

POLICY

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DISTRICT SUSTAINABILITY POLICY
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7461 DISTRICT SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Sustainability is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It considers the interrelationship of economic, social, and environmental factors that protect and enhance present and future quality of life.

The Board of Education desires to conduct its operations and make decisions with identified sustainability priorities that include at a minimum: protecting students, staff, and community from environmental harm; preparing students for the future by educating for sustainability (knowledge of concepts and practices of environmental, social, and economic responsibility and sustainability); and include an intent to preserve current and future resources.

The Board believes by incorporating sustainable practices into school policies and operations it can make an immediate impact on student health, academic performance, and teacher retention while decreasing operational costs and demands on natural resources.

The Superintendent of Schools may establish a School District Sustainability Committee to provide the Superintendent and the Board with information on the benefits of increased sustainability practices within the school district.

The Board wants to protect students, staff, school visitors, and community members from environmental harm and will strive to eliminate the use of potentially toxic and harmful substances; prepare students for the future by providing a high-quality education that support concepts and practices of environmental, social, and economic responsibility and sustainability; and preserving current and future resources by adopting practices in operations that balance environmental, social, and fiscal responsibility to protect and enhance the future quality of life.

The Board of Education authorizes the following sustainability practices to be implemented within the schools of the district:

Professional Development for Sustainability

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Quality professional development of staff and Board members facilitates the effective transition to sustainability planning and practices for schools and school districts. Enhancing the knowledge of school personnel about the benefits and requirements of sustainability practices in a school setting increases the likelihood of a successful integration of sustainability into the school district's operations and promotes shared ownership of the outcomes.

The Board of Education will provide a minimum of two hours of time for professional development on sustainability topics to at least five members of the school district staff and/or members of the School District Sustainability Committee to include, but not be limited to, school Board members, district administrative staff members, teaching staff members, and support staff members.

The professional development for sustainability will provide a general understanding of the benefits of sustainable schools as well as specific information and guidance on undertaking some aspect of sustainability practices from planning to operations. The School District Sustainability Committee, Board members, district administrators, and other school staff members will work together to identify Board members and staff members that would benefit from training on sustainability topics. Training needs will be determined based on plans to maintain, implement, or expand sustainable practices in the school district.

Once the training needs have been identified, various professional development offerings will be reviewed and evaluated to determine the learning concepts that will be included, the educational methods that will be incorporated, and the professional skills that will be imparted. Professional development that incorporates sustainability concepts across subject areas in the teaching curriculum will be a key consideration, as educating for sustainability lays the foundation for sustainable thinking and practice among students, staff, and the broader community.

The school district may choose to train multiple staff members on a particular sustainability topic, either by hosting the training internally or by sending a group to an external training event such as a professional association meeting. Outside experts or internal staff with expertise in sustainability may also be utilized to provide the training. The training hours may also be completed through webinars, online courses, or workshops. Individual staff members or Board members may be trained in different sustainability topics as relevant to their official role in the school district.

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The school district will maintain sustainability training documentation that identifies the names and position of the individuals receiving training (groups of five individuals are recommended), along with the following course information: date, instructor or course provider, course description or syllabus, and course length. Course training times exclude time for breaks and meals from the two-hour training requirement. The two hour training requirement does not have to be completed at a single event. For example, two one-hour training sessions or three forty-five minute sessions would meet the time requirement. The training hours must have occurred in the twenty-four months prior to submission for Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification, if such certification is desired.

Qualifying training includes courses or workshops on a topic related to sustainability in schools, from leadership, planning, policy, and curriculum development to teaching, enrichment, food service, transportation, and facilities management.

Green Purchasing Policy

Green purchasing, also known as Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP), is the coordinated purchasing of goods and services to minimize impacts on human health and the natural environment. Alternatives exist for many products used by schools that are less hazardous, save energy and water, and reduce waste.

A simple first step will be for the school district to purchase as many products as possible made from recycled content that are themselves recyclable. Green purchasing moves beyond recycled materials and also takes into consideration the raw materials, including energy and water, used to manufacture products; the production process itself; the packaging and distribution method; and the distance of transport and proximity of production.

The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary or designee will provide an outline of the standards and procedures for selecting products based on environmental criteria. The specific standards and guidelines for selecting products will be based on established environmental criteria, as well as promote the adoption of this Policy to district staff members. The district will attempt to purchase, in accordance with the provisions of applicable purchasing laws: green cleaning supplies; green cleaning equipment; recycled paper; energy efficient appliances; and/or equipment purchases and green cleaning training.

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Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School is a nationwide movement aimed at encouraging elementary and middle school students to walk or bicycle to school. The goal of New Jersey's Safe Routes to School initiative is to get children walking and bicycling to school where it is safe and to make it safe where it is not safe. In support of this initiative, the Board has adopted Policy 8505 – Local Wellness Policy/Nutrient Standards for Meals and Other Foods, Policy 8600 – Transportation, and Policy 5514 – Student Use of Vehicles. The Board of Education and the administration will collaborate with municipal, county or State transportation, land-use planning, law enforcement, and other agencies to plan, construct, and encourage the use of safe, accessible, and convenient pedestrian and bicycle routes to and from school.

The Board recognizes the benefits of students walking or riding a bicycle to school on a safe route. Understanding there may not be a safe walking or biking route to and from school for every student, this physical activity for a student is both mentally and physically beneficial.

Students walking and riding a bicycle to school will be required to comply with Board policies, all safety and school rules, and regulations. A list of conditions explaining the rules and expectations of the student and parent will be provided by the Principal or designee.

The Board of Education will post this Policy on the school district website along with samples of the district's outreach activities to staff, students, and parents notifying them of the Policy adoption. Outreach activities/materials will include district newsletter articles, email blasts, presentations/announcements at Board of Education or district-wide staff meetings, and other public events.

Adopted: September 2017