

Template Policy Resolution for Climate Action in Alberta Schools
Created by the Alberta Youth Leaders for Environmental Education with support
from Schools for Climate Action

WHEREAS, climate change is a present and urgent issue, this is due to human activity resulting in the increase of trapped greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere leading to increasing and unpredictable climatic changes; and,

WHEREAS, more than 97% of climate scientists agree that human activities, contributing to increases in greenhouse gas emissions, are the dominant cause of climate change; and,

WHEREAS, climate change impacts continue to be a threat to communities across the world, in specific to the region of Alberta; there is increasing concern with an expected peak in emissions in the next decade due to a 15% increase in emissions since 2005, the following implication of the rise in emissions is resulting in record high temperatures, rising water levels, and more frequency in floods, droughts, and forest fires both globally and locally; and,

WHEREAS, we believe it is critical to advocate for climate action that leads to climate restoration in order to mitigate one of the most serious threats facing communities around the world; and,

WHEREAS, we believe that climate change is not a partisan issue and that school, local, provincial, and national policies should be guided by the best available science; and,

WHEREAS, children represent a particularly vulnerable group because greenhouse gasses emitted into the atmosphere will continue to accumulate over the coming decades and will profoundly impact our current students throughout their lives, as well as the lives of future generations; and,

WHEREAS, the _____ recognizes climate change as a generational justice and human rights issue; and,

WHEREAS, climate change is a social justice and equity issue. While climate change impacts all people, especially all young people and all future generations, it also disproportionately affects people of color and people in poverty, thereby exacerbating existing inequities and limiting equality of opportunity which is a foundational aspiration for modern Canada;

WHEREAS, the _____ recognizes and understands the significant negative impact that rapid and ongoing climate change has on Alberta’s schools, students, and their communities; and,

WHEREAS, the _____ celebrates existing district sustainability initiatives such as:

1. List examples of your existing sustainability initiatives

WHEREAS, increased extreme weather events attributed to climate change (e.g., flooding, wildfires) continue to expose greater numbers of children and youth to potentially traumatic events, contributing to increased rates of posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression (IPCC, 2014; Kessler et al., 2008; Lowe et al., 2013; Perera, 2017) according to a National Association of School Psychologists climate action resolution passed in 2021; and,

WHEREAS, Alberta emitted 276 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2019, making it the largest emitter of greenhouse gasses in Canada;

WHEREAS, K-12 schools in Alberta and Canada have an important role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions given that they are major energy consumers; and,

WHEREAS, a 2021 survey of Albertan youth indicated that 80% of youth in the province believe that there should be more environmental education present in schools, and 84% agree that education on the environment, energy, and climate change for Alberta students will help to address climate change.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT...

1. We declare climate change an emergency that is a generational justice, human rights, and equity issue that we are currently facing
2. We will join EcoSchools and develop a climate action plan, which may include actions such as:
 - a. Establishing a student climate/environmental committee at our school
 - b. Creating financial partnerships with local organizations/businesses for youth-led projects
3. We encourage (insert your school district/board here) to form a multi-stakeholder committee, that includes youth, to develop a Climate Action Plan addressing these areas:
 - a. Facilities and operations, including transportation to and from school
 - b. Direct Greenhouse Gas Measurements and Goals for Net-Zero

- c. Climate Literacy and Climate Action in the Curriculum, including funding for student-led initiatives
 - d. Providing students' mental health support, and supports for those struggling with eco-anxiety/climate-anxiety
 - e. Support Teacher Professional Development, through the increase of professional development resources and opportunities available to teachers in the district to better the environment, energy, and climate education for their students
4. We seek to ensure that all the climate actions implemented in Alberta schools are just and equitable, through the inclusion and representation of all peoples

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT

1. We transmit official copies of this resolution to the Alberta Youth Leaders for Environmental Education, our school administration, our school council, our school board, our local teachers association, and the Minister of Education.

Signed:

Date: _____