

# VSB Vancouver School District

## Sustainability Grants 2022-23



The 2022-2023 school year saw a total of \$27,300 distributed to support a wide variety of sustainability initiatives at 36 elementary schools and annexes and 10 secondary schools.

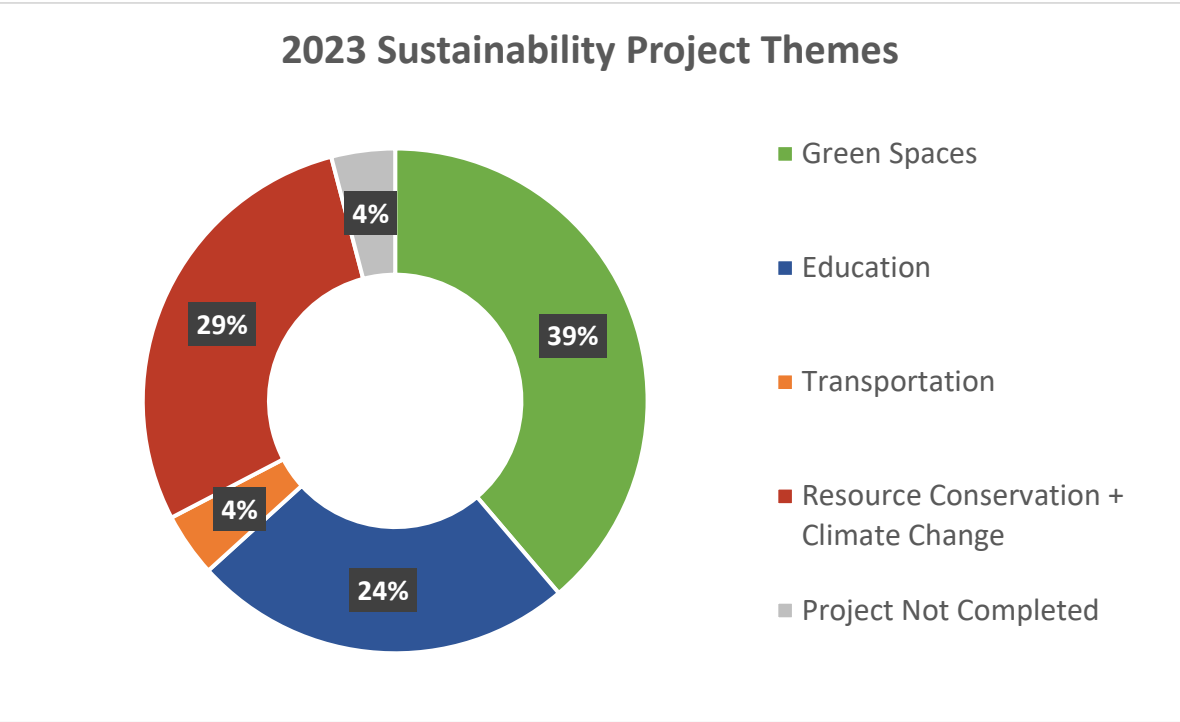
Available to every secondary and elementary school in the District, grants of up to \$1000 and \$500 respectively are available to support sustainability projects. Secondary school projects must be student-led, and elementary school projects are teacher-led with an opportunity for student participation. Projects must fall into four of the themes outlined in the [VSB Environmental Sustainability Plan](#): Sustainability in Education, Green Spaces, Sustainable Transportation, and Resource Conservation and Climate Change.

The sustainability grant program, by design, follows the Plan’s implementation principles:

- Leverage Education – Sustainability projects should support and enrich our students’ education.
- Follow and Support our People – Sustainability projects will be guided by student and educator needs and interests.
- Make our Efforts Lasting - Sustainability projects will endeavor to create lasting impact on the school community and culture of sustainability.

We know that students, educators, and school staff are consistently engaged in the work of sustainability. The grant program is a way for us to support this good work and to learn more about priority areas for students and educators.

This year we saw significant shifts in the sustainability trends across the District, and this report will highlight some of the projects that exemplify those changes.



## Project Summaries

School	Project Description
Beaconsfield Elementary	Beeswax food wraps
Britannia Secondary	Reducing cafeteria waste
Bruce Elementary	Enhanced recycling project – soft plastics
šxʷwəqʷəθət Crosstown Elementary	Waste reduction
Cunningham Elementary	Indoor growing lights
Dickens Elementary	Garden improvements
Douglas Elementary	Gardening equipment
False Creek Elementary	Enhanced recycling project – soft plastics
Franklin Elementary	Garden improvements
Gladstone Secondary	Recycling project
Grandview čuuqinakʷuuh Elementary	Outdoor learning equipment
Grenfell Elementary	Pollinator project
Hudson Elementary	Enhanced recycling project
Jamieson Elementary	Scale Up Seedling Kit – garden encouragement
John Oliver Secondary	Climate education art installation
Kerrisdale Elementary	Reducing plastic waste – beeswax wraps
Killarney Secondary	Ocean ecosystem awareness campaign
King George Secondary	Garden improvements
Kitchener Elementary	Tackling litter + waste reduction campaign
Laurier Elementary	Garden improvements
Lloyd George Elementary	Outdoor recycling improvements + active travel
Lord Elementary	Garden boxes
MacCorkindale Elementary	Indigenous plant garden
Magee Secondary	Beach clean-ups + recycling guide for new immigrants
Maquinna Elementary	Outdoor learning equipment
McBride Annex	Medicine wheel garden
McKechnie Elementary	Gardening equipment
Nelson Elementary	Gardening equipment
Nightingale Elementary	Gardening equipment
Norma Rose Point Elementary	Outdoor learning equipment
Point Grey stəywəte:ŋ Secondary	Plant-based food education
Prince of Wales Secondary	Garden improvements
Queen Mary Elementary	Climate action project
Queen Victoria Annex	Outdoor learning kit
Quilchena Elementary	Eco fair
Renfrew Elementary	Outdoor learning equipment
Roberts Elementary	Legacy tree planting
Secord Elementary	Enhanced recycling project – soft plastics
Sexsmith Elementary	Gardening equipment
Thompson Secondary	Enhanced recycling and improved sorting
Thunderbird šxʷəxʷaʔəs Elementary	Bike rack installation
Tillicum Annex	Sustainability books
Tyee Elementary	Enhanced recycling project + “Buy Nothing Tyee”
University Hill Elementary	Earth Day BBQ
Van Tech Secondary	Mason bee project
xpeý Elementary	Gardening equipment

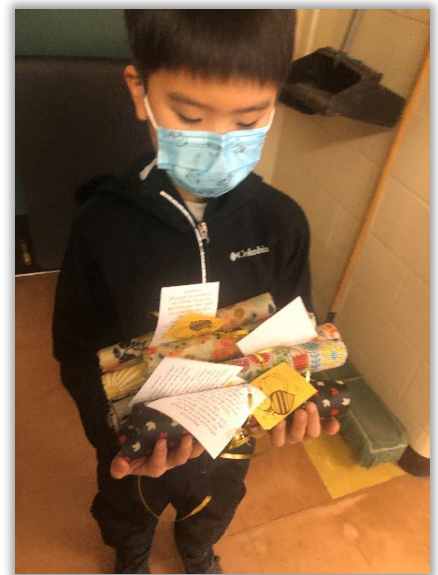
## Resource Conservation and Climate Change

At a glance:

School	Project Description
Beaconsfield Elementary	Beeswax food wraps
Britannia Secondary	Reducing cafeteria waste
Bruce Elementary	Enhanced recycling project – soft plastics
ᓃᔨᗔᓃᓃᓃᓃᓃᓃ Crosstown Elementary	Waste reduction campaign
False Creek Elementary	Enhanced recycling project – soft plastics
Gladstone Secondary	Waste audit and improved recycling sorting
Hudson Elementary	Enhanced recycling project – soft plastics
Kerrisdale Elementary	Reducing plastic waste – beeswax food wraps
Kitchener Elementary	Tackling litter + waste reduction campaign
Lloyd George Elementary	Outdoor recycling improvements
Magee Secondary	Beach clean-ups + recycling guide for new immigrants
Secord Elementary	Enhanced recycling project – soft plastics
Thompson Secondary	Enhanced recycling and improved sorting
Tyee Elementary	Enhanced recycling project + “Buy Nothing Tyee”

The sustainability theme that saw the biggest jump in interest this year was Resource Conservation. The number of projects doubled over last year, and projects related to garbage, recycling and organics collection appear to be of great interest to students and staff throughout the District. These projects directly support our goal of reducing consumption of resources and waste generation. Students are specifically interested in testing out different ways to manage waste in their schools:

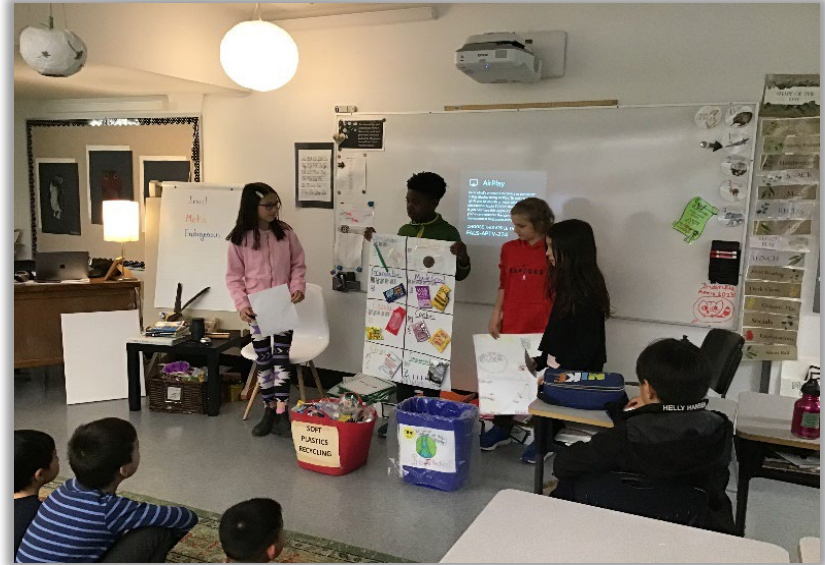
1. Waste Reduction – These projects are focused on education about and exposure to alternative reusable products. Students at **Beaconsfield** and **Kerrisdale Elementary Schools** made beeswax food wraps to take home and share with their families. Students were encouraged to replace single use plastic wrap with reusable beeswax wraps in their lunch boxes.
2. Improving Recycling and Organics Compliance – Sorting which waste goes where is an ongoing challenge in our schools. Items are frequently misplaced, and students have noticed this and are working out some ways to help make sure that waste is sorted correctly into the three streams collected at VSB sites (garbage, recycling, and organics). Students at **Kitchener** and **Lloyd George Elementary Schools** observed litter on their school grounds and organized school-wide clean-ups and worked with their building engineers to create mobile outdoor waste stations to ensure that there is somewhere to put garbage, recycling, and organic waste during recess. Education campaigns are another common tactic to help students learn how their waste should be sorted. **ᓃᔨᗔᓃᓃᓃᓃᓃᓃ Crosstown Elementary** and **Gladstone Secondary** students made improvements to sorting through peer-to-peer



*Beeswax food wraps made by Kerrisdale Elementary students*

outreach, coaching other students about how to sort appropriately and why it is important. Gladstone Secondary students even completed a waste audit to determine just how poorly things are being sorted at school.

3. Enhanced recycling programs – Even with a comprehensive garbage, recycling, and organics collection system in the District there are still items that cannot be recycled in the blue bins at school sites. Students have noticed that the garbage cans are often filled with soft plastic items, like granola bar wrappers and chip bags, that can be recycled outside of school. Students from **Bruce, False Creek, Hudson, and Secord Elementary Schools** and **Thompson Secondary** have



*False Creek students teaching peers about proper waste sorting*

enhanced their recycling program with bins to divert soft plastics from the landfill. Once these items are collected, a teacher or parent volunteer takes the bags to the Vancouver Zero Waste Centre, or another appropriate recycling location.

### Success Spotlight

Inspired by the [Recycling Club established at Thompson Secondary](#) during the 2021-2022 school year, teachers and students at **Hudson Elementary** decided to try to tackle their waste problems using the same “un-garbaging” model. Students in one classroom had already been collecting their soft-plastics and wanted to expand the collection school-wide. Extra bins were purchased, new signage was posted, and an educational campaign with lots of announcements and posters commenced. Everyday student volunteers visited classrooms to collect items that had been placed in the wrong bin. Over the school year three extra-large garbage bags of soft plastic packaging has been diverted from the landfill, and 851 refundable containers have been recycled through the Return-it School program resulting in \$64.80 to reinvest into the recycling club at school.



Hudson's Recycling Club members ready to sort



Soft plastic diverted from the landfill

*"I believe that all the work they have done throughout the year, combined with this experience, has created life-long environmental stewards. It is my hope that these memories and experiences will continue to inspire them. In turn, their actions may inspire others and create a collective impact for years to come," – Jaeger Hunter, teacher sponsor of Hudson's Recycling Club.*

#### Opportunities for Next Year

Waste reduction and recycling compliance is an important entry-point into acting sustainably, it is also an activity that has immediate and visible results. We know that students and educators want to see organizational improvements that aid in their waste reduction goals. During the 2023-2024 school year the sustainability team can:

- Work with Operations and building engineers to optimize access to the three-bin waste stations at school sites, both inside and outside.
- Continue to improve education campaigns around waste sorting, opportunities to enhance the existing waste system, and wish-cycling.
- Support the efforts of recycling clubs across the District to share their success and encourage more schools to take up the challenge of waste reduction.

## Sustainability in Education

At a glance:

School	Project Description
Grandview ɕuuqinak'uuh Elementary	Outdoor learning equipment
John Oliver Secondary	Climate education art installation
Killarney Secondary	Ocean ecosystem awareness campaign
Maquinna Elementary	Outdoor learning equipment
Norma Rose Point Elementary	Outdoor learning equipment
Point Grey stəywəte:ḥ Secondary	Plant-based food education
Queen Mary Elementary	Climate action project
Queen Victoria Annex	Outdoor learning equipment
Quilchena Elementary	Eco fair
Renfrew Elementary	Outdoor learning equipment
Tillicum Annex	Sustainability books
University Hill Elementary	Earth Day BBQ

Outdoor learning has always been an effective tool for educators to help their students foster a connection to the natural world and become environmentally conscientious citizens. The trend in sustainability education this year is outdoor learning equipment. **Grandview, Maquinna, Norma Rose Point and Renfrew Elementary Schools and Queen Victoria Annex** used their grant funds to purchase things like wagons, sit-upons, nature guides, and clipboards to aid students in their outdoor learning. Educators report wanting to make going outside to learn comfortable for everyone, and having equipment at the ready and easy to transport means that they can be spontaneous when a good moment to take their classes outside arises.



*Outdoor learning kits at Maquinna Elementary*

Students at **Point Grey Secondary** and **Quilchena** and **University Hill Elementary Schools** used grant funds to support educational campaigns and events that enhance learning. Events like Eco Day and the Earth Day BBQ reach beyond a single division to the whole school, and often extend into the wider school community. Schools also engage with community-based organizations to bring in new ideas and perspectives. The Point Grey Secondary Vegan Food Fair introduced the idea of plant-based eating to about 300 students.

**Tillicum Annex** teachers connected with a local independent bookstore to curate a list of sustainability books, that students then voted on, to add exciting and locally relevant books to their school library.

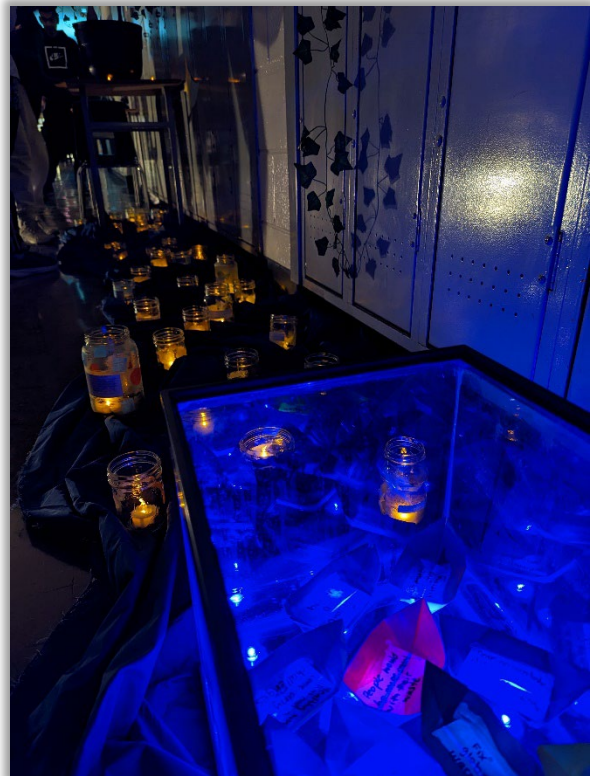
## Success Spotlight

Art-based engagement made a big splash this year with both **John Oliver** and **Killarney Secondary Schools** creating immersive experiences to inspire students to learn about the climate crisis and human impacts on the natural world.

John Oliver students from Math 9 stem, Environmental Science 11 and 12, and the Little Trees Club researched, planned, and created various hallway installations to engage the school community around the climate crisis. Installations included a giant system map showcasing the complexity of climate change issues, murals, music that was coded around social/climate justice, about 100 student made lanterns



*Hallway installations at John Oliver*



*Wishing Well at John Oliver*



*Hallway installations at John Oliver*





with wishes and stories of their connection to nature, a clothing thrift store, and visioning activities where students could contribute their thoughts for a better community through a collaborative art piece.

*“I think that this project really helped the community rethink what school spaces can be. How they can be interactive, hold meaning, tell stories, and a place for creativity. In terms of sustainability, that sustainability is more than about composting or turning off the lights. It is interwoven with issues of race and power and involves rethinking our own relationships with the places we love.” –John Oliver Teacher Sponsor Brendan Chan*

Killarney students in Ceramics 11/12 collaborated on a marine science research and ceramic arts project to create a giant, 3D collaborative coral reef sculpture that will be displayed in the front hall of the school and used to draw attention to the issue of climate change and oceans, in a beautiful and poignant way. A text panel will accompany the installation and will highlight the issues of climate change and human-caused factors that directly impact coral reefs around the world. A list of simple things that students and adults can do in their own lives will be included to inspire people to protect these stunning, fragile, and resilient deep water and tropical corals.



*Ceramic coral reef at Killarney*



*Ceramic artist at Killarney*

### Opportunities for Next Year

Educators and students across the District are consistently creating new ways to deepen their connection to the natural world through direct experiences and creative projects. Sharing stories about these events, equipment, books, and art installations can inspire other schools to come up with their own projects. During the 2023-2024 school year the sustainability team can:

- Use Teams and SharePoint to share stories and photos to inspire new creative sustainability projects.
- Collaborate with educators to create professional development opportunities for environmental club teacher sponsors on linking sustainability projects to classroom curriculum.
- Support educators with outdoor learning equipment lists and booklists that can help them further their efforts in engaging students about sustainability and the natural environment.

## Transportation

At a glance:

School	Project Description
Lloyd George Elementary	Bike, roll, walk, & scoot to school week
Thunderbird ʔxʷəxʷaʔəs Elementary	Bike rack installation

This year saw a marked decrease in the number of active transportation projects funded by sustainability grants. The reason for this is likely due to an increase in funding available through the City of Vancouver’s [Walk Bike Roll Mini Grant program](#).

Through that program, 26 VSB schools each received \$500 for their active transportation projects – so while the sustainability grant funds for active transportation projects have decreased, the overall number of projects have increased significantly.



*Lloyd George students participate in a bike riding workshop*

The two projects funded by the sustainability grants this year were at **David Lloyd George** and **Thunderbird Elementary Schools**. Bike rack installations are always of interest for schools as a way to provide students with a safe and secure place to store their bikes and scooters while at school, and with the increasing cost of materials, schools will continue to look for financial support to improve their infrastructure.

The other project funded was for bike safety workshops and practice sessions to help students gain confidence in riding bikes and to encourage students and families to choose biking as an alternative mode of transportation for getting to and from school.

### Opportunities for Next Year

During the 2023-2024 school year the sustainability team will continue to promote the Walk Bike Roll Mini Grant program to schools to increase the number of schools engaged in active transportation projects. The team can also encourage schools to apply for both City of Vancouver and Sustainability grants in order to support larger and more involved active transportation projects. Since physical bike infrastructure is not eligible for City of Vancouver funding, completing an inventory of bike racks at VSB sites is another opportunity to get sense of the schools that may need support with this aspect of active transportation encouragement.

## Green Spaces

At a glance:

School	Project Description
Cunningham Elementary	Indoor growing lights
Dickens Elementary	Rooftop garden improvements
Douglas Elementary	Gardening equipment
Franklin Elementary	Garden improvements
Grenfell Elementary	Pollinator project
Jamieson Elementary	Scale Up Seedling Kit – garden encouragement
King George Secondary	Garden improvements
Laurier Elementary	Garden box improvements
Lord Elementary	Garden boxes
MacCorkindale Elementary	Indigenous plant garden
McBride Annex	Medicine wheel garden
McKechnie Elementary	Gardening equipment
Nelson Elementary	Gardening equipment
Nightingale Elementary	Gardening equipment
Prince of Wales Secondary	Garden improvements
Roberts Elementary	Legacy tree planting
Sexsmith Elementary	Gardening equipment
Van Tech Secondary	Mason bee project
χpeý Elementary	Gardening equipment

The VSB is fortunate to have a school garden at almost every school site in the District. Often sustainability grants are combined with other fundraising efforts towards building and installing garden boxes, but this year saw a shift in focus towards maintaining existing gardens and replacing soil and tools. **Dickens, Douglas, Nightingale, and Sexsmith Elementary Schools** and **King George** and **Prince of Wales Secondary Schools** all reinvigorated their existing gardens with grant funds.

**Lord** and **Laurier Elementary Schools** renovated their garden boxes by adding water wells. As the climate changes and summers get hotter and dryer, water wells will allow for more efficient water usage.

Supporting native pollinators and adding Indigenous plants to garden boxes we also popular this year with **Grenfell** and **Nightingale Elementary Schools** and **Van Tech Secondary** adding mason bee houses and pollinator friendly plants to their gardens; while **MacCorkindale, Nelson, and χpeý Elementary Schools** and **McBride Annex** have included plants like redwood sorrel, sweetgrass, white sage, and salal in their garden boxes.



*Douglas students preparing their garden boxes*

## Success Spotlight

In an effort to get more divisions growing plants this spring, Jamieson Elementary created “Scale Up Seedlings Kits.” The kits included potting soil, pot makers, and an assortment of seeds to grow.

*“We learned that if we provided the supplies for the teachers and students, they were more interested in participating as they did not need to go out to buy seeds, soil and cups. The wooden pot makers are a sustainable product which is easy to use, re-uses newsprint and makes a little pot for a seedling quickly. There was an excellent response to using the pot makers, as it is more sustainable than buying plastic cups for containers. The students of all ages were able to use the pot makers independently, including Kindergarten students.”*

15 out of the school’s 21 divisions participated and were able to transplant the seeds they started into the school’s garden boxes. Teachers and students alike learned about growing conditions, lighting, succession planting, and watering. The increase in the number of divisions using the garden has also grown interest in adding more boxes to be able to build both a sensory garden and Indigenous plant garden in the future.



*Seedlings started at Jamieson Elementary*

## Opportunities for Next Year

Educational gardens are one of the most popular ways to teach and learn about sustainability at school. They are a living laboratory that can be used to conduct research into climate change, engage the senses, and introduce new concepts to students. During the 2023-2024 school year the sustainability team can:

- monitor the garden boxes that have had water wells installed to determine if they are an infrastructure upgrade that schools should consider when installing or maintaining their garden boxes.
- connect schools interested in adding Indigenous plants with resources from the Indigenous Education Department to enhance cross-curricular learning.
- Continue to offer garden related professional development for educators who want to incorporate gardening into their teaching practice.



WE WILL  
GET THERE,  
**TOGETHER.**

LET'S BE THE  
**GREENEST**  
SCHOOL  
DISTRICT.

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**VSB**