Aboriginal Education School Plan 2016-2017

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## Bowen Island Community School

**School Aboriginal Education Committee:**

* Cindy Fairbank (Teacher)
* Sarah Haxby (Community School Coordinator)
* Simon James (Parent)
* Chris Kientz (Parent)
* Andrea Layzell (Teacher)
* Laura Magrath (Vice-Principal)
* Jane Miller-Ashton (Godparent)
* Fraser Simmons (Godparent)
* Scott Slater (Principal)
* Carmen Yamashita (Teacher-Librarian)

**School Contact Person(s)**

* Scott Slater
* Sarah Haxby

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

**2015-2016**

All students at BICS developed a written, oral or visual story and shared them with others in a multi-age K-7 group. The stories were about an experience they had, and/or a place they had been to, that they thought would affect the way they would live their life. Students were encouraged to consider how place, people, and experiences have a long lasting impact – transformational in fact – in the way they live their lives.

In February, over several days, Bob Baker and Faye Halls, of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), visited BICS and shared various stories with students that taught students about some formative experiences that would shape part of their lives. Reflecting on those stories, in the early spring with their classes, students created their own stories. Then, in 24 groups of twelve students each, students met several times and in the format of a story circle, shared their story with schoolmates. Mr. Baker and Ms. Halls visited BICS again to listen to the stories of students and participate in a school assembly where Mr. Baker and other members of the Eagle Song Dancers performed for the school.

Our 2015-2016 Action Plan was intended to help students understand the following.

Core understandings:

* Our experiences become stories we tell ourselves.
* Our stories, along with our sense of belonging and place, shape our identity.
* Some people have the courage to share their stories with others or carry them alone.

Secondary understandings:

* Ongoing experiences, or practices, shape us; lone events can also be unique and profound enough to shape identity as well.
* What we do not experience also shapes our identity.

In March of 2016, Hoop Dancer Teddy Anderson visited BICS and performed wonderfully. In addition to impressing all ages with his immense skills, Mr. Anderson also had a very sincere message of acceptance and respect for all and living life choosing to be happy and kind. Mr. Anderson also shared the idea of the Medicine Wheel with students and spoke about the tradition of hoop dancing. Following his performance, throughout the day Mr. Anderson taught students how to hoop dance.

**2014-2015**

BICS explored the concepts of elders and ancestors. Specifically, students learned about who elders are and what their role is in their community. Elders visited BICS in the Spring of 2015 on two occasions and shared stories related to their experiences. Understandings of the following concepts were developed:

* Role of First Nations of elders and ancestors
* Historic and contemporary links to elders and ancestry and what conditions fostered and/or challenged these links
* Perspective taking and how people develop expertise in various aspects of life
* Earth-based Survival Skills
* Learning related to Socials Studies 5 content, “past discriminatory government practices and actions, such as residential schools,” related to the big idea, Canada’s policies and treatment of minority peoples have negative and positive legacies.

**Plan for 2016-2017**

With the implementation of BC’s new curriculum this year, the focus of our 2016-2017 Aboriginal Education Committee is to identify areas where committee members can be of service in enriching learning in classrooms or engaging the committee’s network in finding other individuals or resources that can enrich curriculum.

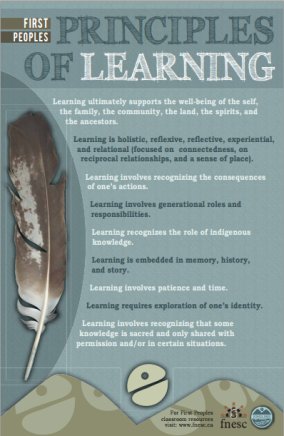
Our goal is that students at BICS from Kindergarten to Grade Seven are provided with ongoing and meaningful opportunities to learn about indigenous peoples and further develop their understandings of where they live, its history, and the First Peoples who have lived here for thousands of years. There are three aspects to our approach.

First, several Committee members themselves will act as resources to enrich curriculum or provide support to teachers in finding resources (people, reading material, etc.) to support the many learning outcomes from Kindergarten to Grade Seven and in all subject areas. This will include coordinating with members of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and other First Peoples.

The Aboriginal Education Committee will be using the Curriculum Search tool to find Big Ideas, Content, and Curricular Competencies related to Aboriginal Education and select at least one area for each grade that the Committee can support teachers with. The Committee will also support learning in areas related to Aboriginal Education identified by teachers in their curriculum year plans including the following competencies and content:

* Kindergarten
  + Engage with a variety of local works of art and artistic traditions, including traditional and contemporary aboriginal arts and arts-making processes
* Grade One
  + People connect to others and share ideas through the arts.
* Grade Two
  + Diverse characteristics of communities and cultures in Canada and around the world; comparisons of different cultures
* Grade Three
  + Develop awareness of how story in First Peoples cultures connects people to land
* Grade Four
  + First Peoples concepts of interconnectedness in the environment
* Grade Five
  + Canada’s policies and treatment of minority peoples have negative and positive legacies
* Grade Six
  + traditional and contemporary Aboriginal arts and arts-making processes
* Grade Seven
  + Recognize and appreciate the role of story, narrative, and oral tradition in expressing First Peoples’ perspectives, values, beliefs, and points of view

Second, the committee will support teachers in an approach to learning that incorporates the First Peoples Principals of Learning.

[](http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PUB-LFP-POSTER-Principles-of-Learning-First-Peoples-poster-11x17.pdf)

The Aboriginal Education Committee itself plans to learn from its members and others more about the Principles and for these to be reflected in the meetings and functioning of the committee. Additionally, the Committee plans to support teachers in their approach to learning so that it incorporates the Principles, with specific emphasis on the following Principles:

* Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
* Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
* Learning is embedded in memory, history and story.
* Learning requires an exploration of one’s identity.

These four principles were chosen because they have been emphasized in previous years and because there is expertise on our committee to support storytelling and developing a sense of place.

The First Peoples Principles of Learning have been printed in poster form and are visible in each classroom as well as other areas of BICS.

The third part of our approach is to create a diversity group that will examine how welcoming BICS is to the diverse people who learn (students), work (staff) and visit (families) BICS.

This group will meet throughout the school year with the following purposes: 1. Define diversity. 2. Examine how welcoming BICS is to its diverse stakeholders. 3. Suggest changes to make BICS as welcoming an environment as possible for all stakeholders.

The work of the Aboriginal Education Committee and Diversity Group will be shared with parents in the form of blog posts, school communications, and possibly school-wide assemblies.

BICS will continue to work closely with Bob Baker in the development and implementation of this plan. Financial resources will be allocated largely for transportation costs and honorariums for guests that visit the school to share stories through oral storytelling, dance and other mediums.