A. PURPOSE

To affirm the Montgomery County Board of Education’s commitment to sustainability practices, including energy conservation and efficiency.

To establish a framework and decision-making priorities for environmentally sustainable practices in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

To promote effective educational opportunities that allow for students and staff to understand the consequences of human-induced environmental change on individual and collective health and well-being and consider the environmental impact and costs of decision-making at all levels.

To set the expectation for environmentally sustainable practices, equitably deployed across the MCPS system to promote the health and wellness of students and staff.
To ensure that Montgomery County Public Schools pursues energy conservation efforts and practices that continue to preserve our natural resources while providing a safe and comfortable learning environment for all staff and students.

B. ISSUE

MCPS is among the largest school systems in the country, and the largest in the state of Maryland, in terms of enrollment. MCPS serves a county that encompasses approximately 500 square miles, spanning from rural to urban settings, and whose tributaries feed into the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Due to the number of facilities needed to support our educational mission, MCPS is one of the largest consumers of energy and other natural resources in the county.

MCPS must intentionally, equitably, and progressively reduce its environmental impact and costs, while improving health and wellness, and provide effective environmental and sustainability education.

A comprehensive approach to sustainability and environmental stewardship acknowledges the consequences of human-induced environmental change and the need for local actions that protect, sustain, or restore the environment; and requires practices that demonstrate responsible use of public funds by prioritizing investments that maximize adaptation,
resilience and mitigation of the effects of climate change as well as efficient, sustainable use of land and resources.

A key component of a sustainable environmental footprint is reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions wherever possible, both to benefit the environment and reduce energy expenses.

The Montgomery County Board of Education desires to work (Board) collaborates with other agencies of federal, state, and local partners government and plan school system activities to solve regional problems, achieve optimal so that the—learning environments and functionality of essential education programs and operations, using effectively and equitably employed sustainability practices and technology. are not curtailed or compromised. A key component of a zero environmental footprint is reducing emission.

The nation is experiencing a depletion of its natural resources which include crude oil, natural gas and other energy sources. The Montgomery County Public Schools is committed to reducing its consumption of natural resources and still improving the quality of its educational programs.

C. POSITION

1. MCPS will incorporate sustainability priorities into decision-making processes based on equitable and strategic deployment of resources to address climate-based impacts on health, safety, and wellness and to
achieve more energy-efficient and cost-effective school operations. MCPS supports and will be an active participant in achieving Montgomery County’s goal to cut GHG emissions 80 percent by 2027 and 100 percent by 2035 compared to 2005 levels.

The Board is committed to innovative and systemwide sustainability to include –

a) reducing the generation of GHG;

b) reducing systemwide energy use intensity and reliance on non-renewable resources;

c) increasing the generation and production of solar energy and use of other renewable energy sources;

d) identifying strategies that equip MCPS with resources and infrastructure necessary to withstand the impacts of climate change;

e) using waste reduction and GHG emissions as criteria in decisions related to purchasing, including, but not limited to, energy, transportation, and other operational areas; and
f) improving the quality of MCPS operations and school environments to positively impact building occupant health and building system performance.

2. MCPS will fully comply with Maryland State Department of Education requirements for a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary environmental literacy program infused within current curricular offerings and aligned with the Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards that provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for students to investigate environmental issues in order to develop and implement local actions that protect, sustain, or restore the natural environment; and understand the environmental impact of human activity, the consequences of environmental change, and individual, collective, and societal responses to environmental change.

D. DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. In alignment with its core educational purpose to prepare all students to thrive in the future, MCPS makes sustainability a priority for present-day decision that impact students’ lives.

2. MCPS minimizes its environmental impact and operational costs.
3. MCPS operational practices meet the immediate needs of the school system without compromising or burdening present and future generations.

4. Staff and students are knowledgeable about the consequences of human-induced environmental change, and individual, collective, and societal responses to environmental change.

5. Staff and students consider the environmental impact and costs of decision-making at all levels.

6. MCPS creates and maintains a healthy and comfortable learning environments that achieve maximum energy efficiency with a consistent focus on sustainability. while controlling energy consumption more efficiently and diverting the otherwise rising utility costs towards educational programs.

7. MCPS implements operational practices and programs that achieve measurable reductions in GHG that align with the Montgomery County Climate Action Plan’s GHG reduction targets.

8. MCPS optimizes limited funding to achieve a sound, resilient, and sustainable educational facilities portfolio that accounts for variations in age, site conditions and geographic distribution.
Continue development of energy conservation efforts that proportionally reduces energy consumption in new and existing facilities.

E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. The superintendent of schools/designee will continue to establish, maintain and enhance procedures to ensure the conservation of natural resources promote environmental sustainability by personnel at all levels of the school system, which shall include the following practices:

a) Continuing reminders to staff and students of the need for conservation of all natural resources

b) Develop processes to establish and foster an organizational culture and operational procedures that foster creativity, cross-departmental collaboration and innovation to implement systemic climate solutions.

c) Infuse sustainability concepts across school curricula and professional development to provide opportunities that allow students and staff to gain an understanding of individual, collective, and societal responses to human-induced environmental change; and engage in climate solutions,
preparedness/adaptation responses, and environmentally sustainable practices.

2. The superintendent of schools/designee will identify actions that can be taken immediately and longer term to reduce the generation of GHG and consumption of nonrenewable resources, and increase efficiency, including, but not limited to, the following:

a) Actively manage energy and water consumption by using technology that can be viewed and monitored by building occupants and responsible operational personnel. f) Procurement and consumption management of fossil fuels and electricity e) Monitoring the general operation and maintenance of all heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment.

b) Use a wholesale managed approach for utility procurement and participate in coordinated efforts with federal, state, and local government agencies to establish appropriate resource conservation plans.

c) Continued development and implementation of behavior-based conservation sustainability programs, including strategies to increase the
number of Maryland-certified Green schools and other programs.

d) Convert or replace MCPS vehicles, as appropriate, from diesel and gasoline to electric, hybrid, or other more efficient or cleaner-fuel vehicles.

e) Promote design strategies and retrofits to make new and existing buildings more sustainable and resilient by designing every construction project to maximize solar production potential and minimize energy use intensity, considering a balanced facilities and infrastructure portfolio across the system.

f) Pursue energy savings infrastructure improvement projects in existing buildings through the use public-private partnerships and available grants and tax credits.

g) Where possible, seek to collocate schools to facilitate compact growth, efficient use of public infrastructure, and adjacency to public services and amenities.

h) Implement other measures to address resiliency and awareness, such as increasing the tree canopy and outdoor educational spaces on MCPS properties, and mitigating storm water runoff.
i) Establish minimum sustainability requirements in MCPS procurement guidelines for -

(a) locally-sourced products;

(b) maximized waste reduction; and

(c) reusable or recyclable products and/or content,

(d) where available at scale at a fair and reasonable price, across all areas of operations.

MCPS will participate in a coordinated effort by government authorities to establish appropriate resource conservation plans and utility price monitoring systems to ensure that public schools have adequate supplies of essential fuels and can obtain these at the best possible prices.

b) Development of acceptable energy conservation guidelines as outlined in the resource conservation plan

d) Performance of energy studies on all new MCPS construction

1. Should natural resources be insufficient to meet normal operating needs, the superintendent will develop further plans for the consideration of the Board of Education to conserve energy.

F. REVIEW AND REPORTING

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1. MCPS will update the inventory of GHG emissions for its facilities at regular intervals, with updates aligned with local reporting requirements.

2. a) Generation—MCPS will develop periodic systemwide annual reports that outline goals, objectives and results of sustainability efforts in alignment with all federal, state, and local requirements. Resource conservation plan that outlines goals and objectives.

3. The Board will receive information about sustainability features in construction project updates, and MCPS will implement methods of sharing sustainability features of the MCPS facility portfolio with the public, such as websites and/or local signage.

4. Copies of this policy and the annual resource conservation plan will be sent to appropriate school system and county government officials. This policy and related documents will be updated and shared in alignment with federal, state, and local requirements.

5. This policy will be reviewed on an on-going basis in accordance with the Board of Education’s policy review process.
Related Sources: Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §75-312.1, School district energy policies; Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §7-117, Increasing the number of green schools in the state; Code of Maryland Regulations, 13A.04.17.01, Environmental Literacy Instructional Programs for Grades Prekindergarten-12; Montgomery County Executive Regulation 15-1: Solid Waste and Recycling; Montgomery County Climate Action Plan of 2021

Policy History: Adopted by Resolution No. 654-73, November 13, 1973; amended by Resolution No. 285-97, May 13, 1997; reviewed April 19, 2002; amended