What is sustainable? How do we define sustainability?

Sustainability is another word for justice, for what is just is sustainable and what is unjust is not. ~Matthew Fox

The human community consists of 3 elements:
Those who went before us,
Those who are with us here and now,
And those who are yet to come.
*Traditional African concept, referred to in Bishop Desmond Tutu’s sermons*

Go to [SSP’s Starter Kit](#) for more on Sustainability Perspectives and professional development module on creating your own sustainability definition.
Sustainability is...

“meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”

By sustainability we mean:

“improving quality of life—economically, socially, and environmentally—for all, now and for future generations.”
The goal:

Use the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) 2005-2014 as a catalyst to:

• Convene
• Communicate and
• build Collaborative partnerships
What is Education for Sustainability?
Educating for Sustainability is “learning that links knowledge, inquiry, and action to help students build a healthy future for their communities and the planet.”
How do schools use Sustainability?

1. Sustainability as its own subject.

2. Sustainability as the context within which to teach core subjects.

3. Sustainability projects.

4. Sustainability at the school or district level to guide institutional and curricular innovation.
Roots of & Connections to Education for Sustainability

- Environmental Education
- Place-based Learning; Community-based Learning
- Project-based Learning
- Service-Learning
- Inquiry
- Global Education

Download *Learning to Make Choices for the Future*
Moving from Wonder to Action

Special thanks to our colleague, Ewa Smuk, in Poland for helping us develop this graphic.
A framework for education for sustainability

- Knowledge of human and natural communities
- Understanding that the world is interconnected
- Citizens engaged in creating sustainable communities
- Knowledge that one can make a difference
The 4 C’s Approach

- Curriculum connections
- Community partnerships
- Campus ecology & culture
- Collaboration

Shelburne Farms’ Sustainable Schools Project
Example of K-12 Scope & Sequence of the Big Ideas of Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre K-Kindergarten</th>
<th>1st/2nd Grades</th>
<th>3rd/4th Grades</th>
<th>5th/6th Grades</th>
<th>7th/8th Grades</th>
<th>9th/10th Grades</th>
<th>11th/12th Grades</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy &amp; Responsibility</td>
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<td>Sense of Place</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Change
- Interdependence
- Limits
- Equity
- Long-term Effects

Cycles

Diversity

Systems
Spectrum of Youth Engagement

**Students:**

1: Understand and are able to apply the **basic concepts and principles of sustainability**.

2: Recognize the concept of sustainability as a dynamic condition characterized by the **interdependency among ecological, economic, and social systems** and how these interconnected systems affect individual and societal well-being. Develop an understanding of the human connection to and **interdependence with the natural world**.

3: Develop a multidisciplinary approach to learning the **knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to continuously improve the health and well-being of present and future generations**, via both **personal and collective decisions and actions**.
Sustainability is used as a lens.
Students gain an understanding of the big ideas of Sustainability.
Students are actively thinking about creating a sustainable future.
Past, present and future contexts and impacts are connected.
Students consider impacts of personal and community decisions.
Local and global perspectives, contexts, and needs are considered.
Academic learning is connected to a real issue or situation.
Students practice inquiry and an open-ended questioning process.
Students participate in problem solving, community building, and service-learning.
The program or curriculum demonstrates interdependence of economic, environmental, and social systems.
Resources

- Sustainable Schools Project - sustainableschoolsproject.org
- Shelburne Farms - shelburnefarms.org
- Promise of Place – promiseofplace.org
- Children’s Environmental Literacy Foundation - celfeducation.org
- US Partnership for ESD, K-12 & Teacher Ed – k12.uspartnership.org
- Community Works - communityworksjournal.org
- Green Teacher – greenteacher.com
- Facing the Future – facingthefuture.org