



Promoting Environmental Education and Stewardship through National Partnerships and Collaborations

The effort to get the U.S. Green Ribbon program adopted by the US Department of Education and working in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency and the White House Council on Environmental Quality has been strongly supported by the Campaign for Environmental Literacy (CEL), alongside Earth Day Network, the National Wildlife Federation and the U.S. Green Building Council. These organizations, along with the greater non-governmental organization community, have worked with many interested parties and stakeholders to build a robust and comprehensive awards program that will celebrate the innovative greening efforts of the nation's schools.

The US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools will recognize schools that save energy, reduce costs, feature environmentally sustainable learning spaces, protect health, foster wellness, and offer environmental education to boost academic achievement and community engagement.

The recognition award is part of the a larger US Department of Education effort to identify and disseminate knowledge about practices proven to result in student engagement, academic achievement, graduation rates, and workforce preparedness, as well as a government-wide aim to increase energy independence and economic security. ¹



¹ More details can be found in the White House Blueprint for Secure Energy Future:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/blueprints_secure_energy_future.pdf. Examples of such efforts include programs implementing the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-14-, 42 U.S.C. chap. 152, and other sections of the US code.)



As a part of its efforts, the Department of Education has developed three pillars that aim to :

- Facilitate the dissemination of best practices and established metrics regarding energy efficient and cost effective, healthy and environmentally sustainable learning spaces and educational programs, among federal agencies, states, tribes and localities; and
- Achieve these objectives by encouraging the coordination of efforts by the public (at federal, state and local levels), for-profit, and non-profit sectors and among schools themselves.

Inspiring schools to strive for 21st century excellence, the Green Ribbon Schools recognition award will recognize schools that have achieved or are making demonstrable progress toward 1) having a net zero environmental impact; 2) improving the health and performance of students and staff; and 3) ensuring the environmental and sustainability literacy of all graduates.²

Environmental and sustainable education can help all students learn to think critically, innovate and develop a solid foundation in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects. Eco-Schools USA is an internationally acclaimed, holistic program that provides a framework to help educators integrate sustainable principles throughout their schools. Through school-based action teams of students, administrators, educators and community volunteers, Eco-Schools combines effective "green" management of the school grounds, facilities and the curriculum. Using our seven step framework as a guide, Action Teams can engage in a variety of environmental focus areas or pathways, such as, energy, water, schools grounds, or consumption and waste.

We have developed an alignment primer between the Eco-Schools USA program and the US Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools award which can be accessed on the Eco-Schools USA website. By participating in the Eco-Schools USA program, you can be confident that you are addressing the Department's Pillars of the Green Ribbon School award.



global dimensions



consumption & waste



water



green hour

²The authorities making nominations to ED will be provided a Framework on Green Ribbon Schools web pages describing methods by which to gauge the performance of schools in these three pillars.