District Sustainability Award Nominee Presentation Form

CERTIFICATIONS

District's Certifications

The signatures of the district superintendent on the next page certify that each of the statements below concerning the district's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the superintendent's knowledge.

1. The district has been evaluated and selected from among districts within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.

2. The district is providing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district wide compliance review.

3. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school district has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.

4. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the school district has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

5. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

6. The district meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

7. The district has in place and is willing to provide a link to or copy of a non-discrimination policy, upon request. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a nomination and/or rescind an award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools District Sustainability Award 2019-2021

Name of Superintendent: *Dr. Greg Baker*

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

District Name: *Bellingham School District No. 501*

(As it should appear on an award)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Greg Baker Digitally signed by Greg Baker Date: 2022.03.01 09:09:58 -08'00' Date:

(Superintendent's Signature)

Nominating Authority's Certifications

The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the district's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority's knowledge.

1. The district is one of those overseen by the Nominating Authority which is highest achieving in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental education.
2. The district meets all applicable federal civil rights and federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency: *Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction*

Name of Nominating Authority: *Mrs. Elizabeth A. Schmitz*

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.

Elizabeth A. Schmitz Digitally signed by Elizabeth A. Schmitz Date: 2022.03.01 09:14:01 -08'00' Date:

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

SUBMISSION

The nomination package, including the signed certifications, narrative summary, documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars, and photos should be submitted online according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509
Expiration Date: December 31, 2023

Public Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1860-0509. Note: Please do not return the completed ED-Green Ribbon Schools application to this address.

2021-2022 Green Ribbon Schools: **District** Application

Summary Narrative: Bellingham Public Schools

The Bellingham Public School (BPS) community has valued sustainability for years, and BPS students, staff, and leadership reflect this community sentiment. Now, our goal is to coordinate our efforts and lead the community in addressing the three pillars of the Green Ribbon School criteria. Using a practiced and proven framework to establish a vision, mission, and strategic plan, BPS is focused on collaborative and coordinated sustainability planning.

A critical first step for our district is the renaming and reframing of our Buildings and Grounds department. We are proud to now have a department of Facilities and Sustainability and hired a local expert in sustainable building and operation processes, Mark Peterson, as the new departmental Director. In addition, Mark is expanding our team of knowledgeable employees who are passionate about sustainable schools and leadership. This fall, he convened a work team including employees from Human Resources, the Department of Teaching and Learning, Communications, and our funding partners to help plan and strategize the next steps for a coordinated approach to sustainability.

Pillar 1: Reduce environmental impact and costs

Our annual Asset Maintenance and Protection report to the Bellingham Public Schools Board of Directors reflects years of efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs. We are part of Puget Sound Energy's Commercial Strategic Energy Management (CSEM) grant program. Our performance for this contract for the period of 7/2/20 -6/30/21 shows we exceeded our target for Kilowatt Hours (kWh) savings of 264,812 kWh for a total actual savings of 623,952 kWh and 597,399 kWh attributed to our CSEM program.

We transitioned 23 of our 29 district faculties to Direct Digital Control systems so we can centrally manage our lighting and HVAC systems. A dedicated building automation technician who specializes in HVAC controls starts each day with a thorough check of all our connected HVAC systems and adjusts them to function at peak efficiency. We can monitor and address any maintenance issues in real-time through this system.

In 2016, during the re-design process for Sehome High School, we encountered a shift in how we approach the design and building of schools. Within the design advisory committee (comprised of BPS staff and community members), a sub-committee was created to focus specifically on sustainable building practices. This was a first. The work of this team involved discussion around specific sustainability elements, and ultimately, they decided the top sustainable priority should be the installation of a solar array at the new facility. Fortunately, the contractor aligned with our values around sustainability and donated $100,000 to help us install our first solar array.

BPS works to reduce water consumption both inside and outside our facilities. For example, in September of 2021, four of our grounds staff completed the ecoPRO Certified Landscape Professional

training. In December of 2021, we engaged with the City of Bellingham and will be working with their Environmental Education and Outreach Specialist to implement weather-based irrigation controllers and Wi-Fi enabled controllers utilizing rebates to cover the cost, efficient sprinkler head upgrades, and irrigation assessments to identify water waste and efficiencies.

BPS regularly mulches facility planting beds. Landscaping is drought tolerant and requires minimal irrigation. Our new landscape design standard is to be intentional about where we install standard turf grass, keeping it to a minimum and only in areas that are intended as active use spaces. We are replacing standard turf grass with eco grass (meadow grass) in these spaces, which, once established, will require minimal irrigation.

BPS has utilized Toward Zero Waste practices for over a decade. We partner with our local waste hauler, Sanitary Services Company, to ensure we have the appropriate level of service in place. We are diligent to avoid contaminating our recycling or composting waste streams. Each BPS facility has receptacles for, at a minimum: plastic, tin, aluminum, glass, cardboard, and paper recycling. All our school sites and the central kitchen have FoodPlus! services where food scraps are composted. Additionally, all school cafeterias provide a compost bin for food waste. BPS has participated in the Food to Flowers program for years.

BPS partners with Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA), Smart Trips to Schools, the Whatcom Council of Governments, the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and the City of Bellingham to offer free WTA bus passes to all residents 17 years old and younger; provide middle school students with pedestrian and bike education through Safe Routes to School curriculum from OSPI; provide “bike rodeos” for elementary students to learn bike education, skills, and safety; and update required Safe Routes to Schools maps for families.

Moving forward, BPS has developed a list of sustainable building practices for new construction that range from improving energy efficiencies to water conservation techniques to utilizing sustainable materials, when possible.

Pillar 2: Improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff

BPS has a longstanding commitment to the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff. In 2015 we designed a new position, Director of Wellness, to lead wellness policy efforts, physical education and activity curriculum, food education, and mental and emotional health support for our district. This position provided a launchpad for us to expand our work.

The driving philosophy of our wellness efforts derives from universal design and public health: we understand that the environment is a critical component of human health and well-being; when we can modify our environments, we choose to do so in a way that promotes good health. This manifests in small ways, like putting bowls of fruit in prominent locations in the cafeteria to encourage kids to start meals with whole, healthy foods; and in significant ways, like building a ground-breaking food services program with a central kitchen and an ambitious menu of scratch-cooked meals made from whole, local ingredients.

Since 2015, our efforts toward health and wellness initiatives have focused on the development of the Good Food Promise, a vision, mission, and strategic plan that set the course for our reimagined Food Services Program. We have been dedicated to fundraising for, designing, and building of a central kitchen to implement a scratch-cooking model, including the preparation of meals using local, whole ingredients. Additionally, a multi-disciplinary district team developed a Wellness Policy & Procedure, #3440, and we expanded partnerships with the Whatcom Community Foundation, Bellingham Public Schools Foundation, Farm-to-School, Common Threads (garden, nutrition, and cooking education program partner for more than ten years), in support of the Good Food Promise and garden education.

Further, we have grown the PlayWorks program for physical activity at elementary schools and developed bike education units that span all K-12 PE classes. Additionally, we have provided PE teachers and exceptional education staff with professional development around inclusive physical education across grade levels. At the same time, we have improved our partnership with the Whatcom Transportation Authority to teach students about healthy ways to walk and roll to school.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges to all of us. Some health and wellness responses that BPS developed include new partnerships with health services staff in all six Whatcom County public school districts and the Whatcom County Health Department; a new position in our district, filled by a public health nurse: Director of Health Services; vaccine clinics and COVID-19 testing for students, staff, and our community; new staff, including a Mental Health Services Coordinator and three district-level Mental Health Specialists; a new focus and commitment to mental health for students and staff; the development of the Big 4 for Wellness initiative; and a multi-disciplinary team of employees developed a series of staff classes and professional development opportunities around staff wellness and well-being.

Pillar 3: Provide effective environmental and sustainability education, incorporating STEM, civic skills, and green career pathways

BPS integrates environmental and sustainability literacy across all grade levels, K-12. For example, we developed integrated units of study in elementary grades with embedded environmental and sustainability goals as part of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program.

In middle school, we use the Amplify curriculum, which is nationally recognized and aligned with Next Generation Science Standards. We also offer a Career and Technical Education program called Plant Systems, where students investigate through experiential, hands-on learning.

In high school grades, we offer five-course options that integrate environmental education and sustainability as a focus. These courses include Environmental Science, Advanced Placement Environmental Science, Agriculture Hunger, and the Environment, Ocean Science, and Sustainable Design. This year over 280 students were enrolled in these courses across four schools.

As a district, we partner with the Whatcom Coalition for Environmental Education, a local organization comprised of over a dozen nonprofits working to increase equity and collective capacity in environmental education curriculum, outdoor learning experiences, and teacher professional

development. Partnership organizations include but are not limited to: North Cascades Institute, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement, Common Threads, and Wild Whatcom.

The Promise Tomorrow initiative began last year and is open to all students K-12. It is an opportunity for teams of students to create collaborative, positive change. Challenge topics include natural resources and the environment.

Over the last few years, BPS has made remarkable progress toward the three pillars of Green Ribbon Schools criteria. For example, in 2007, the City of Bellingham published its first Climate Protection Action Plan, and recent updates articulate new targets for 2030 and 2050. BPS has and will continue to align district planning with this critical work already occurring in our community.

We aim to build on our current progress and coordinate our efforts with a genuinely systems-based approach. This is an evolving journey where continuous development and evaluation are part of the learning process and how we will sustain the work.

School District Profile

School District Name: **Bellingham Public Schools (BPS)**

Address: **1306 Dupont Street, Bellingham, WA 98225**

Website: **www.bellinghamschools.org**

Superintendent First Name **Greg** Last Name **Baker** Prefix **Dr.**

Email **Greg.Baker@bellinghamschools.org**

Phone **360-676-6400**

Total District Enrollment (Fall 2021) 11,065

Select a metric that best represents your district's disadvantaged population, using data from Fall of 2021: Free and Reduced Lunch Rates

If you selected Free and Reduced Lunch Rates, please list the percentage of your student body that qualifies 34%

Is your school: **X** Public

District Facebook Page: Bellingham School District

District Twitter Handle: @BhamSD

District Instagram: @bellinghamschools

Application Team Information - who prepared the application? Please note, the Lead applicant will be OSPI's main point of contact upon receipt of your application.)

Lead Applicant First Name **Mark**	**Lead Applicant Last Name** **Peterson**
Lead Applicant Title (e.g., resource conservation manager, facilities manager, curriculum director, teacher, principal) **Director of Facilities & Sustainability**	Lead Applicant Email Mark.Peterson@bellinghamschools.org
Lead Applicant Phone Number **360-676-6548**	Alternate Phone Number 360-399-3661

Application Team Members (Others who helped prepare this application)

Name (First & Last)	Title/Department
Jessica Sankey	Executive Director of Operations
Gretchen Pflueger	Grant Writer
Margaret Gude	Communications Specialist
Bill Palmer	Director of Teaching & Learning
Jeff Tetrick	Director of Teaching & Learning

Crosscutting Questions: These questions are 10% of your overall score.

Awards and Programs

Does your district participate in a local, state, or national green schools program? ☒Yes

If yes, which program(s) are you participating in, what level(s) are in progress, and what level(s) have you achieved?

Program	Level in Progress	Level and Date Achieved
Common Threads (garden, nutrition & cooking education)	N/A	Program Partners for 10+ years
Toward Zero Waste	N/A	Program Partner for 10+ years

Food Recovery Program	N/A	Program Partner since 2018

In the past five years, has your district received any awards relevant to the ED Green Ribbon School/District recognition?

(for environmental stewardship, student and staff health, and wellness, or environmental education/civic programs) ☒Yes

If yes, provide award details below.

Award	Awarded To	Awarded by	Year Received
$1,650,000+ grant funding for BPS Central Kitchen Project & Implementation	Bellingham Public Schools & Bellingham Public Schools Foundation	OSPI, private foundations, and nonprofits	2016-2021
Waste Not WA Seed Award	Bellingham Public Schools	Washington State Department of Ecology	2020
$37,000 for Safe Routes to School & Bike Fleet Repair grants	Bellingham Public Schools	OSPI	2019 & 2020
$563,392 award for energy efficiency achievements, saving 4,131,031 kWh	Bellingham Public Schools	Puget Sound Energy	2019
Food Body & Mind Awards	Bellingham Public Schools (district and all schools)	OSPI	2020

Communication Strategies:

How do you communicate your Pillar I required policies and best practice recommendations related to school principals, faculty, staff, parents, and other stakeholders in your district?

Bellingham Public Schools (BPS) strategic plan - the Bellingham Promise - is a living document that guides all programmatic work within our district. To communicate our policies and best practice recommendations, we align work with the Bellingham Promise.

In 2016 BPS convened a multi-disciplinary team to write a new wellness policy, Policy #3440 – Food, Food Education, Physical Education & Physical Activity. This formed the basis of our planning for a new Food Services program, designed to operate out of our central kitchen and to prioritize healthy, whole, local, sustainably grown food. This planning also resulted in the Good Food Promise, which is a key communication tool to share our food services values with our community.

Given our success with implementing the Good Food Promise and the launch of our central kitchen, we are building a team to plan a sustainability approach for BPS. A key communication strategy is connecting with families and voters who support our district; in 2022, our community will be voting on a bond in support of education that includes funding for sustainable practices. Education and communication to all our neighbors in Bellingham is part of this bond opportunity.

Our ability to plan a sustainability approach relies on our internal expertise, knowledge, and passion. In April 2021, we were delighted to add a new position to our district leadership team, Director of Facilities and Sustainability. Mark Peterson came to BPS from Sustainable Connections, a key local nonprofit partner in sustainability. Mark is shifting the focus of the department – formerly known as Buildings and Grounds – to truly be a Facilities and Sustainability department. With a holistic approach, Mark is developing a team from many sectors of our district to lead a vision, mission, and strategic planning process for sustainability that aligns with the Bellingham Promise.

In February 2022, BPS will make a call for stakeholders (staff, students, community partners, etc.) to apply to be part of a sustainability task force. This committee will work to solicit feedback, share key communications with the Bellingham community, and outline future sustainability work within BPS. This is hard, complex work, and we believe in continuous improvement. Alongside our community partners, we plan to keep working to make progress for the betterment of our community while prioritizing the three pillars outlined by the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools program.

Equity:

Please describe how all students at your school, and more broadly how community members, are being included in, honored for and engaged in this work?

BPS is guided by our succinct and powerful strategic plan, the Bellingham Promise. This aspirational document pushes us to do better. One of our key strategies focuses on equity, diversity, and inclusion. To this end, we examine the impact of equity across all areas of the district. We know this is especially important as we work to create a sustainability plan that addresses each of the three pillars of Green Ribbon Schools. Within each pillar, we will examine the equity impacts and work to disrupt historical patterns of oppression. Further, we will engage students, staff, and community partners to ensure all stakeholders have a voice in the process and the outcomes.

We know that the impact of our operational actions that are less environmentally friendly are inordinately borne by people of color and families with lower incomes in our community. In the last few years, the Bellingham community has experienced dramatic events related to climate change: excessive smoke from nearby wildfires, extreme heat, and unprecedented flooding. In each case, people with fewer resources or access to safer environments suffered more than folks with more margin for safety.

In BPS, we are also aware of the health disparities that disproportionately impact our students, staff, and families of color, and we are working hard to educate ourselves and take actions to interrupt historical patterns of oppression. For example, a water bottle filling station is considered a fancy bonus, and our newest high school has several. As a system, we want to ensure the technology that improves access to individual and environmentally healthy choices is available to all students. It is essential to upgrade all schools, and especially schools that serve our students furthest from educational justice, with technology that supports healthy choices.

Additionally, students within our district currently receive varying levels of environmental education and sustainability curriculum. Specifically, these inequalities arise due to variations in schoolwide framework

adaptations; community partnerships that exist within their school; individual teacher confidence, capacity, knowledge, and interest; and availability of science curriculum materials. BPS has partnered with the Whatcom Coalition for Environmental Education (WCEE) to address these inequities, a local organization comprised of over a dozen nonprofits working to increase equity and collective capacity in environmental education. Together BPS and WCEE are working to develop a vertically aligned K-8 curriculum and teacher professional development that addresses equity and access related to environmental education and sustainability.

Pillar 1: Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs

This section includes four main elements and is 30% of your overall score.

Element 1A: Energy conservation strategies

Describe how your district programs, policies, and actions have reduced the amount of energy used in your building(s). **Please cite data and/or give specific details in your answer.**

We use several strategies to reduce the amount of energy used in our buildings. Primarily, our energy and utility data are input into Energy Star Portfolio Manager. This allows us to track our energy use and interfaces with our work order system, Asset Planner, which then allows us to track our energy efficiency preventative maintenance measures.

We have transitioned 23 of our 29 district faculties to Direct Digital Control systems so we can centrally manage our lighting and HVAC systems. We employ a dedicated building automation technician who specializes in HVAC controls and starts each day with a thorough check of all our connected HVAC systems and adjusts them to function at peak efficiency. Through this system, we can also monitor and address any maintenance issues in real-time.

We have been part of Puget Sound Energy's Commercial Strategic Energy Management (CSEM) grant program and recently renewed our contract to participate in this program for another three years. We anticipate continuing this program indefinitely. Our performance for this contract for the period of 7/2/20 -6/30/21 shows we exceeded our target for kWh savings of 264,812 kWh for a total actual savings of 623,952 kWh and 597,399 kWh attributed to our CSEM program.

Our new buildings are constructed in accordance with Washington Sustainable Schools Protocols (WSSP), and our policy is to exceed them whenever possible. Our newest four buildings have exceeded the minimum requirement point total for WSSP by at least 20%. Additionally, all our facilities are now built to solar-ready standards, and we installed a 100-kW solar array at our most recently constructed school (Sehome High School). The completion date was August 2020.

BPS has also embarked on a systematic LED lighting upgrade with a goal of transitioning all our buildings to full LED with associated energy-saving lighting controls by 2026. $1.2 million is allocated for the continuation of this work between 2021-2023.

Our greenhouse gas emission reduction plan is a work in progress, with elements in place, but we do not have a fully formalized plan yet. However, we have many of the pieces to make this a systemic practice over the next year. A part of this effort will be to educate students and staff members about everyday energy conservation practices such as reducing plug loads, turning off lights when not in use, and not bringing personal appliances like mini-fridges in classrooms.

Element 1B: Water quality, efficiency, and conservation

Describe how your district implemented and is maintaining your water conservation program.

BPS works to reduce water consumption at all levels. Most of our plumbing fixtures are low flow, and when older fixtures fail, they are replaced with low flow models. Many of the standard faucet fixtures that remain have been retrofitted with spray jets or aerators. All faucets are either push or automatic electronic shut-off.

Fourteen of our 29 sites have irrigation that operates only from June – September. Of the 14 sites, ten are zoned systems that are on-time clocks. Weather is regularly monitored, and irrigation schedules are adjusted accordingly. Four of the 14 sites are on reel irrigation systems and operate manually, only as needed. All our sites are irrigated in the evening or early morning hours to conserve water and avoid evaporation. During the summertime, our grounds crew begins at 5:00 am to complete any manual watering before temperatures start to rise.

Additionally, BPS regularly mulches facility planting beds. Landscaping is drought tolerant and requires minimal irrigation. Our new landscape design standard is to be intentional about where we install standard turf grass, keeping it to a minimum and only in areas that are intended as active use spaces. We are replacing standard turf grass with eco grass (meadow grass) in these spaces, which, once established, will require minimal irrigation.

In September of 2021, four of our grounds staff completed the ecoPRO Certified Landscape Professional training. In December of 2021, we engaged with the City of Bellingham and are working with their Environmental Education and Outreach Specialist to install a weather-based irrigation controller and Wi-Fi enabled controllers utilizing rebates to cover costs, upgrade to efficient sprinkler heads, and assess irrigation to identify water waste and efficiencies.

Options High School has a partial green roof that helps retain water in high rain events and serves as an educational feature for students. Three of our schools utilize either rain barrels or cisterns to capture roof runoff and irrigate school vegetable garden spaces. We also have rain gardens at eight schools to improve the water quality flowing into our local waterways and to provide educational opportunities.

Additionally, we have a certified stormwater specialist on staff who monitors all our stormwater facilities weekly. We perform additional enhancements and in-depth maintenance annually. The facilities are inspected annually for compliance by the City of Bellingham, and all comply.

Element 1C: Waste Management and Product Procurement

Describe your solid waste management plan and practices.

Bellingham Public Schools has used Toward Zero Waste practices for over a decade. We partner with our local waste hauler, Sanitary Services Company, to ensure we have the appropriate level of service in place. We are diligent to avoid contaminating our recycling and composting waste streams. Each BPS facility has receptacles for, at a minimum: plastic, tin, aluminum, glass, cardboard, and paper recycling. All our school sites and the central kitchen have FoodPlus! services where food scraps are composted. Additionally, all school cafeterias provide a compost bin for food waste. BPS has participated in the Food to Flowers composting education program for years.

BPS does not currently calculate landfill diversion rates due to the way our waste hauler collects and produces bills. Most of our waste stream is hauled on a volumetric basis, and we do not know if the container emptied is empty, half full, or completely full, but we are billed at a full rate regardless. Only our roll-off containers are billed on a per pound basis. We are currently in the process of designing a system that will better allow us to determine landfill diversion rates.

All surplus items are broken down, and components are recycled as applicable. For example, wood tops are separated from metal legs.

In 2018, BPS expanded our partnership with the local nonprofit, Sustainable Connections and joined their Food Recovery Program. In total, BPS has donated 31,138 lbs. of nutritious edible food, which has been redistributed to our community members in need. A significant portion of the donated food is distributed to the nearby Lummi Nation.

We use very few hazardous chemicals. Any hazardous chemicals or products are appropriately disposed of at the Whatcom County Toxics Facility. Paper towel dispensers are stocked with unbleached 100% recycled products.

The BPS grounds crew uses arborist mulch to control weeds in our planting beds and other areas. Keeping the material on-site and lowering our carbon footprint by not transporting it to an offsite composting facility has the added benefit. Additional material that cannot be utilized on-site is returned to our facilities site and added to our actively maintained compost pile, which we use to enhance soil at various locations around the district.

Element 1D: Alternative transportation

Describe alternative transportation options to driving single-occupancy vehicles to and from schools and other district facilities.

Bellingham Public Schools prides itself on the efficiency of its yellow school bus fleet, consistently receiving" 100% Transportation Efficiency Ratings" from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Our fleet is comprised of school busses that were built after 1994, when the first emission standards were adopted. We know that school buses and local transportation authority options are ideal choices to decrease single-car drivers; we are working to increase ridership of our school buses.

We partner with the Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) to decrease single occupancy vehicle rides and for student and family education about lower carbon emission transportation options.

Thanks to partnerships between WTA, Smart Trips to Schools, the Whatcom Council of Governments, and the City of Bellingham, our community offers free WTA bus passes to all residents under 17 years old; brings bus riding education into all 7th-grade classrooms in BPS; partners with elementary PE teachers to provide bike education and safe routes to school lessons called "bike rodeos"; and updates required Safe Routes to Schools maps for families

In addition to school buses, we use vans to transport students eligible for services in McKinney- Vento, foster care, afterschool activities, as well as some Special Education and CTE programs. Using these vehicles reduces both driver and fuel costs. We also have district-owned cars used by staff members in our Facilities and Sustainability and Network Services departments; as we replace those vehicles, our emphasis has been on sustainability, and when possible electric or hybrid vehicles are purchased.

BPS schools have posted signage to indicate no-idling of vehicles, specifically during drop-off and pick-up times. Our school busses and drop-off/pick-up lanes are at least 25 feet from building air intakes, doors, and windows.

When Sehome High School re-opened in 2020, the parking lot included two electric vehicle charging stations. In 2023, when the new BPS district office opens, it will also have electric charging stations available. Further, our most recent elementary schools - Alderwood and Parkview – have conduit installed and are electric vehicle charging station ready.

Pillar 2: Improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff

This section includes two main elements and is 30% of your score.

Element 2A: An integrated school district environmental health program

Describe how your district implements and measures the success of your integrated environmental health programs and practices to ensure the health and safety of the district and school(s) community.

As a district, we have adopted many practices that focus on the health and safety of our students, staff, and community.

All our custodial products are either Green Seal, EPA Safer Choice, NSF, or Eco ID certified. We do not use chlorine bleach for cleaning, and it is only used sparingly for some laundry sanitization applications. However, we do not allow individual staff to bring cleaning products into the buildings; staff are instructed to only use district authorized and provided products. Further, all paints and coatings used in our facilities are low or no VOC.

BPS adheres to an integrated pest management approach and has a certified pest inspector/applicator on staff. In 2020, we implemented a no-spray program and do not use any herbicides (glyphosate, etc.). We only use pesticides on an as needed basis and select the least toxic version that will be effective in each situation. All pest control activities are tracked and documented. Sealing of buildings, reducing harborage, and eliminating food sources are the main strategies we use for rodent control. Bait stations are used as a last resort, checked frequently, and removed when activity ceases.

Bellingham Public Schools cares about indoor air quality. We have increased air filtration and have installed MERV 13 filters at all facilities to maximize the fresh air delivered to teaching and learning rooms and workspaces. Our building automation technician monitors each space for airflow and ventilation and adjusts equipment accordingly. For events that are outside of school hours, HVAC

equipment is scheduled to run and to provide ample fresh air. This is done through a centralized calendaring system. In 1989, all frequently occupied rooms were tested for radon, and no rooms exceeded safe levels. BPS has a health services policy that addresses asthma management, and we work in our schools to limit environmental asthma triggers.

The district conducts regular lead testing at all buildings constructed prior to 1999. Water has been tested at every fixture in each of these facilities. Our district does not have any wood playground equipment or other structures that contain chromate copper arsenate.

2B. High standards of nutrition, fitness, and quality outdoor time for both students and staff

Describe how your district implements high standards of nutrition, fitness, and quality outdoor time for both students and staff

BPS is committed to ensuring students have access to physical fitness opportunities and outdoor time. Our elementary students receive an average of 60 minutes of PE each week, plus 35 minutes of outdoor recess time each day. Our middle school students receive an average of 125 minutes, while our high school students who take physical education classes average 200 minutes of PE each week. Our elementary PE teachers received training through the national “Let’s Move Active Schools” campaign in 2015 and 2016.

BPS is dedicated to partnering with local farms and food hubs to source ingredients for our scratch-cooking recipes. To this end, we hired an expert, Mataio Gillis, who has trusted relationships and expertise working with local growers, fishers, and producers.

We participate in the Washington State Department of Agriculture Farm to School Program, Harvest of the Month, and Taste of Washington Day.

For over a decade, BPS has partnered with Common Threads, a local nonprofit, that connects kids to healthy food in the garden, in the kitchen, and at the table. Elementary and middle school students engage in hands-on learning experiences during school hours through joyful gardening, cooking, and eating.

BPS works to provide culturally relevant food and meals. For example, we developed a recipe for Lummi Island Wild salmon chowder and served other ethical dishes such as chickpea masala, falafels with beet hummus, and chicken tortilla soup.

Initiated in the Spring of 2020, the Big 4 for Wellness initiative includes mental/emotional wellness, social connection, physical activity, and reflection. BPS provided ideas and activities for students, staff, and families to help keep self-care front and center in life. BPS continues to distribute a quarterly Big 4 for Wellness newsletter to all staff.

What proportion of schools in your district have a school nurse and/or school-based health center?

All schools in BPS have a designated nurse. BPS employs eight Educational Staff AssociateRN nurses who serve our 23 school buildings. We also have five LPN nurses who support students, in some cases in a 1:1

environment and in other cases supporting whole schools. We also have six health room assistants who support COVID testing, symptom management, and school health rooms.

We partner with Compass Health, Sea Mar Community Health Centers, and Unity Care NW to provide students with Mental Health Therapists on-site at 16 of our 23 schools.

During COVID, we have partnered with local pharmacies, the Whatcom County Health Department, and the Washington State Department of Health to provide vaccine clinics for students ages 5-18, for staff, and adult family and community members. We also offer both rapid and PCR COVID tests in our schools for students and staff.

Describe your district's efforts to support student mental health and school climate (e.g. anti-bullying programs, peer counseling, etc.) (Maximum 300 words).

BPS leadership cares deeply about the school culture, specifically the student's and staff's mental health. Over the last decade, we have adopted strategies to improve student and staff well-being; however, we recognize that this is a complex and challenging issue that we are continually working to address.

Almost a decade ago, BPS adopted Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Justice (keeping kids in school versus suspending/expelling them and helping students restore any harm done) as strategies for improving school climate and mental health for staff and students.

In 2018, BPS began teacher professional development through Sound Discipline, which focuses on creating a caring community of adults in the school to help students dealing with intergenerational trauma and racism.

During the 2017-18, BPS convened a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum Advisory Group, comprised of student, staff, and community stakeholders. Among other things, this group reviewed the evidence-based SEL curriculum and made recommendations to our superintendent. In 2018, BPS adopted a Caring School Community for elementary school students and RULER for middle school students.

In the Spring of 2020, BPS began publishing a wellness newsletter – the Big 4 for Wellness – that focuses on staff taking care of themselves to be prepared to focus on students. This initiative includes mental/emotional wellness, social connection, physical activity, and reflection activities and resources. The newsletter continues to be published every quarter.

Pillar 3: Provide effective environmental and sustainability education which incorporates STEM, civic skills, and green career pathways

This section includes three main elements and is 30% of your overall score.

Element 3A: Interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between environmental, energy, and human systems.

Describe how your district integrates and measures students' environmental and sustainability literacy at each grade level, including curriculum and outdoor learning.

BPS integrates environmental and sustainability literacy across all grade levels, K-12. Unit and lesson assessments serve as methods for measuring student progress toward learning standards.

At the elementary level, BPS has developed integrated units of study with embedded environmental and sustainability goals as part of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program. One example is in a 2nd-grade unit titled "natural resources fuel conflict and stewardship," in which students analyze water resource use in Whatcom County. Another example is a 4th-grade unit on energy conversions in which students analyze the environmental impact and sustainability of various energy sources and prepare a public presentation recommending changes to the energy grid.

We partner with Whatcom Coalition for Environmental Education (WCEE) member organizations for curriculum and outdoor learning experiences as a district. For example, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) provides a "Salmon in Schools" project where all elementary students observe salmon eggs hatching in a tank at their home school. Additionally, 3rd-grade students study the life cycle of salmon, environmental impacts impacting salmon decline, and then release salmon fry into a local stream.

We also partner with Common Threads, which provides students in grades K-8th with access to community partner-led lessons on raising sustainable food and cooking healthy meals. Common Threads staff support school gardens and standards-aligned instruction.

At the middle school level, science classes use the Amplify curriculum and community partners to address the following topics and learning standards:

1. Populations and Resources
2. Harnessing Human Energy
3. Matter and Energy in Ecosystems
4. Ocean, Atmosphere, and Climate
5. Earth's Changing Climate

During the 2021-2022 school year, BPS added a middle school CTE program focused on Plant Systems, a course where students investigate through experiential, hands-on learning. Students learn about soil management principles in one unit and compare seeds, germination, and growth of conventional versus genetically modified plants.

At the high school level, students complete a 3-year course sequence (biology, chemistry, physics) and take electives including Environmental Science, AP Environmental Science, and Ocean Science. Environmental education and sustainability are woven into units through the NGSS standards in the three core science classes. Examples include studying ice melt and global warming and understanding ocean acidification within chemistry class. In addition, biology students explore the impact of environmental changes on ecosystem populations through community partners such as the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association.

Describe professional development opportunities available to your teachers in environmental and sustainability concepts, and the number and percentage of teachers who participated in these opportunities during the past two years.

BPS offers a variety of teacher professional development opportunities, including options provided by district staff and community partners. While we do not have space to describe all of our initiatives, a few examples follow.

To address NGSS, each of our 14 elementary schools has a full-time educational technology coach. These positions support grade-level curriculum teams and provide school-based professional learning to K-5 staff. Each of our coaches has completed a two-day NGSS train-the-trainer module on three-dimensional science teaching and has implemented a shorter version of the training for certificated teachers in their schools. This training accompanies the lesson and unit implementations mentioned in the question above.

We partner with our local NorthWest Educational Service District. They provided multiple professional development offerings as part of ClimeTime, including Climate Science 1.0 – Engaging in Argument from Evidence, Climate Science 2.0 – Analyzing and Interpreting Data, and Climate Science 3.0 – Modeling and Student Explanations.

We partner with WCEE member organizations, such as RE Sources, which provides professional learning to elementary, middle, and high school teachers. Classes include attention to conceptual understandings (waste prevention, water conservation, stormwater, energy efficiency, climate change) and pedagogical approaches (strategies for teaching and learning outside, providing opportunities for student agency and action). During the 2018-2019 school year, the RE Sources Sustainable School Program worked with over 1,600 students in 120 classrooms in 20 elementary schools and taught almost 80 workshops.

We partner with Western Washington University and Whatcom Community College, who provided an interdisciplinary one-day workshop titled “STEM and the Salish Sea” focused on developing student tools for advocacy and policy engagement.

Element 3B: Use of environmental and sustainability concepts to develop STEM content knowledge and thinking skills to prepare graduates for the 21st century.

Describe how environmental and sustainability education in your district supports the teaching of science and engineering practices and supports robust general science education that includes a deep understanding of life, physical, and Earth & space sciences.

The Science curriculum is grounded in the belief that students should investigate contemporary science topics, particularly around climate change and sustainability, in order to apply disciplinary core ideas, and science and engineering practices purposefully. When students engage in relevant topics and make meaningful contributions to their communities, their overall learning within the three-dimensional NGSS framework improves.

Through intentional partnerships with local community organizations such as NSEA, Common Threads, North Cascades Institute, and Wild Whatcom, our students begin to view science as a cumulative, social, and creative enterprise focused on becoming collaborators with the natural world and advocates for our local environment. Within the context of environmentally focused anchor phenomenon and problems, our students are genuinely motivated to participate in the science and engineering practices, for example:

- Students in 3rd-grade ask questions about salmon habitats, plan investigations to understand what makes a good habitat for salmon fry, then create an argument for when and where salmon fry should be released.
- Students in 7th-grade science plan and carry out investigations and analyze and interpret data related to phytoplankton growth and agriculture use while learning aboard the Snow Goose vessel in Bellingham Bay.
- Students in AP Environmental Science collect and analyze data related to home energy use and make an argument to communities for specific changes in energy practices.

Describe how your district's curriculum connects the classroom content to career options that focus on environmental and sustainability field studies and/or careers.

At the elementary and middle school level, BPS partners with Whatcom Coalition for Environmental Education (WCEE) and its member organizations to allow students an opportunity to engage side-by-side with professionals in environmental education and sustainability careers. For example:

1. Students in each 5th-grade class meet and ask questions to park rangers from the North Cascades National Park during Mountain School at North Cascades Institute.
2. Our partnership with the City of Bellingham allows 5th-grade students to shadow staff within the water and sanitation departments to learn how communities manage water and waste operations.
3. Students in middle school work with Northwest Avalanche Center researchers to study snowpack changes over time.
4. In middle school, our Plant Systems Program engages students using greenhouses and includes connections to careers in biology, agriculture, forestry, and natural resources. Guest speakers from WCEE model career options for students.
5. Our partnership with Common Threads allows students to learn about food production and study different agricultural methods within Whatcom County while also learning to cook locally grown produce. This program is offered to students in kindergarten through 8th grades.

At the high school level, BPS offers five courses specifically related to the environment and sustainability – Environmental Science, AP Environmental Science, Agriculture Hunger and the Environment, Ocean Science, and Sustainable Design. These courses are connected to the STEM CTE pathway and offer opportunities for students to be involved in Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs), such as the Environmental Club, which provides opportunities to meet and listen to local guest speakers. Within these courses, students earn credit toward the science graduation requirement; this year, over 280 students were enrolled in these courses across four schools. Additionally, these courses use our local Galbraith Mountain as a learning lab where students have field experiences to study careers in forestry, natural resources, and environmental engineering.

Element 3C: Development of civic engagement knowledge and skills, and students' application of these to address sustainability and environmental issues in their community

Describe students' civic and/or community engagement experiences integrating environmental and sustainability concepts, field studies, and community service at every grade level.

BPS endeavors to ensure students at all grade levels have engaging transdisciplinary learning experiences. These experiences often include engagement with community partners, field studies, and community service.

At the elementary level, the IB Primary Years Program includes a 5th Grade exhibition where students work collaboratively on an inquiry project related to a local or global issue of significance. Because students choose the topic and product, the culminating experiences vary, but many (about 30-50% each year) are related to environmental and sustainability issues like cleaning up plastic in the oceans, restoring salmon habitat, or reducing the carbon footprint of local transportation options.

At the middle school level, students in 8th-grade participate in a mock-congress activity where they design and propose a bill to address a local or national issue. Again, students select the bill to discuss, and many students propose bills related to sustainability and environmental issues.

At the high school level, students enrolled in Biology (a science graduation requirement) and Environmental Science participate in streambank and ecosystem restoration with our community partner, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association.

BPS began an initiative last year called Promise Tomorrow, which is open to all students within the district. This is project-based learning experience that allows students to work on projects that envision creative solutions to transition to a better world. Projects take multi-disciplinary approaches to innovate technologies, designs, or plans that forge connections in their communities to create positive change. Collaborative student groups work across grades, meet weekly, and be supported by a volunteer and supervised by the coordinator. The first challenge topic was the state and natural resources, including specific ideas such as farming practices, biodiversity impact on food supply, sustainable energy production, hydroelectric power and dams, and invasive species.

Superintendent name, date, and signature below.

Name: Dr. Greg Baker **Date: January 10, 2022**

X 

Superintendent

END OF APPLICATION