

What's in It for Me?

Forming a School Green Team



Discover the many ways that sustainability benefits the entire school community. When forming a school green team, it is important to include members from a wide variety of backgrounds. Projects will be more successful and create longer lasting change when individuals are involved at many levels.

Administrators

- **Recognition**

There are state and national level recognition programs for schools that take action toward sustainability. Students and the community will feel a sense of accomplishment and pride in participating in sustainability at their school.

- **Student Leadership**

Projects often give students the opportunity to participate in service projects and act as leaders within their school community. They begin to consider their role in affecting change and making decisions in response to real-world issues.

- **Reduced Absenteeism**

Sustainable schools have been shown to reduce absenteeism and improve indoor air quality while increasing student participation and engagement in class.



Students

- **Career Opportunities**

Environmental education can introduce a new set of career options in the environmental industry to students. In secondary schools, connections with outside organizations may provide future opportunities.

- **Student Leadership Roles**

A leadership role on a green team can make for a great resume builder. If the students are able to make real change throughout the school it can be a talking point during college interviews and even lead to scholarships.

- **Friendship and Fun**

Working on a green team or project can provide students with the opportunity to make friends with others who want to make the world a better place, and have fun while doing it.

- **Health and Wellness**

Healthy, sustainable learning environments have been shown to decrease absenteeism, reduce the incidence and severity of asthma and other health conditions, and improve overall learning outcomes.



Teachers

- **Real-world, Project-based Learning**
When students apply their learning to real world situations that are relevant and meaningful to their lives, education comes to life. Students view themselves as active citizens and stewards within their community and the world at large.
- **Integrated Curriculum**
Projects often tie together many subjects through collecting and graphing data, researching the issue, and communicating solutions.

School Board

- **Positive Community Impact**
Creating healthy, more efficient schools that work to improve the surrounding community creates a positive community image while helping to attract and retain staff.
- **Increased funding where it matters most**
Reducing spending on utility bills allows for fiscal resources to be focused on student learning and achievement.

Facility Director

- **Reduced Costs**
Reducing resource use reduces operational costs. The cost savings with energy projects can often have an estimated payback of a year or less, especially when paired with utility rebate programs such as Ameren Bizsavers.
- **Equipment Efficiency**
Reducing building energy usage often includes the rightsizing of HVAC equipment and can extend the life of equipment.
- **Satisfied Occupants**
Improving indoor air quality, increasing daylighting, and reducing building energy loads create more optimal learning environments and reduce complaints.



Grounds Supervisor

- **Reduced labor demand and costs**
Converting traditional landscaping and turf to native landscaping that is drought tolerant and disease resistant therefore, reduces the need for mowing, maintenance, and irrigation once established.
- **Directly supporting student learning**
Sustainable outdoor environments support student learning around pollinators, ecology, and local biodiversity. Outdoor learning directly ties many classroom concepts to real-world problem solving and supports grounds maintenance.

Custodians

- **Healthier and safer workplace**
Green cleaning practices utilize less toxic chemicals and often simplify cleaning processes using fewer cleaning products.
- **Increased occupant ownership**
When students and staff are involved in projects that increase recycling, indoor air quality, and a clean outdoor environment, they become stakeholders in taking care of the building.

Nutrition Staff

- **Increased Lunch Sales**
Students will likely be excited to see what they've grown being offered in the cafeteria and want to buy their lunch.
- **Reduced waste and cost**
Food waste reduction projects reduce costs by utilizing student chosen menus, share tables, milk dispensers, and reusable serviceware.
- **Student involvement**
Projects that involve students in growing their own food often encourage students to make healthier food choices and see the nutrition services at their school as part of the local economy.



Parents/Community Members

- **Opportunities for community building and service-learning**
When students see the real-world connections between their learning and the community, it creates meaningful opportunities for students to contribute to their community.
- **Schools as community centers**
Many projects are often most successful when they involve the community and parent organizations through efforts such as maintaining gardens, reducing transportation emissions, or reducing lunch waste.
- **Higher Achievement**
School sustainability programs have been shown to increase student engagement and achievement while reducing absenteeism.