



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

June 6, 2013

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents and Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Venessa Keesler, Ph.D.   
Deputy Superintendent, Educational Services

SUBJECT: Green Ribbon Schools Announcement

I am pleased to announce that the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) will once again participate in the Green Ribbon Schools program.

The U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS) recognition award honors schools that are exemplary in reducing environmental impact and costs; improving the health and wellness of students and staff; and providing effective environmental and sustainability education, which incorporates STEM, civic skills, and green career pathways. Although the 2013-14 application materials will not be released by US Department of Education until the Fall, schools are urged to review the 2012-13 materials and begin to gather the information they will need to develop a robust and competitive application for submission. To see a copy of the 2012-2013 application materials, visit: [http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6530\\_2629-271090--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6530_2629-271090--,00.html).

Please review the information flyers attached. Be sure to pass them along to principals and facilities personnel. As you will see from the informational materials, it takes a dedicated team from each school to work toward the goals of the award program.

For more information on US Green Ribbon Schools, please visit their website: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/index.html>.

If you have any questions, please contact Patty Cantú, Director, Office of Career and Technical Education, at: [cantup@michigan.gov](mailto:cantup@michigan.gov) or (517) 335-5224.

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# Michigan Green Ribbon Schools



## Green Ribbon Schools Information

The Green Ribbon Schools award is part of a larger U.S. Department of Education effort to identify and disseminate knowledge about practices that are proven to result in improved student engagement, higher academic achievement and graduation rates, and workforce preparedness, as well as a government wide goal of increasing energy independence and economic security. The competitive recognition award program annually honors schools across the nation that are exemplary in meeting the three Green Ribbon Schools Pillars and Elements:

1. Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs
2. Improved Health and Wellness
3. Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

The application process provides a learning tool for schools to obtain a baseline assessment in all three Pillars. Numerous other initiatives such as LEED certification, environmental education, or participation in Eco-Schools USA and/or Michigan Green Ribbon Schools helps schools to build excellence toward the three Pillars. The application process takes place in the Fall.

### Tips for Getting Started with Your Green Ribbon Schools Application:

- Carefully read the entire Green Ribbon application and determine who should be a part of your development team
- Call a meeting of all team members
- Develop a timeline for completion of the application
- At the team meeting, assign specific parts of the application
- After the initial team meeting, follow up with individuals and monitor the completion of their assigned portions

For more Green Ribbon Schools information or resources, visit:

- Blog [www.ed.gov/blog/tag/green-ribbon-schools/](http://www.ed.gov/blog/tag/green-ribbon-schools/)  
Website [www.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools](http://www.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools)  
Email [green.ribbon.schools@ed.gov](mailto:green.ribbon.schools@ed.gov)

Nominees for the award must be submitted through the Michigan Department of Education. For more information and resources, visit:  
[http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6530\\_2629-271090--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6530_2629-271090--,00.html)

### Questions About the Program? Want to Apply?

Contact Patty Cantú ([cantup@michigan.gov](mailto:cantup@michigan.gov)) at the Michigan Department of Education

**Please note:**

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools is a federal recognition award and should not be confused with any green schools program conducted by non-governmental entities.

**“Environmental education provides a natural link to the careers of the future and to environment, technology and natural resource majors, which require creative thinking, problem solving and a strong foundation in STEM subjects .”**

U.S. Secretary of Education  
Arne Duncan



Green Ribbon Schools annually recognizes the highest performing green schools in the nation that are exemplary in reducing environmental impact and costs; improving health and wellness; and providing effective environmental and sustainability education

*For more information on the benefits of greening your school or to get started, check out Eco-Schools USA ([www.ecoschoolsusa.org](http://www.ecoschoolsusa.org))*

Follow US Green Ribbon Schools on Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/EDGreenRibbonSchools](http://www.facebook.com/EDGreenRibbonSchools)

# Michigan Green Ribbon Schools



## Benefits of Green Ribbon Schools

Being distinguished as a Green Ribbon School sets selected schools apart as a model and mentor for other schools in Michigan and the nation. It may also instill in students, educators, and the community a renewed sense of pride and accomplishment in their school. However, the biggest benefits to moving toward all three Green Ribbon Schools Pillars are far greater for people, places, and schools' financial bottom line.

Research reveals that outdoor education, greener school grounds, and more outdoor play time in natural settings:

- Quantitatively increase student motivation and enthusiasm to learn and increase student engagement
- Usefully employ all of a child's native intelligences
- Markedly improve classroom behavior
- Help students concentrate for longer periods
- Help students to learn across disciplines and make them better real-world problem solvers
- Are particularly effective at helping under-resourced, low-income students perform measurably better in school
- Make students less inclined to drop out of school
- Measurably improve classroom performance in math, science, reading and social studies and increase scores on statewide standardized
- Improve performance on college entrance exams

In addition to saving schools an average of 20% on their energy bills and other financial savings, working toward the three Green Ribbon Schools Pillars improves indoor air quality, removes toxic materials from places where children learn and play, conserves fresh drinking water, and helps manage stormwater runoff, and generally creates a better, healthier, more sustainable teaching and learning environment. It also reduces waste in schools, decreases their carbon footprint, and promotes stronger relationships between teachers, students, and communities that foster stewardship of the environment and natural resources, as well as increased civic responsibility.

Greening school buildings, grounds, and curriculum not only opens the door to increased achievement and better health for students and educators, it opens the door to greater school involvement and support by parents and the broader community.

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**"Preparing our children to be good environmental citizens is some of the most important work any of us can do. It's work that will serve future generations and quite literally sustain our world."**

U.S. Secretary of Education  
Arne Duncan announcing  
the Green Ribbon Schools  
program



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# Michigan Green Ribbon Schools



## Easing Your School's Participation

Green Ribbon Schools is not an additional set of priorities, but it is an opportunity for state and national recognition that is consistent with other green school initiatives and opportunities for recognition of Michigan schools. In fact, your school may already be doing activities that are consistent with the three Green Ribbon Schools pillars. If your school is just getting started working toward the three pillars, you could use some help, or you want to add to what your school is already doing, there are programs and organizations to support you.

There are many resources to support your participation that can be found on the Green Ribbon Schools web page: [http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6530\\_2629-271090--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6530_2629-271090--,00.html). The following is a sampling of the tools and programs listed online that complement, support, or ease your participation in Green Ribbon Schools:

| Organization:  | Program/Tool/Certification   | GRS Pillar |
|--|--|------------|
| National Wildlife Federation – Great Lakes Regional Center | Eco-Schools ( a seven-step framework for greening your school building, grounds, and curriculum      | All        |
| US Green Building Council – Michigan Chapters              | School sustainability, especially Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification | Pillar 1   |
| Michigan Economic Development Corporation                  | ReBuild Michigan   | Pillar 1   |
| Michigan Department of Environmental Quality               | Michigan Environmental Education Curriculum Support (MEECS)  | Pillar 2   |
| Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative                         |  | Pillar 3   |

Being honored as a Green Ribbon School is a noteworthy achievement and a source of pride for your school and community – but most importantly striving toward and achieving the Green Ribbon Schools pillars creates a healthier environment for teaching and learning and sets the stage for student success.

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**“While green schools complement much of America's core educational mission, they also nurture unique skills of special value in a knowledge-based economy.”**

U.S. Secretary of Education  
Arne Duncan



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