



GREEN SCHOOLS
ALLIANCE

Our First Decade: 2007-2017



*10 years of connecting and supporting champions
who are creating healthy and sustainable schools*



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“Our connection with the Alliance has helped energize and focus a nascent sustainability effort. Armed with information obtained through the Alliance, I believe our school will now be able to develop concrete metrics and objectives for the energy conservation/carbon footprint portion of our plan. The Alliance, as an environmental forum for schools, will become a critical resource for all of us as we work to move the environmental sustainability needle ‘measurably’ forward.”

— Julie A. Schmidt, Director of Finance
North Shore Country Day School, Illinois



Uniting the Collective Strength of Individual Action

Green Schools Alliance started because ONE little boy wanted to celebrate Earth Day in his first-grade class, and because ONE mother wanted to make EVERY day Earth Day for him. It started because ONE extraordinary astronaut, who balanced under the Earth on one toe to fix the Hubble said, “There are infinite complex life forms in this infinite universe, some survive and some don’t. I’m afraid we may not make it—what are YOU willing to do?”

It started with ONE school facility manager who thought that energy efficiency was the right way to challenge his community, and ONE business manager who understood the financial implications and the impact of a collaborative effort. It started with ONE music director who began a green team, ONE student who began a community recycling drive, and ONE head of school with the vision, understanding, and determination to change his small corner of the world.

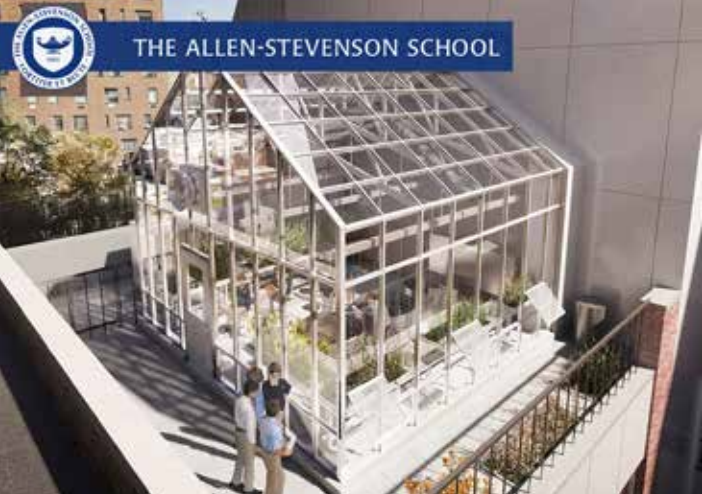
On World Environment Day 2007, inspired by former Mayor Bloomberg’s initiative to reduce carbon in NYC, the Alliance recognized the leadership role that the education community could play. It started as an idea, a dream, then a possibility. Now, because of every single ONE who has brought their experience or curiosity to the Green Schools Alliance, this vision has become a reality. Well, we’re not taking small steps any longer. Uniting the collective strength of individual action is ONE BIG LEAP.

There are an estimated 100 million schools worldwide. As hubs of communities, schools can help to transform markets, policy, education and behavior, increase community resilience, mitigate climate change, and prepare citizens to think and act in new and creative ways. The Alliance recognizes the leadership role that the education community can play, as a critical mass, to help mitigate disaster.

Over the past decade, the Alliance has empowered an unprecedented number of schools worldwide to set and meet their climate and sustainability goals, and measure and report their impact. Today, through exciting new programs and tools developed with input from our members to meet the needs of the next decade, the Alliance continues to turn individual concern into collective action to protect our shared future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MHWatson'.

Margaret Howard Watson, Founder and President



- 2005 UN Foundation’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) introduced the first road map for climate change action.
- 2007 On October 11, the original Climate (Leadership) Commitment, as a basis for Alliance membership, was introduced at the first leadership summit at the Allen-Stevenson School, NY.
- 2007 The first national Green Cup Energy Challenge™ competition was launched.
- 2008 The first international school commitment was made by the Anglo-American School in Moscow, Russia.
- 2009 The first district commitment was made by the New York City Department of Education.
- 2009 Student Climate & Conservation Congress (Sc3) was launched, hosted by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV.
- 2010 The first conference and resource event to reach more than 1,000 participants was hosted by the Martin Luther King Jr. Educational Campus, NY.
- 2010 The first GSAX event was hosted by Alliance founding member Besant Hill School in Ojai, CA when their annual regional conference co-branded with the Alliance.
- 2011 The Green Cup Recycle Challenge™ made its debut.

- 2012 The Alliance's grassroots movement transitioned to a formalized 501(c)3 organizational structure.
- 2013 The first member-led advocacy campaign, "Ban the Bag," was launched.
- 2014 The Alliance hosted the Youth Convergence at the People's Climate March in NYC.
- 2014 The Alliance launched the Renewable Energy Consortium for Schools to aggregate the purchasing power of its schools. 28 schools participated in the inaugural year.
- 2015 The Educator Climate & Conservation Colloquium (Ec3), the Alliance's first professional development program for sustainability champions, was piloted at the National Conservation Training Center.
- 2015 The Alliance's first international chapter was launched in Chile at the International Festival for Social Innovation.
- 2016 The award-winning GSA District Collaborative launched with 21 districts representing 3.7 million students.
- 2016 Maria's Public School in Guwahati, Assam, India became the Alliance's first National Coordinator School and held the first Sc3x event in India.
- 2017 A new membership structure was introduced to allow individuals to participate alongside school signatories of the Leadership Commitment.



Our **MISSION** is to connect and empower schools worldwide to lead the transformation to a sustainable future.

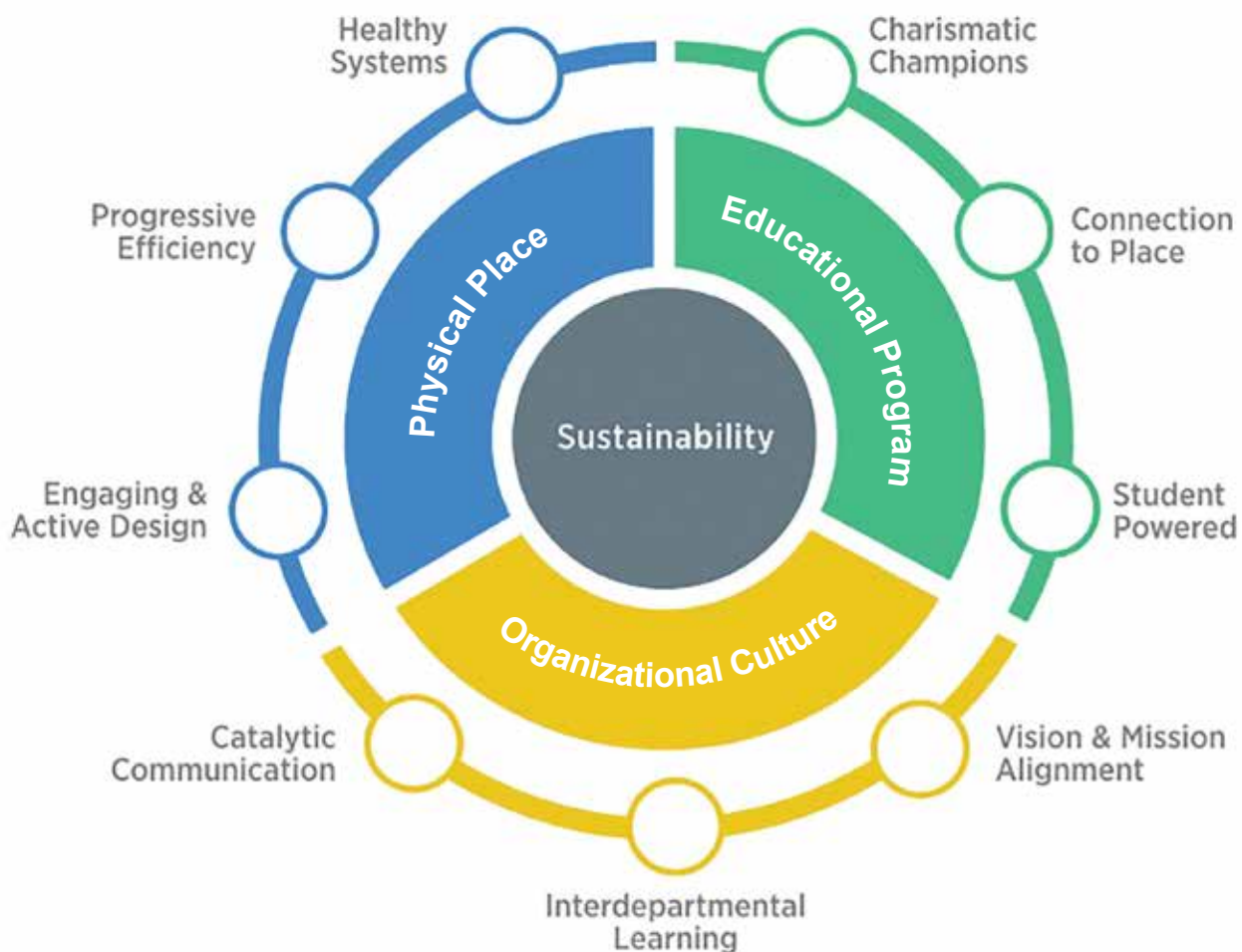


We **ENVISION** a world where every person is aware of and accountable for the impact they have in creating an environmentally, economically, and equitably sustainable future.

We use Whole-School Sustainability as a framework for creating healthy and sustainable schools.

The Alliance organizes its work around the [Whole-School Sustainability Framework](#). This framework is based on the imperative that sustainability requires a whole-system approach in order to be successful, calling for individuals from across an organization to break down silos and work together. The image below outlines the three key principles of integrating sustainability into all aspects of a school organization. We design our programs around the concept of systemic holistic change with the

overarching goal to embed sustainable behavior in everyday activities. By using applied systems thinking, the Alliance is continually developing and refining a model of decision-making that helps organizations effectively deal with or adapt to environmental and social change. We are building innovative tools and programs to help schools be the incubators that create the next generation of citizens who turn into supporters, voters, doers, and advocates for a sustainable future.





We are an alliance of individuals working together to nurture and fortify sustainable school communities. Our network represents more than **9,000 schools, districts and organizations** affecting **5 million students** and **1 billion sq. ft. of buildings** in **47 U.S. States** and **84 countries**.

The Alliance uniquely supports the individual “sustainability champion” – the official or unofficial leader forging sustainable learning and solutions in school communities. These champions are:

- sustainability coordinators
- students
- principals and head of schools
- educators
- facility managers
- business officers
- procurement professionals
- administrators
- school staff
- parents
- volunteers
- non-profit advocates
- conservationists
- sponsors
- corporations
- individual donors
- elected officials
- small business owners
- community organizers
- and others.

With schools as hubs of their communities, the “school community” includes everyone who benefits from, or contributes to, the school’s successes:

- businesses
- nonprofit organizations
- community groups
- local government agencies
- families
- places of worship
- and more

All of these individuals and organizations are a part of the fabric that can help schools succeed and collectively reap the rewards of healthy and sustainable organizational culture, physical place, and educational program.

Online Community

Green Schools Alliance debuted its new online community in July 2016, creating innovative ways for members to get involved, find resources, read and post student and school professional blogs, collaborate in discussion groups, and pledge a leadership commitment.

In its first year, **3,203 members** joined the online community, which continues to grow at an average of **15 new members per week!**

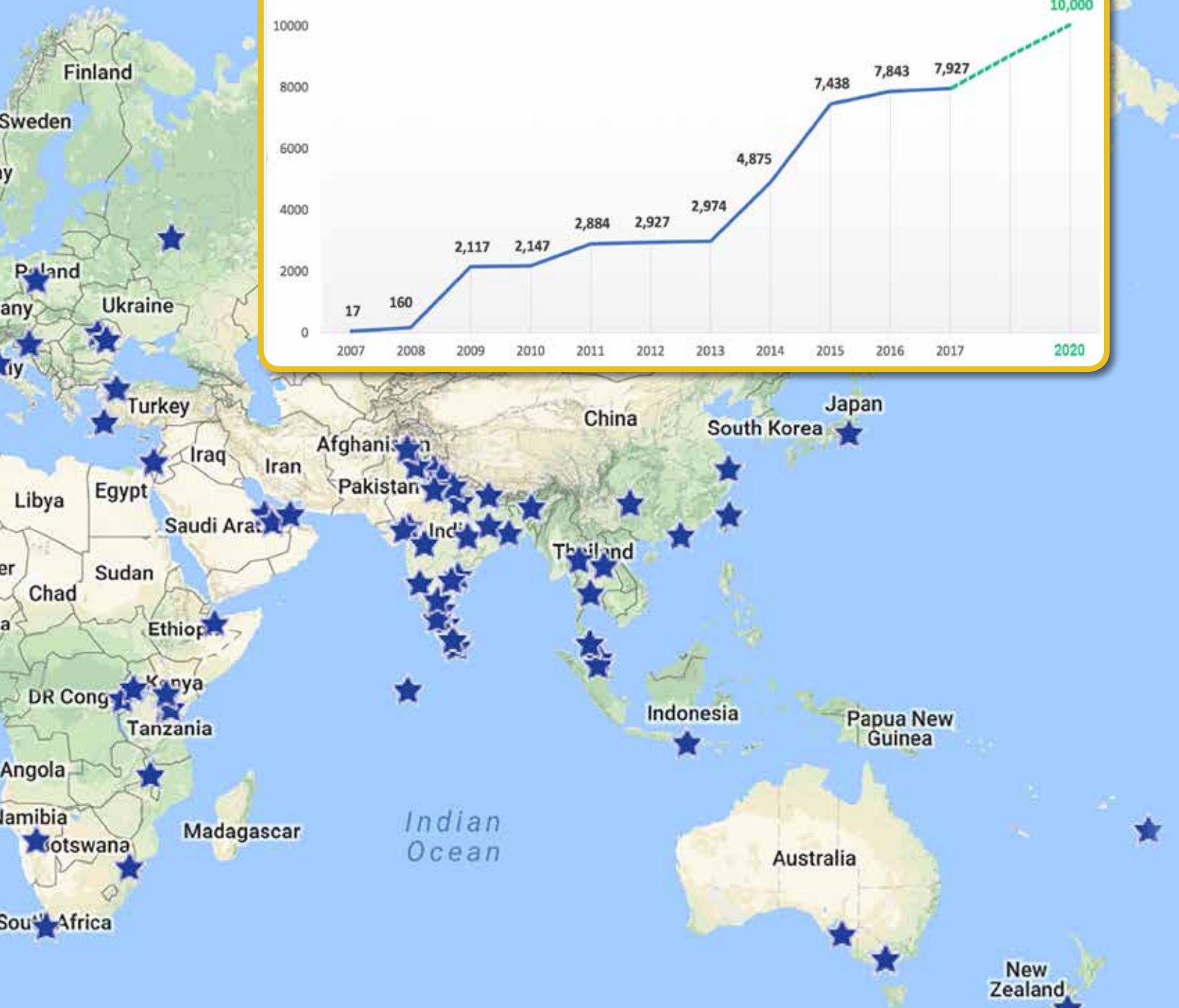
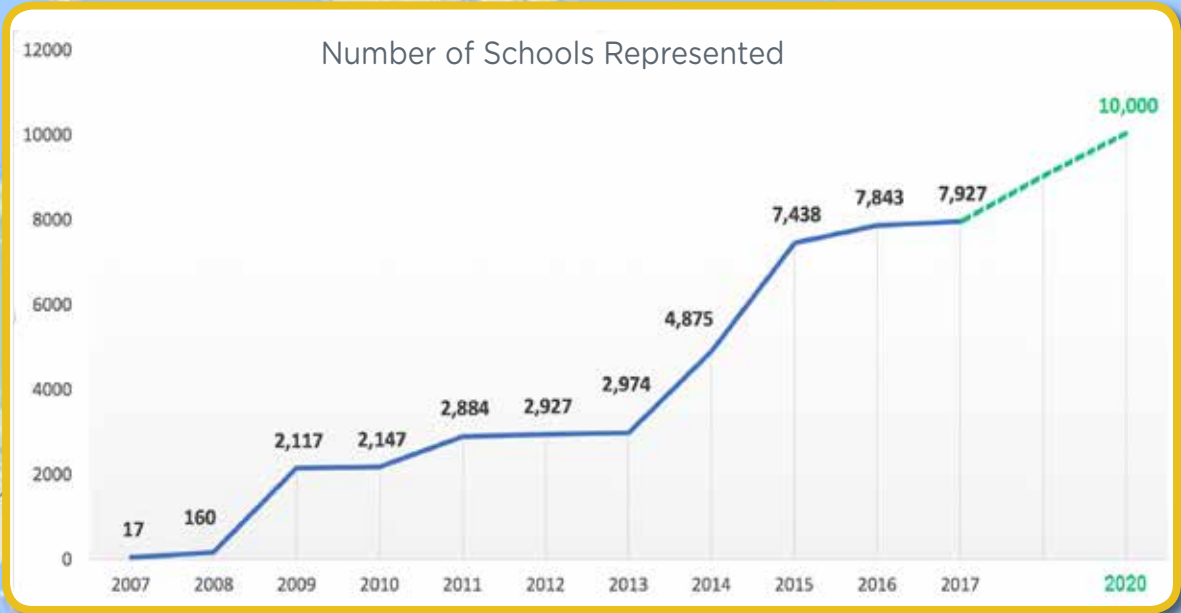
greenschoolsalliance.org/get-involved

The screenshot displays the Green Schools Alliance website interface. At the top, a world map features five circular icons labeled CONNECT, LEAD, ENGAGE, LEARN, and COLLABORATE. Below this, a banner reads: "We have the tools and programs that make it easier for sustainability champions, LIKE YOU, to do more". A row of five icons represents: RESOURCE CENTER, PURCHASING SOLUTION, COLLABORATION GROUPS, MEASUREMENT & REPORTING SYSTEMS, and TRAINING PROGRAMS. A green "GET INVOLVED" button is positioned below these icons. A central text box states: "We envision a world where every person is aware of and accountable for the impact they have in creating an environmentally, economically, and equitably sustainable future." At the bottom, an "OUR IMPACT" section features three colored boxes: a green box for "12,595 Sustainability Champions in 84 countries", a blue box for "568 Leadership Commitments representing 7,928 schools", and a yellow box for "9.84 million kW hours saved in the Greener Cup Challenge".



Hundreds of principals, school heads, and superintendents have set the stage for meaningful change by making a [Leadership Commitment](#) to set goals, take action, and monitor and share progress along the following areas:

- reduce our climate and ecological impact
- educate and engage community
- connect children to nature



**568 leadership commitments
representing
7,927 schools worldwide**

“Sc3 was an absolutely amazing opportunity. Not only was it super fun doing activities and meeting interesting people, it also taught me a lot about the wonderful and complex world around me. Sc3 stresses the fact that everyone can be a part of changing the world. Sc3 made me love and care about the environment.” — Madeline, Sc3 Attendee

“Sc3 opened me up to a world where anyone can make a difference. I discovered that all over the country, and all over the world, there are people who value nature and who really believe we can save the world. It gave me a new perspective; it showed me people are small, but the differences they can make are big!” — Sarah, Sc3 Attendee



“Our association with the Alliance has provided us with valuable resources and expertise, helping us to drive our green initiatives forward with confidence and the knowledge that we are part of a growing, and important, collective.” — Chris Marblo, Head of School, The Town School, NY

“‘Going green’ means so many things to different people, and despite our genuine commitment to sustainability, we were having difficulty focusing our efforts. Working with the Alliance has allowed us to find a community of like-minded schools and set challenging, but reasonable, goals.” — Julian Bull, Campbell Hall, School, CA

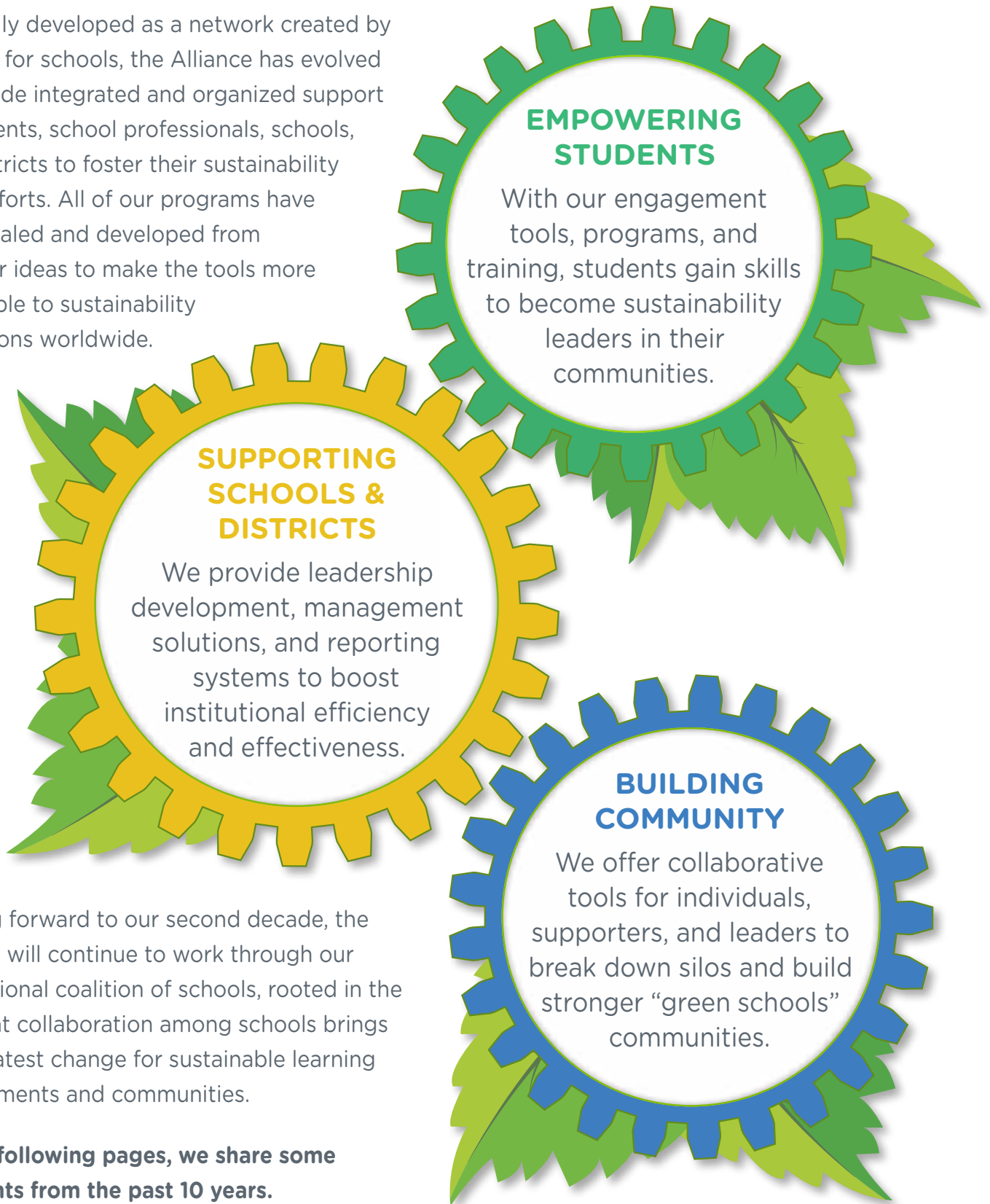
“It is important for sustainability leaders in different parts of the country, representing both similar and different challenges, to have a touchpoint to discuss issues, opportunities, and to troubleshoot. The Alliance provides a supportive environment for this type of open communication, which has benefitted me from positions in both Chicago and New York City.” — Meredith McDermott, Director of Sustainability, New York City Department of Education, NY

“The District Collaborative allows us unprecedented and invaluable opportunities to measure our proficiency in sustainability not just to ourselves, but to the rest of the nation. It has been a crucial source of best practices that allows us to continuously raise our standards.”
— Tresine Logsdon, Fayette County Public Schools, KY



We Provide Integrated Tools and Programs

Originally developed as a network created by schools for schools, the Alliance has evolved to provide integrated and organized support to students, school professionals, schools, and districts to foster their sustainability work efforts. All of our programs have been scaled and developed from member ideas to make the tools more accessible to sustainability champions worldwide.



EMPOWERING STUDENTS

With our engagement tools, programs, and training, students gain skills to become sustainability leaders in their communities.

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS & DISTRICTS

We provide leadership development, management solutions, and reporting systems to boost institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

We offer collaborative tools for individuals, supporters, and leaders to break down silos and build stronger “green schools” communities.

Looking forward to our second decade, the Alliance will continue to work through our international coalition of schools, rooted in the idea that collaboration among schools brings the greatest change for sustainable learning environments and communities.

On the following pages, we share some highlights from the past 10 years.



Student Climate & Conservation Congress

- 945 students from
- 284 cities
- 38 states
- 4 countries

Student Climate & Conservation Congress (Sc3)

is a week-long leadership training program held annually at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife’s National Conservation Training Center – the nation’s top environmental training facility. Participants, also known as Sc3 Fellows, spend a week learning from world-renown experts as well as studying and discussing environmental, social, and economic interconnections to address natural resource conservation challenges affecting their generation in an ever-changing world. Sc3 Fellows gain a range of practical skills such as public speaking, teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, inclusivity and conflict resolution. While at Sc3, students design action plans to implement their knowledge in their schools, homes, and communities during the upcoming year.

Meet an Sc3 Fellow

Katherine Bremer attended Sc3 three times as a student fellow, action plan advisor, and student mentor. She won the Carl Safina Award in 2016 for being an Sc3 Fellow who “exemplifies leadership, determination and a firm commitment to practical solutions for conserving natural places and free-living species, no matter the obstacles.” She is now studying environmental science at the American University in Washington, DC.



“The speakers at last year’s conference...filled my brain with loads of wonderful information that I could then take home and use in my day-to-day life...Sc3 empowered me with knowledge and resources that I desperately needed to change my life and make it more green, but also to educate my fellow peers and friends about what is happening to their home and their planet.” – Katherine

Challenges & Campaigns

[Green Cup Challenge](#)™ empowers students, raises awareness about climate change and resource conservation, and unites school communities around a common goal. Schools compete against each other to measure and reduce their energy use, improve their recycling and waste reduction programs, and activate student engagement by creating awareness videos.



In the 10-year history of the Green Cup Challenge™:

- **724 individual schools participated**
- **9,841,593 kWh saved**
- **14,409,412 pounds of CO² avoided**

In December 2016, Green Schools Alliance became the home for [OnAir Schools](#), a preK-12 educational initiative created by The Clean Air Campaign that inspires students to take the lead on classroom challenges to reduce traffic and air pollution at their school. Using a digital platform to plan, implement and measure, students engage their entire school community in taking actions that help save the air. The programming includes toolkits, resources, and access to a secure online digital platform where projects are teacher managed and student led.



The Alliance plans to expand the OnAir platform to digitize the Green Cup Challenges and other student engagement activities in the coming years.



[Students Take on Plastic](#)

(S.T.O.P.) is an initiative borne out of the 2013 Ban the Bag Conference held at the Hewitt School, NY. Students were trained on how to talk to lawmakers to encourage them to pass legislation that would ban or place a surcharge on single use plastic bags.





PDS custodial staff & principal

The switch to higher quality sustainable paper, plastic, and chemical products is saving Princeton Day School (PDS) significant money while streamlining their purchasing process. The custodial staff is thrilled with the new products—items are effective, easy to use and rollout was a breeze.

“Green and sustainable isn’t more expensive,” says school Sustainability Coordinator Liz Cutler. “We switched to green and sustainable and we’re saving \$10,000 a year.”



Renewable Energy Consortium

In 2014, the Alliance launched the Renewable Energy Consortium for Schools (RECS) for members to purchase renewable energy credits for schools to work towards carbon neutrality. The renewable energy credit purchase qualified schools for recognition through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Green Power Partnership program.

- 28 schools in the inaugural year
- 25 million kWhs of clean energy purchased
- Emissions reduced by 17,230 tonnes of CO²

GSA Purchasing Solution

The success of RECS led the Alliance to explore other aggregated purchasing opportunities. As a result, we launched the [GSA Purchasing Solution](#) in October 2016. Powered by Negotiatus Corporation, the GSA Purchasing Solution saves schools money, sources better quality products, and simplifies purchasing. By leveraging the collective power of our members, we drive down the price of sustainable products to make them more accessible to schools. Income from the program will lead to the Alliance’s long-term financial sustainability.

Princeton Day School, NJ piloted the program in late 2016. First year impacts for the school were:



- Saved 38 trees and 4,426 lbs of virgin fiber
- Saved 12,209 gallons of water
- Saved 4,428 lbs of plastic material
- Lowered CO² emissions by reducing deliveries

Reporting Tools

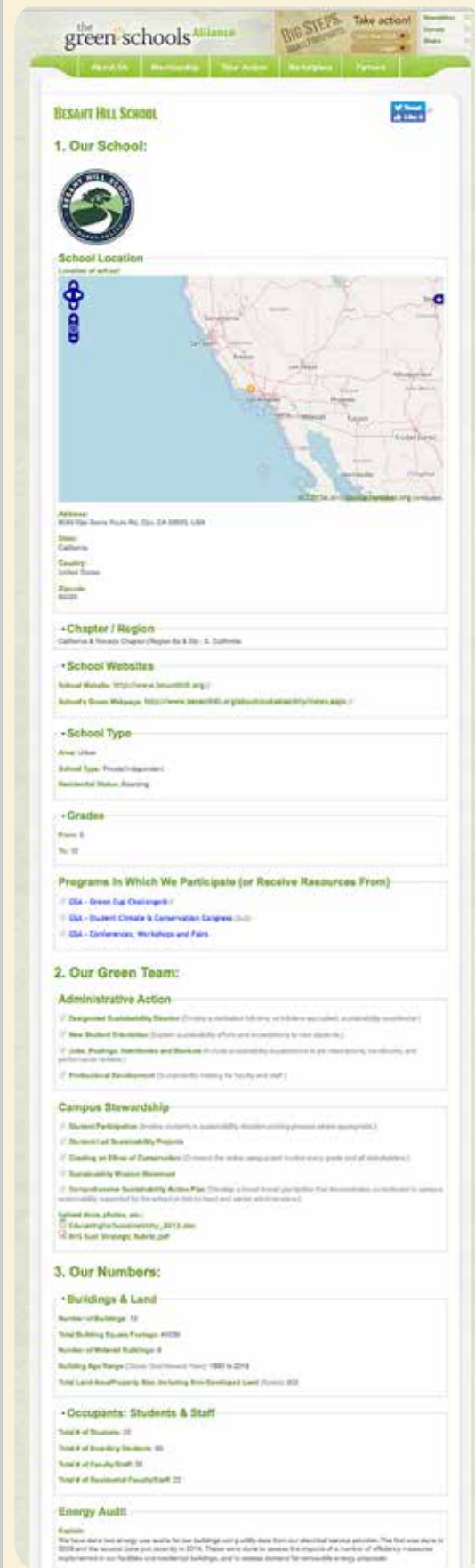
In 2011, Green Schools Alliance debuted its first crowd-sourced website with a curated resource center, video gallery, event calendar, and student and school professional blogs. The highlight of the site was the school profile pages. Each school who signed the Leadership Commitment was given a public profile page to track their environmental achievements, share best practices, and learn from other sustainability coordinators around the globe.

In 2014, the New York City Department of Education beta-tested using the profile pages as their mandatory reporting program for their 1,860 schools.

The New York pilot led the Alliance to create a new online community in 2016 (featured on page 9) and begin development of the [Sustainability Tracking and Roadmap Tool \(START\)](#). Piloting in early 2018, START will provide a roadmap for sustainability champions to transform their schools while improving data collection and reporting of resource efficiencies and sustainability program activities. START is the first system of its kind to integrate data points of progress with a tiered system of achievement, while identifying and quantifying important activities across all three areas of whole-school sustainability.



Initial START Dashboard Design



School profile page from 2011 website



At the **People's Climate March Youth Convergence 2014**, hosted by the Martin Luther King Jr. Educational Campus, NY, activities included making signs for the march, listening to speakers on youth empowerment techniques, and attending climate advocacy training workshops.



GSAx Events

GSAx events provided an opportunity for schools to become global leaders in their own communities.



Besant Hill School, Ojai, CA, USA

Schools hosted conferences, resource fairs, or workshops; bringing local schools together and providing them with the resources, tools, and expertise to meet their sustainability goals. Using the GSAX Toolkit to plan the event, sustainability champions united communities, families, resource providers, experts, and elected officials to share best practices.

Between 2007 and 2017, 30 events were held in California, Connecticut, Colorado, Georgia, New Jersey, New York, Texas, Peru, and India.

Maria's Public School in Guwahati, Assam, India hosted the first international Sc3x event in November 2016. Over three days, students and teachers became informed, inspired, and empowered through Sc3's Open Space Technology (OST) method, hands-on workshops, and exceptional keynote speakers. Five student leaders who had previously attended Sc3 facilitated the OST component to form groups. During the first two days of the event, students in the groups researched, discussed, and prepared a presentation on their topic to be given on the third day. In addition to learning about their chosen topic, students practiced techniques to encourage inclusivity, collaboration, and active participation by all members of the group.



Maria's Public School, Guwahati, Assam, India



GSA District Collaborative

In 2015, sustainability professionals from some of the largest public schools districts in the United States banded together to form the [GSA District Collaborative](#), an advisory council of district representatives working together to harness the collective power of their districts to support greener, more efficient solutions. Members build and share best practices, leverage their combined purchasing power to increase access to sustainable alternatives, and promote market transformation in the hope to influence future national policy decisions.

The GSA District Collaborative is comprised of 24 of the largest districts in the U.S.A.

In April 2016, the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council, in collaboration with the Green Schools National Network, announced the 2016 Best of Green Schools award recipients at the Green Schools Conference & Expo in Philadelphia where the GSA District Collaborative was recognized in the “Moment for the Movement” category.

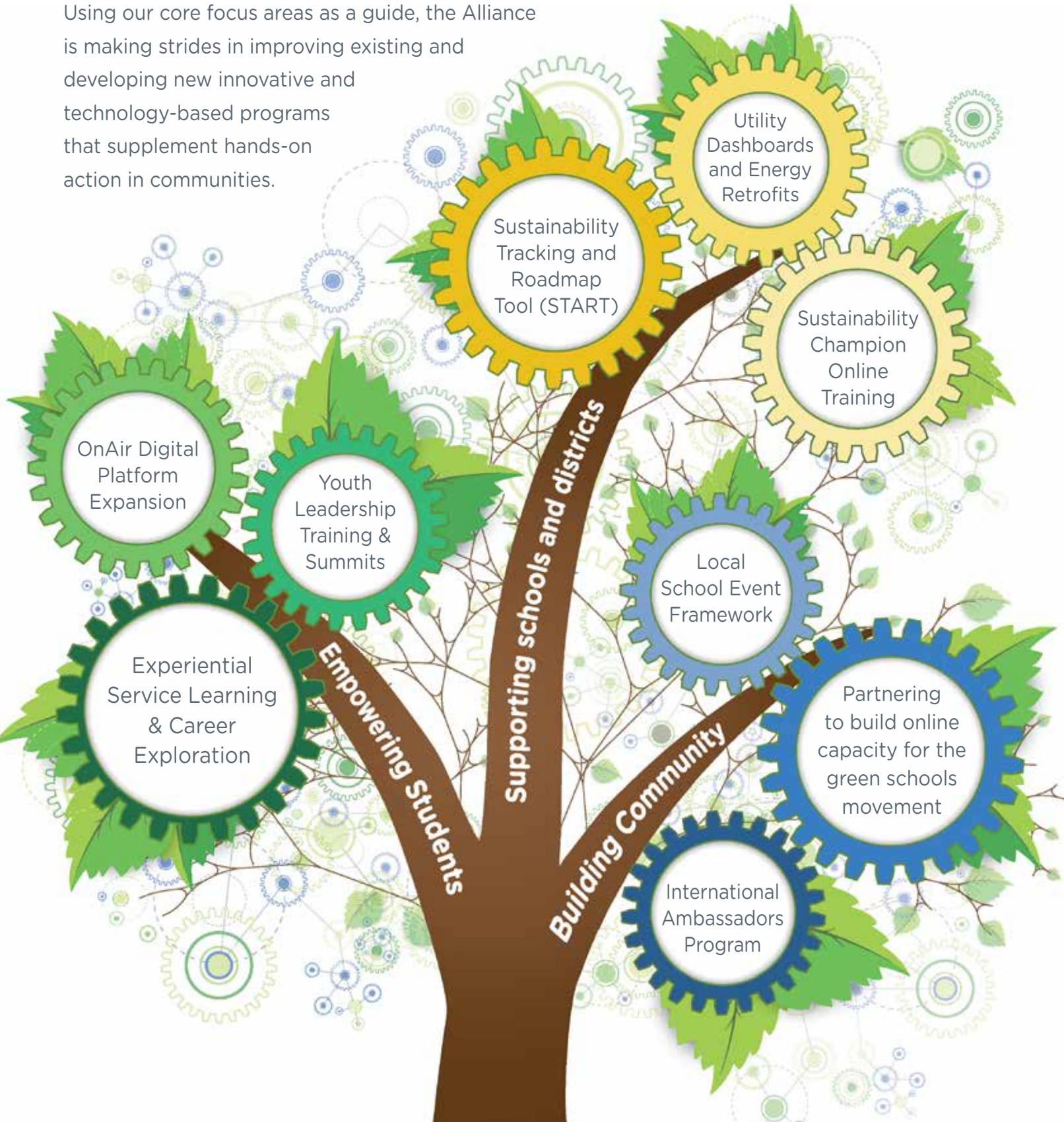
Pictured with the award: Mark Jones from Clark County School District, GSA Executive Director Sharon Jaye, and Francine Locke from The School District of Philadelphia.

Austin Independent School District, TX
Boston Public Schools, MA
Broward County Public Schools, FL
Chicago Public Schools, IL
Clark County School District, NV
Denver Public Schools, CO
Detroit Public Schools, MI
District of Columbia Public Schools, DC
Douglas County School District, CO
Fairfax County Public Schools, VA
Fayette County Public Schools, KY
Houston Independent School District, TX
Kansas City Public Schools, MO
Lincoln Public Schools, NE
New York City Department of Education, NY
Oakland Unified School District, CA
Omaha Public Schools, NE
Orange County Public Schools, FL
Sacramento City Unified School District, CA
San Diego Unified School District, CA
San Francisco Unified School District, CA
The School District of Palm Beach County, FL
The School District of Philadelphia, PA
Virginia Beach City Public Schools, VA



Programs in Development

Using our core focus areas as a guide, the Alliance is making strides in improving existing and developing new innovative and technology-based programs that supplement hands-on action in communities.



You can help make this happen in 2018!

Empowering Students

Goal: Expand and integrate the OnAir digital platform with real world challenges, campaigns, projects and training.

You can... INSPIRE the next generation of changemakers and enable students to take action in their communities.



Supporting Schools & Districts

Goal: Pilot and launch the Sustainability Tracking and Roadmap Tool.

You can... INVEST in programs that boost efficiency and effectiveness to improve schools and districts.



Building Community

Goal: Extend our reach—virtually and in person—to all of the 50 United States and an additional 10 countries.

You can... IMPACT millions by supporting collaborative tools to break down silos in the green schools community.



We cannot do this alone. YOU are integral to making this happen.

[Make a donation](#) or join the [GSA Sustainers Circle](#).



THANK YOU to our members, schools, districts, partners, sponsors, donors, and collaborators for your support over the past decade. You inspire us to continuously explore ways to make a greater impact as an organization and grow the green schools movement. We would not have been able to do this without you.

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