

# EcoSchools U.S.

## National Impact Report 2024-2025

### A Sustainable Future Begins at Every EcoSchool

**68%** of states participated in EcoSchools.  
**452** schools from coast to coast developed action plans with these states submitting and certifying the most action plans.

**#1 Virginia**

**#2 Colorado**

**#3 Ohio**

**#4 New Jersey**

**#5 Michigan**

*EcoSchools and environment-based learning play a key role in fostering a culture of sustainability, environmental awareness, and hands-on learning within our school community.*

Westbriar Elementary School, VA



Larger: Forest Park High School, VA  
Medium: Carter Woodson High School, VA  
Small: Braddock Elementary School, VA

Data collected from all schools participating in the EcoSchools program 2024-2025 as of June 13, 2025.

To learn more about how EcoSchools gathers and interprets school data, [see Viewing Your Schools Environmental Impact in our FAQ.](#)

## About Participating Schools

*As we grew food, we also grew a community. Parents shared that their children were asking to start gardens at home, proof that the impact extended beyond our walls. This wasn't just a science project, it was a story of resilience, responsibility, and respect for the environment.*

Jensen Beach Elementary School, FL



2% Early Childhood Centers

3% K-12

14% Middle Schools

17% Mixed Grade Bands

19% High Schools

45% Elementary Schools



Headwaters Academy, MT



84% Public Schools

10% Private Schools

The remaining 6% identified as magnet or charter, parochial, home schools, or schools within the juvenile justice system.



No Tribal Nation or Department of Defense schools participated.

Terra Centre Elementary School, VA

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## School Administrators

*How does your administration prioritize or lift up EcoSchools and the school's commitment to sustainability?*

- 25 %** Include EcoSchools goals in the school's improvement/success plans
- 35 %** Shares impact of EcoSchools efforts with those outside the school community, i.e., principal's meeting
- 53 %** Approves release time for sustainability-related professional development/learning
- 53 %** Models environmental stewardship and responsibility
- 76 %** Encourages time to address environmental stewardship and responsibility
- 85 %** Celebrates and recognizes environmental efforts and achievements



Carnation Elementary School, WA

## School District Collaborations

Denver Public Schools, CO

The School District of Philadelphia, PA

Red Clay Consolidated School District, DE

Fairfax County Public Schools, VA

Boise Public Schools, ID

Prince William County Public Schools, VA

Katonah-Lewisboro School District, NY

Working toward shared goals for student success and sustainable school communities we look forward to continuing our current collaborations, while welcoming new districts in 2025-2026, including Austin Independent School District, TX, Portland Public Schools, OR, and Lincoln Public Schools, NE.

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## Collective Impact

Student by student, school by school, district by district, community by community, we are proud of the collective impact of the program. Here's to a job well done by all our EcoSchools!

**1,371**

student-led actions taken

**36.4K**students  
engaged**3,189**leadership opportunities taken  
by youth across the nation**22.5k**native trees, flowers, shrubs,  
and grasses planted**281.4k**

square feet of habitat created

**709.8K**pounds of waste collected  
and properly disposed**2,200**

hours of service

**9,600**

hours of outdoor learning

**73.8k**water and energy  
conservation actions taken

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## Certification Breakdown



7

schools



12

schools



14

schools



108

schools

## Top Actions By Theme

The EcoSchools U.S. action library offers a comprehensive selection of 50+ actions, spanning three themes, *Wildlife and Biodiversity*, *Climate Change*, and *Healthy and Resilient Schools*. Here are the top five most popular actions taken by EcoSchools across the country.

WILDLIFE &  
BIODIVERSITY

Build a Pollinator Garden

Create Wildlife Homes

Bird-Friendly Schools

Fish Stewards

Create an Endangered  
Species Coloring Book

CLIMATE CHANGE

Divert Textile Waste

Active & Sustainable  
Transportation

Single-Use Plastics

Using Art to Represent  
Climate ChangeCreate Your Own Climate  
Change Action CardHEALTHY & RESILIENT  
COMMUNITIESPaper & Cardboard  
School Recycling Program

Build an Edible Garden

Indoor Gardening &  
Greenhouses

Clean Earth Challenge

Days of Service

## Connecting to the SDGs

With each action taken as part of the EcoSchools program, schools are making a meaningful contribution to our global effort to achieve the [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). School actions aligned most to the following SDGs.



SDG 11

Actions taken to support sustainable cities and communities.



SDG 13

Critical actions taken to combat climate change through mitigation, adaptation, and policy.



Aerospace and Natural  
Science Academy of Toledo



SDG 15

Actions taken to protect and support healthy land-based wildlife populations.



SDG 12

Actions addressing responsible consumption and production.



SDG 3

Actions that contribute to good health, well-being, and belonging.

Park Day School, CA



## Connections to the Curriculum

As a key element of the EcoSchools Framework, here are the top five content areas teachers used to make connections to sustainability while deepening and strengthening overall understanding.



Hawthorne Elementary School, ID

①

Life and Earth Science

②

Social Science and SEL

③

Arts

④

Language Arts

⑤

Math

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## Social-Emotional Learning

The assessment process helped students understand that environmental action starts with careful observation, listening, and collective planning. Social-emotionally, they practiced collaboration and felt empowered by seeing their ideas shape real changes. Teachers noted increased enthusiasm for STEM, and students felt pride and ownership as they saw their initial sketches come to life. This foundation is now supporting deep learning across science, sustainability, and civic engagement.

Holy Redeemer Grade School, MI

Social-emotionally, the initiative fostered leadership, responsibility, and a strong sense of purpose among students. Wearing ambassador badges and teaching peers gave students a sense of pride and ownership. The initiative also nurtured empathy and equity, particularly through the Share Table, which ensured access to food for all students. Overall, the sustainability work at Valdez Elementary empowered students, engaged the community, and made a lasting impact on the school's culture and climate action goals.

Valdez Elementary School, CO

## Healthy and Resilient School Communities

Certified schools reported that the actions in their plans supported or improved their community's health, wellness, and resilience.

**13 %** inequitable impacts from climate-fueled extreme weather (e.g., floods, droughts, wildfires, hurricanes, etc.)

**17 %** indoor air quality

**22 %** safe and accessible routes to school

**24 %** food deserts

**30 %** soil contamination

**34 %** air pollution

**39 %** outdoor water quality

**68 %** increase in green space or tree canopy



Top: Teller Elementary School, CO  
Left: Holmes Elementary School, NE  
Right: Park Day School, CA

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## Next Generation Leaders and Stewards



**Terra Centre Elementary School, VA**

Student action through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge led council member, Supervisor Walkinshaw, to commit to municipal action to support the conservation of the monarch butterfly.



**The Pike School, MA**

Students at The Pike School repurposed recyclables in innovative ways, like this chess board. Other projects included items like, a fairy house and a decorative planter wall using upcycled wood and cans as planters.



**Polaris Elementary School, CO**

Awarded a Climate Champions grant Polaris used the funds to green their urban school grounds and reduce vehicle-related transit to help reduce GHGs and heat from the heat island effect.



**Mount Scott Elementary School, OR**

It's salmon release day for these students who reared Spring Chinook salmon in the classroom, from egg to fry, maintaining a balanced aquarium environment by regularly testing temperature, pH, and DO.



**St. Benedict School, NJ**

Student PreK-8 use the pollinator gardens, a part of their Great Outdoor Learning Center, for many things such as, enhancing their science lessons, especially around the monarch and life cycles.



**Jensen Beach Elementary School, FL**

As an Everglades Champion School, students K-5 are prepared with the knowledge and skills to steward their Greater Everglades watershed through research, teaching, and community collaboration.



## Stories from the Field



The garden served as a living classroom, boosting environmental literacy and teaching practical life skills. Students learned about plant biology, food systems, and sustainable agriculture. It also provided opportunities for cross-curricular learning—math through measuring plots, writing through garden journals, and science through observation. The broader school community benefited from increased access to fresh food and a strengthened culture of sustainability.

Stone Mountain High School, GA



Throughout 2024–2025, our entire school, comprising 500 students and staff, embraced a weekly Sit Spot routine in six on-campus natural areas. Guided by the EcoSchools Framework, we integrated Sit Spot visits into multiple curricular areas. Over the year, students’ observational skills improved dramatically, and their reflective journals showcased growing scientific and artistic sophistication. Social-emotionally, students reported increased calmness, improved focus, and a deeper sense of empathy for living things. By sitting quietly together, the 500 K–12 students not only developed stronger connections to the natural world but also strengthened their place-based awareness, creativity in journaling, and overall well-being, embodying the true spirit of Sit Spots as a foundational, nature-centered learning practice.

KIPP Columbus, OH



This action had a powerful emotional effect on both students and families. Families in need felt seen, supported, and valued. Green Ambassadors experienced firsthand the joy of giving and the importance of using leadership for good. Students expressed pride in being part of something that helped others and learned that sustainability also means caring for the people around you. The project fostered empathy, kindness, and a sense of belonging that extended far beyond environmental lessons.

Braddock Elementary School, VA



Global Education Benchmark Group (GEBG) held its second Student Action Summit of the 2024-25 school year at Rye Country Day School. As the hosting school, we had the opportunity to select the summit’s focus, Arts and Innovation for an Equitable and Sustainable Future, in partnership with GEBG. RCDS student leaders led other high school students passionate about using creativity and technology to address today’s most pressing social and environmental issues. The event brought together over 40 young innovators, artists, and activists from seven schools to explore the intersection of arts, technology, sustainability, and social justice.

“Our goal for the summit was to inspire our peers to “solve problems in the world in nontraditional ways and spread awareness about sustainability around their schools and communities,” shared the RCDS student leaders.

Rye Country Day School, NY

## Come Grow With Us

**C**are for our Earth every day,  
**A**lways recycle and find a way,  
**R**educe waste in all we do,  
**V**alue nature, keep it true,  
**E**nergy saved, lights turned low,  
**R**espect the planet as we grow.

Our program truly is student led, they are the shining stars, and we are so proud of their hard work! EcoSchools, and its Framework, is a cornerstone of our Outdoor Education program at Carver.

I also want to share with you the impact earning the Green Flag has had on our students: our 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Milestone test scores rose by 18% this year! In addition to academic success, students reported that they felt more connected to nature and we saw direct improvements in overall student wellbeing after participating in stewardship action plans. We are very proud of our Green Flag and are so excited for year two!

George Washington Carver Elementary School, GA



**Hawthorne  
Elementary School, ID**

Students investigating the higher incidence of wildfires and supporting wildfire recovery efforts in a sagebrush ecosystem.



**The Crossroads  
School, MD**

The Crossroads School's Food Pantry, where students are striving to improve food security for families in the community.



**Discovery Elementary  
School, VA**

Discovery Elementary School's classroom learning backpacks, chalk full of engaging activities focused on supporting native birds.



**St. James Santee  
Elementary Middle  
School, SC**

Members of the action team connecting to nature and learning about native trees.

To register your school, visit:

[app.ecoschools.us](https://app.ecoschools.us)

To learn more about what we can offer you, visit:

[nwf.eco-schools-us](https://nwf.eco-schools-us)

Districts and partners looking to work with EcoSchools or general questions, email us at:

[ecoschoolsus@nwf.org](mailto:ecoschoolsus@nwf.org)