

# **Leon County School Sustainability Plan Introduction Draft (November 2023)**

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## **Mission Statement**

To instill respect for the natural world in our learning environment and incorporate sustainability practices throughout Leon County Schools (LCS).

## **Guiding Principles**

The guiding framework for our plan is the establishment of goals and action items that are measurable, actionable, equitable, and achievable. The plan should build on past successes and serve as a blueprint for advancing LCS sustainability efforts. Materials and incentives will be provided to schools and district staff to help make the goals a reality. Yearly reports will be made to the schools, school board, and the public.

## ***LCS Strategic Plan (Adopted by LCS School Board March 2023)***

The LCS school board will monitor the sustainability goals in the LCS strategic plan adopted March, 2023 by yearly reviewing progress on the sustainability goal: which includes:

Incorporate sustainability practices throughout Leon County Schools which includes:

- Incentivize responsible stewardship and cost saving measures for energy, water, and other resources.
- Support sustainable and healthy learning environments as an economic, environmental, and social priority to be taught and practiced throughout the district
- Collect and include individual school and district environmental performance data in an annual report to monitor progress and inform decision making.

## Overall Goals

1. Educate students, staff, and community on the importance of incorporating sustainability practices to preserve the natural world and its resources and create a more sustainable and healthier environment for everyone.
2. Routinely evaluate all district capital improvement projects through the lens of sustainability.
3. Reduce our environmental impact and lower operating costs through the sustainable use of natural resources, energy efficient technology, and renewable energy.
4. Provide sufficient financial support and incentives to district staff and schools to encourage, assist, and reward their sustainability efforts.
5. Teach real-life and work force skills that promote sustainable and energy efficient behaviors that students will take home and into the community.
6. Monitor air and water quality to ensure a healthy environment for teaching and learning and to protect the well-being of students and staff.
7. Engage students in sustainable activities such as service and project learning and provide leadership opportunities for students that promote sustainability.

## The Areas of Focus (Note: Sustainability Framework and Construction and Renovation are new since the May 2023 draft)

1. **Sustainability Framework – To establish a framework for incorporating sustainability principles into the district, the district needs to establish a standing sustainability committee, designate a full-time sustainability director, identify and track relevant sustainability data, and develop a comprehensive sustainability plan.\***
2. **Curriculum –** This means integrating sustainability concepts across content areas and assessments, and providing information about why environmental protection is important, how it affects our daily lives, and what actions can be taken to reduce our consumption of and protect natural resources.
3. **Energy Efficiency –** A major portion of a school system's budget is spent on energy. Thus, having a better understanding of how and where energy is expended in our school system, incorporating energy efficient technology, modifying daily practices and routines related to energy use, and the use of

renewable energy where practicable can help ensure that schools maximize their energy efficiency and reduce operating costs as well as carbon emissions.

4. Water Quality and Conservation - Schools require water for heating and cooling systems, restrooms, drinking water faucets, locker rooms, cafeteria, laboratories, and outdoor playing fields and lawns. Maximizing water efficiency provides opportunities for significant cost savings, including decreases in electricity, sewage, and chemical costs.
5. Construction & Renovation – Current statute, s. 255.2575, F.S. requires all school buildings be constructed to comply with a sustainable building rating system or a national model green building code. For future new and remodeling the school system should aim toward building high performance schools.\*
6. Air Quality - Air pollution is a leading cause of asthma and other health issues that impact children. Clean air practices can lead to increased energy efficiency and reduced exposure to health-related problems. Better air quality can also enhance learning and productivity in schools.
7. Transportation - Motor vehicles use large quantities of fossil fuels and are a major source of greenhouse gases and air pollution. Encouraging walking, carpooling, and biking to school, the use of alternatively fueled vehicles, and cutting down on the idling of buses and cars waiting for children can reduce energy consumption and pollution.
8. Sustainable purchasing and waste reduction– Waste represents a significant loss of natural resources and an inefficient use of school district funds. To the maximum extent practicable all purchasing should consider the environmental impact and sustainability of the products purchased. Waste reduction starts with buying less and doing more with what we already have. Schools have many opportunities to reduce, reuse, repurpose, and recycle.
9. Health & Nutrition Services -Using nutritious and locally produced food contributes to the health of our children and reduces energy consumption incurred in transporting food long distances. Efforts to lessen food waste, which is a major component of landfills, by composting and the use of biodegradable lunch trays is also an important sustainability practice.

\*These two areas of focus have been added since the May 2023 draft.

*Remember: This a draft. Most of it was voted on May 2023. Mainly wordsmithing has been done in addition. The red type shows the two areas of focus that have been added since May.*