

# POLICY

## BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

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### SUSTAINABILITY

#### I. Purpose

- A. The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners (“Board”) acknowledges the importance of the environment and natural resources to our collective economic and social well-being.
- B. The Board is committed to building and operating Baltimore City Public Schools (“City Schools”) facilities in an environmentally responsible manner to create healthy places to learn and work in order to improve student and staff opportunities for success.
- C. The Board aims to educate and empower students to be leaders in creating a sustainable city and society. The Board wants all students to be environmentally literate, to understand the connections between their daily actions and the environment, to use the environment as a context for achieving academic goals and civic action, to access career opportunities in the developing green economy, and to find inspiration and joy in the natural world.
- D. The Board is committed to creating an environmentally sustainable school system that will help preserve our environment, conserve our financial budget, and promote students’ academic and social well-being, recognizing that schools are woven in the fabric of Baltimore City and in a unique position to make substantial contributions toward the goal of a sustainable world for future generations.
- E. Consistent with Board Policy ADA (Equity), the Board is committed to responsible and equitable environmental stewardship to address air pollution, climate change, and other environmental injustices, which disproportionately impact low-income communities and communities of color in Baltimore and beyond.
- F. The Board acknowledges that human-induced climate change is underway and commits to engaging staff, students, and other stakeholders in limiting further change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and by prioritizing investments that maximize adaptation, increase resilience, and mitigate the effects of climate change, as well as promoting efficient, equitable, and sustainable use of land and resources.
- G. The Board will incorporate sustainability priorities into decision-making processes at all levels, based on equitable and strategic deployment of resources to address climate-

based impacts on health, safety, and wellness and to achieve more energy-efficient and cost-effective school operations.

## II. Definitions

A. *Baltimore Sustainability Plans* – Includes, but is not limited to:

1. Baltimore City Sustainability Plan – Adopted in 2019, it aims to reduce the City’s energy and water use, reduce waste production, and maximize the reuse and recycling of materials, among other goals, through a racial equity lens;
2. Baltimore City Climate Action Plan – Adopted in 2012, it aims to reduce the City’s greenhouse gas emissions, water consumption, and vehicle usage, among other goals; and
3. Disaster Preparedness Project and Plan – Adopted in 2018, it aims to prepare the City’s built environment, infrastructure, and energy sources for the impacts of climate change.

B. *Benchmarking* – A system to understand and evaluate the current position of an organization in relation to best practices and to identify areas in need of improvement. For the purposes of this policy and its associated administrative regulations, benchmarking refers to the collection, monitoring, and setting of goals about sustainability, including, but not limited to, utility use and costs.

C. *City Schools facilities* – Buildings and grounds, parking lots, playing fields and fixed equipment located on real property and used to provide or support an educational program for students, where the Board is responsible for maintenance, utilities (such as gas, fuel oil, steam, water, sewage, electricity, and trash removal) or any additional operating costs.

D. *Conservation* – The careful use, management, and protection of natural resources and the environment to prevent depletion, pollution, and waste.

E. *Council of Great City Schools* – A nonprofit membership organization of large urban school districts, of which Baltimore City Public Schools is a member. The organization tracks Key Performance Indicators (“KPIs”) of its members.

F. *Energy* – For the purposes of this policy and the accompanying administrative regulations, *energy* consists of electricity, fuel oil #2, natural gas, diesel, and steam.

G. *ENERGY STAR* – A program of the US Environmental Protection Agency that certifies products and buildings as being energy efficient and thereby helps save money and protect the climate through superior energy efficiency.

- H. *Energy Use Intensity (“EUI”)* – A measure of a facility’s energy use per square foot per year, which allows facilities of different sizes using different energy types to be compared. It is calculated by dividing the total energy consumed by the facility in one year, measured in kBtus (British thermal units), by the total gross floor area of the building.
- I. *Environmental literacy* – As set forth in Maryland’s Environmental Literacy Standards, environmentally literate students understand environmental and physical processes and systems, including human systems. They analyze global, social, cultural, political, physical, economic, and environmental relationships and weigh various sides of environmental issues to make responsible decisions as individuals and as members of their community and citizens of the world. City Schools also seeks to promote *environmental literacy* among staff, parents/guardians, and other community stakeholders.
- J. *Environmentally preferable purchasing and management practices* – An approach to using and reusing materials more productively over their entire life cycles, including raw material acquisition, production, use/reuse/maintenance, and end of life management. This approach seeks to use materials in the most productive way with an emphasis on using less, reusing items whenever possible, eliminating to the extent practicable the use of toxic chemicals and products, and reducing materials’ environmental impact, including reduced packaging and buying locally, in an effort to ensure City Schools has sufficient resources to meet present and future needs.
- K. *Environmental product and service label standards* – Labels for products and services that were developed and awarded by an impartial third-party, were developed in a public and transparent process, and that use specific and meaningful criteria. These include, but are not limited to Design Lights Consortium (for LED light fixtures and replacement bulbs), ENERGY STAR (for appliances, HVAC equipment, light fixtures and bulbs, water heaters and coolers, food service equipment, and vending machines), and Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT, for computers, monitors, copiers, printers, and televisions).
- L. *Green* – A generic term that applies to products and practices that protect both the environment and human health.
- M. *Green school* – A school building or facility that provides a healthy environment conducive to learning while saving energy, water, resources, and money, and promotes environmental literacy.
- N. *Green cleaning program* – The practice of using cleaning supplies and practices that, at a minimum, comply with the Maryland Green Cleaning Law and that protect indoor air quality, human health and the environment.
- O. *Green cleaning supplies* – Products and equipment intended for routine cleaning and building maintenance that have reduced effects on human health and the environment

compared to competing products that serve the same purpose. Many are certified to contain low-toxicity levels and be biodegradable, or have a low volatile organic compound (VOC) content, reduced packaging, and/or low lifecycle energy use as well as positive product performance. *Green cleaning supplies* include, but are not limited to:

1. Recycled-content or compostable bags and liners;
  2. Certified low-toxicity cleaning chemicals;
  3. Certified low-toxicity floor maintenance products;
  4. Certified low-toxicity hand soaps devoid of antibacterial ingredients;
  5. High performance janitorial equipment (e.g., microfiber mops), and powered equipment (floor polishers);
  6. Recycled-content janitorial paper products and high-efficiency hand dryers;
  7. Non-toxic cleansing wipes; and
  8. Sanitizers and disinfectants – due to their ability to kill pathogens, these typically are not certified as green; however, less-toxic yet still effective products exist.
- P. *Green Seal* – A green product labeling program for cleaning products, hand soaps, floor maintenance chemicals, janitorial paper products, and other items, operated by a non-profit organization. It is an acceptable standard under the Maryland Green Cleaning Law.
- Q. *Key Performance Indicators (“KPIs”)* – A system for an organization to define and measure goals and achievements. The Council of Great City Schools establishes energy, water, and waste KPIs for schools.
- R. *Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (“LEED”)* – A green building certification program that recognizes building strategies and practices. Building projects must meet required and optional design, construction, and operation items to earn points, thus achieving different levels of certification (Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum).
- S. *Major Renovation* – Any project with a scope of 7,500 square feet or greater; reuses the building shell for the new construction; and involves the replacement of the heating and cooling systems, electrical and plumbing systems.
- T. *Maryland Energy Laws* – Includes, but is not limited to, EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act of 2008, Md. Code Ann., Public Utility Companies, § 7-211; Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act of 2016, Md. Code Ann., Environment, § 2-

- 1201 through § 2-1211; Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards, Md. Code Ann., Public Utility Companies, § 7-701(i); the Maryland High Performance Building Act of 2008, Md. Code Ann., Education, §§ 5-301, 5-312, 5.312.1, and Md. Code Ann, State Finance and Procurement, §§ 3-602, 3-602.1, as well as subsequent amendments and updates to these laws.
- U. *Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards* – The Code of Maryland Regulation requires each local school system to provide students with a comprehensive environmental literacy program at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The standards are: Environmental Issue Investigation and Action, Human Dependence on Earth Systems and Natural Resources, Environmental Impact of Human Activity, Consequences of Environmental Change on Human Health and Well-Being, and Individual and Collective Responses to Environmental Change.
- V. *Maryland Green Cleaning Law* – A state law, codified at Md. Code Ann., Education, § 5-112(e), that requires county boards of education to write policies and guidelines on the procurement of green cleaning supplies that: require the use of supplies that meet nationally-recognized environmental certification requirements; establish green cleaning practices (including storage, application, frequency of use, and disposal of supplies) to ensure that school building occupants do not suffer any adverse health effects as the result of these practices; and require staff training on implementing the policy.
- W. *Maryland Engine Idling Law* – A state law, codified at Md. Code Ann., Transportation, § 22-402, that states a motor vehicle may not be allowed to idle for more than five consecutive minutes when the vehicle is not in motion, with the following exceptions: the vehicle is stopped due to traffic conditions or mechanical difficulties; the engine is operating heating, cooling, or auxiliary equipment to bring the engine to the manufacturer’s recommended operating temperature; or to accomplish the intended use of the vehicle.
- X. *Maryland Recycling Law* – A state law, codified at Md. Code Ann., Environment, § 9-1703, that requires every county in the state, including the City of Baltimore, to develop a recycling strategy for its schools.
- Y. *Recycling* – Recycling is the process of collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown away as trash and turning them into new products. In Baltimore, many items may be co-mingled (paper, cardboard, glass, plastic, metal) and others should be separated (light bulbs, electronics).
- Z. *Renewable energy* – Energy which is regularly replenished, such as solar, wind, waves, and geothermal heat, in contrast to non-renewable energy such as fossil fuels, which draw on finite resources that will eventually dwindle and become too expensive or too environmentally damaging to retrieve.

- AA. *Safer Choice* – A green product labeling program for cleaning products, hand soaps, and other items, operated by the US Environmental Protection Agency. It covers cleaning, floor maintenance products, hand soaps, and de-icing chemicals. It is an acceptable standard under the Maryland Green Cleaning Law. Prior to 2015, the name was Design for the Environment.
- BB. *Sustainability* – An approach to living whereby the needs of the current generation are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, as defined by the Brundtland Commission of the United Nations in 1987.
- CC. *Sustainability Point of Contact* – A school-based staff person designated by each principal by September 30 of each school year to oversee sustainability efforts at the school.
- DD. *Toxic chemicals and products* –Substances that can cause adverse health effects such as asthma, cancer, or reproductive harm in humans or other animals if they are inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through the skin.
- EE. *UL EcoLogo* – A green product labeling program for cleaning products, hand soaps, floor maintenance chemicals, and other items. It is an acceptable standard under the Maryland Green Cleaning Law.
- FF. *WaterSense* – A green product labeling program for water-using devices (faucets, toilets, etc.), operated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- GG. *Zero Energy Ready* – A building that is designed and built to be very energy efficient, and to which renewable electricity generation can be added in the future, such that annual electricity consumption equals annual on-site electricity generation.

### III. Policy Standards

- A. The Board will intentionally, equitably, and progressively reduce its environmental impact and costs, while improving health and wellness, and provide effective environmental and sustainability education. The Board will promote effective educational opportunities that will allow for students and staff to understand the consequences of human-induced environmental change on individual and collective health and well-being and consider the environmental impact and costs of decision-making at all levels.
- B. City Schools shall develop a Sustainability Plan (“Plan”) that establishes performance metrics and goals. The Plan shall be updated every three years. It shall include, but is not limited to goals and metrics that:
  - 1. Develop environmentally literate students;

2. Create healthy school environments;
  3. Reduce and conserve natural resources;
  4. Improve school green spaces;
  5. Engage school communities;
  6. Build student leadership; and
  7. Address environmental justice.
- C. This policy and the accompanying administrative regulations shall apply to every school, including operator-led schools, unless an exception is noted or an item is not required under city, state, or federal law.
- D. The sustainability initiatives undertaken by City Schools in alignment with this policy also further the goals of Board Policy ADF (Wellness, Nutrition, and Physical Activity). On the physical side, sustainability includes improving indoor air quality, educating students about growing healthy food, and bringing kids outside to explore and exercise. On the academic side, sustainability includes engaging students in hands-on learning about science and social studies, as well as their role in their ecosystem. And on the mental health side, sustainability includes giving students and staff access to safe, healthy, and peaceful indoor learning spaces and outdoor experiences.

#### **IV. Implementation Strategies**

- A. Each office and department in City Schools shall develop annual sustainability priorities aligned with City Schools' strategic priorities, which shall be incorporated into the Sustainability Plan.
- B. Each school shall develop and implement sustainability initiatives and incorporate environmental literacy standards into their educational programming.
- C. The CEO/designee shall establish a monitoring and implementation process for the Sustainability Plan.

#### **V. Compliance**

The CEO/designee shall submit an annual Sustainability Report to the Board by December 15 that shall include progress towards goals established in the Sustainability Plan, as well as the targets and metrics for energy conservation and other requirements, as required by Maryland Energy Laws and as set forth in the accompanying regulations. The Sustainability Plan shall be available to the public on the City Schools website.

#### **VI. Legal and Policy References**

A. Legal Authority

Md. Code Ann., Education, § 5-112(e)  
Md. Code Ann., Education, §§ 5-301, 5-312 (High Performance Building Act)  
Md. Code Ann., Education, § 5.312.1  
Md. Code Ann., Education, § 7-117  
Md. Code Ann., Environment, § 2-1201 through § 2-1211 (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act of 2016)  
Md. Code Ann., Environment, § 9-1703 (Maryland Recycling Law)  
Md. Code Ann., Public Utility Companies, § 7-211 (EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act)  
Md. Code Ann., Public Utility Companies, § 7-701(i) (Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards)  
Md. Code Ann., State Finance and Procurement, §§ 3-602, 3-602.1 (High Performance Building Act of 2008)  
Md. Code Ann., Transportation, § 22-402 (Maryland Engine Idling Law)  
COMAR 13A.03.02.03 (Environmental Literacy Standards)  
COMAR 13A.04.17 (Environmental Literacy Standards)  
Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards  
Baltimore City Sustainability Plan of 2019  
Baltimore City Climate Action Plan of 2012  
Baltimore City Disaster Preparedness Project and Plan of 2018

B. Policy References

Related Board Policies: ACA, ADA, ADF, DJA, FKA, IGE, IHBJ, IKEB, JBA, KCA

C. Administrative Regulation References

ACA-RA, ADF-RA, ADF-RB, ADF-RC, ADF-RD, ADG-RA, ADG-RB, ADG-RC, DJA-RA, IGE-RA, IHBJ-RA, IKEB-RA, JBA-RA, KCA-RA

Sponsoring Officer: Chief Operating Officer

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