

Hibbard Elementary School

2026 Project Report



The Project:

Hibbard Elementary's Green Team launched *The Big Switch*, an LED modernization project that paired energy-efficient lighting upgrades with student-led education. By transforming a needed infrastructure improvement into a learning opportunity, students explored how energy choices impact their school, homes, and community, while promoting long-term energy stewardship and sustainability.

Project Focus: Energy Conservation

Students Involved: 3-5 Classrooms

Staff Involved: 2

Location: Chicago, IL



We selected this topic to transform our school into a living classroom, ensuring that our 900+ students see sustainability in action through a tangible, room-by-room modernization that improves their daily learning environment.



The Process:

Guided by their Green Team leader and mentor, students began by completing the IGSP Sustainability Self-Assessment and Energy Walkthrough for Hibbard's 169,900-square-foot campus. This process helped identify energy waste, non-functional daylight sensors, and disparities between the school's legacy and newer buildings, as primary environmental impact concerns. Students partnered with facilities staff to assess lighting systems and learned how fluorescent fixtures increased energy use. Using this data, the team designed an LED modernization project supported by an IGSP Mini Grant. Students integrated energy concepts into science and math lessons, researched LED efficiency, and led an awareness campaign that included labeling light switches, classroom discussions, and family engagement around energy-saving habits at home.

The Outcomes:

Hibbard Elementary plans to begin replacing fluorescent fixtures with \$1,000-worth of new LED Linnear Tubes in June 2026. The LED conversion is projected to significantly reduce the school's daily energy load, saving the school money and lowering their environmental impact. Their long-term goals are to transform all lights on campus to LEDs, track energy savings, and reinvest utility savings into future sustainability upgrades. The Green Team also hopes to work with the administration towards a sustainable planning policy for future building updates. Students will continue this work through ongoing walkthroughs, curriculum integration, and annual energy education events that reinforce long-term stewardship.

