

Ministry of Education

Ministère de l'Éducation

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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers of School Authorities
Principals of Elementary Schools
Principals of Secondary Schools
Principals of First Nation Elementary Schools
Principals of First Nation Secondary Schools
Principals of Inspected Private Schools

FROM: Ben Levin
Deputy Minister

DATE: March 20, 2009

SUBJECT: ***Release of *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools****

As you are aware, the Ministry launched *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools* at the recent Environmental Education Symposium on February 25-26, 2009.

The Symposium provided an opportunity for school board teams to share initiatives, resources and effective practices in order to promote the implementation of environmental education in school boards and schools across the province. This opportunity built on the series of environmental education initiatives and supports, including project funding, provided by the Ministry since June 2007.

Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools outlines the ministry's commitment to environmental education, focusing on a shared vision, a common vocabulary, the importance of student engagement and leadership, and a reliance on the sharing of practices and resources. The policy framework describes how the Ministry, school boards and schools will work together to move forward on the implementation of environmental education.

In developing their policies, school boards may find a helpful model in the three-goal structure of this policy framework. The framework goals address both environmental literacy and environmentally responsible practices. The three goals are organized around the themes of teaching and learning; student engagement and community connections; and environmental leadership. School boards are expected to revise or develop an environmental education policy, in collaboration with their community partners, that reflects their local circumstances and is aligned with this policy framework. Schools are expected to develop an implementation plan that aligns with board policy. The framework goals, strategies and actions implemented by all system partners will ensure that environmental education is a meaningful part of every child's learning in Ontario.

This policy framework also provides examples of indicators that will allow school boards and schools to map the development and measure the progress of their implementation of environmental education. These examples are provided for school boards and schools to assist with implementation and can be integrated where appropriate into existing reporting structures and planning mechanisms. It is recognized that the implementation of the policy framework for environmental education will occur over time and that it will be guided by local needs and conditions.

To facilitate implementation, a copy of the policy framework was recently posted on the Ministry website at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/curriculumcouncil/ShapeTomorrow.pdf>. Print copies of the document are being distributed to school boards and schools in March 2009. To order additional copies of this document please log onto the Service Ontario Publications website – www.serviceontario.ca/publications - using your EDU username and password. If you have forgotten or not received your username and password please send an email to webpubont-EDU@ontario.ca .

We look forward to continuing to work with you in supporting environmental education in our schools and in ensuring that Ontario students have the tools to be knowledgeable and engaged citizens now and in the future.

Ben Levin

cc: Grant Clarke ADM (A)
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Sue Durst, Director, CAPB
Ginette Plourde, Director, FLEPPB
Kit Rankin, Director, FSB
Regional Managers