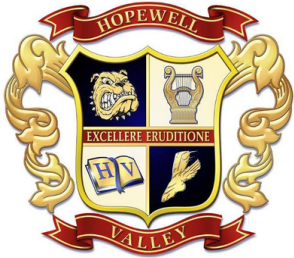


AMERICAN CLIMATE LEADERSHIP AWARDS High School Students

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PROFILE 2024

Advocating for Climate Change with Youth Mental Health: Hopewell Valley Central High School

Hopewell Valley Central High School students stood out for their advocacy work to address an issue they see as disproportionately impacting their generation: climate change and its impact on mental health.



[Watch Video](#)

In 2022, the Youth Environmental Society presented a Climate Action Proposal to the Hopewell Valley Board of Education, urging them to establish a path of ambitious climate action for our school district. Through our district's Climate Action Committee, we have worked alongside administrators, teachers, New Jersey DEP staff, and community members to create and implement the steps to move our district toward greater sustainability.

We established the necessity of quality trauma-informed climate justice education and led professional development sessions for educators in all subject areas in grades 6-12.

We met with our food service providers to identify ways to reduce waste in the cafeterias and are collaborating with the Rutgers University's Food Waste program. We performed a transportation audit to locate areas for traffic reduction and are working

to secure grants to support a transition to electric buses. We ensured all school counselors are trained in issues such as climate anxiety and are piloting a peer support group for climate emotions at our school this year. We are partnering with local environmental organizations to generate solutions for stormwater management on school grounds, and we are in the process of conducting a greenhouse gas inventory for the district.

On a state level, we wrote to the State Board of Education in support of the expansion of New Jersey Climate Education Standards. On a national level, we teamed up with Schools for Climate Action to draft, edit, and advocate for two House Resolutions, one establishing national climate education and the other providing climate mental health support for youth. We hope that our actions can serve as a model to address the climate crisis.