



2014-2015 AESN Case Study

School: Gibson Elementary **District:** #37 Delta

Area of Focus: Enhancement Agreement

Inquiry Team Members: Britt Bryan, Linda Klassen,
Arnie Leon, Peggy Ogloff

Scanning: For the Past two years, Gibson has focused on the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement goal that states: All students will demonstrate a deeper understanding and appreciation of the histories and cultures of Aboriginal Communities. We have worked on raising awareness through story telling and art, and have seen an increase in families who self identify as Aboriginal. As we open each assembly with the acknowledgement of territorial lands, students know that we share the land of the Coast Salish Peoples.

Focus: In 2014/15 school year the Inquiry focus was on connectedness, identity and a sense of place. The Inquiry question started out with: How will an increase in teaching resources and supports, influence classroom instruction and integration of Aboriginal knowledge into classroom practice and curriculum? It evolved into an inquiry around infusing Aboriginal place based learning into our curriculum.

Professional Learning: At Gibson we have 27 students identified as having Aboriginal heritage in an enrolment of 427 students. By learning more about Aboriginal culture through speakers, stories, dance, art and experiential learning, all staff has become more comfortable with their knowledge around Aboriginal culture. Peggy and Linda have taken part in the UBC MOOC course: Reconciliation through Indigenous Education, on Aboriginal Education. We learned about Indigenous Education through the lens of reconciliation, and how education programs and teaching practices can be modified in order to meaningfully integrate Indigenous knowledge worldviews and pedagogies in classrooms, schools and communities.

Our staff participated in the TFN Professional Learning day where we participated in a learning day about our local Aboriginal tribe history.

Action: Our Aboriginal Support worker has a regular schedule for the full day on Thursdays, and as staff collaborate with him on a regular basis, they learn to trust him to help them take risks and reflect their learning in their teaching practice. Our goal is to have Aboriginal culture along side other cultures reflected in the school, classrooms and hallways and celebrated in a positive and inclusive manner.

- Aboriginal support worker has scheduled full days on Thursdays to work with Gibson Students. Each of the 17 classes is able to have two cultural lessons with Arnie.
- Term One Dance classes
- Term Two: Building of Longhouses.
- Term Three: Aboriginal Cultural practices and law

This year at Gibson, we have had the privilege of having Karen McDonald, our District Aboriginal coordinator, work closely with a team of 6 teachers on ways to integrate Aboriginal knowledge into the new curriculum.

Peggy and Linda teach Aboriginal art /story on Monday afternoons as teachers collaborate on methods to Aboriginal Inclusion. We have focused on Place Based Learning, and have researched the trees in our school yard and adopted a coniferous and deciduous tree to observe and imagine with.

We have studied Susan Point's work with welcome poles and created two Gratitude Poles for the library, to help integrate the Coast Salish influence in our SEL Gratitude project.

Peggy is working with other librarians in the district to build up the Aboriginal books in our Delta School libraries.

Checking: We have noticed an increase in understanding amongst our staff around the importance of acknowledging our Aboriginal communities and roots in our classrooms. There is an increase of Aboriginal art and stories on the walls of our classrooms and halls, reflecting the Aboriginal cultures reflected in our school.

Reflections/Advice: We have learned that connectedness and a sense of place is crucial to identity. By acknowledging the harm that we as Canadians have done to our Aboriginal community and connecting that to the gifts that the Aboriginal people have given to Canadian culture, we are able to restore a sense of pride in identity to the families in our community that have Aboriginal heritage. By celebrating the Aboriginal culture through art and song, we are able to reclaim what we have lost.