

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: Ms. Patricia Allen

Official School Name: **Parkway School**

Official School Name Mailing Address: **141 Lower Cross Rd., Greenwich, CT 06831**

County: **Greenwich** State School Code Number *: 0571111

Telephone: **(203) 869-7466** Fax: **(203) 869-9352**

Web site/URL: www.greenwichschools.org

E-mail: patricia_allen@greenwich.k12.ct.us

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



Date: January 29, 2015

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent: Dr. William McKersie

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

District Name: Greenwich Public Schools

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



Date: January 29, 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: Connecticut Department of Education

Name of Nominating Authority: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell , Interim Commissioner of Education

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

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



Date: January 22, 2015

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Parkway School is one of eleven public elementary schools located in the Town of Greenwich. We are home to 260 students in preschool through grade five, and are the only school located in what is described as 'backcountry' Greenwich. We are one of the smaller schools in the district, yet our catchment area represents sixty percent of the geography in Greenwich. Students ride on buses past fields and forests on the ride to school each day, and, if they're lucky, a glance outside the window might include a glimpse of the wildlife we share the woods with. Parkway students grow up surrounded by the beauty of nature, and they learn at an early age the need to protect what they see in their own backyards.



Figure 1 Greenwich Connecticut's Parkway School Grounds

Our beautiful school sits atop a hill and is surrounded by acres of fields and protected forest. We have a pollinator garden on the property that was recently certified as a National Fish and Wildlife Schoolyard Habitat where students at every grade level spend time with science notebooks recording observations and posing researchable questions. We utilize our acreage as much as possible as outdoor classroom space and collaborate closely with our own 'natural resources', including the Town's Conservation Director and our neighbors in backcountry, Audubon

Connecticut. Partnerships with both the Town and Audubon provide us

with targeted professional development for teachers, resulting in strong programs in the environmental sciences for our students. Parkway parents are also important partners in developing our students as environmental stewards, and they eagerly support our work both in the school setting and at home.

The Town of Greenwich holds a deep commitment to the preservation of land and open space, and we are able to access educational programs provided by the Town and supported by our Parent Teacher Association. These programs include the study of Long Island Sound where students collect and study water samples and participate in a clean-up of the beach. Students at all grade levels participate in field trips to local farms and nature centers, and school programs and assemblies encompass a 'green theme' throughout the year. Fifth grade students chose to focus on this theme for their annual play this year, and created a production called, "Parkway's Great Green Adventure". We were treated to 'home grown' skits that highlighted our recycling efforts and study of the environment, and the passion the students shared for 'going green' was inspirational to all.



Figure 2 Parkway School Fifth Grade Great Green Adventure Play

At the district level, Greenwich Public Schools displays a strong commitment to energy conservation and the use of green cleaning supplies. Our participation in Tools for Schools ensures a healthy environment for all. Recent renovations at Parkway School include the installation of water conserving toilets and energy efficient lighting. Hand dryers were installed in new bathrooms to reduce paper waste. Our custodial staff has embraced all of our green initiatives and they assist us greatly both in our recycling efforts and in the utilization of green cleaning products. They also maintain a well on the property, and are careful stewards of our grounds.

Students utilize every inch of our property for recreation. They have access to athletic fields during daily recess periods and enjoy the two large playground structures on our campus. Parkway students participate in physical education classes three times per week where they learn lifelong fitness skills, and have access to a robust schedule of before and after school classes that include something of interest at all fitness levels. Students and staff also participate in 'Fitness Fridays' that encompass an extra twenty minutes of activity per week. This sometimes takes the form of a yoga session or kickball game, and students are exposed to novel ways of incorporating fitness into their daily lives.

Our Health and Wellness initiatives have resulted in changes at the district level, and we have been able to insert healthy menu items at all eleven schools as a result of cooking classes at Parkway. A partnership with a local organic farmer allowed us to bring students together for a cooking class geared toward the creation of healthy snacks, and the resulting kale and parsnip chips are now menu staples across the district. We continue to increase options for healthy snacks and lunches.

Parkway students are encouraged to participate in service activities throughout the year that offer inspiration and 'real world' application. Students not only learn to apply their knowledge of protecting the environment in their daily lives, but are also encouraged to fully participate as members of our larger community by 'paying it forward'. They participate in ongoing food and coat drives, Halloween candy 'give back' programs and other activities that encourage 'acting globally'.

In short, our designation as a Connecticut Green LEAF School ensures that Parkway students grow up learning that the little things they do really can make a big difference in the world. As one of eleven elementary schools, we are recognized as environmental leaders, and hope to inspire others to join us in developing the next generation of environmental stewards.

Step 1: Green and Healthy Outlook

Our school is located in Greenwich, Connecticut, where a deep commitment to the protection of our environment exists at both the town and district levels. Town resources are used as much as possible to encourage students to notice and protect what they have in their own ‘backyards’. We are fortunate to have the full support of a community eager to protect our Earth and leave it in good shape for the next generation of environmental stewards. Our school Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is strongly behind our ‘go green’ efforts and, most importantly, supports our students in applying what they learn at school to their home environment.

The development of Parkway’s Green Team began as a true ‘grass roots’ effort with teachers, students, parents and administrators, and has blossomed to include a very wide range of members across our community. Community partners include Town of Greenwich Director of Conservation, Audubon Connecticut, Animal Embassy, Mike’s Organic Farm, Stamford Nature Center, the Bruce Museum, Garden Education Center (GEC), Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board (GRAB), and students at Greenwich High School. All of these partners have become part of the fabric of our school and help us promote a culture of caring for the Earth and all of its inhabitants.

Parkway students attend a wide array of field trips and on-site workshops supported by our partner organizations that help them attain environmental and sustainable literacy. These trips and workshops range from a day spent on Long Island Sound to study the effects of pollution and a morning spent cleaning up our local beach, to workshops about endangered animals and what we can do to protect them. Our students became especially interested in the plight of the Monarch butterfly after the installation of a pollinator garden on our property. They continue to delve deeply into learning about environmental impacts affecting the species and, more importantly, what they can do to help.

We participate in the Tools for Schools program and are fortunate to have a custodial staff that embraces all of our green initiatives. We comply with Connecticut environmental laws, including not using pesticides, use of ‘green cleaning’ products, and improvements to our school made with energy conservation in mind. Parkway piloted single stream recycling for the district two years ago, and reduced our cafeteria trash by a third on our first day. Students also promote a ‘No Idling’ campaign at the start of every year that supports clean air.



Figure 3 Students observing a Monarch butterfly in the Pollinator Garden

Last year, we replaced paper copies of our newsletters with weekly electronic versions, and continue to use this format for almost all of our communications to families. The newsletter has been expanded to include a ‘Green Corner’ that contains weekly tips and healthy recipes, and we highlight all of our green efforts on a regular basis. We also maintain a large bulletin board outside our main office to keep our community up to date on all events and initiatives.

Parkway Green Team members represent us on the town-wide PTA Council (PTAC), and were recently asked to share ideas for how other schools might achieve Green LEAF designation. We were recently asked to host the next meeting of PTAC, and will welcome the PTA Council members in January at a meeting designed to share ideas to assist other schools in achieving Green LEAF designation. We are recognized as environmental leaders in our district, and hope to inspire other schools in our area to join our efforts toward the 'greening of Greenwich'.

Step 2: Environmental and Sustainability Literacy

The town Director of Conservation is an environmentalist who has supported staff with professional development in Project Learning Tree. She is often called upon to travel throughout the state to deliver workshops on behalf of the Connecticut Green LEAF program as well. We consider her expertise to be one of our greatest natural resources.

We also share the backcountry with Audubon Connecticut and enjoy a strong partnership with them that brings Audubon educators to our school for student and staff workshops. Recently, the education staff at Audubon re-wrote the Schoolyard Habitat curriculum to align with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The curriculum is a rich resource that builds upon a progression of skills to encourage students to become keen observers and deep thinkers. Audubon staff wrote a grant for Parkway teachers and teachers from a school in Stamford to give staff the opportunity to delve deeply into NGSS and apply the standards in our natural schoolyard environments. Teachers from each grade level (PK-5) participated in a full day workshop at Audubon in the fall. The grant includes onsite education throughout the year so that we can tailor the new learning to the natural resources we have on site.

Parkway's Green Team, PTA, and other members of our larger school community planned and installed a pollinator garden on our property that was certified as a National Fish and Wildlife Schoolyard Habitat. Native plants were carefully chosen, with the help of our educators at Audubon Connecticut, and the garden quickly became a favorite spot for our scientists PK-grade 5, to closely observe the process of pollination. Teachers worked closely with our district science coach to utilize science notebooks that build upon a progression of skills at each grade level. Students flock to the garden to record observations and pose researchable questions.



Figure 4 Parkway students study plants in the Pollinator Garden and using science notebooks

Parkway students at all grade levels study the plight of the Monarch butterfly and consider what they can do to help. Our community partner, Animal Embassy, prepared a special assembly to bring attention to the disappearance of the Monarch. Parkway students are deeply concerned with rejuvenating our area's supply of milkweed to support the butterfly. Plans are underway to seed a milkweed meadow on Parkway property to support this cause.

Other community partners include Mike Geller from Mike's Organic Farm, who regularly visits our school to educate students about environmental protection, sustainable farming and organic gardening.

Last year, we instituted **Green LEAF Night**, an evening of workshops that quickly became earmarked as Parkway's 'signature event'. Green LEAF Night brought over 160 participants to our school for an evening of workshops designed to promote a 'green life'. All of our community partners turned out in full force to make the first annual event a great success. Of note is our connection with Greenwich High School where students are trained to deliver workshops to our young students for our Green LEAF Night. The high school students work with both their science teachers and Greenwich Conservation Director to become 'teachers' who deliver workshops to Parkway students. Last year, they taught workshops on the porosity of soil, surface tension of water and the movement of water through the water cycle.

Green LEAF Night workshops included:

- **Tree Walk** – Greenwich Tree Warden, Bruce Spayman, marked the trees on the property and took attendees on a tour that helped them understand the unique characteristics of the trees located on the Parkway grounds.
- **Clean Up the Sound** - Greenwich High School students led experiments designed to bring attention to water pollution.
- **Plant Part Salad** – Garden Education Center led students to discover the many parts of a salad, from root, to stem to seed.
- **Animal Embassy** – Local partner delivered workshop on endangered animals, and what we can do to help them.

A variety of other workshop and activities were also offered, including: testing soil porosity, water Olympics, Enviroscope—pollution prevention, vernal pools, met the animals, recycling activities, and more.

A local Girl Scout troop attended our event to earn their 'green badge', and we look forward to delivering another great series of workshops this spring. Our Green LEAF Night is scheduled for early May 2015.

In addition to supplemental programs, we offer CORE curriculum classes across all grade levels that offer our students a range of opportunities to learn about physical health. Our physical education curriculum incorporates health lessons delivered by certified staff, and PE classes provide both an emphasis on skill building for individual students and the development of leadership skills. We also partner with *Project Adventure* consultants who have helped us develop a protocol that uses activity based learning to develop leadership skills in students. Students in grades 3-5 work with PE staff and classroom teachers to become 'leaders' who visit younger grades during 'Morning Meetings' to direct activities designed to promote teamwork. Students also act as 'Playground Leaders' with younger grades during recess, and support our young students in promoting fair play and sportsmanship.

Step 3: Healthy School Environment

Parkway School promotes a clean, green and healthy learning environment. Our district has been a full participant in the Tools for Schools program for several years. Our Director of Facilities, who displays a strong commitment to the ‘greening’ of our schools, supports us at the district level. Parkway’s participation in Tools for Schools ensures that we maintain high standards for clean air, including our full compliance with the requirements for the use of green cleaning products. Parents are informed of green cleaning requirements through our school newsletters, and encouraged to use green cleaners at home.

Parkway’s students do their part in promoting “green.” Fifth grade students promote a ‘No Idling’ campaign each year that encourages parents to comply with state laws banning this practice. Signs are placed at our pick-up and drop-off circle as reminders to ‘shut off their engines’. School bus drivers are also trained to shut off engines, and bus schedules are designed to limit the time students spend waiting for drop off at school.

Our location in backcountry Greenwich necessitates our use of well water on site. Our dedicated custodial staff, in conjunction with our local Board of Health meticulously maintains this well. We are extremely fortunate to have custodians who share our belief that we are all custodians of this Earth, and we know they take great care in ensuring our access to clean air and water.

Step 4: Healthy Nutrition

Parkway students participate in our annual *Fruit and Veggie Challenge* that highlights the importance of eating a variety of colorful foods ‘from the rainbow’. Each spring students are encouraged to eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day for a 3-week period. At the end of the 3-weeks, all students who successfully completed the challenge are entered into a raffle to win a cooking class with Mike Geller, our organic farmer. The winner of the class last year invited five friends to Parkway’s kitchen where they enjoyed an afternoon with Farmer Mike. They made kale and parsnip chips, and, while one student who participated confessed that she had never even eaten a green vegetable, they all gobbled up the kale chips like they were candy. We then worked with our food service director at the district level and were able to place the vegetable items on menus across the district where they remain as staples each month.



Figure 5 Winners of the Fruit and Veggie Challenge making kale and parsnip chips with Farmer Mike

In addition to the cooking class for our Fruit and Veggie Challenge, Farmer Mike has also delivered school assemblies and workshops that offer students ideas for incorporating gardening and healthy eating at home. This spring, every Parkway student will participate in *Mike's Organics' Lettuce Challenge* that will offer the opportunity to grow vegetables from seed.

In partnership with the Parkway PTA, Farmer Mike runs a successful food co-op that brings fresh fruit, vegetables, cheese and grass fed meats to Parkway families throughout the winter months. Our location in backcountry means that parents drive some distance to grocery shop. As a convenience to parents, Mike's Organics organizes a weekly drop-off at Parkway School that provides healthy fruits and vegetables all winter long. This year, the availability of items such as grass fed meats, local honey and cheeses have been added. Parents are able to order all items online, and pick up the produce at school weekly. Many recipes are swapped and ideas shared for healthy eating that continue to engage our students and families in developing lifelong habits for healthy eating. Mike's Organics donates a portion of proceeds to our PTA in support of our Health and Wellness programs.

Menu items for the cafeteria are delivered to our school daily from the main kitchen located at Greenwich High School. Over the last two years however, the district has made a commitment to cooking as much as possible 'from scratch' on site. As a result, many of our menu items, such as homemade chicken soup, are now made in our own school's kitchen. In addition to these healthy items, daily offerings include gluten free and vegetarian options, as well as many whole wheat and whole grain items. Our district has also made a commitment to use organic produce as much as possible, and maintains relationships with organic suppliers.

We also seek out ways to promote healthy eating habits amongst staff. Throughout the year, staff members gather to provide a monthly breakfast where recipes are often shared. We also sign up to cook a 'soup of the week' during the winter months so that a pot of soup is shared at lunchtime. Many of the healthy recipes shared have become breakfast or dinner table staples in our own homes.

The 'Green Corner' column in our monthly newsletter contains healthy recipes submitted by Parkway staff and families, and it has become the most 'clicked through' item in our electronic communications.

We continue to add menu items and recipe ideas that promote lifelong healthy eating habits for students, staff and families.

Step 5: Physical Well-Being

Parkway students enjoy physical education classes 3 times per week, and have daily outdoor recess periods. Students have access to two large playground structures, outdoor basketball, hopscotch and 4-square courts, a baseball field and open field areas for soccer and other sports. As part of our Phase II plan for our outdoor facilities, we have also begun work on a Wilderness Trail that should be complete by the end of this school year. With the support of many community partners, we are creating a trail that borders the perimeter of our property. The trail will offer students the opportunity to walk amongst nature and participate in fitness challenges along the way.



Figure 6 Parkway "Fitness Friday" four-square game

With the support of Audubon Connecticut, Sam Bridge Nursery, Greenwich Junior League, and a local Eagle Scout, we are creating a trail that will entice all members of our larger school community to utilize the property for physical activity.

Our students have many options for before and after school activities that promote physical activity. The 'open gym' before school program offers an array of activities including badminton, tumbling and fitness stations. After school offerings include gymnastics, dancing, karate and yoga sessions. As an additional incentive to promote lifelong fitness, Parkway students and staff also engage in weekly 'Fitness Friday' activities. Each week, students participate in an additional twenty minutes of physical activity designed to encourage lifelong commitment to exercise. Students often 'vote' on the activity within classrooms. Some of the favorites include yoga, kickball games, or running races. Staff especially enjoy 'dressing down' in fitness gear at the end of the week and are encouraged to wear their sneakers and yoga or sweat pants to school.

Parkway's PTA Wellness Committee distributes funds each year to bring inspirational presenters to school to encourage students to fully participate in wellness activities. Speakers have included a fitness trainer, jump rope expert, BMX cyclist and Project Adventure consultants, and all have had a positive impact in encouraging our students, and staff, in developing life-long fitness habits.

Step 6: Energy Efficiency and Water Conservation

As part of our district's capital plan budget, Parkway School underwent several renovations and improvements in 2013 that contributed to energy efficiency and water conservation. These included the installation of water conserving toilets and sensor lighting systems throughout the school. In addition, hand dryers were installed in student bathrooms to reduce paper waste. The sinks in student bathrooms are also equipped with motion sensors and are designed for water conservation. Students

and staff are encouraged to bring refillable bottles of water from home, and are eagerly awaiting the installation of 'refillable water stations' at the school.

All students in Greenwich participate in a study of our natural environment, including a study of Long Island Sound. Fourth grade students across the district participate in a day of sailing and study of the Sound with a community partner, Sound Waters of Stamford, Connecticut. In addition, students spend a day at our local conservation area, Greenwich Point, to engage in activities that heighten awareness of access to clean water, and all participate in an afternoon of community service to clean up the beach.



Figure 7 Parkway students study Long Island Sound environment

In 2014, students became engrossed in studying the declining population of the horseshoe crab in Long Island Sound. They learned that this decline also impacts our native shore birds. This attention to 'real world' situations in our local environment moves our young scientists to take action, and we have great hope for this next generation of environmental stewards.



Figure 8 Parkway study horseshoe crab habitats on Long Island Sound

Step 7: Green Purchasing and Waste Management

We are supported at the district level with the purchasing of green cleaning supplies. With our PTA, we initiated efforts to 're-stock' our school store with 'green' items. We are replacing less environmentally friendly items with green counterparts and are including more recycled and environmentally friendly products.

Parkway was the first in our district to pilot single stream recycling, and we have reduced our daily trash output by one third. Signage is posted in our cafeteria to assist students in remembering what can be recycled, and children at all grade levels are educated each year as to how to recycle items brought to school.

This year, our PTA also partnered with our local trash hauler to include a battery recycling campaign that kept many items out of the trash. The hauler agreed to a special pick-up at Parkway School to accept these items.



Figure 9 Signage helps students remember what can be recycled

Parkway's Media Specialist created a special 'Maker Space' in our library this year that encourages parents to send 'trash' to school so we can re-use it for educational purposes. Students are encouraged to 'create' or 'build' with the items, and/or take them apart to see how they work.

Parkway's art teacher incorporates recycling into the curriculum. A recent study of an artist, Dan Colen, who utilizes recycled items in his art, afforded students the opportunity to visit to a local museum. The students then worked in groups to create a piece of 'recycled' art that was highlighted at an evening artists' exhibition.

Our students and staff are also encouraged to reduce, recycle and reuse at every opportunity. Staff recently received instructions for use of a copier that allows them to request double sided printing from their classroom computer, reducing paper use. Excess paper is recycled for art projects or donated to a local preschool for drawing paper.

Parkway students grow up knowing how to "pay it forward", and all participate in ongoing coat drives and other opportunities to 'recycle'.