



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

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EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

School Board Limestone District School Board

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Name of Program/Initiative/Strategy Tipi Project at the Katarokwi Learning Centre/Gould Lake Outdoor Centre

Description of Program/Initiative/Strategy

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.?

One of our most successful engagement initiatives was our Tipi Project for our Limestone Outdoor Education Centre located at Gould Lake, north of Kingston. Secondary students built a tipi using trees that they identified, harvested, and scraped. Students painted the exterior canvas and will be donating the completed tipi for primary students to learn from while visiting the outdoor centre.

The project was coordinated by the Indigenous Student Support and Engagement teacher who worked with classroom teachers, the SHSM lead, and partnered with the Métis Nation of Ontario, the City of Kingston, traditional knowledge holders from the Indigenous community, and the outdoor education staff.

The project took place at the Katarokwi Learning Centre, Belle Park (City of Kingston) and will move to Gould Lake Outdoor Centre when it is completed.

The target audience was Indigenous students at the Katarokwi Aboriginal School, students at the Katarokwi Learning Centre, and elementary students visiting the outdoor centre.

Indicators of success were increased student attendance during the program, a cross-curricular and authentic, rich learning experience for students involved, and the full participation of outdoor centre staff in the reconciliation course offered in partnership with Queen's University faculty.

What has been the impact on Student Learning?

The project targeted students at three different levels. First, eighteen Self-identified Indigenous students from one alternative school were most involved. These students learned about structures, forest management, geometry of a tipi, safe operation of chainsaws, harvesting of trees, scraping the bark, and traditional paintings on the tipi canvas. These students interacted with role models and career pathways in Forest Management, Environmental Science, art, and Outdoor Recreation. Students received cultural teachings, built relationships with a wide-range of other students and external partners, and learned from traditional knowledge holders in the Indigenous community. Students received a Chainsaw Course certificate.

The second audience was wider: approximately 200 additional students at the alternative school (Katarokwi Learning Centre) learned about the project, helped paint the tipi, and helped to scrape the bark from the tipi poles for community involvement hours. The involvement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students working together on the project led to the successful application of a Community Centered Experiential Learning grant for a project on Reconciliation in our school.

The final audience for the tipi is the approximately 7,500 primary students who visit the outdoor centre annually. These students will interact with the tipi, the art on it, and work with the Outdoor centre staff. All of the Limestone Outdoor Education staff have taken a course on Indigenous studies in an attempt to bring more Indigenous presence and teachings to the Outdoor Education Centre. This will continue to impact programming at the Outdoor Education Centre for years to come.