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LRNow, a leading environmental non-profit, works to preserve and protect Virginia Beach's waterways through many avenues including advocacy work, restoration projects, and environmental education opportunities. There is much work to be done on all fronts, especially when it comes to Virginia Beach's youth and spreading awareness of the environmental issues affecting our community. This is why LRNow started the Pearl School Award Program in 2007 - to encourage Virginia Beach teachers to teach students about local environmental issues and the ways in which they can be part of the solution!

The *Pearl School Award Program* encourages and supports teachers within their schools to provide their students with relevant and timely environmental lessons. Through the program, schools can earn points toward the Pearl School Award by carrying out environmental education and service projects in and around their schools. These projects should focus on environmental concepts, such as understanding watersheds with their unique characteristics and problems, water quality, and ecosystems functions. Projects and lessons should encourage and engage students to take an active role in tackling the challenges that their school, local, and regional communities face.

Public and private school teachers throughout the City of Virginia Beach (and beyond) are some of the most effective spokespeople in our community for water stewardship. Not only do they help students understand watershed concepts but also guide them to develop an ethic of environmental responsibility and stewardship.

How the Pearl School Award Program Works

The *Pearl School Award* recognizes schools that provide their students with a variety of environmental activities, *exceeding* the requirements of their curriculum. The purpose of this program is to foster good environmental stewards through excellence in environmental sustainability education. This is **not** a competition during which schools compete against each other.

To earn a *Pearl School Award*, a school must complete projects that add up to or exceed the required number of points for the school category. These projects must be documented, listing the teacher, and project points. Photos should be submitted along with the application (no more than 5 please).

Having multiple grade levels and teachers involved in these projects is strongly encouraged. This gives the entire school "ownership" of this award and in some cases, can earn additional points.

How to Earn Points:

Environmental lessons and projects happening during the school year (August-May) are eligible for consideration for that year's Pearl School Award. Each is assigned a point value which is dependent on a few factors including how many students and/or grade-levels are involved as well as the scale and longevity of the action. Large projects completed and receiving maximum credit in its completion year can be counted at half value in subsequent years if the project continues to be maintained, used in a learning capacity, and is documented and explained on the application. Limits may apply to some programs. The following table outlines the point requirements to receive the *Pearl School Award*.

Point Requirements		
Preschool & Elementary	Middle School	High School
First year - 100 points <i>50 points in subsequent years</i>	First year - 150 points <i>75 points in subsequent years</i>	First year - 150 points <i>75 points in subsequent years</i>

Schools achieving an award initially must then apply within the next two years to be eligible for the *subsequent year scoring* requirements. Schools that have lapsed for longer than two years must meet the first year's criteria again to receive the next award.

Schools, teams, and teachers are urged to review the [Award Tracking Worksheet](#) for ideas and point assignments. Ideas for programs and projects not on the list may be designed and submitted in advance for approval.

Award Eligibility

Award applications MUST be submitted by 5pm Monday, May 3, 2027, to be eligible for the 2026-2027 award. You may edit your application at any time until the submission date.

All projects completed between August 24, 2026 and May 3, 2027, are eligible for this award. Applications are done on [Microsoft Forms](#) and can be scanned, emailed, mailed, or hand delivered to the address below. Any applications received after the deadline will not be considered. If you have any issues with application submission, please contact us right away. Schools will be notified when their application is received. Do not assume your application has been received if you have not received an acknowledgement from us.

Email: shantelle@lrnow.org

Phone: (757) 962-5398

Mailing Address: Pearl School Programs 3712 Holland Road, VA Beach, VA 23452

Schools earning the Pearl School status for the first time will be awarded with a perpetual plaque and a door decal, The initial year that the school earns the award will appear on the plaque. For each additional year the school earns their award; a new date plate will be sent to the school to be added.

Lynnhaven River NOW will coordinate with your school to present the initial award at a school event, meeting or on the school's televised announcements. Please think about this date as you fill out your Pearl School application. Advanced planning for this initial presentation helps to ensure that the students who have worked to achieve this award are able to enjoy the recognition of this achievement.