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# Background

Thank you for your interest in completing the application for nomination for the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Pathways to Green Schools program and the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS), District Sustainability Award, or Postsecondary Sustainability Awards. These programs recognize schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions for taking a comprehensive approach to sustainability, incorporating environmental learning with improving environmental and health impacts.

Preparing to become a PDE Pathways to Green Schools program and/or the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS), District Sustainability Award, or Postsecondary Sustainability Award is a multi-step process, you and your facility have worked hard to reach this point in the journey.

The next step is to complete and submit this form to be selected as a nominee by your state education agency or equivalent.

Once selected as a nominee by your state education authorities, the second step of the process requires collection of documents and signatures certifying compliance with all applicable civil rights, Federal Student Aid, health, safety, and environmental statutory and regulatory requirements. [Access the certifications that you will be asked to make in the Nominee Presentation Forms](https://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/applicant.html).

Finally, your nomination materials, including the signed Nominee Presentation Form, documentation of progress in all areas of the award, and several photographs, will be sent to the U.S. Department of Education (ED). ED notifies national selectees in the spring, inviting them to send representatives to attend a ceremony in Washington, D.C. in the fall. Selection is based on documentation of the nominee’s progress in the three ED-GRS Pillars:

* Pillar I: Reducing environmental impact and costs;
* Pillar II: Improving the health and wellness of students and staff; and
* Pillar III: Offering effective environmental and sustainability education.

Schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions demonstrating progress in every area will receive highest scores. It may help to assemble a team with expertise across these areas to complete the application. You may also wish to consult [Green Strides](http://www.greenstrides.org) for programs related to each Pillar.

Applications and supplemental documents are due by to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) by 6:00 PM, January 12, 2024.

Submit supplemental documents (Nominee Presentation Form and Photos) via email to [TPeffer@pa.gov](mailto:TPeffer@pa.gov), no later than 6:00 PM, January 12, 2024.

PDE will convene a panel to review the applications and send nominations to the U.S. DOE GRS program no later than February 9, 2024, and of high enough resolution that they can be used both online and in print.

# Nominee Information

School, District, or Postsecondary Institution Name:

Type of Nomination Application:

* School
* District
* Postsecondary

**Please also consider my school, district, organization for the following PA Level Recognitions (Select all that apply):**

* Success! One Pillar Complete
* Success! Two Pillars Complete
* Success! Three Pillars Complete – State Finalist Level

**Our school has included examples of our work in the flowing areas and would like to be considered for recognition of these efforts. (Note: Explicit description and evidence of efforts must be included and highlighted in the appropriate narrative sections)**

* Agriculture Education
* Climate Resilience
* Environmental Justice
* Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
* Environmental Literacy and Sustainability Plan Development
* Systemic Environmental Literacy and Sustainability Curriculum Integration
* Litter, Recycling, and Waste Management Efforts
* Continued Improvement Recognition for Past U.S.DOE GRS awardees (for schools or districts that have already achieved but would like to continue expanding programs and efforts related to environmental literacy and sustainability)

Address:       City:       State:      Zip:      Twitter:       Facebook:

Top official: Title (Mr./Ms./Mrs./ Dr.):       First Name:       Last Name:       Position/Role (Principal/ Superintendent/ President):       Email:       Phone:

Lead Applicant (if different) Title (Mr./Ms./Mrs./ Dr.):       First Name:       Last Name:

Position/Role (Teacher/ Sustainability Director/ Facilities Director):       Email:       Phone:

Check all that apply:

Early Learning

Elementary

Middle

High

Public

Charter

Magnet

Non-Public

Two-Year

Four-Year

Community College

Career and Technical

Urban

Rural

Suburban

Environmental Justice Area\*

Title I (or ESSA Tier)

*\*To confirm whether your entity boundaries are located within in an Environmental Justice Area, refer to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s* [*Environmental Justice Areas Viewer*](http://padep-1.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f31a188de122467691cae93c3339469c)*.*

Provide percentages, if any are relevant to your school, district, or institution:

Pell Recipients:

Free and Reduced-Price Lunch:

Minority:

Limited English Proficient:

Special Education:

Graduation Rate:

Attendance Rate:

Provide the following:

Total Enrolled:       Number of Schools:       Buildings:       Campuses:

# Documentation of Sustainability Achievement

## Narrative for Pillar I: Your Efforts to Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs (1-4 pages)

* Describe how your school, district, or postsecondary institution is reducing environmental impact and costs in the following areas:
  + Reducing or eliminating greenhouse gas emissions; using an energy audit or emissions inventory and reduction plan, cost-effective energy efficiency improvements, conservation measures, and/or on-site renewable energy and/or purchase of green power;
  + Improving water quality, efficiency, and conservation; including use of onsite best management practices inside and outside the property
  + Reducing solid, food, and hazardous waste production through increased recycling and composting, reduced consumption, and improved management, reduction, or elimination of toxic cleaning chemicals or hazardous waste
  + Expanded use of alternative transportation, through active promotion of locally available, energy-efficient options and implementation of alternative transportation supportive projects and policies;
  + Expanded use of alternative transportation, through active promotion of locally available, energy-efficient options and implementation of alternative transportation supportive projects and policies
  + Identify your energy-efficient facilities and practices, ecologically and educationally beneficial uses of grounds, and methods of disposal for solid and hazardous wastes.
* Use supporting data and reference participation in pertinent benchmarking programs to demonstrate progress where possible.

## Narrative for Pillar 2: Your Efforts to Improve the Health and Wellness of Students and Staff (1-4 Pages)

* Describe how your school, district, or postsecondary institution improves the health and wellness of students and staff in the following areas:
  + Integration of an environmental health program that considers sound health and wellness and safety in all design, construction, renovation, operations, and maintenance of facilities and grounds;
  + Encourages implementation of integrated pest management or other preventative protocols in the following areas:
    - Cleaning and maintenance;
    - Mold and moisture prevention and remediation
    - Reduce student and staff exposure to chemical and environmental contaminants;
  + Ventilation, improved indoor air quality;
  + Pest management and pesticide use reductions.
* Describe how your school is working to meet the high standards of [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscc/index.htm). *Be sure to include how your school is supporting the following efforts:*
  + Nutrition and improved access to healthy foods in and out of school;
  + Outdoors physical activity;
  + Other components you may include are health education, health services, counseling, psychological and social services, sun safety, staff health promotion, and family and community involvement;
  + Incorporate metrics and include program participation where possible.

## Narrative for Pillar 3: Your Efforts to Ensure Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education (1-4 Pages):

* Describe how your school, district, or postsecondary institution ensures effective environmental and sustainability education throughout the curriculum.
  + Provide examples of interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between dynamic environmental, energy, and human systems.
  + Demonstrate how your institution uses the environment and sustainability to develop E-STEM content, knowledge, and thinking skills, and teach all subjects in context.
  + You should discuss how your school, district, or postsecondary institution develops and applies civic knowledge and skills to environmental and sustainability education.
  + All STEM and civics work should be described as it relates to environmental and sustainability learning.
  + Detail any environmental or sustainability literacy standards, show how these concepts are integrated into assessments, and describe environmental and sustainability literacy professional development. Include co-curricular opportunities such as field trips, study abroad, clubs, and service learning.
  + This section should describe hands-on, place-based, project-based, authentic learning across the curriculum, not limited to one subject area, such as science courses, but demonstrating integration across all disciplines that overlap with environmental literacy.

## Summary Narrative: An Overview of Your Work Encompassing All Three Pillars (2-3 pages):

* ***HINT: Complete Pillar I, II, and III narratives first (This section is listed last in the online application to ensure you and your review all the pillar narratives as you develop and this summative statement.)***
* This overarching summary should **highlight the best** of your work in every ED-GRS Pillar and Element.
* Provide a summary narrative describing your school, district, or postsecondary institution’s efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs; improve student and staff health and wellness; and provide effective environmental and sustainability education.
* Access examples of summary narratives in past [Highlights Reports](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/performance.html).
* ***The summary that you submit should be what you would like to see appear in a future Highlights Report, if your institution is selected.***

**Photos:** Please submit 5-10 photographs with descriptions including who, what, when, and where. Photos should be action shots (not posed) and of high enough resolution that they can be used both online and in print. By sending these photos, you are giving your state nominating authority and the U.S. Department of Education permission to use them in a newsletter and on social media.

# Overall

* Be sure to include concrete sustainability achievements, supporting data, unique partnerships, program participation, awards, and certifications.
* Please use normal fonts and margins in your narratives.