



Chillin' with the Planet, Caring for Our Community

A Celebration of our
Environmental Success

brought to you by the
Better Schools™ partnership



HPEDSB Recognized for Energy Conservation and Healthy Active Schools this Spring

The Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board (HPEDSB) is pleased to celebrate the current phase of its school-renewal and conservation program with energy and school-renewal partner Ameresco Canada Inc. The ongoing relationship, called the Better Schools™ partnership (BSp), has renewed school facilities, reduced waste, and helped protect the planet through best practices. In addition, the BSp funds EarthCARE™ – An Environmental Education Partnership, an action-oriented, student-led, environmental leadership program that has inspired thousands of students to become proactive environmental stewards at school, at home and in their communities.



Kathy Soule, Carl Pitman and Peter Love

The HPEDSB received a Certificate of Recognition from the Ontario Power Authority for outstanding achievements in reducing energy consumption through Ameresco's innovative Better Schools™ partnership. The certificate was presented by Peter Love, Ontario's first Chief Energy Conservation Officer, at a special presentation during a regular Board meeting. In addition, Nancy Popovich, Physical Education Curriculum Coordinator at the Board, was recently awarded a provincial Award for Advocacy – Supervision by the Ontario Association for the Supervision of Physical and Health Education (OASPHE).

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The Better Schools Partnership AiMs to Revitalize District Schools

Carl Pitman



The Better Schools partnership functions in tandem with the HPEDSB on another level: it complements the HPEDSB's five-year system plan, *Achievement in Motion for Student Success*, or AiM. This plan focuses on five goals: Success for All Students, System of Character, Employee Excellence, Open Communications and Community Relationships.

Since the adoption of the BSp, 46 elementary schools and eight secondary schools have received approximately \$30 million in infrastructure upgrades to date. Some 17,100 students will benefit from improved facilities, which in turn will promote teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

The Board has achieved 75% of the projected energy savings with the retrofit work completed to date. The remainder of the work will be completed over the next three years at a cost of approximately \$22 million.

The HPEDSB is expected to save \$1.6 million by the end of the project, and has saved over \$1.3 million on utility costs thus far this year. The Board also boasts impressive environmental results: it has reduced greenhouse gas (CO₂) emissions by 8,050 tonnes, or 35% (which is above the Kyoto target of 20%). The reduction in emissions is equivalent to planting 877,450 trees, or taking 1,342 cars off the road. This effort is further enhanced by student participation in the Ameresco Canada EarthCARE program.



Mario Iusi

Mario Iusi, President of Ameresco Canada Inc., says, "The strength of the partnership between Ameresco and the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board is inspiring. The district is seeing many benefits: improved school facilities, lower operating costs, and a growing commitment on the part of students, teachers and staff to put environmental concerns at the forefront of what they teach and do, every day."

Carl Pitman, Chair of the Board, adds, "We're equipping them for a better world that's greener than ours."

Lance W. Roberts, Ph.D., has established a positive correlation between facility quality and student academic achievement.¹ "Improving facility conditions should be viewed as complementing all other interventions to improve student achievement...Substantial manageable academic gains can be captured through school facility enhancement," he says. By improving schools, the BSp helps pave the way for greater academic achievement, thus lending additional support to the goals set out in AiM, the district's system plan.



¹ Lance W. Roberts, Ph.D., [Connecting Facility Conditions to Learning Outcomes: A Review of the Literature](#) (Sociometrix: 2006), p. 5.



“What the kids learn to do today will pay off in the future. The Board absolutely, definitely wants to continue being involved [in the EarthCARE program].”

—Carl Pitman,
Board Chair,
HPEDSB

EarthCARE Expands Scope at District Schools

Veronica Ford, EarthCARE Project Co-ordinator at the HPEDSB, says she has seen tremendous growth in the scope of EarthCARE (EC) and student participation levels since the program was adopted nearly two years ago. At the time of writing, 98 per cent of district schools have implemented the program. Team-building, a key component of the program, has really taken off, with over half of schools ordering EarthCARE T-shirts to help reinforce the message.

The EarthCARE-sponsored *Lights Off/Computers Off* (LOCO) initiative has become standard practice at most schools. Students are encouraged to turn off lights and computers when they leave the classroom to reduce energy waste. In the spring of 2007, a district-wide EarthCARE audit revealed an average 80.3 per cent compliance rate for *Computers Off*, and an average *Lights Off* rate of 85.7 per cent. Between the fall of 2006 and the spring of 2007, the overall reported rate of *Lights Off* increased by 2.5 percentage points. Don Tregenza, Controller of Facility Services, says that the LOCO program is saving the Board approximately \$180,000 per year on utility costs. “It gives [the students] a sense of achievement,” he says.

As the leader of the EarthCARE initiative, Ford chose a theme to focus on in 2006-07: global warming. She cites the example

of two schools, Park Dale School, and Prince Charles PS in Trenton, that now have special programs in place to reduce CO₂ emissions in the pick-up and drop-off areas of their parking lots. Prince Charles students post signs, while students at Park Dale distribute brochures to encourage parents to turn off car engines while they wait for their children – sending a strong message about the importance of helping to protect the planet.

On the whole, conservation activities under the EarthCARE banner have grown substantially, and include poster contests, reducing the number of garbage cans, increasing the number of recycling boxes and expanding composting efforts, to name but a few.

For Ford, caring for the planet meshes perfectly with the district’s increasing focus on character education and respect. She says the



Veronica Ford

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EarthCARE Fosters New Partnerships within Schools and in the Community

Kathy Soule, Director of Education, says that one important reason for the success of EarthCARE is the commitment of staff members. As part of the AiM initiative to promote employee excellence and as a key component of EarthCARE, school support staff are encouraged to play a role in EarthCARE alongside teachers and students. "[It] gives custodians a more recognizable role...they have become leaders in schools through EarthCARE, especially recycling," she says. "They and other



Kathy Soule

school support staff are integral to the organization, part of the web that is woven within the school board." In addition to internal partnering, the Board is fostering partnerships in the community to further strengthen the program. Students in Centre Hastings built

approximately 20 wooden trash bins and recycling boxes, and placed them in strategic locations around Madoc.

Susanna Moodie Elementary School in Belleville recently received help for Earth Day celebrations from the local Home Depot. A

"EarthCARE supports and extends the character development of our students beyond today into tomorrow."

—Kathy Soule,
Director of Education,
HPEDSB

program is less about training than getting the teams together, "sharing and motivating each other, generating ideas and learning from each other." She adds, "There is a synergy that happens when we work together."

Kerry Donnell, Communications Officer at the HPEDSB, says she has seen the number of conservation activities escalate since the program was adopted by the Board. Some of the initiatives she has witnessed include 'litterless lunches' where students bring recyclable containers; signs and banners posted throughout schools; Trash Bashes (community clean-ups); tree-planting; paperless lesson days; and recycling and composting. "Schools have embraced EarthCARE with intensity," she proudly notes.

Donnell feels strongly about the importance of role models, and the support of EarthCARE is an integral part of the AiM system plan. "Under the AiM umbrella, the EarthCARE component supports character development, stewardship, leadership and respect – respect for self, others and the environment," she states.



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Nancy Popovich and Kathy Soule

“We are seeing how EarthCARE integrates with student achievement. There is a heightened awareness about global warming and its impact on animals, vegetation and the human race.”

—Kerry Donnell,
Communications
Officer, HPEDSB

Green Team made up of store managers and associates helped students clean up flower beds and the school playground, and also helped the children build birdhouses. The clean-up has become an annual event.

Soule adds, “EarthCARE supports and extends the character development of our students beyond today into tomorrow. It develops a sense of duty to fulfill commitments for the future, to think about what they want the world to be like for their children, and to do something about it.”

To learn more about the goals of AiM, please visit www.hpedsb.on.ca/ec/directorsOffice/strategicPlanAiM.html.

Award-winning Teacher Combines Physical Activity, Character Development and Environmental Stewardship

Nancy Popovich, Physical Education Curriculum Co-ordinator at the Board, is an important EarthCARE partner. She has offered guidance and insight to officials from the Ministries of Education and Health Promotion to help them embed a strong environmental component in the Ontario school curriculum. At the HPEDSB Popovich has been instrumental in establishing curriculum links among Healthy Active School Communities, the AiM system plan and

EarthCARE. The three elements are inseparable, she says, with a common goal of reinforcing the importance of demonstrating respect: respect for others, respect for the environment, and respect for oneself through physical activity and proper nutrition.

Popovich says that Ameresco Canada has been a great supporter of The HPE Learning Foundation’s Recess Revival project. The renewal partner has afforded schools the opportunity to paint the physical environment of schoolyards to promote active play, including hopscotch. She says, “Ameresco makes the partnership sustainable. I’m pleased to see how engaged Ameresco is in our schools.”

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Energy Conservation Pays Dividends to HPEDSB Schools

Trenton High School is an example of a school that has benefited from the Better Schools partnership's gain sharing program. Gain sharing returns some of the money saved through energy efficiency to schools in the form of discretionary funds, largely to support additional environmental initiatives.

Teacher Jeff McDougall, who heads up EarthCARE at his school, says the approximate amount of \$1,000 the school received allowed them to buy reusable dishes for the school's catering program to replace the disposable plates they were using. McDougall says this emphasizes the importance of taking "little steps to reduce the footprint we leave on the environment."

Dave Lanovaz, a teacher who lends support to EC at Trenton HS, says he initiated a 'hundred mile breakfast' staff meeting using locally-grown produce to raise awareness of environmental concerns among staff. This event, he says, further underscores the importance of role-modelling for students. He has also been instrumental in reducing the amount of administrative paper used by teachers. Says Lanovaz: "Little steps are important. If you can

do one thing per week and make it a habit over the course of a year, you can make a real difference."

Principal Ian Press says that to ensure caring for the environment in a school context, students need "role modelling...a grassroots way of promoting it and making it front and centre," which is a key goal of EarthCARE.

The educators hope to use future gain-sharing funds to purchase a water-dispensing machine to allow students to bring their own water bottles, eliminating the use of disposable plastic containers that quickly cause recycling bins to overflow.

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Speaker Bruce Kirkby, Trenton HS students and Principal Ian Press





“EarthCARE provides students with a voice that will ultimately provide them with a future.”

— Lisa Resmer
Teacher, Coe Hill School

Lisa Resmer and Suzanne Copeland



Coe Hill School Teaches Students to Care for Creatures Great and Small

Principal Suzanne Copeland and teacher Lisa Resmer are proud to ‘walk the talk’ when it comes to teaching and modelling conservation behaviours at Coe Hill School. Lisa is head of the *Extreme Green Team*, the name given to environmental stewards at her school. She has the full support of the principal and other staff members. The school has approximately 85 students, with at least 20 showing up for team meetings – a testament to their enthusiasm for caring for the environment.

Some of the environmental activities at Coe Hill School include *Lights Off/Computers Off*, yard clean-ups, composting and ‘litterless lunches.’ Recent activities include a contest where students were encouraged to research different species and create colourful posters.

Another special project gave students the

opportunity to offer a warm winter refuge to a goldfish and a salamander from Copeland’s property. These creatures might otherwise have perished during the long winter. Both Copeland and Resmer say this activity helped enhance students’ empathy and respect for animals. It also gave them the opportunity to demonstrate some of the eight character attributes outlined in the HPEDSB’s strategic plan, including caring, respect and responsibility.²

Copeland feels the value of EarthCARE is that “it develops the character needed for our students to become responsible adults who will take care of our environment.” She states, “Respect is the one strand of character education we’re focusing on – it will flow out to the other attributes.”

Both say that students look forward to expanding their role in EarthCARE, and that the road to conservation at their school is “a consultative process” which takes into account their students’ abilities and interests. Additional projects either planned or in the works include letter-writing campaigns to reduce waste generated by cottagers and an area coffee merchant.

Resmer feels the students benefit from knowing they matter and can make a difference. She says: **“EarthCARE provides students with a voice that will ultimately provide them with a future.”**

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² For more information about the eight character attributes mentioned in this newsletter, please visit http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/documents/attributes_may07.pdf.





HPE Trustees accept conservation award from Mario Iusi, President, Ameresco Canada

Kente Public School Celebrates Environmental Accomplishments and the Spirit of Co-operation

Principal Bonnie Lloyd plays an important role in EarthCARE at Kente PS. Her role is to encourage and facilitate conservation efforts among staff, using various forms of correspondence to get the message across. Many parents, she says, are keenly attuned to the importance of conserving resources – which helps to ensure the program continues to be a success.

Teacher Catherine Blakely co-ordinates EarthCARE meetings with students who have volunteered to be on the school's EarthCARE Green Team, and spearheads a variety of school conservation activities. The school's *Lights Off/ Computers Off* program – fondly described as LOCORO – includes the *Recycling OK* component. Students who are EarthCARE monitors are responsible for ensuring that lights and computers are turned off, and that only recyclable items are placed in the appropriate bins in each classroom. This endeavour is not only intended to protect the environment, but also to reduce the school's tipping (waste pick-up) fees.

Once a competitive activity pitting classrooms against each other, LOCORO has become a co-operative effort. Students now pool the tokens they receive for successful environmental stewardship efforts to earn extra recess time!

Kente PS has run a number of EarthCARE contests. The prizes have included student-made

Catherine Blakely



trophies composed of materials that would otherwise have been discarded or recycled. The school has also hosted a number of guest speakers, including a local conservationist who monitors the health of the nearby marsh, and a representative from a waste management company, to speak about important environmental issues. In addition, a plan to make 'litterless' lunches a regular habit is in the works.

According to Lloyd, EarthCARE has contributed to character development at her school, a key component of the board-wide AiM initiative. "Some of our students...are finding self-esteem and confidence through participating in EarthCARE," she says.

Blakely says, "Students feel they can make a difference. They are excited at the endless possibilities [EarthCARE offers]." She proudly states that even on the days when there are no EarthCARE meetings, "they still ask if there's anything they can do and their level of enthusiasm, interest and devotion is very inspiring."

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Chillin' with the Planet, Caring for Our Community Event a Success

On April 20, Canadian author and photographer Bruce Kirkby was the featured keynote speaker at the *Chillin' with the Planet, Caring for Our Community* event held at Trenton High School. His speech addressed the role of leadership, character building and personal responsibility in caring for the environment. Bruce's presentation included slides, and inspired students and teachers alike.

Kirkby left lasting and empowering messages

by Jordan Cheyne, Grade 10 Geoventure student, Moira Secondary School

Fostering respect for the environment is a frequently mentioned and highly significant initiative in the school setting as well as on the global stage. We often try to engender this respect by preaching the consequences of humanity's neglect towards the environment. Bruce Kirkby's presentation at Trenton High School on Friday, April 20, 2007 took a much different approach. An outdoor adventurer with over 1,500 days of field experience who has scaled Mount Everest and crossed the Arabian Desert on a camel, Kirkby chose not to reminisce about his adventures but rather to impress upon the audience the value of environmental responsibility. His message was one of respect and accountability for the environment.

Additional speakers included Carl Pitman, Chair of the Board, Student Trustee Steven Solarz and Student Senator Sara Jackson. There were also student EarthCARE displays, posters, an *EarthCARE in our Schools* slideshow featuring EarthCARE activities, a *Recycle* video created by Moira Secondary students, and a drama presentation by Trenton High School drama students.

The presentation included many accounts of man's increasing stranglehold on the environment and instances where Kirkby witnessed firsthand the gradual intrusion on industry into an untouched landscape. Kirkby's devotion to responsible exploration and adventure represents an admirable and very rare link between humanity and our environment. The fearlessness and freedom from conformity shown in Mr. Kirkby's adventures are virtues especially applicable to our quest to improve our environmental practice. His experiences seemed to reflect the awesome presence of the natural environment, offering a stark contradiction to the highly industrialized world that we live in. The presentation was both enthralling and empowering. The adventures of Bruce Kirkby and the message associated with them left a lasting impression on his audience.

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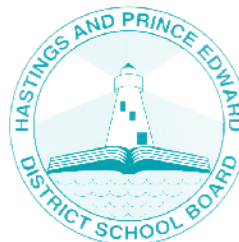
REVITALIZE...Continued from cover page

Don Tregenza, Controller of Facility Services, is very pleased with the school improvements that have been made or are now being implemented. These include replacing boilers with higher efficiency heating systems and upgrading to environmentally friendly chillers; installing building automation systems (BAS) to reduce energy waste in unoccupied areas; replacing doors, weather-stripping and windows to provide both long-term cost savings and aesthetic benefits; renovating washroom equipment to reduce water waste; and replacing old exterior lighting with high-efficiency fixtures that use less energy. The new mechanical equipment will also reduce reactive maintenance costs.

Tregenza says that students and teachers appreciate the washroom upgrades, particularly the new wall finishes and washroom fixtures, as they improve the appearance of schools. Overall, he says the relationship with Ameresco Canada continues to be a key part of the Board's success. He states, "We value the partnership. They're always available to listen...they have the experience and the expertise to complete projects within the timelines and budget established."



Don Tregenza



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For more information about Better Schools™, please contact Tim Cresswell at 1-888-483-7267 or tcresswell@ameresco.com. You can also visit www.ameresco.com.

For information about EarthCARE, please contact Rose-Marie Batley, Executive Director, EarthCARE at rmb@earthcarecanada.com or call (613) 868-0721 or visit www.earthcarecanada.com.

For more information about the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board, please call Kerry Donnell, Communications Officer, at (613) 966-1170 or at 1-800-267-4350 ext. 2354. You can also visit www.hpedsb.on.ca

