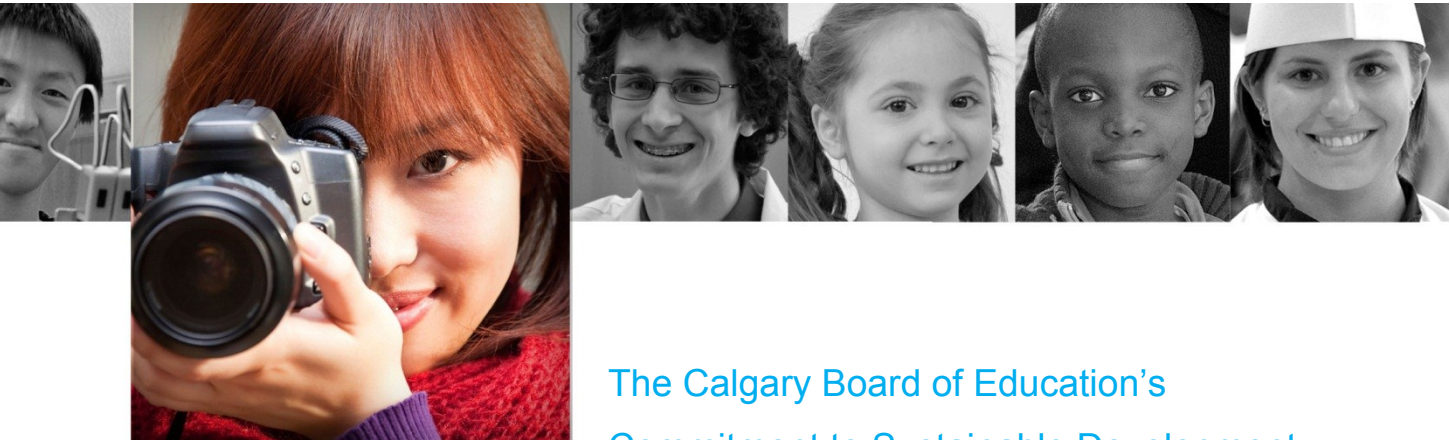


Sustainability Framework



The Calgary Board of Education's
Commitment to Sustainable Development



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Goal	4
Understanding Sustainability.....	5
Sustainability and the CBE.....	6
What the Community Said	7
Guiding Principles	8
Objectives.....	9
2020 Targets	10
The Road Ahead	12

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Executive Summary

The Sustainability Framework is guided by CBE's Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

Educating Tomorrow's Citizens Today

Vision

The Calgary Board of Education is the dynamic learning community of choice

Values

Students come first
Learning is our central purpose
Public Education serves the common good

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) has a considerable legacy of leadership and success in environmental education and energy management on both an individual school level and at a system level.

In May 2007, two documents, the “Framework for Advancing Environmental Stewardship within the Calgary Board of Education” and the “5 Year Implementation Plan” were published and approved by the Board to guide the CBE’s work towards becoming a model of local and global environmental stewardship. For the past 6 years, CBE staff and students have demonstrated significant commitment to this work and we have achieved many of the outcomes and initiatives set out in the Framework and Implementation Plan.

It was time to review, reflect and check with our community on what being a model of local and global environmental stewardship means to our community, and what work do we still need to do to achieve our goal.

In the winter of 2013, through a series of engagement sessions and questions, it quickly became apparent that focusing on environmental stewardship was no longer sufficient if our organization was to contribute to a sustainable future. Environmental Stewardship is just one aspect of the “three legged stool” that is sustainability. The social, economic, and environmental components each represent one of the stool’s legs. If one of the legs is missing, the sustainability stool can’t balance or function.

This document describes a revised strategic framework that enables the CBE to become a leader in sustainability planning, action and education.

The Sustainability Plan, which is the partner document to this framework, describes the activities that will achieve the objectives and targets associated with advancing sustainability at the Calgary Board of Education.

Goal

The Calgary Board of Education will

- advance student achievement with opportunities to acquire attitudes, skills, and knowledge to contribute to a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable society;
- and
- be a leader in sustainable practices and behaviours

Understanding Sustainability

One of the most popular definitions of sustainability is actually a definition of sustainable development. It is from Our Common Future: The Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, commonly known as the Brundtland Commission Report:

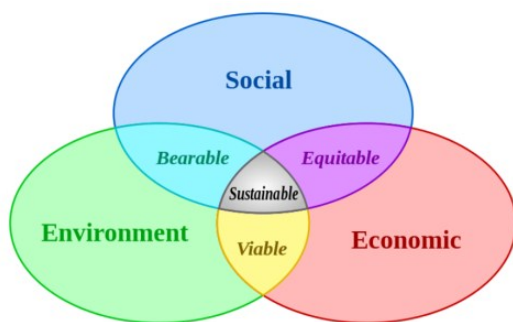
1. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

2. Thus the goals of economic and social development must be defined in terms of sustainability in all countries [...]

3. [...] Physical sustainability cannot be secured unless development policies pay attention to such considerations as changes in access to resources and in the distribution of costs and benefits. Even the narrow notion of physical sustainability implies a concern for social equity between generations, a concern that must logically be extended to equity within each generation.

Today most uses of and references to sustainability emphasize the concept's simultaneous economic, environmental, and social dimensions. For example, businesses talk about the triple bottom line: people, planet, and profits (or, alternately, human capital, natural capital, and financial capital). Likewise, sustainability educators commonly refer to the Three E's of sustainability: economy, ecology, and equity.

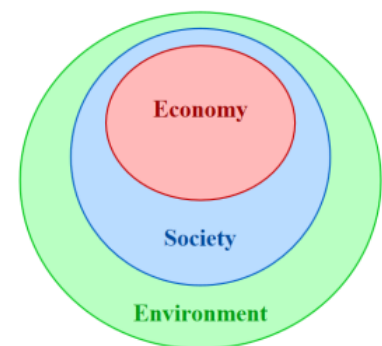


Popular representations of sustainability also underscore the concept's three dimensions. A common illustration of sustainability is the diagram at left depicting three overlapping circles representing environmental needs, economic needs, and social needs. The area where the circles overlap and all three needs are met is the area of sustainability.

Another popular representation is the diagram at right in which sustainability is depicted as three concentric circles to further emphasize the

interdependence of the three dimensions - the economic existing within the social/cultural, and both existing within the environment.

Sustainability, and sustainable development, is about developing an ecologically aware, socially just, and economically responsible society.



Sustainability and the CBE

K-12 school districts play an important role in shaping the path to a healthy, just and sustainable future through preparing students to take their place as lifelong learners and citizens who make a significant contribution within a complex, changing world.

The CBE has a responsibility to its students; what they are taught, how they are taught and the physical environment in which they learn all shape their ability to provide answers to the complex political, technological, and sociological challenges of reaching a just and sustainable future¹.

The CBE has a responsibility to its community; on June 20, 2006 the Board of Trustees agreed that the Calgary Board of Education would become an imagineCALGARY partner. In so doing, the Board of Trustees committed the Calgary Board of Education to work together with other community partners toward the social, economic and environmental sustainability goals set out in the imagineCalgary Plan.

The CBE has a responsibility to the province; in April 2010, the Alberta Ministry of Education published *Inspiring Education*, a vision and high level direction for education to 2030. The vision for the education system is to instill the following qualities and abilities in our youth: engaged thinker, ethical citizen and entrepreneurial spirit. These are all qualities and abilities required of current and future citizens to address the complex challenges of reaching a healthy, just and sustainable future.

By embracing the values of opportunity, fairness, citizenship, choice, diversity and excellence in every decision related to curriculum, teaching assessment, policy and governance, the CBE can be a leader in preparing its students to thrive in life, work and continued learning while contributing to the quality, well-being and sustainability of society and the environment.

¹ from *University of Calgary Sustainability Plan*

What the Community Said

In the fall of 2013, the EcoTeam began the process of reviewing the CBE's current Environmental Stewardship Framework and Implementation Plan, summarizing successes and deciding on the new Environmental Stewardship direction. As part of this process, a community engagement strategy was designed and implemented, to receive input and feedback from the CBE community, external partners and stakeholders, on what environmental stewardship means and what future priorities should be.

Here are some of the high level themes and priorities that emerged:

- ✓ Sustainability starts at the top and is integrated into board policy and regulation
 - Alignment with external accords/agreements/initiatives
 - CBE makes sustainable financial decisions
 - Student leadership is supported, promoted and recognized
 - Sustainability is integrated into policies, plans, and training
 - Shared accountability across the organization
 - Plans, programs and actions are properly resourced

- ✓ Focus on 'living local'
 - Develop naturalization areas and gardens at every school
 - Work on achieving zero waste by following the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle)
 - Staff and students will learn about, develop and support local food programs
 - schools generate their own energy and learn about it

- ✓ Evaluate mobility strategies and options
 - Reduce staff/student driving/busing by exploring alternative transportation, work and learning options

- ✓ Built environment protects the health of the building occupants and environment
 - Sustainable construction and maintenance
 - Attractive, useable spaces

- ✓ Communications are clear and wide-spread, using a variety of methods
 - A common understanding of sustainability is achieved
 - Awards, recognition and incentives are used to support and promote programs

- ✓ Curriculum design includes global citizenship, environmental learning, integrated inquiry learning and outdoor experiences

✓ Schools are hubs of community learning, interaction, leadership, innovation and best practice

- Engage parent community and corporate partners
- Staff and students have a connection to community and the outdoors

The feedback from the engagement sessions was used to inform the CBE Sustainability Framework and Three-Year Plan.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles will provide the foundation for sustainability initiatives:

- **Sustainability literacy** - The definition of sustainability is universally understood.
- **Advance Student Achievement** - Personalization of learning is a key strategy used in designing and implementing initiatives.
- **Collaboration** - Foster early and ongoing connection between curriculum, facility and community to find synergies, leverage resources and draw on diverse expertise when designing and implementing initiatives.
- **Strategic and sustainable** - Initiatives, based on research and the best available information, will be comprehensive, coordinated and reflect system perspectives.
- **Measureable outcomes** - Initiatives will have clear measurable outcomes that reflect social, economic and environmental perspectives.
- **Inclusive and transparent** - Decisions and interactions will be predicated on collaboration with networks and partnerships with internal and external organizations.
- **Coaching** - Initiatives will support and empower leaders to leave a legacy of individuals and structures that are capable of facilitating meaningful change.
- **Celebrate success** - Effective initiatives and progress that support sustainability will be recognized and celebrated.
- **Natural world experiences** - Quality education experiences in the natural world will develop ecological respect, thus promoting the development of a balanced lifestyle and stewardship of the environment.
- **Community Engagement** - As an educational leader, the CBE recognizes its responsibility to educate and share its resources and success with other interested organizations, relevant external agencies and the general public.
- **Aligned and consistent** - Initiatives are consistent with the core values of the CBE and the Province of Alberta as defined in the Results policies.

- **Acknowledge and build on the CBE's legacy** and instill a new standard of best practice regarding a future legacy of sustainability and stewardship.

Objectives

The Sustainability Framework is aligned with the Results policies, the Three-Year Education Plan and Alberta Education's vision for *Inspiring Education*. All of these documents guide our work and connects each CBE employee to our Mega Result and our desired outcome of student success.

The following four objectives will create an environment in which each student has the opportunity to become an engaged thinker, an ethical citizen with an entrepreneurial spirit, who is prepared for success in life, work and future learning,

Student Achievement:

Students are ethical citizens who contribute to the quality, well-being and sustainability of society and the environment

Employee Development:

Professional development activities advance environmental stewardship, social justice, economic responsibility and student learning.

Community Engagement:

Internal and external communities inform and support the CBE's Sustainability Framework and Three Year Sustainability Plan.

Manage Resources Wisely:

Sustainability practices influence decisions and actions of service units and in the classroom.

The Three Year Sustainability Plan will provide the strategies to achieve these four sustainability objectives.

2020 Targets

The Sustainability Framework provides a set of milestones for the year 2020. The Three Year Sustainability Plan will identify what needs to happen now and in the near future to achieve the 2020 Sustainability Targets.

Student Achievement

- Instructional design and leadership supports sustainability as a focus of inquiry related to all core subject areas that engages students as sustainability leaders
- The CBE takes a proactive approach to promoting a diverse, inclusive and welcoming culture that ensures the academic and social success of all students

Employee Development

- The CBE dedicates resources to sustainability coordination, incorporating sustainability into CBE policies and strategic plans, and developing action plans to move towards sustainability.
- The CBE incorporates sustainability into their human resources programs, policies, staff training and development.

Community Engagement

- The CBE gives back to its community through community service, engagement, and partnerships.
- The CBE has formal and informal partnership(s) with the local community, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, or other entities, to work together to advance sustainability within the community.

Manage Resources Wisely

Building Design, Construction, Operations and Maintenance

- The CBE builds, operates and maintains its buildings in ways that protects the health of building occupants and the environment.
- All new construction and major renovation projects are, at a minimum, LEED Silver certified
- GHG emissions are reduced by 17% from 2005 levels by 2020 (in line with federal target)
- Energy consumption reduction (from 2012-13 levels) 8% electricity, 4% gas by 2017
- Water consumption reduction 5% by 2017 (from 2012/13 levels)
- Waste reduction 80/20 by 2020 (from 2007/08 levels)
- 1% of energy derived from alternative sources by 2017

Purchasing

- The CBE chooses environmentally and socially preferable products and services and supports companies with strong commitments to sustainability.

Transportation

- The CBE works to reduce its dependency on petroleum-based fuels for transportation.

The Road Ahead

The Calgary Board of Education has many programs, policies and actions already in place in support of sustainable development.

What is needed now is a formal system commitment, policy and plan that supports, coordinates and reports on all the work being done and all the work that still must be done to achieve a sustainable future.

By embracing the values of opportunity, fairness, citizenship, choice, diversity and excellence in every decision related to curriculum, teaching assessment, policy and governance, building operations and community engagement, the CBE can be a leader in preparing its staff and students to thrive in life, work and continued learning while contributing to the quality, well-being and sustainability of society and the environment.