

# GROWING A GREEN SCHOOL CULTURE

Seeking greener opportunities

# Houston, we have a problem!

## DID YOU KNOW?

- The average person can recognize more than 1,000 corporate logos, but fewer than ten native plants.
- If everyone lived like the average American, we would need 5 or 6 planets to sustain us!
- 80 percent of what we buy today will end up in a landfill within 6 months!
- Asthma is the #1 reason kids miss school.

# Educating tomorrow's *green* generation

HERE'S  
ONE  
GREAT  
SOLUTION!

“Perhaps never before have the needs of human society and the objectives of education been so closely linked, nor has education ever had so compelling a rationale and so urgent a responsibility to contribute to the societal change needed to ensure the survival of the planet and a sustainable future.”

– *Jean Perras, Learning for a Sustainable Future*



## Pahokee Elementary's "Go Green" Kickoff Day

Tree planting, recycling, energy conservation, outreach to parents, staff involvement

# Defining School Culture

**The sum of the values, beliefs, norms, priorities, expectations, and organizational structures within a school that cause it to function and react in particular ways. Also called school climate. Varies from school to school.**

**GREEN**



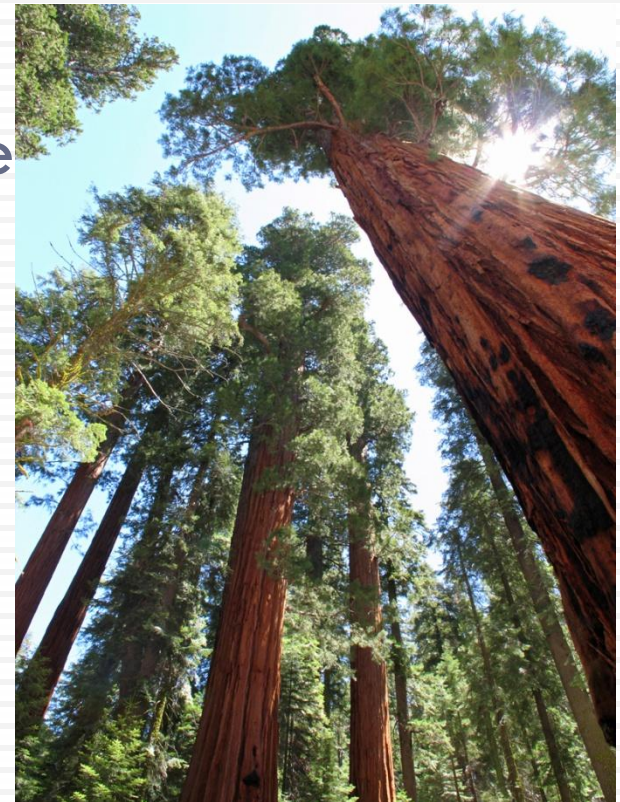
## Defining School Culture

The sum of the values, beliefs, norms, priorities, expectations, and organizational structures within a school that cause it to function and react in a way that *engenders a overall sense of environmental stewardship in the staff, students, parents, and community.*

**GREEN**

# Defining School Culture

Like a mighty Redwood, the green school culture should be long-lived and deep-rooted (i.e., SUSTAINABLE)!



# Cultural Coherence

*“Culture is a notoriously ineffable phenomenon, whether in schools or other social groups. Sometimes it shows up as explicit norms, rituals, or rules. Oftentimes, however, it remains difficult to precisely pin down in words despite its palpable presence. I saw this at [Haley] in the way that most of the people tried to articulate **something powerful yet intangible**, to identify the general bundle of their experiences around science and Haley’s approach to curriculum and the environment... It is also an example of how **cultural coherence** can end up being readily perceived by new members of a community.”*

- Michael Thomas Duffin, Ph.D. Thesis, 2006

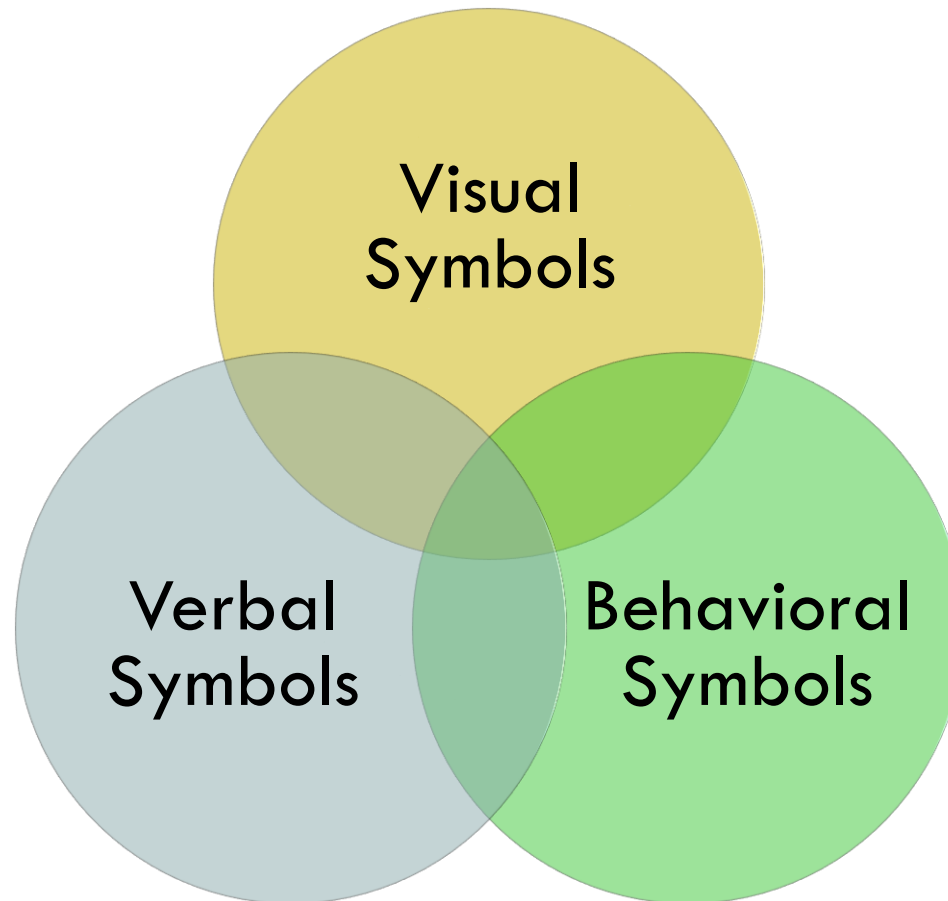


It's more than a set of actions, it's a mindset!

There are tangible things (like words and images) and less tangible things (like a sense of positive energy and good feelings) associated with green schools

# Elements of School Culture

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# Visual Symbols

Visual Symbols –  
*what can they touch and see?*



## ❑ Equipment

- ❑ More recycling bins than garbage cans says, “Recycling is important to us!”
- ❑ Posters reinforce conservation message

## ❑ Logos

- ❑ School mascot with recycling symbol on dog tag?
- ❑ Environmental superhero?

## ❑ School or message “branding”

- ❑ Develop a std. logo and a “green” logo?

# Verbal Symbols

Verbal  
Symbols –  
*what can  
they read  
and hear?*

- Speech
  - ▣ Morning announcements (“Hop on Dr. Hopkin’s green tip of the day”), newsletters, e-mails, etc.
  - ▣ Bulletin board displays, posters
  - ▣ Tag lines, sayings, consistent messages (“Drink it, shrink it, sink it”)
- Curriculum
- School improvement plan, mission statement
- Stories, metaphors, heroes

# Behavioral Symbols

Behavioral  
Symbols –  
*what actions  
can they  
model?*

- Rituals/habits/norms
  - ▣ Waste reduction & recycling
  - ▣ Energy and water conservation
  - ▣ Transportation – bike riding? carpooling?
- Ceremonies – what do we celebrate?
  - ▣ Earth Day festivities
  - ▣ Awards for environmental themes
- Learning and teaching processes
  - ▣ Go outside!
- Rules & procedures
  - ▣ “We do it this way and this is why”
- Communication
  - ▣ Inform internal and external “customers”

# BEYOND THE BASICS

Being a “green school” means more than having a green building!

It also goes beyond recycling...

beyond butterfly gardens...

and beyond turning off the lights...



# Green Schools Recognition Award Luncheon 2009

# Resources

- Link-up to other green schools
- Pine Jog Environmental Education Center
- LOTS of online material
- Look for a new series of “Green Guides” to be published this year (recycling guide next week)
- PBC Green School Recognition Awards ([www.ourgreenschools.com](http://www.ourgreenschools.com))
- Green Schools blog ([www.pbcchoolsgogreen.com](http://www.pbcchoolsgogreen.com))