

Who has a School Sustainability Manager?

A sustainability manager is a role developed over the last decade that is now common in corporations, government, university, and municipal school districts. Within the secondary school space, the position has started to pop up in schools with more developed sustainability initiatives such as International School of Beijing, International School of Kuala Lumpur, and American School of Dubai. The position can range from half to full-time and may also be combined with service learning.

What is the Purpose for a Sustainability Manager?

Creating a role within your school has the power to lead a coordinated evolution of your campus from the place students learn to a place students can apply their learnings using the [Living Lab](#) concept. Having a role focused on sustainability resolves the common complaint of short-lived passion projects at the faculty and student levels by developing a long-lasting coordinated strategy.

The role will often focus on:

- Working with school leadership to develop a sustainability plan for the school and manage the execution of the resulting initiatives.
- Mentoring students outside of the classroom (i.e. Green Team, Eco Schools club, etc) to develop sustainability-related ideas into reality on campus.
- Depending on curricular priorities, support teacher training and direct tie-ins to sustainability / UNSDGs to classroom lessons. (note that this focus has the potential to overwhelm the other two from a time consideration)

Beyond the learning potential, studies conclude that incorporating sustainability concepts at the building level can measurably enhance student learning capacity and teacher productivity ([see our blog article on the topic](#)).

What should I look for in a Sustainability Manager?

The key attributes of anyone in this role are:

- Passion for sustainability
- Self-sufficient
- Flexible
- Strong team collaborator

As the role does not have a traditional path and its focus will vary within each school, any individual in this role must be able to see opportunities as they present themselves and collaborate with the necessary individuals to interweave considerations of sustainability into the final outcome. Given the breadth of possible topics the individual may encounter, the ability to research and identify options that mesh with the overall goals of others is a must.



What would be a good Job Description for a Sustainability Manager?

JOB GOAL / PURPOSE:

The role of the Sustainability Manager is a new, but critical role within the [your school name] that will help develop and lead sustainability efforts and initiatives as related to the school's vision and mission. There will be a great deal of cross-functional interaction, so the candidate must feel comfortable in interfacing with our various community stakeholders from [PK-12] students, teachers, support staff, administrators, parents, and our contracted partners. The desired candidate will maintain a positive atmosphere, be a creative problem solver, and be driven to continuously look for ways to improve and embed sustainability into the way we live and learn.

The candidate should be aware that [your school name] has yet to establish a formal sustainability program; therefore, the approach and focus areas for which to lead the program are undefined. However, in the context of the school, sustainability should have a global awareness of environmental, social and governance challenges such that students and staff alike ought to leave the school with a deeper understanding of the complexity of such challenges and be ready to address them no matter where their lives may lead.

DUTIES / RESPONSIBILITIES:

Administration Focus

- Develop and execute a sustainability program for the school. Assure that strategies are designed to support the school's mission and long-term strategic plan
- Engage, coordinate and lead a multi-stakeholder sustainability advisory committee to provide consultation on overall sustainability program direction
- Assist administrators in developing and maintaining related school policies and procedures to strengthen the school's awareness and impact towards environmental, social, and governance challenges
- Responsible for maintaining sustainability focus in day-to-day operations and work with associated departments and partners to pursue opportunities
- Take a leadership role in staff wellness with a focus on long-term staff attraction and retention
- Develop school-wide sustainability targets in consultation with multiple stakeholders across the community
- Accountable for data reporting processes and impact analysis on sustainability targets and initiatives
- Evaluate and identify projects to improve carbon, energy, water, and waste performance

Student Centered Focus

- Direct and indirect mentoring of students in the context of sustainability project development



- Generation of opportunities for direct student involvement within the school-wide sustainability program
- Oversight of green / sustainability teams to empower students and staff to become leaders within the sustainability program
- As applicable, consult and support facility and administrators interweave sustainability into the learning environment

Impactful Sharing Focus

- Serve as the central contact and voice for students, parents, teachers, support staff and administrator for wants, demands, and desires related to the sustainability program focus areas and objectives
- Develop relationships with external NGOs, businesses, or other schools to share experiences, learn from others, and enable opportunities for students
- Share progress and impacts of the sustainability program periodically through school articles and other forms of communication

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED:

- Bachelor's degree required in a related field (i.e., environmental science, education, sustainability, sustainable business, etc.)
- 5+ years of job experience in project management or teaching role (environmental science teacher or sustainability consulting background preferred)
- Passion for sustainability
- Ability to be an effective change agent
- Ability to demonstrate basic financial benefits of sustainability strategies
- Excellent written, pictorial, and verbal communication skills
- Strong team facilitation and problem-solving skills
- Cross-culture experience/understanding a definite plus