

On Thu, Jan 20, 2022, 5:46 PM Peterson, Mark <mark.peterson@bellingshamschools.org> wrote:

Jon,

Thank you for your email. You pose some interesting questions, and I would like to provide you with some answers both in a broad sense and with some specifics.

Let me start by stating that climate change is real, it is happening now, and we recognize it is important that we do what we can to mitigate the adverse climate impacts as they relate to our district. Our district has been working to mitigate our environmental impact for many years and we have a strong foundation from which we can continue to work from. We fully understand that there is more work to be done and we are committed to doing our part. Sustainability is a path that is far from linear and has many nuances and multiple short term and long-term solutions.

The district is committed to improving our sustainability practices and has placed an additional focus and devoted more resources to these ends. In February of 2022 will convene our Sustainability Advisory Committee that will have broad representation and will include educators, community members, partner organizations and other sustainability professionals. This will be a great opportunity for us to incorporate these varying perspectives into an action plan that represents the desires of our community as a whole.

Here are some highlights of what current practices are.

Waste Reduction:

- We have a Toward Zero Waste plan and all district sites have waste reduction strategies and have recycling and composting services in place.
- We participate in Sustainable Connections' Food Recovery Program and were a founding partner. During our participation, we have diverted from landfill over 31,000 lbs. of nutritious edible foods to our community members in need.

Landscape and Ground Maintenance

- We are now a no spray district. We do not use any herbicides such as glyphosate. Instead, we control weeds with manual weeding, on site arbor chip mulching and incorporating more native drought tolerant plants in our landscaping.
- We have a dedicated storm water specialist who maintains all our storm water facilities to ensure what site run off we have complies with regulations, and we have a number of rain gardens around the district to further mitigate adverse effects from run off.
- We irrigate sparingly, most of our systems are on timers and we are working with the city of Bellingham to convert our systems to have rain sensors. All manual and hand watering in the summer months is done in the early morning to mitigate evaporation.
- In November of 2021 four of our grounds crew completed their EcoPro landscaping certification to further improve upon our landscaping practices.
- We are transitioning where we can to electric equipment. For example, our most recent "gator" purchase is an all-electric vehicle one of the first in the state.

Energy Conservation

- Our buildings are high performing buildings and routinely surpass the required minimum standards required by Washington State OSPI. Our new buildings are efficient and energy consumption compared to old buildings has been reduced dramatically. Every building has a functional life span and the buildings we have replaced and hope to replace simply cannot be retrofit to achieve the same energy performance as a new building.
- We have a dedicated Building Automation Technician who is constantly checking on our systems and balancing them for the best possible HVAC performance.
- A significant portion of our buildings have been retrofit with LED lighting. This work is ongoing, and we anticipate all buildings will be nearly fully retrofit with LED by 2023 if not sooner.
- We work with our utility providers to monitor trends, find anomalies, and pinpoint and fix any issues.
- Benchmarking our buildings in Energy Star Portfolio Manager.

Here are some highlights for the future that build upon past practice:

Waste Reduction:

- Conduct a district wide waste characterization study to find areas where we can improve
- Reduce to greatest possible extent single use/serve containers
- Implement a sustainable purchasing policy

Energy Conservation

- When equipment is at the end of life replace with higher efficiency models and with electric if possible
- Continue to benchmark and refine conservation efforts both in terms of equipment performance and occupant behavior
- Incorporate onsite energy production to the greatest extent possible.
- Incorporate building automation systems that include daylight harvesting, occupancy sensors, optimizing HVAC setpoints and schedules to match occupancy
- Low flow fixtures increase water efficiency to reduce water consumption and energy use
- Both Sunnyland and The District office are being designed with building electrification in mind and will utilize electric heat pump technology with VAV boxes and multiple zones to maximize efficient operation. Electric hot water heaters, stoves, etc.
- Controlled outlets that will turn off on schedules to minimize vampire plug loads.
- Benchmarking – we are currently working with a team of interns to do a carbon benchmarking analysis of one of our buildings. This will serve as a template so we can benchmark all of the building in our district and find ways to improve even further.
- Engaging early in the process for compliance with HB 1257 the Washington State Clean Buildings Standard - not only to reduce our environmental footprint but to also realize early adopter incentives

This is the short list of what we are doing and to a certain extent where we are headed. As I mentioned above there are many nuances to achieving climate goals. We would be happy to discuss more in person should you like to meet and hear more.

Best Regards,

Mark Peterson