

Bayberry School honored for sustainability efforts

By **ALEX PARKER-MAGYAR**
EDITOR

WATCHUNG - Sustainable practices at Bayberry School have landed the elementary school on an elite list.

Bayberry earned bronze-level certification in the 2018 Sustainable Jersey for Schools program. Sustainable Jersey is a nonprofit organization that encourages and rewards schools and municipalities for green practices.

Of the 779 participating schools in the state, only 111 earned Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification this year.

The Board of Education is "very proud" of the designation, Board President Margo Langer said at a meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 12.

"We will continue to move forward with these sustainability projects to enhance our environment, save money and teach our children about sustainability," she said. "This certification provides tools, training and financial incentives for schools. We are very proud of this accomplishment and we will continue to strive to attain



MARGO LANGER



TINA KELLY

even higher status from the state."

She noted Valley View Middle School is working to attain bronze status as well.

Bayberry is the only school in the Watchung Hills communities to earn certification this year.

Watchung Hills Regional High School was certified bronze in 2017.

Certified schools must meet a rigorous set of requirements in categories including board leadership and planning, energy efficiency, food and nutrition, green design and more.

Schools must meet a minimum score of 150 points based on various sustainable actions. Bayberry School earned 171.

Only 10 of the 111 schools earned silver certification, which requires a score of 350 or higher. There is no gold level.

Board Vice President

Tina Kelly noted the district will now be eligible to apply for various Sustainable Jersey grants.

"The certificate, as I stated, is a prestigious designation," she said. "It helps schools to pursue a balanced, sustainable program, one policy, one program or resource audit at a time.

"The benefit is that the school will be able to implement practices that lead to cost savings in energy, water and even garbage bills. So the program will actually help improve efficiency, cut waste and free up money for the classrooms, which is wonderful."

The elementary school will be honored with the other winners at a New Jersey School Boards Association meeting in Atlantic City on Tuesday, Oct. 23.

"We applaud the schools that have achieved certification this year," Randall Solomon, executive director of Sustainable Jersey, said in a press release. "Their leadership and hard work will help New Jersey continue to evolve through their advancement of equitable, sustainable and innovative practices."