



MAY NEWSLETTER

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](#)

It's time to plan a Green Locker Clean-Out!



The end of the school year is approaching and with it the opportunity for a great end-of-year project — a Green Locker Clean-Out! With just a little advanced planning, your school can keep mountains of materials out of landfills.

SGA's [Green Locker Clean-Out Guide](#) can help you get started. The guide will take you through all the steps of planning and implementation, providing best practices and tips along the way.

During a Green Locker Clean-Out, sorting stations are set up for students to sort their unwanted locker or desk contents into categories of Donate, Recycle, and Landfill. Donated items can be made available to other students and staff in the school or donated to organizations such as [CCRx](#), the [The WasteShed](#), [SCARCE](#), [Greener Good](#), or other local nonprofits. A Green Locker Clean-Out can be a great student-led project. Get your Green Team on it!

In addition, SCARCE suggests the following ideas:

- Encourage students to take home supplies they can reuse next year.
- Encourage teachers to stock up.
- Save supplies for students in need at your school.

Coming in September!
Cub's Education Day: The Great Apple Crunch with Stade's Farm!

Calling all Chicagoland K-5 teachers! Start off the 2024-25 school year with a class trip to Wrigley Field Wednesday, September 18. Celebrate the beginning of Illinois orchard season with fun and educational programming before the Cubs take on the Oakland Athletics.



During the pregame programming, students will hear from local orchard grower Vern Stade to learn about how apples grow. Students will also have the opportunity to compost apple cores and help make this a zero waste event. Join us as we crunch into local apples and discover how tasty a fresh, local apple can be.

Register [HERE](#).

Climate Action Educator Advocacy Toolkit



Many educators are increasingly concerned about what the future will hold for students and are, fortunately, in a position to help advance climate solutions in their own classrooms and schools. Learning about climate solutions in schools can help students feel prepared to act in their communities and become leaders for a more sustainable future. These initiatives can also create healthier learning spaces and significantly reduce school spending, which can then be redirected to support teaching and learning.

The Educator Advocacy Toolkit, developed in partnership with [This Is Planet Ed](#), [The National Education Association](#), and [The American Federation of Teachers](#), provides educators with the strategies and resources to advance climate action locally in their school districts. The goal of the toolkit is to help educators encourage their school districts "to develop a local K12 climate action plan, funded by federal resources, to address climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience, and education while advancing equity."

To read more and to access the toolkit, click [HERE](#).

Learn all about composting at the next Go Green Illinois meeting

May 14, 1 pm

Join Go Green groups from across Illinois next Tuesday to learn about the new Priority Climate Action Plan for our region. Edith Makra, Director of Environmental Initiatives at the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, and Nora Beck, Principal Policy Analyst at Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, will provide an overview of the Plan.

Following the presentation, attendees will have the opportunity to hear about what makes a successful composting program and how to advocate for one in their community. Local composting experts, including SGA's own Becky Brodsky and Jen Nelson, will discuss proposed

state organics legislation, how to start composting programs in schools, and ways to provide effective compost education to residents. Speakers will also share the different composting options available to local communities, including curbside pick up, drop-off programs, private collection services, and backyard composting.

[Register HERE.](#)



Pilot Light Food Education Fellowship



The application for the [Pilot Light Food Education Fellowship](#) is now open. Pilot Light created the Food Education Fellowship to invest in PreK-12th grade teacher leaders who are committed to bringing food education

to their students. In addition to integrated food education lessons, Fellows will partner with an individual or organization in the food space to support student-led advocacy work within their classrooms.

Heidi Russell, a PreK teacher at John M. Palmer Elementary School in Chicago Public Schools and current Pilot Light Education Fellow, shared that she applied for the fellowship to teach her students "about advocacy, conservation, culture, and community through the wonderful lens of food." Her class has used the seven education standards for food by cooking and eating together. They also created a Health Fair and found numerous ways to reduce waste at their school, including starting a school wide composting program and tending an edible garden.

Fellows receive:

- Monthly professional development
- 1:1 support & coaching from staff and peers
- Cultivate a community partnership and student advocacy project with your students
- Co-plan a chef demonstration tied to your lessons
- Compensation: \$2,000 stipend + \$300 materials

Application deadline is May 27, 2024.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Announced

The U.S. Department of Education has released its 2024 [Green Ribbon Schools](#) honorees! These schools and districts have employed practices and policies focused on sustainability in and out of the classroom. These initiatives include reducing environmental impact, utility costs, improving health and wellness, and implementing appropriate environmentally focused education. Two-thirds of the honorees are schools and districts in underserved communities, proving that sustainability is possible anywhere.



Two schools in Illinois were announced as honorees. Clarendon Hills Middle School and Lake Zurich Community Unit School District 95 were both awarded the Green Ribbon status. Clarendon Hills Middle School "offers an effective environmental and sustainability education program" with the option for outdoor learning and field trips to preserves and parks. Lake Zurich Community Unit School has a robust system in place for energy conservation such as EV charging, LED lighting, and HVAC system upgrades. Lake Zurich has also implemented waste reduction strategies, such as composting and recycling. These schools exemplify dedication to environmental stewardship through innovative programs and sustainable initiatives, earning them the prestigious Green Ribbon.

To learn more, click [HERE](#).

Watch the White House Summit for Sustainable and Healthy K-12 School Buildings and Grounds



On April 26th the White House hosted its first ever summit focused on sustainable school infrastructure. The goal of this inspirational gathering was to share with school communities around the country the government tools that are available to create sustainable school environments.

Now you have the chance to learn from the panelists by viewing the [full recording of the summit](#).

Grants and other opportunities

[Plastic Free Restaurants](#) Plastic Free Restaurants is dedicated to eliminating single-use petroleum-based products in everyday foodware. Plastic products are not only harmful to the environment but also human health. Their subsidy program is available to schools, non-profits, restaurants, and other for-profit entities to purchase safe reusable foodware products. Apply for a subsidy [HERE](#).

[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.**

[Youth Outdoor Equity Leadership Fund](#) The Children & Nature Network invites young leaders between the ages of 16 and 30 to request up to \$500 to grow professionally as a leader in the movement or to implement projects that create change in equitable access to nature, community health and well being, and justice. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.**

[MobilizeGreen 2024 Youth Conservation Program](#) Individuals between the ages of 15-18 are invited to apply to become a Youth Conservation Crew (YCC) Member. Participants will learn about forest preservation along with beautification, invasive species removal, and trail building. Participants will also receive a weekly stipend of \$350. The first YCC session begins **June 11**.

[Bulk Milk](#) is a project that supports school districts with the transition from conventional milk served in individual bottles/cartons to bulk milk dispensers with reusable tumblers. **Applications due June 27.**

Illinois Schooyard Habitat Action Grant Earn up to \$2000 for the development of wildlife habitat at your school! Projects must emphasize student/youth involvement with planning, development and maintenance and increase the educational and wildlife habitat values of the site. **Applications due Nov. 30.**

Events

International Compost Awareness Week

May 5 - 11

Check out ICAW's composting events to celebrate the end of a fantastic week. Saturday, **May 9th**, will be focusing on adventures in composting with composting related events happening from Bureau County to Mclean County. These events involve farm and garden tours, vermicomposting demos, vineyard tours and much more.

Zero Emissions, Zero Compromises: Health Centered Decarbonization of K-12 Schools

May 15, 1 - 2:30 pm cst

Join leaders from the U.S. Green Building Council and The Center for Green Schools, alongside a panel of industry experts and energy and sustainability directors from three school districts, as we examine how schools are taking steps to decarbonize both new and existing buildings with a focus on health and equity.

Nourishing Minds: Exploring Child Nutrition Policy in School Food Systems

May 22, 1 pm cst

Delve into the landscape of child nutrition policy in school food systems. We'll examine the impact of current policies, related challenges, and strategies to enhance child nutrition in schools.

Green Schools National Network: Community of Practice

May 22, 2 - 3 pm cst

Join the Green Schools National Network in their 3 part series that will be participant driven with focus on educational strategies. These meetings will discuss phenomena, place, project, and problem-based learning and how to create a sustainable educational experience.

Exploring Child Nutrition Policy in School Food Systems

May 22, 1 pm cst

The Chef Ann Foundation presents this webinar which will explore the realm of child nutrition policy within school food systems and analyze the effects of existing policies, address associated obstacles, and explore methods to improve child nutrition within educational institutions.

Going Deeper on IRA Tax Credits for Schools Webinar

May 30, 12 - 1 pm est

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Renew America's Schools Program invites school facilities and financial personnel to learn more about non-competitive federal funding for schools from IRA tax credits. Featuring UndauntedK12 and the Center for Green Schools, this webinar will walk through examples and highlight common questions regarding eligibility, stacking credits with other sources of financing, and bonus requirements which can add significant value to the credit received.

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



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