

Exemplary Environmental Leadership/Sustainability Program or Initiative

School Board__Toronto District School Board _____

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Name of Program/Initiative_Partnerships to Plan, Support and Deliver Professional Learning Opportunities in
Environmental Education _____

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

Description of Program/Initiative

A program initiative that has made a positive impact on student learning are the partnerships that TDSB has developed to plan, support and deliver professional learning opportunities in environmental education for TDSB teachers. Starting with a partnership with Evergreen in 2001, a national non-profit organization, the school board has initiated and grown the EcoSchools program, a major component of developing teachers' and students' ecological literacy. To build teacher capacity, a partnership with OISE, University of Toronto enhanced the existing partnership with Evergreen, resulting in a series of environmental education Summer Institutes over 6 years. These partnerships have led, most recently, to the development of new Additional Qualification courses to directly support TDSB teachers in environmental learning. These activities have been significantly subsidized by an innovative funding model, the TDSB Environmental Legacy Fund, which receives revenues from the sale of carbon credits and other green power initiatives, such as the installation of solar panels on school roofs. The success of this initiative has been quantitatively measured by a high degree of engagement in the EcoSchools program, (75% of TDSB schools are certified EcoSchools), as well as a reduction of the environmental footprint of schools through waste minimization, energy conservation and schoolyard greening.

What has been the Impact on Student Learning?

The impact on student learning of this professional development initiative has been substantial, as teachers are able to engage their students in broader and deeper forms of environmental learning. Using an inquiry approach, many teachers are developing students' ability to think critically about environmental issues by integrating ecological literacy across the curriculum; and by facilitating students' learning about our roles as responsible and active citizens. For example, conducting waste and energy audits, establishing walk and bike to school campaigns, growing food gardens, and greening school yards, all demonstrating how students are reducing their ecological footprints, as well as modeling sustainable practices

for their communities.