

Sustainability

- As the largest land-holder in Pinellas County, and having at least 150,000 people making use of their properties an average of 10 months out of the year, Pinellas County Schools has a significant impact on the environment and on health. Energy usage, water use and quality, air quality, choice of single-use materials, waste stream (minimizing/recycling), impact of sunlight and access to the outdoors for students and teachers, food gardens, composting from the cafeterias, and the list goes on.

I have done work in this area personally, professionally and in education, and I believe it is because of this demonstrated commitment to sustainability that I **earned the endorsement of the Sierra Club.**

Professionally, as a commercial general contractor responsible for demolition, purchasing and use of materials, and often involved in the design process, I was certified as a U.S. Green Building Council LEED AP, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. I could demonstrate sustainability work done in my building career.

In education, I was PTA president at North Shore Elementary School for two years starting in 2017, and during that time we started the first Sustainability Committee and Garden Committee; much of their work intermingled. There are six activities that we initiated:

1. Installation of a food garden, and now three successful years of science curriculum around the garden in 2nd and 3rd grades, teaching students about soil, sun, biology, garden animals, food, and health, and helping them create a personal connection to the earth.
2. Coordinating and starting the pilot program for Pinellas County Schools in composting food material from the cafeteria, to our garden.
3. Initiating a recycling program at the school with students volunteering to be part of the Earth Team and wearing green belts to bring the recycling out, demonstrating pride in caring for our environment.
4. Researching LED options for energy savings for the school and preparing a recommendation for the county to consider the LED project, as well as initiating the idea of a county-wide Sustainability Task Force.

5. Looking at the waste stream in the lunch room and making suggestions of product replacement through the Farm Table coordinator. This work led to replacing styrofoam trays with degradable paper trays for the entire county.

6. Joining the Coffee Pot Watershed Alliance and participating in clean-ups of our local body of water off Tampa Bay.

For this work, we received the Florida PTA Friends of the Environment Award in 2019.

As a school board member, we have the opportunity to influence priorities, and ask about work being done across areas. I would work to ensure a Sustainability Task Force - made of public and private individuals – is formally established, active, has clear goals, and I would want to be an active member of that task force. We can look at the Green Schools program as well as the Sierra Club's 100% Clean Energy School Districts program.

I look forward to moving the needle on sustainability in Pinellas County.