FACILITIES

Office of Facilities Management

Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship

This policy supersedes Policy 8542.1.

I. PURPOSE

To establish policy regarding sustainability and environmental stewardship.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION

This policy was revised in its entirety.

III. PHILOSOPHY

The Fairfax County School Board is dedicated to cultivating a sustainable future by minimizing our environmental footprint. The School Board 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.

V. CARBON NEUTRALITY

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.

VI. 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.

VII. BUILDING CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Building design 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 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.

VIII. INDOOR AIR QUALITY

FCPS is committed to establishing and maintaining a healthy environment conducive to effective learning. FCPS has established 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 . FCPS has adopted green cleaning practices for FCPS facilities in order to minimize negative effects on IAQ. FCPS uses particle filtration devices on buffers and vacuums, special entryway mats at all entrances to prevent the spread of dust, treated dust mops, and microfiber cleaning cloths. In the near future, FCPS will use Green Seal cleaning products, interior paint, and other products with low to no volatile organic compounds (VOC) are being phased in as new commodities contracts are let.

IX. TRANSPORTATION

To do its part to improve general air quality in the region 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. 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 rainwater for building use and field irrigation shall be evaluated for incorporation into design standards.

XI. WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING

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.

XII. GROUNDS AND LANDSCAPING PRACTICES

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.

XIII. 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.

XIV. 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. 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.

XVI. PURCHASING

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,

XVIII. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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

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FAIRFAX COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD