

Clarke County School District
Advisory Committee on District Sustainability
February 13, 2024 - 4:30 PM
Board Office, Room 303

Minutes:

1. Call to Order (4:30 p.m.)

2. Roll Call, Self-Introductions: Patricia Yager; Garrick Askew; Mark Bailey; John Gilbreath; Troy Bassett; Shurod Swift; Paula Farmer; Audrey Hughes; Halo Smart; Christina Hylton; Kevin Kirsche; Justin Ellis; Erwin Greene; Cary Ritzler; Ramsey Nix; Tylasha Mumford, Kyah Campbell, Tommy Nix, Arrow Callahan, Kelli Floyd, Hiram Floyd, Tylasha Mumford, Zebulon Santos

3. Approved January 2024 Minutes

4. Adopted February 2024 Agenda

5. Discussed process for appointment to Committee

Per BBC: Advisory Committees:

The Board of Education recognizes the need for and encourages citizen participation in the decision-making process. Advisory committees may be organized by the Board when needed and appropriate. Membership in each advisory committee will be determined by the Board. Nominations of individuals to committees will be made by Board members and appointments to committees will be made by action of the entire Board. Vacancies occurring on committees for any reason shall be filled as the original appointees were made. Advisory committees to the Board of Education shall report to the Board.

6. Discussed process for providing feedback to this Committee

Interested parties are welcome to reach members of this committee with pertinent information and potential agenda items.

7. Discussed information sharing: Shared Google Drive with folders for each committee. Please remember that all meetings and any correspondence relating to this committee are subject to [Georgia's Open Meetings and Open Records Acts](#).

8. Co-chairs' brief: Discussed what we learned from conference call with the Chief Operating Officer of City Schools of Decatur about their sustainability efforts ([summary attached](#))

9. Staff Report: CCSD employees shared what CCSD is already doing in the sustainability realm:

Mark Bailey, Director of Plant Services, discussed the impact of the Dark Skies

Initiative on stadium lights. Now CCSD must import those lights and pay to dispose of them, and they don't have a long shelf life. There's a lot of maintenance risk involved with those light fixtures. He's been researching LED lighting for four years.

All the other outdoor lighting is owned by Georgia Power and has been changed out to LED.

CCSD replaced all Clarke Central cafeteria lights with LED and found that maintenance costs are cheaper with LED.

Garrick Askew, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, said funding for outdoor LED replacements will be in the budget that will be proposed to the School Board for approval in June. Once money is appropriated, CCSD will proceed with purchasing and should get stadium lights changed out by next winter. Cedar Shoals stadium will also require new light poles.

Patricia Yager, BOE District #4, encouraged staff to seek that funding in March to expedite the project.

John Gilbreath, Director of SPLOST, said the district doesn't pursue LEED certification because there are costs associated with the documentation, and he would rather invest that money in renovations. But CCSD works with architects on sustainable building processes like window placement and efficiency, recyclable flooring, durable and recycled construction materials, heat pumps, LED lighting, low-flow plumbing fixtures, and covered outdoor living spaces as facilities are built or renovated. The bulk of CCSD's energy costs are heating and air conditioning and lighting so we need to concentrate on those.

Gilbreath said 50% of schools do not have LED lighting yet. CCSD is considering a LED lighting package upgrade during the next SPLOST. He hopes a plan for upgrades comes out of this committee and stressed the need for an energy audit.

Askew said funding is the biggest obstacle. CCSD gets rebates and credits from Georgia Power, but it's not enough.

Gilbreath said changing HVAC units requires taking the ceilings out, so CCSD needs a plan that minimizes disruptions to education. Time and money come into play.

Shurod Swift, Director of Transportation, reported that CCSD has purchased propane instead of diesel buses for the past three years. About 40% of the fleet is propane. The emissions are the same, but the mechanics are easier.

CCSD is in the process of trying to move towards electric buses. They already have a site plan. They've submitted round one and round two grants for EPA funding and haven't heard back. A 5- to 10-year plan would need to come out of this committee. Nationwide, schools are depending on federal money for electric buses.

Committee members discussed potential partnership with UGA to share charging infrastructure. UGA also plans to purchase new electric buses.

ACC buses are hybrid. Discussed ride-sharing opportunities with ACC buses.

Justin Ellis, UGA Sustainability Program Manager, said UGA's Carl Vinson Institute just hired a grant writer to help municipalities navigate federal funding opportunities.

CCSD already primarily uses electric appliances in school kitchens.

The committee discussed wasteful food packaging.

Abbie Sawyer, ACC Commercial Recycling Specialist, addressed the committee. She said she is gathering contact information for all kitchen staff so that she can train every kitchen in waste reduction. Recycling is cheaper than garbage, and the cost of waste management will continue to increase.

She said ACC is already working with several elementary schools to compost and that CCSD could expand composting.

Paula Farmer, Executive Director of School Nutrition, said COVID necessitated more disposable products, but CCSD plans to return to stainless flatware. She also blamed staffing shortages that have existed since COVID on some of the increased waste from CCSD kitchens. They recycle paper and boxes, but she wants to learn more.

Donna Elder, Executive Director of Federal Programs, was absent but shared this report: I am not aware of any federal sustainability grants that CCSD has applied for or accepted. The grants we access are directly tied to education. Some of these grants are competitive but most are block grants.

We do not employ a professional grant writer as most of the education grants are block grants. However, if we decided to apply for a sustainability grant, we would need to contract or hire a grant writer.

Audrey Hughes, CCSD teacher, said that ACC Green Schools programs encourage individual schools to attain green school status.

Ellis discussed green roofs at UGA that were justified through stormwater management. Those roofs haven't saved money but have helped stabilize temperatures and have become places for growing food.

10. Discussed an energy audit recommendation

Staff reported that no energy audit had been performed since Georgia Power did some auditing at Cedar and Hillsman. Gilbreath expressed the need to compare old and new schools and to determine how far CCSD needs to go with an audit. He said an audit will

be necessary to provide the background data for committee work.

Yager said that if the committee has recommendations before the end of the year, we can present them to the BOE at any time. We can make recommendations as we go.

She has heard from several companies who want to perform an audit.

Gilbreath said we can engage Georgia Power and our electrical designers and UGA to determine overall scope and get pricing.

11. **Subcommittees met to identify leadership and discuss plans**

Subcommittees (leaders indicated):

HVAC: **Bailey**, Greene, Denson, **Gilbreath**

Energy: Mattox, Bassett, **Hughes**, Callahan, Ellis, T. Nix, Wharton

Transportation: R. Nix, Mumford, **Denson**, Swift, Hull, Ritzler

Green Infrastructure: Vick, Hylton, Farmer, **Askew**, Dunlop, Campbell, Kirsche, Miller, K. Floyd, H. Floyd, Santos

Extramural funding and cost sharing: Smart, Elder, Yager, **Ritzler**

Next full committee meeting: March 12, 4:30 PM.