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# 53 schools win the Green Ribbon for 2019



Sustainable Forestry Initiative  
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Great things are happening for the environment at schools across the U.S. Thirty-five schools, 14 school districts, and four postsecondary institutions have been honored as U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS) for 2019.

This Green Ribbon program was developed by the U.S. Department of Education to recognize schools for innovative sustainability efforts and inspire other schools to follow their lead. Awards are based on three pillars:

1. Reducing environmental impact and utility costs
2. Improving health and wellness
3. Ensuring effective sustainability education

The evaluation criteria include improved student engagement, academic achievement, graduation rates, and workforce preparedness.

This year, five of the schools and one of the school districts selected are Project Learning Tree program participants. PLT is an award-winning environmental education program and an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. PLT is made freely available to teachers working with youth from preschool through grade 12.

Take a look at the dozens of accomplishments—and work in progress—of two very different Green Ribbon schools using PLT.



© Courtesy of U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools and Boston Green Academy

## Boston Green Academy, Massachusetts

Boston Green Academy serves a diverse student body, with 80% of students considered high need. Its sustainability initiatives encourage student empowerment through outdoor learning experiences, real-world interdisciplinary projects, and a range of leadership opportunities.

- Students started a composting program in the lunchroom and a share table in the cafeteria that helps reduce untouched food waste.
- Students designed, built, and maintain an outdoor classroom and garden, and collect and reuse rainwater for the garden and lawns.
- Ninth-grade students are working with city government on a solar feasibility study.
- All juniors and seniors have a four-hour job-shadowing experience in a sustainability field.
- All seniors complete a six-week, 150-hour sustainability internship.



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## Dutch Fork Elementary School Academy of Environmental Sciences, South Carolina

Dutch Fork Elementary School is a small magnet school focused on environmental science. Forty-eight percent of its student body identifies as African American. The school uses the natural environment as a catalyst for inquiry-based, hands-on student learning and critical thinking. Discovery, exploration, collaboration, and scientific research are emphasized.

- Students collect food scraps from the cafeteria to compost their garden, as well as maintain worm bins. According to their data, about 5,000 pounds of food waste is diverted each month from landfills, saving \$1,700 in hauling fees per year.
- They cook fresh meals using their garden produce.
- They started a pollinator garden, monarch highway, and beehive.
- They audit vehicles and help craft anti-idling policies.
- Student recycling captains help run a schoolwide program for recycling paper products, plastic containers, and aluminum cans.

To learn more about sustainability trends, environmental education, and Project Learning Tree, visit [sfiprogram.org](https://sfiprogram.org).



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