

Executive Summary – Quantitative Survey

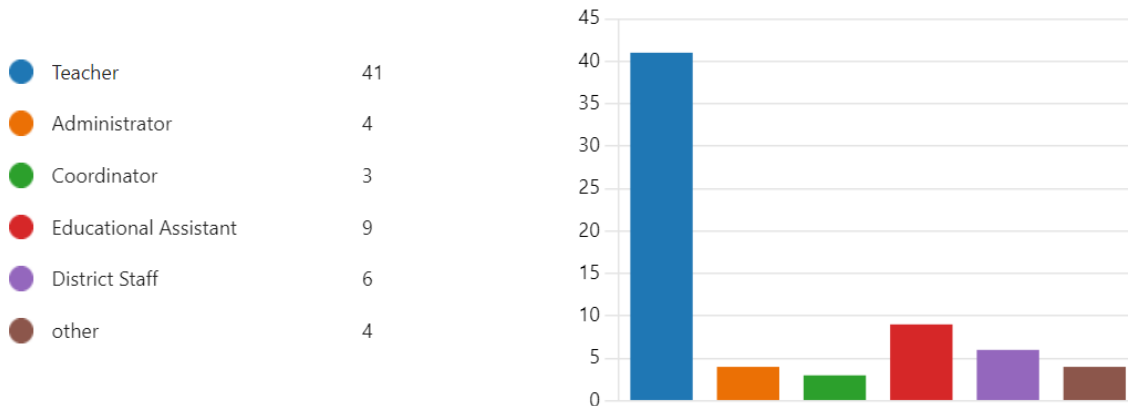
Title: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability in qSD47 Schools

Environmental stewardship and sustainability have been outlined as key priorities for our school district in the latest strategic plan. To inform the process of developing a comprehensive sustainability plan several surveys were conducted. The results below illustrate a question-by-question summary of findings.



Findings by Question

Q1: What is your role within qathet School District?



Q2: What level do you most frequently teach or work within?

Elementary (K-3)	41
Elementary (4-7)	27
Secondary	18
District	4
Other	3

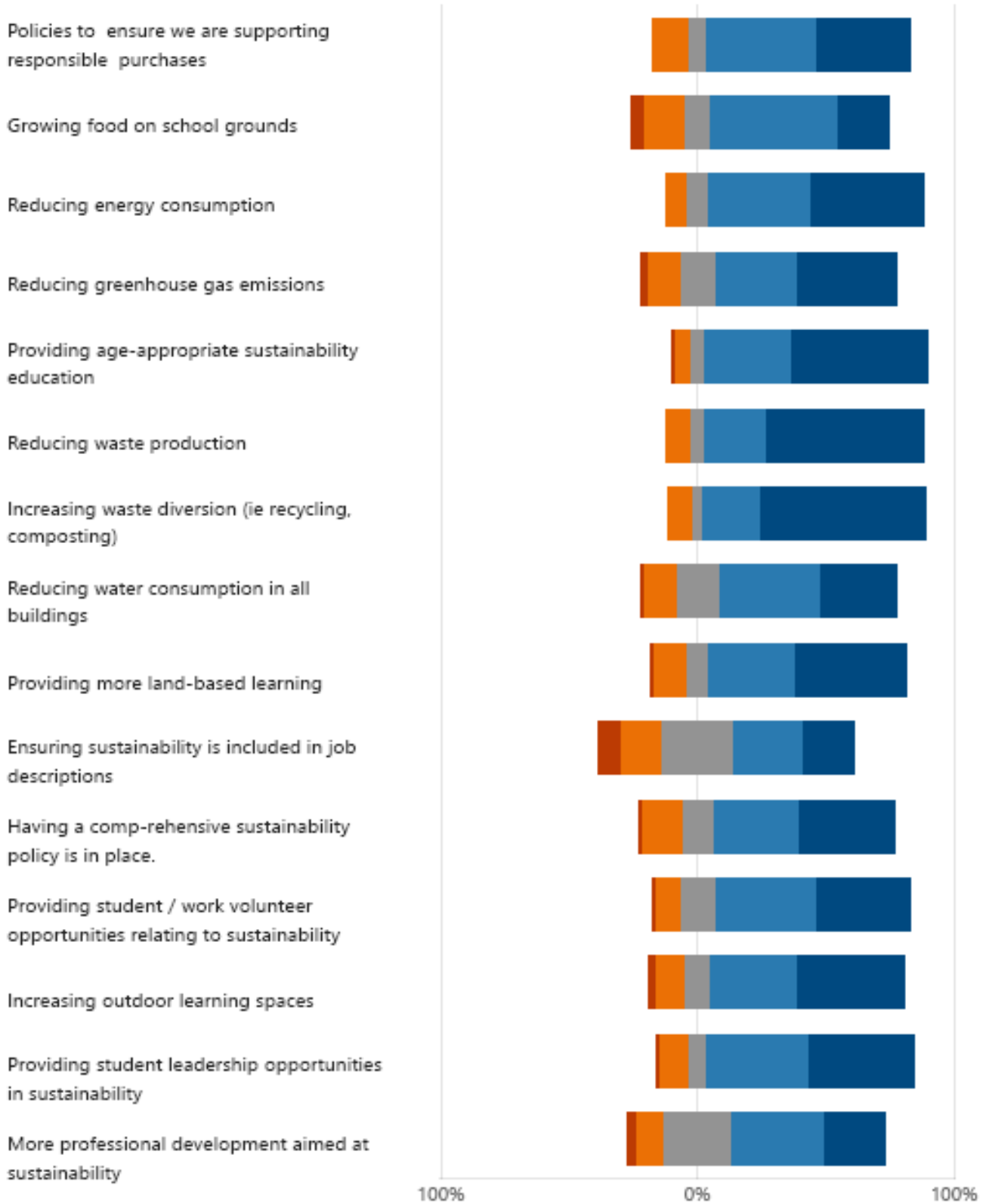


Q3: How would you rate our school district overall in terms of sustainability?



Q4: Sustainability is a key goal in qathet School District's Strategic Plan. What related activities do you think we should focus on to achieve a higher level of sustainability?

■ Not Important
 ■ Somewhat Important
 ■ No Opinion
 ■ Important
 ■ Very Important



Interpretation and Summary

Key Areas of Focus:

- **Responsible Purchases:** Policies ensuring responsible procurement are highly valued.
- **On-Site Food Production:** Growing food within school premises is seen as important.
- **Energy Conservation:** Reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions are top priorities.
- **Education:** Providing age-appropriate sustainability education and land-based learning opportunities.
- **Waste Management:** Emphasis on reducing waste production, increasing waste diversion (recycling, composting), and reducing water consumption across buildings.
- **Incorporating Sustainability:** Participants emphasize including sustainability in job descriptions and having a comprehensive sustainability policy in place.
- **Student Engagement:** Providing volunteer and leadership opportunities related to sustainability for students.
- **Infrastructure:** Increasing outdoor learning spaces is considered important.
- **Professional Development:** More training and professional development focused on sustainability is also recommended.

The data strongly advocates for a multifaceted approach to sustainability, emphasizing education, practical initiatives, policy changes, and student involvement as crucial components for advancing sustainability goals.

Q5: Do you have any other suggestions? Please describe.

Below is a summary of written responses (27 in total)

1. **Curriculum Development:**

- **Scope and Sequence:** Develop a comprehensive K-7 sustainability curriculum framework.
- **Green Leadership Program:** Establish a program for grades 5-7 to promote sustainability education as essential before high school.
- **French and Ayajuthem Materials:** Ensure availability of resources in these languages.

2. **Operational Improvements:**

- **Resource Allocation:** Hire dedicated outdoor educators, provide necessary outdoor gear, and enhance partnerships with community groups for authentic sustainability experiences.
- **Energy Audit and Sustainability Plan:** Conduct an energy audit and establish a strategic sustainability plan with clear benchmarks for 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year goals.
- **Maintenance Collaboration:** Establish a joint committee involving school staff and maintenance for outdoor education projects to ensure alignment and avoid conflicts.

- **Better Waste Management:** Implement better composting systems and advocate for proper waste diversion and diversion and disposal strategies.

3. **Teacher and Staff Engagement:**

- **Professional Development:** Provide training for teachers and Educational Assistants (EAs) in outdoor leadership, First Aid, and sustainability education.
- **Teacher Leads in Each School:** Appoint teacher leads in each school to drive sustainability initiatives.

4. **Community Engagement:**

- **Parental Involvement:** Engage parents through the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) to support initiatives and raise awareness.
- **Local Partnerships:** Collaborate with local organizations to promote sustainability and integrate community learning opportunities.
- **District-Level Policies:** Advocate for district-level policies supporting sustainability to drive systemic change.

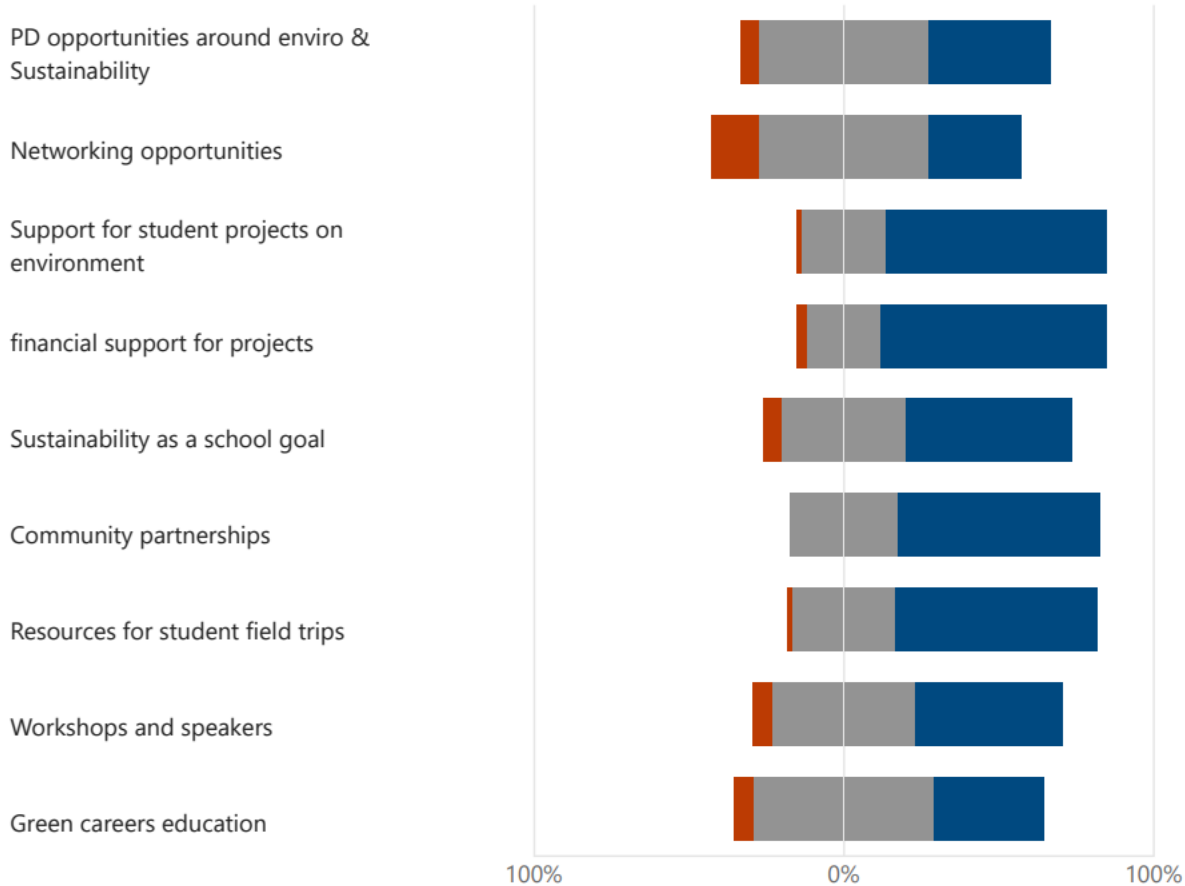
5. **Student Involvement:**

- **Student-Led Committees:** Establish sustainability committees led by students in each school to drive initiatives and create awareness.
- **Workshops and Speakers:** Arrange workshops and speakers focusing on sustainability for both students and staff.
- **Cross-Grade Collaboration:** Facilitate interactions between elementary and secondary students for knowledge exchange and mentorship.

These suggestions highlight the need for a comprehensive approach encompassing curriculum development, operational enhancements, staff engagement, community involvement, resource allocation, and student empowerment to foster a culture of sustainability within the qathet School District.

Q6: How useful would the following resources be for incorporating environmental & sustainability into your teaching / learning / daily practices?

■ not useful ■ somewhat useful ■ very useful



The survey indicates a strong consensus among respondents regarding the usefulness of resources for integrating environmental and sustainability themes into education and daily practices.

The data overall demonstrates a collective recognition of the importance of these resources in promoting environmental and sustainability education. It highlights a consensus on key areas where support and emphasis could significantly enhance the incorporation of these themes into educational practices.

Q7: Do you have any other suggestions? Please describe.

Below is a summary of written responses (21 in total)

Infrastructure and Resources:

- Suggestions involve hiring separate teachers or outdoor educators for better implementation.
- Updating textbooks, providing reusable materials, and reducing reliance on photocopying.
- Conducting an energy audit and creating sustainability plans with benchmarks.

Collaboration and Communication:

- Advocacy for cross-grade collaboration, staff meetings, and training to involve everyone.
- Encouraging collaboration between schools, involving students in sustainability initiatives.
- Encouraging partnerships with community groups and local organizations for better alignment.

Leadership and Policy:

- Urgency in incorporating sustainability into school goals and district policies.
- Emphasizing the importance of modeling sustainability from district and school leadership.
- Pushing for government recognition of climate change as a crisis and aligning policies accordingly.

Educational Initiatives:

- Educational efforts involving curriculum development, informative resources, and workshops.
- Establishing student sustainability committees within each school for active involvement.

Community Engagement:

- Engaging parents, PAC (Parent Advisory Committee), and local organizations in promoting sustainability.
- Partnering with community entities such as city recycling departments, Let's Talk Trash etc to support waste diversion.

Mindset and Awareness:

- Promoting a shift in mindset towards local action and understanding the lifecycle of common products.
- Emphasizing the importance of workshops and speakers for students and staff.

Challenges and Barriers:

- Addressing challenges such as resistance from maintenance staff, lack of resources, and the need for custodial support.

The responses collectively highlight the multifaceted approach needed to promote sustainability in education, emphasizing resource allocation, collaborative efforts, policy integration, educational initiatives, community engagement, mindset shifts, and addressing barriers for effective implementation.

Q8: Are you aware of any ongoing Environmental or Sustainability improvements to your facility? Please describe (37 respondents)

Below is a summary of written responses (37 in total)

Solar Energy Initiatives:

- Several mentioned the installation of solar panels.

- Some individuals highlighted doubts or reservations about the effectiveness or priority of this method.

Energy Efficiency Improvements:

- Upgrades to lighting systems (e.g., LEDs) and windows (single to double pane) for better efficiency.
- Heating and cooling system updates for increased efficiency and reduced energy consumption.

Waste Management and Recycling:

- Recycling programs and initiatives (composting, recycling bins, waste diversion/recycling stations).
- Efforts toward waste reduction in lunches and classrooms.

Garden and Outdoor Initiatives:

- Various mentions of garden improvements, outdoor classrooms, and outdoor learning spaces.
- Involvement of students in gardening activities and outdoor education programs.

Sustainability Committees and Educational Efforts:

- Formation or involvement in sustainability-focused committees (ie EEPSA LSA)
- Calls for more education and promotion on sustainability practices.

Mixed or Limited Awareness:

- Responses indicating limited or no awareness of ongoing sustainability initiatives or improvements.
- Some expressed uncertainty about the effectiveness or direction of certain initiatives.

These findings highlight a mix of initiatives, some of which are not directly related to facilities but are worthy of consideration. Broadly, the responses focused on energy efficiency, waste management, educational programs, and outdoor sustainability projects.

Q9: What Environmental or Sustainability related initiatives are you most proud of in your workplace? Please describe.

Below is a summary of written responses (35 in total)

Outdoor Education & Infrastructure:

- Outdoor classrooms
- Development of outdoor learning spaces
- Utilizing gardens and school lands for education
- Creating forest trails
- Tree planting and care

Food Sustainability & Waste Reduction:

- Local produce utilization
- Minimizing food waste
- Sustainable food programs
- Composting initiatives
- Reducing plastic usage
- Reusable lunch programs

Energy & Resource Conservation:

- Solar energy initiatives
- Natural light utilization to reduce electricity usage
- Efforts to reduce printing and paper waste
- Recycling programs for paper, plastic, cardboard

Community Engagement & Education:

- Student involvement in sustainability projects
- Environmental education courses and clubs
- Teaching sustainability practices to young students
- Engaging community representatives for waste management and sustainability

Indigenous Education & Sustainability:

- Integrating Indigenous knowledge for sustainability
- Land reclamation and restoration projects
- Collaboration with Indigenous communities for land stewardship

Challenges & Aspirations:

- Challenges with inconsistent efforts and lack of awareness
- Aspiring for more initiatives like community gardens, composting, and expanded outdoor activities.
- Desire for increased involvement in school gardens and environmental initiatives

These responses showcase a range of efforts, from infrastructure development to educational programs, waste reduction, energy conservation, and community engagement, along with aspirations for further sustainability initiatives.

Q10: It can be confining to limit our thinking to our current state. Instead, think about a time in the future when we have made great progress towards becoming a sustainable system. How does this look different from today?

Below is a summary of the written responses (42 in total)

1. **Carbon Neutrality & Closed-Loop Systems:** Aim to become carbon neutral, establish closed-loop systems, and shift towards sustainability in the community and economy.
2. **Sustainable Practices in Education:** Implement waste-free schools, organically grown food served on-site, efficient technologies, and a curriculum focused on skills for a sustainable future.
3. **Efficient Infrastructure:** Utilize HVAC systems for energy efficiency, optimize energy use by avoiding wasteful practices like opening windows when heating/cooling is on.
4. **Waste Reduction & Local Purchases:** Implement waste diversion, prioritize local food procurement, focus on quality purchases rather than quantity.
5. **Expanded Recycling:** Extend recycling efforts beyond paper and move towards garbage free schools.
6. **Expanding Outdoor & Sustainability Education** promote outdoor learning and exploration of sustainable practices.
7. **Celebrating Sustainability Milestones:** Encourage students to engage in sustainability activities throughout their schooling. Celebrate school and district achievements.
8. **Composting & Environmental Education:** Teach composting, promote gardening, and integrate it into the curriculum.
9. **Energy and Water Sustainability:** Implement energy generation and water catchment systems.
10. **Off-Grid Greenhouse & On-Site Food Production:** Establish year-round on-site greenhouse systems for food production.
11. **Outdoor Learning Spaces & Sustainability Goals:** Create outdoor learning spaces, promote gardening, and track school sustainability goals.
12. **Teacher Support for Sustainability Initiatives:** Support teachers with sustainability initiatives and projects within their regular work hours.
13. **Integration of Ecology & Bioregionalism Education:** Focus on outdoor learning, ecological understanding, and local ecosystem education.
14. **Community Engagement & Sustainable Education:** Engage the community in sustainable practices and embed sustainability into education.
15. **Normalizing Sustainable Mindsets:** Normalize sustainable behaviors, educate on green careers, and prioritize conscientious resource consumption.
16. **Zero Waste & Outdoor Learning Emphasis:** Strive for zero waste, promote outdoor learning, and engage in community-based learning initiatives.

17. **Education on Reducing Environmental Impact:** Provide workshops, speakers, and education on reducing environmental impacts.
18. **Individual Responsibility & Easy Sustainable Practices:** Foster a culture where individuals take responsibility and where sustainable practices are made easy.
19. **Digital Transition & Reduced Paper Use:** Transition to digital systems to reduce paper waste.
20. **Responsible Consumption & Indigenous Respect:** Encourage responsible consumption, respect for indigenous cultures, and inclusion of diverse perspectives.
21. **Local Agriculture & Survival Skills Education:** Integrate local agriculture education and survival skills into the curriculum.

These visions collectively highlight a shift towards sustainable practices, emphasizing education, waste reduction, community engagement, and a conscious effort to reduce environmental impact across various aspects of school life.

Q11: Do you have any other comments to add? Did we miss anything?

Below is a summary of the written responses (17)

1. **Gratitude, Support and Encouragement:**

- Expressing excitement, support, and gladness about the initiative.
- Encouraging active participation and acknowledging the importance of the endeavor.

Expressions of gratitude for asking for input, pursuing the issue, and taking the time to conduct the survey.

2. **Practical Challenges and Concerns:**

- Highlighting practical barriers such as time constraints, logistical issues with composting/recycling, and the need for support during implementation.
- Concerns about who will be responsible for the implementation and the need for broader support beyond teachers.

3. **Action and Implementation Urgency:**

- Urging immediate action and expressing frustration over delays in similar initiatives.
- Advocating for a hands-on approach to sustainability and emphasizing the need for action over purchasing new items.

4. **Policy-Driven Change:**

- Advocating for policy-driven mandates prioritizing environmental sustainability over convenience, emphasizing the need for mandated change.

5. Continuous Improvement and Challenge:

- Encouraging continuous improvement for both students and educators, challenging them to strive for betterment.

Consolidation of Findings

Priorities Identified:

1. **Responsible Purchases:** Implement policies for responsible procurement.
2. **On-Site Food Production:** Foster growing food within school premises.
3. **Energy Conservation:** Focus on reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
4. **Education:** Provide sustainability education and land-based learning opportunities.
5. **Waste Diversion / Management:** Reduce waste production, increase recycling and composting, and minimize water consumption. Garbage free schools.
6. **Policy Integration:** Embed sustainability in job descriptions and establish comprehensive sustainability policies.
7. **Student Engagement:** Offer volunteer and leadership opportunities related to sustainability.
8. **Infrastructure:** Increase outdoor learning spaces.
9. **Professional Development:** Offer training focused on sustainability for staff.

Recommendations:

1. **Curriculum Development:** Develop a K-7 sustainability curriculum framework and a leadership program for grades 5-7.
2. **Operational Improvements:** Conduct energy audits, enhance outdoor education, and improve waste diversion / management systems.
3. **Teacher and Staff Engagement:** Provide professional development and facilitate cross-grade collaboration.
4. **Community Engagement:** Involve parents, collaborate with local organizations, and advocate for district-level policies supporting sustainability.
5. **Educational Resources:** Incorporate informative resources into the curriculum and emphasize local initiatives.
6. **Student Involvement:** Establish sustainability committees and organize workshops focusing on sustainability.

Useful Resources for Integration:

- **Highly Valued:** Sustainability as a school goal, workshops, networking opportunities, financial support, and community partnerships.
- **Significant Support:** Support for student projects, green careers education, and professional development.
- **Moderate Value:** Professional development around environmental sustainability and networking.

Challenges and Aspirations:

- Highlighted the need for collaborative efforts, policy changes, educational initiatives, community engagement, mindset shifts, and overcoming barriers for effective implementation.

Future Vision:

- Envisions carbon neutrality, waste-free schools, efficient infrastructure, expanded recycling, outdoor education, and a sustainable mindset across the district.

Final Thoughts:

- Expressions of support, gratitude, and encouragement were prevalent.
- Practical challenges, urgency for implementation, and the need for clear definitions and policy-driven change were highlighted.
- Emphasized continuous improvement and challenges for both students and educators.

This data underscores the collective consensus on the multifaceted approach required to embed sustainability within the district. Prioritizing responsible purchases, on-site food production, energy conservation, education, waste management, policy integration, community engagement, and student involvement are key to fostering a sustainable culture within the qathet School District.