



Rockford Middle School, Minnesota
2014-2015 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 Pre-K-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 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.
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.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools 2014-2015

Charter Title I Magnet Private Independent

Name of Principal: Mrs. Amy Denneson

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

Official School Name: Rockford Middle School-Center for Environmental Studies
(As it should appear on an award)

Official School Name Mailing Address: 6051 Ash Street, Rockford, MN 55313
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

County: Wright State School Code Number *: 0883-01

Telephone: (763) 477-5831 Fax: 763-477-5832

Web site/URL: www.rockford.k12.mn.us E-mail: dennesona@rockford.k12.mn.us

*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.

(Principal's Signature)

Date: 1/27/2015

Name of Superintendent: Mr. Paul Durand



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

District Name: Rockford Area Schools

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul D. Durand".

Date: 1/28/2015

(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: Minnesota Department of Education

Name of Nominating Authority: Dr. Brenda Cassellius

(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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Cassellius".

Date: January 30, 2015

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

SUMMARY AND DOCUMENTATION OF NOMINEE'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Provide a coherent "snapshot" that describes how your school is representative of your jurisdiction's highest achieving green school efforts. Summarize your strengths and accomplishments in all three Pillars and nine Elements. Then, include documentation and concrete examples for work in every Pillar and Element.

SUBMISSION

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.

Narrative Summary

Rockford Middle School-Center for Environmental Studies is a 5-8 middle school located in Rockford, Minnesota that serves 540 students in a rural area west of the twin cities. RMS-CES became a STEM school with a focus on using the environment as a teaching tool during the 2010-2011 school year. During the last four years, adjustments have been made to the curriculum, building, and outdoor spaces that reflect our environmental theme. RMS-CES has collaborated with community experts, built partnerships with environmental and outdoor education organizations, and connected students to our local environment through authentic learning experiences.

RMS-CES has core classes of science, math, reading, and social studies as well as specialist classes of art, agriculture, STEM Literacy, communications, quest, music, physical education, and health. Our specialist classes have expanded over the past four years to include technology, agriculture, environmental education, and healthy lifestyles topics. In addition, our school added an exploratory class to the weekly rotation; these classes integrate project-based learning around a driving question and incorporate STEM standards.

Highlighted classes include “From Grass to Glass,” where students explore how milk ends up on their table, “Reducing Carbon Footprints,” where students learn about vermi composting and repurpose items from a thrift store. Other exploratory classes focus on digital storytelling, photography, coding, trees and their uses, mining in Minnesota, invasive species, and water testing. After school activities also include environmental and sustainable opportunities such as FFA, Envirothon, and Green Team.

Teachers have been trained with a variety of outdoor, environmental, and STEM professional development opportunities. Classes through the DNR, Jeffers Foundation, Minnesota Association for Environmental Education, and Project Learning Tree provided teachers with ways to take classes outside and incorporate environmental lessons into content areas. School partners such as Deep Portage Learning Center, the Department of Natural Resources, Three Rivers Park District, the University of Minnesota Raptor Center, the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, 4-H University of Minnesota Extension, Wright County Soil and Water, and Landscape Restoration provide chances for students to learn from experts, spend time in nature, learn real-world environmental applications, and connect with local experts in the field.

RMS-CES is dedicated to providing outdoor, recreational, and physical activities to all students as well as presenting healthy food choices that comply with federal guidelines. All students in grades 5-8 receive 15 minutes of recess each day, providing exercise, stress relief, and the chance to socialize on a new natural playscape, coming fall 2016. Students and staff frequently utilize new drinking fountains with water bottle filling stations that track the number of plastic bottles saved from a landfill. Students have the chance to join school sports as well as after school exercise activities such as Marathon Club, Jumping Club, and Ski Club; community education also offers outdoor activities such as snowshoeing. All grade levels engage in active field experiences at least three times per year. Staff members are also encouraged to take part in wellness activities offered through the district, including biometrics testing, exercise activities, and an all-staff winter activity weekend at Deep Portage.

Students and staff are devoted to reducing waste and lessening our environmental impact. Exploratory classes created a waste challenge; groups tracked and measured the amount of waste in classroom garbage bins that could be recycled instead, created signage to hang on trash bins and in the composting area in the cafeteria, and called to catalogue companies to reduce unnecessary paper. Education about organics recycling among students and staff diverted 47 tons of organic waste from a landfill into compost. A new, efficient HVAC



system and a new roof on one third of the building help reduce energy. This year, all classroom spaces have made the transition to motion-sensor lighting, and a program has been installed district-wide to encourage efficient printing and copying.

RMS-CES hosts multiple events each year for our parents and community members to view and experience the events taking place at our environmental STEM magnet school. In the fall, the STEM Showcase highlights partnerships and activities in our building. School partners such as the University of Minnesota Raptor Center, Three Rivers Park District, the Ames-Florida Stork House, the Boy and Girl Scouts, FFA, and LEGO League have booths to showcase their connections with RMS-CES. Student demonstrations and hands-on activities are a highlight; this year, visitors were encouraged to interact with the pieces created in art class for the Global Cardboard Challenge and to make bowls for the food shelf fundraiser. In the spring, the Arts and Academics Showcase also draws in parents and community members. This night highlights student work, environmental themes and topics, and STEM connections in the classroom. Parents and visitors are encouraged to view student created projects and assignments from classrooms, exploratory units, and after school activities. RMS-CES students are empowered through engaging and authentic opportunities, and our school is proud to showcase our learning experiences, buildings and grounds, and environmental STEM curriculum.

School/District Information

School: Rockford Middle School-Center for Environmental Studies _____

Street Address: 6051 Ash Street _____

City/State/Zip: Rockford, MN 55313 _____)

Website: www.rockford.k12.mn.us _____

Principal Name: Amy Denneson _____

Principal Email Address: dennesona@rockford.k12.mn.us _____

Phone Number: (763) 477-5831 _____

Lead Applicant Name (if different): Beth Russell _____

Lead Applicant Email: russellb@rockford.k12.mn.us _____

Phone Number: (763) 477-5831 _____

School District Name/number (if applicable): Rockford Area Schools ISD 883 _____

Superintendent Name: Paul Durand _____

Superintendent Email Address: durandp@rockford.k12.mn.us _____

School levels: (place an "x" after your choice) K-8, Middle (6-8 or 9): X _____

School Type: Public: X

How would you describe your school: Rural: X _____

Total Enrolled: 541 _____

Does your school serve 40% or more students from disadvantaged households? Yes or No: No _____

Percentage receiving Free or Reduced Priced Lunch: 30% _____

Percentage limited English proficient: 6% _____

Cross-Cutting Programs

1. Is your school participating in a local, state or national school program, such as EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, EcoSchools, Project Learning Tree Green Schools, or others, which asks you to benchmark progress in some fashion in any or all of the Pillars?

Yes or No: Not this year; however, we are currently exploring Project Learning Tree Green Schools and will



be working on the investigations soon. In addition, there is a plan to start the SEE Energy Manager next year.

If yes, enter the program(s) and level(s) achieved:

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

Yes or No: No

If yes, enter the Award(s) and year(s) received:

Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs

Element 1A: Reduced or eliminated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (preference for schools that have used [State of Minnesota B3Benchmarking](#))

1. Can your school demonstrate a reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions? Yes or No: yes- see below

Percentage reduction: 22 metric ton reduction Over 2011-2012 -- 2012-2013 _____

Initial GHG emissions rate (MT eCO2/person): _____

Final GHG emissions rate (MT eCO2/person): _____

Offsets: _____ How did you calculate the reduction?

The EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM) summary report below shows us that the 46.88 tons of organic waste we diverted from a landfill and redirected to be composted gave us a 22 metric ton reduction in our CO2 emissions (-22 MTCO2E) for the 2012-2013 school year.

33.1 ton reduction in total solid waste generated – down from 101.4 to 68.3 tons

.94 ton increase in materials recycled – up from 34 to 34.94 tons

46.88 tons of organic waste diverted from landfill and composted – up from 0

22 metric ton reduction in our CO2 emissions (-22 MTCO2E)

Does your school have an Energy Master Plan? Yes or No: _____

If yes, enter a description of the areas it covers:

2. Do you track resource use in EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager? Yes or No: Not currently; there is a plan to start next year._____

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

Yes or No: in progress this year _____

Current energy usage (kBtu/student/year): _____

Current energy usage (kBtu/sq. ft. /year): _____



Percentage reduction: _____ Over (mm/yyyy - mm/yyyy): _____

How did you document this reduction?

We are currently in the process of documenting how much energy our building will be able to save and conserve. This year, RMS-CES had the addition of new, efficient hot water boilers, commercial water heaters, and low pressure steam boilers. These items are all energy-star rated and allowed our building to take part in CenterPoint Energy's Conservation Improvement Rebate Program, receiving rebates of over \$24,400. Our goal is to conserve and reduce energy with these efficient devices; at this time, we do not have enough information to document the amount of energy we have saved due to their recent installation.

4. What percentage of your school's energy is obtained from?

On-site renewable energy generation: ____ Type: Solar panels were just installed this year. We do not yet have the data for the percentage of the energy we have obtained from this installation as the meter will be hooked up next week. _____

Purchased renewable energy: none _____ Type: _____

Participation in USDA Fuel for Schools, DOE Wind for Schools or other federal or state school energy program: None

5. In what year was your school originally constructed? 1953 _____

What is the total building area of your school? 110,500 square feet _____

6. Has your school constructed or renovated building(s) in the past ten years? Yes or No: yes _____

For renovated building(s):

Percentage of the building area that meets green building standards: none _____

Certification level and year: _____ **Renovated area:** _____

Element 1B: Improved water quality, efficiency, and conservation

7. Can you demonstrate a reduction in your school's total water consumption from an initial baseline?

Yes or No: Not currently _____

8. What measures are you taking to reduce water consumption, such as controlling leaks and water-efficient devices?

9.

Answer: This year, we installed new drinking fountains with timers; they also include water bottle filling stations. Students and staff are encouraged to reduce water consumption with student-made PSAs about water usage. Any pipe leakage is addressed as quickly as possible to avoid water waste. _____

9. What percentage of your landscaping is considered water-efficient and/or regionally appropriate?

RMS-CES has two rain gardens (totaling 1500 square feet) in our front landscaping, which help manage storm water runoff. Types of plants used and location: The plants used in the rain garden consist of native Minnesota plants and flowers and include the following varieties: Sweet Flag, Wild Leek, Canada Anemone, Swamp



Milkweed, Blue Indigo, Turtlehead, Joey Pye Weed, Boneset, Bottle Gentian, Blue Flag Iris, Button Blazing Star, Prairie Blazing Star, Cardinal Flower, Great Blue Lobelia, Monkey Flower, Obedient Plant, Mountain Mint, Wool Grass, Nodding Onion, Little Bluestem, Columbine, Butterfly Weed, Sky Blue Aster, Purple Coneflower, Fireweed, Wild Geranium, Wild Bergamot, Switch Grass, Yellow Coneflower, Black Eyed Susan, and Showy Goldenrod.

10. Describe alternate water sources used for irrigation. (50 words max)

11. Describe any efforts to reduce storm water runoff and/or reduce impermeable surfaces.

Description: Incoming students (5th and 6th grade) planted the rain gardens on their first days of school. Experts from Wright County Soil and Water Conservation District were on site during the planting and afterwards in classrooms to talk to students about reducing storm water runoff on our campus and beyond. Parents and families were encouraged to install rain gardens at their homes.

12. Our school's drinking water comes from: (place an “x” after your choice)

Municipal water source: X _____

Well on school property: _____

13. How does the school ensure drinking water is safe, such as lead testing, well testing, and steps to reduce lead (50 word max):

Description: The City of Rockford does all of the water testing for the school's water. They test the city's water regularly to ensure its safety.

14. What percentage of the school grounds are devoted to ecologically beneficial uses such as natural areas, rain gardens, and run-off buffer? _____

Description(50 word max): RMS-CES grounds are devoted to different types of beneficial use. Students and staff maintain a DNR-approved School Forest, and have an ongoing plan to clear invasive species for native plants to thrive. There is a small school garden as well as a grape vine planting grown in the 7th grade science class with the help of a community member. In addition, plans are in place to plant native prairie grasses to control erosion and run-off.

Element 1C: Reduced waste production

16. What percentage of solid waste is diverted from landfilling or incinerating due to reduction, recycling and/or organics diversion (food to people, food to hogs and/or composting)? Note that Minnesota Statutes, section 115A.151 requires that schools must recycle a minimum of three material types. Complete all the calculations below to receive points.

We have examined and calculated our data on a yearly scale, which is reflected below.

- A. Yearly garbage service in tons (garbage dumpster size(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected): 68.3 tons
- B. Yearly recycling volume in tons (recycling dumpster sizes(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected): 34.94 tons



- C. Yearly organics diversion (food to people, food to hogs and/or composting) volume(s) in cubic yards (leftover food collection bin/food scrap and/or soiled paper dumpster size(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected): 46.88 tons

Recycling and Diversion Rate = $((B + C) \div (A + B + C) \times 100)$: $81.82 / 150.12 * 100 = 54.50$ tons

Yearly waste generated per person = (A/number of students and staff): $68.3 / 600 = .11$ tons per year _____

Using the data we have available to us, we have concluded the following changes between the 2011/2012 and the 2012/2013 school years:

33.1 ton reduction in total solid waste generated – down from 101.4 to 68.3 tons

.94 ton increase in materials recycled – up from 34 to 34.94 tons

46.88 tons of organic waste diverted from landfill and composted – up from 0

22 metric ton reduction in our CO₂ emissions (-22 MTCO₂E)

With input from the custodial staff, a new waste measurement method was developed: The night before a scheduled waste pick-up, a custodian would measure, in $\frac{1}{4}$ full increments, the level of the waste inside the dumpsters and note this level on a tracking sheet nearby. The numbers would be converted to cubic yards, and be compiled, analyzed, and reported as before.

We used the 2011-2012 weight report we received from our hauler, Randy's Environmental, for the tons for the Service Weight and Recycling Servicing Frequency Spreadsheet. We used the estimated cubic yard numbers of solid waste and co-mingled recycling from our waste tracking sheets and converted them to tons with the conversion factors we received from Randy's for our 2012-2013 service weight numbers.

	Solid Waste	Recycling	SSO	Total Waste
2011/2012	101.4 tons	34 tons	0	170.2 tons
2012/2013	68.3 tons	34.94 tons	46.88 tons	150.12 tons
	(-33.1 tons)	(-.94 tons)	(+46.88)	(-20.08 tons)

We found the quantities of organic waste held close to steady at all schools from the start. As we did not have a conversion factor for organics, we used the average of 6 weights taken by Randy's from September through early December and multiplied those figures by the number of organic waste dumps per school year (40 at each school) to get our total tons.

The EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM) summary report below shows us that the 46.88 tons of organic waste we diverted from a landfill and redirected to be composted gave us a 22 metric ton reduction in our CO₂ emissions (-22 MTCO₂E) for the 2012/2013 school year.

17. What percentage of your school's total office/classroom paper content by cost is post-consumer material or fiber from forests certified as responsibly managed by the Forest Stewardship Council (If a product is only 30% recycled content, only 30% of the cost should be counted)? _____

18. List the types and amounts of hazardous waste generated at your school. (Note that Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.33 bans mercury in Minnesota schools.)



Flammable Liquids: paint thinner, mineral spirits, non-sewer lab waste, petroleum naphtha _____

Corrosive liquids: lead acid batteries_____

Toxics: zinc sulfate, ferrous sulfide, PCB ballasts_____

Mercury:_____

Other: fluorescent laps, used oil filters, used oil, antifreeze, electronics, oil sorbent

How is this measured?

The solids are measured by weight and liquids are measured by volume. The quantities vary year to year.

How is hazardous waste disposal tracked?

Rockford Area Schools contracts with the University of Minnesota's Fay Thompson Center for Environmental Management, which annually collects, measures, and properly disposes of our hazardous waste, except for fluorescent bulbs, which are disposed of by Retrofit Recycling, Inc.

19. Describe other measures taken to reduce solid waste and hazardous waste, use recycled materials, and properly dispose of hazardous materials. Include electronic devices. (100 word max)

Description: The organics-recycling program allows for single sort recycling and organic food waste composting. This has reduced the amount of waste our school produces. The program has saved usable waste from traveling to a landfill as well as money for our district, and increased environmental awareness about waste. Students and staff have been taught which items can be recycled and composted to reduce waste in our building by Katie Alexander, a representative from Hennepin County Environmental Services. In addition, as part of our waste management initiative, funding has been provided for a lunch monitor; in order to obtain the most benefits from our organics recycling program, this person is available to help students place their waste in the correct bins. Our electronic waste is recycled on an as-needed basis throughout the year utilizing Tech Dump, an electronic waste-recycling program that recycles 100% of collected materials. Toner and ink cartridges are either recycled through the manufacturer or sent to help the University of Minnesota Raptor Center. Signs and collecting stations have been set up in the media center; students and staff are encouraged to bring in their used cartridges to "Recycle for Raptors." _____

Element 1D: Alternative Transportation

21. What percentage of your students walk, bike, bus, or carpool (2 or more students in the car) to/from school? (Note if your school does not use school buses.) 20% _____

How is this data calculated? (50 word max)

Answer: This is based on observational data. Middle school is the first time students are allowed to walk or bike to school in our district (due to the elementary being on a busy highway). Students are excited for the opportunity to get to school by themselves, and many take advantage of this during the fall and spring. We are working on ways to encourage more students to walk or bike, including adding new, brightly colored bike racks._____

22. Has your school implemented any of the following? (place an "x" after all that apply)



Designated carpool parking stalls: Not applicable: drop off is done on a rotating basis (no parking) _____

A well-publicized no idling policy that applies to all vehicles (including school buses): _____

Vehicle loading/unloading areas are at least 25 feet from building air intakes, doors, and windows: X _____

Safe Pedestrian Routes to school or Safe Routes to School: X _____

Describe activities in your safe routes program and other events to encourage students to walk, bike or carpool, including number of participants. (50 word max)

Description: There are newly painted crosswalks in place around our building, and a designated route is in place for students who live across Highway 55 and walk or bike to school, including crosswalks and stoplights. _____

23. Describe how your school transportation use is efficient and has reduced its environmental impact. (50 word max)

Describe: Five years ago, our district had multi-tier bussing and different start and end times in our school buildings. A study was conducted to determine how effective this system was; it was decided to change to a single-tier bussing system with all schools operating on the same start and end times. This drastically changed how often our busses are out on runs as well as how many students the busses are carrying at one time. Our district wants to make sure the busses are running efficient and full routes to save on fuel and reduce environmental impact. _____

22. Describe any other efforts toward reducing environmental impact, focusing on innovative or unique practices and partnerships. (100 word max)

Our school partnerships focused on reducing environmental impact include Wright County Soil and Water Conservation District, who helped us design and plant two rain gardens, and Landscape Restoration, who worked with students to identify, cut, and eliminate buckthorn in our school forest. Our school does do a variety of practices to reduce environmental impact, including signage reminding about recyclable items, eliminating paper report cards, sending out electronic newsletters to parents and district members, and using plates, glasses, and silverware during meetings and also with our visitors and guests that can be washed instead of being thrown away.

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

Element 2A: Integrated school environmental health program

1. Describe your school's Integrated Pest Management efforts, including IPM/green certifications earned, routine inspections, pest identification, monitoring, record-keeping, pesticide reduction notification of staff and parents etc. (100 word max)

Description: Rockford Area Schools does not use pesticides. We contract with Adam's Pest Control to manage our pest control needs. Our school has an integrated pest management plan in place to reduce and eliminate pesticides and pest control policies, methods of application, and posting requirements are provided to parents and school employees in accordance with the Janet B. Johnson Parents' Right to Know Act (MN Stat. 121A.30). Adam's Pest Control following the requirements of posting treated areas; the Janet B Jonson's Parents' Right To Know requirements as outlined in state law, and district policies. We do not use pesticides within the building. Copies of pesticide labels, copies of notices, MSDS and annual summaries of pesticide applications are all available in an accessible location. Our school prohibits children from entering a treated



area for at least eight hours after the treatment (or longer if required by the pesticide label). External applications occur only after school hours, and only when there is enough lapse time, as defined by the label. Which of the following practices does your school employ to minimize exposure to hazardous contaminants? State yes, no or not apply and explain with specific examples of actions taken.

Our school has a comprehensive indoor air quality management program that is consistent with Minnesota Department of Health best practices which are based on EPA's IAQ Tools for Schools: X__

An IAQ Management Plan was developed by Rockford Area Schools with assistance from Resource Training and Solutions and Clean Air Group, Inc. based on the EPA's IAQ Tools for Schools, most recently revised in 2010.

Our school prohibits smoking on campus and in public school buses: X__

Smoking is not allowed anywhere on district property.

Our school is in compliance with Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.33 and has identified and properly removed sources of elemental mercury and prohibits its purchase and use in the school. (This does not apply for fluorescent bulbs, mercury thermostats, switches and gauges for HVAC systems.): X__

Rockford Area Schools is in compliance and continues to properly report and dispose of any mercury identified in bulbs, thermostats, switches, and gauges from the HVAC systems.

Our school uses fuel burning equipment (such as boilers, water heaters and ovens) and has taken steps to protect occupants from carbon monoxide (CO):____

Our school has sampled frequently occupied rooms in the last five years 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:____

Our school has identified and properly manages or has removed, where applicable, asbestos-containing materials, according to U.S. EPA AHERA regulations and, where applicable, the Minnesota Department of Health asbestos abatement rules: X__

Rockford Area Schools follows state and federal law and regulations for asbestos management and abatement. We conduct six-month surveillances by a certified, licensed inspector, and conduct three-year plan reviews. Asbestos abatement is included, when present, in any repair, remodel, or mechanical replacement activity.

Our school has identified and properly removed sources of lead according to the U.S. EPA's Renovation, Remodeling and Painting Rule where lead containing paint may be disturbed in areas used by children under the age of six: X__

We have identified a very minimum amount of lead paint in our school. Abatement is included in any remodel or repair activity if lead paint is present.

Our school has identified any wood playground or other structures that contain chromate copper arsenate and has taken steps to eliminate exposure: X__

We identified the wood playground structure on our grounds as hazardous, and removed the playground in August 2012. A plan is in place for a new natural play scape that will showcase Minnesota's biomes and provide an integrated design with our environmental curriculum.



Our school has working local exhaust systems for major airborne contaminant sources: _____

2. Describe how your school controls and manages chemicals routinely used in the school (including science, shop and maintenance) to minimize student and staff exposure. (100 word max)

Description: We have switched to a cleaning product line that is rated HIMS: 1,0,0 for concentrate, HIMS: 0,0,0 in use dilution, is biodegradable, has low VOC's, contains no asthmagens, and has a Neutral ph. (Envirox H2Orange2 Concentrate 117). We keep custodial closets and shops where chemicals may present locked at all times, and we lock the cabinets containing chemicals used in science labs. We prove staff with appropriate PPE, and provide training on proper use of PPE. The cleaning products contain no asthmagens, and we use HEPA filters in all of our vacuum cleaners. The air filters in our HVAC units are routinely changed 3 times per year. _____

3. Which green cleaning custodial service standard is used (i.e., Green Seal Standard for Commercial and Institutional Cleaning Services (GS-42), the ISSA Cleaning Industry Management Standard – Green Building)? _____

What percentage of all products is third-party certified? _____

4. Describe actions your school has taken to have your school bus fleet retrofitted with cleaner burning engines or to acquire cleaner burning buses or fuel. (100 word max)

5. Describe actions your school takes to control moisture from leaks, condensation, and excess humidity and promptly clean up mold or remove moldy materials when it is found. (100 word max)

Description: In 2014, a new HVAC system and new windows were installed, as well as a new roof on one third of the building. This HVAC system has DDC controls that monitor and control humidity levels. The HVAC system is very efficient. We have a roof maintenance contract with Service Master to prevent and/or address any roof leaks as quickly as possible. When detected, we promptly clean any mold with a bleach water solution. We remove and replace ceiling tiles that may become wet to prevent mold growth. We water-jetted our main building and exterior drain lines in the summer to minimize the opportunity for drain clogs and back ups. _____

6. 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 (Minnesota State Mechanical Code/American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) guideline or 15 cubic feet per minute (cfm) of fresh air per occupant). 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. (100 word max)

Description: We completed a district-wide HVAC re-commissioning project in 2001 and installed a new HVAC system and air-handling units in 2014 to assure that our equipment is running at optimal capacity. We use a Preventative Maintenance program that schedules our regular HVAC filter changes, unit cleaning, and maintenance. _____

7. Describe steps your school takes to protect indoor environmental quality, such as access to daylight, lighting quality, views to nature, acoustics, thermal comfort, etc. (200 word max)

Description: The new HVAC system and air-handling units provide opportunities for increased environmental quality and thermal comfort for all students and staff. We use DDC controls, optimized start times, and occupant load equipment scheduling to assure maximum thermal comfort. Our school has motion sensor lighting to minimize use when no one is present and to ensure lighting is appropriate when students and staff are in the area. The majority of classrooms have outside windows, and those that do not have skylights for



natural lighting. Views outside classrooms may include rain garden, vegetable garden, vineyard, or fields. Our media center has floor to ceiling windows and includes views to birdfeeders. We keep a bird journal on the counter so students can track what they see outside while in the media center. There are plans in place for a new multipurpose area in the front of our school that would feature large windows and expansive views.

8. Describe any other actions your school takes to manage indoor environmental hazards such as ice arena contaminants, PCBs, kitchen equipment, and air quality in swimming pools. Including doing periodic, comprehensive inspections of the school facility to identify environmental health and safety issues and take corrective action. (200 word max)

Description: Rockford Area Schools conducts the following annual or semi-annual inspections: OSHA, Fire Marshall, Asbestos, Worker's Comp Insurance Site Hazards, and Health Department inspections and take corrective action if needed or when cited. We conduct quarterly Safety Committee meetings that include addressing IAQ issues. Our school works closely with Resource Training and Solutions to manage health and safety in our buildings as well as provide compliance checks. Frequent inspections and continued assessments of our school's health and safety issues are of utmost importance.

Element 2B: Nutrition and Fitness

9. Which practices does your school employ to promote nutrition, physical activity and overall school health? State yes, no or not apply and explain with specific examples of actions taken. (50 word max each) - **please attach answers on a separate document)**

Our school participates in the USDA's Healthier US School Challenge. no_

Level and year: _____

Our school participates in a Farm to School program to use local, fresh food: yes_

We currently use locally grown produce and fruit such as apples in our school cafeteria and hope to grow this program in the future.

Our school has a fruit, vegetable and greens salad bar: yes_

Students have the opportunity to fill their trays with fruits and vegetables from our salad bar. Along with their entrée, students can take an unlimited amount of fruit and vegetables, including salads, broccoli, carrots, radishes, pea pods, peppers, strawberries, apples, oranges, bananas, and pears. Students have increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Our school has an on-site food garden: yes_

We have eight square foot container gardens, which are grown by our middle school garden club. This year, we have hired a new agriculture teacher who will be taking over the gardens. The school garden has produced tomatoes, squash, watermelon, pumpkins, peas, flower, and herbs. There are plans in place to increase the space of the school garden.

Our school garden supplies food for our students in the cafeteria, a cooking or garden class or to the community: yes_

This has been a work in progress, as the garden has produced a limited amount of produce in the fall. Herbs and tomatoes have been used in our lunch program, and signs have been placed in the garden notifying students and staff of their use. We are excited about expanding this program in the future with our new



agriculture teacher; there are plans in place to develop a larger garden space in an open lot across the road from our building.

Food purchased by our school is certified as "environmentally preferable" (USDA certified organic, Fair Trade, Food Alliance or Rainforest Alliance): no _____

Percentage: _____ Type: _____

Our students spent at least 120 minutes per week over the past year in school supervised physical education: yes _____

Students take physical education class on a rotating basis throughout the year; they are held on opposite days of the music classes. Physical education classes are held outside as much as possible. In addition to this, all students receive 15 minutes of recess each day that takes place before or after their lunch.

At least 50% of our students' annual physical education takes place outdoors: yes (weather permitting)

Health measures are integrated into assessments: yes _____

Students are expected to know, understand, and apply proper nutrition and exercise basics, as well as how these concepts work in the body's system. During Healthy Lifestyles class, students are assessed on their understanding of nutrition, cells, movement, energy conversion, and wellness.

At least 50% of our students have participated in the EPA's Sunwise program (or equivalent UV protection and skin health education program): No _____

10. Describe the type of outdoor learning activities, exercise and recreation available, including features such as trails, natural playgrounds, gardens, habitat projects and outdoor classrooms and describe the frequency of use. (100 word max)

Description: RMS- CES has multiple outdoor learning spaces available on campus that are used frequently by classes. Teachers have been trained in the Project Learning Tree curriculum on how to use DNR-approved School Forest for classroom use. Students and staff have worked together to clear brush, eliminate buckthorn, and create a trail system. This area also contains a wetland, which has been used for water testing and sampling during an exploratory class. Our school garden area consists of square foot gardens and a grape vine planting grown by our 7th graders from cuttings. The two school rain gardens are by the front entrance; students have the opportunity to plant, weed, and identify flowers and insects. Off campus, teachers use the Crow River for a phenology project throughout the year as they track changes in the season. We are in the process of building a natural playground that will encourage activity in a natural environment. All students also attend Baker Near Wilderness Settlement twice per year for outdoor education classes. _____

11. Describe any other efforts to improve nutrition and fitness, highlighting innovative or unique practices and partnerships. (100 word max)

Description: Health and wellness is a priority for students and staff members. Our district is implementing a statewide health improvement plan from Hennepin County, including nutrition and action proposals. The nutrition initiative includes low calorie vending machine choices, non-food rewards such as stickers or pencils, and healthy classroom celebration snacks such as yogurt, fruit, and vegetables. Active recess time during the day allows students to move and interact with a variety of equipment choices, games, and activities. Students have created active minute videos for use in classrooms, and all teachers have been trained on the use of active classroom practices. Staff development days frequently start with activities such as a walk, badminton, yoga, or volleyball. Our district insurance also offers resources such as biometric testing,



goal setting, and personal coaching.

Coordinated School Health, Mental Health, School Climate, and Safety

12. Does your school use a Coordinated School Health approach or other health-related initiatives to address overall school health issues? Yes No

If yes, describe the health-related initiatives or approaches used by the school:

Our school iTeam meets student needs based on the RtI framework. It consists of different tiers to meet academic, behavioral, and mental health needs of our school community. The team includes a Nystrom school-based therapist as well as the principal, school counselor, district nurse, teachers, and staff members. The group works together to respond to the needs of students.

13. Does your school partner with any postsecondary institutions, businesses, nonprofit organizations, or community groups to support student health and/or safety? Yes No

If yes, describe these partnerships:

Nystrom and Associates provides a school-based mental health therapist in our building to partner to meet the mental health needs of our students. Students have the opportunity to work with therapists in counseling sessions; they collaborate with our school leaders and counselors to improve the health of our students. RMS-CES also works with Wright County Safe Schools to ensure a safe environment for all students. Resource Training and Solutions also provides opportunities for our student's health, including training for teachers and administration. Our school also promotes Wellness on Wheels; they provide low cost health initiatives such as blood pressure checks, immunizations, and dental clinics. Our community Lions group provides eyeglasses to students in need, and RiverWorks partners with our school to give holiday meals to local families as well as distribute items from the food shelf.

14. Does your school have a school nurse and/or a school-based health center? Yes No

15. Describe your school's efforts to support student mental health and school climate (e.g. anti-bullying programs, peer counseling, etc.):

Our school takes active steps to provide a safe and welcoming climate for all students and staff. We have implemented the WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) Program to partner 7th and 8th grade students with younger students in the building. Our older student act as mentors, check in with their small group, and teach lessons about friendships, studying, and navigating middle school during our Boost time. They work with younger students in sessions about bullying, making choices, and staying focused; leaders interact with their groups during lunch, assemblies, and lock-ins. In addition, middle school students take part in the Courage Retreat, led by Youth Frontiers, to provide students with the tools for positive decision-making and moral courage. 5th grade students participate in the DARE program to promote safe choices. Rockford Area Schools has partners with Nystrom and Associates to provide counseling services to students during the school day. In addition, our school utilizes a "Stop and Think" room for behaviors, working with a Restorative Justice model to keep students in class as much as possible. If needed, students can attend wRight Choice, a program created by Wright County Safe Schools and the Wright County Court System that provides an alternative to suspensions. This program creates a space for retribution, community service, schoolwork, and interventions.



Pillar 3: Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

1. Which practices does your school employ to help ensure effective environmental and sustainability education? State yes, no or not apply and explain with specific examples of actions taken, highlighting innovative or unique practices and partnerships.

Our school has an environmental or sustainability literacy requirement beyond state academic standards and graduation requirements. (100 word max): yes _____

All students will have the opportunity to take STEM Literacy and Agriculture as rotating quarter classes. The curriculum for STEM Literacy is based on both technology and environmental literacy standards. The agriculture curriculum includes United States and Minnesota agriculture, including gardening, animal science, soil and water science, horticulture, food science and safety, agriculture history, and careers in agriculture.

The Minnesota Environmental Literacy Scope and Sequence are blended into the core curriculum in the middle school, which consist of social and natural systems, outputs, and connectedness. RMS-CES teachers are excited to see how this scope and sequence connects to the new cross cutting science standards, which will be used as a basis for collaboration between subject areas. As students move through our school, they will experience a variety of environmentally based systems, such as ecosystems and habitats, biomes, waterways, historical land use, and agriculture in Minnesota.

Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated throughout the curriculum. (100 word max): yes _____

Teachers in a variety of subject areas work together to incorporate environmental literacy as a connecting theme in our building. Students are encouraged to understand our local environment, take ownership of our land, and enjoy outdoor activities. Interdisciplinary units are driven by grade level science standards and environmental themes. Students explore concepts related to ecology, energy, and the environment. For example, 6th grade art class participated in the Global Cardboard Challenge, creating models of Minnesota landmarks with working and moving parts, all from recycled materials. 8th grade communications class held a debate on river management, with each student taking on a role, researching their side, and debating their points. 7th grade math students chart and diagram lead levels in bald eagles treated at the University of Minnesota Raptor Center. These are just a few examples of environmental and sustainability classroom integration.

Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated into assessments. (100 word max): yes _____

Teachers are continually working on assessments that measure learning in state standards and sustainability and environmental concepts. Assessments of these concepts fit naturally into many subject areas. For example, 6th grade students are assessed not only on force and motion in science, but also Isaac Newton's biography in language arts. In 7th grade, students are assessed on their understanding of bald eagles in a variety of classes: by researching their ecosystems in language arts, by graphing lead levels in Minnesota in math, and by categorizing raptors in science. In 8th grade, students are assessed on their application of science astronomy standards in their language arts class by writing poetry and reports about space exploration and constellations. Each teacher is responsible to assess their own state standards; the concepts of environmental education provide a framework for lessons and assessments.

Professional development in environmental and sustainability education is provided to all teachers. (100 word max): yes _____



All teachers, including core, specialists, and special education teachers have the opportunity for ongoing professional development in outdoor, environmental, and sustainability education. We are currently working with our 5th grade team (new to our building in the 2014-2015 school year) to provide STEM and environmental professional development opportunities. Prior to this year, all teaching staff took part in both the Jeffers Foundation training and the DNR Project Learning Tree training; these days were devoted to learning how to use our school campus effectively for outdoor education as well as implementing school wide outdoor classroom methods. We have also provided other opportunities for teachers, such as the DNR's Project WET and Project WILD, the Minnesota Environmental Education conference, the School Forest conference, the Department of Education's Environmental Educator's conference, the River's Institute class through Hamel University, and attending STEM trainings at Saint Cloud State University. Our school's goal is to provide relevant and timely environmental and sustainability professional development to all teachers in an ongoing basis.

2. For schools serving grades 9-12, provide:

Percentage of last year's eligible graduates who completed an AP Environmental Science course during their high school career: _____

Percentage scoring a 3 or higher: _____

What other environmental courses are available? _____

3. How does your school use sustainability and the environment as a context for learning science, technology, engineering and mathematics thinking skills and content knowledge? (100 word max)

Answer: As a STEM magnet school, RMS-CES has an underlying environmental vision and mission that sets us apart from other middle schools; teachers and students are conscious of environmental education and STEM concepts as connected threads throughout the four grade levels in the building. Our school community is aware of current environmental issues, both locally and globally, and teachers work to develop lessons, units, and exploratory classes that support real world concepts using STEM thinking skills and content. Some examples include journaling about changes taking place on our campus throughout the seasons and creating a technology based project, documenting waste in the building and creating a challenge for students to recycle, understanding Vermi composting and building worm bins for use in our building and at home, and creating artwork of Minnesota landmarks with engineering, math, and recycled materials. Students learn the engineering process, and this guides project-based learning in the classrooms. Students work to develop ideas, explore possibilities, and refine their final products. _____

4. How does your school use sustainability and the environment as a context for learning green technologies and career pathways? (100 word max)

Answer: RMS-CES teachers provide a number of ways for students to learn more about environmental, technology based, and sustainable careers. Each spring, we hold a STEM Career Fair, inviting local professionals with careers that include ties to science, technology, engineering, math, and environmental practices. Students chart career paths and interests during their STEM Literacy and Agriculture classes as well as in FFA, focusing on growing fields in technology, agriculture, environmental science, and engineering. They develop questions to ask of the professionals who donate their time to our building and create projects based on the information they've learned about these careers. Students also have the opportunity to attend a variety of field experiences that showcase environmentally based careers. Students tour General Electric to learn more about alternative energy, Target Field to view LEED design in buildings, Wright Hennepin Electric to experience local engineering careers, and Medtronic to understand developing medical technologies. RMS-CES provides a number of opportunities for all students to learn about environmentally



focused careers as they begin their path towards high school, college, and beyond.

5. Describe students' civic/community engagement projects integrating environment and sustainability topics. (100 word max)

Description: We encourage students and staff to take pride in our local environment. During the annual Thousand Hearts event, students and community members gather at RMS-CES to pull weeds, lay mulch, build trails, eliminate buckthorn, and plant gardens. Students also work in our community; the Green Team does a twice-yearly trail clean up in Three Rivers Park. In addition, students work with our school partner, Baker Park Near Wilderness Settlement, to develop service projects in the park, such as raking mulch, building small bridges, organizing equipment, and eliminating invasive species.

6. 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 innovative or unique practices and partnerships. This can also include before and after school, during the summer and other enrichment opportunities. Examples include childcare programs, community education courses, parent education courses, and student green teams, environmental or outdoor clubs. (Maximum 200 words)

Description: RMS-CES works closely with local experts and school partners (see below) to provide quality environmental experiences for all students in grades 5-8. Students will have the opportunity for field experiences to Baker Near Wilderness Settlement twice per year in the fall and winter which highlight outdoor learning skills including archery, wild edibles, compass and GPS use, survival and fire-building skills, snowshoeing, skiing, fishing, animal pelt and print identification, tree and plant identification, and Minnesota Big Woods stories. In addition, there are multiple small group opportunities for students who are interested in visiting environmental and sustainable businesses and organizations, such as the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. RMS-CES offers multiple ways for students to be involved in environmental programs outside of school hours. Our FFA chapter is new this year and has attracted many students who are interested in horticulture, animals, and science. The chapter at RMS-CES is the first and only chapter in Minnesota; these middle school students qualified for State in poultry while competing against others in high school. Students also have the chance to be part of the Envirothon competition; the club meets to work on understanding soil, animals, water, and plants and competes in the spring. The Green Team meets monthly after school to develop plans to help students and staff conserve water, energy, and food. Our Outdoor Club met monthly and gave students the chance to try GPS and geocaching, cross-country skiing, canoeing, and photography.

7. Describe your partnerships (e.g. business, community, informal education, colleges) to help your school and other schools achieve in the 3 Pillars. Include both the scope and impact of these partnerships. (Maximum 200 words)

Description: RMS-CES has developed many partnerships to provide authentic environmental learning experiences, reduce our environmental impact, and improve the health and wellness of our students. These partnerships include Deep Portage Conservation Reserve, Three Rivers Park District, The University of Minnesota Raptor Center, General Electric, and Wright County Soil and Water Conservation District. These organizations encourage students and staff to get outside with their friends and families, learn outdoor activities, reduce their food, energy, and water waste, understand land use, and leave a smaller impact on our environment. Our middle school also invites community members and local businesses such as Fishing Clinics for Kids, Checkered Flag Tree Service, and Landscape Restoration to share their expertise with our students on how to help our environment thrive by controlling invasive species, using trails, and understanding regulations in outdoor activities. Adults in our community with environmental, sustainability, and STEM career paths are invited to our annual career fair. Last year, over 45 people came to RMS-CES to



showcase their careers for our students, and they provided many new insights into a college and career paths that focus on environmental and STEM concepts. It is our goal to continue to strengthen our current partnerships as well as develop more partnerships with community groups to help our students make healthy choices, understand the environment outside their door, enjoy being outside, and learn more about environmental, sustainability and STEM concepts.