



2025 PSO Climate Change Accountability Report

School District #79 – Cowichan Valley

PART 1. Legislative Reporting Requirements

Declaration statement: This PSO Climate Change Accountability Report for the period January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, summarizes our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions profile, the total offsets to reach net-zero emissions, the actions we have taken in 2025 to minimize our GHG emissions, and our plans to continue reducing emissions in 2026 and beyond.

Emission Reductions: Actions & Plans

The Cowichan Valley School District (District) continues to work towards reducing its GHG emissions as a long-term contribution to GHG reductions. The focus remains on upgrading to cleaner energy sources, education, awareness, and supporting climate action programs. Significant weather patterns in 2025 have continued to add challenges to managing reduced energy consumption patterns.

A. Stationary Sources (e.g. buildings, power generation)

In 2025, heat pump replacement projects continued and were completed at Lake Cowichan Secondary, along with HVAC upgrades to Alexander Elementary Gymnasium and Discovery. Boiler and DDC improvements to Chemainus, Quamichan Secondary and Mill Bay Elementary. All lighting upgrades included the most energy-efficient light fixtures, and this will continue to be our practice. Emergency lighting to LED upgrades occurred at many district facilities this year including Crofton, Drinkwater and George Bonner.

The completed construction of the new Quw'utsun Secondary School, replacing the older Cowichan Secondary site, has been built to meet and/or exceed current energy efficiency standards in the year of opening (2025) and beyond. The new Quw'utsun Secondary School received Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

(LEED) Gold certification. Exterior Cladding projects have been discussed, and planning has started to further offset the effects of climate change and use the building core temperature for the changing seasons. An OBS agreement with Honeywell is still in progress to further optimize the existing mechanical systems which will result in a significant reduction in electricity, natural gas, and fuel oil consumption.

The district continues to do end-to-end reviews of all HVAC DDC systems annually, with plans to update end of life systems in the coming years, with temperature mapping for increased efficiency. Infrastructure for our electric bus fleet is in place to support the replacement of fuel and diesel buses at the end of life.

The heating plants for the maintenance shop and bus garage have demonstrated, and continue to have a large impact, on emissions reduction with the conversion to heat pumps.

B. Mobile Sources (e.g. fleet vehicles, off-road/portable equipment)

The Transportation Department annually reviews and maps bus routes to ensure mileage and fuel consumption rates contribute to operational efficiencies. The transportation department maintained existing routes, with some minor efficiency improvements, without sacrificing service to learners. Anti-idling software continues to be used in all school buses where after one (1) minute of idling, the bus engine turns off.

We currently have 3 electrical buses in our fleet with longer-term plans to expand its fleet. Infrastructure is being installed to support future electric buses in the Transportation Yard with plans to expand into the south end of the District. We continue to monitor the fleets energy and maintenance data collected for future planning and reporting purposes. Electric charging stations have been installed, and this infrastructure will support future demands and District goals through fossil fuel reduction.

Clean Fleet Plan: There were discussions for a clean small fleet that will continue into 2026.

C. Paper Consumption

We continue to initiate several short-term and long-term paper reduction strategies as presented below:

- All paper purchased must contain a minimum of 30% content; the actual goal is to purchase 100% sugar cane wastepaper whenever possible. The paper purchase default on our order forms is set to purchase only 100% sugar cane wastepaper.
- We continue to evaluate new sources of low emissions non-forest paper.
- We have an awareness campaign focused on reduced office paper consumption/use.
- Leased printers are proving to be more energy efficient.
- Climate Action Group (CAG) meets occasionally with Local Government agencies and regularly with District Leadership.
- Papercut software was installed on all printers where you must enter a code to receive your print request, rather than have it print automatically.
- Paperless meetings are held whenever possible, most notably on Zoom/Teams platforms.
- Our Online Human Resources portal results in a significant reduction in paper use and distribution.

We continue to support and utilize the use of high-volume eco-friendly wastepaper products in school washrooms and classrooms.

2025 GHG Emissions and Offsets Summary Table

<i>School District #79 – Cowichan Valley: 2025 GHG Emissions and Offsets</i>	
GHG Emissions created in Calendar Year 2025	
Total BioCO ₂	144
Total Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	1825
Total Offsets (tCO ₂ e)	1377
Adjustments to Offset Required GHG Emissions Reported in Prior Years	
Total Offsets Adjustment (tCO ₂ e)	0
Grand Total Offsets for the 2025 Reporting Year	
Grand Total Offsets (tCO ₂ e) to be Retired for 2025 Reporting Year	1377
Offset Investment (\$25 per tCO ₂ e) [Grand Total Offsets to be Retired x \$25/tCO ₂ e]	\$34,425

Retirement of Offsets:

In accordance with the requirements of the *Climate Change Accountability Act* and Carbon Neutral Government Regulation, *School District #79 – Cowichan Valley* (**the Organization**) is responsible for arranging for the retirement of the offset's obligation reported above for the 2025 calendar year, together with any adjustments reported for past calendar years (if applicable). The Organization hereby agrees that, in exchange for the Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions (**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.

PART 2. Public Sector Climate Leadership

2A. Climate Risk Management

We have initiated several short- and long-term strategies as presented below.

- For any building upgrades, energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions will be considered.
- Energy audits have been performed for many of the buildings in the District.
- DDC remote monitoring to heating and mechanical equipment to quickly respond to issues; upgrades to systems to be more sensitive and accurate and response to temperature forecasts planned in the future.
- The promotion of energy efficiency and climate sustainable practices will continue district wide to align with our strategic plan initiatives and objectives.
- Past extreme weather and emergency climate conditions have prompted more urgent and careful consideration of alternative and eco-friendly energy options (i.e., composting sites at schools and administration sites, solar energy, redesigned bus routes, etc.).
- Attendance at conferences and/or professional development workshops are encouraged to be done virtually where possible and if in person cannot be avoided, a low carbon business travel policy has been adopted.
- Recruitment activities occur online where possible.

2B. Other Sustainability Initiatives

The District continues to pursue 'green' purchasing/procurement standards when doing business with suppliers and considers a supplier's contribution to the climate rather than solely on the price/availability of their products.

2C. Success Stories

The biggest success story this year was the new Quw'utsun Secondary School receiving LEED Gold certification. Other successes include upgrades to low temperature boilers, coupled with heat pumps installations acting as primary heating source for the schools, with the District realizing reduced overall costs. The low temperature boilers are demonstrating a significant influence on carbon emission. Exterior cladding upgrades will continue to support high efficiency systems within the building to maximize carbon offset during the changing seasons.

Executive sign-off:


Signature


Date


Name (please print)


Title