



## MEASURING PROGRESS ON STEWARDSHIP Report No. 16-110

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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC)

20 September 2016

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### **Stewardship Objective - By 2019, the District will optimize learning conditions for all students through the responsible and sustainable management of resources.**

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board identified stewardship as one of five key priority areas for the 2015-2019 strategic plan. In the plan, stewardship for the District is described as “a culture that practices ethical decision-making, and social, economic and environmental sustainability”. The objective states: “By 2019, the District will optimize learning conditions for all students through the responsible and sustainable management of resources”. The strategies to support this objective are:

- “Improve access to learning environment and optimize the use of all resources through school accommodation and program review planning”;
- “Enhance operational practices to effectively and responsibly manage human and financial resources in support of students”; and
- “Model sustainability, smart energy use and sound environmental practices for students”.

Progress on the stewardship objective can be organized according to three areas of responsibility:

- Social stewardship (i.e., responsible and caring citizenship);
- Economic stewardship (i.e., sound financial management); and
- Environmental stewardship (i.e., promotion of ecological sustainability).

For all three types of stewardship there is a responsibility to improve practices not only for the direct benefits, but also for modelling such practices for students. Measurement of progress on the stewardship objective involves measuring outcomes as well as examining evidence of advancement in attitudes and practice. As such, it is important to turn to both quantitative and qualitative sources of evidence.

### **Sources of Evidence**

Recent work serves as qualitative evidence for the progress being made in each of the three areas. Furthermore, quantitative measures can be used to assess improvement in these areas. This evidence includes:

**Table 1. Sources of Evidence**

| <b>Social Stewardship</b>        |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Qualitative                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to character development and citizenship;</li> <li>• Development of an advocacy strategy;</li> <li>• Demonstration of leadership by founding Carbon 613;</li> <li>• Support for welcoming and helping Syrian refugee families;</li> <li>• Review of access to learning environments and optimization of resources;</li> <li>• Training to enhance administrative leadership; and</li> <li>• Reviewing operations.</li> </ul>  |
| Quantitative                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total community-use permit hours; and</li> <li>• School utilization rates;</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Economic Stewardship</b>      |   |
| Qualitative                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A thoughtfully and responsibly developed budget; and</li> <li>• Reports to the audit committee outlining (among other updates):                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Conformance in purchasing;</li> <li>○ The development of a regulatory compliance register; and</li> <li>○ Better alignment of the budget to strategic plan priorities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| Quantitative                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in deficit; and</li> <li>• Dollars spent relative to those allocated in the budget.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Environmental Stewardship</b> |   |
| Qualitative                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiatives for increasing environmental awareness;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stewardship Days for students;</li> <li>○ Environmental Education Network and professional development for staff;</li> <li>○ Live monitoring of energy use;</li> <li>○ Forest School Program;</li> <li>○ School gardens;</li> <li>○ Partnership with Growing Up Organic;</li> <li>○ Outdoor Education Centres;</li> <li>○ Adopt-A-Tree Program;</li> <li>○ School Active Transportation Policy; and</li> <li>○ Installation of waste sorting stations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| Quantitative                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of eco-schools;</li> <li>• Reduction in plastic bottles through water fill stations;</li> <li>• Energy used, saved (e.g., LED light installation) and created (e.g., solar panels);</li> <li>• Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through use of hybrid vehicles;</li> <li>• Waste diversion; and</li> <li>• Net increase (decrease) in trees, after ash removals.</li> </ul>  |

## Social Stewardship – Qualitative Evidence

- Commitment to character development and citizenship;

This commitment is evidenced by the identification of global awareness and ethical decision-making as Exit Outcomes and the work focused on helping students achieve these skills/characteristics. The OCDSB models social stewardship through a variety of activities, including support for charitable causes such as the United Way, Relay for Life, Jump Rope for Heart, and Do it for Daron, as well as food, clothing, and toiletry drives. Furthermore, meaningful work is being done to promote social justice, equity, and diversity in all OCDSB schools (e.g., implementation of the Gender Identity Guidelines; partnership with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation; development of a socio-economic index for identifying students from low-income neighbourhoods).

- Development of an advocacy strategy;

The Board recognizes the need to work strategically in order to effectively use resources to support students across the District. To this end, in October 2015, the Board established an Ad Hoc Committee to Develop an Advocacy Strategy. The mandate of this committee was to explore advocacy practices and priorities to support the development of an advocacy strategy. The Board identified the following four goals for its advocacy work:

- To protect and maintain stability in funding;
- To promote high quality public education for all students;
- To promote the importance and value of locally-elected school boards; and
- To ensure the interests of the OCDSB and public education in Ottawa are well represented in provincial and municipal issues.

Annually, the Board will review the specific strategies and actions which will be implemented in order to help achieve these goals.

- Demonstration of leadership by founding Carbon 613;

The OCDSB was a founding member of Carbon 613, an environmental partnership designed to help the community reach targets for carbon reduction in all sectors of the local economy. OCDSB staff has been involved in the leadership of this project and have been asked to share practices and leadership with other organizations locally and across the province.

- Support for welcoming and helping Syrian refugee families;

In 2015-2016, the OCDSB welcomed 502 Syrian newcomers. Staff worked closely with community partners to ensure a smooth transition for all newcomers into both schools and the community, and will continue to do so this school year. Evidence of the impact of this work can be found in Appendix A. This support includes the use of gym space, meeting rooms, libraries, child care space, etc., as well as working with community partners to offer programs such as:

- Storytelling Event for Newcomers;
- Orientation to Canada;
- Syrian Refugee Information Session;
- New Canadians – Refugee Soccer Program;

- Choir Series for Newcomers;
- Police/Fire Safety workshops;
- Children’s Aid; and
- Winter in Canada Information Session.

- Review of access to learning environments and optimization of resources;  
 Within the OCDSB community, significant work is being done to ensure thoughtful management of resources. In the 2015-2016 school year, the OCDSB updated the Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines and has since begun a review of two designated areas. These reviews consider grade configurations, programs, school condition, student enrolment, and excess pupil space. By reviewing these factors, the goal is to reduce excess pupil space and increase school utilization rates. This work is done to ensure sustainable and vibrant learning environments, which provides qualitative evidence of progress towards the stewardship objective.

- Training to enhance administrative leadership;  
 Proper stewardship and management of OCDSB resources includes human resources. This requires a commitment to provide on-going training and development opportunities to principals and managers to develop and enhance their administrative leadership capacity, reinforce standards of practice aligned with legislative and policy requirements and support the creation of positive workplace environments across the District. Examples include the focused opportunities for training and professional learning hosted by the responsible department in areas such as health and safety, school generated funds and supporting new teachers, as well as through the vice-principal and principal intern programs and through monthly operational meetings and superintendency meetings.

- Reviewing operations;  
 In support of stewardship at the OCDSB, the Audit Committee annually selects one or two areas of the Board’s operations for review. In the past, this has included School Office Administration, Business and Learning Technologies, Human Resources, Board Services and Financial Services. In 2014-2015, the OCDSB commissioned a study to assess progress and assist with moving forward on the recommendations of a previous School Office Administration review. This study identified activities and programs that impact school office workload, as well as strategies for improving business processes and developing staff, such as the need for more focus on digital competencies and practices. As a result of this work, the OCDSB identified opportunities for further progress in the responsible management of financial and human resources.

Social Stewardship – Quantitative Evidence

- Total community-use permit hours;  
 In addition to supporting Syrian refugees, community use of schools supports a range of organizations including Alzheimer Society of Ottawa, Vanier Community Services, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and Winthrop Court Community Centre. The local community benefits from the services offered by these organizations (e.g., information sessions, sports programs, homework clubs, cooking programs, art

programs, etc.) that are made available through the use of school space. The number of hours for which OCDSB schools are used by the community has been gradually rising over the years, as depicted in the graph below.

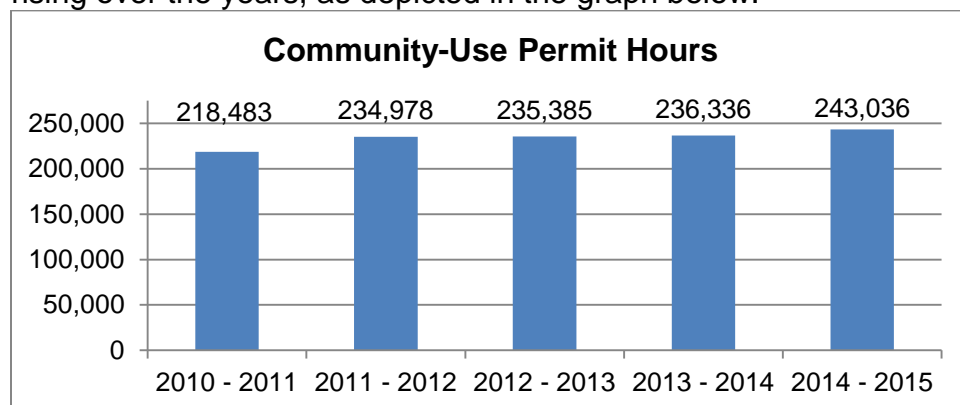


Figure 1. Community-Use Permit Hours.

- School utilization rates;

Optimizing school utilization rates supports social stewardship by increasing depth of programming and strength of program streams, thereby improving access to learning environments. The table below highlights the disparity in enrolment across the District, with overcrowding in some areas and excess pupil spaces in others. Ottawa is a challenging district with areas of growth and decline in specific areas, and while utilization rates alone do not paint the full picture, the OCDSB has 11,000 empty pupil places. This demonstrates a critical need for improvement in this area of resource management. The pupil accommodation reviews, as discussed above, aim to address this need.

Table 2. School Utilization Rates.

|                    | October 2014 |                | October 2015 |                |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
|                    | <i>Range</i> | <i>Average</i> | <i>Range</i> | <i>Average</i> |
| Elementary Schools | 25-159%      | 85%            | 36-164%      | 83%            |
| Secondary Schools  | 42-153%      | 88%            | 40-139%      | 84%            |

### Economic Stewardship – Qualitative Evidence

- A thoughtfully and responsibly developed budget;

Economic stewardship is demonstrated through sound financial management. This involves ensuring that the board budget is developed in a thoughtful and responsible manner, balancing expenditures against revenues, and that it is aligned with the overall strategic objectives. More importantly, it involves a sound financial plan that supports the long term goals of the organization.

In previous years, accumulated surpluses were used to support improvements in student learning, with significant investments in special education supports, enhanced transportation for secondary students, and facilities maintenance activities. The District no longer has the capacity to offset the funding shortfall and therefore has developed a multi-year financial recovery plan to align its expenditures with revenues and eliminate the structural deficit by 2017-2018. With the support of trustees, staff has been actively strategizing to reduce overall expenditures and, where possible, increase revenue. The

2016-2017 budget was developed with the strategic priorities in mind, maintaining a commitment to learning, well-being, and equity when making difficult decisions about where to reduce spending. Staff and trustees were guided by the following principles:

- Where possible enhance student learning through program reviews and optimize any grant funding opportunities;
- Improve business and operational efficiencies to generate savings and/or new revenue;
- Review staffing allocations models to ensure equity, reduce duplication/overlays, and ensure sustainability in alignment with funding levels;
- Use attrition as the mechanism for Full Time Equivalent staffing reductions wherever possible; and
- Look for opportunities to defer expenditures until savings can be generated in future years from more efficient use of space.

- Reports to the audit committee;

Other evidence of progress for economic stewardship is based on improvements in practice, as demonstrated through reports to the Audit Committee. These reports outline (among other details):

- Purchasing policies and exceptions, with non-conformance in purchasing being less than 1% of purchase orders for the 2014-2015 fiscal year;
- The development of a regulatory compliance register as a living document designed to capture ongoing compliance at the departmental level. This document is updated by staff to whom accountability has been assigned. This can then be rolled up and reported annually; and
- Better alignment of budget to strategic plan priorities.

#### Economic Stewardship – Quantitative Evidence

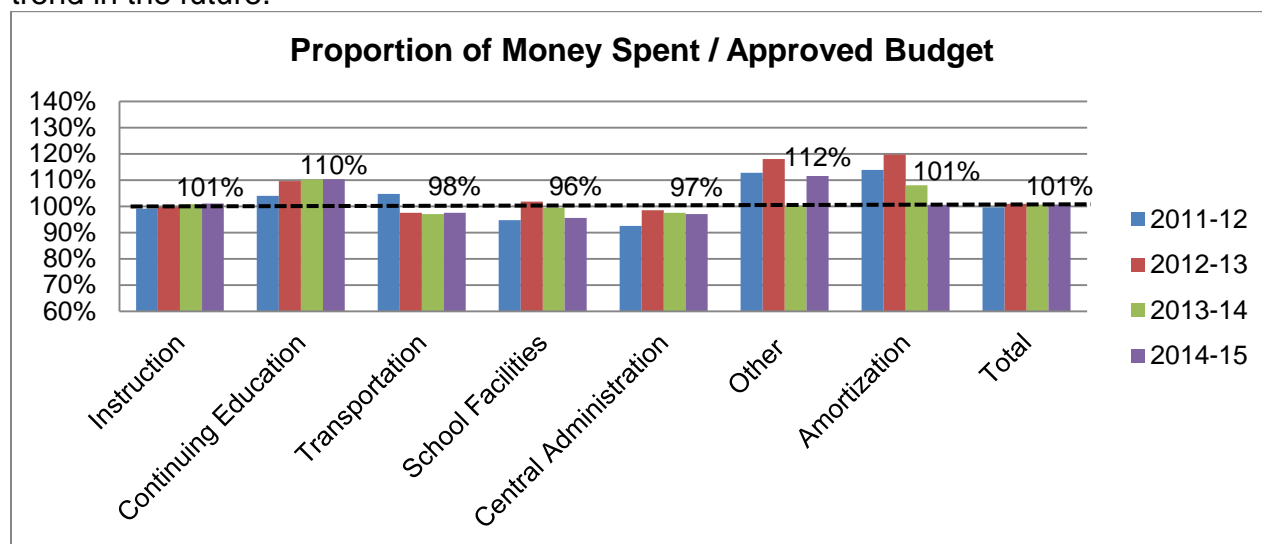
- Reduction in deficits;

Noteworthy evidence of progress in the area of economic stewardship is the reduction of a \$17.2 million deficit in 2014-2015, and an \$11.9 million deficit in 2015-2016, for a balanced budget for 2016-2017. This is the result of a number of initiatives which increase revenues and reduce expenses. These include: enhanced transportation funding, changes to the Early French Immersion Program, an increase in Extended Day Program fees to offset deficit, closure of school wings to contain facilities maintenance costs, staff reductions, reductions in Continuing Education courses, and revision of OCDSB policies and standards (e.g. expense policy, cell phone use standards), among other initiatives. The work done by the Budget Committee, the Board, and all stakeholders in considering competing priorities, maintaining a focus on deficit reduction, and making difficult decisions has led to greater alignment between spending and funding at the OCDSB.

- Dollars spent relative to those allocated in the budget;

Money spent relative to the approved budget is another method for monitoring financial stewardship. Worth noting, as indicated in the graph below, is that the overall funds spent typically adhere to those budgeted year over year. Within the individual areas, however, there is greater variability. Continuing Education, other expenses (which

include Extended Day Care, Child Care Centres, Secondments, Interest Charges and Fifty Five Board Trust), and amortization have tended to run over budget. Changes to Continuing Education courses in the 2016-2017 budget aim to rectify this particular trend in the future.



**Figure 2. Proportion of Money Spent / Approved Budget.**

*Note.* Data labels refer to 2014-2015.

### Environmental Stewardship – Qualitative Evidence

The District’s Environmental Education Policy P.129.CUR outlines the commitment to delivering effective environmental education as well as modeling environmentally responsible practices. Such practices encompass a range of activities carried out to improve ecological sustainability, including modeling of eco-friendly behaviours, initiatives for increasing environmental awareness, and changes in the operation of district facilities. These initiatives for increasing environmental awareness are highlighted below:

- Stewardship Days for students;

Environmental Stewardship Days are held for both Elementary and Secondary schools, where schools and students have the opportunity to come together to network and learn from a variety of presenters (e.g., Canadian Wildlife Federation, Nature Canada, OCDSB Instructional Coaches and Facilities staff).

- Environmental Education Network sessions and professional development for staff;

These sessions provide professional development opportunities for staff and provide staff with the opportunity to work on their eco-schools certification. Opportunities also include workshop sessions or multi-day institutes in partnership with Evergreen (e.g., Teaching in the Outdoor Classroom).

- Live monitoring of energy use;

Current energy use is displayed in schools and administration buildings on live monitors. This is an important mechanism to build awareness and capacity regarding

responsible energy consumption and provides material for teachers to use in the classroom for integration with the curriculum.

- Forest School Program and School gardens;

In two years, the Forest School Program has expanded from one to five schools and is still growing. Evidence of the impact of this program can be reviewed in Appendix B. Also, a number of schools (Norman Johnston Secondary Alternate Program, W.O. Mitchell Elementary School, Featherston Drive Public School, Glebe Collegiate Institute, Metcalfe Public School, and others) have school/community gardens which not only grow produce but also provide rich learning opportunities for students.

- Partnership with Growing Up Organic;

Work with Growing Up Organic aims to provide healthier choices for students and to encourage the move towards food sustainability by decreasing petroleum use in transportation and manufacture of fertilizer.

- Outdoor Education Centres;

In 2015-2016, over 900 classes (elementary and secondary) and over 20,000 students attended the OCDSB Outdoor Education Centres (Bill Mason & MacSkimming). This represents 90% of elementary and 87% of secondary schools.

In 2014, the Outdoor Education Centres offered two local beekeepers access to non-teaching areas of MacSkimming Centre to establish a working honey bee colony. The objective of this project was to help the global decline of the honey bees. The colony grew from three hives in 2014 to 19 hives in 2015. In the fall of 2015, over 700lbs of honey was harvested at MacSkimming Centre.

- Adopt-A-Tree program

This program is being rolled out where schools will be provided up to 10 seedlings for classes to look after. Facilities will help schools through the process from seedlings to trees.

- School Active Transportation Policy;

The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority's School Active Transportation Policy is the first of its kind for student transportation consortia in Ontario. The Board-funded Walking School Bus service is also the first of its kind in Ontario. The Walking School Bus promotes active transportation by encouraging students to walk to school in a group of their peers under the supervision of adult. This program is offered in nine OCDSB schools as of September 2016, with over 80 participants. Furthermore, 15 OCDSB schools have graduated from, or are currently enrolled in, school travel planning with Green Communities Canada, funded by OSTA.

- Waste sorting stations;

The OCDSB Administration Building at 133 Greenbank Road is modeling a new strategy for waste diversion. Waste sorting stations (i.e., integrated recycling bins that allow for one stop for paper, plastic, and garbage) have been installed in many areas of



the building. These stations provide a system for the proper disposal of waste materials, which can be used throughout the district.

### Environmental Stewardship – Quantitative Evidence

- Number of eco-schools;

In 2015-2016, 46 schools (31%) were eco-certified: 13 bronze; 22 silver; 10 gold; and reaching a new milestone, 1 platinum. Platinum certification is the highest honour for eco-schools, a designation achieved by only 3% of schools across the province.

- Reduction in plastic bottles through water fill stations;

The installation of water bottle filling stations at all schools and administration buildings led to a substantial reduction of plastic water bottles in recent years. As of November 2015, an equivalent 2.8 million water bottles have been filled using the water bottle filling stations. This represents a significant diversion of plastic from landfill/recycling streams.

- Energy used;

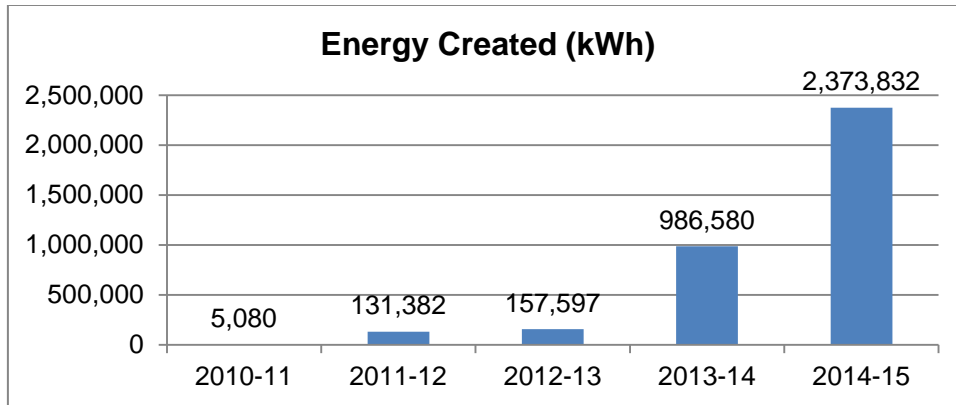
In 2014-2015, OCDSB electricity use was approximately 74.9 million kWh. This represents a decrease of 4.5 million kWh from 2008-2009 (as an adjusted baseline year) with an estimated 79.4 million kWh of use. Natural gas use was approximately 13.1 million m<sup>3</sup> in 2014-2015, compared to 13.3 million m<sup>3</sup> in 2008-2009. Baseline data is adjusted to account for weather and changes in facilities area; however, it does not include potential increases in energy usage based on construction or increased community use of schools. With these factors taken into account, the reductions in energy use are strong evidence of progress. Furthermore, the estimated cumulative cost avoidance through reduction in utilities since 2009-2010 is nearly \$3 million. This highlights the intersection between economic and environmental stewardship.

- Energy saved through LED light installation;

Lighting on the exterior of buildings is being systematically changed to LED to improve the efficiency and take advantage of the extended lifespan. The installation of LED lights at 39 schools in 2015-2016 has resulted in an estimated reduction of 80 kwh annually and approximate annual savings of \$37,631. Plans for 2016-2017 include LED light installations at an additional 29 schools, bringing projected savings up to 137 kwh and \$64,400 annually.

- Energy created using solar panels;

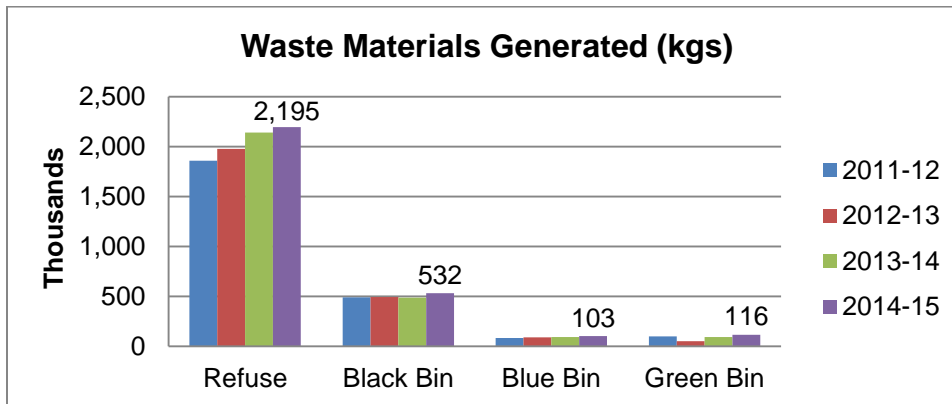
Solar panels on 37 OCDSB rooftops has created over 2.3 million kWh in 2014-2015 – more than double what was created just one year prior with solar panels on 26 rooftops. The solar panels on 13 of these rooftops are owned by the OCDSB and generated over \$110,898 in revenue through hydro credits. In addition, the solar panels owned by external vendors generated \$225,652 in revenue through the rental of the space. Again, this demonstrates the intersection between economic and environmental stewardship.



**Figure 3. Energy Created Using Solar Panels.**

- Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through use of hybrid vehicles; Fuel consumption for 20 vehicles in the OCDSB fleet has been cut in half due to the replacement of 20 compact cars with subcompact hybrid cars.

- Waste diversion; Across the OCDSB, 750,836 kilograms of waste were diverted to green (compost), blue (glass, metal, plastic) and black (paper, cardboard) bins in 2014-2015. This represents 25% of waste materials – a diversion rate that is up from 24% in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, but down since 2011-2012 (27%). Although the amount of diverted waste is on the rise, the overall amount of refuse is as well, and therefore overall reduction of waste materials can be an area for attention in the future.



**Figure 4. Waste Materials Generated.**

Note. Data labels refer to 2014-2015.

## Next Steps

This report presents qualitative evidence of work being done in the interest of social, economic, and environmental stewardship, as well as quantitative evidence of progress being made in these areas. The information presented highlights areas of commendable progress, such as welcoming refugees, balancing the budget, and improving environmental practices. It also highlights areas that could use attention, such as workload in school offices, costs for Continuing Education and ‘other’ expenses (both of which are addressed in the 2016-2017 budget), as well as waste materials

being generated. This is valuable information for allocating appropriate resources and supports to optimize progress on the stewardship objective. This also helps shape conversations about future work and areas of focus.

### Guiding Questions

The following questions are provided to support the discussion of this item by the Committee:

- How does the work discussed align with the stewardship objective in the 2015-2019 strategic plan?
- How does the data inform our progress?
- Based on the data presented, what are the best indicators of progress?
- What areas require focused attention to move the work forward?
- How can we improve our understanding of the challenges we are faced with in making progress on the stewardship objective?
- How does the work in the area of environmental stewardship align with the OCDSB's policy for Environmental Education (P.129.CUR)?
- How do the three areas of stewardship inter-relate?
- How does stewardship relate to the other objectives in the 2015-2019 strategic plan?

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### **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Testimonial for OCDSB: Support for Syrian Refugees

Appendix B – Forest School Pilot Project