



Green Schools Conference 2027 Call for Proposals

The annual Green Schools Conference (GSC) brings together green school leaders and advocates from around the world to connect, learn, and advance the shared mission of **advancing healthy, sustainable schools for all**. This event is the only national convening to unite everyone involved in creating and advocating for green schools, with a focus on those leading their schools and school systems toward whole-school sustainability. Attendees participate in hands-on skill-building, deep-dive discussions, and collaborative problem-solving while gaining inspiration from leading voices at the intersection of sustainability, social justice, and curriculum and instruction.

We strive to build a program that is innovative, inclusive and inspiring. We invite you to be part of this unique event by submitting an education session proposal to share your successful green school strategies, partnerships, research, and lessons learned. The **Call for Proposals (CFP)** document and accompanying **Submission Guide** provide detailed information about the criteria and type of sessions that we seek to help you prepare a successful session proposal.

The 2027 Green Schools Conference will take place February 8-10 in Austin, TX.

All proposals must be received via the **GSC 2027 [Submission Site](#)** by

June 22, 2026, at 11:59 PM EST.

GSC 2027 Submission and Review Timeline	
April 27, 2026	Call for Proposals and Submission Site opens to general public
June 22, 2026	All proposals must be submitted by 11:59 PM EST
July 8, 2026	Program review begins
July 22, 2026	Program review ends
Mid-August 2026	Accepted session notifications are sent
Early September 2026	Presenter acceptance deadline and program announcement
Early September 2026	Presenter Orientation Call
January 2027	Presenter Know Before You Go Call
February 8-10, 2027	Green Schools Conference

*****Important Process Note*****

The submitter cannot complete the proposal without the **acceptance of participation of all proposed presenters/moderators before the deadline**. Each presenter/moderator must log in to the submission site to enter their details and confirm their participation in the proposal. You may begin the process and return to your saved proposal by the deadline. Emailed, faxed, or mailed submissions will not be accepted. Please see the **Submission Guide** provided in the GSC Submission Site for a complete list of the questions and what is needed to complete a proposal. For questions regarding the Call for Proposals, please email help@greenschoolsconference.org



GSC Call for Authors

The 2027 GSC will also be accepting proposals for authors to participate in the Green Book Zone. The **Green Book Zone** features an engaging environment where attendees can hear directly from several authors, learn about case studies and established frameworks, and engage in short talks followed by onsite book purchases and book signings. This experience is designed to connect big ideas with real-world strategies that educators and leaders can take back to their schools and districts. Interested authors can learn more and [apply to participate](#).

GSC Content Framing

The Green Schools Conference is grounded in **whole school sustainability**, recognizing that thriving, student-centered learning environments are realized when a school's educational program, physical environment, and organizational culture are aligned and mutually reinforced.

These elements form the foundation of the [Whole School Sustainability framework](#) offering a comprehensive vision of what a green school can be. In parallel, the three pillars of a green school, as defined by the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools program, provide a way to measure progress across key areas: **environmental impact, health & wellbeing, and environmental & sustainability literacy**.

Because the Green Schools Conference embraces this holistic approach, sessions are encouraged to reflect **interdisciplinary thinking**, with **diverse presenters, cross-sector collaboration**, and **multiple project examples** that demonstrate real-world applications.

Proposals should also align with the **2027 Core Themes** and **Priority Topics** outlined below, which highlight key areas of focus for the field. Each year, the conference elevates specific topics to reflect emerging trends, pressing challenges, and new opportunities shaping the future of green schools.

2027 Core Themes

Conference partners have identified a set of **core themes** for 2027 that they hope to see reflected in the program. While submissions are not required to address these themes, and no additional preference will be given, submitters are encouraged to address at least one in their proposal where relevant.

- Centering student learning in sustainable schools
- Collaboration and cross-sector partnerships
- Innovative funding and financing models
- Storytelling, communications, and behavior change
- Student voice and youth leadership

GSC Session Categories & 2027 Priority Topics

The following four descriptions (aligned around the three pillars of a green school) represent the program's main categories, and all proposals should align with at least one.

Additionally, there are 12 **priority topics**, identified by conference partners to be of particular relevance at this time, and are identified below each main category. Addressing one or more of them in your proposal is encouraged but not required and will not affect scoring.



Environmental Impact: Proven strategies and innovative approaches for schools to mitigate their environmental footprint by conserving resources, reducing carbon emissions, and supporting local ecology.

- Climate resilience and adaptive infrastructure
- Emerging technologies and digital sustainability
- Waste reduction and circular practices

Health & Well-Being: Proven strategies and innovative approaches for schools to support the physical and emotional health and well-being of students and staff through the built environment and curated programming.

- Access to nature and outdoor learning
- Innovations in school nutrition
- Mental health and social-emotional supports

Environmental and Sustainability Literacy: Proven strategies and innovative approaches that help schools deepen student and staff understanding of the connections between living systems, human health, and economic prosperity—through integrated, interdisciplinary, and action-oriented teaching and learning frameworks.

- Green workforce readiness
- Place-based, community-connected learning
- Student-led inquiry and action

Leadership & Systems Change: Proven strategies and forward-thinking approaches that drive system-wide transformation across a schools' organizational culture, physical environment, and educational programs - highlighting the critical role of leadership in modeling and advancing change and embedding sustainability throughout the system to achieve measurable outcomes.

- Communication and storytelling for culture change
- Scaling change and metrics for impact
- Shifting school culture and mindsets

GSC Priority Audiences

When designing your session or workshop, consider the core audiences that the conference serves:

- School leaders (superintendent, principal, etc.)
- Educators
- School design and construction professionals
- School district administrative and facilities staff
- Green school partners (non-profit, government, for-profit, etc.)

All session proposals should **feature an interdisciplinary team of presenters or facilitators, including a school or district voice**, who work together to share replicable and actionable content about a defined topic. The scoring rubric for proposals rewards more points to sessions that include a diversity of perspectives, either as part of the speaker panel or through session storytelling. Student presenters are encouraged in cases where student leadership and/or work are featured.



2027 GSC Session Formats

GSC will accept proposals in one of two programming formats:

- **Education Session (60 minutes)**

A 1-hour education session should feature an interdisciplinary team of up to four presenters showcasing best practices, research, or proven practice around a variety of green school topics. Sessions should feature replicable and real-world initiatives taking place at or with a school or district. Opportunities for attendee engagement and interactive discussion in small and large groups are required.

- **Workshops (120 minutes)**

A 2-hour workshop is a hands-on, participatory learning experience. Workshops provide opportunities for attendees to explore or experience teaching methods, operational practices, or sustainability actions that can be replicated in their community, district, school, or classroom. Content is action oriented and focuses on giving participants practice with processes, technology, or concepts that they may not yet be familiar with. The workshop agenda should integrate best practice engagement activities and Q&A for at least 60 min of the 120 min time block. Workshop facilitators/presenters should be experienced experts in their field.

2027 Proposal Review & Scoring Criteria

All session proposals will be reviewed and scored by a team of volunteer reviewers using a 22 - point scale. Those with the top scores will be selected for the final 2027 conference program. Reviewers will score proposals using one of the following rubrics.

GSC 60 min Education Session Proposal Review Rubric	
Max Value	Criteria
5 points	Provide a clear picture of what to expect during the session, including a realistic plan for teaching the session material in the allotted time. Incorporate attendee engagement strategies using a variety of teaching methods.
5 points	Provide an interdisciplinary perspective with at least two presenters representing different stakeholder groups, backgrounds, and lived experiences. This could include community representatives, students, parents, teachers, facility operations, architects, design professionals, etc.
4 points	Highlight a school or school district that has demonstrated measurable results related to ecological impact, health and well-being, or student learning; and articulate how results are measured or evaluated.
3 points	Propose presenters that have the experience and knowledge necessary to deliver the material.
3 points	Define clear action steps and guide attendees on replication in other schools, districts, states or by other public-private partnerships.
2 points	Highlight a project, school or school district that represents under-resourced or historically excluded communities (i.e., Title I, Tribal schools, etc.)
Max value: 22	



GSC 120 min Workshop Proposal Review Rubric	
Max Value	Criteria
7 points	Provide a clear picture of what to expect during the workshop, including a plan for delivering content in an interactive way to give participants direct practice in implementing new processes, technologies, or concepts. Indicate how the agenda will support at least 60 min of individual, group activities and interaction.
5 points	Provide an interdisciplinary perspective with at least two presenters representing different stakeholder groups, backgrounds, and lived experiences. This could include community representatives, students, parents, teachers, facility operations, architects, design professionals, etc.
5 points	Guide attendees to build new skills and/or develop action plans that can be applied in their own schools, districts, states or organizations.
3 points	Highlight a school or school district that has demonstrated measurable results related to ecological impact, health and well-being, or student learning; and articulate how results are measured or evaluated.
2 points	Highlight a project, school or school district that represents under-resourced or historically excluded communities (i.e., Title I, Tribal schools, etc.)
Max value: 22	

GSC Program Policies

USGBC staff will manage the review process for education session proposals in partnership with Green Schools National Network staff and a volunteer group of reviewers. The reviewer group's responsibility is to curate the most robust educational program possible for conference attendees by including new, meaningful content and learning experiences. All sessions and presenters will be selected based on the guidelines below:

Program Review Process

- Speaker and Reviewer discounts may not be combined or transferred without approval by USGBC staff.
- The review group reserves the right to develop submitted sessions using a combination of proposals and/or invited presenters.
- The review group may modify any submitted session by adding or removing presenters or requesting content changes or additions.
- Submissions not selected for the conference may be considered for other USGBC events.
- Final decisions regarding these policies may be made at the discretion of the review group and USGBC.

Session and Presenter Policies

- All presenters are expected to attend in person. There is no accommodation for remote attendance.

- Presenters are encouraged to attend the full 2-day conference and will receive discounted registration for participation in the conference program.
- An individual presenter may only participate in one (1) education session or workshop during the conference.
- A firm/institution/organization may have a maximum of two (2) total presenters/moderators participating in the education program.
- To promote new and diverse groups of presenters, strong preference will be given to presenters who did not present at the previous year's conference.
- Each session or workshop should include a minimum of two (2) and maximum of four (4) presenters or moderators.
- Each session or workshop is allowed two (2) student presenters or moderators, as long as the total number of session presenters does not exceed four (4) people. Eligible students are individuals attending grades 5 – 12 or undergraduate degree program.
- Sessions based upon an advertisement, product, or service will not be accepted into the program.
- Only complete proposals will be considered.

Presenter Responsibilities

- Session submitters may only propose presenters with the knowledge and permission of the proposed speakers. All proposed presenters must be able and willing to present their session at the conference at the time and date assigned. Proposals submitted without the knowledge of proposed presenters are subject to immediate rejection; if the proposal is selected and it is found that all presenters did not know about the proposal or did not agree to present, the session is subject to immediate cancellation.
- Accepted presenters who are unable to attend must notify conference staff immediately. Replacement presenters must be suggested by the session Submitter and approved by GSC conference staff. Conference staff reserves the right to modify or cancel any session based on a change in the presenter.
- Conference staff reserves the right to retain or remove presenters based on the program's best interest. If a presenter's employment changes, conference staff must be notified. Suppose the session content is related to the presenter's previous employment. In that case, the previous employer must sign a letter indicating a willingness to permit the presenter to speak (the letter could include that the presenter will acknowledge the employer during their remarks).
- If a session is accepted that includes one or more student presenters, those students must share email address, title, short bio and head shot with conference staff by the specified deadline to be recognized as an official presenter and access the speaker discount code.
- All presentations must be uploaded to the Speaker Resource Center by the specified deadlines before the conference. Non-compliance may result in the cancellation of the session.

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please email help@greenschoolsconference.org