



# Sustainable Jersey for Schools Certification Report

This is the Sustainable Jersey for Schools Certification Report of Hackensack Middle School (Bergen), a Sustainable Jersey for Schools bronze certified applicant.

Hackensack Middle School (Bergen) was certified on August 24, 2021 with 290 points. Listed below is information regarding Hackensack Middle School (Bergen)'s Sustainable Jersey for Schools efforts and materials associated with the applicant's certified actions.

## Contact Information

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## Actions Implemented

Each approved action and supporting documentation for which Hackensack Middle School (Bergen) was approved for in 2021 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

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#### Green Enhancement of District Strategic Plans

10 Points

District

**Program Summary:** The 2021-2026 Hackensack School District's Strategic Plan, which will be

approved at the June 21, 2021 regular Board of Education Meeting, includes sustainability and equity goals. Planning for the 2021-2026 Hackensack School District's Strategic Plan began in January 2021 and was conducted over four meetings with members of the District Strategic Planning Committee in order to determine the District's strengths and challenges, vision, goals and objectives. The Strategic Planning Committee included Hackensack Public School District administrators, staff, Board members, parents, students and community members. A field service representative from the New Jersey School Boards association was contracted to facilitate the meetings and assist with development of the plan. The Superintendent and administrative team will continue to develop action plans to implement the Strategic Plan including the actions needed to accomplish the goals and objective; selecting measures for accountability; determining resources required and a timeline for implementation. Five overarching goals for 2021 were developed that included building, empowering & engaging the community; state-of-the-art, sustainable community-based schools; equity & inclusivity; educating the whole child; and creating life-long learners. In the past year, Hackensack Public Schools has committed to anti-racism and cultural proficiency, formed a district equity team, upgraded its technology infrastructure, expanded support for digital learning, enhanced curriculum initiatives, including the development of sustainability-focused project-based learning units, partnered with diverse academic organizations, repaired and upgraded various facilities throughout the district, and embarked on the Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP).

**PDF: [2021-2026 DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN](#)**

**PDF: [JUNE 21, 2021 BOE RESOLUTION](#)**

## Digital Learning Leadership

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### Community Engagement \*Retires 8/31/2026\*

10 Points

School District

**Program Summary:** Hackensack Middle School has always had a commitment to engaging stakeholders in all types of communications. When the COVID19 pandemic closed school buildings, our school quickly had to shift to an all-digital delivery. Our district and core tech facilitator team developed an online portal for distance learning information. Students, staff, and parents could use the portal to learn more about the technology being used for digital learning as well as the expectations. One of the significant adjustments in our communications strategy came when it was time to host our annual Back to School Night. Because we could not have building visitors, our administrative team developed a digital platform that held introductory videos from all staff members. Parents could digitally reserve virtual appointments with staff. Each parent had the opportunity to meet with their child's entire team and support staff as well as administration. This response to the need for digital delivery did not lose anything in the process. In fact, it brought an unexpected benefit because parents could speak with more people than they could if they had been walking around the building as in previous years. The shift in handling Back to School Night was just one way HMS addressed the needs of a changing landscape around communication strategies. The closure of schools did identify some gaps in the current communications plan. For example, we have a large population of Spanish speaking parents and families. Time and the swift moving school closure did not allow for technology tutorials to be translated in Spanish. In future communications plans, it will benefit parents if the school explicitly addresses a solution for the lack of Spanish language technology tutorials. Having the opportunity to reflect on a plan and then amend it ultimately leads to improved engagement with the community.

PDF: [HMS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 21.PDF](#)

PDF: [EVIDENCE - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT](#)

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## District Commitment to Digital Learning

15 Points

 Bronze Priority  Silver Priority District

**Program Summary:** The Hackensack Public Schools Future Ready/Digital Learning Committee meets regularly throughout the year to review progress of digital learning efforts. In 2019 the committee collaboratively developed the vision that “students will become empowered, responsible, global citizens, leaders of their own learning and positive change agents in the technology-complex, inter-connected world around them.” The team met to develop the 2019-2022 Future Ready Plan based on this vision, which focused on project based learning, instructional coaching and the 4 Shifts Protocol (deeper thinking and learning, authentic work, student agency and personalization and technology infusion). During the second half of the 2019-2020 school year and throughout the 2020-2021 school year, due to constraints on meeting time as a result of the pandemic, plan efforts were led primarily by the District’s newly-formed Ed Tech Facilitator team, composed of 10 teachers and media specialists representing all grade levels, who met regularly to develop plans, surveyed staff and led all professional development and instructional coaching/support efforts. The complete Digital Learning Team will be meeting in September 2021 to begin the process of developing the 2022-2025 Digital Learning Plan.

PDF: [DIGITAL LEARNING VISION FROM 2019-2022 FUTURE READY PLAN](#)

PDF: [2019-2022 FUTURE READY/DIGITAL LEARNING PLAN](#)

PDF: [2019-2020 DIGITAL LEARNING TEAM MEETING AGENDAS AND MINUTES](#)

PDF: [TECHNOLOGY BUDGET](#)

PDF: [2020-2021 DIGITAL LEARNING TEAM EOY MEETING AGENDA AND MINUTES](#)

PDF: [COMMITMENT TO DIGITAL LEARNING SUBMISSION FORM](#)

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## District Professional Development Plan \*Retires 10/31/23\*

10 Points

District

**Program Summary:** As a District priority, Digital learning is embedded in all initiatives. Surveys are regularly conducted to determine professional development needs, and the data is analyzed through both our Digital Learning and Curriculum Leadership teams to plan opportunities for scheduled professional development days and coaching sessions led by our EdTech Facilitators. Our school-based Digital Learning Teams also meet throughout the year to plan school-specific PD opportunities.

PDF: [DISTRICT 2019-2020 PD PLAN](#)

PDF: [DISTRICT 2020-2021 PD PLAN \(FOCUS ON EQUITY AND CULTURAL PROFICIENCY\)](#)

PDF: [DISTRICT EQUITY TEAM MEETINGS/PD CALENDAR WITH DIGITAL LEARNING PRACTICES](#)

PDF: [DIGITAL LEARNING ONGOING PD](#)

PDF: [DIGITAL LEARNING PD SURVEYS AND OFFERINGS](#)

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## Equitable Access to Digital Learning

15 Points

 Bronze Priority  Silver Priority District

**Program Summary:** Hackensack Public Schools has had a take-home 1:1 initiative at the High School since 2013. A cart-based 1:1 initiative was implemented in Grades K-8 beginning in 2015. In 2016 the District partnered with EveryoneOn to provide hotspots to bilingual students at the High School; this was expanded to include our homeless population through ESSA funding in 2018. This past year the District expanded its take-home initiative at the outset of the pandemic to any student/family in PreK-8 in need of a device for remote learning. Over 3,000 devices were distributed during this time. As part of this effort, data was collected from parents and students regarding the availability of high speed internet at home through District-level surveys, teacher contact and help desk requests. Over 400 mobile hotspots were purchased and distributed to families in need. The District intends to continue this program at a smaller scale for families with the highest need. The District also partnered with the Second Reformed Church of Hackensack to provide basic internet service through the Altice Advantage program to identified families.

PDF: [EQUITABLE ACCESS TO LEARNING FROM 2019-2022 FUTURE READY PLAN](#)

PDF: [MOBILE HOTSPOT BREAKDOWN BY SCHOOL AND DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS](#)

PDF: [ADDITIONAL CONNECTIVITY SURVEY CONDUCTED VIA QUALTRICS PLATFORM](#)

PDF: [RESULTS FROM QUALTRICS CONNECTIVITY SURVEY](#)

PDF: [ADMIN COUNCIL TECHNOLOGY AGENDA - SURVEY RESULTS](#)

PDF: [DECEMBER 2020 BOE RESOLUTION REGARDING DONATION FROM SECOND REFORM CHURCH](#)

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## Digital Learning Practices

### Authentic Application of Digital Learning Tools and Content

15 Points

School

**Program Summary:** In order to maximize authentic student learning experiences, the Hackensack staff utilizes digital tools in a variety of ways. Hackensack schools defines authentic education and learning as instruction fueled by real-world applications; to learn by actively engaging in content by problem solving, team work, formulating plans, and analyzing, practicing, and revising ideas, based on findings. Hackensack uses digital tools to prepare students for real-world experiences. The staff is committed to executing lessons that emphasize timeliness, a passionate commitment towards social justice and cultural competency globally, and a level of deep engagement to content and learning. Within the foundation of creating an environment to foster empathetic and socially-conscious learners in Hackensack is an engrained love of the community. The Hackensack staff and students display deep commitment and passion for problem-solving and actively maintaining purposeful partnerships with the local community. In the future, the staff plans to take several actions towards enhancing authentic applications that effectively use digital tools, resources, and strategies. These actions include using surveys to gauge school needs, in order to plan for spending. In an effort to improve sustainability initiatives within the school and community, several projects have been tentatively planned for next year. The majority of these issues will be designed with student involvement, planning, and execution,

as an emphasis. Hackensack Middle School intends to form a Student Green Team, where in conjunction with faculty, students will voluntarily organize, plan, and execute school-wide sustainability initiatives, including concerns such as: recycling, upcycling, traffic, outdoor classrooms, etc. Students enrolled in enrichment programs will also be given creative license and flexibility to work with other government branches (police, firemen) to create proposals to improve sustainability locally. The district also plans to minimize its use of paper, and maximize instructional techniques with the use of digital tools and technology.

PDF: [AUTHENTIC APPLICATIONS SUBMISSION FORM HMS.DOCX.PDF](#)

PDF: [DIGITAL TOOLS ARTIFACTS\\_ LESSON PLANS & STUDENT SAMPLES.PDF](#)

PDF: [SUMMARY DESCRIPTION FOR ADDITIONAL ARIFACTS.PDF](#)

PDF: [SCHOOL-WIDE CULTURE OF AUTHENTIC DIGITAL LEARNING ARTIFACTS.PDF](#)

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## Professional Growth and Collaboration

15 Points

School

**Program Summary:** Hackensack Middle School's professional learning goal for the 2020-2021 school year is to provide all staff members with accessible training and resources to attain student achievement through virtual and in-person learning. All educators have been provided necessary tools and opportunities to develop effective, engaging, and relevant lessons for the 21st century learner utilizing digital learning skills and digital literacy. Staff members have access to a directory of digital platforms used throughout the district, which also includes tutorials for the uses and implementation of these platforms to best fit the needs of our student population; many of which have been created by our own staff members. At Hackensack Middle School, the growth and development of digital learning of both staff and students has effectuated positive change amidst teaching and learning during a pandemic through collaboration, planning, and implementation.

PDF: [PDP GOALS 12 OF 10](#)

PDF: [CERTIFICATES 12 OF 10](#)

PDF: [APPLIED TECH 5 OF 3](#)

PDF: [COLLABORATIVE EXAMPLES](#)

## Digital Technology Access

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### Data Safety and Security Policy

10 Points

District

**Program Summary:** Digital learning has transformed the teaching and learning process by giving both teachers and students easy access to information and resources previously unavailable. However, this transformation has also raised new concerns regarding the privacy and protection of student data in an interconnected world. The Hackensack Public Schools District is committed to expanding access to digital resources for students while safeguarding their privacy and data. To achieve this the District has worked to create procedures for the approval/use of

online resources, set security standards for District technology and developed a Data Privacy and Security Policy/Handbook that outlines the types of data that can be collected and how data can be accessed, collected, stored and, if appropriate, shared. All apps undergo a review process prior to being implemented to ensure they meet the District's established security standards. Apps that collect/store student data are added to our published Student Data Privacy Matrix and made available to parents through our District website.

**PDF: [BOE USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY](#)**

**PDF: [DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY GUIDELINES](#)**

**PDF: [DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY TRAINING PRESENTATION](#)**

**IMAGE: [DATA PRIVACY SECTION ON WEBSITE](#)**

**IMAGE: [RESOURCE PORTAL ANNOUNCEMENT](#)**

**PDF: [DATA PRIVACY SECTION OF DIGITAL LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER](#)**

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## Digital Device Life Cycle Management

10 Points

District

**Program Summary:** Hackensack Public Schools utilizes the SchoolDude Insight Inventory Management solution to track all district technology. All items are inventoried shortly after delivery and marked for disposal as they are decommissioned. Our 2019-2022 Future Ready Plan includes an obsolescence plan that outlines the expected lifespan of most district technology items and a timeline for replacing devices. Our Standard Operating Procedures Manual provides detailed procedures for decommissioning equipment as needed or when scheduled for replacement. All technology is recycled through one of several licensed EPA-compliant vendors. Each vendor is provided a list of the items and the highest bid is selected.

**PDF: [GUIDELINES FOR OBSOLESCENCE FROM 2019-2022 FUTURE READY PLAN](#)**

**PDF: [STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL](#)**

**PDF: [INTERNAL IT EQUIPMENT RECYCLING PROCEDURES](#)**

**PDF: [SCHOOLDUDE INSIGHT DATASHEET](#)**

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## Infrastructure

10 Points

District

**Program Summary:** The District Technology Department working in collaboration with the District's Curriculum Leadership and Digital Learning teams regularly evaluates the district's technology infrastructure to align resources with district curricular initiatives and needs. Data is collected via surveys and network/hardware monitoring tools and evaluated periodically to determine needs/areas of improvement. For example, in January 2021 our core infrastructure was re-evaluated to ensure adequate bandwidth to support hybrid teaching and learning. We worked with Curriculum supervisors and building administrators to set up demo hybrid classrooms that would allow us to capture relevant utilization data. Based on the information gathered, we increased our bandwidth and upgraded our District firewall to support the additional need. The Technology Department also conducts an in-depth third-party network security threat assessment at a minimum bi-annually (or as needed) to identify potential vulnerabilities and recommendations for increasing security. Our District Business Continuity Plan is also kept up-to-date as changes are made to network hardware and/or configuration and the overall plan is

evaluated once per year in its entirety. The plan classifies all district systems based on priority and specifies backup procedures as well as recovery point and restoration time objectives for each.

PDF: [SATISFACTION SURVEYS](#)

PDF: [BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN INTRODUCTION](#)

PDF: [EMERGENCY INCIDENT RESPONSE SLA](#)

PDF: [RAPID SECURITY ASSESSMENT SCOPE AND SOW](#)

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## Support for Digital Teaching and Learning

20 Points

District

**Program Summary:** Support for Digital Learning is embedded in all our district initiatives and is a consideration in all planning. Surveys are routinely conducted at the District and school levels to inform needs, and mini-pilots are implemented as needed to demo new technology/tools. This work is primarily done through our District and School-based Digital Learning Teams; however, this past year, through ESSA funding, the District also hired 10 EdTech Parent/Teacher Support Facilitators to provide additional support to staff, students, and parents by providing technology training for parents and professional development support for teachers on new and existing online platforms. Various surveys and professional development workshops were created to support staff in the implementation of various digital and distance learning platforms. Both staff and students completed a distance learning survey in order to better understand the needs of both. The Digital Learning Resource Center, Distance Learning Platform Tutorials, and Technology Support are all included on the Hackensack Public Schools district website for use by staff, students, and parents/families and include resources and tutorials for all district platforms.

PDF: [DIGITAL LEARNING PD SURVEYS AND MORE](#)

PDF: [SATISFACTION SURVEYS](#)

PDF: [DIGITAL LEARNING SUPPORT PAGES FROM 2019-2022 FUTURE READY PLAN](#)

PDF: [2019-2020 FUTURE READY/DIGITAL LEARNING TEAM MEETING AGENDAS AND MINUTES](#)

PDF: [2020-2021 DIGITAL LEARNING TEAM EOY MEETING AGENDA AND MINUTES](#)

PDF: [HACKENSACK TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT RESOURCE PORTAL](#)

## Innovation Projects

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### Innovative Project #1

10 Points

School District

**Program Summary:** Anti-racism, cultural proficiency, diversity, equity and inclusion are priority goals for the District and embedded in all decision-making. In June 2020, the Hackensack Board of Education passed a resolution at its regularly scheduled meeting taking a stand against "racism and discrimination" and committing to take "specific steps to address bias and increase cultural proficiency among our school community." The District has been active through its Affirmative Action and Equity Committees addressing anti-racism and cultural proficiency in our schools

through recruitment and hiring practices, revising curriculum, reflecting on updated pedagogy, professional development on restorative practice and ensuring diverse representation on all district teams/committees. A presentation was made to the Board of Education on May 17, 2021 highlighting these accomplishments.

**PDF: [ANTI-RACISM AND CULTURAL PROFICIENCY BOARD RESOLUTION](#)**

**PDF: [DISTRICT EQUITY TEAM](#)**

**PDF: [PD SURVEYS](#)**

**PDF: [DISTRICT EQUITY TEAM MEETING AGENDAS AND MINUTES \(APRIL AND JUNE 2021\)](#)**

**PDF: [PRESENTATION AT MAY 2021 BOE MEETING](#)**

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## **Innovative Project #2**

**10 Points**

School District

**Program Summary:** This outdoor soil-based garden was spearheaded by one of our School Social Workers in response to anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our social worker, Ms. Lynda McGowan saw in her counseling group that a number of 7th grade students were expressing their anxiety and depression. Many of our students have been plagued with bouts of anxiety and depression as they have not had proper social interaction with family members and friends for over a year now. In addition, students feel intense pressure completing school online. Therefore, creating a school garden would help alleviate stress and promote the physical exercise many students have not been able to engage in due to COVID. Planting would not only help students connect with nature, but serve as a social-emotional lesson that can stay with them. Lavender was planted for its aroma, which can alleviate stress, and the group received education on this aspect of the plant. Students will be able to use lavender to help calm them in times of stress by making sachets or products containing lavender for aromatherapy. Perennial plants were chosen to remind the group that life goes on each year. These types of perennials can also tolerate some dry conditions. This helped the students to realize that like plants, they can persevere under any condition and in the face of adversity. Finally, students used only hand tools to plant. Engaging in physical labor and connecting with the Earth helped students use their physical bodies for a good purpose. In addition, it was a great team-building event for students who have felt isolated by the pandemic. They were able to work together and socialize during the process. Those who have felt overwhelmed physically and emotionally were able to gain back some of the normalcy they have lost during COVID.

**PDF: [HMS GARDEN REPORT](#)**

**PDF: [HMS SHARED WITH COMMUNITY](#)**

**PDF: [HMS EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS](#)**

**PDF: [HMS EXTRA GARDEN PHOTOS](#)**

**IMAGE: [HMS FACEBOOK POST RE GARDEN](#)**

**IMAGE: [HMS GARDEN PHOTO - COMPLETED GARDEN](#)**

## **Learning Environment**

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### **Curriculum Mapping**

15 Points

School District

**Program Summary:** The Hackensack Public Schools implements a curriculum process that strives to provide consistency across the district. Curriculum templates are standardized across all contents and grades. All guides are aligned to include those requirements cited in code (6A:8-3.1) and required by NJQSAC. Curriculum development will be completed through the joint efforts of teachers and administrators. Upon completion, all guides are submitted to the Superintendent and the Board of Education for approval. Curriculum and Unit planning is completed through an application process that is overseen by the Curriculum Director and Content Area Supervisors. Teacher Committees vary based on the applicants and the project.

PDF: [FIVE YEAR CURRICULUM PLAN 2021-2026](#)

PDF: [DISTRICT CURRICULUM](#)

PDF: [SAMPLE PBL UNIT](#)

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## Future Ready Schools - New Jersey Certification

15 Points

School

**Program Summary:** Hackensack Middle School was tasked with achieving Future Ready-NJ status in 2018. A team of staff and stakeholders was assembled and quickly began documenting all the outstanding work that our students and staff were a part of. At the time, our 1:1 Chromebook cart roll out in each classroom was a significant factor in allowing us to achieve Bronze certification that year. By providing devices to students, they had the flexibility to do more creative projects. That year we also began investing in both VR and AR learning opportunities for our students. We partnered with Google Pioneers for a school visit and purchased headsets for our new STEM department and school library. In the following school year, initiatives had grown. In STEM, students were learning basic skills like coding but they also gained exposure to design skills such as computer programming, circuitry, and woodshop. Our school had also switched to an “ed-camp” style of learning with much of our professional development coming from in-house. Students and classroom environments were changing, too: flexible seating was added, group work was collaborative, and students contributed to their learning both in virtual and in-person formats. As confidence grew, we felt prepared to apply for Silver certification and were awarded it in 2019. Little could anyone know how much the Future Ready-NJ certification cycles would prepare our district for closure during the pandemic. Because we had taken the time to audit ourselves during the certification process, certain vital procedures were already in place. The impact that achieving Future Ready-NJ Silver Certification had on our district and community was significant. So much of what we learned about ourselves during this process remains: emphasis on equitable and individualized student learning, made possible by empowered teaching and support staff.

PDF: [HACKENSACK PUBLIC SCHOOLS MAIL - FUTURE READY SCHOOLS - NJ OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF 2019 SILVER TIER CERTIFICATION STATUS.PDF](#)

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## Student Participation in the Arts

10 Points

District

**Program Summary:** In Hackensack Public Schools all students in grades K-12 receive instruction

in the four arts disciplines. Students in grades K-4 receive visual arts and general music instruction weekly. Fourth grade students are offered an option to participate in instrumental music as well. Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year all K-4 students will receive a cycle of dance/theater instruction from a certified teacher. All students in grades 5-12 are offered course options for dance, theater, visual arts, and both choral and instrumental music. Advanced offerings are offered at the high school level. Since we offer a continuum of arts offerings from Kindergarten through grade 12 our students have an opportunity to demonstrate competency in at least one arts discipline throughout their school career.

**PDF: [SUPERINTENDENT LETTER.PDF](#)**

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## School Culture and Climate

### Inclusive Environments Where All Can Thrive

10 Points

School

**Program Summary:** During the 2020-2021 school year, Hackensack Middle School has implemented additional programming based on the unique needs of our community. An example of a new club started this year has been the Gay-Straight Alliance, which meets twice per month and is open to students and staff, seeking an extra safe space for learning and self expression. This club filled a critical need since students of color who are LGBTQ+ having additional challenges navigating the pandemic. The school also implemented new mental health programming for staff and students, such as weekly mindfulness workshops and extracurricular activities such as Tai Chi and painting! The school continued with some important offerings from previous years to maintain routines and accommodate the needs of specific populations, such as gifted & talented through the National Honor Society, additional STEM opportunities, through the school-based Robotics club and the Girls Exploring Engineering program at a local university, and guidance counselor led discussions on goal setting and navigating social interactions within middle school. Some offerings were more in-depth than others, however even mundane actions from the past, such as communicating with parents and guardians were revised this year to improve inclusivity. When student schedules were adjusted throughout the year, this was communicated through several technology channels, in several languages, and several times. For parent-teacher conferences, our school had the largest turn-out this year with virtual conferences. It was such a positive experience that in the future, we plan to offer virtual conferences as an option. Although this year was challenging, the school community worked together to support one another, both physically and emotionally. Some offerings implemented this year due to the pandemic we plan to continue in future years based on the positive feedback from parents, students, and staff.

**PDF: [INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS QUESTIONNAIRE.PDF](#)**

**PDF: [INCLUSIVE PROGRAM INVENTORY 2020-2021 - SHEET1.PDF](#)**

**PDF: [EXAMPLES - BUILDING SOCIAL MEDIA, STUDENT PROJECT EXAMPLES, AND PD OFFERINGS.PDF](#)**

**PDF: [BLACK HISTORY MONTH & HISPANIC HISTORY MONTH\\_ SCHOOL WIDE CELEBRATION VIDEO.PDF](#)**

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### School Culture and Climate Needs Assessment

20 Points

School

**Program Summary:** The questionnaire was created using the New Jersey Climate Survey as a foundation. We have utilized this survey in the past but felt that the survey questions provided enough detailed information. Survey questions were too broad and did not account for information that we wanted to collect to facilitate programming in our school. Survey question inclusion was decided upon by Administration and the Positive Behavior Supports in Schools Committee. Focus groups were conducted with a diverse body of students. These students capture the racial and ethnic makeup of our student body, and their involvement in organizations. Feedback was elicited from open-ended questions answered by students, staff and parents within the surveys. Additionally, the district began our Strategic Planning in which focus groups were utilized with students, staff, families, business owners, and community leaders. To assess, we examined the results to identify common themes about where we needed to grow with programming and ensuring that the most vulnerable students' needs are being addressed. We also examined the Program Inventory to discover what we have and how well it was working, and ways that we could improve. There were initiatives that we started before the Pandemic, that we were able to sustain, but other programs unfortunately were not running the past year due to the need for in-person implementation. Although many programs (PBSIS, Anti-Bullying Club) adapted to the hybrid/virtual model, they did not have as many participants, or had unforeseen obstacles. Other initiatives (Gay/Straight Alliance and the Comet Calm Club) grew in the midst of the pandemic and were realized through needs that weren't previously being met. We are scheduled to present results and our action plan to stakeholders before the end of this school year. These results will also be included in materials provided to families before September 2021.

**PDF: [2A. SCHOOL CULTURE & CLIMATE PROGRAM INVENTORY - SHEET1.PDF](#)**

**PDF: [2AA. SUPPORTING DOCS - PROGRAM INVENTORY, SENATOR VISIT, STUDENT WELLNESS ROOM, AND MORE.PDF](#)**

**PDF: [2B. STUDENT PARENT STAFF SURVEYS MERGED.PDF](#)**

**PDF: [2BB. SURVEY RESULTS STAFF\\_PARENT\\_STUDENT MERGED.PDF](#)**

**PDF: [2C. FOCUSGROUPSMERGED.PDF](#)**

**PDF: [CULTURE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN](#)**

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## Social Emotional Learning Integrated Unit

10 Points

School

**Program Summary:** All Hackensack Middle School 7th graders participated in an SEL-based Health Unit known as the Second Step program. This Unit of Study is created in partnership with The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources, a division of Children's Aid and Family Services. Second Step considers itself "a holistic approach to building supportive communities for every child through social emotional learning." The topics are designed to help students achieve success in and out of the school setting and include managing their emotions, empathy, decision making, and building relationships. The lessons are a combination of lectures, videos, and interactive activities. Parents/guardians receive a letter introducing them to the program (English and Spanish). There are pre-tests, reflective responses, and post-tests to check for understanding throughout all of the lessons. Teachers also monitor that the videos are watched. Before February, HMS students participated in a fully-remote (digital) environment. Since February, approximately 40% of students have been hybrid while approximately 60% remain completely virtual. A facilitator from the Second Step program serves as a co-teacher with the 7th grade Health teacher. Per their video (attached), they teach the skills students need to lead "happy, healthy lives." The program recognizes that middle school students face unique issues (ex. peer pressure and exposure to substances) that they will need tools to navigate. For example, there are several lessons that focus on empathy to help students learn about respecting the feelings and

perspectives of others. Students are encouraged to be curious about the reality of other people's lives instead of being quick to label them. They learn that when you keep an open mind, it is possible to combat prejudice. Students are reminded that they often share more commonalities than differences with others. The young people in the program are asked to think about these empathy-related skills in real-life middle school situations. For example, they imagine what they would/could do if a student dropped their cafeteria tray in front of the whole grade at lunch. This program has been in place at HMS for many years.

PDF: [SEL INTEGRATED UNIT PLAN.PDF](#)

PDF: [SEL INTEGRATED UNIT QUESTIONNAIRE.PDF](#)

PDF: [SECOND STEP SEL PROGRAM THE RESEARCH.PDF](#)

PDF: [SAMPLE LESSON ON POSITIVE SELF TALK \(SELF MANAGEMENT\) \(1\).PDF](#)

PDF: [LAROSE HACKENSACK PARENT LETTER - SECOND STEP MIDDLE SCHOOL.PDF](#)

PDF: [-INTEGRATED SEL UNIT \(HEALTH 7\) STUDENT WORK.DOCX.PDF](#)

## Student & Community Outreach

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### Green Team

10 Points

 Bronze Required School District

**Program Summary:** During the 2020-2021 school year members of the Hackensack Middle School Green Team met as a full team twice per month and in smaller subcommittees twice per month. The HMS Green Team used the Sustainable Jersey for Schools practices as a guide and road map. Our goal for the 2020-2021 school year was to submit a completed application to the Sustainable Jersey for Schools application. As we self-assessed the process became clear on how we would approach completing the Actions and collecting evidence for each throughout the school year. Green Team Meetings have been documented with agendas and attendance (via Zoom) throughout the school year. Our HMS Green Team is made up of 24 staff members, who each played an integral role in researching, implementing and documenting each of Hackensack Middle School's Actions for the Sustainable Jersey for Schools application and submission. We worked hard to spread our message including our mission and belief statements. One of the ways we accomplished this was through leveraging technology to better communicate during school closure for students and parents reinforcing the importance of school and community while sharing information. This included items like back to school night, honors assemblies and other items that are traditionally held in person. We hosted a Green Team presentation for all staff during faculty meeting and welcomed new members as well as feedback. We proudly established a Wellness Center at Hackensack Middle School to support student and staff wellness and mental health. Additionally, we are planning for a school garden with students literally planting some of the initial seeds this year in the form of flower beds outside the building. We look forward to future Sustainable Jersey accomplishments at HMS!

PDF: [GREEN TEAM LETTER - HACKENSACK MIDDLE SCHOOL.PDF](#)

PDF: [GREEN TEAM REPORT FOR HACKENSACK MIDDLE SCHOOL \(1\).PDF](#)

## Student Learning

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## Education for Sustainability Grades 4-12 Math

5 Points

School

**Program Summary:** In this lesson, Hackensack Middle School students will be able to measure the CO2 emissions produced by a classroom of students getting to and from school. Additionally, they will analyze their personal as well as their class' contribution to CO2 emissions. They will brainstorm ways to reduce their CO2 footprint, both as individuals and as a class. Roughly one-third of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation sector: trains, planes, boats, trucks, cars, etc. In Washington State, transportation contributes nearly half of the region's greenhouse gas emissions, with cars and trucks in particular generating more than any other source. Choices made everyday about how to get to school, work, the mall, etc., directly impact the size of your CO2 "footprint". Your CO2 "footprint" is basically a measurement of how much carbon dioxide is emitted into the atmosphere as a result of your individual actions. Transportation choices are just one component of a CO2 footprint - but can often be the most significant. How big is your transportation footprint? And how does it compare with that of your classmates? Through this activity you'll conduct a survey to identify the different modes of transportation you and your classmates use to get to and from school. You'll then use this information to calculate the combined impact of those choices on your CO2 footprint. Hackensack Middle School students will perform this activity in one class period during math class at the end of May 2021. They will spend 30 minutes to calculate and collect all the data and 15 minutes to answer general questions and discuss results. What we are submitting in this application is just one example of several standardized lessons created for grades 6-8.

**PDF: [STUDENT WORK SAMPLES](#)**

**PDF: [LESSON PLAN](#)**

**PDF: [UNGRADED SAMPLE RUBRIC - GRADED RUBRIC WITHIN STUDENT WORK](#)**

**PDF: [EFS QUESTIONNAIRE](#)**

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## Education for Sustainability Grades 4-12 Science

5 Points

School

**Program Summary:** In the past, 7th Grade Hackensack Middle School students have had the opportunity to closely work with the Hackensack Riverkeeper, a local volunteer agency that defends the Public Trust resources of the Hackensack River Watershed, through environmental action, advocacy, education and litigation. HMS and the Riverkeeper jointly ran a program called the Hackensack Middle School Junior Stewards, whereby the students of HMS had a chance to work with scientists and volunteers to examine the Hackensack River estuary, however, we have not partnered with the Riverkeeper since the COVID pandemic in this capacity. In the spirit of re-establishing our relationship with the Riverkeeper and with a focus on our watersheds and estuaries, the 7th grade team challenged the students to use scientific reasoning to defend a claim for or against the use of genetically modified mosquitoes to stop the spread of disease exacerbated by the widening of invasive species habitats due to climate change. For this project, which was a planned two day lesson, students were presented with a summary of related topics from earlier in the year, such as the dynamics of ecosystems, spread of disease, Mendelian Genetics and genetic engineering. The teacher then presented the scenario (phenomenon) with an intent to braid the topics of genetic engineering, invasive species, climate change and spread of disease. The students were given time to research from a number of different resources, including simulators and were expected to answer the question, "Should we be using genetically

modified mosquitoes to control dangerous mosquito populations in New Jersey?.”

PDF: [LESSON PLAN\\_GM MOSQUITO ASSIGNMENT \(CER\).PDF](#)

PDF: [GM MOSQUITO CER \(INTRO INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS\).PDF](#)

PDF: [GM MOSQUITO CER BLANK RUBRIC.PDF](#)

PDF: [GM MOSQUITO CER FRAMEWORK.PDF](#)

PDF: [STUDENT WORK SAMPLE AND GRADED RUBRIC.PDF](#)

PDF: [7TH GRADE SCIENCE SJS\\_EFS\\_QUESTIONNAIRE.PDF](#)

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## Education for Sustainability Grades 4-12 Social Studies

5 Points

School

**Program Summary:** The social studies curriculum and its units provide deeper and more consistent engagement with sustainability issues. Students develop an increased depth of understanding of global society, the fundamental principles and values of American democracy and citizenship provides the conceptual framework that allows them to make informed decisions about local, national, and international environmental issues and challenges. Hackensack Middle school students, both virtual and in-person, use Google classroom and a plethora of digital platforms to collaborate and share instructional resources. In this lesson, students will learn about different kinds of political parties, elections and how people run for office. They read, study and take notes about voting rights and processes through graphic-organizer, comprehension and discussion activities. Students consider the types of positive influences young people can bring to an election and why they should get involved. They learn that citizens can influence public policy in a number of ways through voting, supporting candidates, sharing their concerns with elected representatives and government officials. Discussions centered around the 2020 election campaign and presidential candidates’ ideology and public policies stand. Citizens, citizen groups, and political parties can all suggest public policies, but governments must enact and implement them. Students gained information that revealed their political ideology; this led them to reach a different opinion than they had held previously about their stance on some political, public, and community issues. In “Voto Latino” students discuss and reach a conclusion that people’s apathy, or lack of interest in the political process can hinder how communities make decisions and address issues, including those issues they might care deeply about such as education and the environment.

PDF: [UNIT PLAN 1 ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES YOUR IDEOLOGY.PDF](#)

PDF: [VOTING AND IDEOLOGY LESSON MATERIALS](#)

PDF: [VOTING COLLABORATIVE RUBRICS](#)

PDF: [SJS\\_EFS\\_QUESTIONNAIRE SOTELO.PDF](#)

PDF: [EXTRA MATERIAL - 7TH GRADE AGRICULTURE BENCHMARK](#)

PDF: [EXTRA MATERIAL - 7TH GRADE AGRICULTURE BENCHMARK STUDENT DATA REPORT](#)

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## Education for Sustainability Grades 4-12 Technology

5 Points

School

**Program Summary:** During the 2020-2021 academic year, Hackensack Middle School has been able to continue most of the sustainability projects from previous years and even enhance established initiatives due to hybrid learning environments. One example of a new sustainability

project was assigned in Video Design Class, in which students created a Public Service Announcement on a chosen topic. In terms of sustainability, this project aims to educate the community and part of this project asked students to connect with experts outside our school. This collaboration strengthened the interconnectedness of people, and through technology, students engaged safely with others. An example of a project that was enhanced this year was a unit administered throughout all STEM classes grades 5-8, on single-use plastics by comparing bottled water versus filtered tap water. This unit occurred when the school was teaching concurrently, which allowed students to participate in discussions at their own individual comfort level, whether verbally in-person or through Zoom, typing a comment to the entire class or privately to the teacher via chat. With the high-technology arrangement that is now a part of each lesson, having several channels allows for all to participate at their own comfort level. This unit also included an in-person lab, in which students performed a taste test of filtered water versus bottled water. Students at home were encouraged to conduct their own taste test, but ultimately in-person students were fully immersed and the remote students were observing. The STEM department has goals for the 2021-2022 academic year to include a school-wide plastic bottle collection to determine how much single-use plastic is used in a week and extrapolate the waste for the year. We also discussed adding reusable water bottles to our school store to encourage filtered tap water, while always emphasizing the bigger picture of helping improve the environment.

**PDF: [TV LESSON PLAN 4 - PSA.PDF](#)**

**PDF: [HMS GREEN MAP - SHEET1.PDF](#)**

**PDF: [LESSON PLAN - BOTTLED VS. TAP WATER UNIT.PDF](#)**

**PDF: [STUDENT EVIDENCE \\_ WATER UNIT\\_ PHOTOS, HANDOUTS, PROJECTS & RUBRIC.PDF](#)**

**PDF: [SJS\\_EFS\\_QUESTIONNAIRE - BOTTLED WATER UNIT.PDF](#)**

## Student and Staff Wellness

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### Staff Wellness Program

10 Points

School District

**Program Summary:** The Comet Calm Club was created in March 2021 at the first anniversary of COVID19. It's goal is to support mental health and wellness with focus on HMS staff. The objective is to provide activities that support mindfulness. The Comet Calm Club is led by Lynda McGowan, MSW, LCSW, School Social Worker and Leah Mager, LDTC, Learning Consultant. The events are promoted via internal email, flyers posted within the school buildings, and collegial support. Most activities have been conducted during after school hours. All staff are invited to participate and at no cost. Thus far, four activities have been completed. For one event, one of our Art teachers shared school supplies to staff for the painting: paint palettes, brushes, and paper, among others. Furthermore, staff had the opportunity and choice to participate in a Mindfulness: Relieving Stress session within a Professional Development Day. At this time, only attendance is recorded. The events are planned by anecdotal feedback from staff. Projected for the 2021- 2022 school year, one to two activities per month are anticipated to continue. The Comet Club utilizes a holistic approach to trauma response and mindfulness utilizing multi-sensory activities.

**PDF: [SCHOOL STAFF WELLNESS PLAN](#)**

**PDF: [PROGRAM COMPONENTS](#)**

## Student Safety

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### Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Promotion Initiatives

10 Points

School

**Program Summary:** To promote pedestrian and bicycle safety, the Health and Physical Education teachers at Hackensack Middle School, first educated students on the importance of following certain safety protocols when walking, riding a bike, scooter, skateboard, etc. through various presentations. We reviewed rules of the road, hand signals, proper clothing/equipment, helmet sizing and much more. Furthermore, students were encouraged to think about their safety and use their decision-making skills to make the right choices whether they are on wheels or on foot. Additionally, the Hackensack Middle School hosted a “Walk or Roll to School” day. Students were encouraged to join their fellow students, parents, and educators and safely walk or roll (bike, skateboard, or scoot) to school. The benefits of participating in the event were two-fold, not only were traffic congestion and pollution reduced, but participants got their physical activity in for the day! On the day of the event, in addition to the multiple bike racks located outside of the school, the gymnasium was used for additional storage for bikes and other active transportation modes, like scooters and skateboards.

**IMAGE:** [STUDENT BICYCLES OUTSIDE BUILDING](#)

**PDF:** [BIKE SAFETY LESSON](#)

**PDF:** [CHILD PEDESTRIAN SAFETY RULES REVIEW](#)

**PDF:** [BICYCLE SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU PRESENTATION](#)

**WORD:** [WALK OR ROLL TO SCHOOL DAY FLYER](#)

**PDF:** [OUTDOOR PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC SAFETY PRESENTATION](#)