Ocean Guardian School:
Program Guidelines and Requirements

HANDS-ON SCHOOL- OR COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECT

The NOAA Ocean Guardian School program provides funding for hands-on projects that are focused on current issue(s) affecting the heath of local watersheds and/or the ocean while promoting best environmental practices. Grants are awarded for up to $4,000 per school depending on the level of the project and funding year. *Schools may submit applications for projects that DO NOT require funding, but would like to participate in the program and be evaluated at the end of the year for formal NOAA Ocean Guardian School recognition.*

Schools propose hands-on projects that make a difference in the health and protection of their local watersheds and/or the ocean. Below is a list of the five general pathways and examples of projects that are commonly funded by the Ocean Guardian School program. **A proposed project must have a connection to the health of the watershed and/or ocean.** If your project idea does not relate to this list, but meets the goals of the program, please contact the program director to discuss your idea before applying. For additional examples of past and presently funded Ocean Guardian School projects, please visit http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/ocean_guardian/examples.html.

Remember; keep the proposal focused on a single project.

Ocean Guardian School Project Pathways and related projects

- **Restoration** - watershed/wetland restoration, fish habitat creation, shoreline/bank stabilization
- **Rethink/Refuse/Reduce/Reuse/Rot/Recycle** - school-wide recycling/composting programs, redesign and implementation of school-based wastewater system, school-wide green purchasing program, zero waste lunch program
- **Marine Debris** - reducing single-use plastics in school, promoting reusable bags in local community/stores, promoting monofilament recycling stations in community
- **Schoolyard Habitats/Gardens** - creating or improving school gardens/schoolyard habitats with an **emphasis** on native plants, low water use, rain catchment systems, etc. while *clearly connecting these activities to the health and preservation of the local watershed and/or ocean*
- **Energy & Ocean Health** - school energy audits/carbon footprint calculations resulting in energy saving plans (i.e., "power down" campaign, "no idling" campaign, bike to school days, light bulb/computer energy saving plans, etc.), clean energy alternatives such as wind/solar projects, water savings projects, tree planting projects

WATERSHED/OCEAN CONNECTION

Your proposed project must make a connection to the health and preservation of your local watershed, ocean, and/or special ocean areas like national marine sanctuaries. **During your project period, you are required to incorporate the following into your project activities and/or supplemental lessons**:

- National marine sanctuaries: As a participant in the Ocean Guardian School grant program, you are required to educate your students about the National Marine Sanctuary System including at least one of the sanctuaries, preferably the one that is closest to your school and/or connected to your grant project.

- Watershed education: All projects must include learning opportunities around watershed identification and the land-ocean connection. By the end of the year, students should be able to identify in what watershed their school is located as well as some of the surrounding watersheds.

OUTREACH

1. **PROJECT INTRODUCTION PRESENTATION:** At the start of the school year, you are required to formally present/communicate your Ocean Guardian project to your school community. This requirement is referred to as **a Project Introduction Presentation**. This presentation must take place **within the first eight weeks of the school year**. There is no mandated format for this initial presentation. Please select the best means for your school to let your students, teachers, staff, and even parents know about your Ocean Guardian project. Please note that it is unacceptable to use *only* your school website to communicate your project introduction. Recommended presentation formats include but are not limited to:

    - School-wide assembly
    - Individual classroom presentations given by teachers and/or students
    - Series of morning announcements
    - Series of email/newsletter articles

    The following topics must be included in your Project Introduction Presentation:

    - What does it mean to be an Ocean Guardian School? Brief summary of your school's funded project, goals, and objectives? How your school's project will contribute to the protection and/or conservation of a local watersheds/ocean?
    - Introductory information about the National Marine Sanctuary System
    - Overview of the land-ocean (watershed) connection

Participating schools will have access to an introductory PowerPoint presentation and an introductory short video to use as needed for the Project Introduction Presentation.

> The **Project Introduction Presentation** is a grant program requirement and is included in the evaluation process for final Ocean Guardian School recognition. You will be asked about your Project Introduction in the Final Report Survey at the end of the school year.

2. **PROJECT WRAP-UP:** At the end of the school year, students who have been involved with the Ocean Guardian project will present some aspect of the project to the entire student body (i.e., their project experiences, lessons learned, best practices, community outreach, etc.). Presentations can include but are not limited to formal presentations, videos, readings, artwork, songs, plays, poems, etc.

> The **Project Wrap-up** is a grant program requirement and is included in the evaluation process for final Ocean Guardian School recognition. You will be asked about your Project Wrap-up in the Final Report Survey at the end of the school year.

3. **INTERNAL & EXTERNAL OUTREACH:**

- INTERNAL OUTREACH: **Year 1** schools are asked to engage their students in "Internal Outreach" activities. Internal Outreach activities focus on communicating Ocean Guardian School projects and related environmental issues within the school community.

  Examples of Internal Outreach activities include but are not limited to:
  - ➢ STUDENT posters or art work displayed on school campus
  - ➢ STUDENT created bulletin boards
  - ➢ STUDENT written articles for the school paper, e-newsletters, or school website
  - ➢ STUDENT presentations to other classes at school
  - ➢ STUDENT created PSA or videos used for school audiences
  - ➢ STUDENT presentations to parent-teacher organizations

- EXTERNAL OUTEACH: Schools that receive a **Year 2 or more** grant must move beyond the school campus and engage their students in outreach activities that are focused outside the school campus and in the local community. These activities are referred to as "External Outreach" activities. External outreach activities should *not* be limited to online (social media, school website, blogging) platforms.

  Examples of External Outreach activities include but are not limited to:
  - ➢ STUDENT letters or articles written to local papers
  - ➢ STUDENT communications to political representatives, business leaders, community organizations
  - ➢ STUDENT presentations at conferences or community events
  - ➢ STUDENT presentations to City Council or local governmental agencies
  - ➢ STUDENT presentations to students at non-Ocean Guardian schools
  - ➢ STUDENT presentations to parent-teacher organizations, School Board/District, School Site Council
  - ➢ STUDENT created educational information distributed to community neighborhoods, businesses, etc.
  - ➢ STUDENT produced PowerPoints, videos, plays, songs, etc. presented to community audience

Internal & External Outreach are grant program requirements and are included in the evaluation process for final Ocean Guardian School recognition. You will be asked about your Internal and External Outreach in the Final Report Survey at the end of the school year.

Please note: The Ocean Guardian School program does not typically fund projects that are focused *primarily* on online-related platforms unless the applicant provides documentation as to how this aspect is an integral and necessary component of the project.

MEASURABLE DATA

Your project's quantitative data helps to tell not only your school's unique Ocean Guardian School story, but together with all the other schools, helps to communicate the impact of the Ocean Guardian School program. The Ocean Guardian School program office will share your school's project data with our NOAA colleagues who in turn, work to shape federal priorities and programs around ocean stewardship.

Your Ocean Guardian School project application must include information about the quantitative data you plan to collect during your project period. **It is important to keep track of your measurable data as your project unfolds.**

Below are examples of measurable data. This is not a complete list. You will also be asked to submit any other quantitative data that is not listed below, but is specific to your project.

NOTE: For all activities with a red asterisk *, you will be asked for the estimated number of hours the students were engaged in those activities.

Garden/Habitat/Restoration Activities	Rethink/Refuse/Reduce/Reuse/Rot/Recycle Activities	Energy & Ocean Health Activities
# of native/fruit trees planted *	# of recycling bins installed	# of native trees planted *
# of native perennials/annuals/grasses planted *	# of compost bins installed	# of LED or energy saving light bulbs installed
# of rain barrels installed	Kilograms of trash/debris removed from school campus or community sites *	# of Energy Smart power strips installed
Square meters planted with native or fruit trees *	Kilograms of compost made from school food/garden waste	Total savings of energy use – include units of measure
Square meters of non-native invasive plants removed *	# of reusable bottles distributed	# of bike-to-school days
Square meters of turf removed *	# of reusable bags distributed	
Linear meters of bank stabilization *	# of single use plastic bottles not used due to reusable bottles used at water filtration system	
# of wildlife habitat structures installed	Liters of water reclaimed from us of water catchment system	
# of storm drains stenciled *		

Measurable data is a grant program requirement and is included in the evaluation process for final Ocean Guardian School recognition. You will be asked about your measurable data in the Final Report Survey at the end of the school year.

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BUDGET

Grants are awarded for up to $4,000 per school depending on the level of the project and funding year. Schools may submit applications for projects that *do not* require funding, but would like to participate in the program and be evaluated at the end of the year for formal NOAA Ocean Guardian School recognition.

Grant funds are available for a variety of items including, but not limited to project supplies, signage, field trip (transportation, entrance fees, etc.), teacher stipends, and technology equipment.

- **FIELD TRIPS:** The Ocean Guardian School grant will fund field trips. *Field trip costs are limited to 30% of the total project budget.* Field trips must supplement the project activities and learning opportunities. Field trip expenses may include entrance fees and transportation.
- **STIPENDS:** The Ocean Guardian School grant will fund stipends for teachers, staff, parents, and/or community partners. *Total stipend amounts are limited to 30% of the total project budget.* Stipends may also include payment for substitute teachers needed during project activities.

In the Final Report survey, you will be asked for basic budget information: the amount of your initial award, how much was spent, and the amount of remaining funds. *You are not required to submit receipts for any of your grant-funded expenditures.*

BECOMING AN OCEAN GUARDIAN SCHOOL

1. **RECOGNITION RUBRIC:** The Recognition Rubric is the basis for determining final Ocean Guardian School status and decision to award the official Ocean Guardian School banner. It is used to score how well your school meets the grant requirements. At the start of the school year, the Lead Teacher will receive an electronic copy of the Recognition Rubric to help track the school's progress towards becoming an Ocean Guardian School.

2. **FINAL REPORT SURVEY**: At the end of the school year, the project's Lead Teacher will be required to complete an online Final Report Survey. After the Lead Teacher has submitted a Final Report Survey, the school will be evaluated for formal recognition as a NOAA Ocean Guardian School.

3. **OCEAN GUARDIAN SCHOOL RECOGNTION:** After your school is formally recognized as a NOAA Ocean Guardian School, you will receive a 2'x5' Ocean Guardian School banner to display on your campus. Your school will receive a new banner for each year it receives formal Ocean Guardian recognition.

Examples of criteria items included in the Recognition Rubric		
Project Outcomes	Budget	Project Communications
School Outreach	Measurable data	
Internal & External Outreach	Final Report Survey	

OCEAN AND CLIMATE LITERACY: ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES AND FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS
http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/literacy.html

Ocean and climate literacy are central to the mission of the Ocean Guardian School program. In an effort to define these two concepts, many scientists and educators have collaborated to produce two guides, *Ocean Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts* and *Climate Essential Principals and Fundamental Concepts*. They are practical resources for educators, outlining the knowledge required to be ocean and climate literate in accordance with the National Science Education Standards (NSES). Although these are not required Ocean Guardian School program materials, participating schools are strongly encouraged to review and incorporate some of the basic themes that most closely relates to their stewardship project.

Ocean literacy is an understanding of the ocean's influence on you—and your influence on the ocean.

An ocean-literate person:
- understands the Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts about the functioning of the ocean;
- can communicate about the ocean in a meaningful way; and
- is able to make informed and responsible decisions regarding the ocean and its resources.

You are climate literate if you understand the influence of climate on yourself and society and your influence on climate.

A climate-literate person:
- understands the essential principles of all aspects of the Earth system governing climate patterns that are presented in this document;
- knows how to gather information about climate and weather, and how to distinguish credible from non-credible scientific sources on the subject; and
- communicates about climate and climate change in a meaningful way.

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