



Award Checklist: Green Flag

Use this handy checklist to help track your school’s progress through the Eco-Schools USA program and confirm that you are meeting criteria to apply for a Green Flag-level award. **300 points are required to qualify for a Green Flag award.**

CRITERIA	POINTS	COMPLETED	NOTES	TIPS
Eco-Action Team 40 Points Required documentation for upload: Eco-Action team list.				
50% of the Eco-Action team is composed of students in addition to teachers, community members and other school staff.	15			Consider connecting with resource professionals from local government, conservation or academic entities.
The Eco-Action team meets a minimum of eight times a year.	15			Some schools meet more frequently in the beginning and then scale back meetings once their program has become established.
Students take significant responsibility, as appropriate, for conducting the meetings, are part of the team’s decision-making process and help keep minutes.	5			If students are old enough, give them the opportunity to lead some or all of the team meetings.
Students actively engage other students and take suggestions from the student body.	5			Allow students to determine how they will share information and in what formats.



CRITERIA	POINTS	COMPLETED	NOTES	TIPS
Pathway Audit 50 points Required documentation for upload: Baseline Audits				
The audits for at least three pathways are conducted on a formal and comprehensive basis utilizing the Eco-Schools USA audit forms.	20			Include as many members of the school community in the auditing process as possible and be inclusive of the larger community and pathway experts.
Students are involved in conducting the environmental audit and engaging resource specialists in the community.	20			Determine which audit steps are safe for students to complete and which should be completed or facilitated by an adult.
Results of the audit are shared with the whole school and wider community.	5			Go over audit results at an assembly, PTA meeting, post on bulletin boards, and/or write an article for the school website or newsletter.
A baseline and post-action audit are conducted and the audits are completed each year.	5			Each year it is a good practice to review results from the previous year to establish a benchmark, before moving forward.
Eco-Action Plan Total 50 points Required documentation for upload: Action Plans				
Develop an action plan using the provided blank action plan worksheet, and based on audit results goals should be quantifiable.	20			Action plans are thoughtful and represent goals that are inclusive of the needs of the school community and informed by scientific investigation and research. Start this process by asking the community what they need. What do they envision?



CRITERIA	POINTS	COMPLETED	NOTES	TIPS
Eco-Action Plan, Continued				
The action plan is shared with the entire school and local community.	10			Use morning announcements or other school methods of communication to share the team's plan.
A range of actions are planned to mitigate environmental problems, targets are prioritized and cost-benefit information is provided for each action.	20			Prioritize actions by dividing them into what is achievable in the short, medium and the long term.
Monitor and Evaluate Total 50 points Required documentation for upload: Post-Action Audit				
The Eco-Action team monitors and reviews progress against timeframes and targets outlined in the action plan.	15			The procedure for monitoring progress should be developed in parallel with the action plan.
Conduct the post-action pathway audit. Metrics data is entered on the award application for the pathway(s) the school is focusing on.	20			The should be able to pull metrics (data) from the post-action pathway audit form.
Progress and challenges are communicated to the whole school and wider community.	5			Progress and challenges should also be recorded in meeting minutes.
The school shows significant progress on several large -scale projects that are focused on three Eco-Schools USA pathways.	5			Adequate progress can be used as evidence to move forward in the awards process.



Monitor and Evaluate (continued)

Students are engaged in monitoring and evaluation. Data is used in academic classes, where applicable.	5			Encourage students to do computations, develop equations, solve problems using data and chart and graph data over time.
Link to Curriculum Total 50 points Required documentation for upload: None				
Environmental topics are integrated into the classroom at all grade levels and across disciplines .	20			You may not be able to integrate across as many disciplines as you'd like, but you should try to integrate across as many as possible to demonstrate a whole school effort. Sustainability as a vehicle to deliver instruction should become more common place.
Student learning experiences are authentic, place-based and inquiry driven.	15			Eco-Schools USA has several lesson plans and curricula available along with Ranger Rick content, this is in addition to the content the school is using or has acquired.
School staff are provided with professional development and training in association with best practices and knowledge and skills for environment-based education.	15			Reach out to organizations in the community, such as a nature center or the parks and recreation department, who can train staff on environmental education. Look to professional organizations such as NAAEE, CNN, GSNN for webinars, articles, etc.
Engage and Build Community Total 30 points Required documentation for upload: None				
The school has a bulletin board, display case, website and/or newsletter which details Eco-Schools USA activities.	10			Have students write blogs, newsletter copy, or website content through their English or journalism class. Young students can use hand-made or digital art to showcase Eco-Schools USA activities.
The entire school, along with volunteers from the community engage in a number of Eco-Schools USA activities.	5			With input from the community, host events to raise awareness and provide ways for all to take action. Do not be shy about seeking help and/or donations from the community.



Engaging and Building Community (continued)				
A special event is planned that engages the greater community in learning about and helping with Eco-Schools USA projects.	5			Consider hosting gardening events, a farmer's market or market day, walk/bike to school event, and/or an event to celebrate Earth Day. Be creative, the possibilities are endless.
Students write about Eco-Schools USA projects for local papers, magazines and/or digital outlets.	5			Engaging the local news outlets is a great way to build a lasting relationship with a member of the community – a partnership that can be cultivated over time to share the school's sustainability work whether it's a campaign, event or celebration.
The school shares its Eco-Schools USA projects with other schools in the U.S. and with the global community through digital communication, e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. Tag other schools, districts and Eco-Schools in other countries.	5			Reach out to Eco-Schools USA staff and let us know if you'd like to connect with an Eco-Schools in another country.
Eco-Code Total 30 points Required documentation for upload: Eco-Code				
An Eco-Code is developed that includes input from the whole school, and is agreed upon and adopted.	15			The Eco-Code should demonstrate, in a clear and imaginative way, your school's commitment to improving its environmental performance.
The finished Eco-Code is prominently displayed for all to read as they enter the school and is prominent in common areas around the school.	10			Design several ways to creatively display the Eco-Code so visitors, staff, volunteers and students see it frequently.
Every other year the Eco-Code is reviewed as part of a review process and in preparation for the next Green Flag award.	5			The Eco-Code is a fluid document that is meant to change throughout a school's sustainability journey. Frequently, reviewing and revising the Eco-Code is a good practice.



APPLYING FOR A GREEN FLAG AWARD

Steps

1

Before applying ensure the team has all the evidence ready to upload, principal's feedback and are ready to answer the Green Flag Award questions. We advise doing this over 2-4 sessions. [Download a copy of the Green Flag Award questions](#) that also include the administrator's section.

2

[Login](#) to your Eco-Schools USA dashboard.

3

Once on the school's dashboard, click on "Apply for an Award" in the left side navigation. Click on the "Green Flag Award" button.

4

Fill-out the award application and click 'submit'. If the application is only partially completed, click 'save' and return to it at a later point.

5

If the application is successfully entered and all criteria met, the school's submission will be reviewed by a member of the Eco-Schools USA team. The review process takes approximately 2-3 weeks. Once approved, you will receive an email and the Green Flag Award badge will appear on the school's dashboard.