



Conserving our natural resources through education, demonstration, and collaboration.

Green Schools Program Performing Energy Audits at Local Schools

The [Sustainable Sandhills Green Schools Program](#) is working with local schools to save money and energy. The program teaches earth-friendly behaviors and assists schools in realizing cost savings from energy and water conservation and reductions in solid waste disposal. The program is a partnership involving students, teachers, administrators, custodians, and parents that is aligned with existing curricula. Through hands-on activities – including recycling, composting, reducing vehicle idling time, planting school gardens, and tracking energy and water usage -- the program encourages and rewards environmentally responsible behaviors that will last a lifetime.



Moving from air conditioning to heat for the cold weather, night audits of classrooms are assessing areas of energy waste. The audits are a joint effort between Sustainable Sandhills and the Cumberland County School's Energy Department and HVAC, plumbing, and electrical. To accurately determine energy use, employees are encouraged

to leave appliances, computers, and lights as they normally would, even though they know an audit is being performed. The primary areas assessed are lights, technical equipment such as Smartboards and ELMO projectors, and computer equipment. Contact with the school's custodial staff is key to a successful audit. Custodians often see trends in energy usage and can identify appliances or practices which waste energy when staff members are not

present. Small classroom refrigerators are a good example of this; they cool and freeze 24/7, regardless of whether school is in session.



The Green Schools Program Coordinator also assesses the sustainability plan for each school and offers suggestions on reducing energy and solid waste. The recommendations can include opening or closing blinds to either utilize passive solar heating or decrease heat loss in a classroom. Taking advantage of natural light during the day can also decrease energy expenditure on fluorescent lights.

Recycling initiatives are another important aspect of the Green Schools Program. While picking up recycling costs nothing for our school system, each school is charged every time its trash dumpster is lifted. The Sustainable Sandhills Green Schools Program encourages all schools to become stewards of the earth by decreasing their school's footprint in the county and steadily reducing their energy and solid waste.

To learn more about Sustainable Sandhills Green Schools Program, please contact Program Coordinator Gloria Lengel (glorial@sustainablesandhills.org) in Cumberland County or Kea Meacham (keam@sustainablesanshills.org) in Moore County.