

AMBER TRAILS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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Principal: Mrs. Lorelei Bunkowsky

Vice-Principals: Mr. Jeff Anderson

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AMBER TRAILS SCHOOL NAMED GREENEST IN CANADA

WINNIPEG - Amber Trails School is proud to announce its appointment as the Canada Green Building Council's Greenest School in Canada.

One of Seven Oaks School Division's most recent additions, the 78,000-square-foot school was designed to provide a family home-like building that connects strongly to its community and the environment.

"Sustainability is the focus of so much of our learning that as we build new spaces it's paramount to have sustainability as the focus of our buildings as well," says principal Lorelei Bunkowsky, who was appointed to the helm of Amber Trails during planning and helped usher the school's vision to fruition.

"This award means so much to us, not just because we welcome the accolades, but more so because it allows us to start a whole new level of discussion surrounding sustainability, our environment and how we can start making the world a better and more long-living place right from our earliest days as learners."

Among its most impressive features are its geothermal heating and cooling, radiant floor heating, low flow fixtures and other initiatives and has achieved over 68 per cent energy savings and a lower carbon footprint.

More importantly, says Bunkowsky, the school was designed to embrace all aspects of its community, right from the people down to the local flora and fauna.

"Our school was truly focused on welcoming everyone from our surrounding area into a diverse learning environment that fosters all kinds of education for today and the future," says Bunkowsky. "We focus on being a gathering place and a learning space, and doing it rooted in our natural surroundings and what our environments can teach us."

Please see the next page for notes from the Canada Green Building Council regarding the school's environmental achievements.

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From the Canada Green Building Council:

The school was consciously designed to address the impacts a large school has on the environment. Since the beginning of the 2017 school year, these measures have reduced over 5000m³ of potable water.

Amber Trails has achieved over 50 per cent reduction in water use. The school division reported that they are saving approximately \$7,224 per year on water and it was found that the average water consumption for Amber Trails is 1.21 m³ per student, in comparison to 3.2m³ per student at a similar school.

Growing together

A student run organic vegetable farm was developed last summer on site enabling students in the farming club to work together with a farm coordinator to cultivate a mixture of over 20 varieties of vegetables. Vegetables are sold to staff and community members and students work on the farm throughout the summer, while learning about the benefits of local food systems.

The school is currently working on a timeline based document that incorporates the climatic seasons as a teaching activities' guideline surrounding the school's vegetable farm in order supporting land-based education to promote a deeper sense of place, an awareness of human impacts and how they acknowledge and connect with natural cycles.

Weaving LEED certification into school curriculum

As part of their path to LEED Platinum certification, Amber Trails included a public teaching document that wove the school's green design features into the daily instruction and learning activities. This enabled student to interact with the daily functions of the school facility in ways that raise their awareness of energy conservation, resource consumption, waste generation and the influence of the micro-climate on building systems and human comfort.

Minimizing energy consumption, GHG emissions and cost

The project owner, Seven Oaks School Division and PSFB, made the decision to eliminate natural gas from the project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and future mechanical maintenance costs.

With the combination of geothermal heating and cooling, radiant floor heating, low flow fixtures and other initiatives, the building achieved over 68 per cent energy savings and a lower carbon footprint. There are no gas emissions from this school since this building is primarily heated with heat pumps with electric boilers as backup giving zero carbon emissions.

Health and well-being

Each classroom has three large windows and a partially glazed wall separating the classroom from the hallway. This allows for fresh air, outdoor views and natural light to come into the classroom and filter through to the central hallway providing positive impacts on the mental and physical well-being of both students and teachers.

The centrally located Outdoor Learning Environment and integration into the surrounding public trails encourages sustainable development programs and encourages teachers to take their instruction outside. Additionally, the school has adopted a "balanced" school day schedule which provides students and teachers with two longer nutrition breaks rather than one lunch break, as well as activity breaks allowing students more time to play outside.

Amber Trails Community School was designed to be a healthy, energy efficient building. By implementing sustainability programs and through the participation of students and teachers, the sense of environmental stewardship extends well beyond the building. Students are learning how to be healthy members of the community and have embraced these important first steps to becoming future leaders and environmental advocates.