

W.C.S Outdoor Education & Community Land Based Teachings



A New Beginning - Pilot Year



- We have intentionally moved beyond the constraints of traditional four-walled classrooms to embrace experiential learning in its purest form.
- Crucially, we observed that students who previously struggled to focus in traditional classroom settings began to thrive, enjoying their time at school and attending on a regular basis.
- In a modern world where excessive screen time has become the norm for children, we are deeply moved to see our students choosing a different path.

A New Beginning - Pilot Year



- We are seeing our youth ice fishing, hunting, and preparing food with their friends and families during their evenings and weekends. This program is successfully bridging the gap between school life and home life, fostering a lifestyle rooted in the land.
- To transition from those early successes to the comprehensive program we have today, we are incredibly thankful for the grant and proposal funding received from the Department of Indigenous Services Canada.
- By treating the natural world as our primary learning space, we are fostering a sense of curiosity and resilience in our students that is difficult to replicate indoors.

Curriculum, Truth & Reconciliation

- Our program is deeply integrated into the academic fabric of our division, serving as a direct and meaningful response to the **Calls to Action for Truth and Reconciliation**.
- We recognize that true reconciliation requires more than just words; it requires a restoration of the relationship between Indigenous youth and the land that was historically disrupted.
- By teaching on the land, we meet and exceed provincial standards through a lens of restoration and respect.



Language & Culture

- The land is, and always has been, our first teacher. It is the place where our language is most alive and where our stories find their context. By immersing students in the outdoors, we provide a natural sanctuary for the practice of our culture and the revitalization of our linguistic fluency.
- In this program, language is not learned through rote memorization but through action—naming the plants, describing the weather, and offering thanks in our traditional tongue.
- This immersive environment ensures that our heritage is not a relic of the past, but a vibrant, breathing part of our students' daily identities. We are planting the seeds of cultural pride that will stay with them long after they graduate.



The Role of Our Elders: Heart of the Program



- Most importantly, our program is guided and sanctified by the **Elders of our community**.
- They are the keepers of sacred knowledge, the bridge to our collective history, and our most respected mentors. Without their presence, this program would simply be "outdoor education"; with them, it becomes "land-based learning."



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Cross-Curricular - Bringing Experiences Back To Class



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Who I Am...



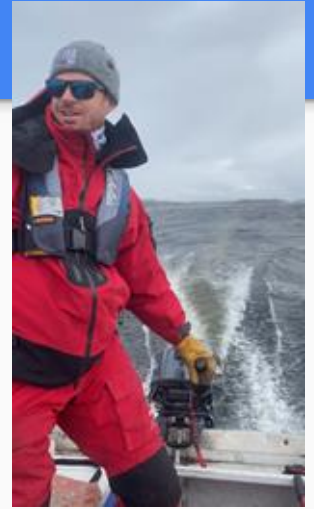
Who I Am...



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Who I Am...



Reflections



- Keep what we are doing in perspective. One of, if not the only school in Canada offering a program on this scale from Nursery to Grade 8 to 380 students.
- Community is the biggest resource. Connect with more community. 30+
- 365 Year Round - Community Mentorship. Work with all community stakeholders (Jordans Principal, CFS, Community Members)
- Language - it's in the students! More of it, incorporate more on a daily continuous basis.
- Can see healing within students and community members.

Highlights

- Since September all 21 classes within the school have had 12+ experiences.
- Safely and successfully took 120+ students "Hunting". Grade 7&8 Traditional Hunts, Kindergarten "Moose Hunt", Grade 1's "Photography Hunt", Grade 6's "Track Scavenger Hunt". Student Support Groups.
- Developed relationships with MWF Hunters Safety, Conservation, Parks Canada, Nature Conservancy, Rossburn XC Ski Club, Cabelas, +++
- Created lessons that incorporated movement, connected with speaking and written language. (Brain-Body Connection) *Learn By Doing!
- 23 Students in Grades 5-8 competed in the Indigenous MTB Bike Race @ Northgate Trails in October.
- Administration identified students that needed extra supports for behaviour, or positive support. Connected with 30+ students.
- Screen Time!!!
- Classroom teachers successfully using and taking these experiences back to classroom. Improvements in behaviour & academics. (Examples)

What to Change & Improve

- Incorporate language and identifying animals, tracks, plants, technology/GPS etc..
- How to record and track each experience for students. Post experience/activity reflection piece. *Red, Yellow, Green. Emoji before and after. 😞 to 😊. How Assess?
- Continuously develop curriculum lesson plans, activity ideas, community member ideas, etc... (Find what works and doesn't. Improve))

Connecting All 3:

Outdoor Education:

- Providing students and staff with safe and meaningful experiences. Focusing on movement, and different Outdoor Education activities as a way of promoting wellness both physically and mentally.

Land Based Education & Culture::

- Anishinaabe Language (Verbal/Identifying).
- Cultural teachings on the land.
- Connection to self, class, community, land and culture.

Academics:

*Tying Outdoor Education and Land Based Cultural experiences to:

- Reading (Literacy)
- Writing (Literacy)
- Oral Storytelling
- Math (Numeracy)
- Science
- Geography
- Art
- ICT (Photography, GPS, Drones)



The Whole Process...



The World Through A Kindergartener's Eyes...



Academics - A Kindergarten Moose Hunt...



Academics - A Kindergarten Moose Hunt..





We're Doing It In Reverse...



- *“Manitoba students consistently rank among the lowest in Canada in reading, science, and mathematics, according to multiple assessments. Recent data shows Grade 8 students scoring below the national average in all areas, with Grade 12 results showing declines in advanced math and French.”*
[CBC.ca](https://www.cbc.ca)
- *According to Children First Canada and 2023–2024 data, mental health for Canadian children is worsening, with 20% experiencing mental health disorders. Over 25% of children live in food-insecure households, while obesity, bullying, and physical/sexual abuse are major threats. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 15–34.*

We're Doing It In Reverse...



- We are concerned more about the results, or end product. Rather than the process of getting to the results.
- Flip It - Get students feeling good mentally and physically first, then focus on the results. (Numeracy and Literacy)
- Building a House - Strong or Weak Foundation? Top-Down, or Bottom-Top
- How do we do it? Connection to community, culture, language. Give students authentic experiences that get students active, and moving. Tasks, activities, physical health components.

What's Next? How Far Do We Want To Take It...

- Get community members together regularly on a monthly basis. Monthly meeting, monthly meal. Develop language to be used on a regular basis. Share with teachers, create boards, discuss, plan etc...
- Financial Plan = 2025 - Cultural/Language Grant... 2025+ Beyond???
- Fixed Costs = Supplies/Equipment/Resources (Food/Fuel etc...)
- Community Fund™ for Community Teachers/Knowledge Keepers. Different Teachers = Hunters, Language Keepers, Artists, Dancers, Singers, Beaders, Medicine Harvesters etc... Timeline for who teaches what teaching etc...
- Get Program Going - Be a Helper, Connect Students, Empower Community, My Role Is Complete! (Year 3-5).
- We are all human, we are all meant to feel good, move our bodies, feel connected, and be proud of where we come from and who we are! Teaching to the complete student! Get everyone feeling good!