



Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

School District 87 (Stikine)

2010 – 2015



Preamble

Encompassing 188,034 square kilometres, School District 87 (Stikine) is, geographically, the largest School District in the province. Large distances, within a subarctic climate, separate its isolated communities. The Tahltan, Tlingit and Kaska people are the original Nations of the region, which today is home to approximately 200 Aboriginal (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) learners. Aboriginal learners represent about 70% of the total school population. Most of these young people are members of the Tahltan, Kaska Dene and Tlingit Nations, and reside in Telegraph Creek, Dease Lake, Iskut, Good Hope Lake, Lower Post and Atlin. The First Nations, the School District and the Ministry of Education have built the consensus represented by this Agreement and each is committed to improving the quality of life for Aboriginal learners in School District 87 (Stikine). The implementation of the Agreement involves shared decision making among all of the participant groups and a commitment to work collaboratively and within trusting partnerships to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal learners

The parties to this agreement are:

Daylu Dena Council

Dease River First Nation

Iskut Band Council

Tahltan Band Council

Taku River Tlingit First Nation

School District 87 (Stikine)

British Columbia Ministry of Education



Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is to ensure high levels of emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual success for Aboriginal learners. This will be accomplished by:

- respecting the right of all Aboriginal learners to receive a quality education in the public school system;
- providing a framework for partners to share decision making and to find solutions which will be effective for Aboriginal learners;
- promoting collaborative partnerships with shared responsibility, accountability, shared vision, common understandings, respect and trust amongst all partners;
- honouring and supporting the revitalization of the languages, cultures, histories and traditions of the Aboriginal peoples whose traditional territories are served by School District 87;
- creating a climate in schools that is welcoming, safe, respectful and builds self esteem for Aboriginal learners and their families; and
- a commitment from educators, learners, First Nations and communities to include cultural education as a means to enhance the intellectual, spiritual, physical and emotional success of Aboriginal learners.



Guiding Principles

To ensure high levels of emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual success for Aboriginal Learners we believe:



- Our relationships and behaviour will be based on the following values:

Trust
Respect
Support
Empathy and understanding
Caring and sharing

- We can all learn from one another.
- Input from Aboriginal communities is an essential component when decisions, which affect Aboriginal learners, are to be made.
- We all have a contribution to make and a role to play in the education of Aboriginal Learners.

We also believe it is important to:



- honour and acknowledge the people, traditional territory, history, languages and cultural diversity of the First Nations within School District #87 (Stikine);
- incorporate the traditional teachings of the Elders, the wisdom and intrinsic value of their culture;
- promote a learning environment where Aboriginal learners feel confident and proud of their ancestry, feel safe, respected and experience a positive sense of place and belonging;
- promote and support educational opportunities beyond the school and community that enhance and expand educational success;
- develop shared responsibility and ownership, and mutual respect through ongoing dialogue and strong relationships that recognize the cultural identity and diverse needs of Aboriginal learners;

- hold high expectations for all Aboriginal learners; and
- understand the necessity for differences in approaches to learning and assessment for individuals.



First Nations Support & Cooperation:

- The development of language and culture resources will be primarily the responsibility of the First Nations. The School District will work with the First Nations to support and encourage the development of language and cultural curricula, and employ language instructors where possible.
- First Nations will support and assist the School District in ensuring that all learners will have access to healthy food.
- All parties will continue to strengthen coordination and communication between First Nations and community programs and School District programs to achieve the goals of this agreement.



Process

The current process of developing an Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement began with a series of community meetings held in September 2007. All trustees and the Superintendent of Schools attended these meeting to gather input from each community.

A Writing Team comprised of a representative from each community along with a Principal and a teacher, was assembled. Four meetings were held during 2008 and 2009, during which members co-operated to produce a draft agreement that reflected the input from the communities, school staffs, students and the Ministry of Education. In September and October, 2008 a draft of the Enhancement Agreement was taken to the Communities for further input, which was included in the next draft. The Ministry of Education was present at a meeting of the Writing Team and the initial round of community meetings.



Enhancement Goals

Success for Aboriginal learners is defined by the realization of the following goals, and accomplishments both within and beyond the community.



Goal

To improve the academic success of all Aboriginal learners



Objectives

- **Aboriginal learners will show improvement in reading, writing and numeracy.**
- **Aboriginal learners will achieve success according to their educational goals and career plans.**

Performance indicators:



Graduation rate

District Wide Write

Performance Standards Assessments

Provincial Examinations

Individual Education Program goal attainment

Grade 11/12 graduation (percentage of learners entering grade 11 who graduate within three years)



Transitions to Post Secondary Training Programs

Baselines will be developed in the first year of the Agreement and annual targets will be established on an annual basis.

Goal

To increase awareness and knowledge of Aboriginal history, traditions, culture and language; and to uphold and strengthen the inherent respect for and connection to the land



In this context spirituality is derived from a deep sense of belonging to the land and the environment, belonging to one's culture, and to others who share the land and the culture. Aboriginal spirituality is a connectedness to all life.

Objectives

- **Aboriginal learners will participate in cultural activities on the land.**
- **Aboriginal learners will learn their local culture within their traditional communities.**
- **All learners will understand Aboriginal history, and broaden their knowledge and awareness of the history of other Aboriginal peoples within School District #87 (Stikine).**
- **Aboriginal learners will increase their appreciation for, and fluency in their language.**



Performance indicators:

- We will continue to look for or develop indicators for language acquisition and respect for and understanding of culture. Community service providers will be involved in identifying appropriate indicators.



Baselines will be developed in the first year of the Agreement and annual targets will be established on an annual basis.

Goal

To improve the physical wellbeing of Aboriginal learners



Objectives

- All learners will make informed and healthy choices about nutritional foods, recreational drugs, alcohol and lifestyle; and the negative effects of making unhealthy choices.
- All learners will participate in sports and traditional activities.

Performance indicators:

- We will continue to look for appropriate ways to measure the health of Aboriginal learners, including the use of survey responses from learners. Health and community service providers will be involved in identifying appropriate indicators.

Baselines will be developed in the first year of the Agreement and annual targets will be established on an annual basis.



Goal

To increase the sense of belonging, identity, and self esteem in a caring and inclusive environment for all Aboriginal learners

Objectives



- All learners will have a sense of belonging and pride within themselves.
- All Aboriginal learners will feel safe and respected in the school environment, and confident that they can safely express their views.
- Aboriginal learners will experience success and a feeling of accomplishment, which builds self-esteem.
- Aboriginal learners will know their tribal and clan history, their genealogy and traditional teachings.
- Aboriginal learners will be leaders in their community.



Performance indicators:

Satisfaction surveys (with added questions)

Success beyond the community

Social Responsibility Performance Standards



Baselines will be developed in the first year of the Agreement and annual targets will be established on an annual basis.

Governance of the Enhancement Agreement

An Aboriginal Education Steering Committee representing all First Nations and School District personnel will be established. The interests of all off-reserve Tahltan learners will be represented by the Tahltan Band Council. The role of the Steering Committee is to oversee the implementation of this agreement by co-operating with and supporting the School District to ensure: high levels of emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual success for Aboriginal learners; shared decision making; and shared responsibility and accountability. They will also foster relationship building, and provide feedback to the District. At the beginning of each school year a report will be prepared by the Aboriginal Education Steering Committee to provide an update on progress with respect to the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement goals, and to recommend priorities and strategies for the new year.

It will be the responsibility of all parties to ensure that strategies are viable, relevant and implemented, and that appropriate assessment is planned to meet emerging needs. It will also be a collective responsibility to ensure that students, parents, communities and school staffs are engaged in the planning and implementation of yearly plans.

