

# Aboriginal Education

Enhancement Agreement  
2018-2023



New  
Westminster  
Schools

**New Westminster Schools  
recognizes and acknowledges  
the Qayqayt First Nation, as  
well as all Coast Salish peoples,  
on whose traditional and  
unceded territories we live,  
we learn, we play and we do  
our work.**

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# Introduction: sharing responsibility

*This document, the third Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement, charts a five-year course to 2023 in support of the academic, social and cultural achievement of a diverse Aboriginal student population.*

It was developed with the guidance of our Aboriginal Advisory committee following a process of collaboration, consultation and consensus. It is our hope this document will meaningfully support the success of students while representing a step in the journey of answering the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

We are proud of the four goals we have set for the success of Aboriginal students. These goals were developed through the lens of education for Reconciliation. They include a renewed focus and concrete steps in support of academic student success in numeracy, reading and writing. They also ensure all learners – students, staff and community – will continue to increase their understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal history, culture and perspectives.

This document will be shared among students, parents/guardians, district staff and community partners. It represents a shared responsibility. As stated by the chair of the Truth of Reconciliation Commission, Justice Murray Sinclair, education is key to reconciliation. “We owe it to each other to build a Canada based on our shared future, a future of healing and trust.”

## **ACKNOWLEDGING TRADITIONAL TERRITORY: A SIGN OF RESPECT**

The Board of Education of New Westminster Schools believes that acknowledging Traditional Territory is a way to honour and show respect to the original inhabitants of this land.

This practice enables the wider school and district community to share in Aboriginal cultures, and leads to better relationships and understandings.

Observing this practice connects participants with the traditional territory, and provides a welcoming atmosphere to the land where people are gathering.

# About the Qayqayt First Nation

*In the 19th century, a village alongside of what is now Front Street in New Westminster was called Qayqayt (pronounced Ka-kite).*

In 1859, New Westminster City Council sought to remove the First Peoples from the city core, creating three reserves in the surrounding area, including 27 acres of Poplar Island and 105 acres across the Fraser River at Bridgeview.

A smallpox epidemic killed many First Peoples in 1904.

In 1916, the McKenna McBride Commission closed the New Westminster Indian Reserve and told the residents to move. Many reserves in British Columbia were being closed at this time, most without compensation or alternative lands to help them move. Qayqayt from New Westminster were married into or adopted into other Nations, relocating to Musqueam, Squamish, and Washington State. The story of the Qayqayt was almost forgotten.

Chief Larrabee's mother, aunt and uncle were the last few living members of the Qayqayt First Nation, which once numbered 400 people before their lands were sold and their remaining reserve was deemed inactive in 1951.

Chief Larrabee's journey of self-discovery led her to apply for Indian Status in 1994, resurrect the Qayqayt Band, become chief, and work to keep the legacy of her ancestors alive through education. Her story is captured in the award winning National Film Board of Canada documentary, "A Tribe of One."

Sharing her story with the school children of New Westminster continues to have a major impact. The New Westminster School District is proud to have a partnership with Chief Larrabee and her band. Chief Larrabee is a member of the New Westminster Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee.



⋮ Adapted from "A History of the New  
⋮ Westminster Indian Band," 2004  
⋮

*Pictured:  
Young Chief Larrabee  
and her mother*

**Chief Rhonda Larrabee  
of the Qayqayt First Nation  
in New Westminster is  
a passionate believer in  
education, offers a traditional  
welcome at many of our school  
functions, and often shares her  
story with our students.**

# Our committee

*We thank all students, families, district staff and partner groups for their work in developing the third Enhancement Agreement.*

**Chief Rhonda Larrabee**

Qayqayt First Nation

**Elder Keely George**

Douglas First Nation

**Bertha Lansdowne**

District Coordinator for  
Aboriginal Programs

**Parent representatives**

New Westminster

**Student representatives**

New Westminster

**Mark Gifford**

Chair, New Westminster Schools  
Board of Education

**Karim Hachlaf**

Superintendent of Schools

**Maryam Naser**

Associate Superintendent

**Betina Wheeler**

Community Program  
Development Officer SD #40

**John Tyler**

Principal, NWSS

**Jamie Sadler**

Vice-Principal, NWSS

**Randy Jaggernathsingh,**

Vice-Principal, NWSS

**Mary-Joanne Hunt**

New Westminster Teachers Union

**Marcel Marsolais**

President, CUPE 409

**Jamey Dye,**

Aboriginal Child and  
Youth Mental Health

**Laura Baracaldo**

Aboriginal Child and  
Youth Mental Health

**Dave Seaweed**

Aboriginal Coordinator,  
Douglas College

**Gary George**

Community Engagement,  
Simon Fraser University

**Aboriginal Education Staff**





*Above: Annual Qayqayt Honouring and Rite of Passage Ceremony, Lord Kelvin elementary school, 2018*

## PROCESS

The Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee was formed in 2001, when the district began consulting for its first Enhancement Agreement in 2004 – the first urban agreement in the province. The committee is representative of the urban Aboriginal population, district staff and other partner groups. It met several times in 2017/2018 to collaborate on setting goals for Aboriginal student achievement for 2018-2023. Aboriginal students and their parents provided input through focus groups and informal conversations at district schools. A writing committee was created so that we could formulate goals and outline commitment statements, and identify indicators of student success. Following a process of collaboration, consultation and consensus, we are proud of the four goals we have set for Aboriginal student success.

**This five-year agreement extends to June 2023, and recognizes our shared responsibility to meet the educational needs of the diverse Aboriginal student population of New Westminster Schools.**

We are committed to ensuring that Aboriginal students and their families are connected to our schools and feel welcome and safe. We are committed to working closely with the Aboriginal community, to shared decision-making and to meaningful and achievable strategies to ensure Aboriginal student success.

# Guiding Principles

*These principles reflect the district's commitment to ensuring that each student is able to learn in a safe, engaging and inclusive environment. These six values will guide us in ensuring our achievement goals for Aboriginal learners are met.*

## 1. collaboration

Purposeful cooperative relationships to achieve shared goals and consider each other in our decisions and actions

## 2. engagement

Meaningful, purposeful, and relevant learning

## 3. equity

Fair treatment and the removal of barriers to learning, achievement, and the pursuit of excellence for all

## 4. inclusion

Learning where all people are welcomed, respected, and supported

## 5. innovation

Curiosity, inquiry and creativity

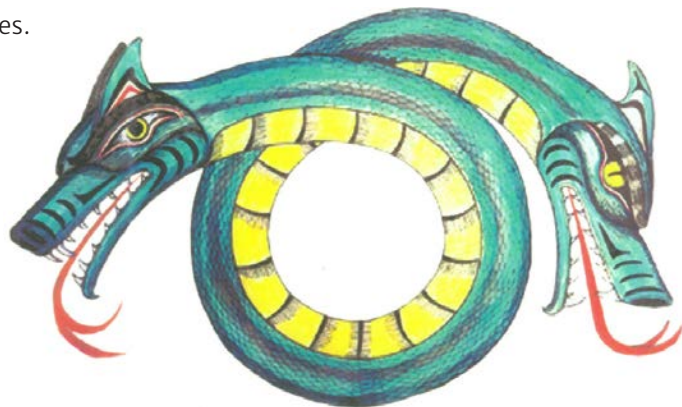
## 6. integrity

Ethical, principled and honest in our words and actions

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## DOUBLE-HEADED SERPENT

The double-headed serpent reminds us to always work on choosing a balance of forces in our lives. It was created by Xwa'lack tun, a Salish artist, and his son James Harry, a graduate of New Westminister Secondary School. A supernatural symbol, the logo was approved by Chief Rhonda Larrabee of the Qayqayt First Nation for use by Aboriginal Education programs in New Westminister Schools.





# Goal 1: Belonging and culture

*Aboriginal students will develop pride, confidence and self-esteem through the affirmation of their ancestral identity.*



## COMMITMENTS

- Encourage Aboriginal student participation in the annual Qayqayt Honouring and Rite of Passage Ceremony
- Encourage Aboriginal student participation in cultural events in the community
- Provide ongoing social and cultural gatherings at school to provide Aboriginal students opportunities to strengthen peer relationships and a sense of belonging
- Provide opportunities for Aboriginal students to engage in reconciliation activities in their schools and communities
- Continue to build student capacity amongst non-Aboriginal students for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect

## INDICATORS

- Attendance** records
- Satisfaction survey** results
- Student surveys**  
locally developed
- Participation in cultural activities** such as Qayqayt Honouring and Rite of Passage Ceremony
- Participation in district,** community, and school-based Reconciliation activities

# Goal 2: Academics

*Aboriginal learners will improve performance in grades 4 through 7 in numeracy, reading and writing.*

## COMMITMENTS

- Apply early screening for Kindergarten students to identify at-risk readers
- Work with school-based teams to identify Aboriginal students in need of numeracy, reading and writing supports in K-4
- Provide research-based literacy interventions to struggling readers and writers in K-4. E.g. Leveled Literacy Intervention
- Consistently use current internal screeners to provide necessary academic supports in both literacy and numeracy
- Continue the partnership between Aboriginal education and Curriculum Facilitators to co-create numeracy units which embed Aboriginal perspectives
- Continue to work with educators on the integration of First Peoples perspectives and world views across the curriculum, the inclusion of Indigenous pedagogies, and the selection and appropriate use of Authentic First Peoples resources
- Continue to provide professional development opportunities for teachers around literacy and numeracy supports for struggling learners
- Indigenize the K-9 curriculum by infusing classroom and school libraries with authentic First Peoples literature and levelled readers

## INDICATORS

**Baseline data** from District Early Learning Screeners and other baseline assessments

**Grade 4 and 7 FSA results** in numeracy, reading and writing

**Increase in the number of numeracy units** that embed First Peoples perspectives

**Increase in the number of literacy resources** that embed First Peoples perspectives

**Report card reviews:** individual students

# Goal 3: Transitions

*Aboriginal students will successfully transition from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and beyond.*

## COMMITMENTS

- Weave in Aboriginal perspectives in Welcome to Kindergarten events throughout the district
- Work with school staff, parents and community partners to assist Aboriginal students in making smooth transitions from one school to the next
- Implement transitional activities for Aboriginal students from elementary to middle school and middle to secondary school
- Survey students to identify which extracurricular activities are of interest to strengthen school engagement
- Investigate holistic summer camps for Aboriginal students that integrate academics and land-based cultural experiences
- Provide leadership training opportunities for secondary students (Youth Leadership Conference, Big Brothers Mentorship Program, Volunteering, etc.)
- Coordinate mentorship programs for older Aboriginal students to mentor younger students
- Develop an Aboriginal Peer-tutoring credit course
- Continue to offer individualized or small-group tours for Aboriginal students entering secondary school trades and apprenticeship programs
- Support students in developing a post-secondary plan and in accessing funding for post-secondary studies

## INDICATORS

### Baseline data

Grade to grade transitions, 6 Year Completion and post-secondary enrollment

### Participation rates

in extracurricular activities

**Student survey** feedback

*Pictured: Aboriginal  
Education staff share a  
traditional song at the  
Qayqayt Honouring and Rite  
of Passage Ceremony, 2018*

**Our vision is that Aboriginal learners leave our district with the confidence to reach their full potential and with pride in their Aboriginal heritage**

# Goal 4: Reconciliation

*All learners in New Westminster schools (students, staff and community) will continue to increase their understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal history, culture and perspectives.*

## COMMITMENTS

- Offer professional development opportunities for educators to deepen their understanding of Canada's colonial history and its effects on Aboriginal peoples
- Support educators as they work towards embedding Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum, including Residential Schools in Grades 5 and 10
- Create awareness for staff, students, parents and community members of the importance of meaningful acknowledgement of traditional and unceded territories of the Qayqayt First Nation and all Coast Salish Peoples.
- Ensure authenticity when selecting resources and experiential activities for students and staff
- Recognize the diversity of Indigenous communities across Canada to avoid perpetuating stereotypes. i.e., diversity in Indigenous world views, cultural practices, languages, and gender identity (two-spirited.)

## INDICATORS

### **Increase in educators using District Aboriginal resources**

Media Center Aboriginal Resource Collection and District History and Culture Presentations

### **Educator participation**

in reconciliation-focused professional development

### **K-12 classrooms resourced**

with First Peoples content

### **School libraries resourced**

with First Peoples content

**Evidence of Indigenous pedagogies** being introduced in classrooms

Evidence that schools are having **on-going reconciliation-focused dialogue**



*Above:  
Powwow  
dancing at  
Lord Kelvin  
elementary  
school during  
Multicultural  
Week 2018*

## Implementation

*Our vision is that Aboriginal learners leave our district with the confidence to reach their full potential and with pride in their Aboriginal heritage.*

The Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee is committed to ensuring that this third Enhancement Agreement is shared among students, parents/guardians, district staff and community partners. By reviewing our commitment statements for each goal area annually, we will have opportunities to assess and revise our commitments in order to better reach our five-year targets.

*Pictured: Courtyard  
mural at Connaught  
Heights elementary school  
celebrating Coast Salish  
peoples*

**“Achieving reconciliation is like climbing a mountain — we must proceed a step at a time. It will not always be easy...but we cannot allow ourselves to be daunted by the task, because it is just and also necessary. We owe it to each other to build a Canada based on our shared future, a future of healing and trust.”**

**— Justice Murray Sinclair  
Chair, Truth and Reconciliation Commission**



New  
Westminster  
Schools

*Where students love to learn*

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New Westminster Schools recognizes and acknowledges the Qayqayt First Nation, as well as all Coast Salish peoples, on whose traditional and unceded territories we live, we learn, we play and we do our work.

**New Westminster School District**

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