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Aboriginal Voices: Creating Our Future – Five Years After



History

December 2004 - Preliminary meetings were held throughout Burnaby to orient the staff and parents of Aboriginal children to the Enhancement Agreement process.

January 2005 - The Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement Advisory Committee was formed and has met monthly since then (with the exception of years when there has been job action).

April 7, 2005 - Guidelines for decision-making were developed and a Talking Circle format was used when everyone's contribution and view was needed.

2005 – 2006 - Performance and achievement data of Aboriginal students such as Foundation Skills Assessment results, transition rates, provincial exam results, and graduation rates were reviewed with the aim of developing goals.

January to May of 2006 - Parent meetings were held in the 8 secondary schools in Burnaby. Parents from the secondary and the elementary feeder schools were invited to participate. The purpose of these meetings was to generate interest and enthusiasm for a community forum to be held in the fall of 2006.

September 21, 2006 - The Aboriginal education forum, entitled *Aboriginal Voices: Creating Our Future* was held at the Shadbolt Centre. Participants responded to 3 main questions:

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- What does success look like for our children?
- What do we need to do to achieve the success we want?
- How will we know that the students are successful?

October 2006 - Themes were generated and discussed until three main goals were drafted.

January – June 2007 - These goals were presented at parent meetings for feedback.

September 2007 – June 2008 – Performance Indicators and commitments were developed for each of the three goals:

- Burnaby Aboriginal students will develop a strong sense of belonging and confidence through pride in their cultural heritage and participation in their community.
- Aboriginal students will develop a healthy lifestyle based on the traditional Aboriginal teachings (Mental, Physical, Emotional, Spiritual).
- Aboriginal students will graduate from secondary schools prepared to further their education, realize their career goals and to live out their dreams.

January – April 2008 – The background, history guiding principles, purpose sections were developed. The history section involved a lot of debate. A fourth goal was added to highlight the importance of history:

- All Aboriginal students will increase their knowledge and understanding of the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada

June 2008 – *Aboriginal Voices Creating Our Future* was signed by representatives from:

- Ministry of Education
- Parents
- Students
- Burnaby Board of Education
- Burnaby Teacher's Association
- Superintendent of Schools
- North Fraser Metis Association
- Burnaby Association of School Administrators

September 2008 – June 2009 – Aboriginal Education Research Organization (AERO) was established to learn more about research. Dr. Jo-Ann Archibald, UBC, Dr. Dolores van der Way, SFU provided guidance.

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September – December 2009 – Developed a survey for Aboriginal students. Teachers incorporating Aboriginal content collected data in primary classroom, intermediate classroom, and secondary ESL.

January – June 2010 – 91 students at 6 secondary schools completed survey

September 2010 – June 2011 – Survey was collated, graphs developed, booklet drafted.

September 2011 – Aboriginal Voices: Creating our Voices: Burnaby Aboriginal Students' Perspectives, a booklet that graphs the perspectives of Aboriginal students in Burnaby schools was published.

March 2011 – Survey for principals regarding barriers for success for Aboriginal students in elementary schools.

2011 – 2012 – No meetings held (due to labour dispute) until May and June 2012.

June 2012 – Community Forum held to discuss criteria for recognizing and honouring Aboriginal students.

2012 – 2013 – Reviewed and presented progress of Enhancement Agreement in each of the 8 families of schools. Developed and refined criteria for recognizing and honouring Aboriginal Students. Aligned educational strategies and structures based on surveys with students and principals.

Aboriginal Voices Creating Our Future - 2012- 2013

Status of the EA and Aboriginal Education Services

Aboriginal Voices: Creating our future is the title of our Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement, completed and signed in 2008. The policy focuses on the following goals:

- Burnaby Aboriginal students will develop a strong sense of belonging and confidence through pride in their cultural heritage and participation in their community.
- All students in Burnaby Schools will increase their knowledge and understanding of the history of Aboriginal peoples of Canada.
- Aboriginal students will develop a healthy lifestyle based on the traditional Aboriginal teachings (Mental, Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual).

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- Aboriginal students will graduate from secondary schools prepared to further their education, realize their career goals and to live out their dreams.

The Aboriginal Education Team is comprised of seven teachers, four Youth and Family Workers and approximately 41 Aboriginal Education contacts distributed across the elementary schools in the district. The team is led by a District Vice-Principal and a Director of Instruction. Implementing the Enhancement Agreement policy has been a challenge. The context for these challenges includes:

- No local Aboriginal community such as a First Nation band, and therefore no specific language and culture to draw upon for elders and knowledge models;
- No urban Aboriginal organization such as a Friendship Centre;
- Minimal social service infrastructure to address socio-economic and housing needs;

Aboriginal Students Voices

In the interview that follows, the student, Shama¹, shares perspectives that echo those shared by many of the parents of Aboriginal students and the students themselves, who regularly attended Enhancement Agreement meetings. These perspectives reflect the importance that was placed on how education is experienced.

Lyn: So, your dad's experiences... there was like policies that were written and then put into place that shaped his experience with education (Indian residential school policies). And then there were also policies that were written and put into place that were about you being an Aboriginal student. What do you think those policies said or...?

Shama: Not in writing but I think that Aboriginal students are often under-estimated and... because the skills that we learn aren't always the same skills that other people are learning I guess. For example, ...even like the languages and stuff that some of us can speak and the way that we present art. And the way that we can just... I don't know, there's something about the way that Aboriginal students learn that, I think sometimes its different because the way that our parents have learned. And so I guess, with that, those policies don't look at that side of it though. They look at a specifically statistical side where, you know, this many students don't

¹ Shama is a pseudonym for one of the Aboriginal college students interviewed by Lyn Daniels, Vice-Principal, Aboriginal Education, as a requirement for completion of a Doctor of Education degree.

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graduate every year. Oh this many of them are Aboriginal. I think that the outcome is looked at but I don't think that the reason behind the outcome is always looked at properly.

Lyn: So what do you think should happen?

Shama: I think that it needs to be more a part of the history classes. And I also think that specifically western (Canadian) history should be more brought up as a focus in history classes in school. (Interview transcript, July 2011)

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection focused on the students' perspectives and the use of surveys. In particular, attention was focused on data collected in 2009 in response to the questions:

What kind of support do you prefer? Approximately 40/91 (44%) students preferred in class support, and only 16/91 (17%) preferred to be pulled out. (See page 37 in *Aboriginal Voices Creating Our Future: Burnaby Aboriginal Students' Perspectives*)

How comfortable are you when topics of Aboriginal peoples, culture and history are discussed? Less than 10/91 (10%) said they were not at all comfortable or not very much, 47/91 (52%) said they were a little or a lot comfortable. (See page 33 in *Aboriginal Voices Creating Our Future: Burnaby Aboriginal Students' Perspectives*)

A survey of elementary principals in March 2012 regarding barriers to success for Aboriginal students indicated a need for increased consultations and specialized support for individual and small groups of students in particular with literacy.

Given that many of our strategies and supports removed students from their classrooms we began to explore strategies and structures that would support students in classroom and whole school contexts.

Strategies and structures in Elementary Schools 2012 - 2013:

In addition to the strategies and supports that have been in place since the before the Enhancement Agreement was signed in 2008, such as the Aboriginal Circle Program and the Honouring Our Youth end of the year ceremony, the following strategies and structures were implemented in 2012-13:

- Aboriginal Storyteller and Author presentations to support English Language development in 6 elementary schools where Aboriginal students are supported in their oral language development,

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- Personalized and small group support for struggling readers in 8 elementary schools,
- Aboriginal Contacts in elementary schools where there Aboriginal students are enrolled attended 3 sessions (October, January, April) to contribute to the criteria for honouring Aboriginal students,
- Development and implementation of rubrics based on the goals of the Enhancement Agreement. Two criteria were implemented this year, all four will be implemented in 2013- 2014.

Strategies and Structure in Secondary schools 2012 - 2013:

- Aboriginal Circle programs during and after school included Independent Directed Studies that expand upon BCFNS 12, English First Peoples, Leadership and/or other learning outcomes for credits
- Personalized and after school support
- Events and activities that support transitions to post secondary including career exploration days with representatives from 10 post secondary institutions
- A field trip to Simon Fraser University attended by 75 Aboriginal students in grades 8-12
- Events and activities that support transitions from elementary to secondary school where grade 7 students visit the secondary schools on 3 occasions
- The District Student Advisory Committee has welcomed and made room for including Aboriginal students at their annual retreat and on the committee for the second year.

Major focus of EA in 2012 - 2013

The work of the Aboriginal Education Team and the Enhancement Agreement Advisory Committee focused on developing criteria for Honouring Aboriginal Students. The three rubrics that follow were developed for Kindergarten to grade 3, for grades 4 – 7 and for grades 8 – 12. These rubrics were based on the goals from Aboriginal Voices: Creating Our Future.

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Guidelines for Recognizing Aboriginal Students K – 3

EA Goals	Grade Levels: K-3	Emerging	Meeting	Exceeding	*Teacher Comments
<i>Burnaby Aboriginal students will develop a strong sense of belonging and confidence through pride in their cultural heritage and participation in their community</i>	Cultural Identity and engagement in the school and community	Joins the Talking Circle Handles Eagle Feather respectfully Can say their name in Talking Circle Is learning to sit through the Talking Circle and a lesson Is learning to complete projects, with support Is learning self-control Is becoming aware of group expectations and interactions	Introduces self in the Talking Circle Passes feather gently and respectfully Can say the nation they belong to Is engaged in the Talking Circle and the lesson Is able to complete projects, with minimal support Maintains self-control, with reminders Follows group expectations and interactions	Can explain the protocol of the Talking Circle Knows the importance of the eagle and the eagle feather Knows and shares the Nation/Aboriginal group they belong to Is actively engaged in the Talking Circle and the lesson Is able to complete projects, on their own, and with care Has a positive attitude Patient Maintains self-control Open to presenting to their peers Models, and can explain, group expectations and interactions	
<i>All students will increase their knowledge and understanding of the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada</i>	Knowledge of Aboriginal peoples, culture and history	Is becoming aware that they have Aboriginal ancestry	Understands that they have Aboriginal Ancestry Understands that there is more than one Aboriginal group	Open to knowing more about Aboriginal peoples, cultures and history by asking questions Knows that they have Aboriginal Ancestry and are open to learning more about their culture Is aware that there are three Aboriginal groups (Metis, Inuit, and First Nation)	
<i>Aboriginal students will graduate from secondary</i>	Setting goals based on the Circle of Courage model for	Is learning to and beginning to understand	Sets, works toward, and achieves, a goal with	Independently sets, works toward, and achieves goals	

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<i>schools prepared to further their education, realize their career goals and to live out their dreams</i>	Belonging, Mastery, Independence, Generosity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic • Social/Emotional • Other 	how to set, work toward, and achieve a goal with support	minimal support		
<i>Aboriginal students will develop a healthy lifestyle based on the traditional Aboriginal teachings (Mental, Physical, Emotional, Spiritual)</i>	Health and well-being		Is becoming aware of the importance of the four aspects of self	Demonstrates understanding by connecting the four aspects of self	

*Please note where the skills and knowledge has been transferred into the classroom context

Guidelines for Recognizing Aboriginal Students 4 - 7

EA Goals	Grade Levels 4-7	Emerging	Meeting	Exceeding	*Teacher Comments
<i>Burnaby Aboriginal students will develop a strong sense of belonging and confidence through pride in their cultural heritage and participation in their community</i>	Cultural Identity and engagement in the school and community	<p>Introduces self in the Talking Circle</p> <p>Knows and when prompted shares the nation/Aboriginal group they belong to</p> <p>Beginning to share their knowledge of culture and history with their peers, informally</p> <p>Beginning to observe the protocol of the Talking Circle and protocols at other gatherings</p> <p>Usually has a positive</p>	<p>Introduces self in the Talking Circle, respectfully</p> <p>Knows and shares independently the Nation/Aboriginal group they belong to</p> <p>Shares their knowledge of culture and history with their peers, informally and to their class</p> <p>Observes the protocol of the Talking Circle and the protocol at other gatherings</p> <p>Wears clothing and/or</p>	<p>Introduces self in the Talking Circle, confidently and respectfully</p> <p>Knows and shows initiative with acknowledging the Nation/Aboriginal group they belong to</p> <p>Shares their knowledge of Aboriginal culture with their peers, informally and formally</p> <p>Shares their Aboriginal traditions, including language, stories, songs</p> <p>Explains the protocol and leads the Talking Circle</p> <p>Observes protocol at other gatherings</p>	

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		<p>attitude</p> <p>Takes turns</p> <p>Maintains self-control with reminders</p>	<p>other symbols of Aboriginal culture</p> <p>Listens to and follows the instructions</p> <p>Respects the materials and the members of Circle</p> <p>Demonstrates how planned activities represents cultural teachings</p> <p>Is a role model</p>	<p>Wears regalia for special events</p> <p>Listens to and supports the group in following instructions</p> <p>Respects the materials and the members of the Circle</p> <p>Extends their understanding of cultural teachings Initiates and assists other students in the group</p> <p>Is a role model and leader</p>	
<p><i>All Aboriginal students will increase their knowledge and understanding of the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada</i></p>	<p>Knowledge of Aboriginal peoples, culture and history</p>	<p>Open to knowing more about Aboriginal peoples, cultures and history</p> <p>Is aware that there are three Aboriginal groups (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)</p>	<p>Knows that Burnaby is on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish</p> <p>Understands that planned activities represent cultural teachings</p> <p>Can identify the three Aboriginal groups (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)</p>	<p>Acknowledges the traditional territory at special events</p> <p>Has awareness of the cultures , traditions and history of Aboriginal peoples, in particular those of the coastal First Nations</p> <p>Uses the names of the three Aboriginal groups (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) appropriately and accurately</p>	
<p><i>Aboriginal students will graduate from secondary schools prepared to further their education, realize their career goals and to live out their dreams</i></p>	<p>Setting goals based on the Circle of Courage model of Belonging, Mastery, Independence, Generosity: -Academic, Social/Emotional Other</p>	<p>Sets, works toward, and achieves, a goal with support</p>	<p>Sets, works toward and achieves a goal with minimal support</p>	<p>Independently sets, works toward and achieves goals</p>	

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<i>Aboriginal students will develop a healthy lifestyle based on the traditional Aboriginal teachings (Mental, Physical, Emotional, Spiritual)</i>	Health and well-being	Can recognize a medicine wheel symbol (mental, physical, emotional and spiritual)	Is becoming aware of the four aspects of self (mental, physical, emotional and spiritual)	Demonstrates understanding of four aspects of self by explaining how health in one area affects other areas	
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*Please note where the skills and knowledge has been transferred into the classroom context

Guidelines Recognizing Aboriginal Students 8-12

EA goals	Grades 8 – 12 Growth in	Learning	Sharing	Leading	Comments
<i>Burnaby Aboriginal students will develop a strong sense of belonging and confidence through pride in their cultural heritage and participation in their community</i>	Cultural identity and engagement in the school and community	<p>Introduces self in the Circle/cultural program respectfully</p> <p>Shares their general knowledge of Aboriginal culture.</p> <p>Observes protocol of the Circle/cultural program and the protocol at other gatherings</p> <p>Attends some of the Aboriginal Circle Program activities</p> <p>Improvement in: - positive self control - being considerate - attendance - academics</p>	<p>Introduces self in the Circle/cultural program respectfully and confidently</p> <p>Shares their knowledge of Aboriginal culture with peers.</p> <p>Participates in cultural activities</p> <p>Explains the protocol of the Circle/cultural program</p> <p>Knows and acknowledges the nation/Aboriginal group they belong to.</p> <p>Usually attends the Aboriginal Circle program regularly</p> <p>Maintains good attendance in all classes</p> <p>Understands the cultural teachings that learning activities represent</p> <p>Independently seeks support when needed</p> <p>Respects learning materials and the members of the Circle</p>	<p>Introduces self, shares traditions including language, stories, and songs in the Circle/cultural program</p> <p>Shares in depth knowledge of culture with their peers formally</p> <p>Wears regalia at special events</p> <p>Understands and follows protocol at Indigenous gatherings</p> <p>Explains and leads the Circle/cultural program</p> <p>Listens to and supports the group in following instructions</p> <p>Maintains excellent attendance at Aboriginal Circle program and school</p> <p>Takes a leadership role in the Aboriginal Circle Program</p> <p>Participates in Aboriginal Leadership program</p> <p>Contributes to the school and broader community</p>	

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		Receptive to support			
		Is learning to respect learning materials and the members of the Circle			
<i>All Aboriginal students will increase their knowledge and understanding of the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada</i>	Knowledge of Aboriginal peoples, culture and history	Is open to knowing more about Aboriginal peoples, culture and history Is aware there are three Aboriginal groups (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)	Knows that Burnaby is on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish Can identify the three Aboriginal groups (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) Has awareness of traditional protocols of the Aboriginal peoples, in particular NWC. Enrols in BCFNS 12 and/or IDS Shows interest in research projects about Aboriginal peoples. Has basic knowledge of colonization and inter-generational effects of residential schools	Acknowledges traditional territory at special events Can explain protocols of the Aboriginal peoples, in particular NWC. Enrols in BCFNS 12 and/or IDS (including outside school hours) Initiates projects about Aboriginal peoples, culture and history Presents knowledge of history of colonization and inter-generational effects of Indian residential schools	
<i>Aboriginal students will graduate from secondary schools prepared to further their education, realize their career goals and to live out their dreams</i>	Setting goals based on the Circle of Courage model for belonging, mastery, independence and generosity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic • Social/Emotional • Other 	Sets, works toward, and achieves, a goal with support	Sets, works toward and achieves a goal with minimal support	Independently sets, works toward and achieves goals	
<i>Aboriginal students will develop a healthy lifestyle based on the traditional Aboriginal teachings (Mental, Physical, Emotional, Spiritual)</i>	Health and well-being	Demonstrates understanding of four aspects of self by explaining how health in one area affects other areas Is open to learning about a healthy lifestyle based on traditional teachings	Knows about and shares the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol Promotes a healthy lifestyle with peers	Is drug and alcohol free Understands the difference between traditional uses of tobacco and abuse of tobacco	

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Impact of Enhancement Agreement on Aboriginal students

Elementary Schools according to zones:

Zone	Number of Elementary schools with Aboriginal students	Total number of Aboriginal students	Not yet meeting or emerging	Meeting/Exceeding
Brentwood North	11/11	121	90 (74%)	31 (26%)
Cariboo Lougheed	7/8	94	72 (77%)	22 (23%)
Central West	7/7	62	36 (58%)	26 (42%)
Kingsway South	14/14 (BCSD)	135	89 (66%)	46 (34%)

Secondary Schools according to zones

Zone	Number of secondary schools with Aboriginal students	Total number of Aboriginal students	Not yet meeting or emerging	Meeting/Exceeding (including grads)
Brentwood North	2/2	86	73 (83%)	13 (17%)
Cariboo Lougheed	2/2	65	49 (75%)	16 (25%)
Central West	2/2	52	26 (50%)	26 (50%)
Kingsway South	4/4 (BCSD, Prov Oral Hard of Hearing)	92	68 (74%)	24 (26%)

Analysis

Aboriginal students were assessed in only 2 of the 4 goal areas for the 2012-2013 school year (setting academic and career goals and cultural identity). The Aboriginal Education team will be focused on increasing opportunities for Aboriginal students to meet or exceed expectations in all four goal areas for the 2013- 2014 school year. The four areas include pride in cultural identity, knowledge of history, developing health and well being, and setting social emotional, academic and/or career goals.

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Trends

Six year completion and Grade 12 Graduation rates

Year	Six year completion Rate %	Eligible Grade 12 Graduation Rate				First time Grade 12			
		Total Gr 12	#	%	Honours %	Total Gr 12	#	%	Honours %
2006/07	45.6	32	26	81	19	52	26	50	12
2007/08	32.3	35	30	86	11	46	29	63	9
2008/09	38.8	37	32	86	5	54	28	52	4
2009/10	30.1	40	37	93	5	68	38	56	4
2010/11	49	37	34	92	16	55	32	58	9
2011/12	54.4	51	45	88	22	92	49	53	12

Analysis

There is an increase in the graduation rate however, with the small number of students rates can change significantly when even 1 or 2 students leave or arrive.

Transitions

The secondary Aboriginal education team is beginning to collect data that is focused on monitoring Aboriginal student transitions from year to year. Annual plans are developed based on this data.

Success

Youth Aboriginal team members have joined the District Student Advisory Committee for the last two years in the retreat and on the district council.

Status of targeted funding

The Burnaby Board of Education allocates close to double the amount of funds that are targeted for Aboriginal education.