

# Connecting to the Sustainable Development Goals with EcoSchools Canada

SDG Progress Report 2022



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## Introduction

EcoSchools Canada is a national, registered charity whose mission is to nurture environmental leaders, reduce the ecological impact of schools, and build sustainable school communities. The EcoSchools program leverages our custom-built EcoSchools Certification Application (ECA), where schools can access a multitude of environmental education resources, track their progress year-over-year and earn a globally recognized 'EcoSchools Certification' for their school ranging from Bronze to Platinum. During the 2021-22 school year, over 1,400 schools representing 9 provinces and territories registered and created an action plan in the ECA. Through the ECA, we were able to quantify schools' actions into statistics and visuals to showcase participation and multi-level sustainability values.

This progress report provides an update on the contribution of the EcoSchools Canada program to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report includes key statistics and identified success stories from schools from coast to coast to coast during the 2021-22 school year. To learn more about how EcoSchools Canada is contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals please see our initial report, [Furthering Sustainable Development Goals with EcoSchools Canada](#).



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### About the UN SDGs

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) are a set of 17 distinctive, interconnected goals that serve as "the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all" (United Nations, 2021). The SDGs were implemented in 2015 with the intent of being completed by 2030. In this global endeavour, every nation is called upon to participate.



## 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

During the 2021-22 academic year, schools across the country were involved with ensuring sustainable water management by monitoring water usage at their school and learning how to better conserve it.



# 10,300+ students

**tracked their monthly water usage at school via the School Water Footprint action.**  
*That's over 4,000 more students than last year!*

## 559 schools

participated in actions related to water conservation.<sup>1</sup>

## 7,600+ students

strategized how to effectively reduce water consumption via the School Water Audit action.

## 88 water audits

were completed this year.

<sup>1</sup> Number of schools that completed at least one of the following actions: School Water Footprint, School Water Audit, and/or The Great Gulp.

## Connecting with SDG 6



### Deer Island Community School (ASD-S) - School Water Audit

"Students look[ed] at how we use water in our school and how to better manage the use of water. All of our water fountains have been replaced in the building with water bottle filling stations. This has caused a major change in behavior for our students and staff, [they] now bring water bottles and it has led to our students looking at other ways we can save water in our building."



### St Patrick C Elem S (NF) (NCDSB) - School Water Audit

"The Grade 6/7 class took a strong focus on conserving water in [their] daily lives and in advocating for First Nations reserves in Canada to have access to clean drinking water. They took it upon themselves to not waste water at the hydration station, to use reusable water bottles, and to find ways to conserve water in their home and in their school."





## 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Students worked together to track their energy usage, promote energy conservation techniques, ensure unused devices were unplugged, and improve their school's energy efficiency throughout the 2021-22 school year.



**8,300+** classrooms

had their energy efficiency optimized through participation in the **Switch Off Lights and Devices, Phantom Power, and Heating and Cooling** actions in the **2021-2022 school year**. *That's over 5,000 more classrooms than last year!*

**363**  
schools

schools reported having motion-sensor lighting in their classrooms.

**220,300+**  
students

students participated in WWF Earth Hour to raise awareness and propel further energy-related action.

## Connecting with SDG 7



### Walden International School (Independent - ON) - Earth Hour

"[T]his year, we decided to do Earth Hour(s) for a whole month. Students ate their lunch with the lights off. We also tried teaching for the whole day with the lights off. We are fortunate to have large classroom windows that let a lot of natural light in. On cloudy days, we had to turn the lights on if the classes got too dark. This not only saves energy but it also helps the school's bottom line as it saves money."



### St Mary's Sep S (CDSBEO) - WWF Earth Hour

"Several classrooms looked at energy consumption and clean energy. As a class, we created posters about clean energy sources as well as created posters for the school and provided tips about little changes that we can make every-day to reduce our energy consumption."



# 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Students all over Canada took on the role of active community members during the 2021–22 academic year by learning about the natural world around them, managing their school's waste, measuring air quality, and participating in discussions and planning events to make their neighbourhood a better place.



**48,300+** waste-free lunches

**were packed and brought to schools this year.**  
*That's over 18,000 more lunches than last year!*

**15,300+**  
students

and staff members pledged to use bus transportation, walking, cycling, and other sustainable modes of transportation to get to school during the 2021–2022 school year.

**86**  
schools

learned how to use the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI).

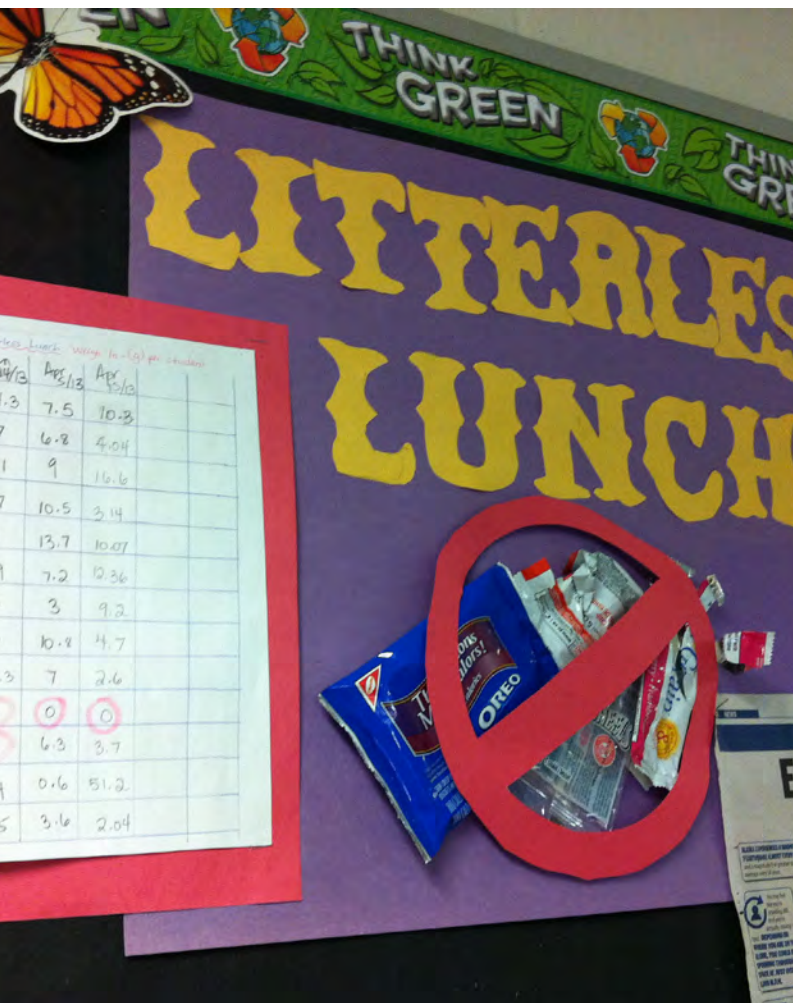


## Connecting with SDG 11



### St Joseph C Elem S (G) (NCDSB) - Waste-free Lunches

"Our EcoTeam leaders collect the number of waste-free lunches in their classes each Wednesday. Percentages per class are calculated and the class with the highest percentage of waste-free lunches wins the 'Golden Lunch Box'. The winners are announced each Thursday and the winning class displays the lunchbox on their classroom door until the following week. Honorable mentions are given to classes that have shown an improvement or are close to winning the award."



### Centre Wellington DHS (UGDSB) - Active and Sustainable School Travel

"We live in a rural community where it is difficult for students to get to school without driving. We outlined safe bike to school routes and spoke about the benefits to ourselves and the environment by choosing to bike to school."

# 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Waste management has always been an integral part of the EcoSchools Canada program, as individuals can make a big difference with their personal decisions every day. From conducting waste audits to community clean-ups, schools across the country were working towards establishing successful waste management practices.



**8,300+** kg of waste

**(recycling + organics) was diverted from landfill.**

*That's over 200,000 more kilograms of waste than last year!*

**647**  
composting /  
vermicomposting

systems were utilized and maintained in schools.

**173**  
schools

held a textile/clothing drive during the 2021-22 school year to help divert textile waste.

## Connecting with SDG 12



### Hampton High School (ASD-S) Vermicomposting and School-Based Composting

"Composting is an important way to reduce the amount of waste that goes to our landfills and when we compost, we create fertile soil from food wastes and that is used to help plants grow in our greenhouse and in our garden. This has a HUGE environmental impact!"



### Kâpapâmachakwêw-Wandering Spirit School (TDSB) - Divert Textile Waste

"Students and families participated in a clothing drive/swap for our Outdoor Education program's clothing library. Our primary focus for the library was to create a collection of used outdoor clothing in an array of sizes for students to use. The clothing library allows students to borrow gear for the season and then return it to be washed and stored for someone the following year. With how quickly students grow, the library is an excellent way for families to give back to their school community while decreasing their environmental impact."

#### Learn more!

To learn more about how to achieve waste diversion and reduction goals at schools, please check out our [Best Practices for Waste Management: A guide for school communities in Canada](#).





# 13 CLIMATE ACTION

Building sustainable school communities is at the heart of the EcoSchools Canada program. This year, student leaders across the country participated in climate action to help reduce the environmental impact of their schools. By taking on a suite of environmentally-focused actions, schools hosted awareness campaigns and pledges, conducted school and class-level initiatives, and took steps towards quantitative monitoring of greenhouse gasses.



**1,200+** tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e

**was sequestered from school ground greening activities that were started or continued in the 2021-22 school year.**

**17,700+**  
meatless meal  
pledges

were made by students and their families this year.

**159**  
schools

wrote an EcoCode in the 2021-22 school year.

## Connecting with SDG 13



### Pte. Buckam Singh Public School (PDSB) - Tree Planting and Maintenance at School

"Students learned about native species including the trees planted. They talked about what species the trees will attract to our school. Students also learned about the importance of planting trees. We are a new school and students learned about replenishing the land that we used to build our school since some plants had to be removed. Students also learned about how trees help with air pollution and how having more trees helps to keep our air cleaner, healthier, and contributes to a better climate."



### St Alfred C Elem S (NCDSB) - Grow a Food Garden

"We discussed not wasting food. Freeze this fresh produce and leftovers if you don't have the chance to eat them before they go bad. We looked at the benefits of consuming less meat and trying to eat vegetarian food one day a week. We looked at how the meat production industry has a huge impact on the environment."