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Catalyzing Climate Action in K-12 Schools

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EESI Congressional Briefing



The education sector at a systems level has not yet been vocal in its role in addressing climate change

AND

Large-scale climate solutions have not considered the role education can play



There are 98,000 schools, each with its own carbon footprint.

To serve children and youth, public K-12 schools have significant energy, food, and transportation needs. In fact, K-12 schools:

- Are the largest consumers of energy for public sector buildings,
- Serve over 7 billion meals annually with related food waste, and
- Use about 480,000 diesel school buses, the largest mass transit fleet in the country.

As public entities, schools need policy to transition to sustainability, AND...





With 50 million children and youth in America's public K-12 schools,

while transitioning to sustainability, they can educate their students about the process...

thereby preparing youth with knowledge and skills to confront the environmental challenges of the future.



Rep. Carlos Curbelo

Vocero LLC

<https://youtu.be/twB3qu22Y1M>



Focus Areas

K12 Climate Action will focus on supporting schools to:

- ***Mitigate.*** Transition to more sustainable operations including energy, transportation, and food use.
- ***Adapt.*** Build resilience in preparation for disruptions and negative impacts related to climate change.
- ***Educate.*** Support teaching and learning to equip children and youth with the knowledge and skills to build a more sustainable world.
- ***Advance equity.*** Center equity to ensure diverse voices are elevated and prioritize the needs of under-resourced urban and rural communities and historically underrepresented students and families.

Listening Tour

Listening Session I: Why Should Schools Move Towards Climate Action?

Listening Session II: How Can Schools Mitigate Their Climate Impacts?

Listening Session III: How Can Schools Adapt to the Impacts of Climate Change?

Listening Session IV: How Can Schools Support Teaching and Learning to Address Climate Change?

Listening Session V: How Can CTE & Out-of-School Programs Address Climate Change?

Listening Session VI: Growing the Movement for Climate Action in Schools



Districtwide switch to renewable energy yields millions in savings

BY JAVIER GIRIBET-VARGAS ON APRIL 22, 2022

INSIDE DALLAS

Dallas ISD's latest sustainability effort is on track to save the district over \$1 million every year.

Student-initiated resolution to power Salt Lake City School District with 100% clean energy adopted

By **Renewable Energy World** - 6.8.2020

'For Our Children's Sake': Miami Dade Schools Commit To 100% Clean Energy By 2030

NYC Aims for Fleet of All-Electric School Buses by 2035

By **Ryan Gray** April 22, 2021

MCPS to become nation's biggest operator of electric school buses

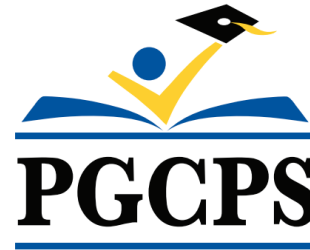




2040

SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

Sustainability, Clean Energy, and Carbon Neutrality



Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) Priority Recommendations

Prepared by the PGCPS Board of Education
Climate Change Action Plan Focus Work Group



K12 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2021



Policy Recommendations



Local Recommendation 2: Develop and implement comprehensive local K-12 climate action plans to consider the needs and opportunities to mitigate, adapt, educate, and advance equity to address climate change.

2.1. Support mitigation strategies to transition the district to clean energy, clean transportation, sustainable food use, and building electrification and to promote healthy learning environments with improved air quality and safe drinking water that are free of environmental toxins.

2.1.A: Assess school infrastructure needs and create plans to ensure all students have access to healthy sustainable learning environments.

2.1.B: Utilize renewable energy.

2.1.C: Transition school bus fleets to electric.

2.1.D: Support healthy sustainable food use.



Local Recommendation 2: Develop and implement comprehensive local K-12 climate action plans to consider the needs and opportunities to mitigate, adapt, educate, and advance equity to address climate change. (cont'd)

2.1. Support mitigation strategies to transition the district to clean energy, clean transportation, sustainable food use, and building electrification and to promote healthy learning environments with improved air quality and safe drinking water that are free of environmental toxins.

2.1.E: Use replacements to support clean energy, transportation, and building electrification.

2.1.F: Provide workforce development and training for school support staff to maximize benefits and success for transition to sustainable operations.

Federal Recommendation 2: Support the development and implementation of local K-12 climate action plans.

Grants from the federal government can be used to help school districts develop and implement comprehensive climate action plans to mitigate, adapt, educate, and advance equity to address climate change. These grants can support planning based on local needs, assets, and interests and collaborative development with the community. They can prioritize community efforts to leverage existing federal, state, and local funding to support the plan's implementation and to coordinate with local climate action plans at the town, city, or county level.

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Appendix



Federal Recommendation 1: Elevate and amplify the role education can play in climate solutions.

The White House, Department of Education, and other agencies can use their platforms, convening power, and resources to help communicate the need and opportunity for the education sector to contribute to climate solutions.

1.1: Build cross-agency collaboration to support the education sector in taking climate action.

1.2: Establish climate change as a U.S. Department of Education priority.

1.3: Center student voice in developing plans to support the education sector in taking climate action.

1.4 Research, recognize, and effectively disseminate best practices gathered across federal agencies to provide states, districts, and schools with easy access to information, research, and strategies to support the sector in moving to climate action.



Federal Recommendation 3: Advance federal policies and programs to support mitigation, adaptation, and resilience:

3.1: Invest in school infrastructure to promote clean energy, clean air, clean water, sustainable schoolyards, sustainable food, and adaptation.

3.2: Support the transition to electric school bus fleets.

3.3: Expand access to locally-grown, healthy, sustainable food and increase opportunities for food donation, food rescue, and composting.

3.4: Increase broadband access for schools and families.

3.5: Establish financing opportunities through tax incentives, bond authority, and revolving loan funds.

Federal Recommendation 4: Advance federal policies and programs to support education:

4.1: Prepare youth for jobs in the clean economy and integrate environmental sustainability across all career pathways through career and technical education.

4.2: Enable professional development and teacher preparation programs to support teaching and learning on climate change, climate solutions, and environmental justice.

4.3: Emphasize the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems and disseminate best practices to build broader awareness of Indigenous knowledge.