

## 2014-2015 AESN Case Study



**School:** LA Matheson Secondary    **District:** #36 Surrey

**Area of Focus:** Enhancement Agreement

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**Question/Focus:** The development of a more wrap around approach that would be curricular based, although with a strong focus on Social Emotional Learning, to hopefully increase our Aboriginal achievement rate with students who currently are not succeeding and are often disconnected from our Aboriginal Family as well.

**Scanning:** We noticed that we had some problematic issues with a number of Aboriginal students due to chronic truancy as well as a lack of support at home that led to major issues to subject completion resulting in large learning gaps. The resulting lack of confidence and schedule changes (often to add a Learning Support Block) proved to be a hindrance to getting them back on track for the most part.

**Focus:** We hoped that by putting into place a program that builds up students' confidence and their decision making process (wrapped up in Aboriginal teachings) we would be able to provide students with more foundational skills that will lead to success. This is of utmost importance because seeing students not being able to complete their education due to a lack of confidence, poor decision making, and lack of resiliency simply cannot stand.

**Hunch:** The interventions at our school, while plentiful when trying to deal with academic supports and attendance supports are simply falling short. If students can have a place where they can engage with themselves in a classroom setting, we hope that this new style of intervention based more on social emotional learning will fill the gaps other interventions have left behind.

**New professional learning:** We've looked into new areas of professional areas of learning that included Social Emotional Learning as well as finding out more about the Social Development Classes that some of our elementary schools in our family of schools run. We went about designing new learning by trying to create a program that wouldn't simply focus on homework support or counselling support but rather work on skills including Responsible Decision Making and Self Awareness tied in with the teachings of a balanced medicine wheel to hopefully help students build a strong advocacy net for themselves that allows them to have success within the mainstream system while connecting with their Aboriginal heritage.

**Taking action:** We've taken certain basic steps such as providing students with more of an opportunity to take on "directed studies". We've tried to reach out to parents/guardians on a more positive note with such actions as Welcome Survival Kits for our incoming Grade 8s in the hopes of starting the relationship on a positive and continuing that thread of the positive throughout. We hope that with enough Aboriginal blocks, funding, and resources ( as basic as the Aboriginal Advocate having a classroom of their own) we can build this up further and turn it into a scheduled block of time rather than simply check in points throughout the year.

**Checking:** We are the point where we have developed a plan of action which we will fully implement next school year. Our plan will be measured by attendance records, improvement in marks, and periodic check points with students on how they feel they are progressing. While we do have some of this information, our plan of action involves additional resources which we did not have for this current school year.

**Reflections/Advice:** What we've learned from the small steps we've taken thus far, is that for many of our students, different options need to be provided that while still part of "mainstream" education allow the students to build up not only their skills and talents in alternative methods but also support methods that reinforce the support that our school can provide to our students.