



NEWS RELEASE

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APRIL 22, 2021

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GREEN RIBBON SCHOOLS HONOREES ANNOUNCED

The U.S. Department of Education today released the names of the 2021 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools, District Sustainability Awardees, and Postsecondary Sustainability Awardees. Across the country, 27 schools, three early learning centers, five districts, and five postsecondary institutions are being honored for their innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, improve health and wellness, and ensure effective sustainability education.

The honorees were chosen from a pool of candidates nominated by 20 states. The selectees include 24 public schools and three nonpublic schools. More than half of the 2021 honorees serve a disadvantaged student body.

Gerald Otte-Blair Middle School (OBMS) in Blair was named a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School, while the Newman Grove Public Schools system was recognized as a District Sustainability Awardee.

OBMS partnered with Washington County Recycling to place a single-stream recycling bin on school property where sixth-grade students collect recycled materials from all the classrooms. Students also participate in the Trex Challenge for the recycling of plastic bags and the school has a composting program run by students, using 1,700 pounds of food scraps each year. OBMS incorporates hands-on learning in the school garden and partners with DeSoto Bend National Wildlife Reserve to provide Outdoor Environmental Science Class at the refuge.

Newman Grove Public Schools built a new school featuring efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), LED and motion-sensor lighting, energy-efficient doors and windows, and automatic faucets and toilets. The school FFA program oversees paper and aluminum recycling and the agriculture mechanics class partners with a local manufacturing company to collect and use their metal scrap in the welding course throughout the year. Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and FFA groups participate in a trash pickup on a local highway and FFA students also maintain a greenhouse where they grow lettuce for the school cafeteria. They are in the process of setting up a larger herb and produce garden. Local families also donate beef for school lunches through the Nebraska Beef in Schools program.

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 40 honorees can be found [here](#). More information on the federal recognition award can be found [here](#).

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