



# GREEN COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

3:30 p.m.

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## Attendees

Committee Members: Jodi Bettermann, Chair  
Elizabeth Fiore

Administrative Staff: Dr. Jonathan Hart, Superintendent; Jason M. Bohm, SBA/Board Secretary; Don Race, Facilities Manager; Timothy Charleston, Principal; Sarah Pauch, Supervisor of Math, Science and Technology

General Members: Gargi Adhikari, Teacher; Dr. Neil Hendrickson, Readington Township; Steve Foster, Readington Township; David Livingston, Readington Township; Christina Albrecht, Readington Township; Eric Zwerling, Readington Township

## 1. Pillar I: Reduce environmental impact and costs

- The solar array expansion project continues to progress with environmental assessments and surveys currently taking place. The Request for Proposal (RFP) process will begin next. Green Committee Board of Education members will review specifications then will forward the specifications along with any comments to the Finance Committee for approval. The RFP process is expected to take several months. Another update will be provided to the Green Committee at its fall 2023 meeting.
- Current capital projects with a sustainability focus discussed include LED lighting upgrades to RMS and HBS, outdoor gardens improvements at WHS, water bottle filling station additions to RMS including one in the cafeteria.
- The district will apply for another round of electric school bus grants through the EPA's Clean School Bus Program. Applications are due by August 22. While the Committee understands that this is not likely to be a successful grant bid, we feel that this is still an endeavor that will pay off in the longer term as more high priority districts receive funding thereby reducing the number of applicants. The Clean School Bus Program provides \$5 billion until 2026 and has awarded \$500 million in the first year, 2022.

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

- The Green Committee applauded the district's Earth Day Celebration held on April 26 and communicated to the community in the June edition of the Readington News. The opportunity for stewardship from the students to the greater Readington community in attendance was very impactful. Representation from diverse students including different academic and artistic disciplines in their presentations showcased the extent of green initiatives occurring in the district. There was a suggestion that this become an annual event. Appreciation was expressed for the work of Dr. Higgins and Mr. Bohm in organizing this wonderful community event.

## 3. Pillar III: Provide environmental education (STEM, civic skills, green career pathways, etc.)

- Mr. Livingston informed the Committee that the bioswale video is undergoing some final revisions. Once complete the link will be shared not only with the district but also with partners at Rutgers so that they can share with other school districts in the state.
- The NJ Department of Education Climate Change Pilot grant received by the district infused some great new resources for students into the classrooms which will assist with climate change education.

#### 4. **Brainstorming strategic plan areas for the 2023-24 school year (Pillar I, II, and III)**

- Committee members collaborated on generating ideas which will inform the summer planning session by Board members and administration on priorities for green initiatives for the 2023-24 school year. Ideas included the following:
  - i. Pillar I Resource Conservation: Work will move forward on the solar expansion project, LED lighting upgrades, and pursuit of electric school bus funding opportunities. Additionally there may be opportunities to collaborate with the Readington Environmental Commission on reduction of food waste.
  - ii. Pillar II Health and Wellness: Exploration of nature as a resource for improved mental and physical health, expansion of 7<sup>th</sup> grade walk in the woods to other grades, and potential to incorporate the [1000 Hours Outside](#) challenge.
  - iii. Pillar III Environmental Education: Expansion of partnerships that support environmental education such as Raritan Headwaters Ambassador, community resources, and township Open Space and Environmental Commission. Plans are in place to update the district's Sustainability Integration document and to update math curriculum to include new climate change standards. Support for leadership opportunities for students such as Board of Education presentations was expressed as well.
  - iv. The Readington Environmental Commission is updating the township's Environmental Resource Inventory which will be an interactive digital resource to the schools that can be incorporated as applicable to all Pillars. It should be available around the start of the school year.

#### 5. **Unfinished / New Business**

- The district is restructuring its submissions to the Readington News such that periodically as appropriate ads will be purchased to communicate information such as the budget summary color ad placed in the June edition. This will be in addition to the regular submission of articles from the district.
  - The Committee briefly discussed this [NY Times Article](#) shared by Mr. Zwerling regarding food waste and partnership between a municipality and a school district and how it might inform planning for next year.
6. The next Green Committee meeting shall be held in the summer of 2023 with Board of Education members only for strategic planning for the 2023-24 school year. Thank you to all Green Committee members for their support in 2022-23!