

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK  
2011-2012**

**WELLINGTON SECONDARY  
#68 Nanaimo Ladysmith**

**Wellington Aboriginal Leadership Team (WALT)**

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**Contact**

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**School Context/Community Involvement**

Wellington Secondary is located in central Nanaimo. The school's student population is diverse in cultural backgrounds. Part of the diversity is attributed to a strongly developed and desired International Education program. Aboriginal Education is also prominent at Wellington, with 10% of the school population identifying as Aboriginal.

**School Inquiry and Action**

**School Question**

What would engage Aboriginal youth to form connection with Aboriginal Education?

**Focus of Inquiry**

The goal of our inquiry question is ultimately to create a school culture that is inclusive and safe for Aboriginal learners. Using the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) as our guiding document, Aboriginal Education created a series of lessons to be incorporated into the current Social Studies curriculum. The lessons were to include traditional knowledge, teachings and culture.

**Links with District Enhancement Agreement**

Our Inquiry question is linked to the District Enhancement Agreement question "How can we enhance ALL students' knowledge and ALL adults understanding of Aboriginal history, perspective, people and the contemporary context?" Through this lens, we will survey how Aboriginal learners and their peers see themselves in the physical environment and curriculum to create an Aboriginal Education program that is reflective of their valuation.

**Strategies**

Aboriginal Education aims to create safe learning environments for our Aboriginal students through the incorporation of traditional knowledge and teachings within the current academic courses. Working with our Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement partners, we aim to develop cultural adaptations with Social Studies curriculum, including oral tradition of talking circles and stories, Elder teachings and cultural ceremony.

**Focus on Formative Assessment Learning Strategies**

Using Dover Bay Aboriginal Education Formative Assessment model for Measuring Aspects of the Holistic Self as a guide our goal is to measure social awareness and attitude towards Aboriginal knowledge and history. Students were guided to provide feedback through an open "free write" on the Residential School talking circle. The feedback was then used as a guide to determine the knowledge and attitude of students in relation to Aboriginal history, perspective, people and the contemporary context.

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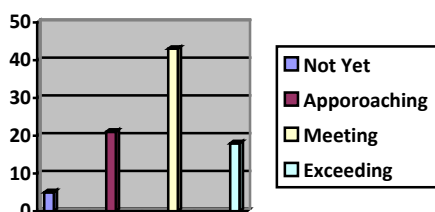
**School Findings**

	Not Yet Meeting	Approaching	Meeting	Exceeding
Social Awareness and Aboriginal ways of Knowing	Has no interest or connection to Aboriginal ways of knowing or culture.	Is beginning to seek an understanding of Aboriginal ways of knowing.	Is open to engaging in activities that focus on Aboriginal culture or heritage.	Student inherently understands Aboriginal ways of knowing.
Attitude toward history & contemporary context	Student presents negative knowledge or understanding of contemporary context	Does not express knowledge or understanding of contemporary context	Demonstrates a sense of knowledge regarding impact in a contemporary context	Takes action to share in culture & knowledge with others

\* adapted from Dover's Aboriginal Education *Rubrics for Formative Assessment of the Holistic Self*

Feedback assessment of 87 students

	NY	A	M	E
Spring 2012	5	21	43	18



**AESN Plans for 2012-2013**

Residential School talking circle series was an effective means of incorporating Aboriginal knowledge and culture into the current curriculum. I found this inquiry question vital to the development of further programming and will continue to partner with classroom teachers to build Aboriginal knowledge into the mainstream curriculum.

**Reflections, Advice**

The goal of the inquiry question was to allow for Aboriginal students to build connection to Aboriginal education. Prior to this project, the Wellington Aboriginal Leadership Team attempted several initiatives to help build connections without visible success. Through reflection it was determined Aboriginal Education had to build a safe and inclusive environment for Aboriginal students. Partnering with mainstream education allowed for connection between all students with Aboriginal Education. Through this connection, we were able to enhance non-Aboriginal student's understanding of Aboriginal history, perspective, people and contemporary context. This understanding allowed for students to challenge stereotypes or predetermined belief systems regarding Aboriginal people and therefore contributing to a safer and more inclusive school environment. As we continue to create understanding and knowledge within the school community, it is our hope Aboriginal students will form stronger connection with Aboriginal Education. I would like to continue this inquiry question into the following year as we slowly bring Aboriginal teachings, knowledge and context to the overall school environment.