



## The Vision for MN GreenStep Schools

**Picture this: *One Step at a Time...***, Teams of Schools, Districts, Students, Parents, and a supporting community of volunteers, non-profits, businesses, and local and state government agencies work together to help schools and their community take actions and build capacity to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future: preparing children for a changing economy, protecting our environment and community health, and harvesting the benefits of a clean energy future—all with guidance, assistance, and recognition from MN GreenStep Schools.

## About MN GreenStep Schools

Minnesota GreenStep Schools is a **free and voluntary** statewide best practices program for public and private K-12 schools and districts to:

1. Reduce environmental impacts and achieve cost savings in buildings and grounds,
2. Improve the health and well-being of students, staff, and community
3. Provide effective environmental and sustainability education, linking to STEM careers.

MN GreenStep Schools integrates the proven, beginner-friendly MN GreenStep Cities program with the comprehensive Green Ribbon Schools framework. Schools benefit from an *accessible pathway to sustainability, a common framework, and support to build upon small efforts over time*. For students, staff and communities, MN GreenStep Schools *spurs sustainable behavior changes using peer network strategies*. With a partnering approach, MN GreenStep Schools helps connect schools with existing local and statewide resources and organizations.

## Pilot Launched January 2020 with Interest across Minnesota

The MN GreenStep Schools pilot version launched in 2020 and has gained interest across Minnesota. As of November, 2022 one or more contacts at 15 school districts, 36 schools, and 44 resource organizations throughout Minnesota have expressed interest in the pilot program, -- many more than can be effectively supported with current 10% FTE staffing from interim funding. As a free, voluntary program, a fully funded MN GreenStep Schools can help level the green school playing field so that all schools (independent of region or resources) can enjoy the benefits of green schools--improved learning, health, efficiency, and environmental quality.

## Draft Legislation Status

Education Finance committee members in the senate and house, Sen. Kunesch (committee chair) and Rep. Hill with Rep. Kraft are authoring bills for ongoing base funding support for MN GreenStep Schools, to be administered through the MN Department of Education with the Minnesota Design Center at the U of MN continuing to lead the day-to-day development, program operation, school technical support and recognition, and private/non-profit/public collaboration coordination. [SF2350](#) was introduced in the Senate, and [HF2626](#) was introduced in the House. Both were referred to their respective Education Finance Committees.

More Background can be found at the MN GreenStep Schools [Strategic Planning Page](#)  
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