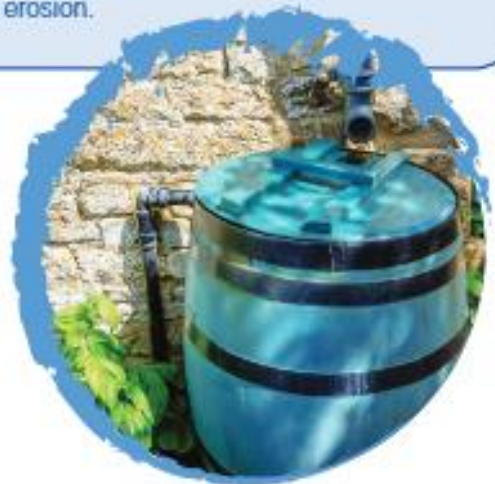


Water Action Project Ideas

Here are just a few ideas to help get you started. You can check out what other PLT GreenSchools are doing by watching PLT's short video *GreenSchools in Action: Water* (available on PLT's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/ProjectLearningTree>) and by reading stories posted at www.plt.org/teacher-stories.

- Encourage others to conserve water through poster contests, school TV broadcasts, local TV broadcasts, school and local newspaper articles, persuasive essays, public service announcements, poetry, posters, and assemblies.
- Install signs in all restrooms that encourage water conservation.
- Work with school administrators to install low-flow faucets, toilet tanks, and showerheads.
- Work with school administrators to install automatic or sensor faucets to reduce water waste.
- Investigate and repair leaking fixtures (with the help of school maintenance staff members or a custodian).
- Install rain barrels to capture rain runoff from roofs and gutters for use in school and community gardens.
- Install a rooftop garden to capture rain and to reduce runoff.
- Use mulch around schoolyard plants and gardens to conserve water.
- Plant native vegetation, which needs less watering because it is adapted to local rainfall amounts and climate.
- Build a rain garden to capture runoff and improve the health of your local watershed.
- If grassy areas must be watered, encourage watering during the cooler parts of the day to minimize water evaporation loss.
- Use drip irrigation systems rather than conventional sprinklers to conserve water.
- Encourage the sweeping of sidewalks and parking lots instead of using running water to clean them.
- Sponsor or join a stream clean-up event.
- Volunteer to help your city mark storm sewers with "No Dumping" signs, reminding people that the water that enters these drains ends up in the local body of water.
- Plant native trees and plants next to streams or bodies of water.
- Plant trees to intercept and clean water and prevent erosion.



Energy Project Action Ideas

Here are just a few ideas to help get you started. You can check out what other PLT GreenSchools are doing by watching PLT's short video [GreenSchools in Action: Energy](#) (available on PLT's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/ProjectLearningTree>) and by reading stories posted at www.plt.org/teacher-stories.

- Form a student energy patrol to educate others about how students can save energy at school and at home.
- Plant trees at appropriate places around your school to reduce heating and cooling costs.
- Make posters to inform others about energy-saving practices, such as turning off lights and unplugging appliances that are not in use.
- Adjust lighting in classrooms to take advantage of natural lighting.
- Insulate windows to prevent drafts and save energy.
- Use power strips to minimize the phantom energy load loss or unplug appliances that are not in use.
- Educate others about the importance of checking classroom air vents to make sure that the airflow around heating and cooling vents is kept clear.
- Adjust the heating or air conditioning thermostat to reduce energy use.
- Encourage the school to use fluorescent or LED lights if this change has not been implemented.
- Encourage the school to install vending machine misers to save energy.
- Install motion sensors in lower-use areas such as bathrooms and locker rooms to ensure that lights are only on when the room is occupied.
- Delamp (or reduce the number of light bulbs) in areas where the quantity of light exceeds recommendations.
- Ensure that HVAC filters are inspected every month and replaced or cleaned as needed, especially during peak heating or cooling months.
- In summer, set thermostats between 74° and 78°F when the building is occupied. At the end of the day or beginning of a holiday or weekend, set thermostats to 78°–80°F, but NEVER TURN THEM OFF. During winter, set thermostats between 68° and 72°F. Keep temperatures appropriate if there are plants and/or animals in classrooms.
- Keep windows and doors closed to help conserve energy (in the form of heat or cool air) in the classroom. When there is little difference between the outside and inside temperatures, open windows and doors will not have much effect on energy consumption.



Environmental Quality Action Project Ideas

Here are just a few ideas to help get you started. You can check out what other PLT GreenSchools are doing by watching PLT's short video [GreenSchools in Action: Environmental Quality](#) (available on PLT's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/ProjectLearningTree>) and by reading stories posted at www.plt.org/teacher-stories.

A. Transportation

- Develop a "no idling" campaign for buses and cars near your school; hand out fact sheets or note cards to drivers explaining why idling is harmful.
- Have a poster contest that encourages carpooling.
- Sponsor a walk- or bike-to-school day.

B. Indoor Air Quality

- Work with school administrators to reduce possible allergen triggers in the classrooms.
- Investigate the consequences of high CO₂ levels on student learning and overall health.
- Develop a policy to ensure that ventilation and humidity levels are appropriate to prevent the growth of molds and mildew.

C. Cleaning and VOCs

- Create a "no clutter" policy for your school or district.
- Investigate green cleaning techniques and procedures to limit exposure to toxic chemicals and fumes, which will often save money and time as well.
- Work with the janitorial staff to implement ideas.

D. Hazardous Materials

- Work with school administrators to phase out mercury in your school, including mercury in equipment such as thermometers and thermostats.
- If mercury-containing equipment or devices must be kept, label them so they are properly handled.
- Become familiar with the school's mercury use and storage practices. If mercury is located in your school, you can work to become a "mercury-free school." For further information on mercury in schools, visit www.epa.gov/hg/schools.htm.
- Petition the school to begin purchasing only TCLP (Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure)-certified fluorescent bulbs.
- Work with school administrators to encourage the use of green cleaning products that do not expose students and staff members to toxic chemicals.
- Work with school staff to adopt the use of Integrated Pest Management in order to reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides on school grounds.
- Write articles for the school newsletter or develop a school news show that explains the importance of safely handling chemicals at school and at home.

School Site Action Project Ideas

Here are just a few ideas to help get you started. You can check out what other PLT GreenSchools are doing by watching PLT's short video *GreenSchools in Action: School Site* (available on PLT's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/ProjectLearningTree>) and by reading stories posted at www.plt.org/teacher-stories.

- Planting trees—and caring for them!
- Creating an outdoor classroom.
- Establishing vegetable gardens to study science, math, and other core subjects; to grow nutritious food; and to teach healthy eating habits.
- Planting a pollinator garden (many of the plants that produce our food rely on pollinators!)
- Building a container garden, indoor herb garden, or rooftop garden.
- Improving wildlife habitat by planting a butterfly garden, hanging bird nesting boxes, or adding bird baths.
- Building a rain garden to improve the health of your local watershed.
- Constructing a wildlife observation site.
- Building a nature trail or a fitness trail.
- Working with maintenance staff to establish environmentally friendly and sustainable management practices for the grounds.



Waste and Recycling Action Project Ideas

Here are just a few ideas to help get you started. You can check out what other PLT GreenSchools are doing by watching PLT's short video *GreenSchools in Action: Waste & Recycling* (available on PLT's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/ProjectLearningTree>) and by reading stories posted at www.plt.org/teacher-stories.

- Reduce paper waste—for example, by photocopying and printing on both sides of paper and by saving scrap paper for notes and art projects.
- Reduce cafeteria waste—for example, by using less Styrofoam, by serving food on reusable trays, and by using metal utensils instead of disposable ones.
- As your school reduces the amount of waste produced, dumpsters may no longer be full when waste is picked up. "Right size" the dumpsters by selecting the appropriate size. This will give your school the best value from the waste hauling service.
- Start a recycling program, or increase recycling efforts and the types of items that are recycled.
- Start or increase composting efforts.
- Implement grasscycling, the practice of leaving grass clippings on a lawn to compost and to nourish the grass.
- Reuse items—for example, by organizing an exchange day for students to swap items they are no longer using such as sports equipment, clothes, CDs, posters, and so forth.
- Encourage students across the whole school to use refillable water bottles, reusable lunch boxes or cloth bags, and reusable containers.
- Have an end-of-school year locker and desk cleanout and have students donate unwanted items to a local charity or needy school.
- Educate others about reducing waste, recycling, and composting through flyers, posters, articles in the school newspaper, skits, assemblies, and school announcements.

