

## LCCSS School Board Questionnaire 2007

### **Introduction:**

The world that our children and future generations will inherit from us will be vastly different from the one we are living in today. National and global phenomenon such as global warming, conflict over fuel reserves declines as well as natural resources and species depletion will require a knowledgeable generation prepared to problem solve for the future while making critical changes now.

Our public and private schools provide fertile ground for both preparing the new generation to successfully manage and even reverse current energy trends as well as practicing what we preach as we plan our school buildings and develop curriculum. As places of teaching and learning, schools must help pupils understand the impact we have on the planet. As models of good practice, schools must be places where sustainable living and working is demonstrated to young people and the local community.

The Loudoun County Public School (LCPS) system currently maintains 68 school facilities. Policies in place within this large infrastructure have a significant impact on the health and well being of our students. Also, LCPS has the unique opportunity to demonstrate leadership to Loudoun County industries towards green building and sustainable practices. We look to elect School Board members who support policies that will have an positive impact on these challenges.

## **Resources:**

The authors of this questionnaire are citizens who have enthusiasm and passion for these subjects, but not necessarily professional authority. We humbly offer the following resources, which assisted us in identifying our collective positive vision and finding examples of this vision in action. Please feel free to use these resources in completing this questionnaire, and in your future career on the School Board!

### **Greening America's Schools: Costs and Benefits:**

<http://www.cap-e.com/ewebeditpro/items/O59F9819.pdf>

A "green school" policies white paper summarizing all the work on health benefits, teacher retention, test score increases, etc., as well as savings from reduced energy usage and reduced water consumption.

### **TeacherNet Sustainable Schools:**

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools/>

Website designed to support schools on their journey to sustainability, introducing the principles of sustainable development and offering guidance on how to embed these principles into the heart of school life. From UK.

### **Green Schools Initiative:**

<http://www.greenschools.net/>

Report advocating that school boards and state policymakers develop comprehensive action plans to improve health and sustainability and build the local capacity to implement these plans. Developed by an organization founded by parent-environmental advocates in California.

### **Action for Healthy Kids**

[www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)

The only nonprofit organization formed specifically to address the epidemic of overweight, undernourished and sedentary youth by focusing on changes at school. They work in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to improve children's nutrition and increase physical activity, which will in turn improve their readiness to learn.

## **A. Healthy Schools /Environmental Hazards**

It is well documented that children are most susceptible to environmental hazards in their environment. Under current policy, our children are potentially exposed in school to environmental hazards such as pesticides, commercial cleaning products, lead, mold, poor indoor air quality (especially in portable classrooms), and industrial emissions at and around school. As more is learned about the effect on student health of these hazards, school systems nationwide are seeking alternatives to pesticides, herbicides and toxic cleaning materials whenever possible and seeking to use the least-toxic alternatives when constructing new schools.

1. Do you support the creation of an interdepartmental task force to review and revise maintenance practices and materials policies to improve the health and safety of our students?

**YES NO**

***Environmental Hazards Comments:***

## **B. Healthy Schools /School Nutrition**

Research shows that efforts to improve school health and nutrition have significant impact on school performance. Childhood obesity and other chronic diseases are at epidemic levels; research shows that this is very closely linked to poor nutritional intake in children. Loudoun County, with our good soil and rural farms has the unique opportunity to initiate reforms to improve the health of our children through food policies and education. Please rank the following initiatives according to your priorities (#1 through 8):

- \_\_\_ Restrict sale of candy, soda, sweets at/through the school
- \_\_\_ Adopt a "Healthy snacks" and "Healthy Parties" policy
- \_\_\_ Upgrade the nutritional quality of food offered in school lunches
- \_\_\_ Initiate partnerships between local farms and school food-service
- \_\_\_ Incorporate in-school kitchen gardens and local food economy education
- \_\_\_ Provide meal preparation and food selection workshops
- \_\_\_ Teach the significance of packaging and processed foods to ecological and personal health
- \_\_\_ Reinforce learned concepts by extending education to parents

2. As a school board member, will you show your commitment to student health by initiating an initial review and follow-up trial programs to improve food service offerings (lunches, vending machines, extra-curricular fund-raising food sales) **YES NO**

3. The first step in changing practices is educating. Will you support the creation and adoption of food selection curriculum for students and parents guided by sustainability and personal health concepts? **YES NO**

***Environmental Hazards Comments:***

### **C. Green Schools**

“Green building” is a loosely defined collection of land-use, building design, and construction strategies that reduce the environmental impacts that buildings have on their surroundings. Conventionally constructed buildings consume more of our resources than necessary, generate large amounts of waste, and expose inhabitants to environmental hazards through their materials and design. In addition to consideration of materials and architecture, building location & transportation are considered in designing a green building

Loudoun County Schools is poised to follow the lead of Arlington, Fairfax and Montgomery Counties in adopting school construction & maintenance standards and policies that improve school performance, save money in life-cycle costs, and provide a model for other Loudoun industries to follow.

4. Would you support changes to the school building standards to accommodate sustainable features that would provide a healthier environment for our children, use resources sustainably and generate life cycle cost savings for the taxpayers? **YES NO**

***Green Schools Comments:***

#### **D. Sustainable Schools Initiative**

We recognize that the changes we have proposed will require time to plan and execute. We intend to support school board members who provide the guidance and vision to promote the necessary policies and initiatives with wisdom and determination.

LCPS currently maintains an Energy Education Program whose mission has been "to reduce the use of energy throughout the school system". LCPS could expand the mission and personnel of this office to develop resources that will embed sustainable development principles in school buildings, the curriculum and the community.

A school-wide Sustainable Schools initiative would encompass evaluation of current practices and recommendations with respect to global warming emissions, waste streams, and natural resource depletion in the facilities construction, maintenance and operation systems. It would emphasize problem solving and respect for the interdependent web of life, and foster commitment to sustainable development within the curriculum. School staff could make use of the resources that already exist for these types of evaluations and programs.

5) Would you support the creation of a school system-wide Sustainable Schools initiative? **YES**  
**NO**

6) Initiatives that support sustainability have positive effects beyond their environmental focus: cost savings, improved school performance, student and staff health, etc. However, there may also be obstacles to pursuing sustainable strategies in our school system. What impediments do you foresee and how would you deal with them?

***Sustainable Schools Initiative Comments:***

***Additional Comments:***