

Taking Action on Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change

Whereas, there is broad consensus among scientists that the dominant cause of climate change is human activities, that global warming will increase by 1.5°C by mid-century, and urgency and global impact of climate change calls for education, leadership, and transformational change in all sectors of society, locally and globallyⁱ; and

Whereas, National PTA and Washington State PTA have position statements/resolutions recognizing scientific climate consensus and committing to advocate for mitigation of environmental hazards, climate education, and clean energy use in schools and communitiesⁱⁱ; and

Whereas, climate change and environmentally damaging activities disproportionately impact socially vulnerable populations, such as low-income communities and communities of colorⁱⁱⁱ; and

Whereas, children represent a particularly vulnerable group already suffering disproportionately from adverse health effects of climate change and environmentally damaging activities^{iv}; and

Whereas, WA state passed legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in buildings in WA, which applies to school buildings, and to prioritize communities most impacted by climate change^v; and

Whereas, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has implemented programs and is providing leadership on integrating environmental sustainability-related teacher training and implementing an environmental and sustainability student literacy plan^{vi}; and

Whereas, Everett Public Schools has maintained compliance with existing state energy-efficiency standards and has implemented several actions to promote environmental sustainability; and

Whereas, school districts contribute to climate change and pollution through harmful carbon emissions from buildings and school transportation, food waste, use of single-use plastics, and chemicals of concern^{vii}; and

Whereas, long-term cost savings can be achieved when school buildings are designed and renovated to be energy-efficient, reduce waste, and conserve water, and when districts hire a resource conservation manager to monitor utility use and recommend/implement conservation improvements^{viii}; and

Whereas, specific actions such as decreasing carbon emissions from buildings/school buses, changing purchasing practices, reducing waste, and fostering connection with nature are effective strategies for mitigating impacts of climate change and further result in improvements in student health, well-being, and academic performance, particularly among those most vulnerable^{ix}; and

Whereas, climate education positively impacts individual climate change mitigation behaviors, and fostering connections to nature supports creativity and problem solving, enhances cognitive abilities, improves academic performance, and reduces stress in students^x;

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Everett PTSA Council will implement and support evidence-based environmental sustainability programs designed to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, including but not limited to:

- Continuing its partnership with Everett School District to collaborate and support implementation of environmental sustainability actions
- Establishing and maintaining an environmental sustainability council board position

- Developing an action/implementation plan within two years of adopting the resolution, to include strategies in areas such as reducing waste, conserving resources, and providing training for PTA leaders
- Supporting local PTAs in development of environmental sustainability chairs, committees, and/or programs designed to mitigate the effects of climate change at their schools
- Implementing actions through an equity framework by centering the needs of communities most impacted by climate change and environmentally damaging activities; and be it further

Resolved, that the Everett PTSA Council encourages Everett School District to build upon existing efforts and implement evidence-based environmental sustainability programs, policies, and practices designed to coordinate sustainability-related efforts across the school district and mitigate the effects of climate change, including but not limited to:

- Continuing its partnership with Everett PTSA Council to collaborate and support implementation of environmental sustainability actions
- Establishing and hiring for a district leadership position dedicated to sustainability
- Establishing and maintaining an inclusive environmental sustainability workgroup or advisory council comprised of students, staff, community members, and relevant stakeholders
- Developing a comprehensive environmental sustainability action and implementation plan with measurable goals and objectives
- Implementing actions through an equity framework by centering the needs of communities most impacted by climate change and environmentally damaging activities; and be it further

Resolved, that the council will seek and advocate for policies, partnerships, grants, and other funding opportunities with national, state, district, and local organizations to support the preceding activities.

ⁱ <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/> ; <https://doh.wa.gov/data-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/washington-environmental-health-disparities-map>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.wastatepta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/WSPTA-Resolution-11.28-Mitigating-Effects-of-Climate-Change-2020.pdf> ; <https://www.wastatepta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/WSPTA-Resolution-11.25-Mitigating-Envl-Hazards-2016.pdf> ; <https://www.pta.org/home/advocacy/ptas-positions/Individual-Position-Statements/Position-Statement-Environmental-Health-Remediation-Sustainability-and-Climate-Change>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-09/climate-vulnerability_september-2021_508.pdf;

^{iv} https://apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/topics/climate/childrens_health.ashx

^v <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/bulletinsmemos/bulletins2021/B001-21.pdf>;

<https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Who-we-are/Our-Programs/Equity-Environmental-Justice> ;

<https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/clean-buildings-policy-brief-bill-signing.pdf>

^{vi} <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/resources-subject-area/science/climetime-2021%E2%80%9323> ;

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/resources-subject-area/environment-sustainability/environmental-and-sustainability-literacy-plan> ;

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5722&Initiative=false&Year=2021>

^{vii} <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2491491/> ; <https://www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste/schools> ;

<https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/program/documents/Clean-Schools-Handbook.pdf> ;

^{viii} https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-08/documents/k-12_guide.pdf

^{ix} <https://www.nber.org/papers/w25641>;

http://schools.forhealth.org/Harvard.Schools_For_Health.Foundations_for_Student_Success.pdf ;

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/21/11/why-schools-need-look-their-own-carbon-footprint>

^x https://naturalstart.org/sites/default/files/benefits_of_connecting_children_with_nature_infosheet.pdf ;

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0206266>