



# **K-5 Everglades Champion Schools Program**

## **2024 – 2025 Evaluation Criteria**

Schools are expected to use the categories & indicators of the evaluation criteria to plan, implement, and report on their Everglades initiatives for each school year.

- I. Professional Development
- II. Integrating Everglades Literacy into the Curriculum
- III. Everglades Community & Culture
- IV. Everglades Extensions: Above and Beyond

**Questions? Contact the Program Manager, Alicia Torres, at**  
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**Website: [www.evergladesliteracy.org](http://www.evergladesliteracy.org)**

# 2024-2025 Evaluation Criteria Overview

The evaluation criteria are based on a point system where the maximum number of points for all four categories is 130 points. The number of points that schools earn on their applications determines their recognition levels:

**Bronze (40-70 points), Silver (71-101 points), or Gold (102-130 points).**

**Highlighted indicators** are mandatory for program recognition. **Proper documentation is required to earn points.**

Category	Possible Points	Indicators		
<b>I. Professional Development</b>	40*	A. Everglades Literacy Teacher Trainings (30 points) + (5 bonus points*)	B. Additional Environmental Trainings (10 points)	
<b>II. Integrating Everglades Literacy into the Curriculum</b>	50	A. Everglades Literacy Teacher Toolkit Implementation (30 points)	B. Everglades Interdisciplinary Approach (10 points)	C. Field Experiences (10 Points)
<b>III. Community &amp; Culture</b>	30	A. Everglades Student Ambassadors (10 points)	B. Community Partnerships (10 points)	C. School Culture (10 points)
<b>IV. Everglades Extensions</b>	10	Judges may award up to 10 points for Everglades initiatives that have gone above and beyond the scope of the other categories, or for initiatives that do not fit neatly elsewhere.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	(+5 if bonus points are awarded)		

# I. Professional Development (40 points max.)

**Documentation Required for all indicators (A. & B.)**

## I. A. Everglades Literacy Teacher Trainings (30 points max.) *\*See Program Requirement*

*Teachers, staff, and administration use professional development provided by The Everglades Foundation to build a school's Everglades literacy capacity to ensure that all Florida students understand the importance of conserving, protecting, and restoring the Everglades.*

***\*Program Requirement: Two teachers must have attended an Everglades Literacy Teacher Training to be eligible to participate in the Everglades Champion Schools Program.***

5 points	10 points	15 points	20 points	30 points
At least <b><u>15% of your teachers</u></b> have attended an Everglades Literacy Teacher Training.	At least <b><u>30% of your teachers</u></b> have attended an Everglades Literacy Teacher Training.	At least <b><u>45% of your teachers from multiple grade levels</u></b> have attended an Everglades Literacy Teacher Training.	At least <b><u>60% of your teachers from multiple grade levels</u></b> have attended an Everglades Literacy Teacher Training.	At least <b><u>85% of your teachers from multiple grade levels</u></b> have attended an Everglades Literacy Teacher Training.
<b>Bonus Points (Up to 5 points)</b>				
<b>Bonus points</b> will be awarded if a school is a host training site for an Everglades Literacy Teacher Training in the current academic year. Host schools are highly encouraged to invite other schools (private, parochial, charter, public) to attend.				

**Examples of documentation may include but are not limited to:** spreadsheets of training records (preferred), images of training agendas, sign-in sheets, images that capture teacher participation.

## I. B. Additional Environmental Trainings (10 points max.)

**Any in-person or virtual trainings, modules, webinars, and/or conferences that focus on the Everglades or environmental topics for teachers, staff, and administration.**

**The Everglades Foundation has provided modules that are independent, self-paced online professional development opportunities that will increase teachers' content knowledge about various topics of the Everglades. Access all modules from the website: <https://www.evergladesliteracy.org/content-modules>**

### 1-10 points

**Up to 10 teachers attend** any additional environmental related professional development opportunities **AND/OR** complete any of The Everglades Foundation's online Everglades Content Knowledge Modules available with a passing score of 60/80 (75%).

**Note:** Modules are only valid for the year they are completed and cannot be repeated. To check teacher eligibility, email requests to [atorres@evergladesfoundation.org](mailto:atorres@evergladesfoundation.org).



### Examples:

- Attending other speaker series, webinars, and teacher symposiums that are hosted by The Everglades Foundation (Ex. The Annual Everglades Teacher Symposium, Families ForEverglades speaker series, Everglades Restoration Fights Climate Change webinars, and more!)
- Attending environmental-related webinars and/or conference sessions
  - LEEF (League of Environmental Educators in Florida), NAAEE, Native Plant Society, National Parks, Audubon Society & other environmental education organizations in your region
- Attending an Outdoor Learning in the Everglades Professional Development

**Examples of documentation may include but are not limited to:** images of training certificates, training agendas, confirmation emails of participation, or images that capture teacher participation.

## II. Integrating Everglades Literacy into the Curriculum (50 points max.)

**Documentation Required for all Indicators (A., B., & C.)**

### II. A. Everglades Literacy Teacher Toolkit Implementation (30 points max.)

**\*See Program Requirement**

**The K-12 Everglades Literacy Teacher Toolkit offers a set of three (3) lessons that are to be implemented in each grade level. These lessons introduce students to the Fundamental Concepts of Everglades Literacy that students, and all Floridians, should understand.**

Learn more about the concepts on our [website](#).

Access the K-12 Everglades Literacy Teacher Toolkit at <https://www.evergladesliteracy.org/teacher-toolkit>

**\*Program Requirement: Schools must reach a 5-point minimum to be eligible for the ECS Program.**

*5 points	10 points	15 points	20 points	30 points
At least <b>20%</b> of the students in your school have participated in the <b><u>complete set of the three (3) grade-specific lessons</u></b> from the Everglades Literacy Teacher Toolkit.	At least <b>35%</b> of the students in your school have participated in the <b><u>complete set of the three (3) grade-specific lessons</u></b> from the Everglades Literacy Teacher Toolkit.	At least <b>50%</b> of the students in your school have participated in the <b><u>complete set of the three (3) grade-specific lessons</u></b> from the Everglades Literacy Teacher Toolkit.	At least <b>65%</b> of the students in your school have participated in the <b><u>complete set of the three (3) grade-specific lessons</u></b> from the Everglades Literacy Teacher Toolkit.	At least <b>85%</b> of the students in your school have participated in the <b><u>complete set of the three (3) grade-specific lessons</u></b> from the Everglades Literacy Teacher Toolkit.

**Note:** Teachers who are not Everglades Literacy trained may still implement Everglades Literacy Teacher Toolkit lessons.

**Examples of documentation may include but are not limited to:** images of sample student work, images of teaching identified lesson(s), and/or images that capture student engagement.

## II. B. Everglades Interdisciplinary Approach (10 points max.)

**Schools integrate Everglades-themed interdisciplinary lessons beyond the grade-specific Teacher Toolkit and/or Everglades projects that are implemented across two or more disciplines.**

**Note:** Any EL Teacher Toolkit lessons that are adapted from another grade level **AND** are interdisciplinary may be applied here.

4 Points	6 Points	8 Points	10 Points
At least <b>20%</b> of the students have conducted <b>one (1) Everglades themed interdisciplinary lesson or project.</b>	At least <b>40%</b> of the students have conducted <b>one (1) Everglades themed interdisciplinary lesson or project.</b>	At least <b>60%</b> of the students have conducted <b>one (1) Everglades themed interdisciplinary lesson or project.</b>	At least <b>80%</b> of the students have conducted <b>one (1) Everglades themed interdisciplinary lesson or project.</b>

### Examples of Interdisciplinary Projects:

- As a Teacher Toolkit lesson extension to **Grade 2 – Lesson 2, *Everglades Seasons***, students design and build their own alligator hole that can be a true-to-size alligator hole with props, a smaller version using paper mache, and/or through a digital platform.
- Students measure components of the alligator hole (i.e. length of an alligator, distance between objects).
  - Disciplines used: Science, Art, Math, Technology
- Other ideas may include Everglades Challenge Coin Design Contest, Everglades focused STEM lessons, teacher-created project-based learning activities, etc.

**Visit our website to see [additional instructional resources.](#)**

**Examples of documentation may include but are not limited to:** images of sample student work, images that capture teacher instruction or student engagement, or screenshots of teacher lesson plan(s).

## II. C. Field Experiences (10 points max.)

***Students learn about their local natural environments through guided first-hand observations and/or investigation that allows students to collect data. All experiences must have an Everglades connection.***

4 Points	6 Points	8 Points	10 Points
At least <b>20%</b> of the students have participated in <b>one (1)</b> guided <b>first-hand experience and collected data</b> in a local natural environment that has an Everglades connection.	At least <b>40%</b> of the students have participated in <b>one (1)</b> guided <b>first-hand experience and collected data</b> in a local natural environment that has an Everglades connection.	At least <b>60%</b> of the students have participated in <b>one (1)</b> guided <b>first-hand experience and collected data</b> in a local natural environment that has an Everglades connection.	At least <b>80%</b> of the students have participated in <b>one (1)</b> <b>guided first-hand experience and collected data</b> in a local natural environment that has an Everglades connection.
<p><b>Note: Field experiences are outdoor experiences (in the “field”). Schools are encouraged to visit local nature centers, natural areas, State &amp; County parks, etc. that have an Everglades connection. Field experiences may also occur on or near campus.</b></p>			

### **Examples of Field Experiences:**

- Conduct and compare data from [water quality testing](#) at different locations.
- Pair an [Interactive 360-degree habitat video](#) with a field guide and the provided [student field datasheet](#) to conduct a virtual field experience. *Additional virtual field studies are available on our website.*
- Students conduct bird counts or other plant/wildlife surveys on or off school grounds and then classify if the species are native or non-native species of the Everglades.

**Examples of documentation may include but are not limited to:** images of sample student work, images that capture student engagement, a field program agenda, or a field trip letter of site confirmation.



### III. Everglades Community & Culture (30 points max.)

**Documentation Required for all Indicators (A., B., & C.)**

#### III. A. Everglades Student Ambassadors (10 points max.)

**Students model and practice successful collaboration, partnership, and leadership skills to advance Everglades-related initiatives. Students serve to educate others about the Everglades and protect the ecosystem through action.**

Download [Everglades Student Ambassadors' Guide](#) and [Everglades Pledge](#) here or from our website.

4 Points	6 Points	8 Points	10 Points
<p>Student ambassadors are established, and <b>Everglades activities are integrated</b> into a new or existing student club(s).</p> <p>Ambassadors sign the <b>Everglades Pledge</b> from the EF Student Ambassadors' Guide. School acknowledges these student ambassadors.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Student ambassadors build an Everglades watershed model in their school club to learn about how water flows through the watershed.</p>	<p>Student ambassadors <b>create and implement an action plan to teach other students</b> from different classes/grade levels about the Everglades (<b>students teaching students</b>).</p> <p><b>Example:</b> 5th graders teaching 2nd graders about an endangered species found in the Everglades through an extended research project/poster presentation.</p>	<p>Student ambassadors <b>create and implement an action plan to lead a school-wide project</b> that promotes Everglades literacy (<b>students leading school</b>).</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Student ambassadors organize a school-wide campaign via morning announcements to raise awareness of the ecosystem services that the Everglades provides to people such as filtering pollutants out of the water.</p>	<p>Student ambassadors <b>create and implement an action plan to with adult decision-makers to implement a community event</b> that promotes Everglades literacy (<b>students leading the greater community</b>).</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Student ambassadors plan and coordinate with PTO, a River of Grass community festival to celebrate the birthday of Marjory Stoneman Douglas (April 7th). April 7th is officially designated as Everglades Day.</p>



### III. B. Community Partnerships (10 points max.)

**School works with the community at large to teach the importance of Everglades literacy through community and/or service-learning activities/projects that directly benefit the wider community. Partners are businesses or organizations that provide services and/or resources to the school.**

4 Points	6 Points	8 Points	10 Points
Community involvement consists of <b>1-2 guest speakers</b> that provide Everglades related education to the students and/or within the school community (e.g., parents/families).	Schools work with <b>one community partner</b> to conduct Everglades community and/or service-learning activities at least <b>once or twice a year.</b>	Schools work with <b>two community partners</b> to conduct Everglades community and/or service-learning activities <b>throughout the year (more than twice).</b>	Schools work with <b>two-three community partners</b> to conduct Everglades community and/or service-learning activities <b>throughout the year on a regular on-going basis (monthly, weekly, etc.).</b>
<b>If necessary, virtual connections with community partners to conduct Everglades related education, and Everglades community and/or service-learning activities are permitted (i.e., virtual guest speakers).</b>			

#### Definitions and examples of “Environmental Community-Service” and “Environmental Service-Learning”:

- **Environmental community-service:** Environmentally focused projects and activities that engage students in addressing the needs of their community, but do not necessarily include a learning component.
  - **Example: Students collecting trash from a local Everglades habitat.**
- **Environmental service-learning:** Environmentally focused projects that involve students in identifying, researching, and implementing solutions to real needs in their community as part of their Everglades learning and/or curriculum goals.
  - **Example: Students will research local threatened or endangered bird species and work with a local environmental group to build and monitor nest boxes to support their population.**

### III. C. School Culture (10 points max.)



**Everglades literacy is systematically included as components of school planning, administrative support, and overall school culture.** It can be illustrated through various means of communication (i.e. School-wide projects, community events, newsletters, social media posts, bulletin boards, the school website) that strengthens and involves your school community about your partnership with The Everglades Foundation to become an Everglades Champion School.

4 Points	6 Points	8 Points	10 Points
<p><b><u>Administration and school faculty are involved</u></b> in the school's Everglades literacy &amp; Champion Schools initiatives.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Faculty meeting updates related to ECS, promoting trainings, interdepartmental communication, planning meeting with admin, grade level highlights, share-fairs</p>	<p><b><u>The entire school body is involved</u></b> in the school's Everglades literacy &amp; Champion Schools initiatives.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Everglades word of the day on morning announcements, Everglades gallery walk of student work in common area, Everglades door decorating contest</p>	<p><b><u>Families and visitors as well as the school body are involved</u></b> in the school's Everglades literacy &amp; Champion Schools initiatives.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Parent newsletters include ECS updates, school kiosk displays Champion School status or level goal, banners are publicly displayed, school website, digital signature banners included, parents invited to Everglades gallery walk of student work</p>	<p><b><u>A whole school community approach</u></b> is involved in the school's Everglades literacy and Champion Schools initiatives. It includes a diverse mix of trained teachers, students, administrators, staff, parents, and/or community reps.</p> <p>The school's efforts to be an Everglades Champion School are shared with <b><u>other schools and the wider community.</u></b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Annual Celebration of Everglades Day, Everglades Literacy Week, ECS recruits/mentors new schools, Everglades centered public events involving community partners, share at a school board district meeting.</p>

**Examples of documentation may include but are not limited to,** meeting sign-in sheets, agendas, emails, photos, website links, or campus signage.

## IV. Everglades Extensions: Above and Beyond (10 points max.)

***Up to ten (10) points are awarded for Everglades-related initiatives that go “above and beyond” the scope of the other categories, or for Everglades initiatives that do not fit in neatly elsewhere. This is your chance to be creative!***

### Examples:

- Schools implement [PreK Everglades Literacy Teacher Toolkit](#) lessons with their early learners.
- Additional Interdisciplinary Projects or Field Experiences that have not been included in Indicators II. B. or C.
- Additional teachers that successfully complete online modules that have not been already included in Indicator I.B.
- Recruiting and/or mentoring other schools to become Everglades Champion Schools.
- PTO/PTA members attend Everglades Literacy Teacher Trainings.
- Fundraising initiatives to support Everglades-focused field trips and/or projects.
- Everglades-focused Science Fair Projects.
- Student presentations at public events. E.g., Everglades Day; Broward County for Water Matters Day; District Science Fair; or other county-wide water/environmental initiatives.
- Starting an Everglades book club or book share (for students, teachers and/or parents).
- Integrating your Everglades initiatives as part of county, state, or national Green Schools program.
- **AND MORE! THE SKY’S THE LIMIT!**

