

SCHOOL BOARD OFFERING NEW OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

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A new outdoor educational program is being offered by the Halton Board of Education during the second semester of this school year, one that will incorporate both elementary and secondary students.

The initiative is a "starting point" as the board seeks to fulfill its commitment to find alternatives to the Bronte Creek Project, one of the more contentious casualties of last spring's budget.

The once popular BCP, a semester long outdoor program for secondary students, was a board sta-

ple for 30 years but was discontinued as the result of a combination of provincial funding cuts to education, the project's high price tag and declining participation.

The new initiative, outlined to trustees at the regular meeting of the board Jan. 8, was designed to impact as many students as possible, said HDSB associate director David Boag.

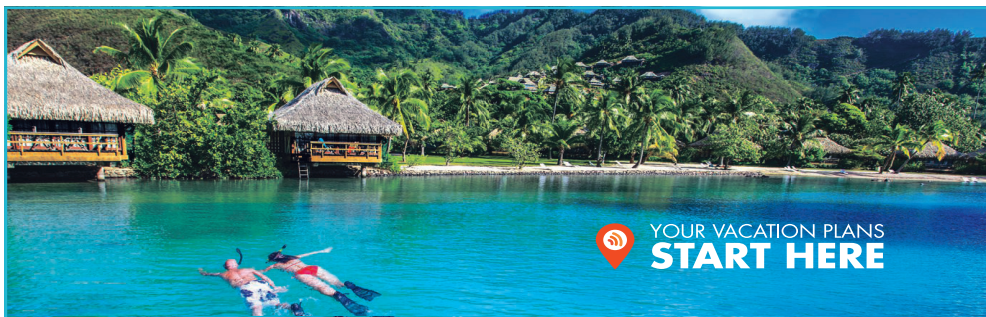
"The concept is a bit of a rebranding of Earthkeepers or Project Wild offered through Bronte Creek; this will be a different version of that but some of the essential elements from those two programs will be incorporated into this new program, he said.

Between February and June, Grade 5 students will participate in a one-day outdoor environmental education "learning experience" to be facilitated by an outdoor education expert and high school co-op students.

The program will utilize inquiry, cooperative games, teamwork and hands-on learning activities to relate to environmental issues and promote responsible stewardship of the environment, according to the staff report.

The outdoor space itself is flexible and students may find themselves in their own school yards, a local park or a conservation area, said Boag.

"So our co-op kids will be trained by this outdoor expert and the co-op students will be facilitating the learning of the Grade 5 students, so we've got kids learning from kids and we think that's a really powerful model."



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