

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 early learning to 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 and sustainability 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: **Mr. Joshua Long**

Official School Name: **Southside Occupational Academy High School**

Official School Name Mailing Address: **7342 South Hoyne Avenue, Chicago 60636**

County: **Cook** State: **Illinois** School Code Number *: **150162990253765**

Telephone: **(773) 535 9100** Fax: **(773) 535 9110**

Web site/URL: www.southsideacademycps.org E-mail: **jnloug@cps.edu**

**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.



(Principal's Signature)

Date: **March 16, 2018**



Name of Superintendent: **Ms. Zipporah Hightower**

District Name: **Chicago Public School**

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zipporah Hightower".

Date: **March 17, 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: Illinois State Board of Education

Name of Nominating Authority: Tony Smith, Ph.D.

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 black ink, appearing to read "Tony Smith".

Date: 3/21/18

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

SUBMISSION

The nomination package, including the signed certifications, narrative summary, documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars, and photos should be submitted online 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.

“Daily Affirmations of Environmentalism and Special Needs Students on Chicago’s Southside”

Southside Occupational Academy is a vocational school of 270 special needs children between the ages of 16-22 in Chicago’s West Englewood community on the south side. Our school motto is: “We believe in ourselves. We learn in different ways. We understand we are important. We excel in school, work and in the community.” It is through this anthem that we, repeat daily, that we hope to inspire and encourage our students to live and breathe a better life. With these goals in mind, we are creating a closed-loop system where we can support our students and community. Politico recently published an article featuring our programs and ethos, highlighting the collaborations we have formed with Chicago-based institutions as well as the work we are doing in West Englewood. SOA is changing the way we think about and practice special education by expanding the network of possibilities that those with special needs can pursue and creating a space and community, within itself, to allow students to model lifestyles and behaviors that lead to healthier lives and help contribute to a healthy environment.

In recent years, Southside has been able to reduce environmental impact and cost. As an institution focused on increasing student independence, many of our courses have teamed together to not only contribute to the maintenance of the school’s landscaping, but also use the space for instructional purposes. Horticulture class uses the outside space for gardening various ornamental plants as well as fruits and vegetables. The custodial course uses “green” cleaning materials, and contains a unit focused on landscaping, where native plants are used to create rain gardens to help reduce wasteful runoff. Our lawn is kept and maintained by our students and rakes the clippings for mulching our school orchard or adding to our growing vermicomposting program. The agriculture course also helps in beautifying the campus by planting trees, perennial bulbs and grasses and native pollinator habitats. Also, by collaborating with the carpentry lab, they have constructed honey bee hives that have been utilized on campus, in addition to raising our very own poultry coop which houses a combined 50 chicken and ducks, and produces over a dozen eggs a day. These eggs are then used by our culinary lab or sold to faculty and staff to fund additional programs. Additionally, PE classes also use our green space when practicing for various Special Olympics sports. While making use of green space, students also learn about how to minimize their carbon footprint. For this reason, we have a built in travel training program. Public transportation is the most realistic way for students to get from place to place while also helping the environment.

The health and wellness of students and staff is at the forefront of Southside’s focus. Last year, Southside began implementing a classroom technique, Calm Classroom. Three times a day, teachers read or play a meditative video for students to listen to. This practice teaches both students and staff the importance of mindfulness. As teachers, our days are often filled with never ending to do lists and stress. Many of our students also face various forms of stress and anxiety. Calm Classroom provides us with 3 to 5 minutes of meditation three times a day. Students have had a very positive reaction to this, often using the practice as a coping mechanism or preferred reinforcer. The ideas of health and wellness are also stressed throughout course selections. Culinary arts, health and PE classes all contribute to physical and mental health. The purpose of the Health course is to introduce the maintenance and promotion of health and explain how it is achieved. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. Systematic activities to prevent or cure health problems and promote good health in humans are delivered by health care providers. In addition to health care interventions and a person's surroundings, a number of other factors are known to influence the health status of individuals, including their background, lifestyle, and economic and social conditions; these are referred to as "determinants of health". This course is designed to help students develop the ability to achieve socially responsible behavior. Students will be encouraged to become a

productive and independent family member, citizen, employee, and participant in a variety of a vocational/leisure activities. Physical education involves competency in a wide range of motor, non-motor and manipulative skills. Learning in this area is developmental, building simple movements into more complex patterns. This course is also designed to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports to prepare students to participate in Special Olympics. This two-fold approach to health helps to our students to develop a clear and habitual practice of both physical and mental health.

The importance of “respecting the environment” is incorporated into every class at Southside as students are asked to self-assess how they did in terms of “Respecting themselves, respecting others, and respecting the environment.” This fortification of environmental literacy incorporated throughout the curriculum has established a culture of young environmental stewards, as well as, kind and compassionate young adults.

School Applicant Information

1. School Name: Southside Occupational Academy High School
 District Name: Chicago Public Schools
 Street Address: 7342 South Hoyne Ave.
 City: Chicago; County: Cook
 Zip: 60636
2. Website: <http://www.southsideacademycps.org/>
 Facebook page: @southsideocc
3. Principal Name: Joshua Long
 Principal Email Address: jnlong@cps.edu
 Phone Number: 1 (773) 535 9100
4. Lead Applicant Name (if different): Naaman Gambill and Elizabeth McCarthy
 Lead Applicant Email: nmgambill@cps.edu emccarthy2@cps.edu
 Phone Number: (312) 989 – 0551 (708) 738 – 1335

Level <input type="checkbox"/> Early Learning Center <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary (PK - 5 or 6) <input type="checkbox"/> K - 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Middle (6 - 8 or 9) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High (9 or 10 - 12)	School Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private/Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Magnet	How would you describe your school? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural	Is your school in one of the largest 50 districts in the nation? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Total Enrolled: 270
Does your school serve 40% or more students from disadvantaged households? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	% receiving FRPL: 87.8% % limited English proficient: 10.4% Other measures: Click here to enter text.		Graduation rate: 98% Attendance rate: 91.8%

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School Summary and Highlights:

- 1. Please describe your school's efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs; improve student and staff health; and provide effective environmental and sustainability education. Please highlight any benchmarking initiatives and unique or innovative practices. *Note: This text may be used in promotional publications that describe the winning nominees.***

Southside Occupational Academy's mission is "to foster a safe and supportive environment for all students to participate in individualized transition education, capitalizing on students' interest and strengths while preparing them to become contributing members of their community." As we teach our students to be contributing members of society, we also instill an understanding of the term respect. Each morning we recite our school motto. "We respect ourselves. We respect others. We respect the environment." Each student at Southside Occupational Academy (SOA) has a clear understanding of these three statements. Regardless of their disability, our student body exhibits care and concern for their environment in their every day activities such as following our recycling and compost system or minimizing their water usage.

- 2. Does your school have a forum where those involved in its daily operation (e.g. students, teachers, maintenance staff and cafeteria staff) meet to discuss and implement green initiatives? If so, please describe some the forum's recent accomplishments and future plans:**

Our Instructional Leaders Team (ILT) meets bi-weekly to discuss school initiatives and concerns. This team is comprised of administrators and teachers who express care and concern for bettering our school in all ways possible.

- 3. Please list any awards or special recognition that your school, staff or student body have received in the last five years for facilities, health, or environment literacy; please list the award(s) and the years they were given.**

In the last five years, we have increased our environmental awareness by participating in the district's pilot of zero food waste composting. We have also been named an exemplary supportive school. This school has a strong commitment and robust systems to support social and emotional learning (SEL). Documents, observations, and interviews with students, parents, and other members of the school community demonstrate that SEL is a core part of students' experience and the learning environment meets CPS School Climate Standards

Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs

A. Energy

- 1. Do you track energy use in ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager®, or other way in district?**
 Yes No
- 2. If so, how have you tracked your resource usage, for how long, and how has your usage dropped over that time? (Data or graphs can be submitted as a separate supportive document if desired.)**
Our Chicago Public School Chief Operating Engineer monitors the usage of the entire school district.

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3. **Please describe the strategies you have implemented or planned to reduce your energy consumption.**

We have incorporated the use of smart light switches in some rooms and also worked with staff to turn off all appliances when they leave at the end of the day. Computing devices are also set up with a power saving feature.

4. **What percentage of your school's energy is obtained from:**

- a. **On-site renewable energy generation:** None.

Type: [Click here to enter text.](#)

- b. **Purchased renewable energy:** None.

Type: [Click here to enter text.](#)

- c. **Participation in an energy cooperative, USDA Fuel for Schools, DOE Wind for Schools or other school energy program:** None to our knowledge.

5. **In what year was your school originally built?** Southside Occupational Academy was originally built in 1987.

6. **What is the total building area of your school?** Between our two buildings, the total area takes up 50,000 ft.²

7. **Please describe any new construction or major renovations at your school in the past ten years, including the date, the percentage of area renovated. Describe how you achieved green building or similar standards and any certifications earned.**

We have not added on to the building. However, we have installed a series of learning gardens, a fruit orchard, and a chicken/duck coop with the intent of decreasing our carbon footprint and increasing environmental stewardship of our students.

8. **Please describe your sustainability policy and practice for new or renovated construction materials and building maintenance.**

Our goal is to re-use as many materials as possible in order to refrain from placing additional items in landfills.

B. Water and Grounds

9. **Can you demonstrate a reduction in your school's total water consumption from an initial baseline or describe your best practices to limit water usage? For example, calculate your change in water usage (in gallons per occupant) over a specified period of time, or a reduction in water used for irrigation.**

Recently, we have added eco-friendly water fountains. These fountains include a bottle filling station which automatically shuts off when a water bottle or cup is full. This has not only reduced our total water consumption but also decreased the amount of plastic used throughout our campus.

10. **What percentage of your landscaping is considered water-efficient and/or dedicated to ecological or instructional use? Describe the kinds of plants used and locations:**

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100% of our landscaping is dedicated to instructional use. Our horticulture class uses the outside space for gardening various ornamental plants as well as fruits and vegetables. The custodial course contains a unit focused on landscaping. For this reason, our lawn is kept and maintained by our students. Our agriculture class also helps in beautifying the campus by planting seasonal trees and grasses. Lastly, PE classes also use our green space when practicing for various Special Olympics sports.

11. Describe the water sources used for irrigation, including any cisterns or rain barrels.

Our garden contains multiple rain barrels that collect water which is then used to hydrate our plants. We have also implemented a drip irrigation system for our production gardens.

12. Describe any efforts to reduce storm water runoff (e.g., rain gardens) and/or reduce impermeable surfaces.

SOA has designed through the use of burms, rain gardens, rain barrels, native perennial gardens, and water reclamation areas, to limit wasteful runoff and conserve water. These areas are maintained by students and are utilized by the entire campus.

C. Waste and Chemicals Management

13. Describe the strategies you use to divert solid waste (e.g., trash, cafeteria waste, paper, or landscape waste) from landfills due to reduction, recycling and/or composting. Complete the calculations below or provide reduction rates:

We have in place a school wide vermicomposting program. Classrooms and the cafeteria are encouraged to separate differing waste in our three bin system, of waste, recycling, and compost. These are then sorted and appropriate materials are added to the vermicomposting bins.

14. What percentage of your school's total office and classroom paper content is post-consumer material, fiber from forests certified as responsibly managed and/or chlorine-free?

98% of our paper comes from responsibly managed sources and acid free products.

15. List the types and estimated quantities of chemicals (e.g., laboratory materials, cleaning products, pesticides) managed at your school, and how they are stored, disposed of, and minimized:

Lab materials and cleaning products related to a specific class are stored in the classroom in a locked cabinet with visuals to remind students of safety precautions. Pesticides are controlled by our hired lawn maintenance team. All pesticides are sprayed during non-school hours and disposed of away from the school building by the team.

16. Describe how your school purchases environmentally preferable products for use by students and staff:

In order to make a purchase through CPS, we must first find a preferred vendor for the product we are looking for. Once we have found a vendor, we look for the most eco-friendly option taking special consideration when thinking of packaging.

D. Alternative Transportation

17. What percentages of your students walk, bike, bus, or carpool (2 or more students in the car) to and from school? Please explain how these numbers are obtained and calculated, and describe any

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improvement in this area over time.

Southside is a specialty Chicago Public School. For this reason, students travel from areas of the city. Because of this, 100% of our student population uses a school bus or CTA

18. Describe the plans or strategies to increase the number of students walking and biking to school.

Less than 5% of our students live within walking distance. Given the high crime rate of the area, it is not feasible to encourage students to walk or bike to school.

19. Has your school implemented any of the following? Check all that apply.

- Designated carpool parking stalls.
- A well-publicized no idling policy that applies to all vehicles (including school buses).
- Vehicle loading/unloading areas are at least 25 feet from building air intakes, doors, and windows.
- Safe Pedestrian Routes to school or Safe Routes to School.

Describe activities in your safe routes program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

20. Describe how your school transportation is efficient and has reduced its environmental impact:

Because of our specialty school label, our students travel from all over the city. To reduce the environmental impact, there are several shared bus routes. Some of our students also use the CTA to get to and from school.

21. Describe any other efforts toward reducing environmental impact, focusing on innovative or unique practices and partnerships:

To increase a student's level of independence and reduce environmental impact, we have a travel training program embedded within our school. Our travel trainer teaches students about public transportation, how to use it and addresses any safety concerns voiced by the student and/or their family.

Pillar 2: Improve the health and wellness of students and staff

A. Environmental Health

1. Describe your school's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program, including any certifications earned, routine inspections, pest identification, monitoring, record-keeping, and pest prevention activities.

SOA subscribes to an organic IPM approach whenever possible. The utilization of Neem oil, and garlic spray, as well a reliance on mechanical approach where possible. Also, we have incorporated biological controls in our horticulture and agricultural programs, applying 'ladybugs' to our produce and grow towers to minimize aphids and mealy bugs, on our produce.

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2. **Describe the efforts or practices you have in place to minimize or eliminate the use of pesticides, both indoors and outdoors.**

As many of our population has asthma or health concerns, we do not spray any herbicides or pesticides on the grounds, unless they are organix methods such as Neem oil.

3. **Describe the actions taken or the practices your school employs to minimize or eliminate exposure to the following specific hazardous contaminants (if applicable):**

a. **Elemental Mercury**

b. **Carbon Monoxide from fuel burning equipment or appliances**

c. **Radon**

d. **Chromated Copper Arsenate in wooden playground equipment**

e. **Others (e.g., Lead, Asbestos or PCBs)**

All fuel burning equipment and appliances are stored in our boiler room. This room is only accessible to our engineer. Our campus contains two playgrounds for the neighboring school. Both sets of equipment are made from recycled plastic.

4. **Describe policies and practices in place to promote security and life safety.**

We have a security staff member on duty, in both buildings, at all times. We also had cameras installed with our door bells so that security is able to see each person coming in and out of the buildings. It is protocol that when a student leaves one building to go to the other, an adult in that classroom, whether it be a teacher or assistant, must use our radio system to let the other building know that the student is coming over. In addition to these precautions, we also practice fire drills, lock down and shelter in place several times throughout the year. Practicing the drills helps students to become familiar with expectations as well as taking away any fear or anxiety students may feel.

5. **Describe actions your school takes to prevent exposure to asthma triggers in and around the school, such as animals in the classroom, sanitation, or other airborne contaminants.**

Our custodial class cleans both buildings throughout the the week, taking special note of areas that are more likely to be contaminated (handles, bathrooms and doors). They have also created a natural air freshener with students who struggle with asthma especially in mind. We have several different school pets but they are all kept in our Pet Store Lab to limit exposure. Our school therapy dog, Louie, is hypoallergenic for this reason as well.

6. **Describe actions your school takes to control and prevent leaks, moisture, condensation, and excess humidity; and to promptly cleanup mold or remove moldy materials when it is found.**

Our custodial class works with our custodial team, along with school engineer, to ensure that any building emergencies are addressed promptly and appropriately.

7. **Our school has installed local exhaust systems for major airborne contaminant sources.**

Yes No

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If Yes, list the rooms with these features and their uses:

Not to our knowledge.

8. **Describe your school's preventive maintenance program for the building's ventilation system, including unit ventilators to ensure it is clean and operating properly:**
Our custodial class works with our custodial team, along with school engineer, to ensure that any building emergencies are addressed promptly and appropriately.
9. **Describe actions your school takes to ensure that all classrooms and other spaces are adequately ventilated with outside air, consistent with state or local codes, or national ventilation standards, including any periodic measurements and record keeping:**
In addition to individual, room by room, HVAC systems, all of our classrooms have windows which provide open access to outside air.
10. **Describe other steps your school takes to protect indoor environmental quality such as implementing EPA IAQ Tools for Schools and/or conducting other periodic, comprehensive inspections of the school facility to identify environmental health and safety issues and take corrective action:**
Indoor Air Quality testing is provided by Chicago Public School engineers quarterly.
11. **Describe your green cleaning policies, equipment, products and practices, and green cleaning certifications or awards:**
Because of our student population, we use many soft chemicals and alternative methods as to not have a negative effect on our students who might be more sensitive than others. All of our chemicals are Green Seal certified.

B. Nutrition and Fitness

12. **Does your school employ the programs below to promote nutrition, physical activity and overall school health? Give details about program and successes:**
 - Participates in the USDA's Healthier US School Challenge.
: Our culinary class works with the cafeteria staff to ensure that both kitchens are providing students with healthy options.
 - Participates in a Farm to School program or similar local food program.
 - Our school has an on-site garden.
 - Our cafeteria provides fresh meals daily with healthy choices for students.
 - At least 50% of our students' annual physical education takes place outdoors.
 - Health measures are integrated into assessments.

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13. Provide specific examples of actions taken which are innovative or unique practices and partnerships:

SOA models smart health choices in multiple classrooms, scaffolding learning opportunities in our Culinary and Café Lab classrooms as to how to choose and prepare healthy food choices. We can then practice what we have learned in CBI trips throughout the city. Also, partnerships with local area non-profit organizations, such as, The Kitchen Community and Slow Food Chicago have helped introduce additional healthy alternatives, and additional learning opportunities for multiple classrooms.

14. Describe how outdoor education, exercise and recreation are promoted within the curriculum and outside the classroom.

PE and Health class often use our outdoor space for educational purposes. PE classes can often be observed stretching and running outside when the weather is nice. Special Olympics are a core part of our PE program and help students to recognize the importance of physical health while both exercising and having fun. Health class takes

15. Describe efforts to improve nutrition, health, fitness of students and staff, highlighting innovative practices and partnerships:

With the ongoing initiatives of the many environmentally focused themes, SOA is becoming a near closed-loop system. For example, the poultry program produces nearly two dozen eggs a day. These eggs are collected, cleaned, sorted, and stored; until they are sold either through our Staff Buy-Back Program, or at Farmers Market. The money raised from these sales goes back to the agricultural initiatives programs. These delicious eggs are also incorporated into our culinary program, where they can replace store bought eggs and help keep cost down.

C. Coordinated School Health, Mental Health, School Climate, and Safety

16. Does your school use a Coordinated School Health approach or other health-related initiatives to address overall school health issues?

Yes No

If yes, describe the health-related initiatives or approaches used by the school:

Last year, we began implementing Calm Classroom. This practice teaches both students and staff the importance of mindfulness. As teachers, our days are often filled with never ending to do lists and stress. Many of our students also face various forms of stress and anxiety. Calm Classroom provides us with with 3 to 5 minutes of meditation three times a day. Students have had a very positive reaction to this, often using the practice as a coping mechanism or preferred reinforcer.

17. Does your school partner with any outside institutions, businesses, clubs, nonprofit organizations, or community groups to support student health and safety?

Yes No

If yes, describe these partnerships:

Our school neighbors an elementary school, Randolph Elementary. Together, we have paired up to create service learning opportunities for their eighth grade students. Once a week, their students come to different classes within our building to learn about Southside and what it means to work with individuals with disabilities. Many Randolph students have stated that working with us is the high light

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to their week. It provides a “brain break” from their school work and a chance to practice empathy with someone who may be different from what they are used to. In creating this relationship, we also have fostered a sense of neighborhood security. Students from Randolph respect our buildings and students because they see the hard work and dedication from both staff and students of Southside.

18. Describe your school’s curriculum content for student health and fitness as well as its applied learning:

We have two courses that are dedicated to health and fitness. These include health class and physical education. The purpose of the Health course is to introduce the maintenance and promotion of health and explain how it is achieved. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. Systematic activities to prevent or cure health problems and promote good health in humans are delivered by health care providers. In addition to health care interventions and a person's surroundings, a number of other factors are known to influence the health status of individuals, including their background, lifestyle, and economic and social conditions; these are referred to as "determinants of health". This course is designed to help students develop the ability to achieve socially responsible behavior. Students will be encouraged to become a productive and independent family member, citizen, employee, and participant in a variety of a vocational/leisure activities, such as recreational pursuits and hobbies, and increase the probability that students will function more adequately in interpersonal relationships and problem solving situations. These skills are needed for home, community, recreational, and employment situations. People who have successful careers are typically quite skillful in the following areas: (a) achieving self-awareness; (b) acquiring self-confidence; (c) achieving socially responsible behavior; (d) maintaining good interpersonal skills; (e) achieving independence; and (f) making adequate decisions. Physical education involves competency in a wide range of motor, non-motor and manipulative skills. Learning in this area is developmental, building simple movements into more complex patterns. Learning to follow directions and rules enhances enjoyment and success in both recreational and competitive sports. Working toward higher levels of competence, students learn how to maintain health and fitness as individuals and as members of teams. This course is also designed to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports to prepare students to participate in Special Olympics. This two-fold approach to health helps to our students to develop a clear and habitual practice of both physical and mental health.

Pillar 3: Effective Environmental Literacy

1. Describe what *sustainability* means to your school or district in particular. How is sustainability included in your mission to educate students?

To us, sustainability means respecting the environment. This is embedded in everything we do. Each day, in each class, students give themselves grades on how well they respected themselves, others and the environment. This is included in our mission because our goal is create a level of independence in our students and guide them in becoming contributing members of their communities. A part of being a contributing member of society means being environmentally knowledgeable.

2. Does your school have a written definition and requirement for environmental literacy? Is there an assessment required?

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3. What practices, working groups, or committees does your school employ to help ensure effective environmental and sustainability education? Provide specific examples of actions taken.

2) Our definition is embedded in our ideal of “respecting the environment.” As stated, we require students to self-assess and provide examples of how they respected the environment throughout the class day. Students can give themselves a 0, 1, 2, or 3. A 0 would indicate that the student must try again tomorrow. A 1 would suggest that the student only respected the environment part of the time while a 2 would indicate that they respected the environment all of the time. A 3, however, states that the student went above and beyond in respecting the environment.

3) As a vocational, special needs school, SOA is committed to “Respecting the Environment” as one of our three daily affirmations, we repeat before the start of school. All classes are instructed to recycle and compost, and individual lab classes, such as, Custodial, Environmental Education, Horticulture, and Agricultural Sciences. These classes, in addition to our very ethos impart the importance and conservation of the environment, on a daily basis. Additionally, the school participates in culminating activities for our annual Earth Day Celebration.

4. Describe how your school promotes student and teacher engagement with the community and civic involvement outside the school? Have there been green themes to their work?

Our teachers and students are actively seeking ways to enhance educational opportunities for furthering educational experiences. Every Wednesday our students participate in Community Based Instruction, leaving campus and engaging in instructional opportunities throughout Chicago. These experiential learning environments reinforce the work initiated in the classroom and show our students real-world application. Our civics class also has a strong focus on service learning. They recently finished a project where they encouraged students and staff to clean out their pantries and donate canned goods to those less fortunate.

5. How does your school use sustainability and the environment as a context for learning STEM? How is sustainability and the environment incorporated into the curriculum in all areas?

As a speciality school for adults with special needs, STEM is not our main priority but rather, we have a strong focus on preparing these young adults for the world around. This includes caring for their environment, in whatever setting they might be in. Whether it be a classroom or their community, the focus is on ameliorating the space in which they inhabit.

6. How does your school use sustainability as a context for learning green technologies and/or career pathways?

The ultimate goal for SOA is to find employment opportunities for our students. With the emergence of green initiatives, there is an increased employment opportunity for student population. Our custodial, horticulture and agriculture classes serve as training opportunities for students to learn and master skills needed to follow green career pathways. While working on these skills, soft job skills are also embedded in the curriculum. Furthermore, community ties, such as McCormick Place, Museum of Science and Industry, Shedd Aquarium and Navy pier serve as burgeoning employment opportunities.

7. Describe how does your school share environmental education or sustainability events with other schools or organizations?

We know that in order to make actual change for the city it is by working together with others to make lasting change. By partnering with organizations like, The Kitchen Community, Green Corps, Advocates for

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Urban Agriculture, FFA, Chicago Park District, as well as other Chicago Public Schools; SOA has created a culture of sustainability and conservation, that serves all Chicago.

- 8. Does your school have a green team, garden club, or a community green committee on sustainability? Who participates? What kinds of project or activities do they undertake? What roles do they play in the school?**

Our four science teachers serve as the green team at SOA. We host several events throughout the year to build interest and understanding in the various areas of science. The culmination of what we have learned in practice throughout the year is our Earth Day celebration where students, staff and outside volunteers will work together on large, campus encompassing projects that will have a lasting impact on our school quality of life and increased educational opportunities. These include: planting an orchard, improving and implementing garden spaces, or the construction of the poultry coop.

- 9. If applicable, describe how the school grounds are devoted to environmentally educational uses: In the last three years SOA has redoubled its efforts to create an extended green spaces and sought to make the grounds ADA accessible. The newly constructed pathway links our track to pathways that incorporate our poultry coop and educational courtyard gardens along with our apple, pear, and cherry orchard. This now allows all of our students the ability to explore, examine, and learn in all areas of our campus.**

- 10. Describe students' outdoor learning experiences at multiple grade levels. How do they support curriculum content?**

At SOA, multiple grade levels are co-mingled to provide a more realistic transition experience. Students, ages 16 to 22, are enrolled in the same classes working together to create their own level of independence. Outdoor learning experiences occur in all of our classes. Agriculture class works outside in our chicken/duck coop, collecting eggs and providing food and water to the birds. Horticulture regularly plants outside to beautify our green space while custodial class maintains our lawns and hedges. PE often takes place outside, weather permitting, giving students a space to practice for our 17 Special Olympics activities. School dances and events are also held outside when the weather allows it.

- 11. Describe your partnerships to help your school and other schools achieve in the 3 Pillars. Include both the scope and impact of these partnerships:**

Southside's motto is: "We believe in ourselves. We learn in different ways. We understand we are important. We excel in school, work and in the community." It is through this anthem that we, repeat daily, that we hope to inspire and encourage our students to live and breath a better life. With these goals in mind, we are creating a closed-loop system where we can support our students and community. Our future programs seek to expand upon the foundation we have started at SOA. Politico recently published an article featuring our programs and ethos, highlighting the collaborations we have formed with Chicago-based institutions as well as the work we are doing in West Englewood. SOA is changing the way we think about and practice special education by expanding the network of possibilities that those with special needs can pursue and creating a space and community, within itself, to allow students to model lifestyles and behaviors that lead to healthier lives.

- 12. Describe other ways your school integrates sustainability into daily habits and culture of the school's staff, volunteers, students and community (ie: recycling days, no bottled water, murals, themed events, virtual backpacks, etc):**

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At the beginning of the year, all staff were gifted with a reusable water bottle. We are encouraged to use our water bottles, while at work, and refill them at our bottle station. This not only helps to decrease our carbon footprint but also encourages healthy habits among staff members. Each April, we host an Earth Day event where we celebrate all things our earth has to offer. This past year, we hosted our first Farmer's Market where we sold fruits, vegetables and plants we grew throughout the year. Our art classes also contributed by making pieces from recycled ceramic tiles. In addition to this, we also have a three-tiered recycling system. Our environmental science class monitors this system at each lunch period every day. One group focuses on reminding students what items can be composted while another reinforces positive recycling habits. Our last group double checks that items in the trash cannot be composted or recycled.

13. Any other school practices, visions, projects, plans or information you want to include to showcase the environmental work your school has achieved?

Our vision is to expand our agriculture program so that we can not only become more environmentally conscious as we continue to grow but also introduce students to green career opportunities. We feel that these two goals embody both the ideals of Southside Occupational Academy and Illinois Green Ribbon.

Supporting Materials (Optional)

Attach up to five images and one video file with your application.

Please provide a brief description (300 characters) for each. Please number image file to match its number below:

Image 1: This picture shows students watering different plants throughout our building. One will notice the plant is labeled with a sign that says "watered on ____." This helps students to see which plants have been watered so as not to over water or waste water.

Image 2: This image depicts students going out into the community to inform our neighbors of an event we hosted, The Urban Livestock Expo. The educational event informed Chicagoans of how to raise chickens, ducks, goats and bees in their backyards and the eco-friendly benefits.

Image 3: This picture shows one of our students making use of our educational gardens. Here, Areyon is taking great pride in the plant she has watched grow from a seedling.

Image 4: [Click here](#) to enter text.

Image 5: [Click here](#) to enter text.

Video 1: This video is a reminder for students of how we respect the environment. When students first start at SOA, our 3 R's are introduced and recited daily. These videos serve as a reinforcer and are shown at all school events. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1g8HIXzbVztIK-sqftMv5GBQEaZfitEc/view?usp=sharing>

Submit Your Application

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Applications must be received by 5:00 PM on Monday, February 12, 2018. Applications are being collected by the Illinois Green Alliance on behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

For an application to be considered, it must be **submitted via email** to info@illinoisgreenalliance.org. Submittals via other methods will not be accepted.

Questions? Contact Illinois Green Alliance at 312-245-8300.