



COWICHAN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

CLIMATE ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2025-2030



CLIMATE ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that this work is taking place on the lands of the Hul'q'umi'num' speaking people. The Board of Education is honoured to be able to collaboratively walk beside the Quw'utsun, Malahat, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, and Lyackson Peoples who have cared for this land for thousands of years.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	pg 3. Message from the Committee Chair pg 3. Message from the Board Chair
Summary of District Climate Action Initiatives	pg 4. Building on District Climate Mitigation Measures pg 5. Climate Action Passion Projects
Climate Action Plan	pg 7. Environmental Stewardship pg 8. Honouring Indigenous Teachings pg 9. Creating Sustainable Learning Environments pg 10. Education and Advocacy
Summary	pg 11. Moving Forward Together



INTRODUCTION

Message from the Committee Chair

The Cowichan Valley School District's Climate Action Plan 2025-2030 reflects years of dedicated work by the Climate Action Advisory Committee and staff. This effort began with the Board of Education's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2020 and has evolved into a comprehensive approach that emphasizes adaption to climate changes.

While initial measures focused on emissions reductions and cost savings, the Committee recognized the need for broader adaptation strategies within the District's public education and child care mandate. In 2024, the [Climate Action Framework](#) laid the foundation for this Plan, shaping efforts from 2023-24 onward and supporting school-based Climate Action Passion Projects.

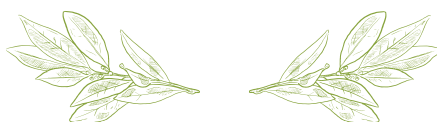
Looking ahead to 2025-2030, the Plan focuses on adaptation measures and partnerships while empowering students to take leadership roles in climate action within their schools. Gratitude is extended to all who have contributed to this collective effort, ensuring the Plan benefits current and future generations of the xe'xe'smun'eem on these Indigenous ancestral lands.

Eduardo Sousa, Trustee

Message from the Board Chair

On behalf of the Board of Education, we thank the Climate Action Committee for its dedication and work as we all look to ensure a vibrant future for all. The Board wanted to see a plan that was non-political and filled with action that would be understood by all. Our Climate Action Plan aligns with our Strategic Plan goals and is a key part of our District's work going forward.

Cathy Schmidt, Board Chair



CLIMATE ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF DISTRICT CLIMATE ACTION INITIATIVES

BUILDING ON DISTRICT CLIMATE ACTION INITIATIVES

The Cowichan School District has been reducing our environmental footprint for many years by moving to efficient heating systems, transportation routing and reducing water use. In addition to infrastructure, there have also been educational initiatives to encourage students and staff to change behaviours to be mindful of energy and water use.

Some examples of reducing emissions through mitigation:

- LED Lighting replacing older systems
- Electric bus purchase
- Motion detected lighting and water
- Energy efficient window and door installation
- Managed irrigation, heating and ventilation systems

School based educational initiatives have been designed with student and staff feedback to create greener spaces for learning, while reducing the environmental impacts of daily life. Recycling programs, drought resistant gardens, food security, forest education and managing resources with Indigenous world views are some examples of school based initiatives.



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CLIMATE ACTION PASSION PROJECTS

2023-24 School Based Initiatives ~ \$19,600 total

- Alex Aitken - \$1,500 - drought-resistant landscaping
- Alexander - \$ 1,500 - greenhouse project
- Bench - \$1,000 - water conservation
- Chemainus Elem - \$1,500 - landscaping with native vegetation
- Chemainus Sec - \$1,500 - fruit trees with drip irrigation
- Crofton - \$1,500 - erosion and drought-resistant landscaping
- Discovery - \$1,400 - stewards of the land program
- École Cobble Hill - \$1,000 - composting program
- George Bonner - \$1,200 - composting program and hydroponics
- Khowhemun - \$ 1,500 - Elder Forest trees and signage
- Lake Cowichan - \$1,500 - drought -esistant trees and flowers
- Maple Bay - \$1,500 - compost and recycling programs
- Palsson - \$1,500 - making Friendship Forest fire safe
- Quw'utsun - \$1,500 - composting program



2024-25 School Based Initiatives ~ \$20,000 total

- Alex Aitken - \$1,500 - continuation of landscaping project
- Alexander - \$1,300 - seed trays and tables for greenhouse
- Bench - \$1,300 - paper stewardship and reusing initiative
- Chemainus Elem - \$1,500 - create a wildflower garden on site
- Discovery - \$1,500 - planting native species plants on site
- École Mount Prevost - \$1,500 - Elder Forest with drip irrigation
- Frances Kelsey - \$1,500 - replacing landscaping with native plants
- George Bonner - \$1,500 - soft plastics recycling
- Khowhemun - \$1,500 - continuing Elder Forest project
- Lake Cowichan - \$1,500 - greenhouse project
- Mill Bay - \$600 - composting bins
- Palsson - \$1,000 - continuing Elder Forest project
- Tansor - \$1,200 - recycling program
- Quw'utsun - \$ 1,300 - tools for volunteer landscaping

CLIMATE ACTIONS



ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Who is Involved	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• using fewer non-recycled items• conserving energy• increasing our use of sustainable energy sources• composting• promoting green transportation options• water catchment and water literacy (where water comes from, where it goes, the need to conserve it, and watershed awareness)• sustainable food systems• further embedding environmental education into our schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• encourage and increase hikes/nature walks/ outdoor classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ongoing - monitor quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• classroom teachers, PVP	<p>Environmental Education & Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on awareness campaigns, individual actions, and programming that supports environmental preservation. <p>Hands-On Environmental Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experimental, action-oriented learning opportunities (e.g., planting trees, school gardens, school composting systems, rain barrels, and water recycling/filtration). <p>Energy Efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further implement energy efficiency systems such as solar panels, upgraded heating/air sources, automatic lighting systems. <p>Transportation & Emissions Reduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce transportation emissions. <p>Community Engagement & Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foster connections with community partners to stay informed about local environmental initiatives.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• encourage school gardens with active student involvement connected to curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PVP, Operations, Facilities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increase bus availability/ reliability and promote public transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ongoing - monitor progress - first check in - December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transportation Department, Operations Director	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increase composting and recycling programs in every building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin immediately - start September 2025 with composting program in each school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operations (custodial), Municipalities, City of Duncan	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• promote green transportation options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ongoing - monitor effectiveness annually (create measurement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transportation Manager, Operations Director	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• explore solar power options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• report to Board August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operations/Facilities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Outdoor Environment” class (BAA?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• course to begin September 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District Learning Team	

HONOURING INDIGENOUS TEACHINGS

Objective	Actions	Who is Involved	Timeline	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• in the spirit of reciprocity, uplift the ways Indigenous people have been stewards of the land and still are.• provide professional development for educators to ensure they are equipped to respectfully incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their teaching.• continue to create spaces for Indigenous elders, knowledge keepers, and community members to share their wisdom and stories with students, fostering understanding, respect, and appreciation for Indigenous ways of knowing and being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create district network of teachers with knowledge of traditional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous Education Department (District Coordinator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ongoing - monitor quarterly	<p>Indigenous Climate Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support school climate action groups with Indigenous climate leaders and knowledge holders who share values, traditional knowledge, and environmental stewardship practices.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer regular nature walks with elders in culturally-significant places	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous Education Department (District Coordinator)• school -based staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ongoing - monitor quarterly	<p>Hands-on Learning and Field Trips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organize experiential learning on wild crafting, traditional practices.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a district shared resource of elder stories related to climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous Education Department (District Coordinator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ongoing - monitor quarterly	<p>Elders and Knowledge Keepers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create spaces for elders to share their teachings on environmental respect, sustainable practices, and traditional ecological knowledge.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement Indigenous environmental learning activities into EFP and PHE courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• school-based staff, administrators to monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• check annually, district and school review	<p>Curricular Integration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include more hands-on learning in local ecosystems.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure Indigenous climate knowledge sessions at NID in September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous Education Department, NID planning team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• annually - monitor in September	<p>Cultural Empowerment and Traditional Knowledge:.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on traditional knowledge related to the environment. <p>Professional Development and Learning Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer professional development (Pro-D) and collaborative learning sessions (PLC) focused on Indigenous knowledge and environmental issues.

CREATING SUSTAINABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Objective	Actions	Who is Involved	Timeline	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• implementing further energy-efficient infrastructure upgrades, such as solar panels and efficient lighting, to reduce carbon emissions and promote resilience to climate impacts.• fostering green spaces and outdoor learning areas to connect students with nature and promote environmental stewardship.• partnering on programs such as tree planting, ecosystem restoration, waste reduction programs, composting, community clean up initiatives and sustainable transportation options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore energy savings and water use reduction strategies that will fit into the district infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• all district staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ongoing - monitor quarterly	Sustainable Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritize energy-efficient building updates, which include climate targets based on sustainability.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce waste production throughout the district using existing contracts with Waste Management and behaviour changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• all district staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ongoing - monitor quarterly	Waste Reduction & Composting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement comprehensive waste reduction and education strategies and regular reviews of waste programs to monitor progress.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create partnerships with local farms and food producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• school-based staff, administrators to monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• annually - monitor in September	Food Systems & Local Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote sustainable food systems
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create initiatives that focus on changing behaviours and are manageable for schools; for example, throwing trash into recycling bins, leaving water taps running...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• all district staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ongoing - monitor quarterly	Water Conservation & Recycling <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote water conservation and storage systems that reduce consumption and waste.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure all learning environment initiatives are sustainable and will continue over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• all district staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• check annually, district and school review	Fostering Environmental Stewardship & Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop programs and leadership opportunities that focus on effective sustainability actions through behaviour change.

EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

Objective	Actions	Who is Involved	Timeline	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• implementing robust experiential and real-world learning opportunities• community engagement opportunities to instill ecological literacy• foster a sense of stewardship among students and staff - especially what it means to live in a watershed and which one.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage the creation of student led, staff sponsored School Climate Action groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• school-based staff, administrators to monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• check annually, district and school review	<p>Experiential and Real-World Learning Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate real-world environmental projects into the curriculum that connect students with local ecosystems and environmental challenges (e.g., watershed health, sustainable farming practices). <p>Ecological Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foster partnerships with community organizations and environmental groups to create learning opportunities that connect students with local ecological initiatives. <p>Connection to Local Watersheds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide specific learning about local watershed(s) including water quality, biodiversity, and local ecology, and encourage participation in environmental initiatives, that directly impact the local watershed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily responsibility to reduce waste and natural resources use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• school-based staff, administrators to monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• check annually, district and school review	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land based learning such as local restoration projects and creating educational opportunities encouraging food production	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• school-based staff, administrators to monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• check annually, district and school review	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create smaller scale educational experiences and include watershed groups to share with schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• all district staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• check annually, district and school review	

CLIMATE ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUMMARY AND MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Cowichan Valley School District's Climate Action Plan has been drafted as a means to adapt to the impacts of a rapidly changing climate whose impacts at the regional level and globally change from year to year. It was important to create a set of actions that are by their nature changeable and resilient to meet the climate emergency challenges now before us.

As such the Plan is also intended to be a living document over the next five years and will be monitored, operationalized and adaptively managed by staff with guidance from the Board of Education.

This Plan is for the current and next generations, and in collaboration with other jurisdictions and organizations including the region's First Nations may it provide a sense of optimism and investment for and by students so that they have the urgent ability to be more involved in shaping their future.

