

Florida Green School Awards Program

Application Overview and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Florida Green School Awards Program recognizes and documents the achievement of students, teachers and school administrators to enhance learning by implementing green school initiatives in Florida. The Florida Green School Awards Program is a partnership between DEP, DOE, the Governor's Energy Office, the Collins Center's Sustainable Florida Program, and Florida's Foundation. This document is designed to assist applicants as they complete their online application for recognition.

Application Guiding Principles

The online application has been designed around four key principles: 1) simplicity; 2) sustainability; 3) commensurability; and 4) applicant-derived data.

1. The online application is simple, revolving around three open-ended questions and 23 multiple choice questions. If an applicant has already developed a good description of his/her project, the application can be completed in less than 40 minutes. By previewing this information, the applicant can gather the necessary information to complete the online application more quickly.
2. The application enhances the environmental sustainability of the program by eliminating the need to print paper applications and reproduce those applications for judges (additional paper can be saved by reviewing this overview online rather than printing it). Program administrators can maintain and search applications online for future reference. Starting in 2011, applicants can also access previous applications from the 'My Applications' page after they log in.
3. The application format ensures that competing projects (within a given year) can be compared with one another without bias, using a common set of standards and a common time frame. This commensurability also allows the projects to be more objectively compared, the results aggregated at the end of each year, and the generation of cumulative impacts of the program since inception. Care has been taken to select the most common criteria and standards associated with green school projects. The program will evaluate these criteria and standards on an annual basis and refine them as needed.
4. The dependence on applicant-derived data is essential due to the volume of applicants. Applicants are notified that the program reserves the right to verify data if their project is selected as a semifinalist in the program.

Florida Green School Award Categories

There are five award categories, one for each of the five key audience groups: 1) students; 2) classes; 3) teachers; 4) schools; or 5) school districts. Applicants should select the award category that most accurately reflects the level at which the project was undertaken. For example, if a student initiates a recycling program at school and is responsible for organizing and managing the program, the most appropriate category would be 'student.' However, if a school pursues a recycling program and involves students, teachers from multiple classrooms and grades in all aspects of the program, it would be more appropriate to apply for the 'school' award. Similarly, if a school district develops a program to recognize students and teachers for their green projects, the school district recognition program should be considered for a 'district' award.

In some cases large projects can be broken down into smaller components with each component submitting an application for recognition. For example, a school may have initiated a green school program involving schoolyard improvements, Earth Day events and energy conservation programs. One part of that program may include one particular class that initiated an energy audit for the school. In this case, both the school and the class could apply for recognition. It is important to remember that each application should focus only on the activities, outputs and outcomes that result from efforts at the particular level. Also, within any given category, the more comprehensive programs will tend to score higher.

Florida Green School Award Themes

The Florida Green School Awards Program includes a number of themes that projects should be aligned with: 1) Green Learning Environments; 2) Exemplary Curriculum or Teacher Professional Development; 3) Service Learning; 4) Policy and Partnerships; and 5) Recycling. These themes are broad enough to capture just about any green school project. If the project does not fit neatly into one of these categories, please choose 'Green Learning Environments.'

1. The Green Learning Environments theme includes efforts that green the school's facilities or grounds by addressing the three pillars of sustainability (economic, environmental and social) while integrating learning into each one. Efforts may include projects that promote healthy learning environments (indoors and out), enhance or restore school grounds, or reduce waste and promote resource use efficiency.
2. The Exemplary Programs in Curriculum and Teaching theme addresses systematic efforts to use the local environment or environmental topics to enhance the curriculum in any subject. This theme also includes efforts that enhance a teacher's capacity to integrate green school instructional materials into the curriculum, make use of green school facilities, improve their knowledge of green schools, or improve their delivery of green school lessons and activities.

3. The Service Learning theme emphasizes efforts that integrate service and learning with a special emphasis on local environmental service projects that strengthen relationships between the school and the community and foster a sense of stewardship.
4. The Policy and Partnerships theme focuses on successful policies that establish a broader foundation for green schools and/or partnerships that engage private sector, universities, government agencies or non-profit groups in support of green school efforts.
5. The Recycling theme revolves around efforts to promote, enhance, sustain and increase recycling efforts of all types of materials at schools or school district facilities.

Open Ended Questions/Items

The application includes three open-ended questions related to the following: 1) project summary, 2) additional project information, and 3) evidence of increased student achievement. These three open-ended questions provide an opportunity for applicants to describe the distinct characteristics of their project and its impact on students.

1. In 1,600 characters or less, the 'project summary' question should address the following:
 - Who implemented the project (student(s), class, teacher, school or school district)?
 - What were the project goals (green learning environments, exemplary curriculum or teacher professional development, service learning, policy and leadership, recycling or other)?
 - What were some of the specific objectives (e.g., reduce water consumption, increase recycling, develop new 'green' curriculum, restore degraded habitat)?
 - What activities were undertaken and what were the outputs of those activities (e.g., students replaced a degraded area with native plants covering 1.5 acres)?
 - What were the primary project outcomes (new knowledge, skills and practices; changes in behavior, impacts on the local environment?)
2. The question seeking 'additional information' should – in 1,200 characters or less – address the following:
 - How did the project integrate green school activities and learning?
 - How feasible is it to replicate the project at other locations?
 - Does this project build on previous efforts?
 - How do you know the project can be sustained into the future?
 - Is there something innovative about this project?

- Was strong leadership required to start the effort? How?
 - Describe the extent to which this project was student driven.
3. The question related to ‘evidence of increased student achievement’ should – in 800 characters or less – describe how student achievement gains were measured or determined. The following questions should be addressed?
- What forms of student assessment (anecdotal, formal or non-formal) were used?
 - How significant were the gains?
 - How closely can these gains be linked to the green school intervention?

Multiple Choice Questions/Items

The multiple choice questions/items seek to ensure that applicant responses are commensurable. Applicants are not required or expected to have generated outcomes for every question/item. If the item is not addressed by the project, the response should be ‘none’ or ‘not applicable.’ If the applicant for the project believes some impact on the item has been achieved, but does not have any quantifiable data, the response should be ‘anecdotal.’ Otherwise, the applicant should choose the response with the data range that most closely matches their own results. In general, broader and more comprehensive green school projects will tend to score higher than more focused initiatives. The table below lists the multiple choice items for project outputs and outcomes along with multiple choice options.

Activities and Outputs	Answer Choices [Drop down options]
Number of people directly involved in project implementation (implementation team)	1. 1-5 2. 6-30 3. 31-150 4. 151-200 5. >200
Number of person-hours spent on the project	1. 1-8 2. 9-40 3. 40-100 4. 101-200 5. >200
Number of people directly reached by the project (active participants and those who were directly affected)	1. 1-30 2. 31-150 3. 150-900 4. 901-1000 5. >1000
Number of people indirectly reached by the project (passive recipients, those who heard about the project)	None or Not Applicable 1. Anecdotal 2. 1-30 3. 31-400 4. 401-1200

	5. >1200
Geographic Scale of the Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom 2. School 3. School Zone (school and community) 4. Multiple School Zones or a School District 5. Multiple School Districts
Project History	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project just started this year. 2. Project has existed for 2-4 years. 3. Project has existed for 5-10 years. 4. Project has existed for 11-15 years. 5. Project has existed for more than 15 years.
Alignment to Curriculum (Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) are available at http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/FLStandardSearch.aspx)	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal. 2. Activities aligned to NGSSS and integrated into one subject area. 3. Activities aligned to NGSSS and integrated into multiple subject areas. 4. Activities aligned to NGSSS and used as an integrating context for learning for an entire teaching team or grade level. 5. Activities aligned to NGSSS and used as an integrating context for the entire school.
Outcomes	Answer Choices [drop down options]
Evidence of economic benefits: Cost Savings (excluding donations)	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal 2. \$0-1000 3. \$1001-2000 4. \$2001-5000 5. >\$5000 (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data)
Evidence of social benefits: Parental Involvement	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence of increased parental involvement. 2. Measurable evidence of one of the following: outreach to parents through newsletters; outreach to parents through events in the community; outreach to parents through school-based events; increased number of parent volunteers from the previous year. 3. Measurable evidence of two of the following: outreach to parents through newsletters; outreach to parents through events in the community; outreach to parents through school based events; increased number of parent volunteers from the previous year. 4. Measurable evidence of three of the following: outreach to parents through newsletters; outreach to parents through events in the community; outreach to parents through school based events; increased number of parent volunteers from the previous year. 5. Measurable evidence of three of the following: outreach to parents through newsletters; outreach to parents through events in the community; outreach to parents through school based events; increased number of parent volunteers from the previous year (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data).
Evidence of social benefits: Community Partnerships	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence of increased community partnerships.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. One new community partnership established. 3. Two new community partnerships established. 4. Three new community partnerships established. 5. Four or more new community partnerships established (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data).
Evidence of Energy Savings	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence of energy savings 2. 1-50,000 kWh 3. 50,001-100,000 kWh 4. 100,001-200,000 kWh 5. >200,000 kWh (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data)
Evidence of Water Savings	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence of water savings 2. 1-500 gallons 3. 501-1000 gallons 4. 1001-5000 gallons 5. >5000 gallons (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data)
Evidence of Waste Reduction	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence of waste reduction 2. 1-100 cubic yards 3. 101-500 cubic yards 4. 501-1000 cubic yards 5. >1000 cubic yards (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data)
Evidence of Pollution Prevention (Elimination of toxics)	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence of pollution prevention 2. 1-50 gallons/lbs 3. 51-100 gallons/lbs 4. 101-200 gallons/lbs 5. >200 gallons/lbs (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data)
Evidence of improved Outdoor Air Quality by reducing bus idling minutes (number of buses x number of minutes of idling = reduced bus idling minutes)	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence 2. 1-30 bus idling minutes 3. 31-90 bus idling minutes 4. 91-180 bus idling minutes 5. >180 bus idling minutes (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data)
Reductions in Miles Driven to School: Reductions in the number of car miles driven to school by students and teachers walking or biking or using 'walking' school buses	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence 2. 1-50 miles 3. 51-100 miles 4. 101-500 miles 5. >500 miles (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data)

<p>Evidence of Improved Schoolyard Environment (schoolyard)</p>	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence of improvements to school grounds (e.g., conversion from turf grass, school garden, removal of exotics or planting native species) 2. 1-50 square feet of area improved (e.g., conversion from turf grass, school garden, removal of exotics or planting native species) 3. 50-250 square feet of area improved (e.g., conversion from turf grass, school garden, removal of exotics or planting native species) 4. 251-500 square feet of area improved (e.g., conversion from turf grass, school garden, removal of exotics or planting native species) 5. >500 square feet of area improved (e.g., conversion from turf grass, school garden, removal of exotics or planting native species) (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data)
<p>Litter Removal: Miles of river, coastline or roadway cleared of litter.</p>	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence. 2. 1-2 miles cleared of litter. 3. 3-5 miles cleared of litter. 4. 6-10 miles of litter cleared. 5. >10 miles of litter cleared (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data).
<p>Evidence of Increased Productivity (reduced absenteeism, visits to clinic, sick days)</p>	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence of reduction in student and staff sick days. 2. Student and staff sick days reduced by 1-3%. 3. Student and staff sick days reduced by 4-5%. 4. Student and staff sick days reduced by 6-10%. 5. Student and staff sick days reduced by >10% (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data).
<p>Evidence of student Volunteerism arising from, but not directly related to, the Green School activities.</p>	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence 2. 1-50 volunteer hours 3. 51-1000 volunteer hours 4. 1001-2000 volunteer hours 5. >2000 volunteer hours (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data)
<p>Service Learning: Service Learning Hours (# of students x # of hours of direct service per student)</p>	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence 2. 1-50 service learning hours 3. 51-1000 service learning hours 4. 1001-2000 service learning hours 5. >2000 service learning hours (when selecting the highest level of impact, you may be requested to provide an actual amount and the source of the data)
<p>Evidence of increased student achievement. Describe how student achievement gains were measured</p>	<p>None or Not Applicable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal evidence 2. If you have documented results related to increased student achievement as a result of your project, select this option. You will be asked later in this application to describe those results and how they were measured.
<p>Does your project involve one or</p>	<p>School building/name</p>

more school buildings meeting the requirements of an approved green building standard THIS school year?	Standard: LEED; Green Globes; FGBCS, other Level: Certified, Gold, Silver, Platinum, etc. Date:
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Frequently Asked Questions

The following section addresses the most frequently asked questions about the program and the application form.

Question	Answer
Who is eligible to apply?	The Florida Green School Awards Program is designed for public, private and home school students in Florida only. College or university level students and projects are not eligible.
What time period should my application focus on?	The Florida Green School Awards Program only recognizes projects that have been completed between the period of June 1, 2010 and May 31, 2011.
Does the Florida Green School Awards Program provide funding for green school projects?	IMPORTANT! The Florida Green School Awards Program is a recognition program only; <u>it is not a funding source and does not accept grant proposals.</u>
Do I need to submit data to support my responses?	The Florida Green School Awards Program relies heavily on applicant-provided documentation of measurable results. Applicants who do not have documentation of measurable results for various criteria should choose the 'anecdotal' or 'none/not applicable choice' when completing their application. The Awards Program reserves the right to request documentation of measurable results for all finalists.
When does the application period end?	June 21, 2011
When will applicants be notified if they are selected as a semifinalist?	Semifinalists will be notified by the end of August 2011.
What if I am selected as a semifinalist?	Semifinalists are invited to the Florida Green School Awards Program Recognition Ceremony in early November where the five state winners will be announced.
Whom do I contact if I have questions about my application?	Gregory C. Ira Director, Office of Environmental Education Greg.Ira@dep.state.fl.us
How are the projects evaluated?	Applications will be reviewed during the summer by a select panel of judges convened by the Sustainable Florida Program of the Collins Center for Public Policy.