

Upcoming Events

January 4 - National Ribbon Skirt Day

Feb 12 - SD 61 Annual Lahal Tournament @ Spectrum Community School

Community Events

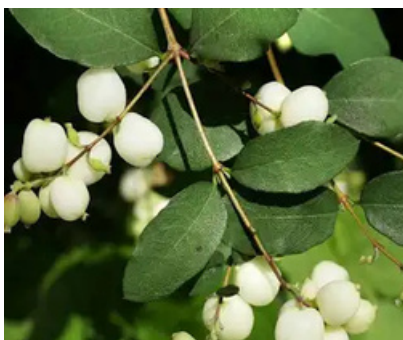
Drumming at VNFC - everyone is welcome
Fridays 5:30 - 7:00 pm in the gym at the Victoria Native Friendship Center

Local Plants

Chocolate Lily / also known as rice root



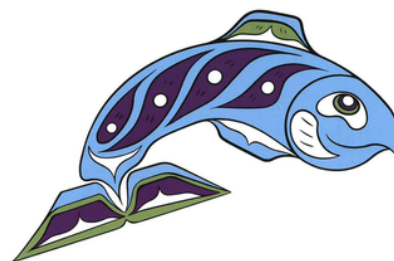
Snow Berry / pəp̓q̓'iyas



Salal / t̓éqeʔ



Sword Fern / s̓əx̓éləm

**The Spirit of Alliances: Support and Wellness Framework****Spirit of Alliance Animals**

Since 2015, our school district has been using the Spirit of Alliance animals, that were created in consultation with community, as part of an Education Enhancement Agreement. These animals and teachings are widely used in our schools. These animals now have a new look! They have been rebranded and redesigned and are available for all to use. The new animals have been designed by local artist and Esquimalt High School alumni, Jessica Joseph of the Songhees Nation. The rebranding of these animals is evident not only in the new design, but also in the use of the Support and Wellness Framework, which guides teachers in a wholistic approach to wellness.

The Spirit of Alliances: Support and Wellness Framework (2022) was created by the Indigenous Education Department of the Greater Victoria School District in consultation with Indigenous community advisory groups. This framework provides the structure for a culturally responsive service delivery model that will allow all staff to support the holistic needs of Indigenous students and families within our school district, across all grade levels.

This framework includes aspects of existing Indigenous models that are holistic and relational: The Medicine Wheel, which highlights four aspects of the whole person (Physical, Emotional, Spiritual and Mental); the Circle of Courage, which reminds us that developing students need opportunities to be Generous, Independent, Courageous and Connected. The four animals that represent the Spirit of Alliance Support and Wellness Framework the Bear, Wolf, Raven, and Salmon. (taken from the Introduction)

Here is a glimpse:

Bear: Self-Awareness - represents Belonging, Engagement and Location

Wolf: Relationships - Generosity, Social and Emotional Support

Raven: Cleverness and Imagination - Courage, Learning and Academic Support

Salmon: Navigation - Independence, Transitions and Connections

The new Spirit of Alliance Animals have been introduced to the district counselling team, the Principal and Vice Principal Team and the Indigenous teachers of the district. All district staff will have a chance to be informed and trained on this new framework at the following:

Jan 24th Middle School Focused Pro D Day

May 16 Indigenous Focused Pro D Day

While many of you are still actively using the original Spirit of Alliance Animals, please feel free to use the art work as a comparison and please do not disregard the old, while we bring in the new. The original design speaks of the past while the new design speaks of the present and guides us into the future.



The Chocolate Lily's root ball holds the 4 animals while each bud represents the four levels; Early Learning, Elementary, Middle and Secondary. The Chocolate Lily is Indigenous to Lekwungen Territory.

National Ribbon Skirt Day

National Ribbon Skirt day was first recognized on January 4, 2023, after Isabella Kulak, an Anishinaabe girl from Cote First Nation in Saskatchewan, was shamed for wearing a ribbon skirt to a formal event at her school.

See link to video with more info below

The Ribbon Skirt Evolution
Ribbon skirts are worn as a sign of womanhood, strength, and connection to Mother Earth. They evolved in the early 1800s, as traditional clothing from animal hides transitioned to materials like wool and cotton resulting from European trade. As a result, ribbon work was incorporated to decorate these skirts. The materials and ribbons often tell a story about the wearer.



Lahal Tournament

February 12, 2025 @ Spectrum

The IED Department is hosting their 2nd Annual Tri-District Lahal Tournament at Spectrum Community School.

Middle and High Schools are welcome to register teams. Please stay tuned for the official poster to come out.

Elementary Schools are welcome to visit and see Lahal in action.

Please email ied@sd61.bc.ca for questions.



Lahal was initially played to settle disputes. Games could last for days. Sticks and bones were elegantly carved and painted using animal bones and/or antlers.

Cultural Appropriation

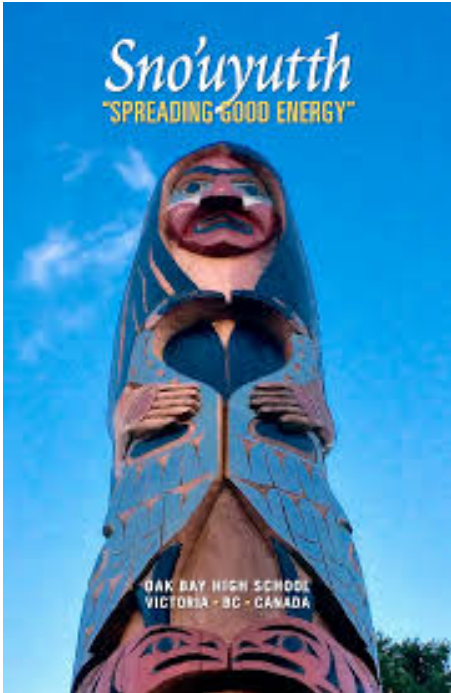
Most people in North America recognize certain aspects of what it means to “be Indigenous” to these lands. Many of these aspects are the “visible” pieces, such as drumming, dancing, fishing, hunting, carving and beadwork. The belief systems, values, languages, stories, and cultural knowledge that support them are the “unseen” aspects. Cultural appropriation occurs when people copy or create (often for profit) the outward aspects of Indigeneity without having the lived experience of being Indigenous and the generational teachings that come through community, family, and ties to the land. This is why we have moved away from classroom activities like making representations of totem poles and button blankets, which when made authentically in community, come with important teachings and knowledge woven into the process.

In the article “How Do I Avoid Cultural Appropriation in My Classroom or School?”, Jo Chrona (Wayi Wah!) discusses the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation. Many educators have struggled with finding the line between the two. As Chrona advises,

In appreciation, we can learn about and understand other cultures, and in a cultural exchange there is an intentional sharing of cultural knowledge. These are both different than cultural appropriation of Indigenous knowledge which occurs when non-Indigenous people take elements of Indigenous knowledge as their own, without permission to do so and without recognition of where the knowledge comes from, and how it exists within specific contexts.

IED is also happy to help with specific questions around this. For further reading on this topic:

Appropriation (?) of the Month: First Nation Totem Poles - This article by R. R. Gray discusses the appropriation of totem poles from a Northwest Coast perspective.



We have moved away from recreating sacred items like regalia and poles. A blog article by Carissa Waugh/ Ékè Éwe from the Kwanlin Dün First Nation captures some of the complexities and reasoning behind this:

A primary example I like to give about appropriation is about the traditional Tlingit Button Blanket. I had never made one before until I started a new job with Youth of Today Society. I was put in charge of getting a team together to build it, and I learned so much from a Tlingit Elder. There was so many rules and traditions to follow, for example if I wasn't Tlingit, then I would have had to ask a Tlingit Elder for permission to make the Blanket, and if I wanted my own blanket for regalia then an Aunt of the opposite clan would have to make it for me.

(From “Cultural Appropriation vs Cultural Appreciation, October 2019”)

January/ February 2025

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

What is happening with the IED Website?

The IED Website is waiting for an overhaul.

Thank you for your patience as we continue to work on updating this service.

While there is still relevant information on our website, we do recognize that some of the material is dated.

Please connect with any member of our team, listed on the right, if there is information that you need help locating.

Indigenous Education Library Team

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IED Teacher-Librarian
Friday PM



Francine Spahan
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Secondary School Teacher Consultant

The role of Indigenous Teacher Consultants is to work with SD61 staff to help build capacity of Indigenous knowledge, resources and Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

To view and browse the IED library collection online, please visit destiny.sd61.bc.ca and select *Indigenous Education Library* from the bottom right.

[Click here to browse the Library Collection on Destiny](#)

To borrow items from the IED Library please email iedlibrary@sd61.b.ca and allow a day or two for reply.

Indigenous Guest Speakers In Schools

If you plan on inviting Indigenous guests into your school, please be sure to go through the IED Department First. Hay'sxw'qa

iedlibrary@sd61.bc.ca

Browse the online library catalog at: destiny.sd61.bc.ca

Teachings of the Bear

As winter approaches, one of the teachings of bear reminds us to take care of ourselves. The longer, cooler days remind us that taking longer rests and being mindful of slowing down are all part of winter self care.

"The Spirit of Alliances" : Indigenous Support and Wellness Framework states "The Bear's gift to the learning process is self-awareness. This means being able to make meaning out of life, be creative, and act with intention. When the Bear's gifts are accessible to students and they are able to weave them into the learning experiences, the students' abilities to develop internal skills are enhanced. A principle of Bear's gift of internal learning is the exploration of one's identity, which provides the foundation for students to make meaning of their place in family, school, and community. Students, with a strong sense of self-awareness, are able to make space for creativity in life, which enables them to act with intention. In order to experience this, learners need to be in a place where they are nurtured, valued, and feel a strong sense of belonging."



Recommended Listening



Podcasts are a great way to learn something new. Here are a few that we recommend (please be sure to listen before you use in class):

[Warrior Kids Podcast](#): Elementary to Middle (Various topics, host Pam Palmeter)

[Our Native Land](#): Middle/Secondary From the Chek Studios on Lkwungen territory, host Tchadas Leo covers various topics on all things Indigenous.

[Unreserved with Roseanna Deerchild](#) Secondary (Various topics) ***Click on Podcast link under title banner - lots of great info on main page as well!

[The Storykeepers](#) Secondary (authors Waubgeshig Rice and Jennifer David host discussions on Indigenous literature)



Authentic Authorship

With so many Indigenous storytellers, authors, artists and musicians finally finding a place for their voices to be heard in mainstream Canadian society, it is more important than ever to know how to ensure the voices we choose to use in our classrooms are authentic Indigenous voices.

What Are Authentic First Peoples Texts?

Authentic First Peoples texts are historical or contemporary texts that

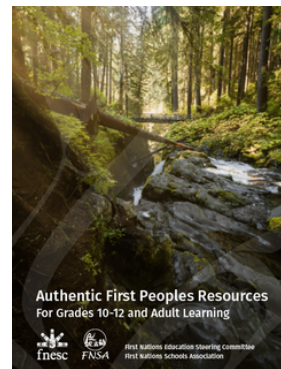
- are created by First Peoples or through the substantial contributions of First Peoples
- depict themes and issues that are important within First Peoples cultures (e.g., identity, tradition, role of family, importance of Elders, connection to the land, the nature and place of spirituality as an aspect of wisdom, the relationships between individual and community, and the importance of oral tradition — see Common Themes in First Peoples Texts later in this Introduction)
- incorporate First Peoples story-telling techniques and features as applicable (e.g., circular structure, repetition, weaving in of spirituality, humour).

(From [FNESC Authentic First Peoples Resources](#))

How Can I Ensure That I Have Authentic Resources in My Classroom?

Sometimes we need to do some research into who an author is, and how they identify as Indigenous. The following resources are excellent guides to help with this process:

[In Our Own Words](#) - While this resource says it's for K-3, we highly recommend it for all grades and classrooms. Lots of useful information about respectful terminology, protocols, and more.



[The Importance of Including Authentic First Peoples Resources in BC Classrooms](#) (2 min video)