



ENERGY WIRE

SD43 Sustainability and Energy Management Newsletter

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EVERY TREE
IS A STEP TOWARDS
SUSTAINABILITY



ABOUT US

We work with BC Hydro, Fortis BC and Clean BC, to find ways to make our schools run more efficiently to reduce our carbon footprint. New LED lights at your school? That was us. New efficient heating system? We were there too. Holiday Shut Down competitions, us too, and so much more.

This newsletter is designed to let everyone know about SD43 sustainability initiatives. All through the District, great things are going on to make our students, our community, and our world more sustainable. We want to know what you are doing and how you are doing it.

MESSAGE FROM THE ENERGY MANAGEMENT TEAM

Tending to Our Success 🌿

April was a whirlwind of collective action, and we are so proud of the momentum we built together! As we head into May, our focus shifts to stewardship. With our garden plants now delivered and in the ground, this month is all about care and cultivation. It's a time to watch our school gardens thrive and reflect on the impact we've made so far this year. Let's keep tending to our environment and our community as we move toward the final stretch of the school year!



Building a Greener District: Caretakers Lead the Way!

Over **200 of our district caretakers** gathered at Gleneagle Secondary on March 26th for a deep dive into the Low Carbon Sustainability Action Plan (LCSAP).

This workshop, facilitated by our Energy Team proved that sustainability is truly a district-wide effort. Our caretakers spent over 45 minutes in passionate group discussions, sharing feedback about how to make our schools more energy-efficient.

Key Takeaways:

- **A Wealth of Knowledge:** Our caretakers see our buildings in ways teachers and administrators might not. They shared innovative ideas for sustainability that come directly from their hands-on experience.
- **Ready to Engage:** There is an incredible, untapped enthusiasm among this team. Many expressed a strong desire to be more involved in school-based sustainability initiatives.
- **Teamwork is Key:** A common theme was the importance of keeping teachers and administrators informed so that simple, effective changes can be made together at every school site.

It is clear that our caretakers care deeply about the environments where our students learn. We are excited to bridge the gap between our classrooms and our facilities teams!



Sustainability in Style: Clothing Swap Recap

Clothing Swap Success!

By Morgan Holmes, Pinetree Secondary Leadership

On April 18th, students and families from all over the district came together and went home with mounds of free clothes after attending the district-wide Clothing Swap, hosted and planned by the SD43 District Sustainability Leaders.

The event, with the goal of providing Coquitlam families with an alternative to fast fashion, was a massive success, with thousands of clothes being donated and rehomed to the community!

Anything that didn't get taken at the swap was donated to Big Brothers, where the items will be sold to raise money for youth mentoring programs.

The event couldn't have taken place without the dedicated support of over **60 volunteers** from SD43 secondary schools—including Pinetree, Gleneagle, Charles Best, Terry Fox, Centennial, Riverside, and Port Moody—as well as all the families across the district that donated! Special thanks to Adrian Pettyfer, our district's Energy and Sustainability Manager, who brought all the students together to create this event!



Garden Clubs: From Delivery to Discovery!



Our school gardens are officially coming to life!

This year, we reached an incredible milestone with **44 schools** across the district registering to participate in our gardening initiative.

On Earth Day (April 22nd), the District Delivery Department worked tirelessly to distribute 24 different varieties of starter plants—including a diverse mix of vegetables, fragrant herbs, and pollinating flowers.



This program has become one of the most anticipated events in our District calendar. Beyond just growing food, it is a vital opportunity to get our students outside, hands in the dirt, and connected to the natural world. Seeing our students transition from the classroom to the garden bed is a powerful reminder that sustainability is a hands-on journey.

A huge thank you to the Delivery Team for their logistical support and to the teachers for fostering these outdoor learning spaces!



Powering Down & Planting Up!



Sustainability is about more than just saving energy; it's about giving back to the earth. We are thrilled to celebrate the four winners of our Spring Break Holiday Shutdown challenge:

- **Pitt River Middle**
- **Kilmer Elementary**
- **Riverview Park**
- **Vanier Centre**

In recognition of their efforts to reduce energy waste over the break, each school received a tree to plant on-site. These trees have now been successfully planted by students, providing a hands-on way to create a more resilient and shaded school environment.

Eco-Week Challenge: Small Actions, Big Leadership!



A heartfelt thank you to the students and staff who stepped up for this year's SD43 Eco-Week Challenge in celebration of Earth Day!

While this challenge happens over a single week, the habits practiced—from mindful energy use to waste reduction—build the foundation for a more sustainable lifestyle all year round.

We are incredibly proud of the **69 students** who took the lead this year, proving that you don't need a massive crowd to make a meaningful impact.

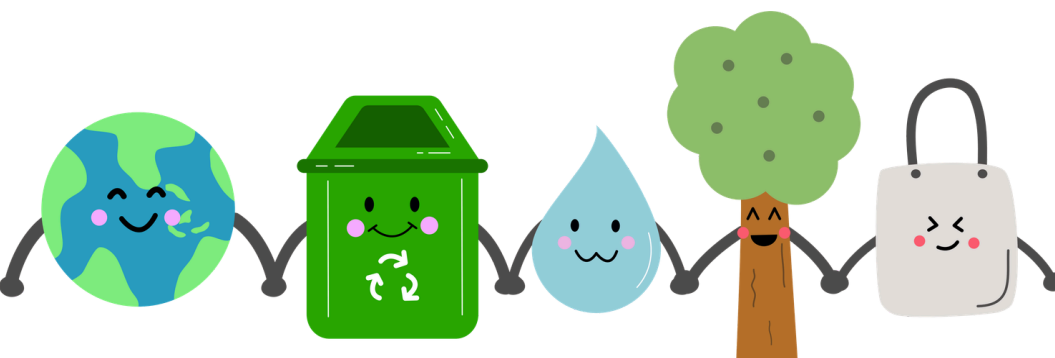
These sustainability champions showed us that when we are intentional with our choices, we inspire those around us to do the same.

Congratulations to our three winning teams!

To celebrate their dedication, these groups will be enjoying a well-deserved pizza lunch prize:

- 🇺🇸 Riverside Secondary – Physical Geography 12
- 🇺🇸 Pitt River Middle – The Laminators
- 🇺🇸 Minnehada Middle – Division 29

Thank you to everyone who joined in to help District 43 move closer to our Low Carbon goals. Let's keep that momentum rolling—because every light turned off and every litter-less lunch packed is a win for our planet!





Sustainable Leaders Tour Lulu Island

During the recent Pro-D Day on Friday the 24th, the Energy and Sustainability team brought **21 dedicated student leaders** together from Centennial, Riverside, Gleneagle, and Port Moody Secondary for a special day of learning and celebration.

Thanks to **MetroVancouver** a bus was provide for our District Sustainability Leaders to travel to the **Lulu Island Wastewater Treatment Plant**. The tour offered a fascinating look at how Metro Vancouver filters and cleans our wastewater to making it reusable and clean for our environment.



A Celebration of Impact

This trip goals went far beyond the pipes. It served as a vital team-building session and a "thank you" to the students who have spearheaded massive initiatives this year, including:

- The District-Wide Clothing Swap: Rehomeing thousands of items to fight fast fashion.
- Waste Diversion Education: Leading the charge in classroom sustainability.
- Community Clean-ups: Taking direct action to protect our local environments.

The day allowed these leaders to step back, celebrate their collective success, and begin forward-thinking for next year's sustainability goals.

A Message from our Partners

We are honored to share a quote from our partners at Metro Vancouver, who helped make this day possible:

"We applaud SD43's commitment to bringing students together, through the SD43 District Sustainability Leaders Circle, to celebrate learning, leadership, and collaboration for action and sustainability at school and beyond."

Seeing our students dive into the "how" of regional sustainability on their day off was the highlight of the trip. It's clear that the future of SD43 sustainability is in very capable hands!



Bee Education with Master Beekeeper Max!

We are incredibly lucky to have a Master Beekeeper right here on our SD43 Grounds Crew! This month, the Sustainability Team is "borrowing" Max Aurelian from his usual groundwork to lead an immersive bee education program at four of our elementary schools.

Bees are critical to our food supply and are simply fascinating creatures. This program has taken students on a deep dive into the world of pollinators:

- **Mason Bee Kits:** Schools were first provided with Mason Bees to kickstart their own local pollination.
- **Virtual Hive Tours:** Students have been watching exclusive videos of Max working through a real honeybee hive, explaining the complex social structure of the colony.
- **Hands-On Learning:** To wrap up the experience, Max is visiting schools in person with educational tools, professional supplies, and detailed hive photos to bring the fascinating science of apiculture to life.



A huge thank you to Max for sharing his expertise and helping our students understand the tiny giants that keep our ecosystem thriving!



Transitioning to Sugar Sheet Paper



The Energy and Sustainability Team, in partnership with Purchasing, is pleased to announce that Sugar Sheet is now available as a sustainable, high-performance alternative for the District's 8.5" x 11" paper needs.

Strategic Advantages:

- **Cost-Effective:** Now available at a lower cost than traditional tree-based paper, offering significant annual savings for school budgets.
- **Low Carbon:** Recognized as 100% recycled by the Carbon Neutral Government Program, helping to reduce the District's carbon footprint and associated taxes.
- **Rapidly Renewable:** Made from sugarcane agricultural waste (harvested 3x yearly) rather than forest wood.



Implementation for Schools:

- **Direct Procurement:** The Sugar Sheet SKU is active and visible on your existing Grand & Toy online portal.
- **Performance:** The product has been rigorously tested and approved for high-volume copying and daily administrative use across the District's device fleet.
- **Recommendation:** We encourage schools to place a modest initial order to assess suitability for specific applications before adopting it as your primary paper stock.

By transitioning to Sugar Sheet, schools can demonstrate environmental leadership while optimizing operational costs.



Looking Ahead: Sustainability Events



In 2026, we plan to put on an activity each month to empower students to take the lead in creating a greener future. We hope you participate by joining us for these fun and impactful events:



Spring Gardens

Now that our plants have arrived, we look forward to seeing students across the district outside, getting their hands in the soil, and nurturing our school gardens all month long!



Car Free Day

Leave the car behind – take transit, walk, or roll! Let's inspire people to get out of their cars, interact with each other, and explore alternative modes of transportation.



Urban Bird Workshop

Birds are vital to our urban ecosystems, but their populations are in decline. Join us earlier than usual this month to explore city bird species, understand the challenges they face, and learn how to protect them!

Event Details

- **Date:** Monday - May 4, 2026
- **Time:** 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm
- **Location:** Coquitlam Campus (1250 Pinetree Way)

More information click [here](#).



Coquitlam Public Library Science Expo



Celebrate the next generation of scientists! This annual event showcases the ingenuity of local students (Grades 4-12). It's a fantastic opportunity to see student-led research and innovation in action—many of which tackle environmental and sustainability challenges. More information click [here](#).

Event Details

Date: Saturday, May 9, 2026

Location: Coquitlam campus of Douglas College (1250 Pinetree Way, Coquitlam, BC V3B 7X3)



SD43 Professional Development



Summer Leadership Opportunity: CHAMP 2026

Level up your leadership skills this summer with **Metro Vancouver's CHAMP program!**

If you are a sustainability-minded student entering Grades 10–12, this program offers an action-packed camp in August followed by a fall mentorship series to help you launch your own school projects.

More information click [here](#).

Apply by May 25th! Check out the Youth4Action Instagram or Facebook for more details and a look at previous projects.



Cool It! Climate Leadership Training



The Cool It! program, a climate change education and action-focused initiative designed for students in Grades 4 through 12.

Delivered by the BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSEA), this program empowers youth and their families to learn about climate science and take tangible steps to reduce their carbon footprints.

How the Program Works

Cool It! is a four-week, action-focused program that blends classroom learning with real-world impact:

- **Interactive Workshops:** Students learn foundations of climate science through games, videos, and group discussions.
- **The Climate Challenge:** Following the workshop, students begin a four-week mini-curriculum.
- **Results & Rewards:** Teachers receive a summary of their students' performance, including the total actions taken and an estimate of emissions avoided.

More information, click [here](#).



The Live Net Zero Classroom Challenge 2026–27

The Live Net Zero Classroom Challenge is back for the next school year with a brand-new format! Running twice (Fall 2026 and Spring 2027), this challenge offers cash prizes awarded through random draws in each round.

What's in the box?

- **21 Ready-to-Use Activities:** Curriculum-linked and available in English and French for K–12.
- **Flexible Learning:** From "Rescue My Lunch" (food waste) and "Stuff Swaps" to designing "Green Routes" to school.
- **Easy Participation:** Complete up to 10 activities and submit work via photos, videos, or worksheets. Every entry increases your chance to win!



Register your educator account now to stay updated. Early planning makes it easy to integrate these fun, high-impact activities into your Fall or Spring curriculum!

More information click [here](#).

Advanced Teacher Training for Sustainability



Elevate your environmental education with Ecosource & York University. Gain practical skills to bring climate justice and sustainability into any subject area.

- **May 5:** Climate Change Across the Curriculum (Virtual)
- **May 20:** Pollinators & Habitats (In-person)
- **May 30:** Gardening for the Curriculum (In-person)
- **Cost:** \$20 | **Bonus:** Earn a certificate of completion!

More information, click [here](#)



MAY – MONTH OF ECO-STEWARDSHIP



Get involved! Whether in the classroom or at home, these global dates are perfect opportunities to take action and celebrate our planet.



International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW)

Dates: May 4 – 10, 2026

This year's theme highlights compost as the "soil's best friend." Composting is a simple but powerful way to divert waste from landfills and nourish our local school gardens.

More information, click [here](#)

Endangered Species Day

Date: May 15, 2026

A day to learn about the importance of protecting our planet's most vulnerable wildlife and the habitats they call home. It's a great time to discuss local BC species at risk and how we can support biodiversity.

More information, click [here](#)



World Bee Day

Date: May 20, 2026

Bees and other pollinators are fundamental to our food security and ecosystem health. Celebrate the tiny workers that keep our world blooming!

More information, click [here](#)

International Day for Biological Diversity

Date: May 15, 2026

The UN has designated this day to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. This year focuses on "Being part of the Plan" to reverse biodiversity loss.

More information, click [here](#)



What is going on at your school?



While April was about planting the seeds of change, May is about nurturing our collective growth. From our school gardens to our district-wide sustainability plans, your dedication is what allows these initiatives to flourish. Let's keep growing together, SD43!

At Coquitlam School District, we believe in the power of collective action for a sustainable future. If you or your school is making a positive impact on the environment, we want to celebrate and share your achievements with the community.

Connect with Adrian Pettyfer at apettyfer@sd43.bc.ca to share your eco-champion stories. Let's work together to get the word out and inspire more positive change.

