

Sustainable Schools, Sustainable Futures

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Student Action for a Sustainable Future (SASF)

- SASF is a teacher led learning experience for Saskatoon students in grades 5-8 to investigate and take action on sustainability issues at their school.
- The SASF program is currently in the final year of a three-year pilot program.

About SASF

The pilot program is a joint venture of

- The City of Saskatoon,
- Saskatchewan Environmental Society,
- Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools,
- Saskatoon Public Schools,
- Saskatoon Light and Power,
- University of Saskatchewan.

(SES, 2016)

About SASF

- Focus on 6 areas:

- Waste
- Water
- Energy

- Food
- Transportation
- Biodiversity

- The classes choose an issue in one of these areas in their school or classroom and develop a plan to measure and mitigate that problem.
- At the end of the year, the students participate in project showcase with the other program classes to present the results of their project.

Some Stats about SASF

- 26 teachers
- 23 schools
- ~ 675 students

(Deb Hockley, 2016. pers. comm.)

Some Stats, pt. 2

Annual Savings of all the projects were estimated:

- 35 600 kWh of Electricity
- 88 GJ of Natural Gas
- 1050 m³ of Water
- 10 210 Kg of Waste
- 730 L of Fuel
- 47 510 Kg of Greenhouse Gases

Looking at teacher experience

- The teachers were asked to complete an online survey about their experience with SASF.
- How effective was the program, and what could be made better?
- This information could help secure future funding and improve the experience for both students and teachers.

Results

9 teachers completed the survey.

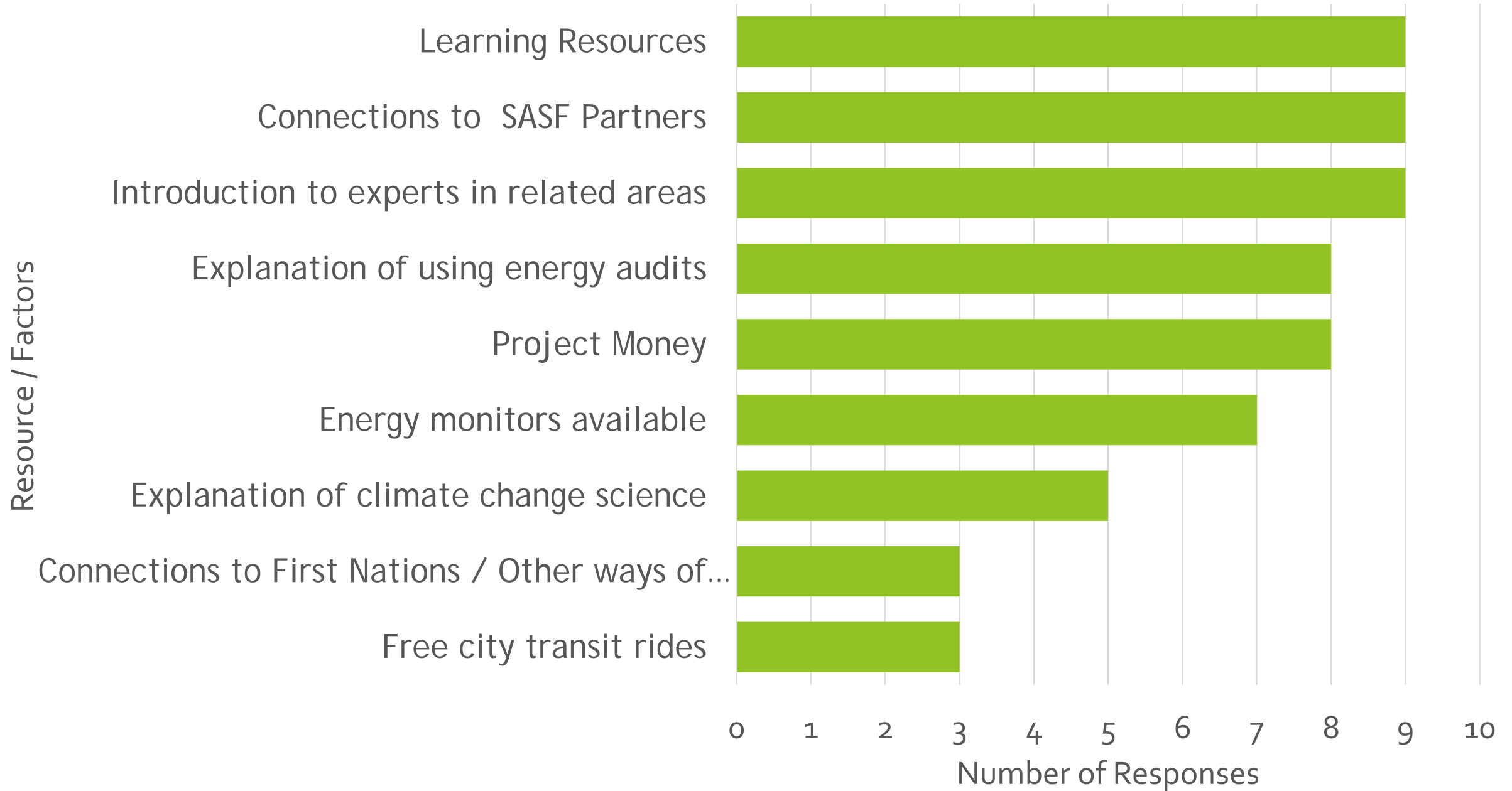
Comfort

8 of the teachers felt that they were somewhat or much more comfortable teaching Sustainability.

Why did they feel more comfortable?

- Introduction to resources
- Introduction to organizations
- Working with experts
- Able to integrate sustainability into other topics

What Resources and Factors
were most helpful?



What Additional Supports
would help?

- More Money
- PD Time
- Information about Sustainability careers
- Presentations from Sustainability professionals
- School divisions implementing more sustainable infrastructure
- More time with experts

Changing Student Understanding

- 4 teachers saw changes in student behaviour within their project topic
- 4 teachers saw changes in many areas

Enjoyment

- 7 of the teachers believed the students enjoyed participating.
- All 9 teachers said they enjoyed participating.

Effect on Future Actions / Thoughts

- Most of the teachers (8) thought that student participation would affect student's actions or thoughts in the future.

"...[T]hey also came to realize that small actions - things that they can do themselves - can make big impacts."


-2014/15 teacher

Is there a need for these type of programs?

All of the respondents believed so.

Is there a lasting legacy of SASF?

Again, all of the respondents believed so.



“Absolutely. The legacy will be an informed student body of the issues that face our world and city. It is easier to do the right things when people understand why we need to.”

-2013/14 teacher

“Yes...The changes that they made to the school through their projects are still in place and are having an impact. Most importantly, they are there as a reminder to other students...that student-led changes can have a lasting impact for sustainability.”

-2014/15 teacher

Discussion

- Generally, teachers responded very positively to SASF
- Appropriate access to funding, experts, and information to facilitate the program successfully.
- As well, the teachers became more comfortable teaching these topics.
- For the most part, teachers and students enjoyed the program.
- Student behaviour around sustainability has had positive change as well, and there is a lasting effect to this.
- An interesting side effect noted was having the chance to work with teachers from the “other” school board.

Conclusions

- The SASF program is an effective method to integrating sustainability into classroom learning.
- The program also had a positive effect outside of the class, as students were encouraging their friends and family to participate in more sustainable activities.

How to Improve SASF:

- More funding for each class project
- More time with experts
- Connecting previous and new participants
- Adjusting time frame
- Connecting to professionals & careers

Any Questions?

References

- Hockley, Deb. 2016. Personal Communication.
- Saskatchewan Environmental Society, 2015. "Student Action for a Sustainable Future Program". <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTYJN5-Xmwo>>. Accessed January 26, 2016.
- Saskatchewan Environmental Society, 2016. "Student Action for a Sustainable Future". <<http://environmentalsociety.ca/programs/k-12-school-programs/sasf/>>. Accessed January 26, 2016.