

Greetings, ESAC members and friends of AISD Sustainability,

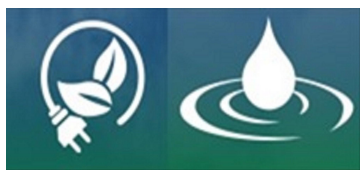
We look forward to seeing you **in person at the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders, 5:30-7:30pm tomorrow** for the first ESAC meeting of the 2023-24 school year! We will have an optional green building tour of the school after the meeting for anyone who would like to join. In advance of our meeting, please review the latest sustainability news and info from our AISD staff and ESAC subcommittee leaders.

In addition, at the ESAC meeting we will be discussing and potentially voting on [this letter](#) regarding the joint use status of nine School Parks slated for modernization. Please read the letter in advance of our meeting and come prepared with your thoughts and questions. (For reference, please see the [list of sites](#) being discussed and the current [Joint Use Agreement](#).) This letter was drafted by the Joint Use Agreement ESAC Working Group, led by ESAC member Melody Alcazar. Time permitting, we will vote on whether the ESAC supports sending this letter to Interim Superintendent Matias and the AISD Board of Trustees. Thank you, Melody and everyone who helped to draft the Joint Use Agreement letter!



Federal Funding for Solar Panels & HVAC Controls

- AISD is currently in negotiations with the Department of Energy regarding the Renew America's Schools grant. A final award amount will not be confirmed until negotiations are complete, but the award amount could be up to nearly \$15 million.
- The funding and scope could change, but the grant proposal includes 16 AISD schools (11 receiving solar panels, 2 receiving building automation controls, and 3 receiving both).
- We estimate that once complete, these projects will provide an annual savings of 10,094,827 KWh, 15,768,120 pounds of CO2 emissions, and \$1,250,575 for the district.
- AISD will invest at least 25% of budgeted dollars in minority and small local businesses across the project period.



Energy and Water
Management Department

Energy & Water Updates

- [Energy and Water Stats](#) (click in the link, please)
- Energy and Water Conservation Training is being provided across Austin ISD.
- Discussion of constraints and pros in Energy and Water Conservation, and methods to improve behavior at campuses.
- For the first time in AISD, all 6th graders were enrolled and received Energy All-Star kits during SY 22-23. First to finish was Blazier Intermediate, and applied for the mini-grant. Energy Conservation Engagement will keep working in promoting this initiative during SY 23-24.
- AISD and E&W curved the energy consumption cost during May 2023 by 150K USD, in comparison to prior year 21-22, during the second consecutive year of record high temperatures in Texas.



Food Updates

- This Fall we are featuring locally produced mmmpanadas, made in from Niederwald, Texas on our menus. We worked with this company to produce a K-12 compliant beef empanada with excellent ingredients and whole grains. Check them out in our Cafes and in HEB!
- We are now offering new entrees featuring Rebellious Kickin' Tenders, which are a plant-based Vegan option
- We will bring back our daily Sunbutter and Jelly Sandwiches at all Elementary Schools as an additional Vegan option
- Other new Fall menu items include Greek Bowls, Orange Chicken, Chicken Tamales, and Veggie Potstickers
- We are also featuring local watermelon, zucchini and squash from Fredericksburg, Texas and Edinburg, Texas
- We are proud to report that the self-serve and sustainability initiatives we rolled out last school year yielded great results!
 - We reduced the number of single serve fruit trays by 1.97 million units, saving the department \$11,000.
 - We reduced the number of compostable trays by 867,000 units, saving the department \$20,000



Nature Updates

- We have a new part-time Outdoor Learning Specialist! Amanda Braziel joins us with 20 years of experience in AISD as a teacher, a librarian, and a campus green champion. She also works part time as a Youth Educator for the City of Austin Watershed protection. Wearing both hats is immensely valuable for greening our schools!
- The AISD Science and Health Resource Center has moved to the former Metz Elementary, meaning that Discovery Hill is no longer our home. Stay tuned for updates as we dream toward a new outdoor learning center at Metz!
- Amanda secured funding through the Austin Ed Fund to restore and grow the peace garden in the courtyard at Metz "Coming to our Senses on the Path of Least Resistance" project will provide a pathway for healing and sensory exploration in the beloved Metz courtyard.
- With AISD's outdoor learning center in transition this year, field trips will be limited. Amanda and I will instead focus on building relationships within the District and supporting campuses in getting kids outside.
- Girls+ Outside is recruiting 4 new schools this year in an effort to better align with our equity goals, and pair schools that share communities through the same vertical teams.
- Sanchez Green School Park will hold their ribbon cutting ceremony on October 27 from 11:00am - 12:00pm.



Zero Waste & Procurement Updates

- Training is being provided to all AISD Housekeeping staff at the Metz location, and per request of any member of AISD.
- ZW Assessment of Schools.
- Discussion of methods to make more efficient the waste sorting at AISD: Equity, funding, and cooperation.
- Zero Waste: Myths and Facts
- ZW Lead has worked together with procurement in the correction of bills for waste management



Transportation & Air Quality Updates

- Our first charging stations are in! The Southeast Bus Terminal is the pilot site for our first 3 electric school buses. The buses will arrive in mid September. Zero emissions here we come!
- This summer, we received rebate grant approvals totaling \$1,015,000 from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. We are awaiting approval notifications on 2 more grants - the TxVemp Grant and the EPA Clean School Bus Grant. These funds will be used to purchase more electric school buses and charging infrastructure.
- The initial conversations about the Nelson Terminal modernization project have begun. The new bus terminal will be designed with a full electric bus fleet in mind. The terminal supervisors requested to include an element of employee health and wellness in the building design.
- We are reducing paper usage in our internal process by redesigning our Extra Duty applications, reducing the yearly amount of paper applications by 70% with smart and simple design.



Equity & Community Engagement Updates

- Last year, the Equity & Community Engagement subcommittee looked at ways to make our committee more diverse and representative of the community that we serve. The hope is that, if we have more diverse representation and provide a more inclusive environment, then we can be more confident that the recommendations we offer and the activities we spend time on will align with the environmental sustainability priorities of our school communities. We're excited by the composition of our new slate of ESAC members this school year and look forward to what comes next!
- We are starting the year with 35 of 42 voting member positions filled, and 4 more positions expected to be filled within the next week.
- We are still recruiting for 2 AISD teachers and 1 AISD non-teaching staff position. If you know of any AISD teachers or staff who would be a good fit, please share the [ESAC application](#)!

Kind regards,
Darien Clary & Lucia Sewing Cole