



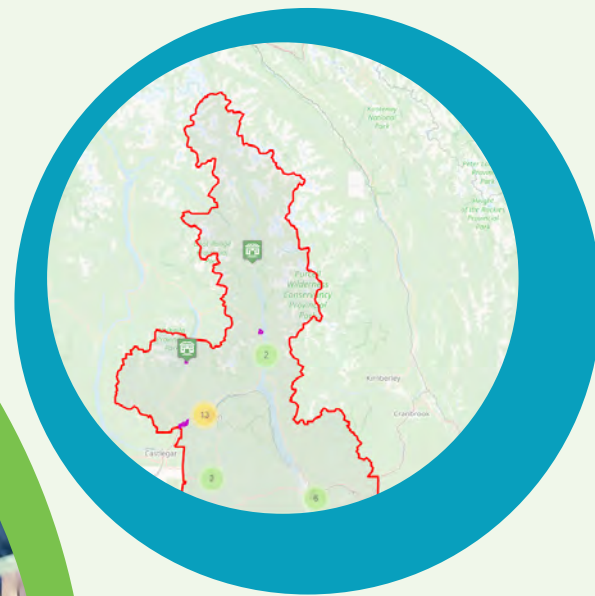
School District 8  
Kootenay Lake

# CLIMATE ACTION & SUSTAINABILITY ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 10, 2025

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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.



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# 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.

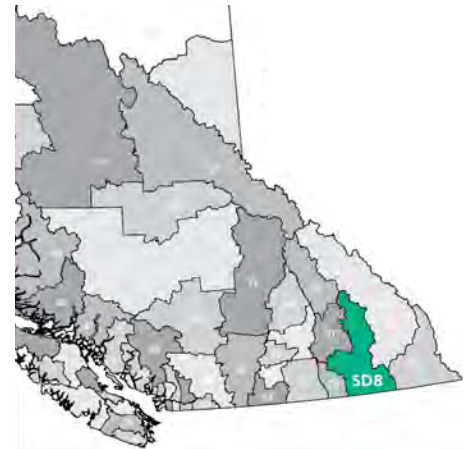
School District No. 8 has developed a [Strategic Plan for 2024-2029](#), which focuses on five key priorities to enhance student success and well-being:

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

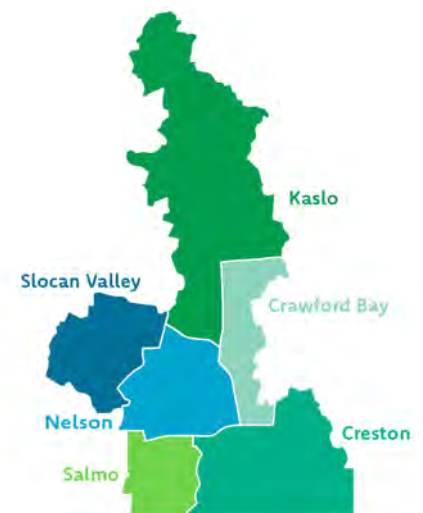
The Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of education, stewardship, and cultural development in fostering a sustainable future.

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

4,700  
students

21  
schools

900  
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 2024/2025 school year. In accordance with current Provincial regulations, all public service organizations are required to report their annual greenhouse gas emissions. The district's 2024 Climate Change Accountability Report is appended to the end of this report.





# EDUCATION, AWARENESS & ACTION

Education 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.



## Priority Actions

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.					
Launch an annual survey to identify what actions each school has taken to move forward with the goals identified within this plan.					
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.					
Conduct a review of existing curriculum & course offerings across all grade levels to identify sustainability related content, themes, & learning outcomes.					
Develop & implement a plan to address gaps & opportunities for sustainability-related curriculum & course offerings.					
Review provincially offered Board Authority Authorized (BAA) courses to identify sustainability-related courses which could be offered at SD8.					
Develop one new sustainability-focused BAA course within the 2026–2027 academic year.					
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.					
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.					
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.					
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.					





# EDUCATION, AWARENESS & ACTION

## Progress in 2024-2025

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

- Strengthening relationships with external partners (e.g. Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN) and Kootenay Boundary Environmental Education (KBEE)) to foster environmental awareness and stewardship among students. Examples include:
  - ◇ SD8 schools participated in the Take Me Outside for Learning Challenge with the support of KBEE. This initiative encourages teachers to commit to taking their learning outside on a weekly basis throughout the school year. By fostering outdoor, experiential, place-based and place-conscious learning, this program enhances students' understanding of their local environment and empowers them to take thoughtful action. This school year, SD8 achieved the highest level of student participation in the initiative in the Kootenay-Boundary region.
  - ◇ The annual Environmental Education Leadership Clinic was held from April 25th to 27th, 2025 at Nipika Mountain Resort, bringing together educators from the Columbia Basin and across British Columbia. Representatives from SD8 and eight local chapters of the Environmental Educators' Provincial Specialist Association collaborated with CBEEN, KBEE, Wildsight to strategize on enhancing environmental learning in their respective regions. (See Ben for picture)
  - ◇ KBEE is coordinated by a committee of the Kootenay-Boundary Chapter of the British Columbia School Superintendents Association (BCSSA). This includes School Districts 5, 6, 8, 10, 20 and 51. The goal of the KBEE to better support students' understanding of their local environment and empowering thoughtful action, through learning that is outdoor, experiential, place-based and place-conscious. (see Ben for picture)
- Embedding Indigenous knowledge and ecological practices by involving Knowledge Keepers in classrooms, inviting Elders to the Student Leadership Conference, and providing land-based learning opportunities for SD8 staff and students. Examples include:
  - ◇ On November 5th, 2024, SD8 hosted the annual Student Leadership Conference at Mount Sentinel Secondary, bringing together students in Grades 8–12 from across the district. The theme of the conference, "Future Readiness in a Changing World," invited students to reflect on the skills, mindsets, and leadership required to navigate an increasingly complex and dynamic global landscape. The day began with a powerful welcome by Donna Wright, Indigenous Elder, who opened the conference with the beat of the drum. Her presence and words created a safe, inclusive, and respectful space for learning, dialogue, and connection throughout the day. (see Ben for picture)
- Growing student led sustainability and climate action opportunities. Examples include:
  - ◇ On March 5th, students in the Adventure Tourism Leadership and Safety (ATLAS) program waxed 80 skis and snowboards, raising approximately \$1,300. Proceeds were donated to the Friends of Kootenay Lake Stewardship Society in support of their mission to enhance the health and stewardship of Kootenay Lake through monitoring, habitat restoration, and community empowerment, including partnerships with local communities and First Nations.



## EDUCATION, AWARENESS & ACTION

### Sharing Sustainability Stories

#### **L.V. Rogers Secondary School Green Team Recognized as Leaders in Sustainability**

On December 10, the LVR Green Team received the 2024 Sustainability Leadership Award and an honorarium of \$1,150 from the City of Nelson. This award recognizes contributions to the five pillars of sustainability—cultural strength, healthy neighbourhoods, robust ecosystems, prosperity, and resiliency—as outlined in the City’s Path to 2040 Sustainability Strategy.



#### **Grandmother Drum at JV Humphries School**

Students at JV Humphries School had the unique opportunity to engage in the creation of a new Grandmother Drum through a two-day learning experience. Guided by traditional knowledge keepers and teachers, students learned the cultural teachings and protocols associated with building and awakening a large drum. The experience was rooted in community knowledge and supported intergenerational learning, fostering deeper understanding and respect for Indigenous traditions.

# 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

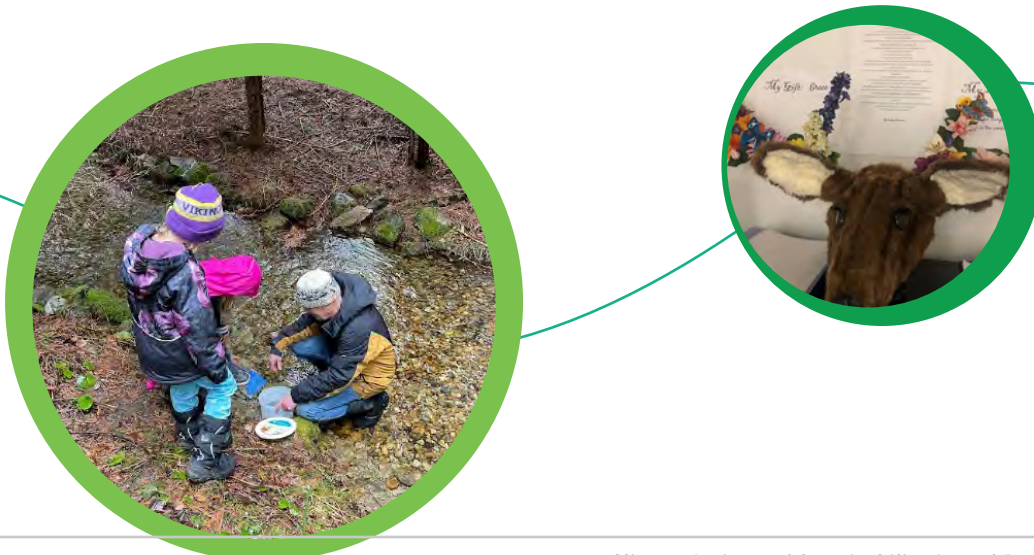
SD8 will enhance efficiency and resilience while reducing climate impact by setting focused sustainability goals and targets to monitor progress. The district will prioritize efforts in climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience, driving operational improvements and long-term financial and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





## Priority Actions



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.					
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.					
Continue to incorporate water conservation opportunities into the installation or replacement of water fixtures, irrigation systems, & HVAC systems.					
Review & develop procedures that optimize travel to district sites / schools to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.					
Review & develop strategies to optimize student curricular & co-curricular travel to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.					
Continue to enhance green spaces & promote biodiversity on district sites.					
Assess the district’s purchasing practices to identify products & services that offer opportunities to further embed sustainability.					
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.					
Embed sustainability into the district’s procurement processes, including the acquisition of fleet vehicles, equipment, & other products.					
Continue to work with Waste Management service provider to maintain waste data tracking system.					
Continue to explore & implement waste reduction initiatives, applying best practice to reduce waste.					
Pilot window covering solutions at select schools to enhance the learning environment during hot weather.					
Complete FireSmart pilots at select schools to manage forests for increased safety. Monitor the results & expand the program to other suitable sites.					
Identify & pursue funding & incentives to support sustainability, energy efficient & emissions reductions projects.					



# STEWARDSHIP

## Progress in 2024-2025

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

### HVAC (Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning), DDC (Direct Digital Control), and LED (Light emitting Diode) Projects

The replacement of HVAC and DDC systems as well as LED lighting projects at all schools have been a district focus. Many of these systems were operating with older technology and equipment. Most of the DDC systems have now been upgraded and lighting has been upgraded to LED. The district continues to focus on the HVAC systems as they are large multi year capital projects. These improvements provide the best return from a financial perspective and have an immediate effect not only on the environment but building comfort and student learning as well.



### Waste and Recycling

Waste and recycling in the district are a challenge as commercial applications differ greatly from residential applications. One of the key solutions to this through education, and that message is elimination, pack out what you pack in. The district has expanded and continues to expand the recycling program where possible with the recent addition to the mixed paper and cardboard recycling at Mount Sentinel Secondary School, Hume Elementary School, Brent Kennedy Elementary School, and L.V. Rogers Secondary School.



# 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

## 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 B.C. Challenge

A team of inspired SD8 staff established the SD8 Wellness Committee in spring 2025 with representation from all employee groups. The first district-wide wellness initiative is the Walk Across B.C. Challenge in which employees log their steps or distance to reach the district-wide goal of walking 1,050 kilometres across B.C. between May 12 and June 16, 2025. Friendly competition, quiet strolling and vigorous striding are all encouraged, with prizes and draws for participants across the district.



## Priority Actions



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 2024-2025

SD8 has made significant strides in improving climate action and sustainability culture, including:

- Review of district workplans to align with sustainability.
- Public and internal communication on student-led climate action and sustainability initiatives.
- School board office green initiatives including a “pack it in, pack it out” program for staff, and off-site composting of coffee grounds and tea bags spearheaded by the SBO Green Team, and a returnables program with refundable cans, bottles and cartons collected by Wildflower Nelson for use in school initiatives.
- SD8 Wellness Team established in spring 2025 with representation from all employee groups. First district-wide wellness initiative was the Walk Across B.C. Challenge in which employees log their steps or distance to reach the district-wide goal of walking 1,050 kilometres across B.C., with prizes and draws for participants.





# 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.

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





# APPENDIX A

## 2024 PSO Climate Change Accountability Report





## School District 8 (Kootenay Lake)

### 2024 PSO Climate Change Accountability Report

Prepared May 2025 in accordance with British Columbia's Climate Change Accountability Act, and the Carbon Neutral Government Regulations.

## Overview

The Climate Change Accountability Report (CCAR) for the period January 1 to December 31, 2024, summarizes School District 8 Kootenay Lake's (SD8) greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions profile, the total offsets to reach net-zero emission, the actions taken in 2024 to minimize emissions, and plans to continue reducing emissions in 2025 and beyond.

The Board of Education of School District 8 Kootenay Lake is committed to climate action and sustainability and ensures that every effort is made to conserve energy and natural resources while exercising sound financial management. As part of this commitment, the school district has developed *Policy 173: Climate Action and Sustainability* that was adopted on February 11, 2025. The three priority areas of this policy are: **education, awareness and action, stewardship and culture.**

This report provides an account of SD8's efforts to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, outlining key actions taken in 2024 and future commitments to sustainability. It reflects the district's commitment to climate accountability by measuring progress, and aligning with the priorities set in *Policy 173: Climate Action and Sustainability*.

By June 30, 2025, the School District No. 8 Kootenay Lake's final 2024 Climate Change Accountability Report will be posted to our website at [www.sd8.bc.ca](http://www.sd8.bc.ca)

## Provincial Policy

The Province of British Columbia (Province) enacted the Climate Change Accountability Act (CCAA) in 2007 (formerly the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act GGRTA 2007). The CCAA requires, among other things, that public sector organizations (PSOs) be carbon neutral beginning in 2010, and for each year thereafter. The District is subject to this requirement.

Being carbon neutral requires that an organization:

- take action to reduce its Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions,
- measure and report its carbon emissions (or carbon 'footprint'), and
- purchase carbon offsets for any remaining emissions to effectively 'neutralize' the environmental impact of these emissions.

The Province has defined criteria for reporting and has developed a web-based system for tracking and reporting emissions.

Declaration Statement

This PSO Climate Change Accountability Report for the period January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024 summarizes our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions profile, the total offsets to reach net-zero emissions, the actions we have taken in 2024 to minimize our GHG emissions, and our plans to continue reducing emissions in 2025 and beyond.

Retirement of Offsets

In accordance with the requirements of the *Climate Change Accountability Act* and Carbon Neutral Government Regulation, *SD8 (the Organization)* is responsible for arranging for the retirement of the offsets obligation reported below for the 2024 calendar year, together with any adjustments reported for past calendar years (if applicable). The Organization hereby agrees that, in exchange for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (**the Ministry**) ensuring that these offsets are retired on the Organization’s behalf, the Organization will pay within 30 days, the associated invoice to be issued by the Ministry in an amount equal to \$25 per tonne of offsets retired on its behalf plus GST.

Executive Sign-off

Signature	Date
Name (please print)	Title

Part 1: Legislative Reporting Requirements

2024 GHG Emissions and Offsets Summary Table

School District 8 Kootenay Lake 2024 GHG Emissions and Offsets Summary	
GHG emissions for the period January 1 – December 31, 2024	
Total BioCO <sub>2</sub>	45 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
Total Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	2,995 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
Total Offsets (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	2,300 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
Adjustments to Offset Required GHG Emissions Reported in Prior Years	
Total Offset Adjustment (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	0 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
Grand Total Offsets for the 2024 Reporting Year	
Grand Total Offsets (tCO <sub>2</sub> e) to be Retired for 2023 Reporting Year	0 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
Offset Investment (\$25 per tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	2,300 x \$25 = <b>\$57,500.00</b>



## Emission Reductions: Actions and Plans

Below is a list of actions taken by SD8 in the 2024 calendar year to minimize emissions and plans to continue reducing emissions in future years.

Stationary Sources (Buildings)		
Actions Taken	Site	Project Description
	Mount Sentinel	A complete HVAC system upgrade is scheduled for completion this summer. This project replaces all outdated equipment—well beyond its useful life—with modern, energy-efficient systems
	KRSS	A new Direct Digital Control (DDC) system has been installed to enhance the efficiency of the existing HVAC system and establish a platform for future upgrades.
	Redfish	A new Direct Digital Control (DDC) system has been installed to enhance the efficiency of the existing HVAC system and establish a platform for future upgrades.
	Hume	Preliminary design work is underway for a new HVAC system, laying the groundwork for a future full upgrade—similar to the one completed at Mount Sentinel School.
Actions Planned	Site	Project Description
	Hume	Begin replacing the HVAC system in annual phases.
	Central	A full window replacement will improve the building envelope, thereby enhancing the performance and efficiency of the new HVAC and DDC systems.

Mobile Sources (Fleet)		
Actions Taken	Site	Project Description
	Operations	Recent additions to the administrative white fleet include hybrid vehicles, along with one fully electric vehicle, acquired through a combination of leasing and purchasing.
	Operations	The electric bus program expanded further, with the addition of two new electric buses this year.
Actions Planned	Site	Project Description
	Operations	Ongoing review of vehicle technologies will support the continued acquisition of hybrid and electric white fleet vehicles where possible.
	Operations	Continue expanding the electric bus fleet, with consideration currently underway to extend charging infrastructure beyond the Creston and Nelson bus yards to include the Slocan Valley yard. This expansion will provide greater operational flexibility and increase the use of electric buses, thereby reducing reliance on diesel units.