

**Executive Summary: BASD Climate and Sustainability Commitment**  
**Board Curriculum Committee**  
**April 7, 2014**

*“Changes to Pennsylvania’s climate are happening now. While there is uncertainty as to the extent and timing of these impacts, it is undeniable that action must be taken to minimize risks to the public.”*

—PA Climate Adaptation Planning Report: Risks & Practical Recommendations, PA DEP

Context:

The BASD has a long history of responsible stewardship of natural resources and support of sustainability. The district wishes to maintain and build upon its leadership in these areas. In doing so, the Administration recommends the *School District Climate and Sustainability Commitment* described below.

***School District Climate and Sustainability Commitment***

As the Bethlehem Area School District Board of School Directors, we believe educational institutions have a special responsibility to demonstrate leadership in their communities as responsible stewards of shared environmental resources. We further believe the potential for adverse health, social, economic and ecological effects resulting from climate change are real.

As responsible environmental stewards, school districts should address the climate challenge by reducing emissions and integrating sustainability into both their educational programs as well as into their support operations. School districts that proactively address environmental concerns better serve their students and their communities. These school districts provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to address the critical, systemic challenges faced both locally and globally. Ultimately, students will benefit from improved environmental and climate conditions as well as economic opportunities that will accompany those conditions.

Beyond addressing environmental challenges and providing educational opportunities for students, responsible environmental stewardship will reduce school districts’ long-term energy costs.

Accordingly, we commit our district to taking the following steps:

1. Complete a comprehensive inventory of annual greenhouse gas emissions since 2010 (including emissions from electricity, heating, and transportation), update the inventory every year thereafter, and make the report available to students, faculty, staff, and the public.
2. Develop a comprehensive plan, by involving administrators, students, faculty, staff, and community members, to guide the development and implementation of ways to integrate academic, operational, and public engagement aspects of climate change and sustainability.
  - Academics: explore ways to integrate climate, sustainability, a living laboratory, and eco-literacy into curriculum and immersion experiences for all students, at all levels;
  - Operations: continue to improve energy efficiency and sustainability in facilities, transportation, and construction;
  - Public Engagement: promote transparency, and involve administrators, faculty, students, staff, and the community.
3. Take actions in each of these three areas now to demonstrate a comprehensive, system-wide approach.
4. Exemplify leadership by encouraging other school districts to adopt this commitment.

**DULY ADOPTED**, by the Bethlehem Area School District Board of School Directors, April 28, 2014

## Recommended Action Steps

The Bethlehem Area School District Climate Commitment cover the three critical areas of curriculum, operations, and public engagement, starting with steps to demonstrate the District’s commitment and prepare for a broader implementation. The second stage covers ideas and steps that should be considered in developing the comprehensive plan, while the stage 3 lists actions that are more feasible when implementation is underway in most schools.

	<b>Stage 1: Starting</b>	<b>Stage 2: Implementation</b> Points to Consider for the Comprehensive Plan	<b>Stage 3: Leadership</b> Long-Term Challenges
<b>Curriculum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively encourage teachers to integrate climate &amp; sustainability topics &amp; problems into their classes (all subjects, all grade levels)</li> <li>• Actively encourage teachers to do action research projects related to fully integrating climate &amp; sustainability topics</li> <li>• Develop topics related to integrating climate &amp; sustainability as part of in-service programming</li> <li>• Ask teachers and curriculum specialists to identify areas in which immersion projects for climate &amp; sustainability would be appropriate (e.g. Illick’s Mill Project)</li> <li>• Incorporate the concept of ecological literacy into Comprehensive Literacy Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate ecological literacy concepts into curriculum</li> <li>• Develop ways to use school facilities and neighborhoods as ‘living laboratories’</li> <li>• Develop immersion projects that integrate climate &amp; sustainability topics across the curriculum using real-world concerns</li> <li>• Incorporate sustainability-related career paths (such as Sustainability Coordinator or Manager, Sustainability Studies) into ‘Career Pathways’</li> <li>• Urge BAVTS to incorporate topics and problem frameworks related to climate &amp; sustainability in all topics &amp; programs; develop and expand programming that prepares students to design &amp; work in fields such as renewable energy, and LEED building, and organic farming</li> <li>• Explore ways to include STEAM perspective (expand STEM to show how all divisions of education &amp; life work together)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an ecological literacy assessment each academic year</li> </ul>
<p>(See supplementary curriculum resources, including the Environmental &amp; Sustainability Literacy Plan developed by the state of Washington, for examples of ways to integrate these topics across the curriculum)</p>			

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<b>Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track &amp; report GHG emissions from all facilities &amp; transportation</li> <li>Identify locations where lights could be turned off to maximize use of natural daylight</li> <li>Centralize and reduce the number of bus stops</li> <li>Maintain title of Energy Stars Leader by continuing to conserve energy</li> <li>Adopt policy for all new buildings and renovations to qualify as LEED Silver or better</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify areas where minor rewiring &amp; sensors could save by reducing electricity for lighting</li> <li>Plan to install energy efficient lighting and HVAC as renovations are made following LEED Core Standards</li> <li>Invest in low-emission replacements whenever buses are replaced</li> <li>Explore ways to reduce number of commuters, and encourage carpooling and alternative transportation</li> <li>Consider increasing distance for busing to 2 miles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider climate impact on all operations and facilities decisions</li> <li>Continue to incorporate more renewable energy sources</li> <li>Ensure all schools are Energy-STAR rated</li> </ul>
<b>Public Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report publicly and publish Climate Commitment on website</li> <li>Also report publicly and publish on website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2010–2014 GHG inventories</li> <li>Description of Broughal’s use as a living laboratory</li> <li>Energy STAR Leader rating</li> </ul> </li> <li>Apply for BASD to be a Green Ribbon district</li> <li>Encourage high school students to work in community gardens to fulfill community service requirement</li> <li>Put “National Walk to School Day” in calendar &amp; encourage students to walk/bike to school</li> <li>Encourage PTA/parents to create “Walking School Bus” model where appropriate</li> <li>Make other school districts aware of this Climate Commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage other school districts to sign this Climate Commitment</li> <li>Educate parents at PTA meetings about the importance of climate protection and energy conservation</li> <li>Work with partners to refine a more thorough assessment system for climate &amp; sustainability (potentially based on STARS)</li> <li>Annual report on state of climate protection and sustainability in BASD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urge the Pennsylvania Department of Education to adopt state-wide Sustainability and Ecoliteracy Standards</li> </ul>