



Sample Eco-Schools USA Timeline

Welcome to Eco-Schools USA! Utilize this timeline to help you on your school's journey toward sustainability. You should develop a realistic timeframe for implementing the Eco-Schools program based on the structure and culture of your school. For simplicity, this sample timeline has been structured as an 18-month program (2 school years) starting with Eco-Schools registration through applying for your first Green Flag. This is only a guideline, as the Eco-Schools program is flexible, and you can organize your Eco-Schools program in whatever manner works best for you and your school. Please refer to our new Eco-Schools USA Handbook (found on the main page of our [website](#)) which can help guide you through the program.

WHEN?	STEP	WHO?	WHAT?
Week 1	GET STARTED	School Contact/ Club Sponsor	<p>Request a meeting with your school administration to discuss the Eco-Schools USA program, including its academic, behavioral, financial, and environmental benefits, what you hope to accomplish by participating, and what the program might look like for the campus.</p> <p>*Note* It is critical to gain the support of your school administration for successful implementation.</p> <p>Register your school as an Eco-School by going to www.eco-schoolsusa.org/registration</p> <p>*Reminder* Keep your username and password in a safe place as you will be using it again! If you move to a new school please give your Eco-Schools information including your username and password to your principal.</p>
Month 1	Organize the Eco-Action Team	School Contact/ Club Sponsor	<p>It's time to find members of your Eco-Action Team. Solicit volunteers via these channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Students - morning announcements, school newsletter, school to home communications B. Teachers - faculty meeting, email, note in teacher mailbox C. Custodians/Grounds Keepers - email or note in their mailbox. D. School district staff - send personal invitations or email, phone call E. Parents - school website, e-newsletter or school newsletter, announcement note home, parent communications, or through PTA/PTO. F. Community members - personal invitation, seek them out and request a brief meeting, phone call, email

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Month 1	ORGANIZE THE ECO-ACTION TEAM- continued	Eco-Action Team	<p>Hold first Eco-Action Team meeting. Things to discuss include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. What is Eco-Schools USA? (Brief overview) B. How often should we meet? Be sure to refer to the award checklists. Meeting number requirements change based on award level. C. First order of business - Environmental Audit Checklist. Schedule a time for the Eco-Action Team to perform this task.
			<p>Complete the Environmental Review Checklist - this checklist is an easy and simple way to start thinking about sustainability at school. The data collected will allow the Eco-Action Team to identify priority pathways in which to complete full audits.</p>
Month 2	ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITS	Eco-Action Team	<p>Schedule and hold second Eco-Action Team meeting. Things to discuss include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Review results from the Environmental Audit Checklist. B. Identify top three environmental focus areas needing improvement. C. Make copies of the pathway audit(s) and schedule time for the audit(s) to be conducted. *Note* Be sure to see if there are district or community personnel who could assist you in conducting the audits.
			<p>Complete one pathway audit following the seven step framework.</p>
Month 3	ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITS	Eco-Action Team and District/Community Volunteers	<p>Audit work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Complete another pathway audit if you choose and/or B. Prepare and organize data from the environmental audit(s) for the next Eco-Action Team meeting.
Month 4		Eco-Action Team	<p>Schedule and hold your next Eco-Action Team meeting. Things to discuss include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Have members of the Eco-Action Team present the data collected from each of the audits. B. Use the data to decide which pathway the Eco-Action Team should address first. C. Begin developing the Eco-Action Plan.

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Months 5 and 6	ECO-ACTION PLAN - continued	Eco-Action Team	<p>Complete development of Eco-Action Plan – Strive for goals that are realistic, achievable, and measurable.</p>
			<p>Develop a campaign timeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. How will we get our message out? B. When will it start and when will it finish? C. Will there be weekend work days? D. Will there be assemblies to schedule? E. Are there any expenses? Do we have a fund? Do we need to ask for donations? Do we need to apply for a grant?
			<p>Begin to carry out the goals of your Eco-Action Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Put your campaign in action. B. Monitor and evaluate your progress as you carry out your goals.
Months 6-9	MONITOR AND EVALUATE	Eco-Action Team	<p>Monitoring and evaluation will allow you to gather quantifiable data, which will be necessary when applying for awards and measuring the impacts of your program. Use the results of your evaluation to make changes to the Eco-Action Plan if needed.</p>
Months 6-9	LINK TO CURRICULUM	School Contact/ Club Sponsor and Teachers and Students	<p>Overtime, it is important for the Eco-Schools program to become a part of the culture of the school. One way in which this happens is to link the Eco-Action Team’s work with state-mandated curriculum. For more information on linking to the curriculum, follow this link, http://www.nwf.org/Eco-Schools-USA/Become-an-Eco-School/Steps/Link-to-Curriculum.aspx.</p> <p>Look for ways you already address the pathway on which the school is working. For example, if you are working on the Energy Pathway what are the expectations around the topic of energy for the various grade levels at your school? You could have a working session for groups or grade level teachers to work on this or create a professional learning community around the topic.</p>

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Months 6-9	INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY	Eco-Action Team	<p>Expand the focus of your program beyond the school and out to the local community. Involving your community will bring a wide array of benefits. Below are just a few ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Publish information about Eco-Schools activities and Environmental Audit results on the school's website or create an Eco-Schools page on your school website to disseminate your work. B. Send letters to local businesses seeking support for initiatives. C. Encourage students, with adult supervision, to go out into the community by being a part of events, talking at council meetings, asking for donations, etc. D. Have students contact your local newspaper and ask the paper to publicize details about the success of your Eco-Schools USA program.
Months 8-9	CREATING AN ECO-CODE	Eco-Action Team	<p>The Eco-Code can take many forms. It is a mission statement for your school and should be reflective of both your Eco-Action Plan and your curriculum. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Holding a competition to create the Eco-Code B. Ensuring that students play a central role in its creation. C. Displaying the code prominently in the main entrance and throughout
Month 9	END OF THE YEAR	School Contact/ Club Sponsor and Eco-Action Team	<p>Celebrate your successes!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Apply for an Eco-Schools USA Bronze Award. B. Plan a celebration for the team or a school-wide event. C. Where have you ended your year? What goals did you meet? What do you still need to work on? D. Submit your End-of-Year Eco-Schools USA survey. E. Recognize students and community members for their contributions. F. Get summer contact information for the Eco-Action Team members.

Summer You may want to keep in contact with the Eco-Action Team via an email list, website announcements, etc. – Plan a summer clean-up day or weed warrior activity for the school garden. There may also be community gardening or greening festivities in which the team could participate to keep up the momentum.

When?	STEP	WHO?	WHAT?
Month 10	BACK TO SCHOOL	School Contact/ Club Sponsor	<p>Schedule the first Eco-Action Team meeting of the new school year. Things to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Review the 7- Step Framework and Eco-Code. B. Review the checklists for Silver and Green Flag Awards. If the Energy Pathway was not addressed for your Bronze Award it must be addressed to receive a Green Flag Awards. C. Make plans to create the next Eco-Action Plan based on the results of the Environmental Review Checklist you performed in the previous year or plan to conduct this year. D. Develop a communications schedule to keep the school and community engaged and involved. (i.e. announcements/newsletters/action days)
Months 11 & 12	ECO-ACTION PLAN	Eco-Action Team	<p>Schedule and hold the second Eco-Action Team meeting. Actions to be taken include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Develop Eco-Action Plans for your second and third pathways. Remember, if you have not yet addressed energy, you must do so now in order to apply for the Silver and Green Flag Awards. B. Remember to create goals that are realistic, achievable, and measurable.
			<p>Develop a campaign timeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. How will we get our message out? B. When will it start and when will it finish? C. Will there be weekend work days? D. Will there be assemblies to schedule? E. Are there any expenses? Do we have a fund? Do we need to ask for donations? Do we need to apply for a grant?
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Months 12-18	MONITOR AND EVALUATE	Eco-Action Team	Monitoring and evaluation will allow you to gather quantifiable data, which will be necessary when applying for awards and measuring the impacts of your program. Use the results of your evaluation to make changes to the Eco-Action Plan if needed.
Months 13-17	LINK TO CURRICULUM	School Contact/ Club Sponsor and Teachers and Students	Overtime, it is important for the Eco-Schools program to become a part of the culture of the school. One way in which this happens is to link the Eco-Action Team's work with state-mandated curriculum. Look for ways you already address the pathway on which the school is working. For example, if you are working on the Energy Pathway what are the expectations around the topic of energy for the various grade levels at your school? You could have a working session for groups or grade level teachers to work on this or create a professional learning community around the topic.
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Month 14 or 15	APPLY FOR THE SILVER AWARD	School Contact/ Club Sponsor	<p>Apply for the Eco-Schools USA Silver Award. You will need your username and password.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Review the Silver Award checklist. B. Make sure you have been monitoring and evaluating your progress. C. Share your award with the school and your local paper.
Month 16	ECO-CODE	Eco-Action Team	<p>Make modifications to your Eco-Code only if necessary based on this year's work.</p>
Months 16-18	END OF THE YEAR	School Contact/ Club Sponsor and Eco-Action Team	<p>Celebrate your success and prepare for the Green Flag Ceremony.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Review the green flag award checklist. B. Where have you ended your year? What goals did you meet? What do you still need to work on? C. Submit your application for the Eco-Schools USA Green Flag Award. D. Prepare certificates for your Eco-Action Team members to recognize their contributions. E. Plan a school-wide event or Eco-Action Team celebration. If you are receiving the Green Flag Award plan a school-wide event. The Eco-Action Team can build out a day of festivities around the awarding and flying of the Green Flag. F. Submit your Eco-Schools USA End-of-Year survey. G. Update the Eco-Action Team's summer contact information.