



Indigenous Education School Plan 2020 - 2021

1. School: Eagle Harbour Montessori

2. School Aboriginal Education Committee Members: Erica Hardern, Debbie Tobin, Trevor Kolkea, Amit Gatneyo (Parent Representative)

3. School Main Contact Person(s): Debbie Tobin

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

2018-2019

Artist in Residence: Eagle Harbour combined school resources, an Art Starts grant and an SD45 innovation grant to plan a year-long Artist in Residence program for the students. In collaboration with local indigenous artist, Haisla Collins, our students were exposed to various aspects of culture, community, tradition and art through regularly scheduled lessons, assemblies and fine arts opportunities, learning directly from four different local indigenous artists over the school year.

The project introduced students to Northwest Coast Indigenous and the broader North American Indigenous artistic living culture, evolved from North America's rich history of Indigenous cultures.

Students learned:

- traditional and contemporary Northwest Coast, Canadian and North American art.
- Canada's history of colonization, its impacts and reconciliation.
- design and execution of 2D visual art.
- the evolution of Button Blankets and created a school blanket.
- animal symbology in local, National and North American contexts.



- traditional and modern Indigenous art practices from four local Indigenous artists with roots across Canada.

This project impacted students by:

- i. Building a more sophisticated understanding of contemporary Indigenous culture. We took them from thinking about Indigenous Culture in a historical context, to thinking about Indigenous culture as a living, evolving culture.
- ii. Developing new artistic skills under the direction of professional Indigenous artists.
- iii. Empowering students to teach reconciliation and understanding of Indigenous culture by sharing their artistic creation and the teachings it represents with their families.

The project also provided a professional development platform for a local Indigenous artist learning about extending their practice through creating an elementary school art and history program.

At the end of the project, Eagle Harbour had a giving ceremony, wherein students performed clan (class) dances, and the button blanket was gifted to the school. The ceremony culminated with a feast of Bannock.

Additionally, the Lower Elementary classes studied an assortment of indigenous cultures from across North America, comparing and contrasting the traditional ways of life of the Inuit people, the Dine people, and the NorthWest Coast peoples and spent time particularly trying to identify the use/impact of the natural environment on each culture.

2019-2020

Orange Shirt Day:

Starting with a school wide project around Orange Shirt Day the staff and students are encouraged to wear an orange t-shirt. All students will be learning about Orange Shirt Day and why we acknowledge the day. We will be using the following picture books:

- *Stolen Words*
- *Shi-shi-etko*
- *When I Was 8*



Orange shirts will be made with messages inspired by the theme of “ Every Child Matters”. These messages will be displayed throughout our school as a visual reminder. On September 30th we will wear orange shirts to acknowledge the day and our prior learning. On October 1st we are having Chaslynn and Donny Gillanders present to our lower elementary students about Aboriginal Peoples and residential schools as their parents are residential school survivors. The children will also be making bannock as well as a traditional hide and deer bone bracelet.

The upper elementary will be spending the day with an Elder from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

Upper Elementary Learning at Eagle Harbour Montessori:

Through the fall, the upper elementary (intermediate) students at Eagle Harbour will be exploring how Indigenous ways of knowing impact how local governments make decisions. Will will first spend a day with the District of West Vancouver staff where we learn about the issue of sea level rise on the North Shore through the lens of a Western democratic scientific perspective. Next, we will spend the day on Maplewood Flats and then at Capilano University learning from Tsleil-Waututh Hereditary Chief Ernie George about the land as unceded territory and about the issue from an Indigenous knowledge perspective drawing on the history of the traditional territories passed down to him by his elders.

This will allow us to situate Indigenous government within the pantheon of government types and talk about how it does not fit well within the "three levels of government" paradigm. It will also let us examine how the different lenses are useful for understanding the issue and engaging in action.

To supplement this, we are doing a novel study of Hannah and the Spindle Whorl, which explores the intersection of history and colonialism. This makes a thematic link to how we understand the role of colonisation on shaping the kinds of decisions that are being made on our behalf today.

Whole School Learning at Eagle Harbour Montessori:

We are then moving into a school wide study about Africa. Through this study we will be discovering and making connections with Indigenous People of Africa and the First Peoples of Canada. These cross curricular connections will not only strengthen and solidify our learning about the First Peoples of Canada but give our students a broader view of the teachings and



struggles of other Indigenous peoples around the world. We will be hosting a community Feast in February to celebrate our learning and share our knowledge with our families.

Milton Randall has been contracted to work with our students as they learn the traditional Djembe Drums. This learning will culminate in an evening performance at the Feast for the families as well as a community drum circle. It is our wish to have 200 people drumming at the same time.

Our Vice- Principal is being gifted a traditional First Peoples drum. The drum is being made with the intention that the maker is giving it to her and Eagle Harbour Montessori School. Once the drum has been completed she will attend the awakening ceremony to make it her own. Once that has been done the drum will become the new bell for Eagle Harbour Montessori. It will be used each lunch hour to bring the children in and a daily reminder for us as we remember we are guests on this beautiful land that we live, learn, work and play.

As we move forward with our learning this year it is our intention to keep the First Peoples Principles of Learning as a living, breathing and guiding part of all that we do at Eagle Harbour.

We are embarking on a new FESL this year. We have chosen *Identity and Belonging* as our main Inquiry. With this focus as our guiding torch it is our intention as we work to develop our three year plan that we commission an artist to work with us to build a traditional cedar identity box for Eagle Harbour Montessori. This is in the very early stages of planning, but our school goals will have significant First Peoples focus as we move forward.

5. Action Plan for 2020/2021

Whole School Learning at Eagle Harbour Montessori:

Starting the year with Orange Shirt Day grounds our school community in our Indigenous ways of Knowing and Learning. Our previous year of learning using The First People's Principles of Learning has taught our school community to embed these principles into our everyday lives. This year began the way we ended 2019-20 with our weekly school wide drum circles. We had to be creative and find a way to drum that fell within the new COVID guidelines. We persevered and found ways to socially distance while drumming. We also changed our school schedule to allow Ms. Harden to teach all of us at different times while staying within our school safety



guidelines. Orange Shirt Day was more meaningful and authentic to our community this year. This is attributed to the seamless ways of learning and teaching that have become a part of the Eagle Harbour pedagogy. Click here to learn more about [Orange Shirt Day](#) from September 30th 2020 at Eagle Harbour.

Through our drum circles the children are authentically taking part in traditions that have been gifted to us. The children have come to intrinsically understand and recognize how our school community strives to follow the First People's Principle of Learning: "Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or certain situations."

Drumming has become an integral part of who we are at Eagle Harbour. We have had the bells turned off and now signal the end of recess with a drum that was built by the school's Vice-Principal and gifted to Eagle Harbour for this very purpose. The students take turns using the drum which ensures every child shares the responsibility of safely ending recess throughout the year. To hear this drum call each day reminds us how important it is for us to be connected to the land, the people who came before us and the people who's land we are so fortunate to work, play and live on each day.





As we move through the year the community of Eagle Harbour is committed to exploring our identity. We will be embarking on an Identity Wall with one question “ What is your story? ” We will then have subsets of questions for all to discover such as:

- What is the story of your name?
- What is your DNA? (dreams, needs and abilities)
- How are we connected to this place?
- How did we all land at Eagle Harbour?

Through this inquiry we hope to embed memory, history and story into our everyday lives.

While working on Remembrance Day this year the staff learned this assembly was part of the school act and without hesitation the staff made the decision to have one assembly a year dedicated to Truth and Reconciliation. We will begin to hold a Truth and Reconciliation assembly in June of each year to coincide with Indigenous People’s Day. It is our wish that one day this assembly will be part of the school act, but for now we'll make it part of our identity and school culture at Eagle Harbour Montessori.

6. How does your plan support the goals of the 2020-2025 Indigenous Enhancement Agreement?

We have planned our school learning year using the Indigenous Ways of Knowing. We have used these perspectives to “ inform and empower our teaching, learning and decision making” in what we feel is authentic and true to who we are as individuals and learners. This is most evident in our weekly drum circles, daily drum call, dedication to finding out who we are as educators and people all while developing this learning with our students. Together at Eagle Harbour we can find out who we are as a community of learners and as citizens of the world. With the development of a new yearly school assembly dedicated to Truth and Reconciliation we will remember the hard truths both past and present. Our school community will commit to continually educating those around us that these truths still exist today and it is our job to make a better future for everyone.