

Equity in Action Agreement For Truth & Reconciliation 2020-2025

Equity empowers each learner to thrive holistically

Second Annual Report 2021-2022



kihew iskweisis / Amelia
Kindergarten student

"One of my 'Shining Moments' is when I proudly share my *nehiyaw* (Cree name) with my Classmates.

kihew iskweisis
(eagle girl)

I received my name at a ceremony from **kihtehayah kihew**, Elder Bob Cardinal, from Enoch Cree Nation.

When we are talking about words that start with the letter "Ee", I like to remind everyone that I have two names, one that starts with an E."



**Central Okanagan
Public Schools**
Indigenous Education



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action Agreement 2020-2025

Central Okanagan Public Schools and the District's Indigenous Education Council acknowledge and honour the traditional territory and history of the Okanagan (syilx) People and Westbank First Nation as our host band. We also acknowledge the traditional teachings of all our Elders and the wisdom of their Indigenous culture.

EQUITY IN ACTION AGREEMENT IS BETWEEN

Central Okanagan Public Schools

AND

Westbank First Nation, the Okanagan Indian Band, Okanagan Nation Alliance, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, Lake Country Native Association, Kelowna Métis Association, Indigenous Parent and Family Education Council

AND

The Ministry of Education in the Province of British Columbia



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This report has been prepared by Terry Beaudry, April Strickland, Jasmine Lemon, and Evelin Mueller.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation

Our Second Year (2021 - 2022)

Way' [Hello] everyone,

The District's 2021-2022 theme of *Musls, Hope, Espoir* inspired us to stay positive, hopeful, and committed to "equity in action" as we continued to navigate the unpredictable nature of the pandemic. Even through the myriad of challenges confronting learners, staff, and community members this year, the commitment to equity remained a priority.

This report reflects our shared responsibility and progress towards equitable opportunities for our District's 3,062 Indigenous (First Nation, Metis, and Inuit) K-12 learners. What is new to the report, this year, is an added section, highlighting equity in action initiatives from individual schools. The schools invited to share their school stories presented their School Community Learning Plans and equity in action initiatives to Board of Education members and senior staff during the 2021-2022 school year. As written in the February 20, 2020 Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation Agreement, "Each school's journey towards equity will be embedded within their School Community Learning Plan, updated regularly, and shared with parents".

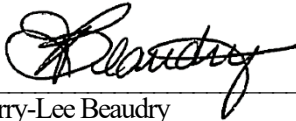
May the stories, photos, and links, embedded within this report, continue to inspire reconcili-ACTION within our school communities and the greater community.

Moving forward, together, our District will continue *creating caring communities* focused on equitable and inclusive learning environments.

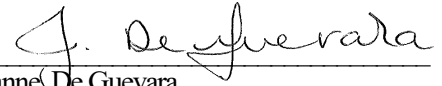
Li'm lə'mt [Thank-you],



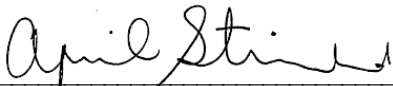
Kevin Kaardal
Superintendent of Schools/CEO



Terry-Lee Beaudry
Deputy Superintendent of Schools



Joanne De Guevara
District Principal of Indigenous Education



April Strickland
District Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education



Jasmine Lemon
Acting District Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education



The District's HOPE paddle had a profound ripple effect, inspiring school communities to create a school community paddle with words of HOPE from students, staff, and community members.

Please Note: Each school and workplace, in Central Okanagan Public Schools, is on a journey towards equity. This report reflects only some of the work being done in each of the goal areas.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

How Are Our Indigenous Learners Doing?

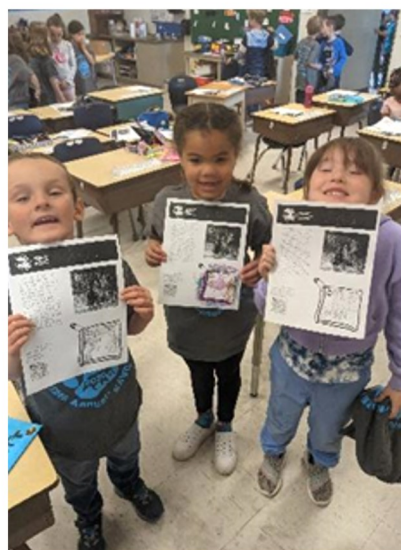
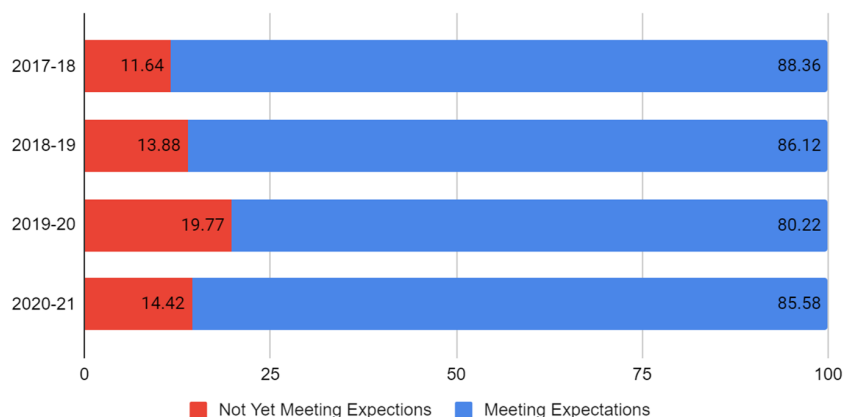
Within Central Okanagan Public Schools, more students, each year, identify as having Indigenous ancestry. The Ministry of Education's How Are We Doing? report reflects a District growth rate of over 800 Indigenous students in the past ten years.

In the 2010/11 school year, 2,208 students claimed Indigenous ancestry. During the 2021-2022 school year, 2,945 students (K-12) identified as Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit), representing 61 Bands and territories. This represents over 13% of the District's student population.

The following charts reflect the reading performance of grade three Indigenous and non-Indigenous early learners.

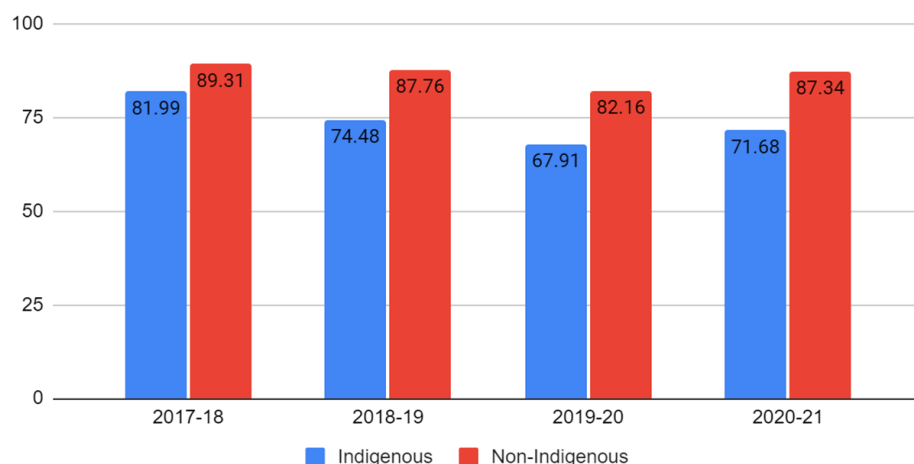
Reading Performance

PM Benchmark Results - Grade 3



Reading Performance

Grade 3 - PM Benchmarks - Students Meeting Expectations



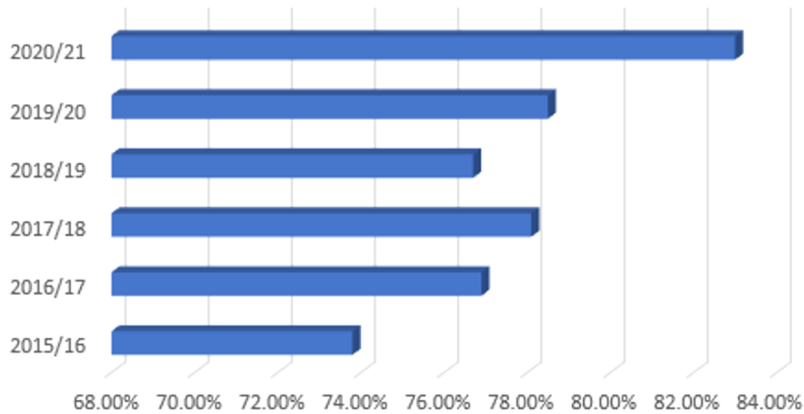
To address disparity of literacy results, the Collaborative Learning Services Team (Early Learning, Instructional Leadership, Indigenous Education, Inclusive Education) are focusing efforts to provide additional classroom support in schools with the highest priority early learners. The 2022 Literacy Summer Camps, offered at four regional sites, provided targeted interventions for striving readers.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

How Are Our Indigenous Learners Doing?

SIX-YEAR COMPLETION RATE: 2015/16 - 2020/21

District Six-Year Graduation Completion Rate

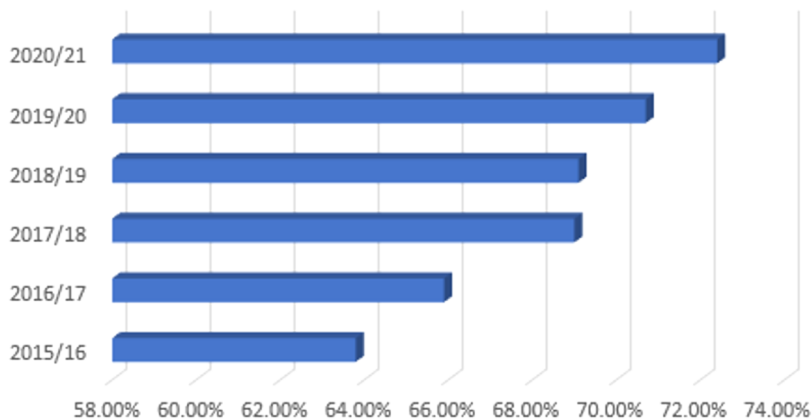


The six-year completion rate is the percent of grade 8 students who graduate, with a B.C. Certificate of Graduation ("Dogwood") or a B.C. Adult Graduation Diploma ("Adult Dogwood"), within six years from the first time they enroll in grade 8, adjusted for migration in and out of B.C. It is not the inverse of a "dropout rate" as students may graduate after the six-year period.



Rutland Secondary School

Provincial Six-Year Graduation Completion Rate



Mount Boucherie Secondary School
Graduate Tanner Donaldson with parents

Central Okanagan Public Schools

How Are Our Indigenous Learners Doing?

In celebration of this year's **199** Indigenous student graduates, individual blanket ceremonies were held at all secondary schools and at Central Programs and Services during the latter part of June.

*In 2021, the six year completion rate was over 80%.
100% of all Indigenous students living on reserve met all graduation requirements.*



Mount Boucherie Secondary School
Atoria Lalonde, Graduate



Rutland Secondary School
Rayanne Wycotte, Graduate

“Being wrapped in a blanket is one of the highest honors one can receive in the Indigenous community and is a custom that is shared by many nations across Turtle Island. This recognition is a reminder of one’s responsibility within their community and throughout life’s journey.”

Jordan Coble, Westbank First Nation



[View video messages](#) from Elder Bonnie Coble, Board of Education Chair Moyra Baxter, Superintendent Kevin Kaardal, and the Chair of the Indigenous Education Council Jordan Coble.

Please refer to the Ministry of Education & Child Care's
["How Are We Doing?" Report for all Indigenous student achievement results.](#)



Central Okanagan Public Schools

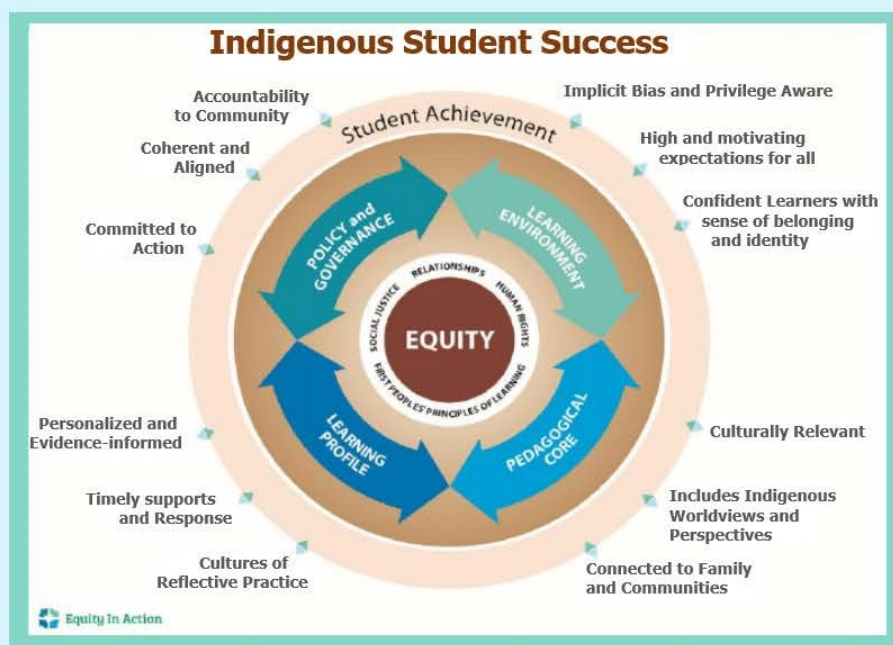
Equity in Action - District Responsibilities 2020 - 2025

Policy and Governance

- Maintain a District Multi-year Equity Committee
- Request the Board of Education review policies to support equity
- Request the Superintendent to review administrative procedures to support equity
- Provide annual reports on the goals of the Equity in Action Agreement

Learning Environment (School Culture)

- Implement and expand Elders in Residence programs, ensuring access to Elder wisdom
- Reflect a strong culturally-appropriate Indigenous presence in each school
- Ensure quality, culturally relevant space or Gathering Rooms in every school



Learning Profiles

- Continue to develop a holistic definition of success for each learner, with a focus on personalizing the learning journey
- Develop a timely response plan for 5th & 6th year, Grade 12 and year after Grade 12
- Collaborate to implement culturally responsive interventions and alternatives to suspension

Pedagogical Core

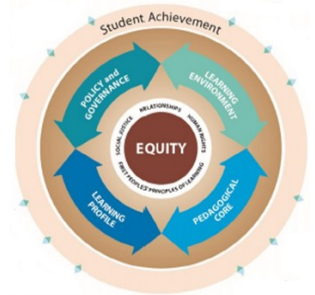
- Embed Truth & Reconciliation in teaching and learning K-12
- Ensure Indigenous worldviews are incorporated into classrooms and embedded into school culture
- Create understanding with ALL students through authentic Indigenous presence
- Continue to foster partnerships between Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and non Indigenous educators through reciprocal learning opportunities
- Continue to foster community relationships through ongoing collaboration
- Incorporate culturally relevant land-based learning for all students

EACH SCHOOL'S JOURNEY TOWARDS EQUITY WILL BE EMBEDDED WITHIN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEARNING PLAN, UPDATED REGULARLY AND SHARED WITH PARENTS.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - Policy and Governance

The District's Strategic Plan continues to direct policy and governance towards **equitable practices for Indigenous learners**. The District's focus on equity is clearly reflected in the District's graphic image of the Strategic Plan and is clearly articulated in the Central Okanagan Public Schools Strategic Plan (2021-2026) document. This document describes the District's commitment to achieving equity through fostering an inclusive learning culture, the intentional design of learning and collaborative professionalism.



Central Okanagan Public Schools District Strategic Plan



An additional highlight during the 2021-2022 school year, was the signing of the eighth Local Education Agreement (LEA) with Westbank First Nation on June 27, 2022. Senior staff, Indigenous Education Administration and members of Westbank First Nation met, on a regular basis, for eight months, to co-write the 2022-2027 LEA.



Central Okanagan Public Schools Board Chair, Moyra Baxter, and WFN Councillor, Jordan Coble, sign the 8th Local Education Agreement.



Westbank First Nation Council members and education staff, and Central Okanagan Public Schools Trustees and senior staff celebrate the signing together.

One exciting new initiative within the Local Education Agreement, to be implemented in the fall of 2022, is the creation of a Community Table, providing opportunities for Westbank First Nation education staff and Central Okanagan Public Schools staff to collaborate on how best to support WFN students and families.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - Learning Environment

It is through intentionality that Central Okanagan Public Schools demonstrates the importance of acknowledging the territory on which we learn, live and play each day. Acknowledgement of territory is included in all District meetings, assemblies and events to honour the First Peoples who have been on these lands since time immemorial.

sqilx'icant
PENSEUR

Chef Skemxist - Ours Noir
La perspective de la Réflexion Sage

AINÉ
TRADITIONS • PROTOCOLES • CULTURE • CONTEMPLATION

L'apprentissage reconnaît les rôles et les responsabilités générationnels.

L'apprentissage est enchâssé dans la mémoire, le passé et les récits.

L'apprentissage reconnaît que certaines connaissances sont sacrées et ne sont partagées qu'avec la permission de qui de droit et dans certaines situations.

Penseur: Une personne qui analyse, fait des liens et des inférences, pose des questions et peut transférer ses connaissances.

k'w'ulimt p'cy'cap'
nous sommes si heureux que vous soyez arrivés

Nous reconnaissons que nous apprenons ensemble sur le Territoire traditionnel, non cédé, du peuple Syilx de l'Okanagan

As a natural evolution of the representation of nsyilxcən in our schools, including entrances, offices, classrooms, hallways and multi-use spaces, we have worked with the French Language Learning department to create signage in French, which is proudly displayed in all dual-track schools.

Revitalization and presence of Indigenous Language and culture is evident throughout many Central Okanagan Public Schools. The School District continues to work closely with the host nation, Westbank First Nation, to ensure the implementation of Indigenous language and culture is done in an appropriate and respectful manner. Nsyilxcən is seen in school offices and throughout school sites incorporating place and room names. Many schools have had the opportunity to have nsyilxcən language speakers visit classrooms and implement language learning.

“This mural was painted by local Indigenous artist Sheldon Louis. This was the final touch on a project that Central students, staff and the Indigenous Education Department have been working on over the last two years. Its bright colours and beauty represent the land, water and air of the unceded Okanagan Territory. The salmon, which is one of the Four Food Chiefs, represents our learners, as they are resilient, persevering and never giving up. The raven, which is represented in the mural, as well as the head of our canoe, is about to fly away and embark on the next step of its journey. The orange eggs on the river floor represent a new beginning. Lastly, the song being sung by this Indigenous Elder represents the power of oral story and our connection to nature.”

Nathen Elliott, Principal
Central School Programs & Services



“Raising the Canoe”
Central School Programs & Services School Gym

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - Learning Environment

Reflecting a strong culturally appropriate Indigenous presence in each school is important for building a sense of belonging and identity for Indigenous students and families. School entrances, classrooms and common areas celebrate Indigenous peoples across Canada with the strong presence of local, Okanagan syilx peoples' artifacts and teachings.

Years ago, a graduating class of École Kelowna Secondary School envisioned the future creation of an outdoor classroom. The Indigenous Inquiry staff team (circa 2016) scanned students. As a result of this scan, the Indigenous Academy for students was formed in 2019. During a second scan, students expressed interest in an outdoor learning space that honours the Traditional unceded Territory of the Okanagan syilx people. Students involved have worked on designs to create a space that reflects values of respecting the land, learning outside, storytelling, and many cross-curricular initiatives. The space is also meant to be inclusive, accessible, welcoming, versatile, and safe.



Indigenous Inquiry Outdoor Classroom Planning Team

Pictured (left to right): Maria Dargatz, Amelie Guignard, Pooja Lal, Abdalla Tall, Camille Arellano, Talis Scott, Noah Kaiser, Ms. Marton, Mr. Bennett

Not pictured: Autumn Lee, Kiera Ray, Gavin Deming, Ms. Hughes, Ms. Margetts, Ms. Culham, Ms. Manca, Mr. Kramer, Mr. Kelly



The purpose of the project is to bridge all students with the land, honour local Indigenous teachings, create a welcoming outdoor gathering space, and partner with people interested in being a part of Reconciliation, as per the Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation Agreement. This will be a space that emphasizes the use and celebration of Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

[KSS Indigenous Inquiry Outdoor Classroom Proposal Project](#)

North Glenmore Elementary School Head Secretary, Mrs. Lora Hunter, included nsyilxcən in the greeting at the front office of North Glenmore Elementary.



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - Learning Environment

Indigenous students experience increased success through a strong sense of belonging and connection to school. Schools throughout the District provide **Gathering Spaces** for Indigenous students to access support for academic and social/emotional needs. Indigenous culture is present and reflected both visibly throughout the gathering spaces and through the teachings of the Indigenous Education Department. The Indigenous Student Advocates and secondary teacher tutors provide welcoming, supportive spaces where both students and families can experience a strong sense of place and identity.



Gathering Room signs are in each school, shown in both nsyilxcən and English.



Constable Neil Bruce Middle School

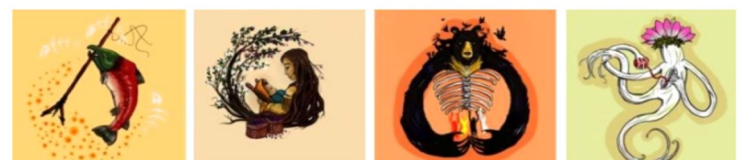


Rutland Secondary School



As schools responded to the changing parameters of health restrictions due to the pandemic, creativity was required as some learning environments became digital. In many schools, the traditional all-student "welcome back" assembly was re-imagined virtually. In the digital learning environment, Central Okanagan Public Schools continued to recognize the importance of place, creating a sense of belonging and supporting students in developing and strengthening connections to their schools. One example of a reimagined digital environment comes from Okanagan Mission Secondary School, which used the teachings and framework of the Four Food Chiefs to set the intentions for the 20/21 school year.

[View the video presentation](#)



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - Learning Profiles

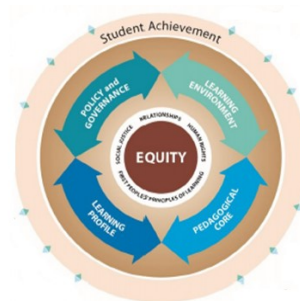
We Believe:

Learner success is achieved through personalized learning, timely supports and culturally relevant interventions.

What We Are Doing:

In the 2020-2021 school year, the Administrative Procedure – Student's Adjusted School Schedule Plan was edited to include:

- For students with a Ministry Designation, the appropriate District Consultant must be a member of the team assessing and planning for the adjusted schedule, and must liaise with the District Principal of Indigenous Education for Indigenous students being considered for an adjusted school schedule.
- The District continues to develop a definition of success which focuses on the personalized learning journey for Indigenous students. We understand the importance and power of culture and connection and relationship to the land as our teacher. Many opportunities and programs were put in place to respond to Indigenous Learners' interests and learning styles, including multiple ways of assessing learning.



Jordan's Principle

Jordan's Principle is named in honour of Jordan River Anderson, a young First Nations child from Norway House Cree Nation in northern Manitoba, who spent his entire life in hospital while caught in a jurisdictional dispute between the governments of Canada and Manitoba. The ongoing dispute prevented Jordan from returning to his home community to receive in-home care. Through advocacy efforts, Jordan's Principle has now become a legal requirement, resulting from the Orders of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.



Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle with a primary purpose to eliminate inequities and delays for Indigenous children. The principle states that any public service ordinarily available to all other children must be made available to Indigenous children without delay or denial.

Central Okanagan Public Schools is collaborating with Westbank First Nation to develop a coordinated response to the application process.

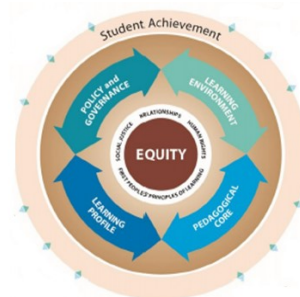
A number of Central Okanagan Public Schools have applied for support through Jordan's Principle, and received funding to assist in assessment support, health care, and school-related resources.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - Pedagogical Core

We Believe:

- Reimagining teaching and learning with a shared responsibility for inspiring social justice, equity and understanding truths reflects our commitment to reconciliation.
- Integration of Indigenous world views and perspectives and First People's Principles of Learning are at the core of instruction, assessment and learning.
- Incorporation of local culturally relevant curriculum builds understanding with ALL children through an authentic Indigenous presence.



What We Are Doing:

Throughout the year, schools deeply engaged in learning that honoured and celebrated Indigenous Peoples. Schoolwide initiatives and classroom learning included Orange Shirt Day, teachings on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (Red Dress Project), Moosehide Campaign, National Indigenous Peoples Awareness Day, Indigenous role models, and ongoing acknowledgements of the contributions of Indigenous Peoples.



Truth and Reconciliation Week at Davidson Road

Each day had a theme to explore: Understanding, Truth, Reconciliation, Family, Land, and Hope. Every morning we started with the Land Acknowledgement and Okanagan song. Over the week, students wrote their 'hopes' on ribbons, which were added to class 'Hope Musls' paddles during our outdoor assembly.

Central Okanagan Public Schools upholds the BC Standards for BC Educators and Standard 9 to foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, and the histories and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Professional Development opportunities, workshops, ongoing collaboration and modelling Indigenous pedagogical practises, created environments of learning for educators to feel confident in decolonizing, integrating and implementing Indigenous perspectives, ways of knowing and curriculum content. A strong focus has been on local teachings. Along with the ongoing work in Indigenous Education throughout the schools, the District dedicated the October Implementation Day entirely to focusing on Indigenous Education. A centralized Indigenous Resource portal was created so educators have access to authentic Indigenous resources and pedagogies.

You can access this portal using this link [here](#).



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - Pedagogical Core

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30, 2021 marked Canada's first official recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Included here is a letter from Central Okanagan Public Schools Board of Education, chaired by Trustee Moyra Baxter.



Together We Learn

NEWS RELEASE

BOARD STATEMENT ON TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 28, 2021

Kelowna, BC – Central Okanagan Public Schools will mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation this week. Throughout the week, schools will engage in various activities and deep learning about Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Flags at District schools and workplaces will fly at half mast on September 30th.

Public education has a vital role and responsibility in reconciliation, as outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

As school system leaders, our Board of Education acknowledges that the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is an occasion to establish our commitment to the Calls to Action and lead the learning that must take place throughout the school year. We need to both learn and teach the truth if we are to collectively act on inequities in the education system.

Truth and Reconciliation is a guiding principle of the Board of Education's Strategic Plan. We know that to build equitable outcomes for Indigenous students and develop engaged global citizens across our district, we must learn together. We need to listen to survivors of the residential school system and their descendants, we need to learn Elders and Knowledge Keepers into our classrooms, and we need to fortify our curricula with Indigenous ways of knowing.

We apply the lens of Truth and Reconciliation to critically evaluate policy and practices in our system. We will work alongside Indigenous leaders, communities, and families in our district with cultural humility. We are grateful to those who have led our work thus far, and we commit to continuing this journey for the sake of all the children entrusted to our care.

"Education is what got us here, and education is what will get us out."

-Hon. Murray Sinclair

For comments, please contact:

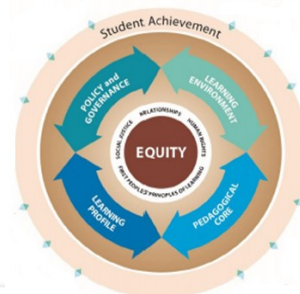
Moyra Baxter, Chairperson of the Board of Education, 250-767-4153

Please click the image to the left to read the letter in its entirety.

October Implementation Day

As part of supporting school teams in preparation for October's Implementation Day, the Indigenous Education Department and the Instructional Leadership Team created a bundle of resources and stories organized to help guide learning for the day. These resources were intended to be drawn upon individually or together to deepen the collective learning journey, both on Implementation Day and throughout the school year.

Please click the image to the right to access the resource bundle.



Central Okanagan Public Schools IMPLEMENTATION DAY 2021

Learning Through Story



KEVIN LAMOUROUX

Kevin Lamoureux is the Associate Vice President of Indigenous Affairs at the University of Winnipeg. He is committed to truth and reconciliation and contributing to an ever-better Canada for all children to grow up in. We are grateful to Kevin for sharing with us.



ANONA FAWN KAMPE

Anona is a member of the Potlatch Indian Band in the Okanagan Nation. She is a knowledge keeper and always happy to share Okanagan culture with those willing to learn. We are grateful to Anona for sharing the story of the First Food Cloud with us.



Terry Brandy, Deputy Superintendent of Schools

SCHEDULE
Please join us on Friday, October 8, 2021, at 8:30 A.M. for the opening at 8:30 A.M. A development of the Treaty/Opening Remarks - Kevin Kampe, Superintendent of Schools/CDO
Introduction of Elders/Talk Contributions - Terry Brandy, Deputy Superintendent of Schools
Introduction of Kevin Lamoureux - Trevor T. Gorman, Principal of Indigenous Education
Closing Comments - Kevin Kampe, Superintendent of Schools/CDO

Please join us on Friday, October 8, 2021, by 12:00 P.M. for the session with Anona Kampe at 1:00 P.M. A development of the Treaty/Opening Remarks - April Strickland, Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education
Closing Comments - Superintendent Learning Team

WE WILL SHARE RECORDINGS OF THE PRESENTATIONS LATER IN THE DAY.



Okanagan Mission Secondary School staff gather in circle with the Land-Based Learning team on Friday, October 8, Implementation Day 2021.

Harmony Day

Wednesday, February 16 saw the celebration of the District's 15th annual Harmony Day, which is a day that recognizes and encourages respect for all members of the community. The theme for this year was HOPE, knowing that each school community is on a path towards a journey of reconciliation. The [Harmony Day newsletter](#) states, "The canoe symbolizes our journey and the paddles represent that we move forward as a community together. Using the word HOPE, we would like to share the acronym of HARMONY, OPTIMISM, PERSEVERANCE, and EMPATHY. How has your journey been impacted by these words?"



Original HOPE themed artwork by Nevela Radar, grade 12 student, Kelowna Secondary School

My design was inspired by the idea that hope and harmony create one another. I chose to make the lines and colours simple to allow the message and symbolism to be seen clearly and to encourage them to speak for themselves. I invite people to explore what hope means to them, and how they can use it to inspire harmony. We all must paddle together!



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - Pedagogical Core



The image to the left shows the Conversation Hearts for #WeLoveLanguage made by Mount Boucherie Secondary School's Indigenous Leadership Class to decorate the hallway for Valentine's Day.

This project was based on Okanagan Nation Alliance's #WeLoveLanguage Campaign which focuses on inclusive language and consent for Valentine's Day and for Anti-Bullying Month.

In partnership with MBSS, the West Kelowna RCMP Indigenous Policing Unit held an RCMP Recruiting Youth COP CAMP at MBSS, May 27 to May 30, 2022, for Indigenous students in grades 10 to 12. The goal was to help build better community relationships between the RCMP and Indigenous communities while boosting the recruitment of Indigenous people into the RCMP. Student participants had the opportunity to experience a wide variety of activities related to policing and obtained an inside look into the life of RCMP recruit cadet training. Their activities included:

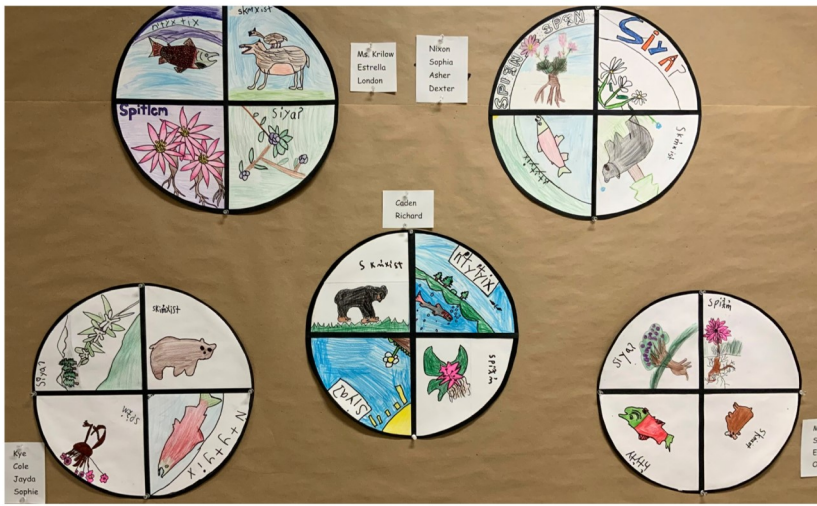
- Basic Firearms Safety
- Forensic Identification Unit
- K9 Police Dog Service
- Numerous RCMP Transport Units
- Physical Activity Drills
- Report Writing/ Notebooks
- Self-Defense
- Tactical Team
- Traffic Unit
- Water Safety and Canoe



This was a very successful partnership, and we are grateful to the RCMP members and school district staff, including Indigenous Advocates, who supported students in having this opportunity.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - Pedagogical Core



Jim Elwood, Art Teacher at MBSS, has been collaborating with Westbank First Nation on Indigenous Art Lessons, K-12.

"I spent the morning at Peachland Elementary School. Wendy Briggs, Principal, had invited me out to see how they have been using the K-9 Indigenous Art lessons. Amazing! I was thrilled to see the work that their Art Prep teacher, Rebecca Pepin, has done with her students; such genuine care and gratitude.

The artwork produced is great but it is just a vehicle for sharing and learning about Indigenous culture. It is the stories that I hear from the teachers about the impact it has had. Rebecca shared that when she was

introducing the broader Indigenous groups in Canada, a Grade Two girl proudly shared that her family is Métis. Providing opportunities for young students to see themselves reflected in our educational settings is so important. I was very proud of the lessons and it gave me a good refuel to keeping working!"

Jim Elwood, Art Teacher, MBSS

You can access the link to Indigenous Art Lessons (K-12) [here](#).



Partnering with the West Kelowna RCMP, Indigenous Leadership students from Constable Neil Bruce Middle School began preparations for the 2022 National Truth and Reconciliation Day in September during the 2021-2022 school year. Through weaving together teachings and skill development from early in the school year, to being on the water in June, these students have shown themselves to be role models.

[Media release from the West Kelowna RCMP](#)



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - Pedagogical Core

Witness Blanket Exhibition

The Witness Blanket Exhibition is a large-scale installation by artist and master carver **Carey Newman**, inspired by a woven blanket. This exhibition stands as a national monument to recognize the atrocities of the Indian residential school era, honour the children, and symbolize on-going reconciliation. The original piece is made from hundreds of items reclaimed from Indian residential school survivors and their families, band offices, churches, government, friendship centres, and other cultural organizations, which were borrowed from 77 separate sites across Canada. Each item tells a story of loss, strength, resilience, and pride.

Bringing the Witness Blanket Exhibition to the Okanagan territory has been a multi-year journey, involving Westbank First Nation, Okanagan Indian Band, Okanagan Nation Alliance, sncewips Heritage Museum, Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna Museums, Central Okanagan Public Schools, and UBC Okanagan's School of Education.

The exhibition, described as profoundly impactful with "huge, ongoing reconciliation potential", sparked huge interest from local Elders, Knowledge Holders, and community members. Collaborating with Nataley Nagy, Executive Director of the Kelowna Art Gallery, a proposal was written to bring the exhibition to Kelowna. In 2014, the partners of this project received confirmation that the Kelowna Art Gallery would host the exhibition in 2019. Then, the travelling Exhibition was cancelled. Due to artifacts being stolen or mishandled, the Exhibition was sent to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg for restoration. Unfortunately, the decision was made to permanently cancel the Exhibition's tour.



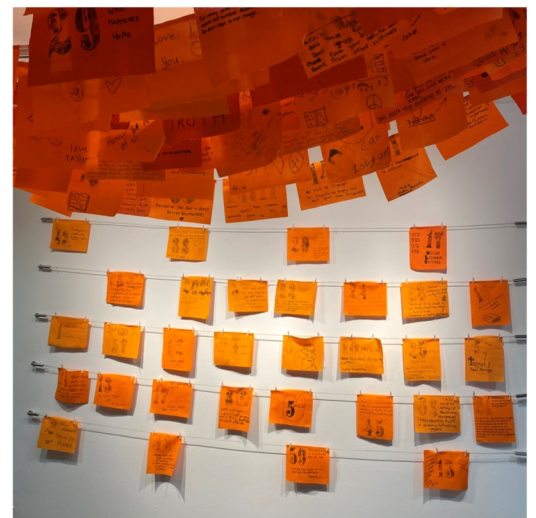
This number includes adults, students (K-12), seniors, and residential school survivors. The impact of this community partnership was profound, shifting teaching and learning, broadening perspectives, and inspiring a plethora of reconcili-ACTION initiatives in our schools, homes, and greater community.

View an interactive online version [here](#).



After waiting so long for the Exhibition to make its way to our community, it was cancelled. You can imagine our surprise when we received word that a replica Exhibition was being constructed and that our community would be one of the first to receive it in 2022.

Ten years later the Witness Blanket Exhibition was confirmed to come to the Okanagan! In preparation, a Syilx Settler Pedagogy Circle was created to prepare teachings and learning resources associated with the Exhibition. From January 15, 2022 to April 17, 2022, **9,767** visitors came to view the exhibition.



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - Pedagogical Core

Year One: UBC Partnership to Support Equity in Action Social Sciences and Humanities Research (SSHRC) Project

"Co-Curricular Making: Honouring Indigenous Connections to Land, Culture and the Relational Self"

During the 2021-2022 school year, over 100 participants (Elders, local syilx Knowledge Keepers, educators, UBC faculty, and community partners) journeyed together through four land-based experiences and had the opportunity to meet for three online reflections. Exchanging insights and understandings, participants engaged in reorienting learning with, from, and alongside each other honouring local syilx connections to *tmix*[™] (all living things). Collectively, there is a pursuit of the needed curricular spaces and opportunities to: articulate reciprocal curricular pathways; enhance understandings of local syilx knowledge; and mobilize local land-based Indigenous ways of knowing and being. As the research project moves forward, community partners are incredibly grateful for educators' invaluable insights and contributions.



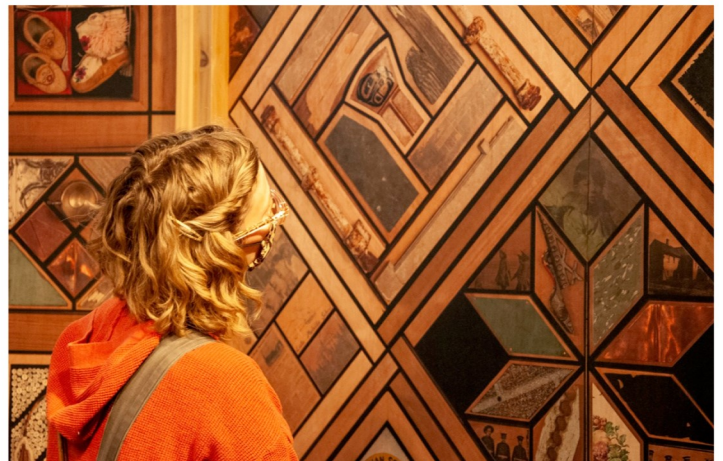
Over 100 pages of feedback were received from Year One research participants, including the following:

"I am walking differently through the world relating to water on a daily basis. I am treating water as a sacred life force, mentor, teacher, sibling, wise Elder and future ancestor. I am doing internal and external work to walk (or perhaps swim) in a more respectful, reciprocal and responsible way with my close relations and new relations."

"My biggest takeaway, for me is the patience and generosity of our syilx partners who are being pulled in so many directions and who are graciously taking the time with others to allow us to move forward in a better way."

"Any circle you become a part of is not by chance."

"I deeply appreciate the time, energy and efforts put into this project. Everyone involved has demonstrated and continues to show a deep commitment to the spirit of reconciliation, decolonization and moving forward together with hope and in a good way. The Elders and Knowledge Keepers involved, and present, offered their honesty and their intergenerational knowledge to us. That is no small thing. I recognize the depth and importance of each of the offerings to us as leaders."



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - School Community Learning Plans

Focus on Equity

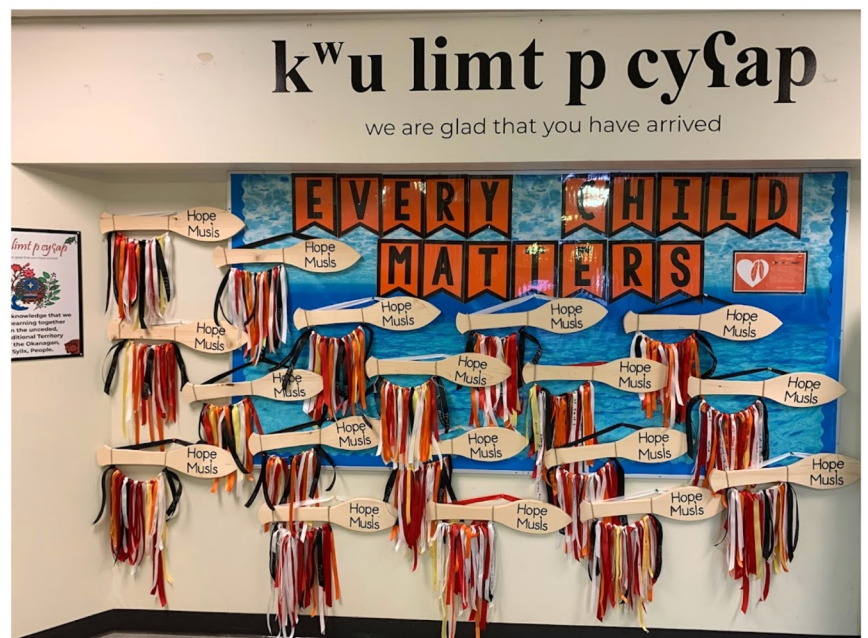
Davidson Road Elementary



At Davidson Road Elementary School, we have worked to improve our learning environment to reflect a stronger, culturally appropriate Indigenous presence and our pedagogy has continued to work towards ensuring that Indigenous worldviews are incorporated into the school culture and classrooms.

For Truth and Reconciliation week (Sept 27 - Oct 1), Davidson Road Elementary School educators (teachers and administrators) designed learning opportunities and resources for each day. Each day was anchored to a theme and began by acknowledging the Okanagan Syilx Territory and playing the Okanagan Song. On the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we provided families with conversation starters as well as an nsylxcən scavenger hunt to encourage families to explore the theme of Truth and Reconciliation by connecting to the land and family.

In classrooms, teachers have worked to improve the learning environment with many classes starting their day by acknowledging the Okanagan Syilx Territory and continuing to incorporate Indigenous teaching in their classrooms.



As a school, we have been trying to, and will continue to, create the conditions that empower each Indigenous learner to be cultural, confident, and courageous, believing that equity empowers all learners to thrive.



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - School Community Learning Plans Focus on Equity

École Glenmore Elementary



With the assistance of the Indigenous Student Advocate and Art Teacher, our grade five and six Indigenous students created a piece of art that will stand in the entrance to the school with our local land acknowledgement written in both English and French.

The process started with the students collaborating on a design for the front of the book that included all four Food Chiefs. The group voted, with three designs being chosen. Those three students then worked together to bring each of their styles into the final piece.



The Moosehide Campaign was embraced all around the school. Resources were shared, teachers were facilitating age appropriate conversations with their classes, while intermediate Indigenous students talked about the significance of the campaign and what it means to wear the pin. On May 12, the whole school joined in a walk around the entire school grounds in support of the campaign.



The month of June brought many different opportunities to the students in our school.

Teachers celebrated Indigenous culture through sharing the stories and contributions of prominent indigenous individuals, and through teaching traditional games and art. On Indigenous Peoples' Day the Indigenous students learned how to make bannock and shared it with all staff members.



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - School Community Learning Plans Focus on Equity

Helen Gorman Elementary



The staff of Helen Gorman Elementary School have been working to make local Indigenous culture be better recognized as a regular part of our students' educational experience.

This work to create a safe and inclusive place for our Indigenous students has taken on many forms. For example, we wanted to make local Indigenous culture more visible throughout the school through increased signage. Artifacts which honour the Four Food Chiefs and the Okanagan Language, *nsyilxcən*, are now ubiquitous throughout the school.

Teachers often take their students on tours of the school's Indigenous signage to help explain the significance of each food chief as well as *nsyilxcən*. In addition, we have a group of Indigenous leadership students who regularly go on the announcements to share some learning of the Four Food Chiefs.

With the help of our Indigenous Advocate, these student leaders also have shared some *nsyilxcən* words with our whole student population.

Finally, all our staff and students endeavor to be thoughtful and respectful as we honour the children who attended residential schools. We have learned that we all have a role to play in reconciliation in order to create a more equitable learning environment where everyone belongs.



Orange Shirt Day



Helen Gorman Leadership Students

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - School Community Learning Plans

Focus on Equity

Quigley Elementary



Anona Fawn Kampe

The Gathering Room at Quigley is filled every day at lunch with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students working harmoniously and building relationships while learning about Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

The Quigley Elementary School community has had and will have opportunities to continue its learning journey as we walk the road of truth and reconciliation

Prepared by
Des Sjoquist, Retired Principal

Quigley Elementary School students and staff have embraced Indigenous culture and worked to deepen their understanding of truth and reconciliation. During Implementation Day, all staff viewed a video by Madeline Terbasket followed by emotional and thought-provoking small group discussions. Staff were then invited to visit a local bookshop where they were given credit to purchase books written by Indigenous authors, read them and share their thoughts with each other. At subsequent faculty meetings they viewed and discussed videos produced by CBC - *Scars of Abuse* and *Okanagan Nation Alliance - A Stand for Justice*.

At their weekly school-wide student assemblies, one teacher introduced new words to students in the Okanagan language. The PAC financially supported two cultural presentations for the entire school by Anona Fawn Kampe and Dallas Arcand. Our Indigenous Advocate worked closely with the Indigenous Education Department to ensure that all classes in the school participated in cultural presentations together.



Dallas Arcand

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - School Community Learning Plans

Focus on Equity

Watson Road Elementary



We began our year celebrating the theme of mus'is (hope). This theme resonated with each of our staff who knew that we had to deepen our focus on equity, diversity and inclusion to help each and every student feel like they belong as Every Child Matters.

We are all connected to the principles of the Circle of Courage which asserts that there are four essential values that drive a healthy community. The central premise of this model is that a set of shared values and common language must be present in order to unify a community of learners.



These shared values include belonging, independence, mastery and generosity. The Circle of Courage is a unifying vision and a common language for all members of our learning community where we take pride in fostering self-esteem, a sense of self-worth and inclusiveness.

With the support of many, including Ms. Madden our Indigenous Student Advocate and Ms. Ramdyal, a Grade Two teacher, a variety of Indigenous inspired initiatives that promoted education, awareness, and traditional Okanagan culture were brought forward for all learners in our school. Truth and ReconciliACTION was intentionally woven into each learning opportunity, which allowed students and staff to continue their journey with truth and reconciliation.

One example of action at Watson Road Elementary is from this past March, when, as a school, we held a Walk for Wenjack to honour residential school survivors and victims. The walk was led by Elder Maureen and ended in the gym with a celebration of bannock from Kekuli Cafe.



The school was filled with purple shoe prints made by students and teachers. Our Indigenous students' parents and important adults in their life were invited to participate, and approximately 17 classroom divisions went on the walk in our neighbourhood honouring the memory of Chanie Wenjack.

Prepared by Janet Williams, Principal

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Year Two Progress - School Community Learning Plans

Focus on Equity

École H.S. Grenda Middle School



This year, it was clear that schools were intentionally engaging in activities to honor and celebrate Indigenous Peoples.

One example of this authentic engagement is demonstrated through the information produced at École H.S. Grenda Middle School regarding Red Dress Day (May 5) and the Moosehide Campaign (May 12).



On June 24th, École H.S. Grenda Middle School staff and students in collaboration with staff from the Indigenous Education Department, GESS and the Lake Country community, held a celebration to recognize National Indigenous Peoples' Day. Staff and student leaders worked collaboratively to plan a full morning to honor this special day. Guest presenters from the community, from GESS, and the Indigenous Education Department came alongside the HMS staff to offer 14 different sessions for our school community to participate and learn together through song, dance, food, and teachings.

The morning started off with local elder, Maureen Ziprick, welcoming everyone to the land and providing the opening prayer. Students and staff then moved to participating in two of their chosen sessions. There were a variety of Indigenous games including Double Ball, Stick Games, Lacrosse, Hoop and Dart offered ,along with traditional beading, interactive oral storytelling, smudging, making of spruce tea, teachings around the Four Food Chiefs, the Medicine Wheel, and traditional medicines, just to name a few. The morning was designed to uphold the First Peoples Principles of Learning and be a reminder of our commitment toward reconciliation.

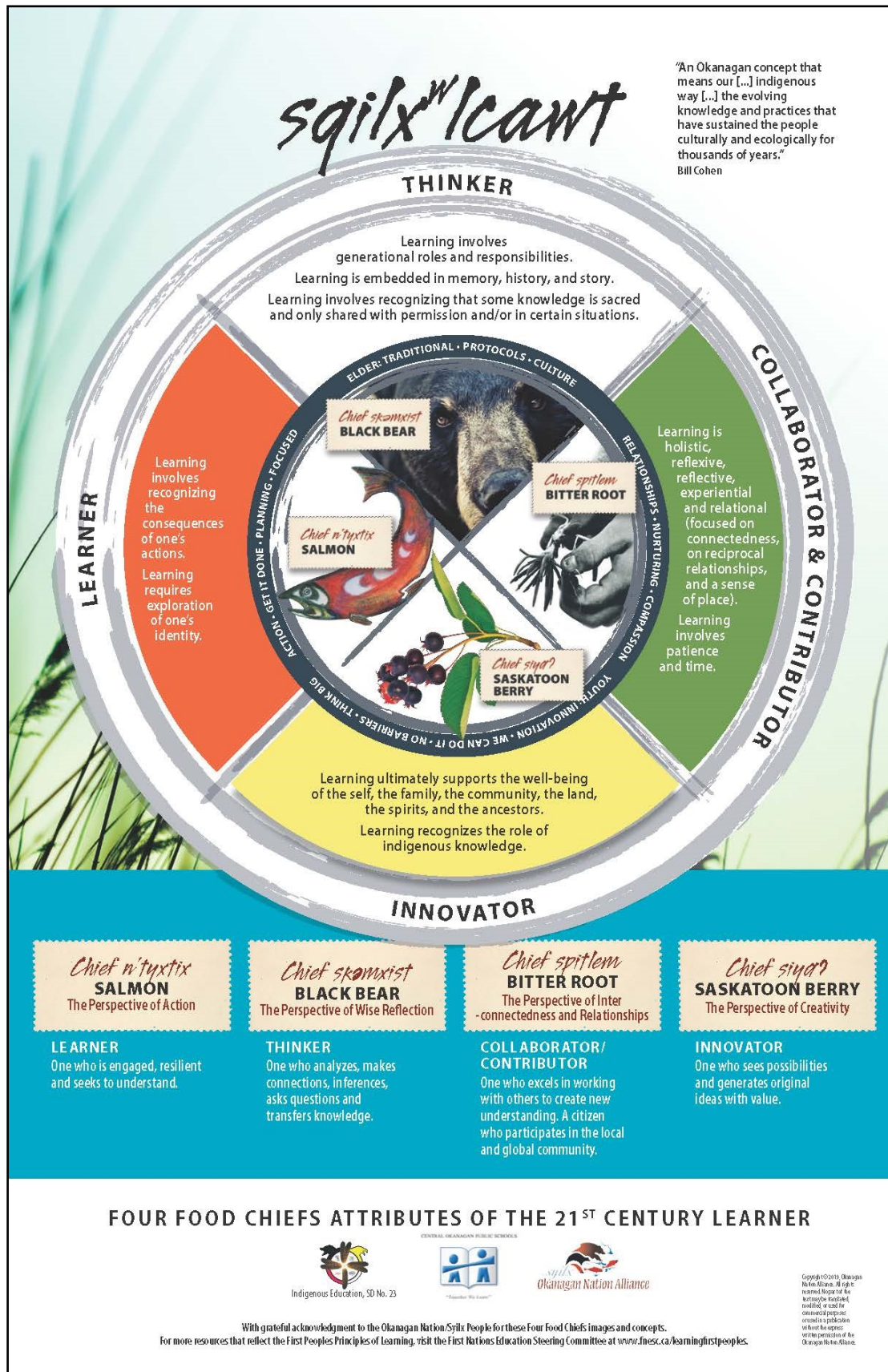
Prepared by Michelle Relova, Principal



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Our Indigenous Education

Department Responsibilities



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department Our Progress

Chief sp̓ɬtlem Bitter Root
*Relationships*Nurturing*Compassion*



Our Commitment:

We are committed to fostering reciprocal relationships for the health and well-being of each Indigenous learner, inspiring confidence and a sense of connectedness to others.

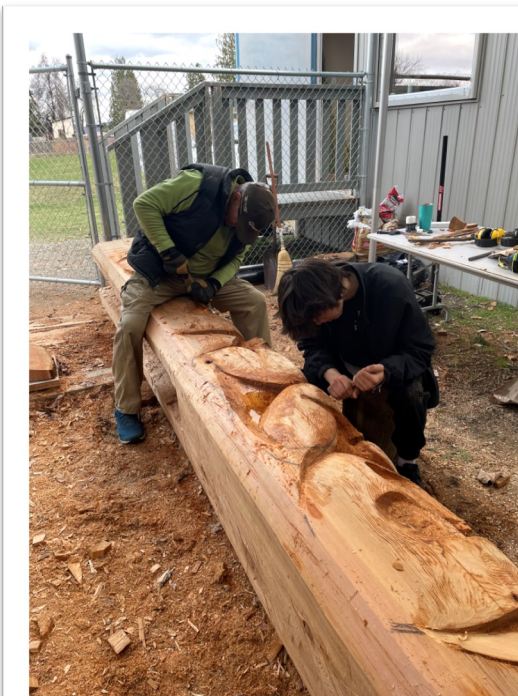
What We Are Doing:

The Indigenous Education Department's 75-member staff (Indigenous Student Advocates, Teacher Tutors, Indigenous Youth Wellness Workers, Indigenous Resource/Support teachers, Land-Based Learning Team, Cultural Coordinator and Presenters, Administration, and Clerical Team) strive to support all Indigenous students in a compassionate and nurturing manner. Strong connections and relationships foster emotional well-being. Support in and out of the school is provided through Indigenous wellness perspectives and practices.

Elders in Residence Program

Although COVID restrictions impacted the school year, the Elders in Residence Program continued through the creativity of technology.

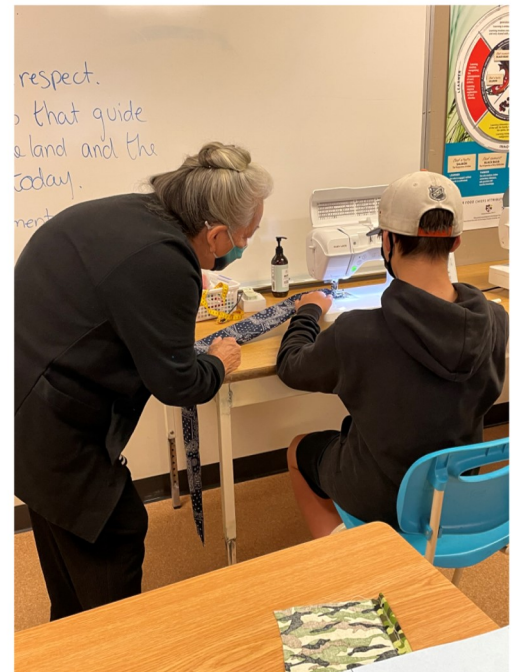
In order to ensure the health and safety of Elders, most Elder connections were made via Zoom at the beginning of the school year to late winter.



Elder Darren McKenzie
teaching a student to carve
at the Land-Based Learning Academy.

In early spring, we began to witness more involvement of Elders in certain schools and programs. Five community Elders provided regular support to Indigenous students (K-12).

This is the largest number of Elders involved in school communities in the past few years. The District is committed to continuing to expand the District's Elders in Residence Program during the 2022-23 school year.



Elder Rose Lube
teaching a student to sew
at the Land-Based Learning Academy.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department Our Progress

Youth Wellness Camps

Indigenous Wellness Workers provide services and cultural support to grades 5-12 Indigenous students (while providing support and referrals for families). The overall goal is to provide counselling-like services and cultural support for Indigenous students to garner a deeper sense of balanced wellness, providing greater connectedness to their learning, overall happiness, self-esteem, confidence, and success while attending school.

The Indigenous Education Department ran its third year of Wellness Camps for Indigenous learners during the summer of 2022.

These camps offer a variety of fun and culturally appropriate activities geared towards healthy living and well-being. Indigenous learners engaged in activities such as traditional games, wellness hikes, and the making of cultural crafts.



Listening to our students this summer, we heard:

"This feels amazing!"

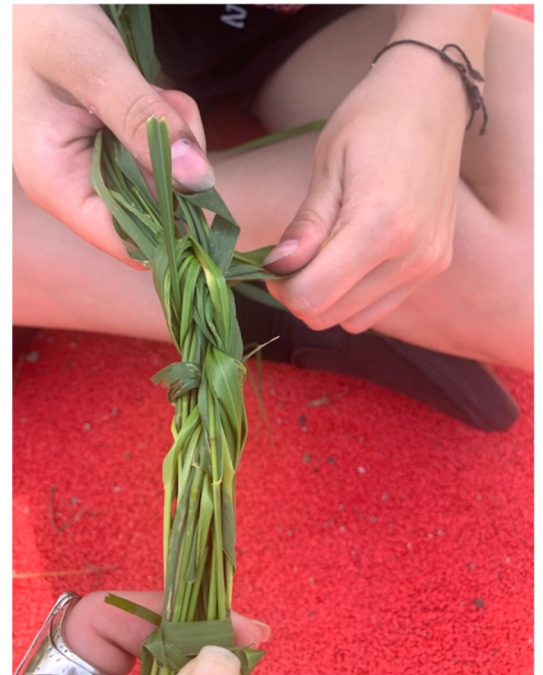
"I feel like I belong."

"Let's get our wellness on!"

"I just feel really calm."

"I got through summer because of the camps."

"I feel like I have roots now."



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department Our Progress

Academy of Indigenous Studies

Collaboration Opportunities

George Elliot Secondary, École Kelowna Secondary, Mount Boucherie Secondary, and Rutland Secondary Schools each run an Academy of Indigenous Studies. These programs include courses such as Indigenous Leadership, English First Peoples, Contemporary Indigenous Studies, BC First Peoples, nsylxcən (Okanagan Language) and Indigenous Art, taught by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, and connected to local Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers, as well as school-based Indigenous Advocates. These programs are distinct and valued by students. During the 2021/2022 school year, the Indigenous Education Department facilitated opportunities for educators to collaborate and connect, strengthening their ties to each other and to the land on which we learn together.



"We are in different contexts and no program should look like the other exactly, but cross-school collaboration lives out the value of community and connection."

- Academy of Indigenous Studies teacher



This spring, we learned on the land through sharing stories and teachings at Mission Creek, completing an ethnobotany walk led by Rutland Secondary School Indigenous Academy teacher, Stacey Mee.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department Our Progress



“‘What is sacred?’ is a question that we ask ourselves a lot as educators. Learning at Spotted Lake, we experienced the sacredness of syilx land. We are committed to learning how to respectfully acknowledge all our relationships and to listen to what the land is teaching us about living the terms of truth and reconciliation.”

*Kristi Langlois and
Kelly Hanson
Teachers, Instructional
Leadership Team*

In June, Indigenous Academy teachers and members of the Indigenous Education Department Admin, Cultural Program, Wellness Worker Program, as well as the Instructional Leadership Team, spent time at Spotted Lake and the Nk'mip Desert Cultural Centre to learn local teachings from School District 53 District Indigenous Teacher, Helen Gallagher, and Indigenous Education and syilx Elder, Herman Edwards.



Connecting to each other, and to the land, provides a rich foundation for the educators involved in the Academy of Indigenous Studies courses to authentically meet their learners' needs.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department

Our Progress

National Indigenous Peoples' Day

Schools throughout Central Okanagan Public Schools recognized National Indigenous Peoples' Day in a variety of context-specific ways. Learning opportunities and celebrations occurred in classrooms, outside and in community. Many schools had teams of educators collaborating, often with student involvement, demonstrating commitment to recognizing this important day. Below are two examples of the learning students were able experience on June 21st.



Chief Tomat Elementary came together as a school in circle. Elder Bonnie Coble joined to share some traditional teachings for National Indigenous Peoples' Day. There were teachings around Indigenous History Month and Indigenous Peoples' Day. Students shared their shawl dancing skills which they had practiced leading up to the day.



At Anne McClymont Elementary, the Library Learning Commons created a read-aloud of "Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox" through the digital platform BookCreator, which classroom teachers were able to share with their students. The voices of three of Anne McClymont Elementary's Indigenous students contributed to this project.

To listen, use the link [here](#).



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department Our Progress

Chief siya? Saskatoon Berry

*Youth*Innovation*We Can Do It*No Barriers*Think Big*



Our Commitment:

We are committed to co-creating cultural opportunities that strengthen home, school, and community connections.

What We Are Doing:

Indigenous students at all grade levels are encouraged to participate in a variety of cultural opportunities throughout the school year. In and out of the school, students participate in classroom presentations, lunch and after school programs. (District-wide events, inclusive of family participation, will be rescheduled when appropriate.) Through the 2021/2022 school year, students were able to participate in modified community events such as *siya?* hosted by WFN, and the Turtle Island Festival. The Indigenous Education Department strives to strengthen home, school and community connections through cultural teachings.

Indigenous Focused Course Graduation Requirement

With the announcement of the implementation of an Indigenous-focused graduation requirement, our department committed to working alongside secondary schools to ensure that staff and schools are well-prepared to authentically and effectively support students in engaging with these courses.

We began by facilitating a day of learning for teachers and administrators from all Central Okanagan Public School secondary schools at the WFN Health Centre, with teachings from Elders Pamela and Grouse Barnes, as well as leadership from Stacey Mee, RSS Indigenous Academy teacher.



Stacey Mee
RSS Indigenous Academy teacher

We met again later in the spring to deepen our learning through *captikwł* and teachings shared by Anona Fawn Kampe. The 2022-2023 school year will see the creation of a Learning Network, co-facilitated by the Instructional Leadership Team and the Indigenous Education Department, to further our collective learning and preparedness.



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department Our Progress

Cultural Program

During the 2021-2022 school year, the Indigenous Education Department Cultural Coordinator, Deanna Negan, provided 227 class presentations (including five whole school presentations). This reached **8,181** school district students, including **1,608** Indigenous learners.

Additionally, our Cultural Coordinator worked with the Kelowna Museum, co-presenting "Storytelling and Shnklip" 40 times throughout the 2021-2022 school year, for classes from Central Okanagan Public Schools.

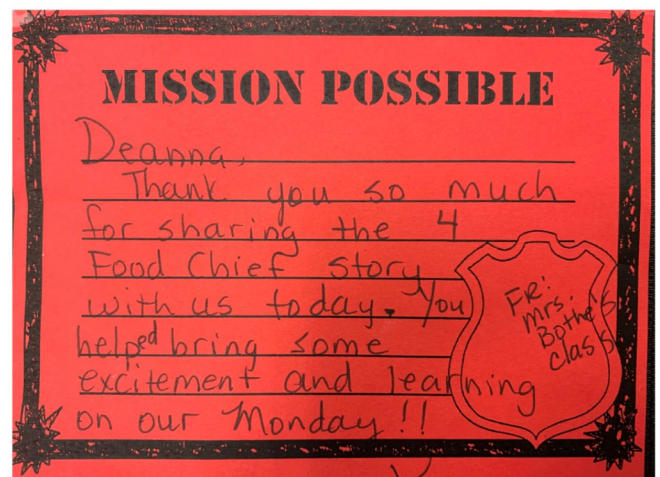
For more information about this and other programs available through Kelowna Museums, see [here](#).



Indigenous Education Department Cultural Coordinator, Deanna Negan, spent the afternoon with École George Pringle Elementary's grade one class teaching how the syilx Peoples of the Okanagan gathered and used arrowleaf balsamroot, a lovely and versatile sunflower for food and medicine.



A beading table was offered for Chute Lake Elementary's Spring Carnival. It allowed time for families to gather around together while enjoying a beading project.



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department Our Progress

Chief n'tyxtix Salmon
*Action*Get It Done*Planning*Focused*



Our Commitment:

We are committed to empowering each Indigenous learner to take action to explore and strengthen their personal identity.

What We Are Doing:

The Indigenous Education Department helps empower each Indigenous learner by providing meaningful cultural opportunities through recognizing milestones and events their lives.

Indigenous Graduation Ceremonies

The Indigenous Education Department partnered with each secondary school to offer a student-centered culturally-focused graduation ceremony. Each event was contextual to the school, with location and land being a primary focus. Each graduate and their family had the opportunity to be individually recognized and to participate in ceremony.

Each graduate was blanketed and had time with their family, friends and/or school team in a tipi to hear words of support and encouragement. Time was available afterwards for shared food in circle.

Feedback from students and families confirmed the importance of each student feeling individually recognized, as well as honoured, in a culturally connected way.



We want to acknowledge the support of the Kelowna Métis Association (KMA), which gifted each of the 89 Métis graduates with a traditional Métis sash, as well as other gifts in a graduation package they prepared for each individual student. Pictured here is Rod Aubichon from the KMA, presenting a sash to his daughter Hannah Aubichon at the Mount Boucherie Secondary School Indigenous graduation ceremony.



A valedictorian representing the Indigenous graduating class was selected at each school. You can view videos of their speeches [here](#)



GESS

KSS

OKM

MBSS

RSS

CPS



École Kelowna Secondary School Graduate, Shawna MacKay

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department Our Progress



"We had an amazing day yesterday at Deigan's Blanket Ceremony. What a perfect way to end the year and such a well organized, emotional event. All his teachers, who meant the most, were there as well as his first Indigenous Advocate! I cannot believe how fast 13 years of school fly by and I'm so very proud of the man he's turning out to be."

*Nicole Garcia
Mom of RSS graduate, Deigan Nicholls*



George Elliot Secondary School Grad Committee,
Administration and Student Advocates



Preparation of prints to be gifted to
Indigenous graduates



George Elliot Secondary School Graduates,
Olivia Mould and Cassie McConnell



Acting Vice-Principal
of Indigenous Education Jasmine Lemon,
sews her own ribbon
skirt in preparation for
the upcoming Indigenous
Graduation Ceremonies.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department Our Progress



The images here reflect the importance of each graduate's community gathering around them through this special experience.

By encouraging family, friends, and influential educators to take part in these ceremonies, graduates were supported in building powerful memories of this significant achievement.



Rutland Secondary School Honor Drum Recipient
Terrance Woodhouse



Mount Boucherie Secondary School Graduate
Amber Derickson, with family



Gifts given to graduates included a hand-painted paddle, representing the journey that each of them is on as they paddle through to their next stage of life.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department

Our Progress

Academy of Land-Based Learning



Land-Based Learning provides students with an opportunity to be on *tmx'wulax'* (the land) with teachers, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers. Indigenous students experience local Indigenous culture known as *na'pk'wulamən* (the things that we do) and are exposed to ways of knowing that have been in the area since time immemorial. This is a unique and innovative opportunity for students to gain a greater sense of how their interaction with local Indigenous culture can provide confidence in their ability to tackle new learnings and coursework.



Land-Based Learning is a culturally responsive intervention program for students who are identified by administrators, teachers, and Indigenous Student Advocates as needing wrap-around-support for social and emotional learning, academics, behaviour, engagement, sense of belonging, and identity.



The team at Land-Based Learning organized two rooms: “Auntie” and “Uncle” rooms, to be culturally appropriate as well as a safe place for Indigenous students to engage in traditional teachings such as sewing, beading, carving, treating hides, etc.



“In the short time I’ve been here with Land Academy, and the very short span of my life, 14 years, I have come to find that there are three ways of thinking in a situation: emotion, intelligence and wisdom. When you think with emotion in a certain situation, you have probably experienced that situation, and you have feelings about it. When you think with intelligence or logic in situations, you’re probably pretty cold and thinking straight to the point, and sometimes you don’t do what your heart really wants you to do. If you think with wisdom, and I have learned that my culture has a lot of wisdom, and I know Mr. Kaiser as a lot to teach me, you think with both emotion and intelligence combined. I am looking forward to being able to take on new situations or problems with wisdom instead of just emotion.”

Ashton Hystad, Grade 8 student
École Dr. Knox Middle School



Pit House at
Summerhill Pyramid Winery

“Our students are medicine. As educators we grow through their gifts and it is our responsibility to tend to these gifts and to be flexible and to listen to what they are asking for.”

Kevin Kaiser
Teacher, Land-Based Learning

You can access more information about Land-Based Learning on page 18 of the [June 2022 Together We Learn.](#)

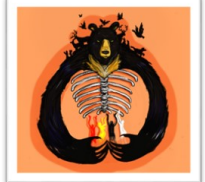


Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department Our Progress

Chief skəmxiŋ Black Bear

*Elders: Traditional*Protocols*Culture*



Our Commitment:

We are committed to fostering intellectual and cultural growth through an Indigenous mindset.

What We Are Doing:

The Indigenous Education Department provides academic support to Indigenous learners K-12, in a variety of ways:

Indigenous Student Advocates provide support in and out of classrooms, attend academic support meetings fostering home and school connections, and provide one to one academic, social and emotional assistance in Indigenous Gathering spaces at all school sites.

Secondary School Indigenous Education Teacher Tutors provide academic support to all Indigenous students grades 9-12. Secondary Indigenous students are monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure we are responsive to ongoing needs.



A Proud Moment for
École Kelowna Secondary School Graduate,
Camille Arellano

Indigenous Education Early Learning Support Teachers provide early literacy support to Indigenous learners K-6, with a strong emphasis on early literacy intervention for Indigenous learners K-3.

Academies of Indigenous Studies at secondary schools provide opportunities for Indigenous students to receive credit in courses such as English First Peoples, BC First Peoples, and Indigenous Leadership with Indigenous curricular content taught through Indigenous ways of knowing and being.



Student Advocate, Cara Koebel, with École H.S. Grenda students standing in front of the “Hope” paddle made by Cara Koebel’s father. Celebrating National Indigenous People’s Day by distributing bannock to the school community.

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Equity in Action - Indigenous Education Department

Our Progress

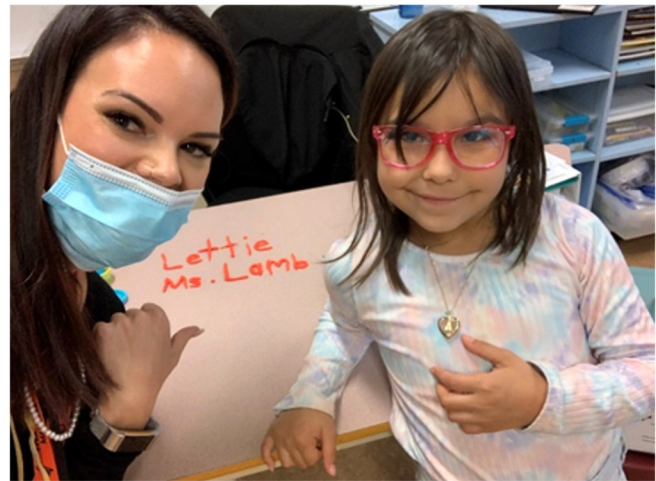
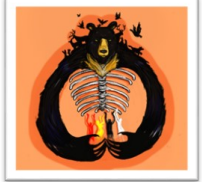
Early Learning Program



This is Jade from Chief Tomat Elementary School. She uses her experiences to connect through story. While reading about powwows, Jade said, *"My brother likes to dance in moccasins at powwow, but I like to go bare feet so I can feel the land,"* which reminds us of the importance of having cultural representation for our students.

The Indigenous Education Early Learning Program is geared towards working with priority Indigenous early learners, providing mainly one-on-one support and small group as well as group instruction in the area of early learning literacy.

Between two priority schools, upwards of 45 learners received direct literacy support.



Indigenous Education's Early Learning consultant, Ms. Reanna Lamb, along with Chief Tomat Elementary School student, Lettie, practicing their writing skills.

Early Learning Literacy Summer Camp

During the first two weeks of July, Indigenous and non-Indigenous early learners from across the school district had the opportunity to join a joyful, inclusive community at one of four school sites. During their time at these summer camps, students and families made connections with teachers and Indigenous Advocates, and received support with the development of students' literacy skills, therefore helping them build personal identities as readers and writers. A total of 41 Indigenous learners took part in summer camps this year. Setting students up with access to books and learning resources, as well as intentionally reinforcing sound literacy strategies, is an intentional way that we are putting equity into action.

"Supporting the Indigenous and non-Indigenous students this summer at Literacy Camp was extremely rewarding...having an Advocate they felt culturally safe around...allowed them to feel proud. This allowed and encouraged them to write, read and verbally share their Indigenous teachings and understandings to their peers and teachers. Some students would have a challenging time finding something to write about until they were given an idea that was Indigenous related. This also was a very natural way for the non-Indigenous students to learn and become more enthusiastic about Indigenous culture when the students would read their very own written stories to the class in a shared circle. At Literacy camp the students independently read, practiced one-to-one reading, wrote their own stories, and read in front of the whole class. I saw improvements in their reading fluency and self-esteem. I found having an Indigenous Advocate was beneficial for the whole Literacy team and allowed open conversations that would not normally happen. All Indigenous students were eager to return the next day to either show me what they had written at home or read a favorite new book. It was nothing but a positive experience assisting all the students at summer literacy camp." Naomi Ehlers, Indigenous Student Advocate



Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Seven Priorities for the 2022/2023 School Year

IF WE BELIEVE...

That equity is everyone's responsibility

**That equity fuels the art of possibility
for each Indigenous learner**

**That equity requires transformative change through
partnerships with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers
and reciprocal learning**

And, that equity is about nurturing the spirit

THEN...

**Together, we will create the conditions that empower each
Indigenous learner to be cultural, confident, and courageous.**

"We've all in Canada inherited a wreckage of broken relationships, through no fault our own. But even though we didn't create the problem, we have an opportunity to be part of the solution by helping students to reach past that prejudice, that learned otherness to really be part of something beautiful."

Kevin Lamoureux

Central Okanagan Public Schools

Our Seven Priorities for the 2022/2023 School Year

The following Seven Priorities will be a focus during Year Three of Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation:

- Continuing to support inter-cultural competency learning for staff and students;
- Prioritizing targeted interventions and community supports for Indigenous early learners;
- Broadening culturally-responsive interventions as an alternative to students on suspensions or adjusted school schedules;
- Expanding the Elder in Residence Program to increase individual connections with students and strengthen Elder care in schools;
- Preparing our educators for the implementation of the Indigenous-focused graduation requirement in 2023-2024;
- Implementing Year One of Westbank First Nation and Central Okanagan Public Schools Local Education Agreement (2022-2027);
- Implementing Year Two of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Grant Project:
[Co-Curricular Making: Honouring Indigenous Connections to Land, Culture and the Relational Self](#)



This was supported by research undertaken through a Partnership Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. For more information, please use this [link](#)



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