

Focus on First Nations



Above & right: Participants of the Cultural Advisor meeting with staff members of the Duncan Hiiye'yu Lelum Friendship Center.



This year there are 25 students of North American First Nations Ancestry attending Maxwell, six of whom will be graduating in July. In looking for ways to support First Nations students there have been ongoing special gatherings arranged, called Cultural Advisor, which invite the Duncan Friendship Center staff to work with these students once a month during the students' weekly Advisor Group class. Students from diverse tribes and cross-sections of grades get acquainted with each other during these social gatherings of creative arts and activities. Tribes these students represent include Blackfoot, Cowichan, Metis, 'Namgis, Navajo, T'Sou-ke, Stoney Nakoda, and Tsawataineuk.



Below: Teddy Anderson performs for the All-School Consultation

During the All-School consultation, 2005 Graduate Teddy Anderson did a hoop dance about a Native American Creation story including the creation of the different races of mankind and the need for harmony if there is to be oneness of humanity.

Last month at Maxwell, a production entitled "Soar Like an Eagle" was put on by a First Nations theatre group from Duncan, who used dramatic presentation and dance to address issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and the suffering caused



by culture loss that was the result of the residential schools the children of native communities were forced to attend.

Maxwell's BC First Nations 12 class, a 4 credit BC Ministry approved course which meets the requirements of a provincially examinable grade 12 course or a grade 11 Socials Studies credit, has 10 students enrolled this year.

The course covers the history of the British Columbian First Nations people. It explores traditional culture of the BC First Nations people, the impact of colonial contact from the First Nations point of view, treaty negotiations, current First Nations culture, as well as leadership and self determination for the First Nations people. The course allows students to explore the impact of colonialism on aboriginal people in the world and how they are addressing these issues today.