Massachusetts Green Ribbon Schools: Evaluation Criteria and Rubric For 2023-24 Program Applicants

This rubric specifies the official pillars and elements of the Green Ribbon Schools, provides examples of best practices, attaches point values to each of those practices, and in the far-right column, defines the maximum number of points an applicant can receive.

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| **Summary Narrative** |
| 500-word maximum description of your school’s efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs, improve student and staff health, and provide effective environmental and sustainability education. Focus on unique and innovative practices and partnerships |

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| **Cross-cutting Category** | | | **5 Points** |
| **Participation in Green School Programs and/or Awards for Environmental and Sustainability Efforts*.*** | | | **5 points** |
| 1 point | 2-3 points | 4-5 points |  |
| School participates in a program that benchmarks progress. | School has a baseline for benchmarking progress and has verifiable data to show progress from the baseline. | School has received at least one award based on this progress |  |

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| **Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs** | | | **30 Points** |
| **Element 1A: Improved energy conservation/energy-efficient building(s).** | | | **15 points** |
| 1-5 points | 6-10 points | 11-15 points |  |
| School demonstrates some reduced energy use | School is part of a city or town that is designated a Green Community, and therefore is part of a five-year energy reduction plan. School is part of a community that is tracking its energy use and reductions through [MassEnergyInsight](https://www.massenergyinsight.net/home) or other recognized energy tracking software. School has an Energy Star rating and an Energy Master Plan; demonstrates ~10 percent reduction in electricity and heating energy use; demonstrates ~10 percent reduction in carbon footprint from an established baseline; generates or purchases some renewable energy; has green building recognition for some new, renovated and/or existing buildings; measures and offsets some of its remaining carbon footprint. School participates in [MA CHPS](https://chps.net/criteria/chps-massachusetts) program or equivalent. | School has an Energy Master Plan; is Energy Star rated around or above 90; demonstrates reductions from baseline in electricity and heating of ~20 percent or more; ~20 percent of energy use comes from renewable sources either onsite or from generation sources within Massachusetts; demonstrates reductions in carbon footprint of over 20 percent; offsets a *substantial* amount of its remaining footprint; has received green building recognition all or nearly all of new, renovated, and existing buildings. School participates in [MA CHPS](https://chps.net/criteria/chps-massachusetts) program or equivalent. |  |
| School has at least one innovative or unique practice and/or partnership to help reduce its environmental footprint (related to footprint monitoring, access to community expertise, training, in-kind support student/community engagement, contests, etc.) | School has at least two innovative or unique practices and/or partnerships to reduce its footprint. | School has at least three or more innovative or unique practices and/or partnerships to reduce its footprint. |  |
| **Element 1B: Improved water quality, efficiency, and conservation** | | | **5 points** |
| 1 point | 2-3 points | 4-5 points |  |
| 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 *some* water-conserving fixtures and/or appliances (e.g. waterless urinals, dual-flush toilets, appliances); can demonstrate a *modest (5-10 percent)* amount of reduction in water-use compared to baseline; and has some amount of grounds devoted to ecologically beneficial uses. | In addition, the school demonstrates a *substantial* amount of reduction in water-use compared to baseline (~30 percent reduction for landscape irrigation, and ~20 percent for building water consumption); makes use of alternative water sources for irrigation (e.g. gray water; rainwater harvesting); restricts all newly installed toilets, urinals, lavatory faucets and showerheads to those that are *WaterSense* labeled; uses other creative measures for protecting and conserving water at the school site (e.g. bioswales for controlling storm water runoff; reducing impermeable surfaces); and devotes substantial amount of grounds to ecologically beneficial uses. |  |
| **Element 1C: Reduced waste production and improved recycling and composting programs** | | | **5 points** |
| 1-2 points | 3-4 points | 5 points |  |
| School monitors its hazardous waste and disposes of it as required by state law; has a recycling program that diverts at least 20 percent of its solid waste (but no organics/ compost); purchases some paper with *some* recycled content; uses *some* “third-party certified” cleaning products and describes a few creative ways the school community practices the 4Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot). | In addition, school also has a pollution prevention approach to reduce the use of hazardous chemicals; recycles computer and electronics responsibly; purchases some electronics with [EPEAT](https://epeat.net/about-epeat#accessing-epeat-criteria) certification; uses *substantial* amount of “third-party certified” cleaning products; has a recycling program that diverts at approximately one third of its solid waste (some organics/ compost, such as yard waste); purchases *substantial* amounts of paper with recycled and chlorine-free content. | School also has made *substantial*, measured progress towards a “zero waste” goal; has a recycling program that diverts ~50 percent or more of its solid waste (including organics like yard waste and food waste); purchases *substantial* amounts of paper with ~30 percent or more recycled content, and chlorine-free; has an environmentally-preferable purchasing policy and a hazardous waste management policy that reduces and prevents solid and hazardous wastes; uses 100% “third-party certified” cleaning products (not including disinfectants); and describes several creative ways the school community practices the 4Rs. |  |
| **Element 1D: Use of alternative transportation to, during, and from school** | | | **5 points** |
| 1-2 points | 3-4 points | 5 points |  |
| 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; and has some percentage of students that do not drive in a single vehicle to school. | In addition, school has approximately one third or more of licensed students that do not drive in a single vehicle to school; participates in Safe Routes to Schools and identifies safe pedestrian routes; and adopts a policy to promote non-motorized transportation. | In addition, school has alternative-fuel buses and other creative means of promoting alternative transportation, including bike racks. School is part of a designated Green Community that has adopted a policy to purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles (as feasible/available) for its school department fleet. |  |

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| **Pillar II: Improved Health and Wellness** | | | **30 Points** |
| **Element 2A: An integrated school environmental health program** | | | **15 points** |
| 1-5 points | 6-10 points | 11-15 points |  |
| School complies with all relevant state laws related to pesticides, mercury, tobacco and other hazardous materials; can report volume of pesticide use; 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 indoors and outdoors; implements an Indoor Air Quality Program equivalent to [Tools for Schools](https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools); reduces some environmental asthma triggers; actively manages chemicals; and describes *several* measures to protect student and staff health and safety. | School has completed everything in this section and has described *numerous* aggressive approaches to eliminating environmental health and safety hazards (physical, biological, chemical, natural), including, for example, environmental asthma triggers, pesticides, mold, mercury. |  |
| **Element 2B: High standards of nutrition, fitness, and outdoor time** | | | **15 points** |
| 1-5 points | 6-10 points | 11-15 points |  |
| School conducts an average of ~120 minutes per week per student of physical education with a reasonable amount conducted outdoors; has an on-site food garden or participates in a farm-to-school program; and participates in some nutrition program. | In addition, school participates in USDA or other nutrition program at a high level; students participate in [EPA](https://www.epa.gov/schools) programs; *some* food is certified organic; food from school garden is cultivated by students and eaten by students or community. Compelling description of student outdoor activities. | In addition, school also purchases a *substantial amount of* food certified organic; reduced UV and heat exposure; ~50 percent or more of physical education annually takes place outdoors; describes unique and innovative practices and partnerships to promote healthy nutrition, and high quality outdoor time. If a high school that requires community service credits for graduation, school actively encourages students to participate in fundraising walk-a-thons to fulfill these requirements. |  |

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| **Pillar III: Environmental and Sustainability Education** | | | | | | **35 Points** |
| **Element 3A: Interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between dynamic environmental, energy, and human systems** | | | | | | **20 points** |
| 1-5 points | 6-10 points | | 11-15 points | | 15-20 points |  |
| School incorporates *limited* environmental and sustainability (E/S) activities in *some* grades; includes *limited* E/S concepts in *some* assessments; and 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; Teachers participate in *occasional* E/S professional development opportunities; Offers environmental science courses. | | 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*; students are proficient in these assessments;* most teachers participate in one or more E/S professional development opportunities *annually*. Inquiry- and project-based learning activities are described.  >5% of the school's eligible graduates enroll in AP environmental science during their high school career. | | School has an E/S *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 standards for *all* grades; students demonstrate high proficiency; enrolls >5% of the school's eligible graduates enroll in AP environmental science during their high school career. Inquiry-based, project-based activities are described. |  |
| **Element 3B: Use of the environment and sustainability to develop STEM content, knowledge, and thinking skills** | | | | | | **5 points** |
| 1-3 points | | | 4-5 points | | |  |
| School *sometimes* integrates E/S into science courses; makes *some* connections to E/S careers; and provides *some* additional evidence about links to STEM. | | | School *frequently* integrates E/S concepts into STEM courses; curricula makes *many* connections throughout to E/S careers, career tech/green jobs; offers E/S related Career Technical Education courses; and provides a *substantial* amount of additional evidence about links to STEM education. | | |  |
| **Element 3C: Development and application of civic engagement knowledge and skills** | | | | | | **10 points** |
| 1-3 points | | 4-7 points | | 8-10 points | |  |
| School has civic projects related to environment and sustainability in *some* grades; occasional meaningful outdoor learning experiences in a *few* grades; and a *few* 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 *all* grades have civic projects; when *all* grades have meaningful outdoor learning experiences; and when the *quality* and *quantity* of community partnerships *results* in sustainability advances at the *school, other schools and the wider community*. Higher points for inspiring and creative projects and partnerships. | |  |
| Photos of school’s environment, health, and educational features are included. | | Photos of features that show students engaged in STEM, civics, and environment/ sustainability education activities, along with photo captions. | | Photos and videos that show environment, health and STEM, service learning, and environment/ sustainability education activities that tell the story of your school’s unique and innovative features. | |  |
| **Maximum Score** | | | | | | **100 points** |