



Sustainable Jersey for Schools Certification Report

This is the Sustainable Jersey for Schools Certification Report of Metuchen High School (Middlesex), a Sustainable Jersey for Schools bronze certified applicant.

Metuchen High School (Middlesex) was certified on August 14, 2024 with 175 points. Listed below is information regarding Metuchen High School (Middlesex)'s Sustainable Jersey for Schools efforts and materials associated with the applicant's certified actions.

Contact Information

The designated Sustainable Jersey for Schools contact for Metuchen High School (Middlesex) is:

Name:	KATE LEMERICH
Title/Position:	STEM SUPERVISOR / MATH AND SCIENCE
Address:	400 GROVE AVE. METUCHEN, NJ 08840
Phone:	732-321-8743

Actions Implemented

Each approved action and supporting documentation for which Metuchen High School (Middlesex) was approved for in 2024 appears below. Note: Standards for the actions below may have changed and the documentation listed may no longer satisfy requirements for that action. Additionally, points associated with actions prior to 2013 certifications may not be accurate.

Board Leadership & Planning

District Sustainability Policy

10 Points

🏅 Bronze Priority 🏅 Silver Priority District

Program Summary: The Board of Education desires to conduct its operations and make

decisions that promote a sustainable future for all members of our school and district community. The students will be prepared for the future as they will be educated on sustainability practices that include environmental, social and economic responsibilities. By incorporating sustainable practices into our school policies it can make an immediate impact on student health, academic performance and teacher retention while decreasing operational costs and demands on natural resources. The Board wants to protect students, staff, school visitors, and community from environmental harm and will strive to eliminate the use of potentially toxic and harmful substances in our district. The Board also seeks to educate our community about the causes and effects of climate change in an effort to create a sustainable future. Our district policy can be found on our district website (<https://www.metuchenschools.org/>) under "Board of Education." It is policy 7461. It was approved in 2018. Sustainability continues to be a major focus of our district and the Board's work, as evidenced by our active Climate Change Committee, in which our committee and members of the Board collaborate throughout the year. We have several actions we take and events we host. Attached you will find a summary of our work as presented to the Board of Education. A sample of reference to our policy can be found in our district newsletter/communication (attached email). It was referenced as it relates to an upcoming event we are hosting for our district's community on June 6, 2024, in which Dr. James Shope from Rutgers University will be joining for a climate change talk. You can find the information about this also on our website - <https://www.metuchenschools.org/documents/live-feed/flyers/may-2024/619618>.

PDF: [ELANONLINE DISTRICT POLICIES.PDF](#)


IMAGE: [DISTRICT SUSTAINABILITY .PNG](#)

IMAGE: [DR. SHOPE TALK.PNG](#)

PDF: [CLIMATE CHANGE SPRING COLLABORATION .PDF](#)

Professional Development for Sustainability

20 Points

 Bronze Priority  Silver Priority School District

Program Summary: On August 31, 2023, all of our 6-12 science and 21st century teachers, as well as our K-12 PE, World Language, Music and Art teachers were trained by two staff members for 3 hours on climate change education. On October 9, 2023, all of our 6-12 science and 21st century teachers, as well as our K-12 World Language, Music and Art teachers had a follow-up PD session for an additional 3 hours, developing interdisciplinary lessons and units that align to climate education. On October 17 and 18, 6 of our teachers from 3 of our 4 buildings attended the NJ Science Convention, each attending sessions on sustainability. On January 24, 2024, 2 of our high school teachers attended a training at RVCC with Wil Van DerVeen on NJ Climate Change Standards. On February 28, 2024, two 7th grade teachers and the 6-12 STEM Supervisor attended an OpenSciEd Adaptation of the Climate Change unit at Rutgers University. On June 6, 2024, we will have Dr. James Shope from Rutgers, a climate change expert, come to speak to our Science NHS students, and climate change committee members with the associated Board of Education committee members from our Climate Change Collaboration attend a lecture with Q&A. All members of our community will also be invited to attend (students, staff, community members). Throughout the year, all K-12 staff have participated in a staff climate change awareness initiative, in which they can choose to read articles, engage in our climate change Google Classroom, listen to a podcast, teach a lesson on climate change, facilitate students' participation with climate change projects, etc. 12 staff have participated, to date, with the completion of 24 actions.

PDF: [METUCHEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SUSTAINABILITY - SHEET1.PDF](#)

Digital Technology Access

Data Safety and Security Policy

10 Points

District

Program Summary: Metuchen Public Schools values staff participation and collaborative decision making. As such, there are a variety of district-level committees that are co-chaired by an administrator / teacher pair. The Technology Committee is the district committee that oversees Instructional Technology and collaborates with the IT Department regarding Data Safety and Security. The district Technology Committee meets four times per year (minimally) to review practices and policies, and is aligned to the BOE's Finance and Technology Committees. The co-chairs of the district Technology Committee provide updates to the BOE Committees two times each school year (Fall/Spring). The district Policy Committee is another committee that meets four times (minimally) during the year to review current policies and make recommended updates. They are aligned to the BOE Policy Committee, and also present two times each school year. Throughout the past year, our district has made upgrades to the security of our network by rolling out the Cisco Duo multifactor authentication service. As you can see through the attached artifacts....

PDF: [BOE COMMITTEE ALIGNMENT 22-23.PDF](#)

PDF: [MULTIFACTOR AUTHENTICATION - CISCO DUO.PDF](#)

PDF: [TECHNOLOGY POLICIES.PDF](#)

Food & Nutrition

Promote Locally Grown Foods

10 Points

School District

Program Summary: This year, the student lunch program Pomptonian pledged to source some of its menu items from local producers. Among these was Blueberries, bought in bulk from Blueberry Bill Farms in Hampton, New Jersey. Pomptonian, by doing this, brought significant business to the local farm, while also providing students with a fresh and unique menu item. Both the lunch program and student body endorsed this new addition to the menu. An informational video created by Pomptonian was released to the Metuchen High School staff and students, educating them both about the process of selecting a local provider as well as the nutritional value of Blueberries. Flyers would be created to supplement this, specifically detailing fun facts and the health benefits of Blueberries. Perhaps most importantly, Pomptonian's physical and online menus were updated to include this fruit, facilitating awareness of this change. To celebrate this addition, Pomptonian named the fruit of March (the month it was implemented) as Blueberries, to further inform the student body of this new addition to their school menu. (Link to our school menu is also below; foods using locally sourced Blueberries were served every day in March, as seen under the 'Fresh Farmstand' section.)

PDF: ["BLUEBERRY BILL'S" LOCAL PRODUCE VIDEO](#)

PDF: [POMPTONIAN SCHOOL-WIDE EMAIL](#)

PDF: [BLUEBERRY NUTRITIONAL POSTER](#)

PDF: [BLUEBERRIES MENU.PDF](#)

School Gardens

10 Points

School

Program Summary: This hydroponic garden was originally gifted to the Metuchen High School after the district won our lunch provider's annual meal creation challenge in 2023. The system was placed under the supervision of the MHS Environmental Club, and moved to a faculty advisor's classroom. Here, the station was in full view of numerous classes, and attracted significant interest. After we had researched seeds that could grow effectively in a Hydroponic System, the garden saw its first actual use. We grew kale, mint, rosemary, cilantro, and other plants in the system, which soon covered the vertical garden from top to bottom. Eventually, we offered the garden's produce to our cooking classes, as well to the occasional student or supervisor who passed by. In this regard, we also began advertising the garden, which was illustrated in school pamphlets, a "staff short" online forum, and finally, in a staff presentation (to the entire rest of the faculty) by our cooking teacher. The same cooking teacher also used the garden in an optional, staff-oriented training activity called "Very Veggie." In this program, staff used, among other food, vegetables from the system to, "make easy, healthy vegetarian dishes to chase away your hunger." By now, the garden's plant has been recycled several times, with older, established plants being substituted out for new and fresh produce. Currently, we are growing lettuce, kale, and basil in this garden. We plan to give this produce to the Unified Physical Education Program here, to help with their weekly cooking activities.

WORD: [LESSON PLAN](#)

WORD: [HYDROPONIC SYSTEM CAPTIONED PICTURES](#)

IMAGE: [MHS CHALLENGE FOR HYDROPONICS SYSTEM POSTERS.JPG](#)

PDF: [PHYSICAL ADVERTISEMENTS OF SYSTEM](#)

PDF: [ADVERTISEMENT TO SCHOOL FACULTY](#)

PDF: [GARDEN REPORT](#)

Healthy School Environments

Anti-Idling Education & Enforcement

10 Points

School District

Program Summary: Our anti-idling campaign aimed to spread awareness about the negative effects of idling to various components of our school community. At the beginning of the school year, parents were required to sign an electronic anti-idling form, in which they promised not to idle on school grounds. During the winter of the same year, we launched our active, hands-on anti-idling initiative, in which we aimed to promote anti-idling through a variety of awareness-based programs. In February and March, students, on multiple occasions, took initial data on the

percentage of cars idling outside the school. Several weeks later, we handed out student-made pamphlets to drivers waiting for school dismissal. Simultaneously, we engaged in numerous other actions to showcase the effects of idling. We gave presentations toward Driver's Ed classes, which aimed to showcase to upcoming drivers what idling is and why it is harmful. Large infographic posters were placed in several classrooms, detailing the environmental and economic costs of idling. We also placed fun fact posters around the school, wrote a community-wide email about idling, and had our principal include idling information in his morning announcements. After two weeks of this campaign, we evaluated our efforts, reassessing the amount of cars idling outside our school. Originally, the average number of cars idling totaled 67%. After our two-week campaign, that average dropped to 34%, in similar temperature and weather conditions.

PDF: [ANTI-IDLING PAMPHLET 2024 \(1\).PDF](#)

PDF: [ANTI-IDLING POSTERS.PDF](#)

POWERPOINT: [ANTI-IDLING SLIDESHOW](#)

EXCEL: [ANTI-IDLING DATA](#)

Outdoor Air Quality Awareness Program

10 Points

School District

Program Summary: Physical Education Protocol - In response to the current air quality of the day based off of the EPA's air quality index, we plan to act accordingly and safely by avoiding outdoor activities on days when the air quality is deemed unhealthy or very unhealthy. On days when the air quality is deemed unhealthy for sensitive groups, physical education teachers will be prepared to engage their students in less physically demanding activities during outdoor classes, such as walking around the track. Additionally, students with asthma, heart or lung conditions will have the opportunity to participate indoors on such days. Sports - To reduce the health risks associated with poor air quality, practices will be held indoors on days with unhealthy air quality. Additionally, we plan on reducing the intensity of activities or shortening the length of practices when the quality is poor. There would be frequent rests and water breaks. Practices would also be split between indoors and outdoors to minimize exposure to the air. Furthermore, one option is to move parts of the practices to before and after school. Especially on high risk days, moving practices to primarily before school is an option. Display Mechanism - In order to notify the school community on the daily air quality conditions we have put the EPA's air quality awareness widget on our website which all students can see. School and Community Education - We plan to hang an infographic around the school to raise awareness of the EPA's different air quality levels and what they mean. We also plan to display the infographic on the school electronic billboards which students can see throughout the day. Even more than this, we plan to have the principal tell informative facts about the dangers of air pollution during the school's morning announcements.

PDF: [PROTOCOL FOR POOR AIR QUALITY DAYS.PDF](#)

IMAGE: [AIR QUALITY POSTER ON METUCHEN SCHOOL WEBSITE](#)

IMAGE: [AIR QUALITY POSTER AT MHS](#)

IMAGE: [AIR QUALITY INFOGRAPHIC](#)

Learning Environment

Student Participation in the Arts

10 Points

District

Program Summary: Every elementary school student in the Metuchen Public Schools is taking classes in music and visual arts. In addition, every middle and high school student has access to music and visual arts classes. Last, students in the Metuchen Public Schools are demonstrating competency in at least one arts discipline during the previous school year. Most notably: Each school in the district has a certified music and visual arts teacher. Moss Elementary School and Campbell Elementary School require all students to participate in music and visual arts at least once a week. Edgar Middle School provides a variety of course offerings in music and visual arts as part of the school day, including general music, band, orchestra, chorus, guitar, and art. Metuchen High School provides a variety of course offerings in music and visual arts, including Art 1, Art II-2D, Art II-3D, Honors Art 3, Honor Art 4, AP Art and Design, AP Art History, Photography/Digital Media 1, Photography/Digital Media 2, Media Production 1, Media Production 2, Concert Band, Honors Concert Band, Orchestra, Honors Orchestra, Concert Choir, Honors Concert Choir, Music Technology, Music in American History, Music in Modern America, Music Foundations, Musical Theater, AP Music Theory and Digital Graphics 1 and 2. Percentage of students enrolled in music and visual arts at Edgar Middle School (2021-2022): 96.7% Percentage of students enrolled in music and visual arts at Metuchen High School(2021-2022): 57.7%

PDF: [PERFORMING ARTS LETTER.PDF](#)

School Culture and Climate

Inclusive Environments Where All Can Thrive

10 Points

School

Program Summary: Metuchen High School has a safety and climate committee which meets quarterly and includes student, parent, teacher, and administrator reps. Climate, culture, trends, and areas for growth are discussed and plans are made to improve student climate so that all students may feel safe and thrive in our building. To date, Bullying investigations are at an all time low (only 3 investigated this year so far), and incidents of bias or intolerance are essentially non-existent in our building. One area for growth noted by student representation in the committee is in regard to pronoun usage, gender identity, and acceptance toward all sexual orientations and gender identities. As such, the committee partnered with the Gay/Straight Alliance to develop a plan of action.

WORD: [CLIMATE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES](#)

WORD: [INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT QUESTIONNAIRE](#)

PDF: [PRIDE WEEK FLYER](#)

PDF: [GENDER/SEXUALITY ALLIANCE PRONOUN PINS - WEEK OF RESPECT](#)

PDF: [GSA AGENDAS 2023-2024.PDF](#)

Student & Community Outreach

Green Team

10 Points

 Bronze Required School District

Program Summary: The Metuchen High School Green Team Consists of administrators, teachers, students, and a parent representative of Metuchen High School. The students has been meeting since September and administrators and teachers join meetings throughout the year to discuss projects. During the 2023-24 school year, the MHS Sustainability Initiative completed or started some of the actions for SJS certification. With much turnover at the high school due to retirements, as well as student turnover throughout the years, the Metuchen High School Green Team has been revamped and reorganized to support the important initiatives that have been identified. We have been able to take on many projects including the Anti-Idling Campaign, AQI Flag Posting, among others. Ms. Kato and our students have taken the initiative to support efforts including Green Infrastructure Installation (Raingarden), Access to Healthy Water, and Civic and Stewardship Volunteer Initiatives. Ms. Lemerich has been planning and overseeing Climate Change Professional Development for staff, as well as overseeing Climate Change Lesson Planning and Implementation within the school. Mr. Stike, our vice principal, has been taking on the School Culture and Climate Needs Assessment, and Ms. Youngman of the Athletic Department has been facilitating communication of the Staff and School wellness programs.

PDF: [MHS GREEN TEAM MID-YEAR REPORT - FEBRUARY 2024.PDF](#)

PDF: [2023-2024 MHS GREEN TEAM MEETING SCHEDULE.PDF](#)

PDF: [MHS GREEN TEAM LETTER - FEBRUARY 2024.PDF](#)

Civic & Stewardship Volunteer Initiatives

10 Points

School

Program Summary: Metuchen High School students are taking part in the Tree Ambassador Program sponsored by the Metuchen Shade Tree Commission. The invitation to participate was initially open to the students taking AP Environmental Science, but then later opened to wider student body by announcing the invitation via Google Classroom post. Currently, eight students ranging from 9th grade to 12th grade are involved in this program. The Metuchen students will be attending series of lectures by experts in the field of tree ecology and will be using skills they gain to assess the status of the urban trees in our community. The students will also be creating lessons to present to the middle and elementary school students and leading them in tree planting activities. THE STREET PROJECT is the story about humanity's relationship to the streets and the global citizen-led fight to make communities safer. Metuchen High School Students were invited to participate in the film screening. The event was open to all MHS students. This was advertised through Google Classroom for the National Honors Society students, and email was sent to all the staff by the principal to encourage all extracurricular clubs to participate in this event. After the film there was a panel discussion with representatives from Bike Walk Metuchen, Middlesex Greenway Coalition, and the Highland Park Safe Walking & Cycling Committee to provide youth perspectives on the following topics: Traffic Violence , Street Safety, Transportation Options for Youth (specifically in Metuchen & Middlesex County), Transportation Alternatives & Considerations for Climate Change (reducing emissions via e-bikes, e-scooters, walking/biking),

and any other relevant topics and/or personal experiences that can connect with the topics.

WORD: [METUCHEN SHADE TREE COMMISSION TREE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM SCHEDULE](#)

WORD: [TREE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM PROPOSAL](#)

IMAGE: [THE TREET PROJECT POSTER](#)

IMAGE: [GC POST FOR HOURS.PNG](#)

PDF: [TREE AMBASSADOR PHOTOS.PDF](#)

Green Challenges

10 Points

School

Program Summary: Beginning in January 2024 and continuing through the remainder of the school year, the district's Climate Change Committee instituted a "Climate Change Awareness Initiative" for all staff throughout the district in an effort to build awareness about climate change. By engaging in any/all of the following ways, staff name were entered into a monthly prize drawing to win a set of eco-friendly household items. Staff submit entries here: <https://tinyurl.com/MetuchenStaffClimateChange>. To date, we have 25 entries from staff throughout the district. The entries included those who read articles and/or listened to podcasts posted on the district's Climate Change Google Classroom, explored resources to help with teaching climate change education (e.g. NJ Climate Change Hub), taught a climate change lesson, and used our district's Padlets that contain integration ideas for each of the subject areas responsible for teaching climate change. Teachers from each school have submitted entries with winners randomly drawn each month. This "Green Challenge" ensured staff gained greater awareness around contributory factors to climate change, as well as lasting impacts and demonstrated increased integration of climate change lessons throughout our district. Several of our teachers and students from across multiple subject areas (art, foods, science, elementary) presented to the NJDOE's Climate Change Division in April about their climate change lessons. This was great evidence of the impact this challenge had on our teachers which ultimately transformed our classrooms into spaces that discuss and help address climate change. On the slide deck attached below, you will find evidence of this initiative.

PDF: [METUCHEN STAFF CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS INITIATIVE.PDF](#)

PDF: [CLIMATE CHANGE SPRING COLLABORATION .PDF](#)

"Green" Your Green Fair or School Event

10 Points

School

Program Summary: During the 2023-2024 school year, all music concerts and events went "green" this year with digital programs in lieu of paper copies, as well as additional recycling bins provided and announcements made about the importance in reducing waste. In the past, we have found that printing copies has led to an inaccurate count and/or a large number of programs being discarded or wasted in the process. This year, to reduce waste and save trees, a limited number of programs were printed for each concert with at most one being provided, if desired, per family. A flyer was made at the welcome table to encourage scanning the QR code to access the full program at the concert and after the concert. Last, reminders in newsletters and on social media are shared with our community about the effort to go "green" and to be able to continue accessing the programs well after the event.

PDF: [QR ENSEMBLE NIGHT 2024.PDF](#)

PDF: [MHS WINTER CHOIR ORCHESTRA QR CODE.PDF](#)

PDF: [MHS WINTER BAND JAZZ QR CODE.PDF](#)

PDF: [GOING GREEN PROJECT SUMMARY \(1\).PDF](#)

Student Learning

Education for Sustainability Grades 4-12 Career and Technical Education

5 Points

School

Program Summary: This lesson was planned and implemented in Ms. Stanski's Foods class on Food Waste. Objectives: Students will identify the issue of global warming/climate change as it pertains to food. Students will suggest ways to help decrease the impact of climate change. Students will identify the issue of food waste, evaluate their own food consumption/waste and suggest ways to reduce food waste. Standards: FCS 14.3.4 Evaluate policies and practices that impact food security, sustainability, food integrity and nutrition & wellness of individuals and families. The students watched " Friendly Guide to Climate Change - and what you can do to help" and "Just Eat It: A Food Waste Story" (FULL MOVIE) Next, they completed the Problem Solving Model sheet (attached). Last, they discussed & suggested ways to help decrease the impact of climate change (individually, locally, nationally, globally).

PDF: [PATH TO PROBLEM SOLVING— STUDENT REFLECTION SHEET.PDF](#)

PDF: [EFS LESSON PLAN FOODS.PDF](#)

PDF: [COPY OF FINAL VERSION PROBLEM SOLVING RUBRIC.PDF](#)

Student and Staff Wellness

Staff Wellness Program

10 Points

School District

Program Summary: The Metuchen School District's Wellness Committee consists of the following members: John Cathcart Michelle Huff Beth Abbott Robert Ulmer Nick Zaneto Julie Youngman Mark Mooney Ashley Jaye Michelle Schutz Brian Strike Rick Carter John Butler Drew Bandola Nicolette Jomo Panos Tzetzos Kathleen Nolde Jennifer Korpon Beth McLaughlin Linda Garfinkel Vivian Petrakakos Richard Stoner Sydney Rudin Adora Jones Jennifer Doherty Karen Logan Kelsee Young Lauren Korellis We are committed to providing our staff with various ways to engage in health and wellness activities & events that will enhance one's overall mind, body and soul! Some of the actions focused on staff wellness include: monthly newsletters sent to all district staff that include health tips, healthy recipes, and workouts, participation in random acts of kindness, sunshine committee celebrations, full programming for staff members' children for Take your Child to Work day, etc. We offer physical training after school in the gymnasium open

to all staff, as well. Attached are some examples of the efforts of this district committee. Newsletters for the year are all available here (and attached): <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mPJlm1oCRrUrHixuaLqTUoLjQvj8YTPgKS7ZSssySh8/edit?usp=sharing> The district's Social-Emotional Character Development Committee also did considerable work around staff wellness, and their work can be seen in the attached slide deck.

PDF: [17105154613072 \(1\).PDF](#)

PDF: [HEALTH & WELLNESS COMMITTEE SLIDE.PDF](#)

PDF: [MSD WELLNESS NEWSLETTER 2023-2024.PDF](#)

PDF: [SECD COMMITTEE PRESENTATION TO CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MAY 2024.PDF](#)

Student Safety

Safe Routes to School District Policy

10 Points

District

Program Summary: Within our District's Sustainability Policy (policy 7461), which is posted on our district's website under "Board of Education" -> "Policies and Regulations" you will find our "Safe Routes to School" policy. Attached are examples of how we continue to promote the Safe Routes to School initiative and policy in the Metuchen Public School District. Campbell participated in Walk, Bike, & Roll to School in October and had Walking School Buses organized from multiple locations in town. Parents signed their students up through Google Forms. The mayor, chief of police, and district personnel were among the group leaders. Pictures were posted on X. We encourage students to walk/bike to school throughout the year and utilize a Frequent Walker/Rider Punchcard. Each time a student fills their punchcard (20), they get entered in a raffle to spend recess with me (and friends) playing games. Delfina from Keep Middlesex Moving presented an assembly on Bike/Pedestrian Safety for each grade level last month.

PDF: [ELANONLINE DISTRICT POLICIES.PDF](#)

IMAGE: [SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL.PNG](#)

WORD: [BIKE ROLL TO SCHOOL OCTOBER 2023.DOCX](#)

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Promotion Initiatives

10 Points

School

Program Summary: Students are made aware of safety concerns when walking and riding bikes to and from school. - Through lunch programs - Peer Leadership - Safety Ambassador program - Health and Physical Education classes Information is posted on the electronic sign (Grove Avenue) informing drivers to slow down and be aware of pedestrian safety Speed limit was reduced from 35 mph on Grove Avenue to 25 mph due to a presentation that was made by the high school principal to the borough's traffic committee. Speed limit on school grounds (Bulldog Drive) is 5 mph. Student drivers who violate speed are at risk of losing parking privileges on campus. Students can secure their bikes to numerous bike racks located at the front of the school, additional bike racks were added in the past 3 years due to the growing population of students

who bike to school. With an impending referendum project occurring, parking is limited and student bikes fill the bike racks each day, including on all but the coldest days of winter. There are no bus routes for MHS - all students are encouraged to walk and/or bike daily. The anti-idling program, sponsored by the MHS environmental club, is a district wide initiative. Parents and students alike, when they sign paperwork to drive on school grounds, agree to not idle in front of schools.

PDF: [ANTI IDLING PAMPHLET](#)

PDF: [BIKE AND WALK TO SCHOOL](#)

IMAGE: [BIKE RACK 1](#)

IMAGE: [BIKE RACK 2](#)