



[SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS OUTCOME, MAY 2020 QUARTERLY PROGRESS MEETING]

Outcome: Continually increase the number of schools in the region that reduce the impact of their buildings and grounds on their local watershed, environment and human health through best practices, including student-led protection and restoration projects.

Management Approach 1: Strengthen and coordinate sustainable school state certification and recognition programs consistent with high-quality, recognized criteria such as the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School program.

Management Approach 2: Broaden stakeholder engagement beyond environmental literacy constituents to increase awareness, build partnerships, and strengthen support.

Management Approach 3: Identify and disseminate sustainable schools information and resources to school districts and schools.

1. Examine your red/yellow/green analysis of your management actions. What lessons have you learned over the past two years of implementation?

Summarize what you have learned about what worked and what didn't. For example, have you identified additional factors to consider or filled an information gap?

What worked?

- **2018 GIT Funding.** Through the GIT Funding Process, Stroud Water Research Center was awarded a grant to quantify and best support Best Management Practices (BMP) installation and restoration at schools to contribute directly to Bay restoration goals. Stroud has conducted stakeholder interviews, including school districts, sustainable school certification programs, and other workgroups. Stroud has spent considerable time developing an ArcGIS online tool that displays school, demographic, environmental and land use data. The following outputs are expected in 2020: 1) Report that analyzes and makes recommendations for the types of BMP projects that will result in the highest benefit to the CBP, the potential restoration opportunities on school grounds for each BMP (by state and school district), and, specific school districts where this work is recommended; 2) Guidelines for state and local resource managers (i.e. county planners, MS4 permit holders, etc.) on how BMPs at schools can be used by states to meet Total Maximum Daily Load requirements; 3) Guidelines for school district personnel on how to include BMPs in school district sustainability plans, including a discussion of barriers to BMP installation.

- **State interest.** Individual states like Maryland and Pennsylvania are expecting an increase in Certified Sustainable schools because their Governor's have identified Sustainable Schools as a priority. Pennsylvania has created a new Excellence in MWEA Awards for schools and non-formal partners. The Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) certification program has secured funding from the State.

What didn't?

- **District level involvement.** Over the past two years, the Workgroup has noticed district-level involvement in pursuing sustainable schools is limited. Involvement from all levels is needed to have successful sustainable school grounds.
 - **Individuals pursuing restoration projects.** Often, individual teachers or faculty work to pursue protection and restoration projects on school grounds which is unsustainable.
 - **Limited resources.** States and many local school districts do not have a funding strategy for sustainable school efforts. Much of the work is supported by individual grants without a plan for sustainability beyond that period. This impedes schools pursuing sustainable school practices and prevents schools that have been successful from sharing information.
2. Regardless of how successful your short-term progress has been over the past two years, indicate whether we are making progress at a rate that is necessary to achieve the outcome you are working toward. The example graph below illustrates this concept.

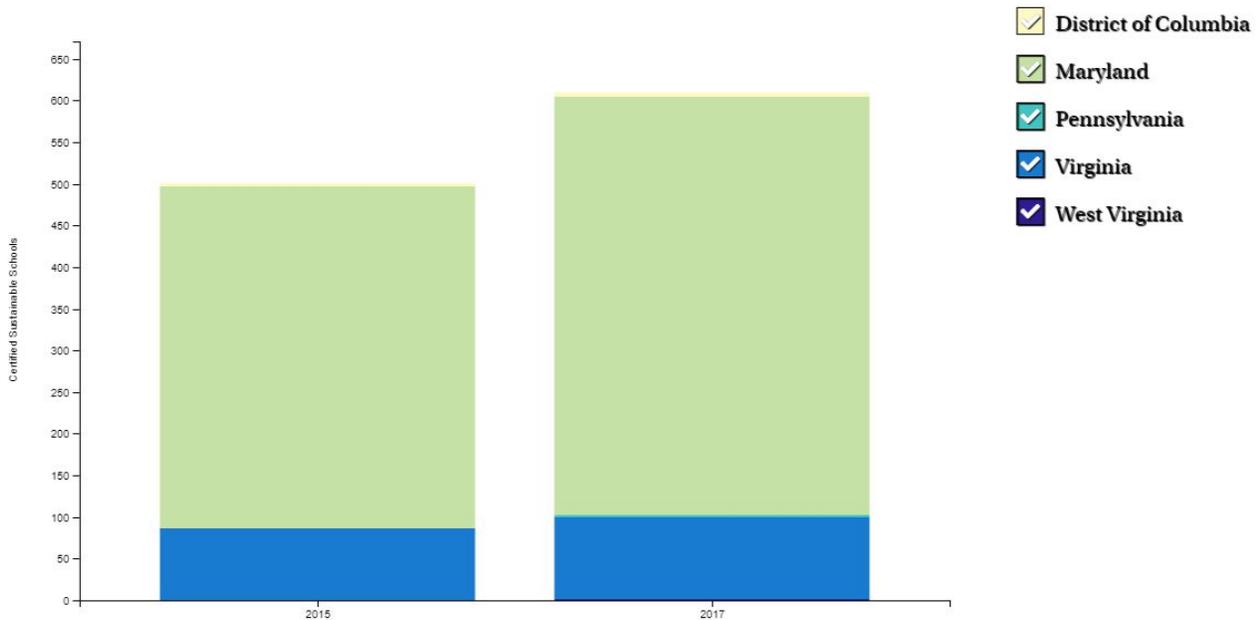
*Use the **editable** graph below (or your own chart) to illustrate your progress. Explain any gap(s) between our actual progress and our anticipated trajectory.*

The Sustainable Schools outcome aims to continually increase the number of schools in the region that reduce the impact of their buildings and grounds on their local watershed, environment and human health through best practices, including student-led protection and restoration projects. Although a target number is not associated with this outcome, it is important to gauge progress and growth.

In 2017, 14 percent of public and charter schools in the Chesapeake Bay watershed—610 schools in all—were certified sustainable. This marks a 22 percent increase from the number of sustainable schools in the watershed in 2015. Updated data is forthcoming.

Certified Sustainable Schools in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed (2015-2017)

Certified sustainable public and charter schools have been recognized by the following programs: U.S. Green Ribbon Schools, National Wildlife Federation Eco-Schools USA, Md. Green Schools, Pa. Pathways to Green Schools and Va. Naturally Schools.



NOTE: A mistake was found in the data, which required a reanalysis of the data set. These numbers are currently being recalculated. Will be available prior to the May MB meeting.

3. What scientific, fiscal and policy-related developments will influence your work over the next two years?

This may include information learned at the previous biennial SRS meeting or more specific information about your outcome such as an increase or decrease in funding, new programs that address gaps, and new scientific data or research. Describe how these developments are likely to impact your recommended measure(s) of progress, the factors you believe impact your ability to succeed, and newly created or filled gaps. These changes should be reflected in the first three columns of your revised logic and action plan after your quarterly progress meeting.

Policy

Promoting Sustainable Schools and sustainable school practices is largely reliant upon collaboration and coordination among school district officials, teachers, facilities staff, and parents and parent-teacher organizations, like PTOs and HSAs. However, creating and instituting policies from a state oversight level can decidedly institute sustainable practices.

Over the next two years, sustainable school efforts can be amplified and expanded with the creation and institution of new policy and commitments. For example, in Pennsylvania, the Governor has proposed up to \$1 billion in grants from the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) be used for lead and asbestos remediation in schools, a problem plaguing many of the state's aging school buildings and

causing health concerns for students and their parents, teachers, and staff; and recently the Maryland Green Schools Act of 2019 was passed.

The workgroup consistently pushes for increased participation in the various certification programs, and states continue to nominate applicants for consideration to the US Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools program.

Scientific

Recent studies have proven green and healthy schools promote better learning. According to the "Greening America's Schools" report, sponsored in part by the non-profit U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), green buildings provide a better study and learning environment for students. Improved lighting, air quality and acoustics are estimated to improve learning abilities and test scores by as much as five percent. In 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded Science to Achieve Results (STAR) research grants to seven universities under the "Healthy Schools: Environmental Factors, Children's Health and Performance, and Sustainable Building Practices" Request for Application (RFA). The RFA funded community-engaged research on the relationship between environmental factors in K-12 educational facilities, the health, safety, and academic performance of children, and the effectiveness of teachers and staff. Research grantees have built collaborations between local schools and communities to develop, demonstrate, and promote best practices that protect health and well-being of students and teachers in diverse communities. This research was designed to evaluate whether various aspects of holistic environmental public health connections throughout the processes involved in the planning and operation of schools (designing, building, and managing buildings) would result in improved health and well-being of students and teachers, including improved academic performance.

Additionally, with 2018 GIT funding, the Stroud Water Research Center was awarded a grant to address stormwater BMPs on school grounds. This GIS tool, and corresponding research, will allow for better collection of data, thus resulting in greater Bay restoration practices.

Fiscal

EPA recently announced a Request for Applications (RFA) opportunity to support healthy learning environments. EPA also recently signed two MOUs: 1) with the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at increasing children's environmental health knowledge among high school students; and 2) with Scholastic, Inc. to customize comprehensive environmental health in schools materials for middle-school teachers, students, and parents. Additionally, schools can explore cost savings with the adaptation of sustainable school practices using various tools and websites.

4. Based on your response to the questions above, how will your work change over the next two years?

Describe the adaptations that will be necessary to more efficiently achieve your outcome and explain how these changes will lead you to adjust your management strategy or the actions described in column four of your logic and action plan. Changes that the workgroup, GIT or Management Board consider significant should be reflected in your management strategy.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have re-learned the importance and need for clean, green, and healthy schools. Schools are places where people gather, for work, for learning, for fun. If we are to keep

schools safe and healthy for staff and children, then we must have policies that promote those principles, and the principles must be supported and funded. COVID-19 has already proven to be a “game changer” in how we live, work, play, and pray. We will face a great challenge promoting green cleaning practices, an important aspect in sustainable schools, while schools prepare to reopen. Green cleaning practices are an effective method to combat the spread of COVID-19 within the school environment. Chemical ingredients found in more “harsh” cleaning products can cause increased asthma symptoms as well. Not only will it be important to spread these messages, training will need to be conducted with school building maintenance and facility departments. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Tools for Schools Program remains fully committed to stakeholders who are working to ensure that schools are healthy places to work and learn, whether school is in session or not.

Sustainable Schools must be a priority and a focus area if we are to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay. In order to continue to increase sustainable schools, we must find a better connection to MWEES.

There is also a great need to increase recognition and visibility for those schools who achieve certification. It would be helpful to have the participation of the Governors. For example, Maryland holds an annual youth summit to recognize students from certified schools.

5. What, if any, actions can the Management Board take to help ensure success in achieving your outcome?

Please be as specific as possible. Do you need direct action by the Management Board? Or can the Management Board direct or facilitate action through other groups? Can you describe efforts the workgroup has already taken to address this issue? If this need is not met, how will progress toward your outcome be affected? This assistance may include support from within a Management Board member’s jurisdiction or agency.

Provide an updated list of appropriate contacts for Sustainable Schools:

US EPA Region 3 has a new schools coordinator, and it would be beneficial to have a full, updated list of partners at the Federal, State, and partnership levels in order to increase sustainable schools in the Bay watershed.

Initiate conversations with State Secretaries and Governors to increase recognition and visibility of sustainable school programs:

There is a great need to increase recognition and visibility for those schools who achieve certification. It would be helpful to have the participation of the Governors and high-ranking officials. For example, Maryland holds an annual youth summit to recognize students from certified schools.