**Template for LEA Energy Policy**

**Authority and Instructions:** Maryland Code, Education Article § 5-312.1 (2021) requires each Maryland school district to adopt or update a school district energy policy beginning on July 1, 2022. It requires that certain information be included in the energy policy.

The Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) coordinated with the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to develop this template energy policy that LEAs may choose to use in their compliance with Chapter 608 (2021). In addition to the recommendations and explanations, this template includes “minimum content” sections which can be used as a checklist for compliance.

**Recommendations for writing an energy policy:** Recommendations from workgroup members, the IAC, MEA, and MDE include:

* *Word choices are crucial in expressing intention. A word like “may” is acceptable and provides much more flexibility than “shall” or “will.” Consider word choices that reflect the degree of commitment that your LEA is willing and able to make.*
* *The policy should identify what and why for each section to keep the policy durable. The who, when, how much, and how can also be included in the policy, or they can be communicated in subsequent implementation and planning documents. For example, the energy policy can identify that the LEA intends to use an energy management platform, but does not need to name the specific software.*
* *The art of policy writing is finding the right level of aspiration. Workgroup members recommend that policies should not settle for mediocrity and that real change can be driven with ambition. They also recommend realistic goals that can be met by the next renewal cycle.*

**TEMPLATE FOR LEA ENERGY POLICY**

This template is intended to be a reference for LEAs seeking to craft a policy statement that is compliant with 2021 Chap. 608 (the “Statute”). The following is a guide with sections that correspond to the requirements set forth in the Statute. When drafting their own policy, LEAs may reference this template and adopt, dismiss, or modify the segments wholly or in part, at their discretion. Each LEA is free to craft its own policy and policy statement independently.

1. **Policy Standards**

*Some policy writers like to also identify who and how in this section by including specifics such as:*

* *Applies to: (scope of departments to be tasked with implementation)*
* *Delegation of Authority*
* *Responsibilities: (recognize the officer(s) responsible for the policy implementation and outcomes)*
* *List all individuals responsible for specific tasks, such as utility analyst, communications manager, energy project manager, grant writer, sustainability manager, or other faculty*

Standard inclusions for every policy typically include:

* *Effective Date*
* *Approved by: (should be LEA Board of Education)*
* *Frequency of future updates (at least every 3 years)*
* *Procedural requirements for updates*
* *Superseded versions (list)*
* *Provisions for posting policy, policy statements, and performance data on a website*

**Minimum content:** The policy must be adopted or updated beginning July 1, 2022 and must be adopted by the Board of Education. It must be posted on the LEA’s website. Updates must be every three years, or more frequently.

1. **Policy Statement**

Begin with a strategic vision. This should be two or three sentences, a simple and high-level declaration of durable intent to achieve one or more specific outcomes. Consider mandates, constraints, and problems that the policy seeks to address.

Approaches or endeavors may be any mix of these examples, and is certainly not limited to:

* *Reduce costs*
* *Limit the adverse environmental impacts of energy consumption*
* *Increase the use of renewable energy in meeting energy needs*
* *Ensure operational resilience*
* *Harmonize energy and sustainability initiatives with the school district’s operational and fiscal priorities*
* *Achieve a safe and comfortable learning environment for staff and students*

**Minimum content:**  Follow the strategic vision with content that at a minimum recognizes the requirements set forth by the Statute. The requirements include energy purchasing, conservation, and efficiency of energy.

1. **Energy Purchasing**

An energy policy may spell out any number of energy purchasing intentions, such as (1) maintaining current procurement practices, (2) investigating alternative practices, or (3) committing to adopting one or more innovative approaches.

Procurement options in today’s energy markets include:

* *Continued use of standard offer services provided by local electric utilities*
* *Purchasing energy commodity contracts from independent suppliers*
* *Enlisting energy advisory services to manage the price risk of commodity purchases*
* *Power purchase agreements (PPAs) that offset utility supplies with solar or other on-site energy generating capacity*

**Minimum content:** Identify current practices. Identify if your LEA intends to investigate alternatives, anticipating their implementation as soon as administrative conditions permit.

1. **Energy Efficiency**

*It is very likely that budgetary limitations prevent equipment replacement for the sole reason of increasing energy efficiency. This may be obvious to anyone in the LEA familiar with the capital budget and IAC/MSDE/DGS design development requirements, however, the policy writer may want to consider that many who read the policy may not have the same understanding.*

Energy efficiency is the performance of systems, as measured by their output in relation to the input (energy used). A given building component or system, as well as the building itself, will have a level of energy efficiency that is measurable using metrics such as:

* *Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER, expressed as Btu/hr per total input power, watts)*
* *Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER, same as EER but averaged over multiple temperatures)*
* *Energy Use Intensity (EUI, expressed as energy per square foot per year)*

An energy efficiency policy should identify the metrics to be used in measuring efficiency and identify the components to which the standards or goals will be applied. Identify the minimum efficiency standards currently in place and consider establishing policy for going beyond those minimums. The energy policy statement provides overall guidance whereas the specifics are provided in the Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP), procurement standards, design guides, etc.

**Minimum content**: The energy policy must address energy efficiency. LEA should recognize and consider energy efficiency equipment and energy efficient buildings.

Possible policy intentions for energy efficiency:

* *Building envelope: influence design standards and the EFMP towards consideration of more energy efficient construction*
* *Building systems: supplement existing life cycle cost analysis requirements to specify consideration of high efficiency/Energy Star certified equipment and rebates available*
* *Recognizing that high efficiency equipment comes with increased complexity, the policy can identify that maintenance standards and training opportunities need to be coordinated to ensure that equipment is being used appropriately*

1. **Energy Conservation**

*Energy conservation strategies will likely be a key component in any* ***Implementation Plan.*** *Use the implementation plan to identify specific ways that your LEA will conserve energy, such as identifying high impact changes, encouraging staff to turn off and unplug energy intensive equipment when not in use, or recommending investment in smart power strips.*

Energy conservation entails initiatives to reduce energy wasted by existing assets. Results are derived from changes in behaviors and habits among students, administrators, and facility professionals. Conservation usually involves continuous effort and commitment by all stakeholders.

**Minimum content**: The energy policy must address energy conservation. LEA should at least recognize and consider energy conservation strategies.

Possible policy intentions for energy conservation:

* *Promote real time electricity monitoring to foster awareness of electricity usage and cost savings*
* *Achieve and sustain energy conservation to the most practical extent*
* *Engage students, faculty, and staff to secure their cooperation in reducing energy waste*
* *Integrate energy conservation awareness with educational curricula, using energy data specific to students’ schools when possible*
* *Insert energy-saving behavioral criteria into the terms and conditions of custodial and other service contracts*

1. **Energy Data Monitoring, Reporting, Analysis, and Management**

*Keep in mind that energy management starts with data collection. You can’t manage what you don’t measure.*

This section is the core component of the Statute. In some situations, an LEA may already have a sustainability plan that lacks this section and needs to be added. Methodology for compliance will vary by LEA. The policy should identify what is going to be measured and how the data will be used.

While the Statute requires LEAs to report district-wide results, LEAs may, at their option, also report individual facility results. Ideally, energy management data will include an inventory listing all facilities by name and type, the square footage of each facility, and the energy metrics for each.

**Minimum content:** Each policy must require the LEAs to monitor and report district-wide electricity use, including metrics on total electricity use, the volume and percentage of annual electricity consumption derived from renewable sources, and overall electricity use by source and square foot. The energy policy needs to identify that the LEA will meet these minimum requirements. Additionally, the Statute requires that both current and historical energy per square-foot data be included in the policy.

Possible intended uses of energy metrics (and reasons for the effort) include:

* *To report results as necessary to maintain compliance with the Statute*
* *To forward results to teachers for use in educational curricula*
* *To facilitate goals for energy improvements based on energy benchmarking*
* *To serve as the basis for intra-district performance competitions and awards of recognition*
* *To fortify the LEA’s analytical capacity for facility investment choices*

1. **Goals and Targets**

Consider that there are different types of goals based on the time frame for implementation:

* *Short term (1-year) objectives are used to enact multi-year plans and are typically communicated via an implementation plan. These annual objectives set the context for annual budgets in that they communicate how much money/ hours are needed to implement the policy and plan.*
* *Short term (1-3 year) quantified goals are usually communicated in implementation plans along with responsibilities and authorities (who does what, how they are to do it, and when tasks are to be completed).*
* *Long term (3+ year) intentions best suited for policy documents because they communicate what outcomes are expected in general terms and why. Consider the policy update schedule when communicating any goals in the policy document.*

**Minimum content:** The statute encourages each LEA to set targets to increase the school district’s use of renewable energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

1. **Related Information and Supporting Documents**

Links to any forms needed to meet the policy’s requirements. List related LEA policy documents, legal references to state law, and/or external documents that provide helpful, relevant information to the policy. Consider prioritization of any documents that provide additional information on the LEA’s energy usage or ability to reduce energy usage to set goals.

**Minimum content:** None.

Consider the use of links or uploading related documents directly to the policy page. Examples include the following:

* *IAC Reporting Template (*[*https://iac.mdschoolconstruction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Reporting-Template-for-LEA-Energy-Data.pdf*](https://iac.mdschoolconstruction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Reporting-Template-for-LEA-Energy-Data.pdf)*)*
* *Self-Certification Form (*[*https://iac.mdschoolconstruction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/LEA-Energy-Policy-Self-Certification.pdf*](https://iac.mdschoolconstruction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/LEA-Energy-Policy-Self-Certification.pdf)*)*
* *FAQs on Reporting Template (*[*https://iac.mdschoolconstruction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Reporting-Template-for-LEA-Energy-Data.pdf*](https://iac.mdschoolconstruction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Reporting-Template-for-LEA-Energy-Data.pdf)*)*
* *Maryland Energy Codes*
* *Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 5-112*
* *Maryland State COMAR Regulation 13A.03.02*
* *Relevant Data Sources on the following: school energy use data, school waste generation and recycling rates, Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Educators Green School Certification, and U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Certification*
* *School facilities information beyond what is in the Educational Facilities Master Plan (electric utility provider, water source, sewage provider, Natural Gas, Propane Gas, Heating Oil, Ground Source Heat Exchangers*