

Enhancement Agreement For Indigenous Students



2019 - 2024



Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the Elders, Leaders and families from Sumas First Nation, Matsqui First Nation, the Fraser Valley Métis Association, Indigenous students and their parents from Abbotsford School District and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee for their input in developing the third Enhancement Agreement for Indigenous students in the Abbotsford School District.

Purpose

The purpose of this Agreement is to support the enhanced educational experiences and the achievement of Indigenous students in the Abbotsford School District.

This agreement is an expression of commitment to Indigenous learners and their families. The process taken demonstrates the ongoing commitment to consultation and co-development of programs and services with Indigenous community partners.

This agreement guides the goals of the District Strategic Plan. It provides a framework to assess the effectiveness of the programs and interventions implemented to support our Indigenous learners.

This agreement is the focus for the next five years of programing and supplemental services offered using Targeted funds for Indigenous students from the Ministry of Education.

Process

Numerous consultation meetings with stakeholders were held. The Department held four community dinners where a short presentation sharing the Achievement results to date were shared. This was followed by an invitation for community members to provide feedback on what they felt was most important for future Enhancement Agreement goals. Stakeholders included Indigenous community leadership, Elders, families and students themselves. Department staff and the Advisory Committee also provided input. The Advisory Committee, Matsqui First Nation, Sumas First Nation, the Fraser Valley Métis Association, and an open invitation to all families to respond electronically and to attend a consultation meeting occurred. Consultation meetings occurred between January and May 2019. All responses were collated and organized by themes to create three goals.

Goals

Future goals are built upon the work previously done. Former Enhancement Agreement success has allowed the Abbotsford School District to reach for the next steps for Indigenous students in the Abbotsford School District. Emerging themes are clustered into three major goal areas for Indigenous students.

1. Student Success
2. Cultural Identity
3. Equity and Access

Goal #1 -- Student Success

Indigenous students will be supported to develop their full potential in all aspects of school life.

Values:

- ✓ Grade 12 School Completion
- ✓ Successful transition from and level to level and grade to grade (with an emphasis on grade 10-12)
- ✓ Consistent attendance
- ✓ Connection to a career, trades or post-secondary plan
- ✓ Reading achievement benchmarks as measured in grade 3, 4, and 7
- ✓ Successful academic completion of grades and courses throughout K-12

Goal #2 -- Cultural Identity

Students will learn about their own Indigenous cultural identity and connect with their ancestry in a meaningful way. When Indigenous students know their identity, who they are and where they have come from, they will develop a positive sense of self and belonging.

Values:

- ✓ Students will learn about the diversity of different Indigenous cultures of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit People and their personal connection to these cultures. Learning about the diversity of Indigenous cultures and the positive contributions of Indigenous people, will be inclusive to all students in the school district.
- ✓ Indigenous language is strongly interconnected with culture.
- ✓ Positive Indigenous role models and family are important to the Indigenous community.
- ✓ Connection to Elders instills respect and enhances learning.
- ✓ Learning that is place-based, learning from the land, in a hands-on and experiential way supports the success of Indigenous learners.

Goal #3 -- Equity and Access

Indigenous students thrive in an environment that supports equity and access to all opportunities in schools.

Values:

- ✓ Indigenous students have the right to a culturally safe learning environment: a school environment where students see themselves positively reflected in the schools and a space for Indigenous students to connect and feel supported.
- ✓ The Abbotsford School District will embark on an Equity Scan to self-identify structures or systems that create barriers to the success of our Indigenous students. This acknowledges that there is inherent bias and racism that Indigenous students still face. The Abbotsford School District is committed to addressing and removing barriers to access and success.
- ✓ Reducing the over-representation of Indigenous students related to discipline and creating alternate to suspension with an Indigenous focus.
- ✓ Supporting transportation will improve access to programs and services in our schools including extracurricular, trades programs and district programs.
- ✓ The Abbotsford School District is committed to the ongoing learning, across all systems, about the truth and history of Indigenous people in Canada, the impact of that history on our students today and their families.

Strategies

The Enhancement Agreement will be implemented with strategies related to staff and hiring, connection to and consultation with the Indigenous community, school space, the curriculum and professional development.

1. **Staff**
 - a. All staff that work with Indigenous students will have a connection to Indigenous culture, a commitment to learning and developing their skills and capacity to support culture and student success, and to be a positive role model for Indigenous students.
 - b. Hiring practices will demonstrate a commitment to recruiting staff with a connection to Indigenous culture and student success.
 - c. Training for all staff working with Indigenous students will be ongoing to build the knowledge of diverse Indigenous cultures, the lived experiences and challenges Indigenous students face, and the skills to support school success.
2. **Community**
 - a. Ongoing consultation with the local Indigenous community
 - b. Community engagement is valued and reflected in the programs and services offered for Indigenous families.

3. *Space*

- a. Each school will examine how to best provide a positive space for Indigenous students to connect with staff for support. This space should reflect Indigenous culture, be central and inviting. This space can be inclusive but must still meet the needs of the Indigenous learners in the school.

4. *Curriculum*

- a. The curriculum is a natural catalyst to support Indigenous learners. This agreement outlines the expectations that secondary schools will offer First Peoples courses and will support structures that encourage participation rates for all students.
- b. Learning Indigenous language is closely linked to learning about culture.
- c. Teachers are expected to implement curriculum that infuses Indigenous content and perspectives in their classrooms with all students.
- d. Learning from the land, place-based learning, experiential learning, hands-on learning are methods to be adopted in all classrooms as examples of best practice.

5. *Professional Development*

- a. The Indigenous Department is committed to providing ongoing training and professional development for all levels of staff to support the success of Indigenous students.

Memorandum of Agreement

We, the undersigned acknowledge and honour our collective responsibility for the success of all Indigenous students in the Abbotsford School District.


We agree the terms of this Enhancement Agreement will provide direction to Indigenous Education in the Abbotsford School District for the period of September 2019 to June 2024.

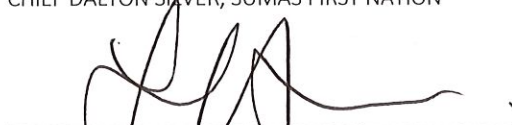
We commit to working together in a mutually respectful manner to implement programs and supplemental services for the benefit of all Indigenous learners.


CHIEF ALICE MCKAY, MATSQUI FIRST NATION


STAN PETERSEN, CHAIR, BOARD OF EDUCATION,
ABBOTSFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT


CHIEF DALTON SILVER, SUMAS FIRST NATION


KEVIN GODDEN, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS,
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LISA HENDRY, PRESIDENT, FRASER VALLEY MÉTIS
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EDUCATION, ABBOTSFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT


GWENDOLYN POINT, ADVISOR, STÓ:LO NATION