

# APRIL 2016 SUSTAINABILITY HERO



## SCOTT P. MCCARTNEY, ED. D. Superintendent, Egg Harbor Township School District

Dr. Scott McCartney is the Superintendent of the Egg Harbor Township School District, which is the largest school district in Atlantic County and has been one of the fastest growing districts in New Jersey. Under Dr. McCartney's leadership, all of the schools in his district achieved Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification in the first year of the program and the district was recognized with the 2015 Sustainable Jersey for Schools Leadership Award. Dr. McCartney's good nature and impressive accomplishments have set him apart as a leader in Egg Harbor Township. He takes pride in his self-described role as a servant to his church, family and community.

"The fact that all of our schools were certified with Sustainable Jersey for Schools is a testament to the dedication we have to this cause," said Dr. McCartney. "My approach to sustainability is pragmatic. Our sustainable practices not only save money for our taxpayers but they educate our students to be good stewards of the environment and conserve valuable resources." Dr. McCartney served on the Sustainable Jersey Board of Trustees and has received awards including the New Jersey and United States Department of Education National Green Ribbon Awards, NJ Governor's Environmental Excellence Award, USDEP Environmental Quality Award, Cenergistic National Quality Awards and Energy Star Awards.

### **Egg Harbor Township School District sustainability leader:**

Dr. McCartney oversees more than 1,000 employees with approximately 8,000 students and a budget of over 120 million dollars. Having one of the first and largest school solar programs in New Jersey and a very successful energy management program has provided the district over eight million dollars in savings to reapply to school programs and saving the taxpayer resources. "It's my job as a leader to keep my eyes and ears open for the next big thing. I have been fortunate to be surrounded by colleagues that are passionate about sustainability and I rely on them to guide me for what the District could do next." He said the school district is now working on air quality initiatives, farm to school programs, finding additional wind and solar programs and developing a partnership with local organizations to promote the watershed.



**Alder Avenue Middle School and the Catawba Project:** When Dr. McCartney was a student in the district, his elementary school science teacher David Crawford was an inspiration; he taught practical, hands-on science. Scott was lucky enough to work with Mr. Crawford 20 years later as a teacher in the same school district. This past year, Alder Avenue Middle School was certified with the Sustainable Jersey for Schools program. To review all of the actions that this school

accomplished, read the certification report: [Alder Avenue Middle School](#). Dr. McCartney said, “The impact of this one teacher has been incredible. Mr. Crawford brought together diverse stakeholders and thousands of students for events like an eco-system jamboree. He was teaching about problem solving and incorporating STEM before it was an acronym. His work is the cornerstone for the Egg Harbor Township School District’s sustainability program and he helped launch the Catawba Project.” The project continues to flourish under another great teacher named John Jones.

The [Catawba Project](#) is a grassroots environmental education program designed to partner Egg Harbor Township public school children with Township leaders, environmentalists, parents and community members to work together to help solve environmental problems. Guided by their teachers, the program puts students in charge of their own educational destiny championing causes, planning classroom activities and implementing high quality Service-Learning projects.



What began as a water quality testing classroom experiment in the year 2000 has grown into an award-winning environmental umbrella program that has impacted more than 5,000 Egg Harbor Township students and sparked many ancillary district projects including Fresh and Saltwater Expeditions, Outdoor Classroom sites, Reforestation project, Energy-Saving Solar and Recycling programs.

### **Egg Harbor Township High School achieves Sustainable Jersey for Schools silver-level certification:**

Egg Harbor Township High School started a composting program in the school and teaches the students about the different methods of composting. Prep food scraps from the kitchen staff are collected and put in bins set up in the teacher faculty rooms and several of the science classrooms. A group of dedicated students have been collecting the material, weighing it and then adding the right combination of carbon to nitrogen ratios for composting. A composting location has been set up on the campus.



Dr. McCartney said, “I am very proud of our school family for their hard work to create environmentally sound and sustainable practices in all aspects of our operation. I am also thankful for partners like Sustainable Jersey for Schools that has helped us advance with resources and sound research to take on new initiatives.” Review all of the actions that this school accomplished; read the certification report: [Egg Harbor Township High School](#).

**Advice for districts considering sustainability programs:** “Sometimes it’s hard for me to understand my colleagues that are tentative about doing sustainability initiatives. For Egg Harbor Township School District, the rewards have been so positive versus the risks. Your initial motivation may not be a passion for sustainability, but you can’t live in New Jersey and not feel the need to find new solutions to our tightening resources. We had to look at our fixed costs and energy was a perfect area where we could find savings. We have had about eight million dollars in cost avoidance and savings due to changes in our energy portfolio and a lot of these changes are based on behavioral strategies. Every month I sit with my staff and we look at our energy use data. These savings help keep resources in the schools. If you don’t have the data in front of you, the changes will not be made.”

**Before becoming the superintendent:** Dr. McCartney began his educational career as a teacher in the Egg Harbor Township Schools in 1991. In 1997, he started as an administrator in the Hamilton Township Schools where he served as assistant principal and principal. As a principal of the George L. Hess Complex, Dr. McCartney and his school were awarded the National Blue Ribbon of Excellence by the United States Department of Education. Dr. McCartney then became the youngest Superintendent of Schools in the State of New Jersey at age 31 and worked in the PK-8 realm until returning to his home town and alma mater, Egg Harbor Township, in 2008.

**Leadership and professional accolades:** Dr. McCartney has served as an officer and/or member of various local and state boards and foundations including the Atlantic County Association of School Administrators, N.J. Association of School Administrators, Phi Delta Kappa, Community Partnership for Egg Harbor Township Schools, Inc. and Egg Harbor Township Education Foundation. He was recently named, K-12 Education Professional of the Year for his contributions to public education over the last 21 years. He was recognized with a National Blue Ribbon Award for Excellence in Education. He received the Distinguished Service and Leadership Award from Phi Delta Kappa, and was named the Atlantic County Superintendent of the Year (2014-15) and the New Jersey Superintendent of the Year, Southern Region (2014-15).

**Education that led to his current position:** Although he had an offer to attend the Air Force Academy, Dr. McCartney decided to take another path and went to Ursinus College in Pennsylvania. He took a variety of classes such as engineering, design, accounting and economics before he settled on a major in English and a minor in secondary education. “When I look back, I am thankful for all of the twists and turns of my life. As a superintendent, the classes I took in engineering prepared me for the building and design work we do at the schools and my accounting and economics classes laid the foundation for me to successfully manage budgets, while my English major helps me communicate,” Dr. McCartney said. “I may have struggled to find my path in college, but the diversions definitely help me today,” he added. After his first job in teaching, Dr. McCartney was encouraged to go back to school; he received a masters degree in Educational Administration from Rowan University and his doctorate in Educational Administration and Leadership from Seton Hall University.

**First in family to graduate from college:** Dr. McCartney has lived the majority of his life in Egg Harbor Township. His father was a kitchen cabinet maker and designer, a skill that Dr. McCartney learned from his father. Dr. McCartney had thought he might follow in his father’s footsteps since he enjoyed architectural design in high school. He said he remembers the day his father advised him to go to college to get a formal education so he could get ‘a rewarding job with benefits and a pension.’ Both of his parents valued education and Dr. McCartney was the first in his family to graduate from college.

**What you may not know about Dr. McCartney:** Dr. McCartney and his identical twin brother James both live in Egg Harbor Township. James is the senior pastor of Mission Point Church. Dr. McCartney said, “It is not uncommon for someone in town to mistakenly approach me with a question about their faith, or approach my brother James to talk about his child’s suspension from school.” And yes, Dr. McCartney admitted that he on occasion has switched places with his brother, a favorite was on April Fool’s day in school.

Dr. McCartney met his wife Jennifer after returning home from college. He was working as a hospital orderly and his wife Jennifer was doing a summer residency as a nursing assistant at what is now called Shore Medical Center in Somers Point. Dr. McCartney used his expert management skills to make sure that he was assigned to all of the calls associated with Jennifer’s work. The rest is history and they are the very proud parents of two children - Matthew, a freshman at George Mason University and Lauren, a senior at Egg Harbor Township High School who is moving on to Cedarville University to follow in her father’s educational footsteps. Dr. McCartney said, “Matthew and Lauren are good students but more importantly are even better people.” In his free time, Dr. McCartney is an avid reader and a self-described ‘mediocre but passionate golfer.’