

Foundational Statements

Territorial Acknowledgment

The Board of Education acknowledges that we are on the traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation. We are thankful for the privilege of living on their land and the gift of working with their children.

The Role of Public Education

The Board believes that public education is foundational to a free and democratic society. Public education is critical in advancing equity and inclusion and providing all children with the opportunity to thrive. Public education is a shared responsibility with families and communities, who together nurture young people to flourish with dignity, confidence, purpose, and a commitment to contributing to a healthy, inclusive society.

Vision, Purpose, and Values

The Board is guided by a vision of compassionate, connected, and personalized learning for all.

Our purpose is to create safe, equitable learning environments that support each learner in thriving, sharing, and developing their unique gifts.

These values shape every decision and action within our district:

- **Learning:** We center learning in all that we do, encouraging curiosity, growth, and lifelong inquiry.
- **Equity:** We lead with a vision of diversity as a strength and inclusion as a right, ensuring fair opportunities for all.
- **Relationships:** We commit to building connections founded on compassion, respect, and mutual understanding.
- **Safety:** We create learning spaces where everyone feels safe, valued, and has a sense of belonging.
- **Integrity:** We uphold high ethical standards, acting with transparency, honesty, and accountability.

These values are our universal guiding principles, serving as the lens through which the Board assesses each decision and action to ensure alignment with our foundational beliefs.

Commitment to Reconciliation and Indigenous Worldviews

The Board acknowledges the historical role of Canada's education system in advancing colonial structures that marginalize and harm Indigenous Peoples. We recognize the ongoing impact of these policies on Indigenous communities today and are committed to reconciliation. In alignment with our values and strategic plan, we strive to center Indigenous perspectives and knowledge throughout our practices by:

- **Engaging in Learning and Unlearning:** We commit to learning, unlearning, and relearning about Indigenous histories, worldviews, and ways of knowing as part of our responsibility toward truth and reconciliation. This learning will lead to engaging in processes that are less colonial and more reflective of Indigenous world views and perspectives, such as conducting meetings in circle.
- **Building Relationships and Deepening Understanding:** We seek to foster relationships that are rooted in respect, empathy, and shared responsibility.
- **Aligning with National and International Frameworks:** Our actions are aligned with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the First Peoples Principles of Learning.
- **Supporting Environmental Stewardship:** In recognition of Indigenous teachings on the interconnection with land, we share responsibility for nurturing and protecting our environment, fostering an ethos of stewardship among all learners.

Accountability and Implementation

The Board of Education affirms that every decision, action, and interaction within the district will reflect this foundational policy. This commitment extends across all roles and responsibilities within the district, ensuring that our work remains aligned with the values outlined here. The life and legacy of the late Honourable Murray Sinclair reminds us of the transformative power of education, guiding our commitment to equity, respect, and reconciliation.

Through continuous engagement, reflection, and learning, we strive to uphold these principles in our service to each student and to the broader community.

Legal and Policy References:

School Act (RSBC 1996, c. 412) Section 65, 75, 81, 85
Framework for Enhancing Student Learning - Province of British Columbia
Statement of Education Policy Order (OIC 1280/89)
Ministerial Order 217/2024 - Indigenous Education Council Order (IEC Order)
BC DRIPA: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (SBC 2019, c. 44)
UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action

Policy Type	Governance
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Responsible Operational Leader	The Board of Education