June 25, 2016

Mr./Ms. _____, Principal
Your School Name
Address

Dear Mr./Ms. Principal:

The Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, in Hesston, Kansas, is inviting K-12 teachers to apply for the 2017 Earth Partnership for Schools (EPS) Program. The program begins with a one-week institute, June 5-9 2017, in which school teams of 2-6 teachers are trained about prairie restoration. They learn about cultural and natural history as they do hands-on curricular activities. Developed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum since 1991, EPS has become part of the curriculum in over 200 schools in Wisconsin. The Dyck Arboretum was chosen by the UW-Madison Arboretum as one of 5 regional facilitating centers in 2005 to begin expansion of the program on a national scale. The Kansas EPS program is in its eleventh year and has facilitated a flourishing pilot program at Sunset Elementary School in Newton (started in 2006) and the birth of programs at 70 new schools/education entities from 2007 to 2016.

The EPS Summer Institute shows teachers how to restore a native habitat garden on school grounds and teaches a broad range of subject matter. The EPS teacher professional development model has been proven effective in increasing teacher collaboration and improving student learning. While focusing on ecology, native habitat gardening also incorporates subjects such as mathematics, history, science, social studies, language arts, art, and music. EPS works with schools restoring schoolyard habitats and improving K-12 education by engaging students in hands-on/minds-on learning. Dyck Arboretum staff will provide services, training, and consultations worth approximately $15,000 and help with finding available $ from various sources for seeds and plant materials. Friends University graduate credit (3 credit hours) is provided at the reduced fee of $85/credit hour for participating teachers.

EPS offers teachers an EPS curriculum correlated to Common Core/Next Generation Science Standards, substantial support, training, and expertise as they work with students to create a native habitat garden on school grounds. The program provides:

- Up to three Friends University graduate credit hours for each teacher who attends the week-long EPS Summer Institute, June 5-9, 2017
- one-day follow-up winter meeting in January
- professional, on-site consultation by Arboretum staff for the native garden site
- ongoing support to participating schools
- guidance and leadership for a prairie field trip
- school-wide in-service opportunity
- assistance with achievement of funding for plants

OVER

Box 3000 Hesston, Kansas 67062-2093 Phone 620.327.8127 Fax 620.327.3151 www.dyckarboretum.org

Arboretum staff will work with teachers to help them and their students envision, design and undertake a cooperative ecological native garden at their school. Before the institute, we will schedule a date and time for a site visit to meet with you and your teachers if desired to share expectations, set up a date for the school in-service, and address questions or concerns.

We ask that the following requirements be met to satisfy guidelines from our funders and our desire to maintain a high quality program:

1. Each participating school will provide space (area to TBD by school team) that is suitable for a long-term native habitat garden.
2. The school commits to the development of a native garden at the school and its subsequent use as a teaching tool in keeping with the school's long-range plan, professional development plan, and mission.
3. Schools will form a planning team to infuse and integrate the native habitat garden project into the school's curriculum.
4. Schools will provide substitute teachers for the one-day winter meeting (date to be determined at summer institute) and allow for an in-service and project planning time.
5. Our funders at times request evaluation of Earth Partnership for Schools Program activities. Your school may be asked to participate in program evaluations and/or to provide classroom and student assessments. In no case will student names be required.
6. We may take photographs of students participating in the native gardening process. We will need permission to use the images.

We are very excited about this opportunity and look forward to working with your teachers and school. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at 620-327-8127 or e-mail: brad.guhr@hesston.edu. New schools are already signing up so consider soon how a team might be put together at your school so you can be involved in this next EPS group. Limited team spots are available. Sign up today!

Sincerely,

Brad Guhr
Earth Partnership for Schools Program Manager
Dyck Arboretum of the Plains

I have read the above and understand the requirements of the program:

_____ (Principal Signature)

_____ (Principal Name, PLEASE PRINT)

Dyck Arboretum of the Plains
Earth Partnership for Schools:
Summer Institute

TEACHER FORM

Complete 1 teacher form per team member for a total of
2 – 6 forms submitted with your application.

Name (Please Print) **Grade/Curriculum Area(s)**

_____ _____

Preferred Name: _____

School Address (Include Name) **Home Address**

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

School Phone_____ **Home or Cell Phone** _____

E-mail Address: _____

Years of Teaching Experience: _____

Where did you hear about applying to the Earth Partnership for Schools Program?

Please summarize why you would like to be a participant in the Earth Partnership Program.

What history of collaboration do you have with teachers and others in your school community?

What experiences have you had which you could bring to this program?

I understand that as a participant in the Earth Partnership for Schools Program I will:

1. **Commit a minimum of two years to the Earth Partnership for Schools project.**
2. **Attend the Summer Institute (June 5 – 9, 2017) and a one-day winter meeting (date to be determined during the Institute.)**
3. **Form an on-going curriculum/site team at the school.**
4. **Work with students to develop a native habitat garden at the school site or within the community.**
5. **Assist Arboretum staff with implementing an in-service.**
6. **Participate in program evaluation as requested by Earth Partnership for Schools Program funders.**

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Print Name)

Send to Brad Guhr (bradg@hesston.edu) at Dyck Arboretum of the Plains (Phone-620-327-8127/Fax-620-327-3151), Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. Limited team spots are available for 2017. Sign-up now!