

Coal Tyee Elementary

Year: 2021-2022

Principal: Diane Charles

Our School Story

What are the unique, positive characteristics that we celebrate in our school/community?

As a school community we are digging deeply into the Syeyutsus Reconciliation Framework, working to gain a strong sense of place, and developing the interconnectedness needed to strengthen all relationships. Our school is 25 years old this year and we are working with Snuneymuwx Elders and Knowledge Keepers on our school's name, moving beyond the story of colonization to what was before the coal. It is with great honour and humility that we engage in this process.

We are entering year two of a partnership with NALT (Nanaimo Area Land Trust), with students and staff learning to become stewards of this land, the marsh and the surrounding watershed and forest areas. Our school garden provides an active outdoor classroom to bring this learning to life.

Other highlights of our school community include:

- Active parent community, highly involved with school initiatives
- Collaborative school staff working on shared literacy goals across all grades
- Introduction of School House Teams (Bear, Beaver, Orca, Salmon, Raven, Wolf) to develop school spirit
- Caring and inclusive school community that celebrates the strengths and stretches of students and staff alike
- We value student activity, and you will often see students running laps of the building, or exploring the marsh, playing games in games club, participating in intramurals, or working collaboratively on student leadership projects

What are the important demographics of our school and community?

Coal Tyee is situated on the traditional and unceded territory of the Snuneymuwx People, nestled in the fast-growing Diver's Lake community and neighbouring the Northfield Marsh. We have approximately 350 students and 40 staff, with 16 divisions and 2 portable classrooms. We are a K-7 school, with a diverse student population, including 20% Indigenous learners as well as learners new to Canada. We take pride in meeting our students where they are at and helping them grow to be the best they can be.

Our School Goals

1. To improve student success in English Language Arts, specifically reading, listening, and viewing, through a school-wide focus on teaching the simple view of reading (Decoding X Language Comprehension = Reading Comprehension).

2. To bring the Calls to Action #57 and #63 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to the forefront of our work within our school to foster healing, understanding and appreciation for Nanaimo before coal – specifically moving beyond the settler story of Coal Tyee – including renaming the school.

Our School Celebration Story

Our school celebration story focuses on the connection to the Syeyutsus Reconciliation Framework, our goal on Truth and Reconciliation and the related activities around developing a sense of stewardship of the land.

As a school staff we spent 2020-21 digging into the history around Coal Tye – how did the school get its name? What is the story of this place prior to colonization? We also explored this place through place-based learning, co-facilitated with NALT.

One of many celebrations in this very important work occurred with our grade 7 students. Through learning about the marsh and bluff that surrounds our school, as well as the indigenous plants and species that have been here since time immemorial, our senior students became stewards of the land in a very concrete way. After learning how to identify the indigenous versus the invasive species, the senior students participated in a series of invasive species pulls. When reflecting on their year of learning, students overwhelmingly identified this work as being the most impactful for them. A true success!



Our grade 7 students worked hard this week to remove invasives from our marsh area, including English ivy, daphne, blackberries, and a shocking amount of trash. The work continues next week.

