

Eco-Schools USA: Environmental Review Checklist

The *Environmental Review* is an essential tool for understanding the current environmental situation in your school. It will guide you toward the comprehensive pathway audits you want to conduct and will then begin to inform your [Eco-Action Plan](#). **Please note this Eco-Schools USA Environmental Review Checklist DOES NOT count as a “completed” audit when applying for a Bronze, Silver, or Green Flag award.**

What is the checklist for?

The **Eco-Schools USA Environmental Review checklist** is designed to be an easy to complete component as you begin your sustainability journey. The results of your Environmental Review will inform the audits the Eco-Action Team chooses to perform. Once you have determined what aspects need to be addressed, you can establish priorities and set realistic targets to measure your success.

Although you may want to focus on one specific pathway such as Energy or Water, an environmental review will provide a complete environmental picture of your school and ensure that no significant areas are overlooked.

How do I use the checklist?

The Eco-Action Team should be responsible for determining a strategy for completing the environmental review. It is particularly essential that students play a primary role in this environmental review which will inform the work they do on the audits.



- 1) Devote an Eco-Action Team meeting to completing the **Environmental Review Checklist**.
- 2) Choose a method for completing the Environmental Review Checklist that works best for your school. An example scenario would be to divide students into 10 groups, one for each pathway. Have each group responsible for completing one pathway on the checklist, which will also include any notations, thoughts, and/or ideas. It would also be beneficial to have an adult contact in the building that students can go to if they have specific questions, for instance if one group is working on the sustainable food section it would be nice if the students could go to the cafeteria manager if they have questions.
- 3) The more “NO” checks you have the more likely it is that this will be an environmental focus area that will need to be taken into consideration when deciding which pathway audit to undertake.
- 4) Devote the next meeting to the analysis of the **Environmental Review Checklist** and next steps. At this meeting students responsible for completing each pathway section will need to speak about what they found.



Eco-Schools USA Environmental Review for _____

Completed on _____ Grade Levels _____ School Population (students & staff combined) _____

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

-  To investigate environmental focus areas commonly found in schools.
-  To allow Eco-Action team members to prioritize the environmental needs of the schools

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The underlying principal of Eco-Schools USA and our pathways to sustainability

A. Do students consider how actions taken within the school affect people and the environment locally and globally?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
B. Have the students had an opportunity to interact with students living in other parts of the country and around the world?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Have students developed an understanding of the relationship between the environment, society, economics.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

NOTES:

ENERGY

A. Are most lights turned off when no one is in the classroom?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
B. More than 10% of the teachers have personal appliances, i.e. refrigerators, microwaves.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Do students and/or staff frequently complain about the temperature inside the building?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Are classroom appliances shut off and unplugged when not in use? i.e. classroom computers, pencil sharpeners, projectors, lab equipment, lamps	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
E. Students know what type of energy is used to supply the school with energy, i.e. coal, oil, natural gas, wind, solar, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

NOTES:

WATER



A. Do students know the name of the watershed the school is a part of?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
B. Does the school have low flow toilets installed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Do students know where used water goes after it is consumed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Does the school have a sprinkler system?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
E. Do you notice areas of erosion, standing water, and/or broken pavement?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

NOTES:

SCHOOLYARD HABITATS

A. Does your school have a garden(s)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
B. Do students use the school grounds as an outdoor learning classroom?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Does your school have natural play areas, observation areas and/or gathering areas?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Would you say trees and other vegetation cover a quarter or more of the school grounds?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
E. Does your school use an integrated pest management approach to maintaining the school grounds?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

NOTES:

CONSUMPTION AND WASTE

A. Does the campus have a recycling program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
B. Is the school paper (that used for worksheets, etc.) made from at least 30% post-consumer materials?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Does your school have a place to compost school lunch waste?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Do you know who your trash and recycling hauler is?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
E. Does the school communicate with the school community by electronic means only?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

NOTES:

CLIMATE CHANGE

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Do a majority of students know what a carbon footprint is? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| B. Have students used a carbon calculator to determine their personal carbon footprint? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| C. Have students used a carbon calculator to determine the carbon footprint of the school? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| D. Do a majority of students believe climate change is creating problems around the world? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| E. Do students know what greenhouse gases are and that they contribute to an increase in global temperatures? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

NOTES:

BIODIVERSITY

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Do students know threatened or endangered species in their region? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| B. Do students know the difference between native and non-native vegetation? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| C. Do students understand the meaning of biodiversity? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| D. Can students name types of vegetation and wildlife on the school grounds? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| E. Do students have weekly opportunities to observe plant and animal species at school? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

NOTES:

HEALTHY SCHOOLS

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Does the campus use green cleaning products to clean school surfaces? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| B. Do students and staff know how to dispose of science lab waste according to MSDS guidelines? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| C. Do less than 15% of students and staff have chronic asthma or other respiratory problems? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| D. Has the school been tested and/or treated for mold and/or asbestos? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| E. Does the school use an integrated pest management approach inside and outside the school? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

NOTES:

SUSTAINABLE FOOD

A. Do the majority of students understand the difference between processed and fresh foods?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
B. Does your school have vending machines for students and/or staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Do the majority of students know where their food comes from?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Does the school know the average number of students who eat in the cafeteria per week?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
E. Does the school district and/or school have a wellness committee?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

NOTES:

HEALTHY LIVING

A. *Do students spend 70 minutes or more a week participating in recess?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
B. *Do students and staff spend at least three hours a week, beyond recess, outside?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Does the school yard have an outdoor space that is suitable to hold class?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Does the school encourage students to walk/bike to school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
E. Do students and staff participate in events that promote healthy living, i.e Jump Rope for Heart, School Fun-Runs, Play 60, Let's Move, etc?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

NOTES:

TRANSPORTATION

A. Are students encouraged to walk/bike and/or carpool to school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
B. Do students have enough safe places for bikes to be locked up?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Does the school have an idling policy?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Is the area around the school safe for walking/biking to school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
E. Does the school participate in the Safe Routes to School program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

NOTES:

Please remember this checklist does not apply toward requirements for receiving the Bronze, Silver, or Green Flag award.

Now that you have completed the Eco-Schools USA Environmental Review the Eco-Action Team is ready to prioritize the pathways and determine which comprehensive audit will be completed first. Other helpful tools as you move forward on your sustainability journey include the program timeline, individual pathway audits, and the awards checklists.

* Denotes question mainly for elementary/primary schools.

