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2023 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Honorees from Maryland Announced

*Award Honors Schools, Districts, and Postsecondary Institutions for Reducing
Environmental Impact and Costs, Improving Health and Wellness, Offering Effective
Sustainability Education*

BALTIMORE (April 21, 2023) – The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) congratulates the Maryland 2023 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS) announced on April 20, 2023. This week, the U.S. Department of Education announced the 2023 ED-GRS Awardees, District Sustainability Awardees, and Postsecondary Sustainability Awardees, and one school and one district from Maryland are among the 2023 ED-GRS. The two Maryland honorees are Watershed Public Charter School (WPCS) in Baltimore County and Queen Anne’s County Public Schools (QACPS).

“The Maryland State Board of Education takes great pride in the ED-GRS recognition of WPCS and QACPS. Not only do these schools emphasize environmental literacy, sustainability, and conservation, they all establish healthy physical environments where our children learn, grow, and thrive,” said State Board of Education President Clarence C. Crawford.

"Congratulations to WPCS and QACPS for setting a standard of excellence in environmental sustainability emphasizing student and community health, environmental stewardship, and resource conservation," said State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. "WPCS and QACPS feature resources including outdoor classrooms and school gardens that encourage students to become active leaders who monitor and conserve energy and minimize waste. While all schools throughout Maryland demonstrate a deep commitment to environmental sustainability, the MSDE will continue to expand and scale best practices that emulate the work of WPCS and QACPS. Together, we will continue to deepen the teaching and

learning of Maryland’s robust and multi-disciplinary Environmental Literacy Program grounded in Next Generation Science Standards that combine learning with practice."

The MSDE nominated WPCS and QACPS for their outstanding commitment to environmental sustainability. WPCS prioritizes environmental stewardship and holds it at the center of its mission. Students at WPCS lead many environmental sustainability efforts including a completely waste free lunch in December 2022. The WPCS staff, students, and community regularly collaborate in tree plantings and other campus enhancements to reduce environmental impact.

“Being an ED-GRS school aligns with the Watershed mission and vision of outdoor, hands-on learning,” said WPCS Principal Lori Widney. “Our campus and environmental curriculum provide students with the tools to show their progress, use social emotional regulation, and problem solve through challenges. I’m proud of our students and staff who worked to create a more sustainable school building and campus, which lessened our carbon footprint on the immediate environment.”

QACPS demonstrate a deep commitment to sustainable practices in each of its schools including careful monitoring of energy use, concerted efforts to reduce waste, and exclusive application of environmentally friendly custodial practices. Students in QACPS benefit from thoughtful integration of environmental programming throughout the curriculum that emphasizes the value of outdoor time for learning.

“I commend our school district under the leadership of Mr. Michael Page, Supervisor of Instruction,” said QACPS Superintendent, Dr. Patricia Saelens. “This is an honor of distinction that is only earned through hard work and dedication to Green Schools efforts.”

Across the country, 26 schools, 11 districts, and four postsecondary institutions are being honored as Green Ribbon Schools for their innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, improve health and wellness, and ensure effective sustainability education. The honorees were named from a pool of candidates nominated by 18 states.

The list of all selected schools, districts, colleges, and universities, as well as their nomination packages, can be found [here](#). A report with highlights on the 41 honorees can be found [here](#), and more information on the federal recognition award can be found [here](#). In addition, resources for all schools to move toward the three Pillars can be found [here](#).

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