

RSU1 Climate Action Plan

Prepared by the RSU1 Climate Resilience Working Group

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RSU1 Climate Action Plan

The RSU1 Climate Resilience Working Group (CRWG) developed this Climate Action Plan in fulfillment of its charter as outlined in the 2024 policy resolution, "*RSU1 Won't Wait: A Policy Resolution to Address Climate Change.*" This policy recognizes that the education and well-being of RSU1 students and families are already negatively impacted by climate change due to lost instructional time from severe weather events, coastal flooding, and extreme heat. It further acknowledges the urgent need for schools to decarbonize in order to help prevent the most severe future impacts of climate change.

Through this policy, the district committed to pursuing two overarching goals:

A. Reducing Emissions and Waste.

RSU1 will prioritize system-wide efforts to reduce its carbon footprint, including—but not limited to—energy use and sourcing, HVAC systems, efficiency upgrades, waste reduction, purchasing practices, transportation, and food sourcing.

B. Producing Climate-Literate, Workforce-Ready Citizens.

RSU1 will ensure that all K–12 students receive instruction in climate science, have opportunities to engage in climate solutions, and have access to training pathways aligned with jobs in the future economy.

To advance these goals, RSU1 convened a Climate Resilience Working Group composed of Superintendent of Schools Patrick Manuel; Director of Facilities Dennis Ouellette; Dike-Newell Principal Jenn McKay; Phippsburg School Board Member Patricia McLaughlin; teachers Micah Depper, Brent Luchies, Katherine Smith, Juliet Stone, and Flower Noble; community members Judd Thompson, Bethany Atkins, Megan Mansfield-Pryor, and Connor English; and six student representatives from Morse High School and Bath Middle School.

The working group was charged with providing insights, research, and recommendations to guide the district’s climate efforts. The committee met seven times during the 2024–25 school year and reported on its progress to the RSU1 School Board in October 2025. Following that presentation, the working group incorporated board feedback to develop this Climate Action Plan, which outlines four high-impact strategies aligned with the goals of *RSU1 Won’t Wait*:

- Net-Zero New Construction
- Building Electrification and Energy Efficiency
- Resource Consumption and Waste

- Education and Engagement

Within each strategy, the working group identifies attainable goals and practical action steps that build on RSU1's strong track record of investing in sustainable infrastructure and educating students with a strong sense of place and an ethic of conservation. In addition to tackling climate change, *these actions will directly and immediately benefit our students and community* in numerous ways, including:

- Lowering operational expenses through improved energy efficiency and reduced waste disposal costs
- Increasing student academic performance and reducing lost instructional days due to illness through improvements in the air quality of classrooms
- Alleviating student hunger through rescuing unwanted food for later consumption.

Upon adoption, the RSU1 district leadership in partnership with the Climate Resilience Working Group will be responsible for integrating these recommendations into relevant district planning documents—including, but not limited to, the facilities plan and educational plan—by the end of the 2026-2027 school year.

The working group acknowledges that this is an ambitious plan and that school districts must always balance priorities with limited resources. To ensure that time and resources are directed as strategically as possible, action items will be scored, prioritized, and planned for based on four criteria:

- Climate impact
- Health & wellbeing impact
- Educational impact
- Feasibility & affordability

Following adoption, the Climate Resilience Working Group will continue to meet monthly and provide semi-annual updates to the School Board to support implementation of the district's climate goals. Decarbonization is complex, long-term work, and it is expected that RSU1 will make incremental progress over several decades. Accordingly, this Climate Action Plan is intended to be a living document that responds to changing economic, policy, demographic, and environmental conditions. The plan will be reviewed, updated, and approved by the School Board every three years.

Strategy 1: Net-Zero New Construction

Goals

1. Build a new K-5 elementary school with zero-carbon (ZC) or zero-carbon ready (ZCR) standards, with an energy use intensity (EUI) not to exceed 20 kBtu/ft²/yr.
2. Utilize the new K-5 building as a "learning lab" and exemplar of sustainable construction for students, community members, and educational leaders from around the state.

Actions

Climate Resilience Working Group, Facilities Committee, Finance Committee, and District Leadership

- A. Work with Levallee-Brensinger architectural firm to develop educational specifications for new construction, considering: student

health; LEED, Zero-Carbon, and/or Zero-Carbon Ready standards; land stewardship; and resilient design.

B. Incorporate a lifecycle carbon assessment (LCA) and embodied-carbon targets as part of the request for proposals (RFP)/design contract.

C. Include post-occupancy evaluation and a 2–5 year monitoring plan to measure actual building performance vs. design.

C. Develop a recommended design standard checklist (ZC/ZCR, materials, water, indoor air quality, resilience) that informs future district construction contracts.

Community-wide

A. Host public charrettes and virtual design reviews so residents, students, and town staff can contribute to site and program decisions.

B. Host public information sessions about green building, sustainable practices, and performance-based financing to build support for green school design; offer community tours during construction and after occupancy.

B. Work with community partners to explore development of a “friends of the school” building fund for add-ons (e.g., demonstration photovoltaic, living roof, interpretive signage).

B. Explore partnership with City of Bath for shared stormwater/green infrastructure solutions (e.g., bioswales that benefit town and site).

Strategy 2: Building Electrification and Energy Efficiency

Goals

1. Maximize energy efficiency across district operations and electrify district building systems where possible by 2030.
2. Achieve 80% renewable electricity sourcing in district operations by 2040.

Actions

Climate Resilience Working Group, Administrative Team, Facilities Committee, Finance Committee, and District Leadership

A. Adopt a district-wide Electrification & Efficiency Roadmap (including timeline, priority list, estimated costs, phased targets, funding sources).

a. Reduce GHG emissions from district electricity through a variety of strategies, including: procuring electricity generated from renewable

sources, increasing shares in solar cooperatives, and purchasing renewable energy credits (RECs).

- b. Require consideration of non-fossil fuel options when replacing appliances and equipment, with preference to purchase them whenever costs are comparable or simple payback is under 10 years.

B. Contract with an engineering firm to conduct energy audits of Bath Middle School (BMS), Woolwich Central School (WCS), Phippsburg Elementary School (PES), and Morse High School (MHS), in order to identify high-energy use buildings and efficiency upgrades.

- a. Create a ranked list of priority upgrades, weighing return on investment (ROI), estimated useful life (EUL), simple payback, and reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

- b. Develop a financial strategy for completing high-impact capital projects.

C. Conduct an internal facilities audit to identify “quick win” efficiency projects at BMS, PES, and FMS, including air leaks around air handler units, uncaulked windows, water leaks, weather sealing of egress

doors, etc. Create a running list of high-impact, low-cost projects to be completed on a rolling basis.

D. Commission updated feasibility assessments and issue RFPs for rooftop photovoltaic (PV) array at MHS. Consider financial options, including fundraising.

E. Introduce energy use monitoring systems across school buildings to identify and implement additional system modifications to support energy conservation and improved efficiency.

E. Pursue Energy Savings Performance Contracting (ESPC) or other financing tools to accelerate upgrades without one-time capital strain.

Community-wide

A. Promote a culture and ethic of energy conservation (e.g., signage to remember closing windows, turning off lights, purchasing smartplugs, powering down smartboards, etc.).

B. Communicate facts about energy use through a variety of media and communication challenges. Educate the community about the cost savings associated with efficiency upgrades.

- B. Partner with Bath, Arrowsic, Woolwich, and Phippsburg climate committees to offer public workshops on simple energy conservation behaviors and small-scale electrification (e.g., heat-pump basics, weatherization).

Strategy 3: Resource Consumption and Waste

Goals

1. Achieve a 50% solid waste diversion rate by 2032, consistent with requirements set in LD 1065 (38 M.R.S. § §2147. Food waste management; diversion).
2. Promote a community-wide ethic and habit of stewardship and conservation of resources.

Actions

Climate Resilience Working Group, Administrative Team, Food Service, Custodial Service, Finance Committee, Facilities Committee, Technology Department, and District Leadership

- A. Conduct comprehensive municipal solid waste audits to identify and implement strategies to minimize solid waste, and to minimize costs associated with waste collection.
- B. Include compost service in waste service RFP beginning in SY2026-2027. Explore possible economies of scale through shared waste hauling contracts with the City of Bath.

- C. Develop composting plans in all district schools. Develop phased diversion rate targets to achieve at least 50% diversion of pre- and post-consumer organics waste.
- D. Ensure appropriate and adequate recycling and composting receptacles are supplied and located throughout buildings. Create a standardized signage and bin system across all sites to reduce contamination and simplify training.
- E. Provide share tables and share refrigerators in all cafeterias for the purpose of rescuing unwanted food for later consumption.
- F. In collaboration with faculty, administration, facilities, food service, and the student body, develop site-specific plans for monitoring cafeteria and kitchen waste separation, classroom organic waste collection, transportation of organic waste into proper receptacles, and maintenance/cleaning of receptacles. Include monitoring of cafeteria waste sorting as a responsibility for lunch duty staff.
- G. Embed sustainability criteria in job descriptions for leadership roles.

- H. Create policies to promote conservation of consumables, such as default double-sided printing and sharing paper use reports from Papercut.
- I. Adopt a district procurement policy that prioritizes low-waste, reusable, partial recycled content, or compostable products and requires vendors to report packaging waste.
- J. Adopt a phased plan for eliminating single-use items from food service. In coordination with food service director, consider case studies and site visits of schools that have eliminated single-use items.
- K. Collaborate with the technology department to discuss the environmental considerations of technology implementation (e.g. AI energy and water consumption, e-waste, etc.).

Community-wide

- A. Conduct annual waste audits in order to identify seasons with greatest impact, track progress, and identify and implement strategies to minimize discarded resources. Create a school waste report card and encourage friendly competition to minimize waste between buildings in the RSU.

B. Adopt and/or develop waste diversion curriculum for each school level. Educate all staff, students, and families about current best practices around waste management, including what and how to recycle, compost, and landfill. As feasible, have students tour Bath landfill, Bath wastewater treatment plant, and/or EcoMaine recycling facility as part of science studies.

B. Promote the conservation efforts of the district, including information about cost savings, greenhouse gas emissions, and student learning, in district communications.

B. Host seasonal community waste-audit days (students and families) to gather data and co-design solutions.

Strategy 4: Education and Engagement

Goals

1. Ensure that all graduates of RSU1 receive solutions-oriented climate education at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
2. Prepare students for jobs in the clean energy sector, such as wind, solar, geothermal, green building, and HVAC.

Actions

Climate Resilience Working Group, Teachers, and District Leadership

A. Convene a curriculum working group to assess where climate change and climate solutions are being taught at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Approve a district climate-literacy scope & sequence that maps competencies across K–12 and aligns to state standards.

B. Adopt a set of climate change teaching literacy modules and incentivize teacher elective professional development in climate literacy.

C. Develop a programs and personnel plan for Bath Tech that considers experience and training in the clean energy sector as a factor in program development and hiring decisions.

Community-wide

A. Incorporate energy use and efficiency into the curriculum where possible, including involving students in informal energy audits of buildings (e.g. unoccupied classrooms with lights on, temperature monitoring, touchscreen use monitoring, window use, types of lights).

B. Promote expansion of citizen-science partnerships (local monitoring of coastal flooding, temperature, biodiversity) that inform district curricula and local planning.

C. Convene a MHS/BT green jobs fair that allows for students to learn about jobs and training opportunities in the green industry. Coordinate with local workforce/trade programs to create pathways for students and residents into HVAC/heat-pump installation jobs.

D. Develop communication materials (e.g. annual report or static signage) for the general public on how RSU1 is working to reduce environmental impacts.

E. Incentivize student involvement in achieving waste reduction goals by redirecting savings to school celebrations.