

## **EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

**School Board:** Hamilton Wentworth District School Board

**Contact Person and Email Address:** Glenn Cooke, Principal, System Programs-gcooke@hwdsb.on.ca

**Name of Program/Initiative/Strategy:** Strengthening Hamilton Aboriginal Education (SHAE)

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

<http://www.hric.ca/programs.php>

### **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.?

### **Where the program/initiative/strategy is delivered (school/board locations)?**

SHAE is a partnership between the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB), and the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre (HRIC). This unique alternative education program is delivered through a Memorandum of Understanding between these two community partners at the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, a friendship centre located at 34 Ottawa Street North, Hamilton, Ontario. Who is responsible for delivering and monitoring the program/initiative/strategy? The SHAE alternative education program is delivered in partnership and in collaboration with the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre and Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. Program delivery is based on student inquiry, in a problem based experientially rich environment. Community based learning partnerships are established based on student voice. Authentic formative and summative tasks are co-constructed based on current student cohort interest, and delivered in partnership with those community based learning partnerships whenever possible.

### **Who is the target audience?**

The primary target audience is First Nations, Métis and Inuit students wishing to further their secondary school education in a culturally rich and supportive environment. Are there any community partnerships involved? Although this culturally rich education model is delivered and managed in collaboration between the HWDSB and the HRIC, there are multiple community partners actively involved in supporting and assisting student learning throughout the school year. These community partners and activities include: -YMCA on James St.: Weekly attendance for physical fitness -Kitchen Collective and Factory Media Centre: An eight-week collaborative project learning traditional cooking from Indigenous chefs and advocates and audio-visual skills by creating an online cooking series -YWCA: A partnership project to create artistic works in the 150 Years of Persistence exhibition, illustrating Indigenous women's resistance -Pass the Feather To Me: An ongoing project including a drum-exchange with youth from Attawapiskat. -Elder Mark Sault from Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation: Monthly visits to teach students teachings and traditions. -McMaster University Aboriginal Health Sciences: Monthly visits to campus or to friendship centre to discuss pathways and experiential learning on campus. -Hamilton

Regional Indian Centre programs including: Wasa Nabin, Indigenous Youth Wellness and I am a Kind Man have done outreach and teachings within the SHAE classroom -Every Child Matters: Participated in campaign and educated Memorial Elementary students about residential schools. Are there any staffing or budget implications? HWDSB provides classroom operating expenses, including teacher salary, classroom materials, experiential learning opportunities, technology support, etc. While, the HRIC provides the salaries for the SHAE Coordinator and the SHAE Educational Assistant, physical classroom space, all classroom office and student furniture, community supports, daily lunch programming with nutrition funding, field trip cost-sharing, classroom supplies, Elder visits costs. Are there any special resources required? This program requires access to Indigenous community resources as well as additional human resources including but not limited to: -Indigenous teacher, support staff including an educational assistant and coordinator for the program, support from local elders and knowledge keepers, added tracking and support assistance (SHAE Operations), an Aboriginal social worker provided by HWDSB, additional funding for traditional activities and teachers.

### **What are your indicators of success, etc.?**

Indicators of success captured through student observations, conversations, and products, as indicated below: Student Observations: Students drive learning, they also guide the program through choice and project based learning, they are respected and accepted, they are treated like family. They feel safe, they do not come to school under the influence, they do not engage in violence, they find the classroom to be their home and the centre is part of that home. -National Aboriginal Day Community Event. - Student Engagement in authentic learning opportunities. Student Conversations: -Anecdotal evidence: Students quotations include: "I don't fight anymore," "I don't want to leave here and go anywhere else." -Relationship building and dialogue on self-identification (July 12, 2016) -Addressing Indigenous Students' Holistic Needs (August 5, 2017) -Gathering Voices: FNMI Learner Testimonials (July 21, 2016) - Monthly SHAE/HRIC Operations Meetings. -Quarterly Indigenous Education Circle Meetings. Student Products: -Video (draft) – "What are the Core Conditions that contribute to cultivating Indigenous student success and well-being at HWDSB?" -Student attendance tracking/intervention/credit accumulation monitoring -Student-led and created video series with the Factory Media Centre and Kitchen Collective -Student traditional learning: created traditional birch bark baskets, medicine pouches, building a traditional housing structure (in June), traditional life skills including corn soup, bannock and traditional medicinal teas alongside a local Elder, Mark Sault.

### **What has been the impact on Student Learning?**

#### **2015-2016**

Total number of students who have participated in SHAE (Sept 2015-June 2016): **32**

Total number of credits generated: **49**

Total number of students who have successfully moved to next learning opportunity: **5**

Total number of students transferred to alternative learning opportunity: **9**

Total number of students withdrawn to non-education program, but still being re-engaged: **3**

Total number of students withdrawn to non-education program: **3**

**2016-2017 (As of April 2017)**

Total number of students who have participated in SHAE (Sept 2016 - April 2017): **25**

Total number of credits generated: **58**

Total number of students who have successfully moved to next learning opportunity: **1**

Total number of students transferred to alternative learning opportunity: **4**

Total number of students withdrawn to non-education program, but still being re-engaged: **3**

Total number of students withdrawn to non-education program: **2**