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MARYLAND CHAPTER

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Prince George's County Board of Education Adopts First in the Nation School System Climate Change Action Plan

College Park, MD – On April 28, 2022, the Board of Education (BoE) of Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) adopted a Climate Change Action Plan outlining how the school district will begin to transition to 100 percent clean, renewable electricity by 2030, and all other energy usages, including boilers, HVAC, and transportation by 2040, as well as 100 percent zero waste by 2030 as committed to under a resolution adopted by the BoE on March 1, 2021.

This Climate Change Action Plan was the result of a year-long effort of a workgroup co-chaired by District 3 Board Member, Pamela Boozer-Strother, and lead volunteer of Climate Parents of Prince George's County, Joseph Jakuta, both of whom are also parents of PGCPS students. The workgroup was made up of and informed by local elected officials, PGCPS staff, students, technological and policy experts, labor leaders, environmental and justice advocates, and parents.

Mobilized to act by Climate Parents of Prince George's County, a campaign of the Sierra Club, and Chispa's Clean Buses For Healthy Niños, a campaign of the Maryland League of Conservation Voters, this announcement shows how support for clean energy, transportation, and food has grown in Prince George's County and that PGCPS is ready to lead in the transition. The campaign showed there is continued support throughout Prince George's County, including through a petition signed by residents in the County and support from municipal governments, parent-teacher associations, and non-profit groups.

“With this plan Prince George's County Public Schools once again has shown it is both a state and national leader in regards to fostering a healthier learning environment using the clean energy technologies of the future,” **says Joseph Jakuta**. “It has been an honor to serve PGCPS in developing this plan that, when implemented, will lead to real emission reductions and cost savings

in our schools. And the Board of Education and PGPCS staff have shown to be true allies to my children's generation in the fight for a just climate future."

"I want to thank all of the community leaders, students, staff, and advocates that have volunteered their time over the past year to develop this action plan," said Board Member Boozer-Strother. "It is a well thought out approach for PGPCS to tackle its role in climate change. I am especially proud of the student leaders that participated in developing the plan, whether as members of the workgroup or as student moderators in our town hall events. These students are an inspiration for action."

"It is wonderful to see the school system's commitment to more sustainable operations for our children's health and long-term wellbeing," says **Dr. Janet Gingold, chair of the Sierra Club, Prince George's County Group**. "The Climate Change Action Plan will put PGPCS on a new path toward a transition to clean renewable energy, more energy-efficient buildings, electrification of the fleet, improved waste management, and nature-based solutions to decrease impacts from extreme heat and precipitation stormwater. Our next generation of leaders will have new opportunities to learn about environmental stewardship, not only through the enhanced curriculum but also through examples in the school infrastructure and operations that they see around them every day. We thank the Board of Education for taking this important step forward for our communities."

PGPCS is the 20th largest school district in the country and the second-largest in Maryland with about 130,000 students enrolled in 207 schools with more than 19,000 staff members. The district's schools and facilities make it one of the largest consumers of electricity in Prince George's County and have the largest bus fleet in the state of Maryland.

Transitioning PGPCS away from the use of fossil fuels towards greenhouse gas-free electricity, heating and cooling, and transportation will be a vital piece of the puzzle for Prince George's County to make its climate goals while improving the health of students and staff through reduced air pollution. The transition towards zero food waste will also play an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well and lead to healthier diets for the students. The plan itself, as well as the process used to develop it, can also provide a blueprint for other school districts around the nation to take the next step toward implementing climate action goals

For questions contact Joseph Jakuta, lead volunteer on the Climate Parents Campaign at climateparentsPGMD@gmail.com or 512-203-4538.

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About the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with millions of members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person's right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, [visit www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org).



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