



Media Release

For Immediate Release
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Grand Erie Honours Treaties Recognition Week

Brantford Ont. – Grand Erie District School Board is marking Treaties Recognition Week, November 5-9, by providing valuable opportunities for teachers to implement lessons and activities to aid students' understanding of the complex history of Canada, and the work involved in moving towards Reconciliation.

"Understanding treaties is understanding our responsibilities to the land as well as to one another," said Sabrina Sawyer, Indigenous Education Lead for Grand Erie. "Treaties are the foundations of our relationships between nations, including both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. There is still a great deal of work to be done. Reconciliation begins with understanding where we started, and the journey of how we arrived at where we are today."

Grand Erie is committed to the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, specifically calls 62 and 63, which recognize the need to build teacher capacity and student understanding.

This past July, nearly 30 staff members from Grand Erie and Six Nations of the Grand River spent three days taking part in Treaty 101, a workshop with author and historian David Plain and filmmaker Monica Virtue.

Last spring, two books – *Alex Shares His Wampum Belt* and *Dakota Talks About Treaties* by Kelly Crawford – were distributed to elementary classrooms in the board to begin important conversations. In 2018-19, additional resources will be distributed to junior and secondary classrooms to build upon that learning.

Grand Erie's Multi-Year Plan has *Success for Every Student* at its centre, and the recognition of Treaties Week aligns with the plan's Equity indicator. Through its commitment to the Calls to Action, the board is working to promote practices that help students, families, and staff feel safe, welcomed and included.

At Tollgate Technological Skills Centre in Brantford, a Two Row Wampum beading workshop led by Indigenous Student Trustee Allan St. Pierre will take place. The demonstration, open to all students at Tollgate, will include an explanation of the significance of the Two Row Wampum.

"The earliest of Wampum belts were agreements detailing how we would respect one another and honour our traditions and cultures without interference, steward the land, and share the resources," said Sawyer. "When we understand the original intention of the treaties, we begin to better understand the complicated history of Canada, and can work towards healing."

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