Chapter 19

PPBES:
How One School District Goes Green

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ABSTRACT

The chapter is intended to examine the effort of a progressive school district toward advocating for the green school initiative. The school district’s employment of the Planning, Programing, Budgeting, and Evaluation System to implementing green school concepts is reviewed for its effectiveness. The school district’s green school effort is observed in the areas of new school construction, existing school renovations, school operational practices, and curriculum integration. While the school district continues its commitment to environmental greenness, suggestions are made to improve the implementation process. The chapter ends in highlighting the long-term benefits of green school initiative.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of environmental greenness actually started when human beings finally awoke and found that earth resources were not unlimited. The faster we consume these resources, the closer we are approaching self-destruction (Brundtland, 1987). The whole idea of greenness is to promote the concept of saving our environment by (1) saving natural resources, and (2) exploring alternative resources for sustainability (Lockwood, 2006). To save the earth environment, all segments of the world community need to be mobilized (U.S. Green building Council, 2006). It is anticipated that educators playing a key role of community services would assume a major green responsibility in this worldwide green initiative (Chance, 2011; Dejong, 2012; Fox, 2007; Orr, 2007).

As conceptualized by the Green School Initiative (2013), a school declared as green is supported by four pillars: (1) Strive to be toxin-free; (2) Use resources sustainably; (3) Create a green healthy space; and (4) Teach, learn and engage. It is not difficult to envision that enormous effort is needed to turn a school green. As the green school movement is receiving increased publicity and support, school administrators are under greater pressure to
meet the challenge of green school accountability (Schiller, 2012; Sims, 2012).

In this chapter, a large school district in a southern metro area is introduced for its courageous effort in facing the green school challenges of the century. In setting a goal to achieve school greenness, the school district has taken on a high level task of district wide planning effort. The Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Evaluation System (PPBES) is employed as the planning model to be pursued to ensure that the planning effort is focused, supervised, affordable and effective.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN

The school district sampled in this chapter is located in the suburban area of a major city in the south. With a student enrollment of 110,000 students, the school district has 16 high schools, 25 middle schools, 66 elementary schools, an adult education facility, a digital academy, and 2 special education centers totaling 7,137 classrooms and 16,549,252 square feet of educational space. The school district has approximately 40% Caucasian students, 31% African American students, 18% Hispanic students and 5% Asian students. Approximately 38% of the students have received free or reduced price lunches.

The strategic plan of the school district illustrated in this chapter consists of several components, namely vision, curriculum and instruction, human resources, fiscal affairs, public relations and operations. A key strategy of the operation component is to “create a supportive environment that empowers staff”. The district strategic plan specifically lists one of the key actions as “to acquire, build, maintain, renovate, and secure physical facilities to provide state-of-the art equipment, technology, and room for expansion……...” (CC School District, 2013). Without doubt, green school initiative has been identified as a state-of-the art equipment and technology to improve the school physical environment for student learning (U.S. Green Building Council, 2009).

THE PLANNING, PROGRAMING, BUDGETING, AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

The Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Evaluation System (PPBES) is identified as a guide to achieve the green school goal because of the system’s logical procedure and analytical approach in project management. PPBES is a popular planning tool for educational institutions. As commented by Guthrie, Hart, Ray, Candoli and Hack (2008), the essential components of PPBES are as follows:

- A careful specification and systematic analysis of objectives.
- A search for the relevant alternatives.
- An estimate of the total cost of each alternative.
- An estimate of the effectiveness of each alternative
- A comparison and analysis of the alternatives, seeking that combination of alternatives that promises the greatest effectiveness. (p. 179)

The functions and real significance of PPBES were further elaborated by Guthrie, Hart, Ray, Candoli and Hack (2008) in the following:

PPBES, through systematic analysis, seeks to aid the educational planner by being clearer and more explicit about objectives, assumptions, and facts; by trying to distinguish relevant issues from irrelevant ones, and by tracing out the costs and consequences of the alternatives, to the extent that these are knowable. (p.180)

Because of fiscal constraints in recent years and goal priorities set by the school Board, the