



## Indigenous Education School Plan 2023 - 2024

**1. School: Eagle Harbour Montessori**

**2. School Indigenous Education Committee Members: Debbie Tobin, Erica Hardern and Nathan Blackburn**

**Parent Representative: Andrea Haldik**

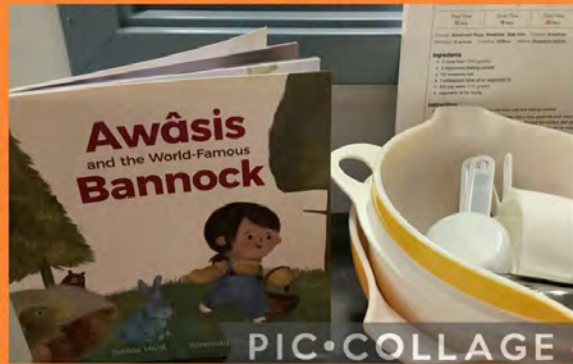
**3. School Main Contact Person(s): Debbie Tobin, Erica Hardern**

**4. Activities, events, speakers, presentations, projects etc. that have occurred at your location last school year:**

Our 2022/23 school year began with a week long community drum making workshop where our students and community members came together to build 30 Indigenous drums. This was a project that was three years in the making. We had children and families who had moved on to other schools come back and be part of this week as it has meant so much to them.

The children and community members were both honoured and humbled to build these drums. We were even more honoured when we were able to wake them up on National Indigenous Peoples day with a community drum circle in our field led by Xwalacktun. Click [HERE](#) for a video peek at that learning journey.

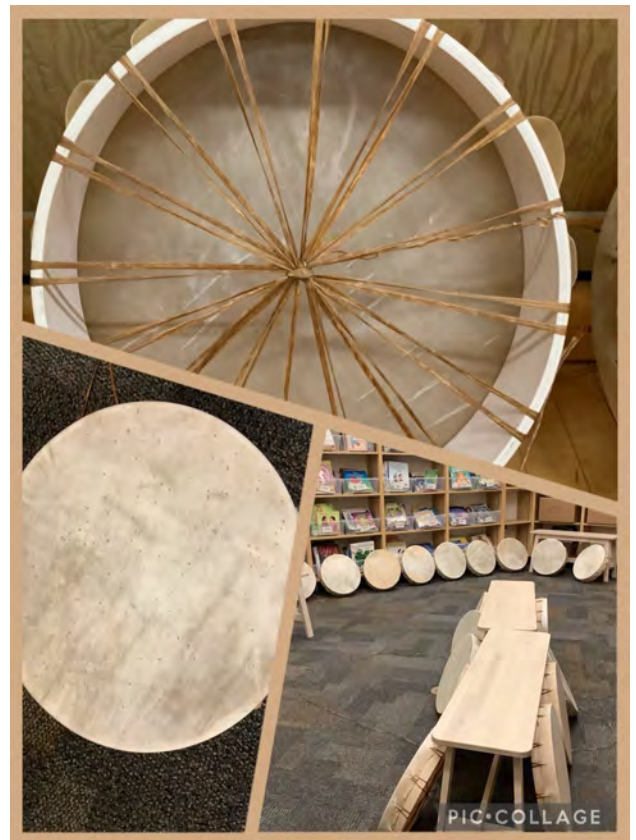
We ended the week by making Bannock and completing artistically done Orange shirts that have become part of the Little Orange Shirt Project at UBC.



Our drums were played for the first time publicly at our Remembrance Day Ceremony. Before we began our ceremony we asked the children to lead us in the Equality Song - All our voices Matter. The most significant learning and change this year is the children now lead the drum circles, as the knowledge and gifts have been passed on to them. All our gatherings begin with an Indigenous land acknowledgement that is as unique as the child or adult giving it.



Drumming is one of the most authentic ways of learning at our little school in the woods. Recently we took our whole school to Eagle Harbour beach and the children said "aren't you going to bring a drum? We need it to call us to gather."



## 5. Action Plan for 2023/2024

Our 2023/24 school year began as it did last year with a week-long community drum making workshop where our students and community members came together again to build the last of our 60 Indigenous drums. This project has been four years in the making and is now complete. Every child in our school now has a drum to play. The children and community were extremely excited to begin this project this year as they could use their previous knowledge to complete this journey. The excitement was palpable this year as the project came full circle.

We asked Xwalactun to join us once again to wake up our drums and complete the last step in this journey. The children were beyond excited to see him again and share their journey with him. Click [HERE](#) to see a small glimpse of our ceremony.





Our Indigenous Education Plan and FESL are interconnected. Both plans have an oral story telling focus. This focus began last year and will continue this year. With the help of a parent who is a composer and our staff member Erica Hardern, we began a whole school multiage oral storytelling inquiry titled SoundScapes using North American indigenous stories (from the 'Raventales' book series) as our base. Please click [HERE](#) to hear a sample of our oral retellings. We will tackle a similar project again this year, with more knowledge and a better understanding of how to engage our students in this type of learning.

As a staff we are also learning how to orally tell the "Great Stories". The Great Stories are a cornerstone of the Montessori Philosophy, and are told near the beginning of each school year as a foundation for the rest of the curriculum. As a staff team, we hope to be able to weave indigenous teachings into the Montessori Great Stories, and have sought the help of an indigenous storyteller, Eldon Yellowhorn, to ensure we follow appropriate protocols and do so with respect and authenticity. Our Indigenous

professional development day this year is focused on the foundational aspects of this process, as well as learning new songs to play on our drums. To this end we have invited both Eldon Yellowhorn and Xwalactun to join us on December 4th.

Additionally, this year we are actively engaging with Jacquelyn Gladstone, our Indigenous Educator. As we only have one indigenous-identified student enrolled at Eagle Harbour we are using a whole school approach on Thursdays when she is with us. To date she has shared with us the Indigenous Poppy and will be sharing her community connections to herring and the herring drum song.

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

We continue to plan our school learning journey using the Indigenous Ways of Knowing as our guide. We use these ways of knowing 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. Our school community has committed to continually educate those around us that these truths still exist today and it is our duty to make a better future for everyone.

#### **7. How does your plan support Indigenous Equity? Have you considered the following questions:**

At present, we have knowledge of only one indigenous-identified student enrolled at Eagle Harbour. Therefore, it is important that the teachers and staff make every effort to invite and welcome indigenous friends, guest teachers, visitors and community members to participate in our school as often as possible so that indigenous voices and perspectives are reflected more equitably to this indigenous-identified student and the community as a whole.