

# 2022 Impact Report



*Dear Friends,*

As I walked my dog this autumn morning, I thought about Eco-School Network families, who, on a recent nature walk, discussed the changes in their projects, lives, and kids. Change is afoot in our Network, too, and we're ready to grow.

With your support, we now have three tools to grow our school sustainability network: district campaigns, an online training, and an expanded mentorship program. Through district policies, we reach every school in a district. This year, changemakers co-drafted a bold climate policy for Portland Public Schools and will advance policy goals you'll see below.

We completed our first *online* and *hybrid* changemaker trainings this year, engaging volunteers who couldn't participate in-person. While we missed sharing physical space, the results exceeded expectations; **62 trainees** worked with students to start outdoor classrooms, garden and habitat projects, walk and bike programs, green teams, and more. A special thank you to the 18 mentors who coached them. While we keep our local networks going, I'm excited to share a big plan:

**This year, we will start offering our training *statewide* and launch a new "Oregon Eco-School Network."**

Students remind us how decisive the next ten years will be in defining climate change impacts. Now is the time to engage the masses in enacting solutions. To establish a strong foothold for future growth, we'll recruit outside the Metro area, providing the same supports that local changemakers get. We will be leaning into you through this growth. You've taught us to trust in your support as we step into big opportunities. We are honored to collaborate with you—donors, board members, sponsors, volunteers, and staff—you all make our results possible. And we remain in awe of our changemakers and students, who keep creating healthier environments and communities every day. We're humbled by your support and friendship. Thank you.

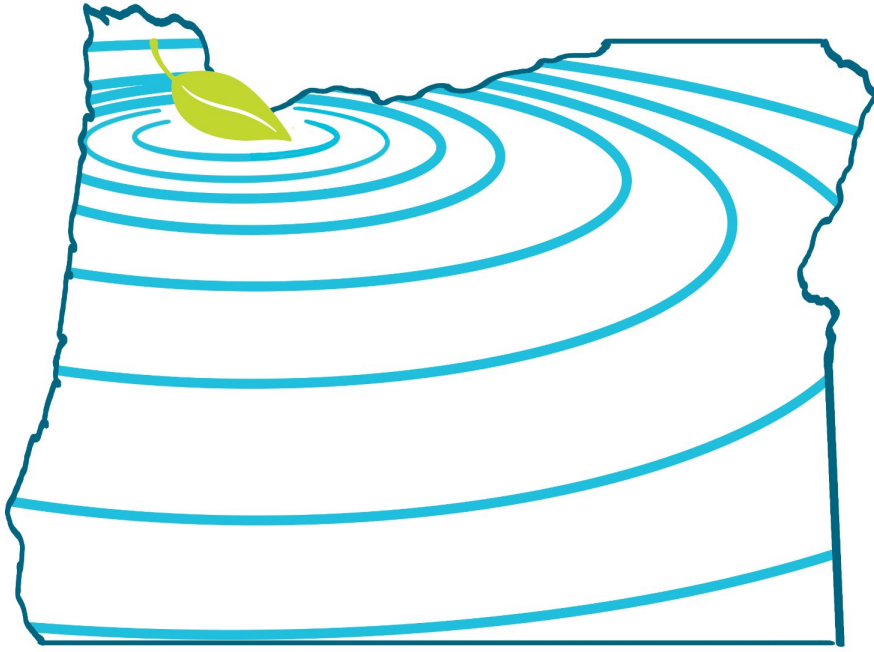
Warmly,

Amy Higgs, Executive Director





# Why expand Eco-School Network statewide?



In the face of climate change, we need more people with the values and skills to carry out solutions. We have an effective model to help kids practice solutions while reducing carbon emissions. Our current districts are well supported, and the need is great elsewhere. With our online training and mentorship program, we can now engage new schools outside our area!

## Reaching Toward New Frontiers

### Who will be invited?

This year's Changemaker Training will be open to elementary schools around the state and Metro area trainees who can't attend in person. We'll recruit in districts with interest and Title 1 schools. We'll return to offering local in-person trainings in the future as well.

### How will this work?

After our first small group of statewide trainees finish their four-session live online training, we'll create a NEW network to support them: **the Oregon Eco-School Network**. A new steering committee will plan regular online gatherings to keep the group engaged.

### What will come of this?

A larger and more diverse group of Oregon parents, teachers, and students will be practicing changemaking skills while making their schools greener, healthier places.

### Can I help?

Yes! If you know eco-minded Oregonians connected to an elementary school outside the Metro area, we're looking for contacts! You can email them to [jeanne@ecoschoolnetwork.org](mailto:jeanne@ecoschoolnetwork.org).



From four local districts toward a statewide reach

**“At every class meeting, I feel so proud—so inspired and encouraged by everyone here to share these incredible ideas and resources with my school. I’m excited to see what change this brings to the school.”**

–Janice Chow–Ng, ESN Changemaker, Class of Fall 2022



**“I am thrilled to learn about plans to expand this formidable program around the state! The Eco-School Network’s efforts are truly critical to helping the next generation develop a sincere and thoughtful appreciation for our environment.”**

– Ward Greene, Attorney, SAGE Chair, loyal donor

## *Taking Root at Oak Grove*

After our first online training last spring, there was a momentary pause. Would these capable Changemakers who we only knew through Zoom really step up and start successful initiatives? We didn’t have to hold our breath long: Rachel Wong of Oak Grove Elementary in North Clackamas formed a student-led green team. We are wowed at their progress!

She surveyed teachers and made a video about their school greening ideas, which she showed the school to get them excited. For the green team, each teacher recommended one or two student ambassadors, who report back to class. The team eliminated all disposable utensils at school meals, started on-site food scrap composting, made posters about green practices, and created a share bin for uneaten, wrapped food.

If you’re a regular volunteer or donor, you’ve heard stories like this. But the on-the-ground view of a new group making change... is magical. A first-grade member says, “We get to come up with our own ideas to help the planet!” They find that realizing their ideas isn’t easy. After all, the whole community must rethink long-held norms.

To keep students engaged, the team shared their success in a second video, and showed it to all students. Principal Heidi Dodge was an enthusiastic supporter, now sharing their stories with visitors. Their vision quickly garnered support from the Clackamas County Waste Educator and the custodian, too. Rachel is delighted. “The green team gives the kids a voice. They got to see how they could actually make change.” We can’t wait to see what they tackle next!



## Empowering Students





# How Kids Are Making Change

With support of volunteer changemakers, students are diving in to practice sustainability at school. They are: a) testifying for climate action at a school board meeting, b) stewarding a schoolyard habitat, c) making pledges to “change one thing,” d) sorting cafeteria waste with staff member Celeste Lewis, e) building ADA-accessible garden beds, f) removing microplastics from the beach, g) raising mason-bees, h) cleaning up their schoolyard, i) composting food-scrap, j) writing to representatives to ban single-use plastic food containers, k) planting trees, l) planning a safe route to walk to school, m) riding on a school “bike bus,” n) distributing free food that would have been wasted, o) making a no-idling video, and p) leading green-team projects of their own design with support from “recyclops” (Beaverton changemaker Adriane Driscoll).



# All Hands Come Together to Spark Climate Policy

Portland ESN changemakers played a key role in co-drafting an ambitious climate action and climate justice policy for Oregon's largest school district. Over two years, they engaged the community, rounded up people to testify, and maintained momentum and collaboration through 26 rounds of revisions! On March 1, the Portland school board unanimously passed the Climate Crisis Response, Climate Justice and Sustainability Practices Policy, touted as one of the boldest, most comprehensive district climate policies nationwide! The policy commits to:

- **Net zero emissions** by 2040 and 50% reduction by 2030
- **No fossil fuel** infrastructure in new buildings
- **Transition to electric/** clean fuel busses, walk & bike support
- **Prioritizing local, organic,** plant-based, minimally packaged foods
- **Frontline community support** in resilience to climate impacts
- **Hands-on climate learning** and practice for all students
- **Standardized waste prevention** systems and fewer disposables
- **Environmentally preferable purchasing** where possible
- **Outdoor learning** at every school! (and much more)



Our own parent leader, Jane Comeault, policy co-drafter, was chosen to sit on the policy's community oversight committee. This effort would not have been possible without district staff and board members who joined forces (like Julia Brim-Edwards), or without the relentless environmental activist, Mike Rosen, former PPS Board Member who sparked and stewarded the whole process. We are so proud of the 13-year efforts of Network Changemakers who paved the way, piloting the practices now being planned district-wide.

We invite you to share the hope that this passage has brought our district and the 154 changemakers whose work illustrated its possibilities. The hard work of policy implementation is up next, and we're collaborating on that. This spark will help changemakers in our other districts work for similar commitments. We'll be there to support them too!

% of new trainees who agree: "Now I feel like a changemaker"	Number of active green teams	Number of students impacted:	Permanent outdoor classrooms created this year:	Newly trained changemakers:
100	33	65,730	3	62
New gardens or habitats planted this year:	Active school greening initiatives:	Value of volunteer time donated:	Volunteer hours:	Percentage of total elementary schools in our districts that we have greened:
20	206	\$240,000	11410	80
Schools engaged in greening since founding:	Number of active Changemaker mentors	Number of trees planted	Volunteers who planned or led meetings	Participating Title 1 schools:
173	18	54	52	24

## Power in Numbers



# Roaring with Pride on the Lion Train

Nestled in North Portland's quaint St. Johns neighborhood, the James John Elementary Lions are roaring back to life. As schools everywhere settle into a new normal, James John is building a stronger community thanks in no small way to new ESN Changemaker, Jessica Fletcher. Jessica's vision is to create a school culture of sustainability while advancing equity, inclusion, and relationship-building. Her first project involved turning all their school gatherings into low-waste or waste-free events by creating party pack kits of durable dishes and a dishwashing procedure that engages the community in waste reduction.

Jessica also knew that bike and walk buses would build community, so she started chatting up families walking to school and made a map showing where school families live. Of her work with district officials, ODOT, PBOT, and Safe Routes to School, she remarked, "These groups are all supporting James John to make active transportation for our students accessible, safe, equitable, and fun."

She has recently revived the beloved "Monthly All-School" - a school-wide walk. The principal and principal's assistant supported Jessica in starting a Walk + Roll Lion Train where the whole school meets up to walk and bike to school together from the nearby Community Center. Bus routes were changed, and the principal even dressed up in a lion suit!

This month's All School Walk +Roll celebrated Ruby Bridges, who at age 6, on Nov 14th, 1960, made an historic walk for school desegregation in New Orleans. Ms. Mehretab, second grade teacher and leader of Black Families Affinity Group provided encouragement, helpful insight and attended the joyful event. Working hard and building relationships has been key in sparking what will grow into a 'culture of sustainability'. With a community-building focus, Jessica is doing her part to make sustainability efforts at her school both equitable and joyful.

"I think we can all live by our school's Lion Pride motto: Be safe, kind, respectful, responsible... and inclusive!" – Jessica Fletcher, 2022 Changemaker

To see a video and learn more about the lion train, scan this code:



## All aboard for community building!



# The Power of Retreat

This year, all four staff and 30 of our changemakers attended a two-day retreat at Camp Collins. There was continued learning: Jeanette Stafford's Great Turning workshop, sessions on how to ignite a district policy, lead a swap, reduce cafeteria waste and tell our stories. There was fun: campfire sing-alongs, folk dancing and bunk bed whispers late into the night. Back home, staff saw our calendar blossom with changemaker-led events, like family nature walks, a new district-wide policy initiative and so many school meetings! By sharing our success, we feel the power of our network. We celebrate new and strengthened connections that re-energize and inspire our volunteer changemakers for a new year.



## Find the Eco School Words!

S	H	A	R	E	S	W	M	E	R	A	C	I	J
E	V	R	E	S	N	O	C	B	O	L	H	P	R
A	L	E	A	R	N	R	L	N	I	E	M	G	Q
N	E	C	H	A	N	G	E	M	A	K	E	R	K
E	A	N	O	I	T	C	A	P	C	F	N	D	L
R	D	O	D	C	N	T	H	C	A	E	T	O	G
D	E	U	K	L	E	N	E	R	G	Y	O	Z	A
L	R	R	M	J	E	I	O	B	Q	H	R	A	R
I	S	I	H	T	R	A	E	N	C	R	F	Y	D
H	E	S	F	H	G	V	U	S	T	S	W	U	E
C	G	H	Y	T	I	N	U	M	M	O	C	X	N

changemaker  
conserve  
grow  
community  
action  
mentor  
green  
school  
energy  
climate

garden  
nourish  
children  
Earth  
leaders  
share  
learn  
fun  
care  
teach

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*Eco-School Changemakers  
who have led school  
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