



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., Miss, 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.

Digitally signed by Brenda Wolf Smith
Date: 2023.12.11 15:10:07 -05'00'

(Principal's Signature)

Date:

Name of Superintendent:

(Specify: Ms., Miss, 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.

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., Miss, 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.

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: December 31, 2023

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.

Green Ribbon School Application

Waldorf School of Baltimore Summary Narrative, 2024

The Waldorf School of Baltimore (WSB) nurtures children from preschool through grade eight with a holistic approach to education that extends far beyond the conventional. For more than 50 years WSB school has distinguished itself with an unwavering commitment to nurturing not only the intellect but also the spirit and conscience of its students.

At the core of its educational philosophy is a profound emphasis on **sustainability and environmental education**. Far more than a mere curriculum choice, these principles are woven into the very fabric of the Waldorf experience, cultivating a profound awareness and appreciation for the interconnectedness of humanity and the natural world. In this dynamic learning environment, students at every age and stage of development not only acquire knowledge but also develop a deep-rooted sense of responsibility for the planet, fostering a generation of mindful individuals poised to shape a more sustainable future. For example:

- In our **Pre-Kindergarten** program, students spend over 60% of their day in our outdoor spaces and woodland classrooms immersing themselves in the natural world throughout all seasons. They tend to organic gardens, using the harvest for a daily community snack. Students participate in our robust composting program by disposing of food scraps in rolling compost barrels and assisting in the processing. The use of sustainable practices at the Waldorf School of Baltimore extends to the shared snack dining experience as well. In an effort to minimize environmental impact, the school employs wooden/clay dishes for meals and a strict no-disposables policy is enforced.
- In our **Kindergarten** program, we provide two distinct class options: a 100% all-season outdoor **Forest Kindergarten** and a traditional Kindergarten. Both classes prioritize nature exploration, incorporating regular nature hikes that often lead to nearby streams for observation. Students, in both settings, learn to identify local flora and fauna, with favorites including skinks, turtles, deer, and crawfish. Additionally, they are educated on responsible and safe foraging practices in nature. Our curriculum includes studies of native plants such as Paw Paw, autumn olives, violets, and Juneberries, providing opportunities for safe snacking alongside valuable learning experiences.

Waldorf School of Baltimore's exclusively outdoor **Forest Kindergarten**, Baltimore City's only, is one of our proudest achievements, uniquely positioning us as Baltimore's sole educational institution dedicated entirely to open-air, all-season learning. This pioneering class immerses young learners in the wonders of nature, providing an unparalleled outdoor classroom experience. The Forest Kindergarten not only fosters a

deep connection with the natural world but also cultivates essential life skills, resilience, and a profound sense of environmental stewardship.

- In **Grade One**, the exploration of nature takes on a formal structure as it evolves into its own dedicated subject class with a diverse and engaging curriculum. Students maintain weekly excursions for nature walks to the nearby stream. Our math classes often transition outdoors, where students actively participate in foraging for natural materials like twigs and acorns, which they incorporate as math manipulatives in their lessons. Additionally, students initiate recycling practices within the classroom, fostering an early commitment to environmental responsibility.
- In **Grade Two**, we build upon the practices and lessons introduced in the previous year, both in the woodlands and within the classroom. During main lesson blocks, students delve into the study of environmental heroes, featuring notable figures such as Kenya's Wangari Maathai and John Muir. This enriching curriculum not only expands their understanding of environmental stewardship but also inspires a sense of admiration for those who have made significant contributions to the planet's well-being. The class also raises painted lady butterflies allowing students to witness and understand the complete life cycle of these insects, from egg to larva (caterpillar), pupa (chrysalis), and finally, adult butterfly. This firsthand experience enhances their understanding of biology and life science.
- In the **Third-Grade** curriculum at WSB, students take on the care and responsibility of the community chickens. They actively participate in feeding, watering, cleaning the pen, releasing the chickens in the morning, and ensuring their safe return at night. Additionally, third graders are entrusted with the care of three garden beds, engaging in the entire process from planning and planting to harvesting.

A standout experience for the third grade is a transformative 5-night field trip to a biodynamic farm in upstate New York. During this immersive excursion, students partake in a variety of hands-on activities, from mucking stalls to gardening and even carding wool. This unique and enriching experience enhances their understanding of sustainable practices and fosters a deep connection to the natural world.

- In **Grade Four**, the day begins with a restorative and observational nature walk, setting a mindful tone for learning. The curriculum prominently features a multi-week study of local geography, with a specific focus on the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. As a highlight of the year, students embark on an overnight camping trip to historic St. Mary's, further deepening their understanding of the local environment and its historical significance. This immersive experience fosters a connection between classroom learning and real-world exploration, making education a dynamic and enriching journey.

- In **Grade Five**, students transition from nature studies to a more academic exploration with a focus on Botany. The curriculum involves hands-on experiences, such as growing mushrooms in the classroom. Students showcase their understanding through detailed drawings of plant life in their main lesson books. A unique aspect of the fifth-grade curriculum is collaboration with our school beekeeper, where students delve into the intricacies of beekeeping in a Langstroth hive. The significance of bees, the role of local pollinators, and the creation of native pollinator gardens are emphasized, providing a holistic and immersive education in the natural sciences.
- **Grade Six** students embark on an exploration of Astronomy, culminating in a multi-night camping trip dedicated to stargazing and identifying constellations. Additionally, sixth-graders take on the responsibility of organizing and maintaining the school's recycling program. This involves collecting bins from various classes and actively engaging in educating younger students about the intricacies of what can and cannot be placed in the recycling bins. Beyond classroom learning, Grade Six students actively contribute to the school community, fostering a sense of environmental responsibility and leadership.
- In **Grade Seven**, students delve into the fascinating world of natural dyes. They actively participate in tending and harvesting from the school's garden beds, using the produce to dye all the wool skeins for the entire school year, benefiting every grade. This immersive experience not only involves hands-on work but also educates students about the environmental impact of the fast fashion industry and introduces them to indigenous dyeing techniques.

Moreover, Grade Seven students engage in a meaningful civic service project. They take water samples from nearby water sources and analyze the health of the ecosystem, contributing to a broader understanding of environmental stewardship and fostering a sense of responsibility towards the local community.

- **Grade Eight** students embark on a comprehensive study of meteorology, taking their studies outdoors with daily scientific observations and data collection recorded in their weather logs. The curriculum, which includes a study of the climate crisis, encourages students to actively aid and appreciate with the natural world. A highlight of the academic year is a week-long camping excursion in Northern VA, providing students with immersive experiences such as kayaking, fire building, woodland navigation, and various other outdoor activities. This hands-on approach to education fosters a deep connection to nature and enhances their appreciation for the planet through real-world experiences.

The Waldorf School of Baltimore has consistently demonstrated its commitment to sustainability, earning **MAEO certification as a Green School** since 2008. In 2023, we proudly achieved our fourth and final award, attaining the prestigious status of "**Certified Sustainable.**"

WSB has a dedicated **Green Team** who play a pivotal role in enhancing the environmental health of our classrooms and campus. Among the team's notable contributions is the planting of over 100 native trees, a testament to our commitment to fostering biodiversity. Additionally, we successfully applied for and received a Chesapeake Bay Trust award grant, further supporting our efforts in environmental conservation as we remove invasive wisteria and replace with native tree's. Education is a cornerstone of our Green Team initiatives, with a focus on raising awareness about the threat of invasive species and empowering students to actively prevent their encroachment on natural habitats. With aid of this group more than 150 native trees and shrubs have been planted on campus, a master plan developed, two new fruit groves plants, seed exchange started, trails mapped and mulches, maple-syrup tapping class demonstrations performed, tree identifying classes lead, and so much more. In our commitment to community engagement and sustainability, we conduct an annual Earth Week free webinar in partnership with LifeBridge Health and Cylburn Arboretum. This initiative aims to foster meaningful and sustainable conversations within the greater Baltimore area, promoting environmental awareness and action.

As part of our ongoing commitment to sustainable practices, we take pride in hosting a **Monthly Mending Circle**. This initiative addresses the detrimental effects of throw-away culture and fast fashion by bringing teachers and parents together to repair or upcycle garments that would otherwise contribute to landfill waste. Through this circle, we not only reduce our ecological footprint but also impart valuable skills and values to our community. The Waldorf School of Baltimore is dedicated to creating a sustainable and environmentally conscious educational environment for our entire community.

The Waldorf School of Baltimore takes pride in offering the "**Forest Explorers**" **aftercare enrichment program**. This outdoor program encourages outdoor exploration, allowing children to engage in activities such as hiking, digging for and sculpting with natural clay, and collecting nature treasures. Through these experiences, participants bear witness to the profound beauty of the natural world, fostering not only a sense of wonder but also a lasting appreciation for the environment. The "Forest Explorers" program reflects our commitment to holistic and nature-inspired education.

The Waldorf School of Baltimore proudly holds recognition as a **certified wildlife habitat** and a certified **monarch butterfly waystation**. These designations underscore our commitment to creating and maintaining environments that support and sustain local wildlife, showcasing our dedication to ecological preservation and biodiversity.

Beyond these programs and achievements, the Waldorf School of Baltimore places a strong emphasis on the holistic wellness of the students under our care. In pursuit of this

commitment, we enforce guidelines regarding **wholesome**, packed-from-home lunches, prioritizing nutritious and balanced meals to support the overall well-being of our students. Sugared drinks, sweets and candy are not allowed in lunches. We ensure that every student has the opportunity to spend time outdoors each day, **with two separate recess** periods totaling 35 minutes per day augmenting our outdoor classroom teaching time. Additionally, classroom talking circles serve as a valuable tool in supporting the social and emotional health of our classes. These intentional and inclusive circles create a safe space for open dialogue, fostering a sense of community and emotional well-being among students. This comprehensive approach to wellness reflects our dedication to fostering not only environmental consciousness but also the physical and mental health of every student in our community.

The Waldorf School of Baltimore views our outdoor spaces as seamless extensions of our classrooms, enriching the learning experience. Our campus proudly **features two rain gardens, three native fruit tree groves, seven raised vegetable garden beds, a pollinator garden, a dye garden, an herb garden, a sensory garden, a chicken coop, and multiple outdoor gazebos/pavilions** designed to facilitate outdoor classroom instruction. These thoughtfully curated spaces not only provide students with unique learning environments but also promote a strong connection to nature, fostering a well-rounded and immersive educational experience. We believe that the outdoors offer valuable opportunities for exploration, discovery, and hands-on learning, integral to our holistic approach to education.

Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs

Our school community is dedicated to reducing its environmental impact, with a strong emphasis on sustainability. We take pride in implementing eco-friendly practices to create a greener and more energy-efficient learning environment.

One significant initiative involves the installation of energy-efficient LED lighting throughout the school, totaling 440 bulbs. This not only provides better and cleaner lighting but also significantly reduces (\$6,000) annual energy costs compared to traditional lighting. Additionally, classroom blinds are strategically used to control daylight and temperature.

Faculty members are actively committed to daily good practices, such as turning off lights, maintaining responsible thermostat settings, and unplugging electronics when not in use. They are also passionate about educating and inspiring students to embrace these habits both at school and at home.

During the summer months air conditioning is intentionally shut off in the majority the school building to minimize energy consumption and related costs.

In Tamarind Hall (gym addition) , the flooring choice was made thoughtfully to avoid wood, which would necessitate year-round air conditioning, thus reducing energy costs. The internal layout of classrooms maximizes south-facing orientation, aiding in natural light and heating

during cooler months. Monthly monitoring of utility bills fosters self-awareness, prompting continuous brainstorming for new ways to reduce energy usage.

The school exclusively utilizes environmentally friendly and durable copper pipes instead of plastic. All expansions, including Tamarind Hall, Two Bathrooms, One Office, and Forest K Locker-room, Classroom, have been constructed within the existing footprint, and they are equipped with top-performing insulation.

The use of double-paned windows in every classroom contributes to energy efficiency, using less energy compared to single-paned windows. These windows also open to the outdoors, allowing for fresh air circulation and reducing amount of time in the year these spaces must be heated/cooled.

The school carpool line strictly adheres to a no-idle zone policy, reducing our carbon footprint and encourages school community engagement by promoting a shared responsibility for environmental well-being. It fosters a sense of collective action and responsibility among parents, staff, and students.

Collectively, these measures result in reduced energy usage, translating to fewer greenhouse gas emissions and a more environmentally friendly school.

1.2

Emphasizing responsible transportation is a key aspect of our ethos. Situated adjacent to an urban neighborhood, we offer a tuition discount for families residing in that area who will be able to walk and from school.

The school actively advocates for carpooling, and our Admissions Director facilitates connections among families living in close proximity to one another in order to achieve this shared goal. Approximately 15% of our students/teachers walk, bike, or take public transportation to school. WSB provides , dedicated bike racks provided to support these sustainable commuting choices.

By way of an example in our emphasis of sustainable living skills, Grade Four students at WSB recently embraced the importance of public transportation this December. As part of their experiential learning, the students delighted in walking along the Jones Falls Bike Path to reach the light rail station. From there, they utilized public transportation to journey to the Baltimore School of the Arts for the annual Nutcracker Performance. This hands-on experience not only enriched their understanding of sustainable practices but also instilled a sense of responsibility towards eco-friendly commuting methods. This occurs in other grades throughout the year as field trips are planned.

1.3

To prioritize water conservation and erosion control, our school has undertaken various eco-friendly initiatives. A significant step involves the strategic planting of native trees on a steep slope, creating trails in the woodlands using branches and wood chips to divert activity from highly erodible soil. Together, the school collaborates with students, parents, and staff to implement erosion management best practices, such as restoring and mulching trails. This collaborative effort aims to slow and infiltrate runoff, with recent work showcasing significant progress.

To manage stormwater runoff effectively, a **grass swale** has been implemented to filter and slow runoff from the school driveway, playing fields, and a section of the public road before it drains into the combined sewer system. Calculations for stormwater runoff volumes during an average storm identified priority areas for management improvements, focusing on roof spaces and turf.

WSB is proud to have planted **two rain gardens** this year, yielding various ecological advantages. These gardens act as natural stormwater management systems, preventing flooding and diminishing runoff pollution. By filtering and purifying rainwater, they enhance overall water quality and safeguard aquatic ecosystems. The use of native Elderberry bushes in the rain garden **supports local biodiversity**, providing habitats and food for wildlife. Additionally, the vegetation stabilized the soil in a high traffic area of the campus, **curbing erosion, reducing carbon, and promoting soil health.**

Rain barrels have been strategically installed in multiple locations across the campus for watering newly planted trees and gardens.

Our commitment extends to water usage within the school community. Each student arrives with a **reusable water bottle**, and filtered water fountains are available for convenient refilling, eliminating the need for single-use water bottles on campus, totaling **12,379 bottles saved** and counting. Notably, the school completely avoids the use of single-use plastic throughout campus, opting for compostable cups and plates when needed for large full community events. In each classroom, **reusable** mugs and plates are provided for shared snacks or study breaks, including warm tea.

Ensuring the safety of our water supply, **annual testing** is conducted by the Maryland Department of Health to verify the absence of lead. This comprehensive approach reflects our commitment to sustainable practices, both in our physical surroundings and in our daily habits.

1.4

The Waldorf School of Baltimore is committed to reducing solid waste and is proud of its recycling rate. Recycling containers in every classroom prevent recyclable items from reaching landfills, contributing to an estimated annual recycling of over 4000 pounds. The Student

Council, comprising representatives from grades six to eight, educates elementary classes on effective recycling practices, emphasizing the school's initiative to reuse or repurpose *before* recycling.

Preschool and kindergarten students actively participate by composting food scraps, diverting 350 pounds of organic waste from landfills annually.

In Autumn, WSB ensures all fallen leaves diverted from landfills and are return to the woods providing natural mulch which helps to retain soil moisture and regulate soil temperature. This contributes to healthier and more resilient woodland and also enhances soil fertility, supporting the growth of plants and trees. This practice is encouraged by staff for families to take up at home as well.

The school responsibly manages hazardous materials, such as ink cartridges and batteries, as well as out of service computers and electronics by sending to state recycling facilities.

WSB's monthly "**Mending Circle**," is a school-wide green whereby movement, parents and community members gather to mend clothes, promoting sustainability and reducing textile waste. Mending clothes rather than discarding them is of paramount importance due to its positive impact on both individuals and the environment. Embracing the practice of repairing garments contributes significantly to environmental sustainability by reducing the demand for new clothing production, consequently minimizing the environmental footprint associated with the fashion industry. This approach plays a crucial role in waste reduction, preventing textiles from accumulating in landfills and is a powerful Additionally, mending clothes conserves valuable natural resources such as water, energy, and raw materials, fostering a more responsible and resource-efficient fashion consumption model. At WSB we see the act of mending as a powerful educational tool further shaping students into environmentally aware and socially responsible individuals.

This dedication extends to festivals and events where repurposed/recycled/compostable materials are prioritized, fostering a holistic approach to environmental consciousness and sustainability within the school community.

Pillar II: Improved Health and Wellness

By adopting a comprehensive approach that addresses physical, environmental, and mental well-being, WSB creates an environment that fosters health and wellness for everyone in the community.

The Waldorf School of Baltimore places a central focus on outdoor learning, complemented by carefully curated indoor elements. Noteworthy recent upgrades include elevating HVAC air filter ratings to MERV 10, comparable to HEPA filters, ensuring enhanced indoor air quality. Ur

director of Facilities implements regular maintenance and cleaning of air ducts and ventilation systems.

Water filters, along with a water bottle filling station, have been implemented in preschool and kindergarten classrooms to minimize disposable waste. A commitment to sustainability extends to cleaning practices, utilizing Green Guard certified chemicals, and annual water testing ensures adherence to state lead levels. The Building and Grounds Committee, composed of board members, conducts bi-annual inspections for necessary enhancements. Led by an arborist, an annual woodland audit guarantees the health of school woodlands and surrounding grounds.

Prioritizing community health and wellness, full faculty and staff undergoes comprehensive annual training, including First Aid/CPR certification, online safety training via Vector Training, and continuous supervision by a delegating nurse. All staff receives emergency medication administration training to ensure preparedness for emergencies and is aware of each student's allergies. Training and monthly fire and safety drills ensure proper safety protocols and emergency preparedness. A dedicated emergency planning committee meets biweekly to review protocols and make continuous improvements.

The school enforces both a no-smoking and a no-idle policy, prioritizing the health and well-being of its community.

To ensure the health and well-being of all, the Waldorf School of Baltimore abstains from the use of any herbicides and pesticides. This commitment reflects a dedication to creating a safe and sustainable environment for students, staff, and faculty. By refraining from herbicides and pesticides, the school minimizes exposure to harmful chemicals, aligning with the broader philosophy of fostering a nurturing and natural learning environment.

Waldorf is committed to the use of eco-friendly materials in both construction projects and the selection of classroom supplies, aligning with its overarching philosophy of sustainability and environmental consciousness.

The intentional choice of materials aligns with the Waldorf educational philosophy, emphasizing holistic development and a deep connection to nature. The use of wooden, silk, and cotton toys, along with beeswax crayons and candles, and non-toxic watercolor paints, serves several purposes. By using materials derived from nature, Waldorf schools aim to instill an appreciation for the natural world. Wooden toys, for example, connect children to the organic origins of the materials, fostering a sense of respect and environmental awareness. Wooden toys, in particular, are known for their durability and longevity. Choosing sustainable materials supports responsible sourcing practices, contributing to the overall ecological sustainability of the educational materials. Fiber Arts class (grades 1-8) exclusively employs wool, dyed with natural plants in the curriculum.

Another notable aspect is the strategic placement of over 60 indoor plants throughout the school premises. These plants serve a dual purpose, not only adding aesthetic appeal to the learning spaces but also significantly enhancing indoor air quality. These plants serve a dual purpose, not only adding aesthetic appeal to the learning spaces but also significantly enhancing indoor air quality.

Uniquely, Waldorf schools incorporate a unique and cherished tradition known as the "Nature Table" to bridge the gap between the indoors and the natural world. This special feature serves as a dynamic display, changing with the seasons, and illustrates the cyclical rhythms of nature. It allows students to observe and appreciate the unique characteristics, colors, and elements associated with each time of year.

2.2

The Waldorf School's integrated environmental health program is designed to create a comprehensive and sustainable approach to well-being within the school community. Emphasizing outdoor learning, the curriculum incorporates regular outdoor classes, nature walks, and activities that deepen students' connection with the environment. In the *Children's Garden*, comprising preschool and kindergarten, students spend between 75% and 100% of their school day outdoors, utilizing dedicated outdoor classrooms and play spaces in all seasons and weather conditions. WSB recognizes the importance of exposing students to various weather conditions, allowing them to engage with nature regardless of rain, sunshine, snow, or wind. This intentional exposure helps build resilience as children learn to adapt and appreciate the natural world in all its facets. Elementary and middle school students engage in a minimum of 35 minutes of unstructured outdoor free play each day, divided into morning and afternoon recess periods. Snack and lunch periods are often enjoyed outdoors as well. Outdoor areas are designed with exclusively natural elements, fostering unstructured outdoor play for physical health and a connection to nature.

The indoor environment at WSB prioritizes health with non-toxic materials, good air quality, and sustainable maintenance practices. The school enforces no-smoking and no-idle policies to ensure clean air quality and reduce emissions. Sustainable practices are woven into daily operations, encompassing energy efficiency, waste reduction, and environmentally conscious procurement.

Healthy nutrition practices are promoted in our school newsletter and bi-weekly teacher/parent communications, potentially incorporating organic and locally sourced foods. Waldorf school is happy to provide a service to the school and surrounding community by being a CSA drop-off site through Lancaster Farms Co-Op, bringing local organic produce, eggs and breads to our front door.

Snacks in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten are made from scratch daily with the students. Engaging young children in the process of making organic snacks, such as vegetable soup, quinoa, bread rolls, rice and beans, offers a rich and multifaceted learning experience. Beyond

the tangible culinary skills they develop, children gain an educational understanding of the origins and nutritional benefits of different ingredients. Importantly, this hands-on involvement promotes a genuine connection to real, whole foods, imparting an appreciation for unprocessed, natural ingredients. As children actively participate in the selection of nutrient-rich components, they are empowered to make healthier food choices.

The curriculum includes environmental education, teaching students about ecological systems, sustainability, and environmental stewardship. To further enhance outdoor experiences, the school offers the "Forest Explorers" extended school-day program for students aged 3 years and above, providing additional time for immersion in woodlands and reaping the health benefits of forest bathing and nature play from 3 pm to 6 pm.

At WSB each grade commences the day with a focus on movement, tailoring the activities to the developmental stages of the students. For Grades 1-3, this entails a movement-rich morning circle that incorporates various activities such as bean bags, clapping games, and more. This engaging and interactive start to the day not only promotes physical activity but also cultivates a sense of rhythm and coordination.

As students progress to the upper school, the morning routine evolves into a rejuvenating outdoor walk lasting 15 minutes. This intentional practice serves to set a positive tone for the day, providing a refreshing start that aligns with Waldorf's holistic approach to education. The outdoor walk not only contributes to physical well-being but also recognizes the importance of connecting with nature as a grounding and invigorating element before diving into the day's learning activities.

Kindergarten through 8th grades engage in a unique 2x week Movement class named Eurythmy, exclusive to Waldorf Education. This class encourages movement filled with meaning, engaging the child's feeling life, fostering intelligence through will activity. The benefits include improved concentration, coordination, posture, spatial awareness, and social relations.

At the Waldorf School of Baltimore, a deliberate choice is made to engage students in cooperative "games" exclusively for Grades 1-3, reserving competitive activities for Grades four and above. This intentional approach aligns with the developmental philosophy of Waldorf education, recognizing the unique needs and stages of child development. For children in the early grades (1-3), cooperative games emphasize collaboration, teamwork, and the development of social skills. These activities focus on building a sense of community, fostering empathy, and instilling a spirit of cooperation rather than competition. At this stage, the emphasis is on the joy of play, shared experiences, and the cultivation of a supportive and inclusive environment. Delaying the introduction of competitive elements until Grades four and above allows students to mature emotionally and socially before engaging in more competitive activities. This approach is in harmony with Waldorf's holistic educational philosophy, which seeks to address the intellectual, emotional, and social aspects of a child's development.

WSB also has a no-screen policy for young students, prioritizing their holistic development, especially in the crucial early childhood and elementary years. This policy yields significant social and emotional benefits by fostering healthy social interactions. Without the distraction of screens, students engage more in face-to-face communication, cultivating essential social skills such as empathy and cooperation. The absence of screens encourages imaginative play, nurturing creativity and fostering emotional intelligence. It supports the development of sustained attention and focus, enhancing emotional regulation. By emphasizing real-world experiences over virtual ones, WSB aims to promote a balanced lifestyle, encouraging students to connect with their immediate surroundings and engage in diverse activities. This intentional approach aims to cultivate a socially aware, emotionally resilient, and well-rounded individual, aligning with the broader Waldorf philosophy of holistic education.

For older students in our Middle School we have implemented a distinctive three-part holistic mental health program tailored to support the well-being of students in grades 6th, 7th, and 8th. This comprehensive approach is designed to furnish students with valuable tools to navigate the challenges of their expanding world successfully. The program is structured into three interconnected parts:

****Part 1: Managing Stress and Worry****

In the first segment of our program, we focus on equipping students with effective strategies for managing stress and worry. Recognizing the increasing demands and pressures they face, we provide practical tools to foster resilience and emotional well-being. Through mindfulness techniques, relaxation exercises, and open dialogues, we aim to empower students in handling stressors in a healthy manner.

****Part 2: How Relationships Inform our Choices****

The second component centers around the profound impact of relationships on our choices. Acknowledging the significance of social dynamics during adolescence, we delve into the ways in which relationships shape decision-making. Discussions and activities explore the importance of empathy, communication skills, and cultivating healthy connections to navigate the complexities of interpersonal relationships.

****Part 3: Cyber Civics****

In the third part of our program, we address the ever-evolving digital landscape and its influence on students' lives. Cyber Civics encompasses essential skills for responsible and ethical online behavior. Students engage in discussions on internet safety, digital citizenship, and critical thinking in the digital age. The goal is to empower them to navigate the virtual world with discernment, integrity, and a sense of responsibility.

Through this holistic three-part initiative, we aim to support our students not only academically but also emotionally and socially, fostering a well-rounded and resilient foundation for their continued growth and development.

Pillar III

3.1 & 3.2

Every summer, the Waldorf School of Baltimore opens its doors to welcome the Environmental Resources and Forest Awareness Network (ERFAN) to host their Environmental Educators Course on our campus. This collaborative effort reflects our commitment to ongoing professional development for our staff. Each year, 1-2 members of our dedicated staff participate in this training program, enriching their knowledge and skills in environmental education. By hosting ERFAN's program, we contribute to the broader community's environmental awareness initiatives and ensure that our educators are well-equipped to integrate the latest insights and practices into our curriculum.

At the Waldorf School of Baltimore, a commitment to interdisciplinary learning is woven into the fabric of the curriculum, ensuring that students of every age and stage explore the key relationships between dynamic environmental energy and human systems. This approach is thoughtfully tailored to each student's stage of development, acknowledging the evolving capacities of learners. From the earliest ages (2.5-4 years old), students engage in age-appropriate activities that cultivate an awareness of the interdependence between environmental factors and human systems. As students' progress through different stages of development, the curriculum adapts, delving deeper into the intricate connections between environmental dynamics and human interactions. This intentional integration of interdisciplinary learning not only imparts knowledge about the complex relationships between humans and their environment but also nurtures a sense of responsibility and ecological consciousness, aligning with the holistic educational philosophy at the heart of Waldorf education.

Examples of this across the grades includes:

Preschool and Kindergarten students cultivate an awareness of the interdependence between environmental factors and human systems in a number of ways. Throughout all seasons, these young learners immerse themselves in nature, fostering a deep connection to the environment. This experiential approach includes activities such as:

1. **Exploration in All Seasons:** Preschoolers spend dedicated time outdoors in every season, allowing them to witness and experience the changes in the natural world. Whether observing blossoming flowers in spring, playing in the warmth of summer, jumping in piles of leaves in fall, or exploring snow-covered landscapes in winter, each season offers unique lessons about the environment.
2. **Composting Food Scraps:** Instilling a sense of responsibility for the environment, preschool students participate in composting food scraps. This hands-on activity not

only teaches them about the natural cycle of decomposition but also imparts the importance of reducing waste and contributing to a healthier planet.

3. **Respectful Tree Climbing:** Preschoolers learn to climb trees but are guided to choose only those strong enough to support their weight. This activity not only enhances motor skills but also instills a sense of respect for the natural world by ensuring minimal impact on the trees themselves.
4. **Do No Harm to Animal Habitats:** Through gentle guidance and awareness-building activities, preschool students learn the importance of respecting animal habitats. They are encouraged to observe wildlife without causing disturbance, fostering a sense of empathy and understanding for the creatures that share their outdoor spaces.
5. **Leave No Trace Policy:** Preschoolers adopt a "Leave No Trace" policy, learning the principles of responsible outdoor behavior. This includes cleaning up after activities, being mindful of the impact on the environment, and leaving outdoor spaces as they found them.
6. Additionally, preschool/K students actively contribute to environmental awareness by engaging in the **planting of native pollinators plants**, such as milkweed and other flowers that attract bees and butterflies. This hands-on experience teaches young learners about the crucial role pollinators play in ecosystems and the importance of supporting these essential creatures. Preschoolers also participate in monarch butterfly observation, witnessing the fascinating lifecycle of these butterflies and gaining insights into the interconnectedness of plant and animal life.

First Grade:

Nature focused study of seasons & life cycles are taught w/ nature hikes & observation. In a collaborative civic minded effort with the Maryland Forestry Board and Gunpowder Reserve, First Grade students at WSB participated in a **civic-minded** fledging program aimed at cultivating stronger strains of native seeds within the state. This initiative aligns with our commitment to environmental stewardship and hands-on learning experiences. Notably, our school recently earned the prestigious **MD Forestry Board Champion Tree certification**, highlighting the "Grandfather Tree" as the largest White Oak in Baltimore city. To contribute to this conservation effort, students took on the responsibility of collecting seeds directly from the Grandfather Oak. During this process, they examined each seed for viability, employing a keen eye to identify any holes that might indicate the presence of bugs or rot. This impactful project not only enriches the students' understanding of ecology but also actively contributes to the preservation and propagation of native tree species in the state.

Second Grade

In a heartfelt commitment to environmental stewardship, second-grade students at Waldorf School actively care for the tree they planted on Earth Day. Demonstrating a hands-on approach to conservation, they protect the tree from an encroaching wisteria patch, repurposing the clipped vines for eco-friendly art projects. Creative initiatives include crafting lantern handles and holiday wreaths, showcasing the seamless integration of sustainability and artistic expression. Additionally, grade two students engage in weekly nature walks, immersing themselves in the outdoors, fostering a deep connection with the natural world. Through journaling, they document their observations and reflections, enriching their understanding of ecology and nurturing a lifelong appreciation for the environment.

Grade Three

The third grade curriculum at Waldorf School is deeply infused with vibrant interdisciplinary environmental learning. One compelling example is the active caretaking of our schools vegetable garden (using both modern and native American practices studied in class) , this includes the responsible utilization of the school's compost. Grade Three is also the caretaking class our community chickens. This experience provides a direct and tangible connection to the responsibility humans have in order to keep the chickens safe and health so that humans may enjoy the nourishment from the eggs the chickens produce. Through this holistic approach, students witness the food cycle firsthand, reinforcing the understanding that food doesn't simply appear in grocery stores but involves a nuanced and interconnected process that demands care and stewardship at every stage.

A capstone Third Grade annual experience includes a week-long experience of living and working on a biodynamic farm, Hawthorn Valley. This trip provides invaluable lessons in understanding the intricate relationships between humans, energy, and the environment. Students witness firsthand the dynamic interplay of ecological systems and the impact of sustainable farming practices on the surrounding environment. Through hands-on activities such as harvesting, planting, mucking horse stalls, cleaning coops, collecting eggs, threshing grain, grinding grains, baking bread, carding and knitting with wool from farm sheep, individuals gain a profound appreciation for the interconnectedness of human activities, energy usage, and the overall well-being of the environment. This experiential learning opportunity aligns with the principles of biodynamic farming, developed by the insights of Rudolf Steiner, who also founded the first Waldorf School, emphasizing holistic approaches that consider the broader ecological context in which we live and work.

Grade Four:

WSB's s fourth-grade curriculum delves into Local Geography, Local History, and the rich tapestry of Native American tribes and myths. This comprehensive exploration extends beyond

traditional geographical and historical studies to encompass "cultural geography." Students gain a nuanced understanding of how human beings shape and are shaped by their environment. A particular focus is directed towards the Chesapeake Bay watershed, allowing students to appreciate the intricate connections between human activities and the health of this vital ecosystem.

The culmination of Waldorf School's fourth-grade curriculum in Local Geography, Local History, and Native American studies is marked by a memorable camping trip to historic St. Mary's City. This experiential journey provides students with a hands-on opportunity to immerse themselves in the living history of the region. By spending time in this historically significant location, students deepen their understanding of the cultural and environmental influences that have shaped the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This camping trip not only reinforces classroom learning but also allows students to forge a personal connection with the landscapes and narratives they have explored academically, fostering a profound appreciation for the rich heritage and ecological significance of the region.

Grade Five:

In the fifth grade at Waldorf School, students embark on a comprehensive exploration of botany, delving into the intricate world of seeds, trees, and various plant life across all stages with meticulous detail. The curriculum extends to the study of animal environmental adaptation, fostering a holistic understanding of ecosystems. In a unique and hands-on integration, fifth-grade students are entrusted with learning the **basics of beekeeping** from our school beekeeper, who tends the school's bee population in a Lansgroth hive. Come spring, students actively participate in the honey collection process, exemplifying the interconnectedness between our food sources and the responsible care of the environment and animals. This experiential learning opportunity underscores the vital role of bees in global food production, prompting students to explore and brainstorm solutions to address the decline in bee populations, thereby deepening their appreciation for environmental sustainability.

Grade Six:

Sixth-grade students at Waldorf School lead the school-wide recycling program, showcasing their commitment to environmental civic responsibility and sustainability. This hands-on initiative empowers students to actively contribute to waste reduction and promotes a culture of eco-consciousness within the school community. In their astronomy block, sixth-grade students travel north for a camping trip, to participate in stargazing. The need to travel leads to the study of light pollution, deepening the classes' understanding of yet another human impact on the environment. This focused exploration allows students to grasp the consequences of excessive artificial light on the natural world such as affect the migration patterns of birds, the nesting habits of sea turtles, and the foraging behavior of nocturnal animals. They also see the waste of inefficient/unnecessary energy use. By gaining insights into light pollution, students

develop a heightened awareness of the broader environmental effects of human activities, and brainstorm solutions.

Grade Seven:

In the seventh grade at Waldorf School, students take on the responsibility of dyeing all the wool that the school will use for the year. This engaging and hands-on project involves the cultivation of native dye plants, the extraction of vibrant colors from these plants, and the actual dyeing of wool. Through this process, students gain a profound understanding of the intricacies involved in natural dyeing methods. The curriculum also incorporates a study of local Native American dye practices, providing cultural context to their hands-on experience.

Furthermore, the harmful impacts of synthetic dyes and fast fashion are critically discussed, allowing students to recognize the environmental consequences of conventional textile practices. This discussion serves as a platform for brainstorming more environmentally friendly solutions, encouraging students to think creatively about sustainable alternatives and fostering a sense of responsibility towards ethical and eco-conscious choices in their daily lives.

This seventh grade class curriculum includes a civic-minded project, visiting nearby streams to assess water health. This initiative not only deepens students' understanding of ecological systems but also fosters a sense of responsibility and connection to the local environment. Through water testing, students gain practical experience in assessing the health of aquatic ecosystems and learn to recognize animal life in the stream as correlating with testing health.

Grade Eight

In the eighth grade students delve into the study of meteorology, engaging in hands-on activities that involve logging weather patterns and making correlations. This immersive exploration allows students to develop a comprehensive understanding of atmospheric phenomena and the factors influencing weather.

As part of this curriculum block, eighth-grade students also explore the critical issue of global warming. This topic provides an opportunity for students to connect their scientific knowledge with real-world environmental challenges. By examining the impacts of climate change and exploring potential solutions, students deepen their holistic perspective on the interconnectedness of human activities and the health of the planet.

As part of their Language Arts curriculum, students at Waldorf School engage with literature that prompts thoughtful exploration of ecological and ethical themes. One such text is "The Omnivore's Dilemma." This book, written by Michael Pollan, delves into the complex choices surrounding food and agriculture, encouraging students to critically examine the impact of their dietary decisions on the environment and personal well-being.

By incorporating "The Omnivore's Dilemma" into the curriculum, Waldorf School aims to stimulate discussions on sustainable living, responsible consumption, and the interconnectedness of human choices with broader ecological systems. T

In the culminating field trip for eighth graders at Waldorf School, students experience a profound connection with the beauty of nature. This immersive journey takes them to the Living Earth in Virginia, where they engage in activities such as hiking, kayaking, and building fires. The trip is designed to provide students with hands-on experiences in the natural world, fostering a deep appreciation for the environment and reinforcing the ecological principles they have studied throughout their Waldorf education.

All Ages:

In a school-wide showcase of environmental stewardship, Waldorf School of Baltimore celebrates Earth Day with a collective effort from students across all grades. On this special occasion, students actively participate in a day of tree planting (for grades K-8) and/or pollinator seed bomb making (for pre-kindergarten). This annual event not only aligns with the school's commitment to environmental consciousness but also serves as a powerful expression of civic engagement.

Student Council:

The Student Council at the Waldorf School of Baltimore actively engages in various green initiatives, addressing environmental concerns in the school and broader community. One recent project focused on raising awareness about the threat of the invasive Lantern fly. The students took a proactive approach by creating informative posters that detailed the identification of Lantern flies throughout their entire lifecycle. These posters were distributed across the school and parent community, aiming to educate and encourage community members to identify and remove the invasive species when encountered. This initiative reflects the student council's commitment to environmental stewardship and fostering a sense of responsibility for the local ecosystem.

3.3

WSB provides a strong foundation in STEM subjects while maintaining its core values of experiential learning, nature connection, and a mindful approach to technology.

The integration of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) in a slow-tech Waldorf approach to education emphasizes a balanced and holistic learning experience. Examples of how STEM coexist within the principles of Waldorf education at WSB include:

1. **Hands-On Exploration:** Waldorf education places a strong emphasis on hands-on, experiential learning. In STEM, this translates to practical experiments, projects, and activities that allow students to directly engage with scientific principles, mathematical concepts, and engineering challenges. A specific example includes our **eighth-grade** STEM-integrated project understanding exponents in the context of population growth and population biology. In this project, students delve into the dynamics of how populations within ecosystems undergo growth, decline, and interactions with other

species and their respective ecological niches. Mathematical Concepts (STEM - Mathematics involves the application of mathematical concepts, specifically exponents, to model and understand population growth patterns. Students use mathematical equations to simulate and predict changes in population sizes over time. Biological Understanding (STEM - Biology): Students study the factors influencing population growth, such as birth rates, death rates, and interactions with other species. This interdisciplinary approach bridges mathematical abstraction with real-world biological phenomena. Scientific Inquiry (STEM - Science): Scientific inquiry is a fundamental aspect of the project. 8th graders gather data, formulate hypotheses, and conduct experiments to test their mathematical models against observed ecological patterns.

2. **Nature-Based Learning:** Waldorf's connection with nature aligns well with STEM subjects. With ample time spent outdoors students explore ecosystems, observe plants and animals, and ask questions about the natural world. This fosters curiosity and the scientific method. In their "play" students are independently building structures with natural materials and creating simple tools from found objects – all of which enhance engineering skills. Nature naturally integrates STEM subjects. For instance, our comprehensive curriculum studies forest ecosystem involves biology (flora and fauna), chemistry (soil composition), physics (light and sound dynamics), and even technology (using digital tools for data collection).
3. **Problem-Solving in Real Contexts:** Engineering (E), Mathematics (M): Nature presents real-world challenges that require creative problem-solving. In **third grade** as part of their unit of shelters of the world, the class actually goes into the woods to designing a shelter apply engineering principles and mathematical concepts in authentic contexts.
4. **Interdisciplinary Approach:** STEM subjects are seamlessly woven into an interdisciplinary curriculum. Rather than isolating science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, Waldorf education integrates them with other subjects, fostering a holistic understanding of their interconnectedness. Examples include engineering a catapult in **7th grade** as part of a study on the Renaissance, or in **a 7th grade** recent Aztec study where they enjoyed an integrated STEAM Activity, creating their own Mesoamerican clay calendar, complete with a made-up code of symbols and a hidden message for their classmates to crack using their own unique A-Z key.
5. **Project-Based Learning:** Both Waldorf education and STEM advocate for project-based learning. Students can work on extended projects that involve research, experimentation, and the application of STEM principles. **For example**, third grade recently planned, designed and built the school's chicken coop. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of engineering concepts.