



Three RUSD Schools Honored as 2025 California Green Ribbon Schools

April 28, 2025 - RIALTO, CA. The California Department of Education recently announced the 2025 California Green Ribbon Schools (CA-GRS) honorees, and among the 26 public schools statewide who earned this recognition, three schools in the Rialto Unified School District (RUSD) earned distinction for their exemplary commitment to environmental sustainability, health, and environmental literacy.

Dr. Ernest Garcia Elementary School earned a **Gold**-level honor, while **Charlotte N. Werner Elementary School** and **Helen L. Dollahan Elementary School** were each recognized at the **Silver** level. RUSD schools have now earned an impressive 24 California Green Schools honors since 2018. Charlotte N. Werner Elementary's elevation from **Bronze** in 2024 to **Silver** this year reflects the school's ongoing growth in sustainability and wellness practices. This upward momentum mirrors RUSD's broader district-wide efforts to reduce environmental impact while fostering healthy, engaged learning communities. In total, 11 elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools in the RUSD have earned California Green Ribbon Schools honors.

The Rialto Unified School District has long prioritized teaching students to be responsible citizens of a global society and has earned a number of awards for its efforts. In 2019, the District was awarded the National Green Ribbon recognition and was honored in Washington, D.C. RUSD STEM CARES (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Cultivating Active Responsible Environmental Stewards) uses locally relevant environmental issues to inspire students to think globally and act locally to improve their community and their world and earned the California State School Boards Association (CSBA) *Golden Bell Award* in 2022. School gardens and citrus groves serve as living classrooms, enrich environmental education and hands-on learning.

"We are extremely proud of these three schools for earning California Green Schools recognition this year," said **Juanita Chan**, RUSD Agent of Science and Career Programs. "Annually in the RUSD, we recommit to our environmental sustainability resolution. The California Green Ribbon Schools honor is evidence of this commitment. Environmental sustainability and environmental stewardship is a fundamental feature of being 'Future Ready,' and we are proud to help San Bernardino County advance in that resolve."

The California Green Ribbon Schools recognition is awarded to schools and districts that demonstrate excellence in three key areas: reducing environmental impact and costs, improving the health and wellness of students and staff, and providing effective environmental and sustainability education.

"Our California Green Ribbon Schools exemplify the values of innovation, resiliency, and creativity that drive our efforts to make every school community a healthy and sustainable learning environment," stated State Superintendent **Tony Thurmond** in the official announcement.

RUSD Interim Superintendent Dr. Judy D. White added, "We are proud that traditionally, Rialto Unified School District leads in various academic, social-emotional, community and environmental and sustainability initiatives. I join the Board of Education and District leaders in congratulating our teachers, administrators, students and parents for making sure environmental and sustainability programs remain relevant and robust in Rialto schools."

For more information on RUSD sustainability initiatives, visit www.rialtousd.org.

