The Green Schools Initiative has been an important component of Omaha Public Schools' success and engagement over the past year.

OPS is committed to becoming one of the greenest school districts in the country. Even though the current economy presents challenges, the past year of work under the GSI has shown that OPS is capable of achieving that vision.

I am very proud of the GSI and will continue to provide support for the Initiative as OPS reduces expenses by creating healthier learning spaces and reducing its impact on the environment.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jerry M. Bartee
Assistant Superintendent

June 2011
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GSI Website (www.ops.org/gsi) | An Internet site hosted by OPS that is the central hub of the GSI online. Provides links to the Toolkit, ENERGY STAR ratings, and other resources. | Complete
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OPS at-a-Glance

The Core Committee is the primary advisory board for the Green Schools Initiative. It comprises a wide variety of individuals, such as teachers and administrators within the District, as well as members of the outside community and local technical experts.

The EMT is responsible for addressing technical issues related to energy and resource consumption. For instance, the EMT is the primary team working to diagnose problems revealed by sudden drops to or persistently low ENERGY STAR ratings.

The Information Management Systems Focus Team is responsible for developing district-wide guidelines on how to reduce energy use by the District’s information systems and computers.

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The Green Schools Initiative would not succeed without the involvement of dozens of dedicated and passionate individuals in several groups under the GSI. The facing page shows roughly how these groups are related with brief descriptions. The following provides additional details on some of the key groups:

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**Next Steps:** This fall every school will receive additional support in the form of a comprehensive resource package designed to get green teams off the ground and accelerate progress toward the GSI goals.
Formulation of the GSI Goals began in February 2010 with the Core Committee (see pp.12–13). The Core Committee brainstormed many potential goal categories, including green purchasing, bike racks, green cleaning, and community gardens. At a subsequent meeting, the Core Committee narrowed down the list to the seven most important categories:

1. Energy
2. Waste/Recycling
3. Paper
4. Water
5. Integrated Pest Management
6. Green Teams
7. Community Involvement

After these categories were selected, the GSI Coordination Team was tasked with researching each area, determining appropriate baselines, and then suggesting appropriate goals. Metrics were developed for each of the first six areas listed above.

The draft goals were presented to the Core Committee in March 2011. Logically, the energy goal is based on the District’s ENERGY STAR ratings (see pp.7–8).

The waste/recycling goal was bifurcated to ensure that OPS was simultaneously sending less material to landfill and sending more material to be recycled. The waste baseline was created by averaging OPS’ past five years of data.

The goal for paper is based upon the number of cases purchased by OPS rather than the number of cases ordered from the distribution center by schools. Although use in schools drives demand, it is the actual amount purchased that will reflect changes in use at the school level.

The GSI Coordination Team has been strategic about promoting the Initiative to schools and the approach it takes in doing so.

The starting point was finding individuals willing to help jumpstart the Initiative. Many of these individuals, including several teachers, volunteered to serve on the Core Committee (see pp.12–13). This group proved invaluable in helping to give direction and guidance in rolling out the GSI.

It is also important to acknowledge that the GSI could not have accomplished what it has without support from central administration.

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Identifying the green champions also allowed the GSI team to establish a FirstClass conference that provides schools a virtual forum in which they could directly connect and share additional helpful information.

Next Steps: The GSI Coordination Team plans to visit every OPS site at least once next year and provide continued support. The Team will also continue to work with GSI Teams (see pp.12–13) to develop strategies that work toward achieving the GSI Goals.
Lighting Retrofit

Phase I of the lighting retrofit took place in the summer of 2010 and included twenty-one schools. Phase II commenced in the summer of 2011 and includes thirty schools, several of which are larger buildings that received only partial retrofits in Phase I. Comparing year-over-year electricity expenses and consumption during a six-month period shows that the retrofit has reduced consumption by about one million kWh in the Phase I schools. Electricity expenses increased by about $17,000, due to the five to seven percent increase in electricity prices.

Without the retrofit, OPS would have spent an additional $45,000 on electricity in that period, or about $90,000 per year, in Phase I schools. Actual savings fell short of the projected $172,000 savings per year, which indicates an extended payback period.

OPS should expect increased savings from Phase II of the retrofit, to be completed by this fall. Savings from Phase II should exceed Phase I because Phase II includes a larger number of buildings.

The goal for water is based on a 12-month rolling average to offset seasonality of water use. The draft goal for water was not aggressive enough, as it barely exceeded historical lows, so the Core Committee insisted on a more aggressive final goal.

The IPM goal is simply that the District should be IPM STAR certified by August 2016. OPS Environmental Services is already pushing out IPM practices into schools.

While less than 40 percent of buildings had a green team as of this past winter, new teams are quickly forming as the GSI ramps up the implementation phase. OPS hopes to have a green team in every building within three years.

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<td>Baseline: 47.4</td>
<td>Current: 50.9</td>
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<td>2. Waste: Send less than 110,000 cu.yd./yr. to landfill by August 2016.</td>
<td>Baseline: 142,000</td>
<td>Current: pending</td>
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<td>3. Recycling: Recycle more than 34,000 cu.yd./yr. by August 2016.</td>
<td>Baseline: 17,300</td>
<td>Current: pending</td>
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<td>4. Water: Use less than 11.1 million gal./yr. by August 2014</td>
<td>Baseline: 12.5</td>
<td>Current: 12.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Paper: Purchase less than 7,800 cases/yr. by August 2016</td>
<td>Baseline: 10,560</td>
<td>Current: pending</td>
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<td>6. Green Teams: All OPS buildings have a green team by May 2014.</td>
<td>Baseline: 36%</td>
<td>Current:</td>
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<td>7. Integrated Pest Mgmt: District is IPM STAR Certified by 2016.</td>
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Top: Graph comparing OPS’ average ENERGY STAR rating with utility expenses. Left-to-Right Above: ENERGY STAR award plaque from one of five OPS recipient schools in 2010; notecards line a window outside a classroom; the 2010 LEED Silver addition to Omaha North High Science and Technology Magnet School—the first LEED certified educational facility in Nebraska—which contains 16 labs and classrooms, a two-story greenhouse, roof garden with rain capture and storage, wrestling room, and faculty fitness center.

The GSI Coordination Team completed ENERGY STAR benchmarking of OPS’ ninety-one buildings in August 2009. Since that time the Energy Management Team has worked closely with the GSI Coordination Team to troubleshoot buildings with low ratings or where ratings have dropped notably. Ratings are updated quarterly as utility data becomes available. Measures are underway to allow bi-monthly or monthly updates to provide more timely feedback to schools and teams.

The most recent data shows that the district-wide rating reversed its initial downward trend and has nearly climbed back to the August 2009 level. The utility costs have also fallen significantly from their peak last fall.

An individual school must have a rating of 75 or higher and pass air, lighting, and temperature tests to receive the ENERGY STAR award. In 2009, four OPS schools received the ENERGY STAR award and in 2010 five schools received the award. As of March 2011, fifteen schools are eligible for the ENERGY STAR award. Another seven schools have current ratings between 70 and 74 that might become eligible by the end of 2011.

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For instance, support from Dr. Bartee allowed the GSI Coordination Team to make short presentations at the March principals’ meetings, at the new principals’ training session, and during the March custodial in-service at Central High School. Direct access to these two groups maximizes the effectiveness of everyone’s time and helps spread the word to key decision makers.

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Green Teams in all schools and buildings

Photo Courtesy of BCDM Architects and Thomas Kessler Photography
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- Lighting Retrofit ......................10
- Promoting the GSI ......................11
- GSI Teams ...............................12–13
- Resources and Tools ..............14–15

**Left-to-Right Above:** OPS Green Team Toolkit; backside of the OPS Recycling Tips flyer listing recyclable materials and key District contacts for miscellaneous items such as batteries and light bulbs. **Facing:** Table listing resources and tools associated with the GSI. **Above:** The GSI Core Committee tours the new greenhouse in the 2010 Omaha North High LEED Silver certified addition.
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