



**DURHAM CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
Learning and Living in Faith

Memorandum

To: Board of Trustees

From: Tracy Barill, Director of Education

Date: June 19, 2023

Subject: Indigenous Education Update

Origin: Daniel Stargratt, Assistant Superintendent of Indigenous Education

Purpose

Durham Catholic District School Board, in partnership with its Indigenous Education Circle (I.E.C.) and Student Indigenous Education Circle (S.I.E.C) is committed to increasing understanding and knowledge of all students about Indigenous histories, cultures, perspectives and contributions. This work is fundamental to our commitment to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; Calls to Action as it relates to education.

Background

In 2007, the Ministry of Education created the Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework. It set out two challenges; to improve student achievement among First Nation, Metis, and Inuit students and to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the areas of literacy and numeracy, retention of students in school, graduation rates, and advancement to postsecondary schools. In its vision statement, it stated, "All students in Ontario will have knowledge and appreciation of contemporary and traditional First Nation, Metis and Inuit traditions, cultures and perspectives."

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action was introduced and has deepened our understanding about historic inequities experienced by First Nation, Metis, and Inuit in the colonization of Canada as well as the lingering impact. As we are called to learn from the past, to help in the present it is understood that education today is a critical gateway on the path forward. Truth is part of new understanding as we continue to learn about our shared history in a manner that is safe, respectful, inclusive, and reflective of equity in the classroom.

Reconciliation is part of new relationships as we continue to learn about our shared history in a manner that is student-centred with a focus on harm reduction (healing)/life promotion and reflective of Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations, our new Multi-year Strategic Plan, board vision and mission and Catholic values.

Information/Analysis/Research

In Discovery 2023: Renewing the Vision Strategic Plan, we identified five goals within Indigenous Education to guide the learning and work we do. The five goals were as follows:

1) To ensure better understanding and provide learning about days/seasons of significance to Indigenous peoples.

The Indigenous Education team continues to work with our communications department to highlight days/significance on social media and the Board website. Some examples are National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Moosehide Campaign and National Indigenous History Month. The team continues to communicate with staff through numbered memos and the Weekly Buzz. The consultants and resources teachers have been busy delivering lunch and learns with schools in the system and providing resources to staff to better support the learning of Indigenous perspectives, history, and culture. Indigenous education has also been incorporated within our Professional development days where staff have been infusing Indigenous perspective in a variety of disciplines.

2) To build understanding of authentic reconciliation.

In order to build understanding of authentic reconciliation, the Indigenous Education Team has focussed on unpacking the papal visit and the Doctrine of Discovery. The team has provided professional development to secondary religion chairs and world religion chairs in partnership with Elder Dr. Bob Phillips. The team continues to build capacity amongst all school staff.

3) To continue to enhance community collaboration through authentic partnerships.

The Indigenous Education Unit has held all five Indigenous Education Circle meetings with our community partners. We have also held all five Student Indigenous Education Circle meetings. We have had a number of learning opportunities led by Indigenous Education Circle members which includes the Indigenous Student Mural. Some of these include learning about residential schools through a survivor lens, infusing Indigenous perspective in Law classes, cooking classes, art, and land-based learning. We continue to work in partnership with our Indigenous community partners and seek feedback from both Circles. We continue to build capacity with our school leaders to foster positive and active relationships with our Indigenous Community Members.

4) To successfully implement the Grade 12 Indigenous Studies course in all Secondary schools.

With the roll out of the Grade 12 Indigenous Studies course NDW (Grade 12 Indigenous Issues), the Indigenous Education Team has provided both training and the opportunity for teachers go network to support the learning sessions. We have purchased resources and worked alongside community members to support the course delivery in both courses. Throughout the sessions, we continue to gather feedback from community, staff, and our students to looks for ways to ensure continuous improvement.

5) To continue to incorporate Indigenous voice within K-12 curriculum.

With the addition of 3 new resource teachers (2 elementary and 1 secondary) we have been able to support teachers in schools in both student and staff learning on Indigenous education. The team continues to build capacity at all levels of the organization. As a team, we have worked collaboratively with other units to expand the infusion of Indigenous perspectives. A few examples are working with outdoor education on land-based learning, working with our numeracy unit and working with our science unit to highlight Indigenous stem. E.g.) Hatcheries, kindergarten kits, OYAP cooking

Next Steps

As we transition to our new Multi-Year Strategic Plan *Inspire 2026*, we will continue to collaborate with our Indigenous Education Circle and our Student Indigenous Education Circle and work to deepen understanding of Indigenous education across the curriculum. We will continue to build capacity and understanding with all areas within the organization about the role they play in moving forward in Reconciliation.

TB/MO/DS/pw

Indigenous Education Update

June 19, 2023

Land Acknowledgement

**Niinwind ndi kendaamin omaa Durham Region
debendmowaad giw Michi Saagiig of Scugog Island
iw aki omaa yaa yong.** 

We here in the Durham Region respectfully acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island.

To ensure understanding and provide learning about days/seasons of significance to Indigenous Peoples

- Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women - May 5, 2023
- Moosehide Campaign – May 11, 2023
- National Indigenous History Month – June
 - Team created learning opportunities for each day of the month.



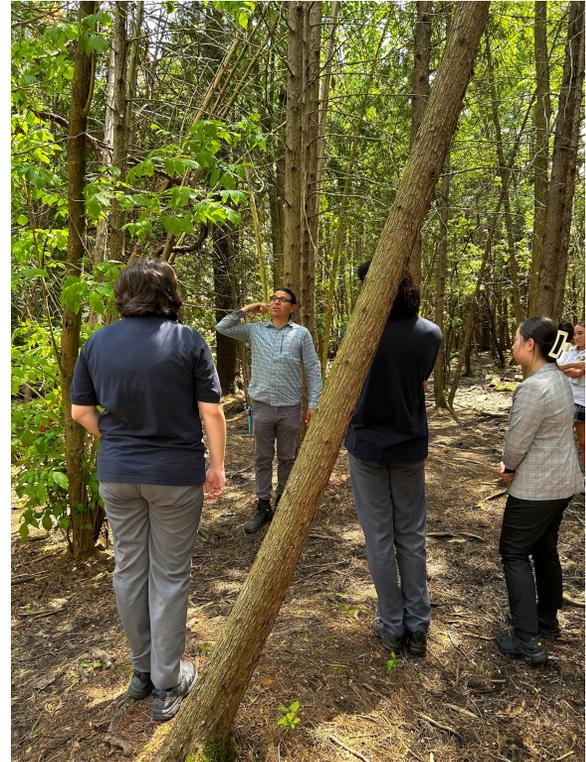
To build understanding of authentic reconciliation

- Sharing of Excellence session with community partners to educate on truth and next steps in reconciliation across the curriculum
- PD training at the CEC for Secondary Religion chairs and Word Religion teachers with the expertise of elder Dr. Bob Phillips
- PD in all secondary schools around the path to reconciliation



To continue to enhance community collaboration through authentic partnership

- Held all five Indigenous Education Circle meetings
- Held all five Student Indigenous Education Circle meetings working on Indigenous Student-Led Mural.
- Indigenous Grade 8 and 12 graduation celebration
- Continuing to have community partners share knowledge with staff and students.



To successfully implement the Grade 12 Indigenous studies course in all Secondary schools (NBE)

- Continual reflection on 'contemporary' works - updating text forms that reflect the work being done, and voices in the many diverse Indigenous Nations and communities
- Reflection on truth telling and trauma but trying to balance this with Indigenous Excellence and joy
- Continuing to build relationship with community partners

To successfully implement the Grade 12 Indigenous studies course in all Secondary schools (NDW)

- Building resources that reflect the Global Indigenous Community
- Learning about UNDRIP and how this can influence policy making
- Reflecting on realities in Indigenous communities within Canada and using inquiry to explore how these realities are reflected globally

To continue to incorporate Indigenous voice within the K-12 curriculum

- Hosting and building relationships with community partners
- Creating a resource for teaching Indigenous Education throughout kindergarten
- Facilitated ordering and delivery of books by Indigenous authors for classes and libraries
- Supporting teachers in understanding reconciliation in the elementary Catholic setting through PD



To continue to incorporate Indigenous within K-12 curriculum

- As a team, we have worked collaboratively with other units to expand the infusion of Indigenous perspectives.
- A few examples are working with outdoor education on land-based learning, working with our numeracy unit and working with our science unit to highlight Indigenous stem.
- E.g.) Hatcheries, kindergarten kits, OYAP cooking

