

**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: Dr. Greta Kuzilla

Official School Name: Hance Elementary

(As it should appear on an award)

Official School Name Mailing Address: **5518 Molnar Drive, Gibsonia, PA 15004**

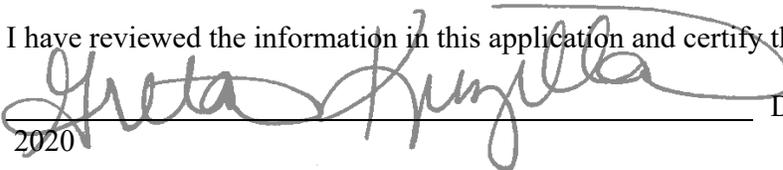
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

County: Allegheny State School Code Number \*: 7998

Telephone: 7244228994 Fax: 724-443-1290

Web site/URL: <https://www.pinerichland.org/Domain/215> E-mail: [gkuzilla@pinerichland.org](mailto:gkuzilla@pinerichland.org) \*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.



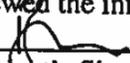
Date: November 18, 2020

(Principal's Signature)



Name of Superintendent: Dr. Brian Miller  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in official records)

District Name: Pine-Richland School District

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.  
  
Date: November 18, 2020  
(Superintendent's Signature)

### Nominating Authority's Certifications

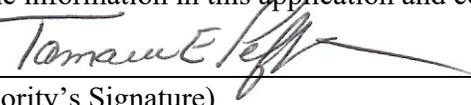
The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority's knowledge.

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: Pennsylvania Department of Education

Name of Nominating Authority: Ms. Tamara E. Peffer  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

  
Date: 2/02/2021  
(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](mailto: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.

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

Hance Elementary sits on approximately 10-15 acres of land and features a plant wall in the entryway and skylights throughout the building. Hance Elementary created an outdoor classroom with the support of the Hance PTO, Pine-Richland Opportunities Fund, students, and staff during the 2019-2020 school year. The outdoor space features an amphitheater, picnic tables with umbrellas, and a covered shelter where teachers can facilitate class, brain breaks, or mask breaks during the pandemic. An outdoor walking path was also installed that year to promote health and wellness of students, staff, and the community.

Hance has tracked consumption on all utilities to visualize where conservation efforts can be made and participates in the local utility's programs to conserve energy. Water is tested periodically in all buildings for lead exposure and all toilets are low-flow. Aerators and faucet screens are cleaned on a regular basis and water use is monitored. The Gifted and Talented students created a rain garden to reduce stormwater runoff. Rain gauges and barrels were installed in the back of the school near the outdoor classroom so that students learn about the water cycle.

The Pine-Richland School Board instituted a policy requiring all schools in the district to establish an integrated pest management plan to reduce or eliminate pesticide use, that addresses needs specific to the school. Routine testing is conducted to monitor radon levels and air quality in the building. Custodians at Hance use Green Seal certified cleaning products for 90% of their cleaning applications, ensuring that the products in use are friendly to humans and the environment by eliminating dangerous VOCs and toxic chemicals.

The school district has contracted with a transportation provider that predominantly uses propane fuel, Hance has implemented and expanded their efforts. No idling signs are posted at all entrances to Hance ELE facilities, and the loading and drop-off area is at least 25-feet away from the building. All light bulbs, batteries, glass, chemicals, and electronics are recycled or neutralized for disposal. Old computers, monitors, and TVs are recycled as well, along with printer cartridges and cell phones. Hance Elementary School installed a "buddy bench" made from 540 recycling milk jugs, purchased three water bottle filling stations, and funded water bottles for each student. Waste-free lunch days are sponsored throughout the school year. Each spring the Hance PTO hosts a book swap and Hance participates in Crayola ColorCycle.

Led by third grade students, Hance Elementary has participated in PA Healthy Schools, sponsored by Women for a Healthy Environment. This Pennsylvania initiative allows schools to submit a report card with various levels of achievement to be considered for an award. The report card provides criteria in the areas of curriculum integration, community engagement, professional development, sharing success, school philosophy, and culture, air quality, water, waste, and recycling, energy, health and well-being, transportation, and school grounds.

Hance Elementary has developed a Wellness Committee that includes support from the PTO and members of the Hance Elementary Instructional Leadership Team. The Wellness Committee created before and after school programs, such as Girls on the Run, Kids of Steel, and Yoga, to encourage physical activity. Friday Focus lessons offer social emotional learning. Minute meetings are conducted three times per year by the school counselor and principal to see if students are connected with school and peers and are having a positive experience during their time at Hance. Two sensory paths were installed in the building for students to use during the school day. The Hance PTO created a relaxation station for teachers during the pandemic, featuring massage chairs, new curtains, seating, and paint in the teacher's lounge. Students in grades K-3 are engaged in a schoolwide positive behavior support system that allows them to earn tickets for positive behaviors to earn healthy rewards such as extra recess or a nature walk or a read aloud by a guest reader in the outdoor classroom area.

New science resources focus on the environment and sustainability. Students in Kindergarten learn about the needs of plants and animals while first grade expands upon those concepts by focusing on animal and plant defenses. Second grade and third grade continue to learn about the environment through learning more about how landforms change as well as weather and climate. These environmental concepts are tied into Social Studies and English Language Arts. Students are also able participate in instruction about these concepts while being immersed in the outdoor classroom making direct connections to the environment surrounding them. The Hance Elementary Library has an extensive collection of books regarding environmental and sustainable topics. A new STEM lab facilitates students' learning about the environment.

Additionally, in order to reduce consumption of paper, several action steps have been taken. Technology is an integral part of ensuring that students are prepared for the digital age. Preparing students is important but also ensuring We have taken immediate action steps to utilize digital means for communications among staff and also among staff and families. Staff receives a weekly "Fabulous Friday Focus" communication digitally to provide any pertinent updates and professional development. Teachers communicate with families digitally utilizing email and websites to publish communications and classroom updates. Students in grades K-3 are now able to leverage technology through their own 1:1 device. Students in grades 1-3 have their own Google Chromebook while students in Kindergarten utilize an iPad. Kami PDF writer was purchased so that students can complete work digitally rather than on paper via their Chromebook or iPads. The use of Google Classroom has also been initiated to help further our paperless goals at the building level. Students are able to download and upload work using Google Classroom. They are also more skilled in communicating very simply via email in grades 2 and 3. Assignments such as book reports that were completed in grade 3 are now fully digitized and presented to the class through screen sharing from the students devices to the Interactive Display Board rather than making paper copies. Not only does every classroom in the building contain an interactive display board but it also has a document camera to help continue to digitize and eliminate paper consumption. Individual classroom printers are not utilized and the use of sending documents to a shared printer released by badge swiping to reduce waste has also been integrated over the past year.

Hance Elementary also has many other supports in place to help build students protective factors and support the education of the whole child. The Hance Elementary Instructional Leadership Team consists of the principal, counselor, and instructional leaders that volunteer their time to helping to promote the mental wellness and culture of the building including students and staff. This team develops a building theme for the building each year. The building theme is tied to a specific book that teaches a PRIDE value and integrated in the RAMS Way acknowledgements. During the 20-21 school year, our building theme was "Up and to the right, Hance is taking flight." Our featured book for the year was "Flight School," which helped students learn about the PRIDE value of resiliency while integrating environmental themes and learning!

This past school year, Hance Elementary formed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team to help promote education of the whole child as well. Professional development was provided to teachers to begin to build awareness. Each teacher made a handprint with a commitment related to this key initiative which was related to improving the overall health and wellness of the whole child and staff at Hance Elementary.

### **Narrative for Pillar 1: Your Efforts to Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs**

Students and staff at Hance Elementary, combined with efforts of the Pine-Richland School District have helped to increase awareness and overall effectiveness of sustainability efforts on a consistent basis. To create a culture of sustainability, Pine-Richland School District had an independent service, the Eric Ryan Company, track consumption on all utilities to visualize where conservation efforts could be made and to identify areas to



become more energy efficient. In 2012, Pine-Richland School District became a part of Duquesne Light’s Watt Choices program to conserve energy and in 2016, the district joined the First Energy Friends & Family utility and energy rebates program. The school district showed a reduction in energy usage from the 2015-2016 to 2016-2017 school years. This qualified the district to receive a rebate for the 2016-2017 school year. The district also participates in an energy curtailment program to power down over the summer to conserve energy as requested. Hance Elementary School participates in each of these programs and initiatives. The energy curtailment program is essentially a test done through the electrical grid to determine "if " we are able to reduce consumption if an "event" is called where we are required to reduce usage. Since 2009, only one event has ever been called. We do receive rebates from the energy grid to participate, but you would not see this as a reduction.

When reviewing data about electrical usage at Hance Elementary, the number of kW has decreased over time spanning from 2014-2020. The decreased usage can be attributed to the awareness of students and staff in the buildings and our green initiatives as the number of kilowatts has been decreasing over time. Although during the summer months the number of kilowatts has increased in some areas, it’s due to the fact that we are lowering the set points and using dehumidifiers to bolster the air quality in the building. We are trying to promote safe air quality which means that we do pay a penalty for electricity during those months. We continue to monitor the system and determine how to efficiently balance these competing tensions (see Figure 1).

Electrical Usage (kW)

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Hance	Jan	53,100	50,112	55,683	60,058	68,042	46,491	45,600
	Feb	63,600	56,390	55,187	52,603	59,941	51,731	45,184
	Mar	64,800	61,564	54,335	53,844	49,617	42,992	45,522
	Apr	52,500	55,209	55,166	53,028	54,936	49,368	28,997
	May	59,100	59,150	57,623	60,590	60,085	56,756	29,923
	Jun	62,400	59,815	56,971	53,512	65,504	68,908	71,795
	Jul	43,200	46,721	53,924	62,494	84,591	79,978	89,296
	Aug	39,000	53,153	55,843	63,306	78,852	79,157	
	Sep	61,200	67,633	71,187	61,289	67,942	86,721	
	Oct	60,300	57,993	62,946	62,586	72,901	64,923	
	Nov	54,300	58,527	60,561	53,180	51,176	50,134	
	Dec	57,152	59,489	55,812	50,951	40,644	49,506	
		670,652	685,757	695,239	687,443	754,231	677,159	

(Figure 1)

Hance Elementary also seeks to reduce the amount of water usage to promote a green environment in the building. Steps have been taken to educate students on proper hand washing techniques as well as expectations for flushing when using the restroom to increase efficiency. The summary depicted below shows the gallons used spanning from 20-19 to 2020. The number of gallons drastically dropped when school was closed due to COVID-19, however, the data indicates a slight decline in the water usage in the previous months as well showing more efficiency by staff and students as well. To promote an increased beneficial trend, the PA Healthy Schools Committee is creating an action plan tied to the school wide positive support matrix to enhance the expectation of students and staff to be accountable for decreasing their water usage throughout the school day. See Figure 2 below showing water usage below.



ERC Analysis

Report-15 - Meter Summary by Period

yyyy-mm	Start Date	End Date	#Days	Use	Unit	Billed Demand	Actual Demand	Cost	Cost/Unit	Cost/Day	Use/Day
<b>Place:</b> [PRSDHANCPA] Hance Elementary School				<b>Energy Type:</b> [Water] Gal							
<b>Meter:</b> [05719921-W] Hance Elementary School-W				<b>Cost Center:</b> [PRSHANCPA] Hance Elementary School							
<b>Rate:</b> Commercial Water											
<b>Account:</b> [88055180] 88055180						<b>Vendor:</b> [RTMA] Richland Twp Municipal Authority					
2019-12	12/2/2019	12/30/2019	28	50,000	GAL			\$501.00	\$0.010	\$17.89	1,785.71
2020-01	12/30/2019	1/27/2020	28	50,000	GAL			\$501.00	\$0.010	\$17.89	1,785.71
2020-02	1/27/2020	2/24/2020	28	51,000	GAL			\$509.42	\$0.010	\$18.19	1,821.43
2020-03	2/24/2020	3/27/2020	32	53,000	GAL			\$526.26	\$0.010	\$16.45	1,656.25
2020-04	3/27/2020	4/27/2020	31	1,000	GAL			\$88.42	\$0.088	\$2.85	32.26
2020-05	4/27/2020	5/26/2020	29	3,000	GAL			\$105.26	\$0.035	\$3.63	103.45
2020-06	5/26/2020	6/26/2020	31	3,000	GAL			\$105.26	\$0.035	\$3.40	96.77
<b>Meter: [05719921-W] Hance Elementary School-W Totals:</b>			<b>207</b>	<b>211,000</b>	<b>GAL</b>			<b>\$2,336.62</b>	<b>\$0.011</b>	<b>\$11.29</b>	<b>1,019.32</b>

(Figure 2)

Hance Elementary continues to offer recycling outside of our building for both staff and community members. The recycling company was able to provide us data from their collections only from 2019. The PA Healthy Schools team plans to track this data for 2020 and make comparisons to ensure that the amount of recycling both in school and in the community increases. See Figure 3 below with baseline data from the 2019-2020 school year.

**Pine-Richland School District**

LOCATION	# Cont	Size	Freq Wk	Yds/Wk	Yds/Mth	Yds/Yr	62lbs/Yd	Tons Per Year
RECYCLING 2019								
Hance Elementary	1	4	1	4	17.32	207.84	12886.08	6.44
<b>TOTAL RECYCLING</b>				<b>4</b>	<b>17.32</b>	<b>207.84</b>	<b>12886.08</b>	<b>6.44</b>

(Figure 3)

Pine-Richland School District has purchased and procured various energy efficient products. Condensing boilers, which run at a lower temperature, have been installed at Hance Elementary. Occupancy sensors were posted throughout the district. Water conservation is a building and district-wide focus for the Pine-Richland School District. Consumption is monitored through a private business, the Eric Ryan Company, with recommendations to improve efficiencies. Water is tested periodically in all buildings for lead exposure and all toilets are low flow. Aerators and faucet screens are cleaned on a regular basis. To reduce environmental impact, the Pine-Richland School District has fifty-three school buses in the fleet using propane fuel. Almost all buses were switched to propane tanks as part of a new transportation contract in 2015. Hance Elementary has seven of these buses with a capacity of seventy-seven or eighty-four passengers that are used on a daily basis to bring students to school and transport them home. Students either ride the bus, carpool, or use parent pickup/dropoff to/from school. No-idling signs are posted at the entry-ways of the building at Hance Elementary. The loading and drop-off area is at least 25 feet away from the building and all buses.

Hance Elementary has put into place a variety of efforts at the school level based on the data received at the district level in terms ensuring that reduction plans for cost-effective energy and conservation measures as well as a changing the mindset and habits of those that work and visit the building. The overall school culture has been greatly enhanced in terms of reducing impact to the environment since we began our journey toward the green



ribbon. Staff and parents are accustomed to receiving digital communications only and transformed traditional paper pencil tasks into digital projects or activities to reduce the environmental footprint of the building. Hance Elementary has many environmentally inviting features that improve the culture and morale of staff and students alike. Upon entering the building, the entrance is filled with natural lighting through large windows and skylights. The natural light contributes to helping lower the amount of electricity used for lighting the front of the building. Plant walls were recently installed in the front of the building to promote better indoor air quality and add to the aesthetics of the building.

Outside the building, the landscaping features many trees that are native to Pennsylvania along with flowers and other vegetation native to the state. The outdoor classroom features an amphitheater with stadium seating installed, picnic tables and umbrellas, a gazebo with student seating made from sustainable materials, as well as a covered shelter for instruction during all four seasons experience in PA. During the 20-21 school year, the Hance PTO and a local scout troop collaborated with the staff to revitalize the outdoor gazebo and seating options. Hance Elementary recently had a walking path installed for additional engagement in the outdoors, which proved to be very helpful during the pandemic for mask breaks and brain breaks.

Additional evidence of our engagement and progression with the three pillars includes the installation of a new buddy bench for our playground throughout the 19-20 school year funded by the Hance PTO. The school requested that the buddy bench was made from recycled materials. The buddy bench that was installed was made from 540 recycling milk jugs helping to further reduce our environmental impact. The school also purchased three water bottle fillers to help reduce the environmental footprint impact and costs. The Hance PTO funded water bottles for each student to cut down on waste.

Hance Elementary also participates in the Healthy Schools PA Recognition Program since 2018. Hance Elementary has reached the High Honor Roll level through a variety of student, staff, and community engagement opportunities. Hance Elementary formed a committee to help in these efforts stressing the importance of lowering energy consumption and helping to reduce waste. Recycling programs were lifted as a key initiative in the building. Waste free lunch days were sponsored throughout the school year throughout 20-21. These days were lifted in our Friday Flash and reminded families about the five simple ways to pack waste-free lunches including leveraging reusable carriers, reusable containers, thermos or water bottles for drinks, and cloth napkins. Classes reduce and recycle paper within designated recycling containers. Our recycling program is also used in the office and kitchen area. Confidential documents are shredded and then saved to be donated to a shredding company that recycles this waste.

Based on the data received about Hance Elementary specifically, several action steps have been taken. Staff and students are encouraged to conserve electricity and reduce energy consumption. Reminders near the light switches are in every area of the building. Custodians collect the paper from the building and recycle it outside in an official recycling dumpster. Old computers, monitors, markers, and TV's are recycled along with printer cartridges and cell phones. The Hance PTO also hosts a shoe drive to collect worn shoes and donates them to either be reused or have the material recycled.

Additionally, in order to reduce consumption of paper, several action steps have been taken. Technology is an integral part of ensuring that students are prepared for the digital age. Preparing students is important but also ensuring We have taken immediate action steps to utilize digital means for communications among staff and also among staff and families. Staff receives a weekly "Fabulous Friday Focus" communication digitally to provide any pertinent updates and professional development. Teachers communicate with families digitally utilizing email and websites to publish communications and classroom updates. Students in grades K-3 are now able to leverage technology through their own 1:1 device. Students in grades 1-3 have their own Google Chromebook while students in Kindergarten utilize an iPad. Kami PDF writer was purchased so that students



can complete work digitally rather than on paper via their Chromebook or iPads. The use of Google Classroom has also been initiated to help further our paperless goals at the building level. Students are able to download and upload work using Google Classroom. They are also more skilled in communicating very simply via email in grades 2 and 3. Assignments such as book reports that were completed in grade 3 are now fully digitized and presented to the class through screen sharing from the students devices to the Interactive Display Board rather than making paper copies. Not only does every classroom in the building contain an interactive display board but it also has a document camera to help continue to digitize and eliminate paper consumption. Individual classroom printers are not utilized and the use of sending documents to a shared printer released by badge swiping to reduce waste has also been integrated over the past year.

A new print service contract was initiated in December of 2018 with ComDoc. Various features were integrated to mitigate accidental prints and promote saving paper. This year, the district also trained staff on the use of Google Classroom as a learning management system for grades K-3. This has significantly reduced the amount of paper being utilized as almost all things have been digitized. This is supported by data from the new PaperCut management. From September 2019 to September 2020, we reduced paper consumption by 40% in a one year period. The environmental impact is also calculated in our monthly papercut report in terms of trees consumed and CO2 produced. We reduced our trees consumed from 4.54 trees to 1.88 trees per 31 day period. The CO2 produced also was reduced from 480.5 kg to 199.2 kg during that one year period.

Each spring the Hance PTO hosts a book swap in May to promote recycling of books rather than just throwing them away. There is a little library within Hance Elementary that is also utilized to promote recycling and sharing of books. During the pandemic, this was used to feature books and continue to promote recycling of used books. The Hance PTO also partnered with our librarian to host a virtual book fair reducing the amount of paper sent home to parents and also fostering the love of reading electronically.

Water-filling stations were installed at every fountain at Hance Elementary. The water filling stations allow students to utilize refillable water containers that help conserve water and reduce waste from plastic water bottles. Stations are located in the cafeteria, hallway near the gym and at the mid-point between grades 1-2. Students are encouraged to bring in their own reusable water bottle during the school to refill. This has been reduced waste and help conserve water at the building. The Hance Elementary PTO also supported this initiative through having custom water bottles made for parents to purchase.

Finally, the Hance PTO has purchased reusable dishes and utensils for the staff room to reduce waste. Staff is able to leverage these to reduce waste during daily lunches as well as during large scale events. Prior to the pandemic, the Hance Elementary cafeteria was also using reusable trays for students. A commercial dishwasher was leveraged to clean and aide in the reduction of waste from the cafeteria.

## **Narrative for Pillar 2: Your Efforts to Improve the Health and Wellness of Students and Staff**

The Pine-Richland School Board instituted a policy for all schools to establish an integrated pest management plan to reduce or eliminate pesticide use. Hance Elementary has complied with this policy and follows posting guidelines to alert staff and students when any pesticide application is scheduled on school grounds. Regardless, pesticides are only applied when staff and students are not present. Signs are posted on property and notification is given to residents via the Allegheny County Herbicide/Pesticide Registry, along with notices prohibiting student access to the area for at least eight hours following treatment. Summaries of pesticide applications, copies of pesticide labels, and notices are all kept in the custodial/nursing areas at Hance Elementary. To ensure proper air quality both indoors and outdoors, Hance Elementary has met the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) Standard 62.1- 2010 for ventilation throughout the

school building.

Although Hance Elementary does not have science labs within the building, the school district has installed proper exhaust systems at all major airborne contaminant sources at Pine-Richland High School. Hance Elementary is compliant with National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NAEPP) guidelines. The school does not have a standing order for albuterol, but students with asthma have access to rescue medication and a full-time nurse. Smoking is prohibited on campus and signs are posted per School Board policy.

Although an indoor air quality management program does not officially exist at Hance Elementary, the school has adopted key guidelines set forth in the Healthy Schools PA Recognition Program. These guidelines include, but are not limited to the following: establishing a plan when outdoor air is potentially harmful to occupants; ensure outdoor air intakes are clear of obstructions, debris, etc.; resolve problems with pollutant sources near outdoor air intakes; replace filters per maintenance schedule; confirm mechanical rooms and air-mixing chambers are free of trash, chemical products, supplies, etc.; ensure air supply is functioning when students are present; ensure that supply and return vents are open and unblocked; and move all barriers that could block movement of air in rooms. Air quality testing is performed periodically to ensure Hance Elementary is free of mold, moisture and water leakage. All areas inside and outside of Hance Elementary are inspected, maintained, and cleaned throughout the year to protect student and staff health.

Pine-Richland School District's custodial department has embraced new green cleaning initiatives throughout the district. These green cleaning initiatives are focused on energy efficient equipment, reducing water consumption, eliminating hazard chemicals, and replacing all consumables with reusable or recycled products. Custodians at Hance Elementary use Green Seal Certified cleaning chemicals for 90% of their cleaning applications. The Green Seal Certification ensures that the chemicals in use are friendly to humans and the environment by eliminating dangerous VOCs and toxic chemicals. In addition to safer chemical compositions, a Green Seal Certification guarantees that the production, distribution, and packaging of chemicals also meet rigid standards of sustainability. Pine-Richland School District has partnered with Georgia Pacific to convert all consumable paper products to recycled material. Paper towels and toilet tissue at Hance Elementary is made from at least 40% post-consumer recycled fiber. This qualifies for LEED Certification.

Hance Elementary prioritizes the physical and mental health of students and staff. The school uses a variety of strategies from both the district and building level. At the building level, students and staff have access to an outdoor classroom, amphitheater, outdoor gazebo, and walking track to promote physical and mental well being throughout the school day. These areas are leveraged for teaching, outdoor lunches, brain breaks, and mask breaks during the COVID 19 pandemic. The environment surrounding the building lends itself to a healthy experience for students and staff since it encompasses many grass fields and play areas. Story walks were also integrated around the walking track to promote engagement in literature related to our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives.

The Hance PTO has been an integral part of helping promote the physical and mental health of staff and students. Within the Hance PTO, a wellness committee was formed during the 18-19 school year. The wellness committee created opportunities for students to participate in physical activities before and after school. Additionally, the wellness committee connected the staff with a yoga instructor who lead classes after school to help staff practice mindfulness and stay healthy physically as well. The Hance PTO also provides staff luncheons and stocks the staff room with healthy snacks throughout the school year.

During the 20-21 school year, the Hance PTO helped support the creation of a relaxation station for teachers. Previously, the work room and lunch room were a combined area. The instructional leadership team recognized that there needed to be a designated area for staff to take a true break without having loud copiers and other



office equipment present to help decompress mentally. Due to the mental fatigue from the pandemic, the instructional leadership team partnered with the PTO to design a relaxation station with massaging chairs that could be used throughout the day and sanitized properly between use. Additionally, new lunch tables were purchased that promoted physical distance but allowed socialization to occur to help mental health and morale. New paint and curtains were also brought into the area to encourage a relaxing area to help staff rejuvenate over their lunch and planning periods. Staff also receive tips and tricks from the building level RAMS Way team about ways to incorporate self-care into their daily routines through the weekly digital communication called the Fabulous Friday Focus.

Other areas developed by the Hance PTO that promote physical and mental health of staff and students included a “Fun Fore All” fundraiser which allowed families to golf in the outdoors during the COVID 19 pandemic in a safe environment. Additionally, the Hance PTO held a virtual book fair, virtual holiday shop, and helped with the formation of the PA Healthy Schools Committee. They also assisted in the creation of the Hance Fab Lab as well as completion of the outdoor classroom area.

Students that attend Hance Elementary also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of other unique opportunities. Students at Hance Elementary participate in a daily recess period which is 30 minutes of physical activity when weather is permitting for students in grades 1, 2, and 3. Students enrolled in half day Kindergarten have the opportunity to take brain breaks and mask breaks throughout their day. Students have access to swings, play equipment, the amphitheater, outdoor classroom, spinning activities, sensory path, outdoor games such as 4 square, basketball, football, and soccer which encourage teamwork. Games were painted onto the playground blacktop to enhance development of the whole child. Although activities with shared equipment were not permitted during the 20-21 school year due to the pandemic, students were able to create their individual recess kits and bring them to school to engage them mentally and physically.

Students in grades K-3 also are engaged in a schoolwide positive behavior support system that acknowledges behavior that is respectful, accountable, motivated and safe. Hance Elementary has an active RAMS Way team with parent liaisons that actively participate to provide feedback and offer suggestions to continually engage students. The third-grade student leaders work with the team to brainstorm building, class, and individual rewards to acknowledge positive student behaviors. Students are encouraged to follow the “RAMS Way” and earn tickets. Tickets are pulled weekly for individual acknowledgements that bolster positive behavior. Tickets are also pooled for a building wide and class-wide healthy rewards such as extra recess or a nature walk or a read aloud by a guest reader in the outdoor classroom area. Students are engaged in positive daily announcements that incorporate a “RAMS way” thought for the day which is often tied to positive and inspiring quotes that promote our PRIDE values. Staff also receive acknowledgements for their positive contributions to the building. The “RAMS Way” initiative not only promotes the physical well being of students and staff, but also helps to build protective factors as well.

Hance Elementary also has many other supports in place to help build students protective factors and support the education of the whole child. The Hance Elementary Instructional Leadership Team consists of the principal, counselor, and instructional leaders that volunteer their time to helping to promote the mental wellness and culture of the building including students and staff. This team develops a building theme for the building each year. The building theme is tied to a specific book that teaches a PRIDE value and integrated in the RAMS Way acknowledgements. During the 20-21 school year, our building theme was “Up and to the right, Hance is taking flight.” Our featured book for the year was “Flight School,” which helped students learn about the PRIDE value of resiliency while integrating environmental themes and learning! The Instructional Leadership Team also played an integral role in planning various activities to support staff mental health during the pandemic such as spirit days related to environmental themes or being chosen as the “lucky duck” which allowed them to earn an acknowledgement to recognize their positive contributions to the building related to

sustainability.

This past school year, Hance Elementary formed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team to help promote education of the whole child as well. Professional development was provided to teachers to begin to build awareness. Each teacher made a handprint with a commitment related to this key initiative which was related to improving the overall health and wellness of the whole child and staff at Hance Elementary.

The Hance Elementary RAMS Way team consists of the principal, counselor, all classroom teachers, school psychologists, reading support, parents and intervention specialist. This team reviews monthly behavioral data to help determine students needing additional assistance so that they can build coping skills or engage in positive behaviors that will lead to improved health and wellness. Parents provide input on specific initiatives that are crafted to help promote positive health and wellness. For example, the team is now providing acknowledgements to students who shows RAMS way behavior at home by awarding them a certificate and gel pen with glitter from the “Bam the Ram” mascot. Students hear their names acknowledged on the morning announcements after the positive referral is received from parents via a paperless form.

The Hance Elementary MTSS (Multi-Tiered System Support) team consisting of principal, counselor, all classroom teachers, school psychologists, reading support and intervention specialists has been operational for the last seven years. It supports students with academic needs, such as difficulty with decoding or fluency and allows a fluid movement for students to receive academic or behavioral interventions or enrichment beyond those available in the traditional classroom. This process helps support students academically but also emotionally so they can build confidence in their skills.

Hance Elementary’s Student Assistance Program (SAP) consists of principal, counselor, some teachers, school psychologists, mental health/drug and alcohol liaisons, and other professionals. The SAP team responds to any observed at risk or change in student behavior by providing a continuum of mental health resources, both internally and externally, to our students and families in and outside the school setting.

The Hance Elementary Pupil Service Team where teachers are provided information on an as needed basis with a sole purpose to solidify communication between principals and counselors of students with most intense needs for support to be provided. This team consists of principals, counselors, school psychologists all working together to assist students in need. The Hance Elementary Pupil Services Team also refers students for social skills or resiliency groups run by the school counselor.

Girls on the Run has been operational at Hance Elementary for the past three years. Hance hosts Girls on the Run, an after-school program for girls with the mission of promoting and nurturing physical and emotional health through running.

In conjunction with the school psychologists and school counselor, Hance Elementary developed Friday Focus lessons. Students are engaged in a series of lessons about using kind words and finding ways to cope appropriately during difficult times. These lessons are taught building wide and have been integrated into the RAMS Way focus.

Each year, Hance Elementary conducts Minute Meetings three times per year through the school counselor and principal. These meetings serve as an informal check in to see if students are connected with school and peers and are having a positive experience during their time at Hance. If students are struggling to connect socially or having difficulty with emotions, they are considered for social groups or our SAP process.



Hance Elementary focuses helping students find success and refocus through brain breaks on sensory paths integrated into the building. Two sensory paths were installed within the building during the 18-19 and 19-20 school year. All students are able to access these throughout the school day as a brain break and to help seek a sensory balance throughout the school day. These paths were obtained through a partnership between Hance Elementary and the Pine-Richland Opportunities Fund. These sensory paths are used by all students and create a culture that promote health and wellness with mind and body breaks integrating mindfulness.

The Hance PTO has been integral in implementing Kids of Steel at Hance Elementary. Parent volunteers host Kids of Steel. This program focuses on physical activity and nutrition to help promote healthy eating and exercise. The culminating activity for students and families is running either the 1 mile or 5K at the Pittsburgh Marathon.

Flexible seating is offered in many classrooms and also in the music room. Last year, the music teacher purchased flexible seating for students to promote movement and increased engagement.

Finally, after school programs sponsored by the Hance PTO are held throughout the school year to help students develop lifetime hobbies and promote the connection between their physical and emotional health. Some after school programs that have been held include “Outside the Box,” “Bakers Dozen,” and “Yoga.”

Several initiatives have also been undertaken as part of the PA Healthy Schools Report card. Some of those initiatives include:

- Participation in the Crayola Color Cycle program
- Professional development using Google Classroom as a learner management system to encourage digitizing rather than using paper copies to reduce the environmental footprint
- Installation of buddy bench made from 540 recycled milk jugs
- Engagement of student leadership group in completing the PA Healthy School Report Card
- Waste free lunch days
- Love Our Earth Day
- Earth Day Celebrations

### **Narrative for Pillar 3: Your Efforts to Ensure Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education**

Pine-Richland School District does not have a graduation requirement for environmental or sustainability literacy; however, students are given these topics as choices for their electives in order to graduate. The district’s curriculum is aligned to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Environment and Ecology. In addition, as a result of the curricular in-depth program review process, we are working through the alignment of our curriculum K-12 and infusing the Next Generation Science Standards into our learning goals and activities as well.

Students from Hance Elementary have a proven track record in achieving highly on Science content specifically around the area of environmental and sustainability. Two years ago, students scored 94.3% advanced or proficient on the Science PSSA. These results indicate that students are performing in the top decile out of the 1572 schools that have a fourth grade attending their school. New data from the spring of 2020 is not available due to the COVID 19 pandemic.



Teachers at Hance also have engaged in professional development related to sustainability. One teacher attended Duquesne University's Sustainability Day in the Fall of 2019. She learned many different simple ways for students to get involved in saving our Earth's resources from bottle stations, to rain catchers, to composting, etc. We do have the bottle stations now and are deciding how we should compost. We need to talk to our borough and kitchen staff to decide which kind of composting bins we should have. We also want to create different garbage cans for compost, waste, and recycling that the children could understand and use effectively. With COVID upon us, we are unable to do the garbage cans at this time. Composting was going to be organized, but now we are being sent home for 100% virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will pick back up with this idea once we are back in school. From this professional development session, the teacher worked with her team to design a "Love Our Earth Day" set of activities for grades K-3 during the 19-20 school year. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the event had to be cancelled. The team is implementing Love Our Earth Day in May at Hance Elementary with an in person format to continue to build a culture supporting sustainability

Hance Elementary is continuously developing a "Fab Lab" which is a unique version of a STEM lab. The theme for the room is focused on using technology to learn more about effective environmental and sustainability topics combined with problem solving. One room in the building has been dedicated to purchasing items that are related to science, technology, engineering, and items to build creative problem solving skills. Materials currently available in the Fab Lab include 30 Osmo's and 30 Osmo Genius Kids. The Fab Lab committee and Hance PTO are working together to incorporate Legos, iPads, and Bee Bots. Teachers in Kindergarten have been using the Osmo and Osmo Genius kits during RAM time (Reading and Math) which is a period of the day designated to differentiated instruction. Students in grades 1-3 are leveraging Chromebooks for their dedicated device throughout the day. The Hance PTO is working to purchase an additional 15 iPads so that we can make the Fab Lab mobile until the pandemic ends to meet the requirements of our Health and Safety plan. Not only do the devices promote the use of paper conservation, they also allow the students to study environmental and sustainability topics more easily. Students are encouraged to study topics that surrounding these themes and submit any projects related to environmental and sustainability topics to be featured on the morning announcements during the month of April. April was chosen because Earth Day, which the building celebrates, is held during this month.

Hance Elementary has recently adopted a new set of curriculum resources for Science. Previously, the district engaged students in the scientific process through hands-on Asset and Foss kits. Students learned through exploration during classroom learning activities. The activities presented allowed them to develop a hypothesis, experimentation, discussion, data collection and analysis. In January 2019, it was determined that a new resource would need to be adopted to help infuse NGSS Standards as well as provide not only the hands-on experiences needed to be successful but more explicit instruction.

The same committee had been piloting a resource called Generation Genius, which supplemented science instruction with demonstration videos, science articles requiring reading and writing in the content area, and which reflect the Next Generation Science Standards. Each of the videos and content pieces included on the website are approved and then endorsed by the National Science Teachers Association demonstrating accuracy of content and alignment of standards. While this tool was proven to be valuable to our students and teachers within the traditional classroom, it has proven itself even more beneficial during the times of virtual learning, when science demonstrations and high levels of engagement to make abstract concepts come to life are more challenging to accomplish without common tools and reference points. After the various pilots by the Science committee, final recommendations for adoption were made in the spring of 2020.

The new resources in grades K-3 feature a focus on the environment and sustainability. Students in



Kindergarten at Hance Elementary learn about the needs of plants and animals while first grade expands upon those concepts by focusing on animal and plant defenses. Second grade and third grade continue to learn about the environment through learning more about how landforms change as well as weather and climate. Cross-curricular experiences are also created tying these environmental concepts into Social Studies and English Language Arts.

Students are also able to participate in instruction about these concepts while being immersed in the outdoor classroom making direct connections to the environment surrounding them. Special projects have been developed at each grade level to help embed further environmental and sustainability projects. In third grade, students studied “Balancing Forces.” Students created at home projects where chain reactions were created and taped. To enhance the project, teachers integrated a specific focus on how specific forces such as people can impact the environment and ultimately its’ sustainability. Video projects were created and shared across the grade level at Hance Elementary. The library at Hance Elementary supports environmental and sustainability topics as well as offers specific literature tied to concepts directly related to the units selected and taught in the Science curriculum.

Students will also be educated throughout the month of April with a specific focus on reduce, reuse, and recycle as well as environments and sustainability. During the month of April, several learning activities have been planned by the wellness committee in conjunction with the art teachers. Below is a description of each of the learning activities for the students:

During the week of April 12-16, students in grades K and 1 will listen to a story on the morning announcements about a particular theme related to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Students will then color paper quilt squares that match the theme for that day. On Friday, students will create their own quilts with their class by cutting finished squares and gluing onto construction paper for display.

Students in grades 2 and 3 will also listen to the story on the morning announcements and then choose a quilt square that matches the theme featured in the book. Students will color their square and write about how they can reduce, reuse, and recycle. On Friday, students will cut out their quilt squares and create a class quilt to display.

Literature that will be featured include:

- “What Should I Recycle?”
- “Save the Ocean”
- “Not for me, please. I choose to act green.”
- “I can save the earth!”
- “Thank you, Earth.”

A song about recycling to the tune of “Row Row Row Your Boat” will also be featured in music class and also in the classroom. Students will also be featured singing the song on the morning announcements.

On Earth Day, April 22, students will participate in a waste free lunch day, virtual field trip to the San Diego Zoo to learn about endangered animals and have a spirit day featuring their favorite animal t-shirt or accessory.

On April 23, students will be creating an Earth Day mural along our walking train to make a pledge with what they can do to promote a greener and more sustainable environment. Students will also have another spirit dress day wear they can wear green or blue to celebrate Earth’s land and water.



On April 29, students will participate in an outdoor scavenger hunt to find the rainbow of colors in the environment taking photos with an iPad. Photos will be collected to make a photomontage and sent out to families.

Finally, on April 30, students will have the opportunity to participate in a recycled fashion show. Students will create their recycled fashion items at home and participate in a runway like opportunity on the walking track with their classmates.

Parents are encouraged and also informed about various opportunities to participate in supporting environmental and sustainability activities. Teachers inform parents about these opportunities through newsletters and the Friday Flash. Additional after school activities connected to exploring careers and concepts related to sustainability and science include LAB Ratz. This is an after-school program sponsored by the Hance PTO that features engineering-based activities.

Hance Elementary also participates in Junior Achievement Day with third grade students. This day allows students to explore and meet career and college readiness standards. Students learn about a variety of careers that they could potentially explore and consider for themselves in the future. This program is delivered through volunteers in various career fields. When recruiting for volunteers, Hance Elementary asks for any parent that has a background in effective environmental and sustainability to help implement the program so that these are topics are explicitly explored and expanded upon with students to help foster interest. Our goal is to help our students explore these potential careers and build interest to help create a that supports and cultivates sustainability in future generations.

Additional activities that provide students at Hance Elementary with experiences related to environmental and sustainable topics include:

- Celebrations of Earth Day – Hance Elementary celebrates Earth Day with a variety of activities including a waste free lunch day as well as virtual field trips to help students learn about various environments and the animals that live there along with participating in a rainbow scavenger hunt and creating a giant earth day mural around the outdoor track to promote positive messages of how to help create sustainability at school. Finally, students participate in a culminating event of creating a trash sculpture to help them reflect on things that could be recycled instead of being thrown away to help promote the concept of reduce, reuse, and recycle.
- Love our Earth Day - K-3 Love Our Earth Day is a day that was developed by our PA Healthy Schools Committee. The day is dedicated to educating students about the environment and sustainability. The first annual event was scheduled for Friday, May 8, 2020 but due to the COVID 19 shut down, had to be cancelled. Love Our Earth Day is scheduled near Earth Day to help students make the connection. The PA Healthy Schools Committee is once again planning to hold this event with a virtual option in May 2021. During this day, students are able to experience a wide variety of learning activities. First students are able to learn more about composting and how it relates to the environment and sustainability. Guest readers share the story, “Composting Stew,” to introduce students to this topic. Another station that students engage with is learning about our plant walls featured in the front of the building as well as our waste free lunch campaigns. Waste free lunches are held quarterly and are advertised to parents. Students additionally complete a quilting activity based on the topics of recycling, water, air, and sustainability. The quilts are hung in the hallways. Finally, students are able to plant a flower to take home and plant. All activities relate back to the topics of environmental issues and sustainability.



- Assemblies - Penguins - Grade 2 Each year our PTO sponsors several assemblies for students. The featured assembly in grade 2 relates back to penguins. The feature of the assembly is to describe the habitat and environment that supports penguins. Students learn about key features of penguins and also how we can help support their environment through sustainability.
- Literature in Library - K-3 The Hance Elementary Library has an extensive collection of books regarding environmental and sustainable topics. Some of those titles are related to saving our endangered planet or a set of animals. Additional titles in the library encompass sustainability, particularly energy conservation and the basics of recycling. On Earth Day, these books will be featured in recorded screencasts. Students will be able to explore these topics further during library class as well.
- Rain Garden - The Gifted and Talented students at Hance Elementary engaged in creating a rain garden during the 20-21 school year as part of one of their passion projects for the spring. This project ties to our sustainability and environmental focus as well. Rain gauges and barrels were installed in the back of the school near the outdoor classroom so that students engage in a variety of activities. The rain garden helped decrease the amount of polluted stormwater runoff. Students learned about the water cycle as well as ground water and choosing native plants for the rain garden.
- Student Leaders - PA Healthy Schools - Grade 3 Student leaders in third grade were integral in helping to lead the PA Healthy Schools Initiative. Students in grade three were able to help complete the PA Healthy Report Card. They were able to interview various staff from the district to learn more about the focus on sustainability and the environment. Students gauged our progress on the PA Healthy School Initiatives and were able to help maintain our plant wall in the front of the building.
- Fab Lab- Grade K-3 A Fab Lab was created at Hance Elementary starting near the end of the 19-20 school year. The theme of the Fab Lab relates back to our STEM concepts. Although the Fab Lab had to become mobile this year due to the COVID 19 pandemic, students were able to build their problem solving skills along with learning more about Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math along with environmental and sustainability concept. These skills were combined with learning more about how to help the environment and also sustainability with initiatives that allowed the building to use less waste. (Ex: paper through utilization of Google Classroom, water in the building, electricity)