



The U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Recognition Award

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan launched the annual U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS) award in 2011 to recognize the highest performing green schools in the nation. The recognition award honors exemplary achievement in reducing environmental impact and costs; improving health and wellness; and providing effective environmental and sustainability education. The award also serves as a clearinghouse of resources that help to advance these complementary aims.

The recognition award is now known as the first comprehensive federal program addressing the environmental impact, health and education of our schools and a major milestone in the Green Schools Movement. The award lays out a thoughtful vision for schools and raises the profile of green schools and the states whose policies encourage them.

Green schools are critical to schools' fiscal health and our nation's economy. Improvements to K-12 school facilities save schools money, strengthen the nation's energy security and conserve natural resources. Healthy behaviors, environmental education and green facilities are as vital to individual students as they are to the nation. High standards for facilities, nutrition and fitness improve student and staff health, attendance and achievement. Finally, environmental and sustainability education prepares students to be good citizens and enhances achievement and engagement in all subjects, especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

ED-GRS has prompted unprecedented government efficiency. As a result of the award, state education agencies now collaborate with health and natural resource agencies to support schools. Likewise, among federal agencies, through the Green Strides Webinar Series and Speakers Bureau, ED-GRS is a platform to connect all schools with existing resources, programs and grants. At every level, ED-GRS is leading to new public-private partnerships, both with non- and for-profit sector.

As with the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, schools do not apply to ED-GRS directly, but to their state education agencies. Schools must contact their state departments of education (or equivalent DoDEA or BIE jurisdictions) for information on selection. The award is voluntary and not all state education agencies will elect to nominate schools. Honorees are invited to participate in national and local recognition ceremonies and may also find raising financial and technical support to their efforts a little easier as a result of their title.

Blog: <http://www.ed.gov/blog/tag/green-ribbon-schools/>

Website: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/EDGreenRibbonSchools>