



NANAIMO LADYSMITH
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESSAC)

Monitoring our Progress



NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Pathways to Environmental Stewardship

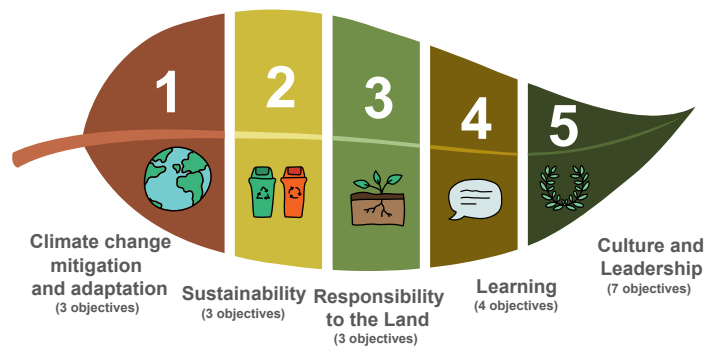
In the summer of 2022, the Board of Education adopted the [Environmental Stewardship Action Plan \(“ESAP” or the “Plan”\)](#). The Plan is a wide ranging plan incorporating commitments to Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG) reductions, sustainable operating, positive educational outcomes and incorporating the principles of Syeyutsus.

It should also be recognized that the Plan contains both short and long-term goals and the expectation is that the Plan will guide the District’s action for the next decade. The Plan contains 5 areas of focus, 20 objectives and 79 actions. While some of the objectives and actions were in place prior to the implementation of the Plan, the District does not have the resources to implement all 79 actions in a year.

The Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Advisory Committee continues to monitor the Plan and set priorities for implementation and discuss resource allocation priorities that then in turn are reflected in Board decisions from programming to capital planning.

This report is intended to provide a brief overview of how we are doing as envisioned by the Plan. It should be noted that the Plan is in its infancy and information continues to be gathered with the goal of creating a robust publicly facing webpage with updates for the public and resources for our school

The ESAP has 5 pathways of environmental stewardship, each with its own objectives:



communities.

The report has three metrics clearly indicated by the graphics next to each recommendation along with a brief description of progress to date. The metrics are as follows:



Red Light – The red light signifies that the District has made no demonstrable progress on a recommendation. This indicates the need for a focus in the following school year to begin progress.



Yellow Light – The yellow light indicates that the District has begun work on a recommendation but has not made significant progress.






Green Light – The green light means the District is actively implementing a recommendation.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

GOAL To protect students and the community from the increasing effects of climate change, NLPS will minimize our impacts on the environment, reduce our GHG emissions, and adapt to a changing environment. NLPS’s climate change adaptation and mitigation plan will have science-based targets and strategies informed by Indigenous knowledge to draw down our ecological impact.






Objective	Actions
<p>Reduce GHG emissions by 50% below 2010 levels by 2030 or 4.5% per year</p>	<p> The District has made significant progress on this recommendation. By March 2023, NLPS carbon footprint will be reduced by 189 tonnes of CO2 through electrification (heat pumps) and boiler plant upgrades at Cedar Secondary, Cilaire Elementary, Brechin Elementary, John Barsby Secondary and Pleasant Valley Elementary and an additional 96 tonnes of CO2 through electrification of four school busses. This reduction is a very positive one; however, to December 2021, GHG emissions increased 12% compared to December 2020. This is a direct result of increased ventilation rates due to COVID guidelines and will put the District back to 2018 levels. To get to the 2030 target, the District will have to reduce emissions by 5% every year which is a very aggressive target.</p> <p>NLPS has also enrolled all sites into Continuous Optimization Program with BC Hydro. Intent of this program is to optimize all building automations systems to ensure systems are operating efficiently, which in turn, will save on average 5-15% energy use. This program will run March 2023 to April 2025.</p>
<p>Implement Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption Actions</p>	<p> The District is proactively planning for future climate change and attempting to insure safety and comfort for staff and students. Adopting heat pump technology for retrofitting portables will provide heating and cooling. Adding air-source heat pumps to provide first stage of heating (Cilaire Elementary) will provide heat mitigation during heat domes and will only temper the air. In addition, any cooling system that served old computer labs will remain in place to act as a respite area during the heat domes. Gyms that have been retrofitted with stand alone heat pumps will also have the ability to temper the air.</p>
<p>Increase low-carbon/active transportation</p>	<p> NLPS has four electric school busses currently operating and by April 2023, three more EV busses will be added to the fleet. In addition, NLPS operates two maintenance EV vehicles and there is a plan to order another four maintenance EV vehicles by June 2023.</p>

Sustainability

GOAL NLPS aims to bring awareness of the interconnection among all things in our ecosystem and our dependence upon the land upon into our use of the gifts this land provides. Respectful and sustainable use of all that is provided by our land, waters, and air is necessary to ensure a healthy environment for generations of children that will come through our schools and honours our sacred trust.






Objective	Actions
<p>Reduce our impact on the land and implement restorative efforts</p>	<p> NLPS is working with community partners to restore local habitats. This includes programs like adopt a park, stream keepers, work with VIU’s fisheries department, Foodshare, and community invasive species pulls. Several school sites are working to develop sustainable food growing practices, including the development of a District farm.</p>
<p>Utilize the Zero Waste Framework</p>	<p> NLPS is in year 3 of a Zero Waste educational partnership with the Regional District of Nanaimo. Through education and action, the District is working towards diverting waste from the landfill and following the 5-tiered principles of Zero Waste. New District signage has been created to facilitate the diversion of waste and reduction of contamination. Participating schools are working with the school community to develop an understanding of source separation. Furthermore, the District has supported Zero Waste schools with the infrastructure required to support the diversion of waste from the landfill.</p>
<p>Implement sustainable purchasing practices</p>	<p> The District is in the process of reviewing Administrative Procedure 513 – Purchasing, and intends to add language in the administrative procedure that embeds sustainability considerations into the procurement process. This may include, when appropriate, incorporating evaluation criteria that have a sustainable component giving preference to suppliers that generate positive social, environmental and economic outcomes. For example, proponents may be asked to demonstrate how the goods/services being offered address key sustainability issues such as: greenhouse gas reduction, waste and packaging reduction etc.</p>

Responsibility to the Land




GOAL NLPS prioritizes and encourages connection to, care for, and restoration of the ecological integrity of the land and waters. Through our actions, we embrace our responsibility to give back to the land and honour our sacred trust to support a healthy environment and ecosystems. In our schools, outdoor spaces will provide hands-on learning environments that teach important skills and build climate resiliency.




Objective	Actions
<p>Reduce consumption of resources</p>	<p> The District has initiated a Paper Reduction Strategy. This Strategy involves reducing the amount of single use printers in the District lessening energy usage, using software that requires individuals to release print jobs lessening paper waste and providing the District and individual users additional information on their paper use.</p>
<p>Develop a better understanding of what it means to give back to the land</p>	<p> Indigenous people view the land as a teacher. Learning about this view of the world will help instill a respect for the environment. As we learn more about the local land and culture, the stories and teachings connect us on more of an emotional level. We believe this emotional connection to the land will influence the people who walk on it. Through partnerships with local First Nations, strong relationships with our knowledge keepers and the continued expansion of hul'q'u'imum language in our schools, the NLPS community is proceeding with this objective. Knowledge keepers are also working with our English First Peoples teachers to help them better understand Indigenous principles so that they can imbed them into their lessons. Understanding and embracing the teachings of this sacred land is part of walking together in this work.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p> Considerable effort has been made to increase use of outdoor space in the district. This includes providing OCC level 1 training opportunities for staff to be able to facilitate outdoor learning in a safe way, providing mentorship opportunities from high school outdoor learning specialists and the creation of district outdoor learning bins and repository of some shared supplies (such as tents and shelter building kits).</p>

Learning



GOAL NLPS will prioritize learning opportunities that foster learning from and connecting to place. Outdoor learning and play spaces and school gardens will provide opportunities for all to develop an understanding of the land as a source of knowledge, to cultivate environmental stewardship, and help to ensure food security.






Objective	Actions
<p>Integrate environmental stewardship and sustainability throughout the curriculum</p>	 <p>Classroom teachers are finding innovative ways to embed opportunities for environmental learning within the curriculum. These opportunities are happening K-12, across many of our school sites. This work is being supported by District Learning Coordinators, Teacher Librarians, Teacher Leaders at school sites, and by community partners. NLPSLearns has a dedicated space for shared environmental learning resources, and the District collection houses resources to support the inclusion of environmental stewardship within the curriculum.</p>
<p>Increase opportunities to learn about environmental stewardship and the land</p>	 <p>Individual school sites are tackling this objective in a variety of different ways, including providing opportunities for students to get out and learn on the land. This year, multiple schools accessed Wildwood Eco-Forest to learn about environmental stewardship and the land from Elders and community partners. Additionally, Learning Services has certified 4 Teacher Leaders as OCC level-1 instructors and sessions were held both last year and this year to facilitate a better understanding of how to safely provide outdoor learning opportunities for students. In addition to these offerings, there are also District kits that are available for sign-out on NLPSLearns, where additional digital resources are also housed.</p>
<p>Support learning opportunities that educate about and strengthen food security</p>	 <p>NLPS is in the intermediate stages of the creation of a District farm that will center the importance of food security and sustainability. Additionally, NLPS has developed a school garden tool/manual to streamline the process of garden creations at school sites. Many schools have active and thriving gardens that school communities are learning with and from. Other schools are utilizing indoor growing opportunities through vertical growing towers and horizontal grow stations. Some schools have even started seed saving and sharing seeds within the community.</p>

<p>Understand and embrace the teachings of this sacred land</p>	 <p>The District continues to provide learning opportunities to expand the understanding of Syeyutsus from senior leadership to the classroom. This path to reconciliation also has a direct impact on our understanding of giving back to the land as Indigenous ways of knowing and learning teach respect for the land and an approach that, if embraced, will ultimately start healing the land. Through the work of Nacu mat tat ulut, educators and leaders throughout the District are creating Indigenous Principles using the Syeytsus Framework as a resource to guide learning in classrooms. Nacu mat tat ulut is a collaboration of teachers, NDTA executive, district leaders, VIU staff, Indigenous leaders and retired educational leaders that meet 5 times a year to provide learning opportunities and professional development to various people throughout the District.</p>
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Culture/Leadership

GOAL To create an organizational culture that places environmental stewardship at the centre of our learning and our operational decisions. Establishing and resourcing a “Green Network” of students and staff will help implement and communicate about initiatives, provide alignment throughout the District, and ensure ongoing support for implementation of Administrative Procedure 526 and the Environmental Action Plan.

Objective	Actions
<p>Create a culture of environmental stewardship</p>	 <p>All areas of the District are committed to moving the Board’s ambitious environmental agenda forward. Facilities, IT and Finance are focusing on business practices, software solutions and environmental upgrades to make immediate impacts on resource use and GHG emissions. The learning side is expanding access to outdoor learning, addressing food security and trying to empower students. All of these activities are being performed in the lens of Syeyutsus.</p>
<p>Establish funding and resources to empower ESAP implementation</p>	 <p>By passing the Plan the Board has committed significant resources in the form of staff time to the Plan. In addition, the Board has prioritized surplus funds to support GHG reduction initiatives already referenced in this document including, energy improvements, food security and purchasing electric busses.</p>

<p>Establish an Environmental Stewardship Network throughout the district</p>	 <p>NLPS is working towards the creation of a formalized environmental stewardship network. At present, there are many informal connections that exist across the different levels of the organization including students, teachers, Learning Services, Facilities, and parents. NLPS has multiple ongoing partnerships with other districts and community partners (RDN, City of Nanaimo, Streamkeepers, VIU, Wildwood Eco Forest, Nanaimo Science, VIU, and numerous others).</p>
<p>Communicate actions, initiatives, and achievements within the District to partner and community groups</p>	 <p>On February 22, 2023 the Board passed the following motion: That the Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) direct the Chair to write to relevant Ministries with respect to its relevant environmental targets, including GHG reduction goals, highlighting our efforts and recognizing Ministry support and requesting funding or other actions to assist the Board in overcoming barriers to meet its targets.</p>
<p>Connect and collaborate with community</p>	 <p>The District continues to work with BC Hydro, and other agencies on pilots and funded initiatives for various projects (continuous optimization, white fleet electrification, low carbon electrification, EV adoption, etc.). Funding through Association of School Transportation Services of BC and CleanBC contributes to the funding of EV buses. The District continues to be aware of and consider other opportunities for funding including low interest loans and grants as energy savings programs are considered and approved.</p>
<p>Provide regular evaluations and updates of the Environmental Action Plan</p>	 <p>In addition to regular meetings of the Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Advisory Committee, the Education Committee meeting of March 1 contained a presentation by District Learning Services highlighting some successes of the plan.</p>
<p>“Walk” together in a way that acknowledges that we are all relations in the cycle of life.</p>	 <p>The District continues to weave Indigenous knowledge and understandings throughout the curriculum in authentic and holistic ways. Regular collaboration with our knowledge keepers, Nation partners, and Indigenous community partners allow us to walk together in the work of Truth and Reconciliation. Strengthening relationships between our Indigenous stakeholders and school communities continue to further build district capacity and understanding around local land and culture. Learning the history and stories of this land create an emotional connection to it and in that it enhances the level of accountability we all feel to protecting. Further, regular reporting will be incorporated into the Board Work Plan.</p>

