



ALGONQUIN AND LAKESHORE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

POLICY STATEMENT

COMMERCIALY BOTTLED WATER

Rationale

The Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board recognizes that access to potable water is a universal human right. This right is being increasingly threatened by a number of practices. The increasing commercialization of water has manifested itself in a number of ways; from the privatization of municipal water supplies to the marketing of water in single-use, soft plastic bottles. Environmentally, the disposal of empty, plastic water bottles has created new burdens not only ecologically, but financially. As such, it will be the policy of the Board to reduce, and, where possible, eliminate the use of water in commercially produced single-use, plastic bottles and to promote viable alternatives for all Board sites and school communities.

The world is already experiencing the effects of a worsening global water crisis. Growing numbers of the world's people are living in areas where fresh water is a scarce resource. Canada holds 20% of the world's supply of fresh water and so has a special role to play as steward of this critical resource. Our students must be able to contribute in informed and meaningful ways to this public policy conversation. Such consciousness raising is appropriately reinforced by modeling good stewardship practices.

- Pricing – what kind of price mark-ups do we find in the bottled water market?
- Water Sources – when the label on the bottle says 'pure spring water', where does the water really come from, who owns it, and how is it regulated?
- Transforming Water – what kinds of filtering and processing methods do companies use to turn 'real' water into bottled water? What is the difference between bottled water and tap water?
- Contaminating Water – what evidence is there to support the industry's claim that bottled water is superior to tap water?
- Marketing Schemes – what kinds of marketing and advertising schemes are used by companies to sell what is really 'water transformed into water'?
- Consumer practices – why are people turning from tap water to bottled water?
- Eco-threatening – what environmental damage is caused by the escalating use and disposal of plastic bottles?

- Recycling Record – what is the track record of companies when it comes to recycling? Recycling rates for plastic bottles has been in steady decline since 1995, despite the explosion in plastic-bottle use.
- School Contracting and Fundraising – what marketing devices have the bottled water companies used in cash-strapped schools, colleges, and universities?
- Water Privatizing – what role and impact does the bottled water industry have on the privatization of public water utilities?

Guiding Principles

- All people have a right to safe, reliable sources of potable water.
- The Board’s EcoSchools initiative embraces the environmental concerns surrounding the disposal of single-use, soft plastic bottles.
- The Board acknowledges its responsibility to model stewardship practices for our students and their families consistent with the Board Mission Statement and the social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

References

You Love All That Exists ... All Things Are Yours, God, Lover of Life - A Pastoral Letter on the Christian Ecological Imperative, Social Affairs Commission, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003

Our Relationship with the Environment: The Need for Conversion, Social Affairs Commission, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2008

A Common Good ... an Inalienable Right, Papal Message for World Water Day 2007

2002 -2005 Fall Action Campaigns of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace Water – Not For Profit and, Carrying into the Share Lent Campaigns, Thirsting for Justice (<http://www.devp.org/>)

Kairos (<http://www.kairoscanada.org/e/index.asp>)

Declaration of the United Nations - International Decade for Action Water for Life 2005–2015 (<http://www.worldwaterday.org/>)

EcoSchools (<http://schools.alcdsb.on.ca/ecoschools/default.aspx>)

Administrative Procedures

Commercially Bottled Water

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