



2013-2014 AESN Case Study

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

Area of focus: Transitions

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Scanning: Next year there will be 64 grade 10 First Nations students attending Caledonia Secondary School (total anticipated school population will be approximately 600 students). Our grade 10 students will be new arrivals to our secondary school leaving behind their previous school, Skeena Middle School. We want our new students to feel welcome and excited to begin their secondary school education in September, 2014.

Focus: A “Transition Plan” was needed from Skeena Middle School to Caledonia Secondary School. Our driving question was: “Will our grade 10 First Nations students’ feel less anxious coming to their new school in September if they have the opportunity to visit their electives teachers and classrooms before they select their timetable courses for the following year?” We consulted with formal leaders from the local middle school and planned a “Caledonia Connections” experience.

Hunch: We believed that if the grade 10 students visited our school and met some of their potential teachers prior to their September arrival, they would feel less anxious about beginning their secondary education. The school visit would allow the grade 9 students to see their electives teachers and hear about the various programs that are available for them to consider before they are given their course selections sheet to complete. This “Caledonia Connections” school visit should make the course selection planning sheet easier for the grade 9 students to complete because they have received a brief introductory session with the electives teachers. We scheduled a parent meeting shortly after the “Caledonia Connections” field study so the parents could hear about the course options that are available for their teenager to consider before the paperwork is given to the grade 9 students to complete.

New Professional Learning: We invited the grade 9 students from Skeena Middle School to come to Caledonia Secondary School for a field study so they could meet their electives teachers and visit various classrooms. We also invited support staff from Skeena Middle School to accompany the grade 9 students so they could learn about our secondary school as well and share this information with other staff members from their school. The tour guides for the middle school students were grade 11 students who would become familiar faces to the grade 9 students in September. The tour guides accompanied the small groups of grade 9 students who rotated to various locations

throughout the school (gymnasium, library, trades shops, computer lab, art room, home economics room).

Taking Action: At the end of January 2014 the grade 9 students from the local middle school came to our school for a half day and visited a variety of electives teachers and classrooms. The students heard about program options that were available before they completed their course selection sheets the following week. There was a follow-up parent meeting in the evening at the secondary school to explain course options that were available for the grade nine students to consider.

Checking: When the grade 9 students first arrived at our secondary school and assembled in the gym they were asked to indicate if they had already decided which two elective courses they would want to take in grade 10. The hand survey indicated that only a small percentage of the grade 9 students were confident about their course selections for the following year. After the grade 9 students finished the guided tours of our secondary school they assembled in the gym again and were asked to indicate if they had made a decision about their electives courses. The hand survey revealed a substantial increase in the number of students who felt confident about the electives courses they wanted to study. Some students even indicated that they had changed their minds about their electives courses after having participated in the guided tours and hearing about the various program options.

There was a follow-up meeting for the parents of the grade nine students from the middle school where they received information about course selections before the grade 9 students were given their course selections sheets to complete. The evening parent meeting at our secondary school was very well attended (Lecture Theatre was filled). This meeting provided an opportunity in a casual setting for parents to receive information about the Graduation program so they could assist their child the following week by complete the course selections planning sheet. Our school's formal leaders were available at the evening meeting to answer questions and make informal connections with parents.

Reflections/Advice: We learned that scheduling a parent information meeting prior to distributing the course planning sheets to grade 9 students was a good idea because parents were able to help their child complete the paperwork. The "Caledonia Connections" school visit was popular with our secondary school's electives teachers because they were given the opportunity to promote their programs to new students using their own words and demonstrations so students could see and hear directly from the electives teacher. Feedback we received from grade 9 students indicated that they felt the school tour was helpful. Next year we plan to have grade 10 student projects from electives courses on display so the grade 9 students can see what is done in the various courses. We also plan to give the grade 9 students a brief feedback survey about the "connections" tours so we can make refinements/changes if necessary.