



LAKE WASHINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Sustainability and Resource Conservation Action Plan

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"Growing up in the PNW, I've always felt connected to the environment around me - the lakes, the trees, even the rainy days. Seeing how quickly things are changing makes the issue feel personal. I want to know that the places I love will still be here, healthy and thriving, for the students who come after me."

Riddhima Das, Student, Lake Washington High School

"District-wide sustainability plans are important because they provide consistency and accountability, and establish a long term vision. They allow for collective progress towards shared goals, rather than relying on individual efforts. This not only has a positive impact on the environment but also contributes to creating more healthy learning environments and stronger communities."

Taein Kim, Student, Tesla Stem High School

"Sustainability matters to me because it combines responsibility, community, and collaboration. It literally defines our futures, especially with climate change becoming an ever-present issue."

Abbas Shakir, Student, Tesla STEM High School

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Introduction

Lake Washington School District has made *Integrated Sustainability* one of its four core commitments, alongside Equitable and Just Systems, Inclusive and Rigorous Learning, and Operational Excellence.

Integrated sustainability means meeting present needs without compromising the future or the ecosystems around us. The Lake Washington School District embeds sustainability into core instructional activities and into operations. The District seeks to have no net direct emissions; for its stewardship practices to be such that they strengthen local and global ecosystems; and that students and staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to make sustainable choices with respect to their own actions in the world.

In every aspect of our work, from planning to implementation to measuring and reflecting on results, we apply a sustainability lens, asking these key questions:

How close or far away are we from ecological balance, resilience, and sustainability, and does this decision move us closer?

In what ways do our students have, or not yet have, the skills, knowledge, habits, and mindsets to live sustainably? How does this action help them build in that direction?

What more could we do under current conditions?

What conditions would need to change in order for us to do even more?

This Sustainability Plan ("Sustainability Plan") lays out recommendations for how to comprehensively commit to, and continue down the path of integrating sustainability into the ethos and actions of Lake Washington School District. An accompanying Roadmap will lay out timeframes and clear next steps for each recommendation.

Superintendent Letter

Dear Lake Washington School District Community,

The history of the Pacific Northwest is one of great resource abundance, majestic physical beauty, and of people caring for the environment. Lake Washington School District is on the Indigenous Land of the Coast Salish Peoples, who have reserved treaty rights on this land, including the Duwamish (dxʷdəwʔabš) and the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe (sdukʷalbixʷ). We recognize and thank the caretakers of this land, who have lived here since time immemorial. Lake Washington School District commits to continued collaboration with Native communities.

We also recognize that current global conditions require every community to do our utmost to address local and global ecological threats. In that spirit, Lake Washington School District has developed this Environmental Sustainability and Resource Conservation Action Plan. This Plan builds on the District's longstanding efforts to conserve resources, and on the strong support and commitment of the students, staff, and communities the District serves.

This Plan is rooted in [Board Policy Operational Expectation-9](#) (OE-9), which outlines the District's ethical and moral responsibility to reduce environmental impacts and ensure sustainability. OE-9 acknowledges climate change as both a current and future threat to District operations and educational equity. In response, this Sustainability Plan addresses OE-9 core directives:

1. Reduce and mitigate the environmental impact of operations.
2. Enhance the resiliency of the District toward future environmental impacts.
3. Prepare students for a sustainable future where they are equipped to understand and address the complex and challenging interrelationships between humans and the environment.
4. Equip staff to appropriately support District efforts related to this policy.

This Plan also aligns to the District's Strategic Framework, which elevates *Integrated Sustainability* as one of four core commitments guiding our future. It establishes a carbon emissions baseline to measure progress and shape priorities, sets a goal for attaining net-zero direct emissions by 2050, and outlines actions the District can take to reduce its environmental footprint, support student health and learning, strengthen resilience and address climate change.

We approach this work with urgency and hope, acknowledging the scale of the challenges we face. By concentrating on efforts with the greatest impact, the District will be able to make measurable progress and build momentum for broader transformation over time. The Plan will serve as the foundation for a roadmap that will identify specific priorities and implementation timelines.

Many thanks to the Sustainability Advisory Committee, along with the many students, staff, parents, and community members who contributed their time, insight, and commitment to creating this plan. Your work exemplifies the collaboration and care that make progress possible. Let's make Lake Washington a model for what a sustainable public education system can achieve. I invite you to explore the Sustainability Plan, learn more about the strategies it outlines, and consider the ways we can each contribute to this collective effort. In doing so, we can build on our shared progress and ensure that sustainability remains a living part of Lake Washington School District's mission and daily practice.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jon Holmen

Superintendent, Lake Washington School District



Sustainability Plan Overview

This Sustainability and Resource Conservation Action Plan outlines how LWSD will build on its strong foundation to meet the Lake Washington School Board's Operational Expectation-9 (OE-9) directives through practical, measurable, and data-informed steps. Consistent with the Strategic Framework, the Sustainability Plan is intended to be iterative, responsive, and evidence-based, promoting cycles of innovation and continuous improvement.

Structure of the Plan

This Plan is organized into five sections, with four recommendation sections aligned to the structure of the Board's OE-9 Sustainability and Resource Conservation Directive. Each recommendation section includes:

- A summary of current district practices
- The current policy and regulatory landscape
- Input from community stakeholders
- Actionable recommendations, accompanied by relative impact ✓ and cost \$ assessments
- An equity analysis
- Budget considerations

For each recommendation, a rating of one to four check marks ✓ and one to four dollar signs \$ indicates the relative impact and cost, respectively, of the recommendation. For example: Complete LED lighting replacement (see box on the right) is high impact and highly cost-effective.



The sections of this plan are as follows:

Section 1: Reducing and Mitigating Environmental Impact of LWSD Operations

- Includes a baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory (conducted in 2025) and recommendations across key operational domains including facilities, capital planning, waste management, food service, transportation, and purchasing.

Section 2: Enhancing Resiliency - Addresses local climate threats and provides recommendations for improving the resilience of District facilities and operations.

Section 3: Preparing Students for a Sustainable Future - Offers recommendations for expanding opportunities to ensure graduates are prepared, resilient, flexible, and skilled in the habits of sustainability.

Section 4: Equipping Staff to Support Sustainability Efforts - Provides recommendations for supporting staff as they develop and deepen their sustainability practices and adapt processes to achieve operational sustainability, educational, and resilience goals.

Section 5: Next Steps - From Planning to Action - Outlines next steps for implementation, anchored by the Sustainability Roadmap, a companion document that establishes priorities, timelines, and accountability.



District Snapshot

55

schools across these communities
Kirkland, Redmond, Sammamish, and
parts of unincorporated King County

30,000+

students enrolled

4.1M+

sq ft of facilities

4,500

employees

2,000

teachers

139

school buses,
including electric

1.5M

meals served
each year

75%+

of schools
have Green
Teams

15

schools generating
635 kW annually:
#1 in WA

**Sustainability and climate
literacy are integrated
into science and CTE
programs across grades.**



"A district-wide sustainability plan ensures that there's a unified plan that makes practices consistent, effective, and easier to implement across schools."

Abbas Shakir, Student, Tesla STEM High School

Local and State Climate Targets

Lake Washington School District operates within a local, regional, and global context of established climate goals. These include long-term commitments to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The table below summarizes these goals:

Climate Goals by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Baseline Year	2030 Target	2040 Target	2050 Target	Additional Notes
Global (IPCC/ UNFCCC/Paris Agreement)	2019	43% reduction	90% reduction	Net-zero CO ₂ emissions	Necessary to limit warming to 1.5°C; Paris Agreement aims for well below 2°C, ideally 1.5°C; nations update commitments via NDCs
Washington State (Climate Commitment Act)	1990	45% reduction	70% reduction	95% reduction (net-zero)	Legally binding targets
King County + 39 Partner Cities	2007	50% reduction	75% reduction	95% reduction	Regional coordination across jurisdictions and sectors
City of Kirkland	Not specified	—	—	80% reduction	ICLEI Framework; interim milestones: 10% by 2012, 20% by 2020
City of Redmond	Not specified	Carbon neutral (municipal operations)	—	Carbon neutral (citywide)	Environmental Sustainability Action Plan; 2020 Climate Emergency Declaration
City of Sammamish	Not specified	50% reduction	—	96% reduction	—

Scientific consensus from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) originally indicated that reaching global net-zero carbon dioxide emissions by around 2050 would be necessary to hold warming to 1.5°C. Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement,¹ nations have pledged to limit global temperature rise to well below 2°C, ideally 1.5°C, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through regularly updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Global temperatures are increasing at an accelerating rate, with 2024 confirmed as the warmest year on record, the highest since measurements began in the 19th century. This record warmth underscores both the urgency and the shared responsibility to act. For Lake Washington School District, it reinforces the importance of reducing emissions, strengthening resilience, and educating students to be capable stewards in a rapidly changing climate.

¹ While the United States recently withdrew from the Paris Agreement (for the second time), the goals of the Paris Agreement provide useful context.

Section 1: Reducing and Mitigating the Environmental Impact of District Operations



Section 1 defines how this Plan addresses the District's operational footprint. It establishes a greenhouse gas (GHG) baseline inventory and outlines the strategies LWSD will use to reduce emissions, conserve resources, and strengthen resilience across all major operational systems. Section 1 includes:

- **GHG Baseline Inventory & Targets:** LWSD's first comprehensive GHG inventory and reduction goals for Scopes 1 and 2, and a partial Scope 3 GHG inventory.
- **Capital Planning and the Built Environment:** Pathways to electrify buildings, reduce embodied carbon, minimize construction waste, and expand solar energy.
- **Waste & Resource Stewardship:** Strategies to reduce food waste, expand composting, transition to reusables, and improve water efficiency.
- **Transportation:** Strategies to electrify the fleet, build charging infrastructure, and expand active transportation initiatives to cut emissions and improve air quality.
- **Purchasing & Upstream Emissions:** Procurement strategies to address the embodied carbon impact of goods, materials, and equipment.

1.A Greenhouse Gas Baseline Inventory & Targets

Understanding Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are the primary drivers of climate change. Addressing these emissions is essential to building a sustainable, resilient future for students.

LWSD's Emissions Context

LWSD has made significant progress through initiatives like district-wide compost collection, green building investments, and a longstanding focus on energy efficiency.

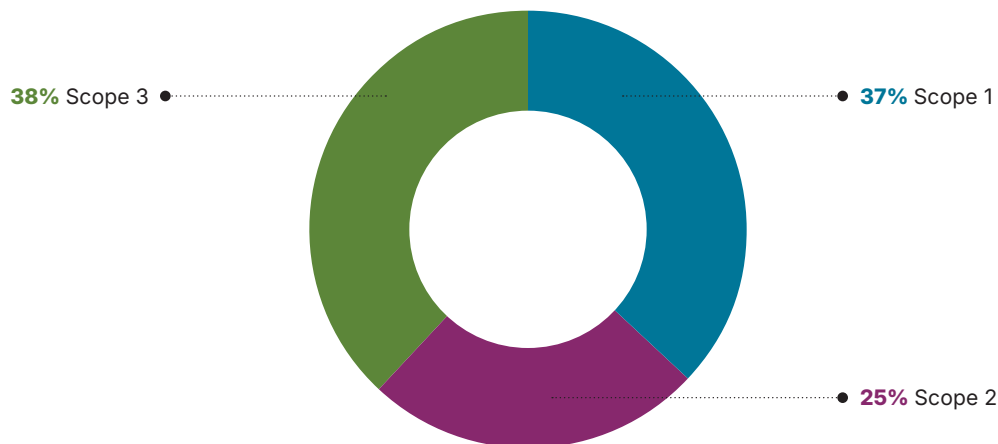
In 2025, LWSD completed its first comprehensive Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas inventory and a partial Scope 3 inventory, establishing the 2022-2023 school year as its baseline year (2023 Baseline). The inventory follows the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and provides a snapshot of emissions of all Scope 1 (direct emissions) and Scope 2 (energy-related emissions) and a partial Scope 3 (indirect emissions).

This foundational analysis provides more than just a metric—it offers critical insight into the sources of emissions, the contributions of different operational areas, and the scale of change required to meet district goals. Most importantly, it grounds the Sustainability Plan in accurate data and science-based strategies.

LWSD 2023 GHG BASELINE EMISSIONS INVENTORY

Category	Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (MTCDE)	Percent of Total
Scope 1	9,584	37%
Scope 2	6,568	25%
Scope 3 (partial)	9,820	38%
Total	25,972	100%

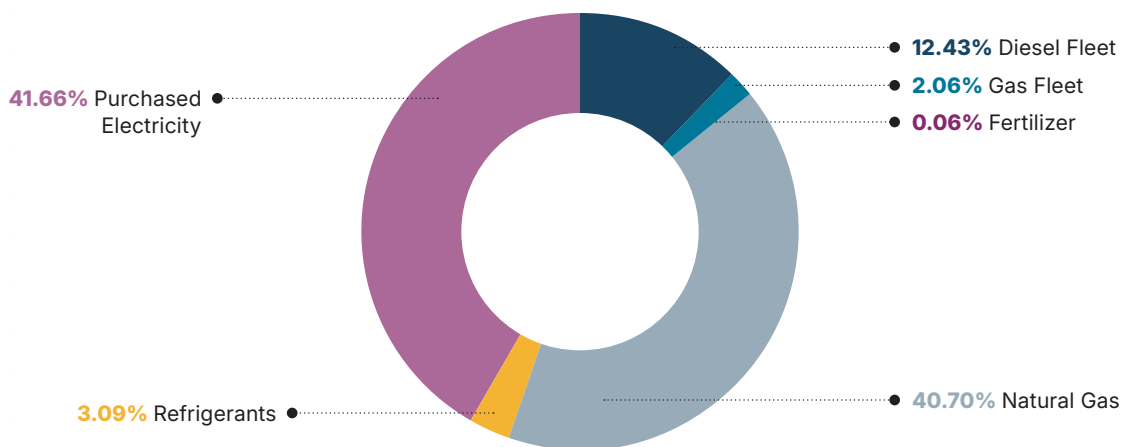
Figure 1: 2023 LWSD Emission by Source



SCOPE 1 AND SCOPE 2 EMISSIONS SUMMARY

Scope	Description	2023 Emission (MTCDE)	Share of Scope 1 & 2 Inventory	Key Insights
1	Direct emissions from natural-gas boilers, water heaters, and District-owned vehicles (buses, fleet trucks)	9,584	59.3%	Natural-gas heating and vehicle fuel use drive the largest portion of Scope 1 emissions.
2	Indirect emissions from purchased electricity for buildings and operations	6,568	40.7%	Electricity use accounts for most Scope 2 emissions; Washington's grid is significantly cleaner than most; continued efficiency gains remain critical.
Subtotal (Scopes 1+2)		16,152	100%	

Figure 2: 2023 Scope 1 & 2 Emissions by Source



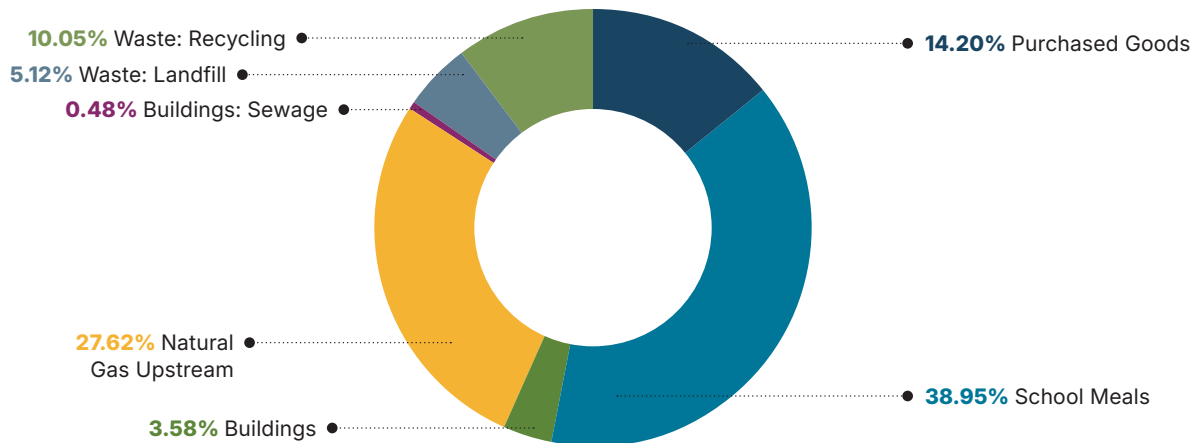
“[The district should] create an aggressive greenhouse gas reduction plan for district facilities and operations. This is the primary sustainability challenge of our time.”

District Sustainability Advisory Committee Member

SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS SUMMARY

Scope	Description	2023 Emission (MTCDE)	Share of Total Inventory	Key Insights
3 (partial)	Food, purchased goods (basic supplies & IT equipment), waste	9,820	37.8%	As in most organizations, Scope 3 represents the largest share of total emissions. LWSD's baseline inventory captured common items such as waste and food, and select high-volume purchased materials—paper and basic IT equipment.

Figure 3: 2023 Scope 3 Emissions by Source



Key Insights

- **Measurement Milestone:** Completing this first inventory marks a major step; few school districts measure Scope 3 emissions; LWSD is among early leaders to do so.
- **Scope 3 Emissions:** Scope 3 typically accounts for the majority of any organization's carbon footprint. Additional indirect sources—such as construction materials, capital goods, and operational supplies—have not yet been quantified.

"I'd love to see more focus on reducing waste, especially paper, and improving recycling and composting systems...These changes might seem small, but they add up—and they show students that our actions matter."

Riddhima Das, Student, Lake Washington High School



SCOPE 1 & 2 EMISSION REDUCTION GOAL

Achieve Net-Zero Direct Emissions by 2050

This goal—aligned with state and regional climate frameworks—sets a clear, science-based benchmark for emissions reductions. It prioritizes direct action through energy efficiency, building electrification, renewable energy, and cleaner transportation, while recognizing the possibility of residual emissions that require offsetting. This target applies to Scope 1 and 2 sources, which LWSD can directly influence through building energy improvements, vehicle electrification, and clean-energy transitions. LWSD will continue to evaluate opportunities to accelerate this timeline as technology and funding options evolve.

PATH TO SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS REDUCTION

Expand Scope 3 inventory to include additional sources over time.

The District will take a phased approach. By 2027, the District will expand its inventory to include additional indirect categories such as commuting, construction materials, and other operational items. By 2030, LWSD will use this expanded dataset to establish specific Scope 3 reduction targets. This approach ensures that future commitments are data-driven, transparent, and science-based.

By establishing a robust emissions baseline and aligning goals with broader climate frameworks, the District is building a clear foundation for accountability, continuous improvement, and long-term operational resilience.

REGIONAL ELECTRICITY GRID

Under the Clean Energy Transformation Act, Washington has committed to a 100% clean electricity grid by 2045, placing it among the top states nationwide for climate ambition. This transition will progressively reduce LWSD's Scope 2 emissions as the grid becomes fully carbon-free.

FUTURE INVENTORIES

LWSD will update its GHG inventory periodically to track progress, incorporate additional Scope 3 categories, and refine strategies for continuous improvement.

1.B Capital Planning and the Built Environment

LWSD's buildings represent both a major source of emissions and one of the District's greatest opportunities for improvement. Through ongoing system replacements, efficiency upgrades, and modernizations, LWSD has already laid important groundwork for more sustainable operations. Building on these efforts, the next phase of capital planning will focus on reducing fossil fuel dependence, expanding clean energy use, and improving the performance and resilience of school facilities across the District.

CURRENT DISTRICT PRACTICES

Lake Washington School District has increasingly prioritized sustainability through its capital planning and operational practices. Its multi-phase Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and other ongoing operational efforts serve as a roadmap for building modernization, new school construction, and systems upgrades. Over the past two decades, this plan has driven one of the most comprehensive K-12 modernization initiatives in the region, ensuring that nearly all schools meet or exceed current building energy performance standards.

The District's building portfolio features a range of high-performance systems—including ground- and air-sourced heat pumps, advanced building automation, and daylighting strategies—supported by long-standing districtwide energy benchmarking and measurable reductions in building energy use intensity (EUI). Modernized schools across LWSD rank among the more energy-efficient learning environments in the country, using 20–30% less energy than the typical U.S. K–12 school when based on their EUI. These gains are also reinforced by an active Resource Conservation Management (RCM) program and a [public-facing energy dashboard](#) that provides transparency into site-level energy consumption. Ongoing investments in efficiency upgrades, such as LED retrofits and system commissioning, continue to deliver cost savings and emissions reductions.



CURRENT POLICY LANDSCAPE

The following table summarizes key state energy and building performance policies that shape LWSD's facility planning and sustainability efforts.

Regulation	Legal Citation	Requirements	Applicability	Key Insights
Clean Buildings Act (CBA)	RCW 19.27A.210	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy benchmarking • Detailed O&M plans • Corrective measures if energy use exceeds state thresholds 	Public buildings over 50,000 sq ft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark all large campuses • Implement site-specific energy management plans • Invest in proactive retrofits to avoid penalties and meet compliance timelines
Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol (WSSP)	State-required standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceed baseline energy code performance by at least 10% • Energy modeling • High-performance building envelopes • Indoor air quality measures 	All OSPI-funded school construction projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate WSSP principles into early design • Include requirements in contractor scopes • Integrate into project reviews • Consistently exceed minimum requirements
Washington State Energy Code (WSEC) – 2031 Update	Effective 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% reduction in annual net energy consumption compared to 2006 levels 	New buildings (starting 2031)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future-proofing current projects • Incorporate ground-sourced and air-sourced heat pumps • Install advanced controls • Implement deep envelope upgrades • Reduce future operational costs

Embodied Carbon Reporting

In addition to the policies currently in place, newly proposed state legislation may require public-sector building designers to report the embodied carbon in structural materials, supporting the state's 2050 net-zero goal. To prepare, the District intends to pilot embodied carbon measurement systems and update procurement protocols to require Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) for key materials. Collectively, these regulations establish the foundation for LWSD's building performance strategy and ensure that future projects align with state energy and carbon reduction goals.

COMMUNITY INPUT & FEEDBACK

Standing bodies such as the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) and Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) bring together students, staff, families, civic leaders, and community partners to review plans, inform priorities, and shape LWSD's long-term sustainability and infrastructure strategies. Across these forums—and through broader community engagement efforts—stakeholders consistently emphasize the importance of visible, ongoing progress on climate action.

Feedback often centers on several recurring themes: the need to accelerate decarbonization projects, expand renewable energy generation—particularly solar, and assess and reduce embodied carbon in capital planning. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of embedding sustainability in daily operations and decision-making and building staff capacity to support long-term implementation. Many encouraged a phased, practical approach—focusing first on actions with the greatest environmental and educational impact, while laying the groundwork for sustained progress over time.

Community members voiced both urgency and practicality: a shared expectation that LWSD act boldly on sustainability while ensuring that each step is realistic, well-supported, and contributes to lasting institutional change.

“I hope my school and district focus on actions that improve energy efficiency in buildings through expanding solar energy, reducing waste through better recycling and composting programs, and increasing education about sustainability.”

Diyaa Thoppay, Student, Tesla STEM High School



Recommendations

1. Transition to Fossil Fuel-Free Building Operations (excluding emergency backup systems)



- Design all new buildings and major modernizations initiated after the current Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) concludes in 2031 to operate without fossil fuel systems for daily operations. Ensure infrastructure can accommodate backup generators where required for emergency resilience.
- Prioritize electrification of existing buildings by replacing gas-based HVAC and water-heating systems with electric alternatives—such as ground- or air-source heat pumps—at end-of-life, during scheduled capital upgrades, or earlier where feasible and cost-effective. When replacing component systems such as individual water heaters, select non-gas options equipped with demand-response capability where feasible, and ensure new HVAC systems are compatible with future grid-interactive controls.
- Publish a phased decarbonization plan that eliminates natural gas use for water heating and space conditioning.
- Evaluate and monitor advances in battery storage and microgrid resilience to replace or supplement fossil-based backup generation as technology and funding allow.
- Continue implementing energy efficiency upgrades across existing buildings such as advanced lighting, controls, insulation, and HVAC optimization prioritized by building age, condition and performance.

Why this matters

Transitioning away from fossil fuels in building operations is the most impactful step LWSD can take to reduce its direct greenhouse gas emissions. This shift supports healthier indoor environments for students and staff by eliminating combustion-related air pollutants and positions LWSD to meet or exceed evolving building performance standards while enhancing long-term resilience. By designing new buildings to operate without fossil fuels for daily use and planning for strategic retrofits of existing facilities, LWSD can lead by example—advancing climate responsibility and community well-being.

2. Monitor and Reduce Embodied Carbon in Building Materials



- Conduct a pilot baseline assessment of embodied carbon for the next major modernization projects.
- Develop and implement embodied carbon reduction protocols for all new construction and major modernization projects. These protocols should guide material selection, set contractor reporting requirements, and include embodied carbon as a factor in contractor evaluation.
- Following completion of the pilot, establish a districtwide embodied-carbon baseline and adopt a framework for benchmarking performance, setting reduction targets, and tracking progress in future capital planning cycles.

Why this matters

Embodied carbon—the emissions associated with the extraction, manufacturing, and installation of building materials—can represent up to half of a building’s total lifetime carbon footprint. Unlike operational emissions, which can decrease over time through efficiency upgrades, embodied carbon is locked in at the moment of construction, making material choices during design and procurement critical climate decisions.

As LWSD continues to modernize and build new facilities, integrating embodied carbon considerations into capital planning ensures each project contributes to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future and maximizes the long-term impact of District investments.

3. Reduce Construction and Demolition Waste



- Establish a construction and demolition (C&D) waste diversion baseline by tracking material recovery from two major modernization projects. Include key material categories such as concrete, metals, wood, fixtures, and surplus equipment.
- Update construction specifications and general contractor scopes of work to include waste diversion requirements, salvage plans, and reporting protocols. Evaluate general contractors based on their ability to meet or exceed diversion and reuse targets.
- Upon establishing a baseline, adopt a districtwide goal to divert at least 75% of construction and demolition (C&D) waste from landfills—consistent with diversion targets recommended by the Washington State Department of Ecology, King County, and LEED. Strategies may include on-site concrete reuse, deconstruction-based wood salvage, and donation or resale of surplus materials and furnishings.
- Incorporate circular design principles into project planning, including design-for-disassembly methods and material reuse strategies that extend the lifecycle of building components.

Why this matters

Construction and demolition generate large volumes of waste—much of which is recyclable, reusable, or recoverable. When managed effectively, diverting these materials from landfills conserves natural resources, lowers upstream emissions by reducing demand for virgin materials, and can decrease disposal costs.

With strong local infrastructure for sorting, recycling, and salvage, LWSD is well-positioned to elevate waste diversion in its construction and modernization practices. Doing so reinforces the District’s commitment to sustainability, fiscal responsibility, and environmental education and could offer students meaningful exposure to material life cycles, reuse, and circular economy principles.



4. Invest in Solar Energy Generation (Rooftop + Community-Based)



- Expand the District's rooftop solar generation by investing in additional solar capacity to meet future offset needs and support long-term decarbonization. Renewable generation will be key to offsetting residual emissions, reducing emissions, and managing long-term energy costs. Focus new installations on resilience hubs and solar-ready schools, with equitable distribution across the District.
- Develop at least 1MW of community solar capacity on underutilized and properly zoned District-owned land (e.g. Parcels 90 and 91) through third-party partnerships. Explore participation models that allow LWSD families to benefit directly from shared solar generation.
- Explore Net Metering Partnership with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to maximize the long-term value of onsite solar generation. Acting promptly is essential, as the state's net-metering framework is subject to change and could become less favorable.

Why this matters

Investing in solar energy generation is an effective near-term strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and managing long-term energy costs. Solar installations would allow the District to offset electricity-related emissions, stabilize utility costs, and lessen reliance on fossil-fueled grid power. As part of a comprehensive decarbonization strategy, solar also offers a key mechanism to address residual emissions—those that remain after deep efficiency and electrification efforts—helping LWSD meet its long-term net-zero direct emissions goal. Embedded within this Sustainability Plan are recommended pathways to finance continued expansion—aligning future capital improvements, bond measures, and potential clean-energy programs to ensure implementation is financially sustainable.

Although Washington's grid is projected to transition toward 100 percent clean electricity by 2045, that shift is nearly two decades away. Acting now enables LWSD to capture existing net-metering benefits, reduce future exposure to energy price volatility, and strengthen the District's capacity to provide reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy for its schools.

5. Include a GHG Reduction and Climate Action Component in the District's Next Funding Measure



- Develop and advance a GHG Reduction Funding Measure (construction levy, bond, or another funding measure) to generate the capital required to implement LWSD's decarbonization priorities—replacing fossil-fueled systems, expanding solar generation, and improving building performance across all schools. Work with the School Board and community partners to design the measure's structure, scope, and accountability framework.
- Create a comprehensive project list that links proposed investments to measurable environmental, financial, and educational outcomes.
- Engage staff, students, families, community partners, the School Board, and local governments to build shared understanding of the District's decarbonization goals, ensure transparency around potential investments and benefits, and define the scope and timing needed for ballot readiness within the broader capital planning framework.

Why this matters

Achieving deep, districtwide greenhouse gas reductions will require sustained investment beyond existing capital and maintenance budgets. A dedicated GHG Reduction and Climate Action Funding Measure would provide the resources and accountability framework needed to implement the District's decarbonization priorities—transitioning school facilities to clean energy, improving efficiency, and supporting long-term cost stability.

A dedicated public funding measure would dramatically accelerate LWSD's ability to cut greenhouse gas emissions across its portfolio. By securing predictable funding through a transparent, community-backed process, LWSD can advance its GHG reduction goals faster and more efficiently.

EQUITY ANALYSIS

LWSD's commitment to sustainability includes ensuring that its investments also advance equity and climate resilience. The following principles can help guide how projects are planned and prioritized across the District.

- **Distribute benefits fairly across campuses:** Cleaner air, energy efficiency, and access to renewable energy should extend to all schools. Project sequencing should reflect building conditions, environmental burdens, and educational opportunity.
- **Support equitable vendor participation:** As sustainability requirements such as embodied-carbon limits or EPD documentation become standard, provide clear guidance and sufficient lead time for all contractors, including smaller and minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBs), to participate competitively.
- **Consider the downstream impacts of the waste stream:** Construction or demolition materials can create environmental burdens for downstream communities when discarded. Expanding salvage, donation, and circular design practices reduces these impacts and extends material life.
- **Integrate educational and community value:** Sustainability projects create opportunities for environmental learning. Where possible, consider how capital improvements can support STEM education, career pathways, or resilience goals that extend beyond the school day.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

As LWSD continues to integrate sustainability into its long-term planning, it must navigate a complex set of financial decisions. Not all climate strategies are equal in cost, impact, or timing—some deliver substantial emissions reductions per dollar spent, while others lay the groundwork for long-term goals such as net-zero direct emissions. The following insights can help shape investment priorities:

- **Continue to prioritize energy efficiency as the most cost-effective starting point:** Projects that reduce energy demand—such as advanced lighting retrofits, controls upgrades, and building envelope improvements—often have relatively low costs and short payback periods.
- **Expand ground-source heat pump adoption where feasible:** While capital-intensive, these systems deliver strong long-term savings and significant emissions reductions—especially when paired with Washington’s increasingly clean grid. Federal tax incentives currently offset up to 30% on installation cost, making this a compelling opportunity to reduce both carbon and lifetime operating costs.
- **Invest in renewable energy as a cornerstone of a net-zero direct emissions future:** Solar energy remains one of the most visible and scalable strategies for net-zero operations. Although the financial payback may be slower with the end of certain federal programs, solar offsets electrical grid use, reduces reliance on fossil fuels, and demonstrates climate leadership across the community. By expanding both rooftop and community-based solar now, the District may be able to capitalize on current net metering and incentive structures that may wane.
- **Evaluate investments based on lifecycle value—not initial cost:** High-performance systems and low-emission infrastructure often cost more upfront but deliver lasting returns through reduced utilities and maintenance expenses. A total cost of ownership approach supports more resilient financial and environmental decision-making.
- **Design for resilience, not only efficiency:** Resilient systems—such as battery storage, passive ventilation, and backup capacity—enable schools to remain operational during grid outages, wildfire smoke, or extreme heat. These investments protect student health and community well-being, particularly in more climate-vulnerable neighborhoods.

“I hope that renovations of schools include infrastructure aimed towards reducing energy emissions such as solar power. Having a districtwide sustainability plan that includes these aspects can help cut energy costs and foster sustainable practices within the school community.”

Nandini Raheja, Student, Eastlake High School

1.C Waste Reduction and Resource Stewardship

Waste touches every part of the school day—from purchasing and packaging to disposal and recovery—and offers a powerful opportunity to align daily practices with long-term climate goals. Waste reduction, particularly in food service, reduces emissions at every stage:

- **Upstream Waste:** Avoiding food waste prevents emissions from agriculture, processing, transport, and packaging—where most climate impact occurs.
- **Downstream Waste:** Diverting organics from landfills prevents methane emissions, a greenhouse gas that can be more than 80 times as potent as carbon dioxide.
- **System-wide Waste:** Reducing single-use packaging, improving procurement, and sourcing food locally lower embedded carbon support regional resilience.

CURRENT DISTRICT PRACTICES

LWSD has taken meaningful steps to improve sustainability in food service operations, focusing on waste reduction, standardization, and student engagement. The District provides composting access across all schools, participates in the King County Green Schools Program, and regularly conducts share tables, school-based waste audits and education.

In 2023 the District also collaborated with the Cities of Kirkland and Redmond, King County staff, and numerous community stakeholders to create the *Food Service Sustainability Roadmap* (FSSR)—a districtwide, multi-year plan that formalized and expanded sustainable practices. The FSSR outlines five key goals:

1. Coordinating food sustainability efforts
2. Standardizing food protocols
3. Reducing food waste; reducing single-use items
4. Expanding education, training, and monitoring
5. Strengthening tracking and accountability

Since adopting the Roadmap, LWSD has resumed food donation partnerships, integrated composting into custodial and food service contracts, and begun tracking diversion progress—advancing both compliance requirements and community expectations.

CURRENT POLICY LANDSCAPE

LWSD's waste management practices are shaped by a growing set of state and local policies aimed at reducing landfill contributions, improving material recovery, and cutting emissions from organic and solid waste streams. The most comprehensive mandate comes from the **Washington State Organics Management Law (HB 1799, 2022 and 2024)** and complementary local policies.

Washington State Organics Management Law (HB 1799, 2022 and 2024)

- Requires all businesses—including school districts generating more than four cubic yards of waste per week—to divert organic waste from landfills by 2026.
- Establishes statewide goals of 75% reduction in organic landfill contribution by 2030 and a 20% decrease in edible food waste by 2025.

Complementary local policies include:

- King County and partner cities are expanding rules on recycling, construction and demolition (C&D) debris, and packaging waste.
- Updated standards address contamination limits, sorting, and material reuse—part of a broader regional shift toward circular material systems and reduced landfill dependence.

Together, these policies define the framework within which LWSD manages solid waste, food systems, and material recovery across both daily operations and long-term capital projects.

COMMUNITY INPUT & FEEDBACK

Students, staff, parents, and local partners have been central to shaping LWSD's food service sustainability agenda. Their input helped guide the creation of the FSSR and continues to inform and drive progress through school Green Teams, PTSA Sustainability Committees, the District's Sustainability Advisory Committee, and more public forums.

Student-led waste audits and campaigns for plastic-free lunchrooms reflect strong demand for reusable serviceware, cleaner waste sorting systems, and visible environmental responsibility in cafeterias.

Operational and food service staff have also provided critical feedback on practical challenges such as limited space for dishwashing equipment, staff capacity for new sorting routines, and managing composting during high-volume lunch periods. Their input has helped prioritize school-specific timelines, prioritize infrastructure investment, and design systems that work within school operations.

Together, these perspectives highlight both the momentum behind LWSD's waste-reduction initiatives and the practical considerations that influence how they are implemented across schools.



Recommendations

1. Transition to Reusable and Compostable Food Tableware and Serviceware



- Implement reusable trays and flatware (utensils) at all elementary schools.
- Implement reusable flatware in all secondary schools with existing dishwashing capacity.
- Expand secondary school reusable tableware (utensils, plus plates, bowls, and cups) pilots with a goal of 100% reusable servingware by the 2030 school year.
- Where reusables are not yet feasible, expand the use of third-party certified compostable alternatives (e.g., BPI-certified) that are compatible with LWSD's commercial composting provider.
- Develop a plan to reduce single-use packaging by 50% by the 2030 school year.
- Integrate sustainable tableware and serviceware standards into vendor contracts and RFPs on an ongoing basis.

Why this matters

Reducing reliance on single-use plastics and transitioning to reusable food tableware and serviceware directly supports LWSD's compliance with Washington's Organics Management Law (HB 1799). It also reduces emissions from manufacturing and transport, reduces landfill and incineration waste, and can decrease long-term procurement costs. Importantly, it reflects strong student advocacy for waste reduction and high food service and waste standards.

2. Strengthen and Standardize Organics Collection



- Ensure every school has a fully supported composting system—including organics bins, clear labeled sorting stations, and custodial integration—by the 2026–2027 school year.
- Conduct a districtwide signage audit to ensure that signage and bin labeling is consistent, clear, and aligned with hauler requirements.
- Launch a composting literacy campaign to build student and staff understanding of what's compostable, why contamination matters, and where compost goes after collection.
- Integrate composting and waste sorting into cafeteria and custodial onboarding and annual training.
- Collaborate with local waste haulers to review contamination data, refine collection protocols, and improve outcomes.
- Continue using waste-sensor data to monitor volumes, identify inefficiencies, and support data-driven waste reduction.

Why this matters

When organic materials end up in landfills, they generate methane, a greenhouse gas that can be over 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Diverting food scraps and compostable items helps LWSD meet state requirements and demonstrates daily climate action across campuses. Strengthening organics collection also builds practical environmental literacy, helping students and staff develop lifelong sustainability habits.

3. Expand Food Waste Prevention and Edible Food Recovery



- Implement share tables and donation protocols at all elementary schools to safely redistribute unused food.
- Establish and expand formalize food donation partnerships with local nonprofits to recover surplus food from kitchens, pantries, and events, starting with 2–3 pilot schools and scaling over time.

Why this matters

Reducing edible food waste cuts greenhouse gas emissions, conserves resources, and helps address food insecurity. These actions align with Washington's Organics Management Law (HB 1799) targets for food recovery and reflect the District's broader commitment to environmental stewardship and community well-being.

4. Promote Water Efficiency and Sustainable Water Use



- Retrofit water fixtures and irrigation systems with high-efficiency models during modernization and maintenance cycles, prioritizing schools with older infrastructure.
- Integrate native and drought-tolerant landscaping at all new or major renovation projects to reduce irrigation demand and support local ecosystems.
- Incorporate stormwater education and water literacy into campus design and student learning opportunities—linking green infrastructure (e.g., rain gardens, bioswales) with real-world sustainability education.

Why This Matters

Water conservation supports LWSD's broader resource stewardship and energy efficiency goals. Even in a water-abundant region, efficient use lowers utility costs, saves energy used for water heating and treatment, and protects regional ecosystems from runoff and overuse.

EQUITY ANALYSIS

Implementation of composting and food waste reduction programs will naturally vary across a system as large as LWSD. Factors such as staffing capacity, leadership and volunteer transitions, budgets and space constraints can influence consistency from one school to another. Rather than expecting uniform implementation, LWSD can take an adaptive approach—providing targeted support, training, and infrastructure where it is most needed. A guiding question might be: What systems and resources are required to ensure that composting and food waste reduction practices succeed in every school, every year?

Food waste also carries equity implications. Each item of edible food discarded is a missed opportunity to support community well-being. While broader food system change lies beyond LWSD's direct control, the District can strengthen donation partnerships and collaborate with organizations such as the Urban School Food Alliance or a food justice organization like Northwest Harvest to connect school operations with regional food recovery efforts.



BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- **Proven Cost Savings:** Research shows that transitioning to reusable systems is one of the most cost-effective sustainability investments available to school districts. Studies consistently find that reusable trays and flatware cost less over time than single-use alternatives—reducing purchasing expenses while cutting waste and improving operations.
- **Prioritize Low-cost, High-Impact Strategies:** Many waste-related strategies deliver substantial climate benefits at minimal cost, especially compared to capital-intensive upgrades such as electrification or new construction.
- **Targeted Investment and Planning:** While cost-effective overall, moving to a consistently low-waste, reusable service model will require targeted investments and thoughtful planning. Schools differ in kitchen layouts, dishwashing capacity, staffing levels, and staffing roles and responsibilities—all of which influence how easily reusable systems can be integrated into daily routines.
- **Long-term Financial and Compliance Benefits:** Upfront costs—such as dishwashing equipment, storage space, training, and signage—should be viewed as short-term investments that yield long-term savings through reduced purchasing, lower hauling costs, and smoother operations, while also mitigating compliance risks and avoiding costly retrofits or corrective measures.

“I hope LWSD focuses on building practical waste reduction strategies, including composting infrastructure, improved recycling education, and partnerships with waste management organizations.”

Abbas Shakir, Student, Tesla STEM High School

1.D Transportation

From daily bus rides to walking and biking routes, transportation shapes the experience of students and families across the District. Transitioning to cleaner vehicles, improving route efficiency, and supporting safe, low-emission commuting options can make every journey to school part of LWSD's broader commitment to health, sustainability, and community impact.

CURRENT DISTRICT PRACTICES

LWSD has made steady progress in reducing emissions and improving the efficiency of its fleet operations. With support from a Washington Department of Ecology grant, the District purchased 16 low-emission buses in 2018 and 32 more since, replacing older diesel models and reducing overall fuel use and tailpipe pollution. The remaining fleet was retrofitted with particulate exhaust filtration to further minimize emissions. LWSD also maintains a 100% route-efficiency rating from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and has invested in GPS-based route analysis and anti-idling training for all drivers—steps that have significantly improved operational performance and reduced fuel consumption.

The District continues to monitor advances in electric vehicle technology and evolving state and federal incentive programs to assess future opportunities for bus and fleet electrification. In 2024, LWSD secured funding through the EPA Clean School Bus Program to purchase four electric school buses—its first step toward a lower-emission fleet. The District also remains attentive to emerging best practices in fleet management, including route optimization, active transportation initiatives, and integration of clean-fuel or electric maintenance equipment where feasible. Additionally, current building codes require the integration of EV charging infrastructure which supports the possible adoption of a more electrified fleet.

At the school level, commuting patterns vary widely across the District. Some campuses serve primarily bus riders, while others see most students arrive by car, bicycle, or on foot. Recognizing this diversity, students, with the support of local organizations, have begun conducting commuting audits to better understand these patterns and identify opportunities to expand safe-routes-to-school programs, carpooling options, and other low-emission travel alternatives. These insights can help the District align transportation planning with both operational efficiency and community well-being.

CURRENT POLICY LANDSCAPE

State and regional policies continue to shape LWSD's approach to clean transportation and fleet planning.

- **State Grants and Incentives:** Through the Departments of Ecology and Commerce, Washington has distributed more than \$35 million to support school district fleet electrification and charging infrastructure. These competitive programs prioritize high-need districts but are open to all. LWSD monitors new funding rounds and applies when eligible to advance its fleet transition goals.
- **EV Infrastructure Requirements:** The 2021 Washington State Energy Code requires new school and major modernizations to include EV-capable or EV-ready infrastructure, with conduit and electrical capacity installed to support future EV chargers. LWSD designs projects to meet these requirements and works with local utilities to assess site capacity and available incentives.
- **Regional Transportation Mode Shift:** King County's *Strategic Climate Action Plan* identifies transportation as the region's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions and targets an 80% reduction by 2050. While LWSD is not formally required to meet commute reduction mandates, these regional goals inform planning for cleaner fleet operations, low-emission travel options.

COMMUNITY INPUT & FEEDBACK

Community members consistently express interest in reducing the environmental and health impacts of school-related transportation. A central concern is the high volume of individual car trips to and from school, which contribute to congestion, air pollution, and higher greenhouse gas emissions. Many recognize that expanding safe, convenient alternatives—such as walking, biking, carpooling, or transit—could provide significant environmental and community benefits.

Families and staff have also voiced concern about prolonged exposure to vehicle emission and particulate matter for students riding buses, especially those traveling longer distances because of program placement or limited transportation alternatives. These concerns highlight both environmental and equity considerations within the District's transportation system.

Overall, stakeholders support a transition toward cleaner, more efficient transportation options. Feedback underscores the importance of a phased, practical approach aligned with vehicle replacement cycles, infrastructure readiness, and available funding—ensuring that progress is both achievable and sustainable over time.

Recommendations

1. Transition the Support and Maintenance Fleet to Electric Vehicles and begin to transition to Electrified Grounds Equipment



- Develop and execute a five-year transition plan to electrify the District's maintenance and service fleet, targeting full conversion.
- Replace vehicles as they reach end-of-life or lease completion, prioritizing passenger cars first, followed by light-duty trucks and other vehicles as market availability expands.
- Use the newly acquired operations facility as the primary charging hub, installing EV chargers to support both fleet and staff use.
- Pilot electric grounds equipment (mowers, blowers, trimmers) and expand adoption as performance improves.

Why this matters

Transitioning the support and maintenance fleet to electric vehicles is one of the most achievable and cost-effective steps LWSD can take to reduce emissions and operating costs. Electric models for passenger and light-duty vehicles are increasingly available and deliver immediate benefits—lower fuel and maintenance costs, quieter operation, and zero onsite emissions.

However, fleet electrification requires thoughtful coordination with facility planning and charging infrastructure investments. As outlined in the forthcoming EV infrastructure goals, charging capacity at the new operations site will be essential to scaling this transition. By aligning vehicle replacements with infrastructure development and funding opportunities, LWSD can execute a realistic, cost-efficient transition that strengthens both environmental and operational performance.

2. Develop a Strategy to Transition to an Electric School Bus Fleet



- Develop and phase in, over three to five years, a strategy to move to replacing retired internal combustion engine buses with electric or zero-emission models as current fleet buses reach the end of their service life.
- Design all new EV charging infrastructure to be bus-compatible and scalable for further expansion.
- Continue pursuing funding opportunities for school bus fleet transition.

Why this matters

While LWSD's fleet already performs above national average—with 48 low-emission buses and retrofitted filtration systems—the transition to an all-electric fleet represents the next major opportunity to cut emissions, improve air quality, and stabilize long-term operating costs. The EV transition may move gradually in the near term as markets, incentives, and tariffs evolve, but electrification is certain to continue over time. Careful planning and monitoring will help LWSD capture funding opportunities and optimize timing, while emerging vehicle-to-building (V2B) technology could eventually enable electric buses to serve as backup power and energy-management assets for schools.

3. Develop EV Charging Infrastructure



- Conduct a detailed electrical and site assessment of the newly acquired operations facility to determine the available capacity, optimal charger locations, and infrastructure needs for phased expansion.
- Install EV chargers to support near-term electrification of support and maintenance vehicles. Design conduit and electrical systems to be bus-compatible, enabling future expansion without costly retrofits.
- Incorporate bi-directional charging capability (V2B/V2G) where feasible to strengthen energy resilience and allow for future load management strategies.

Why this matters

Purpose-built charging infrastructure is essential for a reliable and cost-effective EV transition. Investing early—especially at the new operations facility—positions LWSD to scale electrification efficiently, minimize long-term retrofit costs, and align charging capacity with vehicle replacement cycles. This proactive approach lays the groundwork for future clean transportation technologies while maintaining operational continuity.

“Switching to zero-emission vehicles is a substantive change to reduce CO2 emissions.”

District Sustainability Advisory Committee Member

4. Pursue a Dedicated Funding Measure for Bus Fleet Electrification



- Pursue a transportation-specific funding measure—such as a dedicated transportation levy—to purchase electric school buses and build out corresponding depot-scale charging infrastructure.
- Phase bus replacements strategically based on vehicle age, condition, and service life, using new funding to offset the incremental cost difference between electric, as opposed to internal combustion engine, replacement buses.
- Fully deploy telematics software to monitor idling, mileage, and route efficiency, and vehicle performance—creating a data foundation to track cost savings and emissions reductions.
- Integrate emissions and routing impact assessments into all major operational decisions—such as bell schedule changes, school siting, or grade configuration shifts.

Why this matters

Phasing electric bus purchases according to natural vehicle replacement cycles allows LWSD to modernize its fleet responsibly—managing costs while reducing emissions and improving air quality. A dedicated transportation funding measure would provide the capital needed to offset the higher upfront cost of electric buses and charging infrastructure without diverting funds from other priorities. Importantly, it would also make the transition feasible even if external grant programs expire, ensuring LWSD can sustain progress independent of shifting incentives. Combined with data-driven routing and telematics, this approach advances fleet efficiency, enhances student health, and supports compliance with state clean transportation goals.

5. Expand Active and Shared Transportation



- Conduct a districtwide commuting study to assess staff and student travel patterns—starting with secondary students, and quantify estimated Scope 3 commuter emissions.
- Partner with PTSA leaders, school-based Green Teams, local sustainability organizations, and municipalities to launch walk, bike, and carpool programs at 3–5 schools.
- Use pilot results to create a scalable districtwide Active and Shared Travel Toolkit, with communication templates, tracking tools, and incentive strategies to scale successful approaches.

Why this matters

Reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips improves student health, eases congestion, and lowers neighborhood emissions while reinforcing lifelong sustainable travel habits. Many schools and student groups are already advancing this work through grassroots initiatives; District support can amplify and connect these efforts. Continued partnership with local and regional organizations ensures that LWSD's commuting strategies are data-informed, community-driven, and aligned with broader regional mobility and climate goals.

EQUITY ANALYSIS

Reducing transportation-related emissions delivers significant environmental and health benefits, particularly for students and staff who spend time on school buses or near busy roadways. Transitioning to cleaner vehicles and reducing localized air pollution improves air quality across all communities—especially those already facing higher exposure to traffic emissions. These efforts advance both sustainability and equity by protecting student health and supporting cleaner, healthier learning environments.

As the District continues to evolve its transportation systems, equity analysis should inform all major decisions—including bell schedule adjustments, route optimization, and bus stop placement—to prevent disproportionate impacts on specific student groups or neighborhoods. Expectations for walking or biking should reflect local infrastructure and safety realities, with community input and disaggregated data guiding all transportation-related planning.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

In response to the federal rollback of the *Clean School Bus Program*, LWSD's transportation strategy emphasizes lower-cost, high-impact decarbonization opportunities with a realistic fiscal outlook:

- **Dedicated Funding Measure:** Pursuing a transportation-specific levy or other funding mechanism may be essential in light of expiring federal clean transportation programs to finance electric bus purchases and depot charging infrastructure, allowing the District to advance fleet electrification even as external grant programs decline.
- **Market Outlook:** Electric school buses currently cost roughly \$350,000 to \$450,000 per unit, reflecting prices shaped by expiring federal incentives. Market conditions remain uncertain as tax credits and tariffs evolve, making near-term financial planning especially important.
- **Cost Modeling and Savings Reinvestment:** Using total-cost-of-ownership analysis and emissions tracking in capital planning will help LWSD align fiscal and climate goals. Fuel and maintenance savings from electrification can be reinvested in future sustainability initiatives.
- **Strategic Procurement:** Leveraging cooperative purchasing, phased replacement schedules, and alignment with state or utility incentive programs, can further reduce upfront costs and lower long-term financial risk.





1.E Purchasing and Upstream Emissions

For most large organizations, upstream or “Scope 3” emissions make up the largest share of total climate impact. These emissions occur before goods and services ever reach District campuses—embedded in the production, packaging, and transport of materials that sustain daily operations. While LWSD has limited direct control over these emissions, it can influence them through thoughtful procurement, clear vendor expectations, and long-term purchasing strategies that emphasize durability, efficiency, and sustainability.

CURRENT DISTRICT PRACTICES

LWSD’s centralized purchasing system supports District operations across facilities, classrooms, nutrition services, and technology. In recent years, sustainability considerations have increasingly shaped procurement decisions—particularly in IT equipment, custodial and food services, and outdoor operations. Early steps include exploring Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) for select materials, prioritizing repairability and product lifespan in technology purchases, and working with operations and capital teams to reduce material use.

These efforts reflect a growing understanding that sustainability depends not only on how LWSD operates its buildings or buses, but also on what it buys, how long those products last, and where they come from. As measurement tools evolve, these practices will help the District better quantify and ultimately reduce the upstream emissions associated with its purchasing.

CURRENT POLICY LANDSCAPE

There are currently no binding mandates requiring Scope 3 purchasing reforms.

COMMUNITY INPUT & FEEDBACK

Students, faculty, volunteers, and community partners have raised concerns about product waste, excessive packaging, and the environmental impact of disposable materials. Stakeholders have expressed strong support for expanding the use of reusable and compostable products, sourcing locally where possible, and selecting durable goods that minimize replacement and waste. This feedback highlights a shared desire for LWSD to model responsible consumption—embedding sustainability as a routine part of how the District procures and manages the resources that power its schools.

Recommendations

1. Use Existing Tools to Evaluate Products and Vendors



- Adopt a sustainable procurement policy that includes embodied emissions considerations in key categories such as IT devices, high-volume consumables such as paper and commonly purchased administrative, custodial and maintenance supplies.
- Use third-party tools such as EPEAT (electronics), Energy Star (equipment), and Green Seal (paper and supplies) to evaluate products and vendors based on category.
- Embed sustainability criteria into RFP templates, vendor evaluations, and contract reviews and train purchasing staff to apply them consistently.

Why this matters

Purchasing is one of LWSD's strongest levers for reducing indirect (Scope 3) emissions. By standardizing sustainable procurement practices, improving staff capacity, and enhancing vendor accountability, the District can make data-driven decisions that lower environmental impact and demonstrate climate-smart operations.

2. Pilot Low-Carbon Procurement Strategies in Priority Categories



- Launch pilot projects focused on one to two high-impact categories—student laptops and/or a high-volume consumable.
- Track emissions impacts, lifecycle costs, and staff feedback to assess performance and scalability.
- Use findings to refine purchasing standards and strengthen future vendor engagement practices.

Why this matters

Pilots allow LWSD to test strategies, assess costs and operational tradeoffs, and build internal expertise before scaling additional low-carbon purchasing practices.

3. Formalize Electronics Take-Back and Reuse Strategy



- Include device recycling or trade-in programs in future IT contracts.
- Partner with IT vendors or recyclers to expand device take-back, refurbishment, and end-of-life management.
- Where feasible, redistribute gently used devices (e.g., monitors, keyboards) within the District before disposal.
- Track recovery rates and emissions reductions from avoided new purchases.

Why this matters

Electronics carry a high embodied carbon footprint and are often replaced prematurely. Take-back and reuse strategies minimize waste, reduces procurement costs, and supports responsible lifecycle management of high-impact materials.

EQUITY ANALYSIS

Procurement decisions shape the materials used in school buildings and District offices—affecting everything from indoor air quality to how often items need to be replaced. These choices carry practical consequences for school operations, student health, and overall learning conditions.

Equity considerations also arise in access to quality materials. A sustainability-focused procurement approach helps ensure that all schools benefit from less wasteful products.

At a broader level, many school supplies such as high-volume consumables and electronics are produced and disposed of in ways that create environmental and labor burdens, particularly in low-income regions globally. While these impacts occur beyond District boundaries, LWSD's efforts to reduce unnecessary consumption and extend product life reflect a shared responsibility to reduce harm both locally and globally.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- **Upfront vs. lifecycle costs:** While some sustainable products may carry higher upfront costs, their long-term benefits—such as waste reduction, product longevity, and lower replacement frequency—can offset expenses over time.
- **Leveraging existing purchasing tools:** The District should seek volume discounts, cooperative purchasing, and grant support to minimize cost barriers.
- **Testing before scaling:** Committing to pilot programs will enable LWSD to test more cost-effective strategies and guide broader implementation across departments.



Section 2: Enhancing Resilience



Schools can play a central role in community resilience—providing safe, healthy spaces during emergencies. LWSD's resilience strategy focuses on strengthening buildings, operations, and community systems to withstand and recover from climate-related disruptions while continuing to support learning and well-being.

CURRENT DISTRICT PRACTICES

Lake Washington School District has established a strong foundation for climate resilience through high standards in facility design, modernization, and building systems performance. With a relatively modern building portfolio, most schools already meet or exceed Washington State's most recent building codes. Systems such as geothermal and air-sourced heat pumps, advanced HVAC controls, and enhanced filtration help maintain healthy indoor environments during periods of wildfire smoke, extreme heat, and poor outdoor air quality. Many campuses also incorporate daylighting, high-performance building envelopes, and operable windows, which provide passive survivability and reduce dependence on mechanical systems during power outages or peak energy demand.

In alignment with the Washington State Climate Resilience Strategy and the Climate Commitment Act, LWSD works closely with local partners and municipalities to assess climate-related risks and continually improve its emergency response planning. Resilience considerations are increasingly integrated into school siting, capital project design, and infrastructure upgrades.

Operationally, the District's Resource Conservation Management (RCM) program plays a central role in supporting resilience through ongoing performance monitoring. Using various digital platforms, the District tracks real-time energy and building performance data across school sites—allowing early detection of inefficiencies and energy grid distributions, and promoting conservation during high-stress periods such as grid strain events or seasonal water shortages.

While LWSD's building portfolio is already among the most efficient in the state, an ongoing focus on climate readiness, emergency coordination, and operational reliability will be essential as climate risks intensify.

CURRENT POLICY LANDSCAPE

The Washington State Climate Resilience Strategy, supported by the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), helps school districts prepare for and respond to climate risks such as drought, flooding, extreme heat, and wildfire. Districts must assess climate vulnerabilities and integrate resilience into operations, facility planning, and emergency response protocols. Through state-administered programs required pursuant to the CCA, districts can access funding and technical assistance for energy efficiency upgrades, climate-ready infrastructure, and electric school bus deployment. These investments improve energy reliability, improve indoor air quality, and ensure that schools remain safe and operational during climate disruptions.

COMMUNITY INPUT & FEEDBACK

Community members consistently highlight the importance of collaboration with local municipalities and state emergency management agencies to ensure that schools are integrated into broader resilience strategies and preparedness protocols.

A central theme in stakeholder feedback was equity in resilience planning—with clear calls to prioritize investments and training in communities most vulnerable to extreme weather events. Stakeholder groups have encouraged the District to assess localized risk factors and ensure that schools in high-risk areas are equipped with the infrastructure, planning tools, and staff readiness to serve educational and community functions in times of crisis.

Stakeholders voiced growing concern about the impacts of climate change on school communities. Specific risks mentioned included localized flooding, wildfire smoke, and prolonged heat waves—even when such events typically occur during summer months. Stakeholders stressed the importance of forward-thinking design and operational readiness to ensure that schools remain safe, comfortable, and responsive should disruptions arise during the academic year. The ability to provide community resilience functions when school is not in session was also raised.

Recommendations

1. Assess and Address Risks to Buildings and Communities



- Review regional climate risk maps to identify communities where school buildings may play a critical role in broader community resilience efforts.
- Develop building-specific weather event response plans that align with municipal and regional emergency frameworks.
- Identify opportunities to reduce risk through resilience investments in buildings, mechanical systems, and grounds.
- Assess the District's insurance risk pool exposure.
- Expand existing coordination and joint planning exercises to include simulations of severe weather and climate-driven disruption events.

Why this matters

As climate threats intensify, schools are often asked to serve as vital hubs for community safety and emergency response. Proactive identification, planning, and coordination can ensure facilities are ready to serve both educational and civic resilience functions, and guide future infrastructure investments toward the most vulnerable areas.

2. Strengthen Building Resilience



- Develop risk mitigation plans tailored to each school building, beginning with those located in the most climate-vulnerable communities. Prioritize and accelerate building resilience upgrades, particularly where renovations or capital projects are already planned.
- Ensure Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) plans include wildfire smoke mitigation measures to safeguard student and staff health.
- Enhance energy resilience by integrating microgrid controllers into future solar installations to maintain local power during outages.
- Begin incorporating Vehicle-to-Building (V2B) systems into upgrade plans to allow EV buses to supplement school power as the technologies mature.

Why this matters

Protecting and adapting physical school assets is critical to maintaining safe learning environments during increasingly frequent climate disruptions. Forward-thinking infrastructure investments—particularly in air quality and energy resilience—can reduce downtime, support emergency response functions, safeguard student well-being, and strengthen LWSD's capacity to serve educational as well as community support roles during emergencies.

3. Strengthen Community Resilience



- Empower families through school- or PTSA-led emergency planning workshops, ideally hosted in partnership with local municipalities to align messaging and resources.
- Identify resilience hubs based on community need, geographic location, and onsite critical infrastructure (for example, IT network hubs or large commercial kitchens) to serve essential functions during emergencies. Include as a priority ensuring power resiliency in the areas of greatest economic need.
- Establish redundant communication systems to ensure that families can be reached even during power outages or infrastructure failures.
- Strategically pair schools across the District—leveraging topographic diversity and differing climate exposures—for mutual support and resilience planning.
- Collaborate with local aid organizations to identify and coordinate support services, such as food pantries and shelters, and designate specific school buildings to serve as community shelters where appropriate.

Why this matters

Schools are uniquely positioned to anchor neighborhood resilience. Strengthening community connections and emergency readiness ensures that both school populations and surrounding communities are better prepared for, and able to recover from, extreme climate events.

“Think sustainably start to finish in systems.”

District Sustainability Advisory Committee Member

4. Support Restoration and Resilience of Local Ecosystems



- Engage students in hands-on environmental stewardship by developing native species restoration projects, beginning in schools located in lower fire-risk zones.
- Replace underutilized lawn areas with native plantings to reduce water consumption and support local biodiversity.
- Where feasible, establish microforests on school grounds to enhance ecosystem services while carefully managing fire risk. These projects should integrate student learning and align with science curriculum goals across grade levels.
- Expand tree canopy on school campuses by prioritizing shade-deficient and climate-vulnerable areas, using primarily native, drought-tolerant species—and, where appropriate, climate-adapted, non-invasive species—to maximize benefits such as heat mitigation, stormwater capture, and improved student well-being.

Why this matters

Healthy local ecosystems are foundational to long-term climate resilience. By restoring native habitats and reducing water-intensive landscaping, schools provide habitat for local species and provide students with meaningful opportunities to engage in climate action.

EQUITY ANALYSIS

Climate resilience planning must protect the health and safety of all students and staff, particularly in schools and communities most exposed to climate risks. Hazards such as wildfire smoke, flooding, and power outages often have the greatest impact on under-resourced areas. The District can advance equity by prioritizing resilience investments—like air quality improvements, reliable backup power, and emergency preparedness—in schools and neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by climate risk. Applying clear, equity-based criteria will help ensure that every school, regardless of location or resources, is equipped to maintain safe and healthy learning conditions during climate-related disruptions. Particular attention should be paid to power resiliency in areas that may find power outages more challenging either based on remoteness or to economic need and/or challenging housing conditions.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- **Proactive investment saves costs:** Even high-cost resilience projects are less expensive than post-disaster recovery.
- **Operational practices are resilience efforts:** Routine operational excellence—like clearing of storm drains—can yield resilience benefits. Close coordination between the risk management and operations teams can help identify lower cost resilience actions, and adequately funding operations is itself a resilience strategy.
- **Weigh resilience value against cost:** Microgrid capability and Vehicle-to-Building technologies can add ~\$40,000 to project costs. While hard to quantify precisely, the value of keeping schools operational during extreme weather events is substantial. For example, during the “bomb cyclone” power outage of November 2024, the district lost \$75,000 in food spoilage.
- **Leverage external funding:** LWSD will pursue external funding through state-administered programs supported by the Climate Commitment Act, including resilience planning grants, energy efficiency incentives, and technical assistance for emergency preparedness.

Section 3: Preparing Students for a Sustainable Future

This section addresses how to integrate sustainability throughout the student learning experience, so that students graduate from Lake Washington schools fully equipped to live a sustainable life and to contribute meaningfully to creating a more sustainable society.

CURRENT DISTRICT PRACTICES

Many Lake Washington School District teachers integrate sustainability topics into their classes, and some teach classes entirely devoted to the topic. In addition to these individual efforts to integrate sustainability, climate science, and environmental education into standards-based lessons and projects, LWSD has several district-level initiatives and programs that demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainability.

As of the 2023-24 school year, over 44 LWSD schools have student-led Green Teams supported by adult advisors. Green Team students have autonomy to identify, at the school level, the sustainability-related projects they work on. Often, Green Teams in elementary schools take charge of recycling and composting efforts in the cafeteria. For example, at many elementary schools, Green Team members support proper sorting of lunch items so that utensils are washed and reused, recycling is recycled, recoverable food (for example, an untouched apple) is donated, and food waste is composted. At other schools, Green Teams have conducted waste audits. Green Teams are supported by [King County Green Schools](#). At many LWSD schools, Green Team advisors receive a stipend for their work with Green Team students. Green Team Advisors can be adults in a number of different school-based roles; some are teachers, some are instructional aides, and some are in other school-based roles. LWSD recently obtained "Green District" status because at least 75% of its schools have a Green Team (as of the 2024-2025 school year).



“If kids learn about and care for the environment while they are young, then they will grow up to be adults who care for and protect the environment.”

District Sustainability Advisory Committee Member

[Sustainability Ambassadors](#) is a regional nonprofit organization that empowers young people to “rapidly advance a sustainable future.” In 2025, there were more than 15 LWSD students serving as [Youth Ambassadors](#), more than any other school district in the region. Sustainability Ambassadors uses problem-based learning to support youth ambassadors, educators, and community stakeholders as they identify and take action to respond to sustainability challenges. In 2025, Sustainability Ambassador participants began presenting their findings on ways to decrease emissions from vehicles related to school pick up and drop off.

Every LWSD School has a Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA), and each PTSA includes a Sustainability Committee. These committees support Green Teams and activities such as waste audits, vehicle counts (to measure commuting volume), and broader school-based sustainability initiatives.

The District also offers multiple Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs with sustainability relevance, including the [Agriculture and Natural Resources Program](#).

CURRENT POLICY LANDSCAPE

The current policy environment in Washington State emphasizes the critical role of education in preparing students to lead for a sustainable future. The [Washington State Environmental and Sustainability Literacy Plan](#) outlines a comprehensive vision to ensure that every student has multiple, meaningful opportunities to build the knowledge, skills, and mindsets necessary for environmental stewardship and sustainability. This statewide framework is supported by the [K-12 Integrated Environmental and Sustainability Education Learning Standards](#), which articulate, in three broad thematic areas, what students should understand and be able to do across grade levels to become environmentally literate and active participants in shaping a more sustainable world.

COMMUNITY INPUT & FEEDBACK

Students consistently express a desire for more meaningful exposure to sustainability topics—in the classroom and beyond. They are interested in connecting sustainability to real-world career paths, especially in fields like engineering, business, architecture, and technology. Several students have called for guest speakers, internships, and hands-on opportunities to explore green jobs and local sustainability projects.

Many emphasize the importance of integrating sustainability into existing coursework, rather than limiting it to electives or extracurriculars. Suggestions included using environmental case studies in science, math, and economics classes, and offering opportunities to design solutions for school-based sustainability challenges.

Students also continue to identify areas for growth within school operations—such as reducing packaging in cafeterias, improving recycling and composting access, and making sustainable practices more visible on campus. Several advocate for better coordination among Green Teams, teachers, and administrators, so that student-led sustainability efforts receive more consistent support and visibility.

Recommendations

1. Integrate Sustainability into Everyday Learning



- Over the next three years, develop a framework for what integrated sustainability looks like in the classroom and across the school day.
- Incorporate knowledge, skills, and wisdom from tribal nations and local communities into the teaching of sustainability. One starting point could be aligning the *Since Time Immemorial* curriculum with existing District frameworks.
- Start with sustainable routines and structures (e.g., recycling, waste sorting).
 - Develop checklists for teachers and staff to use with respect to sustainable routines, structures, and habits.
- Identify current standards and curricula that either already include sustainability education or, with minor adaptation, could include sustainability education.
 - National education for sustainability standards like [Cloud](#) and [USPEFD](#) might be helpful in this process.

Why this matters

Integrating sustainability fully into the student experience will necessarily be a multiyear process. Identifying the first few steps allows the District to start without overburdening teachers or upending established, successful instructional practices.

2. Deepen and Expand Outdoor Learning Experiences for All LWSD students



- Partner with local tribes to design an educational program for a possible environmental education center adjacent to the Redmond Watershed Preserve.
 - Include community education classes
- Design and build outdoor learning labs at elementary schools (and possibly middle schools as well).
- Consider partnering with organizations like OutTeach and SummerSearch for outdoor education content.

Why this matters

Outdoor and experiential education help children develop into sustainability-focused adults. A strong connection to nature has innumerable health, mental health, academic learning, and other benefits.

3. Expand and Develop Additional Green Career Pathways for High School Students



- Consider adding a [LEED Green Associate Certification](#) program to go beyond, or pair with, AP Environmental Studies classes.
- Explore a collaboration with Lake Washington Institute of Technology to offer electric vehicle technician and solar installer certification as part of the school District's CTE offerings.
- Identify additional green career pathways that could become new or adapted CTE courses and certifications.
- Support high school college and career centers in providing education and resources to support students interested in studying environmental sciences and related postsecondary pathways and careers in sustainability.
- Expand internship programs to include sustainability work with local businesses.

Why this matters

Green careers will continue to be a growth sector in an otherwise unpredictable employment and professional landscape, and many students are interested in the sector.

4. Launch a Student Green Fund to Support School-Led Innovation



- Establish a districtwide Student Green Fund, modeled after successful programs in [higher education](#).² The fund would provide financial support for student-proposed sustainability initiatives, selected through a peer-reviewed process. A student-led selection panel would evaluate proposals based on criteria such as cost-effectiveness, implementation feasibility, and school-level support. Winning projects would be financed through the fund, potentially through private support, which would be replenished over time using savings generated by the initiatives themselves.

Why this matters

Empowering students to lead sustainability projects fosters agency, innovation, and real-world problem solving. The requirement of a positive cost/benefit ratio drives rigor and encourages students to grapple with the challenges of implementing sustainable solutions. A revolving green fund provides opportunities for students, and student forums, to directly contribute to climate action in their school communities, year after year.

"To me, sustainability means working together as a community to create change through shared goals. I hope my school and district will focus on expanding sustainability education, as understanding the condition of our environment is the first step toward creating impactful change."

Diya Kowshik, Student, Tesla Stem High School

² Including at [University of Washington](#), [Central Washington University](#), [Edmonds College](#), [Washington State University](#), and more.



EQUITY ANALYSIS

Ensuring that schools across the District and at all grade levels are working to integrate sustainability into lessons and projects will maximize student opportunities for learning the essential skills and content they will need to lead a sustainable future. Universal design, and designing for inclusion, are essential for this work.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- **Expanding sustainability education and student engagement efforts:** Scaling efforts will require modest but strategic investments in staffing, training, and seed funding for student-led initiatives. Many current activities—such as Green Team stipends, curriculum integration, and partner-supported learning experiences—are already partially supported by PTSA, nonprofit, or grant-based funding. In order to scale and systematize these efforts, the District will need to identify some core resources.
- **Student Green Fund:** Establishing a Student Green Fund would require initial capitalization through philanthropic contributions. Ongoing management and evaluation of the fund would also require dedicated staff time even if students were to do most of the work. Additionally, district-level coordination of professional development, resource-sharing platforms, and project implementation would benefit from expanded sustainability staffing or internal reallocation of roles.
- **Investments in sustainability education yield long-term dividends:** These include promoting cost-saving practices, fostering student leadership, and strengthening the connection between classroom learning and real-world problem-solving.

“Prepare students for their future by teaching climate science and solutions we can all participate in. Sustaining a livable planet requires all disciplines including arts, math and sciences, history and government, communication, CTE courses, and more.”

Sustainability Advisory Committee Member

Section 4: Equipping Staff to Support Sustainability Efforts

Advancing sustainability across any organization depends on the people who carry it out every day. This section focuses on building staff capacity, alignment, and accountability to ensure sustainability practices are consistent, supported, and embedded in across the entire school district.

CURRENT DISTRICT PRACTICES

LWSD's sustainability efforts are grounded in strong leadership commitment and clear policy direction. Guided by Board Policy OE-9 and the Strategic Framework's core commitment to *Integrated Sustainability*, the School Board, Superintendent, and executive leadership have demonstrated policy and financial support—investing in dedicated staffing, professional expertise, and cross-department coordination to advance districtwide sustainability goals.

The Facilities and Operations team provides training and technical support to staff ranging from custodians to capital project managers. This includes instruction on integrating and maintaining advanced systems such as geothermal HVAC, building controls, and water and energy metering. Designers and planners receive exposure to emerging sustainability strategies.

School-based operations staff are regularly trained in waste diversion, integrated pest management, and other site-level practices. These efforts are supported by a dedicated Associate Director of Sustainability and Resource Conservation who leads districtwide conservation initiatives and supports implementation across departments.

Teachers, custodians, and food service staff contribute daily to sustainability through waste reduction, resource conservation, and behavior change. LWSD supports these efforts primarily through regional partnerships. For example, King County Green Schools provides training and guidance on composting, recycling, and cafeteria practices. Instructional staff also work with partners like Sustainability Ambassadors, Cascade Water Alliance, and Washington Association For Better Schools (WABS) to access professional development and classroom resources aligned to Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

LWSD has invested in dedicated staffing, including a full-time Associate Director of Sustainability & Resource Conservation. This role leads coordination across departments, supports school sites, and builds partnerships with utilities and regional agencies. Communication about these efforts is supported by a sustainability webpage, which shares tools, updates, and highlights from initiatives like solar installations, anti-idling campaigns, and zero-emission buses.

LWSD is now focused on building greater alignment and consistency across sites—clarifying staff roles, expanding access to professional development, and ensuring all stakeholders are equipped to contribute meaningfully to the District's sustainability goals.

CURRENT POLICY LANDSCAPE

While there are currently no state or federal mandates requiring school districts to provide professional development specific to sustainability, Lake Washington School District's Board Policy Operational Expectation-9 establishes a clear expectation that District initiatives must be supported with the necessary resources, training, and staff capacity to ensure successful implementation.



COMMUNITY INPUT & FEEDBACK

Across Lake Washington School District, students, staff, parents, and partners have expressed strong support for sustainability and a shared interest in helping the District achieve its goals. At the same time, stakeholders have highlighted a number of challenges that point to the need for greater coordination and support.

Many noted uncertainty about who at the District level is responsible for leading sustainability efforts and shared that schools often feel left to navigate implementation on their own. Although partnerships with groups like King County Green Schools and Sustainability Ambassadors are valued, the limited visibility of District staff at school-level meetings can make efforts feel disconnected from a broader system.

A consistent theme was uneven support for school Green Teams. While autonomy is appreciated, success often depends on whether a school has a dedicated faculty lead or active PTSA. Teachers reported that leading Green Teams frequently falls on one staff member and can be difficult to sustain without formal recognition or additional capacity. Many also asked for curated materials suited to different levels of experience, clearer communication, and ways to connect with other schools.

Frustrations were most commonly expressed around composting, school gardens, recycling, and commuting options—areas where stakeholders feel more consistent District guidance and infrastructure would help. Many called for better storytelling and visibility of successful projects to inspire and connect schools.

Overall, the feedback reflects a community ready to collaborate, and to lead, given the right supports, clearer roles, and more consistent District policies and supports.

Recommendations

1. Develop Community-wide Alignment on Sustainability Through Shared Language and Experiences

- Adopt a shared definition of integrated sustainability (see [introduction](#) for one starting point).
- Use universally accessible activities (for staff, board members, parents, and students), like Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson's version of an ikigai [climate Venn diagram](#), to develop action steps that are personalized and attainable.
- Design and launch a volunteer program for parents and community partners to participate in sustainability-related student learning experiences.

Why this matters

Creating a shared understanding enhances the community's ability to achieve its sustainability goals.

2. Expand Training for Operational Staff



- Embed waste diversion and resource conservation responsibilities into job descriptions for custodians, cafeteria, and lunchroom staff.
- Integrate sustainability-related performance expectations into staff evaluations and provide role-specific training.
- Continue technical systems training for maintenance teams through the facilities and operations department.

Why this matters

Operational staff are central and ultimately responsible for daily implementation of a wide range of the recommendations in this plan. Clear expectations, regular training, and ongoing support ensure consistent, high-quality practices across all schools.

3. Support School and District Administrative Staff in Advancing Sustainability



- Provide role-specific guidance outlining how principals, school administrators, and district leaders can support sustainability through planning, staff engagement, and Green Team support.
- Integrate sustainability-related professional learning for administrators into ongoing support.
- Include sustainability-related goals in annual goal setting for administrators.
- Support school leaders to lead an authentic, school-based process to identify a shared starting point for integrating sustainability into teaching and learning, based on teacher, student, and community input. Districtwide, identify two or three common categories (e.g., math, science, or lunchroom) to focus support and coordination as a starting point.
- Mutually agree on helpful ways to include sustainability considerations in school-level progress monitoring.
- Conduct regular, visible school visits from central office staff to provide guidance, gather feedback, and highlight progress.

4. Support Teachers in Integrating Sustainability



- Create a shared platform space where educators can exchange sustainability lessons and project ideas.
- Survey teachers to understand current practices, desired support, and integration opportunities within existing curriculum.
- Create a one-page checklist defining the classroom structures and routines that would constitute a baseline “Sustainable Classroom,” using King County Green Schools resources as a starting point.
- Promote participation in professional learning offered by partners such as Sustainability Ambassadors and WABS.
- Establish teacher teams to develop standards-aligned model lessons and units that integrate sustainability across subject areas. When lessons involve operational systems (e.g., energy use, water consumption) include relevant staff to ensure alignment and real-world connection.

Why this matters

Teachers are eager to connect sustainability into instruction and student learning, and would benefit from clearer examples, accessible resources and structured support.

5. Strengthen Support Systems for Green Team Leaders



- Conduct a districtwide inventory of Green Teams, identifying which schools have active teams, who serves as staff lead, and what resources and support are provided.
- Establish differentiated support cohorts, one for novice Green Team leaders and another for experienced leaders.
- Clarify expectations and standardize stipend availability to improve equity and consistency across schools.

Why this matters

Green Teams are the current backbone of school-based sustainability efforts, but success often depends on individual initiative. Formalizing support systems helps sustain momentum, reduces staff burnout, builds community, and helps ensure sustainability work is embedded across all sites.

“All hands on deck!”

Sustainability Advisory Committee Member

6. Establish an Internal Sustainability Implementation Team to Support and Augment Sustainability Management Capacity



- Form a cross-departmental working group to support the implementation of the Sustainability Action Plan and Roadmap.
- Include representatives from key departments such as curriculum, facilities, nutrition services, technology, purchasing, and transportation.
- Charge the team with identifying system-level opportunities, monitoring progress toward roadmap goals, and supporting districtwide alignment.
- Position this group as a support structure to the Associate Director of Sustainability & Resource Conservation.

Why this matters

A cross-functional team improves coordination, builds shared ownership, and helps ensure that sustainability efforts remain integrated and adaptive over time.

7. Invest in Internal Communication and Recognition



- Develop a communications calendar to regularly share sustainability updates, best practices, and school spotlights.
- Create project case studies and highlight successful efforts through District channels to inspire replication and celebrate innovation.
- Keep the sustainability webpage current with team contacts, training opportunities, and implementation tools.
- Ensure consistent District representation at school sustainability meetings, events, and planning sessions.
- Designate clear points of contact for schools seeking support or guidance.

Why this matters

In practice, the District is a leader in sustainability. Historically, however, the District has not promoted widespread awareness of its many efforts. Given the goal of integrating sustainability across the District, communication is key.

EQUITY ANALYSIS

Efforts to advance sustainability across LWSD rely heavily on staff leadership, yet the resources and recognition available to those doing the work vary significantly. In some schools, a single teacher takes on this responsibility without additional compensation or formal support, making long-term sustainability difficult. Without a consistent system of recognition, training, or stipend access, the burden of leadership falls unevenly.

At the classroom level, many teachers express interest in connecting sustainability to student learning but lack access to curated resources or shared planning time.

An equity-informed approach to staff capacity building should ensure that all schools—regardless of size, location, or volunteer support—have access to clear expectations, structured professional development, and districtwide coordination. It is important to recognize that some schools may need more support than others. By reducing reliance on individual initiative and strengthening systems of support, LWSD can create more consistent opportunities for staff and students to engage in sustainability efforts across the District.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Equipping staff to support sustainability will require targeted, strategic investments—but many components can be implemented efficiently by leveraging existing roles, partnerships, and training structures. The most immediate budget considerations include:

- **Leveraging external support** through existing partnerships with King County Green Schools, Sustainability Ambassadors, WABS, and others, which provide professional learning, facilitation, and tools at low or no cost.
- **Standardizing stipends for Green Team leaders** to ensure equity and sustained engagement across schools.
- **Allocating professional development resources**, including time, funding, and substitute coverage, for role-specific sustainability training for staff in instructional and operational roles.
- **Maintaining dedicated central office staff capacity** to coordinate implementation, provide technical assistance, and oversee internal communications and reporting.
- **Investing modestly in digital infrastructure**, such as shared platforms for lesson exchange and progress tracking, to enhance collaboration and reduce duplication of effort.

Section 5: From Planning to Action

TRANSITION TO IMPLEMENTATION

This Sustainability Plan establishes the District's long-term vision, goals, and strategies for reducing emissions, conserving resources, and strengthening resilience. The next step is to translate these priorities into a focused set of near-term actions through a **Sustainability Roadmap—a tool to ensure that implementation remains strategic, achievable and measurable**. The Roadmap will serve as a companion document and an operational bridge between strategy and implementation, identifying where to start, what to do first, and how to track progress.

THE SUSTAINABILITY ROADMAP

The Sustainability Roadmap will outline the *initial phase of implementation*—a manageable, near-term set of actions designed to launch progress toward the District's long-range sustainability goals. It will establish timeframes and next steps, focusing on the activities that most effectively advance LWSD's sustainability priorities.

Consistent with the Strategic Framework, the Roadmap will be *iterative, evidence-based, and adaptive*—supporting cycles of testing, evaluation, and refinement rather than attempting to prescribe every action through 2050. Each update will draw on new data, lessons learned, and stakeholder feedback, ensuring that implementation remains aligned with District priorities, capital planning, and operational realities. Regular progress monitoring and public reporting will reinforce accountability and embed sustainability as a core management practice.

Recommended mechanisms to monitor progress

To ensure that sustainability remains a visible, accountable, and continuously improving effort, LWSD should establish clear mechanisms for tracking progress, reporting outcomes, and applying lessons learned into future planning cycles.

- **Public Performance Data:** Maintain and expand access to emissions data to support transparency and engagement, and update the GHG emissions inventory on an annual basis.
- **Scheduled Progress Reports:** Publish an annual sustainability summary detailing Roadmap progress and measurable outcomes.
- **Board Updates:** Provide regular updates to the School Board aligned with Operational Expectations reporting—ensuring accountability and visibility at the governance level.
- **Plan and Roadmap Updates:** Review and update the Plan and the Roadmap every five years.

Embedding monitoring, reporting, and stakeholder engagement in the Roadmap process ensures that this plan moves from aspiration to measurable action—delivering environmental, educational, and equity benefits across the District.

Reducing the environmental impact of LWSD operations is foundational to the District's broader sustainability vision. From reducing fossil fuel use in buildings to decreasing waste and transitioning the transportation fleet, each initiative provides tangible benefits for students, staff, and the broader community.

With a strong GHG emissions baseline inventory in place, LWSD is well-positioned to act decisively—leveraging data, policy alignment, and community leadership to guide early implementation. By approaching progress in focused, iterative phases, the District can take bold yet manageable steps towards its long-term climate and educational goals.

Through this first Plan and the accompanying Roadmap, LWSD turns commitment into action—laying the foundation for a resilient, equitable, and climate-smart future.



A districtwide sustainability plan conveys a clear message that student voices and future generations are being taken seriously and that sustainability is achievable. It encourages collaboration across schools and strengthens the impact of collective action. This is our century, and the choices we make now will shape the health of our schools, communities, and our planet for years to come.

Diya Kowshik, Student, Tesla Stem High School

Acknowledgements

Gratitude to:

Sustainability Advisory Committee

Sustainability Ambassadors

Green Teams

King County Green Schools

The LWSD Leadership Team

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