



## 2013-2014 AESN Case Study

**School:** Caledonia Secondary School    **District:** SD82 Coast Mountains

**Area of focus:** Transitions

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**Scanning:** Next year we will have 59 grade eleven First Nations students and 86 grade twelve First Nations students attending Caledonia Secondary School (total anticipated school population will be approximately 600 students). Some of our Aboriginal learners have not visited our local post-secondary institution and or made connections with other Aboriginal students enrolled in post-secondary programs. We want to make arrangements for our students to visit our local college and participate in a “College Connections” field study.

**Focus:** A “Transition Plan” is needed for our high school students to view our local post-secondary institution (Northwest Community College) as a viable option for their consideration. Our driving question will be: “Will our students’ achievement at our school improve if they connect with a post-secondary program and discover what the institution has to offer them for their future?” We have consulted with the Northwest Community College Staff to plan a “College Connections” tour.

**Hunch:** We feel that if a field study is offered to our students then they will see the “bigger picture” of their learning beyond their own high school graduation. We also believe that by introducing our students to college staff then there will be a sense of familiarity and support when our students apply to the local college and attend classes.

**New Professional Learning:** We scheduled a series of consultation meetings between our school’s formal leaders and the local college staff so we could coordinate a field study to the Terrace campus for our students. These meeting formed new linking relationships between our high school and Northwest Community College.

**Taking Action:** Our students toured the local college campus to connect with staff in post-secondary programs so they could see what the campus was like and ask questions. Students visited the college registration office, library, cafeteria, and various activity stations (Northwest Coast Art and Design carving shed, trades building, nursing classroom, early childhood education classroom). Afterwards the college staff arranged for information booths to be displayed during our parent-teacher report card evening in the spring.

**Checking:** Report card data indicated that a majority of the First Nations students who participated in the “College Connections” activity were able to achieve good progress with their courses in the second semester and some of the students applied to the local college for their post-secondary education. After the college tour was concluded survey sheets were distributed to students to gather feedback and have students share their impressions of their “College Connections” experience.

### ***SAMPLE of Student Survey Responses***

#### ***What did you find most useful?***

- I learned where my classes will be
- Being able to ask questions about how university and college works (programs, enrolment)
- It gave me a sense of where some of the classrooms are and the people seem really nice
- The class sizes are small
- The tour through the buildings
- Getting familiar with the school and some of the staff (e.g., librarian)
- The enthusiasm of the instructors
- I had a great time listening to what the courses are about

#### ***What did you learn that you didn't know before?***

- That college is not scary
- I learned that the school is much bigger and more mature than it seems
- University credits can be transferred
- What the inside of the college looks like
- More about the nursing program
- Requirements that are needed to be accepted into a program
- The pre-requisites required and how to apply
- The library is pretty great
- The college is a good place to go
- Field school...I didn't know they existed
- That you can take classes here, anywhere
- The people are really nice and helpful, very welcoming
- That there is a person at the college to talk about being First Nations and how it helps with schooling funds/costs

#### ***How did this event help you with your educational planning?***

- It helped me set my career goals
- To think what to do outside high school
- I should apply sooner than later if I want to be accepted
- Figuring out money costs
- I had clarification about some programs I want to go into
- It gave me the basic knowledge of what I want to do
- I know exactly what I need to take the courses

- It gives me a better understanding of how the college works
- It helped me see my options on what I want to do in life
- I made a big decision to stay in college in Terrace
- It encouraged me to keep up with my plans
- It got me thinking to start making a plan
- I might include classes that I didn't think of at high school

**Reflections/Advice:** Having the college tour scheduled on a non-instructional day was good because our students were not absent from their regular high school classes and this simulated the real world experience of making the necessary travel arrangements needed to get to the local college. Next year we will enhance the "College Connections" tour by asking college students to be assistant tour guides accompanying the college staff. We will also encourage our secondary teachers to arrange field studies to the local college as part of their high school coursework (i.e., college library research projects) and/or have the college staff visit our high school as guest speakers to make connections/comparisons between high school courses and college courses.