

# HOW GREEN IS MY TOWN? Evaluation Workbook

## Part Two: The School District

**SS 1.** Has the school district adopted a comprehensive environmental policy covering the following areas?

- energy use
- green procurement
- green cleaning
- building practices
- transportation
- grounds maintenance
- recycling
- environmental toxins
- communications

**SS 1 Total Points:** \_\_\_\_\_ (out of 9)

### ENERGY:

**SS 2.** Has the school district had an energy audit performed at all school facilities? **GreenPoint:** *A professional energy audit is like a blood test: it's a method of determining exactly where and how a school building's energy is being used, and what opportunities may exist for improvement.*

**SS 2 Total Points:** \_\_\_\_\_ (out of 2)

**SS 3.** Has the school district mandated energy reductions with dates and/or percentages? **GreenPoint:** *Once an energy audit has been completed, schools can use the results of the audit to set target reductions and timetables for implementation.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 4.** Has the school district replaced all incandescent bulbs with energy efficient bulbs? **GreenPoint:** *Improving the efficiency of school lighting is one of the easiest and fastest ways to save energy.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 5.** Has the school district installed electronic thermostats? **GreenPoint:** *Some new communicating thermostats can be integrated into a "whole school" electronic control system or controlled directly from a central computer. Not only can temperatures be regulated accurately, but some systems can also compute and track energy savings.*

\_\_\_ No credit      \_\_\_ Partial credit      \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 6.** Has the school district investigated alternative energy sources, including solar, wind, biofuel and biomass and utilized them where appropriate? **GreenPoint:** *Solar, wind and other alternative energy projects at schools provide excellent educational opportunities for students and serve as good models for the community.*

\_\_\_ No credit      \_\_\_ Partial credit      \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

## GREEN PROCUREMENT

**SS 7.** Does the school district have a comprehensive green purchasing policy? **GreenPoint:** *A comprehensive purchasing or procurement policy for a green school system should address all environmental aspects of products and services, and be incorporated into all contracts and bid specifications.*

\_\_\_ No credit      \_\_\_ Partial credit      \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 8.** Does the school district consider lifetime energy costs in purchasing decisions? **GreenPoint:** *The true energy cost of a product includes all the energy required to manufacture, transport, maintain, use and dispose of it.*

\_\_\_ No credit      \_\_\_ Partial credit      \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 9.** Does the school district consider sustainability of all product materials and ingredients? **GreenPoint:** *"Sustainability" refers to a production process that uses renewable resources in a manner that be continued indefinitely.*

\_\_\_ No credit      \_\_\_ Partial credit      \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 10.** Does the school district consider the recyclability of products or component parts? **GreenPoint:** *Buying recycled products or products containing recycled materials in the first place can reduce the waste stream, improve sustainability and help support and develop the market for these products.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 11.** Does the school district consider transportation costs and packaging impacts? **GreenPoint:** *As packaging is reduced in volume and weight, transportation costs go down.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 12.** Does the school district consider the health impacts of products?  
**GreenPoint:** *The consideration of health impact of products used in and around schools must be based on the fact that children are uniquely vulnerable and disproportionately exposed to environmental toxins, and that teachers and school staff who are pregnant need to be especially careful about any exposures.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 13.** Does the school district belong to a local purchasing network?  
**GreenPoint:** *Local purchasing networks help school systems reduce product transportation and energy costs, and reduce greenhouse gases.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

## GREEN CLEANING

**SS 14.** Does your school district have a comprehensive “green cleaning” policy?  
**GreenPoint:** *School boards and administrators, when establishing a green cleaning policy, must seek out the **most protective criteria** for children, recognizing that these requirements will necessarily be more stringent than those developed for adults.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 15.** Does your school district use only cleaning products that are safe for children? **GreenPoint:** *Manufacturers are developing new products for schools and other institutions serving “sensitive populations” - children, women who are or may become pregnant, and anyone with chemical sensitivities.*

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 16.** Does your school district use best efforts to reduce dirt sources?

**GreenPoint:** Most school custodians agree that one of the best ways to reduce their workload, save money and reduce the use of cleaning chemicals is to prevent dirt from entering the building in the first place.

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 17.** Does your school district prohibit the purchase or use of anti-bacterial products containing triclosan? **GreenPoint:** Products which are labeled "anti-bacterial" or "anti-microbial" often contain triclosan, a chemical that has been shown to have significant health and environmental impacts.

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 18.** Does your school district prohibit the purchase or use of artificial air fresheners? **GreenPoint:** Chemicals commonly found in air fresheners (and scented candles) can trigger asthma attacks, interfere with endocrine systems, and even increase the risks of cancer in some individuals. Children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to these toxins.

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 19.** Does your school district mandate the use of non-toxic hand wipes?

**GreenPoint:** Alcohol is dangerous for use around young children, whose typical hand-to-mouth behavior puts them at risk for exposure from products with high alcohol content. Anti-microbial products are registered pesticides, and their long-term effects on children's health and the environment, even at low levels, are just now being discovered.

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 20.** Does your school district encourage the use of microfiber cloths?

**GreenPoint:** Microfiber can be used to clean camera lenses, eyeglasses, furniture, mirrors, floors and almost anything else using only hot water, although it can also enhance the performance of cleaning products.

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

## GREEN BUILDINGS

**SS 21.** Does your school district require new construction to meet green building specifications? **GreenPoint:** *There are currently two national green building standards organizations with categories for school construction, LEED and Energy Star.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 22.** Does your school district require renovations to meet green building standards? **GreenPoint:** *Installing energy-efficient windows and doors, adding skylights, replacing old lighting fixtures, installing Energy Star machines and appliances, and using non-toxic building materials can all help make an older school building more efficient and create a healthier environment for students and staff.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 23.** Does your school district utilize solar energy and natural daylighting in all new projects? **GreenPoint:** *Studies have shown that natural lighting in schools can lead to higher test scores and better work habits, as well as a decrease in headaches, fatigue and eye strain among staff and students.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 24.** Does your school district discourage the use of carpeting? **GreenPoint:** *Most institutional carpeting is made from non-renewable petrochemicals with high VOC (volatile organic compound) levels, that volatilize (or "outgas") for weeks or months after installation. Some of these chemicals can be very toxic to children and pregnant women, and inhalation is the primary route of exposure.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 25.** Does your school district prohibit the installation of microwave towers on school property? **GreenPoint:** *Manufacturers and telecom companies are quick to dismiss any worries about microwave towers, although because the technology is relatively new, there are no scientific studies showing that long-term exposure is safe. What we do know for certain is that children and developing fetuses are more vulnerable to the effects of environmental exposures in general than adults.*

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 26.** Does your school district install permeable paving where practical?

**GreenPoint:** Permeable paving is a method of paving surfaces in a way that permits air and water to move through the surface, reducing runoff from stormwater and other sources.

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

## TRANSPORATION

**SS 27.** Does your school district prohibit the idling of school buses and other vehicles on school property? **GreenPoint:** Diesel exhaust contains more than forty hazardous air pollutants, twenty-one of which are identified by the EPA as known or suspected carcinogens. Most health experts agree that there is no safe level of exposure to diesel exhaust.

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 28.** Does your school district encourage the purchase of (or contracting for) alternative fuel vehicles? **GreenPoint:** An Alternative-Fuel Vehicle (AFV) is a vehicle that runs on fuels other than gasoline or diesel. AFVs typically run on compressed natural gas, hydrogen, ethanol, vegetable oils, methanol or electricity.

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 29.** Does your school district retrofit diesel school buses with pollution control devices, or require retrofits on contracted buses? **GreenPoint:** Most of the particulate matter (PM) pollution inside school bus cabins appears to come from the engine crankcase. Closed Crankcase Ventilators (CCVs) reduce particulate matter almost to ambient air levels.

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 30.** Does your school district encourage walking, biking and car pools? **GreenPoint:** Walking or biking to school is not only great for the environment, it's healthy for kids and provides an opportunity for them to be "part of the solution."

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

## GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

**SS 31.** Does your school district maintain grounds and playing fields naturally, without pesticides? **GreenPoint:** *Natural playing fields maintained without pesticides can perform just as well as any chemically maintained turf, with even greater resiliency, softer playing surface, less water consumption and greater drought tolerance.*

\_\_\_ **No credit**    \_\_\_ **Partial credit**    \_\_\_ **Full credit (1 point)**

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 32.** Does your school district discourage the installation of synthetic turf fields? **GreenPoint:** *Synthetic turf fields are made from plastic, an unsustainable petroleum-based product; they are not biodegradable and cannot easily be recycled. They often replace natural turf fields that are living ecosystems, capable of sequestering carbon in their biomass, recharging and filtering rainwater and pollutants, and cooling ambient temperatures.*

\_\_\_ **No credit**    \_\_\_ **Partial credit**    \_\_\_ **Full credit (1 point)**

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 33.** Does your school district prohibit playground equipment constructed with treated wood? **GreenPoint:** *Scientific studies show that chemicals from treated wood contaminate the surface of the wood and readily leach into the soil where children can be exposed through normal hand-to-mouth behavior.*

\_\_\_ **No credit**    \_\_\_ **Partial credit**    \_\_\_ **Full credit (1 point)**

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 34.** Does your school district use energy-efficient, non-polluting landscaping equipment? **GreenPoint:** *According to the EPA, emissions from mowers, blowers and trimmers are often much greater than those from a car, per hour of operation.*

\_\_\_ **No credit**    \_\_\_ **Partial credit**    \_\_\_ **Full credit (1 point)**

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

## ENVIRONMENTAL TOXINS

**SS 35.** Does your school district use only no- or low-VOC paints, stains, finishes, and adhesives? **GreenPoint:** *The smell of fresh paint is actually the smell of volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, being released into the air. Most commercial paints, stains, finishes and adhesives have high levels of VOCs, as well as other chemical additives that can cause significant health and environmental problems.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 36.** Does your school district encourage a fragrance-free environment? **GreenPoint:** *Rising rates of asthma and the growing number of students, teachers and school staff with chemical sensitivities have led to greater concern about the proliferation of fragrances in the products used by building occupants.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 37.** Does your school district perform floor care renovation only during vacation periods? **GreenPoint:** *Floor care products typically used in schools include strippers, neutralizers and sealers that often contain highly toxic, highly caustic and highly corrosive chemicals. Their high VOC (volatile organic compound) levels can exacerbate respiratory problems.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 38.** Does your school district have a policy to remediate any mold problems immediately? **GreenPoint:** *Most moisture problems in schools are related to roof and gutter leaks that may not be easily detected. Mold gradually destroys the material it grows on; but by the time damage is visible, the mold growth is often out of control.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 39.** Does your school district have an effective IPM policy for interior pesticides? **GreenPoint:** *In many cases, pest problems in schools can be greatly reduced*

through simple steps such as blocking pest access routes, keeping surfaces clean and controlling food sources.

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 40.** Does your school district have a comprehensive recycling program for use by students and staff? **GreenPoint:** *A comprehensive program should include the recycling of bottles, cans, paper, plastic and cardboard, as well as electronics waste ("e-waste"), batteries and food scraps.*

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 41.** Does your school district provide convenient recycling receptacles for student use? **GreenPoint:** *Containers should be clearly marked as to their desired contents, and be located in places that are visible, convenient and secure.*

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 42.** Does your school district compost food scraps from cafeterias? **GreenPoint:** *Through a school composting program (in most cases, a vermicompost, or worm-based program), students learn about nature's own built-in recycling program. In the process, they create valuable compost that can be used to enrich soil on school grounds.*

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 43.** Does your school district collect and recycle batteries and e-waste? **GreenPoint:** *School e-waste programs can include recycling of used cell phones for emergency phone use (see below), and the collection and recycling of old electronic equipment through manufacturer's programs or other local initiatives.*

\_\_\_ No credit    \_\_\_ Partial credit    \_\_\_ Full credit (1 point)

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 44.** Does your school district include students in management of recycling programs? **GreenPoint:** *Most students — particularly in younger grades — are anxious to be part of the solution, and school recycling programs provide a great opportunity to encourage and support children's natural instincts to "do the right thing."*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

## COMMUNICATIONS

**SS 45.** Does your school district provide curriculum in all grades on environmental issues? **GreenPoint:** *If tomorrow's leaders and citizens are going to successfully address these complex environmental problems, they will need a solid foundation in the principles that shape both the natural and the human-built world.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 46.** Does your school district effectively communicate policies to students, faculty, parents and the community? **GreenPoint:** *Keeping everyone informed about new policies and the progress of existing programs helps build support among students, staff and administration. This is often best accomplished by establishing a "Green Team" made up of representatives from each "stakeholder" group.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

**SS 47.** Does your school district provide information on environmental issues on the school web site? **GreenPoint:** *The use of web sites reduces the use of paper and cuts printing and mailing costs (and reduces the greenhouse gas emissions associated with delivering mail). Web sites are infinitely variable and can be changed quickly, as needs and resources allow.*

No credit       Partial credit       Full credit (1 point)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_