



News Release

From Seattle Public Schools

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School Board commits to effort to reduce greenhouse gases **Seattle Public Schools is first district to join Seattle Climate Partnership**

The Seattle School Board unanimously adopted a [resolution](#) during its regular meeting on June 20 that directs Seattle Public Schools (SPS) to become a member of the [Seattle Climate Partnership](#). The Partnership, which includes government, higher education, and private sector organizations, is committed to reducing greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

The Seattle Climate Partnership is a voluntary agreement among local organizations to find ways to reach Seattle's community-wide goal of meeting or exceeding a 7 percent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2012, based on 1990 emissions levels. The resolution's adoption makes Seattle Public Schools the first public K-12 school district to become a Seattle Climate Partnership member.

"This partnership demonstrates to staff, students, families and the community that Seattle Public Schools values the environment," said Irene Stewart, chair of the School Board Operations Committee. "By reducing greenhouse gases that harm our ecosystems, we increase the likelihood that our children and grandchildren will inherit a healthy earth with fewer environmental problems."

[The board resolution](#) calls for each SPS department to develop an action plan with measurable goals and identified steps that will help Seattle Public Schools reduce greenhouse gases. Each action plan should include "a cost/benefit analysis adequate to ensure that these plans will be implemented in a manner that does not reduce resources available for learning and teaching or district operations," the resolution states.

Actions that SPS is considering include partnerships with utility companies to obtain rebates on new construction and building upgrades that are energy and/or water efficient; and educating staff and students on what they can do in their own work and classroom spaces to reduce greenhouse gas and resource use.

The board resolution follows adoption last year of a strong board policy on [Natural Resources Conservation](#), which has resulted in an estimated 3.5 percent total reduction in utilities for the 2006-2007 school year, a cost savings of \$315,300.

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In addition, the district has reduced the use of fossil fuels by 8.6 percent this year or 1,266 metric tons of CO₂. This represents 25 percent of the 4,908 metric tons of CO₂ the district has voluntarily committed to reduce, meeting the Kyoto Protocol.

“SPS staff members and students have embraced the need to implement resource conservation measures,” said Superintendent Raj Manhas. “Some creative, practical, and sustainable ideas have been implemented.”

Some of the actions the district has taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, meet the reduction in CO₂ goals and conserve natural resources, include:

- Changing the heating and cooling set points to reflect a broader temperature range. This significantly reduces electricity and natural gas consumption district-wide. In addition, heating and cooling schedules have been adjusted to more closely reflect school operating hours and staff schedules.
- Performing mechanical upgrades on operating equipment to increase efficiency.
- Reducing garbage and recycling pick-ups, which lowers the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by trucks servicing SPS facilities.
- Adapting the time that computers automatically shut off district-wide to align with staff schedules.
- Expanding the student-run composting program, which now includes Concord, Laurelhurst, Lawton, John Muir and West Woodland elementary schools, and Salmon Bay K-8.
- More efficient irrigation schedule for sports complexes, which reduces water use.

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