FACILITIES

Office of Facilities Management ~~and Transportation Services~~

Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship

This policy supersedes Policy 8542.~~1~~2.

I. PURPOSE

To establish policy regarding sustainability and environmental stewardship.

~~The world's leading scientists agree that human-induced greenhouse gas emissions are a sigare a significant nt contributor to global warming and that reducing those emissions is one of the most significant challenges confronting the world today. Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) is committed to continue to take innovative and cost-effective steps to help our country achieve climate stabilization. This policy is intended to prioritize the practices to be developed and implemented by staff members in order to address global warming and to meet other important environmental stewardship initiatives. FCPS is also committed to educating students and staff members in environmental stewardship responsibilities and to encouraging them to use their critical thinking skills and communication skills to debate the appropriate measures we need to take in order to be responsible stewards of our environment.~~

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION

- This policy was revised in its entirety. ~~Section I. Updated to current~~
- ~~Section III. Philosophy statement added~~
- ~~Section V. Updated to current~~
- ~~Section VI. Updated to current~~
- ~~Section VII. Updated to current~~
- ~~Section VIII. Updated to current~~
- ~~Section IX. Updated to current~~
- ~~Section X. Updated to current~~
- ~~Section XI. Updated to current~~
- ~~Section XII. Updated to current~~
- ~~Section XIII. Updated to current~~
- ~~Section XIV. Has been added to include the Get2Green program and school based environmental action.~~
- ~~Section XVII. Updated to current~~

III. PHILOSOPHY

~~FCPS~~The Fairfax County School Board is dedicated to cultivating a sustainable future by minimizing our environmental footprint. The School Board~~We~~ commits to reducing energy and water consumption, lowering emissions, and fostering responsible resource management. This work is driven by the adopted recommendations of the Joint Environmental Task (JET) which concluded in 2021.

IV. DEFINITION

Sustainability and environmental stewardship are defined as those policies that reduce energy use and water consumption and result in a smaller carbon footprint. Responsible environmental stewardship enhances the overall environment as well as the classroom environment by reducing noise and improving air quality. Sound policies focus on minimizing pollution and refuse, reducing facility operating costs, and promoting a healthy environment for citizens, students, and staff members.

~~IV. MISSION~~

~~Operating and infrastructure design policies shall be focused on supporting all environmental initiatives approved by the School Board. FCPS shall collaborate and coordinate with local and regional initiatives in an effort to produce an overall positive community impact on the environment.~~

V. ~~RESPONSIBILITIES~~

~~The Joint Environmental Task Force (JET) goals were adopted by the Fairfax County School Board in July 2021. The JET goals, admittedly being lofty and ambitious, present FCPS with an opportunity to review its existing policies and procedures to better align them to meet environmental sustainability – especially regarding transportation, capital improvement, recycling, and workforce development. They also present challenges that need to be prioritized so FCPS can meet, or substantially implement, each recommendation by the target dates.~~

~~Since its inception, the JET's primary aim has been to set and meet aggressive goals in areas of common influence such as workforce development, infrastructure and sustainability of public facilities and transportation, land use planning, communication, and community engagement. The JET provides a forum for collaboration and alignment of institutional policies and practices.~~

VI. CARBON ~~REDUCTION~~ NEUTRALITY

~~Carbon reduction is the most important environmental concern, and FCPS is committed to reducing energy consumption wherever possible both to take advantage of its benefits to the environment and to reduce energy expenses. Energy-efficient heating and cooling equipment, as well as energy-saving lighting and controls, will be employed to meet this goal. We will continue to look for further opportunities to institute programs adding climate control systems, and initiating window replacements.~~ FCPS is committed to the overarching JET goal of being carbon neutral, or to have substantially implemented measures to achieve carbon neutrality, by 2040. Carbon neutrality means having a balance between emitting carbon and removing carbon oxide from the atmosphere and then storing it, a process known as carbon sequestration or investing in carbon offsetting projects such as reforestation, storing carbon in manufactured devices, carbon-storing agricultural practices, or waste and landfill management practices that reduce or remove carbon dioxide emissions outside of FCPS to compensate for school division emissions that cannot be avoided. To achieve net zero emissions, all FCPS greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will have to be counterbalanced by carbon sequestration or offsets.

To achieve this goal, FCPS will set intermittent goals for achieving carbon emissions reductions of 50% by 2030; producing 25% of the school division's energy use from in-

county renewable energy generation by 2030, and 50% by 2040; decreasing total energy usage from all FCPS facilities by 25% by 2030 and 50% by 2040.

VII. GREEN GLOBES

Virginia's High-Performance Buildings Act (HB2001) was enacted in 2021 and updated in 2024 to drive more efficient and resilient public buildings. Per HB2001, public buildings must be designed, constructed, verified, and operated to comply with a high performance building certification program. Following the Act's update, the building certification program with which FCPS has most-recently participated is not recognized as a certification pathway. The Office of the Chief of Facilities Services and Capital Programs conducted a thorough evaluation of certification program pathways, resulting in a recommendation of the Green Building Initiative's (GBI) Green Globes certification.

Green Globes is a science-based building rating system that assesses a project's environmental impact across multiple areas, including energy, water, materials, and indoor air quality. It offers a flexible approach that allows project teams to collaborate with the GBI to prioritize key sustainability aspects. A transition to Green Globes is viewed as satisfying legislative requirements but also a reinforcement of FCPS's commitment to JET initiatives.

VI~~I~~II. BUILDING AND CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Building design ~~will~~ focuses on improving student achievement by reducing ambient noise, optimizing classroom acoustics, maximizing natural lighting, and improving air quality. Staff members will help educators develop sustainable curricula by using features and systems of the school facility as teaching aids in order to educate students in the art and science of sustainable design. In this regard, FCPS ~~recently established new~~ academic goals to include the expectation that students understand and model attributes that contribute to an effective and productive community and to the common good of all. FCPS also has set the expectation that students be skilled in environmental stewardship.

IX~~VIII~~. INDOOR AIR QUALITY

FCPS is committed to establishing and maintaining a healthy environment conducive to effective learning. FCPS has established ~~new~~ ventilation standards to ensure that temperature and humidity are maintained at comfortable levels. During renovations, indoor air quality (IAQ) is tested before construction in order to establish a baseline and is monitored regularly to ensure that quality levels are maintained. During renovations, FCPS observes more stringent IAQ standards than are required by the industry and applicable federal standards~~Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)~~. FCPS has adopted green cleaning practices for ~~FCPS facilities~~FCPS facilities in order to minimize negative effects on IAQ. FCPS ~~We have instituted the~~ uses ~~of~~ particle filtration devices on ~~our~~ buffers and vacuums, ~~the use of~~ special entryway mats at all entrances to prevent the spread of dust, ~~the use of~~ treated dust mops, and ~~the use of~~ microfiber cleaning cloths. In the near future, FCPS ~~we will phase in the~~ will use ~~of~~ Green Seal cleaning ~~Seal cleaning~~ products, interior paint, and other ~~and~~ products with low to no volatile organic compounds (VOC) are being phased in as new commodities contracts are let.

~~I~~X ~~VII~~. ~~OUTDOOR AIR QUALITY~~ TRANSPORTATION

To do its part to improve general air quality in the region~~, FCPS will maximize the use of school buses with green diesel technology using ultra low sulfur diesel fuels and, when replacing vehicles, FCPS shall give preference to vehicles with improved fuel economy and reduced emissions.~~ FCPS is committed to providing carbon-neutral student transportation and will work to transition to electric school buses, electric non-school bus vehicles, and electric vehicle alternatives by 2035. FCPS will install electric vehicle charging infrastructure wherever possible. FCPS will coordinate efforts with the Fairfax County government for shared parking and will apply for local, state, and federal grants wherever possible.

Providing residents with safe, well-designed, and ADA (Americans with Disabilities) - compliant, alternative fuel transportation choices will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote healthier living, and increase access to jobs, education, medical services, local businesses, and other quality-of-life amenities.

X~~I~~VIII. WATER USE AND MANAGEMENT

Plumbing systems will be designed to minimize water consumption through use of low flow fixtures and metering faucets and meet building code requirements. New technologies for recycling gray water and ~~rain water~~rainwater for building use and field irrigation shall be evaluated for incorporation into ~~design standards~~design standards.

~~I~~XII. WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING

~~Schools and centers will have mandatory recycling programs for paper products, cans, bottles, and fluorescent light bulbs. Construction waste materials will be separated and recycled. Local recycled-content and rapidly renewable materials will be used in new schools and renovations when readily available.~~ FCPS has set an aspirational goal to be at zero waste by 2030. To meet this aspirational goal, in collaboration with Fairfax County government, FCPS will implement procedures to reduce waste in all schools and offices. Schools and offices will separate organics from waste and recycling and compost organics as the service becomes available.

XIII. GROUNDS AND LANDSCAPING PRACTICES

~~Drought-resistant landscaping will be used to conserve water, and maintenance-free landscaped areas will be installed wherever practical to reduce energy consumption and emissions incurred due to mowing and other maintenance activities. Artificial turf will be installed at schools wherever possible. These fields will result in the savings of millions of gallons of water, minimize the introduction of harmful chemical fertilizers into the ecosystem, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by mowing.~~Artificial and organic turf fields and naturalized habitat areas are popular at FCPS for their athletic and service-based learning attributes. These areas require low maintenance, reduce the need for harmful chemical and pesticide application, are drought resistant – saving the divisions millions of gallons of water, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by mowing. FCPS prioritizes the installation of native plants during construction and grounds-related projects to enhance canopy coverage – reducing the region's heat island effect and meeting green space requirements. FCPS will install artificial and organic turf fields where practical and economically feasible to support athletics and reduce overall maintenance costs.

XI~~V~~I~~I~~. WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Stormwater management features are included in FCPS construction projects and also required by the Code of Virginia. Where feasible, FCPS designs and build these features to exceed code requirements and reduce pollution from entering the storm drains, creeks, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

X~~I~~V. GET2GREEN AND SCHOOL-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

FCPS promotes student-centered environmental stewardship activities through FCPS Get2Green, a program jointly administered by the Instructional Services and the Facilities Services & Capital Programs departments. Each school identifies a Get2Green Leader to facilitate equitable access for students to engage in environmental stewardship. Get2Green Leaders also serve as the Zero Waste liaison to advertise and promote waste reduction practices and proper recycling procedures. Get2Green central office staff directly supports school-based Get2Green Leaders through consultations, professional development, and resources to foster a culture of environmental stewardship. Get2Green partners with National Wildlife Federation's EcoSchools U.S. program to support schools in earning recognition for student-led environmental stewardship efforts.

XV~~I~~. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

FCPS is committed to identifying and expanding green career opportunities in renewable energy, energy conservation, green building, resource and wildlife management, stormwater and wastewater management, sustainable landscaping, and related fields.

To support this effort FCPS will: provide schools with resources related to Green Careers; partner with business and industry representatives from related fields; continue collaboration between all FCPS related departments and project; include energy pathway lessons/content where appropriate; and develop a plan to utilize FCPS buildings as learning tools that include renewable and net-zero energy features and ensure building occupants have the opportunities to learn all about those building's sustainable features through educational tools such as signage, dashboards, and interactive models.

XV~~I~~I. PURCHASING

~~Acquisition of products and services will be done in accordance with state and local laws, and in support of environmental stewardship, whenever possible. Purchasing decisions will include environmental considerations such as reducing waste and greenhouse gas emissions, minimizing environmental impacts, and using products made with recycled materia~~Acquisition of goods and Services will be conducted in accordance with Virginia Public Procurement Act (VPPA), Fairfax County Purchasing Resolution, as adopted annually by the School Board,

XV~~II~~I. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

~~Staff members shall create an inventory of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and implement policies, programs, and operations to further achieve measurable reduction~~

~~and help contribute to regional reduction targets. Annual performance measures shall be instituted.~~ Report on program efforts and status via various media and methods.

Legal Reference: Code of Virginia, Sections 22.1-135.1, 22.1-138, 22.1-141.1

Policy adopted: November 6, 2008
Reviewed and Corrected: September 26, 2013
Reviewed: January 22, 2026

FAIRFAX COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD