## Massachusetts Green Ribbon Schools

### Evaluation Criteria and Rubric For the 2024-25 Program

This rubric specifies the evaluation criteria that corresponds to each Pillar and Element of the US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS) program. The rubric provides examples of best practices and outlines the maximum number of points an applicant can earn for each Pillar. Applicants are encouraged to utilize the rubric as a guide while compiling their evidence to support each Pillar in their application. Applicants should include evidence from all three Pillars in their application to be considered for the award.

### Cross-Cutting Category: Participation in green school programs that measure progress. [5 points]

* School/district benchmarks sustainability progress (e.g., tracking multiple metrics such as energy, water, waste, health) policies, partnerships, and has set educational goals towards sustainability.
	+ School/district has evidence/data to show benchmark progress in multiple areas of sustainability
* Action photos of students engaged in STEM, health and wellness, civics, and environment/sustainability education activities along with photo captions are included in the application

## Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs [30 points]

In your narrative, provide evidence for each of the Elements and practices (shown by black and green boxes) below. The green boxes indicate more advanced steps taken to reduce environmental impact. It is not expected that your narrative will include all practices within the Elements, however, it should include a range and variety of practices for *all* Elements within this Pillar. The more examples provided will result in a higher score.

### Element 1A: Improved energy conservation/energy-efficient building(s)

* School/district has an energy policy
	+ School/district has a policy or plan to reduce its carbon footprint
* School/district is part of a community that is tracking its energy use and reductions through [MassEnergyInsight](https://massenergyinsight.net/mei/overview.html) or other recognized energy tracking software.
* School/district demonstrates some reduced energy use. School/district demonstrates ~10 percent reduction in electricity and heating energy use.
	+ School/district demonstrates reductions from baseline in electricity and heating of ~20 percent or more.
* School has achieved an Energy Star rating. District has achieved an Energy Star rating for two or more schools/admin buildings.
	+ Rating(s) at or above 70.
* School/district generates or purchases some renewable energy.
	+ School/district generates or purchases renewable sources either onsite or from generation sources within Massachusetts to offset 20%+ of total electricity use.
* School building has achieved green building recognition (E.g. CHPS, LEED certification). District has green building recognition for more than one school or admin building.
* School/district has at least one additional action and/or partnership to help reduce its energy use (E.g. Data monitoring, access to community expertise, training for building users, student/community engagement, contests)
	+ School/district has at least two additional actions and/or partnerships to reduce its energy use.Element 1B: Improved water quality, efficiency, and conservation
* School/district protects its water from contaminants and has in place a policy or procedure for testing water for lead, copper and other contaminants.
* School/district installs some water-conserving fixtures and/or appliances (e.g. waterless urinals, dual-flush toilets, appliances).
	+ School/district can demonstrate a modest (5-10%) amount of reduction in water-use in building/across the district compared to baseline.
* School/district installs and maintains landscaping that is water-efficient and ecologically beneficial.
	+ No outdoor irrigation is used, or if used, smart irrigation with weather sensors is used in school/at least 50% of district buildings.
	+ School/district makes use of alternative water sources for irrigation (e.g. gray water; rainwater harvesting).
	+ School/district uses other creative measures for protecting and conserving water at the school(s)site (e.g. bioswales for controlling stormwater runoff; reducing impermeable surfaces, rain gardens, wildlife and native plant habitat, and/or outdoor classrooms created).
* School/district conducts annual water audits and controls leaks.
* School/district has at least one additional action and/or partnership to help improve water quality, efficiency, and conservation (E.g. data measurement and tracking, training for building users, student/community engagement, contests)
	+ School/district has at least two additional actions and/or partnerships to improve water quality, efficiency, and conservation.

### Element 1C: Reduced waste production and improved recycling and composting programs

* School/district has a recycling engagement program in place in all schools and educates students and staff about effective practices 4Rs (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle).
* School/district has a waste management plan in place and has demonstrated at least 30% diversion of material that can be recycled or composted.
	+ Has demonstrated 50%+ diversion of materials (recycling/composting) from the trash
* School/district has an environmentally preferable purchasing policy in place for office materials and electronics.
* School/district has at least one additional action and/or partnership to reduce waste (E.g. training for building users, initiatives that focus on the REDUCE & REUSE, partnerships to recycle hard to recycle items, end of year cleanout events, student engagement in waste reduction programs).
	+ School/district has at least two additional actions and/or partnerships to reduce waste

### Element 1D: Use of alternative transportation to, during, and from school

* School/district has programs in place to promote more efficient and healthier transportation, including designated carpool stalls, anti-idling policy, no loading/unloading near air intakes.
	+ School/district (25% of schools) participate in Safe Routes to Schools and identifies safe pedestrian routes or has at least 10% of students walking biking or taking public transport to or from school.
	+ School/district has a program in place to encourage students and staff to carpool to school.
	+ School/district (25% of schools) provides charging stations for student and staff electric vehicles (E.g., cars, bikes, scooters).
* School/district has made strides to plan for, purchase, and put into service electric vehicles.
	+ School/district has adopted a policy to purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles (as feasible/available) for its school department fleet.
* School/district has at least one additional action and/or partnership to help improve low carbon transportation options (E.g. bike racks, student, staff and parent education on EV’s, outdoor air quality monitoring near unloading zones, student/community engagement, contests)
	+ School has at least two additional actions and/or partnerships to help improve low carbon transportation options.
	+ School has at least three or more additional actions and/or partnerships to help improve low carbon transportation options, including biking, walking and scootering to school.

## Pillar II: Improved Health and Wellness of Schools, Students, and Staff [30 points]

In your narrative, provide evidence for each of the Elements and practices (shown by black, green, and purple boxes) below. The purple and green boxes indicate a deeper implementation of health and wellness. It is not expected that your narrative will include all practices within the Elements, however, it should include a range and variety of practices for *all* Elements within this Pillar. The more examples provided will result in a higher score.

### Element 2A: An integrated school environmental health program

* School/district complies with all relevant state laws related to pesticides, mercury, tobacco and other hazardous materials
	+ School/district actively manages chemicals and follows several measures to protect student and staff health and safety.
	+ School/district implements best practices in pest management (e.g., tracks pest sightings and treatments in a logbook at each school)
* School/district ensures good indoor air quality for staff and students through regular proactive maintenance.
	+ School(s) tests classrooms for radon every year
	+ School/district implements an Indoor Air Quality Management Program equivalent to [Tools for Schools](https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools)
	+ School/at least 25% of district schools have in place real-time air quality monitors inside the building to measure conditions such as CO2, temperature, humidity, VOC’s.
	+ Ventilation systems are assessed regularly to ensure they provide required ventilation; filters replaced at the frequency required
* School/district uses some certified green cleaning products (EPA Safe Choice, Green Seal, etc.)
	+ School/district has a green cleaning policy in place.
	+ School/district provides annual training to custodial staff on the use of cleaning products.
* School has at least one additional action and/or partnership to help improve the environmental health of their school (E.g. training for building users on environmental health, student/community engagement, contests)
	+ School/district has at least two additional actions and/or partnerships to help improve environmental health

### Element 2B: High standards of health and wellness (nutrition, fitness, outdoor time, and mental health)

* [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC)](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscc/index.htm) standards are addressed and focus on student mental health and welcoming school climate
	+ High standards from [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC)](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscc/index.htm)  are evident and focus on student voice, mental health, and welcoming school climate
		- School community has been recognized for [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) programs](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscc/index.htm) with exemplary focus on student voice, mental health, and welcoming school climate. e.g., encouraging staff wellness challenges; integrating social emotional learning into the curriculum; providing social emotional and mental health supports for students and staff.
* School has a health and wellness plan and a committee in place that meets on a regular basis to progress the goals of the plan.
* School encourages safe outdoor education and play.
	+ School conducts an average of at least 90 minutes per week per student of physical education with a reasonable amount conducted outdoors.
	+ School works with the community to provide access to before and after school programs that incorporate physical fitness and outdoor time (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs).
	+ Outdoor spaces provide adequate protection from the elements to reduce exposure to UV, heat, rain, etc.
	+ School has outdoor classroom spaces for teachers to use for delivering lessons outside and encourages teachers to use them.
* School/district has a [social emotional learning program](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/#:~:text=Social%20and%20Emotional%20Learning%20in%20Massachusetts.%20Sign-up%20to) that is integrated throughout the school day.
* School/district (at least 50% of schools) has an on-site food garden or participates in a farm-to-school program.
	+ School(s) purchase a substantial amount of locally-grown, organic, or harvested food.
	+ School(s) food from the school garden is cultivated by students and eaten by students or community.
* School/district (at least 50% of schools) participates in some [nutrition program](https://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/)
	+ Staff utilizes the Offer method (vs. serve method) or other food policy to improve consumption of foods offered (such as slicing whole fruits and veggies)
	+ In addition, school participates in USDA or other nutrition program at a high level
* School/district has at least one additional action and/or partnership to help improve health, wellness and mental health of students and staff.
	+ School/district has at least two additional actions and/or partnerships to help improve health, wellness and mental health of students and staff.

## Pillar III: Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education [35 points]

In your narrative, provide evidence for each of the Elements and practices (shown by black, green, and purple boxes) below. The green and purple boxes indicate a deeper implementation of environmental and sustainability education. It is not expected that your narrative will include all practices within the Elements, however, it should include a range and variety of practices for *all* Elements within this Pillar. The more examples provided will result in a higher score.

### Element 3A: Interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between dynamic environmental, energy, and human systems

* School/district includes environmental and sustainability (E/S) concepts including climate education and food literacy, in the curriculum and aligned to the [MA Curriculum Frameworks](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html) in *some* grades
	+ School/district includes examples of how the standards are integrated into the scope and sequence of learning for *all* grades throughout the year
		- School/district incorporates E/S focused inquiry- and project-based learning activities
		- School/district offers environmental science courses or programs
		- School/district has an E/S *requirement* which is focused on understanding the key relationships between dynamic environmental and human (social, economic, etc.) systems
		- >5% of the school's eligible graduates enroll in AP environmental science or other advanced environmental courses during their high school careers
* School/district integrates E/S concepts into *many* subjects
* School/district has students participate inenvironmental programs (e.g., Green Team, Envirothon, community farm to school, etc.)
* School/district integrates meaningful, standards-aligned E/S learning into outdoor student experiences
	+ Most grades have at least one meaningful outdoor learning experience
		- All grades have meaningful outdoor learning experience
* School/district provides opportunities for teachers to participate inE/S professional development
	+ Most teachers participate in one or more school-provided E/S professional development opportunities *annually*
	+ School/district offers professional development to incorporate E/S topics across the curriculum/subjects
* School/district has at least one additional action and/or partnership to foster interdisciplinary learning about sustainability.
	+ School/district has at least two additional actions and/or partnerships to foster interdisciplinary learning about sustainability.

### Element 3B: Use of the environment and sustainability to develop STEM content, knowledge, and thinking skills

* School/district integrates E/S into STEM (science & engineering, math, DLCS[[1]](#footnote-2), and CHPE[[2]](#footnote-3)) courses.
	+ School *frequently* integrates E/S concepts into STEM courses
* School/district provides opportunities for connections to E/S careers and green jobs
	+ School/district provides curricula that integrates E/S careers and green jobs
	+ School/district offers E/S related Career Technical Education (CTE) courses
* School has at least one additional action and/or partnership to foster STEM learning and skill building.
	+ School has at least two additional actions and/or partnership to foster STEM learning and skill building.

### Element 3C: Development and application of civic engagement knowledge and skills

* School/district employs best practices for inquiry-based, hands-on, experiential learning in both their civic and outdoor experiences.
	+ School/district provides opportunities for teachers to participate in civic action professional learning.
* School/district supports students who choose E/S topics for their [civics projects](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/hss/civics/default.html)
	+ School/district Projects are not "one-off" but instead are in-depth service learning and civic projects fully integrated with school's academic coursework.
* School has at least one additional action and/or partnership to enhance E/S in civic engagement
	+ School has at least two additional action and/or partnerships to enhance E/S in civic engagement
1. DLCS refers to [Digital Literacy and Computer Science](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/dlcs/default.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. CHPE refers to [Comprehensive Health and Physical Education](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/chpe/default.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)