

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2011-2012**

**PRINCE GEORGE SECONDARY
#57 Prince George**

Prince George Secondary School AESN Team:

Chairperson/Sponsor, Jennifer Pighin, Teacher

Co-Chairperson, Terry Espejo, Teacher

Sponsor Elder Stella George, Gitxsan Aboriginal Dance and Cultural Teacher

Team Members:

Steve Bordeleau, Teacher

Brian Pataky, Teacher

Ivy Chelsea, Eagle Center Ab. Ed. Worker

Paige French, Eagle Center Ab. Ed. Worker

Amber Browne, Eagle Center Ab. Ed. Worker

David Davidson, Aboriginal Social Worker

Mary Lamarre, Counsellor

Supportive Community Network Team:

School District #57

Krystal McKinnon, Ab. Ed. Worker

School District #57

Cheryl Webster, Ab. Ed. Worker

All Nations Elders

Joyce Roberts, All Nations Elder Coordinator

All Nations Elders

Jim Roberts, All Nations Elder

College of New Caledonia

Jessica Erickson, CNC Academic Advisor

College of New Caledonia

Marlene Erickson, CNC Academic Advisor

University of Northern British Columbia

Paul Michel, UNBC Director First Nations Center

University of Northern British Columbia

Toni Carlton, UNBC Peer Counselor Coordinator

Lheidli T'enneh

Edith and Robert Frederick, Lheidli T'enneh Member

School Inquiry and Action

School Question

Will weekly Aboriginal Culture classes, post-secondary tours, cultural tours, dialogue, mentorship through Elders, guest speakers, peer-tutors, and leadership opportunities and school-wide participation in Aboriginal awareness activities increase instructional effectiveness and help students to appreciate and celebrate diversity as measured by academic achievement in core courses, attendance and qualitative survey questions using BC Ministry of Education performance standards?

Focus of Inquiry

In June of 2011 the Prince George Secondary School AESN Team, consisting of a core team of ten staff members, formed a school-based inquiry question geared towards improving academic achievement leading to increased graduation rates and sense of belonging for Aboriginal students through the planning and implementation of a weekly Aboriginal Culture class, post-secondary and cultural field trip program.

Strategies

Activity Log: Each activity was led by community leaders and elders.

Numbers of student participants are listed only.

- October 19, 2011: *Introduction* with student participants. 3 participants.
- October 26, 2011: *Beaded Earrings*. 5 participants.
- November 2, 2011: *Beaded Earrings Continued*. 3 participants.

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2011-2012**

- November 9, 2011: *Survey* presented, *CNC Field Trip Form* distributed, *Beaded Earrings Continued*. 3 participants.
- November 15, 2011: *CNC TOUR* 28 participants
- November 16, 2011: Aboriginal Awareness Week Planning. 3 participants
- November 23, 2011: Aboriginal Awareness Week Planning continued. 1 participant
- November 30, 2011: *Metis History: Bones Game* 3 participants
- December 7, 2011: *Making Bones Game* 3 participants
- December 14, 2011: *Playing Bones* 6 participants
- January 4, 2012: *Hand out UNBC Permission Slips* and *About Dream Catchers* and *Making Dream Catchers as gifts for Elders* 2 participants (continued during lunch hour on their own time to complete the set)
- January 11, 2012: *Hand out UNBC Permission Slips* and *Making Dream Catchers* 3 participants
- January 18, 2012: *UNBC Field Trip AM, Drum Philosophy and Drum Making Preparation Workshop PM*. 19 participants
- February 1, 2012: *Drum Making Preparation continued* 10 participants
- February 6-10, 2012: *First Annual Aboriginal Awareness Week School Wide Classroom Presentations, Daily Aboriginal Awareness Week Fact announcement*. Throughout the school approximately 10+ classes participated in welcoming a guest presentation on topics such as: plants, foods, medicines, bannock making, storytelling, feasts, cultural celebrations, families and traditions, games, employment and training opportunities. Other classes were encouraged to include a lesson within their subject area in respect of the Aboriginal Awareness Week.
- February 8, 2012: *Full Day Drum Making Workshop* 16 participants
- February 15, 2012: *Drum Painting and Drum Stick Making* 5 participants
- February 22, 2012: *Drum Painting and Drum Stick Making* 4 participants
- Feb 22 – 13, 2012: Note: Lunch hour activities cancelled due to withdrawal of extracurricular activities and low student turnout.
 - Students were welcome to use the art classroom during lunch hours to complete their projects. On average there were 2 student participants dropping in daily.
 - Permission slips for additional field trips were made available through the Eagle Center and Art Room 640.
 - Announcements were made to encourage students to sign up for field trips and for teachers to sign up for classroom presentations by Eagle Center staff throughout the year and specifically during the first annual Aboriginal Awareness Week at PGSS.
- April 18, 2012: *Exploration Place* and *Historical Tour of Fort George Park* 20 participants
- May 16, 2012: *Eskers Park/Vivian Lakes Trails* Elder guided tour of local traditional ecological knowledge. 16 participants
Student Surveys completed (see APPENDIX-A)
- June 6, 2012: *Huble Homestead* historical tour 18 participants
Student Reflections completed (see APPENDIX-B)
- June 8, 2012: *Second Annual Feast of the Forrest, Traditional Drum Blessing Ceremony* and *Smudge Ceremony* honouring all students, staff and volunteers of this year's AESN activities and student support. Attended by many students, teachers, family members, Elders, community members and SD#57 school leaders.
- June 8, 2012: *Aboriginal Grad Feast* hosted by the Eagle Center and attended by students, teachers, family members, Elders, community members and SD#57 school leaders.

ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK 2011-2012

School Findings

In June of both 2011 and 2012, qualitative student feedback from the Prince George Secondary School program was very positive (see Appendix A, B). All students surveyed enjoyed their experience, expressed interest in attending again next year and offered many new ideas for the activities. In order of popularity, suggestions were as follows:

- Expanded Aboriginal Cultural Activities i.e. Sweat Lodge, Smudge, Regalia making.
- More drumming and singing for fun and therapeutic reasons.
- Traditional hunting, fishing, medicines and food preparation.
- Heritage, local history and language instruction.
- Story-telling and games.
- Tours to post-secondary: 60% of the 2010-2011 class said their goal-setting was helped by tours of pre-surveyed areas of interest; such as Early Childhood Education, Natural Resource Management, Computer Studies, Nursing, and Heavy Duty Mechanics.

Results from the 2012 survey in July

Throughout this year the PGSS AESN team feels that we have successfully:

- encouraged all staff to utilize the presentations offered through the Eagle Center and community resources as an enhancement to the curriculum and instruction throughout the year and during the Aboriginal Awareness Week
- included Indigenous perspectives in classrooms by including Aboriginal activities, materials and guest speakers in classrooms
- provided qualified instruction in Aboriginal history, language, and culture with the ongoing participation of community Elders during class presentations, tours and inclusion of elders in our teachings
- provided Post-secondary goal-setting opportunities through both tours and guest speakers with the goal of improving academic achievement in the process
- made both classroom and school a model of openness, tolerance, and respect
- contributed to dispelling racism within our school by guiding students to appreciate and respect the diversity of cultural patterns and expectations of the Aboriginal student population in the school
- provided students with varied opportunities for the development of post-secondary goal-setting, increasing authenticity of school learning outcomes.
- facilitated student learning about the history, language and culture of First Peoples raising self-esteem and awareness of local history
- helped students explore a traditional heritage identity with different behavior patterns and expectations, relationships to authority, family, peers, conventions of politeness, formality and other sociopragmatic factors (Brown, 2007).

Reference

Brown, H.D. (2007). *Teaching by Principles, an Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education Inc.

Problems and Solutions:

This year the team struggled to work within a limited scope and framework due to both the loss of the previous years' 29 minute Tutorial Block within PGSS as well as the limited involvement from teachers during the province wide BCTF strike action and withdrawal of extracurricular activities in response to Bill 22.

As a result of the loss of the 29 minute Tutorial Block we were not able to secure a core group of students as we had in previous years. This year the culture class operated as a drop in activity group during lunches. The initial turnout for activities was low but student participation increased as the year progressed.

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2011-2012**

Later in the second semester, the limited teacher participation in extracurricular activities resulting from response to Bill 22 further restricted the ability for the group to establish a consistent schedule and core student body.

Regardless of these circumstances, teachers, staff and students continued to work together to carry on with the Aboriginal Activity Group in various ways: field trips continued on a sign up basis, guest speakers were brought into classes, full-day workshops continued with release time, at least 15 students participated in completing surveys, the annual feast was successfully organized, prepared and held.

APPENDIX – A

AESN Question Survey - May 16, 2012

20 Questions

Number of Surveys 14

Grade	8	9	10	11	12
	3	2	5	2	2

Aboriginal Ancestry	None	Metis	Status	Inuit	blank
	2	2	9		1

1. What program are you in right now?

1. Regular	6
2. Skills	3
3. PEP	1
4. Alt Ed.	3
5. Montessori	

2. Favorite Subjects

1. Math	7	
2. English	6	
3. Science	2	
4. Social Studies	3	
5. French	1	
6. PE	2	
7. Electives	2	
8. Other	2	Dance

3. Absolute Favorite Subject and why

Cafeteria because I like cooking
 Math because it is easy to learn and do
 English because of poems and reading and I like to write stories
 PE because it is fun
 Textiles because you get to work with your hands
 Drama is fun

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2011-2012**

4. Career Goal Similar to Favorite subject	
1. Yes	4
2. No	4
3. Not sure	5
5. Reasons to be in school	
1. Friends	6
2. Parents/Guardians	7
3. Teachers or other staff	2
4. Subjects	
5. Post-Secondary	3
6. To get a job	8
7. Other	
6. PGSS - "the place to be"	
1. yes	8
2. No	
3. Sometimes	5
7. When you are out of school, do you know the options available to you for education and funding	
1. Yes	1
2. No	2
3. Maybe	5
4. I know of a few options	4
8. Which options would you choose after school?	
1. Trades	1
2. University	
3. College	8
4. Work	4
5. Other	
9. What is stopping you from pursuing post-secondary education?	
1. Grades	3
2. Finances	1
3. I'm unsure about what to do	5
4. Other	3
10. What programs would you like to know at CNC?	
1. Professional Cook	3
2. Electrician	1

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2011-2012**

3. Car Mechanic	1
4. Early Childhood Education	1
5. Welding	1
6. Natural Resources and Envir. Tech	1
7. Forest Tech	1
8. Office Worker	1
9. Nurse	1
10 Social Worker	3
11. Women's Studies	1
12. Heavy Duty Mechanic	1
5. Other	2
Singer /Dancer	1

11. What programs would you like to know about at UNBC

1. Teacher	1
2. Arts	3
3. Social Worker	3
4. Sciences	1
5. Environ. Science and Engineering	2
6. Business	3
7. Health Science	1
8. Outdoor Recreation	2
9. Women's Studies	1
10. Nurse	2
11. English	1

12. Are you interested in learning about Aboriginal Culture and History?

1. Yes	9
2. No	
3. Maybe	3

13. Did you know that there is a First Peoples English course at PGSS?

1. Yes	3
2. No	9

14. Would you be interested in taking EFP 10?

1. Yes	5
2. No	3
3. Maybe	4

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2011-2012**

15. Did you know there is an Aboriginal Activities offered at PGSS during lunch hours once a week?

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1. Yes | 6 |
| 2. No | 5 |

16 Are you participating in the Aboriginal Activity Block at PGSS?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Yes | 4 |
| 2. No and I am interested | 3 |
| 3. No and I am not interested | 2 |
| 4. Other | 3 |

1. Homework to do

17. Aboriginal Cultural Activities experienced so far

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Circles | 8 |
| 2. Potlatches | 8 |
| 3. Feast | 7 |
| 4. Sweat Lodge | 5 |
| 5. Smudge | 6 |
| 6. Drumming | 8 |
| 7. Drum Making | 6 |
| 8. Singing | 6 |
| 9. Dancing | 9 |
| 10. Regalia Making | 1 |
| 11. Arts and Crafts | 6 |
| 12. Language | 4 |
| 13. Story Telling | 5 |
| 14. Carving | 4 |
| 15. Games | 8 |
| 16. Traditional Hunting | 4 |
| 17. Traditional Fishing | 3 |
| 18. Traditional Medicine | 5 |
| 19. Traditional Food Preparation | 6 |
| 20. Traditional Ecological Knowledge | 4 |
| 21. Other | |

18. Aboriginal Activities would be interested in learning

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. Circles | 1 |
| 2. Potlatches | 1 |
| 3. Feast | |
| 4. Sweat Lodge | 4 |
| 5. Smudge | 4 |
| 6. Drumming | 2 |
| 7. Drum Making | 2 |

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2011-2012**

8. Singing	
9. Dancing	1
10. Regalia Making	6
11. Arts and Crafts	2
12. Language	3
13. Story Telling	2
14. Carving	2
15. Games	
16. Traditional Hunting	4
17. Traditional Fishing	4
18. Traditional Medicine	2
19. Traditional Food Preparation	2
20. Traditional Ecological Knowledge	3
21. Other	

19. Rate yourself	E	G	S	I
Attendance		4	5	1
Work Habits	2	7		
Academics		8	1	
Electives	1	4	2	2

20. Any other questions/comments

APPENDIX – B
Student Reflections
June 6th 2012

Students were given a *Reflection* sheet with three prompts:

1. 3 things I learned
2. 2 things I would like to know more about
3. 1 thing I will do with what I have learned

There was also space for any additional feedback/comments/suggestions.

The results are as follows.

I've learned:

- Canoes made from cottonwood don't last very long
- What a fence net is and how it's used
- There is a hundred year old house still standing
- I learned about the portage and the name Giscome
- I learned about the "short cut"
- That fish traps are real
- I learned that the canoes aren't permanent
- I can make gum out of tree sap
- Lheidli T'enneh means where the two rivers meet

ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2011-2012

- How to make a drum
- The olden days
- Fish people
- History of Fort George Park
- Every thing
- How to feed sheep
- To look at things
- A new game
- The unique buildings
- Huble and his co-workers built his house
- Pete helped Hubles family through the Spanish Flu
- Native Plants in the forests
- History and the now
- Cultural
- Huble family
- More about tools back in the day
- More about the culture
- More about their ways

I would like to know more about:

- Lheidli T'enneh culture
- First Nations Medicine
- Dream Catchers
- The history of the different buildings
- More about how government system thought they should be the only power, like why they do
- Whatever people are listening to
- Canoes and the fish traps
- The canoe and the fish traps
- The language
- The history
- The residential schools
- What kind of wood did the First Nations people use to smoke the fish?
- The way life used to be
- The Huble family
- The Huble farm and territory

What I will do with what I learned:

- I will share with my family
- Start reading the First Nations dictionary
- Tell someone
- Tell someone
- I will ask my mom if we can go to the place
- Go back and see more and learn more
- Help out next year more
- Tell people
- Remember the native ways with pride

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2011-2012**

Other Feedback:

- Awesome time w everyone even with rain was very nice
- I had fun too bad I can't go again next year
- Very fun
- Great job!
- I had lots of fun I think we should do may more things like this!
- I had fun!

APPENDIX – C

2012 PGSS AESN Aboriginal Activity Yearbook Spread

This spread contains images and a write ups about the PGSS AESN Aboriginal Activities prepared for the yearbook in February 2012.
*spread scaled down to fit.

Aboriginal Activities

This years activities are organized by the Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network Team, with the support of the Network of Performance Based Schools, the 30457 Aboriginal Education Department, the PGSS Parent Advisory Committee and All Nations Elders. We thank our supporters for their valued contributions.

The Aboriginal Awareness Activity block is open to ALL PGSS students. Activities occur in on Wednesdays at lunch.

Students participate in field trips to local post-secondary institutions and culturally relevant and historical destinations such as UNSC, CNC, Vivian Lake Trails, Fort George Park/Exploration Place and the Hubble Homestead.

Weekly activities, guided by local Elders, include Traditional Arts and Crafts, Medicines, Foods, Drum Making, Drumming, Singing, Storytelling, Winter Games and the organizing of an Aboriginal Awareness Week.