

## **RIDGEVIEW ELEMENTARY**

### **Aboriginal School Plan**

**2014 - 2016**

School Contact: Valerie Brady

The Ridgeview Aboriginal School Plan builds on our shared acknowledgement of the importance of exploring and expanding student, teacher, and community awareness and understanding of British Columbia's Aboriginal people.

The Ridgeview Aboriginal Plan embraces the guiding principles of the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement dated June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The Enhancement Agreement is an important milestone that marks the beginning of a formal partnership to enhance educational opportunities and continue developing appropriate, meaningful programs to benefit all First Nations, Metis and Inuit students in our schools. The guiding principles of the agreement include:

- Improving cultural awareness
- Developing relationships
- Collaborating with all educational partners, and
- Inspiring learners

Historical learning assumptions outline long-established ways of life of British Columbia's Aboriginal peoples. The following shared assumptions are embedded in our school plan:

- Aboriginal peoples have strong, dynamic, evolving cultures that have adapted to changing world events.
- Aboriginal peoples' values and beliefs are strong, durable, and relevant.
- To understand Aboriginal issues, it is necessary to understand and appreciate that all contemporary events have their roots in history.
- Aboriginal cultures and languages have an important place in society.
- Individual responsibility to family, community, and nation has long been emphasized in Aboriginal culture.
- Pursuit of spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual balance is central in Aboriginal culture.
- A respect for the relatedness of all things in the natural world.

Ridgeview's Aboriginal School Plan merges the above named historical learning assumptions about aboriginal peoples and their cultures (values, beliefs, traditions, history, and languages); with Safe Schools and Character Education programs.

An objective of the plan therefore, is to engage and empower all students and teachers to:

- Define character attributes that align aboriginal teachings and restorative practice
- Infuse aspects of traditional medicine wheel teachings with existing character development initiatives to create and ensure positive school climates and safe places to learn.

Core to the plan is to encourage children and community members to care deeply, think critically, see clearly and act wisely.

As identified in the Enhancement Agreement, this plan specifically supports students identified of Aboriginal Ancestry as indicated in the following goal areas:

1. To Improve the sense of belonging and presence of all students of Aboriginal Ancestry
2. To improve the academic performance of Aboriginal students
3. To increase the use of accurate, authentic and relevant First People's resources

Additionally, the plan aims to improve overall student learning and achievement in the following ways:

- Increasing acceptance and concern for others
- Improving individual self confidence
- Developing shared purpose and sense of belonging

Implementation of the school plan includes grade specific study as per the new Ministry of Education curricular outcomes\*. Grade theme areas include:

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Kindergarten | First Nations Families   |
| Grade 1      | Native Villages NW Coast & Plateau   |
| Grade 2      | Native Communities and Use of Environment  |
| Grade 3      | Oral Traditions, Native Technology, Use of Environment   |
| Grade 4      | Fur Trade and Native Tales   |
| Grade 5      | Perspectives of Power Hierarchy Aboriginals vs Europeans, Treaties & Self-Governance<br>Residential Schools                    |
| Grade 6      | Native vs European Interpretation of Religion & Philosophy   |
| Grade 7      | Power Structures, Aboriginal Boundaries & Displacement, Cultural Expression & Art<br>Research (Biography) First Nations People |

Whole school implementation of the school plan will include the following:

#### Literature Study

Aboriginal cultures pass knowledge from generation to generation through an oral tradition. Participation in Aboriginal storytelling and other group activities requires effective and responsible listening behaviours. These are the shared learning's that would form the foundation of Aboriginal literature studies.

#### Science and Visual Art

Storytelling, presentation and artistic representation will support the learning about the natural world. Students will continue to explore the connectedness of the natural world as outlined in the Shared learning's document and within the new Curricula. Connecting with an Aboriginal Artist to support an 'In Progress' Ridgeview Artist in Residence project, Art and the Environment, may further engage students in awareness and understanding of British Columbia's Aboriginal peoples.

#### First Nations Resource Contacts:

- Lynne Tomlinson, Director of Instruction, WVSD
- Bob Babker (Sahplek)
- Faye Halls (Yeltsilewet)
- Jada-While-Harry, Aboriginal Success Teacher, WVSD
- Carole Langley

#### Community Partnerships:

- West Vancouver Museum and Archives
- Squamish Nation partnership
- Eslha7an Learning Centre (345 W5th, NV)

#### Support and Resources needed to actualize plan:

- Ongoing guidance/teaching of First Nations History and Culture
- Connection with Aboriginal speakers and artists

*\*Authentic Aboriginal content is presented in the BC Ministry of Education resource Shared Learnings: Integrating BC Aboriginal Content K – 10 and represented across grades and subject areas in the updated Ministry of Education Curricula.*