



To: PPS Board of Education

From:

CC:

RE: Climate Crisis Response, Climate Justice and Sustainable Practices Policy Annual Update

Date:

DRAFT

Introduction

The purpose of this memo is to provide an annual update on the implementation of the Climate Crisis Response, Climate Justice and Sustainable Practices Policy (CCRP) (APPENDIX A). This memo will review high-level progress made on 2025-2026 policy implementation, successes, challenges, and recommendations to meet the ambitious goals in our commitment to the community.

Context

In March 2022, the Portland Public Schools Board of Education (the Board) unanimously adopted the Climate Crisis Response, Climate Justice, and Sustainable Practices Policy. This policy commits PPS to immediately mobilize resources to reduce the impact of climate change, recognized as one of the most ambitious public school climate action policies in the nation¹. Beyond responsibility for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the policy centers frontline communities² in advancing climate resilience, developing a climate justice education, and to connect students, parents, teachers, staff, and community partners as leaders in climate solutions. This policy requires the advancement of District planning to consider the disproportionate impacts of climate change on the vulnerable members of our community, and recognizes our responsibility to attend to our students' mental health, wellness and emotional challenges that come from anticipating and experiencing extreme climate events. With this commitment, PPS can show our students what a future of climate solutions looks like, creating opportunities for excellence despite a changing climate.

To advance the CCRP objectives, PPS continues to strengthen an intentional and focused strategic approach. In 2024-2025 Climate Crisis Response Committee highlighted the following as key successes from the 2024-2025 school year:

¹ CCRP is highlighted on the NAAEE [District Climate Policies & Resolutions site](#), and this [Sierra Club article](#) describes CCRP as a landmark policy.

² Communities that experience the 'first and worst' impacts of climate change: those experiencing systemic injustice—including people of color, people with disabilities, immigrants, people with lower incomes, those in rural areas, and indigenous people—and face a legacy of systemic inequity that impacts their living and working places, the quality of their air and water, and their economic opportunities.



- **Launch of the Student Climate Awareness Survey:** Led by the Climate Crisis Response Committee student representatives, the inaugural survey received over 250 responses from high school students across the district, and captures student awareness of climate action at PPS and feelings of knowledge and efficacy toward participating in climate solutions. This survey is now an annual practice to capture changes in how students feel about the district's climate actions over time.
- **Continued support for electrification of schools:** With the 2025 Bond, PPS is modernizing the remaining three high schools. Given the increasing costs of construction, the Board weighed cost-saving measures for these projects. The Board decided to maintain a commitment to build fully electric comprehensive high schools, honoring the goals of the climate policy and taking a significant step toward reaching the district's 2030 GHG reduction goals.

The CCRC identified as 2024-2025 "Significant Deliverable wins":

- Launch of the Climate Policy Public Envisio Dashboard
- Public Digital Showcase of Student Projects
- Community-Centered Climate Action Design Team Report
- Decarbonization Prioritization Tool

To continue advancing policy progress, at the June 2025 Board meeting, the CCRC recommended the following:

- I. Align Climate Work with PPS Priority Goals
- II. Embed Transparency and Engagement Tools
- III. Preserve and Scale Climate Programs
- IV. Institutionalize Student Voice
- V. Expand and Redesign the PPS Volunteer Program to Include Climate Policy Implementation Support

Given limited resources, prioritization of the 75+ objectives within the Climate Crisis Response Policy (CCRP) is critical to ensure alignment with leadership's vision and operational capacity. To support these priorities, the Climate Justice Advisor created a high-level framework to prioritize the implementation of systems-wide policy scopes and to establish a district-wide process for tracking progress. The strategic priorities for 2025-2026 included:

- Operationalize the Decarbonization Roadmap
- Increase support systems for student action and empowerment
- Develop systems to integrate climate literacy curriculum
- Increase accessibility and transparency to information on climate action



As the district continues to navigate resource constraints, aligning the scope of this policy with district-strategic initiatives to achieve student outcomes is increasingly important to ensure the sustainability and accountability of the policy scopes.

Major 2025–2026 Policy Milestones at a Glance

Decarbonization:

With the bond-funded high school modernizations maintaining the commitment to a fully electric design, PPS is projected to reach the 2030 goal of reducing GHG emissions by 50% from the 2019 baseline³.

Engagement, Resilience, and Wellness:

The Climate Friendly Public Schools Program, funded by the Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF), has grown this year, with 100% of eligible schools submitting project proposals by the deadline. This program provides \$10,000 to every PPS K-8, middle school and high school for student-led climate action projects. These schools receive these funds every year for five years, starting with the 24-25 school year. Over 2,700 students have been involved in the 25-26 project development, and student groups anticipate engaging nearly 20,000 students in their project activities. Targeted partnerships with community organizations such as the Ecoschool Network and Future Climate Collective provide additional classroom capacity through coordination of adult volunteers to support students in high-need communities for project development and implementation. Projects span a wide array of interests, including student advocacy in Salem, career fairs and workshops, field trips to learn new skills, adding accessible biking infrastructure, and much more. Read more about all of this year's Student Climate Projects on the [interactive dashboard](#).

In addition, the Climate Justice team is working closely with the CCRC Student Representatives to provide support in operationalizing and elevating the Climate Crisis Student Survey (survey open April 1 - 30, 2026).

Pillar One: Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs

To reduce environmental impact and costs, PPS prioritizes investments that achieve the greatest emissions reduction. Designing and constructing new low-carbon schools and renovations that are energy-efficient, resilient, and adaptable is a top priority, as is maximizing reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from district operations, maintenance, transportation and facilities management. Additionally, advancing green schoolyards projects increases carbon

³ Contingent on PGE making progress on their decarbonization goals.



sequestration and resilience to climate extremes. Below are progress metrics towards these goals for the 2025-2026 school year:

- 100% of buildings have completed LED lighting updates
- 100% of leaf blowers transitioned to electric
- 10 PPS-owned electric school buses, 17 contracted electric buses (awaiting delivery, 3 electric buses secured and on the way
- 59 schools participated in Safe Routes to Schools programming, 76% of students in grades PK-8 engaged in a SRTS program
- 100% of schools utilize back-of-house (kitchen) composting
- 50+ waste reduction classroom lessons in collaboration with the City of Portland
- 3+ schools implementation planning for schoolyard vision plan
- 13 schools engaging in creating their schoolyard vision plans this year
- Expanded volunteer schoolyard maintenance events, 15+ events so far this year
- Asphalt removal at 3 schools (Vestal, Peninsula and Chief Joseph)
- Expanded outdoor learning partnerships to 3 additional schools

Pillar Two: Improve Health and Wellness

Climate change disproportionately impacts the vulnerable members of our communities. Implementation of this policy prioritizes serving people with disabilities, communities of color, and other vulnerable populations. PPS is working to address climate-based impacts on health, safety, and wellness of students and employees to build resilience from climate change induced stresses and support preparation for and recovery from these events. Activities to advance this pillar include:

- Piloted emergency cooling measures during Fall heat wave
- Increased communication regarding heat and air quality.
- PCEF SP16 Grant (\$19.9M) scope and plus a new MESD Collaborating for Climate Action Grant (PPS award: \$25.6M) scopes to include thermal comfort, HVAC and greening schoolyards⁴.

Pillar Three: Provide Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

The climate policy commits PPS to educate and empower students as leaders in the just transition to a sustainable city and restorative society. Our goal is for all students to be environmentally literate, and to understand the connections between their daily actions and the natural world by using community-based learning and civic action as a context for meeting academic goals described in the Graduate Portrait. The goal of this initiative is for PPS

⁴ The PCEF CfCA Grant IGA with MESD as the fiscal agent was officially signed in March 2026



graduates to understand the causes and consequences of climate change and climate justice, and have opportunities to practice climate solutions. Notable progress includes:

- With guidance from the Oregon Department of Education K-12 Climate Literacy Standards (published December 2025), this fiscal year the Climate Justice team is supporting a review of the high school science curriculum and supporting the social studies curriculum adoption to identify opportunities to enhance climate literacy.
- Advanced scope to expand the Climate Justice High School Elective from a one-semester course (.5 science credit recovery) to a full year course (1 full science recovery credit).

Scopes that have Shifted:

In the spirit of transparency and accountability, a few scopes shifted this year that were celebrated in previous years due to the need to prioritize capacity and resources to advance student success and decarbonization outcomes. PPS decided not to renew the Envisio contract, removing the PPS CCRP dashboard that was shared at the June 2025 Board meeting. In its place, the CCRP will be included as a strategic priority alongside other district-wide initiatives in a public-facing dashboard. This new platform is still in development, but will be shared with the community when available. In addition, the Climate Justice team made the challenging decision to not continue the Climate Justice Youth Advisor space this year. In previous years, this space has provided a pathway for passionate high school students from across the district to come together to learn about climate justice, share their thoughts and experiences on how PPS is implementing the CCRP, and to plan education and engagement activities for their peers. Should resources and capacity increase in the future, restarting this space will be a top priority.

Moving Forward

PPS has made a targeted effort to operationalize the goals in the CCRP in design standards for construction, advancing the Pillar One policy goals and decarbonization efforts. With Oregon HB 3365 in 2025, ODE is now providing guidance to better advance the Pillar 3 climate literacy goals in alignment with the PPS Instructional Framework. As PPS moves into a year of restructuring and re-alignment, there is an opportunity to more intentionally focus on the Pillar 2 climate resilience and wellness goals. The PPS Climate Justice Advisor will take the Climate Crisis Response Committee recommendations into consideration to develop a strategic implementation proposal for PPS leadership for the 2026-2027 school year.