

Encouraging Environmental Excellence in Education

Ohio EPA's Encouraging Environmental Excellence in Education Program (E4) recognizes any K-12 public or private school for their achievements in environmental stewardship and efforts to educate and involve students in environmental topics.



Recognition Classes

Root Class

School demonstrates activities in one of the 3Rs; environmental education and stewardship is included in the curriculum; students have opportunities to participate in environmental activities.

Branch Class

School demonstrates activities in at least two of the 3Rs; environmental education and stewardship is interdisciplinary through all grade levels; students have opportunities to participate in STEM programs or green clubs.

Leaf Class

School demonstrates activities in all 3Rs; environmental education and stewardship is interdisciplinary, and curriculum is progressive; student-led environmental initiatives; the community beyond the school is encouraged to participate in environmental activities.

E4 Recognition Benefits

All three classes will receive a certificate of recognition signed by the Director and recognition on Ohio EPA's website. Those in the branch class will also receive a window sticker decal. The leaf class will receive a flag and, schedule permitting, an award ceremony at the school.

E4 applications, which are accepted at any time, are available on Ohio EPA's website. An individual school, school system or portion of a school system can apply. For more information, visit epa.ohio.gov/ohioe3.

How to Submit an Application

Applicants should submit a description of the school's activities related to the three guiding principles: reduce, reuse, and recycle. Emphasis will be given to activities that provide students with the opportunity to become environmental leaders through learning and encouraging others around them to participate. Schools graduate from each class by adding additional activities – see examples to the right. Those with activities in all three principles qualify for Leaf – the highest class available.

"We want to recognize schools for incorporating environmental principles into their curriculum or as part of extra activities."

*Laurie A. Stevenson
Director, Ohio EPA*

Reduce

- Energy conservation and reduction efforts
- Efforts to reduce water consumption
- Efforts to reduce solid waste
- Avoiding single-use items in the cafeteria (plastic straws, polystyrene trays/containers)
- Reducing paper waste by sending emails and printing double-sided

Reuse

- Providing refillable water stations
- Use of products made from recycled or bio-based materials
- Facilitating reuse opportunities for school supplies, sporting equipment, clothing, etc.
- Encourage students and staff to pack their lunch in reusable containers

Recycle

- Any type of recycling program in school buildings
- Recycling efforts with the local community during school events
- Efforts to encourage recycling at home
- Establish a food waste composting program