

From Red to Blue, States Across the Country Adopt the Green Ribbon Schools Program

Published on **14 Nov 2011**

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Just weeks after the Department of Education [released the framework](#) for the Green Ribbon Schools award, 22 33* states, plus the District of Columbia and the Bureau of Indian Education, have announced their participation in this voluntary program. From Pennsylvania to California, red to blue, states are realizing the Green Ribbon Schools program is a way to achieve current goals around the improvement of their education systems. In case you've missed the buzz, the Green Ribbon Schools program is an initiative from the U.S. Department of Education, in collaboration with other federal agencies, to recognize and award schools demonstrating excellence across three categories: healthy learning environments, building efficiency and environmental education.

The Center has been supportive of Green Ribbon Schools since the concept was introduced, in large part because the program provides a clear connection point for the many federal programs and initiatives relating to healthy, high performing schools, as well as the many non-governmental organizations working to advance the green schools movement. And since the launch of this program, there has been a tremendous outpouring of support from the NGO community to assist schools and states interested in pursuing the Green Ribbon Award.

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan [commended](#) the Center's work with Green Ribbon at the Department of Education's Sustainability Summit last year saying, "the U.S. Green Building Council is working with school districts and universities to incorporate green technology into schools. These schools not only are good for the environment, they provide a better learning environment for students—and they are cost efficient. The council is bringing together the nation's strongest advocates for education—representing more than 10 million members across the country to build a national infrastructure of healthy, high-performance schools that are conducive to learning while saving energy, resources and money."

States are viewing their participation in Green Ribbon as a way to use their existing standards, resources and grants to achieve sustainable goals – reduce operational costs, increase STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) learning, and improve student and staff health. Moreover, state departments of education are realizing they're not alone in these efforts – there are a host of existing federal resources to help ensure schools can be high performing in the standards that Green Ribbon sets out.

The progress of the Green Ribbon Schools program to date has been nothing short of extraordinary. Rarely do multi-agency initiatives come together with the speed – and careful quality – demonstrated by the launch of Green Ribbon. And with this week's release of the [Proceedings Report](#) from the 2010 Sustainability in Education Summit, we're reminded that the Department of Education is also following through on one of the summit's key recommendations: demonstrating their strong commitment to improving sustainability in education, and ultimately ensuring the vision of every child in a green school.

For more information, and to view the proceedings report, visit:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/strat/sustainability/summit-2010.doc>

*as of [Dec. 5, 2011](#)

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