

Proposed Objective

Education, Arts & Community Goal Area of STAR Community Rating System

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Objective Title: Educating for Sustainability

Purpose of the Objective: The K-12 public education system produces graduates who understand the interdependent nature of ecological systems, economic systems, and social equity and have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to advance a sustainable future.

1. **Knowledge:** I understand sustainable systems in context of how well my community is performing on one or more of the STAR Community Rating System objectives.
2. **Skills:** I can apply systems thinking and 21st Century skills to understand and work to improve STAR outcomes and actions in my community. (21st Century skills: critical thinking, creative problem solving, collaboration, communication)
3. **Dispositions:** I share my views, learn from others and take informed action on important issues within an ethic of stewardship and fairness.

Rationale: At no other time in Earth's history have humans had as great an impact on the planet's systems. Disagreements about how best to approach the issues raised by the interactions between humans and Earth's life-support systems will continue to challenge social, political and economic systems, and it is clear that only a public educated in sustainable systems will be able to find workable, evidence-based solutions for these challenges.

Presently, STAR does not have an Objective that focuses directly on Educating for Sustainability in K-12 public education. If STAR supports community scale comprehensive planning to achieve interdependent improvements in sustainable community conditions it is only logical that we should educate our children in these same principles and practices and help prepare them for college, career, and civic life. Adding this new Objective would make the rating system more robust and provide critical knowledge, skills, and resources to our youth, who will be the decision-makers of tomorrow.

Current Models: The North American Association for Environmental Education has developed a [National Framework for Assessing Environmental Literacy](#). The framework has informed the education strategies of federal agencies such as EPA and NOAA. Many states, like the State of Washington have adopted [Environmental Literacy Plans](#) and have established legislatively approved [Environmental and Sustainability Education Standards](#).

The [US Department of Education Green Schools Program](#) has been established to inspire schools, districts and Institutions of Higher Education to strive for 21st century excellence by highlighting exemplary practices organized around three pillars: (1) reduce environmental impact and costs; (2) improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff; and (3) provide environmental and sustainability education.

Similarly, the US Green Building Council's Center for Green Schools has established a [National Action Plan on Educating for Sustainability](#) (as opposed to educating “about” sustainability). The Plan provides a visionary roadmap for advancing policies and practices through collaboration, alignment, and large-scale implementation so that the term “Educating for Sustainability” becomes synonymous with excellent education for all. The plan makes clear that educating *about* sustainability is a body of isolated knowledge while educating *for* sustainability is driven by academic excellence applied to community problem-based and empowers students to improve their community now as a core purpose of their education.

Educating for Sustainability is successful when educational standards are met in the classroom and STAR objectives are met in the community.

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Knowledge: 90% of graduates demonstrate knowledge of their communities sustainable characteristics based on STAR objectives, outcomes and actions. (potential development of a national, online, pre-post knowledge survey)

Outcome 2: Project-Based Service Learning: Demonstrate an increase in the percentage of students engaged in projects that meet education standards in service to one or more STAR objectives.

Preparatory Actions

Education and Outreach

1. Educate local school administrators, teachers, student leaders, and community leaders on the value of aligning student academic performance with local STAR outcomes and actions. For verification provide written evidence of an outreach strategy and key accomplishments of the past three years. Verification includes a clear and inclusive protocol for engaging students leaders from Green Teams, Student Government, City Youth Advisory Boards, or other youth associations in co-designing the policies, programs and curricular pathways that affect them.

Plan Development

2. Develop a K-12 scope and sequence on Educating for Sustainability aligned with local STAR objectives, outcomes and actions. For verification provide written scope and sequence.

3. Establish a logic model to guide short and long term actions toward the desired outcomes of Educating for Sustainability. For verification provide logic model referenced to the [National Action Plan for Educating for Sustainability](#).

Policy and Code Adjustment

4. Adopt a joint resolution between city council and school board to use the STAR framework as a general guide and shared measurement system for integrating student academic performance with improvements in community sustainability. For verification provide link or copy of resolution.

Partnerships and Collaboration

5. Establish a backbone organization or coalition working group specifically charged with facilitating communications among existing mission-aligned entities and initiatives, and tracking progress on the development of this objective. Membership includes student leaders empowered to represent their respective schools. For verification provide membership, roles, work plan of backbone organization and key accomplishments of the past three years.

Practice Improvements

6. Provide continuing professional development to support teachers, students, and community partners in designing and facilitating problem-based learning, aligned with 21st Century skills and education standards, resulting in measurable improvements in sustainable community conditions. For verification provide written synopsis of professional development plan including syllabi and calendar, plus clock hour or credit opportunities. Or, promote and track the percentage of teachers endorsed in Educating for Sustainability ([Washington State model](#))

Inventory, Assessment, or Survey

7. Inventory current K-12 scope and sequence for instructional units or courses in sustainable community problem solving aligned with local STAR outcomes and actions. For verification provide inventory and apply at least two of the following assessments.
 - a. Track and showcase the number of exemplary student-driven projects that meet education standards and are directly associated with advancing one or more STAR objectives.
 - b. Track the percentage of students placed in school-to-work learning programs including job shadows and internships supported by local government, business and community sectors.
 - c. Track and showcase the number of learning experiences associated with outdoor classrooms, field investigations and learning in Nature.

Implementation Actions

Enforcements and Incentives (not applicable, none offered)

Programs and Services

8. Convene an annual community sustainability summit through which student and community leaders report data-driven improvements in community conditions based on local STAR objectives and update a 12-month intergenerational work plan on selected priority actions. For verification provide a list of Summit participants and community associations, and a written work plan developed via the Summit process.
9. Develop neighborhood specific initiatives particularly in low-income and/or communities of color to strengthen opportunities for better access to sustainability information and practices, and to connect classroom learning with family and community learning. For verification provide initiative work plan(s) aligned with the STAR goal area of Equity and Empowerment, a schedule of meetings, and testimony from participants.

Facilities and Infrastructure

10. Apply the three pillars of the [US Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools Program](#) to document progress in: (1) reducing environmental impact and costs; (2) improving the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff; and (3) integrating environmental and sustainability education. For verification provide:
 - a. Evidence of The U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon School application submittal and/or award recognition.
 - b. Analysis of the degree to which sustainable practices and performance data related to facilities and operations are integrated as resources in the core curriculum or drive the development of new curriculum. .