

Department of Education launches Green Ribbon Schools Program

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With today's [announcement](#) from Secretary Arne Duncan, the Department of Education has finalized the criteria for the Green Ribbon Schools program and is inviting schools to participate in this landmark initiative. This program is truly the biggest thing to happen to the green schools movement, and the opening of this voluntary recognition program creates a new center of gravity for the many organizations, associations, coalitions and individuals working to advance and the Center's mission to put every child in a green school within this generation.

I strongly encourage all local schools to visit the [Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools website](#) to review the criteria, which is divided into three pillars – (1) healthy learning environments, (2) environmental impact and energy efficiency and (3) environmental literacy – and work with their state education authority to submit their application.

The speed and efficiency with which the Department of Education has been able to develop and launch this program, collaborating closely with EPA and other federal agencies, is incredibly noteworthy, and shows that there is a clear national priority for green schools. Further, when this initiative is considered alongside the implications for green schools currently contained within the American Jobs Act, it's clear the green schools movement has [reached a tipping point](#).

Since the [announcement](#) to launch this program last April, we've been proud to express our excitement around this initiative and work collaboratively with leaders from the public sector and NGO community to promote the success of this program. This is a proud moment for everyone working to advance the green schools movement, but I'd to personally congratulate our friend Jim Elder, Director of the [Campaign for Environmental Literacy](#), who originally conceived the idea for this program and has worked tirelessly to build a nationwide network of make Green Ribbon Schools a reality.

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