OMAHA Public Schools

Environmental Stewardship Plan

July 2023

Please do not print this document. It was designed for electronic viewing and will use a significant amount of ink. If you would like to print, consider selecting eco-friendly options like black & white, double-sided, and removing section cover pages with images.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Omaha Public Schools would like to express their appreciation to the following individuals who have shared their time and expertise to help develop this plan.

Project Team

Charles Wakefield, Chief Operating Officer

Ayanna Boykins, Economic Inclusion/Workforce Administrator

Dave Fannon, Environmental/Safety

Planning Groups and Other Participants

Aaron Christensen, Waste Management

Abby Peters, Procurement

Abigail Brophy, Trane

Alan Bolas, Maintenance Manager

Annette Crowder, Transportation

Brent Crampton, Hillside Solutions

Brian O'Malley, Metropolitan Community College

Bridget Blevins, District Communications

Cecil Hicks, Former Omaha Public Schools Staff

Charlie Baber, Lead Vehicle Mechanic

Chloe Johnson, Former Omaha Public Schools Student

Dr. Cheryl Logan, Former Superintendent

Cy Willson, Environmental Technician

Chris Schaben, Career Education

Dan Riha, Steamfitter

Darren Rasmussen, Principal - Burke High School

Darwin Rohde, Former Omaha Public Schools Staff

David Prince, Student Transportation of America

Dr. Fateama Fulmore, Former Omaha Public Schools Staff

Eduardo Acosta, Technician/Buyer

Ernie Bless, Metropolitan Utilities District

Evalina Sain, Omaha Public Schools Student

Gabrielle Geist-Hunter, Former Omaha Public Schools Student

Hannah Rennard-Ganley, Keep Omaha Beautiful

Holden Fershee, Former Omaha Public Schools Student

James (Tony) Zimmerman, Energy Systems Specialist

James Musil, Career Education

Jamie Wagner, OPPD

Javier Rodriguez-Torres, Engagement Specialist - Student and Community Relations

Jeff Kulhanek, Schemmer

Jennifer Valenti, Facility Management - Buildings & Grounds

Jeramie Cobb, Former Omaha Public Schools Staff

Jeremy Maskel, Chief Communications Officer

John Kelly, OPPD

John Royster, Big Muddy Workshop

Jon Lucas, Supervisor of Operations

Julie Harris, Bike/Walk Nebraska

Kaye Kennedy, Principal - Dundee Elementary

Ken Juhl, Director of Schoolhouse Planning

Kevin Pinkleman, Student Transportation of America

Kirsten Case Fuller, OPPD

Leah Carpenter, Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition

Acknowledgements (cont'd)

Lee Stover, Teacher - Westview High School

Linda Rice, Instructional Facilitator - Bancroft Elementary

Lisa Utterback, Chief Officer of Student and Community Services

Mark Noonan, Operational Services Specialist

Matt Ray, Secretary of the Board, Interim Superintendent

Melanie Stewart, Optimized Systems

Mia Perales, Omaha Public Schools Student

Michael Blankenfeld, Sheetmetal Worker

Mike Novy, Environmental/Safety

Monica Green, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Otto Stennis, Head Engineer at Saddlebrook Elementary

Paul Nelson, Jensen Gardens

Phil Thomas, Terracon

Phillip Connatser, Construction Inspector (Schoolhouse Planning)

Quang Le, Distribution Center Administrator

Rachael Arens, Teacher - Westview High School

Rick Harris, Optimized Systems

Rick Kmiecek, Optimized Systems

Ron Bush, Operational Specialist (Shift Engineer, Central High)

Scott Roberts, Former Omaha Public Schools Staff

Dr. Shavonna Holman, Omaha Public Schools Board of Education

Sherri Morris, Human Resources

Steve Priesman, Retired Omaha Public Schools Staff

Sunita Boyer, Former Omaha Public Schools Staff

Susan Christopherson, Director of Secondary Education

Susan Davie, Student Transportation of America

Tammy Yarmon, Director of Nutrition Services

Terrell Jones, Relief Engineer

Thomas Jankowski, Electrician

Tony Dixson, Operational Services Specialist

Trent Tranmer, Stationary Engineer/Program Specialist

Trevis Sallis, Director of Transportation

Yvonne Schuster, Buyer

Zack Fergus, Lamp Rynearson

Verdis Group

Verdis Group is a local sustainability consulting firm that has been our partner in environmental stewardship efforts since 2009. The following members of their team helped to shape this plan in some capacity.

Arnaud Manas, Senior Associate

Corbin Delgado, Data Analyst

Craig Moody, Managing Partner

Jeremia Njeru, Associate

Jess Wagner, Project Specialist

Joey Gruber, Analyst

Kate Hamel, Associate - Project Lead

Molly Coglan, Data Analyst

Letter from the Superintendent

At Omaha Public Schools, we have a long history of environmental stewardship. Since 2009, the District and several individual schools have received the Department of Education's prestigious Green Ribbon Schools award. We have implemented facilities upgrades, initiated and maintained a robust recycling program, and avoided nearly $14.5 million in utility costs through energy saving initiatives. With this history, we truly understand the importance of conserving natural resources and protecting our planet.

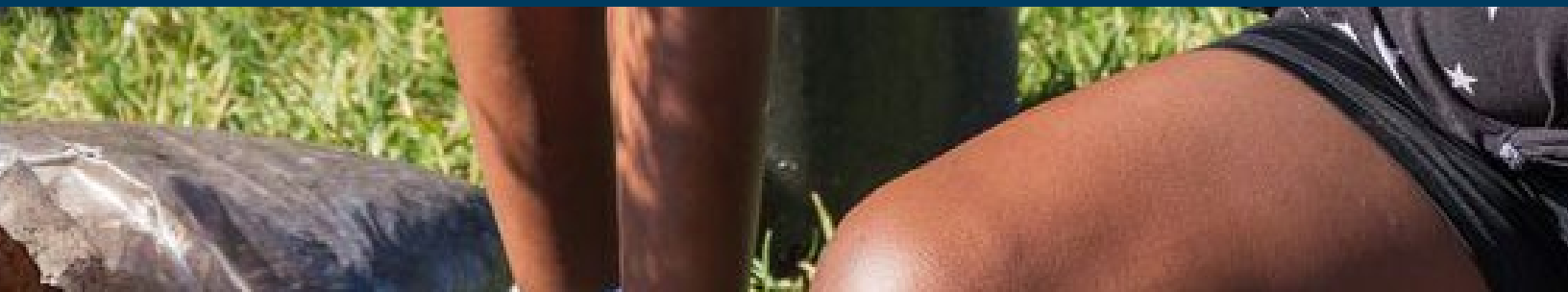
We also recognize the interconnection between the environment, health, and our mission to prepare students for success. Environmental impacts caused by a changing climate - from rising temperatures to air pollution to extreme weather - have significant effects on the physical and mental health of young people in particular. To succeed in both career and life, students need to be prepared to face these challenges. Students' experiences at Omaha Public Schools should help them navigate the changing world and connect them to new academic and career opportunities that will be shaped by these changes. Creating a culture of environmental stewardship and regeneration also cultivates responsibility and connects students to a broader worldview.

Students often already understand this responsibility: they are the driving force behind many environmental actions in their schools and the community, and District staff are there to support them. In fact, 81% of respondents on an employee survey believe it is important for the District to take active steps toward environmental stewardship. It is our task as a District to listen to these voices and ensure we are doing our part to care for the environment.

This Environmental Stewardship Plan will guide our efforts to implement innovative strategies that contribute to student success and engage our community around a healthier future.

Mr. Matthew Ray
Interim Superintendent, Omaha Public Schools

Introduction



Environmental stewardship and K12 education are inextricably intertwined. Young people are especially vulnerable to the physical and mental health effects of a changing climate, and they are also the ones leading the environmental advocacy movement. Our students will face environmental challenges as they move forward in their lives, and we recognize the connection between these challenges and our mission to prepare all students for success. It is our responsibility as a District to do our part in mitigating these challenges, and to teach our community to do the same. In accordance with the strategic priority Ethic of Care, as part of the District's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan of Action, this plan lays out a path forward for the District to reduce its environmental impact, implement innovative strategies that improve student health, and engage our community in becoming better stewards of our natural environment.

Connection to Mission

During the initial phase of this project, District leaders were asked about the connections they see between environmental stewardship and the District's mission: "To prepare all students for success in college, career and life". Their responses (summarized below) laid the foundation for a meaningful plan that is grounded in a shared vision for the future of the District and our students.

Climate impacts will cause disruptions for the District as an organization. In 2021, the District experienced several disruptions due to climate, including power outages, floods, weather events, etc. As an organization, we need to adapt to meet the needs of current and future students and the community.

Teaching and modeling environmental stewardship to students creates a culture of responsibility and connects students to a broader worldview. Environmental stewardship means incorporating good practices into everyday norms, and teaching students to be good stewards aligns with being responsible in other ways. If students understand that individuals are responsible for making the world a better place, they will be more successful in their jobs and lives.

Preparing students to succeed, in both career and life, involves preparing them for the changes that will come with an ever-changing world, which includes a changing climate. Stewardship of resources is connected to students' success in school as well as their family and health outcomes. Students will not be able to thrive if the District does not care for the environment they will be living in. Students' experience at Omaha Public Schools should help them navigate the challenges that will come with environmental change. Academic and career opportunities will be shaped by these changes, and connections to these opportunities can be made now.

Plan Structure

This plan uses a number of different terms to refer to various components and outcomes from the planning process. Definitions for each component are included below to help provide clarity for readers.

- **Vision**: The future we hope to achieve as a result of this plan. The icons on page 14 are used to refer to the vision statements throughout this document
- **Focus Areas**: Seven (7) topic areas determined based on the vision, around which Focus Teams of subject matter experts were formed to brainstorm strategies
- **Metrics**: Five (5) key indicators for which quantitative goals were set during the second Task Force workshop
- **Goals**: Quantitative goals set to be achieved by 2030/2040 for the five (5) quantitative metrics
- **Targets**: High-level, qualitative goals based on strategy categories that will help motivate and organize the District's efforts. These are not intended to be rigid goals for the District to adhere to, but rather guiding objectives
- **Strategies**: Actions that will help the District achieve the targets, goals, and vision; compiled from brainstorming session(s) with Focus Teams

Each section of this plan includes an introduction to the topic and its importance; relevant metrics, quantitative goals, and associated baseline data; targets for the Focus Areas within that section; and a table with the full list of strategies assigned to corresponding targets. Quantitative goals are represented with target icons within callout boxes throughout the document.

All components of this plan were developed in collaboration with a wide range of parties within the District and in the Omaha community. The Focus Areas around which these components are organized align with the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools, which largely serves as the foundational framework for K12 environmental efforts.

Plans for implementing strategies are included in a separate tracking tool that outlines decentralized ownership of strategies to ensure that environmental stewardship is integrated into the District's existing structures rather than sitting as a separate project outside them. The strategy tracking tool will serve as an ongoing, living document for the District to use going forward. Recommendations for governance and coordination, including a broad range of funding opportunities and how to leverage them, were developed with the Project Team to further guide implementation. The Project Team, along with owners identified for strategy implementation, will be responsible for moving this plan forward, evaluating progress, and adjusting priorities as necessary.

Process & Methodology

Phase 1: Discovery

The initial phase of the project included a variety of information-gathering tasks to set the context for the creation of the Environmental Stewardship Plan (ESP). A full summary of Phase 1 results can be found in the Appendix.

Key participant mapping and Task Force creation
At the outset of the project, internal and external parties representing a diverse range of perspectives were identified to be part of the Environmental Stewardship Task Force.

Interviews
Eleven District leaders were interviewed about their views on environmental stewardship and their vision for the future of the District.

Peer benchmarking and external research
Research on peer sustainability efforts and K12 environmental stewardship frameworks was conducted in order to ensure that the process and outcomes of the ESP align with the K12 context. See Appendix (Summary of Discovery Results) for a full overview of key findings from this benchmarking process.

Task Force meeting
The Task Force was convened to ensure all members had an understanding of the purpose and importance of the group and the planning process.

Visioning
Context, including data baselines, basic information about the climate crisis, and results from interviews, was presented to the Task Force. Then, the Task Force participated in a visioning exercise and consensus workshop where they were asked to think about what the District should strive to achieve through the ESP.

Survey
A survey was distributed to all employees to gauge awareness of and engagement with environmental stewardship initiatives and practices. Approximately 1,800 individuals completed the survey. 81% of respondents indicated they believe it is very or moderately important for the District to take active steps toward environmental stewardship. Full survey results can be found in the Appendix.

Data baselining and greenhouse gas inventory
The District has been tracking and analyzing its energy, water, and waste data for many years, so baselines were already established for these metrics. Additional information was gathered to baseline greenhouse gas emissions, including fleet and bus fuel sources and employee commuting data.

Facilities Assessment review and alignment
Consultants and relevant parties met with the District to establish alignment on outcomes from the Facilities Assessment process and identify opportunities for collaboration and overlap with the ESP process. More information on the connection between these two projects can be found in the Buildings section.

Phase 2: Strategy Development

Focus Team creation
Seven Focus Areas were identified based on the vision created by the Task Force. Subject matter experts and other key participants were identified to participate on Focus Teams for each area.

Focus Team meetings #1
Each Focus Team met to brainstorm and discuss strategies that would help the District achieve relevant aspects of the ESP vision.

Student strategy brainstorming
Several students participated in discussions to share their priorities for environmental stewardship. Their suggestions were primarily waste-focused, with students being most passionate about expanding composting efforts, improving recycling processes, and reducing disposable items in the cafeteria.

Strategy refinement, organization, and prioritization
Strategies brainstormed by Focus Teams were compiled, vetted, and refined. Strategies were organized into subcategories, rated by various criteria, and scored within a prioritization matrix. Criteria for prioritization included cost, time investment from staff, environmental impact/acceleration toward vision, opportunity for student engagement, permanence of strategy, and ability to scale. Focus Teams reviewed the strategies and matrix for their focus areas and provided feedback. This information and consultant expertise was used to identify top strategies for the District to pursue within the first two years.

Focus Team meetings #2
Focus Teams met again to review and approve the top strategies identified for years one and two. The Focus Teams developed action plans that identified owners, key partners, first steps, and potential barriers for each top strategy.

Transportation Focus Team meeting #3
The Transportation Focus Team met a third time to discuss goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions through employee commuting and fleet composition.

Net Zero Pathway analysis
Key inputs were collected for inclusion in a decarbonization modeling tool and analysis was completed to identify various strategies' potential for reducing emissions to Net Zero.

Student projects
Students from Northwest High School participated in a separate tree planting project in partnership with Keep Omaha Beautiful, and created a video about environmental stewardship and the process of planting a tree. Blackburn students also worked on relevant projects as part of a partnership with the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO)'s Service Learning Academy. They participated in a waste sort and presented information about their research alongside UNO students, including information about why environmental stewardship is important to them. These projects helped inform development of strategies and action plans.

Phase 3: Goal Setting & Plan Development

Goal setting
The Task Force participated in a workshop to identify goals for energy use, water consumption, waste diversion, engagement, and emissions. These goals were based on data and other context provided to small groups within the workshop.

Finalization of strategies
Results from strategy discussions were organized to create a refined list of strategies. The Project Team reviewed the full list of strategies and provided feedback regarding District priorities, capacity, etc. This feedback was incorporated to create final strategy lists within each topic area for short-, medium-, and long-term implementation, as well as plans and timelines for year one and year two strategies.

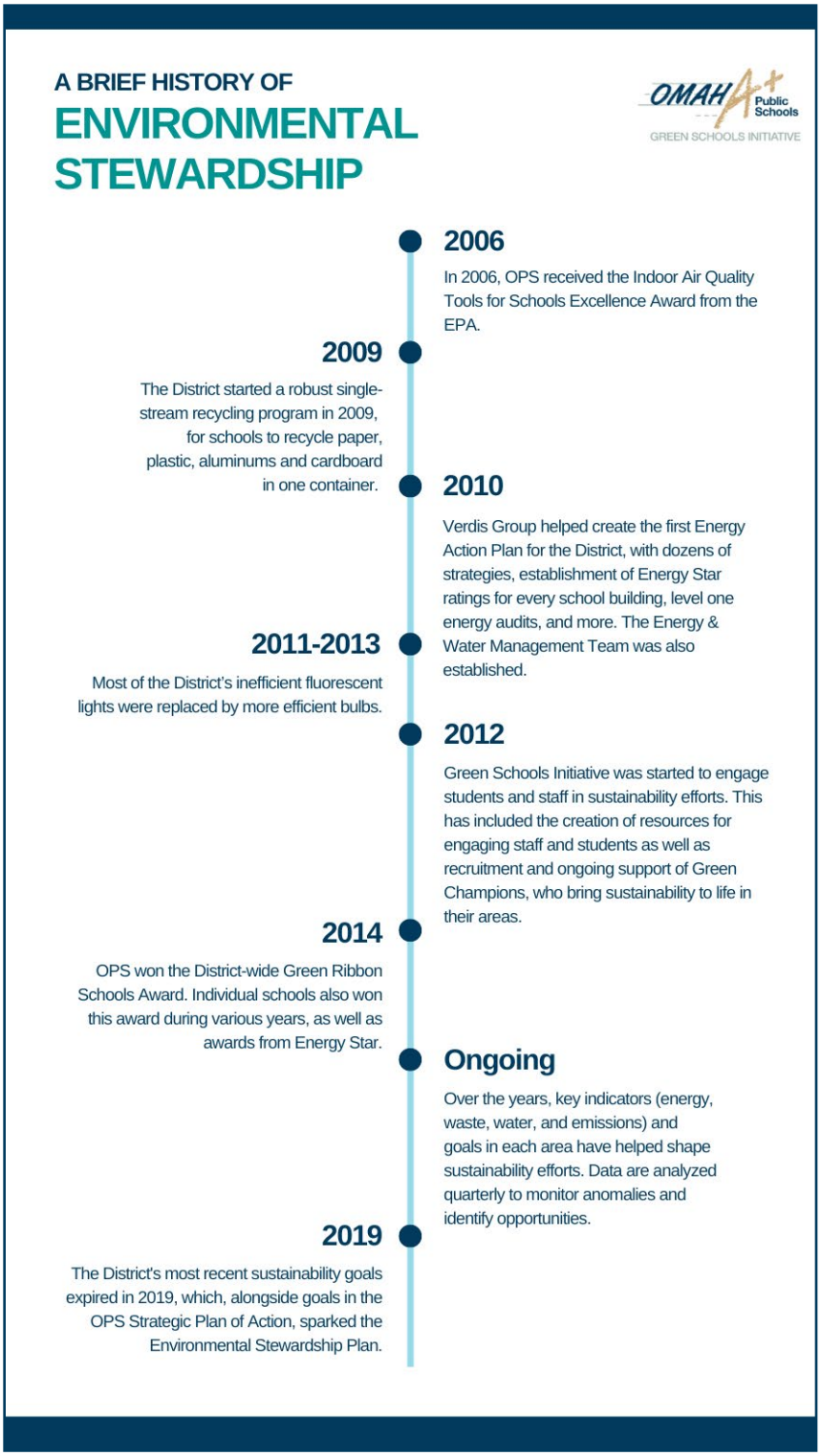
Strengths & Successes

The history of environmental stewardship/sustainability efforts at Omaha Public Schools dates back at least two decades and includes parties within and outside the District. The District has implemented a range of strategies for energy and water efficiency and waste reduction in particular.

Over the course of the past 10 years, energy efficiency strategies have cumulatively saved the District over $14.5 million in avoided costs. Dozens of schools now have real-time energy monitoring systems that help the District determine when and where energy is being used so that conservation strategies are targeted. LED lights are the norm in new renovations and new buildings. The District's Energy & Water Management Team is focused on monitoring energy use and providing direction and solutions to schools for continued conservation. Guidelines and toolkits for schools - from waste signage to classroom efficiency checklists - were developed, have recently been refined, and are available on the internal Omaha Public Schools website. The District won the Green Ribbon Schools award in 2014, and 10 individual schools have also received the award since then.

The Board of Education also adopted a sustainability policy (#3590) in September 2020 that affirms a commitment to environmental stewardship: "The Board, administration, staff, students and parents of the District believe that it is our responsibility to encourage and implement environmentally sound practices."

The timeline to the right summarizes some of the key actions the District has taken since 2006.



Vision & Goals

Envisioning the Future of the District

The regenerative spectrum shown in Figure 1 is a framework for thinking about design and development - from business-as-usual approaches that extract from the environment (left), to practices that consider the whole system and ultimately have a positive impact on the environment (right). The spectrum is used to visualize the range of possibilities for an organization's impact on the environment. Both interviewees and Task Force members were shown a blank version of the spectrum below and asked to identify where they hope to land on the spectrum by 2050. The gold dots represent the responses from Task Force members and interviewees.

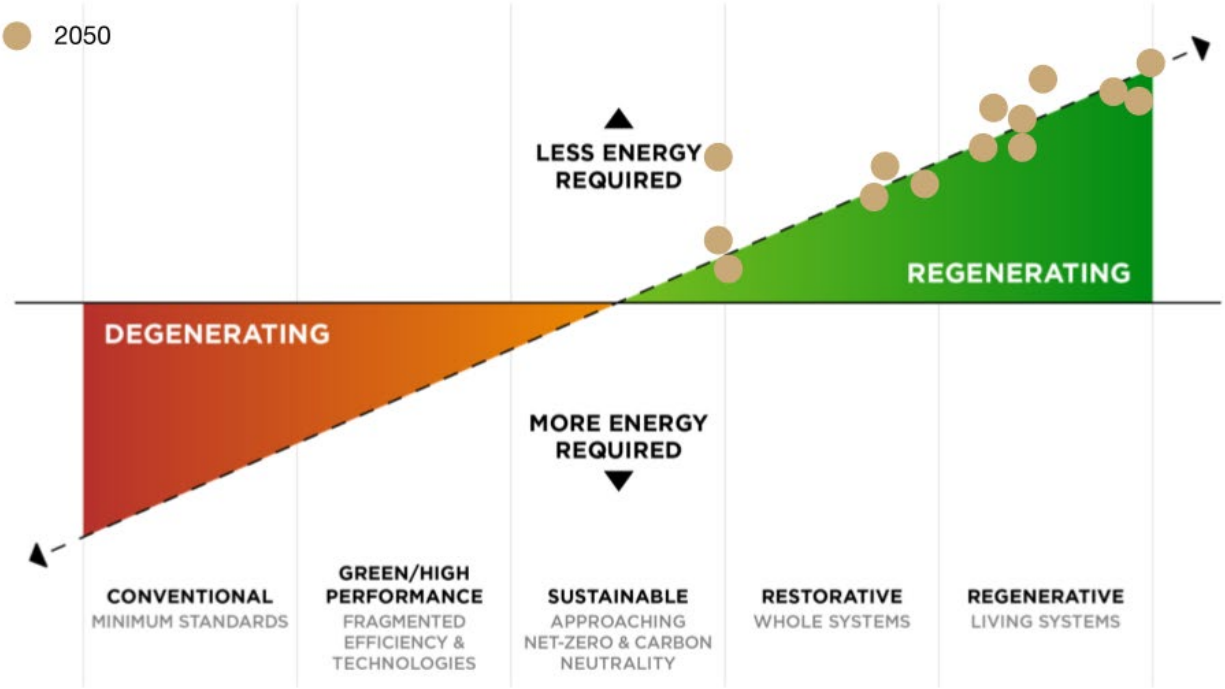


Figure 1: Regenerative spectrum diagram

Vision Statements

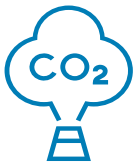
In addition to envisioning the District's long-term future on the regenerative spectrum, the Task Force participated in a collaborative activity to answer the question: What do you hope the District will achieve through the Environmental Stewardship Plan? The results of the activity were refined into the following vision statements.

At Omaha Public Schools, we recognize the connection between our mission to prepare students to succeed and the challenges they will face due to the climate crisis. We believe it is critical to their success and ours as a District to take innovative action to become better stewards of our natural resources, equip our students to overcome environmental challenges, and ultimately become an organization that gives back to our planet and community.

Elevate student voices and empower students as leaders. We seek to create a culture that elevates student voices and supports student-led environmental initiatives. We will partner with community members to connect students with career and educational opportunities related to environmental stewardship.

Cultivate a healthy learning environment through high-performance buildings and thoughtful grounds management. We will use modern building management systems, real-time analytics, and other advanced technologies to increase energy and water efficiency in buildings and on grounds. We will improve indoor and outdoor air quality and conserve resources through the implementation of Integrated Pest Management and landscaping plans.

Foster a culture of regeneration. We will work to improve staff and student participation in environmental stewardship initiatives. We will provide accessible education to encourage personal and collective practices that support our sustainability goals at school, at home, and beyond. We will integrate environmental stewardship into daily practices in each department and promote interdepartmental communication and collaboration.



Reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We will significantly decrease our greenhouse gas emissions by reducing energy usage, procuring energy from clean sources, and producing our own clean energy. We will seek opportunities to reinvest energy cost savings into our buildings and students.

Implement transportation systems that support our emissions goals. We will increase the number of clean fuel vehicles in our fleet. We seek to reduce the use of cars by all members of the Omaha Public Schools community by promoting alternative modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, and carpooling.

Eliminate waste, from purchasing to disposal. We will reduce our purchasing and use of materials and reuse or donate items when possible. We will ensure all buildings have proper recycling and composting equipment and education.

Make socially responsible procurement decisions. We will let District values guide our purchases, which means supporting the local community and purchasing from businesses that share those values.

Implement sustainable food practices that support student nutrition. We will source local and sustainable food in the cafeterias when possible, and we will promote 'ready access' to healthy food outside of mealtimes.

Summary of Metrics & Goals

Along with the targets and strategies outlined in this document, the following quantitative, data-driven metrics will guide the District's efforts and provide a way to measure progress toward improved environmental stewardship. Throughout this document, look for the symbol to the right to find goals and progress associated with each section.

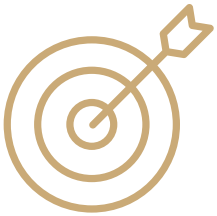


Table 1: Summary of environmental stewardship metrics and goals

Key Indicator	Metric	Baseline (2021)	Goal
Greenhouse gas emissions	**Total Scope 1, Scope 2, and selected Scope 3 emissions** as calculated in GHG inventory	109,738 $MtCO_2e$	50% reduction by 2040
Building energy consumption	**District average Energy Star rating**: benchmark score based primarily on energy consumption (electricity, natural gas, etc.)	63	70 by 2030
Waste reduction	**District average diversion rate**: percent of materials that are diverted from the landfill through recycling, composting, reuse, or source reduction	23%	50% by 2030
Water use	**District average water consumption** per square foot (in gallons)	11.1 gal/sq ft	9.5 gal/sq ft by 2030
Engagement	**Engagement survey score**: calculated from five survey questions about student*/staff awareness, knowledge, and behavior around environmental stewardship; on a 1-100 scale	46*	70 by 2030

**Students were not surveyed but will likely be included in future surveys, so this baseline and goal is subject to change. Full survey results can be found in the Appendix.*

Materials & Procurement

This section includes outcomes from three Focus Teams (Waste, Purchasing, and Food) and will help the District achieve three corresponding components of the vision:

Eliminate waste, from purchasing to disposal.

Make socially responsible procurement decisions.

Implement sustainable food practices that support student nutrition.

Reducing waste is a critical component of environmental stewardship for a variety of reasons. Sending waste (particularly organic material) to the landfill results in methane emissions, which are over 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide and have significant impacts on community health. Waste not only impacts the environment through materials sent to the landfill, but materials that do not make it to the landfill at all. Plastic waste in particular often ends up polluting waterways and other wildlife habitats, ultimately finding its way into our food and water sources. Finally, reducing waste is also a smart strategy for schools - it saves money and resources, allowing for greater investment in our students. Waste reduction is measured using a diversion rate, which is the percentage of materials not sent to the landfill, and instead diverted through reduction, reuse, composting, or recycling.

Purchasing can contribute to waste reduction, but it can also help reduce emissions from the supply chain and promote social values in sourcing practices. Many of the strategies related to food are also related to sourcing, and are focused on continuing to improve access to healthy, sustainable food.

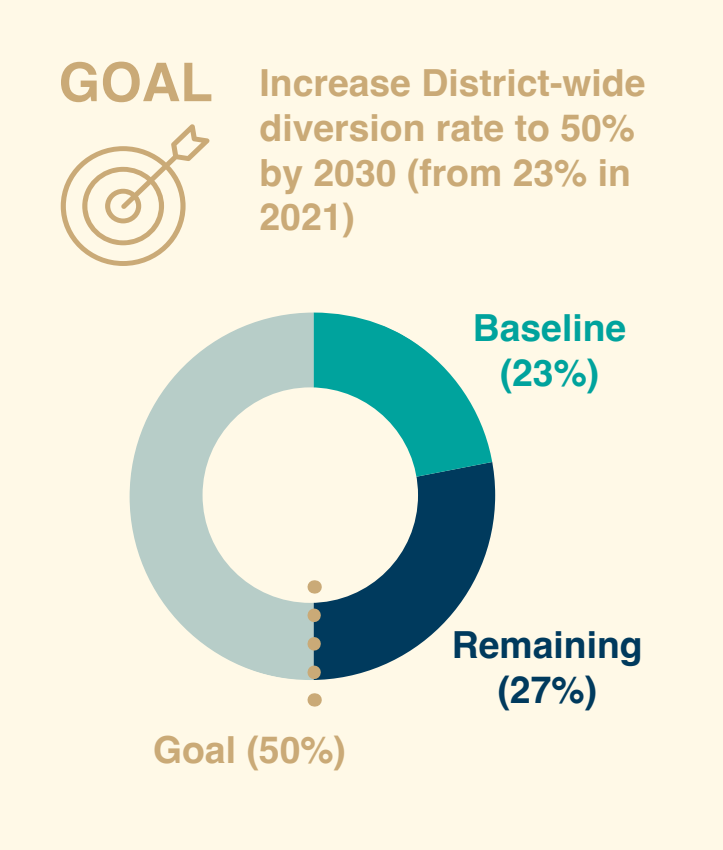


Figure 2: Waste goal

Targets & Strategies

Included in this section are the Targets (numbered) and Strategies (in tables) for each of the Focus Areas within this category.

Waste Targets

1 Reduce landfill waste volume

a. All schools are tray stacking in the cafeteria to reduce waste volume by May 2024

b. Measures are implemented to maintain security and ensure dumpsters are used only for District waste by May 2025

2 Improve recycling systems and education

a. 80% of buildings have adequate recycling containers and signage by May 2024
b. 80% of buildings have identified a responsible party for collecting and disposing of recyclable materials by May 2024
c. All buildings are fully participating in recycling of plastic, metal, paper, and cardboard by December 2024
d. Students and staff know what is recyclable, and contamination (landfill waste in recycling containers) is reduced by May 2025

3 Improve waste data tracking and reporting

a. Dumpster fullness assessments are conducted at least once at each school by December 2023
b. Data is effectively used to inform changes to service levels that increase building diversion rates by May 2024

4 Increase participation in composting

a. The District has a contract that schools can opt into with a composting vendor that provides benefits that are returned to participating schools by August 2025

Table 2: Waste strategies, by target

Target	Waste Strategies	Timeline*
1	Emphasize tray stacking by providing appropriate communication and resources	1
1	Ensure bid/RFP process for waste hauling services incorporates environmental stewardship practices (e.g., requesting bids for composting services, requiring appropriate data sharing, etc.)	2
1	Set printer defaults to double-sided	2
1	Implement equipment for addressing public contamination (i.e. cameras, locks on dumpsters)	2
1	Incorporate waste reduction and diversion requirements in all construction projects and construction contracts	3
1	Increase the availability of mobile devices in classrooms in order to reduce the need for print materials	3
1	If regulations change, consider implementing a circular system for unopened food and beverages (i.e. students place unopened items like cheese sticks or milk cartons on a table, those items are then put back into the initial line for others to take or to donate to a food bank)	3
1	Explore use of milk pouches instead of cartons (less volume)	3
1	Reduce packaging in cafeteria food distribution	3
1	Create incentives for school-level waste reduction	3

**Timelines: 1 = 2023-24, 2 = 2024-25, 3 = 2025-27, 4 = 2027 or beyond*

Target	Waste Strategies	Timeline*
1	Eliminate use of styrofoam district-wide	3
1	Implement donation program for reusable schools supplies (like Drive for Supplies)	3
1	Liquidate some of the materials at the warehouse to allow for more reuse and repair	3
1	Clean/refurbish computers to prolong the life of the machines	4
1	Partner with nonprofits to donate/reuse items	4
1	Reduce disposables in the cafeteria where possible	Ongoing
1	Continue emphasizing "offer vs. serve" approach to minimize food waste	Ongoing
1	Ensure waste management is meaningfully incorporated into planning for new buildings	Ongoing
1	Expand the installation of water refill stations in additional buildings	Ongoing
1	Install hand dryers where applicable	Ongoing
2	Establish minimum expectations for recycling streams, service levels and collection processes and conduct periodic audits to optimize, including clearer expectations for which parties are responsible for handling which components of waste collection (custodial vs Green Teams)	1
2	Audit or assist schools in auditing waste signage (including flatten boxes and no dumping signs) in all buildings and standardize around best practices (i.e., color coding, images of items, etc.)	1
2	Audit and optimize (or assist schools in auditing and optimizing) quantity and placement of containers in all buildings and implement best practices where needed (i.e., centralized collection where possible, paired bins, color coding aligned with signage)	1
2	Divert back-of-house food packaging from landfill	3
2	Implement zero waste event practices	3
2	Audit waste stream handling and management system to understand and identify operational efficiencies from the point of waste/recycling generation to the waste dock/area	3
2	Re-institute centralization of shredded paper processes	4
2	Communicate about waste disposal outside of OPS buildings (i.e., encourage recycling of paper that goes home with students)	4
3	Provide resources and encourage schools to conduct fullness assessments of landfill dumpsters on a periodic basis to ensure landfill pickups are reduced when possible	1

Target	Waste Strategies	Timeline*
3	Continue to improve collection and monitoring of data (i.e., incorporate atypical waste streams, e-waste, paper reduction, etc. in to diversion rate calculations)	2
3	Conduct an audit of atypical waste streams (e.g., batteries, ink cartridges, hazardous waste) and identify opportunities for diversion	3
4	Expand composting to be a district-wide opt-in program	2

Purchasing Targets

5 Evaluate current ordering and data tracking processes

a. Annual order process is evaluated and improved to increase efficiency and bulk ordering by December 2023

b. Procurement data and reporting is improved by May 2024, which will allow the District to better evaluate what is being purchased and identify opportunities to reduce waste and emissions in procurement

6 Communicate with appropriate parties about purchasing practices

a. The District's environmental stewardship goals have been communicated to its current and potential vendors by May 2024

7 Incorporate environmental stewardship criteria into District purchasing policy

a. The District has explored options for incorporating preferences for local vendors and sustainable products, as well as consideration of long-term impact, into purchasing criteria where appropriate by May 2025

Table 3: Purchasing strategies, by target

Target	Purchasing Strategies	Timeline
5	Evaluate annual order process	1
5	Improve procurement data/reporting and evaluate what's being purchased and why	1
5	Evaluate success of centralized purchasing practices (vs. school/individual purchases, direct pay, ensure internal awareness)	2
5	Use forecasting tools to identify future needs and purchase in bulk	3
5	Continue identifying products that can be purchased in bulk (e.g., chemicals)	Ongoing
6	Increase awareness in local community about OPS procurement process (including small contracts for service work) and make local/small businesses feel welcome to participate in bid process	1
6	Inform vendors of environmental stewardship goals and influence vendors to provide materials and services that align with goals	2
6	Increase internal awareness about procedures and requirements for furniture and equipment	2

Target	Purchasing Strategies	Timeline
6	Leverage school knowledge of community to purchase at the micro (school neighborhood) level	3
7	Build potential for local/sustainable/values-driven criteria into district purchasing policies	2
7	Incorporate long-term cost/benefit analysis when sourcing products in order to purchase higher quality/less disposable items	2
7	Analyze sustainability initiatives of large suppliers	4
7	Create materials guidelines for purchasing to avoid hazardous/wasteful materials (red list)	4
7	Examine possibilities for use of reusable containers in deliveries (esp from large suppliers)	4

Food Targets

8 Build partnerships that support sustainable nutrition

a. Partnerships with community organizations to support development of recipes focused on local, sustainable food are established by August 2024

b. Additional opportunities for sourcing local and sustainable food options are identified and pursued through partnerships with Nebraska Farm to School program, farmers, and producers by May 2025

Table 4: Food strategies, by target

Target	Food Strategies	Timeline
8	Partner with MCC on recipe development	1
8	Work with NE Farm to School Coordinator (currently Sara Smith) to bridge gaps between districts and producers	1
8	Work with building administrators to identify opportunities to offer more nutritious food options outside of mealtimes	2
8	Create an outreach strategy for communicating with new and existing farmers	2
8	Commit to a producer early enough to have them plant what OPS needs (plant forward)	3
8	Identify partnerships for one-off projects (like corn)	3
8	Connect food to curriculum and prioritize education around healthy and sustainable food	4
8	Explore options for school gardens/greenhouses that consider needs for institutionalized maintenance and processing	4
8	Continue current efforts for local and sustainable sourcing	Ongoing

Emissions, Energy, & Water

Emissions, energy, and water are interconnected topics with significant overlap. Strategies to address them intersect between three focus areas: Buildings (Interior), Grounds (Exterior), and Transportation. These Focus Teams were created to address three components of the vision:

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Implement transportation systems that support our emissions goal.

Cultivate a healthy learning environment through high-performance buildings and thoughtful grounds management.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere, causing a blanket-like effect on the planet that results in increased temperatures and other extreme weather. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are largely created by the burning of fossil fuels for energy. GHG emissions inventories were completed for the District's **Scope One** (direct, onsite), **Scope Two** (electricity consumption), and selected **Scope Three** (indirect) emissions, for each year starting in 2019 (see Table 5). The 2021 total is used as a baseline for the District's emission goal. Figure 3 shows a breakdown of 2021 emissions, which total 109,738 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent ($MtCO_2e$).

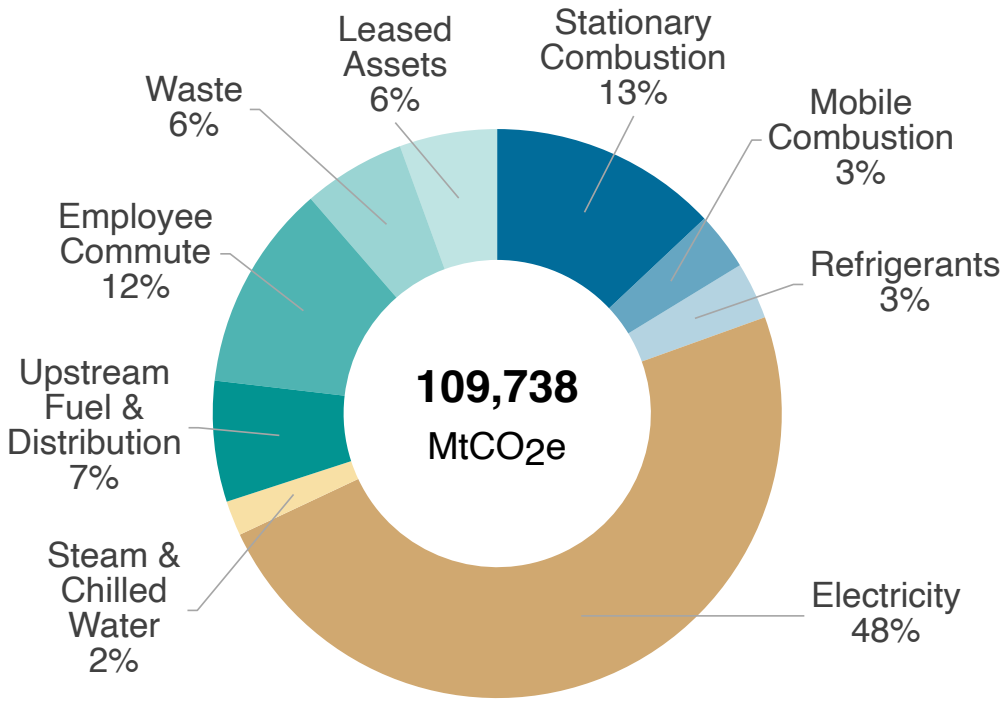


Figure 3: GHG emissions by source as a percent of total emissions, 2021 ($MtCO_2e$)

Table 5: GHG emissions by source, 2019-2021 ($MtCO_2e$)

Scope	Category	Source Details	2019	2020	2021
Scope 1	Stationary Combustion	Combustion of fuels in stationary sources (e.g., boilers, furnaces)	15,724	13,649	14,245
	Mobile Combustion	Owned vehicle fuel consumption	2,113	3,894	3,606
	Refrigerants	Use of refrigeration and air conditioning equipment *(Note: emissions estimated as a % of scope 1 and 2. Actual data not available.)*	4,525	3,804	3,553
Scope 2	Electricity	Generation of purchased electricity that is consumed onsite	72,656	58,542	53,218
	Steam & Chilled Water	Generation of steam and chilled water that is used onsite	4,525	3,804	3,553
Scope 3	Upstream Fuel & Distribution	Extraction, production, and transmission of energy	10,625	8,942	7,532
	Employee Commute	Based on mode split	14,210	12,914	12,914
	Waste	Methane from landfill	5,991	3,706	6,392
	Leased Assets	Operation of assets leased to a third party (Student Transportation of America)	2,187	2,140	6,098
		Total	**129,790**	**108,751**	**109,738**

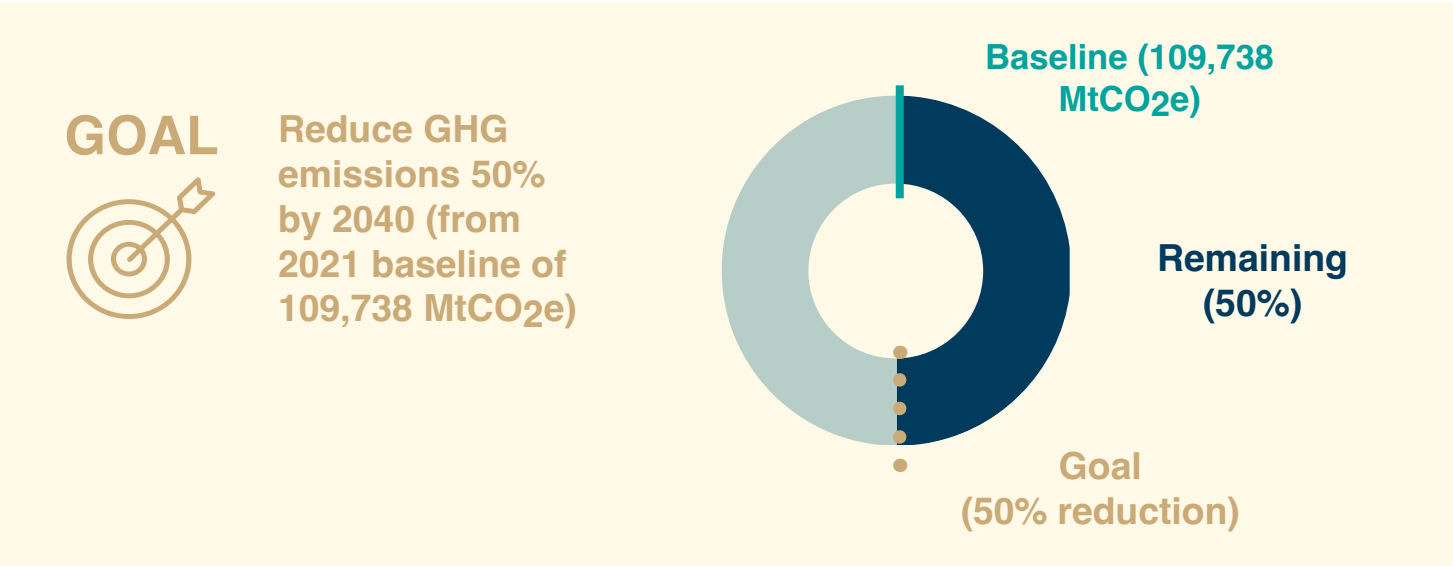


Figure 4: GHG emissions goal

Electricity & Stationary Combustion

Electricity and stationary combustion correspond to energy usage in District buildings. Combined, they account for 69% of the District's total GHG emissions. Stationary combustion relates to the natural gas needed for space heating, and varies based on building efficiency and weather patterns. While electricity usage depends on similar factors, it also takes into account another key variable: emission factor.

This value, provided by the utility, represents the mix of fuels used by the utility to generate electricity (natural gas, coal, renewables, etc.). As Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) reduces the amount of fossil fuels in their mix and shifts to more renewable sources, their emission factor will improve, and the District's emissions associated with electricity will decrease.

Transportation

Transportation-related emissions are included in the GHG inventory, from fleet vehicles and buses (as mobile combustion and leased assets) as well as from employee commuting (based on survey results). While no top-level goals were identified for these categories, metrics, strategies, and targets exist to monitor and address these emissions.

Vehicle Emissions

Fleet and bus emissions represent 8% of the District's total emissions. Over half of these come from Student Transportation of America (STA) buses, which run on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Figure 5 shows the breakdown of emissions and fuel sources for each vehicle category, color-coded by emissions scope in consistency with Table 5 on the previous page. Strategies are included to address both the transition of District vehicles to alternative fuels and the need to lease alternatively-fueled vehicles from STA or other bus vendor(s).

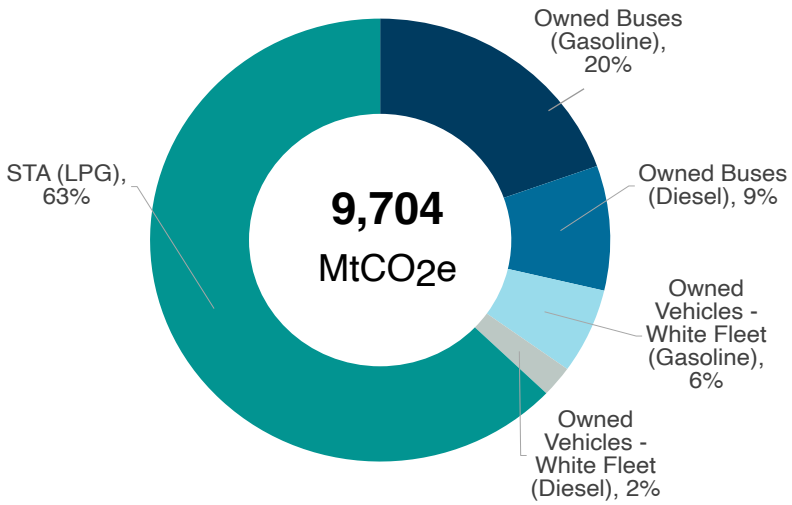


Figure 5: Vehicle emissions, 2021 (percent of total)

Employee Commuting

Mode split is a quantitative metric that can be used to help inform active commuting strategies. Mode split is the percentage of trips employees make to work using a mode of transportation other than driving alone in a vehicle (i.e., biking, walking, taking public transportation, or carpooling) in a typical week. As of December 2021, the District's mode split is 13%. In other words, 13% of employees get to work in a way other than driving alone in a car. See below for a full breakdown of transportation modes used by survey respondents. The District currently has policies in place to encourage the use of virtual meeting technology to reduce travel time (emissions) between buildings and will continue to explore work-from-home potential and support those who can do so.

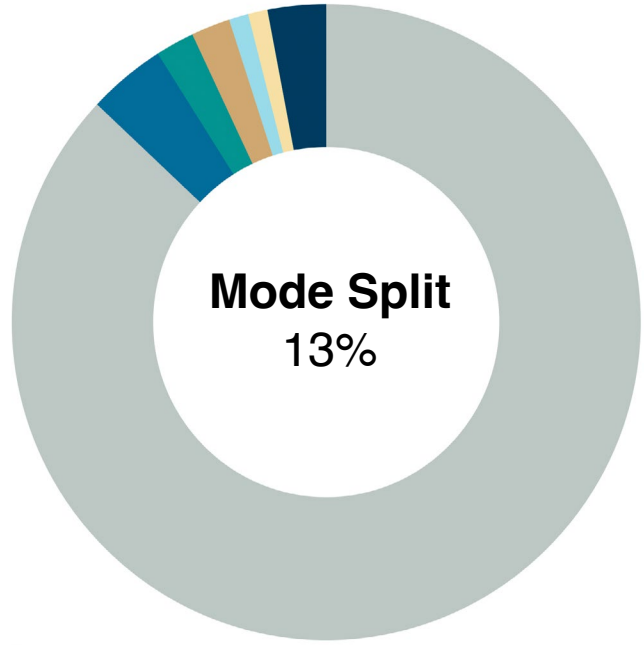


Figure 6: District mode split, 2021

Table 6: Breakdown of District mode split by mode, 2021

	Drive alone	87%
	Carpool	4%
	Walk	2%
	Work remotely off site	2%
	Bike	1%
	Bus	1%
	Other (motorcycle, scooter, moped, taxi)	3%

Building Energy

Given that electricity and stationary combustion are a significant portion of the District's emissions, a separate metric and goal have been identified for building energy use. An Energy Star Rating is a score that provides a comprehensive snapshot of a building's energy performance, taking into account the building's physical assets, operations, and occupant behavior, and compares it against similar buildings nationwide. A score of 50 represents median energy performance, while a score of 75 or higher indicates the building is a top performer and may be eligible for Energy Star certification. The District average score is used as a metric for energy efficiency.

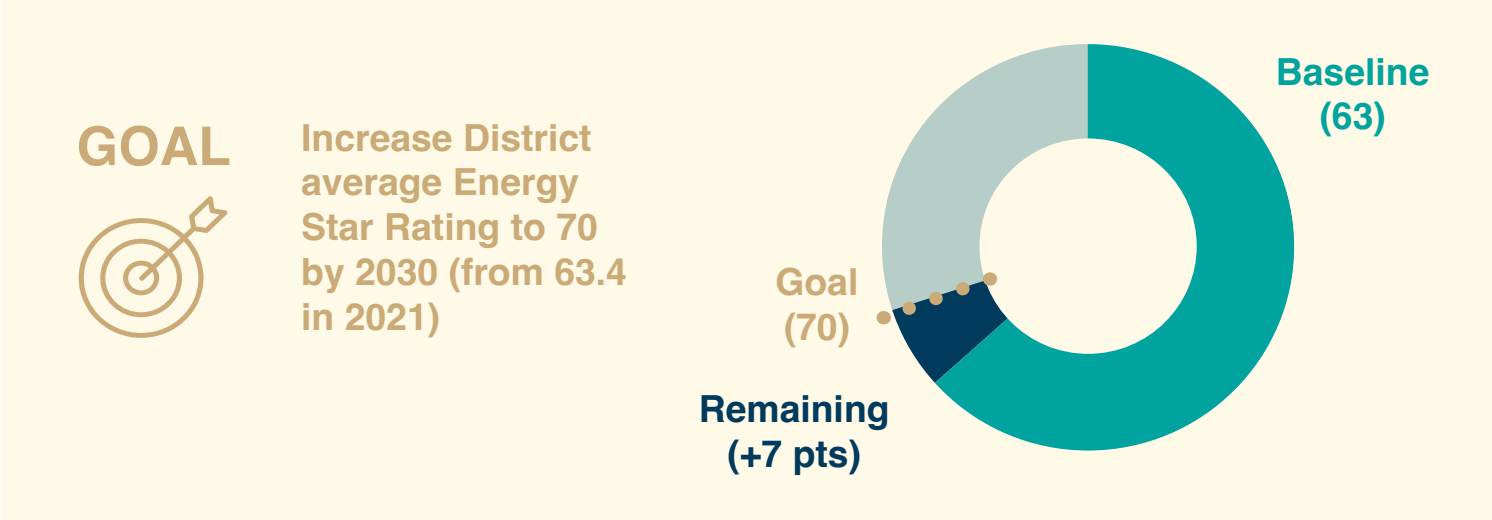


Figure 7: Building energy goal

Facilities Assessment

Building energy use can be impacted by behavioral practices as well as efficiency of systems and equipment. Along the same timeline as the creation of this plan, Omaha Public Schools worked with a team of experts to conduct a detailed assessment of all District facilities. The outcome of this process, which will likely be concluded in August of 2023, is an outline of projected maintenance needs for the next 30 years, including replacement of systems and equipment as well as redistribution of facilities based on utilization and condition.

The recommendations in this assessment are based on a variety of data points and are designed to allow for flexibility in future decision-making, to account for unknowns like changes in building codes, innovations in technology, and other variables. Acting in alignment with the Facilities Assessment recommendations will likely improve energy and water efficiency across the District, with a projected increase in Energy Star scores of 5-10 points due to equipment upgrades and other changes.

While this assessment does not include recommendations to adopt innovative environmental technologies like solar panels or electrified space and water heating, these kinds of technologies will be piloted, evaluated, and rolled out across the District as appropriate. Funding from recent federal legislation, local grants, and other sources are available to support these kinds of projects. Leveraging this funding will help the District appropriately maintain its facilities while also adopting innovative strategies that have proven successful.

Water

Water conservation is an important component of high-performance buildings and thoughtful grounds management. While water is generally considered a fairly abundant resource in this region, concerns about water scarcity have come up in recent years and may continue to arise in the future due to drought, flooding, and other climate impacts. Conserving water prepares the District for these potential risks and places less stress on water delivery systems. It also contributes to reductions in energy use and saves the District money that can be reinvested into our students. Water use is measured per square foot to provide a consistent metric that can be used over time, even if the District changes in size. It also provides a quantitative way to benchmark against other school districts and organizations.

Figure 8: Water consumption goal

Targets & Strategies

Emissions Targets

9 Increase student and staff use of active modes of transportation, supported by benefits and education provided by Omaha Public Schools

a. All schools provide infrastructure to support active modes of transportation (i.e. bike racks, walking access, etc.) by December 2025

b. Schools provide appropriate recognition for using active modes of transportation by December 2025

10 Increase proportion of alternative fuels in vehicles used by the District

a. 50% of fleet vehicles are using alternative fuels (such as electric vehicles) by December 2035

b. 50% of District-owned buses are using alternative fuel sources by December 2035

c. 80% of leased buses/vehicles are using alternative fuels by December 2035

11 Produce clean energy onsite

a. Ten (10) schools have onsite clean energy production (i.e., solar, wind, etc.) by December 2030

12 Increase efficiency in routing to reduce emissions from distribution

a. Develop quantitative target for decreasing fuel use for supply distribution by vehicle by December 2023

Table 7: Emissions strategies by target

Target	Emissions Strategies	Timeline
9	Create an active commuting program (with incentives/benefits and promotional materials) that encourages the use of active transportation modes for staff, students, visitors, and families (can be connected to employee wellness program)	1
9	Conduct a transportation study to identify potential employee transportation modes and strategies to support active commuting (MAPA survey + program funding)	1
9	Evaluate and improve bicycle parking infrastructure at all buildings	1
9	Evaluate traffic patterns/flow at buildings and identify policies to improve safety, work with the City as necessary to improve pedestrian issues	1
9	Provide ride matching resources to support carpooling for families and staff	2
9	Ensure and promote access to shower facilities and other active commuting infrastructure needed for active commuters once they arrive at the building	2
9	Implement an emergency ride-home program to provide a ride home after work for employees who miss the last transit stop or a carpool due to unplanned overtime or off-peak shift hours	2
9	Provide subsidized or free bus passes to staff and students	2
9	Provide education related to active commuting, such as the true cost of parking, how to use transit, etc.	2
9	Install preferred parking spaces for students/staff/visitors who use low-emission, high-efficiency vehicles (such as gasoline-electric hybrids, electric vehicles, motorcycles, and scooters)	2
9	Ensure any available maps highlight transit, walking/bicycling routes and times, bicycle parking, and locker/shower locations in addition to standard vehicle parking	2
9	Create park 'n' walk zones	3
9	Invite or hire local bicycle technicians to do pop-up repair stations	3
9	Create biking clubs for students or staff to bike together	3
9	Work with a community partner to provide bikes to students	4
9	Work with Metro Transit on routing	4
9	Advocate for safe, clean trails and sidewalks	4
9	Develop a sustainable transportation savings calculator for use by students and staff	4
9	Teach bike mechanical skills at Career Center	4

Target	Emissions Strategies	Timeline
9	Advocate for integration of bike safety skills into state phys. ed. curriculum	4
10	Apply for EPA Clean Bus Program funding to purchase zero- and low-emissions buses, fleet vehicles, and/or charging infrastructure	1
10	Purchase and/or lease electric buses as funding becomes available	2
10	Include requirements for alternative fuel (potentially electric) in contract with transportation service provider	2
10	Install electric vehicle charging stations as appropriate	Ongoing
10	Replace traditionally-fueled fleet vehicles with electric and/or hybrid fleet vehicles as part of the vehicle replacement plan	Ongoing
11	Analyze potential for onsite clean energy production	2
11	Create a plan for installing clean energy onsite at 10 schools	3
12	Shorten and/or optimize distribution delivery routes	3
12	Continue to improve efficiency of bus routing, including using GPS data	Ongoing

Buildings & Grounds Targets

13 Create sustainable landscaping at each site

a. Sustainable tree and landscaping plans have been developed at the District level and for all buildings by May 2025. Plans follow guidelines that reduce the need for irrigation and maintenance, including the use of drought-tolerant and native plants. Plans seek to improve outdoor air quality, contribute to carbon sequestration, and provide shade and other environmental benefits to students.

b. Sustainable landscaping plans and practices are piloted at 10 schools by May 2026

c. Ongoing maintenance practices, including proper training and communication, have been implemented to align with sustainable landscaping, by August 2026

14 Reduce energy and water consumption in buildings and on grounds

a. Energy and water consumption have been reduced by 5% due to a culture shift toward resource conservation through focused management, District guidelines, and education by December 2025

b. All locations are using real-time energy monitoring and leveraging advanced building control systems, which have improved energy and water efficiency in buildings and on grounds by December 2028

c. Building energy efficiency has improved due to facilities upgrades as identified by Facilities Assessment by December 2030

15 Improve environmental quality to promote the health, wellbeing, and success of building occupants

a. Indoor air quality, as measured by CO2 (primary metric), CO, and humidity levels, has improved in at least 90% of buildings due to changes identified through Facilities Assessment by December 2025

b. The District purchases and uses environmentally-friendly cleaning products that do not negatively impact indoor air quality in all instances where there is an effective product available by December 2025

c. The District has fully implemented Integrated Pest Management practices that prioritize the health of building occupants and ecosystems by December 2030

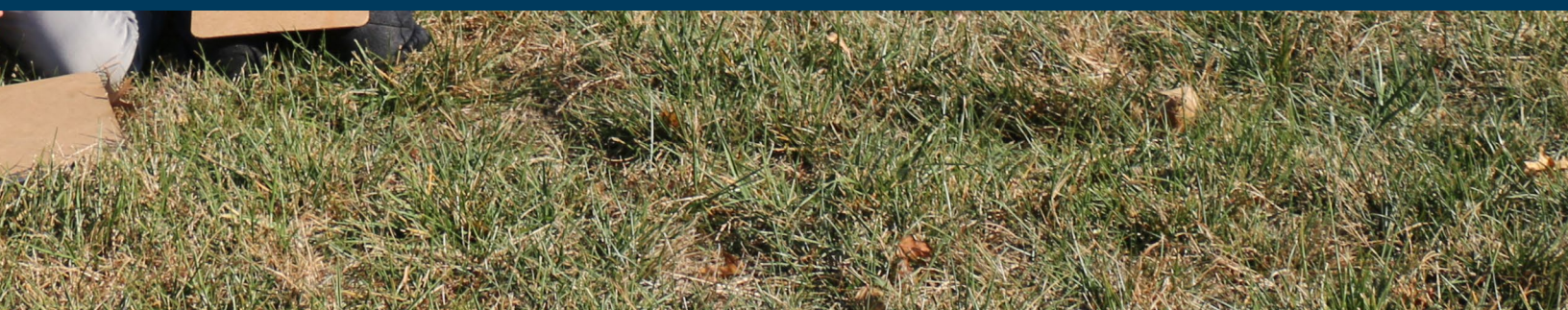
Table 8: Buildings and grounds strategies by target

Target	Buildings & Grounds Strategies	Timeline
13	Create educational public messaging about the importance of grounds and landscaping practices and their connection to the OPS mission, including addressing any aesthetics complaints, and share internally and externally	2
13	Create a district-wide landscaping and tree planting plan that prioritizes environmental sensitivity and minimizes maintenance requirements, including a planned approach and approval process for plant selection	2
13	Use the district-wide sustainable landscaping guidelines to create school-specific landscaping/tree planting plans	2
13	Explore the conversion of natural grass athletic fields to artificial athletic fields where feasible (calculate 10-year cost to evaluate whether it is cost-effective)	2
13	Communicate internally about grounds management practices and landscaping plans	2
13	Train building operations staff on landscaping best practices, especially as they relate to care for new native landscaping	2
13	Explore options for reducing warming from pavement on school grounds (i.e., alternative parking surfaces, replacing paved areas with landscaping, etc.)	3
13	Identify the appropriate mower height for reducing irrigation needs and implement mowing standards at this height across the district	3
13	Explore the use of subsurface drip irrigation in situations where irrigation is a necessity	3
13	Explore options for more sustainable maintenance equipment (self-driven, electric, etc.)	3
13	Explore possibility of privatizing grounds maintenance or including one year of private maintenance after a project is completed	3
13	Incorporate composting soil (and other Hillside Solutions products that can be purchased at a reduced cost by schools that are composting) into landscaping	3
13	Use brush from trees for mulch	3
13	Develop a water management plan to support local stormwater management and decrease water consumption	4

Target	Buildings & Grounds Strategies	Timeline
13	Require soil quality restoration	4
13	Explore and determine feasibility (i.e., cost/benefit) of options for stormwater collection and rainwater harvesting, such as rain gardens (bioretention gardens) and cisterns and create a plan for installation of these systems	4
13	Create partnership with Master Gardener program or certified arborist/botanist for maintenance of landscaping	4
14	Evaluate the use of a single temperature set point year-round, for energy impacts vs. other benefits (i.e. ease of communication, control)	1
14	Display real-time building-specific consumption data/dashboard on screens (or another medium) in buildings	1
14	Transition to an automated permit system to increase overall communication and coordination across buildings spaces	1
14	Explore options for returning a percent of energy savings back to schools for further funding	1
14	Enforce current guidelines for small appliances, IMS equipment, energy best practices, etc. Include turning off lights and closing doors in custodial procedures if not already.	1
14	Increase and improve water monitoring by continuing to retrofit buildings with automated water monitoring equipment	1
14	Audit MUD service records to identify where water meters are and ensure that proper metering exists, identify opportunities to increase and improve water metering.	1
14	Create and enforce district-wide policies for irrigation	1
14	Explore types/scale of advanced irrigation systems, including contacting local irrigation experts/representatives, researching options, etc.	1
14	Create a plan for expanding submetering to all buildings	1
14	Manage electric capacity charges through a summer peak load management program	2
14	Control the operation time for exterior lighting through the use of electronic controls and photocells	2
14	Facilities Assessment: Identify best practices and create plans for facilities upgrades	2
14	Install and use advanced irrigation controls (ideally centralized, cloud-based systems)	2
14	Consolidate servers, as appropriate, to reduce the number of servers and the associated power consumption and infrastructure needs	3
14	Develop a plan to conduct routine preventive maintenance, including unoccupied site walk audits, to ensure that systems are functioning efficiently	3
14	Conduct annual audits to confirm that all irrigation rain sensors are functioning correctly to prevent overwatering, and freeze protection so that irrigation does not occur when temperatures are below freezing	3

Target	Buildings & Grounds Strategies	Timeline
14	Centrally control irrigation systems through Buildings and Grounds	3
14	Ensure sustainability factors are included in the creation of building design guidelines	4
14	Use Trane education program to communicate the impact of HVAC on energy	4
14	Tighten up building automation systems and setback settings (including temperature set points for occupied vs. unoccupied time) to minimize building run time when spaces are unoccupied	Ongoing
14	Improve utility data tracking in order to effectively analyze energy and water use and collaborate with appropriate parties to identify opportunities for conservation (EWMT)	Ongoing
14	Continue expanding real-time energy use monitoring in facilities	Ongoing
14	Purchase energy-efficient computers and monitors when new computers are needed	Ongoing
14	Use natural lighting instead of electrical lighting when possible	Ongoing
14	Reduce lighting in indoor public areas (e.g. hallways)	Ongoing
14	Reduce heat/air conditioning use in hallways and other high traffic areas	Ongoing
15	Use the results of the facility assessment to prioritize facility enhancements that maintain or improve air quality	1
15	Evaluate current Integrated Pest Management practices and products and identify remaining opportunities for shifting to weed and pest control chemicals that improve environmental and human health	1
15	Evaluate cleaning products (e.g., general purpose cleaners, specialty cleaners, hand soap, etc.) and establish green cleaning standards to be implemented across the district	2
15	Formalize Integrated Pest Management standards in bids/RFPs and district policies	2

Engagement & Curriculum



The scope of improved environmental stewardship is not limited to operational projects and policies. Students, staff, and teachers are instrumental in creating sustainable change - it is each of us as individuals who can become the greatest stewards of the environment. Engaging the whole Omaha Public Schools community in environmental efforts will encourage collaboration, inspire new initiatives, and result in a greater impact. An Engagement/Curriculum Focus Team was created to develop strategies related to communication, opportunities for education, and integration of environmental stewardship into the classroom, to address two important pieces of the vision:

Elevate student voices and empower students as leaders.

Foster a culture of regeneration.

The curriculum team and others across the District have already done great work to incorporate environmental topics into existing courses and to create new courses that focus on these topics. For example, Northwest High School has an AP Environmental Science course, Westview has a Sustainability Pathway, and Bryan has an Urban Agriculture program.

Engagement Survey Score

The environmental stewardship engagement survey score is calculated based on responses to five questions that assess various dimensions of engagement, culminating in an overall score that can be used as a metric to measure progress in this area over time. The five dimensions are shown below, along with their score (i.e., the percentage of respondents who selected one of the top two levels of awareness, knowledge, etc.). For full survey results, see Appendix.

Table 9: Survey scores by dimension, 2021

Survey Dimension	Score
Awareness of Efforts (very/moderately aware) at the District to be better stewards of the environment	23
Knowledge (very/moderately knowledgeable) about ways to be a better steward of the environment at work/school	59
Behavioral Frequency (always/most of the time) self-reported key environmental stewardship behaviors	67
Perceived Norm (always/most of the time) perceptions of how often others engage in key behaviors	35
Awareness of Environmental Stewardship (very/moderately familiar) familiarity with the concept of environmental stewardship	46
Overall Score	**46**

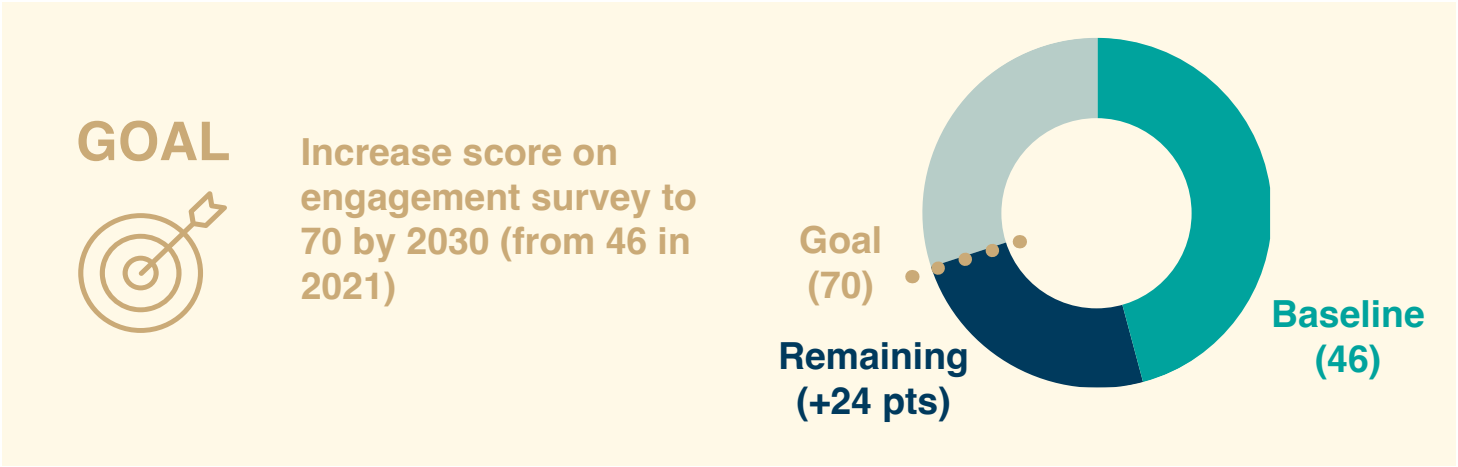


Figure 9: Engagement goal

Targets & Strategies

Engagement & Curriculum Targets

16 Increase communication about environmental stewardship internally and externally

a. Regular communication about environmental stewardship is incorporated into internal and external channels by December 2023

17 Expand educational opportunities for career and professional development related to environmental stewardship, for both students and staff

a. All students have access to education about environmental career opportunities through guest speakers, career fairs, coursework, etc. by May 2024

b. Staff are aware of professional development opportunities related to environmental stewardship by December 2024

18 Improve participation, leadership, and accountability for school-level environmental stewardship efforts

a. Most schools have a Green Team by May 2025

b. At least 50% of schools are participating in an incentive or recognition program (i.e., Green Schools Challenge) by May 2026

c. At least 50% of buildings have school-specific environmental stewardship goals incorporated into their School Improvement Plan by August 2026

19 Expand development of environmental stewardship components in curriculum

a. The District has explored additional opportunities to incorporate environmental issues into courses and curriculum by August 2025

b. At least 50% of high school courses incorporate connections to environmental issues in some way by August 2027

20 Use outdoor classrooms to connect students with the natural environment

a. Existing outdoor classrooms have curriculum connections and plans for ongoing use by December 2024

b. The District has explored opportunities to create outdoor classrooms at appropriate locations by December 2024

Table 10: Engagement and curriculum strategies

Target	Engagement & Curriculum Strategies	Timeline
16	Incorporate information about environmental stewardship into staff and student orientation (opening days, curriculum days, leadership camps)	1
16	Create and implement a plan for communicating about environmental stewardship with internal audiences	1
16	Create and implement a plan for communicating about environmental stewardship with external audiences	2
16	Develop a structure for anonymously submitting sustainability ideas/two-way communication and feedback	3
17	Bring in guest speakers to discuss career opportunities and provide education to students on various sustainability-related topics	2
17	Provide ongoing sustainability training for staff and teachers	3
17	Leverage community partners that OPS already has relationships with, such as the Service Learning Academy at UNO, Keep Omaha Beautiful, OPPD, etc. and support teachers in working with them	Ongoing
18	Establish a Green Team at every building	1
18	Conduct behavior change campaigns to target specific behaviors, including physical reminders (like "lights off!" stickers)	2
18	Initiate and maintain a recognition program for incentivizing school environmental stewardship	2
18	Create building-specific goals to be incorporated into School Improvement Plans	3
18	Build a resource library for information sharing across green champions	3
18	Incorporate a general expectation of energy, water and resource conservation into employee standards of behavior to build a culture of energy and water conservation (i.e., use this space like you're paying for the utilities)	3
18	Engage and get buy-in from building administrators to prioritize energy and water conservation efforts	3
18	Incorporate environmental stewardship into job descriptions and employee performance reviews	4
19	Use OPPD arboretum and/or solar field as a classroom	3
19	Establish partnerships between classes with opportunities for interdisciplinary projects (i.e., art from plastic)	4
19	Identify applied learning opportunities for incorporating energy education/best practices into the classroom	Ongoing
19	Continue to incorporate environmental stewardship into curriculum development	Ongoing
20	Develop a program for supporting the use of outdoor learning spaces	4
20	Where space allows, incorporate trails into outdoor classrooms	4

Appendix

1. Summary of Discovery Results

2. Sustainability Engagement Survey Report

OPS Environmental Stewardship Plan - Summary of Discovery Results

January 2022

The process to create a plan for improved environmental stewardship, in accordance with the OPS Strategic Plan of Action, began in fall 2021 with a Discovery phase. This phase included:

1. Summarizing historical environmental stewardship efforts at OPS
2. Peer/industry research
3. Interviews with key leaders at OPS
4. District-wide survey
5. Completion of a greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory
6. Updates to key indicator baselines through ongoing energy, water, and waste data analysis
7. Environmental Stewardship Plan (ESP) Taskforce visioning exercise

This document summarizes outcomes from the above activities and outlines next steps.

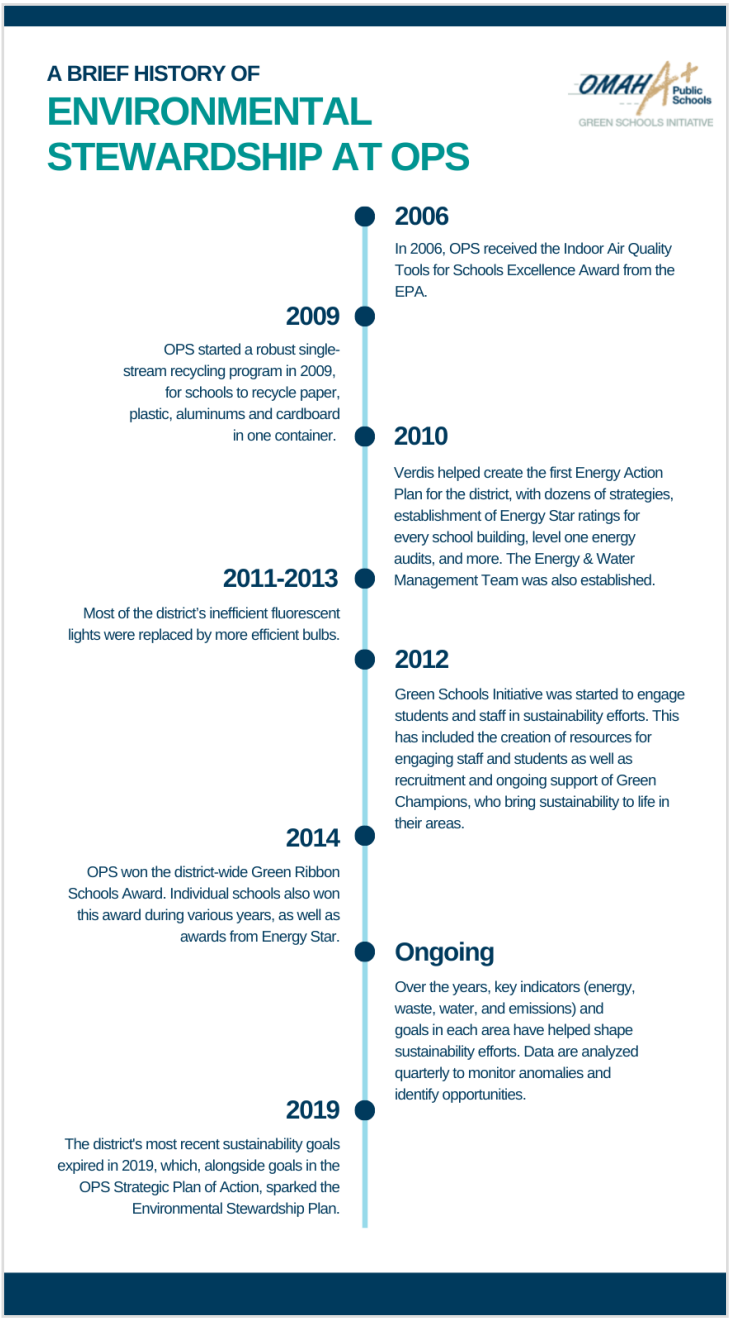
Table of Contents

History of Environmental Stewardship at OPS

The history of environmental stewardship/sustainability efforts at Omaha Public Schools dates back at least two decades and includes parties within and outside the district. The district has implemented a range of strategies for energy and water efficiency and waste reduction in particular. Verdis Group has been a partner on these efforts since 2009.

Over the course of the past 10 years, energy efficiency strategies have cumulatively saved the district over $14.5 million in avoided costs. Dozens of schools now have real-time energy monitoring systems that help the district determine when and where energy is being used so that conservation strategies are targeted. LED lights are the norm in new renovations and new buildings. The district's Energy & Water Management Team is focused on monitoring energy use and providing direction and solutions to schools for continued conservation. Guidelines and toolkits for schools - from waste signage to classroom efficiency checklists - have been developed and refined throughout the past few years and are available on the internal OPS website.

To the right is a timeline that summarizes some of the key actions the district taken since 2006.



Peer/Industry Research

Research on peer sustainability efforts and industry frameworks was conducted in order to ensure that the process and outcomes of the Environmental Stewardship Plan (ESP) align with the K-12 context. Information available from the following peer school districts regarding goals, focus areas, and strategies was reviewed:

- Lincoln Public Schools (geographical peer)
- Millard Public Schools
- Des Moines Public Schools
- Denver Public Schools
- Wichita Public Schools
- Oklahoma City Public Schools
- Saint Paul Public Schools
- Seattle Public Schools (aspirational peer)

Other sources of industry research included:

- Green Ribbon Schools (National and Nebraska DOE program)
    - Highlight reports
- Center for Green Schools
- LEED Schools

Key Findings

1. **Goal and strategy information was not readily available for many school districts.**
   Goals available:
    - Seattle Public Schools - Carbon neutrality by 2030
    - Saint Paul Public Schools - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions 45% by 2030

2. **Areas of focus and strategies were similar across districts.**
   Areas of focus for most school districts included:
    - Energy efficiency
    - Renewable energy
    - Water use
    - Waste/recycling
    - Applied education opportunities (i.e., outdoor learning, gardens, curriculum and STEM integration)

   Peer focus areas reflect frameworks commonly used within the K-12 industry - namely, the Green Ribbon Schools pillars, which can be seen as the industry standard:
    - **Pillar One**: reducing environmental impacts, such as waste, water, energy, greenhouse gases, and transportation, encompassing the areas of school facilities, grounds, and operations;

- **Pillar Two**: improving health and wellness by promoting a healthy physical environment (including aspects such as air quality, contaminant control, moisture control, acoustics, daylighting, pest management, and thermal comfort) and student and staff wellness practices (such as healthy school food and outdoor physical activity); and
- **Pillar Three**: offering effective environmental and sustainability education, including civic learning, green careers, and STEM connections.

3. **There is a wealth of resources available for implementing strategies within these areas, particularly from the Center for Green Schools.**
   These resources, especially information regarding funding mechanisms (some of which are unique to school contexts), will be leveraged to develop implementation plans.

Interviews

Eleven individuals were interviewed about their views on environmental stewardship and their vision for the future of OPS:

1. **Dr. Cheryl Logan**, Superintendent
2. **Charles Wakefield**, Chief Operations Officer
3. **Jeramie Cobb**, Director of Operations
4. **Dr. Fateama Fulmore**, Chief School Improvement and Accountability
5. **Susan Christopherson**, Director of Secondary Education
6. **Scott Roberts**, Chief Financial Officer
7. **Cecil Hicks**, Chief Talent Officer
8. **Lisa Utterback**, Student and Community Services Chief Officer
9. **Ayanna Boykins**, Economic Inclusion/Workforce Administrator
10. **Darwin Rohde**, Director of Buildings and Grounds
11. **Matthew Ray**, Secretary to the Board of Education

Questions asked and key themes from responses are outlined below.

Connection to OPS Mission

How do you see environmental stewardship connecting to OPS' mission, vision, and values?

Preparing students to succeed, in both career and life, involves preparing them for the changes that will come with an ever-changing world, which includes a changing climate. Stewardship of resources is connected to students' success in school as well as their family and health outcomes. Students will not be able to thrive if OPS does not care for the environment they will be living in. Students' experience at OPS should help them navigate the challenges that will come with environmental change. Academic and career opportunities will be shaped by these changes, and connections to these opportunities can be made now.

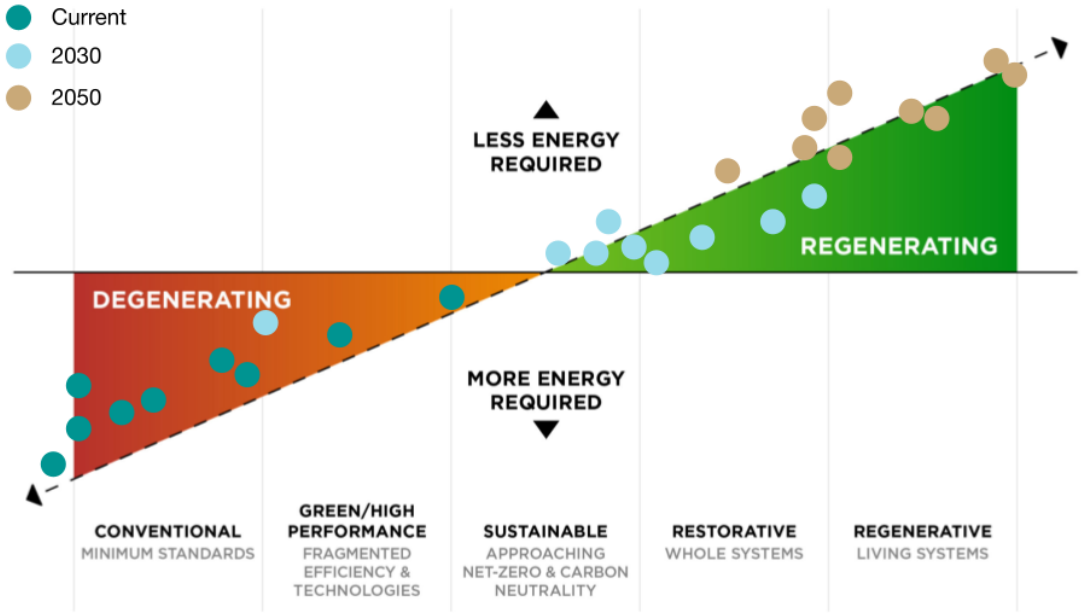
Climate impacts will cause disruptions for OPS as an organization. In 2021, there were 10 disruptions due to climate, including power outages, floods, weather events, etc. As an organization, OPS needs to adapt to meet the needs of current and future students and community stakeholders.

Teaching and modeling environmental stewardship to OPS students creates a culture of responsibility and connects students to a broader worldview. Environmental stewardship means incorporating good practices into everyday norms, and teaching students to be good stewards aligns with being responsible in other ways. If students understand that individuals are responsible for making the world a better place, they will be more successful in their job and life.

Vision for the Future

Where is OPS currently on the regenerative spectrum? Where should OPS be in the future?

The regenerative spectrum is a framework for thinking about design and development - from business-as-usual approaches that extract from the environment, to practices that consider the whole system and ultimately have a positive impact on the environment. The spectrum is used to visualize the range of possibilities for an organization's impact on the environment. Interviewees were shown a blank version of the spectrum below and asked to identify three locations along the line: where they think OPS is currently, where they would like to see the district in 2030, and what they hope to achieve by 2050. Each dot represents one interviewee's response, color coded as shown.



Keys to Success

Get buy-in by educating and communicating the importance of the work. Connect environmental stewardship to climate impacts that everyone experiences and communicate the importance of taking action. Help everyone - students and employees - see their role in it and engage people throughout the process to create champions who can help make this shift.

Take a systems approach that makes environmental stewardship a priority and keeps it front of mind. As a district, incorporate environmental stewardship into all practices and departments such that it is embedded in the way the district operates on a daily basis. Ensure that actions taken will have a replicable, long-term impact that will be sustained across the district over time.

Make it accessible and manageable. Focus on incremental changes that can be accomplished and that will have a long-term impact, not just what's happening right now. Make it something the district "is" rather than something to "do".

Engage with students. Integrate environmental stewardship into the student experience through pathways, academies, programs, clubs, and other engagement/outreach.

Identify champions. Ensure that there are advocates throughout the district who can help make the shift on a peer-to-peer level. Support these champions - equip them to share the message and education.

Barriers

Financial. There are resource limitations and costs associated with investments in technology, infrastructure, etc.

Political. As a public entity, the content that will be included in the plan will likely elicit feedback from the community. Communication and education will be key.

Lack of understanding/education. People may not understand the issues and the potential impacts of climate change, or they may not see why environmental stewardship needs to be a priority at OPS.

Resistance to change. There are often people who are afraid to grow and shift and who see environmental stewardship as "one more thing I have to do".

Survey Results

Full report

A district-wide survey was conducted in December 2021 to collect information from OPS employees about their views on and engagement with environmental stewardship efforts at the district. The survey was developed by Verdis Group over many years and can be used to generally compare within an organization over time as well as across organizations with whom the survey has been conducted.

The survey uses five questions to assess five dimensions of engagement, which culminate in an overall "score" (1-100) that can be used as a metric to measure progress in this area over time.

Key Findings

- **Overall score of 46,** calculated as the average of five dimensions:

Dimensions	2021
Awareness of Efforts (very/moderately aware) at the organization to be better stewards of the environment	23
Knowledge (very/moderately knowledgeable) about ways to be a better steward of the environment at work	59
Behavioral Frequency (always/most of the time) self-reported key environmental stewardship behaviors	67
Perceived Norm (always/most of the time) perceptions of how often others engage in key behaviors	35
Awareness of Environmental Stewardship (very/moderately familiar) familiarity with the concept of environmental stewardship	46
Overall Score	**46**

- **81%** of respondents believe it is **important** for OPS to take active steps toward environmental stewardship
- However, only **56%** believe environmental stewardship **aligns with the district's mission** to prepare students for success in college, career, and life, which does not align with interview findings
- **20%** of 9,000 employees participated in the survey
- Only **23%** of respondents were very or moderately aware of district efforts, but many more were knowledgeable about sustainable or environmentally-friendly personal

practices (**59%**) and indicated that they participate in key behaviors to be better stewards of the environment (**67%**)
- **Waste management** is one of the top areas where respondents see both successes and opportunities, and want to see it as an area of focus

Key Indicator Baselines

The ESP will include goals within the following metrics to measure progress toward improved environmental stewardship. Baselines shown in this section will inform goal-setting as well as strategy development and prioritization.

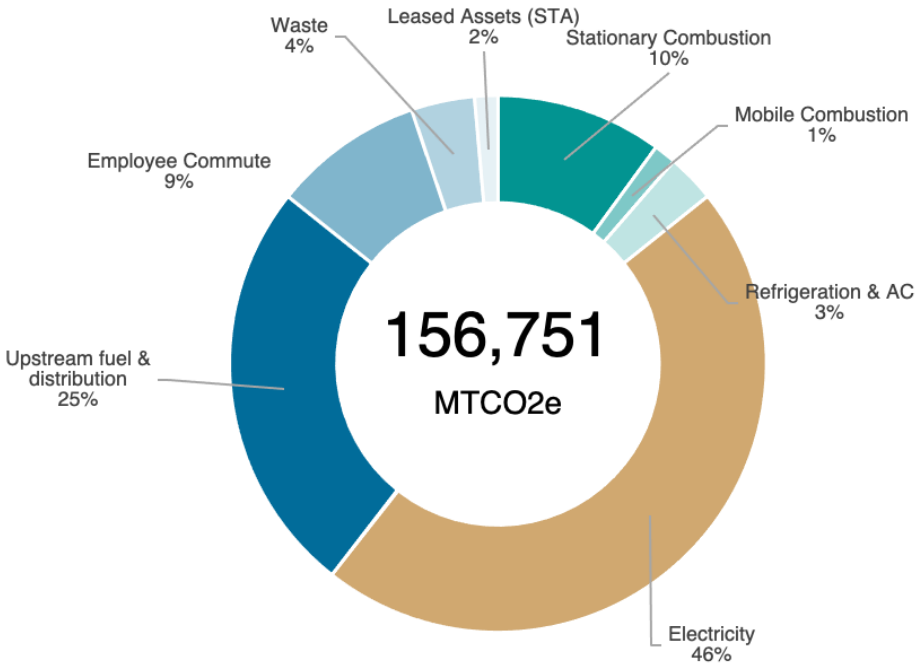
Key Indicator	Metric(s)
Greenhouse gas emissions	**Total emissions**: as calculated in GHG inventory Transportation sub-metrics (will be reflected in the emissions value, but will be monitored separately to support implementation efforts): • **Commute mode split**: Percentage of employees who travel to work using a mode of transportation other than driving alone in a car (i.e., biking, walking, taking public transportation, or carpooling) • **Fleet makeup**: TBD
Building energy consumption	**Energy Star rating**: benchmark based primarily on energy consumption (electricity, natural gas, etc.)
Waste reduction	**Diversion rate**: percent of materials that are diverted from the landfill through recycling, composting, reuse, or source reduction
Water use	**Water consumption per occupant**
Engagement	**Engagement Survey score**: calculated from five survey questions about awareness, knowledge, and behavior at OPS around environmental stewardship

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory[1] was completed for OPS, covering emissions associated with **Scope One** (direct, onsite), **Scope Two** (from electricity consumption), and **selected Scope Three** (indirect emissions from leased assets, upstream fuel and distribution, employee commute, and waste) for 2019 and 2020. The table on page 10 provides a description of what is included in each scope.

[1] Greenhouse gas inventory: a list of emission sources and the associated emissions quantified using standardized methods (EPA)

The 2019 inventory is being used to set a baseline (rather than 2020) due to COVID-19-related anomalies (i.e., sharp decreases in energy use while buildings were unoccupied). Below are the full results of the inventory. OPS produced 156,751 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent[2] ($MtCO_2e$) greenhouse gas emissions in 2019. The primary source of emissions is electricity consumption for building operations (46%).



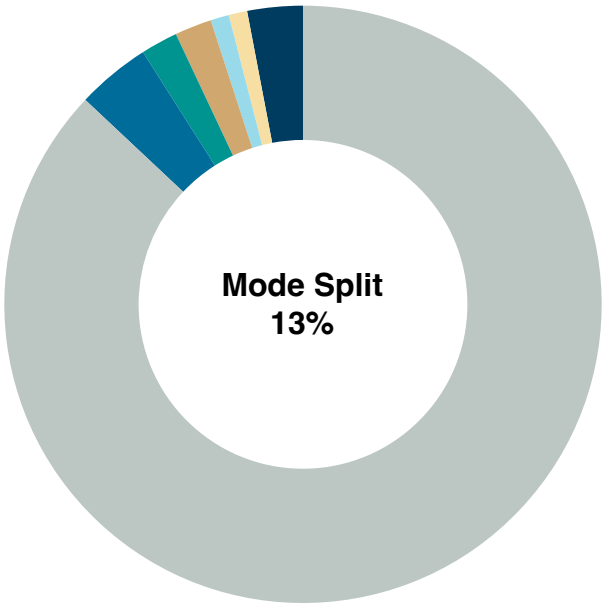
Scope	Category		2019	2020
Scope 1	Stationary Combustion	Combustion of fuels in stationary sources (e.g., boilers, furnaces)	15,724	13,649
	Mobile Combustion	Owned vehicle fuel consumption	2,113	3,894
	Refrigerants	Use of refrigeration and air conditioning equipment *Note: emissions estimated as a % of scope 1 and 2. Actual data not available.*	4,525	3,804
Scope 2	Electricity	Generation of purchased electricity that is consumed onsite	72,656	58,542
Scope 3	Upstream Fuel & Distribution	Extraction, production, and transmission of energy	39,346	31,447
	Employee Commute	Based on mode split	14,210	
	Waste	Methane from landfill	5,991	
	Leased Assets	Operation of assets leased to a third party (Student Transportation of America)	2,187	2,140
		Total	**156,751**	**113,475**

[2] Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) is used to express emissions from different greenhouse gases (e.g., methane and nitrous oxide) in a common term, taking into account that some gases are more powerful than others.

Mode Split

Emissions from employee commuting are included as transportation emissions in the GHG inventory, but will also be tracked separately as a metric called “mode split” to help inform active commuting strategies. Mode split is the percent of trips employees make to work using a mode of transportation other than driving alone in a vehicle (i.e., biking, walking, taking public transportation, or carpooling) in a typical week.

As of December 2021, the district’s mode split is **13%**. In other words, 13% of employees get to work in a way other than driving alone in a car. See below for a full breakdown of transportation modes used by survey respondents.

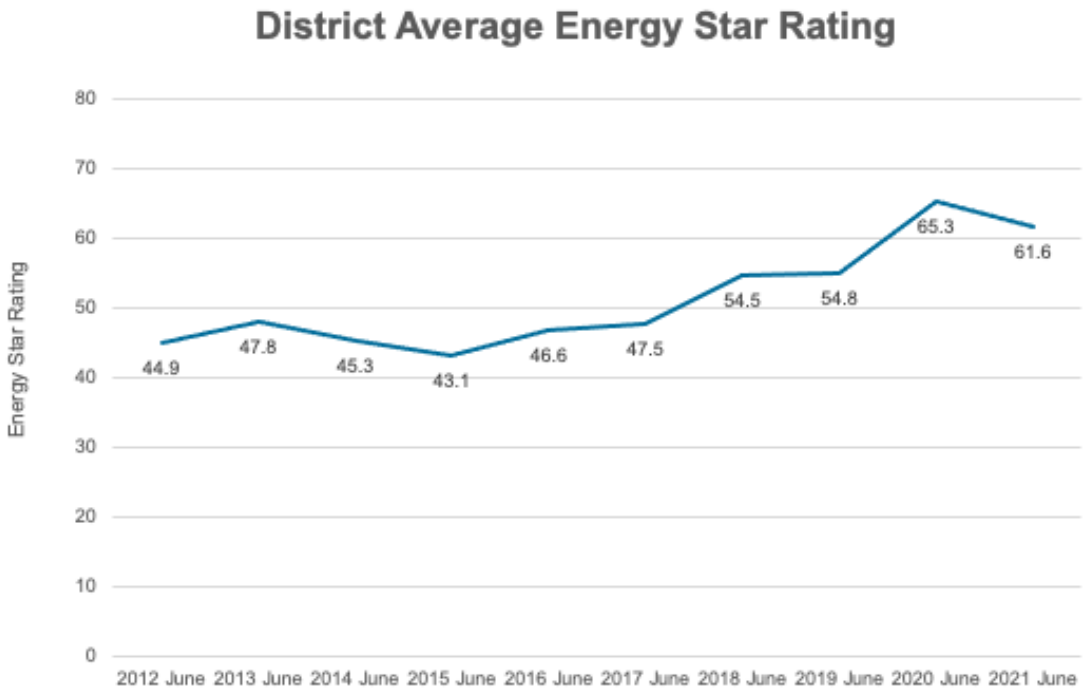


	Drive alone	87%
	Carpool	4%
	Walk	2%
	Work remotely from off-site	2%
	Bike	1%
	Bus	1%
	Other (motorcycle, scooter, moped, taxi)	3%

Energy Star Rating

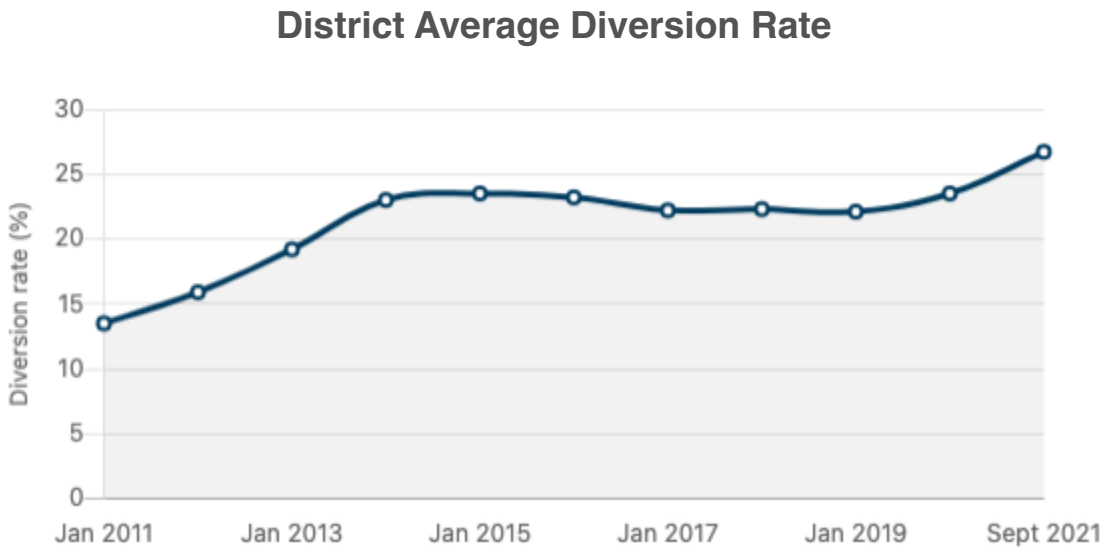
The objective of the Energy Star rating system is to “provide a fair assessment of the energy performance of a property relative to its peers, taking into account the climate, weather, and business activities at the property” (source).

District Energy Star rating is calculated based on energy consumption (electricity, natural gas, etc.) and other factors and is reported on a 12-month rolling basis. As of June 2021, the district’s rating is **61.6**.



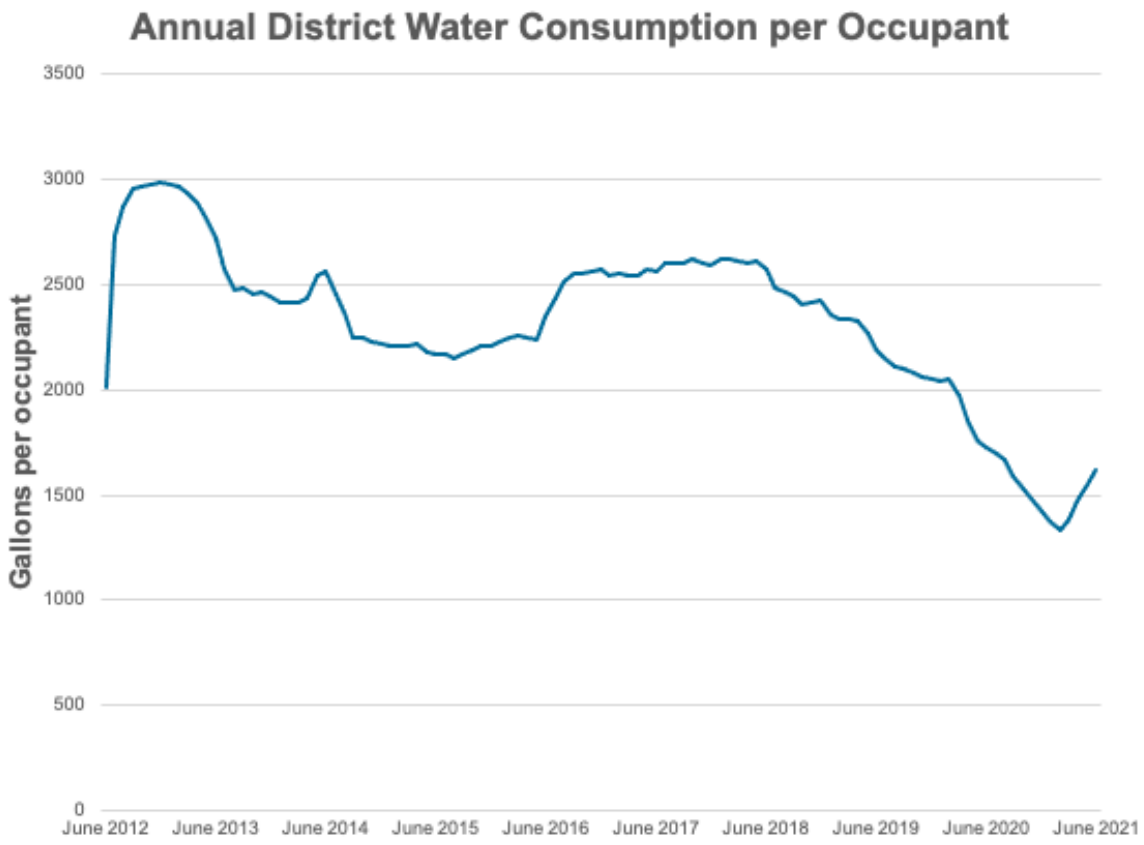
Waste

Diversion rate is calculated by dividing the percentage of material not sent to the landfill by the total waste for the district. As of September 2021, the district diversion rate is **27%**.



Water

Water use per occupant is used to measure progress for this key indicator. As of June 2021, district water use is **1,616 gallons per occupant**.



Engagement

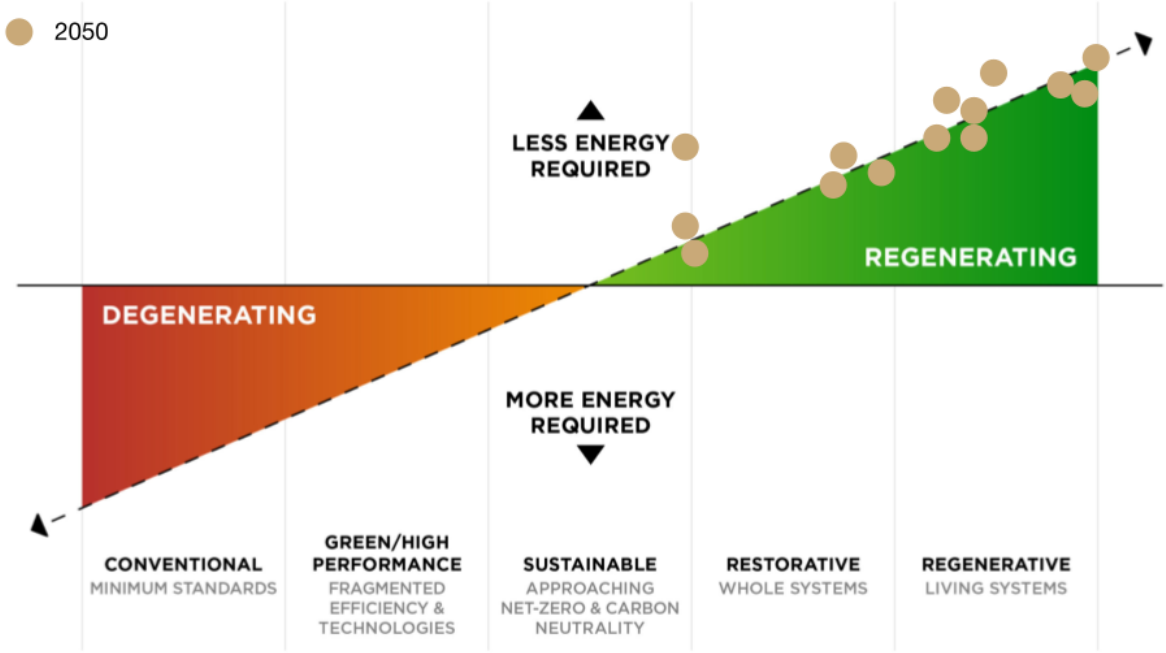
As of December 2021, the district's baseline Engagement Survey score is **46.**

The survey uses five questions to assess five dimensions of engagement, which culminate in an overall "score" (1-100). Total score is calculated by taking the average of the five dimensional scores - see Survey Results section for more information.

Environmental Stewardship Vision

Process

On November 29, 2021, the Taskforce met for a two-hour workshop where they participated in several exercises to identify their vision for the future of environmental stewardship at OPS. They were asked to place a dot on the same regenerative spectrum used in the interviews, thinking about their goal for OPS in the long-term future (2050). The results are shown below.



The Taskforce also went through a process to brainstorm, discuss, and organize their ideas for the future of environmental stewardship at OPS. They were asked to think about what success would look like for this project and what they hope to achieve. The results of this exercise were refined into the following vision.

Vision Statement

At Omaha Public Schools, we recognize the connection between our mission to prepare students to succeed and the challenges they will face due to the climate crisis. We believe it is critical to their success and ours as a district to take innovative action to become better stewards of our natural resources, equip our students to overcome environmental challenges, and ultimately become an organization that gives back to our planet and community. This includes taking action to…

Elevate student voices and empower students as leaders.

We seek to create a culture that elevates student voices and supports student-led environmental initiatives. We will partner with community members to connect students with career and educational opportunities related to environmental stewardship.

Cultivate a healthy learning environment through high-performance buildings and thoughtful grounds management.
We will use modern building management systems, real-time analytics, and other advanced technologies to increase energy and water efficiency in buildings and on grounds. We will improve indoor and outdoor air quality and conserve resources through the implementation of integrated pest management and landscaping plans.

Foster a culture of regeneration.
We will work to improve staff and student participation in environmental stewardship initiatives. We will provide accessible education to encourage personal and collective practices that support our sustainability goals at school, at home, and beyond. We will integrate environmental stewardship into daily practices in each department and promote interdepartmental communication and collaboration.

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
We will significantly decrease our greenhouse gas emissions by reducing energy usage, procuring energy from clean sources, and producing our own clean energy. We will seek opportunities to reinvest energy cost savings into our buildings and students.

Implement transportation systems that support our emissions goals.
We will increase the number of clean fuel vehicles in our fleet. We seek to reduce the use of cars by all members of the OPS community by promoting alternative modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, and carpooling.

Eliminate waste, from purchasing to disposal.
We will reduce our purchasing and use of materials and reuse or donate items when possible. We will ensure all buildings have proper levels of recycling and composting equipment and education.

Make socially responsible procurement decisions.
We will let OPS values guide our purchases, which means supporting the local community and purchasing from businesses that share those values.

Implement sustainable food practices that support student nutrition.
We will source local and sustainable food in the cafeterias when possible, and we will promote ‘ready access’ to healthy food outside of mealtimes.

Next Steps

Context from each of the areas above will be used to guide the remainder of the process for creating the ESP. Below are the next steps, many of which are currently underway.

Student Engagement

Thirteen students who have expressed interest in environmental stewardship were recruited to participate in a student engagement program during the spring semester. They will be provided the tools and knowledge to visit other schools and present about environmental stewardship to their peers and/or to school administrators. They will also be equipped to speak about the project and environmental issues with other students, friends, and their families. Ultimately they will be asked to provide a summary report of their conversations, which will inform the plan.

Focus Teams

Focus Teams will be convened around seven key topic areas covering the subtopics listed below.

- Buildings (Interior)
    - Energy efficiency
    - Renewable energy
    - Green technology
    - Water efficiency
    - Indoor air quality
    - Facilities Assessment
- Transportation
    - Buses
    - Fleet
    - Mode split (employee and student commuting)
- Waste/Recycling
    - Waste reduction
    - Recycling
    - Composting
- Purchasing
    - Social responsibility
        - Local community/businesses
        - Shared values
        - Companies that have sustainability goals
    - Materials/disposal (i.e. compostable, less packaging, etc.)
- Grounds (Exterior)
    - Landscaping
    - Pest management

    - Outdoor air quality
- Food
    - Sustainable
    - Local
    - Healthy food accessible at all times
- Engagement/Curriculum
    - Communications
    - Curriculum
    - Community relations
    - Student leadership and empowerment

These teams will meet up to four times between February and June to develop strategies that will improve environmental stewardship and drive the district toward the future identified in the vision. These strategies will include everything from energy efficiency upgrades to tree planting plans to student engagement programs. The Focus Teams will also examine data and suggest preliminary goals for the metrics within their purview. The Taskforce will review, refine, and finalize these goals.

Goal Setting

As noted in the Key Indicators section, the Focus Teams and Taskforce will both be involved in helping develop goals for the following metrics, which will help measure progress and success of the ESP:

- Greenhouse gas emissions
    - Transportation sub-metrics will be reflected in the emissions value, but will be monitored separately to support implementation efforts:
        - Commute mode split
        - Fleet makeup
- Building energy consumption
- Waste reduction
- Water use
- Engagement

Strategic directions (as opposed to formal quantitative goals) will be set for the following areas as well:

- Curriculum integration
- Indoor air quality

The Taskforce will meet in March to review outcomes from initial Focus Team meetings and set goals. Draft goals will be released for community feedback.

Creation of Plan

The strategies and goals developed by the Focus Teams will be compiled and refined into a draft plan. Along the way, there will be opportunities for the public, the Board of Education, and OPS stakeholders to share feedback and ask questions. The plan will be presented to the Board during the summer of 2022 and will be finalized following approval. Implementation will begin during the 2022-23 school year.

GREEN SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

Omaha Public Schools Environmental Stewardship Survey Report

December 2021

Overview

This survey was conducted in December of 2021 as part of the initial phase of the process to create an Environmental Stewardship Plan. The objective was to collect information from OPS employees about their views on environmental stewardship and their awareness of and engagement with OPS environmental stewardship efforts. The survey was developed by Verdis Group over many years and can be used to generally compare within an organization over time as well as across organizations with whom the survey has been conducted.

The survey uses five questions to assess five dimensions of engagement, which culminate in an overall "score" that can be used as a metric to measure progress in this area over time. The five dimensions are shown below, along with their "score" (i.e., the percentage of respondents who selected one of the top two levels of awareness, knowledge, etc.). Key findings from across the survey are summarized on page 2, followed by detailed results by question.

Dimensions	2021
Awareness of Efforts (very/moderately aware) at the organization to be better stewards of the environment	23
Knowledge (very/moderately knowledgeable) about ways to be a better steward of the environment at work	59
Behavioral Frequency (always/most of the time) self-reported key environmental stewardship behaviors	67
Perceived Norm (always/most of the time) perceptions of how often others engage in key behaviors	35
Awareness of Environmental Stewardship (very/moderately familiar) familiarity with the concept of environmental stewardship	46
Overall Score	**46**

Key Findings

20% of 9,000 employees participated in the survey

81% of respondents believe it is important for OPS to take active steps toward environmental stewardship

Low awareness of efforts, higher knowledge of individual action. Only 23% of respondents indicated that they were very or moderately aware of OPS district efforts to be better stewards of the environment. However, 59% indicate they were very or moderately knowledgeable about ways they personally could be better stewards of the environment at work. Likewise, 67% indicated they participated in key behaviors always or most of the time.

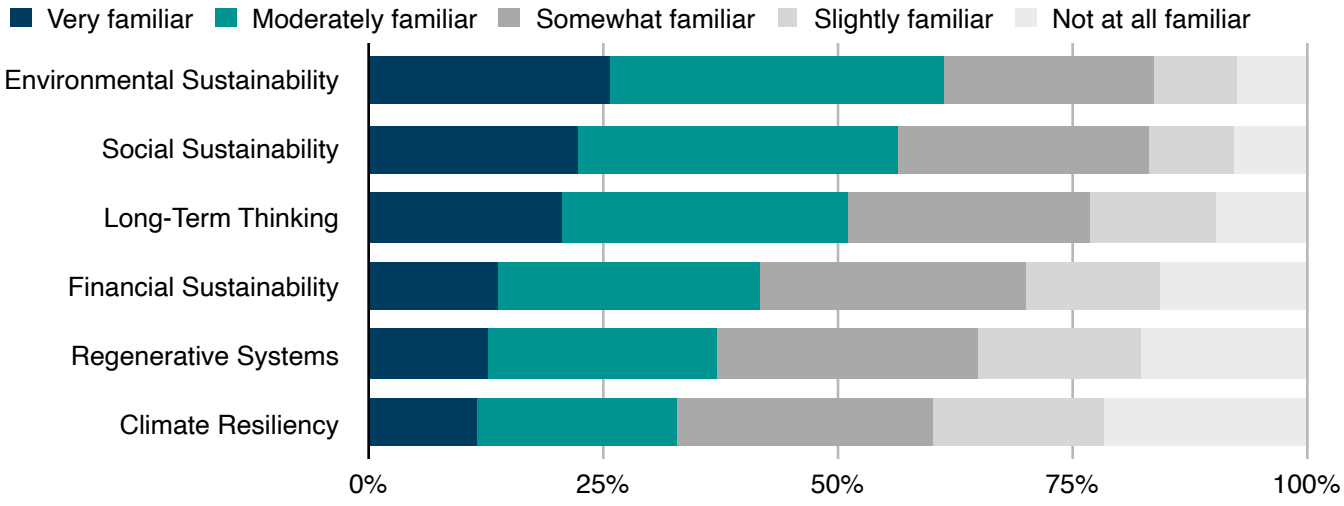
High importance, lower mission alignment. While 81% of respondents indicated they believe it is important for OPS to take active steps toward environmental stewardship, only 56% believe it aligns with the district's mission to prepare students for success in college, career, and life.

High awareness of diversity and inclusion. Respondents indicated a significantly higher awareness of district efforts (and knowledge of personal practices) toward diversity and inclusion than other aspects of the broader definition of environmental stewardship.

Waste management a focus area in open-ended responses. Waste and recycling are often the most commonly associated topics related to environmental stewardship because they are visible and most people interact with waste systems on a regular basis. Many open-ended comments referred to waste management issues (both successes and opportunities).

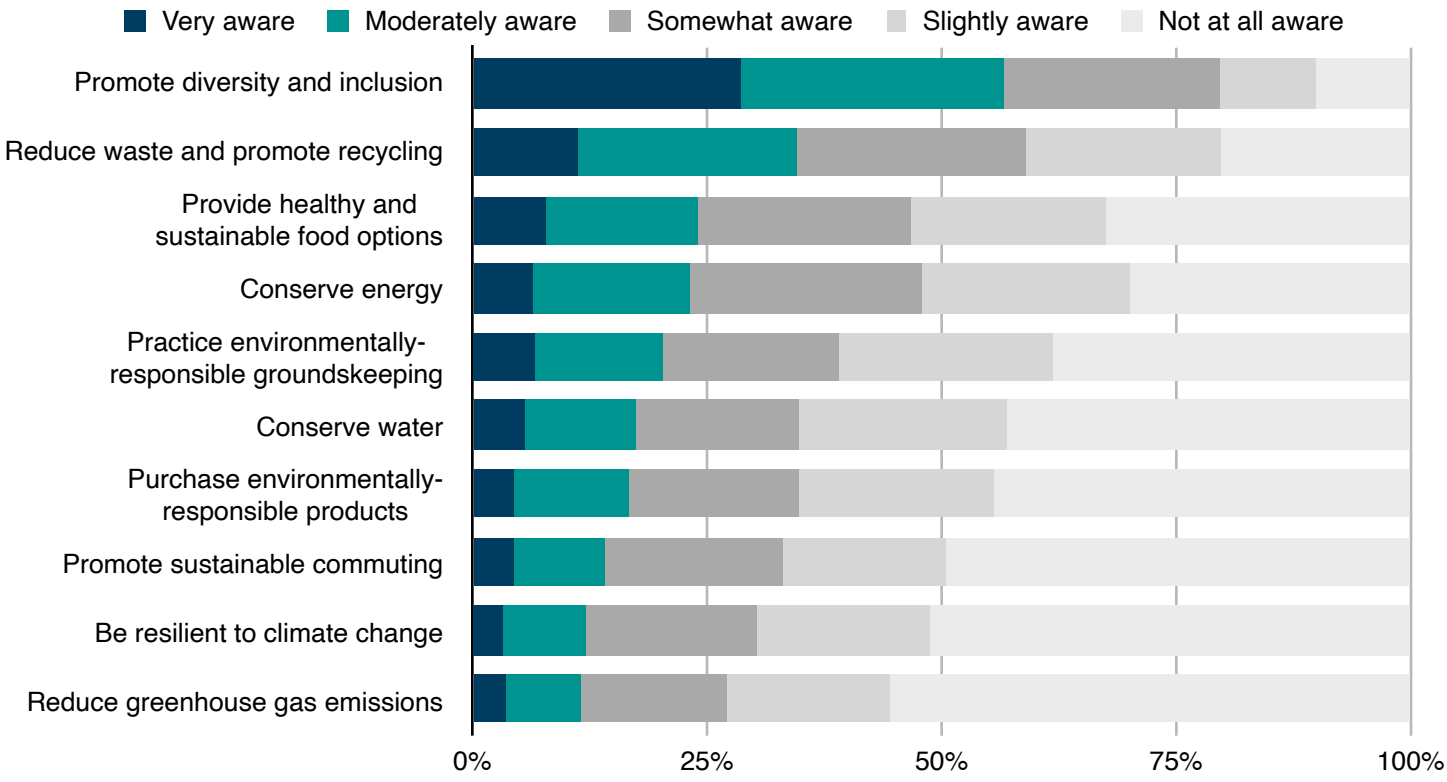
Awareness of Environmental Stewardship (46)

How familiar are you with the following concepts?



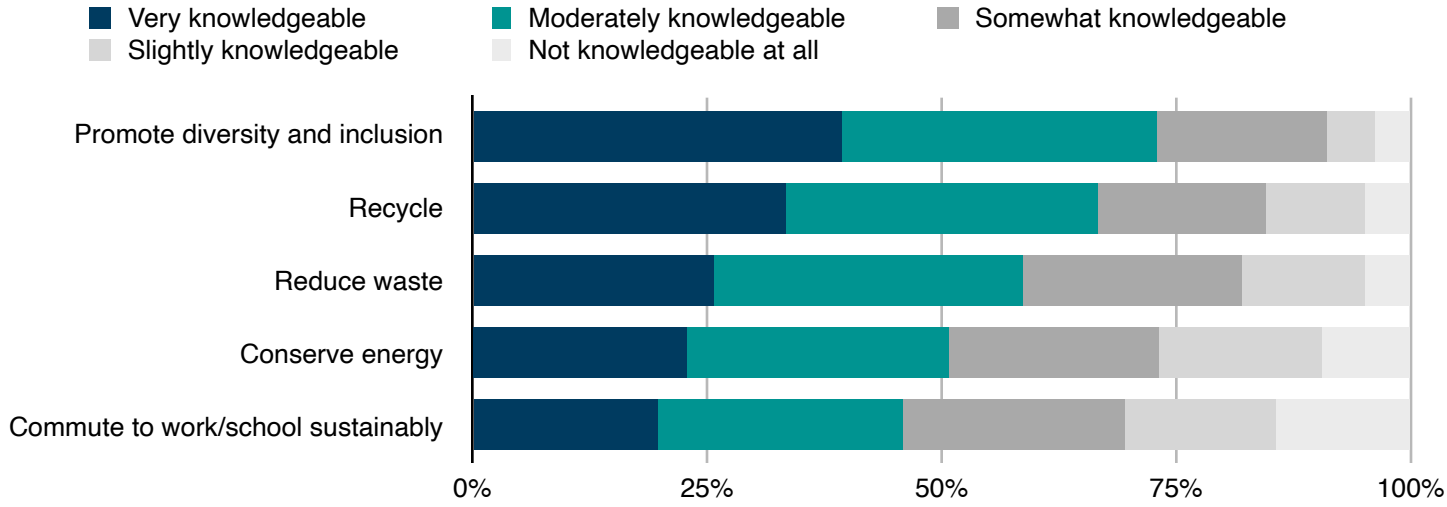
Awareness of OPS Efforts (23)

How aware are you of OPS efforts to…?



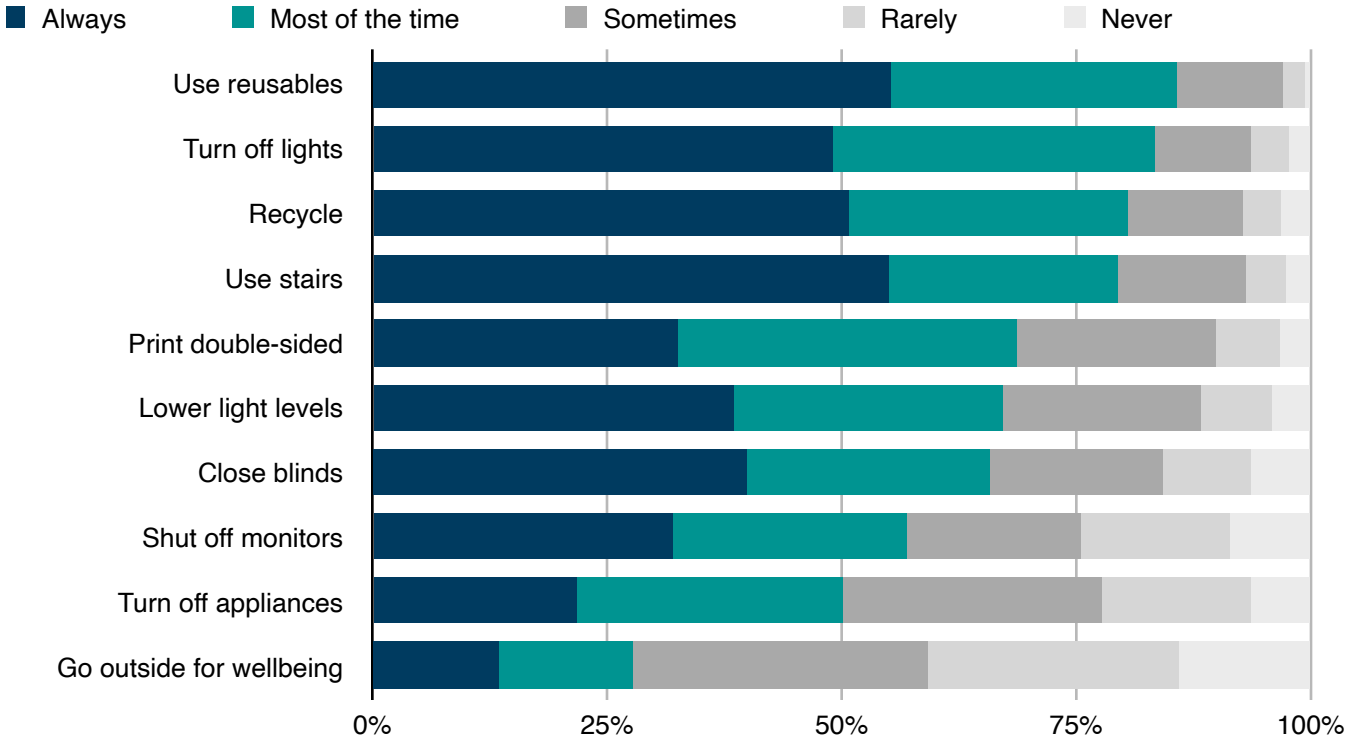
Knowledge of Practices (59)

How knowledgeable are you about ways you can do the following at work?



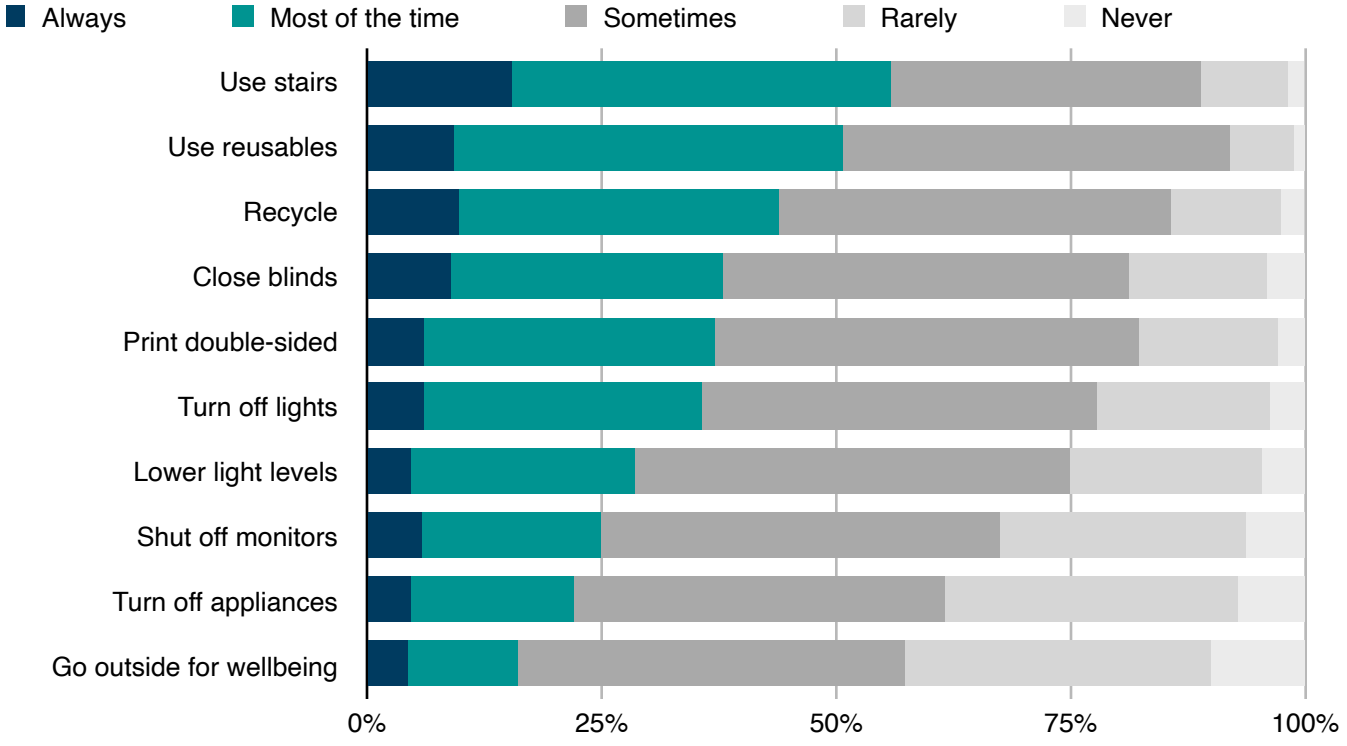
Self-Reported Behavior (67)

How often do you do the following at work?



Peer Behavior (35)

How often do your peers do the following at work?



Mission Alignment and Importance

Mission Alignment: How strongly respondents agree or disagree that environmental stewardship concepts align with OPS' mission.
Importance: How strongly respondents agree or disagree that it is important for OPS to take active steps toward the various aspects of environmental stewardship.

Shown below are the results for both Mission Alignment and Importance for each of the four concepts, as well as the average of the four that is used as an overall response.

Concept	Mission	Importance
Environmental stewardship	**57%**	**85%**
Community leadership in environmental stewardship	**56%**	**78%**
Resilience to the effects of climate change	**52%**	**76%**
Operating in a way that produces more benefits than harm	**58%**	**83%**
Overall Average	**56%**	**81%**

Reason

Top four reasons why respondents believe it is important for OPS to actively pursue environmental stewardship efforts:

1. **Environment** - Because it lessens OPS's environmental impact, conserves resources, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions *(654 respondents)*
2. **Responsibility** - Because it's the right thing to do *(556)*
3. **Health & Wellness** - Because it protects public health and promotes wellness *(441)*
4. **Future Generations** - Because it ensures that future generations can fully meet their needs *(412)*

Focus

Top four areas respondents believe OPS should focus on:

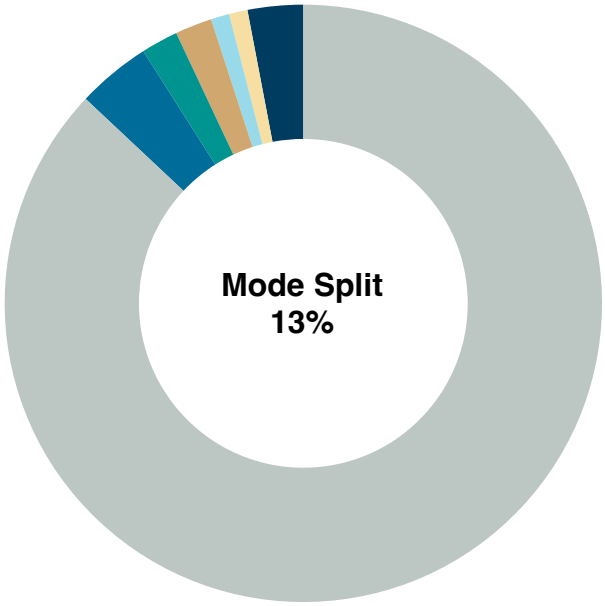
1. **Waste** - reducing waste, increasing recycling, and purchasing environmentally-responsible products *(822 respondents)*
2. **Energy** - conserving energy, making buildings more energy efficient, and generating energy on site from renewable sources (e.g. wind or solar) *(665)*
3. **Food** - making healthy and sustainable food options more available *(478)*

4. **Wellness** - supporting OPS staff to meet the challenges they face and supporting their strengths so they feel a part of the community, and are connected to their natural surroundings *(438)*

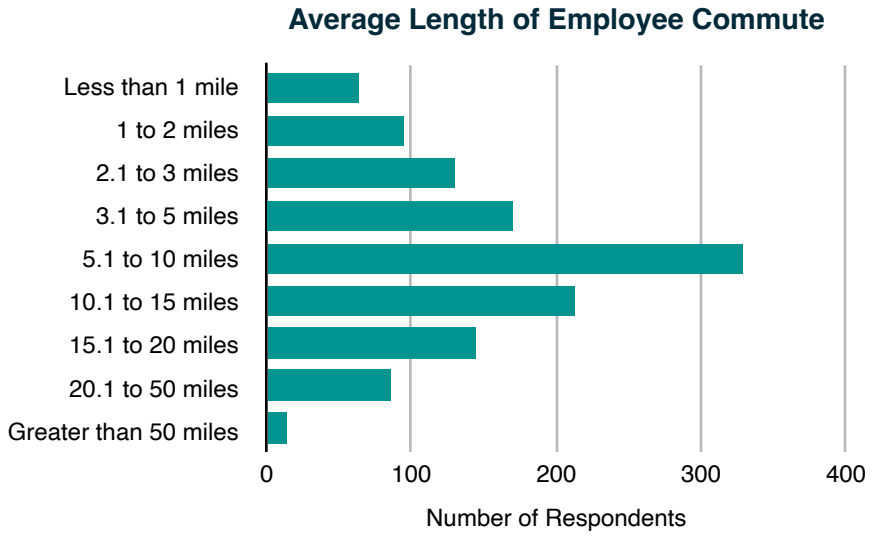
Active Commuting

Transportation constitutes approximately 25% of U.S. emissions, in large part due to commuting. When employees commute using an active mode of transportation, it not only helps OPS reduce its emissions, but also contributes to employee wellness. The metric used to measure this is called a mode split - the percent of trips employees make to work using a mode of transportation other than driving alone in a vehicle (in a typical week). Responses on this question will be used to calculate transportation emissions in the greenhouse gas inventory.

OPS' current mode split is 13% - in other words, 13% of employees get to work in a way other than driving alone in a car. See below for a full breakdown of transportation modes used by respondents, followed by a chart showing the average length of employee commute.



Drive alone	87%
Carpool	4%
Walk	2%
Work remotely from off-site	2%
Bike	1%
Bus	1%
Other (motorcycle, scooter, moped, taxi)	3%



Successes/Strengths

The survey asked participants for specific sustainability strengths and recent successes with explanations, if possible. Of the 1586 participants surveyed, 396 left comments.

Commonly Identified Strengths:

1. **Waste Management.** Responses from 160 individuals (40% of responses) mentioned recycling and composting as a success. This was by far the largest and most popular success mentioned in comments.

2. **Energy Conservation.** 16% of respondents noted energy conservation efforts such as motion sensor lighting and faucets, and upgrades to heating and cooling systems.

3. **Purchasing & Source Reduction.** A total of 22 respondents (6%) highlighted other forms of materials management and source reduction, such as reduction in paper use through 1:1 technology and plastic reduction with water bottle filling stations.

Sample Responses:

- “JROTC paper recycling; Benson group is redoing the rain garden.”
- “Switching from Styrofoam lunch trays to paper.”
- “We now have recycling bins at every location that I know of. Most schools encourage using the online textbooks and limit printing of paper.”
- “Motion-detection lights; go off automatically after several minutes; rooftop garden at one of my schools; previous attempts to compost lunch items (prior to the pandemic).”
- “I love that my school's renovation includes lights that have dimmers and motion activation to save energy. “
- “At Dundee we have a water tank that collects rainwater. This is the water used for the plants.”

Opportunities

In addition to asking survey participants about strengths, the survey also provided an opportunity for respondents to suggest ways in which OPS could be more sustainable. Of the 1586 participants surveyed, 483 left comments.

Commonly Identified Opportunities:

1. **Waste Management.** 187 individuals (39% of responses) identified recycling and composting as an area for improvement. Of these comments, 127 respondents pinpointed the need for training and follow through with the existing recycling program.

2. **Purchasing.** A total of 104 respondents (21%) indicated a desire for OPS to reexamine materials purchased. A significant portion (87 individuals) specified the food program as an immediate area of concern.

3. **Energy Conservation.** 93 participants highlighted energy conservation, especially through building improvements and upgrades, as a necessary area of focus. 10% suggested incorporating sustainable green spaces such as rain gardens.

Sample Responses:

- “Actually taking the recycling bins materials to be recycled -- our custodial staff is exhausted and overworked and I know they've been just throwing stuff away.”
- “Recycling should be promoted and should not be limited to paper. Omaha uses a single-stream recycling processor. Each room should have a recycling container that is appropriate for the size and purpose of the room.”
- “Compostable lunch materials/options for composting. Less single-use plastic in breakfast/lunch programs. Expand plant-based options in dining rooms (intentional food sourcing, no factory-farmed meat/less over-processed food).”
  “Schools should STOP having grab and go breakfast because so many plastic bags and plastic and paper products are used everyday!”
- “Packaged food unused should be sent to shelters or somewhere not a trash can.”
  “Immediately stop the use of quaternary ammonium compounds in schools. These are pesticides that ruin the environment AS STATED ON THE LABEL ON THE BOTTLE.”
- “I believe all new buildings should accommodate both solar and wind energies.”
  “Grounds should be sustainable prairie grasses and native plants. Grounds should all include a community garden/orchard to foster community, ownership, and equity within each neighborhood.”