

MECCS

A newsletter for Mother Earth's Children's Charter School to share its successful traditional and innovative programming.

Mother Earth's Children's Charter School
Box 42, Site 2, RR 1
Warburg, AB T0C 2T0

780-702-7531 school office
780-340-1716 family liaison

Principal Erin Danforth - edanforth@meccs.org
Family Liaison Janet House - jhouse@meccs.org

MECCS is on Facebook! 
Find driving directions and more at www.meccs.org

Our Guests from Academy at King Edward

This issue of our newsletter focuses on the first year of success developing a partnership with the Academy at King Edward School in Edmonton Public Schools. We hope it will continue to develop in future years.

(Watch for the next issue, which will focus on the Experience Canada exchange with Studio 9 Independent School of the Arts from Kelowna, BC.)

What readers may notice that both issues have in common are the smiling faces of the children. It shows what a good place MECCS is for kids. We love sharing our story with other schools.

For the second time this year, students and staff from the Academy at King Edward School made the trip out to our school. This time it was for a cultural infusion day as both schools met a curriculum need. One of the mandates for MECCS is to share our knowledge and learning with other schools. Academy at King



Students from MECCS and the Academy at King Edward School play together.



MECCS students recently hosted students from the Academy at King Edward School. Together they worked on (clockwise from above) beading techniques; took part in outdoor pursuit studies; participated in and observed traditional drumming; and performed traditional dances.



Edward, like all schools in Alberta, has a FNMI component so their students can learn about Indigenous culture in Canada.

In the morning of the visit, groups of students from both schools chose what they wanted to learn from a variety of options. Activity choices included Oral Stoney, Drumming, Aboriginal Games, Outdoor Land Pursuits, Beading and Cosmetology.

Lunch featured a popular powwow item: Taco in a Bag.

Following that, MECCS students performed their award-winning traditional dances for their guests.

Next year, we hope to go to their school to try some of these activities with their students and staff.

We ended our school year at MECCS by receiving the Alberta Education School Review before applying for our charter renewal next year. There were several commendations in the report but a key one recognized the value of our efforts to form new connections with other schools, such as the ones we have with the Treaty Six Education Association, Wildwood School and Academy at King Edward School.





Above: Students listen to Elder Theresa Bird speak the Stony language.



Below: Learning cosmetology techniques together.

Left: Discovering the fun of playing traditional Indigenous games.





Students from MECCS proudly display their traditional dancing skills and regalia for their guests from the Academy at King Edward School. Teachers and students alike were invited to take part in the dancing, a truly wonderful way to strengthen the relationship between the two school communities. The four solo dancers, clockwise from right, are Brisa Lewis, Storm Mackinaw, Lazura Roan and Jayden Lewis.



The Alberta Education review team saw how we share our vision with these other schools and how we offer them firsthand experiences as very positive steps in the process.

The Medicine Wheel and Seven Sacred Teachings (humility, courage, love, truth, wisdom, respect and honesty) were clearly evident in the classroom decor and learning activities observed by the evaluation team.

The infusion of Indigenous teaching permeates the spirit of the school, they noted. MECCS has a respected Elder who is instructing the students in the Stony language.

Evidence of Indigenous methods of teaching at our school include

- Stony language instruction
- stories, songs and ceremonies, such as smudging, pipe and feasts
- traditional symbols, such as the Medicine Wheel

- experiential learning, such as instruction from Elders about living with the land

The review team praised the school for establishing its strong sense of community. Many of those interviewed described the atmosphere of the school as “family like.”

The school has several long-standing partnerships with private companies that see the benefit of creating a safe, caring and supportive learning environment for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners. TransAlta, Enbridge and the Ptarmigan Foundation have all contributed to the success of school programs.

The Company of the Cross and Saint John’s Legacy Foundation have supported the school’s mandate for the past few years.

These partners have helped sustain MECCS in the past and have pledged to keep doing so to make sure we can continue to deliver a quality educational experience. We are grateful for their support.