

SPPS Energy Action Plan Update Executive Summary



Saint Paul
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

JULY 2023



Our Purpose Statement

Districtwide Stewardship

As a learning institution, Saint Paul Public Schools has the opportunity to raise awareness of sustainable energy practices with positive impacts extending far beyond the classroom. Our District's ambition is to foster a culture of sustainability and instill environmental self-efficacy through education, outreach, and collaboration across the District.

Reducing our environmental impact through energy conservation, efficiency, and renewables must actively and equitably engage our students, teachers, administrators and the Saint Paul Public Schools community.

This Energy Action Plan Update is a continuation of our strategy for achieving District-wide commitment to energy stewardship by fostering healthy and sustainable schools that positively impact our students' learning experience and empower them to be environmentally literate leaders of tomorrow.

Plan Goals

by 2030.

The SPPS Energy Action Plan overall goals are to:

1

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45% District-wide by 2030, with a stretch goal to reduce emissions 50% by 2030.

2

Engage all buildings to reduce their carbon footprint through energy efficient improvements and behavior changes by 2030.

3

Help the Saint Paul Public Schools community recognize the real and actionable impacts of climate change.

Why an Energy Action Plan?

Minnesota's climate is rapidly changing, the evidence is clear. Activities such as land use, and the burning of fossil fuels causes a rise in greenhouse gasses (GHG), which in turn are warming and destabilizing our climate. Over the past 130 years our state has warmed by nearly three degrees and is averaging more than three inches of additional annual rainfall. Each of the top 10 combined warmest and wettest years on record occurred in the last 20 years¹. A comprehensive approach to energy and climate awareness, advocacy, and support is vital. We can build resilience and effect change with districtwide actions through facilities and operations, promoting school-level climate education and behavior changes, and cultivating community advocacy and engagement.

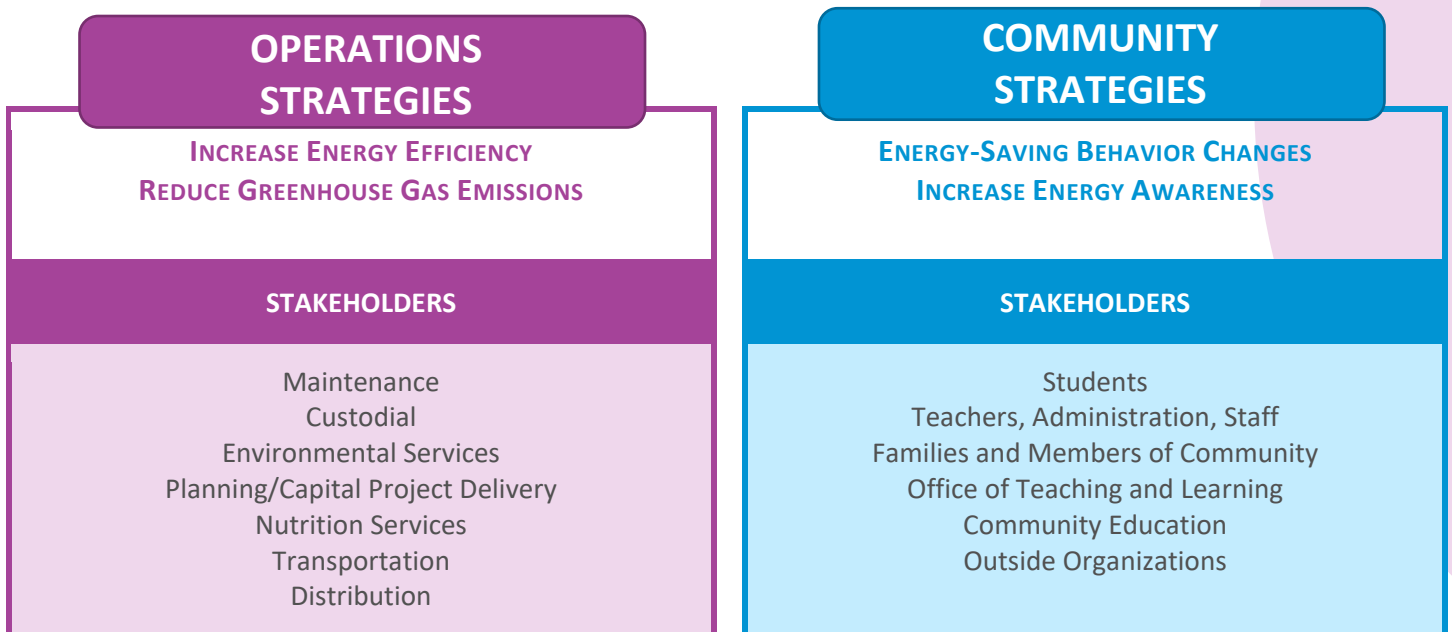
The School Board's recent decision to divest from fossil fuels² explicitly notes that actions must prioritize justice and equity, and recognize the disproportionate impacts from pollution and waste disposal, food and water shortages, and systemic financial risks on vulnerable populations such as children, indigenous groups, people of color, and the financially insecure.

The Saint Paul Public Schools Energy Action Team believes an Energy Action Plan will provide the comprehensive framework for effective and lasting district-wide initiatives for climate action and set the District on a path towards achieving its energy vision by doing the following:

- Identify the appropriate goals and strategies to help achieve that vision.
- Engage and motivate our community to take action to achieve our goals.
- Monitor and track our progress.
- Celebrate our achievements and promote our successes.
- Carry forward our energy momentum for the long term.

Strategies

The Energy Action Plan Update centers on eight strategies in two focus areas: Operations and Community.



¹ https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/climate/climate_change_info/climate-trends.html

² <https://files.constantcontact.com/59e59ea9001/91dedbeb-ea1d-4fa4-ba8a-c7fb24ffd9b8.pdf?rdr=true>



FACILITIES & OPERATIONS STRATEGIES

All buildings and properties owned by Saint Paul Public Schools, and their operational procedures. Staff from all departments that impact the maintenance and operations of SPPS buildings.

Strategy A

IMPLEMENT ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECTS AND PRACTICES

A1

Schedule energy audits in buildings to identify energy saving opportunities to implement.

A2

Research and develop energy efficiency design standards for new construction, and major renovations.

A3

Create process to replace aging equipment with more efficient equipment

Strategy B

TRAIN AND EDUCATE OPERATIONS STAFF ON BUILDING ENERGY MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

B1

Train custodial engineers on building automation system scheduling, and share energy management best practices.

Strategy C

COORDINATE WITH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP ON SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY INITIATIVES

C1

Form Sustainability Advisory Taskforce to advise Board and senior leadership about sustainability and energy.

C2

Work with Business Office to create process to direct energy rebate dollars to the District Revolving Energy Efficiency Fund (REEF).

Strategy D

INCREASE RENEWABLE ENERGY OPTIONS FOR SPPS FACILITIES

D1

Update design process to include systematic evaluation of renewable energy systems for new construction projects, including geothermal and photovoltaic systems.

Strategy E

ELECTRIFY EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES

E1

Participate in EV Fleet study to ID vehicle electrification opportunities

E2

Identify school bus electrification feasibility and grant opportunities

E3

Explore public charging station opportunities on District-owned sites.

E4

Identify and convert gas powered landscaping equipment to battery powered.



COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

Members of the community who use SPPS buildings, including students, teachers, staff and administration, groups who rent space, families, and community education groups. Schools across Saint Paul serve as hubs for their communities.-

The primary purpose, of course, is educating the city’s youth, but that’s just the beginning of how the community benefits from these buildings. Our school buildings are frequently used during evenings and weekends for a variety of activities.

Strategy F

SUPPORT STUDENT-LED CLIMATE AND ENERGY ACTION

F1	F2	F3
Work with existing environmental clubs to develop guidelines and best practices to help other schools create clubs.	Build a coalition to create an energy games-based, extra-curricular youth empowerment program to educate and challenge students to take action in school and at home.	Implement an anti-idling education campaign targeting District and non-District vehicles

Strategy G

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN SPPS DEPARTMENTS TO INTEGRATE ENERGY AND CLIMATE EDUCATION INTO EXISTING PROCESSES AND PROMOTE ENERGY AWARENESS.

G1	G2	G3
Collaborate with Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) to connect energy action into existing classroom activities.	Collaborate with before/after school education programs to incorporate energy action into learning opportunities.	Build partnership with Career Technical Education (CTE) and Operations staff to connect students with energy career pathways and job opportunities.

Strategy H

COMMUNICATE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CLIMATE ACTION BENEFITS AND SUCCESS STORIES

H1	H2
Share stories and impact about what the District is doing for energy efficiency and renewable energy, including sharing success stories from first phase of Energy Action Plan implementation	Promote public-facing dashboard(s) to inform students, teachers, and staff about their buildings’ energy use and renewable energy project impacts.



The content of this plan is derived from a series of planning workshops hosted by Xcel Energy’s Partners in Energy. Thank you to Saint Paul Public Schools Energy Action Team who contributed many hours of service.