



École Secondaire LAURIER MACDONALD High School
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Ivan Spilak
Vice principal, Laurier Macdonald High School
May 2023

Re: Partnerships between schools and *enuf* to tackle the waste crisis

To school principals, the English Montreal School Board (EMSB), and municipalities in Montreal,

I am writing to: 1) speak to the experience of the Laurier MacDonald's High School (LMAC) in partnering with *enuf*, 2) invite other school principals to engage in similar partnerships with *enuf*, and 3) encourage the EMSB and municipal governments in Montreal to provide logistical and financial support for such partnerships.

The waste and climate crises require deep social transformation to resolve, for which schools can be a central pillar. Waste is very much a Canadian problem as Canada produces the most waste per capita in the world, the majority of which is sent to landfills. The waste and climate crises are interconnected because landfills are the 3rd leading source of methane, a greenhouse gas that captures 70 times more heat than CO₂ over a 20 year period. As a school, we have the responsibility to 1) equip the students in our stewardship with the education and the tools they need to contribute to systemic solutions, and 2) lead by the example of our own operations. In a school's context, half the waste we generate is organic and can be composted instead. LMAC has thus partnered with *enuf* over the past two years, generously funded by the [SHIFT center for social transformation](#), to introduce composting. Since, *enuf* has coordinated with the city and Eco Quartier St. Leonard to ensure a smooth introduction of composting into the school. They consulted with us to ensure we receive the right number and size of compost bins, and that the new collection process by the city of the captured organic waste runs smoothly. They presented to the school's staff meeting to build engagement and buy-in. They trained the school's student green team to act as a green brigade who help their fellow students learn how to correctly use the new compost bins and sort their waste at the cafeteria during lunch time. They also conducted school-wide workshops on waste sorting, designed as a 30-minute game, attended by all of our 650 students as well as some 30 staff. Finally, they have conducted waste audits, with the educational engagement of our student green team, before and after the introduction of the compost bins and educational workshops.

We are proud to report that the waste audit reflected [incredible results!](#) The organic waste captured in the new compost bins is virtually pure (0.4% contamination). The contamination in our recycling bins has also decreased from 23% in 2022 to 9% in 2023. The school succeeded in capturing half the organics it generates in the new compost bins. The latest waste audit showed that the other half is mostly coming from bathrooms (paper towels are compostable!), and therefore the school added bathroom compost bins last month.



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These results are a reflection of the strong desire within the school community to tackle the waste crisis, and the efficacy of the model developed by *enuf* to provide the much-needed support. It is also a testament to how well-received this partnership is by the entire school community, and how positive our experience of working with the *enuf* team is. We were furthermore, encouraged and proud of our staff's commitment and involvement. Led by M. Castonguay and M. Barnabé our school green team grew throughout the school year and encouraged the majority of the school to commit to reducing waste within the school. The transformative process was pleasant and neither burdensome nor onerous. We look forward to continuing our partnership with *enuf*, and host annual workshops and waste audits to sustain and grow progress. **I highly recommend other schools go through the same model of transformation with *enuf* as Laurier Macdonald High School did.**

Perhaps the most profound impact of our partnership with *enuf* is that the young leaders studying at our school are carrying forward the awareness and education to their families and households as well. For this vital social transformation to accelerate across Montreal, **I strongly encourage both the EMSB and municipalities to provide the financial and logistical support needed to facilitate and sustain these partnerships in as many schools as possible.**

Sincerely,

Ivan Spilak
Vice principal, Laurier Macdonald High School