



Next Generation Green Schools Program

Make a Difference

Action steps and resources for our environment

Young people are making a difference for the environment! From restoring local creeks and protecting our forests to bringing renewable energy, organic food, recycling and eco-friendly transportation to local schools, students are playing a key role in protecting the planet. You can take local action and do something about environmental problems like air and water pollution, habitat destruction and global warming. This guide shows you how.

Ten Steps to Making a Difference

- 1. Identify an Issue** – What environmental issue do you care most about? Food? Energy? Transportation? Land and water conservation? Can you see how your school plays a part in a bigger issue?
- 2. Bring People Together** – There is strength in numbers! Join a club, start your own, or just bring a few friends together to work with you. Asking supportive teachers to advise you is a great first step.
- 3. Choose a Solution** – Think about solutions that will best address your problem, and will be practical to implement. How much will it cost? How long will it take? Will students and teachers support the change?
- 4. Develop a Plan** – How will you make the solution happen? Develop a plan that includes your goals, steps that will get you there, when you will take the steps, the things you need to do to make each step happen, and who will do what.
- 5. Talk to Decision Makers** – Talk to teachers and administrators at your school. Bring up the problem you have identified, as well as proposed solutions. See what they think.
- 6. Find Supporters** – Seek out teachers, fellow students, supportive administrators, and other adults at school and in the community who can help you. There are great groups listed on the back of this flyer.
- 7. Educate Your Community** – Make presentations to clubs and classes, bring in guest speakers, write articles for your school newspaper (or start your own), and do everything you can to spread the word.
- 8. Build Community Support** – Show students care about these issues by having people write letters, sign petitions, attend events, volunteer to help and make their voices heard.
- 9. Change Policies and Behaviors** – Work with teachers, administrators and other student leaders to actually change school policies and student behaviors.
- 10. Celebrate and Evaluate** – Take the time to celebrate your accomplishments, acknowledge those who played a part, and evaluate what worked and what you could do differently next time.



This guide is printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper. Check out the backside for groups that can help you make a difference.

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Environmental Issues, Facts and Resources

By taking local action to make your school and community more sustainable, you can make a difference. Here's what you can do about six pressing issues:

RECYCLING, COMPOSTING AND SCHOOL GARDENS

Problem: We use too much stuff and throw away too many valuable resources. A year of America's trash could fill garbage trucks half-way to the moon!

Solutions: Reduce, reuse and recycle at your school, and start a composting program and a school garden.

Resources: The [Marin Conservation Corps](#) can help you recycle, compost and start a garden. www.marincc.org

HEALTHY FOOD

Problem: Much of the food we consume in the US is sprayed with dangerous chemicals and harvested by people who earn poverty wages.

Solutions: Get tasty, healthy, local, fair trade, and organic food in your cafeteria.

Resources: [Marin Organic](#) www.marinorganic.org
[Good Earth Natural Foods](#)
Organic School Lunch Program.
www.goodearthnaturalfoods.net
[Straus Family Creamery](#)
www.strausmilk.com

ECO-FRIENDLY TRANSPORTATION

Problem: Driving is unsafe, it creates pollution, it fosters global warming and America's reliance on foreign oil threatens our national security.

Solutions: Promote walking, biking, carpooling and taking public transit to school and around the community.

Resources: [Safe Routes to Schools](#) help increase biking and walking to school. www.saferoutestoschools.org
[Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit](#) proposes a train through Marin and Sonoma www.sonomamarintrain.org

GREEN SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Problem: The products we use and the clothing we wear is often produced using dangerous chemicals that are harmful to people and the environment.

Solutions: Get your clubs, classes and entire school to use fair trade, organic cotton clothing, recycled paper and other eco-friendly products.

Resources: [Next Generation](#)
www.gonextgeneration.org

CLEAN ENERGY

Problem: Schools use a lot of power, and most of it comes from non-renewable sources. Pollution from power plants is a lead cause of global warming and acid rain.

Solutions: Get your school to conserve energy and install a solar power system.

Resources: [Strategic Energy Innovations](#) can help your school conserve energy www.seiinc.org
[Green Light Solar](#)
www.greenlightsolar.com

SAVING WATER

Problem: Americans use too much water, and our rivers, lakes, and oceans are becoming increasingly polluted with motor oil, chemical pesticides, fertilizers, and cleaning products.

Solutions: Conserve water, switch to eco-friendly cleaners, garden organically and maintain your car to prevent oil leaks.

Resources: The [Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program](#) www.mcstoppp.org
[Marin Municipal Water District](#)
www.marinwater.org
[North Marin Water District](#)
www.nmwd.org

Next Generation Green Schools Program

Help to educate yourself, your peers, your school and your community, and make changes happen at your school! The Next Generation Green Schools Program offers assemblies, lessons, field trips, school-based Green Weeks and grassroots support for student leaders, teachers and administrators. Contact rebecca@gonextgeneration.org www.gonextgeneration.org 415.459.6398