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SUSTAINABLE CLASSROOM SPECIALIST SCS CERTIFICATE

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MODULE

3

What Does a Successful Green School Look Like?

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A green school is an educational system that integrates environmental sustainability into its operations, curriculum, and culture. Examples include Bali's Green School, Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farm, and EcoSchool program in Canada, which promote sustainable infrastructure and biodiversity.

Learning Objectives

- Introduction
- Getting Started with Sustainable Building
- **What Does a Successful Green School Look Like?**
- The DNA of Whole School Sustainability
- Teaching projects and problem-based learning
- Green School Management, Aesthetics, and Efficiency
- Design Principles for Whole School Sustainability
- Policy, Safety, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Green Schools
- Green Building Basics and Cost Benefits
- Healthy Ecosystems for Learning



INTRODUCTION

- Sustainable Infrastructure: Energy-efficient buildings, use of renewable resources, and environmentally friendly materials.
- Integrated Curriculum and Environmental Literacy: Integrates environmental education throughout the curriculum.
- Active Engagement and Community Involvement: Prioritizes community participation from students, teachers, and families.
- Health and Well-Being: Promotes healthy eating, physical activity, and mental wellness.
- Continuous Improvement and Innovation: Regularly assesses environmental impact and seeks new strategies to enhance sustainability practices.
- Health Initiatives: Implements wellness programs that focus on nutrition, physical activity, and mindfulness.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF A GREEN SCHOOL



- Physical Plant: Prioritizes sustainable building operations and maintenance practices, adopting energy-efficient systems and promoting health and wellness.
- Health and Wellness: Implements farm-to-school programs for fresh, nutritious food and mental health support.
- Curriculum: Emphasizes sustainability and environmental education, engaging students in problem-based learning.
- Community Engagement: Leverages local expertise and resources, facilitating partnerships that enhance learning opportunities and foster civic responsibility.
- Use of Outdoor Space: Enhances academic performance, reduces behavioral issues, and enhances student engagement.



LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT OF A GREEN SCHOOL



- Leaders must foster a school culture that prioritizes sustainability, empowering educators and students to take ownership of environmental practices.
- Leaders should establish partnerships with external organizations specializing in sustainability, providing access to resources, expertise, and funding opportunities.
- Ongoing professional development for educators is necessary to sustain momentum for green initiatives.

CREATING THE IDEAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Conventional teaching methods often struggle to connect content to prior learning and life experiences.
- Green school programs aim to foster a whole-school approach to sustainability, fostering life-building skills like critical thinking, communication, and leadership.
- These programs provide social skills like self-esteem, character development, and teamwork, and the ability to resolve conflicts and take action.
- Different countries interpret how to become a green school, with the U.S. being motivated by cost savings and enrichment.
- A successful green school involves a combination of environmental science, outdoor space, and leadership.



CREATING THE IDEAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT +

Understanding Content Connection

- Traditional teaching methods often struggle to connect content to prior learning and life experiences.
- Students should be engaged and enthusiastic about their learning, with sustainability as the underlying theme.

Green School Programs

- Green school programs promote a whole-school approach to sustainability, providing students with life-building skills like critical thinking, communication, leadership, social skills, and conflict resolution.
- Readington Middle School (RMS) is an example of a green school model, promoting student-led, inquiry-based learning, research, and action.

Green School Projects

- Students at RMS are promoting a hydroponic system for plant cultivation, studying nutrients and plant growth over time
- The project was submitted to the ePals-Smithsonian Invent-it Challenge and won.
- Students also repurpose Styrofoam trays in their cafeteria to be used in the seed lab.



UNDERSTANDING GREEN SCHOOLS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

- In the U.S., schools are motivated by cost savings and enrichment, while also supporting enrichment and the “educational experience” for students.
- Australia Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI) integrates existing environmental and social education programs and resources into a coordinated framework.
- Taiwan has developed the Greenschool Partnership Network (GPN) to establish environmental literacy, greening school campuses, and promoting active learning.
- Germany implemented the German Curriculum Framework for Global Development Learning (OR)/Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in 2016



CHARACTERISTICS OF A GREEN SCHOOL



- Green schools can be created by emphasizing a diverse set of goals, including a physical plant (reducing environmental impacts and costs), health and wellness, and curriculum (environmental and sustainability literacy).
- The main goals of green schools are to teach students to be problem solvers, lifelong learners, and passionate community leaders.
- School leadership is needed to make advances on green school initiatives, and when teachers, parents, and community members collaborate, the green school can become the pride of the local community.



NET-ZERO ENERGY BUILDING CONCEPTS



- Net-zero energy building concepts aim to generate as much energy as they consume annually, achieving a net-zero energy balance.
- Key aspects include energy efficiency through high-performance insulation, energy-efficient appliances, and advanced building systems.
- Renewable energy generation, such as solar panels, wind turbines, or other renewable energy sources, is also a key component.
- Innovative design strategies like passive solar design, building orientation, shading, and ventilation optimization are used to enhance energy efficiency and renewable energy generation.
- The Bullitt Center in Seattle, Washington, is an example of a net-zero energy building, combining solar panels, geothermal heating and cooling, and advanced energy-efficient technologies.

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