

**GREEN SCHOOLS COMMITTEE  
NINTH ANNUAL REPORT  
MAY 25, 2016**

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## **2015-16 GREEN SCHOOLS COMMITTEE ATTENDEES/REPORTS**

### ***Community Experts & Parents***

Molly Behn	Coastal Watershed Council
Nick Coonrod	Global Student Embassy
Julia Davenport	City of Santa Cruz and Watershed curriculum author
Elida Erickson	UCSC Sustainability Office
Bret Jensen	City of Santa Cruz Recycle!
Jeanne LePage	Ecology Action representative and traffic study coordinator
Jessica Missaghian	Santa Cruz City Water Department
Andy Moskowitz	Seed Culture Labs
Melissa Ott	UCSC Sustainability Office
Ana Maria Rebolo	Santa Cruz County
Roland Saher	Santa Cruz Climate Change Speakers Bureau
Mary Simmons	City of Santa Cruz Recycle!
Felicia Van Stolk	Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
Ken Wagman	Community Member
Peter Wampler	Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
Wyatt Wunderlich	Global Student Embassy

### ***District Staff***

Catherine Meyer-Johnson	Administrative Assistant to the Committee
Jim Monreal	Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
Trevor Miller	Director of Maintenance, Operations & Transportation

### ***Classified and Teachers***

Branna Banks	Soquel High Counselor
Stu Branoff	Bay View teacher
Joanne Brown	AFE consulting teacher and parent
Stacey Falls	Santa Cruz High teacher
Mark Thomas	Greater Santa Cruz Federation of Teachers Representative and AFE Teacher

### ***SCCS School Board***

Jeremy Shonick	SCCS Trustee
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The committee met four times (quarterly) in 2015-16. The highlights include:

- Continued development of the partnership with Agnes Topp (City of Santa Cruz Environmental Projects Analyst), UCSC IDEASS students, engineering mentors, and district facilities staff in coordinating the next steps for the DROPS (Drought Response Outreach Program for Schools) grant to increase rainwater catchment and reduce runoff at Bay View. We are anticipating responses from the State of California for project roll out.
- Bay View, for the fourth year in a row, participated in the Green Apple Day of service sponsored by the US Green Building Council on 9/26/15. Approximately 100 parents, teachers, staff, and students participated, doing garden work and installing bike racks.
- 3rd and 5th graders from Gault and Westlake visited the resource recovery facility last fall, using grant funds from CAL Recycle. Field trips for Delaveaga and Bay View students took place in the spring.

- The fourth or fifth grade classes participated in the Watershed Education Program with bus transportation funded by the City of Santa Cruz. This partnership enabled this program to positively affect our students.
- Partnered with Ecology Action, and co-hosted the 2015-16 Bike/Walk to School Days. City Schools participates in the fall and in the spring events. At DeLaveaga, students take part in the “Active4Me” program. Days that students walk, skate, bus or bike to school are tracked and qualify students for prizes. Bay View provides a monthly breakfast snack celebration to reward active student participation.
- In conjunction with Educational Services Department, expanded introduction and support of Global Student Embassy in SCCS. Information was shared as our students did work over spring break in Nicaragua. Students from Central America visited SCCS High Schools this spring and assisted with student garden projects. At Harbor High, an outdoor classroom is being constructed in the “Grow Quad”, and a beautiful mural has been painted nearby. At Soquel High, the 2<sup>nd</sup> quad has been renovated in partnership with the school’s FFA club, featuring drought resistant plantings. GMEC students are planning to build a gazebo in the center of the quad. At SCHS, a garden area has been established by the softball field, with six organic beds and multiple fruit trees.
- SCCS students participated in the annual Teen Fashion Show, featuring recycled materials, and in the Santa Cruz Recycles poster contest, both sponsored by SC City Public Works.
- A Request for Proposal for a Prop 39 Clean Energy Use was circulated and Climatec was chosen for their proposal to find and implement energy savings in schools. Their work will be tied in with the Long Range Master Facilities Plan being developed.
- Began our first project with Prop 39 Clean Energy Funds. We have initiated a light replacement project at our high school gyms.

What follows is a report on specific activities of the Committee during the 2015-16 school year.

## **DISTRICT OPERATIONS**

The District is now finalizing a Long Range Master Facilities Plan (LRMFP), to guide the District over the next ten years. The LRMFP is intended to be a document which will reflect the anticipated facility needs of our schools and our students. It is being constructed after many meetings with District Planners, Teter & Associates, school administrators, staff and school community members with needs being discussed and prioritized. The LRMFP will provide a well-considered and comprehensive base for a possible facilities bond measure in November, 2016.

Seven years ago, the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy was established to help Santa Cruz City Schools improve its environmental footprint through purchasing practices that seek out goods and services that have a lighter impact on human health and the environment.

This policy demonstrates the district’s commitment to environmental stewardship by guiding purchasing decisions towards more environmentally friendly products and services. It also encourages fiscal responsibility in purchasing decisions. Custodial products now include only green-certified products.

We are still purchasing green and recycled materials including:

- Low-mercury florescent lamps
- Electrical equipment with energy star features
- Copy paper that is up to 30% post-consumer recycled
- Toilet paper which is 100% recycled
- Paper towel rolls also 100% recycled
- Certified green glass cleaner
- Less toxic cleaners for other areas
- Multi-fold towel 100% recycled
- Toilet seat liners 100% recycled (40% post-consumer use)
- Mailing envelopes, business cards 30% recycled

Board Members took steps to reduce paper usage by switching to an electronic Board packet program.

Water took center stage this year as the District continued fixing the watering systems at all the grass fields at the high schools. In addition, water use will decrease further with the installation of an artificial turf field at Harbor High School and the renovated athletic field at Soquel High School.

## **DISTRICT CONSERVATION PROJECTS**

Water conservation continued to be a high priority for the District, as the State emerges from drought conditions. At Soquel High, the artificial turf football field and track was replaced during the summer of 2015. EPDM was used rather than recycled rubber, to eliminate the need for water. A 1.5 inch polymer pad with a 20 year life was installed under the EPDM, and under that porous rock. Grass is becoming less of an alternative because high usage by students and outside groups damages the fields every year, necessitating expensive rehabilitation work without enough time for fields to recover, and because of the water required. Catchment facilities for rain water have been considered but adequate storage presents a challenge. Currently staff are preparing for a summer installation of artificial turf on the football field at Santa Cruz High.

At Soquel High School, SCCS partnered with Soquel Creek Water District to replace our urinals with low flow urinals and faucets.

The projects this year have been continuations of previous projects including utilizing Prop 39 Clean Energy Jobs Act funding which is anticipated to be around \$2 million over the next five years. Again this year, the City of Santa Cruz is providing dory poles with flags for sites to use at celebrations instead of balloon arches that can end up in the ocean and harm turtles and other aquatic life. Contact Mary Simmons, waste management reduction specialist for the City of Santa Cruz.

## **STUDENT SUBCOMMITTEE**

Although students did not attend Green Schools Committee meetings this year, many District students participated in programs focused on environmental awareness and action, as detailed elsewhere in this report. Collaborations with Global Students Embassy have provided opportunities at SCCS high schools. It is hoped that next year, student participation on GSC will increase.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

In partnership with the City of Santa Cruz and Ecology Action, the District encouraged students and staff to participate in "Bike to School" day, held this year on Thursday, 5/12/16. Breakfast treats and other goodies were given to all who participated.

The Safe Routes to School Project begun last year will this year see flashing signal lights and signage installed at Harbor and Soquel High Schools. Parents and staff at these schools were asked to survey students on how they traveled to school prior to installation of the equipment. They will be asked to survey students again after the installation to measure results.

SCCS has applied for a grant from the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution District to replace two older 84 passenger buses. Funding is available as part of an initiative to minimize student exposure to diesel particulates by replacing older buses with more recent models with improved emissions control technology. The buses to be replaced are from 1972 and 1993.

## **CURRICULUM**

The focus of the Curriculum Committee this year was to transition the successful Wetlands and Watershed field study program from all fifth graders to fifth and fourth grade, depending upon the school. In addition, supporting the goal to make the program sustainable for the district, the City of Santa Cruz Water department took on the funding of the buses, a significant cost of the project. This happened after the Water district saw the great teaching and learning that goes on in the classes. Especially in a time of drought, they realized educating the kids will go a long way to getting the whole household to save water. And, after five years, there are more and more kids who have been educated about the whole water cycle. The program included classroom visits by wetlands “scientists” and field trips. Students studied maps of the San Lorenzo River and tested the river’s water quality, temperature, and turbidity by getting in the San Lorenzo River. They explored the river environment and prepared scientific drawings of many of the key features of this water source. Students also traveled to Loch Lomond Reservoir and special thanks go to the workers there who allowed the kids to be there in spite of the closure due to the drought. For many students, this was the first time they had been there. They hiked much of the reservoir’s perimeter and participated with local rangers in building a model dam. These field study opportunities were preceded by in-classroom orientations to the Santa Cruz Watershed by staff from the Resource Conservation Department.

In partnership with the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, Branciforte Small schools teacher Joanne Brown led groups of Alternative Family Education students on birdwatching walks at Neary Lagoon and at Pogonip, where they pulled invasives and learned about native plants.

## **PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

\*\*\*At its meeting in April, 2016, the committee was approached by Santa Cruz Climate Change Speakers Bureau with ideas on how to promote climate change awareness as part of curriculum for all grade levels. The District will continue discussions to explore ways to implement these proposals.

\*\*\* Santa Cruz City Schools is a signer of the Climate Action Compact 2.0 along with UCSC and the City of Santa Cruz, among others. One of our commitments is to reduce the district’s carbon footprint. Reviving the Carbon Footprint subcommittee is a strong recommendation for the new chair and the administration.

\*\*\*Revive the Student Subcommittee and encourage and support students in their projects. This education aspect of the committee is unique for district committee. What has worked in the past is to have the board representative and the Assistant Superintendent/Business Services at subcommittee meetings to support students. This allowed students to ask questions, get coaching, and have immediate access to decision makers.

\*\*\*Keep working with the city and county governments, the COE, the City Museum of Natural History, Ecology Action, the US Green Building Council, and other interested organizations that want to contribute to the district. This directly supports the committee’s commitment to picking the low hanging fruit.

\*\*\*Keep the flexibility of the committee that enables local organizations to participate and make contributions to the district.

\*\*\*The committee has won awards and, more importantly, been emulated statewide for its composition and flexibility. Maintain its statewide presence through attendance and presentations at conferences and other venues.