



PGCPS Board of Education Climate Change Action Plan Focus Work Group

July 21, 2021 3:30pm.

Draft Narrative Summary

Committee Chair Pamela Boozer-Strother thanked the members and the panelists for attending and sought approval of the minutes of the last meeting and the agenda for this meeting, both of which were approved without dissent. Board Member Boozer-Strother then thanked Dr. Kia McDaniel and Ms. Desann Manzano-Lee for joining the meeting today. She also discussed the implementing documents for Focus Workgroup for those that wished to read them. She then turned the meeting over to Joseph Jakuta for announcements.

Mr. Jakuta first brought the revised schedule for the Focus Workgroup, which added a break in August which pushed the date for finalization of our work, which will be relayed to the full Board of Education at the next meeting. He then brought up the idea of signing up for subworkgroups so we can address specific topics in more detail outside of the main meeting. He also provided a link for workgroup members to sign up and stressed the need to have the form filled and mentioned that Kate Culzoni will be setting up documents for each sub workgroup. He next mentioned that we are still collecting research materials so the group should add to the collection. Finally he mentioned that the research request was sent to Valerie Ervin after July 4th, that it is being reviewed by PGCPS staff, whom have noted that some of the information is available and some might not have yet been collected. He also mentioned that for anything that PGCPS does not collect, we can include recommendations to start collecting it in the final plan. He then turned the meeting back to Board Member Boozer-Strother.

Board Member Boozer-Strother mentioned the hard work that Mr. Jakuta, Ms. Culzoni, Ms. Ervin, Donald Belle, and Michele Smith put into this meeting and that the update to the full Board of Education will be given at the next meeting. She also mentioned that <http://pgcps.org/climate> is up and running. Ms. Culzoni then discussed that the general public survey will open up in September and that it was necessary to wait since the PGCPS newsletter was on hold until after summer break.

Ms. Culzoni then relayed data from the student forum. 80 students and 10 committee members joined the meeting, which had 9 breakout sessions with 18 student moderators. Students said that PGCPs should prioritize climate change education and that on a scale of 1 to 10 PGCPs is about 6 on incorporating climate change into the curriculum, though students also said that education and awareness has been improving. Students also identified that more action is needed both in education and “doing.”

Michele Smith then introduced our special guest, Dr. Kia McDaniel, the director for curriculum and instruction in PGCPs. She has also been in the classroom, a reading specialist, an ESOL instructor, an instructional specialist, and in various supervisory positions.

Ms. Culzoni asked the first question, what is the process for how curriculum is developed, including timelines. Dr. McDaniel said that curriculum is always being developed and planned a year in advance. PGCPs is one of the few districts in Maryland that develops its own curriculum, which does require budget and time resources. Many revisions do come from requirements to meet national and state curriculum changes and when updated textbooks are updated. Textbooks are not necessarily used chronologically though, lesson timing is developed cross discipline. New digital resources have also become available, especially during Covid-19, and these need to be integrated as well. A new aspect of curriculum development also came from the adoption of the Canvas tool (<https://www.instructure.com/canvas>), which allows for more robust curriculum module planning and is necessary now that PGCPs is a [one-to-one district](#).

Mr. Belle added that it is quite important that we both have both a Science and an Environmental Literacy curriculum team, the former is housed at Howard B Owens and the latter which is housed at the William Schmidt Center.

Ms. Smith also added that county curriculum writers also work as contractors for state curriculum development, which allows the teachers to learn more about the assessments to better develop PGCPs’s curriculum.

Ms. Culzoni asked if there are standards around climate change. Dr. McDaniel said that climate change is part of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Mr. Belle added that they include problem solving around human impact. Dr. McDaniel stated that she assumes that there are not going to be specific new courses on climate change, so the addition of new curriculum would be expected to take one year. They are already in the biology, bio-geochemical systems, environmental science, earth and space sciences courses, as well as in the two speciality centers’ programs. Mr. Belle added that climate change education is an important part of the Maryland Green School program and that we have the most Green Schools in the state.

Board Member Sonya Williams asked about how newer information available on the Internet can get integrated in the curriculum and how flexible news on climate can be. Dr. McDaniel discussed how curriculum documents are living documents so that they can incorporate news

into the lessons. Using Canvas and being one-to-one will also make pushing out such things even easier.

Ms. Culzoni asked what was occurring at the state level on integrating climate change into the curriculum. MSDE's environmental literacy standards have been revised to reflect climate change. NGSS standards in particular have many climate elements. PGCPs staff will also be following USDE's upcoming webinars on climate adaptation and mitigation curriculum.

Mr. Jakuta asked if climate change was integrated into the liberal arts curriculum, in particular government and literature studies. Dr. McDaniel said that she didn't know specifically, but it is part of readings, in particular in government courses. There is a requirement to have a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE), and final MWEE projects often have a climate element. Ms. Manzano-Lee also added how the ability to push out news materials allows climate change to be included in multiple subject areas and Mr. Belle pointed out that this mechanism also has been a way to touch on the nexus of racial and climate justice.

Dawn Holten asked how climate change is integrated into the Career Technical Education (CTE) program. Dr. McDaniel pointed out the CTE is managed through a different office so Dr. Cadet would need to answer more specific questions, but also discussed that some projects do touch on issues of sustainability.

Ms. Culzoni asked how climate is integrated into the curriculum for younger students. Dr. McDaniel did discuss the introduction of outdoor classrooms in the recent past and the Green School program. One program, Homegrown Heroes, allowed students to start gardens at home and another that allows students to use photovoltaic cells to conduct scientific experiments using such tools. Additionally, William Schmidt has specific programs at a variety of elementary and middle school levels and they developed a set of climate resources for teachers. Mr. Belle also discussed school composting projects and Ms. Smith discussed how English and media classes produced the PSAs for the Largo High School composting program.

Jamee Alston also discussed how there are other hands-on programs developed with PEPCO that allow for hands-on projects that involve energy management. One of these included building their own wind turbines and another involved students building an energy efficient house.

Delegate Mary Lehman said she was inspired by the programs she heard, but was concerned that these opportunities are not available uniformly across the system. Ms. Smith discussed how it is important to have administrators that find Green Schools, etc to be a priority. She also mentioned the fact that "what gets monitored gets done" and the Green School program in particular provides for that. Dr. McDaniel also pointed out that they are more formally pushing out information, including Green School and other climate change related opportunities, though the regional offices rather than piecemeal as had been the practice. Mr. Belle also discussed a new program to obtain air quality monitors that can be used by students to investigate the issue in the biology program, which can be connected to the climate planning, which was chosen given that every student must take biology allowing all to have access to this type of project.

Board Member Boozer-Strother brought up the point that we should be thinking about Kirwin and how funds can be put towards programs that bring parents and students together, including in regards to climate education. She also mentioned the students want to see work accomplished in all of the core areas of climate focus workgroup at once and we can have the students in the core active group work next year to push this.

Ms. Culzoni asked if there were any shared lessons from school to school. Mr. Belle brought up the quarterly Environmental Literacy Steering Committee meetings with staff and community partners to discuss similar issues as to what we discussed today.

Board Member Williams reiterated the point that programs are not equally distributed across schools and the importance of school leaders in regards to that. She asked if there is an ability for students, with PGCPs being a one-to-one system, that maybe there are in other programs, especially CTE or arts, where students who may be interested in these issues can get access even if it isn't part of their daily curriculum. Dr. McDaniel did agree that being one-to-one should open up these opportunities for students to have access to more areas of learning. Mr. Belle brought up a situation where a student at one high school attended Green Club meetings at two other schools and learned specifically about the Brandywine Power Plant in their community and hopes to see more of this type of interaction. Ms. Smith also brought up the ability to rely on technology, social media, and flip grid to connect students to a Keep America Beautiful program.

Marita Roos brought up the Anacostia Watershed Society as a hands-on resource for students to learn about the environment.

Board Member Boozer-Strother than closed the meeting.

Action Items:

- The next meeting is September 15 at 3:30 with a focus on Labor Issues.
- We will begin communicating about sub workgroup collaboration.