



## Truth and Reconciliation Week & Orange Shirt Day

Truth and Reconciliation Week and Orange Shirt Day are an opportunity for the CDSBEO to honour the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in a meaningful, age-appropriate way that is respectful to both survivors, intergenerationally traumatized students and to the truth of our history. Clearly communicated messages to both staff and parents ensured that CDSBEO students sensitively begin their journey of building awareness and understanding of our Canadian history through a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspective.

Indigenous Consultant Melissa Mader-Tardif, presented details to the board on how Truth and Reconciliation Week, as well as Orange Shirt Day, were unpacked in CDSBEO schools through various initiatives which focused on empathy, respect, and kindness.

“Letters were preemptively sent home to parents. While reconciliation calls us to teach our students about the traumatic history of Indigenous colonization, we wanted to reassure parents that such learning would be age-appropriate and sensitive to the individual needs of our students. Grade specific resources and professional development opportunities were also distributed to teachers,” explained Melissa Mader-Tardif.

Schools embraced the learning and participated in many ways through activities that demonstrated their commitment to “Every Child Matters.” Posters, videos, murals, class discussions, and reading and discussions about Indigenous literature were some examples of how students honoured the commemoration. Every CDSBEO school participated and shared their learning and commemoration through photos, by wearing orange, and in the examples of student learning that took place.

Secondary students were also provided the opportunity to listen to the stories of Elders, from the local community of Akwesasne, Leona Cook and Bill Sunday. Members of the Ontario Catholic Schools Trustee’s Association Chair and First Nations Trustee Judy Wawia and First Nations Trustee Judy Manitowabi, shared their personal experiences of residential school with secondary students.

For the past three years, CDSBEO has partnered with the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and the City of Cornwall to action the Calls in a physical way at the Clock Tower in Lamoureux Park. Since 2020, an Orange Shirt Day Banner has been raised at the Clock Tower before September 30th to promote Orange Shirt Day and to bring more awareness to the work which takes place around Truth and Reconciliation throughout the year. This year, Akwesasne’s Grand Chief Abram Benedict, Ministry Indigenous Education Officer Romaine Mitchell, as well as members of the Board’s Indigenous Education Advisory Committee Brenda Rivers and Wathahiiosta (Teresa) Cook, Mayor Glen Grant, and city councilor Elaine McDonald were in attendance.

Mohawk Council of Akwesasne’s Representative and Advocacy program unveiled three orange benches at the at the Lamoureux Park National Day of Truth and Reconciliation event. The



# CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Board Meeting Highlights  
From the meeting held October 4, 2022



event included a community meal of traditional Haudenosaunee corn soup, fried bread and strawberry drink, and all guests were welcomed to join in a social.

"It is essential to take the time to celebrate culture and to encourage the consistent integration of First Nations, Métis and Inuit history and perspectives in all classrooms throughout the school year."

"We appreciate you being here today to share all of these initiatives and student learning, facilitated by the work being done by your department, and through our board partnerships. Thank you so much for an outstanding presentation," concluded Vice-Chair Wilson.