



## GREEN COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 30, 2023

3:30 p.m.

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Committee Members: Jodi Bettermann, Chair, Elizabeth Fiore, Board member

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

Other Members: Betsy Freeman, Teacher; Gargi Adhikari, Teacher; Dr. Neil Hendrickson, Readington Township; Steve Foster, Readington Township; Marlene Orlandi, Readington Township; Eric Zwerling; Readington Township

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

- The solar array expansion project continues to move forward. Mr. Settembrino, the architect for the district, presented the project to the Readington Planning Board and received unanimous approval. The next steps are to finalize proposal specifications and to issue a Request for Proposals that will allow a schedule where the project can be awarded in March and work can commence in June 2024.
- We received word that our latest electric bus grant submission was not successful. We continue to look for opportunities to secure funding for this initiative.
- Energy efficiency upgrades being pursued for district facilities include phase 2 and 3 of LED lighting installations in HBS and RMS scheduled for this summer. Additionally, Ameresco, the district's solar PPA provider, has an opportunity for a facility energy audit and the potential for energy efficiency upgrades where they can pursue funding to offset the costs to the district.
- The district is moving forward with OperationsHERO energy tracking software recently made available. Since we already use OperationsHERO software for our facilities, this is expected to be a moderate additional cost which will allow us to continue to monitor energy usage and energy costs.

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

- The Committee reviewed the [Readington Township Environmental Resource Inventory \(ERI\)](#) which has recently been reimagined. The new ERI is a dynamic story map which provides detailed interactive information about Readington history, climate, natural resources, land use, and air quality. This innovative ERI won the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions' 2023 Environmental Achievement Award. Committee members will continue to review and can send feedback to Dr. Hendrickson. There is the potential for this ERI to be used with students and the Environmental Commission may be able to provide a Professional Development session for teachers.
- Local farm samplings from Zone 7 provided as giveaways on staff professional development day.

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

- The district was fortunate to be chosen by the National Wildlife Federation and NJ Audubon Society to host a visit on November 21 from a delegation from Taiwan interested in learning more about sustainable schools and climate change education. They were able to spend time at Readington Middle School and Whitehouse School as well as with district administration and Board of Education Green Committee members. It is hoped that this will lead to a partnership between Readington Schools and Taiwan school representatives.

- At the November 14<sup>th</sup> Board of Education meeting, staff, students, and volunteers were recognized for their efforts toward making the TBS Bioswale Project a success. Here is a link to the final video that will be posted to the district's website: [TBS Bioswale Project](#)
4. **Board Goal No. 5:** To continue to improve communications and expand community engagement with all stakeholders. Our efforts will continue our focus on transparency, broadening our efforts beyond our locality, highlighting and celebrating district accomplishments with an emphasis on our sustainability/greening initiatives, and developing collaborations with our local governmental entities. Focus on “closing the loop” and communicating the results.
    - This goal was discussed by the Committee with ideas generated around communicating results including opportunities for student presentations to relevant Readington Township Committees such as the Environmental Commission and to local organizations such as the Rotary Club.
  5. Committee members were invited to review the Strategic Focus Action Plan Tracking Document which includes efforts and activities planned or completed in the schools related to the Green Committee's focus on being outdoors and experiencing nature, conserving energy, and exploring options for food waste. This document is continually being updated to reflect progress toward these goals.
  6. Jodi Bettermann was thanked for her service and dedication to the community as this is her last Green Committee meeting as Board member and Chair.
  7. **Unfinished / New Business**
    - Support was expressed for the idea of a QR code as part of the signage requested for the solar expansion project. This would be an opportunity for some rich content related to the advantages to the district, students, and community of using solar energy to power the school facilities.
  8. Our next Green Committee meeting shall be Wednesday, February 7, 2024, at 3:30 p.m.