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| <i>Rainy River District School Board</i> | SECTION 5 <i>Curriculum & Instruction</i> |
| ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION | 5.25 |

POLICY

The Board promotes and supports the implementation and expansion of environmental education.

RATIONALE

The Board is committed to environmental education, environmental action and care of the environment. Environmental impact will be considered in decision-making, and concern for the quality of the natural environment will be reflected in the daily activities of students and staff.

IMPLEMENTATION

- 1.1 **Teaching and Learning** – Environmental education enables students to develop the knowledge and skills they need to be environmentally active and responsible citizens and to apply their knowledge and skills cooperatively to effect long-term change.
- 1.2 **Student Engagement and Community Connections** – Students must be active participants in shaping their future. Student engagement involves the active participation of all students in sustainable environmental practices, a strong student voice in decision-making, and involvement in the school and community in meaningful ways.
- 1.3 **Environmental Leadership** – By exercising environmental responsibility in its operations, the Rainy River District School Board can serve as a model of corporate citizenship for students and the broader community and can ensure coherence with the environmental messages conveyed by the curriculum.

GUIDELINES

2.0 Teaching and Learning

- 2.1 To increase student knowledge and develop skills and perspectives that foster environmental stewardship, the Rainy River District School Board will:
 - ensure that environmental education and practice are incorporated into the content and methodology of the instructional program in all divisions and subject areas, as appropriate, through the use of relevant curriculum resource documents;
 - support staff and students in linking environmental knowledge and related skills and activities to the teachings of diverse communities, including First Nation, Metis, and Inuit peoples, and to principles of responsible citizenship;

- encourage schools to provide opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and skills related to environmental education in all subject areas;
- deepen students connection to the natural world by expanding innovative interdisciplinary, experiential programs focusing on the environment;
- encourage community based, system based and school based programs, projects and events to advance environmental awareness and action in regard to local and regional environmental issues;
- support schools in modeling and teaching environmental education through an integrated approach that promotes collaboration in the development of resources and activities;
- as well, schools will provide opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and skills related to environmental education in all subject areas, and encourage them to apply their knowledge and skills to environmental issues (e.g., loss of biodiversity, climate change, waste reduction, energy conservation) through action-based projects;
- schools will develop learning opportunities that will help students understand the underlying causes, the multiple dimensions, and the dynamic nature of environmental issues;
- students will be challenged to develop skills in systems thinking and futures thinking that they will need to become discerning, active citizens.

3.0 **Student Engagement and Community Connections**

3.1 To increase student engagement by fostering active participation in environmental projects and building links between schools and communities, the Board will:

- engage student leaders in the design and delivery of environmental education projects at the board and school level;
- support students on a system-wide basis, as they develop skills and act as decision-makers to effect positive environmental change;
- share school and student projects across the board that demonstrate engagement in environmental stewardship (e.g., science fair).

3.2 At the school level, students will be encouraged to enrich their learning by:

- using information technology to access resources, connect with others, and create communities that focus on environmental issues;
- addressing environmental issues in their homes, in their local communities, or at the global level;
- for secondary students, considering ways of completing their community service requirements that involve addressing environmental issues in their communities, in a manner consistent with school board policy.

3.3 In encouraging student engagement at the school level, principals and teachers will encourage students to plan and participate in environmental education activities.

3.4 The Board will encourage the school councils to provide advice on the implementation of environmental education and to work with the larger educational community to promote environmental awareness and foster appropriate environmentally responsible practices.

3.5 In working with their community partners to help extend engagement in and responsibility for environmental education to the broader community, the Board will share information about local resources that support environmental awareness and protection, energy conservation, waste management, protection of the biosphere, and outdoor education.

4.0 Environmental Leadership

4.1 In order to in create the extent to which environmental education is integrated into school board policies, procedures, and strategic plan, the Board will:

- create a system-wide Environmental Education Committee which will develop a strategic plan that is annually reviewed, renewed, and communicated to all stakeholders;
- embed environmental education as a priority in the Board's annual System Plan;
- develop and implement a plan for integrating sustainable environmental practices into the Board's operational services and similarly support schools in adopting environmentally responsible management practices that are consistent with Board policy;
- implement strategies, programs, and procedures to protect and conserve the environment, while ensuring that schools and workplace environments are safe and healthy;
- develop environmentally responsible purchasing practices, while considering quality, price, and service;
- encourage all stakeholders to adopt and promote environmentally appropriate practices.

4.2 To increase the capacity of staff to implement evidence-based environmental education programming, practices, and operations, the Board will integrate in-service opportunities related to environmental education into staff development for all employee groups.

4.3 Using the Rainy River District School Board Environmental Education Policy and the Board's annual Environmental Plan, schools will develop local priorities focused on environmental education. Schools will encourage staff to develop knowledge and skills related to environmental education and responsible environmental practices as well as encourage mentoring opportunities and sharing opportunities through existing networks.

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| <p><u>CROSS REFERENCE</u></p> | <p><u>Date Approved</u> September 1, 2009</p> <p><u>Board Motion</u> 319</p> <p><u>Review prior to</u> 2016</p> | <p><u>LEGAL/MINISTRY OF EDUCATION REFERENCE</u> <i>Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools</i></p> <p><i>Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future</i></p> <p><i>Ready, Set, Green! Tips, Techniques, and Resources from Ontario Educators</i></p> <p><i>Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations, 2008</i></p> |
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