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## Wisconsin local education agencies honored nationally for commitment to sustainability, environmental education

*Schools, early learning center, district named 2024 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools*

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction today announced two Milwaukee schools, an early learning center in Madison, and a school district in Eagle River have been named 2024 U.S.

Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools. The honor was presented to the local education agencies for having a dedication to sustainability and environmental education among students, staff, and the surrounding community.

Among the Wisconsin LEAs receiving the prestigious national honor is an elementary school where a new green space and recreation/educational areas helps manage the city's stormwater, a school mixing conservation and sustainability with culinary arts, an early learning center where students and staff collaborate to reduce environmental impacts, and a school district with a commitment to energy conservation and environmental literacy.

“Our kids clearly understand the impact they can have in creating a better future and sustainable planet,” State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly said. “I am continuously impressed by the collaborative efforts of our kids and our schools in understanding environmental issues and working to make a difference. The commitment of these Green Ribbon Schools gives me hope for a promising future for all of us.”

The U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools Program recognizes schools and districts across the nation that have ongoing efforts to reduce environmental impacts and costs, improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff, and provide effective environmental and sustainability education. Wisconsin's 2024 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon schools are:

- Hawthorne Elementary, Milwaukee Public Schools
- Parkside School for the Arts, Milwaukee Public Schools
- Creative Learning Preschool and Child Care Center, Madison
- Northland Pines School District

(more)

Through a grant with [Reflo](#), Hawthorne Elementary, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, and the Green Schools Consortium of Milwaukee removed almost 36,000 square feet of asphalt from the schoolyard and replaced with new green space and mixed-use recreation and educational areas. Paired with native plantings, new trees, bioswales and a large underground cistern, the space helps manage nearly 85,000 gallons of stormwater per rain event.

At Milwaukee Parkside School for the Arts, students have countless environmental learning opportunities in the aquaponics lab, hoop houses and the school gardens. An extensive gardening and agricultural program, with an emphasis on conservation practices and culinary activities, focuses on nutrient dense seasonal recipes from across the world and provides students the opportunity to try new, healthy, garden-grown, and locally-sourced foods.

Young learners at Creative Learning Preschool, the only early learning center in the nation recognized this year, immerse themselves in environmentally friendly practices each day alongside staff. By installing rain barrels, launching a program aiming to reduce waste, exploring composting options, promoting alternative transportation, participating in MG&E's SolarShare program, and utilizing outdoor spaces to create food and native gardens, the partnership between students and staff reduces environmental impacts and lowers energy use throughout the building.

As a district receiving the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools District Sustainability award, Northland Pines measures energy consumption and actively works to conserve across its three campuses. All three of the district's buildings use solar energy and work to advance environmental literacy within its school forest.

For more information on the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Program, [visit the DPI's website](#). Sustainability stories of each of Wisconsin's recipients and photos for publication [can also be found on the DPI's website](#).

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