



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: **Mrs. Georgianna Diopoulos**

Official School Name: **Warwick Valley Middle School**

Official School Name Mailing Address: **225 West Street, Warwick, NY, 10990**

County: **Orange** State School Code Number *: **362997004035**

Telephone: **(845) 987-3100** Fax: **n/a**

Web site/URL: <http://www.warwickvalleyschools.com/warwick-valley-middle-school/> E-mail: gdiopoulos@wvcsd.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.


(Principal's Signature)

Date: **February 14, 2019**



Name of Superintendent: **Dr. David Leach**
District Name: **Warwick Valley Central School District**

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

Date: **February 14, 2019**

(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: **New York State Education Department**

Name of Nominating Authority: **Mrs. Rosanne Groff**

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

Date: **February 14, 2019**

(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.

Warwick Valley Middle School, Warwick, New York

Committed to a sustainable future

Warwick Valley Middle School is nestled in a charming rural landscape approximately 55 miles north of New York City. The school, which has 1,075 students in grades 5-8 and close to 100 staff members, is considered an environmental beacon in the local community and beyond, thanks to its commitment to ensuring a sustainable future for all.

This commitment is evidenced by the seemingly endless educational opportunities presented to students. Each eighth-grader is required to participate in 20 full weeks of sustainability education, which provides a foundation for developing environmentally and socially conscious citizens. As these students progress through middle school, they can opt to take such classes as Energy and the Environment and/or Computer Science for Innovators and Makers. A sequence of Project Lead the Way courses provides valuable additional hands-on STEM experiences for middle school students, too; these are complemented by the real-world learning about power usage and net zero impacts that occurs when Warwick Valley Middle School students access and analyze data generated from the district's 9,000-panel solar farm.

Warwick Valley Middle School educators and students are breaking through traditional assumptions about what constitutes a learning space. In fact, classroom walls might well be considered a thing of the past, thanks to the school's newly constructed outdoor classroom; this is a place that provides the perfect setting for science experiments and observations, but also a setting to promote creative thought, expression, contemplation and appreciation of the planet. Learners also spend time in an outdoor courtyard area accessible from the school; this area provides space for students to plant gardens and test theories about environmental factors that will affect plant growth.

Students take advantage of many community-based learning experiences, as well. For example, pupils in the Green Architecture class visit historic structures in the Warwick area to get a first-hand look at best practices for restoring buildings using environmentally friendly and sustainable construction practices. Fifth-grade students spend time at the Greenkill Outdoor Education Center each autumn, where they can take nature hikes, explore water and forest ecology and participate in team-building activities.

Civic-minded endeavors for Warwick Valley Middle School students include cleaning up local parks, engaging in environmental projects in the community for Earth Day and translating their classroom knowledge into social media campaigns focused on increasing sustainability and green living activities throughout Warwick. Pupils can even travel to *virtual* communities with one of the school's most high-tech and innovative activities. Using virtual reality goggles, they immerse themselves in an endless array of biomes and environments — without ever leaving the classroom

Warwick Valley Middle School educators, like their colleagues throughout the district, are required to incorporate sustainability and environmental concepts into curricula and class

activities — and do so with creativity and enthusiasm. They often receive training and guidance from the Children’s Environmental Literacy Foundation and Sustainable Warwick (a local organization committed to protecting the environment and reducing carbon emissions) on integrating green concepts and themes into daily activities. With that knowledge, they might be creating interactive lessons for the school’s weather station one day, helping students recycle and refurbish furniture that was originally heading for the landfill another day and developing projects to help the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation the following day. Many Warwick Valley Middle School educators are also involved in organizing the annual STEAM Fair, which showcases student-designed projects that never fail to impress even the most advanced and educated scientists and environmentalists in the Warwick Valley community.

Warwick Valley Middle School students need only look around their school setting to gain an even greater understanding of how to effectively address sustainability and environmental issues in a larger, real-world context. With all of its successes in reducing environmental impacts and costs, the school itself is a perfect model.

For instance, the school has improved energy efficiency through enhanced monitoring of energy usage, by installing LED lighting in all indoor and outdoor areas and by using software that automatically powers down computers when they’re not in use. Efficiencies are also evident in the way middle school students are transported to and from school, as the district continues purchasing propane-powered buses. These vehicles run cleaner than traditional diesel buses and have almost no emissions. In addition, propane is approximately half the cost of diesel and the propane buses require less maintenance, yielding an estimated 30 percent savings in maintenance costs. Even with these advances, the middle school’s student-led Green Team continues to provide leaders at the school and district levels with more ideas to further improve energy efficiency and sustainability.

Educators, school leaders and students also continually seek out ways to maintain a healthy, positive and compassionate school climate. The middle school has significantly improved its school climate by using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). With PBIS, staff and students focus on systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create a positive school environment. Additionally, all physical education teachers trained extensively in mindfulness and stress-relief strategies and incorporate these strategies in every class. Students are also improving their focus by using the newly installed virtual golf facilities.

Warwick Valley Middle School has a full-time school nurse, three school counselors, as well as two full-time psychologists and social workers to provide support and guidance to pupils. The school also presents a regular series of anti-bullying and character education activities and follows all requirements of the state’s Dignity for All Students Act. To increase overall safety, a school resource officer has been hired to work exclusively in Warwick Valley Middle School, meaning he can build sustainable relationships with students, staff and families.

Improving pupils’ physical health is another vital element in the school environment. Students can participate in the modified sports program, in addition to joining a crew team. The Girls on

the Run club is popular with female students. Many teachers take advantage of outdoor spaces, leading children on hikes to not only build physical stamina, but also to expand students' knowledge of the environment surrounding them. Also, students in the cooking club and consumer science classes learn about creating nutritious meals. This knowledge is reinforced through meal preparation in the Warwick Valley Middle School cafeteria, which includes organic produce sourced from local farmers and student gardens. With these fresh produce options, the school's menu often exceeds the USDA meal pattern requirements related for fresh fruits and vegetables.

With such an ingrained culture of green living, environmental awareness and education, Warwick Valley Middle School has been recognized on regional, state and national levels. The school was honored by Hudson Valley Dirt magazine as one of the top three greenest schools in the region in 2018 and among the top 10 greenest schools in 2017. Additionally, the school was recognized by the Orange County Green Stars Schools Program for its comprehensive efforts to reduce waste and by the Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation for integrating sustainability topics into the curriculum at all grade levels. Finally, Warwick Valley Central School District, including Warwick Valley Middle School, was honored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with a \$91,000 grant award in 2015 for its Envirocation project. The grant has allowed the school to develop and carry out even more green activities and continue its commitment to a sustainable future.

Part III – Documentation of State Evaluation of Nominee

The Warwick Valley Central School District is located 50 miles south of Poughkeepsie, NY in Orange County. The district is made up of 5 towns and covers an area of 101 square miles. Warwick Valley Middle School houses 1,075 students in grades 5-8.

A sample of the reasons this candidate was selected by the New York State Green Ribbon Schools selection team is included below.

Pillar I – Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs (Score 64.25 out of 90)

- Received the Energy Star Building Label in 2015 with a score of 81%.
- An on-site 2 megawatt solar array provides 100% renewable energy
- Native plants are used in gardens to minimize watering required.
- Building systems, such as HVAC and lighting, can be remotely monitored and controlled in each classroom to ensure efficiency.
- Achieved a high recycling rate (64%) based on volume, and has 100% use of chlorine – free, post-consumer recycled paper.
- A strict anti-idling policy is followed and several propane-powered buses are used for pupil transportation

Pillar II – Improved the Health and Wellness of Schools, Students, and Staff (Score 77.13 out of 90)

- A qualified IAQ coordinator is employed to effectively carry out the environmental health program which corresponds with the work of the school's health and safety committee. The committee is inclusive of a student representative and local law enforcement personnel, among multiple school staff members.
- A registered nurse is available during all school hours to aid with asthma management plans and actions. Asthma triggers are actively mitigated as well.
- Fresh foods provided by local vendors are prioritized via purchasing agreements, as well as some foods produced in the school's greenhouse. Also, 50% of the purchased food is certified environmentally preferable.
- Refillable water stations are installed throughout the school to reduce use of single-use plastic containers.
- The EPA's Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools is used to help protect the health of the air quality and reduce contamination, moisture, mold and VOC's.
- Various examples of mental and physical fitness were provided.

Pillar III – Provided Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education (Score 84.13 out of 105)

- Professional development is in coordination with the Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation – 100% of the teachers at this school participate in PD sessions on sustainable topics
- Students learn about green technologies and environmental studies through classes developed as part of their "Lead the Way" series. Course titles such as "Energy and the Environment" and "Green Architecture" incorporate sustainable efforts. A new course offered for the first time this year is titled "Computer Science for Innovators and Makers" which has a strong emphasis on green technologies.

- The school's Green Team focuses on recycling and reducing waste through initiatives such as the sale of reusable water bottles within the school and refinishing old server tables otherwise headed to the landfill.
- Students collaborate with a local community-based organization – Sustainable Warwick - on projects to benefit the community that are focused on sustainable and environmental protection. (Cleaning parks and streets, planting vegetables, rehabilitating walking trails, etc.)
- Students experience off-site field trips that relate to environmental issues. For example they attend tours of local historic buildings that have been restored for reuse via sustainable construction practices.