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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Pam Stewart

DATE: January 20, 2012

SUBJECT: National Green Ribbon Schools Award

Contact Information:

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DPS: 2012-05

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) recently announced a new initiative: Green Ribbon Schools (GRS). Modeled after the Blue Ribbon Schools Program, the Green Ribbon Schools award will recognize exemplary achievement in environmental impact, health, and environmental education.

The USED is looking to identify schools that have the least impact on the environment, the most positive impact on the health of students and staff, and the most effective preparation of students for careers and citizenship in the 21st century. As Education Secretary Arne Duncan has said, “*Green schools support our shared objectives of well-rounded education, healthy students, and STEM achievement.*”

The Florida Department of Education is pleased to announce that Florida will participate in the Green Ribbon Schools program. We are eager for your schools to apply for a Green Ribbon Schools Award by submitting an application for this important and new national recognition. Each state will be allowed to nominate up to four schools for the 2012 national award. Of the four nominees, at least one must be a private school and one must be a school with at least 40 percent of its students from disadvantaged backgrounds determined by free and reduced lunch.

PAM STEWART
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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The selection process will be based on demonstrated progress toward the goals of each of the three USED-Green Ribbon School Pillars:

- 1) Pillar One: the school has a net-zero environmental impact.
- 2) Pillar Two: the school environment has a net positive impact on the health and performance of students and staff.
- 3) Pillar Three: 100 percent of the school's graduates are environmentally and sustainability literate.

These are ambitious goals and few schools may achieve all three goals. However, it is important for schools to demonstrate concrete accomplishments, using quantified measures wherever possible. Schools in your district that have participated in the annual Florida Green Schools Award program, or similar initiatives, are prime candidates prepared to submit the USED Green Ribbon Schools application. Your continued support of your schools' exemplary achievement in environmental impact, health, and environmental education is greatly appreciated.

Qualifying schools may apply for this honor online using this link: [Florida GRS Application](#). Applications must be submitted by February 17, 2012. If a school in your district is selected as a finalist, a brief summary of strengths and accomplishments will be required along with your signature and the principal's signature. For further information about the Green Ribbon Schools Award, visit the USED website at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/index.html>

If you have any questions about this award, please feel free to contact Romina Sola, Florida Green School Network Coordinator, at Romina.Sola@dep.state.fl.us or 850-284-3298 or Penny Detscher, Office of Healthy Schools, at Penny.Detscher@fldoe.org or (850)245-5089.

PS/pd