



Climate Action Committee: Goals, Actions, and Progress

Palomar College Earth Week 2026
April 23, 2026

Dr. Shawn T. Loescher, Assistant Superintendent



Presentation Overview

- About Vista Unified School District
- Purpose
- Principles
- Key Concepts and Definitions
- Composition
- Actions and Strategies
- Results
- Example Meeting Agendas
- Sample Result Presentation
- Questions and Answers



You may be pleasantly surprised that the Vista Unified School District (VUSD) leads the way in San Diego County when it comes to its commitment to sustainability, reduction of noise and air pollution, and energy efficiency. In recent months, a full-electrification resolution was passed by the school board to make sure the District moves as far as possible toward an all-electric environment, to the extent that is practical, on all of our school campuses and at the District offices.

Assistant Superintendent Shawn Loecher, Ed. D., leads our District's Climate Action Committee. Over the last 3 1/2 years, there has been significant progress and positive changes happening toward an eco-friendlier, energy- and cost-savings approach at VUSD. "The board has been amazing in its support of our efforts and they are thrilled with the added bonus of the economic results for taxpayers," says Loecher.

He explains, "It's not only about environmentalism. It's a bigger scope and efficiency effort. We are finding solutions in our community that serve our children and our operations far better than before, and we can get more done while saving money for taxpayers. As the largest employer in Vista, we are therefore, the largest enterprise. We understand the importance of being good stewards and to look at the impact we have on the entire community. For example,



we serve three million meals a school year. That can add up to a lot of waste that goes into our landfills. Now we food sort and work with EDCO to help make biofuels that run their trucks. We also partner with local farmers in a new farm to take initiative to bring locally grown, fresh and nutrient rich food to our students. It's good for the local economy and we save money on shipping costs."

VUSD is also the largest landowner in North County with 500 acres to maintain. By moving to all electric mowers, blowers, and other tools, noise and air pollution levels are reduced, there is less interruption to students and teachers, and there is cost savings in fuel and equipment maintenance fees due to less moving parts involved. "It's a real win-win," says Loecher.

The district has also committed to expanding its fleet of vehicles. Today, 60 percent of its 176 vehicles are now electric. A growing number of E-buses are being added every year due to state incentives and discount programs that make them even more affordable than traditional buses. "There is no fuel to purchase and maintenance costs are way lower. Overall, we have reduced our petroleum purchase by 70 percent," says Loecher. "And half of that goes into electricity."

On top of it all, the District is the largest producer of solar energy in the area. Almost every school including the District office has solar panels and uses LED light bulbs wherever possible.

When looking to the future, Loecher says, "We feel we are getting ahead of the game in our sustainability efforts. Now we are setting our sights on something really big with the construction of an entirely electric school without any reliance on petroleum or natural gas."

The new Baker Elementary School is currently under construction and it is expected that it will save 90 percent off grid. Every heater, A/C, appliance, and piece of equipment will be electric based. And when the school is not in use, the power generated from its solar panels will be pumped back into the grid.

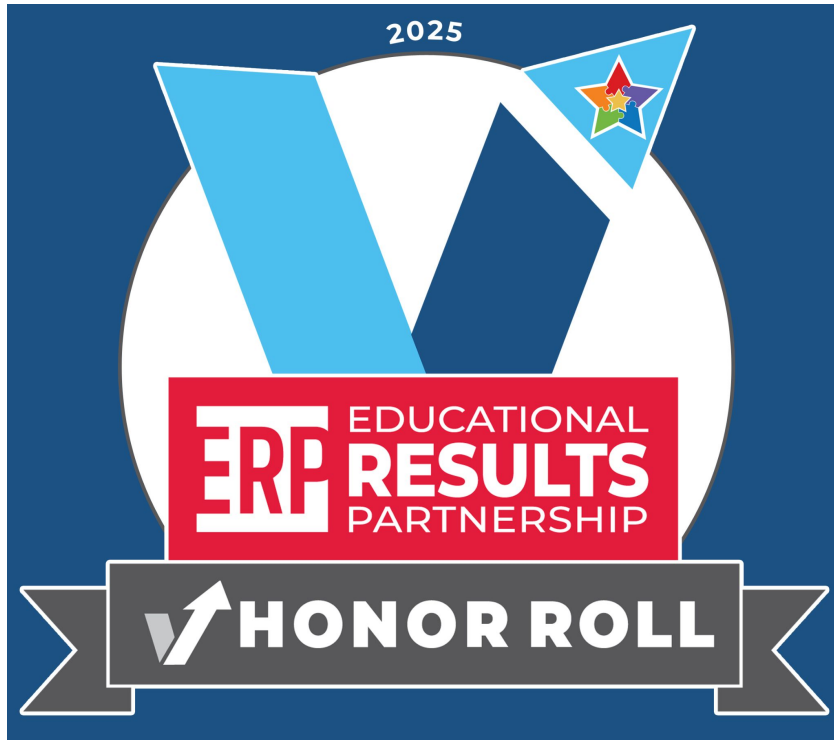
"It's a great example of our City and District collaborating to create something really special," says Loecher. "Baker Elementary will also feature a set of e-chargers so that local residents can charge their e-cars after hours, which is ideal for many of the apartment complexes near the school."

According to Loecher, things are moving so fast that in four months, his state reports will be outdated due to more vehicles arriving and more programs being implemented. If you would like more information, please visit the links provided for public review.





Vista Unified Overview



- **Schools:** 26 (1)
 - Pre-Schools (on exiting sites)
 - T/K-12 Schools
 - Adult School
- **Students Preschool - Adult:** +23,000
 - About 65% of students qualify as socioeconomically disadvantages
- **Scope of Operations:** 35 Square Miles
 - 500 Acres
 - 440 buildings
 - +2 Million Square Feet
 - 193 System Categories
 - 12,257 System Elements



Framework for the Future v 2.0

VISION:

Every student graduates from Vista Unified as a resilient, agile learner and creative problem solver who navigates the world with confidence and kindness and eagerly embraces local and global challenges.



Learner Portrait: Kind and Confident; Curious and Connected; Capable and Knowledgeable



Adult Portrait: Compassionate Champion; Flexible and Innovative Facilitator;
Open-Minded and Equity-Centered Learner




System Portrait: Inclusive Culture Focused on Growth; Joyful, Innovative, Rigorous, and Equitable Learning Environments; Future-Oriented, Forward Thinking; Family and Community Partnerships



VUSD Student Group Improvements 2025

Five at-risk student groups showed improved academic achievement in ELA, Math, Science, and Graduation Rate.

	ELA (DFS points)	Math (DFS points)	Science (Science points)	Graduation Rate
English Learners	+10.2	+6.8	+1.2	+7.5%
Long-term English Learners	+13.6	+13.1	+2.5	+7.8%
Homeless	+12.3	+14.7	+2.2	+4.0%
Students with Disabilities	+11.4	+11.2	+2.1	+6.2%
District Average	+5.7	+4.2	+1.2	+1.9%

 = improvement or growth



Vista Unified is Top Ten in SD County



2026 Best School Districts in the San Diego Area

The 2026 Best School Districts ranking is based on rigorous analysis of key statistics and millions of reviews from students and parents using data from the U.S. Department of Education. Ranking factors include state test scores, college readiness, graduation rates, teacher quality, public school district ratings, and more. SAT/ACT scores have been removed from this year's rankings to reflect a general de-emphasis on test scores in the college admissions process. [Read more on how this ranking was calculated.](#)

OCTOBER 3, 2025, Vista, CA - Vista Unified School District, a Pre-K through 12th- grade school district serving the Vista and Oceanside, California communities, was named **one of San Diego County's Best School Districts** by [Niche.com](#), a national leader in researching schools and connecting students to colleges.

Niche rates districts in nine categories, including academics, teachers, and college prep. Vista USD received an A in College Prep, an A- for Clubs & Activities, Diversity, and Teachers, as well as B+ grades for Academics, Resources & Facilities, and Administration.



Climate Action Committee

- **Committee Purpose:** The Climate Action Committee was established to provide feedback and recommendations as to the establishment of sustainability policies, goals, and practices to reduce waste, carbon emissions, and other factors that may contribute to climate change.
- **Authority:** Advisory to the Superintendent and to the Board of Education.
- **Establishment:** At the regular meeting of the Board of Education on December 14, 2021.



Key Concepts and Definitions: Governance

- **Defining Committee:** A group with a committed (limited) topic
- **Open Meetings:** Brown act compliant meaning these are meetings held in public but are not meetings for the public.
- **Meeting Schedule:** Five times a year with an annual report to the Board of Education.
- **Focused Goals:** Overarching topics of discussion to narrow actions options to be achievable on an annual timeline
- **Composition:** students, teachers, staff, and community partners that are regular participants
- **Governance:** The minority opinion rule/concept





Key Concepts and Definitions: Shared

- **Climate:** The sum of all environmental factors that affect a defined population (sounds, air, sight, resources, etc.)
- **Pollution:** Any byproduct produced by humans harmful to the environment or population.
- **Effective:** The degree to which an action or process achieves the desired purpose of being in place.
- **Efficient:** The degree to which an action or process achieve the desired purpose in a way that requires the least amount of resources to do so effectively.
- **Sustainable:** The ability of an action or process to be ongoing with renewable or contributing resources.





Meeting Structure

- **Call to Order:** Beginning
- **Public Comment:** Three minutes per speaker on topic
- **Welcoming:** Housekeeping
- **Presentation/Discussion:** Guest speakers and review of previous items
- **Activities and Recommendations:** Action items for governance of committee or items for Board consideration.
- **Closing:** Review of actions.

Climate Action Committee



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Council Focus for 2023-2024: [Board Presentation: July 20, 2023](#)

- **Goal 1 - Immediate Action:** Join regional organization such as the clean energy consortium for a power purchasing agreement
- **Goal 2 - District Plan and Alignment:** Develop an official Climate Action Plan aligned with city, regional, and state plans.
- **Goal 3 - Student Engagement and Curriculum:** Engage in(a) an organization such as Climate Action Pathways and (b) adopt a districtwide design challenge on STEAM and/or climate related topics.

Governance: The Committee is subject to all Brown Act Requirements. You can review a copy of our Brown Act meeting protocols by clicking here. This is a Brown Act Committee and is subject to all provisions thereof.

More About the Committee

[Agendas & Reports](#)

[Meeting Summaries](#)

[Membership](#)

[Background](#)

Meeting Agenda and Minutes

— 2025-2026

- **September 9, 2025** | Location: Vista Unified School District, 1234 Arcadia Ave., Vista, CA 92083 | Time: 6:00 p.m. | [Meeting Agenda](#) | [Meeting Minutes](#)
- **December 8, 2025** | Location: Vista High School T Flex, 1 Panther Way, Vista, CA 92083 | Time: 6:00 p.m. | [Meeting Agenda](#) | [Meeting Minutes](#)
- **March 10, 2026** | **CANCELLED** | Time: 6:00 p.m. | [Cancellation Notice](#)
- **May 5, 2026** | Location: TBD | Time: 6:00 p.m. | [Meeting Agenda](#) | [Meeting Minutes](#)

Previous year's meeting minutes and agendas can be retrieved below.

+ 2024-2025

+ 2023-2024

+ 2022-2023





Committee: Membership

- **Anthony Arias** | Vista USD | Manager, Grounds
- **Danielle Christensen** | Parent Teacher Association | Parent
- **Scott Conley** | Vista USD | Manager, Operations
- **Robert Crowell** | Vista USD | Career Pathways, Coordinator
- **Joe Houde** | North County Climate Change Alliance
- **Robert Johnson** | CSEA Representative | Athletics Grounds Lead
- **Janis Jones** | Surfrider Foundation, SD Chapter, and Rise Above Plastics
- **Shawn Loescher, Ed.D.** | Vista USD | Assistant Superintendent
- **Tracy Mangold** | Vista USD | Director of Transportation
- **Rena Marrocco** | Vista USD | Board of Trustee
- **Cassidy McCarthy** | City of Vista | Climate Action Plan Program Administrator
- **Rick McCurdy** | Vista USD | Career Pathways & Internships
- **Mary Moffett** | VTA Representative | Teacher
- **Alexis Panchevre** | Community Advocate, Only Losers Liter
- **Christine Spielman** | Director of Market Development, EDCO
- **Cipriano Vargas** | Vista USD | Board of Trustee
- **Karolyn Wasung** | Vista USD | Director Child Nutrition Services





Committee: Membership - Students

Student Members

- **A., Madeleine** | Mission Vista High School
- **C., Julia** | Mission Vista High School
- **A., Alessia** | Rancho Buena Vista High School
- **M., Angelique** | Rancho Buena Vista High School
- **A., Jayden** | Vista High School
- **W., Mackenzie** | Vista High School
- **O., Sadie** | Vista High School



The Three Areas of Focus

- **Multiyear Overview:** Over three years the VUSD CAC has remind focus on three primary areas of focus with multi-step action items for each area. The areas of focus and limited action steps are intended to advance the initiative through a pull work in progress systems for change. Those areas of focus have been as follows:
 - **Area 1 - Immediate Action:**
What is within our immediate control and authority to support change?
 - **Area 2 - District Plan and Alignment:**
How will we contribute to a regional plan for improved environments?
 - **Area 3 - Student Engagement and Curriculum:**
Can we drive continued change through ongoing student participation and education?



Climate Action Committee Results

- *100% on Clean Renewable Resources for Electricity*
- *100% of Schools on Sorted Waste System*
- *+90% on LED Lighting*
- *90% off Grid Campus (Bobier ES, new design standard)*
- *70% Reduction on petroleum products*
- *+65% of Yellow Fleet on Electric*
- *+20% of White Fleet on Electric*
- *+50% of Grounds Equipment on Electric*
- *+50% on Efficient HVAC Units*
- *+100% of Student Participation in STEM/Climate Annual Event*
- *Action Research Projects on Climate Action Implemented*
- *Goal Alignment with Region*
- *Policy Implementation and Refinements*



Effective, Efficient, and Sustainable Futures



VUSD Leads the Way with Green Initiatives

By Julie Smith Taylor

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Current Fleet by the Numbers

Total Yellow Fleet: 64

- 11 Electric, 42-passenger Wheelchair Buses
- 3 Electric, 54 Passenger Buses
- 13 Electric 72 Passenger Buses
- 1 Electric 9-20 Passenger Buses
- 16 Diesel, 9-20 Passenger Wheelchair Buses
- 8 Diesel, Over 60 Passengers Buses
- 3 Unleaded, Over 60 Passengers Buses
- 5 Unleaded, 9-20 Passenger Buses

White Fleet: 113

- 14 Student transportation vans
- 8 Electric Vans
- 16 Medium Trucks
- 1 Electric Truck
- 5 Heavy Trucks
- 39 Light Trucks
- 11 Gasoline cars
- 7 Electric Cars
- 12 Child Nutrition Services Delivery Vehicles

Total Fleet: 177 Vehicles





Summary:

- VUSD is a significant operational footprint in North County San Diego;
- The District Climate Action Committee supports progress through a defined process;
- Common terminology helps generate shared understanding;
- The areas of focus supports collective action to drive change;
- Results include a reduction on petroleum products, improved learning environments, and more cost effective and efficient systems for sustainable results.



Questions and Dialogue

**Palomar College Earth Week 2026
April 23, 2026**

Dr. Shawn T. Loescher, Assistant Superintendent