



The Raven's Call

To many tribes of the north pacific coast, Raven is an insatiable trickster as well as a transformer who manifested humanity from out of a clamshell and gifted us with fire and water. Many tribes invoke Raven for assistance in their healing ceremonies.

Raven's knowledge of these mysteries enables him to bend reality, work magic and travel astrally. We call upon Raven medicine to help us transform and transcend our limitations. This is why Raven is present at our meetings, bringing Grandmother Moon with her infinite wisdom in his heart to assist us to achieve the difficult task of improving the system and to benefit the young people who are interested in improving their knowledge and consequently their lives.

We ask Raven to help us heal old wounds and lead us to a new paradigm where love and spirituality prevail.

Tlingit Elder Jim Spencer, 'Wave Walker'



School District No. 64 (Gulf Islands)

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT

2013-2018

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The Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee honours Aboriginal people who have lived on the Salish Sea since time immemorial, and we acknowledge that our school district operates in the ancestral and shared territories of the Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tseycum, Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Penelakut peoples. We thank the Coast Salish Peoples for their cultural legacy, transmitted from generation to generation through teaching and learning, and we dedicate this agreement to our Elders and all teachers, learners and community members who will continue this process.

We recognize that past educational institutions were part of the colonization process. We also recognize the healing and empowerment movement that has already begun. In the present and the future, we intend our schools to be part of the healing and empowerment process.

The partners to this agreement acknowledge that many people, Aboriginal and Allies, have brought us to where we are now. We thank them for their efforts and for lending their hearts and voices to this document.

School District 64 is more than just an organization - it's a team made up of educators, support staff, students, parents, and community members. We acknowledge the individual and collective contributions of all of these people to the success of all learners, particularly those of Aboriginal ancestry, through their support for and participation on this Committee.

Our History and Context - how we got here



School District No. 64 is a unique collection of school communities, located on six Southern Gulf Islands (Saturna, The Penders, Mayne, Galiano and Salt Spring Islands) and in North Vancouver. Altogether, we are eleven schools, six of which are on Salt Spring Island.

Because our school district serves learners from diverse Aboriginal communities within the traditional lands of several Coast Salish groups, as well as Aboriginal and Métis learners from elsewhere in the province and country, this agreement is intended to meet the needs of all, while respecting the differences that exist. Moreover, it reaches beyond these students, to promote increasing awareness and respect for Aboriginal peoples, languages, cultures and history, amongst all students and in the greater school community.

This agreement builds upon the 2006-2011 agreement which had its origins in June, 2004, when members of all Aboriginal families, Elders, and staff members from all district schools were invited to a dinner on Galiano Island.

The former document was informed by and developed through a thorough and on-going process of consultation and shared decision-making which began that night, and involved partner group representatives from each of our school communities.

The process of renewing our 2006-2011 agreement began on December 6th, 2011 with a planning meeting. On April 18th, 2012, school staff, students and community representatives met on Galiano Island to review our progress to date and look to the future. On June 12th, we established our goals; on October 4th, our indicators of success; and on December 4th, the rationales and action plans for each goal. This brought us to the point of having a rough draft of this agreement.

The process of crafting this new Enhancement Agreement has been one of deep engagement with students, parents, staff, and community members. We have worked collectively and then reflected, embodying the concept of praxis, which is thoughtful reflection informing action. Our process has had significant input from Aboriginal students, and their relations, in order to remain student focused. We have taken the time to discuss widely the question, "What does success look like for Aboriginal students?" By engaging in discussion and activity based inquiry, we have raised the awareness of staff, students, parents and community members and this process in itself has been valuable. In the interest of ensuring that our second agreement reflects 'best practice', we have reviewed the Enhancement Agreements of other school districts, and consulted with The Ministry of Education.

The Coordinator has ensured and overseen the continued operation of The Aboriginal Education Advisory Council, and the implementation of the previous agreement within the school district. This position has served, and will continue to serve, an important liaising and coordinating role between the community, the council, the school district, and the Ministry of Education.



As we look to the future, we envision a society where all Aboriginal people are able to honor and express their traditional and contemporary cultures and values in meaningful ways: where Aboriginal people are valued and respected, both individually and collectively, for their contributions to Canadian society. We envision a future where Aboriginal children have the skills, knowledge and confidence to be successful in whatever path they choose. We envision a school system that has the capacity to address each learner's unique challenges and strengths and that incorporates Aboriginal content throughout the year and in all subject areas. We envision this agreement will create a future in which students have confidence in themselves and their schools, and where teachers, parents and community members collaborate to guide with confidence, and demonstrate an increased awareness of sensitive/important issues.

With this future in mind, we will continue to regard learners as whole persons, and everyone together as a whole community of co-teachers and co-learners, all working together to build the capacity that allows us all to be more effective and successful.

What we believe and why

‘In order to harmonize the traditional values with the system we are now in, it is important to know those values.’

*Hereditary Chief Kwicksutaineuk Nation, Alfred Scow
First Aboriginal Provincial Court Judge*

In the spirit of these words, we believe that this ‘harmonization’ is most likely to be achieved if we:

- ▶ promote and sustain open, honest dialogue focused upon children and youth
- ▶ encourage a holistic approach to each child’s development
- ▶ promote a learning environment where Aboriginal students feel a strong sense of belonging
- ▶ provide educational opportunities that enhance academic success
- ▶ promote the importance of Aboriginal education for all learners in all subjects
- ▶ honour and acknowledge the people, traditional territories and history of the Gulf Islands
- ▶ acknowledge the traditional teachings and wisdom of the Elders
- ▶ promote and strengthen community through increased involvement of Aboriginal families throughout the district
- ▶ ensure alignment of established district policies and practices with this agreement
- ▶ strengthen district policies, protocols, and practices to bring awareness to Aboriginal culture, values, languages, history and knowledge
- ▶ encourage all students and staff to recognize both the strength and richness of Aboriginal cultures and values and the damaging impacts of colonization



The values identified in our first agreement were these: belonging, kindness, creativity, and generosity

Over the past six years, we have been inspired by the teachings of Dr. Martin Brokenleg, in whose ‘Circle of Courage’ [1] those values are embedded. Dr. Brokenleg’s circle represents the sacredness and inter-connectedness of life, and it’s four quadrants represent the four directions of the medicine wheel. These domains -independence, mastery, belonging and generosity- represent key, integrated aspects of child and youth development and the shared values that continue to inspire our work.

We value the mastery that occurs, and the independence that results, when learners can confidently demonstrate knowledge, skill and understanding; the sense of belonging that arises out of strong ties to family, school and community; and the generosity that promotes and serves community through ‘giving back’.

We believe success is identified through community engagement; and that it involves the academic as well as the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being of each student. We believe that Aboriginal values and learning methods are beneficial for all students.

We believe that assessment and evaluation are important parts of an educational system intent upon helping learners achieve academic success. For example: it should recognize “storytelling” as a means of demonstrating an understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal knowledge and culture. We further believe that these should be part of an on-going process rather than an event, and that this process should honor the fact that we are all different, and our academic success can be demonstrated, assessed and evaluated in a wide variety of ways.

[1] Book, Martin Brokenleg, Reclaiming Youth At Risk; Our Hope for the Future, January 1, 2002.

What We Commit to



This second agreement demonstrates our ongoing commitment to the improved success of all Aboriginal students, whilst promoting knowledge of and respect for Aboriginal cultures, values, languages and histories within our school communities. This is understood by all parties to be a shared responsibility.

This agreement will ensure continuous enhancement of the quality of education available to Aboriginal students while respecting the diversity that exists within School District No. 64.

To demonstrate its commitment to this purpose the District, with the ongoing collaboration of all parties will:

- ▶ enhance educational outcomes to empower all students
- ▶ ensure that the environment is safe, healthy and conducive to learning, while accommodating divergent learning styles
- ▶ promote learning opportunities that integrate Aboriginal pedagogy
- ▶ enhance the achievement of Aboriginal students relative to locally established targets in all areas of learning
- ▶ support Aboriginal students by creating an environment that embraces and promotes Aboriginal culture, values, languages, history and knowledge
- ▶ encourage integration of contemporary and traditional indigenous teachings into all learning environments to ensure that our students enjoy their highest levels of academic, cultural, social, and individual success
- ▶ promote knowledge and skills that will lead to successful experiences

We intend this to be a 'living document' - one reflecting our shared commitment, our willingness to question our assumptions, consider new ideas and information, and make adjustments as we go - and one which we hope will serve, increasingly, as both a starting point and a touchstone in the district's classrooms.

OUR GOALS

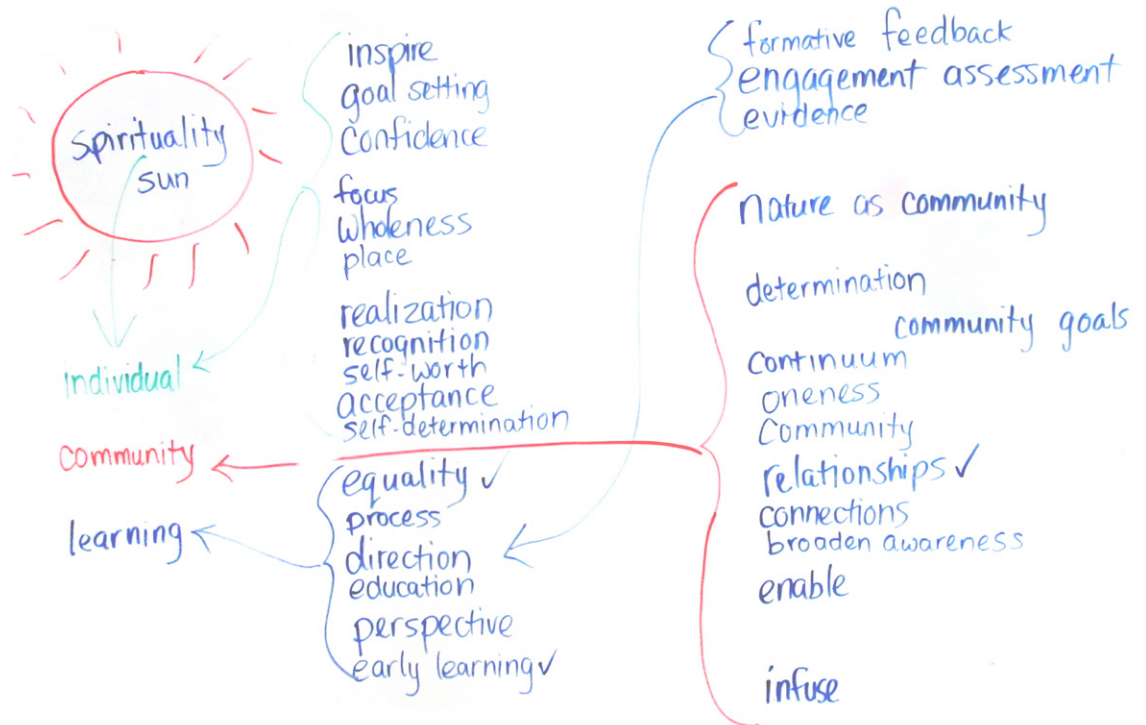
Fulfilling Our Purpose, Realizing Our Vision



Identification of our goals was achieved through a collaborative process involving representatives of all partners. The decisions underlying these goals were made locally, in the interest of meeting our local needs.

It's important to note that one of the three goals outlined in the school district's 2012-2015 achievement contract with the Ministry of Education is finalization of this second agreement. Thus the goals that follow are the goals to which the district is committing.

The goal statements that follow began as questions posed as a result of a more inquiry-based approach to goal-setting.



"I thought it was cool that everyone got together to do this. I didn't know the agreement even existed."

Claire O'Donnell
- Grade 8

GOAL ONE: The Individual

Every Aboriginal learner will have the dignity of knowing who they are, the knowledge of where they are from and the confidence to shape their future.

Rationale: We identified this goal because, as we are all members of School District No. 64's "community of learners", we believe learning is a lifelong process of engagement, personal growth and self-awareness. The partners to this agreement accept our shared responsibility to foster and nurture the dignity that arises out of each learner's growing sense of self. We envision that as we are implementing this goal area we will see all learners talking about and being excited about Aboriginal topics and content.

Indicators: We'll know we're achieving this goal when . . .

- ▶ Aboriginal learners demonstrate increasing participation in extra curricular and leadership opportunities
- ▶ Aboriginal learners demonstrate greater success in making grade to grade and post-secondary transitions
- ▶ Parent-teacher relationships are strengthened through increased dialogue concerning Aboriginal Education programs and student achievement relative to the goals of this agreement

Baseline data will be collected in the first year of this agreement, and inform our decision-making with respect to targets in following years.

"When I was first asked to be a part of the Enhancement Agreement, I was honoured, yet nervous. It's a big meeting with lots of intimidating adults – or so I thought. It was really a collaboration of ideas between students and adults. We had Chief Jim Spencer as a part of it, which was so interesting. There were several students and many different opinions. I enjoyed it so much and I can't wait to read the new Agreement."

Cassidy Fraser
- Grade 11



GOAL TWO: Community

Every Aboriginal learner will have opportunities to connect with community members to enhance and extend the learning beyond the classroom.

Rationale: We identified this goal because we believe that the needs of Aboriginal learners are best served when their learning takes place in a context of a supportive community. We value the shared understanding that results because this, in turn, strengthens the community. We recognize that this goal is difficult to quantify; therefore, the indicators reflect a mix of quantitative and qualitative data.

Indicators: We'll know we're achieving this goal when . . .

- ▶ we see greater breadth and depth of programs involving Aboriginal content, district-wide
- ▶ there is an increased presence of Aboriginal community members in our schools
- ▶ there is an increase in media stories about Aboriginal education
- ▶ there are strengthened community/learner connections reflected in the self-awareness and self-confidence levels of Aboriginal students

Baseline data will be collected in the first year of this agreement, and inform our decision-making with respect to targets in following years.



“Why it has been important to me to be a part of the enhancement agreement is because it is important that we recognize our lack of acknowledging the First Nations people in our school systems. I have hope we will share, and change this with the community we’ve built in the AB Ed meetings.”

Wesley Hardisty
- Grade 12



GOAL THREE: Learning

From the time Aboriginal learners enter a school community they will experience a culture that encompasses equality, awareness and engagement in learning, allowing for formative feedback, evidence of knowledge and self assessment.

Rationale: We identified this goal because we believe in the equality of all learners, and we recognize that learning is best supported in school cultures rooted in this belief. Trust develops in school communities that promote equality. Where there is trust, learners feel safer and more willing to take risks. Where there is safety, there are opportunities to give and receive formative feedback; to self-assess and reassess; to learn from our challenges and the challenges of others; and to share our growing understanding through demonstration of what we know and what we can do. We believe that learning is a life-long process, and that it is never too soon to welcome young learners into school cultures founded upon, promoting, and sustaining this belief.

Indicators: We'll know we're achieving this goal when . . .

- ▶ Aboriginal learners demonstrate a greater sense of belonging and engagement with the system, as reflected in school attendance
- ▶ Aboriginal learners demonstrate increasing participation in a wide variety of learning experiences
- ▶ there is promotion of teacher professional development with respect to ways of incorporating Aboriginal themes and content into their programs
- ▶ Aboriginal learners have improved performance in the areas of numeracy and literacy
- ▶ students, teachers, and parents indicate growing satisfaction with learning environments in our school district
- ▶ there is increased participation by Aboriginal parents in their children's school experience, particularly in early grades
- ▶ there is an increase in levels of self identification by Aboriginal students
- ▶ there is increased Aboriginal knowledge incorporated into the learning journey of all students

Baseline data will be collected in the first year of this agreement, and inform our decision-making with respect to targets in following years.



APPENDIX A

Strategies to Support the Implementation of the Goals

encourage

- ▶ promote and facilitate participation in extra-curricular and leadership opportunities
- ▶ advocacy and schools/educators taking responsibility for meeting needs of Aboriginal students
- ▶ teachers, staff, parents and students to utilize and increase the community involvement in schools, ranging from guest speakers to formal mentorship
- ▶ Aboriginal curriculum to enhance professional development and professional growth opportunities
- ▶ self assessment as a tool to measure success of Aboriginal Education
- ▶ oral assessment through conversations - making meaning of the Aboriginal culture

focus

- ▶ on transition strategies from pre-school to elementary school, from elementary to middle, middle to secondary, secondary to post secondary and trades
- ▶ on current as well as historical representations of cultures (contemporary culture) ensure relevance to now - contemporary reflection on history

strengthen

- ▶ parent/teacher relationships through increased dialogue concerning Aboriginal Education programs
- ▶ the use of social media - get the word out and invite responses

promote

- ▶ an Aboriginal Education camp
- ▶ nature and the natural environment is a key learning space
- ▶ awareness and use (with understanding) of resources currently available
- ▶ open classroom doors to community advisors who can assist in the delivery of the curriculum
- ▶ the gathering of information for baseline data using qualitative and quantitative measures as well as photo, testimonials etc.

identify

- ▶ champions and create conditions that allow them to flourish
- ▶ adults - staff/community mentors - identify possible supports and more human connections
- look for more opportunities to do this
- ▶ community advisors - publish it
- ▶ the needs of the teachers to feel confident to deliver and dialogue Aboriginal curriculum
- ▶ Aboriginal role models (popular culture, hip hop, art, music) as cultural exemplar

develop

- ▶ a catalogue of resources and encourage teachers to use it
- ▶ a process for ongoing feedback for students, staff, parents and community

APPENDIX B

Goal Three of the SD No. 64 Achievement Contract.

The current achievement contract between School District No. 64 and The Ministry of Education has three goals.

These are to ensure that:

- ▶ all students are progressing towards greater competency in foundation skills;
- ▶ all students experience a successful transition from school to their adult lives; and that
- ▶ the finalized goals of this, the district's second Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement, are pursued district-wide

The district has chosen to embed the goals of this agreement into its achievement contract because, in the spirit of Alfred Scow's words, it wishes to pursue further "harmonization" through a greater and stronger alignment of established district policies, protocols, and practices with the goals of this agreement. Doing so, the district believes, will support the implementation of the agreement, in a way that sees the learning experiences and outcomes of our Aboriginal students improved; awareness of Aboriginal cultures increased; and the learning experiences of all students enriched.



APPENDIX C

The Role of the District Aboriginal Education Coordinator

(Job Description)

The Coordinator of Aboriginal Education will:

- ▶ Work with the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee
- ▶ Provide support to teachers to implement the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement
- ▶ Facilitate communication with the local Aboriginal peoples, parents and students
- ▶ Facilitate communication among teachers pertaining to the teaching practice and curriculum resources as it relates to Aboriginal learners
- ▶ Coordinate events supporting Aboriginal culture and education
- ▶ Report to the Ministry of Education on matters related to the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement
- ▶ Select, evaluate and purchase Aboriginal resources for the District Resource Center

Qualifications:

- ▶ B.C. College of Teachers' Certification
- ▶ Evidence of exemplary teaching experience
- ▶ Knowledge of, experience with, and sensitivity towards local First Nations culture
- ▶ Knowledge of historical and current issues affecting Aboriginal People
- ▶ Knowledge of systemic issues that affect Aboriginal student performance
- ▶ Teaching experience in a First Nations environment and/or with traditional Aboriginal holistic approaches to teaching and ways of being or knowing
- ▶ Knowledgeable of district and provincial resources to support Aboriginal education
- ▶ Knowledge of current trends in curriculum, teaching methodology and delivery of educational services to Aboriginal students
- ▶ Demonstrated ability in working with Aboriginal community members
- ▶ Proven ability to use computer technology
- ▶ Knowledge of current trends in professional growth initiatives
- ▶ Proven ability to coordinate and collaborate with educators within the district and in other jurisdictions
- ▶ Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- ▶ Experience developing school and district-wide plans for Professional Development
- ▶ Successful experience in event and workshop facilitation

Relationships

- ▶ The coordinator will report to the Superintendent of Schools

APPENDIX D

Acknowledgement

Many people collaborated on the development of this Enhancement Agreement.

Special thanks to the 2011-2012 Aboriginal Education Advisory Council members and to the students that have contributed to this process.

- 
- Shelly Johnson ▪
- Sarah Hook-Nilsson ▪
- Cassidy Fraser ▪
- Brizah Frank ▪
- Dustin Billwiller ▪
- Kayla Windsor ▪
- Wesley Hardisty ▪
- Shasta Steadman ▪
- Ellie Langford Parks ▪
- Brendan Hardisty ▪
- Annette Witteman ▪
- Bonnie MacGillvray ▪
- Carol Arnold ▪
- Connie Moulton ▪
- Jeff Hopkins ▪
- Elder Jim Spencer ▪
- John Aiken ▪
- Jessica Wood ▪
- Lorna Fraser ▪
- Martin Blakesley ▪
- Shannon Shields ▪
- Tracey Braiden ▪
- Yarrow Sheehan ▪
- Lyall Ruehlen ▪
- Jasmine Klebe ▪
- Tessa Scott ▪
- Jorian Velthuisen ▪
- Weston Abbott-Arcan ▪
- Claire O'Donnell ▪
- Kachina Small Wolf ▪
- Jeannine Goergeson ▪
- "I, The Wave Walker,
Jim Spencer inherit the right
to communicate through Raven
from my great grandmother
Annizlaga Hunt, nee Ebits"*

APPENDIX E

Memorandum of Agreement

We, the undersigned, acknowledge and honour our collective responsibilities for the success of all Aboriginal learners attending schools in the Gulf Islands School District.

SIGNATORIES



[Handwritten signature]
Elder, Aboriginal Education Advisory Council

[Handwritten signature]
British Columbia Ministry of Education

[Handwritten signature]
Student Representation

[Handwritten signature]
Parent Representation

[Handwritten signature]
Superintendent, Gulf Islands School District

[Handwritten signature]
District Coordinator, Aboriginal Education; Chairperson,
Aboriginal Education Advisory Council

[Handwritten signature]
Trustee Representative, Gulf Islands Board of Education

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Gulf Islands Teachers Association

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School District No. 64 CUPE Representative