



Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
"Making Education Work for All Georgians"

2013 Nominee to the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

Ford Elementary School
Cobb County Schools
1345 Mars Hill Rd
Acworth, Georgia 30101

Sitting amid more than twenty acres, Ford Elementary School in Acworth, Georgia utilizes more than 60% of the grounds for environmental education and habitat protection. For almost twenty years, Ford has been committed to protecting, restoring and sustaining its native forests and stream beds while developing outdoor learning labs. Our award winning model school for environmental education strives for relevance and resiliency while serving as a mentor to others across the state and nation. <http://eeingeorgia.org/net/org/info.aspx?s=70349.0.0.4863>

Ford Elementary, built in 1991, was designed to accommodate 900 students, but within three years needed to educate more than 1700 students. Within its first year, Ford became a National Wildlife Certified Schoolyard Habitat. After additional schools were built to relieve overcrowding, Ford became proactive in reclaiming its native habitats. Adopt A Spot, Plot or Pot, and Earth Shaking Workdays became our mottos. Inviting our community to join us in developing our vision, we developed The Children's Garden, native plant and pollinator habitats, Math and Social Studies Gardens, a native tree arboretum, aquatic habitats, an extensive nature trail and stream project, and Seeds of Hope, our community outreach garden. "Sustainability" in all areas - physically, educationally and financially - remains our goal as we continue to reach out and engage our students, community and beyond. Recently, Ford was featured in PBS "Growing a Greener World" segment, and spotlighted in Dr. Herb Broda's book, [Moving the Classroom Outdoors](http://www.growingagreenerworld.com/episode309/). <http://www.growingagreenerworld.com/episode309/>

During the summer of 2013, Ford Elementary will undergo the first extensive renovation since the building was constructed in 1991. Several energy saving projects are going to bring our school up to a 'greener' standard. Once the project is complete, we will be eligible to apply for the Energy Star rating. Highlights of the project include a new HVAC system and occupancy

sensors in each room. Those occupancy sensors will be tied into the lighting system as well as the heating and air system to regulate energy usage. Additionally we will receive all new lighting fixtures that are energy efficient using the T-8 lamps. A recycling company, hired by Cobb County School District will properly dispose of the old bulbs. At the conclusion of the project, we expect our energy efficiency to increase from approximately 80% to over 92%.

Our lunchroom program includes incentive and recognition activities as an approach to educate and promote the importance of making healthy food choices. All activities are within the guidelines of the *USDA's Healthier US School Challenge and Farm to School Program*. At least 30% of our purchased food is fresh fruit and vegetables offered on a daily basis to all students. The outdoor food garden classrooms educate our students, staff and community on how to grow and harvest their own crops. Foods from the garden are prepared in the classroom to demonstrate both the life cycle and nutritional value of food crops.

At least 50% percent of our students' annual physical education takes place outdoors to include soccer, football, track & field, lacrosse and many other movement activities. Students rotate through two 45 minutes physical fitness activities a week. Aside from that, several afterschool physical fitness activities are offered to all students to help support continuous movement. In addition, we use funds awarded us through the national **Fuel Up to Play60** nutrition and physical fitness program to promote school-wide participation lead by our student ambassadors for a healthier and fit school body.

Ford's 18 year commitment to provide relevant environmental education has been a journey that involves our staff, faculty and trained volunteers, known as "Earth Parents". Working with classroom teachers and Science Lab teacher, Earth Parents facilitate and support the curriculum with enrichment activities that extend into the outdoor learning labs. Curriculum and best practices were developed by Ford staff and volunteers who recently co-wrote the Learning Garden Curriculum with The Captain Planet Foundation. Serving as a model school for this program, Ford organized and hosted The Learning Garden Conference (September 2012) attended by over 200 educators. Sponsors included the EPA, U.S. Forest Service, Keep Cobb Beautiful, The Captain Planet Foundation and CCSD.

http://www.cobbk12.org/Ford/pdf/Article_LGW.pdf

Recently, Ford was invited to present our award winning program at the Environmental Education Alliance Conference in Georgia (March 2013), and at the National Children's Gardening Symposium in Denver (July 2013), allowing us to share both our challenges and successes with a much larger audience.

Recognizing the significance of collaboration, Ford Elementary has continuously reached out to our local Partners in Education and other supporting organizations across the state such as: Keep Cobb Beautiful's Green School Initiative and grant program; U.S. Forest Service; The Captain Planet Foundation; Farm to School/Georgia Organics; Environment Education Alliance of

Georgia; and The National Wildlife Federation. Additionally, the Ford Elementary School Foundation works to support our extensive EE program and Science Lab through fundraising and grant writing.

GEORGIA GREEN RIBBON APPLICATION

School Name: **Ford Elementary School**

District Name: **Cobb County School District**

Principal Name: **Jami Bice Frost**

Address: **1345 Mars Hill Road, Acworth, Georgia 30101**

Lead Applicant Name: **Catherine Padgett**

Lead Applicant Email Address: **Mary.Padgett@cobbk12.org**

Lead Applicant Phone Number: **678-594-8092**

2. School Information

How would you describe your school: (Urban, Suburban, Rural) - Suburban

Does your school serve 40% or more students from disadvantage households? (Yes or No) - No

% receiving FRPL - 8%

% limited English proficient - 0.5%

School Type: Private/Independent, Public, Charter - Public

Level: (Elementary, Middle, High, K-12) - Elementary

Total Enrolled: - 705

Graduation Rate: - N/A

Attendance Rate: - 97%

Is your school participating in a local, state or national school program which asks you to benchmark progress in some fashion in any or all of the Pillars?

Yes, **The Cobb Green School Initiative** recognizes schools in Cobb County with an active environmental education program and encourages other schools to develop environmentally based education initiatives within their school. This is a program of Cobb County Water System Watershed Education and Water Efficiency Programs, Cobb County Parks and Recreation Natural Resources Unit, and Keep Cobb Beautiful. The primary focus of the program is conservation, preservation and beautification of our environment. The program annually recognizes Cobb County Schools that have met the Green School requirements. Green School Teachers must teach a minimum of 5 environmental education lessons a year and document those lessons. Over 75% of Ford's teachers participate in this program, earning Ford a Gold Level Status since 2007.

2. Has your school, staff or student body received any awards for facilities, health or environment? **Yes**

Award(s) and year(s):

2012 Host of Learning Garden Conference funded by EPA

http://www.cobbk12.org/Ford/_pdf/Article_LGW.pdf

2012 NFL Play 60 and SE Dairy Council Grant <http://www.nfl.com/play60>

2012 PBS Growing A Greener World featuring Ford Elementary

<http://www.growingagreenerworld.com/episode309/>

2012 National Wildlife Federation Pollinator Grant

2010-2012 Keep Cobb Beautiful, Dig in the Dirt Grant

2010 EEA Environmental Educator of the Year to Catherine Padgett, Ford Teacher

2010 Catherine Padgett and Ford Elementary featured in Learning in the Outdoor Classroom by Dr. Herb Broda

2009 Captain Planet Foundation, Superhero for Earth Award to Catherine Padgett

2009 Keep Cobb Beautiful, Great American Cleanup Award; KCB Recycling Grant

2008, 2009 Cobb County Green School, Gold Level Status for Environmental Lessons

2008-2012 First Place, 9th District GA PTA for Education Enrichment for Environmental Education

2005 Second Place, Scotts Classroom Gardener Award to Catherine Padgett, Ford Teacher

2005 VIVA Gardens Most Creative Design Award for one of our Kindergarten raised beds

2005, 2002, 2001 1st Place, 9th District GA PTA for Environmental Education

2003, 1997 Outdoor Classroom Grant awarded by the Environmental Education Alliance of GA

1996 Atlanta Journal Constitution Honor Teacher Award to Catherine Padgett, Ford Teacher

1996 Kroger Good Neighbor Award for Excellence to Catherine Padgett for establishment of the Children's Garden

1996 Regional Third Runner Up President's Environmental Youth Awards Program; National Wildlife Federation School Yard Habitat Certificate #14460

Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs

3. Energy A. Can your school demonstrate a reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions? No

B. Has your school received EPA ENERGY STAR certification or does it meet the requirements for ENERGY STAR certification? No

In the summer of 2013, Ford Elementary will undergo a renovation of several energy saving projects which will allow us to apply and receive Energy Star certification. As a part of the lighting and HVAC replacement, we will be installing occupancy sensors in all classrooms. Those occupancy sensors will be tied into the lighting system as well as the heating and air system. The occupancy sensors sense movement in a room. If there is no movement in the room for a set time period, the lights will go out. By the same token, the temperature on the thermostats will be raised or lowered (depending on the season) if there is no movement in the room for a specific time period. Each classroom will have its own thermostat that the sensor is tied into.

Additionally, our district maintenance office will manage the controls system on the HVAC. With this control system, Maintenance controls the overall temperature of the building. They have set times that the overall temperature of the building is raised and lowered, depending upon occupancy. For example, the temperature is set to either be raised or lowered (again, depending upon the season) after school hours. At a set time before school opens in the morning, the temperature is adjusted for the day. Also, if the school has an after-hours event in one specific part of the building, only that specific area needs to be heated or cooled. The rest of the building can remain in the 'controlled' mode. In other words, the temperature of the whole building does not have to be adjusted if only one area of the school is to be used. We are currently operating at 80% efficiency on HVAC. After renovations, the new units will allow us to increase to 92% efficiency.

The new lighting fixtures are also more energy-efficient. The old fixtures have what are called T-12 lamps (bulbs) in them. We are replacing the old fixtures with new ones that use T-8 lamps. They are smaller bulbs that emit a lot more light than the older ones.

C. Has your school reduced its total non-transportation energy use from an initial baseline?

C1. Yes or No – No

C2. Current energy usage (kBtu/student/year): FY 2012 Natural Gas 996 kBtu per student and 7.4 kBtu per sq. ft.

C3. Current energy usage (kBtu/sq. ft./year): FY 2012 Electrical 5,760 kBtu per student and 44.56 kBtu per sq. ft.

Once our new HVAC systems have been installed and operational for a year, we will be able to calculate a reduction in energy use.

D. What percentage of your school's energy is obtained from:

D1. On-site renewable energy generation: - None

D2. Type - N/A

D3. Purchased renewable energy: - None

D4. Type - We use natural gas for heating and electricity for cooling. Cobb EMC is the electric provider. Cobb EMC's Green Power Program is certified by Green-e-Energy. Our total energy usage is 51.96 kBtu per sq ft. Electrical usage is 86.5% and Natural Gas usage is almost 14%.

D5. Participation in USDA Fuel for Schools, DOE Wind for Schools or other federal or state school energy program: - NO

E. In what year was your school originally constructed?

E1. In what year was your school originally constructed? 1991

E2. What is the total building area of your school? 99,000 square feet

F. Has your school constructed or renovated building(s) in the past ten years?

F1. Yes or No – NO

4. Water and Grounds

A. Describe alternate water sources used for irrigation.

A. 50 gallon rain barrels are placed in garden areas to supplement irrigation needs.

B. Describe any efforts to reduce stormwater runoff and/or reduce impermeable surfaces.

B. Georgia Native plantings control storm water runoff on hill sides, seeds of hope community garden and on nature trail. Railroad ties have been installed in areas to reduce storm water runoff in natural areas. Curbing has been placed to redirect storm water into natural creek bed.

C. Our school's drinking water comes from:

C. Municipal water source: Chattahoochee River (Quarles Treatment Plant) and Lake Allatoona (Wycoff Treatment Plant).

D. Describe how the water source is protected from potential contaminants.

D. When there are contaminants, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has treatment methods to reduce levels and protect human health. CCMWA's laboratory monitors water quality daily to ensure EPA standards are maintained. Over 200 water samples throughout the Cobb County distribution system are taken randomly each month and tested.

E. Describe the program you have in place to control lead in drinking water.

E. (50 words max) – The Cobb County School District purchases water from the Cobb County Water System. This company provides drinking water that is treated using state of the art equipment and ensures water quality through continued monitoring and testing.

Locally the taps, faucets and fountains used for cooking and drinking are cleaned on a regular basis to reduce possible contamination.

F. What percentage of the school grounds are devoted to ecologically beneficial uses?

F. (50 words max) - 65% of our almost 40 acres is devoted to ecologically beneficial uses.

5. Waste

A. What percentage of solid waste is diverted from landfilling or incinerating due to reduction, recycling and/or composting? Complete all the calculations below to receive points.

A1. Monthly garbage service in cubic yards (garbage dumpster size(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected): 1440 cu/yd
*percentage full when emptied or collected is unknown – this is not monitored

A2. Monthly recycling volume in cubic yards (recycling dumpster sizes(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected): 720 cu/yd
*percentage full when emptied or collected is unknown – this is not monitored

A3. Monthly compostable materials volume(s) in cubic yards (food scrap/food soiled paper dumpster size(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected): - 0

However, composters are installed in all gardens across Ford Elementary campus. Students actively participate in composting programs while participating in environmental education lessons and gardening.

A4. Recycling Rate = $((B + C) \div (A + B + C) \times 100)$: $(720+0) \div (1440+720+0) \times 100 = 33\%$

A5. Monthly waste generated per person = (A/number of students and staff): 2.043 cu/yd per person

B. What percentage of your school's total office/classroom paper content is post-consumer material, fiber from forests certified as responsibly managed and/or chlorine-free?

B. – 100% We use green seal paper.

C. List the types and amounts of hazardous waste generated at your school:

C1. Flammable liquids - none

C2. Corrosive liquids - none

C3. Toxics - none

C4. Mercury - none

C5. Other - Used Florescent Light Bulbs (average 13- 48” bulbs per month)

C6 How is this calculated? - Divide total number of used bulbs collected for 7 months to arrive at monthly average.

C7. How is hazardous waste disposal tracked? - Manifest Log

D. Which green cleaning custodial standard is used? What percentage of all products is certified? What specific third party certified green cleaning product standard does your school use?

D1. - Green Seal certified standard

D2. - 100% of our cleaning products are certified

D3. – Green Seal certified

E. Measures taken to reduce solid waste in our school include the following: 1. Recycle all paper products to include: Cardboard, brown paper bags, newspaper, magazines, phone books, office paper, junk mail, and paper board. 2. Recycle aluminum to include: cans, foil and tin pans. 3. Recycle plastic bottles. 4. Recycle steel cans: kitchen food cans. Measures taken to eliminate hazardous waste: Log all hazardous materials before and have removed by a certified vendor.

6. Alternative Transportation

A. What percentage of your students walk, bike, bus, or carpool (2 + student in the car) to/from school? (Note if your school does not use school buses) How is this data calculated?

A1. - 100% either ride the bus or come to school in a car. 65% of our students ride the school bus. The remaining 35% are transported by personal car. Of those who come in a car, almost all have 2+ students. Very few of our students are dropped off as the only child in the car.

A2. All of our students take the bus or are car riders.

B. Has your school implemented?

B1. Designated carpool parking stalls. - N/A

B2. School buses have no-idling policies that are explained in detail below. We have applied to the Clean Air Campaign for the Pool to School carpool program, Ride the Bus Campaign and No Idling Campaign. <http://www.cleanaircampaign.org/Your-Schools>

B3. Vehicle loading/unloading areas are at least 25 feet from building air intakes, doors, and windows. - Yes – the vehicle and bus loading and unloading areas are more than 25 feet from the building.

B4. Safe Pedestrian Routes to school or Safe Routes to School – Our district participates in the Safe Routes to School project. However our school is located on a busy road and we do not have a safe pedestrian route.

B5. Ford Elementary School does not have designated parking stalls for carpool. Our parents can turn off their cars in the carpool line due to the long driveway that leads to the school and ample access in and out of the campus. We have a well-documented no idling policy for school buses. We are in the process of implementing three programs through the Clean Air Campaign. Our vehicle loading and unloading is more than 25 feet from the building.

C. Describe how your school transportation use is efficient and has reduced its environmental impact.

C. Our school district manages the transportation routes for all schools.

- We recently doubled up elementary bus runs which took 100 buses off the road
- Eliminated 10,000 unnecessary bus stops which reduces idle time and saves fuel
- School district wide Idling Policy for all vehicles, especially around schools
- We recycle oils and fluids, paper, and metal products
- Received a Federal Diesel Emissions Grant of 1.24 million dollars in partnership with Georgia Tech University Diesel Emissions Retrofit Program was developed to solicit pricing for the purchase and installation of a Diesel Oxidation Catalyst (DOC) and Crankcase Emissions Filters.
- In July of 2010 Cobb County School District Transportation Fleet Maintenance Department was awarded a Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) grant in the amount

of \$1,240,275.00. This grant will allow for the installation of exhaust filters to be installed on CCSD school buses and partner with Georgia Tech for installation of idle-reduction technology on 480 buses.

The effects of Particulate Matter on the respiratory system, especially in children, are well documented. Through the purchase and installation of 275 the DOC and Crankcase Emissions Filters the District will reduce in-cab emissions and under hood odors/fumes. The DOC will reduce diesel particulate matter by 20% and the crankcase filter by 90%. Use of these devices will reduce engine oil consumption and help maintain a cleaner engine compartment.

D. Describe any other efforts toward reducing environmental impact, focusing on innovative or unique practices and partnerships.

- The Cobb County School District is partnered with The Clean Air Campaign to educate and improve the commute in Cobb County. The district receives their PACE Award as the School district of the Year for innovative programs and improving our carbon footprint.
- Our school district promotes walking and biking to schools where possible as part of the Safe Routes to School Program.
- Our school district has also received another grant which matches funds 50% to purchase 12 new buses and take 6 older model buses off the road. We also plan to get the entire fleet to a 10-15 year replacement cycle for the newer emissions standards.

Pillar 2: Improve the health and wellness of students and staff

7. Environmental Health

A. What is the volume of your annual pesticide use (gal/student/year)? Describe efforts to reduce use:

A. Pest control method that we use is IPM, which means we focus mainly on the pests access to our buildings. If we use any chemical, it is baits and gels. We only spray in the worst of circumstances and our provider strictly obeys all laws.

B. Which of the following practices does your school employ to minimize exposure to hazardous contaminants? Provide specific examples of actions taken for each checked practice.

B1. Our school prohibits smoking on campus and in public school buses. - Yes

B2. Our school has identified and properly removed sources of elemental mercury and prohibits its purchase and use in the school. - Yes

B3. Our school uses fuel burning appliances and has taken steps to protect occupants from carbon monoxide (CO) - Yes - we have a vent hood that has a sprinkler system and

ansel system. All of our employees have hand held detectors that are checked periodically.

B4. Our school does not have any fuel burning combustion appliances - Yes - we have a gas cooktop.

B5. Our school has tested all frequently occupied rooms at or below ground level for radon gas and has fixed and retested all rooms with levels that tested at or above 4 pCi/L OR our school was built with radon resistant construction features and tested to confirm levels below 4 pCi/L. - Not known

B6. Our school has identified any wood playground or other structures that contain chromate copper arsenate and has taken steps to eliminate exposure. - Yes

C. Describe how your school controls and manages chemicals routinely used in the school to minimize student and staff exposure.

C. We use only green seal certified chemicals for all chemicals that have a category.

D. Describe actions your school takes to prevent exposure to asthma triggers in and around the school.

D. The school has a nonsmoking policy. For mold and moisture, any leaky plumbing or other sources of water are fixed as soon as possible and mold is cleaned up appropriately and as quickly as possible. There is a plan in place to control pests such as cockroaches and mice. No animals are in classrooms where a sensitive child is present. To help with dust mites, the custodial staff vacuums and dusts regularly. Our school avoids using strong cleaners, paints, and other irritants when children are present. We monitor air quality index station to determine safe times for outdoor play.

E. Describe actions your school takes to control moisture from leaks, condensation, and excess humidity and promptly cleanup mold or removes moldy materials when it is found.

E. Our school controls moisture from leaks and condensation by maintaining a weekly check for such issues. When leaks are found they're address by either the local custodial staff or through the Cobb County School District work-order process. Effected materials are discarded in the proper containers and disposed by our waste service operation (Waste Management, Inc.).

F. Our school has installed local exhaust systems for major airborne contaminant sources.

F. Yes or No - Yes, Our school is equipped with a local exhaust system for major airborne contaminant sources. An emergency shut-off is located in the main office area and staff is trained to use it.

G. Describe your school's practices for inspecting and maintaining the building's ventilation system and all unit ventilators to ensure they are clean and operating properly.

G. The school inspects and maintains the building ventilation through visual inspection and through Cobb County School District maintenance personnel inspections. A group changes the air filters every 12 week along with preventative maintenance at that time.

H. Describe actions your school takes to ensure that all classrooms and other spaces are adequately ventilated with outside air, consistent with state or local codes, or national ventilation standards.

H. Cobb County School District maintenance personnel take action to ensure our classrooms and other areas of the school area adequately ventilated with outside air by performing air quality test. Based on the results of those test, adjustments or replacement of equipment may be made to meet state and local codes, or national ventilation standards. All rooms have outside ventilation brought in.

I. Describe other steps your school takes to protect indoor environmental quality such as implementing EPA IAQ Tools for Schools and/or conducting other periodic, comprehensive inspections of the school facility to identify environmental health and safety issues and take corrective action.

I. All indoor environmental quality testing is handled through the Cobb County School District office. We have IAQ team that comes through quarterly to check the room using certified equipment. The district has a department devoted to IAQ.

8. Nutrition and Fitness

A. Which practices does your school employ to promote nutrition, physical activity and overall school health? Provide specific examples of actions taken for each checked practice, focusing on innovative or unique practices and partnerships.

A1. Our school participates in the USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge. Level and year: - No we do not participate in the Healthier US School Challenge. We do follow the guidelines and are currently participating in the NFL Play60 Challenge. We received a grant from that organization for the 2012-2013 school year.

A2. Our school participates in a Farm to School program to use local, fresh food. - Yes - Georgia Grown products once per month

A3. Our school has an on-site food garden. - Since 1994, Ford has utilized some of our outdoor learning labs for growing herbs and food in order to educate our students and community about the life cycle and nutritional value of our food sources. We currently have all grade levels participating in growing and harvesting crops in our Children's

Garden, Math Garden, Three Sister's and Victory Garden as well as in our community garden.

A4. Our school garden supplies food for our students in the cafeteria, a cooking or garden class or to the community. - Food that is grown in our school wide gardens is harvested by our Earth Parents and students and prepared in the classroom for the purpose of demonstrating both the life cycle and nutritional value of food crops. A mini orchard provides fruit that a local chef helps to prep and recipes are created for our students and community. Recently, Ford filmed two "Café Chat" segments that will be used by Food Services to teach nutrition lessons across the county and state. A state of the art nutrition cart and supplies were recently acquired to assist teachers and volunteers in implementing these "edible" lessons that were developed by Ford teachers and volunteers.

A5. Our students spent at least 120 minutes per week over the past year in school supervised physical education. - Our students receive 90 minutes of supervised physical education per week in the form of two forty-five minute class periods. Students are provided other opportunities for physical activity in the form of daily recess, weekly "Mileage" club in the mornings, and nature walks with the Science Lab. Through these added ventures students receive well over 120 minutes of supervised physical activity/recreation per week.

A6. At least 50% of our students' annual physical education takes place outdoors. - Our Physical Education program is fortunate to have a wonderful outdoor education space with a large grass field, blacktop, and running track. As such, many of our units such as soccer, football, track & field, lacrosse, Frisbee, large group games etc... are designed to take place outdoors. We strongly believe in teaching the importance of being outdoors and try to model and instill those behaviors for and in our students.

A7. Health measures are integrated into assessments. - The State of Georgia has mandated that all 4th and 5th grade students take part in the FITNESSGRAM health assessment. FITNESSGRAM serves to measure if students are in the "Healthy Fitness Zone" relative to several different fitness components such as cardiovascular endurance, BMI, core strength, upper body strength, and flexibility. This test is completed twice per year, once in the fall and then again in the spring. Students are assessed based on their improvement over the course of the year and are eligible to receive rewards for obtaining a certain number of health fitness levels.

A8. At least 50% of our students have participated in the EPA's Sunwise (or equivalent program). - No

A9. Food purchased by our school is certified as "environmentally preferable" - At least 30% of our purchased food is fresh fruits and vegetables which are offered on a daily basis to staff and students. Once a month we are guaranteed a product from a Georgia

Grown vendor which we spotlight on the menu. We also participate in the DOD fresh produce program.

A10. Percentage: - 30%

A11. Type: - Georgia Grown Products and DOD fresh produce program

B. Describe the type of outdoor education, exercise and recreation available.

B. The State of Georgia has mandated that all 4th and 5th grade students take part in the FITNESSGRAM health assessment. FITNESSGRAM serves to measure if students are in the “Healthy Fitness Zone” relative to several different fitness components such as cardiovascular endurance, BMI, core strength, upper body strength, and flexibility. This test is completed twice per year, once in the fall and then again in the spring. Students are assessed based on their improvement over the course of the year and are eligible to receive rewards for obtaining a certain number of health fitness levels.

C. Describe any other efforts to improve nutrition and fitness, highlighting innovative or unique practices and partnerships.

C. Our school has formed a partnership with the **NFL/ Southeast Dairy Council FUEL UP to PLAY60** national campaign. We plan to launch a school wide lunchroom campaign for increased dairy consumption and getting our students moving 60 minutes a day. We also participate in monthly promotions for Georgia Grown Produce, National Farm to School Month, National Nutrition Month and National School Breakfast Week. Over the last 19 years our school has raised over \$100,000 for the **American Heart Association**. In return our students have the opportunity to learn about the importance of exercise, eating right, and having a great attitude.

Pillar 3: Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

9. A. Which practices does your school employ to help ensure effective environmental and sustainability education? Provide specific examples of actions taken for each checked practice, highlighting innovative or unique practices and partnerships.

A. Ford’s Environmental Education program was established in 1994 to insure that curriculum written by our teachers and Earth Parent volunteers supported the development of our extensive outdoor learning labs and habitats. For over 18 years we have continuously delivered six Earth Parent lessons a year to our students that focus on our environment and commitment to sustainability in addition to the lessons taught in the Science Lab. We annually train and equip over 50 volunteers as Earth Parents to extend and enrich the grade level content into the outdoor classrooms. All Earth Parent

curriculum is standards based and integrated across the grade level content. All third grade classrooms are involved with CATO, an, environmental partnership, that host five programs a year based on GPSS. Ford Students receive over 400 lessons a year collectively, earning Ford the Gold Status Level for the last 6 years for **Keep Cobb Beautiful's Green School Initiative**. Currently Ford is partnering with Kennesaw State University to take part in a STEM grant initiative with a school in Costa Rica. Students and KSU Student Teachers will be developing technical avenues to share their gardening experiences and to provide educational support for the Costa Rica teachers.

B. Our school has an environmental or sustainability literacy requirement.

B. All students at Ford are educated about environmental and sustainability issues through the required **Earth Parent** program, the **Science Lab** and through grade level GPS. Literacy is achieved through the integrated curriculum that has been developed by our staff and volunteers and is extended to hands on experiences and performance based assessments.

C. Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated throughout the curriculum.

C. Recently, a partnership grant from Keep Cobb Beautiful allowed us to construct new Math and Social Studies Gardens. Using the new Common Core math standards, curriculum was written by Ford teachers to extend the math concepts into this new outdoor classroom. Integrated Social Studies and Language Arts and Math curriculum was created to help develop Victory Gardens and Three Sisters Gardens as an extension of 3rd and 5th grade GPS. STEM lessons are currently being developed through the Science Lab that will offer authentic learning experiences for our students in the outdoor learning labs. We are currently working with two Eagle Scouts to develop a special needs Eco-Therapy natural playscape within a native plant habitat.

D. Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated into assessments.

D. Ford uses a balanced variety of assessments techniques to evaluate, monitor and adjust instruction. The State and County require that we administer CRCT, ITBS and Quarterly Benchmarks. The classroom teachers work closely with our Earth Parent Committee and Science Lab Instructor to develop unit tests and appropriate grade level common assessments that are directly aligned to the GPS in Earth Science. In the Science lab, students are engaged in hands-on learning projects. Students keep a Science Lab Journal of their observations and conclusions. These journals are used as an assessment tool to gauge student participation and understanding of the concept.

E. Students evidence high levels of proficiency in these assessments.

E. The CRCT assessment is administered to our 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students. Performance on the CRCT is indicated by three categories. (1. Do Not Meet 2. Meets 3. Exceeds) The CRCT data shows that ALL of our students consistently performed at the meets and exceeds categories in Science. Our Science trend data shows that in 2009-2010, 95% of our students performed in the meets and exceed categories on CRCT. In 2010 – 2011 and 2011 -2012, 98% of our students performed in the meets and exceeds categories, demonstrating a gain of 3% on CRCT. The ITBS is administered to our 3rd and 5th grade students only. Our trend data shows that our students consistently made gains in Science. In 2010, the total of our 4th and 5th grades students performed at the 80% Percentile Rank in Science. In 2010 our total students performed at the 83% Percentile Rank in Science. In 2012 our total students performed at the 89% Percentile Rank in Science a gain of 5%. The Benchmark assessments and common assessments are local assessments and provide the teachers with a snap shot of how the students are progressing toward GPS at a particular time in the year.

F. Professional development in environmental and sustainability education are provided to all teachers.

F. Over the last 18 years Ford has offered to its staff, volunteers, community and other educators, extensive environmental and sustainability education. Recently, Ford's extensive EE program was featured on PBS "Growing A Greener World", episode #309 (<http://www.growingagreenerworld.com/episode309/>) and spotlighted in Dr. Herb Broda's book, Moving the Classroom Outdoors. In the fall of 2012, Ford hosted a state-wide Learning Garden Conference sponsored by the EPA and supported by The Captain Planet Foundation, U.S. Forest Service, Keep Cobb Beautiful and The Ford Elementary School Foundation. This was a two day conference to offer educators both environmental and sustainability support and GPS based curriculum to encourage their efforts. http://www.cobbk12.org/Ford/_pdf/Article_LGW.pdf Ford currently offers support to other schools on an ongoing basis and serves as a model school for the Captain Planet Foundation's Learning Garden program. An Earth Parent Resource Room is available to all trained volunteers and teachers to support their effort to educate themselves and their students in environmental literacy. Hallways and bulletin boards leading to the Science Lab feature current environment happenings and issues and outdoor pathways have educational signage for seamless learning.

10. A. For schools serving grades 9-12, provide: Percentage of last year's eligible graduates who completed the AP Environmental Science course during their high school career: Percentage scoring a 3 or higher:

A1. Percentage of last year's eligible graduates who completed the AP Environmental Science course during their high school career: - N/A

A2. Percentage scoring a 3 or higher: - N/A

B. How does your school use sustainability and the environment as a context for learning science, technology, engineering and mathematics thinking skills and content knowledge?

B. Every student at our school participates in weekly lessons in our donation-funded Science Lab. Many of these inquiry based lessons are taught outdoors in our gardens and nature trail areas. Students are given the opportunity to use the environment as a context for exploring and learning basic scientific principles in Earth Science, Physical Science, and Life Science. Technology, Math, and Engineering are integrated into many of our lessons along with problem based learning activities related to real life experiences.

C. How does your school use sustainability and the environment as a context for learning green technologies and career pathways?

C. At the elementary level, we focus on teaching basic green principles. We encourage our students to participate in recycling, litter control, energy conservation and respect for our environment. Every one of our students is involved in our school-wide garden program where they are taught to appreciate the natural beauty in their schoolyard habitat. Service Learning projects that allow students and families to care for Ford's outdoor learning labs encourage the development of good stewardship practices.

D. Describe students' civic/community engagement projects integrating environment and sustainability topics.

D. **Certified as a Natural Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitat** since 1991, Ford was originally developed as a project that involved our entire school community. At this time, we started an **Adopt-a-Tree** program to provide native trees to our beautiful school yard habitat. Additional trees were planted as part of an erosion control project that now provides a beautiful hillside arboretum and amphitheater for our students. Ford has also been committed to developing and sustaining over 15 Eagle Scout Projects that directly impact our outdoor classrooms and environmental education. We work closely with local partners like the **Cobb County Parks & Recreation, US Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Smith-Gilbert Gardens,** and the **Captain Planet Foundation** to both educate and mentor other schools and businesses in regard to environmental education. One of the areas where our students and families develop civic

responsibilities is through our **Seeds of Hope Community Garden**. Families work together on a weekly basis through the harvest season to deliver half of the produce to our local food bank. To date, we have donated over 600 pounds of fresh produce to our local community. <http://www.seedsofhopegarden.blogspot.com/>

E. Describe students' meaningful outdoor learning experiences at every grade level.

E. Our Kindergarten students participate in garden lessons where they grow their own food and participate in a series of garden- to -table lessons. They also learn about raw materials and the sources of many of the products that we use every day. Our first graders curriculum includes lessons on earthworms and plants. Students learn about how earthworms are beneficial to soil. Students learn about the environmental needs of both plants and animals. Our second grade students participate in a year-long study of trees. They learn about how trees change with the seasons and about how trees are a renewable natural resource that gives us many gifts including oxygen, shade, shelter, and food. They also learn about renewable energy sources and the advantages to using alternative energy. Our third grade students have comprehensive lessons on Georgia ecosystems and habitats that include a series of outdoor lessons on our nature trail .Our fourth grade students participate in a long term study of food chains that include the dissection of owl pellets. Our fifth grade students have an extensive unit on the constructive and destructive processes that affect the Earth. They learn about acid rain, erosion, and beach reclamation.

F. Describe how outdoor learning is used to teach an array of subjects in contexts, engage the broader community, and develop civic skills.

F. Ford works to integrate core curriculum along with physical education and the arts to support authentic learning experiences for our students. This year we wrote curriculum with The Captain Planet Foundation that focused on Common Core State Standards and The Next Generation Science Standards. Our Victory and Math Gardens provide enrichment to showcase integration of the curriculum. Our community garden offers service learning opportunities for our students and staff. To celebrate the integration of the environmental education and the fine arts, an annual event “**Evening in the Garden**” is held to highlight the achievements of our students. Our community is invited to enjoy a night of performing arts, art shows, poetry reading and creative writing all hosted in our gardens. To instill a sense of environmental stewardship in our community, three to four “Earth Shaking” Workdays are held each year at Ford to build, repair and sustain our extensive outdoor learning labs, habitats and gardens. Ford has sponsored over 15 Eagle Scout projects. In the fall of this year, Ford organized and hosted over 175 people at a state-wide **Learning Garden Conference** to support educators in their effort to bring environmental education into their schools and organizations.

G. Describe your partnerships to help your school and other schools achieve in the 3 Pillars. Include both the scope and impact of these partnerships.

G. Ford's unique program has enabled us to reach out to other schools and organizations to provide support and share our experiences. **The Learning Garden Conference** enlarged our circle of influence across the state and offered professionalism, expertise to educators, a network of support. We are a member of the **Environmental Education Alliance** and plan to present at the state conference this year. We will also be presenting our program at the **National Children's Gardening Conference** in July. **CATO**, a partner since 2002, combines the efforts of CCSD and Cobb County Parks and Recreation. **Keep Cobb Beautiful** helped sponsor the Learning Garden conference, and they have supported our program through grant opportunities and educational initiatives. In 2009, Ford was named the model school for the **Captain Planet Foundation Learning Garden Program** based on our commitment to sustainability and environmental education. Currently we are working with **Kennesaw State University** on a STEM project that builds partnerships with schools in Costa Rica. Other state and national partnerships such as the **EPA, The Wildlife Federation and U.S. Forest Service** have supported our efforts and Ford has served as a model program for many of their projects involving schools and educators.

H. Describe any other ways that your school integrates core environment, sustainability, STEM, green technology and civics into curricula to provide effective environmental and sustainability education, highlighting on innovative or unique practices and partnerships.

H. Ford Elementary School saw the need to expand our students' experience in hands-on Science to prepare them for the global environmental challenges that they will face as adults. Five years ago, our Science Lab opened to serve every student at Ford Elementary School. What makes our Science Lab unique, is that it is run entirely on donations from our school community. Parents, students, teachers, local businesses and organizations all contribute financial support to sustain our Science Lab. As a result of our efforts in the Science Lab, we are seeing a huge rise in Science Literacy and problem solving ability as demonstrated by our standardized test scores. Seeing a greater need for Technology, Math and Engineering, we are currently transitioning our Science Lab into a STEM Lab. We hope that our students will use these skills to solve the many ecological and sustainability challenges that are imminent in the 21st Century. Each year, our school hosts a school-wide Family Science Night where we invited organizations like the USDA Forest Service, the National Park Service, Centers for Disease Control, Cobb Energy, and the Marietta/Cobb Water Authority to set up hands-on learning stations to share environmental concepts with our students.

Snapshot of Environmental Education at Ford Elementary School

Earth Parent Lesson in the Pollinator Garden



Ford Math Garden



Science Class on the Nature Trail



Earth Parent giving lesson in the Environmental Education resource room using farm to school best practices.



Local chef demonstrating cooking in Ford's mini orchard.



Students in the Children's Garden





U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools 2013

For Public Schools only: Charter Title I Magnet Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Jami Bice Frost
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Ford Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1345 Mars Hill Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)
Acworth Georgia 30101
City State Zip

County Cobb State School Code Number* 0292

Telephone (678) 594-8096 Fax (678) 594-8094

Web site/URI http://www.cobbk12.org/Ford/ E-mail jami.frost@cobbk12.org

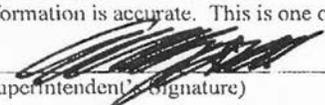
I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Jami Bice Frost Date 2/14/13
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Michael Hinojosa
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name* Cobb County School District Tel. (770) 426-3300

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate. This is one of the highest performing green schools in my jurisdiction.

 Date 2/14/13
(Superintendent's Signature)

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



- 2. The district meets all applicable federal civil rights and federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency Georgia Department of Education

Name of Nominating Authority Dr. John D. Barge

(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 district meets the provisions above.

John D. Barge
(Nominating Authority's Signature)

Date: February 12, 2013

The nomination package, including the signed certifications and documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to green.ribbon.schools@ed.gov according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509
Expiration Date: February 28, 2015

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.