2024-2025 Green Schools Online Portal Guide

MARYLAND GREEN SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The purpose of this guide is to provide guidance on completing and submitting your Maryland Green Schools application through our new online portal. **All applications must be submitted through the portal.**

This guide addresses navigating the portal. For application requirements, visit the MAEOE website.

Important Dates:

- Intent to Apply Due: December 16, 2024
- Preliminary Review Sessions: February 2025
- Submission Dates:
    - Early Submission (renewing schools only): December 16, 2024 - March 3, 2025
    - Regular Submission (new schools): February 24, 2025 - March 3, 2025
    - Final Submission Deadline: March 3, 2025
- Announcements: On or around Earth Day
- Youth Summit at Sandy Point State Park: May 29, 2025

All Green School applications must be submitted by **March 3, 2025** using the Maryland Green Schools online application portal at marylandgreenschools.org.

For information about the application requirements, consult the Green Schools Application Guide.

Questions? Email applications@maeoe.org.

Contents

Click on the name of the section you wish to view to be directed immediately to that page.

Introduction

The Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) is a non-profit organization that has been in existence since 1985. MAEOE encourages, engages, and empowers the community to understand, responsibly use and promote the natural world.

The MAEOE Maryland Green School award program began in 1999 and allows a school to demonstrate that by integrating hands-on, inquiry-based instruction, youth are empowered to practice environmental sustainability. At school, home, and in their communities, schools are reducing pollution, decreasing waste, increasing habitat, limiting carbon emissions, creating healthy learning, living environments, and supporting environmental literacy. The program is designed to highlight achievements and progress that schools are making towards environmental sustainability, aligned with the Maryland Environmental Literacy graduation requirement as set forth in COMAR 13A.04.17.01 and the Environmental Literacy Goal established in the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. By providing environmental education, Maryland teachers and partners enable students to make decisions and take actions that create and maintain a positive relationship between themselves and the environment. Maryland's students, teachers, families, and those who work at the schools are all involved in the preservation and protection of the state's unique natural resources, particularly those of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Find more information about Environmental Literacy here.

Keep in mind that multiple parts of your application connect with Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards including:
- NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) curriculum
- Maryland Content Standards
- C3 curriculum
- STEAM curriculum (Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math)
- Pressing environmental issues including climate change, decreasing biodiversity, nitrogen cycle, aquifer depletion, endangered species, habitat loss and other issues
- Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences
- Chesapeake Bay Backpack Resources

Getting Started

This section covers information about creating an account for your school and starting an application:

- Accessing the Portal and Resources
- Tips to Use the Portal
- Troubleshooting
- Creating an Account
- Signing Into Your Account
- Your Account Dashboard
- Adding User Accounts

Accessing the Portal and Portal Resources

The portal can be accessed through the MAEOE website, or by going to marylandgreenschools.org. The purpose of the online portal is to streamline the Green Schools application process and provide information regarding the Maryland Green Schools Program, MAEOE news, and grant opportunities.

Getting Started	Youth Summit	News	FAQ	Funding
Application Timeline for New Schools	Information about MAEOE's Annual Youth Summit	MDGS News	FAQs to Complete MDGS Application	Learn About and Apply for Mini-Grants

Tips for Using the Portal

All information for the application will be submitted to MAEOE using the portal. For each section, the specific information and requirements are given.

Considerations when using the online portal

Unlike Google or Microsoft products, the online portal does not have the capability for multiple users to work on the same field (i.e. text boxes) at the same time, nor can the users view "version history". To avoid problems with filling out the application, we suggest:

- **Split the workkload:** Assign different people different sections of the applications to complete. This prevents any work in one field being overridden and saves work correctly.

- **Make sure you click out of the field before exiting:.**The portal saves work automatically when you click outside of any field.

- **Adding and deleting information.** When applicable, there will be options to provide additional data or delete data.

  ⊕ Click the green plus to provide additional data.

  🗑 Click the trashcan to delete additional data provided.

  Note: deleted data cannot be recovered. Do not click unless absolutely certain you want to delete that data..

  *You can undo (Ctrl-Z) deleting text from a field when typing.

Other Portal Tools

❓ Some sections of the portal have a question mark symbol. Click to see examples and documentation ideas that count toward that section.

Uploading Documentation

In the portal, documentation is referred to as "materials". You must add at least one material to support statements, where applicable. Include the date and a caption describing the material you updated.
PLEASE ONLY UPLOAD DOCUMENTS AS A PDF. Any Word documents, PowerPoints, photos, etc., should be converted to PDF format. Links that are viewable to anyone are also acceptable.

"I am having trouble with the portal." What to do if…

I cannot login to my account. Make sure the name of your school appears on the login page. Click on the text box that says "School" and begin typing the name of your school. Click on your school name and continue to sign in with your email and password.

The work I have done is not saving.
- Make sure you click out of the text boxes before moving to the next section.
- Make sure more than one user is not filling out the same section at the same time.
- Log out of your account when you are finished working on your application.
- Clear the cache on your browser.

Creating an Account for Your School

1. Click "New School" on the home page

2. Complete the School Information section

> The "About your School" section needs to be filled out before you submit your application but does not need to be completed with creating the school account.
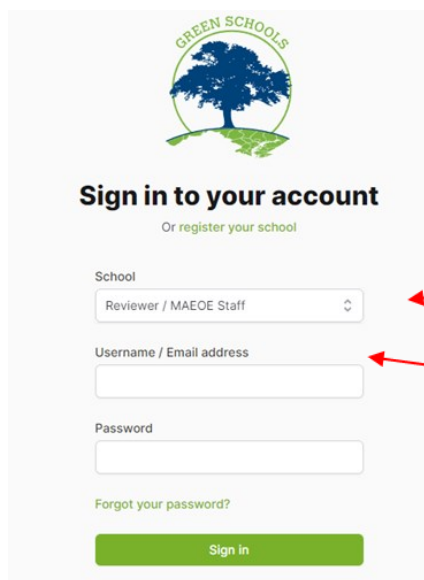
3. Create the Application Manager Login

> The Application Manager is the person who is creating the account, or has control of the account. This is not necessarily the principal or assistant principal. The account manager can make accounts for other people working on the application (see page 9).

4. Fill out the School Statistics

- *Like the "About your School" section, the number of teachers, students and other school personnel can be updated later. This needs to be completed before submitting your application.*

- *If you are unsure which application you are submitting, check the Current Green Schools list on the MAEOE website HERE. Find the name of your school and look at your previous award dates. Add one to the total number of dates to find the application number. To find the next application year, add four years to the last date listed.*

Signing Into Your Account

1. Type in the name of your school

2. Sign-in using your username and password*

*If you are the application manager, this is the username and password you created when you made the account. If your account was created for you by the application manager, you will use the username and password they provide to you.

Your Account Dashboard

This is the dashboard for the school account. Think of it like the "home page" for your school's account. All sections of the school account can be accessed from here.

Adding Users

If you are the application manager, you can add additional people to work on the application. The only difference between your login and other logins is that you can add users to the application. A login for your principal MUST be created so they can sign the application electronically (see page 20).

To add a user:

The "User Accounts" tab lists all the accounts that have access to the application.
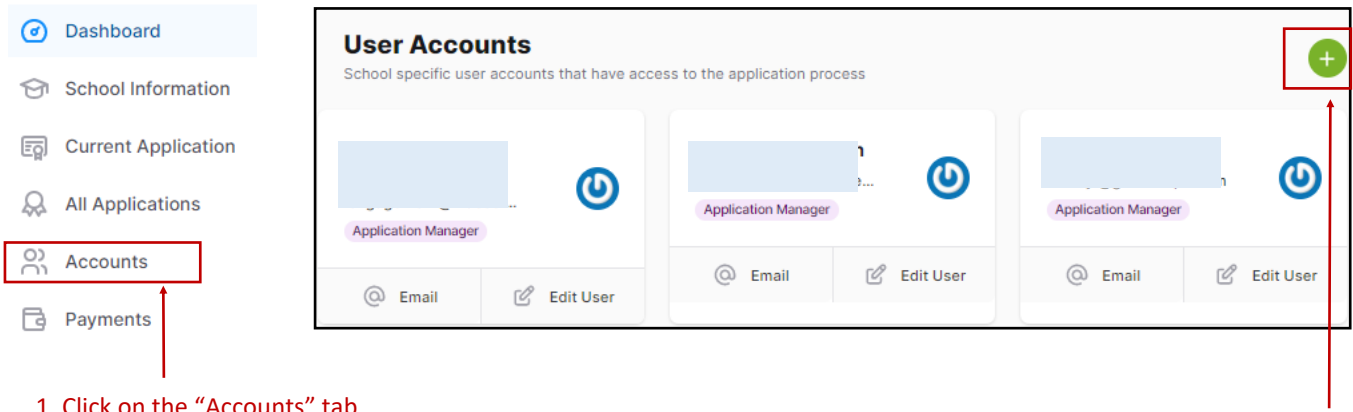
1. Click on the "Accounts" tab

2. Click the "+" to add users

User Details
Please provide all the required fields

Avatar

Drop your files here or **click in this area**

Username *

Email *

Password *

Full name *

Title

3. Fill in the required information

Access Levels
Select the group/s for this user to determine access
(NOTE: hold ctrl/cmd + click to select multiple groups)

Roles *

Application Manager
Principal
Teacher
Parent

4. Select the all the roles that apply

You can create more than one application manager account

Save

Completing the Green School Application

This section covers how to create and fill out the Green Schools application on the portal.

- Application Checklist
- Starting Your Application
- Paying the Intent to Apply Fee
- Objective 1: Systemic Sustainability
- Objective 2: Student Action
- Objective 3: Community Partnership
- School Metrics Survey

The Green School application is split into four sections: Objective 1, Objective 2, Objective 3, and School Metrics Survey. Within the portal, click on the corresponding tab to complete each section.

Each section has a percentage circle. The portal will measure how much of each section has been completed.

Application Checklist

To be completed the year of your application submission on the portal:

School Information:
School Information: contact information, address, county, Title 1 status
About Your School: describe your school's green culture
School Statistics: number of teachers, students and staff
Application Number and Year: application your school is completing, year of submission
> *Basic information and application number are required at the time the account is created. All other information should be completed before submitting application.*

Intent to Apply:
$125 fee paid by December 16, 2024 on the portal
Payment is ONLY due the December before your application submission.

Objective 1: Systemic Sustainability
1.1 Environmental Curriculum & Instruction
1.2 School-wide Awareness
1.3 Professional Development
1.4 Achieving Sustainable Schools

Objective 2: Student Action
Provide a total of 8 actions that address 3 or more of the following sustainability practices.

2.1 Water Conservation/Pollution Prevention
2.2 Energy Conservation
2.3 Solid Waste Reduction
2.4 Habitat Restoration
2.5 Opportunities for Nature Exploration
2.6 Responsible Transportation
2.7 Healthy Indoor Environments
2.8 Citizen/Community/Participatory Science

Objective 3: Community Partnership
3.1 Community Partners
3.2 Additional Achievements (*optional*)

School Metrics Survey
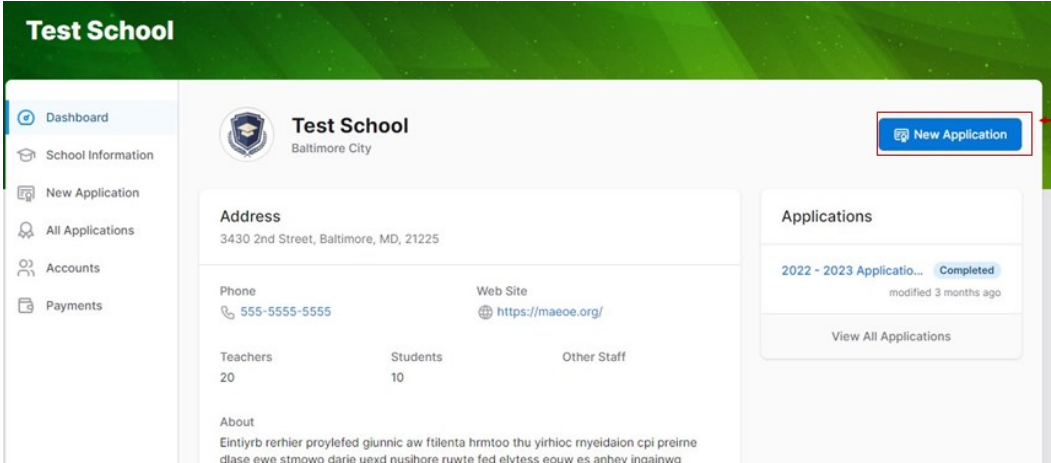Q 1.2- Legal Permissions
Q 1.3- Committee/ Green Team Members
Q 1.4- Top Five Accomplishments
Q 1.5- Goals (Applications 4 and beyond *ONLY*)
Q 2- School Metrics Survey
Q 3- Other Metrics

Starting Your Application

All Green School applications will be submitted using the online portal. Each application is saved, and a new application will need to be made for each submission.

Whether you are **submitting an application** on the portal for the **first time** or are **creating another application**, you will need to:

1. Sign into your school account
2. Go to "Dashboard"
3. Click on "New Application" button
4. Read through the instructions and tips, agree to the legal agreements, and click "start application".

Click here to create a new application.

Read all the directions

Read through the legal agreements carefully and check the boxes to agree.

Paying the Intent to Apply

The $125 Intent to Apply (ITA) fee MUST BE PAID by December 16, 2024 for the March 2025 submission deadline. Use the "Pay Now" button on the Portal Dashboard.

If a check must be used, mail the check payable to MAEOE at P.O. Box 1103 Edgewater, MD 21037.

*IMPORTANT: If you are not planning on applying in 2025, **DO NOT pay the ITA yet!**
Pay the ITA the December before the year you are submitting the application.

1. Click "Pay Now"

2. Fill out your credit card information on PayPal. The $125 fee is already in the "cart".

Check Payment Status

Once you pay the ITA fee, it should be listed under the "Payments" tab. (please give a few days for the payment to be processed).

If you mailed a check, MAEOE will update this in the portal once the payment is processed.

Objective 1: Systemic Sustainability

1.1 Environmental Curriculum and Instruction

Demonstrate that outdoor, environment-based instruction is occurring through hands-on, authentic lessons on environmental issues.

ES/MS: Provide one example of environmental issue instruction per grade level

HS: Provide one example of environmental issue instruction in a least four subject areas

You will need to add a grade for each activity. ⊕ ← Click the green plus to create new activity
A new activity should be made for each grade (elementary or middle school) or subject (high school).

For each activity, you will need to include:

Grades * ← Check all grade levels that apply.

- Pre-K
- Kindergarten
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Grade 6
- Grade 7
- Grade 8
- Grade 9
- Grade 10
- Grade 11
- Grade 12
- Other (e.g., course/clubs/subject area)

Other Grades

← High Schools: Please include the subject (i.e., biology, Spanish, chemistry) in "Other Grades" section.

Date *

← Approximate date activity occurred.

Lesson / Activity *

← Name of activity.

Teacher Name *

← Name of all teachers (if it is an activity taught by all in a grade level, include all teachers in the grade).

Students Count *

Number of students participating in the activity

← Number of students (if this is an activity taught for whole grade, include all students in that grade).

Description *

← Describe purpose of learning activity, and how it relates to environmental issue instruction.

Brief description of the Lesson / Activity.

Upload supporting materials.

Material *

Upload one or more files
PNG, JPG, PDF up to 10MB
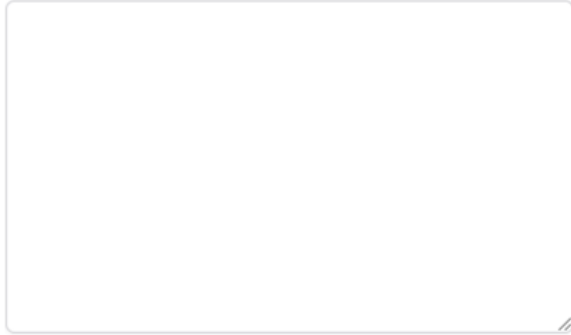
1.2- Green School Awareness

1.2.1 School-wide Awareness - Staff
Demonstrate that all school personnel are aware of your school's Green School status and application process.

Summary *

Describe how all school personnel are made aware of your school's Green School status and application.

Provide examples of how your Green School process was promoted by creating a new meeting record.

No meetings
Get started by creating a new record.

+ New meeting
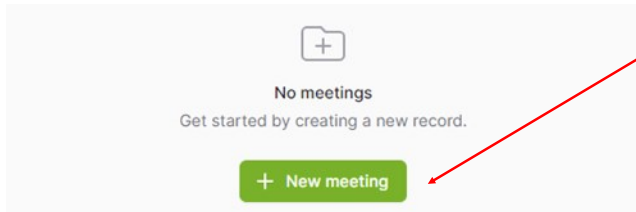
Click to add a meeting record.
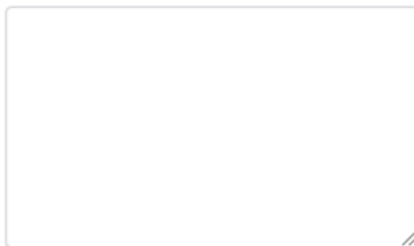
For each meeting record, you will need to include:
1. Date of meeting
2. Number of staff in attendance
3. Description of meeting
4. Supporting materials

1.2.2 School-wide Celebration
Demonstrate how your school celebrates being a Green School by hosting a school-wide, environmentally-focused event open to all students.

Introduction *

Provide a short introduction of how your celebrates being green.

Click to add an event.

No events
Get started by creating a new event.
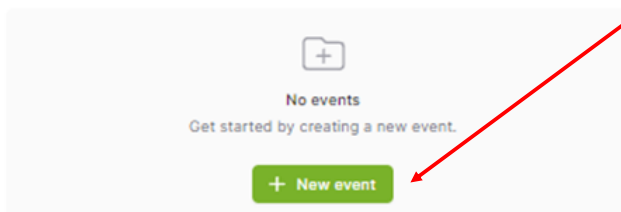
+ New event
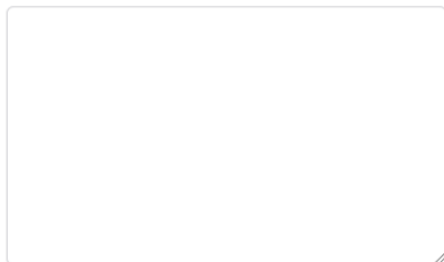
For each event record, you will need to include:
1. Grades of students participating.
2. Date of event
3. Name of celebration
4. Description of celebration
5. Supporting materials

1.2- Professional Development

Demonstrate that 10% of instructional staff have had environmental education PD within the last 2-4 years.

Summary *

Type total number of teachers who participated in PD.

Staff Engagement *

0

of 40 (0%)

Total number of teachers (from school information). Calculated percentage of engagement.

Each teacher needs to have their own attendance record, regardless of how many PD opportunities a teacher has participated in. The number of attendance records needs to match the Staff Engagement number provided.

No records
Get started by creating a new record.
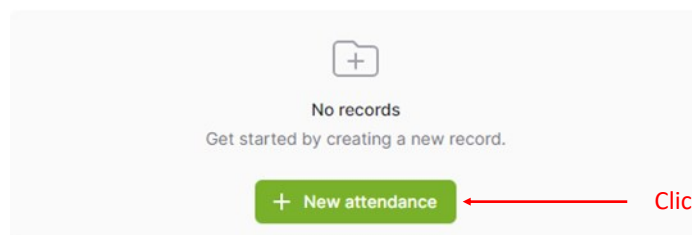
+ New attendance

Click to add an attendance record.

For each attendance record, you will need to include:
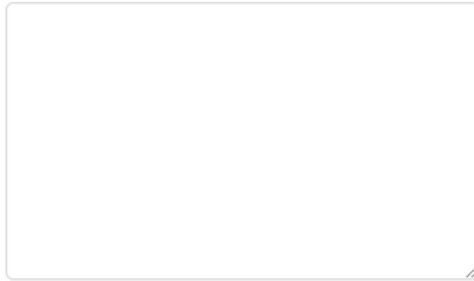
1. Date of PD
2. Name of teacher
3. Description of PD
4. Supporting materials

1.4 Achieving Sustainable Schools

1.3.1 School-Wide Staff Sustainability
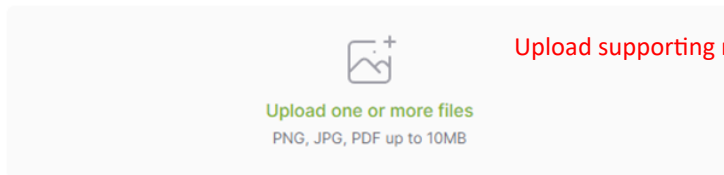
Demonstrate the sustainability practices your teachers, staff, and other school personnel have implemented school-wide to make your school green.

Behavior Change *

Describe actions your school has taken to support sustainability.

Material *

Upload one or more files
PNG, JPG, PDF up to 10MB

Upload supporting materials.

1.3.2 Systemic Partnership
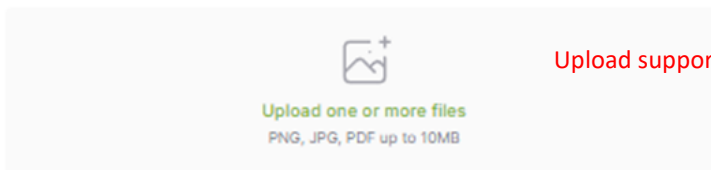
Demonstrate one partnership with a central office or board within the school system that supports part of the Maryland Green Schools Program.

Introduction *

Describe who the partner is and how they supported an aspect of the Maryland Green Schools program.

Material *

Upload one or more files
PNG, JPG, PDF up to 10MB

Upload supporting materials.

Objective 2: Student Action

Schools are required to submit information and documentation for a total of eight actions that address *three or more practices.*

Each action needs to fit into one of the eight sustainability practice categories:

1. Water Conservation/Pollution Prevention
2. Energy Conservation
3. Solid Waste Reduction
4. Habitat Restoration
5. Opportunities for Nature Exploration
6. Responsible Transportation
7. Healthy Indoor Environments
8. Citizen/Community/Participatory Science

In the portal, each of the eight sustainability practices is listed. The process to add an action, and what is needed to be included for each action, is the same.

To add an action:

2.6 Responsible Transportation

1. Go the sustainability practice that the action fits.

2.6 Responsible Transportation

No records
Get started by creating a new record.

+ New record

2. Click "New Record" to add action

3. For each action, include the following:
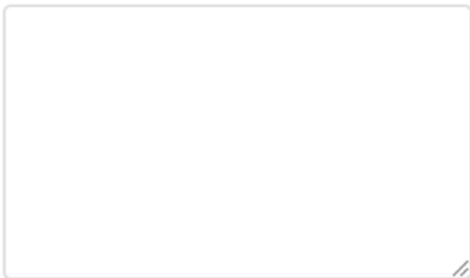
1. Date of activity
2. Activity title
3. Description of activity
4. Supporting material

4. To add an action in the same practice, click the plus sign.

2.6 Responsible Transportation

Record 1   Record 2   Record 3   Record 4

Click here.

*You can see all the actions you have created and toggle between them by clicking on the record number.

Continue this process until all eight actions are documented.

Objective 3: Community Partnerships

3.1 Community Partnerships

3.1.1 School Active in Community

Describe at least one sustained partnership where the school is active in the community.
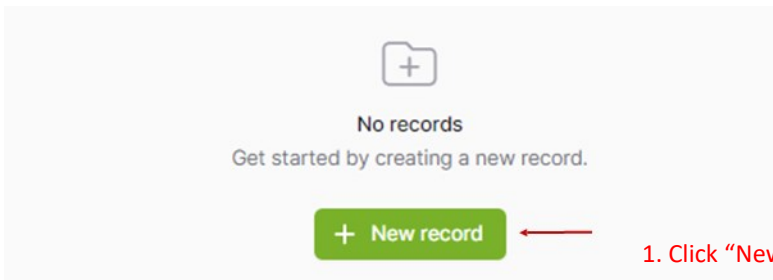
No records
Get started by creating a new record.

+ New record ← 1. Click "New Record"

2. For each event, include the following:
1. Date of event
2. Activity title
3. Description of event and partnership
4. Supporting materials

3.1.2 Community Active in the School

Describe at least one sustained partnership where the partner is active in the school.
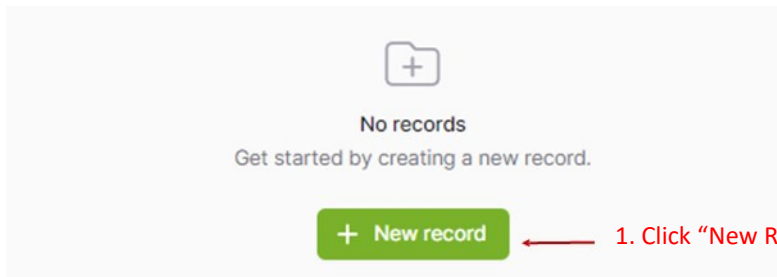
No records
Get started by creating a new record.

+ New record ← 1. Click "New Record"

2. For each event, include the following:
1. Date of event
2. Activity title
3. Description of event and partnership
4. Supporting materials

3.2 Awards and Special Recognition (OPTIONAL)

Include any awards or special recognition that your school or students have received.

No records
Get started by creating a new record.
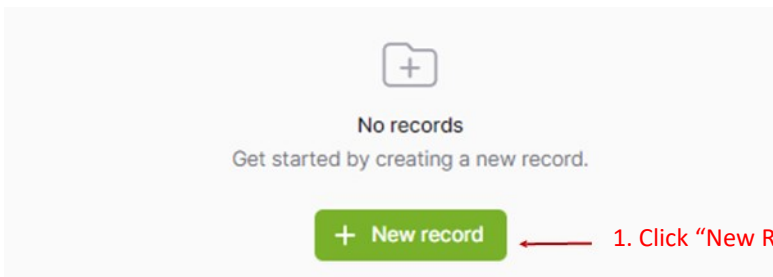
+ New record ← 1. Click "New Record"

2. For each award, include the following:
1. Award date
2. Award name
3. Description of award
4. Supporting materials

School Survey

This part of the application has two sections. The first section of the School Survey asks about legal permissions and provides information on the school's Green Team members and Top 5 Accomplishments. The second section focuses the school metrics, the data regarding the student-driven practices.

Q 1.2 Legal Permissions

Q.1.2 Legal Permissions

Check off each box giving permission. Photographic Permissions may not be given if the use of photos is not desired.

Before submitting , have the principal electronically sign and date the document. This signature **must** be completed using the principal account.

Q.1.2 Permissions

☑ Upload and use of material *

I declare I have permission to upload the documents, including photographs for this application. I understand that photographs may be blurred or cropped for inclusion.

☑ Accuracy Statement *

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

☐ Photographic Permissions *

MAEOE has permission to use all photographs within this application for promotional purposes. MAEOE will not identify any individual student.

Principal's Signature *

[   ]

Date *

[   ]

You can opt-in to give MAEOE permission to use photographs in this application for promotions if you wish.

Q 1.3 Committee/ Green Team Members

Q.1.3 Committee / Green Team

List each member of the Committee/Green Team that helped with this process.

Q.1.3.1 Team Members

⊞

No records
Get started by creating a new record.

+ New record

Click "New Record"
Fill out information for each team member.

Q.1.3.1 Team Members

Choose name

Fullname *
[   ]

Email *
[   ]

Position *
[⌄]

Q.1.3.2 Team Members (Students)

⊞

No records
Get started by creating a new record.

+ New record

If students assisted in the Green Schools application process, include their names.

Q 1.4 Top 5 Accomplishments

Q.1.4 Top 5 Accomplishments

This section lists your school's:

- Top 5 Accomplishments

- Assistance in completing any parts of the application or application process

Q.1.4 **Top 5 Accomplishments**

Top 5 Accomplishments *

1. Connecting all students to the environment through sustained partnerships with Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Annapolis Maritime Museum, and Maryland Park Service

2. Habitat restoration (pollinator and unity gardens)

3. Commitment to continued solid waste reduction

4. Environmental integration to school wellness event Renew You

5. Regular advisory class lessons

← Top 5 Accomplishment example

Use **one sentence** or a phrase for each accomplishment. This will NOT be scored when reviewing your application, but it is required and does give the reviewers an indication of what is important to the school/center. Your Top 5 are shared at the MD Green Schools Youth Summit.

From whom have you had assistance? *
- ☑ Green Leader
- ☑ Green Center
- ☐ N/A
Check all that apply

Green Leader / Green Center *

Green Center - Arlington Echo

If you answered the previous question please list the name of your Green Leader or Green Center. If you answered No, please enter N/A.

← Give the name of the Green Center/Green Ambassador that provided assistance.

If you did not receive assistance, click "N/A" above and type "none" in the text box.

What type of help did you get from the Green Leader or Green Center? *
- ☐ Introduced the Program at a Staff Meeting
- ☐ Helped Review the Application
- ☑ Provided Professional Development for teachers at the School
- ☑ Helped the students with a Sustainable Practice (eg. planted trees, set-up a rain garden, painted storm drains)
- ☑ Provide Resources (materials like compost bins, shovels, etc.)
- ☑ Answered any questions you might have had
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Specify Other

← Check all that apply.

If you did not receive assistance, click "N/A" above and type "none" in the text box.
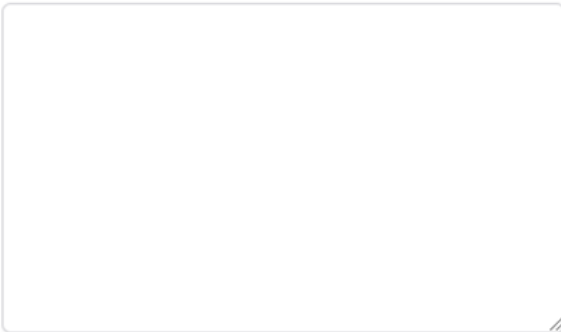
Q 1.5- Goals (Applications 4, 5 and Beyond *ONLY*)

All schools completing a Sustainable application (Applications 4 and beyond), must set goals for their school. These goals are set for 4 years, 8 years and 12 years in the future. Schools completing Application 5 and beyond must reflect on previous goals as well.

Application 4
Set Your Goals

Q.1.5 **Set Your Goals**
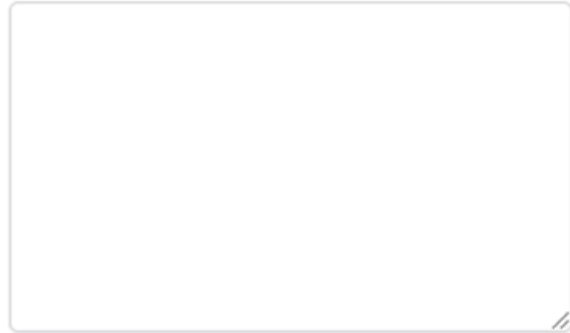
Write goals for the next 4, 8, and 12 years. *

Example: In 4 years, we would like to expand our composting from simple classroom to a school wide daily lunch activity. We hope to get composting bins for each grade level to use after breakfast, lunch, and classroom snacks/celebrations. The compost will be used for our vegetable and flower gardens.

Application 5 and Beyond
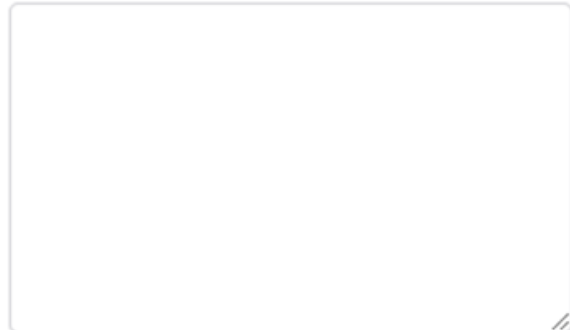### Reflection and Setting New Goals

Q.1.5 **Set Your Goals**

Look at your goals from the last application and reflect on them *

Example: During the last several years, the school was able to maintain composting in the classroom, but adding a lunch composting program has been a challenge. Currently, the school is working with the city of Laurel to pick up compost on a weekly basis to take to the compost facility in Upper Marlboro. We hope this beging in the near future.pper Marlboro. We hope this beging in the near future.

Set New Goals (for the next 4, 8, and 12 years) *

Example: In the next four years, we would like to expand our composting from classroom composting to a school wide daily lunch activity. In eight years, we hope the composting continues and we are using the compost in community gardens. In twelve years, we hope the composting is a sustainable program that has carried into the community.

Q 2- School Metrics Survey

The metrics survey provides data regarding the eight sustainability practices listed under Objective 2:

1. Water Conservation/Pollution Prevention
2. Energy Conservation
3. Solid Waste Reduction
4. Habitat Restoration
5. Opportunities for Nature Exploration
6. Responsible Transportation
7. Healthy Indoor Environments
8. Citizen/Community/Participatory Science

For each practice, you will need to share whether or not any actions toward this practice occurred and provide data regarding each practice. This data can come from School-wide Staff Sustainability (Objective 1.4.1), Student Action (Objective 2), or projects done at a Green Center. For fields that you had no activity in, enter 0.

Some of the metrics ask for information regarding amount of water saved, electricity saved, food waste reduction, etc. The facilities person at your school should be able to provide some of the data.

Example Metrics Section

Q.2.1 Water Conservation / Pollution Prevention

Did you implement strategies to reduce water use in your school? *   ← In this example, strategies to reduce water use were used.

● Yes ○ No

If possible, quantify how much water you save in one year (gallons) *   ← We were not able to quantify, so we wrote "0".

`0`

Cumulative Practices on the School Grounds (over the application period)   ← If the practice was done, write how much for each practice. If the practice was not done, write "0".

Stream Bank Planting (Riparian Buffer) (sq ft) *

`0`

Erosion Control Project other than Stream Bank Planting - Describe in comment box (sq ft) *

`50`

Painted Storm Drains (#) *

`5`

Raingarden/bioretention area planted (sq ft) *

`20`

No-mow zone installed (sq ft) *

`0`

Rain barrels installed (gallons) *

`250`

Stream Cleaning- Length of Stream Cleaned (ft) *

`75`

Water Conservation: Other and Comments *   ← Describe any additional actions, and give details for the actions completed.

Large bioswale between parking lots was installed prior to original green school cert. It has been maintained and plant life has grown and absorbs more storm water. Storm drain art helps reduce SDW in storm water. New plantings around 3 drains aim to absorb and filter storm water
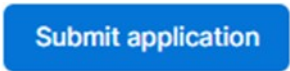
Submitting Your Application

This section covers how to submit the application, and next steps.

- Submitting Your Application
- What Happens After I Submit the Application?
- Accessing, Viewing and Sharing Your Application
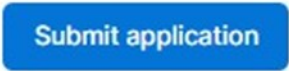
Submitting Your Application

Once you are ready to submit, scroll down to the bottom of any section under the Current Application page.

Submit application ← Click "Submit application"

There are 8 failing fields. Review your application and correct or add the missing fields, then try submitting again.

*If there are fields that are not filled out, you will not be able to submit. All fields that are not filled in will be labeled in red.

Submit application

ALL APPLICATIONS ARE DUE MARCH 3, 2025

Make sure ALL sections are completed to submit by midnight on March 3rd!

RENEWING SCHOOLS are eligible to submit their application anytime between December 16, 2024 - March 3, 2025.

NEW SCHOOLS are eligible to submit their application between February 24 - March 3, 2025.

What Happens After I Submit the Application?

Once you submit your application, MAEOE will begin its review process. If the reviewers have any questions or concerns regarding your application, MAEOE will contact you for clarification. Schools will have the opportunity to re-submit the corrected application.

All approved Green School Applications will be announced on or around Earth Day, April 22. Schools that submit their application early will not receive their announcement early.

Awarded schools will receive metal signs recognizing the Green School Award, as well as a citation from the governor and a certificate from their county executive.

We celebrate our Green Schools and the wonderful work occurring in Maryland during our annual Youth Summit at Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis, MD. Green Schools will have the opportunity to share their Top 5 Accomplishments and receive their awards at the ceremonies occurring at the Youth Summit.

The MAEOE Youth Summit will occur this year on May 29, 2025.

Accessing, Viewing and Sharing Your Application

The online portal converts the information provided into a website. This website can be accessed at any time while completing the application. This link can be shared with anyone you wish, including school staff and families.

From the Account Dashboard:

Click "Public Site"

The created website includes the information provided for Objectives 1-3.

Each section will follow the same format.

Documentation materials you uploaded are also included in the website. If you choose to display images publicly when uploading documentation, they will be viewable (left image). If you do not opt- in, the images will be blurry (right image).

MAEOE Contacts

Questions about the application process, online portal, and general FAQs:

applications@maeoe.org

Questions about grant funding:

grants@maeoe.org