



2013-2014 AESN Case Study

School: Cougar Canyon **District:** SD37 Delta

Area of focus: Enhancement Agreement

Inquiry Team Members: Natalie Crespo, Fiona Fraser, Ashif Jiwa, Arnie Leon, Karen McDonald, Jacquie Schierer

Scanning: At Cougar Canyon, we have started to embark on the journey of increased awareness of, and empathy for, Aboriginal people and their communities and the history that we share. It is imperative that our staff understands the importance of *why* we need to learn about this history, and where we will go once we know the truth. Through our beginning stages staff members are starting to appreciate the importance of sharing this knowledge with our student, colleague and parent communities.

Focus: Our initial focus was to educate our staff members about Residential schools and the impact they had on Aboriginal children, families and communities. We hosted an after school film presentation about Residential Schools and then provided an opportunity to discuss what was viewed. Attendance was voluntary and we had 17 staff members join us after school.

The Inquiry Team created a survey and this was sent out to all staff in order to provide us with a good baseline for where we were beginning and what supports would be useful for staff members in order to embed Aboriginal content throughout the curriculum.

We had intended to hold an assembly working directly with our District Vice Principal of Aboriginal Education, an Elder and our school Aboriginal support worker. Unfortunately, our Aboriginal support worker suffered an injury and we felt that his presence was paramount to establishing a visible, familiar Aboriginal presence in the school so we decided to wait for his return.

Hunch: With the changing perceptions and mindsets of our staff members we are looking forward to continuing to work with district staff, Aboriginal support workers, Elders and special guests from the surrounding First Nation communities (Tsawwassen, Musqueam and Tsleil--- Waututh) about the history and cultural value of contributions First Nations people have made in the community.

It will be valuable for our entire school community to become aware of the history and cultural value of the Aboriginal ways of learning and knowing. Our goal is to create an

inclusive environment that celebrates, and acknowledges, Aboriginal culture along with other cultures represented in our school population.

New professional learning: The Inquiry team will meet to look at the survey results and plan future professional development sessions, according to staff needs/requests.

Teachers have begun to book sessions with the Aboriginal success coordinator to learn ways to incorporate the First Peoples' Principles of Learning into their daily practice.

Taking action: Cougar Canyon will be hosting a school-wide assembly early this fall to explain the history of our area and the importance of acknowledging the land as traditional territory. We are working with the District Aboriginal Education Team as well as our Aboriginal support worker to put this presentation together.

Information will be made available to the parent community (i.e. newsletters, website, Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings). Arrangements can be made to have a District Aboriginal Education staff member, and/or an Elder present attend a PAC meeting.

Checking: We have already noticed *openness* with our staff in discussions about incorporating Aboriginal education into our teaching practices (at staff meetings, in the staff room or small group discussions). The teachers' willingness to invite the Aboriginal Success Coordinator into their classrooms, and to participate in professional development activities around place-based, Aboriginal ways of learning is an exciting start to bringing Aboriginal education to all members of the Cougar Canyon school community.