

**U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools
District Sustainability Award
2015-16 Minnesota Application**

Overview

Thank you for your interest in completing the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) application for nomination to the U.S. Department of Education for the Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS) District Sustainability Award. Awards are made to PreK-12 schools, school districts and postsecondary schools. To complete this application, you will need to collect data about your district's facility, health, physical education and safety policies; wellness and food service practices; and environmental and sustainability curriculum.

Applications are due by December 18, 2015. Please send an Intent to Apply message to the email address below by December 4, 2015, so that we may support you in the application process and plan for the review of your application.

Complete the cover sheet electronically. The application questions starting on page 6 may be copied and pasted into any word processing tool for completion. Save the completed document in Word, PDF or as a plain text file and [submit via email to John Olson](#), Minnesota Department of Education. Questions may be sent by email or call 651-582-8673.

Through its District Sustainability Award, ED-GRS recognizes districts taking a comprehensive approach to sustainability. A comprehensive approach incorporates environmental learning with improving environmental and health impacts. Becoming a U.S. Department of Education District Sustainability Awardee is a two-step process. To be selected as a nominee, the first step is completion and submission of the application. This determination will be made by MDE in late January. If you are selected as a Minnesota finalist, the second step of the process requires a summary narrative describing your district's efforts and signatures for the nominee package that will be sent to ED-GRS by February 1, 2016. **Districts selected as national winners will be announced on Earth Day, April 22, 2016, and will receive a flag, a plaque and an invitation to the national ceremony in Washington, D.C.**

Minnesota is permitted to submit up to five PreK-12 school and district nominees. If a state wishes to nominate three public schools or districts, at least one must show that at least 40 percent of their students are from a disadvantaged background. If a state wishes to nominate a fourth school, it must be a private school. No more than one may be a private school. A school or district may be selected as an honoree only once.

ED-GRS selects honorees from those presented by state nominating authorities. 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.

Districts that demonstrate exemplary achievement in all three Pillars will receive highest rankings. It is important to document concrete achievement.

Team completion of the application is recommended. This team might include a facilities manager, physical education director, food services director, curriculum director, finance department representative, teachers and students. You should consult the ED-GRS [Green Strides Resources](#) and the [Minnesota Green Schools page](#) for standards, programs and grants related to each Pillar, Element and question. These are excellent clearinghouses of resources for all schools, not only for those who apply. Consult the [MDE Green Ribbon Schools website](#) for applications, other materials, and announcements. [Please also visit the ED-GRS website](#) for program information and applications from past awardees.

The questions in this application will help you demonstrate your high achievement in these Pillars and allow you to include pertinent documentation. **You should consult [the PreK-12 School Application](#) for examples of comparable data that could be supplied to support your claims. Note that the district application focuses on district-wide policies, data and practices, rather than a collection of school-level activities.**

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is offering three webinar conversations to answer questions and help you complete your application. Contact [John Olson](#) for call-in/login information.

October 1, 2015: 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

November 2, 2015: 10 a.m.

December 1, 2015: 3:30 p.m.

If you are selected for nomination to ED-GRS, your superintendent must be prepared to certify that each of the statements below concerning the district's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true:

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 and sustainability 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 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.

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.

Application Scoring Criteria

Cross-Cutting Question: Participation in green school programs: 5%	5 points
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ED-GRS Pillar and Elements	Points
Pillar I: Reduce environmental impact and costs: 30%	
Element 1A: Reduced or eliminated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (preference for schools that have used) State of Minnesota B3Benchmarking 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

ED-GRS Pillar and Elements	Points
Pillar II: Improve the health and wellness of students and staff: 30%	
Element 2A: Integrated school environmental health program Integrated Pest Management Contaminant controls and Ventilation Asthma control Indoor air quality Moisture control Chemical management	15 points
Element 2B: Nutrition and fitness Coordinated health plan Fitness and outdoor time Food and Nutrition	15 points

ED-GRS Pillar and Elements	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
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Complete this form and attach to the front of your application packet. See further instructions on the next page.

2015-16 Cover Sheet

Minnesota Green Ribbon District Sustainability Award Application

District Information

District Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: MN Zip: _____

Website: _____

Facebook page: _____

Superintendent Name: _____

Superintendent Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Lead Applicant Name (if different): _____

Lead Applicant Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Number of schools at each grade level

____ Elementary (PK-5 or 6)

____ K-8

____ Middle (6-8, 9)

____ High School (9, 10-12)

____ Other

Our district is:

____ Urban

____ Suburban

____ Rural

Total Enrolled: _____

Does your district serve 40 percent or more students from disadvantaged households?

____ Yes

____ No

Percentage receiving Free or Reduced-Priced Lunch: _____

Percentage limited English proficient: _____

Other measures: _____

Graduation Rate: _____

Attendance Rate: _____

Cross-Cutting Questions

1. Is your district participating in a local, state or national program, such as EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, EcoSchools, Project Learning Tree, or others, which asks you to benchmark progress in some fashion in any or all of the Pillars? Answer yes or no and include program(s) and level(s) achieved.

2. Has your district received any awards for facilities, health or environment? Answer yes or no and include award(s) and year(s).

3. Does the district have a sustainability program or coordinator? Answer yes or no and describe the program or the coordinator's role.

Narrative

Provide a narrative describing your district'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, yet replicable, practices and partnerships that are across the district rather than at individual schools. Be sure to cover every ED-GRS Pillar and Element identified on page 4. See the [PreK-12 School Application](#) for comparable data sources that could be used as evidence in supporting your claims of accomplishments.

The narrative is not to exceed twenty (20) numbered, double-spaced pages. Do not double space charts, tables, or graphs.

Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs

Describe and provide evidence of how your district is reducing environmental impact and cost by:

Element A: Reducing or eliminating greenhouse gas emissions, including using energy audits, energy efficient facilities and practices, and use of renewable energy.

Element B: Improving quality, efficiency and conservation of water.

Element C: Reducing solid and hazardous waste through recycling and composting, reduced consumption, and improved management.

Element D: Expanded use of alternative transportation through active promotion of locally available transportation, energy-efficient options, and implementation of alternative transportation supportive projects and policies.

Pillar 2: Improve the health and wellness of students, faculty, and staff

Describe and provide evidence of how your district is improving the health and wellness of students and staff by use of:

Element A: An integrated campus environmental health program, including pest management, contaminant controls, asthma control, indoor air quality, moisture control and chemical management.

Element B: health and wellness programs.

Pillar 3: Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

Describe and provide evidence of your environmental and sustainability education across the district by use of:

Element A: Interdisciplinary learning about the key dynamic relationships between environmental, energy and human systems.

Element B: Environment and sustainability curriculum and programs to develop STEM content knowledge and thinking skills to prepare graduates for the 21st century, technology-driven economy.

Element C: The development of civic engagement knowledge and skills and students' application of such knowledge and skills to address sustainability issues in their community.

Resources**[Minnesota Green Ribbon Schools Website](http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/ScholarRecog/GreenRibbonSch/index.html)**

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/ScholarRecog/GreenRibbonSch/index.html>

- Minnesota Green Ribbon PreK-12 School Application (contains examples of data that could be used in the district application)
- Minnesota Green Schools Resources document (resources for sustainability best practices that may help in developing the application)
- Promotional Flyer

[National Green Ribbons Schools Program website](http://www.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools)

www.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools