



Aboriginal Education School Plan

School: Cypress Park Primary

School Aboriginal Education Committee: Judy Duncan, Kim Grimwood, Andrea Anderson, Charity Cantlie, Krista Koke, Shannon Clarke, Morikke Espenhain, Carolyn Huggett

School Contact Person(s): Kim Grimwood

Activities, events, speakers, presentations, projects etc. that have occurred at your location over the past two years:

- Xwalacktun worked as our school's artist-in-residence for five days. He connected with all of the students and led them through a series of directed drawings. He shared stories and songs with the students. This was funded through our PAC.
- Sahplek visited our school on two separate occasions. He supported the grade one unit of inquiry by sharing stories and discussing the significance of oral story telling. He also worked with the grade three students by sharing music and stories and discussing the connection between culture and story.
- Each year, our students visit Britannia Elementary School and also hosted them at Cypress Park. The students continue to build their relationships through a variety of activities including, dance, crafts, music, and play.
- The Teacher librarian continued to build our First Nations book collection in the Learning Commons. These books were highlighted in a number of lessons and were quite popular with students.
- Teachers began working with the new BC curriculum and worked to incorporate First Nations perspectives into their units of inquiry. For example, our Kindergarten students inquired into

how they express themselves through the arts and looked at totem poles and read some First Nations stories. The grade one class inquired into the nature and purpose of story and completed a book study using the story *Raven Steals the Light*

Action Plan for 2015/2016

Connections to BC Curriculum (new document)

All teachers have begun teaching using the new curriculum documents and have redesigned their units of inquiry to reflect the changes and to embed the First Nations content. Some examples from each grade are listed below:

- Kindergarten: Unit of Inquiry into families explores First Nations' ideas and perspectives about family. The Kindergarten inquiry into how they express themselves through the arts will continue to focus on Aboriginal art and will involve a museum visit. The Kindergarten teachers have been using aboriginal art books to introduce each letter of the alphabet during their literacy lessons.
- Grade 1: The inquiry into how the environment shapes communities will focus heavily on the First Nation perspective and how the First Peoples used the land. Additionally the grade one story-telling unit and fine art unit will have First Nations content embedded.
- Grade 2: Exploring the importance of First Nations to Canada and Canadian culture and the importance of the First Nations during European settlement is one new unit that students will be engaged in. Additionally, during the unit on How the World Works, students will be inquiring into the importance of water and its uses in relation to First Peoples.
- Grade 3: This class will be inquiring into the central idea, discoveries reveal evidence of the indigenous ways of the past. Moreover, a second inquiry will have students exploring the idea that indigenous societies create systems to meet needs.

First Peoples Principles of Learning (how will you embed these in your work with students this year?)

Some of these principles are woven within our Primary Years Program pedagogy. For example, learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors connects with our practice of developing internationally-minded students. The IB Learner profile connects with the First Peoples Principles of Learning in that learning is holistic, reflective, experiential, and relational. Additionally, one of our trans disciplinary themes *Who We Are* connects with the principle that learning requires exploration of one's identity. Some of the First Peoples Principles of Learning will need to be more directly included in our work this year and in order to do this we need to make sure that these principles are in the foreground of our planning. In particular we will need to be mindful of how we plan on embedding the principles that learning involves generational roles and responsibilities, indigenous knowledge, and patience and time.

Two teachers at Cypress Park have been awarded an Innovation Grant to inquire into how developing a sense of place deepens connections with the natural world. They will be exploring this through a First Nations lens and sharing their learning with the school and district community.

Parent Education (Native and Non-Native)

- Communication with our parents about the learning that is happening in our classrooms on a day to day basis (Freshgrade, e-mails, classroom newsletters)
- PAC meeting education session
- Vice-principal blog

Community Partnerships

- Connect with Alice Guss (Tsawaysia Spukwus) re: developing an understanding of the land/plants at Cypress Park Playground and their uses. She also offers: weaving, drumming etc as it connects with other units of inquiry <http://tsawaysia.com/>

- Continue to work with Britannia Elementary school to deepen that relationship (perhaps visit on Aboriginal Day)
- We are beginning to think through the process of applying for an Art Start Grant (May, 2016). Our purpose with the application would be to aid in our long-term goal of understanding the history/significance of the land/community of Cypress Park. We are hoping to secure funds for the creation of a work of art mask (representing school animal)/carving by local Squamish Nation artist. Students would participate in the journey along with the artist to connect with stories and sense of place

District support and resources needed this year:

- Faye Halls to share her knowledge with grade 3 during their units inquiring into Indigenous ways of being
- Bob Baker (Sa7plek) to share stories of the animals that inhabit (traditionally originated from) the Cypress Park landscape and to connect with our music teacher and the music program to explore the purpose and form of music in the First Nations culture, along with the ideas that songs can be gifts, you can own a song and the respect musicians are given.