



# GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD MEMORANDUM

TO: CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

FROM: SHELLEY ARMSTRONG, SUPERINTENDENT OF BUSINESS AND TREASURER  
VICKI HOUSTON, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

SUBJECT: CLIMATE ACTION PLAN – UPDATE

DATE: JUNE 18, 2024

Engaging Communities

Demonstrating Ethical  
Stewardship

## AIM:

To provide Trustees with an update on the progress of the goals and objectives outlined in the Climate Action Plan in response to the Climate Emergency Declaration passed by the Board on November 16, 2021.

## PURPOSE:

The Greater Essex County District School Board has long understood the need for energy conservation in order to minimize the impact of fluctuating energy prices on the Board's finances and the impact of the Board's operations on the environment. Since 1990, the current and previous school boards have implemented several phases of energy retrofit projects that have produced significant reductions in energy consumption. Previous funding from the Ministry of Education, including Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funding ("GGRF") and School Condition Improvement Allocation ("SCIA") has enabled the Board to renew infrastructure while accelerating the implementation of energy conservation strategies. Also, the EcoSchools program, introduced 13 years ago, has been successfully implemented in many schools, positively affecting occupant behaviour.

On September 19, 2019, the Board passed a motion that established a Single-Use Plastics Reduction Committee for the purpose of developing a phased-in strategy to reduce single-use plastics over a 1 – 3 year timeframe. The Committee's mandate included targeting the most problematic single-use plastics, developing a school and community awareness program and reporting on the reduction strategy, timeframe, measures and alternative products through regular monitoring reports to the Board. The last update provided to Trustees was on April 5, 2022.

On November 16, 2021, the Board of Trustees pass a motion to declare a Climate Emergency. In doing so, the Board acknowledges the impact of greenhouse gases (GHG) on the climate and commits to adopting a climate action lens to its existing operations and to the behaviour of its staff, students and school communities. The Board has committed to the development of a climate action plan including priority action items, implementation measures and cost implications towards the reduction of emissions from its operations.

On June 18, 2023, the Board received the Climate Action Plan which set out 44 goals and targets with timelines for Implementation over the next 5 years.

**CONTEXT:**

Since September of 2023, the Superintendent of Business and Treasurer, the Manager of Facility Services and the Energy and Environmental Officer have been meeting monthly on the work required to implement the goals and targets of the Climate Action Plan.

This working group has involved key stakeholders from various departments, committees and organizations throughout the 2023/2024 school year to operationalize these goals and targets. A status update on this work can be found in Appendix 1.

**NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINES:**

The Climate Action Plan Committee will continue to meet monthly to continue the work on the Climate Action Plan targets. The Committee will continue to involve key stakeholders in the work and ensure consultation on action steps to achieve the targets. The Committee will continue to provide annual updates to the Board of Trustees.

- Appendix 1 - Status of Climate Action Plan goals and targets

## Appendix 1 – Status of Climate Action Plan goals and targets

Each Action is numbered identifying the Area of Interest and the Goal along with actions identify to implement the goals and targets. For example the Policy section has 7 targets therefore actions taken against the first target are labelled “P1.1, P1.2, etc”, for the second target, the actions taken are labelled “P2.1, P2.2, etc”.

### GHG Inventory:

#	Target	Timeline
1.	Complete GHG accounting for 2022/2023 year to establish baseline data for reduction targets.	<del>Fall 2023</del> Fall 2024

### Actions Taken and Status Update:

GHG 1.1 Energy and Environmental Officer to complete course on Green House Gas Accounting (University of Toronto).	Complete
GHG 1.2 Energy and Environmental Officer to complete course on Green House Gas Validation and Verification (University of Toronto).	Complete
GHG 1.3 Complete GHG accounting for baseline 2022/2023 school year.	Fall 2024
GHG 1.4 Align GHG reduction targets with 5-year Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan (FY 2024-2028).	Complete

### Policy:

#	Target	Timeline
1.	At each policy and regulation renewal, critically assess policies and regulations from a climate lens perspective.	<del>Fall 2023</del> <del>On-Going</del> 2024/2025 school year
2.	Provide climate education and awareness communications and / or training to trustees, senior administration, and school administration.	<del>Fall 2023</del> Fall 2024
<del>3.</del>	<del>Introduce sustainability pledges in all schools.</del>	<del>Fall 2023</del>
4.	<del>Request each school to nominate an Environmental Champion.</del> Confirm EcoSchools Canada as the preferred program to encourage participation at a school community level.	<del>Fall 2023</del> Complete
5.	Grow Eco School participation by 2 schools. Mandatory participation in EcoSchools Canada by all Board buildings. This will be supported through Policy.	<del>2023/ 2024</del> 2024/2025 school year
6.	The Board continues to comply with Ontario Regulation 24/23 and ensure energy conservation measures are captured in the ECDMP along with energy reduction targets.	<del>On-going</del> July 1, 2024
7.	Ensure the Board is maximizing all financial incentive opportunities.	<del>On-going</del> Complete

Actions Taken and Status Update:

P1.1 Superintendent of Business to determine next steps and how to implement as required for each policy and regulation renewal.	On Going
P1.2 Merge environmental, energy conservation and stewardship related policies. Meetings held with Program staff to start the review. Facility Services to develop a draft policy.	January 2025
P2.1 Energy and Environmental Officer presented regularly at the Board of Trustees meeting to highlight environmental issues facing the Board.	Complete
P2.2 Energy and Environmental Officer regularly attended System Principal Meetings to highlight environmental issues facing schools.	Complete
P2.3 Energy and Environmental Officer regularly attended Student Senate meetings to highlight environmental issues facing students.	Complete
P2.4 Develop a monthly touchpoint one-pager with climate action updates to be distributed to all staff through System Communications.	September 2024
P2.5 A Brightspace training module on Environmental Stewardship was developed and training released to All Staff. This training is captured in AP-HR-32 Training: Mandatory Staff.	Complete
P3.1 The introduction of Sustainability Pledges in all schools was review by the committee and was not actioned. Efforts will focus on the re-introduction of EcoSchools Canada in all Board sites. This will confirm each school community's commitment to Environmental Stewardship.	-----
P4.1 Research was conducted on options regarding supplementary environmental programming in schools. EcoSchools Canada continues to be the choice for many school boards in supplementing Environmental Stewardship in schools. EcoSchools Canada has also updated the program to ensure many options for participation.	Complete
P4.2 Determine the level of school participation in the EcoSchools Canada Program.	Complete
P5.1 Mandatory participation in EcoSchools Canada by all Board Buildings. This will be supported by Board Policy.	2024/2025 school year
P6.1 Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan(ECDMP) (2024-2028) has been submitted approval by Trustees in June of 2024 in compliance with new format.	Complete
P6.2 Work with energy consultants to better project utility budgets for 2024/2025 school year.	Complete
P6.3 Submission of ECDMP to Ministry of Energy.	July 1, 2024
P7.1 Facility Services Staff met with representatives from Enbridge to determine what financial incentives are potentially available. Energy and Environmental Officer regularly attends OMC Energy Committee meeting where all financial incentives are discussed.	Complete
P7.2 The Energy and Environmental Officer to work with Capital Projects on the application process with Enbridge.	Complete
P7.3 Investigated if there are any water incentives available. None have been identified.	Complete

**Existing Buildings:**

#	Target	Timeline
1.	Continue to implement and optimize the Building Re-commissioning program through all Board buildings on a regular basis.	Start summer of 2024 with 5-year implementation Goal September 2027
2.	Consider energy efficiency in all renovations and retrofits.	Implemented and ongoing 2024/2025 school year
3.	Improve operation and maintenance processes to reduce energy usage through strategies such as building and control system assessment and optimizing the preventative maintenance program.	Start September 2024 with 1-year implementation plan January 2025
4.	Research and implement an Operations and Maintenance checklist of common energy saving measures that can be used to optimize energy opportunities.	Spring 2024 Fall 2024
5.	<del>Implement Real-Time Monitoring and Metering with an energy dashboard</del>	2024/ 2025

**Actions Taken and Status Update:**

EB1.1 As Building Automation System is upgraded in most buildings over the next two years, the program sequencing of all HVAC systems will be optimized for energy efficiency. Once this is completed Facility Services can review each building to prioritize re-commissioning if still required.	September 2027
EB1.2 The Building System Officer, as part of the Building Automation System upgrades, is standardizing programming across similar systems which accounts for ventilation, occupancy times, occupant comfort, etc. and maximizing energy efficiency.	Fall 2024
EB2.1 Capital Projects to develop checklist or toolkit to determine that energy efficiency has been considered.	January 2025
EB2.3 Capital Projects to explore opportunity for HVAC retrofit over replacement. Currently assessing all HVAC systems in existing schools. Once this is completed, these units can be assessed as to whether they can be retrofitted or have to be replaced.	2024/2025 school year
EB3.1 The Building System Officer, as part of the Building Automation System Upgrades, is standardizing programming and documenting the as-built conditions of all the control systems. This will ensure energy efficiency is maximized.	Complete
EB3.2 Capital Projects department has completed assessments on various structural components of a building including roofing, windows, and masonry. These assessments are prioritized, and renewal completed as funding becomes available. Capital projects currently assessing all HVAC systems which will prioritize renewal needs in this category. Work can be	January 2025

completed as funding becomes available.	
EB3.3 Maintenance department regularly performs preventative maintenance (PM) procedures to ensure all require PM work is carried out as prescribed by the manufacturer. As new equipment is introduced, the operation and maintenance manuals are reviewed, and PM procedures updated accordingly.	Complete
EB4.1 Maintenance Coordinator and Operations Coordinator to research other audit systems and checklists that can be incorporated into a Facility Services energy audit.	Complete
EB4.2 Use existing external checklists to develop a Board specific energy checklist. Ensure tasks added to appropriate custodial/ PM regular inspections.	Fall 2024
EB4.3 Provide all staff training on reporting issues in schools “never pass a fault”.	Fall 2024
EB5.1 Facility Services reviewed the implementation of Real-Time Metering at other school boards. <i>The utility industry has progressed significantly in terms of allowing customer access to utility data. School boards who have implemented real-time metering have not seen a significant benefit that could not be achieved in a more cost-effective way.</i>	Cancelled

#### New Buildings:

#	Target	Timeline
1.	Develop building construction standards that identify measures to reduce energy use, GHG emissions and total cost of building ownership through the operational life of buildings.	2024/2025
2.	Work with and support building design teams to achieve the best possible performance and provide direction on the Board’s future performance targets.	On-going 2024/2025 school year

#### Actions Taken and Status Update:

NB1.1 Identify consultant who completes carbon footprint assessment on the construction of a new building.	2024/2025 school year
NB2.1 This will be incorporated following completion of Target #1.	2024/2025 school year

**Energy Supply:**

#	Target	Timeline
1.	Continue to work with the Board’s third-party energy consulting firm to minimize the impact of market pricing on the Board’s utility costs.	Complete
2.	Continue with the action items as outlined in the Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan.	2024-2028 school years

**Actions Taken and Status Update:**

ES1.1 Schedule regular reviews with all utility stakeholders.	Complete
ES1.2 Implement UCD spreadsheet to accurately project usage and budgets.	Complete
ES2.1 Review action steps for 2024-2028 Energy Conservation Demand Management Plan and ensure implementation for 5 year plan window.	2024 – 2028 school years

**Waste Management:**

#	Target	Timeline
1.	Increase waste diversion rate from an average of 27% to an average of 35%.	2024 2025/2026 school year
2.	Reduce red box contamination from an average of 14% to an average of 5%.	2024 2024/2025 school year
3.	Reduce blue box contamination from an average of 46.5% to an average of 20%.	2024 2024/2025 school year
4.	Complete 10 waste audits per school year.	Complete
5.	Encourage individual schools to complete their own waste audits by leveraging the EcoSchools program.	Fall 2023 2025/2026 school year
6.	Ensure all schools are posting their waste audit publicly on individual Websites.	Complete
7.	Provide opportunities for schools involved in the waste audit with benchmarking opportunity- December 2023.	Complete
8.	Post results of first-round single-use-plastics reduction.	Complete
9.	Evaluate opportunity for second round or single-use-plastic reduction.	November 2024
10.	<del>Complete a second round of single-use-plastic reduction</del>	Spring 2024
11.	Continue open and transparent conversation with the Essex Windsor Solid Waste Authority and local municipalities to understand what organics collection will mean for our schools.	Ongoing 2024/2025 school year
12.	Benchmark with other schools in the province where organics collection is already in place.	Complete
13.	Run an organic collection pilot with two elementary schools and one secondary school.	Spring 2024 2024/2025 school year

14.	Explore opportunities to implement waste reduction during construction and maintenance activities.	Fall 2024 2024-2026 school years
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Actions Taken and Status Update:

WM1.1	Work with the school and contractor to develop and implement Waste Reduction Work Plans for each school where an audit takes place.	2024/ 2025 school year
WM1.2	Post the Waste Reduction Work Plan and School Waste Audit on each school's website and benchmark (extrapolate) the findings across all schools.	2024/ 2025 school year
WM1.3	Revisit RFP for waste audits and work plans to ensure contractor fulfilling obligations under RFP.	Complete
WM 2.1	Continue to work with schools to reduce red box contamination from an average of 14% to an average of 5%. Work with the Environmental Stewardship teachers to implement actions in schools to address recycling.	2024/2025 school year
WM 3.1	Continue to work with schools to reduce blue box contamination from an average of 46.5% to an average of 20%. Work with the Environmental Stewardship teachers to implement actions in schools to address recycling.	2024/2025 school year.
WM4.1	RFP issued and funding available to 10 waste audits per school year.	Complete
WM4.2	Work with contractor to ensure RFP requirements are completed annually.	2024/2025 school year
WM5.1	Encourage individual schools to complete their own waste audits by leveraging the EcoSchools program. <i>During previous recycling pilot projects, Environmental Stewardship Teachers were able to have schools complete waste audits. Future target to ensure all schools complete appropriate waste audits.</i>	2025/2026 school year
WM6.1	Energy and Environmental Officer is working with Communications Officer to post all school waste audits on school websites as they are completed.	Complete
WM7.1	Energy and Environmental Officer has compiled the data comparing all schools audited and sent to participating schools. This will continue until all schools are audited.	Complete
WM8.1	Environmental Stewardship teachers continue to send messaging around Single Use Plastics and have developed a "non-negotiable" poster which asks schools to ban some single use plastics in their building. This has been well received.	Complete
WM8.2	Energy and Environmental Officer is working with the Communications Officer to determine the best vehicle for delivery of information on the Board's Climate Action Plan (EDSBY, main landing page of website, social media).	2024/2025 school year
WM9.1:	Purchasing Supervisor working with cafeteria services to eliminate single use plastics from the supply chain.	2025/2026 school year
WM10.1	– Incorporated into Target #9.	Cancelled
WM11.1	Continue open and transparent conversation with the City of Windsor to understand what organics collection will mean for our schools.	2024/2025 school year
WM11.2	Continue open and transparent conversation with the Essex Windsor	2024/2025 school year



Solid Waste Authority to understand what organics collection will mean for our schools.	
WM11.3 Plan for a two-tired collection system (city with organics, county without).	2024/2025 school year
WM12.1 Energy and Environmental Officer to reach out to other school boards to determine the logistics of their Organics Collection Program and its effectiveness.	Complete
WM12.2: Energy and Environmental Officer conducted site visits at other school boards to gather information on organics collection at the elementary and secondary levels.	Complete
WM13.1 Energy and Environmental Officer to run an organic collection pilot at two elementary schools and one secondary school.	2024/2025 school year
WM14.1 Energy and Environmental Officer to review processes that were in place during the tear-down of Princess Anne and new build Dr. David Suzuki. Energy and Environmental Officer to work with Capital Projects to implement cost effective waste minimization or waste diversion action steps.	2025/2026 school year
WM14.2 Capital Projects to work with consultants and Board contractors to plan for waste minimization during renovations such as roof restoration vs roof replacements and HVAC re-conditioning vs replacements. This will divert waste from the landfills.	2024/2025 school year

**Behaviour Change:**

#	Target	Timeline
1.	<del>Improve the recycling habits and reduce contamination in recycling streams.</del>	2023/2024
2.	<del>Select two new families of schools for pilot.</del>	Fall 2023
NEW 3.	<b><i>Development of more robust targets for behavioural change that includes Program, Facility Services and School Communities</i></b>	<b>2024/2025 school year</b>
NEW 4.	<b><i>Implement two new family of schools into waste minimization pilot conducted by Environmental Stewardship Teachers</i></b>	<b>2024/2025 school year.</b>
NEW 5.	<b><i>Align yearly school-based CAP theme with Environmental Stewardship Teacher's program offerings</i></b>	<b>2024/2025 school year</b>

**Actions Taken and Status Update:**

BC1.1 This target is captured under Waste Management Target #1.	Complete
BC2.1 This target is captured under Waste Management Target #13.	Complete
BC3.1 The committee decided that more robust goals and targets must be developed for behavioural change that includes Program and Facility Services.	2024/2025 school year
BC3.2 Team to discuss how Board is preparing students for climate resiliency ("foster climate resistant children").	2024/2025 school year
BC4.1 Potentially move towards another two new families of schools for Waste Minimization pilot conducted by the Environmental Stewardship Teachers.	2024/2025 school year
BC5.1 Align yearly school-based CAP theme with Environmental Stewardship Teacher's program offering.	2024/2025 school year

**Fleet:**

#	Target	Timeline
1.	Increase the efficiency of the Board's fleet through procurement of right sized, high efficiency, and electric vehicles and motorized equipment wherever possible.	2025/2026
2.	Explore opportunities for Electric Vehicle Charging stations at each school.	Complete

**Actions Taken and Status Update:**

F1.1 Facility Services investigated the option to procure electric/ hybrid vehicles. This is cost prohibitive at this time. Will continue to review during budget deliberations annually.	2025/2026
F1.2 Facility Services to Investigate optimizing travel to reduce gas.	2024/2025 school year
F1.3 Facility Services to revisit PM/BM scheduling to find efficiencies in vehicle usage. Example: complete all jobs at first school before going to the next one.	2024/2025 school year
F1.4 Facility Services replaced 4 vehicles in the fleet to a more fuel efficient Chevrolet Trailblazer.	Complete
F2.1 Investigate options for charging stations. This is currently cost prohibitive.	Complete
F2.2 Facility Services discussed with OASBO to see if any school board had explored install options outside of using their own funding. None is available at this time.	Complete

**Procurement:**

#	Target	Timeline
1.	Review the Board’s procurement activity to identify potential suppliers and services to be considered for sustainable procurement.	2023/2024 2024/2025 school year
2.	Develop Key Performance Indicators to measure environmental and sustainability factors of suppliers.	2023/2024 2025/2026 school year
3.	Revise the Procurement Policy and Regulation (BA-01) to incorporate sustainable procurement.	2024/2025 2028/2029 school year
4.	Phase-in sustainable procurement.	2024 Onwards 2028/2029 school year
5.	Develop regular reporting to the Board of Trustees and stakeholders on the impact of sustainable procurement.	2024 Onwards 2028/2029 school year
6.	In new school construction and building additions, utilize surplus furniture and equipment, where available and in good condition.	2023/ 2024 Complete
7.	Repurpose surplus furniture and equipment as part of the annual Furniture Replacement Program, where available and in good condition.	2023/2024 2024/2025 school year

**Actions Taken and Status Update:**

PR1.1 Regular monthly meetings were scheduled with Purchasing Supervisor to investigate procurement opportunities. This will continue during the 2024/2025 school year.	Complete
PR1.2 Procurement to identify potential suppliers and services that to be considered for sustainable procurement.	2024/2025 school year
PR2.1 Purchasing Supervisor to investigate taking course on Sustainable Procurement.	2024/2025 school year
PR2.2 Purchasing Supervisor to determine which KPI’s should be included to weigh the sustainability metrics of supplies.	2025/2026 school year
PR3.1 Purchasing Supervisor to perform initial review of BA-01 for references to sustainable procurement.	Complete
PR3.2 Purchasing Supervisor to other public sector procurement policies for benchmarking possibilities.	2024/2025 school year
PR3.3 Purchasing Supervisor to incorporate sustainable procurement into Procurement Policy and Regulation (BA-01) during the next review period.	2028/2029 school year
PR4.1 Purchasing Supervisor to create a draft of what the procurement policy should look like going forward.	2028/2029 school year
PR5.1 Purchasing Supervisor to determine what regular reporting looks like and what key performance indicators look like for sustainable procurement.	2028/2029 school year

PR6.1 Purchasing Supervisor to determine how current surplus will be inventoried going forward. Purchasing Supervisor has inventoried all existing surplus not in a school building.	2024/2025 school year
PR6.2 Purchasing Supervisor has reviewed existing checklists of what is required in a new building for each grade level.	Complete
PR6.2 Purchasing Supervisor has worked with Program and School Principals to determine what furniture and equipment can be carried forward from the existing schools and what is surplus in the system that can be repurposed to the new school.	Complete
PR7.1 Purchasing Supervisor to update the Furniture and Equipment Replacement Program to ensure surplus in empty (vacant) schools and open schools is properly inventoried and re-purposed to other school who need replacement furniture and equipment.	2024/2025 school year

**Complimentary Opportunities:**

#	Target	Timeline
1.	Continue to support active transportation opportunities at our schools.	Ongoing
2.	Continue to explore Renewable Energy Opportunities at schools.	Ongoing

**Actions Taken and Status Update:**

CO1.1 Superintendent of Business and Manager of Facility Services continue to participate in the City of Windsor Liaison Committee meeting which include City of Windsor staff responsible for traffic, active transportation, safe schools etc. City of Windsor continues to partner with all area school boards to pilot active transportation initiatives.	Ongoing
CO1.2 Committee to continue to explore opportunities to promote active transportations in schools.	2024/2025 school year
CO2.1 Explore opportunities for additional renewable energy sources at schools. Currently, this initiative is cost-prohibitive however, Facility Services will continue to explore options in the future.	2024/2025 school year.