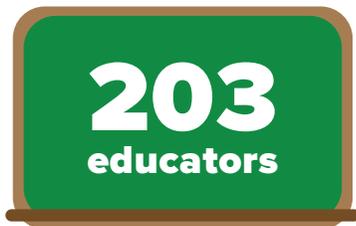


2021–2022 Project Impact

This year, faculty, staff, and community members from 29 schools participated in the second annual Illinois Green Schools Project. Participating schools receive educational tools, resources, and support from a Green Schools Mentor to guide each school's sustainability projects. This year's optional project theme was "Energy & Justice at School."



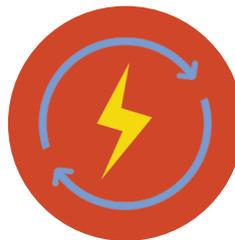
“

The reason I chose to become a mentor is because I wanted to use my skills to guide young people in addressing environmental issues within their immediate sphere of influence. It was great to see them use their agency and their skills to advocate for change within their own community.

Kerri DiMonte, Green Schools Mentor



Cohorts from four schools completed **student-led energy audits** to better understand their school's energy usage.



Eight schools undertook projects directly related to this year's optional theme: "**Energy & Justice at School.**"



Building gardens was a popular project — seven schools established a **community garden with either native plants or edible fruits and vegetables.**



Sixteen schools emphasized **schoolwide waste reduction** in their projects.

“

My favorite part of the Illinois Green Schools Project was **seeing the beautiful collaboration between students, teachers, mentors, and administrators...** what a powerful lesson it is to see how everybody working together towards a common goal — an important goal like sustainability — how much can truly be achieved.

Cindy Wong, Oak Park River Forest High School Teacher

Project Snapshots

With the support of dedicated educators and Green Schools Mentors, students pursued specific sustainability projects to increase their schools' sustainability and educate their community about sustainable practices. From composting to energy audits to a recycled water pump, these projects were creative and wide-ranging.



Putting Waste in its Place

Murphysboro Middle School's student-led Eco-Action team posted educational posters to raise awareness about trash sorting and waste reduction throughout the school. The team's mission is to improve the school's recycling program and to show how working together can make large differences in reducing waste and energy usage.



TEDx Audit-orium Seminar

Students and staff at Wolcott College Prep collaborated on a school energy audit to determine where the school was using the most energy. Students will present their findings along with ideas for reducing energy consumption at their annual TEDx seminar event. Their project has already led to administrative changes in school energy use.



The Butterfly Effect

Pleasantdale Elementary School's butterfly garden has been a student favorite for over two decades. Students were given the opportunity to participate in composting their food waste, which they used to enrich the soil for flowers and plants in the butterfly garden. At the school's Family Science Night, the Kindergarten students proudly presented their compost projects.



Trash to Treasure

Students at John Barry Elementary School learned about sorting waste and applied what they learned in creative and fun ways. Students "reused" their trash by repurposing materials into bird feeders, lava lamps, marble rollercoasters, and even seed catapults to launch seeds in the school garden. Students also created posters about decomposition and waste sorting.