


Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board



Section: Schools

POLICY SC: 19
Environmental Education

NUMBER:	SC: 19
EFFECTIVE:	July 27, 2010
AMENDED:	
RELATED POLICIES:	See References
REPEALS:	
REVIEW DATE:	2014 - 2015

1.0 OBJECTIVE:

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to promote and support implementation and expansion of environmental education.

2.0 DEFINITIONS:

2.1 **Environmental Stewardship** is the philosophy and accompanying actions of valuing and protecting the environment as something held in trust for future generations. As stewards of God’s creation, *Environmental Stewardship* is a moral responsibility to promote reverence of the sacredness of the earth and to encourage sustainability through the wise management of natural resources for the benefit of all.

2.2 **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
- The positive and negative consequences, both intended and unintended, of the interactions between human-created and natural systems.

2.3 **Environmental literacy** is an important outcome of stewardship and environmental education. An environmentally literate individual will have the knowledge and perspectives required to understand public issues and place them in a meaningful environmental context.

3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

3.1 The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board believes that stewardship of creation and protection of the planet is a fundamental Catholic social teaching and that an environmental education framework that consists of themes associated with teaching and learning, student engagement, community connections and environmental leadership will assist students in becoming future stewards of creation.

- 3.2 The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board is committed to delivering effective environmental education and modelling environmentally responsible practices by consistently considering the environmental impact of curriculum and operational decisions.
- 3.3 The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board encourages staff, students and the school community to advocate for and follow environmentally sustainable practices. As part of this commitment, the Board is dedicated to engaging youth through leadership opportunities and will nurture students' ability to affect positive change both locally and globally.
- 3.4 The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board is committed to exercising leadership in environmental education, environmental action and care of the environment. Environmental impact will be considered in decision-making, and concern for the quality of the natural environment will be reflected in the daily activities of students and staff.

4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES:

- 4.1 ***Catholic Teaching and Learning*** - Environmental education initiatives shall be designed to enable students to develop the knowledge and skills they need as steward's of God creation to be environmentally active and responsible citizens, and to apply their knowledge and skills cooperatively to effect long-term change.
- 4.2 ***Student Learning and Community Connections*** - Students must be active participants in shaping their future. Opportunities shall be created for students to address environmental issues in their homes, in their local communities or at the global level. Student engagement shall involve the active participation of all students in sustainable environmental practices, a strong student voice in decision-making, and involvement in the school and community in meaningful ways.
- 4.3 ***Environmental Leadership*** - The Board shall promote leadership and encouragement for community-based, system-based and school based programs, projects, and special events designed to promote environmental awareness and conservation. By exercising environmental responsibility in its operations, the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board can serve as a model for students and the broader community and can ensure coherence with the environmental messages conveyed by the curriculum.
- 4.4 An Environmental Education Committee will be struck with membership from across the system to provide leadership support to enhance student engagement and community involvement, and to enhance the integration of stewardship and environmentally responsible practices into management of resources, operations and facilities.
- 4.5 The Environmental Education Committee will develop and annually review, a system-level Environmental Plan. Concern for effects on the environment shall be reflected in all system-wide practices and procedures, including but not restricted to, curriculum development, capacity building, purchasing, waste management, maintenance and custodial services, and sites/facilities.

- 4.6 The requirements of this policy and associated administrative procedures will be incorporated into the development and implementation of strategies, programs and procedures to protect and conserve the environment, while ensuring that schools and workplace environments are safe and healthy.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITY:

- 5.1 As stewards of God’s creation, environmental education is the responsibility of the entire education community.
- 5.2 The Director of Education/designate shall issue administrative procedures to support this policy.
- 5.3 The Director of Education shall assign responsibility for environmental education and sound environmental practices to appropriate supervisory personnel.
- 5.4 Trustees will make decisions based on a careful balance between fiscal responsibility and sensitivity to a sustainable environment.

6.0 REVIEW AND EVALUATION:

- 6.1 This policy shall be reviewed during the 2014 - 2015 policy review cycle.

7.0 REFERENCES:

Education Act, R.S.O. 1990 and its Regulations

Environmental Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990 and its Regulations

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

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

Administrative Procedure Pr SC:19 Environmental Education