



COMMISSION SCOLAIRE SIR-WILFRID-LAURIER
SIR WILFRID LAURIER SCHOOL BOARD

**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Truth and Reconciliation at SWLSB: the Journey Continues



Rosemère, April 20, 2022 – Yesterday was a special and emotional day for some teachers, consultants, administrators, and commissioners of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board. Many employees, including Truth and Reconciliation liaisons from across the school board, came together at Laval Junior Academy for the viewing of the movie “Beans”, the internationally acclaimed “coming of age” film of a young Mohawk girl living through the Oka crisis.

Following the viewing, discussions took place with “Beans” filmmaker Tracey Deer and other Indigenous guests. Attendees were able to ask questions to the panel to better understand Indigenous issues and struggles. After lunch, teachers and consultants took part in a blanket ceremony which was led by Tealey Ka'senni:saks Normandin. The blanket ceremony is a very powerful and immersive exercise during which participants are invited to walk and step

through the history of Turtle Island.

This is one of several other initiatives that the school board has organized in its Truth and Reconciliation journey. Thanks to a \$51,000 grant received from the *Sensibilité aux réalités autochtones* measure, the school board will be able to continue putting forth training and resources for teachers and all levels of staff. It is important to note that this measure aims to develop projects that promote harmonious relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

“Events like this help us gain a better understanding and further our knowledge of Indigenous realities. We can't change the past, but as hard and as emotional as it is, we must face the truth if we want to change the future. Together, we can make things better,” said Chairperson Paolo Galati.

The SWLSB initially established a First Nations, Métis and Inuit Committee (FNMI Committee) to represent the school board's commitment to Aboriginal education. The mandate of this committee was to ensure integration of First Nations awareness into our classrooms. The FNMI Committee, part of the Pedagogical Services Department dossier, has evolved into a team of consultants dedicated to helping our educational community move forward in the Truth and Reconciliation journey. The process now includes ongoing partnerships with Indigenous leaders and partners as well as dedicated Indigenous Liaison teachers in each school and centre. It is through listening, learning and building partnerships on an ongoing basis that we can bring about sustainable change and a better understanding of Indigenous peoples' culture and history.

“As a school board, we play a key role in the Truth and Reconciliation journey. We must educate ourselves, our students, and the community as well. Initiatives like these are in line with our Commitment-to-Success Plan and our Policy on Inclusion and Diversity,” added Chairperson Galati.

With a workforce of more than 2,000 employees, the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board is the third largest English school board of the Province of Québec. Its territory comprises the administrative regions of Laval, Lanaudière and the Laurentides. The school board provides preschool, elementary, secondary, adult education and vocational training services to over 14,000 students in 35 schools and 4 centres, as well as business training services.

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