



School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)

# ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT

September 2014 - June 2019

*“Our vision for Aboriginal students is to have a balance between academic performance and Aboriginal culture and identity that will foster the value of lifelong learning.”*

– Aboriginal Education Council

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

# ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT

between

Comox Valley Aboriginal Education Council

and

School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)

and the

Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia

We, the undersigned, in recognition of our shared responsibility to improve the quality of education of Aboriginal students in School District 71 (Comox Valley), agree that the terms of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement enhance the basis of Aboriginal education programs and services of School District 71 (Comox Valley) for the period of September 2014 - June 2019.

 K'ómoks First Nation	 K'ómoks First Nation	 Chairperson, Aboriginal Education Council
 Ministry of Education	 Chairperson, Board of Education School District 71 (Comox Valley)	 Superintendent School District 71 (Comox Valley)
 Elder, K'ómoks First Nation	 Wachay Friendship Centre	 Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry
 North Island College	 MIKI'SIW Metis Association	 Comox Valley Aboriginal Head Start
 School Board Trustee Liaison	 Comox District Teachers Association	 Aboriginal Parent Representative (0-5 yrs old child)
 Aboriginal Parent Representative (school aged child)	 Aboriginal Parent Representative (school aged child)	 Aboriginal Parent Representative (school aged child)
 Aboriginal Parent Representative (school aged child)	 Aboriginal Parent Representative (school aged child)	

• Dated the 16th day of December, 2013 •



Wachay Friendship Centre

## Table of Contents

1. Preamble.....	1
2. Vision .....	1
3. Background .....	2
4. Purpose.....	4
5. Process .....	5
6. Goals.....	6
7. Implementation.....	14
8. Acknowledgments.....	15
9. Annual Review.....	16
Appendix A: Expectations .....	17
Goal 1 - Sense of Belonging.....	17
Goal 2 - Academic Success.....	17
Goal 3 - Awareness .....	18
Goal 4 - Student Leadership .....	18
Appendix B: Table.....	19
Appendix C: Aboriginal Curriculum Support Teacher Position Description.....	20
Appendix D: EFP Principles of Learning .....	22



---

*Photo of 2014  
Agreement Signees*

---



ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT 2014 to 2019





## 1. Preamble

It is recognized that School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) operates on the traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation. The Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) will contribute to and influence the Achievement Contract of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley), the District Literacy Plan and school growth plans. The Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) acknowledges the collective responsibility of the Aboriginal community and School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) for the success of all Aboriginal learners.

The AEC is made up of delegated representatives of the K'ómoks First Nation, the Wachiay Friendship Centre, the MIKI'SIW Metis Association, Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry, Comox Valley Aboriginal Head Start, North Island College, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) Board of Education Trustee Liaison, elected parents/guardians of Aboriginal students, an elected parent/guardian of an Aboriginal child 0-5 years, Comox District Teachers' Association (CDTA) teacher representative and invited Elders.

## 2. Vision

Our vision for Aboriginal students is to have a balance between academic performance and Aboriginal culture and identity that will foster the value of lifelong learning.

### The AEC Believes in:

- honouring the traditional territory of the K'ómoks people and recognizing the importance of their leadership role in Aboriginal Education;
- sharing our world view we take a leading role in education;
- exercising our right to participate in the decisions affecting Aboriginal children and their families;
- a shared responsibility to provide quality education for our children and families
- involving parents at all levels;
- respecting and honouring the cultural diversity within the Aboriginal community;
- continuous learning to improve the quality of life;
- the validity of Aboriginal (knowledge) ways of knowing;
- striving for unity of one voice as a Council;
- open and respectful communication at all levels;
- the permanence of Aboriginal culture and rights.



### 3. Background

In 1992 the K'omoks First Nation and School District 71 hired two part-time staff to conduct research on the number of First Nations students in the community. A tutor was also hired to support elementary students. The result of the research was presented to the Board of Trustees. As a result, an Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee was established, which also led to increasing the staff to two Home-School Support Workers and two tutors.

The first Advisory Committee was established and made up of School District Administrators, staff and a Comox Band representative. During the early years of the committee, the following recommendations were made: increase the hours for the tutor, Change the names of the Tutors to Aids, Hire a District Resource Teacher, and Establish an Advisory Committee and Continue to identify First Nation Students.

In 1993 the Comox Band offered a Teacher Aide training program and two additional Aides were hired by the School District. The First Nation population in schools was documented at 260 students. In 1994, the Aboriginal student population had increased to 353. As a result, seven Teacher Aides, two Support Workers and one District Resource Teacher were hired.

From 1995 to 2000 the Advisory Committee continued to meet and grow. In 2000, the first teacher was hired to work with students in grade 1-3 and the Aboriginal





Alternate program for secondary students, Nala'tsi, opened its doors. There was also continued support for the cultural needs of students through the hiring of a Cultural Resource Aid and Teacher. The Advisory Committee changed its name to the Aboriginal Education Council and developed a Terms of Reference and in January 2001 the Performance Improvement was drafted. Soon after, the AEC held their first Aboriginal Community meeting and an Aboriginal Protocol and Guidelines were developed.

On October 4, 2001 our first Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) was signed between the Ministry of Education, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) and the Aboriginal community represented by the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC). This was a five year agreement with 14 goals to improve the success of Aboriginal students and to reduce the gap between performance of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in our school district.

In March of 2008 the second AEEA was signed. This was a culmination of two years of work and was a significantly different process. It was much more inclusive of the Aboriginal community, families and student voice. The school district Board of Education, Senior Management, the AEC and Aboriginal Education staff provided guidance and leadership in the process.

In January of 2013, to facilitate community and school district consultations for the third AEEA, an online survey was created and placed on the district website. Also, four community gatherings were held across our community, school talking circles and student leadership groups had input on the survey questions, and Aboriginal Education staff held discussions. Each consultation provided a focus on setting the new goals and expectations for the next five years.





## 4. Purpose

An Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) is designed to enhance the educational success of Aboriginal students. It is a working agreement between our school district, all local Aboriginal communities, and the Ministry of Education designed to improve Aboriginal student success. The AEEA also establishes a collaborative partnership between Aboriginal communities and school districts that involves governance, shared decision making and specific goal setting to meet the educational needs of Aboriginal students.

AEEAs highlight the importance of academic performance and stress the integral nature of Aboriginal traditional culture to Aboriginal student development and success. Fundamental to AEEAs is the requirement that school districts provide strong programs on the culture of local First Nations' Peoples on whose traditional territories the districts are located.

### Enhancement Agreements:

- provide Aboriginal communities and districts greater autonomy to find solutions that work for Aboriginal students, the schools and the communities; and require a high level of respect and trust to function;
- are working documents that are developed for a five year period and provide goals that are reviewed /assessed regularly to determine progress;
- include actions that are assessed frequently during the term of the agreements to determine their effectiveness and are adjusted as needed.







## 5. Process

In January of 2013 the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) determined that community, family, student and staff input would be invited through online surveys, four community gatherings: meeting with Comox Valley Aboriginal Head Start parents; in Aboriginal student leadership and Seventh Generation groups; in classrooms with Elders; and in Aboriginal Education teacher and support staff professional development days and meetings.

The following survey questions were developed: What does success in school mean to you? What will support Aboriginal student success in school? What does success in life mean to you? Target groups were Elders and Aboriginal community members, past and present Aboriginal students, parents/guardians of pre-school Aboriginal students, parents/guardians of Aboriginal students, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) Board of Education and Senior Management, School Administrators, Teachers, Aboriginal Support Workers (ASW) and Aboriginal Home Support Workers (AHSW).

Over 2,000 individual responses were collected, analyzed and collated into themes by a working group of the AEC. Four distinct themes became evident: Sense of Belonging; Academic Success; Awareness of First Nations; Metis and Inuit history and culture for all students and Aboriginal student leadership.

The exact wording for the four goals was articulated by the AEC and then district Aboriginal teachers and support staff worked within the format of the school district Achievement Contract to develop the areas of: Expectations, Actions and Evaluation for each goal. The interconnectedness of the four goals is evidenced in the use of a cedar weaving as a symbol of strengthening relationships, protection, and inclusiveness and provides visual meaning to the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement for School District No. 71 (Comox Valley).





## 6. Goals

### Goal 1 – To increase every Aboriginal student’s sense of belonging, cultural identity and self-esteem

#### RATIONALE

In 2011-2012 43% of grade 4 and 48% of grade 7 Aboriginal students reported they do like school. This drops to 36% of Aboriginal students in grade 10 and 41% in grade 12. Continuing to allocate gathering places in all schools for hosting lunches, welcoming families, community Elders and speakers, providing academic support and facilitating student activities, is believed to have made a difference and is central to a sense of belonging for Aboriginal students. Other students are being welcomed to share in the food and gatherings and have increasingly become involved.

Role models, Elders, and community cultural presenters are appreciated by families for their cultural teachings. A visible presence in schools is desirable, inclusive and honouring.

#### EXPECTATIONS

As shown by our metaphor of the woven cedar, we recognize that our goals are connected and dependent on each other. As such, how the goals are measured is part of one larger way of assessing our growth over the five years of this agreement. The expectations are displayed to show how they will be used in each of the goal areas and in some instances in more than one

goal area to provide evidence of progress for Aboriginal students. Baseline data will be collected, analyzed and a five year target will be set. Expectation tools and data will be analyzed and reviewed annually. Expectations are provided in Appendix A and B.





**POSSIBLE ACTIONS: (which will be evaluated and reviewed annually)**

1. Continue to develop the Learner Engagement Model in classrooms through the elementary Aboriginal Curriculum Support Teachers (ACST) model. *\*See appendix C*
2. Continue to follow the First Peoples Principles of Learning. *\*See appendix D*
3. Aboriginal authored resources presented to schools with a school based, in-service model.
4. Make Aboriginal content resources accessible to classrooms through advocacy and promotion.
5. Implement mentoring activities between schools and within the school.
6. Increase elementary to middle, and intermediary to middle, to secondary transition activities (school visits, luncheons, buddy programs).
7. Create visual expressions of culture in all schools.
8. Invite Aboriginal Elders and cultural presenters in to all schools.
9. Develop an Elder in Residence program.
10. One Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) Award will be developed, to be awarded annually in each school assembly, based on criteria from Goal 1.





## Goal 2 – To increase the academic success of all Aboriginal students through personalized learning

### RATIONALE

In the 2012 *How Are We Doing?* Report the Six Year Dogwood Completion rate for Aboriginal students was 73%, a result of which we are very proud. To continue to meet or exceed this result will be possible by providing academic and personal support one on one, with Aboriginal Support Workers (ASW) and Aboriginal Curriculum Support Teachers (ACST) in classrooms in all elementary schools (refer to Appendix C and D). In middle and secondary schools teams of staff are made up of Aboriginal Support Teachers, ASWs and AHSWs.

An area to focus on is the transition rate for Aboriginal students. The transition rate is 100% until entering grade 12 which then drops to 85% and the six year completion rate declines to 73%. The continuity of service for Aboriginal students throughout their Kindergarten to grade 7 school life has shown an increase in involvement, positive identity and requests for academic or personal support in secondary. It has been indicated that students need a quiet space to go to and study with support, especially in Math and Science. The Aboriginal Support Workers, Home School Support Workers and teachers in Aboriginal Education are seen as advocates for students and their families. Gathering spaces and offices are an integral part of that support. There will be a focus on increasing tracking, support and advocacy for grade 12 students as a role for the District Resource Teachers (secondary).

Survey results indicate that only 34% of grade 10 and 24% of grade 12 Aboriginal students believed that school is preparing them for a job in the future. Only 34% of grade 10 and 29% of grade 12 Aboriginal students felt school prepared them for post-secondary education. Supporting transitions into post-secondary work or trades, by providing information and guidance, is important to increase options and choices in life. Schools can provide knowledge of, and access to, options at post-secondary/in trades/for work earlier to inform students of pathways, prerequisite and relevant courses. Increasingly there could be exposure to culturally influenced careers. Increasing job exploration and work experience in Aboriginal placements was frequently mentioned.

*See Appendix C and D for background on Aboriginal Curriculum Support Teacher (ACST) model and the Key Questions for Learner Engagement poster.*



## EXPECTATIONS

As shown by our metaphor of the woven cedar, we recognize that our goals are connected and dependent on each other. As such, how the goals are measured is part of one larger way of assessing our growth over the five years of this agreement. The expectations are displayed to show how they will be used in each of the goal areas and in some instances in more than one goal area to provide evidence of progress for Aboriginal students. Baseline data will be collected, analyzed and a five year target will be set. Expectation tools and data will be analyzed and reviewed annually. Expectations are provided in Appendix A and B.



## POSSIBLE ACTIONS (which will be evaluated and reviewed annually)

1. Continue to develop the Learner Engagement Model in classrooms through the elementary Aboriginal Curriculum Support Teachers (ACST) model. \*See appendix C
2. Continue to follow the First Peoples Principles of Learning. \*See appendix D
3. Implement district Aboriginal teacher roles to enhance and support all grade 12 Aboriginal students.
4. One Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) Award will be developed, to be awarded annually in each schools award assembly, based on criteria from Goal 2
5. Increased information sharing before, during and after relevant school meetings between educational stakeholders, Aboriginal students and their families.
6. Continue to improve the transition plan for Aboriginal students entering Kindergarten and the Aboriginal K/1 program.
7. Hold an annual information night for parents of Aboriginal students entering Kindergarten.
8. Increase secondary student visits to post-secondary sites, Aboriginal information events, career fairs and host local information sessions and advisor visits locally.
9. Develop and host an annual Grade 9-12 Aboriginal Family & Student Information Night. Include accessible (published print and web-based) resources.
11. Develop a FAQ sheet and online resource for families and students in secondary schools.



## Goal 3 – To increase the awareness and understanding of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit history, traditions and culture for all students

### RATIONALE

The satisfaction survey for School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) asked non-Aboriginal students if they are being taught about Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. Their responses dropped from 75% of grade 4's, are to 14% of grade 7's, 40% of grade 10's and 16% of grade 12's.

The inclusion of First Nations, Metis and Inuit history, traditions and culture in all curriculum areas and at every grade, welcoming Elders and cultural presenters and including library resources is integral in the building of understanding. Inclusion increases awareness by reducing stereotyping and discrimination based on a lack of information. By increasing understanding and awareness, we believe Aboriginal students will become more successful in our school district.

### EXPECTATIONS

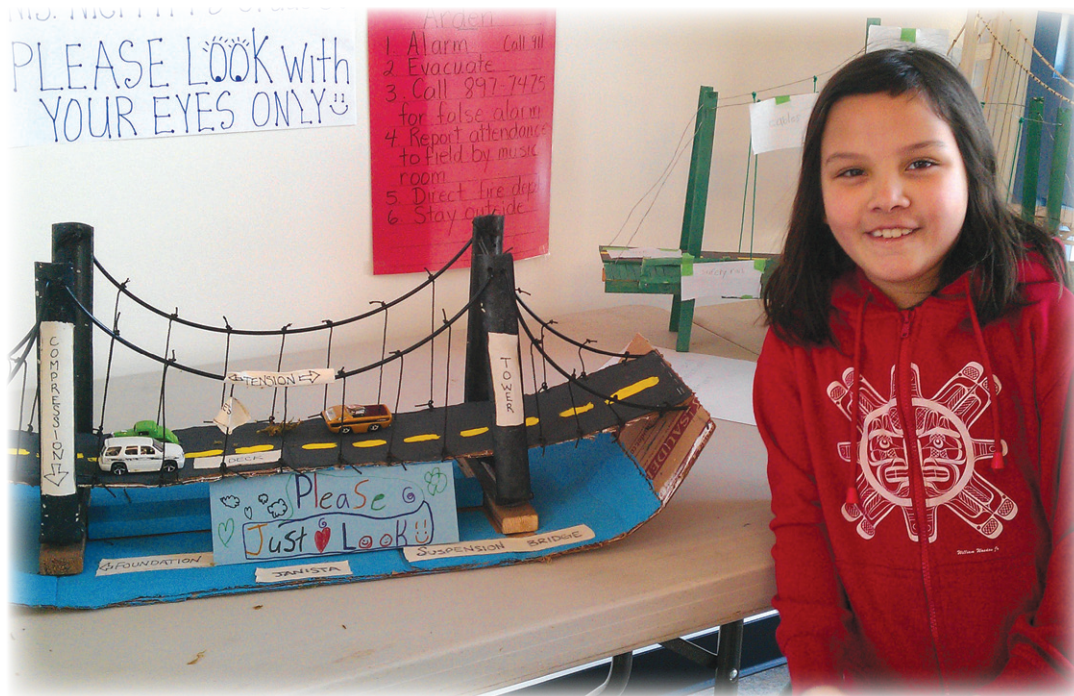
As shown by our metaphor of the woven cedar, we recognize that our goals are connected and dependent on each other. As such, how the goals are measured is part of one larger way of assessing our growth over the five years of this agreement. The expectations are displayed to show how they will be used in each of the goal areas and in some instances in more than one goal area to provide evidence of progress for Aboriginal students. Baseline data will be collected, analyzed and a five year target will be set. Expectation tools and data will be analyzed and reviewed annually. Expectations are provided in Appendix A and B.





**POSSIBLE ACTIONS (which will be evaluated and reviewed annually)**

1. Promote content specific courses in all secondary schools: First Peoples English 10, 11 and 12, BC First Nations Studies 12, locally developed Language 8/9, locally developed Humanities 8/9 and Socials 10 with Aboriginal focus.
2. Provide cultural awareness and inclusion through Aboriginal Curriculum Support Teacher (ACST) roles by integrating content, developing experiential activities, supporting teacher awareness of Aboriginal content, describing and promoting availability of Aboriginal teacher resources, and modeling Aboriginal principles of learning.
3. Provide cultural awareness through Aboriginal cultural support – community cultural presentations, Elders in schools, connections to cultural resources, and experiential learning opportunities (i.e. storytelling, nature-survival walks).
4. Implement *Professional Partnership-Professional Learning Communities* with district teachers with the purpose—  
“To increase student engagement through experiential learning opportunities based upon First Peoples Principles of Learning.”
5. One Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) Award will be developed, to be awarded annually in assemblies at each school, based on criteria from Goal 3.





## Goal 4 – To increase Aboriginal students’ skills, qualities and confidence in leadership

### RATIONALE

The development and advocacy for leadership within the Aboriginal student population is important to students, families, Elders, Aboriginal Education staff and the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) representing the community. This goal was introduced in 2008 and has driven Seventh Generation Clubs in many elementary schools as well as secondary Aboriginal leadership councils, student lead assemblies, inter and intra-school buddy programs. Transition plans are made for, and facilitated by, secondary Aboriginal students in welcoming events for elementary Aboriginal students at all receiving secondary schools.

There is a strong response to continue and interconnect at all levels of governance from student councils to the AEC. It is strongly believed that leadership opportunities enhance students’ self-esteem and confidence in stepping up to help, organize and lead. In this way students learn to have a voice.

### EXPECTATIONS

As shown by our metaphor of the woven cedar, we recognize that our goals are connected and dependent on each other. As such, how the goals are measured is part of one larger way of assessing our growth over the five years of this agreement. The expectations are displayed to show how they will be used in each of the goal areas and in some instances in more than one goal area to provide evidence of progress for Aboriginal students. Baseline data will be collected, analyzed and a five year target will be set. Expectation tools and data will be analyzed and reviewed annually. Expectations are provided in Appendix A and B.







**POSSIBLE ACTIONS: (which will be evaluated and reviewed annually)**

1. Advocate for, and increase, Aboriginal student leadership opportunities in schools, at district events and in the community.
2. Schools will host opportunities for Aboriginal student leadership or the Seventh Generation Club.
3. Provide student leadership groups with opportunities to collaborate with other levels of governance.
4. Local Elders will be invited to articulate protocols relevant for schools, community gatherings and talking circles and Aboriginal students will be taught protocols.
5. One Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) Award will be developed, to be awarded annually in every school assembly, based on criteria from Goal 4.
6. Increase the number of school and district gatherings Aboriginal students participate in which provide opportunities to witness and share stories of knowledge and understanding. (e.g. The Village workshop, Suicide Prevention Awareness workshop, Giving Voice workshops, community dinners, Recognition Ceremony)
7. Develop a mentoring program to support Aboriginal elementary students transitioning into secondary schools.
8. Support inter and intra-school buddy programs which engage secondary Aboriginal students with elementary Aboriginal students.





## 7. Implementation

This third Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) will be in effect from September 2014 until June 2019. The 2014-15 school year will be the baseline year unless otherwise stated. The 2015-16 school year will be the first performance year unless otherwise stated. The AEEA will contribute to and influence the Achievement Contract of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley), the District Literacy Plan, and school growth plans.





## 8. Acknowledgments

Thank you to the Elders, students, family members in our Aboriginal community for your strong voices which are clearly reflected in the goals.

Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) members who participated and contributed to the development process:

Jill Beech	Wachiay Friendship Centre
Bruce Carlos	District Principal, Aboriginal Education, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)
Sherry Elwood	Superintendent of Schools, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)
Cindy Frank	Parent representative
Nicole Gagnon	Parent representative
Kathleen Hawksby	Under 5 parent representative
Rhonda Loughead	Parent representatives
Bryce Mercredi	MIKI'SIW Metis Association
Pam Moore	Comox Valley Aboriginal Head Start
Fernanda Pare	K'ómoks First Nation
Fran Prince	K'ómoks First Nation
Paula Selby	Board of Education Trustee Liaison, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)
Kelly Shopland	North Island College
Steve Stanley	President, Comox District Teachers' Association (CDTA)
Danielle VanDerMolen	Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry
Barb Whyte	Invited Elder

Special thanks to Aboriginal Education staff for their assistance in the development of this Agreement;

Suzanne Camp, *Cultural Resource Aide*  
Sallie Crawford, *Senior Admin Assistant*  
Melissa Litke, *Curriculum Support Teacher*  
Ken Lees, *District Support Teacher*

Gail Martindale, *District Support Teacher*  
April Shopland, *Home Support Worker*  
Lynn Swift, *Curriculum Support Teacher*



## 9. Annual Review

The expectations established in this process will be re-assessed annually and five year targets will be set by School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) and the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) to ensure that they remain reasonable and attainable. The AEC will provide recommendations for program enhancements and budget allocations. Any changes in the enhancement targets or expectations, resulting from the annual review, will be promptly conveyed to the Ministry of Education.

The annual report on the performance of Aboriginal students in School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) will be created each year in collaboration with our school district partners and collected into a document by the District Principal of Aboriginal Education to be submitted to the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC), School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) Board of Education and the Ministry of Education.





## Appendix A: Expectations

### Goal 1 – Sense of Belonging

#### DISTRICT LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Satisfaction survey results
- ✓ Learning resource centre and school library tracking databases
- ✓ District <http://www.sd71.bc.ca/> and
- ✓ Aboriginal Education website <http://www2.sd71.bc.ca/abed/>

#### SCHOOL LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Attendance in events
- ✓ Student photo journals
- ✓ School newsletter articles/photos
- ✓ Develop honouring criteria and record recipients of award

#### ACTION EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Participation in community events
- ✓ Presentations
- ✓ Elder visits
- ✓ Elder program involvement

### Goal 2 – Academic Success

#### DISTRICT EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Grade to grade transition rates
- ✓ Six year completion rates
- ✓ Satisfaction surveys

#### SCHOOL LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Grade 12 attendance
- ✓ Grade 12 marks
- ✓ Develop honouring criteria and record recipients of award

#### ACTION EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Attendance at events (post-secondary transition)
- ✓ Participation in buddy activities
- ✓ Participation



### Goal 3 – Awareness

#### DISTRICT LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Course completion
- ✓ Satisfaction surveys

#### SCHOOL LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Telling our stories reporting
- ✓ Attendance in events
- ✓ Develop honouring criteria and record recipients of award

#### ACTION EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Student reflections
- ✓ Elder visits
- ✓ Presentations

### Goal 4 – Student Leadership

#### SCHOOL LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Develop honouring criteria and record recipients of awards
- ✓ Attendance at 7th Generation Club gatherings
- ✓ Attendance at Aboriginal Student Leadership gatherings

#### ACTION LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Attendance at events





# Appendix B: Expectations

Expectations	Sense of Belonging	Academic Success	Awareness for All Students	Leadership
Satisfaction Survey Results				
LRC & School Library Databases				
District Websites				
Anecdotal Observations				
Grade to Grade Transitions				
Dogwood Completion Rates				
Transition to Post-Secondary				
School AEEA Awards				
Course Completion				
Aboriginal Presentations				
Participation in Events				
Formative & Summative Assessments (CST model)				





## Appendix C: Aboriginal Curriculum Support Teacher position description

The Aboriginal Curriculum Support Teacher (ACST) in School District No. 71 (Co-mox Valley) is a position that supports learning about Aboriginal content, history and culture in our schools to all students. By working side by side with the classroom teacher, the ACST provides instructional strategies to help all students have ownership and engagement of their learning. More specifically, the ACST helps the classroom teacher and students connect their learnings in the classroom to the Aboriginal content integrated into their curriculum.

The ACST uses a variety of assessment for learning strategies to determine the needs of the class, formulate a plan and work side by side with all students and the teacher within the classroom. This position is not a pull out or learning assistance model. Prior to entering the classroom in a conversation with the classroom teacher, the topic area connecting Aboriginal Principles of Learning with the classroom curriculum content is agreed upon. The classroom content can be any subject area such as Math, Language Arts, Physical Education, Social Studies, and Science. In the classroom, the ACST is striving for all student engagement by applying Experiential Learning, Assessment for Learning Strategies (e.g. stating learning intentions, co-constructing criteria, providing descriptive feedback, asking questions) and explicit teaching and thinking strategies such as inferring, connecting, and visualizing.

In our school district, Curriculum Support Teachers (CST) were created and placed in every elementary school to support teachers in teaching diversity, using assessment for learning strategies and teaching thinking strategies. When the ACSTs were created it was a natural fit to work with this group as the goal of teaching diversity and best teaching practice was the same. The support teachers meet regularly as a model of a Professional Learning group and the two ACSTs along with the Director of Instruction, the Literacy and Numeracy lead teachers and district Librarian collaborate to organize these meetings. Our ongoing goal is to weave the Aboriginal Principles of Learning into these meetings.

*Written by Lynn Swift, ACST, SD71*





# Key Questions for Learner Engagement



Practice asking these three key questions of a range of learners.

## What are you learning?

- Check for the difference between **DOING** and **LEARNING**.
- Listen for deep understanding, relevance and connections to other areas of learning, as well as to life outside school.
- Don't hesitate to probe if the first response is superficial or hasty. This may be new for some learners.

## How is it (your learning) going?

- Does the learner have clear criteria for success?
- Does the learner understand the criteria? Can he or she explain it in their own words?
- Can he or she articulate their strengths and weaknesses related to this particular learning challenge?

## Where to next?

- Does the learner have a clear picture of what to do to improve?
- Are the steps specific? Doable?

Halbert and Kaser 2010



## Appendix D: English First Peoples Principles of Learning



FIRST  
PEOPLES

# PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.

Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

Learning involves patience and time.

Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.



For First Peoples  
classroom resources  
visit: [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca)





School District 71 (Comox Valley)

# Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement 2014 - 2019

A large circular artwork contained within a woven basket. The artwork features a variety of cultural symbols: a bison, a bald eagle, a beaver, a canoe, a totem pole, a dreamcatcher, a colorful flower, a wooden structure, a sun, and a central circular logo. The basket is decorated with green sprigs on the left side.

Signing Ceremony  
December 16, 2013

Artwork by Tami Compton, Lillian Daniels Phil Umpherville, Letitia Pokiak, Suzanne Camp, Andy Everson



Aboriginal Education Services

SD No.71 (Comox Valley)  
665 16th Street  
Courtenay, BC V9N 1X6

[www.sd71.bc.ca/abed](http://www.sd71.bc.ca/abed)

Tel: 250-331-4040  
Fax: 250-331-4041