

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

School Board: Bluewater District School Board

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Name of Program/Initiative/Strategy: The Bimaadzwin (Good Path) Project and and Mural Painting Project

Hyperlinks to Documents or Website(s) Describing this Program/Initiative/Strategy:

[Student Art Reflects Grandfather Teachings](#)

[Students Collaborate on Mural Project](#)

Description of Program/Initiative/Strategy (max 200 words)

The focus is on practices that excite, engage and increase student confidence, achievement and well-being. In the brief description please provide answers to the following questions: Where the program/initiative/strategy is delivered (school/board locations)? Who is responsible for delivering and monitoring the program/initiative/strategy? Who is the target audience? Are there any community partnerships involved? Are there any staffing or budget implications? Are there any special resources required? What are your indicators of success, etc.?

The Bimaadzwin (Good Path) Project

Indigenous history and culture are being embedded into the learning at G.C. Huston Public School (Southampton) as students learn the Seven Grandfather Teachings of our local First Nation community. Teachings, such as Respect, Love and Humility, are designed to keep an individual on the Good Path in life. Each month, teachers weave one chosen teaching into their classroom instruction. Student Bizmaadzin Artists are also deployed to depict this teaching in graphic form by painting a selected classroom's door. Eventually, every walk through the hallways will remind students of the importance of staying on the Bimaadzwin. This initiative is organized and monitored by staff at the school.

Mural Painting Project

Saugeen District Secondary School (Port Elgin) invited G.C. Huston Public School (Southampton) students to participate in a week long collaborative project with Métis artist Christi Belcourt and traditional Ojibway storyteller Isaac Murdoch. Student groups worked at SDSS on three large canvases to depict traditional Indigenous stories. Staff and media were invited to an unveiling ceremony of the final artwork where participating students reflected on the collaboration process. A student survey was also developed to enable feedback on their learning experiences during the project.

What has been the impact on Student Learning ? (max 200 words)

The Bimaadzwin (Good Path) Project

At the end of each month, a Bimaadzwin assembly is held to celebrate the way in which the monthly teaching has been put into action. Students wear T-shirts reflecting the Seven Grandfather Teachings and share their learning prior to the student artists' unveiling of the classroom door. In addition to students becoming increasingly engaged through artistic expression, the project has resulted in G.C. Huston's application to the Province of Ontario to name the bridge that spans the nearby Saugeen River the "Bimaadzwin-Good Path" bridge. Some of the junior and intermediate students are writing persuasive letters to support this goal of connecting our Southampton and Saugeen First Nation communities. We are seeing that the Seven Grandfather Teachings can empower our students to think critically and act responsibly and with honour.

Mural Painting Project

Beyond learning some amazing traditional Indigenous stories, students were able to creatively problem solve and think abstractly through artistic expression. These are skills that benefit every profession, and not just those that are arts related. The mural project provided an especially unique learning experience in that this form of artistic expression is usually a private undertaking as opposed to a collaborative exercise.