

February 5, 2012

**Sample Scoring Rubric for Nominating Authorities of  
U.S. Department of Education GREEN RIBBON SCHOOLS**

The following sample introduction and scoring rubric has been prepared for states participating in the pilot year of ED-GRS by the Campaign for Environmental Literacy with the support of our partners in the Green Ribbon Schools Partnership (U.S. Green Building Council's Center for Green Schools, National Wildlife Federation, and Earth Day Network) and the help of Deborah Moore of the Green Schools Initiative. Note that the U.S. Department of Education will not publish a rubric that assigns specific points for the competition. The Department's guidance is contained in its award Criteria, so you should read those carefully. You of course are free to change this sample as you see fit, or develop your own approach to scoring.

**Reminder:** Depending on state law and the design of this particular state application, there may be several questions within the application which, if left unanswered or answered negatively, would mean that the application would be inconsistent with the affidavit affirming that no laws are being violated. For example, if state law requires notification of parents and school employees when pesticides will be used, and if this question was not affirmatively answered, then a school could be in violation of state law. In such cases, the school should not be considered eligible for U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools, and their application will need to be rejected.

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## Scoring Rubric for Reviewers of the (state) Green Ribbon Schools Applications

**Background:** The U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools criteria state:

"Inspiring schools to strive for 21st century excellence, the Green Ribbon Schools recognition award will recognize schools that have achieved or are making demonstrable progress toward 1) having a net zero environmental impact; 2) improving the health and performance of students and staff; and 3) ensuring the environmental and sustainability literacy of all graduates. These three 'Pillars' of the Green Ribbon Schools award will serve as guideposts to motivate states, tribes, districts, administrators, faculty, parents and students to create the most productive, enriching, and efficient schools possible. The demonstrated combined achievement in these three areas serves as the basis for the Green Ribbon Schools award."

They further state that a state's selection of nominees should be based on an "evaluation of schools' **quantified achievement** based on the common metrics provided in the Framework for Evaluation of Schools by Authorities Making Nominations to the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (Framework)...Nominees demonstrating exemplary achievement in all three Pillars and every Element, according to the Framework, will be ranked highest."

Finally, they state that schools must "comply with all applicable federal civil rights and federal, state and local health, environment and safety statutory and regulatory requirements" and nominating authorities must "include documentary verification of health, safety and environmental statutory and regulatory compliance of nominated schools."

So your job as a reviewer in general is to look for "demonstrable" and "quantified" progress towards the Elements of three Green Ribbon pillars or goals, and score applicants in relation to each other on this as best you can.

Ideally, the Green Ribbon application would simply assess a school's progress toward these three goals alone - if the tools to do so were readily available and widely used. For example, if a widely accepted and used environmental and sustainability education assessment were in place, then the job of reviewing and scoring a school's progress towards the third pillar (100% of graduates are environmentally and sustainability literate) would be relatively easy. If this were the case, then the additional questions under this pillar would become very secondary, if not irrelevant. In other words, the goal is student literacy. So measuring for example the amount of professional development undertaken by the schools teachers is beside the point: a school should undertake however much professional development is needed to produce environmentally literate graduates. Some schools and teachers might require more PD at times, and others less. The bottom line is literacy and how a school chooses to achieve this in its graduates should be left to their discretion. The same is true for a school's environmental footprint and impact on student/staff health.

Unfortunately, such widely accepted assessments do not exist. Nonetheless you should always keep the three pillars in mind and ask yourself: how much quantified

progress is this applicant's response to a particular question demonstrating towards one of the three pillars?

**Instructions:** The nature of this particular application design requires that you exercise your best, impartial judgment as an expert in this field when scoring individual applications. The following table offers some guidance on how to assign points within each Element, but you should feel free to deviate from this if it is clear to you that the situation warrants it.

Some items to keep in mind as you consider how many points to award in each element:

- The application includes some overlapping questions - each is a reasonable way to at least partially assess progress toward that element, which can make it difficult to assign points without "double-counting".
- Some questions simply may not apply to a particular applicant, which makes scoring that question especially difficult. This clearly occurs in at least two situations.
  1. an older school (not modernized or renovated in the last 10 years). For example, an older school with renovations greater than 10 years old could automatically lose points through no fault of their own.
  2. an elementary school. For example, elementary schools may not have specific graduation requirements and rarely if ever offer career technical education.

There may be other such situations as well, perhaps private or charter schools without a cafeteria, for example.

***In such cases, a school should not be automatically penalized for being unable to answer a question that simply does not apply to them. Therefore, you should take this into consideration as best you can when assigning points in that element.***

Green Ribbon Pillar and Elements			Points
<b>Cross Cutting Questions – 5 points</b>			
Participation in Green School Programs and/or Awards for Environmental and Sustainability Efforts.			5 points
1 pt	2-3pts	4-5 pts	
School participates in a program that benchmarks progress	In addition, school has received one award	In addition, school has received more than one award and has achieved an advanced level of progress in at least one recognized program	
<b>Pillar I: Environmental Impact and Energy Efficiency– 30 total points</b>			
<b>Goal: Net zero energy, carbon, water, waste, and hazardous waste impacts.</b>			
<b>Element IA: Improved energy conservation/energy-efficient building(s).</b>			15 points
1-5 pts	6-10pts	11-15 pts	
School demonstrates some reduced energy	School has an Energy Star rating and an Energy Master	School has an Energy Master Plan; is Energy	

use	Plan; demonstrates substantial reductions in electricity and heating energy use and carbon footprint; generates or purchases some renewable energy; has green building recognition for some new, renovated and/or existing buildings at minimum Silver level or equivalent; measures and offsets some of its remaining carbon footprint.	Star rated above 90; demonstrates reductions from baseline in electricity, heating and carbon footprint of 35% or more; >50% of energy use comes from renewable sources; offsets a <i>substantial</i> amount of its remaining footprint; has received green building recognition at the Gold or higher for all new, renovated, and existing buildings.	
<b>Element IB: Improved water quality, efficiency, and conservation</b>			5 points
1 pt	2-3 pts	4-5 pts	
The school protects its water from contaminants; cleans its drinking water fountains and controls lead in drinking water.	In addition, the school has smart irrigation and landscaping that is water-efficient; conducts annual water audits and controls leaks; installs <i>some</i> water-conserving fixtures and/or appliances (e.g. waterless urinals, dual-flush toilets, appliances); and can demonstrate a <i>modest</i> amount of reduction in water-use compared to baseline.	In addition, the school demonstrates a <i>substantial</i> amount of reduction in water-use compared to baseline; uses <i>only</i> alternative water sources for irrigation (e.g. gray water; rainwater harvesting); provides <i>only</i> water-efficient fixtures; and uses other creative measures for protecting and conserving water at the school site (e.g. bioswales for controlling runoff).	
<b>Element IC: Reduced waste production and improved recycling and composting programs</b>			5 points
1-2 pts	3-4 pts	5 pts	
School monitors its hazardous waste and disposes of it as required by state law; has a recycling program that diverts 20% of its solid waste (but no organics/compost); purchases some paper with <i>some</i> recycled content; uses <i>some</i> “third-party certified” cleaning products; and describes a few creative ways the school community	In addition, school also has a pollution prevention approach to hazardous chemicals; recycles computer and electronics responsibly; purchases some electronics with E-PEAT certification; uses <i>substantial</i> amount of “third-party certified” cleaning products; has a recycling program that diverts 35% of its solid waste (some organics/compost, such as yard waste); purchases <i>substantial</i> amounts of paper with	School also has made <i>substantial</i> , measured progress towards a “zero waste” goal; has a recycling program that diverts 50% or more of its solid waste (including organics like yard waste and food waste); purchases <i>substantial</i> amounts of paper with > 30% recycled content, and chlorine-free; has an environmentally-preferable purchasing policy and a	

practices the 4Rs.	recycled and chlorine-free content.	hazardous waste management policy that reduces and prevents solid and hazardous wastes; uses 100% “third-party certified” cleaning products (not including disinfectants); has a custodial program that meets “green” institutional services standards; and describes several creative ways the school community practices the 4Rs.	
<b>Element ID: Use of alternative transportation to, during, and from school</b>			<b>5 points</b>
<b>1-2 pts</b>	<b>3-4 pts</b>	<b>5 pts</b>	
School has programs in place to promote more efficient and healthier transportation, including designated carpool stalls, anti-idling policy, no loading/unloading near air intakes; has some percentage of students that do not drive in a single vehicle to school, and has some means of connecting students to the schoolyard.	In addition, school has a high percentage of students that do not drive in a single vehicle to school; participates in Safe Routes to Schools and identifies safe pedestrian routes; adopts a policy to promote active transportation; and has several means of connecting students to the schoolyard.	In addition, school has alternative-fuel buses and other creative means of promoting alternative transportation.	
<b>Pillar II: Healthy School Environments– 30%</b>			
<b>Goal: The school improves the health and performance of students and staff</b>			
<b>Element IIA: An integrated school environmental health program</b>			<b>15 points</b>
<b>1-5 pts</b>	<b>6-10pts</b>	<b>11-15 pts</b>	
School complies with all relevant state laws related to pesticides, mercury, tobacco and other hazardous materials; ensures good ventilation; keeps relative humidity below 60%;contains no mold; has CO alarms and inventory of appliances; complies with radon laws.	In addition, school tests classrooms for radon within last 24 months; implements an Integrated Pest Management plan that eliminates pesticides; implements an Indoor Air Quality Program equivalent to Tools for Schools; uses “third-party certified” cleaning products; actively manages chemicals; and describes other measures of student and staff health and safety.	School has completed everything in this section and uses an aggressive approach to eliminating environmental health and safety hazards (physical, biological, chemical, natural).	

<b>Element IIB: High standards of nutrition, fitness, and quantity of quality outdoor time</b>			15 points
1-5 pts	6-10pts	11-15 pts	
School conducts at least an average of 120 minutes per week per student of physical education with a reasonable amount conducted outdoors; has an on-site food garden; and participates in some nutrition program.	School also participates in a farm-to-school program; participates in USDA or other nutrition program at a high level; students participate in Sunwise-type program; <i>some</i> food purchased is certified organic; food from school garden is eaten by students.	School also purchases a <i>substantial amount</i> of food certified organic; reduced UV and heat exposure; more than 50% of physical education annually takes place outdoors; and undertakes other measures to promote healthy nutrition, and high quality outdoor time.	
<b>Pillar III: Environmental and Sustainability Education– 35%</b> <b>Goal: 100% of the school's graduates are environmentally and sustainability literate</b>			
<b>Element IIIA: Interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between dynamic environmental, energy, and human systems</b>			20 points
1-5 pts	6-10pts	11-15	15-20
School incorporates limited environmental and sustainability (E/S) activities in some grades; includes limited E/S concepts in some assessments; and <20% of teachers participate in occasional E/S professional development opportunities.	School integrates E/S concepts into many subjects; integrates E/S into some class and school assessments; >50% of teachers participate in occasional E/S professional development opportunities; enrolls at least 5% of the school's eligible graduates in AP environmental science during their high school career.	School focuses E/S literacy on understanding the key relationships between dynamic environmental and human (social, economic, etc.) systems; incorporates E/S themes and topics in many grades, subjects, classroom and school assessments; >75% of teachers participate in one or more E/S professional development opportunities annually.	School has an E/S graduation/ matriculation requirement which is focused on understanding the key relationships between dynamic environmental and human (social, economic, etc.) systems; fully integrated E/S into the curricula scope and sequence of learning and matriculation standards for <i>all</i> grades; enrolls >5% of the school's eligible graduates enroll in AP environmental science during their high school career.
<b>Element IIIB: Use of the environment and sustainability to develop Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) content, knowledge, and thinking skills</b>			5 points
1-3 pts	4-5 pts		
School <i>sometimes</i> integrates E/S into science courses; makes <i>some</i>	School <i>frequently</i> integrates E/S concepts into STEM courses; curricula makes <i>many</i>		

connections to E/S careers; and provides <i>some</i> additional evidence about links to STEM.	connections throughout to E/S careers, career tech/green jobs; offers E/S related CTE courses; and provides a substantial amount of additional evidence about links to STEM education.	
<b>Element IIC: Development and application of civic engagement knowledge and skills</b>		10 points
1-3 pts	4-7 pts	8-10 pts
School has civic projects related to environment and sustainability in <i>some</i> grades; occasional meaningful outdoor learning experiences in a <i>few</i> grades; and a <i>few</i> community partnerships, perhaps only involving donations of funds/supplies.	In addition, school employs best practices for inquiry-based, hands-on, experiential learning in both their civic and outdoor experiences; projects are not "one-off" but instead are in-depth service learning and civic projects fully integrated with school's academic coursework.	School receives full credit when <i>all</i> grades have civic projects; when <i>all</i> grades have meaningful outdoor learning experiences; and when the <i>quality</i> and <i>quantity</i> of community partnerships <i>results</i> in sustainability advances at the <i>school, other schools and the wider community</i> . Higher points for inspiring and creative projects and partnerships.
		<b>100 points</b>