

AISD Sustainability & ESAC Updates

January 29, 2025

Greetings, AISD Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee (ESAC) members and friends of AISD Sustainability,

Please see below for the latest highlights of sustainability news and info from our AISD staff and ESAC working group leaders.

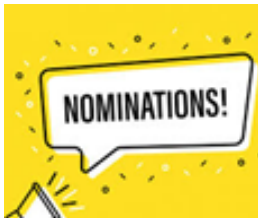
ESAC members, thank you for joining the upcoming 1/29 ESAC meeting. We look forward to a productive and engaging conversation!

ESAC Meeting Reminders



January 29th: AISD Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee (ESAC) Meeting

- January 29th - Join the [virtual meeting](#), 5:30-7:30PM
- See the [ESAC webpage](#) for the meeting agenda, upcoming meeting dates, and previous meeting materials.
- **January is Board Appreciation!** This year's school board month's theme is "Leadership for Tomorrow's Texas." Our elected Trustees play a crucial role in our schools and communities. To show our appreciation for the Board of Trustees, please sign this [e-card](#).



ESAC Co-Chair Nominations

- **Elections will be held January 29th.** Please plan to attend this virtual ESAC meeting. Over half of the members must participate to elect the new leadership.
- We will be having another open call beginning in May to fill the second co-chair position to replace outgoing Jeff Wacker.

AISD Staff Updates





The below updates are from AISD staff and departments that are contributing to AISD's sustainability efforts.






austinisd.org/sustainability








Sustainability (Update from Darien Clary & Carsen Daniel)

- The [AISD Sustainable Schools Course](#) is now available on BLEND. This course, co-created with EcoRise, helps teachers and staff perform simple actions to create a healthier learning and work environment and foster student learning about sustainability. AISD staff and teachers can enroll [here](#).
- [Bright Green Future Grants](#). Congratulations to all 35 Austin ISD campuses that were awarded grants for their sustainability projects, totaling \$43,500.
- [Host an intern this summer!](#) The Austin Ed Fund and the Austin Chamber of Commerce now offer a paid high school professional summer internship program providing students with soft skills training, networking opportunities, and mentorship from career professionals. This is a great opportunity to foster student experience in [green career pathways](#). Help get the word out: [Instagram](#) | [X](#)
- **AISD School Equity Resources for Partners**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AISD Support and Resource Index. AISD developed an objective approach to prioritize limited resources and support. This can be a tool for partners to evaluate and prioritize outreach and programming. ○ GIS Maps Available. Austin ISD has downloadable GIS files that support community partners in understanding and responding to geographically diverse students and community needs. ○ Equity by Design Reflection Questions. The former ESAC Equity Working Group created this guide to use in your planning. ● Build-a-Table volunteer day at Reilly Elementary, 3/1 9am-12pm. The US Green Building Council will be hosting their third annual volunteer day to support connections to the outdoors at AISD schools. Tables will be built for Reilly, Uphaus, Eastside, and Pickle. Donations are being accepted for table kits and workday supplies. A volunteer signup link is forthcoming.
	<p>Energy & Water (Update from Rey Torres & Louis Zachary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AISD has been awarded a \$10,000 grant from Austin Water! It will cover water conservation at Murchison. ● Energy & Water Manager, Rey Torres, is working on a power monitoring and power outage project for 24 schools. The project is about 50% complete!
	<p>Transportation (Update from Rica Sunga-Kwan, Kris Hafezizadeh, Miguel Rios)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Congrats to AISD Transportation for being awarded a 2023 Fleet & Fuel Recognition from CTXCC for adding NEW charging or fueling stations! ● The design process for the 2022 Bond construction and modernization of Nelson Bus Terminal has begun. Employees from this terminal have expressed interest in wellness and green space in the new facility. Leadership also wants to explore the future integration of electric buses and charging stations.
	<p>Sustainable Food (Update from Diane Grodek & Lindsey Bradley)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Our Department will be hosting Kendal Valois, a Senior at UT majoring in Sustainable Studies for the next 10 weeks. She will be working on waste studies, and reusable tray studies. ● We were awarded \$3,000 through the City of Austin Office of Sustainability Bright Green Future Grant to support the expansion of self-service across the district. Our Self Service model saves thousands of single-use containers from entering the trash system. ● Celebrate AISD Food Service and Warehouse Workers Appreciation Week, Feb. 24-28 and National School Breakfast Week, March 3-7!
	<p>Warehouse (Update from Mark Curtis)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pecan Springs Materials Reuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AISD Warehouse partnered with Austin Creative Reuse to recover 4,000 pounds of surplus materials. ○ The Warehouse team recently partnered with Vaughn Construction to collect multiple truckloads and a trailer of obsolete furniture and books to send to Ghana. ● The washers and dryers at Clifton Center were sold at auction, generating \$20k. Additionally, buyers removed the surplus, paving the way for a timely completion of the Clifton Center bond project.

	<p>Nature & Outdoor Learning (Update from Colleen Garland & Mandi Golman)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AISD Outdoor Wonder and Learning (OWL) Center at Metz is securing all necessary funding to develop the nature play and outdoor learning features we want, with the help of tree and boulder donations by the City of Austin Lampasas Dam materials reuse project. • The City of Austin Watershed Protection Department installed Rain Garden signs Navarro ECHS and Govalle Elementary. The students helped, and they were already using the signage the next day in lessons with Ms. Colasanti! • Congrats to our three newest Green School Parks: Pillow, Menchaca, and Gorzycki! Austin ISD schools are invited to apply to be a Green School Park and receive the official designation. • On January 11, 20 teachers participated in an Outdoor Learning Cohort Workshop at Metz with the National Wildlife Federation, PEAS, and AISD to model lessons outdoors!
	<p>Urban Forestry (Update from Sydnie Levell)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AISD has been awarded a \$300,000 grant from the City of Austin Urban Forest Grant Program for a pilot program with the Texas Conservation Corps (TxCC). Led by the AISD Urban Forester, the partnership includes training youth in proper tree care and expanding young tree care at campuses. • AISD Urban Forester is working with Austin Fire Department Wildfire Division to identify dead or dying trees at AISD facilities as a part of their chainsaw qualification training, enhancing wildfire training and maintaining the safety and beauty of our facilities.
	<p>Planning & Asset Management (update from Dr. Raechel French)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin ISD, in collaboration with Kirksey Architecture, has recently agreed to pilot a new building rating system called the Building Equity Standard. Norman-Sims Elementary will serve as a pilot for this certification that recognizes equity-centered design and post-occupancy experiences for staff, teachers, and students.
<p style="text-align: center;">ESAC Updates</p>	
<p>This section includes news and updates from AISD Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee Working Groups. austinisd.org/advisory-bodies/esac</p>	
 <p>SNAP THE QR CODE TO TAKE THE SURVEY!</p>	<p>Greenies Connect! (Resource List)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Group Leader:</u> Jen Cregar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 17 surveys completed! ○ Goal is 100% of ESAC members + supporters ○ Will be shared with AISD campus green team (Greenies) contacts and updated annually
	<p>Outdoor Amenity Rehoming & Mapping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Group Leaders:</u> Melody Alcazar + Yasmine Anderson + Mandi Golman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing data analysis ○ Exploring opportunities to GIS map existing data and finish the rest of schools ○ Successfully recovered outdoor amenities to reuse at our first school

	<p>Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Green Career Pathways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Group Leader:</u> Mo Beacham + Mike Eggen ● This group plans to gauge interest from teachers on Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning in their classrooms, create a resource hub, share AI/ML lesson plans, plan and execute a Generative AI Hackathon. ● Learn more
	<p>Legislative Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Group Leader:</u> Catherine Martinez <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Info about Trustee Legislative Priorities (see staff leader letter) ○ Areas of interest to be discussed with Luke Metzger of Environment Texas: solar, solar storage, incentives for electric lawn equipment, and climate resilience. ○ Working on a date in February for a field trip with Board of Trustees President Lynn Boswell to the capitol! We'll learn how to register to speak on legislation.
	<p>Zero Waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Group Leader:</u> Lavanya Selvam Alli <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning to audit a few AISD schools and observe how they can streamline their landfill, compost and recycling SOPs. Audit outline is based off of TDS' audit on all AISD elementary and middle schools. ○ The Zero Waste will be meeting with custodial and food services to discuss their zero waste policies for the 2025-2026 school year.
	<p>Energy Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Group Leader(s):</u> Rey Torres & Tamera Tate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recently, we have been working with the solar student engagement working group to find ways to plug students into this grant that will be installing solar arrays on 15 schools. This includes providing feedback on a handout for teachers and students, as well as on a draft web page dedicated to our solar work. ○ Austin Energy is working with EcoRise on solar specific curriculum for Austin ISD teachers.
	<p>Walk 'n' Roll to School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Group Leader(s):</u> Sahiti Karempudi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Currently working on providing draft updates for the internal AISD transportation website and the external transportation website

Resources: [AISD Sustainability Website](#) | [ESAC Google Drive](#) | [ESAC Website](#) | [ESAC Working Group Notes Folders](#) | ESAC listserv: aisd_esac@googlegroups.com

(If you need access to the ESAC Google Drive or listserv, please contact carsen.daniel@austinisd.org)

Kind regards,

AISD Sustainability Team, Darien Clary + Carsen Daniel

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AISD staff can call direct via Microsoft Teams

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