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# Climate Crisis Response Committee

## Portland Public Schools FY 2024 - 2025 - CCRC Annual

School Board Meeting - June 24, 2025

The Climate Crisis Response Committee (CRCC) advises the Portland Public Schools Board of Education on implementation of the Climate Crisis Response, Climate Justice and Sustainable Practices Policy.

### Committee Members

Barbi Alexander (Chair)

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Alma Valls (Student)

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# PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS CLIMATE CRISIS RESPONSE COMMITTEE (CCRC) ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

JUNE 24, 2025

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the adoption of the Climate Crisis Response, Climate Justice, and Sustainable Practices Policy by the PPS Board in 2022, the district has demonstrated measurable commitment toward climate resilience and climate justice in alignment with its Vision 2025 priorities. The Climate Crisis Response Committee (CCRC) is tasked with monitoring and supporting the district’s progress in meeting these goals and issuing annual recommendations based on data, transparency, and frontline community impact.

This year’s progress reflects both accomplishments and challenges—particularly in the face of significant budget constraints. Nonetheless, PPS has maintained forward momentum through targeted partnerships, student engagement, and transparent data tracking.

### Key Successes (2024-25):

- **Transparency:** Public launch of the [PPS Climate Policy Dashboard](#), providing visual, real-time progress updates aligned with Key Performance Indicators.
- **Student Engagement:** Broad reach of Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF)–supported student projects across 34 of 36 eligible schools, plus publication of the Climate Awareness Student Survey with over 700 student respondents.
- **Infrastructure Funding:** Secured over \$40 million in funding from PCEF and other sources to modernize and decarbonize facilities, launch electrified transportation, and expand green schoolyard efforts.
- **Policy Alignment:** PPS Board upheld electrification standards in high school modernization, reinforcing PPS’s alignment with both the Climate Policy and community-supported Bond Measure 26-259.

## ALIGNMENT WITH PPS STRATEGIC GOALS AND POLICIES

This work directly supports PPS’s [Vision, Mission, and Core Values](#) as well as the Graduate Portrait and Educator Essentials by preparing climate-literate, engaged students and ensuring safe, equitable learning environments.

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The CCRC’s recommendations and oversight specifically advance the district’s stated goals of:

- Educational equity and racial justice
- Community partnership and engagement
- Environmental and fiscal sustainability
- Academic excellence and whole-student development

## **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATION**

Student involvement has become a signature strength of climate policy implementation. This year:

- The first year of the Portland Clean Energy Funds student-led climate projects launched, with projects at 34 schools involving nearly 700 students.
- PPS Published the Climate Action Design Team report featuring prototypes of co-created student pathways with students, educators and community members.
- Student members of the Committee conducted and analyzed a district-wide climate attitudes survey, showing broad concern over school climate impacts (e.g., classroom overheating) and eagerness for involvement.

To institutionalize this, the Climate Awareness Student Survey should become an annual PPS-administered metric, embedded into the broader student feedback ecosystem alongside the Successful Schools Survey and School Climate Survey.

## **DASHBOARD, EVALUATION, AND DATA SYSTEMS**

Following the Committee’s recommendations, PPS has:

- Launched a public-facing Climate Dashboard, updated with data on carbon emissions, HVAC upgrades, transportation, and green infrastructure.
- Utilized the Evaluation Plan developed in 23-24 with ECONorthwest, to develop performance metrics tailored to track both environmental outcomes and equity-centered impacts on frontline communities.

The Dashboard and associated reports are consistent with PPS’s accountability efforts under the [Racial Equity and Social Justice Framework](#).

## **FUNDING & PARTNERSHIPS**

Notable funding achievements include:

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- \$25.8M from the PCEF Collaborating for Climate Action grant for infrastructure
  - \$99K from the Oregon Dept. of Land Conservation for Green Schoolyards
  - \$100K from the Oregon Dept. of Education for Farm to School programs
  - Support for grant writing and implementation was enhanced by hiring a Climate Justice Student Projects Coordinator (PCEF-funded)

These funding wins align with PPS’s Climate Policy Directive to “leverage community and agency partnerships” and maximize available climate investment resources. However, more staff capacity is still needed for project management and long-term strategic fundraising.

## **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Despite progress, budget constraints threaten continued implementation. Committee concerns include:

- Reduced staffing across central departments may hinder ongoing climate-related project management.
- Student and community awareness of climate initiatives is still uneven; additional communications efforts are needed.
- Volunteer engagement, including community grant writers and Green Team support, remains an untapped opportunity.

## **2024–25 RECOMMENDATIONS**

In alignment with PPS’s Strategic Plan, Community-Informed Policy, and the current financial context, the Committee offers the following five recommendations for the 2025–26 school year:

1. **Align Climate Work with PPS Priority Goals**
  - Focus on strategies that align with PPS’s broader priorities, including electrification and energy efficiency in school modernization, HVAC upgrades for student comfort and safety, and embedding student-designed climate initiatives (e.g., PCEF-funded projects, Climate Action Design Team recommendations) into ongoing school improvement efforts.
2. **Embed Transparency and Engagement Tools**
  - Continue to use the Climate Policy Dashboard as a central transparency and accountability tool. Ensure its use is extended into student curricula, parent communications, and community updates, and track engagement metrics (e.g., unique visitors, stakeholder awareness, and use in classrooms and site-based decision-making).

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### 3. Preserve and Scale Climate Programs

- Prevent erosion of climate action gains due to budget cuts by mobilizing a broad base of support. Explore non-traditional strategies to sustain efforts, such as recruiting community volunteers to assist with climate-focused projects like grant writing, storytelling, schoolyard maintenance, and school-based climate advocacy teams.

### 4. Institutionalize Student Voice

- Make the Climate Awareness Student Survey a recurring annual measure, supported by the district through equitable outreach, classroom engagement, and integration of results into school and district-level planning. Continue to cultivate student representation on advisory committees and leadership teams.

### 5. Expand and Redesign the PPS Volunteer Program to Include Climate Policy Implementation Support

- The Committee recommends that PPS expand its existing volunteer infrastructure to include roles aligned with implementation of the Climate Policy. This includes but is not limited to:
  - Grant writing and development support
  - Planning and research assistance for infrastructure and curriculum teams
  - Communications and outreach coordination in partnership with school-based staff
  - Support roles for teachers and administrators to relieve burden on staff capacity
  - The expansion of the volunteer program should include clear pathways and onboarding for parents, students, alumni, and community members to contribute to district-wide and school-level climate initiatives. Establishing a district-supported “Climate Volunteer Corps” or integrating this track into the existing PPS Volunteer Services Program will ensure equitable access, accountability, and sustainability. This approach reflects the community’s willingness to contribute and addresses capacity shortfalls that otherwise risk stalling progress.

## CLOSING

In a year marked by difficult budget decisions, PPS has demonstrated that climate leadership can remain bold and visionary while being pragmatic. The CCRC commends PPS for continuing to prioritize climate justice and sustainability amidst competing demands and urges the district to protect this momentum through 2025 and beyond.