



**Capitol Hill Elementary School
Indigenous Education Plan 2023-2024
DRAFT**

Optional: Please share your plans for National Day/Week of Reconciliation

In the weeks leading up to Orange Shirt Day/National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, classes did a variety of individual activities within their classrooms. Teachers and students talked about Indigenous worldview (specifically - reciprocity, all are learners and teachers, all are looking forward to learning and sharing their knowledge); colonization; our role in Truth and Reconciliation. *When We Were Alone* was read and students were asked to compare grandmother's school experience with Indigenous worldview. We also talked about how the story was written to teach in a beautiful way. The intermediate students also viewed David A. Robertson's video essay "The Path to Healing and Reconciliation." Some students reflected and wrote their personal commitment to reconciliation on a tiny orange shirt and each shirt is part of a whole school display. The culminating activity for the week was a whole school assembly where the Coast Salish Anthem was played by Ms. Lui and some Indigenous students on drums (loaned to us from Burnaby North), a grade $\frac{3}{4}$ class shared their Land Acknowledgement, two grade 1 students read a poem about Orange Shirt Day, Phyllis Webstad's video of how Orange Shirt Day came to be was viewed as well as the short film "Shin-Chi's Canoe (loaned from Reel Canada).

Objective

The objective of this plan is to continue to enhance the Indigenous students' learning journey by integrating concepts of Indigenous culture throughout the school. This will benefit all students as their understanding of Indigenous culture will also be strengthened. We will also work to engage our staff in taking steps to decolonize our practices and meaningfully embed Indigenous ways of knowing and being into our school community. In addition, we will continue to educate ourselves and the school community in the Truth and Reconciliation process.

Student Specific Service - “WHAT IS WORKING WELL FOR STUDENTS AT YOUR SCHOOL?”

Staff are committed and excited about building their understanding of Indigenous Ways of knowing and being. Many staff completed a survey at the start of the year. In it they indicated a wish for more Indigenous knowledge, particularly from Elders and other community members.

There has been a commitment over the past few years to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. In terms of a commitment to Indigenous Education, this means increasingly becoming more culturally responsive.

Each day and all gatherings start with an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement that incorporates the hənq̓əminəm language and is, often, personalized by the speaker.

The Indigenous students feel safe and are comfortable sharing their culture – e.g., drumming, dancing, clothing, family stories.

When issues arise at school, they are solved using restorative justice problem solving circles.

We are working on assemblies becoming recognized by all as valued community gatherings where important roles are shared, and all are [invited] to participate. For the most part, students are the leaders of the assembly, and it is a sharing of thinking and learning not a performance by a few talented students.

There are bi-weekly lessons focused specifically on Indigenous learning.

Student Identity

Indigenous students at Capitol Hill seem well settled into the community. They are engaged learners who come to school ready to learn. They, quietly, but proudly speak of their culture and seem pleased to see their culture reflected at school. There are two new kindergarten students, and we are just getting to know them and their families.

The Indigenous students appeared very excited to share their drumming at the Orange Shirt Day Assembly and several conversations were overheard as they gathered before the assembly. For example, when one of the grade 7 students saw another with their drum, their response was a very excited – “oh you are Native! This makes sense now. I just thought you were from somewhere else.” This feels like clear evidence of how culturally responsive gatherings are important and need to happen regularly.

In terms of learning progress, Indigenous students at Capitol Hill are at different stages in their learning journeys. In terms of literacy and numeracy, the intermediate students are in the developing-proficient range. Assessment indicates that the primary students at the kindergarten/grade 1 level will benefit from additional support in literacy acquisition. A Network of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIIE) Inquiry is in progress to address the need for additional literacy support for these learners.

Our commitment will be on working together to answer the questions – what is this place? who are the people who used to live here? who are we? how are we benefiting from this place?

One of the Indigenous worldviews that will guide us in this work is Reciprocity – constantly reflecting on the belief that we are all connected and are required to care for one another. This will create an environment where all learners and their families have a sense of place and belonging.

Sense of Community and Indigenous Representation in the Classroom

Our focus is on honouring and celebrating individual differences and acknowledging and responding to individual realities from a trauma informed lens, so that every student can be self-regulated, safe, and proud.

We are honouring our commitment to Reconciliation and that will inform all the work that we do.

We are committed to helping families feel like an important part of our community. We are committed to inviting them to the school for tea and conversation and to ask for their advice

We will identify and explore the *Seven Sacred Teachings* and other related stories as being Indigenous stories that are being generously shared. As we highlight the qualities of these teachings, our sense of knowledge of Indigenous worldview will grow and, also, our entire community will be strengthened by the practice of these beliefs.

A recent email from Rob Smyth provided recommendations for the ILIT learning times. One of these recommendations was ‘dedicate a space.’ This advice has really provided substantial inspiration for our plans this year and allows us to concretely embed Indigenous worldviews and First Peoples Principles of Learning into our daily practice.

We will use a currently empty classroom in the following three ways:

As a dedicated space to hold the Wednesday virtual Indigenous teachings. Classes can attend together to view these teachings. The space can contain cultural artifacts and other evidence of the children’s learning. The ILIT learning times will also take place in this space.

As an area where students can have their social emotional needs met in terms of self-regulation. A space can be set up in this room to support children in self-regulation and problem solving.

And, as a makerspace – a space of experiential learning where children will learn by doing.

Academic Success/Pathways to Graduation

How will this year’s plan enhance your Indigenous student’s journey? FNESC states: deeper understandings of the experiences, cultures, and histories of Indigenous peoples

We commit to ensuring students feel a greater sense of belonging within the school community. We will do this by having students see their culture and heritage represented and honoured. We will continue to implement culturally responsive teaching practices and resources.

We will continually be assessing and monitoring each student's academic progress throughout the year. Tier two interventions will be implemented in a variety of ways to strengthen literacy and numeracy skills where needed. The NOIIE Inquiry will also focus on these skills.

We will also be adjusting our approach to ensure it is always learner-centred and better reflects the Indigenous' strengths-based worldview that children are a gift. We will be vigilant in our efforts to not appear as if we want to 'fix' a learner.

We will be explicit, consistent, and relevant in communicating high expectations for all learners. We will involve learners in learning opportunities and make sure that they realize their voices are welcome and heard. We will provide opportunities for students' self-reflection and support them in understanding their progress and where to go next with their learning.

We will continue to provide experiential learning activities and incorporate outdoor land-based learning as frequently as possible. We commit to learning more about the place we are on. We are hoping for the opportunity to invite Elders and other members of the community to share their knowledge with us.

Annual School Based Indigenous Education Professional Development Plan

BC Tripartite Education Agreement outlines a requirement for schools to host one non-instructional day per school year focused on Indigenous Education. Section 4.17 states: 'Commencing in the 2019/2020 school year, and for the duration of this Agreement, British Columbia will ensure not less than one non-instructional day per school year is focused on enhancing First National student learning outcomes.'

There will be dedicated time at each monthly staff meeting to review this Plan and share stories of the learning that has been occurring. The June Professional Development Day will have an Indigenous focus. There is considerable interest in a drum making workshop.