

302.3AP – Land Use

Background

As one of the region’s largest land holders, the Board is committed to sustainable and transparent practices in land stewardship that align with Board Policies, the Strategic Plan, its commitment to student learning and playing its role in addressing the climate crisis. The District recognizes land as a critical resource that supports educational programming, community well-being, and environmental responsibility.

This Administrative Procedure provides guidance to staff regarding the maintenance, remediation, and improvement of the lands upon which the District is located. It also establishes a transparent framework for schools and the broader community on expectations and processes related to District land use.

Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to:

1. Support sustainable, responsible stewardship of District lands.
2. Provide clear operational guidance to staff for land maintenance, remediation, and improvement activities.
3. Establish consistent expectations and processes for schools and community partners interacting with District land.
4. Ensure alignment with Board goals, District policies, regulations, and long-term educational priorities such as Syeyutsus principles.
5. Encouraging a strengthening of the connection between students and staff and the land.

Scope

This Administrative Procedure applies to all District-owned or District-managed land, including school sites, fields, natural areas, gardens, play spaces, and landscaped grounds.

Definitions

Land Use Improvement

Any modification, enhancement, or development to District land, including planting, landscaping, construction of outdoor learning spaces, installation of gardens, removal or planting of trees, or other site changes.

Native Species

Plants, shrubs, or trees that occur naturally in the region and support the local ecosystem.

Invasive Species

Non-native species that negatively impact local ecosystems, biodiversity, or site sustainability.

School-Based Project

Any land use activity initiated by or requested by a school or school community (e.g., PAC, student groups, staff).

Community Involvement

Engagement by community groups, volunteers, or partners in land use improvement or maintenance activities on District property, subject to District approval.

Procedures

1. General Principles

When maintaining, remediating, and/or improving land, the District shall consider the following principles:

- a. Safety and accessibility are the District’s primary considerations.
- b. The role of the land is central to learning.
- c. Use and programming of land shall align with the District’s core function—education.
- d. Native species that support local ecosystems shall be planted wherever possible, while also considering climate resiliency and long-term viability.
- e. The District shall support the removal or mitigation of invasive species wherever possible.
- f. For significant projects, the District shall involve the school community in planning.
- g. When planting trees, the District shall consider future maintenance needs and potential school expansion requirements.
- h. Long-term sustainability (e.g., low-maintenance choices, perennial gardens, drought-tolerant species) shall be assessed for all improvements.
- i. Preservation of green space shall be prioritized in decision-making.
- j. Land use improvements shall be considered investments that increase the long-term value of land for schools and community.
- k. Improvements shall consider impacts on natural habitats and ecosystems.

2. Planting and Removing Trees

- a. The District supports the planting of trees whenever feasible and appropriate.
- b. Tree removal shall occur only when necessary and in close coordination with the affected school(s).
- c. Replacement tree planting shall follow applicable local authority requirements (e.g., municipal bylaws, environmental regulations).

3. Maintenance of Green Space, Green Infrastructure and Transportation

- a. Additions and portables shall be located, wherever possible, in areas that preserve existing green space.

- b. The District shall install green infrastructure where possible, including permeable parking spaces.
- c. The District shall aim to minimize parking and transportation infrastructure in order to maximize green space.
- d. Planning shall prioritize active transportation supports (e.g., bike racks, pathways) over expanded vehicle infrastructure.

4. Gardens and Outdoor Learning Spaces

- a. The District supports the development of school gardens and outdoor learning spaces, in collaboration with Learning Services where appropriate.
- b. School communities are responsible for caring for garden plantings (watering, pruning, harvesting, seasonal maintenance).
- c. The District is responsible for maintaining infrastructure such as:
 - o irrigation and utilities
 - o garden fencing and gates
 - o planter boxes and structural elements
- d. Proposals for new gardens or outdoor learning spaces require consultation with Facilities and Learning Services.

5. School Requested Projects

- a. Wherever possible, school-based land use improvement requests may be supported through District funding or with funding from the PAC or other appropriate fundraising sources.
- b. Schools must submit requests through the established Facilities request process.

6. Community Involvement

- a. The District may support community involvement in land use improvements, maintenance, or education activities.
- b. All community participation must:
 - o comply with District policies and safety requirements
 - o be coordinated in advance with Facilities and school administration
 - o avoid activities that create long-term maintenance burdens without prior approval
 - o be approved via a written agreement
- c. The District reserves the right to decline or modify proposed community projects for operational or safety reasons.

Responsibilities

Learning Services

- Reviews, approves and supports planning of outdoor learning environments and school garden initiatives.

Facilities Department

- Oversees implementation of this Administrative Procedure.
- Ensures project planning aligns with District standards and long-term site plans.
- Coordinates tree removal, invasive species management, and major improvement projects.

School Administrators

- Consult with District staff before initiating school-based land use projects.
- Receive written approval or agreement prior to undertaking projects.
- Communicate site planning considerations to school communities.
- Ensure volunteers and community groups follow District guidelines (i.e. donated labour/equipment process).

Staff, Students, and Community Partners

- Participate in land stewardship in accordance with District procedures and safety requirements.

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Amended:

References: