

# National Green Ribbon Award

## Application

Deadline: December 31 each year  
Submit application and photos to [info@showmegreenschools.org](mailto:info@showmegreenschools.org)


In order to complete this application, and to have it considered, you need to have achieved Level 4 or 5 in the Missouri Green Schools program. In certain cases, we will invite schools that are not enrolled but have made progress in all three Green Schools Pillars to apply.

To complete this form, make a copy of it and complete the information in the tables below, and enter narrative responses where prompted.

### School Leadership Certification:

I attest that the information presented in this application is accurate and true, to the best of our knowledge, and that the photos included herein have been released for sharing to the public.

Principal Name: BRAD GRIFFITH

Principal Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent Name: Dr. Jim Wipke

Superintendent Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

## School Contact Information

<b>School Name:</b> Ladue Horton Watkins High School		<b>Street Address:</b> 1201 S. Warson Road	
<b>City:</b> St. Louis		<b>State:</b> MO	<b>Zip:</b> 63124
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://lhwhs.ladueschools.net/">https://lhwhs.ladueschools.net/</a>		<b>Facebook and Instagram:</b> Facebook: Ladue Horton Watkins High School Instagram: @ladue_schools and @laduesage	
<b>Principal:</b> Brad Griffith		<b>District:</b> Ladue School District	
<b>Principal Email:</b> <a href="mailto:bgriffith@ladueschools.net">bgriffith@ladueschools.net</a>		<b>Principal Phone:</b> (314) 983-5402	
<b>Lead Applicant and Position (if different):</b> Kelley Krejnik, Classroom Teacher			
<b>Lead Applicant Email:</b> <a href="mailto:kkrejnik@ladueschools.net">kkrejnik@ladueschools.net</a>		<b>Lead Applicant Phone:</b> 314-983-5786	

## School Characteristics

<b>Level</b> • High (9 or 10-12)	<b>School Type</b> • Public	<b>How would you describe your school?</b> • Suburban	<b>Total Enrolled:</b> 1,406  <b>Graduation Rate:</b> 98%  <b>Attendance Rate:</b> 80-84.9%
<b>Does your school serve 40% or more students from disadvantaged households?</b> No			
<b>% receiving FRPL:</b> 9.31%		<b>% limited English proficient:</b> 2.2%	

## Summary Statement

Over the past five years, our high school has elevated sustainability from individual passion projects to coordinated, school-wide initiatives grounded in leadership support, professional learning, and long-term planning. As a high-performing public high school in a small but resource-rich district, we see sustainability as a framework that strengthens academic excellence, student well-being, and responsible stewardship of our resources. Our vision is to model how sustainability can be meaningfully embedded into environmental impact, health, and educational programming in ways that reflect shared community values and prepare students for the challenges of a changing world.

In 2025, our school focused on building the infrastructure for sustained environmental action. A designated sustainability coordinator works directly with the head principal and district leadership to align initiatives with operational priorities. Quarterly faculty meetings include sustainability updates, ensuring that all staff are informed and invited to participate. Key initiatives in the 2025–2026 school year include a student-led no-idling campaign; expansion of single-stream recycling (20.6 tons diverted) and battery recycling (60 pounds diverted) throughout the building; responsible data usage and digital clean-up campaigns; continued donation collections; and ongoing community service to maintain school grounds and promote native species. At the facilities level, the district is collaborating with the Ladue Education Foundation to install solar and electric vehicle charging stations, with plans to expand this network to other campuses in our district.

Our sustainability efforts are explicitly tied to student and community health. The no-idling campaign addresses local air quality and respiratory health, while native landscaping and outdoor maintenance projects enhance green space and biodiversity on campus. Faculty and staff professional development highlights the connection between environmental conditions, equity, and well-being, helping educators understand sustainability as a public health issue and an environmental justice one. In addition, students have created public-facing webpages that explain the health and environmental benefits of these initiatives, building leadership skills and strengthening communication with the broader school community. These initiatives support a healthier school environment while reinforcing habits that benefit students, staff, and families beyond campus. Ultimately, we hope to model and engage students in the productive coordination that leads to meaningful and supported community change.

Professional learning and student leadership anchor our educational pillar. In March, 2025, the Science Department chair and the sponsor of Student Action for a Greener Earth (SAGE) attended the National Green Schools Conference, supported by school-designated funding. In February, 2026, the head principal, director of educational technology, and sponsor of Student Action for a Greener Earth (now the designated sustainability coordinator) attended NGSC. Continued participation in such activities ensures that sustainability leadership expands to more individuals and those people are connected to national networks, current standards, and best practices.

Regarding leadership, the school and district has increasingly supported the specialization of an emerging sustainability coordinator role. This role is partly due to the expertise of the individual which includes a masters degree in sustainability and a Ph.D. in educational leadership focused on climate-conscious school leadership. This individual's full time role is that of classroom teacher, but, the in-house expertise offers a valuable capacity to

implement sustainable practices. In recognition of this teacher's expertise and to increase their capacity to support sustainability, the district reduced this teacher's instructional load to expand sustainability coordination and support other teacher leaders across buildings. Sustainability is increasingly embedded into curriculum, student clubs, and service learning, with plans for regular sustainability-themed professional development each semester.

Looking ahead, district leadership, which includes an incoming superintendent with a background in business and finance and also plans to publish a formal sustainability report to communicate progress and future goals. While the 2025-26 school year represents a foundational year, our school and district are committed to continued, intentional growth that integrates environmental responsibility, health, and education into a cohesive sustainability vision.

## **Engagement, Benchmarking and Recognition**

List the members of the team that helped prepare documentation and their role in the school

1. Kelley Krejnik, teacher and sustainability coordinator
2. Lynda Rater, business secretary

List any programs you are currently using to benchmark your progress in sustainability

1. START
2. UndauntedK12
3. Climate Psychology Alliance: An Educator's Guide to Climate Emotions

List any recognition or awards you have received in the last five years related to your efforts in any of the pillars

1. Green Schools Quest
  - a. 2nd Place, 2019-20
  - b. [Winner, 2020-21](#)
  - c. [Winner, 2022-23](#)
  - d. [Sustainability Champion, 2023-24](#)
2. HWHS HOSA's Success at Missouri State Leadership Conference ([January, 2025](#))
  - a. 1st Place Mental Health Promotion Team
  - b. 3rd Place Environmental Health
  - c. 5th Place Health Policy
  - d. 5th Place Healthy Living
3. Students recognized for volunteer service hours: 5 with 200+ and 7 with 150+
4. Dr. Haydee Taylor-Arnold Receives [National Elevate Award](#) for Advocacy in Language Education ([March, 2025](#))
5. Two Students Honored with Congressional Award Gold Medal for Community Service and Volunteering ([May, 2025](#))
6. National Scholastic Press Association Winners (November, 2025)
  - a. [Local Climate Change Reporting, 4th Place, "A Greener World"](#)
  - b. [Environmental Portrait \(Photo\), Honorable Mention, "Triple Threat"](#)
7. National Scholastic Press Association, Local Climate Change Reporting, 4th Place for "Dousing the Flame" ([November, 2024](#))

List any partners who you have worked with to achieve the accomplishments outlined in this application (not already mentioned above).

1. Show Me Green Schools
2. Center for Green Schools
3. Green Schools Network
4. Midwest Climate Collaborative
5. Washington University in St. Louis Greenhouse

Have you done any outreach to other schools to spread green and healthy practices? If so, list below:

1. Old Bonhomme Elementary
2. Reed Elementary
3. Conway Elementary
4. Spoede Elementary
5. Ladue Early Childhood Center

## **The Pillars**

Using information from your START Snapshot Forms, fill in the sections below. For each pillar, describe your most significant accomplishment in the pillar and then list other steps your school has taken to become greener, healthier and smarter. Use a bullet list format, but write in complete sentences, including numbers and descriptive details. You are limited to 3 pages for each Pillar, 9 pages total. Show-Me Green Schools reserves the right to edit responses for length and clarity.

## **The Pillars & Elements**

### **Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs**

#### **Energy and Greenhouse Gases**

- During major new construction completed between 2017–2019, the high school incorporated multiple energy-efficiency and emissions-reduction strategies, including carbon-neutral flooring, LED lighting in 98% of fixtures (with remaining areas currently being converted), and automatic lighting shut-off systems.
- The building includes automated temperature controls, upgraded energy-efficient boilers and air conditioning systems, and automatic blinds that recalibrate every 30 minutes to reduce heating and cooling demand.
- A Building Automation Control (BAC) system operates across all district buildings, allowing real-time monitoring and control of heating, cooling, and ventilation systems. The system includes optimum start/stop programming and night and weekend setbacks, which are continuously monitored by facilities staff.
- The majority of the roof surface is white roofing, designed to reflect heat and reduce cooling loads.
- Exterior lighting is controlled by photocells and programmed shut-off, ensuring lighting operates only when needed.
- The school has established partnerships with multiple solar energy vendors, who have conducted site visits and feasibility assessments for rooftop solar arrays and Level 2 EV charging stations. Installation is expected Summer of 2025, in time for the start of the 2026-27 school year.

#### **Water and Grounds**

- New construction (2017–2019) included automatic shut-off faucets in restrooms and the installation of bottle-filling stations to reduce water waste and encourage reusable water bottle use.
  - 13 filling stations have eliminated over 795,000 water bottles since 2019 (approximately 113,500 annually) while contributing to hydration throughout the school day

- The district has installed and maintains 12 bioretention basins (bio basins) to improve stormwater management and water quality across nonpermeable surfaces, including those serving the high school campus. These include native plants.
  - Large bioretention [basin at the high school](#): approximately 1500 m<sup>2</sup>
  - Small bioretention basin: approximately 130 m<sup>2</sup>
- Student Action for a Greener Earth (SAGE), with support from a Ladue parent and funding from Green Schools Quest winnings and greenhouse funds, has supported native planting and grounds maintenance efforts at the high school. Established plants in the garden include the following varieties:
 

◦ Alumroot/Coral Bells	◦ Helen's Flower	◦ Rose Turtlehead
◦ Aromatic Aster	◦ Indian Grass	◦ Roundleaf Groundsel
◦ Arrowwood	◦ Joe Pye	◦ Sensitive Fern
◦ Black Chokeberry	◦ Missouri Coneflower	◦ Serviceberry
◦ Blue Lobelia	◦ Obedient Plant	◦ Shining Blue Star
◦ Blue Mist Flower	◦ Orange Coneflower	◦ Shrubby St. John's Wort
◦ Brown-Eyed Susan	◦ Palm sedge	◦ Sky Blue Aster
◦ Butterfly Milkweed	◦ Pennsylvania Sedge	◦ Soft Rush
◦ Cardinal Flower	◦ Prairie Beard Tongue	◦ Southern Blue Flag
◦ Copper Iris	◦ Prairie Blazing Star	◦ Swamp/Marsh Milkweed
◦ Coral Honeysuckle	◦ Prairie Coreopsis	◦ Yarrow
◦ Culver's Root	◦ Prairie Dropseed	◦ Yellow Coneflower
◦ Curlytop Ironweed	◦ Prairie Pussytoes	
◦ Fox Sedge	◦ Purple Beard Tongue	
◦ Foxglove Beard Tongue	◦ Purple Coneflower	
◦ Grayhead Coneflower	◦ Purple Prairie Clover	
	◦ Redbud	
	◦ Rose Swamp Mallow	
- Students confirmed the garden met the qualifications for registration as a monarch waystation ([Registration 59891](#)). A sign is posted in the garden communicating the waystation status and students and visitors observed caterpillars and butterflies in our garden this past summer.



(May, July, September 2025)

- The district uses newer salt spreaders that reduce overall salt use and ensure more even application, along with eco-friendly deicing materials, to protect soil and water quality. After the heavy snow melted in January, students helped sweep up leftover salt (approximately 0.5 cubic foot) before rain washed it into Deer Creek.



## Waste Reduction

- Students in the Elements Club and pre-vocational classes regularly collect single-stream recycling throughout the building, supporting consistent recycling practices school-wide.
- The district's alternative education program manages kitchen scrap composting through vermiculture, reducing organic waste sent to landfills and providing hands-on sustainability learning opportunities.
  - St. Louis County visited campus to help harvest worms from compost on February 11, 2026:



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## Transportation

- The school has implemented a no-idling policy, supported by a [student-led information campaign](#) and posted signage to reduce vehicle emissions during arrival, dismissal, and events.

- Facilities staff have received targeted communication reinforcing no-idling expectations as part of daily operations.
- Plans are underway to fund air quality monitors through a Ladue Education Foundation grant to support education and data collection related to vehicle emissions and health.
- Plans for EV charging stations are informed by a staff transportation survey, which found that 10% of employees currently drive electric vehicles and 50% reported they would be more likely to drive an electric vehicle if workplace charging were available, demonstrating both current use and strong potential demand for alternative transportation options.

## **Purchasing**

- The school and district are improving coordination between building-level staff and district purchasing to identify cost-effective sourcing and appropriate quantities of frequently used supplies, such as paper for printing.
- Students are actively developing recommended purchasing guidelines for school concessions, with attention to waste reduction, packaging, and environmental impact.

## **Pillar II: Improved Health and Wellness of Students and Staff**

### **Environmental Health**

- The school maintains all grounds in accordance with a district Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan, minimizing chemical use and prioritizing prevention, monitoring, and least-toxic interventions to protect student and staff health.
- A campus-wide needs assessment of access to safe drinking water has been completed. As a result, automatic bottle-filling stations are installed on every floor and in every wing of the building, each equipped with sensors that track bottle usage and indicate filter health to ensure safe water quality.
- The school operates under an indoor air quality management plan, supported by a comprehensive preventive maintenance program for HVAC systems that includes regular filter changeout, coil cleaning, and fine-tuning of controls and dampers to ensure adequate ventilation and occupant comfort.
- All ice makers are cleaned districtwide and have contaminant filters replaced semi-annually, supporting both health and safety compliance and energy efficiency.
- Common areas such as the library and cafeteria are designed with access to natural light. Most classrooms provide views of greenspaces or tree canopies, supporting student well-being, focus, and connection to the outdoors.

### **Nutrition and Fitness**

- The physical education department offers elective courses in holistic wellness and outdoor education, providing students with opportunities to explore physical activity, mindfulness, and lifelong fitness practices beyond state mandates.
- In addition to required physical education, the school offers organized physical activities across all seasons, including fall, winter, and spring sports, as well as optional summer training opportunities on campus, ensuring broad access to physical activity for students.
- Staff and faculty are encouraged to participate in wellness initiatives, including winter weight management programs, and are partially reimbursed for investments in exercise-related equipment, classes, or gym memberships, supporting employee health and well-being.

### **Coordinated School Health Programs**

- Through a partnership with Love on a Leash, therapy dogs visit campus before the end of grading periods throughout the school year, providing stress relief and emotional support for both students and staff.
- The district provides a comprehensive Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through Personal Assistance Services (PAS), offering confidential, professional support at no cost to employees for concerns related to stress, family, finances, and overall well-being.
- School counselors support student mental health and academic success by creating quarterly videos on stress management and study strategies and providing services including academic support, Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP), short-term personal counseling, crisis intervention and referrals, college and career advising, and parent and family workshops.

- 2025 Counseling Videos for Student:
  - [Final Exam Strategies](#)
  - [Early College Program](#)
  - [Course Selection](#)
  - [This or That: Who You Gonna Call?](#)
- Counselors are assigned to specific grade levels and meet with their students multiple times in person throughout the school year, ensuring familiarity and accessibility so students feel comfortable approaching counselors for support as needs arise.

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

- The school sponsors a wide range of student-led affinity groups, including the Asian Culture and Advocacy Group, African American Student Associations (Ujima and Rise with 109 members), Brother2Brother, the Jewish Student Union, the Muslim Student Association, and FemCo, among others. These organizations provide mentorship, leadership opportunities, and service projects that strengthen peer connections and support a welcoming school climate. Most recently, Brothers2Brothers hosted a 3v3 basketball tournament to raise \$600 for tornado victims in the St. Louis community, donated to the St. Louis Urban League.
- The school celebrates cultural and linguistic diversity through events such as International Week, sponsored by the World Languages Department, which features cultural food tastings, international films, a student talent showcase, and a schoolwide Parade of Nations that allows students to come together in celebration of the school community's diversity.
- Since 2023, the school has hosted [Rams Around the World](#), an event that brings together hundreds of students, families, and staff for an evening of global celebration featuring country-themed tables, cultural artifacts, traditional foods, and student performances. Organized by the Student Inclusion Committee, the event highlights the many cultural backgrounds represented in the Ladue community and fosters meaningful cross-cultural connections. This event has grown in attendance each year.
- The school library serves as a central hub for belonging and representation, regularly updating its collection to reflect diverse cultures, identities, and perspectives. This commitment is reflected in the student-selected Class of 2023 gift displayed at the library entrance, reinforcing the importance of inclusive reading spaces where all students can see their experiences reflected in literature and learning resources.



- Student leadership initiatives also promote equity and community engagement. The Ladue African American Student Alliance (LAASA) raises thousands of dollars in scholarship funds through events such as the annual Faculty Frivolities auction and community celebrations, while students incorporate sustainability into these events by growing plants and flowers in the school greenhouse to decorate the annual LAASA brunch and awards ceremony, attended by students and families. Each year, the school also chaperones 12–15 juniors to visit multiple Historically Black Colleges. Last year, students visited Bowie State and Howard University. This year, students will travel to visit Emory University, Spelman College, Morehouse College, and Clark Atlanta University.

## **Pillar III: Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education**

### **Curriculum and Assessment** *(DEI Intersection: Global perspectives, career access, systems thinking, and culturally responsive inquiry)*

- In World Languages, Level II and III German and Spanish courses and Level V French include sustainability-focused units in which students analyze eco-friendly habits and evaluate characteristics of sustainable communities. Students compare their own community with communities in the German- and Spanish-speaking world and propose culturally responsive strategies to improve sustainability and environmental stewardship.
- The Tiny Houses Shop Class engages students in grades 10–12 in an intensive, hands-on, project-based learning experience in which they design and build a fully functional tiny home from the ground up. Students develop core trade skills (carpentry, plumbing, electrical, HVAC), apply modern technologies such as CAD design and Shaper Origin technology (supported by the Josh Seidel Foundation), and build essential workforce skills including estimating, planning, scheduling, and job-site safety. The project spans all phases of construction and meets NOAA home inspection standards, with future iterations planned to incorporate energy efficiency and waste-reduction strategies, expanding access to high-demand green career pathways.
- In Foods I and II students design menus around sustainable foods and in Housing & Design they consider sustainability in planning and drafting.
- Sustainable Investigations courses for grades 10–12 engage students in systems thinking through the three dimensions of sustainability: social/cultural, economic, and environmental. Students investigate real-world challenges related to sustainable development, conduct research, propose solutions, and explore careers connected to meeting human needs in a world of finite resources and interconnected systems.
- Enrollment in 2025:
  - World Languages: 575
  - Shop + CAD: 50
  - Foods + Housing & Design : 200
  - Sustainable Investigations: 40

### **Professional Development** *(DEI Intersection: Student well-being, climate anxiety, and inclusive instructional practices)*

- Faculty and staff receive quarterly sustainability updates that highlight student-led initiatives and provide short, actionable lessons for implementing sustainable practices in classrooms and offices. Fall topics included battery recycling and responsible data management, while spring programming focuses on paper reduction, printing practices, and responsible recycling.
- Professional development is planned for the spring on foundational climate science and climate anxiety among Gen Z and Gen Alpha, supporting educators in understanding student concerns and integrating sensitivity to environmental change into curriculum, classroom discussions, and student support.
- For the second consecutive year, staff and administrators are attending sustainability-focused conferences (including the National Green Schools conference) to remain current on best practices, emerging research, and implementation strategies in environmental education.

## **Outdoor Learning Experiences** (DEI Intersection: Access to nature, experiential learning, and environmental literacy)

- The school is in its second year of cultivating a native pollinator garden, which now includes over 40 native plant species (see list above, p. 7). Students are developing a public website featuring original photography and research describing each species' ecological and cultural value, with plans to share plant divisions and expertise with additional school gardens across the district.
- Students enrolled (50 in 2025) in Outdoor Education develop physical fitness, teamwork, critical thinking, and safety skills through hands-on outdoor experiences. Activities include hiking, camping, outdoor cooking, responsible fire-building, first aid/CPR, rock climbing, underwater swimming, snow skiing, and GPS navigation, with an emphasis on cardiovascular endurance and lifelong outdoor recreation.

## **Community Engagement** (DEI Intersection: Civic responsibility, local partnerships, and student leadership)

- Elements, the school's recycling club, works in partnership with St. Louis County Waste Management to improve recycling collection practices, with a planned field trip to a local recycling facility to deepen students' understanding of waste systems, labor, and community infrastructure. Approximately 49 different students have worked to contribute 26 hours of community service so far this year to help with collecting and sorting single-stream recycling for pick up. All in all, we estimate that
- Students are encouraged to engage with local sustainability initiatives and volunteer in community-based environmental restoration efforts, including park cleanups and honeysuckle removal projects sponsored by Olivette in Bloom, reinforcing civic responsibility and place-based stewardship.
- Missouri Botanical Garden is collaborating with Student Action for a Greener Earth (SAGE) to develop sustainable purchasing guidelines for school concession stands and improved recycling practices at athletic events, connecting environmental stewardship to school culture and community gatherings.
- SAGE implemented a student-led No Idling campaign, resulting in an approximately 30% reduction in idling vehicles during pickup and drop-off within the first week of implementation, demonstrating students' ability to apply civic engagement skills to achieve measurable environmental and public health outcomes.

## MEDIA

Note: Visible student faces have been checked for media release in our system.

### Pillar I – Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs

#### 1. Pollinator Garden Clean-Up (October 3, 2025)

Students participated in seasonal maintenance of the school's native pollinator garden, learning about habitat restoration, invasive species management, and the role of native plants in supporting biodiversity and stormwater health.



#### 2. Campus Tree Walk and Identification (October 14, 2025)

Students engaged in a guided tree walk and species identification with Missouri Department of Conservation forest technician Evan Parker, learning how urban trees support carbon sequestration, shade, and ecosystem health.



#### 3. Deer Creek Watershed Stewardship (September 3, 2025) & Trash Capture in Deer Creek (September 10, 2025)

Students learned about watershed protection and local water systems with Allison Joyce and Hannah Gibson of the Missouri Botanical Garden, focusing on stormwater, runoff, and community-based conservation. Students examined

trash capture strategies in local waterways with Maggie McCoy and Kassie Knight from the Missouri Botanical Garden, learning how engineered solutions reduce pollution and protect aquatic habitats.



#### 4. Recycling Collection Systems in St. Louis County (September 4, 2025)

Students explored how recycling collection works at the county level with Ben Winkler of St. Louis County Waste Management, connecting individual recycling habits to regional infrastructure.



### Pillar III – Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

#### 5. Rambuncion Robotics Team – Team Sustainability Award (April 2025)

Students from the Rambuncion Robotics team earned the Team Sustainability Award sponsored by Dow for developing sustainable practices that reduce environmental impact and support long-term program continuity, demonstrating systems thinking, engineering design, and civic responsibility.

Related article:

<https://www.ladueschools.net/post-details-blog/~board/district-news/post/rambuncion-robotics-takes-st-louis-regional-robotics-competition-by-storm>



**6. “No Idle November” Student Campaign**

Students created and shared a peer-led educational video as part of “No Idle November,” encouraging drivers to reduce vehicle idling during pickup and drop-off and reinforcing connections between air quality, health, and behavior change. Student video link provided.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fzIMbypQmuEuRqNkXijved174NeSks2a/view?usp=sharing>

**7. Greenhouse Water Filtration Investigation (Fall Semester 2025)**

Students conducted hands-on experiments in the greenhouse to study water filtration by planting seeds and raising fish in a self-designed planting and irrigation system, comparing how different soil types affect water quality and plant growth.



**8. Student Advocacy with District Leaders (November 12, 2025)**

Students met with district administrators and school board members to present

sustainability initiatives, share data, and discuss future goals, applying civic engagement skills and practicing leadership in real-world decision-making contexts.



**9. Wheels to Africa Bicycle Drive (November 15, 2025)**

Students led a Wheels to Africa bike drive that collected over 80 bicycles, which will be distributed to communities in Liberia and other African nations. The initiative supports safe transportation for students and women while also contributing to local economic development by enabling small businesses to repair and maintain bicycles, reinforcing global citizenship, equity, and sustainable transportation.



**10. Brother2Brother Food and Essential Items Drive (November-December, 2025)**

Students involved in Ladue Horton Watkins High School's Brother2Brother initiative organized a community food and personal care drive that collected eight boxes weighing 414 pounds, valued at \$757.62, and donated to Operation Food Search. The donation provided enough food to feed 104 people for one day, connecting student leadership to food security, public health, and local community needs.



### **Post-Application Reflection**

I am writing this reflection as the “PhD-level climate leader” mentioned in the submission. By training and experience, I bring together several perspectives that have shaped this work. I hold a master’s degree in Sustainability from Saint Louis University and spent three years working in higher education and the private sector on sustainability teams, including corporate sustainability reporting at a public affairs firm in Washington, D.C. I have also been a classroom Social Studies teacher for twenty years and recently completed my Ph.D. in Educational Leadership (also from SLU), where my dissertation examined how climate change is reshaping the meaning of education and school leadership. I pursued this work with the expressed intention of forging a path as a school-based sustainability leader.

For the past eight years I have worked at Ladue Horton Watkins High School, gradually incorporating sustainability into my role at the school. I first took over management of the school greenhouse, which was offered to me because I was recognized early on as someone who could help turn that space around. Through this unexpected twist in my responsibilities, I built partnerships with the Science Department, Facilities, and our Business Department. Meanwhile, I continued sponsoring the student sustainability club, Student Action for a Greener Earth (SAGE), and participating in the Green Schools Quest while encouraging other district schools to become involved. I also helped introduce *Sustainable Investigations*, a non-science sustainability course, and wrote the curriculum to help students explore the social, political, and economic dimensions of climate change and sustainability.

Over time, I developed a reputation within the school community as an approachable resource for sustainability questions and initiatives. I love when people come to me with ideas and ask how they can help. That willingness means a great deal coming from colleagues whose work already overfills their plates.

Administrators have also shown considerable trust in me and respect for my expertise in an area they openly acknowledge they know little about. In recent years they have begun directing students, parents, and community members with sustainability concerns to me. Consequently, I have served as a mediator between these groups and district leadership, striving to clarify what the district already does while identifying opportunities to expand those efforts through visible and engaging initiatives, such as the pollinator garden and the solar array and EV charging stations now planned for installation. I have met multiple times with central

office leadership to share these concerns and brainstorm ways to strengthen leadership and communication around sustainability.

To support this work, my teaching schedule was modestly reduced (in part because our enrollment continues to grow), allowing time to coordinate projects such as the greenhouse, pollinator garden, and student-led sustainability initiatives. While this limited time does not allow for a fully dedicated sustainability role, it has helped us begin building the structures and relationships needed to advance this work within a small school district where leaders often wear many hats. Like many districts, we are still developing more consistent systems for communication and data collection, but these efforts are moving us in that direction and helping build momentum for more dedicated time for this work.

What stands out in our application, in my view, is that sustainability is not treated as a side project for a few interested teachers. District leadership, facilities staff, and curriculum leaders are all interested in advancing practical sustainability efforts, but they need support in coordinating and implementing them. We are focused on both operational improvements, such as clean energy investments, and interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students. My evolving role reflects a shared recognition that sustainability education and responsible operational practices are becoming essential parts of preparing students for the future. For many of us, it is also an ethical obligation if we are in the work of caring for children and their futures.

One aspect of our work that may be somewhat distinctive is the way sustainability leadership has developed through collaboration between educators, students, and district leadership. Rather than assigning sustainability solely to facilities or curriculum, our district has allowed the role to emerge through partnerships across departments. My background as both a classroom teacher and sustainability researcher allows me to help translate between operational decisions, student learning, and community concerns. My role is to facilitate and coordinate. One strength of a small district is the ability to know many people and speak with them directly. This has created a structure where student initiatives, classroom learning, and district operations reinforce one another, helping sustainability become a shared part of the culture of the school rather than a single initiative or isolated program. We still have a ways to go, but I feel confident that we are willing to go there and are working together to become more sustainable every day.