

Sustainability Policy (Draft)

The Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) values sustainability and is committed to practices that support a healthy environment for present and future generations, and inspire students to be good stewards of the Earth and its people. The District will prioritize conservation of resources, carbon neutrality, and environmental education in concert with fiscal responsibility, health, and safety including:

Education and Engagement: The District will cultivate an understanding of environmentally sustainable practices and their urgency (i.e. environmental literacy) through incorporation of climate-focused sustainability into our core curricular values. Climate science and climate action will be addressed in a combination of units of study and courses, pedagogies, and through extracurricular organizations, clubs and teams.

Energy and High Performance School Buildings: Energy is a significant expenditure for schools. Districts that target energy efficiency in their building operations and maintenance can typically reduce bills by 5-20%. The District will seek out opportunities for energy conservation, energy efficiency, and deployment of renewable energy technologies to capture both cost savings and reduced carbon emissions. The District will move in the direction of adopting green building standards, such as the following:

- Set an EUI of less than 21 kBtu/ft²/year.
- Commit to Fossil Fuel Free and Zero Emissions on-site.
- Optimize opportunities for passive energy use and “daylighting.”
- Install on-site photovoltaic solar panels and electricity storage to maximize on-site energy usage.
- Provide electric vehicle chargers for employee parking spaces.
- Plan for emergency sheltering to provide resiliency for the broader community during extreme weather events or other grid outages.
- Design new buildings and renovating existing ones as Net Zero Energy Projects.
- Integrate de-construction (as opposed to demolition) and materials reuse to minimize embodied carbon impacts.
- Perform building efficiency assessments on all PSB school buildings.
- Plan opportunities for efficiency projects through the CIP (such as building envelope upgrades, procurement of high efficiency appliances, and transitioning of lighting to LED).
- Provide a healthy and safe environment for students and staff through best practices in protection of indoor air quality (IAQ), as well as adhere to a green cleaning program (where the cleaning solutions contain no known carcinogens).
- Promote conservation campaigns such as “power down Fridays” with the District community.
- Work with and train staff on how to reduce individual plug loads within school buildings.

Schoolyards: Learning outdoors, surrounded by nature, has a diversity of benefits for students and staff alike, including academic success, improved mental and physical health, and education about real-life environmental issues and solutions. Where hardscape is needed, the PSB will minimize carbon-intensive, non-renewable materials such as asphalt. The District will maintain grounds according to best practices in organic management and Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Food Services: The District will promote student health, sustainable agriculture, and environmental restoration through gardening, recycling, and composting, as well as the well-being of food chain workers across all food services activities. The District will promote sustainable food consumption by moving away from unsustainable foods, including but not limited to meat, poultry, and fish. The District will instead move towards and promote plant-based food options, including initiatives such as “Meatless Mondays.” In addition, the District will:

- Provide nutritious vegan entrees at every meal.
- Encourage adoption of the Good Food Purchasing and the Farm to School programs, and prioritize procurement of food and drink produced within 250 miles of the Town of Brookline.
- Promote a transition to all natural and organic foods.
- Cultivate school gardens that could support edible schoolyards.

Waste: The District will promote resource conservation and efficient use of resources, including waste reduction for water, food, paper and other resources. The District will establish business procedures that give priority to environmentally preferable products and practices, and that consider environmental and social costs as well as short-term financial costs. The District will commit to reducing its waste through a variety of methods, such as:

- Supporting the Town’s Zero Waste initiative through professional development, zero waste campaigns, waste audits and PTO presentations.
- Working with staff to introduce the 4 R’s (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) to students.
- Providing composting opportunities at every school.
- Initiating a program to donate appropriate wasted food to the Brookline Food Pantry.
- Reducing single use food and drink service items served on-site (e.g. not distributing single use water bottles at events).
- Installing additional water bottle filling water stations.
- Installing automatic shut-offs at sinks.
- Evaluating irrigation techniques and potential for irrigation upgrades.
- Exploring the feasibility of water catchment projects.
- Transitioning from paper to electronic forms of writing, where appropriate.
- Purchasing paper made from recycled materials.
- Installing electronic hand dryers.

Transportation: The District will promote and explore measures supporting transport sustainability, such as expanding its electric vehicle fleet, retrofitting existing vehicles with technologies that reduce emissions, reducing idling time and educating vehicles at drop-off and pick-up about no-idling laws, adjusting bus schedules and routes to improve travel efficiency, reducing unnecessary trips, reducing solo automobile trips to shared destinations, promoting use of public transportation, and encouraging walking, cycling, and use of human powered vehicles or other pedestrian conveyances where appropriate. The District will collaborate with town and state partners to maintain a transportation infrastructure at or near school properties that supports sustainable modes of travel.