

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.46 (SUNSHINE COAST)

STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT: CARE OF OUR PLANET & ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

Submitted by Superintendent Bocking
May 12th, 2021

- 1i Our students will have the knowledge and skills to contribute to the **care of our planet** and its changing climate.
 - 3d Our district will support comprehensive **environmental initiatives**.
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“Let your walks now be a little more adventurous”

- Henry David Thoreau

Background:

- Environmental education results in longer attention spans, more creativity, higher levels of self-confidence, greater academic success, improvements in cognitive development, self-discipline, imaginative and creative expression, language skills and social interactions. Here, on the remarkably beautiful Sunshine Coast, our students experience the wonders of nature as a normal part of their learning and are discovering the positive impact that they can make in their part of the world. Our facilities team have made remarkable strides over the last decade to reduce the district’s carbon foot print.

Discussion:

- The District’s Environmental Action Committee is implementing the Environmental Action plan (attached) that presents a comprehensive strategy for meeting goals 1(i) and 3(d).
- International author Naomi Klein presented an excellent workshop to teachers and a second workshop for students using zoom to help us all to develop a mindset as well as professional and personal strategies to care for the planet and specifically to highlight the importance of student voice.
- Students on Shorelines was a practical and instructional success as our students could see for themselves the difference that they can make in their world.
- The facilities department has installed a large number of solar arrays on many of our schools, upgraded controls and HVAC systems and installed LED lighting to reduce energy consumption.

Next steps include:

- We are proud of our staff for having achieved remarkable growth in environmental education and facilities upgrades. Our new Environmental Action Plan continues to build upon the district's rich tradition of environmental awareness and action.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 46 - SUNSHINE COAST

Environmental Education Action Plan

May 26th, 2020

1. CIRCLE OF CARE: STUDENTS

- a. Our **students' voices** will be supported for addressing environmental issues.
- b. Match provincial **early years framework** with environmental connections.
- c. Formalize links between the **Core Competencies** and **Environmental Education**.
- d. Support teachers through the CARE project to teach global citizenship through a **sustainability lens**. Enrich the **ecological literacy** (the ability to understand the natural systems that make life on earth possible) of our students.
- e. Our students will identify **patterns** in our natural world and will use math to understand & protect our environment. Our students will use **data** to be more energy and waste efficient.
- f. Our students will learn that being outdoors supports their **positive mental health**.
- g. Our students will engage in **physical activity outdoors** in wild spaces on school properties and nearby.
- h. Our students will understand the connection between care of the planet and the Spiritual Connection to the Land/Waters and the **Traditional Ecological Knowledge** of Indigenous Peoples.
- i. Our students will understand and act upon **climate change** in **developmentally appropriate** ways.
- j. Our students will apply **technological skills** to enhance their environmental learning. Students will recognize bias in digital resources when researching environmental issues. Students will apply digital tools to collect data to test hypotheses. Students will create animations documenting local events.
- k. Our students will apply **fine arts skills** in their environmental learning.
- l. Our students will learn about new and emerging career opportunities in the "**green sector**".

2. CIRCLE OF CARE: STAFF

- a. Our staff will develop **environmental initiatives** in the classroom, schools and the community with their students.
- b. Our staff will have **professional development opportunities** related to environmental education.
- c. Our staff will ensure that all students **learn outdoors**.
- d. Our staff will develop unique strategies for **ecological literacy** relevant to our context and share beyond our district.

- e. Our staff will develop school yard gardens, outdoor classrooms, and **involve local community members** and families.

3. CIRCLE OF CARE: COMMUNITY

- a. Our district will effectively **communicate environmental issues** with students, staff, and the community.
- b. Our district will continue to foster partnerships with local governments to support **Environmental Policies and Practices**.
- c. Our district will deepen partnerships with local environmental education organizations, and other private and public organizations, to develop a **shared approach** to environmental stewardship.
- d. Our district will research and lead environmental initiatives, both in our **facilities** and in our educational practices.
- e. Our district will lead in **energy efficient** travel.
- f. Our district will grow **green transportation strategies**.
- g. Our district will develop **cross-cultural environmental connections** with international students.