

Certification 2009-10 Tipsheet

- meeting certification criteria -

This is not an exhaustive or comprehensive list. Please read the criteria for each question and ensure that they are met. If you have any questions contact your board representative.


General tips:

- Don't 'double-dip'. If a project is claimed in one section, chances are that it isn't eligible in another section.
- Read the questions carefully. If you need clarity, click on the link at the end of the Guiding Question at the top of the section or check the [Guide to online certification](#).
- Be specific in identifying how students are engaged, what they are learning and the environmental issues that are addressed.

Ontario EcoSchools resources at www.ontarioecoschools.org


- Best practices gallery - http://www.ontarioecoschools.org/best_practices/index.html
- Certification section - <http://www.ontarioecoschools.org/certification/index.html>
- Newsletter archives - <http://www.ontarioecoschools.org/archives/newsletter.html>
- Sign up for our FREE newsletter for tips and reminders about certification

Here are some questions/criteria that are new to certification for 2009-10, with further explanations:

1.7: Is EcoSchools part of the school culture and leadership...?	
	<p>1.7 EcoSchools throughout the school culture</p> <p>The EcoSchools program recognizes the importance of incorporating environmentally responsible practices in every part of school operations, as well as student learning. EcoSchools is based on the philosophy that the environment is not something "outside," but is intrinsic in everything we do, including school events, awards, and communications. <i>Scoring:</i> Level 1 = few school initiatives/events incorporate environmental responsibility; Level 4 = all school initiatives/events incorporate environmentally responsible practices.</p>
<p>Meets the criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration decisions that support environmental initiatives (e.g., EcoSchools on agenda for staff meetings, planning time, money for initiatives) • Environmentally-responsible behaviour promoted at school events (e.g., "green" Proms, hosting "green" sports tournaments) 	<p>Criteria not met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentioning how large/diverse the EcoTeam is, or how often the EcoTeam meets. These aspects are valued in questions 1.1-1.6. • Listing communication strategies. These are valued in 1.8 and other questions in the application.
1.9a & b: Did staff and/or students participate in environmentally focused professional development (PD) and workshops, or mentor a school using EcoSchools?	
<p>Meets the criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PD provided by central board staff/outside expert with diverse audience from many schools (e.g., board-delivered PD on EcoSchools where participants are from many schools; information on raising Monarch butterflies given by conservation authority) • Ongoing mentoring of one school to another on their EcoSchools program (e.g., meeting with a school several times during the year) 	<p>Criteria not met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one meetings or staff meetings about EcoSchools • Meeting with a school once to share EcoSchools experiences

Part IV: School Ground Greening

4.3: Does your greening project **improve biodiversity...and/or encourage ecological sustainability...?**

	<p>4.3</p>	<p>Improve biodiversity and encourage ecological sustainability</p> <p>School ground greening projects can not only provide valuable shade, and diverse play and learning opportunities, but also improve habitat and biodiversity for species that live in our neighbourhoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why promote biodiversity?</i> Biodiversity helps ensure a robust ecosystem that will support and maintain a healthy balance of living and non-living components. • <i>Why plant native species?</i> Native plants are hardier, require less maintenance, and provide habitat for the local natural ecosystem. • <i>Why use drought-resistant plants?</i> These plants are ideal for schools, where access to water is often limited, especially during the summer.
<p>Meets the criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifying how the project promotes biodiversity (e.g., wetland was created to provide habitat for Pickerel frog and other native amphibians) • Specifying how the project is sustainable (e.g., 4 native trees (sugar/red maples) were planted with protective cages and mulch) 	<p>Criteria not met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not demonstrating how your actions improved biodiversity or encouraged ecological sustainability (e.g., students planted trees and shrubs around school; classes planted flowers they had started from seed; new gardens created) • Beautification projects (e.g., planting annuals) 	

Part V: Curriculum

Curriculum Template:	
4. Overall curriculum expectation addressed:	
<p>Meets the criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect to the curriculum (e.g., assess the impacts of human activities and technologies on the environment, and evaluate ways of controlling these impacts) 	<p>Criteria not met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not connected to curriculum (e.g., students become aware of Climate Change; students will create a poem about respecting the environment)
7. What did students learn about the environment?	
<p>Meets the criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific examples (e.g., students learned the impact of extracting natural resources; students developed skills at identifying different species; students learned the history of air pollution legislation) 	<p>Criteria not met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear connection to the environment (e.g., students learned how to create art from materials found in the recycling bin)

Part VI: Environmental Stewardship

Environmental Stewardship template:	
1. What environmental issue(s) were addressed in this stewardship activity?	
<p>Meets the criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues clearly articulated (e.g., conserving resources through reusable water bottle campaign; minimizing waste through daily boomerang lunch; reducing air pollution through walk-to-school program) 	<p>Criteria not met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear that addressing an environmental issue is part of the activity (e.g., school-wide yard sale; fundraising for wells in developing country; Earth Month Assembly)
5. How did you communicate the school community about this environmental issue and the impact of the activity?	
<p>Meets the criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly identify that the school community learned about the issue (e.g., posters about the environmental impact of bottled water; newsletter articles tracking the amount of garbage; information about natural resources saved through reuse or recycling) 	<p>Criteria not met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear that environmental issue was communicated (e.g., advertising/reporting on the event with no mention of the environmental issue)