



ESAC & AISD SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER

austinisd.org/sustainability

May 20, 2026

AISD Sustainability, Energy, and Environment & ESAC Updates

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

Please see the [May 2026 Newsletter](#) 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 5/20 in-person ESAC meeting. We look forward to a productive and engaging conversation!

ESAC Meeting Reminders



May 20th AISD Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee (ESAC) Meeting

- Meeting Details:
 - Join us at Wooten Elementary School on 5/20, 5:30-7:30pm!
 - 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. austinisd.org/sustainability



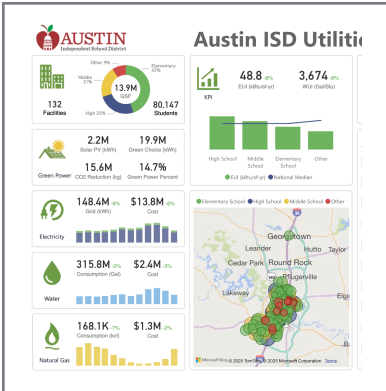
Job Alert! We are hiring for two positions to join the AISD Grounds team:

- **Landscape Irrigator (license and certification required)** - [Apply Here](#) | [Job Description](#) | Pay Range (AUX 10): \$25.330-\$31.826/hr | [AISD Compensation Manual](#).
- **Operator Irrigation** - [Apply Here](#) | [Job Description](#) | Pay Range (AUX 5): \$22.257 - \$28.281/hr
- **Please share!** If you know someone who is interested, please refer them to Mandi.Golman@austinisd.org.



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

- **AISD & Austin Energy Earth Week Celebration.** On April 30, we celebrated over **\$2M earned by AISD through Austin energy demand response program and energy efficiency rebates.** See the [press release](#), and additional info below from the Energy and Water Subcommittee.
- **Solar Summit.** The next AISD “Solar Summit” is May 20 with the 4th and 5th grade classes from TA Brown Elementary School. As a school set to receive solar from the Department of Energy Renew America’s Schools grant, students will learn about renewable energy from activities with Austin Energy, EcoRise, Axis Solar, and Parent’s Climate Community.
- **AISD Materials Reuse Featured Nationally.** Check out Austin ISD’s materials salvaging and reuse initiatives in the latest US Green Building Council Article, [Materials Circularity in Austin ISD Schools and Facilities](#), written by Sustainability Coordinator, Carsen Daniel.
- **Thought-Provoking Thursday Webinar Series.** The AISD Economic Opportunity Office partners with AISD departments to share a commitment to building a stronger, more sustainable Central Texas. As part of AISD Earth Week on April 30, Darien Clary, *Director of Sustainability, Energy, and Environment*, shared about the programs and resources available to help connect **small businesses to Austin ISD**, especially as Bond work continues to expand across the district. [Watch here!](#)
- **Green Team Leaders Collaborative.** We recently wrapped up the inaugural [Green Team Leaders Collaborative](#), paying 23 teachers across 16 campuses grant-funded stipends. We are currently in search of external funding to support additional teachers next year.
- **Green Apple Day of Service.** The US Green Building Council Balcones Chapter, in partnership with AISD Sustainability, Energy, & Environment, hosted its 4th annual [Green Apple Day of Service](#) on May 16th at Navarro High School. Volunteers came together to paint picnic tables for four Title I Austin ISD schools, helping to create a bright and welcoming outdoor space for students. The schools receiving tables include **Navarro High School, Ortega Elementary, Galindo Elementary, and Cunningham Elementary.** Huge thanks to Trustee Hunter for **joining in the day!** Check out the photos [here!](#)
- **Take a look: [AISD Sustainability’s first annual report!](#)** Thanks to all our dedicated staff, teachers, students, and partners who contribute to this work.
Read: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
Download [here](#)
Reshare: [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#)
- **Follow us on social media!** [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#)



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

- **AISD Utility Dashboard.** Rey Torres, *Energy & Water Manager*, has updated the dashboard with the past 5 years of data. **The dashboard is now [live for public view!](#)**



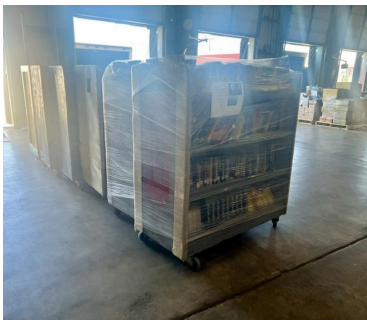
Transportation (Update from Kris Hafezizadeh & Miguel Rios)

- **EV Fleet Update.** We are pleased to share that our three electric school buses remain in daily operation as we continue to implement ongoing software enhancements.
- **Nelson Terminal Remodel Coming Soon!** Looking ahead, we are excited to begin construction later this year on the bond-approved Nelson Terminal remodel. This 18-month project is being thoughtfully designed to include the necessary foundations for the possibility of future EV infrastructure, ensuring our facilities evolve alongside our commitment to provide safe & reliable transportation.



Sustainable Food (Update from Diane Grodek & Lindsey Bradley)

- **We celebrated Texas Fruit & Vegetable Day** across the district on Friday, April 3 with samples of Texas Quickles, a quick pickle recipe prepared with local carrots and cucumbers. Check out the recipe [here!](#)
- **AISD Nutrition & Food Services was recently honored with the “Cream of the Crop” award by the Texas Department of Agriculture**, the top recognition in the Farm Fresh Challenge! This award highlights our commitment to serving Texas-grown and produced foods, educating students about agriculture and nutrition, and promoting local food throughout our AISD community.
- **We hosted the Kerbey Lane All Day Cafe & Austin ISD Student Culinary Competition!** Students from Austin and Bowie High Schools competed for the top spot, presenting incredible dishes to our panel of judges: Mason Ayer (Chief Executive Officer at Kerbey Lane All Day Cafe), Madeline Hollern (Editor in Chief at Austin Monthly), and the Cafeteria Crusader (Food Critic at Austin High School). Watch the full video [here!](#)
- **Visit [Kerbey Lane](#) this month to try an Austin ISD student’s dream pancake, for a good cause!** 🥞 Throughout May, visit Kerby Lane to try the **Mint Chip Pancakes** topped with mint cream cheese glaze and chocolate sauce, created by Hannah, a 4th grader at Zilker Elementary. A portion of every sale helps clear negative school meal balances for AISD students. Plus, look out for **Tres Leche Pancakes**, created by Wells, a 3rd grader at Bryker Woods, on the menu in June, benefitting the same cause.
- **We are preparing for summer meal service**, with more than 30 schools offering free breakfast and lunch to any children 18 and younger. See Austin ISD sites and learn more [here](#).



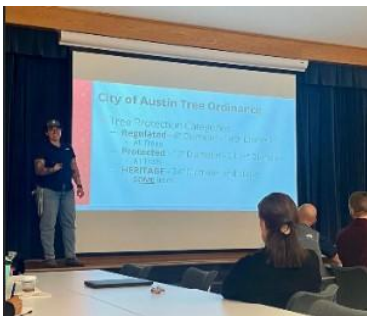
Warehouse (Update from Mark Curtis)

- **BookSpring Partnership.** We are partnering with [BookSprings](#) to connect children with surplus books resulting from school consolidations.
- **Austin Creative Reuse Collaboration.** This summer, we will be supporting [Austin Creative Reuse](#) with donations from our closed schools moving into their newly built facilities. Please reach out for volunteer opportunities.
- **AISD Warehouse Pop-Up Sale.** Our recent [Earth Day Surplus Sale](#) was a huge success! Proceeds support [Garden to Cafe](#) programs at Doss and Oak Hill elementary. See video of materials [here!](#)



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

- **A Year of Growth at the OWL Center!** Since opening in the fall, AISD Outdoor Learning has hosted **25** student field trips (~1,000 kids!) and **23** guided tours or events with grown up partners.
- [Earth Camp](#) hosted **34** school field trips at the Metz OWL Center.
- Partners for Education, Agriculture, and Sustainability will host three weeks of [summer camp](#) at the OWL in June.
- [Girls+Outside](#) had another wondrous year with almost **400** girls attending 5 field trip sites over 25 dates. This year's theme was **water** - the girls visited the OWL Center, Westcave Preserve, Laguna Gloria, the LCRA Redbud Center, and the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment.
- **Federal Grant Milestone.** This month marks the end of the \$2.15M Dept. of Education federal grant from Congressman Doggett for AISD Outdoor Learning. The impact of the grant has been immeasurable, and has included outdoor learning infrastructure at schools, professional development, nature learning kits for all libraries, transformation of the OWL Center nature play field trip site, and much more.



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

- **Trees & Construction.** AISD Urban Forester, Sydnie Levell, presented a lunch & learn for our Construction Management Department to educate them on Austin's Tree Ordinance and how to protect our trees during construction projects.
- **AISD Spotlight on Green Schoolyards America.** Sydnie was a guest speaker for the Community of Practice for Schoolyard Forests, where she spoke about AISD trees and partnerships that make our Urban Forest thrive. [Watch here!](#)
- **AISD x Texas Conservation Corp.** This June, the [Texas Conservation Corps](#) is returning to AISD campuses to give our trees some much-needed care, a partnership made possible by the [City of Austin Urban Forest Grant](#).
- **Multiuse Facilities Showcase.** Mandi Golman, Ground & Schoolyards Admin. Supervisor, presented at [Liveability and Longevity Symposium](#) about multiuse intergenerational facilities

- **AISD Outdoor Learning (OL) Signs are Ready!** Finished signage is set for installation after this summer. OL is working to add TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills) lessons to activate spaces.
- **Summer GIS Launch.** This summer, our Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping work kicks off with several partners.
- [Green Team Leaders Cohorts](#) have wrapped up and we hope to jumpstart it again for next year!

ESAC Updates

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

austinisd.org/advisory-bodies/esac



Upcoming ESAC Meetings:

- Last meeting for the 2025-26 school year:
 - May 20, 2026 (in-person, Wooten Elementary School)
- You can always check the [ESAC website](#) for future meeting dates, agendas, and materials.



Construction & Demolition Materials Salvaging

Group Leaders: Mandi Golman & Mary Petrovich

- **Upcoming Campus Transition.** AISD school moves due to consolidations and modernizations kick off the first week of June. AISD will be using a list compiled by the working group to determine exactly which items will move to new campuses along with students.



Energy & Water Engagement

Group Leaders: Rey Torres & Tamera Tate & Aubrey Lethbridge




- **AISD & Austin Energy Earth Week Celebration.** On April 30, Austin Energy presented AISD with a **"big check" to commemorate over \$2M that AISD earned** through our participation in demand response and energy efficient rebates 2020-2025. The event included words from AISD and Austin Energy leaders, a photo op of the check presentation, and energy-themed activities for students. **Govalle Elementary is the district's most energy-efficient school and will be receiving solar panels in the coming years, thanks to a federal grant.**



Student Civic Engagement

Group Leader: Catherine Martinez

- **Local Leaders Suggestions.** We are currently taking suggestions for next semester's Local Leaders conversations!
- **TxLeg 90th Session.** Join us during our ESAC summer planning to chat about the 90th Legislative Session! **Date TBD.**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Voting Reminder. Early Voting for Texas Primary Run-Offs are from May 18th - 22nd. Election Day is May 26th!
  	<p>Walk & Roll to School Group Leaders: Julie Gutierrez & Bobby Quindlen Sandoval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interested in being a Bike Bus Leader? Trainings will start in July: Bike Bus Leader Interest Form ● Walk to School Toolkit Coming Soon. Safe Routes to School is actively developing a brand-new toolkit designed to support and protect our student pedestrians. ● Smarter School Commutes. Schools interested in reducing drop-off and pick-up carlines are encouraged to reach out to Alex at Movability. Movability is partnering with AustinISD to provide assistance for both staff and school families to commute to and from schools more sustainably using carpool apps and helping to create connections for collaboration.

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 nia.nickens@austinisd.org)

Kind regards,
 AISD Department of Sustainability, Energy, & Environment

Darien G. Clary, MPH
 Director of Sustainability, Energy, & Environment
 Austin Independent School District
 e: darien.clary@austinisd.org
 AISD staff can call direct via Microsoft Teams
austinisd.org/sustainability

