

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
GreenRibbonSchools
School Nominee Presentation Form

ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS

School and District's Certifications

The signatures of the school principal and district superintendent (or equivalents) on the next page certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of their knowledge. *In no case is a private school required to make any certification with regard to the public school district in which it is located.*

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades Pre-K-12.
2. The school has been evaluated and selected from among schools within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental education.
3. Neither the nominated public school nor its public school district is refusing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district wide compliance review. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is not subject to the jurisdiction of OCR. The nominated DoDEA schools, however, are subject to and in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements to comply with Federal civil rights laws.
4. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the public school district concluding that the nominated public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.
5. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
6. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the public school or public school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or public school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.
7. The school meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools 2015-2018

Public Charter Title I Magnet Private Independent Rural

Name of Principal: Dr. Terri North-Byrts

Official School Name: Woodland Forrest Elementary School

Official School Name Mailing Address: 6001 Hargrove Road East, Tuscaloosa, AL, 35405

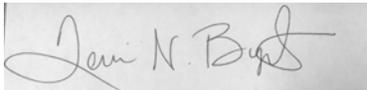
County: Tuscaloosa State School Code Number *: 0195

Telephone: 205-759-3675 Fax: 205-759-3675

Web site/URL: <https://www.tuscaloosaschools.com/WFES> E-mail: tbyrts@tusc.k12.al.us

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space*

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.



Date: March 23, 2018

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent: Dr. Michael J. Daria

District Name: Tuscaloosa City

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.



Date: March 23, 2018

(Superintendent's Signature)



Nominating Authority's Certifications

The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority's knowledge.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades Pre-K-12.
2. The school is one of those overseen by the Nominating Authority which is highest achieving in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
3. The school meets all applicable federal civil rights and federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency: Alabama Department of Education

Name of Nominating Authority: Mrs. Mary Dansak

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Dansak". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Date: March 23, 2018

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

SUMMARY AND DOCUMENTATION OF NOMINEE'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Provide a coherent summary that describes how your school is representative of your jurisdiction's highest achieving green school efforts. Summarize your strengths and accomplishments in all three Pillars. Then, include concrete examples for work in every Pillar and Element. Only schools that document progress in every Pillar and Element can be considered for this award.

SUBMISSION

The nomination package, including the signed certifications and documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to green.ribbon.schools@ed.gov according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509

Expiration Date: March 31, 2018

Public Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1860-0509. Note: Please do not return the completed ED-Green Ribbon Schools application to this address.

Alabama State Department of Education Nomination of Woodland Forrest Elementary School to 2017-2018 ED-GRS Green Ribbon Schools

Woodland Forrest Elementary School Green Ribbon Highlights

Woodland Forrest Elementary School is a place where all students embrace our motto: “Discovery Starts Here!” Located on 15 acres of land in the Hurricane Creek Watershed, Woodland Forrest serves 527 pre-K through 5th grade students as part of the Tuscaloosa City School system. Woodland Forrest makes a great effort to ensure that all students experience the excitement of science, and discover that the environment is worth saving. Serving as the *Discovering Alabama* model school, a *Leader in Me* school, and a Title 1 school, we at Woodland Forrest believe that all students can be leaders, taking responsibility for both themselves and their impact on the environment.

Abundant and purposeful nature areas are available around our school for students to experience learning outside the classroom. Woodland Forrest is proud to be the home of an Alabama Certified Outdoor Classroom, which includes vegetable and butterfly gardens, a pond with recirculating water-flow waterfalls, sensory gardens, a bird sanctuary, and a nature trail. Our students experience science in this real-life setting, gaining valuable opportunities to learn about their place in our natural ecosystem. Students learn the importance of crop rotation, integrated pest management, and composting by utilizing their garden. Not only do they participate in planting and tending to their gardens, but they eat what they reap! This truly brings their learning to life.

Our outstanding efforts toward environmental education have been recognized by several entities. Print publications featuring our approach to environmental education have appeared in *The Tuscaloosa News*, the University of Alabama’s *Museum Chronicle*, and the University of Alabama’s *Capstone Educator*. Woodland Forrest has written and received grants totaling over \$17,000 which have been used to improve the Outdoor Classroom, to control drainage and runoff in Outdoor Classroom and Nature Trail, and to build a covered amphitheater which can hold an entire grade level for outdoor classes. We are very proud that our school has been featured on the Emmy Award winning television show *Discovering Alabama* with Doug Phillips in recognition of being named their Model School. In the documentary, which aired on Alabama Public Television and other local stations, our students were showcased as they discovered that Woodland Forrest is part of the Hurricane Creek watershed, and then took a canoe trip down the creek to explore the diversity of the region, learning how development impacts our environment and the water flow along the way.

As well as tending to learning about our environment, we take the health of our students and staff seriously. We believe in mental and physical health as being essential for student well-being, and we ascribe to the American Psychological Association's claim that being in nature provides psychological and physical benefits for children and adults. Woodland Forrest students participate directly in pest management by hand-picking bugs off plants in the garden. Our school uses cleaning products from companies such as Spartan Chemical, Solution, and Consume who are committed to safe, sustainable practices. We strive for our students to spend at least 30% of their time outdoors, and encourage our staff to maintain optimal health through participation in programs such as Scale Down Alabama and partnering with Tuscaloosa Parks and Recreation for discounted memberships to their fitness services. Our students learn to recognize and report bullying through the Harassment Awareness Learning Together (HALT) program and as a *Leader in Me* students.

Woodland Forrest has taken measures to reduce our energy consumption by building four prototype classrooms which utilize natural light and environmentally friendly materials. We plan to expand this upgrade. We have made several other changes in our school as well, earning us an Energy Star rating of 90. We conserve water by utilizing rain barrels for our garden, and by using timed irrigation systems which reduces unnecessary watering. Our students are active recyclers. They participate in the local phone book recycling contest, work to recycle on campus, and compost their uneaten fruits and vegetables to fertilize their gardens. Our students even recycle bicycles! We institute a No-Idle zone for our busses, and plan to do the same with our carpool area, which is already well regulated for smooth and efficient pick-up of children. We don't like to waste a thing here, not even time.

Woodland Forrest has multiple partnerships which provide content deepening opportunities for our teachers and students, as well as exposure to real life careers in environmental, sustainability, and STEM careers. We host a Family Science Night to showcase a culmination of months' worth of classwork on our STEM projects. Our last two Family Nights were each attended by over 500 people! We also host DiscoverFest, an Earth Day celebration, and invite community partners to visit and share their expertise. Our students participate in STEM lessons such as wiring cardboard rooms for efficient lighting, building model dams to harness the power of water, and designing a robot to test for nuclear radiation in a model failing nuclear facility.

These are only some of our efforts we make toward sustainability and environmental education. We are pleased to share the details of our work in each of the three pillars below. Please visit our webpage at <https://www.tuscaloosacityschoools.com/WFES>, or visit our Facebook page (Woodland Forrest Elementary School) to learn more!

Woodland Forest Elementary School Green Ribbon Elements in Detail

Pillar 1: Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs

Element 1A: Energy Savings

- Energy Star rating of 90
- Site Energy Use Intensity (EUI) is 30.6 kBtu/ft² (-39% Source EUI differentiation from the national average)
- Greenhouse gas emissions are currently 358 metric tons CO₂e/year, and we are working to find ways to reduce that further.
- Four prototype classrooms upgraded with energy efficient lighting on a sensor and seating made from more environmentally friendly materials; plans to expand this upgrade by the 2018-2019 school year
- Original 1974 building added onto in 1988 and 2000; additions upgraded lighting to meet recent requirements
- Heating and air conditioning controlled by central office, reducing excess heating and cooling during non-use hours as well as eliminating careless overuse
- Lightbulbs replaced with more energy-efficient bulbs
- Drink machines not back-lit, reducing energy pull
- Some common areas and 27 classrooms have windows making use of natural light
- Many paved walkways are covered and playground benches have large umbrellas to reduce heat island effect

Element 1B: Improved Water Quality, Efficiency, and Conservation

- Students learn about water conservation through the use of rain barrels in the Outdoor Classroom, and they learn about our naturally occurring landscape which provides buffers and prevents run-off.
- School-wide shut down procedures to conserve water and energy during breaks from school
- Use of rain barrels to collect water for the garden, and an irrigation system on a timer to prevent unnecessary watering, including peak hours

Element 1C: Reduced Waste Production

- Student led recycling program; recycling approximate 260 gallons of mixed materials/week
- Recycling includes oversized boxes
- Plans in place to involve students in data collection of recycling program
- School-wide ink cartridge recycling program
- Five year collaboration with local bike shop to recycle bikes; over 200 bikes given to needy children in the Tuscaloosa City Schools for Christmas
- Participation in phone book recycling program, winning awards frequently
- Participation in United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Department of Defense (DoD)'s *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program* to promote healthy eating habits
- Leftover fruits and vegetables composted and used in student gardens, in turn fertilizing produce which is used and consumed by students
- Disposable Styrofoam lunch trays replaced with reusable lunch trays

- Cleaning products obtained through Spartan Chemical, a company that has committed to sustainability, and Consume and Green Solutions, whose products are certified green
- Other cleaning products are non-toxic
- 100% of paper products used in restrooms have Certified Green Seal
- Hazardous waste protocol in place requiring removal of students from the area, and certified trained professionals brought in for clean-up; City of Tuscaloosa available to respond to any situation beyond what the central office is capable of handling

Element 1D: Use of Alternative Transportation

- Safe sidewalks and crosswalks
- Efficient car loading system in place which loads 2 rows, 15+ cars at a time before moving, cutting down on idle time and ensuring a safe loading process
- Plans to institute a No-Idle zone for carpool area
- Buses practice No-Idle, and load at least 25 feet from the building

Pillar II: Improve the Health and Wellness of Students and Staff

Element 2A: Integrated School Environmental Health Program

- Integrated Pest Management practices
- Students identify pest species in their garden (utilizing Bug ID lessons), hand-picking safely handled bugs and placing them in buckets of soapy water.
- Adults control larger pest outbreaks with organic chemical control methods (neem oil BT concentrate and diatomaceous earth).
- Beneficial insect populations, which prey on common garden pests, are encouraged by incorporating flowers and herbs into crop rotation.
- Practices in place to control pest outbreaks; routine pest checks and treatments performed by professional pest company using non-toxic chemicals
- Infestations spot treated after school hours
- Priority to cleanliness to deter infestations and pesticide use
- Suspend chemical (approximately 8 gallons a year) and nontoxic glue boards used
- School-wide tobacco free zone; signs posted on all entrance doors and website
- Radon and mold levels tested periodically
- Playground recently renovated to address concerns regarding potentially toxic material in wood
- Attention to asthma and chemical sensitivity addressed by the use of ecofriendly chemicals obtained through Spartan Chemical, who are committed to sustainability, as well as previously mentioned Consume and Green Solutions (certified Green)
- Exposure to perfumes, dust, and smoke is avoided or limited.
- Action plans provided by physicians and signed by parents in place for students with asthma; individual asthma triggers and interventions understood and plans followed by staff and teachers
- Thorough cleaning of the school done to reduce dust and other airborne particles
- Bags and jars of absorption materials placed in high humidity areas and changed out as needed
- Mold issues handled by professional cleaning crews
- HVAC systems compliant with nation/state standards with fresh air vents; filters maintained and changed by school and HVAC staff

- Now that EPA IAQ tools have been brought to our attention, we plan to look into the School Action Kit and begin implementation of the Teacher’s Classroom Checklist from the Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools.
- Permanent shade tops recently installed on benches, and natural shade reduce sun exposure.
- An acre of undeveloped land provides habitat for native plants and animals.

Element 2B: Health and Wellness

- Woodland Forrest adheres to the American Psychological Association’s report that being in nature provides psychological and physical benefits for children and adults, and consider mental and physical education and health as essential for student well-being.
- Students receive 180 minutes of physical education/week and 15 minutes of recess/day
- Weather permitting, students spend approximately 30% of time outdoors
- Students participate in Alabama Physical Fitness Assessment annually (students measured on sit-ups, sit- and-reach, one mile run)
- Students participate in Jump Rope and Hoops for Hearts to benefit The American Heart Associate every year.
- School system partners with community resources to provide health and wellness opportunities to students and staff.
- The Journey Program through Indian Rivers Mental Health provides school with a school-based therapist to service student with mental health issues including anxiety, depression, ADD, ODD, and ADHD
- Harassment Awareness Learning Together (HALT) program in place to address bullying; students sign a pledge to refrain from any type of bullying, and report bullying that they may witness; school counselor makes sure that students understand what bullying is as well as how to report it
- Stephen Covey’s 7 Habits of Happy Children used during age appropriate counseling lessons, taught by guidance counselor monthly
- Partner with Vision Research and Sarrell Dental to provide students with vision and dental screenings
- Tuscaloosa Parks and Recreation offers discounted membership for faculty and staff, including weight rooms, gyms, swimming pools, basketball courts, indoor tracks
- School participates in state-wide program, Scale Back Alabama, which provides incentives for school workers coming together to lose weight
- Health fairs are held quarterly, flu shots offered free of charge to faculty and staff
- Partnership with Schoolyard Roots, a local non-profit, to maintain an organic teaching garden; students plant, observe harvest, and cook garden produce while integrating Alabama state standards
- Students learn and follow sustainable crop rotation in raised beds, practicing integrated pest management and learning about the garden as an ecosystem.
- Students exposed to over 20 different garden vegetables, eating what they grow
- Fresh Fruits and Vegetable program; students receive fresh fruits and vegetables three times a week as a snack
- Students receive Alabama-grown Satsumas during the Christmas season.
- Full time school nurse available every day

- Partners with Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS) to provide Second Step lessons to all students with goal of preventing abuse, drug abuse, and neglect

Pillar III: Provide Effective Environmental and sustainability Education, Incorporating STEM, Civic Skills, and Green Career Pathways

Element 3A: Interdisciplinary Learning about Key Relationships between Dynamic Environmental, Energy, and Human Systems

- Students work in our teaching garden, in cooperation with non-profit School Yard Roots program, to plant, grow, harvest, and cook seasonal vegetables; crop rotation and integrated pest management are examples of learning about key relationships in the ecosystem.
- Plans are in place to upgrade and expand our outdoor classroom and garden areas to include more covered seating areas, upgrades to our sensory garden beds, additional vegetable garden beds, and the addition of American Disability Act (ADA) approved raised beds that are accessible for students with special needs.
- Students use our Nature Trail, which runs through approximately 2 acres of undeveloped forest land, to learn about native plants and natural wildlife habitats.
- In our Discovery Lab, classroom teachers collaborate with the science lab instructor in teaching lessons to help students understand our role in protecting the environment.
- Reading and social studies materials (*Reading Week* and *Weekly Reader*) purposefully integrate readings to support learning about our role in sustainability.
- Teachers participate in professional development opportunities including Project Wet; Project Wild; Project Learning Tree; Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative; Growing up Wild; Alabama Wildlife Federation; and Legacy to stay current on content related to this element.
- Our school partners with organizations such as Johnson Gardens & Café, Resource Conservation and Development, Alabama Museum of Natural History, Geological Survey of Alabama, and LEGACY to stay current on funding opportunities as well as for guidance.

Element 3B: Use of the Environment and Sustainability to Develop STEM Content Knowledge and Thinking Skills

- Many lesson incorporate STEM, with examples following.
- Students design a robot that will go into a failing nuclear facility and test for radioactivity in this real world simulation.
- Students construct a model dam to harness the power of water.
- Students design shoe box rooms wired with electricity including a light switch, conductors, insulators, and the conservation of energy; this lesson provided by Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI).
- Second grade students extend lessons on rocks and soil to explore which types of soil are better suited for growing plants.
- Students use model shorelines to experiment with erosion prevention strategies.
- Each grade level experiences AMSTI science lessons that focus on STEM activities, investigations, and projects which develop students' understanding of environmental and sustainability issues.

- School hosts “DiscoverFest,” our Earth Day celebration; community partners visit and share their expertise
- DiscoverFest celebrations guest include a local bee keeper who brings a demonstration hive to teach students about bee conservation, and allow them to taste honey, teaching the benefits of bees
- Other Discover Fest partners are AMSTI, Enviroscape, Moundville Archaeological Park, the Alabama Wildlife Federation, Tue University of Alabama Natural History Museum, Discovering Alabama, and Tuscaloosa Environmental Services
- Partnership with the University of Alabama College of Education; elementary math professors received a grant in 2016 that allowed incorporation of a Math Trail into the already established Nature Trail
- Woodland Forrest hosts Family Science Night, a culmination of months of classwork on STEM projects; over 500 people have participated each year (implemented two years ago); family participation emphasized in this Title 1 school

Element 3C: Civic Skills and Green Career Pathways

- Students explored how the construction of neighborhoods impact the environment and water flow through a canoe trip down a creek; featured on Discovering Alabama (Alabama Public Television and other local stations)
- Exposure to various green career pathways through the interaction of speakers and experts that come to Woodland Forrest and directly interact with students (examples include representatives from Alabama Power, Tuscaloosa City Environmental Services, Alabama Wildlife Federation, Discovering Alabama, UA Honors College and Center for Service and Leadership, Master Gardeners
- Responsibility for food choices encouraged through the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program; anecdotal observations of students discussing their decisions are frequent
- Interest inventories conducted to determine interest in green career pathways
- Students learn civic skills by applying for school-wide jobs such as serving on the recycling team, a very popular job.