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## Media Toolkit

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Engaging the media to elevate sustainability and the transition to  
renewable energy at your school

Prepared by Friends Initiative to Reach Sustainability Together  
(FIRST)

Friends Council on Education

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## **Introduction**

Friends' schools have an opportunity to lead by example in clean energy and sustainability practices. This is especially true when we are visible in local, regional, and national media. News coverage across formats keeps families, communities and local leaders up to date on advances we are making and informs public understanding on issues related to sustainability and the climate crisis. When our schools engage the media, it is an opportunity to elevate the need for climate action, connect with new audiences, and increase your school's recognition and role as a leader.

Ideally your school already has a staff person assigned to communications. This person may handle all aspects of the school's in-house publications as well as public facing media relations. Social media is a moving target, and you will have to decide which platforms you wish to use. Each school will want to assess what approaches work best for them. In this document we will review options on four approaches: 1) in-house publications 2) relations with news and social media; 3) Friends Council on Education communications; and 4) topics and events to generate interest and awareness.

## **In-house publications**

Most schools have a variety of in-house publications. Examples include:

- Newsletters
- Principal and/or Head letters home
- Alumni publications
- Admissions materials
- Development materials – fundraising pitches
- Open house materials
- Board Meeting reports
- Annual Reports
- Mission or sustainability statements

Your sustainability and clean energy actions are important to keep front and center with your extended school family. Increasingly, young people and their families are looking for institutions that are forward looking and aligning their operations with their values. Parents also understand that schools will integrate the new technologies needed for clean, renewable energy in the child's education. Many also care deeply about creating the safest, healthiest environment for their child and will want to know what steps are being taken to promote indoor air quality, limit exposure from toxins in food and on the grounds, etc. Some of your alumni are now grandparents and feel deep concern about the legacy they are leaving the next generation of students. In short, think about your audience and highlight your action, your spiritual and ethical motives, and the short and long term benefits of your actions. Building a yearlong calendar to highlight energy efficient operations, renewable energy procurement, new green construction, student led activities, school wide celebration of national or international days related to energy and sustainability will create a sense of your sustained commitment.

## Public facing media

There are now two forms of public media that schools can take advantage of. The first is the conventional media – generally local papers, radio or television coverage. (The second form, social media, will be discussed below.) For the purpose of mainstream media, you will most often use press advisories (which let the media know you have something coming up) and press releases (which effectively tell your story relating to an event, announcement, etc.).

Back in the day, these were print documents. Now they are usually sent to the newspaper by email. You can send the text within the body of the email and send it as an attachment, along with any images you are including. These days it is entirely possible that a local paper will print your press release with little or no editing. For this reason, you need to ensure that the message is accurate and informative – making the key points you want made and shows your strengths as a school.

Press advisories are generally sent a week before an event so the newspaper can determine if they want to send a reporter or call you for an interview. The press release is usually sent the day of an event or announcement. Timing of when a press release is sent will vary depending on the media outlet it is being sent to. If you want coverage of the event or announcement before it happens the press release can go before. This is recommended for smaller news outlets without reporting staff that will just run your press release as is.

According to one source, “**Tuesday** is the best time to send your press release, followed by **Thursday**. The worst day to send your PR is on **Friday**. Similarly, the best time to send your press release is early in the morning – at 9:00 am to be exact, or later in the day at 8:00pm.”

### When to use a press release

There are two items that can be sent to the media. 1) Press release and 2) media alert. A press release has written content that a media outlet can use and print as is for a short article. A media alert is a one pager that is essentially an invitation to the media to come cover an event, It includes date, time, event name with brief description, location, contact info. These are some of the contexts in which it would be appropriate to use a press release:

When you want to:

- announce or introduce specific plans or decisions (a new LEED building, a new renewable energy contract, installation of a new composting system, etc.)
- highlight positive results (energy savings achieved, award winning LEED building, student farm producing food for the dining room, etc.).
- draw attention to your values (announcing signing the Green School Alliance pledge, celebrating Earth Day, a walk-to-school campaign, public support for new state policies to protect children’s health, student participation in a community stream clean-up, testimony at a Clean Air Hearing on behalf of the school community, etc.).
- invite the community to an event or report on an event you are hosting or participating in

## **Writing tips:**

- Keep it positive
- Keep your language active, avoid the passive form.
- Emphasize what is good about your school rather than commenting negatively or comparing yourself to others
- The quotations are ones you create, which allow you to communicate key messages you want included
- Feel free to borrow ideas from other schools – if you see a great angle for a story about student projects, new policies or programs, adapt it for your own use. Let’s learn from each other!
- Generally, keep your press release to 300-350 words.

## **The Format**

- Top left hand of page : your logo, contact information and date
- An informative, brief and ideally, eye catching title
- A subheading that is also brief and gives a little more content to attract interest
- The name of your location followed by a dash – and the first paragraph.
- A first paragraph which includes all the necessary information for your story (who, what, when and why)
- A quotation from a spokesperson on the importance of what was said in paragraph 1. This should build interest in your story or activity.
- A second paragraph which expands on that information as needed. This can include some background on your school and any of the individuals being highlighted.
- A third paragraph which includes a quotation from a relevant person – staff, teacher, parent, student, community member with a focus on positive impact.
- A fourth paragraph which includes any further action which the readers may be interested in OR a couple sentences that expand on what the person quoted has shared and why their perspective matters.
- 3 centered hashtags # # # which indicate the text is complete
- An “About” section follows where you can provide a brief description of the school or any co-sponsoring organizations with contact details and other sources of information such as links to relevant web sites.

Use images or photos to illustrate your story because it is unlikely a photographer will be sent to the school, even if someone covers the story from the paper. Always provide a caption to show that the picture is relevant.

## Friends Council on Education Communications

Friends Council in Education has several communications channels through which Friends Schools may share news about their clean energy and sustainability efforts.

- **Chronicles of Quaker Education** - 8 page print publication, 1-2 times per year. Stories run 300-500 words and can include 1-2 photos.
- **QuakerEd News E-newsletter** - currently a monthly e-newsletter released at the end of each month to a subscribership of 2000+ individuals and organizations.
- **Featured News Stories** - News stories featured on Friends Council on Education's home page in the "Featured News" window.
- **Website News Stories** - With a new website platform in May 2019, Friends Council has the ability to post news stories of varying types throughout our website. Friends Council is interested in receiving short news stories from schools about their work in sustainability and clean energy.
- **Social Media**
  - **Twitter** - Friends Council's Twitter feed is @FriendsCouncil. Schools are invited to tag @FriendsCouncil and also use the hashtags #QuakerEd and #ThisIsQuakerEd. Friends Council will aim to like, retweet and comment!
  - **Facebook** - Friends Council on Education's Facebook page is @friendscounciloneducation. Schools are invited to tag the page when posting to draw FCE's attention to their posts on sustainability and clean energy. Friends Council will aim to like, share and comment!
  - **YouTube** - [www.youtube.com/user/FriendsCouncil](http://www.youtube.com/user/FriendsCouncil)

### To share your school news with Friends Council on Education:

- Add Friends Council on Education to the school media list. Send school press releases and media alerts to Friends Council on Education at [news@friendscouncil.org](mailto:news@friendscouncil.org).
- Story ideas for Chronicles of Quaker Education, QuakerEd News E-Newsletter or Featured News can be sent to Friends Council on Education at [news@friendscouncil.org](mailto:news@friendscouncil.org) or to Betsy Torg at [betsy@friendscouncil.org](mailto:betsy@friendscouncil.org).

### Coming soon!

Friends Council on Education recently transitioned to a new website platform in May 2019. With this new platform, there may be a shift in how you can send your sustainability and clean energy news to Friends Council on Education. Stay tuned for more information coming soon in the summer of 2019.

## **Topics and events to generate interest and awareness**

While the focus of this effort is to create a positive profile of your school based on your efforts in sustainability and renewable energy, communications and public relation topics abound for schools, as do resources. One resource aimed at the role of the principal, with some specific examples, is Education World's article, [\*PR for Principals\*](#)

To build your reputation as an environmental steward and sustain visibility it helps to plan media relations throughout the year. Below are some occasions that could warrant sending out a press release. Schools are also invited to send their press release to Friends Council on Education at [news@friendscouncil.org](mailto:news@friendscouncil.org) for all of the topics listed below (see section 3 below for more details of sharing your sustainability and clean energy news with Friends Council on Education).

### *Community wide school events related to sustainability and renewable energy*

- Ribbon cuttings for new projects
- Plaque and signage dedications for completed projects
- Clean energy open houses, tours
- Earth Day celebrations, other national days celebrated on campus
- Student presentations, clean energy event
- School events co-sponsored by your community
- Sustainability/Green School awards
- School/utility events
- Parent/grandparent days
- Commissioning a new or retrofitted building
- Special guest/lecturer related to sustainability and renewable energy

### *Installations or purchases, or assessments of success*

- Renewable energy purchasing (RECs)
- Renewable energy procurement renewals – new contracts
- Solar energy installations
- Wind energy purchases or installations
- Electric Vehicle chargers
- Electric Vehicle purchases
- Geothermal, heat pumps
- Advanced lighting (LEDs, automatic controls)
- Contracting for a new green building
- Other energy efficiency measures
- Pervious parking areas

### *Policies approved*

- Mission statements including sustainability and renewable energy targets
- No-idling policies
- Membership in the Green School Alliance and your level of commitment

- Committing to a vehicle policy to replace combustion engine vehicles (campus vehicles, vans and buses)

*Student focused activities*

- Student engagement in monitoring and assessment activities
- Student exhibits, student video releases
- Guest speakers or visiting faculty
- Additions to environmental science curriculum or other departments

*School Alumni or Faculty engagement in areas of sustainability and clean energy renewal:*

- Profiles of alumni engaged in sustainability or clean energy renewal efforts: careers, awards, speaking engagements, books
- Profiles of faculty engaged in sustainability or clean energy renewal efforts

Sample press advisories and press release can be found in the appendix.



## Social Media Tools

There are many online toolkits on how to use social media. One that we found helpful is from the Administration for Native Americans. It includes samples of successful and unsuccessful use of social media. Rather than including long excerpts we are providing a [link for this resource](#). The following very general recommendations are adapted from *Social Media Better Buildings U.S. Department of Energy*

### Social Network Platforms

#### FACEBOOK EXAMPLES

Lansdowne Friends School commits to purchase 100% Renewable Electricity ([link to school webpage](#))

Buckingham Friends is EV Friendly – installing 4 new EV charging stations. ([link to school webpage](#))

#### THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS PLATFORM

Facebook is built for readers to filter content.

Your content will reach only about 6% of your fans (unless you pay for advertising.)

Facebook has one of the largest digital ad platforms in existence with a potential audience of 1.3 billion people. Size of audience reach is important to take into consideration when determining use of an advertising budget.

#### HOW TO USE THIS PLATFORM WELL

Add pictures to improve engagement (i.e., likes, comments, click-throughs)

Add links to drive more people to your content.

Upload video directly to Facebook. Video uploaded natively in Facebook outperforms video that is shared from YouTube.

Aim for a broad audience, with “broad” being relative. Almost everyone is on Facebook. Even a pretty niche demographic is likely to have tens or even hundreds of thousands of people in it.

#### TWITTER EXAMPLES

West Chester Friends School: “Don’t forget Renewable Energy Tour this Sat 5/9 at noon-4pm. Educational opportunity for all! [http: . . .](#)”

Media-Providence Friends School Goes Solar: [http:// . . .](#) ([link to press release](#))

#### THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS PLATFORM

Twitter is ephemeral, even by the standards of the Internet. The average lifespan of a tweet is between 20 seconds and a couple of hours. Only 6% of tweets are ever retweeted, and 97% of those retweets happen within the first hour.

Twitter is not particularly good at driving traffic to website content, but it is very good at starting conversations.

Twitter needs lots of care and feeding. Tweets have to be spontaneous and frequent to work. Most programs should expect to devote at least an hour a day (and probably closer to 10 to 12 per week) to your social accounts, with most of that going to Twitter.

#### HOW TO USE THIS PLATFORM WELL

Post frequently and do not be afraid to repost the same content. Around 14 times per day is a decent rule of thumb.

Pay attention to the ongoing conversations that are happening so that you will know when you have something to add.

## **Appendix**

1. Examples of news stories from other Friends schools
2. Sample media advisory
3. Press release advisory samples
  - a. On EVs and EV chargers
  - b. On efficiency
  - c. Policy
  - d. On procurement
  - e. On renewable energy installations
  - f. On green new buildings or retrofits
4. Sample press releases for local media from different sustainability/education sources

## **1. Examples of news stories from other Friends schools**

Campus event example

[Oakwood Friends –solar array/alumni day](#)

[Campus hosts FEEN and gets coverage for energy efficiency – Buckingham Friends](#)

Campus publications/blogs

[Oakwood Friends – sustainability web page “Going Green”](#)

[Sustainability webpage Friends Central](#)

[Stewardship Page Carolina Friends](#)

Solar installations

[Oakwood Friends – solar installation](#)

<https://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/news/local/2016/01/05/oakwood-friends-school->

[Mullica Hill blog on their webpage and reaching 100% renewable electricity](#)

[Sandy Spring Friends installs solar](#)

[Solar energy Friends School of Portland](#)

Examples of kick-off / announcement/ribbon cutting

[Mullica Hill launches solar](#)

[Oakwood Friends – solar installation](#)

[Sandy Spring has begun using the sun for savings](#)

[Delaware Valley Friends Throws the Switch](#)

Examples of educational benefits

[Wilmington Friends ties renewable energy to classroom](#)

Example of Financial Benefits

[Case study US Dept of Energy: Friends School of Portland](#)

[Making Solar Affordable Sandy Spring Friends \(p.4\)](#)

[Innovative Financing Sidwell Friends](#)

Examples of Procurement Contracts

[Friends School Baltimore announces 100% renewable energy procurement](#)

Example of awards, grants, rebates, memberships

[Westtown solar grant](#)

[Press on joining Green Schools Alliance](#) – not a Friends school example

LEED and other building standards

[Sidwell Friends Middle school](#)

[Friends School Portland](#)

[Germantown Science Building](#)

Friends Council on Education sites

[Chronicles of Quaker Education – It's Great Being Green](#)

[Chronicles of Quaker Education – Minding the Light](#)

Resources for background on renewable energy and schools

[Solar energy for schools](#)

[Solar United Neighbors](#)

[Green Power Partnership](#) (Sidwell and others listed)

[Solar Foundation - resources](#)

[Green schools conference](#)

[Green Schools Alliance](#)

[Energy Star for schools](#)

Friends Council on Education sites

[Chronicles of Quaker Education – It's Great Being Green](#)

[Chronicles of Quaker Education – Minding the Light](#)

## 2. Sample Media Advisory

### MEDIA ADVISORY FOR AN EVENT

#### YOUR LOGO GOES HERE

DATE:

#### CONTACT:

[Name]

[Phone number]

[Email address]

**[School Name]**

*National day of awareness to highlight benefits of energy efficiency*

**WHAT:** On October 5, 2018, [school] will join a national network of advocates, companies, government agencies, utilities and others to showcase the benefits of energy efficiency as part of the third annual national Energy Efficiency Day ([www.energyefficiencyday.org](http://www.energyefficiencyday.org)).

The message of Energy Efficiency Day is simple: “Save energy. Save money.” Social media content will be shared under the hashtag #EEDay2018. Cities, counties, and states are officially declaring Energy Efficiency Day with proclamations.

**WHEN:** Friday, October 5, 2018 at *[Insert specific time if relevant]*

**WHERE:** *[Your school’s address where spokespeople will be available for in-person interviews]*

**WHO:** *[Name(s) of your school key spokespeople available for interviews]*

Schools, organizations, companies, government agencies and others will promote energy efficiency through social media messaging and other content. The growing list includes states, cities, utility commissions, utilities, government agencies, companies plus a long list of nonprofit advocacy organizations working throughout the country.

#### **Background:**

Energy efficiency is the cheapest, quickest way to meet our energy needs, cut consumer bills and reduce pollution. Energy efficiency is also an economic engine, supporting 2.25 million jobs nationwide in manufacturing, construction and other fields – most of which can’t be outsourced overseas.

### 3. Press release advisory samples

**YOUR LOGO GOES HERE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE

Contact: [Name]

[Phone number]

[Email address]

#### **[School Name] receives approval for new EV Charger Rebates**

[YOUR CITY NAME] — [School name] will be the first school in [location] to install charging stations for electric vehicles on their campus. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection approved an installation rebate for [School name] as part of a state program for zero-emission vehicle charging and fueling stations. The funding comes from Pennsylvania's \$118 million settlement with Volkswagen Group of America for cheating on EPA emissions tests.

"Electric vehicles reduce air pollution that can trigger asthma attacks and other health issues, especially in children and elderly residents. Reducing tailpipe emissions also helps Pennsylvania attain and maintain air quality standards," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. "I'm excited to make electric vehicles more feasible for Pennsylvania residents by expanding the network of charging stations available."

"Electric vehicles are beginning to take off in [location or region]," said [name and title], who drives an electric car himself. "As a Friends school, we are committed to modeling environmental stewardship. By making EV chargers available, we can begin to achieve cleaner air and meet state goals for reducing dangerous greenhouse gas pollution," he continued.

The rebates are available through Gov. Tom Wolf's Driving PA Forward initiative, which aims to permanently reduce nitrogen oxide (NOx) pollution from vehicles by encouraging people to consider these clean vehicles as a viable option. The U.S. Department of Energy reports that more than [25 plug-in electric vehicle models](#) are currently available in the U.S. [More than 600,000 plug-in electric vehicles](#) have already been sold. The Pennsylvania program helps provide access to affordable, convenient charging stations at home, at work, or in public areas.

"We strive to build an active and environmentally knowledgeable community of children," said [Name and position]. "Many people don't realize that [school name] has already made significant forward-thinking investments in energy savings, benefiting our students health and reducing our carbon footprint."



*[add description of what your school has done to invest in energy efficiency, using numbers and dollar figures if possible]*

*[add another quote from school spokesperson]*

To learn more about *school name*'s sustainability efforts, visit *[add your website URL here]*

###

## **About**

*[School MISSION STATEMENT/BRIEF DESCRIPTION HERE: approx. 1-2 sentences]*

Learn more a *[web address]*

**Sample Press Release FOR EFFICIENCY example focused on Award (edited/adapted from a published story)**

**YOUR LOGO GOES HERE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE

Contact: [Name]

[Phone number]

[Email address]

[Name of school] energy saving improvement project in the works

[YOUR CITY NAME] — [School name] is in the process of implementing energy-saving measures in all [number] of its buildings, which upon completion, is expected to save the (school name) more than [\$ amount] annually in energy costs.

“The [name of school] is a leader in undertaking a large-scale energy-savings project. Once we did a careful energy assessment, administrators realized that the bigger the project, the greater the rewards for students and staff who use facilities and for the environment,” said [person and position].

The energy assessment identified the school’s current energy use and the energy conservation measures that could be implemented to produce energy savings.

“It’s an innovative and proactive program,” [name and position]. “We’re improving school facilities and saving money.”

The [school name’s] projects include [number] measures, including various upgrades to the mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems in all buildings.

Construction started in [date] with the [example such as retrofitting of LED lighting in all buildings], and the school anticipates all construction to be completed by the end of the [year] school year.

When completed, the upgrades are expected to save the school [\$ amount] of savings each year going forward.

“There is a complex challenge, but we know that in the end, it will pay off for everyone,” [person and position]. “We will see a reduction in our carbon footprint and dramatic improvements in air quality, temperature, and comfort. [school name] will become much more energy-efficient and the savings generated will be enough to finance the enhancements.”

###

**About** [School MISSION STATEMENT/BRIEF DESCRIPTION HERE: approx. 1-2 sentences]

Learn more [web address]

## Sample Press Release FOR POLICY

**YOUR LOGO GOES HERE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE

Contact: [Name]

[Phone number]

[Email address]

### **[School Name] Joins Green School Alliance as a Climate Champion**

[YOUR CITY NAME] —*[name of school]* announced that they have joined the national Green School Alliance (GSA) as a Level II Climate Champion. GSA connects more than 13,000 sustainability champions across 9,000+ schools, districts, and organizations from 48 U.S. states and 91 countries. It organizes climate commitments for public and independent schools similar to the College and University Presidents Climate Leadership Commitment which has more than 500 active signatories.

“[School name] fosters resilience and give our students the tools they need to ensure a sustainable future” say [name and position]. By educating for sustainability, we teach our children to meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations.”

According to the Head of school [name], the decision flowed from the recent review of the school’s mission statement, which now includes a robust statement related to sustainability.

The Green School Alliance Level II Climate Champions agree to target carbon neutrality as their ultimate goal. Champions will develop and implement a comprehensive climate action plan to achieve carbon neutrality at a time determined by our school or district.

According to the Green Schools Alliance, “The reduction of CO2 emissions through energy efficiency and carbon offsetting initiatives is necessary to offset the devastating effects of global climate change with the goal of achieving a zero carbon footprint.” They ask each school to use their collective power to achieve carbon neutrality by integrating carbon emissions education, setting target dates for meeting milestones and establishing mechanisms for tracking progress.

[School name] has a long history of environmental stewardship. “By joining the GSA, we are modeling for our students what it means to live in a world for which we are all responsible to care for each other,” added [name and position].

Sustainability and community action are woven throughout the curriculum at [school name] and students work on projects that meet real and specific needs of the communities they learn about in school, allowing them to use academic skills and knowledge in real life situations.

*[add another quote from school spokesperson]*

To learn more about *school name*'s sustainability efforts, visit *[add your website URL here]*

###

**About**

*[School MISSION STATEMENT/BRIEF DESCRIPTION HERE: approx. 1-2 sentences]*

Learn more about the Green Schools Alliance at <https://www.greenschoolsalliance.org/home>

**Sample Press Release FOR PROCUREMENT**

**YOUR LOGO GOES HERE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE

Contact:

[Name]

[Phone number]

[Email address]

**[School Name] joins regional effort to transition to 100% Renewable Electricity**

[YOUR CITY NAME] — *[name of school]* made the switch to purchasing 100% of its electricity from renewable wind energy in late September, becoming a Green Power Partner with the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) and joining ranks with the Top 30 K-12 schools in the country. (School name) ranks at number [number] on this Power Partner list.

“EPA is excited to welcome [school name] to the Green Power Partnership and applauds the school for using 100% green power and taking a leadership position on the environment,” said [name and position] “Complementing [school name’s] many other sustainability efforts, the school’s green power commitment helps to reduce the environmental impacts of conventional electricity use and provides an excellent example for other schools.”

While some schools have ample opportunities to install solar and wind power, schools with limited space or cash reserves can purchase renewable energy. Renewable Energy Credits (RECs): schools can purchase RECs to pay renewable electricity providers for the right to claim the provider’s renewable electricity towards their own clean energy goals. [School name] purchases renewable energy credits (RECs), which enable forward-thinking schools, households and businesses across the country to purchase wind power. REC sales help developers to finance renewable energy projects. One REC is created for every megawatt-hour of electricity placed on the grid, ensuring that the amount of electricity used is sourced from clean, renewable wind power.

“This is a goal we’ve worked hard to achieve,” says [name and position] “and it grows out of the school’s intensive sustainability efforts over the past five years. We have already reduced our energy use in dramatic ways as a result of campus energy conservation efforts. These come from changes in student and faculty behavior and more efficient building control and monitoring. The shift to renewable electricity will cut carbon emissions from heating, cooling and electricity by 60-65% over our peak in 2007. We hope other schools will follow our lead.”

To learn more about *school name’s* energy efficiency efforts, visit *[add your website URL here]*

###

**About** *[School MISSION STATEMENT/BRIEF DESCRIPTION HERE: approx. 1-2 sentences]*

## Sample Press Release FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY INSTALLATION

**YOUR LOGO GOES HERE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE

Contact:

[Name]

[Phone number]

[Email address]

### **[School Name] students flip the switch for new solar array**

[YOUR CITY NAME] — The entire senior class at [school name] gathered this week to observe the final touches being put on the new solar array on their gymnasium and parking lot. The students have been following the progress since the planning for the arrays began two years ago.

“Most of us are clean energy advocates and want our school to model the future of energy now,” commented [name, senior]. The head of school [name] agrees, “Our students have been encouraged to use their voices to create the future they want. We believe assisting and empowering students to participate in clean energy project development and implementation can result in increasing energy literacy, raising awareness and reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the larger community.”

The good news is that with installation costs plummeting, American schools are switching to solar energy at a rapid pace. This has the positive impact of reducing their electricity bills and freeing up resources to invest in education.

According to the Solar Energy Industries Association, there more than 5,500 K-12 schools in the United States using solar energy.

The [number]kW solar photovoltaic project at [school name] began in [year] with the vision and initiative of a school wide sustainability committee which included the co-president of the high school’s Earth Club. Over the course of a year the senior helped launch a plan to transition [school] to 100% renewable electricity for all campus purposes.

“I am very glad to see how much we’ve been able to spread awareness of renewable energy and energy efficiency,” said [student name, class year].

The school currently feeds excess energy back to the utility, producing negative electricity bills for the school and a cleaner campus for students. The installation has also transformed [school name] into the region's first 100% solar-powered school.

###

**About**

*[School MISSION STATEMENT/BRIEF DESCRIPTION HERE: approx. 1-2 sentences]*

To view the interactive map and other resources for schools that seek to go solar, visit [gosolarschools.org](http://gosolarschools.org).

**Sample Press Release FOR GREEN NEW BUILDINGS OR RETROFITS**

**YOUR LOGO GOES HERE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE

Contact:

[Name]

[Phone number]

[Email address]

**[School Name] Completes New Campus Green Building**

[YOUR CITY NAME] — On May [date], [school name] will be holding a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of their first LEED certified building [type of building/its purpose] and the retrofitting of their main classroom building. LEED is the most widely recognized and widely used green building program in the world.

According to the U.S. Green Building Council, nearly one in eight people around the globe spend their weekdays in a school, making it imperative that we continue to improve the overall health and environmental sustainability of schools.

[School name] put a premium on efficiency in the retrofitting of the main building. The EPA reports that schools spend \$75 per student on gas bills and \$130 per student on electricity each year and by implementing energy efficiency measures, K-12 schools can reduce energy costs by 30%. Modification of a pre-existing building for energy efficiency can save a typical 100,000-square-foot school building between \$10,000 and \$16,000 annually.

"We wanted to show people it makes economic sense to invest in high efficiency now," comments [name and title]. "If a school our size can set the highest standards for reducing emissions, imagine what the technology could do for businesses and homes throughout the community."

To learn more about US Solar institute or to sign up for [solar installation training](http://ussolarinstitute.com/), visit: <http://ussolarinstitute.com/>

To learn more about *school name's* green building effort efforts, visit *[add your website URL here]*

###

**About**

*[School MISSION STATEMENT/BRIEF DESCRIPTION HERE: approx. 1-2 sentences]*



## **Sample Press Releases for Local Media from different sustainability/education sources**

Use this press template to share your school's National Green Week story with local media.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(ADD NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL) PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL GREEN WEEK 2013

*Nationwide event enlists an army of student "green keepers" to jumpstart sustainability education*

*(Add Date)* - (Name of your school) is joining thousands of others from across the country to participate in eco-lessons and hands-on programs during Green Education Foundation's (GEF) National Green Week [date], a sustainability education campaign that takes place from February 3 through the end of Earth Month (April). This initiative is designed to jumpstart a commitment for continuing sustainability education and a lifetime of eco-friendly habits.

Schools, classrooms, and youth groups are encouraged to choose a sustainability theme, such as waste reduction, energy and water conservation, sustainable transportation or green building, to focus on during Green Week. Each GEF Sustainability Theme includes standards-based lessons, activities, contests and more. This year, {Name of your School} has chosen the {Insert Theme} theme!

Some of our sustainability focused projects and activities will include:

- {Insert examples of your own projects}

"By participating in National Green Week [date], students will learn that simple decisions such as turning off lights, adjusting thermostat settings and packing snacks and drinks in reusable containers can add up to big savings in energy and waste," noted Victoria Waters, CEO of GEF. "Children are in the best position to impact the future of the environment by developing green behaviors that become lifelong habits."

National Green Week is always free. Visit [www.greeneducationfoundation.org](http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org) to learn more or find out how you can get involved.

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### *About Green Education Foundation (GEF)*

Green Education Foundation (GEF) is a non-profit organization committed to creating a sustainable future through education. Sustainability education provides educators with the real-world applied learning models that connect science, technology, and math education with the broader human concerns of environmental, economic, and social systems. GEF provides curriculum and resources to K-12 students and teachers worldwide with the goal of challenging them to think holistically and critically about global environmental concerns and solutions.

Become a member for free to gain full access to GEF's comprehensive library of standards-based lessons and activities at [www.greeneducationfoundation.org](http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org). Join the sustainability education conversation by following GEF on Twitter [@greenedufdn](https://twitter.com/greenedufdn) and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/greenedufoundation](https://www.facebook.com/greenedufoundation)

National green week <http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/greenweek/start-up-kit/press-release-template.html>