



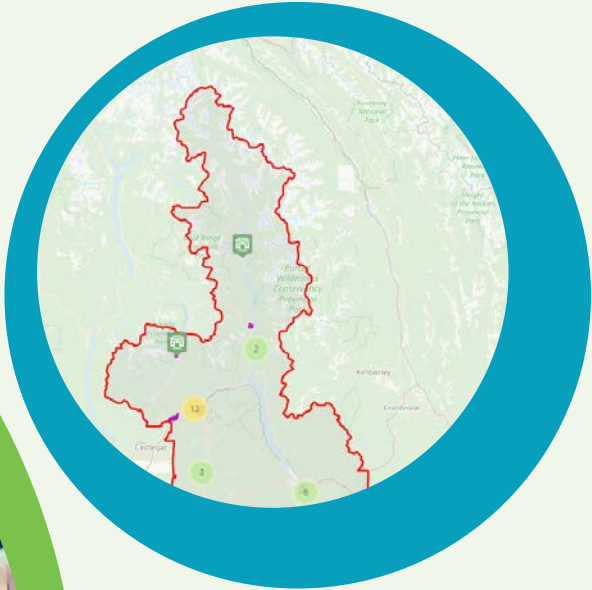
School District 8  
Kootenay Lake

# CLIMATE ACTION & SUSTAINABILITY ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 10, 2026



We acknowledge, respect and honour the First Nations in whose traditional territories the Kootenay Lake School District operates and all Aboriginal people residing within the boundaries of School District No. 8.



# CONTENTS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ..... i

ABOUT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 8 (KOOTENAY LAKE) ..... 1

COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE ACTION ..... 2

EDUCATION, AWARENESS & ACTION ..... 4

STEWARDSHIP ..... 8

CULTURE ..... 12

LOOKING FORWARD ..... 16

APPENDIX A - 2025 PSO CLIMATE CHANGE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT ..... 17



# ABOUT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 8 (KOOTENAY LAKE)

School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake) (SD8) is a rural district of six unique school communities within two different time zones within the Columbia Basin in southeastern B.C. Kootenay Lake is one of the largest lakes in British Columbia, with the Kootenay River flowing into and out of it on either side of the highest mountain pass in British Columbia, and draining into the Columbia River system toward the Pacific Ocean.

School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake) serves a diverse region in southeastern British Columbia, operating 21 schools across the Regional District of Central Kootenay.

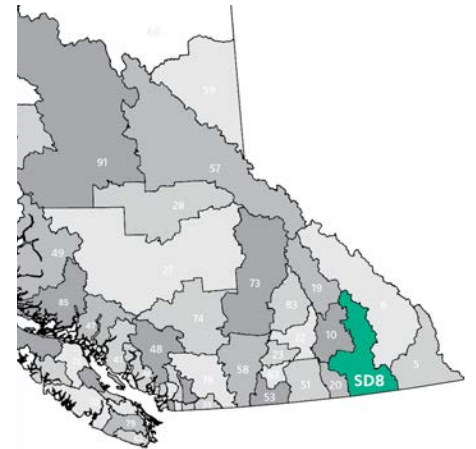
School District No. 8 has developed a [Strategic Plan for 2024-2029](#), which focuses on five key priorities to enhance student success and well-being:

- Lifelong learners
- Connected learners
- Caring and inclusive learning culture
- Cultural and identity development
- Career development

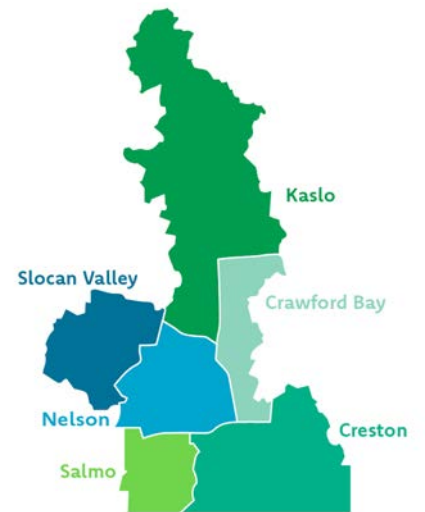
The Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of education, stewardship, and cultural development in fostering a sustainable future.

Climate change is raising the risk of more frequent and severe wildfires in southeastern B.C. that will result in smoke during the summer months and affect surrounding areas in shoulder seasons as well. The risk of floods and impacts from high precipitation events and drought is also increasing.

For these reasons, climate change and sustainability action is critical to SD8 meeting the needs of students, staff, education partners, Indigenous partners and local communities. This report outlines how the district will take action.



British Columbia School Districts



School District 8 Kootenay Lake  
Families of schools

4,500  
students

22  
schools

800  
staff



# COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE ACTION

## Policy 173: Climate Action and Sustainability

In alignment with the Strategic Plan, the district has developed **Policy 173: Climate Action and Sustainability** that was adopted by the Board of Education on February 11, 2025.

This policy’s commits SD8 to responding to climate change and integrating sustainability into education, planning and programs across the district. It outlines three commitment areas where the district will take action to contribute to a positive future:

### Education, Awareness and Action

We will foster education, awareness, and action to empower all education partners with the critical thinking skills, knowledge, and responsibility to address climate issues, while honoring Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.

### Stewardship

We will enhance the efficiency and resilience of our operations while reducing climate impacts through our sustainability efforts.

### Culture

We will promote climate action and sustainability through leadership, inclusive decision-making and sustainability discourse.

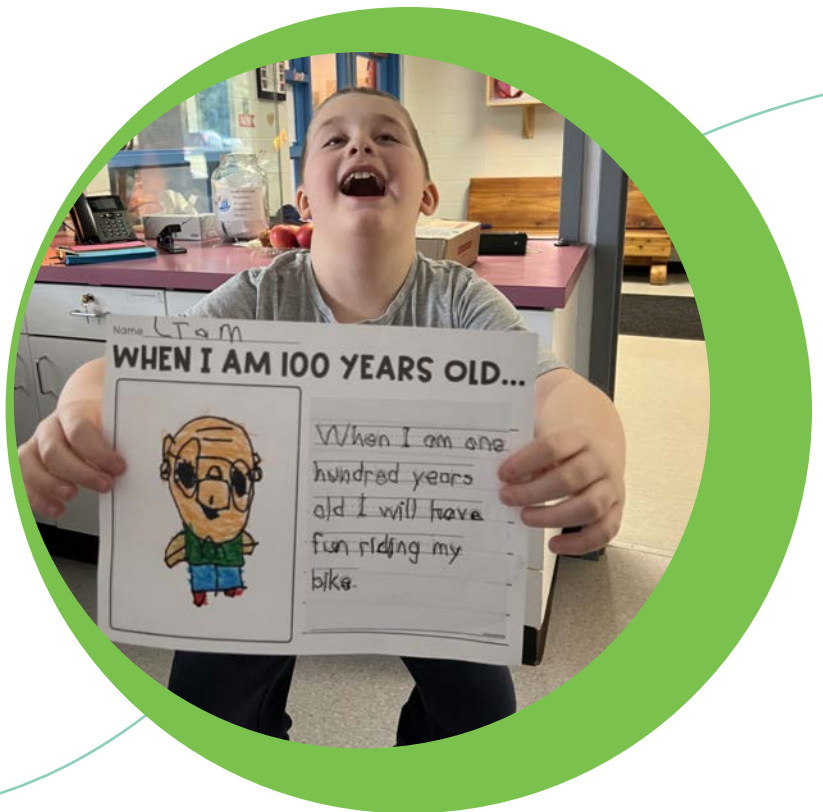




## About This Report

In the fall of 2024, School District No. 8 established a Sustainability and Climate Action Implementation Group, comprised of leadership from across the district, to develop a set of actions that will advance our sustainability commitments over the next five years.

This report outlines the actions developed for each commitment area and provides an update on our progress for the 2025-2026 school year. In accordance with current provincial regulations, all public service organizations are required to report their annual greenhouse gas emissions. The district's 2025 Climate Change Accountability Report is appended to the end of this report.





# EDUCATION, AWARENESS & ACTION

Education is foundational to school districts, and education is also the foundation for meaningful climate action. Through core educational programming and community partnerships, SD8 is creating opportunities for active participation in climate action and sustainability, empowering students, staff, and the broader school district community to learn about and take action on these critical issues.

Real change happens when staff, students, education partners and communities work together. The following vision and commitments will guide SD8 in climate change and sustainability actions over the next five years, leading to more sustainable outcomes and empowering the leaders of tomorrow.

## Vision

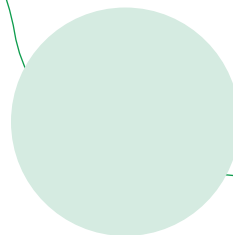
SD8 will engage all education partners—including students, staff, trustees, parents, families, community members, rights holders, and Métis partners—to develop critical thinking skills that address sustainability, climate, and biodiversity challenges. The district will empower individuals to make informed decisions and take actionable steps toward climate solutions, fostering a collective sense of ownership and accountability.

## Commitments

To achieve this vision, SD8 will:

- Encourage conversations, learning and action related to sustainability and climate change.
- Promote growth of environmental literacy and ethics.
- Foster hope through knowledge, empowerment, engagement and action.
- Incorporate Indigenous knowledge, worldview and ways of learning.

The following table highlights the priority actions we will undertake over the next five years that will help the district make progress on our Education, Awareness and Action commitment area.





Grey box indicates priority action corresponding to each school year.

Education, Awareness & Action – Priority Actions	Timelines (2025–2030)				
	25–26	26–27	27–28	28–29	29–30
Conduct a survey to collect information from each school on its Sustainability & Climate Action-related programs; identify external partners. Use data collected to identify opportunities for sharing best practices.	Grey	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Launch an annual survey to identify what actions each school has taken to move forward with the goals identified within this plan.	Light Blue	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Develop a plan for strengthening relationships with external partners (e.g. Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN) & Kootenay Boundary Environmental Education (KBEE)) to foster environmental awareness & stewardship among students.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Conduct a review of existing curriculum & course offerings across all grade levels to identify sustainability related content, themes, & learning outcomes.	Grey	Grey	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Develop & implement a plan to address gaps & opportunities for sustainability-related curriculum & course offerings.	Light Blue	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Review provincially offered Board Authority Authorized (BAA) courses to identify sustainability-related courses which could be offered at SD8.	Grey	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Develop one new sustainability-focused BAA course within the 2026–2027 academic year.	Light Blue	Grey	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Provide at least one workshop at each district-wide professional development day to equip staff with knowledge, resources, & strategies to integrate sustainability & climate action into teaching & learning.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Engage District Student Voice & Student Trustees at least twice a year to meet with the Operations department team, learn & provide input on stewardship & operations projects & initiatives.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Create a plan to strengthen & grow student-led sustainability & climate action initiatives – provide resources, mentorship, & platforms (e.g. student councils & green teams) for engagement within schools & community.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Embed Indigenous knowledge, ecological practices, & worldviews into projects & initiatives – invite Knowledge Keepers into classrooms, elders to speak at the annual Student Leadership conference; offer Indigenous knowledge & land-based learning to SD8 staff & students.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey



# EDUCATION, AWARENESS & ACTION

## Progress in 2025-2026

Significant progress has been made in this area over the past year, including:

- The Climate Action and Sustainability Working Group (CASWG) was created and met regularly throughout the year to support collaboration, learning, and sustainability initiatives across the district, including the promotion of monthly sustainability themes.
- CASWG members met with the Director of Operations to learn more about district stewardship, operations projects and sustainability initiatives taking place across SD8.
- City of Nelson presented to CASWG in January on the theme “Save Our Energy.”
- School based climate action and sustainability leads were established to support communication with staff, share information at staff meetings and help champion sustainability initiatives within individual schools.
- A district website was created to provide climate action and sustainability resources for educators.
- Ongoing information was shared through weekly communication to staff, including curriculum connections, sustainability updates and educator resources.
- SD8 conducted a Sustainability and Climate Action Survey to gather information about initiatives currently taking place across schools. The information collected will help identify opportunities to share effective practices, strengthen collaboration, and highlight community partnerships supporting this work.
- Kootenay Boundary Environmental Education Initiative (KBEE) presented at the Banff conference as a model for other school districts interested in developing environmental education networks within their own contexts.
- The KBEE Place-Based Learning Inspiration Handbook was updated. The handbook is a living collection of curricular ideas, resources, and examples of environmental and place-based learning practices that will continue to evolve over time.
- SD8 staff participated in an Indigenous Day of Learning that included opportunities for land-based learning experiences, including walks on the land.

SD8 continues to strengthen environmental and sustainability learning through ongoing partnerships and participation in regional initiatives, including:

- Strong ongoing connections and collaboration with Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN), KBEE and Wildsight.
- Continued support for the Columbia River Field School, an SD8 Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) course that provides students with place-based and experiential environmental learning opportunities.
- Participation by SD8 schools in the Take Me Outside for Learning Challenge, encouraging outdoor and land-based learning experiences for students.
- Participation in the Annual Environmental Education Leadership Clinic held April 17–19, with three SD8 teachers attending to support professional learning and environmental education leadership development.



# EDUCATION, AWARENESS & ACTION

## Sharing Sustainability Stories

### Columbia River Field School

The Columbia River Field School is a unique 15-day School District No. 8 Board/Authority Authorized course for students ages 15 - 18 that combines canoeing, outdoor adventure, and place-based learning along the Columbia River. Students paddle key sections of the river while exploring topics such as ecology, geography, history, culture, and sustainability. Guided by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, scientists, local experts, and outdoor instructors, participants earn four credits and Recreational Canoe Association of BC certifications while building leadership, friendships, and a deeper understanding of the Columbia Basin.



### Crawford Bay Elementary-Secondary School Green Team

Students in the Crawford Bay School Green Team continue to demonstrate how small actions can create a big impact. Throughout the year, students have participated in a range of sustainability initiatives connected to learning, stewardship and community. This has included trimming invasive plants and using them in art projects, visiting local wetlands with a wolverine tracker, learning alongside Knowledge Keepers, and supporting a school garden focused on local food and food security. The school also continues to encourage the use of natural light to reduce electricity consumption, along with school wide reduce and recycle initiatives.



# STEWARDSHIP

A commitment to stewardship motivates SD8 to make responsible choices that minimize environmental impact while enhancing the district’s ability to adapt to a changing world. Every aspect of school district operations, whether managing buildings, grounds, and transportation or making purchasing decisions and handling waste, offers an opportunity to reduce emissions, conserve resources, and support biodiversity.

By prioritizing resource efficiency and building resilient spaces and systems, SD8 reduces its environmental impact, enhances the safety of students and staff, and creates long-term financial and operational benefits.

SD8’s vision and commitments provide a clear plan to continue to drive meaningful action in this area.

## Vision

SD8 will enhance efficiency and resilience while reducing climate impact by setting focused sustainability goals and targets to monitor progress. The district will prioritize efforts in climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience, driving operational improvements and long-term financial and operational efficiencies.

## Commitments

To achieve this vision, SD8 will:

- Reduce carbon emissions, conserving energy and water, and making transitions in relation to buildings, infrastructure, transportation, properties, purchasing, programs and services.
- Foster biodiversity associated with District properties.
- Consider carbon emissions, biodiversity, energy and water consumption in all decision-making.
- Foster programs to reduce consumption and waste, and promoting reuse, recycling and regeneration.
- Decrease climate impact through mitigation and adaptation, including considerations regarding the cumulative effects of District decisions and activities.
- Ensure accountability by setting goals, measuring and reporting on progress, and using public reporting mechanisms.
- Advocate for resources to facilitate a transition to more sustainable options.

The following table highlights the priority actions SD8 will undertake over the next five years that will help the district progress in its stewardship commitments.





Grey box indicates priority action corresponding to each school year.

Stewardship - Priority Actions	Timelines (2025-2030)				
	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30
Continue to identify & implement strategies to enhance building energy efficiency & reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Engage students, teachers, & staff in at least one campaign or initiative per year that promotes waste reduction, energy conservation, climate action, sustainable food choices, or sustainable transportation.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Continue to incorporate water conservation opportunities into the installation or replacement of water fixtures, irrigation systems, & HVAC systems.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Review & develop procedures that optimize travel to district sites / schools to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	Grey	White	White	White	White
Review & develop strategies to optimize student curricular & co-curricular travel to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Continue to enhance green spaces & promote biodiversity on district sites.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Assess the district's purchasing practices to identify products & services that offer opportunities to further embed sustainability.	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Grey	Light Blue
Integrate practical sustainability design measures & considerations into the Facility Project Proposal for all operations & school projects. Identify & pursue funding to support sustainability in project planning.	Grey	White	White	White	White
Embed sustainability into the district's procurement processes, including the acquisition of fleet vehicles, equipment, & other products.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Continue to work with Waste Management service provider to maintain waste data tracking system.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Continue to explore & implement waste reduction initiatives, applying best practice to reduce waste.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Pilot window covering solutions at select schools to enhance the learning environment during hot weather.	Grey	White	White	White	White
Complete FireSmart pilots at select schools to manage forests for increased safety. Monitor the results & expand the program to other suitable sites.	Grey	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Identify & pursue funding & incentives to support sustainability, energy efficient & emissions reductions projects.	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey



# STEWARDSHIP

## Progress in 2025-2026

This year, SD8 has achieved considerable progress in stewardship, including:

- HVAC System Replacements – Mount Sentinel Secondary school is in the final stages of a complete HVAC system replacement. This year, after completing the installation of a new DDC (Direct Digital Controls) system at Kootenay River Secondary School, the team is now installing the system at L.V. Rogers Secondary School.
- LED Lighting Projects – LED lighting was recently completed at Salmo Elementary School and the gym area at Crawford Bay Elementary/Secondary School.
- Building Comfort/HVAC Heat Load – At L.V. Rogers Secondary School, various window coverings were installed as a pilot program to improve building comfort and alleviate the HVAC heat load created in the summer months. We are excited to explore the results and anticipate a cost-effective improvement.
- Firesmart Project – The forest at Jewett school in Meadowcreek is in the final stages of the Firesmart project. The program provides guidance on how best to support the furthering of wildfire resiliency in BC, establishing a method for research project coordination across the province, nationally and internationally, as well as with aligning research priorities with those of FireSmart Canada and national agencies like Canada Wildfire, CIFFC and Natural Resources Canada.



# STEWARDSHIP

## Sharing Sustainability Stories

### SD8 Receives National Award for Surfacing Sustainability and Stewardship Ideas

The district received an Award of Distinction from the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education (CACE/ACACÉ) in October 2025 for its Sustainability in SD8 public engagement campaign.

Through the EngageSD8 platform, participants submitted 357 surveys and 700 ideas on how SD8 can reduce its environmental footprint, support sustainable transportation, and make sustainability part of everyday school life.

Ideas submitted during the engagement served to underpin the SD8 Climate Action and Sustainability Policy and highlighted sustainability and stewardship priorities going forward.



### Let it Grow! Students Learn to Garden Indoors

Across SD8 schools, students are exploring questions such as: Can we grow vegetables in the winter? What do plants need to grow? Can plants grow without soil?

The district supplied 26 new grow towers to schools in 2025-2026, funded through the National School Food Program and Food Infrastructure Program.

For example, students at Blewett Elementary planted peas, beans, nasturtiums, and basil in their tower equipped with lights and a supply of supplemental nutrients.

By learning to produce food year-round, students learn about sustainability, healthy eating, agricultural and water stewardship, food security, STEM and more.



# CULTURE

SD8 is building a culture where sustainability and climate action is a priority. In this effort, the district is engaging students, collaborating with staff and educational partners, and sharing stories of success and learning with communities. SD8 is also working to embed sustainability into policy and everyday decision-making, ensuring that climate and other sustainability considerations are integrated into how learners grow as global citizens in an innovative and inclusive community.

The district recognizes that climate change affects not only the environment but also human mental health. That’s why SD8 is committed to supporting the well-being of students, staff and educational partners through collective action and community connections.

The vision and commitments outlined below will guide SD8 to foster a culture of kindness, creativity, and resilience in the face of climate and other challenges ahead.

## Vision

SD8 will inspire a proactive response to climate change and sustainability within our district by leading through example, fostering open communication, and engaging diverse perspectives to guide our actions.

## Commitments

To achieve this vision, SD8 will:

- Bring a sustainability lens and considering opportunities for climate change mitigation and adaptation in all areas of planning and decision-making at every level.
- Foster collaboration and engagement with education partners in our sustainability and climate-related efforts.
- Ensure SD8’s sustainability policy and process is understandable and accessible.
- Cultivate kindness, mindfulness, empathy, adaptability, creativity, community and resilience within the context of climate change.
- Lead by example and demonstrating SD8’s commitment.
- Advocate for funding, including finding opportunities to partner with local and regional organization, to support sustainability and climate response commitments.

The following table highlights the priority actions the district will undertake over the next five years toward fulfilling its commitment to culture.



# CULTURE



Grey box indicates priority action corresponding to each school year.

Culture - Priority Actions	Timelines (2025-2030)				
	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30
Conduct an assessment and identify opportunities to integrate sustainability into all applicable policies and administrative procedures.					
Ensure that student and employee engagement, feedback, and initiatives in climate mitigation and sustainability are acknowledged at least once annually.					
Publish an annual report that shares progress on sustainability commitments and performance metrics outlined in the Sustainability Operational Plan.					
Ensure that the website and other communication materials align to and/or promote environmental sustainability.					
Develop and support employee green teams or recycling teams at all district worksites.					
Support the wellness team in developing 2 initiatives a year that promote sustainability.					
Determine the roles, responsibilities and resources needed to coordinate the sustainability actions outlined in the plan.					



# CULTURE

## Progress in 2025-2026

SD8 has made significant strides in improving climate action and sustainability culture that include:

- Review of district workplans to align with sustainability and to identify opportunities to share effective practices, strengthen collaboration, and work in partnership where doing so improves a culture of climate action and sustainability.
- Realignment of reporting structure to ensure climate mitigation and sustainability are acknowledged twice annually.
- Publication of an annual report that shares progress on sustainability commitments and performance metrics outlined in the Sustainability Operational Plan.
- Public and internal communication about student-led climate action and sustainability initiatives.
- Identifying climate initiatives on SD8 and school websites to highlight actions and resources related to climate action and sustainability.
- Development of and support for employee green teams or recycling teams at all district worksites. This includes green initiatives such as a “pack it in, pack it out” program, off-site composting of organic kitchen waste from the school board office, and returnables programs with refundable cans, bottles and cartons funding various school initiatives.
- Climate action and sustainability themes promoted to all staff: January – Save Our Energy; February – Reduce Our Waste; March – Small Actions, Big Impact; April – Learning from the Land; May – Planet Friendly Travel; June – Local Food & Living Things.
- Support for the SD8 wellness team to develop two initiatives each year that promote sustainability, including a wellness walk across Canada in May in keeping with the them of planet-friendly travel, an e-bike funding program, and established environmental budgets for schools.
- Implementation of district work plans to align with climate action and sustainability.
- SD8 Wellness Team that includes all employee groups. In May 2026 the team launched its second district-wide wellness initiative, the Walk Across Canada Challenge in which employees log their steps or distance to reach the district-wide goal of walking 7,800 kilometres in a month’s time.





# CULTURE

## Sharing Sustainability Stories

### Bus Fleet Goes Electric

SD8 is approved for purchase of five electric buses in the 2025–2026 school year. Charging stations have also been installed in Nelson and Creston, readying the bus fleet for expanded service and charging infrastructure in the years to come.



### Walk Across Canada Challenge

The SD8 Wellness Committee is in its second year, with representation from all employee groups. The district-wide wellness initiative for 2026 is the Walk Across Canada Challenge in which employees log their steps or distance to reach the district-wide goal of walking 7,800 kilometres across Canada between May 11 and June 14, 2026.

Prizes are awarded to the worksite that collectively walks the furthest distance, and all participants' names are entered into a draw at the end of the challenge to win prizes.

Walking has many benefits, such as improving cardiovascular health, boosting mental health and enhancing joint and muscle function. The challenge also encourages employees to walk to work instead of driving where practical to do so.

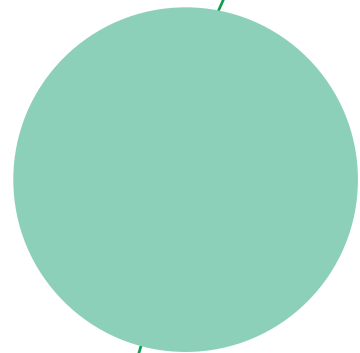


# LOOKING FORWARD

## 2025-2030

Over the next five years, we will track and report on our progress in integrating sustainability into education, operations, and school culture. This includes evaluating how we teach climate action, improving resource use, and ensuring sustainability is considered in decision-making at all levels.

SD8 recognizes that this work is ongoing. As challenges and opportunities arise, the district will adapt its approach based on what is learned. By working with students, staff, educational partners, families, and community partners, SD8 will continue to find practical ways to reduce our environmental impact, respond to a changing climate and make sustainability a lasting part of the school district.





# APPENDIX A

## 2025 PSO Climate Change Accountability Report

