



February 22, 2022

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Mill Bay Nature School Students, Teachers, and Parents  
Kim Ondrik, Principal  
Mill Bay Nature School  
Email: [kondrik@sd79.bc.ca](mailto:kondrik@sd79.bc.ca)

Dear Students, Teachers, Parents and Principal Kim Ondrik:

Thank you so much for inviting me to spend time with you on December 14, 2021. It was my privilege to visit Cowichan School District which is located on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Malahat, Lake Cowichan, Quw'utsun, Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus and Lyackson Peoples. I truly appreciate the time you spent introducing me to the Mill Bay Nature School community.

It was a very special visit and I have returned to that morning around the fire many times in my mind over the last two months. It was wonderful to see students so engaged in the morning circle and reflecting on the meaning of k'shintul. Their reflections on what it means to walk together and how their school works "like a circle, not a triangle" was very impactful. I want to thank all of the students for sharing their experiences and expressing what they value about their school. It is powerful to see the leadership role that these students are taking on, and their enthusiasm for outdoor learning.

I am also grateful to the parents for sharing how the school has impacted their child's learning and community. Thank you to the teachers for sharing how they tackle the challenging and "messy" process of reconciliation and decolonization. Integrating this work into their individual and collective teaching processes and co-creating with the students supports this essential work within the greater learning environment.

You have all built very special relationships in this education environment and I am grateful for having been invited into the circle to learn alongside you for a time. Best wishes in your future learnings.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Whiteside  
Minister

pc: Candace Spilsbury, Chair  
Robyn Gray, Superintendent