Education for Sustainable Development
Leadership Council:
Creating a Sustainable Future Together
The establishment of an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Leadership Council was proposed in the 2010 report Sustainable Development and Living through Changing Teacher Education and Teaching in Manitoba (Babiuk, et al.). In June 2012, with the release of Tomorrow Now: Manitoba’s Green Plan (Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship), an ESD Leadership Council, consisting of senior-level representatives from various educational sector groups, faculties of education, and government departments, was established to assist with the development and implementation of a three-year provincial Education for Sustainable Development Action Plan (2013–2016).

The ESD Action Plan is intended to continue to guide the whole-system approach toward implementing ESD throughout the pre-school and Kindergarten to Grade 12 (Pre-K-12) school system in Manitoba. As the primary document for steering the implementation of ESD in Manitoba, the ESD Action Plan is intended to be a dynamic resource that establishes a series of actions to guide government and its educational partners in developing appropriate responses for ESD in Manitoba. The ESD Action Plan will be released in the winter of 2013.

As members of the ESD Leadership Council, we believe it is time to boost our collective efforts to ensure a sustainable future. By working together through a strong coalition of partners, we will strengthen our capacity to provide the foundation for a more relevant education and a sustainable future for all.

The Manitoba school system will provide quality education through a whole-system approach oriented toward a culture of sustainability. By 2020, all Manitoba students progressing through the school system, and their educators, will have the knowledge, skills, and commitment to make decisions in their career and personal lives supportive of sustainable development within a culture of collaboration—working seamlessly across departments, institutions, sectors, and communities.

Students will be informed decision-makers and active, responsible citizens of Canada and the world, contributing to environmental, economic, social, and cultural well-being and to an equitable quality of life for all, now and in the future.
What Is ESD?

Quality education is essential to creating a sustainable future for all. The education of today is crucial to enhancing the ability of present and future leaders and citizens to create solutions and find new paths to a better, more sustainable world. With an increasing population and diminishing natural resources, the present and future generations in Manitoba and around the world will need to be engaged to think and act in ways that reflect responsible environmental, economic, social, and cultural choices. ESD helps prepare our students for a sustainable future by ensuring that they are environmentally responsible, globally aware, economically astute, socially responsible, and technologically proficient citizens who are capable of coping with the emerging challenges and opportunities we are facing now and will continue to face in the future.

ESD is a particularly important dimension of quality education. We know that simply increasing basic literacy and numeracy, while important, will not produce sustainable societies. ESD is far more than teaching knowledge and principles related to sustainability. ESD also involves learning to

- ask critical questions
- clarify one’s own values
- envision more positive and sustainable futures
- think systemically
- respond through applied learning

In a comprehensive sense, ESD “is education for social transformation with the goal of creating more sustainable societies. ESD touches every aspect of education including planning, policy development, programme implementation, finance, curricula, teaching, learning, assessment, [physical operations, and] administration” (UNESCO, *Education for Sustainable Development Sourcebook*).

This whole-system approach to ESD infuses sustainability awareness into all aspects of schooling in such a way that

- ESD is reflected in the curriculum across all subject areas and grades
- teaching and learning are learner-centred, exploratory, and action-oriented
- student-teacher-staff interactions are participatory
- buildings and school grounds are managed sustainably and provide a sustainable learning space
- the school interacts with the local community

One example of what should be included in a whole-system approach is illustrated in the diagram below, and is also reflected in the *Domain Framework for Whole-System Approach to ESD* (Sustainability and Education Academy).

ESD can build interconnections among a range of school initiatives and practices, such as healthy living, school travel planning, responsible citizenship, social justice, integration of Aboriginal perspectives, and schoolyard greening. It is also fundamental for preparing young people for green jobs, for adapting to a changing physical environment, and for changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

Ultimately, ESD can provide a common vision for education—the vision of creating a better, more equitable and sustainable world.
Our Goals

The ESD Action Plan we are committing to will make a vital contribution toward ensuring that ESD is infused into formal education and that we are all working together to move toward truly living and working sustainably. Over the next three years, we will focus on working together to achieve the following goals:

|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|

### Goals

1. **Ensure Quality Education for All**
   - Education is the basic building block of every society. Every child has the right to quality education and equitable learning opportunities.
   - An inclusive school environment is a major focus in planning and implementing relevant school programming (including parent-engagement initiatives).
   - Attainment gaps in literacy and numeracy are narrowed.
   - Funding of schools and educational programming is equitable within and across school divisions.

2. **Infuse ESD Pedagogy into Teacher Education**
   - Teaching is characterized by practices that facilitate critical and creative thinking, media literacy, systems thinking, interdisciplinary thinking, and responsible decision making leading to sustainable actions.
   - Professional learning models and teaches ESD pedagogy.
   - Teacher education models and teaches ESD pedagogy.
   - Student learning is demonstrated through sustainable actions.

3. **Integrate ESD into Curricula and Learning (Pre-K-12 and Teacher Education)**
   - Curricula and resource materials provide an ethos based on ecological literacy, systems thinking, and global concern, enabling students to become effective stewards of the planet. Students gain the knowledge, skills, and values they need to cooperate in resolving the interconnected sustainability challenges of the future.
   - ESD concepts are identified in curricula and educational resources across all grades.
   - Competency-based learning outcomes that address environmental, economic, social, and cultural responsibility are identified.
   - Faculties of education integrate ESD concepts into their programming.
### Goals

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<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>Establish ESD School Plans</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Every school and post-secondary institution is encouraged to have an ESD plan in place by 2015.</td>
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<th>5</th>
<th>Strengthen ESD Capacity Building at All Levels through Training and Professional Learning Opportunities</th>
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<td>All stakeholders in the education system have a commitment to ESD and take action accordingly.</td>
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<th>6</th>
<th>Reorient Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Support of a Green Economy</th>
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<td>TVET responds to changing job opportunities and skill requirements that a green development agenda brings about. TVET and academic education are equally valued and are aligned so that students can access credits in both and move seamlessly between them.</td>
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### Achievement Indicators

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<th>All schools and post-secondary institutions have an ESD plan in place by 2015.</th>
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<td>System-wide policies and criteria exist for procurement, school management, and resource use based on sustainability practices.</td>
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<td>Professional learning and support are provided to assist in sustainability practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Every school conducts regular audits and reports results related to school plans.</td>
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<td>A policy is in place for the provision and weekly use of outdoor classrooms for all students.</td>
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<th>5</th>
<th>The school system and school leaders model commitment to ESD principles in their roles.</th>
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<td>Systems commitment to ESD is communicated to all staff, students, school trustees, and the community through practices, actions, and documents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESD is integrated into professional learning for all stakeholders.</td>
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<td>Learning communities are established to share successful practices, models, and resources.</td>
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<th>6</th>
<th>TVET teachers are trained in ESD.</th>
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<td>ESD is infused into TVET curricula and new courses are developed.</td>
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<td>The match between classroom and workplace learning through apprenticeships has improved.</td>
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<td>The private sector, trade unions, advanced educational institutions, and employers’ associations are involved in designing TVET to ensure its relevance to industry needs.</td>
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What Are School Leaders Doing?

A sustainable school can help prepare young people for a lifetime of sustainable living through its teaching, learning, and assessment, as well as its day-to-day practices. School leaders are fostering this culture by

- taking a whole-system approach to sustainability, placing it at the heart of the ethos of the school, demonstrating it in management practices, operations, and facilities,
- developing an ESD school plan or integrating sustainability within the existing school plan,
- providing professional learning for educators and staff in sustainability issues and practices,
- developing leadership models, management practices, and policies that reflect environmental, economic, social, and cultural considerations,
- promoting sustainability in the school in ways that help students to understand the factors that affect their well-being and improve their capacity for sustainable living.

What Are Educators Doing?

ESD empowers students to take action, individually and collectively, to effect change now and in the future. Educators are supporting students in the classroom by

- providing opportunities for critical thinking about emerging issues (e.g., climate change, poverty reduction, biodiversity), while problem solving for sustainable solutions,
- assisting students to become effective citizens and change agents by addressing the ESD learning outcomes infused across the Manitoba curriculum (Refer to “ESD Correlation Charts of Student Learning Outcomes” [Manitoba Education].)
- using pedagogical approaches to facilitate participatory and learner-centred education that develops critical thinking, active citizenship, systems thinking, inquiry, active learning, problem solving, and futures thinking, emphasizing both local and global contexts,
- encouraging students to take an active role in the classroom, school, and community to effect positive change and to minimize negative environmental, economic, social, and cultural impacts on future generations,
- assessing the impact of students’ actions in enhancing sustainability,
- reflecting on the impact of students’ actions on learning, understanding, and changed behaviour.
References and Further Reading


The above websites were accessed in April 2013. Any websites referenced in this document are subject to change without notice.
ESD Leadership Council Members

Council of School Leaders (COSL)
International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC)
Manitoba Association of School Business Officials (MASBO)
Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS)
Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA)
Manitoba School Improvement Program (MSIP)
Manitoba Teachers’ Society (MTS)

Red River College (RRC)
Université de Saint-Boniface (USB)
University College of the North (UCN)
University of Manitoba (U of M)
The University of Winnipeg (U of W)

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives
Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship
The Council of Post-Secondary Education (COPSE)
Manitoba Education

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This resource is available in the Education for Sustainable Development section of the Manitoba Education website at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/resources.html>.

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