



School Nominee Presentation Form

ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS

School and District's Certifications

The signatures of the school principal and district superintendent (or equivalents) on the next page certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of their knowledge. *In no case is a private school required to make any certification with regard to the public school district in which it is located.*

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades early learning to 12.
2. The school has been evaluated and selected from among schools within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
3. Neither the nominated public school nor its public school district is refusing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district wide compliance review. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is not subject to the jurisdiction of OCR. The nominated DoDEA schools, however, are subject to and in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements to comply with Federal civil rights laws.
4. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the public school district concluding that the nominated public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.
5. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
6. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the public school or public school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or public school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.
7. The school meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.
8. The school or its district has in place and is willing to provide a link to or a copy of a non-discrimination policy, upon request. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a nomination and/or rescind an award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

Name of Principal:

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

Official School Name:

(As it should appear on an award)

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space*

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

DocuSigned by:

35DE7177A2A14AB...

Date:

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent:

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



District Name:

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

833BE6A5168149F...
(Superintendent's Signature)

Date:

Nominating Authority's Certifications

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

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

Name of Nominating Agency:

Name of Nominating Authority:

(Specify: Ms., Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.

A54A8C841ABC47C...
(Nominating Authority's Signature)

Date:

SUBMISSION

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

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509

Expiration Date: October 31, 2026

Public Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1860-0509. Note: Please do not return the completed ED-Green Ribbon Schools application to this address.

Nominee Information

School, District, or Postsecondary Institution Name: **Park Forest Middle Creative Sciences & Arts Magnet**

Category of Nomination (School, District, or Postsecondary): **School**

Address: **3760 Aletha Drive** City: **Baton Rouge** State: **LA** Zip: **70814**

Twitter: Facebook: **www.facebook.com/pfmmagnet**

Top official: Title (Mr./Ms./Mrs./ Dr.): **Dr.** First Name: **Curtis** Last Name: **Walker**

Position/Role (Principal/ Superintendent/ President): **Principal** E mail: **cwalker@ebschools.org**

Phone: **225-275-6650**

Lead Applicant (if different) Title (Mr./Ms./Mrs./ Dr.): **Ms.** First Name: **Courtney** Last Name: **Holden**

Position/Role (Teacher/ Sustainability Director/ Facilities Director): **Magnet Coordinator** Email:

cholden@ebschools.org Phone: **225-275-6650**

Check all that apply:

- | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|
| Early Learning | Charter | Community College |
| Elementary | Magnet | Career and Technical |
| Middle | Non-Public | Urban |
| High | Two-Year | Rural |
| Public | Four-Year | Suburban |

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

Pell Recipients:	Special Education: 15%
Free and Reduced-Price Lunch: 100%	Graduation Rate:
Minority: 474	Attendance Rate:
Limited English Proficient: 15%	

Provide the following:

Total Enrolled: **474** Number of Schools: **1** Buildings: **3** Campuses: **1**

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

Park Forest Middle Creative Sciences & Arts Magnet is a Title I school where a STEAM Lab and Outdoor Learning Classroom utilizes project-based learning to incorporate STEAM-based lessons to engage students in the cross-curricular thematic integration of minimizing our carbon footprint. To minimize our carbon footprint, students are exposed to different types of gardening, from the traditional raised garden bed to the use of aquatic life to fertilize the vegetation through aquaponics. The vegetables chosen for the garden beds are chosen based on how well the plant type will thrive during the season of the semester. The choices are also directly connected to standards and important concepts for student learning.

Through the USDA, all students receive a free, nutritious lunch as well fresh fruit and vegetable snacks. The Agriculture Department of Southern University and A&M College has partnered with Park Forest Middle's Environmental Science classes to host gardening and agriculture workshops to apply authentic, agricultural-based content as the context to teach core curriculum concepts in science, social studies, language arts, and engineering. Additionally, the Louisiana State University School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences (SPSS) has engaged in teaching extension activities in the areas of botany, agronomy, environmental management, horticulture and weed science. The entire magnet staff attends professional development training, workshops, and conferences throughout the year to broaden teachers' perspectives about eco-friendly project-based learning.

The NEED Project is another curriculum source that is providing the students of Park Forest with project-based learning opportunities. At least one teacher from each grade level has attended a NEED (National Energy Education Development) Project professional development session so those teachers can not only educate, but also energize, and bring that energy into their classrooms. In addition to the NEED Project, Park Forest Middle teachers who were awarded placement in the Building Environmental and Educational Technology Competence and Leadership Among Educators: An Exploration in Virtual Reality Professional Development (BEE-Tech) Fellowship and Research Program, have also attended professional developments and workshops with the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, & Restoration Act (CWPPRA), to utilize their WaterMarks360 curriculum. The WaterMark360 curriculum is a multifaceted project intended to teach people of all ages about Louisiana's wetlands and restoration efforts by virtually exploring different coastal habitats. In addition to self-navigated 360° video hotspots and

informational videos, this project also includes resource materials and several STEM experiments in which students will explore concepts like wetland formation and erosion, as well as impacts of terrace construction, vegetative plantings and dune fences.

The Global Geospatial Institute provided our students with monthly Geographical Information Systems (GIS) meetings, which allowed students to take part in lessons and activities using various technologies to demonstrate how the coastal regions of Louisiana are affected by various factors from climate, water levels, and natural disasters.

The Entergy Solutions School Kit Program worked with Park Forest Middle to enhance energy-efficient lessons and activities. The lesson plans are designed for middle-school students and focus on sources of energy and electricity, how electricity is created, and how students can help their families save money by reducing electricity use. Students who participated were provided with energy-efficiency kits to install in their homes with an adult's assistance. The energy-efficient kits included: LED light bulbs, water-saving showerheads, water-saving aerators, and a shower flow and faucet meter bag.

To further provide awareness to the multifaceted opportunities of not only being involved in a STEAM program, but also an energy and green conscious program, Park Forest Middle will begin to have workshops hosted by the local non-profit organization, LA Shift, three (3) days each month for the duration of the school year. LA Shift will host workshops on an array of topics which include, but not limited to environmental science, Agri-science, and engineering. The LA Shift organization has expressed extreme interest in the areas of horticulture and assisting our core content teachers with cross curricular activities using the garden and various outdoor areas.

Over the course of the past seven school years, Park Forest Middle has been able to reduce its overall energy consumption. Due to the massive flooding of the East Baton Rouge Parish and surrounding parishes in 2016, Park Forest Middle was renovated and now features various energy and cost saving features such as, LED and motion sensor lights in every classroom and restroom, motion sensor faucets, programmable thermostats, increased insulation, and water bottle filling stations. Students and staff worked with community partners to revitalize the landscaping of the school, and to maintain the beautification of the outdoor gardens and greenhouse maintenance. Community partners such as Clegg's Nursery and Louisiana Nursery, help to educate students and families about how to conserve energy through simple actions that protect the environment and save families on electricity costs, and provided Park Forest Middle with plants, herbs, and durable, weather-resistant materials for the upkeep and

maintenance of the Outdoor Learning Classroom Greenhouse. The Outdoor Learning Classroom is the focal point of the exterior of our campus. In addition to the newly reconstructed greenhouse, it includes six (6) raised beds for vegetation and gardening, a newly installed irrigation system for efficient and effective scheduled watering, a composting station, and outdoor dining areas, all used by the Park Forest Middle faculty, staff, and students.

Pillar 1: Efforts to Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs

Introduction:

Park Forest Middle takes pride in its unwavering commitment to sustainability, evident through a multi-faceted approach aimed at reducing environmental impact and costs. This narrative details our comprehensive initiatives across various domains, including greenhouse gas emissions reduction, water quality improvement and conservation, waste reduction, and the promotion of alternative transportation methods. Supported by compelling data, our efforts exemplify a steadfast dedication to creating a greener and more efficient educational institution.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction:

Our institution has devised a comprehensive and forward-looking strategy to bolster energy efficiency and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. As part of our upcoming initiatives over the next two years, we are planning the installation of solar panels on our rooftops, a move anticipated to substantially diversify our energy portfolio, constituting an estimated 30% of our total energy consumption. This strategic approach aligns with our commitment to adopting sustainable practices and fortifies our trajectory towards a greener and more environmentally responsible future.

Beyond the plan of installing solar panels on our rooftops, we have strategically focused on electricity conservation within our buildings and classrooms, especially during periods of reduced activity like holiday breaks and weekends. To achieve this, we've integrated curriculum materials from the National Energy Education Development (NEED) program, a valuable resource that allows us to not only calculate energy outputs but also devise and implement reduction practices. This pedagogical approach extends beyond the traditional classroom setting, fostering a culture of energy conservation that permeates our institution.

Moreover, we've embraced innovative practices to instill principles of energy efficiency, conservation, and sustainability into our educational framework. Our commitment is exemplified through the installation of a greenhouse, serving as an experiential learning environment where students can witness firsthand the application of

energy-efficient technologies in plant cultivation. Additionally, we've integrated aquaponics into our curriculum, offering a unique and interactive platform that not only teaches the intricacies of sustainable agriculture but also underscores the importance of energy-conscious practices.

Furthermore, our school garden has become a focal point for hands-on learning about energy efficiency. Students actively participate in the cultivation of produce, gaining insights into sustainable agricultural practices and the energy inputs required for food production. This experiential learning extends beyond theoretical knowledge, providing students with tangible examples of how their choices and actions impact the environment.

By weaving these diverse initiatives into our curriculum, we aim to create a holistic educational experience that goes beyond the mere adoption of energy-efficient technologies. Our approach is centered on cultivating a profound understanding of responsible resource management and inspiring students to become stewards of a sustainable future. In doing so, we firmly believe that we are not only reducing our carbon footprint but also nurturing a generation of environmentally conscious individuals equipped to address the challenges of tomorrow.

Water Quality, Efficiency, and Conservation:

Recognizing the importance of water conservation and quality improvement, Park Forest Middle has implemented measures to reduce water usage and enhance water quality. Low-flow fixtures have been installed in all restrooms, and garden irrigation systems have been upgraded to smart technologies that adjust watering schedules based on weather conditions. These initiatives have led to a 20% reduction in water consumption and contributed to the preservation of local water resources. Regular water quality testing ensures that our commitment to maintaining high water standards is upheld. As a continuation of this aspect, students engaged in the Aquaponics program receive instruction on water quality, undertaking routine water quality tests to verify that the water sources maintain optimal conditions.

Waste Reduction:

In pursuit of waste reduction objectives, Park Forest Middle has successfully implemented an extensive waste management program, giving precedence to recycling and composting practices. To bolster our recycling initiatives, strategic placement of single-stream recycling bins across the campus has been complemented by educational campaigns, fostering awareness and responsible waste disposal habits. Notably, our collaboration with community-based students has extended our impact, particularly in the recycling of single-use plastics and toner and ink cartridges through a partnership with Office Depot. The school's Green and Clean Club actively engages students in recycling endeavors, contributing to a commendable 40% reduction in landfill waste and a concurrent rise in recycling rates. An additional facet of our waste reduction efforts involves harnessing the potential of our school garden. Here, food items are composted, transforming kitchen waste into nutrient-rich compost. This innovative approach not only diminishes our environmental footprint but also enhances our landscaping practices, reinforcing our commitment to sustainable and eco-friendly solutions. Through these collaborative and multifaceted initiatives, Park Forest Middle strives to instill a culture of environmental responsibility while actively contributing to the broader community's recycling endeavors.

Alternative Transportation:

Park Forest Middle actively promotes sustainable commuting options, giving students and staff the choice to walk or bike to school. In addition to fostering a culture of eco-friendly transportation, we've established designated bike racks, walking paths, and robust carpooling programs. These initiatives have contributed to a commendable 25% decrease in single-occupancy vehicle trips to the campus over the past academic year, further reducing our school's carbon footprint.

Energy-Efficient Facilities and Practices:

Our dedication to energy efficiency is integral to the planning and operation of our facilities. New constructions and renovations strictly follow rigorous energy-efficient standards, integrating elements like energy-efficient lighting, insulation, and windows. Regular energy audits are conducted to ensure that existing facilities consistently meet or surpass energy efficiency benchmarks. This commitment underscores our focus on sustainable building practices,

emphasizing the reduction of waste and the incorporation of energy-efficient features in all new construction and renovation projects.

Ecologically Beneficial Uses of Grounds:

The school grounds at Park Forest Middle function as a dynamic space for ecological sustainability. We have integrated green spaces and native plant landscaping to promote biodiversity and enhance the ecological health of the campus. A notable aspect of our approach involves the collection of rainwater in the garden for use in various school activities, contributing to both sustainable water management and habitat preservation. These features provide invaluable educational opportunities for students, fostering an understanding of ecological principles and reinforcing our commitment to maintaining environmentally beneficial grounds.

Methods of Disposal for Solid and Hazardous Wastes:

In line with environmentally responsible waste management, Park Forest Middle employs safe and sustainable disposal methods for solid and hazardous wastes. Hazardous materials are handled and disposed of in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations, ensuring the safety of our students, staff, and the surrounding community. Regular training programs and safety protocols are in place to minimize the generation of hazardous wastes and to maximize the effectiveness of disposal practices.

Supporting Data and Progress:

Our commitment to transparency is reflected in the data that supports our sustainability initiatives. Quarterly reports track key performance indicators, including energy consumption, water usage, waste generation, and greenhouse gas emissions. These reports, available to the public, demonstrate the tangible progress we have made over the years and provide a roadmap for continuous improvement.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Park Forest Middle has embraced the challenge of Pillar 1: Reducing Environmental Impact and Costs with an unwavering commitment to sustainability. Our achievements in greenhouse gas emissions reduction, water quality improvement and conservation, waste reduction, and alternative transportation reflect not only our dedication to environmental stewardship but also our commitment to creating a healthy and thriving learning environment. Grounded in data-driven progress, our holistic approach positions Park Forest Middle as a model for sustainable practices within the educational community, paving the way for a greener and more sustainable future.

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

Integrated School Environmental Health Program:

Park Forest Middle Creative Sciences & Arts Magnet utilizes the codes, laws, and standards of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry school pesticide safety. The methods of non-chemical sanitation are achieved by the regular removal and pickup of trash from each classroom, restroom, office, and any garbage disposal areas located on campus inside or outside of the school buildings, along with regularly scheduled garbage pickup. The floors are cleaned throughout the school days and also during holidays to ensure a clean environment for our students. Chemicals used for outdoor pest control are only handled by certified personnel. Students, faculty, and staff are not exposed to any harmful or unapproved chemicals to eliminate the exposure to various contaminants. Additionally, to assist with pest control, the school district has contracted a lawn company to provide mowing, weed-eating, turf area cutting, trimming of shrubs for each campus of the East Baton Rouge Parish School District.

Ventilation is one component of maintaining healthy environments, and is an important COVID-19, and asthma trigger prevention strategy for our school. The school's ventilation systems are inspected quarterly in each building, classroom, restroom, and cafeteria to ensure healthy air quality. Allergy reducing filters are sized, installed, and replaced within the recommended time frame. All ventilation systems are on and operating at full capacity while the school is in operation or occupied. Indoor environmental quality is protected through these methods of consistent and regularly scheduled inspections and maintenance. Rooms are kept at cooler temperatures to prevent moisture and mold. If any abnormalities are discovered that compromises the integrity of the ventilation systems, certified personnel are informed immediately to provide treatment or repair. Known allergens are reduced in the classroom to help students who have allergies and asthma. To reduce these allergens, dry erase markers and boards are used in lieu of chalk, spray perfumes and colognes are prohibited, and paints used in art classes are non-toxic and safe for indoor use, and students are encouraged to wear masks while completing projects which require the use of paints and other sprays. Regular dusting of equipment and furniture is conducted to keep surfaces free and clear of allergens. Students with asthma are encouraged to participate in physical activities, but make sure they follow proper precautions. A school nurse is available to create an asthma action plan for students who have asthma diagnoses. A

copy of the action plan is provided to the school, and teachers, and coaches are informed to ensure the action plan is followed.

Nutrition and Fitness:

At Park Forest Middle, nutrition and fitness are priorities for student wellness. All students are enrolled in Health and Physical Education. Within these courses, one-mile walks are conducted weekly, and safe sports practices are taught and reinforced daily. Health professionals visit to conduct workshops on various health related topics such as diet and nutrition, personal hygiene, physical health, and mental health. The link between health and learning is clear: healthy, active and well-nourished children are more likely to attend school, be ready to learn and stay engaged in class (Basch, Gracy, Johnson, & Fabian, 2015). Therefore, school boards, school administrators, and principals can feel confident that maintaining or increasing time dedicated for physical activity during the school day will not have a negative impact on academic performance, and it may positively impact students' academic performance (CDC, 2010). Students enrolled in Physical Education spend a desirable amount of time outdoors engaging in sports and wellness activities to combat the effects of screen time which decreases physical activity and contributes to a host of related health and behavioral issues (Strasburger, Jordan & Donnerstein, 2010).

Through the USDA, all students receive a free, nutritionally balanced, lunch as well fresh fruit and vegetable snacks each school day. The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program introduces children at participating low income schools to a variety of produce they otherwise might not have the opportunity to taste. In addition to supporting the health of our students, our school wellness program has helped boost academic performance, and students are more physically active and perform better in school.

Park Forest Middle incorporates as much outdoor air as possible. All classes, content, and clubs have an opportunity to utilize any outdoor space on or off the campus grounds for lessons, activities, and other content needs. Our school gardens are maintained by our Environmental Science and Agri-science classes. We have additional adaptive gardens raised and grown by our Self-Contained ESS students. Although gardening can benefit anyone, for self-contained students, adaptive gardening has helped to improve their communication and social skills through collaboration, their overall fitness, and confidence levels. It has also become a useful outlet to relax and reduce stress levels, and improve motor skills. For the entire student body and staff, gardening provides an opportunity to learn

about healthy food, the environment and nature, and is a wonderful leisure activity that easily utilizes collaborative learning where tasks and routines can be varied and shared.

Moreover, monthly club days serve as another opportunity for students to engage in outdoor, nutrition, and wellness activities. For example, the Green Club works together to make our school and community a better place. Students leadership opportunities include tending the school garden(s), managing the recycling, and exploring other environmental issues and projects on campus. The club's goal is to support a better life on Earth for all living creatures. The Yoga Club engages in activities to learn basic yoga poses, which help reduce stress and increase flexibility and strength. The 4-H Club incorporates activities to develop citizenship, leadership, responsibility, and life skills in youth. The club will focus on citizenship, healthy living, science, engineering, and technology programs. The Soccer Club allows students to learn the terminology of the field, position/roles on the field, and rules/skills of the game. Students will apply rules and skills in a game setting while demonstrating good sportsmanship and team camaraderie. Lastly, Tastefully Yours Club provides hands-on life skills essential for becoming a great cook, while learning how to create nutritious, healthy meals, and exhibiting proper etiquette for dining in and/or out. We will add flavor while cooking with grace.

A full-time school nurse is established at Park Forest Middle. The presence of the full-time nurse is imperative to the increase in adolescents with underlying health conditions that require regular scheduled treatments, or immediate care. Our parents and students depend on the school nurse to keep their child safe at school, and ensure medications are administered correctly. Our full-time school nurse also provides the Park Forest Middle faculty and staff with professional development on topics which include, but is not limited to administering medications, safe hygiene practices, minimizing or eliminating the spread of germs and diseases, and medical code of ethics.

The East Baton Rouge School System students and staff are educated on effective social-emotional coping strategies and trauma-informed approaches in prevention education. Because of this, I CARE staff and team members are on school campuses weekly to advocate for students, community, and staff to have safe and drug free schools, while also empowering schools and families by providing resources, technology tools, and training in evidence-based prevention education. Social emotional learning skills and curriculum support are also provided to increase prosocial behaviors (such as kindness, sharing, and empathy), improves student attitudes toward school, and reduces bullying, depression, and stress among students. Park Forest Middle students have expressed increased social awareness and

empathy, improved relationship skills, and better efforts in making responsible decisions. The Mission of the I CARE Program has been evident through the agency providing prevention education in the areas of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and violence, to all students and families of Park Forest Middle, other Baton Rouge schools, and the community.

Pillar 3: Efforts to Ensure Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

Introduction:

Park Forest Middle stands at the forefront of environmental and sustainability education, embedding these critical principles throughout our curriculum. Pillar 3 is a testament to our commitment to ensuring effective and comprehensive environmental education. This narrative details our interdisciplinary approach, emphasizing the dynamic relationships between environmental, energy, and human systems. We showcase how STEM content, civic knowledge, and skills are seamlessly integrated into all subjects, creating a robust and contextually rich learning experience for our students.

Interdisciplinary Learning:

Our commitment to environmental and sustainability education goes beyond individual subjects, fostering interdisciplinary learning experiences that delve into the interconnectedness of environmental, energy, and human systems. For example, we initiated a collaborative project spanning science, ELA, math, social studies, and Magnet courses, focusing on the integration of carbon footprint awareness. This unique curriculum initiative aimed to calculate the carbon footprint of the entire student body through survey data, encouraging students to propose solutions for reducing their individual footprints. The data collected from this project serves as the impetus for our ongoing efforts to comprehensively reduce the school's environmental footprint, emphasizing the practical application of sustainable practices across various disciplines.

STEM Integration:

The theme of "Renewable Energy" is intricately woven into our curriculum at Park Forest Middle, where we actively collaborate with Entergy to broaden students' understanding of energy conservation and utilities reduction. This partnership extends beyond the classroom, offering co-op sessions that provide practical insights into these critical concepts. Infusing STEM content with a central focus on the environment and sustainability, our science courses empower students to address real-world environmental challenges by applying scientific principles to propose innovative solutions. The mathematics curriculum places a spotlight on data analysis related to environmental issues,

nurturing students' quantitative reasoning skills. Technology seamlessly integrates into environmental projects, enabling students to use digital tools for monitoring and analyzing environmental data. Our holistic approach, incorporating the NEED curriculum and other environmental science materials, ensures that students not only gain awareness of various forms of renewable energy but also develop the expertise needed to actively contribute to a sustainable future. Through these initiatives, we foster critical thinking skills and empower students to make meaningful contributions to the field of renewable energy and environmental sustainability.

Civic Knowledge and Skills:

Recognizing the pivotal role of civic knowledge and skills, Park Forest Middle is dedicated to preparing students as informed and active citizens. Our science curriculum serves as a platform enriched with environmental topics, fostering a sense of civic responsibility towards the planet. The Green & Clean club, an integral part of our initiative, actively engages with these topics through discussions and projects, applying acquired knowledge to real-world situations. Within our science curriculum, we place a particular emphasis on exploring the connections between civic action and addressing environmental challenges. Additionally, we integrate lessons on climate change and natural disasters, including extreme weather occurrences driven by climate change, ensuring that cause-and-effect components are central to class discussions.

Further reinforcing our commitment to environmental education, we host an annual Math & Science Night expo, where over 30 vendors, including Entergy, USDA, Louisiana State University, Southern University AgCenter, and others, converge to provide current knowledge to students about being environmental stewards. This interactive event enhances students' understanding of their roles as environmental stewards by exposing them to valuable insights from reputable organizations and fostering a sense of civic engagement. Through these initiatives, Park Forest Middle not only equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to address environmental challenges but also instills a profound sense of civic responsibility and engagement in shaping a sustainable future.

Environmental and Sustainability Literacy Standards:

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of environmental and sustainability concepts, we have developed and implemented environmental literacy standards across all grade levels. These standards are integrated into assessments,

ensuring that students demonstrate proficiency in understanding the complexities of environmental issues. Our assessments are designed to evaluate not only knowledge but also critical thinking, problem-solving, and application of concepts in real-world scenarios.

Professional Development:

Our educators at Park Forest Middle are dedicated to continuous professional development, ensuring they enhance their capacity to deliver effective environmental and sustainability education. In addition to conventional professional development avenues, such as workshops and conferences, our teachers actively engage in collaborative learning opportunities to stay abreast of the latest developments in environmental science, sustainability practices, and innovative teaching methodologies. This commitment to professional development extends to participation in specialized events like the Magnet Schools of America conference, partnerships with the Master Gardeners of Baton Rouge, and attendance at the NEED Conference. These diverse opportunities ensure that our educators remain well-equipped, enabling them to deliver high-quality, relevant, and engaging content to our students.

Co-Curricular Opportunities:

Park Forest Middle enriches the educational experience by offering a diverse array of co-curricular opportunities that seamlessly complement classroom learning. Our students embark on field trips to various destinations, including the Southern University AgCenter for Agriculture Day, Louisiana State University for Engage LSU and Ocean Commotion, New Orleans for GrowDat Youth Farm, and Dallas for Samuell Farm & Texas Discovery Gardens. These excursions, along with numerous others focused on sustainable practices, active participation in environmental clubs, STEM experiences and engagement in service learning projects, form integral components of our educational approach. These experiences not only provide students with hands-on, place-based, and project-based learning opportunities but also serve to reinforce classroom concepts within the dynamic contexts of the real world.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Park Forest Middle is dedicated to providing an exemplary environmental and sustainability education, as outlined in Pillar 3. Our interdisciplinary approach, STEM integration, civic education, adherence to environmental

literacy standards, ongoing professional development, and co-curricular opportunities collectively contribute to a holistic learning experience. By fostering authentic, hands-on, and contextually rich learning across the curriculum, we prepare our students not only to understand the complexities of environmental issues but also to actively engage as responsible stewards of the planet.