

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

Public Charter Title I Magnet Private Independent Rural

Name of Principal: **Mr. Dexter Taylor**

Official School Name: **Paramount Brookside**

Official School Name Mailing Address: **3020 Nowland Avenue, Indianapolis IN, 46201**

County: **Marion**

Fax: **317-423-0569**

State School Code Number*: **5508**

Web site/URL: **www.paramountindy.org**

Telephone: **317-775-6660**

E-mail: **dtaylor@psoebrookside.org**

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



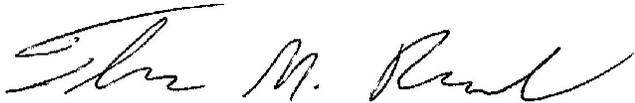
Date: December 2, 2020

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent: **Mr. Tommy Reddicks (CEO)**

District Name: **Paramount Brookside**

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



Date: December 2, 2020

(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: Indiana Department of Education (IDOE)

Name of Nominating Authority: Joseph Matthew Walsh "Matt", Academic Specialist

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



Date: January 26, 2021

(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, 2021

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.

Nominee Information

School, District, or Postsecondary Institution Name: **Paramount Brookside**

Category of Nomination: **School**

Address: **3020 Nowland Ave.** City: **Indianapolis** State: **IN** Zip: **46201**

Top official: Title: **Mr.** First Name: **Tommy** Last Name: **Reddicks**

Position/Role: **Chief Executive Officer** Email: **treddicks@paramountindy.org**

Phone: **317-519-4588**

Lead Applicant Title: **Mr.** First Name: **Chris** Last Name: **Larson**

Position/Role: **Director of Environmental Education** Email: clarson@psoebrookside.org
Phone: **317-775-6660 x2801**

Check all that apply:

Early Learning

Elementary

Middle

High

Public

Charter

Magnet

Non-Public

Two-Year

Four-Year

Community College

Career and Technical

Urban

Rural Suburban

Provide percentages, if any are relevant to your school, district, or institution:

Pell Recipients: **N/A**

Free and Reduced Lunch: **Combined 80%**

Minority: **78%**

Limited English Proficient: **8.2%**

Special Education: **15.1%**

Graduation Rate: **N/A**

Attendance Rate: **8-year average of 94.9%**

Provide the following:

Total enrolled: **837**

Number of Schools: **1**

Buildings: **1**

Campuses: **1**



Summary Narrative: An Overview of Your Work Encompassing All Three Pillars



The building's frontage shows three of the school's five turbines.

Established in 2010, Paramount Brookside is a kindergarten through eighth-grade public charter school, founded with the underlying philosophy of offering students an unparalleled academic approach and being a transformative force in its Indianapolis neighborhood. The school is Paramount Schools of Excellence's flagship campus. Paramount Brookside's Indianapolis neighborhood is within a Federal Promise Zone due to a 31% community poverty rate. For Paramount Brookside's students, neighborhood statistics are more than numbers on a page. The data reflects the significant

challenges that our students face daily. Currently, the school serves 837 students, of which 80% are from families with household incomes at or below the poverty level, 15% receive special education services, and 8.2% are English language learners. Paramount's student population is 47% African American, 27% Caucasian, 16% Hispanic, and 10% multi-racial.

Paramount accomplishes its mission through an emphasis on rigorous academics, technology, and the environment. The schools' education framework and hardworking staff have proven to be a successful combination. State testing consistently ranks Paramount among the top public schools in Indiana. Paramount Brookside is a 2018 U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School. The Indiana Department of Education designated Brookside as an "A" school for six consecutive years and one of the 200 Promising Practices for Accessibility in STEM Education. The Indianapolis Urban League awarded Brookside the School Excellence Award in 2018 and 2019. Additionally, the Education Equality Index recognizes Paramount for closing the achievement gap irrespective of a family's income. Paramount Brookside received the Thriving Schools Challenge Masters Certificate for its green school efforts, the highest green school designation from the City of Indianapolis's Office of Sustainability.

Since its beginning, Paramount Brookside has aimed to be a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization and a model of urban sustainability. Paramount's involvement is evident in the staff's active participation in the neighborhood association, community-wide summits, and clean-ups. Annually, Paramount Brookside presents the East of Downtown Neighborhood's annual Eastside Games. The week-long, Olympic-style games include events such as volleyball, bocce ball, horseshoes, dodgeball, table tennis, corn hole, cooking, frisbee golf, hockey, and track & field for all who live, work, or worship on Indy's Eastside.

Held on the Paramount school farm grounds, the TURN Festival (Transforming Urban Neighborhoods) is a yearly celebration of urban sustainability that focuses on farm, food, health, and environment. A natural outgrowth of the school's work in agroecology, the free event attracts more than 4,500 visitors for exhibits, workshops, children's activities, and demonstrations. Attendees find presentations on beekeeping, family gardening, healthy and kids' cooking, health and lead screenings, and more than fifty interactive displays. Proceeds from the festival's food booth and Farm to table dinner are shared with the neighborhood association and Slow Food Indy to fund community outreach efforts.



Over six years, the school transformed a desolate and overgrown portion of the campus into a welcoming pocket park for the Brookside Neighborhood. After the site's reformation, a collaboration with Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Reconnecting with Our Waterways, and Herron School of Art culminated in installing seven permanent artworks. The Park



The Paramount Peace Park's ADA compliant viewing ramp and *Indy Curves* sculpture, artist R.A. Buys.

embodies a unique incorporation of the space's physical assets with thoughtful connectivity to the neighborhood and the belief that art is an active component of "place-making." Among the Paramount Peace Park's forestry, visitors can view the sculptures at the street level or from two elevated observation decks accessible to everyone via an ADA compliant ramp. Representatives of the Mayor's Office of Disability Affairs and a U.S. Paralympic Gold Medalist helped dedicate the Park on the 2017 National Barrier Awareness Day.

Paramount Brookside is very fortunate to have a 5.5-acre site that has developed into a working farm", notes Tommy Reddicks, Paramount CEO. "Our school farm is an integral part of the school's STEM curriculum and offers Paramount students a multitude of unique learning opportunities." It serves as an outdoor learning classroom for students throughout the school year and Paramount's summer STEAM (Success Through Education Agriculture and Mentoring) program. The available land enabled the school to develop an extensive Environmental Education program. A staff of three environmental educators support classes, extracurricular groups, community initiatives and maintain farm operations for the 3.5-acre farm.

The Brookside Farm has ninety vegetable and ten herb beds, a seven-variety orchard, a pollinator and native prairie garden, a hoop greenhouse, and a Big Green Learning garden. Farm assets include a 2,200-gallon water cistern system, an outdoor classroom, composting bins, a shipping container barn, a chicken coop housing eight chickens, a goat barn, a run for four dairy goats, a two-hive apiary, and a cheese production kitchen. The licensed dairy operation is the basis for Paramount's artisan cheese enterprise. Rain or shine, students arrive before class to milk and care for the resident goat herd. Next, the milk is filtered, pasteurized, and processed into cheese in the on-site cheese kitchen. From start to finish, Paramount middle school students and staff handcraft the cheese. Two varieties of Paramount cheese are available for purchase at numerous Indianapolis retail outlets.

Paramount's STEAM program provides an in-depth work development and summer employment opportunity for thirty-two middle school students. Each student worker is assigned to a team that over eight-weeks rotates between farm staff and function. The rotation schedule includes livestock/cheesemaking, garden/Farm Market, and infrastructure projects/maintenance. Each concentration aligns with Indiana STEM academic and employability skills standards. Student workers are paid eight dollars an hour to help maintain the farm and operate a summer Farm Share and Farm Market. The school's foundation of more than 400 families allows it to have a meaningful impact on nutrition, quality, and access to healthier eating options for both students and their families. Annually, the Farm's gardens yield 2,022 pounds of vegetables resulting in 10,289 servings. Neighborhood food pantries receive any surplus harvest. Modeled after the Boston Food Project, STEAM continually connects theory with practical, hands-on activities. Additionally, school-year extracurricular Farm activities include Goat and Bee Teams and Recycling and Gardening Clubs. The Recycling Club is responsible for a school-wide recycling program that averts 86,000 pounds of mixed paper and cardboard waste from the landfill per school year.

Inside the school building, an Eco-Discovery Center offers additional onsite learning opportunities. The Center's resources include a butterfly hatchery, observation beehive, and a rooftop butterfly garden planted with Indiana native pollinators. Other campus green resources include five grid-tied wind turbines that provide an energy offset of eleven percent, two battery-based solar light arrays, and a sixty-seat electric bus.



Paramount Brookside exemplifies the community school model by blending a consistent and dedicated focus on the community to grow the academic environment. Cross-curricular, project-based investigations include partnerships with Purdue University, the Indianapolis Children's Museum, Indiana University, Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District, Marion County Farm Bureau, and other community education entities. The use of exciting components, like community fairs, neighborhood clean-ups, and farm activities, promotes students' civic engagement and combines experiential activities with academics.

For Paramount, students' zip codes do not determine excellence. The school's statistics reflect a multitude of ongoing challenges that students and staff face daily. Student wellness, nutrition, and family support services are critical school priorities to ensure that students thrive. All Paramount students receive a free, nutritious breakfast and lunch, with an additional 200 students also getting an after-school meal. A partnership with Gleaners, the local Feeding America affiliate, supplies 180 students weekend meals during the summer. During the Spring 2020 COVID campus shut-down, Paramount staff delivered 62,754 meals to students' households. Due to several identified risk factors, Paramount students are potentially at higher risk of lead exposure. Therefore, in partnership with the Marion County Public Health Department, Paramount conducts student and drinking fountain lead screenings. Student testing resulted in a 30% positivity rate. By identifying the students exposed to lead, the school can implement ongoing intervention strategies. Air quality improvements include an upgrade of the air filtration filters from a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) of 8 to MERV13, installing Purple Air sensors to monitor indoor and outdoor air quality levels, and launching Idle Free Zones for student drop-off and pick up. Every 10 minutes an engine is off saves one-pound of carbon dioxide from being released. Calculated at ten minutes per car per day, reducing car idling saves 540,000 pounds of air toxins from entering the atmosphere.

Paramount further demonstrates a commitment to student wellness by staffing two full-time nurses to respond to 5,500 student visits a year, two full-time counselors, and a partnership with Community Health Network to deliver behavioral and sports health care. A collaboration with Easter Seals Crossroads provides student speech, occupational, and physical therapy services. The school's Family Allies and Community Team staffs an onsite Parent Resource Center, regularly meets with families, and organizes monthly parent meetings. Topics presented range from student health and extracurricular opportunities to financial planning and academic supports. With the onset of online learning due to COVID-19, a Paramount counselor produced a series of videos that focus on mental health supports for students. Series topics include *COVID-19*, *Self Esteem*, *Unrealized Expectations*, *Physical Health*, *Self-Esteem*, and *Unrealized Expectations*.

The school promotes exercise and fitness by having daily recess, weekly physical education classes, and an annual school-wide Field Day. Physical Education (PE) instruction is tailored to the student's proficiency level and incorporates health education. The emphasis for physical and health education classes is on developing an awareness and appreciation of lifelong healthful activities. Partnering with the city's professional sports teams, Paramount hosted the Pacers' Get Fit, the Colts' Play 60, and the Indy Eleven's Goals for Indy fitness programs.

Paramount Brookside planned the campus to minimize environmental impact and serve as an ecological learning tool. In 2010, Paramount renovated a Masonic Lodge to become Paramount Brookside school, incorporating energy-saving components throughout the building. All hallway, classroom, and office lights are occupancy activated and hand dryers motion-controlled. Bathroom faucets automatically shut off to conserve water. The heating and air conditioning (HVAC) system thermostats are WIFI-enabled, allowing for whole school

indoor climate regulation and adherence to air quality standards. In 2018, the school received funding from the State of Indiana and Indianapolis Power and Light to retrofit more than 600 lighting fixtures to LED in the 74,166 square building, resulting in 69% energy savings.

Paramount worked with the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA and used the Indoor Air Quality, IAQ Tools for Schools Program to develop a comprehensive IAQ Management Plan to monitor and improve the school building's quality of air. The plan was adopted in 2017 and revised in 2019. An IAQ Coordinator and a building IAQ Team, comprised of staff, students, and parents, are charged with assisting school administration review IAQ information and policies to maintain and improve air quality at Paramount Brookside. Execution of the air quality procedures and integrated environmental health initiatives lies with the building's Operation Manager, maintenance and farm crews, teaching, and office staff.

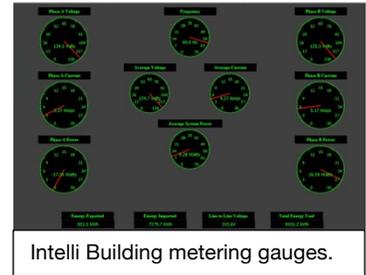
The school balances students' hard work and classroom rigor with on-campus experiential learning opportunities. This focus on student outcomes paired with enthusiasm for learning is present in the hallways, on the school grounds, and spills out to the community. And because excellence does not happen in a day, students and staff work toward it every day at Paramount.

Pillar I: Efforts to Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs



Planners of the Paramount Brookside facility sought to minimize environmental impact and have the campus serve as an ecological learning tool. In 2010, Paramount renovated a Masonic Lodge to become Paramount Brookside school, incorporating energy-saving components throughout the building. All hallway, classroom, and office lights are occupancy activated and restroom hand dryers motion-controlled. Bathroom faucets automatically shut off, ensuring that none are left running after a student finishes washing their hands. The HVAC system thermostats are WIFI-enabled, allowing for whole school indoor climate regulation and adherence to air quality standards. In 2018, the school received funding from the State of Indiana and Indianapolis Power and Light to retrofit more than 600 lighting fixtures in the 74,166 square building resulting in 69% energy savings. Paramount installed two exterior solar lighting systems on its five-acre campus, each with a battery pack system. With two full-size panels, one tower serves as the parking lot security light, and the other system powers four individual lights to illuminate Peace Park art installations. Each solar light is accessible by students and serves as direct supporting evidence for classroom instruction. In 2016, the City of Indianapolis chose the Paramount site to install the first new streetlight in 35-years. The light was part of the city's installation of 100 lights with energy-efficient LED technology.

Paramount Brookside is known for its five-wind installed around the property. The turbines' style relatively smaller size is discreet but contributes to energy savings. All outlet and light switch plates throughout the building are colored the same as the green turbine poles for students to be aware of the turbines' output and energy usage. Paramount installed an Intelli Building have more accurate knowledge of the electricity supply that the turbines were supplying. The latest reading indicates an 11% building energy offset.



A Lion Electric 60 passenger bus is Paramount Schools' latest effort to reduce its environmental impact. As a zero-emission transportation solution, the vehicle reduces emissions harmful to human health and the environment, especially in the school's surrounding neighborhoods. Other benefits of electric versus diesel-powered transportation options are greater efficiency with fuel cost savings, lower maintenance and operating costs, and a 125-mile range before recharge. The design incorporates additional student safety features, such as interior and rear back-up cameras and an ADA-compliant wheelchair lift with docking.



Paramount Brookside utilizes a local vendor to operate a single-stream recycling program. Students and teachers are responsible for collecting recyclables in their



Recycling Club taking cans to recycling collection bin.

classrooms, dumping the classroom bins into larger rolling carts taken out by support staff or selected students to the 8-yard dumpster. Averaging 1.5 full pickups per week, Brookside has recycled nearly 432 yards, or approximately 86,000 pounds of mainly mixed paper and cardboard waste that would have otherwise gone into the landfill. Additionally, the other side of the recycling process is evident throughout the school. The school's classroom, hallway, office, and conference rooms flooring are Interface's Flor carpet squares. The squares are an eco-friendly, recycled product that is carbon neutral across the product

lifecycle. This Flor flooring selection allows for the easy and cost-effective maintenance of floors should the carpet become compromised and reduce ambient white noise in classrooms and hallways that would typically be the case with laminate flooring options.

Each May, fifth-grade students, in groups of three to four, build, test, and race Pinewood Derby Cars. Any car modifications can only be recycled materials. Students must find ways to reuse small, ordinary household materials to improve the basic car's stability, speed, and safety. The winning class teams compete with other schools at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, see IMS Race Team cars, and learn the science behind automotive engineering.

Brookside's campus farm provides a setting to practice diverse agricultural techniques. The overall model for the Farm is the same as a certified organic operation. No herbicides or pesticides not Organic Material Review Institute (OMRI) approved are used in food

production areas or areas with direct student access. The cut and spray method, where only the smallest amount of herbicide is applied directly to an undesired plant's immediate trimming, is practiced. Precautions include no broadcasting of herbicides and applying herbicides in the absence of precipitation. The Farm uses various season extension methods to get the most out of gardening space, whether through cover crops for soil fertility or row covers to prevent frost buildup. These methods allow for reduced loss of soil microbes and other beneficial organisms that would possibly die off if not protected. Covering crops with insect netting reduces parasitic species and the need for pesticides. When a more potent strategy is required, BT, or *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a spore-forming bacterium toxic to most bugs, is deployed. BT is OMRI listed. Two 1,100-gallon cisterns collect rainwater from the outdoor classroom's roof for use on the property.

All products, both sourced to and sold from the Brookside campus, are obtained locally. The food service contractor orders local produce as much as possible, with 40% of goods coming from farms within 100 miles. Similarly, any farm supplies such as animal bedding, feed, or supplements are purchased from a local granary or supplier. Our product model follows a similar framework.

Pillar II: Improved Health and Wellness

Paramount Brookside spearheaded the use of school health encounters as a predictor of academic risk after ascertaining how social determinants of health correlated with student academic achievement. Data initially collected by Paramount's school-based health center, staffed with two full-time nurses, provided insight for developing an innovative means of identifying students in need of additional academic support. The Paramount Health Data Project, heathdatapoint.org, began when an initial analysis of the disaggregated 2013-14 academic and health center data exhibited significant correlations between key poverty health indicators and adverse academic outcomes. The original IRB-approved study data contained 622 third to eighth-graders who reported a total number of 8949 health visits and correlated formative assessment results. Subsequent data sets confirmed the initial findings that the frequency of school nurse visits for specific diagnoses is associated with increased school absences.

Furthermore, statistically, students were at risk of performing lower than their peers. The subsequent findings prompted Paramount to leverage health-clinic interactions proactively with targeted counseling and academic interventions. Since this initial data comparison, the Paramount Health Data project has grown to a consortium that encompasses six schools, including urban charters, township schools, and a rural community charter. Community partners include Community Health Network, Indiana University Center for Collaborative Systems Change, M.A. Rooney Foundation, and Prosperity Indiana. While Paramount Brookside's founding and continued participation in the Paramount Health Data Project has important implications for improving student academic outcomes, the school health and wellness culture's day-to-day contributions are also a priority. Paramount retains two full-time counselors that interact daily with students. These counselors serve students with ongoing issues or respond to direct student needs based on classroom teachers' input and

discipline plans throughout the day. Students visiting the school nurse for a nonmedical reason are automatically referred to a school counselor to unpack underlying stress or trauma before being sent back to class. The process builds a self-advocacy culture, as stress and trauma often manifest in physical maladies in students who cannot identify or articulate emotional health issues. Rather than dismissing students back to class, they are met with another layer of care to assess and address their mental health.

Paramount's counselors also support the Recovery Program, a 3-tiered system of responsive interventions designed to keep students engaged in a learning environment. This program has been put in place specifically to reduce the number of out of school suspensions a disruptive student may face in a more traditional setting and intervening before the behaviors get to the point of expulsion. There were 0 expulsions in the 2018-2019 school year with a data-heavy approach and staff committed to student success.

Paramount Brookside has made a concerted effort to improve building air quality. Before the start of the current school year, Paramount Brookside upgraded all the air filters from MERV8 to MERV13. Operations implemented an accelerated filter replacement schedule since the upgraded filters have an increased ability to trap small air particles. Other air quality improvements are Purple Air sensors to monitor indoor and outdoor air quality levels and Idle Free Zones for student drop-off and pick up. Every 10 minutes an engine is off saves one pound of carbon dioxide from being released. Calculated at ten minutes per car per day, reducing car idling keeps 540,000 pounds of air toxins from entering the atmosphere.

Paramount worked with the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA and used the Indoor Air Quality, IAQ Tools for Schools Program to develop a comprehensive IAQ Management Plan to monitor and improve the school building's quality of air. The plan was adopted in 2017 and revised in 2019. The objectives of this IAQ Management Plan are to:

- reduce indoor air pollutants' levels through preventive measures such as routine maintenance activities, periodic building evaluations, inspections, and adherence to IAQ-specific policies.
- provide and maintain adequate airflow by repairing, maintaining, and upgrading ventilation equipment, which will promote a comfortable and healthy learning and working environment.
- respond to IAQ-related concerns and problems promptly and thoroughly, and effectively communicate the progress of investigations and their resolution to all interested parties.

An IAQ Coordinator and a building IAQ Team, comprised of staff, students, and parents, are charged with assisting school administration review IAQ information and policies to maintain and improve air quality at Paramount Brookside. IAQ policies and operational plans include:

- animals in the classroom
- food in the classroom
- painting
- hazardous materials, chemical and environmental contaminants, and non-toxic cleaning materials

- asbestos
- pest management
- lead, radon,
- non-smoking
- anti-idling
- ADA compliance

Brookside's Operation Manager conducts a weekly building inspection to ensure that the general areas, restrooms, cafeteria, classrooms, offices, and grounds meet cleanliness and condition standards. The standards include checking for water leaks, absence of mold or mildew, proper room ventilation and temperature, electrical safety, paint integrity, and ADA compliance. Additionally, Paramount has a model office and classroom checklist that describes the lightning, security, energy efficiency, welcoming atmosphere, air quality, and cleanliness responsibilities of individual staff members.

Due to several identified risk factors, Paramount students are potentially at higher risk of lead exposure. Therefore, in partnership with the Marion County Public Health Department, all students participate in lead screening, resulting in a 30% positivity rate. Identifying individual students permits the school to implement and support ongoing intervention strategies.

Physical Education (PE) is one of four special classes that Brookside students attend once a week in addition to the daily recess. PE classes and recess are outdoors when the weather permits. Paramount promotes exercise and fitness with an annual school-wide Field Day and partners with the city's professional sports teams for the Pacers' Get Fit, the Colts' Play 60, and the Indy Eleven's Goals for Indy activities.

With support from KaBoom and the Indianapolis Colts, the campus has a playground. Assistance from the Indiana Pacers resulted in a campus track and fitness trail. Paramount Brookside has also received support from Indiana Action for Healthy Kids to supply classroom teachers with Go Noodle, an online activity offering for indoor recesses and "brain breaks," and a parent healthy lifestyle workshop. Paramount Brookside provides students with several after school and competitive sports opportunities that include, but are not limited to, basketball, football, track and field, and tennis.



Students harvesting vegetables in Paramount's Learning Garden.

Paramount's Brookside 3.5-acre farm in 2020 harvested 2,022 pounds of vegetables, 4,534 flowers, 372 eggs, 372 eggs, and 26 pounds of honey to sell directly to Paramount families and neighborhood residents at a weekly Farm Market and summer farm share program. The produce is priced affordably with the highest charge of \$1.00 per pound. A local food pantry receives any surplus. Periodically, the farm market hosts the Marion County Purdue Extension healthy cooking demonstrations to acquaint families with vegetable options. In addition to the farm gardens that consist of 100

raised beds, The Big Green organization granted Paramount Brookside a learning garden. Students, staff, and community groups use the smaller Big Green Learning Garden for classroom lessons and workshops.

Daily, Paramount Brookside offers each student a free nutritious breakfast and lunch. Students who wish to bring their packed lunch may do so, but the school values nutrition and strongly discourages lunches that do not align with school values. The Family Handbook communicates that junk food, fried chips, and sodas will not be allowed in the lunchroom without special permission. Any items taken from students (when deemed as non-nutritious) will be returned at the end of the day unless handled in a disciplinary situation.

Paramount Schools of Excellence invests in the health and well-being of its staff. Baseline staff benefits include higher than state average salaries, 7.5% contributions to a 403(b), and competitive dental, vision, and health insurance costs. Other health-related incentives include a fully paid family membership to the YMCA and rewards for meeting health goals. Unique staff support is an onsite coffee shop staffed by a barista who can receive online orders from any school employee, board member, or visiting community member. The coffee shop allows teachers to remain in their classroom during those peak hours of student focus while still being treated to a free coffee or tea. The shop also has an Elkay Smartwell dispenser for staff to refill reusable water bottles with numerous healthy beverage options, including still or flavored sparkling water options with available electrolytes or Vitamin C enhancements. Per Elkay's calculations, another benefit of the dispenser is the savings of 61 pounds of plastic and aluminum can waste per month.

Pillar III: Effective Environmental and Sustainable Education

Central to Paramount's academic success is the core tenet of integrating experiential activities to motivate students to endure the hard work and rigor required in their classrooms. The firsthand experiences offered students build on a solid foundation of traditional instruction rooted in literacy and mathematics. An engaging E-STEM environment provides a stimulating campus that fosters students' desire to attend school; offers opportunities for active student engagement; and gives a platform for more in-depth subject matter synthesis via the cross-subject application of curriculum content. Through data-driven instruction, teachers have the best perspective on their students' needs. Because of this, all lessons and content come from classroom teachers. This framework ensures fidelity with content standards and maintains student growth measured by the Indiana Department of Education. That being the case, students have access to the various experiential learning opportunities throughout the Brookside campus to enrich their understanding of STEM content through experience. Examples of the farm classroom curriculum integration are kindergarten studying animal habitats, first-grade examining the similarities and differences between animals, and second-grade investigating the life cycle of a chicken by hatching eggs. The hatched chicks eventually join the Farm's flock.

The campus is planted with a diverse array of native pollinators, designed to provide food to our bees throughout the growing months. These bees are cared for by farm staff and provide real-life connections to our students about pollination, food systems, and a better understanding of the web of life. In an urban setting, beekeeping is becoming more prevalent, yet there is a shortage of food supply for the bees. Paramount Brookside hosts community workshops to identify what types of plants are best for the Indiana landscape and are suitable host species for the bees and pollinators.

For the past ten years, Paramount Brookside has created a reliable infrastructure to support experiential classroom activities. A fully functioning multi-disciplinary urban farm allows for a balance between learning opportunities, process, and product. Three full-time staff are tasked with maintaining farm operations, supporting classes and extracurricular groups, community initiatives, Success Through Education Agriculture and Mentoring (STEAM summer program), and campus grounds maintenance. The Farm Team includes the Farm Manager, a Garden Coordinator, and a Cheesemaker/Livestock Coordinator. The Farm operates year-round, which that care needs to be provided to the animals and other infrastructure each day. Due to this heavy workload, the school grounds are always active and attended.

At Paramount Brookside, walk through the playground gate, and one is transported to an environment often not experienced in the middle of a city. There is a goat shed with a herd of 4 milking goats. The goats have a small enclosure where they live, a milking parlor, and a modest pasture.



A Goat Team member milks a goat.

Students can engage with the goats on a broad spectrum of opportunities. From saying hello as they walk by to recess, meeting the goats, and touring their habitat as part of a classroom lesson, or signing up for the Middle School Goat Team that milks the goats and helps with chores. The Paramount Farm is a licensed dairy operation and a hub for its artisan cheese enterprise. Rain or shine, students arrive before class to milk and care for the resident goat herd. Next, the milk is filtered, pasteurized, and processed into cheese in the onsite cheese kitchen. Two varieties of Paramount cheese are available for purchase at numerous Indianapolis retail outlets.

Students are not required to participate in extracurricular activities tied to the Farm, but there are many options to spark their interest. Besides the Goat Team, a Green Team helps with the gardens and Farm Market, and a Bee Team works with the beehives and processing the honey.

STEAM – Success Through Education, Agriculture, and Mentoring, Paramount's middle school summer employment/ academic enrichment program, offers 32 students an in-depth work development experience and employment opportunity. Each participant receives an hourly wage of eight dollars an hour and undergoes a multiple-step selection process. The procedure requires an application, a one-on-one interview, and participation in a group content-based fieldwork experience. More than 65 students applied to participate in the 2020 summer program resulting in 30 middle school students selected for STEAM.

Paramount also employs two high school students as youth leaders via the Youth Working for Indy (YWFI) opportunity. The YWFI employees were previous STEAM participants that returned to the program to help lead and mentor the younger workers. Over the eight weeks, STEAM participants log 5,120 hours working on the Farm.

STEAM has two, four-week sessions with two cohorts. Each student worker is assigned to a team and rotates between farm staff. The Farm Manager, Garden Manager, and Cheese Monger serve as supervisors of the field experience rotations. The rotations allow STEAM participants an in-depth week working within each core farm area. Each area concentration aligns with Indiana STEM academic and employability skills standards.

Week One - Orientation

Week Two - Infrastructure

Week Three - Animal husbandry and cheese making

Week Four – Gardening and product marketing

The farm staff at Paramount Brookside maintains farm operations, and classroom teachers control the curricular connections. Such delegation of responsibilities ensures that lessons align with State Academic Standards and grade-level goals. Student experiences are always rooted in an identifiable outcome. Maintaining the Farm infrastructure enables teachers to present ongoing classes rooted in experiential activities and the sciences. Additionally, each week, the Environmental



Aerial view of the Paramount Brookside Farm.

Education Director produces a short educational video, "Friday from the Farm," that entertainingly gives information about some aspect of the Farm. To date, thirty-three episodes are available. The videos are available on Paramount's [YouTube Channel](#).

Seen as a community resource, Paramount strives to plan and plant the school grounds so that the community feels welcome. This welcome extends to having an open campus policy that allows anyone onto school property, any day of the week, outside of school operating hours.



Social Digital and Media Accounts

Paramount Schools of Excellence

- Websites:
 - Main: <https://paramountschools.org>
 - TURN Festival: <https://TURNFestival.com>
 - Paramount Peace Park: <http://www.paramountpeacepark.com/>
 - Paramount Health Data Project: <https://healthdatapoint.org/>
- Facebook: Paramountschool
- Twitter: @paramountindy
- Instagram: @paramountindy

Paramount Brookside

- Website: <https://brookside.paramountindy.org/>
- Facebook: PSOEBrookside

Paramount Schools of Excellent
Inspire learning through an unparalleled academic approach.
Transform communities by changing lives.