

BOARD MOTION: June 21, 2021

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to prepare a Climate Action Plan as directed by the Board in its motion of 24 June 2019, by December 2021 for consideration by the Board and our stakeholders. The plan should also include funding options to support targets and strategies such as available rebates and government funding to meet sectoral targets set by the provincial government.

CARRIED 8:1

Board of Education

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
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*Chair: Jordan Watters Vice-Chair: Elaine Leonard
Trustees: Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris, Angie Hentze,
Diane McNally, Ryan Painter, Rob Paynter, Ann Whiteaker*

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Trustee Duncan
RE: Motion for OPPS
DATE: June 14, 2021

Background: Since 2008 the School District of Greater Victoria No. 61 has been required to submit an annual Carbon Neutral Action Report. Previous reports can be found via the following url:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/climate-change/public-sector/cnar/annual-reports-cnars-table>

This reporting sets out our emission profile, the total offsets to reach net-zero emissions and the actions we have taken in the calendar year to offset our emissions in line with our obligations under the Climate Change Accountability Act and Carbon Neutral Government Regulation. The Climate Change Accountability Act section 6.1 sets out that:

Public sector buildings and fleets

6.1 *A public sector organization must manage the risks to the public sector organization that could reasonably be expected to result from a changing climate and minimize the public sector organization's adverse environmental effects by complying with the prescribed requirements and achieving the prescribed targets respecting*

- (a) buildings owned or leased by the public sector organization,*
- (b) motor vehicles and other mobile combustion sources owned or leased by the public sector organization, and*
- (c) the fuels used in or by the things referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b), that are owned or leased by the public sector organization, and the infrastructure used to dispense those fuels.*

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

In the 2019 Carbon Neutral Action Report, we set out that the Board of Education, “...clearly recognizes its role as a leader in environmental stewardship and will continue to support initiatives that will reduce energy consumption and reduce our impact on the environment.” (2019 Carbon Neutral Action Report, p. 3) In this report we also commit to posting the Carbon Neutral Action Report to our website by June 2020.

School Districts are in a unique position to show leadership in mitigating and adapting to address the impacts of climate change. We are a member of the public sector with responsibility to both manage our resources such as our buildings and infrastructure in an environmentally sustainable manner, and to support an environmental ethic including the importance of sustainability in our educational programs.

Rationale:

On June 24, 2019 through the passing of a motion of the Board we declared a Climate Emergency and directed the Superintendent to develop a Climate Change Action Plan with specific objectives and measurements that are in alignment with the United Nation’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It is now just days to the 2nd anniversary of this declaration and the Board and school community has yet to see a concrete plan with measurable targets and goals. What is the plan for reducing our GHGs and how will that be achieved to keep us to below 1.5 degrees of global warming as laid out by the IPCC?

Recently the provincial government updated its’ requirement for GHG reductions in buildings with sectoral targets. Sectoral GHG targets have been established for 2030 in transportation, industry, oil and gas, and buildings and communities. Sectoral GHG targets for 2030 are expressed as a percentage reduction from 2007 sector emissions. Target ranges for each sector are as follows:

- Transportation- 27 to 32%;
- Industry- 38 to 43%;
- Oil and gas- 33 to 38%; and
- Buildings and communities- 59 to 64%.

Sectoral targets were established based on emissions modelling done by the Climate Action Secretariat and input from engagement with stakeholders and partners.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021ENV0022-000561>

The Province has launched a new round of applications for emission reduction projects for 2021 through the CleanBC Industry Fund with temporary changes to increase the provincial share of funding up to 90% of project costs with a cap of \$25 million per project to encourage a greater number of proposals. However, to be eligible for funding through the CleanBC Industry Fund, applicants must have emissions over 10,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021ENV0022-000561>

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One *Learning* Community



Our School District's most recent Carbon Neutral Report on June 2019 reports 4,868 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent were emitted during the annual reporting period. Therefore, as it stands we are not eligible for the new funding available to support sectoral targets.

Clean energy retrofits funded by the province could solve some of the budgetary challenges faced by school districts who should not be forced to sell assets in order to fund retrofits. It is a moral imperative that the Board act swiftly on climate change. We need a plan and we need to monitor the implementation of that plan. Our School District was one of the first School Board's in Canada to declare a climate emergency. We need to show our learning community and the country that this wasn't just hollow words.

The proposed motion supports the Board's Environment Policy 3324 which includes a commitment to environmental management through considering the environmental impact in the planning of all operational and educational programs and to working with community and government agencies to support good environmental practices.

The proposed motion also supports the Board's Energy, Environment and Climate Change Policy 4216.22 which states, *"The Board of Education takes it as its responsibility to ensure that every effort is made to conserve energy and resources in order to reduce the District's carbon foot print. This requires an ongoing, integrated and systematic approach to energy management, including assessing performance, setting goals, creating an action plan, and tracking and communicating results. Greenhouse emission reduction is the joint responsibility of the trustees, administrators, staff, and students. Every employee is expected to be cognizant of their energy use and contribute to energy efficiencies."*

Alignment to Strategic Plan:

The proposed motion aligns with all goals of the Strategic Plan. At the core of the proposed motion is a clear commitment to our District's Strategic Plan and the core values expressed in that plan of sustainability, social responsibility, innovation, openness and transparency. In June 2019 our Board recognized that the breakdown of the stable climate and sea level under which human life has developed constitutes an emergency. We know that we must take action to mitigate and adapt to address climate change. The action directed in the motion is intended to support ongoing climate accountability.

Recommended motion:

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to prepare a Climate Action Plan as directed by the Board in its motion of 24 June 2019, **by September 2021** for consideration by the Board and our stakeholders. Further the plan should establish measurable targets and strategies to reduce GHGs by 2030 commensurate with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's call to limit warming to 1.5 degrees. The plan should also include funding options to support targets and strategies such as available rebates and government funding to meet sectoral targets set by the provincial government.

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