

2014-2015 District Nominee Presentation Form

CERTIFICATIONS

District's Certifications

The signatures of the district superintendent on the next page certify that each of the statements below concerning the district's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the superintendent's knowledge.

1. The district has been evaluated and selected from among districts 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.
2. The district is providing 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.
3. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school district 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.
4. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the school district has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
5. 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 school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.
6. The district 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 District Sustainability Award

Name of Superintendent: **Mr. Chris Ragsdale**
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

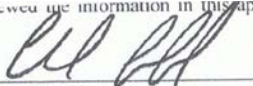
District Name: **Cobb County School District**
(As it should appear on an award)

Address: **515 Glover Street, Marietta, GA 30060**

Telephone: **770-426-3453** Fax: **678-594-8559**

Web site/URL: **www.cobbk12.org** E-mail: **chris.ragsdale@cobbk12.org**

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

Provide the information in this space

Superintendent's Signature

(Superintendent's Signature)

Date: **1/21/15**



Nominating Authority’s Certifications

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

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

Name of Nominating Agency **Georgia Department of Education**

Name of Nominating Authority **Mr. Richard Woods**

(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.

provisions above

 (Nominating Authority’s Signature)

Date: **1-27-15**

(Nominating Authority’s Signature)

SUMMARY AND DOCUMENTATION OF NOMINEE’S ACHIEVEMENTS

Provide a coherent "snapshot" that describes how your district 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.



Cobb County Schools: An environment for student success because tomorrow's future begins today

Cobb County School District (CCSD), located in metro Atlanta area, is the second largest school system in the state and 24th largest school system in the United States with an enrollment of 111,751 students and 13,371 employees. CCSD is comprised of 112 schools and 14 support facilities totaling 17,202,405 square feet of floor space and 3030 acres of land. District growth, rising utility costs and a heightened awareness of environmental health as well as the safety of staff and students guided administration to research, test and implement new technologies to provide the best possible learning environment while reducing environmental impact. Environmental strategies are implemented through individual departments, as well as site based school programs, resulting in the common goal of environmental responsibility. The following is a brief summary of District accomplishments.

State Recognition: For 2014 Cobb Schools was recognized by the Georgia US Green Building Chapter as a Georgia High Performance Healthy Schools System and in 2013, the Georgia Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council named Cobb County School District one of three statewide winners of its “Leadership in Indoor Environmental Quality” award. Cobb Schools in 2011-2012 named “Clean Air Schools District of the Year”

Indoor Environmental Quality: The creation of a Maintenance department IEQ team that conducts periodic inspections of all facilities to locate and correct potential leaks, and cleanup after floods created by burst waterlines or sewage backups. The IEQ team also investigates school concerns related to odors, possible mold and upon discovery of problem; IEQ team provides corrective measures to return areas to normal use. There is also a system wide No Smoking policy in all school facilities and grounds.

Custodial/Recycling/Pest Management: Green Seal Certified custodial supplies program eliminated six traditional cleaning chemicals and replaced with one chemical - Oxy Orange. This Green Seal Certified cleaner reduced chemical exposure for custodians, teachers and students. Adoption of Square Scrub machines provides dry wax removal on floors, eliminating liquid stripper odors/fall hazards. The use of ionized water to clean surfaces in schools provides further

elimination of chemicals. A District wide Single Stream Recycling program results in a substantial reduction in waste going to landfills by recycling tin cans, aluminum cans, plastic bottles, paper and cardboard, recycled materials are placed in dedicated recycle dumpster for pickup and processing. Annual recycling of 20,000+ light bulbs helps reduce landfill waste. The installation of vinyl floor tile instead of carpeting during renovations and new buildings construction allows for rapid and complete removal of dirt and dust during cleaning of floors. Vinyl floor tile allows for quick cleanup of floods and sewer backups. An Integrated Pest Management program provides pest control by elimination of habitat, food and water sources while minimizing treatment applications. Finally, custodial equipment must meet CRI (Carpet and Rug Institute) approval standards.

Electrical/HVAC/Water: During 2008, utility budgets for electricity, water and gas were exceeded. Since then, utility costs have been reduced by \$6,359,526.00 with the following projects. Eastside Elementary school built in 2012 uses a geo-thermal heating and cooling system. Smyrna Elementary school built in 2013 to LEED standards. District wide computer controlled HVAC systems provides HVAC shut down after school hours. District wide HVAC filter replacement program exchanges all filters every nine weeks using high efficiency filters. Occupancy sensors and T-8 light bulbs installed at 41 schools providing further reductions in energy usage of unoccupied classrooms. “Total Darkness” program at 20 schools shuts off all interior lights when security alarm is activated. Exterior LED security lighting at CCSD’s Maintenance Shop has shown that LED technology meets lighting needs and reduces electrical cost and maintenance. Electric hand dryers in 90% of student restrooms provide a sanitary alternative to paper towels and eliminate paper towel waste. Timer controlled irrigation at 45 schools eliminate excessive watering and cost. The installation of meters for irrigation only at 16 high schools at baseball, soccer fields eliminates sewage treatment charges. Installation of artificial turf on 16 high school football fields eliminated irrigation, maintenance and pest control cost. Installation of blow down water meters on eighty-six HVAC cooling towers allows CCSD to monitor the amount of evaporated water not requiring sewer treatment charges. The installation of low flow flush valves on toilets, urinals and low flow aerators on sinks reduces water usage.



Transportation: A District wide no idling policy for 1,168 school buses and 236 support vehicles resulted in fewer daily exhaust emissions while improving both the indoor and outdoor air quality. The Installation of a GPS tracking system on all district vehicles has improved route efficiencies and reduced excessive idling. The retrofit of 108 school buses with particulate filters to reduce emissions was made possible by an EPA grant. CCSD funded the purchase of 200 buses equipped with low emission diesel engines.

School Based: Learning Gardens, Environmental Clubs, Clean Air School and Cobb County Water Departments' Green School Initiative as well as CCSD's C-STEM district wide program provides a wide variety of programs for students and teachers to participate in making environmental a difference in their schools, local community and global community.

Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs

Following are projects completed in recent years but continue to provide cost savings as well as reduction in environmental impact as each year passes.

- A. System wide (126 facilities) single stream recycling program to reduce the amount of paper, cardboard, aluminum cans and plastic bottles going to local landfills.
- B. System wide program to collect school science lab chemicals and biology specimens. If recycling not an option then disposal by EPA approved method.
- C. Warehouse auctions of surplus equipment, furniture, school buses and maintenance vehicles for re-use/recycle by the end buyer and reduce debris to local landfills.
- D. District No Idling Policy for 1168 school buses and 236 support vehicles
- E. Retrofit of 108 school buses with diesel particulate filters to reduce diesel emissions, replaced 12 older buses with new ones, both made possible by EPA grants.
- F. Purchased in last two years 200 school buses equipped with low emission diesel engines.
- G. Installation of GPS tracking systems on all buses including district wide support vehicles which will alert to



excessive idling and also produce more efficient bus routing.

H. Natural landscape is estimated to be 5% per school site. Guide specifications for new buildings and additions specify that drought tolerant trees and shrubs be installed to reduce or eliminate watering needs.

I. A system -wide transition from traditional cleaning chemicals to green seal certified hydrogen peroxide based cleaners resulted in less cleaning chemical exposure to building occupants and custodians and eliminated multiple types of traditional cleaners.

J. Recent developments in Electro-Chemical Activated water allows participating schools to eliminate chemicals and provides a non-hazardous cleaning alternative. The engineered water is a mixture of sodium and water with an applied electrical charge that results in a harmless product to building occupants and custodians. The solution proves to be an effective cleaner, degreaser and sanitizer and is reported to kill 99.999% of germs such as MRSA, Staph, H1N1, E.coli, Norovirus as well as others.

The following items K through W are projects that occurred that resulted in direct reductions in cost for water and sewer, gas and electricity. The projects ranged from maintenance initiatives to new schools, building additions or renovations of existing facilities. Yearly there are projects such as HVAC replacements of old equipment with energy saving equipment. With the exception of entirely new schools it is difficult to determine utility savings, however when looking at the total budget for utilities there is a definite reduction in utility cost. This is occurring even as utility costs continue to rise as well as increases in school system square footage. This can be tracked by looking at our total yearly budget for all utilities combined. For the last 4 out of 5 years Cobb Schools has come in under budget for utilities' for a total of \$6,359,526.00 dollars.

K. Eastside Elementary built in 2012 to LEED standards but not certified. It is to our knowledge the first entire school building in Georgia built utilizing geo-thermal heating and air conditioning system, cost .03 cents PSF less to operate than traditionally HVAC equipped buildings as well as reduced ongoing maintenance cost over a heat pump system.

L. Smyrna Elementary school (\$20 million to build), opened for school year 2013 built to LEED standards with

LEED application and certification presently in progress.

- M. System wide computerized monitoring of HVAC systems with static set points for heating and cooling and district approved on/off schedules.
- N. Installation of occupancy sensors and retrofit of T-8 light bulbs at 41 schools to turn off lights in un-occupied rooms after 15 minutes.
- O. Installation of occupancy sensors in 30% of our schools to turn HVAC off when un-occupied.
- P. Timer controlled Irrigation systems at 45 schools to eliminate excessive watering, plans to install on remaining systems.
- Q. Installation of irrigation only water meters at 16 high schools to eliminate water department charges for sewage treatment.
- R. Installation of make-up and blow down water meters on 86 cooling towers to monitor evaporated water not returning to Cobb County Water Treatment facilities thereby eliminating sewer treatment charges.
- S. Total Darkness Program at 20 locations which turns all lighting off once the building is security system is set which results in savings on electrical usage when building is un-occupied.
- T. LED outdoor lighting retrofit at the Argo Road South Maintenance Facility. Reduced total wattage from 11,450 watts to 1,656 watts for dusk to dawn lighting.
- U. Installation of artificial turf at 16 high schools which resulted in significant savings by eliminating watering, maintenance of irrigation systems, mowing and pest control.
- V. To reduce water usage system wide toilets and urinals have low flow valves and all faucets have low flow aerators.
- W. Single Stream recycling program system wide.



Pillar II: Improved Health and Wellness

Cobb County School District's Wellness Steering Committee works to not only meet but also exceed wellness requirements in schools. Schools are required to complete and report on wellness activities for students and staff. Last year schools reported over 225 wellness activities. Our district's commitment to wellness was further demonstrated when District Administrative Rule EEE-R Wellness Program was updated to include Employee Wellness Goals. School cafeterias conduct six nutrition education promotions each year. In addition, the Cobb Food and Nutrition Services Department provides more than 75 nutrition education opportunities. Also, the department holds a monthly art contest which focuses on different wellness topics each month.

In addition to the district wellness committee and local wellness teams, the district works with various groups to enhance wellness opportunities for our school communities.

The following are some examples of groups we work with to improve wellness initiatives:

- 29 schools participate in the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program.
- 31 schools participate in the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Strong for Life Challenge Program.
- The Cobb2020 Partnership is a partnership of community organizations and individuals dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyles and the delivery of essential health services in Cobb County.

District Awards and Recognitions include:

- 1 school received the National Bronze Award from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.
- 6 schools named Fit Friendly Schools by the American Heart Association.
- 20 Fuel Up to Play 60 Grants were received totaling more than \$59,000.
- 2 Golden Radish Awards which demonstrate the district's support of Farm to School initiatives.
- 1 Georgia Department of Agriculture Georgia Grown Test Kitchen Site.
- 54 Bronze HealthierUS School Challenge schools.
- 4 schools received National Let's Move! Recognition Award.
- Recipient of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services Best Practice Award



for Farm to School Programs.

Pillar III: Environmental and Sustainability Education

The Cobb County School District remains committed and supportive of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning in our classrooms. We recognize the invaluable learning opportunities and skill development afforded through educational settings which embrace STEM. Overall, Cobb schools strive to provide our students with a world class educational experience while building skills needed to successfully participate and compete in a dynamic global workplace. With respect to STEM education, our students are expected to embrace academically rigorous advanced math and science instruction that cultivate problem-solving, critical thinking and collaboration. As students are challenged by complex problems related to real-world scenarios, they research, design, build, discover, and collaborate while creating potential solutions. Pervasive use of technology throughout these STEM initiatives helps students to see the myriad of connections between these disciplines.

As evidence of our emphasis on STEM, we were pleased to have two schools that have been awarded STEM Program Certification by the Georgia Department of Education. The Center for Advanced Studies in Science, Math, and Technology at Wheeler High School was recognized for their long standing STEM excellence in 2013. Shortly after, the Kennesaw Mountain High School Academy of Mathematics, Science and Technology earned STEM Program Certification. The STEM programs at each of these schools have provided a robust and comprehensive academic foundation for hundreds of hard working Cobb students. In addition to these two schools, about one-third of our Cobb schools are formally seeking STEM Certification as they build their programs and strengthen their commitment to innovative STEM practices.

Our STEM instruction is enhanced through participation by Cobb students in a variety of extra-curricular teams, events, and competitions. Competitions include Robotics, Science Fair, Science Olympiad, Odyssey of the Mind, Math Team, Intel, and other culminating events. During these events, teams of students are challenged to tackle complex problems



and create viable solutions related to the specific competition. In the highly competitive varsity FRC Robotics league, two Cobb high school teams, Kell and Walton, have annually been two of the top performing teams in Georgia. In the largest Elementary Science Olympiad completion in the United States, Cobb elementary schools have consistently performed at the highest levels. Through problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaboration, students build key skills that will serve them well as they enter an increasingly STEM-focused world.

In addition to our STEM efforts the Cobb County School District values environmental educational programs. Our Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) for science align nicely with established environmental programs at each grade level. Students in elementary school learn about conservation, recycling, impact (beneficial and negative) of organisms on various habitats, scarcity of resources, as well as the effects of constructive and destructive forces on the environment. We have developed Cobb best practices instructional resources and exemplary units around each of these concepts, and more at the elementary level. Additionally, seventy-five percent of our elementary schools have science labs. Students visit the labs on a rotating basis and receive in-depth hands-on environmentally based lessons during each nine weeks. These resources may be reviewed at www.cobbsciencelabs.com.

Schools across our district have a long history of participating with environmental programs. Perhaps the most wide spread environmental partnership is with the Cobb Water Department and the Green School initiative. Each year our schools and teachers document the number of environmentally based lessons they teach. Schools earn various levels of recognition based on the numbers of teachers participating. Schools are provided a Green School sign to post on campus. They are awarded additional signs documenting subsequent years of participation. Many schools have well over five years of participation.

Gardening is another program that is well established across the district at all levels. Most of our elementary school gardens are the result of a multi-year partnership with the Captain Planet Foundation. They have collaborated with our schools to install more than 25 school gardens at schools across the district. The gardens have ranged from traditional vegetable gardens, to sensory gardens, to pollinator gardens, to victory gardens, to community gardens. Each school is



able to tailor the design of the gardens to best align with the unique qualities of the school. Our district garden committee felt that this flexibility was important to the sustainability of the school gardens.

Cobb teachers have access to exemplary environmental education from a number of community partners. Keep Cobb Beautiful has provided teachers with free gardening workshops and grants every year for the past six years. Cobb Water has also offered ongoing Adopt a Stream, Project Wet, Wild, and Learning Tree training for teachers at all levels. Perhaps our longest and most successful partnership comes from Cobb Parks & Recreation. This partnership consists of a five part educational field study series for students and teachers. Students complete three in depth field studies at Cobb Parks adjacent to their local school community. These field studies are interspersed with two classroom visits from Cobb Parks & Recreation naturalists. This unique partnership enables students in third and fifth grade to receive sustained environmental education aligned to grade level standards in their neighborhood.