**Flagstaff Junior Academy Climate Action Plan**

**Intro**

The City of Flagstaff passed their Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) in November of 2018.[[1]](#footnote-1) This was not only a testament to the City’s dedication to sustainability, but also a wake-up call for the greater Flagstaff community to take action to reduce our carbon footprint. The goals of the CAAP call for: an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 (15% by 2025 and 30% by 2030); increasing resiliency of our neighborhoods, resources, and economy; and prioritizing those individuals and groups most impacted by climate change. The urgency of this matter has recently been emphasized by the passing of a declaration by the city of a “Climate Emergency” on June 23, 2020. This declaration will serve to further prioritize the CAAP.We here at Flagstaff Junior Academy (FJA) are pledging to reduce our impact on the climate, take responsibility for our own emissions, and help support the CAAP and its goals by developing our own climate action plan.

Development of this plan was also motivated by the disproportionate impact of climate change on future generations, especially that of disadvantaged groups. In fact, FJA is the only school in the state of Arizona that has passed a resolution and registered with Schools for Climate Change to address “climate change as a generational justice and equity issue, expand our school’s response to climate change, and articulate to elected-political leaders to support climate policies.” According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), impacts from climate change are expected to slow economic growth, slow poverty reduction, diminish food security, and propagate existing and create new poverty traps.[[2]](#footnote-2) These effects are particularly felt by disadvantaged groups. The initial inequality of disadvantaged people leads to increased exposure and susceptibility to adverse climate impacts while at the same time decreasing their ability to cope with damages resulting from said impacts, ultimately causing inequality for those groups to increase further.[[3]](#footnote-3) FJA recognizes vulnerable communities and how their future well-being depends on our actions today. FJA has also adopted the Seven Generation Principle, meaning we believe our actions today should result in a sustainable future for the following seven generations.

The following plan was developed by the FJA Climate Action Committee to implement a school-wide climate action plan that supports the City of Flagstaff’s plan and reduces our climate impact in an equitable and sustainable way while preserving FJA for future generations of students. Education, energy, transportation, water, and waste are addressed with specific strategies and actionable items that FJA may choose to implement to improve sustainability. Funding opportunities are also addressed for each applicable action item. Each strategy has been approved by the FJA Climate Action Committee to reduce FJA’s overall environmental impact. This plan is intended to be viewed as a living document and may be amended upon approval of the Committee (and the Board). The plan will also be updated and revised every three years to reflect current progress on specific strategies. The Climate Action Committee will be responsible for implementation of the plan upon approval of the FJA Board. Progress on the climate action plan will be shared with the staff throughout the school year.

**Strategies and Actions**

**Education**

**Strategy**: **Educate students and parents on the climate crisis to promote behavioral changes resulting in reduced impact.**

**Action Items:** (TBD)

Climate education is arguably the most valuable action FJA can take to reduce its carbon footprint along with the individual footprints of students, parents, and teachers alike. In fact, UNESCO cites education as an essential element of the global response to climate change.[[4]](#footnote-4) Being an institution of education, FJA is responsible for making invaluable information regarding climate change available to parents and students in order to not only raise awareness to the issue, but also encourage lifestyle and behavioral changes people can adopt to reduce their associated emissions and promote sustainability. The primary mode by which this will be achieved is through incorporating topics of sustainability and climate change into FJA’s curriculum. Examples of such topics include:

* CO2 and Climate change
* Impacts of fossil fuel extraction and consumption
* Why climate change has a larger impact on underprivileged communities
* Climate change as a generational justice issue
* How energy is produced and distributed
* Energy Efficiency
* Data Analysis
* Water scarcity in the southwest and how to conserve water
* Principles of sustainability
* Recent advances in sustainable technology
* What we can do in our homes and community to make a difference

FJA will also recruit guest speakers from the local community and incorporate field trips into its curriculum. Flagstaff is home to a wealth of professionals currently working in sustainability that would gladly lend their time to teach our students about what they do. Also, facilities such as Willow Bend Environmental Education Center, the Wildcat Hill Water Reclamation Plant, Arizona Trail Association, and Flagstaff Recycling Center all offer free tours that make for great sustainability themed field trips. FJA will also make an effort to educate parents by providing access to community resources for information regarding sustainable living. The U.S. Department of Energy and City of Flagstaff websites provide ample resources for designing sustainability-based workshops and outreach programs. Lastly, student involvement will also be encouraged through sustainability projects, some of which may be designed by the students themselves.

**Implementation Strategy:**

* **gather specific information from curriculum maps**
  + **align grade specific climate related field trips to standards**
* **encourage teachers to do a minimum of one sustainability based field trip.**
* **Have students create informational materials regarding sustainability**
* **project based learning requirement**

**Energy**

**Strategy: Improve energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption.**

**Action Items:**

1. **Contact an ESCO to get an energy audit and create an ESPC project.**
2. **Invest in LED bulbs and Energy Star certified appliances at every opportunity.**

In 2018, electricity generation accounted for approximately 27% of the United States’ total emissions, making energy our country’s second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions.[[5]](#footnote-5) About 65% of the United States electricity is generated by burning fossil fuels.[[6]](#footnote-6) Here in Arizona, coal and natural gas account for 36% and 27% of our total energy production respectively; therefore, much of the electricity FJA consumes is generated by the combustion of fossil fuels.[[7]](#footnote-7) Because of this, increasing energy efficiency will play an important role in reducing FJA’s carbon footprint.

The most effective way to reduce FJA’s energy consumption and to improve energy efficiency is through an energy savings performance contract (ESPC) project. With the help of an energy service company (ESCO), FJA can use an ESPC project as a means to finance energy efficiency projects with money saved in energy costs.[[8]](#footnote-8) To begin an ESPC project, FJA must choose an ESCO to work with. The Department of Energy (DOE) provides a list of federally qualified ESCOs at <https://www.energy.gov/eere/downloads/department-energy-qualified-list-energy-service-companies>. Climatec, LLC; CTS MIDCO, LLC Veregy; and Daylight America, Inc are three local Arizona ESCOs based in Phoenix from the DOE list of certified ESCOs. Each ESCO has experience working with industries including K-12 schools to develop, design, build, and arrange financing for projects that save energy, reduce energy costs, and decrease operations and maintenance costs at their customers' facilities.[[9]](#footnote-9) The Veregy website states: “We’ve designed hundreds of state-of-the-art educational facilities solutions using the latest in sustainable design, technology, and behavior modification.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Once an ESCO is chosen, the company will perform an investment grade energy audit in order to most accurately assess where and how energy efficiency improvements can be made. The main purpose of the investment grade energy audit is to examine energy use and infrastructure from an engineering standpoint to identify energy conservation measures (ECMs) while also providing upfront cost and life-cycle cost comparison analysis to illustrate the long-term cost-savings of a given ECM. FJA and the chosen ESCO will ultimately choose which ECMs will be bundled into the ESPC. Once the ESPC is drafted, FJA and the ESCO will work together to secure funding. Most ESPC projects are financed through municipal tax-exempt lease-purchase agreements with a national level financing company. The ESCO will then monitor FJA’s energy savings until the project has been paid off in FJA’s energy cost savings as negotiated in the ESPC.

There are also several actions that FJA faculty and staff can take on their own to increase energy efficiency at both campuses. For example, investing in LED bulbs for facilities use would significantly decrease energy consumption. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, LED bulbs use at least 75% less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.[[11]](#footnote-11) Additionally, the price of LED bulbs have decreased significantly over the last decade, and they are now more affordable than ever. Energy efficiency must also be taken into consideration when purchasing new appliances. When possible, FJA should invest in Energy Star certified appliances, or appliances certified by the EPA to consume significantly less energy than non-certified alternatives, inherently lowering appliance operation costs.[[12]](#footnote-12) Other behavioral changes FJA faculty and staff can make to increase efficiency include investing in timers for lights and power strips to save energy outside of work hours, keeping building doors closed during the winter, and turning thermostats down by just a few degrees can marginally reduce overall energy consumption and the associated carbon emissions.

**Water**

**Strategies: Reduce water consumption by inspecting and improving water infrastructure.**

**Action Items:**

1. **Sign up for water consultation through the City of Flagstaff and become Water Wise certified.**
2. **Sign up for the City of Flagstaff Rainwater Container Program.**

The future of freshwater availability and drought in the Southwest United states is of great concern to FJA. Being a drought-prone state, Arizona is at particular risk of future water shortages due to climate change. As of the time this was written, 58% of the State of Arizona’s population live in regions currently experiencing drought-like conditions.[[13]](#footnote-13) All of Arizona’s tribal lands are in areas being hit particularly hard. On top of our current situation, climate change is expected to significantly increase the likelihood of droughts in our region.[[14]](#footnote-14) Because of these conditions, FJA is committing to conserving water and reducing water use.

The first action is to conduct a free water consultation through the City of Flagstaff.[[15]](#footnote-15) Through this free consultation, the City will identify and measure all indoor and outdoor water fixtures for both FJA campuses. They will search for leaks, areas of excess water use, and opportunities to upgrade to more efficient appliances. Ultimately, the city will provide a list of recommended actions to reduce water use and applicable commercial rebates to fund said actions. A list of such existing rebates can be found on the City of Flagstaff Water Conservation website here: <https://www.flagstaff.az.gov/4054/Commercial-Rebate-Program>. For example, If the city were to find that the grass field at the elementary campus is too large of a water sink, a potentially qualifying rebate is the Low Water Landscape Rebate Program.[[16]](#footnote-16) At this point, FJA will have the opportunity to enroll in the Water Wise Business Certification Program, where FJA can become certified “water wise” by the city by fixing the issues identified during the consultation. Accomplishing this would not only reduce FJA’s overall water usage, but also show our community that FJA is truly committed to sustainability. The city also offers free 55-gallon rainwater barrels through their Rainwater Container Program. The waiting list may be long, but this is the most cost-effective option. Additionally, the program also offers a $100 rebate for installing a rainwater harvesting container that exceeds 1000-gallon storage if FJA were to choose to do so.[[17]](#footnote-17) The city of Flagstaff’s Water Conservation Program’s website (<https://www.flagstaff.az.gov/31/Water-Conservation>) also hosts a wealth of information including water saving tips, a list of native low-water plants by neighborhood, and educational resources that FJA should reference when making future decisions regarding water use.

**Waste Management**

**Strategies: To reduce outgoing waste**

**Action Items:**

1. **Contact City of Flagstaff Zero Waste Coordinator for assistance improving FJA’s recycling program.**
2. **Develop a composting program at FJA.**
3. **Host Regular flea markets.**
4. **Continue selling reusable lunch kits.**

According to the EPA, the average American generates approximately 4.51 pounds of waste per day, which is the largest amount of municipal waste per person in the world.[[18]](#footnote-18) 35.2% of this waste is composted or recycled, but the large majority ends up in landfills and our oceans. Though the environmental impacts of waste varies widely depending upon its chemical makeup, the combined effect of these wastes in a landfill are a significant amount methane emissions. In 2016, methane from landfills accounted for 16% of the United States' total methane emissions, making landfills the USA’s third largest source of methane emissions.[[19]](#footnote-19) To combat this, FJA plans to significantly reduce its contribution to landfills by improving recycling and promoting reuse over discarding used items.

FJA will begin by contacting the City of Waste Coordinator for a free consultation to improve the FJA’s recycling program.[[20]](#footnote-20) The Waste Coordinator will first evaluate FJA’s current recycling program and then help develop and implement a new, optimized program. Many of the materials and resources that will most likely be used for this new recycling campaign can be found on the City of Flagstaff Sustainability Section webpage. Ideally, the new program will increase the amount of material being recycled while also educating faculty and students about recycling. In addition to this, FJA will continue to pursue other recycling program opportunities through Crayola and Terracycle. One Terracycle program of particular interest is their BIC Stationery Recycling Program, through which FJA can recycle all brands of writing instruments, glue sticks, paint sets, watercolor dispensers, and packaging.[[21]](#footnote-21)

In addition to improving recycling, FJA will take several other actions to reduce waste. For example, the FJA Climate Action Committee in conjunction with the FJA Board will develop a plan for composting food waste and yard trimmings. The City of Flagstaff Sustainability Section webpage provides instructions for composting that are necessary for this project.[[22]](#footnote-22) This compost will be primarily used for the FJA student gardens but can also be used as mulch for groundskeeping. FJA will also promote waste reduction by hosting regular flea markets, offering incentives for students using reusable lunch boxes and water bottles, and continuing to sell reusable containers and beeswax wraps to students and families. FJA will also consider a means to make reusable lunch kits available to underprivileged students and families. Also, The City of Flagstaff mentioned in their CAAP that they plan to achieve zero waste by 2050. This means that FJA should keep an eye out for new commercial programs and initiatives the City of Flagstaff might create to help achieve their goal.

**Transportation**

**Strategies: Reduce FJA’s indirect emissions from vehicles.**

**Action Items:**

1. **Develop and implement an idle-free campaign.**
2. **Provide students and faculty access to transportation alternatives.**

We are responsible for the indirect emissions (or scope 3 emissions) generated from the commute to school by parents, faculty, and staff every day. A large contributor to these emissions is idling vehicles. Idling personal vehicles emit 300 million tons of CO2 and consumes approximately 6 billion gallons of fuel each year in the U.S. alone. In fact, completely eliminating unnecessary idling would reduce emissions equivalent to taking 5 million vehicles off the roads.[[23]](#footnote-23) In addition to contributing to climate change, idling personal vehicles also emit pollutants such as benzene, formaldehyde, and acetaldehyde that are damaging to children’s developing lungs.[[24]](#footnote-24) To combat emissions from idling vehicles, FJA will conduct an idle-free campaign. The FJA Climate Action Committee will be responsible for the development and implementation of this campaign. The EPA provides a suite of materials at <https://www.epa.gov/schools/idle-free-schools-toolkit-healthy-school-environment> to help formulate a successful anti-idling campaign. Iturnitoff.com, a successful anti-idling campaign, also has resources available to help get started.

In addition to the idle-free campaign, FJA will also work to provide students and employees with alternative transportation options. For example, the Committee can establish carpool, bike to school, and walking groups by neighborhood for both students and faculty. FJA will also encourage the use of Mountain Line buses by making information regarding bus routes and schedules available on their website. FJA might also consider opening up a dialog with Mountain Line about donating a number of bus passes to give to students and staff that might not otherwise be able to afford a bus pass. Encouraging the use of buses for everyday commuting and other school functions such as field trips will further help to reduce FJA’s carbon footprint.

**Additional Funding**

Many of the projects and programs in FJA’s climate action plan are free or financed, but additional funding opportunities should still be explored, nonetheless. The City of Flagstaff provides one such opportunity via the Flagstaff Neighborhood Sustainability Grant.[[25]](#footnote-25) This grant awards up to $2,000 that can be used to fund or continue projects in the categories of food, waste, climate action, resilience, and water conservation. The project must also meet the specific requirements of its given category. This can potentially be used to fund several of the sustainability projects and actions mentioned in the previous sections of this plan. Grants should be applied for each year.

1. Teaching Enhancement Award through FJA
2. The Shindig fundraiser (potentially)

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