School Bus” initiative
- Planted California native gardens in each grade level area
- Provided students with numerous opportunities to learn how to grow and eat foods that maximize nutritional value and minimize environmental impact through its partnership with GrowingGreat

When notified of Grand View’s status as U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School, Principal Steinberg noted, “I am so proud of my students, staff, and parents for embracing the greening efforts at Grand View. As an elementary school educator I strongly believe that in order to make change in something as important as the environment, you need to begin with our youth to ensure that environmental awareness is a habit, not a challenge. We have instituted 32 green programs that have become an integral part of providing our students with a well-rounded education. I will be flying to Washington, D.C., on June 3<sup>rd</sup> to accept this well-deserved “Green Ribbon” award on behalf of my students, staff, and parents who have transformed Grand View to be a school worthy of the title, “Greenest in the Nation.”

Manhattan Beach USD's Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Matthews added, "In the words of renowned naturalist John Muir, 'Tug on anything at all and you'll find it connected to everything else in the universe.' Our Grand View community has exemplified Muir's spirit through their countless efforts to protect and preserve the environment. From kindergarten through fifth grade, environmental education is a cornerstone at Grand View Elementary School.

"Grand View Elementary students, staff, and parents are to be commended for their comprehensive efforts to teach students about their responsibility to protect the environment and adopt healthy lifestyles," stated Board President Ellen Rosenberg. "Grand View's enthusiasm and success have spread to all MBUSD schools. Our Board is committed to supporting environmental education and increased participation in green activities throughout the district."

Led by Grand View, all Manhattan Beach schools have made huge leaps forward in conservation over the past four years, with tremendous support from parents, students, and the non-profit group Grades of Green. The progress has helped both the environment and the District's bottom line. For example:

- MBUSD began an energy conservation program last November with Energy Education. The program is on target to save \$250,000 this year, and will likely save \$1,000,000 over five years, in addition to reducing the schools' carbon footprint by more than 100 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> to date.
- All five of the district's elementary schools have walk-to-school programs. In many of the schools, an average of 70% of students walk at least one day a week, up from just 15% of students four years ago. Grand View alone has saved 52 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually, and about \$366,000 in gas costs a year for parents.
- MBUSD has switched to Green Seal Certified cleaning supplies and has reduced insecticide applications, reducing students' exposure to toxins.

In addition, most MBUSD schools have implemented:

- In-class recycling
- E-waste recycling
- No-idle zones
- Earth Clubs and native gardens
- Paperless school newsletters

Applications for the Green Ribbon School program were submitted to state education agencies by more than 350 schools across the United States with fifty two originating from California. Each state was allowed to nominate up to four schools for the federal award, one of which had to be private. Among the list of winners are 66 public schools and 12 private schools composed of 43 elementary, 31 middle and 26 high schools.

Principal Rhonda Steinberg and Manhattan Beach USD Superintendent Michael Matthews will represent the Grand View Elementary community at a formal Green Ribbon Schools awards presentation in Washington, D.C., on June 3-4, 2012. For more information about the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools Program, including a list of all 78 recognized schools in the United States, go to <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/index.html>.

## **About the Manhattan Beach Unified School District**

Manhattan Beach Unified School District ranks as the third highest performing unified school district in the State of California with a 2011 Growth Academic Performance Index (API) of 932. MBUSD serves nearly 7,000 students from preschool to twelfth grade at eight school campuses—one preschool, five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Mira Costa High School's API of 911 places it in the top 1.3% of public high schools in California, and it was named number fifteen in ESPN's "Fab 50" High Schools in the United States in 2010 for its superior athletic programs. In addition to outstanding students and excellent teachers, MBUSD is extremely fortunate to have a high level of parental involvement in the schools and very strong partnerships with the Manhattan Beach Education and Athletic Foundations, the City of Manhattan Beach, Chevron, Northrop Grumman, Continental Development, the Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce and other local organizations and businesses. More information about MBUSD is available at [www.mbusd.org](http://www.mbusd.org).