



AISD Sustainability, Energy, and Environment & ESAC Updates

September 24, 2026

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

Please see the [September 2026 Newsletter](#) (also attached) 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 9/24 in-person ESAC meeting. We look forward to a productive and engaging conversation!

ESAC Meeting Reminders



September 24th AISD Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee (ESAC) Meeting

- **Meeting Details:**
 - Join us at Harris Elementary School on 9/24, 5:30-7:30pm!
 - See the [ESAC webpage](#) for the meeting agenda, upcoming meeting dates, and previous meeting materials.

AISD Staff Updates

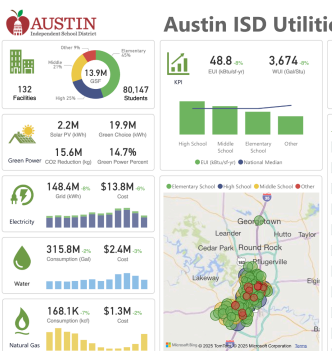
The below updates are from AISD staff and departments that are contributing to AISD's sustainability efforts.

austinisd.org/sustainability



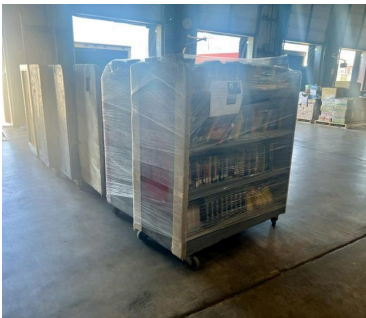
Sustainability, Energy, & Environment (Update from Darien Clary & Carsen Daniel)

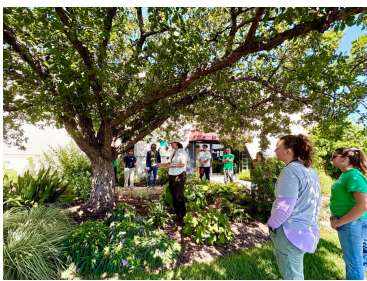
- **Green Team Leaders.** We are kicking off our 2nd year of the [Green Team Leaders Accelerators Program](#) with 40 educators across 25 campuses, thanks to generous funding from the City of Austin, Texas Disposal Systems (TDS), and Austin ED Fund.
- **Eco-School Certifications.** Congratulations to the [thirteen schools](#) who achieved [National Wildlife EcoSchool Certification](#)! Odom and Maplewood achieved the highest award of Green Flag.
- **Educator Extravaganza.** On August 8th, AISD Sustainability Staff & Austin Creative Reuse hosted the Educator Extravaganza + Resource Fair that included getting classroom and teaching supplies recovered from consolidated schools back in the hands of our teachers. Many ESAC partners also tabled at the event, including [Austin Climate Action & Resilience](#), [Austin Energy All-Stars](#), [EcoRise](#), [Keep Austin Beautiful](#), [PEAS](#), and [Ghisallo Cycling Initiative](#). 📺 [See video here!](#)
- **Golden Trashcan Recycling & Composting Competition.** AISD's top 20 schools in recycling and composting success will be recognized in Mid-November for Texas Recycles Day. Schools will receive awards, thanks to **H-E-B** and **Texas Disposal Systems (TDS)**!
- **Campus Improvement Plans (CIP).** In alignment with the district improvement plan, 24 schools selected [Sustainability strategies](#) to achieve Goal 1, Systemic Support & Opportunity, of their Campus Improvement Plan! We look forward to supporting their efforts!
- **2022 Bond Program Outdoor Learning.** Thanks to voter support for the 2022 Bond, Patton Elementary's outdoor spaces got a major upgrade! Check out this [video](#) to see how leadership, volunteers, and these new spaces are enriching learning every day.



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

- **Utility Dashboard.** Check out the [AISD Energy & Water Dashboard](#) to track our progress! Select Water in the top right corner to view our recent monthly reduction which shows a direct result of several major leak repairs made this year. *Note: Data currently runs through May as we upgrade to an automated utility billing process.*
- **Water Audit.** AISD Energy & Water Manager, Rey Torres, is partnering with Austin Water on a water audit at Akins High

	School to leverage local incentives. They are seeking a STEM student from Akins to participate in the project.
 The top image is a sign for 'Queso for CLASSROOMS' with the text 'Every queso sold helps make school lunch accessible to more local students'. The middle image shows a paper tray filled with various fruits like watermelon, cantaloupe, and apples. The bottom image shows a white bowl filled with a meal consisting of rice, beans, meat, and vegetables.	Sustainable Food (Update from Diane Grodek & Lindsey Bradley) ● AISD Recognized as Good Food Leader. Following our most recent assessment from the Good Food Purchasing Program, Austin ISD is being recognized with Good Food Leader: Silver distinction for values-based food procurement efforts. ● Support AISD Students at Kerbery Lane Cafe. Did you know every order of Queso and Chips ordered at Kerbey Lane All Day Cafe helps support paying off negative meals account balances for Austin ISD students? Stop by and support local small business and student nutrition today! ● October is Farm Fresh Month! October is Farm Fresh month for our Food Service Department where we highlight local vendors, fruits and vegetables we offer. We look forward to sharing some new menu items and existing ones that feature our Texas grown beef, rice, watermelon, sweet potatoes, bread tortillas, honey and more! ○ ES: Fruit Salad featuring local watermelon, additional melons, and local honey ○ MS: BBQ Pork Grilled Cheese featuring New World Bakery sliced bread ○ HS: Hot Honey Beef and Sweet Potato Bowl featuring local beef, rice, sweet potatoes, and honey
 The image shows a large, industrial-style metal shelving unit or cart in a warehouse setting, with various items stored on the shelves.	Warehouse (Update from Mark Curtis) ● Allison Elementary School Bond Project Salvage & Reuse. Our latest material recovery efforts include: ● Kitchen Equipment: 80% successfully salvaged, with contractors opting to recover fire suppression systems, hoods, and walk-in coolers/freezers. ● Furnishings: 90% set for reuse or donation
 The image shows a person in a white shirt and hat working on a water trough installation. They are using a shovel to dig a hole in the ground next to a blue water trough. A wheelbarrow is nearby.	Outdoor Wonder & Learning (OWL) (Update from Colleen Garland, Joanna Orozco) ● OWL Center Field Trips. OWL Field trips will be limited this year, with prioritization going to Band 1 schools. ● Water Trough Installation. Two triple water troughs for watershed models are being installed at the OWL Center! ● OWL Center Landscaping. NWF and BDO Bank are helping us with volunteers and an \$8,000 gift for landscaping the OWL Center. Stay tuned for the date to join!



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

- **Urban Forestry.** This summer, AISD Urban Forester Sydnie Levell provided Texas Conservation Corps at American Youthworks (TxCC) crews hands-on experience in tree care and planting. **In total, they cared for 315 trees across 13 AISD campuses, in addition to planting 37 trees at two campuses.** A huge thanks to the City of Austin Urban Forest Grant for making this possible! 📸 [See photos here.](#)
- **Texas Tree Awards.** The International Society of Arboriculture Texas Chapter has named AISD Urban Forester Sydnie Levell and American YouthWorks' tree care initiative the **Arboricultural Project of the Year.** The team will receive the award on September 24th at the Texas Tree Conference in Waco, TX.
- **Travis County Collaboration.** In September, Urban Forester Sydnie Levell led a basic tree care session for Travis County's AmeriCorps 4-H partners, boosting campus tree knowledge and strengthening community care for our urban forest.

ESAC Updates

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

austinisd.org/advisory-bodies/esac



Welcome Back! We look forward to kicking off the year at the September 24th meeting where we will meet new members and establish working groups for this year.

Upcoming ESAC Meetings:

- September 24, 2026 (in-person, Harris Elementary School)
- November 17, 2026 (virtual)
- January 28, 2026 (virtual)
- April 1, 2026 (virtual)
- May 19, 2026 (in-person, TBD)



Upcoming Events

Bike Bus Training Clinic. Join [Get There ATX](#) and [Ghisallo Cycling Initiatives](#) for free bike bus leader training clinic to become an Austin Bike Bus Leader. Bring your bike, helmet, water, and sunblock! Sept. 26th | 9:30 - 11:30am | Windsor Park Branch Library | [RSVP](#)

Sun Day ATX. Join Parents' Climate Community for the free, family-friendly festival celebrating renewable energy and community power! Sept. 27 | 4-6pm | [RSVP](#)

ASES National Solar Conference. Darien Clary, AISD Director of Sustainability, Energy, & Environment, will be featured on a panel at the [ASES National Solar Conference](#) on Oct 20th during the [Education for All Y'all](#) session to speak about the increasing importance of education around solar energy! Oct 19-21 | Palmer Events Center | [Register here!](#)

Partners for Education, Agriculture, & Sustainability (PEAS) 15th Anniversary Market. Join PEAS to celebrate their 15th anniversary with a variety of local vendors, entertainment, and hands-on nature activities! Nov 1st | 11am - 3pm | Bowie High School | [RSVP](#)

Cyclovía with [Ghisallo Cycling Initiative](#)! This fall we're bringing Cyclovía ATX back to the streets of Windsor Park! This event is built by the community, for the community! If you'd like to volunteer, we'd love to have you! Visit the Cyclovía link, above, to sign up as a Volunteer or to get a sneak peek at what we've been cooking up for y'all! Nov 7th | 10am-2pm | Windsor Park Branch Library

17th Annual Green Schools Conference (GSC). Join us for [sessions](#) and [local tours](#) featuring Austin ISD projects and presenters! Feb 8-10, 2027 | Downtown Hyatt Regency

- [Registration](#) is now open with discounts and scholarships for educators, students, school district staff, non-profit leaders, and green building professionals. Early bird pricing ends after **November 30, 2026**.
- Become a [sponsor](#) to support scholarships and the conference.

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

(If you need access to the ESAC Google Drive or listserv, please contact
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Follow us on social media! [Linkedin](#) | [Instagram](#)

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

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