

"Ontario's education system will prepare students with the knowledge, skills, perspectives, and practices they will need to be environmentally responsible citizens." (p. 6, Acting, Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A policy framework for environmental education in Ontario Schools – Ministry of Education)

Peel District School Board commitments:

- Development of an environmental policy for the board
- Achievement of Ecoschools certifications for Peel schools, in partnership with Region of Peel and Toronto Region Conservation Authority
- Continue 40 year history of providing opportunities for outdoor education at the Field Centres

Vision of PDSB Field Centres: The Peel field centres strive to be the key outdoor education resource for the Peel DSB and the surrounding community. By fostering a spirit of investigation, we promote environmental, historical and social values for both Peel schools and community groups.

- 1 in 5 students use the field centres every year; so far, over 32,000 students have accessed programs at the field centres for 2008-09, including the Britannia Farm Field Centre; in the last five years, over 170,000 students have accessed programs at the field centres
- Classroom Without Walls initiative builds teacher capacity in supporting students with environmental education
- STEPS initiative focuses on character development for at-risk students in Grades 6-8
- At least 40 established programs offered to all students within the system (orienteering, teambuilding, high and low ropes, summer camps, watershed studies, wildlife studies, skiing, etc.)

Britannia Farm Field Centre:

- Alternative programs focus on character education and anti-bullying initiatives
- Nature programs – natural history-based programming: (e.g. ecology, animals, plants)
- 1 of the 2 sites that offer a sugar bush program

Elementary Farm Programs	Secondary Farm Programs
Inventors Unite! (simple machines)	Population studies
Pioneer life on the farm (K-3)	Island geography
	Habitat inventory

Along with these specific programs offered at the Britannia Farm Field Centre, there are a multitude of programs available at all PDSB Field Centres.

The distinct nature of the Britannia Farm Field Centre provides for some unique opportunities for the students within the Peel Region:

- Cooksville Creek is remarkably diverse, considering it runs underground both south and north of the property; this provides unique opportunities to access and study these ecosystems
- The virgin fields and forest at the farm are a rare gem, in that no development has taken place since the mid-1800s, allowing for ecological and historical studies unlike those in areas farmed, logged or developed more recently.
- The preserved natural environment provides some unique opportunities to study island geography, as the environment is encircled by developed neighbourhoods, thereby containing the populations that reside there; various species exhibit characteristics unique to this geographical location, and this promotes opportunities for comparative studies between other field centres
- The natural untouched ecological environment in the middle of an urban, highly populated city environment is easily accessed by students in the surrounding community, and this provides for more frequent opportunities for students to explore experiential and integrated environment education.

Potential opportunities for Field Centre programming to address sustainability:

- identification and sharing of best practices or the need to invoke change
- energy conservation through demonstration of efficient use of alternative energy sources (green roof, solar power, wind turbines, geothermal energy, etc.)
- school yard naturalization (butterfly gardens, outdoor classrooms, landscaping in an urban setting, etc.)
- promotion of ecological literacy
- utilization of agriculture to understand primary sources of food (animals and plants)
- environmental stewardship
- support for Ecoschools