



The Director's Award

The Director's Award recognizes state education authorities' exemplary efforts to administer U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS). Annually, the ED-GRS Director's Award goes to the state education official who does the most to advance sustainable education in his or her state, by such means as:

- Running a robust nomination process, including extensive outreach to schools, districts, and/or postsecondary institutions, support to nominees, and detailed consideration to all three Pillars in concise and well-documented nomination packages;
- Connecting more schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions to sustainability resources in all three Pillars;
- Amplifying the stories of their honorees through online, social media, and in-person fora;
- Helping schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions connect to and learn from one another;
- Partnering with a variety of state and non- and for-profit private sector entities to bring more resources and expertise into schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions; and
- Exhibiting a dedication to exceptional school facilities, health, and environmental education through activities outside of the administration of the ED-GRS award, such as participation in professional development, conferences or organizational work.

The ED-Green Ribbon Schools Director will annually present the ED-GRS Director's Award at the ceremony, considering input from states, non-profit organizations, and the ED Green Team. *If you wish to nominate a state education official, please send your nomination and justification to ed.green.ribbon.schools@ed.gov by March 1st.* Any state education official who is involved in implementing the ED-GRS award and has not yet received the Director's Award is eligible for nomination. Final selection for the award will be made at ED.

Past honorees and some of their achievements include:

2012: Gilda Wheeler, Program Supervisor, Sustainability and Science, WA Office of Public Instruction

- Role in the pilot year of ED-GRS, pioneering a multi-state, multi-sector committee structure, online application and scoring process
- Participation on numerous all-state calls that year helped to define the program and how it would become a tool to encourage collaboration among state education officials and their partners
- 2012 participation in the Green Schools National Conference and work to develop a Washington Green School and District award and recognition events
- 2013 Best Practices Tour host
- Developed a simplified school application format that has served as a template for states





2013: Victoria Rydberg, Environmental Education Consultant, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

- Revamped Wisconsin Green and Healthy Schools, enrolling literally hundreds of Wisconsin schools in this pathway to ED-GRS certification
- 2013 Best Practices Tour host
- Model submission format to ED
- Role on the Advisory Council to the Green Schools National Network
- Developed a website that tells the best practices of each Wisconsin Green and Healthy School

2014: Lesley Taylor, Consultant, Facilities Planning, California Department of Education

- Developed a new online application for 2013-2014, a feedback scorecard to applicants, and a California Green Ribbon Schools program
- 2013 Best Practices Tour host
- Helpful contributions on all-state calls
- Model submission format to ED
- Participation in Green Schools National and Green California Schools conferences
- Recruiting schools, hosting webinars, revamping the California Department of Education Green Ribbon pages, conducting social media outreach, and coordinating with an array of partners

2015: Lynn Bamberry, Director of Competitive Grants and Awards, Colorado Department of Education

- Continually improving the Colorado application process
- Ensuring comprehensive nomination packages from school, district, and postsecondary nominees
- Overseeing the Colorado leg of Green Strides Best Practices Tour in Fall 2014
- effectively working with partners and sponsors, creating mechanisms for mentoring potential applicants with the assistance of both past honorees and private sector
- Successful fundraising for honorees' travel to ceremony and Green Strides Best Practices Tour
- leading the state to nominate for the new postsecondary award

2016: Bernard Piaia, Director, Office of School Facilities, New Jersey Department of Education

- 2013 Green Strides Tour host
- Developed mechanisms to use honorees to incentivize more schools
- Built lasting partnerships with the New Jersey Department of the Environment, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, New Jersey Building and Grounds Association, School Boards Association, and the EIRC, among others.
- Encouraged a postsecondary nominee
- Submits nominees and then immediately looks for opportunities to improve in subsequent years
- Willingness to mentor other states



GreenRibbonSchools



2017: Keisha Ford-Jenrette, Program Manager, Georgia Department of Education

- Fosters collaboration among many government, non-profits, and for-profit partners, and schools
- Supports schools and districts in the process of applying, including providing feedback and mentoring so that they can improve for re-application
- Works with Captain Planet Foundation to offer a significant cash award to honorees
- Works with Lt. Governor's office for state recognition festivities, releases, and citations each year and developed a state-level honorable mention to broaden recognition and reward promising efforts

