



Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

2016 – 2021

Skwxwú7mesh Nation

Tsleil-Waututh Nation

Metis Nation of British Columbia

Aboriginal Peoples in North Vancouver

North Vancouver School District

BC Ministry of Education



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Signatories

We, the undersigned, acknowledge and honour our collective responsibilities for the success of all students of Aboriginal ancestry attending school in the North Vancouver School District.

We agree that the terms of this North Vancouver Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement will provide direction for Aboriginal education in the school district for the period June 30, 2016 to June 30, 2021.

With respect and honour toward all Aboriginal peoples, we intend, with shared participation and wisdom, to work together in a mutually respectful manner to develop appropriate and meaningful programs for the benefit of all students of Aboriginal ancestry.

SIGNATURES APPLIED TO ORIGINAL DOCUMENT ON JUNE 20, 2016

CHRIS LEWIS & ANN WHONNOCK

Skwxwú7mesh Nation

CHRISTIE SACRÉ

North Vancouver Board of Education

CHIEF MAUREEN THOMAS & DENNIS THOMAS

Tsleil-Waututh Nation

BRAD BAKER

NVSD Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee

GLEN OHS

Metis Nation of British Columbia

KARIM HACHLAF

North Vancouver Administrators' Association

JANE THORNTWHAITE, MLA

Ministry of Education

CAROLYN PENA

North Vancouver Teachers' Association

Introduction

The North Vancouver School District acknowledges and honours the history and culture of the Skwxwú7mesh and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations in whose territory we reside. The purpose of this third Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) is to continue a collaborative partnership to increase the academic and personal success of all students of Aboriginal ancestry in our district.

Further, it is recognized that a successful partnership in education between the Skwxwú7mesh Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, Metis Nation of British Columbia, all other Aboriginal peoples in North Vancouver and the North Vancouver School District is critical to the academic, social and emotional growth of students of Aboriginal ancestry. The development of this AEEA was done with interests of students of Aboriginal ancestry first and foremost. Engagement by community partners was instrumental in the creation of the AEEA, as it is a shared responsibility to enhance the learning opportunities for students of Aboriginal ancestry.



Process

The process of developing this third AEEA was driven by a goal to support student learning and ensure that all Aboriginal students in North Vancouver achieve success and graduate with dignity, purpose and opportunities. In addition, we have endeavoured to provide opportunities for education for all of our students and families that honours and reflects the rich history, current issues and culture of the Skwxwú7mesh Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, other First Nations, Metis and Inuit people. The AEEA development process began in February 2015 when the North Vancouver School District Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee began the consultation process with the Skwxwú7mesh Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, Metis Nation of British Columbia and all other Aboriginal peoples in North Vancouver. Collaborative sessions were held in the community, along with student information meetings, and more formal committee meetings for our First Nations, Metis and Inuit families, students and Elders. All of these collaborative sessions were geared at communicating, working together and providing input toward the goals and objectives of school programs and structures in the North Vancouver School District.

Through the consultation process we were able to learn that the North Vancouver School District has made great strides in providing students of Aboriginal ancestry with a learning environment that enables them to succeed. This is clearly evident in the notion of sense of belonging of students of Aboriginal ancestry; student voice shows that a high percentage of students feel valued and respected at school. In addition to providing safe and supportive learning environments where students feel a sense of belonging, academic success for students of Aboriginal ancestry is a goal that is entrenched in all of the work that we do. Over the next five years, we are committed to further improvements in academic achievement for students of Aboriginal ancestry.

This five-year AEEA, extending from June 30, 2016 to June 30, 2021, recognizes both shared and individual areas of responsibility among schools, teachers, parents, communities, and governing bodies to meet the educational needs of students of Aboriginal ancestry. Commonly held values of mutual respect, collaboration, consensus building and inclusion informed the extensive consultation process that produced this AEEA. It is the pledge of all partners and stakeholders to continue to work in partnership; to share decision-making and goal setting; and to develop and implement relevant and strategic actions and initiatives for the benefit of all students of Aboriginal ancestry. The goals and strategies of this AEEA will be reviewed annually for the length of the agreement.

Acknowledgements

We thank all students, parents, school district staff, and community members who made the third AEEA a reality. We extend a special thank you to the members of the Aboriginal Education Advisory Council:

Barry Forward – Trustee, North Vancouver Board of Education
Cyndi Gerlach – Trustee, North Vancouver Board of Education
John Lewis – Superintendent, NVSD
Mark Pearmain – Assistant Superintendent, NVSD
Brad Baker – District Principal, NVSD
Robert Smyth – Principal, NVSD
Sanjeet Johal – Principal, NVSD
Karim Hachlaf - Principal, NVSD
Bill Reid - Principal, NVSD
Doug Beveridge - Principal, NVSD
Maria Power – Teacher, NVSD
Marna Thomas – Teacher, NVSD
Pamela Hollingsworth – Teacher, NVSD
Stephanie Maki – Aboriginal Support Teacher, NVSD
Jessica Johnson - Aboriginal Success Teacher, NVSD
Heather Myhre - Aboriginal Success Teacher, NVSD
Anjette Dawson – Elementary School Counsellor, Squamish Nation
Tracy Williams – Secondary School Counsellor, Squamish Nation
Vanessa Campbell – Elder, Squamish Nation
Candace Halls – Department of Education, Tsleil-Waututh Nation
Katherine Stenger - Department of Education, Tsleil-Waututh Nation
Glen Ohs – Metis Nation of British Columbia
Sarah Thomas – Aboriginal parent
Magali Caron – Aboriginal parent
Melanie Nelson – Aboriginal parent
Jessie Williams – Aboriginal parent
Joe Desjarlais – Metis parent
Adina Williams – Student

Partners

The AEEA of the North Vancouver School District is acknowledged as a partnership with shared responsibility and opportunity to sincerely support and foster success and achievement for students of Aboriginal ancestry. The partner groups are:

- Skwxwú7mesh Nation
- Tsleil-Waututh Nation
- Metis Nation of British Columbia
- All other Aboriginal peoples residing in North Vancouver
- North Vancouver School District
- BC Ministry of Education

The partners have a five-year commitment (June 30, 2016 to June 30, 2021) that will be reviewed annually in conjunction with the complementary goals of the North Vancouver School District.

Definitions

Aboriginal

Embraces First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples.

Caregiver

Includes, but need not be limited to, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, adult siblings, step-parents, foster parents, and guardians.

Community

Refers to those responsible for and those contributing to the care, wellbeing and advancement of Aboriginal youth.

School Community

Refers to all those who are part of a school, including students, teachers, administrators, and support staff.

Other Aboriginal Peoples

Refers to all off-reserve and urban Aboriginal peoples who are not affiliated with Skwxwú7mesh Nation or Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

House Posts

As the foundation of a stable home for people to live in, the term "house post" is significant in Aboriginal culture. Strong house posts form a solid structure that withstands the forces against it. In this AEEA, the following four house posts encompass all corners of the North Vancouver School District and form the foundation by which the district will achieve the goals outlined in this AEEA.

Students

All students understand and respect Aboriginal culture, history, and language. This will lead to academic success and to further opportunities for students of Aboriginal ancestry.

Educators

All educators are provided with support, in-service and professional development that allows school staff to improve the success of students of Aboriginal ancestry. This commitment includes increasing educator knowledge of Aboriginal culture, history and perspectives, including the First Peoples Principles of Learning.

Community

Continue to build upon the foundation of collaboration and respect to enhance the relationships between the North Vancouver School District, Skwxwú7mesh Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, Metis Nation of BC, and other Aboriginal peoples in North Vancouver. Strengthening these relationships and building shared perspectives will lead to further opportunities for students of Aboriginal ancestry.

Family

Aboriginal parents, caregivers and elders are active participants in reaching the goals identified in this AEEA to support the wellbeing and academic success of students.

Strong leadership shared by the North Vancouver School District, Skwxwú7mesh Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, Metis Nation of British Columbia and other Aboriginal peoples in North Vancouver; respect for Aboriginal cultures and traditions in every classroom in the school district; and a holistic approach to learning, will challenge and inspire North Vancouver students of Aboriginal ancestry to reach higher and higher levels of achievement. Their success will be measured in their capacity to thrive in both traditional and modern worlds.

Guiding Principles

To help the above house posts stand strong, the parties to this AEEA support the following principles:

Consultation

Involving all stakeholders, including students, parents/caregivers, teachers, school community, and all Aboriginal peoples in the community. Aboriginal community involvement includes leaders such as elders, hereditary chiefs, and the band council/elected government. Students of Aboriginal ancestry are a meaningful part of consultation; students need to take pride in an educational system in which their heritage and culture are reflected, celebrated, and respected.

Communication

Embraces the ideal of open dialogue that clearly communicates common goals and objectives. It also entails that this AEEA continue as a "living" document, building common understanding among all stakeholders.

Collaboration

Emphasizes partnerships and shared accountability.

Consensus

Entails a process of formalizing and including the collective voice of all partners.



Overview

The partners have worked diligently over the past year to determine the next path for our students of Aboriginal ancestry. Through the process of Aboriginal Education Advisory Council (AEAC) meetings and individual meetings with partner groups, the first two AEEAs were examined to determine what the basis of the third AEEA should look like. In their assessment of our second agreement (2011-2016), the AEAC felt that it succeeded in creating a positive learning environment for students of Aboriginal ancestry and increased academic success for these students. Moving forward with the third AEEA, there was a push from the AEAC to have a stronger focus on academic achievement. With the recent Auditor-General Report on education stating that students of Aboriginal ancestry should be offered the same level of education as all other students, the academic achievement of all students of Aboriginal ancestry must be the cornerstone for future success.

Through the discussion at the advisory council table, it was determined that the "Calls to Action" from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission needed to be part of the process of lifting the North Vancouver School District to the next level of supporting students of Aboriginal ancestry. The atrocities of the past need to be acknowledged in order for Aboriginal peoples to regain dignity and a rightful place in society. The reconciliation process began in 2008 with the Government of Canada's formal apology for the Indian Residential Schools System and continued with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada from 2009 to 2015. The recent publication of the Truth and Reconciliation final report, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, acknowledges the critical role that our education system will play in reconciliation.

The AEAC members are asking the community of North Vancouver to use the following quote from the final report to support students of Aboriginal ancestry:

"We have described for you a mountain. We have shown you the path to the top. We call upon you to do the climbing."

- Justice Murray Sinclair, Commission
Chairperson

AEEA Goals

The goals identified in this agreement are in keeping with the strategic vision and goals of the North Vancouver School District. They are goals for which the data can be effectively and accurately measured, and can be tracked with integrity over time. Some of this data will arise from the North Vancouver School District Aboriginal Education Survey, which will continue to be administered during the length of the AEEA. The North Vancouver School District will also use all data readily available through the North Vancouver School District and Ministry of Education.

This AEEA encompasses three main goals:

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|---------|--|
| Goal #1 | To improve academic success of students of Aboriginal ancestry. |
| Goal #2 | To improve the sense of belonging and presence of students of Aboriginal ancestry. |
| Goal #3 | To increase the understanding and knowledge of all educators and students in the North Vancouver School District of Aboriginal culture, history and ways of knowing, in order to enhance the learning environment for students of Aboriginal ancestry. |

Evidence of Success

The following data will be used to determine our success in achieving the above-mentioned goals:

- Increased number of students fully meeting/exceeding expectations in FSA results.
- Increased number of students fully meeting/exceeding expectations on North Vancouver School District assessments.
- Increased number of students achieving C+ or better on provincial exams.
- Use of report card data to examine numeracy and literacy trends.
- Use of district numeracy and literacy surveys.
- Use of data available from the *How We Are Doing?* report by the Ministry of Education, transition data, post-secondary data, and completion rates to examine trends.
- Use of data from the North Vancouver School District Aboriginal Education Survey and other district surveys.

Goal #1: To improve academic success of students of Aboriginal ancestry.

This goal focuses on the intellectual development of each student of Aboriginal ancestry. Increasing the academic success of students of Aboriginal ancestry is critically important to helping them progress beyond graduation and realize their hopes and dreams into adulthood.

- **Increase** the number of students who successfully transition from grade to grade. Whole child transition - attendance, work habits and achievement.
- **Increase** the number of students who are fully meeting or exceeding expectations in core academics.
- **Increase** the number of students who successfully complete English and Math courses in Secondary Schools.
- **Raise** the bar for graduates - profile measurement.
- **Increase** the number of students participating and completing high school trades and apprenticeship programs.



Goal #2: To improve the sense of belonging and presence of students of Aboriginal ancestry.

This goal focuses on the emotional and spiritual development of each student of Aboriginal ancestry. We have taken the lessons learned from our Aboriginal educators who have shared with us the importance of recognizing that all Aboriginal peoples have a thriving community. The development of cultural awareness in our schools is an important enhancement for our Aboriginal students, but will also help our non-Aboriginal students to better understand the rich traditions and history of the Skwxwú7mesh Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, Metis Nation of BC and other Aboriginal people in our community.

- **Increase** attendance rates of students of Aboriginal ancestry (acknowledging the strength-based approach).
- **Increase** the level of satisfaction related to sense of place, caring and belonging.



Goal #3: To increase the understanding and knowledge of all educators and students in the North Vancouver School District of Aboriginal culture, history and ways of knowing, in order to enhance the learning environment for students of Aboriginal ancestry.

Students perform better when there are strong partnerships within the school and with the community. A common understanding of the historical context is essential to building a shared vision of what success is for our students.

- **Increase** the satisfaction of Aboriginal students and parents with the instruction happening in classrooms of historical and current contextual knowledge of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.
- **Increase** student and staff understanding of Residential Schools and Aboriginal history in Grade 5 and Grade 10 (offer staff workshops and resources for instruction).
- **Increase** student and staff understanding of the First Peoples Principles of Learning and Aboriginal Ways of Knowing.



Appendix – Actions

The actions mentioned in this appendix are a sampling of the initiatives that will be undertaken to achieve our goals. Other actions will also be developed over the course of this AEEA.

The actions' effectiveness will be reviewed on an ongoing basis according to their success in:

- Increasing the presence of Aboriginal language, history, and culture in the schools and at a district level.
- Increasing the number of qualified Aboriginal teachers and qualified First Nations Support Workers.
- Promoting and increasing participation by all partner groups in joint activities that support school and district initiatives.
- Providing ongoing opportunities to meet and discuss Aboriginal issues and learning. Participants might include the Aboriginal Education Advisory Council, Aboriginal Support Teachers, First Nations Support Workers, Learning Services, administrators of all schools, membership of Skwxwú7mesh or Tsleil-Waututh nations, parents, etc.

GOAL #1: To improve academic success of students of Aboriginal ancestry.

ACTION	INITIATE	INTENSIFY AND REPORT	ANALYSIS OF PROGRESS
Regular support (EA/LST) and FNSW within the classroom so each student has an advocate			
Early intervention and identification of student concerns			
Community relationships with all Aboriginal peoples			
Data collection: school-wide FSA Attendance Provincial Exams Report Cards Meeting NYM exceeding range			
Identify gifted students with unique forms of gifted programming			
Triangulation: home, child, school, community leadership			

GOAL #2: To improve the sense of belonging and presence of students of Aboriginal ancestry.

ACTION	INITIATE	INTENSIFY AND REPORT	ANALYSIS OF PROGRESS
Providing lessons taught K-12 about Aboriginal history of First Nations, Metis and Inuit			
Increase local Aboriginal Metis and Inuit speakers, elders, culture, traditions, storytelling, placed-based traditional names, ceremonies, carvers, dancers, classroom visits			
Use of traditional blessing			
Continue to conduct in-service series on cultural awareness and teachings			
Naming and reclaiming			
Presence and valuing will increase sense of belonging			
Use of First Peoples Principles of Learning			
Aboriginal Student Leadership			
Welcoming families' relationships			
Interaction between First Nations communities on the reserve and off reserve			

GOAL #3: To increase the understanding and knowledge of all educators and students in the North Vancouver School District of Aboriginal culture, history and ways of knowing, in order to enhance the learning environment for students of Aboriginal ancestry.

ACTION	INITIATE	INTENSIFY AND REPORT	ANALYSIS OF PROGRESS
K-12 resources created by Aboriginal Education Team and provide opportunities for teachers to share their resources. Publish resources. Write resources for grades 7-9 and 10-12			
Teacher self evaluation using Aboriginal Education rubric			
Student self evaluation using Aboriginal Education rubric			
Mentorship			
Modelling-change approach			
More time on the land			
More sharing			
Authenticity			
Timelines			
Design series and workshops for teachers			



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