



ESAC & AISD SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER

austinisd.org/sustainability

January 21, 2026



AISD Sustainability, Energy, and Environment & ESAC Updates

January 21, 2026

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 1/21 ESAC meeting. We look forward to a productive and engaging conversation in-person!

ESAC Meeting Reminders



January 21st: AISD Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee (ESAC) Meeting

- **Meeting Details:**

- Join the [in person meeting](#) from 5:30-7:30PM at the [General Marshall Middle School](#) Library.
- See the [ESAC webpage](#) for the meeting agenda, upcoming meeting dates, and previous meeting materials.

AISD Staff Updates

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

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Sustainability, Energy, & Environment (Update from Darien Clary & Carsen Daniel)

- [**AISD Sustainability's first annual report \(English | Español\)!**](#)
Thanks to all our dedicated staff, teachers, students, and partners who contribute to this work.
- Darien Clary, Director of Sustainability, Energy, & Environment was honored with the [**Capital Area Council of Governments & Air Central Texas Bill Gill Central Texas Air Quality Leadership Award**](#) for her work in improving indoor and outdoor air quality for AISD students through green building standards, bus and fleet vehicle electrification, campus air quality monitors, and more.
- In partnership with the [City of Austin's Air Quality Program](#) and [Clean Air Force of Texas](#), [**Purple Air Sensors have been installed**](#) at Graham Elementary, Noack Sports Complex, AISD Service Center, Sanchez Elementary, Garza Independence High School, and Kealing Middle School, adding to the 13 monitors already installed at AISD locations. See the outdoor air sensors [live data](#) and [student air quality lessons](#)- created by AISD teachers!
- [**Host an Intern!**](#) Support social impact and green career pathways by hosting an intern this summer through the AustinEdFund/Chamber of Commerce partnership. See the [bottom of this page](#) for upcoming host info sessions & FAQs.
- [**Follow us on social media!**](#) [Linkedin](#), [Bluesky](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter/X](#).



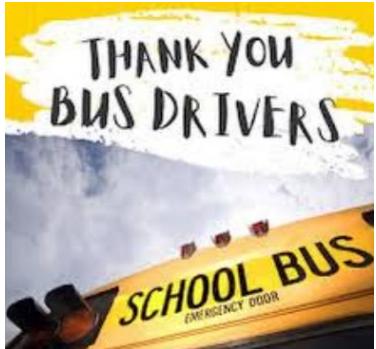
Welcome, new staff members! ([Org Chart](#))

- The AISD Sustainability, Environment, & Energy Department is excited to welcome our new team members:
 - Mandi Golman, Administrative Supervisor of Grounds & Schoolyards ([Bio](#))
 - Chris Papick, Administrative Supervisor, Environmental Quality & Compliance, ([Bio](#))
 - Lace Senegal, Environmental Quality and Compliance Coordinator, ([Bio](#))
 - Nia Nickens, Administrative Assistant, ([Bio](#))



Energy & Water (Update from Reynaldo Torres, Louis Zachary, Darien Clary, & Carsen Daniel)

- [**Utility Dashboard.**](#) Reynaldo Torres, Energy & Water Manager, is updating the dashboard with the past 5 years of data. This was paused during the pandemic, and we will be excited to relaunch the dashboard. Schools can still request current data from reynaldo.h.torres@austinisd.org or [generate reports online](#).
- [**Solar Summit.**](#) In partnership with [EcoRise](#), [Austin Energy](#), and [Axis Solar](#). We hosted a renewable energy-themed field trip on

	<p>1/21 for 4th graders at two schools that are included in our Department of Energy solar grant. Students visited the Austin Energy La Loma Community Solar Farm and The Thinkery.</p>
	<p>Transportation (Update from Kris Hafezizadeh & Miguel Rios)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Transportation Department is working on the consolidation transition plan for next school year. Our district will close 10 schools next year and we will have many changes to our bus routes. Please check our website Transportation Austin ISD under “2026-27 Transportation Guidelines”.
	<p>Sustainable Food (Update from Diane Grodek & Lindsey Bradley)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are excited to open two new kitchens that are designed to be zero waste at Wooten and Harris! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both serving lines feature self-service which reduces the use of single use containers Both kitchens have new dishwashers to accommodate plastic reusable lunch trays! All Elementary Schools are participating in the Kerbey Kids Pancake Challenge where they can draw their Dream Pancakes, with a chance of being one of 3 winners adapted into the Pancake of the Month served at all KL locations! A portion of all sales will go towards our department’s negative fund balance! AISD is part of a new group of schools, organizations and local producers, the Central Texas Farm to School Collaborative. The Collaborative is a regional farm to school network that exists to share and strengthen strategies that bring local food into Central Texas schools, to improve student health and nutrition, expand food access, and support local producers, building a resilient regional food system together. If you are interested in participating, please email lindsey.bradley@austinisd.org! Follow us on Instagram, X, and Facebook!



Warehouse (Update from Mark Curtis)

- The warehouse team collected four and half truck loads of surplus furniture, e-waste, and kitchen equipment from the Wooten bond project [swing space](#). The remaining obsolete and unneeded furniture will be donated to schools in Juarez Mexico.



Outdoor Wonder & Learning (OWL) (Update from Colleen Garland, Mandi Goman & Joanna Orozco)

- Our team is working on the procurement of materials for a second cohort of 11 campuses through the Federal Outdoor Learning Grant. These include gardening, outdoor play and learning materials, and tools to increase accessibility.
- We hosted AISD counselors and Licensed Mental Health Professionals for a day of Eco-Therapy training (pictured here enjoying nature play time).
- The OWL Center hosted four [Girls+ Outside](#) mentorship workshop field trips for secondary students, and five field trips to Westcave Preserve for all 10 schools.
- Our team presented at the [How Outdoor Learning Outperforms Indoor Learning Leadership Summit](#).
- Mandi Golman presented at the Texas Children In Nature Network Conference. Her session, [“Repurpose, Relocate, Reconnect: Strategic Campus Resource Management”](#) was in collaboration with the City of Austin and focused on equitable resource distribution during campus renovations.
- Feb 16 staff development day will be a day of Outdoor Learning at the Metz OWL Center! PEAS will offer a full day for elementary teachers, EcoRise will offer two sessions for secondary.



Grounds, Schoolyards, and Urban Forestry (Update from Mandi Golman, Sydnie Levell, & Darien Clary)

- Urban Forester, Sydney Levell, continues to implement **tree care at campuses with the Texas Conservation Corps (TxCC)**. Thanks to this City of Austin Urban Forest Grant, 756 trees have been cared for at 22 AISD properties since 2024. This includes activities such as pruning, root collar clearing, and mulching. [See photos](#) of the team in action.

ESAC Updates

This section includes news and updates from AISD Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee Working Groups.

austinisd.org/advisory-bodies/esac



Upcoming ESAC Meetings:

- Remaining meeting dates for the 2025-26 school year:
 - January 21, 2026 (in person)
 - March 25, 2026 (virtual)
 - May 20, 2026 (in-person, location TBD)
- You can always check the [ESAC website](#) for meeting dates, agendas, and materials.



Construction & Demolition Materials Salvaging

Group Leader: Mary Petrovich

- Our working group is meeting next week to discuss team assignments on doing inventory of AISD outdoor amenities to aid in school consolidations and campus moves.



Energy & Water Engagement

Group Leaders: Rey Torres & Tamera Tate & [Aubrey Lethbridge](#)

- Looking to make a connection with Austin Water outreach & engagement team
- Austin Energy continuing to engage AISD students in electrical safety
- Contributing to the “Solar Summit” for Widén 4th graders to engage in solar & renewable energy as part of the Dept. of Energy Renew America’s Schools grant in January 2026.



Greenies Connect! (Resource List)

Group Leader: Jen Cregar

- Greenies Connect! has merged with the Construction & Demolition Materials Salvaging Working Group for SY25-26 to help connect ESAC volunteers with materials rehoming initiatives to divert materials from the landfill.



Student Civic Engagement

Group Leader: Catherine Martinez

- Meeting with Brian Pena, Legislative Director for Representative Gina Hinojosa (Virtual)
- Next meeting on Wednesday, February 4th, please complete the new [interest form](#) to receive a calendar invite.



Walk & Roll to School

Group Leaders: Julie Gutierrez & Bobby Quindlen Sandoval

- Austin Bike Bus Program has an official website page on the Get There ATX page, including resources and interest form. [Austin Bike Bus Pilot Program - Get There ATX](#)
- Odom and Travis Heights (THES) are launching their Bike Bus programs this Spring.
- Bike Bus Bash events will be on 2/21 at THES and 3/28 at Odom.
- Partnering with Austin/Travis County Active Living Collaborative to build the Park and Walk to School initiatives.
- Kidical Mass will be at Marshall Middle School for its 2nd year on April 26, 2026! We hope to collect sustainable transportation oaths from families!

Resources: AISD Sustainability Website | Sustainability Resources for Schools Flyer

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 Department of Sustainability, Energy, & Environment

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AISD staff can call direct via Microsoft Teams

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