Greening the Sacramento City Unified School District

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What will it take to turn Sacramento City Unified School District into a green school district? That was the question department leaders tried to answer last week. On Wednesday, October 12, directors and employees from a variety of departments at SCUSD met at the Serna Center for the first “Green District Working Session.” The working session had three specific objectives: connect district greening activities to the district’s current strategic plan; generate specific goals for departments to support greening SCUSD; and develop a “District Green Team” that is able to provide support to the school site green teams.

The working session began with a presentation I gave that set the stage for the importance of green schools. There are over 133,000 K-12 schools in the U.S., most of which are not providing adequate learning and teaching environments for the 20 percent of our population occupying them daily. This number brought clarity to a lot of participants, and made the purpose of our meeting much more relevant.

SCUSD staff during the "Green District Working Session"

Next, the group discussed past successes of different departments in order to determine how we could weave those activities into our overall plan. We all realized that although SCUSD has had many changes and successes this past year, we still need to be constantly thinking about future endeavors we can take on to support our greening efforts.

Finally, participants discussed how each individual department’s work could help toward the broader goal of greening the district, and discussed green projects currently occurring at each school site. Tangible, specific goals were developed by each department that will help the district move forward in this process.

Participants left the working session inspired and equipped with tools to begin greening SCUSD. The group determined that accountability is crucial for continued success and decided to have quarterly meetings for the District Green Team. The road to greening SCUSD will not be easy, however having the right people in the room early will help with the progress. This working session was the beginning of a powerful movement within the district that will help create healthier learning environments that save resources and money. To green our district we each must ask ourselves, “What am I going to do tomorrow?”

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