

# Sustainability Framework 2030

The Calgary Board of Education's Commitment to Sustainability



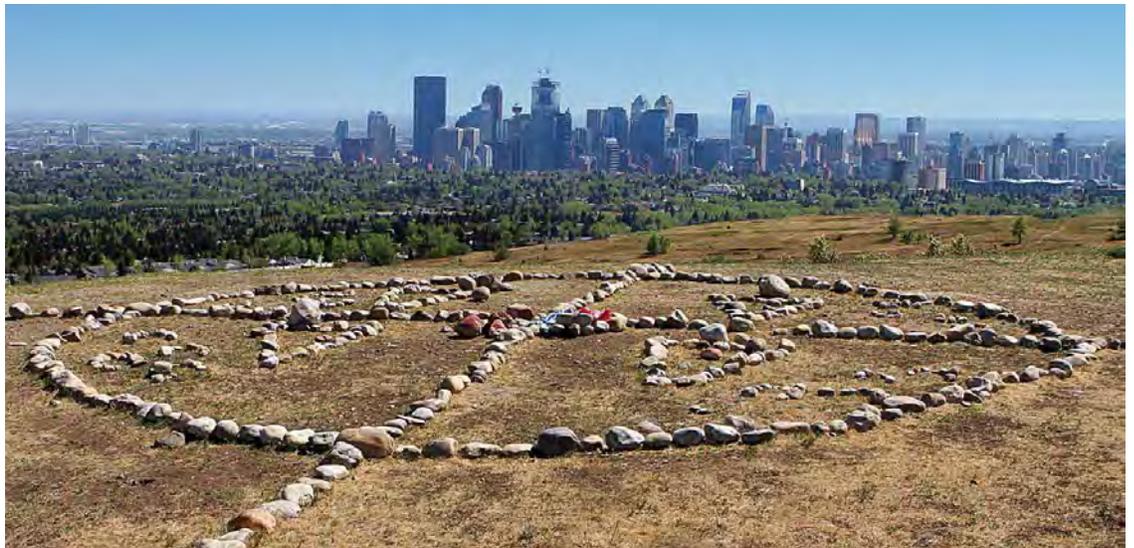
learning | as unique | as every student



Calgary Board  
of Education

# Acknowledging the land where we gather

We would like to acknowledge the traditional territories and oral practices of the Blackfoot Nations, which includes the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai. We also acknowledge the Tsuut'ina and Stoney Nakoda First Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.



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

#### Mission

Each student in keeping with their individual abilities and gifts will complete high school with a foundation of learning necessary to thrive in life, work and continued learning.

#### Values

Students come first. Learning is our central purpose.

Public education serves the common good.

## Overview

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

The CBE Sustainability Framework 2030, guided by the CBE's Mission and Values, describes the strategic framework that will enable the CBE to continue being a leader in sustainability planning, education, and action.

## Goals

The Calgary Board of Education will:

- support the development of engaged citizens who understand their responsibility in contributing to a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable society,
- and
- be a leader in sustainable practices and behaviours.

# Understanding Sustainability

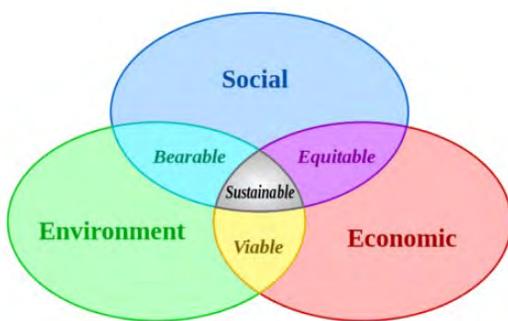
In the broadest sense, sustainability means that things can endure, 'sustain' themselves, keep up or keep going into the future. For the purposes of this framework, we are utilizing the definition for sustainable development found within *Our Common Future: The Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*, commonly known as the *Brundtland Commission Report*, "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. There are 17 goals in all that address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice.

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.

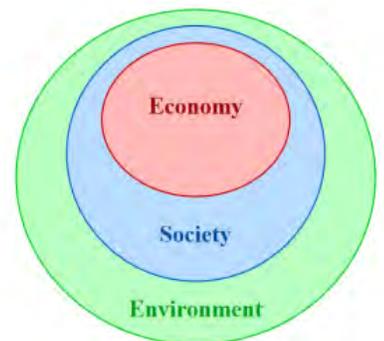
CBE's goals, to be a leader in sustainable practices and behaviours as well as engaging staff and students towards the achievement of a sustainable future is consistent with Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy. Within this strategy, it is recognized that "achieve[ment] of the SDGs requires leadership at all levels, including the federal government, the provinces and territories, municipalities and national Indigenous organizations. Stakeholders, particularly from civil society, underscored the fact that action needs to be community-driven and supported by efforts to enable local contributions to sustainable development."

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



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.



CBE would further expand these models to identify the role of CBE's goals and education as responsible and active participants in contributing to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

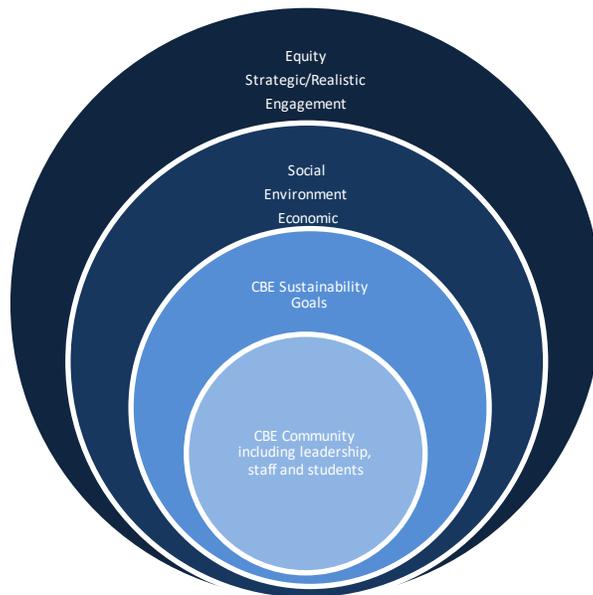
# Sustainability and the CBE

K-12 school districts play an important role in shaping the path to a healthy, just, and sustainable future by preparing students to take their place as lifelong learners and citizens who make a significant contribution within a complex, changing world. As participants in the current environment, CBE is accountable and responsible to many stakeholders through legislative and regulated requirements.

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 future<sup>1</sup>.

CBE has a responsibility to its community – as the second largest landowner and the largest education provider in the City of Calgary, the CBE commits to work together with other community partners toward the social, economic, and environmental sustainability goals set out in the Climate Strategy.

CBE has a responsibility to the province – direction for education is provided through the mission, vision and values within the preamble to the *Education Act*. Therefore, CBE has a responsibility to educate and support students to become engaged thinkers and ethical citizens who work with an entrepreneurial spirit as they engage in society. Qualities such as thinking critically and creatively, respect, teamwork, resilience, adaptability, risk-taking and bold decision-making support students to demonstrate democratic ideals and face challenges<sup>2</sup>. These are all the qualities and abilities required of current and future citizens to address the complex challenges of reaching a healthy, just and sustainable future.



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<sup>1</sup>from *University of Calgary Sustainability Plan*

<sup>2</sup>from *Education Act, S.A. 2012, c E-0.3*.

# What the Community Said

Staff, students, parents, and the public provided feedback through engagement sessions, an online survey, and Idea Boards on what being a leader in sustainable practices and behaviours will mean in the future, and what work we still need to do. Here are some of the high-level themes and actions that emerged:

## Governance

- Each school should have a student-led environmental committee
- The school district should have a sustainability advisory committee for shared accountability across the organization
- Wider adoption of EcoSchools Certification program<sup>3</sup>

## Waste

- Work on achieving zero waste by following the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle)
- Educate staff and students on how to reduce, reuse and properly recycle
- Focus on food waste reduction

## Outdoor gardens and learning spaces

- Develop outdoor learning spaces, food gardens, rain gardens at every school
- Staff and students should learn about, develop, and support local food production

## Energy efficiency and renewable energy

- Improve energy efficiency of school buildings through retrofits
- Scale up and expand solar for schools

## Reduce GHG Emissions

- Work on achieving zero carbon buildings through emissions reduction and decarbonization

## Sustainability education and Climate Change education

- Create more opportunities for students to learn, share, and take action on sustainability and climate change
- Support teacher professional development, opportunities to collaborate and share ideas on the topics of sustainability and climate change

## Evaluate mobility strategies and options

- Electric school buses
- Active transportation

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

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

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<sup>3</sup> *EcoSchools Canada* is the largest bilingual, voluntary environmental certification program for K-12 schools in Canada. For more information visit [ecoschools.ca](http://ecoschools.ca)

# 2030 Targets

The CBE Sustainability Framework 2030 is aligned with the Results policies, the *Education Plan* and the Alberta Government *Education Act*. All of these documents guide our work and connect each CBE employee to our desired outcome of student success.

These are the CBE's sustainability targets for the year 2030:

## Learning Excellence

- Students have access to learning opportunities in environmental, energy, and climate education in alignment with the Programs of Study.
- All schools provide opportunities to students, educators, support staff and facility operators to advance environmental sustainability initiatives.
- More than 50 per cent of CBE schools are certified as EcoSchools.
- Students and teachers work together to embed sustainability into classroom learning and practices.

## People Excellence

- CBE dedicates resources to sustainability coordination and planning.
- CBE aligns policies with sustainability goals and targets, seeking advice from sustainability experts to participate in and advise on policy development
- CBE has an active district-level sustainability advisory committee, with representatives from all areas of the organization, for shared accountability across the organization.
- Professional development resources and opportunities are available to staff, to better equip them with the knowledge necessary to achieve sustainability targets.
- Professional development resources and opportunities are available to teachers, to better the environment, energy, and climate education for their students.

## Collaborative Partnerships

- The CBE has formal and informal partnership(s) with the local community, including government, non-profit organizations, and other entities, to co-develop climate solutions and work together to advance sustainability within the community.

## Strategic Resourcing

### *Building Design, Construction, Operations and Maintenance*

- The CBE builds, operates, and maintains its buildings to ensure resilience to extreme weather events and chronic climate changes.
- All new construction is built to a net zero standard.
- GHG emissions are reduced by 50 per cent (from 2010-11 levels) to support climate change mitigation, with a goal of net zero by 2050. This is in line with the federal target for GHG emissions reduction.
- The CBE manages and/or reduces energy consumption to the following energy utilization intensity targets:
  - 0.45 GJ/m<sup>2</sup> for elementary schools; and
  - 0.55 GJ/m<sup>2</sup> for middle/junior and senior high schools
- The CBE manages and/or reduces water consumption to 2m<sup>3</sup> per student per year.
- The CBE reduces waste going to landfill by 90 per cent (from 2007-08 levels) with a goal of zero waste by 2050. This is in line with the municipal target for zero waste.
- Increase school energy generation from renewable energy systems.
- Every school has access to an outdoor learning space to connect staff and students to the land and fosters a love of nature.

### *Purchasing*

- The CBE has sustainable purchasing guidelines that consider: conservation of energy and resources, promoting pollution prevention and waste reduction and protecting human health and well-being, for all procurement opportunities and contracts.

### *Transportation*

- The CBE has an anti-idling policy on school grounds.
- The CBE promotes active transportation methods and routes to school.
- The CBE promotes and supports the use of low or no emission busing for student transportation.