Climate Adaptation Plan

2022 Progress Report

Agency	Department of Education
Climate Adaptation Official	Deputy Secretary Marten
Agency Climate Adaptation Webpage	www2.ed.gov/about/reports/strat/sustainability/climate-adaptation-plan-2021.pdf

SECTION 1: UPDATES ON PRIORITY ACTIONS

1. Priority action progress summary

Priority Action Progress			
Action	**Current Status**	**Estimated date of completion**	**Brief Description of Progress**
Leadership and public engagement	In progress	Ongoing	The Department has consistently engaged educators, students, and parents in better understanding and adopting ways to combat climate change through the education system, including through conducting listening sessions, hosting learning webinars, and developing resource hubs. ED also continues to administer and bolster the Green Ribbon Schools program.
Policy, guidance, and programs	In progress	Ongoing	The Department has offered clarification and guidance that supports climate, sustainability, and environmental education activities using existing and new funding, guidance, and technical assistance, and building energy systems that reduce energy costs and support healthy environments. ED has worked with EPA to educate the public about ways to use American Rescue Plan funding to support both energy efficiency and environmental health aims, and is clarify guidance about Title IV Part A regarding using funds to support outdoor, environmental, and sustainability education.
Technical assistance	In progress	Ongoing	The Department has been providing ongoing technical assistance to support climate, sustainability, and environmental education and planning through a number of programs, namely

			Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center, Immediate Aid to Restart School Operations, and Project SERV.

2. Priority Action Progress Examples

Priority Adaptation 1: Leadership and public engagement

The Department has consistently engaged educators, students, and parents in better understanding and adopting ways to combat climate change through the education system, including holding public listening sessions related to sustainability, climate, and infrastructure (August 2021), a series of four outdoor learning webinars (spring 2022) co-hosted by outdoor learning organizations, and worked with the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council to promote federal and non-profit resources for school sustainability on the Green Strides School Sustainability Resource Hub. ED continues to administer its U.S. Department of Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS), a public engagement initiative structured as a recognition award for school sustainability. By highlighting schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions' cost-saving, health promoting, and performance-enhancing sustainability and environmental education practices, ED-GRS celebrates these schools and brings more attention to their work.

Priority Adaptation 2: Policy, guidance, and programs

The Department has offered clarification and guidance that supports climate, sustainability, and environmental education activities using existing and new funding, guidance, and technical assistance, and building energy systems that reduce energy costs and support healthy environments. In collaboration with the EPA, ED hosted several public webinars to educate the public about ways to use American Rescue Plan funding to support both energy efficiency and environmental health aims. ED is working to clarify guidance about Title IV Part A of the ESEA regarding how states and school districts may use Title IV-A funds to support outdoor, environmental, and sustainability education for students. ED's most innovative efforts to take climate action are reflected in its fiscal year 2023 proposal for a new office and clearinghouse. In the President's FY2023 Budget, ED proposed an Office of Infrastructure and Sustainability to support schools in creating healthy, safe, sustainable, 21st century learning environments. The new office would provide additional capacity to engage with multi-agency efforts, education stakeholders, states, and districts. Whereas, in the past, this work was undertaken in an informal, voluntary manner at ED, with no position or division designated to lead this work, the office would institutionalize an ED structure to advise the Department on matters related to climate, sustainability, environment, and infrastructure, and lead coordination and interagency efforts in this area.

Priority Adaptation 3: Technical assistance

The Department's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center works with schools, school districts, institutions of higher education and their community partners to increase their capacity to implement effective safety, security, and emergency management programs, including with a renewed focus on recovery planning in the immediate aftermath of a significant or federally declared natural disaster. The Department as also provides TA support to address disaster recovery through the Immediate Aid to Restart School Operations and Project SERV. ED worked with the White House and other agencies to release an interagency toolkit to help schools and school districts access available funding, as well as technical assistance opportunities and planning tools to help schools improve school sustainability and environmental health.

SECTION 2: UPDATES ON OTHER INITIAL PLAN TOPICS

1. Climate-Risk Reduction

The Department's efforts on climate-risk reduction have focused on working with schools, school districts, institutions of higher education and their community partners to increase their capacity to implement effective safety, security, and emergency management programs related to climate risk and natural disaster. Programs within this effort have included American Rescue Plan funding, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center, Immediate Aid to Restart School Operations, and Project SERV among others. In the President's FY2023 Budget, ED proposed establishing an Office of Infrastructure and Sustainability to support schools in creating healthy, safe, sustainable, 21st century learning environments. This office could help lead on developing additional structured methods for assessing operating risk to climate-related hazards.

2. Climate Vulnerability Assessments

Thus far the Department's ability to complete vulnerability assessments has been limited in scope, though we hope to be able to do so in the coming year, pending additional resources. Our objective will be to update the agency's most recent assessment using the latest climate information included or referenced in the Fourth National Climate Assessment. These vulnerability assessments will include descriptions of 1) the climate threat and the expected impact, including the impact of no action; 2) the determined adaptation action, including the known barriers to implementation; 3) an estimate of the timeline and any measures for indicating progress over time and success; 4) a determination if managing the risk and overcoming the barrier are achievable within existing agency resources or consistent with the agency's budget request; and 5) identification of how the vulnerability either is or will be disclosed in annual agency financial reporting and integrated into the agency's enterprise risk management process.

3. Climate Literacy

To increase climate literacy externally, the Department conducts ongoing national engagement with stakeholders on topics related to school infrastructure, sustainability, health, and environment as they relate to climate adaptation on an ongoing basis. Information and engagement requests cover three broad areas relating to climate: 1) environmental impact, infrastructure, and operations; 2) whole child health and wellness, including multiple aspects of environmental health; and 3) environmental, outdoor, climate, and sustainability education. Internally, ED's Office of Human Resources (OHR) is in the process of developing training opportunities for the Department's workforce to advance climate, environment, and sustainability priorities. The focus of the training opportunities will align to ED's Climate Action Plan. The Office has connected to both EPA and NOAA expertise to develop this training.

4. Tribal Engagement

The Department has not conducted a complete assessment of how to best incorporate Tribal Treaty Rights and Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge, though is eager to bring a sharper focus to this in forthcoming iterations as the plan is built out. ED will continue to find ways to integrate climate adaptation planning into ongoing workstreams with Office of Indian Education (OIE) within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). For example, on June 30th 2022, ED conducted Tribal Consultation on the development of priorities for ED's Fiscal Year 2024 Budget, to learn more about Tribal leaders' priorities. ED will review how these priorities intersection with climate adaptation priorities.

5. Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is a critical element of the climate adaption work, as well as the Department's overall strategic objectives around advancing equity for students. Thus far, ED has focused on building strategic partnerships to incorporate environmental justice into planning, including a long list of national and local groups such Build America's School Infrastructure Coalition, Campaign for Environmental Literacy, North American Association for Environmental Education, and more detailed in the subsequent section on

partnerships. Moving forward, as part of ED's proposed Office of Infrastructure and Sustainability, the office would oversee a proposed National Clearinghouse on School Infrastructure and Sustainability. This clearinghouse would also develop resources and assemble best practices on issues related to ensuring equitable access to healthy, educationally adequate and environmentally and fiscally sustainable public school facilities and grounds, to bolster work on environmental justice within the agency.

6. Partnerships

While there are scores of groups with which ED engages, including regional, state, and local entities, some key national groups include Build America's School Infrastructure Coalition, Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council, Green Schools National Network, Campaign for Environmental Literacy, Undaunted K-12, Aspen K-12 Climate Action, National Wildlife Federation, Earth Day Network, 21st Century School Fund, National Council on School Facilities, EcoRise, Out Teach, Green Schoolyards America, and the North American Association for Environmental Education. These groups have engaged with ED on educational events to increase climate literacy, to discuss technical assistance, and to engage in programmatic feedback updates.

ED has strengthened its participation in multiple interagency efforts related to sustainability and climate that, while closely linked to natural resource agencies' missions, are less subject matter and programmatically focused for the federal education agency. These include The National Climate Task Force, a new climate engagement and capacity building inter-agency work group, Partners on Reducing Lead Levels in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities, Domestic Policy Council ongoing activities to facilitate coordination among the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and ED, President's Task Force on Children's Environmental Health, DOE Efficient, Healthy Schools Campaign, U.S. Department of Treasury-led Financial Literacy and Education Commission's Climate Committee, Federal Geographic Data Committee; as well as numerous collaborative efforts with EPA programs and offices.

SECTION 3: NEW TOPICS FROM E.O. 14057

1. Policy Review

The Department has taken several steps to review internal agency policies related to climate adaptation. The Office of Facilities Security and Logistics (OFSL) continues to collaborate with the General Services Administration (GSA) to right-size ED-occupied buildings. It has begun work to reduce space in the National Capital Region as ED moves towards a post-pandemic hybrid posture. Funding continues to be a challenge to implement initiatives. OFSL has hired a new Safety and Occupational Health Manager with a background in sustainability and climate to further develop ED facilities-related programs incorporating climate and sustainability. ED implemented a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) to purchase sustainable furniture through the GSA Integrated Workplace Acquisition Center. Regarding procurement, aligning with GREEN purchasing initiatives, ED completed 12 contract actions totaling $16,520,939 using Energy Efficient procurement strategies (FAR §§ 52.223-15) and Recovered Materials purchasing (FAR §§ 52.223-4 & FAR §§ 52.223-9). ED will continue to coordinate regular task force meetings and leverage innovative procurement strategies with national education leaders and federal partners for the purpose of establishing priorities and providing guidance and support to local and state educational agencies related to climate change events that may limit equitable education opportunities. ED's Contract Management Division will continue to encourage training on GREEN procurement for contract professionals.

1. Climate Scenario Analysis

To bolster the Department's efforts to incorporate climate projections in decision-making, ED has proposed establishing an Office of Infrastructure and Sustainability in the President's FY2023 Budget. This would provide more dedicated resources to building out systems and approaches. To start building internal

capacity for ED has developed new roles pertaining to sustainability, infrastructure, and environment by standing up a cross-department group to steer ED on matters related to school sustainability and infrastructure and a cross-ED sustainability and infrastructure coordinating group, representing all principal offices, which meet regularly to consider how existing programs might support school sustainability and infrastructure. Designating an existing employee as Special Advisor for Infrastructure and Sustainability to help promote public engagement, programs, coordination, and guidance, giving primary attention to these matters.