

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

This project seeks to expand students' understanding of public goods and the role of taxes in funding them, using a blend of domestic and international perspectives. During a recent 7th-grade unit on percentages and taxes, students analyzed how taxes support public goods and services. They discussed both the benefits and challenges, such as the limitations of Boston's Red Line public transportation system. The class also explored how tax-funded initiatives don't always align with everyone's values, sparking critical conversations about equity, sustainability, and community priorities.

To build on these discussions, students will explore Lisbon, Portugal—a city internationally recognized for its sustainability practices. Named the European Green Capital in 2020, Lisbon is an example of how urban sustainability can be achieved through effective tax policies. The city has an efficient public transportation network, innovative waste management systems, and an emphasis on creating accessible green spaces. By studying Lisbon, students will see how taxes can be used to create environmentally sustainable and socially equitable urban systems.

This exploration will include research, comparisons between Lisbon and Boston, and classroom discussions on how Portugal's successes can inspire change locally. The goal is to provide students with an international lens, helping them to think critically about the impact of taxes and the ways they can be better utilized to support public goods in our communities.

The project will also tie into a climate change initiative for 6th graders later in the year. In this unit, students will explore how they can contribute to a more sustainable world, guided by the principle of being "people for and with others." By positioning themselves as "little ancestors," students will consider how their actions today shape a better future for generations to come.

The project will culminate in student presentations, where they propose innovative ideas to improve public goods and sustainability in their own communities. Through this experience, students will develop a deeper understanding of civic responsibility, environmental stewardship, and global interconnectedness, empowering them to become active participants in creating sustainable change.

## **MEASURABLE GOALS**

**Goal 1:** In July 2025, I will travel to Lisbon Portugal to gain experiential knowledge about Lisbon's journey for sustainability through museum visits, conversations with locals, and tours.

- Museu da Agua (history about science, and technology of water in Lisbon.)
- Museu da Electricidade (a cultural center and museum of science that show the past, present and future of energy in Lisbon.)

**Goal 2:** By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, I will share my learnings from Lisbon with my staff to encourage a broader conversation about sustainability in education. Through presentations and discussions, I will inspire my colleagues to think critically about how sustainability can be integrated into our curriculum and daily practices, fostering a school-wide commitment to environmental stewardship and interconnected learning.

**Goal 3:** By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, I will incorporate my experiences from Lisbon into two projects that highlight both local community sustainability efforts and initiatives at Epiphany School. Through lesson plans, discussions, and activities, students will explore how

these efforts connect to global sustainability practices, and they will propose actionable ideas to enhance sustainability within their school and local community.

## TEACHING OUTCOMES

- During our percents unit, when talking about taxes and sustainable public goods - 7th grade students will collaboratively identify one public good or sustainability-related issue at Epiphany (e.g., recycling, energy use, or green spaces) that can be improved, providing a written explanation of its current state, which will be delivered to the facilities team.
- By the end of the sustainability and climate change project, 6th-grade students will be able to propose actionable steps to contribute to a sustainable future, demonstrating an understanding of climate change and their role in shaping the world for future generations.
- Throughout both units, I will apply culturally sustaining pedagogy to deepen my students' critical thinking skills and help them connect classroom knowledge to their own cultural contexts and experiences.

## PROPOSED TIMELINE

### → **May/June 2025**

- ◆ finalize travel plans

### → **July 2025**

- ◆ Travel to Lisbon Portugal
  - Potential dates (7/14-7/21)
- ◆ Experiential research of Lisbon's urban sustainability begins
  - Journal
  - Audio interviews
  - images

### → **Late August**

- ◆ Collect research from travel (journal/ audio interviews), images, and online research
- ◆ compile research in a place easily accessible.

### → **Mid-November**

- ◆ 7th grade project

- In the ***Taxes and Public Goods Project***, 7th-grade students will explore how taxes fund public goods and services by examining real-world examples like Boston's Red Line/ Public Schools, and more. They'll discuss the benefits and challenges of these systems, including how taxes may fund services that not everyone supports, sparking discussions about equity, sustainability, and community priorities.
- Students will then compare Boston's systems with Lisbon, Portugal's sustainable urban practices, such as green spaces, public transportation, and waste management, to see how tax policies can promote environmental and social sustainability. The project culminates in student presentations where they propose ideas for improving public goods and sustainability in their communities and at the Epiphany School.

### → **Late May/Early June**

◆ 6th grade project

- In the **Sustainability and Climate Change Project**, students will build on their knowledge of sustainability by researching how other cities, like Lisbon. They'll propose actions to enhance sustainability at Epiphany School and in their local community, guided by the principle of being "people for and with others." This project ties into the 6th-grade climate change unit, encouraging students to consider how their actions today will shape a sustainable future for generations to come.