

FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

May 9-10, 2025 | Vancouver

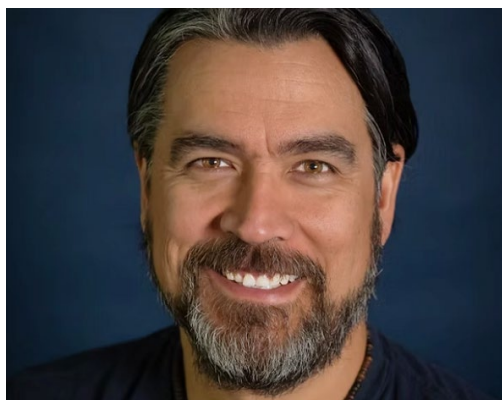


Cultivating Cultures of Success



The First Nations Schools Association Conference is an opportunity learn about a wide range of effective practices in classroom instruction, school administration and key areas of professional growth. Hosted at The Westin Bayshore Hotel in Vancouver, the conference features workshops, exhibitors, guest speakers, and networking opportunities.

Keynote Speakers



David A. Robertson

Two-Time Governor General's Literary Award Winner

David A. Robertson is a two-time Governor General's Literary Award winner who has won the TD Canadian Children's Literature Award and the Writer's Union of Canada Freedom to Read Award. He has received several other accolades for his work as a writer for children and adults, podcaster, public speaker, and social advocate. In 2023, he was honoured by the University of Manitoba with a Doctor of Letters for outstanding contributions to the arts and distinguished achievements. David is a member of Norway House Cree Nation and he lives in Winnipeg.



Brandi Morin

Indigenous Author, Journalist and Survivor of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Crisis

Brandi Morin is an acclaimed Cree/Iroquois/French journalist from Treaty 6 territory in Alberta who has dedicated over a decade to amplifying Indigenous voices and shedding light on crucial stories that have advanced change and reconciliation in Canada. Known for her clear-eyed and empathetic reporting, Brandi brings a unique perspective to her work as a survivor of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls crisis.



The First Nations Schools Association is a registered non-profit society that represents and works on behalf of the First Nations controlled schools in BC. It supports schools in creating effective, nurturing and appropriate educational environments that provide students with a positive foundation in all academic areas. www.fnsa.ca

Registration

- Registration opens Wednesday, **March 12, 2025, at 12:00 pm.**
- Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - Until Monday, March 17, 12:00 pm schools can register a maximum of **10 people**. This includes the schools' FNSA Authorized Representative and principal. On the registration form there will be a dropdown with school names. Your school name will continue to appear until all 10 spots are filled.
 - After March 17, 12:00 pm, there is no limit on the number of people a school can register.
 - Registration will close when we reach overall capacity.
- Register for the conference at <https://www.fnsa.ca/fnsa-events/conference-agm/> or link to the registration form <https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/event/2025/FNSA>
- When you register, you will receive an automatic email acknowledging registration. To cancel or make workshop changes, please use the link at the bottom of that email to request those changes or contact conference@fnesc.ca.
- Payment options:
 - Schools will be automatically invoiced starting late March.
 - Alternatively, payment may be made by credit card during online registration or by phoning in payment to CivicInfo at 250-383-4898 after registering.

Policies

- Payment must be received by April 30, 2025, or the registration may be cancelled.
- Cancellation policy: Full refunds up to and including April 30, 2025; no refunds after. Substitutions allowed.

Registration Rate

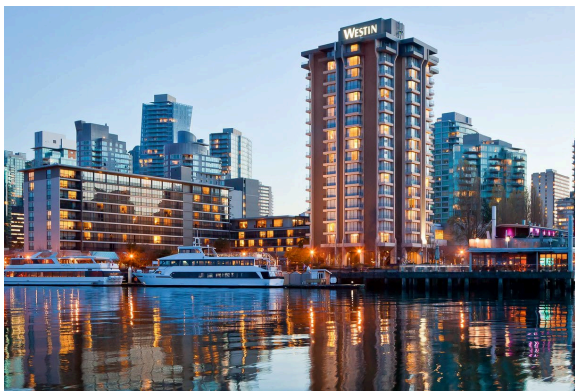
Regular Registrants	\$450
FNSA Authorized Representatives – with code (max one per school)	\$250

Support

For registration questions, please contact conference@fnesc.ca.

Accommodation

Booking links will be available on the event website,
<https://www.fnsa.ca/fnsa-events/conference-agm/> on
March 12, 2025 at 12:00 pm.



Main Venue

The Westin Bayshore Hotel, 1601 Bayshore Drive, Vancouver
Rooms from \$349+tx
Book by **Monday, April 7, 2025**, for the negotiated rate.



Overflow Block

*If the main venue fills to capacity,
we recommend booking at the following
nearby hotel.*

Pinnacle Hotel Harbourfront, 1133 West Hastings Street, Vancouver
Rooms from \$329+tx
Book by **Monday, April 7, 2025**, for the negotiated rate.

Sharing Table

Schools are invited to bring flyers/brochures about resources of interest to BC First Nations schools for our Sharing Table. Please drop off your items at the Information and Directions station in the foyer when you arrive at the conference.

Health

Please stay home if you are feeling unwell. Only registered participants are eligible to attend. Family and friends cannot attend the event at any time, including for meals. The decision to attend in-person events is a personal one and it should be made in consideration of your individual risk factors and vulnerabilities.

Meals

Buffet breakfasts and lunches with a variety of food options will be offered. Please indicate any special dietary needs or severe allergies on your registration form.

Photography and Filming

This is a public event where photography and videorecording will take place. The images and recordings will be used by FNSA and FNESC for promotional purposes. In case of questions, please contact conference@fnesc.ca.

Friday, May 9

- 7:30 AM Registration & Breakfast
- 7:45 AM Breakfast
- 8:50 AM Traditional Welcome by Chamiya Janis Campbell, Squamish and Musqueam Nations
- 9:00 AM Opening Remarks
- 9:10 AM Student Cultural Performance
- 9:30 AM Keynote Address by David A. Robertson
- 10:30 AM Break
- 11:00 AM Workshop Session 1

- 1A Embedding Gwelx yee'inswx within our Gitksan Curriculum
- 1B Our Wealth in Who We Are Language Workshop
- 1C Yapatłans (We will Weave)
- 1D Prophet River First Nation - A Dream Becomes Reality
- 1E Nuxalk Environmental Science, Living and Learning on the Land
- 1F Building Capacity - Exercising our Indigenous Rights in Community Schools, through Academics and Gitksan Ways of Being
- 1G Literacy Social Nights
- 1H An Indigenous Approach to Getting Started with Physical Literacy
- 1I Creating Mindful Learning Opportunities and Spaces for all Learners
- 1J Delivering First Nations Aspects of Social Studies Curriculum in a Child-Friendly Way
- 1K Sharing the Journey - A Practical Guide to Transitioning to a Standards-Based Approach Through Teamwork and Collaboration
- 1L Cultivating Success in Math for All Learners
- 1M Nurturing Success: Fire Friday's Path to Connecting Culture, Food and Land

12:30 PM Lunch

1:45 PM Workshop Session 2

- 2A Embedding Gwelx yee'inswx within our Gitksan Curriculum
- 2B Our Wealth in Who We Are Language Workshop
- 2C Yapatłans (We will Weave)
- 2D Prophet River First Nation - A Dream Becomes Reality
- 2E Nuxalk Environmental Science, Living and Learning on the Land
- 2F Building Capacity - Exercising our Indigenous Rights in Community Schools, through Academics and Gitksan Ways of Being
- 2G Literacy Social Nights
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- 2L Cultivating Success in Math for All Learners
- 2M Nurturing Success: Fire Friday's Path to Connecting Culture, Food and Land

3:15 PM End of the day

Saturday, May 10

- 7:45 AM Registration & Breakfast
- 8:45 AM Opening of the Day and Recognition of the FNSA Board
- 9:10 AM Keynote Address by Brandi Morin
- 10:10 AM Break
- 10:30 AM Workshop Session 3

- 3A Take me to the Yí'nta
- 3B Empowering Family Members to Play
- 3C ka kni#wi·tiya#a (Our Thinking): Engaging the School in the Community's Strategic Plan
- 3D Syilx Cultural Connections: Our Journey to Developing Local and Land-Based Cultural Curriculum Grade 10-12
- 3E Learning for Life: Planting Seeds of Sustainability and Growth
- 3F Teaching by Doing
- 3G Xáxtsa Pedagogy
- 3H Practical Strategies for Incorporating SEL (Social Emotional Learning) into Physical Education Classes
- 3I Land-Based Learning in the Intermediate Classroom and High School Science
- 3J Forming an International Travel Club and Connections to the World
- 3K Developing Personal Finance Programs for First Nations High Schools
- 3L Building Curriculum from the Heart of sqilx^wɫcawt
- 3M Creating a Program for Young Adults with Exceptionalities to Support their Transition to Adulthood

12:00 PM Lunch

1:00 PM Workshop Session 4

- 4A Take me to the Yí'nta
- 4B Empowering Family Members to Play
- 4C ka kni#wi·tiya#a (Our Thinking): Engaging the School in the Community's Strategic Plan
- 4D Syilx Cultural Connections: Our Journey to Developing Local and Land-Based Cultural Curriculum Grade 10-12
- 4E Learning for Life: Planting Seeds of Sustainability and Growth
- 4F Teaching by Doing
- 4G Xáxtsa Pedagogy
- 4H Practical Strategies for Incorporating SEL (Social Emotional Learning) into Physical Education Classes
- 4I Land-Based Learning in the Intermediate Classroom and High School Science
- 4J Forming an International Travel Club and Connections to the World
- 4K Developing Personal Finance Programs for First Nations High Schools
- 4L Building Curriculum from the Heart of sqilx^wɫcawt
- 4M Creating a Program for Young Adults with Exceptionalities to Support their Transition to Adulthood

2:30 PM Break

2:45 PM Door Prizes and Reflections

3:15 PM End of the Day

Workshops (alphabetical)

An Indigenous Approach to Getting Started with Physical Literacy (1H 2H)

Dwayne Roberts, Manager/Facilitator School's Physical Activity and Physical Literacy Program, ISPARC

Developed in consultation with First Nations communities and educators, and with leadership from ISPARC, this workshop brings perspectives that honour the First Peoples' Principles of Learning to physical literacy theory. Learn some practical ways that you can start to develop students' physical literacy and engage with other communities in a storytelling method, to incorporate physical literacy in and around your school. There will be opportunities for physical activity in this workshop.

Building Capacity - Exercising our Indigenous Rights in Community Schools, through Academics and Gitxsan Ways of Being (1F 2F)

Jessica Starlund, Language & Culture Teacher, Gitwangak Elementary School

Serenity Wilson, Primary Teacher, Gitwangak Elementary School

This workshop will share the successes of the Gitwangak Education Society, Gitwangak Elementary School, and Daycare model within the community's school. It will explore staff retention, capacity building, and the work being done to empower and encourage the next generation to continue the work, while including the vision in the daily curriculum. Learn how intergeneration teaching and learning is incorporated in all traditional activities and learn about the calendar that reflects the traditions of the Gitxsan Nation. At the school, academics reflect daily teachings and staff use Gitxsan ways to implement the subject areas. Participants will also have an opportunity to practice creating a lesson plan outline that is suitable to their nation.

Building Curriculum from the Heart of sqilx'wɫcawt (3L 4L)

sani?wlm Aimee Lezard Baptiste, Language and Culture sux'wma?ma?yam, Outma Sqilx'w Cultural School

This workshop will focus on the intricacies, challenges and successes encountered in building curriculum rooted in sqilx'wɫcawt – our ways of being, doing and knowing – at Outma Sqilx'w Cultural School. It will outline the importance of teamwork to cultivate connections, community, language and culture with our children. Learn about the collaborative journey that resulted in the Land-Based Learning Program, the Big Buddy Program, and integrated science/socials curricula. The collaborative works to be highlighted are Salmon/Deer learning which fuses historical knowledge, language, hands on learning, art and science from a First Nations perspective, and the Big Buddy Program, which cultivates connections between older and younger students.

Creating a Program for Young Adults with Exceptionalities to Support their Transition to Adulthood (3M 4M)

David Robin, Special Education Teacher, Nuxalk College

Liz McLean, Specialist, Complex Exceptionalities, First Nations Education Steering Committee

Three years ago, Nuxalk College created a new program to support young adult students who have exceptionalities and accomplished a unique high school leaving certificate. We have been successful in helping the student and their family identify their life goals and "dreams" and have created a program that is individualized to each young adult. Their learning is happening in the classroom, in the community and on the land. The goal of our program is to partner with community supports to create a long-term space for these young adults to continue to grow. The key learnings would be how to identify individual "dreams and goals" for students with exceptionalities, as well as how to create programs and partnerships to support students.

Creating Mindful Learning Opportunities and Spaces for all Learners (1I 2I)

Preston Dumaine, Learning Assistance Teacher/Coordinator, K'ak'ot'lats'i School, Quatsino First Nation

Danielle Paling, Grade 2/3 Teacher, K'ak'ot'lats'i School, Quatsino First Nation

Courtney Picard, K4 Teacher, K'ak'ot'lats'i School, Quatsino First Nation

This workshop is designed to showcase self-regulation and sensory processing strategies for all learners by using the environment as our third teacher, setting up classroom and sensory room environments that foster student success, and using the outdoors to engage students. The learning environments and teacher preparedness have a huge impact on a student's ability to regulate and learn, and a teacher's ability to effectively engage. In this workshop the presenters will share examples and ideas that participants can take home to implement right away.

Cultivating Success in Math for All Learners (1L 2L)

Natalie Crespo, Grade 5 Teacher, senpaq'cin School

Lisa van den Munckhof Grade 6/7 Teacher, senpaq'cin School

Discover how to create a fun and inclusive math environment where every student can thrive! This workshop is packed with practical tips, easy-to-adapt activities, and creative ways to meet students where they are. Participants will get hands-on ideas for differentiating lessons, boosting math confidence, and encouraging a growth mindset. Together, we will explore strategies to support all learners and build a strong foundation for success in math, focusing on inclusive math practices that help all students succeed. The workshop will share simple, practical strategies to create supportive classrooms where everyone can thrive.

Delivering First Nations Aspects of Social Studies Curriculum in a Child-Friendly Way (1J 2J)

Monique Sam, Grade 5 Teacher, Wsanec School Board-LAUWELNEW School

Cristin Lafortune, Grade 5 teacher (Immersion), Wsanec School Board-LAUWELNEW School

The Grade 5 Social Studies curriculum is complex and can be challenging to present to school-aged children. Learn about a system at LAUWELNEW School where one teacher presents curriculum through hands-on lessons in the classroom and another presents valuable learning opportunities through land-based experiences. Key topics include the Douglas Treaty, the residential schools, and sustainability of fishing/gathering practices. Land-based learning explores the value of places used traditionally while identifying native plants, engaging in restoration, and being on the land. Resources will be shared and worksheet/templates will be available for those who are interested in using the system in their own classrooms.

Developing Personal Finance Programs for First Nations High Schools (3K 4K)

Richard Stockton, Teacher, Stein Valley Nlakapamux School

Noel Froste, Teacher, Stein Valley Nlakapamux School

People say that they are bad with money because personal finance is not being taught in schools, but it doesn't have to be that way. There is space made for personal finance class in the British Columbia high school curriculum and at Stein Valley Nlakapamux School. Educators interested in developing a personal finance program, or who already are offering one but have questions, will find that this workshop answers important questions, like how to make finance interesting to First Nations high school students, how to find program support, and how to find materials. The workshop will also explore how course materials, tasks, and goals can be recultured and Indigenized – not just superficially, but on a deeper level. Come to this workshop to learn all about it.

Embedding Gwelx yee'inswx within our Gitksan Curriculum (1A 2A)

*Nox Gyes, Edith Loring-Kuhanga, Leadership & Governance Consultant, Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs
Galsimgiget, Katie Ludwig, Gitksan Language Teacher, Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs
Guu sii wel'aaxm guu ganaw, Pam Spooner, Assistant Superintendent, School District 57
Hamolik, Liz Williams, Aboriginal Head Start*

The Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs have embarked on a long-term curriculum project encompassing early learning, elementary and high school. Three curriculum circles have been created that include twenty-two hereditary chiefs, fluent speakers, teachers and community members who provided the content on four Gitksan topics: li'ligit (feast), lax'yip (territory), ayookw (laws) and salmon. We have highlighted our ayookw and Sim'algyax throughout our curriculum. Our curriculum is based on a cross-curricular approach that covers relevant and meaningful content from the core subjects, arts and the ADST curriculum and includes assessment strategies. Come learn how we flipped the general approach to curriculum development upside right by starting with our lax'yip, our natural classroom and developed relevant and meaningful curriculum that incorporates modern curriculum methodology.

Empowering Family Members to Play (3B 4B)

*Colleen Mitchell, Speech-Language Assistant, Witset Elementary/Secondary
Sheila Mitchell, Education Assistant, Witset Elementary*

Are you looking to involve your students' families in fun learning words activities? Join us for a workshop you can host for families, creating games made from materials around the house. Students benefit from the games through improved imagination, reading and math skills. In this workshop, we will demonstrate how to engage families to create the games and play with their children. This workshop will be especially helpful for principals and teachers who work with families or want to support parents clubs.

Forming an International Travel Club and Connections to the World (3J 4J)

Blake Wolter, Grade 9 to 12 Teacher, Skeetchestn Community School

After years of local BC field trips, Skeetchestn Community School set its sights on international voyages. With one trip now complete and another scheduled for March 16th 2025, a change spread throughout the high school population that was directly inspired by our journey to Japan. This presentation is intended to inspire other schools to consider looking at travel and cultural "pen pals" as a way to expand students' worldly knowledge and cultural pride. It will explore how to organize, fund and manage a trip of this size. This presentation will also encompass how the students at Skeetchestn Community School created an Art Club Collective that helps them fund their trips through ADST creations and entrepreneurship opportunities at conventions and markets throughout our region.

ka kni#wi-tiya#ta (Our Thinking): Engaging the School in Community's Strategic Plan (3C 4C)

*Michael Bishop, Principal, #aqamnik Elementary School
Tod Lunan, Student Services Teacher, #aqamnik Elementary School*

Building upon the workshop "Connecting School Curriculum to Community Values and Goals" offered by #aqam staff at the 2021 FNSA Virtual Conference, this session will further explore the innovative ka kni#wi-tiya#ta model, a community-driven educational approach inspired by the Ktunaxa tipi structure. The model uses tipi poles to represent key initiatives in the #aqam Community's strategic plan, fostering student engagement through monthly collaboration and creating meaningful connections between education and local priorities. This approach not only enhances students' understanding of the #aqam Community's strategic plan but also develops crucial skills in leadership, teamwork, and independent thinking, preparing them to become resilient, community-minded leaders.

Land-Based Learning in the Intermediate Classroom and High School Science (3I 4I)

Natasha Jollymour, High School Science Teacher, Seabird Island Community School
Suzanne Smith, Grade 6 Teacher, Seabird Island Community School

Land-based learning is a process that recognizes and builds upon the values of Indigenous knowledges. The presenters, Natasha and Suzanne, will talk about the equipment, gear, and grants that helped Seabird Island Community School's land-based learning become a reality and the projects that bring the K-12 school together, including the school forest and school garden projects and composting. Suzanne will review land-based learning overarching concepts and provide examples of intermediate grades activities based on stewardship and connection to land. Finally, Natasha will give examples of land-based learning units she has taught for Science 8 to 10 and some of the more common senior science course topics. These units include plant medicine, water monitoring, simple machines, stewardship, applied genetics (e.g., salmon monitoring and species identification), local geology, and more.

Learning for Life: Planting Seeds of Sustainability and Growth (3E 4E)

Roxanne Ilagan, Teacher, senpaq'cin School

Equip yourself with some practical and easy ways to incorporate sustainability into your school, including food practices, gardening and responsible consumption. With sustainability at the forefront of our practice and accessibility at all levels in mind, learn about some of the many ways to get your students involved. We will discuss the value of growing food for reconnecting students with the land and school pride, how to connect composting to the curriculum, easy ways to include the whole school across school subjects, and information on grants and school programs to help your garden grow. We will also share Nsyilxcen words that our school has learned in relation to the snk^wanłqtn (garden).

Literacy Social Nights (1G 2G)

Rachel Zimmerlee, Librarian/Educational and Personal Assistant, Nak'al Bun Elementary School
Karen Milanese, Vice Principal, Nak'al Bun Elementary School

Once a month, Nak'al Bun School invites families and community to the school for Social Literacy Nights to promote family and cultural literacy. The events focus on literacy and family fun activities and involve community members of all ages. Land-based learning and other cultural activities are always included, as well as a multicultural night for the whole community to share their knowledge. We connect students with other schools and surrounding communities and encourage community volunteers. At this workshop, the presenters will share insights into the successes they have experienced, how they fund social nights, and how they plan for the year.

Nurturing Success: Fire Friday's Path to Connecting Culture, Food and Land (1M 2M)

Leah Powder, First Nations Healthy Schools Coordinator and Teacher, senpaq'cin School
Levi Bent, Language and Culture Teacher, senpaq'cin School

Join Leah and Levi for a hands-on workshop that dives into Indigenous food sovereignty, focusing on its core principles, values, and wisdom. Beyond cooking, this session highlights the power of land-based education as a cross-curricular tool for cultural connection and academic success. Learn how to implement programs like senpaq'cin School's Fire Friday, which integrates cultural pride, community building, and decolonizing food systems. Participants will gain practical tools, including lesson plans, funding strategies, and resources to develop food sovereignty initiatives. By the end of the workshop, participants will walk away with actionable insights into empowering students through Indigenous perspectives and land-based learning. Let's work together to inspire the next generation!

Nuxalk Environmental Science, Living and Learning on the Land (1E 2E)

*Kim Baglot, STEAM Teacher: Science, Math and ADST, Acwsalcta School, NAALS Nuxalk Nation
Q'umulha Rhonda Schooner, Land-Based Healing Cultural Support Worker, Nuxalk Nation Wellness*

The Nuxalk Environmental Science program is a multidisciplinary course combining the principles of traditional Nuxalk knowledge and Western academic science. Students learn through local land tours and field trips to understand first-hand how governments, businesses, industry, research, and society in general impact Nuxalk territory and landscape. The Nuxalk Environmental Science course has been created to enable students to participate, regardless of their prior academic science background, feel a sense of belonging, and achieve learning success. This is accomplished through field trips and assignments with numerous levels of student-led learning. The workshop will provide attendees with examples of successful projects, free digital content creation tools, and a roadmap for implementing differentiated land-based technology-supported science initiatives in their own schools.

Our Wealth in Who We Are Language Workshop (1B 2B)

Gloria Cole, Retired Educator

This workshop will include a discussion about First Nations languages and learning some words in Kwakwala. There will also be some time given to look at Kwakwala language resources and practicing words. These resources were created by Gloria and given to Wagulas in Fort Rupert as well as to the Kwigwis Day Care in Fort Rupert. Gloria uses these resources to visit schools in Campbell River to share the Kwakwala language as well as uses them with her three grandchildren. There will be a fun Kwakwala BINGO game and some other Kwakwala language games.

Practical Strategies for Incorporating SEL (Social Emotional Learning) into Physical Education Classes (3H 4H)

Michele Woitzik, PHE Specialist and Resource Teacher, senpaq'cin School

In this workshop, learn practical strategies to help create a culture of safety, belonging, and positivity within indoor and outdoor recreation spaces. Michele will share approaches to learning that support students' emotional growth and self-management through participating in physical activities, and extending into teamwork skills that build healthy and positive relationships with others. This workshop will demonstrate how integral social emotional learning is to the physical education curriculum. Resources such as quick warm up games with minimal equipment requirements, teamwork challenges to build cooperation and communication skills, ideas for assessing specific sports by using fundamental skill cues, and self-regulation tools will be shared.

Prophet River First Nation – A Dream Becomes Reality (1D 2D)

*Leah Asher, Director of Education, Prophet River First Nation
Colleen Austin 'Wii Goot, Indigenous Education Consultant, Gamaats Consultants*

In this workshop, Leah and Colleen will share the journey of how the community leadership and members of Prophet River First Nation turned an education dream into academic success. The dream of designing two unique, Gr. 12 credit courses to suit multi-generational learners, who live in and out of this remote community in BC's Northeast, became a reality in December 2024. They will share details of Art Studio 'Connections to Our HeARTland' and Dunne-Zaa 'The Language of Our Lands,' which are offered through a modular format to members in Prophet River First Nation, Fort St. John, BC, and Whitehorse, Yukon. Presenters will share each course syllabus, curricular alignment, de-colonized methods of instruction and assessments, and unique demonstrations of collaboration and learnings.

Sharing the Journey: A Practical Guide to Transitioning to a Standards-Based Approach through Teamwork and Collaboration (1K 2K)

*Mark Doolan, Principal, Eliza Archie Memorial School
Caroline Schaal, Teacher, Eliza Archie Memorial School*

This session is designed for teachers and school principals who are looking for a way to implement standards-based planning, teaching and assessment in their schools. Mark and Caroline will be sharing their journey as a school staff transitioning to a school-wide approach to standards-based instruction, assessment and reporting. They offer insights on both successes and challenges faced. By the end, participants will have practical tools and examples for navigating through this process. Participants will also be invited to share their examples and experiences at the workshop.

Syilx Cultural Connections: Our Journey to developing Local and Land-Based Cultural Curriculum Gr. 10-12 (3D 4D)

Joseph Pierre, School Principal, Penticton Indian Band Education Centre

Kathy Pierre, Resource Teacher, Penticton Indian Band Education Centre

This workshop will explore how Penticton Indian Band Education Centre developed a high school program to improve school completion rates in the community. It will discuss the journey through the First Nation Authorized Course Process to get Syilx Cultural Connections 10-12 courses recognized and approved as credited courses for graduation. Syilx Cultural Connections 10-12 is a series of courses intended to create meaningful, culturally rooted learning opportunities (land-based and other) connecting students to the land, stories, and language, to teach and reinforce syilx ways of being and knowing. We will discuss how syilx Cultural Connections follows the natural progression of learning and ensures the revitalization and transmission of our syilx ways of knowing and being.

Take me to the Yí'nta (3A 4A)

Audrey Sargent, Grade 3/4 Teacher, Witset Elementary School

Marsha Sebastian, Grade 4/5 Teacher, Witset Elementary School

Do you find yourself wondering, “What is your process? How does this work? Who’s helping you?” Experience the land as a teacher with educators Audrey and Marsha as they share their stories of learning on the Wet’suwit’en Yí’nta (earth-water/land/territory). By incorporating land-based practices in their unit and lesson design, they have shared, meaningful, learning experiences with their students, colleagues, and community members. Take me to the Yí’nta is an interactive, experiential, land-based workshop designed to showcase how a shared experience making “fire nests” has multiple entry points for a diverse range of learners as well as cultural and curricular goals. The workshop will go through the ADST design thinking and skills process. *There may be an outdoors component. Max 25 people.*

Teaching by Doing (3F 4F)

quaysultunaat (Randeana) Jack, K/1 Immersion Teacher, Quw’utsun Smuneem Elementary

Role modeling is a key component when teaching culture to our children. Using song and dance, students learn about pitch, tone, tempo, cultural etiquette, responsibilities, leadership, and school community. The creation of song and dance has given both Hul’q’umi’num’ immersion and English streams a cultural bridge. This workshop exemplifies that to support students to be culturally creative, the most important resources are time and opportunity.

Xáxtsa Pedagogy (3G 4G)

Carl H. Sr. Sam, Cultural Teacher, Xáxtsa Community School

Carl M. Sam Jr., Teacher Assistant, Xáxtsa Community School

This workshop will begin with sharing a PowerPoint presentation about the cultural and ancestral skills taught to the Xáxtsa Community School students from Headstart to grade seven. Next, the participants will have the opportunity to make an actual authentic rawhide rattle. The school’s students are very receptive to hands-on experience in drumming, singing, and dancing to our ancestral songs, making drums, rattles, and regalia. They also skin, scrape, stretch, tan and cut hides of beaver, elk, and deer and defeather grouse. As part of the program, students harvest cedar roots, bark, and medicinal plants for tea and produce various salves. Students also make their own nets and prepare fish for wind drying or smoking. Learn all about this, and much more. *Max. 35 people.*

Yapatłąns (We Will Weave) (1C 2C)

Donna Cranmer, Namgis Educator & Artist

Anthony Hunt, Kwagu’ł Artist

The First Nations on the coast have been gifted with what Kwakwaka’wakw (Kwakwala speaking people) call the “tree of life.” After giving words of thanks, Kwakwaka’wakw gather the bark, withes, roots, and wood to create clothing, utensils, containers, houses, canoes, and much more. In this hands-on workshop Anthony and Donna will guide participants through the process of creating two diagonally woven cedar bark bookmarks and finishing each with a shell button. Come and experience the cedar teachings. Each participant will leave with their own cedar bark bookmarks and the experience of working with cedar bark which they can bring to their schools and students. *Max. 40 people.*