

Every Student, Every Day (“ESED”) project highlights

Holy Family Elementary School Outdoor Classroom



Holy Family Elementary School had been dreaming of an outdoor classroom for their students, recognizing that an outdoor gathering space would be a great addition to the school community. To facilitate year-round use, the school council also wanted it to have a fire pit and covered roof. The idea was that it would serve as a place to foster reconciliation, behavioral regulation, mental wellness, respect for all things, and learning in nature. This outdoor space takes students, teachers and staff out of the more traditional classroom environment. This addition was also a way for the school to help students

feel more engaged in their learning as they would be more connected to their environment.

The project was presented to the *Every Student, Every Day* initiative for the 2022-23 school year, and it was chosen as one of the projects to receive financing from the initiative.

The project was a dream come true for the school, and students now enjoy learning in this environment outside, around a fire pit. This extends the classroom outside the walls of the school, and improves the well-being of the students.



Gadzoosdaa Residence improved attendance through incentives and dorm enhancements



The Gadzoosdaa Residence in Whitehorse received funding from *Every Student, Every Day* for the 2021-22 school year to improve class attendance and punctuality through incentives such as gift cards on a bi-weekly basis. The funding also covered some enhancements to the student residence environment, to make it feel more like home. Some on-site equipment was also added to encourage healthy engaging activities.

Overall, the residence administration reported that the project really helped support daily attendance and academic success. They held attendance check-in meetings every two weeks and gave the students a \$7-\$10 gift card for those attending at least 85% of their classes. This number was increased from 80% from the previous year, and the students became competitive with each other about who would

attend more classes.

The residence also held a large celebration in the form of a bingo. Students participated by sharing ideas of items that would be appreciated to reflect their overall school year of achievements.



The residence administration also reported that the dorm enhancements were a valuable addition. They were able to get SAD lights for students, which helped them get to school more alert during the dark winter. They also installed a portable fire pit that was enjoyed by the students. The students had also requested more plants in the building as a way to make it more like home. Due to limited stock, they weren't able to add as many plants as they had hoped to, so instead they booked sessions with Northern Strength Academy to promote healthy choices.

Takhini Elementary Timberwolves on the Snow and on the Land with Kicksleds



Takhini Elementary School was looking to facilitate an easy and innovative way to encourage kids to become more physically active, connect with traditional culture, learn on the land, and have fun in wintertime. Ultimately, they wanted to give students a sense of pride and accomplishment working a permutation of traditional winter transportation. They received funding from ESED to purchase kicksleds as a low barrier winter recreation and active transportation mode for all Takhini Elementary's age groups and fitness/ability levels. The school also received skis of sizes that were missing from their ski fleet to ensure all students could participate in the "Takhini Elementary

Timberwolves on the Snow and on the Land" cross-country ski program. Allowing students of all sizes (particularly those in the Grade 4-5 range) to ski with their peers was important to keep the program accessible to all.

The goal of this project was to provide opportunities for students to explore the land and forest, increase health and physical fitness, learn from Elders and create cultural experiences. This project aimed to also increase student engagement and attendance, as well as develop an appreciation of traditional land and foster reconciliation.

In the November to December months of the 2022/2023 school year, facilitator Kevin Embacher took physical education students on regular kick sledding outings as a part of his school-based programming. Furthermore, classroom teachers also took their students on kick-sledding excursions as well. These regular outings promoted outdoor learning and cultural experiences on traditional land. This project enhanced physical literacy and developed new/improving physical skills and resulted in augmented student engagement with outdoor experiences and with each other as classmates.

The students responded very positively to the addition of kicksleds, and the ski program in general.

A parent response to the program stated:

"My kids come home excited from school having used the kicksleds. I was happy to have my two children spend active and engaging time outside."

An educator's response to the program stated:

"My class kicksleds every week. I appreciate how accessible it is, as it does not require any special skills, but allows us to get out and be active within minutes. We kicksled on the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation traditional territory, and kick sledding is an important way that our class connects with our local lands. The healthy activity and experiences in nature help foster future healthy habits."



The school has reported that the kicksled/ski program did positively affect the attendance rates and was something the students looked forward to based on their enthusiastic participation and positive reflection.