



Annual Indigenous Education Update

To: Program and School Services Committee

Date: 27 March 2019

Report No.: 03-19-3617

Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students
- Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

Recommendation

It is recommended that the *Indigenous Education Annual Update: January 2018 – 2019*, as described in this report, be received.

Context

In March 2014, the Ministry of Education released an updated Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework Implementation Plan to guide the work of school boards through to 2016. In a subsequent memo to all Directors of Education in November 2017, the Ministry further directed school boards to develop plans for responding to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada: Calls to Action*, as they relate to education.

Aligned with the Provincial Policy Framework, the Toronto District School Board's current Indigenous Education strategy is grounded in supporting student achievement and well-being by centering Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum; building system-wide knowledge and awareness of Indigenous cultures, histories and ways of knowing through structured staff development and direct support to schools; and providing wrap-around supports for Indigenous students and families of Toronto's extremely diverse urban Indigenous population.

Implementation of the Board's Indigenous Education strategy is the mandate of staff at the TDSB Urban Indigenous Education Centre. Led by a Centrally Assigned Principal, this team of Indigenous education professionals comprises:

- Centrally Assigned Vice-Principals (2)
- Office Assistants (2)
- Itinerant Student Success Teacher
- Child and Youth Counsellor
- Social Worker
- Indigenous Student Engagement Initiative Teacher

- Itinerant Culture and Traditions Instructor
- Community Liaison Workers (2)
- Elder & Arts and Culture Advisor
- Instructional Leaders (4)
- Itinerant Indigenous Language Teacher

Collectively, UIEC staff develop and deliver a broad range of programs, initiatives, resources and services to students, staff and communities across the Board, covering the Seven Dimensions of Indigenous Education:

- Professional Learning
- Student Well-Being and Voice
- Community Engagement
- Programming, Curriculum Development and Implementation
- Research, Development and Innovation
- Partnerships
- Reconciliation and Relationships

For a comprehensive overview of the UIEC team's current activities in each of these areas, please see the annual staff report, *The Road to Reconciliation, Indigenous Education in the Toronto District School Board: Annual Report, January 2018 - January 2019* (Appendix A, attached).

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

UIEC staff will continue develop and implement strategies to support the achievement and well-being of Indigenous students throughout the Board, including

- culturally-relevant curriculum, enhanced learning opportunities, direct wrap-around supports (counselling, traditional healing programs, youth empowerment, etc.) that focus on the unique needs of urban Indigenous students, families and communities; and
- system-wide professional learning enhance staff capacity and cultural competence by building understanding of Indigenous cultures, histories and current contexts.

Resource Implications

Indigenous Education has been highlighted as one of the eight proposed strategic drivers that will assist the Board of Trustees to develop the 2019/20 operating budget. This is an important step in ensuring that budget funding decisions support Indigenous Education in TDSB. UIEC staff will continue to work collaboratively with TDSB central departments (e.g., Teaching & Learning, Professional Support Services, Employee Services, etc.) and Indigenous community partners to provide supports and develop enhanced learning opportunities for Indigenous students across the system.

Appendices

- Appendix A: *The Road to Reconciliation, Indigenous Education in the Toronto District School Board, Annual Report: January 2018 – January 2019*

From

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The Road to Reconciliation

Indigenous Education in the Toronto District School Board



Annual Report: January 2018 - January 2019



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Education for Reconciliation

“Education, delivered through residential schools, was the tool for assimilation. It was education that helped to perpetuate the situation we see today for Indigenous Peoples in Canada. We [...] believe that it will be education, again, that will be the tool that best addresses all of that, for education will create knowledge and from knowledge will come understanding. From understanding will come respect – both self-respect for Indigenous people and mutual respect for all.” Senator Murray Sinclair

Moving Towards Decolonization

Decolonizing schools for future generations means centering Indigenous knowledge, understandings and world-views across curricula and throughout the learning environments of all students. In other words, it requires thinking about Indigenous education not as an exclusive pedagogy (intended solely for the consumption of Indigenous students), or one that is offered only as an alternative to mainstream teaching and learning, but as integral to an inclusive pedagogy for all Canadian learners. In her 2010 report for the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), *Decolonizing Our Schools*, Dr. Susan Dion makes the following recommendations:

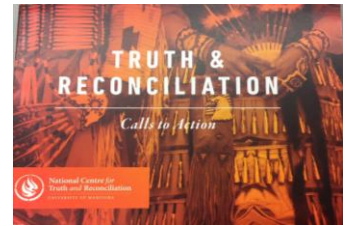
- Indigenous Education must be recognized as a priority by the Board and must be actively supported at all levels.
- Sustained funding is necessary to build the work accomplished by the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Program.
- Attention to Indigenous students' well-being and the meaningful and appropriate incorporation of Indigenous subject material across the curriculum must be made a priority.
- A comprehensive staff development plan, including the recruitment of Indigenous educators and staff, is needed for decolonizing and indigenizing teaching practice and content delivery.
- Establishing and maintaining respectful and reciprocal relationships between the TDSB and community organizations is essential for creating a safe teaching, learning, and work environment for Indigenous staff and community members.

Supporting the Ministry Framework

In March 2014, the Ministry of Education released an updated Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework Implementation Plan to guide school board actions through to 2016. Boards have been asked to develop an Action Plan on First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education, with strategies for meeting Ministry expectations in four key domains: I. Using Data to Support Student Achievement, II. Supporting Students, III. Supporting Educators, IV. Engagement and Awareness Building TDSB's Indigenous Education strategy is aligned with the Provincial Policy Framework, and annual progress updates are provided to the Board.

Ministry of Education Calls to Action

The Ministry of Education sent a memo to all Directors of Education in November 2017, asking all school boards to move forward on a comprehensive plan to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada: Calls to Action, focused on the following TRC: Calls to Action 62 and 63.



Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #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.
- ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
- iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
- iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #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.
- iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

Urban Indigenous Education Centre

Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 4



Currently housed at 16 Phin Avenue, the Urban Indigenous Education Centre (UIEC) in downtown Toronto, offers a variety of services that support Indigenous student achievement and well-being. This mandate is approached by centering Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum for all students, as well as by providing wrap-around supports for Indigenous students and families. Toronto has an extremely diverse Indigenous population within an urban context. The UIEC includes the following staff members:

- Centrally Assigned Principal
- Centrally Assigned Vice-Principals (2)
- Office Assistants
- Itinerant Student Success Teacher
- Child and Youth Counsellor
- Social Worker
- Indigenous Student Engagement Initiative Teacher
- Itinerant Culture and Traditions Instructor
- Community Liaison Workers (2)
- Elder & Arts and Culture Advisor
- Instructional Leaders (4)
- Itinerant Indigenous Language Teacher

These staff collectively offer a wide range of system wide services. Moreover, the UIEC has staff, such as Indigenous Language Teachers, Cultures and Traditions Instructors, and Child and Youth Counsellors, in a number of schools with higher self-identified Indigenous populations. The UIEC also maintains a roster of artists, Elders and speakers that work in TDSB schools, in addition to partnerships with external agencies and organizations. The UIEC also partners with post-secondary institutions on research projects, dual credit programs, Additional Basic Qualification Intermediate Native Studies, undergraduate Native Studies courses, an Indigenous Teacher Education Program, and a Master's in Urban Indigenous Education cohort. The UIEC also maintains a parallel governance structure that includes the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee (UICAC), the Indigenous Steering Council and an Elders Council.

Seven Dimensions of Indigenous Education

The Seven Dimensions of Indigenous Education are: Professional Learning, Student Well-Being and Voice, Community Engagement, Programming, Curriculum Development and Implementation, Research, Development and Innovation, Partnerships, and Reconciliation and Relationships.

Dimension 1: Professional Learning

Indigenous Education for All

We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties
--

and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
TRC #57

The staff at the UIEC provides opportunities for professional learning for all staff through KEY to Learn. The UIEC also Intentionally creates professional learning projects for staff that are focused on Indigenous student learning and well-being. These sessions are coordinated with teams from the Teaching & Learning department as well as Professional Support Services, and workshops align with cross-curricular initiatives supporting learning around the TRC and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Aanse: Indigenous Student Well-Being and Achievement Strategy

The Anishinaabemowin word, Aanse, translates in English to transforming. This word has inspired the multi-faceted professional learning that has made of the Indigenous Student Well-Being and Achievement Strategy. The focus of Aanse is schools with the highest numbers of self-identified students, with whom we have engaged Administrators, Teachers, support staff and supporting Learning Coaches and Transitions Counsellors. Working with a total of 17 schools and central staff supporting those schools, we engaged in collaborative inquiries which sought to respond to the overall question, In what ways can we effectively and appropriately engage Indigenous ways of knowing to decolonize and indigenize teaching practice and enhance well-being and learning for Indigenous students? The overall goals of the inquiries were to:

- Share and Investigate ways to build respectful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous students, families, and community members;
- Learn about trauma-informed practices in Indigenous contexts;
- Enhance the promotion of Indigenous knowledges, self-determination, strength, contributions and resistance across school culture; and
- Enact the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Aanse participants will engage in four professional learning sessions as part of the overall inquiry, and will be sharing their learning at Woodland Cultural Centre at Six Nations Reserve on May 23rd. This final session for this year will mark the ongoing nature of our learning and strategy to support the well-being and achievement of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students across the TDSB.

Administrators and Centrally Assigned Principal PLCs

The Administrators at the UIEC have developed a professional development series for cultural competency and cultural safety for Administrators (e.g., collaborative inquiry group). These Administrators volunteered for a personal inquiry and to deepen their learning.

Professional Learning for Teacher Librarians

The UIEC offered professional learning sessions for Teacher Librarians (in partnership with the Library Teaching Resources Department and Social Studies, World Studies and History Department). These sessions continued to address historical and contemporary contributions of People from the Métis Nation of Ontario. With the guidance of the UIEC, Teacher Librarians added the resources given to their libraries and continue to add more relevant resources throughout the year (increased authentic resources in libraries).



Supporting Expression of Indigenous Cultures through the Arts Course, NAC10

The UIEC supports NAC10 teachers with professional learning, learning from Indigenous perspectives, artists, speakers, Elders and the partnership with Art Gallery of Ontario. NAC10 has been selected by 4000 students through 64 schools. The UIEC provides five professional learning days, funding to support the purchase of classroom materials, a visit to work with an Indigenous artist at the Art Gallery of Ontario, a visit to the Debwewin Exhibition, and funding to access Indigenous artists and speakers for the classroom (from the UIEC's rosters).

Outdoor Education

The UIEC and Toronto Outdoor Education Schools have formed a strong partnership. Professional learning for Outdoor Education staff has included: Indigenous history and caretaking principles related to the Humber River and Watershed Regions, Indigenous Relationships to the Land and Contemporary Health and Well-Being Strategies for Natural Environments, Indigenous Educational Pedagogy and Activities to Learn How to Learn With and From the Land).

Indigenous Educators Network

Self-Identified Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, Inuit) staff continued to participate in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) at the UIEC. Two professional learning days took place this year for this group to collaborate and establish collegial relationships in a spirit of building relationships and to encourage and support each other throughout the school year by sharing promising practices and resources.

Inuit Curriculum Resource

The UIEC contracted Tauni Sheldon to compose a collection of Inuit resources in all cultural regions that TDSB staff could contact to seek cultural and support services guidance on Inuit Education. This project was completed during summer 2018 with the support of Instructional Leader, Mike Izzo. This resource is offered as part of all Professional Learning sessions that include Indigenous Education.

Revised Curriculum Resource and Implementation

The UIEC has supported the implementation of the revised curriculum in partnership with the Teaching and Learning Department: Social and World Studies. It has:

- Provided localized learning opportunities for educators within the TDSB in collaboration with regional stakeholders and community partners;
- Built educator capacity to implement the revised curriculum;
- Conducted board wide learning opportunities on intercultural competencies; and
- Provided awareness and professional learning for educators related to the revised curriculum documents and the resources available to support implementation.

The Urban Indigenous Education Centre has provided professional learning sessions focused on the development of lessons, resources, and web links to multimedia and Indigenous organizations and agencies. This resource has been launched for educators across the TDSB. The UIEC will be supporting the roll out of the resource by the offering Exploration Classrooms in order for educators to engage in job-embedded learning using important educator-developed curriculum.

Impact of Professional Learning

- Teachers indicate increased confidence in incorporating Indigenous histories, cultures, perspectives, and contributions in the school and classroom experience of all students;
- Relevant, respectful, and appropriate Indigenous centered practices are being implemented more regularly across schools participating in UIEC professional learning, with a renewed focus on School Improvement and inquiry based professional learning among participating leadership teams; and
- Teachers have reported that based on their learning of new strategies the center Indigenous knowledges and voices, gaps in Indigenous student achievement are beginning to close and students are experiencing enhanced well-being.

Dimension 2: Student Well-Being and Voice

Student Success Team

The Student Success Team is focused on the social and emotional well-being of Indigenous students. The Student Success Team receives approximately 2-3 referrals per week to support Indigenous students from across the TDSB. The referrals range from advocacy, counseling, student success, cultural support, social work, school re-engagement, food insecurity, housing, sex trafficking, attendance, accessing mental health supports, navigating the school system, consultation with other non-Indigenous support service staff etc.

The Student Success Team has launched a series of professional development days for all frontline staff members, focusing on the unique intersections of Indigenous histories, current realities, mental health, trauma and education. Delivered by both the Indigenous itinerant social worker and the Indigenous itinerant Child and Youth Counselor, these full-day trainings seek to develop meaningful and experiential ways of understanding the complexities of Indigenous

mental health. Staff who attend these PD sessions hear the teachings of both Elders and Residential School Survivors, as well as receive a full-day of practical training on trauma from both an Indigenous and Western lens.

From a participant:

"Sitting and bearing witness to the knowledge and experience in the room was heavy and uncomfortable, but so needed. I loved the personal stories, information on trauma and the language that was used to explain it all. Thank-you so much for an excellent day of learning."

In addition to caseload management, student advocacy and counseling, the Student Success Team seeks to support a variety of initiatives focused on student mental health. This includes on-site training for schools, the hosting and developing our annual Creating Spaces of Belonging Conference on Indigenous Mental Health, support for Indigenous-focused student programming and events, professional networking with Indigenous mental health professionals across municipalities and provinces, community-based capacity building and the creation of new referral forms and assessment tools. All of these initiatives come from consult and guidance from community Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and through ceremony.

Indigenous Social Worker

Rising to meet the cultural, academic and emotional well-being of Indigenous students across the TDSB can be a true challenge. Systemic barriers (such as racism and discrimination against Indigenous peoples), combined with students' own personal challenges, traumas, resiliencies and successes require wrap-around, culturally informed responses of care by a social worker. Advocacy and building capacity within schools is at the forefront of the work that is done in Indigenous social work in the TDSB. We must create an extended web of culturally-relevant, holistic support for students, provided by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff. We are all Treaty people - we are all responsible for the success, well-being and education of Indigenous children.

Child and Youth Counsellor

The UIEC currently has one Indigenous Child and Youth Counsellor (CYC) who works across the whole TDSB on a referral basis to the Student Support Team. Frontline work consists of one on one counselling, advocacy, family work and group work with students. Current open cases range in grades from senior kindergarten to Grade 12. Each case differs in nature, all students receive weekly or bi-weekly 1 hour sessions with the Indigenous CYC to work through current challenges and to identify areas of strength. Part of the work in schools also consists of attending meetings with school/support staff to work together in bettering the school experience for the student, while also acting as a support person and advocate for the parents/guardians. Lastly, providing support for families through connecting them to community resources, being present at school meetings and keeping in frequent contact to ensure they are up to date on the progress their child is making in the counselling process.

School-Based Indigenous Counsellors

There are four school-based Indigenous Counsellors who are recruited, hired and supported by the Urban Indigenous Education Centre (UIEC). They are at First Nations School of Toronto, Eastview PS, Native Learning Centre East (at Sir Wilfrid Laurier CI) and Native Learning Centre Downtown (at Jarvis CI). They provide a range of supports including counselling, traditional healing programs and youth empowerment.

Itinerant Cultures and Traditions Instructor



The Student Success Team has an Itinerant Cultures and Traditions Instructor who works across the TDSB on a referral basis. The Itinerant Cultures and Traditions Instructor supports students through providing cultural supports and feeling less isolated in schools with lower Indigenous populations. Students participate in a range of ways including cultural teachings (e.g., wampum) and in arts-based Indigenous activities that are wholistic and centered on student well-being. Students also receive cultural support in their academics, and families receive support accessing cultural events, community organizations and agencies in Toronto.

Indigenous Student Success Teacher

The Indigenous Student Success Teacher provides support to Indigenous students (K-12+) across the TDSB on a referral basis to the Student Support Team. The Student Support Teacher provides assistance with resources and opportunities to engage in promising practices for Indigenous education through in-class presentations, collaborating on student assessments, assignments and events that better reflect the learning needs of Indigenous students. The Indigenous Student Support Teacher provides Indigenous students with academic and cultural support, by fostering meaningful relationships and (re)engaging students in an effort to increase overall achievement and well-being (including, but not limited to, attendance and credit accumulation). There is a focus on building capacity by creating positive student engagement and learning opportunities by encouraging the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, histories and stories within classrooms and schools.

Indigenous Student Engagement Initiative Teacher (ISEI)

Indigenous Student (Re)Engagement Initiative Teacher is responsible for working with the Student Success Team to re-engage Indigenous students who have withdrawn from school. This includes credit retention and/or recovery opportunities and student leadership groups. The ISEI teacher supports students and families to find solutions to barriers to attendance, credit accumulation, and well-being thereby increasing graduation rates of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

The Indigenous Student Engagement Initiative Teacher also works with students on leadership opportunities and post-secondary pathways and collaborates with Indigenous and non-Indigenous community organizations/agencies to create youth leadership opportunities for Indigenous students.

Student Well-being

....students who have strong relationships and a positive sense of self – and who can understand and manage their own health and emotions – are in a better position to reach their full potential in the future. Their sense of well-being supports their learning because it makes them more resilient and better able to overcome challenges. Ontario’s education system needs to help students build the knowledge and skills associated with positive well-being and become healthy, active and engaged citizens.”

*Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision
for Education in Ontario*

3rd Annual Creating Spaces of Belonging Conference

Building on recommendations from last year’s conference for making Toronto public schools healthier, more inclusive spaces for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, participants were challenged to re-define student success and well-being and to view themselves as allies. Rather than an emphasis on getting good grades or making the right diagnosis, professionals in the school system should nurture students’ ability to heal from trauma and find balance among their physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual aspects. To make a difference in Indigenous students’ lives, care providers need to establish a mutually trusting, respectful relationship based on honest self-expression, not clinical objectivity or professional distance. Elder Dr. Joanne Dallaire said that, when dealing with a diagnosis, school staff must highlight the individual’s strengths and be wary of the power of labels to become a person’s identity. Those in the education system who are settlers on Indigenous lands must uphold their responsibilities as treaty people and participate in the reconciliation process, according to the principles articulated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and to make schools more inclusive for all people. Allies must accept that they have benefited from the harms inflicted by colonization, forge genuine partnerships with marginalized people and seek an end to historical practices that oppress others.

Indigenous Student Voice

Seventy-six per cent of Indigenous students say that their classmates do not understand First Nation, Métis, and Inuit histories, cultures, perspectives, and contributions very well, or that they do not understand them at all. Ontario Ministry of Education, Strengthening Our Learning Journey Progress Report

Indigenous students across the board are saying:

- they are profoundly resilient, and have immense talents and gifts.

- have many skills that are not often measured in a traditional classroom setting.
- are the children of survivors.
- have commitments to family and the ability to care for others.
- miss home if we are from northern and rural communities.
- pride in our cultures (when not in a school setting where we still experience racism).
- reluctant to participate when we don't feel a sense of belonging.
- respond well when our Indigeneity is respected/valued/acknowledged.
- want to be connected to traditional knowledges, languages and have opportunities for community engagement and experiential learning.
- often don't fit into the colonial school mould.
- not feeling represented in the classroom/school, isolation and lack of Indigenous presence in schools.
- there is a lack of staff understanding of the implications of ongoing colonization and the social determinants of health impacting Indigenous communities that contribute to attendance, transience, grief, sex trafficking, food insecurity, foster care, homelessness, supporting extended family and siblings, travel barriers, parental substance abuse, conflict in the home, lack of suitable clothing and low self-esteem.
- staff have low expectations.
- challenge in returning to school due to negative perceptions of already having multiple 'chances' and gaps in academic skills.
- lack of 'alternative' educational options within our system.

Student Voice Ideas:

- need more student voice sessions-leadership opportunities.
- new courses and programs need to be offered that make personal and meaningful connections to students' lives based on student and community voice.
- opportunities for authentic student voice forums (Indigenous student specific).
- more choice needs to be offered to students in what courses are offered in secondary.
- would like to see more flexibility in schools approaches to credit recovery.
- staff need to really understand us first before they co-create a plan with us and our families.
- Indigenous peoples at the table for making decisions ("with" not "about").
- reach out and make personal connections (e.g., talking, calling, showing you care).
- bring Indigenous students and communities together (e.g., feasts, drum socials).
- Indigenize formats for meetings and gatherings (not audience style meeting).

Toronto Indigenous Youth Council

"Make Change, Be Ambitious, Take Pride"

The Toronto Indigenous Youth Council (TIYC) is a collection of ambitious Indigenous Youth from across Toronto that come together to make positive change in their communities and support one another in the process. These students throughout the TDSB saw a need for a space to be created where peers could meet and talk about political action, business, post-secondary, and other high level topics that come up in a safe environment. For example, in October one member saw racist Halloween costumes in a store and once the group contacted CBC, two of the members were on live TV and Radio discussing how shocked they were that this is still a reality in 2018. For 2019 the group will be participating in the Youth Participatory Action Research course offered as a joint program between the TDSB and the University of Toronto. This exciting course will create further connections with Indigenous students and develop the self-knowledge of everyone on the team.

This group meets weekly and is always looking for new members, so if you know an ambitious Indigenous youth who isn't afraid to work hard to make change, please contact the group's mentor, Indigenous Student Engagement Teacher, Michael Carlson at michael.carlson@tdsb.on.ca.

"It is time for Indigenous Youth in the TDSB to come together and support one another by listening... by working together... by taking pride in who we are"
Jeanne M. - TIYC Founder

Impact of Student Well-Being and Voice

- Increased engagement, understanding and self-confidence of Indigenous students.
- Increased connection to culture and community, and making connections to students' personal lives.
- Safe spaces are created where students can explore their Indigineity.
- Increased student and family re-engagement with school.
- Increased understanding of the supports needed to address the social determinants of health (e.g., food security, housing, health supports) of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students.

Dimension 3: Community Engagement

Community Liaison Team

The Community Liaison Team at the Urban Indigenous Education Centre provides family advocacy and connection to community resources:

- acting as a supportive point of contact for families and community members;
- helping foster communication with school staff and extend school/community connections;
- developing innovative partnerships with community agencies and other service providers;
- developing partnership agreements with a roster of Indigenous artists, speakers and Elders;
- organizing and implementing community events including feasts and drum socials, annual Pow Wows;
- development of brochures, Self-Identification pamphlets and rebranding;
- information sharing for community and working with the UICAC, the Indigenous Steering Council; and
- parent and community engagement.



The UIEC co-facilitates, organizes and supports schools with high Indigenous populations (e.g., Eastview Public School, First Nations School of Toronto) with community socials and feasts. The Community Liaison team develops community awareness by attending and setting up booths at TDSB and community events to promote awareness and understanding of Indigenous student self-identification. The Community Liaison Workers provide individual support to Indigenous students and families across the TDSB with the following: parent engagement, referring and connecting families to Indigenous and mainstream service providers and

organizations, assisting with interventions to support Indigenous students, as well as helping students, parents and guardians with navigating a range of departments and services within the TDSB (e.g., alternative schools, adult night school and Native Learning Centres). Services also include support with food security, affordable housing, employment, connecting to cultural activities, events and resources.

Medicine Garden Project

The goal of the Medicine Garden Project is to provide access for urban Indigenous community members to sacred medicines. The gardens are also used to teach TDSB youth and staff about Indigenous sacred medicines and to create opportunities for them to participate in experiential education in the medicine gardens. Students plant, maintain, and harvest medicines through such experiential education programs.

Building on the work of the Aboriginal Education Centre to begin a medicine wheel garden at the Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre and the Forest Valley Outdoor Education Centre, the UIEC reactivated both gardens to start producing sacred medicines last spring. These medicines are distributed to the urban Indigenous community through the UIEC. Jan Beaver (Anishinaabe/retired Outdoor Education teacher) was commissioned to lead spring planting last April at Forest Valley with her medicines from the southern Canadian Shield. UIEC Instructional Leader Mike Izzo led spring planting at Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre with his medicines from Tyendinga. Both developed programs so students could be deeply engaged in the planting and maintenance of the gardens.

Impact of Community Engagement

- Increase in role models and mentors who can offer advice and guidance from and with an Indigenous perspective.
- Increase in community attendance at Indigenous socials, feasts, Speaker Series and learning opportunities
- Increase community attendance at the UICAC meetings.
- Increase interest in community members engaging in partnerships

Dimension 4: Programming, Curriculum Development and Implementation

Visioning the Urban Indigenous Centre of Excellence

In every Nation, in every Clan,
The Elders to a person.
Whether woman or a man,
Shared a common truth,
One Truth to understand,
That the spirit of the people
Is equal
To the Power of The Land.

The Mother of us all
The sacred Mother Earth,
Is constant in her giving,
And perpetual in her birth,
In meadows and in fields,
Where weeds and flowers grow,
She conceives the summer
showers,
And spawns the winter snows.
In forests and in mountains,
She gives the birds that fly,
Every type of wing,
Then coaxes the wind to join,
In harmony, when they begin to
sing.

In brooks and streams,
And rivers as they flow,
She generates the dreams
And makes the fires glow.

And in every creature,
Whether large or small
She buries gems of wisdom
In them all,

And in every grain of sand,
She plants the knowledge,
Of the Power of The Land.

And those that honour,
Her creations,

And acknowledge her grand
design,
She gives the templates,
Of the sacred,
And the patterns of the divine.

And then with certain
knowledge,
This to understand,
That the spirit of the people,
Is equal,
To the Power of the Land.

A poem by Duke Redbird

Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects. - TRC, #92,

The Urban Indigenous Education Centre (UIEC) and Wandering Spirit School have both moved to 16 Phin Avenue to develop a new vision of an Urban Indigenous Education Centre of Excellence. The Ministry of Education announced capital funds to support renovation and Indigenousization of the former Eastern Commerce Collegiate site into the Urban Indigenous Education Centre. This will also include the addition of an Indigenous daycare and Indigenous community space.

Wandering Spirit School

Wandering Spirit School was founded by Elder Pauline Shirt and co-founded by Elder Vern Harper in the 1970s. The school is committed to supporting Indigenous student achievement and well-being. The vision is to create a vibrant Indigenous Centre serving First Nations, Métis, Inuit students and their families. The UIEC supports the Indigenous Language courses, NAC10, Indigenous Child and Youth Counsellor, Cultures and Traditions, Community Liaison support, as well as Instructional Leadership and Partnerships.

Eastview PS

The UIEC supports Eastview PS by providing an Indigenous Language Instructor, an Indigenous Child and Youth Counsellor, a Cultures and Traditions Instructor and a Community Liaison Worker who work with and advocate for Indigenous students and families, as well as through Pow-Wows, Drum Socials, Winter Solstice Feasts and Round Dances.

Other Schools with Indigenous Education Programs

There are other TDSB schools which are located in communities with large Indigenous populations, provide Indigenous Education programming, culturally-relevant learning opportunities and settings that focus on the unique needs of urban Indigenous students.

Bala Community School & Humewood Community School

The UIEC supports both Bala Community School and Humewood Community School with an Indigenous Language Teacher from JK to Grade 8 (Ojibwe).

Riverdale Collegiate Institute

The UIEC supports Riverdale CI with an Indigenous Language Instructor and the Indigenous Students Engagement Initiative. Riverdale CI was the first secondary school in the TDSB offering the Native Language Program at all four language levels.

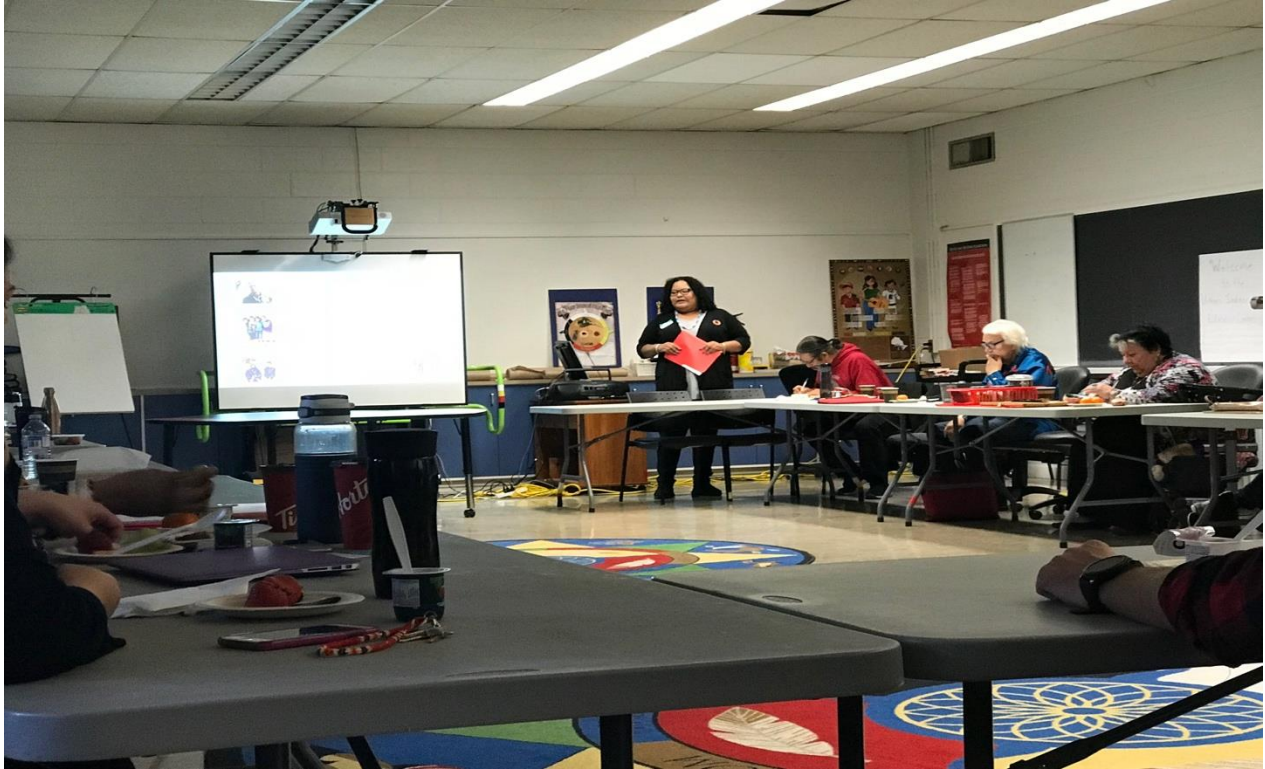
Sir Wilfrid Laurier Collegiate Institute

The UIEC supports Sir Wilfrid Laurier CI with an Indigenous Language Teacher. It is the second TDSB secondary school to offer an embedded Ojibwe language program. The school also provides the NAC10 course and provides support through the UIEC School Support Team and the Community Liaison Teams. Since the 2013/14 school year, Sir Wilfrid Laurier CI has hosted the Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative's Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program (AYEP) with a Business specialty option. In September 2014, Sir Wilfrid Laurier CI also became home to the relocated Native Learning Centre (NLC) - East.

Native Learning Centres (NLC)

The UIEC supports two Secondary School Native Learning Centres (NLC). They provide educational programs to Indigenous youth working toward high school graduation. The NLC program model provides students with an opportunity to work at their own pace, with highly individualized instruction in a non-competitive environment. The programs' foundation and success are based on combining traditional practices with "wrap around, wholistic" services to meet the needs of students, fostering positive Indigenous identities, achievement and well-being. The first NLC was established in 1998 to re-engage students of Indigenous ancestry who had left school. NLC Downtown works in partnership with Jarvis CI and is located adjacent to Church St. Public School. Additional programming includes NAC 10, visual and media arts opportunities, Indigenous focused curriculum, Indigenous Language and options for extracurricular experiences.

Instructional Leadership Team



The UIEC Instructional Leadership team builds system-wide knowledge and awareness of Indigenous cultures, histories and ways of knowing through structured staff development and direct support to schools:

- building capacity among staff to enhance conditions in schools for Indigenous students
- developing and implementing curriculum units, courses of study, and professional learning modules;
- vetting resources and helping classroom teachers and teacher-librarians identify accurate, authentic materials and resources for classrooms and school libraries;
- establishing partnerships and learning initiatives in collaboration with various Indigenous organizations; and
- delivering professional development at all levels to all staff (e.g., New Teachers Induction Program, Outdoor Education staff, etc.).

Instructional Leaders also meet with Principals and teacher leader teams to support the development and implementation of 'Indigenous Education learning plans'. This includes support with understanding Indigenous pedagogy, Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, cultures, languages and ways of knowing.

Indigenous Languages and Cultures and Traditions Instructors

The Urban Indigenous Education Centre supports Indigenous Language teachers and Cultures and Traditions Instructors with planning, and instruction incorporating Indigenous Knowledge and Ways of Knowing. Currently there are eight school sites offering Indigenous Language Instruction. There are six secondary sites (Sir Wilfrid Laurier CI, Riverdale CI, First Nations School of Toronto, Native Learning Centre Downtown at Jarvis CI, Native Learning Centre East at Sir Wilfrid Laurier CI) and four elementary sites (Humewood CS, Bala CS, Eastview PS, First Nations School of Toronto).



With the continued growing enrollment at First Nations School of Toronto, an additional half-time elementary Native Language Teacher needed to be hired to meet the demand. The grades served are junior kindergarten to Grade 12. The total number of students receiving Native Language and Tradition/Culture instruction in the board is 739 students. There are also two multigenerational language nests in the evenings: one at the Indigenous Education Centre and one at Eastview PS. The Language Nests allow the community to meet once per week to support each other in learning the Ojibwe language. Since the Nests include children, parents, grandparents and aunties, it allows the whole family to participate in language reclamation. Currently the only language of instruction is Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe), but there is an increasing demand for more programs (e.g., in new locations and additional languages). There are Traditions and Cultures Instructors also supporting Indigenous students across the TDSB (e.g., First Nations School of Toronto, Eastview P.S., Native Learning Centre East, Native Learning Centre Downtown, and itinerant through the Student Success Team).

Staff are supported through a Professional Learning Community that brings together the Native Language Teachers and the Cultures and Traditions Instructors to build capacity by sharing ideas and best practices in the delivery of the Native Language and Cultures and Traditions programs.



Online Resources

The UIEC provides resources to the system (e.g., Direct Line, System Leaders' Bulletin, Trustees' Weekly, etc.) throughout the school year by co-producing 'Education Sheets' resources on various topics and Indigenous Days of Significance including: Orange Shirt Day, Treaty Recognition Week, Aboriginal Veterans' Day, Powely Day, Louis Riel Day, Inuit Day, National Aboriginal Day, etc.

The Urban Indigenous Education Centre also has an Academic Workspace (AW) site (<https://aw.tdsb.on.ca/sites/tl/equityandinclusiveshools/aboriginal/>) , a Facebook site (<https://www.facebook.com/AboriginalEducationCentre/>), a Twitter account @UIEC_TDSB, and a newly created online curriculum resource referred to as the UIEC Awesome Table (<https://sites.google.com/tdsb.on.ca/uiiec-resources-draft/home?authuser=1>)

Dimension 5: Research, Development and Innovation

The Urban Indigenous Education Centre employs Indigenous research methodologies and works with research data to identify a variety of approaches and tools to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit student achievement and well-being more effectively based on identified trends. This data is being used to determine things such as: new locations for Indigenous Language programs, and possibly a west location for a third Secondary Native Learning Centre. Data includes: comparison of trillium self-identification data to Student and Parent Census data; analysis of individual school Aboriginal population numbers; encouraging identified schools to offer First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies courses based on student self-identification numbers; providing professional learning to schools with large numbers of self-identified students. The UIEC has engaged in a gap analysis and environmental scan within the Learning Centres. To support this work, the UIEC is represented on the following external Boards, committees and organizations in a leadership capacity including: the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASCC), the City of Toronto Aboriginal Advisory Committee, A Way Home Committee for Youth Homelessness, Akwa Honsta Affordable Aboriginal Housing and Toronto Police Services Aboriginal Peace Keeping Unit. The UIEC staff is also represented at the Toronto Area Regional Office (TARO) Ministry of Education Indigenous Education Branch.

Updating the *Decolonizing our Schools Report*

The Urban Indigenous Education Centre (UIEC) is working with Dr. Susan Dion to update the *Decolonizing our Schools Report - Aboriginal Education In The Toronto District School Board*, in order to use this data to best meet the needs of Indigenous students.

Our objective is to understand how to create school communities that support positive Indigenous student achievement and well-being.



Outdoor Education Programming Research

Visioning and research for the reopening of the Boyne as an Indigenous Focused Outdoor Education Centre will include programming possibilities such as Indigenous land-based education: sports (e.g., snowshoeing, lacrosse, archery, hiking), using the kitchen (growing and preparing Indigenous Foods, Indigenous culinary program), medicine walks (plant walks), ceremonies (e.g., solstice/equinox gathering, fasting), conferences and feasts, ceremonial spaces (e.g., healing lodge), maple syrup, canoe building, tool making, traditional games, cultural teachings, professional learning, team building activities, wellness activities, workshops and/or classes on the land, community engagement, and partnership engagement.

Trauma-Informed Schools

The Urban Indigenous Education Centre is working towards knowledge mobilization on Trauma-Informed Schools and Cultural Safety. The Student Success Team is delivering informative professional learning that addresses the historical and contemporary contexts of colonialism and its impacts, Indigenous approaches to healing and wellness, wholistic approaches and the current resources and research available. This research will benefit administrators, teachers and Professional Support Services staff in learning about Trauma-Informed schools from Indigenous perspectives.

Impact of Research

There has been an increasing demand for Indigenous communities to engage with Indigenous research methodologies in education which include participatory and decolonizing research processes led by Indigenous peoples. The research provides implications for future research based on what we have learned from Indigenous communities. Continued action is needed for

implementing Indigenous methodologies which supports Indigenous student well-being and achievement.

Decolonizing research is a process for conducting research with Indigenous communities that places Indigenous students' voices and perspectives at the centre of the research process. This privileges and promotes Indigenous knowledges and methods. We continue to learn that data needs to be gathered and analyzed through processes recognized and valued by the communities in which and with we are working.

Dimension 6: Partnerships

Indigenous Partners

There has been a significant increase in authentic Indigenous partners through a Partnership Process, artist roster and speaker's roster. Please visit the Urban Indigenous Education Centre (UIEC) AW site and the Partnership website for details at <https://pims.tdsb.on.ca/>

Current internal partnerships include the Arts Department, Outdoor Education, Libraries, E-Learning, Continuing Education, Experiential Learning, Social World Studies and Humanities and Early Years.

Across Experiences Secondary Credit Co-op Program

In partnership with the Arts Department and Experiential Learning, Across Experiences is a Co-operative Education opportunity for secondary students with an interest in social justice and a passion for the arts, with priority consideration given to Indigenous students. Students have the opportunity to gain co-op credits by working together at an Arts Production Company. The credits include Dance, Drama, and/or Film/Media. The students create an original performance exploring issues of identity, power and their personal connections to place. Indigenous perspectives are woven into all options of the program. The program aims to build cross-cultural understanding through the arts, as students are mentored and supported by Indigenous artists and Elders to draw upon their diverse backgrounds to tell their stories through film and media arts. Across Experiences culminates with a tour of Grade 7/8 schools and a Gala Showcase Performance and screening of films at a professional theatre.

External

York University, Faculty of Education: Additional Basic Qualifications, Int. Native Studies, Combined Credit, Masters' in Urban Indigenous Education Cohort.
University of Toronto (OISE): YPAR, Youth Participatory Action Research.

Combined Credit Program

In Partnership with York University and University of Toronto (OISE), and the Continuing Education department, the UIEC provided secondary students with an opportunity to take a Combined Credit in night school. The students receive a secondary school credit (NDA3M or NDW4M), a transferable university credit from York University, and an honorarium for their Youth Participatory Action Research from University of Toronto (OISE). The course is taught jointly.

The course offered students two course options (NDA3M Current Indigenous Issues in Canada or NDW4M Issues of Indigenous Peoples in a Global Context) in which students learn from Indigenous authors, filmmakers and artists. The course explores Indigenous perspectives of identity, history literature and tradition, and provides students an opportunity to develop their own understanding of Indigeneity. To reduce barriers to Indigenous student participation the students receive TTC tokens, dinner, resources and course fees covered by the UIEC.

Intermediate Basic Qualification in First Nations, Metis and Inuit Studies

The UIEC has continued to offer Additional Basic Qualifications certificate in First Nations, Metis and Inuit Studies and undergraduate Native Studies teachables with York University. This partnership will expand in 2018-2019 to include an Indigenous Teacher Education Program, and an Indigenous PhD cohort.



Masters in Urban Indigenous Education Cohort

In response to the need for knowledge and understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, histories and perspectives, the Faculty of Education at York University, in collaboration with the UIEC, offers a course as a special cohort of students who will complete the Masters in Education (MEd) degree with a focus on Urban Indigenous issues in education. Admission to this program is completed every two years.

Impact of Partnerships

UIEC partnerships are contributing to improving First Nation, Métis, and Inuit student achievement and well-being and increasing all staff and students' awareness and knowledge of Indigenous histories, cultures, perspectives and contributions.

Dimension 7: Reconciliation and Relationships

"All Canadians must now demonstrate the same level of courage and determination, as we commit to an ongoing process of reconciliation. By establishing a new and respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, we will restore what must be restored, repair what must be repaired, and return what must be returned."

-Excerpt from 'What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation,' 2015

Relationships built on respect, trust and reciprocity are at the heart of the work of reconciliation. There can be no reconciliation without truth. Through creating trauma-informed and culturally safe spaces, we can lay the foundation for the possibility of transformation that supports student achievement and well-being. Reconciliation emphasizes changing institutional structures, as well as personal and professional paradigms to create environments that strengthen relationships with Indigenous peoples. The Urban Indigenous Education Centre (UIEC) continues to develop and implement strategies that contribute to the enhancement of relationship building and concrete steps towards reconciliation. All staff have opportunities to learn from Indigenous Elders and scholars, educational leaders, community members and authentic resources. As part of our commitment to an anti-oppression stance, it is our responsibility to be a part of the reconciliation process. It will require active participation and engagement to move forward towards respectful and collaborative relationships with Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Protocol of Engagement

The UIEC will be piloting and launching a resource guide for all TDSB staff called the 'Indigenous Protocol of Engagement'. This resource will be launched in conjunction with an update to the Checklist of Promising Practices (and School Walk-Through Tool) that addresses areas such as: In-School Climate, School Community Relations, Physical Environment (Classroom), Pedagogical Approaches, Teaching and Learning Strategies, Curriculum Content, Resources Assessment and Evaluation and Teacher Personal & Professional Development

Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee

The Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee (UICAC) – formerly the Aboriginal Community Advisory Committee (ACAC) - was established by the Board in April 2006, and meets on a monthly basis to provide the Board with parent and community input on TDSB policies and programs concerning the education of Indigenous students. As part of its mandate, ACAC is responsible for advising the distribution of programming and services for Indigenous students and their families across TDSB, with the goal of making these more equitably accessible to all members of the Indigenous communities. The committee also plays an advocacy role for parents and the community. The UICAC is composed of parent representatives and community agencies, and Trustees. The committee is co-chaired by two parent/community representatives, and is supported by the UIEC staff.



The UIEC collaborated with UICAC to look into barriers to recruitment and hiring. Working with Employee Services' staff to reduce barriers in order to increase the number of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit teaching and support staff in the school board, the UIEC engaged parents and community, including the Indigenous Steering Council and Elders Council.

Diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities were engaged to gain an understanding the complexities of self-identification (e.g., the only way self-identification can happen is if schools are a safe place to self-identify). Trauma-informed approaches will be addressed and cultural safety. These areas of focus included recruitment for community leadership.

Indigenous Steering Council

The TDSB Indigenous Steering Council meets with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre staff on a quarterly basis (or as needed).

Elders Council

The TDSB Indigenous Elders Council meets with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre on a quarterly basis (or as needed). It serves and guides the Board in supporting student achievement and well-being.

- Family advocacy and connection to community resources
- One on one and group itinerant support
- Professional learning, curriculum development and support for school staff
- Referrals and student support and networking within the Indigenous community



Debwewin (Truth): A Visual Representation of Contemporary First Nations, Métis and Inuit Cultures



This exhibition of contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artwork from the collection brings together the voices of students, teachers, communities, as well as celebrated Indigenous artists to provide varied, sometimes controversial, but always personal messages. The exhibition's curator is acclaimed artist, poet and educator Elder Dr. Duke Redbird who worked collaboratively with our TDSB Exhibition Team to bring his vision of Debwewin to life. The exhibition was named by Elder Pauline Shirt. The exhibition is open to all for guided tours by Elder Dr. Duke Redbird. Students, staff and community members have opportunities to engage in learning and teaching experiences.

Treaties Recognition Week

In November, during Treaties Recognition Week, the UIEC in partnership with Canada Roots Exchange supported many Living Library Events. The Indigenous Student Support Teacher helped organize Indigenous guest speakers, including youth, to visit a total of 10 Elementary and Secondary schools throughout the TDSB to present on Treaty Awareness/Week, through in-class presentations and/or assemblies.



Our Mission

To enable all students to reach high levels of achievement and well-being and to acquire the knowledge, skills and values they need to become responsible, contributing members of a democratic and sustainable society.

We Value

- Each and every student's interests, strengths, passions, identities and needs
- A strong public education system
- A partnership of students, staff, family and community
- Shared leadership that builds trust, supports effective practices and enhances high expectations
- The diversity of our students, staff and our community
- The commitment and skills of our staff
- Equity, innovation, accountability and accessibility
- Learning and working spaces that are inclusive, caring, safe, respectful and environmentally sustainable

Our Goals

Transform Student Learning

We will have high expectations for all students and provide positive, supportive learning environments. On a foundation of literacy and math, students will deal with issues such as environmental sustainability, poverty and social justice to develop compassion, empathy and problem solving skills. Students will develop an understanding of technology and the ability to build healthy relationships.

Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being

We will build positive school cultures and workplaces where mental health and well-being is a priority for all staff and students. Teachers will be provided with professional learning opportunities and the tools necessary to effectively support students, schools and communities.

Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students

We will ensure that all schools offer a wide range of programming that reflects the voices, choices, abilities, identities and experiences of students. We will continually review policies, procedures and practices to ensure that they promote equity, inclusion and human rights practices and enhance learning opportunities for all students.

Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs

We will allocate resources, renew schools, improve services and remove barriers and biases to support student achievement and accommodate the different needs of students, staff and the community.

Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

We will strengthen relationships and continue to build partnerships among students, staff, families and communities that support student needs and improve learning and well-being. We will continue to create an environment where every voice is welcomed and has influence.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

We acknowledge we are hosted on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe (A NISH NA BEE), the Haudenosaunee (HOE DENA SHOW NEE) Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognize the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

Reconnaissance des terres traditionnelles

Nous reconnaissons que nous sommes accueillis sur les terres des Mississaugas des Anichinabés (A NISH NA BAY), de la Confédération Haudenosaunee (HOE DENA SHOW NEE) et du Wendat. Nous voulons également reconnaître la pérennité de la présence des Premières Nations, des Métis et des Inuit."

Committee Mandate

The Program and School Services Committee's mandate will be to consider and make recommendations to the Board on education matters referred to it for consideration, including matters presented by the Board's Community Advisory Committees.