



Elizabeth Ballantyne Elementary School
314 Rue Northview, Montréal-Ouest, QC H4X 1E2
Tel: (514) 484-1006

Nick von Roretz
Grade 6 teacher
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To school principals, the English Montreal School Board (EMSB), and municipalities in Montreal,

I am writing to: 1) speak to the experience Elizabeth Ballantyne Elementary School (EBS) 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, nearly half the waste generated is organic and can be composted instead. EBS has partnered with *enuf* over the past year, generously funded by the SHIFT centre for social transformation to improve waste-sorting practices and overall waste diversion. *enuf* presented to the school staff meeting to build engagement and buy-in. They also conducted school-wide workshops on waste sorting, designed as an interactive presentation, followed by a 30-minute game, attended by all of our 205 students as well as some 20 staff. Finally, they have conducted waste audits, with the educational engagement of students, before and after the introduction of the educational workshops.

We are proud to report that the waste audit reflected incredible results! The contamination rates of compost bins significantly decreased from 52% in October 2023, to just 4% in March 2024! The contamination rates of the recycling and trash bins also decreased, with a notable reduction of organic contamination in the trash bins headed for landfill. The school succeeded in capturing 25% more non-divertible trash items since the preliminary waste audit, corroborating with the decreased contamination in the compost and recycling bins. The latest audit report outlined the common trends in waste misplacement and consequential contamination, and provided recommendations on further steps that we can take to continue improving.

These results reflect 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 by and proud of our staff's commitment and involvement. Whilst in the midst of school strikes across the board, staff were flexible and involved in their information session with *enuf*, showing interest in discussion of logistics and potential solutions to waste-related problems faced at EBS. Led by Nick von Roretz, our environmental club

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 Elizabeth Ballantyne Elementary 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'N' followed by a small flourish and a large, sweeping signature.

Nick von Roretz
Grade 6 teacher, Elizabeth Ballantyne Elementary School