

# County board awards 'green' schools

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Jefferson Middle School in Lakeview Public Schools won the Macomb County Green Schools logo contest on April 1 with a showcase of Michigan's Great Lakes, Sleeping Bear Dunes and fall foliage. The logo will be represented on Macomb County Green Schools program materials for the upcoming academic year. (Photo provided by Courtney Flynn)

CLINTON TOWNSHIP — More than 100 Macomb County schools were recognized by the Macomb County Board of Commissioners for their efforts in "going green" at the seventh annual Macomb County Green Schools program on April 1.

The Green Schools program began statewide in 2006, and the Board of Commissioners has facilitated the program for seven years. With 120 schools being recognized this year, board Chair Dave Flynn said Macomb County's participation is probably growing at the fastest rate throughout the state.

"Green Schools is a terrific program that instills the values of environmental stewardship and entrepreneurial ideas for students from elementary school to high school," Flynn said. "It's something where we can bring new ideas of how we can create more sustainable communities to kids at an early age, so those practices will endure throughout their lifetimes."

Participating schools are categorized into "green," "emerald," or "evergreen" status based on how many activities the school performs to pursue eco-friendly and environmentally sustainable practices.

The evergreen designation, which is the highest category, was awarded to 67 schools this year. Twenty-seven percent of schools earned an emerald designation, while 17 percent earned green designation. The 67 evergreen schools is an increase from 61 last year.

Crescentwood Elementary School in East Detroit Public Schools was named the overall top green school in Macomb County for the 2014-15 academic year.

**Cherokee Elementary (Chippewa Valley Schools) in Clinton Township took the top evergreen recognition.** Career Prep Center (Warren Consolidated Schools) in Sterling Heights was named the top emerald school, and Havel Elementary (Utica Community Schools) in Sterling Heights was the top green school.

The Robert G. Lutz School (Macomb Intermediate School District) in Clinton Township earned the inaugural “Super Recycler” award, and Fountain Elementary (Roseville Community Schools) in Roseville took home the first-ever “Creative Conservation” award.

Students and teachers from South Lake Middle School (South Lake School District) in St. Clair Shores, home to one of the county’s largest green school student organizations, spoke on their school’s successes in creating green programs.

“This is our eighth year of doing the Green Team. We recycle 10 to 15 large bins of paper each week. We’ve worked on beautifying the school by making a green garden outside, and have planted native species and created habitats for animals,” said Jill Stockwell, a teacher at South Lake. “The kids do all of the work. They have the ideas; they go and do it. We’re just the facilitators that make things happen sometimes.”

The winner of the program’s annual logo contest was St. Clair Shores’ Jefferson Middle School in Lakeview Public Schools. The winning logo out of entries from 34 schools represents Michigan’s Great Lakes, forests, Sleeping Bear Dunes and fall foliage.

Special presentations at the event were given by Justin Schott of EcoWorks and the Detroit Youth Energy Squad, and Kathy Klein of Waste Management.

As participation in the Green Schools program has continued to grow, Flynn said that he hopes the board can continue to help incentivize schools to bolster their efforts.

“We outreach to all of the school districts through the MISD early in the process, and continue to have new schools join up. That continues to be our goal every year,” Flynn said. “Hopefully we can continue to create mini grants for schools by fundraising. Schools will submit proposals for how they can create more energy-efficient projects in their community, and we can help sponsor those and fund them to help make them come to fruition.”