

The Eco-Schools USA Seven Step framework is designed to be a flexible process and one that any school should be able to implement. You are encouraged to implement each of the Seven Steps in the way that suits your school and situation best. The steps involve a wide diversity of individuals from the school community - with students playing a primary role in the process.



Step 1: Form Eco-Action Team Target Completion Date: _____

Meet at least 4 times/year and represent the whole school community – students, teachers, facilities staff, board members, and community members. Students should play a leading role and represent the entire student body.



Step 2: Conduct Environmental Audit Target Completion Date: _____

Pathway audits (available for free on our website) should be led by students and should be conducted before creating an Eco-Action plan. The “[Environmental Review Checklist](#)” is optional and can help you choose pathways to focus on.



Step 3: Create Eco-Action Plan Target Completion Date: _____

Draw up a plan with details of the projects the Eco-Action Team wants to take action on. It will include lists of tasks, supplies/equipment needed, people to involve and their responsibilities, a timetable, and a budget outline (if applicable).



Step 4: Monitor & Evaluate Progress Target Completion Date: _____

Identify how you will monitor and evaluate your progress on the Eco-Action Plan. There are lots of different ways to monitor and evaluate change. Examples: Before/after photos, analysis of electricity bills, biodiversity surveys, post-audits.



Step 5: Link to Existing Curriculum Target Completion Date: _____

Teachers review the school’s current curriculum and see where sustainability topics are taught and suggest ways to build it in further. Teachers identify where skills like critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication are being developed.



Step 6: Involve the Community Target Completion Date: _____

Let people know about your work with a prominent and eye-catching display, assemblies and class presentations, school announcements, social media and fun events. Involve the wider community in to engage even more people in the learning and practices of sustainability.



Step 7: Create your Eco-Code Target Completion Date: _____

The creation of the Eco-Code is student-driven and should be reviewed and updated every two years. Create a song, statement, poem, rap, acronym, acrostic, limerick, or something even more creative to get people thinking about the work of the Eco-Action Team. Display the Eco-Code prominently in a variety of locations around the school.

Award Criteria



1. The Eco-Action Team consists of students and adults and meets 4 times/year. Minutes are kept. Decisions and actions are shared with the school community.
2. A formal or informal audit is conducted.
3. Create and share a basic action plan focused on at least one Eco-Schools Pathway. School-wide action on the selected pathway is taken to mitigate environmental problems.
4. The Eco-Action Team identifies and monitors progress on the Eco-Action Plan, noting successes and challenges in the formal record and archiving for use when applying for the Green Flag award.
5. Students have the opportunity at most grade levels and across disciplines to integrate environmental issues into the classroom, on school site or in the local community.
6. The school uses a prominent, designated way (such as a newsletter, bulletin board or website) to communicate Eco-Schools activities with staff, students, and the greater community.
7. The Eco-Action Team gathers input on a school-wide basis and develops and displays an Eco-Code.



1. The Eco-Action Team consists of students, staff and community members and meets 6 times/year. Students help make decisions, keep minutes, and communicate team information to the school community.
2. Two formal Eco-Schools USA audits are conducted and documented. Students play an active role in conducting the audit and share results with the whole school.
3. Create and share an action plan that addresses at least two Eco-Schools Pathways. Include specific quantifiable targets along with a timeframe for completion.
4. The Eco-Action Team identifies and monitors progress on the Eco-Action Plan. School shows significant progress on a large scale project. Progress and challenges are communicated to the whole school.
5. 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 inquiry-based and integrated into curriculum.
6. The school uses a prominent, designated way (such as a newsletter, bulletin board or website) to communicate Eco-Schools activities with staff, students, and the greater community. The whole school, along with community volunteers, engage in a number of Eco-Schools activities.
7. The Eco-Action Team gathers input on a school-wide basis and develops and displays an Eco-Code.



1. The Eco-Action Team consists of students (50% of team), teachers, staff, and community members and meets 8 times/year | Students take significant responsibility for conducting Eco-Action Team meetings, making decisions, keeping minutes, and communicating team information to the school community. Student representatives actively engage other students and collect suggestions from the greater student body.
2. Three Eco-Schools USA audits are conducted (one being Energy) and documented. Students conduct the audits and engage resource specialists from the community. Results are shared with the whole school and wider community. Environmental audits are conducted yearly to evaluate overall progress.
3. Create and share an action plan that addresses at least three Eco-Schools Pathways. Include specific quantifiable targets along with a timeframe for completion. The plan should prioritize targets and provide cost-benefit information for each action.
4. The Eco-Action Team identifies and monitors progress on the Eco-Action Plan. Students are engaged in monitoring and evaluation and data is used in some curriculum work. School shows significant progress on a large scale project. Progress and challenges are communicated to the whole school and wider community.
5. 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 inquiry-based and integrated into curriculum. School staff are provided with professional development and training on environmental education.
6. The school uses a prominent, designated way (such as a newsletter, bulletin board or website) to communicate Eco-Schools activities with staff, students, and the greater community. The whole school, along with community volunteers, engage in a number of Eco-Schools activities. The school develops a day of action or other event that engages the greater community in learning about and helping with Eco-Schools projects. Students write about Eco-Schools projects for local papers and magazines. The school uses the Eco-Schools USA website and other communication tools to share its projects with other schools in the US and globally.
7. The whole school and greater community are given the opportunity to make suggestions on developing (or refining and enhancing) the Eco-Code. The Eco-Code is reviewed every year to ensure relevancy – suggestions and refinements are taken to the full school for adoption. The Eco-Code is prominently displayed for all to see as they enter the school.