



Exemplary Environmental Leadership/Sustainability Program or Initiative

School Board: **Upper Grand District School Board**

Contact Person and Email Address:

Name of Program/Initiative: **UGDSB Environmental Learning Centres**

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

Leaders and Learners, the official magazine of the Canadian Association of School Administrators, Summer 2011, pages 17-19 http://www.cassa-acgcs.ca/files/_mFB3P_/01f8cb14dabb82dd3745a49013852ec4/LL_Mag_2011_Summer.pdf

Description of Program/Initiative and Impact on Student Learning

UGDSB Environmental Learning Centres

Acting Today Shaping Tomorrow: Environmental Leadership

“Enhance the integration of environmentally responsible practices into the management of resources, operations, and facilities.”

In 2013, the UGDSB finished the construction of five Environmental Learning Centres (ELCs) which are stand-alone classrooms that were built using sustainable, energy-efficient and eco-friendly designs. The ELCs house junior grade classes and are located in diverse geographic locations throughout the board at five elementary schools: Island Lake P.S., Minto Clifford P.S., Rockwood P.S., JD Hogarth P.S., and Westwood P.S. Three of the ELCs are permanent, two-classroom structures that utilize a number of environmentally friendly features such as straw bale walls, rainwater cisterns, solar to air heat collectors, light harvesting systems, as well as other green initiatives to promote energy conservation. Two of the structures are prototype portable classrooms that were built off site by Evolve Builders, a green construction firm, and then moved to their current locations. These naturally built portables feature a straw bale insulated wall construction and use local, sustainable materials, energy efficient LED lighting and healthier options when it comes to low VOC paints, finishes and adhesives.



Environmental Learning Centre at Island Lake P.S.

While of environmental and economic significance, the excitement generated by this initiative is focused on the learning opportunities it provides to our staff, students and school community. Using their classrooms as real-world examples, students engage in cross-curriculum based lessons on energy conservation, renewable resources, and the solar advantages of building position. Every year the teachers in the ELCs get together with an environmental curriculum leader to take part in collaborative inquiry to decide on a new learning focus. This year students will integrate media curriculum expectations to create a promotional video of the unique features of their classroom so that their learning can be shared with a wider audience. In addition, students in the ELCs have been paired with digital pen pals in another ELC location and have been writing to one another. An exciting face-to-face meeting has been arranged in May so they will be able to get to know one another in person and share their unique environmental experiences!



The ELCs are always open to receiving visitors to increase the learning of these centres across the school board. The first ELC at Island Lake P.S. has now hosted tours for hundreds of students. This year, Westwood PS in Guelph will be inviting students from neighbouring schools to go on a walking fieldtrip to visit their newly opened ELC and allow the Westwood students to demonstrate their leadership abilities by teaching other students about the environmentally friendly features of their classroom. Future plans to continue to build on and share the experiences learned in these remarkable centres will promote the goals of the UGDSB's new Environmental Sustainability Action Plan to further enhance environmental stewardship in our board.

Links to UGDSB Policy and Plans:

UGDSB Environmental Education and Management Policy #210

<http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/board/policies/index.aspx>

UGDSB Environmental Sustainability Action Plan

<http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/community/article.aspx?id=51720>

UGDSB Energy Demand and Management Plan

<http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/community/article.aspx?id=39650>