

# Sustainability Action Plan

A Roadmap to Healthy and  
Sustainable Schools

**2025-2031**







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Individuals work together to cultivate garden beds outside Hawthorne Elementary, promoting biodiversity and enhancing the natural beauty of the campus. These efforts reflect the school system's dedication to hands-on sustainability and environmental learning.



## VISION

The Boise School District vision is to be an inspiring and responsible model of environmental, educational, social, and economic sustainability within our community.

## MISSION

To engage students, families, teachers and school staff in sustainability initiatives while bringing together the experience, perspectives and resources of community partners. To assess and implement best practices to achieve efficient and sustainable environments within a culture of respect, responsibility, equity, and education.



Students and staff participate in a hands-on waste audit at North Junior High, sorting through collected trash to identify opportunities for improved recycling and waste reduction. Activities like these help raise awareness about consumption habits and support the school system's commitment to environmental stewardship.



# REFLECTIONS FROM SUPERINTENDENT LISA ROBERTS

Dear Boise School District Community,

Boise School District is proud to present this Sustainability Action Plan Roadmap for 2025-2030. Both as an active participant in our community and as a steward of public resources, we have a responsibility to ensure not only that students fully understand the academic and scientific value of living sustainably, but that we hold ourselves to those same standards. Our plan reflects these values and builds on the foundation of previous sustainability work and reflects our commitment to operational efficiency, environmental stewardship, and educational excellence.

Over the last decade, BSD has reduced energy consumption and improved building performance through installing strategic lighting upgrades, more efficient HVAC controls, incorporating Idaho Power energy management practices and making our buildings more resilient from extreme weather. Our students and staff have embraced environmental stewardship initiatives, with every school now having an active Green Team supporting recycling programs, energy drawdown competitions during school breaks, creating outdoor gardens, composting programs and more.

As we look to the future, we are setting ambitious yet achievable goals to integrate smart resource use and more cost-effective practices into all aspects of district operations, curriculum, and culture. This roadmap outlines strategic priorities and measurable outcomes that will guide BSD toward achieving a more resilient, thriving future for all students and staff.



**SUPERINTENDENT LISA ROBERTS**  
SPRING 2025

# THE CITY OF BOISE YOUTH CLIMATE ACTION COUNCIL

May 23, 2025

As student leaders and advocates for climate action, we are writing to share our strong support for the Boise School District Sustainability Action Plan. This roadmap is an exciting and essential step toward creating a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable future for our schools and our city.

We are especially encouraged by the plan's focus on collaborative leadership. By integrating Green Teams, students, educators, and community members into decision-making, the district is showing that youth voices matter. As members of our high school TREE Clubs, Green Teams, and the City of Boise's Youth Climate Action Council, we've seen how student ideas can drive real change--like one of our peers whose push for solar energy helped lead to new solar panels at Whittier Elementary, or a YCAC member who has piloted compost pick up from White Pine Elementary. When youth are given a platform, we rise to meet the challenge.

We also support the plan's curriculum goals. Exposure to climate science through outdoor learning and hands-on activities has inspired many of us to take action. From AP Environmental Science to leading biodiversity games at elementary schools, we've seen how climate education—especially when it's interactive and positive—sparks passion and purpose in young people.

This plan recognizes the creativity, energy, and commitment that students bring to climate solutions. We are proud to offer our enthusiastic support for this plan and are committed to helping bring it to life. Let's continue building a district that leads boldly, listens deeply, and empowers every student to help shape a more sustainable future.

Sincerely,

**Hadley Dermott and Jisong Ryu**

Co-Chairs

***The City of Boise Youth Climate Action Council***



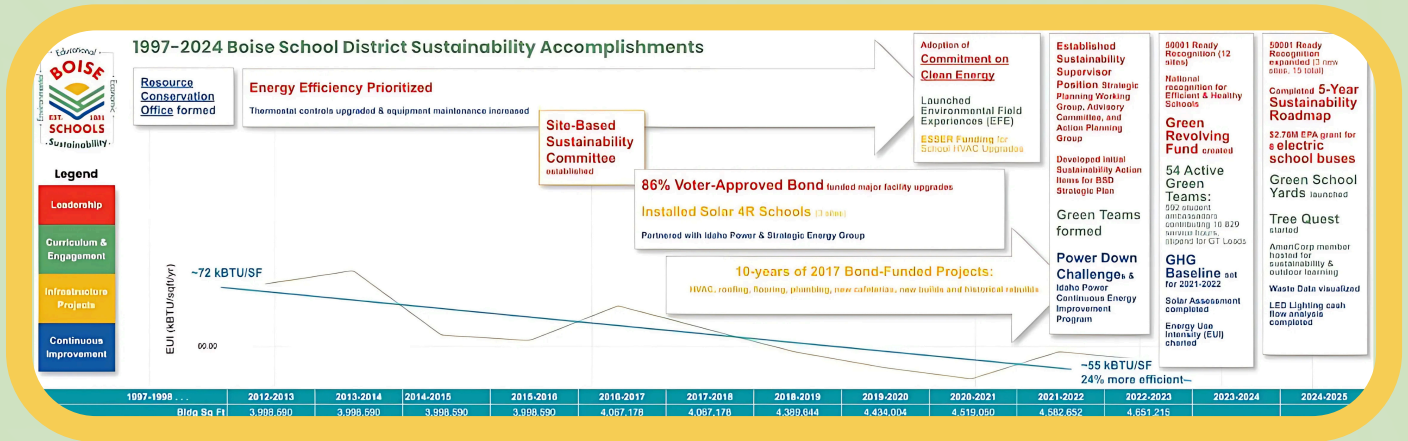
YOUTH  
CLIMATE ACTION COUNCIL





# OUR SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY

BSD's journey toward sustainability spans decades. Below is a look at key milestones in our evolution—from early efforts in resource conservation to today's integrated district-wide strategies.



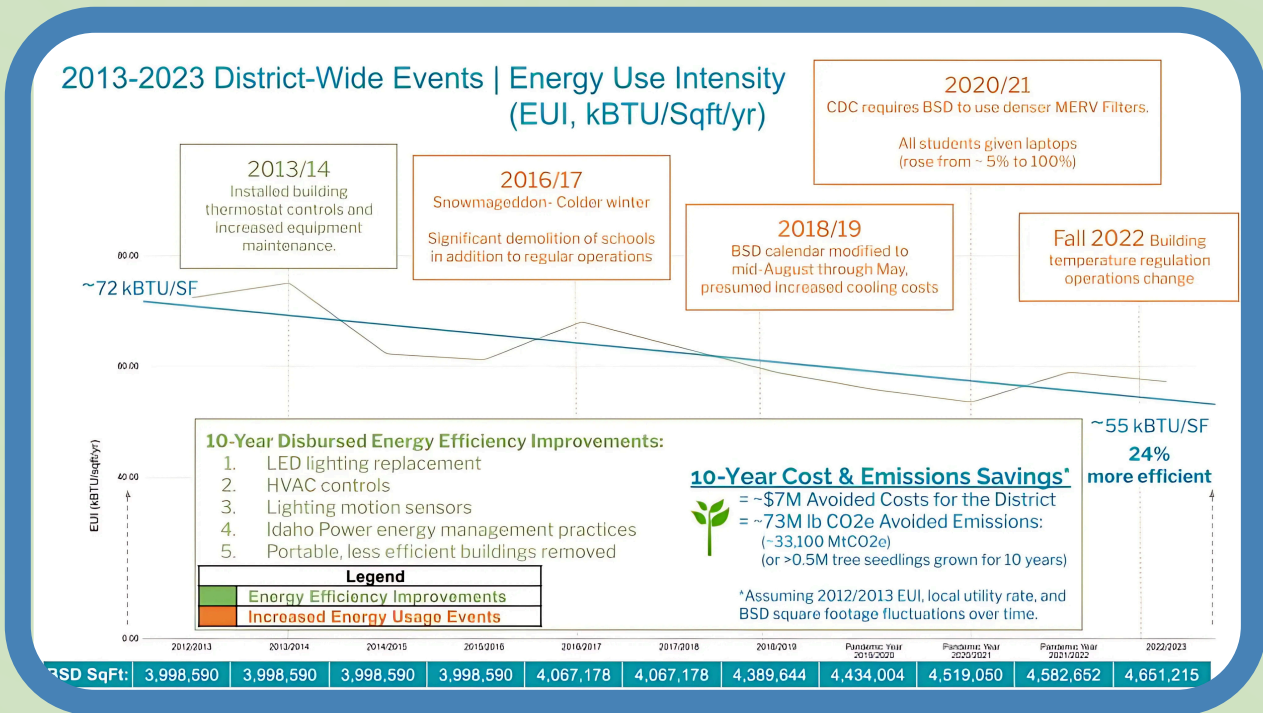
## BACKGROUND

Boise Schools' documented sustainability journey began in 1997 with the creation of the Resource Conservation Office. But a commitment to sustainable practices has shaped this region since time immemorial—when the **Shoshone, Bannock, and Northern Paiute tribes** cultivated and stewarded the Boise River valley.

Over the years, the district has made deliberate efforts to manage resources wisely. In 2016, the District deepened its commitment by forming a **Sustainability Steering Committee**, setting the stage for more strategic efforts. A pivotal moment came in 2017, when the district partnered with **Idaho Power's Strategic Energy Group** and passed a **capital project bond with 84% voter approval**, funding critical upgrades in HVAC, roofing, and plumbing.

In 2021, BSD adopted a [Collective Commitment on Clean Energy](#) and launched Environmental Field Experiences (EFEs). By 2023, the district formalized its approach with a Sustainability Strategic Planning Working Group, a full-time Sustainability Supervisor, and a Site-Based Facilities Advisory Committee, while continuing with Idaho Power's Continuous Energy Improvement Program.

The **Energy Management Team**—including the Sustainability, Custodial, HVAC, and Assistant Supervisors— work together to guide district-wide efficiency improvements. Custodial, maintenance, and facilities teams play a vital role—from improving energy and water efficiency to reducing waste and enhancing indoor air quality.



Momentum continued into the 2024-25 school year with **54 active Green Teams** and **2000 Green Ambassador students** contributing over **16,000 service** hours across schools and administrative buildings. These students identified and led sustainability projects, including **carbon sequestration gardens, Power Down Challenges, the Orange Bag Recycling Program, and the Milk Bottle Recycling** initiatives.

BSD also established a **district-wide greenhouse gas** baseline and earned **DOE 50001** Ready Recognition for energy management systems at secondary sites. Recent updates to those studies show reduced GHG emissions overall since the 2022 baseline.

In 2024–25, the district received **national recognition through the Efficient and Healthy Schools Program** for exemplary energy and indoor air quality improvements. An **AmeriCorps member** supported outdoor learning, and the district launched pilot planning for **electric school buses, solar projects,** and enhanced **lighting and HVAC performance.** In 2025 Boise School District was awarded the **Energy Efficiency Leadership Award** from the State of Idaho’s Office of Energy and Mineral Resources.



# OVERVIEW & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Boise Schools’ sustainability journey reflects steady progress, strategic vision, and a deeply engaged community—demonstrating how thoughtful planning and collective action create lasting impact.

To accelerate this momentum, BSD is launching the **2025–2030 Sustainability Action Plan Roadmap**—a unified strategy for cultivating sustainability leadership, scaling what works, and embedding sustainability into everyday operations, instruction, and culture.



The Action Plan emerged from a year-long process, facilitated by the [Green Schools National Network](#) (GSNN), engaging students, staff, district leadership, and community partners to co-create the vision and strategy. GSNN uses the [GreenPrint](#) to anchor district-wide sustainability efforts, connecting goals to four significant impact systems:





*The 2025–2030 BSD Sustainability Action Plan Roadmap builds on past success and aligns with Boise School District’s current broader strategic goals to “lead the integration of sustainable practices across all district operations by aligning resource conservation efforts with educational goals, reducing environmental impact, and modeling responsible stewardship for students and the community.”*

For each of these systems, the Roadmap sets goals, supporting goals, and aligned Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

These measurable targets are designed to improve energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance sustainability education, and foster a culture of resource stewardship.

The plan aims for outcomes such as improved well-being, cost savings, and reduced environmental impacts. It is grounded in the understanding that lasting prosperity depends on the health of both people and the planet—People · Planet · Prosperity.

Standing for these three pillars reflects Boise Schools’ enduring commitment to a healthier, more resilient future for students, staff, and the broader community.

A special thanks goes out to the team at [Straven Strategy Group](#) for their ongoing support and insight and [ShawContract](#) for helping provide the resources necessary to complete the Roadmap.



# Leadership

## IMPACT SYSTEM

### Goal 1:

Further support collaborative leadership that integrates sustainability initiatives into regular discussions, agendas, and initiatives.



At the foundation of effective sustainability efforts is empowered, collaborative leadership.

This priority builds capacity and alignment across the District by integrating sustainability into decision-making at every level.

By fostering strong leadership networks, leveraging data for transparency and progress, and embedding sustainability into procurement and communication practices, BSD is creating a culture where every leader—from students to superintendents—has the foundational tools and support to champion meaningful impact.

## Indicators

- % of schools with an engaged Green Team
- # of sustainability-focused professional development hours completed by staff
- Green Team composition data, action items completed
- % of threshold purchases evaluated using lifecycle cost + co-benefits criteria
- By 2026 BSD has a dashboard presence that is regularly updated and referenced

## Supporting goals



### **Establish a Sustainable Futures Collaborative**

Form a leadership team that includes administrators, teachers, facilities staff, students, Green Team leads, community members, and industry leads to oversee sustainability progress and guide strategic decision-making.



### **Support Active Green Teams**

Ensure each school and administrative facility has an active Green Team lead to champion sustainability initiatives and foster peer collaboration.



### **Support Data-Driven Decision-Making**

Deploy a centralized dashboard for energy, water, waste, cost-savings, and emissions tracking; use data to prioritize upgrades and support instructional use by students and educators.



### **Integrate Sustainability Criteria into Procurement**

Establish sustainable procurement standard operating procedures for threshold purchases that shift the District from cost-only analysis to lifecycle cost plus co-benefits (e.g., health, resilience, avoided emissions). Establish sustainability criteria in decision-making processes to consider environmental, social, and financial impacts.



### **Build District-Wide Leadership Capacity for Sustainability**

Provide professional development for 100% of faculty and staff focused on sustainability principles, data use, and partnership development to align with district goals and drive measurable impact.



### **Foster Transparent Communication and Stakeholder Engagement**

Develop a communication strategy that regularly informs and involves the community in sustainability efforts and decision-making. Elevate celebration and pride in sustainability efforts across the district.



“

*"What I like about being a Green Team Ambassador is the responsibility you get. I also like working to help the earth I live on."*

**4th grader, Boise School District**

”



# Curriculum and Instruction

## IMPACT SYSTEM

### Goal 2:

Further integrate climate science and sustainability education into the K-12 curriculum.



With a strong leadership foundation and aligned learning environments, sustainability education equips students with the knowledge and skills to create a thriving world—and nurtures the resilience they need to navigate and shape a rapidly changing one.

This priority ensures that every learner—at every grade level—engages with authentic sustainability concepts through relevant, interdisciplinary instruction.

By embedding climate science and systems thinking into core subjects and expanding outdoor and community-based learning, BSD empowers students to be critical thinkers, problem-solvers, and engaged citizens prepared to lead in a sustainable future.

## Indicators

- % of curriculum integrated with sustainability content
- % of schools using 4PBL in curriculum
- % of students completing sustainability-focused projects, presentations, or competitions
- % of students and staff participating in outdoor learning
- Evidence of cross-disciplinary connections in unit plans or curriculum maps

## Supporting goals



### **Implement Grade-Appropriate Sustainability Curriculum Mapping**

Develop grade-level curriculum maps that identify key sustainability concepts in science, social studies, language arts, math, and electives.



### **Expand Experiential Learning Experiences**

Engage students in inquiry-based, hands-on learning rooted in real-world contexts through 4PBL (Phenomena-, Place-, Project-, and Problem-based learning experiences) that build sustainability knowledge and problem-solving skills.



### **Develop Sustainability-Focused Performance Assessments**

Collaborate with teachers to develop integrated assessments such as portfolios, service projects, and public presentations aligned with the graduate profile.



### **Foster Regular Opportunities for Outdoor and Community-based Learning**

Provide all students with regular opportunities for place-based education through outdoor classrooms, schoolyard projects, and local partnerships. Wherever possible, equip and support interested teachers to lead these experiences.



# FACILITIES & OPERATIONS

## IMPACT SYSTEM

### Goal 3

Optimize facilities for resource efficiency, reduced environmental impacts, and enhanced health and learning environments through strategic improvements and performance monitoring.



Sustainability comes to life through the spaces where students learn, play, grow, and lead. This priority advances the District's commitment to resource efficiency, healthy environments, and climate resilience through high-performing, thoughtfully maintained facilities.

By integrating real-time monitoring, green infrastructure, and training opportunities, BSD ensures that school buildings not only reduce environmental impact but also enhance student health, learning, and long-term operational effectiveness.

## Indicators

- Trendlines showing reduced:
  - GHG emissions per student and per square foot
  - Energy Use Intensity
  - Water consumption
- % increased waste diversion
- Project pipeline status and opportunity analysis; updated records (e.g., efficiency upgrades)
- % of students participating in sustainable facilities-focused internships
- % of schools implementing green cleaning protocols daily

## Supporting goals



### **Pursue High-Performance Building Standards and Certifications.**

Seek third-party certifications (e.g., DOE 50001 Ready, LEED, WELL) and/or compliance with the Boise Green Building Code (where applicable) to demonstrate leadership, recognize and drive continuous improvement in building performance.



### **Implement Integrated Performance Monitoring Systems**

Establish performance tracking systems that turn energy, water, waste, and emissions data into actionable insights for operational improvements, sustainability data-driven decisions, and climate planning — using real-time or monthly data to identify inefficiencies and prioritize needs.



### **Create Facilities-Focused Learning Opportunities and Workforce Training**

Provide annual training for facilities staff and create student pathways through internships, shadowing, and technical education in green building, facilities operations, and energy systems.



### **Broaden Streamlined Green Cleaning and Maintenance Practices**

Advance the transition to comprehensive and streamlined green cleaning practices, prioritizing low-toxicity, low-waste, and low-emissions products. Strengthen support through updated procurement policies and staff training to ensure consistent, efficient implementation.



### **Enhance green schoolyards and climate resilience**

Increase tree canopy, green infrastructure, and outdoor learning spaces — prioritizing campuses most vulnerable to heat, poor air quality or smoke, and flooding. Incorporate resilience strategies into facility planning to support student learning, environmental health, and protection from climate impacts.



# CULTURE & CLIMATE

## IMPACT SYSTEM

### Goal 4

Foster well-being, belonging, and community through sustainability mindsets.



Sustainability and well-being are mutually reinforcing. This priority integrates physical, mental, and social health with environmental connection through nature-based experiences, movement, reflection, and restorative practices. By embedding these approaches into daily school life, the District fosters empathy, resilience, and belonging, grounded in care for people and place.

BSD strengthens connection and shared responsibility across campuses. Through student-led service learning, active transportation, living schoolyards, outdoor field experiences, and engagement in waste and energy reduction, students and staff demonstrate empathetic, responsible, and future-ready leadership.

# Indicators

- Positive trends in student surveys
- % of students participating in nature-based programs
- % of food waste reduced
- % of schools with active well-being and belonging
- % increase in Safe Routes to School participation
- # of student-led building, waste, or water audits

# Supporting goals



## **Expand Wellness Programming With Nature-Based Experiences, Reflection, and Mindful Decision-Making**

Integrate physical, mental, and emotional well-being with environmental connection through activities such as outdoor mindfulness, movement, and unstructured play. Foster reflection and intentional technology and resource use and awareness of the broader impacts of our choices, including high intensity energy use tools like AI.



## **Promote Sustainable and Healthy Food Systems**

Support local sourcing, composting, school gardens, and culturally responsive food education to build a healthy food culture and reduce food waste wherever practical.



## **Advance Restorative Practices: Support Well Being, Sense of Belonging, and Mental Health**

Foster empathy, resilience, and positive relationships through integration of sustainability and responsive school culture.



## **Promote Active Transportation and Outdoor Recreation**

Promote physical health, climate-friendly transportation, and nature and social connection by expanding Safe Routes to School, walk/bike programs, nature-based PE, and outdoor recreation offerings before, during, and after school.



## **Engage Students in Sustainability Stewardship Projects**

Implement student-led projects that monitor and improve school operations related to energy, water, and waste, building accountability and authentic learning.



“

*When I think about my days out in the field, I am still curious about all the ways we can help nature thrive and grow more.*

**6th grader, Boise School District**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Boise School District thanks its staff, students, and community partners for their invaluable contributions to this Sustainability Action Plan. Your commitment to sustainability is helping create a healthier and more resilient future for all students and staff.

## COMPLETED WITH THE SUPPORT OF



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