



## Indigenous Education School Plan 2025 – 2026

**School:**

Irwin Park Elementary

**School Indigenous Education Committee Members:**

Alex Bleim – Vice Principal

Stephanie Morris – Teacher

Heather Spracklin – Teacher

Dawn Ellwyn - Teacher

**School Main Contact Person(s):**

Alex Bleim

1. What is the focus of your Indigenous School Plan for 2025/2026?

Our 2025–2026 Indigenous School Plan focuses on developing a shared understanding among staff of the difference between *decolonizing pedagogy* and *Indigenizing the curriculum*. Using place-based and land-based learning as a starting point, our goal is to deepen our collective capacity to engage with Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being in meaningful, respectful, and sustained ways.

Through professional learning, reflective dialogue, and experiential opportunities in our School Garden and local natural spaces, we will explore:

- How *place-based learning* can be an act of decolonization which connects students to their immediate environment and community context;
  - How is it different from *land-based learning*, which see land as a teacher, centres Indigenous knowledge, relationships, stories, and responsibilities to the land;
  - How decolonizing pedagogy challenges colonial systems and assumptions; and
  - How Indigenizing the curriculum makes space for Indigenous knowledge systems, languages, and worldviews within all areas of learning.
2. If you have students with Indigenous Ancestry attending your school, what Indigenous Student Outcome(s) are you working to improve? (Attendance, Developing Sense of Belonging, Literacy, Numeracy...) Please reference your school data.

We currently have one student in grade 3 with Indigenous Ancestry and our focus is on literacy, specifically writing. School data shows that writing skills, particularly organization and elaboration, are an area for growth for the student and their cohort. We are integrating oral



storytelling approaches, as well as Matt Glover's mentor text and writing conferences, to make writing more meaningful, connected to place, and reflective of student voices and experiences.

3. How does your plan connect to the Enhancement Agreement and/or the Equity in Action Goals found in the (see WVS Indigenous Success Plan)

Our school's focus on literacy, specifically writing, connects directly to the goals of the West Vancouver Indigenous Education Council's Indigenous Enhancement Agreement by using Indigenous ways of knowing and perspectives to inform, empower and transform our teaching and learning practices. By embedding UDL practices, Indigenous storytelling and land-based experiences, we are also aligning with the district's Equity in Action aim to ensure that Indigenous students experience multiple ways of knowing and demonstrating literacy. Through these practices, we strengthen both writing competency and cultural identity, contributing to more equitable outcomes for all learners.

4. Highlight your school plans and learning intentions for the November 24<sup>th</sup> Indigenous Focused PD Day afternoon Session.

The afternoon session will begin with reflection questions following the keynote speaker, leading into a collaborative workshop facilitated by Alex on:

- The distinction between decolonizing and indigenizing the curriculum;
- The difference between place-based and land-based learning;
- A way to check if resources are authentic

Teachers will engage in reflective discussion and identify practical next steps for integrating these concepts into classroom and school-wide practice. Alex is excited to facilitate the discussion and share recourse from her Master of Indigenous Education journey but approaches the work with humility.

5. What are you most proud of with respect to your Indigenous School Plan?

We are proud of our school's ongoing commitment to embedding Indigenous knowledge and perspectives throughout the year, rather than confining this learning to commemorative days such as Orange Shirt Day or National Indigenous Peoples Month. Our garden initiative, professional learning, and classroom practices all reflect a shift toward sustained, authentic engagement with Indigenous worldviews, honouring reciprocity, responsibility, respect, and relevance.

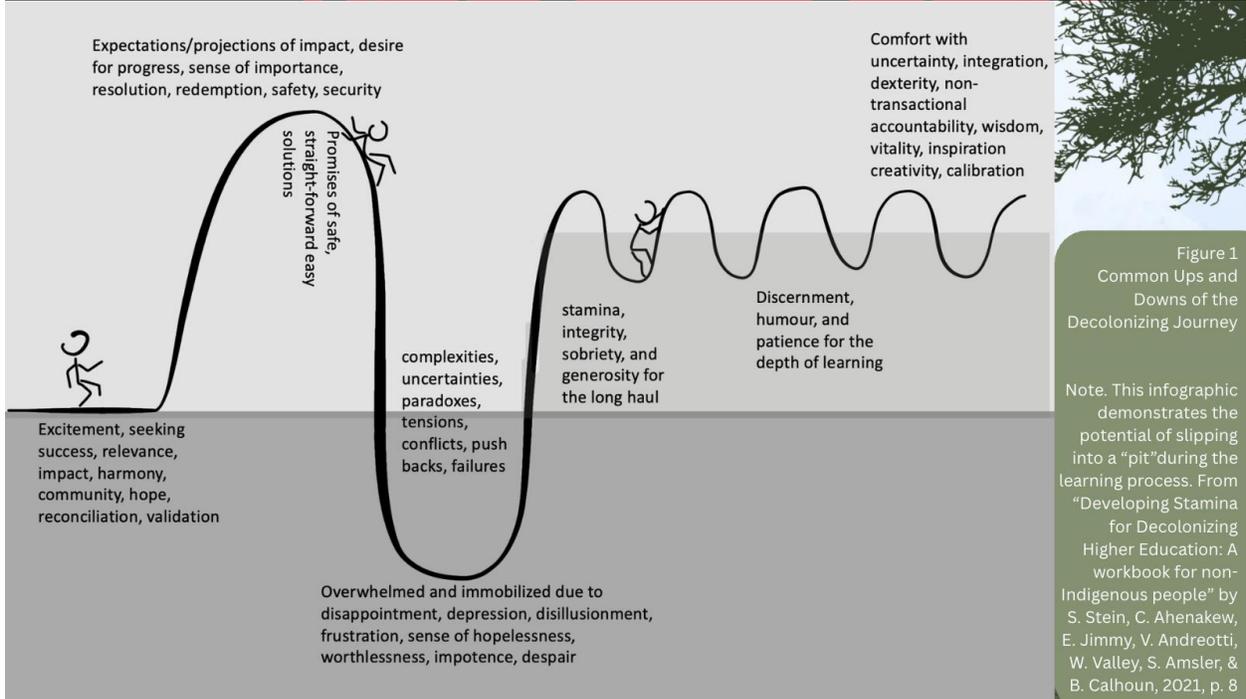


Figure 1  
Common Ups and  
Downs of the  
Decolonizing Journey

Note. This infographic demonstrates the potential of slipping into a “pit” during the learning process. From “Developing Stamina for Decolonizing Higher Education: A workbook for non-Indigenous people” by S. Stein, C. Ahenakew, E. Jimmy, V. Andreotti, W. Valley, S. Amsler, & B. Calhoun, 2021, p. 8

## DECOLONIZING VS INDIGENIZING

### Decolonizing Practices

Work that challenges, disrupts, and changes the colonial structures, assumptions, and power dynamics embedded in schooling.

- Re-examines assessment, discipline, classroom management
- Centres relationship
- Values multiple ways of knowing and doing
- Questions Eurocentric assumptions
- Focus on changing systems/structures

Seek to repair harm caused by colonial schooling

Build student belonging & identity safety

Require critical self-reflection for educators

Are lifelong, ongoing commitments

Must honour community protocols & local Nations

### Indigenizing Curriculum

Bringing Indigenous worldviews, stories, knowledge systems, and perspectives into the curriculum.

- Teaching local Nation history and knowledge
- Using Indigenous authored texts and resources
- Incorporating Indigenous place names and languages
- Embedding content, stories, representation throughout the curriculum
- Embedding Indigenous Pedagogies



abstem • 7 • November 27, 2025  
**Nov Pro-D Reflection Questions**

**abstem**  
Nov 14, 2025

**As a School Community or as and Educator...**

Where do you hold influence in Decolonizing Learning?

How are you uniquely positioned to engage in Decolonizing Learning?

Where are your entry points in Decolonizing Learning?

- Sarah B**  
Nov 24, 2025  
Always making sure we are showing multiple perspectives and not looking at things only from 1 point of view eg a Western lens/ perspective.
- acampbell190**  
Nov 24, 2025  
As an admin. I feel I have a huge role in this... however it's not easy based on the pressures and constraints of the role I play in the system. But won't stop learning and being open to this work and this learning.
- Parisa**  
Nov 24, 2025  
as teachers, we hold a large amount of influence. Especially in the way that we use language/ frame narratives when teaching. It is important that we use multiple lenses/perspectives when teaching.  
  
I am uniquely positioned as a teacher, being in this role, allows me the opportunity to decolonize education.  
  
I hope to use story/storytelling as an entry point for doing this work.
- Unique Fly**  
Nov 24, 2025  
Trying to think about multiple perspectives of families
- Humble Kangaroo**  
Nov 24, 2025  
Sharing stories that show a multiplicity of perspectives

**Share any key take-aways from this morning's keynote by Dr. Dustin Louis**

- Unique Fly**  
Nov 24, 2025  
There is more than one definition of decolonization
- Enthusiastic Goldfish**  
Nov 24, 2025  
Connected with the idea of starting small, beginning with areas that we can functionally make change.
- Helpful Falcon**  
Nov 24, 2025  
The idea of incrementalism is encouraging, as choosing an entry point can be overwhelming
- Adorable Elephant**  
Nov 24, 2025  
Traveling and living in different countries. I connected with comparing other cultures like NZ, Australia and their traditions or customs. To do your research but also not to be afraid to ask questions and learn.
- Invisible Penguin**  
Nov 24, 2025  
We should be wary of making sure that we are not negatively impacting others as we need to show respect towards other cultures.

**What questions do you still have?**

- Sarah B**  
Nov 24, 2025  
What are some examples of things we can be looking at to do differently?
- Humble Kangaroo**  
Nov 24, 2025  
what cultural contexts/knowledge do we need in order to de-centre our teaching approach?
- Zakary**  
Nov 24, 2025  
**Cultural gate way**  
As a member of the faculty with a distinct background, I act as gate way to question from many who are curious and convertible around me. Not necessarily to indigenous culture but I as a gate way can encourage a healthy conversation and draw parallel between my culture and that of indigenous people's culture.

**Moments of Reconciliation**

He spoke about doing this with a group he's working with each time they meet. "What moments of reconciliation have you witnessed since we last met?" Maybe we could try it at the beginning of staff meetings?

**Key takeaway...**

De-Centering is a very viable alternative to decolonization. I find that perhaps decolonization has been associated by some to be a negative and De Centering is more neutral and perhaps removes the bias from the term of Decolonization. I also loved the term "relentless incrementalism"... small steps...constantly.

**Iceberg concept of culture**

I've seen this visual before but it was a great reminder of the importance of culture that is not always "above water" the deep culture is important to keep in mind.

**Clever Axolotl**  
Nov 24, 2025

**Sarah M.**

Just choose one very small area to focus on making a decolonizing change. These small and RELENTLESS increments will lead to a broader reaching social justice.

**As an EA, I focus on building trusting relationships with students by using inclusive language and inclusive practices that make every learner feel seen, respected, and supported.**

**sxharrington**  
Nov 24, 2025

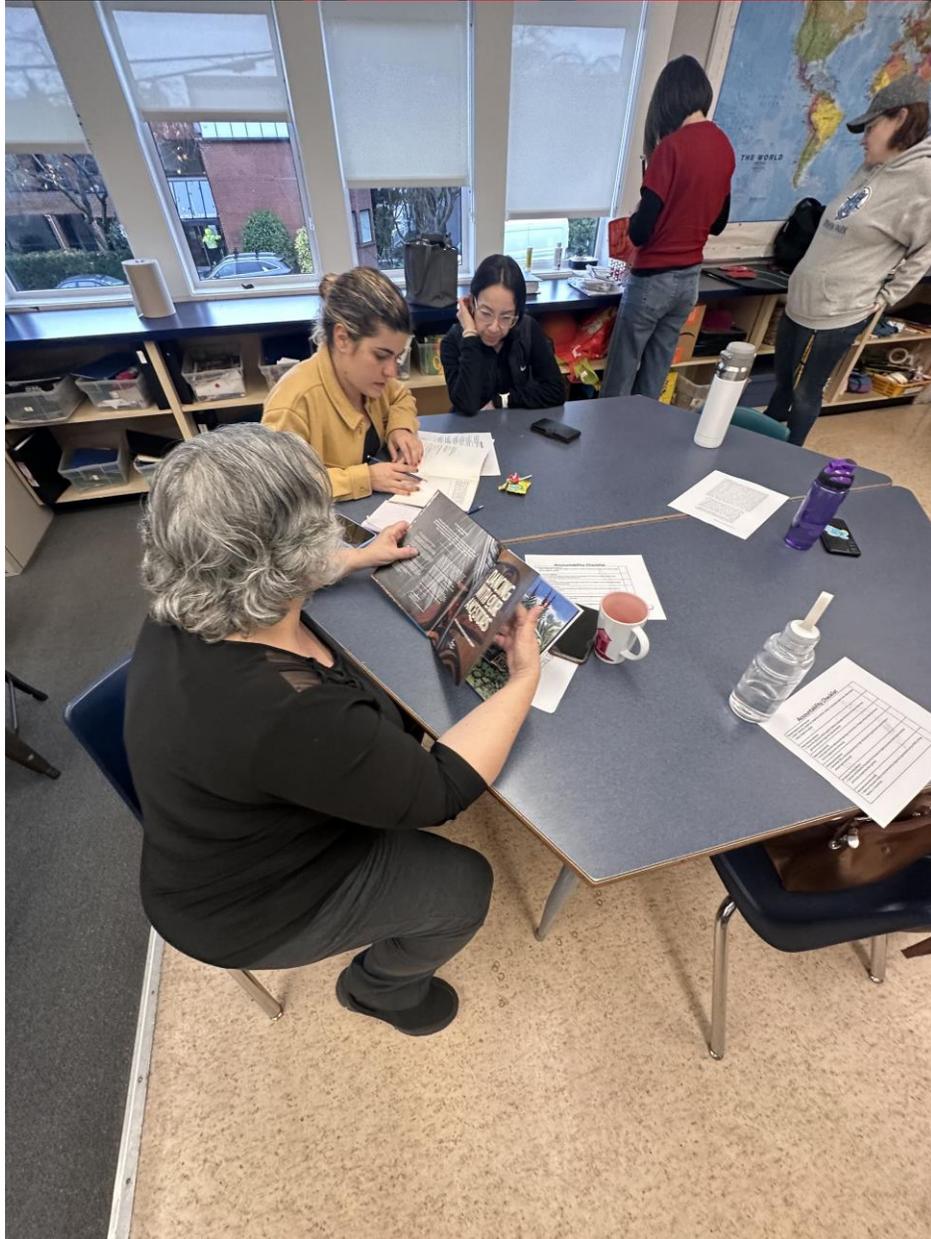
I hold influence in the book selection and literacy materials I use, purchase, display and recommend and the methods I use to make these decisions.

I am able to take an active approach to reflect on, collaborate and make changes within the library and community.

I would like to think about our system of paying for fees for lost or missing books.



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