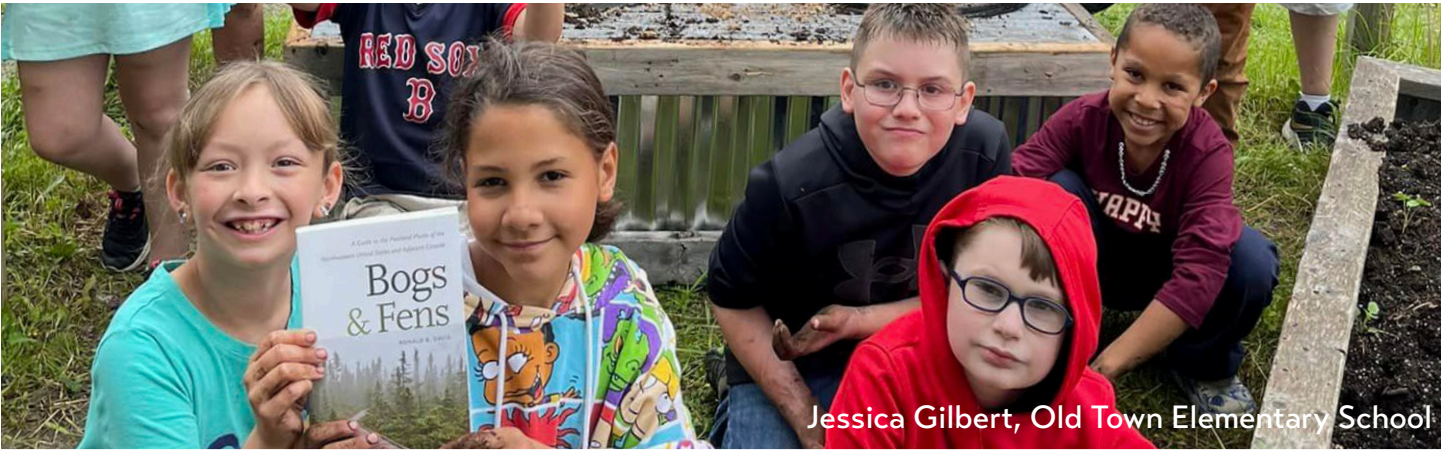


# Maine Green Schools Network

Support local schools' efforts to build healthier, more cost-effective, and sustainable schools in every Maine community!



Jessica Gilbert, Old Town Elementary School

The Maine Green Schools Network will support project-based, real-world environmental education in Maine schools, and help schools save money and improve aging infrastructure through more energy efficient adaptations in their [buildings](#), [energy systems](#), [transportation](#), [food use](#), and [landscaping](#). The Network will bring together state agencies, educators, students, community-based organizations, and Wabanaki leaders. The bill is yet to be printed, but anticipates no fiscal note, and will set up opportunities for future funding of Green Schools work.

## A 'Green School' is a school that...

1. Fosters leadership for youth, educators, administrators, and community members;
2. Increases efficiencies and reduces waste in their buildings, energy systems, transportation, food use, and landscaping;
3. Emphasizes interdisciplinary, place-based, and/or project-based learning, and incorporates Wabanaki studies;
4. Shares outdoor learning curricula and activities amongst teachers and administrators;
5. Creates pathways for student career exploration and skill development in outdoor and environmental fields.

## Current state of environmental programming in Maine public schools

Maine is a national leader in environmental education. Maine's climate action plan *Maine Won't Wait* prioritizes climate education to advance our state climate goals.

However, Maine does not currently have a Green Schools network like many other U.S. states. Without a Green Schools Network, Maine schools will continue to duplicate efforts or neglect to share successful ideas in increasing efficiencies in buildings, energy systems, transportation, food use, and landscaping.

## Schools choose.

**THIS IS NOT A MANDATE!** The Maine Green Schools Network will connect schools with community partners and funding opportunities to create more cost-effective and sustainable Maine schools for those who choose to participate.

This is a group of individuals and organizations, including educators, students, administrators, community organizations, and the Department of Education, collaborating to improve schools statewide.

# The Maine Green Schools Network will help...

## Students.

- Creating real-world learning opportunities by helping students implement data-driven, energy efficient adaptations in their schools;
- Improving motivation, critical thinking, math and literacy, self-esteem, and leadership skills;
- Engaging students as integral members of their community through project-based outdoor learning;
- And equipping students with practical, career-focused environmental education and real-world skills for success after graduation in understaffed fields.

## Schools.

- Saving money and improving aging infrastructure through more energy efficient adaptations;
- Improves educational results and increases teacher retention and recruitment and reduces student absenteeism.

## Teachers.

- Creating a network for busy teachers to support and celebrate one another in implementing environmental education;
- Helping them succeed in delivering standards aligned curricula (like NGSS) and Wabanaki Studies in an engaging, hands-on, interdisciplinary way.



Candra Glenn, Village Elementary School

## The bottom line.

- Maine workforce development efforts depend on well-prepared students; Building a green economy begins with young people inspired to pursue new career paths. Environmental education is a strong foundation for youth to choose a career connected to Maine's natural resources—in agriculture, fishing, and forestry, science and engineering, renewable energy, and other key industries.