



Annual Report 2022

Indigenous Education in
the
Toronto District School
Board

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Forward

We welcomed the start of 2022 thankful that after a global pandemic, the Urban Indigenous Education Centre had weathered the storm of uncertainty and peril caused by COVID-19. Our staff heroically managed two years of homeschooling, providing direction, and leadership and support for the difficult challenges during that period. Once the pandemic had subsided to the degree that we could return to a more normal routine. We began workshopping ideas to resurrect the visions that had developed over ten years, but had been suspended for the past two years.

2022 was a very busy time for the Elders Council and the UIEC. We continued to engage in various events and opportunities to share knowledge and wisdom. This work focussed on transforming education in the TDSB, introducing Indigenous Land-Based learning, community engagement, partnerships, curriculum development, research, and truth and reconciliation through Indigenous perspectives. The Elders Council supported the UIEC as they reimagined ways to decolonize and Indigenize proficiencies throughout the TDSB.

With the support of the Elders Council, the UIEC participated in planning for Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous People's Day and a highlight for everyone was a visit by Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Governor General Mary Simon who visited the school and UIEC on April 1st, 2022.

Conversations continue to be held exploring ways of implementing Indigenous Sovereignty. The promise by Colleen Russell-Rawlins, Director of TDSB, regarding the opening of the Boyne Natural Science School as an Indigenous Land-based Learning Site, speaks to the importance of Indigenous education across the TDSB schools. The Director stated: "We remain committed to honouring the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action and to creating additional opportunities for students to learn from Indigenous perspectives and teachings on the Land."

With this promise in mind the Elders continued advocating for a new school, and shared ideas with Indigenous architect, Brian Porter for the design and development of the Boyne land-based learning site.

The annual Creating Spaces of Belonging took place in May, I gave a Professional Development Keynote speech to the UIEC and TDSB staff. In June the UIEC launched the *O.K. K.O. O.K. Magazine* and the UIEC hosted the second annual Two Spirit and Indigiqueer Pride event.

The Ministry of Education and the Board of Directors continue to be supportive of the work of the UIEC and the Elders Council, as demonstrated by the passage of the motion that incorporated Indigenous authors and texts into Grade 11 English, with the possibility of establishing an Indigenous Trustee position in the future at the TDSB.

Elder Dr. Duke Redbird

Canopy 1:

Professional Learning

Supporting Beginning Teachers in Indigenous Education, Summer and Fall 2022

Through the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), UIEC Staff engaged newly-contracted teachers in learning about Indigenous Education at Toronto District School Board (TDSB), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)'s Calls to Action 62 and 63. During this professional learning, teachers were introduced to TDSB's Strategic Direction of Truth and Reconciliation along with TDSB's commitment to Indigenous Education through the *MultiYear Strategic Plan*, connections to curriculum, finding resources to support K - 12 student and teacher learning, and about the work of the UIEC to support Indigenous students and their families.

Number of Participants: 250 Educations

Impact:

- Participants reported:
 - Understanding the context of Indigenous Education and teachers' roles in Truth and Reconciliation in Education
 - Knowledge of where to access resources for the classroom

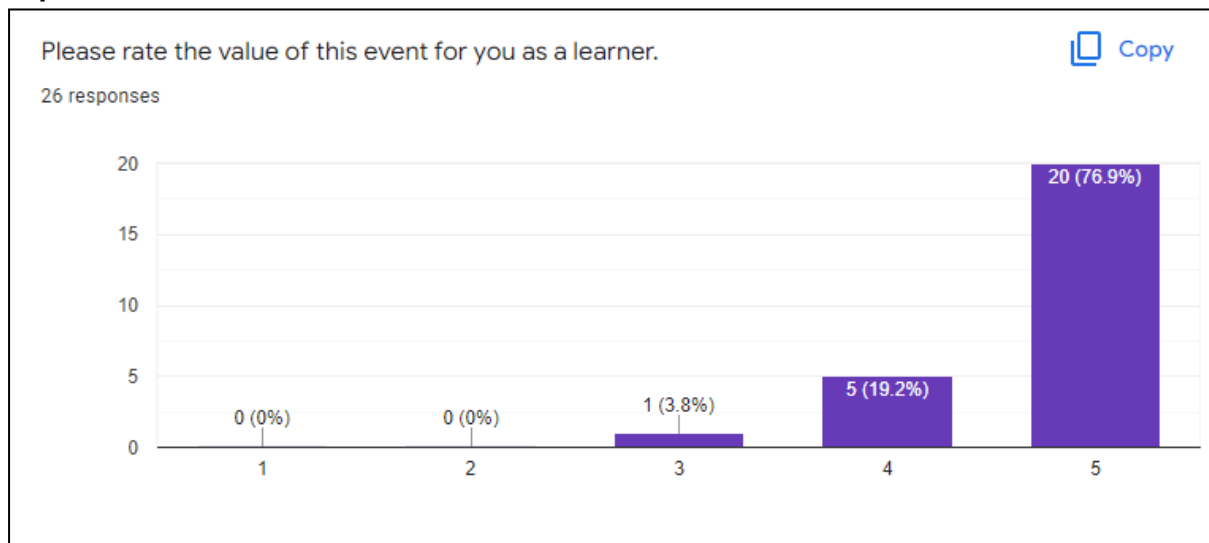
Indigenous Focused Early Years Literacy Strategy, Spring 2022

Beginning in Spring 2022, a targeted Indigenous Focused Early Literacy Strategy was designed to complement and enhance practices already in place at each of the four target schools, 3 of which are also Aanse Schools (i.e., schools with the highest numbers of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students). Using Culturally Relevant and Indigenous-focused resources to support professional learning, the goal was to increase educator knowledge and confidence in early years literacy strategies in order to increase student reading levels and interest. Through the strategy, the four pilot schools received tailored support, additional culturally relevant resources, and were invited to attend a full day Professional Learning session; *Centering First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Perspectives and Building a Framework of Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy in the Early Years*.

Audience: Staff in the Early Years (Kindergarten - Grade 3)

Number of Participants: 75

Impact:



Key Learnings Reported By Participants:

- How to engage with our students in appropriate ways and using culturally relevant and appropriate resources.
- I learned many resources that I can use, and how to use them with my students.
- I learned some valuable strategies to teach culturally appropriate lessons.
- I learned about the amazing resources that the UEIC offers! I'm excited to use the "Primary Awesome Table".
- It was great to see the different perspectives of how to try to engage our learners in our classroom. All the amazing resources to help make sure that all our students are valued and teach them in a meaningful manner. Thanks so much for all your hard work.
- More clarity about appropriation vs appreciation.
- I learned how to better approach Indigenous teaching in my classroom with my young students.
- One of the main things that stood out to me the most, was the *Potlatch as Pedagogy* resource. What stood out the most, and which led to a great/deeper discussion was how learning occurs through recognizing and encouraging strengths. This was something that I found as an educator, we need to encourage more within our classrooms.

Learning in *First Nations, Métis and Inuit in Canada Course (Revised 2019)*, NAC20

2022 marked the first professional learning offering from the UIEC focused directly on the course *First Nations, Métis and Inuit in Canada*, NAC20. During the series of virtual professional learning opportunities that culminated in learning on the land at Forest Valley Outdoor Education Centre, educators engaged in learning about revisioning the teaching of history from linear to thematic and decolonizing pedagogies and assessment practices. In 2021/22, NAC20 was offered in twelve (12) secondary schools.

15 educators participated in the learning and were provided with book bundles for their and their students' ongoing learning.

Number of Participants: 15

Impact:

See:

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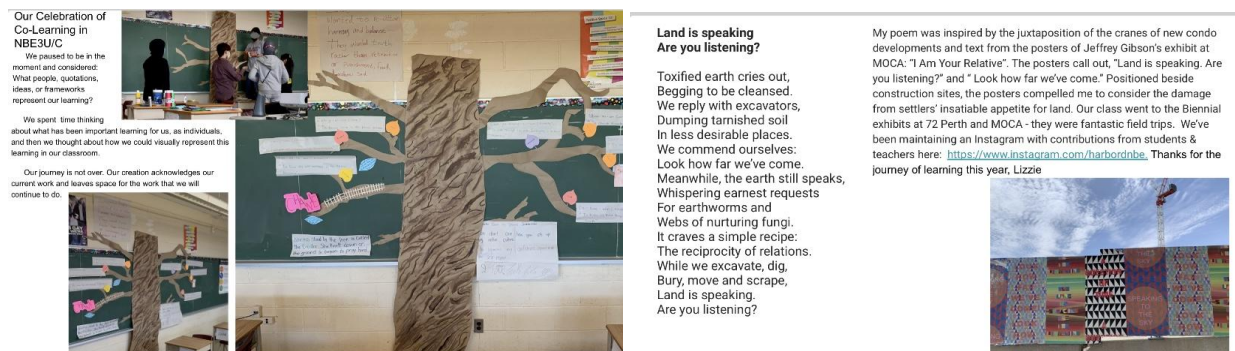
Supporting *Contemporary First Nations, Métis and Inuit Voices* Course (Revised 2019) NBE3

In 2022, there was an increase in secondary schools offering *Contemporary First Nations, Métis and Inuit Voices*, NBE3, as a compulsory English course. Guided by the Elders Council, and Indigenous protocols using Kirkness and Berhardt's [Four Rs of Indigenous Education](#) and Joanne Archibald's 7 [Indigenous Storywork Principles](#), Instructional Leaders developed and facilitated professional learning opportunities for NBE3 teachers focused on enhancing their capacity to deliver the curriculum in ways that effectively centred Indigenous voices and perspectives. NBE3 has been selected by over 1000 students in 27 secondary schools. Teachers were provided with book bundles by Indigenous writers to enhance classroom practice and student engagement.

Number of Participants: 27

Impact:

- Documented examples of teacher learning about responsibilities engaging in teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies courses, specifically *Contemporary First Nations, Métis and Inuit Voices*, NBE3.
- Pedagogical examples of student learning based on teacher shifts in practice.



Three-Part Series: Indigenous Education in the Early Years, Fall 2022

In fall, 2022, UIEC provided a three-part course to engage Early Years educators in learning to centre First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives in Early Years pedagogy. Participants engaged with Indigenous-centred pedagogies to enhance classroom

conditions for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. Early Years educators were guided through resources created by Indigenous authors and engaged in hands-on opportunities to explore play-based possibilities for classroom instruction.

Number of Participants: 30 Educators

Impact:

- Increased capacity among early years educators to centre Indigenous perspectives and use Indigenous pedagogies in their everyday practice
- 100% of participants rated their experience as Highly Beneficial to their practice.
- Key Learnings identified by participants include:
 - The importance of honouring protocols, specific to art and beyond
 - How to incorporate indigenous resources in my own teachings in a respectful and appropriate manner; Better understanding of the issues that the indigenous community faces
 - Jordan's Principle
 - Different strategies and resources to approach colleagues who may be hesitant and resistant to engaging in the necessary work

Three-Part Series: Leadership in Indigenous Education (Virtual), Fall 2022

This three-part series embedded leadership in the context of land and treaties, fostering dialogue about Indigenous-settler relationships in education and what those relationships might mean for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and families. Questions engaged included: What does it mean to lead for truth and reconciliation, and decolonization in education? How can leaders centre Indigenous perspectives, realities, resistance, brilliance, and joy in their school improvement plans? The Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Education frame the conversations.

Number of Participants: 30 Principals and Vice-Principals

Impact:

- Participants reported:
 - An increase in self-efficacy with capacity building with schools staff specific to land acknowledgement
 - Improved Indigenous Education Goals based on identified student and staff learning needs in Indigenous Education
 - Increased effectiveness of planning for appropriate and responsible actions to enhance Indigenous Education in schools

Biidaaban: Truth and Reconciliation Project, Fall 2022 - ongoing to June 2023



The UIEC, guided by the Elders Council and Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Council, created a project to work alongside system and school leaders to ensure a (re)focus on Truth & Reconciliation and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples across the TDSB, including individual school improvement plans (SIP). The **Biidaaban - Truth & Reconciliation Project** is guided by The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (TRC) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), aligning with the TDSB's spring 2022 motion to embed TRC Calls to Action and UNDRIP in all areas of board processes and planning, and is a TDSB Strategic Direction. It creates possibilities for system and school leaders to influence and confront colonial practices, beliefs, and structures that perpetuate adverse impacts of colonization on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students, families and staff. Finally, this project leverages school improvement planning processes, including the identification of Reconciliation/Indigenous Education Goals and Action Plans in individual schools (in connection to the Board Action Plan for Indigenous Education).

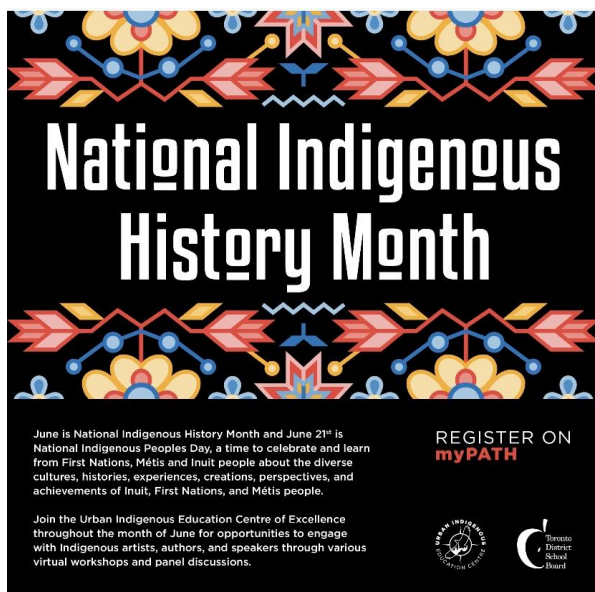
Number of Schools Participating: 52 Schools across all Learning Centres, at least 2 schools from every Learning Network

Number of Participants: 100 Teachers, 52 Principals or Vice Principals, 28 Supervisory Officers

Impact So Far:

- Direct work to enhance conditions and increase Indigenous Education learning in 52 schools across the system
- Increase in Indigenous Education learning and capacity building for over school and system leaders
- Enhanced classroom instruction and student learning in Indigenous Education in participating schools
- Enhanced school improvement goals focused on Indigenous Education with deeper consideration of the TRC Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

June: Indigenous History Month



Throughout June 2022, the UIEC offered 11 virtual workshops/events for K-12 students and educators. These workshops/events were opportunities to listen to and learn from First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples. Opened by Dr. Elder Duke Redbird, some of the speakers included: Pam Palmater, David A. Robertson, Ange Loft, Vicky auf der Mauer, and others.. These learning opportunities provided participants with the opportunity to celebrate and honour First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, perspectives and historical and contemporary realities.

Number of participants: 500+ students and educators

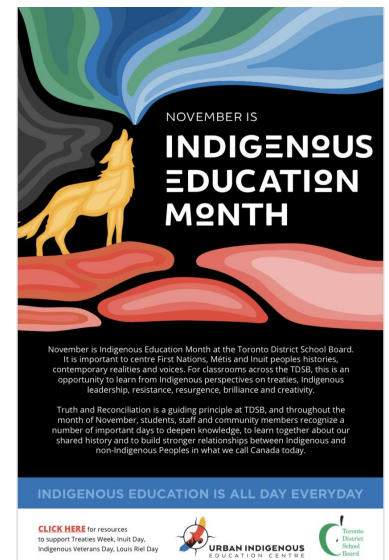
Impact:

- Feedback from some participants around their learning and application to the classroom include:
 - My class followed the DDSB situation a couple of months ago. They are deeply engaged with this series and that incident offered them (and me) an opportunity to exercise their critical consciousness. To see David A. Robertson continue to thrive and celebrate the series was a very positive experience for my students.
 - Pamela Palmater's communication of such big topics of Indigenous Sovereignty into an understandable narrative I and my students could follow so easily.
 - Learned about the Indian Act, the Royal Proclamation, Indigenous history in Canada...a lot.
 - With Ange Loft, through the movement and dance, I learned the meaning and the significance of the treaty and how that contrast to business process of the colonists
 - Becky Han - Learning that communities look different around different parts of Canada. Learning that children can have the same fears no matter if they are from the same place/same culture/same language or not. Exposure to new language, new story and new author. Learning more about Indigenous Peoples living in Canada.

November: Indigenous Education Month, 2022

November is Indigenous Education Month and is an important reminder to centre First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives, voices, histories, and contemporary realities in education contexts. In classrooms across the TDSB, it is an opportunity to learn about treaties, Indigenous leadership, achievements, resistance and creativity.

During November 2022, the UIEC offered 6 virtual workshops/events for K-12 students and teachers to listen to and learn from First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples. Opened by Dr. Elder Duke Redbird, some of our speakers included: Maurice Switzer, Clayton Shirt, Ange Loft and others. This year's learning ended with Dr. Susan Dion leading an in-person session for TDSB staff on her new book *Braided Learning*.



Number of Participants: 250+ Students and educators

Impact:

- Increase in cross-system access for students and educators to learning from Indigenous voices
- Enhanced educator capacity in engaging conversations on significant topics specific to Indigenous experiences

Overall Impact of Professional Learning

- Educators indicate increased confidence in incorporating Indigenous histories, cultures, perspectives, and contributions in the school and classroom experience of all students;
- Relevant, respectful, and appropriate Indigenous-centred practices, including more broadly incorporating Indigenous-centred courses in secondary schools, are being implemented more regularly across schools participating in UIEC professional learning, with a renewed focus on school improvement; inquiry-based professional learning among participating leadership teams; and
- Administrators share that they feel more confident in engaging in Leadership in Indigenous Education through data, shared leadership, and engaging with Indigenous Leaders.

Canopy 2: Student Well-Being and Voice

Indigenous Student Trustee



The work of the Indigenous Student Trustee is guided by the Elders Council, Truth and Reconciliation, UNDRIP and Indigenous ways of being, Knowing, and doing. One of the primary roles of the Indigenous Student Trustee at TDSB is to engage with First Nations, Métis and Inuit students across the board and represent their successes, joy, creativity, concerns and challenges. Indigenous students are underrepresented in student voice and engaging indigenous youth is of critical importance to shifting current conditions that adversely impact Indigenous student

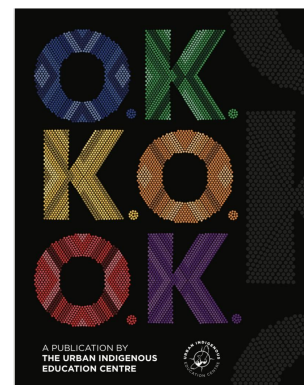
well-being. The Toronto Indigenous Youth Council (TIYC) is an advisory body to the Indigenous Student Trustee and is composed of Indigenous youth who want to share their perspective on issues affecting them. Isaiah Shafqat has served as Indigenous Student Trustee since 2020, with his term coming to an end in 2023. Throughout his time as Indigenous Student Trustee so far, he has worked closely with the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Council, Student Senate, UIEC, TIYC and more. He has led advocacy in various areas to advance Indigenous Education in the TDSB.

OK, KO, OK Student Publication, Spring and Fall 2022

The premier issue of the Urban Indigenous Education Centre's student publication *OK, KO, OK* was launched June 1, 2022, the first day of National Indigenous History Month. The second issue launched November 1, 2022 as a way to launch TDSB Indigenous Education month. Each issue features work produced by secondary students in classes from *the Ontario Curriculum, Grade 9 to 12, First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Studies (2019)*. Educators were encouraged to learn and work with students for students to share creative work that is:

- personally authentic, respectful, insightful
- inspires increasingly responsible relationships between settlers and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples now and into the future
- challenges and disrupts past and present colonial narratives

The launch of the magazine culminated in an event hosted by a student and featured talks by Dr. Elder Duke Redbird spoke, along with Tanya Senk (System Superintendent, Indigenous Education), Lee Sheppard (Instructional Leader, magazine lead), Robert



Durocher (Centrally Assigned Vice-Principal, Indigenous Education). The audience consisted of community members, students, families, staff and trustees.

See: CityTV News Coverage [TDSB students launch Indigenous education magazine - YouTube](#)

Toronto Indigenous Youth Council

The Toronto Indigenous Youth Council (TIYC) brings together Indigenous Youth from across Toronto that come together to make positive change in their schools and communities, and to support one another in the process. The students meet weekly both in-persona and virtually. The founding members of the collective saw a need for space to be created where peers could meet and talk about political action, business, post-secondary, Indigenous arts, and other engaging topics that come up in a culturally safe environment.



In collaboration with the TDSB's Continuing Education School as well as the continued support of the Urban Indigenous Education Centre, the TIYC launched its first credited course offerings to TIYC students. As of January 1, 2023, a total of 19 students were enrolled in courses and an additional 5 students were attending regularly in a volunteer capacity. The two courses offered through the TIYC are:

- NDA3M1 - Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues and Perspectives
- NDW4M1 - Contemporary Indigenous Issues and Perspectives in a Global Context

Impact:

- 288 - Stronger connections among Indigenous youth
- 108 - Native plants planted in garden boxes around the school
- 87% - Youth reporting a “stronger sense of community with their peers”
- 42 - Individual students who attended TIYC during the year
- 19 - Students on track to achieve a high school credit
- 7 - Students receiving volunteer hours for supporting the collective
- 6 - Inspirational field trips to sites across Toronto

- Quotes from students about the program:
 - The program “made me feel like I was not the only native person in the TDSB”.
 - “I feel more comfortable around my fellow classmates and have a new sense of belonging”.
 - “This course is the main source for me to learn more about my history and where I come from”.

- “I think I’m still learning what to look out for and look for in relationships (platonically). A lot of the folks I’ve been able to know are genuine people even if not apparent - I have more patience for others now”.
- “I have a reaffirmed understanding of how I connect with people on a personal level. It’s helped me reevaluate how I can grow socially and be more willing to create a community with others”.
- “It’s not normal in today’s education system that we have this type of realistic & progressive environment”.

UIEC Student Success Team

The UIEC Student Success Team centres the social and emotional well-being of Indigenous students throughout the TDSB. Through the Access to Services Referral Process, the team receives three-six referrals per week to support Indigenous students from across the TDSB. The referrals include requests for advocacy, counselling, academic supports, cultural access, social work, school re-engagement, addressing food insecurity, housing, sex trafficking, attendance, and accessing mental health supports, navigating the school system. The Student Success Team consists of an Indigenous Child and Youth Counsellor, Indigenous Social Workers, and a Student Success Teacher. Alongside their student-focused supports, the Student Success Team planned and delivered a series of professional learning sessions for all frontline staff members, focusing on the unique intersections of Indigenous histories, current realities, mental health, trauma, and education. These were delivered by both the Indigenous itinerant social workers and the Indigenous itinerant Child and Youth Counsellor. This professional learning aimed to develop meaningful and experiential ways of understanding the complexities of Indigeneity and mental health. Staff who attended these sessions had the opportunity to receive the teachings from both Elders and Residential School Survivors, as well as practical training on trauma from both an Indigenous and Western lens. The Student Success Team also planned and facilitated a series of workshops on Cultural Safety from an Indigenous perspective.

Total Number of Student Referrals: 150 across 80 schools

Indigenous Social Work

As the TDSB recognized and supported the rising need for critical mental health needs, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, Indigenous social work has sought to meet the unique needs of Indigenous students. Indigenous students face a disproportionate amount of mental health challenges and systemic barriers that impact achievement and emotional well-being. Intergenerational trauma, poverty, racism (both direct and systemic) and the over-representation of Indigenous children in the legal system and Children’s Aid are just some of the factors that contribute to the unique challenges that Indigenous students face.

Indigenous students are three times more likely to withdraw from their education than the national average. Indigenous students have overwhelmingly identified that they are

experiencing a lack of support and safety in the school setting (noted in the 2018/2019 Aanse report, as well as the 2017 TDSB Parent Census Report).

Therefore, advocacy and capacity building in schools remain at the forefront of Indigenous social work in the TDSB. This is achieved through providing professional development and education for staff, providing life-altering one-to-one counselling, facilitating student groups, advocacy for families, and outreach to the broader Indigenous community across the GTA.

Impacts:

- Facilitated year-long student groups, with the goal of fostering positive peer relationships, developing social skills, gaining new experiences and knowledge, and amplifying student voice. Social Workers also delivered workshops on the impacts of colonization on healthy relationships, human trafficking, and missing and murdered indigenous women.
- Facilitated the Toronto Indigenous Youth Leadership Council.
- Respond to student crises (including suicidal ideations, homelessness, community violence and self-harm).
- Provide in-class student circles, to raise awareness amongst classroom communities about Indigenous cultures and teachings, in order to foster better peer-to-peer relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Cultures and Traditions Instructors

First Nations, Métis and Inuit students have opportunities to engage in cultural teachings through Cultures and Traditions Instructors. The UIEC has an Itinerant Cultures and Traditions Instructor who works in Aanse schools. Kâpapâmahchakwêw/Wandering Spirit School and Eastview Public School also have Cultures and Traditions Instructors. These instructors support students through providing cultural support, to address students isolated in schools with lower Indigenous populations. Students participate in a range of ways, including cultural teachings (e.g., wampum, drum workshops and fire teachings) and in arts-based Indigenous activities that are holistic and centred on student well-being. Students also receive cultural support in their academics, and families receive support accessing cultural events, community organisations, and agencies in Toronto.

Impacts:

- Increase in access to cultural resources and teachings for Indigenous students in 3 schools with the highest numbers of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students
- First Drum Social at Bowmore Public School bringing together over 100 community members in December 2022
- Coordination of Winter Solstice gatherings at Kâpapâmahchakwêw Wandering Spirit School. Native Learning Centres East and Downtown, Eastview and Bowmore (December, 2022)

Creating Spaces of Belonging Conference, Spring 2022



The Urban Indigenous Education Centre's Student Success Team offered a virtual conference 6th annual *Creating Spaces of Belonging*. This year's conference theme was inspired by keynote speaker Elder Dr. Duke Redbird that shared Indigenous perspectives with connections to humour, art, and music, and well-being and mental health. Workshops included an Indigenous educator panel, and Indigenous student panel, Indigenous artist panel, and others. These virtual workshops engaged the audience in learning from and alongside Indigenous people around well-being, and offered opportunities for questions and conversation.



Number of Participants: 150 staff

Impact: Efforts to improve education for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students and families include learning about enhanced school conditions, access to cultural and well-being services, improved engagement, and a focus on Indigenous education.

UIEC and TDSB Arts Department Student Arts Co-Op

In collaboration with the UIEC, the TDSB Arts Co-op Education offered two, 2 credit co-operative education opportunities for secondary students with an interest in social justice and a passion for an interdisciplinary approach to the arts. This program aims to build cross-cultural understandings between students through storytelling, playwriting, acting, spoken word, dance, visual, media and digital arts production. Students collectively explore themes of truth, identity, and relationships in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Indigenous perspectives and worldviews are an integral part of this program. Students learn from Indigenous artists, as they draw upon their diverse backgrounds to share original stories through virtual performances. This program culminates with a virtual tour showcasing their original performances to Grades 7 and 8 students throughout the TDSB. This year's Arts Co-op was supported by UIEC Instructional Leaders and led by Indigenous digital and performance artist Archer Pechawis. Students collaborated in the creative process to co-create and share their voices and stories about their relationships to water. As this year's program was all done virtually, students also gained a number of digital tools and skills.

Number of Participants: 40 students in Arts Co-op, and 300+ students, educators

Aanse: Student Well-Being and Achievement Strategy

Aanse, the Anishnaabemowin word for “transformation”, is the inspiration for the Aanse: Student Well-Being and Achievement Strategy. This strategy involves structures for teams of UIEC staff to provide direct wrap-around support for 5 focus schools with the highest numbers of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in the TDSB. Supports include leadership in Indigenous Education coaching for Principals and Vice-Principals (Centrally Assigned Principal and Vice Principal), collaborating with teachers to enhance classroom instruction and student learning (Instructional Leaders), providing one-on-one academic supports (Student Success Counsellors), mentorship and access to diverse secondary and post-secondary resources and programs (Graduation Coaches), family/caregiver forums and circles (Community Liaisons), and one-on-one counselling and bi-weekly sharing/healing circles (Social Workers and Child and Youth Counsellors). Further, ensuring access to Indigenous culture and languages in these schools is a key priority.

Number of Schools: January to June, 2022 - 8 elementary schools & 8 secondary schools

September to December, 2022 - 6 schools (3 elementary, 3 secondary)

Impacts:

- Enhanced classroom and school conditions for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students and families
- Increased access to cultural, language, and well-being supports and services for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students and families
- Increases in literacy engagement for students and enhance capacity in Indigenous pedagogies for educators
- Increase in wholistic approaches to school improvement with a focus on Indigenous Education

Overall Impacts on Student Well-Being and Voice

- Increased engagement, understanding and self-confidence of Indigenous students;
- Increased connection to culture and community, and making connections to students’ personal lives;
- Safe spaces are created where students can explore their Indigeneity;
- Increased student and family re-engagement with school;
- Increased understanding of the supports needed to address the social determinants of health and wellness (e.g. food security, housing, health supports) of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students.

Canopy 3: Community Engagement

Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee (UICAC)

The Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee (UICAC) meets on a monthly basis to engage the voice, experiences, expertise and concerns of local community groups, organizations and supports to inform our work at UIEC to better support First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, caregivers and communities. The following community agencies have been part of the UICAC:

- Two-Spirited People of the First Nations
- Council Fire
- Indigenous Affairs Office, City of Toronto
- ENAGB
- City of Toronto, Early ON
- Seneca College
- York University
- Toronto & York Region Métis Council

Two-Spirit Indigiqueer Pride and PowWow



REGISTER ON [myPATH](#)



The second Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer Pride at UIEC and TDSB in June 2022, with support from Indigenous Student Trustee Isaiah Shafqat. This event provided K-12 students and staff with the opportunity to listen to and learn from Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer students, Elders, writers and artists about their experiences, lives and perspectives. It was also an opportunity to engage in decolonizing conversations around gender and sexual diversity. Some of the guests included Elder Blu Water, artists Patrick Hunter and TJ Cuthand, poet T'áncháy Redvers, academic Marie Laing, and others. This event was a partial collaboration with 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, and in June 2022 the UIEC participated in the Two-Spirit Pow Wow at Downsview park with the support of the Community Liaison team.

Number of Participants: 500+ (Both virtual events and Pow Wow)

Impact:

- Based on some of the workshops, participants responded:
 - I learned that there is a real spectrum to experiences/interpretations of Two-Spirit but that what is most important is that it applies only to Indigenous folks and comes from ceremony. I also learned how important it is to connect Two-Spirit folks to their community (and ensure those connections are safe and positive).

- What I learned from this event is to support, uplift and help someone who needs help, be a voice, and also be there to listen. Elder Blu Water said, "everyone is a beautiful gift from the creator."
- I was previously unaware of how the term 2spirit came about. I had also forgotten to consider 2spirit experiences in the context of residential schools before now thanks to Teddy Syrette sharing this.

Covid-19 Vaccination Clinics

In collaboration with [Anishnawbe Health Toronto](#) the Community Liaison Team organized several Covid-19 vaccination clinics for UIEC staff, Kâpapâmahchakwêw/ Wandering Spirit School students, staff and caregivers, and community.

Impact of Community Engagement

- Increase in role models and mentors who can offer advice and guidance from and with an Indigenous perspective;
- Facilitated conversations about Covid-19 vaccination in culturally safe ways;
- Increase community attendance at the UICAC meetings.

Canopy 4: Programming, Curriculum Development and Implementation

The UIEC Instructional Leadership team built system-wide knowledge and awareness of Indigenous cultures, histories and ways of knowing through structured staff development and direct support to schools. Some key activities included:

- Building capacity system-wide among staff to enhance conditions in schools for Indigenous students;
- Developing and implementing curriculum units, lessons and provocations for learning at the primary level, and professional learning modules;
- Vetting resources and helping classroom teachers and teacher-librarians identify accurate, authentic materials and resources for classrooms and school libraries;
- Establishing partnerships and learning initiatives in collaboration with various Indigenous organizations;
- Delivering professional development at all levels to all staff (e.g., New Teachers Induction Program, Outdoor Education staff, The Arts, French, etc.).

This work aligns with the TDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan, Curriculum documents, the [First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework](#), United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.

Urban Indigenous Education Centre Library

The UIEC Library Collection has grown with the addition of several hundred new books purchased from Goodminds, an Indigenous run supplier. The new additions to the collection represent First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and include selections appropriate for readers from Kindergarten to Graduate-level learning. We have also added four additional copies of Indigenous Peoples Giant Floor Map to the collection.

Online Resources

The UIEC provides resources to the system (e.g., Direct Line, System Leaders' Bulletin, Trustees' Weekly, etc.) throughout the school year by co-producing resources on various topics and Indigenous Days of Significance including: Indigenous Education Month, Treaty Recognition Week, Aboriginal Veterans' Day, Louis Riel Day, Inuit Day, National Indigenous Peoples Day, etc.. The Urban Indigenous Education Centre also has a Google Site (<https://sites.google.com/tdsb.on.ca/uiiec-resources-draft/home?authuser=0&pli=1>) which includes our online curriculum resource, *the Awesome Table*; a Facebook site (<https://www.facebook.com/UrbanIndigenousEducationCentre/>); and a Twitter account @UIEC_TDSB.

Anishinaabemowin Language Learning

Anishinaabemowin is offered in Kindergarten to Grade 12 at eight schools within TDSB. Elementary schools that offer it include Eastview PS, Humewood CS, Bala CS, Kâpapâmahchakwêw/Wandering Spirit School and this year, Bomwore PS started offering it for the first time. Secondary schools that offer Anishinaabemowin in grades 9 -12 are Riverdale CI, Native Learning Centre Downtown, Native Learning Centre East, and Kâpapâmahchakwêw/Wandering Spirit School. Currently, there are seven Ojibwe language teachers within TDSB. With student population growth and demand, we are looking to recruit Indigenous language teachers, and to include within our Indigenous language programs: Mohawk, Cree, and Inuktitut. There are currently 328 elementary students and 80 secondary students currently enrolled in Ojibwe Anishinaabemowin classes in the TDSB.

Combating Hate and Racism Strategy

The Student Learning Strategy for Combating Hate and Racism is a proactive and student-centred approach to creating respectful and culturally safe learning environments for all students. The Urban Indigenous Education Centre, in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement and the Equity, Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism Department, has supported classroom educators to develop curriculum to support classroom instruction that builds understanding, develops critical consciousness, and implement strategies that centre truth and reconciliation and challenge anti-Indigenous and other forms of hate and racism. The development and review of the curriculum resources occurred from summer to winter, 2022, with plans to pilot lessons and units in 2023.

Impact of Programming, Curriculum Development and Implementation

- K-12 educators and vice-principals/principals have access to relevant lessons, resources and learning opportunities to support the work of Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous Education in K-12 classrooms;
- On-line resources now has robust K-3 lessons and provocations for learning along with modules for NAC10 and NBE3;
- The Indigenous Food Sovereignty Program is providing fresh food to 3 sites on a daily basis;
- The Indigenous Food Sovereignty Program facilitated secondary school students in earning credits in co-operative education while gaining skills and work-place experience;
- The UIEC Twitter handle has grown by followers and is a vehicle that some TDSB staff access to learn about learning opportunities offered by UIEC.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies (Revised 2019) Professional Learning Series

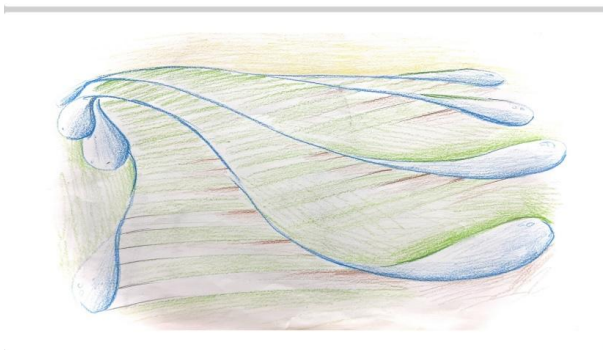
Learning in *Expressions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Cultures Course (Revised 2019)*, NAC10

The UIEC provided various professional learning opportunities for teachers of the course *NAC10 - Expressions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Cultures*. These opportunities included four (4) full professional learning days that included listening to and learning from and alongside Indigenous artists, speakers, Elders, and UIEC Instructional Leaders to engage in enhancing practices in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. These days were themed around Truth, Reconciliation and Decolonizing Art Practices. In 2021/22, over 3000 students in 48 secondary schools were enrolled in NAC10. The UIEC also worked in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Ontario to provide virtual tours and creative tasks for NAC10 students and teachers to further their learning about Indigenous art and artists. Teachers were provided with book bundles focused on Indigenous art and artists to support classroom learning. Starting this year, teachers were encouraged to keep journals and sketchbooks, and to then make an artefact to represent their learning.

Number of Participants: 48

Impact:

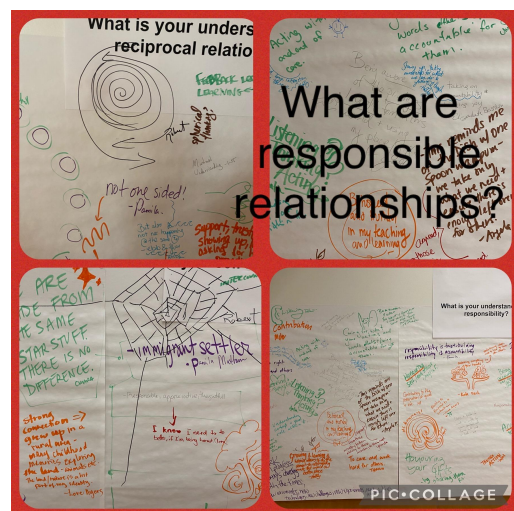
Examples of teacher reflections and learning about responsibilities engaging in teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies courses.



This was a wampum bracelet that I made during a workshop with Rebecca. It reminds me of the importance of Treaties and my role as a treaty person, how I want to



focus on Treaty work at the start of the course next year, and how lucky I am to get to work with Rebecca and receive support from the UIEC.



Canopy 5: Research, Development and Innovation

Indigenous Language Coach

To strategize supporting and recruiting Indigenous Languages teachers and instructors, the Urban Indigenous Education Centre developed TDSB's first learning coach role to support mentoring and professional learning for Indigenous Language teachers and Instructors.

Indigenous Graduation Coaches

A team of three (3) Indigenous Graduation Coaches at The Urban Indigenous Education Centre provide system-wide supports to First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in academic pathways, and looking to remove barriers to graduation. The team also provides workshops throughout the year to support Indigenous youth with resume writing, job opportunities, dual credit learning, co-operative education positions, and looking at post-secondary options.

Impact:

- Grade 8 Students:
 - Built relationships in 7 schools, servicing, 38 and probably more, Grade 8 students;
 - Facilitated transitions processes for students leaving Grade 8 and entering Grade 9 (10 schools)
- Secondary School Students:
 - Built relationships at 21 High Schools, getting to know teachers, guidance counsellors and administrators
 - Served 72 non-graduating students to access employment, housing, and vaccines
 - Enhanced student capacity to advocate for themselves and their needs to teachers to make sure they are getting the level of education they deserve
- Graduating Students:
 - Served 36 Graduating Indigenous Students across TDSB
 - 14% of those graduates are returning to High School to upgrade their marks - with that, the Graduation Coaches advocated to the Dual Credit team to make Indigenous Graduates able to take Dual Credits to support students to build positive relationships with post-secondary education
 - 25% of the graduates have work lined up, apprenticeships, trades work, and other full-time employment opportunities
 - 17% of graduates are attending college, and most, if not all, have full-funding set up for next year
 - 33% of the graduates are attending University with full-funding

Indigenous Food Sovereignty Program

The Indigenous Food Sovereignty program is a multifaceted program that:

- provides First Nations, Metis and Inuit students at 3 sites (Kâpapâmahchakwêw/Wandering Spirit School, Native Learning Centre East, Native Learning Centre Downtown) with healthy, local, Indigenous-based food throughout the school day;
- engages in building capacity through holistic teaching and learning about Indigenous Food Sovereignty systems;
- provides opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students to engage in co-operative education learning to gain skills, credits and experiences;
- engages community in learning about Indigenous Food Sovereignty.

Canopy 6: Partnerships

Relationship Development and Maintenance

The Community Liaison Team, guided by the Elders Council facilitates working with Cultures and Traditions Instructors, UIEC Instructional Leaders, the Student Support Team, and UIEC Administrators to build and nurture relationships with new Indigenous partners and maintain relationships with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, artists and community members.

Engaging Indigenous Artists and Educational Partners Working in Schools

UIEC staff supported Indigenous artists, speakers, authors and other partners on the TDSB Educational Partnerships list by connecting to curricula, navigating policies and procedures, and sharing their work with schools. The UIEC developed protocols for teachers and schools to facilitate engagement of artists and partners in ways that are welcoming and respectful. The partnership list continues to grow to support school-based programming.

Urban Indigenous Education Centre and York University Faculty of Education Office of Professional Learning Partnering to Provide Additional Basic Qualifications

Descriptions: The Intermediate Basic First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies additional basic qualification course facilitates elementary and Grade 9-10 teachers in being able to better plan, teach and assess the Revised (2018) Social Studies, History and Geography curriculum, and the Revised (2019) Grades 9 - 12 First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies curriculum (NAC10, NAC20). Participants will engage in learning from Indigenous perspectives for their classrooms.

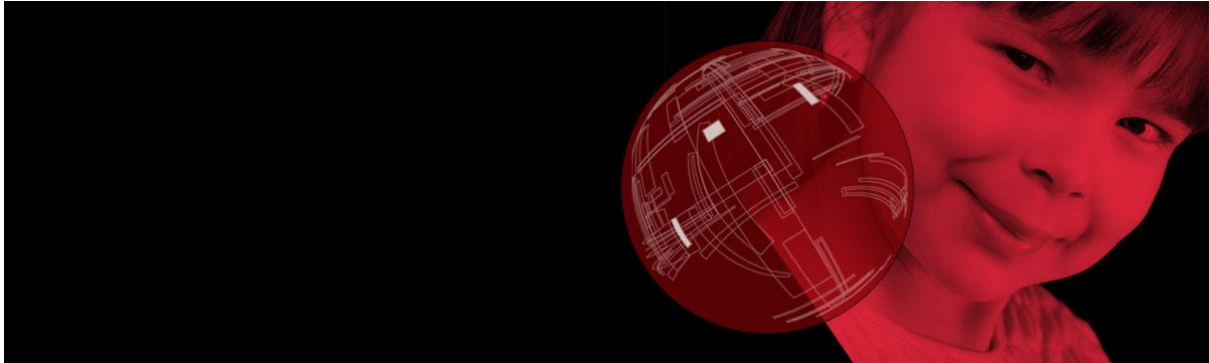
The Senior Basic First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies additional basic qualification course facilitates secondary teachers in being able to better plan, teach and assess the Revised (2019) Grades 9 - 12 First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies curriculum (Grade 11 & 12 courses (NBE3). Participants will engage in learning about First Nations, Métis and Inuit historical and contemporary realities from Indigenous perspectives for their classrooms.

Number of Participants: 130 educators

Toronto Aboriginal Social Services Association

Working in collaboration with TASSC, UIEC was able to continue offering Indigenous families with COVID-19 Relief.

York University: Wüléelham



[York University Indigenous-Focused Courses, Cohorts and Programs](#)

[Wüléelham](#): is a Lenape word that means "make good tracks"

Rooted in Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies, the *Wüléelham* courses, cohorts and programs engage participants in learning from Indigenous peoples' experiences and perspectives.

Wüléelham options were developed to highlight the specific strengths of urban Indigenous communities. They are not intended to be taken in a linear sequence; instead, students make their own tracks, choosing to participate based on their timelines and interests. Our ultimate goal is to provide students with the knowledge and understanding to contribute to community well-being through their chosen career paths.

Developed in collaboration with Indigenous scholars and communities, *Wüléelham* prepares students for a wide variety of careers including, teaching, journalism, public administration, law enforcement, court work, policy work, or research on Indigenous experiences.

Bachelor of Education (BEd) - WAABAN Indigenous Teacher Education

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Report, the Faculty in collaboration with the Toronto District School Board Indigenous Education Centre offers admission to a **special cohort** of students who will complete the Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree with a focus on Indigenous worldviews. **Waaban Indigenous Teacher Education** will educate a new generation of teachers prepared to address the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, families and communities. *Waaban* will be grounded in Indigenous Knowledge and Pedagogy and will include teachings from Indigenous Elders, educators, and community leaders.

Waaban is an Anishinabe (Ojibwa) word meaning *it is tomorrow*. It signifies commitment to a holistic program of teaching and learning that acknowledges the impacts of colonialism, and draws on the wisdom of ancestral teachings and contemporary leaders to put Indigenous futures into Indigenous hands. *Waaban* Indigenous Teacher Education

will include attention to contemporary urban, rural and reserve perspectives and teachings from a diversity of nations. Students will be introduced to cultural and community resources and have opportunities to learn from and with Indigenous educators.

Some features of the program are:

- **Community-centred**
Held in Toronto for a special cohort of teachers who will take most classes together. Students will work with faculty members, guest speakers and others from the community to gain knowledge, insight and skills for teaching and learning in Ontario schools
- **Condensed schedule**
 - Complete a full two-year degree in four consecutive semesters (16 months)
 - Classes will take place in a [continuous schedule of terms](#) (Summer-Fall-Winter-Summer)
 - Click [here](#) for a full list of required courses
- **Location**
Due to Covid-19 restrictions and protocols, courses were offered through on-line learning platforms. Teacher candidates also participate in [community practicum placements](#) and [school practicum placements](#) in order to gain practical skills and experiences to qualify for the BEd degree.
- **Focused curriculum**
Courses and experiences infused with a focus on Indigenous education.
Note: Special elective courses will be available to students in this cohort

Graduates will be certified to teach in Ontario in one of the following teaching panels:

- **Primary-Junior** (JK to Grade 6)
- **Junior-Intermediate** (Grade 4 to Grade 10)

Master of Education (MEd) - Urban Indigenous Education Cohort

Developed in collaboration with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Urban Indigenous Education Centre, the Faculty of Education at York University is offering a Master of Education (MEd) Cohort with a focus on Urban Indigenous Issues to a **special cohort** of part-time students. This cohort in the MEd is in response to the need for knowledge and understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, histories and perspectives. Admission to this program is generally completed every two years. **A new cohort started September 2021.**

Indigenous people are often rendered invisible in a bustling multicultural cityscape. The impact for Indigenous children, youth and their families is frequently one of alienation. Students in urban settings confront particular challenges including: not being recognized as Indigenous students; not seeing themselves represented in the teaching population; and not seeing themselves represented in the curriculum. They

attend school despite a long, negative and hurtful relationship between Indigenous people and schooling.

In urban settings, school board administrators, teachers, employees and other service providers for Indigenous people may confront challenges, including: identification of Indigenous students; delivery of programs; and a lack of knowledge and understanding of urban indigeneity, Indigenous students' experiences, and the complexities of teaching Indigenous subject material. This program takes these challenges seriously. This special cohort in the MEd program, focuses on Urban Indigenous Education as an area of study. Admission to this program is completed every two years.

Impact of Partnerships

- UIEC partnerships are contributing to improving First Nation, Métis, and Inuit student achievement and well-being and increasing all staff and students' awareness and knowledge of Indigenous histories, cultures, perspectives and contributions.
- Increase interest in community members engaging in partnerships. 16
- As a result of York's Waaban Teacher Education Program, there is an increase of self-identified First Nations, Métis and Inuit teachers working in TDSB classrooms.

Canopy 7: Truth and Reconciliation, Governance, and Policy

Toronto District School Board Motion, June 2022

In June 2022, the Toronto District School Board passed the following Motion:

Whereas, the Elders Council passed a motion that was unanimously supported by the representatives of the Indigenous communities of Toronto (UICAC); and
Whereas, ***it is the stated goal of the Toronto District School Board to ensure that Indigenous staff and students are not deprived of their rights and are provided with a learning and working environment that is free from racism and discrimination of any kind;***
Therefore, be it resolved:
(a) That the Toronto District School Board ***commit by resolution to the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the governing framework for reconciliation;***
(b) That the TDSB ***acknowledge that Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) are distinct with inherent rights, laws, and institutions;***
(c) ***That the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples be embedded in policies, bylaws and Board governance structures;***
(d) That ***Truth and Reconciliation be set in the Board's strategic directions.***

This motion has had an impact on various policies, procedures and processes in the TDSB, including:

- Inclusion of an Indigenous Education Goal in all School Improvement Plans
- Out of Area Admissions Policy (Policy P013, Section 6.5.7)
- School Naming Policy (Policy P047)

September 30 - National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

September 30, 2022 marked the second *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*, a national statutory holiday that “honours the lost children and Survivors of residential schools, their families and communities. Public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools is a vital component of the reconciliation process”¹ On this day we recognize the legacy of Canada’s residential school system and continue to learn about the many truths of these institutions. We honour First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children and communities impacted by this system. This was through the amendment of Bill C-5. During the National Week for Truth and Reconciliation the Urban Indigenous Education Centre shared resources with K-12 educators. The UIEC shared the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation website, <https://nctr.ca/>, through Direct Line, System Weekly and Twitter for staff to engage in the events taking place across the country.

¹ From Government of Canada, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html> accessed Tuesday, March 29, 2022



Orange Shirt Day



Established in 2013, Orange Shirt Day was inspired by Phyllis Webstad, who was excited to wear her new orange shirt to her first day of school in 1973.

However, when she arrived at St. Joseph Mission Residential School, her shirt was taken and never returned. From that day forward, the colour orange, for Phyllis, reminded her of that moment, how her feelings didn't matter, how she felt like she wasn't worth anything and that no one cared for the children who were crying about it that day.

Now, on this day, we recognize the legacy of the residential school system for First Nations, Métis and Inuit families and communities.

We acknowledge the legacy of residential schools in Canada by wearing orange and we honour the survivors. We

remember the thousands of children who were murdered and buried in unmarked graves.

On Friday, September 30, 2022 students and staff were encouraged to wear orange to participate in Orange Shirt Day. UIEC supported K-12 students and teachers through access to lessons and resources to facilitate learning in classrooms. This year, UIEC collaborated with Indigenous designer Peter Jensen ([Jensen Group](#)) to specifically design shirts for TDSB students, staff and community to wear.