Ciena Solutions Challenge: Indigenous Land Recognition
Project Name: Ciena Solutions Challenge Project
Big Idea: Reducing inequalities in our community
Essential Question: Why is Indigenous land recognition so important?
Team Members: Mara D., Emma C., Kareem G. and Bryce C.
School Name: Ridgemont High School
Location: Ottawa, ON, Canada
What challenge does your project address?
We are addressing reducing inequalities in our community. We want to recognize that our school and the Ottawa community is on Algonquin land and by making a website that can share more information that will hopefully spread more awareness about this topic.

Why did your team select this topic or challenge?
Our team chose this topic because it is relevant to what is going on in Canada right now. It is important that the Indigenous community is recognized for their unsurrendered land in Ottawa and Canada.

How is it a real world problem or concern?
We know this is a real world problem as it is connected to the history of our country. Especially because of colonization and recently learning about the history of Canada and how the Indigenous community was mistreated.
We discovered that during the colonization of Canada, Indigenous natives would be negatively impacted for generations to come. A total of 290 languages were spoken by the natives, one of many examples of unique diversity. This would be simplified massively through residential schools, forcing children to abandon their cultures, lifestyles, languages, or face heavy repercussions. Even to this day, schools teach children inaccurate information about Indigenous populations. Orange Shirt Day was centered around acknowledging the negative effects of residential schools and raising awareness to the Indigenous population. Currently, most people see Orange Shirt Day as a way to bring light to a topic centuries old for one day, and forget about it until the next year, rinse and repeat. Some Indigenous descendants currently view many memorials to the native population as meaningless and non-genuine, entirely as a way for the government to gain a good reputation with them and completely ignore it when they have no need for it anymore.
Our group participated in a Google Meet with Kyl Morrison, OCDSB’s Indigenous support teacher. We knew that our school and school board wanted to produce sincere and genuine Indigenous land acknowledgments, but we weren’t 100% sure how to achieve that and how to do it respectfully at Ridgemont, so we asked Kyl Morrison. Kyl Morrison widened our perspective on Indigenous land recognition and gave us many tips on how we can portray it. Including, making your own personal land acknowledgements that reflect your own personal knowledge that you understand and not something you don’t. Acknowledging that we are connected to more than just land, like food, water and many more resources that we take for granted. As well as knowing that this topic is always changing, everybody is learning and everybody should be open to learning.
Investigation (Survey):

During our investigation, we created a survey for various students in the school to answer. It featured multiple choice questions and two long-answer questions. It was a short, simple form designed to avoid discomfort in anybody looking through the form, entirely optional. This form would grant us some much needed data to help with our investigation. As of right now (December 6th, 2021), there has been a total of 37 responses. Thankfully, all questions were answered by all of the 37 of those who took the time to fill it out, with the exception of optional long answer questions. Many people had great suggestions as to how the school board could improve upon their efforts in Indigenous land recognition by explaining what they did to honor land (if they did so in the first place).

Multiple survey participants stated that they believed the school partook in land acknowledgement in the morning on announcements, through discussions around the schools, and in online assemblies/staff meetings.
Investigation (Team Interview):

A few days after the interview with Kyl Morrison, the team was brought into the room to have a short conversation about what we learned from speaking with Kyl. It was relatively short and everybody took turns speaking about various topics that they were informed about. This meeting was recorded and we were given this recording to use in our website to help us double-check some information if needed. It was very helpful in ensuring that everybody at least somewhat understood the task. This video will also be available on the website alongside what was recorded of the interview with Kyl.
Team Interview (Video)
Our team had collected data to use on our website. We have put out an anonymous google form to survey our school. We then put this data on our website including other information from our meeting with Kyl Morrison. We have five pages to the website, that we will fill with information as we work and gather more from the survey. These pages are as follows:

1. Home Page
2. About
3. Statistics
4. Interviews
5. Resources

The link to the website: https://echac19.wixsite.com/land-recognition
The Home Page to the website is very self explanatory. It simply serves as a page that allows you to freely navigate to other pages, and is accompanied by a short summary to the website's purpose.
There are three pages on the website that feature the information. The first of these is the statistics page. This page simply features the statistics most recently obtained from the survey and requires manual updates whenever a chunk of data is introduced through multiple people answering this survey.
The next page on the website is the interviews page where information obtained from our interview with Kyl Morrison is summarized in an easy to understand way. We managed to write down everything important and put it together on this interview page.
The resources page on the website is the most important page, as it helps the team ensure that the information is reliable and can be trusted. It also includes some land recognitions that a class of Ridgemont students produced over the morning announcements.