

SAMPLE SCHOOL BOARD RESOLUTION:

BLUEPRINT FOR HEALTHY, ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND SCHOOLS

Whereas—Schools have the potential to make positive, tangible environmental change in the world while teaching students to be stewards of their communities, the earth and its resources;

Whereas—Our current school systems often suffer from inadequate facilities that frequently use energy, water and other resources unsustainably; use pesticides, cleaning agents and other chemicals that pose health risks; and can result in “sick building syndrome” from indoor air pollution and poor ventilation;

Whereas—Many schools across the nation are sited on or near toxic waste dumps, environmentally hazardous facilities, and other sources of pollution;

Whereas—Schools are important consumers of natural resources, including energy, water, food, and paper, and generators of waste materials, including garbage, runoff, and air emissions, which contribute to the world’s larger environmental problems like global warming, water and air pollution, and habitat destruction.

Whereas—Children, teachers, and staff are regularly exposed to toxic chemicals at school, are offered poor and unhealthy food choices, and use and manage resources unsustainably resulting in negative impacts on their health and their ability to teach and learn.

Whereas—This district expends considerable financial resources on chemical pest control, cleaning supplies, energy, water, office and school supplies, and educational activities (resolution could include specific statistics from the district on funds spent on specific resources);

Whereas—This district has a considerable opportunity through its purchasing power to improve both the environment and its financial bottom line.

Whereas—Many options and choices exist for schools to use natural resources more efficiently; to reduce, reuse, and recycle; to follow “Healthy, High Performance School Guidelines” for construction; to ban junk food

and soda and produce healthy lunches through local farm-to-school partnerships; to eliminate toxic chemicals; and to purchase (or produce) clean energy and recycled paper to protect our global environment.

Whereas—There is a tremendous opportunity to teach children about ecological sustainability, environmental health and nutrition; meet math, science and social studies standards; integrate environmental education into curricula; and support students to become leaders in making their own school a healthier and more ecologically friendly place;

Whereas—The Precautionary Principle has been adopted by a growing number of cities, as well as the Los Angeles Unified School District as a proactive approach to promote the safest, lowest risk way to protect people’s health, the environment, and property;

Recognizing all the excellent work already underway in the district in X, Y and Z, undertaken by parents, teachers, administrators, janitors, nurses and others;

Recognizing that this framework creates a long-term, inspiring vision that integrates and strengthens many efforts in our district.

Further recognizing that fully implementing this resolution will take time, and must be achieved in stages.

Be it resolved that to promote healthier, more environmentally sustainable schools and teach environmental leadership, the School Board hereby:

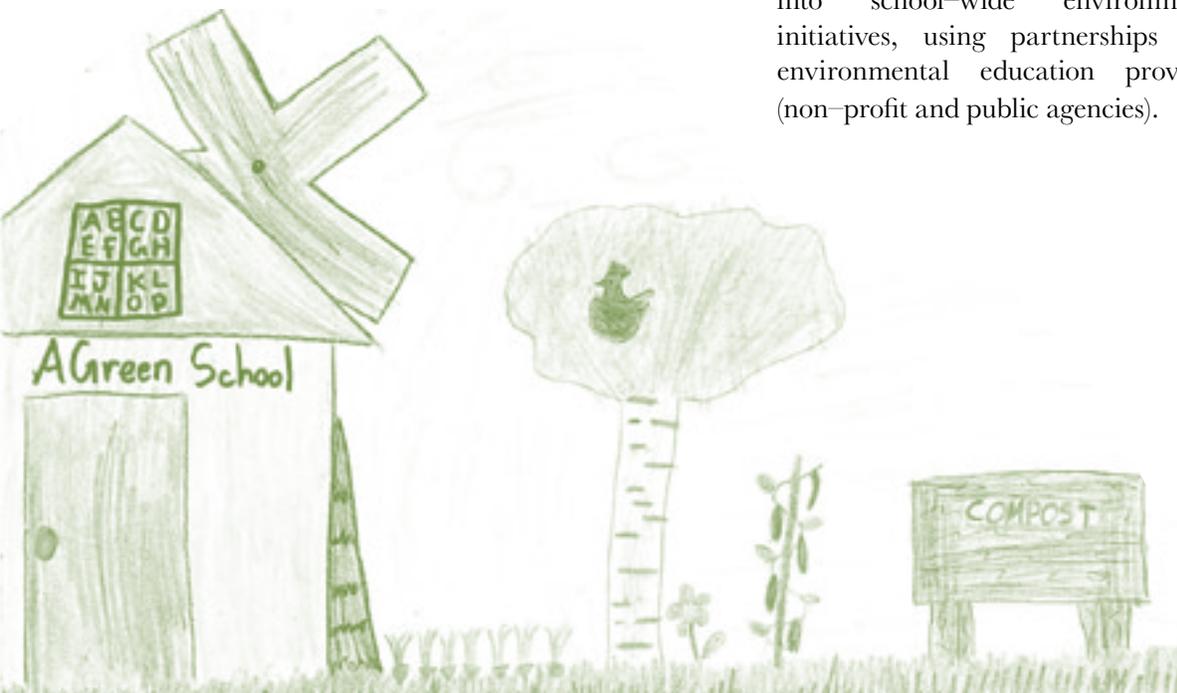
1. Adopts the Precautionary Principle as the foundation for its environmental policy. The Precautionary Principle includes the following elements: *Anticipatory Action; Right to Know; Alternatives Assessment; Full-Cost Accounting; Participatory Decision Process [see: City of San Francisco, Precautionary Principle Ordinance]
2. Calls on the district to develop an action plan to implement a proactive environmental policy based on the Precautionary Principle

that includes the following to be prioritized and implemented step by step:

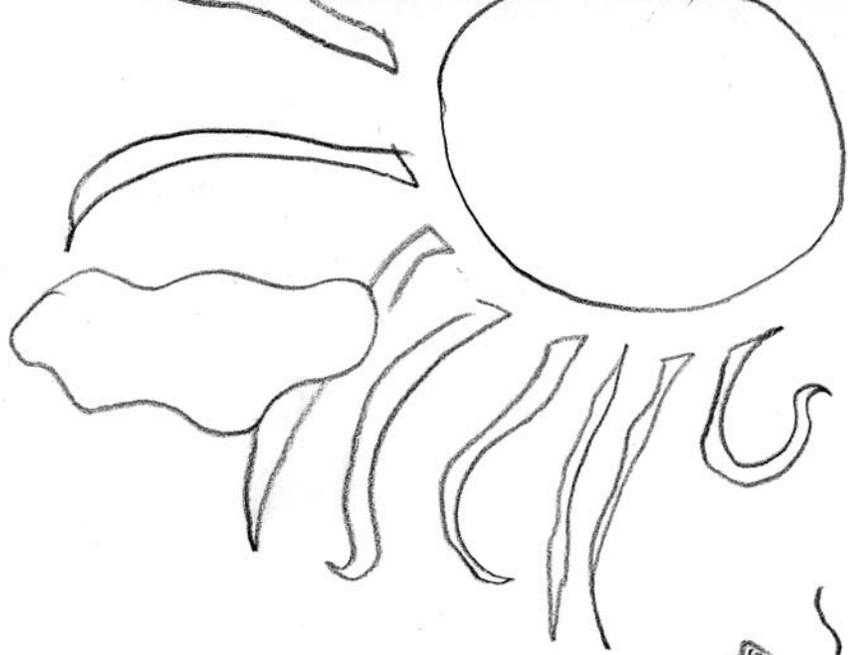
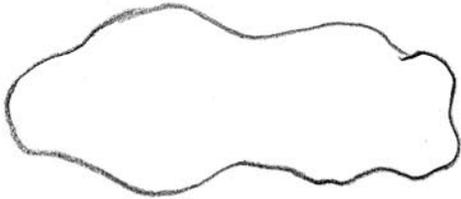
- 2.1 The development and adoption of an Integrated Pest Management program and other policies to minimize or eliminate the use of hazardous pesticides and herbicides in schools.
- 2.2 An audit of cleaning materials used in district schools and the development of a plan to use the least toxic substances.
- 2.3 Mechanisms to ensure that new schools are not sited near or on environmental health hazards.
- 2.4 A program to ensure that new schools are built and existing schools refurbished following Healthy, High Performance school building criteria that mandate the use of environmentally sound building material, efficient use of energy, water and other resources, and the creation of a healthy learning environment for children.
- 2.5 A district-wide plan to improve

the energy efficiency of schools, to increasingly rely on clean, renewable energy sources to power the district's facilities, and to ultimately transform schools into independent power producers by investing in clean renewable technologies such as solar and wind.

- 2.6 The creation of district-wide recycling and composting programs, along with the procurement of recycled office and classroom supplies.
- 2.7 Follow and build upon the examples of New York City, Chicago, Nashville, San Francisco and others and ban soda, candy, junk food and fast food from all school grounds.
- 2.8 Evaluate the district's school lunch program to ensure good nutrition and consider developing a farm-to-school program.
- 2.9 Encourage the development of school gardens and green schoolyards as hands-on learning tools that promote good nutrition, stewardship of the land, and that teach to standards.
- 2.10 Adopt frameworks that meet state standards and integrate environmental education and student participation into school-wide environmental initiatives, using partnerships with environmental education providers (non-profit and public agencies).



Source: "The Little Green Schoolhouse: Thinking Big About Ecological Sustainability, Children's Environmental Health and K-12 Education in the United States." www.greenschools.net



LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

PHYSICAL ECOSYSTEM

COMMUNITY/
GLOBAL ECOSYSTEM

THE LITTLE GREEN SCHOOLHOUSE



THE FOUR PILLARS

ONE

STRIVE TO BE TOXICS FREE

Children's environmental health

No Pesticides, lead, mold

Green building and cleaning materials

Avoid siting on toxic land

TWO

USE RESOURCES SUSTAINABLY

Energy efficiency and alternatives

Green building design

Environmentally sound school supplies

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

THREE

CREATE A GREEN, HEALTHY SPACE

Green schoolyards and gardens

Rethink school lunch

No junk food, fast-food, or soda

Farm-to-School; organic produce

FOUR

TEACH, LEARN, ENGAGE

Environmental education

Hands on, place-based, learning

Involve children in greening their schools

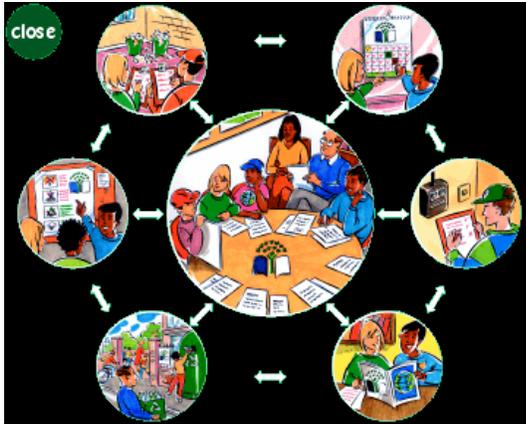
THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

"Better Safe than Sorry"

A foundation for decision making

TAKE ANTICIPATORY ACTION • ASSESS ALTERNATIVES
EXERCISE DEMOCRACY • CHOOSE THE SAFEST SOLUTION





The Green Schools Initiative's 7 Steps to Green Your School

It's easy to be green! Start by following these 7 steps. Go to www.greenschools.net to get more ideas, resources, and tools for taking action!

Source: Eco-Schools International

1. Establish A Green Team or Eco-Committee

The Green Team is the core of the Green Schools process, both organizing and directing activities at the school. Consisting of the stakeholders of the school environment – students, teachers, janitors, facilities managers, parents and school board members - the Green Team is democratic and can be run by the students themselves. Whatever the type of school or age group, student involvement in the committee is essential. This group can be charged with coordinating many of the greening activities, making recommendations to relevant school decision-makers, and facilitating communication among and actions by the whole school community.

2. Adopt An Environmental Vision Statement or Planet Pledge

Each school produces its own vision statement, setting out what the students are striving to achieve. The Environmental Vision Statement or Planet Pledge is displayed in various places within the school and is recognized by the students and other school community members as a statement of beliefs and intents. This statement is often in the words of students, and can be an inspiring classroom, art, or school-wide assembly project. Such statements can also be accompanied by a resolution from the school board, Parent Teacher Association, the Green Team, or other school bodies (see the sample school board resolution on the [Take Action](#) page). Use our [Green Schools Graphic](#) to help you understand and define the key components of a Green School.

To view inspiring and beautiful posters made by kids from all over the world as part of an Eco-Schools International poster contest in 2004, visit:

<http://www.eco-schools.org/projects/ecocode/ec2004c.htm>

3. Conduct A School Environmental Survey or Audit

To identify priorities for action, begin with conducting a review of the environmental impact of the school. Students are involved in this work from assessing the level of waste from school lunch to checking the building for inefficiencies such as leaky taps or electric equipment left on overnight. The school and the Green Team can work with local organizations, businesses, or other resource people or experts during the review. Examples of environmental surveys and audit tools can be found on our [Resources](#) page, under Curricula. These audits can be fun and really help educate the school community about the health and environmental impacts of the school.

4. Create A Green School Action Plan

Use the results of your environmental survey or audit to identify priorities of the key areas where you want to make change and create an action plan. It is important to set realistic and achievable targets to improve environmental performance at the school so kids and adults can take pride in tangible accomplishments in the short term. And it is important to set long-term, inspiring and

challenging targets to move beyond the status quo and foster greater environmental improvements. The action plan could involve and promote, for example, a school recycling program; eco-friendly, non-toxic cleaning materials; carpooling; energy conservation like turning off lights, computer monitors and printers; or a school garden. See the "sample school board resolution" and "Steps Forward" on our [Take Action](#) page for examples of policy resolutions, and specific action items under a range of environmental and health topics.

5. Monitor and Evaluate Progress

The Green Team, students, or other school community members can assist with monitoring and evaluating progress on the priorities in the action plan. This could involve conducting an annual environmental audit to monitor levels of waste, recycling, energy use, purchases of environmentally-preferable products, and financial savings and/or costs. The information from the monitoring is needed to ensure that progress towards the goals and targets is made and that the action plan is modified, if necessary. It also ensures that environmental education is an on-going process in the school, since students can be responsible for the annual audits. The basic data collected over time can show the waste, pollution, and energy avoided - big motivators for people to continue the efforts.

6. Integrate Greening into the Curriculum

Greening activities can be integrated into existing curricula in science, art, humanities, math, language arts, or electives. Using the school as a hands-on laboratory offers opportunities for real-world problem-solving. Students can undertake study of themes such as energy, water, forests, toxic pollution, and waste. The whole school should be involved in practical initiatives - for example, saving water, recycling materials and saving energy. Outdoor education, and time spent in nature locally - whether the schoolyard, a park, or a field trip - is a critical component of a hands-on, place-based, experiential education. Where environmental education is not part of the regular curriculum, recommendations can be made by the Green Team as to how these themes can be incorporated. See our [Resources](#) page for some examples of environmental curricula, on-line quizzes, and other resources for children.

7. Inform, Involve, and Celebrate!

Recognizing, communicating, reflecting on, and celebrating achievements are critical components of a Green School! Greening programs can often unify the whole school and strengthen community relations. Green Schools are encouraged to partner with external organizations from the community to benefit from their experience and expertise. In some schools, environmental consultants have offered to take part in the environmental review process. Many local government agencies and utilities often offer free advice on energy, recycling, and hazardous waste management. Green Schools are also encouraged to consider the wider community when preparing action plans - for example, schools could offer to be the local recycling point or to be a drop-off for Community Supported Agriculture boxes. Some schools get involved with clean-up or habitat restoration at nearby parks or share their experiences in other ways. A communication and publicity program keeps the school and the community informed of progress through classroom displays, school assemblies, newsletters, or other press coverage. Annual Earth Day celebrations - organized around April 20 - can offer an opportunity to showcase actions taken by the school and bring together the school and wider community.

The "7 Steps to Green Your School" is adapted from Eco-Schools International, <http://www.eco-schools.org/aboutus/howitworks.htm>