# Superintendent’s Memo #246-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: September 18, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: 2020-2021 Green Ribbon Schools

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is pleased to announce that the Commonwealth will participate for the ninth year in the United States Department of Education's (USED) Green Ribbon Schools (GRS) award program. The GRS award program is open to both public and private schools and public school divisions. The program is intended to recognize schools and school divisions that are: 1) reducing environmental impact and costs; 2) improving the health and wellness of students and staff; and 3) providing effective environmental and sustainability education based on sound science and civics.

The applications are intended to focus on measurable and verifiable results wherever possible, and Virginia’s applications, though based on the national criteria, provide ample opportunities for schools and school divisions in the Commonwealth to highlight Virginia-specific emphases and initiatives. Over the last eight years, Virginia has had a total of thirteen public and private schools and six school divisions recognized by the GRS national selection committee as achieving this prestigious award.

In order to proceed in applying for the USED Green Ribbon Schools award program, a nonbinding GRS Intent-to-Submit form included in the state application packet should be submitted electronically by October 23, 2020, to the Virginia Department of Education. The next step is to complete and electronically submit the application to VDOE by December 11, 2020. An expert panel will carefully review all GRS applications, and all state applicants will be notified as to their status on or before February 1, 2021.

Virginia will recognize up to five schools or divisions as awardees of the Virginia GRS recognition. The awardees’ applications will be forward to USED; upon approval of the USED GRS recognition program, these applications to be reviewed by a national selection committee. All five of the Virginia state nominees for 2020-2021 potentially could be designated as national GRS awardees. The new cohort of Virginia GRS recipients will be invited to be recognized by the Virginia Board of Education in Richmond in October 2021 and at a national level awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. in the spring of 2021.

Additional information about the USED Green Ribbon Schools program and the [2019-2020 Virginia Green Ribbon Schools Application](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/facility_construction/healthy_buildings/green_ribbon/index.shtml) can be found on the Virginia Department of Education [Green Ribbon Schools](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/facility_construction/healthy_buildings/green_ribbon/index.shtml) website. The GRS applications must be completed and received electronically in Word format by the Virginia Department of Education by Monday, December 11, 2020, no later than 4 p.m. For additional information, please contact Anne Petersen, Science Coordinator, Office of STEM and Innovation, by email at anne.petersen@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2676.

JFL/AMP