

NEWS RELEASE

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Grade 4 Departure Bay class earns top marks in climate leadership program

City-funded climate education program is seeing success as it inspires sustainability through action-based classroom challenges.

Summary

As sponsors of the BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSEA) and its Cool It! Climate Leadership Training program, the City is pleased to see some very positive results at the end of its second term. This includes a remarkable 241 sustainable actions made by students of Ms. Melissa Kristiansen's grade 4 Departure Bay Elementary School class, collective winners of the challenge for the 2023 Fall term.

The City of Nanaimo began sponsoring the BCSEA's Cool It! Climate Leadership Training program for School District 68's students in March 2022. The Cool It! program is a climate education workshop and contest for students in grades 4 and 5, as well as secondary school classes. Students participate in interactive workshops and games to support discussion and build on knowledge of climate change. Following the workshop, students bring that knowledge home and work on a four-week Cool It! challenge that encourages families to make important changes to their energy consumption. Some of the actions students are encouraged to complete include: calculating their household water consumption, taking their bike or public transit instead of driving, building a "bee bath", eating leftovers at least 3 times, researching and learning about the City of Nanaimo's purpose in declaring a climate emergency, writing a climate reflection and suggesting actions that they (and the City) can take to reduce climate change and protect our environment.

The program wrapped up its second-ever term in December and the program's third semester is now under way. Within the 2023 Fall term, 14 elementary and 10 high school classes participated in the Cool It! program. Overall, the Cool It! program was delivered to 30 classes (20 elementary and 10 high school) and reached 634 students (424 elementary and 210 high school). Students collectively completed 4,143 actions focused on climate change and sustainability.

For their great achievement, Ms. Kristiansen's grade 4 class was awarded a pizza lunch and a visit from Mayor Leonard Krog.

Strategic Link: Carrying on education and outreach activities to help residents learn about climate impacts and climate adaptation measures is recognized as an ongoing action within the City's Integrated Action Plan.

Key Points

- For the 2023 fall semester, Ms. Melissa Kristiansen's grade 4 class at Departure Bay Elementary won BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSEA) and its Cool It! Climate Leadership Training challenge after completing 241 actions.
- Cool It! Is a climate education program and contest for students run by the BC Energy Association and funded by the City of Nanaimo. Students participate in classroom workshops and discussions on climate change, and then are challenged to complete sustainable, climate-focused actions at home. The classroom that completes the most challenges wins the Cool It! challenge.

Quotes

"On behalf of Council, I wish to thank the students and teachers who participated in the Cool It! program to date and congratulate Ms. Kristiansen's grade 4 class at Departure Bay Elementary on winning Nanaimo's second-ever Cool It! Climate Challenge. It was a pleasure meeting such a wonderful group of students committed to improving our environment."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- Through energy conservation and emissions-saving actions at home, along with research and enquiry activities, these student actions may result in an annual saving of a total of 113.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions (CO₂e) if they maintain their actions for one year.

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