

Rhode Island School as a Tool Protocol

SCHOOL/DISTRICT Agreement

SCHOOL/DISTRICT _____

By this agreement, the SCHOOL/DISTRICT commits to implementing the School as a Tool / RI Sustainable Schools Protocol, pursuant to the RIDE's School Building Authority.

The SCHOOL/DISTRICT has extensive infrastructure ideal for the School as a Tool protocol. The school itself can become a hands-on teaching tool to enable instruction about the benefits of high-performance design as well as to help prepare an environmentally literate student body. According to the RI Environmental Literacy Plan (2011), an environmentally literate student is one who has “the opportunity to become aware, inquire, investigate, and develop responsible citizenship action plans or behavior regarding local, national, or global environmental issues.” In preparing environmentally literate students, RI schools and communities also “have the opportunity to concurrently improve students’ proficiency” in core academic areas.

The SCHOOL/DISTRICT will develop the School as a Tool program by integrating sustainability through curriculum, campus, and community as outlined in the five (5) components below.

I. Establish a Green Team

The SCHOOL/DISTRICT will assemble a motivated and empowered group of stakeholders including, but not limited to, principals, teachers, facility managers, students, nurses, and/or parents. The Green Team will:

- adopt an environmental vision statement specific to the SCHOOL/DISTRICT.
- plan and develop an action plan to be shared with all stakeholders.
- meet on a regular basis to implement, and monitor the action plan.
- coordinate and direct School as a Tool related initiatives and activities.

Resources for establishing a green team:

- *Green Schools Initiative:* <http://greenschools.net/>
- *Healthy Schools Campaign:* <http://www.greencleanschools.org/>
- *RIC Green Initiatives:* <http://www.ric.edu/green/>
- *URI Green Team:* <http://www.uri.edu/sustainability/greenteams.php>
- *The Green Team (Massachusetts):* <http://www.thegreenteam.org/>
- *Eco-Schools:* <http://www.eco-schools.org/>

II. Conduct a School Environment Survey

Students and teachers will engage in data collection to acquire information about the SCHOOL/DISTRICT that will inform their forthcoming decisions.

- The survey might collect data on: greenhouse gas emissions; water quality and conservation; waste production and disposal; recycling; transportation methods; pest management; air quality; cleaning products and chemical management; physical fitness and outdoor time; food and nutrition; environmental education activities; and more.

Resources for conducting a school environment survey:

- *RI Green Ribbon Schools Online Application:*
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/finance/funding/construction/schoolconstruction.aspx>
- *Green Flag Schools' The School Environment Survey:* <http://www.greenflagschools.org/Survey.pdf>
- *US EPA Healthy School Environment Resources:* <http://cfpub.epa.gov/schools/index.cfm>
- *Energy Education & Workforce Development:*
<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/education/lessonplans/default.aspx>

III. Integrate Environmental Literacy into the Existing Curriculum

Using the school as a hands-on laboratory and integrating environmental education activities into science, math, civics and government, engineering and technology, language arts, art, and elective courses provides abundant opportunity for real world problem solving and instruction on the benefits of the SCHOOL/DISTRICT's sustainable building. The following section describes five (5) key elements in the School as a Tool program, each followed by examples of how the SCHOOL/DISTRICT may integrate them into the curriculum.

- Integrate environmental and sustainability concepts throughout the curriculum. Examples include:
 - creating environmental education units and lesson plans aligned to state and national standards (i.e. Common Core State Standards, Grade Level Expectations/Grade Span Expectations, etc.).
 - using sustainability and the environment as a context for learning science, technology, engineering and mathematics thinking skills and content knowledge.
 - establishing opportunities for interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between environmental, energy and human systems.
 - allowing students to undertake study of environmental and sustainability themes such as energy, water, forest, pollution, and waste.
 - providing real-world contexts and relevant issues by using the facility as a teaching tool for indoor environmental quality, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and more.
 - involving the entire school in initiatives such as saving water, recycling, and saving energy.
 - using sustainability and the environment as a context for learning green technologies and career pathways.
 - offering environmental science courses.
- Integrate environmental literacy into student exhibitions, portfolios, and course assessments. Examples include:
 - incorporating environmental and sustainability concepts into classroom based and school wide assessments.
 - allowing students' civic and community engagement projects to focus on environmental and sustainability topics.
 - creating an environmental or sustainability literacy graduation requirement.
- Provide and/or promote professional development opportunities in environmental and sustainability education for all teachers.
- Promote outdoor education and time spent in nature. Examples include:
 - using the school yard, parks, and/or field trips to engage students in meaningful outdoor learning experiences at every grade level.
 - using outdoor settings to teach an array of subjects in contexts, engage the broader community, and develop civic skills.
- Increase alignment to North American Association for Environmental Education's (NAAEE) Guidelines for Learning.

Resources for integrating environmental literacy into the existing curriculum:

- *RI Environmental Literacy Plan:*
http://rieaa.org/images/stories/RI/documents/ri_elp_plan_2011.pdf (NEEDS TO BE UPDATED)
- *NAAEE's Guidelines for Learning:*
<http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines/topics/Excellence-in-EE-Guidelines-for-Learning-K-12>
- *Green Ribbon Schools:* <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/index.html>
- *Green Strides Resources:* <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/green-strides/resources.html>
- *PLT Green Schools! Program:* <http://www.plt.org/about-project-learning-tree-greenschools-program>
- *Green Education Foundation:* <http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/>

IV. Inform and Involve the Community

The SCHOOL/DISTRICT will facilitate communication about the School as a Tool program within and outside of the whole school community. Such activities can include:

- partnering with external organizations to implement the School as a Tool program.
- operating an information kiosk in the community where information pertaining to the School as a Tool program is regularly updated.
- developing a website/webpage to update the community on the School as a Tool program.
- organizing a semi-annual or annual event to showcase the ways in which students are involved in the School as a Tool program.
- conducting educational workshops for school personnel, parents, students, and/or community members.

Resources for informing and involving the community:

- *RI Environmental Education Association:* <http://rieaa.org/>
- *Sustainable Schools Network:* <http://www.apeiron.org/new/education/rissn.php>
- *Earth Day Network:* <http://edu.earthday.org/>

V. Monitor and Evaluate Progress

By gathering and analyzing information and data initiated through the School as a Tool program, the SCHOOL/DISTRICT will be able to measure progress, inform future decisions, and even promote the program when applying for recognition or funding. Such activities can include:

- conducting an annual school survey of teachers, students, parents, and other project partners.
- facilitating an annual meeting or seminar to obtain feedback from project partners.

Resources for monitoring and evaluating progress:

- *Educational Survey Templates:* <http://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/education-survey-templates/>
- *School Survey Templates:* <http://www.websurveymaster.com/1-School-Survey-templates->

VI. Apply to the Green Ribbon Schools Program

The SCHOOL/DISTRICT will apply for a Green Ribbon Schools Award, a national program that recognizes schools that save energy, reduce costs, feature environmentally sustainable learning spaces, protect health, foster wellness, and offer environmental education to boost academic achievement and community engagement.

Resources for applying to the Green Ribbon Schools Program:

- *Online Application:* <http://www.ride.ri.gov/finance/funding/construction/schoolconstruction.aspx>
- *US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools:*
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/index.html>

Timeline

By _____, the SCHOOL/DISTRICT will submit an environmental vision statement, action plan, roster, and meeting schedule.

By _____, the SCHOOL/DISTRICT will submit the results from the school environment survey.

By _____, the SCHOOL/DISTRICT will submit a preliminary proposal for how it will integrate environmental literacy into the curriculum; inform and involve the community; and monitor and evaluate progress.

By _____, the SCHOOL/DISTRICT will submit a final program description for how it will integrate environmental literacy into the curriculum; inform and involve the community; and monitor and evaluate progress.

By _____, the SCHOOL/DISTRICT will implement the approved program.

By _____, the SCHOOL/DISTRICT will apply to the Green Ribbons School program.

In addition, the SCHOOL/DISTRICT will welcome the opportunity to be active participants in sustainable schools opportunities in the future. These activities might include participation in sustainable schools meetings or hosting RIDE-sponsored events such as sustainable schools meetings.

Signature of SCHOOL/DISTRICT authorized representative

Date

Print name of SCHOOL/DISTRICT authorized representative

Superintendent

Title of SCHOOL/DISTRICT authorized representative

SCHOOL/DISTRICT