



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

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Date: January 31, 2022

To: School Board

From: Aaron Presberg, Senior Program Manager, Energy & Sustainability
Mary Kane, Senior Legal Counsel

Subject : Staff Analysis Report to the Board- New Policy

Policy # and Name: Climate Crisis Response, Climate Justice, and Sustainable Practices
Policy X.XX.XXX-P

BACKGROUND

The initial draft of a Climate Crisis policy was presented to the Policy Committee on December 17, 2020, by members of the PPS Climate Justice Committee and the Eco-School Network, which had been engaged in discussions with PPS staff about the need for the District to respond to the climate crisis in a more robust and strategic manner. Although the coalition conducted stakeholder engagement with some community partners, the committee asked Shanice Clarke, Director of Community Engagement, to conduct additional listening sessions with students and communities of color. The policy spent many months in committee and, in response to the input from multiple stakeholders, underwent multiple revisions. Discussions of the policy were held on 1/4/21, 1/25/21, 2/17/21, 4/26/21, 5/10/21, 9/8/21, 10/19/21, 12/1/21, 12/15/21, 1/21/22. On January 26, 2022, the committee approved sending the policy to the full Board for consideration.

This policy focuses on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, developing climate justice curriculum, building District-wide practices to encourage sustainability, and engaging communities in this mission. The policy also emphasizes the leadership role of our students in meeting the goals outlined in the policy and establishes a board-appointed committee and reporting requirements to the committee and the Board.

RELATED POLICIES/BEST PRACTICES

Resource Conservation 3.30.080-P, Environmentally Sustainable Business Practices 3.30.082-P; Integrated Pest Management Program 3.30.083-AD; Elimination of Mercury 3.30.084-AD

ANALYSIS OF SITUATION

The district has had a robust energy and sustainability management program for over two decades, which has included ongoing energy efficiency upgrades (lighting and HVAC retrofits), green schoolyard improvements (tree plantings, depaving, garden installations, etc.), and waste management (landfill diversion through waste reduction, recycling, and food waste collection). More recently, school improvement bonds passed in 2012, 2017, and 2020 have enabled the

district to construct new, high-performance, and resilient schools, further contributing to our stock of energy-efficient buildings.

In 2016, the board unanimously passed Resolution No. 5272, leading to the development of a climate change and climate justice curriculum program in the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL). This policy takes all of this ongoing work and elevates it to the next level, targeting GHG emissions reductions while centering student education, climate justice, and impacts to frontline communities.

FISCAL IMPACT

Many measures outlined in this policy are already underway; however, for the District to meet the goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2040, there will need to be significant and intentional budget allocations. There has been some FY 2022-23 budget preliminarily allocated from the Facilities & Asset Management department for a GHG emissions baseline analysis, which will tell us where we stand and where we will need to focus our efforts on the operations front. However, the District will need additional funds allocated across various departments including, but not limited to, Climate Justice, Community Engagement, Career & Technical Education, Facilities & Asset Management, Maintenance, Nutrition Services, Purchasing & Contracting, Strategic Partnerships, Office of Teaching and Learning, and Transportation.

In order to successfully move forward with implementation, the District also will need to continue to pass voter-approved bonds on a four-year cycle and allocate general fund budget specifically for climate change mitigation and climate justice measures outlined in the policy. Additionally, there are fiscal impacts that may be out of the District's control, such as the capacity of the local construction industry and contractor pool to support decarbonization projects district-wide and the market availability and demand of electric vehicles.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2019, members of the PPS Climate Justice Committee and the Eco-School Network began meeting with PPS staff to review and discuss District response to climate change. Out of these meetings, the community partners developed a proposed policy outlining specific goals for the District to respond to the climate crisis. Once the policy was brought to the policy committee, the District did additional outreach to students and communities most impacted by the climate crisis.

RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE LENS

The policy committee applied a social justice/racial equity lens as it made revisions to this policy. The committee and stakeholders recognized the inequitable impact climate change has on frontline communities and put this concern at the center of discussion as it developed the policy goals.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION/EVALUATION and COMMUNICATION PLAN

Staff will develop a communication plan within the month to disseminate the policy to our community. Staff will also continue to work on internal processes and guidance to staff to create a culture of sustainability and continuous improvement. The creation of the Board-appointed climate committee will provide opportunities to monitor the District's progress and develop creative approaches to achieve the policies goals.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the revised policy.

As a member of the PPS Executive Leadership Team, I have reviewed this staff report.

_____ *(Initials)*

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Redline copy of Policy
- B. Clean copy of Policy