



ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP Action Plan 2025



June 2025

Table of Contents

Introduction 3

Development of the Plan 4

Purpose of the Plan 5

Pathways to Environmental Stewardship 6

 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation 7

 Sustainability 8

 Responsibility to the Land 9

 Learning 10

 Culture and Leadership 11

Monitoring Our Progress 13





Introduction

This is a time of change in SD83. Since the school year began, we have approved a new strategic plan, undergone a massive school reconfiguration, and we have even changed our District name and logo. While the Rightsholders, students, parents, staff, and community stakeholders have joined along on this exciting undertaking, we all must keep in mind who we are doing it for: the students. Our community puts in the effort now as an investment in their future.

Environmentally, the world has been profoundly affected by rising sea levels, widespread species loss, and extreme climate events. Our own region has felt these impacts directly, especially with the growing intensity of wildfires, which have affected many in our school community. The trauma from these events is significant, and now that climate scientists confirm we have surpassed the 1.5°C threshold above pre-industrial levels, there is concern about further increases in extreme weather and the major changes this could bring in the near future. Ambitious targets at all levels of government will be essential to help mitigate these effects and adapt more effectively.

This plan is a step in the right direction. The resulting actions that come out of this plan aim to put our school district in a leadership role within our community for hopeful, positive, and ambitious action towards environmental stewardship and sustainability. The work that evolves out of this plan aims to inspire and activate all members of our community and hopefully reassure our children and youth that adults intend to invest in and protect our environmental future.

Development of the Plan

In the fall of 2024, our district released its new strategic plan. Included in this plan was *a new district vision* that identified the importance of sustainability: “Preparing students to become educated citizens who contribute to a dynamic, sustainable, and diverse world.” While many ideas were synthesized in the development of our new strategic plan, **stewardship** was identified as one of the key themes. Our new strategic plan clearly states, “Schools must continue to advocate for sustainable practices, nurture a mindset of conservation, and actively engage in initiatives that protect the traditional lands and water of the Secwépemc people” (p.8). Specific intended outcomes were identified in the strategic priorities related to environmental care. Within the strategic priority of intellectual development, our plan aims to “Support and expand teaching and learning practices and opportunities that address climate change and environmental sustainability” (p.9). Within the strategic priority of *community partnership development*, our plan aims to “expand our culture of social responsibility and implement long-term commitments that support society and protect the environment” (p.15). Further, within the strategic priority of governance and leadership, we aim to “promote environmental stewardship and sustainability” (p.20).

In March of 2025, the Board approved an updated [Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability policy](#). This policy recognizes the climate emergency and our shared responsibility as stewards of Secwépemc land. The policy emphasizes the need for ecological literacy and the importance of the integration of environmental education into the curriculum. From an energy use perspective, the policy outlines commitments to reducing our impacts with improvements in energy efficiency, waste reduction, and responsible resource management.

The SD83 Environmental Working Group, which has been meeting monthly for the past four years, agreed that this was an important time to build a cohesive plan. We agreed that our new plan could align with the new strategic plan, the new environmental policy, and the 2020-2029 Long Range Facilities Plan. With support from our Board of Education and the Senior Leadership Team, beginning in May 2024, the development of this plan became the focus of this group. We received guidance from the developers of Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District’s plan, which helped provide initial direction and support. For the purpose of including more perspectives, we opened the group to new members, including two new student members, our two directors of instruction, and two new community members with expertise in education and environmental action. This plan was formed from our collaborations and research from May 2024 – February 2025; however, it should be noted that much of the project work included in this plan began implementation many years before.

This plan intends to be concise and easy to navigate for both public and SD83 employee use. We aim to update this plan annually through the work of the Environmental Working Group and we intend to monitor its progress. An appropriate place to reflect on our successes and to make necessary adjustments would be captured in our annual Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) Report.

Purpose of the Plan

This plan has been put in place to help guide the broad directives that have been laid out in our [Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability policy](#) that was approved by the Board in March 2025.

Specifically, this plan will:

1. Inform the Board regarding funding decisions supporting the strategies and action plans for sustainability with respect to its annual budget, local capital, and the amended budget process.
2. Impact weave and implement sustainability, stewardship, and Indigenous Ways of Knowing into school-based goals to ensure the reflection of the Environmental Stewardship Action Plan (ESAP) in those goals.
3. Ensure that professional development opportunities are made available to District staff associated with the ESAP.
4. Influence school site planning and operations.
5. Foster an understanding of our reliance upon and interconnection with a healthy environment.
6. Highlight to the school community and broader community the Board's commitment to environmental sustainability and being stewards to the land.
7. Update the Board annually on progress towards the goals and targets in this plan. Reflections and annual adjustments will be included in the annual Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) Report.

Pathways to Environmental Stewardship

Using a well-laid out framework from the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School district, our plan uses 5 pathways of environmental stewardship. Each of these pathways has its own objectives that will guide the specific actions in this plan. These pathways include:



The specific actions vary in their scope and timeline. Some of the projects included may be pilot projects, some may be smaller one-off initiatives, while other projects like the electrification of the school bus fleet could take up to a decade to complete. Each of the actions outlined here are intended to be measurable, so we can accurately monitor our progress. As such, besides each action, we have outlined the timeline for completion.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Objective	Actions	Timeline
Reduce GHG emissions by 50% below 2010 level by 2030 or 4.5% per year	LED Upgrades District-wide Implementation of LED lighting upgrades in various schools. One electrician is working full-time on these upgrades in the 2024/25 school year. HVAC and Heat Pumps upgrades at multiple schools Centralized computer-based HVAC system Among all schools, providing real time information and optimization capabilities	Underway: aim to complete by 2027 Ongoing Completed with ongoing monitoring and upgrades
Increase low-carbon and active transportation	School bus fleet electrification plan Development of a comprehensive plan for fleet electrification, including applying for grants and rebates to support the transition to electric buses. This also involves assessing the costs and benefits of electrifying the school bus fleet. Electric vehicle acquisition Purchase our first electric bus and charging stations for the Armstrong area bus routes in 2024. E-Vans are being purchased for the Operations as well. Active transportation Partnership with City of Salmon Arm and participation in the development of the Salmon Arm active transportation plan (committee work) as laid out in the new Official Community Plan. This identifies safe routes to school. Marianne VanBuskirk is our trustee sitting on this committee. Transit Work with City of Salmon Arm to ensure routes and schedules that meet the needs of students.	Charging station in Armstrong yard will be completed pending BC Hydro engineering approval (October 2025) Operations in the design phase of infrastructure upgrades needed for Salmon Arm yard. 3 e-Vans purchased in 2025 and being tested for range Ongoing Ongoing

Sustainability

Objective	Actions	Timeline
Reduce our impact on the land and implement restorative efforts	Local Food Provincial funding from Feeding Futures is used to support local farmers and locally and community sourced businesses to help transition to a more sustainable regional food system. Aim to spend 65% of feeding future food budget on BC foods, focusing on Shuswap Farmers when possible. This includes breakfast and hot lunch programs. Collaborate with Shuswap Food Action to source and serve more local food.	Ongoing Currently spending 60% on BC foods Collaborations are ongoing
Utilize the Zero Waste Framework	Uniform Waste Management Efforts to standardize waste management practices across schools, including common signage and uniform bins, to reduce contamination and promote effective waste sorting. Composting Initiatives Re-introduction of composting programs in schools, with support for schools opting into composting and providing feedback on composting practices. Explore new partnership with CSRD and Wildsight where interested teachers could be connected to resources as “composting champion” This includes organizing poster contests to promote composting awareness. This includes approval and funding for outdoor rolling composters, classroom food cyclers, and worm bins for student learning. Reduce single use packaging Schools transitioning to low-waste snacks for students. Aiming to move to 30% snacks that have plastic free packaging (i.e.) Local fruit and veggies and/or locally produced muffins rather than factory made granola bars	Aim to complete by 2027 Aim to have 60% of our schools composting by 2026 Initiated April 2025 30% mark achieved by 2026
Implement sustainable purchasing practices	Meals All hot lunch and breakfast programs at schools committed to using compostable products when not using washable dishware Single use plastics Abide by provincial regulations for single use plastics. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/waste-management/zero-waste/plastics/supwpr	Underway, however compostables are being thrown in garbage at many schools. Need to remove barriers and clarify needs/roles. Create a mechanism that ensure schools are following this by Sept 2025

Responsibility to the Land

Objective	Actions	Timeline
Reduce consumption of resources	Look into options for recycled paper sources to further reduce our carbon footprint.	September 2025
	Explore the idea of paper reductions in classrooms. MS Teams has digital options available to interested teachers with support available from our Technology Helping Teacher.	Consultation to commence in September 2025
Develop a better understanding of what it means to give back to the land		
Thoughtful and intentional use of our outdoor space to support connection to the land and to foster an understanding of the land as our teacher.	Naturalized Playgrounds Committee work on incorporating natural elements into playground designs, such as planting trees and installing large rocks for seating. This aims to create more engaging and environmentally friendly outdoor spaces for students. Have a subcommittee that can put together a short info document to keep prospective schools that have interest in the loop. Planting Process Development and review of Step-by-step process for planting trees on school grounds developed and disseminated.	Have a subcommittee that can create this supporting documentation. To be reviewed annually and shared out with Principals and Vice Principals (PVP)

Learning

Objective	Actions	Timeline
Integrate environmental stewardship and sustainability throughout the curriculum	Educational Video on Waste Management Development of an educational video on waste management and energy consumption, involving students in the production and promoting it across schools (ongoing, various dates). Trees for Hope Program Coordinating tree planting activities for Earth Day. The initiative included distributing trees to students and organizing educational workshops on tree care WEX Enhancement Project Utilizing the Future Ready Grant we have secured, expand work experience placements into our local agriculture sector (Agritech) as well as Climate Change Mitigation (virtual and in-person WEX)	Update video and encourage teachers to show annually Annual event in April Work has been initiated by our contracted employee Annual Environmental Expo with community mentors
Increase opportunities to learn about environmental stewardship and the land	School-based energy monitoring BC Hydro's Portfolio Manager to monitor energy consumption across schools. This has been used by operations and we have been working towards making this available to teachers. There are some staffing challenges with this. Professional Development Outdoor Learning Pro-Ds offered every year. Introduction of BC Tomorrows software and associated teaching resources.	Aim to have this operational within schools by Sept 2025 Ongoing - 2025 Indigenous Day of learning is Place-Based Bring BC Tomorrows to Pro-D Committee for inclusion in offerings for the 2025-26 school year.
Support learning opportunities that educate about and strengthen food security	SD83 Teaching Farm Establish a partnership with Salmon Arm Economic Development Society (SAEDS) to create a "teaching farm" on land that Bill Laird has made available to us for this purpose.	Initial stages of creating partnership. Targeting September 2027 as the start date for all Salmon Arm high schools.
Understand and embrace the teachings of this sacred land	After consultation with the Quelmúcw Education Council in April 2025, we look forward to listening to and learning from the council to find ways to incorporate Indigenous voice and perspective into the fluid ESAP.	Ongoing

Culture and Leadership

Objective	Actions	Timeline
Creating a culture of environmental stewardship	Raising Salmon Salmonids program and Kingfisher Interpretive Centre visits. Sharing out Environmental Project work Many classes and schools undergoing initiatives – work with our district publishing team to share these projects . Outdoor learning spaces Development of outdoor classrooms and gardens at different schools.	Ongoing – monitoring needed how many schools doing this? ongoing Ongoing – monitoring needed
Establish funding and resources to empower ESAP implementation	Energy Manager position Many conversations about this and working with BC Hydro to acquire a 0.2 Energy Manager to support select projects, particularly in the area of rebates Environmental Education Grants HCTF Go Grants for many schools, Rotary to support K-12 Expo, BCTF grant to support expo, Garlic festival grant, others, Susan Langley grant - others	Ongoing – mechanism for monitoring progress needed Ongoing
Establish an Environmental Stewardship Network throughout the district.	Green Teams Initiative This never really took off in a comprehensive way through all schools, but many schools did start “Green Teams” and help to disseminate info, work on a variety of projects. This needs more committed leadership/oversight to support these different green teams. Discussion of rebranding “Green Teams” – especially for older grades – How do we make this more appealing? Our goal is to increase student and teacher participation in environmental activities (planned for 2025/2026). Environmental Expo- Champions at every school	Initiated April 2025 Inaugural event held in April 2025
Communicate actions, initiatives, and achievements within the district and to partner groups and community.	Temperature Control Letter A draft letter to teachers asking if they would like to sign up to turn their class temperature down, to help reduce carbon emissions (planned for October 2024). Strategic Plan Input Advocating for references to climate action and sustainability in the district’s strategic plan. Efforts to align environmental initiatives with the district’s broader goals. Achieved to some extent: District vision: Preparing students	In progress Completed

	to become educated citizens who contribute positively to a dynamic, sustainable, and diverse world.	
Connect and collaborate with community	City Environmental Advisory Committee Representation of SD83 on the City of Salmon Arm's Environmental Advisory Committee Ensure this plan is shared and the relevant stakeholders, including rights holders	Ongoing
Provide regular evaluations and updates of the Environmental Action Plan	Policy 124 Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability This working group spent time reviewing and finalizing this document prior to it being sent to various district committees, board of trustees and then policy committee. Adopted Sept. 21, 2021, Disseminating this info to PVP, then updated March 2025 Environmental Stewardship Action Plan Inspired by the Nanaimo-Ladysmith school district, development of an Environmental Stewardship Action Plan to guide the district's sustainability efforts.	Completed March 2025 Monitoring mechanism for the action plan to be completed annually via Board Presentations every April.
"Walk" together in a way that acknowledges that we are all relations in the cycle of life.	Development of Shuswap Chapter of EEPsA supporting various educational initiatives and Pro-D	Ongoing – monthly meetings

Monitoring Our Progress

The Framework for Enhancing Student Progress is completed annually and will be used as a platform to determine the areas that we are succeeding in, areas for improvement, and possibly even areas that have been neglected. This will inform District staff and the Environmental Working Group on the progress of the various initiatives and areas that may need attention. Both this action plan and the annual progress from this group will be posted on the District website each fall.

The work will be presented to the Board in April of 2025 and annually as a part of the annual monitoring of the Framework for Enhancing Student Progress report.



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