

Cultivating Curiosity



COVER PHOTO CREDIT: NINA LAFLAMME PHOTOGRAPHY

**A practical guide to strengthen
agricultural education in secondary schools**



Land Acknowledgement

As a provincial healthy eating program administered by the Public Health Association of BC (PHABC), Farm to School BC's (F2SBC) work aims to reach all parts of British Columbia. We acknowledge that 95% of BC is on unceded traditional First Nations territory. This land is home to more than 200 distinct First Nations, each with their own unique history, culture, tradition, and land stewardship practices. The main office for PHABC is located on the traditional territory of the lək'wəŋən People, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

We would also like to acknowledge that while this resource offers ideas to engage with land and food in a way that can be positive for students, communities, and schools, the colonial agricultural history of Canada is based on the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their land. As you engage in celebrations of food, community, and place with your students, we encourage you to dive deeper into the history and stewardship of the land you are on.

Thank You!

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Introduction

Cultivating Curiosity supports educators in strengthening agriculture education in secondary schools. It provides examples of how agriculture concepts can be integrated into existing curriculum, guidance on developing Board Authority Authorized (BAA) courses, and opportunities to explore post-secondary and dual-credit pathways in agriculture.

This resource profiles school-based agriculture programs across B.C., outlining how they were developed, implemented, and sustained. It also offers inquiry-based ideas and activity suggestions for integrating agriculture across subject areas and throughout the seasons. Educators will find links to dual-credit and post-secondary options, along with best practices for aligning classroom learning with weekly and seasonal farm cycles.

The guide complements a webinar series featuring program leads sharing their stories. You can watch all recordings at www.farmtoschoolbc.ca/cultivating-curiosity

We wish you the best of luck on your own journey—one that is sure to be fruitful for teachers, students, and community alike!

Background



Public Health Association of BC

The Public Health Association of BC is a voluntary, non-profit, non-government, member driven organization that provides leadership to promote health, well-being and social equity. PHABC fulfills their mission through advocacy, collaboration, education and research and do this work through the spectrum of public health practice; including prevention, promotion, protection and policy. Furthermore, PHABC champions a number of public health programs, including Farm to School BC, to fulfill its vision of a fair and healthy British Columbia for all. To learn more about the Public Health Association of BC, visit phabc.org.



Farm to School BC

Farm to School BC brings healthy, local, and sustainable food into schools across British Columbia and provides students with hands-on learning opportunities that develop food literacy, all while strengthening the local food system and enhancing school and community connectedness. To learn more about Farm to School BC, visit farmtoschoolbc.ca.

Sardis Secondary School Farm, Chilliwack, B.C.



Program Created in:	Run by:	Growing space:	Courses offered:	Number of students impacted per year:
2012	Teachers	5-acre farm	High School courses offered at SSS: Environmental Science 11/12, Science 10 Summer Learning Courses offered through SD33: Sustainable Vegetable Production (SVP) 10/11/12, Elementary gardening, Middle School Gardening	School year: 70-100 (Secondary courses) Summer: 100 High school (SVP 10/11/12) taught by teaching team of 5 teachers, 25 Middle School taught by 1 teacher, 40 Elementary School taught by 2 teachers

Farm Description

The Sardis Agriculture Program operates in three main locations: a classroom, a greenhouse, and an off-campus farm. In the classroom, students focus on theory and lab work, especially in science. The on-campus greenhouse allows hands-on plant growing experience, including preparations for a Mother's Day plant sale. The nearby five-acre school farm, which is within walkable distance, offers space for more practical agricultural learning.

 [Webinar Recording Link](#)

 [BAA COURSE SYLLABUS LINK](#)

Getting Started

The Sardis Secondary School Farm (SSSF) began as a modest idea that slowly grew into the vibrant initiative it is today. It started after a successful Mother's Day plant sale, when new teacher Joe Massie shared a vision that began to take shape. Around 2010, early talks with the school district and the owner of an unused property owned by SD33 sparked planning, supported by district leaders, maintenance staff, and the school board. At this time, the

five-acre plot was being maintained by the neighbouring farmer, but unused by SD33.

At first, the site was just a parking lot and cornfield. Despite early challenges, including a strike in the first year, the team gained access and began development. Over time, features were added: a shed, a community notice board, edible landscaping by horticulturist Brian Minter, and a garden now used by elementary and middle school students.

A pole shed and multiple garden beds were also built to meet expanding needs. Over the past decade, continuous work has improved the soil and expanded the farm. It now includes vegetable plots, berries, flowers, a giant pumpkin patch, and a corn field.

Funding and Sustainability

The farm program is supported through fundraisers, such as the popular Mother's Day plant sale, grants, community backing, and volunteer efforts. A major fundraiser is the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, where members buy shares of the harvest and receive weekly produce. This generates income while also deepening community engagement and support.

Curriculum Connections

The school farm program blends science education with experiential, place-based learning, with a strong focus on Environmental Science 11 and 12.

Environmental Science 11 – Students explore themes like land stewardship, ecosystem services, and Indigenous knowledge through hands-on projects. These include building a medicine wheel garden, a traditional First

Nations garden, and practicing sustainable farming methods such as crop rotation and integrated pest management. Students also work in the greenhouse and study fisheries and forestry, strengthening their connection to Chilliwack's environment.

Environmental Science 12 – Building on earlier learning, the course explores human impacts on land and water, sustainable land use, and ecological responsibility. Students apply these ideas through lessons on irrigation, fertigation, and no-till farming. A key feature of the course is the 100-Kilometre Diet, where students bring home farm produce, cook with their families, and reflect on local food systems.

Summer

A major milestone was the creation of a Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) summer course, *Sustainable Vegetable Production*, which offered academic credit and unlocked government funding to hire certified teachers and ensure long-term sustainability of the farm.

Today, the program enjoys strong support from the school district, particularly for its summer learning component. In a recent year, it employed eight teachers who worked with



"We didn't start this way. If you're beginning this journey in your career, know we took it in phases. The first was the meeting phase—the idea phase." – Sardis Secondary Teacher

around 100 high school, 25 middle school, and 40 elementary students. Positive feedback from families and students has led to high participation. Of the eight teachers, four are mainly involved with the high school students running SVP 10/11/12. Two are designated to teach the elementary group and one to teach the middle school group. In addition, the culinary instructor (the 8th teacher) works with all three groups to teach culinary skills throughout the summer. In addition, support staff (EAs) are also working to support students with IEPs. Joe Massie and Tania Toth, as the overall project leaders, are overseeing all happenings at the school farm as Teachers in Charge (TICs) to ensure all staff are working together cohesively.

Although the three ages of students are working within their own groups, some high school students are given extra responsibilities by becoming mentors to the younger students. This mentorship becomes part of their high school credit.

The summer program focuses on supporting middle school students transitioning to high

school. By engaging them early with academic credits, building relationships, and offering hands-on learning, it eases the intimidating shift to a larger school. With upwards of 1,500 students, the school can feel overwhelming, but the farm program offers a personal, welcoming entry point for new students.

What happens to the food produced?

The school farm's CSA program has grown in popularity, reflecting strong community interest in fresh, local food. Many families prefer buying directly from the farm, which adds responsibility to maintain a reliable supply of quality produce, especially with many students involved. To protect the educational value, CSA membership is capped at a manageable level.

The program prioritizes student benefit, encouraging participants to take home as much produce as they can carry, linking learning to real-world impact. Excess produce is used in the school meal programs, and is donated to local groups like the Salvation Army, extending the farm's community role.



"Labs and science are great, and they're a great next step to getting students to see learning. But when it becomes real, and we can show them that the pH of the soil, and the fertilizers can actually affect the growth of plants before their eyes over the course of weeks, it becomes a much more powerful lesson." – Sardis Secondary Teacher

The Downtown School Farm, Squamish, B.C.



Program Created in:	Run by:	Growing space:	Courses offered:	Number of students impacted per year:
2022	Squamish CAN employs a Farm Manager who works in collaboration with a Farm Studies Teacher and overall support from SD48 leadership and staff	0.25 acre (10,000 sq. ft.)	Farm Studies (10, 11, 12) Food and Agriculture Leadership (10,11,12)	70 students, including farm club involvement

Farm Description

The Downtown School Farm is located on the field between Squamish Ecole Elementary School and Howe Sound Secondary in Squamish, British Columbia. Around the outside of the farm there is an Indigenous Plant Garden and raised beds used for elementary school teaching. Within the gates there are inground beds both outside and inside the 100 x 30 ft greenhouse, a tool shed, and a 20 x 8 ft shipping container which is half office space and half walk-in cooler.

 [Cultivating Curiosity Webinar Recording link](#)

 [BAA COURSE SYLLABUS LINK](#)

Getting Started

The school farm project began around 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, when extra funding supported innovative education, and hands-on learning was becoming emphasized for its positive effect on engagement and graduation rates. The school's approach to the curriculum shifted toward experiential learning and skill development, reflecting students' growing interest in practical, career-focused subjects over traditional academics. Efforts were

made to secure ongoing funding for a dedicated farmer to maintain momentum and ensure sustainability as a daily learning environment.

Funding and Sustainability

The non-profit Squamish Climate Action Network, with School District 48 support, raised nearly \$200,000 capital to launch the project. Funds were sourced through government and non-government grants, community donations, private businesses, raffles and farm sales.

Howe Sound Secondary contributed \$30,000 in staff wages and management during the first year, enough to plant crops and cover operational costs. In 2024, the project became fully financially sustainable through farm sales, and fundraising efforts – all a result of a highly skilled farm management team, capable of managing the production and education needs on the farm. A clear request to the community was key to successful returns.

The success of the school farm relies heavily on student and community engagement, which sustains its operations. A key part of this is the farm club and community volunteers, both of which are led by the farm manager. The club, which is not for credit, meets weekly with students, and while a teacher is assigned, daily activities are driven by the farm manager and

students. The club is sponsored by a teacher, hosted during lunch-hour, and is often utilized by students in scholarship and bursary applications as an example of extra-curricular learning. Community volunteer involvement has also grown with the support of the farm manager overseeing a reliable team with sessions once a week.

The farm supports the school's food program by supplying vegetables and herbs for the culinary chefs, creating a sustainable food cycle. A seasonal farm stand runs from May to October on Wednesdays, offering a growing mid-week opportunity to share and sell farm produce – including seedlings, in response to strong community interest. An annual plant start fundraiser further supports sustainability and community ties.



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“Your school’s leaders and decision makers need to be brave in taking on the commitment of a project like this, but know that other schools have done this and can lend resources and advice. The win-win for the school and community is filled with incredible impact; it just needs to be set up for success.” – Krystle tenBrink, Executive Director, Squamish CAN

Curriculum connections

Two unique BAA courses have been developed to support the integration of the school farm into the educational experience: Farm Studies (grades 10-12) and Food and Agriculture Leadership (grades 10-12).

Farm Studies: Initially offered in the fall, this course faced challenges due to limited farm activity in late fall and winter. It has since shifted to spring when farm work is more active, to allow for more hands-on farm learning. Students earn four elective credits in Farm Studies. There's interest in converting it into an Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies (ADST) class or integrating science credits to make it more accessible for students with limited electives.

Food and Agriculture Leadership: This Leadership class runs once a week from 3:30-5pm and offers four general credits. Students sign up for this course when they do their course selection. The school operates leadership classes outside of the regular timetable to give more students the opportunity to join while still having time during school hours to take all their pre-requisites for post-secondary. This course focuses on community service and food systems, with students coordinating volunteer efforts for programs like the Breakfast Club and free lunch. They source ingredients from local farms, including the school farm, and help assemble and distribute CSA boxes. The course offers real-world leadership experience and engagement with local food networks.



"Engagement equals buy-in, which equals support, which makes the farm run." – Erin Eidsvik, Howe Sound Secondary Teacher

The Story of the Indigenous Garden Creation:

In 2024, the Farm Studies class and Squamish CAN collaborated on a project blending Indigenous knowledge, hands-on learning, and student design. It began with a guided walk led by an Indigenous educator, where students learned about native plants and their traditional uses. Inspired, the class was tasked with designing an Indigenous garden for the school farm.

After site measurements and design guidelines from Krystle (Executive Director, Squamish CAN) students developed concepts incorporating local plants and traditional knowledge, which Squamish CAN reviewed. The final garden design closely followed one student group's plan, showing how student input shaped the project's next phase.

Squamish CAN consulted Skwxwú7mesh Elders, who shared seeds, stories, and guidance on plants and signage. Students and teachers from the Indigenous Leadership and Farm Studies courses attended, deciding on twelve plants to start the garden. The Indigenous

Leadership class created multilingual signage for these plants in English, French, and Skwxwú7mesh, with a student recording the plant names in Skwxwú7mesh sníchim.

The [Indigenous Plant Garden](#) space is for all students and community members to relax, reflect and connect with Indigenous plants, while learning the cultural significance and pronunciation of them in the Skwxwú7mesh sníchim (language).

Summer Programming and Maintenance

Squamish CAN, the non-profit partner of the Downtown School Farm applies and receives funding from the Canada Summer Jobs program to hire one full time and one half time person under 30 for the summer months. During the summer, Squamish CAN and school educators work with the farm manager to strengthen knowledge and collaboration. The Canada Summer Jobs funding allowed the Farm Studies teacher—who was eligible for the role due to her age—to support the farm over the summer months, providing valuable continuity.



Garden and Gather: Daaxiigan Sk'adáa Née, Haida Gwaii, B.C.



Program Created in:	Growing space:	Run by:	Courses offered:	Number of students impacted per year:
2010	2,000 square feet – including Greenhouses	Teacher champions, SD50 with partners including Local Food to Schools, Northern Health Authority, Indigenous Knowledge holders.	Garden and Gather 8–12	500 annually across district

Growing Space Description

The school features a 20-by-50-foot greenhouse, providing 1,000 square feet of indoor growing space, plus an equal amount of outdoor beds. It also operates three indoor hydroponic grow towers.

In addition to on-site produce, traditional foods are harvested and processed for education and the school lunch program. The school has infrastructure for post-harvest processing, including deer hanging facilities, stainless steel tables, and a smokehouse. Investments in the food system include class sets of knives, a dehydrator, a pressure canner, an industrial vacuum packer, and five freezers. The kitchen was recently upgraded with restaurant-grade stoves to meet professional standards.

[!\[\]\(e3f8612927870f2e0f9f5989e6dd3064_img.jpg\) Cultivating Curiosity Webinar Recording link](#)

[!\[\]\(003082e50e3009141f59bd5df831749f_img.jpg\) BAA COURSE SYLLABUS LINK](#)

Getting Started

It is important to recognize the traditional knowledge and abundance that exists on Haida Gwaii around harvesting, processing and preparing traditional foods and growing gardens. The initiative began with two educators—one teaching English and Social Studies, the other Math and Science—who

covered grades 8, 9, and 10. Their collaboration was sparked by the arrival of a new cohort of hands-on learners who thrived in experiential, land-based environments. Recognizing this, the teachers began adapting their instruction to better meet these students' needs. Much of their planning was informal, often taking place during hunting trips. With encouragement from a local

educational assistant to incorporate local foods, they envisioned an outdoor classroom that would allow students to engage with nature while still covering core academic content.

What would eventually become the Garden and Gather class began informally, as a series of field trips woven into academic subjects, such as digging razor clams. These early experiences laid the foundation for a more structured and integrated outdoor learning program that continues to evolve (Garden and Gather).

Building Community Connections and Imbedding Indigenous Knowledge

The key to the success of this work is the ongoing knowledge sharing of Elders with the

youth of Haida Gwaii. The Indigenous Knowledge Holders' willingness to share their knowledge with teachers, settlers and youth is generous and has supported building school capacity. As the program evolved, local fishermen, hunters, and harvesters would come into the classroom or get out on the land with students. Local Food 2 School (LF2S), a grassroots organization emerged to support schools to source food during the summer for the school year ahead. LF2S, led by a Xaada/Xaayda Foods Committee, helped sustain and expand the program by building relationships with local Elders and Knowledge Keepers. These connections introduced students and staff to traditional practices, such as highly experienced ways to shuck and prepare Dungeness crabs. One memorable session



"It's not just about food skills—it's about weaving together community, culture, and sustainability in a way that feels completely natural and deeply rooted in where we are and who we are as a school."

– Daaxiigan Sk'adáa Née teacher

involved Elders Margaret Edgars and her sister Emily Watts who guided students through crab cleaning for over an hour, blending hands-on learning with the school schedule and showing how traditional food skills could be integrated into classroom life.

The Garden and Gather program's success is supported by school administrators, families, and grassroots organizations like the local food-to-school initiative. Unique within School District 50, the program is highly flexible, adapting to every school's needs across seven island schools—offering food, Knowledge Keepers, or processing help as needed. Guided by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and a local foods committee, the program is learning with humility the pathway to Yahguudang/Respect

of Haida protocols and ways to prepare and protect Haida Gwaii's food sources. This work is grounded in community values and the shared goal of food sovereignty and education.

Curriculum Connections

Garden and Gather BAA Course: Offered as an elective at Daaxiigan Sk'adáa Née, which means students typically choose to participate based on genuine interest—an important factor in creating an engaged, motivated learning environment. The course is intentionally designed to be hands-on, with a strong emphasis on experiential learning. Ideally, class size is kept small, around ten students, to maintain safety and ensure active participation. However, enrollment can sometimes reach as high as eighteen.



My favorite time in the week is when I have my Garden and Gather class. It's crazy, it's super busy. It's the largest slice of my workload. But it's my favorite one. And honestly, the relationships that I've built within the community and with my students is not a small part of the benefits that I get from the program. – Daaxiigan Sk'adáa Née teacher

Incorporating Food into School Meal Programs

The school's food program has grown far beyond simply offering a few seasonal salads. The initiative has evolved into a hot lunch program, which provides free, hot meals five days a week to all students. It includes a salad bar every Wednesday throughout the entire

year, reflecting a commitment to consistent, healthy options for students. A core focus of the program is sourcing as much local food as possible, currently upwards of 25% of the food is local ingredients, 5-10% of which comes from the Garden and Gather program, and is steadily increasing each year.



Story from the Field – Student Engagement (Daaxiigan Sk'adāa Née)

When I first started, I often saw students sitting quietly in the back—hoods up, eyes glazed. They just weren't interested. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't seem to reach them. That changed when we went to the beach. Suddenly, the same students came alive. Their focus sharpened the moment they stepped onto the sand.

I remember one day especially. I turned to the group and said, "I have no idea how to dig a razor clam. Can you show me?" They smiled, and one handed me a shovel. They showed me the technique. Sometimes I found a clam, sometimes not—but something shifted. The roles changed. The classroom barriers disappeared.

That simple moment became the foundation for everything that followed. It wasn't just about clams—it was about connection. A young person and an adult, each with something to learn and offer, meeting as equals. That human-to-human bond, sparked by nature, is what truly makes this program work.

– Daaxiigan Sk'adāa Née teacher



Best Practices for Aligning Seasonal Cycles and Farm Tasks

Whether you're building a course, running a farm, or integrating curriculum into existing courses, here are some best practices our featured teachers shared for aligning seasonal cycles and farm tasks. Additional ideas for integrating agriculture through field trips, schoolyard activities, and in-school feasts can be found in [The Farm to School BC Edible Adventures Guide](#).

Tips for Aligning Seasonal Cycles with School Farm and Garden Tasks:

- Design lessons as flexible, short-term modules (e.g., 2–3-day units) that can be adjusted based on external factors like season, environment, or community events.
- Adapt activities and assignments to match different phases of the calendar year, ensuring relevance to real-time conditions and progress.
- Avoid rigid unit structures in favor of a responsive, adaptive approach that reflects the dynamic nature of experiential learning environments.

A week in the life at the Downtown School Farm

Another way to integrate agriculture into the curriculum is to plan lessons around what's happening on the school farm or garden in a specific week. Below is an example from the Howe Sound Secondary Farm Studies Course, focusing on seeds and alternating days between the farm and the classroom.

Monday 	Tuesday 	Wednesday 	Thursday 	Friday 
In the Classroom Lesson: Parts of a seed	On the Farm Lesson: direct vs indirect sowing Complete Tasks around the farm	In the Classroom Seed germination testing Testing germination rates from the past season seeds Report to farm manager on findings	In the Classroom Seed Dissection	On the Farm Lesson: How to start seed Direct sow seeds in Greenhouse Other farm tasks: Thinning Carrots

Given this week's garden tasks and the forecasted weather, these are examples of curriculum connections taken from the Farm Studies 10/11 course that could be integrated:

Curricular Content	Curricular Competencies	Big Ideas Competencies
Local food systems: growing	Be able to identify problem weeds, pests and diseases on the farm	Experiential, place-based learning about sustainable food systems to support the well-being of self, community, and earth
Seasonal produce – what vegetables will be ready, when, and why	Farm planning and management tasks: Composting and starting seeds	

Seasons of the School Farm

Here are some examples of monthly activities from Sardis School Farm and Daaxiigan Sk'adāa Née. Every program is shaped by its unique growing conditions and community context. These highlights offer ideas, opportunities, and reminders to support your planning throughout the year.

AUTUMN

Harvest and process beans, apples, potatoes, corn, etc.

Chanterelle mushroom foraging and cooking

Monitor pests and address any issues before winter

Prepare the garden and greenhouse for colder months

Clean and sanitize tools, harvest areas, and storage containers to prevent disease

Start selecting seeds for next season

Collect seeds (tomatoes, sunflowers, lettuce, etc.)

Cook meals using fall harvest (stews, stuffed zucchini)

WINTER

Process halibut and deer meat

Finalize plans for next season's garden layout and crops

Start germinating early crops indoors

Turn and seed garden beds with cover crop

Research food miles, plan and cook local meals

Weed, plant garlic, transplant strawberries

Pickle beets and carrots

Seed salad, peppers, ceremonial tobacco in greenhouse or grow station

SPRING

Seed ceremonial tobacco and salad greens outside

Harvest stinging nettle and greens

Test the soil for nutrients and pH balance, then amend accordingly

Install or repair irrigation systems for optimal water distribution

Keep weeds in check with regular maintenance

Plant carrots and leek seedlings

Plant potatoes with high-nitrogen source (e.g. fish head)

Move seedlings into garden beds as the weather warms up

SUMMER

Final plantings and carrot weeding for fall harvests

Construct new beds or cold frames for zucchinis

Regularly fertilize plants, especially new and growing crops

Identify and label plants in the garden to track growth and prevent confusion

Begin packaging harvested goods for storage or sale

Develop communication and customer service skills when interacting with CSA members or farm customers

Continue to amend soil with compost or other organic materials

Monitor for pests and diseases, and treat them promptly

Connecting Agriculture Concepts into Existing Curriculum

As shown in the previous case studies, there are many opportunities to integrate agricultural learning into the BC Curriculum. While developing learning experiences rooted in your own agricultural environment can take time, here are a few examples to help you start integrating agriculture into existing BC Curriculum courses. View additional curriculum connections [here](#).

Source for curriculum connections: Curriculum | Building Student Success – B.C. Curriculum

GRADE 8

Course	Big Idea	Curricular Competency	Curricular Content
Inquiry: How can math help us plan and maximize the productivity of our garden space? Activity: Students use measurements and calculations to plan the layout of garden beds, considering plant spacing, sunlight, and seasonal growth patterns.			
Mathematics 8	Discrete linear relationships can be represented in many connected ways and used to identify and make generalizations.	Visualize to explore mathematical concepts	Surface area and volume of regular solids, including triangular and other right prisms and cylinders
Inquiry: How have First Peoples' traditional tools and technologies for harvesting, preparing, and preserving food changed over time, and what factors influenced these changes? Activity: Use a traditional method (like drying, smoking, or pit-roasting) and a modern method (like using a dehydrator or oven) to process a local food, then compare the results and reflect on how tools and technologies are influenced by land, resources, and culture.			
ADST Food Studies 8	Complex tasks may require multiple tools and technologies.	Identify how the land, natural resources, and culture influence the development and use of tools and technologies	First Peoples food use and how that use has changed over time

GRADE 9

Inquiry: What can we learn about our local food system, and how can we share that knowledge? Activity: Students interview farmers, market vendors, or chefs, and produce a video highlighting one element of the regional food system.			
Career Education 9	The value of work in our lives, communities, and society can be viewed from diverse perspectives.	Recognize and explore diverse perspectives on how work contributes to our community and society	Role of community, school, personal network, and mentorship in career planning

Course	Big Idea	Curricular Competency	Curricular Content
Inquiry: How do different worldviews influence environmental policies around wild berry harvesting in Canada, and what impacts do these have on communities today? Activity: Students harvest wild berries (with appropriate guidance and permissions), then compare Indigenous and settler perspectives on land use and foraging, analyzing how current environmental policies affect access, rights, and cultural practices.			
Social Studies 10	Worldviews lead to different perspectives and ideas about developments in Canadian society.	Explain and infer different perspectives on past or present people, places, issues, or events by considering prevailing norms, values, worldviews, and beliefs	Environmental, political, and economic policies

Inquiry: How can we design and build a garden bed that is sustainable and meets the needs of our school community? Activity: Students design and build raised beds using reclaimed or sustainable materials.			
ADST Woodwork 11	Design for the life cycle includes consideration of social and environmental impacts.	Engage in a period of user-centred research and empathetic observation to understand design opportunities	Problem-solving techniques using ratio, proportion, and geometry
Inquiry: What makes healthy soil, and how can we tell if our garden has it? Activity: Students collect soil samples, test for nutrients and pH, and compare results to ideal growing conditions.			
Science Environmental Science 11	Complex roles and relationships contribute to diversity of ecosystems.	Seek and analyze patterns, trends, and connections in data, including describing relationships between variables, performing calculations, and identifying inconsistencies	Matter cycles through and between living systems

Inquiry: How can we use what we've grown to create a meaningful meal for our community? Activity: Students harvest garden produce, create a menu, prepare dishes, and host a community meal, reflecting on local and ethical food choices.			
ADST Culinary Arts 12	Cuisine design interests require the evaluation and refinement of culinary principles and practices.	Examine and critically evaluate how culinary decisions impact social, ethical, and sustainability considerations	Examine and critically evaluate how culinary decisions impact social, ethical, and sustainability considerations
Inquiry: What stories can we tell through images of seasonal change in the garden? Activity: Students photograph plant and insect life cycles, documenting change over time and expressing connections between nature and social issues.			
Arts Education Photography 12	Photography provides aesthetic experiences that have the power to effect change.	Investigate ways to respond to social and environmental issues through photography	Traditional and contemporary First Peoples worldviews, stories, and history, as expressed through photography

Board Authorized Course Creation

[Board/Authority Authorized Courses \(BAA courses\)](#) and First Nation Authorized Courses (FNA Courses) respond to the local needs of the schools and their communities while providing choice and flexibility for students. BAA Courses are authorized by School Boards/Authorities according to requirements set by the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

Creating your own BAA course is a powerful way to build locally relevant, place-based learning opportunities that incorporate agricultural and environmental contexts into student learning. These courses offer innovative ways for students to explore local topics while continuing to earn credits toward graduation. If you prefer to adopt a BAA course developed by another district—especially through the BAA Sharing Platform—you must obtain formal approval from your own Board or Authority before offering it locally.

Detailed information on the Board/Authority Authorised (BAA) course creation requirements can be found here:

[BAA and FNA Course Requirements and Procedures Guidebook](#)

[Board/Authority Authorized Courses and First Nation Authorized Courses Policy – Province of British Columbia](#)

What does the process to create a new agriculture course look like?

Although the process will vary between School Districts and Authorities, there are some general steps you can follow when creating a new agricultural course. To help you get started, the following outlines key stages in the development of the Farm Studies course at Howe Sound Secondary School:

1. Form a Collaborative Team

A team was assembled to design the curriculum, including the food studies teacher, vice principal, a local farmer, and another staff member.

2. Develop Course Content

The team collaboratively created the curriculum for two new elective courses, one of which focused on leadership.

3. Submit for Approval

The vice principal presented the course proposals to the school board for review and approval. Should you be interested in utilizing BAA courses developed by other districts, you will need approval.

4. Receive Board Approval

The school board approved the new elective courses.

5. Coordinate Implementation

After approval, the vice principal managed the behind-the-scenes administrative tasks, including:

- Preparing the school schedule
- Assigning teaching staff
- Coordinating the overall rollout of the courses
- Once approved, develop unit and lesson plans within course framework
- Promote program through class visits is ideal to draw interest, other methods include: SD website, creation of flyers emailed to parents, district weekly newsletters and social media

Post Secondary and Dual Credit Connections

There are many opportunities for students to further connect to careers in agriculture through post-secondary institutions and dual credit programs.

What is dual credit?

In partnership with post-secondary institutions, schools provide school-aged students in grades 11 and 12 students with the opportunity to take post-secondary courses as high school electives, earning credit in both systems. Schools often provide supports for participating students and must pay for their tuition. This enables students to gain practical, hands-on experience in areas of learning that they are interested in, kick-starting their post-secondary journey.

More information about dual credit options can be found here:

[Dual Credit – Province of British Columbia](#)

Post-secondary institutions and schools determine what opportunities are available to students at the local level. This opens many options for students looking to experience post-secondary education while in high school, including in agricultural courses or in related trades training (e.g., heavy equipment operation). Participation models vary from arranging for individual students to attend a specific post-secondary course, to setting aside a certain number of seats for high school students in a regular course, to providing for full high school cohorts.

Thompson River University Regenerative Agriculture Dual Credit Program Snapshot

The Regenerative Agricultural Program offers Grade 12 students a dual credit, one-year program that allows students to gain practical experience on farms or ranches of their choice. The program is the first of its kind in British Columbia and is designed to provide students with hands-on skills for agrarian enterprise. The program includes in-class and online courses in business and enterprises management, as well as natural resource science courses. Students, who participate independently, will learn how to assess, select, and develop enterprises, plan for success, and apply regenerative agriculture practices. The program also offers a host-farm practicum as a credit course, with performance reviews by host-farm supervisors. The program is designed to be easy for students and adult learners to access, with content that fits today's needs and situations.

For more information on the program, including admission, tuition fees, and scholarships, students can visit the [TRU website](#) or contact the university directly.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Dual Credit Program Snapshot

The dual credit partnership opportunities within the Sustainable Agriculture Department at KPU are flexible and in the past have created options that work well for both learners, and educators, to offer experiential dual credit options. While they welcome in-person dual credit connections through the KPU Farm in Richmond, they are also open to offering their [Agri 1150](#) course online with sufficient enrollment to ensure accessibility across the province. For more information about KPU Dual Credit, connect with the [Department of Sustainable Agriculture](#).

Helpful Tips

As shown throughout this guide, there are many ways to develop your program—whether through BAA courses, dual credit opportunities, or by weaving food systems topics into existing classes. Our case study partners have generously shared practical tips drawn from their lived experience—consider these insights as you plan and adapt your own approach.

Curriculum Development & Teaching Approach

- Collaborate across disciplines to create programs blending academic and practical skills.
- When planning, be flexible and adaptive, and consider experiential education as a strategic response to real-world conditions.
- Block Scheduling Advantage: The double-block, half-day model lets teachers connect two courses and have enough time to get students out onto the farm. This approach strengthens the connection between theory and hands-on practice, enhancing learning in outdoor and applied settings.
- Practice builds proficiency –repetition matters. Real skill development comes from doing—processing multiple deer or similar activities gives students lasting competence.

Community & Volunteer Engagement

- Engage skilled volunteers, such as Master Gardeners, to add knowledge and labour.
- Collaborate with non-profits focused on food systems and agriculture to expand resources and link to community goals.
- Celebrate every milestone along the way, with partners and community.
- Value Local Expertise: Recognize that some of the most valuable knowledge lives outside formal education systems—tap into community experience.

Youth Engagement & Inclusivity

- Encourage sharing of diverse cultural practices to foster inclusivity and intergenerational learning that deepens connection to student’s personal heritage.
- Try face-to-face outreach like visiting classes and middle schools. This helps to build interest and enrollment.
- Support students in taking the lead and developing leadership qualities.

Policy & Leadership

- Work with public agencies valuing social, educational, and environmental roles of school farming that highlight education benefits.
- Keep school admin involved, by updating them on milestones, and any examples of the project receiving positive media, etc.
- Respect cultural protocols –Always involve Indigenous knowledge keepers when working with traditional foods to ensure respectful and culturally appropriate practices.
- Embrace mistakes and value the bumps in the road – all paths lead to knowledge.



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