



## School Nominee Presentation Form

### ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS

#### School and District's Certifications

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

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

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

Public  Charter  Title I  Magnet  Private  Independent  Rural

Name of Principal: **Ms. Sandra Wood**

Official School Name: **Park Avenue Elementary School**

Official School Name Mailing Address: **10 Park Avenue, Warwick, NY, 10990**

County: **Orange** State School Code Number \*: **362997004032**

Telephone: **(845) 987-3170** Fax: **n/a**

Web site/URL: <http://www.warwickvalleyschools.com/park-avenue-elementary/> E-mail: [swood@wvcsd.org](mailto:swood@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.

Date: **February 28, 2018**

(Principal's Signature)



Name of Superintendent: **Mr. 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 28, 2018**

(Superintendent's Signature)

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

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

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

Name of Nominating Agency: **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 28, 2018**

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

### **SUBMISSION**

The nomination package, including the signed certifications, narrative summary, documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars, and photos should be submitted online according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509

Expiration Date: March 31, 2018

### **Public Burden Statement**

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

## **Park Avenue Elementary School, Warwick, New York**

### *Planting the Seeds for Sustainable and Healthy Lifestyles*

Park Avenue Elementary School is nestled in a charming rural landscape located approximately 55 miles north of New York City. The school, which has 480 students in grades K-4, is part of the Warwick Valley Central School District. It is characterized by a culture of environmental awareness and sustainability — a culture that begins on the very first day of kindergarten and carries through to pupils' post-graduation lives.

To this end, Park Avenue Elementary School has engaged in many successful initiatives to reduce environmental impacts and costs. For example, the school uses the Energy Star Portfolio Manager and dashboard, an online tool that allows school officials to measure and track energy and water consumption and greenhouse gas emissions to ensure all classrooms and other building areas are energy-efficient. Also, every room is monitored through a virtual private network, allowing heating, cooling and lighting to be adjusted from remote locations to save energy and maximize efficiency.

The school has a student-led Green Team that meets regularly with administrators to put forth ideas for new environmental projects. This team has advocated for a clothing collection bin to be located on school grounds and for improved recycling bins to be added to the cafeteria, which has meant tons of recyclable materials are diverted away from landfills. Food scraps are also diverted, as the school maintains a composting program. Through this effort, garden areas and greenhouse plants throughout the district benefit from a rich, natural source of nutrients.

Park Avenue pupils are enthusiastic participants in an annual “treecycle” project to celebrate Earth Day. In this community-wide event, students and other participants collect a variety of recycled materials (cans, milk jugs, cardboard, etc.) to use as the basis for tree sculptures. The beauty is in the creative arts...and the increased awareness of recycling. Students embrace a similar theme when converting recycled t-shirts into tote bags; the funds raised from selling these bags are then used to purchase plants or supplies for Green Team projects.

In the quest to further reduce environmental impacts, Park Avenue students participate in the TerraCycle program, in which they collect plastic barrels and tops from markers, pens and pencils to be recycled into new products. They also collect aluminum pull tabs from drink cans and recycle them for funds that are donated to a local Ronald McDonald House.

Additionally, Park Avenue Elementary School is an integral part of district-wide efforts to decrease its environmental footprint; this includes adoption of a broad-reaching sustainability policy, replacing all fluorescent light bulbs with energy-conserving LED bulbs and reconfiguring transportation routes to reduce bus runs by 30 percent. The school benefits further from the district's installation of a 10-acre, 9,000-panel solar array, which is the largest school district-owned solar project in New York. The array

will generate approximately 2.92 million kilowatt hours of electricity each year — enough to offset all electricity costs at the school and throughout the district. The learning opportunities with this green technology are limitless. Park Avenue students will start taking measurements of the solar array's power output, studying the science behind the technology and discussing the broader implications of choosing green energy options in the upcoming months.

Other environmental education-related initiatives at Park Avenue include teachers' use of the Engineering is Elementary (EiE) curriculum units on sustainability, which include fun and engaging project-based learning activities for pupils. Students are even exposed to environmental education as they move through the hallways, as recycling videos are played on a television located in the main lobby. They are also able to take their learning outside thanks to the creation of an outdoor classroom that is designed to accommodate a variety of activities, from art projects to science experiments.

Educators and families are part of the environmental learning process, too. The Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation provides training to teachers and school leaders on integrating environmental and sustainability themes in all curricular areas. With guidance from school staff, Park Avenue students create instructional materials to encourage family recycling efforts at home and in the community. This latter project was coordinated through Sustainable Warwick (SW), a community organization that also conducts a variety of "green" assemblies for students, as well as partnering with Park Avenue on tree-planting in a local park, community clean-up days and Earth Day events in the Town of Warwick. During last year's Earth Day celebration, every single Park Avenue class developed educational activities for the event; students produced a video to showcase the activities and even wrote and performed a commemorative song.

An array of health- and wellness-related programs complement and support Park Avenue Elementary School's commitment to sustainable practices. The school cafeteria purchases fresh produce from local farms and is participating in a state pilot program that integrates more locally sourced organic produce into school meals. The school also uses vegetables grown on district property and stocks only healthy snacks in vending machines. Along these same lines, classroom celebrations no longer include sugar- and fat-laden foods, such as cupcakes and candy. The school has installed water bottle refilling stations, so students can stay hydrated while also cutting down on the purchase of one-time-use plastic water bottles.

School maintenance personnel also focus on healthy educational settings by closely following green procurement policies for custodial and cleaning products. The school buys products through a cooperative purchasing process that ensures adherence to the requirements of New York's Green Clean program.

In addition, Park Avenue has a full-time school nurse and an active wellness/child nutrition committee. Students' social-emotional needs are supported through the services of a school counselor and daily access to either a psychologist or social worker. The school integrates a character education curriculum at each grade level and has fully

implemented Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) activities; the latter program focuses on recognizing students for positive behaviors rather than punishing them for negative actions. To improve physical health, Park Avenue encourages nature walks and outdoor physical education activities. For “Screen-Free Week,” students are given ideas about replacing screen time with more active pursuits, such as community hikes and reading and movement activities organized by local organizations.

The school has even found a way to blend physical activity and learning with the creation of a kinesthetic learning lab, which is based on research showing a strong link between movement and academic performance. Pupils in the lab can be moving through an obstacle course, tossing bean bags or exercising on a stair stepper while they’re reviewing spelling words, solving math problems or engaging in other learning activities.

The many green initiatives the school has implemented have resulted in reduced environmental impacts and costs, effective environmental education and improved health and wellness for students and staff, as well as the greater community. At Park Avenue Elementary School, the seeds are planted every single day for sustainable and healthy lifestyles.

## **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. Park Avenue Elementary School houses 469 students in grades K-4.

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 56.64 out of 90)**

- Received the Energy Star Building Label in 2015 with a score of 97%.
- A 2 megawatt solar array housed on another property within the district provides 85% renewable energy at the time of application, with 100% anticipated within months of submission.
- Half of the interior and exterior lighting has been upgraded to energy-efficient LEDs fixtures.
- 80% of the cleaning products used are third party certified as green cleaning products.
- Solid waste is reduced beyond recycling via diverting all food scraps to an “eco-digester”.
- As the recipient of a “Safe Routes to Schools” grant, sidewalks are currently being installed to provide safety for students to walk and bike to school.

### **Pillar II – Improved the Health and Wellness of Schools, Students, and Staff (Score 72.07 out of 90)**

- The school has an environmental health program which participates in the EPA’s Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools as well as manages emergency response, pest management, respiratory protection, chemical hygiene, and safety.
- A qualified IAQ coordinator is employed to effectively carry out the environmental health program and works closely with maintenance staff to identify and remediate any IAQ concerns.
- A registered nurse is available during all school hours to aid with asthma management plans and actions. Asthma triggers are actively mitigated as well per the work described above.
- The School’s Wellness Policy addresses items such as nutrition services, health education and family/community involvement. It is revisited and revised regularly.
- Fresh foods provided by local vendors are prioritized via purchasing agreements, as well as some foods produced in the school’s greenhouse. Also, 30% of the purchased food is certified environmentally preferable.
- In partnership with the KidsFit team, a kinesthetic learning lab has been developed at the school which pairs physical activity with academic learning exercises.
- Administrators and teachers worked with Warwick Valley Prevention Coalition to expose students to data on healthy behaviors.

### **Pillar III – Provided Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education (Score 83.79 out of 105)**

- The EPA honored the Park Avenue Elementary School in 2015 for its Envirocation project via a sizeable EPA grant.
- A local environmentally focused magazine recognized the school for their sustainable efforts in 2017 by including it in a list of the ‘Top 10 Greenest Schools’ in the region.

- 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 and learn to incorporate environmental topics into curriculum.
- The school’s Green Cub Club participates in projects for the yearly Earth Day celebrations, as well as routinely assisting with the school’s composting efforts.
- STEM knowledge is coupled with sustainability through the school’s Engineering is Elementary (EIE) curriculum. Community volunteers are brought into the classrooms through the school’s Partnership in Engineering (PIE) program to discuss careers in environmental areas.
- Multiple grades coordinate regularly with community volunteering projects and the school’s Green Team develops sustainable projects inside and outside the school.
- Students can take advantage of the school’s outdoor classroom, as well as the on-site butterfly garden, to foster respect for and engage in the environment.