

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2011-2012**

**WOODLANDS SECONDARY
#68 Nanaimo Ladysmith**

Leadership Team

Wellington Aboriginal Leadership Team (WALT):

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Contact

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School Context/Community Involvement

Woodlands Secondary is located in central Nanaimo. We are in an area of mixed socioeconomic status, including a high percentage of low income families. Aboriginal students make up approximately 12% of the student population. Aboriginal Education is central to the school community and the Ab Ed room is accessed daily by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Aboriginal Education provides a safe environment for students to socialize and check-in with school staff, as well as access academic support.

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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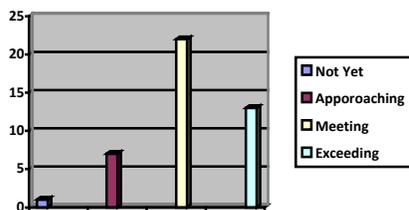
School Findings

| | 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 48 students

| | NY | A | M | E |
|-------------|----|---|----|----|
| Spring 2012 | 1 | 7 | 22 | 13 |



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 questions vital to the development of further programing 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. Strong support of Aboriginal Education at Woodlands allowed for an easy partnering with mainstream education. This classroom presence allowed for greater 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. Through the incorporation of Aboriginal knowledge into the current curriculum allowed for our Aboriginal students to take ownership in their school community. This was most evident in students who chose to participate in the closing ceremony and invited Elders and family members as guests on this day. 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.