



Aankwenmaading

"Gesture of Goodwill"

Truth and Reconciliation: A Commitment to Action

Minowaajmowinan

March 2023

Truth and Reconciliation: A Commitment to Action

A Message from Darcy Trudeau, Indigenous Student Trustee

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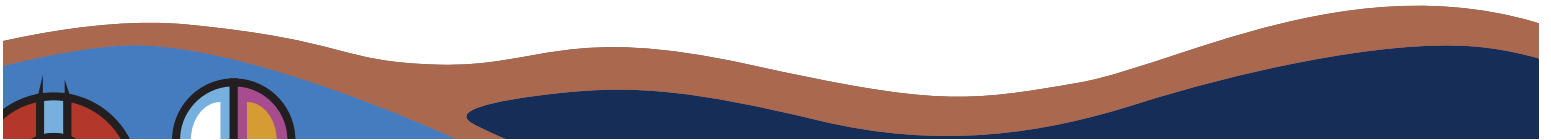
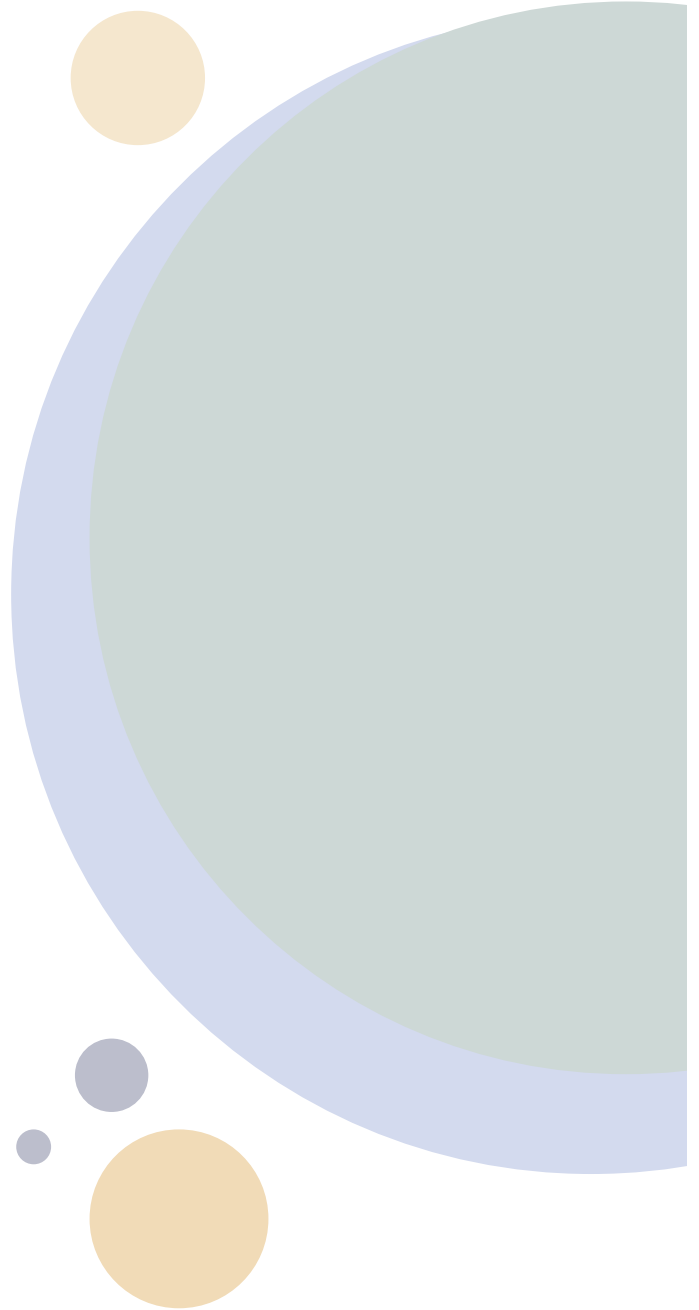
My name is Darcy Trudeau and I am from Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation. I am the Indigenous Student Trustee for Rainbow District School Board for the 2022-2023 school year. I co-chair the Student Senate alongside my fellow Student Trustee Jocelyn Kuntsi. I am currently working on organizing a Pow Wow with the Board's Indigenous Education department. I am forever grateful for the opportunities I have received this school year, and look forward to many more. Miigwetch.





National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (Orange Shirt Day) - September 30, 2022

Indigenous-led organizations collaborated to bring education, information, knowledge and, most importantly, truth, resiliency, and hope to the community at Bell Park on September 30th. The event recognized survivors of the colonial systems of Residential/Indian Day schools, Sixties Scoop survivors and the resiliency of today's warriors. The day began with a Sacred Fire Ceremony. Students arrived later in the morning to watch the play "Debwewin" (Truth). Indigenous agencies and First Nation communities hosted teachings in tipis - medicine, Seven Grandfather Teachings and land acknowledgment, to name a few. Food and craft vendors were set up for visitors to enjoy. The event had an outdoor capacity of 2,000 people, and it filled up quickly. Over 700 students from Rainbow District School Board were in attendance, from four elementary schools and seven secondary schools.



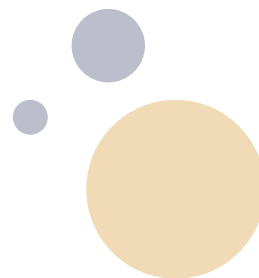


Hide Camp

This was the first year of having students attend Hide Camp, which took place in late October and early November on the traditional grounds of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek. The day started around a fire in the Teaching Lodge, with students learning cultural practices and teachings related to the fall Hide Camp. Students processed deer hide - soaking hide with ashes to create a reaction to get the hide to fall off - and processed the leg bones to make tools. Students toured the traditional grounds and went on a short nature walk, where they learned that sumac trees keep their berries all winter and are used in tea to treat diabetes. Students from Lively District Secondary School, Lockerby Composite School and Lo-Ellen Park Secondary School participated in Hide Camp. Kristina Donato, teacher at Lively District Secondary School, was thrilled with the opportunity. "I just wanted to let you know how AWESOME our experience was yesterday. It was way more than I had expected," she said. "They had us scraping and hammering and cutting and pulling quills. It was very hands-on," she continued. "I would love to do this again next year."

Organizers felt that each student took away something different, and they said it was a pleasure having them.

Students at Manitoulin Secondary School have also been involved in tanning a moose hide. The photo below showcases a new project that began this year and will continue through next semester. Along the way, students have been learning about tanning hide from members of the local community.





Celebrating Indigenous identity with Rock Your Mocs Day

Students and staff in Rainbow Schools once again walked in harmony by wearing their favourite moccasins for Rock Your Mocs Day – a global movement celebrated annually in November.

Rock Your Mocs Day was founded in 2011 by Jessica Jaylyn Atsye from the Laguna Pueblo Indigenous Tribe/ Nation in New Mexico to uplift the spirit of Indigenous people. Since its inception, the day's message of unity, understanding and the importance of Indigenous identity has resonated worldwide.

Making moccasins is a centuries-old craft passed down through generations. Historians believe the footwear was first created and worn by a variety of Indigenous tribes across North America dating back to pre-colonization times.

There are many cultural teachings behind the making of moccasins and moccasin styles.

Patterns and design showcase the characteristics, values and histories of Indigenous territories. Nations could often identify Indigenous people by their footwear.

To deepen their knowledge of Indigenous perspectives, schools received resources to share with students, including videos and readings about the traditional significance of moccasins for Indigenous people.

Participants were invited to take photos to spread the word on social media using the hashtag #RockYourMocs.



Hiking and Connecting with Nature

At Mishko-Ode-Wendam, staff and students enjoy hiking in nature and taking in the beautiful fall colours. During their outdoor adventures, teaching staff or members from Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre's traditional team share the various medicines that can be found in nature. Students enjoy the opportunity to get away from their desks and into the great outdoors – to detach from the many daily stressors that surround them. Teacher Debra Lalonde shared her sentiments: "Being outside, walking and connecting with nature always seems to ground us. It's a great opportunity to laugh, and talk, and to learn about everything nature has to offer". The outdoors is also a great place for an art lesson or quiet time reading.





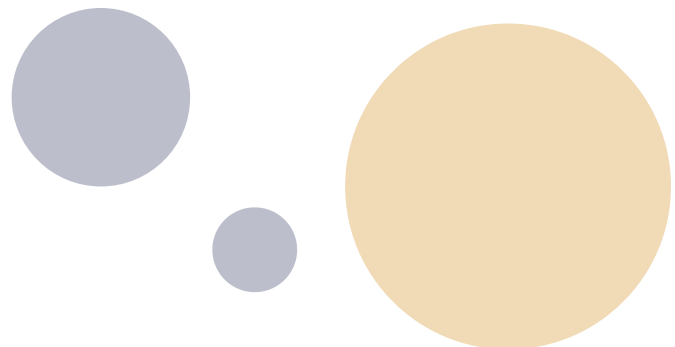
Tie Blankets

In August, Rainbow District School Board's leadership team gathered to plan for the upcoming school year. During their time together, staff made tie blankets. The meaning of the tie blankets and how to make them were passed on to us from Elder Hilda Nadjiwan. Tie blankets are a great gift and the blankets were taken back to schools to give out to Elders, Knowledge Keepers or school guests for sharing their knowledge. All schools had the opportunity to create a tie blanket as a team building exercise during a Professional Activity Day in September.



Through Indigenous Education initiatives, a number of school visits have taken place to share the "My Medicine Wheel of Self-Care" resource and to make tie blankets with students at MacLeod Public School, Copper Cliff Public School, Westmount Avenue Public School, Carl A. Nesbitt Public School, Queen Elizabeth II Public School, Adamsdale Public School and Espanola High School. During these visits, students learned about self-care as shared by the traditional team at Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre. Students helped to develop a list of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual activities that they currently do or would like to do in the future to look after their overall well-being.

Classes also worked together to make a tie blanket. Older students served as great helpers to the younger students.





Hiking in Killarney

Staff and students from the N'Swakamok Native Alternative School were able to venture out on field trips throughout the fall - most notably, a hike in Killarney Provincial Park. The day was beautiful, with the vibrant colours of the leaves shining through the bright sky. Staff and students enjoyed the walk and the opportunity to take in some fresh air. Once the walk was complete, everyone was treated to fish and chips at the famous Herbert Fisheries in Killarney. It was the perfect way to end a memorable day!



Espanola High School Ravens Program - Making Moccasins with Irene Dickson (Sagamok)

During the past semester, students in the Ravens Program at Espanola High School participated in a variety of cultural learning activities with community members from Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation, Espanola, and the Espanola branch of the Noojmowin Teg Health Centre. Students explored the outdoors with hiking and land-based reflection activities, smoking and filleting fish with partners at Noojmowin Teg, cultural teachings on stories and medicines from Wayne Southwind of Sagamok Anishnawbek, and teachings on resilience and reconciliation from Elder Isabelle Meawasige of Serpent River First Nation.

In November, students were especially thrilled to make their own moccasins with Irene Dickson of Sagamok Anishnawbek. Over the course of two weeks, students learned how to build their own pair of moccasins using materials gathered locally and regionally. Students learned where the materials were from and how they were gathered. They also learned beading, sewing, and other lessons about how to make moccasins and their origins.



Grade 11 student Hiram Hiebert shared his learning. "It was a cool project," he said. "I learned how to make moccasins, how to take my time and be patient," he added. "In the end, I made a pair of moccasins that looked good and taught us more about our culture." Quintin Megwanabe-McGregor, also a Grade 11 student, reflected on his experience. "It was interesting to see how moccasins were made. We had to deal with all the fur and stitching the leather," he said. "It was hard work, but it was interesting and taught me the importance of being patient."

The moccasin making exercise served as one of the major projects for the Indigenous Studies component of the Ravens Program this semester. Students showed tremendous effort and pride in their work, and were proud of their moccasin creations.

"I always saw people making moccasins but never knew how to do it. My Grandma always has the materials, and she has the knowledge of beading and everything, but because of residential schools and being quiet about things, I haven't really learned how to make them myself. So it was really interesting to make my own, and now I have that knowledge. After the workshop with Irene, I feel I now know more about how to actually make moccasins, and that's something I think I might explore in the future." - Rayne Bennett-Peltier, Ravens Program student





Professional Development for Indigenous Support Workers

The Board's Indigenous Support Workers (ISWs) met as a group in December at Manitoulin Secondary School for a professional development meeting. Staff truly enjoyed the opportunity to gather in the school's state-of-the-art medicine room, which is available to students on a daily basis. Gordon (Chop) Waindubence shared his knowledge of the Seven Grandfather Teachings with the group. Rainbow District School Board has incorporated these teachings into their Strategic Directions 2022-2027. Board staff will continue to build on these teachings in the 2022-2023 school year and through the next five years and beyond with the support of local Indigenous community members. In the afternoon, the ISWs visited Bridal Veil Falls to take in a hike and share best practices. Incorporating the land and fresh air are very healthy ways to spark stimulating conversations.





Winter Solstice Feast

The winter solstice, which officially began on December 21, 2022, presents a time for blessing and balance, as the northern hemisphere has the fewest hours in the day, and the southern hemisphere has the most. Having a feast is one way we can acknowledge the new change and connect back to the natural world. Prior to the feast, one of the students made a feast plate, and also smudged the nourishing food and Indigenous Support Room space where the feast was held. Traditionally, people contribute to the feast. Donations for the feast were generously provided by the Sagamok Education Unit, Sagamok Mental Health Services, parents, guardians, students, staff from Espanola High School as well as Noojmowin Teg Health Centre. Some 100 people joined the feast. It was a wonderful time.

Rainbow District School Board Indigenous Student Success Awards

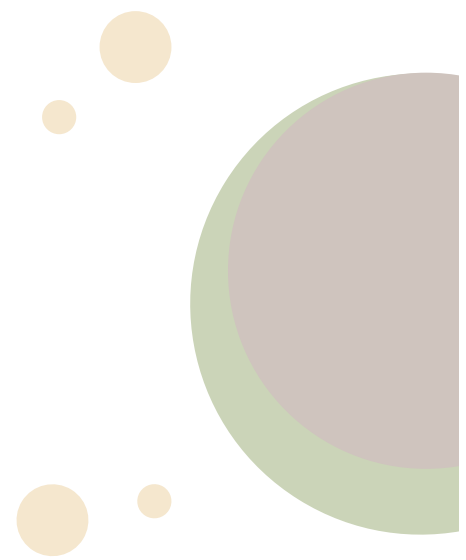
The Indigenous Student Success Awards (ISSA) were developed to empower Indigenous students to strive to their fullest potential within an education system that is not their traditional way of learning. The awards aim to encourage students to be proud of their identities and honor their worldviews as Indigenous people. The ISSAs also represent and reflect the Indigenous students' culture. Each award is categorized based on one of the Seven Grandfather Teachings: Wisdom, Love, Respect, Humility, Truth, Honesty, Bravery. This is the Rainbow District School Board's third year recognizing the Indigenous Student Success Awards in Rainbow secondary schools. These awards promote reconciliation.

Aboriginal Secondary School Awards

United Way/Centraide, in partnership with N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre, last hosted the 16th Annual Aboriginal Secondary School Awards on Thursday, June 6, 2019 at the Caruso Club, Sudbury, Ontario. The Aboriginal Secondary School Awards will once again return in person on Thursday, June 1, 2023 at the Caruso Club.

The Aboriginal Secondary School Awards is organized by a committee of dedicated individuals from various educational institutions and support organizations.

The purpose of the Aboriginal Secondary School Awards is "To celebrate, promote and recognize the achievements, successes and culture of aboriginal youth in education."





Ziisbaakdokeng - Maple Syrup Time

Here is a short vocabulary list in preparation for the upcoming maple syrup season.

- Ziisbaakdokaaning maple syrup camp
- Ziisbaakdokegamig maple syrup cabin
- Ziiwaagmide maple syrup
- Ninaatig maple tree
- Ziisbaakdaaboo sap water
- Mezweyaansan maple syrup candy
- Ziisbaakod sugar
- Shkode fire
- Msan wood
- Kikoog pots
- Zhiitag! Get Ready! (plural)
- Ziisbaakdokaaning gdizhaami We are all going to the maple syrup camp
- Gaa-gjidaanaang ziisbaakdaa boo
mshkiki aawan ziisbaakdaaboo We are going to taste sap water

