

# Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Plan

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## Context

The qathet School District 47 (qSD47) is located on the Northern Sunshine Coast in Powell River British Columbia. We are a rural School District of 400 employees serving approximately 3,400 students: five elementary schools, one remote island elementary school, one online learning school, an alternate school, and one secondary school.

The qSD47 2023 Strategic Plan is based on our mission, “Learning and Growing, together” and our vision, “Creating Brighter Tomorrow’s for All.” This mission and vision are rooted in our commitment to promoting culture and belonging and understanding where differences are embraced and celebrated. This plan is advanced through the following six strategic priorities:

- Cultivating an Ethic of Learning: Ensure early learners and students have the best possible learning experience.
- Cultivating Curiosity: Transform our learning environments into places of innovation.
- Cultivating Connection: Prioritize mental health, community connections, and social-emotional learning.
- Supporting Self-Determination: Ensure holistic Indigenous student success.
- Cultivating Truth and Reconciliation: Honour truth and reconciliation.
- Cultivating Integrity/Responsibility: Prioritize climate change, organizational health, and sustainability.

Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Initiatives have been an integral part of qSD47 for many years. From ECO teams, to related credit courses and senior leadership programs, the expansion of our Indigenous Education Department, and technological upgrades and efficiencies, qSD47 has been a champion of environmental, sustainability, and outdoor learning for decades. Though not an exhaustive list, some specific attempts at a reduced carbon footprint have included culture-change campaigns, school gardens, composting infrastructure, and the installation of EV charging stations at District schools. Most recently, the board has formed a committee with the intent purpose to help further their goals relating to this work (Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Committee). The advent of this Plan enable a coordinated approach to sustainability that will allow our District to move beyond individual teacher champions or siloed operational upgrades, to a broad systems-based approach.

## Sustainability Inventory

The qSD47’s Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Plan is informed by the following to date:

- A scan of leading school districts throughout Canada to determine how they are pursuing sustainability
- A series of Sustainability Surveys (Qualitative and Quantitative) that was open to all staff
- An inventory of Outdoor and Sustainability Learning Opportunities and Educational Initiatives in qSD47
- An ongoing Operational Audit during the 2023 / 2024 school year

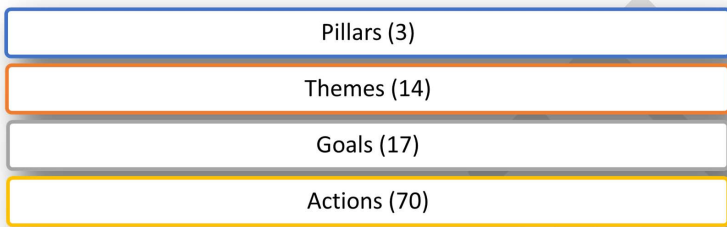
## Defining a Sustainable School District

There is no singular definition of what it means to be a Sustainable or Sustainability-Minded School District. At its core, the Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Plan for our District is a framework to guide our staff, teachers, and students to actively contribute (i.e. stewardship) to a positive relationship with the earth, a relationship that considers future generations and the ecological integrity of the natural systems that support all life. This is the definition of sustainability in the context of this Plan.

## Structure and Approach

The qSD47's Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Plan is not a static document and will evolve throughout the term and presumably beyond. An iterative approach will assist us in adapting to organizational, technological, and behavioural shifts as we move towards establishing a truly sustainable system. To this end, we have sought to build a simple and functional approach understanding that clarity combined with strategic steps forward will yield results.

## Organization Structure of the ESSP



## Overview of Pillars and Themes

### Pillar 1: Leadership for Sustainability

- Theme: Support and Implementation
- Theme: Communication and Celebration

### Pillar 2: Education

- Theme: Fostering Connections
- Theme: Fostering Stewardship
- Theme: Professional Learning and Resources

### Pillar 3: Operations

- Theme: Carbon Neutrality
- Theme: Waste Management
- Theme: Water Conservation
- Theme: Green Building Practices
- Theme: Promoting Alternative Transportation
- Theme: Fleet Efficiency
- Theme: Sustainability Procurement
- Theme: Partnerships and Community Engagement
- Theme: Monitoring and Reporting



# PILLAR: LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABILITY

## Theme – Support and Implementation

|  | <b>ACTIONS</b>   |
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| <p><b>GOAL:</b> Cultivate Integrity &amp; Responsibility (hays qaymεmix<sup>w</sup> γayγaytawθ) by providing ongoing support and empower implementation of initiatives across all sustainability themes.</p> | 1.1 Maintain Sustainability Coordinator position to support Plan implementation (.5 FTE)   |
|  | 1.2 Establish a Sustainability Committee to advise and support efforts   |
|  | 1.3 Develop a clear, comprehensive, and ambitious Environmental Stewardship & Sustainability Plan and periodically review and adapt for improvement  |
|  | 1.4 Provide training, leadership opportunities and resources to school leaders and staff which build awareness, improve practices, and empower them to embed these principles into decision-making |
|  | 1.5 Actively seek ways to remove barriers and support systems-based approaches to sustainability   |
|  | 1.6 Increase opportunities for Operations to work with schools to implement actions outlined in Plan   |
|  | 1.7 Register qSD47 with Eco-Schools Canada and aim to have all schools certified at the gold level by the 2027   |
|  | 1.8 Update / develop Administrative Policies to incorporate Plan   |
|  | 1.9 Align District and School Goals with Plan  |

## Theme – Communication and Celebration

|   | <b>ACTIONS</b>  |
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| <p><b>GOAL:</b> To promote a shared understanding of existing and future sustainability and stewardship related initiatives, opportunities, and supports.</p> | 2.1 Work with qSD47 Communications Team to advance actions and share successes across schools and broader community |
|   | 2.2 Promote opportunities for all stakeholders to build awareness and collaborate                                   |
|   | 2.3 Provide regular updates to qSD47 Board on Plan progress   |
|   | 2.4 Ensure there is a Sustainability Lead at every facility   |
|   | 2.5 Recognize, and celebrate educator and staff stewardship & sustainability leaders                                |

## PILLAR: EDUCATION

### Theme – Fostering Connections

|   | <b>ACTIONS</b>  |
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| <p><b>GOAL:</b> Support learning initiatives which develop a sense of connection to nature and place.</p> | <p>3.1 Develop and support school-level projects for nature connected learning (place-based, indigenous ways of knowing, healthy lifestyles etc.)</p>   |
|   | <p>3.2 Provide supported outdoor, place-based learning opportunities across the grades</p>  |
|   | <p>3.3 Support outdoor leadership courses and experiences for qSD47 students including LEAP, CMA, Grade 7 Sailing Leadership etc. to introduce students to Experiential Learning and to build capacity in youth leaders. Expand as needed (ie LEAP Grade 6)</p> |
|   | <p>3.4 Support outdoor learning opportunities that encourage mentorship between older and younger students</p>  |
|   | <p>3.5 Develop ways to track and measure learning opportunities around connections to nature and place.</p>   |
|   | <p>3.6 Support learning opportunities in partnership with the Indigenous Education Team and Tla’amin Nation that focus on Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Storytelling, and Ayajuthem</p>   |
|   | <p>3.7 Support learning opportunities in partnership with community groups/individuals that focus on nature and place-based connection</p>  |

### Theme – Fostering Stewardship

|   | <b>ACTIONS</b>  |
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| <p><b>GOAL:</b> Support learning initiatives which develop environmentally conscious citizens</p> | <p>4.1 Support student networks for dialogue by supporting gatherings and utilizing district communications to share stories around Plan themes</p>                                       |
|   | <p>4.2 Highlight the sustainable practices of facilities and their operations as learning opportunities through educational models, demonstration projects and curricular connections</p> |
|   | <p>4.3 Establish and support Eco-Teams at every school</p>  |

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|  | 4.4 | Establish an Eco Grants fund to enable school, student, staff led initiatives   |
|  | 4.5 | Review existing awards at the secondary level and identify opportunities to integrate the theme of leadership in environmental stewardship    |
|  | 4.6 | Re-establish secondary level courses like the Sustainability Toolbox and the Green Careers Education course with focus on post-carbon economy |
|  | 4.7 | Support existing Food Literacy programming; expand support for Food Literacy programming across the grades                                    |
|  | 4.8 | Support existing Environmental Restoration (ER) initiatives; expand support for ER initiatives at every school                                |
|  | 4.9 | Develop ways to track and measure learning opportunities about climate change and sustainability  |

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Theme – Professional Learning & Resources

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| <p><b>GOAL:</b> Support administration, teachers, staff, and students to incorporate sustainability in their professional practice and learning journey.</p> | <b>ACTIONS</b> |  |
|  | 5.1            | Provide Professional Development opportunities for educators and staff to learn about sustainability principles and practices  |
|  | 5.2            | Create mentorship opportunities via Teacher Coordinators to assist educators in integrating sustainability content and outdoor pedagogy into the curriculum          |
|  | 5.3            | Develop grade-appropriate, curriculum connected instructional materials on sustainability topics (elementary and secondary)  |
|  | 5.4            | Support and encourage place-based connection for teachers and students by providing Professional Development in the area of Outdoor Learning and Land-Based Learning |
|  | 5.5            | Offer certifications to teachers and CUPE staff that support the provision of safe and meaningful outdoor, land-based and place-based learning experiences           |

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|  | 5.6 Nurture and encourage the decolonization of instruction through professional learning opportunities and cross-cultural community building initiatives |
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## PILLAR: OPERATIONS

### Theme - Carbon Neutrality

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| <b>GOAL:</b> Reduce overall GHG / Carbon equivalent by 15% within the term and 80% by 2030. | <b>ACTIONS</b>   |
|   | 6.1 Complete energy audit to baselines and identify inefficiencies and track progress. |
|   | 6.2 Implement LED Lighting and motion sensors in every building                        |
|   | 6.3 Invest in energy efficient HVAC Systems in each remaining school                   |
| 6.4 Promote Awareness Campaigns on energy conservation among students and staff             |  |

### Theme - Waste Management

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| <b>GOAL:</b> Achieve zero waste to landfill by implementing a comprehensive waste-diversion strategy. | <b>ACTIONS</b>  |
|   | 7.1 Introduce recycling bins in all classrooms and communal areas.  |
|   | 7.2 Educate students and staff on proper waste segregation and composting.                                    |
|   | 7.3 Partner with local waste management companies for efficient waste diversion / disposal.                   |
|   | 7.4 Encourage the use of reusable items (water bottles, lunch containers) to reduce single-use plastic waste. |
| 7.5 Implement a pack in / pack out program.   |   |

### Theme - Water Conservation

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| <b>GOAL:</b> Reduce water usage through conservation measures and review | <b>ACTIONS</b>  |
|  | 8.1 Install low-flow faucets, toilets, and water-efficient landscaping. |
| 8.2 Conduct regular inspections for leaks and repair promptly.           |   |

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| capacity for water metering at each site. | 8.3 | Review each site for water metering eligibility to track water use and allow for measurable conservation/education efforts. |
|   | 8.4 | Educate students on the importance of water conservation through workshops and educational programs.                        |

**Theme - Green Building Practices**

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| <b>GOAL:</b> Incorporate sustainable design principles in new construction and renovations. | <b>ACTIONS</b> |  |
|   | 9.1            | Implement LEED and Energy Step Code Requirements- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards for new buildings.                     |
|   | 9.2            | Use eco-friendly building materials and designs (solar panels, green roofs, natural lighting).   |
|   | 9.3            | Integrate indoor air quality measures to promote a healthier environment for students and staff by installing MERV 13 filters in all facilities. |
|   | 9.4            | Install carbon filter capability in all District daycare facilities for summer operations during fire smoke air quality advisories               |

**Theme - Promoting Alternative Transportation**

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| <b>Goal:</b> Reduce carbon emissions by promoting / engaging alternative transportation methods. | <b>ACTIONS</b> |  |
|  | 10.1           | Promote programs to encourage active transportation to schools, e.g. ‘Bike to Work Week’ and ‘Walk and Roll to School’ campaigns |
|  | 10.2           | Provide safe and convenient bicycle infrastructure and end-of-trip-facilities at schools and district offices                    |
|  | 10.3           | Implement a carpooling program for students and staff.   |
|  | 10.4           | Increase number of EV charging stations at District facilities for personal vehicles   |

**Theme - Fleet Efficiency**

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|  | <b>ACTIONS</b> |   |
|  | 11.1           | Conduct electrical infrastructure feasibility study for school bus electrification program. |

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| <b>Goal:</b> Transition 10% of the district fleet to electric or low emission by 2027 and 70% by 2030. | 11.2 | Install phased electrical charging infrastructure at the bus garage for new electric bus fleet. |
|  | 11.3 | Seek grants and funding for purchasing eco-friendly vehicles.                                   |
|  | 11.4 | Regularly maintain existing vehicles to ensure optimal fuel efficiency.                         |
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**Theme -Sustainable Procurement**

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| <b>Goal:</b> Source 80% of school supplies from sustainable and eco-friendly sources within term. | <b>ACTIONS</b> |  |
|   | 12.1           | Establish procurement policy with a focus on triple bottom line guidelines   |
|   | 12.2           | Ensure Total Cost of Ownership & Life Cycle Analysis is considered for purchases   |
|   | 12.3           | Update all district tendering documents / renewals in accordance to triple bottom line guidelines                        |
|   | 12.4           | Establish a Preferred Vender List to support triple bottom like procurement across ALL themes                            |
|   | 12.5           | Educate supply chain on qSD47 procurement goals and encourage participation (perhaps through Federal Net Zero Challenge) |
|   | 12.6           | Identify and implement educational opportunities relating to sustainable purchasing for all staff and students.          |
|   | 12.6           | Seek certification with Buy Social Canada  |

**Theme -Partnerships and Community Engagement**

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| <b>Goal:</b> Collaborate with local organizations and authorities to improve transportation sustainability. | <b>ACTIONS</b> |   |
|   | 13.1           | Partner with transportation agencies to improve public transit options for students and staff.                              |
|   | 13.2           | Engage with the local community stakeholders to support initiatives like bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. |
|   | 13.3           | Organize events or initiatives focused on sustainable transportation practices.   |
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**Theme - Monitoring and Reporting**

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| <b>Goal:</b> Regularly track and report progress towards sustainability goals. | <b>ACTIONS</b> |   |
|  | 14.1           | Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) for each goal and monitor them periodically.  |
|  | 14.2           | Establish dashboarding of metrics at each school (via RET screen).                        |
|  | 14.3           | Publish annual sustainability reports to showcase achievements and areas for improvement. |
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