

## **Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks**

**12.3** *The school's purchasing and physical and technological improvements are by design, done in alignment with the mission and the school's planning and curricular goals and consistent with environment stewardship.*

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

Benchmark 12.3 is about physical and technological improvements in the school being consistent with mission of the school. It is also about being environmentally appropriate. Purchasing for improvements should be clearly calculated and planned with the school's mission in mind. Purchasing and planning should also reflect best practices of environmental stewardship. Schools can seek certification from an external, independent review called LEED certification to ensure their planning reflects best practices for an external source.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

Here are some fundamental guiding questions which will help frame this item:

- Does the purchasing plan for school improvements align with the mission and vision statements?
- Are there records of recent purchasing decisions?
- Is there an analysis describing environmental impact of these purchases?
- Do the records of planning meetings indicate an environmental impact analysis?
- Are there copies of energy audits? Are there records of energy savings initiatives?
- What types of analyses have been done in the past?
- Should any new impact analyses be performed to properly prepare future budgets?

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- How is environmental stewardess reflected in purchasing or improvements at the school?
- Is there an external audit available to verify current budgeting practices?

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

the physical and technological improvements are planned and consistent with the mission of the school. Environmental stewardship is visible and consistent with the school's curricular goals. However, at this level, one may not see a larger integrated system or an independent review.

#### At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

purchasing for physical/technological improvements is fully integrated in all areas of the school and driven by the school's mission and curricular goals. Environmental stewardship is reflected in all purchasing decisions. Additionally, environmental stewardship is also reflected in the mission and vision of the school. The school follows best practices and may seek an external and independent review such as a LEED certification.

#### At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark**,

the school's purchasing and physical and technological improvements are sometimes aligned to the mission and curricular goals but not always. Decisions are made with some understanding of environmental stewardship but not full understanding or consistency.

#### At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

purchases are not planned or are made in reactionary mode to crisis. There is little or no regard to the school's mission with purchasing or making improvements. Environmental stewardship is not taken into consideration when making decisions or purchasing. There is no evidence of improvement design aligned to the school's planning and curricular goals.

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### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Align improvements with the vision which articulates the mission.
- Align improvements with the school's curricular goals.
- Demonstrate a conscious understanding of the environmental impact of all purchasing decisions for improvements.

#### To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Carefully align the school's purchasing regarding physical and technological upgrades with the mission/vision of the school.
- Connect and describe all improvements as they directly support the curricular goals.
- Consider and include environmental stewardship when planning purchases.

#### To move from level 3 to 4,

- Design the school's improvements and purchasing to be a part of a larger and integrated system.
- Intentionally address the need for environmental decision-making not only when considering purchases but in other decisions as well.
- Revisit the mission and the vision on what the school does, to ensure that it is fully addressed at this level.
- Seek an external and independent review of purchasing decisions, especially those over a certain limit.

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to Glossary for the key terms listed below.)

LEED Certification  
Environmental stewardship