



Green Schools Quest Welcome Letter

Welcome to the Green Schools Quest!

We're thrilled you are participating in this annual challenge to advance sustainability in local schools. Each year, we have a nice mix of repeat and first time participants. We have worked to keep both of these perspectives in mind when developing the introductory and resource materials which are outlined below and available to you on our website at www.greenschoolsquest.org.

Green Mentors serve as the primary contact working with each school throughout the program; however, schools and mentors are encouraged to reach out to the program coordinator at any time during the Green Schools Quest with questions or feedback via info@showmegreenschools.org.

Getting Started

Schools and mentors are paired at the beginning of October and notified of their matches via email. Immediately following, Green Mentors are asked to contact their assigned schools to set up an initial virtual meeting with the School Lead in early October. The initial meeting between Green Mentor and School Lead plays an important role in setting the project up for success!

Specific 'Getting Started' steps are outlined on the [Mentor Checklist](#) and [School Lead Checklist](#).

Noteworthy Items:

- **All Green Mentors AND School Leads are asked to view these video recordings and checklists:**
 - [Program Introduction](#) (18 minutes)
 - [Applying the Rainbow of Sustainability](#) (24 minutes)
 - [Mentor Checklist](#)
 - [School Lead Checklist](#)
- Projects must be new initiatives or major expansions of existing initiatives.
- Each year, our Green Schools Committee designates a "Focus of the Year" theme for the Green Schools Quest as an **OPTIONAL** area of focus for participants who would like to be considered for the "Focus of the Year" award. Themes are selected to reflect current issues both locally and globally. **The 2023-2024 theme is Biodiversity.** [This document introduces the theme](#) and highlights three key areas for taking meaningful climate action: **Saving Resources, Transforming Landscapes, and Inspiring Communities.** To be considered for the Focus of the Year award, schools must submit 150 words or less describing how their project relates to Biodiversity in their Final Submission materials.
- [Submissions](#) are reviewed by a panel of judges using this [evaluation rubric](#). Winners will be determined in Elementary, Middle and High School Divisions. In addition, five Spotlight Awards will be presented across all of the age categories: Rookie of the Year, Sustainability Champion, Focus of the Year, Innovation, and Judges' Choice. Winners receive a cash prize and/or trophy. Participants are encouraged to [integrate Rainbow of Sustainability principles](#) into their projects and to complete the [MGS Baseline Self-Assessment](#).

- Throughout the Quest, we'll offer opportunities for schools and mentors to connect with each other and learn together. Attendance is optional. *More details on dates and registration will be shared via monthly emails from the GSQ program coordinator.*
 - [Connect on the Quest](#): A virtual speakers series sharing Green Schools Quest project stories and resources to support schools in their green schools endeavors, providing participants with opportunities to connect with each other and learn together. More details on exact dates, speakers and content forthcoming.
 - [Mentor Meetups](#): An opportunity for mentors to: share updates on your project with fellow mentors, learn about others' projects and progress, seek suggestions/resources from fellow mentors, and provide general input on the program. Dates TBA soon.
- We encourage you to share your progress on social media. Use the hashtag #GreenSchoolsQuest.
- GSQ Participant static cling window decals are available for you to proudly display and will be mailed to you.
- Lastly, listed below are links to all of the GSQ resources to help you on your journey:
 - [Program Introduction](#) (18 minutes)
 - [Applying the Rainbow of Sustainability](#) (24 minutes)
 - [Mentor Checklist](#)
 - [School Lead Checklist](#)
 - [Ways for Mentors to Engage](#)
 - [Focus of the Year](#)
 - [Project Idea List](#) (Aligned with Missouri Green Schools Topics)
 - [101 Ways to Green Your School](#)
 - [Final Submission Materials](#)
 - [Evaluation Rubric](#)
 - [Examples Past GSQ Projects](#), including video compilations, project summaries, and final submission materials from past winning submissions (excellent resource to check out!)
 - [Photo Release Form - Individual Student](#) to be signed by each student's parent/guardian, or submit one [Photo Release Form - Certificate of School Official](#) to cover all students pictured
 - [Show-Me Green Schools Newsletters](#) (past issues; you will begin receiving these)
 - [Show-Me Green Schools Discussion Forum](#) - You are invited to connect with other program participants on this discussion forum that is housed within the Green Schools Alliance Community (account set-up takes less than 1 minute).

Through the Green Schools Quest, we hope to create a lasting awareness of the importance of green schools, and catalyze a movement that fosters an attitude among youth and future generations to appreciate and model sustainable practices. Thank you for working with us to positively impact our region and its inhabitants!

www.greenschoolsquest.org



Green Schools Quest is part of the Show-Me Green Schools suite of programs co-managed by Missouri Gateway Green Building Council and Missouri Environmental Education Association.