Stafford Township Board of Education Policy

7461 DISTRICT SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Sustainability is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It considers the interrelationship of economic, social, and environmental factors that protect and enhance present and future quality of life.

The Board of Education desires to conduct its operations and make decisions with identified sustainability priorities that include at a minimum: protecting students, staff, and community from environmental harm; preparing students for the future by educating for sustainability (knowledge of concepts and practices of environmental, social, and economic responsibility and sustainability); and include an intent to preserve current and future resources.

The Board believes by incorporating sustainable practices into school policies and operations it can make an immediate impact on student health, academic performance, and teacher retention while decreasing operational costs and demands on natural resources.

The Superintendent of Schools will establish a School District Sustainability Committee to provide the Superintendent and the Board with information on the benefits of increased sustainability practices within the school district.

The Board wants to protect students, staff, school visitors, and community members from environmental harm and will strive to eliminate the use of potentially toxic and harmful substances; prepare students for the future by providing a high-quality education that support concepts and practices of environmental, social, and economic responsibility and sustainability; and preserving current and future resources by adopting practices in operations that balance environmental, social, and fiscal responsibility to protect and enhance the future quality of life.

The Board of Education authorizes the following sustainability practices to be implemented within the schools of the district:

Professional Development for Sustainability

Quality professional development of staff and Board members facilitates the effective transition to sustainability planning and practices for schools and school districts. Enhancing the knowledge of school personnel about the benefits and requirements of sustainability practices in a school setting increases the likelihood of a successful integration of sustainability into the school district's operations and promotes shared ownership of the outcomes.

The Board of Education will provide a minimum of two hours of time for professional development on sustainability topics to at least five members of the school district staff and/or members of the School District Sustainability Committee to include, but

not be limited to, school Board members, district administrative staff members, teaching staff members, and support staff members.

The professional development for sustainability will provide a general understanding of the benefits of sustainable schools as well as specific information and guidance on undertaking some aspect of sustainability practices from planning to operations. The School District Sustainability Committee, Board members, district administrators, and other school staff members will work together to identify Board members and staff members that would benefit from training on sustainability topics. Training needs will be determined based on plans to maintain, implement, or expand sustainable practices in the school district.

Once the training needs have been identified, various professional development offerings will be reviewed and evaluated to determine the learning concepts that will be included, the educational methods that will be incorporated, and the professional skills that will be imparted. Professional development that incorporates sustainability concepts across subject areas in the teaching curriculum will be a key consideration, as educating for sustainability lays the foundation for sustainable thinking and practice among students, staff, and the broader community.

The school district may choose to train multiple staff members on a particular sustainability topic, either by hosting the training internally or by sending a group to an external training event such as a professional association meeting. Outside experts or internal staff with expertise in sustainability may also be utilized to provide the training. The training hours may also be completed through webinars, online courses, or workshops. Individual staff members or Board members may be trained in different sustainability topics as relevant to their official role in the school district.

The school district will maintain sustainability training documentation that identifies the names and position of the individuals receiving training (groups of five individuals are recommended), along with the following course information: date, instructor or course provider, course description or syllabus, and course length. Course training times exclude time for breaks and meals from the two-hour training requirement. The two hour training requirement does not have to be completed at a single event. For example, two one-hour training sessions or three forty-five minute sessions would meet the time requirement. The training hours must have occurred in the twenty-four months prior to submission for Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification, if such certification is desired.

Qualifying training includes courses or workshops on a topic related to sustainability in schools, from leadership, planning, policy, and curriculum development to teaching, enrichment, food service, transportation, and facilities management.

Green Purchasing Policy

Green purchasing, also known as Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP), is the coordinated purchasing of goods and services to minimize impacts on human health and the natural environment. Alternatives exist for many products used by schools that are less hazardous, save energy and water, and reduce waste.

A simple first step will be for the school district to purchase as many products as possible made from recycled content that are themselves recyclable. Green purchasing moves beyond recycled materials and also takes into consideration the raw materials, including energy and water, used to manufacture products; the production process itself; the packaging and distribution method; and the distance of transport and proximity of production.

The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary or designee will provide an outline of the standards and procedures for selecting products based on environmental criteria. The specific standards and guidelines for selecting products will be based on established environmental criteria, as well as promote the adoption of this Policy to district staff members. The district will attempt to purchase, in accordance with the provisions of applicable purchasing laws: green cleaning supplies; green cleaning equipment; recycled paper; energy efficient appliances; and/or equipment purchases and green cleaning training.

Classroom Chemical Purchase, Storage, and Disposal Policy

The Board of Education requires outdated chemicals used in the school district as part of the school district's Chemical Hygiene Plan are routinely removed from school grounds and future purchases will attempt to curtail or eliminate storage of unneeded chemicals. The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary will coordinate a lab clean-out and clean-out of outdated and unneeded chemicals every eighteen months.

Classroom chemical purchase, storage, and disposal will be in accordance with Board of Education Policy 7420 – Hygienic Management and Regulation 7420.2 – Chemical Hygiene that is in accordance with Federal and State law.

Green Cleaning Policy and Plan

A well-designed Green Cleaning Program developed by the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary or designee will be designed to reduce harmful chemical exposure and yield positive benefits for students, custodial staff, administrators, teachers, and the environment by protecting the environment; providing a healthy learning and work environment; increasing the lifespan of facilities; and protecting the health of custodial, maintenance, and building staff.

This Policy incorporates recommendations from the district's Green Cleaning Plan which will commit to procuring and using green cleaning products and green equipment, support training for custodial and maintenance staff, and describe efforts to evaluate and monitor progress. This Green Cleaning Policy will be shared with the

administration, school staff members, and the broader school community. Before adopting this Green Cleaning Policy, the district will develop a Green Cleaning Plan or Green Cleaning Action Plan that will inform the Policy and support an effective program.

The school district's Green Cleaning Program will incorporate green cleaning products and equipment as well as staff training; engage parents, students, and school organizations in the program implementation; and follow a comprehensive plan that articulates strategies for key building areas including classrooms, kitchens, gymnasiums, offices, and entry systems. In addition to the use of Green Cleaning products, the district's Green Cleaning Program will incorporate technologies like microfiber cloths to reduce the use of cleaning chemicals and HEPA-filtered vacuum cleaners to promote healthy indoor air quality.

The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary or designee will establish a District Green Cleaning workgroup that includes administrators, facility manager, custodial and maintenance staff, teachers, school nurses, support staff, parents, and Green Team members, as well as other individuals interested in Green Cleaning to familiarize the team with Green Cleaning Program components, including Green Cleaning supplies and equipment, as well as the relationship to indoor air quality, chemical exposure, and cost-saving opportunities.

The development of the district's Green Cleaning Plan or Green Cleaning Action Plan will consider the following steps:

1. Complete building cleaning assessments by collecting facility and occupant information, and historical program strengths or weaknesses.

2. Create an inventory of custodial cleaning products and mechanical and non-mechanical equipment, and determine if they meet Green Cleaning standards.

3. Assess staff training and identify training needs and program resources available to support training. Determine how existing policies and procedures can be modified to utilize the wide range of Green Cleaning techniques and concurrently meet accepted levels of clean for specific areas of the facility.

4. Develop a plan with goals and strategies for cleaning procedures, Green Cleaning supplies, Green Cleaning equipment, and building facility enhancements (like expanded use and maintenance of walk-off mats at entrances). Benchmarks to guide the transition to Green Cleaning are critical due to training, product sourcing, and purchasing and staffing considerations.

5. Identify the Green Cleaning standards that will be used to purchase Green Cleaning equipment, non-mechanical equipment, and Green

Cleaning custodial supplies. Possible standards include, but are not limited to:

a. Carpet and Rug Institute, Green Vacuum Cleaner Standards.

b. ISSA, Construction Industry Management Standard for Green Buildings that supports Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

c. EcoLogo Certified products, services and packaging are certified for reduced environmental impact. ECOLOGO Certifications are voluntary, multi-attribute, lifecycle based environmental certifications that indicate a product has undergone rigorous scientific testing, exhaustive auditing, or both, to prove its compliance with stringent, third-party, environmental performance standards.

d. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Safer Choice label helps consumers, businesses, and institutional buyers identify cleaning products and others that perform well and are safer for human health and the environment.

e. Green Seal standard provides sustainability standards for products, services, and companies based on life-cycle research. Green Seal standards provide criteria and guidelines for manufacturers, service providers, and companies to work toward sustainability. Green Seal has 31 issued standards that cover over 375 product and service categories. Examples of Cleaning Products and Services include the GS-42 Commercial and Institutional Cleaning Services, GS-34 Cleaning and Degreasing Agents, GS-37 Green Cleaning Services, GS-40 Floor-Care Products for Industrial and Institutional Use, and GS-41 Hand Cleaners for Industrial and Institutional Use.

f. U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design-Existing Buildings criteria; or ISSA Cleaning Industry Management Standard for Green Buildings.

g. Other standards that meet or exceed those listed above are also acceptable.

6. Green Cleaning Action plans may also incorporate implementation timeframes and program-monitoring requirements.

Promoting Physical Activity

In addition to high-quality physical education classes in the school district taught by certified and well-supported physical education teachers, multiple opportunities exist before, during, and after school to enable young people to achieve the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' recommended sixty minutes of physical activity per day. They include: recess, physical activity breaks, before and after school programs, and the use of school facilities outside school hours.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires every school district that participates in Federal school meals programs to have a local school Wellness Policy that includes goals for physical activity. The Board of Education has adopted Policy 8505 – Local Wellness Policy/Nutrient Standards for Meals and Other Foods to meet this requirement. The Board of Education promotes a comprehensive school-based physical activity program in accordance with Board policy that will permit students to safely walk to and from school, to ride bicycles to and from school, and some of the activities and programs listed below to promote physical activities:

1. Recess: The district will provide a recess period on most school days for Kindergarten through fifth grade students;

2. Physical Activity Breaks: Teachers may periodically conduct three to five minute "physical activity breaks" or "brain energizers" and incorporate physical activity into academic lessons to help improve student performance and on-task behavior;

3. Before and After School Programs: Elementary and Middle Schools in the district will attempt to offer a minimum of two types of extracurricular programs that provide students with opportunities for physical activity beyond school hours. A high school will offer additional extracurricular programs that provide students with opportunities for physical activity beyond school hours;

4. If the district offers a before and/or after school student care program for children, either directly or through a contractor, such programs shall incorporate physical activity as a component of the daily schedule;

5. Intramural sports, which are organized sports that often emphasize fun as well as competition and involve students from the school of all skill levels who may not want to participate in an interscholastic sport;

6. Physical activity clubs that allow students to pursue specific interests or explore new activities;

7. Use of School Facilities Outside School Hours: The district may, in accordance with Board Policy, allow for the joint use of school facilities

by community recreation programs offered by municipal or parks and recreation commissions, outside agencies, and/or youth-serving organizations on evenings, weekends, and during breaks in the school calendar.

Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School is a nationwide movement aimed at encouraging elementary and middle school students to walk or bicycle to school. The goal of New Jersey's Safe Routes to School initiative is to get children walking and bicycling to school where it is safe and to make it safe where it is not safe. In support of this initiative, the Board has adopted Policy 8505 – Local Wellness Policy/Nutrient Standards for Meals and Other Foods, Policy 8600 – Transportation, and Policy 5514 – Student Use of Vehicles. The Board of Education and the administration will collaborate with municipal, county or State transportation, land-use planning, law enforcement, and other agencies to plan, construct, and encourage the use of safe, accessible, and convenient pedestrian and bicycle routes to and from school.

The Board recognizes the benefits of students walking or riding a bicycle to school on a safe route. Understanding there may not be a safe walking or biking route to and from school for every student, this physical activity for a student is both mentally and physically beneficial.

Students walking and riding a bicycle to school will be required to comply with Board policies, all safety and school rules, and regulations. A list of conditions explaining the rules and expectations of the student and parent will be provided by the Principal or designee.

The Board of Education will post this Policy on the school district website along with samples of the district's outreach activities to staff, students, and parents notifying them of the Policy adoption. Outreach activities/materials will include district newsletter articles, email blasts, presentations/announcements at Board of Education or district-wide staff meetings, and other public events.

Adopted: 19 September 2019