

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

School District No. 57 (Prince George) acknowledges that it is situated on the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh people in Prince George and McBride, the McLeod Lake Indian Band in the Mackenzie region as well as the Simpcw First Nation in Valemount

School District No. 57 is fully committed to the delivery of Indigenous Education as mandated through the British Columbia Ministry of Education and rooted within the communities it serves. School District No.57 recognizes the significance of the First People Principles of Learning and Indigenous wisdom teachings to all learners.

Definitions

“Indigenous ancestry” includes First Nations (both Status and non-Status, on-reserve and off-reserve), Inuit and Métis people. Indigenous designation is made through self-declaration, as prescribed by the British Columbia Ministry of Education.

“Indigenous community” refers to the community that is composed of the parents/guardians, siblings and other representatives of the Indigenous children who attend school in School District No. 57.

“Indigenous education” is the incorporation of Indigenous perspectives and philosophies in all curricular areas to inform all students of the past and contemporary lifestyles, indigenous knowledge and histories of the Indigenous peoples of Canada. Indigenous education encompasses the rich traditions and values of the various Indigenous people and applies those concepts to relevant issues facing Indigenous children and youth today, throughout curriculum and cultural activities in positive, student-centered learning experiences.

Indigenous Education Committee’s role of the Indigenous Education Committee is to support and advise the Indigenous Education Department on Indigenous Education Programs and Services as per the mandate from the Ministry of Education on Indigenous Education and to involve the Indigenous community where possible in Indigenous Education initiatives that support Indigenous students.

Indigenous Education Department of School District No.57 coordinates and supports the delivery of Indigenous Education Language, Culture and Support Programs as mandated through the British Columbia Ministry of Education.

“Indigenous languages” are the ancestral languages of the Indigenous people. The Indigenous languages within School District No. 57 are Dakelh (Lheidli T'enneh First Nation), Ts'ekhehene (McLeod Lake Indian Band) and the Secwepemctsin (Simpw First Nation).

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“Indigenous education support services” are designed to assist Indigenous students to achieve success. Services shall be provided by personnel who are culturally competent in the Indigenous worldview and sensitive to the values, beliefs and needs of Indigenous students.

“Cultural competency” is the development of the knowledge, skill and confidence to integrate Indigenous perspectives into all aspects of educational endeavours, as well as the ability to work respectfully with Indigenous people.

“Indigenous Elders Advisory Council” is a group of identified Indigenous community Elders who meet monthly. Elders share wisdom, knowledge and ancestral teachings with members of School District No. 57 in order to achieve cultural equity in education for Indigenous students, families, staff and the community.

“Informed Consent” means that information has been given (in writing or verbally) to the local Indigenous communities and they were given the opportunities to respond. Initial lack of consensus with the local Indigenous Communities does not preclude the responsibility of the School District to deliver Indigenous programs and services for Self-identified Indigenous Students.

Local Education Agreement Management Team is the management team established under section (20) of the Local Education Agreement and is comprised of representatives appointed by the Board of Education, the schools and the First Nation community to develop and implement a plan for the full implementation of this agreement, and to oversee the implementation of this agreement.

“Targeted Indigenous education funds” are provided by the British Columbia Ministry of Education to school districts. School districts are then required to follow the funding mandate for these targeted funds as prescribed by the British Columbia Ministry of Education.

1. Evidence that the Indigenous Student has self-identified as being of Indigenous Ancestry (First Nations, Status, Non-Status, Métis and Inuit). Indigenous Ancestry is determined on a voluntary basis through self-identification.
2. Evidence that the parents or guardians of the student has been consulted.
3. Evidence that the Indigenous Education Programs and Services have involved the Indigenous community in planning and delivery, either through direct involvement or through a process of informed consent.
4. Evidence that the Indigenous Education Programs and Services are in addition to any other programs and services to which the student is eligible.
5. Evidence that the Indigenous Education Programs and Services provide a continuum of substantive learning experiences and/or support services for each self-identified claimed student throughout the school year.

“Traditional teachings” encompass accumulated knowledge, skills, values and principles passed down from generation to generation for the wellbeing and survival of its people for a particular Indigenous cultural group.

Policy 2.11

“Worldviews” are perspectives that encompass the aspects of physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual well-being, and how these interrelationships created and affected the past, present and future.

Specifically

The Board of Education recognizes that it serves a diverse population of learners and is committed to making education meaningful for, responsive to and inclusive of cultural diversity that characterizes our Canadian society. The Board of Education acknowledges the significant Indigenous student population within School District No.57 and is committed to transforming educational experiences and academic achievement for all learners.

The Board of Education:

- Supports the development and delivery of Indigenous Education programs and services that enhance and benefit both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students as mandated by the British Columbia Ministry of Education.
- Supports meaningful consultation with the Indigenous community and the variety of methods used to achieve this throughout each school year.
- Acknowledges and values the role of the Indigenous Education Committee, Elders Advisory Council, and the Local First Nations within School District No.57 boundaries in enhancing and supporting Indigenous Education.

The Indigenous community has made known its understanding of Indigenous education as holistic. An Education that is inclusive of Indigenous perspectives, including values, languages, histories and cultures.

This policy reflects the belief that education is a lifelong learning process that encompasses Indigenous students, parent/guardian(s) and the community. The Board of Education will work with all partners in the educational process to ensure that an education of high quality is provided, leading to academic achievement, social leadership, environmental stewardship, secured career pathways and full participation as local and global citizens.

1. Indigenous Choice School (Nusdeh Yoh)

- 1.1. Programming at Nusdeh Yoh will ensure the integration of Indigenous values, languages, histories and cultures in all aspects of education within the school community.

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2. Indigenous Languages

- 2.1. Within the requirements of the *School Act* and Board policy, School District No. 57 will work cooperatively to establish Indigenous language programs, with priority given to Dakelh (Lheidli T'enneh First Nation), Ts'ekhene (McLeod Lake Indian Band) and the Secwepemctsin (Simpwc First Nation).

3. Early Childhood Learning Initiatives

- 3.1. The Board of Education shall support Indigenous Education early childhood learning initiatives and early developmental assessments for Indigenous students. These initiatives will be identified and embedded within School District No.57 planning for student success.

4. Employment Equity

- 4.1. The Board of Education shall maintain a Human Rights Special Program (Section 42) in order to recruit and develop a workforce that is representative of the Indigenous communities within its jurisdiction in all job classification areas.

5. Cultural Competency

- 5.1. The Board of Education supports the implementation of District Indigenous Education goals that are designed to strengthen cultural competency for all members of school communities.

6. Curriculum

- 6.1. The Board of Education supports the Indigenous Education Department and the Learning Innovations Department with integration of Indigenous Worldviews and Perspectives throughout all areas of the newly revised British Columbia Ministry of Education curriculum.

7. Responsibility

- 7.1. The Indigenous Education Department of School District No.57 coordinates and supports the delivery of Indigenous Education programs and services as mandated through the British Columbia Ministry of Education, in support of equity of educational opportunity and learning outcomes for all students.

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8. Mandate to Consult

- 8.1. The Board of Education of School District No.57 has a mandate from the British Columbia Ministry of Education to consult on Indigenous Education Programs and Services. This mandate is defined in section(s) 2 and 3 of the audit requirements of Indigenous Education Targeted Funding from the British Columbia Ministry of Education and reads as follows:

(2) Evidence that the parents or guardians of the student have been consulted. Interpretation consultation-represents communications between the school and parent/guardian.

(3) Evidence that the Indigenous Education Programs and Services have involved the Indigenous communities in planning and delivery, either through direct involvement or through a process of informed consent.

- 8.2. School District No. 57 meets this mandate to consult as defined by the British Columbia Ministry of Education through a variety of processes; Local Education Agreements, Indigenous Community Involvement, Indigenous Elders Advisory Council, Parental Engagement.