



Prince George's County Public Schools

Climate Change Action Plan

MID-YEAR COMMITTEE REPORT | **JANUARY 2023**

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Executive Summary

On March 1, 2021, the Prince George’s County Board of Education established the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) Focus Work Group to develop a plan for creating and meeting climate action goals. Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) will work to meet UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) emission reduction targets by 2030 or 2040, depending on the target.

To begin implementing the 58 Climate Change Action Plan items, the Chief Executive Officer created a Climate Change Action Plan Operational Committee, composed of 38 PGCPS staff members who meet monthly to review each action item, share progress for each priority and discuss plans to continue moving the work forward as we meet all timeline requirements. A biannual report will be published in January and July to keep all stakeholders informed of our progress and ways they can support our continued work to reduce our carbon footprint.

Eight Priority Recommendations: Taking Action for a Carbon Neutral Future

PGCPS believes taking urgent action to combat climate change is critical to the future of our students and our community. The CCAP is also a call to action to empower our students, staff and administration to work as partners with our county and state to bring about transformational changes and help create a future where we all share the benefits of healthy air, clean water, job opportunities and safe places to live, work and play.

Taking action is the heart of the CCAP. The following eight **Priority Recommendations** outlined in this section are intended as only the beginning to our school system’s transition to a low carbon and climate resilient future:

1 	Support Environmental Justice Through Climate Curriculum, Training and Partnerships
2 	Reduce Carbon Footprint from PGCPS Buildings
3 	Commit to Renewable Energy Sources for a Net Zero Emissions Future
4 	Commit to Low Carbon School Transportation
5 	Reduce Food Waste and Grow Climate-Friendly Food
6 	Commit to Sustainable Materials Management and Procurement
7 	Commit to Climate Resilient Land Management
8 	Lead by Example to Support Transformational Change

Priority Recommendation #1: *Support Environmental Justice Through Climate Curriculum, Training and Partnerships*

Operational Action 1: *Create Climate Curriculum and Environmental Justice Work Group (CCEJWG)*

William S. Schmidt Center staff members were identified to serve on the work group. A process was started of finding repositories of climate change education materials. Many organizations have worked or are working on climate change-related activities and lessons. Discussions were held with organizations outside of PGCPs that could bolster the work group.

The Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health at the University of Maryland School of Public Health has agreed to representation on the work group. Other potential members are being evaluated, including individuals from the Environmental Literacy Steering Committee.

Supporting Student Voice:

- 1 – Students participated in a promotional video on composting ([“Trash Talk,”](#) PGCPs-TV).
- 2 – Students invited to two professional development sessions (November/December).
- 3 – Information regarding the Schmidt Center Environmental Art Contest was distributed to schools and the community.
- 4 – Planning is underway for the Student Environmental Alliance Summit.
- 5 – An Academy of Health Sciences student was selected for the Prince George’s County Climate Resident Advisory Group (organized by the Prince George’s County Department of the Environment).

Operational Action 2: *Launch Annual Climate Ready Leadership Summit*

A leadership summit will be hosted by fall 2024. The budget will need to be submitted in fall 2023. We will use the Student Environmental Alliance (SEA) Summit as a test case for the Climate Ready Leadership Summit. Subcommittee members participated in the SEA Summit planning meeting on December 21, 2022, for ideas on fusing both events. Site visits are planned for early 2023.

Operational Action 3: *Enhance Access to Climate Technology*

In order to enhance school access to climate technology, we must start with a set of consistent data across PGCPs that informs building energy performance. Specifically, students will need access to climate data dashboards for new energy and waste systems for analysis and action. This data will provide the gateway for students to access climate technology, such as reviewing energy data from solar panels or learning about hydrology through stormwater management data analyses. PGCPs has contracted with EnergyCAP to collect and disseminate data on building energy performance. Once this data is gathered, student teams will be able to use it to make decisions on climate action and technology for their building.

Operational Action 4: Enhance CTE Program to Further Incorporate “Green” Skills and Job Readiness

The Construction Program Advisory Committee is exploring ways to offer LEED certification in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, such as electric car assembly/maintenance and farm-to-cafeteria processes. The Environment, Agriculture, and Natural Resources (EANR) Program Advisory Committee is committed to supporting recruitment events to maintain and grow student enrollment in the EANR program. CTE staff will continue acquiring feedback from our Local Advisory Committee to collect a list of energy-saving/climate impact initiatives that stakeholders are implementing at their respective sites, businesses and organizations.

Operational Action 5: Build New Climate Partnerships with Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS) and Businesses

The Office of Communications and Community Engagement is in the process of identifying potential partners and selection criteria to align schools with viable environmental partner(s) based on school/systemic needs.

Operational Action 6: Incorporate Climate and Environmental Justice Curriculum into Learning Standards and Benchmarks

Initial discussions focused on creating a matrix for capturing areas in the curriculum already addressing climate change and environmental justice. The draft template will be shared with Curriculum & Instruction in early 2023 with the goal of collecting baseline data.

Priority Recommendation #2: Reduce Carbon Footprint from PGCPs Buildings

Operational Action 1: Require Private Partners to Participate in All Rebates and Other Appropriate Programs

The Purchasing Department drafted contract language for inclusion in all building services contracts, requiring vendors to apply for rebates and incentives related to energy efficiency on behalf of the school system. The sample language is below:

Contractor agrees to apply for all incentives and rebates related to energy efficiency that become available through any Federal, Provincial and Municipal Government Agencies and public utility entities. Contractors are expected to maximize EmPower Maryland rebates. On a quarterly basis, the contractor shall provide information detailing all incentives and rebates for which they have applied to the appropriate Building Services designee.

Operational Action 2: Collect and Disseminate Data on Building Energy Performance

Project was awarded to EnergyCAP after a bidding process. EnergyCAP will collect electric, natural gas, propane, heating oil and water utility data. PGCPs and EnergyCAP held a kickoff meeting on December

5, 2022. We are working to secure PGCPs utility account information. A meeting with EnergyCAP was held January 12, 2023 where sample energy data was shared. Additional data transfer is in progress.

Operational Action 3: *Build Staff Capacity in Building Maintenance and Management*

The Director of Sustainability position was submitted for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget request. This position will help to develop and lead the work of this department with systemic support of the Climate Change Action Plan. A draft Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) outlining roles and responsibilities was submitted to Compensation & Classification for review. An assessment of future staff positions is underway.

Operational Action 4: *Consolidate PGCPs Administration/Central Office Staff*

The Web Services Office, located at Bonnie F. Johns Educational Media Center, is one of the first sites to move to full telework beginning January 2023. It has been determined that staff can effectively execute and achieve everyday tasks and responsibilities without disruption while teleworking. Should staff need to come into the office on any given day, arrangements will be made to accommodate a swing/plug space.

It is important to note that not all offices will shift to full telework. Work will continue to consolidate offices and allow partial telework for appropriate central office employees.

Mitigation Action 1: *Perform Comprehensive Energy Audit All Existing Buildings and Rely on Data for EFMP Cycles*

Building Services' Energy Team is implementing the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) FY22 Decarbonization Grant. The next phase of energy management will include a comprehensive audit of all buildings.

Mitigation Action 2: *Move Toward Fossil-Fuel Free/Net Zero Ready for All New Construction*

Met to discuss opportunities for utilizing electric buses as resiliency hubs at school locations as well as the design and cost savings from federal rebates now available directly to school systems. Data is currently being collected for modifications at the Mullikin Bus Lot. Work is underway to develop net-zero construction guidelines for inclusion in future solicitations and to examine reduced building energy-consumption renovation measures.

Mitigation Action 3: *Research and Potentially Implement Wastewater Thermal Energy Technologies*

Athletics and Capital Programs have identified two new high school projects (Northern Area High School — Adelphi and High Point High School) for a grass field pilot towards more resilient design.

Mitigation Action 4: *Phase Out Fossil Fuel Powered Steam and Water Heating Systems*

All buildings that host steam plants are under structural evaluation. Once completed, determinations will be made on the future of these facilities. It is estimated that evaluation reports will be completed by June 2023. Additional investigative measures will be taken regarding replacement systems (i.e., electric boilers, etc.).

Mitigation Action 5: *Phase Out R-22 HVAC*

The Division of Supporting Services has utilized both federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant funds and state Healthy School Facility funds to replace aged HVAC sources. Evaluations are also being conducted on the utilization of refrigerants with lower Global Warming Potential (GWPs).

Adaptation Action 1: *Design All New PGCPs Buildings to be Resiliency Hubs*

Capital Programs has held conversations with developers regarding renovation and system designs to allow affordable conversion to green energy and energy-efficient systems. Working toward requirements that result in net-zero designs, electric vehicle (EV) charging locations and eco-friendly energy and heating systems.

Priority Recommendation #3: *Commit to Renewable Energy Sources for a Net Zero Emissions Future*

Operational Action 1: *Begin Renewable Energy Purchasing Through Wholesale Markets*

Continued research will be conducted on the wholesale market. Attended Baltimore Regional Cooperative Purchasing Committee (BRCPC) meeting on November 28, 2022. Participating school systems include Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Howard, Frederick and Montgomery counties and Baltimore City. The districts receive Enel X consulting services through a separate contract with BRCPC. PGCPs would need to contract with BRCPC to receive similar consultative services. A new public solicitation is anticipated in 2023.

Operational Action 2: *Create a Publicly Available Dashboard*

Building Services, Capital Programs and Information Technology are working to establish a framework for facility environmental data and the development of related dashboards.

Mitigation Action 1: *Install Solar Panels on PGCPs Property*

Building Services has discussed roof audits and solar opportunities with potential vendors. Procurement options for the Blueprint Schools (Phase I) are moving forward.

Mitigation Action 2: *Sign onto Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) for Off-Site Renewable Energy*

Options and possibilities have been examined for ways to incorporate off-site renewable energy into future procurements. Information for a solar pilot was provided November 17, 2022 to the Office of Alternative Infrastructure Planning and Development.

Adaptation Action 1: *Explore Approaches to Integrate Battery Backup Power*

Capital Programs is researching and exploring potential approaches to electric buses and backup power options. Meetings with original equipment manufacturers (OEM) and developers are being scheduled. There have been several meetings with various organizations regarding energy infrastructure with plans to engage a consultant to assist with short-term and long-term infrastructure projects.

Priority Recommendation #4: *Commit to Low Carbon School Transportation*

Operational Action 1: *Modify Bus Route to Fuel Use*

Continuing to analyze and monitor all bus routes, ridership, transportation scheduling and software (Transfinder) to reduce fuel usage and annual maintenance costs and to improve operational efficiency.

Mitigation Action 1: *Electrify All Buses by 2040*

Transportation will utilize existing procurement contracts with three electric bus manufacturers (Blue Bird, IC Bus and Thomas Built Buses). Staff is exploring the purchase of 20 electric buses utilizing federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant funds; school charging system infrastructure options on existing bus lots; and solar electrification options and benefits.

Mullikin Bus Lot will be a pilot location for EV charging infrastructure (up to 90 buses). The current Mullikin facility capital improvement project will be conducted in phases to allow the inclusion of electrification and charging infrastructure.

Mitigation Action 2: *Increase Walking/Biking/Public Transit Use*

Representation PGCPs on the County's Vision Zero Committee monthly / quarterly meetings.

Mitigation Action 3: *Eliminate Unnecessary Idling from School Buses*

Incorporate SOP's into Safety Meetings and Driver Training. Enforcement by all Transportation Supervisors, Bus Lot Management Staff, Driver Trainers and School Administrators. Refer to the [PGCPs Transportation Department Handbook](#), [Administrative SOP Section 5 - School Bus Idling Policy](#) and [Conservation of Fuel](#).

Transportation Operations will issue an updated memorandum to all drivers and school principals regarding [operating procedures](#) on idling, fuel conservation, and strategies for reducing diesel exhaust emissions and maintaining comfortable temperatures. Future professional development will include these topics.

Mitigation Action 4: *Increase the Safety and Other Amenities Available on School Buses*

Equip all school buses with internal and external cameras and GPS (Zonar). Work directly with vendor to provide fully operational school bus equipment for increased and improved student safety.

Mitigation Action 5: *Electrify All Light-Duty Vehicles and Other Equipment by 2040*

Exploring various electric vehicle options and types for use by executive, administrative, supervisory and mail delivery staff.

Priority Recommendation #5: *Reduce Food Waste and Grow Climate-Friendly Food*

Operational Action 1: *Incorporate Student, Parent, Staff and Community Stakeholder Input into PGCPs Menus*

Food and Nutrition Services conducted a survey in December to research student interest in vegan menu items (plant-based proteins, no meat or dairy).

Major Findings:

- 62.1% expressed interest in vegan items
- Vegan burgers and nuggets were the most popular items
- Commenters stated a desire for meals that use different herbs and more culturally diverse, gluten-free options

Met with Prince George’s Regional Association of Student Governments (PGRASG) to discuss future menus and product testing, using students to market eco-friendly foods. The committee is in the process of drafting a parent survey.

Operational Action 2: *Conduct Baseline Assessments for Food Waste and Values-Driven Purchasing*

Student testing is conducted on all menu products as part of our standard operating procedures. Conducted initial food waste audits and site visits to gather baseline data.

Mitigation Action 1: *Implement Values-Driven, Climate-Friendly Food Service*

Identified two companies with plant-based meat alternatives (i.e., pea protein, bean protein, pasta); currently revisiting MorningStar Farms and Dr. Praeger’s Sensible Foods products. Held meetings with representatives from Prince George’s County Food Equity Council, Friends of the Earth, Eleanor Roosevelt High School Environmental Club, Brighter Bites and Prince George’s County Board of

Education member Pamela Boozer-Strother (District 3).

Mitigation Action 2: *Reduce Food Waste and Increase Composting*

PGCPS has partnered with Prince George’s County Department of the Environment on a pilot program to expand the number of composting schools. Twelve additional schools now collect compostable materials, including food scraps and paper trays, and transport them to the Prince George’s County Organics Composting Facility.

Professional development workshops were conducted for staff on composting. Student education and leadership opportunities are included as part of the composting program.

Initial waste audits have been conducted at schools.

Adaptation Action 1: *Continue to Participate in Maryland’s Farm to School Program and Expand Sourcing and Promotion of Locally Produced Foods*

The Department of Food and Nutrition Services chooses in season produce from the local [USDA Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program](#). FNS Director and Nutrition Specialist II met with Meeting Creatives, a consulting group hired by MSDE to assist with developing a sustainability plan to improve access to local foods in school meals

Adaption Action 2: *Create Resilient Food Production on PGCPS Properties*

Discussed engaging University of Maryland Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed) to promote school gardens; enhance student engagement in creating recipes and growing herbs for PGCPS menu items; expand nutrition education throughout the community.

Priority Recommendation #6: *Commit to Sustainable Materials Management and Procurement*

Operational Action 1: *Develop a Sustainable Purchasing Policy*

Created draft PGCPS Sustainable Purchasing Policy, building upon the environmentally-preferred procurement language from the current Purchasing Manual, policies gathered from other organizations and internal meetings.

Operational Action 2: *Reduce School Meal Packaging Sent to the Landfill*

Identified compostable food container alternatives for packaging school meal items; obtained pricing information and initial estimates.

Operational Action 3: *Promote Recycling and Waste Reduction in PGCPS*

Waste management lessons for fourth grade were introduced to the PGCPs curriculum this school year and include the topics of waste reduction, recycling and composting. A related teacher professional development workshop was held in the fall.

America Recycles Day (Nov. 15) events included a Teacher [Toolkit](#) with recycling information, lessons, activities and contests. Information on the commemorative day was shared through the *PGCPs Express* staff newsletter and PGCPs website to encourage school participation. Schools were encouraged to submit a video/photo to show their recycling activities. America Recycles Day was also selected as the theme for the Student Media Day video challenge.

Students created a composting promotional video (see Priority 1.01).

Mitigation Action 1: *Improve the Carbon Footprint of the Waste Collection System*

Refining dynamic routing collections of recycling materials to reduce truck trips (and greenhouse gas) while balancing individual service-level needs and collection logistics. Increased the number of school cafeterias with three waste collection streams (landfill, compost, recycling).

Mitigation Action 2: *Expand Tracking of Waste and Diversion Rates*

Received contract approval for school waste audits. Completed planning, preparation and initial audits at schools. Waste audits included an educational component for students and staff; they observed the audit, asked questions and participated in discussions about decreasing waste. School Green Teams discussed student-led strategies and actions to reduce waste.

Priority Recommendation #7: *Commit to Climate Resilient Land Management*

Operational Action 1: *Conduct a System-Wide Landscape Inventory and Develop a Plan for Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Landscape Management*

Discussions held regarding the review of project databases for the number of existing green infrastructure projects and using Capital Programs and the Building Services team to develop an inventory. Working with Prince George's County to compile a list of green infrastructure projects permitted and performed by PGCPs.

Operational Action 2: *Establish a System-wide Project Database with Tracking and Monitoring for all Green Infrastructure and Conservation Landscapes*

Establish a data framework for facility environmental data more broadly and develop dashboards inclusive of green infrastructure and conservation landscapes. Awaiting county data to establish the database.

Operational Action 3: *Incorporate Stormwater Management Activities into School Curriculum to Enhance Climate Science*

Teacher professional development workshops were held, focused on the introduction to stormwater issues and activities.

Operational Action 4: *Streamline the Review Process for Green Infrastructure Projects and Separate the Review Process from the Current Site Permitting Process*

Meetings scheduled with Washington Sanitary Suburban Commission (WSSC) and Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) to discuss streamlining their processes.

Mitigation Action 1: *Plant More Trees at Each School and Across the School System*

Meeting scheduled with M-NCPPC regarding effective forest management and developing an overall plan.

Mitigation Action 2: *Plant Native Plants and Create Conservation Landscapes for Stormwater and Multiple Benefits*

Meeting scheduled with M-NCPPC regarding an effective forest management plan that will address this issue and comply with the new building standard.

Mitigation Action 3: *Increase the Number of School-Based Green Infrastructure Projects*

Discussion held regarding types of projects that fall within this category. Working to determine inventory of green infrastructure projects.

Mitigation Action 4: *Transition Sports Field Surfaces to Natural Turf*

Gathering information from industry experts on best practices for sustainable grass fields. Working to identify school for pilot projects on sustainable grass field and natural turf design.

Adaption Action 1: *Reduce Paved Surfaces and Replace Remaining Impervious Parking Areas with Pervious Paving*

Researching materials and costs related to potential changes to our current paving practices.

Adaptation Action 2: *Investigate Building Structures and Retrofit Green Roofs Where Feasible*

Exploring blue roofs for stormwater management and rooftop solar as alternatives to green roofs due to difficulty achieving net-zero with green roofs alone.

Adaptation Action 3: *Preserve Existing Trees and Woodlands During Site Development Process*

Working with Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) on the development of forestry management and green spacing plans.

Adaptation Action 4: *Reuse Already Developed Properties for School Sites*

Working on the creation of a swing plan. Reviewing cycle 1 and cycle 2 potential projects for order and site selection. Working on a vacant properties use plan that will emphasize land banking for future construction.

Priority Recommendation #8: *Lead by Example to Support Transformational Change*

Operational Action 1 (MOVED TO PRIORITY 2.1): *Create a Sustainability & Resiliency Officer Position in the PGCPs Administration*

Operational Action 2: *Ensure that Equity Permeates Through All Decisions Implementing the CCAP*

Equity & Excellence are working with Priority Recommendation Leads to draft and address equity considerations for each operational action.

Operational Action 3: *Ensure Equitable, Meaningful Student and Community Engagement*

Office of Communications and Community Engagement and Department of School and Family Partnerships developing system-wide activities for two environmental-themed holidays (Recycling Day and Earth Day). Researching needs for middle and high school environmental action groups and Green Teams as we work towards full implementation for 2023-24 school year.

Operational Action 4: *Ensure that Negotiated Workforce Contracts Respond to the CCAP Recommendations*

The Purchasing Department will review for alignment/conflict with current or proposed language and CCAP recommendations as contracts are scheduled for the negotiation process.

Operational Action 5: *Lobby for Necessary Changes to State, County and Federal Law and Regulations*

The Office of Chief of Staff is tracking state legislation and exploring opportunities to engage on proposed federal legislation. Working with state legislative staff to track legislation or bills addressing climate or environmental concerns. The PGCPs legislative liaison team will contact all local and state elected officials to request copies of any early draft legislation.

Operational Action 6: *Ensure that Capital Program and Other Budgetary Decisions Keep the CCAP Goals*

Schedules are currently being created to update our PGCPS Master Specifications for construction projects. Communicating with auxiliary departments to ensure that specifications are aligned with Climate Change Action Plan goals for construction projects. With input from the Maintenance Department, the Capital Programs Department is developing an inventory of facility improvements in existing buildings and developing specifications for future projects.

The Budget Office prepared a list of department budgetary decisions made in support of the Climate Change Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2024:

- Sustainability & Resilience Officer Position
- Administrative Assistant
- Building Automation positions (Scheduler & Technician)

**Operational Action 7 (THIS ITEM SHOULD MOVE TO PRIORITY 2 AT THE END OF THE YEAR):
*Calculate a PGCPS Greenhouse Gas Inventory***

The Departments of Capital Programs, Building Services and Central Garage are updating the master inventory list of major equipment to further quantify what needs to be addressed. Additional coordination to occur with Central Garage on fuel usage as well.

Working with Purchasing on procurement process to measure greenhouse gas emissions of equipment at school sites.

Work in progress to develop tool(s) and a method for proper inventory of portable fossil fuel-powered equipment/tools (i.e. lawn mowers, blowers, chainsaws, snow blowers, trimmers, etc.).

Operational Action 8: *Update Inaugural Climate Change Action Plan*

A semester report will be created and shared with all stakeholders for awareness of the work underway to meet the CCAP goals.