



## Environment Policy

---

---

Date Approved: December 2011

Projected Review Date: December 2014

### **Purpose:**

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to promoting and supporting environmental education, environmental action and care of the environment. It is the policy of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board to facilitate the implementation of programs and curriculum initiatives to deepen and broaden student learning about the environment. As part of the Board's continuing commitment to implement environmentally responsible practices, understanding of environmental impact will be consistently utilized to inform decision-making.

### **Guiding Principles:**

1. Effective environmental education programs:
  - a. Address sustainability and the underlying causes of environmental stresses which are rooted in personal and social values and in organizational structures;
  - b. Promote changes in personal, behavioural and organizational practices that will minimize our ecological footprint; and
  - c. Foster greater community engagement.
2. Engaging students in environmental education programs expands students' knowledge of the environment, enhances their critical thinking and problem-solving skills and increases their community awareness and the likelihood of initiating proactive involvement.
3. Environmental education is a shared responsibility in which we all have roles to play as learners, teachers, leaders, and community members.
4. Environmental stewardship requires respecting and caring for the environment to meet the needs of the present and future generations by:
  - a. Ensuring all HWDSB activities and operations meet or exceed applicable legislation and regulations; and
  - b. Achieving a high standard of institutional accountability by implementing best management practices to prevent or reduce environmental impacts.

### **Intended Outcomes:**

1. Teaching and Learning:
  - a. Increase student knowledge and develop skills and perspectives to enable them to be environmentally active and responsible citizens and to apply their knowledge and skills cooperatively to effect long-term change.
  - b. Model and teach environmental education through an integrated approach that promotes collaboration in the development of resources and activities.

2. Student and Community Engagement:
  - a. Increase student engagement by fostering and active participation in environmental projects and building links between schools and communities.
  - b. Provide leadership to enhance student engagement through a strong student voice in decision-making and proactive involvement in the school and community in meaningful ways.
3. Environmental Stewardship:

Reducing, reusing and recycling practices are used wherever possible to ensure:

  - a. Attainable and cost-effective practices;
  - b. Compliance with provincial laws and regulations; and
  - c. Meeting targets and goals for reductions in the environmental footprint of the Board.

### **Responsibility:**

The Director is authorized to put in place the required policy directives and procedures to ensure the implementation of this policy.

### **Definitions:**

Ecological footprint: *Measures of the impact that human activities have on the environment.*

Environmental Interdependency:

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;*
- *Interdependency of our social and economic systems on these natural systems;*
- *Scientific and human dimensions of environmental issues; and*
- *Positive and negative consequences, both intended and unintended, of the interactions between human-created and natural systems.*

Environmental Stewardship: *Environmental stewardship or sustainability is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.*

### **Action Required:**

1. Teaching and Learning:
  - a. Ensure that environmental education and practice are incorporated into the instructional program in all divisions and subject areas, as appropriate, through the use of relevant curriculum resource documents.
  - b. Support staff and students in linking environmental knowledge and related skills and activities to principles of character education and responsible citizenship.
  - c. Provide opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and skills related to environmental education, and encourage them to apply their knowledge and skills to environmental issues (e.g., loss of biodiversity, climate change, waste reduction, and energy conservation) through action-based projects.
  - d. Encourage innovative interdisciplinary programs that focus on the environment and include field components such as outdoor education programs and experiences.
  - e. Challenge students to develop skills in systems thinking and futures thinking that they will need to become discerning, active citizens.

- f. Foster collaborative opportunities for educators to develop and share activities, integrated approaches and action research projects related to environmental education.
2. Student and Community Engagement:
- a. Engage student leaders in the design and delivery of environmental education projects at the school and board level.
  - b. Encourage community-based and system-based programs, projects and events to advance environmental awareness and action in regard to local and regional environmental issues.
  - c. Encourage students to enrich their learning by using information technology to access resources, connect with others and create e-communities that focus on environmental issues.
  - d. Work with parents, school councils and community groups in promoting environmental education including environmental awareness and protection, energy conservation, waste management, protection of the biosphere and outdoor education.
  - e. Encourage students to plan environmental activities that will engage all students and to encourage active participation in activities on school grounds.
  - f. Share school and student projects across the HWDSB that demonstrate engagement in environmental stewardship.
  - g. Encourage and support students on a system-wide basis to be active leaders and decision-makers effecting positive environmental change.
3. Environmental Stewardship
- a. Develop and implement a plan for integrating sustainable environmental practices into HWDSB operational services that protect and conserve the environment while ensuring that schools and workplace environments are safe and healthy and with consideration to quality, price and service to include:
    - Waste management and recycling;
    - Energy and water conservation and consumption targets;
    - Use of pesticides / herbicides;
    - Management of hydrocarbon reservoirs;
    - Building standards including LEED;
    - Cleaning supplies, fuels and chemicals;
    - Purchasing standards (Buy Green) and clauses to contractors;
    - Due diligence standards with respect to property acquisition and disposal;
    - School planning which considers proximity for pedestrian access;
    - Hazardous materials management;
    - Partnerships with local municipal and regional authorities, other school boards and community organizations to enhance environmental education and action; and
    - Landscaping standards.
  - b. Support schools in adopting environmentally responsible management practices that are consistent with HWDSB policy.
  - c. Create a system-wide Environmental Education and Management Committee to coordinate:
    - Board-wide environmental initiatives;
    - The development of an annual environmental report that provides the status of actions required related to the Environment Policy which are reviewed, renewed and communicated to all HWDSB employees and trustees.
    - Review existing HWDSB recognition programs for opportunities to include recognition of responsible environmental leadership;
    - Support the provision of staff development opportunities related to environmental education and encourage members of all employee groups to participate; and
    - Encourage all HWDSB personnel, students, parents, and school councils to adopt and promote environmental appropriate practices.

**Progress Indicators:**

Key Area	Components	Measures
Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increase student knowledge and develop skills and perspective that foster environmental stewardship.</li> <li>■ Model and teach environmental education through an integrated approach that promotes collaboration in the development of resources and activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Environmental Education and Management Committee's annual report summarizes examples of student projects related to environmental education.</li> <li>■ Superintendent's annual School Improvement Plan (SIP) review provides evidence that the school is:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Implementing required environmental programs;</li> <li>✓ Providing required resources to support environmental initiatives; and</li> <li>✓ Engaging students in action-orientated, environmental education activities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Student and Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increase student engagement by fostering active participation in environmental projects and building links between schools and communities.</li> <li>■ Provide leadership to enhance student engagement and community involvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Environmental Education and Management Committee's annual report summarizes the:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Involvement of community groups/partnerships for environmental education purposes;</li> <li>✓ Existence of environmental education committees in schools; and</li> <li>✓ Engagement of youth organizations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Superintendent's annual SIP review provides evidence that the school has:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increased student engagement through participation in environmental projects; and</li> <li>✓ Provided leadership opportunities to enhance student and parent/school council/community engagement.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Environmental Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop and implement a plan for integrating sustainable environmental practices into HWDSB operational services that protect and conserve the environment while ensuring that schools and workplace environments are safe and healthy and with consideration to quality, price and service.</li> <li>■ Increase the extent to which environmental education is integrated into HWDSB policies, procedures and strategic plans.</li> <li>■ Enhance the integration of environmentally responsible practices into the management of resources, operations and facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Set measurable targets and provide evidence for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reducing carbon footprint targets and energy consumption;</li> <li>✓ Reducing water consumption; and</li> <li>✓ Increasing waste diversion rate and reducing expenses.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Environmental Impact Report (formally the Annual Utilities Report) provides progress data (e.g. electricity, water, and waste reduction).</li> <li>■ The Environmental Education and Management Committee's annual report provides:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Evidence of the Board's commitment to providing resources to support environmental awareness.</li> <li>✓ Evidence of the types of environmentally responsible management practices currently in place at the school and Board level;</li> <li>✓ A summary of staff development programs offered that are related to environmental education;</li> <li>✓ An overview of the opportunities for student leadership in environmental education; and</li> <li>✓ A summary of the support and recognition provided for applicable schools, departments, personnel and parent/community groups.</li> <li>✓ Evidence of partnerships with local municipal and regional authorities and community organizations to enhance environmental education and action.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## **References:**

### **Government Documents:**

Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools, September, 2009.

Standards for Environmental Education in the Curriculum. 2008

Shaping our Schools, Shaping our Future. June, 2007.

Ready, Set Green! Tips, Techniques, and Resources from Ontario Educators. Spring, 2007.

Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations (Elementary and Secondary). 2009.

Energy Efficiency Act: General – O. Reg. 38/06

Environmental Protection Act

Waste Management Act

### **Related HWDSB Policies:**

- Environment Policy No. 7.06  
Approved 1999 09 09.

### **HWDSB Strategic Directions**

- Achievement Matters
- Engagement Matters
- Equity Matters