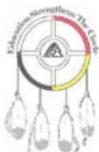
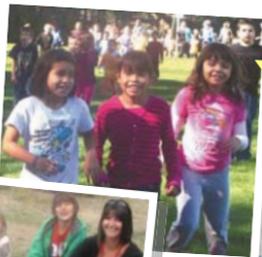


# Building Success for Aboriginal Learners



Meeting  
Expectations

Aboriginal Education Enhancement  
Agreement:

2011-16

"We have taken so much from your culture, I wish you had taken something from ours...For there were some beautiful and good things within it..."

- Chief Dan George

"Our task is to educate our student's whole being so they can face the future. We may not see the future, but they will and our job is to help them make something of it."

- Sir Ken Robinson

**What do you think of Our Aboriginal  
Education Enhancement Agreement?**  
Tell us your thoughts at...

Online: [www.sd68.bc.ca](http://www.sd68.bc.ca)  
By phone: 250 741-5318  
By fax: 250 741-5307  
By mail or in person:  
395 Wakesiah, Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 3K6



SD68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith – Success for All





"The grandfathers and the grandmothers are in the children: teach them well."

- Ojibway



## Building Success for Aboriginal Learners: Dedication

To all learners young and old, may you all benefit from this Enhancement Agreement. Thank you to all those teachers, administrators, and support staff who work hard to "Build Success for Aboriginal Learners."

To those who led the way...

Dr. Ellen White  
Barbara Bartrop  
Terry Sampson

In Memory...

Barb White  
Chief Viola Wyse  
Leonard Edwards  
Chief Peter Seymour



SD68 Nainaimo-Ladysmith – Success for All

Exceeding  
Expectations



# Building Success for Aboriginal Learners: Table of Contents



Every student served by School District 68 has great potential: potential that can be enhanced by Aboriginal peoples' ideas connected to effective teaching and healthy human development. Early childhood education, inquiry-based teaching, implementation of First Peoples Curricula, Aboriginal Education professional learning, leadership development, and the creation of a District Elders Council are some of the agreement strategies that reflect this understanding. Such strategies also illustrate that strengthening trust between the District and the Aboriginal nations represented in our schools and communities is a system priority.

- School District 68  
Superintendent Dave  
Hutchinson

## Background to the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

- Who are our Aboriginal learners and where do they come from? 1
- What is an Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement? 2
- What are the intentions of an Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement? 2

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- We looked at things we would change 4
- We will know that Aboriginal students are more successful when... 4

## Mission and Vision

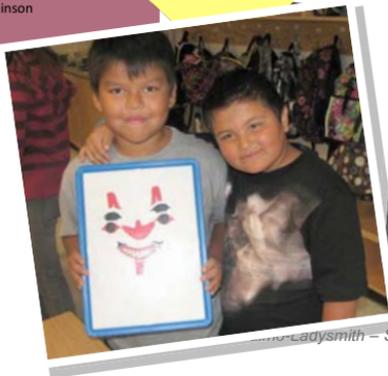
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Big  
Expectations



# Building Success for Aboriginal Learners: Background to Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement



Who are our Aboriginal learners and where do they come from?

**Recognition of Snuneymuxw, Stz'uminus and Snaw-Naw-As Traditional Territories**

Since time immemorial, First Nations people have inhabited the lands that make up British Columbia. Although First Nations are many and diverse, they have a common connection, an enduring relationship with the land, a bond so strong that it defines who they are. Acknowledging traditional territory of our land-based communities acknowledges this bond and the importance of the Hul'qumi'num culture and language as a living benefit to all learners across our district.

This Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement recognizes that School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) resides within traditional territories of the:

- Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Stz'uminus First Nation
- Snaw-Naw-As First Nation

In addition, this Enhancement Agreement acknowledges and honours the vital role in representing the interests of the non-land-based communities, represented by:

- Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre
- Mid Island Métis Nation

School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) and the aforementioned communities acknowledge the collective responsibility for the success of all Aboriginal learners in our district. In respect and honour of all Aboriginal peoples, we intend, with their participation and wisdom, to develop appropriate and meaningful educational programs for the benefit of all Aboriginal learners: First Nation, Métis and Inuit.

Aboriginal Students in SD68 2011-12	# of Students
Inuit	15
Métis	378
Non-Status	522
Status - Off Reserve	811
Status - On Reserve	367
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2093</b>

Aboriginal students make up 15 percent of the student population in SD68. While the overall number of students in the district is declining, the percentage of Aboriginal students is increasing.

Humankind has not woven the web of life, we are but one thread in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together, all things connect. We are part of the earth, and it is part of you.  
- Chief Seattle, 1854  
(Translation)



SD68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith

## What is an Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement?

An Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) is a working agreement between a school district; all local First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities; and the Ministry of Education designed to enhance the educational achievement of Aboriginal learners. The AEEA establishes a collaborative partnership between Aboriginal communities and school districts that involves shared decision-making and specific goal setting to meet the educational needs of Aboriginal learners.

An AEEA highlights the importance of academic performance and more importantly, stresses the integral nature of Aboriginal traditional culture and languages to Aboriginal student development and success. Aboriginal student success is identified through community engagement and is reflected in the AEEA goals. It is holistic, encompassing the academic or mental well-being as well as the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of each Aboriginal learner.

Fundamental to an AEEA is the requirement that school districts provide comprehensive programs on the culture of local First Nations on whose traditional territories the districts reside. However, all Aboriginal students (First Nations, Métis and

Inuit) in our school district are included in the AEEA. In addition, the agreements reach beyond Aboriginal students to increase the knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture, language and history among all learners and all adults.

## What are the intentions of an Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement?

To implement strategies to support full effort by district staff, schools and Aboriginal communities:

- To improve the academic achievement of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.
- To enhance all students' and all adults' understanding of Aboriginal history and culture including the contemporary context.
- To enhance Aboriginal learners' sense of belonging within schools and their belief that they can be successful in the public education system while at the same time enhancing the belief of the system that Aboriginal students can be more successful.
- To enhance the participation of Aboriginal communities, parents and Elders as equal partners in the attainment of the Enhancement Agreement goals.



**"Building success for Aboriginal students in School District 68 is everyone's job!"**

- Chris Southwick, Assistant Superintendent  
School District 68



SD68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith – Success for All

# Building Success for Aboriginal Learners: On the Road to Our Third Enhancement Agreement 2011-16



The first two enhancement agreements in SD68 resulted in some improvements to success and graduation rates for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners; particularly first time graduation rates which were at 68 percent in 2010-11 up from 48 percent the year before. The goals in these early agreements focused not only on academic improvements but on building social and cultural strengths as well. The 2001-06 and 2006-11 Agreements allowed for:

- The development of a strong Aboriginal Education Department with at least one Aboriginal education assistant in every elementary school and an Aboriginal education teacher, tutor and at least one education assistant in each of our secondary schools.
- Our staff being supported by Aboriginal Professional Learning gatherings that enhance their ability to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.

- Our Hul'q'umi'num language program to expand throughout the district and we now employ two full-time language teachers.
- The development of policies and procedures for participation and contribution to district governance structures.
- Aboriginal Education gaining a respected profile at the provincial and national levels as a result of working together and collaborating with others.

Although improvements have been made we still have some distance to go in demonstrating that Aboriginal student success matters to us all.

“Our two previous Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements have allowed us the opportunity to build greater success for Aboriginal students. Our third Enhancement Agreement will reaffirm our belief that Aboriginal students can be successful, and our commitment to take action on that belief. As a district, we continue to be committed to building success for Aboriginal students and to building positive relationships with Aboriginal communities.”

- Michael J. Munro, SD68 Retired Superintendent



SD68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith – Success for All

Expectations

What we have learned along the way  
 In developing the third Enhancement Agreement we met and identified what the communities believe is working well:

- Aboriginal Education District Leadership Team
- Celebrations, cultural events, demonstrations and presentations
- Efforts to welcome *more* families to schools and school functions
- Growing understanding of Aboriginal history that puts life experience into a contemporary context
- Role models of success within the system
- Communication between Aboriginal Education and Aboriginal Communities
- More graduates with Dogwood Certificates
- More first time graduates
- Partnerships and collaboration with Vancouver Island University

We looked at things that we would change

- Every staff member of SD68 would have at least a basic knowledge of the history of the local First Nations and the diversity of Nations that make up the population of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith district.

- Forums that engage all students in discussion about racism, colonization etc.
- Greater awareness regarding Aboriginal history and its present day effects.
- More Aboriginal learners in rigorous reading and math courses at grade level.
- More support systems for Aboriginal learners in the early grades.

We will know that Aboriginal students are more successful when...

- Aboriginal learners have more information, abilities and confidence in choosing their own education and career path.
- More Aboriginal learners graduate with a desire to keep learning that honors both Aboriginal knowledge and Western knowledge.
- Transitions between secondary and post-secondary become smoother and fewer learners are lost in the gap.
- More people are aware of the intentions/purposes of the Enhancement Agreement and actively seek ways to meet the goals.



SD68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith – Success for All



# Building Success for Aboriginal Learners:

## Mission and Vision

Our vision of success for Aboriginal learners

**Mission Statement:** Building Success for Aboriginal Learners.

**Vision of Success for Aboriginal Learners:**

Aboriginal students take pride in their heritage and belong to supportive communities. Aboriginal students are confident in their ability and their responsibility to reach personal goals.

### Inquiry-based approach

*We believe that an inquiry-based approach encourages and supports all educators, and Aboriginal communities in asking questions and seeking answers that will build success for Aboriginal learners. This approach allows participants to ask questions that make sense in their individual contexts.*

Inquiry-based learning is a cyclical process that means that learners:

- formulate questions
- investigate widely
- build new understandings, meanings and knowledge
- develop a solution
- share their knowledge and actions with others
- formulate new questions

Inquiry is quite simply, asking questions. Inquiry-minded people ask questions that relate to their specific context. They observe, listen, appreciate and reflect. They look for bright spots while also paying attention to the challenges that they face. They are open to new interpretations and seek out new ways to look at the world. Inquiry-minded people find new ways of doing things, while maintaining what works. Reflection brings deeper understanding, new learning and often new questions.

"Inquiry is the dynamic process of being open to wonder and puzzlement and coming to know and understand the world."

- Galileo  
Educational  
Network, 2004

This cycle of asking, learning and reflecting mirrors Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. Indigenous knowledge systems honour the circle or the cycle of life. A cycle infers the renewing patterns that allows for reflection and transformation.

Who can support and implement the inquiries and goals in the Enhancement Agreement?

Aboriginal Education and the Aboriginal communities are committed to building success for Aboriginal learners but experience has taught us that we cannot do it alone. We need the participation of *everyone*: School District senior management and trustees, schools, Ministry of Education, helping agencies, Aboriginal communities and of course the students and their families.

We believe that each of us has a role to play in implementing strategies and measures that respond to the goals/inquiries in the Enhancement Agreement. In the spirit of this Enhancement Agreement we believe that Aboriginal learner success matters to us all. Since there is no one magic answer to the question of how we build greater levels of success for our Aboriginal learners, we are committed to using an inquiry-based approach in our Enhancement Agreement. It will give everyone an opportunity to ask questions and participate in a way that is meaningful to them in their own context.

Through school plans, district achievement contracts, building relationships with Aboriginal learners and their families, coaching models, inquiry-based projects, assessment for learning practices, tracking student results and building awareness and knowledge *everyone* can contribute and celebrate as we move forward.

## Exceeding Expectations



## Goals and Inquiries



### Our goals and inquiries

We believe that our first inquiry, "SPIRIT" is essential if we are to make lasting, sustainable, positive changes for Aboriginal learners.

We believe that this collaborative systemic approach will be the *Spirit* that guides our work from wherever we come to it.

Like the pillars in a Coast Salish Longhouse, the Spirit of our Enhancement Agreement permeates and supports throughout the MIND, BODY and EMOTION goals and inquiries that follow. Without the SPIRIT of collaboration and full effort by everyone our mission to "Build Success for Aboriginal Learners" may not be realized. (See *Appendix C*)

"According to the legends from our forefathers ... People dropped down from heaven ...and each one of these people had a specific trade, like a carver, a hunter, a fisherman ... and each one benefited one another to sustain themselves. They traded amongst each other with their abilities."

- Gilbert Joe, Shishah, 1992



SD68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith – Success for All

Shared awareness and understanding builds positive relationships that will affect all students' success in SD68. This is why we as First Nations communities support the Enhancement Agreement.

- Charlotte Elliott,  
Education Director  
Stz'uminus First Nation



**Spirit:** How do we ensure Aboriginal learners are successful through the full effort of SD68 and Aboriginal communities in supporting the Enhancement Agreement?

**How will we know that we are getting there?**

- SD68 and our First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities show evidence of moving toward greater Aboriginal student success by participating in the inquiry-based learning laid out in this agreement.
- Senior managers, along with trustees, have regular, meaningful dialogue as equal partners in the attainment of the Enhancement Agreement goals.
- Aboriginal Education includes strategies for full effort in the annual focus plan.



- All schools, (teachers, principals and vice-principals, support staff, Aboriginal Education staff, School Planning Councils and Parent Advisory Councils) commit to building success for Aboriginal students in their school plans.
- Aboriginal communities take a stand on education and look for ways to have conversations about the importance of education as a means to social and economic development.
- Social agencies and community groups are aware of and connect to the Enhancement Agreement within the scope of their work.

Where do we hope to get by 2016?



Exceeding Expectations

**Mind:** How do we improve the academic achievement for all Aboriginal learners?

**How will we know when we get there?**

We will utilize both formative and summative assessments:

- Inquiry Projects will focus on enhancing understanding the MIND area
- District-wide data as available e.g. British Columbia Performance Standards, Report Cards K-12.
- *How Are We Doing? Report* from the Ministry of Education
- Early Literacy Strategy District Project Results (See Appendix D)
- First Time Grade 12 Graduation Rates
- School Projects/School Data/School Plans

**Where do we hope to get by 2016?**

**Body:** How do we enhance all students' and all adults' understanding of Aboriginal history, perspectives, and people respecting that there is a contemporary context?

**How will we know when we get there?**

- Aboriginal Literacy (Knowledge) Surveys
- Growth and development around Aboriginal awareness in SD68 (rubric)
- Number of Aboriginal content/courses running (English First Peoples, BC First Nations Studies, and Hul'q'umi'num)
- School Projects/School Data/School Plans
- Inquiry Projects will focus on enhancing understanding in the BODY area

**Where do we hope to get by 2016?**



**Emotion:** How do we enhance Aboriginal students' sense of belonging within schools and their belief that they can be successful in SD68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith while at the same time enhancing the belief of the system that Aboriginal students can be more successful?

**How will we know when we get there?**

- Grade to Grade Transition Rates and post-secondary transitions
- Satisfaction Surveys - Grade 4 to 10
- Grad rates 6 years, 7 years, and reasons for leaving data
- Post-Secondary Transition Data
- School Projects/School Data/School Plans
- Inquiry Projects will be based on enhancing the EMOTION area
- Aboriginal learners will report that they see themselves reflected in the physical environment and the curriculum

**Where do we hope to get by 2016?**



"In Aboriginal Education we believe that a collaborative framework for developing assessment for learning and inquiry-based practice are in essence indigenous in their nature and will be major contributors towards building success for Aboriginal learners."

- Stella Bates, District Principal Aboriginal Education

Our implementation plan is a road map and will be revisited and developed over time. We believe that implementation of the Enhancement Agreement needs to be responsive, inclusive and organic to allow for growth and change over time.

### **Implementation Plan for Our Enhancement Agreement**

#### YEAR ONE

- Engage and educate the wider community on the Enhancement Agreement
- Lead learning in the district on the Enhancement Agreement
- Analyze current data and set appropriate targets
- Establish Aboriginal student database
- Develop programs and strategies to enhance Aboriginal students' success and achievement
- Development of assessment tools to be used for baseline data
- Celebrate successes

#### YEARS TWO - FOUR

- Assess all programs and strategies
- In-service all new staff in the district on the Enhancement Agreement
- Maintain and sustain programs that are working for Aboriginal student success and achievement
- Make changes to curriculum, programming and strategies as appropriate and recommended
- Continue to develop and enhance programs and strategies to improve Aboriginal student success and achievement
- Monitor new results through performance indicators
- Celebrate successes

#### YEAR FIVE

- Evaluation
- Identify and make recommendations to continue successful programs
- Identify major growth areas
- Identify current needs and challenges, make changes where needed
- Development of a new Enhancement Agreement
- Celebrate successes

**STEP ONE**

As communities and the district we have created a vision of what we believe success could look like for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.

**STEP TWO**

As communities and the district we revisited the purpose or intention of Enhancement Agreements and framed them in a holistic manner as per Aboriginal ways of learning:

**SPIRIT**

To improve the academic achievement for all Aboriginal students.

**MIND**

To enhance all students' and all adults' understanding of Aboriginal history, culture and contemporary Aboriginal context.

**BODY**

To enhance Aboriginal students' sense of belonging within schools and their belief that they can be successful in the public education system while at the same time enhancing the belief of the system that Aboriginal students can be more successful.

**EMOTION**

To enhance the participation of Aboriginal communities, parents and Elders as equal partners in the attaining of the Enhancement Agreement Goals.

**STEP THREE**

Community and District Consultation Meetings

#### STEP FOUR

##### **Develop the Goals/Inquiry Questions**

Stay the course and maintain the goals from the 2006-11 Enhancement Agreement, but look for ways to support and encourage participation from all levels of the system through an inquiry-based approach to building success for Aboriginal learners.

#### STEP FIVE

Signing Celebration on Thursday, December 1, 2011

#### STEP SIX

Implementing and evaluating our progress in meeting the goals.

**Characteristics of Inquiry-Based Learning**

- Deep learning
- Formative assessment – coaching feedback
- Teams of adults working together
- Schools working together – and with community
- Leadership by contribution
- Genuine transformation

**Mindsets Needed for Inquiry-Based Learning**

With a fixed mindset, you believe that your qualities are pre-determined and set.

With an open mindset, you believe that your basic qualities can be cultivated through your efforts.

## Early Literacy Pilot Project

Learning to read and reading to learn are the keys to academic success. Reading proficiency is still the best predictor of student success. Early identification and support of struggling readers will result in more students reading at grade level as they enter Grade 4. By identifying the Grade 1s not yet reading at grade level, reading supports can occur at the earliest possible level. Although we will capture a “District” picture of the reading levels of all Grade 1s, we will focus our initiative at schools with the greatest incident of at-risk Grade 1 readers. The aim of identifying and targeting at-risk Grade 1s means that we will be able to assist more of our students in acquiring the skill of reading, one of the most common predictors of school success; and we will build district capacity to support vulnerable learners.

### OBJECTIVES

#### Objective 1

Work with schools to identify Grade 1s not yet meeting performance standards in reading.

#### Objective 2

Identify schools which need the most support.

#### Objective 3

Identify schools which are eager to support this project and narrow the list down to a manageable number using the following criteria:

- schools with a large population of vulnerable students
- schools from various parts of the district
- schools which demonstrate a commitment to this project

#### Objective 4

Work with the designated schools to develop a system of supports that enable these learners and their teachers in their Grade 2 year.

#### Objective 5

Track the cohort as it moves through the primary grades so that by the end of Grade 4 we have a way of assessing the reading interventions.

What each of our Enhancement Agreement plans and strategies will look like when we work collaboratively, emphasizing assessment for learning and an inquiry-based approach that honours Aboriginal world views, history, knowledge, and ways of learning?

**SPIRIT**

With full effort by School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) and First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities?

*Imagine...*

A circle of support for Aboriginal learners that included Aboriginal education, senior managers, trustees, district coordinators, school-based personnel, students, families, communities and helping agencies, all working together to build success for Aboriginal learners.

**MIND**

How do we build academic success for Aboriginal learners?

***District Aboriginal Education Leadership Team***

*Imagine...*

Literacy and numeracy projects in schools; support school plans with academic goals/questions: coaching model; Aboriginal Education Professional Learning Gatherings; Aboriginal Curriculum Implementation Projects.

***Schools***

*Imagine...*

School plans and inquiry-based projects inclusive of Aboriginal Education staff aimed at building academic success. Support for Aboriginal students in the development of their graduation transition planning. External credit for participation in Aboriginal cultural activities. Know your Aboriginal learner results and track cohorts over time.

**MIND**

How do we build academic success for Aboriginal learners?

***Trustees, School District Management Teams, District Coordinators******Imagine...***

Trustees and management teams hold regular, meaningful meetings with Aboriginal communities. School growth plan Aboriginal goals/questions part of district achievement contract. District support for efforts regarding assessment for learning, collaborative practice and inquiry-based learning.

***Aboriginal Communities: (Snuneymuxw, Stz'uminus, Snaw-Naw-As, Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Mid Island Métis Nation)******Imagine...***

Take a stand on education in their communities; build relationships with schools; after school support; homework clubs etc.; provide cultural learning opportunities.

**BODY**

How can we enhance all students' and all adults' understanding of Aboriginal history, perspectives, people and the contemporary context?

***Aboriginal Education Leadership Team******Imagine...***

Aboriginal Understanding Workshops: adults and students; Aboriginal resources; support school plans with Aboriginal goals: coaching model; First Peoples Curriculum Implementation project; new employees' orientation to Aboriginal Education and the Enhancement Agreement; Aboriginal Education Professional Learning Gatherings.

**BODY**

How can we enhance all students' and all adults' understanding of Aboriginal history, perspectives, people and the contemporary context?

***Schools****Imagine...*

Inquiry-based projects inclusive of Aboriginal Education staff aimed at building Aboriginal awareness for all.

Pursue innovative models to better address the needs of students in transition: from elementary to secondary school level, between programs and mainstream, and between secondary, post-secondary or work experience.

***Trustees, School District Management Teams, District Coordinators:****Imagine...*

Continue to develop awareness of Aboriginal issues

Look for ways for the district budget to support the Enhancement Agreement

***Aboriginal Communities: (Snuneymuxw, Stz'uminus, Snaw-Naw-As, Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Mid Island Métis Nation)****Imagine...*

Restructure SD68 Aboriginal committees to expand participation, innovation and to streamline processes and communication.

**EMOTION**

How can we enhance Aboriginal students' sense of belonging within schools and their belief that they can be successful in the public education system, while at the same time enhancing the belief of the system that Aboriginal students can be more successful?

***Aboriginal Education Leadership Team******Imagine...***

Sacred Circle: Me to We Youth Leadership; support school plans with Aboriginal goals: coaching model; Aboriginal Education Professional Learning Gatherings.

***Schools******Imagine...***

First Peoples Curriculum Implementation; Aboriginal Student Transitioning Planning; Secondary Aboriginal Leadership Team Plans, track early leavers and post-secondary plans/enrollment; inquiry based projects inclusive of Aboriginal Education staff aimed at building a sense of belonging; provide anti-racism education, which will include giving students and staff the tools to respond effectively to discrimination; provide opportunities for parents and family members to be welcomed into the schools; ensure that Aboriginal students and their families are involved in assessment and appropriate placement decisions in the full range of programs from gifted to supportive.

***Trustees, School District Management Teams, District Coordinators******Imagine...***

Add specific questions to satisfaction surveys; create a District Elders Council; committee meetings acknowledge territory and other Aboriginal protocols; maintain District Principal of Aboriginal Education's participation on management and other district committees; increased number of qualified Aboriginal employees in SD68.

## EMOTION

How can we enhance Aboriginal students' sense of belonging within schools and their belief that they can be successful in the public education system, while at the same time enhancing the belief of the system that Aboriginal students can be more successful?

***Aboriginal Communities: (Snuneymuxw, Stz'uminus, Snaw-Naw-As, Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Mid Island Métis Nation)***

*Imagine...*

Review Shawn Atleo's "Call to Action Plan" with SD68; promote Aboriginal candidates for trustee positions; promote Aboriginal voting in school board elections

***What are your ideas?***

***What could you do?***

***What are you already doing?***

***Send us your thoughts – we want to learn and grow together!***