

Now that you have completed **Step 1: Build a Green Team**, you are ready to proceed in the process of becoming a Washington Green School.

Objective

Step 2: Assess. Transportation Assessment Guide provides tips on how to complete the Transportation Assessment, and some recommended resources. The goal of completing the assessment is for your Green Team and other school members to get a good overview of current practices relating to modes of transportation and fuels that are being used by students, staff, and in school operations, and why.

Once your assessment is complete, you will be able to use the answers and the information to identify and implement a policy level Lasting Change (for Step 3) to improve energy efficiency at your school.

A Successful Assessment Process

1. **Planning:** Meet with your Green Team and decide who will complete the assessment. Some possibilities are:

- The whole Green Team
- A classroom of students and their teacher
- A combination of Green Team members, classrooms, staff or grade levels

2. **Finding resources:** Consider whom you will need to call or meet with to answer the assessment questions related to energy usage.

You may wish to include:

- Teachers who specialize in this topic
- School bus drivers
- School district staff
- Facilities staff
- School fleet managers
- Non-profit organizations that promote alternative transportation modes and fuel choices.
- Local transportation providers such as your local transit authority.

3. **Saving Information:** Put the data collected in a place where it will be accessible to future Green Teams.

- While some of the information gathered on the assessment will be entered into your report card and saved on the web, most of the details will be contained on your paper assessment or in notes. It is helpful to save data in a central location so future Green Teams can learn from what you did, compare results, and track school-wide success as the work continues.

4. **Submission:** Remember, in order to certify, you must also scan (or take a picture of) your hand-written assessment findings, and upload them with your other Washington Green School records in your school account at www.wagreenschools.org.

Support Information for Assessment Questions

Assessment Question	Hint	Why It's Important	Related Action Items
Support			
1. Do you have educators or technical experts in the area of transportation or outdoor air quality in your community?	Research community organizations, non-profits, government agencies and businesses to find local expert educators on this subject.	<p>Transportation and outdoor air quality educators can help you with the challenging questions in this assessment. They can also provide tips on changes you can make to improve outdoor air quality and transportation choices to and from your school, as well as information about alternative fuel sources that may be available in your community.</p> <p>They can also identify other actions you could take that are not listed in the Washington Green Schools program, but are appropriate for your school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your local clean air agency to find out what resources, programs and technical assistance are available for your school (speakers, classroom resources, technical assistance, grant programs, special projects, etc.). Schedule a speaker, program, or technical assistance. • Research three local or international schools to learn what they are doing on transportation alternatives and improving outdoor air quality, and how they are measuring and evaluating their results. Present your findings to the school community or other appropriate audience.
General Transportation			
2. Does your school curriculum include transportation related topics?	Ask your school administration / staff to see what transportation related curriculum is being taught in the school.	Teaching students about transportation related topics and how transportation impacts health, safety and the environment could increase awareness and help students understand the importance of transportation choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a bicycle safety workshop such as a “Bicycle Rodeo”, helmet fitting, or other bike safety event. Research if this is already being offered by an organization in your area that could provide this to your school free of charge. • Perform a skit, puppet show, or other type of entertainment about transportation alternatives or outdoor air quality to the school community, or another school.
3. Does your school sponsor or participate in any programs to encourage carpooling, use of public transportation, or non-vehicular transportation to and from school? If yes, describe.	Ask your school administration /staff.	Increasing student and staff use of carpools or high occupant transportation types decreases an individual’s impact to the environment, lessening the amount of emissions per person.	

Assessment Question	Hint	Why It's Important	Related Action Items
<p>4. Which of the following options are available for students and staff to get to and from school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks • Public Transportation (Bus) • Bike paths • School Buses • Bike lanes • Other _____ 	Conduct a site and community survey on transportation options.	Exploring and educating students and staff about all safe to and from school transportation options may lead to permanent commuting behavior changes that reduce vehicle emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a school-wide recognition program for students who participate in alternative transportation activities. • Design a display for the foyer, commons, cafeteria or other public spaces to educate students and staff about your school's transportation alternatives.
<p>5. Does your school have anti-idling policy for school buses, delivery vehicles and all vehicles at student pick-up areas?</p>	Contact your school administration / staff to see what policies are in place regarding idling.	Idling vehicles contribute to poor air quality surrounding school due to tail-pipe emissions. Reducing idling time can significantly reduce emissions and fuel use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a no-idling policy for your school.
Walking and Biking			
<p>6. Are sidewalks and bike paths within a quarter-mile radius of the school safe and accessible for all?</p>	Work with school administrative staff to get answers to these assessment questions.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students research what "Safe Routes to School" projects have received grant funding in other schools. Come up with a potential project for your school. <i>Example:</i> http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/SafeRoutesResources.htm. • Apply for Safe Routes to School grant funding through WA Dept. of Transportation. http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/SafeRoutesResources.htm. • Celebrate International Walk to School Month in October by having an activity or event. See http://www.walktoschool.org/ to get ideas and to register your event.
<p>7. Do sidewalks and bike paths within a quarter-mile of the school have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate lighting • Access ramps • Smooth paved surfaces 		Adequate lighting, access ramps, and smooth paved surfaces make using sidewalks and bike paths for transportation to and from school safer for students and staff.	
<p>8. Are crossing guards provided before and after school for students who walk or bike to school?</p>		Crossing guards at intersections near the school serve to reduce accidents by increasing the visibility of students crossing intersections.	
<p>9. Does your school have a "Walking School Bus" program?</p>		Walking School Bus programs are a way for students that live near schools to coordinate walking between school and home safely.	

Assessment Question	Hint	Why It's Important	Related Action Items
10. Does your school district have a "School Walk Route Plan"?	Contact your school administration / staff to see what bike and walk to school policies and programs are in place, and what resources may be available to the school.	Washington State school districts are required to have suggested walking route plans for every elementary school. Walking to school is an effective way for students to get to school without contributing any harmful emissions to the atmosphere.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students research what "Safe Routes to School" projects have received grant funding in other schools. Come up with a potential project for your school. <i>Example:</i> http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/SafeRoutesResources.htm. • Apply for Safe Routes to School grant funding through WA Dept. of Transportation. http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/SafeRoutesResources.htm. • Offer a bicycle safety workshop such as a "Bicycle Rodeo," helmet fitting, or other biking safety event. Research if this is already being offered by a local organization in your area that could come, and do provide this at your school free of charge for free. • Celebrate International Walk to School Month in October by having an activity or event. See http://www.walktoschool.org/ to get ideas and to register your event. • Celebrate Bicycle Month in May by having bicycle-to-school activities. May is also Clean Air and Asthma Awareness month. Coordinate with Bike-to-Work Week in May if it exists in your community. • Create a school-wide recognition program for students who participate in alternative transportation activities and/or have students partner with a community groups, non-profits, businesses, etc. on alternative transportation related projects. • Design a display for the foyer, commons, cafeteria or other public spaces to educate students and staff about your school's transportation alternatives or outdoor air quality actions.
11. Does your school allow students to bike to school?		Biking to school is an effective way for students to get to school without contributing any harmful emissions to the atmosphere.	
12. Does your school provide bicycle-parking racks for students and staff?		Inadequate/ insufficient bicycle storage can be a barrier for students and staff to bike-commute to and from school.	

Assessment Question	Hint	Why It's Important	Related Action Items
School Buses			
<p>13. Approximately how many school buses stop at your school during the day?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before school? • After school? • During school? 	<p>Work with your school administration to determine how many buses stop at your school. Or, do a school bus and student count with your Green Team members on a regular school day.</p>	<p>Knowing the number of buses that arrive at your school every day will help you determine how much buses contribute to your schools overall carbon footprint.</p> <p>If you can figure out approximately how many students are on each bus you could calculate the percentage of students that currently arrive by bus. With this information you could determine the success rates of future walk and bike campaigns. You could also calculate avoided emissions that bus riders would have produced had they used single occupant vehicles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using one of the online carbon calculator tools, measure your school's carbon footprint reduction or the energy saved from using alternative forms of transportation. • Have students calculate the school's "ecological or global footprint" using one of the many online calculators, and present information, findings and recommendations to school community or other appropriate audience. Example: http://www.globalfootprints.org/issues/footprint/councquiz1.htm • Research how much money your school/district spends on fuel each year. Use an online calculator to calculate your emissions.
<p>14. Do school buses frequently idle their engines for longer than 3 minutes while parked outside the school?</p>	<p>Interview bus drivers and ask them whether they turn off their engines while waiting. Or, have the Green Team observe and document school buses that are idling for more than three minutes at a time.</p>	<p>School buses idling for longer than three minutes contribute to poor air quality surrounding the schools from unnecessary tail pipe emissions, and waste fuel.</p> <p><i>See the following links for more info:</i> http://airwatchnorthwest.org/wa/NO_IDLE/Measure_Idling.html#top http://airwatchnorthwest.org/wa/NO_IDLE/PDFs/Idlingmeasurement_form.pdf http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/idle_fuel_calc.htm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the environmental and health impacts of idling cars and buses at school, and present your findings to the school community. • Measure idling behavior at school (average number of cars/buses idling, use stop watches to time idling and find the average idling time for cars and buses, etc.). Present your findings and recommendations to the school community. • Use the EPA online calculator to calculate the amount of fuel and money your school/district will save by reducing school bus idle time. Present your findings to the school community.
<p>15. Has your school district already joined the free Diesel School Bus Retrofit program through your local clean air agency?</p>	<p>Ask your school administration for the answer to this question.</p>	<p>The Diesel Bus Retrofit Program offers free resources to schools with older bus fleets. Join the program to cost effectively upgrade your fleet and enjoy better air quality as well as improved fuel economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your district hasn't already, join the free Diesel School Bus Retrofit program through your local clean air agency. • Contact your local clean air agency or Washington Department of Ecology to find out what resources, programs and technical assistance is available for your school.

Assessment Question	Hint	Why It's Important	Related Action Items
Other Vehicles			
16. Besides buses, what types of vehicles does your school own or use, what are they used for, and what kind of gas mileage do they get?	Contact your school/ district fleet manager for this information. Also tally the number of vehicles.	This information can help determine the amount of fuel used by the school and the total emissions of the fleet. This could also help identify some alternate fuel sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research how much money your school/ district spends on fuel each year, and use an online calculator to calculate your emissions. • Research the use of an alternative fuel source (biodiesel or natural gas) for the school bus fleet or landscaping equipment and provide information to the district fleet manager or related position.
17. If your school has a driver's education program, does it use fuel-efficient vehicles for instruction?	Contact your driver's education program staff to determine the types of vehicles used.	Using fuel efficient and low emitting vehicles can help reduce the negative impacts to the outdoor air quality surrounding the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the use of an alternative fuel source for the school bus fleet or landscaping equipment and provide information to the district fleet manager or a related position.
18. Does your school/district use biodiesel for any cars, trucks or buses?	Contact your school/ district fleet manager to determine what fuel types are used by cars, trucks and buses.	Using biodiesel cars, trucks and buses as part of the schools fleet decreases the demand for oil. Biodiesel can be generated by less environmentally harmful ways than drilling and is easier to clean up if spilled.	
19. Does your school send its used cooking oil to a biodiesel manufacturer?	Contact your kitchen staff and/or facilities manager.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider finding a biodiesel manufacturer to send used cooking oil and buying back from them for school vehicles.
20. How many deliveries come to your school each week (e.g. food, office, and janitorial supplies, etc.)?	Work with your school administration to determine how many trucks stop at your school. Or, pick 2 – 3 school days and have your Green Team perform a truck count.	They way your school receives its supplies can affect air quality and impact fuel use. Opportunities to reduce and/or combine truck trips will have direct air quality benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start a school garden that can provide some food for the cafeteria, or serve food from an existing school garden or horticulture program. This can help reduce transportation pollution from long-distance deliveries. • Learn about food, farming, and the environment and map some food paths to your community. Display in the cafeteria. www.ecoliteracy.org • Work with your school board to amend your Wellness Policy to include goals and priorities for local food and a sustainable food system.

Assessment Question	Hint	Why It's Important	Related Action Items
21. Does your school use public transportation for school trips?	Contact your school administration / staff for the school trip policies regarding public transportation.	Use public transportation when possible for school trips to reduce transportation emissions by replacing individual car or school bus trips.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask your local transportation providers (bus, light rail) how to get additional services to your school.
Transportation of Food			
22. Does your school have a food garden? If yes, do you use food from that garden in the cafeteria, snack program or classroom?	Meet with your school chef and/or the district's food services manager to discuss what types of foods could be grown at the school and used for meals or snacks. Find out where they are currently sourcing food for your cafeteria, and whether the school is participating in any CSA efforts or would be interested in hosting a CSA drop-off site.	Using food grown on-site has many benefits. From a transportation standpoint, it reduces the need for deliveries to your school. An organic garden will also reduce transportation and fuels used in the production of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Talk with the local farmer who grows your food as an educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start a school garden that can provide some food for the cafeteria, or serve food from an existing school garden or horticulture program. This can help reduce transportation pollution from long-distance deliveries. Learn about food, farming, culture and the environment and map some food paths to your community. Display in the cafeteria. www.ecoliteracy.org and www.agr.wa.gov/farmtoschool/edres. Establish your school as a drop-site for the local CSA or farmers market, so parents and teachers can pick up locally grown foods, rather than making separate trips to buy food. (CSA stands for "Community Supported Agriculture," a program where customers pay farmers for weekly deliveries of farm-fresh produce throughout the season). Work with your school board to amend your Wellness Policy to include goals and priorities for local food and a sustainable food system that reduces pollution caused by food transportation and processing.
23. Does your school or district have a policy to choose locally made products?			
24. Does your school host a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) drop-off, farmers market, or other community food access program?			