

# PRESS RELEASE

## **Manhattan Beach Unified School District**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Grand View Elementary One of Four Schools in California Nominated as a “Green Ribbon School”**

**Manhattan Beach, CA, March 23, 2012**

On Thursday afternoon, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson nominated Grand View Elementary School of the Manhattan Beach Unified School District as one of four schools in the state to represent California in the new federal Green Ribbon Schools Award program. Grand View Principal Rhonda Steinberg accepted the nomination on behalf of the school at a ceremony held at the Environmental Charter High School in Lawndale.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan unveiled the national Green Ribbon Schools Award program on September 29, 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. California was one of forty states that elected to participate in the program, and California Department of Education officials collaborated with several state agencies to develop the state’s Green Ribbon Award application. The comprehensive, twenty-page California application focused on three major pillars: environmental impact and energy efficiency, healthy school environments, and environmental and sustainability education. Fifty-two total California schools submitted applications for this recognition. Each state is allowed to select up four schools, one of which must be private.

Under Principal 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:

- Reduced lunch trash from approximately thirty bags per day to just two bags daily
- 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 a California Green Ribbon School and nominee for the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Award, Principal Steinberg noted, “Although I was the proud recipient of this award, the real winners are my students, staff, and parents who have so diligently focused on ensuring that Grand View Elementary School is the greenest in the nation. Grand View ‘Gators’ are committed to protecting our environment and making a difference on our planet.”

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

MBUSD Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Matthews added, "When I joined the Manhattan Beach Unified School District family, I was impressed by the sheer number of areas in which our students and staff excel. One area that stood out was the commitment to green initiatives in all MBUSD schools. Grand View Elementary is the leader in that effort, and their incredible success and willingness to share their expertise has benefited all Manhattan Beach schools."

Ellen Rosenberg, President of the MBUSD Board of Trustees stated, "Principal Steinberg and her entire school community are incredibly deserving of this award. Grand View has developed model programs that have resulted in high energy savings, a sizable reduction in costs, and engaging curricula that provide students with hands-on lessons during which they learn how to protect the environment."

Grand View Elementary and the other three California finalists now join approximately 150 schools across the country vying for the U.S. Department of Education's award. Each of the four state finalists was required to provide additional information beyond the state application that will be forwarded to the U.S. Department of Education. A federal selection committee will review all of the applications and choose approximately fifty schools to receive the national Green Ribbon Schools Award. The schools that are selected as national Green Ribbon Schools will be notified on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, and a formal awards presentation will take place in Washington, D.C., on June 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **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 Unified 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).