

September 19, 2024

Greetings, ESAC members and friends of AISD Sustainability,

Please see below for the latest highlights of sustainability news and info from our AISD staff and ESAC subcommittee and working group leaders.

ESAC members, we look forward to seeing you at our **in-person ESAC meeting on September 19, 2024** (5:50-7:30 pm at Sanchez Elementary School)!



Welcome Back, ESAC!

- We are excited to begin the 2024-25 school year!
- You should have received invitations for all the ESAC meetings this year. All are 5:30-7:30pm. Dates:
 - September 19, 2024 (in-person)
 - November 14, 2024 (virtual)
 - January 29, 2024 (virtual)
 - March 26, 2024 (virtual)
 - May 21, 2025 (in-person)
- You can always check the [ESAC website](#) for meeting dates, agendas, and materials.




ESAC Strategic Planning & Working Groups

- This is the list of [possible working group topics](#) that emerged in the 8/30 ESAC Strategic Planning Meeting.
- We will also dedicate time during the 9/19 meeting for working group leaders to share more about their topics.
- Members are highly encouraged to join at least one working group.



Welcome, Mandi Golman ,Outdoor Learning Design and Activation Specialist

- Mandi is focusing on the outdoor design for our Bond Schools and looks forward to collaborating with a great team! Click [here](#) for Mandi's bio.
-  **Outdoor Learning Specialist (part time)**
 - AISD is hiring an additional Outdoor Learning Specialist to help expand our efforts in the District. A passion for connecting children and nature, teaching experience, and being bilingual in Spanish and English are the skills we need most. The position is part time (no benefits), 15-19 hours a week, and will pay \$38.50/hour. Please help spread the word with anyone you think may be a great fit for our team!
Links: [Application link](#) | [Job Description](#)



(AISD Staff Update) Transportation (Update from Rica Sunga-Kwan, Kris Hafezizadeh, Miguel Rios)

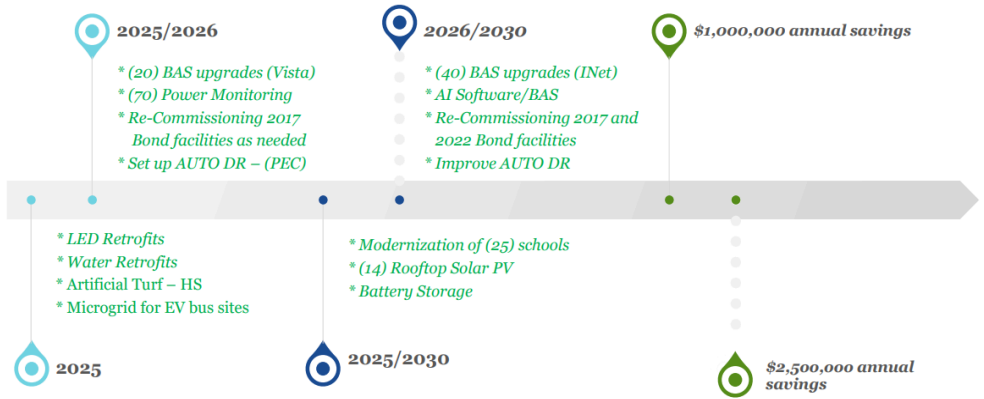
- We are in the final stages of a Request For Qualifications for a School Bus Electrification Implementation Project Manager. The selected entity will assist us in planning the transition to electric school buses.
- The current EV buses have been well received in many events like Touch-a-Truck, Bob Bullock's Free First Sundays with HEB, and the Planning for Climate Resilience: National Summit for School Leaders.
- The conversations for the modernization of Nelson Terminal, our largest bus terminal have started. Many sustainability topics will be discussed: EV bus charging stations, wellness aspects, and solar.



Energy and Water
Management Department

(AISD Staff Update) Energy & Water Updates (Update from Rey Torres)

Energy and Water Conservation Strategies and Projects



(AISD Staff Update) US Department of Energy Renew America's Schools Grant (Update from Darien Clary)

- Thanks to everyone who came out to the August 27th press conference. You can read more here:
 - [Here's how a federal grant could help Austin ISD shave \\$1.2 million in annual energy costs](#)- Statesman- Aug. 28
 - [Solar panels to be installed at 13 Austin ISD campuses](#)- KVUE- Aug. 27
 - [Austin ISD receives \\$15M grant toward solar power](#)- Community Impact- Aug.27
 - [Austin ISD named only Texas school district to get federal grant to expand solar panel program](#)- KVUE- Aug. 28
- Background: AISD was awarded \$15M from the Department of Energy for rooftop solar and/or building automation controls at 15 schools. The project will take 60 months (5 years) to fully implement. Click [here](#) for more info.



(AISD Staff Update) Sustainable Food (Update from Diane Grodek & Lindsey Bradley)

- We are excited to feature new Fall Menu items including our BBQ Drumstick served with Baked Beans and Pasta Salad, Greek Salads, BBQ Pork Tacos, Succotash, and Alfredo Vegetable Flatbreads in addition to new frozen fruit and dried fruit options.
- The Food Service Department was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Sprouts Foundation to support our sampling program that features interesting whole and prepared fruits and vegetables.
- We contracted a few new plant-based ingredients for this year including a high protein ramen noodle called Woodles, Planetarians Strips which utilize excess yeast bi-product from beer production, and we will bring back our now beloved Rebellious Vegan Tenders and Patties
- 77 Schools in Austin ISD will offer free breakfast and lunch to all students this year



(AISD Staff Update) Nature & Outdoor Learning (Update from Colleen Garland & Mandi Golman)

- With Mandi's wealth of knowledge on the team, we are able to expand our reach in the District. Mandi will focus on bond projects and facilities, while Colleen will focus on academics and campus support.
- Following a successful pilot program to host Earth Camp and Earth School at the Metz OWL last spring, CoA Watershed has kicked off this school year with a full schedule of programming to be at the OWL Center!
- As we continue to plan how to redevelop the outdoor spaces at the OWL Center, we have sought community input and feedback through informal meetings, and a survey. The survey responses can be viewed [here](#).
- The Girls+ Outside program was able to secure additional funding this year so that Westcave was able to add two more schools to the program, and hire a part time bilingual educator to support it. I'm looking forward to another incredible year adventuring with them!



(AISD Staff Update) Urban Forestry (Update from Sydnie Levell)

- Texas tree planting season is near! AISD will have four tree planting events this season at the following campuses:
 - Ann Richards School for YWL - Sponsored by HEB
 - TA Brown Elementary - hosted by TreeFolks
 - Norman Simms Elementary - hosted by Treefolks
 - Menchaca Elementary - hosted by treefolks
- New general inbox created, email trees@austinisd.org for all tree questions!



(ESAC Working Group Update) Amenity Mapping Working Group

- Group leader: Melody Alcazar + Yasmine Anderson
- Updates:
 - 29 assessments complete, 2 scheduled:
 - 1,884 total features
 - Medium - average infrastructure quality
 - Finish remaining sites by end of school year, then bi-annually
 - Data analysis and how to plug-in to come



Join Our New AI & Sustainability Working Group!

We are excited to announce the formation of our new AI & Sustainability Working Group**! This initiative will explore how AI can be harnessed to address global sustainability challenges, from climate change to resource management.

We're inviting students to get involved and contribute to innovative discussions and projects through ****AISD**** (AI for Sustainable Development) initiatives. Whether you're passionate about technology, the environment, or both, this is a fantastic opportunity to engage, collaborate, and make a positive impact.

Resources: [AISD Sustainability Website](#) | [ESAC Google Drive](#) | [ESAC Website](#) | [ESAC Subcommittees and Working Groups \(padlet\)](#) | [ESAC Working Group Notes Folders](#) | ESAC listserv: aisd_esac@googlegroups.com

(If you need access to the ESAC Google Drive or listserv, please contact darien.clary@austinisd.org)

Kind regards,
Darien Clary

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