



# PLT GreenSchools!

## Students Lead the Way to a Sustainable Future

PLT GreenSchools! is a nationwide environmental service-learning program that seeks to transform students, teachers, schools, and communities by harnessing the creativity and energy of youth to make their schools, homes, and communities greener. The critical thinking, leadership, and problem-solving skills that students develop as leaders in PLT GreenSchools! lays a strong foundation for a lifetime of environmental stewardship.

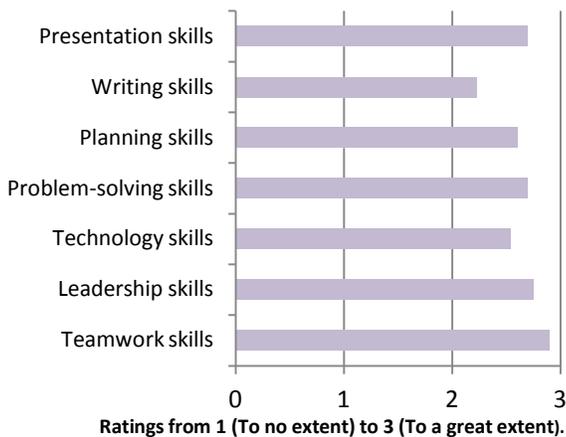
### PLT GreenSchools! Is Proven

In a recent independent study\*, 58 teachers and 77 students participating in the PLT GreenSchools! program reported positive outcomes on student learning and engagement, as well as benefits to their schools and communities.

### Benefits to Students

Educators agreed that PLT GreenSchools! Investigations and action projects developed students' academic and life skills.

#### PLT GreenSchools! developed students...



Two-thirds of students indicated that their experience conducting PLT GreenSchools! Investigations and environmental action projects encouraged them to pursue a career in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), namely environmental sciences and engineering.

\* Evaluation Report of GreenSchools! Program (2008-2012), prepared by Janice Easton & Jane Osmond of Evaluation by Design, 2013.

### Benefits to Schools and Communities

Educators strongly agreed that environmental action projects had a positive social and environmental impact on their school and community. *One school reduced its cafeteria waste by 75%!*

When asked how their GreenSchools! environmental action projects related to STEM, most respondents were clear that the projects undertaken addressed all aspects of STEM.

### Students Investigate and Take Action

Here are some examples of student action projects resulting from PLT GreenSchools! Investigations.

**Energy.** Students install photo sensors and motion sensors to turn off lights when natural light is adequate or when rooms are not in use. The school purchases energy-saving light bulbs, computers, and appliances with 'Energy Star' labels. Solar panels have been installed on roofs.

**Waste & Recycling.** Students compost cafeteria waste and cut down on disposables. They recycle batteries, milk containers, and plastic bags, and other items.

**Water.** Students install rain barrels and create rain gardens. They add bioretention filtration systems to remove contaminants and sedimentation and control stormwater runoff. Students educate the community about their local watershed; restore riparian areas; and build floating wetlands to improve water quality.

**Environmental Quality.** Students advocate for chemical-free garden care, and switching to green cleaning products. They grow indoor plants to reduce carbon dioxide levels, and establish 'no idling' zones.

**School Site:** Students convert paved areas to green spaces; build outdoor classrooms; create school and community gardens; start farm-to-school programs.

*“GreenSchools! works in rural, suburban, and urban schools, large and small, diverse and underserved. The feedback we get from participating schools shows that the program has the flexibility that teachers need.”*

– James McGirt, PLT GreenSchools! program manager



## Versatile Pathways to Greener Schools

Two schools in Houston, Stonewall Jackson Middle School and The Monarch School, show the versatility of PLT’s GreenSchools! program. Jackson was built in 1926 and is in the city. Monarch’s new LEED-certified building opened two years ago on 11 acres. Jackson, a Title 1 public school, has 950 students, 95 percent Latino, in grades 6 through 8. Monarch, a private school dedicated to providing an innovative, therapeutic education for individuals with neurological differences, has 110 students of all ages.

These two very different schools have something in common. Both are PLT GreenSchools, and both are finding ways to use the program to meet the needs of their students.

*“GreenSchools! has been great for our students because it exposes them to opportunities in the real world – and it makes people aware that this school is not just for kids, it is for the community.”*

– Joseph Alva, Limited English Proficiency coordinator,  
Stonewall Jackson Middle School

As part of the PLT GreenSchools! energy investigation, Stonewall Jackson students worked with a professor at the Energy Institute at Houston Community College. They learned how to conduct an energy audit on the college campus, which they applied by conducting an audit back at Jackson. They also focused on improving three enclosed atriums, growing a vegetable garden, adding play equipment, and installing a rain barrel. They are planning a recycling program next.

The Monarch School’s new campus building is LEED-certified at the Gold Level by the U.S. Green Building Council, and has many environmental features built into the new facility. PLT GreenSchools! builds on these features by providing further opportunities for environmental improvements and student learning. It engages youth in conducting investigations and encourages them to voice their recommendations.

*“Even in a new building like ours, students and faculty need training in how to use all the features. We have had several big ‘ah-ha’ moments related to usage. Students like the hands-on in collecting data, and we discuss what we should do, based on the data. PLT’s GreenSchools! process gets students to comment and write down observations, not just collect numbers. Their relationships and communication with each other develop as a result.”*

– Richard Klein, teacher, The Monarch School

