



AUGUST NEWSLETTER



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The Zero Waste Schools newsletter will help you get your school on a path toward generating zero waste through waste prevention, recycling, composting, and food recovery. You'll also find resources that connect zero waste to healthy eating, school gardens, and environmental education and action.

Share the newsletter with friends, colleagues, and students interested in zero waste.

[Sign up for ZWS news](#)

Zero Waste Event & Back-to-School Guides

School year 2023-24 is almost here! Get your school on a path to zero waste with these resources from [Seven Generations Ahead](#):

[Zero Waste Schools Event Guide](#) Make all of your school events this year a good time for everyone, including the planet. With a little advanced planning, school picnics, sporting events, graduation parties, meetings, and more can be accomplished with much less waste. Our updated guide is loaded with ideas to help you do it.

[Zero Waste Lunch Flyer](#) Download and share this one-pager showing how to pack a zero-waste lunch from home.



[Back-to-School Supplies: A Zero Waste Guide](#) Get ideas for reusing supplies and purchasing more sustainable supplies. Teachers can also find helpful hints on how to promote sustainability in the classroom.

In addition to SGA's resources, [Illinois Sustainable Technology Center's Back-to-School Guide](#) has more tips for starting the school year with less waste.

One Earth Young Filmmakers Contest Global Awards Celebration

Sept. 17, 11:30 a.m., Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago

[One Earth Film Festival](#) is hosting its global awards celebration for a viewing of the best short environmental films from youth around the world. The viewing will be in person at the Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago, but there will be a virtual option for those who cannot attend the in-person event.



Through films that range from animation to live action to documentary, the young filmmakers provide tips on the best ways we can all work to improve the health of the planet. To learn more, click [HERE](#).

EPA Youth Council



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed the [National Environmental Youth Advisory Council \(NEYAC\)](#) as an opportunity for youth (ages 16-29) to offer advice and recommendations on environmental issues to the EPA directly. Selected applicants will be appointed to a two-year term.

The NEYAC is meant to be a committee "by youth and for youth" so they can provide their own thoughts, ideas, and solutions to the U.S. EPA administrator. The council presents an opportunity to reflect the diversity of the American people and to include them in the conversations

surrounding sustainability. **Application deadline is Aug. 22.**

Resources for teacher supplies

Back-to-school time can be costly for teachers and can also lead to a lot of waste. These organizations help get teachers the supplies they need at little or no cost while keeping perfectly good materials out of the landfill.

- [The Waste Shed-Chicago and Evanston](#) sell used art and classroom supplies in good condition. They offer a 25% discount for educators that provide a school ID. They also provide a "Free to Teachers" section that is also available to all educators.
- [SCARCE](#) focuses on reducing and reusing and offers classroom resources to teachers in need. For \$5, teachers can get a box of school supplies.
- [Greener Good](#) is an organization that sells reclaimed and reusable materials for crafters, educators, and artists at a low cost, as well as hosts creative reuse workshops.



Photo by [Laura Rivera](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Beyond Plastic Pollution online class

Judith Enck, founder and president of [Beyond Plastics](#), will be teaching her online Beyond Plastics class through Bennington College once again in September. This virtual class is **open to all high school and college students** who want to take the



class for academic credit, as well as **individuals of any age** who are interested in learning about plastic pollution and what we can do to address the growing problem.

The class will meet on Zoom on **Wednesday evenings from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. cst from Sep. 6 to Oct. 18**. The cost is \$100 to audit or \$400 for college credit. Registration will open soon. In the meantime, fill out this quick interest [form](#) to be notified when registration opens.

Register for the Illinois Green Schools Project

Registration for the [2023-24 Illinois Green Schools Project](#) opens **Aug. 16!** The Illinois Green Alliance's Green Schools Project is a challenge for K-12 schools to devise and implement creative no- to low-cost energy, water, and waste reduction initiatives and sustainable practices.

The project's goal is to help schools reach net zero through initiatives that involve both staff and students. Check out these [project guides](#) for some inspiration and consider joining the next cohort of schools!



School registration ends Sept. 29.

New! Sustainability Tracking and Roadmap Tool



Start your school year off right with the Green Schools Alliance's [Whole School Sustainability Tracking and Roadmap Tool](#) (START). This new platform helps schools measure and improve their sustainability levels. Beginning with an interactive

survey, schools can establish a baseline and find resources to help create healthier and more sustainable learning environments.

START involves a benchmark to begin the process, a scorecard to help visualize sustainability levels and progress, analytics, and resources to help schools take action. This is an ideal tool for those wanting to track their sustainability journey while engaging the entire school community.

Grants and other opportunities

Whole Kids Foundation Salad Bar Grant Any district or independent school participating in the National School Lunch Program can apply. The grant program donates salad bars to U.S. schools to give kids daily access to fresh fruits and vegetables. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.**

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom is offering two grants for Illinois teachers.

- **Teacher Project Grants** provide up to \$300 to PreK-12th grade teachers for projects that promote agricultural literacy in the classroom. **Deadline: Oct. 20.**
- **Teacher Book Grants** provide up to \$250 in books from a pre-selected list of titles

to help teachers integrate agriculture into their curricula. **Deadline: Oct. 20.**

SWANCC Waste Reduction Grant The Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) is allocating funds to SWANCC member schools to assist in purchasing materials that promote the education and benefits of waste prevention. Grant coordinators may **apply and request** up to \$500 to expand their reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting initiatives. **Applications are due Nov. 10.**

Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant: Applicants must use native Illinois plants in their wildlife habitat area and be prepared to maintain and commit resources to the project for at least five years. Projects need to be implemented on school grounds or on other public property. **Deadline: Nov. 30.**

Events

Plastic Free Back-to-School Webinar

Aug. 17, 4:00 p.m. cst

Learn how to avoid plastic in the upcoming school year. This webinar will discuss how schools can incorporate reusable, plastic-free items, and practices into school operations. To register, click [HERE](#).

Teachers Back2School Supply Rx-Travaganza

Aug. 18 - 20, Creative Chicago Reuse Exchange, 2124 W 82nd Pl, Chicago

Calling all Chicago teachers! Gather supplies for your classroom at this 3-day event. Ticket prices are \$30 for Friday, \$20 for Saturday, and \$10 for Sunday.

Unanswered Questions: Series Speakers “Get Back to You on That”

Aug. 30, 11:00 a.m. cst

This webinar will identify at the end of each session what questions and concerns remain unanswered about federal grants, tax incentives, and partnership opportunities. The Center for Green Schools will invite previous speakers to address these unmet needs during the final session.

Seven Generations Ahead | [Email](#) | [Website](#)



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