



The Compass School Sustainability Self-Assessment is an assessment tool developed by Compass Education (compasseducation.org). The assessment provides a framework to evaluate the existence and progress of sustainability through the framework of the four Compass Points (Nature, Economy, Society, and Wellbeing).

As noted by Compass Education, the tool can help a school recognize systemic structural gaps in relation to fully integrating sustainability as a core value and practice in all domains and aspects of a school. The tool is freely available for use by schools and can be downloaded here: <http://www.compasseducation.org/tools-and-resources/school-sustainability-self-assessment-tool/>.

A weakness of the tool is providing users with sufficient understanding of what others around the world are doing (i.e. what is best practice?). To supplement the tool's guidance, Decoding Sustainability is providing the following supplemental scoring guidance that aims to answer that question of what is best practice, giving schools visibility into where exactly they stand on each issue.

If after completing the self-assessment you looking for a deeper dive or help answering the question of what do we do next, you can contact Matthew Yamatin, Principal of Decoding Sustainability (matthew.yamatin@decodingsustainability.com)

Nature Compass Indicators	Components to Consider	0 Beginning	1 Approaching	2 Meeting	3 Mastering
Water Use & Management	Indoor use Outdoor use Reuse Metering Cooling Towers	Passive management meaning no meaningful consideration of flow rates when purchasing water using devices; applying landscape without consideration of water use; reviewing water bills from a budget perspective only.	Passive management, but aware of the impacts of its water use. Starting to look at / incorporate some of the Meeting criteria, but often in an ad hoc manner.	Active management meaning completing many of the following: Achieve LEED indoor water use credit expectations; drip irrigation/smart scheduling technology; 40-50% reduction from EPA WaterSense Water Budget Tool calculation; reuse HVAC condensate/rainwater collection; submetering for significant water users; maximize cooling tower concentration cycles (10+ cycles)	Active management meaning completing all of the Meeting criteria and many of the following: No-flow fixtures; no irrigation; grey water system; smart meters; low water use cooling tower technology/treatment programs
Habitat, Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services	Integrated Pest Management Biodiversity Landscape Management Functionality	Minimal awareness of habitat and biodiversity on campus; landscape seen primary for aesthetical purposes.	Some awareness of habitat and biodiversity on campus, but landscape selection primary for aesthetical purposes.	Sufficient awareness and campus planning to designate specific biodiversity protection zones, develop an integrated pest management plan, limit fertilizer and chemical use, and consider other purposes of landscape (i.e. stormwater management, shade)	Campus-wide landscape plan with focus on functional spaces for biodiversity, school function use, and learning. Plan to include criteria around use of low risk pest control methods (i.e. non-toxic to humans); re-establishing natural habitats on-site; organic lawn care
Green Energy Sourcing	Off / On-Site Renewable Electricity and Natural Gas	Passive management meaning buying the default electricity provided by utility company.	Passive management meaning, but aware of renewable electricity. Starting to look at alternative options to default grid mix and consideration of on-site renewables.	Active management to enable the following: establish target year for 100% renewable electricity purchasing; formal evaluation for on-site opportunities for renewable energy; commence purchasing renewable electricity.	Active management meaning completing all the Meeting criteria and many of the following: 100% renewable electricity sourcing; plans for / implementation of renewable electricity with stronger additional component (i.e. power purchasing agreements, on-site development); evaluation of biogas sourcing opportunities; establish renewable energy center for student learning.
Green House Gas Emissions	Inventory Measurement Reduction Refrigerants Paris Agreement Green Transportation	Passive management meaning unaware of organizations impact of greenhouse gases.	Passive management, but aware that school is contributing to climate change. Starting to look at / incorporate some of the Meeting criteria, but often in an ad hoc manner.	Active management meaning completing many of the following: calculating Scope 1 and 2 emissions; identify significant Scope 3 categories; establish targets for Scope 1 and 2 emissions; monitor and track reduction projects; compliance with 1987 Montreal Protocol (no CFCs and HCFC-22), transition to refrigerants with low global warming potential; public show of commitment to Paris Agreement and establishing reduction target to align with 2C global target; conversion of bus fleet to all-electric	Active management meaning completing all of the Meeting criteria and many of the following: calculate all relevant Scope 3 categories with annual third-party verification; Carbon Neutral school; adding target for Scope 3 emission reductions; set sub-targets for related renewable energy and electric vehicles; transition plan for early compliance with Kigali Amendment to Montreal Protocol (i.e. HCFC and HFC phaseout); use of refrigerants with GWP less than 50; establish public carbon reduction target aligned with Paris Agreement (target should be forward looking by 7 to 12 years).

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Waste Management	Reduce Reuse Diversion (i.e. recycle/compost) E-waste Hazardous	Passive water management meaning the primary focus is ensuring waste is removed is collected and removed from campus in a sanitary manner.	Passive water management, but aware of the impacts / community desire to recycle. Starting to look at / incorporate some of the Meeting criteria, but often in an ad hoc manner such as buying recycling bins without a system to back up their use.	Active water management meaning completing many of the following: Minimize giveaways of short life cycle items; reuse of materials within organization; recycling of all materials readily feasible in the region; proper disposal of all e-waste to an e-waste vendor; proper disposal of all hazardous waste.	Active water management meaning completing all of the Meeting criteria and many of the following: eliminate nearly all single-use disposables and thrown away food; reuse of materials within and outside the school; focus on diversion methods with higher positive impacts; 100% diversion from landfill; e-waste tracking; replacement of hazardous materials with non-hazardous versions.
Environmental Compliance Standards	-	Passive management meaning initial achievement of minimum expectations of local / regional regulations but not ensuring upkeep and continued compliance during standard maintenance activities.	Passive management meaning initial achievement of minimum expectations and effort to maintain compliance.	Active management meaning achieving not just technical compliance with local / regional regulations, but also meeting the intent of the regulation.	Proactive management meaning understanding shifting local / regional government expectations and priorities and incorporating into school operation ahead of regulatory adoption. Pilot projects and provide feedback to regulatory bodies to support regulatory development.
Connection With Nature	Green Space Biophilia	No formal consideration of nature within campus design campus beyond aesthetics / regulatory requirements.	Informal consideration of nature within campus design beyond aesthetics, but not considered a necessity in the design process.	Key campus design criteria meaning completing many of the following: provide outdoor space greater than 30% of total site area (of which 25% must be vegetated with turf grass not counting); minimize parking area, use of potted plants, more natural light, use of nature's patterns within buildings; use of colors seen in nature.	Key campus design criteria including all of the Meeting criteria and many of the following: accessible rooftop gardens; continuous canopies; 25% of project site landscaped ground / green roof; indoor green walls and water features; natural material finishes (i.e. wood, cork); indoor trees; plants covering 1% of floor area.

Economy Compass Indicators	Components to Consider	0 Beginning	1 Approaching	2 Meeting	3 Mastering
Considered Consumption And Production	Sustainable Purchasing Policy Electronic Purchasing Cleaning and Janitorial Purchasing School Supply Purchasing Durable Goods / Paints Lamps	Passive management meaning no consideration of environmental / social impacts as a purchasing criteria.	Passive management, but aware of the impacts of its energy use. Starting to look at / incorporate some of the Meeting criteria, but often in an ad hoc manner.	Active management meaning implementing many of the following: creation of an environmentally preferable purchasing policy for common items; 50% of electronics being ENERGY STAR qualified or similar regional system; achieving LEED Operation and Maintenance for Schools purchasing credit expectations for cleaning products, durable goods and paint; 30% recycled content paper; FSC certified paper; rechargeable batteries; transitioning all lights to LEDs	Active management meaning completing all of the Meeting criteria and many of the following: establishing a Supplier Code of Conduct covering environmental, human rights expectations; engaging and setting goals for suppliers; all products purchased meet LEED Operation and Maintenance for School credit expectations for electronics, cleaning products, school supplies, durables goods, paints and lighting.
Energy & Water Use	Metering Performance Reporting Sourcing (excluding Water as already covered in Nature Indicator)	Passive management meaning not considering energy performance when purchasing equipment; reviewing energy bills from a budget perspective only.	Passive management, but aware of the impacts of its energy use. Starting to look at / incorporate some of the Meeting criteria, but often in an ad hoc manner.	Active management meaning completing many of the following: monitoring and achieving an ENERGY STAR Score of 75+; submetering significant energy using equipment; establishing an internal online dashboard with live updating; studying strategies to transition away from natural gas and other fossil fuels.	Active water management meaning completing all of the Meeting criteria and many of the following: creating a management system aligned with ISO50001; smart meters to enable real-time energy monitoring, anomaly alerts, and reporting; setting goals to become Net Zero Energy; public online and physical on-site dashboard with live updating; Fossil Free goal and commence transitioning away from fossil fuel combustion to full on-site electrification.
Value for Ethical Business Practice	Not Covered by Decoding Sustainability				
Fair and Equitable Remuneration	Living Wage Gender Pay Gap Maternity and Paternity Paid Time-Off	Meeting minimum levels required by local / federal regulations.	Monitoring total compensation including benefits such as time off with comparison to regional peers / industry standard.	Total compensation of all direct hires meets or exceeds the region specific Living Wage; monitoring of gender wage gap; reasonable maternity and paternity paid time-off	Total compensation of all contractors working on-site meets or exceeds the region specific Living Wage; structure to eliminate gender wage gap; supplier policy with similar expectations.
Investment in the Sustainability of School Facilities	<i>See sub-indicator topics for more detail</i>				
- New Construction	Standards, Energy Modeling, Acoustic Performance, Construction Pollution Prevention, Commissioning, Indoor Air Quality, Materials, Natural Light, Construction and Demonstration Waste	No formal processes or procedures around green building design	Some awareness of green building design (i.e. heard of LEED), but no specific application or requirement for designer/builder.	Establish of expectation around green building design either internally or referencing external standard. Require designer / builder to meet baseline expectations.	Commit to achieving third party green building certification at a reasonably high level (i.e. USBGC LEED Gold or Platinum Level).
- Operation	Indoor Air Quality Green Cleaning Program Energy/Water Management Durable Good Maintenance Recommissioning	No formal processes or procedures around green building operation	Some awareness of green building design (i.e. heard of LEED), but no specific application or requirement for building operator / maintenance provider	Establish of expectation around green building operation either internally or referencing external standard. Require building operator / maintenance provider to meet baseline expectations.	Commit to achieving third party green building certification at a reasonably high level (i.e. USBGC LEED Gold or Platinum Level).
- Resilience and Adaptation	-	No visibility towards impacts of changing climate	Some awareness of impacts to school from changing climate	Active evaluation of potential climate change impacts to school.	Active management meaning develop a resilience and adaptation plan based on scientific guidance on projected regional climate change-related impacts
- Community Impact	Rainwater Heat Island Effect Light Pollution	No awareness of school's impact on surrounding community	Some awareness of school's impact on surrounding community but no plans to evaluate and develop next steps as necessary.	Assessing the school's impacts on the surrounding community and developing plans for next steps such as: replicate natural hydrologic process to management rainfall for 95% percentile event; minimize impervious pavement; use of white roofs; plant shading; and light colored pavers; minimize light emitted above horizontal plane.	Continuous improvement and communication to community over the school's impact and actions being taken. Additional actions may include rainwater collection and reuse; photovoltaics; and green roof.

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Socially Responsible Investments (External)	-	No awareness around socially responsible investing	Awareness that investments can have an impact, but no knowledge of what investments are supporting.	Understanding of what funds investments are in and the mix of companies they support. Establishing outline of what school should invest and what not to invest in.	Active management of investments meaning allocation to funds meeting established criteria (i.e. divest from companies with negative attributes such as guns, tobacco, fossil fuels etc. or positive attributes such as high corporate social responsibility scores).
Community Contributions (Financial and in-kind)	Charitable Contributions Labor Provided to Mission-Driven Organizations	No coordinated approach or tracking of contributions	Informal strategy around charitable contribution and in-kind provisions, but minimal tracking.	Formal strategy establish around types of organizations that fit school and service learning mission, but inconsistent application and inconsistent tracking mechanisms.	Formal strategy establish around types of organizations that fit school and service learning mission with consistent implementation and impact tracking mechanisms in place allowing for deeper relationships and opportunities.
Society Compass Indicators	Components to Consider	0 Beginning	1 Approaching	2 Meeting	3 Mastering
Inclusive Decision-Making & School Governance	Resources Policy Planning Participatory Structure	No sustainability specific representative body; school sustainability program, policy or plan.	Weak Governance around sustainability will have many of the following attributes: Student or staff-led sustainability council with no direct link to school leadership; lack of formal policy and practices to justify next steps; resulting progress will often be ad hoc and short-lived with weak governance.	A moderately strong program around sustainability will have many of the following attributes: Dedicated sustainability office / officer to direct, manage, and implement school-wide sustainability program; sustainability policy to frame integration across school functions; sustainability action plan with key performance indicators; representative body through which students and staff can participate in governance.	Strong Governance around sustainability will incorporate all of the Meeting attributes and many of the following: Sustainability officer sitting within operational leadership; development of a Green Revolving Fund; topic specific policies and practices; internal price on carbon; comprehensive roadmap to guide decision making with dedicated action plan for next steps; inclusion of external stakeholders in representative body.
Equity and Inclusion	Diversity	No public facing commitment statement to diversity, equity and inclusion.	Public facing commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion across gender, race, nationality and culture. Insufficient resources placed towards implementation of commitment.	Public facing commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion across gender, race, nationality and culture with resources provided to match commitment level.	Structured diversity and equity assessment; cultural competence training and activities; active support of underrepresented groups.
Social Cohesion	Not Covered by Decoding Sustainability				
Sense of Place & Belonging	Not Covered by Decoding Sustainability				
Community Engagement & Partnerships	Public Reporting Inter-School Collaborations Community Engagement	Lack of external communication on sustainability program; Lack of outside partnership with socially or environmentally focused organizations.		Active communication and partnership with community and external organizations including many of the following: website page with high level coverage of sustainability program; active member of global/regional sustainability network; formal-multi-year partnership engagement.	Active communication and partnership with community and external organizations including many of the following: offering sustainability walking tours of campus; website page with impactful data/information; presenting at sustainability conferences; providing case studies; serve on sustainability network boards; mentoring/assisting other schools in support of their program development; formal community partnership strategy; inclusive and participatory partnerships.
Global Citizenship	Not Covered by Decoding Sustainability				
Authentic Service & Action	Not Covered by Decoding Sustainability				

Wellbeing Compass Indicators	Components to Consider	0 Beginning	1 Approaching	2 Meeting	3 Mastering
Sense of Purpose & Resiliency	Not Covered by Decoding Sustainability				
Individual Wellness	Student and Staff Wellness Programs	No formal program		Provision of a range of activities to build social bonds, opportunity for physical and mental exercise; preventative healthcare; on-site counsellors.	Evaluating and identify approaches to improve student and staff wellness as related to day to day interactions with schedule and the building.
Health and Safety	Emergency Preparedness Child Protection Program Workplace Safety Air Emissions Policy	No formal program	On-site nurse for students; informal programs around emergency drills	Formal programs enabling well executed emergency drills; child protection to be a contributing factor in decision making; monitoring and recording of all student and staff injuries; providing information and training around the most common injuries.	Formal programs enabling all of the Meeting criteria plus creation of health and safety indicators with targets and zero injury/illness aspiration; eliminating air emission sources
- Food is specifically called out from Health and Safety given its impact and importance in child development	Nutrition Labeling Sourcing Environmental and Social Impact Promoting Healthy Choices	Passive management meaning providing no impact to food service provider on expectations	Passive management, but providing feedback and basic expectations to food service provider.	Active management, meaning the direction of Food Service provider to enable many of the following: Follow established nutritional standard; 1st tier of 'free of' (i.e. trans-fats, high fructose corn syrup; artificial growth hormones; pesticides; soda); all foods labeled with nutritional information + \$ of est. daily requirements; local sourcing; 1st tier of sustainable certifications (i.e. cafe-free eggs; organic); signage to encourage healthy choices	Active water management meaning completing all of the Meeting criteria and many of the following: focus on whole grains, calorie to dietary fiber ratio; limit/eliminate deep-fried food; follow USDA Smart Snacks in Schools Guidelines; labeling for allergens, ingredient; and location of origin; supporting local farmers via CSA and on-site farmers market; plant-based meats; 2nd tier of certifications (i.e. fair trade, certified humane; grass-fed; marine stewardship council); shift towards plant-based menus and minimization of beef; highlighting healthy choices; priority placement of healthy options
Balanced Working / Learning Conditions	Community Satisfaction Occupant Comfort	No formal program	Informal assessment of work / life flows and satisfaction with working environment; minimal consideration of building / space design on learning and working.	Annual community wide assessment on job satisfaction, learning opportunities, and work culture; use of sound masking systems and continuous temperature / humidity monitoring system	Formal programs enabling all of the Meeting criteria plus community wide assessment on satisfaction of the working environment including temperature, noise, indoor air quality, lighting and cleanliness; minimizing noise levels in learning and working spaces; high availability of nature views and natural light.
Interpersonal & Self Relationship	Not Covered by Decoding Sustainability				
Social and Emotional Learning	Not Covered by Decoding Sustainability				
Growth and Development	Not Covered by Decoding Sustainability				