



ONTARIO PUBLIC  
SCHOOL BOARDS'  
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates

## **Exemplary Environmental Leadership/Sustainability Program or Initiative**

**School Board – Lambton Kent District School Board**

**Contact Person and Email Address – Director Jim Costello, Jim.Costello@lkdsb.net**

**Name of Program/Initiative – Wallaceburg District S.S. - Reducing Ecological Footprint**

**Hyperlinks to Documents or Website(s) Describing this Program/Initiative**

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### **Description of Program/Initiative**

**Wallaceburg District S.S. has diligently worked to change the culture of the school and the mindset of students by focusing on reducing their ecological footprint and working towards creating an environmentally sustainable school by participating in the Ontario Ecoschools program.**

**Initiatives include litter-less lunches, battery recycling stations, milk bag recycling by creating sleepmats for 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries and installing a water bottle filling station. WDSS has currently saved over 16,000 plastic water bottles from potentially ending up in a landfill.**

**Their most important environmental project has been taking a deserted cement covered wasteland and turning it into a naturalized courtyard. The courtyard is used to conduct outdoor lessons and the area includes student art, living walls to reduce heat and provide sensory stimulation for their medically fragile students. A wheelchair accessible space was created as equity is an important part of the school culture. A water feature which recycles rainwater also provides sensory stimulation. Rain barrel water collection system is used for irrigation as well.**

**WDSS has also worked with the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority by planting over 200 trees. The school has been a gold level Ecoschool 3 years running and been awarded the Wallaceburg and District Chamber of Commerce Environmental Excellence Award.**

### **What has been the Impact on Student Learning?**

**By tying the environment into the school culture, students study invasive and endangered species specific to the diverse ecosystem of Walpole Island where many of their students live. The school greenhouse which is maintained by students and utilized by science classes offers the opportunity for experiential learning opportunities. Students grow plants from seeds with vegetables harvested for use in the Food and Nutrition programs. Plants in the courtyard are low maintenance native species researched by students and chosen to enhance local biodiversity.**

**Students have learned the value of reducing their ecological footprint and the importance of**

**living in an environmentally sustainable world.**