



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.

Brian Slater Digitally signed by Brian Slater
Date: 2024.02.26 11:01:22 -05'00'

Date:

(Principal's Signature)

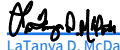
Name of Superintendent:

(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.


LaTanya D. McDade (Feb 26, 2024 14:28 EST)

Date:

(Superintendent's Signature)

Nominating Authority's Certifications

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

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

Name of Nominating Agency:

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.

Anne Petersen  Digitally signed by Anne Petersen
Date: 2024.02.24 08:48:21 -05'00' Date:

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

SUBMISSION

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

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509

Expiration Date: 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.

Summary of Achievement

Green Ribbon Narrative: Dale City Elementary School

Dale City Elementary School is a Title I school in Manassas, Virginia, serving approximately 440 students annually. More than half, or 61%, of our families are economically disadvantaged, and 100% of our students receive free breakfast and lunch which, for many, will provide their total nutrition for the day. In addition, Dale City Elementary has a 91% total minority enrollment with 67% of our students being Hispanic, 14% Black, 18% Asian, and 3% Native Hawaiian or multiple races. English Language learners comprise 55% of our student population and 12% receive special education services.

The mission for Dale City is “Every Child, Every Day, Whatever It Takes!” Our core beliefs include that our students are incredible, showing up every day to learn and have fun, our parents are supportive and visible in their child’s learning, and the staff is there to make a difference in the students’ lives. We are actively integrating Environmental Literacy in all grades through the Virginia Standards of Learning and modeling the guidelines in the Prince William County Environmental Literacy Plan. We are eager to show off our school.

Dale City has four formal outdoor classroom spaces used daily by the school community. Both indoors and outdoors, Dale City’s staff provides students with interdisciplinary environmental and sustainability learning opportunities embedded into the kindergarten through fifth-grade curriculum. The unique campus and homegrown curricula help students learn about varied ecosystems, explore their environment, and establish their school as a place for stewardship.

Dale City partners with many local organizations, including Virginia Master Naturalists, Prince William County Parks, Keep Prince William Beautiful, Prince William County, Prince William County Soil and Water Conservation District, Prince William County Schools Energy and Sustainability Team, and Friends of the Occoquan, to provide environmental and sustainability education programming, such as field trips to local and national parks and to improve the campus’ environment with cleanups and restoration projects. All instruction includes content about physical science, inquiry, and is place-based.

Health and wellness are a priority at Dale City. Every classroom in the school has a “calming corner” for students to self-regulate and process emotions while learning coping skills and other social success strategies. Students benefit from a team of mental health professionals, behavior specialists, and student mentors, giving students confidential access to staff and peers who bring culturally relevant support to the school community.

The school wanted to bring back the sense of the community and identity that was lost during recent redevelopment, so, Dale City leveraged the Safe Routes to School program to increase safety measures and collaboration in the neighborhood. The Ride Your Bike and School Walking program integrated the school with the surrounding community; addressing attendance and morale among students and staff, while promoting healthy habits. Exploring ecotherapy and methods toward wellness has also been vital for community buy-in. Revitalizing the natural garden greenhouse with updated equipment and technology allowed the school to develop partners to educate both staff and students on how to sustain programming, offer access to healthy food, and provide hands-on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) experiences. Students have learned about composting, solar energy, dehydration, urban agriculture, and food justice.

In 2012, the students and staff embraced the Prince William County Schools (PWCS) Energy Management program and Dale City has seen a 22.6% cost avoidance in utility costs, representing \$280,000 in 11 years. This represents a reduction of 7.3 million KBTU and an equivalent of 709 metric tons of CO₂. A lighting renovation in SY2019-20 upgraded the exterior and indoor lighting to LED fixtures with an estimated 60% decrease in the lighting load.

In addition, teachers and staff embrace the ability to turn on only 50% of the lighting in rooms, power down computers and smart boards, and turn off lights upon leaving the building. Dale City takes part annually in the division's Energy Challenge to reduce the school's environmental impact and costs and share sustainable activities and behaviors. Students remind teachers to turn the power off before leaving for the day and take surveys of how many rooms have lights turned off at dismissal. Nightly checks occur and staff are informed if lights or smart boards are left on.

Dale City is dedicated to reducing, reusing, and recycling. The school reduces environmental impact and costs by tracking data through the Arc data tracking system portal and working with the district's Energy and Sustainability team. Students are achieving more sustainable lighting and decreased energy use. Dale City reduced the use of single-use plastic water bottles by installing five water bottle filling stations which allowed students and staff the ability to refill reusable water bottles and reduce their water bottle consumption by over 24%.

Furthermore, the school participates in the NexTrex, a program that helps to keep plastic films out of the environment and instead be made into Trex decking and other products. We have three bins within our school. The collection accepts plastic grocery bags, bread bags, produce bags, plastic shipping envelopes, water bottle plastic casings, and more. Last year, 2022-23, was our first year participating and we collected and turned in 63 pounds of plastic.

Upon making a pledge, students were given a reusable water bottle, to encourage reuse. Students are also committed to stewardship on campus which resulted in 67 bags (55-gallon size) of waste, numerous TVs, and 15 tires being removed from the environment around the school. In a recent waste audit, students discovered that 100% of Dale City's classrooms actively recycle and in SY2023-24, three collection bins were set up in the cafeteria for all compostable material. The students are making a sustainable difference as their cafeteria and breakfast food scraps are turned into compost at the Freestate Farms compost facility. Students lead campaigns to educate peers and staff on proper recycling procedures during morning announcements and at all-school assemblies. Dale City is extremely fortunate to have a group of science club students who dedicate themselves to picking up recycling every week from the classrooms.

Dale City Elementary School students also take part in energy and waste audits. In SY2021-22 and 2022-23 students completed an all-day waste characterization, transportation survey, and energy audits. The data collected was entered into a digital platform, Arc, that allows students to track and benchmark project performance. The waste audit was eye-opening to students as they saw the enormous amounts of wasted food, contaminated recycling, and unique items such as utensils, school supplies, and shoes that had been discarded.

Students across the curriculum enjoy time outdoors in Dale City's outdoor learning spaces. The school has four outdoor classrooms, a Virginia Natural Plant Garden, and a nature trail. Art teachers use the gardens, outdoor classrooms, and the school nature trail for pictures and stills; English Language Arts uses the gardens and trail to draw inspiration; reading classes use the outdoors for a relaxing place to read; and science classes use the on-campus resources to collect water quality data, germinate seeds, and to learn to observe and study nature.

Dale City has adopted its campus and nature trail through Keep Prince William Beautiful's (KPWB) Adopt-a-Spot program. Students serve as citizen scientists by recording and reporting data on litter collections and water samples. Grants have helped Dale City provide hands-on learning experiences for the students. The outdoor garden was created and designed by Mr. Beaumont. Most recently, Dale City was recognized as a Virginia Naturally School for both the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years and has been an active participant in the PWCS Energy Challenge since 2019.

This year our fifth-grade science teacher, Mr. Beaumont, was recognized by the Virginia Association of Science Teachers (VAST) with a RISE award in recognition of exemplary efforts and contributions made to sustainable and responsible science education.

Pillar I: Reducing Environmental Impact and Cost

Element 1A: Energy Savings and Efficiency

Dale City Elementary School is committed to reducing our energy usage through both student and facilities actions. Starting in SY2012-13, the students and staff embraced the PWCS Energy Management program and Dale City has seen a 22.6% cost avoidance in utility costs from the baseline SY2011-12, representing more than \$280,000 in 11 years. This represents a reduction of 7.3 million KBTU and an equivalent of 709 metric tons of CO₂.

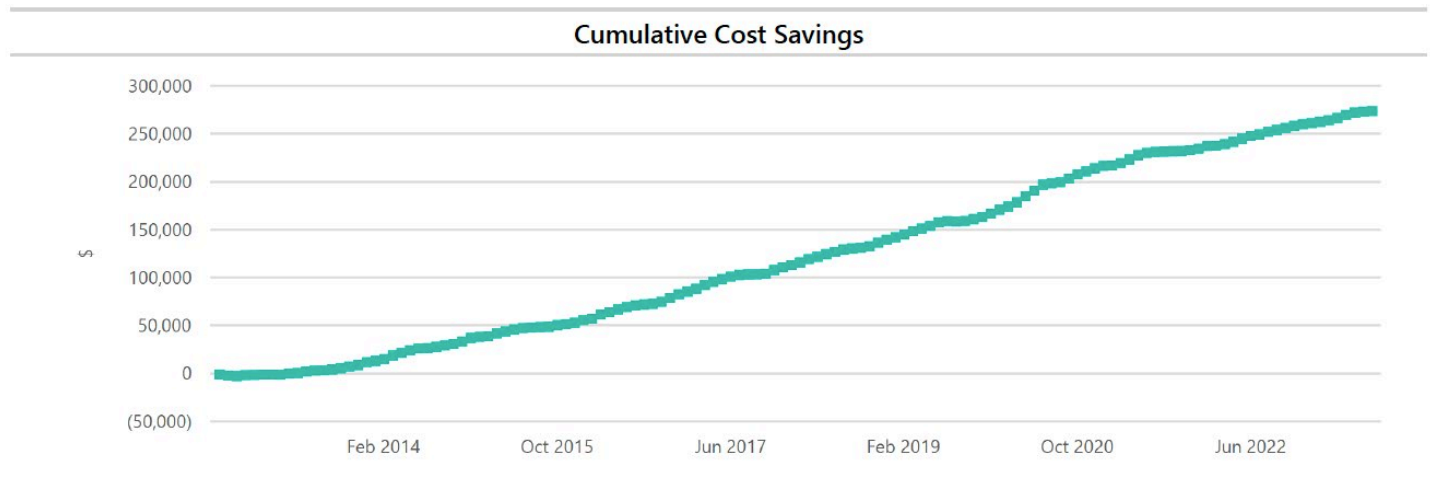


Figure 1.

Cost Savings from 2012 to 2023, Dale City Elementary School cost avoidance savings totaled over \$281,000 a 22.6% reduction.

Energy use at Dale City is tracked through Energy Cap and students annually review numbers through the PWCS Energy Dashboard. In addition, students annually perform energy audits checking for behavioral energy conservation measures, including powering down technology devices, turning off lights, and keeping exterior doors shut. Prior to school breaks longer than two days, school staff are reminded by the school sustainability liaison to “turn off and unplug” to let the building have an energy holiday.

Since 2018, the school has annually taken part in the CPower demand response program. The school and staff actively participate by curtailing energy usage for the performance test to show the building’s ability to lower energy demand. Each year, since participating, the school has met their load shed 100%.

To reduce the heat-island effect, Dale City has a white reflective membrane roof to reflect sunlight and heat away from the building. During the 2017 restoration, the roof was partially replaced and the insulation increased to a minimum of R25 insulation, reducing energy usage for cooling and heating and reducing air temperatures inside the school.

Dale City has received an “Energy Star Certification” two times since 2012 and was again eligible in 2022. An “Energy Star” certified property meets strict energy performance standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), uses less energy, is less expensive to operate, and causes fewer greenhouse gas emissions than its peers. This certification shows the dedication of the facilities staff to energy efficiency and conservation and the effectiveness of the energy management program at Dale City.

In 2020, the interior and exterior lighting was updated throughout the site. All lights were replaced with LEDS after a comprehensive lighting study. Each interior space can now control the lighting level with dimmers and can illuminate specific areas of the classrooms. This upgrade decreased the light energy load by 60% and lowered energy consumption by 10% to 12% while supplying proper illumination that can be adjusted by the staff to account for daylighting as well as allowing for control by the staff members in the building.

Dale City students are also tracking the school's green building performance using the Arc platform to view real-time sustainability performance. The students participated in and learned about building energy and waste audits from the PWCS facilities team. The students then used the information gathered from Arc and the audits. They then compiled the energy data and presented their findings to school staff, all the while developing an understanding of building energy usage. The students integrated the information from the energy and matter resources unit.

Element 1B: Improved Water Quality, Efficiency, and Conservation

Water quality and conservation have also been a focus for Dale City. PWCS uses Energy Cap software to track water consumption. Monthly detailed consumption data are recorded, and consumption is monitored by a water meter for any changes in usage. Unusual consumption patterns are immediately investigated, allowing Dale City's staff to find and fix water leaks or identify user-caused increases. Water-saving checklists at the school request teachers, administrators, custodians, and staff to monitor faucets for leaks and request work orders to repair leaking faucets. Since 2011, the school has reduced water and sewer consumption by 1,435 Kgal (24%).

All drinking water at Dale City is provided by the school's local water retailer, Virginia American Water. During SY2022-23, five bottle filling stations were installed for students and staff, supplying filtered and chilled water with built-in water purification. Bottle-filling stations make drinking water consumption more convenient, promote the use of reusable containers, and reduce the use of single-use plastic water bottles. Since then, Dale City has saved over 93,296 water bottles and distributed over 895 reusable bottles.

Dale City has a native plant garden created in SY2021-22 that is used as an outdoor classroom. The plants selected were all native to Virginia and were planted by the students. Due to their native adaptations, they are water efficient. In the spring of 2023, four rain barrels donated by the Friends of the Occoquan were modified and installed to collect rainwater, and this water is used to maintain the garden in spring and summer.

Dale City first opened in 1967. When the school was built there were no requirements for on-site stormwater management. Since 1967 the school has maintained the grounds with on-site vegetation to reduce stormwater runoff and the parking lots are regularly swept and cleaned to reduce waste and toxins leaving the site due to stormwater.

Element 1C: Reduced Waste Production

Dale City Elementary School is committed to waste reduction and recycling of resources. As part of the PWCS Regulation 494-3, "Recycling Program," Dale City recycles metal and aluminum cans, plastic bottles, juice and milk boxes, cardboard, and paper. Each classroom, office, and common area have customized labeled recycling bins, where the recyclables are collected by the Green Team weekly. In SY2022-23, the school staff volunteered, as part of a pilot, to use blue plastic recycling bins, and not place plastic liners in the new bins. Students and staff worked collaboratively with the custodial manager to educate and encourage behavior change to correctly separate waste and recyclables in all bins. There will be an expected saving of approximately 6,100 plastic liners.

Since 2020, Dale City has been a one-to-one technology school. Students bring their devices to school daily, and teachers and staff are strongly encouraged to provide lessons and assessments through the Canvas Learning Management System. This has decreased the amount of paper copies and waste from paper lessons and

assessments. Paper purchased has the seal of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, with at least 30% recycled content.

Starting in September 2023, Dale City has been separating its food scraps from non-compostable waste in the cafeteria. The food scraps are then taken by a hauler to a local compost facility. This program was established with a grant by Keep Prince William Beautiful (KPWB) to pay for the hauling of the food scraps. As part of the new program, students learned about what parts of their lunch waste are compostable and what is not, and uneaten, wrapped food is set aside for sharing. The weights measured by KPWB estimates that 150 pounds per day of food scraps are diverted from the landfill.

The Dale City kitchen staff also participates in waste reduction by recycling and reusing. Dale City serves over 445 meals daily. Instead of disposable trays and utensils, the kitchen staff provides reusable trays and utensils for meals, setting an example for staff and students. Within the kitchen, the food scraps are also separated and placed in bins for compost pickup.

Office Depot named PWCS as one of only 20 recipients from among 1,000 for its Leadership in Greener Purchasing Award. This award recognizes the school division's efforts toward environmentally-conscious purchases as it considers the buying of supplies to support 100+ schools and offices, including items such as technology, paper, printing products including ink and toners, furniture, and other supplies. Award-winners are selected for purchases made during 2021 across multiple categories of expenditures for products with "eco-attributes" such as recyclable materials, energy efficiency, the reduction of harsh or harmful chemicals, and items that carry eco-labels or environmental certifications.

Dale City custodial staff are an integral part of our waste reduction team. Custodial staff attend training courses biannually to include environmental waste reduction, recycling updates, and cleaning product training. In the spring of 2023, PWCS changed the cleaning strategy in all schools, using only five Spartan Chemical Cleaning products, a hard surface disinfectant, odor eliminator, surface cleaner, degreaser, and floor cleaner. Both the odor eliminator and classroom surface cleaner are Green Seal certified products. When the products were distributed, Dale City's custodial stations were equipped with a product mixing station that reduces waste. Staff were trained in the proper usage of the five products. Color-coded microfiber cloths for cleaning are used, washed, and reused to reduce paper waste in cafeterias, kitchens, and wherever food is eaten. With the use of these products, we see a reduction in water and chemical usage and a cleaner environment. In addition, the school division supplies the school with exterior labeled dumpsters for both waste and recycling, and the custodial and kitchen staff are annually trained regarding recycling and waste reduction.

NexTrex is a plastic film recycling program that Dale City has participated in since 2022. The program keeps plastic film out of the environment and recycles it into Trex decking and other products. We have three bins within our school. The collections accept plastic grocery bags, bread bags, produce bags, plastic shipping envelopes, water bottle plastic casings, and more. Last year, SY2022-23, was our first year participating and we collected and turned in 63 pounds of plastic. For SY2023-24, we are continuing and expanding the program to offices and classrooms.

Element 1D: Use of Alternative Transportation

Dale City Elementary School is in a suburban part of Prince William County and most of the students arrive at 8:30 a.m. The school has five bike racks that hold 25 bikes. Over 138 students are assigned as bus riders at Dale City Elementary. Over 225 students walk to school each day with 88 carpoolers. Dale City staff members walk students to school who have no transportation and have missed the bus.

The "PWCS Transportation Services Bus Driver and Attendant Handbook" stipulates an anti-idling policy for school buses and cars. This minimizes air pollution and saves fuel. Dale City trains school bus drivers to turn off their engines while waiting to load and unload students at school.

Pillar II: Improving Health and Wellness

Element 2A: Integrated School Environmental Health Program

Dale City Elementary School takes part in environmental health initiatives to support clean and safe classrooms and grounds. To improve indoor air quality and reduce exposure to allergens, at the end of the day, all chairs are stacked on desks so custodians can have access to all areas of the floor. Countertops are wiped down at the end of every day. Trash is removed daily in classrooms, offices, and common spaces. Teachers are trained to reduce exposure to allergens by minimizing the amount of upholstered or carpeted items in the classroom and not bringing in cleaning chemicals or air fresheners from home to provide a safe classroom environment. Water leaks are reported and promptly fixed to prevent surface mold and mildew growth, and wet ceiling tiles are promptly replaced.

The HVAC air filters, which are Energy Efficient rated per ASHRAE 52.2-199 and 52.2-2012, are replaced every three months. Tobacco use and vaping are prohibited on campus. To control air moisture in the building, humidity levels are monitored throughout the school using a Building Automation System (BAS) and are monitored by the BAS team in the Facilities Department. In the activity room, cafeteria, and library, carbon dioxide levels are monitored 24/7, and flushing occurs if the levels exceed 700 ppm above outdoor air levels.

Dale City follows the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program for PWCS. All efforts are taken to eliminate the need for chemicals to control pests and to provide a safe, clean environment for the school. Education about what attracts pests and how to eliminate the attractants aids in keeping Dale City pest-free and free of pesticides. Dale City only uses surface disinfectants that are approved by the EPA. All teachers are supplied with vinyl gloves and disinfecting spray to help maintain a healthy and safe learning environment.

The PWCS landscaping crew has a nutrient-management and weed control program for all outdoor landscaped and turf areas. Soil tests are conducted for turf areas, and after analysis, the areas are aerated, fertilized, and overseeded to maintain the turf. Walks, curbs, gutters, perimeter of schools and buildings, flower beds, fence lines, tracks, and areas around utilities are treated for weed control. The program is run by certified commercial applicators using products labeled as caution, the least toxic.

In science classes, students learn about the importance of safety in the classroom. Students must sign a safety contract and must wear personal protective equipment when conducting a lab. In addition, science experiments are conducted using natural materials as much as possible, and teachers are trained in the safe use of materials in a laboratory setting. All classrooms are equipped with safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, fire blankets, eye wash, and fume hoods where applicable.

Safe drinking water for students and employees is a priority for Dale City. PWCS tests every water spigot in each school every three years for lead to ensure the drinking water quality in the schools. If lead is found in the water test, the unit is shut down, filters installed, the spigot is replaced, and the unit is retested.

Element 2B: Nutrition and Fitness

Dale City Elementary School is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects student health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Students are provided with free, enjoyable, and nutritious meals for breakfast and lunch. Nutritional education and physical education at Dale City promote lifelong healthy habits. Students receive nutrition and fitness education in alignment with the K-6 standards.

The Dale City PE teachers educate students and family members year-round. One of their activities is Family in PE Week, which has a goal to help families, schools, and communities understand the importance of physical education. It gives parents a chance to see what their child does in PE and invites them to participate and enjoy playing and being physically active with their child! Another program is Walking Wednesdays. The Dale City Tiger families are invited every Wednesday morning before school, to come and walk together for 35 minutes. The purpose of Walking Wednesday is to allow students and their families to enjoy movement, spend time with friends and family, and make a healthy choice first thing in the morning. In addition, there is a Turkey Trot in November and an Avo-Cardio Run allowing the students and faculty to have a themed race. The students get excited about running and participating in physical activity which will help build healthy habits. Students get recognized for both effort and performance. The top three male and female runners for each grade level receive medals.

Students participate annually in the Smoothie Bike activity provided by the PWCS Food and Nutrition Department. It allows students to connect eating healthy and physical activity. Students learn about different vitamins and minerals and how they help their bodies grow and stay strong. Students make their own recipes and ride a bike, which powers a blender that makes the smoothie they drink! Humus tasting is also sponsored by the PWCS Food and Nutrition Department and the PE teachers. Students learn about the ingredients, how to make humus, how it tastes, and why it's a healthy snack choice.

Dale City has two Color Runs during each school year. Students celebrate the first quarter by participating in the Color Run which allows them to be physically active and find joy in movement. Dale City staff hold fitness sessions after school to build community among staff and provide them with an opportunity to focus on their fitness and well-being.

Dale City's meals are planned by the PWCS Food and Nutrition Department's registered dietitians and are based on the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Meals feature a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low or fat-free milk, and properly portioned proteins and grains. Meals are free of trans fats and are less than 10% saturated fat. To give students the opportunity to eat breakfast, Dale City offers 100% of their students free or reduced meals. Students eat breakfast in the classrooms. Each classroom is encouraged to set up a food share area where uneaten, wrapped foods are set aside for later consumption and not thrown away. Any food scraps are put into the bins and sent off for compost.

Mental health is a top priority at Dale City. In SY2022-23, Dale City hosted a family community wellness event where the public was invited to learn about living healthy, participate in an English as a secondary language class, receive free medical/dental screenings, receive informational pamphlets, learn wellness tips, and more from dozens of vendors. The students have weekly proactive circles to build community within the classroom. Students also have calming corners available to use coping skills, and take time to relax and regulate their emotions.

Dale City uses the social-emotional learning curriculum, Zones of Regulation, to teach their students self-regulation and emotional control. Teachers and staff are trained in this skill-based approach and students are provided with calming corners, restorative practices, and mindful strategies. Some of the one-on-one programs are Big Hearts Little Hands, where fifth graders mentor kindergarteners who need a little extra support, and Check In Check Out which is an opportunity for a student and an adult champion to work together to improve student behavior. The strategy works by providing predictable opportunities for educators to teach behavior expectations and provide positive reinforcement (e.g., behavior-specific praise) and feedback. Morning walks to the creek provide students with needed areas of growth to start their day in a positive way.

Dale City has a full-time nurse who promotes healthy practices like consuming adequate water, healthy eating habits, and proper hygiene. Outside of the nurse's office, there are posters with visuals to inform staff and students how to properly wash hands, how to cover their mouths when coughing, and what a balanced diet looks

like. Dale City also has a social and emotional learning team made up of teachers and counselors to provide ideas and advice for staff in dealing with social and emotional health in the face of all the challenges that affect our schools, students, and communities. The team turned the teacher's lounge into a relaxing mental health break room complete with soft lighting, massage chairs, and inspirational wall hangings. Daily inspirations, monthly mental health newsletters, small group meetings, and comradery through Yoga and social events are just a few ways Dale City's mental health team supports students and staff.

Pillar III: Providing Effective Environmental Education

Element 3A: Shared Responsibility for Environmental Learning

Dale City Elementary School has an active sustainability presence. We have dynamic and environmentally literate teachers and staff members who provide learning and activities to support their students' learning about their place in the environment. Dale City students have participated in energy and waste audits, educating staff and students on waste and recycling. They learned about green schools through U.S. Green Building Council's learning activities and curriculum, building a one-mile nature trail around the school with four outside classrooms, maintaining a Virginia Natural plant garden, adding rain barrels to conserve water, and making a no-mow zone on the school grounds. Additionally, Dale City annually conducts a Kindergarten Science Day, holds an on-site Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) for fifth grade, maintains an onsite native plants garden with composting, celebrates Earth Week with lessons throughout all grade levels, and has a Taking Kids Outside program for one week.

Environmental literacy and sustainability are cross-curricular priorities at Dale City. On a given day, over 425 students may be exposed to some form of environmental literacy. For example, all science classes use environmental and sustainable resource concepts and educational experiences that use scientific engineering practices to provide students with the skills needed to make informed decisions. This is reflected in the 2018 Science Standards of Learning and assessed on unit tests and projects. Dale City improved its Standards of Learning by over 35% last year. Students discuss various environmental topics such as how road salt affects soil chemistry, climate change, water pollution in the Chesapeake Bay, renewable energy, and environmental careers that focus on solving such issues. Learning is supplemented with Newsela, "Science News," and Discovery Education articles and assessments. To promote cross-generational learning, environmental science, and ecology, students may be asked to complete home health surveys, energy audits, water usage audits, and calculate carbon footprints.

One of Dale City's goals is to encourage an outdoor classroom activity for each grade level. Pre-K students use the school nature trail system to enhance the student's environmental awareness. The kindergarten classes learn about recycling and participate in a Science Day with the fifth graders where they visit sustainability stations on the nature trail and in the outdoor classroom, and observe the different types of rocks created, assisted by the fifth-grade students. Dale City first graders participate in a water quality activity, complete the MWEE stream analysis activities, and release tadpoles. The third-grade students all visit the outdoor garden, learning about the native plants, their life cycles, soils, and plants' requirements for life.

Fourth-grade students use the nature trail multiple times for multiple reasons. One of the first lessons is to spend time learning about the proper way to be in nature and interact with plants and animals. They also focus on using a compass to tell directions and discussing moon phases. Students look at the moon at night and describe how the moon changes. In the spring, they will be talking about weather and taking the time to record the weather for each day. Dale City has three weather stations for live monitoring, and fourth-grade students provide a weather report over the announcements.

This year, all fourth-grade students took a field trip to the Prince William County Fairgrounds for Farm Field Days, supported by Prince William County Soil and Water Conservation District. While there, they not only learned about farm animals including cows, horses, and chickens, but also learned about the importance of bees and pollination. In addition, they learned about the importance of water in Virginia and how erosion is affected by plant life. The fourth graders had a great time talking to local arborists and eating a locally grown apple!

All fifth-grade students use the school building as a teaching tool to conduct an energy audit. Students look at the different forms of energy used at the school, how the orientation of the school affects its energy use, and the amount of energy used by the lights. Upon completion of the energy audits, students share how lighting could be adjusted in the classroom and the preference for daylighting when possible. Fifth-grade students also take part in an on-site MWEE where they review the effects of stormwater, tree cover, and trash on the environment. They trace the path of stormwater from their school grounds using maps and then measure the water quality in the adjacent stream using invertebrate samples. This in-school, on-site field trip is assisted by local Master Naturalists and the PWCS Environmental and Sustainability Teams.

For the last 11 years, Dale City has participated in the LEGO robotics program. On average, 25 to 30 students participate on the team. Last year, for the innovation project, they researched alternative forms of energy. The students focused on biomass and examined the pros and cons of biomass energy. After looking at the problems associated with biomass, students worked to create solutions to make biomass a better alternative energy.

Dale City annually hosts a career day for all students K-5. Local community members in more than 20 career fields participate in the event. Some of the careers include military, environmental and green careers, business entrepreneurs, law enforcement and legal, and health care. At this event, STEM educational requirements for these positions are shared with the students.

Element 3B: Use of Environment and Sustainability to Develop Science, Mathematics, Engineering and Technology Content

Dale City has a long history of using the environment as a learning tool. In the early 1980s, a nature trail was created in the forested common area adjacent to the school for use by the school and community. The trail's stairs were cut into the steep slope one step at a time by hand and it takes the walker from the school to a perennial stream, a walk of about 1,500 feet. In the early 2000s, more work was done to update the trail borders and build the amphitheater. In SY2021-22, after returning from COVID, the trail was used again and KPWB partnered in a grant with Prince William County Parks to restore the outdoor classrooms along the trail. In September 2023, a bridge to the trail was completed by an Eagle Scout, increasing access to the trail.

Teachers use the classrooms and tree-shaded trail to educate PreK-5 students and expose students to the outdoors. All teachers are encouraged to take their students outside and a school-wide go outside and read day is held every year. When the students visit the trail, they are on trash alert and maintain the trail with regular cleanups. The trail is treated as an extension of their playground and is maintained by the students. Providing the students with conservation and stewardship activities.

On average, over 60 students are part of Dale City School's Green Team which meets weekly to take part in sustainable activities such as school building energy audits, school-wide waste characterization, germinating seeds to plant on campus, hatching chicks, recycling, collecting litter, designing and planting a native garden, learning about and experimenting with composting. In partnership with Friends of the Occoquan, four rain barrels were installed in the garden by the students.

The club also participates in annual waste audits, where students collect, weigh, sort, and characterize all waste produced by the school in one day. They calculate the percentage of waste diverted from the landfill and how much of each type of waste, recycling, and food waste the school produces daily. This data is used every year to set up goals and decide which classes to focus on sharing recycling and waste requirements.

To capture data on the school's efforts to decrease the use of single-use plastic bottles, the five water bottle fillers were labeled and the data on bottles saved was documented by the Green Team. To date, 93,296 bottles have been saved and the students share the data with the students and staff, noting the trends, and reporting their findings in the student live broadcast.

In the early spring of 2024, Dale City students will help assist in installing five approved bluebird boxes. The box in the native garden will livestream a video of its interior, allowing the students to see the box activities. Virginia Master Naturalists in the community will monitor the boxes over the summer and train the students in best practices for monitoring and maintenance.

Element 3C: Development and Application of Civic Knowledge and Skills

Dale City Elementary School follows the guidelines in Regulation 494-1, "Energy Conservation," Regulation 494-3, "Recycling Program," and Regulation 495-1, "Sustainability." Dale City also participates in the PWCS Energy Challenge to promote energy conservation, develop new ways to create healthier schools, encourage and model environmental stewardship, reduce waste, increase recycling, and grow a culture of sustainability. Weekly reminders are sent to staff to turn off lights and computers. Posters and emails are used to educate staff and students on how to properly recycle. Emails, announcements, and posters are used to encourage students and staff to use reusable water bottles.

All third-grade students at Dale City attended the Mr. Eco Hero show in October 2023. The one-hour show with singing and dancing led by Mr. Eco, an environmental rap superhero, included eight songs on topics of waste reduction, recycling, water and energy conservation, and watershed stewardship. As a follow-on activity, the third-grade students reflected on their favorite songs and shared the concepts with their families. They will be carrying out an action project this spring.

In April 2023, as part of the effort to support the Dale City community, 200 adults and students went on a field trip to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C. This was the first trip for most of the students and many of the adults. As a result, a repeat trip in May 2023 took 350 community members to the Smithsonian National Zoological Park to learn about nature and animals in their habitats. The school took school buses for both trips to reduce emissions, replacing the use of about 100 cars for the first trip and 175 cars for the second. Both trips were on Saturdays and included both adults and students, creating a multi-generational learning experience.

The adult English program at Dale City is currently serving 52 multilingual families in our community. Our target audience is parents, guardians, relatives of students currently enrolled in the ESOL program, and/or anyone with a second language. Classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday from 5:30-7:30 p.m. with the goal of this program not only to teach English as a second language but also to increase parental participation in school activities and student academic progress.







Dale City - Green Ribbon Nominee Application and Narrative 2 26 24

Final Audit Report

2024-02-26

Created:	2024-02-26
By:	Terry Meyer (MEYERMT@pwcs.edu)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAu4-PmZrolbwsSu-5kOXVCBBeczQb_2Bq

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-  Document created by Terry Meyer (MEYERMT@pwcs.edu)
2024-02-26 - 5:58:38 PM GMT- IP address: 204.122.110.248
-  Document emailed to pwcssupt@pwcs.edu for signature
2024-02-26 - 6:00:00 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by pwcssupt@pwcs.edu
2024-02-26 - 6:05:16 PM GMT- IP address: 204.122.110.249
-  Signer pwcssupt@pwcs.edu entered name at signing as LaTanya D. McDade
2024-02-26 - 7:28:28 PM GMT- IP address: 174.216.178.35
-  Document e-signed by LaTanya D. McDade (pwcssupt@pwcs.edu)
Signature Date: 2024-02-26 - 7:28:30 PM GMT - Time Source: server- IP address: 174.216.178.35
-  Agreement completed.
2024-02-26 - 7:28:30 PM GMT