

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To strengthen and expand the Green Ribbon Schools Program at the Department of Education by boosting the capacity of participating States to expand the number of engaged schools, applicants, and nominees, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. BOOKER introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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## **A BILL**

To strengthen and expand the Green Ribbon Schools Program at the Department of Education by boosting the capacity of participating States to expand the number of engaged schools, applicants, and nominees, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Green Ribbon Act of  
5 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. GREEN RIBBON SCHOOLS PROGRAM.**

7 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1           (1) ESEA DEFINITIONS.—The terms “elemen-  
2       tary school”, “local educational agency”, “secondary  
3       school”, “Secretary”, and “State educational agen-  
4       cy” have the meanings given the terms in section  
5       8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education  
6       Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

7           (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-  
8       ty” means an elementary school, secondary school,  
9       school funded or operated by the Bureau of Indian  
10      Education, local educational agency, or institution of  
11      higher education.

12          (3) ENVIRONMENTALLY LITERATE.—The term  
13      “environmentally literate”, when used with respect  
14      to an individual, means the capacity to—

15            (A) perceive and interpret the relative  
16      health of environmental systems and the inter-  
17      relationships between natural, economic, and  
18      social systems and technology; and

19            (B) assess options and take appropriate  
20      action to maintain, restore, or improve the  
21      health of the environmental systems and pro-  
22      mote sustainable development.

23          (4) GREEN RIBBON PILLARS.—The term  
24      “Green Ribbon pillars” means the following 3 inter-  
25      related aspirational goals:

1 (A) 100 percent of the graduates of the eli-  
2 gible entity or the schools served by the eligible  
3 entity are environmentally literate.

4 (B) The environmental impacts of the eli-  
5 gible entity's buildings, grounds, and operations  
6 are targeting significant emission reductions  
7 with a long-term goal of 100 percent reduction.

8 (C) The eligible entity has a net positive  
9 impact on the environmental health of its stu-  
10 dents and staff.

11 (5) GREEN RIBBON SCHOOL AWARD WINNER.—  
12 The term “Green Ribbon School award winner”  
13 means an eligible entity that has received an award  
14 of recognition from the Department of Education for  
15 high performance in making progress toward all 3 of  
16 the Green Ribbon pillars, in accordance with sub-  
17 section (b)(4).

18 (6) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The  
19 term “institution of higher education” has the  
20 meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher  
21 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

22 (b) GREEN RIBBON SCHOOL PROGRAM OF THE DE-  
23 PARTMENT OF EDUCATION.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct  
25 a program, which shall be known as the “Green Rib-

1       bon Schools Program”, to reach and engage more  
2       schools by—

3               (A) encouraging eligible entities to imple-  
4       ment the Green Ribbon pillars;

5               (B) recognizing high performance in the  
6       Green Ribbon pillars by eligible entities,  
7       through voluntary partnership with States;

8               (C) increasing the number of participating  
9       local educational agencies and schools that are  
10      receiving resources from the program, including  
11      those not pursuing an award on the date of en-  
12      actment of this Act;

13              (D) engaging with public and private  
14      stakeholders to maximize positive impact; and

15              (E) supporting schools in implementing  
16      measures to reduce energy and water use and  
17      costs, increase resilience, and improve condi-  
18      tions for health and wellness.

19              (2) GRANTS AND AWARDS.—In conducting the  
20      Green Ribbon Schools Program, the Secretary shall,  
21      from the amounts made available to carry out this  
22      Act—

23              (A) reserve not less than \$250,000 for the  
24      Secretary of Interior to carry out the activities  
25      under subsection (c)(6) with respect to schools

1           operated or funded by the Bureau of Indian  
2           Education;

3           (B) award grants to State educational  
4           agencies under subsection (c); and

5           (C) provide an honorarium to each Green  
6           Ribbon School award winner in an amount  
7           equal to \$10,000, subject to appropriations.

8           (3) STUDIES, RESEARCH, AND SURVEYS.—The  
9           Secretary may conduct studies, research, and sur-  
10          veys to inform the Green Ribbon Schools Program.

11          (4) GREEN RIBBON SCHOOL AWARDS.—Each  
12          year, regardless of whether funds are available for  
13          the honoraria described in paragraph (2)(C), the  
14          Secretary shall—

15                (A) establish a process through which—

16                   (i) State educational agencies may  
17                   nominate eligible entities for recognition of  
18                   high performance in making progress to-  
19                   ward all 3 of the Green Ribbon pillars; and

20                   (ii) the Secretary of the Interior, oper-  
21                   ating through the Bureau of Indian Edu-  
22                   cation, may nominate eligible entities that  
23                   are schools operated or funded by the Bu-  
24                   reau for such recognition; and

1 (B) award the Green Ribbon School award  
2 to nominated eligible entities that the Secretary  
3 determines have shown high performance in  
4 making progress toward all 3 of the Green Rib-  
5 bon pillars.

6 (5) REPORTS.—

7 (A) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

8 (i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than No-  
9 vember 1, 2023, and annually thereafter,  
10 the Secretary shall publish a report de-  
11 scribing the Green Ribbon Schools Pro-  
12 gram of the prior fiscal year.

13 (ii) CONTENT OF ANNUAL RE-  
14 PORTS.—Each annual report described in  
15 clause (i) shall—

16 (I) describe the activities and  
17 outcomes of the Department of Edu-  
18 cation and State grant award winners,  
19 including the uses of grant funds to  
20 reach and engage additional schools,  
21 and the successes and challenges of  
22 the Green Ribbon Schools Program;  
23 and

24 (II) provide a proposed plan for  
25 the following year.

1 (B) BIENNIAL REPORTS.—Not later than  
2 November 1, 2024, and biennially thereafter,  
3 the Secretary shall publish a report describing  
4 key programs and policies of each State in sup-  
5 porting its schools in making progress toward  
6 all 3 of the Green Ribbon pillars.

7 (c) STATE GRANT PROGRAM.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award  
9 grants to State educational agencies, on a competi-  
10 tive basis, for the purpose of supporting and engag-  
11 ing eligible entities as green schools.

12 (2) APPLICATIONS.—A State educational agen-  
13 cy that desires to receive a grant under this sub-  
14 section shall submit an application to the Secretary  
15 at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by  
16 such information as the Secretary may require, in-  
17 cluding an assurance that the agency will—

18 (A) expend not less than 40 percent of the  
19 grant funds to support underresourced schools;  
20 and

21 (B) provide documentation to the Sec-  
22 retary demonstrating compliance with the re-  
23 quirement under subparagraph (A).

24 (3) CRITERIA.—In selecting grant recipients  
25 under this subsection, the Secretary shall consider

1 the State educational agency's proposed program or  
2 program expansion in terms of—

3 (A) the projected impact and proposed im-  
4 pact metrics;

5 (B) the incorporation of specific activities  
6 to ensure underresourced eligible entities ben-  
7 efit and have opportunities to participate;

8 (C) the extent to which stakeholders and  
9 partnerships are included;

10 (D) innovative approaches to scaling green  
11 school practices and learning;

12 (E) the engagement of past award winners  
13 in the program, including as mentors or advi-  
14 sors to other eligible entities; and

15 (F) other criteria as may be identified by  
16 the Secretary.

17 (4) AMOUNT OF GRANTS.—In carrying out this  
18 subsection, the Secretary may determine the amount  
19 of each grant award, except that no grant award  
20 shall be for an amount that is less than \$250,000  
21 nor more than \$1,000,000.

22 (5) TIME PERIOD.—Grant funds awarded under  
23 this subsection shall be available for use by the  
24 grant awardee for not more than 3 years.



1           (6) ALLOWED USES.—A State educational  
2       agency that receives a grant under this subsection  
3       shall use the grant funds to increase and support eli-  
4       gible entities in becoming Green Ribbon School  
5       award winners, including by—

6           (A) establishing State-level Green Ribbon  
7       awards and recognition events;

8           (B) working in partnership with nonprofit  
9       green school organizations and other organiza-  
10      tions, utilities, businesses, and other State and  
11      local governmental entities to inform, educate,  
12      and support eligible entities regarding actions  
13      to make progress toward all 3 of the Green Rib-  
14      bon pillars;

15          (C) using resources from the Department  
16      of Education and its green schools partners, as  
17      appropriate, to curate and disseminate re-  
18      sources about best green school practices and  
19      provide statewide training and professional de-  
20      velopment in the Green Ribbon pillars;

21          (D) utilizing innovative ways to promote—

22              (i) the implementation of green school  
23      practices; and

1 (ii) the Green Ribbon Schools Pro-  
2 gram and any State-level Green Ribbon  
3 schools program; and  
4 (E) providing statewide training and pro-  
5 fessional development in the Green Ribbon pil-  
6 lars.

7 **SEC. 3. INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES**  
8 **GREEN RIBBON AWARD PROGRAM.**

9 (a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to de-  
10 velop and implement a Green Ribbon award program for  
11 nonformal learning institutions at the Institute of Museum  
12 and Library Services in order to recognize and help ad-  
13 vance excellence in the greening of nonformal learning in-  
14 stitutions.

15 (b) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “non-  
16 formal learning institutions” includes public and private  
17 libraries, museums, arboretums, botanical gardens, nature  
18 centers, historical societies, historic preservation organiza-  
19 tions, history museums, science and technology centers,  
20 planetariums, children’s museums, art museums, general  
21 museums, natural history museums, natural science muse-  
22 ums, zoos, aquariums, and wildlife conservation centers.

23 (c) ESTABLISHMENT.—Consistent with section 209  
24 of the Museum and Library Services Act (20 U.S.C.  
25 9107), the Director of the Institute of Museum and Li-

1 brary Services shall establish an award program for non-  
2 formal learning institutions modeled on the Department  
3 of Education's Green Ribbon Schools Program. The award  
4 program shall recognize and honor nonformal learning in-  
5 stitutions that demonstrate high achievement in all 3 of  
6 the following goals:

7           (1) Ensuring that their visitors are exposed  
8           through multiple learning modes to locally relevant  
9           information to advance understanding of the inter-  
10          connection of the natural environment, built environ-  
11          ment, and quality of life.

12          (2) Significantly reducing their net environ-  
13          mental and carbon footprints, while using their own  
14          built and natural environment as a learning labora-  
15          tory and a model of best practice for their host com-  
16          munity.

17          (3) Ensuring their institution has a net positive  
18          environmental impact on visitor and staff health.

19          (d) AWARD.—The Director of the Institute of Mu-  
20 seum and Library Services shall provide each national  
21 award winner under this section with an honorarium of  
22 \$10,000.

1 **SEC. 4. OFFICE OF SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUS-**  
2 **TAINABILITY WITHIN THE OFFICE OF THE**  
3 **SECRETARY OF EDUCATION.**

4 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within  
5 the Office of the Secretary of Education, the Office of  
6 School Infrastructure and Sustainability that shall be  
7 composed of 3 full-time employees.

8 (b) PURPOSE.—The Office of School Infrastructure  
9 and Sustainability shall—

10 (1) direct content and programming of a tech-  
11 nical assistance center for school infrastructure;

12 (2) liaise with partner Federal agencies that  
13 have programs, grants, and equities in school facili-  
14 ties, promote the National Clearinghouse’s resources  
15 to schools, provide robust technical assistance to  
16 partner Federal agencies, local educational agencies,  
17 and State educational agencies, and oversee, pro-  
18 mote, and expand the recognition award for the  
19 Green Ribbon Schools Program;

20 (3) provide technical assistance, training, and,  
21 subject to appropriations, grants to State edu-  
22 cational agencies and local educational agencies on  
23 issues related to educational facility planning, de-  
24 sign, financing, construction, improvement, oper-  
25 ation, and maintenance, including green building de-

1 sign and operation practices consistent with a com-  
2 mitment to tackling the climate crisis;

3 (4) develop resources and assemble best prac-  
4 tices on issues related to ensuring equitable access  
5 to healthy, educationally adequate, and environ-  
6 mentally and fiscally sustainable public school facili-  
7 ties and grounds; and

8 (5) recommend revisions to regulations of the  
9 Department of Education that pertain to school con-  
10 struction and renovation.

11 (c) APPROPRIATION.—There is authorized to be ap-  
12 propriated to carry out this section \$2,000,000 for fiscal  
13 year 2024.

14 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-  
16 priated to carry out this Act (except for section 4)  
17 \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2024 and such sums as may  
18 be necessary for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029.

19 (b) RESERVATIONS.—The Secretary—

20 (1) shall reserve 10 percent of the amount ap-  
21 propriated under subsection (a) to carry out section  
22 3; and

23 (2) may reserve not more than 5 percent of the  
24 amount appropriated to carry out this Act for a fis-  
25 cal year for administrative expenses.