

**Vancouver School Board 39
Sustainability Profile
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Embedding Sustainability...

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Background

The Vancouver School Board, (VSB) is the second largest school district in British Columbia with 91 elementary schools and 18 secondary schools. The total elementary student population (K-7) is 31,000 and the total secondary is 25,000. The VSD provides educational programs and services to 48,000 full-time adult education and continuing education students. Staff, including teachers number 6000.

The District is committed to leadership on the sustainability agenda. A year ago the Board appointed a full time Sustainability Coordinator. This position has a dual report to Learning Services and Facilities and Operations, and has responsibility to foster the integration of sustainability through both behaviour change and systems.

THE VANCOUVER BOARD OF EDUCATION WILL BE THE GREENEST, MOST SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL DISTRICT IN NORTH AMERICA

DRAFT VISION



Key Initiatives

A) Policies, Plans, Reports

The District is well known for its leadership and innovation in social responsibility. This commitment is found in its mission and realized through a variety of school based programs:

To enable students to reach their intellectual, social, aesthetic and physical potential in challenging and stimulating settings which reflect the worth of each individual and promote mutual respect, cooperation and social responsibility.

Over the last year, VSB prepared base-line information that will form the basis of a comprehensive sustainability policy and plan. This plan will be prepared in the 2010-2011 school-year, and will include such priorities as:

- Education & Organizational Culture
- Procurement and Supply Chain Management
- Resource & Waste Management
- Energy & Climate Change
- Green Building Design
- Transportation

The VSB is fortunate to be a part of a wider community and city with supportive policies and programs fostering sustainability in place. The City of Vancouver, known as the ‘Green Capital’ has set out an ambitious comprehensive road map to a sustainable future, *Vancouver 2020: A Bright Green Future (BGF)* vancouver.ca/greenestcity/.../Vancouver2020-ABrightGreenFuture . The opportunity for alignment with city policy, targets and programs is tremendous.

The provincial carbon tax, legislative requirements to be carbon neutral by 2010 (Bill 44: 1997), and the BC Energy Plan drive initiatives in the areas of climate protection and energy management. . The Board completes an annual carbon neutral report to the province (www.livesmartbc.ca/attachments/carbon_neutral_action_reports/SD39.pdf), and submits quarterly energy management reports to the BC Hydro Power Smart Program.

B). Curricula

Curriculum is set by the provincial Ministry of Education, and it actively promotes the integration of sustainability education into curriculum through policy and resource provision:

Environmental education aims to integrate concepts and principles of the sciences and social sciences, such as ecology, biogeography, sociology, environmental chemistry, environmental psychology, politics, and economics (to name only a few) under a single interdisciplinary framework. (www.bced.gov.bc.ca/environment_ed/envisust.html)

The VSB will develop a web-site for staff and students over the summer months. It will also provide professional development for teachers on such topics as recycling, food security, and green learning. A leadership development program is available to teachers and staff.

Next year, the VSB will pilot a novel district wide sustainability course. This secondary course, called SOLARIS (taught for social studies credit) brings students together from various schools outside of regular school hours (Saturdays and evenings.) This course was developed by a teacher.

The University of British Columbia, located on the door-step of the VSB is a recognized leader in sustainability. The VSB and UBC's Land and Food Systems Faculty will launch a five year program focused on food security in Vancouver public schools. The program is called 'Think and Eat Green at Schools.' This program includes curricular and extra-curricular activities such as composting, school gardens, food service procurement and hands-on tutorials at the UBC teaching farm.

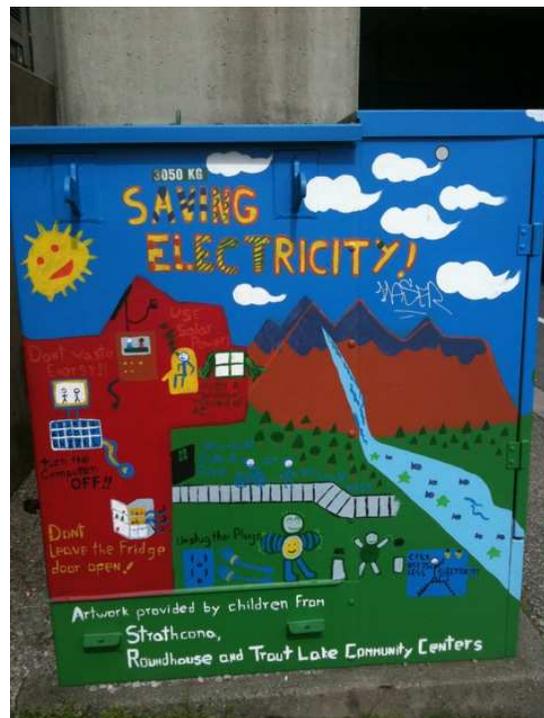
C.) Extra-curricular /Applied Learning Activities

School-based and community based extra-curricular sustainability activities are diverse and numerous. A list of these can be found in the carbon neutral report, (www.livesmartbc.ca/attachments/carbon_neutral_action_reports/SD39.pdf).

DISTRICT WIDE STUDENT NETWORKS AND COURSE OFFERINGS ARE ENCOURAGED AND SUPPORTED

In December 2009, students organized a climate change conference. At this conference a secondary school student network called ECHO (Education Creating High School Opportunities) formed. ECHO meets weekly, and focuses on fostering thematic action (e.g. procurement, food, transportation, etc.) across the district.

As part of the BC Hydro Power Smart Program, a work place conservation program will be piloted in three schools in the 2010/2011 school year. The



program targets energy management as well as other sustainability practices such as paper reduction.

D) School Operations

The VSB has a number of operational programs aimed at resource conservation. For example, energy management in place for a number of years has yielded one of the lowest energy uses per student in the region. Energy management activities will be ramped up in the future, and a BC Hydro Energy Manager has been in place for over a year.

VSB has had district wide recycling programs established this past year. A waste audit revealed that 86 per cent of the VSB's waste can be diverted from landfill. 40-50 per cent of this is compostable. Plans are in place to connect with the city for a district wide composting system. There are 3 industrial composters to be placed in garden active schools as a pilot program.



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2009 /2010 Highlight Achievements

- Five solar water systems installed on five high schools
- Fifty new bike racks and a focus on fostering cycling
- A new policy on establishing school based food gardens
- New guidelines on composting
- Board approval to proceed with the development of a Sustainability Plan
- \$ 250,000 worth of sustainability grants

Resource Commitments

Dedicated resources for sustainability include:

- A Sustainability Coordinator
- An Energy Manager
- A Management Working Group
- A District Wide student network – ECHO
- Website and other support resources

An External advisory committee is proposed.

Contact

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