



Going Green: a school district pursues environmental sustainability

Environmental & Energy Study Institute
Congressional Briefing
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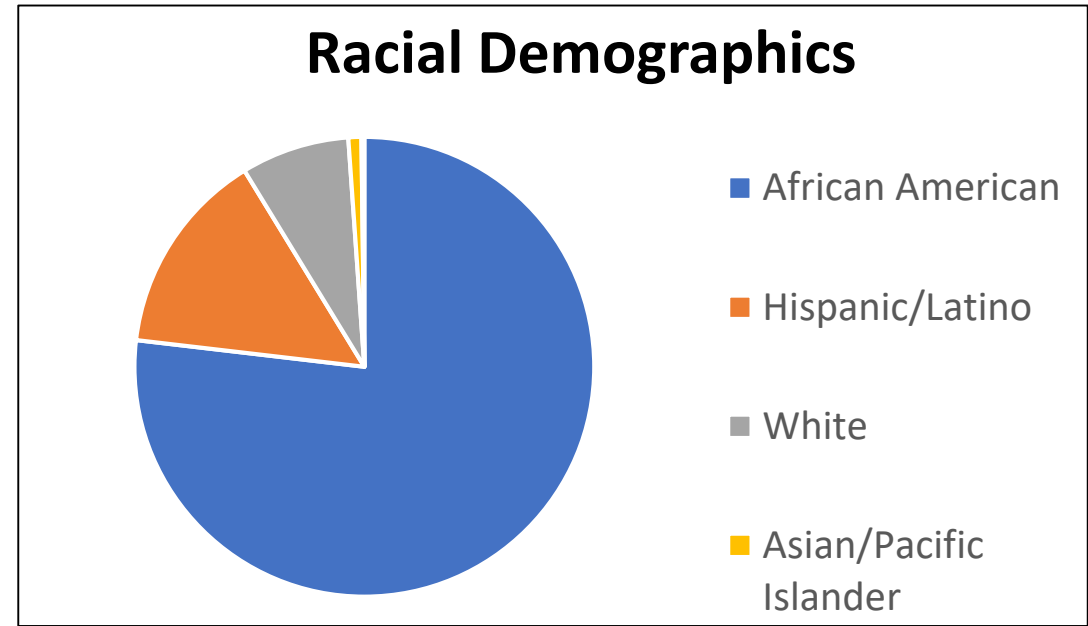
BALTIMORE CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A little bit about us

- 164 schools and programs in 155 buildings
- 17+ million square feet
- 77,800 students
- 61% low income; 100% free lunch
- 11% English Language Learner
- 14% students with disabilities

**Sustainability Policy
first adopted in 2016**

**BALTIMORE CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



Three of our sustainability efforts

1. Sustainability policy & plan: building networks
2. School buildings: construction & operations
3. Environmental experiences:
embedded in the curriculum &
spending time outdoors

1. Our Sustainability Policy & Plan

Sustainability Plan



**Develop
environmentally
literate students**



**Create
healthy
school
environments**



**Reduce and
conserve
natural
resources**



**Improve
school green
spaces**



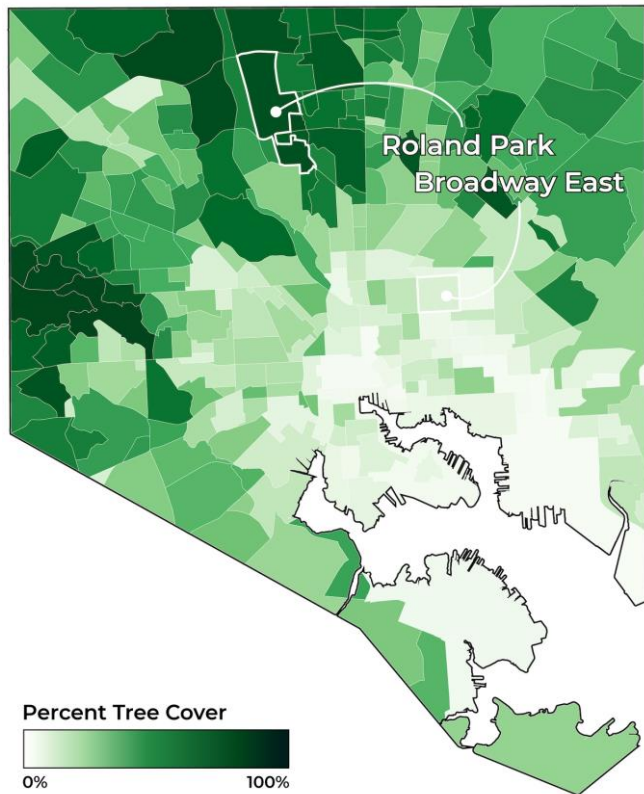
**Engage school
communities**



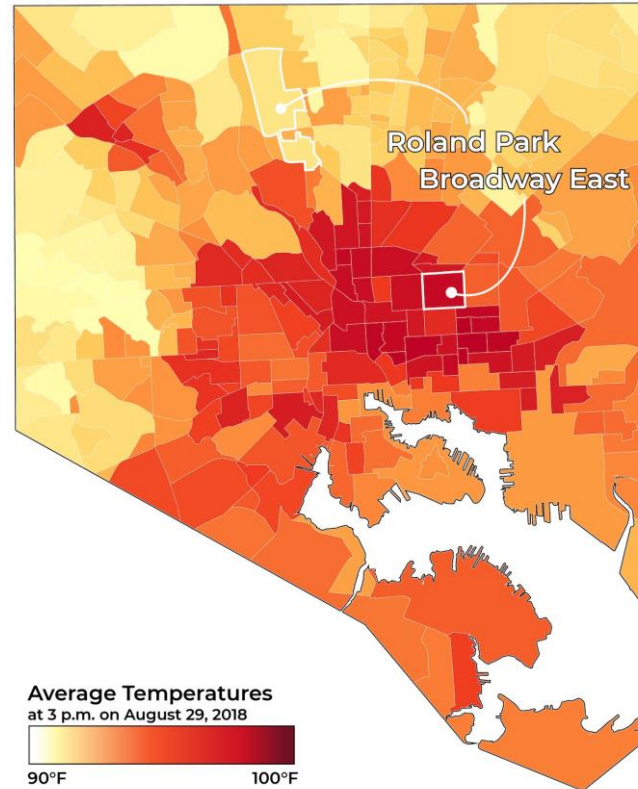
**Build
student
leadership**

The historical, generational & compounding reality of racism

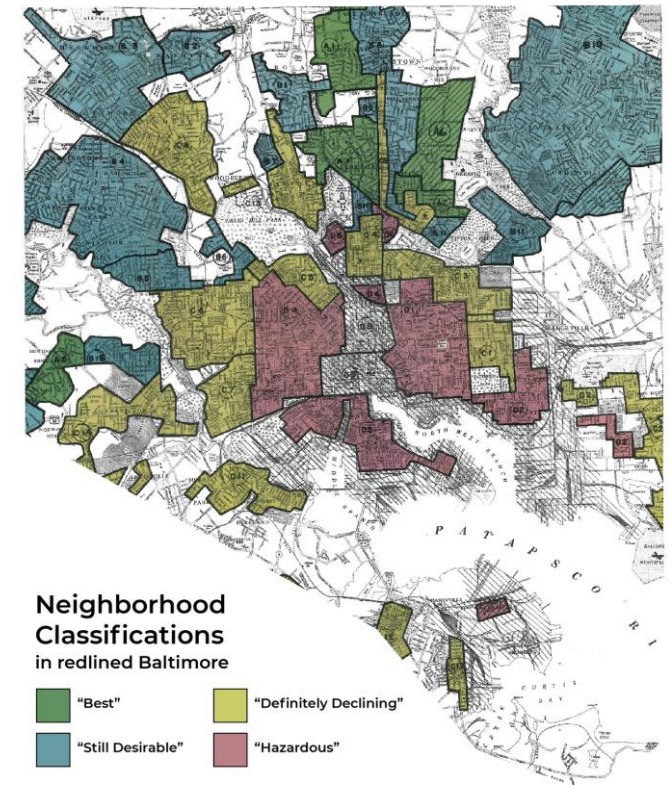
Communities that were redlined (the practice of denying home mortgages to certain areas based on race) in the 1930s have lower tree canopies today. *The Role of Trees – Poor neighborhoods in Baltimore have far less tree canopy than wealthier neighborhoods.* Capital News Service/Howard Center for Investigative Journalism, 9/3/2019. [link.](#)



The more trees (dark green)....



The cooler the temperatures on hot summer days (light orange)



Current level of tree canopy roughly matches 1930s redlining maps

Negative environmental burdens disproportionately impact people of color and people with lower incomes

People of color face disproportionate harm from climate change, EPA says

- USA Today. [Link](#)

Areas with weak health infrastructure – mostly in developing countries – will be the least able to cope [with climate change] without assistance to prepare and respond.

– *World Health Organization*. [Link](#)

The elderly, poor, mentally ill, mobility-constrained, and those with limited experience of flooding were consistently identified as among the most susceptible to flooding effects in Baltimore.

- *Framing the Challenge of Urban Flooding*. [Link](#)

Race Best Predicts Whether You Live Near Pollution

- The Nation. [Link](#)

America is segregated and so is pollution. Race and class still matter and map closely with pollution, unequal protection, and vulnerability.... Reducing environmental, health, economic and racial disparities is a major priority of the Environmental Justice Movement.

– *Dr. Robert Bullard*

Considered the “father” of the environmental justice movement” [Link](#).

Building a network



Communication with school leaders, teachers, staff and partners

[Monthly newsletter](#)

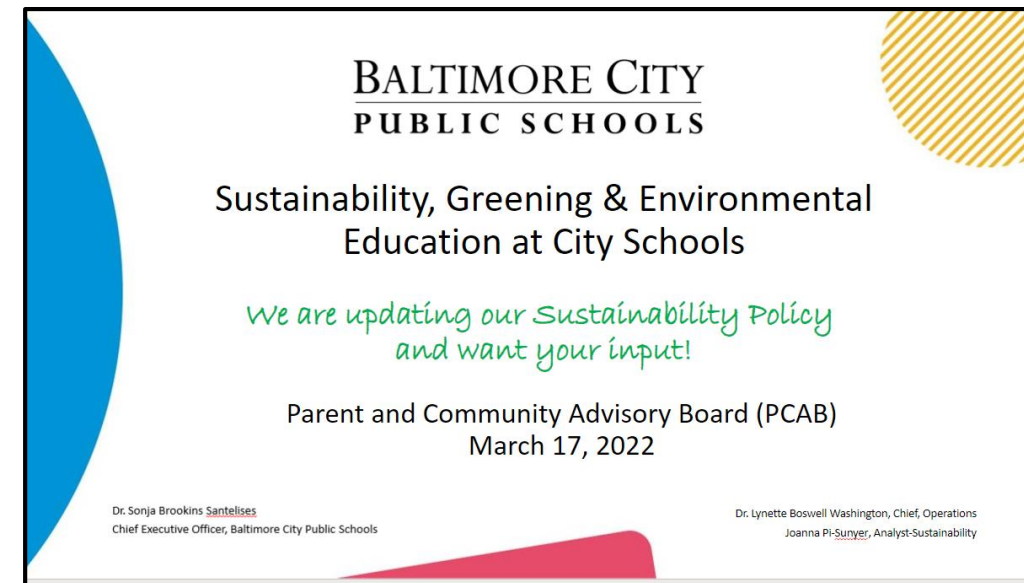
Supporting teachers to lead in their schools

[Green Leader Achievement Units](#)

[Green Healthy Smart Challenge](#)



Presentations, conversations & surveys with stakeholders



2. School Buildings

Net Zero Energy (NZE) Schools

Two NZE schools serving grades K-8 opened in 2020



We
succeeded
because:

- Fertile foundation
- Serendipity
- Funding
- The will to succeed
- Consistent education and tweaking

[The Path to Your Net Zero Energy School
info sheets](#)

21st Century Schools



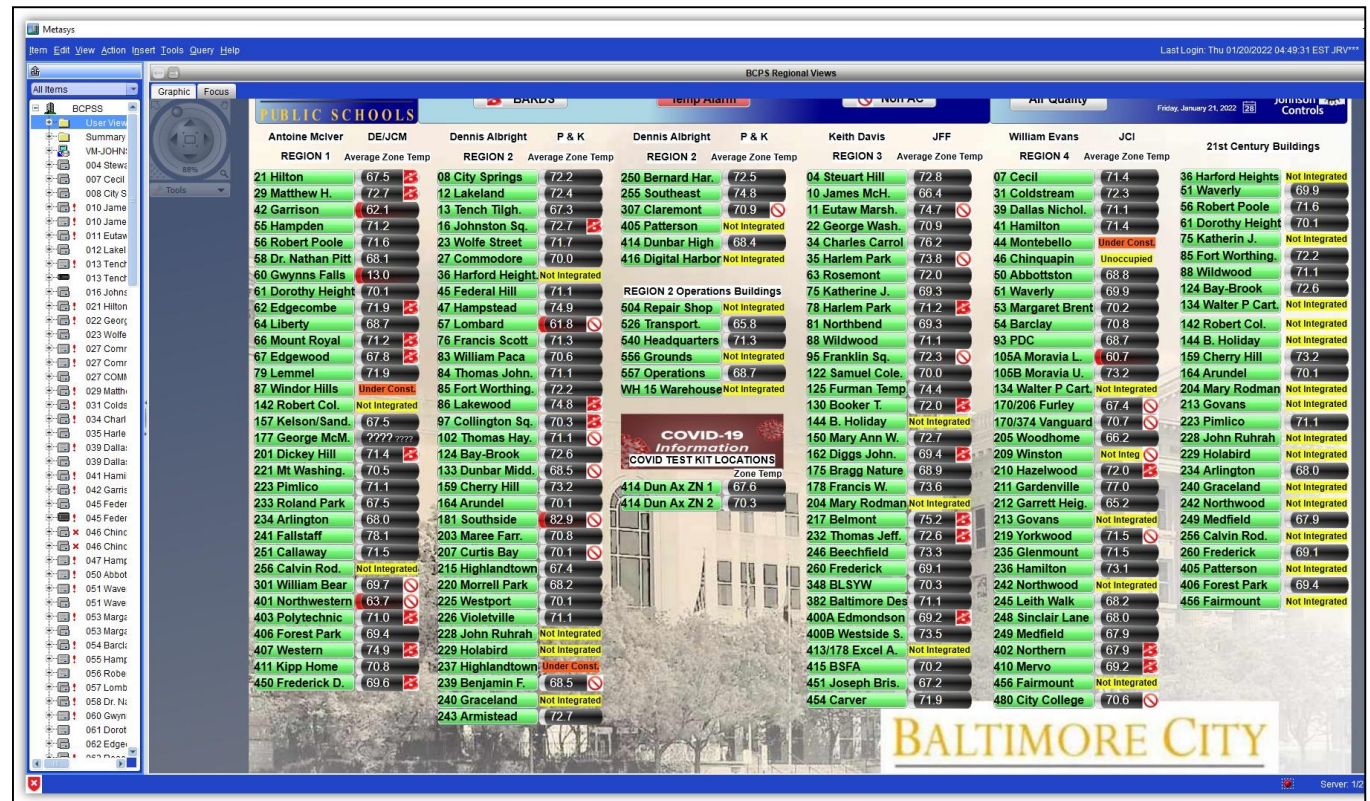
Green Features (selected)

- LEED Silver, Gold & Platinum
- Lower Energy Use Intensity (EUI)
- Good acoustics, light and air
- Light-colored roofs
- Potable water fountains
- Storm water management



Across the District

- Increasing number of Building Automation Systems to control temperatures
- Monitoring utility consumption and costs
- Behavior modification
- Recycling
- Less-toxic cleaning supplies



3. Environmental experiences

Environmental literacy – curriculum-embedded experiences



Grade: 5

Unit: Save the Bay

Partners: Towson Center for
STEM Excellence / Waterfront
Partnership experience

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBo7IhT_sxU



Grade: 6

Unit: Where have all the creatures gone?

Partner: National Aquarium in Baltimore

<https://youtu.be/17ZPrCTCbOA>



Grade: 9

Unit: The Baltimore Watersheds

Partners: Living Classrooms, Baltimore Recreation & Parks,
MD Dept of the Environment, Chesapeake Bay Foundation,
Chesapeake Bay Trust

[Biology Classes Investigate the Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#)

Outdoor experiences




Take it Outside!
Outdoor Learning at City Schools

Bringing students outside can complement classroom learning. Benefits for both students and adults include alleviating stress and anxiety, promoting social-emotional learning, and providing time for creative exploration. Outdoor spaces can support all content areas, including ELA, math, and science. Plus, being outside reduces the chance of transmitting the novel coronavirus. So, consider your school's outdoor space as valuable educational space - and a place to eat lunch! Kids benefit from even short amounts of time outside where they can stretch their legs, move around, and have a different experience.

Outdoor learning supports the Blueprint for Success and the Equity Policy

Many of our students have long faced barriers that restrict their freedom of movement in outdoor spaces, including barriers rooted in systemic racial inequities; infrastructure (absence of sidewalks and parks); concerns about safety; environmental toxins; and hyper-surveillance when in public spaces. **The time is now to disrupt and dismantle all inequities wherever and whenever City Schools has the power to do so.** We can intentionally provide students with safe, engaging, and joyful time outside, something even more restricted during the pandemic. Expanded outdoor movement and exploration support students' academic, physical, and mental well-being. Time outdoors also benefits staff, helping to fortify the foundation they provide to our students.



<p>Neighborhoods lacking access to recreational facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 81% of HISPANIC neighborhoods 70% of AFRICAN AMERICAN neighborhoods 38% of WHITE neighborhoods 	<p>Children living below the poverty line are more likely to be deprived of recess</p> <p>159%</p>
<p>BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS</p>	<p>Adults are physically active at different rates. In</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 states, more than 30% of WHITES are inactive 22 states, more than 30% of HISPANICS are inactive 23 states, more than 30% of AFRICAN AMERICANS are inactive

Source: Active Living Research.org



bit.ly/BCPSSOutdoorLearning

[Farm to School programs](#)



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[Sustainability Resources](#)

