



## U.S. GREEN SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

1



**Educate students!** This is a school's number one role in going green: change the mindset and behavior of the next generation. Schools should teach students about global warming, climate change, renewable resources and all of the exciting technologies utilizing these, about recycling of solid wastes and water, and about green building.

2



**Build Green.** Make all necessary building renovations or new buildings green. Building green means complying with green building standards such as LEED (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design), administered by the U.S. Green Building Council. By meeting these standards schools can create a healthy environment that is conducive to learning while saving energy, resources and money.

3



**Change the lights.** According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), if every home in America replaced just one incandescent light bulb with an Energy Star compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL), in one year it would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes. That would prevent the release of greenhouse gas emissions equal to that of about 800,000 cars. Schools represent the largest non-residential building sector and replacing the bulbs would have an enormous impact. For information on the safety of these bulbs, [see the EPA article](#).

4



**Reduce Paper.** Minimize the use of paper in handouts to parents. In many cases parent communications can occur through email. When printing is necessary, use both sides of the paper.

5



**Recycle and Reuse.** Recycling can include traditional recycling pickup of paper, metal, and glass products, as well as composting associated with a gardening program. Schools can recycle their printer cartridges, and earn money for the school for doing so through organizations such as [Planet Green](http://www.planetgreen.org). Schools can go further and involve the community by creating art projects such as a mosaic mural out of recycled materials from chipped coffee mugs, cracked china, and other non-porous items that ordinarily would have been headed for the garbage can.

6



**Grow a garden,** and integrate gardening into the curriculum. School gardens give students a wonderful outdoor botany laboratory, as well as education in sustainable environments, local growing seasons, and the nutritional value of locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs.

7



**Stop Idling.** Rethink student transportation. Bus and car idling in parking lots leads to high levels of emissions into the atmosphere, so set up the pickup and drop off to minimize idling time. Schools or their booster clubs can help by setting up carpool groups. Encourage students to ride their bikes or walk.

8



**Eat Organic.** Engage caterers for student lunches that use local and organically raised foods. Great for the environment, healthy for the kids, and even an exciting learning opportunity.

9



**Conserve Energy.** Turn off computers at the end of the day. Many schools have large computer labs, and turning them off, rather than leaving them in hibernation mode, can make a significant difference to electricity consumption.

10



**Use biodegradable** cups and utensils for class parties and snack time; keep a stash of biodegradable plates and utensils.

**Sarita Douglas**, Co-Founder and Program Director of the U.S. Green Schools Foundation ([www.usgreenschools.org](http://www.usgreenschools.org)). The mission of the U.S. Green Schools Foundation is to provide consulting services and grants to enhance the energy efficiency and environmental sustainability of K-12 schools, and to enrich K-12 curricula by providing educational resources related to the energy efficiency and environmental sustainability of schools.

