



## 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.
8. The school or its district has in place and is willing to provide a link to or a copy of a non-discrimination policy, upon request. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a nomination and/or rescind an award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

### U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

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

Official School Name:   
(As it should appear on an award)

*\*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:   
(Principal's Signature)

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



District Name: n/a

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date: n/a

**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: Department of Education of Puerto Rico

Name of Nominating Authority: Mrs. Annia E. Calcaño Nieves

(Specify: Ms., 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.

(Nominating Authority's Signature) Date: February 14, 2023

**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: October 31, 2026

**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.



## **The TASIS School in Dorado**

**Puerto Rico**

### **Application for Green Ribbon Award**



The Tasis School in Dorado is committed to incorporating Green Ribbon pillars into its core curricula, promoting a holistic educational philosophy that places equal emphasis on cultural sensitivity, global responsibility, and sustainable development. This alignment helps students to become more informed, responsible, and engaged contributors in addressing global challenges.



## Summary:

Our TESIS Dorado school strives for excellence in promoting environmental sustainability, and we are eager to be considered for the Green Ribbon designation by the Department of Education. We uphold high standards across various domains to create a healthy, supportive, and eco-conscious educational environment. TESIS Dorado has undertaken a multifaceted approach across three pillars to establish itself as an exemplary school of environmental sustainability, health promotion, and comprehensive environmental education.

In the **first pillar**, dedicated efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs involve a meticulous greenhouse gas reduction plan featuring energy audit, enhanced insulation, and the optimization of HVAC systems. The integration of renewable energy sources, smart thermostats, and LED lighting further underscores the school's commitment to energy efficiency. Notably, eco-friendly transportation policies, including a strategic car no-idling policy during drop-off and pickup periods, emphasize outdoor air quality improvement. Water efficiency and conservation measures, such as high-grade water filters and auto-stop water faucets, ensure the well-being of students while actively contributing to resource conservation.

In the **second pillar**, the school prioritizes students' and faculty's health and well-being. The Wellness Garden serves as a green space for various activities promoting mental and physical health, including community service opportunities and wellness activities for teachers. Stringent health standards, regular COVID screenings, and a robust support system comprising full-time nurses, school counselors, and college counselors exemplify the school's commitment to holistic health. The cafeteria's exclusive catering to students and staff offers healthy options sourced locally, aligning with the school's broader dedication to sustainability.

The **third pillar** places a strong emphasis on environmental education. TESIS Dorado offers a diverse range of environmental courses at the high school level, including AP Environmental Science, Marine Biology, and Zoology. These courses provide an academic foundation for hands-on experiences through student-led initiatives supported by the school's FabLab. Environmental projects, such as hydroponics, lionfish traps, and the creation of "bee hotels," showcase the mix of classroom learning with real-world problem-solving. Noteworthy community engagement initiatives include the active management of on-campus beehives, the installation of a STEM lab in a local public school, and collaborative efforts with nearby rural communities like Los Naranjos to promote lifestyle changes for environmental and financial sustainability.

Furthermore, the integration of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into both the curriculum and FabLab projects demonstrates TESIS Dorado's commitment to global sustainability initiatives. The introduction of a Robotics and STEM program for younger students furthers the school's dedication to fostering an early understanding of STEM concepts and their

application to real-world environmental challenges. Collectively, these initiatives position TASIS Dorado as an excellent candidate for the "Green Ribbon" award from the PR Department of Education, embodying an exemplary model of environmentally friendly school practices.

## **Pillar I: Reduction of environmental impact and costs**

**GHG emissions reduction:** TASIS Dorado regularly tracks and analyzes energy consumption data for all buildings on campus, identifying patterns and areas for improvement. We systematically assess our progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, aligning with our sustainability goals. Post-COVID improvements in air quality, use of outdoor learning spaces, remediation of any moisture, and a precise cleaning and maintenance schedule were developed as part of the Return to School Plan and are now consistent procedures in all day-to-day operations. A professional pest control company performs routine pest checks and treatments using nontoxic chemicals. In rare chance these infestations occur, these areas are spot-treated after school hours. Recently, new facilities such as the Wellness and Athletic Center (WAC) use LED lighting and other upgraded lighting systems, decreasing energy use and making it more efficient, saving electricity costs. Our school is located in a tropical climate, hence heating is not required, but effective cooling is a year-round challenge. The school uses smart thermostats in classrooms with a limit on the low temperature level of 72 degrees. TASIS extends its focus beyond indoor enhancements, using sustainable landscaping practices by employing water-conservation efforts and planting local vegetation. Local animals, such as hens, thrive on campus in designated areas. As far as future plans, TASIS aims to implement solar panels in the WAC roof within the next few years after fundraising efforts.

**Eco-friendly transportation:** A strategic car no-idling policy during student drop-off and pickup periods helps improve outdoor air quality. During morning drop-off, parents use the drive-through drop-off or park their cars to drop off their children next to school entrances. This measure eliminates excessive auto emissions. TASIS Dorado also promotes environmentally effective transportation from the large nearby Sabanera community, where students can walk, ride bikes, or use electric golf carts to arrive at school, thereby much reducing car traffic and emissions.

**Water efficiency, quality, and conservation:** To ensure the well-being of our students, all water fountains on campus are equipped with high-grade water filters and water quality indicators. Additionally, special spouts are provided for convenient refilling of water bottles. This initiative not only guarantees clean and accessible drinking water but also encourages the use of reusable water bottles, thereby contributing to a reduction in plastic waste. All student restrooms are equipped with auto-stop water faucets, helping to reduce unneeded water consumption.

Additionally, we have sold water bottles in aluminum and cardboard containers, which are later recycled to eliminate single-use plastic and decrease pollution.

**Solid or dangerous waste reduction:** Ongoing student projects include partnering with a composting company on the island. Food scraps from the cafeteria will be taken to an external facility, which will use them as outdoor compost. Teachers are encouraged to reuse scrap paper and hand it out to students for their scratch work.

**Other:** The cafeteria offers reusable trays and metal cutlery, which helps to significantly reduce plastic and paper one-time-use trash.

### **Individual Student Projects:**

- Surf Riders Club - Puerto Rico's beautiful beaches are in danger with constant erosion due to strong rain run-offs and sea currents. To remedy this problem, for the past two years students have started to recycle Christmas trees into material that is used to strengthen sand dunes in nearby municipalities (Rincon) and protect them from erosion (*UN Sustainable Goals #4 and #12*).
- Save the Parrots - After completing research for a science class, a student discovered an endemic endangered Puerto Rican parrot species. As a result, they created homemade ornaments and sold them at local bazaars during holidays. All proceeds went to support the endangered Puerto Rican Parrot project fund.
- The National Honor Society and Student Council worked together to host an old clothes and toy drive to donate to Hogar Ruth, a rehabilitation home for women that have suffered from domestic violence. This project aided in reducing ecological footprints and promoting recycling among school and community members.

### **Leadership Academy Program Student Projects:**

- Students worked at the FabLab (center for STEM learning) to create a filament for 3D printing from recycled plastic water bottles in an effort to decrease plastic waste and pollution. (*UN Sustainable Goal- #4, #12, and #13*)
- A group of high school students raised \$20,000 by hosting a beach tennis tournament in San Juan and used it to install air-purifying AC units in La Esperanza, a public school in Puerto Nuevo, Puerto Rico (*UN Sustainable Goal- #10*).
- A group of students taught young girls in a local foster care home how to tend gardens and grow plants, in an effort to brighten their surrounding environment (*UN Sustainable Goal #4*)

## **Pillar II: Improvement of Health and Wellbeing**

**Integrated School Environmental Health Program:** The school is regularly cleaned and maintained by janitors on a daily basis. In order to eliminate any potential pest problems, we implement integrated pest management (IPM) strategies to control pests without heavy reliance on pesticides, while educating staff and students on preventive practices. A professional pest control company performs routine pest checks and treatments using nontoxic chemicals. In rare chance these infestations occur, these areas are spot-treated after school hours. All buildings are designed with proper ventilation systems to promote healthy indoor air quality for students and teachers. Additionally, TASIS Dorado incorporates natural lighting to enhance the well-being of occupants, and additions such as non-toxic flooring is used to minimize the release of harmful chemicals. The school was designed with an open space idea, with all hallways receiving continuous ventilation from fresh air and trees lining the campus. Over the past few years, tens of classrooms have been created to handle the expanding student population and provide more classes. Every classroom is cleaned everyday after school, with the room disinfected and properly sanitized. We establish routine maintenance schedules for prompt issue resolution, employ eco-friendly cleaning products, and implement a pest control program focusing on prevention. Staff regularly inspect and promptly address water leaks or moisture buildup, while improving air cleaning strategies to mitigate mold growth risks. Concerning chemical and environmental contaminants, we develop policies for safe chemical storage and disposal, and educate staff on proper handling practices to minimize environmental impact. Also, regular assessments of ventilation systems are conducted, ensuring they meet or exceed recommended standards. In terms of outdoor nature, the school's Wellness Garden serves as a space of clean air and luscious greenery, including a botanical garden and a fish pond on campus. Community service opportunities are offered to students at the Wellness Garden to tend to plants, spray natural fertilizer, clean the pond, and more. In conclusion, TASIS Dorado's comprehensive Integrated School Environmental Health Program reflects its commitment to maintaining a clean, safe, and environmentally conscious campus for the well-being of both students and staff, fostering a conducive learning and living environment.

**High standards of health:** TASIS is committed to the safety of its students, teachers, and staff members. Every semester, students have a Wellness Day, where there are no formal classes and instead small activities that promote better mental and/or physical health. While students have a half-day, teachers stay the full day for a physical health check-up, speaking with school nurses and undergoing preventative tests or health procedures. Such procedures include flu clinics, mammograms for women, and eyesight checks. Teachers also enjoy year-round free access to a personal trainer in the Wellness and Athletic Center before or after school hours.

**Social and psychological services:** The school provides students with extensive counseling services, mentorships, and initiatives to boost students' achievement and change their trajectories related to the whole child's health and wellness. TASIS Dorado employs a dedicated team of three full-time nurses, five school counselors, and two college counselors. The psychologist counsels and speaks to all new families and students the week before school starts in August to ensure a seamless transition between schools. Extracurricular offerings include the Stress Management Club, Crochet Club, and Board Games Club, providing various influential outlets to relieve student stress.

**Nutrition:** Cafeteria food is exclusively catered to students and staff. Healthy options such as salads and soups are offered with every meal. Fruits like apples, bananas, and oranges are offered during snack time. The catering company, Los Muchachos, prioritizes the availability of healthy and sustainable choices by using locally sourced food, thereby helping local farmers.

**Fitness:** A semester of physical education in our newly-built Wellness and Athletic Center (WAC) is mandatory for all high school students. The program utilizes the Fitnessgram system to measure students' flexibility, running endurance, and strength. The WAC, equipped with a new turf for soccer, track and field facilities, a rock climbing wall, two new playgrounds, and an indoor personal gym, provides a dedicated space for athletes to train anytime. The WAC also has a culinary arts classroom used to educate students and parents on healthy eating habits. A seminar was held in this classroom where parents learned how to make local Puerto Rican food that balances great taste with healthy and nourishing ingredients.

**Outdoor activity:** Students have 55 minutes of lunchtime daily, during which they can eat outdoors under umbrella-covered tables. All students have access to the outdoor playground and covered basketball courts. Emphasizing the importance of physical activity, TASIS Dorado encourages all students to participate in school sports, involving 450 student-athletes in grades between 4th and 12th. For faculty, Wellness activities are held monthly to promote the well-being of teachers' mental and physical health in outdoor areas. Such activities include painting self-portraits in the gardens, outdoor meditation, a medicinal plant workshop, and micro-gardening. After every activity, teachers provide feedback and self-reflection. These Wellness Activities extend to the student as high schoolers are offered an Exploration Week each year. Students get opportunity to explore their potential career interests, often in outdoor settings, and become more informed on essential topics like anti-bullying, mental health, and suicide prevention throughout the school year.

**Community Service Requirement:** TASIS recognizes the need to give back to the community and the importance of teaching kids to help others. Because of this, a policy is implemented that requires students to do 100 hours of community service in high school to graduate. Not only



does this teach students the importance of assisting people in need, but also benefits the surrounding community. Activities that count towards these 100 hours range from building and maintaining sustainable infrastructure in the small rural Los Naranjos community to volunteering at a local hospital.

### **Pillar III: Environmental education**

**Interdisciplinary environmental education:** TASIS Dorado offers a diverse range of environmental courses at the high school level, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of ecological concepts. Notable courses include AP Environmental Science, Marine Biology, and Zoology, where students learn about ecosystems, marine life, and animal behavior. The acquired knowledge from these courses serves as a foundation for hands-on experiences through various student-led initiatives. Additionally, as part of the science curriculum, students are taught about protecting local fauna and flora. One example of this is when students had a visit from Zaimarie Carillo, “Interprete Ambiental” from Para la Naturaleza, (a unit of the Puerto Rico Conservation Trust), who gave a talk about the importance of native trees.

The school's FabLab, dedicated to STEM learning, has become a thriving hub for student projects. Initiatives such as hydroponics, lionfish traps, and creating "bee hotels" for solitary bees demonstrate the fusion of classroom learning with real-life problem-solving. In addition to coursework and student projects, TASIS Dorado has hosted numerous impactful TED Talks. The school has welcomed distinguished speakers, including "green infrastructure" expert David Aponte, whose advice has encouraged students to pursue green initiatives. This encouragement has been bolstered by the wide variety of environmental trips for TASIS students - including the Science and Literature Trip to Spain and Portugal in 2023 and the Scientific Research Trip to Costa Rica in 2023. Through separate classes, students are also getting educated about food security on the island, the number of farms on the islands, and their strategies.

**Sustainability and community awareness:** The Bee Club actively manages on-campus hives, engaging students in hands-on experiences such as honey harvesting and fostering a deeper understanding of bees' crucial role in ecosystems. There are soon-to-be three certified beekeepers on campus, and the Bee curriculum is an integral part of the TASIS Dorado summer camp. Additionally, students installed a STEM lab in a Manati public school, extending educational opportunities to local students and promoting ecological awareness (UN Sustainable Goal #4). One of TASIS' most extensive community involvements in environmentalism has been with the nearby rural community of Los Naranjos, which has about 40 young students. Original involvement in this community started as a way to teach Los Naranjos individuals to make

lifestyle changes for environmental and financial sustainability. Students and teachers from TASIS built an off-the-grid school entirely powered by solar power. This school collects rainwater in cisterns before undergoing purification to be used as drinking water. Community members are encouraged not to use single-use plastics.

**STEM in sustainability and environmentalism:** The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are woven into our curriculum and FabLab projects at TASIS Dorado. We recently introduced a Robotics and STEM program tailored for Pre-K to 5th-grade students. This initiative enables younger students to gain an early understanding of STEM concepts and how they can be used to address real-world challenges, particularly those related to environmental issues. Additionally, students are instructed to look at the 17 UN Sustainability Goals when brainstorming for possible project ideas that further integrate the ideals highlighted by the UN.

**Sustainable Future Leadership Program:** In our mission to continue fostering leadership and sustainable development opportunities for TASIS Dorado students, the middle school team has designed the Sustainable Future Leadership Program. The program aims for students to continue being global citizens and leaders who strive for academic and personal excellence while living and practicing kindness through selfless acts. Framed by three areas of great significance to the TASIS Dorado middle school, the program of studies follows the sequence of work of other additional leadership development opportunities like National Student Council and National Junior Honor Society memberships.

It allows students to go on educational trips such as Space Camp (6th grade) and Close Up Washington DC (7th Grade). Lastly, TASIS has a Project Based Learning (PBL) system that focuses on sustainable practices, Puerto Rico (6th and 8th grades), and nutrition (7th grade). All 8th-grade students will continue working with the PBL Siembra initiative, but selected participants will be challenged to go beyond the project.

Therefore, the Sustainable Future Leadership Program targets the pillars of Leadership Development, Sustainable Development, and Service Learning. As the basis of the work to be done and to provide direction in the design thinking process, the program considers the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals to identify issues and problems in a community. The program will take a look at sustainable practices in the three domains through targeting Sustainable Agriculture Practices, Sustainable Development: Food Management, and Sustainable Development: Food Security.

Targeted UN Goals: SDG 2, SDG 9, SDG 12, SDG 15

**TASIS Dorado Green Ribbon Application - Puerto Rico**

**Photos:**



*TASIS Dorado' Wellness Garden is a green space on campus, promoting mindfulness, environmentalism, and ecology.*



*TASIS Dorado hosted multiple TED Talks and one of them was devoted to environmentalism and “green” infrastructure. This event was instrumental in teaching young students about the importance of sustainability and caring for the environment.*





*This is a part of the TASIS' FabLab. This is a center for innovation, STEM learning, and creativity as middle and high school students are encouraged to lead individual projects in this space.*



*The above photo shows the Middle School Project Based Learning (PBL) Initiative, in which 8th grade students were taught about sustainable agricultural practices (2023).*





*Our recently completed Wellness and Athletic Center is equipped with a basketball court, volleyball court, rockwall, personal gym, and an outdoor soccer and track field. It was opened in the fall of 2023 and promotes student and faculty wellness.*



*This is a faculty Wellness Activity where Upper School teachers were encouraged to paint and plant their own plants in pots in the comfort of the school's Wellness Garden. Its purpose was to encourage self-sustainability, promote individual agricultural practices, and create an outlet for stress relief. This is just one of many Wellness Activities hosted for staff over the course of multiple years (2021-2024).*





*Water fountain station has an area dedicated to refilling aluminum water bottles. This decreases the number of plastic bottles used and incentivizes students to bring their own water bottles.*