



GREEN COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

3:30 p.m.

Attendees: Pamela Cassidy, Beth Fiore, David Rizza, Dr. Jonathan Hart, Jason M. Bohm, Timothy Charleston, Dr. Kristen Higgins, Dr. Jonathan Moss, Dr. Ann DeRosa, Betsy Freeman, Gargi Adhikari, Dr. Neil Hendrickson, Eric Zwerling, Jodi Bettermann

Absentees: Rich Pieros, Don Race, Sarah Pauch, Denise Birmingham, Blair Alber, Steve Foster, Marlene Orlandi, David Livingston, Christina Albrecht, Robert Becker, Victoria Gregorio, Carol Hample

1. Strategic Focus for 2025-2026 School Year

- Mr. Bohm presented the 2025-2026 year in review and closed out the action plans the district has been tracking over the school year. He updated the committee on the referendum, strategic planning, and staff-led green or wellness-based initiatives demonstrating successful partnerships with the Readington community and beyond. Highlights include:
 - Over half of the district referendum projects were sustainable or green in nature, with many started or scheduled.
 - The Strategic Planning Core Team, which met in April, included six Green Committee members. The Strategic Planning Committee will review the proposed district goals for alignment with sustainability, wellness and green objectives.
 - At Readington Middle School, the EcoAmbassadors program won the Community in Nature prize and the school has been awarded more than \$10,000 in grants for outdoor spaces. Betsy Freeman walked her camera through the Tiny Forest behind the middle school, showing the 98 trees that had been planted, and thanked Jason Bohm and Facilities for their support with grant applications and preparing the area.
 - At Holland Brook School, the biodiversity audit started as a pilot program for all schools in the district. Dr Moss invited community members and students to participate using a Wildlife Federation checklist to document the flora and fauna around the school. The HBS audit will be completed by the end of May, and the remaining schools will be scheduled for their biodiversity audits in the fall or next spring. Ms. Adhikari complemented the partnership with local experts, like Mr. Becker, who shared their firsthand knowledge with students. Additionally, Ms. Orlandi sent thanks to HBS and the Readington DPW for the 4th grade Lachenmayr Trail walk, highlighting the true partnership between the community and schools.
 - At Three Bridges School, Mr Becker shared that the grant for the TBS learning woods would be approved in late May. TBS was awarded the Educator of the Year by the NJ Association of Extension 4H Youth Development Professionals.
 - To celebrate Earth Day at Whitehouse School, specials classes embedded green topics in all electives: music, art, Spanish, PE, Library and STEM Lab. Students at WHS partnered with Rutgers master gardeners to plant peas, lettuce, onions, radishes and carrots in their garden and learned how to weed.
 - Mr Bohm shared that across the district, all water stations now include water bottle fillers, plastic bags are being collected to make plastic benches, outdoor air quality is being monitored to limit pollution from buses and idling cars, and students are participating in food tastings and culture sessions, food pantry donations, bicycle safety, the nature and garden club, field trips such as America's Grow a Row, Viking Visionaries, watershed lessons, science fairs, tree giveaways and plantings.

- **Strategic Focus Brainstorming for 2026-2027 School Year**
 - Over the summer, the Green Committee will meet to identify the next school year's objectives in alignment with the three pillars (Pillar I: Reduce environmental impact and costs; Pillar II: Improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff; Pillar III: Provide environmental education). Early brainstorming included:
 - Ms. Betterman suggested applying for cafeteria food waste reduction grants like neighboring Hunterdon County school districts, building upon the data Mr Zwierling previously compiled. Suggestions such as composting, food waste reduction, or raising worms for the school garden were proposed.
 - Multiple committee members asked for a baseline energy report, prior to referendum change implementation, to better understand the energy-use impact of projects such as solar installation and the boiler upgrade. Mr. Zwierling suggested posting energy use on the district website, for transparency with the community.
 - Ms. Cassidy asked to benchmark against other districts to identify best practices and share ideas. Ms. Betterman suggested we could convene a group of Hunterdon County schools, like goHunterdon has done with municipalities.
- **Unfinished / New Business**
 - Mr. Bohm provided a Solect solar update: installation is planned by Dec 2027 or sooner.
- Our next Green Committee meeting shall be in the summer of 2026 for strategic planning with administration and board members.