

An interview with Jeff Brown, executive director of Global Learning and New Jersey Sustainable Schools Network- a non-profit organization established to promote education for a sustainable future in all schools in New Jersey.

Q: Tell us about your mission and your philosophy.

Brown: The New Jersey Sustainable Schools Network is a new partnership of individual schools, professional associations, higher education groups, state agencies, state-based regional and national nonprofit organizations, and corporations. Our long range goal is to promote education for a sustainable future -- local as well as global -- in all schools in New Jersey, working through existing educational organizations and agencies in a consortia approach.

Q: How would you attempt to implement more sustainable programs in existing Schools?

Brown: A sustainable school is one that maximizes the educational opportunities in its total life to create a total learning community committed to contributing to a more sustainable future. In a sustainable school, students -- and everyone else -- will see the intellectual concern for a sustainable future mirrored in the practices in the cafeteria, during construction or renovations, in the inclusion of students and custodial staff in energy efficiency training and initiatives, in transportation policies or in the design and maintenance of schoolyards etc.

Environmental issues that are garnering public attention and acceptance, like global warming, can serve as great way to get others motivated about contemporary ecological problems both inside and outside of schools. We have developed tools that schools can use to measure their ecological footprint, like our greenhouse gas emission calculator.

Q: Do you have any suggestions for those (parents/teachers/students) who might want to start to implement more sustainable practices in their schools?

Brown: Start by identifying your school's strengths (recycling programs, reductions in energy use, etc.) and then plan for the future. Take the time to implement small additions to your school's normal operation to foster gradual organic progression into more effective ways of teaching environmental stewardship to students and your school's operation. Remember the 3 E's of Sustainability as you initiate programs; prosperous *Economy*, quality *Environment*, and social *Equity*.