

10/4/23 Progress Report to MVWSD Board of Trustees

Climate Change and Green Schoolyards

Resolution No. 05-012623 (2/9/2023)

Mountain View Whisman School District

On February 9, 2023, the MVWSD Board of Trustees approved Resolution No. 05-012623, titled “Climate Change and Green Schoolyards.”

Per the resolution, MVWSD staff established an Environmental Sustainability Advisory Council (ESAC) with participation from staff, parent and faculty volunteers, as well as non-profit organizations and professional consulting firms that were already partnering and working with the District. To date, the following have participated in council meetings:

- MVWSD staff (4): CBO, and Directors of MOT, Nutrition and Food Services, and Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment.
- Parent Volunteers (11): Parent volunteers with students at Landels ES, Graham MS, Mistral ES, Vargas ES, Castro ES, Monta Loma ES and Bubb ES. Areas of interest and experience include: vegetation ecology, food recovery, reusable foodware, resource management, stormwater management, healthy living and food choices, native plantings, and others.
- Faculty Volunteers (2): Faculty volunteers from Vargas ES and Mistral ES. Both are active in their school environmental sustainability and campus garden programs.
- Organizations Partnering with the District (3): Representatives from Canopy, Living Classrooms and Greenspaces Mountain View.
- Professional Consultants (4): MVWSD staff have also involved profession consultants who are working with the District and who have relevant subject matter experience or expertise, including HHF (Planning), Carducci (Landscape Architecture), Greystone West (Construction Management) and Sage (Green Building Systems).



Prior to the above resolution, MVWSD began working with Carducci Associates, a San Francisco-based landscape architecture firm in the Fall of 2022. Carducci's work began as a tree replacement project on the Vargas Elementary School campus and would evolve to a District-wide study of outdoor learning landscapes.

To address Resolution 05-012623, Carducci's scope of services was further updated in early-2023 to include developing: a) a District-wide Greening Index; b) Greening Scores for each school campus; c) a Greening Metric to track progress; and d) a Greening Plan for to increase green space on each campus to meet minimum criteria on the Greening Index.

Following an introductory ESAC kickoff on May 5, 2023, MVWSD staff established a program of monthly ESAC meetings through the end of 2023. Notes from the ESAC kickoff meeting are included as Attachment A. These meetings will ultimately culminate in MVWSD staff preparing a report to the Board of Trustees for its meetings in May 2024. The staff report will include a plan of short-term and long-term actions to guide the District as it implements different aspects of an environmental sustainability program.

From May to July 2023, the first three meetings of the ESAC were held with Carducci to review the progress of landscape-related task items from the Board resolution and their original Outdoor Learning landscape scope. Carducci held an additional meeting with school principals in September 2023. Notes from these landscape-related meetings are included in Attachment B.

In addition to the Greening Index and other landscape-related goals, the resolution touched on other aspects of an environmental sustainability program including but not limited to: reducing heat island effect; water managements; stormwater management; waste reduction and diversion; green building systems and green equipment and vehicles; curriculum and learning opportunities; collaboration with local partners; and opportunities to leverage State and federal resources.

MVWSD Staff visited with and reviewed the Los Angeles Unified School District's Sustainability program. LAUSD program has won numerous local and national awards and has been in place for over 10 years. It provides a model for organizing and executing a program. LAUSD organizes its program into six categories including: Energy Conservation; Water Stewardship; Education and Awareness; High Performance Schools; Campus Ecology; and Emerging Technologies.

MVWSD staff recognized that the different aspects of the Board’s resolution fit within these six categories and has decided to similarly organize the MVWSD’s program around these same six categories. See Table 1 below:

| No. | Categories | MVWSD Board Resolution Goal Areas |
|------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | Energy Conservation | Transition to clean, renewable energy. |
| 2 | Water Stewardship | Reduce water consumption, replenish groundwater, stormwater management-best practices. |
| 3 | High Performance Schools | For new construction and renovation projects, apply high performance design criteria (e.g., LEED, CA-CHPS). |
| 4 | Campus Ecology | Greening Index, Greening Score, Greening Metric, Greening Plan, reducing heat island effect, outdoor learningscapes. |
| 5 | Emerging Technologies | Acquire and integrate green buildings systems, equipment, and vehicles into District buildings and operations. |
| 6 | Education and Awareness | Collaborative approach, environmental sustainability advisory council, outreach and engagement, curriculum and learning opportunities, partnerships, State and federal environmental sustainability initiatives. |



In addition to the monthly ESAC meetings with Carducci through July 2023, two additional ESAC meetings were held in August and September 2023. Notes from these meetings included as Attachments C and D, respectively.

The August and September ESAC meetings were used as opportunities for volunteer members to share their respective experiences and areas of expertise. This provides opportunities for members and the District to grow in their knowledge of best practices that can be applied to the District. Where the topics may be relevant to their respective areas of responsibility, MVWSD senior directors have joined the ESAC meetings

The August meeting focused on food and student health and available partnerships and granting programs in these areas. MVWSD's Director of Child Nutrition Services joined the August meeting and provided insights on recent food-related initiatives within the District as well as potential challenges and opportunities.

The September meeting focused on biodiversity, native plantings, and lighting. The discussion identified areas of opportunity, challenges with maintaining native plants, training opportunities, light pollution and best practices, and challenges with managing environmentally related behavioral changes. MVWSD's Director of Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation joined the September meeting and provided insights on challenges and opportunities related to maintaining native plants.

For the upcoming October and November meetings, the ESAC will continue with presentations from its own volunteers and District staff covering environmental behavior change management, urban forests, partnering and outreach opportunities, learning and curriculum opportunities, and teacher-led site opportunities.

ATTACHMENT A



MEETING RECORD

Date: May 5, 2023 **Project No.** 2021141
Time: Noon-1:00pm **Project Name:** MVWSD Planning Services
Location: Online (Google Meets) **Recorded by:** GY
Subject: Environmental Sustainability Advisory Council - Meeting No. 1

ATTENDEES:

| Name | Affiliation | Attending |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| Silja Paymer | Volunteer/Parent-Bubb ES, Greenspace MV | X |
| Mariana Jimenez Gonzalez | Volunteer/Parent-Castro ES | X |
| Amber Kerr | Volunteer/Parent-Landels ES | |
| Shivika Nayyar | Volunteer/Parent-Landels ES | |
| Emily Chueh | Volunteer/Parent-Landels ES | X |
| Arren Allegretti | Volunteer/Parent-Mistral ES | |
| Megan Burcher | Volunteer/Parent-Monta Loma ES | |
| Ana Reed | Volunteer/Parent-Graham MS | |
| Mohan Gurunathan | Volunteer/Parent-Graham MS | X |
| Pilar Osaba | Volunteer/Faculty-Mistral ES | |
| Rebecca Westover | MVWSD | X |
| Mary Dateo | Canopy (canopy.org) | X |
| Vicki Moore | Living Classroom (www.living-classroom.org) | X |
| Bruce England | Greenspace Mountain View (www.greenspacemv.org) | |
| Jason Cave | Greystone West (Construction Management) | |
| Vincent Lattanzio | Carducci (Landscape Architecture) | |
| | Sage (Green Building Systems) | |
| Gene Yong | HHF (Planning) | X |

DISCUSSION NOTES:

RW provided an overview of this initial meeting of the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Council in response to the MVWSD Board Resolution No. 05-012623.

1. Introductions-Attendees

- R Westover: CBO for MVWSD; will lead District's follow up to Board Resolution No. 05-012623 and advisory council; involved with environmental initiatives on school campuses and taught AP environmental science.
- G Yong: Planning consultant working with MVWSD; prepared 2019 MVWSD Master Facilities Plan; supporting District's follow up to Board resolution.
- V Moore: Founder and board president for Living Classrooms; former teacher with MVWSD for 9 years; interest in edible/native habitats, green schoolyards, sustainable and resilient school campuses.
- M Dateo: Board member for Canopy; working on urban forests and planting events with multiple schools in Mid-Peninsula region; involved with Carbon Free Mountain View.
- M Jimenez Gonzalez: Parent volunteer; graduate degree in environmental engineering; worked on recycling programs in Mexico; interest in engaging community on environmental initiatives.
- E Chueh: Parent volunteer; energy efficiency consultant for K-12 schools; involved with Carbon Free MV; working with a reusable foodware startup; interest in addressing plastic pollution.
- M Gurunathan: Parent volunteer; interest in food sustainability and student access healthy food choices.
- S Paymer: Parent volunteer; Green Space Mountain View founder; taught environmental science at Los Altos HS; interest in expanding access to nature and green space for schools and the community.

2. Board Resolution No. 05-012623

- Environmental Sustainability Advisory Council
 - Established to advise, provide feedback, and be a thought partner to District Leadership.
 - Support the District Superintendent, who will bring any recommendations to the Board.
 - Monthly meetings. Initial meetings may be part of ongoing school greening work by Carducci. Work has begun with Vargas and will grow to include other schools in MVWSD.
- Greening Schools (Index, Score, Plan, Metrics)
 - Interest in plant palette for school campuses.
 - Helpful for advisory council to meet directly with Carducci.
 - Ongoing work on Vargas.
- Areas of Discussion

- Collaborations and Resources
 - City of Mountain View
 - Ongoing biodiversity program, explore opportunities to collaborate.
 - The City is enforcing green policies for new construction.
 - County Office of Education
 - Recently prepared campus resiliency plan.
 - Green Schoolyards America
 - A national organization with resources available online (www.greenschoolyards.org).
 - MVWSD
 - Limited resources compared to larger districts.
 - How will District sustain longer-term commitment and implementation of the environmental sustainability program?
 - Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation (MOT) can be engaged as needed, particularly on issues related to District facilities, building systems, equipment, and vehicles.
 - Food Services can be engaged as needed, particularly with regards to interests in food choices, waste, foodware, and healthy communities.
 - Other similar-sized school districts
 - Learn about programs and implementation challenges from districts with similar limited in-house resources (i.e., not comparing with a large district like LAUSD).
 - RW meets regularly with other CBOs in the region and can reach out to other smaller districts.

3. Areas of Interest

- Greening schoolyards (MD, VM)
- Plant pallets (SP)
- Plastic pollution, including synthetic turf (EC)
- Building systems/conversion from fossil fuels (MD)
- Food choices/food waste/environmental and health Impacts (MG-available presentation to share)
- Reusable foodware (EC)
- Toxin-free campuses (SP)
- Rainwater collection (MJG)

MEETING NOTES

DATE: Wednesday May 17th, 2023
PROJECT NAME: MVWUSD Outdoor Learning – 10 Sites
PROJECT NUMBER: MVW20-01
RE: Site Committee Meeting #2

1. Attendees

- a. Rebecca Westover – MVWSD Chief Business Officer
- b. Gene Yong – Planner with HFF planning working with the district (consulting professional)
- c. Mohan Gurunathan – Parent of two students at Graham & Bubb (engineer by background)
- d. Mariana Jimenez – Parent
- e. Peking Lee – Representative of Canopy
- f. Emily Chueh – Parent

2. Q&A Discussion

- a. Where does the funding come from?
 - i. Funding is already available from the outdoor learning budget supported for all schools.
- b. Does the greening index include a green space to hardscape ratio (in SF)?
 - i. Our assessments don't currently include those square footage breakdowns. We can look at developing a graphic that breaks down the softscape to hardscape, and what percentage of those areas are shaded.
- c. Are you all considering the toxicity of materials as it pertains to syn turf?
 - i. The main goal of this project is to improve the schoolyard's outdoor learning and greening spaces with natural materials.

3. Comments

- a. Add tree diversity and native plants to the physical assessment category? so that schools can have different trees and biodiversity!
- b. Butterfly garden(s) would be wonderful.
- c. kids love to play in the sand - tactile elements.

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- d. trees that can be favorable for climbing (ex: BUBB)
- e. celebrate natural resources (sun catcher or elements at the Exploratorium)
- f. some more thoughts on stewardship (habitat restoration, food production/ Living Classroom, reuse of natural materials using leaves for art projects and bookmarks!)
- g. For operation and sustainability, it could be a good idea considering water reuse E.g. Treated water from sinks for irrigation
- h. the idea of garden(s) for growing food crops. That would be a valuable experience for the kids.
- i. While I realize that in California we have a water issue, replacing grass with synthetic turf and infill rubber brings in additional environmental health and human toxicity (microplastics, PFAS, carcinogenic chemicals) concerns. It will also be a huge waste issue (and cost) when it needs to be replaced. Synthetic turf and rubber infill is not being effectively recycled in any meaningful way.

4. Shared Links

- a. <https://ceh.org/yourhealth/everything-you-need-to-know-about-artificial-turf/>
- b. The Dangerous Pileup of Artificial Turf - not recycled - <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/12/artificial-turf-fields-are-piling-no-recycling-fix/603874/>
- c. Artificial turf and crumb rubber a potential carcinogenic - <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/artificial-turf-debate/rubber-mulch-safe-surface-your-childs-playground-n258586>
- d. The Center for Environmental Health recommends natural grass over artificial turf - <https://ceh.org/yourhealth/everything-you-need-to-know-about-artificial-turf/>
- e. Synthetic turf sheds microplastic, PFAS, and may cost more maintenance-wise for replacement <https://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/blog/2022/6/3/pass-on-plastic-grass>



MEETING NOTES

DATE: Wednesday June 14th, 2023
PROJECT NAME: MVWUSD Outdoor Learning – 10 Sites
PROJECT NUMBER: MVW20-01
RE: Site Committee Meeting #3

1. Attendees

- a. Rebecca Westover – MVWSD Chief Business Officer
- b. Vicky Moore – Canopy Acting Director
- c. Mary Dateo – Board Member with Canopy
- d. Gene Yong – Planner with HFF planning working with the district (consulting professional)
- e. Mohan Gurunathan – Parent of two students at Graham & Bubb (engineer by background)
- f. Silja Paymer – Parent of two students at Bubb and founding member of green spaces Mountain View

2. Q&A Discussion

- a. What is the frequency of this document?
 - i. Unlike other districts like LAUSD that have an entire department for this effort, this document would be addressed as the district has funding available. We've imagined this tool as something that can provide lots of value and inspire people.
- b. Staff Score vs Student Score?
 - i. The goal is to have (1) way to address all our campuses. It could be less useful if we get granular – might be more effective to get all stakeholders involved.
- c. Environmental Distractions (i.e., irrigation overspray, equipment noise)
 - i. During our site visits, we observed some levels of this, but this can be conducted by ongoing observations.
- d. Can we assess where there are opportunities? Like lights being on all night, EVA lanes that have been abandoned or under-used.

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- i. The purpose of this committee is to get into those details in future meetings. Carducci's scope is limited to creating an outdoor learning and greening score matrix.
- e. Designated Emergency/Safety Routes for Evac Areas
 - i. The DSA has the latest information on these areas, and part of improvement projects, we have to designated, identify and record those EVAC routes. Our designs proposed are not to compromise those areas.
- f. Who does the assessment?
 - i. It could start with Carducci, and in the future could be directed by school administration.
- g. For scoring, is it all yes/no questions?
 - i. Yes, it's designed for that, with an additional notes section for other non-subjective elements.
- h. For "Adequate" scores, 4 feels like a low bar. Maybe we should consider starting from 5 or 6.
 - i. Being realistic about what a school can achieve and sustain over time, we are trying to be subjective with what the schools lack.
 - ii. With regards to terminology and talk about where we going, we definitely want to start with the bar high and make the best experience for our students.
- i. Should there be something in the matrix that implies these improvements can be for all grade levels?
 - i. We want these spaces to be accessible from an ADA standpoint for any age and ability can get into them. We want to make sure there are spaces for all students on campus. It was noted during the pandemic that Informal spaces were used more frequently for outdoor instruction.
- j. On the checklist, this is all about what we can see, but what about professional development?
 - i. This is part of the committee's scope of the work in general, but not necessarily about the matrix. Carducci's scope is not about the educational



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aspects, but about the physical schoolyards supporting those programs. Ed services can talk through the services.

- k. If we are going to use this assessment for many years, having a box to check if curriculum is implemented is important.
 - i. The matrix isn't about the curriculum at this time.
- l. Could there be a separate checklist that can be developed outside this scope?
 - i. We want to work with subject matter experts, and Carducci is specific to physical space. So, a separate list or checklist could be developed in future conversations.
- m. In terms of the physical, it's important to site the educational elements near classrooms.
 - i. Our goal is to create complimentary spaces that are valued and used.
Designing and sustaining these physical spaces is important for this matrix.
- n. There needs to be a shift with the way how the district maintenance handles these operational issues. Currently there are significant limitations.
 - i. At MVWSD, maintenance practices are very typical to how many Districts perform their maintenance. It's not our role with this document to change that, but we are creating spaces that can assist with the paradigm shift of maintenance and stewardship moving forward.



MEETING NOTES

DATE: Monday, July 24th 2023
PROJECT NAME: MVWUSD Outdoor Learning – 10 Sites
PROJECT NUMBER: MVW20-01
RE: Site Committee Meeting #4

1. Attendees

- a. Rebecca Westover – MVWSD Chief Business Officer
- b. Vicky Moore – Canopy Acting Director
- c. Mary Dateo – Board Member with Canopy
- d. Gene Yong – Planner with HFF planning working with the district (consulting professional)
- e. Peying Lee -

2. Q&A Discussion

- a. At Amy Imai, do we know if the lawn area outside of the baseball area is used recreationally by the City or the School?
 - i. Yes, the city uses the lawn area for recreational activities. While on site, it was observed that there were soccer fields chalked on the ground.
 - ii. Need to consider not reducing fields for recreational uses, but how we can expand outdoor learning areas into the lawn spaces without impacting recreational activities.
- b. I like the approach of “useable” space, as it’s a more accurate representation of what areas are most important to school program priorities. Anecdotal can be helpful for future conversations.
 - i. Each of the schematic levels of designs will be presented by us to the Board at the public meeting, so it will be interesting to see what the greater public thinks with regards to “useable” space.
- c. What is the significance of “LUNCH 4th/5th” on the site analysis plan?
 - i. Those are spaces that are currently being used as official shaded lunch areas, but our aim is to create spaces that are flexible, with dual-use.

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- d. Does it make sense to include areas outside of the fences as “useable space”?
 - i. Kids use the playground for recess for about 15 mins, but children sometimes can wait up to 20-25 mins for pick-up.
- e. Should we identify the types of play areas? Natural vs Structures? Shaded vs Non-Shaded?
 - i. Currently not being quantified on plan but could be seen graphically. We can consider including a percentage of “shaded” play areas.
- f. “Useable” Space can change over the years with each principal depending on which areas they want to include in their supervision.
 - i. If we include percentages of “shaded play areas,” there is a possibility that the campus supervised areas can change.
 - ii. Don’t want to create a metric that can change on us over time.
- g. There could be easy ways to improve the areas between the classroom wings. Removing asphalt, adding planter boxes, and such could be accomplished.
 - i. We need to consider also not creating disruptions for other classrooms, especially during testing time.
- h. Green Schoolyard Funding Available
 - i. MVW applied and did not get the CalFire Grant.
- i. “Useable Space” determination
 - i. Including drop-off and “non supervised” areas could be a benefit. Incorporating shade into drop-off/pick-up areas and public spaces can be a positive improvement.
 - ii. If supervised areas can change principal to principal, we should include these areas in the total take-offs and shade calculations.
 - iii. Consider of the lawn areas, what % takeoff is associated to recreational activities/ city use
- j. The resolution talks about a “Greening Index” and a “Greening Metric”. The Index in my mind is more informational for high level board



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members and constituents to review and gather information from.

Greening metric gets into developing actionable plans.

- i. We hope that these two items work hand and hand to propose action plans and site developments that will benefit the overall site for all users.



MEETING NOTES

DATE: Tuesday, September 19th, 2023
PROJECT NAME: MVWUSD Outdoor Learning – 10 Sites
PROJECT NUMBER: MVW20-01
RE: Meeting with the Principals

1. OUTDOOR LEARNING AND GREENING OVERVIEW

- a. Metric Framework and Scoring
- b. Successful and Sustainable Greening
- c. Objectives for Moving Forward and Creating an Action Plan
- d. Impacts Every Single Student
- e. Dynamic Experiences for All

2. Q&A DISCUSSION

- a. Are staff allowed to plant along the perimeter of school use areas/public use areas?
 - a. Yes, it is possible, but we can do it very delicately.
 - b. Consideration should be given to maintaining the character of the open space.
- b. Is a specific list of native species or drought tolerant plants being used?
 - a. There has been effort towards beginning a master plant list for the District incorporating plants being used in the playground improvements.
 - b. Referencing resources from Green Schoolyard America for schoolyard forests and outdoor learning.
 - c. Native and regionally adaptable plants.
 - d. Bring native plantings into the central areas of campus.
- c. What is the schedule of the outdoor learning and greening projects?
 - a. Public/Staff Input by January.
 - b. Construction by next Winter.
 - c. Schedule meetings at milestones to update the Board of Trustees.
- d. Is there a next step to review sites with stakeholder groups?
 - a. This process is modeling what we did at Vargas.

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- b. Design team will meet with Principals to score sites.
- c. Next, will set up a community input session for each site.
 - i. Staff, Admin, Parents, & Students
- d. Goal to get the District in the right direction.
- e. Will this project incorporate work with the history of Native populations?
 - a. Regional context and the larger narrative can be incorporated into art and planting design
 - b. Tailor the design to the site's unique goals and characteristics





MEETING RECORD

Date: August 16, 2023 **Project No.:** 2021141
Time: Noon-1:00pm **Project Name:** MVWSD Planning Services
Location: Online (Google Meets) **Recorded by:** GY
Subject: Environmental Sustainability Advisory Council - Meeting No. 2

ATTENDEES:

| Name | Affiliation | Attending |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| Ana Reed | Volunteer/Parent-Graham MS, SB1383 Coordinator-Cupertino USD | X |
| Esperanza Sanz | Volunteer/Parent-Vargas ES | X |
| Mariana Jimenez Gonzalez | Volunteer/Parent-Castro ES | X |
| Mohan Gurunathan | Volunteer/Parent-Graham MS | X |
| Rebecca Westover | MVWSD-CBO | X |
| Deborah Austin | MVWSD-Director, Child Nutrition Services | X |
| Vicki Moore | Acting Exec Director-Living Classroom (www.living-classroom.org) | X |
| Gene Yong | HHF (Planning) | X |

DISCUSSION NOTES:

1. Introduction

- R Westover noted a recent decision by the District to adopt wood-based, compostable cutlery (Alder-Tek) that allows students to pick individual pieces instead of the previous packaged cutlery sets. District is also eliminating straws.
- RW recently visited with LAUSD's sustainability program director (Christos Chrysiliou). LAUSD's program has been in place for 10 years and now has a staff of 16 people. Organized in several thematic program elements, which allows flexibility to respond to opportunities as they arise.
 - MVWSD is considering adopting a similar program framework. While not resourced similarly to a large district like LAUSD, MVWSD will need to work through different program directors to identify opportunities and implement ideas and initiatives on an incremental basis over time.

2. Presentations

- M Garunathan
 - Shared a food- and student health-oriented presentation titled “What are we feeding our kids?”
 - Themes from the presentation included:
 - Foods that are consumed and the ways they are produced influence impact different aspects of our environment (e.g., climate, biodiversity, deforestation, fresh water, oceans, atmosphere, ozone, etc.).
 - Meat and dairy production dominate land policy in the U.S. and have an outsized impact on the environment.
 - Traditional school-based menus emphasized meat, dairy, grains, and produce, while more recent environmentally-friendly menus emphasize more fruits, grains, legumes, and vegetables.
 - A number of school districts have adopted menus which are better for the environment and for student health (i.e., increase plant-based menu items, decrease dairy and meat-based menu items, etc.). These include districts in New York City, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara.
 - There is increased public funding supporting healthy food options in schools.
- V Moore
 - Concurred with many points from MG’s presentation.
 - The State of California has established a well-staffed *Office of Farm to Fork* within the California Department of Food and Agriculture.
<https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/>
 - One of its programs is a *Farm to Schools* program, which was recently given a \$60 million grant.
<https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/CaFarmtoSchoolProgram.htm>
 - Living Classrooms (LC) is actively promoting nutrition and healthy foods.
<https://www.living-classroom.org/what-we-do.html>
 - LC is educating students about “where does food come from?” and how food is grown, harvested and prepared (e.g., how tomatoes are grown, harvested, and become soup; how grains are grown, harvested, and become bread, etc.).
 - Farm to Lunch Program
 - Sponsors 11 taste testings during a typical school year at each of the 11 schools in the District.
 - Performs education, disseminates information, and conducts surveys.

- Provides 3 to 6 lessons per classroom per school year (or total of 575 lessons). <https://www.living-classroom.org/grade-5-sample-lessons.html>

3. Discussion

- A Reed
 - AR is a middle school food science teacher, is involved in safe serve kitchen, and her daughter is vegan.
 - Alternatives to milk can be a challenge for school districts because of the need to order ahead and balance inventory with demand. Daughter understands that she has the option not to take milk during the school's food service.
 - MG's children also do not drink milk and find it challenging to find alternatives to milk.
- D Austin/R Westover
 - The District has a "Take 3" policy during lunch, meaning students must take 3 items for lunch.
 - Students are not required to take milk. DA has been educating food service staff on policies and student options.
 - The District has a "Share Table" program and uses it to monitor what students are taking but not eating/drinking. The District is experiencing less waste.
 - The District is moving away from processed meats and will begin purchasing "regenerative" meats (i.e., cattle and chickens that are cage-free, grass-fed, antibiotic-free, etc.).
 - The District is challenged to provide over 6,000 daily meals with a small kitchen staff and undersized prep kitchen. Currently understaffed by about 30% (i.e., 8 current staff, need 4-5 additional staff). District has emphasized "scratch" cooking as much as possible.
 - AR noted that the recent *free meals for all* program has exacerbated food prep costs for school districts, and has made it more difficult for districts to track how much food to have available daily.
- A Reed
 - Student "wants" is a big issue. If districts offer food students don't want to eat, food waste will increase.
 - Students' willingness to try new foods can be tied to their participation in the growing and prep process.
 - Need to make curriculum more consistent and expose students to new foods (i.e., make the norm rather than the exception).
- E Sanz
 - Inquired about legumes being underrepresented in school meals (e.g., beans, lentils, peas, etc.).

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- Families also need to be educated on healthy foods (e.g., more nutrition info. to accompany meals).
- DA noted that the District has started using a *NUTRIKIDS* nutrient analysis program for elementary and middle school meals. Now looking for a mobile program to adopt.
- Students struggle with available time during lunch periods (i.e., prefer to play vs. eating).
- V Moore
 - Can be a challenge to introduce new foods that students will try.
 - Through its food truck program, Living Classrooms celebrates special foods as a way to introduce non-traditional foods.
 - Is it possible for school districts to collaborate and partner on purchasing decisions? DA/RW noted the Federal/State laws prohibit districts from partnering with other districts on purchasing.
 - Living Classrooms has been partnering with the Center for Ecoliteracy. <https://www.ecoliteracy.org/home> The Center has a food oriented mission and works with many school districts.
 - Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) participates in the State's Environmental Literacy Initiative. <https://ca-eli.org/>
 - SCCOE has staff committed to environmental literacy. VM referred to Jennifer Mutch at SCCOE. <https://ca-eli.org/staff/jennifer-mutch/>
- A Reed
 - CUSD established a green waste composting program to divert food waste from landfills. In one school year, CUSD donated 1.5 tons of uneaten food to the local community (i.e., food purchased or prepped but not eaten).
 - Need to involve students as part of a lifelong education program.



MEETING RECORD

Date: September 20, 2023 **Project No.:** 2021141
Time: Noon-1:00pm **Project Name:** MVWSD Planning Services
Location: Online (Google Meets) **Recorded by:** GY
Subject: Environmental Sustainability Advisory Council - Meeting No. 3

ATTENDEES:

| Name | Affiliation | Attending |
|----------------------------|--|-----------|
| Arren Mendezona Allegretti | Parent/Garden Committee-Mistral ES, Vegetation Ecologist | X |
| Esperanza Sanz | Parent-Vargas ES | X |
| Silja Paymer | Parent-Bubb ES, Greenspace Mountain View | X |
| Mohan Gurunathan | Parent-Graham MS | X |
| Vicky Moore | Living Classroom | X |
| Mary Dateo | Canopy | X |
| Justin Gordon | MVWSD-Teacher/Vargas ES | X |
| Rebecca Westover | MVWSD-CBO | X |
| Brian Perron | MVWSD-Director, Maintenance Operations & Transportation | X |
| Gene Yong | HHF | X |

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Presentations

1. "What to do for Biodiversity and Nature on Campuses", S Paymer
 - a. Themes from presentation included:
 - i. Lighting
 1. District has adopted LED lighting (lower temperature, warmer light tones, reduced energy consumption, reduced maintenance, brighter).
 2. District has installed timers and sensors for campus lighting systems.
 - a. Timers: Some campuses appear to have exterior lights turned on during the day and late at night (e.g., Graham MS late at night, Bubb

ES in daytime). May need to confirm if timers are set and functioning correctly.

- b. Sensors: Need to review the extent to which interior lights dim when motion sensors are not triggered (e.g., MUR observed to dim only slightly).

- 3. Improve technologies and best practices to minimize light pollution. Align lighting systems and levels to meet a specific need.

ii. Planting

1. Areas of Opportunity

- a. Plant native landscaping in under-utilized green spaces.

- i. Grassed areas at front of school by pickup/dropoff and street frontages (i.e., areas students do not use and are not encouraged to be in).

- b. Improve maintenance practices for native planting.

- i. These are not the same as conventional ornamental landscape and grass maintenance practices (i.e., “mow and blow,” etc.)

- ii. Examples of native planting areas that were either not maintained/died or used for other purposes (e.g., maintenance, staging, etc.).

- c. Integrate green spaces into school campuses (e.g., Castro/Mistral, Stevenson, Vargas, Crittenden, Graham).

2. Introduction by Arren Mendoza Allegretti

a. Themes from introduction:

- i. Human dimensions to resource conservation. Connecting with local and indigenous communities. Social ecology. Collaborative conservation. Share lived experiences.
- ii. Cultivating more-equal engagement relationships with communities/stakeholders with regards to environmental stewardship and resource conservation (i.e., not traditional educational model of a knowledge-holder educating a non-knowledge holder).
- iii. Environmental communication (with regulating agencies, clients, students, colleges, after school program at Mistral).

Discussion

3. J Gordon

- a. Question: Observed staff regularly leave lights and electronics on. How to motivate staff to turn lights and other electronics off?
- b. Response (SP): Integrating modern technology is an efficient solution (i.e., motion sensors, timers). Need to establish procedures to ensure best practices become routine. Continue to educate staff and students. Rely less on policing human behavior.

4. M Dateo

- a. See training as critical to maintaining native plants. Should result in reduced use of fertilizers and pesticides and reduced impacts to the watershed/bay. Aware of more general training resources like ReScape. ReScape is a non-profit organization that provides training programs for design and maintenance of sustainable landscapes. www.rescapeca.org
- b. Question: Are there organizations that provide more detailed training programs?
- c. Response (SP/AA):
 - i. Maintaining native plants and landscapes is not the same as maintaining conventional ornamental landscaping.
 - 1. Example of native grasslands, which had adapted to historical grazing and continuous impacts. Native grasses do not do well when impacts are removed. Needs impacts to sustain grasses.
 - ii. A number of training options available, including:
 - 1. ReScape
 - 2. California Native Plant Society www.cnps.org
 - 3. Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation focuses on pollinator plants. Website identifies curriculum opportunities. www.xerces.org
 - iii. AA is involved in training programs as part of her work. Has been installing plants at Mistral ES as part of the garden committee.
 - iv. Need partnerships and funding to expand capacity to increase native gardens. (Mistral PTA helps to fund the garden budget) and MVEF funds Living Classroom. www.living-classroom.org

5. V Moore

- a. Living Classroom is interested in integrating native plants into its lesson plans. Interested in integrating native plants into the general landscape of school campuses (i.e., beyond limited areas designated for native habitat gardens). Interested in educational opportunities of native plants as part of a larger biodiversity program.
- b. More can be done with stormwater capture and reuse. There are a number of agencies which provide granting opportunities for the District.
 - i. Can share more on 10/18 as part of her presentation.

6. E Sanz

- a. Concur with lighting presentation. Reducing light pollution and achieving energy savings should be a priority. Noticed limited green space on new campuses (e.g., Vargas ES).
- b. Living Classroom provides opportunities for community gardens and native plantings on campuses but these do not appear to be formally integrated into the curriculum.
- c. Concerns: Plastics pollution relating to artificial turf sports fields and degradation creating health concerns for children playing on the fields.
- d. Response:

- i. SP: People are smarter about artificial turf fields and impacts of micro-plastics, as well as improved practices for natural turf management (e.g., subsurface irrigation, improved water usage).
- ii. RW: MVWSD has three artificial turf sports fields (Crittenden MS, Graham MS, Vargas ES). These were requested for and partially funded by the City of Mountain View.

7. B Perron

- a. Plant Maintenance: interested to learn more about best practices for maintaining native plants. Need to balance traditional approach driven by maintaining the ornamental appearance of school landscapes vs. letting things grow out more naturally (i.e., less tidy). This will be a slow transition and will need re-train staff to cultivate a new mindset.
- b. Lighting: need to more consistently implement and apply best practices.
- c. MOT would benefit from more information on best practices. Need to know where and how to find information.
 - i. RW: There is a lot of information available. What's needed is opportunities for real-world, hands-on training for District staff and vendors. See CNPS website.
 - ii. AA: Work includes cultivating and educating people on environmental behavior change. Can share with the group if needed.
 1. *Note: Follow up presentation by AA on cultivating and managing Environmental Behavior Change scheduled for 10/18 meeting.*