

**Bergenfield High School  
Green Team**

**Sustainable Schools Jersey  
2015-16 Annual Report**

## **Members**

Dr. Joseph Amara, Board of Education President  
Christopher Tully, Interim Superintendent of Schools  
James Fasano, Principal  
Robert Ragasa, Assistant Principal  
Paul McDevitt, Director of Buildings and Grounds  
Chris Langschultz, Special Assistant to the Superintendent  
Paul Whitaker, Supervisor of Food Services  
Adam Hirschman, Transportation Manager  
Janina Zychowski, Business Analyst  
Fred Frangiosa, Head Custodian  
Alyssa Bania, Green Technology Teacher  
Joseph Kozay, Teacher/Union Representative  
Gabriel Tanglao, Teacher/Union Representative  
Joe Verga, Community Member  
BHS Students (4), Names Withheld

## **Meeting Dates**

January 6, 2016  
March 7, 2016  
May 26, 2016  
June 6, 2016

## Summary

The Bergenfield High School Green Team was assembled on December 23, 2015 by James Fasano, Principal of BHS. The committee is comprised of key school members, including Board representation, administration, faculty, staff, students, and the community. The purpose of the team was to support the school's initiatives to increase sustainability and reduce waste while guiding the process for the Sustainable Jersey Schools application. The Sustainable Jersey Schools application served as an integral tool that helped the team to evaluate the school's current programs and find ways to increase sustainability. The team's involvement included the research, organization, planning, and execution phases of the initiative.

During the process, the team found that the high school had many positive programs already being utilized that served as a strong platform on which to continue building. Such programs include general recycling, digital curriculum mapping, school garden, before-the-bell breakfast (Breakfast After the Bell) program, green infrastructure, renewable generation system, and volunteer initiatives. As we reviewed the Sustainable Jersey Schools application in our first meeting, the team set various goals for the first year that would increase sustainability through implementation of several new programs.

First, the school installed new univent systems that would help us control our indoor air quality while providing more energy-efficient heat. The high school also began utilizing air quality flags in our athletics compound to better inform our school members of outdoor air quality. The Board of Education also approved an LED lighting conversion for the auditorium to occur over the summer. We have made revisions to our lunch program to begin incorporating locally sourced foods, and hope to continue building on this for year two. The high school received a Sustainable Schools Jersey grant from PSEG to support a new program that will target collecting food waste and converting it to compost to be used in school gardens and grounds. Also new this year, the district began utilizing Google cloud technology to facilitate curriculum collaboration and storage. In the area of professional development, the district increased awareness of our anti-idling initiative through professional development to our entire transportation staff. In addition, key members also received training on green building and sustainability topics.

As each new initiative was tackled, team members collected evidence for our application and organized it to be submitted during each round. The team set the bar high from the start, hoping to touch on every action item on the application. As time went on, the team prioritized action items by those we would focus on in year one, and those we would work towards in year two and beyond. The Green Team looks forward to continue building on the foundation of sustainability with diligence now that it has been charged with the task to oversee this process.

## Evaluation

In evaluating the effectiveness of our efforts, the Green Team polled various students and staff members in regards to the school's efforts to increase sustainability. An area we received a lot of student feedback focused on our Food Services program. This included positive remarks on our Breakfast After the Bell program and our locally sourced food options. Staff members were very pleased with the curriculum revision process introduced this year that utilized Google Drive. We also received good feedback from our first Green Fair, which was held in the spring.

While we've had great participation in recycling at Bergenfield High School since we began promoting it in years past, we received feedback that students and staff would like to see more recycling bins throughout the building. Some bins have gone missing and needed to be replaced, and other high-traffic areas could use additional cans to make them more accessible- especially in the cafeterias. While the color-coded cans are easily identifiable to most members of the school, some were confused as to which can, blue or yellow, was for paper and which for cans and bottles. With this feedback, we are thinking that labeling each can with its purpose could help all to remember.

The Sustainable Jersey School application process has helped the Green Team evaluate the high school's various efforts to increase sustainability. The team hopes to increase awareness and promotion of such actions as our recycling initiatives, anti-idling campaign, paper reduction, energy saving practices, and more, by maximizing social media outreach. While we've accomplished much in our first year, the Green Team realizes it has a long way to go to achieve all action items set forth in this application process. We are proud of the action items that we were successful with, the amount of waste we were able to reduce, and the participation and buy-in from our school community members.

## Planning for Year 2

During our final meeting of the 2015-16 School Year, the Green Team identified various action items to focus on in Year 2. These areas include conducting an energy audit, developing a green cleaning policy and practice, conducting a school health assessment, creating green challenges, and much more.

We will be working diligently in year two in regards to our PSEG grant. We are excited to begin utilizing our food waste for compost once our tumblers arrive. In particular, the Green Technology students are looking forward to participating in the process and utilizing the compost in the school gardens. We are also looking at options for recycling runoff and excess "gray water."

This upcoming year also marks the first phase of incorporating Google Apps for Educators into our institution. GAFE will dramatically reduce paper use, facilitating all communication between student and staff electronically. Eventually, we hope to eliminate printed textbooks and replace all with digital eBooks, further increasing our sustainability. This initiative will also reduce our need for servers, therefore saving energy. Last, but not least, since GAFE is free for schools, there will be a tremendous savings on servers, books, paper, and software. It will likely take us a few years to completely phase in all classrooms to achieve our goal, as we are carefully calculating the implementation into several phases.

The high school wants to continue to focus on its recycling initiatives, making necessary tweaks to expand and improve efficacy. For starters, we are looking to purchase more paper from recycled sources. We also want to maintain ongoing education for staff and students on recycling and other sustainable initiatives. We are looking at ways to promote our programs through the use of awards and prizes for those who continue to exercise good recycling habits, such as reusable water bottles. We also hope to educate our middle school students, so that they are aware of these practices and ideas before reaching the high school. The Green Team will continue to explore new ways and ideas for increasing participation by all. We are also looking at starting a Green Week that focuses each school day to specific sustainability practices.

Physical activities are also a focus of the Green Team in year two. We've begun to brainstorm on ways to increase activity outside of the school environment, and have come up with a few ideas. We'd like to organize a 5K or walk-a-thon for the entire community to raise awareness for sustainable practices. We also are looking at holding a Walk-to-School Day, where we encourage all of our students to walk rather than being dropped off or driving to school. We are hopeful that we will come up with many unique ways to promote physical activity among our students and staff as well as the community at large.

We look forward to an exciting new year implementing new initiatives and promoting greater sustainability.