

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **School Board Directors Stand Up for the Environment**

*August 29, 2007* - Public, Catholic and French Language school districts across Ontario are joining together to establish common policies, standards and practices for environmental education and to reduce the ecological impact of school system operations.

At its annual meeting in August, the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE), agreed to adopt and promote the Ontario EcoSchools program, which links environmental literacy instruction with real-life conservation strategies to reduce waste, energy consumption, and ecological degradation throughout schools and school communities. Ontario EcoSchools is a certification program created through a collaboration of school boards and other partners to address environmental issues in the education system.

"Classroom learning about the environment is common in most schools, but content varies considerably and students have rarely had the opportunity to participate in practical projects that can measurably reduce environmental impacts," said Mary Jean Gallagher, Chair of the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE). "To that end the Directors encourage all schools to become certified as EcoSchools," she added.

The Directors of Education also agreed to review their current business policies and procedures to ensure that environmentally responsible practices are in place throughout their school districts. Best practices in areas of purchasing, transportation, planning and maintenance will be shared and highlighted for the benefit of all school systems.

CODE members also committed to work with the Canada Green Building Council to establish specific environmental and efficiency standards for school construction, according to international LEED (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design) criteria.

Mrs. Gallagher said Directors of Education agreed to actively seek out partnerships with organizations that can offer experiential learning opportunities for students. "We want to empower students to shape their environment in positive ways through education," she said.

The Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) is an advisory and consultative organization composed of the chief executive officers of all 72 district school boards in Ontario; Public, Catholic and French Language.

- 30 -

***For further information, please contact:***

***Frank Kelly***

***Executive Director of CODE***

***905-845-4254***