Reconciliation begins with you.

The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund (DWF) Legacy Schools program helps classrooms/schools lead the movement in awareness of the history of Canada’s residential school system. All participating schools are encouraged to create reconciliACTIONs, which are unique to each school and can incorporate fundraising, cultural activities and more. DWF will share these activities online to provide support and inspire all of us to “Do Something.”

Are you ready to find out more? Visit downiewenjack.ca.

Together, we can raise awareness of the impact of Canada’s residential school system on Indigenous Peoples.
SECRET PATH Quick Lessons

1. Where do you find hope?

Ask:
From the Secret Path people work with your class.

Answer:
Creating Secret Path with your students is a great way to engage students and bring them into your classroom. Use these ideas to get started!

2. What’s your question about Chanie’s residential school story?

Ask:
Secret Path and/or Heritage Minute. Chanie Wenjack Fund is available to work with you.

Answer:
Students can write new questions after learning Chanie’s story. You can even turn it into a story on Twitter or Instagram, or use it as a message on your school’s digital board.

3. Write a letter to the Wenjacks.

Ask:
Write two videos, Harley Logan, Secret Path Backstage, Chanie Wenjack, Roberta, and a Wrinkled Moment (available online for free).

Answer:
Write a short letter or video (with a script) to send to Chanie’s family.

RECONCILIATION Ideas

Educators and students can work together to learn about reconciliation, the whole school community or small actions making daily change, or just one step.

1. Learn from reconciliation in your community. Share one or more opportunities with local elders and knowledge-keepers. Carefully consider your relationship to the land that you work and teach on on traditional territory.

2. Find out if there was a residential school on your property or where the closest one is located.

3. Visit a commemorative exhibit that honours the contributions of residential school survivors.


5. To learn about local Indigenous communities, invite elders and knowledge-keepers into your classroom to share their stories and knowledge. Use these ideas to engage in reconciliation and ask elders and knowledge-keepers to share their stories and knowledge. Use these ideas to engage in reconciliation and ask elders and knowledge-keepers to share their stories and knowledge.

6. Research Indigenous educational organizations, and visit their websites. Find out about reconciliation and Indigenous education organizations.

7. Build a class of activists or get the training to organize an Indigenous event for your school and students.

8. Participate in an action that the students are passionate about. Support an Indigenous event, or get involved in the journey of reconciliation.

9. Visit a local Indigenous organization, friendship centre, council, or government.

10. Create a presentation for your classroom, school or community. Share your knowledge in the form of presentations.

A few resources to get you started

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (ntwr.org)
Orange Shirt Day (orangeshirtday.org)
Kamloops Indian Residential School (kirsntwr.org)
First Nations Child & Family Caring Society (firstnationschildcare.org)
Will Years of Love (wyl.org)

Do you have resources to share with other educators?

If you have resources that may be useful for other educators in teaching Indigenous perspectives, history and rights, we can provide resources through this list. Please email your questions to gord@shannendesme.com.