

ACTION PLAN

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01

REDUCE CLASSROOM GARBAGE WASTE

Using Sarah Newton's classroom as inspiration, the goal will be to minimize waste produced by our class. Following suit with Newton, a garbage audit will be conducted at the start of the school year (Newton). This will be accompanied by research on what products found could be recycled and where, how long it takes for materials to degrade, and places where plastics end up, like the ocean. Students will then be encouraged to take packaging home that can be recycled in the city curbside recycling and bring food with less packaging when they can. For students that use the lunch and breakfast program, a set of plates and cutlery will be purchased for students to take to the canteen instead of getting their food on disposable plates. Students will be responsible for washing their plates, cutlery, and recyclables in the classroom sink. Additionally, drink containers that can be returned for a deposit will be collected, counted, and returned by the class. The money will be used towards a class treat. Periodic garbage audits will be conducted to ensure students are continuing to recycle what can be recycled.

For students that don't have access to the city's curbside recycling program, a small bin will be located in the class that I empty into my bin at home.

02

REDUCE ELECTRICITY USAGE

Starting in September, our class will initiate a school wide challenge to reduce electricity used. The incentive will be that part of the difference in the current year and previous year's hydro bill will be put towards new playground equipment. Some money saved will also be used to made sustainable upgrades to our school. Our class will request the previous year's electricity used from the board office and present it to the school. They will also suggest ways to reduce electricity. According to the Ministry of Education's Sustainable Schools Best Practice Guide, "lighting accounts for nearly half the electric bill in most schools." With this in mind, many suggestions will be related to turning off the lights when not needed in classrooms and other areas that have adequate light from windows throughout the day. Monthly progress reports will be presented to the school.

All students can take it upon themselves to turn off the lights when the class is leaving a space or suggest that lights be turned off if there's enough light coming through the window.

When enough money is raised for playground equipment, all students will benefit.

03

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

As a class and while encouraging other classes to participate, our class will see how much we can reduce our carbon footprint of getting to school. Before and after school, the parking lot and side streets around the school are filled with vehicles picking up and dropping off students. Many students take a school bus and some already walk or bike, but a large portion of the students being dropped off either qualify to take a school bus or live within walking distance of the school. Additionally, students that live further away usually have a friend near by and might be able to carpool. Emphasis will be placed on the positive effects of taking the bus because the number of students that take the bus to school in BC each day removes "60,000 vehicles that would otherwise be on the road" (BC Ministry of Education).

Although not all students can walk, bike, or carpool, the flexibility of the goal is designed to, ideally, include all students in collectively getting to school in a more sustainable way.

04

ADVOCATE FOR SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

As our class explores waste and energy throughout the school year, we will look for ways our school could be made more sustainable and advocate for those changes. This will help students think critically about energy and resource consumption while building skills in persuasive letter writing, supporting arguments, and respectful communication. Although all changes might not happen, if even a small change is successful, it will help them see their power to make change, even while being in grade 7. Sustainable operations changes could include suggestions from the Sustainable Schools Best Practice Guide, such as switching to compact LED bulbs, hand driers instead of paper towel dispensers, or pushing for more sustainability within the breakfast and lunch programs. Not only will this goal help students in the class make positive changes in their own school, but it aligns with "solutionary thinking", as described by Zoe Weil.



WORKS CITED

BC Ministry of Education. *Sustainable Schools Best Practice Guide*.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teaching-tools/environmental-learning/sustbestpractices.pdf>.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yACTw75HRp4&t=2s>.

Weil, Zoe. *The World Becomes What We Teach: Educating a Generation of Solutionaries*. New York Lantern Books, 2016.