



Step 5: Link to Existing Curriculum

Educating for sustainability in the classroom and as citizens of the community

STEM | Literacy | Inquiry | Systems Thinking | Reflection | Critical Thinking | Design | Collaboration

What is it?

It is important that your Eco-Schools USA program become an integrated part of your overall curriculum and not another “add on” to an already busy academic schedule. The principle behind Eco-Schools USA is that the topics you are teaching in the classroom should have an influence on how your school environment operates. Use the school building and grounds as a learning laboratory capable of transporting students through a sustainability journey that is rigorous, experiential and fun.

How Does it Work?

Student-led projects to improve the school’s sustainability performance are a great example of action learning, but learning for sustainability can happen in a variety of ways at a school. Eco-Schools are able to demonstrate how the learning going on in class is helping students develop sustainability knowledge and skills. Teachers review the school’s current curriculum and see where sustainability topics are being taught and suggest ways to further integrate environment-based instruction. Teachers should also be able to identify where skills like critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication are being developed; these all contribute to education for sustainability. Encourage colleagues to take advantage of their Eco-Schools work too; real-life projects can bring just about any subject to life.

Award Criteria



Students have the opportunity at most grade levels and across disciplines to integrate environmental issues into the classroom, on school site or in local community



Students have the opportunity at most grade levels and across disciplines to integrate environmental issues into the classroom, on school site or in local community | Students’ experiences are integrated into curriculum and are inquiry based



Students at all grade levels have the opportunity to integrate environmental issues into the classroom, on school site or in local community | Students’ experiences are integrated into curriculum and are inquiry based | School staff are provided with professional development and training on best practices, knowledge and skills for environmental education

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Help colleagues see how they are already contributing to education for sustainability and simple ways they can incorporate environment-based topics as a part of their pedagogy rather than separate from it. Remember to stress a student’s Pre-K-12 experience is about educating the whole child, mind, body, and spirit and sustainability is one way to develop youth’s skills, values, and knowledge.