

Leon County Sustainability Committee Accomplishments and Recommendations, June 2023

I. The Leon County Schools Sustainability Committee held its first meeting November 10, 2022, and subsequently met December 8, 2022; February 9, 2023; March 9, 2023; and April 13, 2023 (January and May meetings were cancelled). Membership includes:

- Rod McQueen, Facilitator, Code Enforcement Compliance & Director Sustainability Program - Leon County Schools
 - LySandra Black, Executive Assistant, Leon County Schools
- Gina Gass, Science Instructional Developer, Leon County Schools
- Michele Keltner, Principal, DeSoto Trail Elementary
- Rhonda Flanagan, Principal, Hartsfield Elementary, designated ECO school (retiring)
- Savanna Elliot (Roach), Sustainable Tallahassee Board of Directors, Florida Conservation Voters
- Aida Richardson, Student Representative, Leon County Schools
- Stephanie Cornais, Raa Science Teacher (moving away)
- Jeanette Villa, Woodville Elementary 5th grade science teacher
- Joel Dawson, Retired teacher, principal, science coordinator, LWCT member
- Steve Urse, Solar and Electric Vehicles, LWVT member
- Meta Calder, LWVT Natural Resources & Clean Energy Committee chair
- Miasha Mitchell, Tallahassee Food Network, Frenchtown Neighborhood Asso.
- Kim Ross, ReThink Energy Florida
- Cara Fleischer, Leon Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor
- Susan Walden, LCS Professional Learning and Instructional Materials Coordinator (ad hoc advisor)
- Rosanne Wood, Ex Officio Member, Leon County School Board Member

II. During that time, we have:

- Listened to presentations and participated in discussions relating to:
 - Curriculum Frameworks and the LCS Green School program (Michele Keltner & Susan Walden)
 - Funding opportunities under recent federal acts, i.e., ARP, IIJA, IRA (Meta Calder)
 - Sustainability status of Leon County Schools (Rod McQueen)
 - Leon County Schools, federal grant application procedures (Kasey Kirkland)
 - Leon County School's CNG Bus System
 - Florida Green Schools designation by the Department of Environmental Protection (Joel Dawson & Michele Keltner), and National Wildlife Federation ECO schools (Rhonda Flanagan)
 - Purple Air Monitors and WeatherSTEM Stations programs in Leon County Schools (Cara Fleischer and Steve Urse)
- Developed our Mission Statement, Guiding Principles, Goals and Areas of Focus (see attached) and begun working on the development of a 5-year Sustainability Plan and Action items.

III. We are proposing the following interim sustainability projects for the 2023-24 School year.

1. Establish or revitalize school Green Teams consisting of students, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and other representatives from the community. The team will meet at least quarterly to conduct a school environmental audit, develop a school specific environmental action plan, and track progress toward achieving that plan. Some actions they might take are to increase native plants, increase outdoor activity, decrease amount of electricity and water used, plant school gardens, compost cafeteria waste, improve recycling efforts, and increase the percentage of green cleaning products.
2. Encourage all district schools to become a *Florida Department of Environmental Protection Green School* or *National Wildlife Federation ECO School*. The district will provide data and support for schools working toward certification. There will be end of the year recognition for schools that reach each level of certification.
3. Reduce energy and water usage in district schools. Schools reducing such usage will be rewarded with a portion of the operational costs saved by such reduction.
4. Review the districts non-bus fleet for the purpose of developing a plan to transition the fleet to electric vehicles (EV). It is recommended that the district invite the Electrification Coalition, a national nonprofit organization, for assistance with conducting an analysis of the district's current fleet and making the cost-effective transition to EVs. The coalition is also well-versed in the availability and pathways for accessing federal funding.
 - The coalition has developed and provides at no cost its Dashboard for Rapid Vehicle Electrification (DRVE) tool which allows users to upload simple fleet data into an easy-to-use Excel-based tool that can analyze and assess the best fit for EV deployment within minutes. This tool works for both private-sector and public fleets, including both local and state fleets. Leon County has downloaded the tool and is on its 3rd fleet run through.
 - The coalition has also partnered with Southwell and Climate Mayors to form the Climate Mayors Electric Vehicle Purchasing Collaborative to help reduce the cost of EVs and EV infrastructure.
5. Conduct a district-wide cost benefit analysis for adding solar photovoltaic systems and other energy efficiency upgrades to schools. Such analysis must explore and account for the availability of federal funding and tax incentives. Reportedly Oak Ridge Elementary and Montford Middle currently have solar but it not clear if these systems are operational.
6. Examine, adopt, and implement strategies to promote anti-idling by school bus drivers and parents during after school pickup. Such initiatives help to reduce carbon emissions and unhealthy air pollution.
 - The school district has adopted an "Anti-Idling and Smart Driving" policy procedure (#8615). The policy, with certain specified exemptions, limits bus-idling time to 10-15 minutes. In addition, school buses have on-board technology that monitors bus idling time. Suggest collecting, reviewing and publicizing that data. Also recommend using that data to establish a quarterly recognition program for the bus driver with the least "idling time."

- Independently or as part of the Green Schools initiative (#2 above) challenge all schools to adopt and implement the EPAs Idle-Free Schools Toolkit. The program is especially concerned about the health-effects of auto exhaust on growing children.