



District Sustainability Award Nominee Presentation Form

CERTIFICATIONS

District's Certifications

The signatures of the district superintendent on the next page certify that each of the statements below concerning the district's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the superintendent's knowledge.

1. The district has been evaluated and selected from among districts 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.
2. The district is providing 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.
3. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school district 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.
4. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the school district has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
5. 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 school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.
6. The district 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.
7. The district has in place and is willing to provide a link to or 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 District Sustainability Award

Name of Superintendent: Dr. Michael Hester

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

District Name: Batesville School District

(As it should appear on an award)

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: 12/13/23



Nominating Authority's Certifications

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

1. The district 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 education.
2. The district 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: **Division of Public School Academic Facilities & Trans.**

Name of Nominating Authority: **Mr. Tim Cain**
(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.

Tim Cain
(Nominating Authority's Signature)

Date: **2/5/2024**

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.



Documentation of Sustainability Achievement

Narrative for Pillar 1: Your Efforts to Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs

Use 2-4 pages to describe how your early learning center, school, district, or postsecondary institution is reducing environmental impact and costs by reducing or eliminating greenhouse gas emissions; improving water quality, efficiency, and conservation; reducing waste production; and using alternative transportation. Identify your energy-efficient facilities and practices, your efforts to decarbonize and electrify your premises, ecologically and educationally beneficial uses of grounds, and methods of disposal for solid and hazardous wastes. Use supporting data and reference participation in pertinent benchmarking programs to demonstrate progress where possible.

Narrative for Pillar 2: Your Efforts to Improve the Health and Wellness of Students and Staff

Use 2-4 pages to describe how your early learning center, school, district, or postsecondary institution improves the health and wellness of students and staff by integrating a school environmental health program and promoting sound health and wellness practices. You should discuss indoor and outdoor environmental quality; cleaning and maintenance; mold and moisture; thermal and acoustical comfort; chemical and environmental contaminants; air quality and ventilation; pests and pesticide, as well as nutrition and outdoors physical activity. Other components you may include are health education, health services, counseling, psychological and social services, sun safety, staff health promotion, and family and community involvement. Incorporate metrics and include program participation where possible.

Narrative for Pillar 3: Your Efforts to Ensure Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

Use 2-4 pages to describe how your early learning center, school, district, or postsecondary institution ensures effective environmental and sustainability education throughout the curriculum. Provide examples of interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between dynamic environmental, energy, and human systems. Demonstrate how your institution uses the environment and sustainability to develop STEM content, knowledge, and thinking skills, and teach all subjects in context. You should discuss how your early learning center, school, district, or postsecondary institution develops and applies civic knowledge and skills to environmental and sustainability education. All STEM and civics work should be described as it relates to environmental and sustainability learning. Detail any environmental or sustainability literacy standards, show how these concepts are integrated into assessments, and describe environmental and sustainability literacy professional development. Include co-curricular opportunities such as field trips, study abroad, clubs, and service learning. This section should describe hands-on, place-, project-, and problem-based, authentic learning across the curriculum, not limited to one subject.

Summary Narrative: An Overview of Your Work Encompassing All Three Pillars

Use one substantive paragraph to provide an overview narrative describing your early learning center, school, district, or postsecondary institution's efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs; improve student and staff health and wellness; and provide effective environmental and sustainability education. This overarching summary should highlight the best of your work in every ED-GRS Pillar and Element. You can view examples of summary narratives in last year's [Highlights Report](#). The summary that you submit should be what you would like to see appear in a future Highlights Report, if your institution is selected. It may be helpful to pull from your previous three narratives to write the summary.

Photos: Please submit 5-10 high resolution photographs with brief descriptions including who, what, when, and where. By sending these photos, you are giving Arkansas and the U.S. Department of Education permission to use them in our newsletter and social media.





Pillar 1: Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs

Reduce Environmental Impact & Costs

- In 2018, BSD adopted energy-efficient LED lighting, with approximately 7,000 fixtures replaced. These LEDs use one-tenth of the energy of traditional lighting while providing twice the lumens which leads to reduced energy consumption and lower energy costs, thus contributing to emissions reduction. The system is complemented by automated light switches for improved energy conservation and illumination control.

- Beginning in 2019, the Batesville School District (BSD) implemented water-saving measures, including the installation of low-flow water fixtures, such as 1.5 gallon-per-minute flow-restricting aerators, in 305 units encompassing toilets, urinals, and faucets. BSD is seeking funding to install automatic shut-offs for all water fixtures to minimize water wastage and improve efficiency. Furthermore, all BSD campuses have water bottle filling stations, 19 in total, to promote the efficient use of water by encouraging reusable containers and reducing the need for single-use plastic bottles.

- The district follows a maintenance routine of quarterly air filter replacement with high-efficiency filters across approximately 50 buildings. Each building is equipped with HEPA air filters. Every campus features electrostatic air filters to capture micro particles, and 420 units are equipped with centralized, computer-controlled thermostats for efficient climate control and improved air quality. Sealing buildings for energy efficiency and utilizing high-efficiency air filters enhances indoor air quality and reduces energy waste. BSD has also undertaken an HVAC upgrade initiative, focusing on enhancing the efficiency of 80 units by installing heat pumps. This upgrade aims to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- BSD has replaced single-pane windows with a total of 119 double-pane, energy-efficient windows. This contributes to reduced energy consumption, lower heating and cooling costs, and a decreased carbon footprint.

- In 2020, BSD installed solar panels to generate renewable energy, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, lower energy costs, and significantly decrease greenhouse gas emissions. The district installed a total of 1,486 solar panels, utilizing both field arrays and canopies. The district implemented net metering to efficiently manage energy production and consumption. BSD established a partnership for a satellite solar site in collaboration with our community hospital under ACT 464 Non-profit Satellite MOU, further expanding their renewable energy initiatives.

- BSD is actively transitioning from gas-powered weed cutters and blowers to battery-powered alternatives, reducing emissions and promoting cleaner equipment, and lowering operational costs. Knowing that the adoption of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure will reduce emissions, a shift toward cleaner transportation methods, is being explored. In 2022, BSD introduced an electric vehicle for Drivers Ed purposes and installed an electric charging station on the Batesville High School Charter campus. The district is conducting research on electric bus applications, with a focus on electric vehicle charging infrastructure within our district, reflecting our commitment to sustainable and electric transportation solutions. Also, BSD is collaborating with the Coalition for Clean Air to modernize the bus fleet by using efficient diesel exhaust fluids which contributes to reducing emissions from transportation, leading to both environmental and cost benefits. In an effort to reduce environmental impact and costs, BSD is researching the need for idle-free school zones to minimize unnecessary vehicle emissions and to promote cleaner air around schools and strategies to





manage drop-off and pick-up times more efficiently.

Water Quality, Efficiency, and Conservation

- Beginning in 2023, BSD began managing water runoff which effectively helps prevent water pollution and improves overall water quality by reducing the transport of contaminants into water bodies. The district has embarked on a comprehensive runoff management initiative aimed at addressing various water-related challenges. This initiative includes the implementation of several strategic measures. A "Runoff Project from the Hill" has been undertaken to manage water runoff originating from elevated areas, while "Detention Ponds" have been strategically placed to capture and manage excess water, preventing erosion and flooding. The district has also installed "Storm Drainage Systems" to effectively handle and channel rainwater. Additionally, the construction of "Retaining Walls" and the use of "Permeable Berms" are key strategies to stabilize landscapes, mitigate erosion, and retain runoff water. Furthermore, BSD has employed "Ditch Erosion Strategies," including the use of "B Stone," to prevent sediment and pollutants from entering waterways. Culverts have been both installed and widened to redirect water flow and reduce erosion. Lastly, "Seeding Bare Hillsides" has been implemented to prevent erosion and promote vegetation growth, ultimately contributing to improved water quality and reduced runoff. The district is researching ways to secure financing to complete the runoff water project, which is critical for effective water management. These measures collectively demonstrate a commitment to effective runoff management and environmental conservation.

- BSD implements a water leaks reporting system where custodians are responsible for promptly addressing these issues. The goal is to ensure that any reported leaks are repaired within a two-hour timeframe, emphasizing the district's commitment to efficient maintenance, water conservation, and preserving water quality. The BSD Maintenance Dept. routinely completes inspection and replacement of hot water heaters and boilers with energy-efficient models to contribute to water conservation by reducing the energy required to heat water.

- The district focuses on landscaping with an emphasis on implementing drought-restrictive strategies for vegetation and beautification. BSD is actively reducing the number of watered beds and projects that necessitate regular watering, demonstrating our commitment to conserving water resources and promoting sustainable landscaping practices.

- BSD is fostering community partnerships to enhance support and collaboration in water conservation efforts and seeking national grants to fund water conservation projects such as recycling and capturing runoff water for various purposes. The district is researching classroom education programs on water conservation to raise awareness and promote responsible water usage among students and staff.

Waste

- The Batesville School District has proactively implemented various initiatives to minimize waste production and adopt responsible waste management practices. BSD has transitioned to environmentally friendly cleaning products, resulting in a reduction in hazardous waste generation. Moreover, by reducing the cleaning product inventory from 126 to 62 items, BSD has effectively minimized waste stemming from excess packaging. Additionally, BSD has made a significant change by substituting oil-based paint with water-based paint, further reducing the generation of hazardous waste. In managing the disposal of solid and hazardous wastes, BSD has established a comprehensive approach. The district employs an EPA holding tank for engine fluids, guaranteeing





responsible disposal practices to prevent environmental contamination. To further align with waste reduction goals, the district has implemented strategies to lower fuel consumption, reducing the frequency of service jobs such as oil changes. BSD also operates a Chemistry Lab Collection Program, which ensures the proper disposal of hazardous chemicals. Moreover, our transition from a paper-based culture to a digital one, utilizing tools like Google Workspace, cloud storage, Operation Hero, Trip Direct, and Mojo Helpdesk, has streamlined operations and reduced paper waste.

- BSD faces challenges in developing and implementing a comprehensive sustainable Cardboard Recycling Program. Initial steps for implementation include securing research funding and industry partnerships, and collaboration with city and county stakeholders. Additionally, executing an EAST (Environment and Spatial Technology) Project, which involves student-led waste audits and community partnerships to initiate the creation of a Cardboard Recycling Program for our district.

Alternative Transportation

- Batesville School District has implemented several sustainability initiatives to minimize its environmental footprint. In 2021, the district reduced bus routes from 42 to 32, leading to 10 fewer buses idling and operating daily. This change not only decreases bus traffic but also reduces emissions. Bus safety is a top priority, with the district conducting two drills annually and an extra drill during National School Bus Safety Week. The Transportation Dept. actively educates students about bus safety during annual visits. Furthermore, BSD has relocated its transportation and maintenance center to enhance efficiency and reduce mileage between the center and campuses. Another sustainable step taken by the district is the centralization of custodial supplies at one location. This approach has resulted in annual cost savings of 7 to 10% and fewer deliveries, which in turn helps lower emissions.

- To encourage alternative transportation, the organization has installed bike racks at various locations, such as BHSC, West, and Eagle, and has set up a bike repair station, promoting eco-friendly commuting options for its community. These efforts showcase the district's commitment to reducing its environmental impact.

Energy-Efficient Facilities & Practices

- Batesville School District is actively executing its strategic plan, which encompasses a 5-year master facility plan and the gradual adoption of high-efficiency materials and equipment upgrades to improve operational efficiency. This initiative involves key partnerships with entities like Entegry, a solar company, and White River Health, who are collaborating on these efforts. One significant project, in partnership with McKinstry, focuses on installing a light-reflecting roof on the DAC Building to reduce waste and minimize environmental impact in the built environment. In addition to these efforts, BSD is effectively managing records and data related to energy providers such as Entegry and Entegry while implementing energy-efficient measures across the natural gas and water departments. They are also deploying comprehensive travel data management software for improved efficiency. The district is enhancing energy efficiency through various means, including adopting a TPO roofing system, implementing white roof systems to reduce solar energy absorption, upgrading





windows from single to double pane as needed, and utilizing timers for electrical efficiency. These initiatives collectively contribute to a more sustainable and eco-friendly infrastructure.

- One of the key challenges in this endeavor is ensuring effective education and awareness among staff regarding conservation and efficiency practices. To address this challenge, BSD is providing professional development, improving communication within the district, conducting energy orientations, utilizing social media for outreach, and implementing appliance audits. BSD is gradually phasing out unnecessary electric devices and lighting to optimize energy conservation throughout the district.

Efforts to Decarbonize & Electrify Premises

- The Batesville School District demonstrates a commitment to aligning with efforts to decarbonize and electrify premises through two key initiatives. First, the implementation of a Central Controlled HVAC Program seeks to enhance efficiency in heating and cooling systems, potentially reducing carbon emissions when coupled with cleaner energy sources. Second, the adoption of LED stadium lighting is aiding in electrification endeavors by substantially decreasing electricity consumption, in line with the overarching goal of curbing carbon emissions.

Grounds

- BSD creatively utilizes its grounds for a range of ecologically and educationally beneficial purposes. This includes the operation of three greenhouses across different campuses, not only for hands-on plant growth but also for educational opportunities. Additionally, BSD provides recreational green spaces like the Sara Low Trail, City Walking Track, Cross Country Trail, and bike paths, which serve dual roles as venues for physical education and opportunities for people to connect with nature. BSD emphasizes sustainable food production and horticultural education through raised beds at multiple locations, offering outdoor classrooms equipped with benches and tents to facilitate natural learning environments. Collaborations with partners like Home Depot have led to innovative common spaces designed for green landscaping and experiential learning, while the establishment of an outdoor theater adds a cultural and artistic dimension. The incorporation of detention ponds with walking tracks for stormwater management and outdoor exercise, along with the creation of an outdoor park featuring playground equipment designed for climbing and educational purposes, further demonstrates their commitment to fostering play-based learning and green recreational spaces throughout their campuses.



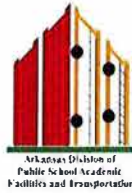


Pillar II: Efforts to Improve Health & Wellness of Students and Staff

School Environmental Health Programs

- In order to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment for students and staff, The Batesville School District (BSD) complies with state laws by contracting with companies to regularly inspect and apply non-hazardous pesticides. BSD ensures that the amount of pesticide used is appropriate for specific locations and purposes. Additionally, the district goes above and beyond state requirements, promptly acting on any reported pest issues. Custodial and maintenance staff play a crucial role in reporting such incidents, with a team of 48 people actively involved in this process. The district is also committed to using eco-friendly and environmentally safe cleaning products, reducing the number of cleaning products from 126 to 63 to minimize the risk of sickness. Minimizing the use of toxic chemicals in cleaning products further reduces potential health risks, ensuring students and staff are not exposed to harmful substances.
- BSD places a strong emphasis on maintaining air quality and ventilation. This is achieved through quarterly air filter changes, CO2 monitoring units in classrooms, and the introduction of outdoor air when CO2 levels are high. Hepa air purifiers are deployed in critical and high traffic areas. Regular air filter changes, CO2 monitoring, and the use of air purifiers help ensure that students breathe clean air. The district has upgraded to high-efficiency heating and air units, with 75% of these units being high efficiency. To support an optimal learning environment, the district controls temperature centrally and ensures the availability of fresh air when necessary. By providing consistent temperatures and fresh air as needed, the district creates a comfortable and healthy atmosphere for learning.
- In order to address mold and moisture concerns, BSD employs dehumidifiers in areas prone to dampness and utilizes moisture meters to assess potential issues. If mold is identified, it is promptly removed using safe and natural remediation methods, such as vinegar. Effective mold and moisture control not only prevents potential health issues but also ensures that students and staff are not exposed to mold-related allergens or toxins. The use of safe and natural remediation methods, like vinegar, helps to maintain a healthy indoor environment.
- Daily cleaning routines and the provision of hand sanitizing stations are integral components of the district's approach to cleaning and maintenance. Non-toxic cleaning products are used to ensure the well-being of students and staff. Daily cleaning routines with non-toxic products and the availability of hand sanitizing stations are instrumental in preventing the spread of illnesses, which can significantly impact student well-being.
- To maintain thermal and acoustical comfort, BSD's heating and air systems are centrally controlled to maintain consistent temperatures. These systems introduce fresh air as needed to uphold temperature levels. Additionally, acoustical learning environments are managed through specialized wall applications known as Tectum Sheets to create an optimum learning atmosphere. Proper temperature control and effective acoustics management support student concentration and overall well-being.



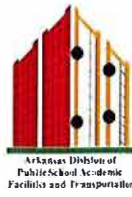


- The BSD Maintenance Directors actively participate in ensuring health and wellness best practices. They maintain certifications related to health and wellness, including areas such as asbestos, electrical, lead, HVAC, and plumbing. The involvement of district directors in health and wellness practices and their certifications in relevant areas ensure that policies and practices are aligned with the best interests of students and staff and demonstrate a commitment to a healthier and more sustainable learning and working environment.
- In terms of challenges, BSD aims to address the resealing of buildings and doors to pressurize spaces. The district is also working on implementing training programs to educate students and staff on various environmental topics, emphasizing the importance of health and wellness. Additionally, the district has access to experts in fields related to student and staff health, enabling them to address health and wellness concerns effectively. As a result, BSD demonstrates our dedication to continuous improvement and a strong focus on student and staff well-being.

Sound Health & Wellness Practices

- The Batesville School District in partnership with the City of Batesville provided Batesville Community Center passes for all staff and students in grades seven through twelve for two years beginning in 2020. This was in response to the COVID pandemic and was aimed at improved fitness and mental health.
- Beginning Fall 2023, West Elementary led a transformative Farm to School pilot project that will span over two years, collaborating with Batesville Preschool and Eagle Mountain Elementary. This program focuses on fostering a deeper connection between the school community and locally sourced, fresh food products, with an impressive 32% of the food purchases originating from local producers.
- As part of this commitment to nutrition and well-being, Batesville School District successfully secured a Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program grant, now in its third year. This initiative enables elementary campuses to provide a daily supply of fresh fruits and vegetables to 1,600 children, promoting healthy eating habits among the young learners.
- BSD incorporates The Nutritional Advocacy Committee processes which play a pivotal role in enhancing nutrition education within our campus classrooms, ensuring that students are well-informed about making healthy food choices.
- In addition to these classroom-based efforts, the Batesville School District extends its commitment to the broader community. Free summer programs and nutritious meals are provided to children outside the regular academic calendar, addressing both food security and continued learning.
- BSD campuses actively participate in the National School Lunch & Breakfast Program, promoting an all-you-care-to-eat philosophy. This approach offers a wide variety of entrees and side options, allowing students to select healthy choices that resonate with their preferences.
- As part of the broader initiative, Language Access programs are in place to ensure that non-English-speaking members of the community can fully participate in making healthy food choices. This includes providing free/reduced applications in 30 languages and offering online menus in multiple languages. Every BSD kitchen maintains bilingual staff to cater to the diverse population, thereby ensuring that no one is left behind in their access to nutritious meals and educational resources.
- Free after school snacks are made available to BSD K-12 students remaining on campus after end





of day dismissal, fostering their overall well-being and ensuring they have access to healthy options beyond traditional meal times. This multifaceted approach to nutrition and health underscores the school system's dedication to promoting the welfare of its students and community members.

- Batesville School District places a strong emphasis on fostering the overall well-being of its students. This commitment is evident through its encouragement of both indoor and outdoor physical activity. Programs such as recess and Physical Education (PE) are firmly in place, providing students with opportunities to engage in physical activities. Additionally, extra movement time for enrichment is offered, reinforcing the importance of an active lifestyle.

- In BSD gardening initiatives are actively promoted, teaching children about the origins of fresh and locally sourced produce, while also encouraging physical activity and fostering a connection to nature. These various activities align with the broader effort to promote healthy eating, a wholesome lifestyle, and sound food choices among students. The implementation of a Healthy Choice class food related program by Save the Children, along with STEM classes that focus on healthy eating, further contributes to the promotion of sound health and wellness practices.

- Batesville School District provides a comprehensive range of health services to ensure the well-being of its students and staff. Telehealth services, including on-site visits, cater to various health needs, offering testing for conditions such as COVID, flu, strep, and simple urinalysis.

- The Batesville School District's health system conducts essential health assessments, including kindergarten and sports physicals, along with providing vaccinations for flu and COVID. Collaborating with the local Health Department, BSD extends services such as T-DAP vaccinations, flu vaccination clinics, and screenings for vision, hearing, scoliosis (Grade 6 and 8), and Body Mass Index.

- BSD offers CPR certification and first aid training to preschool staff, coaches, and other school employees equipping them to respond to health emergencies promptly. NARCAN training is also provided to staff to address specific health crises.

- The Batesville School District prioritizes the emotional and mental well-being of its students. This includes a focus on School-Based Mental Health with a commitment to Trauma-Informed Care, aiming to create a supportive and nurturing environment for students who may have experienced trauma. In summer 2023, all BSD staff were trained in Trauma Informed Care.

- Batesville School District facilitates health insurance for its staff through the Arkansas Department of Transformation and Shared Services, underscoring our dedication to providing comprehensive health support and services to the entire school community which includes health conditions such as: asthma, coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, chronic pain, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and chronic kidney disease. These programs are designed to assist staff members in managing and improving their health, providing valuable resources and guidance.

-The Batesville School District's health insurance also offers a Special Delivery (Maternity Program) as part of its plan, with a particular focus on prenatal care. Participants in the program can earn a \$250 incentive upon completion.

- Additionally, case management services are available for health insurance plan members or their dependents facing long-term or costly illnesses or injuries. These services are overseen by a dedicated Case Manager who helps individuals understand their treatment options and access the care needed to address their specific health concerns.

- The Batesville School District in connection with The Arkansas Department of Transformation and Shared Services continues to support staff members by providing access to Nurse24, an insurance





plan feature available 24/7. This allows direct communication with a nurse who can answer health-related questions and help individuals determine if they need to seek medical attention.

- The BSD health insurance program offers an Employee Assistance Program that is available for those without insurance, providing 24/7, year-round access to free resources, assessments, referrals, short-term counseling, health tips, work-life tools, relationship support, legal and financial consulting, and a health resource library.

- The Batesville School District in connection with The Arkansas Department of Transformation and Shared Services also offers Blue365 Insurance, which offers discounts on products and programs aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle, further enhancing staff well-being and quality of life.

- One significant challenge that the Batesville School District faces is connected to the Department of Human Services and the CACFP (Children and Adult Community Food Program). The program is for families at risk for food insecurity. To tackle this issue, the Batesville School District plans to apply for acceptance into the program, aiming to secure vital services for our community. Overcoming this challenge will be essential to maintain support for children and adults who rely on this program for their nutritional needs.





Pillar III: Your Efforts to Ensure Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

Education for Sustainability Initiative

-The Batesville School District Strategic Plan for PreK- Grade 12 focuses on empowering students for future challenges, with a vision of "Every Student Growing Everyday." The strategic plan ensures efficiency and innovation in teaching which provides a strong framework for integrating environmental and sustainability education into the curriculum. Additionally, BSD is committed to having a safe, supportive, and collaborative culture that aligns with the broader goal of fostering ecological literacy and responsible resource management. Overall, this strategic plan sets the stage for a comprehensive and impactful approach to environmental education, preparing students for a sustainable and environmentally conscious future.

-In order to ensure effective environmental and sustainability education, the Batesville School District, per the BSD Curriculum Board Policy, has adopted the Arkansas K-12 Science Standards that are set forth by the Arkansas State Board of Education and the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Board Policy. The Arkansas K-12 Science Standards are based on *A Framework for K-12 Science Education* (NRC 2012) which requires instruction related to environmental and sustainability education.

-Students in the Batesville School District experience environmental education through STEM classes which include lessons on recycling, sustainable energy, and environmental gardening. Students participate in field trips to a water treatment facility, where they measure the cleanliness of wastewater and runoff before discharge into the White River. Additionally, BSD students receive instruction from the Entegrity curriculum related to solar energy, emphasizing the long-term benefits of green energy sources.

-In order to connect BSD students with environmental sustainability and provide a well-rounded educational experience, schools in the district offer various field trip opportunities such as:

- Students across the district visit different zoos, including the Little Rock Zoo and St. Louis Zoo.
- Students tour the Sheriffs Youth Ranch Pumpkin Patch and other local pumpkin patches annually to experience local agriculture and the importance of climate, water conservation, and seasonal awareness.
- Students explore fish ecology at the Fish Hatchery in Heber Springs, contributing to a comprehensive approach to environmental responsibility and how ecosystems are connected.
- Students attend a week-long learning experience at the Dauphin Island Sea Camp which allows them to see the environmental impacts on marine life and the ecology.

- Moving forward, the district recognizes the need for administrators and staff to pinpoint field trips that better align with the curriculum which presents an opportunity for improvement in environmental and sustainability education. BSD desires to enhance the relevance and educational impact of field trip experiences. As a result, the district will ensure that field trips become integral components of the





overall educational strategy. Visits to places like the BSD Solar field array, water treatment facility and local farms not only offer practical insights into environmental processes but also serve as experiential learning opportunities, reinforcing classroom teachings and fostering a deeper understanding of sustainability principles. Overcoming this challenge is essential for maximizing the educational potential of field trips and promoting a more comprehensive approach to environmental and sustainability education.

Programs for Teachers, Students & Community Partners

-The Batesville School District focuses on an educational approach that revolves around an integrative strategy that combines environmental sustainability, STEM education, and community engagement. Resources such as the Entegrity Solar Trak Curriculum, Mobile Solar Kits, and involvement with Future Farmers of America (FFA) and horticulture emphasize hands-on experiences in solar technology, agriculture, and gardening, which provides students with practical applications of science and engineering concepts. Our district approach also addresses environmental science through activities such as:

- Water Sampling and the analysis of chemicals and pollutants in partnership with the AR Game & Fish Commission. This not only contributes to STEM education but also fosters critical thinking skills as students engage with real-world environmental issues. The focus on improving local ecosystems, as seen with Polk Bayou and participation in AR Stream Teams, demonstrates a commitment to environmental stewardship and community involvement.
- The Junior Master Gardeners' Club, affiliated with the Farm to School Institute through the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, is part of a select group of four schools in Arkansas with a long-term goal of establishing a community garden. The collaboration with Master Gardeners in Independence County involves students in weekly introductions to new fruits or vegetables, supported by a specialized curriculum. The gardening activities, characterized by year-round sustainability, take on an unconventional approach, utilizing items like tires, egg cartons, and milk cartons. Notably, Home Depot and Tractor Supply contribute essential support to these innovative and sustainable gardening practices.
- The community garden maintained by Batesville Junior High Charter serves a dual purpose by cultivating vegetables and fruits, which are then either donated to pantries or utilized in Family and Consumer Science classes. Master Gardeners are actively involved, providing teacher-led lessons to students on techniques for creating more efficient and productive gardens. Home Depot plays a crucial role in supporting these efforts by partnering to donate materials, plants, and gardening supplies for the construction and maintenance of both raised beds and traditional garden beds.
- Each year, the BSD FFA program organizes an Annual Greenhouse Plant Sale, where agriculture students cultivate seedlings for public purchase. Priced at \$1 each, the proceeds often





contribute to local youth ranch gardens. Plant descriptions, detailing names and growth requirements, are prepared by students. Additionally, the organization received a Perkins Grant to install aquaponic tanks, allowing students to grow and raise catfish, which are then sold to the public to restock ponds.

- A significant aspect of the FFA experience is the Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE), mandatory for all students in agriculture courses. SAEs range from market animal livestock projects to innovative initiatives, such as the placement of bee hives in a solar field in 2021. The bee hives were to help pollinate the area and increase our bee population. Although successful initially, maintaining the bee colonies proved challenging.
- Batesville FFA students also engage in community outreach through Elementary School Outreach programs. These initiatives focus on educating younger students about food sources, including where milk comes from and the origins of pizza ingredients. Furthermore, FFA hosts a Summer Camp that emphasizes civic knowledge and skills, incorporating a Day of Service to encourage active participation and community involvement among its members. This multifaceted approach ensures that FFA not only equips its members with agricultural expertise but also fosters a sense of responsibility and community engagement.
- BSD is committed to ongoing teacher training opportunities through Arkansas State University and the incorporation of STEAM classes for students in our district highlighting a dedication to continuous professional development and enhanced student learning. Additionally, the emphasis on recycled art projects and the integration of maker spaces in media classes demonstrate a creative approach to sustainability and technology, encouraging innovation and environmental awareness among students.

-The Batesville School District has found it to be challenging to maintain trained Entegri Solar Trak Curriculum instructors. The district initially trained two teachers, but they were quickly recruited to other employment due to the popularity of the knowledge and skills of this science technology. Moving forward, we are still working with our Entegri partners to continue providing this training opportunity for our new staff as we move forward.

Environment as Context for Learning & Access to Outdoor Learning

-Batesville School District focuses on engagement and partnerships to accelerate our environmental and sustainability education. The involvement of the school district with organizations such as Entegri, Entergy, Home Depot, and the Agriculture Extension Agency showcases strong community partnerships. These collaborations demonstrate a civic approach to education by engaging external entities to support and enhance environmental initiatives.

-The creation and maintenance of outdoor learning spaces, community gardens, and the involvement of students in planting trees exemplify a commitment to environmental stewardship. These initiatives provide tangible examples of civic responsibility toward the local environment.





- The integration of STEM classes, field trips, and science curriculum (such as the Entegrity Curriculum) into the district's educational framework indicates a deliberate effort to instill civic knowledge related to environmental issues. This includes understanding renewable energy sources (e.g., solar energy) and practical experiences like water quality measurements.
- The involvement of Batesville preschool students in projects like building raised beds, planting, and harvesting vegetables contributes to early civic education. These activities teach young students about community involvement, sustainability, and the importance of addressing local issues, such as food insecurity. The donation of over 100 pounds of fresh vegetables from the school garden to the community's food pantry is a direct civic action addressing food insecurity. It reflects an understanding of the broader community's needs and a commitment to making a positive impact.
- Engaging Master Gardeners to teach classes and involving students in lessons with the Agriculture Extension Agency showcases an educational outreach component. These efforts not only impart knowledge but also encourage students to share their learning with the broader community, fostering a sense of civic responsibility.
- The Batesville School District faces challenges in maximizing the potential of its abundant green space for gardening, farming, and sustainability projects. The district recognizes there's a need to identify more impactful ways to utilize the space efficiently. Staff involvement in guiding students through such activities is crucial. Additionally, for high-quality outdoor learning experiences, financial constraints pose a challenge. The cost of the trip becomes a barrier for our district and for some students, limiting their participation. The costs associated with transportation often puts limitations on in district and out of district field trips. Also, the reluctance of some parents to send their children on an out of district field trip further complicates providing an inclusive outdoor learning experience for all students. Addressing these financial and logistical challenges is essential for ensuring equitable access to these valuable educational opportunities.





Summary Narrative: An Overview of Your Work Encompassing All Three Pillars

The Batesville School District (BSD) is actively engaged in addressing environmental challenges across multiple fronts. Efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs involve water-saving measures, energy-efficient lighting, and solar panel installations. Water quality initiatives include runoff management and leak reporting systems, while waste reduction measures encompass eco-friendly cleaning products and digital tools for minimizing paper waste. Alternative transportation strategies, such as reducing bus routes and promoting bus safety, aim to minimize the district's environmental footprint. BSD prioritizes energy-efficient facilities and is working on decarbonization and electrification efforts. The creative use of grounds for education and recreation, including greenhouses, trails, outdoor classrooms, and parks, showcases a holistic approach to sustainability. The district demonstrates a comprehensive commitment to improving the health and wellness of students and staff through various environmental health programs, including air quality, nutrition, mental health, and access to health services. In the realm of environmental and sustainability education, BSD integrates these principles into its strategic plan, emphasizing hands-on experiences, community partnerships, and ongoing teacher training. Despite challenges in funding, education, and program implementation, BSD remains dedicated to fostering ecological literacy and responsible resource management across its campuses.

Photos

1. [Solar Canopy](#) that serves for common everyday uses such as shelter from sun and rain for loading and unloading at school but excites the imagination of future energy sources.
2. Pioneering [Electric Engines](#) on the frontier of innovation and imagination.
3. [Raising our own Greens](#) to empower all students for the challenges of tomorrow.
4. Using [Bee Hives to pollinate the solar fields](#) and repopulate endangered bee populations.
5. [Tracking Solar Arrays](#) for 25% more efficiency than fixed panels and a shelf life of 30 years with 96% panel efficiency.
6. Every Student Growing Everyday with [Agriculture and Animal Science](#).
7. [Centrally controlled thermostats](#) to monitor Net Zero efficiency efforts.
8. [FFA Fish Hatchery](#) for effective environmental and sustainability education.
9. [Portable Solar Lab Kits](#) developed by scientists and engineers to partner with schools to show students how to reduce environmental impact.
10. [Green Gardens](#) for Co-Curricular opportunities and service learning.

