What is Education for Sustainability?
By sustainability we mean:

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

- Curriculum connections
- Community partnerships
- Campus ecology & culture
- Collaboration
Placed-Based Education

globe
nation
state/bioregion
watershed
community
neighborhood
home
Ladder of Place-Based Learning

- Integrated place-based unit with service learning, strong community partnerships
- Unit designed to take advantage of place, community partnerships formed
- Lessons designed to incorporate local experiences or applications within existing units
- Lessons designed to incorporate local examples within existing units
Moving from Wonder to Action

Special thanks to our colleague, Ewa Smuk, in Poland for helping us develop this graphic.
The Big Ideas of Sustainability

- Ability to make a difference
- Change over time
- Community
- Cycles
- Diversity
- Equilibrium
- Equity/Fairness
- Interdependence
- Limits
- Long-term effects
- Place
- Systems
Shelburne Farms’ Sustainable Schools Project

Big Ideas and Essential Questions

Community:
What is a community?

Interdependence:
What can communities learn from natural systems to improve our common future?

Cycles:
What cycles are we a part of?

Change over time:
How do living things adapt to changes in their environment?

Fairness / Equity:
How should we balance the rights of individuals with the common good?

Place:
How does where we live impact how we live?

Ability to make a difference:
How do individuals’ choices affect themselves, their communities, and the world?

Long-term effects:
In what ways does how we live today impact how people live in the future?
• Where might there be opportunities for students to do community-based research on the features that they consider most vital to community well-being?
• Where might there be opportunities for them to act on what they learn from that research?
1. STUDY NEIGHBORHOOD and PLACE
2. DEFINE QUALITY of LIFE
3. CREATE NEIGHBORHOOD REPORT CARDS
4. CONDUCT A NEIGHBORHOOD WALK
5. SHARE RESULTS
6. PLAN A PROJECT
7. CELEBRATE and REFLECT
Healthy Neighborhoods/Healthy Kids

What does a healthy Neighborhood have?

- Bird bath
- No graffiti
- Trees
- Hospital
- Emergency Services
- Gardens
- Animal shelter
- Nicest sidewalks
- Water fountain
- Trees for shade
- Nursing home
- Park/Playground
- Slide
- Garbage can
- Walkways-out st.
- Pond
- Sport teams
- Soccer field
- Solar panels
- Pick up after dog signs
- Water slides
- Dog park
- School house
- Pool
- A lot of plants
- Smiling people 😊
- Speed bumps
- Benches

- Birds/wildlife
- Community shop
- People playing outside
- No littering signs
- Crosswalks
- People using sustainable energy sources
- Poop n’ Scoop house
- No Idling
- Church
- Store - you can walk to
- Recycling
- Bike path
- Snack bar

- Streams
- Community center
- Planetarium
- Wildlife reserve
- One way Rd.
- Horse stable
- Bathrooms (that flush)
- Police/fire station
- Street mall
- Neighborhood watch
Spectrum of Youth Engagement

- Young people and adults share decision-making
- Young people lead and initiate action
- Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people
- Young people consulted and informed
- Young people assigned and informed
- Tokenism
- Decoration
- Manipulation

What does Education for Sustainability look like in....
What does Education for Sustainability look like in….

• Reading
  – *Primary*: Picture book collections on gardening, compost, and animal life cycles are used to enhance social studies and science units.
  – *Secondary*: Students launch a study of local food systems by reading *The Omnivore’s Dilemma Young Reader’s Edition*. 
What does Education for Sustainability look like in….

• Writing
  – *Primary*: Students create posters to inform the community about local maple sugaring process from sugar bush to table.
  – *Secondary*: Students write speeches to persuade school board members to adopt a “green school” purchasing policy or an “affirmative hiring” policy
What does Education for Sustainability look like in….

• Math
  – *Primary*: Students create quality of life report cards and collect data on these indicators in their neighborhood.
  – *Secondary*: Students collect and compile data on energy use or on student dropout rates on the school’s campus, and analyze it to find area for improvement.
What does Education for Sustainability look like in....

• Social Studies
  – *Primary*: Students explore how local businesses operate and how services offered in the community change to meet consumers’ needs.
  – *Secondary*: Students host a politicians’ forum prior to election day and prepare questions for the candidates.
What does Education for Sustainability look like in…..

• Science
  
  – *Primary*: Students conduct water quality analysis of rivers in the watershed and present their findings and recommendations to the local natural resource agency.
  
  – *Secondary*: Students conduct a biotic survey in a local park, and based on their findings design a park management plan that they submit to the city manager.
What does Education for Sustainability look like in…. 

• Family & Consumer Sciences
  – Secondary: Students identify consumer habits and home management practices that embody sustainable resource use.
What does Education for Sustainability look like in…. 

• Physical Education
  – *Primary*: Children engage in free play on outdoor play structures that feature natural spaces and uneven terrain to develop dexterity and balance.
  – *Secondary*: Classes are outdoor-based and include on yoga and mindfulness, as well as physical fitness.
• Visual/Performing Arts, Music
  – *Primary*: Students create murals of their ideal communities learning about perspective and dimension.
  – *Secondary*: Students film and edit a documentary informing recent immigrants on how to use resources in the community.
"Your students have the potential to become an empowered and reflective group that’s thoughtful in decision making and unified...for the common good of making their community a better place. Be prepared to see your children become articulate speakers, letter writers, and problem solvers as they unify themselves while talking to town and city managers about changes that would make a difference in everyone’s lives."

-Anne Tewksbury-Frye, Sustainability Academy at Lawrence Barnes