



Education for Sustainability (EfS)

Strengths Assessment



DUTCHESSBOCES



OMEGA

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

Welcome!

The Dutchess BOCES Center for Sustainability and Climate Education would like to congratulate you and your district for embarking on it's next steps towards achieving a sustainable future for your students and your community. The strengths assessment process creates an opportunity for building/district stakeholders to take stock of where the district is currently in the effort to provide Education for Sustainability (EfS) to the community.

Education for Sustainability (EfS) is defined as the transformative learning processes that equip students, teachers, and school systems with the new knowledge and ways of thinking we need to achieve economic prosperity and responsible citizenship while restoring the health of the living systems upon which our lives depend.

This tool was designed with the help of the Center for Green Schools at the US Green Building Council, and in partnership with the Cloud Institute, Dutchess BOCES, and Omega Institute.

It does three things:

- Provides a baseline assessment of the 'stage of change' your school or district is currently in on the continuing journey to educate for sustainability through curriculum design, organizational policy, and the built environment.
- Creates a shared frame of reference for some of the essential elements of Education for Sustainability (EfS)
- Sparks ideas for short and long-term planning

We are excited to be on this path with you! Let's begin.



Component A: Curriculum & Instruction

A1	<u>EfS Standards Adoption</u>	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	Have you formally adopted EfS standards or Environmental Literacy Guidelines?			
	<p>If so, please indicate which EfS standards or Guidelines you have adopted (<i>check all that apply</i>):</p> <p>EfS Benchmarks: _____</p> <p>Cloud Institute EfS Standards: _____</p> <p>Environmental Literacy Guidelines for Excellence: _____</p> <p>Environment as an Integrating Context (EIC): _____</p> <p>Other: _____</p>			
A2	<u>Curriculum Integration</u>			
	Documentation and Mapping	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	Our operating curriculum is continually documented, mapped and updated regularly by our faculty			

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

A2	Curriculum Integration (continued)	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	<p>Alignment/Crosswalk EfS Enduring Understandings, Standards and Performance Indicators have been aligned with our curriculum and other frameworks and standards (i.e. Common Core Standards, Next Generation Standards, Character Education, 4 Cs, Cultural Competency, etc.) and we have an “alignment chart/consensus map” that guides us as we embed EfS where appropriate into our learning outcomes, assessments, performance criteria and lessons</p>			
	<p>Stage of Change In this section, you will map out where each grade level and discipline are within the “Stage of Change” (Duffin) described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Precontemplation/Disinterest</u>: We are not intending to make a change in the next six months; we are not necessarily opposed to the idea, we are just not ready to start b. <u>Contemplation/Deliberation</u>: We are thinking about making a change in the next six months; we are still ambivalent about the costs vs the benefits of the effort required c. <u>Preparation/Planning and Design</u>: We intend to make a change in the near future. We are convinced that the potential benefits outweigh the risks d. <u>Actions are being taken/changes are happening</u>: We are implementing changed in our curriculum and instructional practices to incorporate EfS across the disciplines and grade levels; not everyone is involved yet e. <u>Changes are maintained over time and EfS is the “new normal”</u>: We are moving toward full participation of the faculty; we see evidence of EfS enduring understandings, standards and performance indicators in courses, units of study, assessments, performance criteria, lessons and student work; we are continually collaborating to improve and expand the work we are doing in EfS; We monitor our progress, we analyze student work for evidence of EfS and we improve our practice over time; it just gets better and better 			

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

A2	Curriculum Integration (continued)	
	<i>Please indicate which "Stage of Change" you are in by grade level</i>	Choose one for each grade level
	Grades K-5	
	Grades 6-8	
	Grades 9-12	
	<i>Please indicate which "Stage of Change" you are in by discipline</i>	Choose one for each discipline
	Social Studies/History	
	English/ELA	
	Science	
	Math	
	Arts	
	Physical Education	
	World Languages	
	Other (please specify)	

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

A3	Instructional Practices			
	Typical Instructional Practices Used in the School <i>Please indicate whether the implementation of the instructional practices listed below are a strength, aspiration or not yet part of your instructional repertoire.</i>	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This is not part of our instructional repertoire
	A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH			
	LEARNER-CENTERED ACTIVITIES			
	AUTHENTIC INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT			
	DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION			
	INTERDISCIPLINARY INSTRUCTION/CURRICULA			
	WRITING PROCESS			
	INQUIRY-BASED APPROACH			
	PROJECT-BASED APPROACH			
	APPLIED LEARNING METHODS			
	PLACE-BASED INSTRUCTION			
	REFLECTIVE PRACTICE			
	COOPERATIVE OR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING			
	SERVICE LEARNING			
	INTERACTIVE MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY			

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

A3	<u>Instructional Practices (continued)</u>	
	Other (please specify):	
A4	<u>Place-based Education for Students:</u> Learning about and taking care of the social and physical place in which the students go to school (the school buildings, grounds and community) OR the place and community surrounding them as they learn from home is embedded in the curriculum and instructional practices and students develop a sense of place by taking care of the places in which they live and study	<i>Please indicate which opportunities for place-based education are currently part of the curriculum (check all that apply)</i>
	Investigate local natural ecological processes and systems	
	Monitor and conserve energy usage	
	Monitor, reduce/eliminate waste	
	Monitor and conserve water usage	
	Design, develop and maintain the growth and health of the garden	
	Farm/garden to school programs	
	Study the local food system and preparation	
	Design, develop and maintain a composting system	
	Develop and track local sustainable community indicators	
	Test, monitor and continuously improve water, soil and air quality	

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

A4	<u>Place-based Education for Students (continued)</u>	<i>Check all that apply</i>		
	Replace invasive species with native species			
	Conduct school community asset mapping			
	Design and conduct Interviews with, and/or social histories of, people in the community			
	Other (<i>please describe</i>):			
<p><i>Please indicate which statement best applies to your school below</i></p> <p>Students regularly leave the classroom as part of their school day ____</p> <p>Students regularly leave the classroom as part of their school week ____</p> <p>Student regularly spend time outdoors enjoying physical activity ____</p>				
A5	<u>Use of Exemplary EE/EfS Curriculum Resources</u>	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	Do you utilize “off-the-shelf” supplemental curricular resources from organizations? <i>Some potential examples include: Facing the Future, the Cloud Institute for Sustainability Education, Roots and Shoots, project Learning Tree, Shelburne Farms, Project Wild, Project Wet, California EEi, The Buck Institute’s Project Learning Materials, and/or Center for Ecoliteracy</i>			
<p><i>Please indicate which materials faculty regularly use in your school below:</i></p>				

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

Component B: Organizational Policy & Practice

B1	Strategic Plan to Educate for Sustainability	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	Do you have a strategic plan, policies and practices in place to drive, monitor and evaluate sustainability education efforts?			
B2	Policies and Practices			
	Alignment with Human Resources	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	Are your hiring policies and practices aligned with our strategic goal to educate for sustainability?			
	Do you consistently orient new faculty and administrators to EfS through professional development, peer coaching, critical friends PLCs and/or peer mentoring?			
	Are faculty and administrator performance assessments, grants and other incentives are aligned with the strategic goal to educate for sustainability?			
	Faculty Support Systems	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	Are educators regularly provided with opportunities to build capacity and develop knowledge and competencies in sustainability education through professional development, coaching, reading groups, conferences, etc.?			

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

B2	<u>Policies and Practices (continued)</u>	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	Is time allocated on a regular basis for teachers to collaborate, to plan and document curriculum units and maps, to share, to analyze student work and to reflect on and improve their practices in EfS through professional learning communities, critical friends, department/grade level planning time, etc. ?			
	How many hours of planning/collaborative time do faculty have per month? _____ 0 _____ 1-2 _____ 3-6 _____ 7-8 _____ 9-12			
	Leadership <i>(Please check the current leadership model for EfS in your school)</i>	Check One		
	The school/district leadership team that oversees curriculum and instruction & green operations embraces EfS and includes the implementation of EfS as a strategic goal. In addition, the school board has resolved to make this work a priority for current and future administrations			
	The school/district leadership team that oversees curriculum and instruction & green operations embraces EfS and includes the implementation of EfS as a strategic goal			
	Someone(s) on staff (educator, instructional specialist, administrator, facilities or sustainability staff member) is tasked by administration to coordinate/champion sustainability-related curriculum & green operations efforts			
	The work being done in EfS is lead informally at the moment by passionate faculty and/or staff members			
	No one is leading the implementation of EfS in our school, yet!			

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

B3	<u>Student Leadership</u>	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	A. The school/district has established a structure to facilitate peer to peer coaching and/or mentorships			
	B. The school/district has developed a way to solicit feedback and input from students regarding curricular effectiveness			
	C. The school/district has developed a way to solicit feedback and input from students regarding school policies, plans and implementation			
	D. Students regularly involved through the curriculum (formal and informal) in project-based learning opportunities that allow them to make authentic contributions to sustainable school and community development			
B4	<u>School/Community Partnerships:</u>	On a scale from 1-4 (1 represents the lowest level and 4 represents the highest level) please indicate the rating that best describes the extent to which you school partners with your community/municipality in the following ways:		
	<p>A. Our school has partnerships with several local community-based groups that serve many different purposes. These relationships are developed and nourished over time.</p> <p><i>Possible examples include: service organizations, local government agencies, boys and girls clubs, local businesses, elderhostels, parks and reserves, state and national forests, residential centers, nature centers, zoos museums, 4-H clubs, scouting organizations, etc.</i></p>			

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

B4	School/Community Partnerships (continued)	Rating (1-4)
	B. Our school partners with local community-based groups (see list above) to provide service learning opportunities, project-based and place-based learning opportunities, internships and mentorships for our students	
	C. Our school community including students learns and works with local community-based groups on collaborative sustainable community development projects and/or joint green team initiatives	
	D. Parents, community members, volunteers, other district staff/departments are authentically integrated into sustainability education and curriculum efforts	
	E. Our school is utilized as a learning hub for the community - a place where students, teachers and community members learn together and where the school and community are resources to each other	
	F. Our students, school and community work together to track our sustainable community indicators to monitor our progress	
	G. Our school and community celebrate together as much as possibly our successes and the learning that comes from worthy failures	

Component C: Building Environment, Operations & Maintenance

C1 The Built Environment				
	The School Building(s)	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	The building(s) have completed green HVAC improvements (for example: geo-thermal heat pumps, dual fuel heat pumps, thermally driven air conditioning, insulated ducts, on demand hot water recirculators, energy analysis software, etc.)			
	The building(s) are equipped with energy efficient windows			
	The building(s) are equipped with water fountains with reusable bottle fillers			
	The bathrooms are equipped with low flow toilets			
	The bathrooms are equipped with waste free hand dryers			
	All light fixtures are using LED bulbs			
	Please note any additional improvements made to the built environment that are not already captured above:			
	Signage	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	Is there signage throughout the building that educates the inhabitants on energy efficiency and the sustainable choices they can make?			

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

C1	The Built Environment (continued)			
	Green Space	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	Does the school/district maintain green spaces/roofs on any campus?			
	Does the school/district actively operate a school/community garden on school grounds?			
	Renewable Energy Transition Plan	Select One		
	<p>Please refer to the “Stages of Change” below and select the option that best indicates where your school/district is in the development/implementation of a renewable energy transition plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Precontemplation/Disinterest</u>: We are not intending to make a change in the next six months; we are not necessarily opposed to the idea, we are just not ready to start b. <u>Contemplation/Deliberation</u>: We are thinking about making a change in the next six months; we are still ambivalent about the costs vs the benefits of the effort required c. <u>Preparation/Planning and Design</u>: We intend to make a change in the near future. We are convinced that the potential benefits outweigh the risks d. <u>Actions are being taken/changes are happening</u>: We have begun actively implementing an approved renewable energy plan (ex. On-site infrastructure, entering into community solar agreements, opting in to green energy providers with our utility company, etc.) e. <u>Changes are maintained over time</u>: We have finished implementing our renewable energy plan and are currently monitoring/reviewing it's impact in preparation for what comes next 			

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

C1	<u>The Built Environment (continued)</u>			
	Tracking and Monitoring of Energy/Utility Usage & Costs	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	As a school/district, we have systems and procedures in place to monitor our energy and utility usage & costs			
	We use this information to make operational decisions and to help conserve resources and improve the impact of our buildings			
	The information and data on our energy & utility usage and costs is visible to our school community.			
C2.	<u>Maintenance & Waste Management</u>			
	Our school/district regular conducts a waste audit of our building(s)			
	We are currently operating a composting program for the disposal of food waste			
	Please check off any items that the school/district is actively recycling below a. Paper _____ b. Glass _____ c. Plastic _____ d. Electronics/IT _____ e. Batteries _____ f. Refrigerants _____ g. Oil _____			
	Please specify any other item that the district is currently recycling in the space below:			

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

C2.	<u>Maintenance & Waste Management (continued)</u>	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	Our custodial staff/any outside contractors utilize eco-friendly/organic pest control methods throughout our buildings and grounds			
	Our school/district uses eco-friendly/green cleaning products when cleaning and disinfecting school buildings			
	Green landscaping tools techniques and chemicals (non-GMO/non-toxic) are used while landscaping all school/district grounds			
	Our school/district custodial staff have been trained in the use of: (1) eco-friendly/organic pest control methods, (2)eco-friendly clearing products and all associated cleaning techniques and; (3) green landscaping tools, techniques and chemicals.			
C3	<u>Transportation</u>			
	Bus Fleet Audit & Tracking	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	The school/district tracks the average age of each bus in its fleet AND/OR is appraised of this by the contracted school transportation provider			
	The average age of the daily operating bus fleet is 10 years and under			
	The school/district works (if applicable, with the transportation provider) to optimize the bus route plans to minimize overlap and total route mileage			
	Routes to School			
	The school/district has installed bike racks on campus			

Education for Sustainability (EfS) Strengths Assessment

C3	<u>Transportation (continued)</u>	Yes! This is a strength	Not yet! This is an aspiration	This has not yet been considered
	The school/district facilitates and promotes the use of car pools when traveling to and departing from school events			
	The school employs crossing guards to promote walking to school (where possible)			
	The school/district participates in Safe Routes to School or an equivalent program			
	No-Idling Zones			
	The school has established no-idling zones and posted signage at all school buildings and loading zones			