

In response to the human-caused climate crisis currently underway and the direct harm being done to our District, society, and planet, Portland Public Schools (PPS) is committing to immediately mobilize resources for climate action. To this end, the District commits to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and minimizing other negative environmental impacts; improving our school communities' health and wellness; and building a culture of learning, responsibility, and sustainability centered on our values of racial equity and climate justice.

Climate change disproportionately impacts the vulnerable members of our community. Implementation of this policy will prioritize serving people with disabilities, communities of color, and other vulnerable populations.

The District aims to educate and empower students as leaders in the just transition to a sustainable city and restorative society. Our goal is for all students to be environmentally literate and to understand the connections between their daily actions and the natural world by using community-based learning and civic action as a context for meeting academic goals described in the Graduate Portrait.

The District shall prioritize ~~investment efforts~~ that ~~have~~ achieve the greatest emissions reduction ~~the largest environmental return on investment for immediate action~~, while integrating climate action into our curriculum and developing a culture of environmental stewardship and climate justice throughout our organization. Other efforts which have a lower impact on emissions and require major changes in infrastructure can be implemented over the longer term.

Our two overarching objectives are:

**Emissions Reduction:** PPS will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2030, using the 2018-2019 school year baseline, and reach net zero emissions by 2040<sup>1</sup>~~50~~.

For the sake of emissions tracking, PPS will use a Scope 1 and Scope 2 analysis, which includes all emissions associated with the following: district-operated buses and fleet vehicles, and building energy use from both natural gas and electricity. In addition to Scope 1 and Scope 2, PPS will also track emissions associated with waste disposal (food waste, recycling, and landfill-bound garbage), which is defined as part of a Scope 3 analysis.

**Engagement, Resilience, and Wellness:** The district will take steps to prepare schools for the effects of climate change; PPS will ensure staff and students learn about and engage in climate solutions, climate resiliency, and climate justice practices.

We will align our work with the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon School Pillars. In accordance with those pillars, PPS is adopting the following goals.

---

<sup>1</sup> These goals, and the 2040 target, are based on the following assumptions: the District will continue to pass voter-approved bonds on a four-year cycle; the District will allocate general fund budget to help reach these goals; the local construction industry and contractor pool will have the capacity to support PPS' building decarbonization projects.

## Pillar 1: Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs

**Goal 1.1: PPS will design, construct, and operate new low-carbon, high performance schools and renovations that are energy-efficient, resilient, and adaptable. The District will:**

1. Use appropriate industry standards (e.g. LEED Gold, Net-Zero ready, Oregon's Energy Ready Commercial Code) when designing new and modernized buildings.
2. Prohibit the installation of fossil fuel infrastructure (gas-fired equipment) in all new buildings.
3. Phase out fossil fuel infrastructure (gas-fired equipment) in all existing buildings by 2050.
4. Increase energy efficiency and minimize the indirect use of fossil fuels, where feasible[1].
5. Limit the amount of refrigerants used. Manage existing refrigerants with best available technology.
6. Transition to building materials produced with less carbon and are more sustainable (e.g. green concrete).
7. Design, renovate, and construct new facilities to maximize resiliency to heat, smoke, flooding, and storms to protect district assets, and provide community respite during climate related emergencies.
8. Include infrastructure to support sustainable practices in school nutrition programs.

**Goal 1.2: PPS will maximize reductions in GHG emissions from district operations, maintenance, and facilities management. The District will:**

1. Maximize efficiency in fuel, electricity, and water use.
2. Establish standardized systems for waste prevention practices, including reuse, recycling, and food waste reduction at all campuses. [2]
3. Minimize disposable materials and fully utilize all materials before disposal[3].

**Goal 1.3: PPS will maximize the carbon sequestration-absorbing potential and other environmental benefits of grounds and increase the ability of grounds to adapt to climate extremes. The District will:**

1. Increase shade trees, green spaces, and de-pave projects, with highest priority in low-canopy neighborhoods.
2. Maximize onsite stormwater management techniques such as installing bioswales, rain gardens, and de-paving projects, in preparation for intense rain and potential flooding.
3. Establish maintenance plans to care for school grounds, including through community partnerships and student stewardship programs.
4. Utilize risk maps of district-owned sites and populations most vulnerable to climate impacts and plan accessible grounds improvements accordingly.
5. Phase out gas powered equipment used for grounds maintenance.
6. Phase out the use of pesticides and herbicides where feasible.

**Goal 1.4[4]: PPS will minimize greenhouse gas emissions from student and staff transportation, including transitioning to electric or low-emission vehicles. The District will:**

1. Establish incentives for staff to walk, bike, bus or telecommute, in order to reduce single-occupant car commuting.
2. Offer free TriMet Youth Passes to all high school students.[5]
3. Transition PPS and contracted vehicle fleet to electric or low emissions by 2050<sup>2</sup>, renewable fuels, based on a vehicle life-cycle evaluation of carbon impact. Work with the state and federal government to defray costs of shifting towards electric vehicles.
4. Evaluate bus routes annually to improve route efficiencies and capacities.

---

<sup>2</sup> These goals, and the 2050 target, are based on the following assumptions: technology in the electric vehicle market will advance significantly; the cost of electric school buses will come down significantly over the next 10-20 years; the District will continue to pass voter-approved bonds on a four-year cycle; the District will allocate general fund budget to help reach these goals.

5. Enforce the “no idling” policy to lessen emissions for fleet vehicles and student transportation. Establish an awareness campaign for school communities to minimize idling.

**Goal 1.5: PPS will reduce the demand for new materials and resources, and procure materials, products, and services in a manner that integrates climate considerations, fiscal responsibility, and equity priorities. The District will:**

1. Using best practices related to Environmentally Preferable Purchasing, incorporate climate impact standards and climate justice standards in all purchases, contracts, and RFPs for services and goods. Make special efforts to eliminate the use of non-post-consumer 100% recycled paper.[6][7][8]
- ~~1.2.~~ Use best practices related to environmentally preferable purchasing to make product recommendations to staff and make centralized purchasing decisions.[9]
- ~~2.3.~~ Reduce paper copying by transitioning to increased electronic communication.
- ~~3.4.~~ Where feasible, divest banking investments from fossil fuel industries.

## **Pillar 2: Improve Health and Wellness**

**Goal 2.1: PPS will address climate-based impacts on health, safety, and wellness. The District will:**

1. Include climate change impacts, such as flooding, landslides, and wildfires, as risks in district asset assessment and management.
2. In consultation with labor organizations, implement health and safety standards to ensure a climate-safe work environment (i.e. protected from heat, smoke, and pollution).
3. Work with partners to promote safe routes to schools and invest in walk and bike infrastructure on school property.
4. Where possible, prioritize foods that are less carbon intensive[10], local, organic, seasonal, plant-based, minimally processed and/or minimally packaged, while meeting requirements of the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. Work with USDA to advocate for nutrition programs to be sourced from regenerative agriculture practices.

**Goal 2.2: PPS will empower frontline communities to build resiliency from climate change induced stresses and support preparation for and recover from these events. The District will:[11]**

1. Identify and monitor climate trends and impacts on district families, especially groups vulnerable to impacts of extreme heat and poor air quality. Coordinate with partner agencies to deliver relief resources.
2. Coordinate with the County Office of Emergency Management to develop and distribute accessible and culturally appropriate communications to help families understand, prepare for, and respond to climate impacts such as heatwaves, smoke, heavy rain, landslides, wildfires, and flooding.
3. Work with students, especially students in frontline communities, and communities to develop plans for, and prepare for the adverse effects of climate change in their own communities. Including individual plans for how they and their family will stay safe during worsening climate disasters (or impacts).[12][13]
- ~~2.4.~~ Develop district-wide plans for how to communicate available local resources and support to students and families during address natural disasters such as: wildfires, flooding, drought, heat waves, extreme winter storms, extreme wind events, and others.[14]
- ~~3.5.~~ Incorporate climate justice priorities and climate resiliency design to inform long-term facility planning. Plans should prioritize serving people with disabilities, communities of color, and vulnerable populations.
- ~~4.6.~~ Host climate related emergency preparedness events for students, staff, teachers, and families.

**Goal 2.3: PPS will promote healthy and sustainable opportunities for its students, such as local foods, safe and active routes to school, and increased use of outdoor space for learning and gathering.**[15]

## **Pillar 3: Provide Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education**

**Goal 3.1: PPS will empower all PPS staff as allies for a healthy climate. The District will:**

1. Provide learning opportunities for all staff on key aspects of climate science/climate justice, and the mobilization needed to respond.

2. Provide annual training to custodians, kitchen staff, principals, and all school staff related to climate impacts and solutions relevant to their jobs, and integrate sustainable practices into each position.
3. Establish a program to have a sustainability liaison in every school.
4. Review and remediate inadequate capacity and compensation for staff taking on extra responsibility for climate crisis response efforts.
5. Increase capacity of school and district staff to respond to climate-related crises to safeguard lives, health, facilities assets, and environment.

**Goal 3.2: With guidance from Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) students and communities, PPS will develop curricular learning opportunities, so PPS graduates know the causes and consequences of climate change, understand climate justice, and have opportunities to practice climate solutions. The District will:**

1. Develop and deliver content to help students understand, prepare for and respond to climate change impacts, with priority special support and resources available to schools serving the most vulnerable populations.
- 1.2. Integrate climate justice into curriculum so all students have access and opportunities to engage in understanding climate change and climate solutions.[16]
- 2.3. Utilize an integrative approach to teaching that recognizes the emotional impact of climate change on individuals and teaches emotional resilience.
- 3.4. Offer climate justice learning opportunities that are culturally relevant and solutions focused.
5. Increase workforce training in living-wage green jobs, prioritizing opportunities for students from frontline communities.
6. Provide opportunities for students to probe the underlying causes of the climate crisis, and to understand the dynamic nature of complex systems and how they change, and opportunities for them to practice using systems thinking to inform their choices.[17]
- 4.7. Offer opportunities for students to recognize the vital importance of a healthy climate upon which our lives depend, and to understand how their own vision, imagination and intention, and actions can create a desired future.[18]
- 5.8. Support partner organizations that provide hands-on, place-based, experiential climate education for students.

**Goal 3.43: PPS staff will collaborate with students to create opportunities to engage youth in hands-on climate learning, preparation, and practice on a regular basis at all PPS schools. The District will:**

1. Support development of youth leadership and engagement opportunities around climate solutions.
2. Co-create meaningful opportunities with BIPOC students to shape the development and implementation of climate related programs.
3. Support student-led climate justice, climate action, and climate resiliency initiatives.
4. Treat the grounds and garden of each school as a learning space and involve students in nature-based grounds improvements and design. Support opportunities for students in every PPS elementary school to learn in a designated outdoor learning space.[19]
5. Support student and staff participation in non-partisan advocacy to local, state, and federal jurisdictions for climate policies.
6. Support youth leaders in their ongoing and critical role in ensuring student engagement becomes a standard practice in District programs.

Climate Crisis Response Committee: To monitor effective implementation, transparency, and tracking of progress, PPS will establish a ~~nine-person~~ committee of no more than nine persons that is made up of ~~at least five~~ a majority of members who identify as people of color and two members who are current PPS students. The Board shall approve the Charter for and members of the Committee. The Committee will convene no less than quarterly and will report to the Board on an annual basis the progress the District is making under the policy directives. The Committee informs and advises the Board, but does not have decision-making authority.

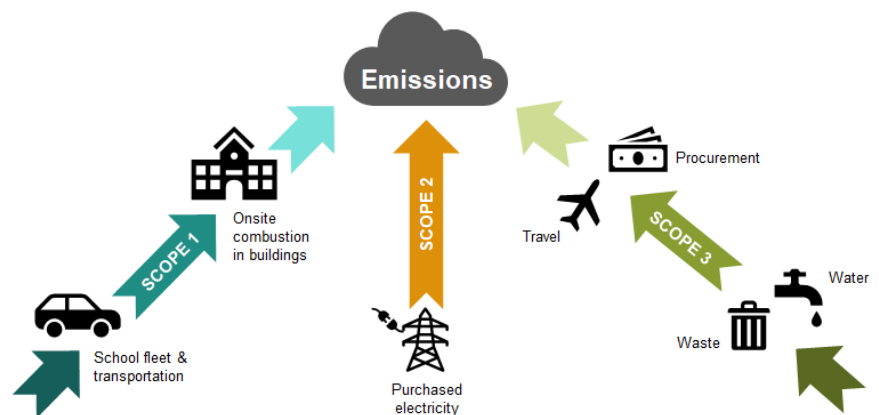
## Glossary of Definitions [To be incorporated into policy]

**Scope 1 Emissions:** direct greenhouse (GHG) emissions that occur from sources that are controlled or owned by an organization (e.g., emissions associated with fuel combustion in boilers, furnaces, water heaters, vehicles).

**Scope 2 Emissions:** indirect GHG emissions associated with the purchase of electricity, steam, heat, or cooling. Although scope 2 emissions physically occur at the facility where they are generated, they are accounted for in an organization's GHG inventory because they are a result of the organization's energy use.

**Scope 3 Emissions:** the result of activities from assets not owned or controlled by the reporting organization, but that the organization indirectly impacts in its value chain. Scope 3 emissions include all sources not within an organization's scope 1 and 2 boundary. The scope 3 emissions for one organization are the scope 1 and 2 emissions of another organization. Scope 3 emission sources include emissions both upstream and downstream of the organization's activities.

### Scopes of Emissions in Schools



(Scope emissions defined by [EPA Center for Corporate Climate Leadership Home](#))

[Address \(2.2.4\):](#) ~~communicate available local resources and support during emergencies to students and families.~~

**Feasible:** capable of being done or carried out. Feasibility will include the following factors: economics/available funding, appropriate trade-offs (i.e. the district will not spend general funds on energy efficiency if it is in lieu of incremental staffing in schools).

**Frontline Communities:** Communities that experience continuing injustice—including people of color, immigrants, people with lower incomes, those in rural areas[20], and indigenous people—and face a legacy of systemic, largely racialized, inequity that influences their living and working places, the quality of their air and water, and their economic opportunities[21].

**Systems Thinking:** a holistic approach to analysis that focuses on the way that a system's constituent parts interrelate and how systems work over time.