

**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget
Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming
Federal Budget**

By: EcoSchools Canada

- **Recommendation 1:** That the government provide funding to the environmental education sector to help achieve Canada's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Recommendation 2:** That the government provide funding to EcoSchools Canada to develop and implement a pan-Canadian framework for climate literacy for K-12 students.
- **Recommendation 3:** That the government provide funding to EcoSchools Canada to activate the education sector around the implementation of the ban of harmful single-use plastic products.

Recommendation 1: That the government provide funding to the environmental education sector to help achieve Canada's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

- EcoSchools Canada has been supporting schools since 2005 and was founded as a response to the lack of coordinated and aligned environmental action in schools and school boards in Ontario. The EcoSchools certification framework engages all levels of the education sector - from kindergarten students to trustees - in order to provide a framework for action that measures collective impact. After receiving numerous requests from regions outside Ontario, in 2017, the organization incorporated as EcoSchools Canada to enable the certification program to be delivered nationwide.
- EcoSchools Canada is the singular Canadian representative in the Foundation for Environmental Education's global EcoSchools network of 67 countries and over 19 million students. Through this network, EcoSchools certification is recognized by UNESCO and UNEP. In 2019, when EcoSchools Canada initiated Canada's membership in this network, Canada was the last G7 country to join.
- The EcoSchools program directly connects to 9 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Good Health, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land, Partnerships for the Goals.
- EcoSchools Canada's award-winning environmental program provides independent, third-party verification for schools and outdoor education centres. It is the largest bilingual, voluntary environmental certification program for K-12 schools in Canada. 64% of EcoSchools have certified for 5 years or more.
- EcoSchools Canada is an environment and climate change focussed organization, which leverages the education sector as a vehicle to get young people excited about addressing climate change and taking environmental action. In addition to school certification, EcoSchools Canada supports capacity building through environment focused training workshops and webinars, annual conferences, educational resources, and fundraising opportunities.
- EcoSchools Canada has a network of over 50 regional and national partners that are committed to working together to address climate change and transform the education sector. It acts as a connector in this community and as a key driver of collaboration among educators, students, and community partners.
- Several school boards in Ontario have identified the EcoSchools program as a key component of their climate emergency response plan.
- In 2018-19 alone,
 - Certified EcoSchools in Canada ran 153 local and sustainable food campaigns.
 - 334 campaigns targeting single-use water bottles took place in certified EcoSchools.
 - 291 active transportation campaigns took place in certified EcoSchools.

- Canadian certified EcoSchools ran 829 responsible consumption and production campaigns.
- 76% of certified EcoSchools actively explored their energy use and energy conservation behaviour.
- Certified EcoSchools ran 248 campaigns involving water conservation, pollution prevention, and wise water use issues.
- 77% of certified EcoSchools engaged in school ground greening projects.

Recommendation 2: That the government provide funding to EcoSchools Canada to develop and implement a pan-Canadian framework for climate literacy for K-12 students.

- EcoSchools Canada is recognized as a global leader in the environmental sector and is uniquely positioned to provide a framework for engagement within the education sector. The program currently engages over 50,000 young people annually, reaching over 1 million people through campaigns and whole-school initiatives each year.
- The EcoSchools program centers on a custom-build online platform where over 1,500 student-led EcoTeams collect data and report on their activities annually. A platform has been created for EcoSchools Canada's national rollout that is the result of a 2-year stakeholder engagement process and over 8 years of experience delivering online environmental education.
- The certification platform offers comprehensive impact reporting that can be compared within school boards, throughout regions, or across Canada.
 - Each school has access to an impact reporting dashboard that will track their progress year-over-year on metrics such as GHG's, energy, waste, student engagement and environmental learning.
 - Administrators can use the platform to monitor groups of schools and coach them towards taking deeper action.
- [A third-party report from Immacutec Systems Technologies Inc.](#) shows that Platinum-level certified EcoSchools produce 57% less waste than non-certified schools.
- 64,800 tonnes of Greenhouse Gasses (GHGs) would be eliminated in Ontario alone, if every school in the province became an EcoSchool, [according to Enerlife Consulting](#).
- EcoSchools Canada is leveraging a strong network of regional partners across the country to support a [collective impact framework](#) that will begin to tell the overarching story of youth climate action in Canada. This data-driven narrative will be able to highlight best practices and uncover gaps in support for young people seeking to take action in their communities. It will also serve to cross-promote resources, tools, funding opportunities, and training across Canada.
- Leveraging a proven certification program, a comprehensive data collection model, a network of national and regional partners, and a community of passionate youth, EcoSchools Canada is aiming to support 2 million students by 2022.

Recommendation 3: That the government provide funding to EcoSchools Canada to activate the education sector around the implementation of the ban of harmful single-use plastic products.

- The EcoSchools program can be leveraged to highlight and promote specific environmental actions while incentivizing data collection and reporting.
- In 2018-19, participating schools designed and implemented over 4,500 environmental action campaigns targeting specific themes.
- Schools are ready and eager to take action to eliminate single-use plastics and plastic pollution. In 2018-19, participating schools delivered 334 campaigns targeting single-use water bottles and 829 campaigns promoting responsible consumption and production.
- For over 10 years, EcoSchools Canada has partnered with provincial ministries to develop bilingual, curriculum-linked tools and resources for schools that support action.
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