

## School Nominee Presentation Form

### ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS

#### School and District's Certifications

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

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

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

☒ Public ☐ Charter ☒ Title I ☐ Magnet ☐ Private ☐ Independent ☒ Rural

Name of Principal: Mrs. Shareka Lee

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name: Sycamore School

(As it should appear on an award)

Official School Name Mailing Address: 18101 Alabama Highway 21, Sycamore, AL 35149

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

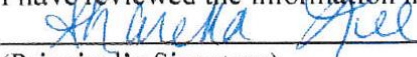
County: Talladega State School Code Number \*: 0160

Telephone: 256-315-5450 Fax: 256-315-5455

Web site/URL: <http://ses.tcboe.org> E-mail: [shareka.lee@tcboe.org](mailto:shareka.lee@tcboe.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.

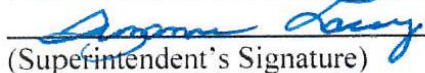
  
(Principal's Signature) Date: January 20, 2017

Name of Superintendent: Dr. Suzanne Lacey

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in official records)

District Name: Talladega County, Alabama

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

 Date: January 20, 2017  
(Superintendent's Signature)

### **Nominating Authority's Certifications**

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

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

Name of Nominating Agency: Alabama State Department of Education

Name of Nominating Authority: Mr. Michael Sentance

(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: 1-31-17  
(Nominating Authority's Signature)

### **SUMMARY AND DOCUMENTATION OF NOMINEE'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

**"See summary narrative in application."**

### **SUBMISSION**

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

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509

Expiration Date: March 31, 2018

#### **Public Burden Statement**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](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.



## ED-GRS APPLICATION FOR SCHOOLS

### School Contact Information

School Name: Sycamore Elementary School

Street Address: 18101 Alabama Hwy 21

City: Sycamore State: AL Zip: 35149

Website: www.tcboe.org Facebook page: ses.tcboe.org

Principal Name: Shareka Lee

Principal Email Address: shareka.lee@tcboe.org Phone Number: 256-315-5451

Lead Applicant Name (if different): Sallie Chastain

Lead Applicant Email: schastain@tcboe.org Phone Number: 256-315-5154

### Contact person for state and national notification:

Name: Dr. Suzanne Lacey Email: slacey@tcboe.org

Phone Number: 256-315-5104

<b>Level:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Early Learning Center <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elementary (PK-5/ 6) <input type="checkbox"/> K-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Middle (6 - 8 or 9) <input type="checkbox"/> High (9 or 10-12)	<b>School Type:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private/ Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Magnet	<b>How would you describe your school?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural	<b>District Name</b> <u>Talladega County</u> <hr/> <b>Total Enrolled:</b> <u>212</u>
Does your school serve 40% or more students from disadvantaged households?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	% receiving FRPL <u>88%</u> % limited English proficient <u>&gt;1%</u> Other measures _____	<b>Graduation rate:</b> <u>n/a</u> <b>Attendance rate:</b> <u>96%</u>	

### Cross-Cutting Question: Participation in green school programs

**Summary Narrative:** Provide a narrative describing your school's efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs; improve student and staff health; and provide effective environmental and sustainability education. Focus on unique and innovative practices and partnerships. (800 words)

## **Sycamore School, Talladega County, Green Ribbon School Narrative 2017**

Sycamore School, appropriately named for a tree, is a highly positive elementary school serving 212 kindergarten through fourth grade students in a rural area of Talladega County. Sycamore as a community is a closed mill village town, with only three small businesses and one small new production industry and the poverty rate is 88%, making the POSITIVE little Sycamore School the hub of many great things for the community. The Talladega County Schools are rural and embrace that label as a goal to provide a quality education for students that is a replicable model for any school.

To that extent, partnerships are essential for the Sycamore School, and this endeavor has grown to be highly embraced by the members of partnerships, particularly in the areas of developing and sustaining exceptional environmental practices. The school is a 1938 structure for the most part, but is attractively landscaped, maintained, and catches the eye during a school day with many children enjoying grassy lawn areas for physical education, or a group performing hillside outdoor experiments. A less visible area of the school campus, but one worth a stop would be to see the gardens of all varieties located in the back of the school, visited EVERY DAY by students on their way to the cafeteria for breakfast and lunch.

The old school has been renovated to be much more energy efficient and environmentally supportive with new well-ventilated HVAC room units, new roofing (no leaks!), and a state of the art playground as well that provides a variety of outdoor exercise with great fresh air. All classrooms and meeting spaces have great windows to further encourage the joy of a natural environment. However, on cold winter days, students also enjoy environmental studies as grow lights with plants for the outdoor gardens are maintained by grade groups for appropriate seasonal crops.

The school is the hub for community recycling efforts and promotions as well, through a partnership with the Talladega County Commission that helps provide much needed recycling bins for all categories of products. The students and the few local businesses partner to advertise the recycling days and bin locations, and are onsite these days to offer info about the schools environmental efforts as well. The information is developed as part of class and club work by the students.

STEM education is an integral part of all grade levels. To increase partnerships and make a civic connection, the school has developed an awesome partnership with The Southern Company, aka Alabama Power Company, in establishing the gardens, understanding energy, and the value of quality water sources for power generation that also provides outdoor sports and recreational venues. For rural children, this has been a major connection to careers, environmental responsibility and community service.

Unique to Sycamore School's activities is its partnership with the State Park at Wind Creek, about 35 miles away. Through a grant partnership, the distance becomes a 'joyride' for a week in the summer for 25 third and fourth graders as they spend the day studying numerous environmental areas as they explore, research and develop skills as Junior Park Rangers. No one is ever late for this early morning bus ride, and parents almost always had to wait for them to return as they just never want the day to end. This active is a great partnership that has proven to have highly sustained impacts on positive environmental practices among these young outdoor environmental leaders.

Gardening at Sycamore is so much more than planting, watching things grow, and harvesting for the students, staff and the community partners. It includes systematic and intentional composting by a group of students for all the garden plots; it includes rain barrels with highly valued and measured water collection for the gardens with shared knowledge that the water is better than the 'bought' water; and the food harvested is valued for quality nutrition, saved money and shared resources. The garden concepts have also enhanced the learning of healthy diets and nutrition that supports the Child Nutrition Program.

The Sycamore School's food service program is essential for well-being of the student population with over 88% of the students being on free/reduced lunches. 95% of the students have breakfast and/or lunch

provided by the school cafeteria staff, a staff of three that earned the designation of Healthier Choice School in 2014. Nutrition is a part of the health and science curriculum throughout the year, and is also integrated into the physical fitness activities and clubs.

The Leader in Me and Lighthouse standards are effectively incorporated in cross-curricula and full school activities. The standards promote development of habits in leadership, teamwork, understanding of self and others, being proactive, and a habit referred to as "Sharpen the Saw". The efforts to be a school that understands this habit fully supports that each stakeholder do things that promote good exercises and healthy habits in all aspects of living a quality life. Through the blended efforts of the partnerships, the daily efforts for positive habits, the Green Ribbon School Pillars are positively impacting all of the Sycamore School, the hub of the community, under the sycamore tree.

1. Is your school participating in a local, state or national school program, such as EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, EcoSchools, Project Learning Tree, or others, which asks you to benchmark progress in some fashion in any or all of the Pillars? (X) Yes ( ) No

Program(s) and level(s) achieved: ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, Healthier Choice Schools Program, Leader in Me

2. Has your school, staff or student body received any awards for facilities, health or environment? (X ) Yes ( ) No

Award(s) and year(s) ENERGY STAR LABEL 2009 and renewed 2014, Healthier School Choice 2014, National Title I Distinguished School, and Lighthouse School

### **Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs**

#### **Energy**

1. Can your school demonstrate a reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions? (X ) Yes ( ) No

Percentage reduction: 7.2% Over (m/yy - m/yy): 2/06 – 10/16

Initial GHG emissions rate (MT eCO<sub>2</sub>/person): .84

Final GHG emissions rate (MT eCO<sub>2</sub>/person): .78

Offsets: n/a

How did you calculate the reduction? ENERGY STAR Data

2. Do you track resource use in EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager? (X ) Yes ( ) No

If yes, what is your score? 93

If score is above a 75, have you applied for and received ENERGY STAR certification?

(X) Yes ( ) No Year: 2009 and 2014

3. Has your school reduced its total non-transportation energy use from an initial baseline?

(X ) Yes ( ) No

Current energy usage (kBtu/student/year): 6236 kBtu

Current energy usage (kBtu/sq.ft./year): 39.5/sq.ft./year Baseline 69.3

Percentage reduction: -29.8% over (m/yy - mm/yy): 01/06 to 10-16

How did you document this reduction? ENERGY STAR Data

4. What percentage of your school's energy is obtained from: N/A

On-site renewable energy generation: \_\_\_\_\_ Type \_\_\_\_\_

Purchased renewable energy: \_\_\_\_\_ Type \_\_\_\_\_

Participation in USDA Fuel for Schools, DOE Wind for Schools or other federal or state school energy program: Recycle Cooking Oil Pickup

5. In what year was your school originally constructed? 1938

What is the total building area of your school? 33,468

6. Has your school constructed or renovated building(s) in the past ten years? (X ) Yes ( ) No

For new building(s): Percentage building area that meets green building standards: 0%

Certification and year received: n/a Total constructed area: n/a

For renovated building(s): Percentage of the building area that meets green building standards: >5% Certification and year: n/a  
Total renovated area: 1500 sq. ft.

### Water and Grounds

7. Can you demonstrate a reduction in your school's total water consumption from an initial baseline?

Average Baseline water use (gallons per occupant): 8.14 (K/gal)

Current water use (gallons per occupant): 4.24(K/gal)

Percentage reduction in domestic water use: 48%

Percentage reduction in irrigation water use: N/A

Time period measured (mm/yyyy - mm/yyyy): 02/2006 – 01/2016

How did you document this reduction (i.e. ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, utility bills, school district reports)?: Energy Cop Professional Database

8. What percentage of your landscaping is considered water-efficient and/or regionally appropriate? 100%

Types of plants used and location: Regional, Drought Tolerant and Shade Providing

9. Describe alternate water sources used for irrigation. (50 word max)

Four 50-gallon rainwater collection barrels are utilized for gardens and landscape plants

**10.** Describe any efforts to reduce stormwater runoff and/or reduce impermeable surfaces. (50 word max)

Less than 2% of the campus parking surfaces are impermeable surfaces. Curbing borders are insignificant, allowing all rainwater to easily be penetrated into the open grassy areas and penetrable campus surfaces.

**11.** Our school's drinking water comes from:

(X) Municipal water source

( ) Well on school property

**12.** Describe how the water source is protected from potential contaminants. (50 word max)

Monthly water samples are required within the building of all drinking and cooking water, and water is provided from a certified water source. Any potential water contaminants would be checked immediately through EPA, ADEM and district HAZ MAT services.

**13.** Describe the program you have in place to control lead in drinking water. (50 word max)

Due to the age of the building, through checking and replacement infrastructure water supply lines have been replaced as necessary and all lines are monitored through systematic inspections and tests by the school district authorities.

**14.** What percentage of the school grounds are devoted to ecologically beneficial uses? (50 word max) Approximately 65% of the school campus is open grassy areas for play. Another 5% is dedicated to classroom gardens. The campus has large wooden areas on the southern and western perimeters, creating great outdoor shady areas for environmental study and additional outdoor physical education activities.

### **Waste**

**15.** What percentage of solid waste is diverted from landfilling or incinerating due to reduction, recycling and/or composting? Complete all the calculations below to receive points.

**A.** Monthly garbage service in cubic yards (garbage dumpster size(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected):  
4.37cu.yd X 4 times/ mo. X 75% full = 13.11 cu. yd. of garbage

**B.** Monthly recycling volume in cubic yards (recycling dumpster sizes(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected):  
4.37 cu. yd. X 2 times/mo. X 100% full = 17.48 cu. yd. recycle bins

**C.** Monthly compostable materials volume(s) in cubic yards (food scrap/food soiled paper dumpster size(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected): 4.37 cu. yd. X 12 times/mo. X 45% full = 23.6 cu. yd. compostable

Recycling Rate =  $((B + C) \div (A + B + C) \times 100)$ :

$$\underline{41.08 \text{ cu. yd} \div 54.19 \times 100 = 76}$$

Monthly waste generated per person = (A/number of students and staff):  
13.11/235.5 students and staff = .06 cu. yd per person

16. What percentage of your school's total office/classroom paper content is post-consumer material, fiber from forests certified as responsibly managed and/or chlorine-free?  
85%

17. List the types and amounts of hazardous waste generated at your school:

Flammable liquids	Corrosive liquids	Toxics	Mercury	Other:
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

How is this measured? The school campus does not have any of these hazardous items nor does it generate any.

How is hazardous waste disposal tracked? Not applicable

Describe other measures taken to reduce solid waste and eliminate hazardous waste. (100 words max)

All Sycamore stakeholders are all fully aware of the school's participation in recycling and compostable materials disposal emphasis. Each grade has a recycle focus that is known and supported by many stakeholders. In collaboration with the county government, recycle bins are utilized extensively, even in this highly rural area. Extreme efforts are made to recycle or properly disposal of any item or material from printer cartridges, small to large batteries, electronic equipment to household waste. These Talladega County Commission services are highly publicized through the school's efforts to provide a positive knowledge of all environmental quality measures for the children's future.

18. Which green cleaning custodial standard is used? Lead free, recycled products, and non-caustic are the standard for the school and these measures are supported at the district level through all cleaning and maintenance supply purchases.

What percentage of all products is certified? Minimum of 85% of all products

What specific third party certified green cleaning product standard does your school use?

Green Seal Products or Green Products are utilized as feasibly as possible within the constraints of state bid laws for bulk purchasing without specifically endorsing a third party. The school district is highly supportive of safe and clean environmental measures and thus supports a quality environmental standard for our school through its supplies as well as expectations.

### Alternative Transportation

19. What percentage of your students walk, bike, bus, or carpool (2 + student in the car) to/from school? (Note if your school does not use school buses) 98%

How is this data calculated? (50 word max) A very limited number of students are not transported by school bus, and the carpooling has less than 2% of the students who are solo 'car riders'. This evidence is fully documented by daily bus routes and extremely limited numbers of students who are transported by car from time to time.

**20. Has your school implemented?**

[Yes ] designated carpool parking stalls.

[ Yes] a well-publicized no idling policy that applies to all vehicles (including school buses).

[ Yes] Vehicle loading/unloading areas are at least 25 feet from building air intakes, doors, and windows.

[ n/a] Safe Pedestrian Routes to school or Safe Routes to School

Describe activities in your safe routes program (50 word max):

There are no children who walk to school or ride bicycles to school at Sycamore as none live within a mile of the school. As to carpool lines, there are fully enforced 'no idle zone' postings include Clean Air Info and an Enter Only/Exit Only plan supports this healthy environment.

**21. Describe how your school transportation use is efficient and has reduced its environmental impact. (50 word max)**

Safe first and the least amount of travel, second, are the priorities for the school bus routing. Sycamore is a feeder school with shared bus routes, therefore northbound buses end routes at Sycamore in the morning and leave with northbound students and pick-up northbound students at the feeder school which is located 4 miles, north. The reverse is in place for southbound students. Bus drivers leave buses at base school through the day, and have them at their home for starting up each day. Bus loading lines are shorter, and arrival at home is much more expedient due to these energy and quality air saving measures.

**22. Describe any other efforts toward reducing environmental impact, focusing on innovative or unique practices and partnerships. (100 word max)**

There is no structured local government beyond the County Commissioners and the local school board for Sycamore. Fortunately the community looks to the school for positive measures, and is amazingly supportive of simple to complex initiatives that enhance a quality environment. The small area businesses donate time, services, and public service announcements on their marquees:" Recycle day AT THE SCHOOL". Nearby town agencies literally come and pick up recycles and teach lessons on environmental issues. Students know to recycle through various grade level clubs from the composters to aluminum can tabs savers, to the 'turn-off' the lights leaders. Yes, kindergarteners through fourth grades can make an impact – they are making good habits.

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

**Environmental Health**

**1. Describe your school's Integrated Pest Management efforts, including IPM/green certifications earned, routine inspections, pest identification, monitoring, record-keeping, etc.:**

Extremely limited pesticides are used in the building or areas where students or teachers have access. Management is recorded and maintained monthly, when students are not present. Any emergency measures for pest control follows the same procedure. Keeping the campus and building clean to discourage pests if a priority.

**2. What is the volume of your annual pesticide use (gal/student/year)? Describe efforts to reduce use: Volume: .11 gallon/student and staff/year**

Prevention is the priority and this plan has proven effective in the reduction of the amount of pesticide usage in this older rurally located building. Less than 2 gallons of properly diluted natural ingredient based pesticide is used monthly.

3. Which of the following practices does your school employ to minimize exposure to hazardous contaminants? Provide specific examples of actions taken for each checked practice.

☒ [ X ] Our school prohibits smoking on campus and in public school buses. The entire school campus and all school buses are clearly marked as NO SMOKING or use of TOBACCO zones and this is strictly enforced.

☒ [ X ] Our school has identified and properly removed sources of elemental mercury and prohibits its purchase and use in the school. Safety inspection as required by law and due diligence of the staff

☒ [ X ] Our school uses fuel burning appliances and has taken steps to protect occupants from carbon monoxide (CO) A limited number of commercial kitchen appliances are in the lunchroom. These are modern appliances that are professionally installed and inspected for no CO emission compliance, and inspected regularly.

☐ [ ] Our school does not have any fuel burning combustion appliances – Lunchroom only as previously stated.

☒ [ X ] Our school has tested all frequently occupied rooms at or below ground level for radon gas and has fixed and retested all rooms with levels that tested at or above 4 pCi/L OR our school was built with radon resistant construction features and tested to confirm levels below 4 pCi/L. School has been tested to be radon free and there are no rooms that at or below ground level.

☒ [ X ] Our school has identified any wood playground or other structures that contain chromate copper arsenate and has taken steps to eliminate exposure. The school playground does not have any wood structures. Any potential items were removed four years ago.

4. Describe how your school controls and manages chemicals routinely used in the school to minimize student and staff exposure. (100 word max) Limited cleaning chemicals are the only chemicals used by the custodial staff. Protective masks and gloves are required for the use of such, the chemicals are used on a limited, highly precautionous standard, and ONLY when students and other staff are not present. For any major cleaning that might be considered needing special attention, outside personnel with proper use credentials are used when students are not present.

5. Describe actions your school takes to prevent exposure to asthma triggers in and around the school. (100 word max)

All staff members are aware of any students or fellow staff members who are asthma identified. Use of any asthma triggers are extremely limited and used with extreme caution. Staff members are also trained to specifically not use materials that might cause issues without authoritative consultation.

6. Describe actions your school takes to control moisture from leaks, condensation, and excess humidity and promptly cleanup mold or removes moldy materials when it is found. (100 word max) The school district is highly proactive in student and staff health. For any moisture control situations, outside professionals are immediately acquired to exact measures to correct or prevent unhealthy conditions. A recent rainwater flood in one campus building was a prime example, as all wet items were removed immediately, walls and floors cleaned and sanitized within hours by an outside professional team. The measures exceeded what could have been completed with only local school staff, and showed the commitment to a quality learning environment. Thorough inspection and testing for residual bacteria affirmed a clean school.
7. Our school has installed local exhaust systems for major airborne contaminant sources.  
(X )Yes ( )No
8. Describe your school's practices for inspecting and maintaining the building's ventilation system and all unit ventilators to ensure they are clean and operating properly. (100 word max)  
Each room at Sycamore School has a modern HVAC system installed, replacing any outdoor units or antiqued systems. The filtering of each unit is clean and /or replaced on a monthly basis, and individual unit records are kept to monitor the same. The individual room units also help conserve energy as well as provide a much more controlled environment in each room.
9. Describe actions your school takes to ensure that all classrooms and other spaces are adequately ventilated with outside air, consistent with state or local codes, or national ventilation standards. (100 word max)  
The local school board is extremely dedicated to provide the best quality feasibly possible learning environment. Sycamore is an old building, however the heating, ventilation and cooling as described in the previous standard is a testament to the practices of quality air in EACH classroom. The school district has teams of maintenance support personnel that are dispatched ASAP for issues of malfunctioning HVAC. All of these measure meet or exceed any local, state or national standards. The fact that little to no industry pollution is in the area, and the air is higher quality in this rural setting is a plus for this school.
10. Describe other steps your school takes to protect indoor environmental quality such as implementing EPA IAQ Tools for Schools and/or conducting other periodic, comprehensive inspections of the school facility to identify environmental health and safety issues and take corrective action. (200 word max)  
If one visits the school, a first impression could easily be that Sycamore is an 'old' school, and its structures indeed are. However, the air is fresh both inside and out, the floors clean and quality surfaces, the rooms fresh and well lighted, and many evidences of a healthy learning environment. This is true throughout the building, even in limited use spaces. There just simply is not an 'old school' smell about the building! There is an abundance of sunlight for every classroom and office as every classroom has a generous amount of outside wall space. In addition to monthly monitoring and cleaning of HVAC filters, a comprehensive mid-year and end of year evaluation of all of the facilities are made and any issues of concern for IAQ are addressed along with water and structural quality needs. Sycamore has a current and quality roofing, for example, that supports the elimination of leaks, mold and mildew issues. Sycamore

School is well maintained, regardless of the age of the building and small number of students that it serves. All of these factors are noted by the community and students as quality environmental factors for a good learning setting.

### **Nutrition and Fitness**

**11.** Which practices does your school employ to promote nutrition, physical activity and overall school health? Provide specific examples of actions taken for each checked practice, focusing on innovative or unique practices and partnerships. (100 word max)

[X] Our school participates in the USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge. Level and year: Silver Level 2014.

[X] Our school participates in a Farm to School program to use local, fresh food.

[X] Our school has an on-site food garden. Yes, small but effective!

[X] Our school garden supplies food for our students in the cafeteria, a cooking or garden class or to the community. YES! The gardens are small on campus, however very productive and grade level competitive! And the community has actively joined in helping promote and partner with these highly effective plots of learning about life.

[X] Our students spent at least 120 minutes per week over the past year in school supervised physical education. 30 minutes per day

[X] At least 50% of our students' annual physical education takes place outdoors.  
Generally the students have at least 110 days for the 180 school days of outdoor physical education, being limited only by inclement weather of extreme heat, cold or rain.

[X ] Health measures are integrated into assessments.  
Students are guided to set goals to measure physical activities that are age and ability appropriate. Additionally students are taught quality nutritional standards as it relates to their physical well-being an overall health for now and their future.

[X] At least 50% of our students have participated in the EPA's Sunwise (or equivalent program.) All students have been provided lessons in EPA's Sunwise program. Due to the location of the school in the sunny south, this is essential. Practices are in place at the school to support a Sunwise program for any and all outdoor activities and provide supplies with parental permission.

[X] Food purchased by our school is certified as "environmentally preferable"  
Percentage: 60% Type: Farm to Table, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable, non-GMO as feasible and packaging that is much more environmentally friendly than not, for example, recyclable cardboard boxes and less plastics. Students actively help place compostable food in one container and paper and plastics in the correct binds for recycling.

12. Describe the type of outdoor education, exercise and recreation available. (100 word max)

If a classroom is missing students, that group of students can probably be found in the outdoor gardening areas planting, inspecting or harvesting! Additionally a high energy and multiple activities playground structure that serves over 30 students at one time is utilized by all students on daily basis, weather permitting. Additional, a spacious indoor facility with high energy exercise equipment if available for students on inclement weather days. The school has a full time physical education teacher, and all students have 30 minutes of physical education activities and lifelong physical skills development each school day. Students and teachers also have many acres of outdoor grassy areas for play, additional outdoor learning experiences and experiments.

13. Describe any other efforts to improve nutrition and fitness, highlighting innovative or unique practices and partnerships. (100 word max)

Efforts to improve fitness and nutrition of the entire community of Sycamore School are highly intentional. The school utilizes the principles of the Leader in Me School philosophy every day to help students develop positive, responsible ownership of daily activities. To that extent, to enhance individual lifestyles, all students are active members of a student-led club of high interest. Clubs are not a simple social outlet, but rather an organization with purposes. Environment, fitness and nutrition are focuses of many of these clubs, meeting at least bi-weekly to actively participate in their goals and related activities. The club names delineate their purpose and reveal the activities. These include The Dance Club, The Composting Club, The Tabs (aluminum can) Club, The Gardening Club, The Running Club, and the Chef's Club. These clubs have been active for several years and outside partnerships, speakers and programs all are part of the practices.

### **Coordinated School Health, Mental Health, School Climate, and Safety**

14. Does your school use a Coordinated School Health approach or other health-related initiatives to address overall school health issues? (X) Yes ( ) No

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

Health lessons are an integral part of each grade level curriculum and these are supported additionally by hosting health fairs, outside presenters, environmental studies, regularly school counselor age appropriate lessons, and school district provided mental health and nursing services.

15. Does your school partner with any postsecondary institutions, businesses, nonprofit organizations, or community groups to support student health and/or safety? (X) Yes ( ) No

If yes, describe these partnerships:.

Over ten of the school's partnerships are related to student health and safety supported projects and student involved practices through their programs and involvement.

16. Does your school have a school nurse and/or a school-based health center? (X ) Yes ( ) No

17. Describe your school's efforts to support student mental health and school climate (e.g. anti-bullying programs, peer counseling, etc.):

The school district provides school safety officers and mental health counselor who regularly provide on-site programs related to healthy social lifestyles, drug and alcohol-free practices, as well as emergency safety measures. The school's participation in the Leader in Me concepts highly supports positive choices as part of the daily routines of this program.

### **Pillar 3: Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education**

1. Which practices does your school employ to help ensure effective environmental and sustainability education? Provide specific examples of actions taken for each checked practice, highlighting innovative or unique practices and partnerships.

[X] Our school has an environmental or sustainability literacy requirement. (200 word max)

Students lead the Leader in Me standards on a daily basis as a part of the beginning of each school day. For kindergarten through fourth grade students, this may not be considered a literacy requirement, however it is highly evident that ALL students are grasping the expectations for a quality level of environment expectations and attitudes. It is a practice in every classroom.

[X] Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated throughout the curriculum. (200 word max)

The previous discussion of the clubs as not being a social venue, but a systemic programmatic approach to student engagement attest to the fact that the concepts are integrated throughout the curriculum. Value is added because doing projects that relates to the quality of the environment, recycling, exercising, for example, are all daily standards for a reason and the students love the approach. Science, whether it is life, earth, physical, is integrated in reading, particularly in informational text,

[X] Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated into assessments. (200 word max)

Students are encouraged to practice quality environmental standards, and assessments are frequently daily, stated practices for elementary aged children. The best assessment of highly desirable environmental and sustainability standards are reflected in on-site assessments of young children making quality choices in activities, food choices, and engaged in critical thinking at a young age to make good decisions. To that extent, assessment is highly integrated!

[X] Students evidence high levels of proficiency in these assessments. (100 word max)

Because our school utilized Project Based Learning as a major learning tool, assessment is built-in. Nearly all students have projects that relate to an environmental realm of study, because there is an interest there within the school structure. As a part of each project, students can actively explain what the project was to 'discover', 'what was discovered' and 'how and why' of the outcomes. Each student has a role of being able to explain their learning, documenting their activities to support their learning and anyone who will listen will definitely know that the student has had a meaningful experience at a rather high level of application.

[X] Professional development in environmental and sustainability education are provided to all teachers. (200 word max)

As a forerunner to desiring to become a Green Ribbon School, for the past three years the faculty and community have been highly engaged in developing outdoor classrooms and a quality engaging playground area. Along with these projects, additional training and methods of involvement have been essential. To meet these additional learning experiences, all teachers have had a minimum of 15 hours of related environmental education through summer workshops and whole group faculty work sessions.

2. For schools serving grades 9-12, provide: N/A

Percentage of last year's eligible graduates who completed the AP Environmental Science course during their high school career: \_\_\_\_\_

Percentage scoring a 3 or higher: \_\_\_\_\_

3. How does your school use sustainability and the environment as a context for learning science, technology, engineering and mathematics thinking skills and content knowledge? (200 word max)

The outdoor classroom is a catalyst for each of these learning areas. Students at various grade levels have utilized various record keeping measure for recording data, helping to build the gardens and helping to maintain the same. Students frequently record their times and distances for running, dancing, walking, steps, etc for a part of math integration into physical education time. The utilization of technology that creates data graphs proves to be a highly engaging and quality learning experience as well.

4. How does your school use sustainability and the environment as a context for learning green technologies and career pathways? (200 word max)

The Sycamore School utilizes Project Based Learning as an ongoing method of students learning to explore and answer questions based on what they know and what they need to find out about their surrounding which impacts their lives and future. To that extent, teachers frequently utilize outside businesses to come in to share their career and industry practices that relate to environment and green technology practices.

5. Describe students' civic/community engagement projects integrating environment and sustainability topics. (200 word max)

Beyond classroom and small group presentations for grade appropriate external learning exposures, the school also supports students visiting various business and industry locations to find out very specific information about environmental practices. The field trip adventure may be to the rock quarry, the water department, the hospital, the EMA center, the recycling paper mill, or Honda Manufacturing, for example. Students are encouraged to engage their families and neighbors in recycling endeavors, and a goal on nearly all of the field trips is to know the quality environmental practices used by that entity.

6. Describe students' meaningful outdoor learning experiences at every grade level. (200 word max)

There is a specific area in the school gardens for each grade level to develop, maintain, label and promote for quality production, whether it is butterfly plants for pollination or the vegetable gardens. Students at each grade level have a specific area of the campus that they are responsible for making certain that it is litter free. Upper grade level students are responsible for the composing from the lunchroom, managing the rain barrels, and assisting with carrying recycles to the campus recycle bin daily.

7. Describe how outdoor learning is used to teach an array of subjects in context, engage the broader community, and develop civic skills. (200 word max)

A unique learning experience at Sycamore is for rising 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students to participate in the Junior Park Ranger program that is provided by the Alabama State Parks Department. Twenty-five students attend four days of off-campus training for a total of 16 hours of activities that are TOTALLY environmental based studies, provided by a State Park Ranger at an area State Park. Students learn careers, ecology, life-cycle, plant and animal identifications, safety practices, and geography. The experience supports students learning of natural resources value, a piece of the world beyond their community but nearby, and a civic responsibility and how to be a part of it.

8. Describe your partnerships to help your school and other schools achieve in the 3 Pillars. Include both the scope and impact of these partnerships. (Maximum 200 words)

The desire to be a Green Ribbon School has been driven by seeing the impact of other schools in the district achieving this goal. The fact that the school district has supported many of the attributes of a Green Ribbon School, first by conservation of energy consumption, has led the school to realize that the staff and students have a valuable role supporting as well. The school district also manages and supported the Healthier School Choices through our Child Nutrition program. Both of these endeavors have been driving factors and challenges that other schools have help us to realize quality environmental practices that would involve the community and all school stakeholders in a most worthwhile set of goals. To become a Green Ribbon School, it was soon learned that it was a total school and community approach that definitely expanded beyond the indoor classroom. Partnerships would be essential and so very valuable to the students and the community. For example, the Alabama Power Company's network of volunteers highly motivated our students and parents as they came and helped build the gardens. Likewise, for additional labor support for a nearby small industry in helping to build and revitalize the outdoor playground and has become a sustainable partner.

9. Describe any other ways that your school integrates core environment, sustainability, STEM, green technology and civics into curricula to provide effective environmental and sustainability education, highlighting on innovative or unique practices and partnerships. (Maximum 200 words)

With all schools in the district being or wanting to become Green Ribbon Schools, our campuses all began to flourish with outdoor classroom with tremendous increases in student engagement. The clubs of the Leader in Me have become competitive in recycling and other fully related environmental efforts but most importantly a network that entire communities are seeing the effects of what students are doing and how they can contribute to a better lifestyle in a healthy environment. Civically, it is exciting to see that communities are participating in

these quality of life endeavors, not because of laws, but because of the positive evidence that supports all citizens doing quality environmental activities.

**10. Submit 5 of photos (with appropriate permissions) or up to 5 minutes of video content.**



**Figure 1 and 2 below: Alabama Power Partners (in red T-shirts) work with students, parents and staff to build gardens and PLANT!**





**Figure 3** Thumbs Up for a great fresh fruit and vegetable smoothie on Club Day for the Chef's Club



**Figure 4 WOW! What a Whopper as students gather their sweet potato crop!**



**Figure 5 Kindergarten Stomps Out Litter by Collecting and Stomping Cans for Recycling**