



A Greener  
Way to  
Learn

By Kathryn Lisk

**Boulder Valley School District** needed a sustainability upgrade. And thanks to Ghita Carroll and a very supportive school district and community, that's exactly what the District is on the path to achieving.

The approval of the Bond measure in 2006 by Boulder Valley School District voters has provided the district with the opportunity to build and renovate in a much more sustainable way. One of the initial steps the district took to “green” the Bond Program was to update BVSD’s technical specifications to include more sustainable elements. Technical specifications are the guidelines that define the various components of renovation and construction. The new specifications encourage the use of things such as high efficiency heating and cooling systems, low-VOC paints and carpets, and more efficient windows and insulation. In addition, the architecture firms selected for the Bond work were chosen in part because of their expertise and experience with the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program.

The District hired Ghita Carroll during the summer of 2008 as the District’s Sustainability Coordinator to help further efforts to incorporate green design in the Bond and develop and implement a district-wide strategy for sustainability.



Carroll, who previously worked for the University of Colorado, Boulder's Environmental Center as the Energy Program Manager, says that the District is headed in the right direction. "BVSD is looking into all of its options for reducing its environmental impact, from healthier learning environments to how we are educating students," said Carroll.

CRC's ReSource Program, directed by Shaun LaBarre, has assisted BVSD in diverting a significant amount of waste from landfills. As various schools collected old desks, lockers, chairs or tables that were no longer of use, the items were given to ReSource to be used in another way. "Although it takes more time, BVSD is happy to make the change in order to divert as much from landfills as possible," said Carroll.

BVSD also has worked with Virco Manufacturing Corporation to reduce what is sent to landfills. Virco, based out of Arkansas, collects sorted metals and plastics and recycles it. Once furniture has been sorted at each school, the materials that are no longer of use are broken down and sent to Virco, where they are recycled and reused.

One of the schools in the first phase of the Bond Program is Louisville Middle, which is receiving a significant yet sustainable renovation. For example, bricks from the old structure were salvaged and reused, reducing waste and the need for new materials. The school's design also employs several innovative techniques to bring natural daylight into the building which reduces lighting demands. The interior finish materials included recycled content and low flow fixtures were installed in the new restrooms.

The Casey Middle School project was able to divert a significant amount of waste from demolition through on-site separation, a co-mingling program, and a partnership with ReSource. Casey will have the distinction of being the first

school in the district to be LEED certified.

Carroll said that the support from schools and the community helped the district onto its current track. "Many teachers, staff, students and community members have been involved with our efforts to become more sustainable, and have been glad to learn that we are making efforts to divert as many of the materials we can no longer use from the landfills as possible."

As an individual who has focused her studies and career in Environmental Science, Carroll is happy to see that BVSD has taken significant steps towards a more sustainable future. "BVSD is embracing sustainability at a new level, and while sustainable practices are not new for the district, this district wide effort to define a path toward sustainability has been a big change," said Carroll.

As more schools in the district need renovations, Carroll says that sustainability will continue to be considered at each step.

For more information on the District's efforts, go to [www.bvsd.org/green](http://www.bvsd.org/green). •

*Ghita Carroll is the Sustainability Coordinator for Boulder Valley School District. She has lived in Boulder for 10 years, and was previously the Energy Program Manager for the University of Colorado, Boulder's Environmental Center. At CU she worked to successfully reduce energy use on campus, and ran a campaign to make CU the first university in the nation to support wind power via student fees. Ghita received a Ph.D. in Environmental Studies from the University of Colorado, where she also taught an upper level undergraduate course titled "Energy Policy". She and her husband Jeff have two children, who they adore, Cecil Bear and Paulina May.*

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Demolition materials being sorted for recycling.

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