



Memorandum

Date: April 26, 2024
To: Planning and Facilities Committee
From: Rob Drew, Director of Operations
Prepared by: Harold Schock, Energy & Sustainability Manager

Information Item: Sustainability Initiatives for the 2023/2024 School Year

1.0 RELEVANT BOARD MOTION/DIRECTION

Provided as information, School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) (the District) the following is an environmental sustainability update as per Policy 660 – Environmental Sustainability, attached as *Appendix A*.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Per Policy 660 – Environmental Sustainability, "Sustainability" means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. To accomplish this, staff continue to review, report, and strive to improve the overall environmental sustainability performance of the District.

In October 2021, the Province of British Columbia released the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 attached as *Appendix B*, which outlines a strengthened plan to meet the province's legislated climate action targets. The roadmap outlines a strategy to meet the climate action targets legislated by the province.

Under the *Climate Change Accountability Act* (the CCAA), the District is expected to contribute to the targets of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 40% below 2007 levels by 2030, 60% by 2040, and 80% by 2050. As a public sector organization, the District is obligated to manage the risks associated with climate change. This includes minimizing adverse environmental effects and meeting the prescribed targets set forth by the CCAA. The compliance requirements are applicable to the District in the following areas:

- Buildings owned or leased.
- Fleet vehicles and school buses.

The District achieved carbon neutrality through a combination of actual emission reductions and carbon offset purchases. This approach allowed the District to effectively manage their GHG emissions and balance out its carbon footprint.

The District implemented various strategies to reduce their direct and indirect emissions. These actual emission reduction measures included:

- a) **Energy Efficiency:** The District focused on enhancing energy efficiency in its buildings by implementing energy-saving measures, such as upgrading lighting systems, improving insulation, and optimizing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. These initiatives helped to reduce energy consumption and associated GHG emissions.
- b) **Transportation Management:** The District implemented transportation management strategies to minimize emissions associated with student transportation and staff commuting. These initiatives included promoting active transportation options like walking and cycling, encouraging ridesharing, and optimizing bus routes to reduce fuel consumption.
- c) **Carbon Offset Purchases:** To address the emissions that could not be eliminated through reduction efforts, the District engaged in carbon offset purchases. Carbon offsets represent investments in projects that reduce or remove GHG emissions elsewhere. By purchasing carbon offsets, the District effectively neutralized the remaining emissions that were not possible to eliminate through their own actions. The carbon offset projects can include initiatives such as reforestation projects, renewable energy installations, or methane capture from landfills. These projects result in verifiable and additional emission reductions, providing an opportunity for organizations to compensate for their remaining emissions and achieve carbon neutrality.

This comprehensive approach demonstrates the District's commitment to reducing its environmental impact and contributing to the fight against climate change.

3.0 INFORMATION STATEMENT

In addition to the previously discussed initiatives, the District has substantially invested in solar energy, which represents a significant step towards sustainability. Solar energy systems installed at École H.S. Grenda Middle School, École Dr. Knox Middle School, Canyon Falls Middle School, Chute Lake Elementary School, and Shannon Lake Elementary School have collectively generated 221,000 kWh of clean solar energy. This volume of energy is substantial, enough to power A.S. Matheson Elementary School and Oyama Traditional School for the entire year of 2023. This shift to solar energy not only meets energy needs but also achieves considerable savings in electrical costs, continuing into 2023 and beyond.

In 2023, the District reaffirmed its dedication to sustainability through the following initiatives:

- a) Engaging in the Fraser Basin Council's "Plug In BC Program," which provided funding to support the procurement of electric school bus DC chargers.
- b) Sustaining solar panel installations at various locations in 2023, including École H.S. Grenda Middle School (60kW) and École Dr. Knox Middle School (120kW). These solar panel installations contribute significantly to the District's renewable energy portfolio and underscore its continued dedication to environmental sustainability and provincial regulations.

4.0 DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

The District is mandated to annually submit a Climate Change Accountability Report to British Columbia Climate Action Secretariat and the Ministry of Education and Child Care. This report is a requirement under the Climate Change Accountability Act (CCAA), which mandates carbon neutrality for various entities within the provincial government, including ministries, agencies, schools, colleges, universities, health authorities, and Crown corporations. Since 2010, these entities have been obligated to maintain carbon neutrality and publicly disclose their efforts towards reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through yearly reports.

The District's report outlines GHG emissions from three key areas specified by government mandates:

- a) Direct and indirect fuel consumption for operating building systems, including heating, cooling, and electricity usage.
- b) Emissions resulting from the consumption of office paper.
- c) Transportation and White Fleet fuel consumption.

These reporting measures serve to transparently document the District's environmental impact and demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and carbon neutrality in alignment with provincial regulations.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

District staff will:

- a) Complete and submit the Carbon Climate Change Accountability Report, with a target of meeting all provincial greenhouse gas reduction targets and reporting requirements.
- b) Utilize available funding sources to achieve the District's goals and objectives.

6.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A - Policy 660 – Environmental Sustainability

Appendix B - GOV CleanBC Roadmap 2030