



## ***Aboriginal Education School Plan 2015-2016***



### ***Bowen Island Community School***

#### **School Aboriginal Education Committee:**

- Scott Slater, Principal (Chair)
- Sarah Haxby, Community School Coordinator
- Laura Magrath, Vice-Principal
- Liz Watson, Classroom Teacher
- Carmen Yamashita, Teacher-Librarian, Classroom Teacher

#### **School Contact Person(s)**

- Scott Slater
- Sarah Haxby

## **Activities, events, speakers, presentations, projects etc. that have occurred at your location over the past two years:**

### **2014-2015**

BICS explored the concepts of elders and ancestors. Specifically, students learned about who elders are and what their role is in their community. Elders visited BICS in the Spring of 2015 on two occasions and shared stories related to their experiences. Understandings of the following concepts were developed:

- Role of First Nations of elders and ancestors
- Historic and contemporary links to elders and ancestry and what conditions fostered and/or challenged these links
- Perspective taking and how people develop expertise in various aspects of life
- Earth-based Survival Skills
- Learning related to Socials Studies 5 content, “past discriminatory government practices and actions, such as residential schools,” related to the big idea, Canada’s policies and treatment of minority peoples have negative and positive legacies.

### **2013-2014**

BICS students examined our cultural and ecological connections to whales and being part of the Salish Sea through a First Nations lens of legends and traditional storytelling. The project was inspired by the story Faye Halls shared with the school at the 2013 Whale Day celebration. The project focused on the following questions:

- What significance do the whale and the sea play in past and present First Nations’ cultures and storytelling?
- How can we learn more about whales and our marine environment through traditional and contemporary First Nations legends and the tradition of storytelling?

### **Action Plan for 2015-2016**

The BICS 2015-2016 Aboriginal Education School Plan will include curriculum related to Aboriginal Peoples as well as approach learning experiences with the First People’s Principles of Learning in mind. As this plan is to guide a Kindergarten to Grade7 range of students, the plan largely focuses on the Core Competencies (Positive Personal and Cultural Identity) which apply to all students in all subjects. In the new curriculum, which teachers are transitioning to partially in 2015-2016 and fully for 2016-2017, there are many opportunities to focus on aboriginal concepts and content.

Our 2015-2016 Action Plan is intended to help students understand the following.  
Core understandings:

- Our experiences become stories we tell ourselves.
- Our stories, along with our sense of belonging and place, shape our identity.
- Some people have the courage to share their stories with others or carry them alone.

Secondary understandings:

- Ongoing experiences, or practices, shape us; lone events can also be unique and profound enough to shape identity as well.
- What we do not experience also shapes our identity.

Our goal is that through developing these understandings, our students will value storytelling and be receptive, respectful and sensitive to the stories of others. This continues our goal from 2014-2015 which is for students to respect and appreciate elders and to understand and practice protocols of respect.

### *Connection to BC Curriculum*

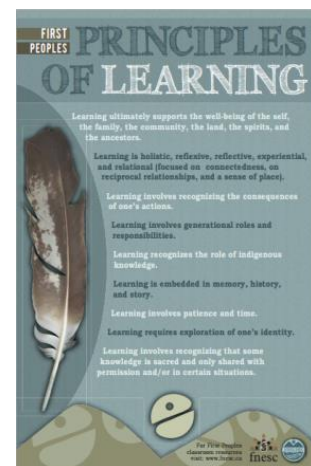
While content abounds in BC's New Curriculum, as this plan is to guide classrooms from Kindergarten to Grade Seven, our primary focus is on the Core Competency, Positive Personal and Cultural Identity. The competency's intention is for students to "become confident individuals who take satisfaction in who they are, and what they can do to contribute to their own well-being and to the well-being of their family, community, and society." The Competency also notes, "Students who have a positive personal and cultural identity value their personal and cultural narratives, and understand how these shape their identity." A goal of this Competency is therefore that students understand how personal and cultural narratives shape their identity.

We plan to support this goal by having all students at BICS develop written, oral or visual stories and share them with others. The stories are to be about an experience they have had, and/or a place they have been to, that they think will affect the way they will live their life. Students will be encouraged to consider how place, people, and experience will have a long lasting impact – transformational in fact – in the way they live their lives.

This relates to several First Peoples Principles of Learning as developed by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), particularly the following:

- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
- Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations

Parent education will include sharing our work in blog posts, PAC presentations, and inviting families to participate in school celebrations and events.



### *Community Partnerships*

Members of the BICS Aboriginal Education Committee will work with Bob Baker and Faye Halls of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) in the development and implementation of the plan. In addition, we will work with community members who have aboriginal ancestry and stories to tell. BICS students and staff also benefit from support from West Vancouver Schools Aboriginal Success Teacher.

### *Resources Needed for this Year*

BICS will continue to work closely with Bob Baker and Faye Halls in the development and implementation of this plan. Financial resources will be allocated largely for transportation costs and honorariums for guests that visit the school to share stories through oral storytelling, dance and other mediums.