

# DEEPENING INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AND EQUITY:

Supporting the Wholistic Success of Indigenous Learners, Families, and Communities in  
Maple Ridge - Pitt Meadows School District No.42



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Deepening Indigenous education: Supporting the Wholistic Success of Indigenous Learners, Families and  
Communities in Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows School District 42

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## OUR HANDS ARE HELD HIGH

We wish to show our reverence to the Katzie First Nation and Kwantlen First Nation, whose traditional, unceded and overlapping territories are occupied by School District 42: Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows.

We respectfully acknowledge the many Nations and communities who are represented by the urban Indigenous, Métis and Inuit communities that currently reside on Katzie and Kwantlen territories.

We are grateful to all the Indigenous Rights Holders who shared their stories, teachings, experiences, connections, expertise, concerns and hopes with us as we developed this living document.

We are aware that this type of consultation with Indigenous Rights Holders is vital. It also comes with a cost which often results in time away from supporting family and community priorities. We also recognize that there is an emotional toll for those who courageously shared their stories of trauma, racism, lateral violence and intersecting forms of oppression related to colonial violence. This report is intended to support the deepening of Indigenous education and equity in School District 42 so that these stories can be heard, felt, understood and acted upon.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“I was reading a booklet [on the provincial equity project] and it said that this started in 2015 or 2016. I was just wondering when do you think we’ll see a change? Or, a call to action? (Indigenous Elementary Student, School District 42)

The salient words from a Grade 6 student that introduce the executive summary are vital to remember and act upon if we are to dismantle our inherited colonial systems in order to support the wholistic well-being of all learners.

It is important to honour decades of activism by the Katzie and Kwantlen First Nations who have worked tirelessly to improve the educational wellbeing of Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners in School District 42 with great strength, humility, dignity, patience, courage, and respect. We also acknowledge the diverse Indigenous families (including members of the Métis Nation) who now reside on Katzie and Kwantlen territories, as well as the organizations (Fraser River Indigenous Society and Golden Ears Métis Society) who have assisted in moving these values and priorities forward with their collective voices in recent years. This report also highlights the stories of many non-Indigenous district personnel who are grappling with their personal and professional responsibilities to learn how to recognize and dismantle deeply entrenched patterns of Indigenous racism, structural oppression and colonialism in the district.

The Deepening Indigenous Education and Equity to Support the Wholistic Success of Indigenous Learners, Families and Communities in School District 42 living report focuses on three key questions:

- How can we deepen ongoing efforts in Indigenous education to collaborate with all stakeholders in School District 42 to critically examine district policies, governance structures, practices, curriculum, programs, initiatives, and Indigenous community engagement mechanisms to identify promising practices and systemic barriers that are impacting equitable outcomes for Indigenous learners?
- How can we collaborate with school district personnel to begin implementing equity and anti-Indigenous racism strategies in district policies, governance structures, practices, curriculum, programs, initiatives, and Indigenous community engagement mechanisms to enhance the wholistic success of diverse Indigenous learners, families, and communities in School District 42?
- How can we collaborate with stakeholders to develop a model of Indigenous education for School District 42 that includes the cultural diversity of Indigenous learners, families, and communities that are represented in the school district?

The review team from the Faculties of Education at the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University engaged Indigenous methodologies in our research process by employing multiple research methods to undertake the research for this living report. Our research process began by developing relationships with the Aboriginal education department, senior district staff and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to support the development of the research design and questions. The research methods included:

1. A Qualitative and Quantitative Review
2. Individual and Paired Interviews
3. Sharing Circles
4. World café focus groups
5. Research Team Debriefs and Reflections
6. Indigenous Professional Leadership Circle
7. Indigenous Knowledge Holder Verification

## Findings

The report findings are grouped into eight broad strands according to the research questions asked. The strands include: (1) Indigenous Educational Governance; (2) Indigenous Knowledges: Teaching, Learning and Assessment;

(3) Engaging Colonialism; (4) Indigenous Specific Racism and Responses; (5) School District Strategic Plan, School Growth Plans and Policies; (6) Professional Development; (7) Transitions; (8) District Alternate Continuing Education/Connected Learning Community Remote Learning Sharing Circle. The recommendations are embedded throughout the living report (please see Appendix A for a list of compiled recommendations).

## Recommendations

In total, 97 recommendations emerged from the empirical findings that were shared from stakeholders in the research for this report. In follow up conversations with district personnel after reading the draft version of the report, the enormity, weight, and complexity involved with the planning required for the implementation of the report's recommendations often brought forward palpable feelings of overwhelm (most notably expressed by district personnel in leadership roles and the District Board of Trustees). Further conversation and questions often unfolded with the research team related to the intricacies and commitment involved in successfully carrying out the recommendations by district personnel. Indigenous Rights Holders generally expressed stronger positive feelings about the implementation of the recommendations; and in most cases celebrated them. For example, two respected Indigenous Knowledge Holders stated that the report and its recommendations "are our educational Delgamuukw and what we have been waiting for in this district." In some instances, Indigenous Rights Holders added further recommendations. Appendix C has intentionally been created to support district leadership in developing a plan for the implementation of the report's recommendations. Appendix C is comprised of the feedback that the research team received from stakeholders between January 2022 and May 2022 for the living draft of the report. The research team felt it was important to: track any suggested revisions; priorities for existing recommendations; and the addition of new recommendations shared by stakeholders for the final version of the report. It is important to highlight that not all recommendations can be implemented within a short time frame, but they offer a clear vision forward in terms of next steps. A number of recommendations will require the district to coordinate, negotiate and/or advocate with different parties such as the British Columbia Ministry of Education, the federal government, and the various professional unions that are embedded in the district. The research team has made explicit notes for recommendations where additional coordination, advocacy and/or consultation with other parties may be required. It should also be noted that the complexity involved in completing these recommendations amongst various parties are an opportunity to exemplify decolonizing practices and policies within the district. The willingness and commitment of all parties and stakeholders connected with the district will determine the time frame and feasibility of the implementation of the report's recommendations. Timely updates to Indigenous Rights Holders within the district are required. Progress measurements related to many recommendations can also be noted in the district Strategic Plan, School Growth Plans, and the implementation plan related to this report as measurable goals.

## Conclusion

It is clear from the findings that supporting Indigenous education and anti-Indigenous racism is the responsibility of all stakeholders in the district. Indigenous learners, families, communities, and staff in the district live with racism that is embedded in institutions, practices, policies, governance structures, and every day relational interactions. The strong voices that shared their stories throughout this process have clearly laid out the pathways forward for School District 42. This work will have many complex moments that will require skill, empathy, unlearning/relearning, reflection, courage, and the relinquishing of power to navigate through them. As an institution and a community, it is important for the district to continue learning with Indigenous Rights Holders, the Anti-Racism Working Group and district personnel to collectively decolonize and Indigenize its governance, policies, practices, curriculum, programs and initiatives. The district's enactment of the report's recommendations will demonstrate a transparent and authentic commitment to Indigenous education, while addressing anti-Indigenous racism and equity. More importantly, the district will demonstrate that it has indeed heard, felt, understood and acted upon these stories to create the needed change and recommendations that were shared in this living report.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Strand 1: Indigenous Educational Governance

### Reciprocity Recommendations

- On-going and continuous in-service professional development is required to support understandings of colonialism, decolonization, personal bias and critical self-reflective practice for all district personnel. This may include the hiring of additional Aboriginal resource teachers to support pedagogical engagement of colonialism in the classroom.
- Aboriginal education department to continue creating resource bins to support teacher professional development on colonialism and decolonization in local, national and international contexts. It is important for the bins to include diverse representation from First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples. Experiences of colonialism and decolonization can be similar with intersecting qualities while also being different according to each Indigenous group. It is important that this nuance is reflected in the literature and resources that are shared with educators in the Indigenous resource bins.
- Students, Indigenous staff and Indigenous Knowledge Holders at all schools in the district need safer spaces for dialogues and wellness.
- Invite Indigenous students, Indigenous caregivers and Aboriginal Advisory Committee member's input on curriculum planning for colonialism, racism and Indigenous knowledge(s) through family evenings, surveys, and school growth planning events for Indigenous education.

### Respect Recommendations

- Indigenous Rights Holders should be continuously consulted in order to ensure that there are consistent opportunities for them to provide feedback across multiple channels throughout the district.
- It is important to continue checking in with all Indigenous Knowledge Holders to determine the best methods for communication and contact, which will vary according to each person's needs (emails, telephone calls, personal reminders, Zoom meetings, community visits, etc.).
- It is important to review communication protocols with all levels of Indigenous personnel (e.g., lunch time supervisors, Aboriginal resource teachers, and administrators) and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to identify ways to better reach and engage Indigenous learners, families, and communities.
- Provide a handout to all caregivers of Indigenous children that explains the communication channels within schools and the district for questions, compliments, and complaints.
- School staff and others involved in the life of children in care should be notified if the children are being placed in another home (which may add extra traveling time to the school or require additional staff support), as the change is stressful for the young person, which may affect them socially and emotionally in school.
- Include guardians of Indigenous children and caregivers with Indigenous (including Métis) ancestry in school correspondence from the Aboriginal education department - even if their children do not self-identify as "Aboriginal" or Métis, for self-protective reasons.
- School district consultation and invitations to participate in Indigenous education priorities, management decisions, school planning, on-going Aboriginal Committee meetings, and emerging issues should include separate meetings with the: Katzie Nation, Kwantlen Nation and Golden Ears Métis Society and Fraser River Society.
- Ensure new Indigenous families and caregivers of Indigenous children in the district are provided with school tours and orientations.
- All of the recommendations in this section will need to be clearly assigned to specific district personnel. Measurable goals for these recommendations should be included in the Aboriginal Education District Principal's School Growth Plan.



## Relevance Recommendations

- Hire additional Aboriginal support workers specifically to take on Indigenous advocate roles.
- All Aboriginal support workers should be provided with in-service training in special education and restorative justice.
- Please see the recommendations in the “Indigenous Knowledge Holders Sharing Circle” section related to honouring and teaching local Indigenous protocols while balancing the diverse representation of Indigenous cultures, knowledges with teachings in district.
- Allocate funding from the district operational budget to land-based education opportunities for all students. This includes supporting teachers to Indigenize their seasonal practices by including local land-based understandings in their lessons.
- Create a district local procurement process to ensure that local Indigenous Peoples are hired.
- Involve district Indigenous students to lead the creation of a visual representation or model for Indigenous Education in School District 42. Local Indigenous artists (or a design lab) should be hired to facilitate the dialogue and process with students.
- Please see Indigenous Knowledge Holder Sharing Circle recommendations for additional relevance recommendations.

## Responsibility Recommendations

- The district should organize a Katzie Nation Day throughout all the schools under the guidance of the Katzie Nation.
- Further consultation is needed with the Kwantlen Nation to determine if a Kwantlen Nation Day or an evening gathering is a priority.
- Partner with the Golden Ears Métis Society and interested Métis Caregivers to organize a Métis night or Métis events in the schools.
- District schools should conduct a yearly Indigenous caregiver survey and host family evenings (with food and door prizes) to solicit caregiver input on management and governance decisions (including the development of school growth plans for Indigenous education and anti-racism priorities). Administrators should also report progress updates for Indigenous education priorities in school growth plans at these events and school newsletters. Annual surveys could also solicit input from Indigenous caregivers about communication needs, the usability of the district website, the parent portal, preferred district communication methods, Indigenous education programming priorities and emerging equity needs.
- The district should support the creation of an Indigenous parents’ council (or Indigenous parents’ councils in multiple schools) to work with the Aboriginal Advisory Council to support Indigenous education governance and management needs (including input on the district’s operating budget). The district should seek input from the Indigenous Parent’s council and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee on the development of the Indigenous caregiver surveys. This may require the district to advocate for flexibility for DPAC/PAC committee structures in the School Act and support interim provisions and support for ad hoc Indigenous parents’ council(s).
- District to advocate with the B.C. Ministry of Education to create provisions for local First Nation representation on the Board of Trustees. For example, each Nation could have an automatic seat at the table if this aligns with their interests and self-determination priorities. At a minimum local Nations and the Métis community should be consulted on the district operating budget.
- There should be a continuation of advocacy efforts for improved funding and supports for Indigenous learners with special needs and Indigenous children in care through funding formula design, provincial ministries, BCSTA motions, meetings with MLAs, and allyship with Indigenous organizations.
- Ensure that Indigenous children who are needing to be picked up from school early or after school are released to individuals noted on parent permission forms. If these individuals are not available, the local Band Office or an Indigenous organization should be called. At no time should Indigenous children be released to community members who are not on the parent permission forms.

- Indigenous children and youth in the district require additional mental health supports and further professional development training for educators to support student's mental health needs.
- A terms of reference for the district's Elders Table is needed. The terms of reference should clearly define the criteria for "Elder" and "Indigenous Knowledge Holder" and any new terminology that is used to refer to individuals who are held in high respect for their cultural knowledge, wisdom and expertise in Indigenous communities. The Aboriginal Advisory Committee should provide input on the the terms of reference.

#### **New recommendation arising from stakeholder feedback sessions**

- District to play an advocacy role with provincial and local governments to support the need for on-going accountability and responsibility for historical and contemporary colonial violence and oppression of Indigenous Peoples.

## **Strand 2: Indigenous Knowledges: Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

### **Indigenous Knowledge(s) Teaching and Learning Recommendations**

- School district leadership should continue modeling Indigenous Education and communicating that Indigenous Education is a responsibility for all.
- There is a need for a district wide mandatory First Peoples course or bundle of credits (with an emphasis on local Indigenous and Métis Peoples within an integrated anti-Indigenous racist (theoretical and pedagogical) as a framework for all students. At present, this course has not yet been approved by the B.C. Ministry of Education. The district is encouraged to join advocacy efforts with the First Nations Education Steering, the First Nations Leadership Council, the BC Teachers' Federation, and the BC School Trustees Association<sup>1</sup> and write a letter of support offering to pilot this course when it becomes available. This will serve as a strategy<sup>2</sup> to counter racism, advance Truth and Reconciliation commitments, and the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2019) priorities. SD42 could also be one of the lead districts in the province to pilot and implement a course of this nature.
- The Aboriginal education department should continue communicating with school staff and teachers about the reasons for pulling Indigenous students out of class. Given that class and school environments continue to perpetuate institutional racism, racial aggressions and colonial violence, there are times when Indigenous students require time away from class to be in safer spaces where they can be heard and validated by Aboriginal support workers and Aboriginal teachers, BPOC staff and Indigenous peers. It is important that school staff and educators are informed that all students must have opportunities to continue engaging with Indigenous education and that it is not an either-or approach.
- Professional development should be required for all district personnel to support responsibilities for Indigenous education and anti-racism in their professional roles (see professional development section for specific details). Professional development should integrate anti-racism (specifically anti-Indigenous racism) with Indigenous education.
- Additional Aboriginal resource teachers (ART) should be hired or created.
- Student surveys should be created and distributed each term. Key questions can focus on: Indigenous content (including colonialism) being taught in all courses; incidents of racism and how they were resolved; the adequate availability of Indigenous learning resources; the need for wholistic supports (including mental health needs), and; transitions needs; Indigenous Knowledge Holder engagement and land-based education opportunities; cultural activities offered by the Aboriginal education department; inaccurate, racist and/or outdated learning materials being used in the classroom, and; arising needs.
- There is a need to create additional in-service curriculum implementation days for Indigenous education, anti-Indigenous racism, colonialism and land-based education for teachers and educational assistants.
- There is a need to allocate funding from the district operational budget to land-based education opportunities for all students. This includes supporting teachers to Indigenize their seasonal practices with local land-based understandings.

<sup>1</sup> As stakeholders in this review indicated, multiple strategies are needed to deepen Indigenous education and equity in SD42

<sup>2</sup> Please click here for further details: [https://firstnationsleadersgathering.gov.bc.ca/assets/Breakout\\_5\\_Education\\_Update\\_FNESC.pdf](https://firstnationsleadersgathering.gov.bc.ca/assets/Breakout_5_Education_Update_FNESC.pdf)

- There is a need to provide recognition for Indigenous education contributions at district awards events and celebrations for teachers, students, staff, administration and senior leadership who are undertaking exemplary actions to support Indigenous education and address anti-Indigenous racism in their district.
- District administrators are encouraged to continue supporting teachers to ensure that they are delivering curriculum that embeds Indigenous education, colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism with clear goals that are included in their planning related to the BC Teachers Council's Professional Standard 9.

#### **New recommendation arising from stakeholder feedback sessions**

- Invite non-Indigenous students to also learn about Indigenous knowledges and cultures by including them in all cultural activities (i.e. Bannock Friday for Indigenous students in Elementary schools and interactive time with Elders).

#### **Local Indigenous Cultures, Languages, Knowledge Holders and Communities Recommendations**

- All Aboriginal Education team members that are hired should have relationships with all three Indigenous communities (Katzie, Kwantlen and Métis Nations) and sound knowledge of Indigenous protocols.
- Hiring committees for Indigenous positions in the district should include Indigenous district personnel and when possible, a representative from the local Nations and the Métis Nations.
- Individuals who self-identify as Indigenous, especially in educational and professional contexts, have a responsibility to clearly articulate and declare their connections to established, legitimate Indigenous communities, thus confirming their connection to family and community.<sup>3</sup>
- Indigenous Elders who are district Elders should have some office space in each school to demonstrate their important role in the district.
- Extend the Indigenous Elders in Residence program beyond the current four weeks that are allocated for an Indigenous Knowledge Holder in each school to support widespread calls from all stakeholders identified in this review. Additional funding for Indigenous Knowledge Holder Honoraria should be allocated from the district operating budget. This recommendation should be included in the District Aboriginal Principal's school growth plan and have a clear time frame and a measurable goal. Following the implementation of this recommendation, individual school growth plans should include goals for the Elders in Residence program in their school.

#### **New recommendation arising from stakeholder feedback sessions**

- Support local language revitalization initiatives within schools whenever possible in district events and community settings.

#### **Assessment Recommendations**

- Findings from this report and consultation with Indigenous Rights Holders should be utilized to develop key metrics that can serve as indicators for the wholistic success of Indigenous learners and support the district data dashboard. Consult with the Ministry of Education as needed.
- Continue providing in-service professional development to support district leadership, administrators', teachers', and teaching support staff's understandings of strength-based wholistic assessment and critical literacy practices. This includes removing all deficit-based language from district materials and data measurement tools.
- Review and adjust grading, discipline, and special education/program identification practices to remove the disproportionality that exists for Indigenous and BPOC students.
- Eliminate streaming practices for "Workplace Mathematics" for Indigenous students (except for exceptional circumstances – e.g. students' with designated special learning needs). (See the Sea to Sky District near elimination of Workplace Mathematics enrollment for Indigenous learners).

<sup>3</sup> For more details, please see <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2019/08/20/research-ethnic-fraud-and-the-academy-a-protocol-for-working-with-Indigenouscommunities-and-peoples/>

## **Instructional Materials and Indigenous Peoples, Perspectives and Diversity**

- Invite Aboriginal Student Leadership Committee to support Indigenous resource and curriculum recommendations including the removal of outdated, inaccurate, racist and outdated learning materials.
- Invite suggestions for a district reporting system to report inaccurate, racist and or outdated learning materials being used in the classroom.
- The district should ensure that a financial commitment is made in its operating budget (not the Aboriginal education department budget) to update Indigenous textbooks and learning resources in all schools.
- All school growth plans in the Indigenous education priority area should have a measurable commitment to removing outdated learning materials from their libraries (e.g., the non-fiction section will be reviewed by January, 2022; school teaching staff will engage in a critical Indigenous resource assessment workshop and follow-up session by March, 2022).
- The district Strategic Plan and school growth plans should also indicate how Indigenous caregivers, students, and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee were consulted on priority areas for the acquisition of new Indigenous learning materials.
- The district should create a partnership with the University of British Columbia's Master of Library and Information Studies Program and the Xwi7x̱wa library to host an Indigenous graduate practicum student from the First Nations Curriculum Concentration in order to support district the Indigenization and decolonization needs for the district library.

## **Strand 3: Engaging Colonialism**

### **Engaging Colonialism Recommendations**

- On-going and continuous in-service professional development is required to support understandings of colonialism, decolonization, personal bias and critical self-reflective practice for all district personnel. This may include the hiring of additional Aboriginal resource teachers to support pedagogical engagement of colonialism in the classroom.
- Aboriginal education department to continue creating resource bins to support teacher professional development on colonialism & decolonization in local, national and international contexts. It is important for the bins to include diverse representation from First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples Experiences of colonialism and decolonization can be similar with intersecting qualities while also being different according to each Indigenous group. It is important that this nuance is reflected in the literature and resources that are shared with educators in the Indigenous resource bins.
- Students, Indigenous staff and Indigenous Knowledge Holders at all schools in the district need safer spaces for dialogues and wellness.
- Invite Indigenous students, Indigenous caregiver sand Aboriginal Advisory Committee member's input on curriculum planning for colonialism, racism and Indigenous knowledge(s) through family evenings, surveys, and school growth planning events for Indigenous education.

### **New recommendation arising from stakeholder feedback sessions**

- Ensure designated safe spaces in all schools for Indigenous students, with Indigenous staff consistently available, specifically (a) a bigger space is needed at Garibaldi; (b) designated spaces in all elementary schools are needed.

## **Strand 4: Indigenous Specific Racism and Responses**

### **See Strand 5 Anti-Racism Policies and Grievances Related to Anti-Indigenous Racism and Discrimination Recommendations**

## Strand 5: School District Strategic Plan, School Growth Plans and Policy

### School District Strategic Plan Recommendations

- Ensure that local Indigenous languages, values, strategies and priorities are embedded within the District Strategic Plan (including appropriate connections to the British Columbia's United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, 2019).
- Create clear measurable priorities with time frames in the district Strategic Plan to support mentoring, staff development, and succession planning for Indigenous district personnel in all positions.
- Ensure the school growth template has priority areas that include: Indigenous education, Indigenous antiracism and anti-racism education, all of which should have clear measurable goals that can track progress.
- Retain the services of an Indigenous Human Relations Consultant to provide training and support for Indigenous equity-related practices in the department.
- Hiring practices should clearly prioritize the hiring, training and retainment of Indigenous leadership in senior leadership roles. The district plan should include clear "targets" for Indigenous staff in leadership positions with direct goals for the equity-related representation across the district in all roles.
- Work with relevant unions to hire Indigenous cultural mediators as an option for dealing with Indigenous employee grievances. Indigenous restorative practices could also be implemented with the assistance of a skilled Indigenous cultural mediator or a respected Indigenous Knowledge Keeper/Indigenous Knowledge Keepers.

### School Growth Plan Recommendations

- School district senior leadership revise all school growth plan template priority areas to reflect distinct and explicit priority areas for Indigenous education, anti-Indigenous racism and equity priorities. This will require in-serve professional development sessions to support administrators to create school growth plans with clear measurable goals that are implemented to achieve Indigenous equity-related goals in their schools and the district.
- The planning process for all school growth plans require the involvement of diverse Indigenous Rights Holders in each school (Indigenous Knowledge Holders, Caregivers, Indigenous students, and Indigenous district personnel). Multiple communication channels and school-based events will need to be organized throughout the school year to ensure that all Indigenous Rights Holders are provided meaningful opportunities to share their input for the development of school growth plans.
- All school growth plans will need to ensure that there are clear progress measurements (benchmarks) for Indigenous education and anti-Indigenous racism. Throughout various sections of this report, there are specific recommendation areas for measurable goals to be included in school growth plans.
- All school growth plans should be reviewed by the Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Indigenous Caregivers council<sup>4</sup> before being finalized.

### Anti-Racism Policies and Grievances Related to Anti-Indigenous Racism and Discrimination Recommendations

It is important to recognize that there is some overlap with the important work that is being currently undertaken by the Anti-Racism Working Committee in SD42. The following recommendations are offered in the spirit of solidarity with the Anti-Racism Working Group, which has already started the process to update board policies and may have already begun addressing some of the following recommendations:

- These existing policies should be updated: Harmonious Workplace Discrimination Bullying and Harassment Policy (7210); Safe and Caring Schools Policy (9410), and; Inclusive Schools Policy (9415) to explicitly include Indigenous anti-racism and discrimination – or, a new stand-alone policy should be created to address anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination. Updated policies should include: holding district personnel accountable for interpersonal racist acts, including enforcing discipline according

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<sup>4</sup> Please see "Responsibility Recommendations" for the creation of an Indigenous Caregivers council.



to the relevant collective bargaining agreements – when appropriate; holding students accountable for interpersonal racist acts with consequences that could include Indigenous restorative justice and progressive discipline; guaranteeing that retaliation against anyone who reports racist incidents will be investigated and addressed; taking timely action that will not further victimize or harm individuals and communities in order to reduce the impact of racism from within the district, and; assuming proactive responsibility for teaching students and staff about racism's causes and effects.

- There is a need to develop an “Equity Dashboard” or a district-wide wide tracking system to record, assess, and monitor reported incidents of racism (including anti-Indigenous racism incidents) for all district stakeholders. The information and base-line data from this tracking system should be reported in the District Strategic Plan and school growth plans to support measurable goals that will inform interventions related to implicit bias, oppression, and racism in order to improve school and work environments for IBPOC students and district personnel. The district is also encouraged to undertake advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Education in order to ensure that all school districts are tracking this data, particularly for the “How are We Doing Report” for Aboriginal Education. Please see the following exemplar from the Ablemare County for further ideas: <https://www.k12albemarle.org/our-division/anti-racism-policy/policy-evaluation-report>.
- The District Strategic Plan should set measurable goals, including timelines for anti-racism policy updates and implementation and tracking mechanisms (including commitments to staffing and budgetary resources from the district’s operating budget). School growth plans should include goals for the implementation of the updated anti-racism policies.
- There is a need to update school and district codes of conduct in order to explicitly include anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination. Indigenous students and Indigenous district personnel should be provided with options for Indigenous restorative support processes regarding racist incidents or employee-related conflicts. Indigenous restorative processes are to be guided by Indigenous cultural mediators and/or respected Indigenous Knowledge Keepers. The district will also need to work with relevant unions on this recommendation. The District Strategic Plan and school growth plans should set measurable goals for the implementation of this recommendation.
- Professional development (including the allocation of resources and staffing) is required for all district personnel to effectively to respond to and implement anti-Indigenous and anti-racism incidents. This includes providing Indigenous restorative training to support the resolution of conflict for administrators, managers, the senior team and trustees (please see professional development section for further details).
- Transparency is needed in leadership succession (particularly for Indigenous-targeted roles like the Aboriginal Education District Principal). This role should be designated for persons of Indigenous ancestry, and she/he/they should be provided with mentorship, leadership and professional development opportunities that will enable her/him/them to transition successfully into this role. It would be a significant misstep for the district to hire a non-Indigenous person in this role.
- There is a need to invite and compensate interested representatives from local Indigenous Nations and the Métis community to be present on hiring committees (including senior district leadership hiring committees) and to help identify Indigenous employees that have clear connections to their communities and understandings of local protocols, Indigenous knowledge(s) and cultural practices. The district will need to work closely with relevant unions for this recommendation.
- There is a need to track the number of Indigenous and BPOC who are hired and employed by the district to help set targets for hiring and promotion practices. This includes exit interviews to identify the reasons Indigenous employees are leaving. There is a need to ensure that all Indigenous and BPOC are invited to participate in an exit interview. Information from exit interviews should be reviewed by qualified district leadership in order to determine how to address equity and on-going systemic barriers for IBPOC district personnel.
- The district should collaborate with the CUPE union to enhance the local agreement to a) recognize lived experience, Indigenous knowledge and cultural expertise<sup>5</sup> when hiring Aboriginal support workers

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<sup>5</sup> The lack of recognition of Indigenous credentials in this area is a form of systemic racism.

(ASWs), and; b) enhance wages for ASWs, given the significant responsibilities for Indigenous education in the district and the overwhelming recognition and value of their work by all district stakeholders.

- Ensure Aboriginal support worker responsibilities remain focused on working with Indigenous students as a key priority, with teaching as a secondary priority, or hire more Aboriginal resource teachers.
- The district should create a standing order when budget surpluses arise in the Aboriginal education department to allow the Aboriginal district principal to increase ASWs' hours immediately without waiting for the district budgetary process to finalize.
- Additional funding is required to support Indigenous caregivers advocacy groups in two key areas: (1) Indigenous children in care, and; (2) Indigenous children with diverse learning needs (recognizing that there is overlap in these two areas). Interested caregivers in these groups should be invited to form an Indigenous caregiver advocacy and support group to: identify exact systemic needs for Indigenous children in their care, common barriers, and training required for school district personnel and families. These group(s) will require child-minding, food, support for transportation, lots of lead time, and flexibility for in-person or on-line meetings. For example, the Sea to Sky District, in partnership with the Squamish Nation, sponsored an Indigenous caregiver's advocacy group for families with special needs children. The group identified key priority areas, which resulted in the hiring of a behaviourist to provide three days of training for Aboriginal support workers, school staff, teachers, and Indigenous families with special needs children. In addition, some parents also felt it was important to attend conferences and to share information back with the Indigenous caregivers advocacy group, which the district financially supported. The creation of an Indigenous caregivers advocacy group was of great assistance to the families. It is also important to continue creating additional partnerships with Indigenous agencies in order to support Indigenous children in care.

## Strand 6: Professional Development

### Professional Development Strand Recommendations

- The development of a local Indigenous protocol guide, learning resource kits or a course\* (see below\*) should be prioritized for all district staff under the guidance of local Indigenous Knowledge Holders and Nations. Content should include: settler bias; systemic racism; the need to critically engage with one's privilege and responsibilities; moving beyond fear to action; and communication and consultation protocols for various district roles including how to listen to Indigenous Knowledge Holders, students and caregivers; how to work with Indigenous Knowledge Holders when they visit classes, schools, and Indigenous community visits; pointers on how to engage Indigenous and anti-racism values in discussions with colleagues, students and Indigenous community members; strategies on how to navigate "mistakes" and develop Settler stamina; district processes for inviting Indigenous Knowledge Holders to the classroom, and to school and district events, including district key points of contact, along with an explanation to detail the reasons why district leads have been appointed to be the contacts (i.e., to not overburden Indigenous Knowledge Holders with multiple requests throughout the district); financial compensation policies for Knowledge Holders and a rationale for Indigenous Knowledge Holders' compensation (i.e., why fair compensation is required); local history and the contemporary realities of the Katzie, Kwantlen and Métis Nations, with key teachings that local Indigenous Nations would like all district personnel to know; engaging land-based practices with local language(s); local district Indigenous and anti-racism resources that are available to support distinct stakeholder groups (support staff, managers, administration, teachers, caregivers, senior leadership, etc.); information and protocols for the Elder-in-residence program in each school; consistent professional development opportunities that are offered annually to support Indigenous education priorities across the district; personal and professional strategies for non-Indigenous district personnel to initiate outside of their relationship with the Aboriginal education department (e.g. join a professional learning community, attend local Indigenous public events, sign up for a free on-line Indigenous open on-line course at a university, etc.). \*The district is encouraged to partner with a local university to create a hybrid in-person local/ on-line course for district employees.

- A video series should be created with Aboriginal education department staff who are comfortable sharing their Indigenous teachings, pedagogical practices and stories that can be utilized for professional development and learning within the district. All participants should be fairly compensated for their time in a similar way to Indigenous Knowledge Holders (and not expected to do this as part of their current positions).
- There is a need to create additional in-service curriculum implementation days for Indigenous education, anti-Indigenous racism, colonialism and land-based education for teachers and educational assistants.
- There is a need to provide anti-racism (including anti-Indigenous racism) training for all district personnel, trustees, the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee, parent advisory councils, the Indigenous parents' council, etc. For example, the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia has just launched its first local open on-line course on "Historical, Systemic and Intersectional Antiracism: From Awareness to Action Course" (please see link for further details). <https://courses.cpe.ubc.ca/browse/ubcv/faculty-of-education/courses/historical-systemic-and-intersectional-antiracism>. Ensure that all district employees and community groups who participate and complete the course are recognized at district awards and event(s).
- Continue inviting Indigenous leaders and educators to present at district professional development days on topics related to Indigenizing and decolonizing the curriculum, engaging anti-Indigenous racism, and Indigenous restorative training, etc. for all district staff. Indigenous presenters should be invited to present in a series of workshops for professional development days, rather than single sessions, to promote sustained learning and engagement.
- Create an Indigenous leadership and mentorship collective to identify systemic barriers for leadership development, professional development needs, training, and the support required to cultivate Indigenous leadership and succession planning at all levels throughout the district (Aboriginal support workers, Aboriginal teachers, vice principals, principals, senior administration etc.). A district budgetary line item should be allocated to the Indigenous Leadership and Mentorship Collective.
- Partner with Simon Fraser University to create a Graduate Diploma in Education Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Education and Anti-Racist Indigenous Pedagogies. It would be helpful if the district offered a financial incentive, such as a \$1,000 commitment, for educators to take the program. <https://www.sfu.ca/education/gs/degreediploma/graddiplomafp.html>.
- Partner with the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University or the Department of Education Studies at the University of British Columbia to develop a graduate MEd cohort on Indigeneity, Equity, and Antiracism. This will also support an internal leadership growth model to cultivate Indigenous and BPOC leadership in the district.
- The Human Resource department should create appropriate cultural supports and activities that support the wellbeing of Indigenous district personnel, including lateral liberation (or lateral violence) workshops.
- There is a need to ensure that each school (including elementary schools) has a safe space (classroom) for Indigenous students. The space could have dual purposes for Aboriginal education department programming. If there is no space in the elementary schools, order portable classrooms. This goal should be reported in the district Strategic Plan.

#### **New recommendation arising from stakeholder feedback sessions**

- Ensure more professional development in trauma-informed pedagogical practices for all teachers, administration, and school staff.
- Funding is required for Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) staff to attend district meetings and initiatives to support the implementation of this report. There is a notable systemic constraint that currently requires all CUPE staff to bank hours in order to participate in professional development initiatives.

## Strand 7: Transitions

### Post-Secondary and Career Transition Recommendations

- Continue post-secondary visits and Indigenous provincial youth conferences for Indigenous learners.
- Partner with a local university or college to create an elementary or high school program in areas where Indigenous students have been underrepresented (i.e., Sciences, Math, Engineering, etc.).
- Indigenous alumni who have graduated from SD42 in the last five years should be invited to attend a sharing circle in order to provide feedback on their post-secondary and career related transitions for the second cycle of the “Deepening Indigenous Education and Equity in School District 42 2021-2022”.
- Indigenous families and caregivers should continue to be provided with information about university transition programs and summer high school access programs offered at local universities.
- Family evenings with a focus on Indigenous post-secondary transitions should be created in SD42. Indigenous alumni should be invited to share their educational journeys related to post-secondary transitions.
- Partner with the Native Teacher Indigenous Education Program (NITEP) at the University of British Columbia, or Simon Fraser University’s Professional Development program, to create a dual credit course for district Indigenous students interested in enrolling in Indigenous teacher education after high school completion. This will also support an internal growth model to support the growth of Indigenous teachers in the district.
- Partner with Simon Fraser University’s Faculty of Education to create a dual credit course for grade 12 students interested in becoming Indigenous educational assistants. A similar course has already been created for another local school district.
- An internal marketing campaign should be created to encourage diverse Indigenous student career pathways in the district, featuring local Indigenous role models who are currently working in the district.

## Strand 8: District Alternate Continuing Education/Connected Learning Community Remote Learning Sharing Circle

**The recommendations from this section have been woven into a number of strands throughout the report (in particular Strands 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5).**

## BRITISH COLUMBIA EQUITY IN ACTION PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2016, the initial Equity in Action project was initiated as a response to: the Aboriginal Education Branch of the British Columbia Ministry of Education Report of the Office of the Auditor General (2015<sup>1</sup>); the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2016), and; the Truth and Reconciliation Report and Calls to Action (2016). The goal of the Equity in Action project<sup>2</sup> is to enter into a genuine and meaningful dialogue about the experience of education for Indigenous learners and respond by creating conditions for success.

School District 42 – Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows (SD42) – joined the provincial Equity in Action Project as one of the 46 school districts that participated in the project during the 2020/2021 school year. During the first year of the project, we focused on creating relationships with diverse district stakeholders by introducing the research team and the project. Next, we began the consultation and collaboration phase to support the development of the research design. Stakeholders included: Katzie Nation, Kwantlen Nation, Métis Nation, Fraser Valley Indigenous Society, District Board of Trustees, Senior Administration Team, Managers, Teachers, Administrators, Students, Support Staff, Caregivers, and Community Members. Next, we embarked on our information and story gathering phase from February to July 2021. The living draft of the report was collated, written and formatted from July to October 2021. Input and feedback on the living draft was provided by diverse district stakeholders from November to May 2022.

The research for this living report began under the direction of former Superintendent Sylvia Russell, the Aboriginal District Principal (Kirsten Urdahl-Serr) and the Assistant Superintendent (Shannon Derinzy). Sylvia Russell retired in February 2021. Superintendent Harry Dhillon has expressed his “commitment to finalizing the living report and moving forward with an action oriented mindset” (Personal Correspondence, November 9th, 2021). At the outset of the research, we re-titled and expanded the existing Equity Scan framework to “Deepening Indigenous Education and Equity to Support the Wholistic Success of Indigenous Learners, Families and Communities in School District 42.” We look forward to continuing to work in layered phases over the next year to support all district stakeholders with the implementation of the report’s recommendations and findings.

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<sup>1</sup> As well as the Auditor General Progress Audit in 2019. Please see here for further details: [https://www.bcauditor.com/sites/default/files/OAGBC\\_Ab-Ed-Progress\\_RPT.pdf](https://www.bcauditor.com/sites/default/files/OAGBC_Ab-Ed-Progress_RPT.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> To learn more about the Equity in Action Project, please visit <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/indigenous-education/equity-in-action>



## WHY ARE WE DEEPENING THE "EQUITY IN ACTION SCAN" IN MAPLE RIDGE - PITT MEADOWS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 42?

Indigenous leaders, community members, parents, youth, educators, policy makers, and numerous research studies have long been calling for the need for our education system to move beyond tokenistic (i.e. add-on approaches) to Indigenous education. Significant changes are needed in order to: 1) transform the values, governance structures, policies, programs, practices, and behaviours that perpetuate Indigenous racism, structural oppression and colonialism, and 2) address to unequal educational outcomes for Indigenous learners across Canada.

There are a number of important policies, laws, and activism efforts that have advanced Indigenous education and equity, and worked towards ending (or challenged) anti-Indigenous racism to support the needs of Indigenous learners in Canada over the years:

- *Indian Control of Indian Education* (1972)
- *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996)
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2016)
- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2016)
- B.C.'s 'new' curriculum (2016) focusing on the First Peoples Principles of Learning
- *British Columbia Teachers' Council's Reconciliation Teaching Standard* (2019)
- *The British Columbia Tripartite Agreement* (2018 – 2023)
- *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (2019)
- Historical and ongoing efforts of Indigenous Peoples locally, nationally, and globally who continue to challenge institutional racism, structural oppression and colonialism.

We also recognize that the current social moment has illuminated the necessity of ongoing learning and action to address colonialism, systemic racism against Indigenous peoples, and power imbalances that impact our classrooms, students, and communities. For example, the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada, Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination in the B.C. health care and justice system, the high rates of Indigenous children in the foster care system, the recent finding of thousands of unmarked graves of Indigenous children in former residential schools, and the need for RCMP reform to tackle racism against Indigenous Peoples. The events of 2020, including the death of George Floyd, have drawn global attention to the reality of systemic anti-Black racism and the need for system-wide reform, solidarity, and ongoing activism among Indigenous, Black, and racialized peoples at all levels. This report is written in the spirit of solidarity to support the important work that is being undertaken by the Anti-Racism Working Group in School District 42, which is actively strengthening the district's commitments, policies, and practices for anti-racism and equity to support all learners.

## INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH TEAM



**YOUERAL ABERA**

***Graduate Administrative Research Assistant***

I am a writer, poet, and academic. I seek to utilize my platforms within art and academia to advocate for the equity and justice of marginalized communities and identities. I have a Bachelor's degree in English and Criminology from Simon Fraser University. Presently, I am an English Graduate Student at McGill University. My graduate research (which will centre the works of James Baldwin and Toni Morrison) will seek to exercise theories of literary criticism with the incentive of analyzing and fully comprehending intersectional, Black literary characters.



**CALDER CHEVERIE**

***Graduate Research Assistant***

Calder Cheverie is a non-binary independent media artist and inter-arts practitioner whose artistic work focuses on untangling the gender binary and its dissociative impact on queer bodies from kinship with the land, as well as processes of (re)weaving ancestral and embodied knowledges through the stories of his grandmother. Calder is a land-based educator and graduate of the Indigenous Education: Education for Reconciliation graduate diploma; they hold a Master of Education in Place-Conscious and Nature-Based Practices and are a current Doctoral student at Simon Fraser University.



**AMRIT COJOCARU**

***Graduate Research Assistant***

I am a PhD Student in Equity Studies at SFU. I was recently an in-Service Faculty Associate in Graduate Studies teaching Inclusive Education at SFU. My research interests focus around equity and inclusion of students with experiences of displacement and my scholarship intersects critical race theory, critical refugee studies, and decolonial theory. The goal of my future doctoral work is to help educate and uplift teachers that work with students who have experiences of displacement.



**DR. GLORIA LIN**

***Research Assistant***

I am a first-generation Taiwanese racialized scholar. I have worked as a researcher for more than 10 years developing, planning, and managing research projects. I am also a sessional lecturer in the Department of Educational Studies in the Faculty of Education, UBC. Working from an anti-colonial and decolonizing framework, my research and teaching focuses on unpacking the legacies of racism, colonialism, and imperialism in the public school system and advocating for justice, equity and inclusion for marginalized communities. I am passionate about learning, teaching and community engagement.



## **OLABANJI ONIPEDE**

### ***Graduate Administrative Research Assistant***

I am an MA student at the Department of Educational Studies in the Faculty of Education, UBC. Before this, I completed an LLM in Peace Operations, Humanitarian Law and Conflict at the National University of Ireland, Galway. My research interests are in the areas of refugee law, social, economic and cultural rights, and the rights of the child especially the intersection between the rights of a child and the right to education. I have worked with teams on various projects and programs that have advocated for the access to education for internally displaced persons in my home country, Nigeria.



## **CAROLYN ROBERTS**

### ***Graduate Research Assistant***

I am a doctoral student at Simon Fraser University in the eTAP Program. I am also a Faculty Member and Indigenous Teaching Fellow in the Department of Education at Simon Fraser University. My work is grounded in educating new teachers and other faculty about the legacies of colonialism that can still be felt on this land today. I recently worked alongside the Squamish Nation towards revitalizing the Squamish language and culture by beginning the conversion process of their elementary school into a Squamish language immersion school.

## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

### DR. AMY PARENT, Noxs Ts'aawit

It is an honour to introduce myself and my colleagues who are a part of the research team for this project. I gratefully acknowledge that I am an “uninvited guest” with responsibilities on the traditional, ancestral, unceded, and overlapping territories of the Coast Salish Peoples. I am Nisga'a from the Nass Valley of Northwestern British Columbia on my mother's side of the family. My Nisga'a name is Noxs Ts'aawit (Mother of the Raven Warrior Chief). We belong to the Ganada (frog) clan from the village of Laxgalts'ap. On my father's side of the family, I am of Settler ancestry (French and German). I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Studies in the Faculty of Education. I am also an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University and have been recently appointed as a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Education and Governance.

My research is grounded in Indigenous methodologies through collaborative partnerships with Indigenous communities to support self-determination needs through community-based research in two areas:

(1) teaching and mentoring practices aimed at capacity-building in Indigenous communities, K-12 contexts, teacher education, and higher education in British Columbia; and; (2) Nisga'a language revitalization, educational governance and policy. I recently served as member of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Canada Working Group on Indigenous Land Based Education ([click here for further details](#)). I am currently a board member for Access to Media Education Society ([accesstomedia.org](https://accesstomedia.org)).

During my time at Simon Fraser University, I also was the project lead for a comprehensive review of School District 92 (Nisga'a) with Dr. Jeannie Morgan, Matriarch Shirley Morven and Dr. Gwendolyn Point. I was a faculty co-sponsor for the Curriculum and Instruction Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw MEd cohort and the lead Indigenous faculty member for Education 400 course in the Professional Development Program (2018 and 2019 intake). Please see <https://amyparent.ca/> for further details about my background and expertise. It has been an honour to collaborate and hear the important stories that were shared by: Indigenous Rights Holders, school district stakeholders, and allies on this important project.



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<sup>1</sup>I borrow this term from dear friend and colleague, Kau'i Keliipio of the Hawaiian Peoples.

## GOALS: WHAT WE HOPE TO CHANGE

The Deepening Indigenous Education and Equity to Support the Wholistic Success of Indigenous Learners, Families and Communities in School District 42 aims to:

- Deepen ongoing efforts in Indigenous education to collaborate with all stakeholders in School District 42 to critically examine district policies, governance structures, practices, curriculum, programs, initiatives, and Indigenous community engagement mechanisms in order to identify promising practices and systemic barriers that are impacting equitable outcomes for Indigenous learners.
- Collaborate with school district personnel to begin implementing equity and anti-Indigenous racism strategies in district policies, governance structures, practices, curriculum, programs, initiatives and Indigenous community engagement mechanisms in order to enhance the wholistic success of diverse Indigenous learners, families, and communities in School District 42.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to develop a model of Indigenous education for School District 42 that includes the cultural diversity and Indigenous knowledge(s) of the Indigenous learners, families, and communities that are represented in the school district.



## METHODOLOGY: HOW WE CREATED THIS REPORT

The research team worked with Indigenous methodologies to support our research project. Indigenous methodologies:

- Firmly locate oneself in one's cultural location and knowledge (usually via story-based methods and strong experiential components);
- Centre Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the research process;
- Are guided by wholism (engaging the heart, mind, body, and spirit);
- Enact values and protocols that emphasize relational accountability, respect, and reciprocity and ensure the relevance of research to Indigenous communities, the more than human, and our ancestors;
- Translate knowledge between Indigenous and Western ways of knowing and being;
- Consider the impact of colonization and structural forms of oppression on the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and settlers;
- Emphasize self-determination and capacity building for the wholistic wellbeing of Indigenous children, families and communities;<sup>1</sup>
- Ensure data sovereignty related to Indigenous knowledge(s) and the principles of Ownership, Control, Protection and Possession© (OCAP).

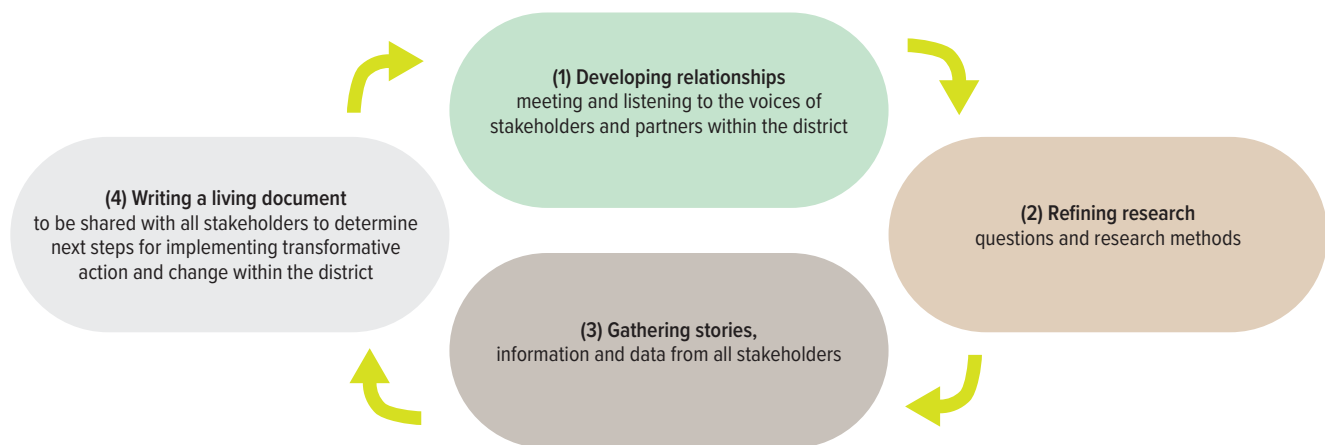
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<sup>1</sup>Please see bibliography for references on Indigenous methodologies.

## RESEARCH PROJECT PHASES

The research project developed in key overlapping phases, which included:

1. **Developing Relationships:** meeting and listening to the voices of stakeholders and partners within the district (January 2021-March 2021);
2. **Refining Research Questions and Research Methods:** developing a research design with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee & Aboriginal education department (January-February 15th, 2021);
3. **Gathering Stories, Information and Data** from all stakeholders (February-July 2021);
4. **Writing a Living Report:** The living document was written from (July-October 2021). The living document will be shared with all stakeholders to determine meaning-making and next steps for implementing transformative action and change within the district (October 2021-May 2022).



## ETHICS AND RESEARCH METHODS

### Ethics and Confidentiality

The research team subscribed to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comforts, and safety for all involved in this project. The information participants shared with our team was kept confidential in a secured online storage system on a Canadian server. Interviews, sharing circles and world café focus group information were collated and summarized into larger themes that supported the development of the living report. Participants' names were not shared to protect confidentiality. In most cases, we identified participants by their role in the district. For example: senior team, trustees, Indigenous teacher, student, etc. In some cases, we ensured greater confidentiality by removing the professional designation of a person and changed it to "district personnel" because the person may have been easily identifiable. Similarly, we did the same thing for Indigenous Knowledge Holders, caregivers or Indigenous school district staff who may have double roles as caregivers and district personnel. In this case, we changed their designation to "Indigenous community member" or "Knowledge Holder" to protect their confidentiality in cases where shared sensitive information could potentially impact their social position or professional role within the school district. In other cases, we felt that it would be inappropriate to withhold the names of Indigenous Knowledge Holders who were sharing important cultural teachings from their Nation. This meant we verified our data with Indigenous Knowledge Holders to confirm their approval of their selected quotes before revealing their names in the living report.

### Our Methods Included

**1. Qualitative and Quantitative Review:** A qualitative and a quantitative review were undertaken in order to understand the Indigenous education landscape in School District 42: Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows (as described on pages 13 and 14 in this report).

**2. Development of Research Questions and Research Design:** with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Aboriginal education department (Please see Appendix A).

**3. Preparation and Research Training Support:** The research team hosted a research training session on February 16th, 2021 with the Aboriginal education department team (including Aboriginal support workers, Aboriginal teachers and Helping Teachers) who were supporting research interviews, world café focus groups and sharing circles for technology and cultural support needs. The research team also undertook mock interviews, world café focus groups and sharing circles with each other for mentorship and preparation needs for the research. Several attempts were made to meet youth in their own environments and settings to begin the process of forming relationships with them to create comfort and awareness about the project and the research team. It was the research team's opinion that this would have helped recruit and support youth in sharing their experiences. Unfortunately, we were unable to have any meetings with the youth prior to the interviews.

**4. Interviews:** The research team (comprised of Dr. Amy Parent, Carolyn Roberts and Calder Cheverie) conducted 43 individual and paired interviews via Zoom or telephone with: Indigenous elementary students (grades six and seven); Indigenous high school students, Indigenous caregivers; Indigenous Knowledge Holders from Katzie, Kwantlen, and the Métis Nations; and district senior administration. Three interviews were written and emailed to the principal investigator due to time constraints. District interviews ranged from 20 minutes to 90 minutes in length and took place between the months of February to July 2021.

Students were accompanied by an Aboriginal support worker or Aboriginal teacher who assisted in setting up the technology (Zoom connection) with the research team. Aboriginal support staff and school counselors were also available to provide emotional support and debriefing after each student interview. With the exception of the written interviews, all participants consented to either an audio or video recording of their interview for transcription purposes.

Interviewees were provided the option to have their transcripts and audio files returned to them at the end of the research process. Interviewees were informed that the research team would delete any research files and transcripts that were shared throughout the research process at the end of the project. Please see Appendix B for interview questions for each stakeholder group. The research team wrote post-research reflections of each interview to support the analysis and meaning-making process. All interviews were coded and analyzed using NVIVO qualitative software. Please see Table 1 for further details.

**TABLE 1: TOTAL INTERVIEWS**

STAKEHOLDER	INTERVIEWS COMPLETED
Senior Team	4
Indigenous Elementary	7
Indigenous High School Students	19
Indigenous Caregivers	8
Indigenous Knowledge Holders	4
Aboriginal education department Team	4
Total Interviews	46

**TABLE 2: INDIGENOUS STUDENT INTERVIEW SCHOOL SUMMARY**

SCHOOL	ELEMENTARY / SECONDARY	NUMBER OF STUDENT INTERVIEWS
Environmental School	Elementary	1
Eric Langton Elementary	Elementary	1
Alouette Elementary School	Elementary	1
Davie Jones Elementary	Elementary	1
Edith McDermott Elementary School	Elementary	1
École Pitt Meadows Elementary	Elementary	1
Katzie First Nation School	Paired interview. Secondary student school was unknown	2
Garibaldi Secondary School	Secondary	1
Thomas Haney Secondary School	Secondary	3
Maple Ridge Secondary School	Secondary	3
Westview Secondary School	Secondary	5
Pitt Meadows Secondary School	Secondary	2
Samuel Robertson Technical Secondary School	Secondary	3
Unknown – Student joined caregiver in Family Interview	Secondary	1
Unknown – Student joined caregiver in Family Interview	Secondary	1
Total Students		26 Students

**Interview Limitations:** During the week of March 8-12, 2021, a research team member fell ill unexpectedly. This meant that most of the student interviews that were scheduled this week were rescheduled for after spring break. Consequently,

six students who had initially agreed to participate in an interview did not end up being interviewed. The research team is grateful to the incredible efforts of the Aboriginal education department team members, who extended themselves to invite and support Indigenous student and Indigenous caregiver participants in the research process. We also recognized that COVID marginally limited the initial goal of 53 interviews for the study. In some cases, Indigenous caregivers noted that they preferred an online format for the interview due to scheduling needs, or due to not feeling comfortable going to their child's school because of previous negative experiences. In other situations, online interviews limited families who did not have access to technology. Telephone options were provided but in some cases in-person interviews were preferred by some families. In addition, the horrific findings of 215 Indigenous children buried at the Kamloops Residential School (Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation) and the 751 Indigenous children buried at the Marieval Indian Residential School (Cowess Nation) at the end of the school year also impacted Indigenous caregiver availability for interviews. We are appreciative of all participants and district staff who shared their voices for this research, despite the difficult year.

**5. World Café Focus Group Sessions:** Eight world café focus groups were held online with the research team (Dr. Amy Parent, Carolyn Roberts, Amrit Cojocar, and Calder Cheverie) via Zoom with: (1) Indigenous teachers and support staff; (2) Trustees; (3) Senior Team; (4) Non-Indigenous Support Staff; (5) Non-Indigenous Teachers; (6) Administrators; (7) Managers; and (8) Mixed Indigenous/Non-Indigenous Students. To help establish a safer<sup>1</sup> space for participants, the research team introduced the importance of enacting the four R's (respect, relevance, responsibility and reciprocity) to support courageous conversations for the world café focus groups (Please see Appendix B). Each world café focus group divided participants into small groups to answer a set of questions using Padlet technology. Padlet technology operated in a similar way to poster paper in an online format. It enabled small groups of participants to write and discuss their responses to each research question. Participant groups would then move onto another research question on the Padlet, while also viewing other small group's comments to the same question. During the small group discussions, the research team members would float between groups and witness the discussions. After the small group discussions, a plenary with the whole group was held to discuss highlights from the Padlet question discussion and generate any additional comments for the research team. The plenary discussions were video recorded and transcribed. All comments were later coded for common ideas, areas of difference, needs and recommendations. The research team wrote post-research reflection notes on each world café focus group after debriefing for each group. Both processes supported the research team to reveal their assumptions, challenge each other's biases, and share different perspectives and feelings on conversations that were witnessed, while holistically making meaning from participant's responses.

The debriefs also provided invaluable emotional space for the research team members to support each other after witnessing resistance, racial aggressions, invalidations, and listening to stories of trauma and racism. The most significant act of resistance that the research team experienced occurred during the non-Indigenous support staff world café focus group. Aboriginal support workers participated in this focus group to support padlet technology needs. During the research team debrief, an Aboriginal support worker shared that the small group that s/he had been assigned would not talk. The small group instantly turned off their cameras and would not engage in the discussion. The Aboriginal support worker tried multiple methods and strategies to solicit input from this group for 15 minutes. When the principal investigator visited this group at the 15 min mark, she observed that their cameras were off. However, the non-Indigenous (all White) staff suddenly turned on their cameras and began talking and answering questions. It was clear that this small group participated in the world café focus group as performative allies. The impacts of resistance of this nature were felt and carried by the Aboriginal support worker, who is required to interact with this group in her/his daily professional routines. The incident also leads us to wonder about how the members of this group interact with Indigenous students and families if they felt comfortable treating their Indigenous colleague in this way. It should also be noted that most of the participants in this world café focus group were committed and interested in supporting Indigenous education in the district, particularly the janitorial staff, who struggled to ensure that they were provided release time by management in order to attend the world café focus group. However, this incident underscores the need to counter professional indifference and resistance to Indigenous education and anti-Indigenous racism efforts in the district.

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<sup>1</sup> The research team recognizes at present no colonial institution is fully safe from colonial violence. Creating safer environments are goals that we endeavour to work toward.



**TABLE 3: WORLD CAFE FOCUS GROUPS**

STAKEHOLDER	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
1. Managers	6
2. Indigenous Teachers and Support Staff	23
3. Trustees	7
4. Senior Team	7
5. Non-Indigenous Support Staff	35
6. Non-Indigenous Teachers	55
7. Administration	62
8. Mixed Indigenous/Non-Indigenous Students	74
Total Participants	269

**World Café Focus Group Limitations:** Due to technology and COVID-19 constraints for the student world café focus groups, the research team was not able to track students according to school or age group. This was due to multiple students being in a room with only one computer in each classroom. There were also multiple classroom spaces being used in a school, as well as across the district in multiple schools for the same world café focus group. Although school district staff did their best to remind the students who had agreed to participate in the world café focus group, not all students attended on the day it was held. In addition, some students gravitated towards a different class and the Aboriginal support worker than initially planned, making it impossible to track everyone. However, we were grateful for the high turnout for the world café focus groups, despite COVID-19 conditions and the technology limitations, which would prevent the research team and the participants from gathering in the same room together. The original goal for participants in the world café focus groups was 450. However, we did observe that the data that was shared via padlet by the focus groups was more accurate (i.e., we did not have to decipher handwriting). The padlet technology also provided more opportunities for participants to expand their comments than a normal piece of poster paper would have done.

**6. Sharing Circles:** Four sharing circles were held online via Zoom with the research team (Dr. Amy Parent, Carolyn Roberts, Amrit Cojocar and Calder Cheverie), with: (1) A Transitions sharing circle comprised of students in grades 7-9; (2) Secondary District Alternative & Remote Learning Students; (3) Indigenous Knowledge Holders; (4) Indigenous Caregivers and Caregivers of Indigenous children. Sharing circles ranged from 90 minutes to 120 minutes in length and took place between the months of February and July 2021. To help create establish a safer space for participants, the research team introduced the importance of enacting the four R's (respect, relevance, responsibility and reciprocity) to support courageous conversations for the sharing circles (Please see Appendix B). Each person was given the opportunity and choice to share her/his response (or to not share) to the facilitator's questions. The majority of participants voiced their opinions and suggestions orally. In other cases, due to technology constraints related to wireless connections, some participants wrote their responses in the chat bar. All sharing circles were video recorded and transcribed. All comments were later coded for common ideas, areas of difference, needs and recommendations. The research team wrote post-research reflection notes on each sharing circle in addition to the debriefing after each circle. Similar to the world café focus groups, we found that both processes supported the research team to reveal their assumptions, challenge each other's biases, and share different perspectives and feelings on conversations that were witnessed, while wholistically making meaning from participant's responses.

**TABLE 4: SHARING CIRCLE PARTICIPANTS**

STAKEHOLDER	SHARING CIRCLE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
1. Indigenous Transitions Grades 7-9	12
2. Indigenous District Alt and Remote (High School)	8
3. Indigenous Community Members	7
4. Indigenous Caregivers and Caregivers of Indigenous Children	12
Total	39

**Sharing Circle Limitations:** We also recognized that COVID-19 limited the initial goal of 60 participants for the sharing circles for the study. Similar to the interview process, Indigenous caregivers noted that they preferred an online format for the sharing circle for time reasons or because they were not comfortable going to their child's school due to previous negative experiences. In other situations, the online sharing circle format limited families who did not have access to technology. Telephone options were provided but only one parent called into a sharing circle. In addition, the horrific findings of 215 Indigenous children buried at the Kamloops Residential School (Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation) and the 751 Indigenous children buried at the Marieval Indian Residential School (in the Cowess Nation) at the end of the school year impacted caregiver availability for the Caregiver Sharing Circle. In addition, the youth sharing circles that were scheduled at the end of the school year were also impacted by graduation and end-of-the-school year activities. We are appreciative to all the participants and district staff who shared their voices for this research, despite the difficult year.

**7. Indigenous Professional Leadership Circle:** Once the living draft was written, the research team enacted a vital element of Indigenous methodologies by sitting with an Indigenous professional leadership circle to review the living draft. The Indigenous Professional Leadership circle provided strategic directions to support the sharing of research findings and provided some of the recommendations for the report. Our research team was honoured to sit in circle with Joy Joseph McCullough, Lynda Gray and Kau'i Keliipio on September 24th, 2021. Please find their biographies below.

**Joy Joseph-McCullough**, also known as Siyaltenaat, is from the Skwxwú7mesh Nation. Joy is the Associate Education Director for the Squamish Nation and has provided significant leadership over the years to support Indigenous education in the Sea to Sky School District (48). This includes supporting the creation of the Aya7ayulh Chet School, which is a Skwxwú7mesh Kindergarten to Grade 6 program of choice school that is guided by the principle that all learning is grounded in understanding the connected relationship of language, land and culture. She is also a Skwxwú7mesh Knowledge Holder and teacher. Her heritage is the foundation to who she is and how she lives her life.

**Kau'i Keliipio** ('O Kau'i Keliipio ko'u inoa, Kanaka Maoli wahine no ka pae'āina 'o Hawai'i. My name is Kau'i Keliipio, Kanaka Maoli woman from the Hawaiian archipelago. As an uninvited guest, I acknowledge the privilege I have had of learning to live on and from the ancestral and unceded lands of the Lilwat and Coast Salish peoples, including the Skwxwú7mesh, Tsleil-Waututh, and X̱məθkʷəy̓əm.

I am an immigrant, comic doodler, painter, educator, and graduate student. In my professional life I taught students in British Columbia's K-12 system. I served as the administrator of a First Nations school, taught in a regional college, was seconded to the Aboriginal Branch of the B.C. Ministry of Education for 3 years, and for thirty-seven years worked in Simon Fraser University's teacher education program, coordinating those programs that were partnered with First Nations communities.

I have responsibility, kuleana, that compels me to continue to do relevant work that ensures Aboriginal children and youth, indeed all children and youth, flourish in their educational endeavors and engage in relationships which fosters meaningful learning and nurtures healthy and valued lives.

**Lynda Gray** is a member of the Gisbutwada/Killerwhale Clan of the Ts'msyen Nation on the Northwest Coast of BC. Although she was born in Prince Rupert, she spent most of her life in East Vancouver until she bought a home in Prince Rupert in 2013, so that she and her children could return home more often to reconnect to their Nation, family, land, and culture. Lynda is the proud mother of two adult children: Northwest Coast artist Phil Gray and professor Dr. Robin Gray. She and her children have learned much about their Ts'msyen culture and community from their participation in the Vancouver-based Lax Xeen Ts'msyen Dance Group, from attending traditional feasts in their home community of Lax Kw'alaams, and from active learning of their ancestral language, Sm'algyax. Lynda is also the author of the national best-selling book "First Nations 101" <http://www.firstnations101.com/>

Lynda's work is grounded in a strong belief in community development, youth empowerment, and culture as therapy. She has a bachelor's degree in Social Work from UBC, served as the Executive Director of the Urban Native Youth Association for 8 years, and serves on community Boards including the Indigenous Cultural Safety Advisory Circle.

**8. Indigenous Knowledge Holder Verification Process:** The research team also met with Indigenous Knowledge Holders who had participated in interviews for the living report to verify their quotes in the document, and answer any questions or concerns related to the document once it was written. The research team felt it was important to meet with the Indigenous Knowledge Holders first before sharing the living document with district personnel. Meetings with Indigenous Knowledge Holders occurred on January 6 and 7, 2022.

**TABLE 5: TOTAL PARTICIPANTS BY METHOD**

INTERVIEWS	WORLD CAFÉ FOCUS GROUPS	SHARING CIRCLES	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
46	269	39	354

## JAY IS LATE FOR SCHOOL AGAIN

This composite story below is based on the interviews, sharing circle and world café focus group data that was shared by Indigenous youth and caregivers with the research team. Jay is a fictional character, yet her experiences are based on the real-life experiences of many Indigenous students and caregivers in School District 42. This composite story allows us to present Indigenous students and caregivers stories in an anonymized, portrayal while also reflecting the key findings that emerged for Indigenous learners and caregivers in this review. We draw upon Indigenous Storywork protocol by inviting you to engage with your heart, mind, body and spirit as you read this story (Archibald, 2008). Ultimately, we hope that this story is a teacher and will assist stakeholders to reflect on their roles and responsibilities to undertake the report's recommendations to re-right and re-write Jay's story to transform Indigenous education and anti-Indigenous racism efforts in the district.

Jay was late for school again. It had been harder for her to get out of the house on time since her mom had passed away. Jay had to help get her brothers, Billy and Ray Junior ready for school in the mornings and walk them to school. Jay's stepdad was working two jobs and would often leave for work early in the morning and return home late in the evening. After school was a little easier, since Auntie Rose would pick up Billy and Ray Junior and bring them to her house until Jay had returned from school. It was taking Jay longer to get to school since she got kicked out of her last school. She now had to take two buses across town to get to her new school, which made it challenging to be on time in the mornings. It didn't help that Jay's family lived in a remote area in Maple Ridge, which meant that if one bus was missed, it would take another 30-40 minutes for another bus to arrive.

The whole situation didn't feel very fair. Her mother had recently passed away and these two White girls, Karen and Rachel, who had constantly called her names in the hallways had finally drawn the line. Jay had told her teachers what was happening, but they didn't do anything. At one point, a couple of years earlier when Jay's mom was still alive, she had gotten mad and called the school principal. The school principal didn't respond to Jay's mom's calls until she showed up at the school raging mad, demanding that someone talk with her. The principal then called the two girls to the office and told them to stop teasing Jay and asked them to apologize. The principal wouldn't listen to Jay's mom's concerns about the racism. He told Jay's mom that all kids tease each other and that they sometimes step over the line and need to be informed that this type of behaviour is hurtful. The principal had even corrected Jay's mom and said "this is mild bullying, this is not racism. We haven't had any racist incidents at this school since I have become the principal". Rachel and Karen offered empty apologies with smirks on their faces and then escalated their behaviour towards Jay in the years to follow. Jay stopped telling her mom because she didn't want to cause her more stress with all her health problems.

Once her mom, passed away Jay's whole world fell apart. She finally got tired of Rachel and Karen's snide remarks. They would ask her if she "still lived in a shack on the reserve" and then would walk away giggling. Other times, they would whisper "dog" as she walked by. The day came when they made fun of her for the last time. They teased her for not having a mother. Jay started punching them and couldn't stop. She had years full of rage that had been buried inside her come out. The grief from her mom's passing didn't help. All she could remember was the sound of screams, seeing Karen and Rachel's bloody noses and feeling a large sweaty PE teacher pulling her off of them. When Auntie Rose came down to the office, the new school principal talked down to her and seemed to be only listening to Rachel and Karen's parents who were demanding that Jay be expelled and asked if she was too young to have a restraint order. The vice principal even called a social worker, which only made things worse. Jay's step dad refused to talk to the school after the social worker was called.

In the end, the principal, vice principal and the school counselor pressured Auntie Rose to place Jay in an alternate school. They told Auntie Rose it would be a better place for Jay. They noted that Jay was not meeting expectations in many of her courses and they were concerned about her attendance record. Jay wondered if they ever thought to ask why she was missing school or why her grades were not on par with the rest of her classmates. Had they considered that Jay had to step in and help her family while her mother was sick? Did they ever check to see what the teachers were actually teaching her? Jay had really hoped her old Aboriginal support worker, Terry, would have been invited to this meeting but she had been switched to another school a few months earlier. The new Aboriginal support worker had been really busy

trying to get to know all the students. It also seemed that the new Aboriginal support worker was doing a lot of teaching which meant less time for students. Jay wondered why teachers were so afraid to teach Indigenous content? Why were Aboriginal support worker's doing their jobs?

Terry had been one of a handful of adults in her school who treated her with respect. Terry was also one of two people who had ever taught Jay about Indigenous peoples and cultures in her high school. Terry would often bring weaving and beading activities down to Mr. H's social studies class. Jay remembered that Mr. H had made efforts to talk about residential schools and the child welfare system in his class with the support of Terry. Jay's class even got to read novels written by Indigenous Peoples in Mr. H's class. Terry had also done a really cool bead timeline activity which Jay liked. All of Jay's other classes were boring and didn't talk about Indigenous Peoples unless they were helping Europeans during the fur trade or when the entire school did the 'one and done' to celebrate National Aboriginal Day.

In elementary school, Jay's entire school got to help carve a totem pole, but the students weren't really told the story behind the pole. Jay remembered Mr. C, who had tried to teach her class about the Miq'mac Peoples in grade seven but ended up being super racist by telling the students to call them "Big Macs" and thought it was a joke. Jay remembered feeling really embarrassed and angry when Mr. C repeatedly told the class remember "Big Macs" but didn't want to say anything to rock the boat. A year earlier, Jay had tried to share more about her family's cultural teachings in class with her French teacher and was flatly told that she was wrong. The teacher wasn't Indigenous and this felt like a huge insult but Jay didn't argue back because she already felt that the teacher didn't like her and didn't want to get a lower grade than she was already receiving. Jay's French teacher only told her what she did wrong on assignments and wouldn't really help her when she would ask for more feedback on her assignments. Her French teacher only seemed to want to focus on the students who were already doing well. Jay really wished she could have an opportunity to learn her own language instead of French but was told by her teacher that "your language is not an official language of Canada", which made her burn on the inside.

As Jay waited for her bus, she was hopeful that her new Indigenous teacher, Sienna was going to be at her new school that day. Sienna was the first Indigenous teacher Jay had ever had and she really admired her. Sienna talked to students about racism and even encouraged the school to show their solidarity for Black and Indigenous Lives Matter. There seemed to be a lot more Indigenous cultural activities embedded in Jay's courses and flexibility for students in the new Alternate school. The teachers seemed to care about student's home lives and they were even offered a hot lunch everyday, which made it a lot easier for Jay. Sienna even made efforts to drive Jay home on Tuesdays, so Jay could play basketball after school. The Aboriginal Resource Teacher even connected Jay with a counselor to help her anxiety and grief. Jay wondered why her old high school couldn't have been more like this school but still struggled with the situation that caused her to end up in the alternate school....



## AN INVITATION TO ENGAGE IN OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

We would like to extend a friendly invitation to non-Indigenous (especially White) people to begin some of the pro-active learning and unlearning that is a part of our decolonizing anti-racist journeys in ways that do not create additional work for Indigenous stakeholders in the district. We would like to invite you to enter a courageous space that will enable the complexities, tensions, discomforts, and contradictions that are involved in the practice of decolonization and reconciliation through anti-Indigenous racist education. No one is innocent with regard to the complicity that arises from living and working in a colonial system. We began our work in this living report with the premise that colonialism is a systemic issue, which means that we are all required to participate in our collective responsibilities to change it. We recognize that transformation and change in a colonial system is an ongoing process that does not end with a checked box. How we undertake our responsibilities for Indigenous education will depend on our employment status and positionality (gender, race, class, abilities etc.) in the system, since some of us will have greater privilege and power than others to make the needed changes.

To deepen the possibilities of unlearning and learning in the context of this living document, we further invite you to approach this process from an extending disposition rather than occupying a place of comfort, apathy or fear, which leave little room for meaningful learning. The extending zone is the ideal space for courageous learning and action to support systemic transformation.



Branching Out

We have intentionally provided “branching out” sections to reflect the living nature of this report. Branching out connections are made in key areas of the report’s findings to support the commitment that is required for us to engage in linking our professional development and behaviour with relevant scholarship in Indigenous education and anti-racism strategies, historical landmark policies, and key teachings from Indigenous Peoples.

Artwork provided by Rain Pierre (<https://www.rainawakens.com/>).





Spiral In

The spiraling in connections are offered to assist you in critically reflecting on your practice to guide meaningful transformation and action that supports Indigenous education in the district. For educators and administrators some of the spiraling in connections will be familiar, as they stem from the Professional Standards for BC Educators and the Principal and Vice Principals Leadership Standards. Some of the branching outs and spiraling in connections may or may not make sense until they are enacted in practice or become contextually relevant. However, we hope to plant the seeds, so they are available when they are needed to support Indigenous learners, families and communities in the district. We hold our hands high to you for accepting our invitation.

Artwork provided by Rain Pierre (<https://www.rainawakens.com/>).

## UNDERSTANDING THE QUALITATIVE LANDSCAPE OF MAPLE RIDGE - PITT MEADOWS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 42

In order to understand the qualitative landscape of School District 42: Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows, the research team reviewed the following resources:

- Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement for Maple Ridge School and Pitt Meadows District Graphic Organizer.<sup>1</sup>
- Fraser River Indigenous Society.<sup>2</sup>
- Golden Ears Métis Society.<sup>3</sup>
- Katzie First Nations Website.<sup>4</sup>
- Kwantlen First Nations Website.<sup>5</sup>
- Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement.<sup>6</sup>
- School District No. 42 Aboriginal Advisory Budget Review PowerPoint Presentation Slides, March 30th, 2021
- School District No. 42 Aboriginal Education Website.<sup>7</sup>
- School District No. 42 Policy 9415: Inclusive Schools, April 2020.<sup>8</sup>
- School District No. 42 School Growth Plan Summary for 2020-2021.<sup>9</sup>
- School District No. 42: Supporting All Learners Annual Report, 2019/2020. October 2020.<sup>10</sup>
- **Academic Review:** of empirical research in academic databases related to Indigenous anti-racism, equity in Canadian school districts.
- **B.C. Ministry of Education Equity Hub:** review of “Equity in Action” research materials, examples from school districts, and orientation materials.
- **Professional Conversations:** We hold our hands high to Dr. Bathseba Opini, Dr. Ozlem Sensoy and Dr. Jeannie Kerr for our professional conversations and the sharing of pertinent anti-racism resources which supported the development of the report.
- School District No. 42 Policy 9410: Safe, Caring and Healthy Schools.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.sd42.ca/assets/media/4th\\_EA\\_signed\\_Apr\\_23\\_2015.pdf](https://www.sd42.ca/assets/media/4th_EA_signed_Apr_23_2015.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.frisociety.ca/>

<sup>3</sup> The society has a Facebook Page sharing their work and making connections

<sup>4</sup> Katzie First Nation does not seem to have a website at this moment and their Facebook page was not updated.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.kwantlenfn.ca/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/Indigenous-education/enhancement-agreements/framework/sd42.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://abed.sd42.ca/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.sd42.ca/assets/media/Inclusive-Schools-Approved-April-29-2020.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.sd42.ca/assets/media/2020-2021-SD42-School-Growth-Plans.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.sd42.ca/assets/media/2020-Annual-Learning-Report-web.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.sd42.ca/board-of-education/policy-manual/policy-9410-safe-caring-and-healthy-schools/>

## UNDERSTANDING THE QUANTITATIVE LANDSCAPE OF MAPLE RIDGE - PITT MEADOWS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 42

In order to understand the qualitative landscape of School District 42: Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows, the research team reviewed the following resource:

- **British Columbia Ministry of Education “Aboriginal Report 2015/16 - 2019/20 How are We Doing?”<sup>[1]</sup>**

Research is never a neutral and objective process (Smith, 1999). It is important to recognize that data alone does nothing to actually support Indigenous communities’ educational goals and wellbeing. While many Indigenous caregivers and community members would like an indication of Indigenous learners’ understandings of success, Pidgeon et al (2019) notes that their definitions of success are varied and are not understood as “one-way” or formed through Western values of success”<sup>2</sup> (p.6). It is clear that educational approaches must be framed within an Indigenous onto-epistemic (worldview) process that supports goals to disrupt Euro-centrism, systemic racism and oppression, while enhancing equity for Indigenous learners, families and communities. Unfortunately, the aforementioned report does not centre an Indigenous framework, and is not explicit about what it is measuring. It relies on the assumption that graduation rates within an Euro-centric system are the key factor in Indigenous student success. At present, it is perpetuating false assumptions about the inherent deficiencies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners in British Columbia. It does so by omission of information and a failure to measure the negative impacts of longstanding structural racism, intergenerational trauma and social exclusion of Indigenous groups in the province. Further, until recently, the B.C. education system has provided little education to support all learners’ understandings of Indigenous education, values, protocols, and practices in the curriculum. The data<sup>2</sup> in this report therefore shifts the focus from systemic failure to individual “success” in a system designed to perpetuate violence and harm towards Indigenous and BPOC Peoples. This in turn leads to further stigma for Indigenous students by comparing them unfairly to non-Indigenous Peoples who rarely have such complex antecedent realities. Further challenges with this report will be highlighted in Strand 4: Indigenous Specific Racism and Responses. It is important to acknowledge that if all non-Indigenous Peoples had violent experiences related to genocide, colonialism and systemic racism (in society and in educational settings), their educational achievements would be impacted in the same way. It is important to ask:

- Are we measuring the negative impacts of long-standing colonialism, structural racism and social exclusion to use data and research to create meaningful systemic change?
- What are we measuring?
- How are we measuring?
- Are we continuously consulting with Indigenous communities to determine what success means for Indigenous children and communities in our district?
- Are we measuring the perceived individual deficiencies and differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners in an Eurocentric system designed to cause harm and violence?
- How will this data improve the lives of Indigenous learners, families and communities?
- How will this data improve our practice to support system wide equitable change and transformation for Indigenous learners, families and communities?

The stories shared by Indigenous students, families, and the caregivers of Indigenous students in this living document will provide a deeper understanding of these issues in a storied, qualitative form.

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<sup>1</sup> Pidgeon, M., Tobin, J., Setah, T., Leveille, A., Dunn, D., Ghag, M., Johnson, K. and Bubela, T. (2019). Looking Forward... Indigenous Pathways To and Through Simon Fraser University Wholistic1 understandings of access, transition, and persistence. [http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/vpacademic/files/PathwaysProject\\_FinalReport\\_July2020.pdf](http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/vpacademic/files/PathwaysProject_FinalReport_July2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> In order to gain an accurate count of Indigenous students in the district to support deeper understandings of student outcomes, graduation, programming effectiveness, grade to grade transitions, post-secondary transitions and student satisfaction, self-identification categories for Indigenous students should be broadened so the exact Nation(s) and ethnic origins of each person is collected. In addition, gender categories should also be expanded to inclusive of the spectrum of gender diversity.

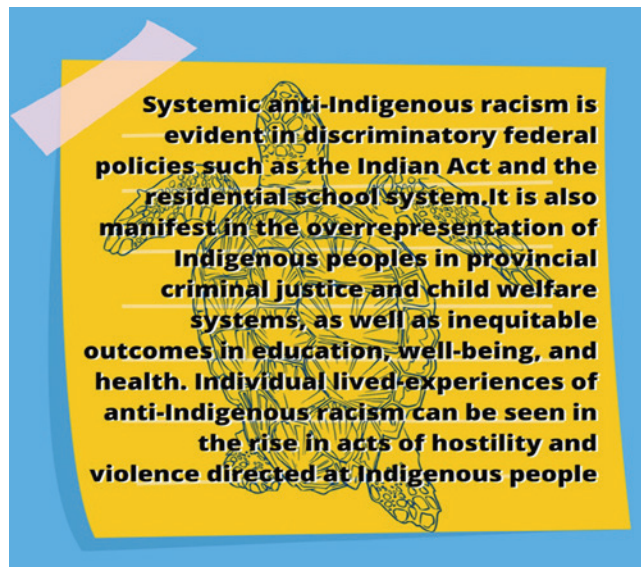


## YOUTH FRIENDLY TERMINOLOGY

To support youth friendly understandings of the terminology that will be used in this report, we are grateful to the Deblekha Guin, Executive Director of the Access to Media Society (AMES)<sup>1</sup> who generously connected us with artists Emma Joye Frank (K'ómoks First Nation, Namgis Nation and Eh-Cho Dene Nation) and Ivy Edad (a Filipinx non-binary poet born in Manila, Philippines). AMES, Emma Joye Frank and Ivy Edad have provided the research team and SD42 permission to use the following memes in order to support systemic transformation for Indigenous and Black Peoples and Peoples of Colour (IBPOC) students, families and communities. We ask that you please honour Emma Joye Frank and Ivy Edad's contribution by crediting their work. The next section will provide written definitions of key terminology.



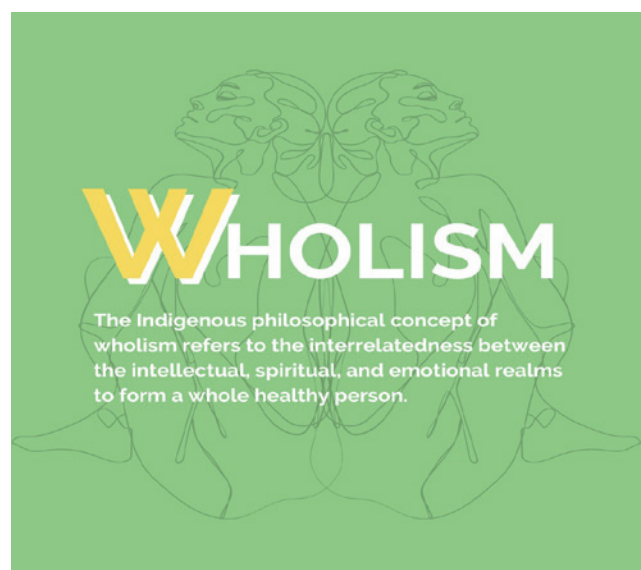
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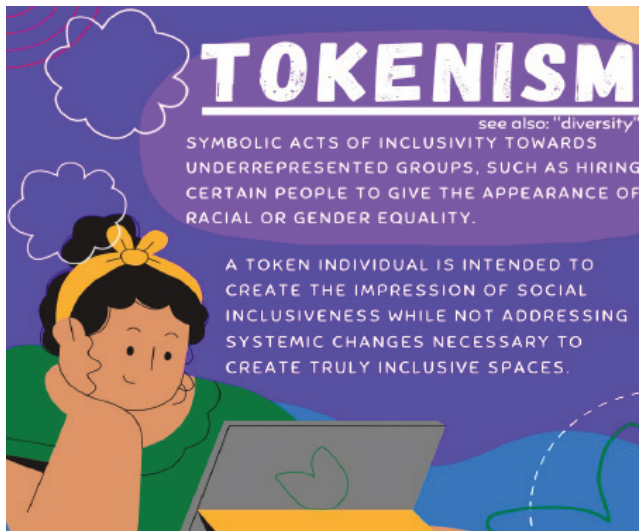


Artist Credit: Emma Joye Frank

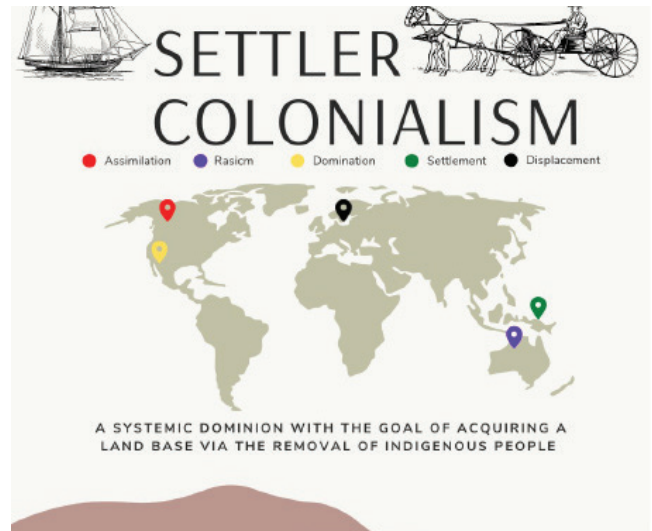


Artist Credit: Ivy Edad

<sup>1</sup> AMES engages marginalized youth in personally and socially transformative storytelling through digital media, artistic collaboration, and peer facilitation. <https://accessmedia.org/programs/>



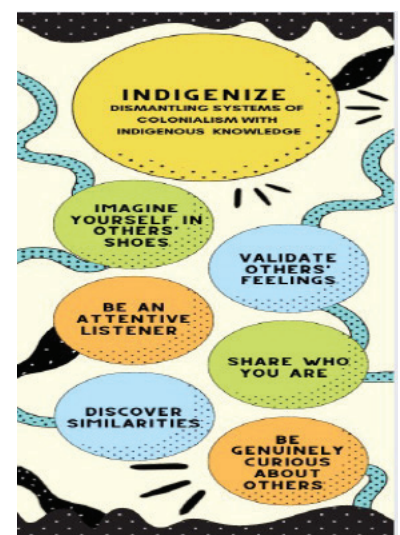
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Artist Credit: Emma Joye Frank



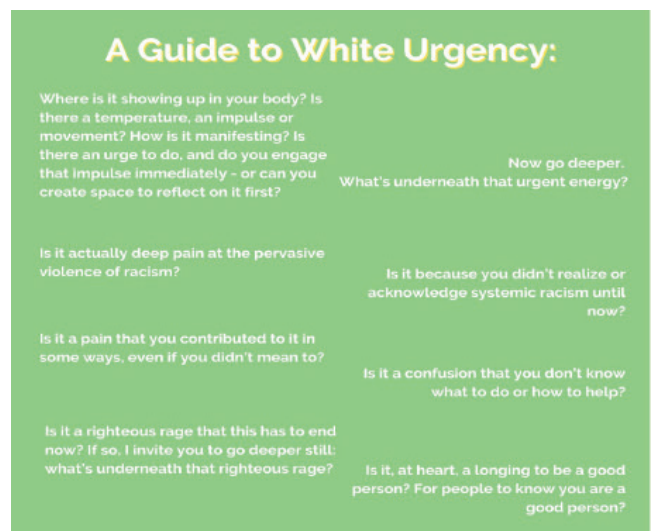
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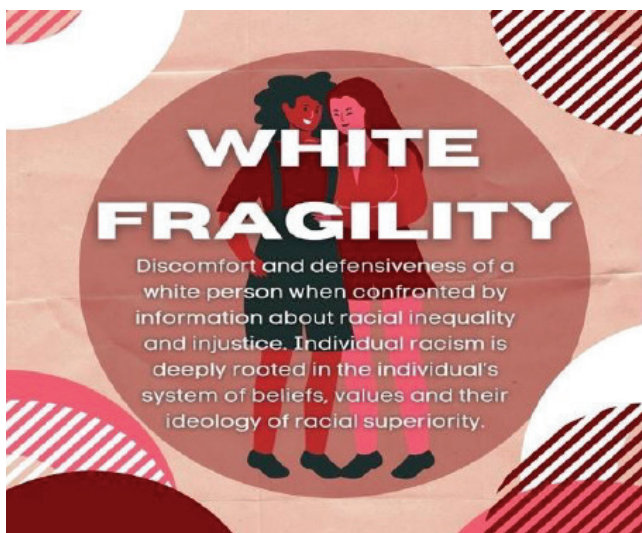


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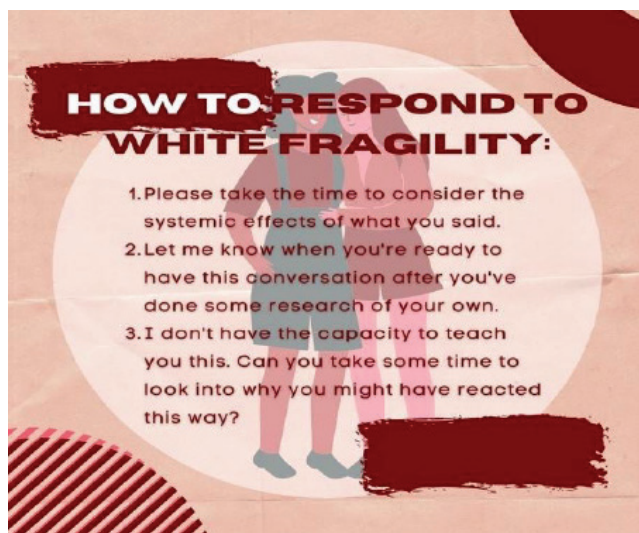


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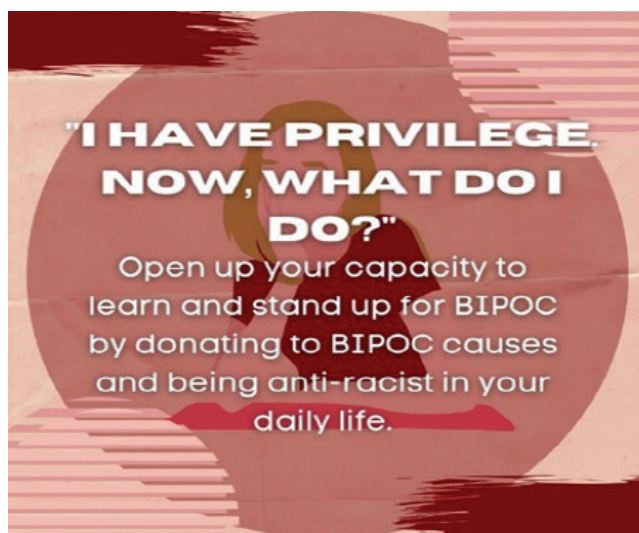
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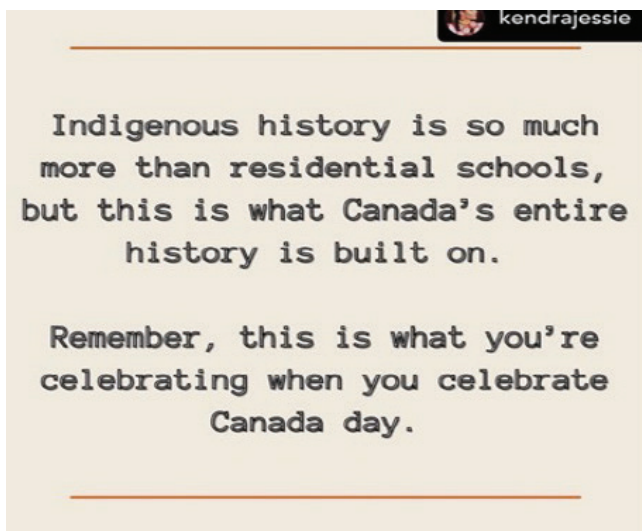
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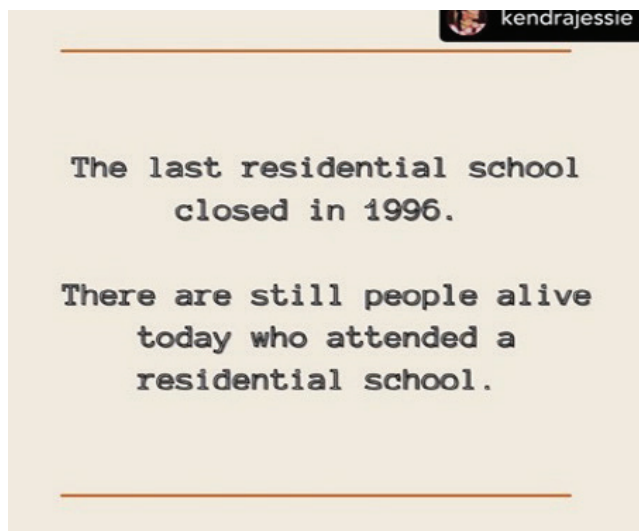
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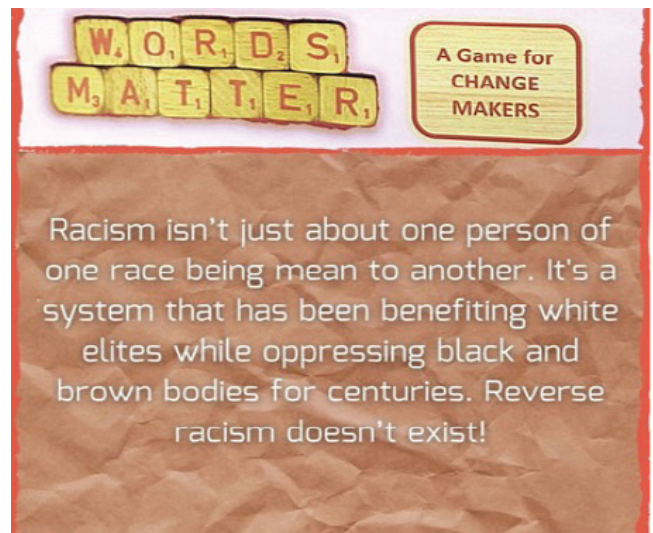


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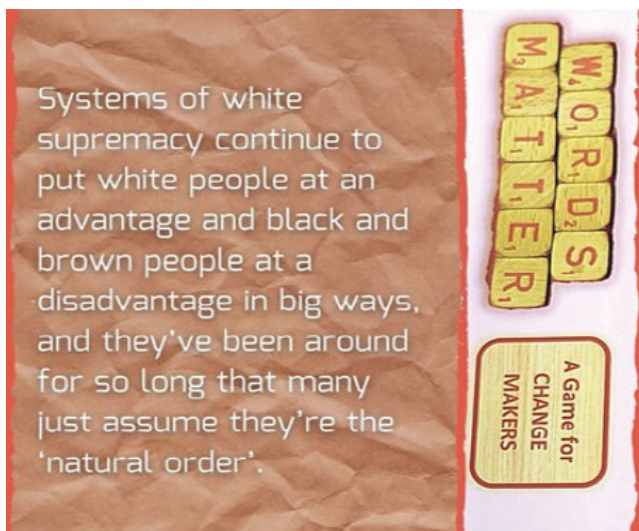




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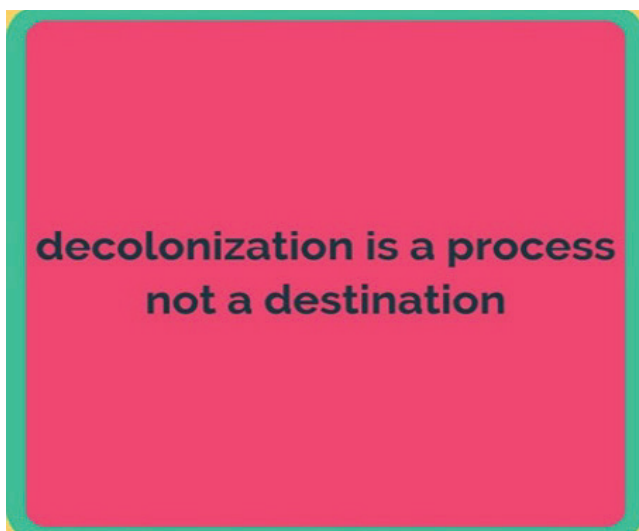
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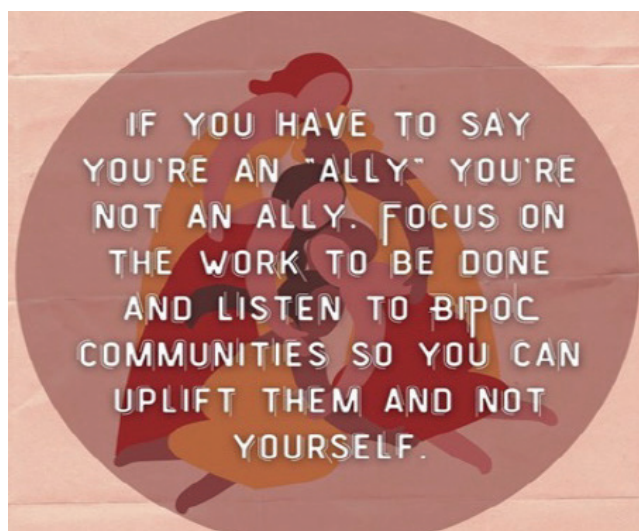
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Artist Credit: Ivy Edad

IT IS HARD TO RESPOND  
WHEN SOMEONE IS ATTACKING  
YOUR IDENTITY. THOSE  
ARE THE SITUATIONS  
WHERE WE  
NEED ALLIES.  
- Tanvi Bhatia



Artist Credit: Ivy Edad



## WRITTEN TERMINOLOGY

### Indigenous

Throughout this document, the research team has chosen to use the terms Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples to refer to what may also be understood as Aboriginal, First Nations, Inuit and Métis. We felt it was important to honour individual stakeholder voices in the ways that they chose to self-identity in their quotes. We also retained the terminology Indigenous scholars used in their writing in the branching out connections. The choice to use the term Indigenous reflects global recognition by Indigenous scholars and communities. We also would like to share the explanation shared by Chief Oren Lyons (Onondaga and Seneca Nations), who has been a leading member on the Indigenous Peoples of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nation, which has been integral to the development of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). Chief Oren Lyons shares that Indigenous Peoples is a self-determined term coined in 1975 to refer to peoples Indigenous to the Western Hemisphere. Michael Yellow Bird (1999) explains that choice in terminology “symbolizes cultural empowerment and political liberation and signal[s] a dialogical process in which Indigenous Peoples reclaim their right to say their own word, reclaim their identities, and name the world according to their understanding” (p. 6).

It is important to communicate that many Indigenous people prefer to identify themselves by specific local terms based on family and community location and traditional names (Kesler, 2020) and that all Indigenous people can choose how they self-identify. Kesler (2020) also points out that within the complexities and changing status of terms there lies a historical perspective worth retaining as reflecting the conventions in operation when the naming was done. He writes that, “recognizing that terms have histories is a way to resolve these apparent conflicts and come to a useful understanding of language in context ... In common usage and in conversation, however, attention to current practice is an important part of being clearly understood and avoiding misunderstandings” (Kesler, 2020, Conclusion section). We recognize that no term is perfect and that not all Indigenous Peoples will agree with our choice. However, we hope that our explanation and the honouring of participant’s decisions to self-identify with their preferred terms, helps to clear up any misunderstandings in this report.

Indigenous Knowledge Holder is a member of an Indigenous community who is knowledgeable in various aspects and forms of Indigenous knowledge, ways of being, and protocol. In each Indigenous community there may be different terms used to describe Indigenous Knowledge Holders with particular distinctions and forms of community recognition that are unique according to community context (Elders, Old Ones, Wise Ones etc).

### Decolonization

Decolonization is a dramatic reimagining of relationships with land, people and the state. It requires a consideration of power, privilege and history. Much of this requires study and conversation. It is a practice and it is an unlearning. According to Maori scholar Dr. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), decolonization was “once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, it is now recognized as a long-term process involving bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological divesting of colonial power” (p. 98), including schools and people. Cree/Blackfoot Scholar Dwayne Donald provides a profound definition of colonization. He says, “Colonization is about the severing of relationships. From each other, from the land and water ways, from spirit, from family, from community” (D. Donald, personal correspondence, February, 2015). If we want to think about decolonization then we can flip this definition around. It is about the rebuilding of relationships with each other, the land, waterways, spirit, family, community, educational institutions, and our governance systems.

### Equity

A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences. “Today, we think of fair as being not just equal but equitable. That’s an important distinction. Whereas equal means everyone gets the same treatment and services as everyone else, equitable means each person gets what he or she needs to succeed” (Smith, Frey, Pumpian, and Fisher, 2017, p.2).

## **Anti-Indigenous Racism**

Anti-Indigenous racism is the ongoing race-based discrimination, negative stereotyping, and injustice experienced by Indigenous Peoples within Canada. It includes ideas and practices that establish, maintain and perpetuate power imbalances, systemic barriers, and inequitable outcomes that stem from the legacy of colonial policies and practices in Canada. Systemic anti-Indigenous racism is evident in discriminatory federal policies such as the Indian Act. It is also manifest in the over representation of Indigenous peoples in provincial criminal justice and child welfare systems, as well as inequitable outcomes in education, well-being, and health. Individual lived experiences of anti-Indigenous racism can be seen in the rise in acts of hostility and violence directed at Indigenous people.

## **Anti-Oppression**

An active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional and systemic racism as well as the oppression and injustice racism causes.

## **Anti-Racism Approach**

Anti-racism is a process, a systematic method of analysis, and a proactive course of action rooted in the recognition of the existence of racism, including systemic racism. Anti-racism actively seeks to identify, remove, prevent, and mitigate racially inequitable outcomes and power imbalances between groups, and to change the structures that sustain inequities.

## **Racialization**

A process of delineating group boundaries (races) and the allocation of persons within those boundaries by primary reference to (supposedly) inherent and/or biological (usually phenotypical) characteristics. In this process, societies construct race as ‘real’, different, and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political, and social life.

## **Racialized (Person or Group)**

Racialized persons and/or groups can have racial meanings attributed to them in ways that negatively impact their social, political, and economic life. This includes but is not necessarily limited to people classified as “visible minorities” under the Canadian census and may include people impacted by antisemitism and Islamophobia.

## **Stakeholder**

Stakeholder is an individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity of the school district. The following individuals participated in this review as stakeholders: Knowledge Holders, Indigenous Knowledge Holders, Indigenous, non-Indigenous students, caregivers of Indigenous children and youth, non-Indigenous support staff, Indigenous support staff, non-Indigenous teachers, Indigenous teachers, Aboriginal support workers, principals, vice principals, managers, Golden Ears Métis Society, Fraser River Indigenous Society, trustees, and senior administration.

## **Systemic Discrimination**

Systemic discrimination refers to policies or practices that appear to be neutral on their surface but that may have discriminatory effects on individuals based on one or more Human Rights Code grounds. Systemic discrimination can overlap with other kinds of discrimination, such as harassment, and may arise from stereotypes and biases.

## Systemic Racism

Consists of organizational culture, policies, directives, practices or procedures that exclude, displace or marginalize some racialized groups or create unfair barriers for them to access valuable benefits and opportunities. This is often the result of institutional biases in organizational culture, policies, directives, practices, and procedures that may appear neutral but have the effect of privileging some groups and disadvantaging others. Systemic or institutional racism refers to the ways that whiteness and white superiority become embedded in the policies and processes of an institution, resulting in a system that advantages white people and disadvantages IBPOC Peoples across all areas of society (education, justice, employment, health, politics etc) (UBC, 2021).

## Lateral Violence

Originates from colonialism, oppression, intergenerational trauma and the ongoing experiences of racism and discrimination experienced by Indigenous Peoples and communities. According to Jane Middleton-Moz lateral violence is “when a powerful oppressor has directed oppression against a group for a period of time, members of the oppressed group feel powerless to fight back and they eventually turn their anger against each other.” As a result, Indigenous People can become the oppressor within a workplace or community by directing abuse to people of their own gender, culture, sexuality, and profession. In other words, instead of directing their anger at the oppressor, these workplace or community aggressors now direct their anger at each other (please see the following link for further details <https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2011-Aboriginal-Lateral-Violence.pdf>.)

# STRAND 01

## INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE

### INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 1991, Drs Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt wrote a foundational article in Indigenous education that asserted the need for educational institutions to meaningfully enact the four R's (respect, relevance, responsibility, and reciprocity) in order to better reflect educational priorities for Indigenous students. This section works with the four R's to frame the findings from stakeholders (Aboriginal education team interviews and sharing circle; senior administration team interviews; senior team world café focus group; Indigenous caregiver interviews; caregiver sharing circle, Indigenous Knowledge Holder sharing circle and; the mixed Indigenous/non-Indigenous student world café focus group, which responded to questions related to Indigenous educational governance and community engagement.

#### Reciprocity

Reciprocity comes in many different relational forms, which can include care, presence, time, knowledge, respect, and honour, as well as physical, material, financial, cultural, and leadership support. Kwantlen Knowledge Holders indicated that the establishment of current relationships with Indigenous communities has taken time and hard work in order to get where they are today – they didn't happen overnight, particularly with regard to the changing positions within district leadership). Most Indigenous Knowledge Holder interviews highlighted the importance of district leaders, staff, teachers, and managers beginning or continuing to develop reciprocal relationships with their communities. Indigenous Knowledge Holders appreciated invitations to sit at various tables in the school district and witness district senior administration leaders making the effort to develop reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities. Being the “seen face” (Smith, 1999) at community events is an important trust building relational commitment that is encouraged and respected in Indigenous communities. Most Knowledge Holder interviews highlighted the importance for the district to go beyond contractual, policy driven relationships in order to demonstrate reciprocal actions in multiple ways.

“I really like the way it is now, you know, with us being at the table. They invited the Elders – do you have any Elders that want to come?... But I want to say that we learned along the way. And with [the former superintendent], ever since the Enhancement Agreement – when I saw her in the longhouse and she was actually the first one I saw in a longhouse (of the superintendents) and she made that mark a big step for any school district, and superintendent that is down to earth like she was” (Kwantlen Knowledge Holder).

“Having the Elders with me, I didn't feel alone. I felt supported. And that meant everything to me” (Kwantlen Knowledge Holder).

## Caregivers

In terms of reciprocity, Indigenous caregivers in sharing circle and interviews were asked the following question:

- How often are you invited to school district or school-based events? What else is needed in terms of greater support or involvement from Elders, families, and communities?

The caregiver sharing circle noted that there were less events offered during COVID, which had made it more challenging for families due to social isolation. However, the caregivers noted the following events that they had been invited to participate in at the school or district level:

- National Indigenous Day event, hosted by the Aboriginal Department.
- Two Zoom events this year – but they were age inappropriate and aimed at younger children.
- Children participated in the Leadership program, which created invitations to attend special events hosted by the program. No district or school specific events are being hosted outside of the Aboriginal education department.
- An Elder supported school reading to another grade level one or two years ago.

Most caregivers (in the sharing circle and interviews) detailed their appreciation of the Aboriginal support workers at their schools, who acted as key points of contact for invitations to school events. In addition, four parent interviewees highlighted that the schools were communicating well, and they felt that they were involved in their children's education. One of the caregiver interviewees noted that communication was positive during their child's attendance at elementary school. However, now that their child has entered high school, they are now required to actively reach out to voice their needs, which often are not heard. Another caregiver interviewee was also an Aboriginal district staff member and shared that she or he felt intrinsically valued due to her or his role as a parent and staff member, noting the positive relationship with the Aboriginal support worker that helped her or his children. Another caregiver interviewee stated that teachers engaged families at drop off times. One caregiver interviewee detailed that her or his relationship with the school and the district has slowly moved in a positive direction after the school worked in tandem with social services to remove a family member's children from their care. Since the removal of the children, the parent passed away, which left this family member in a caregiving role for the children to support communication responsibilities with the school. This caregiver detailed the significant trauma that the school had created by working with social services and felt it was important for the district to know that trust had been broken. However, the caregiver also shared that since the family member's passing, an Aboriginal support worker has acted as a “parental figure” in the school and several district staff have stepped in to support the family and children, which has led to an improvement in the relationship. She/he also wanted the district to know that it was important to provide access to technology (i.e. iPads) and bus passes (particularly for those living in more remote areas). They also appreciated the hot lunches that were provided from time to time from the Aboriginal support worker who worked with their family.



## What Else Is Needed?

- More Elders and Indigenous community members being invited into the schools, including support for the Elders in Residence Program in each school.
- Indigenous education for all students.
- Schools to communicate what Indigenous children are learning in Indigenous education throughout the curriculum.
- Indigenize the graduation ceremony (replace bagpipes with Katzie and Kwantlen Nation drummers).
- Katzie or Kwantlen Nation welcome songs from the territories to be sung during all school assemblies. Katzie or Kwantlen Nation welcome songs from the territories to be sung during all school assemblies. Upon availability Métis fiddlers and/ or dancers are to also be invited to school assemblies.
- District and schools to involve Indigenous war veterans in classes and school assemblies upon availability (and to communicate about efforts to invite Indigenous veterans to assemblies when they are not available).
- Indigenous advocates needed for children with exceptionalities.
- Consistent Indigenous advocates are needed to support families with children with diverse learning needs.
- School tours for families.
- Business cards for families to contact school staff (not all families have computers)
- A magnet calendar with all district Aboriginal education events listed on it for the year.



Do you want only one Indigenous perspective that is understandable from your point of view? How much will the perspective need to be translated into your sensibility for you to feel satisfied? How equipped are you to have difficult conversations without relationships falling apart? How do you usually respond to having your assumptions challenged? How do you usually respond to being called out on harmful practices that are perceived as normal? How will you respond to Indigenous perspectives that may make you feel uncomfortable, guilty, rejected and/or hopeless? Are you able to engage with and hold space for multiple, competing, or even contradictory Indigenous perspectives among Indigenous people? Individual Indigenous people, like all people, are also complex and contradictory; are you able to engage with and hold space for the full, complex humanity of the Indigenous individuals you work with?

*Source: Jimmy, E., Andreotti, V. (2019) Towards braiding report. Guelph, ON: Musagetes Foundation*

"The deeper learning pieces – need to come from School District 42, so not just Aboriginal Education if that – if the staff of that department are perhaps leading those events or providing the knowledge and protocol – is fine, but I think it needs to come from the district and it needs to be maybe even more educational, right? So, letting our students know – our learners know – why they're being involved in these types of events and including our – definitely collaboration with our Local Nations" (Caregiver Sharing Circle).

"I think, that it needs to start from somewhere is – how do we Indigenize our practices? It's sad that our students can't wear, you know, their sashes or be blanketed and move across the stage in a regular graduation ceremony. But the only way they get that is by going to the Indigenous Awards that we have in school districts. I did buck the trend a few years ago with my oldest son (laughs) and I wrapped him in a blanket and had him walk across the stage because I knew that was important for our family. And one of our.... (my relatives actually) did the blanketing and put his headband on, because that was important, and she just happens to be staff. But I think that that's important and I did the exact same thing in kindergarten, for my kids. We used to hold them up in our school district every kindergarten year. We would do a kindergarten graduation ceremony, and we'd welcome those students into Grade one. Kindergarten is the beginning of their journey, and we would have a whole ceremony. We'd do protocol. All the families – we fed everybody. So, I actually took it to my elementary school, and I asked and said, can I do this? And the principal at the time said sure. He had no idea what I was talking about. I went to my favourite kindergarten teacher, and she said, absolutely. Can you tell me a little bit more about it? I said, all I need to do is make sure that this is what's going on. I talked to the support worker, I bought the blankets, I brought money to pin on my child. I did everything in a cultural way, and [names withheld] were there, and brought the kindergarten kids in for the first time. And it was – sorry – (crying). It was the first time that a lot of parents had ever seen anything and were really appreciative of the fact that you know, the school did something. And I kind of had to laugh because it wasn't the school who did it – yet the school and the teacher continued that on through you know, the next four or five years, until she left the school. And yet, that was one small thing that was easily done, and I ask every time, what about graduation? What about Grade seven? And it became part of the protocol (crying) but it was nice to have that opportunity as a parent to do that (crying) but it should be coming from the school. And I know how hard it is for Indigenous staff to continually be asking for these types of things – where it should be more, sure, how do we have that happen – versus – no, we don't have time to fit that in" (Caregiver Sharing Circle).

## Reciprocity Recommendations

- District leadership and all district personnel are encouraged to continue making efforts to attend public Indigenous community events.
- All district graduation ceremonies should be Indigenized. The district should also ensure that Katzie or Kwantlen Nation welcome songs are sung during all school assemblies.
- Indigenous war veterans should continue to be invited to be honoured at all Remembrance Day school assemblies.
- It should be ensured that the district operating budget reflects recommendation priority areas (specific suggestions have been woven throughout the recommendations in this report).

## Respect

Respect can encompass many different actions, expressions, and behaviours. For the findings in this report, we relate respect to respectful communication. Respectful communication involves consistent listening and acting up the information and stories that are heard with our “three ears” – the two on our head and the one in our heart (Archibald, 2008). The following question was asked of the following stakeholders: Indigenous Knowledge Holders, caregiver interviews, caregiver sharing circle, senior team interviews and senior team world café focus group.

☛ How are you informed about management decisions and/or school planning decisions related to Indigenous education, equity policies, agreements and governance procedures in the district?

## Indigenous Knowledge Holders

Katzie representatives stated that they are in consistent communication with Aboriginal District Principal and Superintendent and receive quarterly updates from the district. Kwantlen Knowledge Holders conveyed that it is important to remember that historical lessons have been learned in terms of communication and consultation (i.e. The Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement that was historically developed without consultation by a school principal, which caused significant issues). They also indicated that they appreciate their current relationships with the Aboriginal District Principal and Senior leadership team. A Knowledge Holder interviewee indicated that communication of information and invitations was uneven for the Métis community. They indicated that the Métis community struggles with being recognized as distinct Métis Peoples in the district, which also leads to them not receiving some invitations to district Indigenous events and not being informed about district management and school planning decisions for Indigenous education and equity.

## Caregivers

Most caregivers in the Indigenous caregiver interviews indicated that they received communication primarily from the Aboriginal education department list-serve emails and information that is shared directly by the Aboriginal support workers in each school. The majority of parents also voiced significant concerns about school administrators and teachers being unresponsive to their efforts to reach out and communicate when a need or issue arose. In particular, Indigenous children in care with diverse learning needs are experiencing uneven support and communication from their schools, which must be addressed.



For Teachers: British Columbia Educators Standard 4 states “Educators understand, respect and encourage the participation of families and communities in student learning and development. Educators consider the perspectives of parents/guardians regarding their children. Educators communicate effectively and in a timely manner with parents/guardians” (p. 4). How are you meeting this standard?

Caregivers detailed the exhausting emotional labour that resulted from the professional indifference of teachers and administrators that they experienced, while continually needing to advocate for their children with multiple school district personnel. In many cases, caregivers noted that their issues were never resolved. The research team observed that this sharing circle provided space for caregivers to support each other and share advocacy strategies with each other. The organic relational support that emerged in this group, seemed to positively uplift families (particularly those with children with diverse learning needs and foster caregivers). The Aboriginal support workers who had dual roles as parents in this sharing circle undertook additional initiative to create follow-up connections to address some of the needs that were expressed by the caregivers in the group. It is important to note that the Aboriginal support workers chose to undertake this work on their personal time, which demonstrates both relational reciprocity and shadow labour.

One caregiver interviewee shared that she or he was provided with an opportunity to give direct feedback at their child's school for pedagogical reasons. She was invited into the classroom at the Katzie School to share her stories and teachings. Some caregivers (interviewee and sharing circle) were also district personnel and highlighted that they were aware of the "Deepening Indigenous Education and Equity Review" in the school district through their professional positions, which they hoped would impact management decisions and school planning decisions related to Indigenous education, equity policies, agreements, and governance procedures in the district.

### **Senior Team**

Senior team interview responses noted the following information pathways that were used to communicate information on the district policies, agreements and governance procedures conveyed to Indigenous learners, families, and communities: the online parent portal, district website, District Parent Advisory Committee; parent workshop series, and public board meetings, which are live-streamed to the public. There was also a significant divergence in understandings related to communication with Indigenous learners, families and communities related to this question. Two senior team members recognized that most district communication modes were not Indigenous focused, with one person also noting that conventional school communication methods are not always the preferred modality for Indigenous families and community members. This team member further critically elaborated:

"Identifying and creating ways to support diverse Indigenous student voice through the inherently colonially system and its biases...Is, is their voice really honored and are we listening with the ears that we need to listen with from our own colonial bias and perspective."

Another senior team member detailed that the development of new policy requires broad stakeholder involvement for consultation. This often means that the Aboriginal district principal and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee are consulted to determine if other Indigenous stakeholders need to provide input on a new policy under development.

Conversely, another senior team member responded that the parental portal was an exemplary method for district communication. They noted it was a "traditional" communication method, but it was not something all districts have. When asked if Indigenous families or communities have been invited to provide feedback on their experience with overall district communications, this senior team member stated "Not directly, no. But in my business, no news is good news. Often the people that aren't happy are the ones that complain... I would have probably heard about it. No one ever phones and says 'You know, that's really good - I got that communication right on time.' But I've not had any direct response, no." Another senior team member stated "We communicate directly to staff so we're not communicating directly to our learners or communities or families." In reading through the findings from the Indigenous stakeholders' comments for this question, there is a clear disconnect in communication and understandings with some members of the senior administration team. We encourage the team to listen with their three ears to the communication challenges experienced by Indigenous stakeholders in the district along with the needs and recommendations that they have provided.

"We communicate with everybody the same way, which is through public board meetings, we publish information on our website, and we live-stream our board meetings. So it is very much, we put the information out there and we hope people are going to communicate with us" (Senior Team Interview).

“The needs of our learners, families, goals, strategies ebb and flow yearly. A specific space and time would allow for KFN to have input, updates and a commitment to recognition within this system” (Katzie Representative).

“So, we don't get any contact at all about decisions or we haven't had any – we share the frustrations of the other people [in the circle] because we have no communication at all with the department there. And we'd love to know what's expected of us, what's expected of [our child], you know, what the kind of, curriculum is planned for the year for him, so we can help out with that. But there's been very little communication and what we have had of communication is very frustrating with the school in general this year. Last year was great. We were spoiled very well last year with -- everybody was so helpful with [our child]. And this year's just so different, so we've been quite frustrated. So, it's really hard for us to get information, any kind of information from him as well. And being we're his foster parents, it's not like we're direct parents, but my children grew up in the Maple Ridge school system as well, so it's so different being a foster parent, we don't have the – almost like the rights – that you do of a normal parent, so we're not his legal guardians, so we don't get to communicate – maybe that's part of the reason, I'm not sure” (Caregivers Sharing Circle).

“And then we hear about programming, we hear about planning, kind of in a roundabout way that it's happened for others but that it hasn't happened for our [Métis] students. So you know, that's the meeting that we had – oh gosh, when was it? Almost a year ago? I think it was, the big planning meeting. All morning, you know, it was just repeating -- and Métis, and Métis, and Métis. You know, and finally, after somebody blew up and got really frustrated, you know, by the afternoon -- we finally started to hear it back. So, yeah, we're very – you know very much – sometimes we get the information, sometimes we don't. And I don't think that it's intentional. You know, I think we just get forgotten” (Knowledge Holder).

“I personally have found that I've spoken to the Administration at the high school countless times about other matters, and it just seems to fall on deaf ears. Specifically teachers – I find that the only way I get a response is if I speak to either the Principal – if I still don't get a response I go right to the district office. They give you the politically correct response, you know, which is – oh, I'll look into that, I'll get back to you – and then they never get to you. Never do. So, you feel (ia) if it's really important that you have to either let it go or you have to go up the chain of command until someone gets a phone call from the school board office to deal with any issues that you're concerned about. And that's all matters. But just – they don't want teacher's input or parent's input” (Caregivers Sharing Circle).

“I think, communication on all levels, is really lacking for families and for myself, it's been a struggle. We have – I have 4 [children] and we also have some special needs in there – I think that that makes it even more challenging because there's different struggles that come up – IEP – Individualized Education Planning – trying to get all of those pieces supported, and I think that the information just isn't passed on, and it's a real challenge in general, to navigate – particularly because my children struggle to pass information on, so if something is given to them, I don't get that information, so there's a lot of ownership on the children, I think, to pass information on where sometimes they just can't. And just hearing [caregiver] talk about, you know, connecting with teachers, connecting with the district principal, connecting, sometimes families don't have the ability to advocate to that level, and how do we support those families when they're trying advocate in so many areas of their lives and just might not have the skills or time or energy to that. I think it's a real challenge” (Caregivers Sharing Circle).

## *Respect Recommendations*

- Indigenous Rights Holders should be continuously consulted in order to ensure that there are consistent opportunities for them to provide feedback across multiple channels throughout the district.
- It is important to continue checking in with all Indigenous Knowledge Holders to determine the best methods for communication and contact, which will vary according to each person's needs (emails, telephone calls, personal reminders, Zoom meetings, community visits, etc.).
- It is important to review communication protocols with all levels of Indigenous personnel (e.g., lunch time supervisors, Aboriginal resource teachers, and administrators) and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to identify ways to better reach and engage Indigenous learners, families and communities.
- Provide a handout to all caregivers of Indigenous children that explains the communication channels within schools and the district for questions, compliments, and complaints.
- School staff and others involved in the life of children in care should be notified if the children are being placed in another home (which may add extra traveling time to the school or require additional staff support), as the change is stressful for the young person, which may affect them socially and emotionally in school.

- Include guardians of Indigenous children and caregivers with Indigenous (including Métis) ancestry in school correspondence from the Aboriginal education department-even if their children do not self-identify as “Aboriginal” or Métis”, for self-protective reasons).
- District consultation and invitations to participate in Indigenous education priorities, management decisions, school planning, on-going Aboriginal Advisory Committee meetings, and emerging issues should include separate meetings with the: Katzie Nation, Kwantlen Nation and Golden Ears Métis Society and Fraser River Society.
- Ensure new Indigenous families and caregivers of Indigenous children in the district are provided with school tours and orientations.
- All of the recommendations in this section will need to be clearly assigned to specific district personnel. Measurable goals for these recommendations should be included in the Aboriginal Education District Principal’s School Growth Plan.

## Relevance

Relevance ensures that Indigenous Knowledge Holders, Nations, and caregivers are actively involved (if they chose) to support the educational needs of their community and children in a manner that is appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. In addition, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2016) Article 13(1) confirms that Indigenous peoples have the “right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.” For the first part of the relevance theme, the following question was asked to Indigenous Knowledge Holders (interviews) and caregivers (interviews and sharing circle):

### How is your community represented in the school community and district?

The Indigenous Knowledge Holders from local Nations, positively responded to this question. For example, the majority of the local Knowledge Holders indicated that in recent years they had been involved in the design and naming of schools such as ɕəsqənelə Elementary School. Kwantlen Knowledge Holders indicated that their involvement with the naming and design of ɕəsqənelə Elementary is an exemplary example of the relational work and commitment to Indigenous education that should continue in SD42. Local Knowledge Holder interviews also indicated that the art that is represented in district schools should reflect and involve the artistic traditions of all Indigenous communities and Nations in the schools. Involving local carvers to create poles in the schools was also seen as important. However, it is important to note that some members of the Métis community have felt unwelcome and their distinct identity by not naming them as “Métis” Peoples. A Knowledge Holder interviewee indicated that the Aboriginal education department had invited her or him to participate in and teach Métis art-based traditions in recent years but felt that more effort was needed to ensure that Métis cultural practices were better represented throughout all schools and district events.

The Indigenous caregivers who participated in interviews and whose children were not from local land-based Nations frequently shared that they did not see their community or Nation represented in school and district activities. At the same time, most caregivers signaled their appreciation to the local Nations and acknowledged the importance of honouring local protocols, while also indicating that they would like to see additional Indigenous worldviews, protocols, and content reflecting a diversity of Indigenous Nations in their children’s education. Katzie caregivers shared that they had a school at the Katzie Nation due to a unique COVID related equity circumstance and the community has been involved in all the school’s operations and were quite happy with the district. One parent was new to the school district and felt that she or he could not comment on this question.





**For Administrators: The British Columbia Principals and Vice Principals Domain 3 Relational Leadership Standard 6 asks “What structures or activities have you established to provide Indigenous caregivers (and caregivers of Indigenous children) the opportunity to be involved in their child’s education?”**

Caregiver interviews indicated that they would like additional cultural programming in all the schools to include: an Elders in-residence program, an Indigenous leadership role model mentorship program, and Indigenous cooking classes. In terms of staffing, caregivers highlighted that they would like additional Indigenous advocates hired to support Indigenous learners and targeted positions for Aboriginal support workers who focus on special education. In terms of the curriculum, caregivers, like most other stakeholders in this review, highlighted that they would like to see further professional development for educators to support Indigenizing and decolonizing the curriculum. The caregiver sharing circle shared concerns about the homogeneous Indigenous worldview and perspectives that were being taught in their children’s schools unless the teachings and protocols were specifically tied to Katzie and Kwantlen Nations.

Additionally, caregivers who had been in the district for over a decade observed that positive changes have occurred over the years to support Indigenous learners and families. However, they were quick to note that the Aboriginal Department carries the majority of the responsibility for Indigenous education in the district. They also observed that Aboriginal education priorities are uneven in many of the schools and at the district level, which requires further change.

“I feel that the only way we’re moving is forward, and you know, the district plays a big part in that. They make sure that a lot of our Elders are representing Katzie, and even our youth – I had some – some youth from my family travelling to different schools and drumming and singing, and just sharing a little bit of our culture with the district, and you know, I think that a lot of the students are taking to that very well...I feel like we’re well-represented, and the district makes sure that happens every time” (Katzie First Nation Representative).

“Just a reminder of -- that people changed in the leadership at the school district. Just a reminder to keep in touch with the community. Every urban family, from wherever they come from – their voices need to be heard and it's going to come out that more people are going to be – I feel – are going to want their voices being heard” (Kwantlen Knowledge Holder).

“A few years ago we opened *čəsqənelə* (which means, where the eagles fly, where the eagles gather). And it was all because the former superintendent talked about – and the engineers, at the time – so we even got to talk about what should be part of the [school] – and I told them, I'm all bruised on my arms from pinching myself thinking, “is this for real?” “I'm sitting with you?” And they'd laugh, you know, the whole table was laughing. The engineers were just enthralled by our presence at the table, and it got me really thinking about how our presenters come in to school. And I said, well, I've watched them – kids have a hard time seeing someone's heart -- if they want to see somebody's heart -- in the building. So, they designed one part of the building where a log – a cedar log – can be backed into the school, and the doors opened, like you know, windows opened for it, and so to me, with the engineers listening, we'd see all kinds of things that would open up just because of that. Maybe even open the doors while you're teaching, you know, that's what we want, you know, to recognize that the environment is part of us. And so, ever since we've been with Maple Ridge, it's been a learning curve I mean, and I had to get know Kirsten, and then the different people before her – who – we became really good friends, you know? And they always would call me over and I'd sit in their office and they'd make me coffee, so – that's the way I like it. You know, that home feeling, welcoming, and really listening to the needs of our people. Because I can speak for a lot of our people, and I'm thinking always of the future, because we're going to build on that site, and our kids in the future will be going there in Maple Ridge. So we always have to think like that, we can't think that we're (ia) in the way it is now. We have to keep moving” (Kwantlen Knowledge Holder).

“You know, that big mountain (“Golden Ears Mountain”) down to the Fraser River, was where all the golden eagles would meet every year. They would fly along and meet and they would continue their existence long, long before Maple Ridge was even – began to be built – the land was always entrenched with golden eagles, and they're very huge, huge eagles. Way, way bigger than the bald eagle. And if you remember now, today, how Brackendale is so full of them – the bald eagles – well, *čəsqənelə* was exactly the same. This whole area was called *čəsqənelə* – a place where the golden eagles meet. And they still see them up that mountain and flying around that area. It's a historical place of the golden eagles. When we discussed naming the school after that *čəsqənelə*, it was a historical moment that we got to name the school after something that was there long, long, long before Maple Ridge changed that name from *čəsqənelə* to Maple Ridge, and that went on all over the place, you know?” (Kwantlen Knowledge Holder).

"I also want to say it must be a real struggle for our Inuit students, as well, because there are so few of them in the district. But their experiences are just as valid and just as important, and they need to be seen just as much. You know, and I think, too, about the number of Inuit students that, you know, we might have Inuit students that are here because they – they're in care -- and you know, were brought here" (Knowledge Holder).

"I'm going to just speak specifically about our Métis learners, because that's what I can speak on. So, I think most important with the relationship between the district and our learners is for Métis students to be seen. For the culture to be understood. For them to be understood as Indigenous People, and for it to be understood that a lot of these students – you won't be able to look at them and see that this is an Indigenous person. And that doesn't make them any less Indigenous. That it doesn't matter how many generations have gone by, that the appearance of a person does not indicate how Indigenous they are or aren't. And with that needs to come the understanding that there can be trauma that's carried intergenerationally through families, that a person may not know because they don't necessarily see who they expect to be an Indigenous – you know, they may not see and understand – this is an Indigenous Person. So there needs to be that stronger understanding of the Métis-lived experiences of you know, in – within Métis Peoples' lived experiences" (Knowledge Holder).

"I might be stretching when I say a pan-Indigenous way, I feel like we're represented through the Aboriginal education department, and really that's it. It's quite minimally" (Indigenous Caregiver Sharing Circle)".

"I'm from Haida Gwaii, so my community is not represented in the school district, so I don't like to say it, but like the pan-Indian stuff is still so represented in all the school districts and communities. When my daughters ask things, or my sons ask thing, oh, so what does your community do for – like, these different holidays – and my son goes, oh, I'm not from here. So, like it's just assumed that we're in this district that the Nations that are around us were encompassed into that. So for me, personally, because I've been urbanized my entire life, I could bring what little culture of my Haida culture I know into my work, so I kind of sometimes take my kids out of school when I'm doing a community event at my workplace...and give them a little bit of our culture, because we have to do that in our home because we don't get that representation in the school district. So, it's really nice that we do have access to Elders and stuff, but sometimes it – I feel a little jealous because we don't have our own Elders here, – but – I do appreciate the welcome – the welcoming – how welcoming they are to us" (Indigenous Caregiver Sharing Circle).

"Similar to what other people are sort of saying is that I'm obviously a guest in this Territory. I do have lots of families that live in this Territory and are related. Into the Stó:lō Territory from Chehalis/čəsqənele right through to Kwantlen and into Musqueam. But it's still a guest, and I don't think I've seen any Okanagan – anything taught – from our Territory here that I can recall...That there are 600 Indigenous Communities and recognized Bands in Canada, so we needed to make sure we did that, so it is a tough one, but good to do" (Indigenous Caregiver Sharing Circle).

"I am so appreciative of the Aboriginal program, you know, in Maple Ridge. The staff have been phenomenal – they are caring, they're inclusive, and they've just – I can't say enough wonderful things about the staff. To be quite honest, I wish that all the staff (laughs) at the school were as caring and compassionate and as involved as the Aboriginal workers have been because they really do seem to make the kids feel welcomed and like family" (Indigenous Caregiver Interview).

"I do have to say that over right now it's been 16, no, 17 years that I've had kids in the school district, and it definitely has changed. I still think that the schools need to take more ownership and the district needs to take more ownership of Indigenous education and learning, and being more welcomed. I think that the Aboriginal – the Indigenous department, and the Indigenous workers do an absolutely tremendous job, but they're carrying the whole school district. And I don't think that that's really fair that still, from my perspective – seems that that's where the presence is, is still coming from the Indigenous staff and it – it's talked about but not walked about by district staff and by schools. It's just not – to me, I just don't see that presence if you walk in a school. Some schools have some presence and welcoming, but in general, it's just not the same – it's just not the same as what's coming from the Indigenous department extended through – and I'm just not sure if they're not comfortable with it, or they're thinking that the Indigenous department is doing the welcoming and welcoming of families – so they don't have to – not too sure, but that's sort of my – my lens on that piece. I have to say, it is improved dramatically since I started in the school district with my kids to now, but I still feel that it's a huge Indigenous department's role versus it being the district's and school's job" (Indigenous Caregiver Interview).

## *Indigenous Knowledge Holders Sharing Circle*

A Knowledge Holder's sharing circle was hosted to invite teachings and feedback on the following questions:

1. What cultural teachings, metaphors, visual representations and/or language(s) should be included in the model that we're co-creating for Indigenous Education in School District 42?
2. How can we ensure that the cultural diversity of all Indigenous learners, families, and communities are represented in the school district, in the model that we're creating?

It was an honour for our research team to sit in a sharing circle with Indigenous Knowledge Holders from the Katzie, Kwantlen and Métis Nations, along with representatives from local Indigenous community organizations (Skookum Lab and ISPARK). For the first question, the Indigenous Knowledge Holders sharing circle identified a number of themes related to cultural teachings that should be included in the model that is co-created for Indigenous Education in School District 42. It should be noted that the Indigenous Knowledge Holders' sharing circle's advice for teachings are also helpful for the overall district's best practices related to Indigenous education and should be considered as recommendations. Teaching themes include: honour local protocols and teachings from Katzie and Kwantlen Nations while respecting diverse Indigenous Nations and ethnic communities; honour ancestral teachings and reciprocal responsibilities; work with Indigenous stories as ways to transmit teachings; teach in a loving way in order to nurture and support students to have a sense of belonging and connection; practice orality; engage wholism; undertake land-based education; share Katzie and Kwantlen treaty history; share Métis history, identity and teachings; avoid the pan-Indigenous model; teach and include anti-Indigenous racism in Indigenous education. The Indigenous Knowledge Holders decided to answer the visual representation component of this question in their response to question two.

## *Honour Local Protocols with Katzie and Kwantlen First Nations*

Consultation and guidance should always begin with the Katzie and Kwantlen Nations to ensure that their teachings, educational practices, pedagogy and protocols are honoured. It is important to wait for permission to share in teachings from diverse Indigenous Nations in order to honour all students' backgrounds. The Knowledge Holders in the sharing circle were in agreement that it is important to respect all Indigenous students' Nations and ethnic backgrounds from other countries when possible, as indicated by the following teachings:

"And that's how what we appreciate, abide by, and respect is, the fact that you know, the acknowledgement is there, eh. So, no matter what comes up in their agenda or teachers – teachers are so – their visions, their goals, and what they want to teach to make it worthwhile, it's really – it's awakening the spirit, eh and that's what I appreciate is, the fact that it's their willingness to learn."

"...recognition first then the opportunity for others to bring teachings from other Nations from across Turtle Island in harmony, but with respect and with permission. That's what I understand."

"The Skookum lab works with a cultural intersectional approach process where land-based Nations and protocols are honoured. Diverse urban Indigenous Peoples are also honoured through gift actualized and safe containers for community to come together to revitalize to be healthy and strong."

"I also understand the need for inclusion of all people in the schools and that. So, yeah, Kwantlen and Katzie have so much to offer, but right now, we're only given bits and pieces -- because that's all we can share. We have so much more to give and I think one day, you know, maybe through this process, we may be able to share more with everybody. I know with kids, you know, you give them the basics, and you give them the ideas that there are people here and they've been here for a long time. And then, students as individuals that come from different Nations, from different races, that they also need to be recognized."

### *Share Information on Katzie and Kwantlen Nation's Governance Structure and Treaty Process*

One Indigenous Knowledge Holder expressed the need for Katzie and Kwantlen to governance and treaty process to shared with all students in the district.

### *Share Métis Teachings, Identity, & History*

Another Knowledge Holder shared the importance of providing students with understandings about the Métis identity, Métis teachings and history, and the colonial implications of land theft and displacement:

"The land from the Métis was never really there for them. Like, it was stolen, and taken away. So, they don't have – for many Métis – they don't have a home territory that they can even negotiate. And that's really painful."

### *Honour Ancestral Teachings and Reciprocal Responsibilities*

Indigenous teachings should encourage students to both honour their ancestors and undertake responsibilities to future generations and reciprocal responsibilities to the land, the more than human, and the spirit and living worlds:

"Something that keeps coming up in my work and I find is a really powerful concept, is that, you know, we are here because of the prayers of our ancestor --and in accordance with that, we need to do you know, we need to carry our inherent responsibilities for the ones that we're going to be ancestors for. So, like, we're always thinking about that next seven generations having clean land, clean earth, clean water, traditional foods. So, I keep thinking about the idea of like, that we are future ancestors and like, what world of responsibilities come along with that. And how do we act in line? What's our land-based laws, you know, to guide us and being on these land-based laws, so, that's just one way – I thought about it in a way that kind of can include everybody -- at the same time being respectful to the protocols of the place."

### *Work with Indigenous Stories as Ways to Transmit Teachings*

"When, I go to the schools with the kids that – I know who I am – I'm Kwantlen and – but I don't go there as – as wanting to you know, pound it in their heads who I am and where I come from. It's done very – I do it through stories and I just love sharing stories with kids. And the thing about Kwantlen, maybe Katzie, maybe, too, is that – all of our – most of our oral tradition and stories were lost, and so I've been – I don't know where it comes from. I know that like, I have friends that can hear songs in the wind, and that, and I always tell kids, yeah, stories are like that for me. I can hear them, and I don't know where they come from. I'm putting them all down as much – as fast as I can. That you know, maybe in a thousand years from now, people look back and say, hey, I really like that Sasquatch story you wrote. So that's kind of what – when I go to see all those kids, I – they're so smart. Because they ask me – they call me on things, like. Are Sasquatches real? And I'm like, yeah, they are, yeah, I think they are. You know, I've never seen one, but I can hear them growl and stuff. It's probably a bull – because we have cows here on the Island. But the – the wonderment of sharing with children. And I also teach them how to write and like, from Grade 4's on, their – their writing these amazing pieces, and all I've done is given them a title, you know. I usually start with -- one year – it's the title of your piece, and then they write these pieces. But yeah, that's a little way of – of – for me, giving something back. And as FN Storyteller, it's my job."

### *Teach in a Loving Way*

The Indigenous Knowledge Holders also indicated that traditional Indigenous pedagogical practices should be employed to ensure that students feel safe when learning about Indigenous knowledge, cultures and teachings. They felt it was important for teaching staff to ensure that students feel loved and cared for, which they acknowledged has been in contrast to Western pedagogical methods until recently:

“You know, I think our, you know, education from that traditional perspective is always – it’s safe. It’s you know – Aunties or Grandmas and Grandpas teaching younger people, right? You feel safe in that environment. You don’t feel judged. You don’t – they’re – it’s patient. It’s – it’s loving, and again, that’s not something that a lot of us have experienced in the – that’s contrary to kind of the western method – I think things are changing there, thankfully – but that’s kind of where my mind goes.”

### *Nurture and Support Students to Have a Sense of Belonging and Connection*

The Indigenous Knowledge Holders also recognized that due to colonialism, many Indigenous students may not have strong connections to their identity and cultural teachings. They felt it was important for Indigenous students to be supported in order to feel a sense of belonging and connection to each other, the school community, the land and spirit worlds:

“I worry about those who can’t situate themselves, and don’t know. And I’m talking about the legacy of removing, and all of that where it’s like – so – many conversations I have with the community, and because maybe in the way that I work, and who I work with, and because I’ve been also like, I was in Vancouver in the Urban Indigenous community. That was literally – people will say, yeah, I know but I don’t know. So that and that’s really painful.”

“I think maybe just echoing some of what’s been shared, but yeah, I think I do think that that connection piece – or that – that feeling of connection or trying to foster that feeling of connection for students and for all – everybody that’s involved in kind of Indigenous Education in this school district should be a goal to work towards. Because yeah, I think from an Indigenous perspective, and I know from a Kwantlen perspective – like, connection is everything. Just like, connection to each other, the responsibilities we carry, to how we should interact with each other. Connections to the natural world and for all that it provides, and sustains – and – that sort of connection theme is relevant, I think, to all of those areas and if somehow – yeah, if somehow that could be fostered and encouraged...I know for so many folks and so many of our students, and so many of us in general, are just – who are struggling for that – that connection, right?”

### *Practice Orality*

Another Indigenous Knowledge Holder expressed the importance of engaging orality to teach students and educators to engage in a heart-centred way. At the same time, she/he also recognized the challenges their community was experiencing in terms of language revitalization and the need for additional language instructors or Elders to support the teaching of students in the district:

“One of our staff just tried to say, oh, I was just wondering if you could like up 10 Elders. We want to interview them and we want to write a toolkit on what our culture, traditions, and protocols. And I’m like, you’re – you’re kidding. We don’t have nothing down on a piece of paper. It’s all in the mind. And if you have it in your heart to want to learn – to have the ability to carry on, then sit down, shut up, and listen. That’s how it was brought to me, so, it’s interesting how that was brought up, because that’s the way – that’s the only way it’s going to go, is if – you have to – because not everybody wants to be educated or is interested in want to – geographically, you know, the politics – we have the culture, we have the traditions, and language instructors – you know, we’re struggling – we barely have anybody that knows our – our own dialect. So, yeah, that’s – I just had to add that – that comment to it.”

### *Engage Wholism*

Indigenous Knowledge Holders expressed the importance of ensuring that students are taught in a wholistic way (heart, mind, body, and spirit) while also avoiding a pan-Indian medicine wheel approach whenever possible:

“It’s important to have wholistic model and making sure that whatever program you are doing is hitting all those different assets, you know – spiritual, cultural, mental, emotional, and physical.”



“I’ve seen some really cool model being developed that not only – recognizes all of who we are, but also our connection to our community Nation and the Earth, right? And the natural elements and yeah. So, I like, it was really cool to just see that it was like, you know, the person – and how we’re connected through the concentric circle – like, we’ve all seen that, right?”

### *Undertake Land-based Education*

Indigenous Knowledge Holders expressed the importance of students in the district engaging in land-based education as formative learning opportunities in the district:

“One of the things that I feel is so important for everybody – again -- students and everybody kind of living on – within their territories – just understanding where they’re living – even if they may not be from here, but they’re living here now. And I was just talking with – I was just talking with someone that – that does a lot of archaeology for our Nation recently, and he was just kind of sharing with me – we were just kind of talking about – and we’re about the same age – like kind of, back in the olden days of just the ridiculousness of you know, when you learned about Indians in Grade 4, and you learned about like, you know – we learned there was sort of a chapter on Plains culture and things like that, and there was just sort of no acknowledgement of – of – us, really learning about ourselves. And one of the projects that we’re kind of working on – on the land side of things at Kwantlen, is – trying to – trying to simplify and trying to visualize how we share – how we share information about our territories. So a lot of that is moving to digital trying to share that, and you know, looking at what – what are the number of animal species, for example --that exist within this area. Again – how – how you know, we have these incredible you know, the Fraser River and other tributaries and just trying to sort of quantify, or you know – how many – how many – how many of these waterways are in the area here, and how important are these to the local ecology? Like, trying to just emphasize that in – in – various – which just – you know, the end goal of that is just trying to instill that connection to place, of wherever you call home, and honour some of those – those – just the importance of looking after the environment and connections that we all have.”

“The mountains, the trees, right? That’s the land that --so I’ve been taught or told --that was a territory kind of thing, so I don’t know. Couple years ago – such a great honour – I, for the first time in my life, went to Kwantlen First Salmon Ceremony, and I heard a story told by somebody about the children and the sturgeon and now I get to sit with that person, I’m so excited and so honoured --and it’s the story that I learned, and now becomes a teaching for me because I ate the salmon, and the teaching goes into my stomach and into my heart, because it’s that river, and it’s the story of the (ia audio drop out). And so, like – so, when talking about stories, and connection to the land, that’s what really solidifies is for me, right? And here I am listening – you know, sitting with – and that’s what I remember. And I think that’s -- yeah. So now I need to know the story of the mountains, now I need to hear the story of the lake, right? And that’s how I know the land.”

### *Share Métis Teachings, Identity, and History*

Another Knowledge Holder shared the importance of providing students with understandings about the Métis identity, Métis teachings and history, and the colonial implications of land theft and displacement:

“The land from the Métis was never really there for them. Like, it was stolen, and taken away. So, they don’t have – for many Métis – they don’t have a home territory that they can even negotiate. And that’s really painful.”

### *Pan-Indigenous Teachings and Curriculum Should be Avoided*

Indigenous Knowledge Holders were critical of pan-Indigenous teachings and strongly suggested that the district avoid this approach:

“Something that I think is a very big problem right now is pan-Indigenizing. So the idea that when people are teaching about Indigenous culture, it all gets lumped into one. That everybody had teepees – that has dream catchers, everybody used the Medicine Wheel. I’m on another research group with the Coquitlam School District, creating a lesson plan and they were really talking about – the Medicine Wheel, the Medicine Wheel, the Medicine Wheel – as being around here, you know, I have to kind of sound in, like, you know what, that’s not really something that’s from around here, that really originated back East, and not all Indigenous groups use that. So you can’t put that into a lesson plan and say that that’s an Indigenous way of knowing, when it’s really – it’s a certain group... So, I guess, but the issue is how do you create something that really acknowledges

Katzie and Kwantlen values and says like this is what the part – this is knowledge from here, while also being inclusive of people who are Indigenous from different parts of the world.”

“I think for the model of this, keep it like – keep it very simple – don’t make – don’t complicate it with you know, there’s so much, like – especially – yeah, I keep hearing – I’ve heard words like – Medicine Wheels, and dream catchers, we’re very simple and humble, and our teachings are – and I think that it should be part of what we’re working on, here – what you’re working on.”

### ***Indigenous Anti-Racism Experiential Education to Also Be Taught with Indigenous Education***

An Indigenous Knowledge Holder emphasized the lack of education on systemic racism and the importance of including Indigenous anti-racism experiential education in Indigenous education:

“I think teaching youth about what even systemic racism is, and how it plays out – and what’s been really helpful for us is doing work – we do this workshop called ‘The Circle and the Box’ and it looks at the Indigenous worldview at the time of contact, compared to the European worldview –and it starts to unpack about how like, the things that we experience in our communities now are systemic in nature --and that shame and blame that we carry inherently gets lifted out of the body – when you know – when you have some way to place that. Or – like, somewhere to hold that accountable. So I just keep thinking about – how can we embed more experiential trainings like that, that can really – and that’s what I’ve seen open people up. Especially non-Indigenous folks, too. Yeah, I’m just like, how systemic racism works, and how it still exists – and what we can do to kind of, address it.”

### ***Create a District Local Procurement Policy to Ensure that Local First Nations Peoples are Hired***

Indigenous Knowledge Holders were in agreement that the district should create a local procurement process in policy related to contracts, hiring, and Indigenous Knowledge Holder honouraria to ensure that local Indigenous community members were hired by the district:

“I think that one thing that [Knowledge Holder] said that’s really important to point out is about procurement strategies within the district. So, looking at tangible structures that can be implemented, directly hire the Nations, first and foremost before you hire someone from another Nation. Just to ensure that we are giving back in a tangible way. Not just talking about it.”

### ***Indigenous Knowledge Holder Sharing Circle Recommendations***

- Honour Local Protocols with Katzie and Kwantlen First Nations
- Share Katzie and Kwantlen Treaty History
- Honour Ancestral Teachings and Reciprocal Responsibilities
- Work with Indigenous Stories as Ways to Transmit Teachings
- Teach in a Loving Way
- Nurture and Support Students to Have a Sense of Belonging and Connection
- Practice Orality
- Engage Wholism
- Undertake Land-based Education
- Share Métis Teachings, Identity and History
- Avoid Pan-Indigenous Teachings and Curriculum
- Teach Indigenous Anti-Racism Experiential Education with Indigenous Education
- Create a District Local Procurement Policy to Ensure that Local Indigenous Nations and communities are Hired

👉 How can we ensure that the cultural diversity of all Indigenous learners, families, and communities are represented in the school district and in the model that we're creating?

For the second question, the Indigenous Knowledge Holders' sharing circle unanimously agreed that it was important to involve Indigenous students in leading the creation of a visual representation or model for Indigenous Education in School District 42 based on the core teachings and recommendations that they highlighted in the first question above. The Indigenous Knowledge Holders' sharing circle also felt that local<sup>1</sup> Indigenous artists (or a design lab) should be hired to facilitate the dialogue and process with students to answer this question once a procurement process has been established in the district:

"Like, I said, when you look for something, you want to see yourself in it. So, if we're creating this program for you, I think youth should be able to see themselves in the model of the program."

"I would say if we're looking at developing – developing a kind of a way to get to the – so I think the question comes up for me is like, could you use something like a design lab or have some sort of facilitated session with Indigenous students on how they want to be represented? And really, I really love that idea before of letting them [the youth] design what it looks like you know, as it will be representing them. I've just had such incredible feedback in those kinds of sessions, and it's like the magic happens. It's like, yeah, it's not – our place – you know, it's kind of up to them, and I really like what Tony was saying too, about kind of going into that space, where it's like, you don't even feel like you're doing the art or doing the writing – like it's kind of coming through you. And I feel like that sometimes with our work, too. Sometimes you know that, okay, this is the good path, you can kind of like feel it and really like, tapping back into our bodies and our intuition and using that whole body knowledge, you know, that is included in a lot of Indigenous worldview. Not be pan-Indian (laughs). But yeah, I was just thinking about including our youth in a way that will be, you know, inspiring for them and the project."

"That's interesting, because over 30 years ago, it seemed like it was just a – I called it a vicious cycle because our youth were exposed to stuff that, you know, I think the creators are no longer a part of that vicious cycle. And I developed a panel of probably 11 youths from 11 – 20 years of age – and we asked them a series of questions, and we invited the community, they prepared a meal – and we said – I explained what the intent of the meeting was and explained it very well. I wanted to make the Elders feel comfortable – the community as a whole. And I then I said, whatever you do, I don't want you to pass judgment on any of the youth. It's taken a lot of courage to seek advice or to give advice to Elders, because normally, it's the other way around, right? And they asked a series of eight questions. And they said, why wasn't I ever asked when I was growing up – what do you want? What do you want to learn? Where are you from? Do you know your family roots? Genealogy? Geographically, do you know Katzie has five Reserves? Do you know the politics gone into it? And a lot of them wanted to – one of them won, and a lot of the Elders got up and answered their questions and like, we developed like, five – and it turned out it ended being a number of them standing up, because it triggered them, right? And they said, one of the Elders got up and said, you know, all these years – I'm 73 years old, and you know what? He started crying, you know. Shedding tears. And he said, I don't know a damn thing about this place. I know who my parents, my grandparents are, that's it. I was so involved, I was so focused, all I wanted to do was catch those darn fish out of that Fraser River. I never hunted before in my life. I never owned a gun. And we're supposedly originated in Pitt Lake – that's where we – that's where we originated – and a lot of them, and of course there was a discussion between both parties. Where the youth didn't want to be classified as, you know, we're not doing anything to humiliate you – to provide shame in your mind and your heart, but I just want – I want to learn. I want to be able to teach my grandchildren. I want my grandchildren to grow up with pride, love, respect, everything in general. If it wasn't for that over 30 years ago there wouldn't be a heck of a lot of people that you could school district you could rely on to teach, to educate, to share and learn what we were brought up to do. So [Knowledge Holder name] that was a – that was a really good point, and it triggered, like I said – we could sit around the table for six hours and come up with something and hoping that they'll like it [the youth in the district], they'll join it – but then again, you know, like, you know – if it wasn't for my oldest nephew and my oldest niece – if they didn't speak up back then, we wouldn't be anywhere. We'd be keeping – we'd be greedy – to not share what I was taught when it comes to my culture, traditions, the protocols, etc, right? So if it wasn't for that movement back in the – what – early – mid 80s – that we wouldn't be – we wouldn't have the ability – we'd be making up stories or whatever, right? But it's true that if you want them [youth] to – you want to continue on where we're going. You have to educate somebody on that."

<sup>1</sup> Katzie and Kwantlen First Nations

### Relevance Recommendations

- Hire additional Aboriginal support workers specifically to take on Indigenous advocate roles.
- All Aboriginal support workers should be provided with in-service training in special education and restorative justice.
- Please see the recommendations in the “Indigenous Knowledge Holders Sharing Circle” section related to honouring and teaching local Indigenous protocols while balancing the diverse representation of Indigenous cultures, knowledges with teachings in district.
- Allocate funding from the district operational budget to land-based education opportunities for all students. This includes supporting teachers to Indigenize their seasonal practices by including local land-based understandings in their lessons.
- Create a district local procurement process to ensure that local Indigenous Peoples are hired.
- Involve district Indigenous students to lead the creation of a visual representation or model for Indigenous Education in School District 42. Local Indigenous artists (or a design lab) should be hired to facilitate the dialogue and process with students.
- Please see Indigenous Knowledge Holder sharing circle recommendations for additional relevance recommendations.

### Responsibility

Responsibility ensures that Indigenous Nations, communities, and caregivers have the right to control decision-making and governance responsibilities for Indigenous education. Many Indigenous communities that have been actively pursuing this right have drawn inspiration from the generations of people and organizations who have committed to this issue, including: the National Indian Brotherhood (now Assembly of First Nations) who created the Indian Control of Indian Education Policy Paper (1972), the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action (2015). It is incumbent upon the school district and the British Columbia Ministry of Education to commit to ensuring that Indigenous Rights Holders are not only meaningfully but also consistently involved in the management and governance procedures in the district (Auditor General, 2019). The following question was asked to stakeholders:

☛ How are you involved in management decisions and or school planning decisions related to Indigenous education, equity policies, agreements and governance procedures in the district?

In response to involvement with district governance and policies, local Indigenous Nations indicated that they are involved with the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement (AEA). However, a Katzie representative also highlighted that “Katzie has not been involved or asked to be involved in any other policy or governance procedures” beyond the AEA. The Aboriginal Education team (AED) interviews also highlighted that it would be helpful for the Aboriginal education department and senior district staff to provide more space for direction and involvement for Aboriginal Advisory Committee member in order to support management decisions. The AED team interviews felt that too much time was taken for district presentations and that better listening was needed at the Aboriginal Advisory Committee meetings. The AED team interviews also recognized that the Aboriginal Department should continue fostering relationships with Indigenous Knowledge Holders and advisory members so that community members consistently return to the Aboriginal Advisory Committee. The AED interviewees felt that this would allow for greater momentum and less time spent updating new members, thereby better facilitating the forward movement with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

All the caregivers in the sharing circle and most caregiver interviews pointed out that they had not been invited to or involved in management decisions and/or school planning decisions related to Indigenous education, equity policies, agreements and governance procedures in the district. They felt that further transparency, particularly with regard to funding priorities, was needed and required their input. The AED team echoed the caregiver interviews by suggesting



that Indigenous caregiver nights should be hosted throughout the year to support the Indigenous community in governance and management decisions. These evenings could also support additional awareness and communication of district Indigenous programming and activities.



In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood (now Assembly of First Nations) issued a landmark policy that continues to guide Indigenous self-determination and educational jurisdiction priorities in Canada. The policy document titled “Indian Control of Indian Education” called for Indigenous parents to have control of their children’s education with regard to the responsibility of setting goals and local control of education.

In terms of involvement with management decisions related to Indigenous education and equity, Indigenous Knowledge Holder interviews indicated the following:

- Katzie is usually emailed about [district] management changes (Katzie Representative Interview)
- Katzie Council, members/Elders/care givers are welcomed to sit on advisory tables (Katzie Representative Interview)
- Katzie staff has also been included in the processes of care for our children and involvement with the Elders table (Katzie Representative Interview)
- Katzie is involved in multiple tables, and advisory committees, and informed about quarterly updates if [our Nation] has a concern they are comfortable voicing and know it will be addressed by a specific Principal or Superintendent as needed (Katzie Representative)
- An Knowledge Holder indicated that the Métis community were unevenly invited to various tables and committees related to Indigenous education. Métis representatives were sometimes forgotten, which was an issue for the Métis Community. They also indicated that they would like community evenings to be dedicated to support Métis culture through “Métis nights”.
- Kwantlen Knowledge Holders noted the time and challenging work that has been required for the district to get to the place where it is today in terms of supporting the involvement of Indigenous Nations in various district Indigenous education tables and initiatives. They also indicated their appreciation for the development of the Elders Table, noting this is an exemplary management practice that should continue.

“The part I want to say, too, is it takes a lot of hard work to get to that point where we’re – we are doing things together as a team now – The Aboriginal district principal writes me every week, or sometimes a lot in one week -- and if necessary, we’ll have a meeting right away, and it’s been really handy to use Zoom... But if anything, a few times, to me the negative parts are not as important as talking through it. You know, you have to talk through it, and they were open and a lot of times at the beginning with a [problematic district administrator] after him it was more free. More free, not as business like as – and it’s just different people, right? Different people, different time, and I guess for a long time they just got used to doing stuff for Katzie and Kwantlen, you know? They didn’t realize the traditional – unceded traditional territories, right? As they do now. Now it’s being announced everywhere and recognized, so and that’s been a really beautiful recognition” (Kwantlen Knowledge Holder).

“We’re included at many tables, whether it’s advisory committees, or just the quarterly updates, but yeah, they just seem to keep us all on the same page, and if we ever have any concerns, you know, we’ll bring it forward to whoever necessary, whether it be Principals or Superintendents” (Katzie Nation Representative).

“I think it just needs to be a shift towards questions opposed to information. I find quite often just sharing but the last session we went to we were sharing about our knowledge keepers program but there wasn’t any feedback in terms of, is this what you want to see in the schools? Should we be making sure that there are certain protocol pieces that are embedded within the teachings that are provided? Are there different people that you think might be interested in participating? Just really asking for support and to make sure we are on the right track because I think sometimes, we get so excited and we just go but that doesn’t necessarily mean that we are representing the needs or the wants of the local communities” (Aboriginal Education team Interviews).

“KFN specific day at all schools would be amazing! All grades learning about our land-based nation together. How incredible would that be!” (Katzie Representative Interview).

“But I just said, like, maybe we need to look for opportunities to have like, a Golden Ears night at the school, or a Métis night at the school, and like, Métis-specific, because we don't have a Reservation that they can come into and get to know us. We don't have a Longhouse that they can gather in. So -- but we still need to build that relationship. The only place that we ever really get to build that relationship is at the table., is at our Advisory Committee meetings. You know, that's always about business” (Knowledge Holder).

“Something that I think could be improved for the district is just how big can you make your Advisory Committee and I know sometimes I used to have, gosh – 40 people in a room – because everyone was welcome, everyone, everyone could come. It was never a secret when the meetings were happening, so it was – you're sort of involved in Indigenous education but when you're looking at a bigger – bigger, you know – pie, and you're looking at the district, I always (ia) when I go to different districts. I'd say stop inviting parents to PAC meetings because we're so busy. We want to have voice; we need voice at a much higher table” (Caregivers Sharing Circle).

“As a parent, I've never been involved in anything like that. I've never been – I feel like there hasn't been a whole lot of reach out when it comes to anything that you're talking about there. Like, the equity policies or Indigenous education. But I do feel like this equity scan is the first step in the right direction that we're taking, asking for input from families, and raising awareness (Caregivers Sharing Circle).

“I'm shooting for the stars and I really think that there should be a higher percentage of Indigenous staff at the board office. People who are actually Indigenous, and have Indigenous education ancestry, and practice their culture. Because there is a difference between saying you're Indigenous and practicing and being able to bring those teachings forward so that everyone understands where you're coming from. It's a huge weight, though, to have a solo person at the board office doing that work, because every question comes to you for vetting. And you're supposed to be talking on behalf of all of the families, right? So, I think that's one of the things. The other thing I'd really like to see is whether one or both of the bands -- actually have band representation at the board table. So, they're not elected as a trustee, but they actually have a role on the school board by having a seat that is you know, a voting seat that's actually at the table where decisions are being made” (Caregivers Sharing Circle).

The senior team noted the following positive initiatives that the district had undertaken to involve the Indigenous stakeholders in management decisions and/or school planning decisions related to Indigenous education, equity policies, and agreements: the creation of an Indigenous Knowledge Keepers Table and the naming of c̓əsq̓ənələ Elementary school.

A senior administration interview and input from the senior administration world café focus group recognized the need for the direct involvement of Indigenous stakeholders in the financial planning of the school district. The senior team noted that the Aboriginal Advisory committee is invited to review the budget related to nominal roll for the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement, which is then signed by local First Nations political leadership. The senior team identified the Aboriginal Enhancement agreement as a guiding document for the district's work and process in Indigenous education.

The senior team<sup>2</sup> also reflected that Indigenous stakeholders had little to no involvement in most other aspects of the district's financial planning and that this would be a priority moving forward. The research team reviewed meeting notes from an Aboriginal Advisory Committee meeting on March 30th, 2021, where members of this committee were invited to provide feedback on the Aboriginal department's budget (which stems from the district's targeted Indigenous education funding). The research team was not provided with details on how much notice the Aboriginal Advisory Committee had to prepare for the meeting, how they were consulted about the budget during the meeting, or what feedback was incorporated into this year's budget cycle. For example, it is important to consider the suggestions provided during interviews by Aboriginal Education Team members, who identified a need for additional space and time to allow Aboriginal Advisory Committee members to share their thoughts and priorities as well as to witness district presentations. To date, the Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Indigenous Knowledge Holders and local First Nations have not been directly consulted on the district's larger operating budget (beyond its legal requirements for targeted Indigenous education funding allocated to the Aboriginal Education Department) in a meaningful way. It should also be noted that the district regularly communicates its overall annual budgetary process to stakeholders through public

<sup>2</sup> The research team also observed that the conversation with senior team related to research for this report may have been the first time that they were asked to spend time reflecting on the research questions as a team.

board meetings and budgetary documents shared on the district's website. However, a key finding from Indigenous Rights Holders is that standard district communication procedures are not effective, or in keeping with supporting best practices in Indigenous educational governance and community engagement. As noted by caregivers in previous sections of this report, they also require consultation on the district's budgetary processes for Indigenous education. Further, it is salient to note that not all Indigenous caregivers are invited to attend Aboriginal Advisory Committee meetings and further consultation is needed with this stakeholder group.

The senior team also acknowledged that further efforts are needed by the district to support the development and retainment of Indigenous Peoples in all roles (including district leadership roles to support governance changes). Finally, team members indicated the need to continue paying attention to Indigenous community rhythms while building flexibility in consultation timelines as priorities.

"Can we do more? Yes. I actually, think we can. I think that there are times and opportunities that we need to think about where are we doing our consultation. For example, just recently we were talking about our budget process. We've been recognized as a district that has quite a transparent and effective budget process that involves stakeholders, yet we recognize that as part of some of the requirements is that we need to be involving those, those people in our community of ancestry that are involved in our budget process and that we're consulting with them on that. So I think we need to continue to do that and enhance that and find ways for people to be part of that voice" (Senior Team Interview).

"So I was saying like there, there's obviously the important piece around the one-on-one interaction and when we're connecting with folks of ancestry but I think more importantly I think it needs to be really meaningful and bringing people to the table around decision making, around collaboration, around sharing of information that's involved in the school district" (Senior Team Interview).

"I think also with our hiring, I think there is through our Aboriginal Department in particular we do specifically look for people of ancestry but I think again we could do even more there and you know it's, I feel like if I, if I step back and look at kind of where we are as a society, I almost, I'm hopeful that we're at the front end of something where when it comes to hiring we're going to see more and more people that are graduating of ancestry, more and more that are having equitable opportunities so as a result, because they're quality of graduation is even going to be better so that means more people that are going to be involved in these positions where they get an opportunity to apply and be part in really being in leadership roles. You know I myself feel like you know my, my own background is I'm a first generation Canadian, I've been able to kind of, because of some of the privilege that I have being white and male, I've been able to I think get some of those opportunities and I think that we're hopefully at the front end of something like that in a transformation where we see more and more of that. Saying that, I do still attend pro-d sessions where there are a lot of European descent individuals in the room but even that's starting to transform. So just if, when it comes to our policies and our practices, I think we've made headway and we have movement to do still" (Senior Team Interview).

### ***School Board Trustees***

The school board trustee world café focus group identified the following positive initiatives the district had undertaken to involve Indigenous stakeholders in management decisions and/or school planning decisions related to Indigenous education, equity policies, and agreements:

- The signing of the previous Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement (good opportunity for collaboration and engagement with Indigenous communities).
- Trustee participation in the Elders Table meetings and Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee meetings.
- The school district Strategic Plan involved broad consultation with Indigenous communities.
- The Indigenous Education Department Operational Plan is part of the district's overall education operational plan and presented to board for approval.
- Strategic alignment achieved through operational plans, enhancement agreement and the allocation of resources to priority areas were identified in the plan.

In terms of policy decision-making, the trustees noted that consultation is supported by the Board educational planning, which happens at the staff level.

The trustees specifically mentioned their appreciation of the Aboriginal student leadership forum that they participated in, which allowed them to hear directly from Indigenous students in the district. They felt it was important to also highlight their gratitude for the Aboriginal Education Awards and Indigenous Day celebrations, which allowed them to continue building relationships with Indigenous communities.

However, the trustees also mentioned that there were gaps in Indigenous education in the district, which they hoped the research process would help them to address so they could make the necessary governance changes. Budget consultation and planning with Indigenous stakeholders was noted a priority area in this regard. The trustees indicated that budget consultation has been more difficult during the pandemic and that they would like to create more opportunities to enhance Indigenous participation in this area.

“We talked about you know, insuring that we were aware of potential tokenism in the work that we're doing, and – and not just checking a box – that we're being really thoughtful and intentional in the way that we approach things...you know, connecting with you know, our Local First Nations but also our urban Aboriginal service organizations, our Métis communities, as well as ITK -- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami – so, looking at how – how are we supporting our communities” (Trustee World Café focus group).

“Just that relationship and trust and making sure we have ways that ensure that that's going to continue. I think we've done a really good job of it, or we started it for sure, and I know it's something that [former superintendent] really worked hard at, and the whole senior team, for sure. But to continue that, make sure we have practices that ensure we get – build trust and comfort and build that community to increase the communication” (Trustee World Café focus group).

“I don't know what the gaps are. Otherwise, I'd hope we would have addressed them by now. I think that we need to sort of hear from those with lived experiences in through this whole process that you're taking this through, so at the end, we take a look at – where are those gaps – so that we can make those necessary changes at that governance level. So that those gaps don't exist. So, you know, we come at it sort of at a different way that maybe those that are maybe on the ground, right?... The end of this [research] process is going to be a huge part for us as a Board of Education” (Trustee World Café focus group).

“The Board relies upon engagement with the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, with an Elders table, with First Nations Councils and with students, the latter through workshops to provide feedback on their education. Need to work out how to do it with sensitivity – involve community leaders in meaningful conversations and consultation to create the right process to collect feedback that respects the time and preferences of different communities” (Trustee World Café focus group).

### *Responsibility Recommendations*

- The district should organize a Katzie Nation Day throughout all the schools under the guidance of the Katzie Nation.
- Further consultation is needed with the Kwantlen Nation to determine if a Kwantlen Nation Day or an evening gathering is a priority.
- Partner with the Golden Ears Métis Society and interested Métis Caregivers to organize a Métis night or Métis events in the schools.
- District schools should conduct a yearly Indigenous caregiver survey and host family evenings (with food and door prizes) to solicit caregiver input on management and governance decisions (including the development of school growth plans for Indigenous education and anti-racism priorities). Administrators should also report progress updates for Indigenous education priorities in school growth plans at these events and school newsletters. Annual surveys could also solicit input from Indigenous caregivers about communication needs, the usability of the district website, the parent portal, preferred district communication methods, Indigenous education programming priorities and emerging equity needs.



- The district should support the creation of an Indigenous parents' council (or Indigenous parents' councils in multiple schools) to work with the Aboriginal Advisory Council to support Indigenous education governance and management needs (including input on the district's operating budget). The district should seek input from the Indigenous Parent's council and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee on the development of the Indigenous caregiver surveys. This may require the district to advocate for flexibility for DPAC/PAC committee structures in the *School Act* and support interim provisions and support for ad hoc Indigenous parents' council(s).
- District to advocate with the B.C. Ministry of Education to create provisions for local First Nation representation on the Board of Trustees. For example, each Nation could have an automatic seat at the table if this aligns with their interests and self-determination priorities. At a minimum local Nations and the Métis community should be consulted on the district operating budget.
- There should be a continuation of advocacy efforts for improved funding and supports for Indigenous learners with special needs and Indigenous children in care through funding formula design, provincial ministries, BCSTA motions, meetings with MLAs, and allyship with Indigenous organizations.
- Ensure that Indigenous children who are needing to be picked up from school early or after school are released to individuals noted on parent permission forms. If these individuals are not available, the local Band Office or an Indigenous organization should be called. At no time should Indigenous children be released to community members who are not on the parent permission forms.
- Indigenous children and youth in the district require additional mental health supports and further professional development training for educators to support student's mental health needs.
- District to play an advocacy role with provincial and local governments to support the need for on-going accountability and responsibility for historical and contemporary colonial violence and oppression of Indigenous Peoples.
- A terms of reference for the district's Elders Table is need. The terms of reference should clearly define the criteria for "Elder" and "Indigenous Knowledge Holder" and any new terminology that is used to refer to individuals who are held in high respect for their cultural knowledge, wisdom and expertise in Indigenous communities. The Aboriginal Advisory Committee should provide input on the the terms of reference.



# STRAND 02

## INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

### DEVELOPING SKILLS TO EXPLORE DIVERSE INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEWS, PERSPECTIVES, PEDAGOGIES, CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND LAND-BASED LEARNING

Mi'kmaq scholar Dr. Marie Battiste (2002) shares: "While some peoples have civilizations, philosophies, romance languages, or cultured societies; other peoples have cultures, dialects, worldviews, and tribal knowledge. Peoples with "civilizations" are regarded as inherently superior to peoples with "cultures." Much literature in the last decade has focused on the importance of diverse cultural or multicultural methodologies to support diverse teaching methods to address the needs of Aboriginal students. The studies, however, do not examine the culture of the schools themselves to see what counts as knowledge and truth and what does not. They do not study what, or whom, the curriculum and pedagogy represses, excludes, or disqualifies. Nor do they examine who continually benefits from education and how these students are consistently rewarded and nourished in schools where white privilege is normalized" (p. 16).

In 2015, the official K-12 curriculum in BC was completely revised and the First Peoples Principles of Learning were positioned as a lens focused on curricular reform. However, significant work is needed to honour the Indigenous pedagogies articulated by the First Peoples Principles of Learning in the British Columbia Ministry of Education curriculum, while critically engaging Indigenous anti-racist practices. At present, most of the efforts undertaken in the B.C. educational context reflect an "Add-on Approach" to Indigenous education, with SD42 indicating similar systemic patterns.

It is important to recognize that the "Add-on Approach" or the "Add and Stir Approach" describes an attempt to enrich curricula and pedagogy by adding Indigenous content. This approach attempts to dress up pre-existing methods at a superficial level to make it appear culturally relevant for Indigenous learners. Adding a lesson on "Aboriginal culture" (notice the "s" is missing) and using Indigenous cultural information as the context for the teaching subject matter is an example of this approach. According to Richardson and Blanchett-Cohen (2000), it is an approach that "does not require fundamental change. In essence, it is a pragmatic approach which may offer a mild sense of inclusion to Aboriginal students in majority culture educational settings" (p. 19). This approach is aligned with the tenets of multiculturalism and is seen as a way to include "Aboriginal culture" in mainstream institutional structures (St. Denis, 2011). Therefore, it requires the least effort to implement and does not involve fundamental systemic transformation. The important distinction from an IK centred approach is that students and teachers are being taught by Indigenous knowledges and Peoples. In this way, Indigenous peoples are Knowledge Holders and not objects of study. This involves framing our education context around important questions and consulting multiple perspectives on how to understand and address our collective questions while recognizing that perspectives of Indigenous peoples



One way to understand the lack of Indigenous Knowledge in the school curriculum is through the concept of "epistemic racism" or "epistemicide" which literally translates to the extermination of knowledge. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2010) defines 'epistemicide' as the destruction of knowledges that was tied to the destruction of peoples. In the attempted erasure of Indigenous knowledges, the lack of Indigenous worldview, pedagogies, cultural activities and land based education can be seen as epistemic racism.

on the territories and in the region where questions are raised is a priority. It is important to frame our activities so that students are not just “learning about” the Katzie, Kwantlen and Métis Peoples, but instead implement practices within the classroom that allow us to invite students into a conversation on Katzie, Kwantlen and Métis knowledge and perspectives – to learn from or be taught by Katzie, Kwantlen and Métis knowledges. It is also important that all learners are given opportunities to meaningfully engage Indigenous worldviews, knowledge(s) and pedagogies with appropriate cultural supports, while also being engaged with critical consciousness raising activities on the impacts of colonialism and systemic racism throughout their educational journeys.

The findings from most stakeholders in this report indicate that the majority of Indigenous cultural activities, lessons, and land-based learning activities are heavily supported by the Aboriginal education department through an “Add-on Approach” to Indigenous education. It is important to recognize that these efforts have been vital in supporting students, Indigenous families and communities to feel a greater degree of belonging in their school communities, and this work should therefore continue. However, students consistently reported that they had little integration of Indigenous worldviews, perspectives and pedagogies in the curriculum, and they would like to see this change.

It is clear that stakeholders were in agreement that there is greater opportunity to engage Indigenous worldviews and perspectives more ethically, respectfully and fully to support Indigenous student’s learning needs in the district. The research team focused on the following question for this section of the living report:

🔑 **How are students in your classes and schools provided with opportunities for students to develop skills and explore diverse Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, pedagogies, cultural activities and land-based learning?**

The findings from this question have been organized according to the various stakeholder responses (Aboriginal education department, Non-Indigenous Support Staff, Non-Indigenous Teachers and Students). The stories that are shared by stakeholders in this section highlight critical actions that are needed to advance Indigenous education priorities in the district that are consistent with the British Columbia’s “new” curriculum (2016) focusing on the First Peoples Principles of Learning, the British Columbia Teachers’ Council’s Reconciliation Teaching Standard (2019), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration), the BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA), and the First Nations Education Steering Committee’s Education Jurisdiction Initiative (2006).

## **Aboriginal Education Team Department**

### ***Strengths***

The Aboriginal education department (AED) team shared several strengths that enabled students to develop skills and explore diverse Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, pedagogies, cultural activities and land-based learning in their classrooms and schools. This section presents responses from the AED team interviews and an Aboriginal support workers and Aboriginal teachers world café focus group. For the world café focus, the Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal support workers were provided separate padlet links so they could answer specific questions related to their roles. We have collated the interviews and world café focus group information together according to the strengths that were noted by the AED, Aboriginal teachers, and Aboriginal support workers into the following themes: transforming practice; programs and activities, and; communication. We have also distinguished the method (interviews or world café focus group).

### ***Transforming Practice***

The AED team member interviews highlighted the ongoing work needed to strengthen and transform teacher practice in order to deepen Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, and pedagogies in the curriculum. The interviews provided in-depth responses to the diverse ways that they supported teachers in the classroom. For example, one AED team member



shared that “it looks different in every classroom”, with their work primarily being one-on-one (not including groups of teachers for practical reasons, particularly due to COVID). Working to transform teacher practice to reflect Indigenous worldviews, perspectives and pedagogies was seen as rewarding and time consuming (due to the need to support teachers individually). The AED also continues to develop an Indigenized curriculum (including local First Nation curriculum with videos) to create sustainable resources for teachers and district staff, while also supporting teachers to wholistically expand their practice to work with Indigenous students, families and communities. The AED interviews highlighted the importance of creating accessible Indigenized lesson plans with a literacy focus to support all subject areas for teachers. The AED team recognized the important work being undertaken by the Aboriginal support workers (ASW) in district schools who also lead Indigenous education activities through in-class teaching to support teachers who are unfamiliar with Indigenous worldviews, pedagogies, colonialism, cultural activities and land-based education. The following bullet points are from the ASWs World café focus group padlet responses, which affirm the transformative efforts that are being undertaken to shift teacher practice in the district. The padlet responses also highlight the Cedar Roots Program and the Environmental School as an exemplar for land-based education in the district:

Ab Ed department and Aboriginal resource teachers offer district wide cultural opportunities” (Aboriginal support worker World Café focus group).

“Some teachers work from land-based learning and First Nations pedagogies” (i.e., the Cedar stream program and the Environmental school).”

“A lot of the work that we’ve done this year has focused on training, so we’ve done a number of professional development sessions, we attend staff meetings, we go to work one-on-one with teachers in order to try and help them shift their practice so that they’re able to incorporate Indigenous pedagogy and view their classroom as extending beyond their classroom, their students being teachers as much as learners and really honouring the knowledge that’s held within those spaces. I guess most of the work that we do is either in the lens of advocacy or in the lens of shifting practice, although that’s a little bit slow going” (Aboriginal Education Team Member Interview).

“The Environmental School has been so great at utilizing local Elders and local knowledge keepers, they talk about local languages, local oral stories, they make drums and learn local gifted songs from local Elders. It’s such a great model for all schools. The issue is a long waitlist... (Aboriginal support workers World Café focus group).

### *Aboriginal education department Programs and Activity*

The AED team interviews and world café focus group also highlighted the following programs and activities that supported the district’s Indigenous education needs as key strengths:

- The Cedar Roots Program was a significant land-based education and leadership program that had a wholistic impact on students. Students also received 16 credits for participating in the program, which assisted them with their transition from grades 10 to 11 (Interviews).
- Ignite Cultural Camp (Interviews)
- Indigenous Family community nights year-round, including: Christmas, Spring and National Aboriginal Day (Interviews).
- Developing Indigenous student leadership in secondary schools. This has included involvement from Katzie Knowledge Holder, Mr. Len Pierre, who has mentored and provided guidance on Indigenous leadership teachings to students in the leadership program (Interviews).
- The Aboriginal education department collaborated with the Ballantyne Project to support the Indigenous student leadership program by sending 68 boxes of art supplies to remote Indigenous communities (Interviews).
- Toy drive for Christmas to sponsor students in a district school (Interviews).

Development of the Katzie school during COVID (Interviews).

- Elders and Knowledge Holder Coordination by Aboriginal education department (this prevents Knowledge Holders from being contacted by multiple district staff and supports their requests to have a key point of contact) (Interviews).
- Welcoming Indigenous Ways of knowing (Dr. Leyton Schnellert and Dr. Sara Davidson) series that was coordinated by the Aboriginal education department (Interviews).
- “Cedar Roots program” (Indigenous Teacher World Café focus group).
- “Elders come into classrooms” (Indigenous Teacher World Café focus group).
- “Plant walks and gardens” (Indigenous Teacher World Café focus group).
- “Field Trips” (Indigenous Teacher World Café focus group).
- “Small cultural workshops at lunch time and in community hosted by Aboriginal Resource Teacher and Aboriginal support workers, supporting students to connect culture to their learning in classroom” (Indigenous Teacher World Café focus group).
- “Some of the cultural activities offered by Aboriginal support workers and Aboriginal resource teachers include carving, weaving, wood burning, beading, drumming, powwow dancing, and dot art” (Aboriginal support worker World Café focus group).



The immediate responsive creation of the Katzie school during COVID-19 is a unique and exceptional example of a responsive, co-governed relationship. The school supports the ideals of Indigenous self-determination for Indigenous Education and aligns with the co-governance model that the BC Auditor General outlined and that Indigenous communities have been calling for.



“Métis Dot Art” is another example of the “Add on Approach” or the “Add and Stir Approach.” Although the attempt may have been to add Indigenous context, the approach commodified “Métis” beadwork to “Dot” art. By doing so, the cultural significance of beadwork is lost and it decontextualizes the learning. Métis dot art also promotes erroneous understandings of Métis culture while simultaneously teaching a new generation of children that Métis Dot is a part of Métis tradition, which has caused significant harm.

### *Communication On Indigenous Activities, Programming and Supports*

The AED recognized that communication with Indigenous families and communities required multiple methods and ongoing openness to listen to Indigenous family and community needs while providing information about district Aboriginal education programming. This includes:

- Ensuring Aboriginal support workers communicate directly with caregivers at school drop off and pick up times, telephone calls, and home visits (as required).
- Maintaining an Indigenous family (and caregivers of Indigenous children) email list to send Indigenous education information about community events, services and updates.
- Updating the Aboriginal Education district web page.
- Fostering integrated Indigenous community supports for families by utilizing the Aboriginal Education website if the district is unable to offer these activities themselves (for example, making connections with iSpark, Indigenous scholarship in Promoting Awareness, Respect, and Kinship and other Indigenous community organization information).

“With our secondary Aboriginal support workers, we’ve really focused on the relational connections to the students, encouraging more activities where we can connect with the kids outside of the classroom despite it being COVID. Providing opportunities for them that will support them both in the building, and outside of the building. And so, again, we’ve had to do

that so that other staff in the school will see that that approach is beneficial to students and staff themselves, right? Like, when you establish a better relationship with a child or a family, it makes it a lot easier to have difficult conversations, and not have the parent be defensive, or have them triggered by their own trauma associated with school, right?” (Aboriginal Education Team Member).

## Challenges

The AED team interviews underscored the varied responses they received from teachers in the district in regards to integrating Indigenous Knowledges and pedagogies into their practice as a key challenge. They often experienced a push/pull with teachers noting that some teachers were keen to invite them into their classrooms repeatedly while many others needed support to enact their professional responsibilities to include Indigenous education into the curriculum. In addition, they noted the high case load for ASWs as an equity issue. Directly related to the high case load was a concern that the east school zone is more challenging for ASWs because Indigenous families are from diverse Nations across Canada and not usually connected to a particular local Nation. This means that ASWs are spending more time in this zone. Even though the schools have smaller numbers of students, they are often the only cultural supports available to families living in this area. The AED team interviews felt that ASW caseloads should be lowered and more time should be given to certain zones in order to support stronger connections with Indigenous families and communities.

The ASW’s world café focus group focus group padlet responses and plenary discussion detailed a similar challenge to the AED interviews. The ASWs detailed the reticence expressed by most non-Indigenous teachers and support staff in regard to directly integrating Indigenous knowledges, pedagogies, cultural activities, and land-based learning classroom curricula. This challenge is in keeping with the findings from the non-Indigenous teaching and non-Indigenous support staff focus groups, which highlighted non-Indigenous educator’s fear of making mistakes when engaging Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies into their practice as a key obstacle for Indigenous education. The Aboriginal support workers shared that they were required to extensively support non-Indigenous teachers to undertake their responsibilities for Indigenous education, which was time consuming and impacted their abilities to work directly with Indigenous students and families. The ASWs recommended that the district create further professional development and learning opportunities to support teachers’ engagement to Indigenize and decolonize the curriculum as a priority. The ASWs also shared that their workload has been more challenging because the Ignite program was canceled due to COVID (i.e., less opportunities being made available to students).

The AED team interviews also expressed that COVID has negatively impacted their abilities to engage teachers and students with land-based education opportunities. Additionally, Aboriginal teachers in the world café focus group identified the lack of Indigenous priorities in school growth plans as significant issue. The Aboriginal teachers also signaled the need for the English First Peoples courses to be offered consistently at every school. A particularly concerning theme that the AED team interviews, Aboriginal teacher and Aboriginal support worker world café focus group highlighted was safety concerns for Indigenous educators related to colonial violence and racism. The AED team felt that dealing with the lateral violence they experienced within the department and the micro-aggressions with non-Indigenous colleagues required further support. Although the later issues are not directly related to student learning, they negatively impacted the AED team by acting as barriers to working with students, while also impacting their wholistic health and wellbeing in the workplace.

“We would think that larger Indigenous worldviews are coming from classroom curriculum (i.e. orange shirt day, reading novels, in the elementary activities). We are seeing that the world view is lacking, and this may be because the teachers are cautious are intimidated by not to share incorrect information” (Aboriginal support workers World Café focus group).

“You know, the fact that in our school, you know, the Indigenous Inclusion in Practices was taken off our school growth plan when COVID hit, because we had to have, you know, MYP – Middle Years Programme -- and other things jump to the top of the list. When in fact, you know, if we’re engaging in Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and walking in the world, we have stories about when disease was all over the world because (ia audio drop out) were messing stuff up. Like we had those capacities to have conversations like this. We would be able to have you know, mental health support, and other ways of being that would help everybody. Not just Indigenous People” (Aboriginal teachers World Café focus group).

“How many of us are there who are Indigenous educators in our school district that don't come out and identify ourselves as Indigenous educators? Because it's still not safe to be an Indigenous educator in this province. I know I have colleagues who are Indigenous and I'm not going to out them. I out myself all the time, and it's an uncomfortable step” (Indigenous Teachers World Café focus group).

“We're the only school that offers English First Peoples and by the way – can we not call it English First Peoples 11 and 12? – in BC First Nations. I know some of the other high schools offer that but if we're not even offering those choices as a legitimate way of learning oral literacy and ways of being, in another way, in this space, how are we supposed to feel like we can come to the table in any capacity to ask for what we need? In terms of language, in terms of ceremony, in terms of spaces (safe spaces to do culture and share culture with everybody) because the way that we do what we do, is good for all people” (Indigenous Teachers World Café focus group).

## Non-Indigenous Teaching Support Staff

### *Strengths*

Non-Indigenous teaching support staff in the world café focus groups shared the following examples that enable them to support students to develop perspectives, pedagogies, cultural activities, and land-based learning in their classrooms and schools in their padlet responses:

- “Aboriginal support workers and teaching staff offer cultural activities” (i.e. spending time on the land).”
- “First Nations Class – Science weaves in lessons in the class”.
- “Aboriginal services based out of Westview [Secondary]. Cultural activities offered by Aboriginal support worker includes weaving and beading. However, they are limited time by constraints taking on other roles like counselling and family support.”
- “At my school we have 1 Ab Ed worker in our school but I think she is stretched very thin, so not a lot time.”
- “The Outdoor school offers land-based learning.”
- “Land-based practices are the primary focus of the Environmental School.”
- “English departments starting to use Indigenous authors, poets, and multiple perspectives in their classes.”
- “Indigenous learning activities of the past: totem pole carving with the entire school.”
- “Aboriginal support workers will come into classes to offer whole class activities such as weaving.”
- “Social Studies/PE/Outdoor pursuits class-- Not Indigenous focused, but focused on connecting to land and nature.”
- “Field trips on the land that tie in Indigenous perspective and local culture.”
- “At Thomas Haney, Lisa Shepherd had been working with beading. Lisa educates everyone who is involved... not just the Indigenous learners from their perspective and telling the stories. She tells about the particular patterns for the beading and the history of Métis Peoples and they have been working how to integrate Indigenous principles into other subjects as well.”

### *Challenges*

Non-Indigenous teaching support staff also identified several challenges that hindered opportunities for students to develop skills and explore diverse Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, pedagogies, cultural activities, and land-based learning in their classes and schools. The biggest challenge identified by non-Indigenous teaching support staff was related to their own fear of incorrectly integrating Indigenous pedagogy, knowledge and perspectives into classroom learning activities. Non-Indigenous teacher support staff recognized the crucial work that is undertaken by Aboriginal support workers for Indigenous education in their schools. They observed that Aboriginal support workers were often “stretched thin” in terms of their multiple and competing work tasks and felt that more Indigenous staff and teachers were needed throughout the district. They also noted that Aboriginal support workers are the primary staff in the district who create opportunities for Indigenous students and often can only enter classes that have Indigenous students who are on

their caseloads. They also observed many instances where there were missed opportunities for non-Indigenous teachers to include Indigenous pedagogy, knowledge and local land-based understandings into the curriculum. There were also many references to seasonal and land-based activities that were being undertaken at the elementary school level by teachers that did not include Indigenous land-based education or pedagogy but had the potential to do so. For example, a fishing class that was not Indigenous-focused could have easily integrated local Indigenous teachings.

The research team observed that a final challenge was the significant responsibility being placed on the AED, particularly the ASWs in each school, to continue delivering Indigenous education to support non-Indigenous teachers, staff and students. The majority of non-Indigenous teaching staff felt that ASWs should spend more time in the classroom teaching students of Settler and Indigenous backgrounds. The Non-Indigenous teaching support staff noted that they often were not provided with enough Indigenous resources and would like further professional development opportunities. Significantly, this group spent less time talking about initiating personal and professional responsibilities to include Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, pedagogies, cultural activities, and land-based learning into their practices. However, it should be noted that professional development opportunities were uneven for non-Indigenous teaching support staff, who until recently have been excluded from the majority of professional development opportunities offered to teachers and administrators within the school district.

"Would be wonderful if Ab. Ed. support could also inform more than just Indigenous children so more students are aware of Indigenous knowledge. Bring in more outside activities to schools -history of culture should be introduced early grades and encompass all aboriginal backgrounds." (Non-Indigenous Teaching Support Staff.)

"People are nervous to share to honour the traditions and worried to get that wrong." (Non-Indigenous Teaching Support Staff.)

"I think education was key, like, educating people to be able to have these conversations and have the proper information to share and educating each other. I think that was the big theme through our group discussions today (plenary)." (Non-Indigenous Teaching Support Staff.)

"We are seeing that success is spreading, after high school and into college and into universities and you slowly see the change of – well, I mean, looks what's happening today. Like, it's so positive, just being able to have this forum and openness and discussing how we can do better for the kids." (Non-Indigenous Teaching Support Staff.)

"I think we're just seeing so much positivity in what you're doing here in bringing us all together just the realization that there's so much support out there and so many people that want to make a difference and want to help. We've just got to figure out a way to spread this and make it happen faster because these kids need it and their community needs it and we need it so, hopefully we can pull together and get this done." (Non-Indigenous Teaching Support Staff.)



In her call to decolonize education and resist colonial practices, Battiste (2013) urges educators to reject "colonial curricula that offer students a fragmented and distorted picture of Indigenous peoples, and offer students a critical perspective of the historical context that created that fragmentation. In order to effect change, educators must help students understand the Eurocentric assumptions of superiority within the context of history and to recognize the continued dominance of these assumptions in all forms of contemporary knowledge" (p. 186).



## Non-Indigenous Teachers

### Strengths

In their padlet responses, Non-Indigenous teachers identified numerous strengths that enabled students to develop skills and explore diverse Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, pedagogies, cultural activities and land-based learning in their classrooms and schools, which included:

- “Kindergarten local plants and animals unit with [I]ndigenous perspective (ex. Study cedar tree and how it is important to First People's and learn [I]ndigenous words).”
- “Grade 6 work with school Ab Ed teacher and have Katzie Elder come in on weekly basis to do a variety of activities such as drumming and place-based education based on First Peoples' Principles.”
- “Sto:lo circles in math.”
- “Indigenous games in PE program.”
- “Diverse literature in class throughout the year and highlight [I]ndigenous authors and have students focus on their own identities; embedded in the curriculum.”
- “Kindergarten does Forest Fridays to talk about [I]ndigenous issues.”
- “Library has cohorts come in to access First Nations literature and resources.”
- “The way that we organize our classes and how we start our day with land acknowledgment and incorporating Indigenous practices into our everyday structures (restructuring our classes). Another example would be when a student comes in late, instead of giving them a hard time, acknowledging that you see them and are glad that they made it to class. Taking away the punitive aspect of that and acknowledging that our students have stories and things going on in their lives.”
- “We can decolonize ourselves by seeing the person before the subject and seeing the human before the student.”
- “When it comes to assessment, we are wholistically assessing our students and focusing on strengths and skills to set them up for success.”
- “We have access to outdoor spaces to facilitate land-based learning outside of our classroom walls.”
- “Discussion with high school students, conversations.”
- “Protocol orientation for job sites about diversity.”
- “Elementary flexibility to do land-based learning and activities.”
- “Library work around diversity in authors and audiences – Children's books at primary level to highlight Indigenous perspectives and world views. Teaching the Indigenous cultures of Canada. The geographical areas, the different ways of learning.”
- “Classroom meeting are done through Talking circles. Restorative justice. North Coast West Art lessons. Making sure that we are pulling in the First Peoples Principles of Learning into our resources. Including diversity into our lessons. We are representing everyone in the room. IBPOC. There is a more global awareness for the resources to be utilized and available.”
- “Teaching senior math, I started to revamp my summative assessments and I am incorporating some woodwork opportunities in my lessons and assessments. Plan for place-based Indigenous territory unit addressed in another question.”



The last quote above is a great example of a respectful Indigenous Knowledge (IK) centred approach to teaching. The significance here lies in the summative assessments also including Indigenous Knowledge centred approaches and not just a content add on that does not factor into the graded curriculum materials.

- “Finding a calm place/ mind set Parallels drawn to how education is shifting to a more community learning classroom.”
- “Indigenous worldview: talk about stonework and its importance.”
- “Bring in cultural activities (weaving, language, feasts, etc.).”
- “Oral based literacy practices.”
- “How to hear and listen and honour their own learning spirit.”
- “Participated in district offered activities (Powwow dancing, storytelling, drumming).”
- “Welcoming knowledge keepers into the classroom” “Sharing of identity - Having older students teach to younger students.”

Non-Indigenous teachers revealed that they appreciated borrowing resources and kits from the Aboriginal education department to support the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives into the classroom. They also identified specific pedagogical practices that have enabled them to enhance Indigenous education in their classes which included: land-based education, intergenerational learning, working with exemplary Indigenous resources and literature, integrating Indigenous local authors in all subjects, broadening assessment approaches, and respectfully inviting Indigenous Knowledge Holders in their classrooms. Non-Indigenous teachers in the district also recognized that the examples they shared in their padlet responses and plenary discussion varied in each school and each educator’s practice. They pointed out that many of the educators who were present for the focus group already had an investment in Indigenous education and acknowledged that other colleagues who were not present might not be undertaking as many Indigenous education pedagogical practices or activities in their classrooms. They discussed the need for ongoing personal and professional development responsibilities for all teachers and district personnel to deepen their Indigenous education commitments and understanding as part of an ongoing lifelong journey.

## **Challenges**

Non-Indigenous teachers identified more challenges than strengths to this question. The challenges they reported are detailed on their padlet responses below. Non-Indigenous teachers felt that these challenges were hindrances to supporting students to develop skills and explore diverse Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, pedagogies, cultural activities and land-based learning in their classrooms and schools, which included:

- “At the secondary level it is still department centered. We are talking about it and how we can incorporate Indigenous knowledge into the curriculum. Some departments have a harder time. At secondary there are questions, does it belong in our department or does it belong in Social Studies.”
- “Extremely beneficial for an aboriginal support assistant/teacher to work with the teacher to teach Indigenous teachings in the classroom. This builds capacity for the teacher to continue to do this in their classroom.”
- “It can be challenging for high school teachers to have the time to incorporate these teachings into the high school classroom. Helpful to have guests to model these teachings in the classroom.”
- “Our whole system is colonial and leadership model is colonial. Not valuing knowledge and cultural sharing. Rely heavily on those of ancestry or those have a background in cultural teachings.”



An Indigenous Knowledge (IK) centred approach to teaching is not just appropriate for particular academic subjects such as Language Arts. The need for Indigenous Knowledge centred curriculum within all subject areas is an example of wholistic and interconnected education. In some ways, this is especially important in those subject areas, such as secondary math and physics, which have traditionally been outside of the curricular focus as it enables students to explore other ways of knowing, including Indigenous Knowledges.

Other barriers noted in the plenary discussion involved the inequitable roles and responsibilities for ASWs. There was also significant discussion on the inconsistency of the English First Peoples 11 and 12 course being offered in every high school in the district. As one educator shared: “We had 20 kids at Pitt Meadows who wanted to take it. But because they needed 21 or 22, they just dropped it. So, without meeting that criteria in numbers for quotas, it got dropped.” The discussion revealed the need for Indigenous education course offerings to be viewed through an equity lens to ensure that these courses are made available to students given the larger equity and decolonizing benefits for students, schools and society. Indigenous educators who supported this focus group with technology assistance voiced the need to professionally equip and mentor more educators to teach First Peoples courses and offered their support in mentoring non-Indigenous teachers to teach First Peoples courses.

### *Needs*

Non-Indigenous teachers identified the following needs as priority areas to support their practice in Indigenous education:

- Introductory Indigenous protocol information
- Support to identify exemplary Indigenous resources
- Further professional development training on Indigenous knowledge(s), pedagogies, cultural activities and land-based learning.
- The district creating more opportunities to have discussions related to Indigenous education and equity.

Participants in the plenary emphasized the importance of the plenary discussion and would like to have more opportunities to engage with each other professionally through district initiatives. The research team observed teachers challenging each other’s biases while supporting each other’s understandings and professional practices in positive ways. During the plenary, educators began voicing issues of systemic racism for Indigenous education and then started organically organizing to support each other to challenge policies and practices that required immediate change. Non-Indigenous teachers in this plenary also committed to initiating additional professional learning communities in their schools and identified Indigenous education initiatives that they could support moving forward.

“A lot of teachers are scared to move forward” (Non-Indigenous Educators World Café focus group).

“You know, we all need this education and it falls on the Aboriginal support workers and then sometimes it might feel like we are taking, and taking, and taking, right? And they are giving, and giving, and giving. That relationship, I think, is counter-productive to what this discussion is about. It’s about sharing and community-developing, and being in a Circle and everyone being equal. And they’re in our schools and I don’t feel like they are equals right now in how – in their employment” (Non-Indigenous Educators World Café focus group).

“We just don’t have time, a) to get together, and b) if at the District level if we’re serious about this, there should be some funding that we can access to so we can actually do more things – activities, and bring more people in. And that comes, I think, at the board level. They ought to be supportive of this” (Non-Indigenous Educators World Café focus group).

### *Indigenous Knowledge(s) Teaching and Learning Recommendations*

- School district leadership should continue modeling Indigenous Education and communicating that Indigenous Education is a responsibility for all.
- Update - In March, 2022 the province of British Columbia mandated that Indigenous coursework is now a graduation requirement for all students since this recommendation was made. There is a need for a district-wide mandatory First Peoples course or bundle of credits (with an emphasis on local Indigenous and Métis Peoples within an integrated anti-Indigenous racist (theoretical and pedagogical)) as a framework for all students. At present, this course has not yet been approved by the B.C. Ministry of Education. The district is encouraged to join advocacy efforts with the First Nations Education Steering, the First Nations

Leadership Council, the BC Teachers' Federation, and the BC School Trustees Association and write a letter of support offering to pilot this course when it becomes available. This will serve as a strategy to counter racism, advance Truth and Reconciliation commitments, and the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2019) priorities. SD42 could also be one of the lead districts in the province to pilot and implement a course of this nature.

- The Aboriginal education department should continue communicating with school staff and teachers about the reasons for pulling Indigenous students out of class. Given that class and school environments continue to perpetuate institutional racism, racial aggressions and colonial violence, there are times when Indigenous students require time away from class to be in safer spaces where they can be heard and validated by Aboriginal support workers and Aboriginal teachers, BPOC staff and Indigenous peers. It is important that school staff and educators are informed that all students must have opportunities to continue engaging with Indigenous education and that it is not an either-or approach.
- Professional development should be required for all district personnel to support responsibilities for Indigenous education and anti-racism in their professional roles (see professional development section for specific details). Professional development should integrate anti-racism (specifically anti-Indigenous racism) with Indigenous education.
- Additional Aboriginal resource teachers (ART) should be hired or positions created.
- Student surveys should be created and distributed each term. Key questions can focus on: Indigenous content (including colonialism) being taught in all courses; incidents of racism and how they were resolved; the adequate availability of Indigenous learning resources; the need for wholistic supports (including mental health needs), and; transitions needs; Indigenous Knowledge Holder engagement and land-based education opportunities; cultural activities offered by the Aboriginal education department; inaccurate, racist and/or outdated learning materials being used in the classroom, and; arising needs.
- There is a need to create additional in-service curriculum implementation days for Indigenous education, anti-Indigenous racism, colonialism and land-based education for teachers and educational assistants.
- There is a need to allocate funding from the district operational budget to land-based education opportunities for all students. This includes supporting teachers to Indigenize their seasonal practices with local land-based understandings.
- There is a need to provide recognition for Indigenous education contributions at district awards events and celebrations for teachers, students, staff, administration and senior leadership who are undertaking exemplary actions to support Indigenous education and address anti-Indigenous racism in their district.
- District administrators are encouraged to continue supporting teachers to ensure that they are delivering curriculum that embeds Indigenous education, colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism with clear goals that are included in their planning related to the BC Teachers' Council Professional Standard 9.
- Invite non-Indigenous students to also learn about Indigenous knowledges and cultures by including them in all cultural activities (i.e. Bannock Friday for Indigenous students in Elementary schools and interactive time with Elders).

## LOCAL INDIGENOUS CULTURES, LANGUAGES, KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS AND COMMUNITIES

The research team focused on the following question for this section of the living report:

☛ How are local Indigenous Knowledge Holders engaged to share local history, protocols, stories, land-based education and knowledge in your class, school or district? What else is needed?

☛ What have you learned about local Indigenous cultures, languages and communities in your classes or visits with Indigenous Knowledge Holders? What else is needed?

The findings from this question have been organized according to the various stakeholder responses: Aboriginal education department (including interviews and world café focus group with Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal support workers); mixed Indigenous-Non-Indigenous world café focus group secondary students; Indigenous elementary and secondary interviews, and; non-Indigenous teachers' world café focus group.

## Aboriginal Education Team

### *Strengths*

Interviews with the Aboriginal Education team (AED) brought to light the deep reverence that is held for the existing relationships that have been formed among the Aboriginal education department and local Indigenous Knowledge Holders, caregivers, and community members.

Aboriginal teachers in the world café focus group felt that it was important to highlight their process to connect with Elders for their Non-Indigenous colleagues to understand: (1) first step building connection in community (which can take two years); (2) reaching out to Elder co-coordinators in Indigenous communities (if these positions exist in Indigenous communities); (3) conversations with the Elders; (4) connecting via family connections that are made. The Aboriginal teachers indicated that the sharing of Elders' knowledge (i.e. drumming, coast Salish weaving and story-telling) and Elders' dinners were integral as relational strategies that supported the guidance of Elders in making decisions within the Aboriginal education department and the district.

The ASWs highlighted the following strengths in their world café focus group padlet responses, which they felt were positive ways that local Indigenous Knowledge Holders were involved in their classes, schools and district events:

- “Past year ASWs have done a good job of bringing in speakers. Steady work with Weavers, storytellers. Handful of local Elders.”
- “During COVID. We have hired Métis artist Lisa Shepherd to come in weekly to do beading workshops. We have hired Shiyama Priya to do the powwow dancing. We hired Métis carver Pat Calihou to make the Métis red river carts in all the high schools. The district offered 2 drum making workshops for staff. At the pro d, the district offered moccasin making with Jillian Métis. We’ve hired Trenton Pierre local from Katzie to work at the leadership students up at Loon lake. He does inspirational talks and spray painting art.”
- “We always have some someone from the local territory come to drum and say a few words for our awards ceremonies, pro-d’s, larger district events.”

### *Challenges*

The Aboriginal Education (AED) team members' interviews explained that the department was in a period of growth to ensure that every school had consistent opportunities to engage with local Indigenous Knowledge Holders in order to share local history, protocols, stories, land-based education and knowledge their classes and schools. One AED team member stated that “Local Indigenous Knowledge Holders have only been engaged in the district in the last three years consistently but we are moving in the right direction with room to continue growing.” The quote shared below from another AED team member indicates that there are three consistent Indigenous Knowledge Holders and that additional relational connections are needed with more Elders, particularly with those who are members of the Métis Nation.

“We’re really at the beginning stages in that. And this year has been much more coordinated in our attempts to bring in the Elders and Knowledge Keepers on a more consistent basis into the school, so that they’re tied to the school community, and not just in and out. And that piece is making it so that we need to access more – more people to make that run, because if we want them – we want people to be tied to the school community, and be a natural thing to do different things in the school then they’re not going to be available for other things... And we’ve been building our ties with the Local Métis community, and we have – like, we have two Knowledge Keepers right now – maybe three – that are quite consistently in the District.”



Some AED members highlighted the need to continue developing relationships with more Indigenous families so that they could be invited to share their knowledge in classes at school events. While this is an important relational practice, interviews with students from local Indigenous Nations also revealed concerns about tokenism. Invitations should be presented without targeting Indigenous students or caregivers or putting them on the spot. This should be done in supportive ways that recognize the diverse realities that families may be experiencing. Other AED interviews also highlighted that individuals who are hired by the AED should be prioritized based on their relational connections with all three Indigenous communities (Katzie First Nation, Kwantlen First Nation, and Golden Ears Métis Society) and sound knowledge of local Indigenous protocols, which would help strengthen relationship-building efforts in the district. All Aboriginal Education team interviews also emphasized the important relational commitments that are needed by all district personnel to ensure that Indigenous education is a responsibility for all.

Indigenous teachers in the world café focus group identified the following challenges related to engaging local Indigenous Knowledge Holders to share local history, protocols, stories, land-based education and knowledge in their classes and schools:

- Clear protocols and guidance from all local Indigenous communities to be able to share with the school district<sup>1</sup>. This includes further access to and greater understandings of the Katzie Nation's local protocols, histories and stories.
- More equitable distribution of Elders throughout the school district.
- Meaningful conversations with Elders and community members a consultative manner.
- Need to stop presenting and return to open dialogue in order to foster relationships.
- First Peoples courses need to be offered consistently throughout the district (and change the name of “English First Peoples 11 and 12 courses” to a less colonial name).

In their padlet responses, Aboriginal support workers identified the following needs to support them to engage local Indigenous Knowledge Holders:

- “More access to Elders needed.”
- “More structure and clarity on how to bring in presenters.”
- “We have had minimal local knowledge shared in our schools and classrooms.”
- Nice to involve grandchildren in Elders’ teachings for intergenerational learning.”
- “Utilize zoom for teachings to fill void. Especially oral storytelling. We would like to share local knowledge through a modern lens. Our department looks to Elders more often than we look to those in our department, who also have knowledge and teachings.”

“I think it’s that they need to take ownership over some of this work. It shouldn’t be the Ab. Ed. Department bringing in people when we want to. It’s fostering relationships with your local nations, having those conversations with different knowledge keepers, signing up for grants. If you want a mural, it shouldn’t be coming to the Ab. Ed. Worker and saying, “How do I get a mural in here?” Do the work, which I think has been one of our major hurdles is this expectation that the Aboriginal education department will do everything that is Indigenous. And I don’t mind being consulted in a lot of those things. If you’re unsure if this is a good artist or if you are looking for support around who they could bring in for something and yes definitely come in our way, but you shouldn’t wait for us to act first” (Aboriginal Education Team Member Interview).

“Within that I would love to see administrators and teachers participating in local events like going to National Indigenous Peoples Day, going to some of the workshops that are offered. Katzie is doing a drum circle on July 1st which is going to be really powerful and open to the community. I would love to see people making that effort to connect because that’s another piece that I feel is often shared is that they don’t know how to ask or who to ask. I’m like, “well you need to make a relationship with people first. Because if you know [name], you can call up [name of Knowledge Holder] but if you are just shooting in the dark then that’s a lot harder to try and find somebody who’s going to come in and work with you, right? They’re all lovely, all lovely people so it’s really easy to build a relationship” (Aboriginal Education Team Member Interview).

<sup>1</sup> This challenge aligned with one of the key needs articulated by non-Indigenous teachers.

“We’ve been having conversations about like, protocols that we need to follow on a regular basis, and then that we need to model for people across the District, as well, and so my wish would be that that is actually – like, we actually make the time to finish that because we’re going a million directions at all times, that we – we’re really good at starting conversations and starting things, but not necessarily making the time to finish them. And it needs to be done” (Aboriginal Education Team Member Interview).

## Mixed Indigenous/Non-Indigenous World Café focus group

### *Strengths*

This world café focus group was comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous secondary students from multiple secondary schools across the district. This focus group identified several strengths related to the educational opportunities that they were provided in student’s classes or visits with Indigenous Knowledge Holders that supported their learning of local Indigenous cultures, languages and communities. We have collated the information from this focus group to identify the frequency of each bullet point that was listed in the padlet responses below.

### *Embedded Curriculum Strengths Directly Supported by Teachers*

- Learning about specific topics: Residential schools and #MMIW, pipeline (1)<sup>2</sup>
- Indigenous-focused books brought into class – Three Day Road, There, There, My name is Sepeetza, Indian Horse (1)
- Grade 9 – a teacher that did deeper studies (1)
- Home school: monthly events to learn about culture – food (1)
- Read a book about Indigenous history of a sick girl who felt better as soon as she put on her jingle dress and went back to her culture (1)
- Did Aboriginal veterans poppy (1)
- Baking course – learned how to make bannock (2)
- Chemistry class a guest came in to talk about herbs (1)
- Grade 8 – the secret path poems/songs and discussed in detail that meaning behind the words. Read books about residential schools (1)

### *Programs and Activities Supported by the Aboriginal education department in Collaboration With Educators*

- Aboriginal youth leadership program at Westview and there were many Elders who took part and shared their knowledge and stories.
- Beading bracelets (2)
- IGNITE from earlier grades (2)
- Aboriginal Games Day (1)
- Totem pole carving in grade 5, field trip to Burnaby Museum
- Zoom presentation on powwow dancing and the history behind the regalia (3)
- Métis jigging (1)
- Métis dot art (1)
- Button blankets (2)

<sup>2</sup> The numbers represent the number of youth who mentioned each bullet point. For example, 1 represents 1 youth. Many youth highlighted more than one activity (ie bullet point).

- Weaving in my classroom community (6)
- Drumming or making drums (5)
- Medicine pouches,
- Storytelling (2)
- We have also learned aboriginal songs.
- Dream catchers (1)

### *Land-Based Opportunities (Prior To COVID)*

In their padlet responses, secondary students from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous world café focus group identified the following outdoor land-based learning activities that they participated in prior to COVID at school and in class-based activities. We invited the students to reflect on this question based on pre-COVID times and included the following prompts to provide examples of land-based education: traditional canoeing, visits to local Indigenous communities, longhouses, harvesting traditional plants, foods, berries.

- Nothing for land-based learning - would love to get out of traditional structured environments to expose ourselves to land-based learning (2)
- Cedar archery (2)
- Canoeing (3)
- Kayaking, talking sticks (2)
- Talking circles (2)
- Plant medicines, including making tea and a cream for cuts/burns (3)
- Field trips to Grouse Mountain (1)
- Sacred circle in grade 10 (cooking, archery, land-based) (1)
- One field trip to St. Mary's which included: creation stories, music styles (songs, drumming), medicine pouches, games (hoop throw) (1)
- Camping trip with a guest to speak of hunting and the explained the tools used. Would be nice to have this in our outdoor pursuits program. Canoeing trip with a storyteller on each canoe to talk about nature (1)

### *Challenges*

In their padlet responses, secondary students from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous secondary world café focus group identified the following challenges related to the inclusion of local Indigenous cultures, languages and communities in their classes or visits with Indigenous Knowledge Holders:

- “We need more teachings in schools for non-Aboriginal students who do not have access to Ab. Ed.”
- “Nothing addressed in the IB [International Baccalaureate] courses.”
- “Land-based education in Elementary but not in Secondary.”
- “Indigenous culture, knowledge and land-based education are implemented by teachers and their own interests and not following the new BC curriculum. Certain teachers go deeper - mostly English and Socials Studies courses.”
- “Nothing- except grade 9 traditional dance – residential schools only- not taught anything else or talk about.”
- “Fort Langley- taught from settler perspective and we are trying to teach for Indigenous perspective too.”

*What Else is Needed in Relation to Indigenous Cultures, Languages and Communities and Indigenous Knowledge Holders?*

- More local knowledge, teachings, traditions and cultural activities: including weaving (4)
- More field trip opportunities and land-based education including: archery, plant medicines and tea making (3)
- More work with the words related to the subject and help with authentic resources (1)
- Embed culture in the curriculum, not just on Orange Shirt Day (1)
- Learning more about languages, a language course (1)
- Would like to learn more about storytelling (1)
- Drum circles and drum-making, including a greater variety of music from specific groups with differing styles (2)
- Anything would be good, hard to answer because there is so much. However, hearing oral story and tradition around healing stones came in to play with the stones the students received in their gift bags and the importance and meaning that each stone was meant for (1)

## Indigenous Student Interviews

### *Strengths*

In interviews with Indigenous secondary students from all schools in the district, the students spoke highly about their relationships with their Aboriginal support workers and Aboriginal teachers as key strengths that supported their learning of local Indigenous cultures, languages and communities in their classes or visits with Indigenous Knowledge Holders. Most elementary and secondary students spoke positively about opportunities that allowed them to engage with local Indigenous Knowledge Holders in Indigenous traditional games; weaving; Powwow dancing; school assemblies; Orange shirt day, and; storytelling. The Ignite program (which provides cultural opportunities and social connections for Indigenous students to help with their grade transitions and opportunities to engage at local Indigenous youth conferences) were appreciated by the Indigenous students who participated in the interviews. One student also highlighted the important curricular efforts that their non-Indigenous teacher was undertaking to ensure that they could learn more about local Indigenous knowledge and culture. This student conveyed that this was the first time they had an opportunity to directly learn about Indigenous cultures and people in a class environment, which was helping the student to understand more about their own identity.

“In kindergarten my aunty got to come in and show a slideshow about us fishing salmon and she brought some net corks and hanging needles to pass around to the kids. They do orange shirt day and have an assembly. They acknowledge Katzie and Kwantlen at the beginning of each assembly. I got to include Merry Christmas in my Christmas concert when we sang a song about languages around the world” (Indigenous Elementary Student).

“Well, I remember one time and this was actually this year, we learned how to weave and we also had that cool circle thing where there was dancing and –Powwow dancing” (Elementary student).

“I think I’ve met pretty much – I think I’ve met the Katzie Elders –so I’ve learned the music styles for the Katzie community. They do their drumming sessions sometimes and we get to listen on that, which is super cool...Local story-telling and story-sharing – so, my [ASW] would always kind of tell me about her past here, like with her family, which is all part of the same –I [also] met with Jessica Slater, so she’s like a local artist. I go and talk with her and see what she’s been doing. So that’s interesting, so lots of different points of view from the culture, which is nice” (Indigenous secondary student).

## Challenges

In most interviews, Indigenous elementary and secondary students mentioned that they had few, opportunities to engage in Indigenous education – or none at all. This is a consistent finding among the mixed Indigenous/non-Indigenous student world café focus group and the other district stakeholder responses overall.<sup>3</sup> Indigenous students challenged the “one and done” (i.e. check box) approach that they saw being enacted in the classroom, noting they had few opportunities to engage with local Indigenous cultures, knowledge or Knowledge Holders and would like to see this changed immediately. One Indigenous student detailed that she/he could not participate in Indigenous programming offered by the Aboriginal education department after school due to a scheduling conflict with her/his sport activities. Another student shared that the opportunities to engage with local Indigenous culture and Knowledge Holders changed according to the school in the district, noting that after switching schools recently they had greater opportunities in this regard. In other instances, elementary and secondary students from local Nations detailed how they were tokenized by their teachers and school administration by being continually asked to share their cultural teachings, songs, and dances. While these students were proud of their Indigenous ancestry, they felt that it was overwhelming to be asked to sing and share their language for class and school events that were Indigenous focused. They felt it was important that their teachers and school leaders take initiative to learn more about their culture and language, so they did not have to be so heavily relied upon (please see microaggressions section for further details). Land-based education in class or school-based programming varied according to the student and the school they attended. Some students had little to no experience with land-based education, while others were fully immersed in it (for example, the Environmental School). Some students also highlighted that they could not enroll in an English First Peoples course due to limited enrollment numbers and would like to see the course being mandatory for all learners. This recommendation also reflects input provided by the Aboriginal teachers who participated in the world café focus group.

“I think I could say I personally I wish I knew more about the culture and stuff. I learned about it in Grade 9 once I think. I think it could be taught a lot more. I wish it was taught...instead of just it's taught, now it's over, done with, we're moving on. I feel like it should be taught way more because it is a huge part of history and everyone should know what these people went through and stuff like that. And they suffered and so many lost their cultures and that's part of the reason why I don't know much about it because a lot of the culture is lost. So, I feel like that's something that's really important is to instead of just do one lesson on it and call it a day, I think that we should cover more about it and learn more about it and stuff like that and learned what happened” (Indigenous Student).

“I've learned more with [my Aboriginal support worker] and in Indigenous groups with her than I ever learned from a teacher. Maybe a little bit from my Grade 7 teacher, who taught us about some of the trading routes, but that's about it. I don't remember anything in Grade 8 about it, and in Grade 9 we kind of touched up that there was people there, but we didn't go into any depth about them” (Indigenous Secondary Student).

“I feel like it was an Aboriginal support worker [who did cultural activities] and did a lot of work with classroom teachers” (Indigenous Secondary Student).

“I think if I didn't have my teacher this year, I definitely wouldn't have known enough about it. I think not every teacher...so how our work is, is sometimes we would lightly touch on it. We get like one worksheet and then he would lightly touch on it but we wouldn't actually learn about it. We'd do a worksheet to learn something and then answer questions and then that's it. I think he made it more personal, and we could actually just sit around a classroom and he would just openly talk about it instead of us having to read something and write something.

It gets more ingrained when you can actually have an open conversation. I definitely think if I didn't have my teacher this year, I think it's not talked about enough. The residential schools, also not just that because we do learn about that but also the racism and how to deal with that stuff. We have not learned about that enough a hundred percent. If I didn't have my teacher this year, I really wouldn't have known anything about that” (Indigenous Secondary Student).

<sup>3</sup> This key finding also reflects the Aboriginal Engagement Day feedback that the district received on March 5th, 2020



“The only opportunity is as an elective and it isn’t always offered due to lack of enrollment and interest. I think there should be more opportunities to explore diverse Indigenous histories and local Indigenous communities and practices within my school. It should be mandatory to learn Indigenous history in a regular socials class. Not enough people know about Indigenous history because it isn’t mandatory” (Indigenous Secondary Student).

## Non-Indigenous Teachers World Café focus group

In their padlet responses, non-Indigenous teachers identified numerous strengths (see below) that enabled students to engage with Indigenous Knowledge Holders in order to share local history, protocols, stories, land-based education and knowledge their class and schools. These included:

### *Strengths*

- “One teacher built drums with Katzie Elders and were walked through the process. There are now three sets of drums throughout the district. Also organized a workshop series for students with an Elder.”
- “Powwow session. Very enriching for students. There are things happening, but we would love to see MORE.”
- “Totem Pole carvings at THSS.”
- “Feasting with Elders – brought in community members and shared a meal, students made gifts, honoured them with music, had the Elders speak – an authentic learning opportunity.”
- “Bringing in shared materials to provide a local perspective” (Katzie Ethnography, Xeels).
- “We have an EA who is Indigenous also, and I’ll ask her about protocols, too. I don’t know if many think to do that. I think there may be times when people think, am I treading in the wrong direction? Can I actually ask if this is appropriate or ok?”
- “We’ve got lots of different experiences from each teacher, so what might feel comfortable is different. I have the connection with Katzie, but it would be vastly different if I was new. Ab Ed department has been helpful in facilitating (this year the exception due to COVID).”
- “SELO group is working to develop walking curriculum; not enough Elders to help implement the curriculum; made class set of weaving looms and learned how to weave and then shared this learning with the rest of the school during a festival (pre-COVID); bannock, painting, Indigenous games; Jamie Roberts was able to speak to my classroom about 2 Spirited people.”
- “Students working with [Aboriginal support worker] to do Salish basket weaving (incorporating mathematical skills involved). I don’t know where we would be if we didn’t have the opportunities and resources that our AbEd support teachers making the connections and providing those resources.”
- “Outdoor learning. Kwantlen Elders took part in sharing their knowledge with the students. It is hard to connect at times with the timelines.”
- “Pro D with Katzie Elder; opportunities to do environmental awareness and protection in the community with Katzie and SFU Zoom time with Elders - Ab. Ed. has been busy with connecting with Elders through Zoom Powwow Dancing.”

### *Challenges*

- “There haven’t been any local knowledge keepers brought into the school.”
- “Questions around how to begin that process.”
- “What are the protocols to bring in these voices?”
- “What is the process of wanting to bring in an Elder or member of a local Indigenous band?”

- “When visitors are brought into the school: Indigenous students are invited to participate in workshops but those opportunities are not necessarily as accessible to non-Indigenous students”
- “Money is still needed to fund; two bands yet difficult to contact/liase with them.”
- “Honorariums for Elders/Knowledge Holders are high so difficult to get them in regularly; Complicated and expensive because transportation, food are necessary as well.”
- “Hard to schedule Elders and knowledge keepers.”
- “Time and structure for allowing those things. Doesn't work to structure things into a 1pm hour meeting. We need the time for the learning and let go of other things we feel the pressure of.”
- “Not sure how to do this in my content area. Some content areas can do this but not sure how to do this in math, for example.”
- “At our school our Ab Ed worker is on leave, so I haven't been able to access that (I'm new to the school as well).”
- “We have our Ab Ed support worker come in and work with our kids. He'll do loom beading and make bracelets. He shares with our staff what he would like to do and we gather students who'd like to participate in it. It is nice to have access to a person who is so engaged in teaching and has so many resources and knowledge to share with us. It will be different depending on the person, but we've had [an Aboriginal support worker] for quite a while. She is very responsive to what we want to do. I do Aboriginal all the way through Gr. 3 with some Cdn settler content, but primarily local indigenous content, and because she knows that she might suggest some things, but I tend to go to her to ask.”



The above quote is an example of Aboriginal support workers going well beyond their job description and are being asked to lead cultural teachings on behalf of the school. This is an example of the over dependency on the Aboriginal education department and Aboriginal support workers



Reflecting on the quote above, what are some ways that this may be an over dependency on the ASW? How can the school community support and up-lift the work of this ASW while also shifting the responsibility of teaching the students to the teachers?

“Very Katzie-oriented, but so many other Indigenous groups that are less represented in our activities.”

The most common needs expressed by non-Indigenous teachers were: accessible protocol guidance to engage Indigenous Knowledge Holders and communities; and the need for more professional development to support teachers to make curricular connections with their subject area(s). Other key priorities included: honoraria for Indigenous Knowledge Holders; the need to support language revitalization to educate students on the land-based names of local Katzie and Kwantlen Nation territories; and the need to create more time for in class activities to ensure that timeframes were being respectful of Indigenous Knowledge Holder engagement.

**c'əsqañelə School Involvement in Design and Naming:** “A few years ago we opened c'əsqañelə (which means, where the eagles fly, where the eagles gather). And it was all because the former superintendent talked about – and the engineers, at the time – so we even got to talk about what should be part of the [school] – and I told them, I'm all bruised on my arms from pinching myself thinking, “is this for real?” “I'm sitting with you?” And they'd laugh, you know, the whole table was laughing. The engineers were just enthralled by our presence at the table, and it got me really thinking about how our presenters come in to school. And I said, well, I've watched them – kids have a hard time seeing someone's heart -- if they want to see somebody's heart -- in the building. So, they designed one part of the building where a log – a cedar log – can be backed into the school, and the doors opened, like you know, windows opened for it, and so to me, with the engineers listening, we'd see all kinds of things that would open up just because of that. Maybe even open the doors while you're teaching, you know, that's what we want, you know, to recognize that the environment is part of us. And so, ever since we've been with Maple Ridge, it's been a learning curve I mean, and I had to get know Kirsten, and then the different people before her – who – we became really good friends, you know? And they always would call me over and I'd sit in their office and they'd make me coffee, so – that's the way I like it. You know, that home feeling, welcoming, and really listening to the needs of our people. Because I can speak for a lot of our people, and I'm thinking always of the future, because we're going to build on that site, and our kids in the future will be going there in Maple Ridge. So we always have to think like that, we can't think that we're (ia) in the way it is now. We have to keep moving (Kwantlen Knowledge Holder).

“You know, that big mountain (“Golden Ears Mountain”) down to the Fraser River, was where all the golden eagles would meet every year. They would fly along and meet and they would continue their existence long, long before Maple Ridge was even – began to be built – the land was always entrenched with golden eagles, and they’re very huge, huge eagles. Way, way bigger than the bald eagle. And if you remember now, today, how Brackendale is so full of them – the bald eagles – well, c’əsqənelə was exactly the same. This whole area was called c’əsqənelə – a place where the golden eagles meet. And they still see them up that mountain and flying around that area. It’s a historical place of the golden eagles. When we discussed naming the school after that c’əsqənelə, it was a historical moment that we got to name the school after something that was there long, long, long before Maple Ridge changed that name from c’əsqənelə to Maple Ridge, and that went on all over the place, you know?” (Kwantlen Knowledge Holder)

“When we helped design that school with the district, we were all so excited, because that’s the first time in history a municipality ever, ever came to an Indigenous community and asked them to help design their school – what they would like to see in each classroom. And when they look outside the classroom, what would they like to see? Forest? And when these doors open in that classroom, and let’s all the sunshine and fresh air into that classroom, it was like sitting outside – and those kids were so amazed at how it was designed” (Kwantlen Knowledge Holder).

### *Local Indigenous Cultures, Languages, Knowledge Holders and Communities Recommendations*

- All Aboriginal Education team members that are hired should have relationships with all three Indigenous communities (Katzie, Kwantlen and Métis Nations) and sound knowledge of Indigenous protocols.
- Hiring committees for Indigenous positions in the district should include Indigenous district personnel and when possible, a representative from the local Nations and the Métis Nations.
- Individuals who self-identify as Indigenous, especially in educational and professional contexts, have a responsibility to clearly articulate and declare their connections to established, legitimate Indigenous communities, thus confirming their connection to family and community.<sup>4</sup>
- Indigenous Elders who are district Elders should have some office space in each school to demonstrate their important role in the district.
- Extend the Indigenous Elders in Residence program beyond the current four weeks that are allocated for an Indigenous Knowledge Holder in each school to support widespread calls from all stakeholders identified in this review. Additional funding for Indigenous Knowledge Holder Honoraria should be allocated from the district operating budget. This recommendation should be included in the District Aboriginal Principal’s school growth plan and have a clear time frame and a measurable goal. Following the implementation of this recommendation, individual school growth plans should include goals for the Elders in Residence program in their school.
- When possible, provide support for local language revitalization initiatives.
- Support local language revitalization initiatives within schools whenever possible in district events and community settings.

## ASSESSMENT

The findings for this section detail the various ways that each stakeholder group understands assessment including needs related to supporting students in wholistic (emotional, spiritual, physical and cognitive) ways that go beyond Eurocentric standards. It is clear that broadening assessment expectations by engaging with Indigenous pedagogies and critical literacy assessment practices supports Indigenous students and the entire student body. Some of the quotes below provide details on strength-based assessment practices, which can lead to a wholistic approach to teaching and learning for Indigenous students. We also observed that key district personnel in leadership positions continue to use deficit-based language to describe Indigenous student success in assessment. The students also highlighted the inconsistencies of differing worldviews as it related to assessment practices. For example, students highlighted that the impact of lowered expectations due to racism and the lack of relationships with their teachers were detrimental to their schooling experience. Similar to the findings of the Aboriginal Education team interviews, students called for more inclusive, wholistic approaches to assessment all subject areas in the curriculum to support their learning.

<sup>4</sup> For more details, please see <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2019/08/20/research-ethnic-fraud-and-the-academy-a-protocol-for-working-with-Indigenous-communities-and-peoples/>.

Within the area of assessment, the research team focused on the following questions:

☛ What are successful assessment practices that can wholistically support Indigenous students?

☛ How do pedagogical assessment strategies reflect/not reflect Indigenous pedagogies and student learning needs in the district? What needs to be changed? What are the systemic barriers?

To highlight the major themes, the following information has been organized according to stakeholder responses below.

## Elementary and Secondary Students Interviews

Understandably, students preferred a range of assessment practices to support their growth and learning in the classroom. The majority of students commented that they received both positive and negative forms of feedback from their teachers, which varied according to each teacher. Secondary students noted that they received mixed feedback according to subject area and teacher. The assessment challenges that were shared by students ranged and included: the tension between summative and formative assessment practices; a lack of detailed feedback; the inability to advocate for a higher grade; and a disregard for the diversity of learning methods, which did not pique their interest to learn and subsequently, they did not receive positive assessment. Students also shared that an absent or tense relationship with their teacher (e.g. feeling a lack of connection with their teacher or perceiving that the teacher dislikes them) was a challenge in terms of how they were assessed. Students also communicated that they felt challenged when they were not allowed to creatively share their learning (i.e., going beyond the writing). Most importantly, students expressed that the assessment did not usually look at the whole person, including the extenuating personal circumstances that some students experience, which could negatively impact their grades. Some students also expressed difficulty engaging in an academic curriculum that did not centre Indigenous knowledge and cultural activities, which made it more challenging to do well on the assessment, due to the lack of cultural relevancy and interest. Indeed, as Strand Four: Indigenous Specific Racism and Responses highlights, the student's concerns confirm the epistemic racism that they are encountering in the curriculum.

The strengths that Indigenous students identified were centred on teachers understanding the diversity of learning processes that occurs amongst students. Students appreciated it when teachers supported their emotions before introducing assignment expectations, which helped to calm feelings of anxiety and confusion. Some students highlighted that COVID-19 shifted assessment practices which has enabled better feedback and follow up from some teachers. Secondary students noted that they were receiving more written feedback from their teachers than prior to COVID-19. Most importantly, students voiced the need for strength-based assessment practices. They expressed that it was helpful when teachers provided an explanation for an incorrect answer and preferred being told what their strengths were, rather than the teachers focusing solely on the wrong answers. Students also felt positive about assessment practices that allowed them to demonstrate their learning in diverse ways, including community focused, arts based, and collaborative projects.

“There are opportunities in creative writing, we can be unique and share our stories about our experiences in life. You can only share your experiences in certain classrooms. Not all teachers are willing to listen it is about a 50/50 split.”

“Yeah. I actually had one teacher – who was amazing at it. Every assignment we had, or like, twice per term – he’d like, pull us up and say, okay, how’s it going, and like, talk to us about you know, how we’re feeling with school – if we’re stressed – so like, just that is....to be like, perfect, like – that’s the base – bare minimum that he’s doing, but it just makes the world the better place, like (laughs) – it makes me feel less stressed, and like, okay, he cares about what I’m doing – and like, where I’m sitting.”

## Aboriginal Education Team Interviews

Throughout the interviews with the Aboriginal education department team there was a general consensus that assessment practices varied according to individual schools. Assessment in each school included formal assessments to support teachers to incorporate the assessment of elements of universal design for learning. Other examples of specific assessment practices that were described, including a Literacy Simplified Program for Kitzie Nation students and a literacy support teacher who was hired with First Nations Education Steering Committee funding through a partnership with the Kitzie Nation. The Aboriginal education department team also shared that there was ongoing resistance to Indigenous assessment practices by a high number of teachers, which required ongoing conversations and support in order to shift assessment practices solely based on curricular standards to a growth model. Indigenous students also echoed the need for assessments to be expanded to include wholistic growth in their learning and prioritize it over standardized expectations (which at this point in time are still essentially largely Eurocentric in nature).

### *Wholistic Growth Model*

“I think we should focus on growth opposed to set standards. I have students who work so hard and they’ll come into a classroom and they might be capable of writing a paragraph and at the end they’re able to write a basic essay and they’ll get something like a B. And then I’ll have another student who comes in who’s already at a university level of reading and sort of stays in that same space and they’ll get an A. And then you have somebody else who comes in who can barely write at all and they’ll get to a paragraph and they get a C-. But the amount of growth that is shown within all three experiences is very different and so how do we celebrate students who are really challenging themselves in addition to those who are naturally going to excel within those spaces” (Aboriginal Education Team Member).

### *Student Centred Learning and Growth*

“I try to really make it about them learning and like, focusing on their skills that they want to work on, as opposed to what I tell them they need to do, right? So, and I think that’s really critical for – for all teachers. Like, if you can’t write the paragraph, if you can at least give me your argument – like we can sit and have a conversation in that moral kind of way of expressing knowledge, I’m totally fine with that. And so trying to get the other teachers to recognize that is a little bit of a challenge” (Aboriginal Education Team Member).

### *Move Beyond an Over Reliance on the Written Word*

“I’ve been doing a lot of work around multi-modality and different ways of representing and engaging with knowledge and trying to move away from written assessment as much as possible, which is still pretty dominant within our school system. And so, are there ways that we can engage some of these students who might think more creatively? That was really interesting because having the conversation around how complicated it is to take something like a basic idea and transform that into an art piece, the amount of work and thought and creativity and understanding that needs to go into that transformation. And yet it seems like the easier way of representing your ideas and it’s not as challenging as writing an essay or not as challenging as a test. I don’t know. I struggle with that.”

### *Relationships Matter*

“It’s so complex. And that’s the relationship centered piece. We need to know who our students are. We need to know their families. We need to be connected in the home and inviting people into the classroom as much as possible so that, that is a whole community learning together” (Aboriginal Education Team Member).



### *Include Land-Based and Experiential Learning*

“The way schools assess kids; it's the colonized way it's the assimilation way. It's not land based, it's not nature based, it's always on paper and it's harder for our kids. Our assessments don't give alternative ways to look at kids learning” (Aboriginal Education Team Member).

### Aboriginal Support Staff

In the world café focus group, Indigenous support staff (including Aboriginal support workers) shared the assessment practices they saw within their positions. There was general agreement among the group that assessment looked different in each school. The strengths that were shared centered on alternative assessment practices. The challenges that were articulated pointed to the much larger problem of colonial assessment practices. It's important to note that even the strengths can be understood as a challenge, because students are often continually required to share their learning through text-based assessment.

“Sometimes the classroom teacher allows the student to share their knowledge in alternate ways to the originally assigned way. For example, Oral sharing instead of writing an essay.”

“Some students are allowed to use talk to text technology rather than handwriting. Students access support via a scribe to help express their knowledge. Some secondary teachers allow students to show their learning in alternate ways, but it depends and varies from one teacher to the next.”

“The way schools assess kids; it's the colonized way it's the assimilation way. It's not land-based, it's not nature-based, it's always on paper and it's harder for our kids. Our assessments don't give alternative ways to look at kids' learning.”



Critical Literacy: “The term literacy refers to the reading and writing of text. The term critical literacy refers to use of the technologies of print and other media of communication to analyze, critique, and transform the norms, rule systems, and practices governing the social fields of everyday life” (Luke, 2012, p. 5; Luke, 2004). Essentially, by using critical literacy practices, the assessment of students opens up to allow more than just reading and writing text and becomes inclusive of all media and oriented to the cultural, ideological, and sociolinguistic content of the curriculum.

### Non-Indigenous Teaching Support Staff World Café Focus Group

The non-Indigenous teaching support staff also shared their experiences with assessment. Their responses varied from being unaware of assessment practices, to describing general assessment practices, to speaking directly to the racism faced by Indigenous students. These quotes highlight the lack of equity-oriented assessment practices for Indigenous students.

“Our district is very open to multiple ways of learning being displayed. Real emphasis on quality not quantity in assessment and participation strategies. A little bit of work done really well is better than a lot of work not well done” (Non-Indigenous Teaching Support Staff).

“They are not specific to Indigenous students. All students seem to have the same assessment. Teachers access information and share with support teachers” (Non-Indigenous Teaching Support Staff).

“Children that are being met are not in situations that they struggle. Those that struggle and not being met with the proper amount of time they should get because the time is allocated to others or not given to them. Stereotypical children that look in Indigenous struggle more than non-Indigenous students” (Non-Indigenous Teaching Support Staff).

## Non-Indigenous Teachers World Café focus group

When asked about assessment, non-Indigenous teachers pointed to the challenges of the systemic barriers they felt were limiting their options for assessment. They noted that the time limits and assessment criteria that were mandated for their teacher were made without consideration for cyclical teaching and moving back to focus on learned concepts, which was colonial in nature. Further, they highlighted the way in which they felt trapped by larger assessment criteria, with one teacher stating, “The changes to requirements for letter grades needs to come from the post-secondary down. Without that happening, we don't have a leg to stand on removing them from high school.”

Teachers also articulated the tension of negotiating assessment strategies that have not been developed for use with Indigenous communities in mind and the constant negotiation of the Eurocentric expectations of the curriculum. The research team observed that teachers were engaging in a number of student-centered, reflective assessment processes, but the teachers ultimately taught curricular content that was based on largely Eurocentric standards in set grades and at set times of the day.

The assessment practices that non-Indigenous teachers identified as strengths focused mainly on inclusive teaching practices on the following:

- “The students' background knowledge and their understanding of the topic, which is helpful for diverse learners.”
- “Offering opportunities for choice in assessment (i.e. visual, written, oral/storytelling, circle used as assessment and student voice in assessment).”
- “Project-based learning which supports connection and increases student participation.”

### Non-Indigenous Teacher Pull-Out Quotes

“Our district is very open to multiple ways of learning being displayed.”

“Real emphasis on quality not quantity in assessment and participation strategies.”

“A little bit of work done really well is better than a lot of work not well done.”

## District Leadership

The senior team and administrators were also asked about assessment practices throughout the district. The responses ranged from those framed in deficit-based thinking and those that involved advocating for change by actively engaging and supporting relationships with Indigenous learners, caregivers and communities.

“How many kids in Grade 4 are not meeting reading expectations across the district? I want every principal to be able to name those kids off. I want the Aboriginal department to know who the Aboriginal kids across the district K to 12 are that are not performing and what is the plan to get them there” (district personnel).



The quotes above this branching out box are examples of a deficit perspective. “Deficit practices of educators and schools are often grounded in and supported by common sense notions of meritocracy, perceived attitudes of motivation, a perceived lack of value in education, and biased testing practices (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Taylor, 1998; Valdes & Figueroa, 1994; Valencia, 1997). While some discriminatory deficit practices are intentional, many are grounded in microaggressions - unconscious discursive practices by the majority that perpetuate stereotypes and wound marginalized individuals or groups” (Roy and Roxas, 2011, p.1).

“...in goal number two of that agreement, which is the student achievement piece, you know we don’t want, I believe we shouldn’t be making excuses for Indigenous learners or any learner in our system. Everyone should, we should have high standards for all and we need to ensure that we know who, who is underperforming and what services we’re providing to ensure that they’re finding success” (district personnel).

“It is important to point out that these accommodations would take place for any of our diverse learners. Many educators continue to focus on letter grades and proficiency scales and the colonial standard of not just what is right or what is wrong? But also in the myth of meritocracy. Until educators take the opportunities to learn how to unlearn, decolonize and Indigenize their practices alongside our Indigenous support team, they will continue to fall into the current colonial system that ranks and “others” our Indigenous students” (district personnel).



**Myth of Meritocracy:** The Myth of Meritocracy that is referred to in the above quote refers to the ideology that everyone succeeds on their own merit. In a meritocracy, each individual earns what they have through their own talent and skills and no one has more advantage than anyone else. This is referred to as the myth of meritocracy because when speaking about a meritocracy, it does not consider one’s positionality and the on-going context of systemic racism, colonialism and intersecting forms of oppression.

## Conclusion

It is helpful when educators embrace the life-long and life-wide aspects of learning as it relates to the whole learner (emotional, physical, mental and spiritual), while recognizing the unique experience of each student. Learning opportunities should reflect Indigenous values of respect, reciprocity, humility, collectivity, cooperation, relevance, etc. Student self-assessment (embodied wholistically) needs to be woven into all learning experiences. When this type of assessment is combined with critical literacy assessment, a more wholistic understanding of the learner, their family and community emerges.

As Claypool (2011) states “Students absorb learning (a natural and social event) as they observe and/or participate in cooperative events, storytelling, demonstrations, role modeling, group discussion, self-reflection, talking circles, apprenticeships, and other in vivo experiences. In other words, the processes of learning become as important as the product. If this culturally sensitive philosophy of learning is adopted, assessment practices must adapt to ensure that concrete changes are reflected in actual policies and assessment frameworks (6).”

Strength-based assessments allow students to celebrate their strengths and the gifts they hold, with which they will find meaning and be able to contribute in life. Strength-based assessments, support students to mobilize their gifts and affinities to find their life’s purpose. Most current assessment practices are created through a deficit model of assessment, focusing on what the student has done wrong and on the areas of curriculum where a student struggles to the detriment, instead of showing when, where, and how a student may shine. Furthermore, as stated by Brownlee et al. (2009), strength-based assessment “allows a conceptualization of personal strengths that is unique to an individual’s worldview, and the worldview of one’s family, community, and culture” (p. 107).

The topic of how assessments are carried out cannot be separated from the topic of what is being assessed. Recommendations for future assessment practices include: ensuring a more critical understanding and teaching of the concept of literacy to counter the hegemonic forms of expression used in assessment, inclusive assessment practices such as Universal Design for Learning, and teaching more critical thinking and critical pedagogy throughout the schooling experience. These recommendations may help educators to advance their decolonizing practices and decentre the Eurocentric assessment routines that dominate school curriculum.

When reviewing district documents with information pertaining to assessment, it is evident that the themes and tensions that have arisen through this project are also embedded within these documents. The district Annual Learning Report-

Supporting All Learners documents the graduation rates of Indigenous students and the passing (C- or higher) rates. The graduation rates do not reflect the number of students being put forward for gifted<sup>5</sup> or challenged classes, the number of students being tracked in academic streamed courses and the ratio of students being awarded the highest of grades, awards, and scholarships. They also do not reflect the resilience of Indigenous learners who continue to deal with racism and violence in a colonial system. Graduation rates alone do not tell an accurate or complete story of the opportunities afforded to Indigenous learners. Additionally, the recommendations presented below align with those in the school district Strategic Plan, specifically regarding the continued adoption of innovative and effective district-wide assessment and reporting practices.

### *Assessment Recommendations*

- Findings from this report and consultation with Indigenous Rights Holders should be utilized to develop key metrics that can serve as indicators for the wholistic success of Indigenous learners and support the district data dashboard. Consult with the Ministry of Education as needed.
- Continue providing in-service professional development to support district leadership, administrators', teachers', and teaching support staff's understandings of strength-based wholistic assessment and critical literacy practices. This includes removing all deficit-based language from district materials and data measurement tools.
- Review and adjust grading, discipline, and special education/program identification practices to remove the disproportionality that exists for Indigenous and BPOC students.
- Eliminate streaming practices for "Work Place Math" for Indigenous students (except for exceptional circumstances – e.g. students' with designated special learning needs). (See the Sea to Sky District's example of nearly eliminating Work Place Math enrollment for Indigenous learners).

## **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, PERSPECTIVES, AND DIVERSITY**

This section provides an overview of the instructional materials used in SD42's schools. The stakeholders who provided input for this section include: Administrators world café focus group, non-Indigenous support staff world café focus group, non-Indigenous teachers world café focus group, Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal support workers world café focus group, Aboriginal Education team interviews, caregivers interviews and mixed Indigenous students and non-Indigenous world café focus group.

The following research questions were asked to the participants in this section:

1. Do the instructional materials used in your school, such as textbooks, supplementary books, and media describe the perspectives of diverse Indigenous Peoples and racialized ethnic groups?
2. How are these instructional materials being used by teachers and support staff?

The findings have been organized according to each stakeholder including the strengths and challenges each group reported. This question in particular garnered more challenges than strengths for most stakeholder groups.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, please see the British Columbia (2021) Aboriginal Report 2015/16 - 2019/20 How Are We Doing? The "Gifted" performance reporting group for Aboriginal students is 3% compared to 11% for Non-Aboriginal Students while the Behaviour Disabilities Reporting Group is 34% for Aboriginal students compared to 26% for Non-Aboriginal students. For further details please visit the report at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/reports/ab-hawd/ab-hawd-school-district-042.pdf>

## Administration

### Strengths

There are five main strengths shared by the Administrators world café focus group:

1. District librarians as well as school librarians are culling and purchasing books that show diversity.
2. Different departments (especially English) are going through a re-examination process of content and literature to ensure diverse perspectives of racialized groups and relevancy.
3. Aboriginal education teachers and Aboriginal support workers are resourceful in finding material.
4. District helping teachers are helpful in doing lessons and modelling how to utilize resources.
5. Diverse learning opportunities and resources are available (drumming hives, weaving, reading stories, telling stories, video read-aloud, and lit kits developed by Aboriginal education department).

“Conscious choice to purchase books and materials that show Indigenous perspectives that reflect changes in the curriculum.”

“Great library and resources at Ab Ed. dept. for loan.”

“ELL teachers are working with librarians to increase diversity in books in libraries and schools.”

### Challenges

Administrators in the world café focus group shared five main challenges:

1. Existing textbooks are outdated and new textbooks are expensive and can become outdated quickly.
2. Inconsistencies in instructional materials and application of the new BC curriculum among teachers.
3. Teaching beliefs and practices among teachers vary and some do not align with the new BC curriculum and Professional Standards for BC Educators.
4. More effort is needed on re-institutionalizing B.C. First Peoples 11 and 12 as well as ensuring English First Peoples courses are offered.
5. Adequate funding is needed to enhance learning resources, library collections, and textbooks.

“In one school, the instructional materials used in our school are outdated. Teachers continue to use old textbooks because it is easier to teach what you have always historically taught. Some of the teachers at my school will not engage with the new curriculum or new resources and are stuck in their ways. Again, the problem with this is that it is a very colonial way of teaching and understanding the world and our students are subjected to it on an everyday basis.”

“We need to purchase more materials and resources for our staff to engage in this work. We are always constrained by the lack of funding in education, but the focus needs to be on purchasing learning resources that come with diverse perspectives.”

“Many teachers feel the need to be anchored by a textbook and learning guide, and so if they have to go and research the work themselves, it becomes too tiresome as they feel like there is not enough time to do this work.”

Although one administrator reflected that finding authentic materials from Indigenous authors took time and effort, it is evident that support is available as indicated in the strengths above. This concern speaks to the inconsistencies among beliefs and practices as well as in communication and sharing of resources in the district. At the same time, due to a lack of adequate funding to provide appropriate instructional materials, it is up to individual teachers to search for learning resources and it is dependent upon their comfort level and professional training in the application of resources. This is



compounded by teacher autonomy and a highly regulated union environment. This phenomenon makes it somewhat more of a challenge to ensure accountability across the district and to establish appropriate integration of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into learning environments. However, it is the research team's opinion that updating resources to reflect diverse Indigenous voices and perspectives and supporting educators to use them in the classroom is one of the easier Indigenization efforts that can be achieved.

## Non-Indigenous Support Staff

### *Challenges*

The non-Indigenous support staff echoed similar challenges as the administrators – a lack of consistencies in the adequacy, diversity, and application of resources in all classrooms as well as the openness to engage with Indigenous knowledges.

"In high school classes, it is based on the subject material. There is a lack of resources in all classrooms, and in general classrooms. Lack of resources in classroom regarding curriculum. There are kits available for teachers to teach but are rarely used. The material is not in our schools. Some schools are making an attempt to bring in authentic voices, but it will never be enough. Don't feel that it is happening in all places consistently or enough to make an impact."

"Supports offered vary from school to school due to staff knowledge and openness to teach."

"There needs to be more diversity for teaching and more access to materials and not just a unit they teach."

Another challenge raised by non-Indigenous support staff is that the school and classroom environment does not reflect Indigenous students' backgrounds and that there is not enough representation from their cultures for them to identify and feel safe. Their comments are echoed by Indigenous students and caregivers.

## Non-Indigenous Teachers World Café focus group

### *Strengths*

Similarly, the non-Indigenous teachers pointed out pockets of presence where educators are working with diverse Indigenous resources in their classrooms:

"It seems present in the classes that teach Indigenous History. In elementary schools there seem to be a lot of Indigenous stories."

"Outdoor learning groups at Whonnock are using Indigenous animals as their group names and they are discussing about them. It is more of the hands-on experiences that are being brought to class and not the instructional materials."

"Happening in cross-curricular pieces, in novel studies in some areas-- authentic voices."

"Support from administration and collaboration to send appropriate messages -universal lessons."

"In the Wings Program, we have purchased diverse books and materials. Give exposures to all students. The books that are being shown don't always relate to what they see. Indigenous are not always in their regalia like seen in the books."

## Challenges

The non-Indigenous teachers also provided critical feedback on too many district resources that focus on: on pre-contact, the past, or only one Indigenous group and not from different perspectives, which reflects a colonial framework. They also pointed out that elementary textbooks are not being used to their full extent, but high school textbooks (such as Social Studies 9) are outdated and must be replaced. The non-Indigenous teachers also felt uncomfortable with sharing materials and stories with some of teachers relying on Katzie Nation students to be the classroom experts. Even though the students who assisted teachers in their teaching might appear comfortable in their role as experts, it is important to be mindful that Indigenous students often find themselves locked into a role of having to respond to everything and anything related to Indigenous peoples. Without knowing what the knowledge levels of the students in the classroom, teachers are putting pressure on Indigenous students to be tokenized as the “Native informant” (Cote-Meek, 2014, p. 107). All students<sup>6</sup> should be invited to share their knowledge, and cultural understandings without only pinpointing the Indigenous student to talk about Indigenous topics.

The non-Indigenous teachers shared similar concerns as the administrators. For example, English First Peoples courses were often not offered in many district schools because of low numbers. However, if schools were to look to fill these classes through an equity lens and not a number’s lens, then students who signed up for these classes must be supported. Like the administrators, a lack of adequate funding is also identified by the non-Indigenous teachers. There are materials reflecting diverse perspectives or learning resources that are culturally appropriate, but they are often brought in by teachers and the Aboriginal support workers themselves. Aboriginal support workers’ knowledge, guidance and support were recognized and honoured from all participants in this report. However, most stakeholders also recognized that they were not being compensated as fairly in comparison to what they were offering in terms of their expertise.

The non-Indigenous teachers also reflected on how many teachers are in the space of wanting to diversify their practice in terms of Indigeneity but are not moving forward with actions. Thus, decolonizing instructional materials is dependent on individual teachers. It has been widely critiqued that the implementation of the new BC curriculum as it relates to Indigenous worldviews, perspectives and the First Peoples Principles of Learning, did not offer resources or required textbooks with the curriculum change, which required teachers and districts (largely under the purview of the Aboriginal education department) to compensate for this system wide gap. At the same time, a high school librarian in the world café focus group indicated that her/his school library has a great collection of Indigenous resources to offer, yet few teachers are using them:

“I think I have a pretty good collection of resources. I’ve worked really hard to increase the number of books I have that represent Indigenous voices, and all voices. But I’ve worked really, really hard and I feel like I’m talking to the void. And I – I like, do songs and dances about them, and I get really excited...but it’s really hard to find teachers to take me up on all my offers.”

“The ways that we learn are in line with the First Peoples’ Principles of learning, but the provided materials are only decolonized when they have been adapted and modified by the teacher.”

“Many teachers are in the space of wanting to diversify, but many are not and that is harmful.”

“Teachers are buying their own Indigenous resources because they are not readily available in volume.”

Non-Indigenous teachers are aware of the resources at the Aboriginal Education Library and that different school libraries offer different resources, but without immediate and direct access to them they felt this was a key challenge:

“It’s amazing to have those resources in the district, but to look at them means travelling, etc....”

“Would like to see these resources in school libraries with an interlibrary loan system to requests something from another school.”

<sup>6</sup>In reviewing this section, an Indigenous Knowledge Holder felt it was important to point out that there are differing experiences for Indigenous learners in the district. For example, a Métis student in the same classroom may feel invisible and wonder why their culture is minimized unless an educator makes efforts to be inclusive and invite all students in the class to share their cultures in class assignments and activities. As noted in Strand Four, a common systemic pattern for students who do not appear to look visibly Indigenous is to be overlooked for their Indigeneity while also witnessing significant racial aggressions against students who appear to look Indigenous according to the settler gaze.

“Would be nice to have the kits in each school, which is challenging because they are expensive.”

While there are challenges to be overcome, there are many strengths that can be supported further. The use of Indigenous storywork or stories with traditional Indigenous content (trickster stories, instructional/lessons, walking in good relations with all beings, practices/teachings, etc.) were identified as a strength. The libraries have built up Indigenous resources over time and the Literacy Helping Teachers have provided with a diverse selection of authentic historical stories and resources.

“It makes a huge difference when you have people on staff who are passionate and knowledgeable and want to connect with other teachers and teach and learn together.”

“We work with Connex and we have an Ab Support worker who provides a gamut of materials.”

“We have tried to purchase a number of textbooks and novels that are supported by our Ab Ed.”

“Teachers are starting to bring in Indigenous voices and perspectives into their classrooms.”

“Things are changing to be not so white.”

## Indigenous Teachers World Café focus group

The Indigenous teachers world café focus group felt it was important to have safer spaces for courageous conversations with their non-Indigenous colleagues to help build knowledge and capacity to engage Indigenous knowledge, resources and practices. They also hoped to provide further training through the Aboriginal education department on Indigenous knowledge and perspectives as well as beginning to integrate anti-racism pedagogy.

“I know we have to start somewhere – but it's about a way you see the world. It's not from a book or from an activity, it's from how you see the world and how you yourself encompass that experience, and your lived experience in this space. So, yeah, those are the conversations that we need to have, right? And we need to have these spaces where we have spaces for safe and brave conversations about you know. It's how you're seeing the world, it's not about you know, the kind of – the kinds of – texts, or whatever you're doing.”

They also share the same feedback as the other stakeholders that more resources are needed, as well as accessibility to existing resources in every school. They also suggested that having access to Indigenous Knowledge Holders benefits all stakeholders in the district.

“We have a great resource library but those resources should really be in every school not just in one central space.”

“We talked a little bit about the resources as well that it's not always accessible to be -- for classroom teachers or ourselves to be connecting with those resources, trying to find a way to get to Westview within our very busy schedules.”

## Aboriginal support workers World Café focus group

### Challenges

Aboriginal support workers pointed out the same challenges as the other stakeholders that the materials are outdated and the course content (especially for BC First Nations Studies) is being used inappropriately. They observe that teachers do not have funds to update curriculum and students do not connect, because they do not see themselves reflected in the curriculum and represented in the school environment.

“They do not represent Indigenous Peoples at all! The materials are out of date. The course content is embarrassing.”

“Teachers don’t have access, not funds to update curriculum, not diverse enough.”

“(Course content) presented by non-Indigenous people hard for kids to connect not seeing themselves. Sometimes not authentic teachings.”

They also indicate that better communication is needed with the teachers, because the resources teachers use in their classrooms come from different places and might not be authentic nor appropriate. As a result, they are not always being called upon in a collaborative way. They also would like to be included in school activities as they often found themselves being excluded. They also speak to better utilization of SharePoint among school staff and teachers to access and share resources and more land-based teaching was also needed.

“Teachers are directed to incorporate Indigenous content into curriculum but they are not provided a universal guide to access. It appears to be a very basic outline.”

“We are wondering how to learn how to be included in the school activities. Often we don't know what is happening and we would like to improve communication around this.”

“Regular textbooks are colonized and come from white people perspectives and presented by a non-Indigenous person, and not offered by Indigenous perspectives. Some Indigenous books are not by Indigenous authors.”

“SharePoint that is accessible to all for teachings people need knowledge as to what cultural appropriation is, and how to avoid it and how to gain confidence doing the work ... some staff may be uncomfortable as they don't have the knowledge.”

## Aboriginal Education Team Interviews

### *Strengths*

The Aboriginal Education team is confident with the resources available in the Aboriginal resource library (The Spark Depository for Aboriginal Education Resources) and on the Aboriginal Education website. The AED team puts together book bins, brings them into classrooms with key lessons attached to the bin and leaves them for teachers to utilize, make relevant connections, and create meaningful activities for their students. However, follow-up sessions with the teachers might provide rich feedback on how these bins are being used, what activities have come out of these bins and how students respond to these lessons.

“Yes, in terms of Indigenous voices represented within the classrooms from Ab Ed team. However, teachers are still struggling with Indigenous diversity and representation. Ab. Ed. has a resource library and puts together book bins that Ab Ed teachers bring into classroom with key lessons attached to the bin. They leave the bin with hopes that the teacher will continue creating meaningful lessons/ activities after they leave”

“So our goal is that it's not the Ab. Ed. Department who is ensuring that this is in classrooms. But we are directing people and making available by creating or connecting them with resources that we pulled from other districts. So, it's readily available. Teachers are accessing both our website and Spark [depository] and of course we do go into the classrooms and we also teach.”

The AED team is working on further outreach and coordination with all Indigenous Knowledge Holders (especially Métis Knowledge Holders) to deepen relationships. The AED team acknowledged that Indigenous Knowledge Holders from Katzie, Kwantlen and Golden Ears Métis Society bring sustained commitments and immense opportunities to engage Indigenous knowledge, teachings, and practices in schools.

## Challenges

Like the other stakeholders, Aboriginal Education team also specified the need of updating textbooks to ensure that they are including diverse Indigenous and racialized perspectives in a meaningful way. Problematic texts that contain racism, that are outdated and not relevant to students should be taken out of the curriculum.

The AED team indicated that having a high number of Aboriginal Education resources and books available at each school is a lengthy process. This point speaks to the challenges that the other stakeholders have established on the need for accessible resources at all schools.

## Student Recommended Resources

Secondary students from the mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous secondary world café focus group provided pertinent insight on the critical importance of providing Indigenous education, anti-racist and decolonizing perspectives and practices in the curriculum and school-based activities for all students in their answer to the following question:

☛ Can you recommend any resources that you would like your classmates and teachers to engage with during school that are related to Indigenous cultures, languages, settler colonialism, racism, privilege and allyship? [Examples could be specific books, music, podcasts, movies, local tours, Indigenous cultural activities, protests to support climate change and Indigenous Rights Speakers, games, activist activities etc.]

We noted that the students in this focus group are keenly interested in multi-modal and contemporary pop culture resources to enhance their learning and engagement on inter-related topics that include: Indigenous education, pedagogy, protocols, decolonization, settler colonialism, activism, sexism, gender, patriarchy, and racism. They also signaled the importance for many of their teachers to do more than utilizing Indigenous resources in their practices. They felt it was important for their teachers to engage their positionalities and privilege so that colonial violence, racism, sexism, patriarchy and IBPOC concerns are embedded into the curriculum and not as add on activities provided by the Aboriginal education department, IBPOC teacher leaders or guest presenters. The research team observed that this focus group was a consciousness raising for many of the students, who educated each other on the problematic colonizing and intuitionally racist practices that continue to permeate their schools and classrooms. Please see their feast of ideas below from their padlet responses:

1. "It would be nice to showcase our learning on Orange Shirt Day or another day like Aboriginal Day but the only problem with Aboriginal day it seems to land on a grad day."
2. "We need to continue embedded activities like our school did an aboriginal wreath for Remembrance Day and presented it at our assembly and that was good."
3. "We need to keep doing that and encouraging more of that - having students be involved. And if there is Indigenous holidays is there a way we can incorporate that kind of like how we incorporate Christmas."
4. "It would also be amazing to have an Elder come and visit - do classroom talks if possible. Or an aboriginal speaker. We had Joseph Danderand come and speak - he was great. More of that!"
5. "We could use more Indigenous books in our libraries and classrooms. And books for primaries to read at their level. And Fiction and non-fiction books. Graphic Novel: If I Go Missing, Betty Books: Dear Martin, White Fragility, Breadwinner, Ain't I A Woman, Fatty Legs Movie: Moxie (Netflix) TV: This Is US Songs: Please No Intruders - Jesse Riez (the music video that accompanies it too)."
6. "Indigenous speakers that have spoken at climate and Indigenous solidarity protests have been really impactful."
7. "Topics to learn more about; Regalia and Spiritual learning, Importance of gifting, Importance of respect 7 sacred teachings."
8. "Storytelling is so powerful - so great if we could get more aboriginal speakers to tell their stories and share."
9. "Yes for aboriginal movies and songs too. i.e.. learning a drumming circle / song. One idea is to be able to protest respectfully regarding our opinions."



10. "It's also important to learn about the importance of what we are making ie. weaving - we want to make sure we are being respectful (i.e.. we never waste the leftovers - they are important to keep)."
11. "Would like to have presenters come to our school. This would be better than going to a museum and reading signs. A presenter lets us ask questions."
12. "Parents should be talking to their children about racism."
13. "Movies- entertaining, educational and current; especially based on true stories. The Hate You Give (books/movie). re: IBPOC racism Crooked Arrow (movie) Reason we want these resources is so that everyone can see different perspectives from people ex. those on the receiving end of the sexist, racist or prejudiced comments."
14. "Class discussions to encourage critical thinking around these sensitive issues. Activities - people love to do activities music and art - students would be more interested in this local tours with guests, board games, guest speakers."
15. "I think more information like documentaries, Indigenous speakers, following Indigenous influencers, educators. Watch movies that are education based that teach you more about the culture. A different approach."
16. "More dance - Powwow and jigging. activities because sometimes just sitting in the class learning isn't as applicable - so having a combination of learning in and out of the classroom - cultural - learning // academic learning from an Indigenous perspective e.g. Elders Huge question."
17. "Needs: Teachers that don't know about Indigenous culture and history should not teach it. They need to learn. IT NOT ABOUT RESOURCES - THEY NEED TO LEARN AND BE EDUCATED ON HOW NOT TO BE RACIST AND TO TEACH THIS. Especially when they use the incorrect names. They need to teach about colonialism, colonization, economics. It seems that the teachers forget who's land we are on and are okay to remain ignorant. Why do we celebrate colonialism (Canada Day) What wait -- Why am I just hearing this at 17 years old. Right now students are teaching other students -- because it seems we know more or are willing to talk about it more often than teachers. Even as Indigenous people we haven't learned about this and we need to know about it."
18. "Things to learn: race/gender are social constructs proper terminology Follow Indigenous Tiktok, or creators on social media, - TikTok has some great Indigenous accounts we should post more anti-racist stuff on our school's Instagram account more education in general."

### *Instructional Materials and Indigenous Peoples, Perspectives and Diversity Recommendations*

- Invite Aboriginal Student Leadership Committee to support Indigenous resource and curriculum recommendations including the removal of inaccurate, racist and outdated learning materials.
- Invite suggestions for a district reporting system to report inaccurate, racist and or outdated learning materials being used in the classroom.
- The district should ensure that a financial commitment is made in its operating budget (not the Aboriginal education department budget) to update Indigenous textbooks and learning resources in all schools.
- All school growth plans in the Indigenous education priority area should have a measurable commitment to removing outdated learning materials from their libraries (e.g., the non-fiction section will be reviewed by January, 2022; school teaching staff will engage in a critical Indigenous resource assessment workshop and follow-up session by March, 2022).
- The school district Strategic Plan and school growth plans should also indicate how Indigenous caregivers, students, and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee were consulted on priority areas for the acquisition of new Indigenous learning materials.
- The district should create a partnership with the University of British Columbia's Master of Library and Information Studies Program and the Xwi7xwa library to host an Indigenous graduate practicum student from the First Nations Curriculum Concentration in order to support district the Indigenization and decolonization needs for the district library.



# STRAND 03

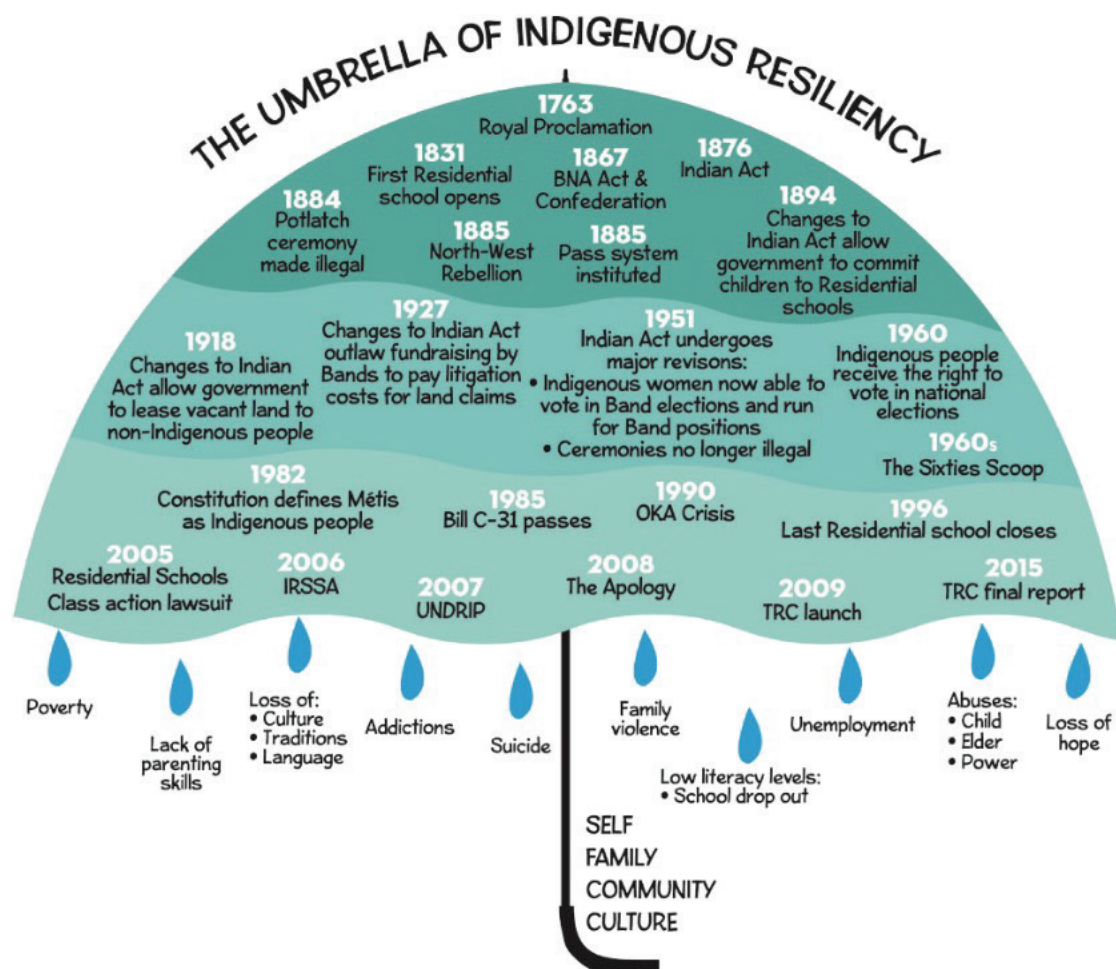
## ENGAGING COLONIALISM

It is only in recent years that Canada and our education system has begun to acknowledge the truth about the colonial atrocities endured by Indigenous Peoples (in large part due to the important work brought forward by residential school survivors in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report). However, the knowledge that students receive in our classrooms and schools about colonialism continues to be uneven across the country. This pattern is also reflected in SD 42, where students shared common experiences of hearing erroneous and glorified settler narratives of an idealized Canada based on Eurocentric knowledges, stories and histories that silence and perpetuate colonialism, systemic racism and oppression. However, schools can also be spaces for educators and district leaders to decolonize their pedagogical practices to support all learners. SD 42 also has the potential to be a place where Indigenous students and communities are supported to maintain, reclaim and revitalize Indigenous knowledges, languages, land-based practices, and cultures for the wellbeing future generations and Mother Earth to support our collective survival.

As Cote-Meek (2004) shares, "If the classroom is one site for making history come alive, it is important to consider who the [learners] are in that classroom and how they receive the content they are learning in their classes" along with the hidden curriculum that continues to operate throughout their school environment (p. 17). It is also critical to understand how the curriculum positions learners and the educators who are delivering historical and contemporary content that ultimately shapes the power dynamics in the classroom. For example, if the curriculum is being taught from a 'neutral' perspective by a non-Indigenous educator while being framed through a multicultural framework, this means that the assimilation and colonization of Indigenous learners continues by undermining Indigenous sovereignty, rights and anti-Indigenous racism (St. Denis, 2011). This also means that students receive biased and fragmented pieces of their culture (not Indigenous knowledge systems) through the inclusion of Indigenous foods and art that are integrated into a celebratory form of multiculturalism. In the previous section this was referred to as the "add on approach" (Battiste, 2014). Cognitive and emotional dissonance between an Indigenous student's home and school realities are common factors that result from this approach. For example, an Indigenous student may enjoy eating bannock and reading a story from Monique Gray Smith, who wouldn't? However, there will still be disconnect, if they continue to learn about Canada and the glorified settler narratives of White European males who discovered Indigenous lands between their lived realities and experiences in the classroom. Indigenous learners are often trying to reconcile the various manifestations of colonialism and racism that they are experiencing alongside the deleterious government policies that have impacted their identit(ies), and the intergenerational effects of residential schools on their families. Without colonialism being taught in schools, Indigenous learners are likely to experience a range of emotions including but not limited to: confusion, shame, and anger which can also lead to internalized racism. Many Indigenous learners also wonder how the contemporary struggles for the recognition of Indigenous rights and sovereignty configure into the multicultural narrative of Canada that they are learning about in school. For non-Indigenous students, colonial omissions in pedagogical practices supports continued notions of dominance and superiority that supports White supremacy and the devaluing of Indigenous Peoples, cultures and knowledge systems.



An Indigenous Knowledge Holder recommended that the Umbrella of Indigenous Resiliency was to be added to this report. The Umbrella of Indigenous Resiliency is found in a Teachers' Resource Guide, *Speaking Our Truth – A Journey of Reconciliation* written by Tasha Henry.



“Colonization is conceptualized as having four dimensions- it concerns the land, it requires a specific structure of ideology to proceed, it is violent, and it is on-going” (Cote-Meek, 2014, p. 18).

Colonialism and racism: “The colonist resorts to racism. It is significant that racism is part of colonialism throughout the world; and it is no coincidence. Racism sums up and symbolizes the fundamental relations which unites colonialist and colonized (Memmi, 1965, p. 70).

The pedagogical practices pursued by an educator can have oppressive or uplifting effects on students, with the latter being reinforced when colonialism is not taught or only spoken about as a historical remnant of the past. As the previous section of this living document has illustrated, colonialism also continues when significant acts of racism are not addressed by district personnel and students are not equipped with the knowledge and skills to name institutional and personal experiences of Indigenous racism. The challenge continues for educators, staff and district leaders to be

able to reflect critically on our current educational system in terms of whose knowledge is offered, who decides what is offered, what outcomes are rewarded, who benefits, and, more importantly, how educational outcomes are achieved in an ethically appropriate process that reflects equity priorities for Indigenous learners in the district (Battiste, 2014). As a result, it is important to question, how the learning spirits of all students can be nourished within our education system? How can we support the development of whole (heart, mind, body and spirit) human beings while supporting students to develop critical understandings of colonialism, racism and oppression through decolonizing educational and leadership practices? Answering these questions will deepen the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' calls to action (2015) and curricular reform for Indigenous education in SD 42.



**Decolonized Curriculum:** A decolonized curriculum framework centers Indigenous knowledges and ways of being, teaching and learning approaches, experiences and worldviews. Grounded in local history as told, recognized and confirmed by Katzie, Kwantlen, and Métis Nations, the curriculum framework should decenter and question colonial voices, norms, practices and power.

The research team focused on the following questions for this section of the living report:

#### How are students taught about colonialism? What else is needed?

The findings from this question have been organized according to the following stakeholders: Administrator world café focus group; Aboriginal education team department interviews, Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal support workers world café focus group; non-Indigenous teachers world café focus group; and Indigenous and non-Indigenous Students world café focus group students.



**Colonization:** is commonly understood as an act of setting up colonies on foreign lands. For example, the former British Empire's creation of colonies in the Americas and Asia has given a sense that colonization has ended (i.e., all former colonies have been liberated). In Canada, the colonizers never left, therefore it is on-going. Colonization is far more complex than the quest for land and resources. As Cote-Meek (2014) explain, colonization has four dimensions: "it concerns the land, it requires a specific structure of ideology to proceed, it is violent, and it is ongoing" (p. 18).



**Colonial Violence:** can be defined as "a consequence to colonization, forced assimilation and genocide; the learned negative, culminative multigenerational actions, values, beliefs, attitudes and behavioural practices by one or more people that weaken or destroy harmony and wellbeing of an Aboriginal individual, family, extended family, community or nationhood (Maracle and Craig, 1993, p. 10).

### Aboriginal education department (AED) Team

The responses from the Aboriginal education department team interviews (AED) were similar to the findings from the mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous students world café focus group. The AED team noted that there are opportunities to teach about colonialism, but the content and activities vary from class to class and are at the discretion of individual teachers. There is a clear knowledge gap in connecting the effects of colonialism to all aspects of Indigenous peoples' way of life, governance, food security, sovereignty, health, well-being, and self-determination in the present day.



"I think that right now colonialism is taught to the discretion of the teacher. In terms of the lens there are some that are looking at the ongoing impact and the damage that was caused. Many I think rely on the textbooks and so it'll be the fur trade and the expansion and settlement which is still present in a lot of the social studies classrooms. Beyond that I don't know if it's taught at all. There's no mandatory conversations that are taking place. I don't think there are even any training for teachers which I think really needs to be something that we bring in. Because we did the bead timeline at one of the schools and I was talking about the impact of colonization on agriculture and community and governance and all these different teachers are like, see the connections to the work that I'm doing now, but they hadn't seen it before. Because I think so often when they think colonialism they think, okay, Social Studies 10 when were talking about the development of Canada. And so really going into deeper Pro-D so that people can see it across the subjects and within the school system itself and the way that the classroom is structured. I don't know. So much learning to take place, but no, I don't think it's taught."

Echoing the responses shared by the administrator and non-Indigenous teachers world café focus groups, the AED team interviews also detailed the significant hesitation, fear, resistance and biases from administrators and teachers that prevent them from deepening their understanding and engagement of colonialism and racism. The emotional labour of working with district staff and educators who often react to conversations and professional development opportunity invitations from the AED team was palpable. The AED team recognized that all educators are required to continue "digging deeper" in their pedagogical and personal understandings of colonialism. The Aboriginal education department team also noted that it would like to focus the upcoming school year by creating opportunities for professional development for teachers to focus on implicit bias and reflective self-inquiry to support their understandings and implications of colonialism.

"It could be so much better. And our focus as teachers this year coming up, our Pro D focus that we'll be working towards, is that kind of inquiry process and discovery process of your own biases -- your own places of learning, I guess. So that's where we're starting, because we know we have a lot of work to do. It has been the biggest stumbling block in the last two years, is people or teachers are very busy, and they mean well in everything that they do, but sometimes, do not recognize that their own biases and beliefs are transmitted through what they're doing in the classroom. And we from the questions they ask, to the literature they chose, to even how they just how they talk to children and if we don't unpack that, we can't move forward. (Aboriginal Education Team Member)"

"Well, first of all, they need to be taught about colonialism, because in the majority of schools, they're not taught (laughs). The kids are like, what is colonialism as an example. Like we have our Leadership kids, and we talk about colonialism, but we've never really talked to them about decolonization, and so, Len Pierre posed this question, what do you need for decolonization? And they were like, what does that mean? (Laughs) so like, a whole conversation. There isn't conversation about colonialism, it's a predominantly white District folks, they're scared of the R [racism] word. They're scared to give up their power. I don't know how many times I hear "oh, well, to play devil's advocate", or "no, I don't think it really is that way and I'm like, yeah, yeah, it is (laughs) yeah. So, I don't think it needs to be taught more. (Aboriginal Education Team Member)."

The AED team members, Aboriginal support workers and Aboriginal teachers tried to unpack the resistance and hesitation from administrators and teachers by considering the feelings of guilt and shame as reasons that are preventing them from engaging with colonialism and racism in their practices. They also recommended that finding allies within the school might help educators and administrators to begin overcoming personal biases and commit to decolonizing practices. They felt it was important for all school leaders to set examples by sharing their own courageous practices and efforts to begin decolonizing. They felt that these courageous leadership stories have the potential to inspire school district staff, particularly when leaders share their authentic relational connections to Indigenous communities and peoples in their school communities. They noted the most powerful stories occurred when educational leaders admitted the mistakes that they made (as way to model the messiness and complexity of engaging in decolonizing practices) and their openness to growth and learning from Indigenous Peoples.

"So using collab time, starting book clubs in the schools. Within our department we do a lot of district level things but I think really those conversations that take place with person in the classroom next to you that really make a difference. And when you know you have an ally within the school who is making these changes and having these conversations and engaging in this learning, it makes it a little easier to have those difficult introspective pieces that are attached to decolonizing practice where you really have to explore your own role within it which I think is the scary part for many" (Aboriginal Education Team Member).

“I think to find a way for staff to really start to understand and remove themselves from the personal connection to the guilt that they have and their shame so that we can really start to have conversations in meaningful ways with kids, right?” (Aboriginal Education Team Member).

“If we're really focused if our bigger idea within our curriculum are about developing critical mindedness, why are we avoiding it?” (Aboriginal Education Team Member).

The Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal support workers world café focus group discussed the urgency of dedicating more time to create professional development for the district, as well as in schools with workshops and lessons, so teachers and staff can be mentored to support decolonizing practices. They also reiterated the importance of implementing anti-racism pedagogy in all schools.

## Aboriginal Education Department Activities on Colonialism

When the Aboriginal education department team was asked how students are taught about colonialism, the following examples are provided:

- “Orange shirt days”
- “Arts based Residential school activity”
- “Teacher Pro-D with Leyton’s team”
- “Professional Development Workshops with Indigenous leaders (Monique Gray Smith, Brad Baker etc)”
- “From an ART [Aboriginal Resource Team] perspective: using indigenous books, beaded timeline, blanket exercise, the acknowledgement, giving tree, plant walks.”
- “Decolonized perspective incorporating First Peoples Principles of Learning.”
- “It is a way of being-- including IWV [Indigenous World View]”
- “Leaving behind lessons to foster capacity in teachers.”



“White supremacy is a system you have been born into. Whether or not you have known it, it is a system that has granted you unearned privileges, protection, and power. It is also a system that has been designed to keep you asleep and unaware of what having that privilege, protection, and power has meant for people who do not look like you. What you received for your whiteness comes at a steep cost for those who are not white. This may sicken you and cause you to feel guilt, anger, and frustration. But you cannot change your white skin color to stop receiving these privileges, just like BIPOC cannot change their skin color to stop receiving racism. But what you can do is wake up to what is really going on. I invite you to challenge your complicity in this system and work to dismantle it within yourself and the world” (Saad, 2020, p. 14).



Ask yourself, “Have I avoided teaching about colonialism and decolonization? Why am I avoiding it? What feelings are underneath this avoidance? What resources are available to support me? How do I deflect responsibility? How do I lean into discomfort to embrace my responsibilities?”

## Administrator Focus Group

When asked how students are taught about colonialism, administrator's responses detailed their fear and hesitation which was related to the need for further professional development in this area. At times, professional apathy was also observed in the administrator's padlet responses and conversations that the research team witnessed. A common pattern emerged in the administrator word café focus group related to erroneous assumptions about administrator "neutrality" and a disassociation from the lack of implementation of the Indigenous worldviews, pedagogies and practices by educators in their schools. Professional indifference was also observed from the problematic learning materials that continued to be taught to students in SD 42 schools that uphold Eurocentric views of Indigenous Peoples (including deficit narratives, inaccurate portrayals, appropriation, and omission of information on Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous knowledge systems and communities).

The Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in British Columbia (Leadership Standards) states, "Principals and Vice-Principals have been tasked with being the advocate and champion of Indigenous Education in buildings, curriculum planning, teaching practices and learning environment" (2019: p. 9). The Leadership Standards has embedded the First Peoples Principles of Learning to support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action (2015), while also illustrating the seminal importance of Indigeneity in leadership, curriculum, community engagement, instruction, and assessment development. The responses from the administrator word café focus group are highlighted below:

"Generally, the old way. Christopher Columbus came to North America and civilization started with European imperialism. There is a tokenistic and romanticized practice of studying a pre-colonial Indigenous cultural group, but beyond this, not much is done to talk about the horrors of enslavement and genocide that took place. History starts with the Canadian story about the British and French Settlers with nothing about the enslavement of peoples. Some teachers will engage with the topic of residential schools and how it decimated Indigenous populations, but would never talk about how thriving those communities were before colonization." (Administrator Word Café Focus Group)



Can you find which professional standard this is for BC educators? "Educators critically examine their own biases, attitudes, beliefs, values and practices to facilitate change. Educators value and respect the languages, heritages, cultures and ways of knowing and being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Educators understand the power of focusing on connectedness and relationship to oneself, family, community and the natural world. Educators integrate First Nations, Inuit and Métis worldview and perspectives into learning environments." (p.9)

"Our history books share continued stories about white supremacy and western dominance and only now will some teachers share/input other perspectives. Nonetheless, the white colonial narrative continues to perpetuate white supremacy in our classes. Teachers continue to hide behind the fear of getting it wrong, and so in their silence they continue to harm Indigenous students with images of either the noble Indian or the savage who need colonizing" (Administrator Word Café Focus Group).

"There is nothing that I have seen in my school that focuses on using Indigenous Ways of Knowing in a science or math class" (Administrator Word Café Focus Group).

"We do have an Indigenous 8 rotation that looks at the history and also cultural beauty of Indigenous peoples, but it is heavily supported by our Indigenous department. Outside of this class, there is not much happening in our school to talk about colonialism" (Administrator Word Café Focus Group).



Standard 1: Leading a community of caring and learning in The Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in British Columbia considers the First Peoples Principles of Learning, specifically the principle on “Learning is embedded in memory, history and story” and asks the following reflective questions: (1) What are the key values, vision and goals of your learning community? (2) How does the school environment reflect the values of your diverse and local Indigenous community members? (3) How do you foster a shared vision with your community and partner groups?”

As leaders in your schools, what concrete steps can you take to ensure: “Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in Canada and through the impact of the past on the present and the future. Educators contribute towards truth, reconciliation and healing. Educators foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories, and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis” as listed under Standard 9 of Professional Standards for BC Educators?

## Non-Indigenous Teachers World Café Focus Group

### *Strengths*

Many non-Indigenous teachers focused connecting themselves to the land and trying to identify the ways colonialism manifests in the school system or from personal experiences in their padlet responses:

- “Try to start with place and sharing our stories of where we come from.”
- “We are learning in this space and we need to acknowledge our place.”
- “Recognition of the colonial values embedded in our school system and to help students how to determine what colonialism is.”
- “Sometimes share own experiences of families arrival in Canada as a settler on Indigenous land.”
- “Perspectives from educators with a different lens – black history – personal experiences – what it means to identify what our systems in terms of a colonized system.”
- “Conversations around personal interests as opportunity comes up where do they come up where do personal identity comes up.”
- “Still learning the ways that our lenses and ways in which systems (are) colonized.”
- “Moving sciences to place instead of Eurocentric views.”
- “French/Spanish- We can't talk about these languages without talking about colonization.”
- “Group conversations with ASW and CCWs.”

The following lessons and activities were found by non-Indigenous teachers to be helpful to connect students and parents on the impacts of colonialism:

- “Kindergarten = Orange Shirt Day: the conversation is started about culture being taken away from the residential students in Canada; write up sent home to parents so the conversation can be had at home; other than this in K no more colonialism discussion.”
- “One of the things that was a great resource was the Indigenous Map of Canada. I don't know that every class accessed it (we had it a year ago in November during parent conferences). The size of it, the amount of languages really brought it home for people.”
- “The Blanket Activity.”
- “Some teachers are explicitly teaching colonialism, especially those who are not using the texts.”
- “Culture jamming unit each year where discussion of colonialism in media and education and what that looks like ex. how colonialism has impacted what is taught in PE; reflecting on literature that is written by white authors and it is not their story (authenticity).”

Under colonialism Indigenous peoples have struggled against how our ‘histories’ are being told by the dominant culture. While the atrocities of enslavement, colonialism, and genocide of Indigenous peoples as part of Canadian history are important learning to have, it is imperative to seek out and include Indigenous Peoples histories from diverse Indigenous perspectives including prior to contact. Contact with Europeans should not be the starting point of time. Indigenous oral histories express that our living presence on our lands and waterways go beyond time (prior to 10,000 years or more). In addition, detailing that Indigenous Peoples having “lost our cultures, languages or knowledges” denies the explicit genocidal efforts that were systematically used to attempt to extinguish us by the Canadian government, our education system and religious institutions.

- “That is always part of the frame. I made one of the beaded timelines, and show where the smallpox and settlers start. Ten thousand years, and they say, “this is very long” and I say “they were living rich lives and here’s what happens when people come.” It’s very impactful, and there are lots of questions and opinions.”
- “Impacts of colonialism on perspectives (what was lost, what impacts when culture/teachings/language/story is lost).”
- “Early explorers section of curriculum: discusses impact on local First Peoples (diseases/residential schools/stripping cultures) but does not focus on life pre-contact
- “What was lost? How was it lost? What is the impact of that loss?”

At the same time, many educators indicated a lack of understanding on what colonialism is and how to teach about it in their padlet responses below:

- “Representing self in a number of ways (and different perspectives from around the world).”
- “Get stuck in the bad story stage without acknowledging how to move forward in a meaningful way.”
- “Conversations about mental and physical safety and identity at the low-incidence level.”
- “Cultural resurgence and re-indigenization instead of decolonization.”
- “Teaching with complex exceptionalities and cultural lens of sharing.”
- “Conversations around music explicitly about cultural music, and how certain cultures are brought to us through negative histories and understanding of protocols around sharing of culture.”
- “Conversations around the ability to acknowledge history and advantages is different than promoting a guilt response.”
- “Conversations about experiences of different cultures and cultural appreciation.”



The last quote above is an example of a multicultural perspective that does not examine power or the on-going detrimental effects of colonialism. While it is important to appreciate all cultures, this quote is also an example of a “settler move to innocence.” According to Tuck & Yang (2012) “Settler moves to innocence are those strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all.” How can you avoid enacting settler moves to innocence in your practice?

Unpacking colonialism requires more than considerations for diversity and inclusion. It requires empathy, unlearning, concerted efforts (i.e. action) to change the various levels of colonialism at work in our classrooms and education system. The intent is not for educators to carry guilt or fear so they can't teach about colonialism, but rather for us to embrace challenging emotions while making concrete efforts to demonstrate our responsibility for change as powerful role models for students and colleagues.



## Challenges

When asked about how students are taught about colonialism, feelings of hesitation, discomfort and inadequacy that were expressed in the administrators world café focus group were also reflected by non-Indigenous teachers in their padlet responses:

- “How do we bring that knowledge into the classroom as a non-Indigenous educator?”
- “I believe that Colonialism is often taught in a historical point. There are struggles that it is historical. How we can teach it could be different, (but) it goes back to the resources that we have.”
- “I feel limited by the resources and not sure how to authentically bring in Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into math and science.”
- “In lower primary, this is not taught as much but would be willing to look at some resources and support in how to incorporate this idea.”
- “It is tough to access and to dig deep. Embedding the big questions in the big ideas.”
- “Colonialism is not in the socials textbooks.”
- “We need resources, guidance and assistance in making this happen.”
- “What is our responsibility to honour the spirits of the people before us, and help students reconnect to their culture and history?”

## Needs

The non-Indigenous teachers world café focus group also identified the following needs:

- “How does your privilege and position make you able to be change-makers?”
- “Time is needed for teachers to adapt these teachings and include colonialism.”
- “The message of colonialism has to come as a collective, not just a few passionate educators trying to piece it together.”
- “There is a need for teaching the history of colonialism but don't teach that Indigenous are the victim, teach about the survival and resiliency of culture.”
- “Why are we still celebrating “Christmas” at school - it's a Christian holiday, why not just Winter Break? We need to be careful about the holidays that we acknowledge and teach in schools.”
- “High school conversations about systemic racism, our system being based on Christian values, more awareness amongst kids about it.”
- “We do not want to cancel cultures. WE need to talk about it so that it is not repeated.”

“My learning of decolonizing the curriculum comes from a Black lens and now it is connecting outwards and I am expanding it. I am still learning how to identify all the ways our system is a colonized system” (Non-Indigenous Teacher World Café Focus Group).

“It's like, actually –how about we just re-make the system (laughs) to work best for Indigenous students – rather than making them fit into our system. And it blows my mind – it almost makes me want to quit teaching, sometimes, because it's so frustrating to try to fix a system that's so broken. Why don't we just re-start? Why is that so horrible?” (Non-Indigenous Teacher World Café Focus Group).



Let's start making personal connections to our complicity in colonialism. What is the history of this territory? What are the impacts of colonialism that are felt here? Who are the Métis Peoples and how is their displacement linked to colonialism in these territories? What is my/our relationship to this territory? How did I/we come to be here? How have I/we benefitted and been impacted by colonialism in this territories? What intentions do you I/we have to disrupt and dismantle colonialism in and beyond our classrooms?

## Students

This section includes findings from elementary and secondary student interviews as well as a mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous world café focus group comprised of secondary students.

## Strengths

Mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the world café focus group shared the following examples of learning about colonialism in their classrooms and schools in their padlet responses:

- “Change is happening, but it's slow.”
- “Learned about colonialism within other cultures: Cuba, South Africa.”
- “I know about residential schools and how they took their culture away. For example making them cut their hair, wear the same clothes and they were forced to learn English and they could not speak their own language.”
- “I learned about residential schools and how they took their culture and languages. They had to cut their hair and wear the same clothes.”
- “The Europeans came in and took their land and took their children and placed them in residential schools.”
- “Majority of students have been taught colonialism. Was not really taught about decolonization.”
- “We've learned about small pox blankets and how they were given to Indigenous people.” “Residential Schools children were forced to go to.”
- “How people were forced off their land into reserves with barely any dirt to farm.”
- “We learned about how we were kicked off the land and stuff.”

Indigenous secondary and elementary student interviews reflected similar sentiments to the students in the mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous world café focus group. Student interviews expressed that learning about colonialism tended to focus on the fur trade and residential schools if it was taught. One interviewee highlighted that they learned about colonialism from Indigenous Elders who visited their school. Another student highlighted that she/he had an opportunity to make bannock and be involved in a sign installation.

## Challenges

The responses from both mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous students world café focus groups and Indigenous student interviews echoed the findings from the administrators and the non-Indigenous teachers world café focus groups. All of these stakeholders shared that there is a lack of awareness and professional indifference to teach colonialism in the district. Students expressed that the education that they received on colonialism varied from teacher to teacher, was inconsistent, limited to certain classes, and was often one-sided (i.e. Eurocentric). The students identified several challenges that prevented them from learning about colonialism in school in their padlet responses:

- “More of the “white” version. They found Canada and made it their own. A one sided story.”
- “We only get bits and pieces at school - not the overall history of colonialism.”
- “Sometimes we talked about it in English and French with specific teachers, but not all teachers - we didn't dive into topic until high school.”
- “Terminology is new and people don't educate themselves about their own culture.”
- “Had minimal knowledge (grades 9-12).”
- “Do not know whose territory we enter when we leave Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows.”
- “Did not learn about this in class.”

- “Conversations happen at home but not in the classroom.”
- “Understood the concepts of immigration and bringing previous traditional practices from original ancestral homelands and experiences.”
- “Could focus more on the conversation around changes in the language of moving to using Settler and Colonialism.”
- “Do not talk about the impact on culture.”

Some students sensed a lack of authenticity from the teachers when learning about colonialism because it was presented as events that happened in the past with no connections to present day violence and injustice. Some students also felt that learning about colonialism on certain days of the year was an empty gesture and reflective of a check-list approach to Indigenous education:

- “We feel like we are learning it because the teachers know they have to teach it, but we don't feel it's authentic.”
- “Topic we covered in Socials - but it's just about the history and it's an isolated unit - doesn't resonate that the aftermath is still happening. So we learn about it, but it's just another unit / isolated from the repercussions today.”
- “Teachers make it seem like it was a really long time ago but we share a community with indigenous people and it's still relevant today.”
- “Embed culture in the curriculum, not just on Orange Shirt Day.”
- “We talk about it, but it's only during events like “Black History Month” or “Indigenous History Month”... should be doing this all year long when we try to talk to our friends they say “it's just a joke”. It's not just a joke...”
- “Sometimes people turn a blind eye when we hear racist comments about us... and we are told to not be so serious, it's just a joke... don't be a snowflake.”
- “It's based on not being educated about the impact of words.”

## **Needs**

Mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous students identified the following needs as key areas to support their education on colonialism:

- “Want to learn about cultural appropriation - Indigenous / Black and more... still kids who think it's a joke”
- “I would like to learn more detail about how the Europeans took their land away.”
- “What it was like for the settlers to settle somewhere and move somewhere and adapt to new environment, culture and language. Why they would settle to different places?”
- “Would like to learn more about storytelling.”
- “We need the Indigenous point of view as well, not just European/settler view incorporated into curriculum.”
- “Intergenerational trauma.”
- “Learn about treaties and how they are viewed today.”
- “Students want to take the Aboriginal Education course.”
- “Details about which towns they went into, what they stole, what they left.”
- “More history from the indigenous perspective.”
- “We would like to know more about the culture.”
- “We have only heard the painful side. It's not the only thing that we should learn.”
- “Learn more about their languages, traditions, and culture.”

The responses from mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are thoughtful, reflective, reflexive, and full of wisdom with suggestions for concrete action. An overarching theme is that students want their education to be reflective of Indigenous cultures, languages, knowledges and colonialism woven throughout every day as part of their K-12 learning journey and not just concentrated in the older grades or one subject area. Ultimately, students want to know the truth:

“Christopher Columbus was – we were taught that he was a hero when actually he was a racist. And it’s – I think it would be important to actually learn more about that subject, because we are only taught maybe once, maybe not even at all.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

“A big theme with us is, not to have it isolated to just a unit in Social Studies or just a month, so they talked a lot about, oh, yeah – we do a really great job with Black History Month, but it’s going to end. Or, if it’s Indigenous Peoples Month, then it just ends. So we need to incorporate it throughout the whole year, and throughout all classes.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

“I think colonization is also really important to talk about. And just the lack of education. Like the history behind it, I feel that that should be more prominent in the school system because you learn the bare minimum about the residential schools and reserves, but I think the actual – going all the way back to where it started – would be super-beneficial for everyone.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

“We discussed how there is a need for more education, and that younger students need to be taught the terminology and engage in the same conversations as those in upper grades.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

“It would be great to have embedded learning throughout the year, and hopefully get Indigenous Elders or speakers to contribute.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

“All we learn is like, residential schools. And like, the effect it ... left and stuff. And ... everyone just gets ... that part of it, and nothing else. Like, (ia) of like, culture and stuff – we don’t really learn a lot – any – of that, so I feel like we should.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

The students also expressed a strong desire to be proactive in tackling racism and to learn words and ways to address racism. They saw a need for education on social stereotypes and social jokes and to be able to speak back to everyday racism (i.e., call people in or call people out, depending on the situation). At the same time, they also wanted to learn effective methods that can engage peers and those around them who might be displaying problematic behaviours or statements that are racially unjust. Indigenous students affirmed the need for decolonization for both non-Indigenous students and Indigenous students. Indigenous students are often working on reclaiming their knowledges and cultures. It is helpful for non-Indigenous students to learn more about white and settler privilege and how non-Indigenous students benefit from the effects of colonialism. Similarly, non-Indigenous teachers are invited to be mindful of cultural appropriation and tokenism in their pedagogical practices. One Indigenous student detailed her/his painful experience of sitting through an art class making dream catchers taught by a non-Indigenous teacher who did not appear to know and appreciate the tradition of making dream catchers, nor gave proper credit to the person who taught them how to make a dream catcher.

“So, first I wanted to talk about like, cultural appropriation, and jokes, and like, I don’t know, there’s just lots of jokes going on, especially outside of school, but it would be like, in the same community, like friends that are in the same school. There will be like, jokes made, and kids will feel like they might take it too seriously, and I myself sometimes say, like – hey, maybe I should like, loosen up, and take it as a joke, but sometimes it doesn’t feel – it doesn’t stick right with me. So, I just feel like kids should be actually educated on when they say that, actually in the background, not just like, hey, don’t say that it’s offensive. But actually be taught like, I’ve seen some teachers pull kids aside now.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

“My thing is – they do talk about it, and they do teach us, but each student, and each individual learns differently, so the topic that – I’m not sure if it’s been mentioned, but we are taught and we are educated on it, but we are not taught how to take that stand, and we are not taught how to enforce it, so that’s just a huge – that was one of the huge discussions that we had. And it is talked about, and we do learn about it, but we’re not taught how to make it better, and how to enforce change. We learn a lot about history in our classes, and even so, it’s important to learn what we’ve overcome in society. But as a school and as a younger generation, we’re not learning how to enforce change and how to make it better for future generations.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

“I’ve had this conversation many times, because I’m kind of put in an awkward spot sometimes, I feel. But, from an Indigenous stand-point, I feel, in my society, at least, in my generation – it’s kind of – I’ve always kind of been like – privileged – because I have ancestry – but at the same time, like – they say that in a negative way. Like, it’s like – oh, you’re privileged because you get to go – go out at lunch with [Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal support workers], and I don’t. Or, for example, with Covid – I get my vaccine first before everybody else – ... um, perception that we do get more – when in reality, like, we got – everything’s been taken away. So, it’s kind of like, they don’t understand that we are decolonizing, kind of a thing – we need to kind of understand, and that’s kind of where the lack of education comes in. Like, they just don’t understand what is really going on here, and why this is – why we are trying to build our culture back, and why I’m getting pulled back out of class. It’s because I’m going to experience my culture and we’re trying to take it back.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

“I remember – in Grade 8 – we were making dream catchers -- taught by like, an Irish man ... (but) that’s not how you make a dream catcher . And he didn’t say anything about getting the permission to teach other people because – I was given a blessing in Yellowknife to make dream catchers, but I don’t teach other people because that’s a whole other family’s culture. (But) some people just like, get a round stick and wrap some like, string around it and say it’s a dream catcher. And it’s ... not what it is. It’s such a big part of our culture and just that people are like, copying it, is very – because like, I feel – like, when I go to the Polish deli, people will be like, oh these are Polish perogies and Russian perogies, and Ukrainian perogies. Why can’t you say that this is a dream catcher from the Dakota Sioux tribe? Or Mi’kmaw – or – everything else?” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group).

At the same time, some non-Indigenous students in this world café focus group recognized their privilege and wanted to engage in further learning opportunities from Indigenous educators.

“We understand our privilege to be learning about racism and not actually experiencing it. So, what we would like to see happen in the future, where we are having discussions like this, is actually to be learning from our Indigenous Educators as opposed to someone who hasn’t had, like, lived experience.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

Quite a few students also had moments of awakening in this world café focus group due to engagement with their Indigenous peers, the Aboriginal Education and research team’s discussion of the padlet questions and plenary follow up. They realized that what they have learned about history is not necessarily true and is a colonial representation of Canadian nationalism. One settler female student spoke two different times about the problematic Disney movies like “Pocahontas” that her generation had grown up with after an Indigenous student began talking about what a problematic story it was. She pointed out that the Pocahontas movie is a problem because this is what her generation has learned about Indigenous Peoples and they have been receiving this type of an education since they were young children. This discussion led to another student reflecting deeper about their own personal experiences and what it means for their generation to move forward in tackling misrepresentation, colonial violence on Indigenous women, and racism.

“I find it interesting that Canada Day is a colonization holiday. Like, that was interesting to me, because I’ve never heard of that before. Because we were talking about Christopher Columbus Day, and how it’s pretty much just celebrating genocide, and then I learned that – today – that Canada Day is also pretty much the same thing.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

“... the misrepresentation, and stuff and it kind of got me thinking about Pocahontas. Because, well, it shows [Pocahontas] like dressing in a very skimpy leather dress with one shoulder open... she looks like how – well, in the 1980s, how they did for Natives, ... and basically, they tell this love story of her and this friend and British dude – I forget his name – because it doesn’t matter – and basically, it’s like they romanticize relationship between a kid and a person who’s actually an adult. When in actuality, it was like basically child slave which kind of makes me mad, you know?” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)



“Another thing that point with Pocahontas that was brought up -- is very interesting because that's a children's show. You watch that when you're six, five, you know. So, ever since we're young, we're being taught, like, that this is like, appropriate, and it's just false representation, and it's in our childhood. So we really have to go back and understand like -- because it's not just that. You know? There's definitely other movies and other shows that do really poor representation of Indigenous cultures... It's in us from when we're children. So, it's a lot of work that we all have to do.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

“I would like to add to the person that spoke before, about how we're being taught since we were young, about these topics, and I think that some people say that this new generation -- Gen Z -- is sensitive, when honestly, we're just starting to realize that this isn't okay anymore. Like -- like, the relationship between a child and an adult and racism and misogyny, and all that -- just all kind of fits in one category -- yeah. So, I think it's important that we start to learn that that's not okay, and that -- that this is a problem, and start bringing awareness to it.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

The students also voiced the importance of honouring how beautiful Indigenous cultures are (the languages, weaving, art, music, board games, and games) and the desire to learn about them, as well as having opportunities to have further discussions with each other as students on the various aspects of Indigenous cultures and different perspectives.

“I wish to learn about the cultural stuff they do -- I just want to learn about, like, you know -- weaving, you know, I think that's so beautiful... incorporate that into community would be good.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

“And another thing like, to learn the beading and stuff like that it's also First Nations like respect for like, the animals -- compared to how we get our food from like, factory farms -- and it feels like they have more of a respect for animals that like, we eat and stuff like that.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

“I'd like having this conversation, like, more often. Like I feel like we have, like every once in a while, but it's not like, throughout the year, it gets discussed. And like, school groups mixed with like, different grades, and different people from ethnicities and diversities all the time, which I feel like this would be a really good thing to have more often to hear about... student to feel like they do matter -- especially when it comes to our learning and what we want for our future, and even though we're in, like, high school -- our children's future, obviously, so -- yeah.” (Mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students World Café Focus Group)

The research team witnessed the student's honesty and the clear articulation of the silences, appropriation and denial of colonialism and racism that has shaped their schooling experience to date. Students indicated a strong desire to receive more education related to Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and land-based education and all spoke about the need for continuing these conversations as much as possible. For example, some students felt that Indigenous education is not meeting minimum requirements, they explained that they only learn a little bit about Residential schools, but nothing else. Students also wanted to learn more about equity and diversity and not just have one off months or days to learn about these issues. They want to learn more so they can do better as future citizens of this country. Students were also deeply interested in learning more about colonialism and decolonization in order to challenge erroneous forms of history that they had learned so far. The strong solidarity coming from the non-Indigenous students in this group and how quickly they were able to grasp the inequities in their educational experiences related to Indigenous education was heartening. Students voiced that they are taught about racism, but not taught how to combat it or how to talk back to it. Thus, they wanted to know some tools and strategies on how they can deal with the racism that happens in the schools. Students also spoke about the importance of having safe spaces for intersecting identities (like LGBTQ+2 & IPOC identities) to be able to have these conversations. The research team also observed, when juxtaposing this transcript with the principal's transcript, they were jarring and disconnected from each other. The principals' world café focus group had very little awareness of the challenges and realities the students were voicing about Indigenous education and colonialism.



What is decolonization? “For non-Indigenous people, decolonization is the process of examining your beliefs about Indigenous Peoples and culture by learning about yourself in relationship to the communities where you live and the people with whom you interact.... It is an ongoing process that requires all of us to be collectively involved and responsible” (Cull, Hancock, McKeown, Pidgeon, and Vedan, 2018, p. 7). As the students reflected on their education related to colonialism in the world café forum, Indigenous Peoples have been imagined and narrated in a particular way and through a particular lens in the media, textbooks, and society. How do you respond to their call for change to the curriculum and school culture? How will you provide an truthful education to your students on colonialism?

## Recommendations

- On-going and continuous in-service professional development is required to support understandings of colonialism, decolonization, personal bias and critical self-reflective practice for all district personnel. This may include the hiring of additional Aboriginal resource teachers to support pedagogical engagement of colonialism in the classroom.
- Aboriginal education department to continue creating resource bins to support teacher professional development on colonialism and decolonization in local, national and international contexts. It is important for the bins to include diverse representation from First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples Experiences of colonialism and decolonization can be similar with intersecting qualities while also being different according to each Indigenous group. It is important that this nuance is reflected in the literature and resources that are shared with educators in the Indigenous resource bins.
- Students, Indigenous staff and Indigenous Knowledge Holders at all schools in the district need safer spaces for dialogues and wellness.
- Invite Indigenous students, Indigenous caregiver sand Aboriginal Advisory Committee member’s input on curriculum planning for colonialism, racism and Indigenous knowledge(s) through family evenings, surveys, and school growth planning events for Indigenous education.



# STRAND 04

## INDIGENOUS SPECIFIC RACISM AND RESPONSES

### "INSTEAD THEY BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER AND MADE HIM OFFER HER AN EMPTY APOLOGY": INDIGENOUS SPECIFIC RACISM AND EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 42

In this section, we begin by acknowledging and honouring the courageous voices who shared their experiences with us and the emotional labour that was required of them to share their stories of racism. Feelings of anger, shame, embarrassment, inadequacy, sadness and trauma are the emotional labour that many Indigenous students, caregivers, and Indigenous Knowledge Holders have to bear in order to participate in the public school system and in society. Racism has a long history in BC schools and still exists today. From the pervasive epistemic racism in the curriculum, to the silencing and dismissal of Indigenous student's experiences of racism in the hallways and classrooms, to inaccurate and stereotypical representations of Indigenous peoples in textbooks, racism in BC schools is pervasive, offensive, and violent. It is emotionally damaging and its effects are traumatic and long-lasting. This section recognizes that understanding the deep connection between racism and the historical and continuing legacy of colonialism is a difficult task. However, without acknowledging and addressing the longstanding and ongoing racism that exist in curricula, district policies, habits and relational interactions, colonialism continues. All recommendations arising from this section are in the "Anti-Racism Equity, Policies, Practices and Grievances Related to Anti-Indigenous Racism and Discrimination Recommendations in Strand 5.

An Anishinaabe scholar, Sheila Cote-Meek (2014) shares, "Linking colonization and education, ... mainstream education for Aboriginal peoples has always been and continues to be part of the colonial regime — one that is marked by violence and abuse — and a regime that has had devastating consequences for Aboriginal peoples" (p. 10). She explains that "colonial violence is understood as the acts perpetrated upon a people, and trauma is the result of that colonial violence" (Cote-Meek, 2014, p. 10). The students, caregivers, and Indigenous Knowledge Holders of this study have shared the multiple and repeated ways that racism manifests and creates a hostile, unwelcoming, and unsafe environment for Indigenous students in their classroom, schools and district events.

Some experts in the field might call the various experiences of racism shared below as a microaggression, a term that has picked up much attention in the media, workplace, schools, communities, higher education, and governments in the recent years of the anti-racism movement. However, the term "microaggression" can be misleading. According to Merriam-Webster, the most common definition of "micro", is "very small," so it can be easy for people to misunderstand microaggression as a form of racism that is not serious and completely dismiss the macro impacts of "microaggression" on the people being violated. "Micro" in microaggression does not mean small at all, but refers to racism conducted on an individual level or expressed in a private situation (Sue et al., 2007).

Microaggressions are defined as "everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. In many cases, these hidden messages may invalidate the group identity



or experiential reality of target persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment” (Sue, 2010). However subtle, unintentional, and unconscious, “... the power of microaggression lies in its invisibility to the perpetrator, who typically finds it difficult to believe that he or she possesses biased attitudes” (Emily Skop, n.d.). Instead of focusing on the invisibility of the perpetrator, we want to honour the brave voices from the students, caregivers, Indigenous Knowledge Holders, and staff, and centre the learning on the macro impacts of microaggressions. Words matter. Although we used the term “microaggression” in our research questions with participants due to its common usage and understanding, we felt it is important to name racism and colonial violence as it is.

The following research questions were asked to participants in this section:

- How do you acknowledge and address acts of racism and microaggressions in your school, and with colleagues? What resources or support do you feel that you need to be able to better address racism and microaggressions in your school? (School district personnel)?
- Have you or your child(ren) experienced discrimination or racism in their class or school community? How did your child’s teacher, principal or school staff support the situation? Do you feel that there was anything else that was needed to resolve the situation? (Caregivers)
- Have you witnessed or experienced discrimination or racism against Indigenous students or families in your class or school community?

We felt it was important to share all cases of racism that were identified by the stakeholders in the district in order to identify the forms and impacts of racism and colonial violence, while supporting readers to take positive actions from the experiences shared by Indigenous students, caregivers, Indigenous Knowledge Holders and staff in the branching out and spiraling in connections.

## How do Indigenous students experience racism in School District 42: Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows?

“One of my friends is constantly called a half-breed because she is Indigenous and white. She also experiences more racism from other students because she appears more Indigenous, and has darker skin” (Student).

The experiences of racism and colonial violence shared in this chapter are all too familiar to many Indigenous students, families, and community members. Schools are supposed to be safe and welcoming learning spaces for all students. However, as the quote above shows, many Indigenous students continue to face racism and colonial violence. They must negotiate culture(s) and complex identities while enduring emotional labour and trauma as part of their learning journey. We have identified 16 themes of racism and colonial violence and have organized them under 5 major categories: (1) racial assault; (2) racial insult; (3) racial invalidation; (4) systemic racism; (5) effects of racism and colonial violence.

### 1. Racial Assault includes: racism, judging authenticity, authority and racism, and silencing/re-traumatizing

#### 1(a) Racism

**Name-calling, racial slurs, jokes, and dismissal or outright change of a name are manifestations of subtle or blatant racism.**

“It made me feel that I didn’t feel safe at school and I didn’t want to go because we were in the same class and even telling the teachers, and principals changed nothing. He would refer to me as his slave because I was an Indian and called me a savage and continually asked me if I lived in a TeePee. Asked if I thought residential schools were a good thing because he did; then proceeded to tell me that I was normalish, I had bruises on my shins because he would kick me so hard all the time. He would say that my language sounded like something that would get you put into a mental asylum and that I sounded crazy” (Student).

“In Grade 9 Socials someone called the Mi’kmaq – Big Macs. Like my Socials teacher. And he said, oh, I know some of those people and they said it’s fine. And I’m like just because they said it’s fine, doesn’t mean you can repeat it over and over and over again. It’s just like ... an African person saying that you can say the – n–word. And you ... a white person – giving other people permission to say it, because a person of that culture said you could. ... it’s like when you tell someone a secret, and you think that you can trust that person – and they go around, and they tell everyone else. That’s exactly what it is” (Student).



"We were watching a movie ... [when] the movie was over – we were talking about it, and [the teacher is] like, yeah, and now we're going to talk about First Nations People. And everybody just kind of booed. I was like, oh, okay, that's cool. Yeah, that's cool. Alright... – and he's like, oh no, you can't be like that and he started laughing ... it was funny and I'm like, it's not really funny – and then he's like yeah, – we'll be learning about, like the Mi'kmaq. And he's like, yeah, and if you really want to like, if you want to learn how to remember their name, you can just call them Big Macs" (Student).



What is in a name? Gray (2011) shares, "I am one of those people who believes that language and words are important. Words, when used improperly or maliciously, can hurt, diminish, or belittle the importance of something" (p. 161). Teaching students to remember Mi'kmaq as 'Big Macs' to help them remember the name is an unacceptable teaching practice. The research heard two accounts of teaching about the 'Mi'kmaq' people from two different students. These quotes are included to emphasize that Indigenous students have repeatedly expressed difficulty and trauma with hearing their respective cultures, stories, traditions and languages being devalued, dismissed, reframed, or appropriated. The teacher in these two quotes is actually teaching insensitivity and racist attitudes to all students. These types of offences happen regularly and are passed on from class to class. Understanding students' perceptions of microaggressions can bring awareness to these hidden insults.



What do you do to develop your relationships with Indigenous students? What procedures are in place to ensure incidents of racism are fully addressed?

## 1(b) Judging Authenticity

Making assumptions about any particular group and their backgrounds based on their skin colour or appearance and denying their identities and authenticity.

"Yes, someone told me I was too white to be Indigenous. I never asked for help. I just ignored it" (Student).

"For me, I've always had, like, ... – what percent are you? Like, oh, you're only one-eighth Aboriginal? That's not enough, kind of a thing -- but at the end of the day, like, I don't ask you if you're 15 percent Irish or Scottish, or whatever it is. I don't ask you and I don't say oh, that doesn't matter, like, that doesn't count. So it's almost like, what? Like, what are they trying to get at? And at the end of the day, I still have ancestry in me and that's all that matters" (Student).

"Because I feel like racism is a funny word. You know, racism – I don't actually know what the actual definition of racism is, but what it feels like to me is that it's based on physical appearance. It's based on whether you're white-presenting, or whether you're dark skinned – that that's what it's based on. But for Métis People, we experience this in a different way. Because a lot of times, you can't look at us and see our Indigenous-ness. So it's – we get to hear and experience all of the racism – without actually being visible as being affected by it" (Métis Community Member).

"I am not the colour of my skin. I don't like being pointed at in class and shown like an animal in the zoo. They assume because we are all Indigenous we all do the same things" (Student).

"That we're still here. That again, speaking to Métis, that we're not the percentage. We're not a portion of First Nations and a portion of European. That has to do with our origins. That's our Origin Story. But we are from here, we are still 100 per cent Métis. Doesn't matter how many generations go by. I always use the analogy... if you go to Italy, you meet an Italian person, you would never ask them -- what percentage Italian are you -- It would be rude. But if you did they certainly wouldn't try to think of who was the first Italian they can name on their family tree. And then say, I'm 125th of that. Because they're still in Italy. They haven't left. They're still on that land, they are 100 percent Italian, no matter how many generations go by. This is where Métis are from. Not in this place here in Maple Ridge in BC, but the Métis are here in Canada. This is where we're from. This is where our ethnogenesis goes back to, we can't go anywhere else. And so, it doesn't matter how many generations go by. We're still Métis. Not a portion of. So I think that that's really important for teachers to know" (Community Member).

### 1(c) Authority and Racism

Assuming authority over student knowledge, culture, and language perpetuates the racist narratives of colonial history and Indigenous peoples in Canada.

"Yes, my French teacher told me to my face that my Indigenous language wasn't a language because it isn't recognized by the government" (Student).

"... I know many ways you can make (ia). You can make it from, like, cedar, really -- And [the teacher] said, huh, it's almost like you're First Nations. And I was like, oh.... [He] kind of looked at me, and gave me a sideways look, and I was like, I am. ... And he's like, oh, I just couldn't tell. You're like -- not dark. I was like, oh, so I have to be dark to be classified as First Nations -- that's not how it goes, but you know -- I'm not going to fight with you. You're authority, and I'm just trying to get through this project without yelling at you" (Student).

"We first got to Bannock, which was -- which was fun, but the teacher didn't know anything about it. She only knew how to cook it. And like generally I don't dare speak up because she probably would -- probably send me to the office --" (Student).

"I personally don't remember it, but it was brought up to me a few days ago -- how I was in class one day learning about it, and one of the kids in my class said, why don't you just get over it? It's not that big a deal, and apparently, I came crying to [My Aboriginal support worker] and was upset about it. She said that -- just to like -- not let them bother you, because they're not really being true with themselves, and stuff like that" (Student).

"Once you insult somebody's culture in front of 30 kids, you can't just brush that off and continue with your day" (Student).

"I'm not really visibly Aboriginal but again, once I mentioned it to my socials teacher. She didn't allow me to make my project around the base of that. She made me do Scottish instead. I told her multiple groups and she said, "You can't do Métis for some reason. You have to do Scottish or something else" (Student).



"[Students] want their schooling to be consistent with their own views of themselves rather than the views of their teachers. To this end, they negotiated under schooling by declaring their expectations and by reaffirming their identities, as opposed to acquiescing to the identities the teachers and the system as a whole wanted to impose on them" (James, 2007, p. 23).

### 1(d) Silencing/Re-Traumatizing

Telling Indigenous peoples to "get over it" or being ignorant of the legacy of colonialism and its intergenerational impact on Indigenous peoples negates their experience and reality.

"... during my speech on intergenerational trauma. Some people have accused me of not being Indigenous because I am light skinned" (Student).

"Another time when I presented my speech on intergenerational trauma my peers laughed and jeered to the point that my sister almost got into a fight because of the horrible comments" (Student).

"...my stepdad does not -- like, he had a hard time dealing with the school system. I think part of it is like, that brokenness -- He's not too fond of the school system, and so, a lot of it's like -- that's why I'm on the emails..." (Caregiver).

"I think, you know, people forget and - or they just don't know or they were never taught, right? And I think if you're lacking that picture - and also you know, that, coupled with, like - the reality of residential schools and the history or, sort of - the negative impacts that have happened to our populations and sort of get them into a situation where they are now, right?" (Caregiver).

"There needs to be - yeah - just a really important understanding of the history, and intergenerational trauma. Yeah, and a redress of how even other systems work with their education system, like Social Services, like making those alerts, I think is really inappropriate for the most part, so a part of that, I think in this school situation specifically, for all my siblings, is addressing that. You know, that broken relationship between my family, and that you know, the school" (Caregiver).



Ing (2006) defines intergenerational impacts as the present-day trauma experienced by individuals whose parents, grandparents, or ancestors attended residential schools (p. 157). However, intergenerational trauma must be recognized and understood from a decolonizing lens. It is not just limited to residential school systems. As Raven Sinclair points out, "the intergenerational and current impacts of colonization (are) manifested through colonial cultural and social suppression, intrusive and controlling legislation, industrial and residential school systems, the child welfare system, and institutional/systemic/individual racism and discrimination" (p. 76).



Gray (2011) asks people to imagine that at least seven successive generations of your ancestors were taken from their homes, forced to live in residential schools and stripped of their support systems and coping mechanisms. What would this kind of systemic, country-wide, century-long oppression and violence do to your ancestors, your families, and communities? How is Indigenous student self-empowerment fostered?

## 2. Racial Insult includes: unconscious biases and stereotypes

### 2(a) Unconscious Biases

Allowing unconscious bias to go unchecked is damaging to students, teachers, administrators, and the entire school community.

"... and that there are still people that will roll their eyes, you know? ... expect to get away with it, too.... And the hard part is how do you approach that if the person is not willing to even see that there is a bias there, right? And even down to, well, the Aboriginal support worker can just be – she can put her desk down there –" (Aboriginal Education Team).

"Yeah, no. (Laughs) not in a closet, are you kidding? ... just those things that – like – those biases have not been, like, confronted" (Aboriginal Education Team).

"The school refers to the students as -- the Katzie students. Our Department refers to them as the Katzie students. It drives me crazy. And so – and then, there's all these, like assumptions that are made regarding their learning, and – so continually, I'm hearing like, well – if they're misbehaving at school, and I can't get a hold of the family member, who can I then call in the community? And I'm like, the Emergency Contact. Like, that's who you call. That's who you have permission. It's gotten to the point where the school has asked for families to sign Release of Information in order to have other community members to pick up their children when they're misbehaving at school and they can't get a hold of them" (Aboriginal Education Team).

"Back at Hammond, sometimes – I was talking to... this person, and I was like – we live in modern houses – and they're like – no you don't, you live in shacks with your Mom, with an old bag" (Student).

"Typically what I experience as the microaggressions are the little side comments and things like that" (Aboriginal Education Team).

"We're like one of the only Indigenous families in this community, right? And you sort of see that reflected in the school as well. Where yeah, you just see a discrepancy between how kids are being treated. You know, for example, sending one kid home, but not the other..." (Caregiver).



"Unconscious bias happens by our brains making incredibly quick judgments and assessments of people and situations without us realizing. Our biases are influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences. We may not even be aware of these views and opinions, or be aware of their full impact and implications" (Tate, 2018, p. 143).



Speaking on the "Idea of Indianness," Deborah Doxtator asks: "how have attitudes towards Indian people changed? Do people still carry in their minds the idea, even if it goes unsaid, that Indian culture is "primitive" and incapable of survival in a twentieth-century environment?" (as cited in Cannon & Sunseir, 2018, p. 21). What are your unconscious biases of "the Indian"? What steps has the school community taken to actively build relationships with members of local Indigenous communities?

## 2(b) Stereotypes

Stereotyping certain groups of people reinforces ignorance and diminishes student engagement.

"... on Halloween – I've seen, like – Indians and cowboys – and it's like – or, it's like in class, when they don't call us First Nations, they call us Indians" (Student).

"... that it's not Indian, it's First Nations, because I feel like Indian is all the way in Asia. Because that's like – when Christopher Columbus came here, he thought that it was India, so they called them Indians" (Student).

"... the stereotypes of the status and less taxes, that they get things that we don't. But the reality is that they deserve so much more" (Administrator).

"... students sometimes, ... say things ... they don't really understand. ... oh, like, you guys get handed everything – or something like that" (Student).

"I have friends that are full status and people tell them all the time that they don't look Indigenous" (Administrator).

"We've had performers and stuff come in right and do their practice and rituals and show us and put on a performance and stuff and I think at least when I was in elementary school people would kind of make fun of it what they were doing" (Student).



"In stereotyping ... students, teachers – in some cases inadvertently – are setting up a schooling situation in which one group of students is seen as 'fitting into' and meeting the expectations of teachers while other groups are seen as less able to do so" (James, 2007, p. 20).



Where do your stereotypes of the First Nations people come from? Is there evidence that administrators, staff and teachers see the value of including Indigenous content and perspectives?

## 3. Racial Invalidation includes: Racism of Lowered Expectations and Tokenism,

### 3(a) Racism of Lowered Expectations

Setting low expectations for students from particular groups, neighbourhoods, or feeder patterns.

"Like she [ASW] really advocated for him as far as getting like, the normal Dogwood Certificate – as opposed to, like, the Evergreen – which was really huge because yeah, I just find sometimes, there's this push to push Indigenous students through, which you know, has I mean we've seen the – different qualities of that, right?" (Caregiver).

“As a student, that I felt like, all because I'm Indigenous - I'm - I'm not good enough to get good grades, or I'm viewed as somebody who's not smart or intelligent. And I made it a point to actually do - to get the top mark of my class in every single class...I felt like I had to represent my people...and I shouldn't have to be like that as a student” (Student).

“Having First Nations classes is a start. I do want to challenge some of our administrators as I believe many of them throw their difficult students, diverse learners (students with designations), and students who just need to graduate in those classes. Do we do so because of the racism of low expectations?” (Administrator).



Are you aware of the Indigenous students with gifted abilities in your school community? Indigenous gifted students represent 3% compared to 11% of the Non-Indigenous gifted learners in the district. This statistic is reflective of deep patterns of systemic racism. Indigenous students are often overlooked for their giftedness and instead labeled with behavioural issues for being disruptive or disengaged in the classroom when in fact they are not being identified for their gifted abilities or provided the appropriate institutional supports to help them flourish. This is a strong example of racism of lowered expectations. What will you do to help change this reality in your practice?



In a 2018 report on Aboriginal Learners in BC's Public Post-Secondary System, the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training found that Indigenous students are significantly less likely to receive a Dogwood Diploma than non-Indigenous students (51% vs 73%). Evergreen Certificates are meant for students with special needs, but Indigenous students are more likely to receive Evergreen Certificates than non-Indigenous students (4% vs 1%) . Issuing Evergreen Certificates is a practice of streaming Indigenous students towards low education attainment and perhaps dropping out of school, because an Evergreen Certificate is not recognized by post-secondary institutions. In a progress audit on the education of Aboriginal students in the BC public education system, one of the recommendations to the Ministry of Education is to ensure the Boards of Education only grant School Completion Certificates “to students who require a modified program due to a special need that prevents them from working toward graduation” (Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, 2019, p. 21).



Without recognizing the on-going effects of racism and colonialism, Indigenous students will continue being seen and treated as “less than average”. The support system in the school system clearly links to student success. What system is currently in place at your school to support Indigenous students and how is it working out? How are you undertaking your responsibilities to support Indigenous education?

### 3(b) Tokenism

Incorporating Indigenous perspectives in BC schools is much harder in practice and sometimes is trivialized or done in tokenistic ways.

“The teacher said that he brought in an oral narrative to one of his science lessons and the students laughed. He's like, “So they don't care. They don't want to know this. They don't want to learn this stuff. Why am I bringing this story into the science class?” And I was like, “Okay well there's a number of things that I have questions around.” Number one was, how was the story presented? So we just worked backwards from there and so then I used a story and he was like, “Okay yeah, that was sort of neat.” I'm like, yeah, it can be” (Aboriginal Education Team).

“There's so much rich learning but you can't just come in and tell a story about a woman falling from the sky and expect it to connect if you don't own it and you aren't connected to the teachings that you're presenting. We all know that. You try to teach something that you don't really care about or are interested in or know enough about and it always falls flat and the students know. They feel it immediately and so maybe you don't do the story yet and you do your own learning first and so that way you can bring it in authentically” (Aboriginal Education Team).

Expecting Indigenous or “other” experts to provide materials and show how to deliver Indigenous perspective and content in lessons.



"This work is hard and exhausting. I find it difficult when non-Racialized folks just want a checklist, or resources given to them. "Can we have a list of resources, videos, etc we can share with our staff"? I know we are worried about getting it wrong, but I do wonder why many of these individuals feel others should do the work for them and then just hand them that work for free. Part of this journey is actually doing the work. It is not up to racialized folks to do the heavy lifting, the exhaustive, and uncomfortable work and then just hand it, so you can quickly glance at and share with your staff" (Administrators World Café focus group).

Engaging with anti-Indigenous racism training only on National Indigenous Day or when time allows without making it a priority.

"I'd join with an invitation- more likely to join if its during working hours - book club would be great, have books gifted, ..." (non-Indigenous Support Staff).

"Offered professional development through NID days" (non-Indigenous Support Staff).



In her article on supporting Indigenous student success, Pidgeon (2015) discusses the notion of Indigenization constituting moving "institutional approaches away from the tokenized checklist response that merely tolerates Indigenous knowledge(s) to one where Indigenous knowledge(s) are embraced as part of the institutional fabric" (p. 78).



What are your assumptions and personal biases that influence your leadership? How might you support and assist staff with overcoming their fears and biases to engage Indigenous pedagogies and content with responsibility, respect, reciprocity, relevance? How is continuous learning and training on anti-Indigenous racism demonstrated in your school?

## Commodifying and Misappropriating Indigenous Knowledges, Culture and Arts Based Practices

"So, often, things will get packaged in quick little craft-type packages, and be taught in a way that's affordable and quick, and easy to do, but the lesson gets lost. So, for example, the Métis are the flower beadwork people. That beaded art work is really important with our Culture. I mean, it really makes us visible. And you know, within the district, when they started doing the Métis – teaching about Métis beadwork – in order to make it – it takes a long time to do – so to bring somebody in to teach Métis beadwork, it's difficult to do, like it would have to be like, a four-week program, minimum. And it would be very slow, and it would take up a lot – honestly, it would take up a lot of time away from other areas to do that. So I understand the struggle. I would love to see when Métis Culture is being brought into the school – I would really like to see care being taken to make sure that it's authentic. And I'm going to say that largely that's going to come down to how it's being presented. Sometimes it's going to come down to who's presenting it. This is part of our identity and when it's taught authentically the lesson is about the Métis people (our lived experiences and worldview) more than it is about the beadwork" (Knowledge Holder).

## 4. Systemic Racism includes: professional indifference, problematic practices related to systemic racism, access to technology, being penalized for speaking up (self-silencing)

### 4(a) Professional Indifference

Assuming that supporting Indigenous students is someone else's professional responsibility.

"I probably could reach out to the principals but I don't feel that anything would happen. They may say they are on it and require the person to apologize but nothing further. I feel they could provide education that is mandatory for all students to have a better understanding of Indigenous peoples and programs for anti-racism" (Student).

"If I told someone they would just tell them to apologize. But when someone who was being racist towards my sister they told her it was non-threatening issue and if she really had a problem with it she should talk to a counsellor if it hurt her feelings. This went on for a whole year. He only stopped harassing her because he was told he would be beat up if he didn't stop. It stopped for a month but continued after that for the remainder of the year until another cousin told him the same thing" (Student).

“Yes, they should have spoken to the offender and helped them understand and educate them about racism and how that affects people. Instead they brought them together and made him offer her an empty apology” (Student).

“I feel like students are pretty smart, and they don’t say things out loud, so they keep it between each other – so there’s not much they can do about it if they don’t know about it, right?” (Student).

“Quite honestly, I think it falls through the cracks... I don’t experience a lot of accountability ... don’t know that there’s any sort of system in place of advocacy in place...” (Student).

“Some teachers will react and others will turn a blind eye” (Administrator Focus Group).

“There is racism in our schools and comments that are made to our ASW’s and Indigenous support workers that go unaddressed” (Administrator Focus Group).

“Who are championing that work (?)... it’s the Indigenous Advocate’s job or the Indigenous Support Worker’s job to go in sort of hold that teacher to account, you know? It’s a lot of work... I can’t say that there is anything besides the onus of the instructors or the Support Workers to take that on themselves” (Caregiver).

“There are some – and there’s – and there’s – there are some that aren’t going to. I know that. I know that, that they’re not going to shift. They will just continue and retire” (Aboriginal Education Team).

“Or the teachers can’t hear it because it’s done under people’s breath... kids are sneaky about their comments... they say it so not everyone could hear. Teachers don’t hear it so even if they are told it happens they don’t do anything about it” (Administrator Focus Group).



It is most often left up to Indigenous Peoples themselves to counteract racist beliefs and actions, rather than having people in positions of influence and power stepping up and helping to eradicate this racism, which affects all people, not just Indigenous Peoples (Gray, 2011, p. 175).



If you are non-Indigenous, how are you implicated in systemic racism and colonialism? How have you benefited from settler colonialism on Katzie and Kwantlen Nations unceded territories? What steps are you going to take to move forward?

#### 4(b) Problematic Practices Related To Systemic Racism

Failing to recognize institutional practices that perpetuate systemic racism.

“It appeared as if the administration or the teachers didn’t want to rock the boat too much, or upset families that they thought (for whatever reason) they looked more highly upon, right?” (Caregiver).

“Feeling like okay, we’re like one of the only Indigenous families in this community, right? And you sort of see that reflected in the school as well. Where yeah, you just see a discrepancy between how kids are being treated. You know, for example, sending one kid home, but not the other.... I feel like in those situations... it’s like they are against them all the time... it’s really frustrating. And having to almost – I’m going to use the word – clout – but pulling some of your clout, you know?” (Caregiver).

“It has been a draining week. 215 flags were planted for the 215 children whose graves were found. My child’s teacher was wearing a pin of an orange shirt cut from construction paper. When a student asked about the pin, he explained why he was wearing it but ended by saying “I have to be careful of what I say.” After, when a beautiful tribute, written by the school’s Aboriginal support worker, was read over the intercom to explain that 215 flags were planted in front of the school to honour the children found in graves, the teacher was not the least bit careful when he said, “well, that is weird.” ...It is inappropriate

in light of everything that has happened as much of our family and other families are grieving right now. It minimizes what everyone is going through. I spoke to the principal who did a good job of hearing me and responded appropriately but his first reaction was to defend the teacher... saying, “just so you know, many of our teachers are afraid to say the wrong thing.” That was my child’s first day back at school (after working remotely during COVID) and that was his experience!” I should note that after the initial inappropriate reaction, the school principal and vice principal did the right thing. My son was moved into another teacher’s class and – most importantly – they didn’t ask him to recount the story, so my son didn’t have to defend his position. I know we got there only because I was emotionally exhausted and fed up and took a real hard line. I never brought it to the [district position responsible for this work] because I felt it would be minimized and nothing would be done. After all, there was no communication sent to me, or any of our GEMS Board, to acknowledge the travesty and what we might be going through, nor was I, as an Advisory member and Métis knowledge carrier, invited to the healing circle that other knowledge carriers attended. Our trauma was not seen. My son’s ASW was instrumental in helping me determine if there was another teacher teaching the same class in the same block before I went to the school principal, so that I knew what I could ask for. She is Métis” (Knowledge Holder).

“I am tired of hearing excuses. I have counselled my own dad and have heard new stories about what has happened in my family history. Held space for survivor stories that have given me nightmares, attended healing circles and then my son experiences a “microaggression,” and the teacher has already made a big deal about this. We continue to be invisible in the school district. I don’t want to reach out of the school district...I am no longer accepting apologies; I am accepting change behaviour” (Knowledge Holder).

“And you know, and in classrooms that I’ve been in, where I’ve been doing cultural presentations, I can see, like, I can look at students and go that’s a Métis student. Not because I can physically see that they are, but I watch their wheels turning, and I’m like they’re thinking about this, they’re really processing what’s being said. So, I think for them, a lot of times they can hear what’s being taught, they can read what’s, you know, what’s being read. And they don’t feel that they have the right to speak up. They don’t feel that they have the right to be visible in it. And they don’t get asked about it” (Knowledge Holder).

“Sometimes I’m not. Sometimes I am, when I come to the Advisory Table, then I can see what’s going on, I hear what’s going on, but I’ve been asking for a long time to be receiving the newsletter, and I haven’t. And you know, I’ve – you know, a lot of times I was told well it’s because I didn’t identify my son as Métis, because he’s in – within the school district. And I didn’t identify him. And you know, I said, but just a minute. While I’ve been at the Table and things have felt toxic. I haven’t felt safe identifying him, so I want to know that we’re on a good path before I identify him. Because I don’t want him to come to First Nations Métis Inuit events or cultural opportunities and show up and to be made to feel like he’s in the wrong place. To me, that’s worse than him not going at all. I can provide him his culture at home, and I’ll do a good job of that. If he’s going to find his culture while he’s at school, then he needs to go there and he needs to be included. And for a long time, I was asking, how come I didn’t know about this? How come we weren’t included in this? And I was told it was in the newsletter. Oh, I didn’t even know – for years, I didn’t even know there was a newsletter. Oh, how come I’m not getting the newsletter? Oh, well, you didn’t identify him as Métis. I said, but we’re in a vicious circle, here. Because he’s not identified as Métis because it hasn’t – we haven’t felt included” (Knowledge Holder).

“There is a broken relationship between my family and the school system, and I say that because you know, my – my – my siblings were apprehended in partnership between Social Services and the school system, you know?” (Caregiver).

“It just continues. It just continues to feed the mistrust between the community and the school. The – the school doesn’t see that as being a micro-aggression. Or to see that as being a form of racism. And so, continually reminding them that we wouldn’t do this if it were little White Johnny down the street. We wouldn’t be asking the same question. And it has invoked a lot of white rage (laughs) and just continued, like, no we don’t do that – yeah, and so, I think it’s just the perpetual like, figuring out where they’re at, and guiding them in a different direction” (Aboriginal Education Team).

“Oh, and then there was like an issue, too, with like, his – when they were transferring his grades – I don’t know what the heck was going on there, but they were just sort of saying, oh, we can’t – he might not be able to graduate now or pass his courses, because we don’t know what his transcripts are. And I’m like, you absolutely do – like, what do you mean you don’t –” (Caregiver).

“... when I’m advocating for students, the ones who are being penalized or constantly being sent to the office or the ones who are failing courses because they aren’t able to work within the system or the structure that is in place within a particular classroom. I think we need to have a different system in place where I can go to a safe VP or a counsellor in a way that we’re able to support that student as much as possible” (Aboriginal Education Team).

“(We need to be able to offer) different channels for when these students are struggling” (Aboriginal Education Team).

“So we need to have Indigenous content in the classrooms, but you can’t teach Indigenous content without doing it in an Indigenous way. Otherwise that whole wholistic picture you’re learning isn’t there, right?” (Caregiver).



Systemic or structural racism (Henry et al. 2000, p. 56) refers more generally to racism that informs a society’s norms, rules, and laws. It results in the unequal distribution of social, political, and economic assets to various minority groups. Hughes and Kallen (1974) argue that structural racism, although unintentional and impersonal, is far more damaging to minority groups than individual racism. It can grow deepening roots in society and become more difficult to eliminate.



How does systemic racism occur and, even worse, recur or persist? How are you perpetuating systemic racism in your practice? Or are you challenging it? To understand why systemic racism continues, it requires White Canadians to “challenge their meritocracy and superiority myths to learn how their privileges were constructed and maintained in a racist society” (Battiste, 2010, p. 17). What is your process for unpacking meritocracy and superiority myths through self-reflection and self-awareness?

#### 4(C) Access to Technology

Assuming all students have access to and are proficient in the use of computers and applications for communications about school activities and academic work.

“...for example, like reading – for the first time, he was reading like, an Indigenous novel, right? By an Indigenous writer, and how much he was like, you should read this...like this is such a good book. And he didn’t have access to the book so maybe that’s a common trend, like access – especially during like, COVID times – to technology, and stuff, because my siblings don’t really have that kind of – yeah, stuff. So, I had to go out and buy the book for him, right?” (Caretaker).



Assigning projects that ignore differences in socioeconomic status can inadvertently penalize students with fewer financial resources and exclude them from participating in activities due to financial costs.



Indigenous students face significant barriers to access education. “One of the primary barriers to learning for Indigenous peoples is the disparity in educational funding for Indigenous education systems, especially in rural and remote areas where access to schools and educational programs may be extremely limited” (National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health, 2017, p. 4). How do you access all available and potential resources to support Indigenous student success? What steps are taken to address any identified barriers?

#### 4(d) Being Penalized for Speaking Up (Self-Silencing)

Discouraging critical and reflective feedback from teachers and staff perpetuates systemic racism.

“I’m like, I can’t – I can’t – be here in this space right now, I need to – and then, when I had conversation with this person, it was quite evident in their response, that if I wasn’t cautious of what I said, I was going to be written up” (Aboriginal Education Team).

“Yes – we’ve heard it – it’s hard to work up the nerve to say something. We all know what we should do (speak up) but it’s easier said than done” (Administrator Focus Group).

“Conflicted because we know if we “tell on someone” we could make it worse and we don’t want to be the tattle-tale” (Administrator Focus Group).



Hidden curricular elements such as unwritten rules, unspoken expectations, and unofficial norms and values can teach people to internalize toxic messages, ignore other people's offences and become passive bystanders.



How does the school culture reflect the values of diverse and local Indigenous community members? How do you foster an environment where all members feel safe, valued, and respected? (British Columbia Principal and Vice Principal Association Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice Principals in BC )

People may have the impression that “microaggressions” are insignificant, but they can lead to mistrust, contribute to problematic practices, reinforce systemic racism, and have significant impacts on the mental, physical, and social wellbeing of the person(s) targeted.

## 5. Effects of Racism and Colonial Violence includes: emotional labour, no racism, and exclusion

### 5(a) Emotional Labour

Acknowledging the toll microaggressions take on Indigenous peoples and having significant impact on their mental, physical, and psychological health.

“That really scares me, because I feel like when our students go to cultural events – they need to go there and feel they’re in the right place. Otherwise, they’re made to feel like they’re not enough. They’re less-than. You know, that – that somehow they’re not enough. And I know the psychology of being taught that you’re not enough. It’s a big deal. You know, it’s not a good thing. So, I really want to make sure those spaces are safe for our students” (Knowledge Holder).

“Like I’ve been in a class before, in a Social Studies class where it’s like, and this here in Vancouver – you know, where somebody’s telling me about my culture, and it’s like in a textbook, and it’s wrong. I’m like, and then as a student, and sitting there, like, do I say something? ... having grown up with Traditional People and people who were really well educated in Indigenous [knowledge] who know their Nations and their histories, and their culture – that put me in a weird spot, and so but I felt sort of like a sense – even as a young person – I should say something, right? And then, you say something and then the teacher is like, no – you’re wrong” (Caregiver).

“As a student, that I felt like, all because I’m Indigenous – I’m – I’m not good enough to get good grades, or I’m viewed as somebody who’s not smart or intelligent. And I made it a point to actually do – to get the top mark of my class in every single class – And then I had to meet up with the so-called you know, tutor – and I walked in at the end of the class, and literally as I walked in, he was like, oh, we’ll try again next year because he thought that I’d fail. And I was so upset, like I was almost in tears, because I was like – I felt like I had to represent my people, right? I shouldn’t have to be like that as a student. And I had my report card and I literally threw it at him, because I was so upset – I just put it on his desk and ... because I was like, I have the top marks – that stayed with me for a long time” (Caregiver).

“But then when they make up packages and they call it Métis dot art. You know, and like, I’ve brought that up at meetings and I’ve said, there’s a problem with the naming of this. It’s not a Métis dot art. We don’t have dot art. Dot art is actually something that does exist and belongs to the Aborigines of Australia. And to say that it’s Métis dot art – and I sometimes feel like when I speak up, I’m being too much. It’s not being heard, or it’s being minimized. And they don’t understand the struggle, because when I go into classrooms, I hear it repeated back to me from the students” (Knowledge Holder).

“Like, if you’re talking about Indigenous story in any way, right? Where there’s elements of Indigenous Culture and history, then maybe you need to talk about why it’s inappropriate. You know, ethically – you know – to say things like, oh, like you know your Spirit Name or whatever, and people making fun of that, right? ... so for someone to go in there and even if, you know, it is a student, or a young person who just is unaware like, we need to teach them that you know, we don’t say stuff like that, right? Like, you don’t make fun of Spirit Names. They’re like highly respected, right?” (Caregiver).

“I had her for two years. Actually I had her for four, not including this year. But we knew each other well enough – she knew I would not steal... I still don’t fully trust her” (Student).



"I feel like ... more could have been talked about in class, and like, someone who knows a lot about [anti-Indigenous racism] could come in and like, explain the effects of [racism] and how it's not something to joke about." (Student).



Emotional labour is a huge weight on Indigenous students, caregivers, Knowledge Holders and colleagues who are often placed in situations where they are required to represent all Indigenous peoples. This includes speaking up against negative perceptions and stereotypes, as well as fighting against discriminatory practices which are emotionally and spiritually exhausting.



"What does it mean to be an ally of Indigenous education?" Change must start by troubling, and teaching others to trouble, the interpersonal and institutional ... the tendency to not name, know, or otherwise mark settler privilege" (p. 163). Here is a list of Indigenous allyship resources for consideration:

- 10 Ways to be an Ally to Indigenous People: <https://looselipsmag.com/features/10-ways-to-be-an-ally-to-Indigenous-people/>
- Decolonization is for Everyone by Nikki Sanchez: [https://www.ted.com/talks/nikki\\_sanchez\\_what\\_you\\_can\\_do\\_about\\_your\\_country\\_s\\_ugly\\_history](https://www.ted.com/talks/nikki_sanchez_what_you_can_do_about_your_country_s_ugly_history)
- Alliances: Re/Envisioning Indigenous-Non-Indigenous Relationships edited by Lynn Davis

## 5(b) No Racism

Calling out and naming racism can be scary and paralyzing, especially when racism is often being dismissed or trivialized.

Survivors of racism are often told that they are imagining it or they are being too sensitive. It takes courage and time to learn the language and perspective for naming the experiences of racism. Admitting that there is racism is accepting the underlying pain, shame and trauma.

"I have heard the slang word for an Aboriginal person be thrown just casually in conversation, and you know, I didn't think much of it because I was younger, and I didn't really understand that as much, but now, me looking back on it, it – it – uh – I wish I was more educated before then, so I could have at least said something to defend – defend that nature, I guess you could say. And like – not let it happen again" (Student).

"I haven't personally experienced it, no, but I think I have definitely seen, I don't know, not up front to the person but people probably make comments.... I mean I've seen people kind of joke around about the dances and stuff like that but yeah, I've definitely seen that" (Student).

"I haven't like been like a part of it but like I've overheard comments and things like that. Just like rude comments or it's like people trying to joke around but it's not really joking, I can't really think of an example right now but..." (Student).

"On one hand, I want to say, no - but on the other hand I'm not completely certain, because I've - I've been like, bullied a lot in like, my younger years, and I've seen people being bullied and I've known some of them to be also Indigenous -- and it's hard to tell if that's because of how we acted, or if it was because of that - which - I don't think comes across a Grade 6's mind, you know?" (Student).

"Some people think that I'm adopted and stuff but it wasn't - I haven't witnessed direct racism towards many people" (Student).

"I like, personally haven't experienced racism because again, I don't look Aboriginal. But I know, like, people in my family have..." (Student).



Indigenous students have to contend with racism in the classroom every day. As Cote-Meek (2014) points out, “one way to resist ongoing colonialism and racism is to actually deny one’s own identity. If one can distance oneself from labels and racialized constructions, a cushion against the daily barrage of attacks is formed” (p. 128).



It is extremely difficult to address racism, especially when racist experiences are being denied, trivialized or ignored. It also creates a sense of isolation, exclusion and marginalization for Indigenous students. Where are the safe spaces for Indigenous students? What steps are being taken to foster a safe and inclusive environment that focuses on student learning and wholistic success?

### 5(c) Exclusion

Honouring students’ cultures and languages is one way of making the school environment safer and more inclusive.

Indigenous students not only want to belong to their families and their communities, but also to the school spaces they inhabit. By sharing their heritages, cultures, traditions, and languages, they are showing their pride as Indigenous Peoples. When Indigenous students share key aspects of their identity, they are taking steps to foster reciprocal and relational understandings and friendships with their peers and district personnel.

“Westview, is that there’s not a lot of Aboriginal kids. There’s like, a couple here and there, but there’s not a lot, so mostly, the classrooms are filled with white people and Black people. I loved – loved making Bannock, but I wanted someone else to enjoy it with me —” (Student).

[This student explains one of the challenges of being moved to an Alternative program] “I’m not good at making friends. And I knew the people in my class, but they all had their little friend groups” (Student).

“And I feel like, now that a bunch of other people are starting to use the Ab. Ed. rooms, I feel like it’s becoming more of an accepted thing...” (Student).

“We had a BLM (Black Lives Matter) poster up...and then it got ripped down, and like torn up, and then they just like plastered a bunch of them on the walls, like – you can’t stop us” (Student).



“To varying degrees, students and teachers learn to dis/identify with the history, images, and language of schooling. These discourses inform them of the extent to which they do or do not belong in this particular public institution. Students who easily fit within dominant cultural practices of the classroom see the school reflected back to them” (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 298).

### How Are We Doing: Completion Rates for School District 42

After reading about the institutional and personal incidents of racism in the district, we invite you to return to the critique of B.C. Ministry of Education’s How Are We Doing Report. It is important to ask ‘what is being measured in this report?’ It is incredible to witness the resilience of Indigenous learners who have been able to navigate a Eurocentric system and succeed. However, success can also be measured in the ways that Indigenous students are provided with opportunities to transform their hearts, minds, bodies and spirits with adequate learning opportunities to be able to dismantle the colonial system they continue to endure.

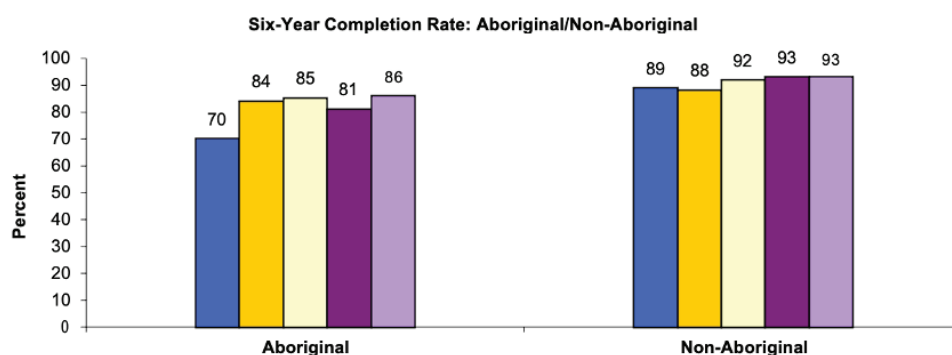
## Completion Rate

### SIX-YEAR COMPLETION RATE, 2015/16 - 2019/20

The six-year completion rate is the percent of Grade 8 students who graduate with a Certificate of Graduation within 6 years, adjusted for outmigration. It is not the inverse of a "dropout rate" as students may graduate after the six-year period.

#### SIX-YEAR COMPLETION RATE\*

School Year	Aboriginal			Non-Aboriginal		
	All Students %	Female %	Male %	All Students %	Female %	Male %
2015/16	70	77	64	89	91	86
2016/17	84	91	77	88	91	86
2017/18	85	86	84	92	94	90
2018/19	81	81	82	93	94	92
2019/20	86	86	87	93	95	92



## RESPONSES TO RACISM

Elementary and secondary students were asked about their experiences witnessing or experiencing racism against Indigenous students or families in class or school community. They were also asked how these incidents were resolved. The overwhelming responses from students were that racist incidents often do not get resolved and students are left to defend themselves. The specific questions asked are:

- How did you work through the situation or was it resolved? How did your teacher, school staff, or principal support the situation?

A number of students were unaware that they could bring forward concerns about racially aggressive comments to their teachers or administrators. Most students voiced that racist incident were not dealt with or explained to students in class. Students were left wondering what happened to the students involved. When seeking help from teachers and administrators, they were faced with further discrimination and complacency that rendered them powerless in the situation. At the same time, some students did not bother reporting racist incidents administrators or teachers because they knew they would get dismissed or nothing would change. One strategy that students shared was not to engage in a conflict and not to say anything. Students also reported racist situations between students were dealt with by:

- Teacher, administrator and school staff apathy, which resulted in the escalation of the situation among students which led to a number of situations of physical violence.
- A teacher and or principal emailing a student's family (but not dealt with or explained to students in class who witnessed the incident).
- Calling the police.
- Student's choosing not to engage in conflict over racism out of fear or wanting to remain neutral in order to not offend the perpetrator (student, school staff or teacher).

When speaking up against everyday racism from authority figures such as teachers and administrators, Indigenous students were most likely to be shut down and their concerns dismissed. In one incident, an Indigenous student called out racist behaviour from their teacher and tried to communicate their feelings to the teacher. However, the teacher did not recognize anything wrong with his prejudice and discrimination and further minimized the student's concerns and shock. The classroom environment became unsafe and unhealthy for the student.

"Well, at first – (I) was processing and I was like, that was really rude... I'm going to need a minute. So then I start – I got up and walked away, and (the teacher is) like – where are you going? I was like, I'm – I'm going. That's it.. I can't do this – (I cannot) be in this environment with you. You're being racist, and I don't appreciate it one bit, nope. And he was like, fine. And he's like, yeah, I guess we can go to the Ab. Ed. room -- (Aboriginal Education room) – he's like, that's where you guys go, right?"

When the student tried to bring it up to the principal, he was given the excuse that the teacher was old with an implied understanding that change would not happen and went on with his day.

"I told the principal and his response was kind of like, not what I was expecting. I was expecting him to do something about it, but he more or less just said, well, he's old. Kind of just brushed it off as if it wasn't happening -- it happened all the time. And frankly, I do believe that it happens most of the time, and that's just kind of really sad."


The racist attitudes from the teacher were compounded with a lack of action and commitment from the principal, which was detrimental to the student's wellbeing and academic achievement. There was also no effort made to build a trusting relationship with the student from both the teacher and the principal. The prejudice and discrimination exhibited by the teacher did not reflect the professional standards for educators. For example, she/he did not "care for the student and act in the student's best interests" and did not "act ethically and maintain the integrity, credibility and reputation of the profession" as set out in the Professional Standards for BC Educators.

"Yeah, no we never had conversations after that, but (the teacher) still continued to make his comments meaningless -- and throughout the year, just kind of treated me like I was less-than after he figured out that I was First Nations."

A few students shared that Aboriginal support workers and Aboriginal education teachers were consulted and some teachers did try to address racism through educational videos and class discussions. They appreciated the advocacy of their ASW's to help resolve some situations. Students also noted that their Aboriginal teachers taught them how to redirect racial aggressions. In one case, a student reported that her/his teachers resolved the situation well through an educational video and discussion. However, there were some students who reported no experiences of racism or discrimination, which also points to the need for further education on systematic and institutional racism for all students.

"How he just kind of brushed it off his shoulder and continued with his day, ... I mean, let's say, you trip over an escalator and a bunch of people see you and a couple people giggle, I mean you're going to be embarrassed, but you're just going to go on with your day – but once you insult somebody's culture in front of 30 kids, you can't just brush that off and continue with your day... like if I did that, I'd be so ashamed of myself because, like, I thought of him as a mentor. and as soon as he said that I just lost every single piece of respect, because it's just – ugh..."

"The kids aren't just – they didn't just wake up one morning and think, you know what? I'm going to be racist today... it comes with like, what you're used to and -- it's the environment. I feel like some of it comes from school, as well, because definitely – but like, ... it comes from parents, or like, older role models ... that this is how they were raised. They believe that this is okay.... I don't necessarily believe that ... you can't teach an old dog new trick, because it's a bad way to excuse them for their actions."

 Do you learn how to speak out against discrimination and racism in your class and school community? What else would help you?

Students were asked about the kind of support that would be helpful to support them speaking out against racism. One student detailed that their grade 12 teacher had taught her/him a lot about anti-racism which has helped their confidence and

understandings to address anti-racism. Most students could not name an intervention nor have they experienced any sort of consistent and effective learning on anti-racism and specific training on how to address racism. These are their responses:

- Non-Indigenous specific (read book about Malala and did worksheets on how to talk about racism)
- Embedded in situations, not explicit. Student couldn't actually name an intervention (other than being nice to each other)
- No but student mentioned watching George Floyd video with no specific feedback on how to address racism
- Confident to "roast back" and tell the teacher
- No, but some brief mentions in Social Studies
- Yes, great 1 English 12 class shared anti-racism content
- None
- An elementary student wrote paper on racism to help sibling understanding its meaning.
- The same elementary student also learned how to use the word "racism" in context and not label everyone a racist by their teacher.
- Students told about racism at assemblies or in class in passive ways
- Recognition that racism can happen at all levels (student to student, teacher/principal, parents et)
- Anti-bullying presentations at assemblies (not focused on race and not overly effective)
- Some specific suggestions on supporting students' learning on anti-racism shared by the students are:
- Learning about the proper terminology to use when facing racism. Same student noticed improvement to support students to identify problematic language to support anti-racism conversations over the last two years
- Learning about the historical context of racism
- Receive further teaching and knowledge about colonialism and history while also setting healthy boundaries
- Frozen and needed assistance to learn proper terminology to handle the discussion
- Teacher training and development
- Awareness of personal supports that are available if a racist situation arises
- Mandatory anti-Indigenous racism for all students
- Truth and history along with deeper understandings of colonialism and decolonization
- Wholistic supports, counsellors and Aboriginal Education Room to go to if issues arise
- More course content overall for anti-racism

## Aboriginal Education Team

### How do you acknowledge and address acts of racism in your school, and with colleagues?

The Aboriginal Education team responded to racism in varied ways with colleagues and students. Some members addressed it directly on the spot but acknowledged that it had taken time and professional development to develop the "courage" to address it directly. Some folks were aware of the tone policing that could occur when addressing racial aggressions with colleagues and detailed the emotional exhaustion and labour of continuously addressing Settler colleagues in a polite and non-threatening tone. Some staff detailed the need for students to learn self-regulation while recognizing that they did not know how to engage in a racist situation. One educator revealed that they felt it was not their responsibility and did not engage when there was a physical altercation amongst students with racial slurs being used. Instead, they later approached the students to share "It hurts my heart", which is not a recommended anti-racist practice. Another educator disclosed the complexity and challenge of calling out colleagues, especially when colleagues cannot recognize their own biases. This concern is also shared by other stakeholder's courageous conversations in many world cafe focus groups, which speaks to the urgency of providing training to all members of schools to acquire the language and actions needed to address racism.



Overall, the Aboriginal Education team was in agreement that there were uneven responses by district administrators to address racist issues when they arose. One Aboriginal Education team member reported that students from the Katzie Nation are being given to non-family members when disciplinary issues arise and families aren't available. One school was not honouring emergency contact forms for Indigenous students. This also became a layered issue because the district employee who was advocating against this practice was not supported by their administrative supervisor and was threatened to be written up for voicing concerns if she/he continued to escalate the situation. Lateral violence was also mentioned as an issue in the Aboriginal education department.

"You either call them in, or call them out. And so sometimes you have to kind of evaluate what is the situation – should I call them in, or call them out? ... this is a form of systemic racism, to ask – to send – like, to call another community member, like we wouldn't do that to our own kids. Like, or your own kids. Like, should I go pick up your son from school when he's been suspended, and not tell you about it? Like, come on, be real.... It's really challenging because I think they think they're doing the work, but there's so much bias. There's – they haven't gotten to the point where they've recognized the bias they carry in themselves. They see it as being concerned for the well-being of the students only, and they don't see that there's layer upon layer of systemic racism, and that is within that."

👉 What resources or support do you feel that you need to be able to better address racism and microaggressions in your schools?

The Aboriginal Education team identified the following the resources that are available to them and support needed to better address racism and microaggressions:

#### *Resources Available*

- Team members relied on the Aboriginal Education teaching team and an internal process developed by the Aboriginal education department to support racism and micro-aggressions.

#### *Support Needed for Racism*

- Mandatory anti-racism training for all staff, teachers, administrators, managers, trustees, senior leadership and students in the district.
- Lateral violence training for all members of the Aboriginal education department.
- Tracking system for racism, microaggressions, and lateral violence.

While more learning opportunities on anti-racism was brought up as much needed support by various stakeholders in different world café focus groups, one Aboriginal Education team member pointed out that one of the key steps to address racism was to think and talk in a more honest and accurate way – to call it out as it is. Many Aboriginal Education team members recognized the strengths from being able to work with a group of like-minded people and to carry out work as a collaborative unit (in most cases). Another Aboriginal Education team member acknowledged the importance of having a relational connection to the local Katzie community and being responsive to the community's needs as they arise.

"I think there definitely needs to start educating teachers across the district. Not just Indigenous worldview, but anti-racism, pedagogy, critical race theory – like, we need to teach kids that it's okay to talk about these things, and it's okay to question them, and it's okay to grapple with these issues, and to understand that we didn't create it, but we live in it. And like, if we're going to – if we don't want to continue it, we have to figure out a new way of doing things, and so, to have that conversation openly, is really critical. And so I think that there needs to be more training for teachers in that area, because a lot of them don't have any idea. Like, they – they don't know about critical race theory, they don't know about anti-racism pedagogy, and – or if they do – then – and this is the tricky part – because then you kind of like, have those people that are like, but I do embrace all people in my classroom – because they don't have that reflectivity in them to see that they don't, right. And I think that's the hard part about this district, is that there's so much white saviorism. And – and people like, in positions of power are really threatened by – by – embracing these theories themselves, because it means that they have to give up, and make space and I don't think that a lot of them are ready for that, so. I think, right from the very top down, we need education across the board, for staff."

“Within our own department, we – I mean, we work together – on a lot of these issues all the time. So, I’m never alone in what I’m – when I am -- saying something... because we’ve worked together as a teaching team, and talked through this so much, that I know that they are there.”

“Structural supports around how to advocate for students who are impacted by structural racism and microaggressions. I feel like the stuff that I experienced personally tends to be more curriculum based just because those are the conversations that I’m having. But when I’m advocating for students, the ones who are being penalized or constantly being sent to the office or the ones who are failing courses because they aren’t able to work within the system or the structure that is in place within a particular classroom. I think we need to have a different system in place where I can go to a safe VP or a counsellor in a way that we’re able to support that student as much as possible.”

“I have some amazing VPs. I have one young boy who ... really struggles with being present in some of his classes because his brain just goes a mile a minute and he always wants to move. And so he was doing really poorly in a couple classes and so the VP just pulled him and put him in a Grade 11 First Nations social studies class instead. He got an A in that course and he’s like, “We’ll give him the Social Studies 10 credit. That’s fine.” (Social Studies 10) is where he needs to be (but) he’s not being successful in this space, so how do we move him into one that is? And that was amazing but that doesn’t happen in every school so often. It’s just, “Let’s give him a movement break and that should be enough,” and I said, “Well, it’s not. There’s so many other pieces that are impacting his need for a movement break.”

## Caregivers

The caregivers were asked the question:

☛ “How did your child’s principal or teacher or school staff support in that situation (where the child experienced discrimination or racism in class or school community)?”

The caregivers had some critical reflections to share, particularly on systemic barriers, systemic racism and problematic practices. One caregiver emphasized the incredible work and support given by an Aboriginal support worker, but also saw the systemic barriers that prevented her from carrying out her work authentically and respectfully as well as the discrimination against her role as an Aboriginal support worker versus a teacher.

“I’ll tell you the one who could have helped is our Aboriginal support worker because she has the beauty and the understanding and the knowledge and she is probably the easiest person to talk to. The problem is she is minimized and undermined because she is only an ASW when really her experience should count for more than the paper that she’s allowed to bring in. She could have helped and she wasn’t enabled to help and she’s not enabled to help even though she’s in the classroom as a teacher. So she’s teaching but she’s not a teacher. She’s actually teaching full on incredibly masterful things. The only information about First Nations/Métis/Inuit people that’s getting out there she’s putting out there in these classrooms of lessons but then she’s not allowed to do a follow through. And then the teacher who’s there, as I said no disrespect but I don’t know what her role is. She is in multiple schools but even I as a teacher don’t understand her role as an Aboriginal teacher. I’m not sure what her role is. There wasn’t an inkling that she would even be able to support that because she doesn’t know [Name]. I don’t know. I think the Aboriginal support workers should have a little bit more respect and when that happens maybe something like this wouldn’t happen again.”

Another caregiver called out on the so-called social emotional learning that their child was receiving as culturally misappropriated from Indigenous ways of knowing which relates to systemic racism:

“We’re moving into this new way of education which they’re calling this critical social/emotional learning and I think it’s really important for...I’ll use the term that you used, for settlers to understand that this actually isn’t new. All the people who are getting credit for this new great way of thinking, this is not new. This is the way of my grandparents and their parents and their parents and it’s just a little offensive sometimes where you don’t take offense but you could quite easily because it’s like, again, another point where the recognition to the people who have done this for a lifetime and understand the point of it, that’s irrelevant. It’s not about that. It’s about us who are, and by “us” ... I mean the colonized white person who has a lot of privilege already and all of a sudden, they’re the ones who are getting credit for this new way of moving forward.... I appreciate allies. I appreciate them in one hundred percent regard. I just wish that instead of being the ego maniacs they would be the actual allies.”

Some caregivers echoed the sentiment that there is a lack of understanding and genuineness from the school and suggested more authentic learning from Elders would be beneficial to the school community.

“It’s really about in the end moving forward. I acknowledge that but I guess there’s still a little bit of me where my family had to hide and we hid white very well for a very long time get still quite offended. We hid under a name but we lived under a tradition. It would be nice if there was an understanding that it’s the action that’s important and it’s not how fast it happens, it’s how well it happens. There seems to be a really speedy expectation right now like, “This needs to get done right now and we’re doing it this year... They’re going to get it going and it’s going to be fixed and this is the year to fix it. That just tells me that the understanding isn’t there, that there needs to be more education from Elders that unfortunately are far and few between now in being able to come into our communities. So I don’t know. I acknowledge that there are some great people with great intentions but I wish they would understand that their intentions are sometimes rolling over the actual good action that could happen. Because the need seems to be about speed and not about education, I guess.”

“When I talked to my vice-principal I’m like, “Well I read it and it looks like there’s a lot of inaction because it looks like it’s all going to be all paperwork and you’re going to do all these interviews and you’re going to do all of this groundwork and then what’s going to come of it? Well there’s actually nothing in the package that says that there will be movement towards, that these are steps that will be taken. There’s nothing in that package, so I am all out.” I still wanted to be part of it when I started understanding where it might be going and he was very supportive. He’s like one of the big members in the team and I tried to say I would join it actually because he was one of the members and then I took a look at who else was on the team and it took my interest in a new direction.”

While one caregiver felt support was available when needed, another caregiver had to take their child out of the program, because racism was not being addressed.

“I’ve been very informed that if I ever had any kind of problem, to please call them and they would help me immediately.”

“It wasn’t dealt with. It wasn’t dealt with which is why I removed him from the program....”

## Administration World Café focus group

The administrators were asked the following questions:

☛ How are grievances (conflicts) related to anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination dealt with?

☛ What is your school doing to foster the relationship with the person bringing forward a grievance to instill trust that the grievance is going to be addressed as a valid concern?

☛ What else is needed?

## Strengths

The administrators identified the following strengths when dealing with grievances (conflicts) related to anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination:

- Address the language with the person who used it.
- Start from a place of learning as to why we do not use this language.
- Listen to the concern(s) brought forth by parents.
- Education is the way to change behaviour.

In terms of what schools are doing to foster the relationship with the person bringing forward a grievance to instill trust that it will be addressed as a valid concern, one strength shared was to have open door relationships, “so that when there is a problem, there is no apprehension to come and discuss the issue” (Administrator World Café focus group).

## Challenges

When juxtaposing students' reporting of racist incidents being dismissed by administrators with the responses below, it is clear that system-wide change is needed to demystify white supremacy, privilege and all forms of racism that are occurring in district schools. Most administrators indicated that they did to deal with grievances (or conflicts) related to anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination and ended up suggesting ways they would address them.

- "Feedback from the group is we haven't directly dealt with grievances / racism."
- "Grievances are not an issue on this topic right now."
- "Pandemic is in the forefront so other things may not be being brought forward."
- "Although we are fortunate that we have not address anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination grievances brought forward to us, we are wondering if there are incidents that are not getting reported and how to build confidence and awareness to build this."
- "If something did come to our attention, we would approach the concern from an educational/teachable lens."
- "If concerns did come to light, we would reach out to Ab. Ed staff for support and include them in the process of moving forward."
- "Historical grievance did come up this year and time invested with investigation with support of senior team."
- "While we recognize there are people in our community who have experiences, we have not personally encountered a situation to be addressed specific to anti-Indigenous racism."
- "We have experienced situations with other racialized groups".
- "Able to be curious and better understand trauma of residential schools"
- "Openness and curiosity needed for these situations"

"Curiosity" along with concrete systemic actions are needed to address grievances relating to Indigenous racism and discrimination. Many of the comments noted above speak to the majority of the administrator's positionalities (which are predominantly Caucasian ancestries) and allows them to relate to trauma, colonial violence, and racism from a safe distance.

When asked about what is being done to foster the relationship with the person bringing forward a grievance to instill trust that it will be addressed as a valid concern, the administrators conveyed the desire to build relationships, to build trust, and to listen to the voices of Indigenous students and educators. They also responded that different schools are at different stages of taking up anti-racism. Processes and protocols need to be in place in to better track anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination as well as to better serve Indigenous students.

- "We need to continue to build relationships to instill greater levels of trust so everything is brought to the surface."
- "Need to continue to bring the voice of Indigenous students, educators and partners to the table."
- "We all agree we would address a situation of this nature with seriousness and swiftness in any way a person is demeaned."
- "Our school is really beginning their anti-racist journey and so I think our responses to Anti-Indigenous and Anti-black racism are a little more heightened than they were even last year at this time."
- "I do not believe that we have a tracking system in relation to Anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination that has been documented or tracked."
- "There are a lot of processes/protocols that need to be set up to support our students of ancestry in this capacity."

One administrator courageously discussed how imperative it is to take the time to consult Aboriginal support workers and work with family members before suspending or moving a student to another school.

"One of the administrators at our school called a family and shared they were going to suspend this student of ancestry and the parent did not respond well to the news. After speaking with our Indigenous Support Worker, we were given some background to the family dynamics and why the family may have responded the way they did. In doing so, this administrator was given another opportunity to approach the family from their space and comfort. This humility and the ability to let someone else lead and us follow led to a better response and a sense of trust between the family and this administrator."

"I have also been guilty of suspending or moving a student of ancestry to another school, before having the conversation with our ASWs or Indigenous support team."

"I always felt this sense of urgency to get stuff done, but in these conversations with these valuable team members, I have been allowed to slow the process down and use as many lenses to support our students and give them the best opportunities for success."

## Needs

Several needs were noted on the administrators padlets:

- Policies and procedures are needed for both district and school levels.
- Engaging in conversations and giving the weight and time needed to address racism with authenticity.
- "What you walk past, you accept." We need more resources to assist with teaching others that language is powerful and steeped in history.
- Building connection with families that are disconnected from the school community.
- Supporting the family and the child with what needs they have.
- Not forcing them to fit into our system, but giving them what they need at this time.
- Building relationships with these students.
- Having an awareness of the silence.

"As a school, we were pretty colonial in our "best practices" and even our restorative process became a bit of a saviour complex process that made educators feel better about their decisions, more than centering what was best for the child. I was guilty of this! Nonetheless, we did begin to collaborate (with an Aboriginal Resource Teacher) a process flow chart that looked at making sure an Indigenous advocate was at every meeting with our students (discipline, IEPs, etc.). This flowchart was also supposed to guide teachers as to how to make contact with Indigenous families."

## Managers World Café focus group

The managers were asked the following questions:

- ☛ Are grievances related to anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination documented and tracked? What else is needed?"

Their responses highlighted the common assumption that there is a grievance process documenting anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination in place, but in reality, there is no formalized approach specific to Indigenous racism or discrimination. One manager asked, "Have we created that environment?" One critical issue that was highlighted by this stakeholder group (and not brought up in other stakeholder groups) was personal social media communication that may be contrary to district or school values of inclusion and diversity. Specifically, one manager asked if it was possible for employees who posted 'racist things' on their personal social media on weekends to not let their personal beliefs come through to their professional lives?

The managers acknowledged that it was plausible that specific racism related issues may be tracked through the Aboriginal education department and believed that as a district, people do work together to create awareness and that people do feel safe to raise issues. They wanted to continue to foster a sense of safety to bring forward issues. The research team has confirmed that the Aboriginal education department does not track racist incidents.

## *The Long Haul of Decolonization*

We draw upon the work of the Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective (2021) to support the development of settler stamina, strength, vulnerability, honesty and persistence that is needed to support decolonizing efforts. We

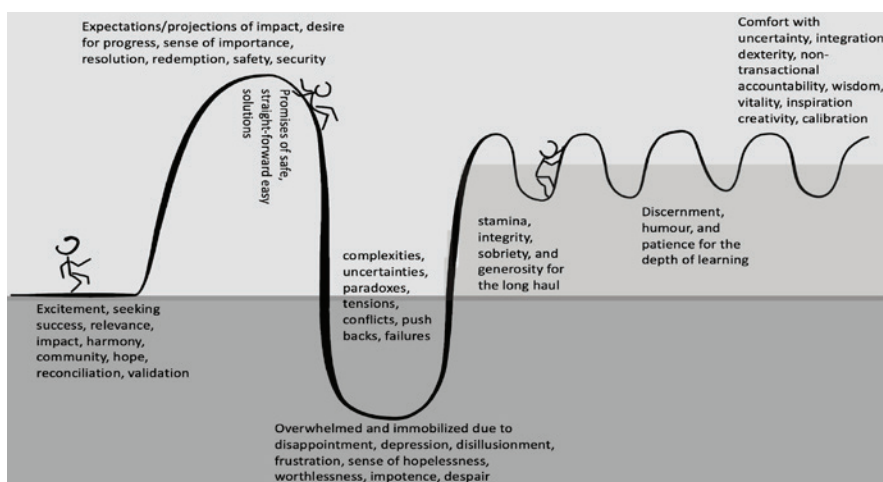


imagine after reading the section on Indigenous specific racism and responses, some folks will appreciate the description and the info graphic below.

“Among those who are involved in decolonizing work, we see a common pattern. Initially, when people first start to be engaged, it is because there is either some excitement or desire to make a difference with one’s intervention, and so one seeks safe, easy, feel-good solutions. In doing so, one can often achieve a sense of purpose, security, and redemption, at least temporarily.

However, at some point, the fantasy of quick fixes comes crashing down as people encounter the inevitable complexities, uncertainties, paradoxes, conflicts, and pushbacks involved in this work. At this point, people can feel hurt, depressed, hopeless, immobilized, and deeply disappointed, and in some cases tempted to give up their decolonizing efforts altogether.

Non-Indigenous people have been socialized into systemic colonial habits of knowing, being, and relating for most or all of their lives; these habits cannot be unraveled overnight. By having patience with uncertainty, vulnerability, and non-linear movement, and by integrating multiple dimensions of decolonization, they might be better able to weather the inevitable ups and downs of this work.” (Stein, Ahenakew, Jimmy, Andreotti, Valley, Amsler, Calhoun and the Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective, 2021).





# STRAND 05

## SCHOOL DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN, SCHOOL GROWTH PLANS, AND POLICY

### SCHOOL DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN

Senior team (interviews and world café focus group) and school trustees (world café focus group) were asked the same questions related to the school district Strategic Plan. Their input on this question were collated together.

The senior team world café focus group felt it was important to share that the term “learner,” as it is used in the school district Strategic Plan, is inclusive of district staff and families. One senior team also stated that “we’re still on a learning journey ourselves. And trying to look at our thinking and look at our own biases and our viewpoints that can help us bring that learning into the classroom from whatever role we have in the district” (Senior team World Café Focus Group Plenary).

Following this distinction, the senior team interviews discussed several indirect connections to the school district Strategic Plan that were often heavily data focused, such as the district performance data tracking system; the middle development data index and student satisfaction surveys. The Spark program and the leadership of the Aboriginal district principal were also noted as positive and indirect ways that the district could achieve its strategic planning goals for equity and specific strategies to support diverse Indigenous learners.

#### In what ways does the school district Strategic Plan address equity and specific strategies to serve diverse Indigenous learners, families and communities?

- “Strategic plan was built with input from all stakeholders and Indigenous groups” (Trustee World Café focus group).
- “Strategic Facilities Plan – also an area where we did extensive engagement” (Trustee World Café focus group).
- “Regular updates of strategic plans with community input also part of board practice” (Trustee World Café focus group).
- “Annual learning report – the end and the beginning of our planning review process – a specific section for Indigenous learners – identifies both achievements and areas of growth” (Trustee World Café focus group).
- “Annual planning cycle – at the operational level has aboriginal piece embedded” (World Café focus group).
- “How to serve diverse Indigenous learners - FRIS - more established in the community - provide supports for Indigenous people in our community” (Trustee World Café focus group).
- “School growth plans do reflect the strategic plan. MDI helps to segregate data for schools, literacy etc. so schools are making efforts (reflected in their plans) to highlight and address Indigenous needs” (World Café focus group).
- “The district plan has explicit literacy goals which focus on Indigenous learners”.
- “Commitment to Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement” (Senior team Interview and World Café focus group).
- “Helping teachers - district level teacher leaders; attached to zones of schools; not a management aspect makes it more inviting for people to participate” (Senior team World Café focus group).
- “Teacher Mentorship - partnership with the teacher’s union and seen as a positive” (Senior team World Café focus group).

The trustee world café focus group highlighted that they were still questioning how to serve diverse Indigenous learners in order to provide supports for Indigenous people the community.

They further elaborated that they needed to move forward with conversations with specific Indigenous communities (including but not only land-based Nations). They also felt that they needed to learn more about Indigenous education to be effective as policy decision-makers. They highlighted that they were missing direct engagement with stakeholders due to COVID and would like to connect with Indigenous stakeholders more. Finally, they emphasized an important distinction between equity and equality: “Equity does not mean equal - the response to learner needs during COVID shows respect for the needs of Indigenous learners - school open on site at Katzie First Nation”.

#### How can the school district Strategic Plan address issues of Indigenous systemic racism, equity and discrimination?

- “This is what we are looking to learn through this process - what are the gaps” (Trustee World Café focus group).
- “Safe and Caring Schools - District Implementation Committee – role to look at how is the district policy being implemented at the school level: - review of language in school code of conduct - educate principals so they can educate their schools on use of language” (Senior team World Café focus group).
- “Anti-Racism Committee - starting to divide into sub-committees to look at resources, professional development, etc. Compassionate systems - 21 people trained (educators) – process called the check in - you can create space to have these discussions happen” (Senior team World Café focus group).
- “So we’ve got some parts of the strategic plan where we talk about actually facilitating supporting the success of all Indigenous learners to ensure equity, inclusion and identity by embracing Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action. So, we’ve got this specific part that talks about how are we going to do this and, and another component around ensuring all learners regardless of ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, culture, religion and family status have a voice and see themselves in our schools and in our curriculum, so I’ve actually read directly from those” (Senior team World Café focus group).
- “Equity with our hiring practices we have a variance that we apply for through human rights to allow for us to hire preferentially Indigenous folks” (Senior team Interview).
- “Collective agreement with our teachers a lot of understanding around a special program in terms of hiring, again giving us the ability to give preference to Indigenous applicants” (Senior team Interview).
- “Employee relations “Conduct” ensures that everyone feels equal and appreciated” (Senior team Interview).

One team member indicated a specific need for the school district Strategic Plan to address issues of Indigenous systemic racism equity and discrimination, but didn’t state a specific issue:

“I think having specific strategies around addressing these issues would help address them. Like it’s, it’s really, you need to say what you believe in and what you’re going work towards in order to get it done so it’s documenting what the objectives are there...And having the right voices when you, when you create those objectives at the table” (Senior Team Interview).

Another senior team member emphasized equality related employment measures, which did not address the question:

“We manage the employee relations aspect, so if there are any discriminatory issues that arise and any complaints that come forward around how somebody feels they’re being treated in the workplace, we address conduct. We will investigate and make sure that people are feeling equal and appreciated and supported and knowing that discrimination is just not tolerated in the workplace” (Senior Team Interview).

Other team members recognized the importance of role modeling anti-racism in their leadership practice to help enact priority areas in the school district Strategic Plan for equity:

“We need to be able to create a space for all the adults in our district to look at their own biases and their own racialized perspectives so then you could have a systemic effect” (Senior Team Interview).



"I think that we're looking and finding ways for that to happen and it's not an easy road, it's, the, to get people to be that vulnerable, it starts with ourselves and myself. So I have to be, especially as a, a person in a formal leader's position, I have to be the one who role models it, lives it, breathes it and speaks it in, in the way that I act and behave" (Senior Team Interview).

Another team member highlighted the important role that the Principal of Safe Schools undertakes to implement equity related policies. However, this statement also reflects the disconnect between some members of the senior team and their understandings of Indigenous-specific racism in the district:

"We have a "Principal of Safe Schools...who does a great job of really making sure that policy is actioned. She has a team at Riverside that works closely with schools and with principals on ensuring that we are giving the services to youths that are needed and that you know there isn't racism or you know other bullying or other things that are happening that shouldn't happen. Now I'm not saying it doesn't happen. I haven't dealt with any specific thing in, regarding racism but I gotta say that bullying is one of those ongoing things that we're dealing with, especially recently with COVID" (Senior Team Interview).

#### ☛ How does the school district Strategic Plan implement Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing?

The senior team indicated the following:

- "BAA courses - impressed that teachers were really attuned to what is required and generally embedded in their program thinking How do you lean into the discomfort?" (Senior team World Café focus group).
- "Well I cannot say that it does, I cannot, like it's, like maybe you can say you know in the, in the values there is some alignment but I cannot say that when the plan was developed that, that the specific lens that was applied to the plan. So I think some work can be done in that area" (Senior team Interview).
- "Our commitment to working with the current BC curriculum focusing on the principles of learning, the First Peoples' Principles of Learning are highlighted" (Senior team Interview).
- "Supporting the Aboriginal education department to have the resources and staffing it needs" (Senior team Interview).
- "We had curriculum implementation days for the first couple of years when the curriculum rolled out, and really supportive network led by our helping teachers on diving deeper and not just superficially looking at the curriculum" (Senior team Interview).
- "HR, not directly but often we're working together with our unions to look at a variety of professional development and we do have days that are focused specifically on Indigenous learning" (Senior team Interview).

The senior team and trustees indicated there are areas of growth for Indigenous education in the district which they hope the stories from this living report will help them address. A review of the school district Strategic Plan reveals that the "values", "strategic directions", "strategic priorities and goals" do not reflect Indigenous languages, values or specific commitments to Indigenous education (or anti-Indigenous racism). It is hoped that the findings and recommendations from stakeholders in this living report can support explicit connections in the next phase of growth in the school district Strategic Plan and its' implementation.

#### ☛ What aspects of the school district Strategic Plan require further decolonizing and Indigenous equity informed strategies and initiatives?

- "Not sure how to address this - maybe related to staff training. Continuously striving to seek input from all parties and recognizing the importance of creating a safe space for people to provide input. Environmental School - example of recognizing different ways of learning" (Trustee World Café focus group).
- "Well honestly I think that a full review of all the different sections of our plan is required to, just to apply that lens 'cause as I said, I don't think that we have consistently done that. So I would say, yeah, like we need to take a critical look at the whole plan and operational plans" (Senior team Interview).



- "Look at more place based, play based learning at secondary, less written" (Senior team World Café Focus Group).
- "Student conferences not at school but into the community" (Senior team World Café Focus Group).
- "Assessment - decolonize the way we measure the success of learners e.g. if they can write they are successful - this is limited and needs to be expanded to recognize student success – who they are as learners" (World Café focus group).
- "Are we conscious of Indigenous people working on reinvigorating their cultures we are trained to be planners and mindful of time graph alone does not tell the full story - add narrative" (Senior team World Café focus group).
- "Not sure that urban Indigenous and Métis have enough of a voice - more difficult to reach the pace at which we move as a society - don't know if that is reflective of an Indigenous perspective of creating time and place" (Senior team World Café focus group).

In recognition of the last bullet point, the research team also observed that the Operational Plan in the school district Strategic Plan which states the goal of: "Improv[ing] relationships and communication with partner groups, representatives of Indigenous Peoples, all levels of government and the communities we serve" (p. 7). In the "current" status 2018-2020 column, a number of meetings with the Katzie and Kwantlen Nations are noted along with involvement in the "Equity Scan" project, which are positive steps to support Indigenous education and equity in the district. In keeping with the concerns echoed by the Métis community, district leadership is encouraged to include and meet with the Métis community and urban Indigenous organizations consistently. For example, the operational plan does not indicate that it has met with or included the Métis community in any of the meetings noted in this section.

We appreciated that this was a new conversation for most senior team members. During interview discussions, there was considerable processing and questioning about the need for explicit Indigenous- and equity-related goals to be included in the school district Strategic Plan. For example, one senior team member candidly shared:

"I think that we need to actually have it explicitly stated throughout the strategic plan. I haven't spent enough time looking at our other areas like our human resources operation, our trustees' operational plan because our strategic plan is made of multiple components and multiple groups and so I think that there's a huge amount of alignment in terms of will and philosophical grounding. I don't know if there's an explicit statement around the Indigenous equity work that we need to do and decolonization. And it's a wonder for me, is that the way that we get to this and do we need to actually to say it and call it out loud, or what are the other different pathways that we can reach folks on? So policy does its piece but policy is just a piece of paper unless it's actually lived and breathed. So how do you, how do you find that way so I think, I'd like to spend more time, you know I think this work equity, this equity in action work is part of that because I think what we're, by me having a conversation, you're gonna be speaking to others in our senior team group. Every person's now gonna be processing this conversation before, during and after. So that's, that's part of the work" (Senior Team Member).

As discussed in the following section, the school growth plan template priority areas do not explicitly reflect Indigenous education or anti-Indigenous racism. One senior team member highlighted the important work that has been done in the area of social emotional learning, which is a priority area in the school growth plans. However, the school district Strategic Plan and school growth plans need specific priority areas for both Indigenous education and anti-Indigenous racism that include measurable goals and facilitate progress to ensure that they are being met.

Finally, the school district Strategic Plan could also support Indigenous equity in its hiring practices by identifying specific hiring goals based on workplace availability (as a minimum benchmark of Indigenous Peoples in roles throughout the district. This would include tracking the number of Indigenous Peoples who apply for positions in the district, and are hired, promoted and retained. As indicated in other areas of the report, there is also a need for Indigenous people to be mentored or hired into senior leadership roles. The following comments from a senior team member illustrates this need:

"I'm really kind of leaning heavy on our discussion on the recruitment piece to provide for a positive learning environment for all of our learners. That includes diversity and it includes...diversity is quite a large umbrella, so it could be cultural diversity,

it could be educational diversity. Not that we practice religion in any way but just different backgrounds of people, gender, sexual orientation - all of the diverse pieces that fall under human rights. I think having a good blend of all is imperative to provide for a fulsome learning environment for our learners. So, when hiring not only are we looking for qualifications but we're looking for that diverse mix. Even though we don't have policy on that or we're not tracking or asking individuals on their application forms necessarily what their background is, we try as much as possible to have a good blend of stuff" (Senior Team Interview).

"The other piece that I've kind of pondered and it started to percolate with me when we had the initial meeting with all of our principals and vice principals and other staff members with you, I think it was at a superintendent's meeting perhaps. I started to think about, "Okay so our recruitment process, we have our standard questions and we go through our standard set of questions but how do we take a look at the questions through the Indigenous lens?" And so again I don't have any professional training or background from an HR perspective as it relates to staff who are Indigenous which is a growth goal but how do we start flipping our lens to help attract more Indigenous staff?" (Senior Team Interview).

### *School District Strategic Plan Recommendation*

- Ensure that local Indigenous languages, values, strategies and priorities are embedded within the school district Strategic Plan (including appropriate connections to the British Columbia's United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2019).
- Create clear measurable priorities with time frames in the school district Strategic Plan to support mentoring, staff development, and succession planning for Indigenous district personnel in all positions.
- Ensure the school growth template has priority areas that include: Indigenous education, Indigenous anti-racism and anti-racism education, all of which should have clear measurable goals that can track progress.
- Retain the services of an Indigenous human relations consultant to provide training and support for Indigenous equity-related practices in the department.
- Hiring practices should clearly prioritize the hiring, training and retainment of Indigenous leadership in senior leadership roles. The district plan should include clear "targets" for Indigenous staff in leadership positions with direct goals for the equity-related representation across the district in all roles.
- Work with relevant unions to hire Indigenous cultural mediators as an option for dealing with Indigenous employee grievances. Indigenous restorative practices could also be implemented with the assistance of a skilled Indigenous cultural mediator or a respected Indigenous Knowledge Keeper/Indigenous Knowledge Keepers.

## SCHOOL GROWTH PLANS

School principals are required to annually prepare and submit a school growth plan containing school goals, educational priorities and strategies for their schools. As stated in the Supporting All Learners: Annual Report (2019/2020): "at this time, the following four areas are school growth priorities: improved learning and assessment; social and emotional learning; literacy, and; secondary innovation." This indicates that the district template for school growth plans does not provide opportunities to explicitly connect Indigenous education with equity and anti-racism priorities. In this section of the report, the administrators were asked the following questions:

1. In what ways do school growth plans implement equity and specific strategies to serve diverse Indigenous learners, families and community?
2. How does your school growth plan demonstrate clear metrics and benchmarks to support Indigenous education, equity, and anti-Indigenous racism?

### *Strengths*

The administrators identified the following strengths in responding to the ways school growth plans implement equity and specific strategies to serve diverse Indigenous learners, families and community:

- “Goals specific to Indigenous learners (etc. literacy, learning First People's principles); inclusive education and authentic Canadian cultural experience (specifically around Katzie); restorative circles included in SEL Literacy; goal is to have students see themselves in a book inclusive of all learners.”
- “Thorough class reviews. When reviewing report cards, an awareness of who requires additional support.”
- “Do all students feel represented? Across the district - librarians doing a great job.”
- “Co-ordinate with Katzie to support students and ensure transition back to home school is successful.”
- “Bringing to school - diverse resources.”
- “Focus on Indigenous performance data (according to data at some elementary schools Indigenous students are out performing the general population).”
- “Goal was to increase number of students being taught about First Nations across Canada and locally.”
- “Follow strategies that are inclusive to all learners.”
- “Using student learning survey for grade 10 and 12.”

The administrators identified the following strengths in responding to the metrics and benchmarks used to support Indigenous education, equity and address anti-Indigenous racism:

- “Restorative Practices, student engagement (attendance), MDI (community).”
- “If you have power, you need to use that power for justice.”
- “In our roles we can make change.”
- “We can seek the resources and supports to effect change.”
- “Is there a reluctance as they may not have the level of understanding or education to support others in their learning?”
- “Presence of language that emphasizes and values the shift in practice.”
- “Reflective of community, space and place.”

The responses given do not indicate any of the comprehensive metrics and benchmarks that are currently in place to support Indigenous education, equity, and anti-Indigenous racism.

## **Challenges**

Administrators’ responses to the ways school growth plans implement equity and specific strategies to serve diverse Indigenous learners, families and community reflected two common threads that are reflected throughout this review: (1) an over-reliance and downloading of responsibility to Aboriginal support workers to support the realization of school growth plans that may or may not have explicit goals for Indigenous education; (2) the need for further professional development to ensure the First Peoples Principles of Learning are authentically practiced in leadership, management, and teaching in the district. As one of the administrators said, “Indigenous learning needs to be woven in for all. It cannot be something we teach as a one-time lesson.” Inclusion for all is without a doubt an important goal to strive for, but it must not be a catch-all approach that takes the focus away from addressing anti-Indigenous racism and supporting Indigenous students’ equity-related needs. Please see the administrators’ padlet responses below for further details:

- “Aboriginal Support Teacher and Aboriginal support worker going into classes to teach.”
- “RTI triangle for Indigenous learners: Aboriginal triangle of activity to provide level of support needed - review with ASW and Aboriginal teacher.”
- “Schools don't necessarily have directly in the growth plan - but strategies are woven into the goals (i.e. librarians purchasing Indigenous stories/literature).”
- “Social / Emotional goals support Indigenous education.”
- “First Peoples Principles of Learning into as many things as possible.”
- “High school courses - content driven courses that provide opportunities to view information through alternate lens.”

- “High school is able to provide more targeted opportunities to bring in focused experiences.”
- “Gr. 9 - unit on aboriginal games, Gr. 8 - cultural themes (Aboriginal is one), full-time ASW.”
- “To foster a sense of belonging for ALL staff and students...”
- “Use modes of communication tailored to the needs of the individuals when centering voices, be aware that we don't want to re-traumatize specific groups by naming specifically.”
- “Some schools have a goal around inclusion and cultural inclusivity, not specifically aboriginal.”
- “The goals in the growth plans are sensitive to creating a whole school community that is caring and accepting for all kids. This includes our Indigenous learners.”

The administrators shared the following challenges to implementing clear metrics and benchmarks that support Indigenous education, equity, and anti-Indigenous racism:

- “These things are difficult to measure.”
- “It is a feeling we are creating.”
- “Some schools have incorporated an emphasis on Indigenous ways of learning and knowing.”
- “Still a place of growth Secondary level.”
- “Courses that focus on First Nations and First Peoples.”
- “Data taken is how many take it, their grades.”
- “Not doing anything with the data only using grad rates, satisfaction surveys, disciplinary data, alt program participants ASW.”
- “Being more aware of the Indigenous students in our classes.”

It is also clear that school growth plans do not have or use any metrics and benchmarks to support Indigenous education, equity and anti-Indigenous racism. Further the stories shared by Indigenous students and caregivers in this review indicate a number of challenging feelings caused by systemic racism, colonial violence and trauma that merit the need for stronger accountability and administrative oversight in the district schools.

## ***Needs***

The administrators identified the following needs for setting Indigenous education, equity and anti-Indigenous racism school goals, and educational priorities. The responses below suggest a lack of urgency, pointing to the need for further professional development and encouragement in this area:

- “Including Indigenous learning across the curriculum.”
- “Learning more about the Principles of Learning and connecting it to SEL and literacy.”
- “Resource - North Van staff rubric of Indigenous education.”
- “Do we make assumptions about data? i.e. attendance - why are they not attending?”
- “Do we not reach out because we may not have the knowledge, education, resources that will support the needs?”
- “Do we always need an expert to guide us? We need to look within...the experts we bring in were not the experts when they started yet they learned as a result their expertise grew over time.”
- “We need to lose the expectation that we have all of the knowledge.”

A couple of administrators suggested strategies such as involving the Katzie First Nation in supporting students' transitions back to school or providing Katzie cultural experiences to students. It is clear that most administrators are considering generalized social emotional learning (SEL) initiatives and “inclusion for all” as specific strategies to serve diverse Indigenous learners, families and communities.

“Our school growth plan historically has had the Indigenous Ways of Knowing somewhere written in them, but not in a meaningful way. I also feel like our current Anti-racism growth plan is leading us towards school growth in anti-racism, but we do not specifically mention anti-Indigenous equity and or anti-Indigenous racism. This is something we need to change immediately and focus on moving forward.”

“I think educators will look at areas such as grad rates (6 year), literacy rates, attendance to show district benchmarks but as a school, we have not set a goal or attendance to show district benchmarks ... (and) we have not set a goal or benchmark focused on anti-Indigenous equity and anti-Indigenous racism.”

### *School Growth Plan Recommendations*

- District senior leadership revise all school growth plan template priority areas to reflect distinct and explicit priority areas for Indigenous education, anti-Indigenous racism and equity priorities. This will require in-service professional development sessions to support administrators to create school growth plans with clear measurable goals that are implemented to achieve Indigenous equity-related goals in their schools and the district.
- The planning process for all school growth plans require the involvement of diverse Indigenous Rights Holders in each school (Indigenous Knowledge Holders, Caregivers, Indigenous students, and Indigenous district personnel). Multiple communication channels and school-based events will need to be organized throughout the school year to ensure that all Indigenous Rights Holders are provided meaningful opportunities to share their input for the development of school growth plans.
- All school growth plans will need to ensure that there are clear progress measurements (benchmarks) for Indigenous education and anti-Indigenous racism. Throughout various sections of this report, there are specific recommendation areas for measurable goals to be included in school growth plans.
- All school growth plans should be reviewed by the Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Indigenous Caregivers council before being finalized

## **ANTI-RACISM, EQUITY POLICIES, PRACTICES AND GRIEVANCES RELATED TO ANTI-INDIGENOUS RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION**

What policies and practices are in place to effectively target anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination in your school or in the district? What else is needed?

The majority of the stakeholders who responded to this question: Administrator World Café Focus Group; Management World Café Focus Group; Senior team Interviews, and Senior team World Café Focus Group) were in agreement that the existing policies are generalized to all populations and are not linked explicitly to Indigenous Peoples, anti-Indigenous racism or discrimination. The following policies were cited as examples that require updates to include anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination: Harmonious Workplace Discrimination Bullying and Harassment Policy (7210); Safe and Caring Schools Policy (9410), and; Inclusive Schools Policy (9415).

The Senior team interviews and management world café focus group indicated that the district applies specific variances from human rights legislation to preferential hiring for Indigenous applicants, as well as language in the B.C. Teachers Federation Collective Agreement that supports the preferential hiring of Indigenous teachers. Senior Administration team Interviews also reported that conflicts are dealt with directly with the individuals involved. If the situation cannot be resolved, the union will get involved or a school principal will try to assist and mediate situations. If these conflict resolution efforts do not work, then the issue will be brought forward to Human Resources for assistance and mediation. Human Resources will invite an external mediator to help support the issue. The mediators were reported to be of non-Indigenous backgrounds. The managers' world café focus group recognized that while there was no discrimination in hiring, there was a need for further professional growth and learning in order to customize approaches to support Indigenous experiences related to conduct- and performance-related issues.



The majority of administrators pointed out that the Inclusive Schools Policy is inclusive of all stakeholders, but does not make explicit connections to anti-Indigenous racism and therefore requires updating. Many administrators also pointed out practices that they felt were inclusive. During the course of conversation in this world café focus group, there was growing recognition that the district could enhance existing policies for anti-Indigenous racism and equity. The administrator world café focus group highlighted the importance of being humble to support professional learning and growth in this area. Another important point that was raised in the Administrator world café focus group was the need to change school and district codes of conduct in order to implement anti-Indigenous discriminatory language that enables the district to appropriately respond to targeted incidents of anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination as reported by students, parents, and staff.

The research team observed that the majority of administrators<sup>1</sup> in the school district were White and the conversations that occurred during their world café focus group illustrated a strong disconnect between their lived realities and most Indigenous students, staff and caregivers in the district. It is important to recognize that although almost all the administrators were reflecting deeply in the spirit of care and concern for Indigenous students in the district, the majority were not able to name incidents of reported Indigenous racism that they had experienced in their role as administrators. It is clear from the findings from Indigenous youth, Indigenous caregivers and Indigenous district personnel that racist incidents are being reported, but they are not being effectively dealt with by administrators and teachers in the district.

The research team also observed a small number of IBPOC administrators, who were able to clearly name and challenge institutionally racist practices. As result, we have tried to ensure that quotes from White and IBPOC administrators are represented throughout the report. However, due to confidentiality measures, we are unable to identify which quotes arise from the various positionalities within this group (as well as other white and IBPOC stakeholders mentioned throughout the report). We also recognized that there is great diversity and heterogeneity within white and IBPOC groups in terms of engagement with Indigenous education and anti-racism. However, general systemic patterns related to historical amnesia, professional apathy, privilege, denial, guilt, fear and the perpetuation of racist and colonial practices that are commonly cited in the research related to white teachers, administrators, leaders and staff were also reflected in the district. We also heard from IBPOC stakeholders who were also experiencing significant professional silencing, institutional and personal racism in their current roles, which also reflects the empirical research in this area. We encourage the district to listen seriously to the recommendations that have shared by the Anti-Racism Working Group and the recommendations in this report.

Many administrators need support to understand that working with racist incidents in their schools is not the responsibility of the Aboriginal support workers and that as administrators, they wield significant power to respond to racism, address the institutional racism that Indigenous students, families, and Indigenous personnel endure, and change their school environments. “Multiculturalism”, “increased diversity”, and “Orange Shirt Day” do not mean that racism is being addressed. In fact, multiculturalism is seen by most Indigenous scholars and community members as a form of assimilation and ongoing colonialism in Canada (please see Strand 3: Engaging Colonialism). The bulleted points below speak to the need for further professional development in this area:

- “Increasing diversity in Pitt Meadows/Maple Ridge has helped us to recognize the Indigenous community. Benefiting now from being included in our more multicultural society.”
- “Increased ASW time in schools to support positive practices and develop deeper relationships with students and site staff. Formal training around restorative practices.”

The Trustees’ world café focus group indicated that most existing policies do not explicitly refer to anti-Indigenous racism or discrimination. The trustees also pointed out that “existing work to date is suggesting a broad-based, bottom-up, policy development.” Some board members also admitted to a challenge related to their involvement in Indigenous education in the district – that is, they are not fully immersed in the Aboriginal Advisory Committee activities. However, two trustees sit on the Aboriginal Advisory Committee indicating that there is need for further time to be added to

<sup>1</sup> This pattern is also reflected in senior district leadership and the board of trustees.

board meeting agendas in order to allow for communication and information sharing with regard to anti-Indigenous racism/discrimination. In reviewing the padlet responses that detailed the strengths related to policies in the district, the research team also observed a difference of opinion about the ways that the district can support anti-Indigenous racism and policies. Some trustee responses focused on the need to “celebrat[ing] the culture and the beauty of this culture will also help with anti-racism”. A padlet response directly underneath this statement challenged this multicultural assumption: “cultural awareness is not just about crafts. Teachers need to have the background and expertise to provide the Indigenous culture lessons; also should be able to embed Indigenous knowledge in all curricular areas - from governance perspective is the strategic and nuance support for enabling this practice.” It is clear that trustees like all stakeholders are at various places in their journeys to decolonize and support Indigenous education and anti-Indigenous racism. Please see Strand 6: Professional Development, for further details.

“We haven’t really had a cultural focus on hiring a mediator” (Senior Team Interview).

“I think what we found in working through our discussions is that we feel like we have a lot of good structures and resources in place but a lot of them are generalized. So, for example, anti-discrimination is just anti-discrimination, anything covered under the Human Rights Code. I’m not aware and I’m sure my colleagues aren’t aware of any specific tracking around just Indigenous issues unless it’s through Ab Ed -- Aboriginal Education -- and we definitely do a lot of that with students and student learning but I don’t know about our staff population” (Managers World Café Plenary).

“And I do wonder about the actual process behind it is do we, how do we involve our, our, our families of ancestry or our leaders in our, in our Aboriginal community, our Indigenous community to be able to be part of that process, what does that look like and what, what’s effective too ‘cause I think what you don’t want to do is bog people down either because you could end up consulting to the end and then you never move so how do you find an effective means of doing, and meaningful means of doing that” (Senior Team Interview).

“I don’t recall when [superintendent] was showing us there was anything that spoke specifically to Indigenous systemic racism. Do you think there’s a need for that? I mean when you look at it, it talks about bullying, violence, discrimination in any form. But it doesn’t specifically say you know there is a, there is a part about LGBTQ but there isn’t a specific thing about Indigenous learners so I think in my mind it fell under discrimination in any form. But I think you know we probably still have work to do in terms of looking at that specifically and that’s I think what part of this, this exercise that we’ve started here today” (Senior Team Interview).

“I was just wanting to include how much I appreciate the work that [principal] and the Anti-Racism Committee are doing to bring some of these [policy and equity] concerns into the forefront. I think that’s something that’s just in the last eight months has taken off, and I’m really finding it informative and positive” (Administrator World Café focus group).

“Our school is really beginning their anti-racist journey and so I think our responses to Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black racism are a little more heightened than they were even last year at this time. As a school, we were pretty colonial in our “best practices” and even our restorative process became a bit of a saviour complex process that made educators feel better about their decisions, more than centering what was best for the child. I was guilty of this! Nonetheless, we did begin to collaborate (Aboriginal Resource Teacher) a process flow chart that looked at making sure an Indigenous advocate was at every meeting with our students (discipline, IEPs, etc). This flowchart was also supposed to guide teachers as to how to make contact with Indigenous families. One of the administrators at our school called a family and shared they were going to suspend this student of ancestry and the parent did not respond well to the news. After speaking with our Indigenous support worker, we were given some background to the family dynamics and why the family may have responded the way they did. In doing so, this administrator was given another opportunity to approach the family from their space and comfort. This humility and the ability to let someone else lead and follow us led to a better response and a sense of trust between the family and this administrator. I have also been guilty of suspending or moving a student of ancestry to another school, before having the conversation with our ASWs or Indigenous support team. I always felt this sense of urgency to get stuff done, but in these conversations with these valuable team members, I have been allowed to slow the process down and use as many lenses to support our students and give them the best opportunities for success. I do not believe that we have a tracking system in relation to Anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination that has been documented or tracked. There are a lot of processes/ protocols that need to be set up to support our students of ancestry in this capacity” (Administrator World Café focus group).

## Anti-Racism Policies and Grievances Related to Anti-Indigenous Racism and Discrimination Recommendations

It is important to recognize that there is some overlap with the important work that is being currently undertaken by the Anti-Racism Working Committee in SD42. The following recommendations are offered in the spirit of solidarity with the Anti-Racism Working Group, which has already started the process to update board policies and may have already begun addressing some of the following recommendations:

- These existing policies should be updated: Harmonious Workplace Discrimination Bullying and Harassment Policy (7210); Safe and Caring Schools Policy (9410), and; Inclusive Schools Policy (9415) to explicitly include Indigenous anti-racism and discrimination – or, a new stand-alone policy should be created to address anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination. Updated policies should include: holding district personnel accountable for interpersonal racist acts, including enforcing discipline according to the relevant collective bargaining agreements – when appropriate; holding students accountable for interpersonal racist acts with consequences that could include Indigenous restorative justice and progressive discipline; guaranteeing that retaliation against anyone who reports racist incidents will be investigated and addressed; taking timely action that will not further victimize or harm individuals and communities in order to reduce the impact of racism from within the district, and; assuming proactive responsibility for teaching students and staff about racism’s causes and effects.
- There is a need to develop an “Equity Dashboard” or a district-wide wide tracking system to record, assess, and monitor reported incidents of racism (including anti-Indigenous racism incidents) for all district stakeholders. The information and base-line data from this tracking system should be reported in the school district Strategic Plan and school growth plans to support measurable goals that will inform interventions related to implicit bias, oppression, and racism in order to improve school and work environments for IBPOC students and district personnel. The district is also encouraged to undertake advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Education in order to ensure that all school districts are tracking this data, particularly for the “How are We Doing Report” for Aboriginal Education. Please see the following exemplar from the Ablemare County for further ideas: <https://www.k12albemarle.org/our-division/anti-racism-policy/policy-evaluation-report>
- The school district Strategic Plan should set measurable goals, including timelines for anti-racism policy updates and implementation and tracking mechanisms (including commitments to staffing and budgetary resources from the district’s operating budget). School growth plans should include goals for the implementation of the updated anti-racism policies.
- There is a need to update school and district codes of conduct in order to explicitly include Indigenous racism and discrimination. Indigenous students and Indigenous district personnel should be provided with options for Indigenous restorative support processes regarding racist incidents or employee-related conflicts. Indigenous restorative processes are to be guided by Indigenous cultural mediators and/or respected Indigenous Knowledge Keepers. The district will also need to work with relevant unions on this recommendation. The school district Strategic Plan and school growth plans should set measurable goals for the implementation of this recommendation.
- Professional development (including the allocation of resources and staffing) is required for all district personnel to effectively to respond to and implement anti-Indigenous and anti-racism practices. This includes providing Indigenous restorative training to support the resolution of conflict for administrators, managers, the senior team and trustees (please see professional development section for further details)
- Transparency is needed in leadership succession (particularly for Indigenous-targeted roles like the Aboriginal education district principal). This role should be designated for persons of Indigenous ancestry, and she/he/they should be provided with mentorship, leadership and professional development opportunities that will enable her/him/them to transition successfully into this role. It would be a significant misstep for the district to hire a non-Indigenous person in this role.
- There is a need to invite and compensate interested representatives from local Indigenous Nations and the Métis community to be present on hiring committees (including senior district leadership hiring

committees) and to help identify Indigenous employees that have clear connections to their communities and understandings of local protocols, Indigenous knowledge(s) and cultural practices. The district will need to work closely with relevant unions for this recommendation.

- There is a need to track the number of Indigenous and BPOC who are hired and employed by the district to help set targets for hiring and promotion practices. This includes exit interviews to identify the reasons Indigenous employees are leaving.
- There is a need to ensure that all Indigenous and BPOC are invited to participate in an exit interview. Information from exit interviews should be reviewed by qualified district leadership in order to determine how to address equity and on-going systemic barriers for IBPOC district personnel.
- The district should collaborate with the CUPE union to enhance the local agreement to a) recognize lived experience, Indigenous knowledge and cultural expertise<sup>2</sup> when hiring Aboriginal support workers (ASWs), and; b) enhance wages for ASWs, given the significant responsibilities for Indigenous education in the district and the overwhelming recognition and value of their work by all district stakeholders.
- Ensure Aboriginal support worker responsibilities remain focused on working with Indigenous students as a key priority, with teaching as a secondary priority, or hire more Aboriginal resource teachers.
- The district should create a standing order when budget surpluses arise in the Aboriginal education department to allow the Aboriginal district principal to increase ASWs' hours immediately without waiting for the district budgetary process to finalize.
- Additional funding is required to support Indigenous caregivers advocacy groups in two key areas: (1) Indigenous children in care, and; (2) Indigenous children with diverse learning needs (recognizing that there is overlap in these two areas). Interested caregivers in these groups should be invited to form an Indigenous caregiver advocacy and support group to: identify exact systemic needs for Indigenous children in their care, common barriers, and training required for school district personnel and families. These group(s) will require child-minding, food, support for transportation, lots of lead time, and flexibility for in-person or on-line meetings. For example, the Sea to Sky District, in partnership with the Squamish Nation, sponsored an Indigenous caregiver's advocacy group for families with special needs children. The group identified key priority areas, which resulted in the hiring of a behaviourist to provide three days of training for Aboriginal support workers, school staff, teachers, and Indigenous families with special needs children. In addition, some parents also felt it was important to attend conferences and to share information back with the Indigenous caregivers advocacy group, which the district financially supported. The creation of an Indigenous caregivers advocacy group was of great assistance to the families. It is also important to continue creating additional partnerships with Indigenous agencies in order to support Indigenous children in care.

<sup>2</sup> The lack of recognition of Indigenous credentials in this area is a form of systemic racism.

# STRAND 06

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTION

The stakeholders who were invited to participate in responding to the question below are: administrators, managers, non-Indigenous support staff and teaching staff, and school district Board of Trustees.

What professional development learning opportunities have you engaged in over the last year that focus on Indigenous education, anti-Indigenous racism, and equity?

What else is needed?

The table below lists the strengths of professional development identified by the stakeholders.

### Professional Development Table

STRENGTHS	
Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aboriginal Education Conference</li><li>• Webinar through BCEIE - linking international education with decolonization</li></ul>
District Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SD42 anti-racism committee meetings on equity and inclusion but not specific to truth and reconciliation</li><li>• SD42 Indigenous focus Pro-D day featuring Monique Gray Smith</li><li>• Indigenous Ways of Knowing secondary school teams</li><li>• Book clubs</li><li>• Brad Baker</li><li>• Jodie Carrington StayLit</li><li>• Whole School Pro-D with Sherri Britton</li><li>• Anti-Racism Professional Learning Sessions with MRPVPA</li><li>• Pro-D on the reserve</li><li>• Pro-D series with our Indigenous Support team (Jessica Knott and Amy Laidlaw) and (Leyton Schnellert and Sara Davidson (UBC)</li><li>• Lifelong learning promoted within district</li><li>• Individual goals are met through district-planned training Pro-D through NID daysAdult Social Emotional Learning grant (SELO)</li></ul>
Aboriginal education department Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cultural knowledge keepers in schools is raising awareness for all staff</li><li>• Indigenous Book Study, Session with Leyton Schnellert</li><li>• Joint Education Change Implementation Committee (JECIC)</li><li>• Tree planting with Katzie First Nations</li><li>• Play-based learning extension with Kwantlen and Katzie First Nations about learning from the land</li><li>• Aboriginal Education District book club</li></ul>



<b>Books</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death and Hard Truths of a Northern City by Tanya Talaga</li> <li>• 21 things you may not know about the Indian Act by Bob Joseph</li> <li>• The Inconvenient Indian by Thomas King</li> <li>• The Truth About Stories by Thomas King</li> <li>• Started Braided Sweetgrass by Robin Will Kimmerer</li> </ul>
<b>Post-Secondary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous Canada course through University of Alberta</li> <li>• SFU online course on Residential Schools</li> </ul>
<b>Other PD opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal education and resources acknowledged at weekly staff meetings</li> <li>• Jessica and Amy are doing an amazing job in supporting our district</li> <li>• Sherri Britton and Amy Laidlaw have also pushed our staff forward by doing professional development activities with our staff</li> <li>• Ted Talks of Kevin Lamoureux</li> <li>• Elders participated in language and teachings</li> <li>• Social Justice Center in Langley focused on Indigenous perspective</li> </ul>

With regard to identifying professional development learning opportunities that the stakeholders have engaged in over the last year with a focus on Indigenous education, anti-Indigenous racism and equity, book clubs and SELO were reported as the most popular professional learning opportunities among the non-Indigenous support and teaching staff. Administrators reported the anti-racism and trauma-informed training as the most prevalent professional development for this group. Both administrators and non-Indigenous support and teaching staff acknowledged the powerful impact of having hands-on experience of learning from the Elders and First Nations community members in their communities. Non-Indigenous support and teaching staff are more likely to join professional development learning opportunities when they are offered during working hours or during NID days. They also appreciated when books are gifted after joining a book club.

Administrators, managers and non-Indigenous support and teaching staff all shared that it is important to provide more and ongoing (lifelong) learning opportunities ranging from large presentations requiring district-wide attendance to smaller workshop sessions that facilitate various degrees of learning and understanding for all staff members. In particular, non-Indigenous support and teaching staff raised the issue that some members of the school communities (i.e. custodians, educational assistants, and other support staff members) have been excluded from professional development opportunities due to union status and release time expenses. This concern was also observed by the research team.

“... we want to do more than survive... every person in the school has -- regardless of your position has the ability to be that kind of person that inspires a child and changes our educational system from being a place where kids are just surviving to being a place where they are thriving.”

Many voiced the importance of having a carefully curated resource centre where people can access professional development keynotes, lectures, and other resources under the umbrella of Indigenous resources; while also ensuring the greater integration of different initiatives across the district. Many also suggested to make anti-racist education required for all staff members in order to allow self-reflection and self-awareness relating to unconscious bias and racism. They observed that incoming teachers have anti-racist and Indigenous education from their professional teaching programs. More importantly, the non-Indigenous support and teaching staff recommended more collaboration between childcare workers, support staff and the Aboriginal Education team, as well as the need to create a safe and open space for Indigenous students to work through trauma and connect with non-Indigenous students.



How do you keep current regarding research, best practice, and trends in your field and in education?

## COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS QUESTION

The stakeholders who were invited to participate in responding to the following question are: administrators, managers, non-Indigenous teachers, Indigenous teachers, senior administration team, Aboriginal support workers, the Aboriginal Education team, and Board of Trustees.

☛ Where do you go to have courageous conversations?

☛ Are you a part of a professional learning community (formal or informal)?

☛ Do you keep a journal of critical self-reflection as it pertains to Indigenous education, decolonization and anti-Indigenous racism?

Three broad categories of courageous conversations are identified: (1) professional learning circles; (2) engagement with other district groups, and; (3) other opportunities.

### Courageous Conversations Table

	PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CIRCLES	ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER DISTRICT GROUPS	OTHER
<b>Administrators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeking a place of discomfort and understanding the impact of White privilege at anti-racism committee meetings.</li> <li>Participating in whole group administrator sessions.</li> <li>Speaking to Aboriginal support workers and teaching staff working on English First Peoples.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joining district Anti-Racism Working Group, which provides an opportunity for reflection and self-awareness, discovery.</li> <li>Creating a space for local Principal and Vice Principal Association (MRPVPA) to move discussions about racism and how to respond appropriately to it, not particularly on anti-Indigenous racism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging in eye-opening conversations with colleagues and activists.</li> <li>Having honest and courageous conversations with “critical friends” on topics such as anti-racism, anti-Black racism, and anti-Indigenous racism.</li> </ul>
<b>Managers</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking it to HR if it needs further action/attention.</li> <li>Asking principal of AbEd for advice, Assistant Superintendents.</li> <li>Seeking informal conversations to expand knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Non-Indigenous Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaking to Aboriginal Education team and the individual AbEd Teachers, Aboriginal support workers and the ART's.</li> <li>Using Professional Growth Plan cohort as a sounding board.</li> <li>Living and working at an Indigenous community with Elders and community SD42.</li> <li>Participating in ELL staff meetings</li> <li>Having professional conversations about racism in literacy theme week featuring Dr. Seuss.</li> <li>Engaging with Land based learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Helping teacher, Black Education.</li> <li>Joining book Club with other SD42 teachers within affinity groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joining Facebook group: Decolonizing the music room.</li> <li>Sharing resources Sunnyhill Children's ProD Indigenous Canada course and Youtube Panel discussion with David Levy.</li> <li>Taking Massive Open Online Course at UBC on Reconciliation Through Indigenous Education.</li> <li>Having courageous conversations in library space when students and teachers are looking for resources.</li> <li>Speaking to trusted colleagues, friends and family.</li> <li>Having conversations in passing and in school community.</li> </ul>

<b>Indigenous Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking to the ART team.</li> <li>• Joining book clubs with staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing a lot of reading and listening to podcasts</li> <li>• Attending different events in the community to develop a better sense of these areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Senior Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating in anti-racism learning opportunities.</li> <li>• Listening to Kevin Lamoureux.</li> <li>• Participating in Carolyn Roberts-Heart and Mind Conference.</li> <li>• Engaging with key Indigenous policies in B.C. and Canada. (The Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the BC Tripartite Agreement).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sitting on a board with Dr. Gwen Point and being mentored.</li> </ul>
<b>Aboriginal support workers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating in Weekly SBT meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking to trusted colleagues.</li> </ul>
<b>Aboriginal Education Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joining Book Club: talked about, “How do we incorporate Indigenous worldview into our own department?”</li> <li>• Being a member of this strong team discussing what is needed to be done to decolonize own practice.</li> </ul>	
<b>Trustees WCF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a member of the BCSTA Professional Learning Committee.</li> </ul>	

Courageous conversations most commonly happened privately and in both informal and formal settings with trusted colleagues and friends. As the table above shows, different stakeholders engaged in a variety of opportunities for courageous conversations. Aboriginal support workers and the Aboriginal education team were sought by the administrators, managers, and non-Indigenous teachers for courageous conversations, advice, and resources, but many Aboriginal support workers reflected on how they did not have a safe space in which to have courageous conversations. They found it difficult to speak from the heart for fear of being judged and of repercussions. Many of them did not feel they could speak up, because the trust was not there and they worried that they could easily offend people.

“...this system is colonized and designed for us not to trust... at times I feel paralyzed with the fear of negative consequences and it prevents me from sharing or having courageous conversations” (Aboriginal support worker).

To get to a place of safety and trust and to speak in a safe way, the Aboriginal support workers recommended having an Indigenous leader in the department and an Indigenous/cultural mentor as the Aboriginal Education Principal.

Both the administrators and senior team searched for anti-racism learning opportunities. One administrator described the importance of “seek(ing) a place of discomfort to understand the impact of white privilege” and another spoke on the importance of “creating safe space for courageous conversations that are reflective of our own practices.”

One senior team member shared how people were willing to be vulnerable to engage in hard conversations of this nature over Zoom and contemplated further actions that were reflective of anti-Indigenous racism. Most senior team members shared how they felt comfortable with each other having courageous conversation, and shared:

“Respect is a part of our district. We have a culture of open collaboration, dialogues, and strength in the district” (Senior Team Member).

But one raised a critical question:

“Official yes but what about the unofficial. How do we speak up when the person is a colleague?” (Senior Team Member).

Another asked:

“The other book that my intention is to read over spring break is *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act* because ... I don't know what I don't know and ... I think... I'm blind ... to some of these issues in some ways because I've not had to deal with them personally just because as, as the term white privilege I think you know being a 50 plus year old white educated male, it's, it's something that I need to think more deeply about because I know that others don't have that same privilege as I do” (Senior Team Member).

Indigenous teachers, non-Indigenous teachers, Aboriginal support workers the Aboriginal Education team, and the senior team all enjoyed joining book clubs in order to have courageous conversations.

Indigenous teachers joined book clubs, listened to podcasts, as well as participated in local events to gain knowledge and to learn to have courageous conversations. One shared:

“We attend different events in the community to develop a better sense of these areas” (Indigenous Teacher).

Non-Indigenous teachers brought in various courageous conversation online learning opportunities, such as Facebook or YouTube or online courses. Reflecting back on the training they received before becoming a teacher, one non-Indigenous teacher shared:

“I am appalled that I got this far without knowing anything. We shouldn't have teachers get to the end of their training without any courses. A lot of the training should be us not talking but us listening” (Non-Indigenous teacher).

Similarly, Aboriginal support workers and Aboriginal Education team also thought book clubs provided a great opportunity to have conversations with colleagues. One member of Aboriginal Education team expressed some apprehension about a particular book, *Me and White Supremacy*:

“...*Me and White Supremacy*... which is probably going to scare me. I haven't read anything like that before. But I'm so curious. Like I – I feel there's got to be hidden biases and racism, and I'm just like, really trying to see them” (Aboriginal Education Team).

The research team highly recommends the aforementioned book for readers who are new to their anti-racism journey's due to its accessible and practical reflective prompts that can be iteratively enacted in professional and personal contexts.

Another member explained that the path to incorporating Indigenous worldview into their own department was not so straightforward:

“We were becoming much more structured I guess in a way which I know is good but I think we lost some of that, that makes those pieces that are important to allow us to feel like a community and heard and connected some of those practices that are rooted within Indigenous worldviews opposed to western ones. And so trying to have those conversations as often as possible where we're able to say what is it that's working for us and where we may be losing our path a little bit in our attempt to work within a Eurocentric system” (Aboriginal Education Team).

Sometimes priorities got shifted and one could easily lose sight of what's really important. They continued:

“Because I find we get so much pressure from the school district to provide different training or to provide different workshops or to do cultural activities that sometimes in our attempt to fit those needs we're no longer staying true to our core. And so how do we make sure that we're holding ourselves accountable and saying, “Yeah, I know that teacher wants that but would we share that knowledge typically? I know that the district asked us to provide this training but are they ready or open and would it be authentic or would it just be trying to fit a hole that they have perceived?” (Aboriginal Education Team).

Trustees found the board table a safe place to raise issues and saw the professional learning community to be embodied in the BCSTA Professional Learning Committee. They also identified goals for their professional development and learning:

"I was talking a little bit, and I was saying, you know, that there's an opportunity for me to do better, as well. I mean, there are some really great additional opportunities to learn about, you know, our Indigenous communities across Canada. And I was talking about, you know, there is a free course on Indigenous People from Canada through U of A – University of Alberta – and that's you know, a really great opportunity just to work on your baseline knowledge, and so you know, I need to do better at sharing those types of opportunities as well, so that we can help elevate the (ia audio interference) of Indigenous People and you know, it makes a lot of these – these conversations a little bit more free-flowing, with that baseline information" (Trustee World Café Plenary).



How do you encourage 'open to learning conversations'?

## JOURNAL WRITING

Most administrators reported participating in a lot of reflection and conversation, but had not engaged in journal writing. They highlighted that they were open to the idea of journal writing, but not sure where to find time. However, in the area of generalized racism and vulnerable students, some individuals are journaling.

Most non-Indigenous teachers and members of Aboriginal Education team also do not keep a journal of critical self-reflection, but some do keep track of their own anti-racism journey by journaling. Some Indigenous teachers do journals.

## Professional Development Strand Recommendations

- The development of a local Indigenous protocol guide, learning resource kits or a course\* (see below\*) should be prioritized for all district staff under the guidance of local Indigenous Knowledge Holders and Nations. Content should include: settler bias; systemic racism; the need to critically engage with one's privilege and responsibilities; moving beyond fear to action; and communication and consultation protocols for various district roles including how to listen to Indigenous Knowledge Holders, students and caregivers; how to work with Indigenous Knowledge Holders when they visit classes, schools, and Indigenous community visits; pointers on how to engage Indigenous and anti-racism values in discussions with colleagues, students and Indigenous community members; strategies on how to navigate "mistakes" and develop Settler stamina; district processes for inviting Indigenous Knowledge Holders to the classroom, and to school and district events, including district key points of contact, along with an explanation to detail the reasons why district leads have been appointed to be the contacts (i.e., to not overburden Indigenous Knowledge Holders with multiple requests throughout the district); financial compensation policies for Knowledge Holders and a rationale for Indigenous Knowledge Holders' compensation (i.e., why fair compensation is required); local history and the contemporary realities of the Katzie, Kwantlen and Métis Nations, with key teachings that local Indigenous Nations would like all district personnel to know; engaging land-based practices with local language(s); local district Indigenous and anti-racism resources that are available to support distinct stakeholder groups (support staff, managers, administration, teachers, caregivers, senior leadership, etc.); information and protocols for the Elder-in-residence program in each school; consistent professional development opportunities that are offered annually to support Indigenous education priorities across the district; personal and professional strategies for non-Indigenous district personnel to initiate outside of their relationship with the Aboriginal education department (e.g. join a professional learning community, attend local Indigenous public events, sign up for a free on-line Indigenous open on-line course at a university, etc.). \*The district is encouraged to partner with a local university to create a hybrid in-person local/ on-line course for district employees.
- A video series should be created with Aboriginal education department staff who are comfortable sharing their Indigenous teachings, pedagogical practices and stories that can be utilized for professional development and learning within the district. All participants should be fairly compensated for their time in a similar way to



Indigenous Knowledge Holders (and not expected to do this as part of their current positions).

- There is a need to create additional in-service curriculum implementation days for Indigenous education, anti-Indigenous racism, colonialism and land-based education for teachers and educational assistants.
- There is a need to provide anti-racism (including anti-Indigenous racism) training for all district personnel, trustees, the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee, parent advisory councils, the Indigenous parents' council, etc. For example, the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia has just launched its first local open on-line course on "Historical, Systemic and Intersectional Antiracism: From Awareness to Action Course" (please see link for further details). <https://courses.cpe.ubc.ca/browse/ubcv/faculty-of-education/courses/historical-systemic-and-intersectional-antiracism>. Ensure that all district employees and community groups who participate and complete the course are recognized at district awards and event(s).
- Continue inviting Indigenous leaders and educators to present at district professional development days on topics related to Indigenizing and decolonizing the curriculum, engaging anti-Indigenous racism, and Indigenous restorative training, etc. for all district staff. Indigenous presenters should be invited to present in a series of workshops for professional development days, rather than single sessions, to promote sustained learning and engagement.
- Create an Indigenous leadership and mentorship collective to identify systemic barriers for leadership development, professional development needs, training, and the support required to cultivate Indigenous leadership and succession planning at all levels throughout the district (Aboriginal support workers, Aboriginal teachers, vice principals, principals, senior administration etc.). A district budgetary line item should be allocated to the Indigenous Leadership and Mentorship Collective.
- Partner with Simon Fraser University to create a Graduate Diploma in Education Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Education and Anti-Racist Indigenous Pedagogies. It would be helpful if the district offered a financial incentive, such as a \$1,000 commitment, for educators to take the program. <https://www.sfu.ca/education/gs/degreediploma/graddiplomafp.html.html>
- Partner with the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University or the Department of Education Studies at the University of British Columbia to develop a graduate MEd cohort on Indigeneity, Equity, and Anti-racism. This will also support an internal leadership growth model to cultivate Indigenous and BPOC leadership in the district.
- The Human Resource department should create appropriate cultural supports and activities that support the wellbeing of Indigenous district personnel, including lateral liberation (or lateral violence) workshops.
- There is a need to ensure that each school (including elementary schools) has a safe space (classroom) for Indigenous students. The space could have dual purposes for Aboriginal education department programming. If there is no space in the elementary schools, order portable classrooms. This goal should be reported in the district Strategic Plan.
- Ensure more professional development in trauma-informed pedagogical practices for all teachers, administration, and school staff.



# STRAND 07

## TRANSITIONS

### ELEMENTARY TO HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITIONS SHARING CIRCLE

A sharing circle comprised of elementary and secondary students in grades 7-9 from across the district was hosted to ask for student's input on elementary to high school transitions. The prompts and questions are listed followed by collated responses and key quotes to illuminate key ideas.

Pretend we are making a comic book on transition to high school for Indigenous youth. What kind of story would you tell?

#### 1. What do you think the characters will need to do in order to be successful in high school?

- Good grades and working habits in school.
- Support from staff, friends, and family.
- Media awareness.
- Emotional support.

"Good people are people who they can trust, and who can put any words through, anything that they might not tell anybody else, they can tell these people."

"Teachers need to understand how each student learns."

"One of the main things is that you need a good mental attitude, because a lot of teenagers in this time of our lives – since the media and a lot of other stuff, and a lot of people online are really, really mean and will put you down if they think that any of your stuff is unoriginal. Right? This can cause a lot of mental stress, and eventually this will lead up to you getting worse grades, you'll become more sad."

#### 2. What activities do the characters participate in?

- Sports
- Academic clubs
- Indigenous leadership programs
- Cultural and artistic activities

"I go to a school that is outside and we learn everything from our environment."

"I think my character would be involved in lots of sports, academic clubs, and um, lots of educational-type things."

### 3. What study habits do the characters have?

- Study groups
- Keeping priorities in line
- Staying away from distractions
- Taking breaks

“Those study habits will eventually become an actual habit..., so it will stick with you all the way through college, which means that if you get all your work done, you can do whatever you want for the rest of your day, and you don't have to stress about it a lot.”

“My character would study in like a quiet environment and like, be like – aware of like, when their focus is not as sharp, then take a few moment's break and then come back to it.”

### 4. What kind of friends do characters have?

- Making friends who make good choices
- Lifelong friendships
- Be understanding of each other's differences
- Having friends who are not toxic, won't guilt trip you or play the victim card

“My character has several friends that are humble, nice, friendly, optimistic, similar interests. They're their own person, they expect diversity, and they have a good sense of humour, open communication, thoughtful. They're very positive people. They may have some flaws, but ...we respect each other, and we want to see each other succeed, and have lifelong friendships, yeah.”

“my character's friends would always treat someone with respect, and always be very understanding of each other's differences. Though they may not be somewhat similar, they'll always respect and understand everything, and be nice.”

### 5. What are their family members like?

- Loving, supportive, and strict
- Understanding, helpful, and hardworking
- A family that sets good examples
- Having a balance of roles and freedom

“I believe my character's family members aren't necessarily blood-related. I believe that my character will find family in their friends or teacher, or just people who they will identify as family.”

“My character's family members would be understanding in how they are, and like (ia) making sure that they're always okay in like, their mental health, because a lot of kids just – a lot of teenager's mental health, I guess, kind of just went down —.”

“I believe that family members would be understanding and loving when it's needed — also being able to help out with stuff. Like, not just being so supported in everything that you could get into bad situations, like giving feedback.”

### 6. What resources, people or programs would the characters go to if they were having a hard time in high school?

- A trusted adult that they'd met, are comfortable with, can deeply relate to, and who understand them.
- Programs such as chess club, sports club and other programs that help release stress.
- Aboriginal Education Room
- Knowing your surroundings, finding a safe environment

"I believe my character would go to somebody that they trust, or somebody that they feel safe with. Or somebody who can deeply relate and understand them."

"I think knowing your surroundings, or finding a safe environment, plus finding wise, moral sort of people can help with those challenges. And people to just vent and tell your problems to, can like, be a stress-reliever."

### 7. What important message would you share for future Indigenous youth making a transition to high school?

- Don't be ashamed of who you are or your history. Be proud of it
- Don't be scared to be honest when talking to someone
- You don't need to conform
- Have a clear head and don't focus on negative feedback or opinions

"My message to other Aboriginal youth would be to not be afraid to be yourself, be proud of your identity and your heritage. Don't change anything about yourself for anybody else, focus on the present, and be who you want to be. You don't need to conform, just be yourself."

"I think, probably the end of elementary school and throughout high school, you will – the character – will be getting lots of negative feedback or opinions, and you should have a clear head space and not focus on them even though it might seem like a challenge at the time, and yeah."

## POST-SECONDARY TRANSITIONS AND CAREER PLANNING

In this section, we focused on looking at how post-secondary education and career planning is experienced by Indigenous secondary students. The collated information below comes from our interviews with youth from across the district. The youth's recommendations are shared below.

### Youth Recommendations for Post-secondary Education and Career Planning Practices and Processes

- Provide adequate information on preparing to apply to post-secondary education.

"And university, I feel like they could have done a bit better on how to like, apply, and what not, but like, I've sort of figured it all out on my own, because I've applied and what not and gotten in."

- Have information about applying for post-secondary education available earlier in the school year.

"I've had, near the beginning of the year, ... our counsellors came into class and ... letting us know that we need to do it early – because it's a long process of – of – prerequisites – well, you need to get prerequisites."

- Provide information about supports specifically for Indigenous students

"the Aboriginal Department, like when we go – like, last year, we'd go on like, the trips to like, the universities, and stuff."

- Have speakers to talk about the importance of post-secondary education and career planning and provide field trip opportunities to visit universities

"I know that they used to do it but this year, I don't really know much about the other schools, we haven't had...that exposed to the other universities. I know they did all the other years."

- Provide additional support and training for career planning

"I think in maybe English or something, or some class – it would be a good idea for some future if they teach us how to write a resume. Because to get a job, you need a resume and if I want to start a job, I kind of need to know how to write one and having that teacher help me with that ahead of time before I even need to start get one, would be really helpful."



## Post-Secondary and Career Transition Recommendations

- Invite Indigenous alumni who have graduated from SD42 in the last five years to attend a sharing circle to provide feedback on their post-secondary and career related transitions for the second cycle of the “Deepening Indigenous Education and Equity in School District 42 2021-2022”.
- Create a partnership with a local university to create dual credit programming to support Indigenous students interested in education (this will help support the hiring of Indigenous educators in the district through a grow your own approach).
- Continue post-secondary visits and Indigenous provincial youth conferences for Indigenous learners.
- Continue providing Indigenous families and caregivers with information about university transition programs and summer high school programs offered at local Universities.
- Create family evenings on Indigenous post-secondary transitions. Invite Indigenous alumni to share their educational journeys related to post-secondary transitions.
- Partner with a local university or college to create an elementary or high school program in areas where Indigenous students have been underrepresented (i.e., Sciences, Math, Engineering, etc.).
- Indigenous alumni who have graduated from SD42 in the last five years should be invited to attend a sharing circle in order to provide feedback on their post-secondary and career related transitions for the second cycle of the “Deepening Indigenous Education and Equity in School District 42 2021-2022”.
- Indigenous families and caregivers should continue to be provided with information about university transition programs and summer high school access programs offered at local Universities.
- Family evenings with a focus on Indigenous post-secondary transitions should be created. SD42. Indigenous alumni should be invited to share their educational journeys related to post-secondary transitions.
- Partner with a local university or college to create an elementary or high school summer access programs in areas where Indigenous students have been underrepresented (e.g. Sciences, Math, Engineering).
- Partner with the Native Teacher Indigenous Education Program (NITEP) at the University of British Columbia, or Simon Fraser University’s Professional Development program, to create a dual credit course for district Indigenous students interested in enrolling in Indigenous teacher education after high school completion. This will also support an internal growth model to support the growth of Indigenous teachers in the district.
- Partner with Simon Fraser University’s Faculty of Education to create a dual credit course for grade 12 students interested in becoming Indigenous educational assistants. A similar course has already been created for another local school district.
- An internal marketing campaign should be created to encourage diverse Indigenous student career pathways in the district, featuring local Indigenous role models who are currently working in the district.

# STRAND 08

## DISTRICT ALTERNATE CONTINUING EDUCATION / CONNECTED LEARNING COMMUNITY REMOTE LEARNING SHARING CIRCLE

### INDIGENOUS ALTERNATE EDUCATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION / ONLINE / CONNECTED LEARNING COMMUNITY / REMOTE STUDENTS - SHARING CIRCLE QUESTIONS

A distinct sharing circle was held with Indigenous Alternate Education and Continuing Education/Online/Connected Learning Community Remote students.

#### 1. How does your school community support your learning?

All students in this sharing circle emphasized the importance of the caring and supportive teacher they interacted with daily. They stated that teachers in their current school community are “really phenomenal” and “super helpful”. Students appreciated that their teachers provided more one-on-one support and interactive activities to help them learn. They also appreciated the additional cultural opportunities that are offered by the Aboriginal support worker(s) and Aboriginal teacher(s). Other students emphasized the importance of having friends in their school and classmates to support their learning.

#### 2. How does your current school support you differently than the secondary school you attended before?

- Students appreciated one-on-one assistance with learning
- Students felt that they had teachers that were more supportive and caring
- Students appreciated flexibility for classes and scheduling (no early mornings are noted as helpful)
- Students feel that they are treated equally in their current school, which also lead to less targeting of students and feelings of exclusion
- Students appreciated additional mental health and wholistic supports
- Students emphasized that their current teachers and staff had greater empathy for their family and personal situations that extended beyond class time
- Students appreciated learning and engaging in Indigenous cultural activities offered by the Aboriginal education department.

“I’m supported in Outreach based on how I was in my first school, is a very big difference, right? I think I was ignored by the teachers a lot before. Like, and my studies reflected on that.”

“Westview -- that’s where I was before, I was there from Grade 8 ‘til Grade 9, and my anxiety got super bad while I was there because I feel like they targeted me a lot. Because I guess I wasn’t that good in the past, but then I changed my behaviour, but I was still a target of being blamed for things that I didn’t do. But I feel like Riverside really helped me with my anxiety and depression and everything.”

“Like when I was at Westview, I wasn’t learning anything about, like, Aboriginal culture or anything at Westview. But now that I’m here, like [we have an Aboriginal support worker and Aboriginal teacher] we got Aboriginal staff.”

2a. What (if anything) do you miss from your previous secondary school?

The majority of students highlighted that they were happier in their present school, but noted that they missed the extracurricular activities and course selection offerings that were offered in their former schools. Two students detailed significant mental health issues at their previous high schools, which either caused them to be ignored or targeted by their teachers, and led them to not miss anything from their previous high school.

"I don't really miss anything from when I was in Westview. I wish there was more extra-curricular activities...and understanding of mental health because my anxiety is so bad, that I just stopped going for a while and then like, I went to school, they forgot that I was even in class, no, I don't really miss anything."

"My old secondary would have a larger variety of what classes you could take. Different science classes, criminology, stuff like that. And at Outreach, we don't have as many choices."

2b. What do you wish had been available at your old school?

- Supportive teachers
- Greater number of support staff
- More services and programs to support students' mental and physical health
- Flexible schedules for students who need breaks

"I don't really miss anything from Westview, except [two teachers]. What I wish has been more available at Westview is more understanding of mental health. I'm ADHD (Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder) so I was always really hyper, and none of my teachers really understood that and I always got in trouble for like, taking long bathroom breaks. I didn't really understand why I was gone so long, except that I needed to move."

3. What do you want your teachers, principal, support workers and parent's to know about your schooling experience so far?

- Indigenous knowledge and learning opportunities need to be incorporated throughout all classes and schooling experiences.
- All teachers need to be enrolled in anti-racism training with specific support on Indigenous anti-racism.
- Mental health and professional development training are needed for all staff.
- Mental health supports for students and bullying prevention are needed.
- Students need support for transitions to a career.

"I feel like there should definitely be like, something that all teachers have to take, in resolving, conflict resolution and like, educational, and racism not just for like, People of Colour, but also like, Indigenous People. Because we all come in different shades you know? Like, you've got some people who are who can be like darkest skin, some people paler skin, some people just don't feel included and I think it should be more normalized to have Indigenous learning in school. Whether it started in elementary or start, like high school."

"In terms of like, anxiety, depression, ADHD -- Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and ADD (Attention-deficit disorder). Everything in the mental health range. Because they couldn't handle it very well at all. I have a panic attack at school, and I'd get sent home because I was crying. Because they didn't know how to deal with it. And after that, I was sent home like, every day for like, two months straight, and I missed so much school that I'd be blamed for it when I would be sent home."

"I think that a lot of schools brush things under the rug all the time, or they just direct all like, conflict, like, onto one student, and then that can definitely build that anxiety, stress, everything. Because that's what happened to me. I was like, a lot of staff, like bullied me, like directly and made me not want to go to school, it definitely made my anxiety increase by a lot, and then I missed more school, and then I was like failing because of it."

The recommendations from this sharing circle have been woven into a number of strands throughout the report (in particular Strand's 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5).

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## APPENDIX A

### Research Questions According to Research Method and Stakeholder Group

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#### **World Café focus group QUESTIONS**

##### **1. Administration -World Café focus group Questions**

###### **Relationships**

How can you and your colleagues enhance relationships in your school and district to support the wholistic wellbeing



of Indigenous learners, families and communities? [We invite you to consider relationships broadly for this question. i.e. families, students, district staff, managers, admin, community members etc]

### **District Policies, Agreements and Governance**

In what ways do school growth plans implement equity and specific strategies to serve diverse Indigenous learners, families and community? How does your school growth plan demonstrate clear metrics and benchmarks to support Indigenous education, equity, and anti-Indigenous racism?

What policies and practices are in place to effectively target anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination in your school? What else is needed?

How are grievances related to anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination dealt with? What your school doing to foster the relationship with the person bringing forward a grievance to instill trust that the grievance is going to be addressed as a valid concern? Are grievances related to anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination documented and tracked? What else is needed?

### **Student Learning and Assessment**

How often does your school invite Indigenous Knowledge Holders to share local history, protocols, stories and knowledge with students?

In what ways does your school assessment practices address the unique needs of diverse Indigenous learners?

### **Indigenous Pedagogy Culture and Colonialism**

Do the instructional materials used in your school, such as textbooks, supplementary books, and media describe the perspectives of diverse Indigenous Peoples and racialized ethnic groups? How are these instructional materials being used by teachers and support staff?

How are students in your school taught about colonialism?

### **Professional Growth and Responsibilities**

What professional development learning opportunities have you engaged in over the last year that focus on Indigenous education, anti-Indigenous racism, and equity? What else is needed?

Where do you go to have courageous conversations? Are you a part of a professional learning community (formal or informal)? Do you keep a journal of critical self-reflection as it pertains to Indigenous education, decolonization and anti-Indigenous racism?

## **2. Managers-World Café focus group Questions**

### **Relationships**

How can you and your colleagues enhance relationships in the district to support the wholistic wellbeing of Indigenous learners, families, and communities in the district? [We invite you to consider relationships broadly for this question. ie families, students, district staff, managers, admin, community members etc]

### **District Policies, Agreements and Governance**

What practices are employed in your department to support equitable outcomes for Indigenous learners, families and communities in management decisions? What else is needed in terms of addressing Indigenous education, anti-Indigenous racism, discrimination and decolonization in management decisions?

What policies and practices are in place to effectively target anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination in the district?

How are grievances related to anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination dealt with? What is the district [your department or school] doing to foster the relationship with the person bringing forward the grievance to instill trust that the grievance is going to be addressed as a valid concern? Are grievances related to anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination documented and tracked? What else is needed?

### **Professional Growth and Learning**

Where do you go to have courageous conversations? Are you a part of a professional learning community (formal or informal)?

What are your professional development learning goals that pertain to Indigenous education, decolonization, equity and anti-Indigenous racism?

## **3. Non-Indigenous Support Staff-World Café focus group Questions**

### **All Support Staff-Relationships**

How can you and your colleagues enhance relationships in your school and district to support the wholistic wellbeing of Indigenous learners, families and communities? [We invite you to consider relationships broadly for this question. ie families, students, district staff, managers, admin, community members etc]

How are Indigenous learners, families and communities offered support in your school(s)? What else is needed?

### **Teaching Support Staff Only-Student Learning and Assessment**

How are students in your classes/schools provided opportunities to develop skills and explore diverse Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, pedagogies, cultural activities and land based learning?

How does the assessment practices in your classes/schools address the unique needs of diverse Indigenous learners?

Do the instructional materials used in your school(s), such as textbooks, supplementary books, and media describe the perspectives of diverse Indigenous Peoples and racialized ethnic groups? How are these instructional materials being used by yourself and colleagues?

How are local Indigenous Knowledge Holders engaged to share local history, protocols, stories, land based education and knowledge in your classes and school(s)? What else is needed?

### **All Support Staff- Professional Responsibilities and Growth**

How do you acknowledge and address acts of racism and microaggression in your school(s), and with colleagues? What resources or support do you feel that you need to be able to better address racism and microaggressions in your school(s)?

What professional development learning opportunities have you engaged in over the last year that focus on Indigenous education and equity? What else is needed?

Where do you go to have courageous conversations? Are you a part of a professional learning community (formal or informal)? Do you keep a journal of critical self-reflection as it pertains to Indigenous education, decolonization, equity, and anti-Indigenous racism?

## **4. Non-Indigenous Teachers- World Café focus group Questions**

### **Relationships**

How can you and your colleagues enhance relationships in your school and district to support the wholistic wellbeing of Indigenous learners, families and communities? [We invite you to consider relationships broadly for this question. i.e. families, students, district staff, managers, admin, community members etc]

## **Student Learning and Assessment**

How do you provide opportunities for students to develop skills and explore diverse Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, pedagogies, cultural activities and land based learning?

How does your assessment practices address the unique needs of diverse Indigenous learners?

## **Indigenous Pedagogy, Culture and Colonialism**

Do the instructional materials used in your school, such as textbooks, supplementary books, and media describe the perspectives of diverse Indigenous Peoples and racialized ethnic groups? How are these instructional materials being used by yourself and colleagues?

How are local Indigenous Knowledge Holders engaged to share local history, protocols, stories, land based education and knowledge in your class and school? What else is needed?

How are students taught about colonialism in your class and school? What else is needed?

## **Professional Responsibilities and Growth**

How do you acknowledge and address acts of racism and microaggression in your school, and with colleagues? What resources or support do you feel that you need to be able to better address racism and microaggressions in your school?

What professional development learning opportunities have you engaged in over the last year that focus on Indigenous education and equity? What else is needed?

Where do you go to have courageous conversations? Are you a part of a professional learning community (formal or informal)? Do you keep a journal of critical self-reflection as it pertains to Indigenous education, decolonization, equity, and anti-Indigenous racism?

## **5. Indigenous Teachers and Indigenous Support Staff: World Café focus group Questions**

### **Relationships (both groups answer these questions)**

How can you and your colleagues enhance relationships in your school and district to support the wholistic wellbeing of Indigenous learners, families and communities? [We invite you to consider relationships broadly for this question. ie families, students, district staff, managers, admin, community members etc]

How are Indigenous learners, families and communities offered support in your school(s)? What else is needed?

### **Teachers-Student Learning Assessment (only teachers)**

How are students in your classes/schools provided opportunities for students to develop skills and explore diverse Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, pedagogies, cultural activities and land based learning?

How does your assessment practices address the unique needs of diverse Indigenous learners?

## **Indigenous Pedagogy Culture and Colonialism**

Do the instructional materials used in your school, such as textbooks, supplementary books, and media describe the perspectives of diverse Indigenous Peoples and racialized ethnic groups? How are these instructional materials being used by yourself and colleagues?

How are local Indigenous Knowledge Holders engaged to share local history, protocols, stories, land based education and knowledge in your class and school? What else is needed?

How are students taught about colonialism in your class and school(s)? What else is needed?

### **Indigenous Support Staff-Student Learning and Assessment (only support staff)**

How are students in your classes/schools provided opportunities to develop skills and explore diverse Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, pedagogies, cultural activities and land based learning?

How do the assessment practices in your classes/schools address the unique needs of diverse Indigenous learners?

### **Indigenous Pedagogy and Colonialism**

Do the instructional materials used in your school(s), such as textbooks, supplementary books, and media describe the perspectives of diverse Indigenous Peoples and racialized ethnic groups? How are these instructional materials being used by yourself and colleagues?

How are local Indigenous Knowledge Holders engaged to share local history, protocols, stories, land based education and knowledge in your classes and school(s)? What else is needed?

How are students in your classes and schools taught about colonialism? What else is needed?

### **Indigenous Teachers and Indigenous Support Staff**

#### **Professional Responsibilities Growth (both groups answer these questions)**

How do you acknowledge and address acts of racism and microaggression in your school and with colleagues? What resources or support do you feel that you need to be able to better address racism and microaggressions in your school?

What professional development learning opportunities have you engaged in over the last \_\_\_\_\_ year that focus on Indigenous education and equity? What else is needed?

Where do you go to have courageous conversations? Are you a part of a professional learning community (formal or informal)? Do you keep a journal of critical self-reflection as it pertains to Indigenous education, decolonization, equity, and anti-Indigenous racism?

## **6. Mixed Indigenous/Non Indigenous World Café focus group Questions**

After watching the "Words Matter" Video what questions do you have about any of the terms that were explained (mis-gendered, settler colonialism, racism, tokenism, privilege, white privilege etc)? Were there any terms that were new for you? Or did you learn new information about a term that you already knew? Link for Words Matter Video: <https://vimeo.com/423324699>

(a) What have you learned about local Indigenous cultures, languages and communities in your classes or visits with Indigenous Knowledge Holders? (b) Do you get to participate in outdoor land based learning activities in your school? [Prior to COVID some examples might include: traditional canoeing, visits to local Indigenous communities, longhouses, harvesting traditional plants, foods, berries ect] (c) What else would you like to learn about in relation to Indigenous cultures, languages and communities? [In your responses below, please write 2a., 2b., 2c]

(a) What have you learned about Settler colonialism? (b) What else would you like to learn? [In your response below, please write 3a., 3b.]

(a) Pretend you are in class watching a movie about Indigenous Peoples and one of your classmates says something about Indigenous Peoples that is offensive. (b) How do you respond? (c) What supports do you need to help resolve the situation?

(a) In what ways are you made to feel welcome and your voice valued by your teachers and school staff? (b) Were there times when you haven't felt welcomed? If so, why?

Have you witnessed or experienced discrimination or racism against Indigenous students, or families in your class or school community? If yes:

- a. How did you work through the situation?
- b. How did your teacher, school staff, or principal support the situation?
- c. Was there anything else that should have been done?

(a) Do you have opportunities to learn how to speak out against discrimination and racism in your class and school community? (b) What else is needed?

Can you recommend any resources that you would like your classmates and teachers to engage with during school that are related to Indigenous cultures, languages, settler colonialism, racism, privilege and allyship? [Examples could be specific books, music, podcasts, movies, local tours, Indigenous cultural activities, protests to support climate change and Indigenous rights speakers, games, activist activities etc]

## **7. Senior Team- World Café focus group Questions**

### **Relationships**

How can you and your colleagues enhance relationships in the district to support the wholistic wellbeing of Indigenous learners, families, and communities in the district?

### **District Policies, Agreements and Governance**

How are diverse Indigenous learners, families and communities involved in creating policies, agreements and governance procedures that support Indigenous education and equitable outcomes in the management and/ or educational planning of SD42 Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows? [Prompts: budgets, employment/hiring, specific services and programs for Indigenous learners etc]. What are the barriers?

How is information on district policies, agreements and governance procedures communicated to Indigenous learners, families, and communities?

### **District Strategic Plan**

In what ways does the district strategic plan address equity and specific strategies to serve diverse Indigenous learners, families and communities? How can the district plan address issues of Indigenous systemic racism, equity and discrimination? How does the district strategic plan implement Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing? What aspects of the district plan require further decolonizing and Indigenous equity informed strategies and initiatives?

What policies and practices are in place to effectively target anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination in the district? What else is needed?

### **Professional Growth and Learning**

Where do you go to have courageous conversations? Are you a part of a professional learning community (formal or informal)? What are your professional development learning goals that pertain to Indigenous education, decolonization, equity and anti-Indigenous racism

## **8. Trustees**

### **Relationships**

How can you and your colleagues enhance relationships in the district to support the wholistic wellbeing of Indigenous learners, families, and communities in the district?



## **District Policies, Agreements and Governance**

How are diverse Indigenous learners, families and communities involved in creating policies, agreements, and governance procedures that support Indigenous education and equitable outcomes in the management and/ or educational planning of SD42 Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows?

What policies and practices are in place to effectively target anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination in the district? What else is needed?

## **District Strategic Plan**

In what ways does the district strategic plan implement equity and specific strategies to serve diverse Indigenous learners, families and communities? How does the district plan address issues of Indigenous systemic racism, discrimination and colonialism? How does the district strategic plan implement Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing? What aspects of the district plan require further decolonizing and Indigenous equity informed strategies and initiatives ?

## **Professional Responsibilities and Growth**

Where do you go to have courageous conversations? Are you a part of a professional learning community (formal or informal)?

What are your professional development learning goals that pertain to Indigenous education, decolonization, equity and anti-Indigenous racism?

## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **9. Aboriginal Education Team Interview Questions**

How can you and your colleagues enhance relationships in your school and district to support the wholistic wellbeing of Indigenous learners, families and communities?

How do you provide opportunities for students to develop skills and explore diverse Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, pedagogies, cultural activities and land based learning?

How does your assessment practices address the unique needs of diverse Indigenous learners? [If you directly assess students only]

Do the instructional materials used in your school and the district, such as textbooks, supplementary books, and media describe the perspectives of diverse Indigenous Peoples and racialized ethnic groups? How are these instructional materials being used by yourself and colleagues?

How are local Indigenous Knowledge Holders engaged to share local history, protocols, stories, land based education and knowledge in your class, school or district? What else is needed?

How are students taught about colonialism in your class and school(s)? What else is needed?

How do you acknowledge and address acts of racism and microaggression in your school, and with colleagues? What resources or support do you feel that you need to be able to better address racism and microaggressions in your school(s)?

Where do you go to have courageous conversations? Are you a part of a professional learning community (formal or informal)? Do you keep a journal of critical self-reflection as it pertains to Indigenous education, decolonization, equity, and anti-Indigenous racism?

Is there anything else that you feel we should know in terms of enhancing Indigenous education and equity in the district?

## **10. Caregiver Interview Questions**

### **Relationships**

In what ways are you made to feel welcomed and valued as part of your child(ren)'s school experiences? What else is needed?

Do you feel that your child's wholistic (spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical) needs are being supported by their school community? Why or why not?

Do you have a trusted relationship with a teacher, support staff or administrator at your child's school? If yes, what does this person/(s) do to help you feel heard and supported? If no, what else is needed to help you feel heard and supported?

### **Governance, Management and Policies**

How are you involved and/or informed about management decisions and or school planning decisions related to Indigenous education, equity policies, agreements and governance procedures in the district?

### **Indigenous Knowledge, Culture and Colonialism**

What do you feel it is important for Settler teachers, school staff, principals and district administration to know about Indigenous Peoples?

How is your community represented in your child(ren)'s school community and classroom?

Does your child(ren)'s textbooks, learning materials, and media describe the perspective of diverse Indigenous Peoples and racialized ethnic groups [people of colour]?

### **Racism**

Have you or your child(ren) experienced discrimination or racism in their class or school community? How did your child's teacher, principal or school staff support the situation? Do you feel that there was anything else that was needed to resolve the situation? Are you aware of any policies, resources or staff that could help you in this situation?

### **\*Individualized Education Plan**

If your child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) how were you consulted in the process of its creation? Were extended family members allowed to participate? Are you satisfied with the special education services that your child receives? How can it be more culturally responsive?

## **11. Indigenous Alternate Education and CE/Online/CLC/Remote Students Interview Questions**

### **Relationships**

In what ways are you made to feel welcome and your voice valued by your teachers and school staff? Were there times when you haven't felt welcomed? If so, why?

### **Student Learning and Assessment**

How does your school community support your learning? How does your school support you differently than the secondary school you attended before? What do you miss from your secondary school? What do you wish had been available at your old school?

What kind of feedback do you get on your assignments and learning from your teachers? What is most helpful in terms of the feedback you receive and what isn't?

### **Racism and Discrimination**

Have you witnessed or experienced discrimination or racism against Indigenous students, or families in your class or school community?

- a. How did you work through the situation?
- b. How did your teacher, school staff, or principal support the situation?
- c. Was there anything else that should have been done?

Do you have opportunities to learn how to speak out against discrimination and racism in your class and school community? What else would help you?

### **Indigenous Knowledge Culture and Colonialism**

What have you learned about local Indigenous cultures and communities in your classes or visits with Indigenous Knowledge Holders? Do you get to participate in outdoor land based learning activities in your school? [ie weaving, visits to local Indigenous communities, ask Kirsten for more specific land based prompts] What else would you like to learn about or do?

What have you learned about colonialism?

### **Transition**

Are you learning about jobs that people do? What have you learned about going to college, university or trade school? What else would you like to know or do to help your transition from high school to a job, college, university or trade school?

## **12. Indigenous Elementary Intermediate Student Interview Questions**

### **Relationships**

In what ways are you made to feel welcome and your voice valued by your teachers and school staff? Were there times when you haven't felt welcomed? If so, why?

### **Student Learning and Assessment**

What kind of feedback do you get on your assignments and learning from your teachers? What is most helpful in terms of the feedback you receive and what isn't?

### **Racism and Discrimination**

Have you witnessed or experienced discrimination or racism in your class or school community?

- a. How did you work through the situation?
- b. How did your teacher, school staff, or principal support the situation?
- c. Was there anything else that should have been done?

Do you learn how to speak out against discrimination and racism in your class and school community? What else would help you?

### **Indigenous Knowledge Culture and Colonialism**

What have you learned about local Indigenous cultures and communities in your classes or visits with Elders? Do you get to participate in outdoor land based learning activities in your school? [ie weaving, drumming, beading, storytelling, drum making, plant medicines, etc] What else would you like to learn about or do?

## **13. Indigenous Secondary Student Interview Questions**

### **Relationships**

What relationships [with teachers, students, school staff, principal, ect] can be strengthened to support your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing at school?

In what ways are you made to feel welcome and your voice valued by your teachers and school staff? Were there times when you haven't felt welcomed? If so, why?

What do you want current students, teachers, principals or district leaders to know about you that you feel like they don't understand?

### **Student Learning and Assessment**

What kind of feedback do you get on your assignments and learning from your teachers? What is most helpful in terms of the feedback you receive and what isn't?

### **Racism and Discrimination**

Have you witnessed or experienced discrimination or racism against Indigenous students, or families in your class or school community?

- a. How did you work through the situation?
- b. How did your teacher, school staff, or principal support the situation?
- c. Was there anything else that should have been done?

Do you have opportunities to learn how to speak out against discrimination and racism in your class and school community? What else would help you?

### **Indigenous Knowledge Culture and Colonialism**

What have you learned about local Indigenous cultures and communities in your classes or visits with Indigenous Knowledge Holders? Do you get to participate in outdoor land based learning activities in your school? [ie weaving, visits to local Indigenous communities, ask Kirsten for more specific land based prompts] What else would you like to learn about or do?

What have you learned about colonialism?

### **Transition**

Are you learning about jobs that people do? What have you learned about going to college, university or trade school? What else would you like to know or do to help your transition from high school to a job, college, university or trade school?

## **14. Indigenous Knowledge Holder Interview Questions**

### **Relationships**

How can relationships in district be enhanced to support the wholistic wellbeing of Indigenous learners, families and communities?

### **Governance and Management Decisions**

In what ways are you made to feel welcome and your voice included as part of the school district's planning for learning, governance procedures and management decisions? How are you informed about district management decisions or school planning?

### **Indigenous Knowledge, Culture and Colonialism**

How often are you invited to school district or school based events? What else is needed to support greater involvement from Indigenous Knowledge Holders, families and communities?

What do you feel is important for Settler teachers, school staff, principals and district administration to know about Indigenous Peoples, anti-Indigenous racism, and decolonization?

How is your community represented in the school community and district?

## SHARING CIRCLE QUESTIONS

### 15. Indigenous Alternate Education and CE/Online/CLC/Remote Students- Sharing Circle Questions

How does your school community support your learning?

How does your current school support you differently than the secondary school you attended before?

What (if anything) do you miss from your previous secondary school? What do you wish had been available at your old school?

Have you witnessed or experienced discrimination or racism against Indigenous students, or families in your class or school community?

- a. How did you work through the situation?
- b. How did your teacher, school staff, or principal support the situation?
- c. Was there anything else that should have been done?

What do you want your teachers, principal, support workers and parent's to know about your schooling experience so far?

### 16. Transitions (Grades 6-9) Sharing Circle Questions

**Pretend we are making a comic book on transition to high school for Indigenous youth. What kind of story would you tell?**

What do you think the characters will need to do in order to be successful in high school?

What activities do the characters participate in?

What study habits do the characters have?

What kind of friends do characters have?

What are their family members like?

What resources, people or programs would the characters go to if they were having a hard time in high school?

What important message would you share for future Indigenous youth making a transition to high school.

### 17. Caregiver Sharing Circle Questions

How can relationships in the district be enhanced to support the holistic well-being of Indigenous learners, families, and communities?

How are you involved and/or informed about management decisions and or school planning decisions related to Indigenous education, equity policies, agreements and governance procedures in the district?

How often are you invited to school district or school based event – is the first part – and then – what else is needed in terms of greater support or involvement from Elders, families, and communities?

What do you feel is important for non-Indigenous teachers, school staff, principals, and district administration – to know about Indigenous people, anti-Indigenous racism, and decolonization?

How is your community represented in the community and district?

### 18. Indigenous Knowledge Holder Sharing Circle Questions

What cultural teachings, metaphor, visual representation and/or language(s) – should be included in the model that we're co-creating for Indigenous Education in School District 42?

How can we ensure that the cultural diversity of all Indigenous learners, families, and communities are represented in the school district, in the model that we're creating?



## APPENDIX B

### Working With the Four “R’s”:

#### Preparing Ourselves for Compassionate, Courageous, and Generative Conversations

We recognize that the current cultural moment has illuminated the necessity of ongoing learning and action to address colonialism, Indigenous systemic racism, and power imbalances that impact us, our classrooms, our students, and our communities. It is important to recognize that, although we are all educators, professionals, and community members who share a common desire to support the wellbeing of our children and youth, we bring diverse experiences, histories, beliefs and insight. We also hold diverse and complex relationships to land, water, and Indigenous Peoples (whether we are of Settler or of Indigenous ancestries).

We will invite stakeholders to help us create a safe(r) space in our discussions for the project. We recognize that no on-line discussion can be fully safe given that we come from diverse positionalities, ways of knowing and being that shape power dynamics in the context of settler colonialism. As a result, our participation will be guided by Verna J. Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt (1991) “4Rs” for supportive education contexts in the following ways:

- Demonstrating Respect toward Indigenous perspectives and each other through;
- Keeping our conversations Relevant to Indigenous perspectives in relation to Indigenous education, equity and anti-Indigenous racism
- Being Responsible in small group discussion in terms of encouraging each person to share ideas and remaining focused on the topic; and
- Practicing reciprocity in contributing to each other’s learning. This includes listening with our “three ears” (Archibald, 2008) which are the two ears on our head and the third on our heart.

When engaging in dialogue on Indigenous education, equity and social justice topics, many people struggle to find the right words to share their thoughts and feelings. We developed this glossary to serve as a foundation for courageous conversations which will ground our discussions and review process. We encourage you to ask questions or pose wonderings and to share your vulnerability and willingness to make mistakes and learn from them.

Many educators are wary of making mistakes due to lack of cultural knowledge or authority when engaging in Indigenous education, equity and social justice topics. It is important to remember that there is no perfect and assured way to do this important work, but it would be a much greater mistake to stay silent and to not take steps to engage with feelings of uncertainty and discomfort in more knowledgeable ways. We look forward to hearing your voice and supporting the important work that you are doing for the wholistic success and wellbeing of Indigenous students, family and communities in School District 42.

## APPENDIX C

### Stakeholder Feedback

This appendix is comprised of the feedback that the research team received from stakeholders in January 2022-May 2022 for the living draft of the report. We felt it was important to: track any suggested revisions; priorities for existing recommendations; and the addition of new recommendations that were shared by stakeholders for the final version of the report. In the sections below, we have organized the feedback that we received according to stakeholder group. In addition, we have thematically organized each stakeholder section according to: new recommendations, priorities for existing recommendations; and general dialogue that we heard in relation to the recommendations and report overall. This appendix is created to help support the district to create its implementation plan for the research and recommendations that have arisen from this report.

#### *Meeting on January 6, 2022 with Kwantlen Knowledge Holders*

- The feedback the research team received from Kwantlen Knowledge Holders was very uplifting and positive. They recommended that the Monique Gray Smith's (2017) *Umbrella of Indigenous Resiliency* to be added to the report. The *Umbrella of Indigenous Resiliency* is found in a Teachers' Resource Guide, *Speaking Our Truth – A Journey of Reconciliation* written by Tasha Henry (see below).

#### *Meeting on January 7, 2022 with Katzie Representative*

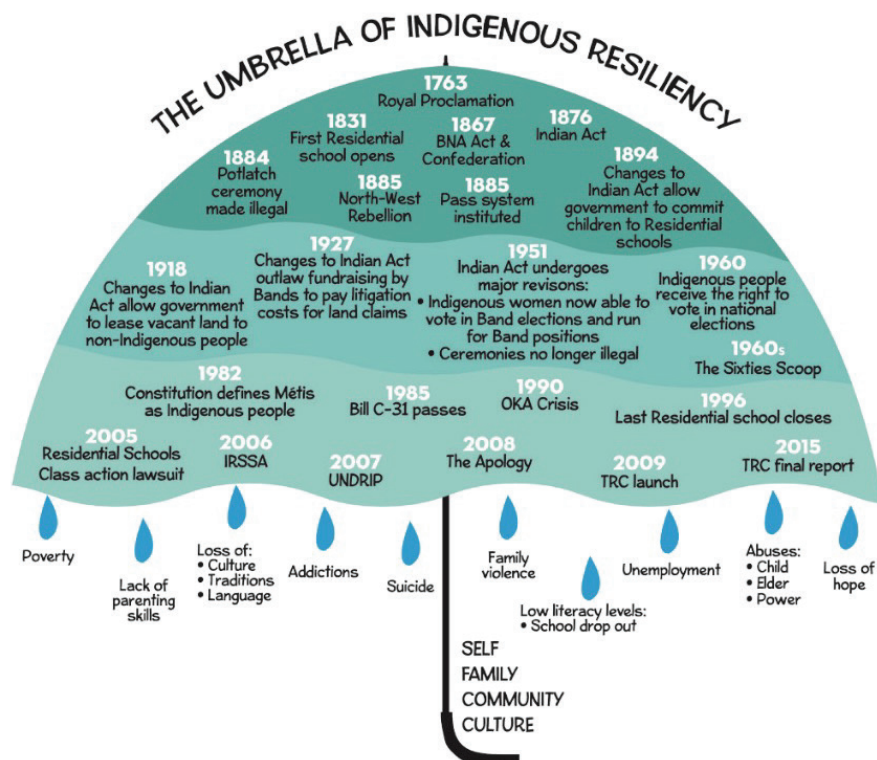
- Thanked the research team for our work and informed us that they had no direct feedback on the report.

#### *Meeting on January 7, 2022 with Fraser River Indigenous Society Representative*

- Dialogue centred around the prioritizing of the report's recommendations and the district's process for the taking the necessary action steps for the report's implementation.
- No revisions were suggested.

#### *Meeting on January 7, 2022 with Métis Knowledge Holder*

- Significant feedback and revisions were provided. However, many of the revisions are confidential. The research team spent considerable time ensuring that the feedback received from this Knowledge Holder was respectfully incorporated into the living report. A table of revisions made to the living report was sent to the Knowledge Holder, with the research team ensuring appropriate revisions were made to the June 15, 2022 version of the report.



### Aboriginal Advisory Committee Meetings Minutes & Feedback from January 27, 2022 Meeting

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ADVISORY MEMBERS			
KATZIE FIRST NATION	ROLE	SD42 TRUSTEES/ADMIN	ROLE
Natasha Cook	education coordinator	Alan Millar	principal
Leah Meunier	parent	Randy Bates	principal
KWANTLEN FIRST NATION		KATHERINE SULLIVAN	TRUSTEE
Cheryl Gabriel	education coordinator	Colette Trudeau	trustee
GEMS	role	Monica Schulte	assistant secretary treasurer
Lisa Shepherd	vice president		
Michelle Jays	parent		
ABED DEPARTMENT	ROLE	ABED DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Billie Seneviratne	support worker	Michelle Chabot	teacher
Katrina Haintz	support worker	Kirsten Urdahl Serr	principal - Aboriginal education
Alison Garneau	teacher	Nadine McSpadden	teacher
Amelia Laidlaw	teacher		
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT MEMBERS			
ABED DEPARTMENT	ROLE	ABED DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Anita Sandy	support worker	Sharon Hack	admin assistant - Aboriginal ed.
Natalie Robertson	support worker	Trisha Osmack	support worker
Sherri Britton	support worker	Natalie Robertson	support worker

EQUITY IN ACTION TEAM			
TEAM MEMBER	ROLE	TEAM MEMBER	ROLE
Dr. Amy Parent	principal investigator	Calder Cheverie	research assistant
Amrit Cojocar	research assistant	Dr. Gloria Lin	research assistant
Olanbanji Onipede	research assistant	Carolyn Roberts	research assistant

## Agenda

1. Introductions of Research Team
2. Presentation – key focus areas of the report prepared by team “Deepening Indigenous Education and Equity: Supporting the Wholistic Success of Indigenous Learners, Families, and Communities in Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows School District No. 42”
3. Feedback offered to research team from members of Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee and members of the Aboriginal Education Department

## Context

Research team was consulted to hold a joint feedback session with members of Aboriginal Advisory and Department present. Members of the Department were provided the option to join the session as it was being conducted outside of assigned hours. Both the Department and Aboriginal Advisory members were provided access to the document two weeks prior to the scheduled feedback session to allow time to read the living draft.

## Minutes

1. Presentation
  - a. Research team used quotes from participants to guide the presentation of their findings and to highlight key areas resulting in the strands of the report.
  - b. Presentation provided insights into the resulting recommendations found in Appendix A of the draft.
2. Construction of the living draft offered to this group
  - a. Dr. Parent explained the methods used to construct the report – gathering of inputs into themes.
  - b. Explanation offered of the review already conducted by Katzie First Nation, Kwantlen First Nation, GEMS, and FRIS. Acknowledged not all of the feedback has yet been included. Some updates were made prior to release to Advisory and Department.
  - c. Extensive updates will be conducted once all feedback sessions have been concluded.
3. Feedback offered by attendees
  - a. Concern raised about reading the living draft as a digital document. Particularly for Elders.
    - i. Elder Cheryl Gabriel commented that she did not have any problems accessing or reading the digital report.
  - b. No noted concerns about specific quotes of participants
  - c. Location of the recommendations in Appendix A was considered. Research team suggested that the recommendations be moved to the front of the report as a preface. This idea was met with some measure of approval.
  - d. Language used to describe participants with some conversation about the use of ‘stakeholder’
    - i. Dr Parent explained there were two groups of participants – stakeholders (all participants) and rights holders (participants with ancestry). To distinguish between these groups, she had chosen these descriptors

- ii. An ASW felt that ‘stake holder’ referred to land claims thus was an unsuitable description
  - iii. Dr Parent acknowledged this may be the perception of the word and would consult with research team about another way to describe all participants of the process.
- e. General comments noted that some quotes offered by participants may be out of context. Dr Parent explained that perspectives are an individual’s truth. Feedback being accepted by this session is to verify the accuracy of one’s own input to ensure the message was accurately represented and not to question the veracity of the input of other participants.
- 4. Next steps
  - a. A timeline was offered as to next steps.
  - b. Families and students with ancestry will be offered the next opportunity to review the living draft to:
    - i. verify their own input is being represented accurately and in context
    - ii. review the recommendations and provide feedback
  - c. The feedback sessions to continue with teachers, support staff, PVPs, Sr Team, and Trustees.
  - d. A final draft will be presented to the board no later than June 2022

Meeting adjourned at 5 pm

### *Research Team’s Notes on General Dialogue*

- Timeline for stakeholder feedback was requested. One member of the Aboriginal Advisory felt that students in the district needed to be consulted and provided an opportunity to share their feedback on the living report as soon as possible. The research team and Aboriginal District Principal shared the participant timeline and feedback schedule.
- One member felt that the living report reflected the same voices that are heard in relation to Aboriginal Education in the district and hoped to have heard from a more diverse group of people. However, this person also shared that they had been on leave during the majority of the research process and had not read the entire report. It is also unclear how the identity of 356 participants was determined since confidentiality measures were in place for the research process.
- One member commented that “every document that we go through is emotional and it takes time for people to work through.”
- There was general comments and dialogue amongst the group to discuss report findings (Please see district meeting minutes above).
- One member of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee who was a district staff member had concerns with the term “Pan-Indigenous” which was a recommendation from the Indigenous Knowledge Holders sharing circle. They requested a footnote for clarification. After reviewing the request, the research team determined that its usage in the report was correct. The research team also did not feel that it was culturally appropriate to revise a recommendation made by Indigenous Knowledge Holders
- The research team received a couple of clarification questions related to stakeholder numbers, definition of terms and timeline for participant feedback.
- One participant recommended that the living report be printed and shared in local Indigenous community settings so that Knowledge Holders without access to technology could have an opportunity to read the document.

### *Indigenous Rightsholders Revisions*

- A definition was created for the term “stakeholder” and “Indigenous Knowledge Holders” in the terminology section of the report.
- Move Appendix A to the beginning of the report (to go after Executive Summary)
- Umbrella of Resiliency added to Engaging Colonialism strand of June 15, 2022 version of report.



## Meeting with Youth, April 7, 2022

### Student Dialogue on Compiled Recommendations for Entire Report by Section

In section A below, we detail new recommendations that came forward in our conversation with district students that are to be included in the final living draft of the report (June 15th, 2022 version).

#### A. New Recommendations:

*The key recommendations from this stakeholder group are to:*

- (1) ensure designated safe spaces in all schools for Indigenous students, with Indigenous staff consistently available, specifically (a) a bigger space is needed at Garibaldi; (b) designated spaces in all elementary schools are needed.*
- (2) invite non-Indigenous students to also learn about Indigenous cultures and include them in all cultural activities (i.e. Bannock Friday for Indigenous students in Elementary schools and interactive time with Elders).*
- (3) support local language revitalization initiatives within schools whenever possible in district events and community settings.*
- (4) ensure more professional development in trauma-informed pedagogical practices for all teachers, administration, and school staff.*
- (5) District to play an advocacy role with provincial and local governments to support the need for on-going accountability and responsibility for historical and contemporary colonial violence and oppression of Indigenous Peoples.*

In section B below, we have highlighted our conversation with district students in an effort to detail the priorities that came forward with existing recommendations from the living draft (which may be off assistance with the development of the strategic implementation plan for the report).

#### B. Priorities for Existing Recommendations:

##### Reciprocity Recommendations

###### Existing Reciprocity Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #2:** All district graduation ceremonies should be Indigenized. The district should also ensure that Katzie or Kwantlen Nation welcome songs are sung during all school assemblies.

*Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

*“ Indigenize graduation ceremonies by incorporating “Honouring Ceremonies” to honour work of students through ceremony. ASW’s should be invited to attend graduation planning meetings at the school level.*

##### Respect Recommendations

###### Existing Respect Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #1:** Indigenous rights holders should be continuously consulted in order to ensure that there are consistent opportunities for them to provide feedback across multiple channels throughout the district.

**BULLET POINT #7:** District consultation and invitations to participate in Indigenous education priorities, management decisions, school planning, on-going Aboriginal Committee meetings, and emerging issues should include separate meetings with the: Katzie Nation, Kwantlen Nation and Golden Ears Métis Society and Fraser River Society.

*Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

“ Ensure implementation and change of policy is not a top-down approach. The process should involve students and Indigenous People with knowledge and lived experience to help guide the necessary policy changes.

## Relevance Recommendations

### Existing Relevance Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #3:** Please see the recommendations in the “Indigenous Knowledge Holders Sharing Circle” section (page 45) related to honouring and teaching local Indigenous protocols while balancing the diverse representation of Indigenous cultures, knowledges with teachings in district).

*Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

“ Start teaching respect for Indigenous culture(s) in early years, so students can learn respect and carry on as they get older.  
“ Ensure non-Indigenous students are invited to learn about Indigenous cultures, because Indigenous knowledge is relevant to all. (i.e. Bannock Friday is held for Indigenous students in elementary schools, but this should be open to everyone).  
“ Encourage all teachers to learn land-based instruction.

### Existing Relevance Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #4:** Allocate funding from the district operational budget to land-based education opportunities for all students. This includes supporting teachers to Indigenize their seasonal practices by including local land-based understandings in their lessons.

*Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

“ Inform students on funding structure. Students do not know how funding is allocated, so letting students know that funding is required for things such as bringing in Knowledge Holders, acquiring resources and so on is important in recommending priority areas. This would also support the recommendation above “Encourage all teachers to learn land-based instruction.”

## Responsibility Recommendations

### Existing Responsibility Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #1:** The district should organize a Katzie Nation Day throughout all the schools under the guidance of the Katzie Nation.

**BULLET POINT #2:** Further consultation is needed with the Kwantlen Nation to determine if a Kwantlen Nation Day or an evening gathering is a priority.

**BULLET POINT #3:** Partner with the Golden River Métis Society and interested Métis Caregivers to organize a Métis night or Métis events in the schools.

*Dialogue from students around these recommendations:*

“ Ensure students and staff are informed of the context for the three aforementioned recommendations, which

stemmed from respected Knowledge Holders in the community. While students are supportive of Katzie Nation Day, they also would like to include other Nations. The desire for inclusivity is noted in the report and it is already reflected in the existing recommendations.

**BULLET POINT #4:** District schools should conduct a yearly Indigenous caregiver survey and host family evenings (with food and door prizes) to solicit caregiver input on management and governance decisions (including the development of school growth plans for Indigenous education and anti-racism priorities). Administrators should also report progress updates for Indigenous education priorities in school growth plans at these events and school newsletters. Annual surveys could also solicit input from Indigenous caregivers about communication needs, the usability of the district website, the parent portal, preferred district communication methods, Indigenous education programming priorities and emerging equity needs.

*Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

- “ Students felt that this recommendation was important so the district could listen to student needs on an on-going basis.*
- “ Ensure easy access to parent portal by showing a map of different ways of communication available between families and schools.*
- “ Reiterate the important role Elders play, especially in connecting people who feel disconnected from their communities.*

**BULLET POINT #9:** Indigenous children and youth in the district require additional mental health supports and further professional development training for educators to support student's mental health needs.

*Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

- “ Emphasize the importance of having adequate access to mental health support. Some comments shared are: (1) Some Indigenous students (with or without status) are never considered Indigenous students; (2) Indigenous students particularly in elementary schools, get pushed aside a lot; (3) Students reiterate the importance to have people knowing them first as people, then to focus on learning; (4) Students want to be known and to know that people are there for them; (5) They affirm their support for having adequate access to Ab Ed staff. This may also reflect the need for culturally relevant mental health supports for Indigenous students.*

## Existing Engaging Colonialism Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #1:** On-going and continuous in-service professional development is required to support understandings of colonialism, decolonization, personal bias and critical self-reflective practice for all district personnel. This may include the hiring of additional Aboriginal Resource Teachers to support pedagogical engagement of colonialism in the classroom.

**BULLET POINT #2:** Aboriginal Education Department to continue creating resource bins to support teacher professional development on colonialism & decolonization in local, national and international contexts.

*Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

- “ Support decolonizing pedagogical engagement in French Immersion classrooms to ensure culturally appropriate and respectful words are used when teaching and learning about Indigenous cultures and perspectives. For example, French immersion students call regalia “costumes,” but regalia is not a costume.*

**BULLET POINT #4:** Invite Indigenous students, Indigenous caregivers and Aboriginal Advisory Committee member's input on curriculum planning for colonialism, racism and Indigenous knowledge(s) through family evenings, surveys, and school growth planning events for Indigenous education.

*Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

- “ Ensure everyone is learning Indigenous perspectives not colonial perspectives.*

## Indigenous Knowledge(s) Teaching and Learning Recommendations

### Building on Indigenous Knowledge(s) Teaching and Learning Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #2:** There is a need for a district-wide mandatory First Peoples course or bundle of credits (with an emphasis on local Indigenous and Métis Peoples within an integrated anti-Indigenous racist (theoretical and pedagogical) as a framework for all students. This will serve as a strategy<sup>1</sup> to counter racism, advance Truth and Reconciliation commitments, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2019) priorities. SD42 would be the lead district in the province to implement a course of this nature, which is currently being advocated by First Nations Education Steering, the First Nations Leadership Council, the BC Teachers' Federation, and the BC School Trustees Association<sup>2</sup>.

#### *Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

- “ Ensure that Indigenous courses are based on local knowledges, focus on Indigenous worldview (as opposed to colonial). Ensure Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders are part of the process. Specific activities recommended are: nature walks, field trips, games day, crafts, and other cultural activities for all students (including non-Indigenous students).*
- “ Ensure educators, who are hired for teaching the mandatory First Peoples courses, have Indigenous knowledge and lived experience in the cultures they are teaching.*

### Existing Local Indigenous Cultures, Languages, Knowledge Holders and Communities Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #1:** All Aboriginal Education team members that are hired should have relationships with all three Indigenous communities (Katzie, Kwantlen and Métis) and sound knowledge of Indigenous protocols.

#### *Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

- “ Ensure everyone is educated more about the Nations being acknowledged in land acknowledgements. Aboriginal Education can help with forming personalized land acknowledgements.*
- “ Provide regular interactive Indigenous cultural opportunities to help connect people who have been through a lot of lived experience. Students shared that many Indigenous students are urbanized and don't have access to the cultural teachings, so there is an immediate need to be more educated about the territories on which we reside and have more supports from the Knowledge Keepers and Elders in regards to cultural sharing. Currently, schools rely on the Aboriginal Education team to provide this cultural knowledge and sharing.*

### Existing Instructional Materials and Indigenous Peoples, Perspectives and Diversity Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #1:** Invite the Aboriginal Student Leadership Committee to support Indigenous resource and curriculum recommendations including the removal of outdated, inaccurate, racist and outdated learning materials. Invite suggestions for a district reporting system to report inaccurate, racist and or outdated learning materials being used in the classroom.

**BULLET POINT #3:** All school growth plans in the Indigenous education priority area should have a measurable commitment to removing outdated learning materials from their libraries (e.g., the non-fiction section will be reviewed by January, 2022; school teaching staff will engage in a critical Indigenous resource assessment workshop and follow-up session by March, 2022).

**BULLET POINT #4:** The District Strategic Plan and school growth plans should also indicate how Indigenous caregivers, students, and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee were consulted on priority areas for the acquisition of new Indigenous learning materials.

**BULLET POINT #5:** The district should create a partnership with the University of British Columbia's Master of Library and Information Studies Program and the X̱wíx̱wa library to host an Indigenous graduate practicum student from the First Nations Curriculum Concentration in order to support district the Indigenousization and decolonization needs for the district library.

*Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

- “ Prioritize the replacement of outdated and colonial learning resources and ensure Knowledge Keepers are brought into the process. People who are rooted in their own culture should be invited to guide the conversations/lead the work and not people who are rooted in dominant culture.*
- “ Include more primary resources on Indigenous perspectives.*
- “ Ensure courses are being taught with authentic Indigenous worldview with current information and authentic resources with a focus on local community, territory, land and language.*

**BULLET POINT #2:** The district should ensure that a financial commitment is made in its operating budget (not the Aboriginal Education Department budget) to update Indigenous textbooks and learning resources in all schools.

- “ Designate district funding to support unlearning and relearning to emphasize district responsibility.*

## Existing Anti-Racism Policy and Training Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #1:** These existing policies should be updated: Harmonious Workplace Discrimination Bullying and Harassment Policy (7210); Safe and Caring Schools Policy (9410), and; Inclusive Schools Policy (9415) to explicitly include Indigenous anti-racism and discrimination – or, a new stand-alone policy should be created to address anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination. Updated policies should include: holding district personnel accountable for interpersonal racist acts, including enforcing discipline according to the relevant collective bargaining agreements – when appropriate; holding students accountable for interpersonal racist acts with consequences that could include Indigenous restorative justice and progressive discipline; guaranteeing that retaliation against anyone who reports racist incidents will be investigated and addressed; taking timely action that will not further victimize or harm individuals and communities in order to reduce the impact of racism from within the district, and; assuming proactive responsibility for teaching students and staff about racism’s causes and effects.

*Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

- “ Student and staff who have experienced racial oppression and other forms of oppression need to be included in shaping policy (i.e. all people from LGBTQ+ community & other racialized folks need to be a part of this shift.)*

**BULLET POINT #3:** The District Strategic Plan should set measurable goals, including timelines for anti-racism policy updates and implementation and tracking mechanisms (including commitments to staffing and budgetary resources from the district’s operating budget). School growth plans should include goals for the implementation of the updated anti-racism policies.

*Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

- “ Allocate funding that doesn’t come out of the Ab-Ed budget to ensure district responsibility.*

**BULLET POINT #5:** Professional development (including the allocation of resources and staffing) is required for all district personnel to effectively respond to and implement anti-Indigenous and anti-racism incidents. This includes providing Indigenous restorative training to support the resolution of conflict for administrators, managers, the senior team and trustees (please see professional development section for further details).

*Dialogue from students around this recommendation:*

- “ Take immediate action to address racism to prevent it from rubbing off on others. Anti-racism should be part of teachers’ ongoing professional development.*

## Professional Development Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #1:** The development of a local Indigenous protocol guide, learning resource kits or a course\* (see below\*) should be prioritized for all district staff under the guidance of local Indigenous Knowledge Holders and Nations. Content should include: settler bias; systemic racism; the need to critically engage with one’s privilege and responsibilities; moving beyond fear to action; and communication and consultation protocols for various district roles including how to listen to Indigenous Knowledge Holders, students and caregivers; how to work with Indigenous Knowledge Holders when they visit classes and



school to Indigenous community visits; pointers on how to engage Indigenous and anti-racism values in discussions with colleagues, students and Indigenous community members; strategies on how to navigate “mistakes” and develop Settler stamina; district processes for inviting Indigenous Knowledge Holders to the classroom, and to school and district events, including district key points of contact, along with an explanation to detail the reasons why district leads have been appointed to be the contacts (i.e., to not overburden Indigenous Knowledge Holders with multiple requests throughout the district); financial compensation policies for Knowledge Holders and a rationale for Indigenous Knowledge Holders’ compensation (i.e., why fair compensation is required); local history and the contemporary realities of the Katzie, Kwantlen and Métis Nations, with key teachings that local Indigenous Nations would like all district personnel to know; engaging land-based practices with local language(s); local district Indigenous and anti-racism resources that are available to support distinct stakeholder groups (support staff, managers, administration, teachers, caregivers, senior leadership, etc.); information and protocols for the Elder-in-residence program in each school; consistent professional development opportunities that are offered annually to support Indigenous education priorities across the district; personal and professional strategies for non-Indigenous district personnel to initiate outside of their relationship with the Aboriginal Education Department (e.g. join a professional learning community, attend local Indigenous public events, sign up for a free on-line Indigenous open on-line course at a university, etc.). \*The district is encouraged to partner with a local university to create a hybrid in-person local/ on-line course for district employees.

***Dialogue from students around this recommendation:***

- “ Ensure teachers are accountable to students. Teachers need to unlearn inaccurate histories and keep educating themselves current history. They also need to be able to address questions when harm happens. For example, when discussions on residential schools are not addressed or taught properly, harm can be done.*
- “ Ensure teachers learn on the land and from local Nations (i.e. emulate the lived experience of the land*
- “ Encourage all staff to earn an “Indigenous learning certificate.”*

In recognition to best practices in Indigenous education while balancing the reality of local capacity to support language revitalization, an important goal is to support whenever possible local language initiatives in district schools and community based settings.

***Meeting with Teachers, April 20, 2022***

Teacher Dialogue on Compiled Recommendations for Entire Report by Section

In section A below, we detail new recommendations that came forward in our conversation with district teachers that are to be included in the final living draft of the report (June 15th, 2022 version).

**A. New Recommendations:**

*Funding is required for Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) staff to attend district meetings and initiatives to support the implementation of this report. There is a notable systemic constraint that currently requires all CUPE staff to bank hours in order to participate in professional development initiatives.*

***Dialogue from teachers around this recommendation:***

- “ The key discussion point from this stakeholder group related to a need to create a joint coalition with the Maple Ridge Teachers Association and the Canadian Union of Public Employees to support the continued work that is needed for the implementation of the report. This may include the creation of a mentorship circle for interested teachers/CUPE staff who are able to undertake leadership roles in the areas of: Indigenous education and anti-Indigenous racism; a graduate requirement group to support the required Indigenous mandated course etc. Participants in this session emphasized that there are existing structures (i.e. MRTA social justice committee) and some (limited financial resources) that could be utilized for the creation of the mentorship circle. However, further financial commitment is also needed from the district to support CUPE staff to attend meetings related to the implementation of this report.*

## B. Priorities for Existing Recommendations

In section B below, we have highlighted our conversation with district teachers in an effort to detail the priorities that came forward with existing recommendations from the living draft (which may be off assistance with the development of the strategic implementation plan for the report).

### Respect Recommendations

#### *Building on Respect Recommendations*

**BULLET POINT #1:** Indigenous rights holders should be continuously consulted in order to ensure that there are consistent opportunities for them to provide feedback across multiple channels throughout the district.

**BULLET POINT #4:** Provide a handout to all caregivers of Indigenous children that explains the communication channels within schools and the district for questions, compliments, and complaints.

#### *Dialogue from teachers around this recommendation:*

“ Ensure communication with Indigenous Rights Holders is carried out effectively. Struggles to get communication through is an on-going issue, particularly for caregivers who need support and who have children with diverse needs.

### Existing Responsibility Recommendation

**BULLET POINT #9:** Indigenous children and youth in the district require additional mental health supports and further professional development training for educators to support student's mental health needs.

#### *Dialogue from teachers around this recommendation:*

“ Ensure district staff are aware of stressors and triggers related to #125 announcements and Orange Shirt Day on Indigenous Peoples (students, families, Knowledge Holders and staff). It is important to be mindful that these announcements and events affect differently people differently, district staff need to be trained on how to support them accordingly.

### Existing Engaging Colonialism Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #1:** On-going and continuous in-service professional development is required to support understandings of colonialism, decolonization, personal bias and critical self-reflective practice for all district personnel. This may include the hiring of additional Aboriginal Resource Teachers to support pedagogical engagement of colonialism in the classroom.

### Existing Indigenous Knowledge(s) Teaching and Learning Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #2:** There is a need for a district-wide mandatory First Peoples course or bundle of credits (with an emphasis on local Indigenous and Métis Peoples within an integrated anti-Indigenous racist (theoretical and pedagogical) as a framework for all students. This will serve as a strategy to counter racism, advance Truth and Reconciliation commitments, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2019) priorities. SD42 would be the lead district in the province to implement a course of this nature, which is currently being advocated by First Nations Education Steering, the First Nations Leadership Council, the BC Teachers' Federation, and the BC School Trustees Association.

#### *Dialogue from teachers around this recommendation:*

*“ Move beyond fear to action, seek out opportunities to critically engage with one’s privileges, biases and responsibilities and consult admin and staff on ways to carry out Indigenous-focused grad requirement. There were concerns spoken by one participant who noted that some parents complained that students will not be able to graduate because of the new Indigenous-focused grad requirement. Participants discussed how to carry out this work without being tokenistic. Significant discussion on the tensions and possibilities associated with planning this new graduation requirement in the district ensued.*

## Existing Local Indigenous Cultures, Languages, Knowledge Holders and Communities Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #3:** Indigenous Elders who are district Elders should have some office space in each school to demonstrate their important role in the district.

## Existing District Strategic Plan Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #5:** Hiring practices should clearly prioritize the hiring, training and retainment of Indigenous leadership in senior leadership roles. The district plan should include clear “targets” for Indigenous staff in leadership positions with direct goals for the equity-related representation across the district in all roles.

### *Dialogue from teachers around this recommendation:*

*“ District strategies need to be put in place to prevent Elder burnout as Elders have many responsibilities to their communities as well as school communities.*

## Existing Assessment Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #2:** Continue providing in-service professional development to support district leadership, administrators’, teachers’, and teaching support staff ’s understandings of strength-based wholistic assessment and critical literacy practices. This includes removing all deficit-based language from district materials and data measurement tools.

### *Dialogue from teachers around this recommendation:*

*“ Ensure more colleagues take on wholistic assessment practices in the district as well as provide professional development on critical literacy practices across the district.*

## Existing Instructional Materials and Indigenous Peoples, Perspectives and Diversity Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #1:** Invite Aboriginal Student Leadership Committee to support Indigenous resource and curriculum recommendations including the removal of outdated, inaccurate, racist and outdated learning materials. Invite suggestions for a district reporting system to report inaccurate, racist and or outdated learning materials being used in the classroom.

## Existing Indigenous Knowledge(s) Teaching and Learning Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #10:** District administrators should work with teachers in each school to identify a minimum goals of embedded lessons on Indigenous education, colonialism or anti-Indigenous racism throughout the year. The lesson goals should be reported in school growth plans.

### *Dialogue from teachers around this recommendation:*

*“ Include local Nations in course development, such as a district-wide committee focusing on course development on Indigenous knowledges.*

## Existing District Strategic Plan Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #1:** Ensure that local Indigenous languages, values, strategies and priorities are embedded within the District Strategic Plan (including appropriate connections to the British Columbia's United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2019).

### *Dialogue from teachers around this recommendation:*

“ Recommend the district to lean into existing structures to support the implementation process of the report. Similar to the UNDRIP recommendations for education, this report will require a multi-year implementation period and strategy.

**BULLET POINT #3:** Ensure that school growth priority areas include: Indigenous education, Indigenous anti-racism and anti-racism education, all of which should have clear measurable goals that can track progress.

### *Dialogue from teachers around this recommendation:*

“ Consult directly with First Nation communities to include anti-Indigenous racism in the anti-racism policy review that is currently in progress at the District level. MRTA is reviewing the consultation process and recognizes the process needs to be bottom up.

## Existing School Growth Plan Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #1:** District senior leadership should revise all school growth plan priority areas to reflect distinct and explicit priority areas for Indigenous education, anti-Indigenous racism and equity priorities. This will require in-serve professional development sessions to support administrators to create school growth plans that are implemented to achieve Indigenous equity-related goals in district schools, and have clear measurable goals.

### *Dialogue from teachers around this recommendation:*

“ Recognize consistent leadership is needed with the report's recommendations and emphasize the importance of having dedicated admin time for school leaders to get together to carry out the new school growth plan development.

“ Emphasize that strong leadership in the schools on this is an important piece. Teachers need reassurance that they can take courageous steps. One suggestion was having department heads at each school unpack the report at department meetings, sub-committees and staff committee meetings.

## Existing Anti-Racism Policies and Grievances Related to Anti-Indigenous Racism and Discrimination Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #5:** Professional development (including the allocation of resources and staffing) is required for all district personnel to effectively respond to and implement anti-Indigenous and anti-racism incidents. This includes providing Indigenous restorative training to support the resolution of conflict for administrators, managers, the senior team and trustees.

### *Dialogue from teachers around this recommendation:*

“ Create a mentorship circle supporting the work in decolonization and anti-Indigenous racism for new teachers and teachers who are changing roles and need mentorship.

## *Meeting with senior team, principals, vice principals and managers, March 10, 2022*

### *Admin Dialogue on Compiled Recommendations for Entire Report by Section*

## New Recommendations:

N/A

## Priorities for Existing Recommendations:

## Assessment Recommendations

### *Building on Assessment Recommendations*

**BULLET POINT #1:** Findings from this report and consultation with Indigenous rights holders should be utilized to develop key metrics that can serve as indicators for the wholistic success of Indigenous learners and support the district data dashboard. Consult with the Ministry of Education as needed.

**BULLET POINT #2:** Continue providing in-service professional development to support district leadership, administrators', teachers', and teaching support staff 's understandings of strength-based wholistic assessment and critical literacy practices. This includes removing all deficit-based language from district materials and data measurement tools.

**BULLET POINT #3:** Review and adjust grading, discipline, and special education/program identification practices to remove the disproportionality that exists for Indigenous and IBPOC students.

### *Dialogue from senior around this recommendation:*

- “ Need to consult FNESC's point of view as it represents many urban Indigenous.*
- “ Recognize performance dashboard is a colonial measure and question how to decolonize practices.*
- “ Recognize individual stories are important to include in assessment and not solely dependent on numerical values.*
- “ Stress the importance of whole child assessment, which is being carried out in elementary schools but not in secondary schools.*
- “ Recommend spending more time to understand each student's story, which may involve multiple conversations with families as part of assessment. Students may see assessment as a tool for labelling with trepidation.*
- “ Emphasize the importance of continuing to consult with Aboriginal Education communities.*

## Managers

## New Recommendations:

N/A

## Priorities for Existing Recommendations:

Relevance Recommendations / Local Indigenous Cultures, Languages, Knowledge Holders and Communities Recommendations / District Strategic Plan Recommendations



### ***Building on Relevance Recommendations***

**BULLET POINT #5:** Create a district local procurement policy to ensure that local Indigenous Peoples are hired.

### ***Building on Local Indigenous Cultures, Languages, Knowledge Holders and Communities Recommendations***

**BULLET POINT #2:** Hiring committees for Indigenous positions in the district should include Indigenous district personnel and when possible, a representative from the local Nations and the Métis Nations.

### ***Building on District Strategic Plan Recommendations.***

**BULLET POINT #5:** Hiring practices should clearly prioritize the hiring, training and retainment of Indigenous leadership in senior leadership roles. The district plan should include clear “targets” for Indigenous staff in leadership positions with direct goals for the equity-related representation across the district in all roles.

#### ***Dialogue from managers around these recommendations:***

- “ Ensure ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities to support awareness of job opportunities and application processes.*
- “ Review procurement policies in SD42 this year and provide training to staff who will be assisting potential applicants.*
- “ Ensure the hiring practice is not a ‘checklist’.*
- “ Further consultation is needed to discuss the weight associated to a person with ancestry in the hiring practice. Questions asked were: Is there an expectation for a “kind of a quota” system and a priority for applicants to ensure a diverse range of people are hired? Concerns shared around preventing people from thinking successful Indigenous applicants ‘just got the job because of their ancestry’.*
- “ Need to ensure the hiring of a diverse range of people is carried out more broadly (has done a good job of this in Ab Ed department).*
- “ Recognize the need to understand where racialized people<sup>1</sup> are coming from and the challenges they have.*

## **Anti-Racism Policies and Grievances Related to Anti-Indigenous Racism and Discrimination Recommendations**

### ***Building on Anti-Racism Policies and Grievances Related to Anti-Indigenous Racism and Discrimination Recommendations***

**BULLET POINT #2:** There is a need to develop an “Equity Dashboard” or a district-wide tracking system to record, assess, and monitor reported incidents of anti-racism (including anti-Indigenous racism incidents) for all district stakeholders. The information and base-line data from this tracking system should be reported in the District Strategic Plan and school growth plans to support measurable goals that will inform interventions related to implicit bias, oppression, and racism in order to improve school and work environments for IBPOC students and district personnel. The district is also encouraged to undertake advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Education in order to ensure that all school districts are tracking this data, particularly for the “How are We Doing Report” for Aboriginal Education. Please see the following exemplar from the Ablemare County for further ideas: <https://www.k12albamarle.org/our-division/anti-racism-policy/policy-evaluation-report>.

#### ***Dialogue from managers around this recommendation:***

- “ Ensure Ab Ed Department is involved in the tracking of racist incidents. Ab Ed Department can play various roles such as liaising, collaborating, providing resources and supporting the process.*
- “ Recognize HR Department can follow up around these issues.*

<sup>1</sup> It was not clear if folks engaging in this conversation understood the distinction between “racialized” and “Indigenous”. We did our best to ensure the words shared in the conversation were congruent with stakeholder statements.

*“ Ensure ongoing education on concepts such as ‘colonialism’ that can create discomfort in people who may not fully understand the context of where racialized people are coming from.*

## *Secondary Principals and Vice-Principals*

### **New Recommendations:**

*Create learning spaces that are designated specifically for people to come together to carry out the work specified in this report.*

### **Priorities for Existing Recommendations:**

### **Engaging Colonialism Recommendations**

#### *Building on Engaging Colonialism Recommendations*

**BULLET POINT #4:** Invite Indigenous students, Indigenous caregiver sand Aboriginal Advisory Committee member’s input on curriculum planning for colonialism, racism and Indigenous knowledge(s) through family evenings, surveys, and school growth planning events for Indigenous education.

#### *Dialogue from secondary principals and vice-principals around this recommendation:*

- “ Recognize the need to assist parents to learn and have resources available to them. The parent community also has learning and unlearning to do as they often rely on their own schooling experiences to understand.*
- “ Recognize each stakeholder group is unique but brings something to the collective. It is important to figure out what stakeholders can bring in to support the work and to keep everyone on the same track.*

### **Indigenous Knowledge(s) Teaching and Learning Recommendations**

#### *Building on Indigenous Knowledge(s) Teaching and Learning Recommendations*

**BULLET POINT #2:** There is a need for a district-wide mandatory First Peoples course or bundle of credits (with an emphasis on local Indigenous and Métis Peoples within an integrated anti-Indigenous racist (theoretical and pedagogical) as a framework for all students. This will serve as a strategy to counter racism, advance Truth and Reconciliation commitments, and the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2019) priorities. SD42 would be the lead district in the province to implement a course of this nature, which is currently being advocated by First Nations Education Steering, the First Nations Leadership Council, the BC Teachers’ Federation, and the BC School Trustees Association.

#### *Dialogue from secondary principals and vice-principals around this recommendation:*

- “ Emphasize to not deliver mandatory First Peoples coursework in a typical colonial way.*

### **School Growth Plan Recommendations**

#### *Building on School Growth Plan Recommendations*

**BULLET POINT #3:** All school growth plans will need to ensure that there are clear progress measurements (benchmarks) for Indigenous education and anti-Indigenous racism education. Throughout various sections of this report, there are specific recommended areas for measurable goals to be included in school growth plans.

*Dialogue from secondary principals and vice-principals around this recommendation:*

*“ Utilize growth plans and personal growth plans to help hold each other accountable.*

## Professional Development Recommendations

### *Building on Professional Development Recommendations*

**BULLET POINT #1:** The development of a local Indigenous protocol guide, learning resource kits or a course\* (see below\*) should be prioritized for all district staff under the guidance of local Indigenous Knowledge Holders and Nations. Content should include: settler bias; systemic racism; the need to critically engage with one’s privilege and responsibilities; moving beyond fear to action; and communication and consultation protocols for various district roles including how to listen to Indigenous Knowledge Holders, students and caregivers; how to work with Indigenous Knowledge Holders when they visit classes and school to Indigenous community visits; pointers on how to engage Indigenous and anti-racism values in discussions with colleagues, students and Indigenous community members; strategies on how to navigate “mistakes” and develop Settler stamina; district processes for inviting Indigenous Knowledge Holders to the classroom, and to school and district events, including district key points of contact, along with an explanation to detail the reasons why district leads have been appointed to be the contacts (i.e., to not overburden Indigenous Knowledge Holders with multiple requests throughout the district); financial compensation policies for Knowledge Holders and a rationale for Indigenous Knowledge Holders’ compensation (i.e., why fair compensation is required); local history and the contemporary realities of the Katzie, Kwantlen and Métis Nations, with key teachings that local Indigenous Nations would like all district personnel to know; engaging land-based practices with local language(s); local district Indigenous and anti-racism resources that are available to support distinct stakeholder groups (support staff, managers, administration, teachers, caregivers, senior leadership, etc.); information and protocols for the Elder-in-residence program in each school; consistent professional development opportunities that are offered annually to support Indigenous education priorities across the district; personal and professional strategies for non-Indigenous district personnel to initiate outside of their relationship with the Aboriginal Education Department ( e.g. join a professional learning community, attend local Indigenous public events, sign up for a free on-line Indigenous open on-line course at a university, etc.). \*The district is encouraged to partner with a local university to create a hybrid in-person local/ on-line course for district employees.

*Dialogue from secondary principals and vice-principals around this recommendation:*

- “ Emphasize the need for people to take leadership, to lean into the hard conversations and do that internal work.*
- “ Emphasize internal honesty is required to decolonize the system.*
- “ Acknowledge that there are no textbooks for this work and that it is people’s lived experiences that people need to learn from.*
- “ Emphasize the need to be comfortable with being uncomfortable and vulnerable.*
- “ Need to overcome fear of making mistakes and recognize collective responsibility is required to do this work. If children are being asked to try to learn new things, people also need to have those courageous conversations and move beyond fear to action.*
- “ Need to have conversations around white supremacy.*
- “ Recognize the importance of cultural humility and of making time to build relationships with local Indigenous communities (it is never too late to start building a relationship with local Indigenous communities).*
- “ Recognize students are required to take mandatory Indigenous Studies, but teachers and staff also need professional development in this area.*

### *Elementary Principals and Vice-Principals*

## New Recommendations:

N/A

## Priorities for Existing Recommendations:

### Relevance Recommendations / Indigenous Knowledge(s) Teaching and Learning Recommendations

#### *Building on Relevance Recommendations*

**BULLET POINT #6:** Involve district Indigenous students to lead the creation of a visual representation or model for Indigenous Education in School District 42. Local Indigenous artists (or a design lab) should be hired to facilitate the dialogue and process with students.

#### *Building on Indigenous Knowledge(s) Teaching and Learning Recommendations*

**BULLET POINT #9:** There is a need to provide recognition for Indigenous education contributions at district awards events and celebrations for teachers, students, staff, administration and senior leadership who are undertaking exemplary actions to support Indigenous education and anti-Indigenous racism in their district.

#### *Dialogue from elementary principals and vice-principals around this recommendation:*

- “ Recognize students are leaders<sup>2</sup>.*
- “ Acknowledge everyone has a role to play – shared responsibility to all be learners.*
- “ Focus on giving voice to Indigenous students and creating opportunities for Indigenous students to lead.*

## Engaging Colonialism Recommendations

#### *Building on Engaging Colonialism Recommendations*

**BULLET POINT #1:** On-going and continuous in-service professional development is required to support understandings of colonialism, decolonization, personal bias and critical self-reflective practice for all district personnel. This may include the hiring of additional Aboriginal Resource Teachers to support pedagogical engagement of colonialism in the classroom.

#### *Dialogue from elementary principals and vice-principals around this recommendation:*

- “ Transform the way thinking about ‘teaching and learning’ to ‘unlearning and learning’.*
- “ Engage in difficult conversations around keeping people safe and “regulated” within a colonial system while making space to learn.*
- “ Recognize the leadership role principals play to see beyond limited resources and to shift from transforming curriculum to transforming pedagogy.*

#### *General Dialogue:*

- “ Many people expressed reading the report, particularly stories from students and families, is emotional and wondered how to start and strategize to carry out the recommendations in the report.*

<sup>2</sup> There seemed to be an over-emphasis with this stakeholder group that placed undue responsibility on students to take responsibility for Indigenous education, which is counter to the stories shared by Indigenous students in the research. We recommend caution is exercised when reading the dialogue from this group.

- “ The current procurement process is guided by BCSPi initiative, but it is driven by policy and process.*
- “ Assessment and graduate rate still matters.<sup>3</sup>*
- “ Discussion on district-wide tracking system for racist incidents includes: using a form to help fill out to report a racist incident; setting a system to log; building on the current system of tracking racist incidents in each building – a district-wide effort.*

## **Meeting with Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), April 21, 2022**

### **A. New Recommendations:**

N/A

### **B. Priorities for Existing Recommendations**

In section B below, we have highlighted our conversation with district CUPE staff in an effort to detail the priorities that came forward with existing recommendations from the living draft (which may be off assistance with the development of the strategic implementation plan for the report).

### **Respect Recommendations**

#### ***Building on Respect Recommendations***

**BULLET POINT #5:** School staff and others involved in the life of children in care should be notified if the children are being placed in another home (which may add extra traveling time to the school or require additional staff support), as the change is stressful for the young person, which may affect them socially and emotionally in school.

#### ***Dialogue from CUPE members around this recommendation:***

- “ Provide more student information sharing opportunities (such as family or caregiver living situations) among teachers, Aboriginal support workers, Aboriginal resource teachers and support staff. Specifically, inviting ASWs to join educational assistant support staff weekly meetings.*

### **Existing Responsibility Recommendations**

**BULLET POINT #4:** Provide a handout to all caregivers of Indigenous children that explains the communication channels within schools and the district for questions, compliments, and complaints.

### **Existing Responsibility Recommendations**

**BULLET POINT #4:** Annual surveys could also solicit input from Indigenous caregivers about communication needs, the usability of the district website, the parent portal, preferred district communication methods, Indigenous education programming priorities and emerging equity needs.

#### ***Dialogue from CUPE members around this recommendation:***

<sup>3</sup> This statement reflects a denial of the report's findings.



- “ Improve information sharing between schools and families.*
- “ Improve accessibility of parent portal. District needs to acknowledge that not everyone is tech savvy or has access to technology to receive information from school.*

## Existing Relevance Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #1:** Hire additional Aboriginal Support Workers specifically to take on Indigenous advocate roles.

### *Dialogue from CUPE members around this recommendation:*

- “ Hire additional ASWs to take on advocate roles and increase their work hours and their rate of pay to recognize the work they do in supporting students.*
- “ Include ASWs at the District level, so their concerns can be heard.*

**BULLET POINT #4:** Create a district local procurement policy to ensure that local Indigenous Peoples are hired.

### *Dialogue from CUPE members around this recommendation:*

- “ Create a district procurement process to ensure local Indigenous peoples are hired in this District is fully supported by CUPE.*

## Existing Building on Anti-Racism Policies and Grievances Related to Anti-Indigenous Racism and Discrimination Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #6:** Transparency is needed in leadership succession (particularly for Indigenous-targeted roles like the Aboriginal Education District Principal). This role should be designated for persons of Indigenous ancestry, and she/he/they should be provided with mentorship, leadership and professional development opportunities that will enable her/him/they to transition successfully into this role. It would be a significant misstep for the district to hire a non-Indigenous person in this role.

## Existing District Strategic Plan Recommendations

**BULLET POINT #5:** Hiring practices should clearly prioritize the hiring, training and retainment of Indigenous leadership in senior leadership roles. The district plan should include clear “targets” for Indigenous staff in leadership positions with direct goals for the equity-related representation across the district in all roles.

### *Dialogue from CUPE members around this recommendation:*

- “ Ensure Aboriginal Education Principal is designated for persons of Indigenous ancestry with lived experience.*

## Existing Anti-Racism Policies and Grievances Related to Anti-Indigenous Racism and Discrimination Recommendation

**BULLET POINT #8:** There is a need to track the number of Indigenous and BPOC who are hired and employed by the district to help set targets for hiring and promotion practices. This includes exit interviews to identify the reasons Indigenous employees are leaving.

- “ Ensure exit interviews are conducted to identify the reasons why Indigenous employees are leaving the district as many ASWs have left the district in the past as a result of feeling unheard, not valued, and treated unfairly.*

## ***Building on Anti-Racism Policies and Grievances Related to Anti-Indigenous Racism and Discrimination Recommendations***

**BULLET POINT #10:** The district should collaborate with the CUPE union to enhance the local agreement to a) recognize lived experience, Indigenous knowledge and cultural expertise<sup>1</sup> when hiring Aboriginal Support Workers (ASWs), and; b) enhance wages for ASWs, given the significant responsibilities for Indigenous education in the district and the overwhelming recognition and value of their work by all district stakeholders.

*“ Ensure lived experience is included in job descriptions for ASWs.*

## **Professional Development Recommendations**

### ***Building on Professional Development Recommendation***

**BULLET POINT #5:** Continue inviting Indigenous leaders and educators to present at district professional development days on topics related to Indigenizing and decolonizing the curriculum, engaging anti-Indigenous racism, and Indigenous restorative training, etc. for all district staff. Indigenous presenters should be invited to present in a series of workshops for professional development days, rather than single sessions, to promote sustained learning and engagement.

*“ Implement more education and training for all staff on colonialism and decolonization and advocate for shifting existing colonial structure for decolonizing work (i.e. school schedule and calendar) to allow relationship and community building.*

*“ Broadcast existing programs and resources for land-based education and encourage individuals to seek out learning opportunities. For example, Pulling Together Canoe Journey is an example of wholistic, land-based learning opportunity in B.C.*

### **Existing Professional Development Recommendation**

**BULLET POINT #10:** There is a need to ensure that each school (including elementary schools) has a safe space (classroom) for Indigenous students. The space could have dual purposes for Aboriginal Education Department programming. This goal should be reported in the District Strategic Plan.

*“ Provide a designated work space at each school site they work in as well as one home base (not District based) in order to build deep relationships with students.*

## RESOURCE LIST

### IMPORTANT REPORTS TO READ FOR UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Indian Control of Indian Education (1972) by National Indian Brotherhood/ Assembly of First Nations: <https://oneca.com/IndianControlofIndianEducation.pdf>

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1991): <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx>



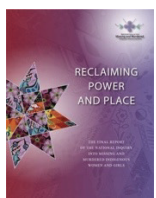
UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007): <https://www.un.org/development/desa/Indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-Indigenous-peoples.html>



Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report (2015):

<http://www.trc.ca/about-us/trc-findings.html>

Truth, and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Canada's Residential Schools: The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Vol. 1. McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 2015.



National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019)

<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>



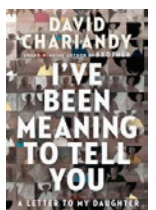
Challenging Racist British Columbia 150 years and Counting 2020

<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/challengingracistbc>

### CANADIAN BOOKS ABOUT RACISM



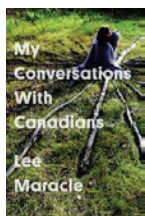
Cole, D. (2020). *The skin we're in: A year of black resistance and power*. Doubleday Canada.



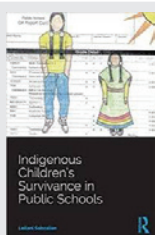
Chariandy, D. (2018). *I've been meaning to tell you: A letter to my daughter*. McClelland and Stewart.



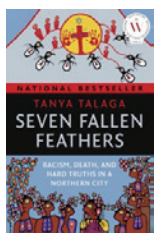
Joseph, R. P. C. (2018). *21 things you may not know about the Indian Act: helping Canadians make reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a reality*. Indigenous Relations Press.



Maracle, L. (2017). *My conversations with Canadians*. BookThug.



Sabzalian, L. (2019). *Indigenous children's survivance in public schools*. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.



Talaga, T. (2017). *Seven fallen feathers: Racism, death, and hard truths in a northern city*. Anansi.

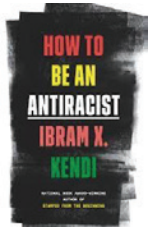


Vowel, C. (2017). *Indigenous Writes*. Portage and Main Press.

## AMERICAN BOOKS ABOUT RACISM



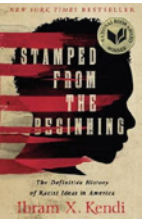
Bonilla-Silva, E. (2010). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States*. (3rd ed.). Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.



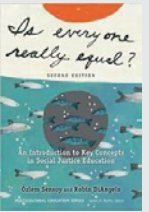
Kendi, I. X. (2019). *How to be an antiracist*. One world.



Oluo, I. (2018). *So you want to talk about race* (First ed.). Seal Press.

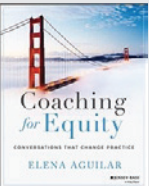


Kendi, I. X. (2016). *Stamped from the beginning: The definitive history of racist ideas in America*. Nation Books.

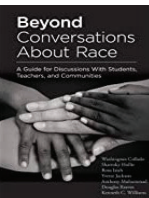


Sensoy, Ö, and DiAngelo, R. J. (2012). *Is everyone really equal?* Teachers College Press.

## LEADERSHIP BOOKS



Aguilar, E. (2020). *Coaching for equity: Conversations that change practice*. John Wiley and Sons.



Collado, W. (2021) *Beyond Conversations About Race: A Guide for Discussions with Students, Teachers, and Communities (How to Talk About Racism in Schools and Implement Equitable Classroom Practices)* Solution Tree Press

## PODCASTS



Anti-Racist Educator Reads

<https://voiced.ca/project/anti-racist-educator-reads/>





Dr Pam Palmater Warrior Life Podcast

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/warrior-life/id1434096503>



Dr Eve Tuck Podcast

<http://www.thehenceforward.com>



Unreserved CBC Radio

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved>

## LATERAL VIOLENCE RESOURCES



Bombay, A., Matheson, K., and Anisman, H. (2014). Origins of lateral violence in Aboriginal communities. *A preliminary study of student-to-student abuse in residential schools. Ottawa, ON: Aboriginal Healing Foundation.*

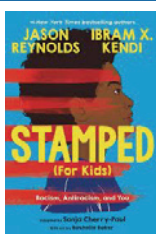


Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)

<https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2011-Aboriginal-Lateral-Violence.pdf>

[www.nwac.ca](http://www.nwac.ca)

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH BOOKS AND RESOURCES FOR THE CLASSROOM

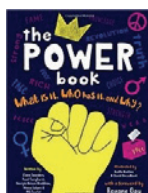


Reynolds, J., and Kendi, I. X. (2020). *Stamped: Racism, antiracism, and you: A remix of the National Book Award-winning Stamped from the beginning*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.



Dr Pam Palmater Warrior Kids Podcast

<https://warriorkidspodcast.com>



Hurst, A. (2019). The Power Book: What is it, Who Has it and Why?. *The School Librarian.*



Johnson, C., Council, L., Choi, C. (2019) *IntersectionAllies: We make room for ALL*. *Dottir Press*.



Anti Racist Reading list for children

[https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/antiracist-reading-list/kids?s\\_campaign=google-Search\\_Books\\_Kids\\_Generic&gclid=CjwKCAjwi9-HBhACEiwAPzUhHGWHyhXVIXEaycRjT1cdcsmkWXtZ2NXW7FHQDqGjtuAG6vHEEeC2BxoCRAwQAvD\\_BwEandgclsrc=aw.ds](https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/antiracist-reading-list/kids?s_campaign=google-Search_Books_Kids_Generic&gclid=CjwKCAjwi9-HBhACEiwAPzUhHGWHyhXVIXEaycRjT1cdcsmkWXtZ2NXW7FHQDqGjtuAG6vHEEeC2BxoCRAwQAvD_BwEandgclsrc=aw.ds)





