



## 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.

DocuSigned by:  
  
 (Principal's Signature)

Date:

Name of Superintendent:

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



District Name:

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

DocuSigned by:  
  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Date:

**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:

Name of Nominating Authority:   
(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.

DocuSigned by:  
  
(Nominating Authority's Signature)

Date:

**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](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.

**Nominee Information**

School, District, or Postsecondary Institution Name: <b>Dunn's Corners School, Westerly Public Schools</b>		
Category of Nomination (Early Learning Center, School, District, or Postsecondary): <b>Elementary School (K-4)</b>		
Address: <b>8 1/2 Plateau Rd.</b>		
City: <b>Westerly</b>	State: <b>RI</b>	Zip: <b>02891</b>
Twitter: IG: <a href="https://www.instagram.com/dunns_corners_school_ri">https://www.instagram.com/dunns_corners_school_ri</a>		Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/WesterlyPublicSchoolsDunnsCorners">https://www.facebook.com/WesterlyPublicSchoolsDunnsCorners</a>

**Top Official (School=Principal; District=Superintendent; IHE= President):**

Title (Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr.): <b>Mr.</b>	First Name: <b>Steven</b>	Last Name: <b>Morrone</b>
Position/Role (Principal/ Superintendent/ President): <b>Principal</b>		
Email: <b>smorrone@westerly.k12.ri.us</b>		Phone: <b>401-348-2320</b>

**Lead Applicant (if different):**

Title (Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr.): <b>Mr.S.</b>	First Name: <b>Tabitha</b>	Last Name: <b>Goins</b>
Position/Role (Teacher/ Sustainability Director/ Facilities Director): <b>Lead Custodian</b>		
Email: <b>tgoins@westerly.k12.ri.us</b>		Phone: <b>401-348-2320</b>

**Check all that apply:**

Early Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Four Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elementary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Charter	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community College	<input type="checkbox"/>
Middle	<input type="checkbox"/>	Magnet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urban	<input type="checkbox"/>
High	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Public	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Career and Technical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Two Year	<input type="checkbox"/>	Suburban	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Provide Percentages, if any are relevant to your school, district or institution:**

Pell Recipients:	NA	Limited English Proficient:	NA	Attendance Rate:	<b>90%</b>
Free and Reduced Price Lunch:	31%	Special Education:	21%		
Minority:	15%	Graduation Rate:	NA		

**Provide the following, if relevant:**

Total Enrolled:	<b>274</b>	Number of Schools:	<b>1</b>	Buildings:	<b>1</b>	Campuses:	<b>1</b>
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## **Documentation of Sustainability Achievement**

### **U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Award Rhode Island**

#### **PreK-12 School Application**

#### **Dunn's Corners School, Westerly, RI 02891**

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

Dunn's Corners School committed to creating and sustaining environmentally friendly initiatives during the 2019-2020 school year during the pandemic. The pandemic caused us to rethink how we foster a healthy and safe school environment. Many of our initiatives have focused on waste management, such as recycling, composting, and plastic recycling. We have embraced our school garden work to not only focus on growing various types of plants, but as a tool for learning. Our special education program utilizes the gardens for adaptive learning skills. DCS, with the support of the district, changed out the fluorescent lighting to LED lighting lowering energy costs.

Dunn's Corners School employs a full-time school nurse, social worker, and half time psychologist to ensure the wellbeing of our students and that each child is a priority. DCS is located just one mile from the Atlantic Ocean coastal area and a few miles from Wood River. Due to our location, our school and community encourages and supports the importance of environmental and water literacy, such as clean up efforts. Sustainability is integrated throughout the school curriculum, specifically, ELeducation, and incorporated into different programs for students such as after school programs, such as Living Laboratories. In partnership with the Greenlove Project, water filling stations reduce plastic water bottles from being used and encourage hydration for all school community members.

## **Pillar I: Efforts to Reduce Environmental Impacts and Costs**

In a time where environmental sustainability and cost reduction are becoming of the utmost importance, we, as a smart and creative school, have embarked on a mission to contribute to these efforts. Our journey began by analyzing various areas where environmental impact and costs could be reduced.

We have replaced all water fountains with bottle filler stations. One of our bottle filler stations was donated by Project Greenlove. Through this partnership, fourth graders, back in 2020 researched and educated our school about “lifelong habits” regarding environmental sustainability. Check out their website, <https://www.greenlovefoundation.org/installations> to see the photo and acknowledgement of our student’s work. Also, every student received a refillable water bottle. Students, staff, and community members use these fountains so they can refill their bottles instead of buying single-use plastic bottles. We are reducing the amount of plastic waste generated so we can foster a cleaner environment in our school community.

DCS has a [principal’s weekly electronic newsletter](#) that goes out every Friday at 3:15pm to all families. Through this newsletter, as one form of communication, we encourage students and families to send in refillable water bottles for use throughout the school day. The water filling stations are also filtered providing and ensuring a clean and safe drinking source. The stations also display a count of how many bottles have been saved. The kids love to keep track of the savings by reading the display! Currently, to date, 43,654 water bottles have been saved. It is also a great way to ensure all students stay hydrated and promote drinking water throughout the day as part of our health and wellness work. Finally, it demonstrates our commitment to sustainability and environmental consciousness. It sends a message that we are actively taking steps to reduce plastic waste and promote eco-friendly practices.

Another initiative at Dunn's Corners School is replacing lighting features throughout the building. All lights in the school have been switched over to led sensor lights. Led lights are very energy-efficient. They last up to twenty-fives times longer than the incandescent bulbs. Given their life expectancy we have reduced the frequency of replacing them. In addition, the lighting features "instant lighting." The lights have sensors that provide instant light when they detect motion that does not require warm up time. They also shut off when a room becomes unoccupied. Staff have the ability to customize lighting such as the dimming feature, which decreases energy output. LED lights do not contain harmful hazardous material like mercury, which is present in fluorescent bulbs. The bulbs are also 100% recyclable, which again, reduces environmental impact. An added benefit with the LED lighting features is enhanced security. They automatically detect motion and illuminate the surrounding areas which can deter possible intruders. This sustainable environmental hardware shift consumes less energy, which helps us consume less electricity and lowers our monthly energy costs.

As we transitioned back into school during the Fall of 2020 due to COVID restrictions it allowed us to rethink how we clean throughout the building. We shifted our practices due to what we learned from the guidance during the pandemic and now we maintain this work. We use washable microfiber cloths with reusable spray cleaner bottles. They are used in place of alcohol wipes for everyday use in all settings of the building. We are reducing the amount of trash being generated by not using single-use disposable cleaning cloths. The clothes are made from high quality materials that are durable and absorbent. We have the appliances to wash them after daily use. They are hygienic and easily sanitized, which reduces the spread of germs. Students and staff have designated areas to return them at the end of each day and gather new ones for the next day. Many of our products used in the school are also environmentally friendly. We also use

Earth Sense certified green foaming hand soap and certified green foaming hand sanitizers in all of our dispensers. Our toilet paper is made from recycled paper products and lunch bags are 100% recycled materials. Ultimately, reducing the demand for single use products and other “green” products is cost effective too.

The cafeteria uses locally sourced food from local farms and local companies through Aramark Services. This requires less transportation compared to food that is imported from distant locations. In the past we have had students taste test locally grown vegetables and healthy recipes. Our students have learned about locally sourced foods promoting sustainability and while supporting local businesses, which contributes to a healthier and more resilient food system.

As we know, student engagement is crucial in our efforts to transform and make sustainable change. The DCS class of 2023 (former fourth graders) began a petition to eliminate all foam trays at the school. In doing so, students learned about the democratic process, activism, and the power of collective action. It empowered them to voice their concerns that affect them personally in school. They were setting an example, to their unbeknownst, to other students by taking initiative to raise awareness and make sustainable change. The students were modeling for the student body as a whole in prioritizing environmentally friendly habits. Students were taught the negative effects of using foam trays. They are made from polystyrene, which is non biodegradable and can be around for hundreds of years. These trays can release harmful chemicals, such as styrene, when they come in contact with hot food. These chemicals can potentially leach into food and pose health risks. Through the power of student voice, we were able to reduce the amount of foam trays used, with the goal of fully eliminating them from use at

DCS. We currently use reusable and washable trays at least 90% to 100% of the time depending on the number of students eating lunch from our cafeteria each day.

In addition to tray use in the cafeteria, we are encouraging recycling with products used in the cafeteria such as plastic lunch containers used for to-go style lunches similar to take out containers used at restaurants. Rather than disposing of the containers we save them and wash them in the dishwasher for other uses. The containers are used as mini greenhouses when planting seeds in the spring for the school garden or for science lessons involving plants. Students place them on the windowsills in the classrooms and watch the process of the seeds sprouting. They observe and take measurements of their growth overtime. The next step, students transplant their seedlings to the outdoor garden. Another item, souffle cups, are recycled internally for Mother's Day seedlings that students bring home for gifts. Students and staff are always thinking of ways to reuse products linked to our curriculum.

Dunn's Corners school has one electric bus, designated for some of the students who attend the school as part of the district's plan to reduce transportation energy. The district has two electric buses in the fleet with the hope of changing out their fleet for more. We have one bike rack at the school, which is accessible and used by a few families. Two staff members ride their bikes to and from school at times. We have to consider the geographic location of the school, which does not have sidewalks, which can be a roadblock in our efforts to encourage more walking and bike riding to school. We also have signage for no idling in the bus zone.

Through the work of our parent liaison, we have purchased gas cards through a local grant to encourage carpooling to and from school, specifically for after school programs.



Finally, we are in the process of applying for the “Get the Foam Out” grant so that our school will be ready to fully comply with the new standards. We hope to upgrade the dishwasher, purchase more reusable trays, reusable silverware, certified compostable trash bags, and other items that are environmentally friendly. We have also applied for a grant from RIRRC with the goal of composting 100% of our food waste to include paper towels by a company that does weekly pick ups.

## **Pillar 2: Efforts to Ensure Effective Environmental Health and Wellness of Students and Staff**

Fortunately, through donations, our supply budget, and grants, DCS is able to supply hats, gloves, coats, scarves, socks, and other personal items that might be in need. These items are provided to those in need at any point in time. Families know to contact the school social worker or nurse if there is a need. We also will work with families if there is a need such as eyeglasses or specific equipment needed for children to ensure equitable access to school or to the community. It demonstrates that we, as a school, care about the well-being of our students.

DCS has a strong mental health staff, which includes a part time psychologist, full time social worker, and a part time social worker. All families have access to this team as a support. These services provide a safe place for students and their families to address emotional, psychological, and social needs. They help to navigate challenges, cope with stress and enhance their overall mental well-being. We know that mental health and emotional well-being are tied closely to academic performance. Through our MTSS we are able to identify students who have areas of need in social and emotional learning and create a plan that is monitored throughout the year to ensure success. Our support staff facilitates social and emotional programs such as

Second Step. The team also facilitates lunch bunches in which students are able to participate in a small social group to foster healthy friendships and work through problems that may arise. This time together also helps our students develop essential skills such as self-awareness, empathy, decision making and problem solving skills.

Dunn's Corners School is proud to be acknowledged as a Special Olympics Unified School. We have a Special Olympics program in which fourth grade students are partnered with a student athlete who has a disability. It promotes inclusivity and diversity by actively providing opportunities for individuals with all kinds of unique needs to participate and be an active member of our school community. It has taught our children and staff empathy and compassion by developing a deeper understanding of individuals with disabilities. "We are better together" is how we lead at DCS! Students are taught leadership skills as they take on the role of coach with their student athlete. This also teaches a sense of social responsibility and teaches them the importance of giving back and making a positive impact on others. We are better together!

We have a high school mentor program that our parent liaison in partnership with the principal and social worker facilitates. Westerly High School students come in and mentor students who are identified through teacher recommendations. They serve as positive role models for students to inspire and motivate younger students by demonstrating what can be achieved through hard work. They help with classwork, play games, make crafts, read, etc. The goal is to improve attendance for some students and for others to build self confidence.

Another way students engage and have a sense of belonging is through trash and recycling teams. Students can volunteer to collect the classroom trash, compost, and recycling. Students sort it out before it goes in the school's containers for pick up or our composting

barrels. Last year, Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation came to the school and had MaxMan, the recycling superhero, teach the students and staff about the importance of recycling.

What does composting look like at DCS? We compost on site where students have taken an active role in the process. They have learned the different steps of composting. We have printed residential directions for students whose families have taken on composting at home. They have expressed how much their children have learned and how much they have incorporated this at home. Over time, our efforts have proven to be successful. We went from 3 forty-four gallon barrels of lunchroom waste to one half of a forty-four gallon barrel.

Our school garden is something the school is very proud of at DCS. The school garden utilizes only organic interventions and not the use of pesticides. We use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to prevent infestation of pests in the garden. Despite laying a thick layer of mulch, invasive weeds and grasses were taking over the DCS garden areas and spreading into garden beds. In previous years, the school maintenance crew used herbicides to kill all weeds. Herbicides used to treat the weeds would “drift” into the garden areas, spreading caustic chemicals onto vegetables, herbs and flowers in the school garden where children worked in the soil. Maintenance was contacted to halt all use of herbicides in any areas near the school. A 30% solution of vinegar was sprayed on weeds in the walkways to kill all existing weeds without the use of chemical herbicides. Landscape fabric was laid down and another thick layer of mulch applied. The area is periodically monitored for weeds and hand removal of weeds minimizes their return. The use of chemical herbicides went from two applications/year to zero applications/year. Furthermore, plants are rotated in different beds each season to disrupt the life cycle of invasive pests. Companion planting of certain types of plants repels pests as well. Crops are also examined on a bi-weekly basis to check for signs of pest damage, for pest eggs, and to

locate pests. Eggs and pests are removed manually. Compost from the school compost bins and worm bins improve the nutrients and organic matter in the garden, improving the soil quality without using chemical fertilizers. Pollinator plants, which are a source of nectar and pollen, attract beneficial insects. Host plants, such as parsley and milkweed, are planted in our pollinator garden in order to provide a place for pollinators to lay their eggs. We have set up a rain barrel to capture water, conserving usage, and watering the school garden and plants around. Students are actively involved in our gardens from planting to harvesting.

Each room has a HEPA air purifier. It minimizes dust, pollen, mold, bacteria, and other airborne particles from the air. They are equipped with ozone free bipolar ionization that neutralizes odors. The district supported the installation of a negative air filtration system that was installed during the summer of 2022. Part of the system includes exhausts that circulate air that is on a timed schedule, which utilizes less energy. Another initiative the school implemented was eliminating classroom carpets, which can house many allergens. We now use flexible furniture that are cleaned daily.

As far as inspections, the school in collaboration with district personnel completes routine environmental testing, such as air quality, mold/ mildew, lead, and radon. Finally, we have no smoking and no vaping signage posted on property.

### **Pillar 3: Efforts to Ensure Effective Environmental Sustainability Education**

First and foremost our Green Team, which is made up of administration, the lead custodian, our parent liaison, our social worker, a classroom teacher, and special educator are constantly working together to find ways to improve the health and wellbeing of students and

improve our school community. Our student council also provides ideas to support this work as well.

Dunn's Corners School works to create authentic learning opportunities for each of our students in all settings of the school. One learning experience that we implemented within our lunchroom to promote compassion, sharing, environmentally friendly habits is through our "share fridge" initiative. Students who purchase or receive lunch from the school have the opportunity to place an unused item into a mini fridge for other students to take if still hungry. Students are taught which items they can share and which items they cannot as part of safety habits. Visual aides are posted near the refrigerator for a reference. This work also promotes inclusivity and community amongst the student body. It encourages them to think beyond their own needs and consider the well-being of others. They also learn that this is an opportunity to reduce food waste that ends up in the landfills. Our kitchen staff follows an "offer vs serve" style, which also aids in possible reductions of food waste. Students can always go back in line to get another fruit or vegetable.

During the 2019-2020 school year, we adopted a new ELA curriculum. This curriculum has topics that foster citizenship. One example is in grade 3, "Central to EL Education's curriculum is a focus on habits of character and social-emotional learning. Students work to become effective learners, developing mindsets and skills for success in college, career, and life (e.g., initiative, responsibility, perseverance, collaboration); work to become ethical people, treating others well and standing up for what is right (e.g., empathy, integrity, respect, compassion); and work to contribute to a better world, putting their learning to use to improve communities (e.g., citizenship, service). In this module, students **work to contribute to a better world** by taking care of and improving the environment and by applying their learning to help

the environment. Students show mastery when planning and writing their opinion essays and creating their PSA's." Additional examples are grade 2, students learn "how weather, climate, and other environmental characteristics affect people's lives in a place or region." Kindergarten students "continue to build on their scientific knowledge of trees by exploring their importance to people and their communities. Students learn how different people, both real and imaginary, enjoy and appreciate trees while exploring how people and characters have used trees to fill a need in their community."

To recognize Earth Day, our resident Master Gardener does an annual demonstration of how ordinary citizens in our community may unknowingly contribute to stormwater pollution and how to mitigate this pollution through simple daily practices. Students see a model of a town similar to Westerly, and how the use of pesticides, fertilizers, and even walking your dog without picking up their waste contributes to poor water quality and eutrophication of our local bays and rivers. Students gain an understanding of how composting, recycling and other simple steps are tangible efforts that everyday people can take to improve the appearance, health and quality of life in our community.

Our school library has a multitude of books which teachers can use for classroom activities, including *Math in the Garden*, *Learn, Grow, Eat and Go!*, *Literature in the Garden*, *The Growing Classroom*, and more. Students also have access to an outdoor insect investigation kit, which includes clipboards with beneficial pest insect identification sheets, magnifying glasses, and insect identification books that include details about native and invasive insects.

DCS in partnership with our local nonprofit conservation organization provides after school programs and field trips for students. Students travel to local nature preserves for environmental education experiences to learn about a range of topics such as biodiversity, life

cycles of plants and animals, pollination, and to further their appreciation of green, open spaces in our community. The school offers multiple STEM after school programs, with recent programs exploring endangered animals, and alternative energy versus non-renewable sources of energy.

Our school garden is part of the RI Master Gardeners School Garden Mentor Program. Through this our School Garden Mentor (SGM) is available to provide opportunities for students to spend time during recess in the garden. When students were given the opportunity to sign up for the “Recess Garden Club”, more than half of DCS students signed up, choosing to work in the garden on their assigned days rather than play in the playground. The SGM also offers environmental education opportunities to classroom teachers. This includes visiting classrooms to make connections with ongoing curricula, such as bringing in turkey feathers to teach about the features of a feather and discuss the adaptations of local native birds. Our school garden is inclusive. Our school custodian constructed a wheelchair accessible raised bed for our school garden to provide access to students with mobility issues.

The implementation of our washable microfiber cloths was another bite size learning experience for students. The students learned the “why” behind the purpose. These are excellent procedures for removing dirt and germs while fostering healthy and safe habits. These procedures help prevent the spread of germs and bacteria that can cause illness and infections. This practice improves air quality by removing dust and allergens that can accumulate on surfaces. They can be used for a wide range of cleaning tasks and the students get involved with cleaning.

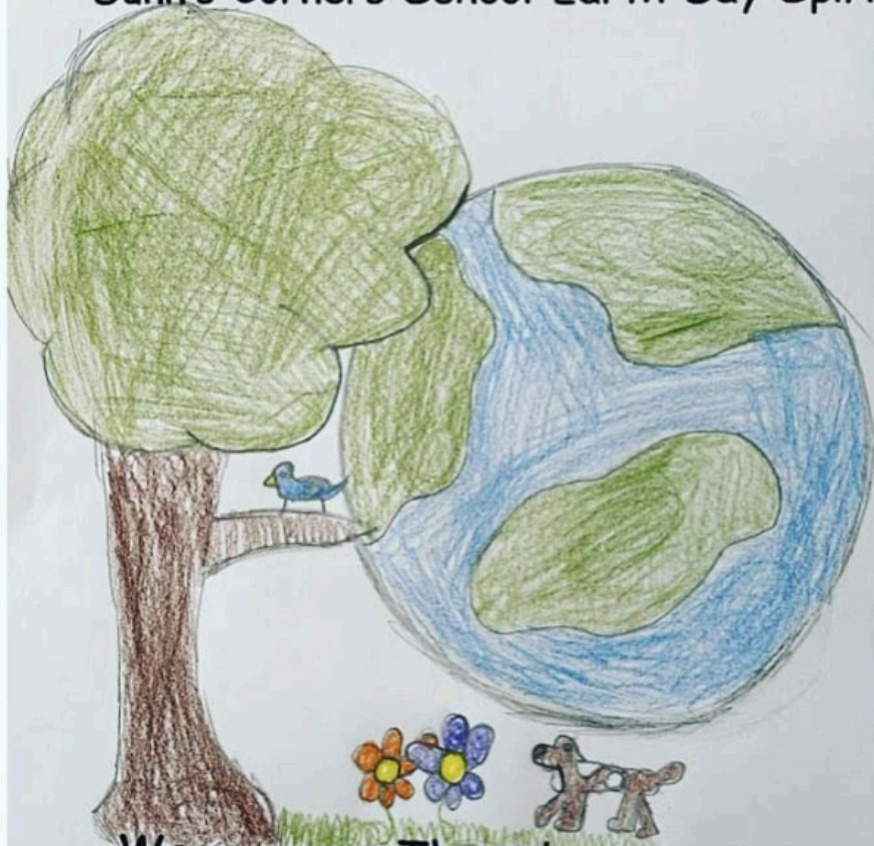
# Fourth Graders are working to keep DCS Clean

Every week Head Custodian Tabitha Goins has assistance from Fourth Grade students in collecting trash and recyclable materials. Here's this week's crew!





# Dunn's Corners School Earth Day Spirit Day



Wear green Thursday, April 14th to show your school spirit.

Dunn's Corners School

Apr 13, 2022 · 🌐

Boost post

👍❤️ 6

1 share

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💬 Comment

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