

Educational institutions are a critical venue for teaching and motivating students to understand and act on sustainability issues, but there has been little study of the inclusion of sustainability in education across Canada at the ministry of education or school division levels. The Sustainability and Education Policy Network (SEPN) conducted a nation-wide census to address this gap.

13 PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION

389 SCHOOL DIVISIONS

Ministry of Education Policies

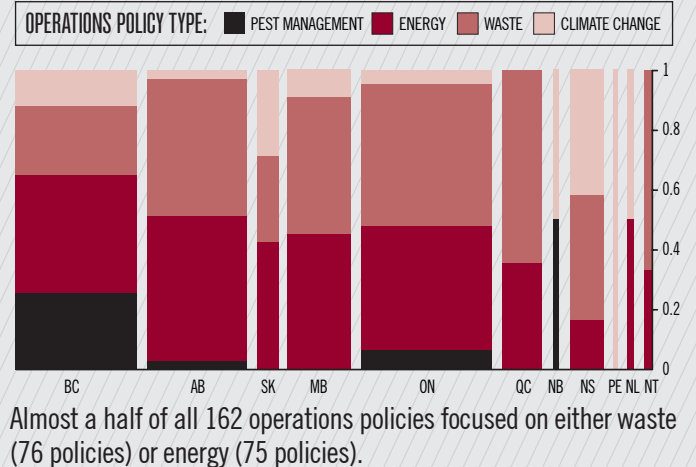
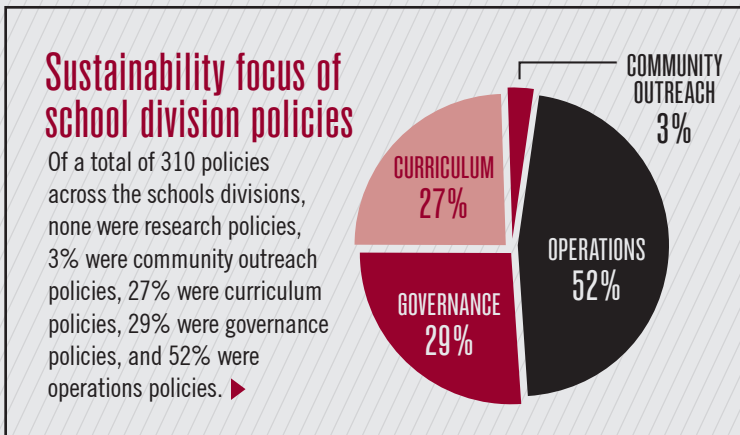
The provincial and territorial ministries of education engage with sustainability issues through sustainability-specific (s-s) policies and general curriculum frameworks.

Province	S-S Governance Documents	S-S Curriculum Documents	S-S Operations Documents	S-S Research Documents	Sustainability in Curriculum Framework
AB	No	No	No	No	Yes
BC	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
MB	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NB/NL/NS/PE	No	No	No	No	Yes
NT	No	Yes	No	No	N/A
NU	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
ON	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
QC	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
SK	No	No	No	No	Yes
YK	No	No	No	Yes	N/A

School Division Policies

Over half of Canada's school divisions have sustainability-specific policies.

Operations policies are the majority of sustainability-specific policies.



31% OF SCHOOL DIVISIONS HAD UNDERTAKEN SOME FORM OF SUSTAINABILITY CERTIFICATION.

Most used two certification types: EcoSchools (only in Ontario) and Brundtland Schools (mainly in Quebec) certifications.

ONLY 8% OF CANADA'S 389 SCHOOL DIVISIONS HAD SUSTAINABILITY STAFF.

"ENVIRONMENT" IS THE DOMINANT TERM USED IN SCHOOL DIVISION POLICY TITLES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

is the dominant term used in school division policy titles across the country.

Sustainability-specific policies increase after 2006

Sustainability-specific school division policy dates followed a distinct temporal trend, with few policy dates before 2006, a rapid increase until 2010, and a slow decline to the present. Only 80 policies were dated between 1978 and 2005. 189 policies were dated between 2006 and 2014.

Sustainability Initiative Scores by Provincial Average

(Average of scores of school divisions in a province. Each school division gets 1 point for each of the three sustainability initiatives they have (eco-certification, staff, policy) with a possible range of 0-3)

ON	NB	QC	BC	SK	NS	MB	PE	NL	NT	YT	NU
1.64	1.29	1.19	0.78	0.73	0.67	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.38	0.20	0.0

There has been a steady increase in uptake of sustainability in K-12 education over the past decade. However these research results suggest that more can be done both at the ministry of education and school division levels to further mobilize knowledge and solutions that enable change for a more sustainable future. 🌱