



Central High School Beautifies Campus While Protecting the Mississippi River

November 2016 Snapshots

The vision to improve Central High School's campus began to take shape in the fall of 2011 through a dedicated group of parents, students, and community members, known as the Transforming Central committee. In partnership with the Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD), the Transforming Central committee and Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) developed a conceptual design to collect and filter rainwater onsite while also improving aesthetics.

Today, the original design has grown to include four kinds of clean water practices including rain gardens, tree trenches, an underground filtration system, and porous pavers near the front plaza. The goal of these projects is to collect and clean rainwater from the plaza and portions of Central High's roof and parking lot instead of allowing it to flow into storm drains and the Mississippi River. Together, these features will filter 1.4 million gallons of polluted rainwater each year. Water monitoring equipment will be installed this fall to allow for regular testing of rainwater before and after treatment.

As a part of project implementation, the CRWD staff worked closely with teachers to identify opportunities for student learning and a summary sheet was created with project details to use in coordination with existing curriculum. The project also added signage and an outdoor classroom to the campus as a part of the larger Transforming Central committee vision.



Britta Suppes (CRWD) discusses water level logger with teachers



Tree trench and permeable pavers



Lieutenant Governor Smith was among those in attendance

SPPS and the Transforming Central committee provided oversight, design feedback, and fundraising to help make this vision a reality. SPPS is also responsible for the operations and maintenance of the project.

CRWD provided technical support and financial resources in the amount of \$253,250. The Board of Water and Soil Resources awarded a grant in the amount of \$175,000 through the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

The beautification of Central High's campus along with the protection of the Mississippi River were celebrated on September 6, 2016 as a part of Saint Paul Central Day. CRWD staff and board members participated in Central High School's 150th anniversary celebration with special guests including Lieutenant Governor Smith, Mayor Coleman, Councilmembers Tolbert and Thao, Melvin Carter III, Principal Mackbee and Interim Superintendent Theirin as well as many teachers, students and alumni.