

Going Green in the Golden State

Posted on [October 22, 2013](#) by [Guest Blogger](#)



California was proud to welcome Andrea Falken, director of U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS), and other federal, state, and local officials and stakeholders for the start of the West Coast leg of this summer's inspired *Education Built to Last* Facilities Best Practices Tour.

A long-time supporter of green school facilities, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson said, "I'm thrilled to see these outstanding schools showcased as part of the national tour on best practices. The students, teachers, parents, and communities have made countless efforts to improve the environmental sustainability of their campuses, increase school health as well as boost academic achievement."

At the California Department of Education, ED-GRS is administered in [School Facilities and Transportation Services](#), and we adhere to the time-tested architectural adage, *form follows function*. Our office envisions school facilities that enhance the achievement of all students and are learner-centered, safe, sustainable, and centers of the community.

Last month, several ED-Green Ribbon Schools showcased these attributes, reminding us just how much can be accomplished in the [three pillars](#) of ED-GRS, even in older and portable buildings. These schools are leading the way by ensuring students are vested partners in their education

and conscious, civic-minded citizens. From composting, gardening, and recycling to xeriscaping, daylighting, and rainwater harvesting—these students get it.

Tour participants visited five California ED-GRS honorees in two days. At [Journey School](#), a Waldorf-style charter school, an eco-literacy curriculum and partnerships with [Earthroots Field School](#) and [Master Gardeners of Orange County](#) grow the whole child green—despite the school being housed on a campus comprised entirely of portable buildings.

At [Environmental Charter High School](#), students are leaders in their community, operating a bicycle repair shop to reduce vehicle miles traveled to and from school.

At [Grand View Elementary School](#), parents and [Grades of Green](#) founders champion Trash Free Tuesdays and Walk to School Wednesdays, things any school can do to start the cultural shift toward greener, more sustainable schools and communities.

And, at adjacent Long Beach schools [Longfellow Elementary School](#) and [Hughes Middle School](#), recycling rules! The schools have also made huge strides to reduce their resource use and environmental impact. Although the main school buildings date to the 1940s, both earned perfect ENERGY STAR scores.

Although state bond funds have contributed \$35.4 billion dollars to school construction and modernization since 1998, California is still faced with [a huge need for capital investment](#)—particularly for building renovation and replacement. The California Department of Education is working with lawmakers and other stakeholders to ensure that the next round of investment is guided by policy that links funding to educational programming, like high performance and career technical education.

Across California, schools are using the resources they have to improve efficiency, ensure health and wellness, and deliver effective and inspiring environmental curriculum. With the passage of 2012's [Proposition 39](#), that pool of resources is about to get bigger. Schools will have access to new funding to plan and execute energy efficiency projects. "Your capital expenditures can immediately help your General Fund," reminded tour participant Eric Bakke of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

With Prop. 39 money coming down the pipeline and the prospect of a new statewide bond on the horizon, California is sure to see more exemplary facilities and ED-GRS honorees in the coming years. California's application for ED-GRS 2014 is available now on the [California Department of Education Web page](#).



Kathleen Moore is Director of the School Facilities and Transportation Services Division, and Lesley Taylor is the program lead for ED-GRS at the California Department of Education.

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3 Responses to *Going Green in the Golden State*

crunchymama says:

October 24, 2013 at 1:41 pm

So while CCSS and Race to the Top are the absolute OPPOSITES of the child-centered learning this article would have us believe is going on in these schools, AND making it sound as lovely as it really is in practice, this blog is highlighting what regular public schools can't have.

Am I the only one seeing the hypocrisy here?

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mohammad humaun says:

October 24, 2013 at 12:46 pm

We have to share, support, good teaching and behavior at the students.

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Md. Humaun says:

October 24, 2013 at 12:38 pm

We have to win the World with our good teaching .

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