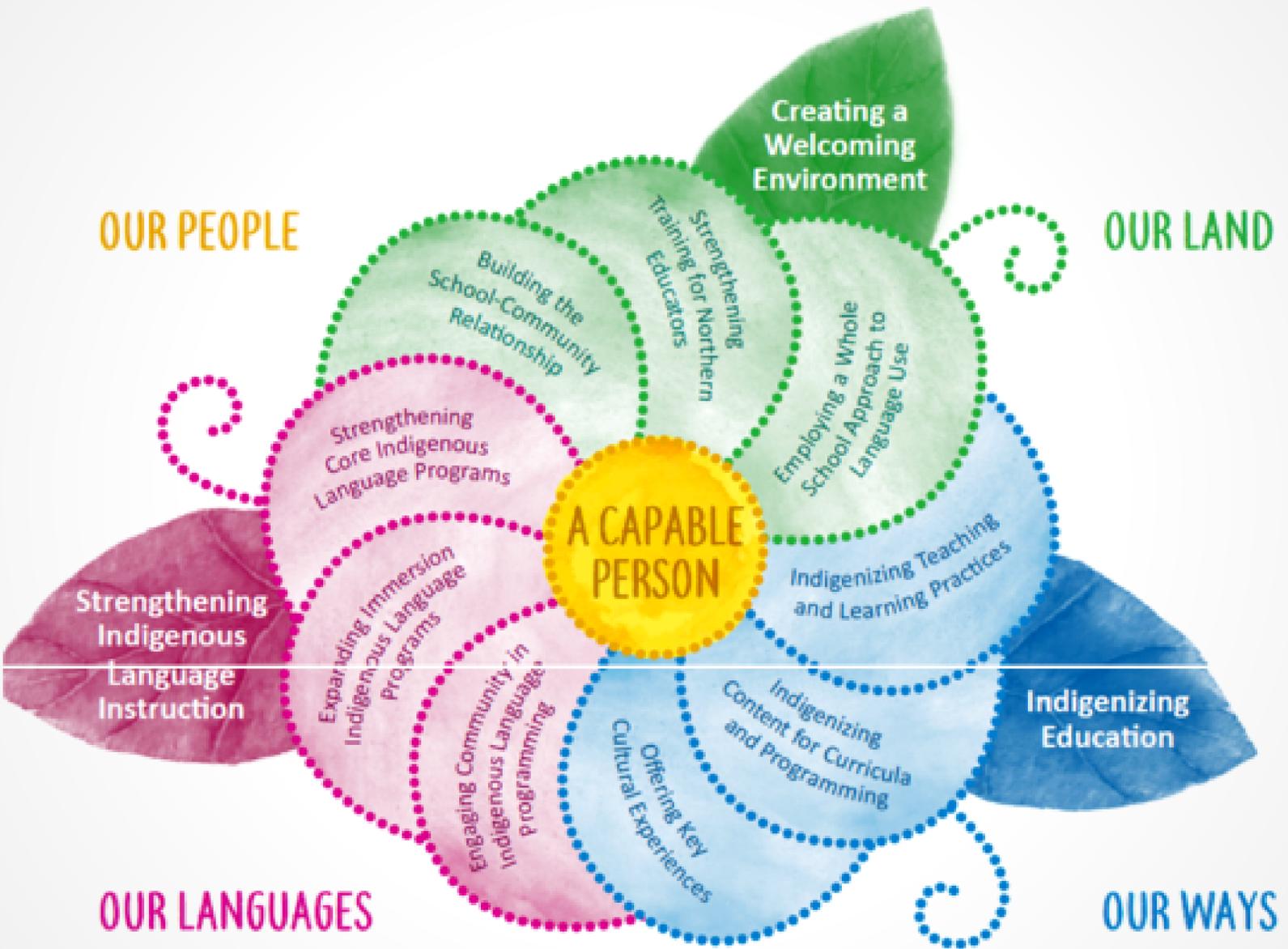


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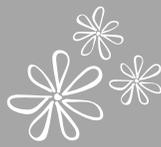
COMMISSION SCOLAIRE FRANCOPHONE TERRITOIRES DU NORD-OUEST

Special Newsletter - Indigenous Cultures



The Arctic Rose





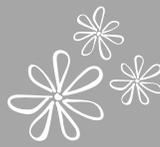
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND CULTURES IN THE CSFTNO's SCHOOLS

The two schools operated by the Commission scolaire francophone des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (CSFTNO) have kept an important place for Indigenous language and culture activities in their annual plans, while reflecting the schools' unique character as minority French-language educational institutions. The development and implementation of these plans are intended to show that our schools are achieving the anticipated outcomes for instruction in Indigenous languages and cultures, as set out in directives issued by the Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE).

Our Indigenous activity plans were inspired by the major pedagogical commitments depicted by the "Arctic Rose," a metaphor used in the Indigenous Languages and Education Handbook to represent the Indigenous approach whereby every learner ultimately develops into a capable person.

Those major commitments consist in creating a welcoming environment, Indigenous education and strengthening Indigenous language instruction.

The plans are divided into two major areas: incorporation of aspects of the Dene Kede Indigenous education program into classroom curricula and supplementary activities in connection with Indigenous languages and cultures (e.g., camps, workshops, games).



Incorporation of Aspects of Dene Kede into Classroom Curricula

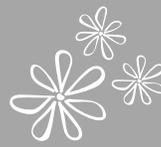
Dene Kede is one of two education programs developed by ECE to respect the worldview and languages of Indigenous peoples.

The Dene Kede program encompasses the languages, cultures and philosophies of five Dene nations. It covers topics such as the spiritual world, the land, the self and the people. According to ECE, “The purpose of this curriculum is to present children with the experiences, knowledge, skills and attitudes which will guide them toward becoming capable citizens.”



Reading in a teepee.

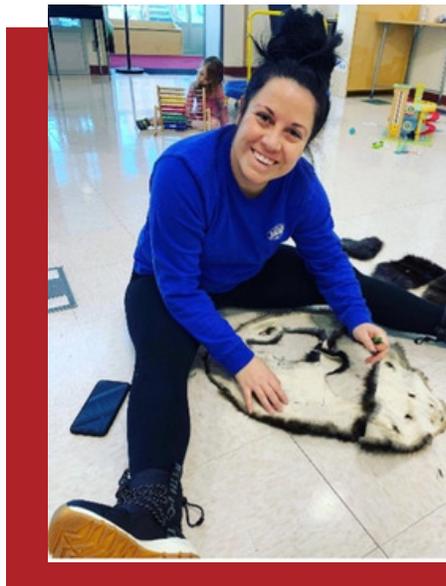
Grade 2, ÉASC



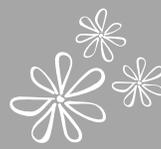
Incorporation of Aspects of Dene Kede into Classroom Curricula (pt.2)

Our schools this year received a draft version of the program in French. We also began training our teachers so they can make greater use of portions of the program in their classroom curricula by linking them with the subjects they teach. The teachers are therefore gradually adopting teaching methods inspired by Indigenous cultures, e.g., sharing circles, forest- and museum-based learning activities, teepee reading nook in classrooms.

In addition, we also gave some of our teachers the opportunity to have meaningful experiences in creating Indigenous arts and crafts. Those teachers are now better equipped to address topics related to northern animals, furs, and Indigenous arts and crafts with their students.



*Learning how to make
beaver fur mittens,
École Boréale staff.*



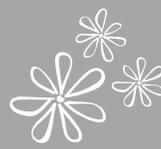
Supplementary Activities

To give students immersive experiences, our two schools regularly hold workshops, camps and games in addition to classroom instruction.

For example, between October 2020 and January 2021, Grade 5 and 6 pupils at École Allain St-Cyr took part in “Bushkids” every Wednesday. Bushkids is an on-the-land education program that aims to support healthy relationships among students with themselves, each other and the land. Students were able to learn in their natural environment using an inquiry and play-based approach framed by Indigenous (Dene) principles and values. They therefore had the opportunity to establish close ties with nature and the community in which they live and go to school.



Learning activities, Bushkids program. Grades 5 and 6, École Allain St-Cyr.



Supplementary Activities (pt.2)

More recently, during Indigenous Languages Month this February, École Allain St-Cyr held fur workshops for eight of its classes. The workshops taught students about trapping, the importance of striking a balance with nature, northern animals and their importance for Indigenous peoples.

In addition, every Tuesday afternoon since January, students in Grades 7 and 8 have been taking part in moccasin-making workshops as part of an exploratory course.

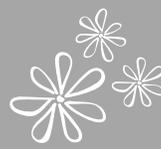


Fur workshops, École Allain St-Cyr.



FMaking moccasins.

Grades 7 and 8, ÉASC



Supplementary Activities (pt.3)

Students at École Boréale took part in drum making workshops over three consecutive weeks. They also had the chance to learn Indigenous songs.

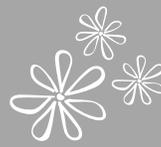
Besides workshops and camps, our schools began incorporating Dene language expressions into their routines. For example, every morning at École Allain St-Cyr, greetings and words of thanks are said in Dene languages over the public address system. The “Dene phrase of the month” is read out daily. The national anthem in Indigenous languages is played regularly, and a draw is held every week to reward students who have used the most Dene words and phrases.



*Drum-making workshops. Grade 9,
École Boréale.*



*Grade 3 pupil, first winner of Dene
words and phrases contest,
École Allain St-Cyr.*



Supplementary Activities (pt.4)

Other activities are planned for the coming weeks. In March, almost all of the students at École Boréale will have the opportunity to take part in an ice fishing camp on Great Slave Lake. École Allain St-Cyr this February is holding workshops for three of its classes on how to prepare bannock and stew as yet another way to celebrate Indigenous Languages Month, whose theme this year is “Cook with Me.” The school is also holding an Indigenous activities week from March 8 to 11. On this occasion, students will be able to take part in workshops on topics including fish types and cutting, Dene art, Indigenous games, dogsleds, building an igloo, ice fishing, and Indigenous stories and legends.

The CSFTNO is proud of its Indigenous program and of the work done by both its schools to give Francophone students who live on the ancestral lands of the Dene and Métis the chance to take part in these activities. We would like to thank the staff of ECE’s Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat for guiding us in developing the program, as well as the Elders for sharing their knowledge and wisdom with our school community.

Mahsi Cho!
