



North Vancouver School District Sustainability Strategy

August 2017

Introduction

As “the Natural Place to Learn”, the North Vancouver School District (NVSD) is committed to demonstrating leadership and providing the highest standard of education in environmental stewardship through programs, education and facilities that foster greater sustainability.

Acknowledgement

We proudly acknowledge and thank the Coast Salish people, upon whose traditional territory the North Vancouver School District resides. We express our gratitude to the Squamish Nation and Tsleil Waututh Nation and we value the opportunity to learn, live, and share through educational experiences on this traditional territory.

We are grateful to be working with the Squamish Nation and Tsleil Waututh Nation as integral education partners. As the NVSD strives to teach and model environmental stewardship, we can learn from the First Peoples’ holistic knowledge and deep respect for ecosystems and their carrying capacity.

Collaborative Development Process

In 2015, the NVSD engaged a working group through a consultative planning process to develop a Sustainability Strategy that provides coherence, direction, and focus to sustainability-related activities. The Sustainability Strategy Working Group drew on wide-ranging experience with environmental and sustainability initiatives, as well as learning in nature, classrooms, and Cheakamus Centre.

Purpose

This Sustainability Strategy is intended to complement and support the myriad of large and small sustainability initiatives already underway across the NVSD by:

- Formalizing our approach for realizing our goal of providing leadership in environmental education and sustainability practices
- Articulating our sustainability-related aspirations and outlining strategic priority areas with associated goals and actions
- Assisting in communicating our sustainability-related activities to the NVSD community
- Providing a framework for weaving sustainability into existing activities and curriculum



Context

The NVSD Sustainability Policy, 2011-2021 Strategic Plan, 3-Year Operating Plan, Outdoor Learning Spaces Policy, Strategic Energy Management Plan, and the BC Ministry of Education's Sustainability Education Framework provide a policy context that supported the development of this Sustainability Strategy.



Supporting Policies and Plans

NVSD Sustainability Policy

In March 2011, the North Vancouver Board of Education adopted Policy 613: Sustainability. The policy outlines that the Board will, among other actions, develop and maintain a current, school district-wide Sustainability Plan that is progressive, transparent, and measurable.

10-Year Strategic Plan

In September 2011, the North Vancouver Board of Education presented its 10-Year Strategic Plan, in which one high level goal is to "Provide leadership in environmental education and sustainability practice."

Strategy Energy Management Plan

The Strategic Energy Management Plan (SEMP) supports the North Vancouver School District's commitment to energy efficiency and conservation by providing a framework for reducing energy consumption and its associated environmental impact. This SEMP includes a specific energy reduction target and an action plan for achieving the target.

NVSD Outdoor Learning Spaces Policy

In May 2013, the North Vancouver Board of Education adopted Policy 806: Outdoor Learning Spaces. This policy recognizes the benefit of outdoor learning spaces for all forms of students' intellectual development. The policy promotes the development of learning spaces beyond the conventional classroom and school building.

Our Sustainability Vision

We believe a sustainable school district is one where all staff and students value, model and actively contribute to a positive relationship with the Earth.

Realizing our Vision

To realize our vision, we will work collaboratively to:

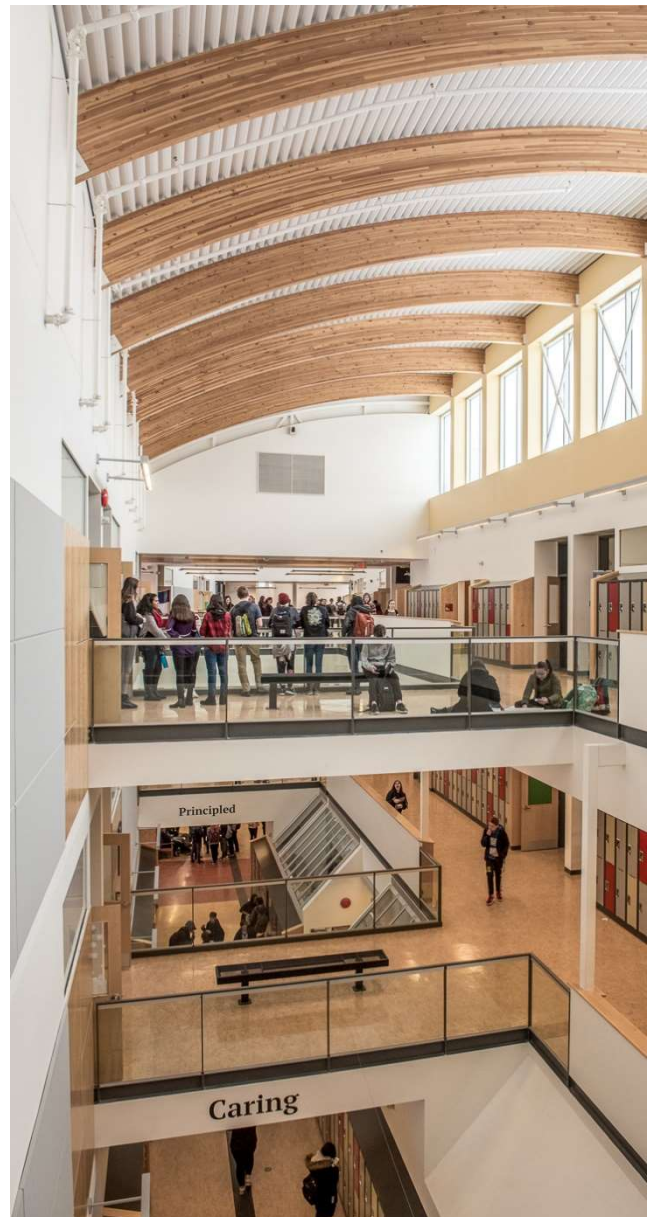
- Foster and celebrate our culture of sustainability
- Design, embrace and implement educational opportunities for learning in, with, about and for nature
- Model environmental stewardship, social responsibility and global citizenship
- Provide leadership, support and resources for sustainability programs and projects

Guiding Principles

The NVSD's values of trust, responsibility, respect and collaboration are supported by our four guiding principles for sustainability.

We believe in:

- Respect for the environment
- Critical thinking and continuous improvement
- Learning that is connected to the community
- Leadership, celebration and recognition



Strategic Approach

We have embraced a district-wide approach to sustainability that includes six strategic priorities within three broad areas of the NVSD community.



Graphic adapted from US Green Building Council Centre for Green Schools Whole-School Sustainability Framework: http://centerforgreenschools.org/sites/default/files/resource-files/Whole-School_Sustainability_Framework.pdf



Process

Strategic priorities, goals, and actions related to the structures that guide how we plan, act, share, and celebrate.

Priority 1: Planning and Decision Making

Strategic Goal	Strategic Actions
Sustainability is integrated into all aspects of the NVSD's planning, decision-making, and daily practices.	1.1 Update NVSD policies, standards, and guidelines to reflect sustainability objectives.
	1.2 Provide dedicated human resources and support to ensure coordination and longevity of sustainability initiatives.

Priority 2: Communications and Engagement

Strategic Goal	Strategic Actions
The NVSD community is aware of its sustainability initiatives and is actively engaged in reducing the environmental impacts of our learning communities.	2.1 Use consistent dialogue to promote networks of learning that reinforce NVSD as "the Natural Place to Learn".
	2.2 Share and celebrate sustainability successes, barriers and best practices across the school district and with the community.
	2.3 Empower, support, and recognize Sustainability Champions (students and staff) across the school district.
	2.4 Organize and support annual district-wide sustainability initiatives and annual events.



Programs

Strategic priorities, goals, and actions related to educational practices and partnerships that support a sustainable school district.

Priority 3: Educational Practices

Strategic Goal	Strategic Actions
<p>The NVSD learning community has a strong connection to place and plays an active leadership role in fostering environmental stewardship and best educational practices for sustainability.</p>	3.1 Provide readily accessible curriculum and resources that support sustainability practices.
	3.2 Provide sustainability training and professional learning opportunities for all NVSD employees.
	3.3 Develop teachers' capacity to implement environmental learning in their daily practice.
	3.4 Enhance and resource outdoor learning programs.
	3.5 Integrate sustainability-related operations, facilities and resource management initiatives in curriculum and classroom practice.

Priority 4: Partnerships

Strategic Goal	Strategic Actions
<p>Mutually beneficial partnerships help NVSD achieve its educational and sustainability goals by sharing knowledge, pooling resources and building upon the efforts of others.</p>	4.1 Develop and strengthen mutually beneficial partnerships to foster the achievement of educational and sustainability goals by building capacity and accessing resources.
	4.2 Raise awareness of partnerships and resources to foster broader participation, collaboration and engagement in sustainability initiatives.



Place

Strategic priorities, goals, and actions related to the natural and built environments that support the NVSD community.

Priority 5: Resource Management

Strategic Goal	Strategic Actions
NVSD works to continually reduce resource consumption, waste production, and harmful emissions.	5.1 Minimize waste and maximize diversion rates across the school district.
	5.2 Effectively manage energy use and minimize greenhouse gas emissions.
	5.3 Minimize transportation-related emissions.
	5.4 Minimize water use.
	5.5 Give preference to products and supplies with low environmental impacts and suppliers who demonstrate socially responsible work practices.

Priority 6: Facilities and Operations

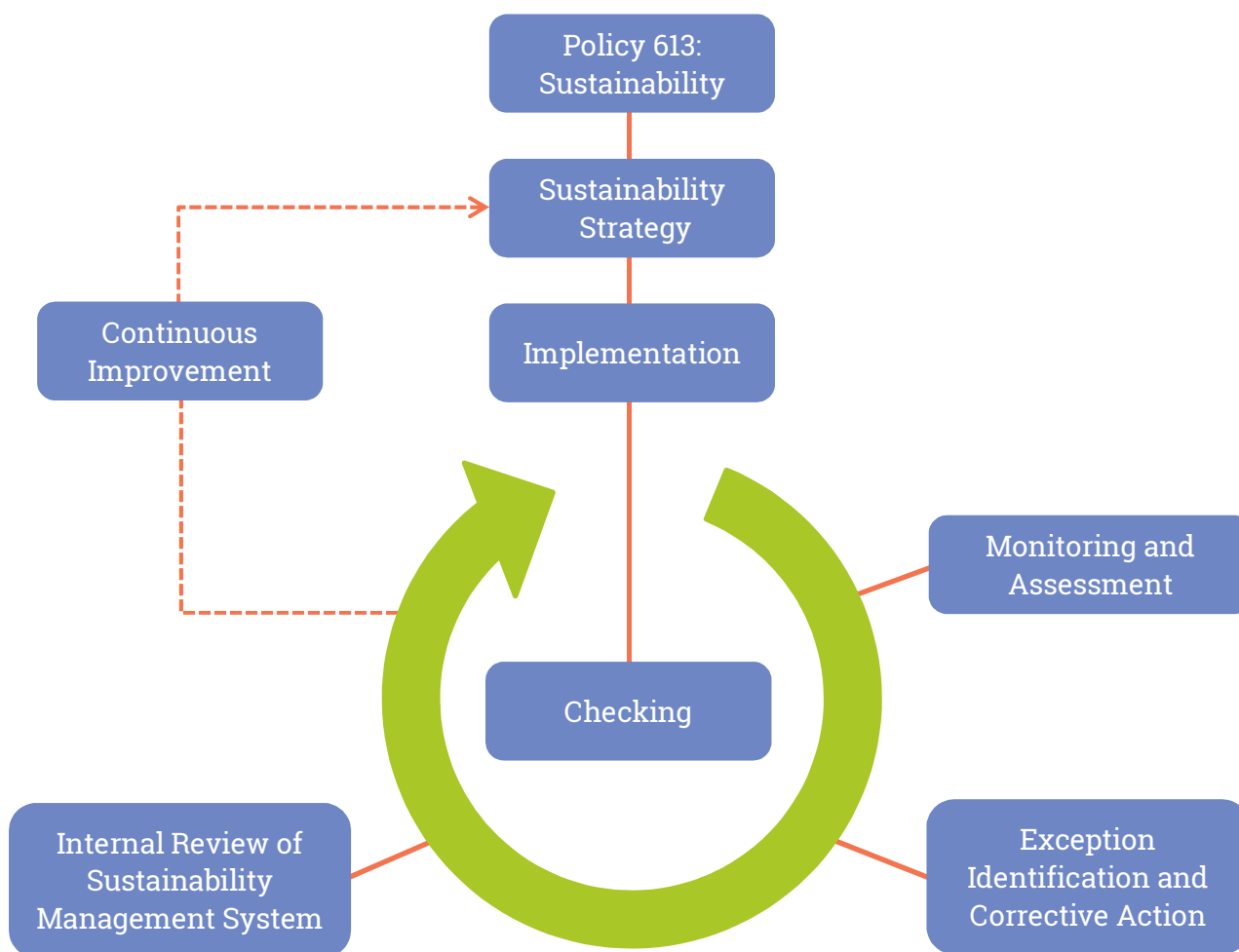
Strategic Goal	Strategic Actions
Buildings, grounds, operations and services are proactively developed and operated in a manner that minimizes our ecological footprint and anticipates changing environmental, social, and economic conditions.	6.1 Design and construct new buildings to high environmental standards.
	6.2 Maintain and enhance buildings and properties to provide healthy, safe, comfortable and energy-efficient learning and work environments.
	6.3 Facilities and Planning collaborates with schools and partners to identify, design and/or enhance flexible and adaptive outdoor classrooms and learning spaces.
	6.4 Develop resilient infrastructure, grounds and practices that are adaptive to changing environmental practices, climatic conditions, and social dynamics.
	6.5 Continue to resource Cheakamus Centre as a centre of excellence for environmental and indigenous education and a leader in sustainability practices.

Implementation Plan

The implementation of this Sustainability Strategy, including the development and articulation of specific goals, metrics, and timelines, will be guided and supported by an ongoing collaborative process.

NVSD Sustainability Management Approach

A biennial work cycle based on the “plan, do, check, act” approach will further define sustainability at the NVSD and ensure that progress is measured and celebrated.



Sustainability management process and graphic adapted from ISO 50001 Energy Management Systems:
https://www.iso.org/files/live/sites/isoorg/files/archive/pdf/en/iso_50001_energy.pdf

Roles and Responsibilities

Manager of Sustainability, Energy, and Environmental Planning (“Sustainability Manager”)

- Maintains Sustainability Strategy and coordinates implementation activities
- Facilitates Implementation Team

Priority Leads

Strategic Priority	Priority Lead
1. Planning and Decision Making	Responsibilities assigned to appropriate Implementation Team member, as required.
2. Communications and Engagement	Nevasha Naidoo Communications Manager
3. Educational Practices	Conor McMullan Director of Educational Programs, Cheakamus Centre
4. Partnerships	Luke Smeaton Manager of Sustainability, Energy, and Environmental Planning
5. Resource Management	Luke Smeaton Manager of Sustainability, Energy, and Environmental Planning
6. Facilities and Operations	Jim MacKenzie Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Planning

- Priority Leads refine priority objectives:
 - Identify concrete objectives and strategies for the year including indicators, targets and timelines
 - Identify responsibilities, resources and budget

Implementation Team

- Comprised of Priority Leads for each Strategic Priority
- Includes representatives from stakeholder/partner groups and additional resource personnel
- Implementation Team reviews progress and identifies priorities for the next year

Preliminary Schedule of Implementation Activities

1. October – Implementation Team Meeting

- Sustainability Manager provides an update on work and progress over the past year
- Priority Leads convene sub-teams to discuss progress and identify priority goals – reset priorities for the next two years, and set objectives to be refined by Priority Leads
- Identify opportunities for cross-priority work (partnerships, communications, etc.)

2. October to February – Refine Objectives

- Priority Leads refine objectives (identify concrete objectives and strategies for the year), including indicators, targets and timelines, responsibilities, resources and budget requirements
- Priority Leads take rough priorities from October meeting, carry out research and make connections with partners

3. February – Implementation Team Meeting

- Shorter meeting to review suggested concrete objectives and plans developed by Priority Leads
- Refine as objectives and plans as necessary
- Confirm recommendations to Senior Executive and the Board of Education

4. March – Presentation to Senior Executive and the Board of Education

- Present priorities objectives to Senior Executive and the Board of Education for confirmation and approval (following the budget timeline)

5. May/June – Official report to the Board of Education

- Report on progress, priorities for next year, etc. (Reflect: how are we doing?)
- Communications: post on website, communicate to stakeholder/partner groups, media, etc.

6. May/June – Green Tea Celebration

- Share progress and plans
- Acknowledge efforts and celebrate successes

7. Summer – Document Progress and Prepare for next Work Cycle

- Sustainability Manager collates work of Priority Leads into a document for review at next Implementation Team Meeting (takes approved priorities and develops new plan)