



## **GREEN VISION EDUCATION PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

(Updated 10/30/08)

Help your school become a Green Vision Education School!

Caring about the environment can be fun and educational. Most of all, it means protecting our valuable natural resources and helping our families and others improve their environmental practices. Green Vision Education Schools practice pollution prevention, recycling, energy efficiency and waste/toxics reduction.

### **GREEN VISION EDUCATION SCHOOL BENEFITS**

Green Vision Education Schools receive advice and on-site consultations from the Green Vision Education Team and other local experts. Topics include: Energy Efficiency, Waste Audits, Recycling, Pollution Prevention, Hazardous Materials, and more. Green Vision Education Award recipients are recognized through the media and receive a flag and banner to display at the school. In addition, these schools will be recognized on the DMASWA Green Vision Education Program website. These schools impact the community by setting the standard for environmental mindedness in their area.

### **AWARD PROCESS OVERVIEW**

The Green Vision Education Award is given to schools that demonstrate a strong environmental ethic, starting with the Green Vision Education Evaluation process. This process encourages environmental stewardship throughout the school building and grounds, as well as education and outreach. Once a school receives the Green Vision Education Award, it is encouraged to display the Green Vision Education Flag and banner and to publicize its achievement.

Pollution prevention and waste reduction, the central goals of the Green Vision Education Program, include all activities that avoid, reduce, or eliminate waste in your school. Waste includes more than solid and hazardous waste, but also includes misuse of water and energy. Waste reduction requires a shift in thinking from “how do I properly dispose of my waste” to “how can I prevent waste?”

## Process at a Glance: Steps to Achieving a Green Vision Education Award

**Step 1: Contact the Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency's (DMASWA) Education Office to arrange a meeting with school staff to introduce the process and the evaluation tool used in the assessment.** Staff involved in the process should include the principal, custodian(s), interested teachers, staff, and students.

**Step 2: School faculty and staff conducts a Self Assessment.** School staff, faculty, and students conduct a self assessment using the same assessment tool that the Green Vision Education Team will use. Results should be compiled, complete with comments and examples, and shared with the Green Vision Education Team coordinator before the initial site assessment meeting. These results will assist in the process for the team and reduce the amount of time needed from the school staff to complete the assessment.

**Step 3: Participate in a Site Assessment.** Green Vision Education Team members visit your school to see first-hand what activities are generating waste or negatively impacting the environment. After the site assessment and reviewing the school's self scores, the team will provide a report outlining the positive activities, recommendations for improvements, and resources to help facilitate the improvements. This is a non-regulatory visit designed to help your school with the process of earning a Green Vision Education Award. The assessment team will return a scored assessment with comments and recommendations. Initial assessments need to be completed by December 15 for each school year.

**Step 4: Implement the Suggestions.** Using the recommendations received after the initial assessment, students, staff and faculty are given time to implement the suggestions for improving their assessment score. Schools should complete a portfolio of their accomplishments, which can then be shared with other Green Vision Schools. This portfolio should be supplemented in future years to demonstrate the continued commitment of the school.

**Step 5: Set meeting with Green Vision Education Team for final assessment.** When your school has implemented the recommendations from the initial assessment, contact should be made with the DMASWA Education Coordinator to schedule a final assessment meeting. Final assessments need to be completed before May 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year. At this meeting, the school's progress is reported and adjustments will then likely be made to the assessment score.

**Step 6: Receive your Award!** Once you achieve the Green Vision Education Award, you will receive:

- Presentation of award at appropriate ceremony for your school, such as a school assembly.
- Public recognition through the Green Vision Education promotional campaign and on the DMASWA Green Vision Education Program website.
- Green Vision Education Flag to fly on flag pole.
- Green Vision Education Banner to hang inside building.

- Ongoing assistance and resource information from Green Vision Education team members.

**Step 7: Maintain your Award.**

- Green Vision Education Schools are expected to work toward at least one “progress patch” each year after receiving their initial award. These progress patches involve a similar assessment process, but are focused on specific topic areas. The patches are sponsored by community agencies and businesses interested in helping schools achieve environmental excellence. Each type of patch can not be received more than once in a 5 year period of time. Initial assessments for progress patches must be completed by December 15<sup>th</sup> and final assessments must be completed by May 1.
- Every three years, a Green Vision school will receive a recertification request, asking for updated contact information and a summary of its current Green Vision Education efforts. It will be asked to update its portfolio regarding goal progress and any patches earned. Schools will also be asked to set new goals for the future. This ensures that your school is always moving forward through new environmental initiatives.

**Current Community Partners with Progress Patches are:**

- **Conservation** – Sponsored by Dubuque County Conservation Board and Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Reviews sustainability and resource conservation inclusion in the curriculum and the school community.



- **Durrant** – Sponsored by Durrant Architects. Reviews pollution prevention and energy conservation incorporated in green building design.

- **Watershed Awareness** – Sponsored by the Upper Catfish Creek Watershed project of the Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District. Reviews water conservation, water quality, watersheds, outreach and educating with water.



- **Energy** – Sponsored by Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative. Reviews lighting, heating, cooling, water heating, air quality, landscaping, transportation alternatives, and renewable energy.

- **Litter Prevention** – Sponsored by Keep Dubuque County Beautiful and Keep Iowa Beautiful. Focuses on school efforts to prevent litter and illegal dumping.

