

POLICY 124 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Board of Education recognizes that the planet is in a state of climate emergency (see Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023). We acknowledge the legitimacy of the United Nations Climate Action Charter (2016) and B.C.'s Climate Action Charter (endorsed March 10, 2009, by our District).

As stewards on Secwépemc ancestral lands, we are committed to fostering environmental sustainability and honouring the deep connections between this territory and its ecosystems. Stewardship is defined as making informed decisions and taking appropriate actions to protect and conserve resources for all plants and animals who share our planet. The District defines environmental sustainability as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This commitment is guided by the principles of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

The Board acknowledges that achieving environmental sustainability requires shared responsibility among trustees, administrators, teachers, students, and support personnel. Its success depends on cooperation at all levels and integration into our collective practices and decision-making.

The Board's commitment to environmental sustainability is closely aligned with the priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Intellectual Development

The District is responsible for the education and well-being of current and future students. As part of our commitment to expanding teaching and learning practices, the District will:

- Promote the growth of ecological literacy and ethics, empowering students to understand environmental challenges.
- Embed environmental education within instruction, connecting core competencies to real-world sustainability challenges.
- Emphasize First Peoples' knowledge and other traditional ecological knowledge, honouring Secwépemc perspectives on caring for the land.
- Address environmental issues and engage students in climate action projects, fostering creativity, adaptability, and resilience.
- Provide students with flexible work skills in a changing world.
- Support students emotional coping strategies in the context of climate change.
- Support the development of a Green Team or Eco Club at each school to support action at the school level.

Community Partnership Development

Expanding a culture of social responsibility requires meaningful collaboration with community partners. The District will:

- Endeavour to work with various levels of governments, Indigenous communities, and community partners to align efforts and deepen our impact.
- Naturalize school grounds with an ecological and educational lens.

Effective Governance and Leadership

The Board's leadership role includes promoting sustainability and environmental accountability. The District will:

- Optimize energy efficiency in new and existing buildings.
- Limit Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and consider alternate fuel sources.
- Conserve resources, including energy, water, and materials, and promote responsible purchasing practices.
- Reduce waste, including electronic waste, through effective composting, recycling, and proper disposal.
- Track energy consumption and material used to measure progress and identify areas for improvement.
- Uphold accountability to the policies, administrative procedures, and targets previously endorsed by the Board.
- Support the planning and funding of professional development related to sustainability and environmental education.

As a large consumer of energy and resources, the District acknowledges its responsibility to serve as a model for sustainability. Staff and students are encouraged to take immediate, positive, and collective action towards mitigating climate change and adapt to its inevitable impacts. This shared commitment reflects our values of Reconciliation, Respect, and Empathy and strengthens our stewardship of the Secwépemc lands.

References: **SD83 Strategic Plan 2023-2028**; IPCC 2018 Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments — IPCC 2023 Climate Change AR6 Synthesis Report; UN Climate Action Charter, 2016 Climate Change – United Nations Sustainable Development; BC Climate Action Charter https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/speical_collections/2016-climate-change-united-nations-sustainable-development; The British Columbia Climate Action Charter ([gov.bc.ca](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/speical_collections/2016-climate-change-united-nations-sustainable-development))

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