



POLICY P 138 CUR

TITLE: ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND EQUITY

The Board recognizes its responsibility to ensure that OCDSB policies and procedures promote and protect Indigenous, equity, and human rights and to seek to address and eliminate racism and structural and systemic barriers for students, staff, and the community.

1.0 RATIONALE

To deliver effective environmental education and model environmentally responsible practices.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

Please refer to Appendix A for a list of definitions used in this Policy.

3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The Board supports staff, students, and school communities to become informed about, advocate for, and follow environmentally responsible practices through its commitment to teaching and learning, student engagement, community connections, and environmental leadership.
- 3.2 By exercising environmental responsibility in its decisions, the Board can serve as a model of corporate citizenship for students and the broader community ensuring coherence with the environmental messages conveyed by the curriculum.
- 3.3 The Board believes environmental education enables students to **develop the knowledge and skills they need to** become environmentally active and responsible citizens who can affect long-term change.

4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

- 4.1 The District shall integrate sustainable environmental practices into relevant policies and procedures as well as academic and operational services, and recognize this policy with respect to the implementation of existing policies and procedures.

- 4.2 The District shall provide students with learning opportunities in the classroom, and the community, and the natural world to acquire knowledge, skills, and perspectives that foster understanding of their fundamental connections to each other, to the world around them, and to all living things.
- 4.3 In support of Teaching and Learning, the District shall:
- a) use relevant curriculum resource documents to support the implementation of revised curricula, as appropriate;
 - b) support staff and students in linking environmental knowledge and related skills and activities to the teachings of diverse communities, including First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples, and to principles of responsible citizenship;
 - c) foster collaborative opportunities for educators to develop and share activities, integrated approaches, and action research projects related to environmental education; and
 - d) encourage innovative interdisciplinary programs that focus on the environment and include field components.
- 4.4 To foster student engagement, the District shall enable students to become active participants in shaping their future through:
- a) active participation of all students in sustainable environmental practices;
 - b) a strong student voice in decision making, and involvement in the school and community in meaningful ways; and
 - c) engaging students in environmental projects that build links between schools and communities.
- 4.5 In support of Student Engagement and Community Connections, the District shall:
- a) engage student leaders in the design and delivery of environmental education projects at the district level, as well as communicate and share school and student projects across the district that demonstrate engagement in environmental stewardship;
 - b) encourage environmental learning for all students inside and outside the classroom, and support students, on a system-wide basis, as they develop skills and act as decision-makers to effect positive environmental change;
 - c) offer community-linked experiences and programs, such as a Specialist High Skills Major focused on the environment, or cooperative education and work experience opportunities that are relevant to environmental education;
 - d) encourage district stakeholders to provide advice on the implementation of environmental education;

- e) share information about local resources that support environmental awareness and protection, energy conservation, waste management, protection of the biosphere, and outdoor education; and
 - f) share links and partnerships with community organizations (such as nonprofit organizations, businesses, farms, and industries) to help extend engagement in and responsibility for environmental education to the broader community.
- 4.6 In support of Environmental Leadership, the District shall,
- a) strive to increase the capacity of system leaders to implement evidence-based environmental education programming, practices, and operations;
 - b) embed the importance of sustainable environmental education and environmental protection into the district's planning processes, and operations as required, including the Board's strategic plan and/or operational practices (action plans);
 - c) review existing district recognition programs for opportunities to include recognition and communication of responsible environmental leadership;
 - d) integrate in-service opportunities related to environmental education into staff development for all employee groups;
 - e) encourage all district personnel, district stakeholders, students and parents/guardians to adopt and promote environmentally appropriate practices; and
 - f) implement programs, procedures, strategies and practices to reflect the directions of this policy and protect and conserve the environment, while ensuring that schools and workplace environments are safe and healthy. Examples include but are not limited to environmentally responsible practices with respect to capital planning, construction and facility renovations, and purchasing, while considering fiscal constraints, quality, price and service.

5.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Policy Definitions

6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

[*Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools*](#), Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009
[*Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations, The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1 to 8*](#), Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017
[*Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations, The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12*](#), Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017
[*Ready, Set, Green! Tips, Techniques, and Resources from Ontario Educators*](#), Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007

APPENDIX A: POLICY DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

Board means the Board of Trustees.

District means Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

Environmental education means education about the environment, for the environment, and in the environment that promotes an understanding of, rich and active experience in, and an appreciation for the dynamic interactions of:

- a) the Earth's physical and biological systems;
- b) the dependency of our social and economic systems on these natural systems;
- c) the scientific and human dimensions of environmental issues;
- d) the positive and negative consequences, both intended and unintended, of the interactions between human-created and natural systems.