



# Furthering Sustainable Development Goals with EcoSchools Canada

SDG Report 2021

# Table of Contents

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Click on any heading below to go to the corresponding page. Once on the page, click on the heading to come back to this table of contents.

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How EcoSchools Canada is Positioned to Help</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How Does the EcoSchools Canada Program Contribute to the Sustainable Development Targets?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Emerging Connections to the Sustainable Development Targets</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Conclusions and Next Steps</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>26</b>

# Acknowledgements

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EcoSchools Canada is a registered charity that aims to nurture environmental leadership, reduce the ecological impact of schools, and build environmentally responsible school communities.

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## About this report

This report discusses the alignment of the EcoSchools Canada program towards furthering the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on the Government of Canada's SDG targets for 2030.



# Executive Summary

**This report explores how participation in the EcoSchools Canada program contributes to the Government of Canada's achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goal targets for 2030.**

Participation in the EcoSchools program directly contributes to furthering the targets outlined in the following goals; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable and Clean Energy; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; and Climate Action. EcoSchools Canada is also uniquely positioned to support in monitoring the extent global citizenship education and

education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in national education policies, curricula, teacher education, and student assessment, which are relevant key performance indicators for global targets in the Quality Education, Responsible Consumption and Production, and Climate Action Sustainable Development Goals.





# Introduction

## The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs hereafter) are 17 unique interconnected objectives that form “the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all” (United Nations, 2021). They were implemented in 2015, with the intent of being completed by 2030. Every country is called to action in this global initiative.

Canada’s domestic implementation of the SDGs is informed by Moving forward together: Canada’s 2030 Agenda National Strategy (Government of Canada, 2021a).

Branching from the strategy is Canada’s Federal Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda (Government of Canada, 2021b) and the Canadian Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (Statistics Canada, 2021a) and Sustainable Development Goals Data Hub (Statistics Canada, 2021b), which outline specific federal roles, responsibilities, and statistical goals for each SDG.

Each goal is broken into multiple specific targets, and each has a statistically informed key performance indicator (KPI).



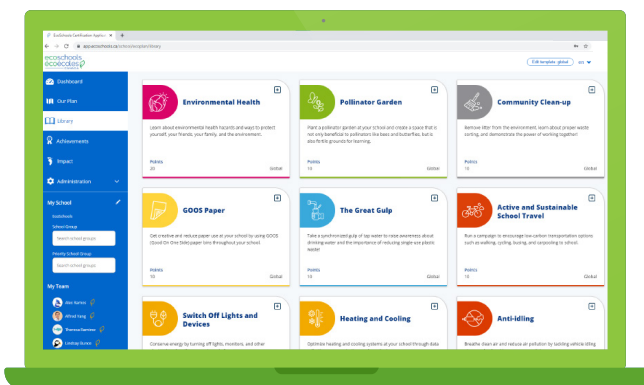
## EcoSchools Canada

EcoSchools Canada (formerly Ontario EcoSchools) is a registered charity with an environmental learning [certification program](#) for schools kindergarten through grade 12. EcoSchools is internationally recognized and endorsed by the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a member of the [Foundation for Environmental Education \(FEE\)](#). Since its inception in 2005, EcoSchools has certified over 3,000 schools across Ontario. In the 2020-2021 school year EcoSchools expanded nationally, with the goal of reaching 2 million students nationwide by 2023.

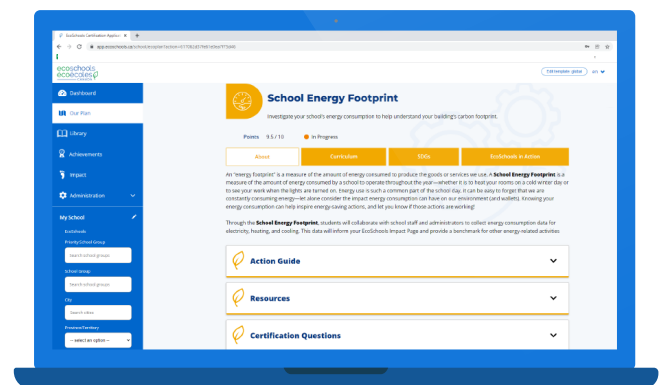
Featuring over [40 unique sustainability-focused actions](#), the custom-built EcoSchools Certification Application (ECA) is an extensive environmental education resource and certification framework. The ECA also serves as a high-level

data collection tool, quantifying schools' actions into statistics and visuals to showcase participation and multi-level sustainability values. Information from the ECA is used to share individual and collective impact with schools, inform national and regional reports, and share key metrics with partner organizations.

With specific reference to the statistical targets Canada has in its [Sustainable Development Goals Data Hub](#), this report will clearly outline how EcoSchools Canada is furthering Canada's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goal targets for 2030. It will also demonstrate how the ECA can bridge the reporting gap in SDG targets to increase global citizen education and education for sustainable development within national education policies, curricula, teacher education, and student assessment.

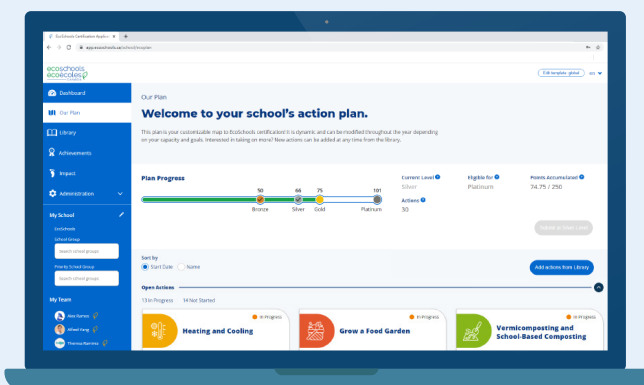


*The EcoSchools Action Library*



*The School Energy Footprint Action*

## Connecting EcoSchools Actions to the Sustainable Development Goals



*The EcoSchools Action Plan*

The core of the EcoSchools program is the [EcoSchools Certification Application \(ECA\)](#), our bilingual, online application platform that enables schools across the country to create and implement a customized environmental action plan that meets the needs of their community. At the end of each year, school plans are submitted and assessed by EcoSchools staff, and schools are awarded a certification level ranging from Bronze to Platinum.

# How EcoSchools Canada is Positioned to Help

**EcoSchools Canada is uniquely positioned to act as a backbone organization for a national collective impact framework.**

Our application platform acts as a comprehensive data collection tool to allow us to measure how each action taking place in a school is contributing to collective sustainability goals. Because our certification program does not compete with, but rather recognizes and supports grass-roots program delivery, EcoSchools can authentically partner with a diversity of organizations also looking to contribute to and measure achievements across a wide range of sustainability goals.

By targeting both behaviour change and operational efficiency in schools, participation in our extra-curricular certification program increases student and teacher engagement, embeds environmental values into school culture, and generates tangible sustainability impacts.

Our team is made up of twelve staff members from a range of backgrounds, including education, sustainability, and STEM fields. We also work in partnership with over 100 school boards and districts across Canada and work with a National Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, Program Advisory Committee and Youth Advisory Committee (Grade 10-12 high school students).



**Halton District School Board is looking to the UN Sustainable Development Goals as the framework for reporting on sustainability. The EcoSchools program is well positioned to support school communities achieve Canada's SDG targets by helping to bridge the gap between board and school level staff.**

*- Suzanne Burwell, Environmental Sustainability Specialist, HDSB*



# How Does the EcoSchools Canada Program Contribute to the Sustainable Development Targets?

The EcoSchools Canada program strongly supports Canada's achievement of five global Sustainable Development Goals: Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, and Climate Action. Below is an overview of each SDG, their applicable target and key performance indicator (KPI) from the Government of Canada's [Sustainable Development Goals Data Hub](#), and at least two specific examples of how the EcoSchools Canada program contributes to its achievement.





## SDG 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

### Global Target: 6.4

By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.

#### KPI:

**Change in water-use efficiency over time.**

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**6,000+**



**students**

participated in the  
**School Water Footprint** action  
in the 2020-2021 school year.



## EcoSchools Connections



### School Water Audit



### School Water Footprint

The EcoSchools Canada program features two actions for improving water-use efficiency. The new **School Water Audit** action is an investigation into how water is used at schools and how it can be conserved. In this action, students are challenged to identify which water-saving strategies are used at their school, then develop and execute an action plan to reduce water use.

The **School Water Footprint** action focuses specifically on calculating the amount of water used by schools in a school year using monthly tracking. Year after year, the

action encourages schools to look back on their baseline water usage to see how much their collective action has made an impact on their school's consumption. Data from this action is used to inform schools' Impact Pages, and contribute to the National Impact Page. [See here](#) to learn more about how EcoSchools Canada is tracking its core sustainability metrics.

EcoSchools Canada gathered limited data relating to water-use efficiency from the 35 schools who completed the **School Water Footprint** action in 2020-2021. However, with the launch of an additional water-focused action, **School Water Audit**, in 2021-22 and increasing participation in water related actions in schools, EcoSchools will continue its efforts to improve and collect further water-use efficiency data for 2021 and beyond.



## SDG 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

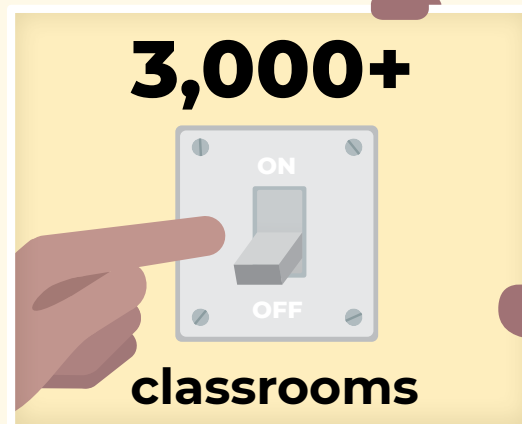
### Global Target: 7.3

By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.

### KPI:

Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP.

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had their **energy efficiency optimized** through participation in the Switch Off Lights and Devices, Phantom Power, and Heating and Cooling actions in the 2020-2021 school year.



## EcoSchools Connections

The EcoSchools Canada program features a number of actions that decrease the energy intensity of school buildings. Three categories that actions fall into are awareness campaigns, school and classroom-level initiatives, and quantitative energy monitoring.

### Awareness Campaigns



WWF Earth Hour



WWF National Sweater Day

**WWF Earth Hour** is a flagship global initiative that is embedded within the EcoSchools Canada program. It is a one day event that encourages schools to power down all non-essential electronics and devices for one hour. This action brings schools together, raises energy awareness, and creates momentum for further energy-related action.





## School and Classroom-level Initiatives



### Phantom Power



### Switch Off Lights and Devices



### Heating and Cooling

**Switch Off Lights and Devices, Phantom Power, and Heating and Cooling** are all actions that track classroom-level energy efficiency before and after the implementation of learning activities and school-wide campaigns. They each set a baseline tally, such as the number of rooms with devices unplugged and power bars turned off, then note the net room efficiency change after implementing new classroom energy policies.



## Quantitative Sustainability Monitoring



### School Energy Footprint

**School Energy Footprint**, similar to **School Water Footprint**, focuses specifically on calculating the amount of fuel and energy used by schools in a school year using monthly tracking. Year after year, the action encourages schools to look back on their baseline fuel and energy usage to see how much their collective action has made an impact on their school's consumption. Data from this action is used to inform schools' Impact Pages, and contribute to the National Impact Page. [See here](#) to learn more about how EcoSchools Canada is tracking its core sustainability metrics.



**I believe the EcoSchools' program does a very efficient job programming for the Sustainable Development Goals."**

*- Grade 12 Student, YCDSB*



**SDG 11**  
SUSTAINABLE CITIES  
AND COMMUNITIES

**Global Target: 11.6**

By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.

**KPI:**

**Total amount of waste sent to disposal via the waste management industry.**



**30,000+**



**waste-free lunches**

**were eaten** in EcoSchools during the 2020-2021 school year. Further, **over 4,000 teachers, staff, and volunteers participated** in a **waste-free meeting** in 2020-2021.



**SDG 12**  
RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION AND  
PRODUCTION

**Global Target: 12.5**

By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

**KPI:**

**National recycling rate, tons of material recycled.**



**168,000+**



**kg of waste**

from schools participating in the EcoSchools program **was diverted from landfill** in 2020-2021.



## EcoSchools Connections

**Reduce, reuse, and recycle** is at the core of many actions in the ECA. EcoSchools Canada provides guidelines and resources in addition to a systems level approach to providing the level of support required to conduct waste audit activities. We work closely with board and district liaisons who are working with schools to complete their waste audits, and we provide a wide range of related professional development resources such as webinars, workshops and conference streams around waste practices within schools.

### Reduce



**Waste-free Lunch**



**Waste-free Meeting and Events**



**The Great Gulp**



**Reduce Your Food Waste**



**Reduce Harmful Single-use Plastics**

The EcoSchools Canada program features actions with a focus on awareness and overall waste reduction before students and staff enter the school building. **Waste-free Meetings and Events** is a broadly scoped action that incentivizes students, parents, and staff to make their events waste-free. Events can range from graduation, to parent council meetings, to PD days. This action is a great example of waste reduction from a school policy perspective.



### Reuse



**Vermicomposting and School-based Composting**



**Repurposing and Innovative Recycling**



**GOOS Paper**



**Divert Textile Waste**

The EcoSchools Canada program hosts actions that challenge schools to redirect waste toward a more sustainable lifecycle before it enters a waste stream. A very popular long standing EcoSchools action is **GOOS (good on one side) Paper**, where students are tasked with designing special bins for **GOOS Paper** in their school's rooms. **GOOS Paper** bins encourage staff and students to use both sides of their paper before it is recycled, limiting the need for new paper and decreasing the amount of recycling being processed.

### Recycle



**Sort Your Waste**



**Conduct a Waste Audit**

Finally, the EcoSchools Canada program supports proper waste management within school waste streams. **Sort Your Waste** and **Conduct a Waste Audit** involve in-person auditing and use hard metrics to uncover the result of all the waste-related actions undertaken at schools. **Sort Your Waste** challenges schools to improve the contamination rates of their waste, recycling, and organic waste streams. **Conduct a Waste Audit** generates annual statistics on waste, recycling, and organic waste generation, and the overall diversion rate of the school based on at least one 24-hour waste audit. Similar to **School Water Footprint** and **School Energy footprint**, **Conduct a Waste Audit** data is used to inform schools' Impact Pages, and contributes to the National Impact Page. [See here](#) to learn more about how EcoSchools Canada is tracking its core sustainability metrics.





## SDG 13 CLIMATE ACTION

### Global Target: 13.2

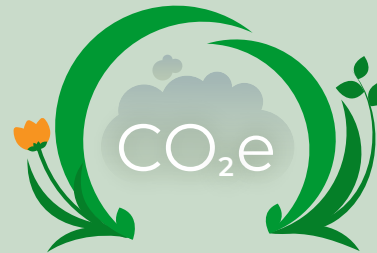
Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.

### KPI:

**Total greenhouse gas emissions per year.**

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**1,000+ tons of**



**was sequestered**

from school ground greening activities that were started or continued in the 2020-2021 school year.



## EcoSchools Connections

As a national environmental education program for kindergarten to grade 12 in Canada, EcoSchools Canada provides a cohesive framework for schools to decrease their greenhouse gas emissions. EcoSchools Canada offers a host of environmentally-focused actions, including awareness campaigns and pledges, school and classroom-level initiatives, and quantitative greenhouse gas monitoring. For more information on how the EcoSchools Canada program connects to GHGs, [see here](#).



## Awareness Campaigns and Pledges



**Eco Code**



**Meatless Mondays**



**WWF Earth Hour**



**WWF National Sweater Day**

**Meatless Monday** is a pledge-focused action that raises awareness about how food choices impact personal health, land and water resources, and climate change. It is an example of an action that is a great starting point for schools to have conversations about their ecological footprint, which can potentially branch into broader campaigns and higher level action.

## School and Classroom-level Initiatives



**Active and Sustainable School Travel**



**Heating and Cooling**



**Indoor Gardening and Greenhouses**



**Low-mow Zone**



**Phantom Power**



**Switch Off Lights and Devices**

**Low-mow Zone** is an action that challenges schools to assess their school's outdoor land use, and identify areas that can be allowed to grow wild. This action provides habitat for wildlife and pollinator species, stabilizes soil, and decreases the amount of materials needed for traditional lawn care. It is a great example of an action that contributes to multi-level learning and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



## Quantitative Sustainability Monitoring



**Anti-idling**



**Conduct a Waste Audit**



**Grow a Food Garden**



**Pollinator Garden**



**School Energy Footprint**



**Track School Transportation Emissions**



**Tree Planting and Maintenance**

All the actions above include data points which can be converted to carbon equivalents through our collaboration with [Arc Skoru](#) or the use of an empirical conversion factor. [See here](#) for our comprehensive guide to how EcoSchools actions connect to Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

**Anti-idling** is a survey-based action focused on cars idling in school parking lots. Schools are tasked to baseline the number, type, and idle time of vehicles in a parking lot in their Anti-idling Tracking Sheet. Then, after an anti-idling school campaign, they tally vehicles in their parking lot again. The net difference and conversion is calculated in the Tracking Sheet, where schools will be able to see the carbon offset they would create if this change was consistent for an entire school year.



**Members of the EcoSchools Canada Youth Advisory Committee (grade 10 to 12 students) identified Affordable and Clean Energy, Gender Equality, Sustainable Cities and Communities, and Climate Action as the most important Sustainable Development Goals to them.**



### SDG 4 QUALITY EDUCATION

### Global Target: 4.7

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.



### SDG 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

### Global Target: 12.8

By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.



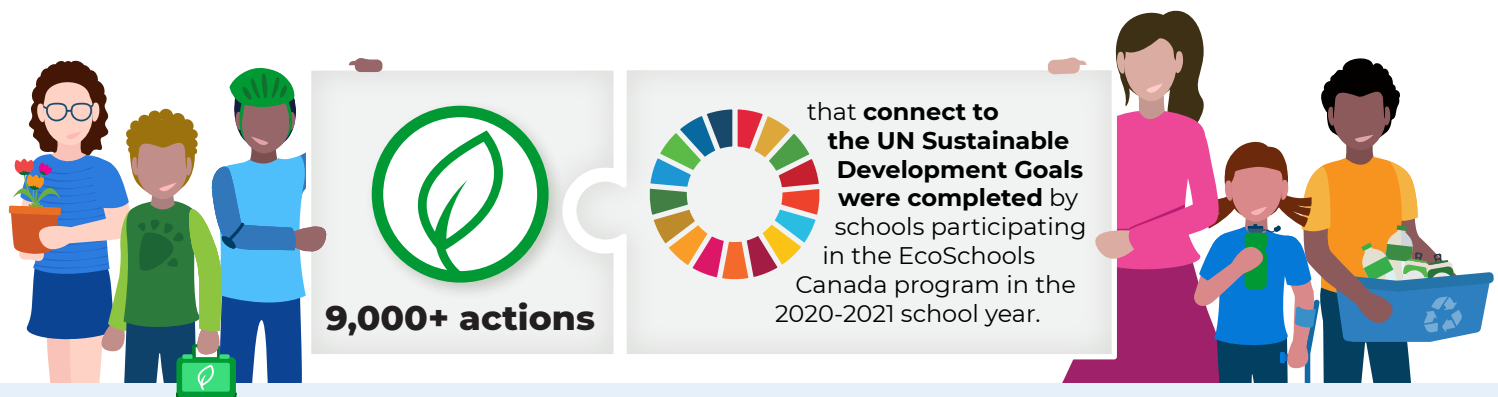
### SDG 13 CLIMATE ACTION

### Global Target: 13.3

Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

## KPI:

Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education, and (d) student assessment.



**It is time for Canada to start focusing on what the youth [are] demanding... It is important that Canada achieves these targets for the future generations.”**

- Grade 12 Student, YCDSB



## ○ EcoSchools Connections

The EcoSchools Canada program is a comprehensive framework for environmental education. As this report has shown, EcoSchools' programming directly supports sustainable development education in Canadian schools. The program has a national scope and the number of public and private schools joining our network across Canada is continuously expanding. All EcoSchools actions are connected directly to the Canadian educational curriculum, and the **Professional Development** action promotes teacher education within an environmental education framework as well. The program also provides high-level monitoring of national sustainable development

education progress as a certification platform and environmental education data source. At the end of each school year, certification levels are awarded based on schools' completion of Sustainable Development Goal-related actions, and the EcoSchools Certification Application (ECA) gathers data on participation and various sustainability metrics across all actions. The EcoSchools Canada program is well positioned to track and improve greater sustainable development education for 2030. Presently, there is a major reporting gap for this KPI in the Canadian Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals.



**I think it's extremely important because there will be absolutely no future for me or generations to come... if Canada doesn't achieve its Sustainable Development Targets."**

*- Grade 11 Student, SCDSB*

# Emerging Connections to the Sustainable Development Targets

There are six Canadian Sustainable Development Goal targets that EcoSchools Canada has emerging contributions within: Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Life Below Water, and Life on Land. Below is an outline of each SDG, their applicable target and KPI from the Government of Canada's [Sustainable Development Goals Data Hub](#), at least one specific example of how the EcoSchools Canada program contributes to its achievement, and a consideration of the EcoSchools program in it's alignment with the goal when looking to future growth areas.





## SDG 2 ZERO HUNGER

### Global Target: 2.3

By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

### KPI:

**Volume of production per labour unit by classes of farming/pastoral/forestry enterprise size - small-scale food producers.**



**Get Cooking**



**Grow a Food Garden**



**Meatless Mondays**



**Pollinator Garden**



**Reduce Your Food Waste**

**Grow a Food Garden** is an action that gets students involved with small-scale food production by taking a hands-on approach to the design, planting, maintenance, and harvesting of foods on their school grounds. It is a great opportunity for students to get involved with local food production, and spark ideas for further involvement. **Grow a Food Garden** and the actions listed above are great starting points for discussion and action on sustain-

able food production and food sovereignty. However, the EcoSchools Canada program is best positioned to contribute to this Sustainable Development Goal from an environmental education perspective, rather than major food production, which is the core of this target and KPI. Thus, this Goal is unlikely to become a target area for further development moving forward.





## SDG 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

### Global Target: 3.9

By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.

#### KPI:

Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution.



#### Environmental Health



#### Take Me Outside Day

The EcoSchools Canada program has an **Environmental Health** action that encourages schools to learn about air quality, chemical safety, extreme heat, and radon. If schools select air quality, the resources provided focus on

the Indoor Air Quality Health Index (AQHI), strategies for avoiding poor air quality individually, and how to improve air quality in indoor classroom spaces. This is an area that the EcoSchools program is furthering connections to in collaboration with [Health Canada](#), with further development of action cards and resources related to air quality. However, this area of focus will provide education and resources on how to reduce exposure, which does not directly support, track, or measure a net decrease in air pollution.



**I want my country and its leaders to care for my future, and the future of my family, peers, and all others living in Canada.”**

*- Grade 11 Student, SCDSB*





## SDG 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

### Global Target: 11.2

By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

### KPI:

**Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities.**



### Active and Sustainable School Travel



### Track School Transportation Emissions

The EcoSchools Canada program promotes environmentally friendly travel to and from schools. **Active and Sustainable School Travel** is an event and pledge-oriented action that tracks the types of sustainable transportation used for a transportation event. The action tracks which mode of transport was used (walking, biking, wheeling, public transit, or carpooling), the number of times the event was held, and the number of sustainable travel pledges written by students, staff, and their families. It is a great starting point for conversations and/or school policy changes around sustainable transit. Bridging from this

action is the **Track School Transportation Emissions** action, which connects different travel options to greenhouse gas emissions. In this action, schools complete travel surveys to count the number of students per travel option (walking, biking or wheeling, school bus, city bus, subway, streetcar, car (solo), carpool, motorcycle, or electric vehicle) and overall average distance travelled for each. Data from this action is used to inform schools' Impact Pages, and contribute to the National Impact Page. [See here](#) to learn more about how EcoSchools Canada is tracking core sustainability metrics. Promoting the access to and use of sustainable transit options, of which public transit is a part of, is a major component of these actions. This Sustainable Development Goal target is considered as an area of future growth for EcoSchools Canada, with the potential to collect data on accessibility of public transit options in school communities.



## SDG 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

### Global Target: 12.3

By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.

#### KPI:

(a) Food loss index and (b) food waste index.



#### Get Cooking



#### Reduce Your Food Waste

The **Reduce Your Food Waste** action contributes directly to this Sustainable Development target. It is an awareness and pledge-focused action for students, staff, and families to reduce avoidable food waste. There is potential for the expansion of this topic within the EcoSchools Certification Application ECA, because there is already a large amount of pre-existing waste-related ECA actions. However, it would involve collecting additional data specifically pertaining to food waste for monitoring and quantitative reporting to be expanded further.

Because of EcoSchools Canada's pre-existing commitment to waste management, this Sustainable Development Goal target is also considered as an area of potential growth.





## SDG 14 LIFE BELOW WATER

### Global Target: 14.1

By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.

#### KPI:

(a) Index of coastal eutrophication; and (b) plastic debris density.



### EcoSchools Connection

The EcoSchools Canada program has a number of actions that contribute to removing plastic from the natural environment, as well as the improper waste streams.

#### Awareness Campaigns and Pledges



**The Great Gulp**



**Reduce Harmful Single-use Plastics**



**Repurposing and Innovative Recycling**



**Waste-free Meeting and Events**

**The Great Gulp** is a plastic-related water awareness activity that is very popular in schools. Students are tasked with taking a synchronized gulp of tap water in a reusable water bottle to raise awareness about the importance of drinking water, reducing single-use plastics, and access to safe

drinking water in Canada. It is a great example of how awareness campaigns can impact school policies - many EcoSchools report plastic water bottle bans and the installation of water bottle filling stations when they submit **the Great Gulp** action card for assessment.





## Quantitative Plastics Monitoring



### Conduct a Waste Audit



### Sort your waste

The **Conduct a Waste Audit** and **Sort Your Waste** actions include monitoring plastic waste. Although these actions effectively track waste diversion and contamination, they do not explicitly monitor plastic debris density, as this Sustainable Development target specifies. Although participation in such actions help to reduce the amount of plastic pollution that ends up in waterways and oceans, we do not currently track plastic debris density in such a way that these actions directly contribute to this specific metric.



## School and Classroom-level Initiatives



### Community Clean-up



### Divert Textile Waste



### Recycle Personal Electronic Waste



### Waste-free Lunch

**Community Clean-up** is an action that targets waste in natural areas. It challenges students to remove waste from the outdoor environment, while keeping plastics and waste separate. **Community Clean-up** is a great example of an action that expands beyond the classroom. Many schools conduct their clean-ups at nearby parks and waterways.





## SDG 15 LIFE ON LAND

### Global Target: 15.5

Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.

#### KPI:

Canadian Species Index.



### EcoSchools Connections

The EcoSchools Certification Application (ECA) hosts a wide range of actions that contribute to increasing biodiversity and the survival of native terrestrial species.

#### Awareness Campaigns



**Connect with Nearby Nature**



**Support Canadian Species at Risk**

**Support Canadian Species at Risk** is an awareness-based action monitored with in-class learning. It is unique in its reporting style, requiring schools to determine the number of students in their class or school who can answer three Canadian Species at Risk-related questions correctly. This action stresses the connection between experiential learning, and the results it can have in a traditional classroom setting.



## School and Classroom-level Initiatives

-  **Community Science**
-  **Create Homes for Wildlife**
-  **Community Clean-up**
-  **Grow a Food Garden**
-  **Indoor Gardening and Greenhouses**
-  **Low-Mow Zone**
-  **Pollinator Garden**
-  **Tree Planting and Maintenance**
-  **Vermicomposting and School-based Composting**

The EcoSchools Canada program has a number of actions that contribute to biodiversity and the survivability of Canadian species. **Create Homes for Wildlife** is an action that has students create wildlife homes and support structures for native wildlife populations. It is a great action for students to experience how their actions impact the natural environment in real time. Although the EcoSchools Certification Application ECA features actions that can make strong contributions to improving the status of species within the Canadian Species Index, EcoSchools does not feature programming that explicitly monitors and/or reports on progress with reference to the Index. Therefore, this Sustainable Development Goal is considered a connection with growth potential. Reframing some programming to embed the Canadian Species Index into actions would allow for this to become a strong connection in the future.





# Further Sustainable Development Targets

There are seven other Sustainable Development Goals that the EcoSchools Canada program does not explicitly connect to when referencing Canada's specific global targets and KPIs. However, the EcoSchools Canada program still has anecdotal or indirect contributions to these Sustainable Development Goals. Below is a brief overview of each.



## Overall Goal:

**End poverty in all its forms everywhere.**

This goal is outside of the mission of EcoSchools Canada, although as a national program we are working to ensure equitable access to program resources and support.



## Overall Goal:

**Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.**

Gender Equality was consistently included as one of the most important goals to our EcoSchools Youth Advisory Committee. The EcoSchools program contributes to this goal by indirectly supporting gender inclusivity; we know anecdotally that the majority of program participants identify as women, but so far we do not have any specific programming, resources, data or statistics directly related to furthering this goal. Given that there appears to be a natural alignment of the EcoSchools program towards furthering gender equality, this would be a good area for further review and development.



## Overall Goal:

**Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.**

EcoSchools Canada indirectly supports this Sustainable Development Goal by providing a program for teachers and students designed to build skill sets within the goal's key themes of creativity and innovation, resource efficiency, and economic productivity through diversification.



## Overall Goal:

**Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.**

As discussed previously, many actions within the EcoSchools Canada program have a focus on the efficient use of building resources such as electricity, fuel, and water. Although these actions don't explicitly call for infrastructural changes within schools, they can serve as the start of a conversation on improving school buildings through retrofits, sustainable design, and the use of environmentally-friendly energy sources.



**SDG 10**  
REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES

### Overall Goal:

**Reduce inequality within and among countries.**

The EcoSchools Canada program is actively working towards ensuring that the program is informed by, and reflects diverse perspectives and brings value to diverse communities, especially Indigenous knowledge. This is outlined in, and is a key focus area of, our [Strategic Plan](#). In the annual EcoSchools school survey for the 2020-2021 school year, respondents reported that 55% of EcoTeams had representation from at least two of the following equity-seeking groups: racialized people, people with different abilities, Indigenous peoples, women or girls, and/or the LGBTQ2S\* community.



**SDG 16**  
PEACE, JUSTICE AND  
STRONG INSTITUTIONS

### Overall Goal:

**Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.**

EcoSchools Canada hopes to encourage furthering this goal by creating opportunities for school communities to work together towards shared goals. Referencing the annual EcoSchools school survey for the 2020-2021 school year, 81% of respondents said that participating in the program benefited their professional development, 76% would recommend the program to a colleague, and 92% were intent on certifying with the program again in the 2021-2022 school year. These statistics are consistent with the fact that since the EcoSchools program began in 2005, over 40% of EcoSchools have been certified for 10 or more years.



**SDG 17**  
PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS

### Overall Goal:

**Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.**

The EcoSchools Canada program is a shared educational platform connected to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Through this framework, we work closely with regional partners and over 100 boards and school districts across Canada; strengthening narratives around the importance of sustainable development and facilitating the types of partnerships needed for national success.

In addition, EcoSchools Canada is the Canadian National Operator of the international EcoSchools program, overseen by the [Foundation for Environmental Education \(FEE\)](#). As a member of FEE, EcoSchools Canada is part of a community of 67 other national EcoSchools programs around the globe. EcoSchools Canada is working alongside other international EcoSchools programs, to share resources and create opportunities to expand our framework worldwide.



# Conclusions and Next Steps

EcoSchools Canada, through the use of its environmental education certification platform, is positioned to meaningfully support Canada's contribution to the global Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. It also presents a unique opportunity to extend reporting on sustainable development education policy, curricula, teacher education, and student assessment throughout Canada.

This is the first of a series of regular reports on EcoSchools' progress connecting to Canada's contribution to the global Sustainable Development Goals. In future, these reports will revisit connections through the lens of EcoSchools Canada's programming and school participation in Sustainable Development Goal-supporting ECA actions. As the EcoSchools Canada program expands nationally, the ECA dataset will continue to grow. With increasing SDG-connected education data, the EcoSchools Canada team will be able to report on Sustainable Development education with greater detail. Examples of next steps include regional analyses, KPI-specific progress reports, and comparisons with the Canadian government's progress on its 2030 targets.



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