

**Sustainability Education Strategy
for New Brunswick Schools**

**Stratégie de l'éducation à la viabilité
pour les écoles du Nouveau-Brunswick**

*Developed by members of "Team Strategy" of the
Sustainability Education Alliance of New Brunswick, September 2008*

1.0 Objective

The aim of this strategy is to integrate respect for all life, environmental ethics, and environmental education into all educational institutions in New Brunswick. This strategy aims to lead New Brunswick schools to green solutions as well as to encourage schools that are already active to further their engagement.

2.0 Applications¹

This strategy applies to all the institutions and infrastructure of the Department of Education and School Districts (schools, administrative buildings, buses, grounds, etc.). The students, employees, District Education Council members, parents, volunteers, and other users are all subject to upholding this policy.

3.0 Definitions

Eco-efficiency

The concept of eco-efficiency was invented by the World Council of Business for Sustainable Development at the Earth Summit in 1992. This form of management involves reducing the consumption of resources, reducing emissions, increasing recycling, and improving the quality of goods and services to better respond to the needs of the human population.

Green School

A school that thinks globally and acts locally for a sustainable future, while promoting the engagement of youth and adults in concrete actions toward a more ecologically-sound world.

Environment

Arena in which an organism lives, which includes air, water, earth, natural resources, flora, fauna, human beings, and their interactions.

Resources

The aspects of the natural environment that humans use to produce goods and services. Resources fall into two main categories:

- Renewable resources: resources that have the potential to be used in perpetuity if managed properly.
- Non-renewable resources: resources that will not be replaced or regenerated within a human lifespan.

Sustainability or Sustainable Development

Development that satisfies current needs without compromising the capacity of the future generations to satisfy their own needs. The three pillars of sustainable development are the environment, the economy, and social justice.

¹ Under the Education Act, DEC's control the buildings and other infrastructure and superintendants are responsible for personnel. Therefore, this strategy presents recommendations, not requirements.

4.0 Legal authorization

From *New Brunswick's Education Act*:

6 (b.2) The minister may establish provincial policies and guidelines related to public education.

This strategy can eventually be integrated into the curriculum, over which the minister has sole authority.

5.0 Goals/ Principles

The Department of Education recognizes that:

- youth must be prepared for their role as independent, engaged, and responsible citizens;
- healthy and safe learning environments must be created;
- innovative incentives regarding self-sufficiency and the sustainable management of environmental and social resources must be put in place;
- the protection of the environment and natural resources is essential to human survival;
- education is the principle method of awareness-raising, mobilization, social change, and citizenship development;
- youth are full actors in present and future society, and they are capable of rising to the challenges related to over-consumption, environmental protection, and sustainability;
- schools play an essential role in education for sustainability;
- the Department must act in partnership with community organizations.

In this context, the New Brunswick Department of the Education will:

- foster a consistent educational message with respect to sustainable environmental management;
- take significant steps to contribute to a healthy environment from a sustainability perspective;
- provide the resources and the expertise necessary to implement this strategy;
- maintain a healthy environment in its buildings.

Goals

5.1 Education and training

- Encourage the development of students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills in the spirit of education for sustainability and community engagement.
- Educate students and staff about environmental challenges, solutions and actions that can be undertaken, as well as tools that are available to them, in order to promote the development of new skills and community engagement.

5.2 Awareness-Raising

- Initiate, support, and recognize local sustainability initiatives.
- Promote the Department's and Districts' participation in education for sustainability activities initiated by other organizations and government departments.
- Establish partnerships with other sustainability-minded organizations.

5.3 Management²

- Integrate the principles of this strategy into the operation and management of educational institutions in the following areas:
 - a) purchasing
 - b) use of consumer goods
 - c) waste management
 - d) land management
 - e) maintenance products
 - f) water use and conservation
 - g) transportation
 - h) new construction, renovation and demolition
 - i) energy use and conservation
 - j) hazardous materials

6.0 Directives / Recommendations

6.1 Education and training

- Encourage the development of students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills in the spirit of education for sustainability and community engagement through actions such as:
 - identifying opportunities to develop knowledge of sustainability issues,
 - ensuring the inclusion of environmental education opportunities such as role-playing, debates, field trips, etc.
- Educate students and staff about environmental challenges, solutions and actions that can be undertaken, as well as tools that are available to them, in order to promote the development of new skills and community engagement through actions such as:
 - setting up an Environment Committee,
 - supporting participation in environmental and community organizations.

6.2 Awareness-Raising

- Initiate, support, and recognize local sustainability initiatives.
- Promote the Districts' participation in education for sustainability activities initiated by other organizations and government departments through actions such as:
 - participation in the Sustainability Education Alliance of NB,
 - answering the New Brunswick Environmental Network's "Greening Our Schools" survey.
- Establishing partnerships with other sustainability-minded organizations through actions such as:
 - linking with local organizations on issues of concern.

6.3 Management

Integrate the principles of this strategy into the operation and management of educational institutions in the following areas:

A) Purchasing

Suggested actions:

² A concerted effort will be required among other departments involved (e.g., DNR, Energy, Environment, etc.)

- Develop a purchasing policy that focuses on environmentally and socially responsible goods and services (e.g., sustainable goods, organic, fair trade, Energy Star).
- Raise the awareness of suppliers.
- Buy locally.

B) Use of consumer goods

Suggested actions:

- Develop a strategy to sustainably manage the consumption of goods.
- Establish a system to optimize the use of goods in order to reduce consumption.
- Promote the donation of used goods to local charities.
- Promote electronic communication (e.g., information to parents, homework online, etc.).

C) Waste management

Suggested actions:

- Develop and implement a waste management system based on 3RC: reduce, reuse, recycle, compost.
- Implement recycling programs.
- Implement composting programs.
- Encourage “litterless lunches.”

D) Land management

Suggested actions:

- Implement innovative alternative energy and energy efficiency projects (e.g., wind, solar, Efficiency New Brunswick).
- Support projects that increase green spaces on school properties and that include native trees and shrubs.
- Encourage and support composting programs.
- Eliminate the use of pesticides.

E) Maintenance products

Suggested actions:

- Encourage the use of non-toxic products in cleaning, de-icing, and lawn care.
- Experiment with green products.

F) Water Management

Suggested actions:

- Encourage water management plans in terms of consumption and waste-water.
- Implement a water conservation program in every building.

G) Transportation

Suggested actions:

- Support the move to more environmentally-friendly transportation methods and vehicles for district activities (e.g., hybrid vehicles).
- Implement Policy 504 (reducing idling) for all vehicles.
- Encourage carpooling.

H) Construction, renovation and demolition

Suggested actions:

- Integrate ecological principles in new construction, renovation, and demolition projects (e.g., LEED certification).
- Revise and update new construction standards.

I) Energy Use and Conservation

Suggested actions:

- Improve energy efficiency through alternate energy sources, alternate technologies, and adjusting consumption to reduce environmental impact and possibly reduce costs (e.g., wind, solar, Efficiency NB).

J) Hazardous materials

Suggested actions:

- Implement management practices for hazardous goods that reduce or control risks to human health and dispose of these materials in ecologically-safe ways.

7.0 Directives by the CED

The CED can establish its own directives in accordance with the local context.

8.0 References and Resource people

- Sustainability Education Alliance of NB <http://www.nben.ca/esd.htm>
- Earth Ed <http://www.nben.ca/earthed.htm>
- New Brunswick Department of Environment <http://www.gnb.ca/0009/index-e.asp>
- The High School Sustainability Assessment Framework (HSSAF) <http://www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education/>
- Établissements verts Brundtland - EVB (Québec) <http://www.evb.csq.qc.net/>
- Green Schools Portal <https://portal.nbed.nb.ca>
- EcoSchools (Ontario) <http://www.yorku.ca/ecoschl/index.asp>
- New Brunswick Environmental Network <http://www.nben.ca/>
- Environment Canada <http://www.ec.gc.ca/>
- *Politique de développement durable*, adoption le 12 juin 2007, résolution # C.C. - 2332-06-07, Commission scolaire des Grandes-Seigneuries, province de Québec
- *Politique de développement durable 2500-017*, adoption le 16 septembre 2005, Université de Sherbrooke, province de Québec
- *Plan de développement durable du Québec*, ministère de l'Environnement du Québec, novembre 2004