



# 20 schools in Jackson area working to become Michigan Green Schools

Posted by Claire Cummings | Jackson Citizen Patriot March 23, 2009 06:55AM

Nearly everything thrown away at Columbia's Miller Elementary School is followed by a question from students: Can we recycle that?

The school has become a community recycling hub with bins for household batteries, paper, printer cartridges, old cell phones and even drink pouches, which can be turned into bags and pencil holders.

## Going green

Schools applying for green school certification

- Miller Elementary (emerald status)
- Springport Middle
- Columbia Central High
- East Jackson High
- Jackson Area Career Center
- Western Middle
- Northwest High
- Michigan Center Jr./Sr. High
- Lumen Christi
- Paragon Charter Academy
- 10 of 12 buildings in Jackson Public Schools

The itch to be green is sweeping the area. Twenty Jackson County schools recently submitted applications to the [Intermediate School District](#) for an official designation.

A state law passed in 2006 allows schools that participate in 10 of 20 listed activities to become Michigan Green Schools. With 15 of 20 activities, they can be Michigan Emerald Schools.

"Last year the students I had were pretty disgusted with the amount of paper we were throwing in waste baskets," said Willow Jeffreys, Miller's student-council adviser. "The students start these things. They're the ones that keep the adults going."

Some of the qualifying activities include cooking with solar energy, planting trees, observing Earth Day, recycling and adopting an endangered species.

Miller, which adopted a bald eagle from [Leslie Science and Nature Center](#), is the only school to apply for emerald status this year.

But [Jackson Public Schools](#) is on its way to becoming the only district in the county to have all its buildings thinking green.

Students in Janeen Bush's Advanced Placement biology class have led the effort by adopting schools and meeting with Jackson High School staff and students to explain how they can be part of the effort.

"I just think that our community needed that push," said senior Lashara Thompson, 17. "It just takes someone showing it's easy, it can be done."

*Source: Jackson County  
Intermediate School District*

Thompson said she was surprised by the excitement shown by staff and students as young as kindergartners.

Among the efforts so far: Bird houses and a nature walk are being constructed at Hunt Elementary School; the bus garage is heated with recycled oil; and Wilson Academy plans to turn some asphalt into green space.

In the end, students and schools are getting more than a flag and certificate, Bush said. They are expanding their learning beyond school walls and becoming good stewards of the environment for present and future generations.

"What we do day-to-day has very limited meaning unless you're influencing someone to replicate your efforts," Jackson High School Principal Barbara Baird-Pauli said.

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