Saint Francis High School

Private School, California Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools
Green Achiever

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California Department of Education
School Facilities and Transportation Services Division
Green Ribbon Schools Award Program
January 2025

PART II – SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Saint Francis High School, Mountain View, California

Stewards Of the Environment, Both Local and Global

Saint Francis High School (SFHS), a private Catholic institution in Mountain View, California, exemplifies a holistic commitment to sustainability, health, and interdisciplinary learning through its environmental initiatives, wellness programs, and educational practices. Over the past decade, the school has reduced energy use by 11.3%, installed solar panels to meet 51% of energy needs, and implemented building features like auto-dimming LED lighting and heat-reflective roofs. Water conservation efforts include low-flow fixtures, drought-resistant landscaping, and rainwater bioswales, while waste management has improved through composting, recycling, and tri-bin systems. Wellness initiatives feature updated facilities with (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value) MERV-13 filtration, bioswales, and artificial turf to enhance health while reducing pesticide and water usage. The school prioritizes social-emotional learning, Health and Fitness courses, and a robust Wellness Center alongside retreats and extracurricular programs promoting physical and emotional well-being. SFHS integrates interdisciplinary environmental education through Advanced Placement (AP) Environmental Science, Earth Week civic engagement, and the Environmental Club, fostering student leadership and linking STEM, ethics, and civic responsibility to address global challenges. Students participate in hands-on projects, such as designing climate solutions, exploring sustainable food systems, and creating renewable energy and robotics innovations. SFHS nurtures global stewardship and community engagement through global and domestic service trips and a curriculum that emphasizes holistic education.

PART III – DOCUMENTATION OF STATE EVALUATION OF DISTRICT NOMINEE

Pillar I: Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs

Element IA: Energy

- Until July 2023, Saint Francis High School (SFHS) contracted with Commercial Energy to purchase energy at a fixed rate and maintain records. They provided daily power usage reports. In July 2023, SFHS changed its energy procurement methods to align with its campus plan. Since then, SFHS has tracked energy usage by analyzing local energy utility, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), bills for carbon-based electricity versus Wunder Energy bills for on-site solar generation.
- In 2009, the SFHS administration implemented a campus master plan, beginning a decade-long renovation and construction process focused on increasing energy efficiency. The upgrades included replacing outdated gas boilers with all-electric heating and cooling, partially powered by newly installed solar panels.
- The school's Innovation Center, Welcome Center, and Dining Commons have solar panels on 50% of the roof space. Solar panels are also on the roofs of all existing campus buildings except for the two newest buildings, whose designs were finalized without this consideration.
- For the 2024 fiscal year, SFHS obtained 75% of the school's energy from renewable sources, both on-site (via solar panels) and purchased energy (via Silicon Valley Clean Energy).

- Regarding all new construction between 2021 and 2024, the campus removed more than half of the gas-powered boilers (installed in the 1960s) and replaced them with heat pumps. The four remaining boilers, which provide heat to one classroom building, the gyms, the pool, and the performance arts theater, are all under fifteen years old, so they are more energy efficient than the older boilers no longer present on campus.
- SFHS reduced its non-transportation energy use by 11.3% from 2016 to 2024, tracking it through the online energy management tool Gridium. This achievement occurred without changing campus square footage and alongside a marginal increase in student enrollment.
- In July 2023, SFHS began using electricity from solar panels installed on newly constructed campus building rooftops. By 2024, 51% of campus electricity was obtained from on-site renewable energy generation.
- The school's new buildings feature energy-efficient elements, including auto-dimming lights that activate when unoccupied, high-efficiency HVAC systems, tinted windows to moderate sunlight, automatic sunlight-level controls, and lighting control panels that turn off lights at preset times through a central control system. The electrical outlets activate only the bottom plug when someone enters the room.
- SFHS completed its campus master plan in the summer of 2024. The plan incorporates reflective white membrane roofs on the Welcome Center, Innovation Center, Sobrato Learning Commons, and both gymnasium buildings. Additionally, the campus road was converted to an Ethylene Vinyl Acetate (EVA) road with bricked or coated stamped asphalt to mitigate the heat island effect.
- Between 2012 and 2019, SFHS reduced energy use by retrofitting all classroom buildings, gyms, and the pool stadium with LED lighting.
- The school uses a Building Management System (BMS) to optimize energy efficiency. The system monitors lighting and HVAC systems, ensuring they operate only when needed, and includes panels to turn off unused lights.

Element IB: Water and Grounds

- From 2022 to 2024, SFHS reduced its overall water usage by 10%, lowering consumption from 38,718 gallons per occupant per year to 34,837 gallons per occupant per year.
- From 2021 to 2024, SFHS 's older buildings were demolished for new construction, enabling the installation of low-flow sinks, toilets, and auto faucets. The new toilets use only a half gallon per flush, compared to the previous three to four gallons. In 2020-2021, existing restroom sinks were upgraded to touch-free auto faucets.
- The newly constructed Welcome Center and Innovation Center are plumbed for reclaimed "purple" water. Additionally, restroom sinks in all buildings constructed between 2021 and 2024 and existing buildings retrofitted in 2020–2021 feature auto-flow to prevent water waste.
- In 2019, SFHS redesigned the center quad by replacing grass and high-water-use landscaping with outdoor planters featuring efficient drip irrigation systems. In addition, all athletic fields are artificially turfed, eliminating the need for irrigation.
- In the summer of 2024, SFHS completed its campus construction master plan, introducing drought-resistant plants and shrubs in bioswales. The school also implemented a rainwater capture system that directs water into bioswales and the school garden, allowing it to filter naturally through the soil.

- All landscaping at SFHS is irrigated using a long-established underground well with a campus-wide loop system. Time clocks regulate the irrigation schedule to optimize water usage, including upgraded systems installed during the 2021–2024 campus construction.

Element IC: Waste

- SFHS documents a 45% diversion rate from recycling and composting. It collects kitchen organics in rolling bins for compost, which its local waste collection company, Recology, transports to its facilities for processing.
- The school has 15 tri-bin waste-separating units in high-use areas. Recology trained all staff on the tri-bin system at the start of the school year, provided orientation to freshmen, and collaborated with the Associated Student Body (ASB) on a training video. Facilities maintenance staff empty compost receptacles daily, consolidate materials into a two-cubic-yard bin, and schedule bi-weekly pickups.
- Saint Francis High School's Science Department has five prep rooms with locked flammable cabinets for chemicals. Chemicals are stored by compatibility groups to minimize cross-reactions. Only teachers can access these areas. Over the past decade, the Science Department has implemented microscale labs and green disposal methods. Staff members collect small quantities of hazardous waste, such as heavy metal cations or acids, and dispose of them annually through a contracted company.
- SFHS has eliminated the use of mercury lamps and tubes. In fall 2022, the Science Department disposed of residual mercury and hazardous chemicals before relocating to the Innovation Center.
- The school's Facilities Department reduces harmful waste on campus by annually disposing of oil for small machines, filters, golf cart batteries, and light fixture components. The school does not store solvents for welding since it subcontracts this work and keeps only a minimal amount of paint on site.
- SFHS exclusively purchases white copy paper from Boise Paper, which is acid-free and meets the Sustainable Forestry Initiative standards.
- Since 2020, the school has significantly reduced paper usage and discontinued purchasing colored paper and cardstock.

Element ID: Alternative Transportation

- Transportation choices among students reflect the diverse needs and geographic dispersion of a population living within a 40-mile radius. A Spring 2024 survey of 1,275 students revealed the following transportation patterns:
    - 27% utilized carpooling with two or more students per vehicle.
    - 4% combined train and school bus travel.
    - 2.5% primarily biked, with occasional car usage.
    - 2% primarily walked, with occasional car usage.
    - 1.2% exclusively biked or used scooters.
    - 1% exclusively walked.
    - 1% combined walking with other human-powered modes, such as biking, scooters, or skateboards.
    - 1% biked and participated in carpools.

    - 1% combined bus travel with car usage.
- In 2021, SFHS launched a Sustainable Transportation Program that promotes carpooling and public transportation. The school also provides a shuttle bus service every morning from the Mountain View train station, and student usage has doubled in three years.
- Between 2021 and 2024, SFHS worked with the City of Mountain View to renovate the streets leading into the SFHS campus at the school's expense. This work included dedicated turning lanes, two High-Intensity Activated Crosswalks, and newly painted pedestrian crossing areas.
- The campus offers 12 external bike racks near entrances and a bike room with 36 racks for bikes and scooters. In 2022, students formed the Sustainable Commuter's Association, which hosted "bike to school" days over two years. This group participated in Saint Francis Environmental Week in April 2022 and 2023, inviting a local bicycle shop to discuss commuting and biking with students.
- SFHS has an informal No-Idling policy for cars waiting for student pick-up on campus. The employee supervising the carpool lane after school will request that a driver cease idling.
- SFHS minimizes air contamination by placing the carpool line over 25 feet from the Welcome Center and away from classroom entrances. The package receiving area is located on the opposite side of the building, far from central intakes, doors, and windows.
- In 2015, SFHS installed six electric vehicle charging stations for the Saint Francis employee community. Employees use them on a first-come, first-served basis through a shared reservation system. Employees can charge their vehicle for up to three hours daily at no cost. After the new construction was completed in 2024, SFHS added 12 more charging stations, bringing the total to 18.
- In the 2023-2024 school year, the Environmental Club and the Bringing hope, Respecting others, Inspiring integrity, and Celebrating family (BRIC) Brothers club collaborated to collect and repurpose empty chip bags on campus. Students can drop off bags at various locations to prevent landfill waste. The bags will be cleaned, shredded, and used to stuff pillows for people experiencing homelessness.

Pillar II: Improve the Health and Wellness of Students and Staff

Element IIA: Environmental Health

- Since 2014, SFHS has transitioned from grass lawns to artificial turf, reducing pesticide and water use. Only small grassy patches remain on campus.
- The school contracts Colony Landscaping for outdoor pest management annually. A staff member collaborates with company representatives to maintain low-risk practices. The facilities staff does not apply pesticides; Colony Landscaping does all outdoor work and keeps records.
- The school contracts monthly pest inspections from Crane Pest Control, which uses pesticides for ant control and provides detailed reports on their usage and locations. New buildings built in the last five years, with better weatherstripping and sealing, have reduced interior pest levels. Pesticide applications happen only upon request, with no regular applications.

- The Science Department utilizes as many “green” laboratory procedures as possible, with minimal hazardous waste stored, and it follows city and county requirements for handling certain chemicals, such as non-drain disposal of acids or bases generated in lab procedures.
- Each summer, the Facilities Department contracts with a professional hazardous waste company to remove chemical waste generated on campus.
- With the opening of the new Welcome Center building in the summer of 2024, all kitchen appliances used by hospitality services on the SFHS campus are now all-electric; SFHS does not use any fuel-burning appliances.
- The abatement of all asbestos on the SFHS campus occurred with the renovation of older buildings in 2011-2018 and the construction of new buildings during 2021-2024, so no existing buildings contain asbestos.
- During the pandemic, the SFHS facilities staff switched from sanitation with traditional chemical cleaning agents to using a static spray to protect student desks. This daily spraying killed the coronavirus and other pathogens on contact. During the pandemic years of 2020-2022, SFHS did have some use of Clorox wipes for sanitation purposes, but the school discontinued this use campuswide in 2022.
- The SFHS Science Department only purchases Simple Green, a U.S. EPA Safer Choice certified spray cleaner, for lab bench clean-up. Both the Facilities and Science Departments maintain electronic chemical inventory databases, including MSDS information for each type of chemical used.
- The Facilities and the Science Departments maintain Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) sheets for all chemicals they use. The science department lab manager completes a lab safety training course from Flinn Scientific, and the science department offers optional safety training to all science teachers, upon request, beyond their teaching certification requirements.
- The Saint Francis Robotics Center uses a nine-stage HEPA filter to filter laser cutter particulates and ambient air in the cut shop. A wall-mounted device removes welding fumes and dust, pulling argon and fumes into a dedicated HVAC system. A passive air filtration system is also being installed in the cut shop.
- The Director of Facilities at Saint Francis opts for safer cleaning alternatives and avoids older solvent-based products. The school subcontracts all services beyond basic cleaning, like painting and welding, reducing the need for in-house staff to manage chemicals.
- SFHS enhances air quality by utilizing MERV-13 filters and central air systems incorporating 100% outside air. This avoids the recirculation of indoor air and ensures constant fresh air circulation. The new constructions and renovations feature well-sealed buildings that reduce outdoor particulate matter.
- The SFHS campus underwent construction from 2021-2024, adding soundproof insulation in classrooms. New buildings feature sheetrock with insulation and sound-absorbing ceiling tiles for acoustics under 45 dBA.
- All SFHS buildings use LED lighting. Campus buildings have many windows; second-floor science rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows, while first-floor math and science rooms have windows from midpoint to ceiling. Main building classroom doors contain glass panels or allow outside light. The Innovation Center features skylights and windowed walls. Most classrooms and offices overlook trees and nature, except for some film projection and Blackbox Theater rooms.

- The SFHS Director of Facilities remotely controls all building HVAC controls through a central BMS system. This system allows the director to continuously monitor and adjust temperature, humidity, and airflow circulation with an outside air exchange to meet or exceed California school codes.
- The SFHS Innovation Center, completed in 2023, features laboratory spaces, including a Robotics lab. All four chemistry labs have fume hoods accessible from the classroom and prep room for procedures involving concentrated acids or volatile chemicals. These fume hoods and chemical storage cabinets vent outside and will alarm if air pressure drops too low.
- SFHS reports that the campus buildings experience minimal leaks and condensation that produce mold or require mitigation to any extent. If any leak does occur, the facilities staff replaces the damaged sheetrock immediately and repaints it as needed.
- SFHS has filtered water stations in all buildings, including four FloWater stations in the 200 and 600 buildings, the pool deck, and the Welcome Center. Both systems exceed municipal water quality standards. Students and employees are encouraged to use refillable water bottles and utilize these filtered sources.
- The school's arborist report documents all campus trees, including 54 planted during recent construction projects from 2021 to 2024. With 95 trees, the campus tree count has more than doubled from the 41 trees recorded before 2021.
- The campus tree canopy currently covers 16.7% of the 26-acre site and is projected to reach 19% as trees mature. Among the campus features is a 400-year-old bay laurel tree, one of the largest and oldest in the state. The tree serves as a gathering spot for outdoor education activities.

Element IIB: Nutrition and Fitness

- The SFHS Hospitality Team prepares all campus meals and prioritizes sourcing seasonal, local, and organic fruits and vegetables. Produce is purchased from BiRite Foodservice Distributors' "Buying Local Catalog," which ensures items come from farms within 250 miles, per BiRite's guarantee. All eggs are Certified Humane cage-free, seafood follows Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch guidelines, and dairy products are free from artificial hormones.
- SFHS has two garden sites: an older garden scheduled to be decommissioned due to a lack of sunlight and a newer poolside garden that receives ample sunlight and rainwater runoff. The poolside garden produces vegetables like tomatoes, zucchini, and peppers, which are shared with educators and used in the cooking club.
- Freshmen at SFHS take a yearlong Health and Fitness course, which meets 200 minutes weekly. This course builds interpersonal skills, enhances fitness, teaches weight room techniques, and covers health and socioemotional topics. It uses Polar Heart Rate Monitors for fitness tracking and the Demotu app for movement assessment. At least 50% of physical education is outdoors with warm-ups and rotating sports. Grades are weighted 50% on participation and 50% on target heart rate training.
- SFHS features a robust athletic program with 1,267 student participants across 30 teams. Sports offerings include fall teams such as football, water polo, and cross country; winter teams like basketball, soccer, and wrestling; and spring teams including baseball, lacrosse, and track and field. The program is supported by dedicated coaches and two full-time athletic trainers.

- The Saint Francis Activities Department offers over 120 clubs, performance groups, and leadership organizations, including the Aviation Club, Chess Club, Surf Club, K-Pop Dance Team, and Ultimate Frisbee Club. Most meet weekly or monthly during morning collaborations, lunches, or after school. The department also runs a marching band program for football games and competitions and a yearlong intramural program featuring flag football, ultimate frisbee, soccer, and basketball, which engages 500 non-varsity athletes.
- In 2023, SFHS converted a classroom into a Wellness Center, providing students with a judgment-free space for self-soothing and re-engagement during the school day. Counselors supervise the center daily from 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM.
- SFHS partners with the Holy Cross Mission and Ministry office, which offers pastoral support to the school community. Eight full-time and one part-time Campus Ministers provide grief counseling, spiritual direction, and support for students facing challenges related to belonging, academics, or home life.
- SFHS has a wellness coordinator who coordinates an employee wellness program. The program includes weekly SF Fit newsletters, Monday walks, buddy swimming hours, and information on using the weight room. It also organizes an annual "try-athlon" and family barbecue.
- The Mission and Ministry Department leads two staff retreats each year, one at the start of the school year and another on Holy Thursday. These retreats offer reflection time and support overall wellness. The department also organizes fall and Christmas social events and provides daily Mass, an after-school rosary, a memorial service, and weekly Bible study.
- The Hospitality Department ensures healthy staff nutrition by providing monthly menus with a salad bar, daily vegetarian options, and scratch-made meals using local, seasonal, organic produce, sustainable seafood, cage-free eggs, and hormone-free dairy. It also avoids processed foods high in sodium, fat, and sugar.
- Since 2015, the Counseling Department has tracked mental health support needs, including academic accommodation plans, counselor visits, and Wellness Center check-ins.
- The Saint Francis Counseling Office, composed of ten full-time counselors and one administrative assistant, provides personal and college counseling services to all students at any time during the school day.
- The Athletics Department supports student health and safety through partnerships with organizations such as the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, which provides preventative and recovery treatment, and the Kyle J. Taylor Foundation, which offers biannual heart health screenings; the department also runs the “Sports Med Aids” program, partnering with the National High School Sports Medicine Association to provide students with training, internships, and scholarships.
- SFHS implements the Living in Holy Cross Community: Restorative Practices Program, which helps students achieve personal growth in social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-awareness, self-management, and relationship skills through a four-week session, restorative conversation, and action plan.
- All freshmen and sophomores participate in the SEL Thrive Advisory Program, which pairs them with an adult advisor and peer mentors from the Family Club to develop essential social-emotional learning (SEL) skills.

- The school adopted equitable grading practices in 2020-2021, including formative assessments that encourage mistakes and revisable summative assessments, empowering students to demonstrate deeper learning, reflect on learning objectives, and reduce stress through retakes and rewrites.
- The Science and Practice of Mindfulness course, offered to sophomores, juniors, and seniors, introduces students to mindfulness practices such as meditation, tai chi, yoga, and nature walks to enhance self-awareness, stress management, wellness, and overall fitness.

Pillar III: Provide Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

Element IIIA: Interdisciplinary Learning

- Since 2018, the SFHS Science Department has followed California's Next Generation Science Standards and developed a vision for all graduates to be curious about the natural world. This vision encourages students to solve societal problems using the scientific method while embodying compassion and a commitment to sustainability.
- SFHS integrates environmental and sustainability concepts into core science courses. Biology focuses on biodiversity, natural resource management, and technical solutions to environmental challenges. Chemistry emphasizes climate change through modeling, data analysis, and long-term climate trends. Physics includes an astronomy unit on sustainable practices to preserve Earth's habitability.
- Environmental and sustainability principles extend across disciplines. Religious Studies juniors engage with Catholic Social Justice Teachings, including care for creation and attention to the vulnerable. Seniors can elect the Spiritual Ecology course, which combines theological reflection, experiential learning, and Indigenous wisdom to foster environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.
- The school offers elective courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) Environmental Science, non-AP Environmental Science, and Marine Biology, focusing on topics like climate change, conservation, and sustainable systems. Enrollment in these courses has grown significantly, with 250 students in AP Environmental Science and approximately 60 students annually in Marine Biology.
- AP Environmental Science and Environmental Science courses use assessments like lab conclusions, project-based learning, and written analysis. These courses address topics including environmental justice, climate change impacts and mitigation, sustainable food systems, U.S. environmental policy, and civic engagement.
- Science courses, including AP Biology, AP Environmental Science, Environmental Science, and Marine Biology, feature field trips such as viewing elephant seals at Año Nuevo, tide-pooling at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, and exploring agroecology at UCSC. Students engage in hands-on learning about biodiversity, ecosystems, and conservation practices.
- SFHS prioritizes the integration of environmental and sustainability principles into various disciplines, ensuring a holistic approach to educating students on ecological responsibility and stewardship. Key highlights include:
    - Eleventh-grade students study Catholic Social Justice, emphasizing care for creation and supporting the vulnerable. Twelfth-grade students can opt for the Spiritual Ecology course, blending theological reflection, experiential learning, and Indigenous wisdom to promote environmental stewardship. In Social Justice

and Moral Issues courses, students explore environmental justice as a project topic.
    - Tenth-grade students examine Indigenous climate wisdom through readings of “Braiding Sweetgrass,” concentrating on sustainable lifestyles and alternative approaches to environmental challenges. Eleventh-grade poetry units feature Socratic seminars on romantic poetry themes, including forest bathing, humanity's inherent connection to nature, and the impacts of technology on this relationship.
    - AP Calculus and AP Statistics students work on projects using climate-based data sets from the Sustainability Math website, applying mathematical principles to analyze environmental trends and their implications issues.
    - AP French and AP Spanish courses include a unit on "Environmental, Political, and Societal Challenges," which teaches relevant vocabulary and concepts. Students research environmental issues and sustainability efforts in selected countries and present their findings as part of a comprehensive assessment project.
- Saint Francis High School's Environmental Club, active for over 20 years, participates in campus and community activities like California Coastal Cleanup Day, removing 77 pounds of trash from Permanente Creek in 2024.
- The Environmental Club also organizes events during Earth Week, including nature-inspired and sustainable art projects, planting native seeds, and sprouting herbs and vegetables. Additionally, the club invites guest speakers, screens documentaries, and educates students about sustainability and volunteer opportunities in native gardens.
- Environmental Club members collaborate with the Sustainable Practices Committee to organize bi-annual Environmental fairs featuring sustainability vendors, green products, and career opportunities. They also organize annual Earth Week celebrations that promote environmental stewardship through education and art.
- Faculty participate in professional development on sustainability education. Recent events include a Recology session on waste management, the West Coast Sustainability and Justice Summit, and workshops led by the San Mateo County Office of Education on whole-school sustainability practices, green facilities, and ecological justice.
- The Innovation Center opened in January 2023 and includes a solar panel data display developed by the Science and Design Departments with STEM clubs. The display provides real-time data on campus solar panel energy production, making sustainability metrics accessible and relatable to students.

Element IIIB: STEM Content, Knowledge, and Skills

- SFHS integrates sustainability and environmental education in science, technology, and engineering. Biology students model energy cycles, assess ecosystem changes, and design climate solutions. Chemistry students study carbon cycles, Earth's energy balance, and water rights while engaging with current events. Environmental Science and AP classes pursue sustainability through data analysis and field trips to sustainable food systems. Engineering courses include renewable energy projects like solar panel art installations. Robotics students create solutions to enhance composting and recycling awareness.

- The Environmental Club connects students to green careers through events like the Environmental Faire and Earth Week, featuring careers in renewable energy and wildlife conservation, with exhibitors sharing insights into fields such as electric car engineering and eco-friendly product development products.
- Chemistry classes highlight career pathways through weekly “Scientist Spotlights,” featuring diverse innovators in fields like alternative battery technologies, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and creating systems to support freshwater procurement or carry out ocean preservation. Units on materials science and the climate crisis include mini-research projects and analyses of Project Drawdown solutions, which explore careers tied to modern materials and climate strategies.

Element IIIC: Civic Knowledge and Skills

- The SFHS Economics course requires seniors to write a "Policy Research Paper" that addresses societal problems and advocates for policy solutions. Some students concentrate on environmental topics, such as cap-and-trade policies, solar subsidies, wind energy, electric vehicle incentives, public transit, and carbon emission standards.
- In the AP Economics course, about one-third of students undertake a socio-economic project, selecting topics like developmental economics, environmental regulations, critiques of GDP from a sustainability perspective, or the pros and cons of globalization in relation to the environment.
- The twelfth-grade Spiritual Ecology elective course involves outdoor activities such as journaling, mindfulness, and prayer projects. Projects like “The Hidden Life of Trees” and the “Favorite Place Prayer Project” foster gratitude and a spiritual connection to nature.
- In September 2019, SFHS participated in the Youth Climate Strike. Students and teachers traveled via public transit to San Jose City Hall for speeches and events led by community leaders, including Saint Francis students.
- The SFHS grounds are dedicated to ecologically beneficial uses and educational opportunities. One such site is Permanente Creek, which runs along the front of campus and is used for cleanup events and educational purposes in science classes and clubs.
- The Saint Francis Immersion Program allows eleventh and twelfth-grade students to engage directly with communities in sustainable work, The program illustrates the impacts of climate change on communities worldwide and encourages students to become agents of change. Some activities students participated in include the following:
    - Assisting with Hurricane Katrina relief in New Orleans through house repair and demolition while also learning about sustainable food systems at Recirculating Farms.
    - Supporting Hurricane Maria’s recovery in Puerto Rico by restoring homes and connecting with local communities.
    - Engaging with the Lakota community on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota through sustainability service projects and cultural activities.
- The SFHS sponsored annual student trips to Iceland (2017, 2019) and Costa Rica (2018) to foster an appreciation for the natural world, ecological balance, and human history. In Iceland, students explored Reykjavik, national parks, the Blue Lagoon, geysers, a geothermal energy plant, waterfalls, and volcanic beaches. In Costa Rica, students experienced tropical rainforests, volcanic hot springs, and beach ecosystems to learn about the delicate balance of these environments.

- During Earth Week, the Environmental Club students organize daily lunchtime activities to promote environmental education, connection with nature, and sustainable practices. Themes include native/edible gardening, sustainable art/gifts, and sustainable transportation. On "Native/Edible Gardening Day," students plant seedlings to take home. On "Sustainable Art Day," students decorate bags, cards, and pouches. On "Sustainable Transportation Day," students participate in "Transit Trivia" and earn free ice cream for walking, rolling, or taking transit to school.
- SFHS's Service-Learning Program involves individual students, classes, and athletic teams in community wellness projects that address human needs. The school collaborates with local organizations, including Animal Assisted Happiness, Hope's Corner, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, Sacred Heart Community Service, Martha's Kitchen, and Second Harvest of Silicon Valley. Each student completes 10-15 service hours annually.
- Sophomore and Junior Religious Studies classes participate in service-learning trips, working with vulnerable populations. Additionally, students aged 16 and older can earn service hours by donating blood at the campus blood drive hosted by the Saint Francis Medical Club in partnership with the American Red Cross.
- The Innovation @ Saint Francis program offers students opportunities to engage with local and global communities, fostering careers in sustainability and green technologies. From 2021 to the present, the school has partnered with Santa Clara University's Bio Innovation and Design Lab. This collaboration has included virtual disease forecasting with CDC and WHO data (summer 2021), a Healthcare Mentorship program (2021-2022) featuring a design challenge for 9th and 10th graders, a biofeedback project in immersive environments (spring 2022), and a 2024 electrification project focused on electric fleet solutions.