



U.S. Secretary of Education Names Discovery Charter School 2021 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School

The U.S. Department of Education announced today that Discovery Charter School in Porter, IN is among the 2021 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools award honorees.

Discovery Charter School was nominated by the Indiana Department of Education. Discovery's accomplishments include reducing environmental impact, improving the health and wellness of students and staff, and effective environmental and sustainability education.

Discovery students engage with their environment by utilizing a trail which connects school grounds to the National Park trail system. Students explore habitats, encounter local plants and animals, and practice stewardship through invasive species removal. Throughout the years, our school grounds have expanded to include an outdoor classroom, beehives, and a rain garden.

Discovery embraces outdoor education and includes many opportunities for students to participate in hikes, hands-on learning, and stewardship projects. Additionally, our recess space includes a nature play area under a canopy of trees. Our families, which include a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), and community are involved in school-wide environmental and service events, such as our annual Adopt-a-Beach cleanup. They are not only supporters of our school but resources for learning.

Discovery's mission is centered on place-based education. Teachers, in collaboration with our School Naturalist, create opportunities that use our place as a resource for learning across all subjects. We partner with the community to develop a sense of community and a student's place in it. These partnerships include inviting guest speakers from local organizations and universities, as well as providing off-site learning experiences that enhance learning.

"Discovery Charter School is honored to be recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a Green Ribbon School. Our school's mission includes our commitment to sustainable practices – our students will become stewards of their environment and community. We want to serve as examples for others and encourage sustainability within our community. The partnerships we build, which includes the Indiana Dunes National Park, allow us to be active caretakers of the environment for present and future generations." Mrs. Pamela S. Moore, Principal

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 named from a pool of candidates nominated by 20 states. The selectees include 24 public schools, five charter schools, one magnet school, and three nonpublic schools. Over half of the 2021 honorees are in communities where over 40 percent of the student body are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

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](#). Resources for all schools to move toward the three Pillars can be found [here](#).

A Note on the Award Name for Communications

ED's award is called "U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools" and has "District Sustainability Award" and "Postsecondary Sustainability Award" categories, in addition to the original school award. It is abbreviated ED-GRS. "Green Ribbon Schools" without the "U.S. Department of Education" is not ED's award, but instead is a separate program overseen by another organization. A selected school is a "2021 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School." A selected district is a "2021 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School District Sustainability Awardee." A selected postsecondary institution is a "2021 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School Postsecondary Sustainability Awardee. There is no "National," "Award," or "Program" in the title. There is no apostrophe or hyphen after Education.

