

Green Schools Newsletter

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Ministry Update: BC's Education Plan in Action

The British Columbia Ministry of Education is looking at new ways of doing education to better prepare our students for the 21st century. Schools across the province have already taken up the challenge and have integrated innovative approaches to how they deliver education. Environmental educators offer many excellent examples such as project or theme based units that focus on the environment and are experienced through interdisciplinary, hands-on, community based activities. This kind of experiential education is the norm in the growing number of environmental and outdoor schools in BC.

The [North Vancouver Outdoor School](#) was first of a kind in BC and has been in operation since 1969. NVOS offers a number of programs that connect K-12 students to the environment, while they are immersed in an outdoor setting.

BC's newest environmental school is in [Maple Ridge](#). Developed in partnership with the School Districts of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows, various community groups and Simon Fraser University, the focus of this K-7 school is to reconnect the natural and human worlds through inquiry based activities that engage the mind, body, and heart.

[Saturna Ecological Education Centre](#) on Saturna Island offers multidisciplinary place-based experiential education to K-12 students. They follow the BC curriculum with a focus on real world activities, actions, and knowledge that contribute to the development of ecologically literate and responsible citizens.

Sooke School District is also embarking on an adventure in innovative learning with their [Nature Kindergarten](#), a first for BC! Developed in partnership with the Sooke School District, the University of Victoria, Royal Roads University and Camosun College, this program is based on the same model as the Waldkindergarten in Northern Europe.

BC has always had a diverse selection of outdoor programs offered throughout the province. All of these are examples of innovative approaches to Personalized Learning for the 21st Century. Discussion about 21st Century Personalized Learning is taking place throughout the province and on the internet.

People have shared over a thousand comments on education topics including competencies, outcomes, class composition, assessment, role of the parent, independent schools, reporting, professional development, funding, class size, and digital literacy. Join the conversation online at <http://engage.bcedplan.ca>

To learn more about the BC Education Plan and to share your thoughts and ideas with us on the direction you would like to see education go in the future, please visit <http://bcedplan.ca>. Engage in the conversation online at <http://engage.bcedplan.ca>. You can also follow us on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/#!/bcedplan>. To learn more about the BC's Personalized Learning, visit www.bced.gov.bc.ca/personalizedlearning

School District Spotlight: Northern BC



As Southern BC experiences an unusual Arctic front, we are all putting on our heavy sweaters and donning toques and wondering how to be carbon neutral when the temperature drops. There are many challenges to reducing carbon emissions in colder climates, but school districts in northern BC have met this challenge with a variety of approaches.

The Prince George School District has learned to better manage energy going towards heat and light over their long winter seasons. They have also successfully piloted a comprehensive and universal recycling program to all schools in the district and created a District Sustainability Committee. The district has applied for LEED Gold Certification at the new Dutchess Park Secondary School. The students at [Westside Academy](#) showcased a variety of green projects in the BC Green Games that helped reduce the carbon emissions in their school.

Peace River South installed a solar panel grid in one of their elementary schools with web-based monitoring so students can observe energy production. The District has been working with [Destination Conservation](#) to increase environmental stewardship in all schools. They even created a new teaching position to be an “Energy Champion” with the schools and students.

As a way to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions, Peace River North completed a district wide evaluation which was used to develop a sustainable plan. They also reduced water consumption by installing low flow sensor faucets and toilets. Peace River North is looking to integrate Real-Time Metering into the classroom.

The School District of Quesnel established a Climate Action Committee to oversee sustainable actions across the district. They trained their entire bus driving workforce on fuel efficient practices. In terms of infrastructure, Quesnel School District re-insulated two of its schools and replaced old appliances with ENERGY STAR rated ones.

[Kelsey Elementary School](#) has completed over 250 environmental projects, achieving JADE status with the [Green Schools Program](#) and contributing to the BC Green Games.

Vancouver Island

Nechako Lakes has acknowledged how their staff and students play a “significant role in changing our culture from consumption to one of reduction and conservation.” As a way to motivate people, they offer incentives and rewards to those who change their behavior. Students at [Nechako Valley Secondary](#) showcased their waste reduction program with the BC Green Games.

BC Green Games

Submit your project now!

Schools across the province have been busy for months creating environmental action projects and documenting their hard work for a chance to win big prizes in the fourth year of Science World’s [BC Green Games](#).

Entries include PowerPoint presentations, videos and pictures of projects such as community cleanups, garbage and recycling programs, energy audits, and idle-free campaigns. All projects that include an energy conservation component will be eligible for two new prizes. Draw inspiration from last year’s winning projects – head to the [BC Green Games online gallery](#).

The online project submission period is February 1- March 1, 2012 and K-12 student teams from all over BC are encouraged to participate.

Encourage your community to vote!

A public voting period, beginning March 1, will determine the additional winners of two prizes for elementary teams and two prizes for secondary teams.

When winners are announced this April, a total of \$24,000 in prizes will have been awarded.

Science World manages BC Green Games with input from youth, government, school district, university, science and environmental education community partners. Presenting sponsors are BC Hydro and FortisBC.





Evans Elementary School in Chilliwack: Generation Green



To send comments and ideas for future issues or to add your name to our mailing list, email:

educ.greenschools@gov.bc.ca

Resources: ECO Canada Green High Schools

GREEN High Schools Program Introduces Students to Careers in the Environment

In partnership with the SEEDS Foundation, ECO Canada launched GREEN High Schools in September 2011—a pilot program that offers national recognition to secondary students, teachers, and schools involved in demonstrating environmentally sustainable actions. With program sponsorship from Waste Management, participating schools also have a chance to win one of three \$1,000 cash prizes to put toward their environmental initiatives.

According to ECO Canada, a growing demand for environmental employees provides a vast array of career opportunities for the next generation of graduates. A recent study produced by Harris/Decima, on behalf of Canon Canada, also reports a growing 56% of secondary students are more than ready to join the ranks of Canada's environmental professionals. However, roughly 51% of those surveyed are unsure of the types of environmental careers available. The GREEN High Schools program attempts to fill this gap by connecting environmental education with career exploration.

Through the GREEN High Schools program, students are expected to research post-secondary programs and related career opportunities as they engage in activities that:

- Enhance the environment;
- Communicate about the environment; and/or
- Demonstrate the sustainable use of resources.

To register your team for the GREEN High Schools program, contact Rebecca Dickson at career.awareness@eco.ca or visit www.eco.ca/greenhighschools.

Project evaluations and documentation must be submitted by May 14, 2012.

About ECO Canada:

ECO Canada develops programs that help individuals build meaningful environmental careers, provides employers with resources to find and keep the best environmental practitioners, and informs educators and governments of employment trends to ensure the ongoing prosperity of this growing sector. ECO Canada is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Sector Council Program. For more information please visit: www.eco.ca.

Events & Announcements

Funding for Outdoor Field Trips

For BC teachers who want to take their classes outdoors, the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation invites you to apply to their Conservation Education Assistance Fund. The grants are to help cover costs such as bus transportation, outdoor field project materials, and field Trip leader or program fees. **Funding application deadlines: February 15** – for grants April 1 – June 30 and **September 15th** – for grants September 1-March 31.

<http://www.hctf.ca/CEAF/index.html>

Redfish School of Change

For BC students who are enrolled in or eligible for post-secondary education, the Redfish School of Changes is accepting applications for its summer program. The RSC is an innovative field school designed for people who want to lead the way in creating positive social and environmental change. This year's **Redfish School of Change runs from May 16 to June 23, 2012**. Visit www.schoolofchange.ca to see the eligibility requirements and learn about student bursaries.

Applications are accepted until February 15, 2012.

Earth Day 2012

The 42nd anniversary for Earth Day. Find out about celebrations and activities all over the world, including British Columbia.

<http://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2012>

A message from your Carbon Neutral Government Team!

Have you joined the [LiveSmart Climate Action Leaders Community](#)? This platform allows you to connect with your peers across BC, spark a dialogue, get answers to your questions, and gain access to current information and resources pertaining to carbon neutral government. Also available are the one-on-one self-certification question & answer session – sign up [here!](#) Please contact climateactionsecretariat@gov.bc.ca should you have any questions.