Minnesota Department of Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GreenRibbonSchools

US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Award
2015-16 Minnesota Prek-12 School 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) Award. To complete this application, you will need to collect data about your school's facility; health and safety policies; food service; 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 we may support you in the application process and plan for the review.

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.

ED-GRS recognizes schools taking a comprehensive approach to greening their school. This approach incorporates environmental learning with improving environmental and health impacts. Becoming a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School is a two-step process. The first step is to complete and submit this application to be selected as a nominee by the Commissioner of MDE. This determination will be made by late January. If selected as a Minnesota nominee, the second step of the process requires a summary narrative describing your school's efforts and signatures for the nominee package that will be sent to ED by February 1**. Schools selected by ED as National Winners will be announced on Earth Day, April 22, 2016, and will receive a flag, plaque and invitation to the national ceremony in Washington, D.C.**

Minnesota is permitted to submit up to five PreK-12 school and district nominees. Free-standing early learning institutions are eligible. 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 eligible nominating authorities nationwide. 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.

Schools 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. Where appropriate, you may supply alternate data to what is specified in the prompts. You may enter "not applicable" if the prompt does not apply to your grade level or circumstance.

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 school principal and district superintendent must be prepared to certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true; however, 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 one or more of grades PreK-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a PreK-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has been evaluated and selected from among schools within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction as 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. 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.

Application Scoring Criteria

Cross-Cutting Question: Participation in green school programs: 5 %	5 points

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**

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 Schools Award – School Application

School/District Information

School: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Website: _____

Principal Name: _____

Principal Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

Lead Applicant Name (if different): _____

Lead Applicant Email: _____ Phone: _____

School District Name/number (if applicable): _____

Superintendent Name: _____

Superintendent Email Address: _____

School Levels *(choose one):*

_____ Early Learning Center

_____ Elementary (PK-5 or 6)

_____ K-8, Middle (6-8 or 9)

_____ High (9 or 10-12)

_____ Other

School Type (choose one from each row):

_____ Public

_____ Private/Independent

_____ Charter

_____ Urban

_____ Suburban

_____ Rural

Total Enrolled: _____

Does your school 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: _____

The application questions below may be copied and pasted into any word processing tool for electronic completion. Save the completed document in Word, PDF or as a plain text file and email it to MDE (see page 1 for details).

Summary Narrative

Provide an 800-word maximum narrative describing your school'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 practices and partnerships, especially those not covered in other parts of the application.

Cross-Cutting Questions

1. Is your school 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 school, staff or student body received any awards for facilities, health or environment? Answer yes or no and include award(s) and year(s).

Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs

Element 1A: Reduced or eliminated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (preference for schools that have used State of Minnesota B3Benchmarking)

1. Can your school demonstrate a reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions? Answer Yes or No and include details for each of the following items:
   - Percentage reduction, occurring from (mm/yyyy - mm/yyyy)
   - Initial GHG emissions rate (MT eCO2/person)
   - Final GHG emissions rate (MT eCO2/person)
   - Offsets
   - How did you document this reduction?
   - Does your school have an Energy Master Plan? If yes, describe the areas it covers.

2. Do you track resource use in EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager? Answer Yes or No and include your score. If score is above a 75, have you applied for and received ENERGY STAR certification? If so, in what year?

3. Has your school reduced its total non-transportation energy use from an initial baseline? Answer Yes or No and include details for each of the following items:
   - Current energy usage (kBTU/student/year)
   - Current energy usage (kBTU/sq. ft. /year)
   - Percentage reduction, occurring from (mm/yyyy - mm/yyyy)
   - How did you document this reduction?

4. What percentage of your school's energy is obtained from each of these?
   - On-site renewable energy generation (list percentage and type).

- Purchased renewable energy (list percentage and type).
- Participation in USDA Fuel for Schools, DOE Wind for Schools or other federal or state school energy program (list percentage and program type).

5. List the year your school was originally constructed and give the total building area of your school.

6. Has your school constructed or renovated building(s) in the past 10 years? Answer Yes or No. If yes, answer the following, as appropriate.

For new building(s): List what percentage of the building area meets green building standards, the certification level and year, and give the total constructed area.

For renovated building(s): List what percentage of the building area meets green building standards, the certification level and year, and give the total renovated area.

Element 1B: Improved water quality, efficiency, and conservation

7. Can you demonstrate a reduction in your school's total water consumption from an initial baseline? **Answer Yes or No and give details for the following:**

- Average Baseline water use (gallons per occupant)
- Current water use (gallons per occupant)
- Percentage reduction in domestic water use
- Percentage reduction in irrigation water use
- Time period measured (mm/yyyy - mm/yyyy)
- Explain how you documented this reduction (e.g., ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, utility bills, school district reports).

8. What measures are you taking to reduce water consumption, such as controlling leaks and water-efficient devices?

9. What percentage of your landscaping is considered water-efficient and/or regionally appropriate? List types of plants used and location.

10. Describe alternate water sources used for irrigation. (50 words max)

11. Describe any efforts to reduce storm water runoff and/or reduce impermeable surfaces. (50 words max)

12. Describe where your school's drinking water comes from (municipal water source, well on school property, other).

13. How does the school ensure drinking water is safe, such as lead testing, well testing, and steps to reduce lead? (50 words max)

14. What percentage of the school grounds are devoted to ecologically beneficial uses such as natural areas, rain gardens, and run-off buffer? (50 words max)

Element 1C: Reduced waste production

15. What percentage of solid waste is diverted from a landfill or incineration due to reduction, recycling and/or organics diversion (food to people, food to hogs and/or composting)? **Note that Minnesota Statutes, section 115A.151, requires that schools must recycle a minimum of three material types. Complete all the calculations below and list them clearly in your application to receive points.**

A. Monthly garbage service in cubic yards (garbage dumpster size(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected).

B. Monthly recycling volume in cubic yards (recycling dumpster sizes(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected).

C. **Monthly organics diversion (food to people, food to hogs and/or composting) volume(s)** in cubic yards (leftover food collection bin/food scrap and/or soiled paper dumpster size(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when **emptied or collected).**

- Calculate your Recycling and Diversion Rate = ((B + C) ÷ (A + B + C) x 100).

- Calculate your monthly waste generated per person = (A ÷ number of students and staff).

16. What percentage of your school's total office/classroom paper content by cost is post-consumer material or fiber from forests certified as responsibly managed by the Forest Stewardship Council? **(If a product is only 30 percent recycled content, only 30 percent of the cost should be counted.)**

List the types and amounts of hazardous waste generated at your school. (Note that Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.33, bans mercury in Minnesota schools.)

- Flammable liquids
- Corrosive liquids
- Toxics
- Mercury
- Other (list types)

How is this measured?

How is hazardous waste disposal tracked?

17. Describe other measures taken to reduce solid waste and hazardous waste, use recycled materials, and properly dispose of hazardous materials. Include electronic devices. **(100-word max)**

Element 1D: Alternative Transportation

18. What percentage of your students walk, bike, bus, or carpool (two or more students in the car) to/from school? Note if your school does not use school buses.

How is this data calculated? (50 words max)

19. Has your school implemented any of the following? List all that apply.

- Designated carpool parking stalls.
- A well-publicized no idling policy that applies to all vehicles (including school buses).
- Vehicle loading/unloading areas are at least 25 feet from building air intakes, doors, and windows.
- Safe Pedestrian Routes to school or Safe Routes to School.
- Describe activities in your safe routes program and other events to encourage students to walk, bike or carpool, including number of participants. (50 words max)

20. Describe how your school transportation use is efficient and has reduced its environmental impact. **(50 words max)**

21. Describe any other efforts toward reducing environmental impact, focusing on innovative or unique practices and partnerships. **(100 words max)**

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

Element 2A: Integrated school environmental health program

1. Describe your school's Integrated Pest Management efforts, including IPM/green certifications earned, routine inspections, pest identification, monitoring, record-keeping, pesticide reduction notification of staff and parents, etc**. (100 words max)**

2. Which of the following practices does your school employ to minimize exposure to hazardous contaminants? Answer Yes, No or Does Not Apply and explain with specific examples of actions taken. **(50-word limit for each response)**

- Our school has a comprehensive indoor air quality management program that is consistent with Minnesota Department of Health best practices which are based on EPA's IAQ Tools for Schools.

- Our school prohibits smoking on campus and in public school buses.

- Our school is in compliance with Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.33, and has identified and properly removed sources of elemental mercury and prohibits its purchase and use in the school. (This does not apply for fluorescent bulbs, mercury thermostats, switches and gauges for HVAC systems.)

- Our school uses fuel burning equipment (such as boilers, water heaters and ovens) and has taken steps to protect occupants from carbon monoxide (CO).

- Our school has sampled frequently occupied rooms in the last five years at or below ground level for radon gas and has fixed and retested all rooms with levels that tested at or above 4 pCi/L.

- Our school has identified and properly manages or has removed, where applicable, asbestos-containing materials, according to U.S. EPA AHERA regulations and, where applicable, the Minnesota Department of Health asbestos abatement rules.

- Our school has identified and properly removed sources of lead according to the U.S. EPA's Renovation, Remodeling and Painting Rule where lead-containing paint may be disturbed in areas used by children under the age of six.

- Our school has identified any wood playground or other structures that contain chromate copper arsenate and has taken steps to eliminate exposure.

- Our school has working local exhaust systems for major airborne contaminant sources.

3. Describe how your school controls and manages chemicals routinely used in the school (including science, shop and maintenance) to minimize student and staff exposure. (100-word max)

4. Which green cleaning custodial service standard is used (i.e., Green Seal Standard for Commercial and Institutional Cleaning Services (GS-42), the ISSA Cleaning Industry Management Standard – Green Building)?

What percentage of all products is third-party certified?

5. Describe actions your school has taken to have your school bus fleet retrofitted with cleaner burning engines or to acquire cleaner burning buses or fuel. (100-word max)

6. Describe actions your school takes to control moisture from leaks, condensation, and excess humidity and promptly clean up mold or remove moldy materials when it is found. (100 word max)

7. Describe actions your school takes to ensure that all classrooms and other spaces are adequately ventilated with outside air, consistent with state or local codes, or national ventilation standards (Minnesota State Mechanical Code/American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) guideline of 15 cubic feet per minute (cfm) of fresh air per occupant). Describe your school's practices for inspecting and maintaining the building's ventilation system and all unit ventilators to ensure they are clean and operating properly. (100-word max)

8. Describe steps your school takes to protect indoor environmental quality, such as access to daylight, lighting quality, views to nature, acoustics, thermal comfort, etc. (200-word max)

9. Describe any other actions your school takes to manage indoor environmental hazards such as ice arena contaminants, PCBs, kitchen equipment, and air quality in swimming

pools. Including doing periodic, comprehensive inspections of the school facility to identify environmental health and safety issues and take corrective action. (200-word max)

Element 2B: Nutrition and Fitness

10. Which practices does your school employ to promote nutrition, physical activity and overall school health? Answer Yes, No or Does Not Apply and explain with specific examples of actions taken. (50-word max for each)

- Our school participates in the USDA's Healthier US School Challenge (also list level and year).
- Our school participates in a Farm to School program to use local, fresh food.
- Our school has a fruit, vegetable and greens salad bar.
- Our school has an on-site food garden.
- Our school garden supplies food for our students in the cafeteria, a cooking or garden class or to the community.
- Food purchased by our school is certified as "environmentally preferable" (USDA certified organic, Fair Trade, Food Alliance or Rainforest Alliance). List percentage and type.
- Our students spent at least 120 minutes per week over the past year in school-supervised physical education.
- At least 50 percent of our students' annual physical education takes place outdoors.
- Health measures are integrated into assessments.
- At least 50 percent of our students have participated in the EPA's Sunwise program (or equivalent UV protection and skin health education program).

11. Describe the type of outdoor learning activities, exercise and recreation available, including features such as trails, natural playgrounds, gardens, habitat projects and outdoor classrooms and describe the frequency of use. (100-word max)

12. Describe any other efforts to improve nutrition and fitness, highlighting innovative or unique practices and partnerships. (100-word max)

Coordinated School Health, Mental Health, School Climate, and Safety

13. Does your school use a Coordinated School Health approach or other health-related initiatives to address overall school health issues? Answer Yes or No. If yes, describe the health-related initiatives or approaches used by the school.

14. Does your school partner with any postsecondary institutions, businesses, nonprofit organizations, or community groups to support student health and/or safety? Answer Yes or No. If yes, describe these partnerships.

15. Does your school have a school nurse and/or a school-based health center? Answer Yes or No.

16. Describe your school’s efforts to support student mental health and school climate (e.g., anti-bullying programs, peer counseling, etc.).

Pillar 3: Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

1. Which practices does your school employ to help ensure effective environmental and sustainability education? Answer Yes, No, or Does Not Apply and explain with specific examples of actions taken, highlighting innovative or unique practices and partnerships.
   - Our school has an environmental or sustainability literacy requirement beyond state academic standards and graduation requirements. (100-word max)
   - Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated throughout the curriculum. (100-word max)
   - Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated into assessments. (100-word max)
   - Professional development in environmental and sustainability education is provided to all teachers. (100-word max)

2. For schools serving grades 9-12, provide:
   - Percentage of last year's eligible graduates who completed an AP Environmental Science course during their high school career.
   - Of students who took the test, what percentage scored a 3 or higher?
   - List all other environmental courses available.

3. How does your school use sustainability and the environment as a context for learning science, technology, engineering and mathematics thinking skills and content knowledge? (100-word max)

4. How does your school use sustainability and the environment as a context for learning green technologies and career pathways? (100-word max)

5. Describe students' civic/community engagement projects integrating environment and sustainability topics. (100-word max)

6. Describe any other ways that your school integrates core environment, sustainability, STEM, green technology and civics into curricula to provide effective environmental and sustainability education. Highlight innovative or unique practices and partnerships. This can also include before and after school, during the summer and other enrichment opportunities. Examples include childcare programs, community education courses, parent education courses, and student green teams, environmental or outdoor clubs. (200-word max)

7. Describe your partnerships (e.g., business, community, informal education, colleges) to help your school and other schools achieve in the three Pillars. Include both the scope and impact of these partnerships. (200-word max)

You may attach up to 10 photos that document your green school efforts. You must have appropriate permissions on file for students. Please submit them in Word or PDF format, individually or as part of your application document, with appropriate alt text.

Resources

Minnesota Green Ribbon Schools Website
http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/ScholarRecog/GreenRibbonSch/index.html

- Minnesota Green Ribbon PreK-12 School 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
www.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools