

GREEN SCHOOLS

DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION

Baltimore City Public Schools (“City Schools”) is committed to healthy environments for its students, staff and teachers, both indoors and out. Active schoolyards, greater conservation of resources, and advances in the procurement processes are ways to be responsible stewards of the environment while ensuring compliance with state and local legislation. City Schools focuses on energy conservation practices, natural resources preservation, and elimination of utility waste. Ultimately, school environments that meet these goals will result in greater academic achievement, greater awareness and personal responsibility, and a reduced carbon footprint resulting in a healthier Baltimore for generations to come.

CURRENT STATUS

City Schools is striving to implement green and sustainable practices in operations and in the classroom. For the past three years the City Schools’ Green Schools Coordinator and Energy Specialist have focused on saving energy, expanding recycling, promoting the Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards, building environmental awareness, complying with city and state laws, and supporting a Green Schools Network of advocates and partners. This work has led to operational savings, reduced impact on the environment, and more students who are knowledgeable about sustainability. City Schools is implementing its Sustainability and Wellness Policies, to improve the operations as well as the health and well being of students and staff.

EQUITY INDICATORS

Addressing schools in order of greatest need and identifying, allocating, and disseminating resources to those schools first. Schools should be considered based on historical disadvantages, transgenerational poverty, the least access to resources, and least to see development in their communities in the near future.

STRATEGIES

1. Create Healthy School Environments

Action 1: Improve indoor air quality by practicing comprehensive Integrated Pest Management, using approved green cleaning products, improving ventilation, and educating school communities on these practices.

Action 2: Increase access to healthy foods by providing nutrition education to all students, increasing fresh and locally-sourced foods into the menu, providing potable water via water fountains, supporting schoolyard gardens that expose students to fresh produce, utilizing the expertise of Great Kids Farm and partners to train teachers on schoolyard gardening.

2. Cultivate Green & Active School Yards

Action 1: Provide attractive outdoor learning using play spaces and schoolyard gardens by increasing age-appropriate nature-based play spaces and funds for maintenance, outdoor activities and schoolyard gardens, and by training teachers to integrate outdoor spaces into lessons, training grounds staff and contractors to care for spaces, and by promoting Great Kids Farm for student engagement and teacher

training, and making schoolyards available for public use during non-school hours.

Action 2: Improve stormwater management by maximizing pervious surfaces when building or renovating schoolyards, and working with partners to replace existing pervious surfaces with impervious surfaces, bioretention areas, and native gardens.

3. Conserve Resources \

Action 1: Reduce utility consumption and purchase renewable energy by closely managing the utility database, benchmarking energy use and performance, procuring energy from renewable sources, improving building energy efficiency (including the promotion of net-zero energy buildings), identifying and repairing leaks, installing low flow fixtures and LED lighting, and engaging staff and students through competitions and recognition.

Action 2: Reduce waste and increase recycling by right-sizing food ordering, maximizing food recovery, researching composting of food waste, utilizing reusable, recyclable, or compostable serveware. Additional efforts include recycling electronics, light bulbs, and construction waste, participating in single-stream recycling at all schools, and instituting electronic communication systems (inter-departmental, communications with partners and vendors, and school-parent communications).

Action 3: Green the fleet by ensuring all vehicles that City Schools owns or leases meet current emission and fuel efficiency standards, minimizing and eliminating vehicle and bus idling, and exploring alternative fleet vehicle fuel sources.

Action 4: Follow green design and construction practices in large renovations and new construction, achieve LEED Silver rating or higher, include life-cycle cost analysis such as energy efficiency and sustainability in facility upgrades.

4. Incorporate sustainability criteria into procurement processes.

Promote environmentally preferable purchasing and management practices including environmental product and service label standards, such as Energy Star and EPEAT for electronics.

5. Report sustainability metrics and goals annually to the School Board, as developed by an inter-departmental Sustainability Steering Committee.

METRICS FOR SUCCESS

Strategy 1: Increase the number of schools with active school gardens and play spaces

Strategy 2: Increase the number of schools with strong recycling programs.

Strategy 3: Decrease the average energy use per square foot at schools.

Other ideas:

- Increase the number of pounds of fresh produce served at City Schools' cafeterias.

- Increase the number of schools practicing green cleaning.