



**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**4:00 pm, Wednesday, October 25, 2023**  
**School Board Office**

**A G E N D A**

**PRESENTATION:** Compassionate Systems Leadership – K. Brach, A. Burt

**QUESTION PERIOD**

**CHAIRPERSON’S REMARKS**

**1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

1.a) **MOTION:** “THAT the Regular meeting agenda of October 25, 2023, be adopted as circulated.”

**2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

2.a) **MOTION:** “THAT the Regular meeting minutes of September 20, 2023, be adopted as circulated.”

**3. REPORT OF CLOSED MEETINGS**

3.a) September 20, 2023 – The Board met in-camera to discuss items concerning personnel, legal and property.

**4. INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE**

- 4.a) PRDTA to SD47 - District Name
- 4.b) BCSTA to all boards - Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report
- 4.c) FNEESC to BCTF – Foundation Skills Assessment
- 4.d) BCSTA to Premier Ebby - Urgent Meeting Request Regarding Recent Protests in School Districts
- 4.e) Ministry of Education and Child Care to BCSTA – Funding for Technology
- 4.f) Ministry of Education and Child Care to BCSTA – Public Transit for Youth
- 4.g) SD5 to Ministry of Education and Child Care – Educational Resources
- 4.h) SD5 to Ministry of Education and Child Care – Invitation to Visit
- 4.i) SD5 to Ministry of Post-Secondary Education – Neurodiversity Training Reponse

**MOTION:** “THAT the correspondence listed in item 4.a) to 4.i) be received.”

**5. OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE**

- 5.a) SD47 to PRDTA - District Name Change
- 5.a) SD47 to Minister of Education and Child Care – District Name Change
- 5.c) SD47 to all Parents/Families - Support for 2SLGBTQIA+ Students, Staff, and Families and SOGI-inclusive Education

**6. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS' REPORT**

- 6.a) Enrollment
- 6.b) Suspension, Exclusion, and Seclusion Report – September 6, 2022, to September 30, 2023
- 6.c) Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development - Email

**MOTION:** “THAT the Superintendent of Schools’ Report be received as presented.”

**7. SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT**

- 7.a) Month End Financial Report as at September 30, 2023

**MOTION:** “THAT the Secretary Treasurer’s report be received as presented.”

**8. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- 8.a) Committee of the Whole Report for October 11, 2023
  - Additional Reference Documents:
  - 8.a.i) Policy 1 – Foundational Statements
  - 8.a.ii) Operational Plan – Learning & Student Support Services

Recommended motions arising from the Committee of the Whole Meeting:

**MOTION:** “THAT Policy 1 – Foundational Statements be amended to reflect the recent decision to change the organizations name to qathet School District, and further to remove the previous Motto until such time as a new Motto, more reflective of the new Strategic Plan, has been selected.”

**MOTION:** “THAT the Learning and Student Support Services Operational Plan be received as was presented.”

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

- 9.a) Advocacy Day & Meeting of Board Chairs – J. Miller (oral)
- 9.b) Provincial Council – D. Lawson (oral)

**QUESTION PERIOD**

**MEDIA QUESTION PERIOD**

**ADJOURNMENT**



**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**4:00 pm, Wednesday, September 20, 2023**  
**School Board Office**

**MINUTES**

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Present: Dale Lawson, Rob Hill, Maureen Mason, Jaclyn Miller, Kirsten Van't Schip

Also in attendance: Jay Yule (Superintendent), Steve Hopkins (Secretary-Treasurer)

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The meeting was called to order by Chair Lawson at 4:04 p.m.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

“Wrapping up the warm, long days of the summer months always feels a little difficult to let go of, but the revitalized energy and enthusiasm of September helps to make this month one of my favorites of the school year.

Students and parents are getting back into their routines, planning for meals, preparing supplies and coordinating their households easing into the transition to fall as smoothly as possible.

Every school is a place where all students deserve to be welcomed, included and respected in a safe environment. Each school in our district is as unique and diverse as the students they serve but one thing they all have in common at this time of the year is the contagious excitement for new beginnings and opportunities. Staff have worked hard over the summer to ensure our schools and classrooms were ready to receive students and we're ready for an exciting year.

Bringing people together, connecting and celebrating differences and similarities always feels more natural to me when there's food involved. It was my pleasure to attend a Meet the Teacher BBQ at Henderson last week. Mr. Hull was happily flipping burgers while chatting with students and staff, the volunteer sign-up sheets were out on a table with pens ready. Staff engaged with parents and students while helping to serve food. The lineup for BBQ was a little long at times but nobody seemed to mind as they joyfully connected with one another.

September includes our district wide professional development day. As part of our District's commitment toward indigenous education and reconciliation, our Indigenous Education department is leading a blanket exercise for all CUPE staff. Many staff have participated in this interactive educational activity designed to help people understand the historical and ongoing impact of colonization on Indigenous communities. Professional development activities such as these provide opportunities to explore meaningful ways to learn more about our shared history.

This community that we share is one of the best. As we start this school year, we know that we need to continue to lean into one another, inspire each other and lift each other up. We know that learning is

best rooted in relationships that are built in safe, caring, and nurturing environments and that each of us have a role to play in that.

On behalf of your board of education, I'd like to extend sincere thanks and appreciation for all of our staff who work so hard to deliver excellence in the work they do for us every single day. Thank you all, we're going to have a fantastic school year!"

**PRESENTATION: Cory Vanderhorst, Graham Roberts MNP – Audited Financial Statements**

C. Vanderhorst and G. Roberts presented the audited financial statements to the board. They reported that they are providing a clean audit opinion, which has been prepared in accordance with appropriate provincial regulations. The auditors reviewed the Statement of Financial Operations, the Statement of Operations. Materiality for the purpose of the audit was set at 1.9 million. The audit firm reported that there are no concerns or items to bring to board attention.

**QUESTION PERIOD**

There were no questions.

**1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**MOVED: J. Miller**

**SECONDED: M. Mason**

**THAT the Regular meeting agenda of September 20, 2023, be adopted as circulated.**

**STATUS: CARRIED.**

**2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**MOVED: J. Miller**

**SECONDED: K. Van't Schip**

**THAT the Regular meeting minutes of June 21, 2023, be adopted as circulated.**

**STATUS: CARRIED.**

**3. REPORT OF CLOSED MEETINGS**

3.a) June 21, 2023 – The Board met in-camera to discuss items which include personnel and legal.

**4. INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE**

4.a) Chilliwack School District to Minister Singh

4.b) Pacific Rim School District to Minister Singh

4.c) Minister Singh to Pacific Rim School District

4.d) BCSTA to Minister Singh and Minister Dean

**MOVED: J. Miller**

**SECONDED: K. Van't Schip**

**THAT the correspondence listed in item 4.a) to 4.d) be received.**

**STATUS: CARRIED.**

**5. OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE**

5.a) N/A

**6. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS' REPORT**

6.a) 2022/2023 Framework for Enhanced Student Learning Report (FESL)

J. Yule shared the Enhanced Student Learning Report, a ministry requirement due by the end of September. The report provides feedback on the standards outlined in the board's strategic plan. Data used for this report covers the entirety of the previous school year.

During the discussion, R. Hill drew attention to discrepancies in language used in specific data sets, particularly the term "reserve" in reference to students' residences. A request was made to instead use the term "indigenous students residing on Nation land". J. Yule acknowledged that a similar request had been previously made to the ministry regarding this dataset and assured that it would be emphasized once again.

Additionally, trustees requested that staff include hyperlinks to the data sources on the Trustee Portal, accompanied by a schedule indicating when the data will be accessible to the district.

6.b) School Growth Plans

School growth plans were included in the agenda package for information. J. Yule pointed out that schools are encouraged to align their growth plans with both the board's overarching priorities and their own specific school-based objectives. A work plan will be developed to outline the objectives and measurable outcomes.

6.c) Anticipated School Enrolment

The report on anticipated school enrolment was presented for informational purposes. A request was made for more detailed information regarding the movement of students between schools. J. Yule explained that although the district does not currently track this information, it could potentially be made available with some further investigation.

6.d) SOGI Report (oral)

J. Yule reported that a communication was sent to families on the day preceding the board meeting in anticipation of potential protests. This letter provided information about the curriculum content related to SOGI in schools and included links to relevant resources and SOGI initiatives.

6.e) Accessible BC Act – [District Implementation](#)

J. Yule stated that T. Gaudreau is spearheading the implementation of an accessibility plan as mandated by the Accessible BC Act. The district aims to have a finalized plan ready for presentation to the board by the end of the year.

6.f) Suspension, Exclusion, and Seclusion Report – September 6, 2022, to June 30, 2023

The report was presented as written. J. Yule pointed out that it encompasses data for the previous school year and highlighted that the total number of suspensions recorded was generally low.

**MOVED: J. Miller**

**SECONDED: K. Van't Schip**

**THAT the Framework for Enhanced Student Learning Report for the 2022/2023 School Year be received.**

**STATUS: CARRIED.**

**MOVED: J. Miller**

**SECONDED: M. Mason**

**THAT the School Growth plans for the 2023/2024 School Year be received.**

**STATUS: CARRIED.**

**MOVED: J. Miller**

**SECONDED: K. Van't Schip**

**THAT the Superintendent of Schools' Report be received as presented.**

**STATUS: CARRIED.**

**7. SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT**

7.a) 2024/2025 Capital Plan Overview

S. Hopkins reported that the capital plan is generally adopted in two parts, with major capital projects adopted in June and minor capital projects adopted in September. The 2024/25 minor capital plan includes mechanical and ventilation upgrades at Henderson Elementary (SEP), lighting upgrades at Westview and Henderson Elementary (CNCP), and one additional school bus (BUS).

7.b) 2023/2024 Capital Plan response Letter Amendment

S. Hopkins reported that the ministry has now approved funding to improve kitchen equipment at several school, in the amount of \$31,600

**MOVED: K. Van't Schip**

**SECONDED: J. Miller**

**THAT the 2024/2025 Minor Projects be approved as presented.**

**STATUS: CARRIED.**

**MOVED: J. Miller**

**SECONDED: K. Van't Schip**

**THAT the Secretary Treasurer’s report be received as presented.**

**STATUS: CARRIED.**

**8. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

8.a) Committee of the Whole Report for September 13, 2023

8.a.i) Strategic Plan (Amended)

S. Hopkins indicated that the plan had been updated to incorporate the feedback received during the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Trustees shared their thoughts on the newly developed plan. They expressed pride in the plan, commending the collaborative process and celebrating its student-centered approach and objectives. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of maintaining focus and ensuring that the operational plan is aligned with and drives the goals forward.

8.a.ii) FSD&A

The Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis report was provided as written.

8.a.iii) Financial Statements

The Financial Statements were provided as written.

**MOVED: J. Miller**

**SECONDED: K. Van’t Schip**

**THAT the 2023 – 2028 Strategic Plan Framework be adopted as presented.**

**STATUS: CARRIED.**

**MOVED: K. Van’t Schip**

**SECONDED: J. Miller**

**TO approve the Operating surplus restriction of \$935,065 and the Local Capital restriction of \$537,195 as detailed in NOTE 18 of the financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2023.**

**STATUS: CARRIED.**

**MOVED: J. Miller**

**SECONDED: K. Van’t Schip**

**THAT the Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2023, be approved as presented.**

**STATUS: CARRIED.**

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

9.a) N/A

**QUESTION PERIOD**

A representative of the PRDTA asked when the association could expect a response to their letter. D. Lawson indicated that a response was forthcoming.

**MEDIA QUESTION PERIOD**

A member of the media asked where to find the board's new strategic plan. D. Lawson indicated that a draft was included in the agenda package and the final document would be published soon.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOVED: J. Miller**

**THAT the Regular Board Meeting be adjourned at 4:40 p.m.**

**STATUS: CARRIED.**

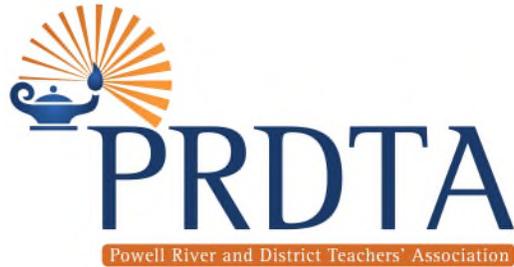
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D. Lawson  
Chairperson

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S. Hopkins  
Secretary-Treasurer

SH/ac



September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Dale Lawson, Trustee Chair,  
4351 Ontario Street,  
Powell River V8A 1V3  
Via e-Mail

Dear Chair Lawson and Fellow Trustees,

Many thanks for all your work governing our District; we appreciate your time and your willingness to receive input and work collaboratively.

As teachers, we highly value education and are guided by both the Provincial Professional Standards and our BCTF Code of Ethics to advocate for the best interests of our students. As you know, the name of our District and Association is painful to our Indigenous students and parents.

Our Association Executive has agreed that our name does need to change. We also understand that the Tla'amin Executive Council has asked for the District's name to be changed. We feel it makes more sense to change our Association name at the same time as the District, and this has been communicated to members.

We have been waiting to hear the outcome of the ongoing discussions both at the Board level and between the Board and the Nation.

Our Executive would like to see the work of the Board move forward and stakeholder groups be informed and participate in the process to make the change. Once this happens, our Association will ask the Nation if we may use the same name.

We look forward to hearing about the proposed process.

Yours sincerely,  
Izi Loveluck, President,  
Laurie Andrews, Vice-president,  
Adam MacLaine, Treasurer,  
Tania Hobson, Secretary,  
Jonathan Dyck, Bargaining Chair,  
Vanessa Coray, Professional Development Coordinator,

Angela Young, Indigenous Chair,  
Natasha Sauve, Social Justice Chair,  
Wendy Adams, Political Action Chair,  
Sydney Liknes, TTOC Chair,  
Carol Wyatt, Health & Safety Chair,  
Megan Kaukas, FELC Representative,  
Kelly Gallagher, FELC Representative,  
Reed Moore, Member at Large,  
Jessica Adam, Member at Large,  
Alex Caverly, Member at Large

CC: Jay Yule, Superintendent



British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

October 12, 2023

Dear member boards of education,

**Subject: Anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion report**

In support of the British Columbia School Trustees Association's strategic plan, the board of directors authorized BCSTA's CEO to hire a consultant to work on an anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion (AEDI) report. At the core of this work, we focused on developing a position statement on equity, a policy and process gap analysis and a member engagement strategy. At this time, I am pleased to share the report developed by Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group with you.

The work related to this project included:

- Analyzing and reviewing gaps between existing policy and practice and BCSTA's legal and ethical obligations.
- Drafting a position statement on equity for BCSTA.
- Engaging with boards of education and providing regular updates to the board of directors.

These efforts have already resulted in moving conversations forward and creating change. A motion submitted by the BCSTA's board of directors and adopted by members during the 2023 annual general meeting resulted in adding an anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion foundational statement to the association's policy book. Please review the statements within our policy book, as they will guide our work ahead. I am also pleased to inform you that an Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) Working Group is being formed to carry on with the initial research completed and summarized in the enclosed report. I look forward to updating you all on their continued work in this vital area of public education.

On behalf of the board of directors, thank you all for contributing to this project through the support of motions, participation in focus groups and your continued commitment to supporting diversity, equity and inclusion in our schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Broady". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Carolyn Broady**

*President*

British Columbia School Trustees Association

Enclosure: BCSTA anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion (AEDI) report

CC: Suzanne Hoffman, CEO, BCSTA  
BCSTA Board of Directors



# **British Columbia School Trustees Association Consulting Services for Anti-Racism-EDI Strategy: Final Report**

Submitted to:

British Columbia School Trustees Association  
4th floor – 1580 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V6J 5K9  
Carmen Batista, Director of Human Resources & Labour Relations  
[cbatista@bcsta.org](mailto:cbatista@bcsta.org)

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April 25, 2023

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## Executive Summary

*Directions* Evidence and Policy Research Group completed work devoted to anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion (AEDI) authorized by the BCSTA Board of Directors. The work consisted of the following phases:

- (1) analysis and review of gaps between existing policy and practice and BCSTA's legal and ethical obligations,
- (2) drafting a position statement on equity for BCSTA,
- (3) engaging school boards, and
- (4) reporting to the BCSTA Board of Directors (this report and a scheduled May 2023 presentation).

The purpose of the first phase was to (a) identify whether the BCSTA's policies comply with its legal obligations in the areas of AEDI and (b) review BCSTA's policies pertinent to AEDI to determine if there are policy gaps, the existence of which have the outcome of non-adherence to statutory obligations.

*Directions* examination of BCSTA's policies determined that BCSTA was following its legal obligations in the areas of AEDI. There are some small but potentially important improvements that BCSTA could make to strengthen its efforts, including:

- Eliminating vague terminology and using language that aligns with the terminology employed in legislation pertinent to BCSTA.
- Continuing to monitor the consistency between its policies and the legislation pertinent to the organization.
- Developing practices that are culturally compatible with the audiences affected by them (for example, a complaints process that is culturally compatible with Indigenous persons).
- Remaining sensitive to the complex intersection among the various bases of self-identification (for example, gender-identity and ethno-cultural identity).
- Seeking ways of increasing the engagement of members of underrepresented groups in BCSTA's activities, including governance.

In the second phase of the work, *Directions* drafted a statement on diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism for BCSTA.

Because there were no gaps between the legal and ethical obligations of the organization and its current policies and practices, in the third phase, *Directions* developed and BCSTA approved a survey to: (1) elicit trustee responses to statements about anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion in Canada; (2) statements about those issues in the context of BCSTA; and (3) advice about priorities BCSTA might pursue with respect to anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion. Focus groups were then conducted to engage interested trustees in interpreting the results of the survey.

185 of 412 (44.0%) trustees responded to the online survey. Survey respondents showed little difference of opinion to statements related to equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in Canadian society. More than 80% of respondents either agreed with positive statements about AEDI or disagreed with negative statements about AEDI. Opinion was more divided about two items related to racism and multiculturalism. There were also gender differences in responses, with women more likely than men to agree that schools should teach about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism, that Canadian institutions exhibit racism, and that the education system can do more to produce greater equity. Women were also more likely to disagree that calling attention to racism in education is counterproductive and that there is too much emphasis on anti-racism and not enough on multiculturalism, and that racism and discrimination are less important than other problems.

There was relatively little difference of opinion in survey respondents about BCSTA's responsibility in addressing issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism. More than 70% of respondents either agreed with statements about BCSTA taking an active role in AEDI or disagreed with the statements that BCSTA should be less involved in AEDI. Most respondents believed that BCSTA has an obligation to disrupt systems of inequity; recognize the need to change to promote diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism; and that increasing the diversity among its members will make BCSTA a more influential voice for public education. Few respondents thought that diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism are issues beyond the scope of BCSTA's mandate. Respondents who commented on the topic emphasized self-examination and the need to balance the focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism with other responsibilities to members.

The third question in the survey asked respondents to indicate the importance of actions that BCSTA might take to increase equity, diversity, inclusion, and eliminate racism. The responses to this question did not provide the guidance sought. Most respondents indicated that all but one of the actions listed were very important; responses to "conduct an employment equity audit of staff" were more variable.

In the eight focus groups to interpret the survey results, most participants perceived the sentiments expressed in the survey on diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism favorably,

though some questioned the representativeness of the survey respondents. There was a range of opinions expressed about the use of specific terms and definitions related to these issues, but most participants appreciated BCSTA's strong stance on them. Increasing diversity among BCSTA's membership was a frequently mentioned topic, though some participants expressed concerns about tokenism and the emotional burden placed on racialized individuals. Participant recommendations to BCSTA included the suggestion that BCSTA convene branch discussions, use case studies or scenarios to engage members in discussion of the issues, create a community engagement and communication initiative, and ensure alignment with education sector definitions of equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism.

Based on the survey results and broader best practices, here are some actions that BCSTA might take to actively pursue greater antiracism, diversity, equity, and inclusion among member school boards:

1. BCSTA could help member boards design and conduct equity audits of staff and students.
2. BCSTA could develop a comprehensive plan for increasing diversity on boards of education. This could include measures such as targeted recruitment efforts, leadership development programs, and mentorship opportunities.
3. BCSTA could provide antiracism and equity training to its members to increase their awareness and understanding of issues related to racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
4. BCSTA could establish a committee focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion to provide guidance, advice, and recommendations to school boards.
5. BCSTA could collaborate closely with diverse community organizations to better understand the unique needs and challenges of diverse groups and to develop programs and initiatives that address those needs.
6. BCSTA could establish metrics and reporting mechanisms to track progress on equity, diversity, and inclusion goals to help members to make progress towards those goals.

## Project Scope

The British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) Board of Directors authorized work to begin in the areas of anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion (AEDI). *Directions* Evidence and Policy Research Group was engaged to undertake this work, including (1) analysis and review of gaps between existing policy and practice and BCSTA's legal and ethical obligations, (2) drafting a position statement on equity for BCSTA, (3) engaging school boards in reviewing the draft policy and in making changes to policy and practice as required by the gap analysis, and (4) reporting to the BCSTA Board of Directors.

The original proposal to BCSTA in response to RFP 22-01 contemplated that if changes to BCSTA policy and practice were required because of the first stage analysis, a survey would be conducted to gather reaction to and advice about making the policy and practice changes that might be required. This survey would be followed by focus groups to engage trustees in a discussion of the changes to BCSTA policy and practice that might be required. The plan called for the focus group process to highlight the gaps between what is legally and ethically required and BCSTA current policy and practice and elicit reactions to possible changes in policy and practice needed to address those gaps.

When it became apparent that there were no gaps between the legal and ethical obligations of the organization and its current policies and practices, the nature of the survey was changed to: (1) elicit trustee responses to statements about anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion in Canada; (2) statements about those issues in the context of BCSTA; and (3) advice about priorities BCSTA might pursue with respect to anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion. Focus groups were then conducted to engage interested trustees in interpreting the results of the survey.

This report to the board includes the following:

- Anti-racism, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (AEDI) Policy Gap Analysis
- Draft Policy on Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Anti-Racism
- Survey and Focus Group Results

## Anti-racism, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (AEDI) Policy Gap Analysis

### Purpose

Organizations and individuals should not contravene legislation and/or act without regard for one's ethical obligations. Doing so is unprincipled and often illegal. On some occasions the individual or organization is unaware that legislation has been contravened or ethical obligations have been overlooked. The BCSTA wants to know whether it has unknowingly transgressed legal or ethical requirements in the areas of anti-racism, equity, diversity, or inclusion so that it can amend its behavior and abide by its obligations. This policy and gap analysis (a) identifies whether the BCSTA's policies comply with its legal obligations in the areas of AEDI and (b) reviews BCSTA's policies pertinent to AEDI to determine if there are policy gaps, the existence of which have the outcome of non-adherence to statutory obligations.

### Context

A not-for-profit association, BCSTA was established in 1905 and incorporated in British Columbia under its own act in 1956. BCSTA's membership is voluntary and comprised solely of public boards of education. Its current membership is composed of all 60 boards of education in the province.<sup>1</sup>

In its covering letter presenting the BCSTA's updated strategic plan for 2020-2023<sup>2</sup> to its members, the BCSTA Board of Directors confirmed that BCSTA:

- Is an association that has a role in revealing and addressing the systemic racism found in British Columbia public schools.
- Is committed to truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities and believes that trustees play a critical role in acknowledging past wrongs and their influence on the systems that trustees govern today.
- Intends for its Board of Directors to "commit every breath and step to walking [the healing process] path over the next 12 months" by carrying out the commitments laid out in the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> BCSTA Request for Proposal, Consulting Services for an Anti-Racism - EDI Strategy (RFP 22-01), issued February 17, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> BCSTA 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, p. 1. <https://bcsta.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2020-2023-BCSTA-Strategic-Plan-With-Goals-July-2021.pdf>

In the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan (p. 3), BCSTA sets out that its mission is to support and advocate for effective public boards of education in British Columbia. This mission includes the beliefs that:

- Local decision-making is the best way to meet the interests of BC students.
- A strong, representative voice for boards of education throughout the province is required.
- Building or improving collaboration with partner groups, local municipalities, and First Nations governments will help student outcomes and achieve member-identified advocacy goals/outcomes.

In 2022, the BCSTA Board of Directors authorized work to begin AEDI work that would include a policy and gap analysis.

## Governing and Guiding Legislation

This policy and gap analysis considers the legislation that governs and guides BCSTA in the work that it does:

Table 1. Governing and Guiding Legislation

Legislation	Jurisdiction
The Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982 ( <i>The Constitution</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part I: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (<i>Charter</i>)</li> <li>• Part II: Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada</li> </ul> <a href="https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/">https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/</a>	Canada
Multiculturalism Act [RSBC 1996] CHAPTER 321 <a href="https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96321_01">https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96321_01</a>	British Columbia
Human Rights Code [RSBC 1996] CHAPTER 210 <a href="https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96210_01">https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96210_01</a>	British Columbia
Anti-Racism Data Act (received Royal Assent on June 2, 2022) <a href="https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/bills/billscurrent/3rd42nd:gov24-1">https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/bills/billscurrent/3rd42nd:gov24-1</a>	British Columbia
School Act [RSBC 1996] CHAPTER 412 <a href="https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96412_00">https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96412_00</a>	British Columbia
Statement of Education Policy Order (Mandate for the School System) <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic_128089.pdf">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic_128089.pdf</a>	British Columbia
School Act: School Regulation (B.C. Reg. 265/89) <a href="https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/crbc/crbc/265_89">https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/crbc/crbc/265_89</a>	British Columbia

Legislation	Jurisdiction
Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/e/m276_07.pdf">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/e/m276_07.pdf</a>	British Columbia
Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act [SBC 2019] CHAPTER 44 <a href="https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/19044">https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/19044</a>	British Columbia

BCSTA's work is further guided by the following documents<sup>3</sup> that set out frameworks to guide collaboration to support First Nations learners:

Table 2. Conventions, Declarations, Commitments and Calls to Action

Document	Issued by
Memorandum of Understanding between the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) <a href="https://bcsta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/FNESC-MoU-signed.pdf">https://bcsta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/FNESC-MoU-signed.pdf</a>	FNESC & BCSTA
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child <a href="https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child">https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child</a>	United Nations
United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples <a href="https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf">https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf</a>	United Nations
The Commitment Document, Vision, and Concrete Actions <a href="https://www.bcafn.ca/sites/default/files/docs/news/BC_FNLV_Vision.pdf">https://www.bcafn.ca/sites/default/files/docs/news/BC_FNLV_Vision.pdf</a>	First Nations Summit, Assembly of First Nations, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, British Columbia
Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf</a>	Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
BC Tripartite Education Agreement: Supporting First Nation Student Success (BCTEA)	British Columbia, FNESC, Canada

<sup>3</sup> The Memorandum of Understanding between the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) references the following documents as part of an existing principled framework: Constitution Act, 1982 (Section 35); United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; The Commitment Document, Vision and Concrete Actions; Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act [SBC 2019] CHAPTER 44; and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.

Document	Issued by
<a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/ways-to-learn/aboriginal-education/bc-tripartite-education-agreement.pdf">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/ways-to-learn/aboriginal-education/bc-tripartite-education-agreement.pdf</a>	
Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia’s Relationship with Indigenous People <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/about-the-bc-public-service/diversity-inclusion-respect/draft_principles.pdf">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/about-the-bc-public-service/diversity-inclusion-respect/draft_principles.pdf</a>	British Columbia

## The Constitution Acts

### *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (the “Charter”) is Part I of the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982. Any person in Canada, whether a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident, or a newcomer, has the rights and freedoms contained in the Charter. There are some exceptions. For example, only citizens of Canada have the right to vote, and “the right to enter, remain in and leave Canada.” The duties and obligations of BCSTA, in the first instance, flow from the Constitution Act, the Charter, and the British Columbia School Act. The Charter applies to all laws made in Canada, including provincial law. The provincial government cannot pass laws over education that are inconsistent with the Charter (unless it specifically provides that the law is made notwithstanding the Charter). The Charter includes guarantees of fundamental freedoms, equality rights, and minority-language educational rights.

Under the Constitution Acts, education is a provincial responsibility. In British Columbia, the *School Act*, as approved by the legislature, delegates certain province-wide administrative functions to the Ministry of Education and many regional administrative functions related to K-12 public education to local, public boards of education. At Section 25 of the Charter, it makes clear that other rights contained in the Charter must not interfere with the rights of Aboriginal Peoples.

### *Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada*

Part 2 of the Constitution Act, 1982, addresses the Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. Section 35 (1) recognizes and affirms the “existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada.” Section 35 (4) guarantees these rights “equally to male and female persons.”

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, the Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia’s Relationship with

Indigenous People, the BC Tripartite Education Agreement: Supporting First Nation Student Success, the Memorandum of Understanding between the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the British Columbia School Trustees Association, and the Commitment Document, Vision and Concrete Actions.

### British Columbia Multiculturalism Act

This Act respects and recognizes cultural diversity as a part of our society. It identifies the goal of fostering a society where there are no barriers to participation in the community, in cultural life, and political life. Part 1 (the Charter) of the Constitution Act, is linked to the Multiculturalism Act. The Charter sets out those rights and freedoms that Canadians believe are necessary in a free and democratic society. Section 27 of the Charter refers to the “preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.” The Charter guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. The Purposes of the Multiculturalism Act (Section 2)<sup>4</sup> are:

- a) to recognize that the diversity of British Columbians as regards race, cultural heritage, religion, ethnicity, ancestry, and place of origin is a fundamental characteristic of the society of British Columbia that enriches the lives of all British Columbians;
- b) to encourage respect for the multicultural heritage of British Columbia;
- c) to promote racial harmony, cross cultural understanding and respect and the development of a community that is united and at peace with itself;
- d) to foster the creation of a society in British Columbia in which there are no impediments to the full and free participation of all British Columbians in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of British Columbia.

### British Columbia Human Rights Code

The Purposes of the British Columbia Human Rights Code (the “Code”, Section 3)<sup>5</sup> are:

- a) to foster a society in British Columbia in which there are no impediments to full and free participation in the economic, social, political, and cultural life of British Columbia;
- b) to promote a climate of understanding and mutual respect where all are equal in dignity and rights;
- c) to prevent discrimination prohibited by this Code;

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<sup>4</sup> British Columbia Multicultural Act. [RSBC 1996] Chapter 321.

[https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00\\_96321\\_01#section2](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96321_01#section2)

<sup>5</sup> British Columbia Human Rights Code. [RSBC 1996] Chapter 210.

[https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00\\_96210\\_01#section3](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96210_01#section3)

- d) to identify and eliminate persistent patterns of inequality associated with discrimination prohibited by this Code;
- e) to provide a means of redress for those persons who are discriminated against contrary to this Code.

“Discrimination in contravention of this Code does not require an intention to contravene this Code” (Section 2).<sup>6</sup>

### Anti-Racism Data Act

Under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, the BC Government passed the Anti-Racism Data Act on June 2, 2022, to support the collection, use, and disclosure of demographic information within BC for the purposes of identifying and dismantling systemic racism and advancing racial equity, particularly in policing, health care, and education. Co-developed with First Nations and Métis communities partners with engagement from representatives of Black and racialized communities, the Act seeks to advance Indigenous data sovereignty and self-governance and sets out requirements for collaboration and consultation with Indigenous peoples and racialized communities regarding data initiatives, including the establishment of a process for government to seek consent from Indigenous communities regarding use of their data.<sup>7</sup> The legislation builds upon the recommendations from the report *Disaggregated demographic data collection in British Columbia: The grandmother perspective* (BC’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner)<sup>8</sup> on how the government can address systemic discrimination through the use of disaggregated data.

### Memorandum of Understanding between the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA)

In the Memorandum of Understanding between the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the British Columbia School Trustees Association (“MOU with FNESC”), the parties agreed to formalize their ongoing relationship by articulating a process to engage in regular dialogue on education as it relates to First Nations students in provincial public schools and on related issues of mutual interest and concern. The MOU with FNESC sets out that the parties are

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<sup>6</sup> British Columbia Human Rights Code. [RSBC 1996] Chapter 210.

[https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00\\_96210\\_01#section2](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96210_01#section2)

<sup>7</sup> British Columbia Office of the Premier: New anti-racism data act will help fight systemic racism.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022PREM0027-000673>

<sup>8</sup> BC’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner. Disaggregated demographic data collection in British Columbia: The grandmother perspective. [https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHR\\_C Sept2020\\_Disaggregated-Data-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHR_C Sept2020_Disaggregated-Data-Report_FINAL.pdf)

committed to working together and with other government bodies and partners as appropriate and agreed upon regarding key matters impacting First Nations students and outcomes.

## Terminology

Anti-Racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion are terms that have different meanings and significance for different people and organizations. The government of British Columbia states that “**Anti-racism** is the practice of identifying, challenging, preventing, eliminating, and changing the values, structures, policies, programs, practices and behaviours that perpetuate racism.”<sup>9</sup> Anti-Black racism encompasses those systemic practices and behaviours that perpetuate racism against Black people.

**Discrimination**, a term which is included in the relevant AEDI documents (Multiculturalism Act, Anti-Racism Data Act, MOU with FNEESC), is the practice of prohibiting the full and free participation in the economic, social, political, and cultural life of British Columbia on the grounds identified and prohibited by the British Columbia Human Rights Code.

**Anti-racism** is conscious and deliberate action to combat prejudice, discrimination, and systemic racism. Anti-racism identifies and eliminates racism through changes to systems, organizational structures, policies, practices, and attitudes; the goal is to redistribute and share power equitably.<sup>10</sup>

**Diversity** is valuing the presence of human differences within an organization. When individuals with specific characteristics are excluded from an organization through bias and discriminatory practices, they are barred from access to opportunities and participation.

**Equality** is often referred to as the process of providing the same to all, whereas equity recognizes that not everyone starts from the same place with the same resources and opportunities. Equity acknowledges that to counter inequalities; adjustments must be made to overcome intentional and unintentional barriers created from biases and systemic disproportional outcomes.

**Inclusion** is a conscious effort to ensure that people of all backgrounds feel they are welcomed, valued, heard, and supported. Inclusion provides equal access to opportunities and equitable

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<sup>9</sup> British Columbia: Anti-racism. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/multiculturalism-anti-racism/anti-racism>

<sup>10</sup> National Action Committee on the Status of Women International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity

resources for people who have been historically excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or intellectual disabilities and members of racialized groups.

Anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia, homophobia, and transphobia, and ableism are societal concerns and for BCSTA's policies to have the outcomes set out in the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, the policies must incorporate statutory and ethical principles so that from the conceptualization of a policy to subsequent review, the legislative purpose and intent of human rights protections are included.

The implications for access to information and equity participation in decision-making is a significant component to policy development and review. Ensuring that policies do not contain unnecessary or unintended barriers to access and that membership on BCSTA's decision-making bodies is truly representative is the first step to ensuring eventual implementation of the organization's Equity Statement (Draft Policy on Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, p. 22).

For example, COVID-19 required organizations to quickly adapt to teleworking and virtual meetings. Did this adaptation in practice have an unintended, differential impact on different communities?

## Methodology

BCSTA is the leader of the larger school board trustee community. For the stated goals and outcomes of BCSTA to be reached, AEDI is foundational to ongoing engagement with and the participation of members of BC school boards.

An AEDI review of BCSTA policies asks whether there are disproportionate, systemic, negative impacts of the organization's policies. We reviewed BCSTA's existing policies and processes pertinent to anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion to identify policies having a negative impact with respect to protected characteristics under the BC Human Rights Code. The characteristics protected by the BC Human rights code include Indigenous identity, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex (includes being a man or a woman, sexual harassment), sexual orientation (2SLGBTQ+), gender identity or expression (identifying as transgender / intersex), age, etc.

The first step of this part of the project was to identify gaps between current policies and the organization's aspirations as expressed by the Board of Directors in the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan and the Governing and Guiding Legislation. Following the gap analysis, the next step was to make recommendations about how BCSTA can eliminate the gaps through revision to

policies and practices including the development of a position statement on anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Given the scope of the project identified in the RFP, the BCSTA policy gap analysis primarily examined policies that related to AEDI. BCSTA policies were reviewed with respect to the Governing and Guiding Legislation (Table 1, p. 8) and frameworks to guide collaboration to support First Nations learners (Table 2, p. 9). The project team reviewed the following policies:

Table 3. BCSTA AEDI Policy Review

Policy	Last Updated
BCSTA Workplace Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy	May 24, 2022
BCSTA Policy Book (2018-19)	2018-19
2021-22 BCSTA Bylaws	2021-22
BCSTA Learning Guide: Governance for Boards of Education	2017
BCSTA Operational Guidelines	June 17, 2021
BCSTA Motion Guide	January 15, 2021
BCSTA Strategic Planning: Boards of Education and Student Achievement	2019

The use of inclusive language in policy documents ensures that language is free from prejudice, stereotypes or discriminatory views of specific people or groups in contravention of human rights rules. The use of plain language facilitates those reading policy documents to understand what they read, especially given the number of individuals who speak English as a second, third or fourth language. In 2021, the Province of British Columbia updated gendered language across 15 ministries to better reflect the diversity of people. "Language matters. It allows people to feel recognized and affirmed," says Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery, and Innovation. By upholding inclusive language, our government is taking steps to protect British Columbians' human rights. We believe outdated language that prevents people from being seen for who they are should be removed to help tackle gender bias."<sup>11</sup>

The gap analysis identified that the BCSTA policy contained plain language that was clear and accessible. There were some instances of gendered language but no barrier language that prevented non-binary individuals from their protected human rights entitlements. There were no instances of barrier language which could exclude or pejoratively categorize individuals or varying life circumstances.

<sup>11</sup> [Gendered language removed from 600 regulations in British Columbia - Burnaby Now](#)

## Key Findings and Observations

### BCSTA Workplace Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy

This policy complies with the Governing and Guiding Legislation (p. 8) and complies with the Workers Compensation Act and WorkSafeBC's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy.

*Directions* makes the following preliminary recommendations:

- Section IV. Definitions. Definitions of “bullying and harassment” are consistent with WorkSafeBC's Occupational Health and Safety Policies. The definition of “discrimination” reflects most of the characteristics protected under the BC Human Rights code, but to ensure that this policy is always in compliance with Governing and Guiding Legislation, it should also include (or refer to) discrimination as contemplated by the BC Human Rights Code and other Governing and Guiding Legislation (see Context, p. 77).
- Section IX. Procedures for Investigating Complaints. Develop a process consistent with Indigenous mediation processes in consultation with the First Nations Education Steering Committee. “Indigenous legal traditions” is a phrase adopted by the Law Commission of Canada and Indigenous Legal scholars to describe a body of Indigenous law including “Aboriginal dispute resolution systems” and “governance process.”<sup>12, 13</sup> A “fundamental principle of survival that comes from timeless wisdom,” it is considered “a core law.”<sup>14</sup> In the Mi'kmaq legal tradition, abeksikdawebegik (reconciliation) and abeksikdewapan (responsibility) are core values.<sup>15</sup> They promote the taking of responsibility by those that cause harm by, for instance, offering restitution and empathy to victims. In the BC Human Rights Tribunal 2020 Report, *Expanding Our Vision: Cultural Equality & Indigenous People's Rights*, Indigenous Peoples explained the need for human rights protection in all aspects of their lived experiences. Some respondents saw filing a discrimination complaint as futile, tying “their decision to not file complaints to larger societal events which are seen to reflect indisputable instances of racism which were either unchallenged or appeared to be sanctioned by society.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Andrée Lajoie, “Introduction: Which Way Out of Colonialism?” in Law Commission Canada, ed, *Indigenous Legal Traditions* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007) 3 at 3 [Law Commission Canada].

<sup>13</sup> Examples: [Anishnabe N'Oon DA Gaaziwin: an Indigenous Peacemaking Mediation Nexus - ADR Chambers](#). Restorative justice often used in the criminal justice system which seeks to repair the harm caused by crime and violence by addressing victims' needs, holding offenders meaningfully accountable for their actions, and engaging the community in the justice process.

<sup>14</sup> 4 Hadley Friedland, *IBA Accessing Justice and Reconciliation Project: Final Report* (4 February 2014), online: *Accessing Justice and Reconciliation Project* at 8 [Friedland]

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> *Expanding Our Vision, Cultural Equality and Indigenous People's Human Rights*, Ardith Walpetko We'dalx Walkem, QC. Cedar and Sage Law. <http://www.bchrt.bc.ca/shareddocs/indigenous/expanding-our-vision.pdf>

## BCSTA Policy Book (2018-19)

The BCSTA Policy Book complies with Governing and Guiding Legislation (p. 8). *Directions* makes the following preliminary recommendations:

- Section 1.2FS VALUES: Appropriate local autonomy in decision-making and practice. The use of the term “appropriate” leaves significant room for interpretation, leaving the decision-making and practice to local decision-makers without providing equity markers against which their decisions must be evaluated. For example, the *Anti-Racism Data Act*, is intended to support the collection, use, and disclosure of demographic information within BC for the purposes of identifying and dismantling systemic racism and advancing racial equity, including in education. “Appropriate” is too subjective. Decision-making rules must include the outcome of “identifying and dismantling systemic racism and advancing racial equity”. It is a preliminary recommendation that specific reference be made to Governing and Guiding Legislation AEDI-defined terms.
- Section 1.3.2P BCSTA SPONSORSHIP REQUESTS: BCSTA only financially supports events where it is directly involved in the planning or delivery. In May 2022, BCSTA signed the MOU with FNEC (see p. 12) to ensure working together to meet the needs of First Nations students in British Columbia’s public schools. Through the action of the MOU with FNEC, BCSTA has agreed to “joint action on specific issues and initiatives to improve the education outcomes of First Nations learners”. The MOU with FNEC acknowledges the existence of systemic barriers and individual biases related to various identity markers, but there is no elaboration on the importance of intersectionality and the complexities of multiple identities, for which BCSTA may not be directly involved. The requirement to be directly involved should be clearly defined. The MOU with FNEC, as well as the Policy Book, acknowledge that there are systemic barriers that prevent identified categories of people from achievement. However, there is no mention of special requirements for Aboriginal women or trans Black people, for example, who may experience additional barriers within their communities and hence could not avail themselves of the tools created to culturally address “Aboriginal people” or “Black people”.
- Section 4.7FS STUDENT VOICE: BCSTA believes that student voice and input are important to inform and influence Boards of Education in effective decision-making for student learning and success. It is recommended that BCSTA establish a process to

ensure effective representation of student trustees from underrepresented and racialized groups.<sup>17</sup>

## 2021-22 BCSTA Bylaws

How membership is elected and the formula for representation have significant implications for who and how school leaders on the BCSTA Provincial Council are selected. Given that leaders representative of disproportionately underrepresented groups (Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQ+) should participate in accordance with equity-based models, Trustees representative of underrepresented groups and communities will have competencies and skills that can assist in identifying and removing barriers for marginalized and underrepresented students. The social identities of Trustees representative on Committees and Provincial Council can be determinants of positive role advancement within BCSTA that can act to counter an absence of marginalized and underrepresented identities within the ranks of school leadership. *Directions* makes the following preliminary recommendations:

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<sup>17</sup> Representation – having a voice in the decision-making processes that may affect you and people like you – is important to feeling welcomed and valued by an organization. “We aren’t being heard” and “we do not have a seat at the table” are expressions often used by the members of groups that do not feel the group’s viewpoints are represented in the decision-making process. Lack of representation or under-representation are often framed in terms of race, ethnicity, language, gender, religion, etc. This framing raises some thorny questions: Who defines the group, determines the group’s membership, and defines the interests or needs of the group? Does the identification of a group presume homogeneity of interests or needs among the group’s members? Does membership in the group imply or establish a hierarchy among the multiple identities that individuals possess? We refer to this form of representation as group representation. This form of representation gives primacy to the group and its composition.

Another form of representation is issue-based. Advocacy groups coalesce around issues (support for persons with special needs, promotion of language, promulgation of religious beliefs, human rights, gender equality, climate justice, etc.). Issue-based groups are self-defined based their perceived needs and interests. They often include members whose self-identification in terms of in terms of race, ethnicity, language, gender, religion, etc. is quite varied.

Organizations have the power to determine the basis for participation in their decision-making processes. In making that determination they confer legitimacy on those who are represented. The question for any organization is whether it will give primacy to the **who** (group) or the **what** (issue/s) in so far as participation in decision-making is concerned.

Short of conferring decision-making authority on a group (whether based on its composition or its expressed interests or needs), there is a range of things an organization such as BCSTA can do to ensure a broader range of viewpoints are considered than may be present among its duly elected membership. Engagement with groups whose members may be affected by the organizations decisions is one mechanism. Such engagements might include inviting the group to appear as a delegation, to submit position papers, or engaging with the group in a consultation process the terms of reference for which have been negotiated with the group’s leadership.

- Section 9. Delegates and Voting Powers at General Meetings: Delegates shall be school trustees duly accredited by the Boards of Education of which they are members.
  - Research has demonstrated that when there is diversity in the leadership complement, diversity of perspectives and decision-making through an equity lens occur (Chin, 2010).<sup>18</sup> Consideration should be given to having a required number of representatives of underrepresented groups.
  - The proportional formula set out in Section 9 should be amended to consider that, where there is no equal access or representation, historical exclusions and systemic biases will be perpetuated. School districts with lower number of pupils may have a high number of students from underrepresented communities (First Nations, for example).

### BCSTA Learning Guide: Governance for Boards of Education<sup>19</sup>

*Directions* makes the following preliminary recommendations:

- Under “Policy Development, Implementation, and Evaluation”, the Learning Guide should include the development of policies outlining how districts will promote and implement the board’s goals to encourage greater support of anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- BCSTA leadership should consider the intent versus the impact of the BCSTA policy development, recognizing that there is a subtle gap created between an organization having written policies in place under the title of equity, inclusion, anti-black racism, homophobia/transphobia, etc., *and* actual compliance with Governing and Guiding legislation.

### BCSTA Strategic Planning Guide for Boards of Education

The Planning Guide complies with the Governing and Guiding Legislation.

### BCSTA Operational Guidelines

The Operational Guidelines comply with the Governing and Guiding Legislation.

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<sup>18</sup> Chin, J. L. (2010). Diversity and leadership in a changing world. *American Psychologist*, 65(3), 216-224.

<sup>19</sup> BCSTA is in the process of reviewing and revising its learning guides.

## BCSTA Motion Guide

The Guide sets out how motions can come forward at BCSTA meetings, who can bring motions forward, and what the subject of motions may be. Motions, which are discussed and voted on by members of the association at Provincial Council and annual general meetings, enable members to bring forward issues for collective discussion, decision-making and advocacy.

The Motion Guide complies with the Governing and Guiding Legislation.

## BCSTA Strategic Planning: Boards of Education and Student Achievement

The Strategic Planning document complies with the Governing and Guiding Legislation.

## School Board Policies

There are hundreds of Board Policies from the 60 Districts. While School Board policies are beyond the scope of this project, it is important to draw to BCSTA leadership attention that there is a role for its leadership in guiding the review of the school board policies. A cursory review of some of the school policies has identified that the policies give discretion to the school boards or principal/staff to use certain definitions or decide what community involvement entails. These components of school board policy are not in compliance with the legal requirements of the BC Anti-Racism Data Act now in place, which require mandatory consultation with certain identified groups and prescribed statutory AEDI definitions.

Equity and inclusion are more apt to become a part of an organization's culture as a default when the organization's leaders live the change. If there is greater diversity amongst school board trustees, this may increase the likelihood of equitable practices and policies being adopted. A senior leadership team made up of a homogenous group of people will likely have greater challenges identifying their blind spots and understanding how biases like the similar-to-me-effect can impact their decision-making.

## Policy Gap Analysis Summary

The BC Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination based on several protected characteristics, including race, color, and ancestry. The personal characteristics that make up the protected areas under the BC Human Rights Code that denote the parameters of AEDI are defined in

disparate ways in various Human Rights Tribunal documents, legal decisions, and policies. The review of the BCSTA policies has found that there is general compliance with the BC Human Rights Code and other Governing and Guiding Legislation. Nonetheless, the process<sup>20</sup> of electing directors in the BCSTA and the process for the participation at the decision-making level renders who makes decisions less representative and, therefore, the perspectives included in discussions, decisions on agenda setting, and lending support to third-party organizations are less inclusive. Discrimination can take many forms, including ‘indirect’ discrimination, where an otherwise neutral policy may have an adverse effect on certain groups. There is no requirement to provide discriminatory intent.<sup>21</sup>

The gap analysis has determined that on its face, the BCSTA policies, vision, mission, and Strategic Plan are all in compliance with the Governing and Guiding Legislation and the BC Human Rights Code. Consideration should be given to establishing processes that would produce greater diversity and inclusion among the membership of BCSTA and among its staff.

The policy gap analysis did not review quantitative data that may show that racialized, Indigenous, and other underrepresented groups are not being proportionally represented in the ranks of membership of BCSTA committees and councils. However, based on a superficial review, there appear to be too few racialized persons represented in positions of leadership at BCSTA. Quantitative data alone are not the only evidence of disproportionate outcomes and systemic bias; however, such data are an indicator or a “red flag” that there may be gaps that the BCSTA should review to determine if there is institutional bias that is a barrier to a full expression of AEDI.

Formal and informal policies and decision-making processes may have the effect of exclusion of racialized and Indigenous persons for not only leadership roles but also for BCSTA’s Provincial Council. The use of informal or substantively discretionary approaches is problematic as there is more room for subjective considerations, differing standards, and biases to come into play. It is crucial that BCSTA design its policies and decision-making processes in a way that does not systemically disqualify racialized, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQ+ voices from sitting at the decision-making table and by default, uses the historically dominant culture as the norm for making

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<sup>20</sup> Section 9 BCSTA Bylaws: Delegates shall be school trustees duly accredited by the Boards of Education of which they are members. For purposes of ballot voting, Boards of Education having an annual enrollment of pupils (actual pupils, not full-time equivalents) at the most recent date established under the School Act for the reporting of student populations, shall have the following number of votes irrespective of the number of delegates: 1 to 249 pupils 1 vote 250 to 999 pupils 2 votes 1,000 to 1,999 pupils 3 votes 2,000 to 5,999 pupils 4 votes 6,000 to 11,999 pupils 6 votes 12,000 to 17,999 pupils 8 votes 18,000 to 23,999 pupils 10 votes 24,000 to 29,999 pupils 12 votes 30,000 to 35,999 pupils 14 votes 36,000 to 47,999 pupils 15 votes 48,000 to 59,999 pupils 16 votes 60,000 to 71,999 pupils 17 votes 72,000 to 83,999 pupils 18 votes 84,000 and over pupils 19 votes

<sup>21</sup> [Stewart v. Elk Valley Coal Corp., 2017 SCC 30](#). paragraph 44

decisions about AEDI. To create equitable representation in those who hold office, there is a need to recognize that there are systemic barriers that prevent persons from sitting at the decision-making table, which in turn shapes how and through which lens that policy will be developed and what partnerships will be given priority. There is a need to be intentional in the recognition that histories of colonialism and slavery have resulted in institutionalized inequity for Indigenous, Black, and racialized people and that power imbalances can be deeply embedded in policies, practices, and procedures. If the democratic process does not yield greater representative voices, then it is imperative that the BCSTA processes ensure that the organization proactively seeks partnership and engagement with underrepresented groups and communities.

BCSTA must ensure that it does not unconsciously engage in systemic discrimination. To avoid this occurrence, there must be a willingness to monitor and review quantitative data of underrepresented groups and decision-making processes that put into practice the requirement of robust consultation and engagement required under the MOU with FNEC and the Governing and Guiding Legislation. From a human rights perspective, BCSTA has taken a proactive step in embarking on this AEDI policy review. Nonetheless, BCSTA should develop policies that set out how disproportional lack of representation will be addressed.

To that general purpose, *Directions* recommended that BCSTA adopt a policy on diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism. The policy drafted by *Directions* was as follows:

### **Draft Policy on Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Anti-Racism**

The British Columbia School Trustees Association aspires to embody and work on behalf of diversity, inclusion, and equity in the public schools of British Columbia. BCSTA strives to:

- value human differences within the organization (diversity).
- ensure that people of all backgrounds feel they are welcome and valued (inclusion).
- ensure that factors such as ancestry, skin colour, place of residence, socio-economic or educational background, gender identity or expression, physical condition, etc. do not determine the outcomes a person achieves.
- eliminate discrimination in policies, procedures, programs, and services (anti-racism).

To those ends, BCSTA commits to:

- Educating ourselves and our members about diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism and how they may be achieved.

- Ensuring that diversity, inclusion, and equity, and anti-racism are evident in all that we do.
- Ensuring that policies and practices of the organization do not contravene the British Columbia Human Rights Code.
- Supporting equity through our policies, procedures, programs, and services.
- Advocating for policies and practices that promote diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism in the public schools of British Columbia.
- Measuring our progress in ensuring diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism.

## Survey and Focus Groups

When the policy gap analysis revealed no gaps between the legal and ethical obligations of the BCSTA and its current policies and practices, the survey's purpose was modified. Instead of gathering feedback and advice about policy and practice changes, the survey was designed to: (1) elicit trustee responses to statements about anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion in Canada; (2) statements about those issues in the context of BCSTA; and (3) advice about priorities BCSTA might pursue with respect to anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Focus groups were then conducted to engage interested trustees in interpreting the results of the survey.

## Survey Results

*Directions* developed, and the Board of Directors approved, a survey to address the three topics listed above. The survey was advertised and made available during the New Trustee Orientation and Academy held in December 2022 and advertised through email to the BCSTA membership. Survey questions are provided in Appendix A: 2022 Trustee Survey. All questions were voluntary.

**Response rate:** 185 of 412 (44.0%) trustees responded to the online survey. The strong response rate implies that anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion are topic of considerable prominence for the membership of the organization.

**Gender:** 157 of the respondents volunteered their gender identification. 109 identified as female (69.4% of respondents), 44 as male (28%), and four had other bases of identification (2.5%).

**Racial(ized) or cultural group identifications:** 155 individuals responded to a question about their preferred racial(ized) or cultural group identifications. Respondents could choose as many groups from a list as they wished, yielding 164 data points, including eleven respondents who indicated “prefer not to say”. 101 (about 60%) selected white as their bases of identification. 27 (about 16%) made other choices: Black – 2 (1.2%), Chinese – 5 (3.0%), Filipino – 1 (0.6%), First Nations – 10 (6.1%), Métis – 3 (1.8%), Latin American – 1 (0.6%), and South Asian – 2 (1.2%). An option was provided to write in one’s preferred group identification; 25 respondents provided a written response, with the majority indicating they were Canadian.

### Views about equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism in the Canadian Context

The first survey question asked respondents about their views about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in Canada. To put the responses of trustees in context, we report data from a [June 2021 Angus Reid Institute survey<sup>22</sup>](#) of a sample of the Canadian population. The Angus Reid Institute describes four mindsets about Canadian diversity, each category making up one-fourth of the population: Detractors, Guarded, Accepting, and Advocates.

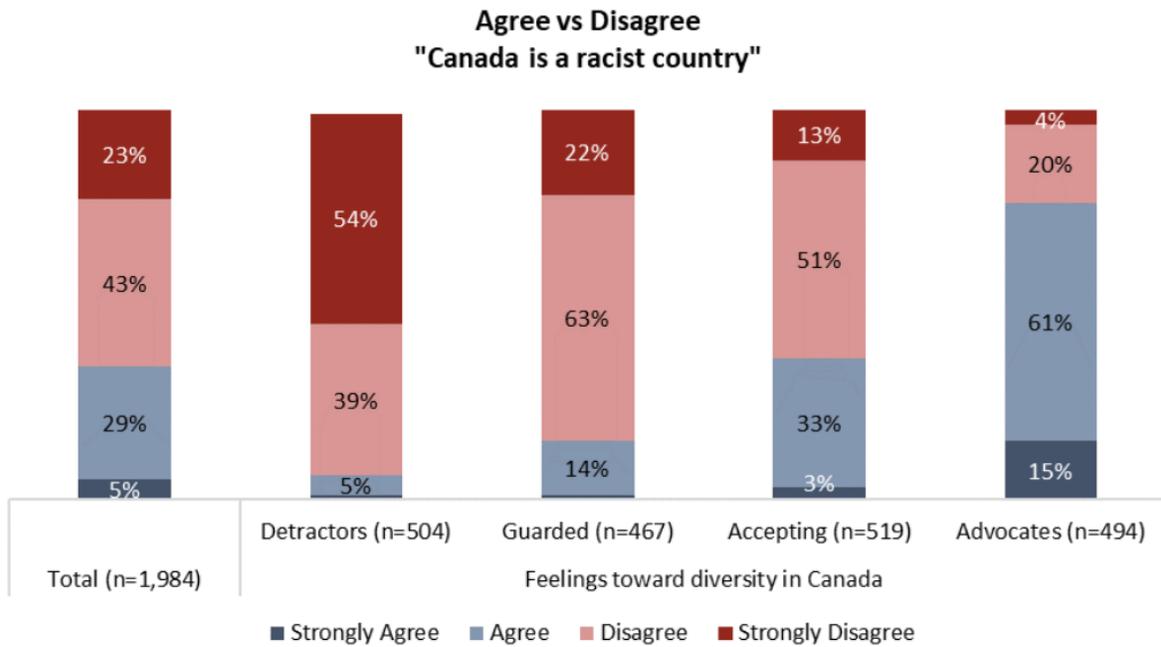
The Angus Reid (2021) data noted differences between males and females with respect to the four mindsets. Women between 18 and 34 years of age, followed by women between the ages of 35-54 were more likely to be advocates. Men of all ages were much more likely to be Guarded or Detractors compared with women.

**Detractors**, a group of older, more conservative Canadians, are more likely than the other groups to say that immigration levels are too high, and that racism is not a problem” (Angus Reid Institute, 2021). **Advocates** express concern about discrimination and racism. They are twice as likely as visible minorities to say, for example, that police are racist toward visible minorities (83% vs. 42%). About half (55%) of those in the **Guarded** quartile say that “perceptions of racial discrimination where it does not really exist is a bigger problem than people failing to see it.” In contrast, the Accepting category says, “people not seeing racial discrimination where it does exist is a bigger problem than people perceiving it in areas where it doesn’t.” The chart below shows the differing perceptions of the four groups about the statement “Canada is a racist country”:

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<sup>22</sup> The report is part of a research series from the Angus Reid Institute, in partnership with the University of British Columbia, on perceptions and attitudes towards diversity and racism in Canada.

Figure 1. Angus Reid



Source: Angus Reid (2021)

Self-identification (Indigenous, Caucasian, Visible Minority) was related to agreement with two statements: (a) “I feel a strong sense of connection with other Canadians living in my community” and (b) “I feel like I am treated as an outsider in Canada” (Angus Reid Institute, 2021). About one-quarter of each group say they feel out of place in Canada. One-fifth (21%) of the population sampled feels as if they are treated like an outsider, a proportion that increases to three in ten for Indigenous persons and persons who identify as Visible Minorities.

Table 4 presents the views from the 2022 BCSTA Member Survey question on equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism in the Canadian Context.

Table 4. Respondent views about equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism in the Canadian Context

Listed below are sentiments that are sometimes expressed about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in Canada today.  Please indicate whether you agree or disagree.	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Do not know		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Calling attention to racism in education is divisive and counterproductive.	6	3.2%	8	4.3%	46	24.9%	121	65.4%	4	2.2%	185	100.0%
Schools should be required to teach students about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.	131	70.4%	44	23.7%	1	0.5%	8	4.3%	2	1.1%	186	100.0%
Because of the protection of human rights, discrimination isn't much of a problem anymore.	2	1.1%	6	3.2%	55	29.6%	120	64.5%	3	1.6%	186	100.0%
Canadian institutions (i.e., government, police, courts, education system, journalists, etc.) exhibit racism.	64	34.8%	89	48.4%	11	6.0%	8	4.3%	12	6.5%	184	100.0%
Trying to change the way people treat one another is a waste of resources.	0	0.0%	4	2.1%	35	18.7%	146	78.1%	2	1.1%	187	100.0%
Racism is an unfortunate, but inevitable, character trait for some people.	7	3.8%	46	24.9%	50	27.0%	71	38.4%	11	5.9%	185	100.0%
There is much the education system can do to produce greater equity.	112	60.2%	64	34.4%	3	1.6%	4	2.2%	3	1.6%	186	100.0%
There is too much emphasis being placed on anti-racism and not enough on multiculturalism.	13	7.0%	37	19.9%	62	33.3%	53	28.5%	21	11.3%	186	100.0%
Although residential schools for First Nations have been closed, the negative effects of residential schooling persist.	137	73.7%	41	22.0%	2	1.1%	4	2.2%	2	1.1%	186	100.0%
Racism and discrimination are not that important when you compare them with problems like climate change, inflation and/or unemployment.	2	1.1%	6	3.2%	52	28.0%	122	65.6%	4	2.2%	186	100.0%

The data for eight of the statements in Table 4 show little dispersion. More than 80% of the respondents either agree / strongly agree or disagree / strongly disagree with the statements.

Agree / strongly agree:

- Schools should be required to teach students about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.
- Canadian institutions (i.e., government, police, courts, education system, journalists, etc.) exhibit racism.
- There is much the education system can do to produce greater equity.
- Although residential schools for First Nations have been closed, the negative effects of residential schooling persist.

Disagree / strongly disagree:

- Calling attention to racism in education is divisive and counterproductive.
- Because of the protection of human rights, discrimination isn't much of a problem anymore.
- Trying to change the way people treat one another is a waste of resources.
- Racism and discrimination are not that important when you compare them with problems like climate change, inflation and/or unemployment.

Opinion is more divided on two of the items:

- Racism is an unfortunate, but inevitable, character trait for some people.
- There is too much emphasis being placed on anti-racism and not enough on multiculturalism.

As was the case with the Angus Reid Institute data (2021), there are gender differences between the responses of men and women. On six of the items in Table 5 below, the differences between females and males are 10% or greater. Women are more likely to *disagree / strongly disagree* with the statements:

- Calling attention to racism in education is divisive and counterproductive.
- There is too much emphasis being placed on anti-racism and not enough on multiculturalism.
- Racism and discrimination are not that important when you compare them with problems like climate change, inflation and/or unemployment.

Women are more likely than men to *agree* with the statements:

- Schools should be required to teach students about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.
- Canadian institutions (i.e., government, police, courts, education system, journalists, etc.) exhibit racism.
- There is much the education system can do to produce greater equity.

Table 5. Respondent views about equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism in the Canadian Context by Gender

Response	Calling attention to racism in education is divisive and counterproductive.		Schools should be required to teach students about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.		Because of the protection of human rights, discrimination isn't much of a problem anymore.		Canadian institutions (i.e., government, police, courts, education system, journalists, etc.) exhibit racism.		Trying to change the way people treat one another is a waste of resources.		Racism is an unfortunate, but inevitable, character trait for some people.		There is much the education system can do to produce greater equity.		There is too much emphasis being placed on anti-racism and not enough on multiculturalism.		Although residential schools for First Nations have been closed, the negative effects of residential schooling persist.		Racism and discrimination are not that important when you compare them with problems like climate change, inflation and/or unemployment.	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Agree / Strongly Agree	5%	14%	97%	86%	1%	9%	91%	70%	82%	77%	27%	32%	97%	84%	21%	41%	96%	91%	2%	11%
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	94%	84%	2%	11%	97%	89%	2%	25%	17%	23%	67%	61%	2%	11%	68%	57%	2%	9%	98%	80%
Do not know	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	7%	5%	2%	0%	6%	7%	1%	5%	11%	2%	2%	0%	0%	9%

Respondents were given the opportunity to expand on their responses to the statements on equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism in Canada. Thirty-seven survey respondents provided additional information, including a small number who objected to the survey itself and its mention of anti-racism. One respondent wrote, the “questions are biased and make answering some of them properly impossible,” though the respondent did not explain either the bias or what made the questions impossible. Although the instrument made provision for varying shades of opinion (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree, as well as do not know, one respondent critical of the survey wrote:

*This is a flawed survey instrument: most of these questions are constructed to elicit only the desired/correct responses; also, the scale is too limited for nuanced subjects/ topics: it's almost "binary" ...*

The remaining objections were to racism and anti-racism. One respondent wrote:

*A wise person once said: "You attract more flies with honey than vinegar." Trying to stop racism by focusing on racism will inevitably backfire. Racism is combatted as we focus more on our common humanity and learn about the beauty of those that are different than us.*

Of the three comments objecting to anti-racism/racism, respondents said they also believed that such a focus was divisive. One wrote:

*Stop buying into the divisive philosophy of anti-racism which promotes discrimination, identity politics and stereotyping. Instead use theories and practices that are evidence based, peer reviewed and publicly debated, which anti-racism is not. I implore you, abandon this track for the good of our kids.*

Another wrote:

*Teaching and exemplifying kindness, compassion, empathy, and mutual respect are much more effective at battling racism or inequality than assigning an "inherited responsibility" based on skin colour. This is divisive and does harm to the mental health of students and puts teachers and administrators in an awkward position of having to defend the stereotyping of people as being oppressed or oppressors. Kindness, compassion, empathy, and mutual respect are also politically neutral values that everyone can support and get behind.*

Two respondents perceived that the BCSTA was not inclusive of Métis and Inuit peoples. Of these respondents, one said:

*Residential schools closed for everyone. Not just First Nations. [Respondent is] very disappointed that the BCSTA continues to use indigenous but only mean First Nations. This form of discrimination and understanding of indigenous is saddening and disheartening to be part of such association.*

The other respondent wrote:

*Education and communication are such a big part of anti-racism. I have a trustee on my board who reminds us that First Nations IS NOT inclusive of all Indigenous people. Yet I hear Métis and Inuit so much less when we talk about Truth and Reconciliation when we meet as an association and when I hear provincial representatives speak. In my 5th year - I have only seen one Métis representative in our conference or as a speaker. And never an Inuit speaker. I feel we can do better as an Association. Thank you for this opportunity to have a voice.*

Most respondents seemed appreciative of the opportunity to qualify or build upon their responses, citing the importance of addressing the issues and the central part that education plays in addressing them (e.g., “Schools have a major role to play in building a society where this is eliminated”). One respondent wrote, “this is very important work. I've recently come to out a lot of Decolonization of my own thinking. It has shown me actually where racism exists in my own thinking.”

Several respondents pointed out that intersectionality is important to consider. Intersectionality refers to the idea that social categories such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability are interconnected. People experience discrimination in different ways depending on how their ‘racial’ identity intersects with other aspects of their identity:

*Please add in Intersectionality and Ableism in anything to do with equity and Inclusion. We cannot have a conversation about equity without including this identity as all other identities can at anytime intersect with Disability. And as we know with intersectionality comes the added layers of oppressive barriers. If we don't name it, it will never be fixed. We have too many students being excluded from the public education system based on their disability and add to that another marginalized identity and you have an over representation of them being excluded, low grad rates and higher negative outcomes.*

Another respondent wrote:

*When discussing equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti racism it must include the intersectionality and be inclusive of people with disabilities and the*

*neurodivergent community. Too often these individuals are left out of the discussion.*

Another respondent provided a concrete example of a form of persistent discrimination based upon gender:

*In addition to the issues we are addressing, there are more concerns. I have seen how there are still many gender inequities in our schools involving sports. Girls' sports are not given the same support even in terms of gym time. Very disappointing to see. So many examples and much work to do.*

Respondents were cognizant that diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism were societal issues needing societal solution that extend beyond the confines of the school system. One respondent put it bluntly, “racism in Canada is systemic which makes it insidious and detrimental to people of colour.” Overall, the comments indicated that addressing equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in education was important, and work that required more engagement with students and more resources. Respondents were grateful for having been consulted.

#### Views about equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism in the BCSTA Context

Table 6 presents the views from the survey question on equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism in the context of BCSTA.

Table 6. Respondent views about equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism in the context of BCSTA

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the statements below about BCSTA and equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Do not know		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
BCSTA can only provide a voice for boards of education if the composition of its staff and board of directors is representative of the citizens of British Columbia.	31	19.3%	54	33.5%	42	26.1%	11	6.8%	23	14.3%	161	100.0%
BCSTA has an obligation to disrupt systems of inequity.	75	47.2%	60	37.7%	8	5.0%	3	1.9%	13	8.2%	159	100.0%
To challenge inequity, BCSTA should start by understanding that it, and other similar organizations, have benefited from and helped to perpetuate inequity.	43	27.0%	69	43.4%	16	10.1%	3	1.9%	28	17.6%	159	100.0%
BCSTA is spending too much time and effort on anti-racism, equity, inclusion, and diversity.	7	4.4%	6	3.8%	56	35.0%	74	46.3%	17	10.6%	160	100.0%
BCSTA recognizes that it and other organizations in the education sector need to change to achieve diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism.	62	38.8%	76	47.5%	8	5.0%	2	1.3%	12	7.5%	160	100.0%
BCSTA’s membership values diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism as fundamental to the organization’s success.	55	34.2%	87	54.0%	5	3.1%	4	2.5%	10	6.2%	161	100.0%
Diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism are issues beyond the scope of BCSTA’s mandate.	8	5.0%	3	1.9%	62	38.8%	79	49.4%	8	5.0%	160	100.0%
Increasing the diversity among its members will make BCSTA a more influential voice for public education.	66	41.5%	72	45.3%	10	6.3%	3	1.9%	8	5.0%	159	100.0%
The pursuit of diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism are central to BCSTA’s ability to support and advocate for effective public boards of education in B.C.	75	46.9%	71	44.4%	4	2.5%	5	3.1%	5	3.1%	160	100.0%
Too much emphasis on diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism can deflect BCSTA from its main goals.	3	1.9%	21	13.1%	56	35.0%	61	38.1%	19	11.9%	160	100.0%

Most opinions about BCSTA and the issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism showed little dispersion. More than 70% of respondents either agreed / strongly agreed or disagreed / strongly disagreed with eight of the ten statements:

Agree / strongly agree:

- BCSTA has an obligation to disrupt systems of inequity.
- To challenge inequity, BCSTA should start by understanding that it, and other similar organizations, have benefited from and helped to perpetuate inequity.
- BCSTA recognizes that it and other organizations in the education sector need to change to achieve diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism.
- BCSTA's membership values diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism as fundamental to the organization's success.
- Increasing the diversity among its members will make BCSTA a more influential voice for public education.
- The pursuit of diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism are central to BCSTA's ability to support and advocate for effective public boards of education in B.C.

Disagree / strongly disagree:

- BCSTA is spending too much time and effort on anti-racism, equity, inclusion, and diversity.
- Diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism are issues beyond the scope of BCSTA's mandate.

Opinions were more dispersed about two of the statements:

- BCSTA can only provide a voice for boards of education if the composition of its staff and board of directors is representative of the citizens of British Columbia.
- Too much emphasis on diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism can deflect BCSTA from its main goals.

Respondents were again given the opportunity to expand on their responses. Seventeen respondents chose to comment about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in the context of BCSTA, many fewer than those commenting on the previous question about the Canadian context. The respondent whose comment about the instrument being flawed in response to the first survey question repeated that comment in response to the second question (“... constructed to elicit only the desired/correct responses; also, the scale is too limited for nuanced subjects/ topics: it's almost 'binary' ...”). Regarding the substance of the statements, one respondent thought that the actions described were “beyond the scope [of BCSTA]

completely.” The respondent who commented about BCSTA’s using Indigenous without attention to Métis, Inuit, and non-status off reserve persons, wrote something similar in response to the second question (BCSTA “does not value diversity or understanding of indigenous... let's talk about Métis and Inuit and non status off reserve.”)

The respondent who admonished BCSTA for “buying into the divisive philosophy of anti-racism” wrote:

*If we want boards to actually be representative of BC in ethnicity, then we should see more Chinese trustees (who make up almost 12% of the BC population) across the province, and less indigenous (less than 5%). Of course, that won't happen because the talking points of the day are not to address anti-Asian racism, but only BIPOC racism. It seems we don't want representation of our community, but over representation of specific ethnic groups who hold political power and public support.*

In a related vein, another respondent wrote, “Character trumps all other traits. Continually focusing on race, gender etc. is in and of itself discriminatory.”

Another respondent commented that:

*There is too much focus on the social issues in the systems of government. The legislative approach has failed in the past and will fail again. We already have the laws in place to prevent discrimination. Strengthening the families of our communities and the promotion of community in district is the way to address these issues.*

A respondent observed that “we are often products of our own experience.” That respondent continued:

*Change requires an honest and unflinching need to self-examine those experiences...and to be open to acknowledging that some of our early learnings and assumptions are one of fundamental to the barriers that exist for change today.*

Another made a plea for inclusion:

*We have a duty to serve ALL of the school community; that means understanding our privilege and how the system itself was created to exclude certain identities. We should be looking to evolve and make the systems more*

*equitable. These students and families and staff have a Right to be there, participate without fear that harm will come to them.*

One respondent's comment seemed to suggest that BCSTA's emphasis on equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism needed to be balanced against its other responsibilities to its members:

*I think there needs to be room for all of it. Issues are significant and I know that BCSTA has focused a lot on truth and reconciliation and indigenous voices which is very important. There are other issues occurring and all of this impact education. Our role as trustees is to look at outcomes and students, all students need to feel welcome, safe, connected, valued, and accepted to thrive in our systems. We need to be informed but there is a balance to the work.*

### Views about BCSTA Priorities

The third question in the survey was designed to help the Board set priorities. The question asked respondents to indicate the importance of actions that BCSTA might take in pursuit of increasing equity, diversity, inclusion, and in eliminating racism (Table 7). The responses did not provide the guidance sought. Eighty-five percent or more of the respondents said all but one of the actions was very important. Responses to "conduct an employment equity audit of staff" were much more dispersed than the responses to the other statements.

Table 7. Recommended priorities for the BCSTA.

Like all organizations, BCSTA’s resources are limited. BCSTA must set priorities based on the perceived importance of specific actions.	Very Important		Moderately important		Not important		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ensure that people of all backgrounds feel they are welcome and valued (inclusion).	152	96.8%	5	3.2%	0	0.0%	157	100.0%
ensure that factors such as ancestry, skin colour, place of residence, socio-economic or educational background, gender identity or expression, physical condition, etc. do not determine the outcomes a person achieves.	140	91.5%	10	6.5%	3	2.0%	153	100.0%
eliminate discrimination in policies, procedures, programs, and services.	141	90.4%	13	8.3%	2	1.3%	156	100.0%
educate staff and our members about diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism and how they may be achieved.	133	85.3%	19	12.2%	4	2.6%	156	100.0%
take action to respond to unfair or demeaning treatment.	147	93.6%	9	5.7%	1	0.6%	157	100.0%
be an organization that models equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in the public education sector in B.C.	133	85.3%	20	12.8%	3	1.9%	156	100.0%
actively seek different points of view about public education.	134	84.8%	20	12.7%	4	2.5%	158	100.0%
conduct an employment equity audit of staff.	69	44.5%	64	41.3%	22	14.2%	155	100.0%
ensure that policies and practices of the organization do not contravene B.C.’s Human Rights Code.	145	92.9%	10	6.4%	1	0.6%	156	100.0%

Eleven respondents amplified on their responses with a variety of written comments. The person who had commented earlier about BCSTA's attention to First Nations to the exclusion of Métis, Inuit and non-status Indigenous persons repeated that comment in response to the third question. The respondent who chided BCSTA for "buying into diversity" continued to voice their objection:

*Either ethnicity contributes to outcomes, or it doesn't. If we want to root out ethnicity-based barriers to success, we also need to abandon hiring and promotion practices that gives preference to candidates based on their ethnicity. This practice inherently and fundamentally discriminates against other ethnicities by preferring and promoting specific other ethnicities.*

One of the respondents who said the instrument was biased and found it challenging to respond wrote:

*BCSTA is not now, nor should it ever be, the race, diversity, inclusion police. The more you focus on this, the more you draw attention away from giving students an education equipping them for future endeavours. I fear this organization has lost the plot here.*

The other respondent who thought the instrument flawed wrote, "again, the wording of the statements dictates the only acceptable responses; however, 'moderately' does suggest that other core mandate areas of focus are legitimate..." And the person who thought there had been too much attention to social issues by governments wrote, "anti-racism is racism, it only perpetuates the problem it does not help." In a similar vein, a respondent wrote, "please teach kindness, compassion, empathy and mutual respect and stay out of the political fads of the day."

Another respondent was critical of BCSTA's failure to make provision for neurodiverse persons:

*BCSTA doesn't ask or recognize those with lived experience to sit in committees. Trustees with lived experiences are excluded by nature of their disability or because they don't in. BCSTA needs to overhaul its attitudes and embrace members with neurodiversity. Until those with lived experiences are embraced, we will not change. Ableist attitudes are very real and even this academy reflects the lack of understanding of what diversity, inclusion, and equity is.*

And another said that more diverse panelists would be welcome at BCSTA events because "the presenters/panelists were overwhelmingly white people, and the Indigenous presenters were all men in the sessions I attended."

## Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted to engage trustees in interpreting the results of the survey. The average level of agreement for each survey statement (i.e., where the average response fell between strongly agree to strongly disagree or between very important to not important) was presented to focus group participants for interpretation.

Knowing that the Board would be recommending the adoption of an additional Foundational Statement by extraordinary motion to the policy book under section one at the upcoming 2023 Annual General Meeting, the Board asked *Directions* to elicit information from trustees that would help the Board prioritize actions consistent with the Foundation Statement and commitments (Appendix B: Foundational Statement).

BCSTA staff publicized dates and times for the focus groups, inviting trustees to select a date and time that suited their schedule. Forty-one trustees indicated an interest in participating in a focus group; 29 were able to attend. Nine staff members participated in the staff session. *Directions* conducted eight 60-minute sessions with trustees and one 60-minute session with BCSTA staff.

Charles Ungerleider and Geniva Liu of *Directions* were present during each session. The former conducted the session, and the latter took notes. Participants were assured that their comments would be kept anonymous in any reporting and that neither they nor the school boards on which they sat would be identified.

Using the notes that Geniva Liu took, Charles Ungerleider produced the following report about the interpretations of the participating trustees. Quotations are used to give a sense of the language a person used or the way a participant expressed the view recorded. The quotations are not exact because they are constructed from notes and not a transcript of the session (no audio or video recording was made of the sessions).

Two participants said that the conduct of the focus group was not culturally compatible with their expectations because no provision was made for participants to get to know one another before a discussion ensued. One respondent said that, because the focus group was not limited to BIPOC persons, it was a “brave place” not a “safe space” for sharing viewpoints. In another group, objected to the BIPOC groups, perceiving that “(BIPOC Community Members Only)” meant that one could not participate if not racialized.

## Survey interpretations

The sentiments expressed in the survey were perceived favorably by most of the focus group members. Participants thought that the sentiments were broadly representative of trustees in their district more generally and consistent with their expectations. Some focus group participants wondered whether most of the survey respondents were those trustees more favourably disposed to diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism.

Focus group participants acknowledged that there are trustees whose perceptions are less positive towards diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism than reflected in the survey. While some participants were surprised that there was not unanimous agreement for some statements (i.e., everyone responding strongly agree or strongly disagree to a particular statement), some noted that the results were equivocal because there were survey respondents who did not agree with the majority's positive perceptions, including some focus group participants.

A small number of focus group participants found specific sentiments and words difficult to accept. The statements that "Canadian institutions (i.e., government, police, courts, education system, journalists, etc.) exhibit racism" and "BCSTA has an obligation to disrupt systems of inequity" were among those mentioned. The definitions and implications of the words *inclusion* and *diversity* were challenging for a few.

Several participants observed that, although they believed that the general disposition of school boards was favorable toward equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism, there was much work to be done. Most focus group participants appreciated that BCSTA was taking a strong stance on diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. That stance was perceived to be establishing a positive normative environment that would help boards to take firm positions on these issues. As one participant put it, "Bringing this [the BCSTA Foundation Statement] to the board at the [BCSTA] AGM makes it easier for the boards to do their work . . . sets the tone for anti-racism, diversity, equity . . . spreads out the work throughout the province." Several participants used the word courage and courageous, saying it took courage to respond to racism and that having a courageous example is motivating and affirming to those who wish to act.

Some said that BCSTA's adoption of the proposed Foundational Statement would be useful to boards working toward those goals. One participant who had seen the statement previously said that she was struck by the choice to provide definitions placed before the words equity,

diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism, as opposed to putting the word before the definition: “often the word is the point of disagreement, not the definition, not the intention.” She explained that when the words are removed and the conversation is about the definitions, people seem to agree about the intentions. Participants in other focus groups concurred, noting with approval that the proposed BCSTA Foundational Statement defined the key terms in the statement that “BCSTA strives to:

- eliminate discrimination in policies, procedures, programs, and services (anti-racism).
- value human differences within the organization (diversity).
- ensure that factors such as ancestry, skin colour, place of residence, socio-economic or educational background, gender identity or expression, physical condition, etc. do not determine the outcomes a person achieves (equity).
- ensure that people of all backgrounds feel they are welcome and valued (inclusion).

Many agreed that the Foundational Statement and accompanying commitments send a message to the education sector that BCSTA holds and champions these values, establishing the expectation that it will act and, in turn, will empower the education sector to act.

A few objected to using the term *anti-racism* because it “has lots of emotional baggage” and because anti-racism was asserted to require that someone be an *anti-capitalist* and/or *feminist*. To one participant, the statements above “don’t look like they are defining the terms but applying these definitions to those terms. These read more like examples of AEDI as opposed to their definitions.” By contrast, another participant asserted that “pushback comes from people who haven’t experienced discrimination – people have great difficulty acknowledging the privileges they receive from being in a position of power.”

Using “loaded” words like anti-racism leads to strife on some local boards. One participant said that the board on which the participant serves supports anti-racism:

*. . . but the rednecks are showing up who do not approve of people being gay, technology, and other things. So, as soon as you put anti-racism in, people will come and protest. If you call it DEI, they will come anyway to protest, but maybe [eliminating the term] it will calm the public down.*

Objections to equity, diversity, and inclusion referenced the debates about identity politics, social justice, and multiculturalism occurring more broadly in society. The objections to anti-racism seemed to reflect the broader discussions of race, power, and privilege in society.

One participant wondered if consideration of an employment equity audit mean that one cannot employ someone who is fully qualified. The comment suggests that efforts to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion do so without regard to merit, unfairly giving advantage to some groups and discriminating against those more qualified. Implicit in the comments of another participant was the notion that efforts to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion are driven by a desire to conform to a preferred ideology (“some of these survey questions seem to have a very clear right or wrong answer;” “anti-racism has been a politically loaded term;” “when we are talking about diversity, why does it focus on BIPOC? Why don’t we say more Russian, middle eastern, Chinese?”). That same participant expressed agreement with the goal of “actively seeking different points of view,” but said achieving that goal is challenging because “there tends to be an echo chamber on the acceptable points of view . . .” and “doesn’t find a lot of diversity of views on BCSTA.”

One participant said that “there’s still a lot of educational awareness required out there.”

*Some people are more immersed in the conversation about settlers, truth, Indigenous perspectives. There is no problem talking to members who are receptive to conversation, but there is pushback. People feel sensitive, guilty, say they didn’t do it [place children in residential schools]. Students reflect what goes on at home. Students often take these [school] conversations home. Not all families are receptive. There are different levels of appreciation. Some people are slow to change, some want to change. Hopefully, BCSTA can provide some resources [for having conversations among board members about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism].*

A few participants referred to negative experiences they had during their campaigns for office that point to the resistance that diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism policies are likely to encounter. Others were cautiously optimistic because they had seen “a really strong sense of discrimination, racism” among students concerned about mental health and discrimination. One participant said she would be happier being in school today – that is, she would feel more comfortable saying out loud that she was Métis – than she was when she was in school. “It [school today] is a much friendlier environment.

One participant said, “it is easier to create strong children than to repair broken adults”. Another said, “the kids will be the change-makers!” An Indigenous woman said: “Change will take seven generations. Some may never change, some will be slow to change, but it will change, starting with the young ones.” Several participants paraphrased Senator Murray

Sinclair’s comment that education [residential schooling] was the source of the harm and trauma that affected Indigenous people and it will be education that will help society to recover from those harms and trauma.

Diversity and inclusion were mentioned frequently during the focus groups, often in the context of increasing the diversity among BCSTA’s membership. One participant wondered if the term inclusion was over-used in too many contexts, diluting its significance. However, most participants were favourably disposed toward increasing diversity, but cognizant that doing so was dependent on encouraging persons from underrepresented groups to run for office or seeking changes to the school act reserving seats for persons from underrepresented groups. There was support for the former suggestion, but resistance to the latter.

Increasing diversity engenders a dilemma for racialized trustees. As one participant noted:

*When you are the only racialized trustee, it is uncomfortable. Why do they [racialized trustees] have to be the one to explain it [racism, for example]. There is a lot to explain, and it takes a toll. A lot of people who had to reassess their own personal experiences. What they see there is some frustration, they are moving on a slow journey . . . People agree [with anti-racism, diversity, inclusion, and equity] but the actions do not match the intentions.*

Another mentioned, “the emotional burden placed on racialized people to teach, to share their lived/living experiences (aka their traumas) so non-racialized people can understand . . .”

Several participants made the point that people want to be involved for their knowledge and skills and that it was important to avoid tokenism. One trustee said that some qualified candidates do not want to run because of harassment that is increasingly part of the political landscape. Racialized candidates will need support. Another thought it advantageous if the candidate spoke the language used broadly in the community.

Several participants mentioned the coincidental timing of the release of the 2023 [K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan Racial Equity Together](#), believing that BCSTA’s efforts were complementary to those expressed in the report. Several focus group participants expressed optimism about the contribution that children, youth, and young adults are making to changing societal attitudes toward equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism, an aspiration expressed in the K-12 Action Plan that “empowering the youngest British Columbians to be anti-racists will ensure these collective efforts continue for generations to come.” Several participants pointed to the

synergy that would likely accrue from the alignment of BCSTA's efforts with the broader efforts in education.

In one focus group a participant observed that the response to the statement "there is too much emphasis being placed on anti-racism and not enough on multiculturalism" seemed equivocal. This prompted a discussion of what it looks like to focus on anti-racism versus multiculturalism. Another participant pointed out that anti-racism and multiculturalism share a common goal of promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools and society. The focus of anti-racism is on addressing systemic racism and oppression, while the focus of multiculturalism is on promoting cultural awareness and understanding.

Several focus group participants made a similar observation about the seemingly equivocal response to the statement that "racism is an unfortunate, but inevitable, character trait for some people." Some participants interpreted this as signalling resistance to the idea that racism is systemic.

Several respondents observed that opinions were stronger on the first set of statements applying to equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in the broader context of Canada and somewhat more muted on the statements that referred to those topics in the context of BCSTA as an organization.

There was agreement that asking respondents to prioritize the things that BCSTA might pursue did not yield very useful information apart from the fact that almost all actions were regarded as important. Nevertheless, there were some suggestions made by focus group participants that the organization might want to consider:

- Convene branch discussions about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.
- Use case studies or scenarios to enable participants to work with the application of those concepts in the context of school board governance.
- Create a community engagement and communication initiative to explain the contribution of school trustees and encourage representatives of underrepresented groups to run for office.
- Ensure the alignment of BCSTA's definitions of equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism with those in the education sector.

## Next Steps

Based on the survey results and broader best practices, here are some actions that BCSTA might take to actively pursue greater anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion among member school boards:

1. BCSTA could help member boards design and conduct equity audits of staff and students.
2. BCSTA could develop a comprehensive plan for increasing diversity on boards of education. This could include measures such as targeted recruitment efforts, leadership development programs, and mentorship opportunities.
3. BCSTA could provide anti-racism and equity training to its members to increase their awareness and understanding of issues related to racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
4. BCSTA could establish a committee focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion to provide guidance, advice, and recommendations to school boards.
5. BCSTA could collaborate closely with diverse community organizations to better understand the unique needs and challenges of diverse groups and to develop programs and initiatives that address those needs.
6. BCSTA could establish metrics and reporting mechanisms to track progress on equity, diversity, and inclusion goals to help members to make progress towards those goals.

## Appendix A: 2022 Trustee Survey

### Welcome

This survey is one of several tools that BCSTA is using to gather information from trustees throughout the province. Data will be pooled, and comments are anonymous. Your participation is voluntary and appreciated.

The intent of this survey is to gather data to guide BCSTA's actions related to equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.

#### Collection notices

This survey does not collect any personal information. Please do not enter any personal information about yourself or others in your survey responses. No decisions about individuals will be made because of this survey.

### Equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in Canada

Listed below are sentiments that are sometimes expressed about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in Canada today. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree.

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
Calling attention to racism in education is divisive and counterproductive.					
Schools should be required to teach students about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.					
Because of the protection of human rights, discrimination isn't much of a problem anymore.					
Canadian institutions (i.e., government, police, courts, education system, journalists, etc.) exhibit racism.					
Trying to change the way people treat one another is a waste of resources.					
Racism is an unfortunate, but inevitable character trait for some people.					
There is much the education system can do to produce greater equity.					
There is too much emphasis being placed on anti-racism and not enough on multiculturalism.					
Although residential schools for First Nations have been closed, the negative effects of residential schooling persist.					
Racism and discrimination are not that important when you compare them with problems like climate change, inflation and/or unemployment.					

Additional comments:

**BCSTA and equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism**

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the statements below about BCSTA and equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
BCSTA can only provide a voice for boards of education if the composition of its staff and board of directors is representative of the citizens of British Columbia.					
BCSTA has an obligation to disrupt systems of inequity.					
To challenge inequity, BCSTA should start by understanding that it, and other similar organizations, have benefited from and helped to perpetuate inequity.					
BCSTA is spending too much time and effort on anti-racism, equity, inclusion, and diversity.					
BCSTA recognizes that it and other organizations in the education sector need to change to achieve diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism.					
BCSTA’s membership values diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism as fundamental to the organization’s success.					
Diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism are issues beyond the scope of BCSTA’s mandate.					
Increasing the diversity among its members will make BCSTA a more influential voice for public education.					
The pursuit of diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism are central to BCSTA’s ability to support and advocate for effective public boards of education in B.C.					
Too much emphasis on diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism can deflect BCSTA from its main goals.					

Additional comments:

**BCSTA priorities for anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion**

Like all organizations, BCSTA’s resources are limited. BCSTA must set priorities based on the perceived important of specific actions.

How important is it that BCSTA...	Very important	Moderately important	Not important
ensure that people of all backgrounds feel they are welcome and valued (inclusion).			
ensure that factors such as ancestry, skin colour, place of residence, socio-economic or educational background, gender identity or expression, physical condition, etc. do not determine the outcomes a person achieves.			
eliminate discrimination in policies, procedures, programs, and services.			
educate staff and our members about diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism and how they may be achieved.			
take action to respond to unfair or demeaning treatment.			
be an organization that models equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in the public education sector in B.C.			
actively seek different points of view about public education.			
conduct an employment equity audit of staff.			
ensure that policies and practices of the organization do not contravene B.C.’s Human Rights Code.			

Additional comments:

What meaningful changes might BCSTA make in policy and/or practice that would increase equity, inclusion and diversity that would also help eliminate racism and discrimination in BCSTA’s sphere of influence?

## Background

*What is your gender?*

Gender may be different from sex assigned at birth or what is indicated on legal documents.

- Male
- Female
- Or please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

*What is your preferred racial(ized) or cultural group identification?*

Select all that apply.

- Arab
- Black
- Chinese
- Filipino
- First Nations
- Métis
- Inuit
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latin American
- South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai)
- West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.)
- White
- My preferred group self-identification is: \_\_\_\_\_\*
- I prefer not to say.

Thank you for completing the survey.

## Appendix B: Foundational Statement

### **Motion as Adopted:**

That the BCSTA Board of Directors recommend to the 2023 AGM that the following Foundational Statement be added by extraordinary motion to the policy book under section one – BCSTA:

*The British Columbia School Trustees Association aspires to embody and work in support of anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the public schools of British Columbia. BCSTA strives to:*

- *eliminate discrimination in policies, procedures, programs, and services (anti-racism).*
- *value human differences within the organization (diversity).*
- *ensure that factors such as ancestry, skin colour, place of residence, socio-economic or educational background, gender identity or expression, physical condition, etc. do not determine the outcomes a person achieves (equity).*
- *ensure that people of all backgrounds feel they are welcome and valued (inclusion).*

*To those ends, BCSTA commits to:*

- *Educating ourselves and our members about anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion and how they may be achieved.*
- *Ensuring that anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion are evident in all that we do.*
- *Ensuring that policies and practices of the organization do not contravene the British Columbia Human Rights Code.*
- *Supporting equity through our policies, procedures, programs, and services.*
- *Advocating for policies and practices that promote anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the public schools of British Columbia.*
- *Measuring our progress in ensuring anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.*

## References

The following references informed the AEDI gap analysis:

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- Bascia, N. (2014). *The school context model: How school environments shape students' opportunities to learn*. Toronto, ON: People for Education.
- [BCOHRC Sept2020 Disaggregated-Data-Report FINAL.pdf \(bchumanrights.ca\)](#)
- Brown, R. S. & Parekh, G. (2013). *The intersection of disability, achievement, and equity: A system review of special education in the TDSB (Research Report No. 12-13-12)*. Toronto, ON: Toronto District School Board.
- Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2014). School leadership models: What do we know? *School Leadership and Management*, 34(5), 553-571.
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- Dei, G. J. S. (1996). *Anti-racism education theory and practice*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.
- [Diversity in B.C. Schools - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)
- Expanding Our Vision, Cultural Equality and Indigenous People's Human Rights, , Ardith Walpetko We'dalx Walkem, QC Cedar and Sage Law.
- [Indigenous Education Teaching Tools and Resources - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

October 16, 2023

Clint Johnston  
President  
BC Teachers' Federation  
100 – 550 West 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2  
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**Re: Foundation Skills Assessment**

Dear President Johnston,

We are writing in response to your letter dated September 15, 2023 regarding the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) campaign against the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA).

As you are aware, the First Nations Leadership Council has been clear and consistent in their support of provincial assessments, and the FSAs in particular, as a means for highlighting the inequities faced by First Nations learners attending BC public schools. As such, the BCTF's continuing campaign against the FSAs explicitly contradicts the stated position of First Nations leadership in this province.

Provincial assessments are necessary for identifying system-wide strengths and weaknesses within the education system. The data can and should assist the education sector in measuring and advancing equity for historically underserved students through planning, intervention, and support. The worsening disparity in results between First Nations students and their peers must serve as a call to action in recognition of the fact that the public education system is failing First Nation learners, families, and communities. The BC Office of the Human Rights Commissioner's 2020 Disaggregated Demographic Data Collection in British Columbia: The Grandmother Perspective Report highlights that "Disaggregated data is merely a tool... and it must be accompanied by a process that supports the purpose of reducing systemic racism and oppression and achieving equity."

The Student Learning Assessment Order requires Boards of Education to ensure that provincial assessments are administered and completed "for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of educational programs." Further, the Enhancing Student Learning Reporting Order requires Boards to annually report on student outcomes, including numeracy and literacy results captured by provincial assessments. We remind the BCTF and its local chapters that action 4.1 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan commits the Ministry of Education and Child Care to identifying and undertaking "concrete measures to increase the literacy and numeracy achievement levels of Indigenous students at all levels of the K-12 education system, including the early years."

fnesc  
First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

disseminating information excellence education innovation  
learning striving soliciting input supporting First Nations  
www.fnesc.bc.ca

FNESC is party to the BC Tripartite Education Agreement that requires the collection of data, including the Foundation Skills Assessment. Actions by the BCTF and its locals in opposition to the administration of the FSA undermines and interferes with this formal commitment.

It is disappointing that a partner organization within the education sector would deliberately and consistently take a position contrary to the perspective of BC First Nations, FNESC, and the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. BCTF's continued focus on the misuse of assessment data by right-wing think tanks distracts us from our collective responsibility to support students.

We encourage the BCTF to cease the anti-FSA campaign and any further actions that obstruct the collection or reporting of assessment results by the BCTF or its local teacher associations. We would be pleased to arrange a meeting to discuss this further.

Sincerely,



Tyrone McNeil  
President

Cc: BC Teachers' Federation Locals 1 through 93  
Cheryl Casimer, Political Executive, FNS  
Robert Phillips, Political Executive, FNS  
Hugh Braker, Political Executive, FNS  
Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, UBCIC  
Chief Don Tom, Vice-President, UBCIC  
Chief Marilyn Slett, Secretary-Treasurer, UBCIC  
Regional Chief Terry Teegee, BCAFN  
Honourable Rachna Singh, ECC  
Cloe Nicholls, Assistant Deputy Minister, Governance & Analytics, ECC  
Carolyn Broady, President, BCSTA  
Brian Leonard, President, BCPVPA  
Teresa Downs, President, BCSSA  
Laura Ward, President, BCCPAC



British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

October 5, 2023

**The Honourable David Eby**  
*Premier of British Columbia*  
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria B.C. V8W 9E1  
premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Eby,

**Subject: Urgent meeting request regarding recent protests in school districts**

We are requesting an urgent meeting regarding protests and disruptions at recent board of education meetings, district parent advisory council meetings and similar meetings close to school sites. We have also experienced incidents of individuals protesting near and at schools as children and caregivers enter buildings.

The British Columbia School Trustees Association is very concerned about the recent protests in communities and the disruptions that are taking place. Our priority is to ensure that all students learn in inclusive, welcoming schools and that staff and boards of education are safe to do their work.

We would like to discuss the proactive steps that BCSTA has already taken to support boards of education. These actions include guidance on processes and procedures, including policies, administrative procedures and practical advice, as well as open communication and support between the Ministry of Education and Child Care, the BC Association of School Business Officials and the BC School Superintendents Association. We have also provided one-on-one support and advice for board of education chairs and trustees, including producing and distributing a guide on public engagement at board meetings.



British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

We would also like to discuss how we can minimize and mitigate disruptions to ensure the safety of staff and the well-being of all students in our care.

Thank you for considering this urgent request. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn Broady".

**Carolyn Broady**

*President*

British Columbia School Trustees Association

CC: The Honourable Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care  
Christina Zacharuk, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Child Care  
Matt Smith, Chief of Staff, Office of the Premier  
Teresa Downs, president, British Columbia School Superintendents Association  
Ray Velestuk, president, British Columbia Association of School Business Officials  
BCSTA member boards of education  
Suzanne Hoffman, CEO, BCSTA  
BCSTA Board of Directors



October 12, 2023

Ref: 292671

Carolyn Broady, President  
British Columbia School Trustees Association  
**Email: [cbroady@bcsta.org](mailto:cbroady@bcsta.org)**

Dear Carolyn Broady:

Thank you for your letter of July 12, 2023 regarding ongoing funding and support for technology.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care (the Ministry) provides school districts with capital funding for school maintenance projects annually, to ensure schools are safe and functioning well. Also, the Ministry provides capital funding for new schools, replacement schools and additions.

Each year boards of education receive Annual Facility Grant (AFG) funding which can be used at their discretion to address a variety of priorities, including technological infrastructure upgrades to accommodate computer and telecommunications networks at existing facilities. In 2023/24, AFG was increased from \$120.5 million to a record-setting \$147.1 million via *Budget 2023*, allowing school districts more flexibility to address local needs. For new school, replacement school and addition projects, the Ministry provides an equipment budget which can be used for technological infrastructure and associated equipment.

I appreciate your comments on the importance of access to technology in classrooms across BC. Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Rachna Singh  
Minister

pc: BCSTA Board of Directors  
Michael Nyikes, Director, Capital Management Branch  
Damien Crowell, A/Executive Director, Capital Management Branch



October 13, 2023

Carolyn Broady, President  
British Columbia School Trustees Association  
1580 West Broadway, 4th Floor  
Vancouver BC V6J 5K9

Reference: 319268

Dear Carolyn Broady:

**Re: Public Transit for Youth**

Thank you for your letter of July 12, 2023, sharing the British Columbia School Trustees Association's support for the extension of free public transit to youth aged 13 to 18 in B.C.

As you know, the provincial government announced a program in late 2021 making [public transit free for children 12 and under](#). The program provides families across B.C. with more affordable transportation options and will help a new generation of British Columbians choose transit as their first travel option.

The program is now continuing into its second year, and we are monitoring customer feedback to ensure the existing program meets the needs of families across B.C. There are many factors to consider regarding a potential expansion of free or lower-cost transit, including transit capacity and ensuring that existing services can meet an increased demand in ridership. We will keep your organization's support for expansion of the program in mind as we continue to evaluate the program's success and look at potential changes in the future.

As you may be aware, TransLink, which provides transit service in Metro Vancouver, offers concession fares for youth between ages 13 and 18, as well as people 65 and older. In the 130 communities served by BC Transit, local governments are responsible for working with BC Transit to determine service levels, fares and routes, and many communities have developed their own programs to provide discounted or free transit for youth. For example, the City of Victoria offers a [Transit Youth U-PASS](#) providing free transit for youth aged 18 and under.

It may interest you to know that under our [CleanBC Roadmap to 2030](#), we are taking steps to reduce carbon pollution from transportation by increasing the share of trips made by transit, walking and cycling to 30 per cent by 2030, while reducing kilometres driven by personal vehicles by 25 per cent compared to 2020. We are developing a Clean Transportation Action Plan to help us meet these goals, which will be released shortly. You can learn more about our work to support [cleaner forms of transportation on our website](#).

.../2

You can be sure the provincial government is committed to continuing to look at ways to deliver safe, accessible and affordable transit service across British Columbia.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rob Fleming".

Rob Fleming  
Minister

Copy to: Premier David Eby

Honourable Rachna Singh  
Minister of Education and Child Care  
MLA, Surrey-Green Timbers

Honourable Dan Coulter  
Minister of State for Infrastructure and Transit  
MLA, Chilliwack

Honourable Mitzi Dean  
Minister of Children and Family Development  
MLA, Esquimalt-Metchosin

Honorable George Heyman  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy  
MLA, Vancouver-Fairview

Honourable Sheila Malcolmson  
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction  
MLA, Nanaimo

Christina Zacharuk, Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Education and Child Care

Reg Bawa, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Policy, Programs and Partnerships Division



# SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

S O U T H E A S T K O O T E N A Y

October 11, 2023

Hon. Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care  
Room 124 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Melanie Stewart, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Learning and Education Programs  
melanie.j.stewart@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Singh and Assistant Deputy Minister Stewart,

RE: Educational Resources for Gender Based Violence (GBV) Education  
Response Letter of August 4, 2023

Thank you, Hon. Minister Singh, for your letter of August 4, 2023 in which you responded to our March 29, 2023 letter requesting that the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) fund the costs of resources required to educate grade 11 and 12 students on gender-based violence (GBV).

In reviewing your response, our Board believes that our initial request for funding from the MECC to cover the cost of resources required to educate grade 11 and 12 students on GBV was not clearly defined in our letter and so we seek to clarify our request. We also wish to thank you for providing the contact information for Melanie Stewart, Assistant Deputy Minister, Learning and Education Programs and have additionally addressed this correspondence to M. Stewart.

At the School District 5 (SD5), Southeast Kootenay public Board Meeting of September 12, 2023, the Board carried the following motion:

*That the Board write a letter in response to the Minister of Education and Child Care's letter of August 4, 2023 regarding educational resources for gender-based violence and that the letter also be addressed to Melanie Stewart, Assistant Deputy Minister, Learning and Education.*

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• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

To clarify the Board's **original intent** in writing our August 4th letter, we wish for the Ministry of Education and Child Care to **adopt and fully fund one of the evidence-based GBV programs** such as *The Fourth R (relationships)*, *Safe Dates*, *Shifting Boundaries* or another program **with significant evidence of its effectiveness and that the program, required resources and training be distributed provincially** to ensure student learning is consistent and free from individual or regional biases.

For your reference, we have included our original letter of August 4, 2023 which provides our rationale. For your convenience, a brief summary of that rationale is included below:

- The current curriculum provides age-appropriate grade markers, building a strong foundation for exploration and meaningful discussion around Gender Based Violence for grades K – 12 but **fails to provide educators** with the training and resources needed to support the emotional, pedagogical, and social sensitivity **of the student population most likely to experience –or perpetrate—GBV.**
- GBV is pervasive in our society and perpetuates the following brutalities:
  - Sexual **assault**
  - Domestic **violence**
  - Honour **killings**
  - **Missing and murdered** Indigenous women and girls
  - The École Polytechnique **massacre**
  - **Violent acts** against (real or perceived) men and boys with non-cis-gender identities, behaviours or sexual partners
  - Other gender-related **crimes**
- GBV is **culturally-rooted**, based on rape culture and toxic masculinity which, while difficult to address, are necessary topics for exploration that **require thoughtful, careful navigation by educators.**
- GBV is **complicated and nuanced** and **requires increased emotional and intellectual labour by the instructor.**
- The World Health Organization (WHO) website says GBV is:
  - a major public and clinical **health problem**
  - a **violation** of women's human rights
  - rooted in and perpetuates **gender inequalities**
- GBV disproportionately affects:
  - **women and girls**
  - **women** with disabilities
  - Indigenous **women**
  - racialized **women**
  - **trans and non-binary** people
  - **women** who are homeless or underhoused.

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• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

- Various institutions and organizations have identified the following statistics of **sexual offences**:
  - Sexual offences were **the most reported crimes among girls aged 12–17**
  - Police-reported violence against females in Canada **peaked at age 15**
  - **Women are five (5) times more likely** than men to experience sexual assault.
  - Approximately **4.7 million women** fifteen (15) years of age and older report having experienced sexual assault at least once
  - There is a **crisis of sexualized violence** at post-secondary institutions

**GBV will continue to occur until the roots of gender inequality, abuses of power and harmful norms that currently exist in our society are exposed, discussed and understood.** This journey of understanding begins with our youth.

Teachers cannot –and should not be expected to—provide students with this **“difficult, complicated and nuanced knowledge”** without standardized and effective resources that can support them in facilitating evidence-based GBV programs provincially to ensure student learning is consistent and free from individual or regional biases.

Our Board applauds the MECC for the proactive policies that support students of diverse ethnicities, gender/sexual identities, abilities, and economic status, for the funding and thoughtful programming that ensures the safety and wellbeing of these students, and for the investment in a better future for those groups who have been stigmatized, brutalized and/or marginalized in the past.

Women may not be a minority but they have historically been stigmatized, brutalized and marginalized in this country regardless of—or in addition to—their ethnicity, identity, ability or economic status. Public education is doing good work toward exposing, discussing and dispelling the inequality, abuses of power and harmful norms historically suffered by people of diverse ethnicities, gender/sexual identities, abilities, and economic status. Now it’s time to do so for women.

**We ask that the Ministry initiate an evidence-based, fully funded program – with resources and teacher training for grades 11 – 12, standardized across the province, without delay.**

Doug McPhee (Chair) • Trina Ayling • Bev Bellina • Irene Bischler • Alysha Clarke  
 • Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

Once again we look forward to your thoughtful consideration of –and timely response to–our request for funding of these **vitaly important** resources and training.

Sincerely,



Doug McPhee, Board Chair

Cc\*: Hon. David Eby, Premier, Province of BC  
Kevin Falcon, Leader, BC United Party  
John Rustad, Leader, BC Conservative Party  
Sonia Furstenau, Leader, BC Green Party  
Elenor Sturko, Critic for Education, BC United Party  
Karin Kirkpatrick, Critic for Child and Family Development & Childcare, BC United Party  
Tom Shypitka, MLA Kootenay East  
Carolyn Broady, President, BCSTA  
BCSTA for distribution to member Boards of Education  
Dawn Lang, President, Kootenay Boundary Branch (KBB), for distribution to KBB members  
Clint Johnston, President BC Teachers' Federation  
Laura Ward, President, BCCPAC  
Shelley Balfour & Adrienne Demers, CFTA Co-Chairs, for distribution to staff representatives  
Krista Napl SD5 CUPE President  
Lies Salvador, DPAC Chair  
Aaron Thorn, President, SD5 Administrators' Association  
Chris Walker/Corey Bullock, CBC Radio  
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Jeff Johnson, Wild B104 Radio  
Josiah Spyker/Ryley McCormack, 107.5 Today FM  
Barry Coulter/Trevor Crawley, Cranbrook Daily Townsman  
Ian Cobb, e-know Online News  
Joshua Fischlin, Fernie Free Press  
SD5 Trustees and District Management

Doug McPhee (Chair) • Trina Ayling • Bev Bellina • Irene Bischler • Alysha Clarke  
• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

\*This correspondence is public and transparent. Please feel free to share and/or respond with comment.

Doug McPhee (Chair) • Trina Ayling • Bev Bellina • Irene Bischler • Alysha Clarke  
• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

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August 4, 2023

Ref: 290162

Doug McPhee, Chair  
Board of Education  
School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay)  
Email: [c/o Jane.Nixon@sd5.bc.ca](mailto:c/o.Jane.Nixon@sd5.bc.ca)

Dear Doug McPhee:

Thank you for your letter of March 29, 2023, regarding educational resources for gender-based violence (GBV) education in School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay). Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in responding.

For the 2023/24 school year, the Ministry of Education and Child Care will be providing \$77.6 million in operating grants to School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay), a \$7.1 million increase compared to 2022/23. As part of the District's supplementary funding, the Curriculum and Learning Support Fund continues to be provided for the upcoming school year, which can be leveraged with other operating funding to support the development of gender-based violence educational resources.

School districts are able to use a variety of approaches to meet the needs of their students, such as bringing in outside experts or working with school staff to integrate these topics into existing Grade 11 and 12 subject areas. Strategies that are currently used to provide physical education and health content for Grade 9 and 10 PHE courses could also be expanded to include Grade 11 and Grade 12 students.

The Ministry has also worked with BC teachers to develop the Supporting Student Health guides for elementary and secondary teachers. These guides provide background information and teaching suggestions to help teachers feel more confident and comfortable addressing sensitive health topics with their students. These guides are available on the Ministry's website at:

- [https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/subject/phe/Supporting\\_Student\\_Health\\_Elementary.pdf](https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/subject/phe/Supporting_Student_Health_Elementary.pdf)
- [https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/subject/phe/Supporting\\_Student\\_Health\\_Secondary.pdf](https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/subject/phe/Supporting_Student_Health_Secondary.pdf)

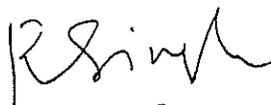
The [erase website](#) was also recently updated to enhance information and resources on gender-based violence, for educators, students and families.

.../2

While education is a powerful tool in generating and creating change, we recognize that gender-based violence remains prevalent in communities throughout BC, and that there is more work to do. Through the Gender Equity Office, the Province has committed to develop an action plan to prevent, address and respond to gender based violence.

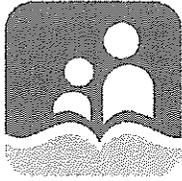
Please connect with Melanie Stewart, Assistant Deputy Minister – Learning and Education Programs, by email at [melanie.j.stewart@gov.bc.ca](mailto:melanie.j.stewart@gov.bc.ca), should you wish to discuss learning supports further. Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Singh', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Rachna Singh  
Minister

pc: Melanie Stewart, Assistant Deputy Minister, Learning and Education Programs



# SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

S O U T H E A S T K O O T E N A Y

March 29, 2023

Hon. Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care  
Room 124 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Singh,

RE: Educational Resources for Gender Based Violence (GBV) Education

At the School District 5 (SD5), Southeast Kootenay public Board Meeting of March 14, 2023, the Board carried the following motion:

*That the Board write a letter requesting funding from the Ministry of Education and Child Care to cover the costs of resources required to educate grade 11 and 12 students on gender-based violence as requested by the Ministry.*

Our Board applauds the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Child Care in developing the *Supporting Student Health Guide* resources for elementary and secondary grade level students to support educators in teaching about sexual health using an age-appropriate and non-discriminatory approach in the classroom.

The Guide provides a thoughtful K – Grade ten (10) overview of “suggested topics” that explore healthy relationships, gender and sexual diversity, sexual and physical development, sexual decision making, contraception and sexually transmitted infections. These resources provide age-appropriate grade markers and this guide provides a strong foundation for exploration and meaningful discussion around Gender Based Violence (GBV) as students move into grades eleven (11) and twelve (12).

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• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

Unfortunately, while it is vital that educators support the emotional, pedagogical, and social sensitivity of students from all sexual, racial and socio-economic backgrounds when exploring GBV topics with students, educators have not been provided with the resources to do so for these senior grades.

GBV-based issues such as sexual assault, domestic violence, GBV against men and boys, historical incidents of GBV (ie: missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, the École Polytechnique massacre, honour killings etc.) and the contributing, culturally-rooted causes of GBV such as rape culture and toxic masculinity, while difficult to address, are necessary topics for exploration that require thoughtful, careful navigation by educators.

*Teaching and Teacher Education, Volume 116, August 2022 (Vanner, Holloway, Almanssori)* describes GBV as “difficult knowledge” that is “complicated and nuanced, constituting an act of bravery and involving increased emotional and intellectual labour”.

The World Health Organization (WHO) website describes GBV as “a major public and clinical health problem and a violation of women’s human rights [that] is rooted in and perpetuates gender inequalities”. GBV disproportionately affects women and girls, women with disabilities, Indigenous women, racialized women, trans and non-binary people, and women who are homeless or underhoused.

In 2017, police-reported violence against females in Canada peaked at age 15 and sexual offences were the most reported crimes among girls aged 12–17 (Conroy, 2018). In 2021, Statistics Canada identified women as being five (5) times more likely than men to experience sexual assault.

In 2022, the Canadian Women's Foundation estimated that approximately **4.7 million women** fifteen (15) years of age and older report having **experienced sexual assault at least once**.

And in February of this year (2023), the *Alliance of BC Students* wrote an open letter to Premier David Eby, calling for the provincial government to “take urgent action to address the **crisis of sexualized violence** at post-secondary institutions.”

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• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

GBV will continue to occur until the roots of gender inequality, abuses of power and harmful norms that currently exist in our society are exposed, discussed and understood. This journey of understanding begins with our youth.

Teachers cannot –and should not be expected to—provide students with this “difficult, complicated and nuanced knowledge” without resources that can support them in facilitating evidence-based GBV programs such as The Fourth R (relationships), Safe Dates, Shifting Boundaries or other programs that show significant evidence of their effectiveness. It is also important that these proven-effective resources be developed/distributed provincially to ensure student learning is consistent and free from individual or regional biases.

We ask that the Ministry fully fund these critically-needed resources and look forward to your thoughtful consideration of –and timely response to—our request for funding of these vitally important resources.

Sincerely,



Doug McPhee, Board Chair

Cc\*: Hon. David Eby, Premier, Province of BC  
Kevin Falcon, Leader, BC Liberal Party  
Sonia Furstenu, Leader, BC Green Party  
Tom Shypitka, MLA Kootenay East BC  
Elenor Sturko, Critic for Education, BC Liberal Party  
Karin Kirkpatrick, Critic for Child and Family Development & Childcare, BC Liberal Party  
Hon. Katrine Conroy, Minister of Finance  
Chris Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Management Division  
Carolyn Broady, President, BCSTA  
BCSTA for distribution to member Boards of Education  
Clint Johnston, President BC Teachers' Federation  
Chris Schultz-Lorentzen, President, BCCPAC  
Shelley Balfour & Adrienne Demers, CFTA Co-Chairs  
SD5 CUPE President  
Doug McPhee (Chair) • Trina Ayling • Bev Bellina • Irene Bischler • Alysha Clarke  
• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

Lies Salvador, DPAC Chair  
Aaron Thorn, President, SD5 Administrators' Association  
Chris Walker/Corey Bullock, CBC Radio  
Dennis Walker, 107.5 Today FM Radio  
Wylie Henerson, Rewind Radio 102.9  
Jeff Johnson, Wild B104 Radio  
Josiah Spyker/Ryley McCormack, 107.5 Today FM  
Barry Coulter/Trevor Crawley, Cranbrook Daily Townsman  
Ian Cobb, e-know Online News  
Joshua Fischlin, Fernie Free Press

\*This correspondence is public and transparent. Please feel free to share and/or respond with comment.

Doug McPhee (Chair) • Trina Ayling • Bev Bellina • Irene Bischler • Alysha Clarke  
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# SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

S O U T H E A S T K O O T E N A Y

October 11, 2023

Hon. Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care  
Room 124 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Carolyn Broady, President  
British Columbia School Trustees' Association  
1580 W Broadway  
Vancouver BC V6J 5K9

Dear Minister Singh and Ms. Broady,

RE: Invitation to Visit School District 5 (SD5) Southeast Kootenay

On July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 School District 5 (SD5), Southeast Kootenay Board of Education sent a letter of invitation to you to visit SD5, in order to highlight some of our District's unique successes and challenges.

As we have yet to receive a response to our invitation, at School District 5 (SD5), Southeast Kootenay public Board Meeting of June 12, 2023, the Board carried the following motion:

*That the Board write a follow-up letter to the letter to Hon. Minister Singh and Carolyn Broady, BCSTA President, of June 19, 2023, inviting them to visit our District.*

We have included a copy of our original letter of invitation, which we hope you will take the time to re-review. Below is a brief recap of our original letter.

School District 5:

- Has the distinction of being both urban and rural.
- Is one of the furthest east from the lower mainland of any district and one of the closest district to the BC/Alberta border.

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• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

- Is resource and recreationally rich, disproportionally contributing *more per capita* to the GDP provincially than other areas of BC.
- Struggle with many of the same *urban* issues as larger districts;
  - Higher housing prices and shortages
  - A large percentage of students learning in portables
  - A growing population of English Language Learners (ELLs)
- Struggle with many of the same issues as other *rural* districts; the
  - Stretching of resources across a large geographic area
  - Growing cost of transportation
  - Difficulty attracting qualified teaching and support staff (especially as we compete with the higher wages offered in Alberta)
  - Challenge to provide equitable dual credit trades opportunities etc. to our rural students as is available in urban districts, and our urban community of Cranbrook
- Is in dire need of replacement of Mount Baker Secondary School (MBSS) which is:
  - 72 years old
  - The largest school in the East and West Kootenay.
  - Used extensively by the community, including use of the attached Key City Theatre (KCT).
  - Integrated with the plumbing, HVAC etc. of the KCT (which provides considerable opportunity to our students).
- The focus of considerable and concerted effort –since 2008—to secure replacement, including (but not limited to):
  - Conducting public consultations
  - Securing partnerships with the City of Cranbrook and Regional District of East Kootenay.
  - Yearly submissions to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (SSCFGS) regarding the need for replacement.
  - Completing fifteen (15) years' worth of studies and audits identifying major deficiencies in the:
    - Structure
    - Fabric
    - Operation
    - Function
    - Code
    - Compliance, and
    - Accessibility of the school.

These compounding inefficiencies are now to the point where *renovation is no longer a viable option*. These inefficiencies are:

Doug McPhee (Chair) • Trina Ayling • Bev Bellina • Irene Bischler • Alysha Clarke  
 • Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

- Costly to the District
- Reduce carbon offset opportunities, and
- Increase safety concerns for our students with each passing year.

In addition to the challenges faced by the ageing facility of MBSS in the urban community of Cranbrook, is the unprecedented growth challenges we face in the rural community of Fernie.

In the past five years Fernie has grown by almost eighteen percent (18%). Prior to a four-room expansion to Fernie Elementary School, *ten (10) portables were in use*. Following the opening of the expansion this September, *ten (10) portables remain in use*. Despite securing property to build a new middle school in Fernie in 2021, our District is still awaiting final Ministry approval for the build.

Given the geographic size and diversity of our District, we would strongly recommend that you plan an overnight stay when you visit SD5.

We look forward to receiving your response to our invitation, and to arranging for your upcoming visit to our District in the very near future.

Sincerely,



Doug McPhee, Board Chair

Cc\*: Hon. David Eby, Premier, Province of BC  
 Kevin Falcon, Leader, BC United Party  
 John Rustad, Leader, BC Conservative Party  
 Sonia Furstenuau, Leader, BC Green Party  
 Elenor Sturko, Critic for Education, BC United Party  
 Karin Kirkpatrick, Critic for Child and Family Development & Childcare, BC United Party  
 Tom Shypitka, MLA Kootenay East  
 Carolyn Broady, President, BCSTA  
 BCSTA for distribution to member Boards of Education  
 Dawn Lang, President, Kootenay Boundary Branch (KBB), for distribution to KBB members  
 Clint Johnston, President BC Teachers' Federation  
 Laura Ward, President, BCCPAC  
 Shelley Balfour & Adrienne Demers, CFTA Co-Chairs, for distribution to staff representatives  
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Ian Cobb, e-know Online News  
Joshua Fischlin, Fernie Free Press  
SD5 Trustees and District Management

\*This correspondence is public and transparent. Please feel free to share and/or respond with comment.

Doug McPhee (Chair) • Trina Ayling • Bev Bellina • Irene Bischler • Alysha Clarke  
• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner



# SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

S O U T H E A S T K O O T E N A Y

June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Hon. Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care  
Room 124 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Carolyn Broady, President  
British Columbia School Trustees' Association  
1580 W Broadway  
Vancouver BC V6J 5K9

Dear Minister Singh and Ms. Broady,

RE: Invitation to Visit Our District

At the School District 5 (SD5), Southeast Kootenay public Board Meeting of June 12, 2023, the Board carried the following motion:

*THAT the Board of Education invite the President of the BCSTA and the Minister of Education to visit Mount Baker Secondary School.*

Our Board wishes to extend an invitation to visit our District in the coming 2023/2024 school year in order to highlight some of our District's unique successes and challenges.

Unlike most districts, which identify as either "urban" or "rural" our district has the distinction of being both urban *and* rural. Our District is also the farthest east of any district from the lower mainland and the closest district to the BC/Alberta border. The Southeast Kootenay is resource and recreationally rich, disproportionately contributing more per capita to the GDP provincially.

We struggle with many of the same urban issues as larger districts such as higher

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• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

housing prices and shortages, too many students learning in portables, and a growing population of English Language Learners (ELLs) as more people immigrate to our area. We also struggle with rural issues such as the growing cost of transportation and the stretching of resources across a large geographic area, difficulty attracting qualified teaching and support staff as we compete with the higher wages available in Alberta, and equity challenges for dual credit opportunities etc.

In the urban community of Cranbrook we are in dire need of replacement of Mount Baker Secondary School (MBSS) which is 72 years old and is the largest school in the East *and* West Kootenay. This school is used extensively by the community, including use of the attached Key City Theatre (KCT). The KCT plumbing, HVAC etc. is integrated with the school and the Theatre provides considerable opportunity to our students.

Our Board has expended considerable and concerted effort since 2008 to secure the replacement of MBSS including (but not limited to) public consultations, facility reports and securing partnerships. We have made yearly submissions to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (SSCFGS).

Studies and audits of the past 20 years identify major deficiencies in structure, fabric, operation, function, code, compliance and accessibility of the school.

These compounding inefficiencies are now to the point where renovation is no longer a viable option. They are costly to the District, reduce carbon offset opportunities and increase safety concerns for our students with each passing year.

In the rural city of Fernie we face unprecedented growth challenges. In the past five years Fernie has grown by almost eighteen percent (18%). While we have secured property to build a new middle school we are still awaiting final Ministry approval for the build.

We are hopeful that you will take the time to visit our District, so that you can better understand that there are legitimately urgent capital replacement and upgrade needs spread equally across the province and that not all districts face *only* urban or *only* rural challenges, requiring more flexibility on the part of

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• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

government if parity among districts is to be achieved.

Given the geographic size and diversity of our District, we would strongly recommend that you plan an overnight stay when you visit SD5. We look forward to touring you around our District to share the amazing educational opportunities our dedicated teachers, support staff and administrators continue to provide for our students, despite the restrictions that limited and inadequate building infrastructure poses to twenty-first century education, the implementation of the province's revised curriculum and embedded principles of Indigenous learning.

We look forward to receiving your response to our invitation, and to arranging for your upcoming visit to our District in the very near future.

Sincerely,

Doug McPhee, Board Chair

Cc\*: Hon. David Eby, Premier, Province of BC  
Kevin Falcon, Leader, BC United Party  
Sonia Furstenu, Leader, BC Green Party  
Elenor Sturko, Critic for Education, BC United Party  
Karin Kirkpatrick, Critic for Child and Family Development & Childcare, BC United Party  
Tom Shypitka, MLA Kootenay East  
Carolyn Broady, President, BCSTA  
BCSTA for distribution to member Boards of Education  
Clint Johnston, President BC Teachers' Federation  
Chris Schultz-Lorentzen, President, BCCPAC  
Shelley Balfour & Adrienne Demers, CFTA Co-Chairs  
Krista Napl SD5 CUPE President  
Lies Salvador, DPAC Chair  
Aaron Thorn, President, SD5 Administrators' Association  
Chris Walker/Corey Bullock, CBC Radio  
Dennis Walker, 107.5 Today FM Radio  
Wylie Henderson, Rewind Radio 102.9  
Jeff Johnson, Wild B104 Radio  
Josiah Spyker/Ryley McCormack, 107.5 Today FM

Doug McPhee (Chair) • Trina Ayling • Bev Bellina • Irene Bischler • Alysha Clarke  
• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

Barry Coulter/Trevor Crawley, Cranbrook Daily Townsman  
Ian Cobb, e-know Online News  
Joshua Fischlin, Fernie Free Press  
SD5 Trustees and District Management

\*This correspondence is public and transparent. Please feel free to share and/or respond with comment.

Doug McPhee (Chair) • Trina Ayling • Bev Bellina • Irene Bischler • Alysha Clarke  
• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

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# SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

## S O U T H E A S T K O O T E N A Y

October 11, 2023

Selina Robinson, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills  
Room 124 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Hon. Minister Robinson,

RE: Neurodiversity Training in Post-Secondary for Teachers, Education Assistants and Early Childhood Educators

On May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, School District 5 (SD5), Southeast Kootenay Board of Education sent the Hon. Premier Eby a letter regarding neurodiversity training for educators, early childhood educators and educational assistants. This letter was forwarded by Hon. Eby to Hon. Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care (MECC).

Hon. Singh sent a response letter to our Board on July 24, 2023 informing us that the MECC does not set the standard for teacher education programs and that enhancements would need to be discussed with each university. She also informed our Board that the Early Childhood Educator Registry (ECCR) assesses and recommends post-secondary early childhood programs in British Columbia.

As Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills we understand that your post-secondary focus is on “building a strong, secure and sustainable economy...ensuring British Columbians have the inclusive, accessible and future-focused post-secondary skills...they will need to succeed”.

While our Board appreciates that much of your mandate relates to ensuring access to post-secondary education, including access for new Canadians in British Columbia and international students, we hope you will also consider the importance of ensuring that *all British Columbians are provided with the tools and opportunities* to contribute to a “strong, secure and sustainable economy that works for everyone”.

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• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

To that end, at the School District 5 (SD5), Southeast Kootenay public Board Meeting of September 12, 2023, the Board carried the following motion:

*That the Board write a letter in response to the Minister of Education and Child Care's letter of July 24, 2023 regarding neurodiversity training for educators, early childhood educators and educational assistants to the Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and copied to the Minister of Education and Child Care.*

While we understand that, unlike the Ministry of Education and Childcare, the Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills, does not mandate the curricular competencies required of universities, we hope that –barring the ability to mandate curriculum—you will consider dialoguing with post-secondary institutions on the merits of embedding neurodiversity training in the curriculum for teachers, education assistants and early childhood educators.

At present, only approximately thirty-three percent (33%) of neurodivergent individuals over the age of fifteen (15) are employed in Canada. Standardized training for educational professionals would redefine how the neurodivergent are included in the classroom and eventually in the community, workplace and society –the ultimate goal of inclusion—enabling them to contribute to a “strong, secure and sustainable economy that works for everyone”.

Enclosed is a copy of the May 31, 2023 letter written by the SD5 Board of Education to the Hon. Premier Eby and the July 24, 2023 response letter received by the Hon. Minister Singh. These letters should provide you with the rationale for the Board's request for neurodiversity training at the post-secondary level and why the MECC is unable to ensure that teachers, education assistants and early childcare providers have the training required to address the needs of neurodivergent students and children in the classroom.

We look forward to your timely response to our request.

Sincerely,



Doug McPhee, Board Chair

Cc\*: Hon. David Eby, Premier, Province of BC  
Kevin Falcon, Leader, BC United Party  
John Rustad, Leader, BC Conservative Party  
Doug McPhee (Chair) • Trina Ayling • Bev Bellina • Irene Bischler • Alysha Clarke  
• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

Sonia Furstenau, Leader, BC Green Party  
Elenor Sturko, Critic for Education, BC United Party  
Karin Kirkpatrick, Critic for Child and Family Development & Childcare, BC  
United Party  
Tom Shypitka, MLA Kootenay East  
Carolyn Broady, President, BCSTA  
BCSTA for distribution to member Boards of Education  
Dawn Lang, President, Kootenay Boundary Branch (KBB), for distribution  
to KBB members  
Clint Johnston, President BC Teachers' Federation  
Laura Ward, President, BCCPAC  
Shelley Balfour & Adrienne Demers, CFTA Co-Chairs, for distribution to  
staff representatives  
Krista Napl SD5 CUPE President  
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Ian Cobb, e-know Online News  
Joshua Fischlin, Fernie Free Press  
SD5 Trustees and District Management

\*This correspondence is public and transparent. Please feel free to share and/or  
respond with comment.

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• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner



July 24, 2023

Ref: 290468

Doug McPhee, Chair  
Board of Education  
School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay)  
**Email: [doug.mcphee@sd5.bc.ca](mailto:doug.mcphee@sd5.bc.ca)**

Dear Doug McPhee:

Your letter of May 31, 2023, addressed to the Honourable David Eby, Premier, regarding neurodiversity training for educators, early childhood educators, and educational assistants, has been sent to me and as Minister of Education and Child Care, I am pleased to respond.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care agrees that schools need to be inclusive environments for students and staff. British Columbia promotes an inclusive education system in which all students are fully participating members of a community of learners. British Columbia educators strive to ensure that all learners are supported to participate in school, develop their individual potential, and acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need for a successful personal future.

As you know the Ministry of Education and Child Care sets the K-12 provincial curriculum standard which outlines what students in BC are expected to be able to know, do, and understand. However, the Ministry does not set the standard for teacher education programs or for the professional learning of teachers or educational assistants. The curriculum of teacher education programs is set by the universities offering teaching certification programs. Teacher education programs do typically include coursework and training in inclusion and topics relating to neurodiversity. However, any further requests or enhancements to the neurodiversity training teachers receive would need to be addressed with each university.

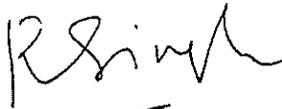
Once teachers are in the field, professional development opportunities are guided by the collective agreements established between the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and school districts, allowing teachers to pursue opportunities of their choosing to support the growth of their professional practice. Locally elected boards of education and districts, like the Southeast Kootenay School Board, have the authority to design and offer professional learning opportunities for all staff in the district, including neurodiversity training. Once again, any requests or enhancements to the neurodiversity training school district staff receive would need to be addressed locally by each school district.

.../2

Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) are certified through the Early Childhood Educator Registry (ECER). The ECER assesses and recommends post-secondary early childhood education programs in British Columbia. The current Standards of Practice and Occupational Competencies are being updated to support inclusion as a pillar as reflected in the ChildCareBC plan. Additionally, professional development opportunities for ECEs include learning about neurodiversity although these courses are not specifically prescribed but selected by each educator. Finally, ECEs are able to take post-basic training which includes neurodiversity education as part of the "Special Needs Educator" certificate.

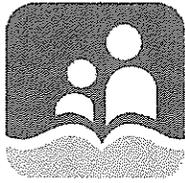
Again, thank you for writing, and for your continued commitment to inclusive learning spaces in British Columbia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachna Singh', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Rachna Singh  
Minister

pc: Honourable David Eby, Premier  
Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills



# SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

S O U T H E A S T K O O T E N A Y

May 31, 2023

Hon. David Eby, Premier, Province of BC  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Hon. David Eby,

RE: Addition of Neuro-Diverse Training to Curriculms

At the School District 5 (SD5), Southeast Kootenay public Board Meeting of May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Board carried the following motion:

*THAT the Board of Education write a letter to the provincial government advocating for the inclusion of neuro-diverse training in the curriculum for teachers, education assistants and early childhood educators.*

On March 30, 2023, the Canadian Federal Government gave assent to *Bill S-203, An Act respecting a federal framework on autism spectrum disorder*. This Bill recognizes that there is a need for autistic persons and their families to receive direct, timely and ongoing access to financial support, treatment and services.

While this Bill does not specifically address K – 12 education, which is the purview of each provincial government, it is significant in that it acknowledges the distinct needs related to persons within the autism spectrum.

More than **95 percent** of persons on the Spectrum have at least one co-occurring condition (ie: physical condition, language disorder, learning difficulty), and more than **50 percent** have at least one of those conditions *–in addition to autism*.

Simply put, some persons on the Spectrum will have conditions that respond

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• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

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best using a medical approach while others will have conditions that respond better to a neurodiverse approach. Many have both.

Medical approaches are often straightforward and easily communicated to the people who employ them. The neurodiverse approach is not.

A neurodiverse approach requires that equal attention be paid to what an individual *can do* rather than disproportionately focusing on what a person struggles with. These variations are intrinsic to an individual's identity and sense of self.

As educators, we need to rethink the language we use (ie: at risk for, deficit in, etc.), stop defaulting to the "autism label" to explain *all* actions or behaviours of an individual and recognize that persons on the Spectrum encounter a range of emotions (just like everyone else), *even if they are unable to express those emotions in a typical way.*

According to a 2019 Scientific American article, *"...in highly social and unpredictable environments some of their [neurodivergent] differences may manifest as disabilities, while in more autism-friendly environments the disabilities can be minimized, allowing other differences to blossom as talents."*

Without the proper education and understanding of those who work with persons on the Spectrum, a neurodiverse student is more easily triggered leading to frustration for the student, classroom disruptions/interrupted learning for other students and, in too many cases, violent outbursts against the professional(s) caring for that student. Neurotypical students who witness such behaviour simply learn to "deal" with it.

To the other extreme, many neurodivergent students learn to "mask" (ie: forcing eye contact, mimicking gestures, minimizing personal interests or "pushing through" intense sensory experiences) their differences, denying their own identity and sense of self, to "fit in". The long-term consequences of masking have been linked to anxiety, depression, loss of identity, exhaustion and suicidal thoughts.

Inclusion of neuro-diverse training in the curriculum for teachers, education assistants and early childhood educators would reduce the incidents of student-to-staff violence in schools and increase the opportunity for all students to thrive. As these students grow into adulthood, they will begin to positively redefine how neurodiverse citizens are included in the community, workplace and society – which is the ultimate goal of inclusion.

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• Nicole Heckendorf • Chris Johns • Sarah Madsen • Wendy Turner

Education and training *must be built into the curriculum* for teachers, education assistants and early childhood educators. For the safety of our staff, the successful learning environment of our students and the future inclusion of neurodiverse citizens in society, our Board urges you to consider the merits of our request and the tremendous advantages such a small change can reap. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Doug McPhee, Board Chair

Cc\*: Hon. Selina Robinson, Minister, Post-Secondary Education & Future Skills  
Hon. Rachna Sing, Minister, Education and Child Care  
Kevin Falcon, Leader, BC United Party  
Sonia Furstenau, Leader, BC Green Party  
Tom Shypitka, MLA Kootenay East BC  
Elenor Sturko, Critic for Education, BC United Party  
Karin Kirkpatrick, Critic for Child and Family Development & Childcare, BC United Party  
Hon. Katrine Conroy, Minister of Finance  
Chris Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Management Division  
Dr. Allyson Jule, Chair, Association of BC Deans of Education  
Violet Jessen, Chair, Early Childhood Educators of BC  
Alicia Kroeker, Chair, Education Assistants of BC Society  
Carolyn Broady, President, BCSTA  
BCSTA for distribution to member Boards of Education  
Clint Johnston, President BC Teachers' Federation  
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\*This correspondence is public and transparent. Please feel free to share and/or respond with comment.

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**Board of Education (School District 47)**

4351 Ontario Avenue Powell River, BC V8A 1V3 Canada  
sd47.bc.ca • Tel 604 485 6271 • Fax 604 485 6435



September 25, 2023

Ms. Izi Loveluck, President  
Powell River and District Teachers' Association

Dear Ms. Loveluck and Executive Members,

Thank you for your letter dated September 5, 2023. Attached is the press release with respect to our name change.

As always, we appreciate the support of the PRDTA on this important issue.

We look forward to working with you in the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dale Lawson".

Ms. Dale Lawson  
Chairperson  
Board of Education  
School District 47

DL/ac



October 13, 2023

Minister of Education and Child Care  
Honorable Rachna Singh  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4  
Email to: ECC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Singh,

On behalf of the Trustees for the Board of Education for School District 47, I am making a formal request to change our District's legal name.

On September 6, 2023, our Board of Education Trustees passed a motion to change our name to qathet School District. As a lead up to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we announced our new naming convention to all interested parties on September 25, 2023 via email and [press release](#).

The process for our name change was initiated in 2022 by a formal letter sent by Hegus John S. Hackett of the Tla'amin Nation asking that the Powell River Board of Education consider a name change. Powell was the first superintendent of Indian Affairs in British Columbia and represents a harmful colonial structure. Shortly after receiving the letter our Board publicly confirmed its support for a name change.

Early in 2023, the Powell River Board of Education asked Tla'amin Nation to engage in a process to select a name which resulted in 'qathet', a gifted word which means "working together", being selected.

Our change is consistent with the regional district's name change in 2017 to "qathet Regional District", which includes five electoral areas and one municipality (City of Powell River) in the traditional territory of the Tla'amin, shíshálh, Klahoose, Nanoose, and K'ómoks First Nation governments.

In partnership with Tla'amin Nation, a naming ceremony will be planned for later in the year to line up with our broader visual identify overhaul.

Please let me know if you require any more information and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dale Lawson".

Dale Lawson  
Board Chair  
Board of Education  
qathet School District

cc: Sarah Loveday, A/Director, Governance and Legislation Branch  
Jill Inget, Director, Online Learning  
Nell Hodges, Senior Legislative Analyst

DL/er

**Board of Education (School District 47)**

*Office of the Superintendent of Schools*

4351 Ontario Avenue, Powell River, BC, V8A 1V3, Canada

sd47.bc.ca | Tel 604 414 2600 | Fax 604 485 6435



Dear SD47 Parents/Families,

**Support for 2SLGBTQIA+ Students, Staff, and Families and SOGI-inclusive Education**

We are writing this letter to reaffirm our support for inclusivity and diversity in School District 47. In the face of recent anti-2SLGBTQIA+ campaigns and resistance activity to SOGI\*-inclusive education, we want to express our unwavering support for 2SLGBTQIA+ students, staff, and families and for SOGI-inclusive education. We remain deeply committed to ensuring a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming environment for all students, staff, and families and upholding human rights and human rights laws.

We know the harm that disinformation causes students and communities, and we will continue to stand against discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity. All students and members of our school community deserve to be welcomed, valued, safe, and respected. There is no room for any type of discrimination in our schools.

SOGI-inclusive education focuses on valuing diversity and respecting differences, as well as human rights and responses to discrimination. Here are some ways we are combatting discrimination and supporting safe schools where all students can thrive, be represented, and succeed.

- All schools are required to have codes of conduct/anti-bullying policies that address the protected grounds of discrimination under the BC Human Rights Code. This includes sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Communication of these codes to all students, staff, and families is required each year. Codes of conduct are displayed in prominent locations.
- All districts use [Safe, Caring, and Orderly Schools](#) strategy and processes to support safe schools.
- School District 47 uses [Administrative Procedure 176 \(Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity\)](#) to help guide the work of SOGI-inclusive education and to define appropriate actions to prevent discrimination and harassment.
- Alongside all 60 school districts in BC, we participate in the BC SOGI Educator Network and use SOGI 123 resources to promote a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.
- Classroom and school activities are designed to provide age-appropriate learning opportunities to help students understand the impacts of discrimination and improve awareness and understanding of the diverse people around them.
- SOGI School Leads and District SOGI Leads are available to help with questions, support, resources, and professional learning.

Through these actions and initiatives, we aim to educate students and our community members about 2SLGBTQIA+ issues, dispel stereotypes, and improve awareness and understanding of the diverse people around them. We recognize the importance of respecting and celebrating the diverse identities and backgrounds of our students, staff, and families and are dedicated to providing a quality education and safe environment for all members of our school community. We remain committed to making our schools and community more inclusive and equitable for all.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jay Yule  
Superintendent of Schools  
School District 47

\* The term “sexual orientation and gender identity” (SOGI) is an inclusive term that encompasses all individuals regardless of where they identify on the sexual orientation, or gender identity spectrums, including identities like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two-Spirit, queer, intersex, cisgender, and asexual. The term SOGI is inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

## ENROLLMENT 1701 DATA - SEPTEMBER 29, 2023 COMPARED TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

Data below is September 29, 2023 1701 Data

SCHOOL	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	AD	GA	Elem Ungr	Secn Ungr	TOTAL Headcount Sept 29, 2023 (1701 data)	TOTAL HEADCOUNT Sept 30/22 (1701 data)	Head count +/-	TOTAL FTE Sept 29, 2023 (1701 data)	TOTAL FTE Sept 30/22 (1701 dta)	FTE count +/-
BROOKS 8-12**									169	158	172	139	191					829	763	66	837.375	752.625	85
EDGEHILL	24	32	29	34	24	27	19	27										216	234	-18	216.000	234.000	-18
HENDERSON	13	7	13	13	19	13	19	25										122	122	0	122.000	122.000	0
JAMES THOMSON	32	25	42	24	34	41	28	29										255	246	9	255.000	246.000	9
KELLY CREEK	20	20	25	22	25	25	20	20										177	178	-1	177.000	178.000	-1
TEXADA	5	9	2	5	5	3	2	1										32	33	-1	32.000	33.000	-1
WESTVIEW	39	51	36	43	47	48	41	58										363	365	-2	363.000	365.000	-2
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>191</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	1994	1941	53	2002.375	1930.625	72
<b>** Brooks - does not include Cadre or International Students (46)</b>																							
PIE PR/ID combined	87	107	101	97	116	115	113	79	76	81	65	71	111		4			1223	1233	-10	1018.3125	1076.313	-58
WLC PROGRAMS									1		3	5	13					22	27	-5	22.0000	27.0000	-5
CONTINUING ED														1				1	3	-2	0.1250	0.5000	0
<b>DISTRICT TOTALS</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	3240	3204	36	3042.813	3034.438	8

\* DL PIE Powell River/Vanc. Isl. and DL Island Discovery - combined in data

**SCHOOL DISTRICT 47 - SUSPENSION, EXCLUSION AND SECLUSION REPORT YEAR TO DATE 2023-2024**

<b>SUSPENSIONS (BY INCIDENT)</b>	<b>SEPT</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>NOV</b>	<b>DEC</b>	<b>JAN</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>APR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUNE</b>	<b>YEAR TO DATE</b>
10 days or less (non-violent)	2										2
10 days or less (violent)											0
11-20 days (non-violent)											0
11-20 days (violent)											0
20 days or more (non-violent)											0
20 days or more (violent)											0
Indefinite (non-violent)											0
Indefinite (violent/threats of violence)											0
Indefinite (first drug offence)											0
Less than 20 days (first drug/alcohol offence)											0
Less than 20 days (second + drug/alcohol offence)											0
20 + days (first drug offence)											0
20 + days (second + drug offence)											0
Indefinite (second + drug/alcohol offence)											0
In-school suspension											0
<b>TOTAL SUSPENSIONS</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>								
<b>EXCLUSIONS</b>											
Exclusions - Elementary											0
Exclusions - Secondary											0
<b>SECLUSIONS</b>											
Seclusions - Elementary											0
Seclusions - Secondary											0

*(Violent incidents include: fighting, physical altercations, threats of bodily harm, etc.  
Verbal is considered violent if threatening)*

**From:** MCF Info MCF:EX <[MCF.Info@gov.bc.ca](mailto:MCF.Info@gov.bc.ca)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 26, 2023 3:01 PM

**To:** Jay Yule <[jay.yule@sd47.bc.ca](mailto:jay.yule@sd47.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** E-mail from the Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

**VIA E-MAIL**

Ref: 281051

Jay Yule  
Superintendent  
47 - Powell River  
E-mail: [jay.yule@sd47.bc.ca](mailto:jay.yule@sd47.bc.ca)

Dear Jay Yule:

Since 1990, October has been declared a time to celebrate and honour the caregivers in our communities across British Columbia who make the unconditional commitment to protect and care for some of our most vulnerable children and youth. I am pleased to announce that this October will mark the 33<sup>rd</sup> Foster Family Month in British Columbia.

As Minister of Children and Family Development, I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to caregivers who have stepped up when they are needed most. By embracing the challenges and rewards of caring for these children, they have made a huge difference in their lives, as well as the communities in which they reside. I have the deepest respect for the hard work that they have done and continue to do as caregivers. In being part of the lives of these young people, they fulfill many roles, including parent, mentor, teacher, friend, and cheerleader. Their efforts and compassion create a safe haven and a home while responding to each unique family situation. I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the warmth and dedication these caregivers and foster families have shown to the children and youth in their care. The support, guidance, and love they have shown will last a lifetime.

To help these children and youth, as part of *Budget 2023*, the Ministry of Children and Family Development increased monthly payments for foster caregivers by as much as 47 percent to ensure that these young people and those who care for them will have the support they need to build safe, stable and happy futures.

Please join me in celebrating October as Foster Family Month to show those in your school district and community how important the role of a foster caregiver is. I encourage you to celebrate foster families for the selfless work they do for the children, youth, and families of British Columbia.

On behalf of the Government of British Columbia, thank you for your continued support in recognizing foster caregivers.

Sincerely,

Mitzi Dean  
Minister

*Sent on behalf of the Minister by:*



**This communication and any accompanying document is confidential and is intended solely for the addressed recipient(s). If you received this e-mail message in error, please delete the e-mail and any attachments and contact the Client Relations Branch, Ministry of Children and Family Development at: [MCF.Info@gov.bc.ca](mailto:MCF.Info@gov.bc.ca).**

**REPORT TO TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD ENDING: September 30, 2023**

	<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>COMMITMENTS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>	<u>AVAIL %</u>
<b>INSTRUCTION</b>						
100 Salaries	3,292,778	0	3,292,778	26,185,096	22,892,318	87
200 Employee Benefits And Allowances	728,054	0	728,054	5,879,241	5,151,187	88
300 Services Purchased	386,544	2,288	388,832	3,683,362	3,294,530	89
500 Supplies And Materials	474,308	0	474,308	2,176,097	1,701,789	78
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<b>Total For INSTRUCTION</b>	<b>4,881,684</b>	<b>2,288</b>	<b>4,883,972</b>	<b>37,923,796</b>	<b>33,039,824</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION</b>						
100 Salaries	362,271	0	362,271	1,556,284	1,194,013	77
200 Employee Benefits And Allowances	61,905	0	61,905	333,813	271,908	81
300 Services Purchased	115,426	0	115,426	372,205	256,779	69
500 Supplies And Materials	5,696	0	5,696	74,179	68,483	92
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<b>Total For DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>545,298</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>545,298</b>	<b>2,336,481</b>	<b>1,791,183</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE</b>						
100 Salaries	386,223	0	386,223	1,827,830	1,441,607	79
200 Employee Benefits And Allowances	74,987	0	74,987	398,560	323,573	81
300 Services Purchased	316,327	0	316,327	880,000	563,673	64
500 Supplies And Materials	164,808	0	164,808	1,168,802	1,003,994	86
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<b>Total For OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>942,345</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>942,345</b>	<b>4,275,192</b>	<b>3,332,847</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>TRANSPORTATION &amp; HOUSING</b>						
100 Salaries	116,292	0	116,292	664,717	548,425	83
200 Employee Benefits And Allowances	28,627	0	28,627	149,424	120,797	81
300 Services Purchased	16,808	0	16,808	54,087	37,279	69
500 Supplies And Materials	88,112	0	88,112	265,000	176,888	67
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<b>Total For TRANSPORTATION &amp; HOUSING</b>	<b>249,839</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>249,839</b>	<b>1,133,228</b>	<b>883,389</b>	<b>78</b>
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6,619,166</b>	<b>2,288</b>	<b>6,621,454</b>	<b>45,668,697</b>	<b>39,047,243</b>	<b>86</b>



**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**12:00 pm, Wednesday, October 11, 2023**  
**School Board Office**

**MINUTES**

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Present: Dale Lawson, Maureen Mason, Jaclyn Miller, Kirsten Van't Schip  
Also in attendance: Jay Yule (Superintendent), Steve Hopkins (Secretary-Treasurer)  
Regrets: Rob Hill, Trustee

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The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m.

**1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Moved: J. Miller**

**Seconded: K. Van't Ship**

**THAT the Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda of October 11, 2023, be adopted as circulated.**

**Status: Carried.**

**2. STANDING COMMITTEES**

2.a) Education & Strategic Planning Committee

i) 2023 / 2024 Operational Plan – Learning & Student Support Services

A. Burt and K. Brach delivered a presentation outlining the development process of the operational plan. They emphasized the importance of data in supporting ongoing improvements and shared a timeline for data release by various entities like MOECC, HELP, and FESL.

The operational plan is designed to be realistic, allowing for progress tracking. It's structured on a year-to-year basis, ensuring that successful strategies are retained, and adjustments are made to address areas of need.

Key highlights from the Learning and Student Support Services Operational Plan presentation included:

- Actions aimed at promoting foundational learning in literacy and numeracy, such as collaborating with intermediate teachers, enhancing comprehension and decoding skills, and piloting elementary numeracy assessments.

- Professional development opportunities for secondary teachers focusing on adolescent and disciplinary literacy.
- Support for a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) approach and continued use of a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework to assist students with unique needs.
- Ongoing initiatives to enhance early learning, community engagement, and support for transitions into kindergarten.
- Initiatives to boost student engagement and voice, including revitalizing elementary student councils, mentoring opportunities from existing secondary student councils, and promoting a culture of collaboration among school staff.
- An emphasis on deep learning through a new curriculum, fostering curiosity and inquiry.
- Support for teachers in implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and promoting the use of the ISTE Standards for students and educators.
- A move towards personalized learning throughout all aspects of education.
- Promotion and expansion of empathy campaigns.
- Planning for food programs in all schools, with a focus on creating a cohesive plan this year.
- The creation of a Sustainability Coordinator position to support environmental stewardship.
- Increased application of the Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies (ADST) curriculum.
- Shifting towards learning commons, maker spaces, and opportunities for cross-collaboration.
- Expanding the Provincial Online Learning School (POLS) by leveraging staff expertise and integrating it into physical school sites.
- A focus on health and wellness through a conference, supporting mental health coordinators, and continuing the implementation of mental health in schools.
- Adoption of compassionate systems leadership, extending to principals, vice-principals, and student leadership teams.
- Efforts to enhance parent engagement and participation at both district and school levels.
- The establishment of a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) committee.
- Conducting empathy interviews with indigenous students transitioning in grades 4, 7, and 12 to learn and share their experiences with a broader audience.
- Renaming the traditional skill builder program to "Guided Indigenized Journey to Excellence (GIJE)" (Ayajuthem for land) and expanding the Indigenous Education Team positions (čepθ) at schools.
- Continued professional learning opportunities for school leaders, including consultant meetings and monthly sessions focused on professional development.
- Ensuring that district objectives are aligned with a continual growth cycle and meeting provincial criteria in the accountability framework, with a particular focus on success rates for indigenous students and students with diversabilities.

Throughout the operational plan, there is a strong emphasis on considering the perspectives and needs of indigenous students in the pursuit of educational excellence.

Operational plans are being developed for all departments and will be presented to the board. The committee agreed to extend the November Committee of the Whole, from noon-4pm to allow an opportunity to review the remaining plans.

ii) Community Engagement Questionnaire – M. Mason (oral)

Trustee Mason suggested further review of open-ended comments obtained from a survey that played a role in shaping the board's strategic plan development.

Following a discussion, the board decided to task staff with sifting out board-related feedback and presenting it for further discussion at the December Committee of the Whole meeting.

2.b) Finance & Facilities Committee

i) N/A

2.c) Policy Committee

i) Policy 1 – Foundational Statements (Proposed Amendments)

The policy was revised to incorporate the modified school district logo and to align with the district's recently introduced operational name, "qathet School District." Further adjustments beyond the proposed changes can be initiated by a board motion during a subsequent board meeting.

ii) Policy 5 – Role of the Board Chair (For Information)

iii) Policy 6 – Role of the Vice Chair (For Information)

Policies 5 and 6 were introduced in accordance with the board's policy review cycle. As part of the board's commitment, a comprehensive review of all policies will be conducted on a four-year schedule. Staff will develop a structured policy review schedule, ensuring policies are presented for board review at the most relevant times. The board also retains the authority to request adjustments to the review cycle or additional policy assessments through the board chair.

iv) Board Evaluation (For Consideration):

- Policy 2, Appendix B – Facilitated Board Self-Evaluation Process
- Policy 2, Appendix C – Facilitated Board Self-Evaluation Sample Questionnaires.
- Readiness for Government Improvement Survey – Ontario Example

A discussion took place regarding the current board evaluation processes. A suggestion was made to transition from the existing self-assessment model to an improvement or growth plan model. Trustees debated the matter and noted that:

- The Ontario model, which emphasizes a supportive plan, was seen as a valuable alternative to the current evaluation-focused policy.
- The current facilitated evaluation process provides information which in turn guides the creation of a "positive path forward", essentially an improvement plan.

Staff agreed to seek relevant examples of board and superintendent processes from organizations like BCSTA and BCSSA. Trustees were invited to share examples of interest as well. A request was made to query the Ontario Education Services Corporation to determine if a similar improvement process had been developed for superintendents.

The discussion concluded with the decision to review additional options at the upcoming December Committee of the Whole meeting, allowing for a more informed

discussion on the potential transition from evaluation to growth-focused models for both the board and superintendent evaluation cycles.

v) Superintendent Evaluation (For Consideration):

- Policy 12, Appendix A – Superintendent Evaluation Process, Criteria, & Timeline
- Policy 12, Appendix B – Superintendent Performance Assessment Guide
- Policy 12, Appendix C – Leadership Practices Interview Guide

As above.

vi) AP 230 – Online Learning

S. Hopkins presented the updated Administrative Procedure, which had been amended to better reflect the district's current processes as part of the Provincial Online Learning Schools (POLS)

vii) AP 360 – Assessment & Reporting

S. Hopkins and A. Burt reported that the amendments to the administrative procedure reflect ministerial changes to reporting, including the use of a proficiency scale for students in grades K to 9. The district has fully transitioned to the new assessment and reporting process due to their involvement in a ministry pilot of the new assessment.

**3. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

3.a) Northern Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Council, September 21, 2023 – S. Hopkins (oral)

S. Hopkins reported on his attendance at a recent Ferry Advisory Council meeting. He noted that a well-attended public open meeting formed most of the discussion. Where there were no items reported that relate directly to the school board, a member of the audience raised awareness of challenges navigating the road to the Blubber Bay ferry terminal when vehicles are parked on the small shoulder while waiting to board the ferry.

**4. OTHER INFORMATION**

4.a) South Coast Branch Survey Summary

The survey results were provided for information. The BCSTA Leadership Series has been set for March 9 and will take place on the lower Sunshine Coast.

4.b) Advocacy Day & Meeting of Board Chairs – J. Miller (oral)

Trustee Miller requested board feedback on items of interest to present at advocacy day. Trustees suggested the ongoing housing crisis and the education assistant shortage as two key items affecting the school district.

4.c) Board Work Plan – For Information

The work plan was provided for review. A request was made to add the trustee and superintendent evaluation cycle to the calendar for January.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 1:41 p.m.

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## FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

### 1. Our Principles

Many Ways of Knowing, Learning and Being  
Diversity, Equity, and Human Dignity  
A Healthy Work and Learning Environment  
Innovation, Curiosity and Creativity  
Openness, Transparency and Accountability

### 2. Our Mission

Learning and Growing, Together

### 3. Our Vision

Creating Brighter Tomorrows for All

### 4. Our Motto

N/A

### 5. Our Values

#### 5.1 Integrity (Honesty, Transparency, Ethics, Care, Leadership)

*We strive to be a living example of what we want to see in the education system through continued self and organizational reflection to ensure the confidence of those we serve.*

#### 5.2 Respect (Commitment, Compassion, Humility, Dignity, Collaboration)

*We honour others, value selflessness, and always strive to act considerately and honestly. We are intentional with our words and actively listen to others. We promote collaboration and power sharing to achieve positive change that benefits the entire learning community.*

#### 5.3 Courage (Perseverance, Vulnerability, Risk-Taking, Strength, Accountability)

*We practice courage by moving beyond our comfort zones, embracing obstacles, and taking responsibility for our errors, allowing us to better ourselves and serve our learning community with excellence.*

#### 5.4 Curiosity (Creativity, Wonder, Exploration, Inquiry, Innovation)

*We cultivate a safe environment to explore new ideas, take risks and challenge the status quo. We understand curiosity as critical for transformative growth, change and innovation.*

#### 5.5 Inclusivity (Equity, Diversity, Fairness, Belonging, Open-mindedness)

*We promote inclusivity by changing mindsets and behaviours and cultivating welcoming and fair environments that actively oppose oppression. We strive to ensure everyone is seen, connected, supported and proud.*

Adopted: May 18, 2022

Reviewed: October 11, 2023

Revised: October 18, 2023

### 5.6 **Good Relations** (Interdependence, Sustainability, Trustworthiness, Reciprocity, Balance)

*We strive for balance in our relationship with ourselves, others and the lands and waters that sustain us. We consider the impact of our actions on past, present, and future generations and strive to leave a positive legacy for them.*

## 6. **Our Priorities**

### **Priority 1**

#### **Cultivating an Ethic of Learning (titwšem taʔow)**

*Ensure early learners and students have the best possible learning experience.*

- Focus on foundational learning in literacy and numeracy.
- Enhance early learning plans, opportunities, and partnerships.
- Foster deep learning so all students can flourish in a rapidly changing world.
- Increase student engagement and voice.
- Expand school food programs to ensure all students have access to nutritious meals and are ready to learn.

### **Priority 2**

#### **Cultivating Curiosity (gagayətən)**

*Transform our learning environments into places of innovation.*

- Continue to support land based and place based learning.
- Strengthen personalized and flexible learning opportunities, including redesigning learning spaces.
- Create a culture of inquiry and innovation.
- Strengthen our competencies around environmental stewardship.

### **Priority 3**

#### **Cultivating Connection (ʔaʔaθəm)**

*Prioritize mental health, community connections, and social-emotional learning.*

- Enhance mental health opportunities and partnerships that support well-being.
- Engage, involve, and support connections within the school and community.
- Continue to create and promote safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environments.
- Promote the development of social-emotional learning skills.

### **Priority 4**

#### **Supporting Self-Determination (təgameθot)**

*Ensure holistic Indigenous student success.*

- Ensure consistent access to enriching, innovative, identity affirming, and culturally relevant opportunities and supports.
- Ensure educational spaces are culturally safe by committing to system wide respect of this place and our shared history by prioritizing Indigenous languages, perspectives, values and cultures.

Adopted: May 18, 2022

Reviewed: October 11, 2023

Revised: October 18, 2023

## Policy 1



- Support students with setting goals for the future (ʔimot ʔ titiwšem, toχnegosəmčxʷom ʔoʔo)

### Priority 5

#### **Cultivating Truth and Reconciliation (tiyhəgən mətəm)**

*Truth and reconciliation.*

- Work to undo the legacies of colonialism through diverse pathways including supporting ʔayʔajuθəm language revitalization initiatives and education.
- Continue our commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action and the United Nation’s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### Priority 6

#### **Cultivating Integrity/Responsibility (tiyhəgən mətəm)**

*Climate change, organizational health and sustainability.*

- Provide climate action education and leadership opportunities grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing.
- Align planning, processes, policies, and procedures to improve the effectiveness of the system.

## 6. The Logo Design and Use



The qathet School District logo shall only be used by external organizations with prior approval of the Superintendent.

## 7. Legal Name

Board of Education of School District No. 47 (Powell River)

## 8. Operational Name

qathet School District

Legal Reference: Sections 65, 75, 85 School Act

Adopted: May 18, 2022  
Reviewed: October 11, 2023  
Revised: October 18, 2023

# qathet School District



## OPERATIONAL PLAN

LEARNING & STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PLAN 2023/2024



# CULTIVATING AN ETHIC OF LEARNING (titlwšem taʔow)

## DISTRICT OBJECTIVES      DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED & ONGOING ACTIONS      PLANNED ACTIONS

*Ensure early learners and students have the best possible learning experience.*

- Focus on foundational learning in literacy and numeracy.

- Continue to focus on early literacy foundational skills.
- Continue to focus on ensuring that Indigenous students, children/youth in care, and students with disabilities/diverse abilities show growth that is consistent with students in the general population by finding ways to eliminate inequities.
- Continue to reinforce and create district and school-based structures to facilitate continuous improvement and regular monitoring of student growth.
- Continue to offer teacher learning opportunities for evidence-based practices that enhance literacy and numeracy for all.
- Deepen understanding of formative assessment in the classroom.
- Support the use of common learning targets to inform instruction and intervention.
- Support Literacy and Numeracy Graduation Assessment activities.
- Continue to support an inclusive delivery model for students with diverse needs using a Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework.

- Collaboratively create a K-7 Literacy Framework and K-7 Numeracy Framework that clearly articulates what components are required to create a rich literacy and numeracy environment for all students.
- Select, pilot, and implement an elementary numeracy assessment that can be utilized across the district to determine where to focus improvement efforts.
- Provide opportunities for grade 8-12 teachers to learn about adolescent literacy and disciplinary literacy.
- Strengthen knowledge, understanding, and application of assessment principles necessary to support and empower students in their learning.
- Support a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) approach for enhancing student success.

### EVIDENCE/METRICS

Foundational Skills Assessment (FSA)  
Graduation Program Literacy & Numeracy Assessments  
Student Learning Survey  
How Are We Doing? Report

DIBELS Assessments  
K-12 Learning Updates/Summary of Learning  
Class Reviews  
Course Completion Rates



# CULTIVATING AN ETHIC OF LEARNING (titlwšem taʔow)

## DISTRICT OBJECTIVES      DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED & ONGOING ACTIONS      PLANNED ACTIONS

*Ensure early learners and students have the best possible learning experience.*

- Enhance early learning plans, opportunities, and partnerships.

- Continue to participate and coordinate the Early Years Planning Table.
- Continue to engage with community partners and families such as the Tla’amin Kindergarten Health Fair and Kindergarten Health Fair to gather feedback and find ways to support early learning in schools and the community.
- Continue to support smooth transitions from home to school.
- Continue to host pre-school transition meetings to ensure supports are in place.
- Continue to provide opportunities to engage ECE’s and Kindergarten teachers with the Early Learning Framework.
- Continue to support early learning programs such as Strong Start, Strong Start Go, Just B4, and Seamless Kindergarten.
- Participate in EDI data collection and use results to inform program development.
- Maintain and enhance relationships with community partners and establish ongoing collaborative projects.
- Ongoing participation in Changing Possibilities for Young Children initiative.

- Deepen engagement with K-3 teachers with the Early Learning Framework.
- Deepen family and community engagement in new and existing early years (birth to 5) programs.
- Provide opportunities for collaboration with ECE’s and Kindergarten teachers.
- Investigate and pilot early learning assessment tools and techniques.
- Enhance the sharing of information from pre-school transition meetings with Kindergarten teachers.

### EVIDENCE/METRICS

- Early Years Developmental Instrument (EDI)
- Kindergarten Assessment
- K-12 Learning Updates/Summary of Learning
- Class Reviews
- Parent Surveys



# CULTIVATING AN ETHIC OF LEARNING (titlwšem taʔow)

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES	DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED & ONGOING ACTIONS	PLANNED ACTIONS
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*Ensure early learners and students have the best possible learning experience.*

- Foster deep learning so all students can flourish in a rapidly changing world.
- Increase student engagement and voice.

- Continue to focus on ensuring that Indigenous students, children/youth in care, and students with disabilities/diverse abilities show growth that is consistent with students in the general population by finding ways to eliminate inequities.
- Provide opportunities for learners to develop core competencies and engage in goal setting.
- Enhance student engagement and skill development through personalized and project-based learning initiatives and specialized programs.
- Support universal design for learning (UDL) to meet the diverse needs, skills, and interests of learners.
- Support staff use of technology to enhance teaching and learning.
- Build support for educators through department heads, coordinators, and student success teachers.
- Continue to offer opportunities for student engagement on district committees.

- Strengthen knowledge, understanding, and application of assessment principles necessary to support and empower students in their learning.
- Promote the use of the ISTE Standards for students, educators, and leaders to create high-impact, sustainable, and equitable learning experiences.
- Facilitate and support opportunities for school-based staff to collaborate on initiatives that enhance student choice, student engagement, and differentiation of instruction.
- Reestablish the district elementary student leadership committee.
- Provide opportunities for student leaders to collaborate.

## EVIDENCE/METRICS

- Completion Rates
- Transition Rates
- Student Learning Survey
- How Are We Doing? Report
- Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)

- Youth Development Instrument (YDI)
- Learning Updates/Summary of Learning
- Self-Reflections on Core Competencies
- Student Goal Setting Artifacts
- Class Reviews

- Listening Campaigns
- Empathy Interviews
- Surveys



# CULTIVATING AN ETHIC OF LEARNING (titlwšem taʔow)

## DISTRICT OBJECTIVES      DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED & ONGOING ACTIONS      PLANNED ACTIONS

*Ensure early learners and students have the best possible learning experience.*

- Expand school food programs to ensure all students have access to nutritious meals and are ready to learn.

- Continue to support the Principal of Early Learning, Child Care, and School Nutrition and the Food Literacy Coordinator.
- Continue to provide resources to ensure access to nutritious food in all schools.
- Continue to support the development and maintenance of school gardens.
- Continue to support teachers in planning for and implementing students' hands on experiences in the garden and kitchen.

- Create a cohesive plan that further supports nutritious food programs in all schools.
- Develop a food security strategy in consultation with community partners.

**EVIDENCE/METRICS**  
Student Learning Survey  
Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)  
Youth Development Instrument (YDI)



# CULTIVATING CURIOSITY (gagayεtən)

## DISTRICT OBJECTIVES      DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED & ONGOING ACTIONS      PLANNED ACTIONS

*Transform our learning environments into places of innovation.*

- Continue to support land based and place based learning.
- Strengthen our competencies around environmental stewardship.

- Continue to support the Outdoor Learning Coordinator.
- Continue to develop and promote quality outdoor learning spaces and learning (e.g. school gardens, outdoor classrooms, CMA, LEAP, Environmental and Sustainability Club) to support and enhance learning in nature.
- Continue to offer ongoing opportunities for learning at the Outdoor Learning Centre.
- Continue to hold end of year outdoor learning camps for all Grade 7 students.
- Continue to support the Food Literacy Coordinator.
- Implement the Seed to Plate food skills program for Gr 4-7 students where students engage in seasonal land-based learning opportunities to understand food production in local context and climates.

- Enhance use of our school gardens to further develop students' understanding of climate action on food production.
- Support collaboration between the Outdoor Learning Coordinator and the Numeracy Coordinator to offer learning opportunities in providing numeracy instruction outdoors.
- Create a Sustainability Coordinator position to support environmental stewardship professional learning opportunities and K-12 curriculum.
- Explore partnerships with Tla'amin on integrating local Indigenous land stewardship practices into food systems.

### EVIDENCE/METRICS

- Student Learning Survey
- Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)
- Surveys



# CULTIVATING CURIOSITY (gagayεtən)

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES	DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED & ONGOING ACTIONS	PLANNED ACTIONS
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*Transform our learning environments into places of innovation.*

- Strengthen personalized and flexible learning opportunities, including redesigning learning spaces.
- Create a culture of inquiry and innovation.

- Continue to focus on ensuring that Indigenous students, children/youth in care, and students with disabilities/diverse abilities show growth that is consistent with students in the general population by finding ways to eliminate inequities.
- Continue to use a collaborative team approach to teaching and learning.
- Build support for educators through department heads and coordinators.
- Continue to provide purposeful career-life development opportunities for all students (e.g. career education curriculum, BAA courses, dual credit programs, Skilled Trades BC programs, career fairs).
- Continue collaboration with PSIs and community partners.
- Support experiential learning opportunities.
- Support exploration of a school library learning commons model.
- Continue to support ADST Innovator.
- Implement ADST Scope and Sequence.

- Increase opportunities that support interdisciplinary inquiry and core competencies.
- Create common resources and procedures for Career Life Connections and Capstone.
- Support the transition to a Provincial Online Learning School (POLS) while continuing to offer other online and blended spaces .
- Transform school library spaces into vibrant library learning commons.
- Increase the application of ADST curriculum.
- Increase student agency throughout the system enabling voice and choice in decision making within a classroom, school, and district.

## EVIDENCE/METRICS

- Completion Rates
- Transition Rates
- Student Learning Survey
- How Are We Doing? Report
- Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)

- Learning Updates/Summary of Learning
- Self-Reflections on Core Competencies
- Student Goal Setting Artifacts
- Class Reviews
- Surveys

Focus Groups



# CULTIVATING CONNECTION (ᑭᐱᑭᐱᑭᐱ)

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES	DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED & ONGOING ACTIONS	PLANNED ACTIONS
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*Prioritize mental health, community connections, and social-emotional learning.*

- Enhance mental health opportunities and partnerships that support well-being.
- Engage, involve, and support connections within the school and community.
- Continue to create and promote safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environments.
- Promote the development of social-emotional learning skills.

- Continue to focus on ensuring that Indigenous students, children/youth in care, and students with disabilities/diverse abilities show growth that is consistent with students in the general population by finding ways to eliminate inequities.
- Continue to offer learning opportunities to students and staff connected to mental health literacy and social emotional learning skills
- Implement the Mental Health in Schools Strategy.
- Continue to support a K-7 Mental Health Coordinator to assist educators with implementation of the mental health curriculum.
- Support PHE educators with curriculum using a Professional Learning Community (PLC) model.
- Strengthen successful transitions (school to school and school to community) (district wide events like the Grade 7 Health and Wellness Conference, tours, work experience and other experiential learning, etc.).
- Offer Compassionate Systems Leadership training to Principals/Vice-Principals.
- Continue to participate in the BC SOGI Educator Network

- Support the K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan
- Establish a Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (JEDI) committee.
- Implement the Elementary Mental Health Literacy Resource and Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide.
- Reestablish the district elementary student leadership group and provide opportunities for them to connect with secondary school student leaders.
- Expand the Compassionate Systems Leadership framework training to other staff and students.
- Enhance mentorship opportunities for educators.
- Create opportunities for greater parent involvement in the learning process.
- Support the Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) Team implementation.
- Support establishment of a community Foundry.

## EVIDENCE/METRICS

- Student Learning Survey
- Early Years Developmental Instrument (EDI)
- Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)
- Youth Development Instrument (YDI)
- How Are We Doing? Report

- Student and Staff Surveys
- Listening Campaigns
- Empathy Interviews



# CULTIVATING CONNECTION (ጥላጥፅ)

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES	DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED & ONGOING ACTIONS	PLANNED ACTIONS
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*Prioritize mental health, community connections, and social-emotional learning.*

- Enhance mental health opportunities and partnerships that support well-being.
- Engage, involve, and support connections within the school and community.
- Continue to create and promote safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environments.
- Promote the development of social-emotional learning skills.

...continued

- Continue to support opportunities that promote staff wellness (e.g. Staff Wellness Committee initiatives, Homewood Health, LifeSpeak).
- Implement Safe Schools and erase strategies (e.g. Codes of Conduct, online reporting tool, training modules, nonviolent crisis intervention training).
- Continue strengthening ongoing community relationships (e.g. Tla’amin, MCFD, CYMH, Youth and Family, VCH).

...continued

- Create and share a year-long SOGI inclusive professional learning BINGO activity.
- Provide intersex-inclusive progress pride flags for each school and provide student-led SOGI-inclusive learning and activities during flag-installation ceremonies.

## EVIDENCE/METRICS

- Student Learning Survey
- Early Years Developmental Instrument (EDI)
- Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)
- Youth Development Instrument (YDI)
- How Are We Doing? Report

- Student and Staff Surveys
- Listening Campaigns
- Empathy Interviews



# SUPPORTING SELF DETERMINATION (†əgameθot)

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES	DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED & ONGOING ACTIONS	PLANNED ACTIONS
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*Ensure holistic Indigenous student success.*

- Ensure consistent access to enriching, innovative, identity affirming, and culturally relevant opportunities and supports.
- Ensure educational spaces are culturally safe by committing to system wide respect of this place and our shared history by prioritizing Indigenous languages, perspectives, values and cultures.
- Support students with setting goals for the future (ʔimot θ titiwšem, toxnegosəmxʷom θoθo).

- Implement †aʔamin (Tla’amin) Education Agreement (TEA).
- Increased focus on Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, and worldviews.
- Continue to review school and district data focused on Indigenous students.
- Strengthen successful transitions for Indigenous students (home to school, school to school, and school to community).
- Support inclusive and anti-racist education and practices.
- Support a competency based inclusive support model and competency based IEP process.
- Continue to provide professional development opportunities for staff that reinforce and model learning that is culturally responsive and embraces the First Peoples Principles of Learning (e.g. ʔayʔajuθəm language lessons, cultural humility training).

- Support the Guided Indigenous Journey to Excellence (GIJE) program in a new semester.
- Review school based assessments using an equity lens.
- Reinforce school based structures to facilitate regular monitoring of student growth.
- Begin a district appreciative inquiry/street data project focusing on the school experiences of Indigenous learners.
- Create a district wide framework to support the successful transition of Indigenous learners between schools.
- Establish regular meetings with school principals to examine the inequities that exist within the school system and find ways to support Indigenous students.

## EVIDENCE/METRICS

- Completion Rates
- Transition Rates
- Student Learning Survey
- How Are We Doing? Report
- Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)

- Youth Development Instrument (YDI)
- Learning Updates/Summary of Learning
- Self-Reflections on Core Competencies
- Student Goal Setting Artifacts
- Class Reviews

- Listening Campaigns
- Empathy Interviews
- Surveys



# CULTIVATING TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES	DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED & ONGOING ACTIONS	PLANNED ACTIONS
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- Honour Truth and Reconciliation.*
- Work to undo the legacies of colonialism through diverse pathways including supporting ʔayʔajuθəm language revitalization initiatives and education.
  - Continue our commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action and the United Nation’s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- Increase initiatives tied to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action (Four Seasons of Indigenous Learning, Blanket Exercise, Truth and Reconciliation Week, Indigenous-focused courses, Equity in Action Project, etc.).
- Raise awareness and understanding of Standard 9 of the BC Teacher Council Professional Standards.
- Create safe and welcoming learning environments for Indigenous learners through regular language, history, and culture lessons provided by the Indigenous Education Team.

- Pilot an afternoon ʔayʔajuθəm language Kindergarten program called qaymıx<sup>w</sup>qenəmšt qay-mixw qeh-numsht (we are all speaking our language) at Tla’amin.
- Support the expansion of Indigenous Education Team positions (čepθ [auntie or uncle] positions, Indigenous Student Success Teachers)
- Support a planned school district name change to qathet with education resources

## EVIDENCE/METRICS

- Completion Rates
- Transition Rates
- Student Learning Survey
- How Are We Doing? Report

Learning Updates/Summary of Learning Surveys



# CULTIVATING INTEGRITY/RESPONSIBILITY (tiyhəgən mətəm)

## DISTRICT OBJECTIVES      DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED & ONGOING ACTIONS      PLANNED ACTIONS

- Prioritize climate change, organizational health and sustainability.*
- Provide climate action education and leadership opportunities grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing.
  - Align planning, processes, policies, and procedures to improve the effectiveness of the system.

- Continue to support the Outdoor Learning Coordinator in encouraging outdoor learning that is grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing
- Continue to provide professional development opportunities for staff that reinforce and model learning that is culturally responsive and embraces First Peoples Principles of Learning
- Implement strategic planning reporting and accountability measures.
- Align the review and evaluation of district and school data with the continuous improvement cycle.
- Support the Professional Growth Plan, School Growth Plan, and Operational Plan processes.

- Support a collaboration between the Outdoor Learning Coordinator and the Indigenous Success Teacher to create collaborative learning sessions that support outdoor learning opportunities embedded in Indigenous ways of knowing.
- Create a Sustainability Coordinator position to support sustainability and climate action professional learning opportunities and K-12 curriculum.
- Support the implementation of the K-12 Student Reporting Policy.
- Support the implementation of the *Accountability and Quality Assurance (AQA) Framework* for online schools.
- Provide monthly professional learning sessions for Principals/Vice Principals on topics related to continuous improvement.
- Create an Accessibility Committee and implement an Accessibility Plan in alignment with the Accessible BC Act.
- Develop tools and resources to support departmental Operational Plans.

### EVIDENCE/METRICS

- FESL Report
- Student Learning Survey
- Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)
- School Growth Plan Reports

