



Exemplary Environmental Leadership/Sustainability Program or Initiative

School Board __ Greater Essex County District School Board _____

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Name of Program/Initiative: EcoSchools

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

https://publicboard.ca/Programs/ecoSchools/Pages/Ecoschools_Main.aspx

Description of Program/Initiative

Purpose

The Right Thing to Do For Our Planet! This has been the mantra of the Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) EcoSchools program for the past several years. With a modest beginning in 2004, the GECDSB's environmental program has grown to the point where it is proud to be one of the most active school boards in the province promoting environmental education and stewardship. The program is supported by a Board wide policy.

Participation

Every school in the GECDSB must establish an EcoTeam to oversee and promote environmental activities within their respective school. An EcoTeam consists of a school administrator, teacher, custodian, and student with parent representation strongly encouraged. Promoting environmental stewardship and influencing change requires widespread community involvement.

Training: A chance to share and grow

To promote a major initiative such as EcoSchools, motivation and sustainability are essential ingredients. In this capacity, the GECDSB is unrivaled and each year school EcoTeams (77) are invited to a full day conference to learn and exchange best environmental practices in each of the key disciplines of the program. During this special day, 500 participants will learn and interact together, leaving with a renewed commitment and vision to influence their school communities.

What has been the Impact on Student Learning?

Thousands students and over half our staff have had direct meaningful training in the area of EcoSchools since inception in our system. When they come to training they join as a collective team from the school including students, administrators, teachers and custodial staff to determine plans in helping their school and local environment to be more ECO friendly and responsible. This has had a tremendous impact at our 57 elementary schools and 16 secondary school sites. There is visible ownership for caring for the environment with our day to day actions. The actions helps schools to be cleaner, safer more responsible places to learn. This training along with other specific projects such

as our partnership with BASF- Fighting Island and our Outdoor Education grant help to create a student who graduates from our system who will no doubt leave a footprint of responsibility for the local and global environment.