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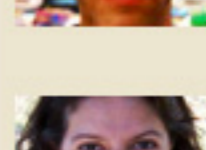
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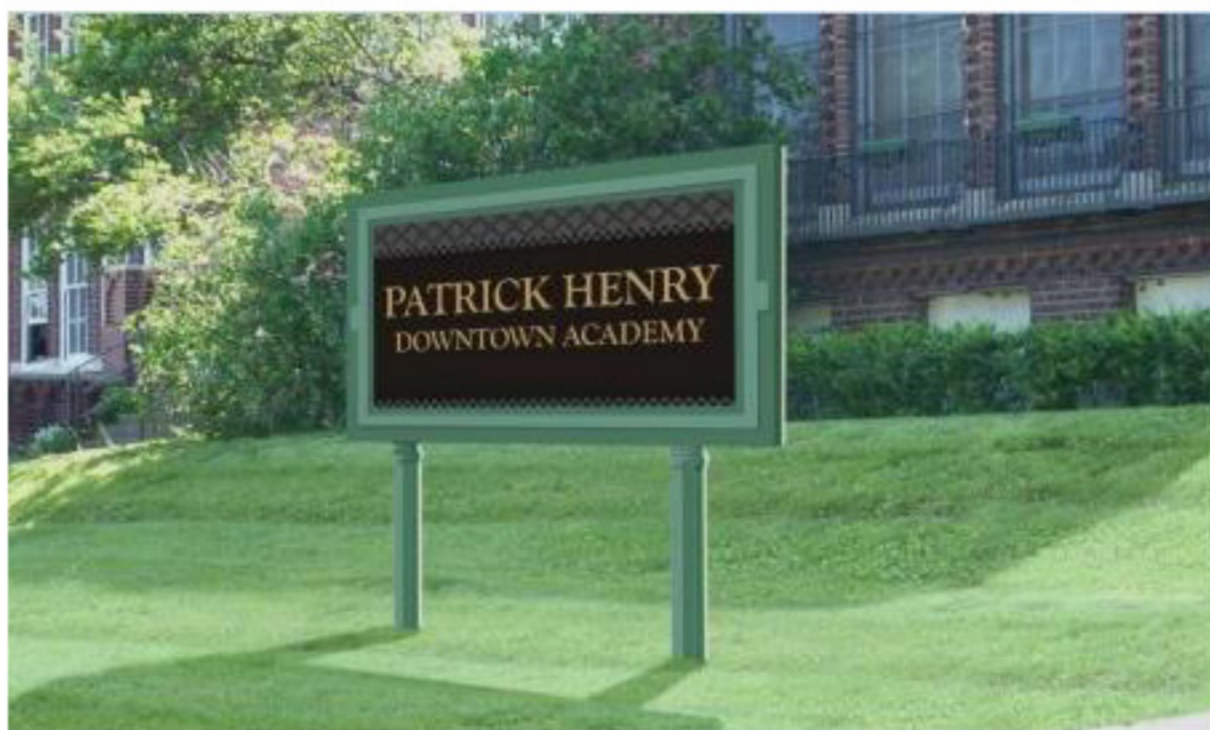
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St. Louis' green elementary school

February 24th, 2010 by [Jeff McIntire-Strasburg](#)

Green jobs training programs are popping up all over the country. Often funded by grants from the [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#) (i.e., the stimulus bill), these programs generally aim to retrain displaced workers in skills such as building efficiency and renewable energy installation and maintenance. Recent numbers tend to bear out the potential for job growth in green industries: wind power, for instance, [grew by 39% in 2009](#).

Here in St. Louis, one elementary school sees these trends, and has decided to get its students thinking green from early ages. The [Patrick Henry Downtown Academy](#) implemented a "GREEN School Model" this year designed to "emphasize ecological sustainability, environmental health, nutrition, personal responsibility, leadership and a comprehensive, high-quality academic program." Though a combination of in-class and hands-on activities, the school plans to position itself as a national model for implementing environmental and sustainability education at the primary level.

While it's too early to tell how well this model will fare, it won't be for lack of support: Washington University architecture professor Gay Lorberbaum, for instance, is teaching a course that sends his students to Henry Academy to [teach sustainability to kids](#). Kindergartners are learning how cereal is made, while sixth-graders are delving in to renewable energy and nutrient cycles. While some will call this "indoctrination," recent Wash U grad Devki Desai (who's taking the course for no credit) claims the program puts science in a context that's meaningful to the kids: "I want to expose the kids to the science topics I would have loved to learn about when I was their age."

This is a really provocative approach... The St. Louis schools have been struggling with many of the same issues faced by many urban education systems — low graduation rates, inadequate funding, and even loss of accreditation — so this kind of innovation is critical rebuilding a solid educational foundation for city students.

Know of other primary, or even secondary schools implementing green-themed curricula...? Tell us about them.

MORE FROM SUSTAINABLOG:

- The [President's Environmental Youth Awards](#) recognizes students developing innovative environmental education programs.
- Get your own kids thinking green with our selection of [eco toys](#).

Image credit: [Patrick Henry Downtown Academy — St. Louis Public Schools](#)

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