



LIVING SCHOOLS ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM REPORT

HOSTED BY: DAWSON COLLEGE & CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
MONTREAL, CANADA

APRIL 23RD, 2019

Written by: Sean Murray



The symposium was held at Concordia University which is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation are recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gathered. Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples.



CONCORDIA & DAWSON

COLLABORATION

The Living Schools Symposium brought together a diverse group of individuals united by an interest to promote well-being for students and citizens through sustainability. Held jointly by Dawson College and Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, the symposium's participants and invited speakers collaboratively explored pathways for interconnecting sustainability with happiness.

Anchoring sustainability to well-being necessitates a firm and observable sustainability ethos that goes well beyond ephemeral or fringe sustainability projects. This sort of undertaking requires large-scale, or small-scale, but sustained, projects that integrate the educational experience and lead towards effective and affective changes in the students', faculty and staffs' felt experiences and environment. Invited speakers and participants shared such initiatives: from creating to tending monarch butterfly gardens and roof-top bee colonies, to giving at-risk youth opportunities to build and positively affect their environment, to greening whole campuses from the inside and out. This symposium started and ended with concrete actions that ultimately lead to measurable improvements in sustainability *and* happiness.

MESSAGE FROM DAWSON'S SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR

DEPARTMENT

Sustainability & Living Campus Office

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Living Schools are reflected by institutes of higher education like Dawson College and Concordia University. We are both neighbours and hubs of sustainability innovation in downtown Montreal and share many students, educational goals and Living School attributes. Several attributes in particular were strengthened by this symposium – commitment to affect positive real-world change, creating respectful relationships and mentoring Living Schools. This joint symposium demonstrated that the future of our institutions is one where *well-being for all* is positioned as a central value and how pro-nature behaviour can facilitate the healthy relationships we all strive for. It is time to dream, create a joint vision and “roll up our sleeves” to tackle the challenges that live between the present and what can be!

SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR, DAWSON COLLEGE

Chris Adam

MESSAGE FROM CONCORDIA'S LIVING SCHOOLS SYMPOSIUM COORDINATOR

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This symposium was one of hope and action. A hope, for a future in education that is inextricably linked to sustainability, supported by action through projects that carve paths towards this ideal we call Living Schools –educational institutions where well-being is conferred before degrees.

The intersection where sustainability crosses with happiness was explored on two fronts. The first was the role schools play in cultivating student agency for creating social change. When students are given real agency over their environment, a sense of empowerment and hope is bestowed. The second was the importance that our educational institutions carry the undeniable, observable, signature of sustainability. When buildings carry no such trace, this only serves to feed into feelings of negligibility and powerlessness vis-à-vis sustainability and its corollary – happiness.

The symposium indeed ended on a high note: A proposal to build a green corridor connecting Dawson College with Concordia University. This “Living Corridor” would serve as a symbol of hope coupled to action for better, more sustainable, futures for our students and the citizenry.

**LECTURER, DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT,
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY**

Catherine Calogeropoulos, Ph.D.

WHAT ARE LIVING SCHOOLS?

LIVING SCHOOLS ARE PREDICATED ON AN EDUCATION VISION OF WELL-BEING FOR ALL.

This embraces well-being – individually and collectively, for all people and the ‘other than human’ life on our planet. It is an inclusive vision that recognizes that our well-being is important both now, and in the future, and that our well-being is intertwined with that of other people and the natural environment. (O’Brien, 2016, p. 9)

[Living Schools](#) are places where people are flourishing, where staff and students are on a co-learning journey, and there is an explicit awareness that schools are interconnected with local and global communities, including the natural world. Living Schools reflect an ethos of bringing life to education and education to life. This means that the values of sustainability and *well-being for all* (Hopkins, 2013; O’Brien, 2016) influence *what* is learned, *how* it is learned, *where* and *when* it is learned, and ultimately *why* it is learned. Living Schools demonstrate the inspiring and dynamic transformation that is possible when the very purpose of education is questioned and the answer is that it ought to lead to *well-being for all*, sustainably. Inspired by Dawson College's Living Campus, Cape Breton University professors, Catherine O'Brien and Patrick Howard developed the concept of Living Schools (O'Brien & Howard, 2016) and created the Living Schools Attributes Chart as well as a resource for educators (see the Living Schools Discussion Chart in the Appendix) to explore how their classroom and school already reflect the Living Schools Attributes and further steps that they would like to take.



MURAL OF LIVING SCHOOL ATTRIBUTES LOCATED AT COOKSHIRE SCHOOL , QUEBEC, CANADA

AGENDA

The morning began with a Land acknowledgement from Emilie Martel, Senior Lead, Cégep Partnerships, Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs. This was followed by opening remarks from Chris Adam, Sustainability Coordinator at Dawson College, an introduction from Emilie Martel, Senior Lead, Cégep Partnerships, Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs, and Chris Adam, Sustainability Coordinator at Dawson. Dr Catherine O'Brien, from Cape Breton University, presented on the Living Schools Attributes. Staff from Cookshire Elementary School, Principal Tina Jacklin, Physical Education Teacher Kris Smith, and Special Education Teacher Kevin Deven shared the progress they have made over the last year. Luisa Montes, with the aid of an interpreter (April Obregon), presented on the radio station at Tres Marias (Mexico) and how the school fits within the Living Schools Attributes and Practices framework (Howard & O'Brien, 2017).

Participants were given a long lunch break and the opportunity to place a sticker next to three attributes and practices on the Living Schools Framework that they found most important or identified with (the framework was displayed in English, French and Spanish). Following lunch, the objectives for the afternoon were introduced. Lorie Kloda, Associate University Librarian, Planning & Community Relations, presented on how the design aspects of the Concordia Library fit within the Living Schools attributes and practices. Satoshi Ikeda, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, followed the presentation with an inspiring talk on possibilities for 'greening' Concordia for re-generative futures. The afternoon concluded with small groups gathering to discuss ideas for the next steps for Living Schools. Each group presented their ideas and a general group discussion took place. Chris Adam, Dr Catherine O'Brien and Dr Catherine Calogeropoulos closed the symposium with final remarks and thanks.

OVERVIEW OF OBJECTIVES

- Introduce the Concordia community to Living Schools
- To share some of the projects and practices at Concordia that align with Living Schools
- Expand the network of educators and academics who are working on Living Schools
- Updates from last year's symposium participants
- Identify what resources or support participants need and what they would like to offer to continue to develop Living Schools



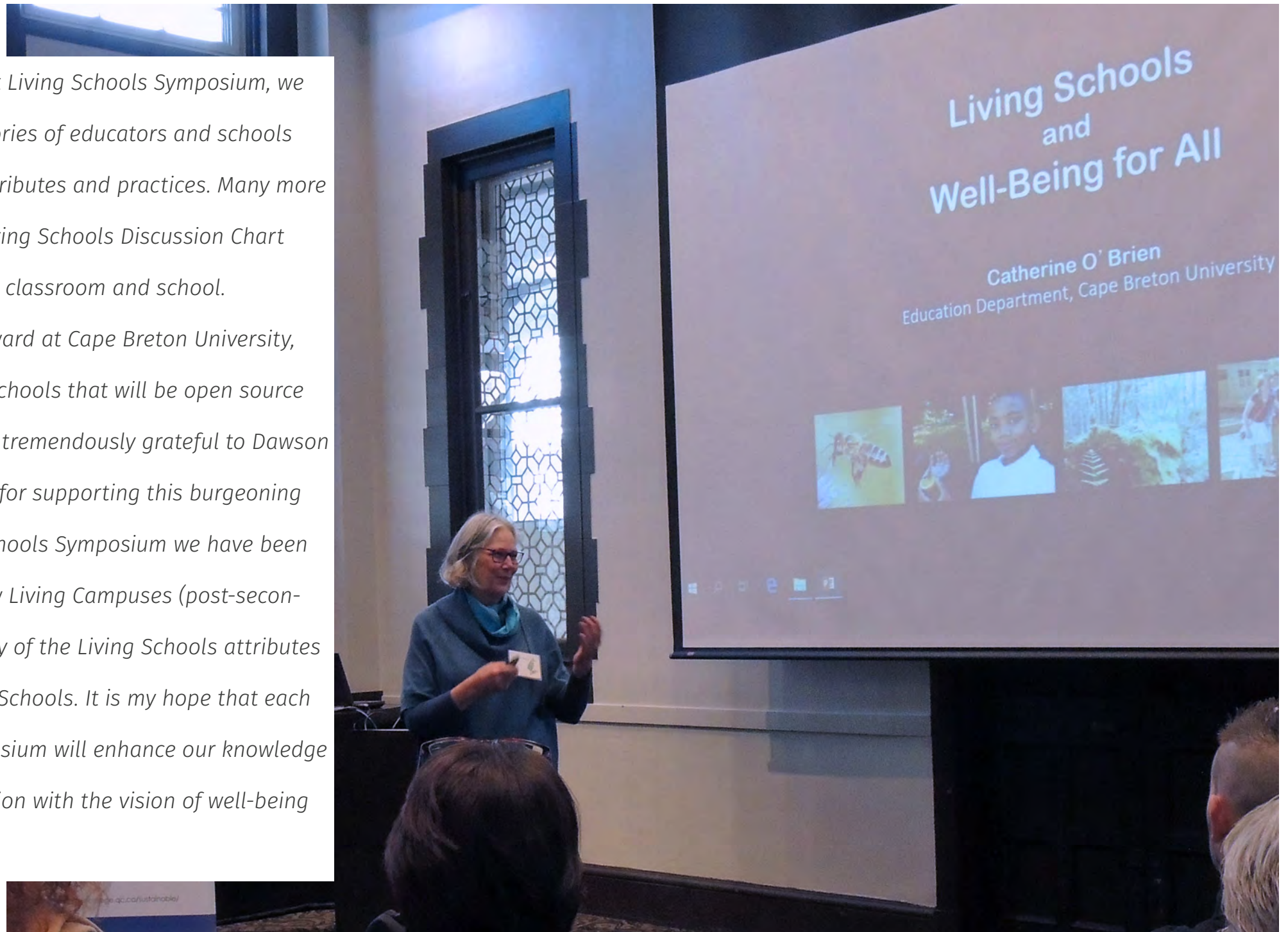
DR SATOSHI IKEDA OF CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY ADDRESSING THE SYMPOSIUM

NEXT STEPS



- Committing to on-going communication and collaboration between Concordia University and Dawson College to advance the Living Schools attributes and practices within their institutions and K-12 education.
- Elevating the practice of Edible Education through courses and projects.
- Utilizing the Living Schools website as a location for cataloging on-going Living Schools projects. (www.livingschools.world)
- Developing the Living Schools website as a location for educators to exchange their experiences of Living Schools.
- Develop a Living Classroom Planner that can be used by individual educators.
- Seek opportunities to scale-up Living Schools to Living School boards and districts.
- Immediately following the Living Schools Symposium, Dr O'Brien and Sean Murray developed a Living Campus Attributes and Practices Framework (adapted from the Living Schools Attributes and Practices framework); a need identified by participants of the symposium. A draft of the new framework for post-secondary institutions has been included in the Appendix.

“Over the past year, since the first Living Schools Symposium, we have continued to capture the stories of educators and schools that reflect the Living Schools attributes and practices. Many more educators have completed the Living Schools Discussion Chart and identified next steps for their classroom and school. Collaborating with Dr Patrick Howard at Cape Breton University, we are editing a book on Living Schools that will be open source and therefore easy to share. I am tremendously grateful to Dawson College and Concordia University for supporting this burgeoning field. During the second Living Schools Symposium we have been especially inspired to explore how Living Campuses (post-secondary institutions that reflect many of the Living Schools attributes and practices) can mentor Living Schools. It is my hope that each subsequent Living Schools Symposium will enhance our knowledge and practice to transform education with the vision of well-being for all, sustainably.”



DR CATHERINE O'BRIEN, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY PRESENTS TO SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS

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An aerial photograph of a dense evergreen forest, likely a spruce or fir forest, with many tall, conical trees packed closely together. The foliage is a vibrant green, and the perspective is from directly above, looking down on the canopy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LIVING
SCHOOLS VISIT:
www.livingschools.world

APPENDIX

LIVING SCHOOLS ATTRIBUTES AND PRACTICES FRAMEWORK

- ENGLISH
- FRENCH
- SPANISH

LIVING SCHOOLS BRIEF OVERVIEW

LIVING SCHOOLS DISCUSSION CHART

LIVING CAMPUS FRAMEWORK

LIVING SCHOOLS ATTRIBUTES & PRACTICES

Values & Vision

School community members are committed to:

Leadership

Organizational structures are characterized by:

Teaching & Learning

Pedagogical practices are influenced by:

Nature & Place-Based Orientation

Schools reflect a commitment to:

Health & Well-Being

School community demonstrates practices designed to:

Engaging with the world

Developing a cultural awareness of other's world views and identities

Demonstrating and modeling care for plants, other animals, and the rest of the natural world

Developing compassion for oneself, other people and all living things as well as skills to address positive change

Promoting the health and well-being of students, staff, the wider community, and the natural environment

A solution-focused growth mindset when facing challenges and opportunities

Creating trusting and respectful relationships in the school community

Respecting indigenous world views and traditional ways of knowing

Ensuring teachers and students have voice and agency

Developing strong collaborative relationships with staff, parents, guardians, and community

Creating opportunities for professional development for transformative learning

Cultivating an ethos of equity, inclusion and diversity

Explicit support for sustainability education and well-being

Encouraging risk taking to explore new ways of living, learning, and working in a safe environment

Collaborative processes

Holistic approaches to teaching and learning

A commitment to inquiry-based strategies to affect real-world change

A spirit of inclusion, student centred and differentiated learning

The development of creativity and creating a climate for risk taking and student agency

Modeling healthy and sustainable lifestyles

Authentic assessment of and for learning practices

Using natural, social, built environments, including the school envelope to foster learning

Incorporating outdoor learning relative to location of school

Developing ecological literacy of students and teachers

Incorporating furniture, light, classroom resources sustainably and to promote well-being

Developing strong ties to community and commitment to active citizenry

Develop emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of students, staff, and teachers

Support the principles of health promoting schools

Explore the links between human health and the natural world

Explore the relationships between sustainability, happiness, and well-being for all

Support positive communication in the classroom, at school and with the wider community



Howard, P., & O'Brien, C. (2018)

CARATÉRISTIQUES ET PRATIQUES DES ÉCOLES VIVANTES

Valeurs et vision	Leadership	Enseignement et apprentissage	Orientation fondée sur la nature et le milieu environnant	Santé et bien-être
Les membres de la communauté scolaire s'engagent à :	Actions qui caractérisent les structures organisationnelles :	Facteurs qui influencent les pratiques pédagogiques :	Les écoles démontrent leur engagement à :	Objectifs des pratiques en vigueur dans la communauté scolaire :
<p>Communiquer et collaborer avec des gens partout à travers le monde</p> <p>Développer une sensibilité culturelle face à l'identité des autres et à leurs visions du monde</p> <p>Servir de modèle et démontrer comment prendre soin des plantes, des animaux et des milieux naturels</p> <p>Encourager la compassion pour soi, pour les autres et pour tous les êtres vivants en plus de s'outiller pour faire face aux changements positifs</p> <p>Promouvoir la santé et le bien-être des étudiants, du personnel, de la communauté et de l'environnement naturel</p> <p>Penser et agir de manière à privilégier la recherche de solutions pour faire face aux défis et aux différentes opportunités</p> <p>Créer des relations de confiance empreintes de respect dans la communauté scolaire</p> <p>Respecter les visions du monde et les modes traditionnels d'acquisition du savoir chez les autochtones</p>	<p>Garantir que les étudiants et les enseignants peuvent s'exprimer et agir par eux-mêmes</p> <p>Développer des relations de collaboration solides avec le personnel, les parents (ou les tuteurs) et la communauté</p> <p>Mettre sur pied des activités de perfectionnement pour favoriser l'apprentissage transformatif</p> <p>Promouvoir les valeurs fondamentales de l'équité, de l'inclusion et de la diversité</p> <p>Appuyer de manière explicite l'éducation à la durabilité et au bien-être des gens</p> <p>Faire preuve d'une plus grande ouverture à prendre des risques pour découvrir des nouvelles façons de vivre, d'apprendre et de travailler dans un environnement sûr</p>	<p>Processus collaboratifs</p> <p>Approche holistique de l'éducation et de l'apprentissage</p> <p>Engagement à privilégier les stratégies fondées sur l'exploration et le questionnement pour amener des changements réels dans le monde</p> <p>Mentalité inclusive centrée sur les étudiants et sur l'apprentissage différencié</p> <p>Développement de la créativité, de l'encouragement à la prise de risques et donner davantage de liberté d'action aux étudiants</p> <p>Présence de bons modèles pour favoriser l'adoption de modes de vie sains et durables</p> <p>Évaluation authentique et réelle des pratiques d'apprentissage</p>	<p>Favoriser l'apprentissage par l'utilisation des environnements naturels, sociaux et bâtis (y compris celui de l'établissement scolaire)</p> <p>Adapter les activités d'apprentissage en plein air selon l'emplacement géographique de l'établissement scolaire</p> <p>Développer les connaissances relatives à l'écologie chez les étudiants et le personnel enseignant</p> <p>Agencer durablement le mobilier, la luminosité et le matériel utilisé en classe de manière à favoriser le bien-être</p> <p>Créer des liens étroits avec la communauté et favoriser l'engagement actif des citoyens</p>	<p>Favoriser le bien-être émotionnel, physique et spirituel des étudiants, des employés et des enseignants</p> <p>Appuyer les principes prônés par les « écoles en santé »</p> <p>Mieux comprendre les liens entre la santé des gens et la nature</p> <p>Mieux comprendre les relations entre le développement durable, le bonheur et le bien-être de tous</p> <p>Favoriser la communication positive en classe, à l'école et dans la communauté en général</p>



Howard, P., & O'Brien, C. (2018)

ESCUELAS VIVAS PRACTICAS Y ATRIBUTOS

Valores y Visión

Los miembros de la comunidad escolar se comprometen a:

- Involucrarse con el mundo.
- Desarrollar una cultura de cuidado por la perspectiva del mundo de los demás y sus identidades.
- Demostrar preocupación y cuidado por las plantas, animales y el resto del mundo natural.
- Desarrollar compasión por las personas y todos los seres vivos, además de habilidades para abordar un cambio positivo.
- Promover la salud y el bienestar de los estudiantes, el personal, la comunidad y el medio ambiente.
- Una mentalidad centrada en la solución al enfrentar desafíos y oportunidades.
- Crear relaciones de confianza y respeto en la comunidad educativa.
- Respetar formas indígenas de ver el mundo y métodos tradicionales de aprendizaje.

Liderazgo

Las estructuras organizativas se caracterizan por:

- Asegurar que los estudiantes y maestros tengan voz y voto.
- Desarrollar fuertes relaciones colaborativas con el personal, padres, guardias y la comunidad.
- Crear oportunidades para el desarrollo profesional y el aprendizaje transformativo.
- Cultivar un ethos de equidad, inclusión y diversidad.
- Brindar soporte explícito para la educación sustentable y el bienestar.
- Fomentar la toma de riesgos para explorar nuevas formas de vivir, aprender y trabajar en un ambiente seguro.

Enseñando y Aprendiendo

Las prácticas pedagógicas se caracterizan por:

- Procesos colaborativos.
- Métodos holísticos de enseñanza y aprendizaje.
- Un compromiso con estrategias basadas en la investigación para hacer cambios en el mundo real.
- Un espíritu de inclusión, centrado en el estudiante y el aprendizaje diferenciado.
- El desarrollo de la creatividad y creación de un clima para tomar riesgos y agencia estudiantil.
- Modelando estilos de vida saludables y sustentables.
- Evaluación auténtica de y para las prácticas de aprendizaje.

Orientación basada en la naturaleza y el espacio

Las escuelas reflejan un compromiso en:

- Usar ambientes naturales y sociales para fomentar el aprendizaje.
- Incorporar el aprendizaje al aire libre en los alrededores de la escuela.
- Desarrollar la alfabetización ecológica de los estudiantes y profesores.
- Incorporar muebles, luz y recursos de clase de manera sustentable para promover el bienestar.
- Desarrollar fuertes lazos con la comunidad y compromiso con la ciudadanía activa.

Salud y bienestar.

La comunidad escolar demuestra prácticas diseñadas para:

- Desarrollar el bienestar emocional, físico y espiritual de los estudiantes y profesores.
- Apoyar los principios de escuelas promotoras de salud.
- Explorar los enlaces entre la salud humana y el mundo natural.
- Explorar las relaciones entre sustentabilidad, felicidad y bienestar para todos.
- Brindar soporte para la comunicación positiva en el aula, la escuela y la comunidad en general.



Howard, P., & O'Brien, C. (2018)



LIVING SCHOOLS DISCUSSION CHART

Completed By: _____

Grades: _____

Comments: _____

THE ETHOS, ATTRIBUTES AND PRACTICE OF A LIVING SCHOOL

Values and Vision: School community members are committed to:

This is one of our
strengths

Developing a
compassion for people
and all living things as
well as the skills to
address positive change

The health and well-being
of students, staff, the
wider community,
and the natural
environment

A solution-focused
growth mindset when
facing challenges and
opportunities

This is an area we
want to grow

Possible next steps
(how we will grow)

Tracking Progress
(indicators of success,
altering plans if needed,
overcoming any obstacles,
celebrating successes)



THE ETHOS, ATTRIBUTES AND PRACTICE OF A LIVING SCHOOL

Values and Vision: School community members are committed to:

This is one of our
strengths

Creating trusting and
respectful relationships
in the school
community

Respecting indigenous
worldviews and
traditional ways of
knowing

This is an area we
want to grow

Possible next steps
(how we will grow)

Tracking Progress
(indicators of success,
altering plans if needed,
overcoming any obstacles,
celebrating successes)



CONTINUE READING THE LIVING SCHOOLS DISCUSSION CHART AT
[HTTPS://WWW.LIVINGSCHOOLS.WORLD/PUBLICATIONS](https://www.livingschools.world/publications)

LIVING CAMPUS ATTRIBUTES & PRACTICES

Values & Vision

Campus community members are committed to:

An ethos that prioritizes well-being for all

An ongoing dedication to sustainability

Modelling global policies and goals for a more sustainable world

Fostering a collaborative culture, locally and globally

Demonstrating a respect for other's world views and identities

Bringing a solution-oriented mindset when facing challenges

Creating respectful relationships within the campus community

Respecting indigenous world views and traditional ways of knowing

Fostering and inspiring, research oriented towards a sustainable future

Constructively managing conflict through a filter of sustainability and well-being for all

Leadership

Organizational structures are characterized by:

Ensuring every member of the campus community has voice and agency

Developing and maintaining strong collaborative relationships within and across departments

Cultivating an ethos of equity, inclusion and diversity

Explicit support for sustainability education and applied research

Support for innovation and creativity by students, staff and faculty

Transparent communication and decision-making

Teaching & Learning

Pedagogical practices are influenced by:

A commitment to inquiry-based strategies

A commitment to affect positive real-world change

Collaborative processes for co-learning

Creating a climate that fosters creativity, risk taking, and student agency

Opportunities for applied sustainability

Authentic assessment of, and for learning practices

Creating effective models for adaptation in other contexts

Nature & Community

Living Campuses reflect a commitment to:

Finding and creating opportunities to incorporate natural spaces into learning processes

Mentoring and collaborating with Living Schools

Strategically creating positive learning and working environments that promote sustainability and well-being

Developing strong ties to local and global communities

Demonstrating and modelling care for plants, other animals, and the rest of the natural world

Recognizing the mentor capacity of nature

Health & Well-Being for All

Campus community demonstrates practices designed to:

Contribute to healthy lifestyles and well-being for all

Explore the links between human health and the natural world

Explore the relationships between sustainability, happiness, and well-being for all

Support positive communication in the classroom, on campus and with the wider community