

Environmental Education and Sustainability Policy

Policy Number:	5002
Policy Owner:	Learning Support Services
Effective Date:	2000 June 27
Amendment Dates:	2010 October 12, 2018 March 27, 2025 October 24
EIE Review Date:	2025 March 19
Resources:	• The Education Act, RSO 1990, c E.2 • The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8 and Kindergarten Program: Environmental Education Scope and Sequence of Expectations, 2017 and The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9-12: Environmental Education Scope and Sequence of Expectations 2017 • Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow. A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools, 2009 • Shaping Our Schools Shaping Our Future B Environmental Education in Ontario Schools. Report of the Working Group on Environmental Education, June 2007 • Environmental Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.19 ○ Ontario Regulation 102/94 Part X ○ Ontario Regulation 103/94 • Electricity Act, 1998, S.O. 1998, c. 15, Sched. A ○ Ontario Regulation 25/23

- TVDSB Environmental Education and Sustainability Policy (5002)
- Thames Valley District School Board Sustainability Framework
- Environmental Education and Sustainability Committee Terms of Reference
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, SC 2021, c 14UNDRIP – Articles 25, 26
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015) TRC call to action #92
- Statement of Environmental Values: Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

1. Intent

- 1.1. The policy was developed to support the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) Multi-Year Strategic Plan, TVDSB Sustainability Framework and the Ministry of Education's Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow Framework.
- 1.2. The TVDSB is committed to fostering environmental stewardship and sustainability within our schools and the broader community. We recognize the importance of the Thames River and other local watersheds to our ecosystem, economy, and quality of life, and are dedicated to their health and sustainability.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **Sustainability** is the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It encompasses social, economic, and environmental aspects and requires action to promote long-term well-being for future generations. Sustainability aims to reduce negative impacts on the planet and its resources, promote economic growth and social inclusion and create resilient communities.
 - 2.1.1. **Sustainability within TVDSB** will involve integrating core environment and sustainability concepts into the curriculum, community collaboration,

extracurriculars, school design, supply chain, and much more.

2.2. **Treaties** in Canada are agreements made between Indigenous Nations and with the Crown and/or Federal Government. They outline the rights, responsibilities, and relationships between the parties involved and establish how Nations would co-exist. Treaties were negotiated on the basis of mutual respect and the principles of peace and friendship and determined how lands and resources are to be shared and sustained.

2.3. **Environmental Education** is 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:

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

Note: This definition comes from: Shaping our Schools, Shaping our Future Pg. 6

3. Objective of Policy

3.1. A goal of the TVDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan, states: "A culture of sustainability is cultivated among students and staff."

3.2. This policy aims to meet this goal by promoting environmental responsibility through three key areas of focus: teaching and learning, student engagement and community connections, and environmental leadership.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. The expectation of this policy is that all TVDSB staff and students actively engage in and promote environmental sustainability. Leadership will be provided by the Environmental Education and Sustainability Committee (EESC), which will meet twice per school year and operate according to its Terms of Reference.

5. Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Stewardship

- 5.1. The TVDSB recognizes and honours the unique relationship that Indigenous Peoples have with the land, water, and all living things. Our Environmental Education and Sustainability Policy is guided by the principles of respect, reciprocity, and responsibility, ensuring that Indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives are integral to our treaty responsibilities as related to environmental education and sustainability practices.

6. Environmental Education and Sustainability Policy Statements

- 6.1. To support Teaching and Learning TVDSB commits to:
 - 6.1.1. Supporting the environmental literacy of staff and students using relevant curriculum resource documents, and day-to-day practices and promotion of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a resource to frame actions and outcomes of all stakeholders;
 - 6.1.2. Supporting students in acquiring knowledge, skills and perspectives that foster respect for, and understanding of their fundamental connections to each other, to the world around them and to all living things; and
 - 6.1.3. Increasing the capacity of the organization to implement evidence-based environmental education programming, practices and operations.
- 6.2. To support Student Engagement and Community Connections, TVDSB commits to:
 - 6.2.1. Increasing student engagement by fostering active participation in environmental initiatives.
- 6.3. To support Environmental Leadership, TVDSB commits to:
 - 6.3.1. Ensuring ongoing prioritization of environmental sustainability;
 - 6.3.2. Assuming a leadership role, as an organization and in school communities, by modeling sound environmentally sustainable attitudes and practices; and
 - 6.3.3. Establishing a board-wide Environmental Education and Sustainability Committee to oversee the implementation of this policy, and corresponding procedure.

7. Monitoring and Review

- 7.1. Data on student engagement in Environmental Education as well as progress towards goals set forth in the TVDSB Sustainability Framework will be collected by the Environmental Education and Sustainability Coordination Team, reviewed by the Environmental Education and Sustainability Committee-at-Large, and presented to the Superintendent responsible for Environmental Education.
- 7.2. The Superintendent responsible for Environmental Education will annually report to the Board of Trustees, at the appropriate committee, on the ongoing status of Environmental Education and Sustainability in TVDSB.