



2013-2014 AESN Case Study

School: Cliff Drive Elementary **District:** SD37 Delta

Area of focus: Enhancement Agreement

Inquiry Team Members: Susan Gillis, Colleen Gough, Diane Jubinville, Joanne Keller, Vanessa Morrell, Kristi Schofield

Scanning: We noticed our school community was not connected to the heritage of our Aboriginal students.

Focus:

- We have strengthened our connection through professional development sessions with an Aboriginal Elder who discussed the impact of the Residential School system and through two assemblies for our students and communities on flora and fauna indigenous to our neighbourhoods and the historical significance of the Aboriginal history of the lands that our school (including Tsawwassen, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh nations).
- The learners in our school benefited from these experiences with awareness of the lands, honoring the historical cultures
- The adult team recognizes the historical wrong-doings and have developed more empathy for the Aboriginal communities.

Hunch:

- We believe this is being effective for our learners and will continue to follow this plan next year.

New professional learning:

- The District Vice Principal of Aboriginal Education and various guest speakers came to our school and supported professional development for our staff and assemblies, class and small group instruction for our students
- Teacher team from Stikine came to share their novel study program
- Truth and Reconciliation presentation from an Elder; situating our local Aboriginal people's historical perspective on education

Taking action:

- We began with a whole school presentation on why we acknowledge traditional territory by the Aboriginal Support worker in the school and the District Vice Principal of Aboriginal Education. This included talking about the surrounding area, the history of settlement and the history of the First Nation People. We then invited Elders and presenters from the First Nation communities to speak about different aspects of the

culture at future assemblies. We will also be providing opportunities for classrooms to take part in hands-on, experiential learning both inside and outside the classroom.

- Our Grade 4 students were invited to participate in a local government presentation and luncheon at the Tsawwassen Long House (but were unable to attend)
- Our Grade 6 students had a presentation by the Tsawwassen First Nations (TFN) Chief and Counselor about indigenous self-government.
- The entire school participated and celebrated the TFN Treaty Signing, with a school wide assembly, attended by TFN and local Elders.
- Many staff, students and parents were able to attend an evening session with Wab Kinew.
- We were unable to coordinate with our sister school in the South end of Delta, however, we plan to do some activities in the future.

Checking:

- The Grade 7 students from TFN have extended an invitation to all of their classmates to attend the TFN Graduation Ceremony this year. This is a first time broad invitation – as in the past only select teachers have been invited.
- Our school climate was positively spoken about at a TFN council meeting, and mentioned in that community's newsletter. Formal feedback is not available, but informally, the majority of staff indicated a positive impact from the presentations that were done.
- Students of Aboriginal heritage have noted an increase of comfort in talking about their ancestry/culture.
- We will not be using Satisfaction Surveys as the Aboriginal student sample size is too small and the data is therefore masked.
- Students from other Aboriginal cultures have spoken freely with their classmates and other staff describing how their traditions are similar or different to the Coast Salish traditions that have been introduced by our TFN Elders.
- A small group have spent several afternoons learning to jingle dance, with the intention of opening up this activity to non-Aboriginal students in the new school year.