



BOARD POLICY No. GOV-13	
Adopted	March 25, 2014
Last Revised	
Review Date	
Board Motion	14-R37

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## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP

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### 1. RATIONALE

The Board is committed to sustainable development as defined by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development as “meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

This governance policy highlights the Board’s commitment to supporting employees, students, and community members in sharing responsibility for minimizing their impact on the environment and taking an active role in protecting it.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**Ecological Footprint:** The ecological footprint is a person’s or an organization’s cumulative impact upon natural resources.

**Environmental Education:** 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 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. (from *Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future*, p. 6)

### 3. POLICY

- 3.1 Rainbow District School Board recognizes the interdependence between the environment, sustainability of the economy, and a democratic society. The challenge is balancing all three and building a healthy and sustainable future through leadership, curriculum, and staff, student, and community engagement.
- 3.2 The Board recognizes that its activities, through educational programs, routine operations, and infrastructure development, impact on the sustainability of the wider community.
- 3.3 The Board will promote changes in organizational practices that result in reducing the ecological footprint of the Rainbow District School Board.

- 3.4 Environmental education is a whole system responsibility. In striving to prepare students in Rainbow schools to become responsible members of a democratic, sustainable, and just society, the Board supports curriculum initiatives across grades and subject areas that support this commitment to sustainable environmental, economic, and equity initiatives.
- 3.5 The Board believes that a healthy and sustainable future is the right of every student.
- 3.6 The Board is committed to preparing students for the future. Students need to have the knowledge and skills that will enable them to understand and deal with complex issues that affect the environment now and in the future. They also need to be able to identify issues and perspectives, carry out research, and communicate their ideas in meaningful ways.
- 3.7 The Board is committed to achieving continual, measurable improvements in educational and operational practices.
- 3.8 The Board will:
- a) embed environmental education in the board improvement planning;
  - b) allocate resources to ensure students progress towards being environmentally responsible citizens;
  - c) support the coordination and integration of professional development opportunities related to environmental education and environmentally responsible practices for all employee groups;
  - d) support community involvement through partnership agreements;
  - e) foster the development of skills, attitudes, and motivations to enable learners to make informed decisions and take responsible actions that incorporate environmental considerations; and
  - f) ensure that Board appreciation programs include opportunities to recognize responsible environmental leadership at all levels of the organization.

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

### **Ministry:**

Canadian Council of Ministers of Education (2008) *Learn Canada 2020*.

Ontario Ministry of Education (2007) *Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future: Environmental Education in Ontario Schools, Report of the Working Group on Environmental Education*.

Ontario Ministry of Education (2009) *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools*.

Ontario Ministry of Education (2011) *Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations. The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1 to 8*.

Ontario Ministry of Education (2011) *Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations. The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12*.

### **Board:**

*Administrative Procedures*

*Strategic Directions for Rainbow Schools*