



# Making Westlake a Sustainable District

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Go Green Team:

Jayne Hoon, Chris Bauer, Brian Gottfried, Troy Miller,  
Jim Matousek, Laura Steinbrink and Gina Wittenberg



# Agenda

- Setting the Stage
- Business Case
- Three Focus Areas
  - Facilities
  - Operations
  - Education
- Moving Forward
- Summary



Sustainable practices are at the forefront of decisions within the private, public and educational sectors. In Ohio, the Ohio Facilities Schools Commission increased attention on green building by mandating all new construction using state funds be built to LEED-Silver standards (LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is defined and managed by the US Green Building Council). Corporations have learned that they can achieve competitive advantage through sustainable business practices. Educators have learned that they can increase student performance through well-built facilities. The sustainability discussion takes place both among those trying to save costs, as sustainable practices are documented to reduce energy and water consumption rates, and among those striving to differentiate their products and services by embracing sustainability as a core corporate value. Companies that succeed in both leveraging sustainable practices to save costs and to develop unique products have better financial performance as measured by the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, Global Reporting Index and the KLN Sustainability Index. The quality of a city's schools is a well-known key factor for people when selecting their homes. Westlake is a district with exceptional academic performance and low property taxes. It attracts families seeking affordable living and strong schools. Over the last thirty years, Westlake's school district population has grown consistently, breaking projected population highs. During this growth, the district maintains its Excellence rating. Is this sustainable?

## Setting The Stage

- Westlake's Current State – District-wide
  - No district-wide sustainability policy
  - School-by-school basis, lack of coherent plan
  - Examples of good work in key focus areas
  - Facilities lack sustainable maintenance and operations
- Comparable Districts
  - LEED certified buildings
  - Renewable energy applications
  - Curriculum components
  - Community good will
- Top 10 Districts
  - Sustainability Directors and district-wide policies
  - Best practices

**OBSERVATION: Educators have learned that they can increase student performance through well built facilities**



Talk about our process – we interviewed Dr. Keenan and his staff  
Researched other districts locally and our comparables  
Overall, our comparables are only slightly ahead of Westlake, just now getting organized  
Nationally, the trend is different and more areas are well ahead  
Researched national best practices

### Examples of What is working in Westlake Now

#### Education

State science curriculum for 5th, 7th, 9-12th grades addresses environmental sustainability  
LBMS Environmental Club, LC Green Group, HS Solar Energy Design Project (raise awareness, provide solutions)  
Outdoor spaces, student gardens, and Beautification Committees

#### Operations

Bus-idling policy, Recycling, Bike to School Day, pollution-control - \$135 K EPA grant to retrofit 20 buses

#### Facilities

student petitions for green school

## Business Case

- Financial reasons
  - Saving money on energy
  - Investing today and recycling tomorrow (facilities)
  - Reducing consumption of paper and other materials
  - Realizing return on technology investments
- Educational opportunities
  - Staying competitive and maintaining excellence
  - Healthy Schools = Higher Grades and Performance
- Ripple effect (other benefits)
  - Business Community Partnerships
  - Grant dollars for innovation



## Recommendations

### Three Focus Areas

1. Facilities
2. Operations
3. Curriculum

**OBSERVATION: Strong green schools have significant commitment from the Board and Superintendent**



## Recommendations: Facilities

- Leverage facilities challenges to change current practices
- Adopt Green building / LEED standards as the norm
- Commit to sustainable maintenance and upgrades

**OBSERVATION: Steps taken today in facilities can result in immediate cost savings**



Consider facilities challenges an opportunity to do things differently

Facilities challenges can lead to new maintenance plans, budgeting, vendors

Commit today to better maintenance and upgrades

Invest today where you can re-use in another building; can obtain LEED points for re-use

Adopt Green building / LEED standards

Adopt commitment today; change procurement policy to reflect sustainability standards

LEED Silver estimated at 1-3% cost than traditional; does not consider lower energy rates

## Recommendation: Facilities (2)

- Benchmark and reduce energy consumption
- Explore electric generation opportunities
- Improve indoor air quality (IAQ)



### Reduce Electric consumption

Install sensors today; recycle in new buildings tomorrow

Switch lighting to lower T-ratings; use new lights in new buildings

Low SRI-values on roofs to keep buildings cool

### Environmental Contaminants

US EPA has guidelines for greener cleaning and pest management

Low –No VOC paints, sealants, etc.

## Recommendation: Operations

- Commit to reducing waste
- Expand recycling efforts
- Adopt green procurement policies

**OBSERVATION: Steps taken today in operations can result in immediate cost savings**



Reduce Waste: The district can adopt an overall waste-reduction goal  
leverage technology to reduce paper  
consider waste streams in cafeteria and adjust to reduce trash – increase recycling / composting

### Recycling

district recycling contract needs reviewed  
each building should have own recycling area  
Using recycled materials is as important as recycling and reducing waste

### Highlights From Other Districts

Brecksville/Broadview Hts (Recycle paper, metal, motor oil, fluorescent bulbs, ballasts, batteries)

### Procurement

District policies need adopted to favor green products  
Construction procurement should include sustainable principles

Procurement Highlights From Other Districts Brecksville/Broadview Hts (Green Seal certified paper, green janitorial products)

## Recommendations: Operations (2)

- Transportation
  - Remove route redundancy; evaluate fleet options
  - Promote walking, biking and carpooling
- Future: Food
  - Another project for another year



### Transportation:

Consider bus line audit to reduce route redundancy; reward walking in good weather months

Consider higher fuel efficient vehicles

Maintain and improve idling policy

Promote carpooling

FOOD: Creating healthy eating opportunities with organic, fresh food is an entire project in and of itself, and can support the district's overall sustainability goals

## Recommendation: Education

- Continue and expand sustainability-based curriculum
  - Continue best practices e.g. Solar Car, AP Environmental Science
  - Sustainability curriculum to all grade levels
  - LBMS Environmental Club concept to all schools
- Expand and enhance green learning spaces
  - More green spaces for learning
  - Strong green spaces for exercise and healthy learning
- Develop service learning opportunities
  - Apply service learning findings to sustainability initiatives



2 Focus areas:

Curriculum

Green Spaces

Westlake has some great projects and curriculum components around the district

## Moving Forward

- Strong support from leadership (board and superintendent)
- Reflect commitment to sustainability in mission and vision
- Create district-wide taskforce and facility-specific Green Teams to uncover best practices
- Set measurable goals
- Engage Community Resources in developing strategies and goals

**OBSERVATION: Organizations that adopt sustainable decision making out perform those that adopt only tactical activities**



CEO/ Board buy-in essential: Board must be prepared to back this fully. If not properly supported, will only bomb. Incorporate into mission and vision

### District-wide taskforce

Include community / business on taskforce: Must get community involved to keep support going and keep costs low, business initiatives look good and tie local businesses into community  
Benchmark current consumption patterns; set reduction goals  
Steward implementation of policies

### Facility-specific green teams

Students: Student-led initiative team, to clean up schools, research new developments, make students a big part of change-insert into curriculum.  
Administration: Green "Supervisor"; full-time monitoring of district's green policy  
Faculty : Faculty volunteers to work in concert with student groups  
Facilities staff : Workshops on green initiatives and environmental sustainability for maintenance staff.

Measurable goals - **Must** create measurable goals for 1-5 year plans, such as reducing consumption in energy, water, fuel, paper and reducing waste (reduce trash, increase recycling). Goals should be based upon benchmarks and include goals and strategies to get there - have the schools compete in the first 3 years to identify best practices  
i.e., reduce total paper consumption, based on 2009 usage, by 10% in 2 years in 25% in 5 years  
When defining goals, consider mutually related behaviors (i.e. achieving reductions in paper expenditures by increasing the amount of electronic communication)

# Summary

## MISSION STATEMENT

*We Educate for Excellence...Empowering all students to achieve their educational goals, to direct their lives and to contribute to a sustainable society.*

## VISION STATEMENT

*The Westlake City School District will provide a dynamic, sustainable, student-centered, 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment. Our district will be characterized by high achievement, actively engaged learners, mutual respect, shared knowledge, pursuit of new skills and capabilities, collaborative learning, willingness to take action, a team commitment to data-driven continuous improvement, efficient and healthy facilities, and tangible results.*

*westlake*  
CITY SCHOOLS

The Westlake Citizen's Advisory Committee's Go-Green team asserts that Westlake will emerge stronger than before, and its rapid and comprehensive adoption of sustainable practices will assure it secures 21st century competitive advantage. The Go-Green Team envisions the Westlake City Schools as the premier sustainable Northeast Ohio school district that consistently out performs its competitors on academic standards, financial performance and low environmental impact. It believes fundamentally that Westlake should leverage its challenges to emerge as the region's leading school district because of its sustainability strategy. Not often do organizations get an opportunity to redefine itself; Westlake can do so now - sustainably. In true Green-Demon spirit, the following document outlines the research and methodology used by the Westlake CAC Green Team and its recommendations for short-term and long-term implementation in three areas, facilities, operations and education. Overall, the committee recommends the district adopt a sustainable based strategy for all its decisions, not just policies.