

LOOKING FORWARD

The future of carbon neutrality within AAPS

VERENA WU
STAFF WRITER

Senior Samantha Chan has been working in Huron to make the community more eco-friendly. Along with being co-president of Huron Green Team, she researched compostable utensils for her IB Personal Project and wrote a proposal for these to be implemented in Huron and AAPS. She also noted how Huron tried to implement a new recycling program last year, but it had never started.

“AAPS as a whole definitely has the potential to become more sustainable if there was just a greater push for it from people like Jeanine Swift and the rest of administration,” Chan said.

Despite being exempt from more dramatic natural disasters, Ann Arbor has felt the impact of climate change.

“It already affects us locally in the significant increase in precipitation falling on our community compared to previous years,” Mayor Christopher Taylor told MLive. “We feel it in increasing temperatures and greater weather volatility.”

There have been some responsive actions on behalf of the city to counteract this.

“[Ann Arbor city council]

passed a resolution in November of 2019 declaring a Climate Emergency and setting a community-wide goal of being carbon neutral by 2030,” Ann Arbor Sustainability and Innovations manager Missy Stults said.

Stults is helping lead the A2Zero initiative, which lays out the plan that will be followed to power the city with no fossil fuels and 100 percent renewable energy to reach carbon neutrality within the next 10 years. The plan is estimated to cost more than \$1 billion, but the city will likely not have to pay the entire cost themselves. Funding from state and federal governments and private philanthropy will be sought from city leaders, and they will enlist University of Michigan, AAATA, and local businesses to reduce their emissions.

“The science is clear,” Stults said. “We must immediately and aggressively reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the most catastrophic impacts associated with a changing climate.”

In order to reduce emissions, Stults believes that the most significant changes are going to be institutional changes that would alter the landscape for everyone. Stults meets with AAPS, one of the major institutions in Ann Arbor, once a month to discuss various projects and opportunities for collaboration between the school district and city government.

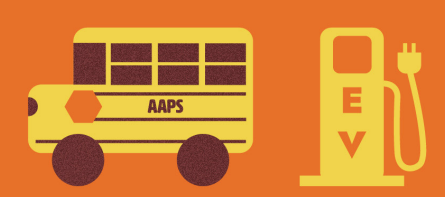
AAPS appears in A2Zero’s timeline to launch emergency preparedness sessions that will be tailored to students and caregivers. The sessions will include education on what to do during an emergency and what resources are available for them. These emergencies would happen because of climate change.

AAPS’s carbon footprint varies yearly depending on a number of factors like weather patterns, building and vehicle use and equipment/facility upgrades, according to Construction Projects Auditor Jason Bing who is moving AAPS toward carbon neutrality. In an average year, AAPS buildings contribute around 25,000 metric tons of CO2 emissions, not including transportation fuel.

For the past few years, AAPS has looked for ways to


WAYS AAPS HAS CHANGED THEIR SYSTEMS

ADDS 4 NEW ELECTRIC BUSES AND CHARGING STATIONS




WITH FUNDS FROM VW SETTLEMENT AND DTE

COCONUT FIBER FILL FOR HIGH SCHOOL TURFS



ADDING 500 NEW TREES TO PLAYGROUNDS



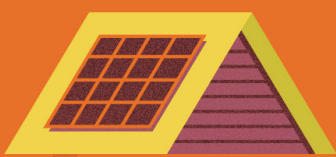
WAYS THAT INDIVIDUALS CAN MAKE CHANGES



BIKING



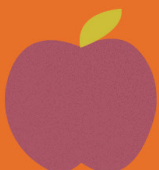
WALKING



INSTALLING SOLAR PANELS ON HOMES



BUYING CONSCIOUSLY



FIND WAYS TO MAKE SCHOOLS MORE ECO-FRIENDLY

reduce operating costs through energy conservation, better building controls and automation, replacing outdated equipment with high efficiency alternatives such as LED lighting conversions, and enhancing the recycling program.

In July 2020, solar panels were installed onto the roof of Pattengill Elementary school by Homeland Solar. This year, the district will be kicking off the installation of four new rooftop solar installations on Haisley Elementary School, A2STEAM, Forsythe Middle School and Huron High School. These solar projects are anticipated to generate energy for approximately 100 typical Ann Arbor homes on an annual basis.

“The pandemic has laid bare the disproportionate vulnerabilities low income and minority populations face in regards to disruptions,” Stults said. “These are the exact same communities who already are being disproportionately burdened by climate change. We won’t have a vaccine for climate change.”

Bing also agrees that the pandemic has exemplified how urgent climate change action is needed.

“Our recent focus on public health and the safety of our students and staff can hopefully help to illuminate the urgency to switch to a clear, safer, healthier, and more equitable clean energy economy locally and nationally,” Bing said.

Stults claimed that as the first generation to fully understand

the impacts of climate change and the last generation to be able to take action to stop this calamity, it’s imperative that we do everything in our power now to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, prepare for the impacts of climate change that are already here as well as those coming and ground all of our work in equity and justice.

“I see no path ahead other than carbon neutrality,” Stults said. “The stakes are simply too high to not go at this goal with every ounce of our being.”



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Ann Arbor Sustainability + Innovations manager