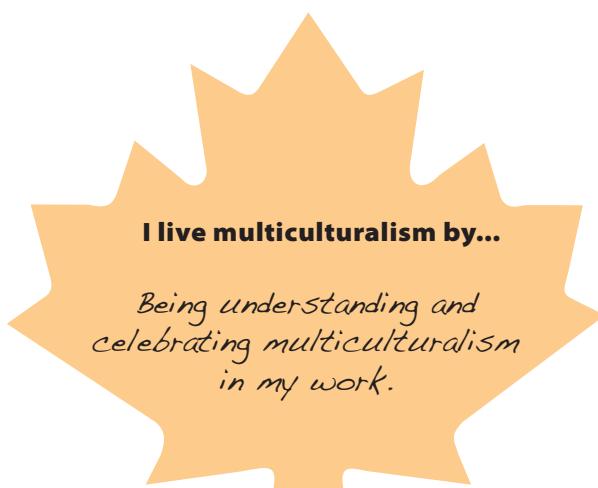


- » Prince George Youth Custody Services (PGYCS) consulted with community Elders, youth, staff and stakeholders in 2013 resulting in a number of initiatives to improve services for Aboriginal youth. A Wisdom Council with expertise in culturally competent service was established to review these enhancements moving forward. At the PGYCS, Elder Tea gatherings occur on a regular basis and are a venue for Elders to share experiences and knowledge with youth and staff. During June, Aboriginal culture is celebrated along with related teachings; National Day of Reconciliation was acknowledged on June 11, 2013; and National Aboriginal Day was celebrated on June 21, 2013. Throughout the year, cultural programs/activities are offered, including, but not limited to: Aboriginal sports (e.g. Lahal), drum making, drumming, traditional crafts and cooking, pipe ceremonies, healing circles, medicine wheel teachings and tipi and smoke hut use. In 2013/2014, a number of staff and residents were educated in smudge protocol and delivery.
- » Burnaby Youth Custody Services (BYCS) engaged youth in learning about the Powwow Drum. The youth performed together for other youth at the Aboriginal Day/Summer Solstice feast. They initiated their first Elder's luncheon, with youth involved in helping to cook and serve the meal. BYCS and Fraser Park Secondary (Burnaby School District) worked together to landscape the Aboriginal Learning Park and plant native plants. A grand opening is planned for June 2014. The sweat lodge was rebuilt and a new canvas was raised for the tipi. Multicultural Day was celebrated by bringing in guest speakers to talk about their cultures and share culturally diverse food with the youth in custody.

Ministry of Education

MANDATE

The Ministry of Education supports and guides the development of an education system that empowers all learners to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society with a prosperous and sustainable economy. We work together with school districts, communities, libraries and other partners to create a solid foundation for the upcoming generation of B.C. citizens.



EXECUTIVE COMMITMENT TO MULTICULTURALISM

The Government of British Columbia is committed to recognizing and honouring the diversity of all British Columbians. Diversity among people is one of the most prominent features of British Columbia's society — and our schools.

Over the years, British Columbia has made an increasing commitment to a school system with teaching and operational practices that honour diversity and promote human rights.

The Ministry of Education works to enhance respect for all cultures throughout the school system; ministry staff is united in their commitment to expand success within the school system for students of all cultures.

The school system strives to create and maintain conditions that foster success for all students, and that promote fair and equitable treatment for all. These conditions include:

- » Equitable access to and equitable participation in quality education for all students;
- » School cultures that value diversity and respond to the diverse social and cultural needs of the communities they serve;
- » School cultures that promote understanding of others and respect for all;
- » Learning and working environments that are safe and welcoming, and free from discrimination, harassment and violence;
- » Decision-making processes that give a voice to all members of the school community; and
- » Policies and practices that promote fair and equitable treatment.

EMBRACING MULTICULTURALISM IN THE WORKPLACE

Multiculturalism recognizes and values the ethno-cultural diversity of our society. It promotes acknowledging and valuing diverse ethnic heritages as well as appreciating and incorporating diverse approaches to learning and working environments.

Diversity in B.C. Schools: A Framework outlines the goals of British Columbia's school system with respect to multiculturalism:

- » Developing cross-cultural understanding to create sensitivity to and respect for difference.
- » Eliminating racism – addressing the effects of historic, organizational, systemic and attitudinal racism by:
 - Working to create an awareness of racism;
 - Educating people about what they can do about racism; and
 - Developing policies and strategies that take action against racism.

- » Eliminating systemic and attitudinal barriers that prevent full and equitable participation in community services, employment and education:
 - Systemic barriers such as policies and practices that intentionally or unintentionally exclude, limit and discriminate against individuals and groups; and
 - Attitudinal barriers that create an environment where people may act out their prejudices, assumptions and biases.
- » Developing culturally responsive services to meet the changing needs of the communities they are intended to serve, rather than expecting clients and consumers to adapt to prescribed services as they exist.

Through legislation and policy, the Ministry of Education supports cross-cultural awareness and respect both within the organization and across the school system. The diversity of our province is reflected in our education system. The system also models and promotes flexibility to respond to diverse cultural needs and the courage to speak out against discrimination.

HIGHLIGHTS OF INITIATIVES

ONGOING EXTERNAL INITIATIVES

The ministry continues to work with education partners, including the First Nations Education Steering Committee, to support bullying prevention and continue to implement our 10-point strategy, ERASE, which will help ensure every child feels safe, accepted and respected, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, or sexual orientation. For further details visit: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/addressing_students_needs.htm

An ERASE Bullying website was launched in November 2012 with resources, tools and tips for parents (www.erasebullying.ca). The website continues to receive steady traffic, with over 200,000 views since January 2014. A corresponding Twitter feed (@ERASEbullyingBC) was created, and as of June 2014, the feed had over 2,500 followers.

As part of the ERASE Bullying website, government launched the anonymous reporting tool for students (www.reportbullyingbc.ca). The tool provides a safe place to report bullying or other safety issues using technology that students are using every day. The reporting tool provides another option to students to reach out and seek help. The reporting tool is currently available in English and French to students in public and independent schools.

We continue to provide a variety of learning options for students and to strengthen the presence of Aboriginal culture and history in classrooms. The ministry supports partnerships between school districts and communities to develop language curriculum documents for First Nations language study within the public school system. Fifteen B.C. First Nations language curriculum documents have been approved for addition to the B.C. K-12 curriculum.

There are currently 53 school districts with five-year Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements in place that promote cooperation among Aboriginal communities, school districts, and the ministry to define goals, indicators, and outcomes to foster success among Aboriginal students.

School Districts that have Enhancement Agreements in place have improved exam results and attendance by Aboriginal students. They have also increased Aboriginal content in classrooms for all students and raised cultural awareness of school district staff. These school districts also report closer working relationships with their Aboriginal communities and a shared focus on student success.

ONGOING INTERNAL INITIATIVES

As part of its ongoing commitment to raise cross-cultural awareness and respect within the organization, the ministry is striving to:

- » Attract, develop and retain a workforce that reflects British Columbia's diversity;

- » Embed the principles of diversity in the practices, policies and services of the ministry; and
- » Remove barriers in our interactions with citizens and within the public service.

NEW EXTERNAL INITIATIVES

In February 2014, the Premier co-hosted an ERASE Student Forum, a "by youth, for youth" event. The Forum included a panel of students with diverse backgrounds who discussed bullying prevention with the Premier, Minister of Education and Travis Price (founder of Pink Shirt Day).

As part of the ERASE strategy, 19 students from public, independent and First Nations schools were selected to establish an ERASE Student Advisory Council. The membership of the Advisory Council represents various ages, ethnicities and strengths. The Advisory Council is tasked with developing provincial social media guidelines and identifying student safety concerns to the Minister of Education and Premier.

February 26, 2014 was proclaimed as "Bullying Awareness Day", which was celebrated on the steps of the legislature by students who have passion for the arts – with a flash mob and slam poetry.

NEW INTERNAL INITIATIVES

On February 26, 2014 the ministry of Education celebrated Anti-Bullying Day aka "Pink Shirt Day". Staff was encouraged to wear pink on the day.

The ministry continues to strive to create a workforce that is diverse with respect to employees' life experience, education, background and culture — to better reflect the diversity of students throughout the school system, their differing views and experiences, and to better respond to their needs.

While hiring has been limited this year due to the hiring restrictions, many of our new hires in the Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB) come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, adding to an already diverse workplace.

In fact, the TRB estimates that amongst their 45 employees there are at least seven languages spoken (e.g., Cantonese, Mandarin, Serbian, Persian, Spanish, etc.), which helps in the ministry's efforts to communicate and connect with our diverse student, parent and teacher clientele.

The ministry also continues to support Government's Aboriginal Youth Internship Program, and we welcomed two new interns for the 2013/14 fiscal year. Part of their role was to engage with students across B.C. around education transformation. Their diverse backgrounds also helped the ministry to better understand the Aboriginal learner perspective and how to adapt it into the work we are doing. Our interns also shared important insights into cultural sensitivities and barriers, protocol for engaging with the First Nations community, and other valuable information.

While we continue to look for ways to bring diversity into our ministry, some of our results and outcomes this year include:

- » Three co-op students under the age of 30 were recruited in 2013, to support student exam administration and marking.
- » Blog posts on our Intranet site from our Aboriginal Youth Intern and our Superintendent of Aboriginal Achievement on various First Nations perspectives (i.e., Truth and Reconciliation week, First Nations Empowerment, etc.).
- » Our 2nd annual Ed-U Day held in June 2013 provided learning sessions that supported diversity, including:
 - Aboriginal Education;
 - Bullying and Cyberbullying: What Parents Need to Know; and
 - Student panel representative of diverse students providing their perspectives on the education system, to inform the work of the ministry.

- » Ongoing collaboration and consultation with work units across the ministry on Leading Workplace Strategies (LWS) initiatives to create work environments reflecting the unique needs of individuals and teams.
- » Three sessions of Building Bridges through Understanding the Village Workshop were offered to Ministry staff — a unique opportunity that explores the effects of residential schools and Canada's policy of assimilation. The workshop is delivered from a non-blame and non-shame perspective which invites participants to become a part of the healing.