

# Anglophone North School District First Nation Education Report 2017-2018



**Prepared by: Matthew Sweezy -ASD-N Subject Coordinator of First Nation Education**

Photo: Two-eyed seeing (Eptuaptmunk) painting created by student at Bonar Law Memorial School

## Preamble

Anglophone North School District is situated on traditional and unceded Mi'kmaq territory and serves the largest population of Mi'kmaq children and youth in the province. ASD-N is committed to providing quality educational opportunities that respond to the needs of First Nation children and youth, and their communities. Moving forward with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action is a priority in building understanding of traditional and contemporary First Nation cultures, histories, and perspectives by all students and staff, system wide. Objective 6 from the provinces 10 Year Education Plan clearly outlines the areas needed to grow in order to meet these needs. Embedding culturally responsive resources, materials and pedagogical practices will get us closer to meeting our goals.

## Mission Statement

First Nations and the Anglophone North School District are committed to **empowering students**, through a **student-centered approach**, to be life long learners and promote academic success by supporting students with a **culturally responsive approach** and **recognizing** the importance of **history, language, culture and traditions of the Mi'kmaq People** while promoting and maintaining a **collaborative and positive working relationship** between First Nations, Anglophone North School District and other stakeholders.



Wall Mural at Miramichi Valley High School

## District Education Council Policy E-11

This policy was developed during the 2016-2017 school year to put into practice a monitoring process to ensure that First Nation education remains a priority. This policy is reported on twice a year. Under this policy the Superintendent is responsible for the following.

The Superintendent will ensure that the three objectives of the First Nation Education Programs and Service Agreements are met, which include:

- a) Reducing the achievement gap that exists between First Nations' students and non-First Nations' students attending, or that will be transitioning to, public schools in New Brunswick.
- b) Providing children of First Nations in New Brunswick with a welcoming school environment and a quality educational experience that is relevant and recognizes cultural background.
- c) Promoting positive learning and working relations between First Nations' communities and school districts.

In addition to these objectives the Superintendent is also responsible for the following:

- The Superintendent will provide leadership and promote capacity building to support the implementation of First Nation community Education Plans in district schools that serve First Nation students.
- The Superintendent will ensure that the District Improvement Plan addresses the teaching and learning of accurate First Nation culture, history and perspectives for all students.
- The Superintendent will increase the knowledge of First Nation cultures, histories and perspectives among all staff members through appropriate professional learning opportunities.

## Guiding Documents

-Truth and Reconciliations Commission- 94 Calls to Action

(10) ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.

iii. Developing **culturally appropriate curricula**.

iv. Protecting the rights to **Aboriginal languages** including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.

vii. **Respecting and honouring** Treaty relationships.

(62) We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

i. Make **age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada** a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.

(63) We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to aboriginal education issues, including:

i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve **curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools**.

ii. **Sharing information and best practices** on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.

iii. **Building student capacity** for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

-10 Year Education Plan: Everyone at their best

Objective 6: Meet the needs of First Nation learners and ensure that provincial curriculum is reflective of First Nation history and culture

### *What key areas will we focus on to achieve our objective and targets?*

- Strengthen partnerships with First Nation communities to enhance support of First Nation learners.
- Ensure the needs of First Nation learners are identified in a timely manner to respond to individual needs and close the achievement gap.
- Create professional learning opportunities for educators and support staff to have an understanding of and appreciation for First Nation historical and cultural contributions.
- Ensure Treaty Education and Indian Residential and Day Schools are integral components of K-12 curricula.
- Ensure access to beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey language education to preserve and revitalize first languages.
- Provide seamless transitions for First Nation students within all learning environments to enhance their sense of belonging and to ensure success.



## ASD-N First Nation Education Team

- Subject Area Coordinator
- Support from Director Of Schools
- 3 First Nation Education Leads
- Mi'kmaq Elder's and Knowledge Keepers
- ASD-N provides additional supports that are school based to address outstanding student needs

## First Nation Education Website

<http://asd-n.nbed.nb.ca/fne>

Above is a link to the ASD-N First Nation Education Page. You can visit our district website to follow all the great things happening in ASD-N and specifically for First Nation education in Anglophone North. The page is also used to upload resources that teachers can utilize.



## Enhanced First Nation Programs and Services Agreement

This agreement provides an opportunity for ASD-N to meet regularly and collaborate with the partnering First Nation communities in our catchment. This agreement requires that we meet with each of the nine communities three times individually and twice in a regional capacity with all communities attending. This tuition reinvestment agreement is in place from 2015-2020. During the spring and summer of 2015, First Nation community representatives and ASD-N representatives met and co-constructed individualized education plans to respond to the specific needs of students from the respective First Nation community. In some instances, communities that have students in the same school collaborated on strategies to increase the level of service received by all First Nation students. Examples of these strategies include a variety of teaching and non-teaching roles in the areas of academics and behavioral support services, transitions, Mi'kmaq language and culture, liaison, attendance, after school programming etc. These plans were co-created with the following goals in mind.

The overall goals of the *Enhanced First Nation Education Programs and Services Agreement* are:

1. to reduce the academic achievement gap that exists between First Nations' students and non-First Nations' students attending, or that will be transitioning to, public schools in New Brunswick;
2. to provide children of First Nations in New Brunswick with a welcoming school environment and a quality educational experience that is relevant and recognizes cultural background; and
3. to promote positive learning and working relationships between First Nations' communities and school districts.



Regional Enhancement Meeting April 2018

### Orange Shirt Day (OSD)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations include the following call to action. Although this call for the establishment a national day for truth and reconciliation is not something we can implement, ASD-N has responded by embedding Orange Shirt Day into its yearly operations.

(80) We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish, as a statutory holiday, a **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities**, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

ASD-N has been celebrating OSD annually since September 2015. This is a district wide initiative that encourages all schools including First Nation community schools, to participate in a day of commemoration and celebration of

those victims of the Indian Residential School System in Canada. We commemorate Survivors and those who did not make it home while celebrating cultural resiliency and strength. Awareness of the impact of Indian Residential Schools and the important role that the education system plays in reconciliation moving forward is clearly stated in this concise quote.

“Education has gotten us into this mess, and education will get us out.”  
–Hon. Justice Murray Sinclair

The topic of Indian Residential Schools is sensitive and requires care and attention to ensure that it is approached in a respectful manner with the understanding that there are strong emotions and feelings associated with this part of our history. With this said, it is imperative that we find ways to educate our students and staff on this sad chapter in our history. PowerPoint presentations have been prepared for the elementary and middle level that teachers can use in preparation for OSD that also included additional district lead support if needed. This service is in high demand and the First Nation Education Leads spend a lot of time supporting teachers directly in the classroom.



Bonar Law Memorial School



Tide Head School



Students from MVHS MakerSpace in collaboration with a Visual Arts class created these buttons for Orange Shirt Day which were distributed to Millerton School and Tide Head School for OSD.





Office of the Superintendent- Miramichi Education Centre

### Multi-School Mawi'omi



Multi-School Mawi'omi at Bonar Law Memorial School in October 2017





A Round Dance at the Ugpi'Ganjig Pow Wow Grounds for our Dalhousie Area Multi-School Mawi'omi



Dancers at our beautiful Multi-School Mawi'omi at Sugarloaf Senior High School



Mutli-School Mawi'omi at Miramichi Valley High School February 2018

At the beginning of the school year ASD-N's Superintendent, Mark Donovan, made a commitment to expose all students in Anglophone North to Mi'kmaq language, culture and traditions. Building off our strong partnerships with First Nation communities we partnered to make this a reality. Amazingly, we were able to do this for almost our entire student population with the remainder to be exposed to a Mi'kmaq cultural experience in the 2018-19. In total approximately 5500 students attended a Mawi'omi (commonly referred to as a Pow Wow) in six different locations throughout ASD-N. This was a massive undertaking that took the hard work and dedication of the ASD-N First Nation Education Team, enhancement employees, teachers and First Nation communities. A sincere thank to sponsors and everyone that helped make these events a success!

As part of the educational programming that was part of the Mawi'omi's, schools were encouraged to have their students participate in a "Spotlight Project". This project saw students select a notable Indigenous figure or community hero to spotlight in an effort to learn about the contributions of Indigenous peoples within communities, society and Canada past and present. These projects were displayed at the Mawi'omi celebrations.



Our amazing sponsors of the Multi-school Mawi'omi's in Bathurst, Dalhousie and Campbellton

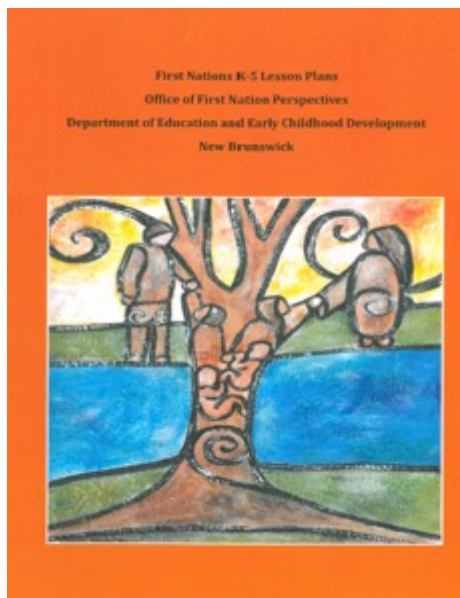


## Indigenizing the Classroom Environment and Lessons

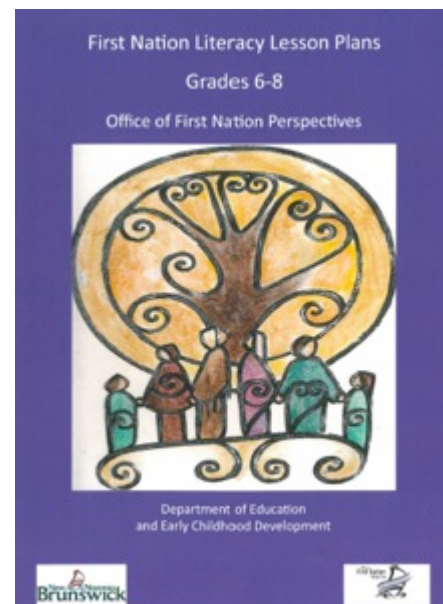
Unfortunately our educational institutions have not been responsive to First Nation students or their history and the need to indigenize the school environment and the content covered until recent years. The Office of First Nation Education (OFNE) has developed and continues to develop resources to support teachers and student learning. These resources cover multiple grade levels and a variety of subject areas in an effort to provide resources and materials for teachers to use in their classrooms. The First Nation Education Team has acquired resources and materials to support these efforts as well.

### Acculturating Classrooms in ASD-N:

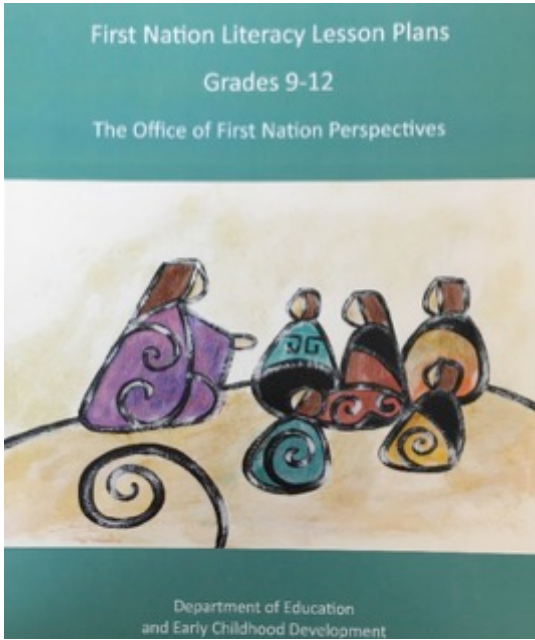
The ASD-N First Nation Education Team firmly believes that follow up is required to ensure that resources and materials with First Nation content are being utilized in the classroom. One of the reasons for why resources are not being used is because teachers are not comfortable with the resources and materials. In order to alleviate this barrier ASD-N's First Nation Education Team provides continued professional development with the resources that have been developed and continue to be developed by OFNE. In addition to providing additional professional development with the resources, co-teaching and co-planning is also available for teachers. ASD-N's First Nation Education Leads have been in dozens of classrooms to co-plan and co-teach.



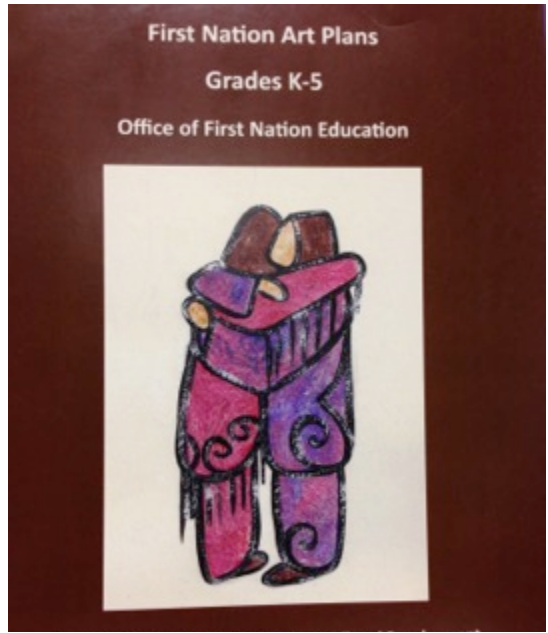
K-5 Literacy Lessons



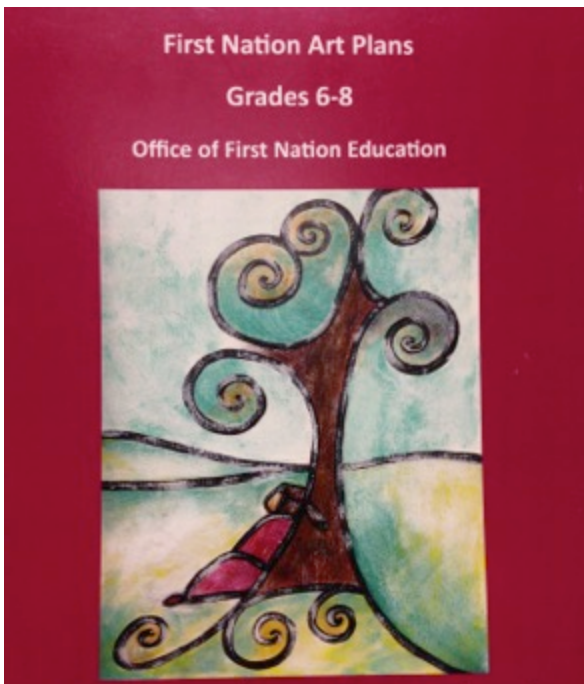
6-8 Literacy Lessons



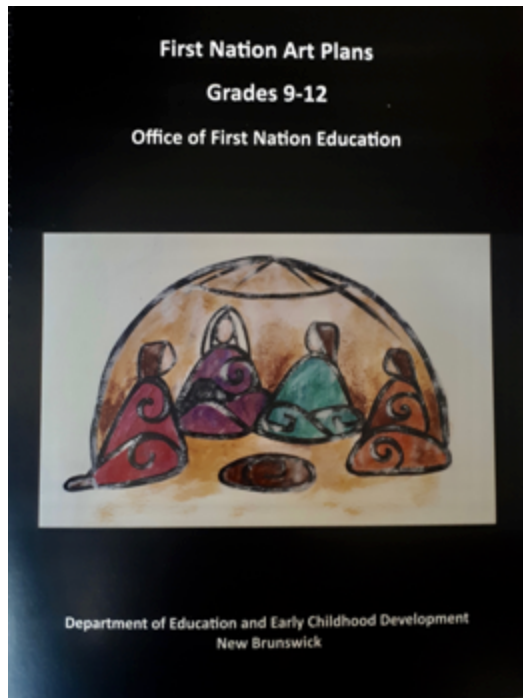
9-12 Literacy Lessons



K-5 First Nation Art Lessons

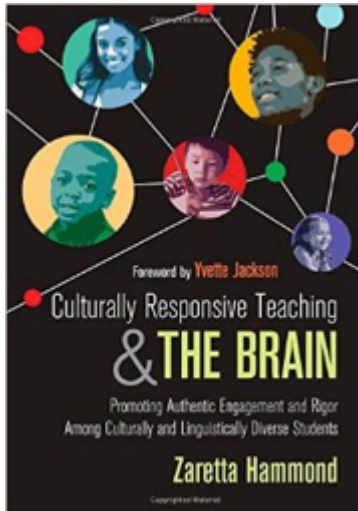


6-8 First Nation Art Lessons



9-12 First Nation Art Lessons





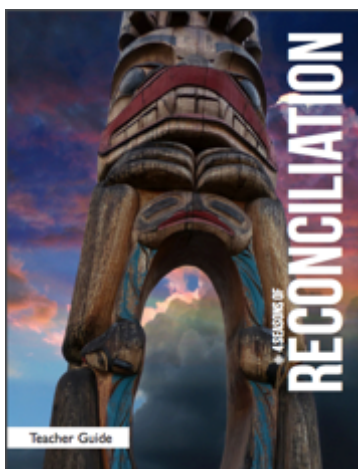
In 2016-2017 the ASD-N First Nation Education Team facilitated a book study on “Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain”. This involved the purchase of 32 copies of the resource and distributed to interested teachers across the district. As part of the book study, participants commented on each chapter on a book blog site. It also included opportunities for face-to-face meetings for book study participants as well as a videoconference evening with the author Zaretta Hammond.



A teacher from every school in ASD-N, including Band Operated Schools, were invited to participate in a professional learning day with the “Teaching About the M’kmaq” resource in 2015-16. Each school received a copy.

In 2016-17 continued follow-up and support was given to teachers to promote the use of this resource that has continued in to the 2017-18 school year.

This resource was created in Nova Scotia through



4 Seasons of Reconciliation is an excellent resource that was just released this spring by EECD. It compliments the provinces grade 9 Canadian Identity course and World Issues 120 course well.

ASD-N is looking forward to providing further professional development with this resource in the fall of 2018 to ensure it is being used in the classroom regularly.

ASD-N has built an inventory of culturally appropriate and historically relevant materials for student and teacher use. This is an ongoing process in an effort to make these current and future resources available for use.

## Community Engagement & Collaboration

Reconciliation is a complex venture that requires healing and the rebuilding of relationships with First Nation communities based on mutual respect and understanding. The legacy of the Indian Residential School era continues to have a negative impact through intergenerational trauma. As an educational institution we have a responsibility to help in the healing process by being good allies and community engagement opportunities are an excellent way to support the building of positive relationships through meaningful acts of reconciliation.

This past school year ASD-N's First Nation Education Team facilitated a book study that is done annually as a professional learning strategy. This years book was "Out of the Depths" by author Dr. Isabelle Knockwood. Fortunately we were able to secure Dr. Knockwood to visit our book study participants as a culmination activity. Capitalizing on this opportunity, we brought Dr. Knockwood in a day earlier to have a Survivor/Elder gathering in Natoaganeg First Nation. It was a rewarding day that could not have been possible without our partnerships with First Nation communities. A sincere thank you to Natoaganeg First Nation for providing the venue free of charge, the Eel Ground Health Centre for helping with sending out the invitations to community health centers, and the Natoaganeg Food Center for helping with the feast!



Indian Residential School Survivors and Elders at our gathering

## Early Literacy Project

The Early Childhood Branch's regional director and ASD-N's First Nation Subject Coordinator and leads worked together with Elder Donna Augustine to explore what cultural literacy might look like when working with Non-Indigenous Early Childhood Educators and preschool aged learners. The process began by inviting Early Childhood Educators from two pilot sites to come together to experience the Blanket Activity and a Cultural Safety session which helped them position the history of Indigenous people in our province and country. Over the course of twelve weeks during the winter of 2018, Elder Donna visited weekly with a class of three and four year old learners and their educators to introduce elements of her culture. Using multimodal literacies such as story telling, music, puppets, art, and dance, Donna shared the stories of her people. She shared the meanings of sacred ceremonies and objects upon which Indigenous peoples rely for strength, wisdom, and guidance. She did the work of reconciliation in that she removed barriers between cultures in an attempt to lessen the gaps that divide our cultures and ways of knowing and being.

In June, the children and their educators gathered for a celebration to recognize the new relationships and knowledges that they had shared.

The project was a huge success. It is an initiative that we hope will be the beginning of many to address our communal responsibilities as treaty peoples towards reconciliation.



Garland Augustine and student



Elder Donna Augustine and student



## Professional Learning

Opening Days- Before students are invited back in September teachers participate in a full day of professional learning and a message from the Superintendent. The First Nation Education in ASD-N provides professional learning specific to First Nation content, resources etc.



Follow Up Professional Learning- The Office of First Nation Education develops resources yearly, which are displayed in this report in the resource section. In ASD-N we provide follow up professional learning with those resources to ensure that all teachers receive exposure to the new resources in an effort to make sure they become implemented in classrooms. This also involves co-planning and co-teaching with teachers upon request. The First Nation Education Leads are invited into many classes each year and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

←Picture of First Nation Education Leads Katrina Clair and Elizabeth Price in an elementary class in ASD-N

Enhancement Employees Professional Learning- ASD-N values our partnerships with First Nation communities through the Enhanced Programs and Services Agreement. ASD-N takes its role in the partnership seriously and strives to provide professional learning for the employees hired through this program. This does not come without its challenges. The positions supported through this agreement are diverse and providing professional learning specifically for all positions can be difficult, however, we also see our role as unifying communities and employees through a team building approach and providing time for enhancement employees to meet and discuss best practices.

Native Education Advisory Team (NEAT) – NEAT supports the Enhanced Programing and Services Agreement and the three goals outlined in it by providing a platform for school, district, community and other stakeholders to work together collectively in identifying and addressing areas to improve the level of service and experience of Mi'kmaw students in the provincial school system.



ASD-N has four NEAT groups functioning in four different high schools across the district.

Heritage Fair- In the spring of each year a heritage fair is hosted in ASD-N that is attended by many students from across the district who represent their schools at a final competition. These finalists experience different cultural activities and learning stations while their projects are not being judged. ASD-N has ensured that Mi'kmaq ways of knowing, learning, history and traditions is represented each year.

NBTA Subject Council Day- Each year the NBTA has a Subject Council Day in May. Teachers from across the province gather in three locations that have professional learning for Elementary, Middle and High School teachers. The ASD-N First Nation Education Team has presented at each location the past two years providing professional learning specific to First Nation content and resources.

### Annual Book Study

In 2017-2018 the ASD-N First Nation Education Team facilitated a book study on Dr. Isabelle Knockwood's book, "Out of the Depths", chronicling the experience of Mi'kmaw children at the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. Teachers, enhancement employees, and district leads made up the 40 participants. As part of the book study participants were asked to comment and reply to others comment after reading each chapter. After the book study was completed participants had a day of professional learning with author Dr. Knockwood.



Book study participants with author Dr. Isabelle Knockwood in February 2018

## Kairos Blanket Exercise (KBE)

The Kairos Blanket Exercise has been the most effective professional learning tool we use in ASD-N. It is truly a transformational experience that leaves participants with a better understanding of the abuse, oppression and marginalization experienced by Indigenous Peoples. The exercise has a deeper effect when participants realize that a lot of this mistreatment and inequity still exists today.

We facilitate this to students, staff, First Nation communities and others upon request. It has become difficult to keep up with the requests and our end goal is to have all staff in ASD-N experience a KBE.

We have facilitated the exercise to the following:

All Superintendents, Directos and Subject Area Coordinators in the province at the NBSSA/NBESA AGM in (2016)

All ASD-N Administrators (2016)

First Nation Enhancement Staff in Miramichi Area (2016)

First Nation Enhancement Staff in Rexton Area (2016)

Miramichi Area Healthy Child Network (2017)

Bathurst/Dalhousie/Campbellton Healthy Child Network (2017)

EECD Senior Administration Team (2017)

Miramichi Area Integrated Service Delivery Team (2017)

NBTA Branch 1640 (2017)

Creating Wonders Day Care 2018

Chatham Day Care (2018)

To date 14 school staff have participated in a KBE. Each staff receives a certificate of cultural proficiency upon completing a KBE



Nelson Rural School



Students at Dalhousie Regional High School

The following are additional professional development opportunities the First Nation Education Team in ASD-N have facilitated and continue to offer to schools.

- *Trauma and Its Effects on Learning*
- *Culturally Responsive teaching and the Brain*
- *The Power of a Growth Mindset*
- *Two Eyed seeing for Reconciliation*
- *Circle of Courage and how it relates to the CAR model*
- *How Indigenous Pedagogy Can benefit Everyone; Old ways are the New ways.*
- *Resources available to incorporate First Nation Content in all classrooms*

### Promotion of Mi'kmaq Language

Mi'kmaq language is offered online and face-to-face depending on location. The promotion and preservation of the Mi'kmaq language is pivotal to culture and ASD-N has pursued different projects and initiatives to promote the language such as trilingual signage and supporting the learning of the “Honour Song” and other ways of incorporating language into the school environment.

#### Face to Face

2015-2016: 97 students enrolled  
2016-2017: Three courses offered  
2017-2018: 97 students enrolled

#### Online

2016-2017: 54 students enrolled  
2017-2018: 5 students enrolled



### Tell Them From Me Survey (TTFM)

ASD-N had the opportunity to customize two questions on the 2017-2018 TTFM. Two questions specific to First Nation Education were created and the information generated from this survey has/will help inform future work.

As you will notice in the responses to the first question, the district needed to provide opportunities for students to experience First Nation cultural activities or events. Superintendent, Mark Donovan, made a commitment to provide a celebration of Mi'kmaq culture across the district exposing students to a Mutli-School Mawi'omi, which are commonly referred to as a Pow Wow. These events took place across the district during the 2017-2018 school year.

The responses to question two indicates that we are well on our way to creating more culturally responsive classrooms through the purchase of appropriate resources and professional learning opportunities for teachers and support staff.

**2017-18 ASD-N Specific Question Measures  
Student Perception Survey**

| <b>Have you participated in any First Nation cultural activities or events in the last school year</b> | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Grade 4-5                                                                                              | 62%        | 38%       |
| Grades 6 - 8                                                                                           | 45%        | 55%       |
| Grades 9 -12                                                                                           | 36%        | 64%       |

| <b>Have you learned about First Nation people in your classroom lessons in the last school year?</b> | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Grade 4-5                                                                                            | 75%        | 25%       |
| Grades 6 - 8                                                                                         | 80%        | 20%       |
| Grades 9 -12                                                                                         | 57%        | 43%       |

**Book Leveling Project**

The early years literacy program involves students reading leveled books and proceeding up the levels in learning to read. It is important for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to read leveled books with Indigenous content. Some elementary schools with First Nation students in ASD-N had purchased resources with Indigenous content; however, classroom teachers were not utilizing them because they were not leveled to match with the books currently used. Although these books are advertised as leveled, their leveling system used does not have the same criteria as NB’s leveling system. The First Nation Education Team in partnership with the Office of First Nation Education purchased numerous titles with Indigenous content and had some teachers in ASD-N with experience leveling books level these titles so they now can be accessed and used by schools and teachers. The success of this project allows our young emerging readers an opportunity to be exposed to Indigenous content at this early stage.



## Ongoing Collection and Promotion Curriculum Materials and Resources

The collection, distribution and accessibility of authentic resources with Indigenous content is an important aspect of creating a culturally responsive school, classroom and lesson plans. The ASD-N First Nation Team is regularly adding to its library of great books and other resources for all grade levels. In the pictures below you will see many resources that are currently available in schools in an effort to equip teachers with the right material to be effective culturally responsive teachers.



## Incorporating First Nation Perspective

Embedding First Nation ways of knowing and learning in ASD-N is a priority and incorporating an Indigenous perspective needs to be pervasive throughout the school district. One of the ways this is done is by capitalizing on the different Indigenous led initiatives and recognizing and highlighting the contributions of Indigenous peoples throughout the year.

September- Reconciliation is the theme for this month and a lot of attention is given to preparing for Orange Shirt Day through resource distribution and Indian Residential School Survivor school visits.

October- This is Mi'kmaq History Month and it is promoted in the school district as such. Resources are made available, Elders are utilized, leads work with teachers etc. in an effort to recognize the contributions of Mi'kmaq people.

November- Special attention is paid to distribute resources from Veterans Affairs, Royal Canadian Legion etc. to spotlight the contribution of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Army and theatres of war. This involves partnering with schools to honor First Nation veterans during school Remembrance Day ceremonies.

June- National Indigenous Peoples Day is promoted during this month and activities are organized and executed in local schools.

Supporting initiatives such as the Sisters in Spirit Vigil October 4<sup>th</sup> and the Moose Hide Campaign. Both of these initiatives support building positive healthy relationships to prevent lateral violence and domestic violence among Indigenous people.

#### Supporting Cultural Activities:

- Talking stick lessons to promote positive communication
- Supporting elementary schools with cultural teachings on dream catchers and four sacred colors teachings etc.
- Beading activities
- Two Nations Teachings workshops where students learned the links between Mi'kmaq and Acadian culturally and historically
- Tipi teachings
- Drum making activities to build cultural pride and understanding



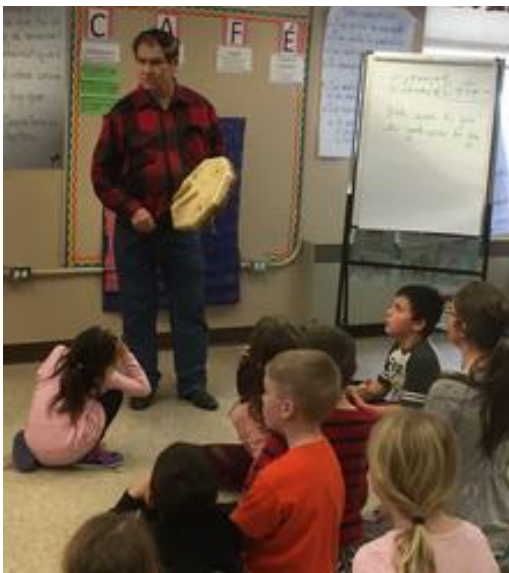
Tipi raising at MVHS



Sisters in Spirit Vigil MVHS



IRS Survivor testimonial at Max Aitken Academy



Elder Gilbert Sewell at Parkwood Elementary



Beading at Terry Fox Elementary

## Moving Forward

As demonstrated by this report, ASD-N has worked tirelessly to meet the commitments outlined in DEC policy E-11, Objective 6, enhanced programs & services agreement, the TRC's 94 Calls to Action related to education and the below goals outlined in ASD-N's district improvement plan.

Moving forward, ASD-N plans to continue fulfilling these commitments and find new ways to holistically support First Nation students. The mental health of students is an ever-growing concern in our district, which has great impacts on student progress and healthy development. ASD-N has decided to embark on a special project in the coming school year to promote positive mental health and resilience at two pilot sites in ASD-N with a focus on First Nation youth.