



What is a Connecticut Green LEAF School?

The Connecticut Green LEAF Schools program is a collaborative effort of the Connecticut Departments of Construction Services, Education, Energy and Environmental Protection and Public Health, as well as many Connecticut environmental and educational organizations created to promote green and healthy schools for all. The Connecticut Green LEAF Schools program guides and recognizes schools for striving toward three essential goals:

Provide Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education. The school will focus on interdisciplinary learning featuring relationships between the environment, energy and human systems, civic engagement with the local community, and connections to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) content and practice.

Improve the Health and Wellness of Students and Staff. A school must strive to integrate school environmental health programs, nutritional and fitness standards, and quality outdoor time to meet the second goal of the Connecticut Green LEAF Schools program.

Reduce Environmental Impact and Cost. A Connecticut Green LEAF School will ensure that its environmental footprint is small by ensuring that the school's buildings maximize energy and water efficiency, focus on waste reduction and recycling, and promote alternative transportation use.

Every school is unique and starts from a different level. The Connecticut Green LEAF Schools program can help your school on its path to becoming greener!

Why Become a Connecticut Green LEAF School?

Connecticut Green LEAF Schools are healthy, productive learning environments for students, educators and administrators. Studies show that a green school raises student academic achievement, saves money and improves the health of students and staff. Schools with strong environmental literacy education build critical thinking skills by designing curriculum that provides interesting and relevant contexts for learning core concepts and skills in state standards and assessments. These schools are energized by a mission to make a difference in their school and community.

- **Academic Benefits:** Environmental education contributes to overall academic achievement and higher performance on standardized tests when it is strategically integrated into the curriculum. Students learn more effectively within a real-world, experiential-based context combined with traditional textbook-based approaches.
- **Health Benefits:** Going green offers many health benefits for students and staff, including improved nutrition and physical health. A focus on healthy eating, physical activity and healthy environments pays off in decreased obesity, asthma and other illnesses while increasing attendance.
- **Reduced Costs:** Green schools are energy efficient, have lower utility costs, conserve resources and reduce waste. Savings on energy, waste and water bills is extra money that can be put into academic programs.



Leading, Educating, Achieving and Fostering healthy, green schools for all.

Ideas For Becoming a CT Green LEAF School

- **Provide Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education.** Examples of successful environmental and sustainability education initiatives include: implementing nationally recognized programs (e.g., Project Learning Tree, Project Wet, Project WILD, or Food, Land and People) connected to state standards, project-based and service learning in the community, STEM partnerships with businesses or universities, sustainability fairs, environmental restoration projects, and outdoor classrooms.
- **Improve the Health and Wellness of Students and Staff.** Successful school strategies would include: participating in the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Tools for Schools program, integrated pest management, green cleaning

programs, daily exercise and health classes (for example: yoga and dance fitness programs), vegetarian food choices, farm-to-school partnerships, butterfly/vegetable/rain gardens, hydroponics and greenhouses, and outdoor classrooms/nature areas.

- **Reduce Environmental Impact and Cost.** A school can achieve this goal through several initiatives including: student energy teams, onsite renewable energy systems and learning, student involvement in planning building additions, recycling and composting programs, paperless classrooms, walk-to-school programs, and attaining Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), ENERGY STAR® and Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS) and other green building rating standards.

Becoming a Connecticut Green LEAF School

Every school is unique and starts at a different level. The Connecticut Green LEAF Schools program will recognize schools that have made significant progress toward greening their schools, as well as those that are just beginning. The program can help all schools on their journey to becoming green and is an important application of the CT Environmental Literacy Plan found at www.coeea.org.

- **Planting Seeds:** This level is for schools assessing their baselines and in the earliest stages of developing their sustainability plans. This level lays the foundation for a more sustainable school community in the future.
- **Growing Green:** This level is for schools that have made significant progress in meeting the three primary goals of the Connecticut Green LEAF Schools program, but need additional assistance to achieve some goals.

- **Connecticut Green LEAF Schools:** Schools that have made significant progress in all three goals will qualify for Connecticut Green LEAF Schools recognition.

Green Ribbon Schools

This is a U.S. Department of Education recognition program for K-12 schools that have made significant progress in reducing their environmental impact, improving student and staff health, and providing effective environmental education. This recognition is part of a larger U.S. Department of Education effort to identify and disseminate knowledge about practices proven to result in improved student engagement, academic achievement, graduation rates, and workforce preparedness, as well as a government-wide aim to increase energy independence and economic security. The state can nominate up to four Connecticut Green LEAF Schools annually for the Green Ribbon Schools award.

For More Information

Further information about the Connecticut Green LEAF Schools program, including a list of resources to assist in greening your school, can be found at:

www.ctgreenschools.org/ctgreenleaf.htm

Questions about the program should be sent to:

ctgreenleaf@ctgreenschools.org

Schools that participate will receive program support, resources and curriculum, professional development and learn best practices from school “mentors.”



**CONNECTICUT
GREEN LEAF
SCHOOLS**

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