



Roots of Reconciliation:

Our School Wide Journey into Decolonization

Roots of Reconciliation Website:
<http://ldss.sd91.bc.ca/reconciliation>

Building Consensus

We brushed out our path for several years prior to this journey. Our goal was to deepen our understanding of Aboriginal culture so that we could honour diversity and develop positive relationships in our school and community to better support student learning. We believe that understanding is the root of reconciliation.



Staff Development

- May 2015-teaching staff unanimously agreed to dedicate entire following school year to heighten awareness of the impacts of Residential School and colonization of First Nations across Turtle Island
- Expedition to find tree (June 2015)
- Open Sweat lodge ceremony x2 (Sept 2015)-most staff attended
- NI Day to collaborate and plan (Sept 2015)
- Viewing of “We Were Children” video and sharing circles to debrief (Oct 2015)
- NI Day with Patrick Young and local Elders with CUPE members (Nov 2015). This was incredibly important for staff in giving them the tools (sensitivity, empathy, confidence and accuracy) to discuss Reconciliation.

Student Development

- Developed our First Nation Student Dakelh’ Circle (from each of the six nations)
- Amalgamated the Student Voice (student leadership group) with Dakelh’ Circle to work together with student body on first Orange Shirt Day recognition
- One full-day workshop with Dr. Allan Downey (university professor from Montreal) to bring awareness of Residential schools with student body (Dec 2015)
- Students participated in sharing circles (multi-grade and multi-cultural) to debrief and then played lacrosse (God’s Game) with Allen and staff
- We all gathered together for a refresh day weeks later to revisit what we had learned throughout the year (watched footage from “We Were Children” and “The Eighth Fire” and reviewed historical truths). That afternoon students reflected their understanding in a school wide write. Each student developed a personal message to engrave on their feather from their writing.



The Project

- An art teacher and a metal teacher collaborated to create the body of an eagle.
- Students, staff, and community members then created metal feathers, each with a personalized message. Every single feather made was welded onto the eagle.



- We culminated our year with a celebration where we invited the community, Hereditary Chiefs and “grass roots” guests to unveil the eagle and share traditional food and music.

Community Development

We continue our efforts this year:

- We include an Aboriginal component to our school assemblies.
- We recently held a Lahal workshop.
- We organized an Orange Shirt Day march through our community.
- We plan to lean into the land with guidance from our First Nations Elders as we pursue continued growth.