



North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

2025 Green Ribbon Schools Application

Instructions

Thank you for your interest in completing the NC Department of Public Instruction application for nomination to U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS). In order to complete this application, you will need to collect data about your school's facility, health, physical education and safety policies; food service; and environmental and sustainability curriculum.

ED-GRS recognizes schools taking a comprehensive approach to greening their school. A comprehensive 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 form to be selected as a nominee by NCDPI. Once selected as a nominee, the second step of the process requires signatures for the Nominee Presentation Form that will be sent to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) along with your application.

ED 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 should be described as it relates to environmental and sustainable education.

Schools demonstrating exemplary achievement **in all three Pillars** will receive highest rankings. It is important to document concrete achievement in all Pillars, as ED-GRS will want to see strength in all areas. While it is okay to discuss "future" plans in your response, this should be very limited as ED-GRS will focus on what has been accomplished to date. It will help you to assemble a team to complete the application. This team might include: a facilities manager, physical education director, food services director, curriculum director, finance department representatives, teachers and students.

You should consult the ED-GRS [Green Strides Resources Page and Webinar Series](#) for standards, programs and grants related to each Pillar, Element and question. The "Resources" link from the website will also assist in addressing the various elements of the Pillars. In addition, previous applications from across the United States including North Carolina are on the [USED Green Ribbon Schools](#) website under "Awards". This is an excellent clearinghouse of information for all schools, not only those who apply. Applicants are encouraged to review submissions by previous honorees from all states.

The questions in this application will help you demonstrate your high achievement in these Pillars as well as provide space for you to include pertinent documentation. For convenience, a North Carolina application template is provided in MS WORD. The "Check Boxes" should be marked by double clicking and choosing "checked" under the Default Value.



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Interested applicants may model their submission after a previous Honoree from any state. While NCDPI provides ready to use application templates, the applicant may choose an application style to fit its needs. The goal is to find the best format for you to tell your story well: succinctly, thoroughly, and clearly. The overall recommended document organization should open with a 2-3 page written "Summary Narrative", followed by the core body of work equally detailing efforts in all three pillars. Note the maximum length of the written submittal in any format is 17 pages including any tables. No exceptions.

Photos. The application should include between 5 and 10 action photos (**not posed and submitted separately**) from activities documented within the application. All photos are to be submitted independent of the written submittal (**DO NOT EMBED ANY PHOTOS WITHIN THE TEXT**). Photos must be in .jpeg format and sized between 200KB (min) and 1.5M (max). Name each photo with your school initials and number 1 through 10 (e.g. CCMS1, CCMS2, CCMS3...). With the photo portion of your submittal, include a MS WORD doc with a brief caption for each corresponding photo (e.g. "CCMS Green Team plants trees for Arbor Day." Applicants shall obtain releases from parents for any students and from any adults shown in the photographs. By sending photos, you are giving NCDPI and U.S. Department of Education permission to use them in our newsletter and social media.

Applications are due by Thursday, January 16, 2025. Submittal is by email only. Submit the completed MS Word document to jon.long@dpi.nc.gov. Please note in subject "2025 Green Ribbon Schools Application".

Questions can be addressed to Jon Long at jon.long@dpi.nc.gov (preferred) or by calling (984)-236-2923.

Note that if selected for nomination to ED-GRS, the 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 regards to the public school district in which it is located. NCDPI anticipates making the nominee announcements by email on or before Monday, January 27, 2025. **Upon notification, selected nominees should immediately coordinate signature with their superintendent's office to ensure nomination form signatures can be obtained promptly.**

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades Pre-K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a Pre-K-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.



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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.



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Application Outline: The following is an overview of the point system for evaluation of the application.

ED-GRS Pillars and Elements: 10%	Points
Application completeness Participation in green school programs	10 points
Pillar I: Reduce environmental impact and costs: 30%	
Element 1A: Reduced or eliminated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 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
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 Fitness and outdoor time Food and Nutrition Other coordinated school health programming	15 points
Pillar III: Provide effective environmental and sustainability education. Incorporating STEM, civic skills and green career pathways as it relates to environmental and sustainable education: 30%	
Element 3A: Interdisciplinary learning about the key relationship between dynamic environmental, energy and human systems	15 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