



2018-2019

Bowen Island Community School Aboriginal Education School Plan

School Aboriginal Education Committee

School Staff: Katie Cooke, Cindy Fairbank, Sarah Haxby, Andrea Layzell, Laura Magrath, Carmen McKay, Scott Slater

Parent/Guardian Advisors: Sarah Cormier, Meribeth Dean, Simon Daniel James, Chris Kientz, Jane Miller Ashton, Fraser Simmons

School Contact Person(s)

Scott Slater (Chair of Committee and School Principal)
Sarah Haxby (Community School Coordinator)

LEARNING FROM THE LAST TWO YEARS

2017-2018

Student Learning

In the Spring of 2018, schools in our District were gifted with an engraved canoe featuring the Squamish name for the location where the school is located. On May 17, Sahplek visited BICS for our Whale Day Celebration. During a school-wide assembly, he presented the school with our canoe and explained a brief history of Kw'ilakm – Bowen Island. Following the assembly, Sahplek led a small group of students and staff with a ceremony to hang the art work in a prominent location in our school. This was not a naming ceremony but some protocols were learned and observed.

Earlier in the year, Sahplek (Bob Baker) visited BICS to teach students The Eagle Song. Sahplek visited with each class so that they could learn the words for the Eagle Song. Ms. Fairbank, our school's music teacher, also helped students learn The Eagle Song in subsequent weeks.

The Eagle Song, while not an anthem, is a reference to being on the traditional lands of the Squamish Nation and the Eagle Song was used as such during the year, including at our Whale Day assembly as a more participatory territorial acknowledgement than having speakers recognize traditional territory.

Parent Education & Community Partnerships

For the second year, BICS continued a Diversity Group. The group read *The Colonial Problem*, by Lisa Monachlin. The book provides insights into the Government of Canada's deliberate attempts to eliminate various indigenous cultures. BICS staff and parents/guardians will continue participating in the diversity group, and through reading *The Colonial Problem* and other conversations, learn more about the history and legacy of residential schools and other laws and practices that have oppressed indigenous peoples in Canada.

2016-2017

Student Learning

BICS parent and artist, Winadzi (Simon Daniel James) of the Kwakwaka'wakw nation assisted one of our teachers with making a stronger connection to the land. Students were engaged in a year-long nature journaling exercise and Winadzi helped the teacher, who was working with six primary classes, brainstorm and incorporate storytelling into nature journals as well as use natural objects to tell a creation story. He also worked with two primary classes directly which included sharing stories that emphasized the importance of our connection to the land. He also made a headband craft with each group.

In May of 2017, BICS hosted our annual Whale Day event. Sahplek (Bob Baker) and Yeltsilewet (Faye Halls) visited BICS and shared stories that generated an understanding and appreciation for the rich culture of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) People. Our focus of the visit was for students to listen thoughtfully to elders and practice respect, listening and learn and practice basic hosting protocols. Some of the stories also shared information on the symbolism of the paddle to the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and how one earns a paddle as well as the great responsibility of the paddle: the symbol is a gift that marks an occasion and that having a paddle means you carry the responsibility of witnessing and being part of the occasion and the stories associated with the occasion. It is our responsibility to know the story, remember it and to bring it forward. Students learned a little about the protocols of going on a journey on sea and into the forest.

Professional and Community Learning

Throughout the year, seven staff members and seven parents/guardians, met periodically to discuss matters of diversity. The group, at the suggestion of several members, decided to read the book, *The Colonial Problem* (also mentioned earlier in this document). The book provides excellent learning about Canada's historically oppressive relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

A Google Doc. which summarized areas of curriculum related to Aboriginal Education was created and shared with staff. This document was commented on by Committee members who were willing and able to help out with various aspects of curriculum.

ACTION PLAN FOR 2018-2019

Professional and Community Learning

On September 21st, 2018, our professional development day at BICS focused on Indigenous Education. The day started with all education staff participating in the Blanket Exercise. Following this exercise, teachers and education assistants explored a variety of online resources from FNESC, ERAC, and DeltaLearns to better understand the many indigenous resources available. Resources related to the story *The Six Cedar Trees* were also shared and the accompanying posters which highlight the six Core Competencies (created by DeltaLearns) were given to teachers to put up in their rooms. All 15 classrooms at BICS will use common language and imagery from *The Six Cedar Trees* to teach about the Core Competencies.

A license for the film *Indian Horse* was purchased by the school for unlimited institutional viewing and lessons. The film will be screened for the community on Saturday, October 13. When promoting this event, which is being offered for free to the community, additional materials related to how families can learn about the Indian Residential School system will be shared. This information may be shared in the local newspaper also.

Student Learning

BICS picked our dates to recognize Orange Shirt Day prior to the date being determined (as September 30) and the week of October 15-19 was selected. Students will wear cutouts of orange shirts to recognize that "Every Child Matters." On the shirts will be the phrase, "I will _____, because Every Child Matters." The intention of this inscription is to demonstrate that each person has a responsibility to ensure that all people are valued; we each have a role in ensuring that every child matters.

An assembly will occur for intermediate students on Monday and we will have a school-wide assembly on Wednesday. The assemblies will feature information and videos from the Orange Shirt website and stay true to the intentions of Orange Shirt Day as described by Phylis.

BICS will host our Whale Day celebration in May. This annual event celebrates the Squamish Culture and is a wonderful opportunity for students to further develop their relationship with Sahplek (Bob Baker) and Yeltsilewet (Faye Halls).

Winadzi (Simon Daniel James) is also carving a welcome pole to be located near our outdoor learning classroom. Winadzi is from the MAMALILIKULLA – QWE'QWA'SOT'EM band with lineage from the Kwicksutaineuk clan from the Kwakwaka'wakw nation. As he is not a Squamish artist, a ceremony to commence the artwork led by Xwalacktun (Rick Harry) of the Squamish Nation, was held in September, which gave students an opportunity to learn some of the relevant protocols. Winadzi, in conjunction with Sarah Haxby, has sought feedback from students on how the pole could embody what students consider fundamental to the identity of Bowen Island. Students will have opportunities to carve throughout the year.