



# PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS CLIMATE CRISIS RESPONSE COMMITTEE

04/15/2026

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## Meeting Minutes

Pursuant to notice made by posting on the Board's public notices webpage and emailed to persons on the mailing list, a meeting of the Climate Crisis Response Committee was held virtually and streamed live at: [https://www.youtube.com/@pps\\_climatejustice](https://www.youtube.com/@pps_climatejustice)

The materials for this meeting were posted on the [Committee's Webpage](#).

### Attendance

#### Committee Members

##### Present:

Alyssa Koomas (Committee Chair)  
Barbi Alexander  
Leah Almeida (student representative)  
Jane Comeault  
America Tirado  
Alma Valls (student representative)

##### Absent:

Shannon Adams  
Murtaza Balta  
Leah Werner

#### Other Attendees

Kat Davis - Staff Liaison

### Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Alyssa Koomas.

### I. Opening

- **Approval of Minutes:** The committee reviewed and voted to approve the meeting minutes from March 4th and April 1st. A quorum was confirmed.
- **Procedural Reminder:** Committee members were reminded of strict Board Public Meeting Rules regarding asynchronous communication. To remain compliant, members must not use "Reply-All" email threads or engage in multi-user collaborative editing on shared documents outside of a public forum.
  - **Timeline Roadmap:** The chair outlined the upcoming milestones leading to the formal board presentation:
  - **April 21st:** Board Committee Meeting on Facilities, Infrastructure, and Operations. Alyssa will distribute the polished internal draft to CCRC members.
  - **April 28th:** Final report draft to be delivered to the School Board.
  - **May 13th Meeting:** The CCRC will formally present its annual report, key recommendations, and student metrics directly to the School Board.

### II. Public Comment

- No members of the public were present for comment.

### **III. Student Update**

- **Student Climate Summit:** Alma reported that the recent weekend summit at Lincoln High School was a success, featuring workshops, community organizations, and a keynote address by indigenous youth activist Keeya Wiki.
- **Student Survey Engagement:**
  - Leah noted that the annual student survey has faced low engagement this year, drawing only 41 responses initially compared to nearly 300 last year.
  - To boost numbers before the survey closes at the end of April, student representatives are executing a final push using direct teacher emails and Canvas announcements.
  - **Committee Recommendations:** Suggestions to improve response rates included leveraging student leadership teams, utilizing central PPS social media channels, and setting up lunch tables equipped with QR codes and candy (a strategy proven successful at other school sites). Barbi offered to assist with outreach and material distribution upon receiving templates and deadlines.
- **Upcoming Student Showcase:** Kat highlighted the upcoming Student Climate Project Showcase at OMSI on April 23rd (5:30 PM – 7:00 PM). The event will feature student displays, student climate representatives, and Director Wang as a speaker.

### **IV. Board Update**

- **Strategic Reporting Guidance:** School Board Director Eddie Wang joined the meeting to provide oversight guidance. He advised the committee to focus their upcoming annual report heavily on problem-solving, identifying implementation efficiencies, and explicitly stating what the committee needs from the board to succeed. He reminded the committee that the board handles governance, oversight, and budget allocations rather than daily administrative management.
- **Contextualizing the Policy:** Director Wang and Kat noted that because the district has a largely new school board and administration who were not present when the Climate Clean Energy Policy originally passed, the annual report serves as a vital tool to convey what this policy means to the community.
- **PCEF Grant Approval:** It was noted that the School Board officially approved PPS's \$25.6M share of the Multnomah Education Service District (MESD) "Collaborating for Climate Action" grant yesterday.

### **V. Staff Update - Share draft end of year report, upcoming events**

Kat presented a comprehensive administrative progress update to frame the baseline data for the upcoming annual report:

- **Facilities & Emissions Reductions:** High school modernizations (such as Jefferson High School) are tracking toward an Energy Use Intensity (EUI) target of 30. Using an all-electric design, these modernizations project an 85% reduction in emissions compared to current operations, keeping the district on track for its 2030 goals.
- **Grant Funding Allocation:** The \$25.6M in approved grant funding will be structurally allocated toward energy efficiency, HVAC system improvements, thermal comfort, and green schoolyards.
- **Climate Friendly Public Schools Program & Equity Focus:**
  - 100% of eligible schools (39 total) successfully submitted climate project proposals this year, avoiding a policy rule that revokes funding after two years of non-participation.
  - Metrics show over 2,700 students were involved in the planning stages (up from 1,500 last year), with projected outreach reaching approximately 20,000 students district-wide.
  - Funding Clarification: Kat clarified that eligibility for Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) infrastructure projects—which focus on free/reduced lunch metrics and

schools east of 82nd Avenue—is entirely distinct from the student-led initiative program qualifications.

- Programmatic Barriers: Program structures vary wildly by campus. Some middle schools only grant students 10 minutes at lunch per week to work on initiatives. To alleviate staff capacity limits and socioeconomic barriers, PPS partnered with the Sun Schools program and the Latino Network to fund dedicated, external administrative staff.
- **Progress Tracking Against 2024–2025 Recommendations:**
  - **Curriculum Integration:** Climate literacy is being directly integrated into the current Social Studies curriculum adoption process, creating a crosswalk with tribal history goals rather than fighting for isolated resource add-ons.
  - **Staffing Realities:** Due to budget constraints, the sustainability department was reduced from three positions to zero active staff over the past year. A new Program Manager for Energy and Sustainability starts in May, at which point training will begin to prevent the advanced decarbonization tool from "collecting dust." External design contractors expressed excitement about potentially scaling this equity-focused optimization tool for other public jurisdictions as freeware.
  - **Data Platforms:** Due to lost funding for the third-party Envivio platform, PPS is developing an in-house strategic initiatives dashboard to host climate data for free on the updated Climate Justice website ([pps.net/climatejustice](https://pps.net/climatejustice)).
  - **Fleet Expansion:** Student Transportation Director Brandon Coonrod successfully secured grants to expand PPS's electric bus count to 10 district-owned and 17 contractor-owned buses.
  - **Paused Programs:** Due to severe capacity limitations and reduced AmeriCorps fellows, the central office paused the Climate Justice Youth Advisory space and suspended classroom policy presentations for the year.
  - **Volunteer Infrastructure:** Community Care Days are now integrated into the central PPS volunteer vetting page. To bypass bureaucratic barriers for student-led projects, partnerships were forged with the Eco-School Network (introducing parent "change makers" into eight middle schools) and the Future Climate Collective.

## **VI. Committee discussion: Vote on Annual Report Topics**

The committee discussed the optimal structure for the annual report and voted on which proposed topics would be formalized as explicit recommendations or retained as narrative items:

- **Report Structure Consensus:** In alignment with Kat and Jane's suggestions, the committee agreed to keep the report "short and sweet" to respect limited district capacity. The report will feature an overarching narrative section detailing the broad spectrum of topics the committee investigated and engaged with throughout the year, followed by a concise, prioritized list of recommendations.
- **Narrative Section Topics (Approved for Inclusion):**
  - **K-12 Climate Curriculum Standards:** Inclusion of Barbi's update regarding her active collaboration with the Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC) team to submit a PCEF implementation grant. If awarded, it would fully fund a comprehensive K-12 climate curriculum, ensuring one hour of instruction per week for every student. This will live in the narrative as a regular update rather than a directive recommendation, as it sits outside direct CCRC oversight.
  - **District Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy Guidelines:** The report will note the committee's active work on this topic and signal a strong note of caution to the board that unregulated district AI expansion could act as a direct energy impediment to achieving the district's carbon reduction goals. Detailed recommendations from the AI workgroup will be delivered as a standalone memo later in the year to maximize visibility.
  - **Greening the Electrical Grid:** Narrative inclusion tracking the necessity of concurrent advocacy targeting external entities like Portland General Electric

- (PGE) to ensure structural electrification translates to true zero-carbon emissions.
- **Volunteer Infrastructure Constraints:** Recognition of the school-level vetting disconnect and the central administrative realities of volunteer management, highlighting an opportunity for PPS to centrally streamline and automate background checks to lift the lift off individual ecosystems.
  - **Votes on Formal Board Recommendations:**
    - **Proposed Topic 1: Embed Transparency & Engagement Tools** (Securing the public-facing tracking dashboard internally on the main PPS website to insulate it from third-party platform funding failures).
      - Voting Outcome: Approved. Passed unanimously via a show of hands.
    - **Proposed Topic 2: Student Survey Integration** (Establishing a formal mechanism for PPS staff to directly incorporate and respond to student metrics during annual operational planning).
      - Voting Outcome: Approved. Passed unanimously via a show of hands.
    - **Proposed Topic 3: School-Specific Communication Channels** (Utilizing PTSAs and student clubs to push out granular, school-by-school composting and air quality data).
      - Voting Outcome: Tabled/Deferred. Determined to be "half-baked" and a potential strain on staff capacity. Will be deferred for future refinement or integrated into the long-term dashboard goals of Topic 1.
    - **Proposed Topic 4: Advocacy for the PCEF Five-Year Climate Investment Plan** (CCRC acting as community advocates before the Portland City Council to protect public school funding carve-outs).
      - Voting Outcome: Tabled/Deferred. Tabled to allow Jane and Alyssa time to reword the narrative offline, exploring lighter or less prescriptive language regarding funding advocacy.
    - **Proposed Topic 5: Committee Capacity & Onboarding** (Adjusting and standardizing internal processes for recruiting, onboarding, and formatting quarterly data deliveries to optimize committee effectiveness).
      - Voting Outcome: Approved. Passed unanimously via a show of hands.
  - **Summary of Action:** The finalized Board Report will feature three formal recommendations (Topics 1, 2, and 5) supported by a comprehensive operational narrative. Alyssa will synthesize the content into a point-driven draft and email it one-way to members by April 21st. Committee members will submit feedback directly back to Alyssa's email without hitting "Reply-All."

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## Adjourn

Alyssa adjourned the meeting at 7:00 pm.

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## Submitted by:

Kat Davis  
Climate Justice Advisor

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Name of person submitting overview  
Title