

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 112**

### **Environmental Education**

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**Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**  
**(Brundtland Commission)**

Limestone District School Board is committed to the development of the skills and knowledge needed to implement environmental education that is relevant to the needs of our staff and students. We believe our system has the important responsibility to be proactive in creating and preparing for an environmentally sustainable future. To that end, the Board is committed to environmental education that is: locally relevant; culturally appropriate; enhances understanding that local issues often have provincial, national, and global consequences; builds capacity for community-based decision making and environmental engagement; and, supports lifelong learning.

As an organization, we will continue to develop environmental sustainability strategies and education in all locations throughout our district and we are committed to ongoing staff development in this regard. Board and school leaders are encouraged to provide an environment in which students are supported in their initiatives in working to create a sustainable future. In our work toward fostering understandings of environmental education and a sustainable school system, we endeavour to provide leadership to our broader community and to seek leadership within the same.

#### 1.0.0 DEFINITIONS

- 1.1.0 For the purpose of this administrative procedure, the term Environmental Education seeks to promote an appreciation and understanding of, and concern for, the environment, and to foster informed, engaged, and responsible environmental citizenship. Effective environmental education incorporates problem solving, hands-on learning, action projects, scientific inquiry, higher order thinking, and cooperative learning, and employs relevant subject matter and topics that actively engage students in the educational process.
- 1.2.0 For the purpose of this administrative procedure, the term Environmental Literacy is an important outcome of environmental education. An environmentally literate student will have the knowledge and perspectives required to understand public issues and place them in a meaningful environmental context. Thus, environmental education requires a mix of knowledge, vocabulary, key concepts, history, and philosophy.
- 1.3.0 For the purpose of this administrative procedure, the term Sustainability is the capacity to endure. In ecology, the word describes how biological systems remain diverse and productive over time. For humans it is the potential for long-term

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maintenance of wellbeing, which in turn depends on the wellbeing of the natural world and the responsible use of natural resources.

1.4.0 For the purpose of this administrative procedure, the term Education for Sustainable Development - The role of *education for sustainable development* (ESD) is to help people develop the attitudes, skills, and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and for the future, and to act upon those decisions.

#### **2.0.0 AIM OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROCEDURE**

2.1.0 The goal of this administrative procedure is to foster and support an approach to environmental education that recognizes the needs of our students, providing them with the skills, perspectives, practices and opportunities to learn and to engage in participative leadership pertaining to environmental sustainability. Further, we endeavour to promote environmental sustainability in the operations of all levels of the Board.

#### **3.0.0 AREAS OF FOCUS**

3.1.0 Teaching and Learning: Increase knowledge, skills, and perspectives of students to foster understanding of their fundamental connections to each other, to the world around them, and to all living things.

3.2.0 Student Engagement and Community Connections: Increase student engagement by fostering active participation in environmental projects and building links between schools and communities.

3.3.0 Environmental Leadership: Increase the capacity of system leaders to implement evidence-based environmental education programming, practices, and operations.

#### **4.0.0 STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

##### **4.1.0 TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- 4.1.1 To increase student knowledge and develop skills and perspectives that foster environmental stewardship, we will endeavour to:
- use relevant curriculum resource documents, as well as board and school generated resources, to support the implementation of revised curricula, as appropriate;
  - support staff and students in linking environmental knowledge and related skills and activities to the teachings of diverse communities, including First

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Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples, and to principles of responsible citizenship;

- provide opportunities for students to acquire and integrate knowledge and skills related to environmental education in all subject areas, and encourage them to apply their knowledge and skills to environmental issues through action-based projects;
- challenge students to develop skills in systems and futures thinking that they will need to become discerning, active citizens.

4.1.2 We will strive to encourage the modeling and teaching of environmental education through an integrated approach that promotes collaboration in the development of resources and activities by:

- fostering collaborative opportunities for educators to develop and share activities, integrated approaches, and action research projects related to environmental education that will enable students to understand the underlying causes, the multiple dimensions, and the dynamic nature of environmental issues;
- encouraging innovative interdisciplinary programs that focus on the environment and include field components;
- developing learning opportunities to share effective practices and pathways about pedagogical strategies that support learning and teaching about the environment.

#### **4.2.0 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

4.2.1 To increase student engagement and foster active participation in environmental projects and to build and maintain links between schools and communities, we will strive to:

- engage student leaders in the design and delivery of environmental education projects at the board and school level, as well as in the community;
- share student and school projects that demonstrate engagement in environmental stewardship, leadership, practice, awareness and action;
- encourage environmental education and participation in environmental education activities for all students, inside and outside the classroom;
- support students, on a system-wide basis, as they develop skills and act as decision makers to effect positive environmental change;
- ensure students enrich their learning by using available technologies to access a broad spectrum of resources, connect with others, and create e-communities that focus on environmental issues;
- encourage action research that promotes partnerships, within and beyond the Board, and the innovative implementation of environmental education concepts and principles;

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- create opportunities for students to address environmental issues in their homes, in their local communities, or at the global level;
- work with and encourage student councils to plan and promote environmental education activities for all students;
- encourage all students to participate in environmental education activities at outdoor education facilities and in the community and endeavour to further understandings of the unique qualities of the natural communities that comprise the Limestone district;
- build student awareness of Board and Municipal regulations as appropriate to student environmental initiatives.

4.2.2 To provide leadership support to enhance student engagement and community involvement, we will endeavour to:

- offer community linked experiences and programs, such as a Specialist High Skills Major with an environmental theme, Focus Programs, Dual Credit programs or cooperative education and work experience opportunities that are relevant to environmental education;
- encourage the school council liaison committee to provide advice on the implementation of environmental education and work with parents, the school council, community groups and other education stakeholders to promote environmental awareness and foster appropriate environmentally responsible practices;
- share information about local resources that support environmental awareness and protection, energy conservation, waste management, protection of the biosphere, education for sustainable development and outdoor education;
- share links and partnerships with community organizations (such as non-profit organizations, businesses, farms, industries, municipalities and co-terminus boards) to help extend engagement in and responsibility for environmental education to the broader community;
- enrich and complement students' classroom learning by organizing out-of-class experiences and activities, (such as the naturalization of the school yard, and the creation of shade areas), as appropriate;
- 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.

#### **4.3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP**

4.3.1 To increase the extent to which environmental education is integrated into school board procedures and strategic plans, we will strive to:

- maintain a school board environmental education procedure, to be revised as appropriate, that promotes environmental literacy and environmentally

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responsible management practices and serves to connect operations and curriculum actions through eco-schools or other measurable performance criteria;

- in connection with procedure development and implementation, form a system-wide committee on environmental sustainability to oversee the implementation of the environmental education procedure;
- continue to embed environmental education as a priority in the board's strategic plan;
- develop and implement sustainable environmental practices or guidelines for the board's operational services and ensure that environmental impact is a consideration for purchasing, use and new-build procedures;
- review existing board and school recognition programs for opportunities to include recognition of responsible environmental leadership;
- encourage all school board personnel, the school council liaison committee, school councils, students, and parents to adopt and promote environmentally appropriate practices and strive to collaborate with school communities and municipalities on existing programs in order to model, educate and lead our communities through environmental change;
- integrate learning opportunities related to environmental education into staff development for all employee groups in order to increase the capacity of staff to implement evidence-based environmental education programming, practices and operations;
- encourage staff to develop knowledge and skills related to environmental education and responsible environmental practices;
- facilitate sharing of staff expertise and knowledge through existing networks, community partnerships and expertise beyond our community.

4.3.2 To enhance the integration of environmentally responsible practices into the management of resources, operations and facilities, we will strive to:

- implement strategies, programs, and procedures to protect and conserve the environment, while ensuring that schools and workplace environments are safe and healthy;
- encourage staff to participate in school or school board sessions on environmental sustainability and facilitate school leadership in this regard;
- develop and implement environmentally responsible approaches to managing resources and operations in all facets of the board.

*Effective Date: June 2010*