



## Vancouver Public Schools

### Sustainability and Conservation Plan

The Vancouver Public Schools (VPS) Sustainability and Conservation Plan (the “Plan”) utilizes industry standards and educational activities to build a culture of conservation that permeates throughout the district. Why do we want a Sustainability and Conservation Plan at Vancouver Public Schools (VPS) and what does it mean when we hear the words sustainability or going green? Sustainability or ‘going green’ can have different meanings to different people and work groups. In this plan we refer to green when referring to issues that impact natural resources. This culture changing Sustainability and Conservation Plan will address how our schools and our district can educate our students and staff, and improve our sphere of educational influence in natural, human, and social capital to **meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**

Vancouver Public Schools Sustainability and Conservation Plan starts with educational responsibility and ends with savings – both fiscal and environmental. Sustainability awareness will present opportunities for life long habits for our students, staff and partners long after the school day has ended, while optimizing operational costs. As we continue to be constrained by district budget realities, we have an opportunity to do things differently by way of partnerships with the community, partnerships with our peers and by simply learning about the benefits of using less energy, less fuel and less product. Each of us can help our planet and our educational system in times of cost crisis as an opportunity and catalyst for change. Therefore in this time of opportunity, we will examine process and practice, be more cognizant of our actions, use less and, therefore waste less.

Implementing an initiative to “green” existing schools across a district requires a comprehensive plan that integrates two broad processes: One focused on how each school facility will optimize and improve upon their existing practices and performance and the other on adopting sustainable operations and maintenance best practices. Coordinating these two processes, calls for dedicated, informed champions who are capable of leading an integrated approach to improving operational effectiveness, awareness and education.

VPS researched local and national models of conservation in order to pull together fractured and often independent silo approaches to conservation across the district, and integrate a plan that supports a culture shift for a comprehensive approach to sustainability and conservation. VPS Sustainability and Conservation Plan was developed thru a deep analysis of VPS internal structure and modification of best practices in each of the following programs across the country: the Department of Energy STAR program; the US Green Building Council’s Green Existing Schools Project Management Guide; and Washington Green Schools. In addition to national programs, the Sustainability and Conservation Plan was shaped thru local connections and resources such as the ESD 112 and Evergreen Public. It is a combination of this research and internal VPS existing conservation efforts that has shaped the Plan.

It is important to note that the district has been doing a number of successful progressive sustainable practices across multiple disciplines over the past decade, however, where the power of this Plan lies is in multiple congruent synergistic approaches to sustainability framed by the Board of Directors policy and regulation on natural resource management and conservation. For school sites, the Plan seeks to harness the desires of students and staff around sustainability and allow these champions for green to have a well supported voice in their school. For support staff, the plan emphasizes the alignment of best practices, general maintenance, major maintenance and capital improvements schedules. Through out the Plan we are looking at measurable outcomes by creating connections with people from varied backgrounds, reinforcing, and conducting our work with the principles of *below the green line* (Identity, Information and Relationships). The work of the Plan will provide experiences of commonality between students, staff, operations workers, and community partners while seeking to build positive, contagious, successful teams that are committed to conservation. The essence of the plan is about building culture. To build the culture of conservation we must achieve the desired experiential outcomes which allows for more creativity and sustainability for our rational outcomes.

This approach does not dictate an added program; the Vancouver Public Schools (VPS) approach to sustainability and conservation is about modeling and encouraging sustainable behaviors, teaching the next generation of citizens to be sustainable and being intentional in our maintenance and operational practices. Therefore it is an important distinction to communicate – Vancouver Public Schools does not have a “program”, rather VPS has a **Plan** and what follows is the vision for that Plan. From past experience we have seen programs come and go with great effort and mixed results. Building a culture of sustainability rather than a program, we will ensure that capacity is built among all and there are shared understandings and practices around conservation.

After the Board of Directors approved the Policy and Regulation on Conservation, The TEAM has been working diligently to identify educational opportunities and implement sustainable procedures into daily operations while cultivating a culture of conservation among staff and students. We have effectively incorporated Utility Manager, an on-line energy tracking program, and reviewed guiding principals for conservation across the district. At the school level we build programs for sustainability based on the Department of Energy and Washington Green Schools philosophy for sustainable program and from there, we build a framework for success in Green Teams– the Vancouver way.

100% of our schools are working toward conservation in one form or another – either thru an official green team or embedding green practices throughout their day. Through the efforts of students, teachers, principals, building operators and support form the district maintenance, custodial support services, and operations team several schools are operating at an exceptional level of efficiency labeled as ENERGY Excellent. Key benchmarking is critical to evaluating the progress of our green initiatives. Two key benchmarks for VPS are Energy Excellence and Washington Green Schools participation. Currently we have 28/35 school sites meeting the energy star rating and 22 of our school sites are formal members of the Washington Green Schools program.

The list of partnerships integrating with students and operational best practices varies from site to site and year to year, however it is important to recognize that Energy Trust, Energy Smart, Waste Management, Clark Public Utilities, Bonneville Power Administration, and the County Water Commission have been key district wide partners providing support and funds to advance our conservation efforts. These organizations recognize that students will become adults who may own property, own or manage businesses, or simply live, work and recreate in Clark County.

Education for the current and next generation of citizens in our community on our environment and conservation is recognized as the most judicious and primary means of implementing a successful pollution source control and prevention program in our county. By encompassing sustainable practices in our work and daily lives, we are influencing more than 23,000 students and over 2,700 employees in our community everyday. VPS is leading the way by doing our part in making this community sustainable and helping ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

## District Green Team

The District Green Teams (DGT) role is to help realize the vision for sustainability and execute work plans that address the Districts needs. The district green team is facilitated thru Facility Support Services and the districts resource conservation manager. The districts size, expertise of in-house staff, culture of conservation at each facility, budget and financing options will affect the pace and sometimes the direction with which the district can proceed. The course each building takes will depend on factors such as the condition and age of each building, expertise of the building operator, and the robustness of individual green teams.

**Best Practices:** Adoption and sharing of operations and maintenance best practices to ensure sustainable measure are effectively implemented and maintained.

**Examples** of best practices include but are not limited to: Systems monitoring, green cleaning, preventative maintenance procedures, recycling, and sustainability culture education.

### **High-Performance Building Systems:**

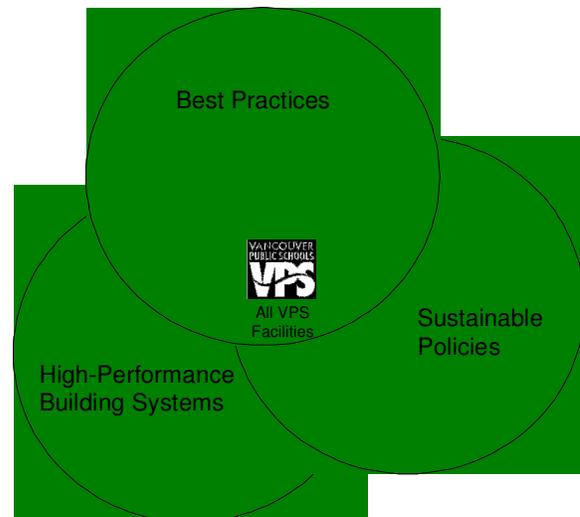
Recommend and implement, where approved, building improvements and technologies in order to use less energy, less water, and fewer natural resources. System upgrades and retrofits also improve indoor air quality and recommend and address, where approved, operational inefficiencies.

**Examples** of high-performance building system action items include but are not limited to: Re-commissioning, digital remote control of systems and retrofitting lighting systems.

**Sustainable Policies:** P3690 Natural Resource Management and Conservation Program and the corresponding regulation R3690 have been approved by the Board to communicate and reinforce guiding principles which set a minimum amount of best practices, time and effort allowed to carry out the Policy. The DGT will review and recommend changes to the policy and regulation as necessary.

The make-up of the districts green team will be the Assistant Superintendent, Facility Support Services, Resource Conservation Manager, Maintenance Supervisor supported by part-time administrative employees. This core group of District Green Team will expand based on project focus and needs to include additional staff, crew leaders and assistant crew leaders.

It is important to align Sustainability and Conservation Plan goals with the maintenance, major maintenance and capital improvements schedules. In doing so, the costs to implement building systems improvements will not be a new or added cost. In this lies the



mission of the District Green Team. To align and facilitate change in the way we do business to reinforce or create best practices, modify policies for sustainability, implement building improvement and technologies in order to use less energy, less water and fewer natural resources for high-performance buildings.

The District Green Team (DGT) will support, facilitate, monitor, evaluate, and suggest policy that focuses on operationalizing and communicating sustainable policies and best practices throughout the district. Specifically the district green team will facilitate the vision for Sustainability and Conservation Plan. Over the next five years the DGT shall work with district operations to recommend changes to policies and regulations to support green operations. The DGT will assist site based green teams through maintenance support, communications, and facilitation.

The key to creating a cohesive district culture of conservation lies in the communication between sites, district and community supporters. As one site grows with enthusiasm and success other sites can build upon this energy, by sharing best practices.

The DGT must help forge and bridge connections for collaboration and integration with:

- School green team communication between schools
- School green team with community support
- School green team with district operations

The DGT will support, monitor, evaluate and suggest policy for toxic reductions (both indoor and outdoor) with programs such as no or low VOC, fleet routes, no idling, fuel options etc.,

## Technical Teams

*Custodial Support Teams* support and set the direction for the districts building operators and determine the districts IPM, cleaning supplies, recycling programs and are responsible for air quality testing and mitigation.

*Building and Mechanical Maintenance teams* are specialized and general experts with the technical knowledge for high performance building systems management such as commissioning, major equipment purchasing choices, lighting options and upgrades.

*Grounds Teams* are the districts waste management experts. Waste management includes garbage disposal and recycling of fiber, food scraps, glass, plastics and yard debris. The grounds teams also enforce the districts policies on pesticides and outdoor eco-friendly products.

*Major Maintenance and New Construction Teams* examine all projects from the Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol and ensure all schools meet the High Performance Guidelines to include –Expanding on indoor air quality with in the five areas of focus is – improved indoor environmental quality. Not only does maintenance and construction work to improve indoor air quality this process also considers improving the indoor environment with the concepts for ideal acoustics, thermal comfort, ventilation, appropriate vision conditions with the use of natural and un-natural light, security and aesthetics. All of these improved indoor environmental strategies help create an environment ideal for teaching and learning.