



Uploading Your Nominees for Submission

1. State education authorities must submit nominees to the U.S. Department of Education by February 1. All nominees must be submitted online as an uploaded pdf through www.greenstrides.org.
2. Indicate to ED (andrea.falken@ed.gov) that your state will be submitting a nominee this year and who will be doing that. She will provide an account for that person to upload the nomination. If the person submitting nominees in your state has changed, please advise ED to create a new account. If you submit early learning-12 and postsecondary nominations separately in your state, we can provide accounts for both elementary/secondary and postsecondary colleagues and those can be submitted independently.
3. You'll be prompted to upload up to five early learning to high school or district nominees and up to one postsecondary nominee. You do not have to complete all nominations in one session, but it is best to have the nomination packages that you intend to upload in a session finalized, so that you do not need to replace a given submission with revised versions within the system.
4. Please make sure that your nomination package is handicap accessible in its entirety. We will have to ask you to resubmit any inaccessible nominations. Signing and scanning the first two pages of your package, the Nominee Presentation Form, will always result in inaccessible pages. Here is one alternate method for creating an accessible signed document:
 - a. Make a jpeg of each certifying signature and then copy and paste the signature into appropriate place on the Nominee Presentation Form.
 - b. Once you have compiled your documentation and pasted signatures into your Nominee Presentation Form in the appropriate places, insert the Nomination Presentation Form as the first pages of your intended submission package, so that it is your cover sheet.
 - c. If your application is created in Word, be sure to save it as a PDF in order to transmit it. If you scan your Word document to convert it to a PDF, it will not be accessible.
 - d. For guidance on creating accessible pdfs, visit the [U.S. Access Board's resources, Health and Human Services checklist for accessible pdfs](#) or World Wide Web Consortium's [techniques for creating accessible PDFs](#).
 - e. Some states have found it helpful to connect with colleagues in IT and special education programs, who tend to have experience with document accessibility.
5. You will be prompted to specify the type of nominee and to enter each nominee's contact information (both a lead applicant and a top official, if they differ), social media handles, and basic demographic data for each institution.
6. Ensure that the name of the honoree is printed exactly as it should appear on a plaque, and that all addresses, name spellings, and emails are accurate. The word 'School' should be included, if it is part of a school's official name.
7. Upload the pdf with a simple name that does not include special characters or spaces.
8. You will be asked to submit between three and five photographs for each nominee and to enter descriptions. You must enter at least three in order to finalize a nomination. *Photos should be action shots, not posed.* Having quality photos allows us to share the nominee's story, if selected. By sending these photos, you are giving the U.S. Department of Education permission to use them in our newsletter and social media.



9. Each submission, including the Nominee Presentation Form, the summary narrative, and documentation of a nominee's progress in all three Pillars *must not exceed 20 pages pdf*. You should use standard fonts and margins. This may require synthesizing information from your state's application intake. You are welcome to intake as much information at the state level as you need to evaluate your applicants.
10. Your nomination package should have the Nominee Presentation Form as its coversheet; then the Highlights Report-ready summary narrative; then additional documentation, *in that order*.
11. If you are asked to make changes, you will need to resubmit the entire PDF with the changes included, rather than revised pieces of the submission. The entire package goes on our website when selectees are announced.
12. Use a nomination format that presents a clear, succinct picture of a nominee's successful practices in each Pillar. Consider orthographical and grammatical correctness. Work with your nominees to put their best foot forward.
13. Provide a narrative that summarizes a nominee's work in all three Pillars. Direct your applicants to [past Highlights Reports](#) for examples of this overview summary. We suggest allowing them at least 2 pages for this summary. It should not be a bulleted list, but rather a coherent narrative. The summary that you submit should be what you would like to see appear in the final Highlights Report.
14. Ensure that the nomination materials cover all three Pillars. The most common reason for not confirming a nominee is weakness in one Pillar.
15. Ensure that Pillar III covers environmental and sustainability education, and that language does not get bogged down in STEM. All STEM and civics work should be described as it relates to environmental and sustainability learning.
16. Confirm the compliance of your nominees with all applicable civil rights, Federal Student Aid, health, safety, and environment statutory and regulatory requirements.
17. Remember that ED will not honor additional schools within district awardees unless they are pursuing innovative strategies that differentiate themselves from the districtwide effort, as clearly explained in a nomination package.
18. ED will confirm receipt of nominees and contact you with any questions.