

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
**GreenRibbonSchools**

ED-GRS (2012-2013)

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U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools 2013

Charter  Title I  Magnet  Private  Independent

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

Official School Name St. Thomas Aquinas School  
(As it should appear on an award)

School  
Mailing Address 4600 N. Illinois Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Indianapolis IN 46208  
City State Zip

County Marion State School Code Number\* C675

Telephone (317) 255-6244 Fax (317) 255-6106

Web site/URL www.staindy.org/our-school E-mail cswinefurth@staindy.org

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

Cara Swinefurth Date January 29, 2014  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Mrs. Gina Kuntz-Fleming  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name\* Archdiocese of Indianapolis Tel. (317) 236-1430

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.

Gina Kuntz Fleming Date January 29, 2014  
(Superintendent's Signature)

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



**PART II – SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Instructions to School Principal**

Provide a concise and coherent "snapshot" that describes how your school is representative of your jurisdiction's highest achieving green school efforts in approximately 800 words. Summarize your strengths and accomplishments. Focus on what makes your school worthy of the title U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School.

**PART III – DOCUMENTATION OF STATE EVALUATION OF NOMINEE**

**Instructions to Nominating Authority**

The Nominating Authority must document schools' high achievement in each of the three ED-GRS Pillars and nine Elements. For each school nominated, please attach documentation in each Pillar and Element. This may be the Authority's application based on the Framework and sample application or a committee's written evaluation of a school in each Pillar and Element.

**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 one or more of grades Pre-K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a Pre-K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
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

*Indiana Department of Education*

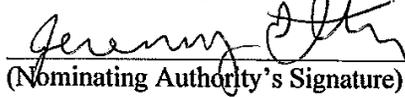
Name of Nominating Authority

*Ms. Jeremy Eltz Jeremy Eltz*  
(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.

  
(Nominating Authority's Signature)

Date

1/30/2014

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](mailto: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](mailto: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.



## ED-GRS Indiana Department of Education Application

Thank you for your interest in completing the Indiana Department of Education application for nomination to U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS). In order to complete this application, you will need to collect data about your school's facility, health and safety policies; food service; and environmental and sustainability curriculum.

ED-GRS recognizes schools taking a comprehensive approach to greening their school. A comprehensive approach incorporates environmental learning with improving environmental and health impacts. Becoming a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School is a two-step process. The first step is to complete and submit this form to be selected as a nominee by an eligible nominating authority. The second step of the process requires signatures for the nominee package that will be sent to the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

ED selects honorees from those presented by eligible nominating authorities nationwide. Selection will be based on documentation of the applicant's high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars:

Pillar I: Reduce environmental impact and costs.

Pillar II: Improve the health and wellness of students and staff.

Pillar III: Provide effective environmental and sustainability education, incorporating STEM, civic skills and green career pathways.

Schools demonstrating exemplary achievement in all three Pillars will receive highest rankings. It is important to document concrete achievement. It will help you to assemble a team to complete the application. This team might include: a facilities manager, physical education director, food services director, curriculum director, finance department representatives, teachers and students. You should consult the ED-GRS [resources page](#) for standards, programs and grants related to each Pillar, Element and question. This is an excellent clearinghouse of resources for all schools, not just those who apply.

The questions in this application will help you demonstrate your high achievement in these Pillars as well as provide space for you to include pertinent documentation. You will receive points when you provide documentation for your answers. **Applications are due by midnight December 16, 2013.**

Note that if selected for nomination to ED-GRS, the school principal and district superintendent must be prepared to certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true; however, 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 one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)



2. The school has been evaluated and selected from among schools within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction as 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. 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.

#### School Contact Information

School Name: St. Thomas Aquinas School

Street Address: 4600 N. Illinois St.

City: Indianapolis State: IN Zip: 46208

Website: <http://www.staindy.org/our-school/> Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StThomasAquinasSchool>

Principal Name: Cara Swinefurth

Principal Email Address: [cswinefurth@staschool-indy.org](mailto:cswinefurth@staschool-indy.org) Phone Number: 317-255-6244

Lead Applicant Name (if different): Sharon Horvath

Lead Applicant Email: [shorvath@staschool-indy.org](mailto:shorvath@staschool-indy.org) Phone Number: 317-255-6244



<b>Level</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary (PK - 5 or 6) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> K - 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Middle (6 - 8 or 9) <input type="checkbox"/> High (9 or 10 - 12)	<b>School Type</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private/ Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Charter	<b>How would you describe your school?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural	<b>District Name</b> Archdiocese of Indianapolis <hr/> <b>Total Enrolled:</b> 214
<b>Does your school serve 40% or more students from disadvantaged households?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	% receiving FRPL 10%  % limited English proficient NA  Other measures <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>		<b>Graduation rate:</b> NA  <b>Attendance rate:</b> 96.4%

**Application Outline:**

<u>ED-GRS Pillars and Elements</u>	<u>Points</u>
Cross-Cutting Question: Participation in green school programs	5 points
<b>Pillar I: Reduce environmental impact and costs: 30%</b>	
Element 1A: Reduced or eliminated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions Energy Buildings	15 points
Element 1B: Improved water quality, efficiency, and conservation Water Grounds	5 points
Element 1C: Reduced waste production Waste Hazardous waste	5 points
Element 1D: Use of alternative transportation	5 points
<b>Pillar II: Improve the health and wellness of students and staff: 30%</b>	
Element 2A: Integrated school environmental health program Integrated Pest Management	15 points



Contaminant controls and Ventilation Asthma control Indoor air quality Moisture control Chemical management	
Element 2B: Nutrition and fitness Fitness and outdoor time Food and Nutrition	15 points
Pillar III: Provide effective environmental and sustainability education, incorporating STEM, civic skills and green career pathways: 35%	
Element 3A: Interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between dynamic environmental, energy and human systems	20 points
Element 3B: Use of the environment and sustainability to develop STEM content, knowledge, and thinking skills	5 points
Element 3C: Development and application of civic knowledge and skills	10 points
Total	100 points

*Summary Narrative:* Provide an 800 word maximum narrative describing your school’s efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs; improve student and staff health; and provide effective environmental and sustainability education. Focus on unique and innovative practices and partnerships.

St. Thomas Aquinas School is a small, urban, Catholic school located in Indianapolis, IN with a current enrollment of 214 students in grades K – 8. We strive to translate our faith into action, including how our actions affect the environment.

Reducing the physical impact of our facilities on the environment is a work in progress, but the progress we have made has been steady. The original school building (built in 1941) had low water use toilets installed (2002), a paper recycling partnership with Abitibi was begun (2006), the windows were replaced with more efficient windows (2007), commingled recycling service was added (2009), and environmental impact was a factor in evaluating new flooring choices (2011). By encouraging walking and biking through our Safe Routes to School program (implemented in 2007), greenhouse gas emissions from cars have been reduced by 19%.

Our lunch waste has been reduced by composting fruit and vegetable scraps, recycling milk cartons, and collecting juice pouches and chip bags to up-cycle through Terracycle. The school recycles paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminum, and glass. Approximately 30% of solid waste has been diverted through our recycling and composting efforts. In 2013, our school participated in the Recycle Bowl program from Keep America Beautiful for the 3rd year; we ranked 9<sup>th</sup>/135 schools in 2011 and 12<sup>th</sup>/218 schools in 2012.

A National Wildlife Federation certified Schoolyard Habitat was created in 2003 that uses mostly Indiana native plants to provide food, water, and shelter for birds, butterflies, and other small animals. The garden also provides an outdoor learning area for the school and is used for art, science, writing activities, and religion. One section of the garden, full of



milkweed and other larval host plants, is called our Butterfly Nursery and meets the requirements to be named a Monarch Waystation.

Student and staff health and wellness is important. Walking to school provides a healthy start to the day. Students are encouraged to be active through Physical Education classes, active recess, after school activities such as karate and flamenco dancing, and participation in school sponsored sports programs. Physical education classes provide a foundation for life-long activities such as walking, biking, yoga, tennis, karate, and dancing. Staff members are encouraged to participate in physical activity through archdiocesan wellness programs, including the wearing of pedometers to track daily steps. Nutrition education is provided in partnership with a local children's hospital, along with programs on dental hygiene and bike safety. Monthly newsletters on nutrition are sent to all school families.

The physical environment of the school promotes an awareness of taking care of creation with posters and environmentally themed art projects. The school celebrates Earth Week every year by collecting aluminum cans, collecting used sneakers to recycle through the Nike Grind process, and having a zero waste picnic lunch. We have also had Earth Week door decorating contests and made buttons with student artwork. The easy access to paper recycling bins in each classroom and several commingled recycle bins throughout the school make recycling an everyday habit at the school.

Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated throughout the curriculum. Science classes help students learn content knowledge about the natural world and its interactions. Natural materials such as shells, leaves, and seeds are used as manipulatives in elementary Math classes. Social Studies classes help us look at environmental concerns from a local and global perspective. Religion classes help frame environmental and sustainability issues as a way to care for our neighbors and for creation. Students respond to nature through Art classes and Language Arts by drawing and writing. In addition to using our Schoolyard Habitat for outdoor learning, we partner with several community resources such as parks and universities to visit prairie, river, and wetlands habitats. Junior high students develop leadership skills and learn about the responsibilities of citizenship in an outdoor setting at a three day camp. Mobile technology vans are used by a local university program called Discovering the Science of the Environment to allow students to map and collect data on trees and birds at our school.

Students are invited to participate in Earth Council, which allows students who have an interest in the environment to take part in service projects such as collecting gently used school supplies for donation to other schools, managing the annual paper drive, Earth Week aluminum can and shoe collections, and pulling invasive garlic mustard at a local park. Earth Council students also create nature themed art projects.

We are committed as a school to caring for our world and its inhabitants. Our faith calls us to consider the environmental impact of our actions. We plan to partner with our parish Creation Care Ministry to further reduce our environmental impact. There will always be more that we can do, but we strive to grow in our awareness and effectiveness.



1. 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  No Program(s) and level(s) achieved: [Click here to enter text.](#)

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

Yes  No Award(s) and year(s) In 2012, 3 students received 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes in a Citizens Energy Savers poster contest demonstrating how to conserve energy at home. (<http://www.citizensenergygroup.com/EPoerContest.aspx>)

**Optional work:** Certain questions have been labeled optional. These questions require more research than the applicant may have capacity to answer or the school currently may not be tracking the requisite data. Answering these questions will provide reviewers a more complete view of your green efforts. However, if you do not have the capacity to answer the question in the format it is asked; please provide either estimates or plans of how you intend to begin collecting this data.

## Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs

### Energy

1. **(Optional)** Can your school demonstrate a reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions?  Yes  No  
Through implementation of our Safe Routes to School Program we have been able to increase the number of students who are walking and biking to school regularly from 22% to 47%. The resulting reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is estimated at 19%.

Percentage reduction: 19%

Over (m/yy - m/yy): 2007-2013

Initial GHG emissions rate (MT eCO<sub>2</sub>/person): 9.57

Final GHG emissions rate (MT eCO<sub>2</sub>/person): 7.77

Offsets: [Click here to enter text.](#)

How did you calculate the reduction? In 2007, prior to starting our Safe Routes to School Program, we conducted a survey of students (using National SRTS survey methods) which indicated that 22% of students regularly walked and biked to school (48 students). In November 2013 we used a teacher-administered survey of all students in grades K-8 to determine that today, 100 of our 214 students (about 47%) “usually” walk or bike to school. For calculation of the savings resulting from this increased walking and biking, we made the following assumptions: 1. we assumed that on average, a student who reports walking and biking to school “usually” is walking/biking an average of 200 times / year (this accounts for walking to school most days and walking home some days) and 2. based on information that we store in our walking / biking tracking system, Active4.me, we know that our average walker /



biker is traveling approximately 0.5 miles to school. We assumed that the average driving distance for parents is 1.0 mile. We then estimated the number of miles driven by parents traveling to and from school both before and after implementing our SRTS program, and used an online CO<sub>2</sub> savings calculator (carbonfootprint.com) to calculate the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions rate for each condition.

2. Has your school received EPA ENERGY STAR certification or does it meet the requirements for ENERGY STAR certification?

Yes  No Year(s) and score(s) received: [Click here to enter text.](#)

3. **(Optional)** Has your school reduced its total non-transportation energy use from an initial baseline?  Yes  No

We will use these figures as a baseline and hope to reduce them as we implement some energy saving measures in our partnership with the parish Creation Care Ministry.

Current energy usage (kBTU/student/year): 9,711 kBTU/student/year (223,080 kwh/year = 761,180 kBTU and 13,161 therms/year = 1,316,981 kBTU; total = 2,078,161 kBTU/214 students = 9711 kBTU/student/year)

Current energy usage (kBTU/sq. ft./year): 72.9 kBTU/sf/year (calculated as above: 2,078,161 kBTU/28,500 sf = 72.9 kBTU/sf/yr)

Percentage reduction: NA

Over (m/yy - mm/yy): 6/1/12 – 5/31/13

How did you document this reduction? Electricity and gas bills were analyzed to calculate this baseline amount.

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

On-site renewable energy generation: 0% Type [Click here to enter text.](#)

Purchased renewable energy: 0% Type We are currently having discussions with the business manager about participating in Green Power from Indianapolis Power and Light but do not yet purchase renewable (wind) energy.

Participation in USDA Fuel for Schools, DOE Wind for Schools or other federal or state school energy program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

5. In what year was your school originally constructed? 1941

What is the total building area of your school? 28,500 sf

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

For new building(s): Percentage building area that meets green building standards: [Click here to enter text.](#)



Certification and level: [Click here to enter text.](#) Total constructed area: [Click here to enter text.](#)

For renovated building(s): Percentage of the building area that meets green building standards: 0  
Certification and level: [Click here to enter text.](#) Total renovated area: 365 sf (a small addition to the Kindergarten space)

## Water and Grounds

7. **(Optional)** Can you demonstrate a reduction in your school's total water consumption from an initial baseline?  Yes  No

The average amount of water used was 31.8 ccf/month x 748 gallons/1 ccf = 23,786 gallons/month for the school; 23,786 gallons/242 occupants = 98 gallons/person/month. Assuming 20 school days/month, the average use is approximately 5 gallons/person/day. This figure includes irrigation amounts; we don't have a way of measuring water used for irrigation separately.

Average Baseline water use (gallons per occupant): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Current water use (gallons per occupant): 5 gallons/person/day

Percentage reduction in domestic water use: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Percentage reduction in irrigation water use: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Time period measured (mm/yyyy - mm/yyyy): 6/11/2012 to 6/14/2013

How did you document this reduction (ie. ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, utility bills, school district reports)?: Water bills were analyzed for that time period.

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

Approximately 30% Types of plants used and location: The major landscaped area around the school is a National Wildlife Federation certified Schoolyard Habitat on the south side of the school (approximately 7200 sf). The remainder of the non-paved area that surrounds the school is grass (approximately 12,000 sf) with about 8 – 10 scattered trees and a grassy playground area on the north edge of the property (approximately 5000 sf). The Schoolyard Habitat contains mostly Indiana native plants such as purple coneflowers, black-eyed susans, false indigo, New England asters, goldenrods, coreopsis, Joe Pye weed, amsonia, penstemon, columbine, coral bells, milkweeds, spicebush, oak leaf hydrangea, and black chokeberry. The habitat also contains small native trees (Redbud, Hawthorn, and Dogwood). Several native serviceberry trees are planted between the parking lot and the school (east side of school).

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

Most of the Habitat area does not need supplemental watering, as it is mostly native plants. During times of drought, trees are watered efficiently using slow-release tree watering bags. However, the water does come from the municipal water source.



10. Describe any efforts to reduce stormwater runoff and/or reduce impermeable surfaces. (50 words max)

School renovations in 2000/2001 included re-designing the school entrance and constructing an addition across the front of the school. We believe that rainwater that collects on the new roof is directed to a gravel dry well that extends the width of the addition in order to reduce stormwater runoff.

11. Our school's drinking water comes from:  Municipal water source  Well on school property  Other:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

12. Describe how the water source is protected from potential contaminants. (50 words max)

Water for our school is supplied by Citizens Water and is rigorously tested by them to ensure the highest level of quality.

13. Describe the program you have in place to control lead in drinking water. (50 words max)

We do not test for lead in drinking water. The State of Indiana does not mandate this testing.

14. What percentage of the school grounds are devoted to ecologically beneficial uses? Relatively little land surrounds our urban school; about 65% of the available space is used for recess, physical education, and active play. (Much of this space is paved and is used as a parking lot during non-school hours.) Of the remaining non-paved area, about 42% (approximately 7200 sf) is used for a National Wildlife Federation certified Schoolyard Habitat. This habitat contains native Indiana plants that provide food, water, and shelter for birds and butterflies. Other native plants have been included in the general landscaping whenever possible.

#### Waste

15. **(Optional)** What percentage of solid waste is diverted from landfilling or incinerating due to reduction, recycling and/or composting? 30.1 % Complete all the calculations below to receive points.

In addition to the food scrap composting and the paper, plastic, cardboard, and milk carton recycling calculated below, juice pouches and chip bags are collected and sent to Terracycle for upcycling.

A - Monthly garbage service in cubic yards (garbage dumpster size(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected):  $8 \text{ cubic yards} \times 12 \text{ collections/month} \times 100\% = 96 \text{ cu yd}$

B - Monthly recycling volume in cubic yards (recycling dumpster sizes(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected):  $(4 \text{ cu yds} \times 8 \text{ collections/month} \times 100\%) + (3 \text{ tons paper/month} \times 3.06 \text{ cu yds/ton}) = 32 + 9.18 = 41.18 \text{ cu yd}$

C - 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):  $4.8 \text{ lb/day} \times 20 \text{ school days/month} = 96 \text{ lb/month}; 96 \text{ lb} \times 1 \text{ cu yd}/1070 \text{ lb food waste} = .09 \text{ cu yd/month}$

Recycling Rate =  $((B + C) \div (A + B + C) \times 100)$ :  $(41.18 + .09) / (96 + 41.18 + .09) \times 100 = 30.1\%$



Monthly waste generated per person = (A/number of students and staff):  $96 \text{ cu yd} / (214 \text{ students} + 33 \text{ school and parish staff}) = 96/247 = .39 \text{ cu yd/person}$

16. 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? None

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

Flammable liquids	Corrosive liquids	Toxics	Mercury	Other:
None	None	None	None	None

How is this measured? [Click here to enter text.](#)

How is hazardous waste disposal tracked? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Describe other measures taken to reduce solid waste and eliminate hazardous waste. (100 word max)

We have reduced paper use by distributing the school newsletter electronically. Google Drive is used for students to turn in work. We partner with Abitibi to recycle paper from the school and community, and partner with Terracycle to collect juice pouches, chip bags, and writing utensils. Our students bring their lunches from home; lunch waste is reduced by composting food scraps, recycling milk cartons, and using re-usable food containers and lunch boxes. Recycling bins throughout the school are used to collect plastic, aluminum, glass, and cardboard. Gently used school supplies are collected and donated at year-end.

18. Which green cleaning custodial standard is used? unknown

What percentage of all products is certified? unknown

What specific third party certified green cleaning product standard does your school use? unknown

#### Alternative Transportation

19. 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) Approximately 47% of our students currently walk or bike to school on a regular basis. Another 5% occasionally walk or bike. STA does not operate any school buses. We do not have data on carpooling.

How is this data calculated? (50 word max) We conducted a tally of all students in November, 2013 to verify our walk / bike participation.

20. Has your school implemented?



- designated carpool parking stalls.
- 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**

Describe activities in your safe routes program: (50 word max) STA is actively implementing the recommendations of its SRTS Comprehensive Plan (2/2009). We operate four daily walking school bus routes, participate in International Walk to School Day, conduct a Neighborhood Walk to School Challenge annually in April, and work with the City to make infrastructure changes that support our plan.

21. Describe how your school transportation use is efficient and has reduced its environmental impact. (50 word max) By encouraging walking/biking to school, we have reduced the number of cars being driven to and from school every day, thereby reducing traffic congestion and idling from long drop-off and pick-up lines. We are also, we hope, influencing a generation who will choose to walk and bike more often!

22. Describe any other efforts toward reducing environmental impact, focusing on innovative or unique practices and partnerships. (100 word max) The Creation Care Ministry of our parish has as one of its goals the development of a long term environmental action plan for the parish and the school. The school plans to partner with them to evaluate how energy is used in the school and identify areas where reductions can be made. Specific areas to focus on include lighting and evaluating heating/cooling use. The "St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation" asks Catholics to consider the environmental impact of their actions from a faith based perspective. We are considering taking this pledge at the parish and school level.

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

**Environmental Health**

1. **(Optional)** What is the volume of your annual pesticide use (gal/student/year)? Describe efforts to reduce use: Minimal pesticides are used at the school. An ant barrier is applied to the exterior of the building during the summer when students are gone. When necessary, pre-filled bait stations that minimize exposure to chemicals are used to control ants during the school year. Lawn areas are sprayed with weed control approximately once/year. We used to use Round-Up occasionally to control noxious weeds in the Bird and Butterfly Habitat garden, but are now just clipping them off. Mulching in the garden helps to control weeds; most weeds are pulled by hand.

2. 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.

**x**Our school prohibits smoking on campus and in public school buses. [Click here to enter text.](#)



Our school has identified and properly removed sources of elemental mercury and prohibits its purchase and use in the school. Science laboratory thermometers use alcohol rather than mercury. Mercury thermometers in the sick room were phased out long ago.

Our school uses fuel burning appliances and has taken steps to protect occupants from carbon monoxide (CO) We have a large boiler in the basement of the school that provides heat for the school. It is heated by natural gas with direct venting to a flue that discharges above the roof line.

Our school does not have any fuel burning combustion appliances [Click here to enter text.](#)

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. [Click here to enter text.](#)

Our school has identified any wood playground or other structures that contain chromate copper arsenate and has taken steps to eliminate exposure. Railroad ties that previously surrounded a gravel playground area were replaced with plastic edging. A wooden play structure (Gaga pit) does not use CCA treated wood.

3. Describe how your school controls and manages chemicals routinely used in the school to minimize student and staff exposure. (100 word max) The chemicals routinely used in the school are primarily cleaning products, many of which are labeled as non-corrosive and biodegradable. Most daily cleaning is done in the evenings when students are not in the building; larger projects such as shampooing carpets or stripping/waxing floors are done during school vacations. Cleaning products are kept in locked closets. Cafeteria tables are wiped down after use with MonoFoil®, which uses a chemically bound non-leaching agent that provides antimicrobial protection (<http://www.coeustechnology.com/monofoil/about-monofoil/>).

4. Describe actions your school takes to prevent exposure to asthma triggers in and around the school. (100 word max) Approximately 5% of the students are identified as having asthma but their asthma is not usually triggered at school. They report using their inhalers only occasionally at school, and usually because of a change in the weather, having a cold, or exercise induced. Efforts to reduce asthma triggers include cleaning when students aren't present and inspecting for excess moisture to avoid mold formation.

5. 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. (100 word max)

Any problems with leaks are reported promptly and taken care of. Occasional leaking water pipes are repaired promptly. Problems with the roof have been addressed to prevent leaks. When a cooling unit broke in a classroom, water was prevented from draining and the carpet was soaked. Students were removed to a separate location for several weeks while the unit was being repaired. On one occasion, a broken water pipe caused a large leak; a local professional restoration service used large fans and other equipment to quickly control the excess moisture.

6. Our school has installed local exhaust systems for major airborne contaminant sources.  Yes  No



7 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)

The school has a monthly maintenance contract with Vasey Commercial Heating and Air Conditioning. They inspect the classroom units, boilers, change filters on a regular basis, and make repairs and adjustments as necessary.

8. 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. (100 word max)

Outside air is brought in by way of air handling systems. In addition, all classrooms have windows that can be opened to bring in fresh air.

9. 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. (200 word max)

The State of Indiana has mandated that schools take action to ensure good indoor air quality (Indiana Administrative Code, Rule 410 IAC 33, April 2011). The Office of Catholic Education from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has developed a program to comply with these requirements. The program includes responding to concerns about mold, water damage, and other possible hazards to indoor air quality as well as following routine maintenance procedures for the HVAC system. Our school does follow these requirements and sends an IAQ Program Compliance Letter to OCE. There is also an annual inspection of some asbestos in a boiler room which is not accessible to students.

#### Nutrition and Fitness

10. 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. (100 word max each)

Our school participates in the USDA's HeathierUS School Challenge.

Level and year: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Our school participates in a Farm to School program to use local, fresh food. [Click here to enter text.](#)

Our school has an on-site food garden. The school has a small plot in a parish/community vegetable garden on school grounds.

Our school garden supplies food for our students in the cafeteria, a cooking or garden class or to the community. Students plant seeds and monitor plant growth in the school plot. Some of the food from the vegetable garden is given to our local food pantry and some is eaten by the students. Garden activities are connected to literacy using books such as “The Carrot Seed” and “Tops and Bottoms”.



x Our students spent at least 120 minutes per week over the past year in school supervised physical education. School supervised physical education for all students includes gym class (60 min/week for grades K – 4, 90 minutes/week for grades 5 – 8) and recess (225 minutes/week for grades K-1, 150 minutes/week for grades 2 – 8).

x At least 50% of our students' annual physical education takes place outdoors. [Click here to enter text.](#)

x Health measures are integrated into assessments. Students in grades 5 – 8 participate in the Presidential fitness program as part of their physical education classes.

At least 50% of our students have participated in the EPA's Sunwise (or equivalent program). [Click here to enter text.](#)

Food purchased by our school is certified as "environmentally preferable"

Percentage: 0% Type: NA – Students bring their lunches from home so the school does not purchase food.

11. Describe the type of outdoor education, exercise and recreation available. (100 word max)

In addition to gym class, outdoor physical education includes active recess for all students. Students enjoy using the playground climbing structure and slides, along with student directed playground games (hopscotch, jump rope, 4-square, ultimate Frisbee, Gaga pit, kickball, soccer, basketball, and other impromptu ball games). More than 50% of students in grades 3 – 8 are involved in boys' and girls' school sports teams. This program is year round and includes football, kickball (girls), soccer, track/field, volleyball, and basketball.

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

Nutrition education is offered using information from "choosemyplate.gov" (grades K – 3). The Peyton Manning Children's Hospital presents programs (dental hygiene, nutrition) and issues a monthly nutrition newsletter that is sent to all school families. After school enrichment classes taught by community members include classes on karate, flamenco dancing, and cooking. Students are encouraged to walk or bike to school; bicycle safety training is provided annually. All students are taught yoga, which promotes flexibility as well as stress relief. The school year ends with all students and teachers walking to Butler University and participating in outdoor physical challenges at their track.

**Pillar 3: Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education**

1. 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.

Our school has an environmental or sustainability literacy requirement. (200 word max)

[Click here to enter text.](#)



Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated throughout the curriculum. (200 word max)

Environmental and sustainability topics are integrated into social studies, art, language arts, library, and religion. The sustainable use of resources, energy production, consequences to the local and global community, and what it means to be a community is discussed in social studies. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies class looks at global environmental issues in the context of Asia and Africa. In Art class, students learn to respect nature through the study of landscapes. Books about nature, animals, and other environmental topics are frequently used in language arts to support literacy standards in language arts and in science. Several teachers use National Geographic Kids as a text in language arts. Other magazines used, such as Time for Kids and Scholastic Magazine, frequently have articles about sustainability issues. In Library, students read books about the importance of gardens and how Native Americans took care of the land. As a Catholic school, learning about how we are called to care for each other and for the world is an important part of our curriculum. A 7 week program called Lent 4.5 raised awareness of the impact of our own actions in various areas such as transportation, water, food, energy, and consumption of resources.

Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated into assessments. (200 word max)

Student understanding of environmental content knowledge is assessed the same way other concepts are assessed. Formative assessments to check understanding are on-going during science lab or outdoor experiences and may be done through discussion, observation journals, or lab reports. Drawing accurate pictures of what they observe is an important skill. Kindergarten students' understanding of concepts may be evaluated during center activities such as sorting, classifying, or comparing. They also draw pictures and complete writing prompts in their science notebooks. Summative assessments in the form of chapter tests at the end of a unit in science evaluate student understanding of the concepts. In art class, students write statements describing their artwork and how they feel their work represents nature in the landscape. Perhaps the best indication of student understanding comes from reports from parents whose children have brought home the message that we need to care for our world.

Students evidence high levels of proficiency in these assessments. (100 word max)

Students show a good understanding of environmental concepts, based on their scores on chapter tests, on discussions, and on their daily actions.

Professional development in environmental and sustainability education are provided to all teachers. (200 word max)

Project WET and Project WILD training was provided to all staff members at the beginning of the 2009/10 school year as part of our school theme at the time, which was "We Care for Creation". Teachers who have joined the faculty since that time have typically had this training as part of their education degree work. The 3 science specialist teachers have the opportunity for further professional development (including environmental education) annually at the HASTI conference (Hoosier Association of Science Teachers, Inc.); they have also been trained in Hoosier Riverwatch, a water monitoring program. The Kindergarten teachers and the K – 3 science specialist have been trained in Growing Up WILD and Project Learning Tree's Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood. The K-3 science specialist has also been



trained in Project Learning Tree, Flying WILD, and uses her Master Gardener and Master Naturalist training to help design the science curriculum for those grades.

2. 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: [Click here to enter text](#). Percentage scoring a 3 or higher: [Click here to enter text](#).

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? (200 word max)

The Science curriculum has a strong emphasis on our natural world. Topics for K – 3 include plants, habitats (including wetlands, forests, prairies, rain forests, oceans, and polar habitats), insects, spiders, soil, birds, life cycles, dirt, rocks, minerals, animal adaptations, and weather. Kindergarten students plant carrot seeds in the spring and harvest the carrots as first graders. First grade students do an endangered animal project and build animal shelters. Students raise and release painted lady butterflies in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Third graders learn about birds in the spring and feed the birds throughout their 4<sup>th</sup> grade year. Fourth graders study the weather and report it to the school. Fifth graders go to a local creek every year to evaluate it. Grades 6 – 8 study energy, ecosystems, and how human activities have impacted the environment. The use of Google Schools allows middle school and junior high students to turn in work electronically and minimize printing. Elementary students use natural materials such as pumpkin seeds, leaves, and shells as math manipulatives to practice counting, sorting, comparing, and classifying. Many students participate in Camp Invention at our school during the summer, where they learn engineering skills by building inventions out of everyday and recycled materials.

4. How does your school use sustainability and the environment as a context for learning green technologies and career pathways? (200 word max)

Green technologies such as the sustainable generation of energy from wind and solar are discussed in upper level science classes. In a discussion about energy, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade discussed jobs that are being created as a result of alternative energy development and anti-pollution measures. Science textbooks contain a "People/Careers in Science" or a "My Planet Diary" page for each unit; some of these feature careers having to do with the environment.

5. Describe students' civic/community engagement projects integrating environment and sustainability topics. (200 word max)

Students are involved in projects at school and outside of the school that involve the environment. All students are involved in recycling their school papers, milk cartons at lunch, and separating their fruit /vegetable scraps for composting. Fourth grade students have the responsibility of keeping the school bird feeders full, taking the food scraps to the compost bin, and giving a weather report to the school each morning. All students participate in Earth Week collections and other drives that have an environmental impact. These collections include an annual paper drive, an aluminum can collection, monthly food collections for our local food pantry, and collecting used sneakers that are recycled via the Nike Grind process. Students help to care for our Schoolyard Habitat by weeding, raking, and planting annuals. Kindergarten students write letters to garbage collectors to thank them for keeping our environment clean. Many students participate in the Citizens Energy Savers poster contest on the topic of saving energy at home. Students



have also been involved in pulling garlic mustard, an invasive plant, at several locations during school sponsored field trips. Some junior high students, who are required to perform service each quarter, will choose activities that impact the environment.

6. Describe students' meaningful outdoor learning experiences at every grade level. (200 word max)

All students go outside in art class to observe and draw plants, trees, and animals. Students use the School Habitat in Science class in a variety of ways. Kindergarten students go on observation walks looking for colors, shapes, bird behaviors, animal tracks, how trees change with the seasons, and evidence of wildlife. They investigate what foods ants will eat, plant carrot seeds, and collect items for a nature corner. First graders harvest carrots, observe and measure plants, investigate soil, decomposers, and earthworms, and visit a prairie and a river habitat. Second graders design a sun investigation, observe shadows, make weather observations, visit a wetlands habitat, and study pollinators. Third graders measure plant growth, observe birds, and start marigolds from seed; the flowers are planted in the Habitat by grades 1 – 5. Fourth graders study weather and go outside to make observations. Fifth graders visit a nearby creek to observe macro-invertebrates and evaluate water quality through chemical testing. Sixth graders go outside to measure shadows and model the Earth's rotation. Seventh graders construct a solar oven. Eighth graders go on a nature scavenger hunt with their 1<sup>st</sup> grade partners. Seventh and eighth graders spend several days at Camp Tecumseh.

7. Describe how outdoor learning is used to teach an array of subjects in contexts, engage the broader community, and develop civic skills. (200 word max)

Seventh and eighth grade students spend several days each year at Camp Tecumseh, a YMCA camp that allows students to learn various skills in an outdoor setting. The Foundations for Success program (7<sup>th</sup> grade) develops leadership and problem solving skills while meeting Indiana state standards in English, Physical Education, Science, and Social Studies. Project American Life (8<sup>th</sup> grade) teaches American History and the responsibilities of citizenship in an outdoor setting. The problem solving challenges are made more exciting and meaningful by taking place in the woods. Nature gives our students a sense of peace as well a greater awareness that there are so many things bigger than themselves. Fifth grade students have monitored the physical, chemical, and biological status of a creek annually since 2002 to learn about the impact of humans on our environment. In 2007, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade class engaged with community members (Master Gardener, botany professor, and native plant suppliers) to design and plant a native plant garden on school grounds.

8. Describe your partnerships to help your school and other schools achieve in the 3 Pillars. Include both the scope and impact of these partnerships. (Maximum 200 words)

We partner with local community resources that allow all students to go on a field trip to a natural area. These resources have included city parks (nature trails, river habitat), universities (prairie, wetland habitats), Central Indiana Land Trust (nature trails), an apple orchard, and a pumpkin farm. These trips allow students to interact with nature in a way that is not possible at school. Other community resources bring programs to the school. IUPUI's Discovering the Science of the Environment program allows 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to use technology to collect data about trees and birds in our Schoolyard Habitat. Students gain a deeper appreciation for what might otherwise be taken for granted. The Peyton Manning Children's Hospital provides programs on nutrition, wellness education, and bicycle safety training. Our recycle commercial partners allow us the opportunity to make recycling convenient at the school. Ray's collects all our cardboard, plastic, and milk cartons. We can earn money by recycling paper with Abitibi (now Resolute Forest



Products); this money is used to buy bird seed for the feeders in the Schoolyard Habitat. We collect juice pouches, chip bags, and writing utensils to send to Terracycle for up-cycling into new products.

9. 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. (Maximum 200 words)

“We Care for Creation” was a school theme (2008/2011). Students were selected to be on an “Earth Council” to develop ways in which the school could reduce its environmental impact. Earth Council is now open to any student who has an interest in environmental service and activities. Currently, 36 students (19%, primarily in grades 1 – 6) meet monthly during recess. Activities include managing the annual paper drive, raising, tagging and releasing monarch butterflies, participating in an energy poster contest (also open to other students), nature crafts, coordinating Earth Week activities, sorting gently used school supplies prior to donating, and going to a local park to pull garlic mustard. School wide Earth Week activities have included door decorating contests, recycling aluminum cans and old sneakers, and a zero waste picnic. Students weed the Habitat gardens in the summer with their families. The school has coordinated with the Creation Care Ministry of the parish to raise awareness of environmental issues and how our Catholic faith calls us to respond. They assisted with a 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade environmental study of the school (2008), provided recycling bins, brought in a speaker on carbon footprint, and provided a school version of the Lent 4.5 program.