

Ideas for sustainability – A summary from the RISE 2019 Teachers' Conference

Gardens

- Find ways and funds to start small gardens with students. It connects them to the earth and they see the results! They also get to take food home and share it with their families.
- Use your garden as an outdoor classroom on nice days. Set up stones for seats and spend some time learning outdoors. This also further connects them to the garden.
- If you have rocky soil, use Gro-Boxes as an option for easier gardening.
- Fish can make a great fertilizer – check out the Island Lake Wabung Fisheries Producers Cooperative in Garden Hill about how you can do this if you live in a community with lots of fishing (http://www.nmfccc.ca/uploads/4/4/1/7/44170639/nmfccc_final_20160502_-_garden_hill_wabung_fisheries.pdf).
- If you have a larger garden, give some of the veggies to Elders as a thank you for their teachings in the classroom and community.
- If possible, try to plant some native plants.
- Bring families into the garden program – assign each family a week to care for the garden and those who help get a share of the harvest.
- Use some of the harvest to make soup! This teaches kids about how to use the veggies in the kitchen.
- If you need someone to care for the garden over the summer, look for funds to hire a high school student. It maintains the garden and provides some local employment.
- If you have gardening experts in the community, ask them to come and present and teach. See if you can get a small grant to pay them an honorarium.

Media and communications

- Use the local radio and tv stations to share information about the school's sustainability efforts. Maybe this can be a monthly segment by the students or green team.
- If you have video equipment, encourage the students to make videos about what they are doing in their school or community. Perhaps you can partner with other communities to have a film festival competition.
- If you don't have video equipment, be in touch with Connected North (www.connectednorth.org) and see if they will work with you to create a video.
- Online and Skype sessions are becoming more popular – Skype with other communities in Manitoba, Canada or the world.
- Work with your music teacher to create a spoken word or music video to share online.
- Work with students to create art or theatre on sustainability issues.

Connecting Elders and youth

- Start a regular Elder program – recruit a few Elders and ask them to come to the school a couple days per month. Find a small grant to pay them for their time and expertise. Take some time to find out what the students want to learn and what the Elders want to speak about.
- Set some sessions where Elders share the way they used to care for the land and students teach the Elders what they have learned about recycling, reducing, reusing or gardening.
- Start small – organize a Grandparents Day where Elders are invited into the school.
- Bring Elders in to teach their language.

Funding and resources

- When you plan a project think about:
 - The budget – how much money you will need for all aspects of the project
 - The details – HOW will you do the project and WHO will be involved
 - The intended outcomes and goals – Is it to teach students? Improve sustainability in your community? Improve food security?
 - Create SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound)
- Know what your funder wants by reading through their website and funding guides.
- Call the funder if you have specific questions. This helps to establish a relationship.
- Get in-kind donations such as an Elder's time; support from Chief and Council.
- Find out if you need approval from Chief and Council to apply for the funds or to do the project (make sure you follow community protocol).
- Have some ideas ready in case you find out about a fund that has a deadline soon.
- Consider applying for a charitable donation number (through Government of Canada) for your school.

Other ideas

- Work with your community to establish a Junior Chief's program – these young people can act as mentors with other students and have the ear of Chief and Council.
- Use pizza parties as rewards for a job well-done.
- Students could take a leadership role in asking Chief and Council for more movement on sustainability issues (if appropriate in your community).
- Partner with trucking companies to take recycling out of your community and to towns where the facilities exist.