



BLUE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Thinking Blue – Teaching Blue



ENDORSEMENTS



Jane Fonda

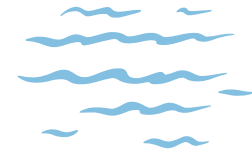
Actor and climate activist

“It is crucial that we teach children from a very young age to protect the world’s threatened water and to ensure that no one goes without. I heartily endorse Blue Community Schools.”

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WE ARE HELPING TEACHERS TELL THE STORY OF WATER TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

Blue Community Schools grows out of the international Blue Communities initiative – a network of communities protecting water and watersheds and promoting the human rights to water and sanitation.

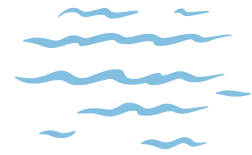
Founded by the Council of Canadians and Maude Barlow, Blue Community Schools expands this initiative to include elementary and secondary schools and provides educational resources for teachers and students to learn together about what it means to protect water as a public resource, and build an understanding that water is life.

Many universities, including a number in Canada, have become Blue Communities, incorporating water justice into their campus policies and practices. These include McGill in Montreal, St. Michael's and Victoria Colleges at the University of Toronto, Saint Paul in Ottawa and Brescia and King's Colleges at Western in London, and York University in Toronto.



MAUDE BARLOW

Maude Barlow, the founder and former chair of the Council of Canadians, has been central to the creation of the Blue Community Schools program. Explore insightful stories and reports on key issues like the Canadian Water Crisis and the Global Water Crisis, curated by Maude Barlow, Canadian activist and author, on the [Water News blog](#).



THE WATER CRISIS

- Our planet is running out of clean, accessible drinking water. The United Nations reports that, within a decade, the demand for water will outstrip supply by 40%.
- Canada, although blessed with more water than many countries, is not immune to the water crisis. We have taken our water for granted and not properly cared for it.
- Canada faces serious issues of water contamination from industrial pollution, extractive industries, and factory farming. We are over-extracting groundwater, and our glaciers are melting.
- The western provinces are now experiencing consecutive years of severe drought, with a high impact on people and food production.
- As well, Canada has the shameful legacy of human rights abuses in First Nations communities with a history of poor or non-existent water and wastewater services, a legacy only recently being addressed.

1/4

of the world's population does not have access to safe drinking water

1/2

of the world's population lacks access to basic sanitation

40%

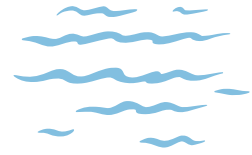
Global demand for water will outstrip supply by 40% by 2030

9%

Only 9% of the plastic ever produced has been recycled

29 years

Some First Nations communities in Canada have not had safe drinking water for more than 29 years



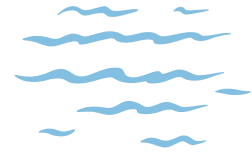
JOIN THE MOVEMENT

It's not too late to protect the planet's water resources and provide safe, clean drinking water and sanitation for all. We have a huge task in front of us – the climate crisis is bringing new pressures on our water resources, and a real urgency for us to act.

To protect water for current and future generations, young people must be educated and prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

By becoming a Blue Community School, your school will become part of a deeply rooted movement that is protecting water as a fundamental human right. You can help guide your students on their path to becoming water defenders.





THE BLUE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

The Blue Community Schools project provides educators with a comprehensive, age-appropriate selection of lesson plans, books, videos, films, and reports designed for in-classroom learning about the human right to water, including the rights of the first peoples to clean water, and the growing water crisis facing the world today.

These resources are intended to complement the curriculum and engage K to 12 in meaningful discussions and activities while they work toward certification as a Blue Community School.

Teachers are the main actors who bring the concept of Blue Schools to life. Curricula, educational systems, and government requirements differ from member state to member state. Teachers, however, can bring the ocean to their classes by challenging the students to explore their connections to the ocean in classes of Biology, Physics, Chemistry, as well as Mathematics, History, Literature, Arts... The relationship of the ocean with humankind encompasses all areas of society.

WELCOME TO THE BLUE COMMUNITY MOVEMENT!



We would love to have your school join by becoming a Blue Community School.



A Blue Community School joins towns and cities, faith-based and Indigenous communities, and universities in pledging to protect water and advocate for water justice.



A Blue Community School understands that teaching young people about the planet's precious and irreplaceable water heritage is vital to preserving life on Earth.



A Blue Community School commits to educating students about the water crisis – globally and here in Canada – and the need to protect water and watersheds.



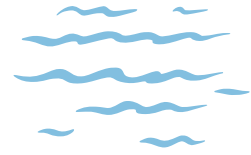
Program Components

- Detailed, age-appropriate lesson plans for K-12 students.
- Books and reading material tailored to various grade levels, from simple stories to more complex texts.
- Easy to understand reports and research on local and global water issues, helping students engage with real-world problems.
- Up to date information on the state of water in Canada and new initiatives in addressing access to water in First Nations communities.
- Interactive workshops, activities and experiments to engage students with hands-on learning.

Benefits for Educators

- Educators have access to ready-made materials to complement existing curriculums, including tools that help make complex water issues accessible and engaging for all age groups.
- The program offers resources for educators to keep you up to date with the latest reports from the UN and others on the state of the world's water.
- The Blue Community and Blue Community Schools movement is a powerful initiative that champions the human right to water, sustainable water practices, and public ownership of water services. Your school will become part of this global movement, a network of communities protecting and promoting the human right to water and sanitation.

In 2024, ice coverage on the Great Lakes reached an historic low.



A USEFUL TOOL FOR TEACHERS

The Blue Schools program offers many resources for teachers to use in introducing their students to the need to care for water. Here you will find books, films and articles appropriate for all ages K to 12. As well, there are resources for educators to keep you up-to-date with the latest reports from the UN and others on the state of the world's water.

MATERIALS

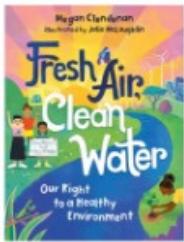
REPORTS

We have prepared must-read reports on the essential information all teachers should have in order to better educate your students on this crucial issue.



BOOKS

We have curated a list of books aimed at assisting you in teaching your students about water and the pressing water crisis we face today. Included here are some highlights.



Fresh Air, Clean Water

As recommended by the CBC, Fresh Air, Clean Water, written by two BC-based authors, explains the meaning of the right to a healthy environment and features profiles of kids around the world who are fighting for their environmental rights.

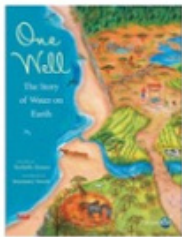
MIDDLE GRADE



Martin and the River

Recommended by the CBC, Martin and the River is the story of a boy who moves to the city and misses his beloved river. Here he finds joy in discovering a water connection in the city. Written by an Ontario author.

AGES 3-6



One Well

A Canadian author and British illustrator teamed up to give us this richly illustrated and popular book that explains how all water is connected, and how important it is to care for it, starting from our taps and wells. Also available as a video on YouTube.

AGES 8-12



Hydrate the Earth

A BC author has written a compelling book, arguing that water is forgotten in much analysis and reporting on the climate crisis. By diverting and over-extracting water, humans have interrupted the hydrologic cycle that, in turn, has added to the climate burden. Water protection also plays a crucial part in regenerative agriculture, increasingly understood as the antidote to industrial farming.

FOR TEACHERS AND SENIOR STUDENTS

FILMS & VIDEOS

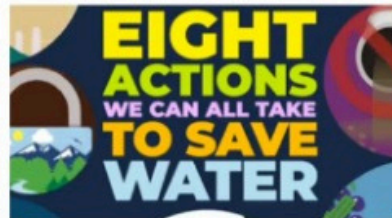
We have pulled together a wealth of documentaries, films, videos, and handimotions centered around water that will be helpful to you and your classrooms. We've curated a selection of excellent options for you to explore and use. Here are some highlights from the Blue Schools program.



A Global Solution to Plastic Pollution

This is a short 2024 video that tells the story about the campaign for a global treaty to stop plastic pollution. Excellent to create political awareness in students. It was created by The Story of Stuff, an American non-profit that also produced the full length documentary, The Story of Plastic, available on their web site.

MIDDLE AND SECONDARY STUDENTS



Eight Actions We Can All Take to Save Water

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has prepared this short video to show us how we can all save water in our day to day lives. Great discussion starter for kids of all ages.

AGES 4+



The Story ~ Regenerating Life

This is a documentary by an American filmmaker who posits that our treatment of water, soil and forests is major contributor to the climate crisis and must be addressed if we are to save the planet. The three-part series tells how water cools the planet, the importance of protecting biodiversity and the promise of regenerative farming.

MIDDLE AND SECONDARY STUDENTS

LESSON PLANS

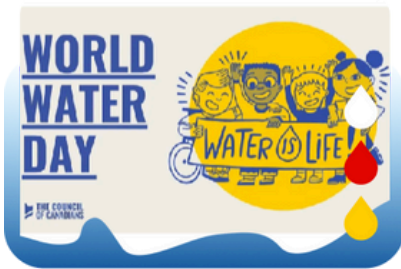
We're excited to provide teachers with a selection of lesson plans designed to facilitate teaching about water and the critical water crisis facing our world today. Included here are some highlights of the Blue Schools resources, which are intended to enrich your curriculum and engage your students in meaningful discussions and activities.



Back to Basics: What is a lake?

The International Institute for Sustainable Development runs the Experimental Lakes Area (ELA), a unique natural laboratory in northwestern Ontario, comprised of 58 small lakes and their watersheds, set aside for scientific research.

Here IISD helps you teach your students everything they need to know about lakes and the ELA.



Download your free WWD Teachers Kit

Celebrate World Water Day all year with our engaging Teacher's Kit! Inspire your students with the Water Drop activity—where they can write messages to the Prime Minister—plus dynamic slideshows tailored for both upper and lower grades on the Human Right to Water. There's also an eye-opening presentation for all grades: Would You Drink This Water? Get ready to spark meaningful conversations and empower young water defenders!

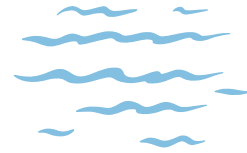


Student Resources – United Nations Sustainable Development

The United Nations has established 17 goals toward a sustainable and just future to be met by 2030. This comprehensive site offers lesson plans and great materials for teachers to educate their students about the Sustainable Development Goals. SDG number 6 is a commitment to ensure access to clean water and sanitation for all. By clicking on the link to this goal, you have an excellent set of teaching tools on the meaning and status of this pledge.

The whole site is filled with valuable educational materials about the commitments governments have made to a safe and just future for all.





HOW TO BECOME A BLUE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

We invite your school to become a Blue Community School by taking these three pledges:

1. Educate about water and the need to protect it;
2. Recognize the universal human rights to clean water & sanitation;
3. Ban or phase out the sale of bottled water at schools where clean tap water is available.



We will help you celebrate your becoming a Blue Community School with a certificate and suggestion for next steps.










PLEDGE ACTIVITY IDEAS

Every school is empowered to bring the three principles to life in its own unique and creative way. To choose concrete measures to respect the three principles.

Here are just a few ideas to spark inspiration, and examples of activities undertaken by some of our Blue Community Schools:

-  On their very first day, every student is welcomed with a reusable water bottle—because change starts with action.
-  Once a year, the entire school dives into a vibrant, hands-on World Water Day that blends learning with fun, creativity, and a splash of playfulness.
-  Eye-catching posters with punchy, thought-provoking messages are placed by every tap, encouraging students to drink tap water and think blue.
-  Every student embarks on a visit to the local water supply system—seeing firsthand where their water comes from and why it matters.
-  Students make waves globally by connecting with their peers from a fellow Blue School, sharing ideas, experiences, and a passion for the planet.





ACTIVITIES FROM SOME OF OUR BLUE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



Grade 7 classes have groups developing educational campaigns to raise awareness about water protection and the universal right to clean water and sanitation. They are also exploring ways to embed water care topics into the school curriculum and design tools or techniques that make this information easily accessible, engaging, and understandable for both students and the wider community.



Other groups are addressing the challenge of access to clean drinking water at school. Since our tap water is not potable, they are designing strategies to reduce reliance on plastic water bottles and promote more sustainable alternatives.



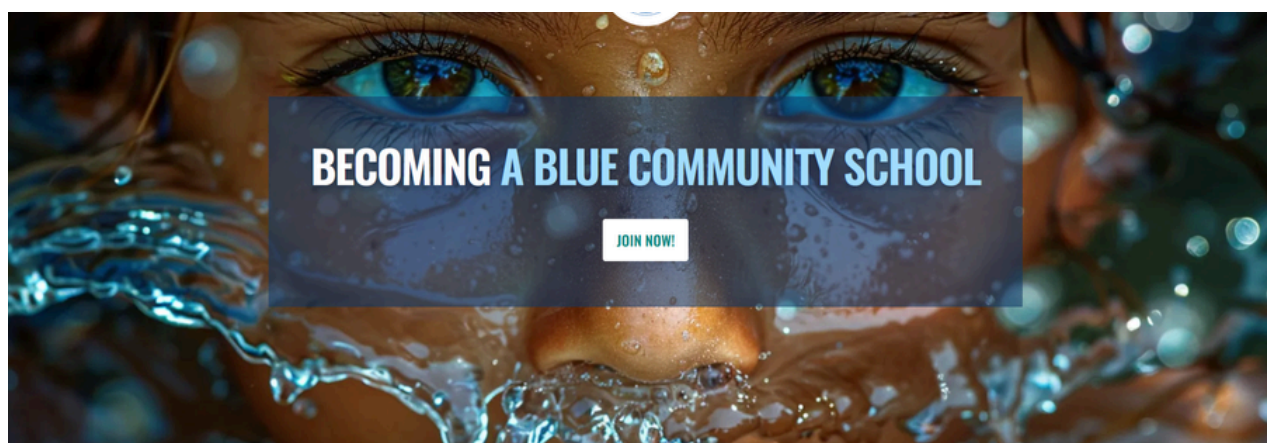
The day that we completed the Water Droplets, we learned about the importance of clean water for all Indigenous Communities on the announcements and in our classes as teachers were provided resources for their lessons.



In the elementary grades, we read the book by the Indigenous author Sunshine Tenasco, "Nibi's Water Song" and discussed the issue as classroom groups.



Our school has been apart of EcoSchools Canada for many years and we work as a school and as a community with our Township on many environmental projects.





HOW TO GET INVOLVED



- Let us know you're interested!
- We'll send you the information you need to get started.

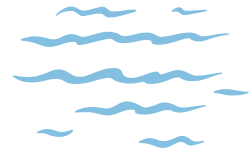


- Fulfill the pledges!
- Identify & implement the steps your school will take to recognize and uphold the human right to water and end the sale of bottled water.



- Share your work with us, and let us celebrate with you!
- Sign & send the fulfilled pledges back to us.





CONTACT

See the full offering of educational resources at bluecommunityschools.org

If you are interested in getting involved or have any questions about the program, please email info@bluecommunityschools.org

As of early 2025, there are 164 Blue Communities worldwide, including 10 Blue Community Schools.



Blue Community Schools initiative is proudly supported by **the Council of Canadians**. To learn more about the Council of Canadians go to canadians.org

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bluecommunityschools.org

