

# Q'pethet Ye Tel:exw, Gathering to Understand: A Framework for Creating a Culture of Equity, Year Three



- Kwakwaka'wakw Artist Roy J. Hanuse

Siwal Si'wes  
Indigenous  
Department  
*Our  
Forefathers'  
Teachings*



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## Acknowledgment of Territories and of Indigenous Peoples

*Il stl'i kw'els spipetstexw kw'eset ite xwelmexwelh stexwlaq temxwe's ye Stó:lō mestiyexw.*

*We humbly work and learn on the Traditional, Ancestral, Unceded, and Shared lands of the Stó:lō people, of Sq'éwlets, Leq'á:mel, Sema:th, Matheqwi and Qwó:ltl'el First Nations, peoples of this land since time immemorial. We also acknowledge that Halq'eméylem is the traditional language of this land.*

*Nous reconnaissons qu'en tant que partenaires d'apprentissage du conseil scolaire de Mission, nous travaillons et apprenons humblement sur les terres traditionnelles, ancestrales, non-cédées et partagées du peuple Stó:lō, des nations Sq'éwlets, Leq'á:mel, Sema:th, Matheqwi and Qwó:ltl'el, qui sont les habitants de cette terre depuis des temps immémoriaux.*



Sq'éwlets



Leq'á:mel



Sema:th



Matheqwi



Qwó:ltl'el

**Traditional**, because these are the traditional lands upon which Indigenous ancestors walked and the lands upon which we walk today.

**Ancestral**, because these are the lands that were passed down from generation to generation, along with the stories told on and of the land.

**Unceded**, because these lands were taken, by no agreement.

**Shared**, because Indigenous peoples of these lands shared this land with non-human beings and shared by trade, the resources of the land with other Indigenous groups.

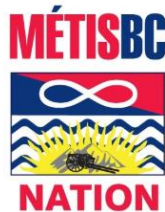
**We acknowledge territory to:**

- **Share our awareness** of the presence of Indigenous peoples of this land, past and present, and the generational knowledge passed on by knowledge keepers.
- **Acknowledge the past histories** of Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, including the intergenerational impacts of colonization, of the Indian Residential School system, of the Indian Day Schools, of the 60's scoop, and of assimilation policies of which the goal was cultural genocide.
- **Acknowledge current biases** including discriminatory laws, oppression, marginalization, deficit thinking and racism toward Indigenous peoples.
- **Recognize positive contributions** made by Indigenous peoples.
- **Show commitment to walk forward respectfully alongside** Indigenous peoples, accepting the responsibility to be living messages of anti-racism and equity for Indigenous peoples.



## Acknowledgment of Additional Indigenous Groups

Mission Public School District 75 and Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Education Department appreciates the vital role of all Indigenous peoples, groups, organizations, and associations residing within the lands of Sq'éwlets, Leq'á:mel, Sema:th, Matheqwí and Qwó:lt'l'el First Nations and those residing in Mission, and involved in and/or connected to the three organizations below, respectively:



- Fraser Valley Métis Nation
- Métis Nation of BC
- Mission Friendship Centre

And:

- Lower Stat'limx Nations
- Members of the Inuit Community
- Members of all Indigenous groups whose ancestors originated on traditional Turtle Island territories (lands which are now known as Canada) and who currently reside on Stó:lō lands.
- Warriors (Survivors) of the former St. Mary's Residential School

MPSD75 Contributions:

- Siwal Si'wes Family & Learning Partners
- Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Advisory Council
- Indigenous Students of MPSD75
- SD75 Educators
- The Board of Education, SD75



## Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Advisory Council



Siwal Si'wes works collaboratively with all schools to ensure that Indigenous students are successful in Mission Public Schools. While promoting and respecting the traditional territory of the Stó:lō people, they help foster an awareness of and respect for all Indigenous peoples.

The Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Advisory Council includes representatives from the community at large including:

- Elected co-chairs
- Parents and Caregivers of Indigenous students
- Indigenous Elders & Knowledge Keepers
- Members of Indigenous Communities
- School Staff
- School Board Trustees
- District Principal of Indigenous Education

This council works in an advisory capacity with the School District, local Indigenous communities, and the Ministry of Education.

### **The mandate of the Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Education Advisory Council is to:**

- represents interests in the design, implementation and assessment of programs and services to improve the school experience, academic achievement, and school success of Indigenous learners to better meet their needs.
- create an innovative and dynamic space for dialogue, discussions, learning and development of education of Indigenous students of SD75
- help inform and support increased success in all areas of education for Indigenous students of SD75, including social, emotional, physical and academic needs
- recommend and facilitate the implementation of new programs to provide better service to Indigenous students of SD75
- contribute to Equity Scan discussions (and other initiatives by the Indigenous Department of the BC Ministry of Education)
- provide strong communication and connection with Band Councils and other Indigenous groups served by SD75.



## The Story of Siwal Si'wes: Our Forefathers' Teachings



In the late 1980's, Agnes Giesbrecht, Robert Charlie and Virginia Joe met to discuss the creation of a vision for the Indigenous Department of Mission Public School System. Heather Hansson (former District Counsellor for Indigenous Youth) and Mel Jack (former Indigenous Liaison Worker) requested self- taught Kwakwaka'wakw artist, the late Roy J. Hanuse, to create a design that would capture and portray the Indigenous Department of Mission Public Schools District 75. Once Roy completed the design, Mel and Heather then enlisted Dr. Gwen Point, who, in collaboration Elders from Coqualeetza, named the design. The design was then gifted the name **Siwal Si'wes: our forefathers' teachings**. A traditional ceremony was held at Fraserview Elementary School (now Fraserview Learning Centre) to celebrate the naming, with the Honourable Steven Point as the speaker of the house. *(Information received from Mel Jack & Heather Hansson, February 2020).*

### Our Mission

Working as a community, we will enhance student empowerment by developing the skills, wellness, confidence, and self-reliance necessary for our children and youth to flourish and prosper throughout their life journey.

### Our Vision

Recognizing and nurturing strengths, students will thrive as individuals, thus contributing to the well-being of their families and communities while preserving tradition.



## Agreement Acknowledgement



THIS AGREEMENT OF ENHANCED EQUITY FOR INDIGENOUS LEARNERS IS  
BETWEEN:

**Mission Public School District 75**

AND

**Sq'ewlets, Leq'á:mel, Matheqwí, Qwó:Itl'el Nations, Lower Stat'limx Nations,  
the Fraser Valley Metis Nation, the Métis Nation of BC, Members of the Inuit  
Community, Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Education Advisory Council,**

AND

**The Ministry of Education in the Province of British Columbia.**



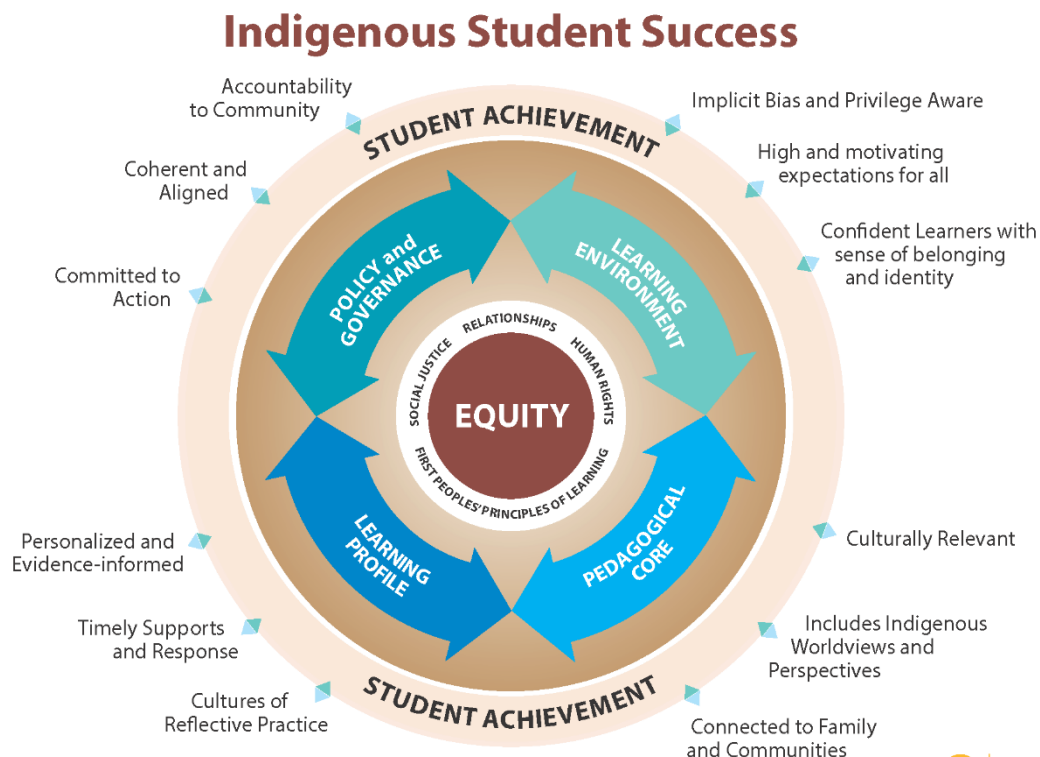
## What is the Equity Scan?

The Equity Scan began in 2016 by the Ministry of Education. The vision is to support school districts in identifying promising practices as well as addressing barriers impacting Indigenous student achievement and success. It is a collective and collaborative decision-making, inquiry-based process involving genuine and meaningful self-assessment dialogue about educational experiences for Indigenous learners with the goal to create conditions for their success.

Four dimensions are explored in the Equity Scan process:

- **Student Learning Profile** - key indicators of achievement and student learning trajectories
- **Policy and Governance** – processes, plans and policies
- **Pedagogical Core** - experience of learners in relation to curriculum, the presence of relevant cultural experiences and values placed on Indigenous Worldviews and Perspectives
- **Learning Environment** – includes human and educator bias; learning spaces

During the process and as a team, we will scan current trends, processes and results of Indigenous learners in our school district, construct an Equity Profile, determine a Theory of Change and develop an Equity Action Plan in service to Indigenous learners, families and communities.





## Why Equity?



### Truth & Reconciliation Calls to Action

In 2008, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement constituted and created Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). This Commission spent six years travelling to all parts of Canada to hear from more than 6,000 Indigenous peoples, surviving witnesses, who had been forcibly taken from their families as children and placed for much of their childhoods in Residential Schools. In 2015, the TRC released its final report including 94 Calls to Action. The focus was to lay the foundation for the important question of reconciliation.

***Now that we know about the legacy left by the Residential Schools, what do we do about it? How can the past be reconciled?***

Sections 62 & 63 of the TRC Calls to Action Report address tasks for educational institutions.

#### Education for Reconciliation

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students
- ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
- iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
- iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
- iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
- iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

(-Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, 2015)

***The TRC laid the foundation for an urgency of change in the education system, with the intentional inclusion of Indigenous truths, histories, knowledges and worldviews in the classroom experience, a call to all educators to reimagine and 'restory' teaching and learning, with a shared responsibility in working toward anti-racism and social justice for Indigenous peoples.***



## **The United Nations Declaration on the Rights in Indigenous Peoples**

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is a document of 46 Articles that describe and protect individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples around the world. It offers guidance on cooperative relationships with Indigenous peoples and addresses the rights of Indigenous peoples on issues such as: culture, identity, religion, language, health, education and community.



In May 2016, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs announced Canada is now a full supporter, without qualification, of the declaration. In Canada, it reinforces the Treaty relationships that exist between Indigenous peoples and the Crown and which form “the basis for a strengthened partnership....” The rights outlined in the *UN Declaration* “constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world” (Article 43).

*The following Articles are of importance to education:*

### **Article 8:**

1. Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.

### **Article 11:**

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.

### **Article 12:**

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.

### **Article 14**

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

### **Article 15**

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.

2. States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.

(-United Nations, 2008)



## BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The provincial government passed the legislation in November 2019 to implement the UN Declaration, which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission confirms as the framework for reconciliation.

The B.C. *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* aims to create a path forward that respects the human rights of Indigenous peoples while introducing better transparency and predictability in the work we do together.

It mandates government to bring provincial laws into harmony with the UN Declaration, providing transparency and accountability while bringing Indigenous peoples to the table for decisions that affect them, their families and their territories.

(-Government of British Columbia, 2019)

***UNDRIP and the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act call on educators to ensure that Indigenous children and youth have equitable access to learning opportunities and that Indigenous children and youth are seen, without discrimination, as capable, valued, contributing learners.***

## Professional Standards for BC Educators

Standard 9 is new, as of August 2019, and carries with it the aspiration and expectation that BC educators strive towards truth, reconciliation, and healing, acknowledging the history and contributions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples who have been on these lands now known as Canada.

**9 | Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada and 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.**

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 relationships to oneself, family, community and the natural world. Educators integrate First Nations, Inuit and Métis worldviews and perspectives into learning environments.

(-Government of British Columbia, 2019)

***Standard 9 calls on educators to look inward and lean into the discomfort of our own personal biases, to acknowledge our personal privilege, to recognize our gifts and talents, to be allies of Indigenous peoples to work toward understanding First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, and to share our learning forward.***



## The Purpose of Indigenous Education

### Ministry of Education Targeting Indigenous Funding

The Ministry of Education and Child Care provides enhanced funding to school age students of Indigenous ancestry. Enhanced funding provides culturally appropriate educational programs and services to support the success of Indigenous students. This policy is part of a larger policy framework to support the achievement of Indigenous students.



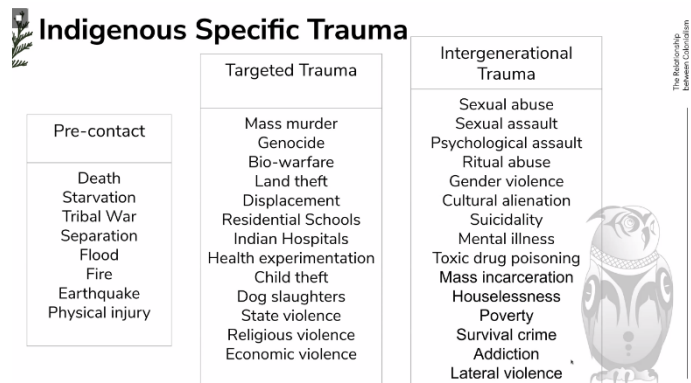
Indigenous Education seeks to improve success and supports for Indigenous students, and increase the presence of Indigenous culture, languages, and history for all students. It also aims to help teachers bring Indigenous knowledge into their teaching practice.

Indigenous Education aligns with commitments to the: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, to the Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples and BCTF Professional Standard #9.

### Why do Indigenous learners receive enhanced services and supports?

The answer to this question lies in a combination of several things.

The history of this land we now call Canada and what it has tried to do to Indigenous peoples. This includes the Indian Residential School System, Indian Day Schools, 60's Scoop, the Indian Act and other laws designed to destroy Indigenous cultures. We have yet to address the current legacies of all of this. Len Pierre, Katzie educator, consultant, TEDx Speaker, social activist, change agent, & traditional knowledge keeper, outlines Indigenous Specific Trauma, which is different than trauma than trauma experienced by non-Indigenous peoples.



This is not to place blame on Canadians, but it does place a reconciliatory responsibility on all Canadians to:

- learn the truths of the past, of the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Canada
- identify untruths of Indigenous Peoples in Canada
- recognize personal bias and stereotypes that influence our thoughts and actions towards Indigenous Peoples
- recognize and address overt and systemic racism against Indigenous Peoples in all sectors of Canada
- develop an understanding of how non-Indigenous Peoples continue to benefit from policies intended to dismantle cultures and assimilate Indigenous Peoples in Canada
- recognize Indigenous land rights and title, and self-determination
- advocate for governments to meet past and current obligations entrenched in the Constitution, legislation, and treaties
- respond to the Calls to Action of the *Truth and Reconciliation (TRC)*, the Articles pertaining to education in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*, the action plan of the *BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and to uphold *BCTF Standard #9*.

Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 explicitly recognizes and affirms the existing Indigenous and treaty rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Section 35 also indicates that the term 'Aboriginal peoples of Canada' includes the First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada.

*Systemic Racism (in its various forms) and specifically Indigenous-specific racism.* This is not about individual learners; it is about how the education system systemically has not been meeting needs of Indigenous learners as a group, and the barriers Indigenous learners face and inequities they experience in school.

It is about trying to address 'the long-term psychological, social, and multi-generational damage caused by being marginalized in your own lands, by having your land appropriated, by having your freedoms and rights systematically denied and/or restricted' (Manitoba Education & Training, 2017). It is about understanding how Non-Indigenous Peoples continue to benefit from policies that were intended to assimilate First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Peoples. It is about a nation being responsive to the original inhabitants of this land.

Finally, Indigenous targeted funding is **not** about *students in need*; it is about the harm caused by education systems (culturally and otherwise) to Indigenous learners, families, and communities.

*-Adapted from Jo Chrona, October 6, 2022, email correspondence and Wayi Wah! Indigenous Pedagogies: An Act for Reconciliation and Anti-Racism Education*



## Who is responsible for creating a Culture of Equity for Indigenous learners in SD75?

***We all are. Equity for Indigenous learners in SD75 is the responsibility of everyone, in whatever role you hold.***

*There continue to be learning gaps within SD75 staff of how implicit and explicit personal bias and stereotypes interfere with the way we think about and interact with Indigenous learners and families. Additionally, there are gaps in understanding in the historical context of this country, how both intergenerational trauma (caused by the impacts of colonization, the Indian Residential School System, the Indian Day Schools and the 60's Scoop etc) and Indigenous-specific racism intersect with systemic barriers Indigenous families face today, and more specifically, how this shows up in schools (in classrooms, on the playground, on the bus etc). Siwal Si'wes Staff report some challenges with other SD75 Staff in having a full understanding of why Indigenous learners receive enhanced services and of the specific roles and responsibilities of SWSW Staff members. Equity for Indigenous learners is everyone's responsibility and these gaps present challenges in our efforts to bring equity to Indigenous learners in SD75, and to SWSW Staff.*

If you don't know how to get started, here are a few 'equity must-have' resources (those marked with an asterisk \* are Indigenous-specific):

- Wayi Wah! Indigenous Pedagogies; *An Act for Reconciliation and Anti-Racist Education* – Jo Chrona
- Legacy – Trauma, Story, and Indigenous Healing – Suzanne Methot
- Ensouling Our Schools – Dr. Jennifer Katz and Kevin Lamoureux
- Equity Centred Trauma Information Education – Alex Shevrin Venet
- Reach & Teaching Students in Poverty – Paul Gorski
- Humanity Over Comfort – Sharone Brinkley-Parker et al
- Equity How to Design Organizations Where Everyone Thrives – Minal Bopiah
- Articles:
  - [Understanding Racism](#)
  - [Policies, Programs and Strategies to address Anti-Indigenous Racism](#)
  - [Indigenous Experiences with Racism and its Impacts](#)



## **Indigenous Learners and Siwal Si'wes Staff of SD75 – 2021-2022**

In 2021-2022, there were approximately 1176 self-identified learners of Indigenous ancestry (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) who received supports from SWSW. Indigenous learners account for 16.1% of the overall learner population in SD75.

The Indigenous learner population is diverse:

- Approximately 9.6% of the Indigenous learners in SD75 are Nominal Roll learners – meaning that they reside within local First Nations communities.
- Approximately 10% of Indigenous learners in SD75 live on-reserve and 90% live away from the reserve.
- Of the 1176 learners,
  - 31.8% self-identify as Metis
  - 0.34% self-identify as Inuit
  - 45.2% self-identify as Non-Status First Nations
  - 15.5% self-identify as Status First Nations and live away from home (away from the reserve)
  - 7.0% self-identify as Status First Nations and live on reserve

Staff within SWSW make up approximately 2.6% of the staff in SD75. Over 90% of all SWSW Staff are of Indigenous Ancestry.

2020-2021 SWSW Staff was as follows:

- 21 Indigenous Liaison Workers (ILWs)
- Two Indigenous Student Success Advocates (ISSAs)
- Two Indigenous Student and Community Outreach Teachers (IOTs) - 0.2 FTE for each; one of which was funded through the Special Purpose Fund
- Two Indigenous Educational Assistants (funded through the Special Purpose Fund)
- One Indigenous Mentor Teacher (IMT) – funded through CORE
- Three Indigenous Program Area Leaders/Instructional Team Leaders (at both middle schools and at high school – funded through CORE
- One Teacher-Librarian (0.4 FTE)
- One Administrative Office Professional (AP)
- One District Principal of Indigenous Education (DPIE) funded by CORE funding
- SD75 has a hiring exemption in place with the BC Human Rights Commission for the preferential hiring of individuals of Indigenous ancestry, for teaching positions funded by Indigenous Targeted Funding.



## What does our District Data Reveal to Us?

### Data from 2020-2021 (extract from *Ministry Aboriginal How Are We Doing Report & Ministry Sharepoint Data Site*):

- **Six-Year Indigenous Graduation Completion Rates (2020-2021)** are currently at 64%, 9% lower than 2019-2020 results.
- **Children and Youth in Care Six-Year Completion Rate (2019-2021)** is 53% (data for 2020-2021 unavailable at this time)
- **Dogwood Diplomas (2020-2021):** 51% of all Adult Dogwood diplomas awarded in 2020 were awarded to Indigenous Adult Students, a 20% increase from 2019-2020 results.
- **Alternate Programs:** 56% of the total students in Alternate Programs are of Indigenous ancestry
- 17% of all eligible Grade 11 Indigenous students are in Precalculus 11.
- 48% of all eligible Grade 10 Indigenous students are in Workplace Math 10.
- **Student Services Data for Students with Ministry Designations:**
  - 42% of Indigenous students with a Ministry Designation, graduate
  - 38% of Indigenous students “ever designated” as Category R or H, graduate
  - 47% of all students with a Ministry *behaviour* designation are Indigenous
  - *Categories:*
    - *R: Students requiring behaviour support or students with Mental Illness*
    - *H: Students requiring intensive behaviour support or students with serious Mental Illness*

### Data from 2021-2022 (MPSD Reports):

- **Attendance**
  - The percentage of Indigenous students missing more than 18 days of school during the 2021-2022 school year was 23%.
- **Suspension Data:**
  - Indigenous students comprise 31% of the total number of suspensions throughout SD75.
  - Indigenous students identifying as male comprise 23% of the total number of suspensions throughout SD75.
- **Indigenous Student Connectivity Survey Results, where the result shown is a cumulation of answers Always, Often or Sometimes:**
  - 87% of Indigenous students K to Grade 12 indicate that they feel that they belong at their school.
  - 91% of Indigenous students K to Grade 12 indicate that they feel safe at school.
  - 90% of Indigenous students K to Grade 12 indicate that they do well in school.
  - 88% of Indigenous students K to Grade 12 indicate that they get help from school staff.
  - 90% of Indigenous students K to Grade 12 indicate that they feel that staff care about them.
  - 48% of Indigenous students K to Grade 12 indicate that they are involved in extra-curricular or service activities.





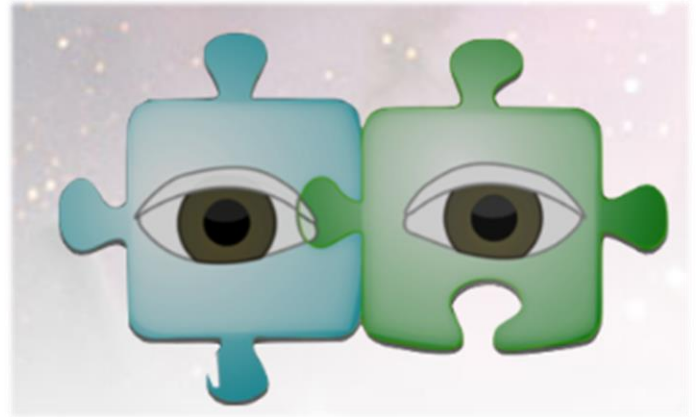
## Enhancement Agreement Emerging Themes

As we worked through the data collection process from the meetings held from September 2018 to December 2019, we considered the words of Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall.

### Etuaptmumk – Two-Eyed Seeing

As we work toward equity for Indigenous students, we create space for Two-Eyed Seeing. *Etuaptmumk* is the Mi'kmaq word for Two-Eyed Seeing, coined by Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall.

*“Etuaptmumk refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing ... and learning to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.”*



– Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall



Once the information was collated, four themes emerged. We named them **commitments**, which are represented in the image created by Ovila Mailhot, Coast Salish graphic artist.

### Artist Acknowledgment

Ovila Mailhot, Coast Salish graphic artist, originally from Seabird Island reservation in British Columbia, whose roots are both of Stó:lō & Nlaka'pamux Nation created an image to capture these themes. Ovila notes that creating new work and revitalizing the techniques and approaches to Indigenous art is something he feels compelled to do.



## In the Words of the Ovila Mailhot, Coast Salish Artist

*“Art feels vital to me. And being able to share that passion I have, is very special to me. This tradition of work, and this beauty, is so necessary for our culture & for healing.*

*My work must carry some level of simplicity; it must not obscure itself. That’s the tradition I’ve inherited. My work is meant to add to a continuum within a culture so rich and expansive that it still hasn’t been fully actualized or received by mainstream culture.*

*I wanted to put together a minimal style logo that would stand boldly and still be able to tell a story. An image that everyone there could be joyful and proud to have represented.*



*The **eagle** is one of my favourite representations used in our culture & among many Nations. To me the eagle can represent strength, knowledge & wisdom. A symbol that I could see easily tied into students, teachers & family. That some might see as a role model as well, eagle being the one creature capable of soaring closest to the creator above all.*

*The **sunrise** behind the eagle brings meaning of a new day & new journeys ahead. A combination shared by both students & teachers. With the educator’s role to show care, a healthy love while nurturing the students to grow and continue their new beginnings in life.*

*The **paddles raised**. A representation of a diverse group of individuals sharing a common goal on their journey together as educators & students. Each individual has their own unique qualities, different skill sets to paddle on the same path together. The skill sets, techniques and knowledge of operating these paddles in life’s journey come from our educators & parents mentoring and knowledge shared.*

*The **canoe** is a representation of our past and something that is still used to this day. Representing how our culture & traditional ways remain intact. The canoe is used on our destination in a collective journey.”*

-Ovila Mailhot, June 2020



## Sp'óq'es, The Eagle: Honouring Relationships and Kin Connections

***What does it mean to be in relationship with ourselves, with others and the land?***

*Learning partners of SD75 are committed to:*

- creating and maintaining strong and meaningful relationships and kin connections with:
  - ourselves and our identities, recognizing our implicit biases and privilege
  - with Indigenous students and their families,
  - local Indigenous Elders, role models and knowledge keepers,
  - with Indigenous culture and local Nations,
  - with colleagues and all learning partners of SD75
  - with Indigenous curriculum and knowledge,
  - and with Indigenous communities and the land
- taking responsibility both individually and collectively in the creation of a culture of reciprocity to deepen a sense of belonging for Indigenous students in SD75 schools.



## Swep'áth', The Sunrise: Creating and Maintaining Safe Learning Environments

***How are kin connections nurtured in a school environment? What does a safe school environment look like and feel like?***

*Learning partners of SD75 are committed to:*

- creating welcoming, nurturing, validating and inclusive learning cultures led by adults
  - who show care, concern and healthy love.
  - who demonstrate an awareness and understanding that students are of diverse family backgrounds, with a range of diverse needs, including basic needs such as food security, clothing, transportation, social-emotional safety and physical safety.
  - who include social-emotional learning and trauma-informed practices in their daily work and in the language used when speaking of, to and with Indigenous peoples.
- Creating culturally responsive learning environments, including learning spaces which reflect Indigenous worldviews and perspectives



## Sq'émél, The Paddles Raised: Supporting Student Success in Equitable Ways

### *What does equity mean? What does equity look like in SD75 schools?*

*Learning partners of SD75 are committed to:*

- meeting students and families where they are and recognizing each student as a differently abled individual, each with unique combinations of gifts and strengths, barriers and needs.
- Supporting student success in equitable ways includes:
  - an awareness, knowledge and growth understanding of anti-racist education,
  - viewing Indigenous students with high expectations, as self-determining individuals, capable of success,
  - realizing that Indigenous student success is a shared and unified responsibility,
  - providing students with necessary supports and opportunities of access,
  - including inclusive and flexible learning environments and schedules,
  - careful selection and scheduling of classes and courses,
  - positive, ongoing communication with parents and caregivers,
  - offering invitations to school events,
  - school staff visiting the Indigenous communities of the students and families we serve,
  - access to after-school programming and tutoring,
  - options for extra-curricular activities and
  - honouring cultural expertise



## **Sléxwelh, The Canoe: Honouring the Past, Being in the Present, Strengthening the Future**

***How can we use our understanding of the past to support our efforts in the present and to work toward a shared future?***

*Learning partners of SD75 are committed to understanding that:*

- pre-contact Indigenous communities were diverse thriving, healthy systems with robust languages, traditions, practices, laws and ceremonies;
- that during contact, these systems were significantly disrupted by the intentional cultural genocide caused by the Indian Residential School System, the Indian Day School and the 60's Scoop;
- that throughout and after contact, Indigenous peoples persevered.

By resilience, and through the resurgence and revitalization of language, ceremonial practices and culture, Indigenous peoples are 'restorying' the past and walking toward a shared future.



## Equity Scan Beginnings

SD75 joined the Equity Scan Project in September 2019. The contributions made during the Enhancement Agreement meetings during the 2018/2019 school year and in the fall 2019 led directly into the Equity Scan Project. These contributions serve as overarching beliefs and commitments to Indigenous learners.

This combined work became:

### ***Q'pethet Ye Tel:exw: Gathering to Understand: A Framework for Creating a Culture of Equity***

The Equity Scan Team includes:

- Local Elders
- Representatives and Education Coordinators from Qwó:lti'el, Leq'á:mel, Matheqwí and Sq'éwlets
- Indigenous Student Success Advocates
- Indigenous Liaison Workers
- Acting District Principal of Indigenous Education
- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent
- Director of Student Services
- Members of Human Resources
- School Board Trustees
- School Administrators
- Members of Student Services
- Classroom Teachers
- District Mentor Teachers



The Equity Scan is a standing topic on the following meetings: weekly Senior Management, focused Equity Scan Facilitators, monthly Management/Exempt, Committee of the Whole, monthly Siwal Si'wes Advisory Council, and monthly Siwal Si'wes Staff.





## Examining Current Practices

***How do current practices support, connect to and/or hinder the commitments represented by the eagle, the sunrise, the paddles raised and the canoe?***

### **Cultural Relevance:**

Is/does this practice...

- culturally relevant to Indigenous students of SD75 and Indigenous communities?
- reflect Indigenous ways of seeing, understanding and knowing the world?
- consider the effects of racism, oppression, marginalization, poverty and colonization of Indigenous communities?
- promote meaningful Indigenous participation and benefit?

### **Impacts:**

Does this practice:

- have any potential negative impacts on Indigenous peoples?
- privilege some individuals or groups at the expense of Indigenous peoples?
- perpetuate systemic disparities faced by Indigenous peoples?
- place barriers in front of Indigenous learners?

If yes,

- What are these impacts?
- How can they be maximized to achieve the most equitable outcome?
- What are the success indicators associated with this?

If no,

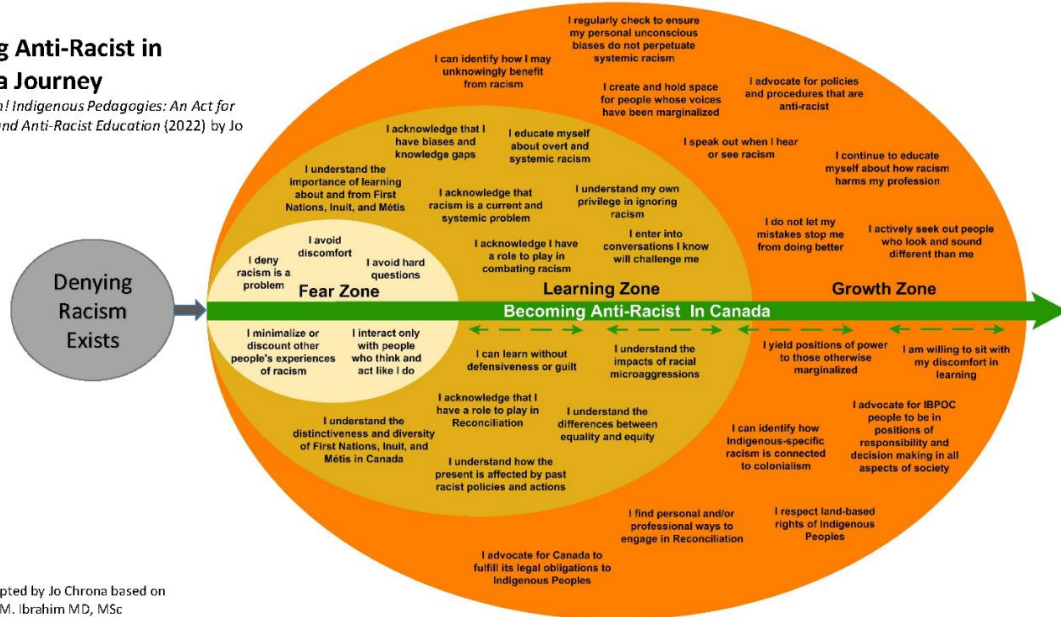
- Are these impacts minor that can be managed? If so, how?
- Are these impacts significant that may require alternatives? If yes, what might be some alternatives to ensure equity?



## Reconciliation through Education

### Becoming Anti-Racist in Canada: a Journey

From *Wayi Wah! Indigenous Pedagogies: An Act for Reconciliation and Anti-Racist Education* (2022) by Jo Chrona



Idea/graphic adapted by Jo Chrona based on work of Andrew M. Ibrahim MD, MSc

## Reconciliation Through Education

What does Reconciliation through Education mean?

Moving forward in Reconciliation:

- Means examining how overt, systemic, and epistemic racism play out in classrooms, schools, and districts
- Asks us to understand how we may be engaging in actions that marginalize and denigrate Indigenous learners, families, and communities. When we place the blame for disparity in education outcomes on learners, families, or communities, we are reinforcing colonial narratives that have portrayed Indigenous Peoples as in need of fixing.
- Asks us to respond to the concerns and priorities of Indigenous leadership, rather than continuing to believe that non-Indigenous Peoples 'know best'.
- Asks us to remove and refrain from using resources that reflect stereotypes or misinformation about Indigenous Peoples in Canada.
- Change assumptions that Indigenous learners come to school with inherent deficits, and recognize that they have innate gifts and abilities to be nurtured into growth.

-Adapted from *Wayi Wah! Indigenous Pedagogies; An Act for Reconciliation and Anti-Racist Education* – Jo Chrona



*This document is a working document, in that each Pillar Group, through discussion and dialogue will commence an examination of current practices, processes and policies, alongside measures of evidence, leading to Action Plans, resulting in increased equity for Indigenous learners and knowing that we are making a difference, but also knowing how we are making a difference.*

## The Pillars of Equity – Moving Beyond Year One Policy & Governance



### Focused Conversations, Commitments & Priorities to Support Equity for Indigenous Learners:

#### Actions Completed, Ongoing or In Progress:

- Review and revise Strategic Plan to reflect Indigenous Worldviews and Perspectives
- Include Halq'emeylem language in Strategic Plan – *In progress*
- Education Coordinators from Leqamel and Sq'ewlets meet with school-based Indigenous teams regularly to discuss progress and achievements of on reserve learners
- Creation of a Policy Working Group between SD75 and the Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Education Advisory Council:
  - Review and align SD75's Plans, Policies, Administrative Procedures, Regulations & Governance Procedures:
    - *Child Care Policy* (approved)
    - *Stó:lō History, and the Halq'eméylem Language, Story, and Culture Policy* (approved)
    - *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy - In progress*
- Creation of a District-wide Smudging Protocol



- Equity is a 'standing agenda item' for Management/Exempt meetings, Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Education Advisory Council meetings, Siwal Si'wes Department meetings, Student Services meetings, School Principal meetings, Mentor Teacher meetings and Committee of the Whole meetings.
- Payment for Elders & Knowledge Keepers as cash payment for ceremonies
- Human Resources (HR):
  - Inclusion of Siwal Si'wes logo, Equity Scan symbol and Land Acknowledgment on Atrieve (the integrated K-12 ERP system that simplifies finance, HR, and payroll)
  - Onboarding Process for all potential SD75 employees includes information segment on Equity for Indigenous Learners, with employment conditional on having read and understood the *Equity-Based Language* document
  - Meetings with MTU and CUPE unions begin with the Land Acknowledgment, and when necessary, Equity for Indigenous Learners and pertinent sections of this document are part of the dialogue
  - Align SD75's Hiring Procedures, Posting Language, and Interview Questions, and specifically the hiring of Indigenous educators to reflect a Culture of Equity - *In progress*
  - SD75 added one full-time position as District Principal of Student Services and Curriculum, with a focus on SEL, and equity-based trauma informed education.
  - Applications to BC Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, approval received for the following positions:
    - Indigenous Student Success Advocate
    - Indigenous Student & Community Outreach Educator
    - Stó:lō History, Story, Halq'eméylem Language and Culture Educator
    - Indigenous Program Area Leader/Program Area Leader
    - Indigenous Learning Support Teacher (at Fraserview Learning Centre)
- Initially, the salary of the Indigenous Mentor Teacher was split evenly between targeted funding and Core funding. As of the amended budget (February 2022), the entire salary of this position now comes from Core budget.
- Creation of Equity Based School Growth Plan Guideline (see attached)
- Development of *Siwal Si'wes Staff Roles and Responsibilities Guide* (for Administrators)

### Explore & Review:

- Ensure District Budget Reports reflect the shared and unified responsibility for supporting learners
- Practices for professional growth plans at the district, school, and classroom level
- Review process of the inclusion and representation of local First Nation communities in the decision-making process of programs and services that directly affect their children
- Equity as a 'standing agenda item' for School-Based Staff Meetings and other Department meetings (Facilities, Operations, Health & Safety, Human Resources etc).
- Equity School Lead and Committee in every school
- Policy Working Group between SD75 and the Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Education Advisory Council:
  - Co-create, align, review and/or explore SD75's Plans, Policies, Administrative Procedures, Regulations & Governance Procedures:
    - *Safe & Caring Schools Policy*
    - *Indigenous Learner Policy*
    - *Indigenous Community Engagement Policy*



## Learning Environment



### **Focused Conversations, Commitments & Priorities to Support Equity for Indigenous Learners:**

#### **Actions Completed, Ongoing or In Progress:**

- Graduation and commencement ceremonies included an Indigenous knowledge keeper and included Indigenous drumming, singing and speakers who addressed the entire school community. Also included, *The Secret Pocket* (true story by Indigenous Mentor Teacher, Peggy Janicki) as part of all graduation portfolios, for all graduates regardless of ancestry
- Pathways to Employment – Partnership with Douglas College, SD75 and Siwal Si'wes – select Indigenous learners were purposefully and intentionally recruited for this program (completed, due to termination of the program)
- Implemented a Complex Care and Intervention Team and PEACEful schools training to provide trauma informed practice training for school staff to implement in classrooms, care plans and intervention plans.
- The Indigenous Student Gathering Place, that it fosters belonging and connectedness
- School practices welcoming Indigenous students and families
- Full-scale reviews of all Cultural Presentations offered by Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Department, to ensure authenticity
- Partnership with Metis Nation BC for the development of a Metis-Based Child Care Centre in SD75



### Explore & Review:

- Review of:
  - how school culture is enhanced by the First Peoples' Principles of Learning
  - how Indigenous worldviews, perspectives and knowledges are reflected in all physical spaces of the school (includes classrooms, hallways, foyer, gym etc) or lack thereof
  - current communication practices between the school and Indigenous families
  - rates of participation of Indigenous learners in extra-curricular activities; identify possible barriers and gaps of opportunity
  - rates of participation of Indigenous learners in student leadership opportunities; identify possible barriers and gaps of opportunity
  - Indigenous presence at school sites; including staff members, Elders-in-Residence; Indigenous Knowledge Keepers & Presenters
  - feedback from the Indigenous community, and the process of gaining input from Indigenous families about the learning environment of their children
  - participation of Indigenous learners and families in school events, those specifically Indigenous and those not specifically Indigenous based



## Pedagogical Core

### Focused Conversations, Commitments & Priorities to Support Equity for Indigenous Learners:

#### Actions Completed, Ongoing or In Progress:

- 'Storefront Learning' Framework at middle and high schools for Indigenous learners needing a different option than distributed learning at Summit Learning Centre
- Equity Language document was created and shared with Senior Management, Human Resources Staff, Siwal Si'wes staff and all principals and vice-principals, with the idea that the school administrators would spend time discussing this with staff; to be included in Siwal Si'wes Handbook and Student Services Handbook for Fall 2021
- Increased availability and promotion of Indigenous resources created for teachers in Curriculum Connections, Si'wes Digital Resource Collection, and by Indigenous Mentor Teacher
- Assessment practices and feedback of learning - *In progress through Assessment Pilot*
- Reviewed current policy/guidelines for selection and purchase of authentic Indigenous learning materials and resources
  - Siwal Si'wes library:
    - Removing inauthentic resources and replacing them with authentic resources; removal of Dewey Decimal section 398.2 (Myths and Legends)
    - Review of collection of picture books learn to read books, most of the information books and some of the teacher resource guides
    - Teacher Librarian learning session with the Indigenous Mentor Teacher and Siwal Si'wes Teacher Librarian on the topic of "Selecting Authentic Indigenous Learning Resources" aka "Books Under the Sink". (2022/23 goal is to visit school libraries and support changes to the collection).
- Created an All Staff Newsletter called Éy St'elmexw Sqwelqwel: Good Medicine Stories (currently on hold)



- Provided learning opportunities and professional development for authentic Indigenous learning, implicit bias and privilege, Equity, Anti-Racism and Trauma-Informed practices, including transgenerational effects of Indian Residential Schools, 60's Scoop and marginalization of Indigenous peoples (for all staff)
  - Provided learning opportunities and professional development for authentic Indigenous learning, implicit bias and privilege, Equity, Anti-Racism and Trauma-Informed practices, including transgenerational effects of Indian Residential Schools, 60's Scoop and marginalization of Indigenous peoples (for interested staff):
    - *Ensouling Our Schools: A Universally Designed Framework for Mental Health, Well-Being, and Reconciliation* (Dr. Jennifer Katz & Kevin Lamoureux) workshop series to select staff
    - Anti-Racism Workshop Series for interested staff
    - Indigenous Reading Challenge – for interested staff
    - The Ballantyne Project – for interested staff
    - Salish Weave Art Exploration
    - Stó:lō Sitel Stories
    - MHFA – Mental Health First Aid Training (Youth Care Workers and Indigenous Liaison Workers)
    - MAPS & PATH – person-centred vision planning (select Student Services, Siwal Si'wes & ESD Staff)
- Learning Opportunities (2021 2022)
  - Five-session *Equity Learning Series* with the Alex Shevrin Venet, the author of *Equity Centred Trauma Informed Education* for interested SD75 Staff and Nation Designates
  - *Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Training* from Bakau Consulting (all SD75 staff)
  - Two one-hour workshops, *Equity through Indigenous Story* and another *Anti-Racism through Indigenous Story* to interested Support Staff
  - *Implicit Bias/Self-Location Workshop* presented by Indigenous Mentor Teacher, Peggy Janicki, focus on Self Location Workshops “Indigenous Research: Personal theory and Self-Situating” to Fraserview Learning Centre staff and students, and District Mentor Teacher Group
  - Kevin Lamoureux, spoke to interested educators in the Fall 2021 about *Schools as Places of Healing: Truth and Reconciliation through Education*. We extended this learning and invited him back as the Keynote Speaker for the February 2022 District-Wide Professional Development Day.
  - Jo Chrona presented to interested educators in Spring 2022 about *Bias, Privilege & Anti-Racism in Education*.
  - To increase SWSW Staff cultural learning we offered:
    - Three two-hour learning sessions with Len Pierre, with a focus on *Mental Health through an Indigenous Lens*.
    - Metis Cultural Strengthening learning opportunity with Metis community member Jillian Currie for SWSW Staff (Medicine Wheel and Smudging Workshops).





- Equity PATH Process completed with:
  - Senior Leadership & Indigenous Board Liaison (February 2022)
  - SWSW Family Staff (April 2022)
  - SWSW IEAC and Nation Representatives (May 2022)
  - School Administrators (August 2022)
  - Members of the Board (September 2022)
- Review of BAA Course Indigenous Mentorship: Engagement with the Education Coordinators from the local Nations, to receive input, consideration, and reflection, with the goal being a unified approach when selecting Indigenous learners for this course. We value the knowledge the Education Coordinators hold regarding cultural strengths of Nation families and specifically graduating youths. Additionally, we will bring some Indigenous youth into the conversation, to ensure that we include student voice and agency.
- MSS Studio, a Secondary School's innovative model which aims to mentor Classroom Teachers with revised curriculum and graduation requirements (2023) and offers teaching strategies, provides resources and professional growth to develop an understanding of Indigenous history, worldview and perspectives.
- Weaving by Ang George, which highlights SD75 to be "in relationship" with Stó:lō communities outside of their local First Nations. The Dan Milo Society is Sqewqel First Nation and the Weaver is Tseil-Wututh First Nation.
- Project of Heart Canoe which highlights relationship with SD75, MTU and BCTF as this is partnership opportunity

### **Explore & Review:**

- Review of:
  - practices for ensuring the academic success of Indigenous students, specifically in CORE courses (i.e., Workplace Math versus Calculus)
  - rates of participation of Indigenous learners in specialized programs and courses; identify possible barriers and gaps of opportunity
  - rates of participation of Indigenous students in Programs and Schools of Choice, and Advanced Placement courses
  - rates of participation of Indigenous learners in Adult Graduation program versus Regular Dogwood
  - district's current practice for classroom instructional practices for racial bias
  - classroom instructional practices to ensure that they enhance teaching/s with Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, and knowledges
  - practices to include Indigenous families on instruction, curriculum and resources used in the classrooms
  - a need for Indigenous Curriculum Lead at elementary school sites



- Equity PATH with:
  - In community with Nations
  - Indigenous Learners
  - Indigenous Families
  - Student Services Staff, Mentor Teachers & International Education (November 16, 2022)
  - Mission Teacher-Librarian Association (November 28, 2022)
  - MTU/CUPE Executive
  - School Equity Leads
  - SD75 Educator Staff
  - Committee of the Whole
  - Non-Teaching Staff (including Human Resources, Operations, Facilities, Technology, Transportation, Custodial Staff, Noon-Hour Supervisors, Health & Safety (Equity in the format of a Professional Development opportunity)
- Reviewed current policy/guidelines for selection and purchase of authentic Indigenous learning materials and resources
  - Siwal Si'wes library:
    - Review remainder of information section, literacy bags and teacher resource section



## Learning Profiles

### Focused Conversations, Commitments & Priorities to Support Equity for Indigenous Learners:

#### Actions Completed, Ongoing or In Progress:

- Student Success Binders
- Meetings specifically to track progress, success and needs of students who cross Indigenous Department and Student Services Department (led by Indigenous Student Success Coaches)
- Focused transition meetings and information sharing and collection for Indigenous students transitioning to middle and high school
- Intentional Indigenous Student Success Plans, for students requiring additional supports when transitioning to middle and high school
- Continuation of weekly Indigenous Student Success Meetings at the middle and high school level
- Focused Grade 12 Indigenous Student Success Meeting in Spring to ensure they are in line to graduate; Create Intentional Student Success Plans for those in danger of not graduating
- Tracking system for non-graduating Indigenous students
- Ministry Sharepoint Data as a reporting tool to be shared with SD75 community (Employees, the Board, Siwal Si'wes Advisory Council, Local Bands)
- District Discipline Committee – to examine current discipline and suspension practices, collaborate to create alternative options as culturally responsive
- District Transition Committee – to examine current transition practices and to collaborate to revise and strengthen current structures
- Sense of Belonging Survey for Indigenous Students – revised
- Collaborate with and utilize resources from outside agencies (i.e., Jordan's Principle, FNHA, CYMH etc)
- Creation of Siwal Si'wes Graduation Handbook so learners can track their progress towards graduation



- Relationships with Partner Agencies (Transition from High School to Post-Secondary and Employment)
  - *Triangle, Futures for Youth Program: Reaching Independence Through Employment and Buxton Consulting Ltd.* (Pre-Employment & Employment Programs)
  - Steps Together Foundation (Bursaries for Indigenous learners entering trades at Riverside College)
  - SASET - Stò:lò Aboriginal Skills & Employment Training (Bursaries for Indigenous learners and post-secondary funding for trades)
- Review attendance rates
- Interaction and communications of school personnel with Indigenous learners and families (AIMS) – Updated routinely
- Supports for Post-Secondary, including the application for Siwal Si'wes scholarships & Bursaries (updated)
- Hiring of additional staff - Indigenous Student and Community Outreach Teacher focus on providing service to students experiencing attendance barriers and additional Indigenous Liaison Workers

#### Explore & Review:

- Use of the Indigenous Learning Profile Tool to monitor and track progress of Indigenous Grade 10-12 students
- Personal learning goals as set by each Indigenous learner assessing their learning through self-reflection and culturally responsive protocols.
- Indigenous learners understanding of identity and understanding of cultural competencies
- Processes for supporting relationships between adults and Indigenous students
- Processes for supporting peer relationships
- Suspension Data



## **Acknowledgments & Concluding Thoughts**

We would like to extend a grand Kwas'hooy to the Indigenous students, parents and caregivers, families and community members who shared their vision for Indigenous Education in SD75.

We are grateful to the Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Advisory Council, to District Staff and to participating individuals from various Indigenous communities and organizations who donated their time to *Q'pethet Ye Tel:exw, Gathering to Understand: A Framework for Creating a Culture of Equity*.

### **Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Advisory Council Members (2021/2022)**

Agnes Giesbrecht, Co-Chair

Priscilla Wells, Co-Chair

Dawn Styran, Education Coordinator Alternate, Leq'á:mel First Nation

Chief Johnny Williams, Sq'ewlets

Sonya Williams, Education Coordinator, Sq'ewlets

Cheryl Gabriel, Education Coordinator, Kwantlen First Nation

Bill Wells, Community Member

Jeannette Phillips, Community Member

Ronald Peters, Community Member

Sharon Syrette, Community Member

### **Staff Support for Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Advisory Council Members**

Marcy Buell, Administrative Assistant, Siwal Si'wes

Vivian Searwar, District Principal of Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Education, SD75

### **The Board of Education – Trustee Members of Siwal Si'wes Advisory Council (Year Three)**

Tracy Loffler

Shelley Carter

Rick McKamey

Julia Renkema

Randy Cairns

