



Media Release

For Immediate Release
September 29, 2020

Grand Erie Honours Orange Shirt Day and Marks First Year of English Course Focused on Indigenous-Authored Works

Brantford, Ont. – There may not be the usual school-wide activities to mark Orange Shirt Day (September 30) this year, but Grand Erie District School Board is finding new ways to mark the day, which recognizes the trauma caused by Canada’s residential school system and its lasting intergenerational legacy.

“Providing opportunities to learn about our collective histories and develop understanding within our school communities is crucial to Grand Erie’s commitments to Truth and Reconciliation,” said JoAnna Roberto, Director of Education. “Part of ensuring students feel a sense of belonging means making sure they see themselves reflected in the curriculum.”

To help meet that goal, the decision was made last year to implement an English course for Grade 11 students in each pathway, focused on Indigenous-authored works of literature. Following consultation with local Indigenous Education staff, Indigenous communities, secondary school administrators and the Student Success team, the course (Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices) is now being taught across Grand Erie. Part of that consultation created a list of texts, with each school choosing which works to study. Authors include Richard Wagamese, Drew Hayden Taylor, and Sara General, a local author from Six Nations of the Grand River.

While many English departments across Grand Erie had been including Indigenous-authored content in courses already, implementing the Grade 11 course ensures every student experiences an Indigenous point of view through the rich works of literature available before graduating. This year, the learning will be taking place both in the classroom and online, as teachers adjust Orange Shirt Day and the lessons it imparts to each mode of delivery.

Grand Erie’s Multi-Year Plan includes Equity as one of six indicators to guide the work of realizing [*Success for Every Student*](#), and promotes practices that help students, families, and staff feel safe, welcomed, and included.

- 30 -

Contact:

Kimberly Newhouse
Manager of Communications and Community Relations
Grand Erie District School Board
349 Erie Avenue, Brantford, Ontario, N3T 5V3
Office: 519-756-6301 ext. 281147 | Cell: 519-732-8540

