

## The Northwest School Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy

**DEFINITION:** Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) is the purchase of products and services whose environmental and social impacts are less damaging to the environment and to human health when compared to competing products and services.

**PHILOSOPHY:** Environmental impacts and social justice impacts are deeply interconnected, and thus product purchases have impacts in both realms. In keeping with its mission goals and values, the Northwest School is committed, through both pedagogy and practice, to educating our community about the importance of using the most environmentally and socially responsible products possible. We are especially committed to modeling this core value for our students and to sharing it with our full community (parents, employees, peer institutions, neighbors, etc.).

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- We seek to reduce overall consumption of resources whenever and wherever possible. To this end, we first consider alternatives to making new purchases and then try to avoid excessive, duplicate, or redundant purchases.
- We give preference to the purchase of EPP-qualified products and resources. EPP principles might not be the sole factor used to select a product, but EPP principles are always weighed with other quality, service, and total cost considerations.
- Our purchasing decisions might consider total cost of ownership, unit cost, unit cost per use, maintenance costs, operating costs (purchasing, stocking, using, transporting, treatment), and waste/disposal costs.
- Even though EPP-qualified products usually cost more, at least up front, we will purchase such products whenever possible. When the price premium is prohibitive, we will seek ways to still choose EPP products, such as securing additional funding, reducing demand, reducing waste, reducing consumption, etc.

**SPECIFIC GUIDANCE:** In determining whether a product qualifies as an Environmentally Preferable Purchase, Northwest School employees will consider these sustainability practices –

#### Sustainable Manufacturing and Local Production

We prefer

- a. Products manufactured in a way that minimizes resource consumption
- b. Products manufactured locally
- c. Products manufactured in ways that do not generate hazardous chemical waste
- d. Products manufactured in ways that generate as little waste as possible

#### Packaging and Transport

We prefer

- a. Products distributed by regional suppliers and in ways that generate as little waste as possible
- b. Products that have reusable packaging or minimal packaging
- c. Products that are shipped/delivered in reusable totes/containers or in minimal/reusable packaging
- d. Products that have and are shipped/delivered in non-toxic or bio-based packaging

#### Reusability and Recycle-ability

We prefer

- a. Products that are recyclable and use high recyclable content
- b. Products in packaging that is both recycled and recyclable

#### Toxicity and Contribution to Greenhouse Gases

We prefer

- a. Products that are non-toxic and/or bio-based
- b. Products that do not damage human health or the environment at any stage of production, use, or disposal
- c. Products that have positive human health and environmental impacts
- d. Products that produce zero emissions of greenhouse gases
- e. Producers and service providers who seek to minimize, eliminate, or offset carbon emissions

#### Durability

We prefer

- a. Products with long life spans

#### Visibility and Educational Value/Impact

We prefer

- a. Products that showcase our commitment to environmental sustainability

#### Additional Vendor Considerations

We prefer to purchase from

- a. Vendors, manufacturers and/or products that have “Take Back” provisions.
- b. Vendors, manufacturers and/or products that support device re-manufacturing.
- c. Vendors and manufacturers who disclose all information regarding the chemical and material composition of products and reduce the use of “materials of concern.”
- d. Vendors and manufacturers who invest in the use of alternative energy sources for manufacturing and distribution.
- e. Vendors and manufacturers who are supporting beneficial reuse and will work with us to find outlets for surplus equipment and supplies.
- f. Vendors and manufactures who can show evidence towards the use of more sustainable and renewable raw materials.
- g. Vendors and manufactures which are minority owned and operated.
- h. Vendors and manufactures who treat employees in a socially responsible manner.
- i. Vendors and manufactures who follow fair trade practices.