GREEN BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT · CERTIFIED 2025

TREE Academy

California Green Business Program · School / Education



Sustainability as a Lesson, Not Just a Checklist

For TREE Academy, a small independent school in West Hollywood, serving about 80 students in grades 6 through 12, becoming a certified Green Business wasn't just about cutting utility costs — it was an extension of what the school already teaches. "Becoming a Green Business is in line with our school mission and philosophy," said Meghan Roggenbuck, who teaches Middle School STEM. "We value sustainability and want to minimize our environmental footprint."

But the most important part of the process wasn't the paperwork — it was the students. TREE Academy made certification a hands-on learning opportunity, engaging students directly in the process of earning the designation. Rather than sustainability being something the school talked about in the classroom, it became something students helped build in real life.

BUSINESS PROFILE

LOCATION
West Hollywood, CA

CAMPUS
30,000 sq. ft.

SECTOR
School · Education

FOUNDED
2016

CERTIFIED
2025

HEAD OF SCHOOL
Phú Trầnchí

> *"Becoming a Green Business is in line with our school mission and philosophy. We value sustainability and want to minimize our environmental footprint."*
>
> — **Meghan Roggenbuck, Middle School STEM Teacher · TREE Academy**
>
> Recipient of a 2026–2027 Literacy for Life Standard Grant from the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (CFAITC)

Building on a Strong Foundation

TREE Academy wasn't starting from scratch. The school already taught sustainability concepts and had established habits like waste sorting and mitigation well before pursuing certification. That head start made the process smoother than expected.

> *"We were surprised at how far along we already were, and how simple it was to gain further ground. There were not as many barriers as many might perceive. It is a commitment, but it's not as cumbersome as skeptics would believe."*

What They Changed

TREE Academy focused on a handful of practical, high-impact upgrades:

Lighting

In April 2025, 289 32W fluorescent tubes were replaced with 12W LED tubes — about a 62% cut in lighting wattage. Building-wide electricity use dropped roughly 10%.

Sustainable Supplies

Office and maintenance supplies shifted to renewable, biodegradable, and eco-friendly sources — with no meaningful increase in cost.

Water Conservation

The WeHo GBP team installed 10 high-efficiency faucet aerators on restroom hand sinks free of charge, saving over 25,700 gallons of drinking water annually.





PROJECT COSTS

PAID UPFRONT	REBATE RECEIVED	OUT OF POCKET
$1,984.50	**$1,500**	**$484.50**
LED lighting retrofit	WeHo GBP Grant	after rebates

WeHo GBP projected savings for the retrofit: approximately 17,198 kWh of electricity and $4,100 in utility costs per year. Measured results are on page 3.

HANDS-ON LEARNING

A certification requirement became a real-world lesson.

Students sorted and composted campus waste, and measured faucet flow rates with a flow-meter bag to verify the impact of the new aerators — seeing water conservation proven with their own hands.

The Payoff

THE BIGGEST WIN

Not a number on a utility bill — it was community engagement.

The students who helped the school earn certification are now carrying those habits and values forward — presenting to their peers, leading projects, and shaping the culture of the school for the classes that follow.



Measured Results

Following the replacement of 289 32W fluorescent tubes with energy-efficient 12W LED tubes in April 2025, TREE Academy's electricity consumption decreased by approximately 10% compared with the preceding 12-month period. This represents an estimated reduction of about 3,200 kWh annually, based on utility data from May 2024–April 2026.

MAY 2024–APR 2025
32,665 kWh
2,722 kWh / month

MAY 2025–APR 2026
29,459 kWh
2,455 kWh / month

REDUCTION
≈ 9.8%
3,206 kWh · 267 kWh / month

Lighting wattage fell about 62% (289 × 32W ≈ 9.25 kW to 289 × 12W ≈ 3.47 kW, based on the 32W tubes). Lighting is one part of total use; HVAC, computers, refrigeration and kitchen equipment were unchanged. The savings held despite a summer program (late July–early August 2025) and unusual heat that increased AC use. Although utility rates rose, TREE's electricity costs did not.

Advice to Other Businesses

"Just do it! It's simpler to accomplish than you might think, and gratifying, because every action and every measure is a positive. It makes each subsequent step easier to take. I have no regrets, and there is no looking back."

— **Phú Trần chí, Head of School · TREE Academy**

TREE ACADEMY

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GREEN CALIFORNIA GREEN BUSINESS NETWORK
CERTIFIED 2025