



ALGONQUIN AND LAKESHORE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

POLICY STATEMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH STEWARDSHIP

Rationale

***God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.
Genesis 1: 31***

As informed by our faith and the social teachings of the Catholic Church, the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board is committed to providing both educational and practical leadership with regard to environmental sustainability.

We must re-establish the links with nature that we have damaged. We now know that we are tied much more closely to the environment in which we live than we had imagined. Our planet is a spacecraft on which we navigate together with the environment, for better and for worse. As Saint Paul says, “the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now,” in the hope “to be set free from its bondage to decay” (Romans 8.22 and 21). Is development that is more respectful of nature’s laws and rhythms not a first step toward its freedom? In this respect, each of us is responsible for having an appropriate attitude toward the environment. We may believe that the actions of individuals, groups and communities are but drops of water in the ocean in comparison with the global challenges we are facing, but the cumulative effect of simple gestures carries weight. ...

... The issue of the environment, now so crucial, ties us to one another as never before. Selfishness is no longer merely immoral, it is becoming suicidal. We no longer have a choice about new solidarity and new forms of sharing.

***Our Relationship with the Environment – Our Need for Conversion,
CCCB 2008***

Guiding Principles

- There is a critical imperative to address issues of environmental sustainability; that is, refraining from practices that are harmful and promoting practices that are restorative, both of which embrace a vision of “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.” (Brundtland Commission, 1987)
- *An education in ecological responsibility is urgent: responsibility for oneself, for others, and for the earth. This education cannot be rooted in mere sentiment or empty wishes. Its purpose cannot be ideological or political. It must not be based on a rejection of the modern world or a vague desire to*

return to some “paradise lost”. Instead a true education in responsibility entails a genuine conversion in ways of thought and behavior. Churches and religious bodies, non-governmental and governmental organizations, indeed all members of society, have a precise role to play in such education. (Pope John Paul II, Vatican City, December 8, 1989)

- Environmental sustainability is a shared responsibility that demands ongoing collaboration between all staff and students, schools and Board departments, community organizations and agencies, parent groups and all levels of government, business and the community at large.
- As Christian believers, we are called to see the entire universe as a creative work of love. As Christian educators, we are called to share that vision with our students and with our community. We are called to leadership in environmental responsibility. We will recover and maintain a safe, just and sustainable environment and celebrate our profound connectedness with all of creation.
- The Board recognizes that for any actions to be effective and sustainable, students and staff must be assisted in developing both their understanding of environmental issues as well as their capacity to respond to them. It is necessary that appropriate resources and supports be provided.
- The Board’s promotion of environmental sustainability is rooted in a “cradle to cradle” model for caring for the earth’s resources, seeking to prepare and inspire our students to be responsible citizens who respect the environment and use resources wisely, contributing to the common good (CGE 7i and 7j).

References

Our Relationship with the Environment – Our Need for Conversion, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2008

Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow, Ministry of Education, March 2009

Shaping our Schools, Shaping Our Future – Environmental Education in Ontario Schools, June 2007, Report of the Working Group on Environmental Education

Eco-Schools Ontario (<http://ontarioecoschools.org/>)

Faith and the Common Good (<http://www.fait-commongood.net/>)

LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

Cradle to Cradle, William McDonough and Michael Braungart, North Point Press, 2002

Interfaith Declaration on Climate Change (www.interfaithdeclaration.org)

Catholic Graduate Expectations, ICE, 1999

Administrative Procedures

Environmental Sustainability Through Stewardship

Approved: June 15, 2010