



West Bay

Indigenous Education School Plan 2023 - 2024

1. School:

West Bay Elementary School

2. School Indigenous Education Committee Members:

Morikke Espenhain, Kirsten Little, Chantelle McGrath, Jessica Richardson, Mimi Ross, Scott Slater

3. School Main Contact Person(s):

Scott Slater (Principal)

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

- **Unit of Inquiry Planning:** First Peoples' Principles are built into each Unit of Inquiry and documented in IB planners.
- **Outdoor Learning experiences** are started with a Territorial Acknowledgment. Students are taught how to speak their own land acknowledgement. There has also been daily territorial acknowledgements on our morning announcements.
- **Guest Speakers:** Sahplek, Bob Baker, visited West Bay for storytelling and song; Rebecca Duncan (Squamish Elder) shared about land use and animals.
- **Field Trips:** Talking Trees field trip led by a local elder in parks around West Bay; visit to Van Dusen Gradnes and studying Indigenous plants; Squamish Nation Big House (NV School District); Hiwus Feast House at Grouse Mountain; and Ridge Wilderness Canoe Experience with Sahplek, Bob Baker.
- **Literacy Connections:** Strong Nations leveled readers are used by many classes.



- **World Mother Tongue Day:** students learned words in their home language and Squamish language.
- **PYP Exhibition:** Grade 7 students chose inquiry projects that centered on inequality of Indigenous peoples such as clean water access, the history and legacy of residential schools, and poor treatment of minority people.
- **Orange Shirt Day and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation:** Recognition and learning for Orange Shirt Day and the concept, *every child matters*. Discussions of privilege and racism in various classrooms. The Heart Garden was a school-wide initiative where students shared messages of inclusivity. There was also a Truth and Reconciliation art expression piece and school awareness campaign.

5. Action Plan for 2022/2023

West Bay will pursue the following goals and undertake the noted initiatives to support these goals.

Goal Statements

Our goals for 2023-2024 are to foster an (1) **understanding** and (2) **appreciation** of Squamish culture and people and Coast Salish peoples more broadly. (1) Understanding will largely relate this year to Squamish history, important cultural practices, and language. (2) Appreciation will relate to the history of Squamish people as stewards of the land we live, work, and play on, and learning about and valuing the local knowledge and wisdom related to living on the land in a good way by acknowledging what the land offers us and our responsibilities to it. Our last goal (3) is to foster a **mindset** in students oriented toward decolonization and reconciliation.

Initiatives and Learning Experiences

- (1) *To understand Squamish history, important cultural practices and language, we will:*
- a. Focus our Indigenous Education professional learning day in December on learning Squamish Language from Alroy Baker. We have requested that Mr. Baker include phrases that can be used often in the classroom and that teachers can share with students for their use.
 - b. Label items in the school in the Squamish language. For example, various spaces (bathrooms, the office) are labelled in French, we hope to label these in Squamish also.
 - c. Invite Sahplek, Bob Baker, to West Bay to teach students stories that have been important in the cultural learning of young people and help understand the history of our place.
 - d. Participate in the Canoe Experience with Sahplek and Ridge Wilderness to learn about the importance of the canoe – literally and metaphorically – to the Squamish people.



- e. Grade Three students will visit the Cheakamus Centre in Squamish to learn about how Squamish people have lived on the land for hundreds of years.

(2) To foster an appreciation of the Squamish people and culture, including respecting Indigenous knowledge and wisdom with an eye towards living more sustainably, in addition to the points noted above, we will:

- a. Incorporate planning time in professional development for teachers to ensure Indigenous Ways of Knowing, and First Peoples Principles of Learning, are embedded in learning experiences in an ongoing fashion throughout units of inquiry through the use of authentic Indigenous resources, citing local knowledge and knowledge keepers.
- b. Learn from ways of being of Squamish people and apply those lessons to live more sustainably.

(3) To foster a mindset in students oriented toward decolonization and reconciliation, we will:

- a. Recognize Orange Shirt Day in a meaningful way: age-appropriate lessons regarding the concept of Every Child Matters, shared and visible projects such as our Orange Heart Garden display featuring student reflections on inclusivity.
- b. Learn about what decolonization means by drawing on the words and ideas of Kevin Lamoureux and Jo Chrona. Continue to learn about new ways to decolonize routines and practises, such as considering the physical set-up of classrooms, alternative learning spaces, visual displays, outdoor experiential learning, ways of sharing knowledge and understanding, and resources used in learning.
- c. Acknowledge Indigenous Peoples Day to celebrate Indigenous People across Canada and draw lessons that will help orient society on a more sustainable path.

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

- IB Units of Inquiry, refined in professional learning days and ongoing collaboration with the IB Coordinator, embed Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Perspectives. The challenge is for educators to know enough about these Ways of Knowing so as to not present a simplified version to students that diminishes students' understanding of the depth of this knowledge.
- West Bay does not currently have students who identify as Indigenous; however, we want all students to see and hear the Squamish language in the school as continual reminders of acknowledging the land the school resides on. Further, when we do have students at West Bay who are Indigenous, we want them to hear and see the language.

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



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- At this point in time, we do not have students who identify as Indigenous who we are transitioning to or from West Bay, however, we continue to refine our transition processes for students coming into Kindergarten, coming into Grade 4 from Cypress Park (as Grade 3 at Cypress Park), students coming to West Bay from outside of the community, and transitioning to Secondary School. We plan to incorporate some aspect of Indigenous learning in our Welcome to Kindergarten event so that the first experience children have in school makes clear the importance this learning has in our school and that we want to ensure our Indigenous students feel welcome.