

Appendix D: School Sustainability Toolkit

Boulder Valley School District

School Sustainability Checklist

The following is a quick checklist adapted from the Washington Green Schools Program (www.wagreenschools.org) to help your school's Green Team develop sustainability practices in four areas: energy, solid waste, water, and transportation. You can use this checklist to help track your school's progress as you take certain actions and accomplish milestones.

Energy

- Establish or improve school-wide strategies for turning off all lights when adequate sunlight is available or when rooms are not in use.
- Establish or improve school-wide strategies to turn off (or put to sleep) all computer monitors, peripherals (printers, scanners, etc.) and other electronic equipment (copiers, typewriters, etc.) when not in use.
- Establish or improve school-wide strategies to make sure space around vents on walls and window sills is kept free of obstruction.
- Establish or improve school-wide strategies to make sure windows, blinds, and curtains are closed at the end of the school day to keep heat in, and open during the day to let daylight in and reduce heating need.
- Establish or improve school-wide strategies to make sure doors to the outside of the building are not left open longer than necessary when heating and cooling. Classrooms should also keep windows and doors closed when heating and cooling.
- Establish or improve school-wide strategies for turning off all outside lights during daylight hours. Consider turning them off at night after caretakers leave the school (dark campus w/ motion sensor lights).
- Set standard heating and cooling points for thermostats to 68°F - 70°F during the winter or heating season and to 75°F or higher during the summer or cooling season. Include a plan to encourage students and staff to dress appropriately for the season so that they will be comfortable with the new energy conserving thermostat settings.
- Implement weekend and vacation shut-down procedures for heating/cooling and lights/equipment to maximize energy efficiency.
- Coordinate after-school and weekend activities for efficient use of heating and lighting systems.

- Have appropriate school/district staff regularly check mechanical equipment and perform proper cleaning and preventative maintenance (heating coils are vacuumed, filters are changed as scheduled, etc.).
- Implement an equipment consolidation program to ensure that energy is not wasted by using more equipment than necessary (e.g., unplugging and/or removing unnecessary refrigerators and reducing the number of computer printers through networking).
- Post conservation reminder stickers and posters around the school (turn off the lights, turn off this computer/monitor, thermostat settings, keep door closed, etc.)
- Include a “conservation minute” or “factoid” each day or week. Post this information, make it a trivia game, a morning announcement, staff meeting announcement, etc.
- Contact your local utilities or agencies to schedule speakers on energy conservation or to order classroom resources related to energy conservation.
- Have students calculate their personal “ecological footprint” using one of the many online calculators and have them write, draw, or present about simple things they can do to reduce their footprint.
- Have students calculate their personal “carbon footprint” using one of the many online calculators and have them write, draw or present about simple things they can do to reduce their footprint.
- Research three local or international schools to learn what they are doing to conserve energy, and how they measure and evaluate their results.
- Establish a relationship with a sister school internationally with similar academic/environmental goals so students can be engaged with the global community. Share information with whole school community.
- Have older students teach younger students activities or lessons relating to energy, conservation, etc.
- Start a student “Conservation Patrol” or “Classroom Energy Monitor” program, or rotate student responsibility to perform classroom and school walk-throughs to monitor conservation actions (turn off lights, monitors, etc.).
- Perform a skit, puppet show, or other type of entertainment related to energy use and conservation to the school, community members, or another school.
- Design an advertising campaign including displays for the foyer, commons, cafeteria or other space to educate students and staff about school energy conservation actions that they can take at school and at home.
- Each classroom signs an energy conservation pledge for their classrooms and/or students could take an energy conservation pledge home for their family to sign and post on their refrigerator.

- Establish an Environmental Club, Energy Club, or Conservation Club, that focuses on environmental issues and projects in your school and community.
- Research and identify barriers to making any additional improvements in energy conservation at your school, and propose solutions to the school/district/school board, or other appropriate audience.
- Learn about solar energy to heat water. Determine if solar-heated water would be appropriate at your school and present your findings and ideas to your administration or other appropriate audience.
- Research potential energy and financial savings if portable electric heaters, small classroom refrigerators or other appliances were not allowed. As part of your research, find if other schools, districts or agencies have banned their use as part of their energy conservation policy.
- Create a school wide recognition program for students who participate in conservation activities outside of the classroom and/or have students partner with community groups, non-profits, or businesses on conservation related projects.
- Mentor another school in your district or county to help improve its energy conservation practices.
- Students calculate the schools “ecological or global footprint” using an online calculators, and present information, findings and recommendations to school community or other appropriate audience.
- Students calculate the school’s carbon footprint and present information, findings and recommendations to school community or other appropriate audience.

Solid Waste

- Set up a recycling program where your school is recycling at least two material types (i.e. paper and plastic containers, or paper and cardboard). Be sure to provide recycling containers and clear signs for a successful program.
- Use one-sided prints for scratch pads/drafts. Place labeled trays for reuse paper in each classroom and office. Encourage paper reuse.
- Create a policy of double-sided photocopying and printing, and provide instructions to photocopier users. Encourage double-sided copying and printing.
- Use email instead of paper copies for one or more regularly issued newsletters, bulletins or memos. (Be aware of audiences that might not have computer access.)
- Reduce print runs based on number of leftover copies, or “right size” the paper used (i.e. use half sheets), or encourage the double checking of formatting documents so that one or two lines do not carry over to the final page. Think of and document other methods.
- Promote “paper free” days at least twice during the school year.

- Start a bag reuse campaign for lunch sacs.
- Establish, promote and monitor a reuse station for supplies such as file folders and envelopes. Appoint one staff member to oversee this reuse system.
- Purchase office paper and paper products that contain at least 30% recycled content.
- Promote “waste free lunches.” Promotional messages may include: “Take or bring only what you will eat” and “Bring reusable containers and lunch sacks for your home lunches.” Measure the effects of your efforts throughout the year.
- Develop a program to decrease the *uneaten* and *unopened food* in the garbage.
- Research milk carton recycling in your area. If recycling is not an option, research other packaging options (including plastic pouches).
- Replace disposable plates, glasses and cups with durable products in the staff break room.
- Hold an end of year locker cleanout school supply reuse (*Great Locker Cleanout*).
- Hold a student-run reuse exchange event/fair/garage sale.
- Purchase and reuse durable, reusable party/holiday decorations.
- Research three local or international schools to find out what they are doing with food waste and look for opportunities available in your area to begin a composting program.
- Implement composting of food waste either on-site (via a minimum of two classroom worm bins or school-wide on-site composting using a BioStack or Earth Tub) or off-site (via a hauler collection program that transports food waste to a composting facility).
- Set up a program to compost yard debris from school grounds either on-site or offsite.
- Research three local or international schools to find out what they are doing to recycle and reduce waste, and how they are measuring and evaluating their results.
- Establish an Environmental Club, Recycling Club, or other club that focuses on environmental issues in your school and community
- Measure your school’s carbon footprint reduction or the energy saved resulting from waste reduction, recycling and/or composting effort, using one of the online carbon calculator tools.
- Have older students teach younger students about recycling, waste reduction, composting, etc.

- Students create and perform a skit, puppet show, or other type of entertainment about recycling, waste reduction or composting in your school to the school, community, or another school.
- Design a print advertising campaign to educate other students at your school about the recycling, waste reduction or composting actions at your school.
- Design a display for the foyer, commons, cafeteria or other public space to educate students and staff about your school's recycling, waste reduction or composting actions.
- Make a public service announcement film or radio ad about recycling, waste reduction or composting in your school and involve your local media.
- Create a school wide recognition program for students who participate in recycling/waste reduction activities outside of school and/or have students partner with a community groups, non-profits, businesses, etc. on a recycling/waste reduction related projects.
- Mentor another school in your school district or county to improve its recycling, waste reduction or composting practices.
- Identify barriers to making additional improvements in recycling, waste reduction or composting based on your Recycling & Waste Reduction Assessment, and propose solutions to the school or school district.
- Create a book recycling program for your old library books or textbooks and send them to war-torn countries or other countries in need.

Water

- Post permanent notices in all bathrooms about bathroom water conservation practices.
- Run a campaign to have students and staff sign pledges on water conservation and water protection as a call to personal action (home and school) (e.g. shorter showers).
- Learn about the water conservation benefits of using native plants for landscaping and present your findings and potential for native plants at your school to your administration or other appropriate audience.
- If your school uses pressure washing or hoses to clean sidewalks and other concrete, measure/estimate how much water is used per year on this activity. Provide alternatives to using water for these activities. Present your findings and recommendations to your administration or other appropriate audience.
- Have a monthly "Leak Patrol" check for water leaks and report them to maintenance staff for repair.
- Implement (design, build, and maintain) a rain garden – use as a model for your neighborhood

- Implement native plant landscaping, an organic garden, or other type of demonstration area, including informational signs on the environmental benefits.
- Install and monitor precipitation gauge or weather station. Alter the schools irrigation schedule based on level of rainfall.
- Create a certified schoolyard habitat (National Wildlife Federation).
- Design a display for the foyer, commons, cafeteria or other public space to educate students and staff about your school's water quality or conservation actions.
- Contact local agencies to find out what resources, programs and technical assistance in water protection or conservation is available for your school (speakers, classroom resources, technical assistance, grant programs, special projects, etc.). Schedule a speaker, program or technical assistance for your school.
- Introduce students to careers in water protection and conservation. Have a career day and schedule several speakers from your area that work on water protection and conservation issues.
- Learn about the water conserving benefits of compost and/or mulch, and propose the use of it at your school to your administration.
- Present an in-service training related to water quality and conservation to teachers, school staff, or PTA.
- Develop a water quality protection policy regarding charity carwashes and alternatives (coupons, carwash kits, education about where and how.) Contact a water resources person.
- Develop a policy at your school to protect your local watershed by choosing actions that conserve and protect water sources.
- Determine water savings (in volume and \$) for one year for one of the following: faucet fixtures (aerators and motion sensor), low-flow toilets and waterless urinals, low-flow shower heads, or irrigation systems. Present your findings to the administration.
- Research three local or international schools to learn what they are doing to conserve water, and how they are measuring and evaluating their results. Present your findings to the school community or other appropriate audience.
- Have older students teach younger students activities or lessons relating to water quality and conservation.
- Identify barriers to making additional improvements in water quality or conservation in your school.
- Design a print advertising campaign to educate other students about the water conservation actions at your school.

- Perform a skit, puppet show, or other type of entertainment about water quality or conservation in your school to the school, community, or another school.
- Make a public service announcement film or radio ad about water quality or conservation in your school and involve your local media.
- Design a campaign to run a “green” car wash using car wash kits.
- Create a school wide recognition program for students who participate in water conservation activities outside of the classroom and/or have students partner with a community groups, non-profits, businesses, etc. on a water conservation related projects.
- Mentor another school in your school district or county to improve its water conservation practices.

Transportation

- Create and send a transportation options survey home with students and display results (complete a web search for resources and examples).
- Research options in your area for ride matching, carpooling, public transit and/or provide commuter ridematching services and display your results in the school.
- Have students research what “Safe Routes to School” projects other schools have gotten grant funding for, and come up with a potential project for your school.
- Ask your local transportation providers (bus, light rail) how to get additional services to your school.
- Award preferential parking for carpooling vehicles or provide incentives for not driving in the first place.
- Encourage carpooling and other alternatives to single-occupant vehicle transport for open-enrollment students.
- Offer a bicycle safety workshop such as a “Bicycle Rodeo”, helmet fitting, or other biking safety event. Research if this is already being offered by an agency in your area, who could come, and do this at your school free of charge.
- Celebrate International Walk to School Month in October by having an activity or event.
- Celebrate Bicycle Month in May by having bicycle to school activities. May is also Clean Air and Asthma Awareness month.
- Make covered bicycle parking facilities and other accommodations to promote bicycling to school. You could also cover an existing bicycle parking facility.
- Create a school-wide recognition program for students who participate in alternative transportation activities and/or have students partner with a community groups, non-profits, businesses, etc. on alternative transportation related projects.

- Measure idling behavior at school (average number of cars/buses idling, use stop watches to time idling and find the average idling time for cars and buses, etc.) Present your findings to the school community.
- Implement a no-idling policy for buses and cars at pick-up and drop-off times and request that delivery vehicles shut off their engines while unloading.
- Design a display for the foyer, commons, cafeteria or other public space to educate students and staff about your school's transportation alternatives or outdoor air quality actions.
- Give a presentation to school board, PTA, or other appropriate group, proposing a new district policy or procedures that would address transportation options/air quality issues.
- Research three local or international schools to learn what they are doing on transportation alternatives and improving outdoor air quality, and how they are measuring and evaluating their results. Present your findings to the school community or other appropriate audience.
- Have older students teach younger students activities or lessons relating to alternative transportation and outdoor air quality
- Identify barriers to making additional improvements in transportation alternatives or outdoor air quality and propose solutions to the school.
- Design a print advertising campaign to educate students at your school about transportation alternatives or outdoor air quality actions at your school.
- Perform a skit, puppet show, or other type of entertainment about transportation alternatives or outdoor air quality to the school community, or another school.
- Make a public service announcement film or radio ad about transportation alternatives or outdoor air quality in your school, and involve your local media.
- Mentor another school in the district in transportation alternatives or outdoor air quality to improve its practices.