

# MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™

*Community Action Team*

*Ever wonder what people think about your school buildings? The appearances of the buildings and the campuses matter. It matters to the people who work for us, our parents, our students, and visitors. First impressions are important as schools work to improve the overall quality of the learning environment.*



First Impressions was created by Andy Lewis, University of Wisconsin Extension Service, and James Schneider, director of economic development in Grant County, Wisconsin, as a community assessment tool. For this program, we have modified and adapted the original concept and assessment for school buildings and facilities.

# First IMPRESSIONS EDUCATION

## need more information?

If your school district is interested in participating in the First Impressions Program, please contact us for further information:

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# First IMPRESSIONS

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# EDUCATION



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## EDUCATION



## how does it work?

The program allows you to see your schools through the eyes of a first-time visitor. A team led by a professional from Mississippi State University visits your school buildings and campuses. The visiting teams are comprised of individuals with diverse backgrounds and may include university personnel, community and economic developers, elected officials, school personnel, and community members.

These visitors drive around your campuses, walk around the buildings, and tour inside the schools. Visitors use a structured assessment tool as they evaluate general appearances, safety and health factors, cleanliness, building upkeep, and overall attractiveness of the learning environments. Training for the team ensures that evaluations by individual visitors are standardized, resulting in a thorough final report for the stakeholders.

## when is the deadline?

Applications are accepted throughout the year. Usually visits are made between March and October. More information and a copy of the application may be found at [www.msca.msstate.edu](http://www.msca.msstate.edu).

## how does the visit help?

This program is designed to raise awareness that school curb appeal and building appearance impact the overall success of the school and learning environment. Simply put, the way your building looks makes a difference. The visit highlights strengths and weaknesses and is designed as a tool to help your school:

- Evaluate and prioritize maintenance efforts.
- Set goals and priorities for improving curb appeal.
- Identify initiatives for improving general appearances and public perceptions.

## how will results be delivered?

The results of the visit are both a written report and a presentation. Both include team comments, photographs, and recommendations. Although the recommendations are a summary, many individual comments are included in the final report. Recommendations are designed to help school leaders improve perceptions of visitors, parents, students, and employees.

## what is your commitment?

1. Complete the application form. By doing so, you are committing to the process and identifying the lead contact person for the district.
2. Allow at least two staff members to join us in visiting another school district.
3. Organize and host a meeting for the final report presentation.

## how does the *community action team* help?

- Coordinates team visits
- Identifies and trains the visitation team
- Compiles team comments into a final report
- Makes the final presentation

