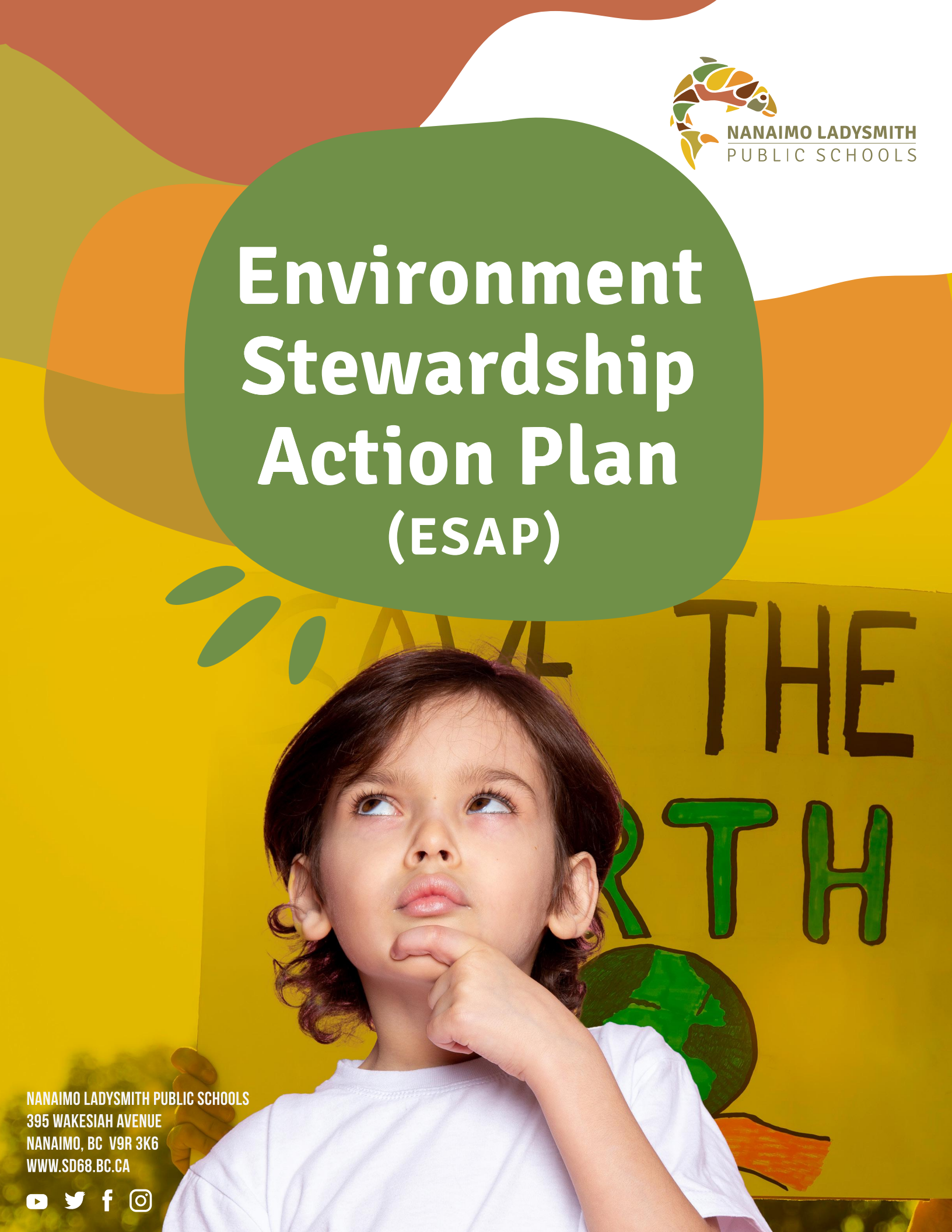
NANAIMO LADYSMITH
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Environment Stewardship Action Plan (ESAP)



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2.

Introduction

We are at a pivotal point in the history of Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS). While the Board of Education (The "Board") continues to pursue its vision of "success for all", the increasing severity of climate change and extreme weather events interfere with our capacity to achieve our mandate of educating the students of NLPS and undermines the well-being of our communities. Given the interconnectedness of our well-being and the functioning of our schools with the environment, our efforts to achieve our Strategic Plan goal of "becoming leaders in environmental stewardship and sustainability" underlies and supports the other Strategic Plan goals of:

Continuous improvement of instruction and assessment

Safe, caring and healthy learning and working environment that is inclusive of the diversity of our entire learning community

Truth and Reconciliation

As such, the Environmental Stewardship Action Plan (ESAP) will operationalize the Board's Strategic goal of being a leader in environmental stewardship and sustainability and will impact all areas of the District from teaching and learning to reconciliation to infrastructure. In our path of Truth and Reconciliation, it has become clear that being stewards of and honouring our interdependence upon the land is an act of reconciliation. As we embrace this truth, our relationship with the land and our commitment to sustainability deepens.

We hope you will join us as we walk this path together.

3.

How we got here

In 2019, the Board's Strategic Plan included the goal of "becoming leaders in environmental stewardship and sustainability". In 2020, the Board adopted the Environmental Stewardship Policy that required the creation of:

> **An environmental stewardship action plan that includes measurable targets and objectives to reduce our carbon footprint, use of resources, waste, and greenhouse gas emissions in a manner consistent with current climate science.**

The Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Committee (ESSAC), with representatives from partner groups, students and Leaders for Learning, began the process of creating the ESAP in late 2021. In April 2022, ESSAC engaged in a student-focused consultation process to determine how the district can achieve its goal to be a leader in environmental stewardship and sustainability.

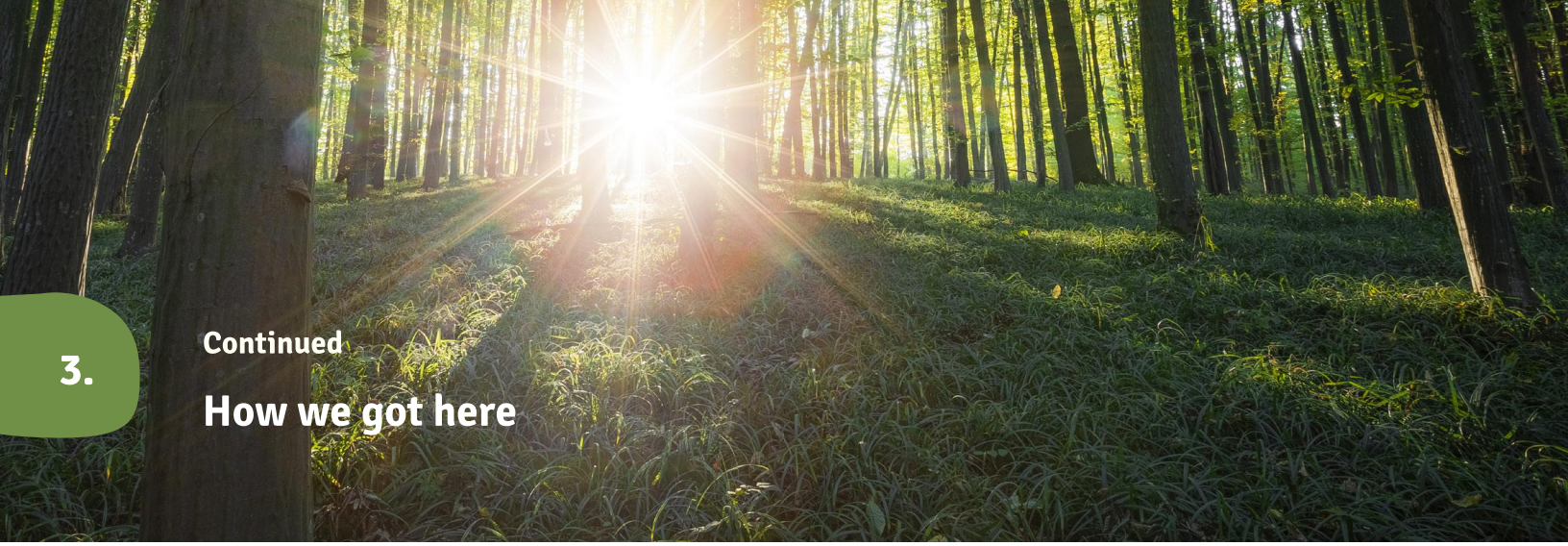
Who participated? And how?

ESSAC created the Values and Vision for the plan through a data collection process on ThoughtExchange and a theme analysis. This resulted in the creation of the 5 pathways to environmental stewardship of the plan.

The ESSAC Chair and Executive Director of Communications, Privacy and Community Engagement had in-person visits with students at Dover Bay, Ladysmith, Nanaimo District and Wellington secondary schools. In total, 26 students and a half dozen staff representatives participated in the school-based consultation sessions.

On April 19, 2022, the ESSAC met at the district administration centre to determine the goals of the plan.

Students and staff were also given the opportunity to share their feedback on the desired goals and actions through ThoughtExchange. A total of 85 students and staff shared 52 thoughts and completed 850 ratings. This exchange was open from April 19 to 26.



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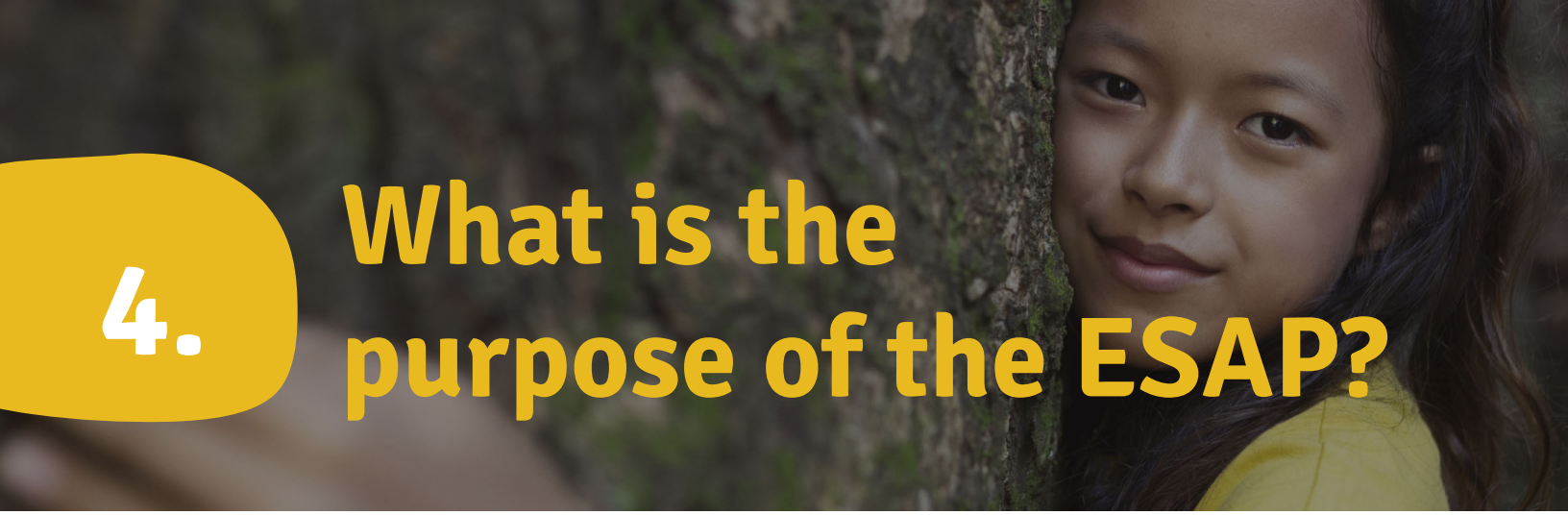
How we got here

Four central values guided the creation of this plan:

Relationality	**We are all interconnected and dependent upon the earth.**
Responsibility	**We have a responsibility to care for the land and ensure a sustainable environment for future generations.**
Restoration	**We want a system that gives back to the natural world and heals the land.**
Respect	**We honour the land and waters as sources of knowledge and life.**

NLPS is committed to fostering a resilient and restorative environment that moves us towards a system that gives back to the natural world. We acknowledge our responsibility to respond to and reduce our impacts of climate change. Our decision-making will reflect our respect for the land and an understanding of the relationality between all things.

It is from this perspective and guided by the Syeyutsus Framework that operation of the ESAP will be directed and updated as required.



4. What is the purpose of the ESAP?

This plan enacts our Environmental Stewardship Policy and sets long-term vision for how the District will fulfill its commitment to environmental stewardship and being an active part of the solution to the climate crisis. As we proceed towards our vision for 2030, the Plan will also provide a benchmark for the Board, staff and the community to meaningful determine how the implementation of the ESAP is proceeding.

The ESAP will:

1. influence funding decisions of the Board with respect to its annual budget, local capital and one-time surplus fund (if available)
2. impact school-based goals to ensure the reflection of the ESAP in those goals
3. ensure that professional development opportunities are made available to District staff associated with the ESAP
4. influence school site planning and operations
5. foster an understanding of our reliance upon and interconnection with a healthy environment
6. highlight to the broader community the Board's commitment to environmental sustainability and being stewards to the land
7. create a mechanism for the oversight and revision of the ESAP

5.

How do I navigate this plan?

The ESAP has 5 pathways of environmental stewardship, each with its own objectives:

To support the objectives, the ESAP envisions 81 specific actions.

Embedded with these action items will be links to further information which will be updated as resources are made available. It is important to note that the ESAP relies on informational links to allow the reader to delve deeper into a variety of resources and background information.

The structure is intended to allow easy access to the ESAP's actions with the ability to scrutinize the assumptions and information that support the objectives and action items.

6.

What are the next steps?

Following the ESAP's initial presentation to the Board in July of 2022, the intention is to seek feedback from the community on the plan prior to the final adoption in the Fall of 2022.

Assuming the ESAP is adopted, the action items will immediately begin to be aligned with other District plans including the Long Range Facilities Plan and the Superintendent's operational plan. Following this, a review of policy and resource alignment will be ongoing alongside the creation of the resources required by the ESAP.

ESSAC will continue to work through the ESAP and make recommendations to the Board when appropriate. As well, ESSAC will review the ESAP and suggest revisions every two years if necessary.

7. How will we know how we are doing?

Given the importance of the ESAP to the District, a website will be created to host not only the plan but associated resource documents. Further, a yearly status update will be presented to the Board and incorporated into the Board's yearly work plan (Policy 2.5).

8. Pathways to Environmental Stewardship

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

GOAL

To protect students and the community from the increasing effects of climate change, NLPS will minimize our impacts on the environment, reduce our GHG emissions, and adapt to a changing environment. NLPS's climate change adaptation and mitigation plan will have science-based targets and strategies informed by Indigenous knowledge to draw down our ecological impact.

Objective	Actions
Reduce GHG emissions by 50% below 2010 levels by 2030 or 4.5% per year	• Create a GHG emission reduction plan to achieve 2030 targets • Electrify school district fleet • Inform relevant Ministries of our efforts and barriers to meet environmental targets • Advocate to provincial and federal government for support/funding
Implement Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption Actions	• Develop a Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption Strategy with measurable objectives • Integrate mitigation and adaption measures into facilities planning and decision-making • Perform climate risk and readiness assessments to inform infrastructure planning and decisions • Create a response plan for climate related/extreme weather events and emergencies • Seek funding sources to support Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption Strategy and energy management projects • Advocate to provincial and federal government for support/funding • Ensure new builds meet or exceed sustainability and low carbon standards and sustainable site planning considerations • Support, prioritize, and advocate for low carbon energy systems in all new construction

Increase low-carbon/active transportation	• Collaborate with the Long-Range Facilities Plan Committee to develop and implement a measurable low-carbon/active transportation plan that includes safe and active routes to school for every school. • Improve infrastructure for active and low-carbon transportation including secure bicycle parking and storage • Implement no-idling practice • Advocate for free bus pass for students

Sustainability

GOAL **NLPS aims to bring awareness of the interconnection among all things in our ecosystem and our dependence upon the land upon into our use of the gifts this land provides. Respectful and sustainable use of all that is provided by our land, waters, and air is necessary to ensure a healthy environment for generations of children that will come through our schools and honours our sacred trust.**

Objective	Actions
Reduce our impact on the land and implement restorative efforts	• Develop an Environmental Sustainability Plan that outlines strategic direction to reduce fossil fuel usage, conserve water, reduce waste, and investigate in low-carbon renewables as an alternate source of energy • Support the BC Hydro Strategic Energy Management Plan • Develop dashboards for individual schools and district buildings to provide information about sustainability performance, energy use, and emissions • Support school-based energy reduction initiatives • Develop a water conservation strategy • Develop a paper reduction strategy • Investigate potential pilot projects that support behaviour change within NLPS
Utilize the Zero Waste Framework	• Implement a zero-waste strategy that incorporates the principles and practices in all our buildings • Initiate source separation of waste into organics, recycling, and garbage containers for collection with clear signage • Develop and conduct waste audit program and communicate results to better understand waste generation and diversion

Implement sustainable purchasing practices	• Review procurement policies and AP to ensure sustainable practices and guidelines • Set sustainability goals and metrics when tendering for goods and services

Responsibility to the Land

GOAL

NLPS's prioritizes and encourages connection to, care for, and restoration of the ecological integrity of the land and waters. Through our actions, we embrace our responsibility to give back to the land and honour our sacred trust to support a healthy environment and ecosystems. In our schools, outdoor spaces will provide hands-on learning environments that teach important skills and build climate resiliency.

Objective	Actions

Reduce consumption of resources	• Develop Land Use Guidelines that consider Indigenous knowledge, prioritizes the use of native plants, the regeneration of natural green spaces, and the inclusion of trees on school grounds and play spaces
	  ◦ Explore ground greening initiatives
	  ◦ Identify budgetary and operational considerations of increasing naturalized environments on school grounds
	• Review and modify landscaping practices to ensure ecological and restorative practices
	• Identify mitigative actions the district could take to help restore ecological function, provide shaded outdoor spaces, and/or enhance environmental learning opportunities
	• Explore and engage school, parental, and community support to maintain naturalized environments

Develop a better understanding of what it means to give back to the land	• Explore a district-wide inquiry project that explores what it means to give back to the land.

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Continued
Pathways to Environmental Stewardship

Objective	Actions
Thoughtful and intentional use of our outdoor space to support connection to the land and to foster an understanding of the land as our teacher.	• Inventory the District's land holdings and surrounding publicly accessible natural areas to identify environmental learning opportunities. • Update the NLPS Garden Application Process Document to include prioritizing planting native plants • Create an administrative procedure for garden and food forest programs for schools • Create an administrative procedure for use of facilities and grounds: use of school grounds for garden plots • Increase equity and accessibility to outdoor learning spaces

Learning

GOAL **NLPS will prioritize learning opportunities that foster learning from and connecting to place. Outdoor learning and play spaces and school gardens will provide opportunities for all to develop an understanding of the land as a source of knowledge, to cultivate environmental stewardship, and help to ensure food security.**

Objective	Actions
Integrate environmental stewardship and sustainability throughout the curriculum	• Provide district-wide professional learning opportunities to foster ecological literacy, environmental stewardship, and connection to the land • Ensure professional learning resource collection represents diverse resources for supporting our Environmental Sustainability Action Plan • Supporting outdoor learning opportunities in all forms at all school sites • Support the creation of board authorized secondary courses that support sustainability principles and practices
Increase opportunities to learn about environmental stewardship and the land	• Create a district annual calendar of environmental opportunities and events both local and digital, and internal and external • Increase opportunity for hands-on or experiential learning • Explore potential learning opportunities among our own environmental stewardship, sustainability, and climate adaptation and mitigation efforts

Continued
Pathways to Environmental Stewardship

Support learning opportunities that educate about and strengthen food security	• Equitable and inclusive access to gardens or food growing opportunities • Develop a district farm that is accessible to school communities and contributes to food security and food literacy within NLPS • Inventory and evaluation of gardens and growing opportunities • Develop a shared understanding of what food security means • Create an administrative procedure or set of guidelines outlining food security within NLPS
Understand and embrace the teachings of this sacred land	• Teach Hul'qumi'num language • Develop culturally appropriate locally developed curricula • Identify actions to support Indigenous culture in partnership with Indigenous communities

Culture/Leadership

GOAL

To create an organizational culture that places environmental stewardship at the centre of our learning and our operational decisions. Establishing and resourcing a "Green Network" of students and staff will help implement and communicate about initiatives, provide alignment throughout the district, and ensure ongoing support for implementation of AP 526 and the environmental action plan.

Objective	Actions
Create a culture of environmental stewardship	• Integrate environmental stewardship considerations and practices into administrative, capital planning, and programming decisions • Inventory and review programs and practices that currently exist within NLPS that support environmental stewardship and sustainability • Enable partner groups to have input and provide feedback to the Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Committee around NLPS environmental initiatives • Increase collaboration opportunities for Facilities to work with Learning Services and schools for ESAP initiatives and related learning opportunities
Establish funding and resources to empower ESAP implementation	• Develop work plan for ESAP and determine necessary resources for implementation • Fund and resource ESAP • Determine if staff position is necessary for effective implementation, outreach, and funding achievement

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Pathways to Environmental Stewardship

Establish an Environmental Stewardship Network throughout the district.	• Support and resource eco-clubs/climate action teams in each school and in each department/building • Develop and support a system that allows student groups to interact, collaborate and coordinate efforts. • Resource annual eco-club/climate action team gathering • Create a method to track and report on environmental stewardship initiatives • Ensure opportunities for student voice and leadership • Develop and conduct an annual district-wide Environmental Sustainability event with student groups
Communicate actions, initiatives, and achievements within the district and to partner groups and community.	• Develop a communication strategy to highlight successes and future areas of action • Maintain NLPS learns with professional learning support for environmental stewardship and outdoor learning • Recognize and celebrate student, educator, and staff sustainability leaders • Promote environmental stewardship campaigns and events (e.g., Energy Cup) to increase awareness and engagement
Connect and collaborate with community	• Connect with community members and organizations for collaboration to support ESAP initiatives and learning opportunities • Engage in partnerships that facilitate clean energy projects. • Seek collaboration opportunities with local and provincial governments on shared sustainability initiatives
Provide regular evaluations and updates of the Environmental Action Plan	• Annual presentations to the board on the progress of ESAP • At a minimum, a biennial review of the ESAP by ESSAC for updates and changes. • Determine measurable outcome indicators for each objective/action for evaluation of ESAP progress
“Walk” together in a way that acknowledges that we are all relations in the cycle of life.	• Build our capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect • Strengthen our sense of belonging and interconnectedness • Utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms

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