



OE-17 Sustainability

Policy Type: Operational Expectation

Annual Monitoring Report for School Year 2024-2025

The Board believes that integrating sustainable practices and fostering environmental responsibility in all district and building operations, capital projects and programs are essential for a future ready district. We aim to reduce our environmental impact and model responsible stewardship by embedding sustainability into every aspect of our work.

The Superintendent certifies that the District is in compliance with OE-17 with no exceptions.

The Superintendent shall ensure a cohesive sustainability plan is embedded throughout the District while considering available district financial resources.

General Interpretation:

I interpret a cohesive sustainability plan to include a waste management program, transportation plan, strategy for sustainable building practices, improving readiness for future environmental impacts, and a plan for communicating this work to the community.

The Superintendent will:

17.1 Develop and implement a waste management program.

Interpretation:

I interpret this to mean that the district will establish a waste management program that prioritizes recycling, minimizes waste, and monitors the effectiveness of the waste management program. I further interpret this to mean that there are public service announcements and training or education efforts to support effective and sustainable disposal of waste.

Evidence of Compliance:

The district maintains a comprehensive waste management program across all schools and facilities, including composting, recycling, and hazardous waste disposal, and continues to be recognized through the King County Green Schools Program. In 2024–25, over 13,000 cubic yards of waste were managed, with 42.5% recycled, while new dumpster monitoring systems reduced hauling costs by 4% and avoided nearly \$68,000 in expenses over two years. The district is also advancing health and sustainability efforts through the Healthy Green Schools and Colleges program, aiming for certification by 2026–27 while strengthening practices in areas such as indoor air quality, maintenance, and safe handling of hazardous materials.

- All schools and support buildings in the district have a waste management program in place that includes composting, recyclable items, garbage, and hazardous waste. The district actively participates

in the [King County Green Schools Program](#) and several schools were recognized during the 2024-25 school year.

- [2024-25 School Year Recognition Report](#)
- [Green Schools Program Benchmarks](#)
- In the 2024-25 school year, the district’s waste profile consisted of:

| 2024-25 | Food Waste (Cubic Yards) | Recycling (Cubic Yards) | Trash (Cubic Yards) | Wood Waste (Cubic Yards) | Grand Total (Cubic Yards) |
|-------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Grand Total | 769 | 5550 | 6634 | 91 | 13044 |
| Percentage | 5.9% | 42.5% | 50.9% | 0.7% | |

- Starting in the 2023-24 school year and continuing in the 2024-25 school year, the district installed dumpster monitoring equipment to minimize pick-up frequency and reduce costs. Over this two-year period, total waste hauling costs have decreased by 4%, and the district has avoided \$67,779 in additional costs by optimizing waste pickups.
 - [Dumpster Sensor Overview](#)
- During the 2024-25 school year, the district initiated the [Healthy Green Schools and Colleges program](#) with the intention of identifying low- or no-cost measures that can make a major difference in health and indoor air quality. We are currently on a pathway to certifying our Custodial and Maintenance practices with the program by the end of the 2026-27 school year.
- Our work with the Healthy Green Schools and Colleges program includes:
 - Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting
 - Integrated Pest Management
 - Sustainable Purchasing
 - HVAC and Electric Maintenance
 - Indoor Air Quality Testing and Monitoring
 - Sidewalk and Pavement Maintenance
 - Training and Communication
- The district partners with the [King County Hazardous Waste Management Program](#) and the [Puget Sound Educational Service District \(PSESD\)](#) to ensure all potentially hazardous materials are disposed of properly – paint, science chemicals, light tubes, batteries, e-waste, etc.
- The district maintains a Chemical Hygiene Plan as part of the districts [Accident Prevention Program](#) for management and handling potentially hazardous materials.

17.2 Develop and implement a transportation plan to minimize environmental impact.

Interpretation:

I interpret this to mean that the district will assess current transportation operations, optimize bus routes, transition to cleaner vehicles, and expand our zero-emission electric bus fleet with consideration for student programming, student safety, legal or regulatory mandates, cost, and educational priorities.

Evidence of Compliance:

The district actively evaluates and improves its transportation system through annual fleet audits, route optimization technology, and data tracking, resulting in reduced mileage, fuel consumption, and operational costs over recent years. It is transitioning to cleaner transportation by adopting renewable diesel and

expanding its zero-emission fleet, including the addition of electric buses supported by state grants and local funding. These efforts, combined with staff training and pilot programs, demonstrate a strategic commitment to sustainability, efficiency, and student safety.

- The district conducts a yearly fleet audit to evaluate the age, fuel type, and maintenance records of current buses.
- The district conducts ongoing route analysis to identify inefficiencies such as overlapping routes, underutilized buses, or excessive idling.
- The district has implemented advanced route optimization technology. This optimization technology has resulted in operational efficiency that has produced measurable improvements in mileage reduction, fuel savings, and idle-time management. Over the past three school years, total miles driven have steadily declined from 1,419,935 miles in 2022–23 to 1,324,544 miles in 2024–25 representing a total of 95,391 fewer miles. This reduction has directly contributed to lower fuel consumption, with usage dropping by 21,418.87 gallons during the same period, generating an estimated **\$85,675.48 in savings** at the current average fuel cost of \$4.00 per gallon.
- During the 2024-25 school year, the district secured a competitive grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology to accelerate its transition toward cleaner, zero-emission student transportation. This funding, combined with dollars from the district’s Transportation Levy, enabled the purchase of three 84-passenger electric school buses as well as the installation of the necessary charging infrastructure. The grant specifically helped cover the cost difference between traditional diesel buses and electric models, ensuring the district could make a fiscally responsible investment in sustainable fleet modernization.
- In the summer of 2025, the charging infrastructure installation was completed and includes capacity for future expansion to accommodate charging 16 electric buses. Three ZE electric Blue Bird D84 rear-engine electric buses were ordered. They were received in fall 2025 and now represent a step forward in reducing emissions, lowering fuel consumption, and improving long-term operational efficiency.
- Drivers and mechanics are receiving training to support safe operation and maintenance of the electric buses, and the Transportation Department has implemented a pilot program to gain performance data for future expansion. This strategic approach positions the district to continue leveraging grant opportunities and levy support to grow its electric fleet over time while advancing broader sustainability goals. The district uses GPS and onboard diagnostics to track fuel usage and monitor driving patterns
- The district has transitioned to [renewable diesel](#) for all diesel-powered buses and tracks fuel consumption. The district’s transition to renewable diesel for all diesel-powered buses has resulted in meaningful environmental and operational benefits, advancing both sustainability objectives and fleet efficiency. Renewable diesel’s cleaner-burning properties significantly reduce harmful emissions, including an estimated **70% reduction in lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions, 26–33% reduction in particulate matter, 11.8% reduction in nitrogen oxides (NOx), and a 6% decrease in tailpipe CO₂** compared with conventional petroleum diesel. These improvements contribute to cleaner air around schools, reduced exposure to harmful pollutants for students and community members, and overall alignment with the district’s environmental stewardship goals.

- Operationally, the switch to renewable diesel has improved engine performance and reduced maintenance burdens. Cleaner combustion enables fuel-filter replacement intervals to be extended from **10,000 miles to 15,000 miles**, decreasing the number of required filter changes per bus each year.
- Based on the district’s fleet profile, this results in **0.259 fewer filter changes per bus annually**. With combined parts and labor totaling **\$62.44 per service**, the district saves approximately **\$16.17 per bus per year**. Across a fleet of **121 diesel buses**, this yields an estimated **annual savings of \$1,955**. Additional advantages include reduced downtime, more efficient maintenance scheduling, and fewer consumable materials.
- Overall, the district’s adoption of renewable diesel demonstrates a cost-effective, immediately actionable strategy for lowering emissions, reducing operational costs, and supporting a healthier environment for students and staff. The documented reductions in pollution and maintenance expenses underscore the value of integrating cleaner fuels into the transportation fleet, while the financial benefits strengthen long-term fiscal sustainability.

17.3 Develop and implement a long-term strategy to minimize the environmental impact of district buildings, including meeting sustainable building standards for new construction and renovations.

Interpretation:

I interpret this to mean the district will proactively plan for and carry out a district-wide, long-range approach to reducing the environmental footprint of all district facilities. This includes integrating sustainability into decision-making for facility design, construction, renovation, maintenance, and operations.

Evidence of Compliance:

The district demonstrates a comprehensive, long-range approach to reducing the environmental impact of its facilities by tracking energy use, improving efficiency, and integrating sustainability into design, construction, and operations. Efforts such as Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and lighting upgrades, energy audits, and retro-commissioning have led to significant reductions in energy use intensity and utility costs, alongside recognition through state and national awards. Additionally, sustainable practices in construction, renewable energy use, and food services further support the district’s commitment to environmental stewardship and resource efficiency.

- All district facilities are entered into the [Energy Star Portfolio Manager](#) which tracks electricity and natural gas consumption.
 - [Cougar Mountain Middle School portfolio example](#)
- The district partners with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to document Energy Use Intensity (EUI) data to document energy efficiency for all facilities. This data allows us to track how facilities are performing based on EUI benchmarks and to identify facilities that are not aligned with expected energy usage. Based on this data, the district audited and adjusted HVAC and lighting schedules to reduce EUI as well as retrofit old light fixtures with new LED light fixtures when possible.
- During the 2024-25 school year we retrofitted parking lot lights at Beaver Lake, Briarwood, Discovery, Grand Ridge, and Pacific Cascade Middle School. Primarily based on these activities, the district achieved \$186,541 in avoided Electricity and Natural Gas costs from July 1st, 2024, to June 30th, 2025.

- During the 2024-25 school year, the district partnered with Energy Service Company (ESCO) MacDonald-Miller to perform investment grade audits at Skyline, Liberty, and Issaquah High Schools to determine Capital Investments needed to improve EUI to meet Washington State benchmarks set by the Department of Commerce.
- During the 2024-25 school year, the district was awarded a grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce for a total of \$847,000 for retro-commissioning of Issaquah High School. As a result of this work, the EUI at Issaquah High School dropped from 91.3 from August 2024 to 69.3 from December 2025. This represents a 24% reduction in EUI and an annual cost savings of \$64,581 or a 10% reduction in utility costs for the facility.
 - [2024 vs. 2025 IHS utility cost savings chart](#)
- The district integrates sustainable design practices into all new construction and major renovation projects by recovering more than 70% of exhaust-air energy through advanced heat-recovery systems, using high-efficiency electric heat pumps for heating, cooling, and hot water, and ensuring fresh, filtered air through actively controlled ventilation systems. Buildings are designed with low air infiltration to reduce energy waste, feature LED lighting throughout to maximize efficiency, and include stormwater systems that clean and manage runoff to protect local waterways, reduce erosion, and support healthy salmon habitats.
- 2025 Puget Sound Energy “Biggest Saver – Electric” Award winner as part of our ongoing participation in the [Commercial Strategic Energy Management \(CSEM\) program](#). This has also resulted in additional incentive awards totaling \$115,527 over the 2024 and 2025 award periods.
- In March 2022, solar panels were installed on the roof of Pine Lake Middle School as part of PSE’s Community Solar program.
 - [ISD News article link](#)
- The Food Services Department uses metal re-usable flatware at elementary schools and uses re-usable trays for meal service at elementary schools and on the hot lunch side at middle schools.
- All disposable flatware is compostable.
- When cost effective compostable single use items are available from suppliers, the district purchases those items for meal service (i.e. portion cups and lids, boats, etc.)
- Per Washington State Department of Ecology, the district does not use polystyrene products and allows students to self-select single use packaged food items (i.e. jelly packets, cream cheese cups, etc.)
- Looking ahead to next year’s report, the district was awarded the 2026 National School Boards Association (NSBA) Magna Award Grand Prize winner for the district’s initiatives focused on improving indoor air quality and reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

17.4 Enhance the readiness of the district’s infrastructure to account for future environmental impacts.

Interpretation:

I interpret this to mean the district shall ensure that district infrastructure planning, design, maintenance, and investment decisions anticipate and account for future environmental conditions and risks. This includes assessing potential impacts such as climate-related events, resource availability, and regulatory changes, and incorporating resilience, adaptability, and risk mitigation into facilities and infrastructure strategies.

Evidence of Compliance:

The district proactively plans for environmental risks by integrating resilience and adaptability into infrastructure, including temperature monitoring, wildfire smoke preparedness, backup connectivity, and generator-supported critical systems. It uses advanced monitoring, air filtration, and emergency response planning to address potential disruptions such as extreme weather, poor air quality, and power outages. These efforts, along with successful flood mitigation and winterization strategies, demonstrate a comprehensive approach to safeguarding facilities and operations against future environmental conditions.

- During the 2024-25 school year, the district installed multiple remote temperature sensors to unconditioned spaces in buildings to guard against extreme low temperature events.
- During the 2024-25 school year, the district provided training to staff who may experience wildfire smoke exposure.
 - [Wildfire Smoke Training link](#)
- The district added satellite internet capabilities to the administration building to ensure internet access during power outages and network failures.
- The district maintains remote monitoring systems for refrigerators, freezers, and irrigation systems to alert staff to any potential outages or significant water flow issues.
- Several buildings across the district have generator capabilities to support critical infrastructure during power outages – including the Administration Building and Holly Street which support our technology infrastructure.
- Most facility HVAC systems utilize MERV-13 filtration systems and the district maintains readiness capability to deploy MERV-13 filters in all buildings in case of emergency.
- In 2022, the district completed repairs to the [Issaquah Creek Bank](#). This repair performed very well during the December 2025 Atmospheric River event which led to major flooding throughout our area. The Holly Street Early Learning Center experienced no flood damage during this event.
- The district maintains Emergency Operations Plans that outline response actions for the district in the event of natural disasters – wildfire, flood, storm, earthquake, etc.
- The district invested in handheld air quality sensors to gather indoor air quality data to enhance response to air quality events (wildfires).
- The district maintains winterization plans for responding to extreme cold weather events. This includes winterization of fire systems, outdoor hose bibs, and irrigation systems, as well as a snow and ice removal / response plan.

17.5 Communicate information on the district’s sustainability programs to staff and the community.**Interpretation:**

I interpret this to mean the district shall proactively communicate its sustainability programs and progress to families and caregivers, staff and the broader community, demonstrating responsible stewardship of public resources. The district shall use digital and traditional channels, including the website, social media, e-newsletters, print, direct mail and School Board meetings, and incorporate updates into Operations Team professional development to reinforce shared responsibility and awareness.

Evidence of Compliance:

The following examples demonstrate the district's consistent and proactive communication of sustainability efforts across multiple channels. These materials highlight how the district shares updates, elevates student voice and provides transparent information to families, staff and the broader community through digital platforms, publications and School Board communications.

- New website: <https://www.isd411.org/get-involved/sustainability>
- Article: <https://www.isd411.org/about-us/news/news-article/~board/horizons/post/sustainability-awards-earned-new-policy-created>
- Article: <https://www.isd411.org/about-us/news/news-article/~board/horizons/post/maywood-pine-lake-offer-new-microschool-opportunity>
- Article: <https://www.isd411.org/about-us/news/news-article/~board/district-news/post/sustainability-efforts-students-help-craft-new-policy>
- Focus: <https://www.isd411.org/about-us/news/focus/focus-newsletter-fall-2024>
- First read: <https://www.isd411.org/about-us/announcements/single-announcement/~board/board-recaps/post/school-board-meeting-recap-april-10-2025>

We acknowledge existing policies that support this sustainability policy are monitored elsewhere:

- **Integrate sustainability education at appropriate grade levels (cross references with Results 3.6).**
- **Embed professional development on sustainability for staff where appropriate (cross references with Operational Expectation 3.12).**

Board acceptance: April 9, 2026