



Aankwenmaading

"Gesture of Goodwill"

Truth and Reconciliation: A Commitment to Action

Minowaajmowinan

November 2019

Truth and Reconciliation: A Commitment to Action

First Nation Trustee appointed to Rainbow District School Board

Ogimaa Kwe (Chief) Linda Debassige was appointed First Nations Trustee with Rainbow District School Board. His Honour Justice André L. Guay administered the Declaration of Office and Oath of Allegiance on Thursday, April 18, 2019. The Oath of Allegiance was completed in both the English and Anishinaabemowin languages. Trustee Debassige represents First Nations communities who have an educational service agreement with the Board.





Education Service Agreement renewed with 10 First Nation communities

The renewal of the Education Service Agreement with 10 First Nation communities is important in the ongoing work to support First Nation learners in Rainbow Schools. In signing this agreement, we honour the history and culture of First Nations communities served by the Board, and commit to working in partnership with these communities to better meet the needs of First Nations students. We commend and acknowledge the leadership and contribution from the First Nations Advisory Committee toward the development of this important agreement.



Rainbow District School Board Chair Doreen Dewar and Director of Education Norm Blaseg sign the Education Service Agreement with Sagamok Anishnawbek Chief Nelson Toulouse.

The agreement was developed with the vision and spirit of enhancing the ability of First Nations learners to meet their goals. It also affirms the rights of all First Nations students to receive a quality education that includes access to culture, language and programs that support well-being and achievement.

Truth and Reconciliation: A Commitment to Action (2019-2024)

"Gesture of Goodwill"

In April 2017, Rainbow District School Board passed a motion acknowledging the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and committing to key recommendations as they relate to education. Under the guidance of the First Nations Advisory Committee and through broad community consultations led by Nbisiing Consulting, the Truth and Reconciliation: Commitment to Action plan was developed. The plan, which was adopted by the Board on July 3, 2018, was formally launched at the Education Service Agreement signing ceremony on August 30, 2019 in Atikameksheng Anishnawbek. The cover features an original painting by First Nation artist Leland Bell – entitled "Gesture of Goodwill".



The Truth and Reconciliation: Commitment to Action plan was formally launched at the signing ceremony.

We invite you to view a short clip of the Education Service Agreement signing ceremony and launch of the Truth and Reconciliation: A Commitment to Action plan from CTV Northern Ontario.

<https://northernontario.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1770916>





Rock Your Mocs

Staff and students in Rainbow Schools were invited to wear their favourite moccasins on Thursday, November 15, 2018, to help recognize unique First Nations cultures and celebrate harmony through unity. We would like to acknowledge all Rainbow Schools for preparing for, and recognizing, the significance of Rock Your Mocs Day.

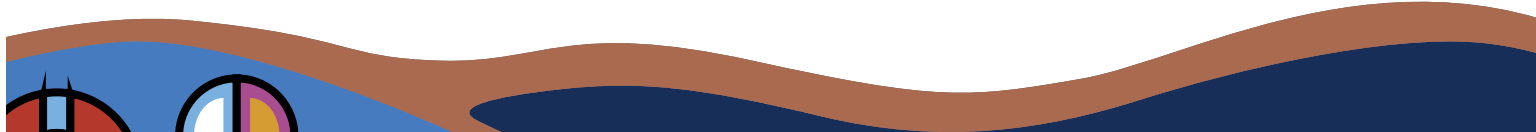
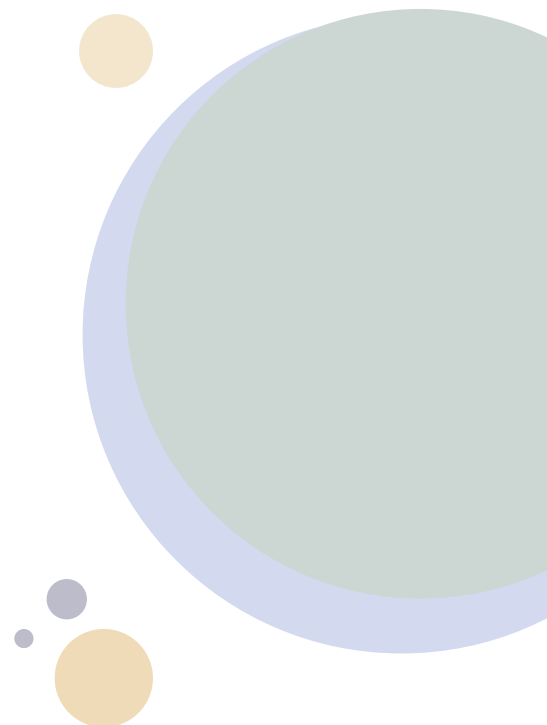


DID YOU KNOW?: Jessica Jaylyn Atsye, of the Laguna Pueblo Indigenous Tribe/Nation in New Mexico, is the young founder of Rock Your Mocs Day. The initiative was launched in 2011 in an effort to showcase the importance of indigenous identity, to honour cultural roots, and to demonstrate the advantage of global unity.

At this time, we would like to highlight Lansdowne Public School for facilitating moccasin making with canvas, cowhide and painting. Students also smudged their cozy footwear, and celebrated through round dancing and feasting on scone dogs. Adamsdale Public School students made paper moccasins with messages of school unity.

We look forward to hearing stories from more schools this year.

ANISHINABEMOWIN: The word "moccasin" originates from the Anishinabemowin word "m'kiznan," which translates to the English word footwear. "Mocazinaan" is another way to say footwear, likely where the English term "moccasin" derived from.





Feasting of the Drums and Feast Bundles

We would also like to acknowledge Princess Anne, Lansdowne and A.B. Ellis Public Schools for caring for their school hand drums ... “apitchi weweni ezhichigaiying”. Our hand drums and grandfather drums have spirit, and should be handled with tender loving care at all times, including feasting the spirit of the drums.

G’chi-miigwech goes out to Lansdowne and A.B. Ellis Public Schools, especially Cyndie Wemigwans and Lisa McGregor, Anishinabemowin teachers, for supporting an important environmental responsibility movement. The gesture of carrying our own Feast Bundles (reusable plate, bowl, fork, knife, spoon and cup) goes a long way to prevent waste and reduce our carbon footprint. G’chi-miigwech for promoting the importance Rainbow District School Board has placed on environmental sustainability and stewardship to protect Mother Earth, our home and school environments.



TIP: Carry your own feast bundle to prevent waste and avoid using disposable items for feasting. This promotes caring for our Mother Earth. Every endeavour helps to protect our beautiful planet.

“Kids Have Stress Too” Program

“Kids have Stress Too” teaches children how to recognize and deal with stress. Through the program, students learn practical techniques for coping with stress and promoting resilience.

At Queen Elizabeth II Public School, Aboriginal Support Worker Ozzie Osawamick worked alongside Social Worker Christine McInnes to embed Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the program.

Indigenous students created a “talking stick” to help facilitate a sharing circle, where participants were invited to share their feelings. The “talking stick” was used to help teach patience, self-regulation and respect.

Within the sharing circle, there is no defined hierarchy, which promotes equality and inclusion. Listening to their hearts and minds, children learned that their presence is important, leaving them feeling valued and acknowledged. While sharing, children were encouraged to think about what their friends are feeling, empathetically, and learned to wait for their turn, helping to develop patience and respect for peers.





Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters

Orange Shirt Day began in Williams Lake, British Columbia by the St. Joseph Mission residential school commemoration project. Phyllis Webstad, a young girl from the Dog Creek reserve, attended the Mission in 1973, where her clothes were removed, including her brand new orange shirt.

Phyllis' story inspired the Mission to declare September 30th Orange Shirt Day, as this was the time of year in which children were taken from their homes to attend residential schools.



Central Manitoulin Public School was proud to participate in Orange Shirt Day last year.

Orange Shirt Day is an opportunity to engage in dialogue about residential schools with our students. It is also a day to honour the survivors and the children that never returned home from the residential school system in Canada.

We would like to acknowledge students from Churchill Public School for voicing the importance of Orange Shirt Day. G'Chi-miigwech to Charmaine Peltier-Pitts for expressing gratitude, on behalf of her family and community, for participation in this event. Charmaine reminded us that we should never forget this shared history to help ensure that it is never repeated. We are grateful for Charmaine's wisdom and leadership. We invite you to see how Churchill Public School honoured the importance of Orange Shirt Day.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OP8cuKEiX4>

How this day is acknowledged is individual for each Rainbow School. We look forward to sharing more stories for years to come.





Treaty Recognition Week: November 5 to 9, 2018

In 2016, the Ontario government proclaimed the first week of November as Treaty Recognition Week, to promote education and awareness about treaties and treaty relationships. Although there is an identified week to focus on treaties, treaty education can occur anytime across the curriculum.

Here are a few examples of how Rainbow Schools honoured Treaty Recognition Week in 2018.

Queen Elizabeth II Public School

Students were invited to participate in a round dance to open up Treaty Recognition Week. Aboriginal support worker Ozzie Osawamick says, "[Treaty Recognition Week] is a good way to remind people that we are all treaty people, and that we are all part of this school community."



"A Promise is a Promise" by Robert Munsch was read to primary students, and was used to start a dialogue with young children about broken promises.

Lansdowne Public School

Brandon Petahtegoose from Atikameksheng Anishnawbek spoke to students about the local Robinson Huron Treaty, and how the development of the Treaty began. The land involved spans the Eastern and Northern shores of Lake Huron from Penetanguishene to Sault Ste. Marie and Batchewana Bay on Lake Superior, including the islands in the said Lakes and inland to the Hudson's Bay Company territory, as well as Unceded lands in Canada West.

Grade 4/5 students learned about different Treaties. They created their own wampum belts and learned about the different wampum belt symbols on and their meanings. They also created their own treaty belts based on what they felt was important in a relationship.

Copper Cliff Public School

Grade 6 students were invited to participate in the exploration of Treaties through inquiry. The students' questions about treaties guided their research. Through this process, students deepened their understanding of Treaties and were left with many questions. Some of the students felt compelled to write to the Prime Minister to address some of their questions about Treaty annuities, in particular the Robinson-Huron Treaty.

We invite you to see how Copper Cliff Public School students learned about Treaties through the inquiry process.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDgwpObxhKE>





Anishinaabemowin Language Learning for Families

The United Nations declared 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, in an effort to raise awareness about the consequences of the endangerment of Indigenous languages across the world.

In Rainbow Schools, we are always looking at ways to infuse Anishinaabemowin into learning with our students and their families.

Anishinaabemowin with Nokomis

Elder Nokomis Martina Osawamick graciously committed to provide her time to share her wisdom about the importance of retaining Anishinaabemowin with Queen Elizabeth II and Churchill Public Schools.



Through storytelling, Nokomis helped promote the Anishinaabek way of life, and presented a wonderful opportunity for students to listen to her fluency, and be inspired to learn the language.

Jiibaayaa Giizhigaad - All Soul's Day

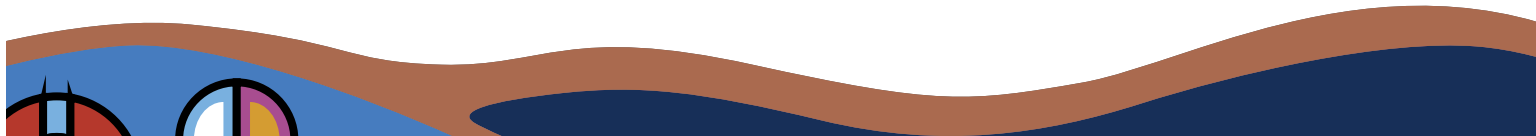
There is a custom throughout the world where we take the time to honour the spirit life of loved ones who have left their Earth walk on Shkagamikwe (Mother Earth) to journey onto the Spirit world. In the Anishinaabe tradition, the spirit of loved ones is remembered by the life lessons they have left behind.

Living family and friends acknowledge and remember the souls/spirits of loved ones and their spiritual happiness, in hopes that they may once again meet their loved ones in the Spirit world.



Jiibaayaa Giizhigaad is a time of reunion and to feast with the spirit of our loved ones. This day of commemoration of our loved ones also teaches and reminds us of who we are and where we come from. This tradition of sacred tribute/homage to our loved ones and Ancestors also teaches us that death is a natural cycle of life on our own Earth walk, and to live life to the fullest.

G'chi-miigwech to Elder Nokomis Martina for leading the ceremony, and delivering the Jiibaayaa Giizhigaad teachings to students and staff at Lansdowne Public School.





Indigenous Mural at Confederation Secondary School

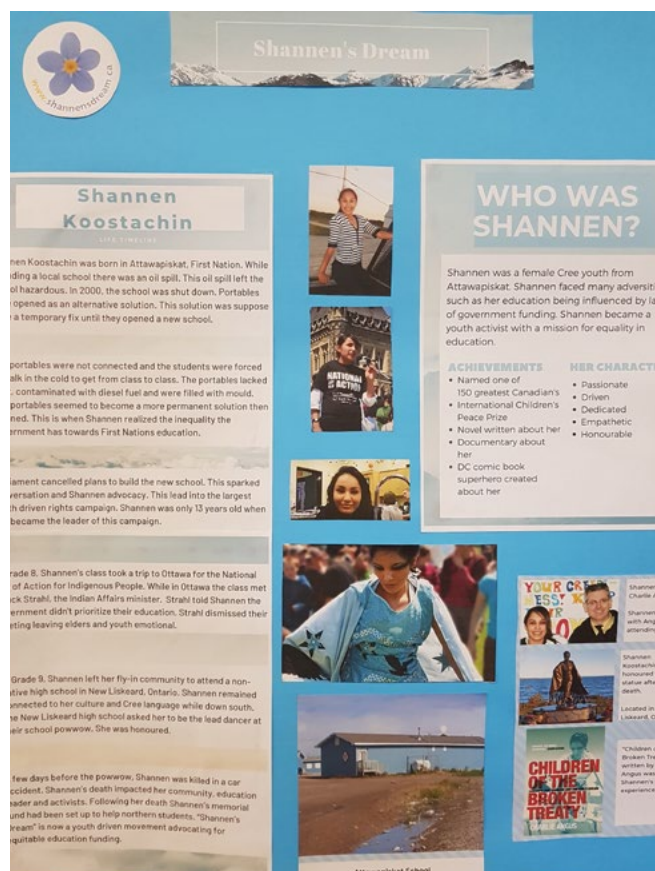
Students at Confederation Secondary School painted an Indigenous mural in the school cafeteria. The design is inspired by the Seven Grandfather Teachings with direction from Indigenous artist Michael Cywink.



Confederation Secondary School students Owen Misner, left, Deacon Michelin and Nicole Jobidon enjoy the newly painted Indigenous mural in the school cafeteria.

Shannen's Dream

Manitoulin Secondary School students in Stewart Roy's Native Studies class paid tribute to Shannen Koostachin, her classmates, and the community of Attawapiskat. Following a diesel spill close to their school causing illness for students and teachers, the group, along with Shannen, spent three decades fighting for a new school. Shannen sadly passed away in 2010 and never had the chance to see the new school that was built in 2014. Shannen's Dream was created in her honour with the support of her loving family, friends and community.



(student work)

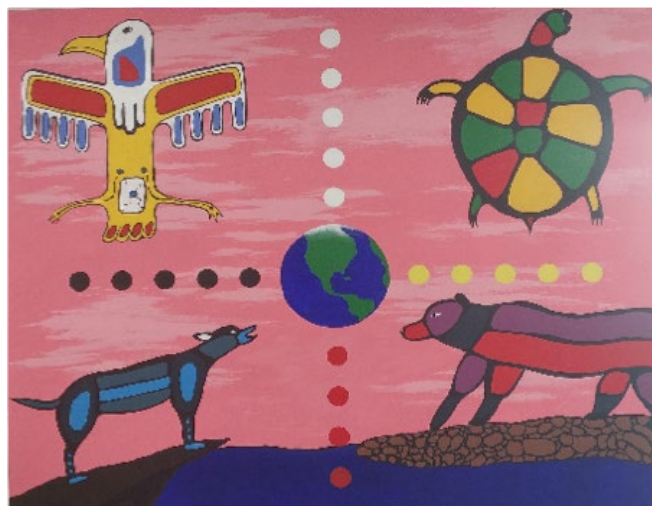


Aboriginal Secondary School Awards Banquet

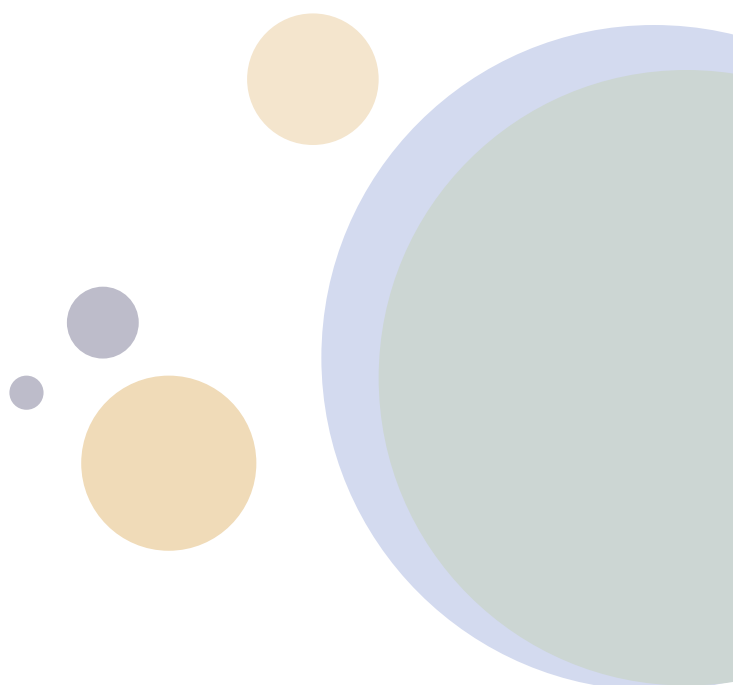
Rainbow District School Board works closely with the United Way and N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre to ensure students across the system are recognized and celebrated for their achievements. June 6, 2019 was an incredible evening celebrating Indigenous youth across the Board. Some 500 students were nominated for a variety of awards, and graduates were celebrated with about 600 family members, friends and educators. Congratulations to all secondary school award recipients.



Mural Project



Staff and students at O'Connor Park completed a mural for their learning space with support from an Aboriginal Support Worker. Hard work and dedication went into creating such a beautiful piece.





Niigaansiiwin (The Leaders Way)

Niigaansiiwin is a leadership focused program providing students with experiential learning opportunities. Students work hands on with equipment and systems in order to understand them.

The students in the Niigaansiiwin Program learned about hydroponics, a system where plants are grown without soil. There are various methods of hydroponic gardening and last year the students at Lasalle Secondary School learned about Nutrient Film Technique (N.F.T.). Kara Hookimaw, a student from Fort Albany shared her learning with us and how she hopes to take what she has learned back to her home community.

"I find this process fascinating. Plants grow faster, they're healthier and it's more natural. Before I started in the Niigaansiiwin Program I had never heard of hydroponics. I live in Fort Albany, a community that is 400 km North of Timmins. My plan is to learn more about hydroponics so that I can go back to my home community and teach my people there about it. Everything back home is so expensive, we have a Northern store and the prices are crazy high. I want to teach the people in my home community to grow their own fruits and vegetables."

Kara Hookimaw, Lasalle Secondary School

Students in the Niigaansiiwin program at Lasalle Secondary School are educated through lands-based learning, where leadership, and the importance of contributing to their community are the focus. Students learn about food security, and how to produce their own food, and they also participate in cultural learning opportunities through the kind support of the Wabnode Centre for Indigenous Services at Cambrian College and the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre.

