

PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

0111
Policy No.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

BASIC COMMITMENTS

Sustainability

I. POLICY STATEMENT

- A. The Board of Education of Prince George’s County (Board) acknowledges the importance of a healthy environment to achieve equity and excellence in learning. Prioritizing our students, Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) has managed to incorporate cost effective solutions to create healthy places to learn for all students, by reducing the energy used in our buildings and transportation and reducing waste. The Board is committed to high-level goals for reducing its carbon footprint by generating renewable onsite energy sources at buildings, monitoring and reporting energy usage, replacing infrastructure and vehicles with zero emissions alternatives, and reducing food-related greenhouse gas emissions, among other solutions.
- B. The Board recognizes the need to reduce the school system’s environmental impact by building and operating its facilities in an environmentally responsible manner to create healthy places to learn and work and to preserve the environment for future generations.

II. PURPOSE

To integrate best practices and lessons learned from Prince George’s County to implement a sustainability policy for PGCPS, which is in alignment with the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), and which addresses conserving natural resources, protecting the environment, reducing waste, fostering energy cost containment, increasing the use of renewable energy in meeting the school system’s energy needs and promoting environmental literacy system-wide in accordance with applicable federal, State, and local laws and regulations.

III. DEFINITIONS

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. *Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP)* – A plan, created by a workgroup made of environmental experts, lawmakers, Board members, staff and students, that reviews how PGCPS can make different decisions that will lessen the school system’s impact on the environment and be more resilient to the negative effects of climate change. The CCAP documents progress to date in advancing climate action across three (3) important broad topic areas: advancing internal systems in PGCPS operations so that its systems and processes are as climate-friendly as possible; reducing PGCPS

contributions to greenhouse gas emissions; and preparing PGCPs and the community for resiliency through impacts of a changing climate.

- B. *Conservation* – The careful use, management, and protection of natural resources and the environment to prevent depletion, pollution, and waste.
- C. *EmPower Maryland Rebates* – Rebates that Maryland residents/businesses are entitled to through the EmPower Maryland Program. PGCPs utilize these rebates for lighting retrofits and energy efficient equipment.
- D. *Energy* – For the purposes of this policy and its associated administrative procedure(s), *energy* consists of electricity, #2 fuel oil, natural gas, propane, and renewable resources (such as solar).
- E. *Energy conservation* – Initiatives to reduce energy wasted by existing assets. Results are derived from change in behaviors and habits among students, administration, and facility professionals and involves continuous effort and commitment by all stakeholders.
- F. *Green* – A generic term that applies to products and practices that protect both the environment and human health.
- G. *Maryland Green school* – A program that provides educational opportunities that empower PreK to 12th-grade students to take action to reduce environmental impact, practice and encourage environmental stewardship and sustainability, fosters environmental literacy, and increases awareness of the impact of the environment on public health. The program aligns with the goals of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and supports Maryland State Department of Education graduation requirements and standards. The Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) administers the program and Maryland Green School awards.
- H. *Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards* – A state law that requires local education authorities to incorporate eight (8) environmental education standards into their curricula, and a related law that requires students graduating from high school in 2015 or later to be environmentally literate. The standards are: Environmental Issues; Interactions of Earth's Systems; Flow of Matter and Energy; Populations, Communities and Ecosystems; Humans and Natural Resources; Environmental Health; Environment and Society; and Sustainability.
- I. *MEA grants* – Maryland Energy Administration grants.
- J. *Net-Zero Ready (NZR) school* – A school building that is extremely energy-efficient in that it produces as *much* energy as it uses over the course of a year.
- K. *Renewable energy* – Energy which is regularly replenished, such as solar, wind, waves

and geothermal heat, in contrast to non-renewable energy such as fossil fuels, which draw on finite resources that will eventually dwindle and become too expensive or too environmentally damaging to retrieve.

- L. *Sustainability* – A responsible management of natural resources to fulfill current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. *Sustainability* aims to balance ecological, economic and social goals, such as reducing carbon emissions, promoting renewable energy and ensuring equitable resource access.
- M. *Resilience* – Involves proactively preparing for and adapting to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, while maintaining a safe and effective learning environment for students and staff.

IV. STANDARDS

- A. PGCPS shall develop a process for implementing operational, mitigation, and adaptation practices and programs that align with the Climate Change Action Plan and establish performance metrics and goals in the following areas:
 - 1. Manage energy by:
 - a. establishing robust district-wide energy data collection to accurately benchmark and calculate greenhouse gas emissions;
 - b. relying on building automation to achieve desirable Energy Use Intensity targets; and
 - c. leveraging metering technology for accurate data-management and performance tracking.
 - 2. Perform comprehensive energy audits on all existing buildings which include: monitoring and reporting district-wide energy use (including metrics on total energy use), the volume and percentage of annual energy consumption derived from renewable sources, and overall use by source and square foot.
 - 3. Begin replacing buses with zero emission vehicles and modifying bus routes to reduce current levels of diesel consumption resulting in low carbon school transportation.
 - 4. Identify metrics for measuring energy efficiency, the minimum efficiency standards currently in place, and the components to which the standards will be applied.
 - 5. Investigate renewable energy sources for a net zero emissions future.
 - 6. Evaluate the most effective approach to reaching compliance with Maryland Green Building Standards requirements, which allow for achievement of the goal of green

building design, new construction and renovation, and operation resulting in the achievement of the goal of Net-Zero Ready schools.

7. Reduce harmful indoor air quality traits such as mold, lead pipes, and little to no air conditioning, that impact the learning ability and health of students, especially in disadvantaged communities.
8. In addition to Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards (MELS) compliance, develop a work group comprised of student leaders and PGCPs educators and administrators to develop a set of guiding principles and values that articulate the expected behaviors and norms between teachers, staff, students, and the school environment. This will support student environmental leadership and service, including engagement with nature and the outdoors.
9. Investigate sustainable and environmentally preferable purchasing and management practices, such as using power purchasing agreements (PPAs) to contract for renewable energy to procure what cannot be produced on PGCPs properties and prioritize reducing solid waste sent to the landfill.
10. Require private partners to participate in all rebates and other appropriate financial programs that lead to reduced emissions and/or increased resilience, such as including language in RFPs (Request for Proposals) that requires contractors to maximize all EMPOWER Maryland rebates, grants or other available funding sources.
11. Integrate strategies that reduce food waste and solid waste sent to the landfill and prioritize the reuse, composting and recycling of materials.
12. Conduct a system-wide landscape inventory and develop a plan for green infrastructure and sustainable landscape management assets at every school and administrative building.

B. This policy will be reviewed every two (2) years.

V. IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Superintendent is directed to develop administrative procedures to implement this policy.
- B. The Superintendent is authorized to advocate for adequate resources to promote the school system's sustainability plan.
- C. The Superintendent will establish a department to integrate sustainability into business operations throughout the district and implement, monitor, and evaluate the priority goals of the PGCPs Climate Change Action Plan.

VI. REFERENCES

A. Legal

MD. CODE ANN., EDUC. § 5-312.1

MD. CODE ANN., EDUC. § 7-117

COMAR 13A.04.17.01

B. Other

Climate Change Action Plan Priority Recommendations, approved 4/28/22

VII. HISTORY

Policy Adopted

10/27/22

Policy Amended

06/26/25