



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE – AP523-1

Environmental Education

Area: Academic Services
Policy Reference: Environmental Education (PO523)
Approved: April 26, 2010
Revised: November 9, 2015; April 7, 2026

1. Purpose

It is the purpose of this administrative procedure to support the requirements of the Board's Environmental Education Policy (PO523).

2. Definitions

Nil

3. Procedures

3.1 Environmental Stewardship

3.1.1 The Board shall:

- a) support staff and students in linking environmental knowledge and related skills and activities to the beliefs, teachings, and faith traditions of the Catholic Church as well as to the diverse communities, including First Nation, Métis, and Inuit, and to principles of responsible citizenship;
- b) incorporate environmental skills and perspectives that foster environmental stewardship in applicable professional development learning opportunities for educators; and
- c) communicate revisions to updated curriculum documents to educators, highlighting the integration of environmental education expectations.

3.1.2 Each school shall:

- a) provide students with opportunities to develop knowledge and skills related to environmental education across all subject areas, and support them in applying/support their application of this learning to real-world

environmental issues, such as biodiversity loss, climate change, waste reduction, and energy conservation, through action-based projects; and

- b) encourage students to develop systems thinking and futures thinking skills that support informed decision-making and active citizenship.

3.2 Environmental Education (Curriculum & Instruction)

3.2.1 The Board shall:

- a) foster collaborative opportunities for educators to develop and share activities, integrated approaches and inquiry process related to environmental education, including intentional collaboration with the Indigenous Education team and community partners; and
- b) encourage innovative interdisciplinary programs that focus on the environment and include field components.

3.2.2 Each school shall:

- a) develop learning opportunities that will help students understand the underlying causes, multiple dimensions, and dynamic nature of environmental issues; and
- b) develop professional learning communities to share effective practices about pedagogical strategies that support learning and teaching about the environment, sustainability, and outdoor education opportunities.

3.3 Student Capacity, Leadership, and Engagement

3.3.1 The Board shall:

- a) share school and student projects across the Board that demonstrate engagement in environmental stewardship and Land-based learning;
- b) encourage environmental learning for all students inside and outside the classroom; and
- c) support learning opportunities that deepen understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives, and nurture respectful relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit partners across the system.

3.3.2 Each school shall:

- a) engage student leadership in the design and delivery of environmental education at the school level;

- b) 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;
- c) encourage an inquiry process that promotes partnerships and the innovative implementation of environmental education concepts and principles;
- d) create opportunities for students to address environmental issues in their homes, in their local communities, or at the global level;
- e) work with their school councils in promoting environmental education;
- f) encourage students to plan environmental education activities for all students; and
- g) encourage all students to participate in environmental education activities on school grounds.

3.4 Partnerships and Out-of-Classroom Experiences

3.4.1 The Board shall:

- a) where possible, offer community-linked experiences and programs, such as a Specialist High Skills Major focused on the environment, or cooperative education and work experience opportunities that are relevant to environmental education;
- b) involve the Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (DCPIC) in discussions relating to environmental education;
- c) share information about local resources that support environmental awareness and protection, energy conservation, waste management, protection of the biosphere, and outdoor education; and
- d) share links and partnerships with community organizations (such as non-profit organizations, businesses, farms and industries) and to help extend engagement in and responsibility for environmental education to the broader community.

3.4.2 Each school shall:

- a) work with parents, the Catholic School Councils, the Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee where applicable, community groups, and other education partners to promote environmental awareness and foster appropriate environmentally responsible practices;

- b) enrich and complement students' classroom learning by organizing out-of-classroom experiences and activities (such as the naturalization of the school yard), as appropriate; and
- c) encourage students to consider ways of completing their community service requirements that involve addressing environmental issues in their communities, in a manner consistent with Board policy.

3.5 Integration into Board Operational Services

3.5.1 The Board shall:

- a) review and revise environmental education policy as needed that promotes environmental literacy and environmentally responsible management practices;
- b) develop and implement a plan for integrating sustainable environmental practices into each of the Board's operational services;
- c) integrate professional learning opportunities related to environmental education into staff development; and
- d) encourage all Board personnel, the Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee, Catholic school councils, students, parents and school staff to adopt and promote environmentally appropriate practices.

3.5.2 Each school shall:

- a) adopt environmentally responsible management practices that are consistent with Board policy and consider the advice of members of the school community on these matters; and
- b) encourage staff to build their knowledge and skills in environmental education and responsible environmental practices, while also supporting mentoring opportunities.

3.6 Management of Resources, Operations and Facilities.

3.6.1 The Board shall:

- a) implement strategies, programs and procedures to protect and conserve the environment, while ensuring that schools and workplace environments are safe and healthy;
- b) develop environmentally responsible purchasing practices, while considering quality, price and service;

- c) develop and maintain effective waste reduction programs through consistent recycling and resources management; and
- d) develop and maintain annual energy and water conservation programs.

3.6.2 Each school shall:

- a) encourage staff to participate in school or Board sessions on environmental sustainability and the role of staff in preparing and implementing the school and/or Board's Sustainability Action Plan.

4. Sources

- 4.1 [Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future: Environmental Education in Ontario Schools, Report of the Working Group on the Environmental Education, Ministry of Education](#)
- 4.2 [Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow, A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools, Ministry of Education](#)
- 4.3 [Durham Catholic District School Board Sustainability Action Plan](#)

5. Appendices

Nil

6. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures

- 6.1 [Environmental Education Policy \(PO523\)](#)