

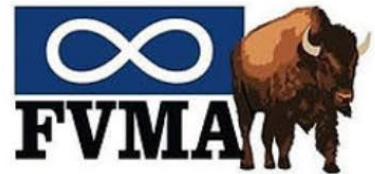


ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT FOR

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

2025-2030





Acknowledgements

Éy swáyel. We acknowledge that the Abbotsford School District is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Semá:th First Nation and Mathxwí First Nation. With this, we respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. The Abbotsford School District acknowledges historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public educational institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching and community engagement.

This fourth Enhancement Agreement for Indigenous students in the Abbotsford School District was created through consultation and listening with our three ears (two on the sides of our head and one in our heart) to more than 500 voices.

We are grateful to the many voices that guide this work: Elders, Leaders, families, community members and children from Mathxwí First Nation, Semá:th First Nation, the Fraser Valley Métis Association, Indigenous students and their parents from Abbotsford School District, and the Indigenous Department Staff.

Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is to support the enhanced educational experiences and achievement of Indigenous students in the Abbotsford School District.

This agreement expresses commitment to Indigenous learners and their families. The process undertaken demonstrates the ongoing commitment to consultation and co-development of programs and services with Indigenous community partners.

This agreement guides the goals of the District Strategic Plan. It provides a framework to assess the effectiveness of the programs and interventions implemented to support our Indigenous learners.

This agreement is the focus for the next five years of programming and supplemental services offered using Targeted Funds for Indigenous students from the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

In short, it guides our everyday work for Indigenous students.

Process

Under the guidance of our Indigenous Education Council, we began with Indigenous Department Staff reflecting on how the previous Enhancement Agreement goals were being met and what is needed for the future. The department then held three community dinners, where a short presentation was given, sharing achievement results. This was followed by an invitation for community members and families to provide feedback on what they felt was most important for future Enhancement Agreement goals. Those who were not able to attend a Consultation Dinner were provided with an open invitation to respond electronically. An Indigenous student leadership group called Agenda Gap initiated ways to capture Indigenous student voices through an online form and opportunities for one-on-one interviews. Consultation meetings occurred between September 2023 and May 2024. Responses were collated and organized by themes to support our three goals.

Goals

The former Enhancement Agreements have guided how we support Indigenous students for success in the Abbotsford School District. We will continue to walk forward on that path. Goals have been clustered into three main themes for Indigenous students.



1. Student Success

2. Cultural Identity

3. Equity and Access through Advocacy





Goal #1 -- Student Success

Success for Indigenous students is holistic. This includes Academic Success, Emotional Wellbeing, Physical Wellness, and a positive Cultural Identity. Receiving balanced support means that students can develop their full potential in all aspects of school life.

Academics:

We are committing to...	Our actions will be...
Increasing literacy and numeracy rates for Indigenous learners (as measured in Reading achievement benchmarks and FSAs in grades 4 and 7)	Literacy and Numeracy practice in Elementary and Middle School
Successful academic completion of grades and courses throughout K-12	Monitoring and support in completing school assignments and courses
Supporting consistent attendance	Attendance tracking and support and communication with home
Providing engaging and meaningful learning opportunities	Opportunities for place-based learning, crediting creative assignments, and having opportunities for Indigenous Cohort Learning opportunities outside of the school calendar
Celebrating educational milestones	District-wide opportunities for transitioning from elementary to middle, middle to secondary and secondary on.
Increasing Grade 12 School Completion Rates	Grade 12 School Completion tracking and meetings of support. Opportunities for creative learning opportunities.
Graduating with purpose	Connections to a post-secondary plan: including trades, colleges and universities, and careers. Support with applications and scholarship opportunities.

Emotional:

We are committing to...	Our actions will be...
Supporting Indigenous students with a sense of belonging	Providing a dedicated Indigenous space and Indigenous support workers at every school site with Indigenous students.
Recognizing the importance of relationship	Relationships with Indigenous staff are important – prioritize relationships in staffing-related decisions. Regular check-ins with Indigenous staff.
Recognizing the value of Indigenous health and wellness teachings	Provide opportunities for students to learn about and be invited to practice Indigenous cultural healing methods (including, but not limited to smudging, cedar teachings, connections with plants and water, medicine wheel teachings).
Acknowledging and valuing community and family supports for health and wellness	Valuing and advocating for both traditional and mainstream healing and restorative practices.

Physical:

We are committing to...	Our actions will be...
Ensuring that students have access to healthy nutrition to enhance positive academic and health outcomes	Provide access to healthy nutrition – including breakfast clubs, lunch clubs and snacks.
Understanding that having time to centre oneself in a safe environment has benefits for physical wellness.	Have a safe dedicated space to go to – Indigenous Room at each school site.
Valuing Indigenous connections to land and environment.	Provide opportunities for on the land experiences to connect students with place and land

***Spiritual and Cultural wellness are included in Goal #2 – Cultural Identity*



Goal #2 -- Cultural Identity

Connecting students with culture begins with the land and territory that we are on: Semá:th and Mathxwí. Being grounded in place, students will learn about their own Indigenous cultural identity in a meaningful way. When Indigenous students know their community's stories and connect this with their identity, they will develop a positive sense of self, belonging and direction.

We are committing to...	Our actions will be...
All students will learn the stories, teachings, language, culture and history of the territories that we are on, Semá:th First Nation and Mathxwí First Nation	Sharing stories and resources from vetted and authentic sources. Sharing Sxwōxwiyám, Sqwélqwel and Halq'emeylem while observing local protocols with a good heart and a good mind.
Supporting Indigenous students in connecting with their personal cultural identity	Prioritize learning about students' cultural identity. Connect students with authentic, vetted traditional stories and teachings that are representative of their culture.
Recognizing Indigenous cultures and ways of being and knowing are diverse.	Prioritize place before content. When sharing Indigenous knowledge, share the territory, location and people of where the knowledge comes from. Indigenous cultures are diverse. Pan-Indigenous approaches minimize and reduce this diversity.
Celebrating stages of life and providing opportunities for all Indigenous students to come together	Provide district-wide teachings and opportunities: Grade 5 drum project; Grade 8 paddle project; and Grade 12 Indigenous Honouring ceremony
Highlighting Indigenous Role Models – community members, elders, First Nation, Métis and Inuit Leaders, and students	Prioritizing Indigenous ceremonies – including Role Model and Honouring ceremonies. Sharing resources to uplift Indigenous voices.
Providing connections with Elders and Knowledge Keepers	Utilizing Abbotsford School District's Knowledge Keeper Program and following the Indigenous Education Cultural Handbook and Protocols: https://indigenous.abbyschools.ca/knowledge-keepers-program
Valuing cultural teachings - Culture is the lifeline Indigenous students and families need.	Students' cultural work is recognized with the same value as curricular work.



Goal #3 -- Equity and Access through Advocacy

The Abbotsford School District commits to prioritizing equity and access for Indigenous students. Indigenous students and families have the right to agency and advocacy in all school opportunities.

We are committing to...	Our actions will be...
Food security for Indigenous families	Abbotsford School District will prioritize funding for food security programming – including breakfast clubs, lunch clubs, access to community food programs, cooking classes and teachings about food sustainability and traditional foods.
Reducing the overrepresentation of Indigenous students receiving disciplinary action and providing culturally relevant alternatives	Indigenous Department staff are invited and included in Disciplinary Meetings, ARTO’s and Safety Plan Meetings. Culturally relevant alternatives will be considered.
Supporting the diverse needs of students and families	Indigenous Department staff are invited and included to School Based Team Meetings, Care Team Meetings, IEP Meetings, and Transition Meetings.
Addressing bias and racism	<p>The Abbotsford School District is committed to the ongoing learning, across all systems, about the truth and history of Indigenous people in Canada, the impact of that history on our students today and their families.</p> <p>Explicit professional learning about bias and racism.</p> <p>Additional family advocacy and support at the District Level.</p>
Addressing and removing barriers to access and success.	Supporting transportation will improve access to programs and services in our schools including extracurricular, trades programs, alternate programming, and district programs.
Provide Indigenous students to a culturally safe learning environment	A dedicated, physical space and an overall school environment where students see themselves positively reflected in the schools and a space for Indigenous students to connect and feel supported.
Reducing the overrepresentation of Indigenous students receiving Adult Graduation diplomas and Evergreen certificates.	When graduation plans are changed from a Dogwood Diploma to an Adult Graduation or an Evergreen Certificate: Indigenous Administration, Learning Support Services, families and school teams will have opportunities for informed decision-making meetings.

Strategies

The Enhancement Agreement will be implemented with strategies related to staffing, hiring, connection and consultation with Indigenous communities, school spaces, curriculum and professional development.

1. Staff

- a. All staff that work with Indigenous students will have a connection to Indigenous culture, a commitment to learning and developing their skills and capacity to support culture and student success, and to be a positive role model for Indigenous students.
- b. Hiring practices will demonstrate a commitment to recruiting staff with a connection to Indigenous culture and student success.
- c. Training for all staff working with Indigenous students will be ongoing to build the knowledge of diverse Indigenous cultures, lived experiences and challenges Indigenous students face, and the skills to support school success.

2. Community

- a. Ongoing consultation with local Indigenous communities
- b. Community engagement is valued and reflected in the programs and services offered for Indigenous families.

3. Space

- a. Each school will examine how to best provide a positive space for Indigenous students to connect with staff for support. This dedicated space should reflect Indigenous culture, be central and inviting. This physical space can be inclusive but must still meet the needs of the Indigenous learners in the school.

4. Curriculum

- a. BCTF's Professional Standards state that 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. Teachers are expected to implement curriculum that infuses Indigenous content and perspectives in their classrooms with all students.
- b. Learning Indigenous language is closely linked to learning about culture. Using approved resources, we prioritize learning and sharing Halq'emeylem with students.
- c. Learning from the land, place-based learning, experiential learning, hands-on learning are methods to be adopted in all classrooms as examples of best practice.
- d. Vetted curriculum resources are openly available on our website to support educators and families in learning. Our Ray and Millie Silver Library is open to all Abbotsford School District Educators and to community members to lift up authentic Indigenous resources.

5. Professional Development

- a. The Abbotsford School District acknowledges historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public educational institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching and community engagement.
- b. The Indigenous Department is committed collaborating with departments and schools to providing ongoing training and professional development for all levels of staff to support the success of Indigenous students.

Artistic Contributions

The Enhancement Agreement for Indigenous Students document is enriched with meaningful artistic contributions that symbolize the continuous journey of student growth and success within the Abbotsford School District. These contributions include photographs and original artwork, each with profound cultural significance and educational purpose.

Photographic Contributions

The photos included in this document are from the Indigenous Role Model Honouring Ceremonies held in 2019, 2022, 2023, and 2024. These images capture moments of recognition and celebration, highlighting the achievements of Indigenous students within the Abbotsford School District.

Artwork by Carlos Julian, Mathxwí First Nation

The artwork created by Carlos Julian from the Mathxwí First Nation provides a visual narrative for the Indigenous Enhancement Agreement's three goals. Each piece is thoughtfully designed to reflect the journey and cyclical nature of student development and achievement.

Goal #1 — Student Success

The artwork for Student Success features a salmon egg, symbolizing the beginning of a journey. Just as the salmon egg requires the right conditions to hatch and thrive, students need support and nurturing to grow and succeed. This artwork represents the foundational stage of a student's educational journey, emphasizing the importance of a supportive environment.

Goal #2 — Cultural Identity

For Cultural Identity, the artwork shows the salmon egg evolving into an alevin, signifying growth and adaptation. As the alevin learns to navigate its surroundings, students develop and realize their own cultural identities and sense of belonging. This stage highlights the significance of cultural education and personal identity in a student's life.

Goal #3 — Equity and Access

The artwork depicting Equity and Access illustrates the mature salmon returning to the river to reproduce, completing its life cycle. This symbolizes the achievement of equity and access for students, providing them with opportunities to thrive and contribute back to their communities and schools. It emphasizes the importance of equitable opportunities and support for all students.

The Continuous Cycle

The cycle of the salmon's journey mirrors the ongoing nature of the Indigenous Enhancement Agreement's goals. There is no end to this cycle, reflecting the need for continual commitment and connectedness to support the students' journeys. This artistic representation reinforces the idea that student development is a continuous process requiring sustained effort and dedication.





Memorandum of Agreement

We, the undersigned, acknowledge and honour our collective responsibility for the success of all Indigenous students in the Abbotsford School District.

We agree the terms of this Enhancement Agreement will provide direction to Indigenous Education in the Abbotsford School District for the period of September 2024 to June 2030

We commit to working together in a mutually respectful manner to implement programs and supplemental services that benefit all Indigenous learners.




CHIEF ALICE MCKAY, MATHXWÍ FIRST NATION




SHIRLEY WILSON, CHAIR, BOARD OF EDUCATION,
ABBOTSFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT



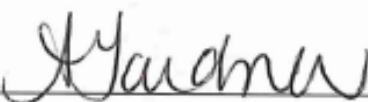
CHIEF DALTON SILVER, SEMÁ:TH FIRST NATION



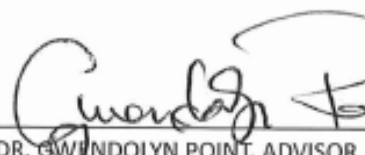
SEAN NOSEK, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
ABBOTSFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT



PIXIE WELLS, PRESIDENT,
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ALLISON GARDNER, DISTRICT PRINCIPAL OF
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