

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING LOCAL EDUCATION AGREEMENTS

The following Guiding Principles apply to:

- the development or reform of legislation and policy to support Local Education Agreements; and
- the negotiation and implementation of effective Local Education Agreements, including the Provincial LEA where applicable, between First Nations and boards of education or BC Independent Schools.

First Nations' Central Role in First Nations Education

- a) Indigenous families and communities have the right to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, training, education and well-being of their children, consistent with the rights of the child, and Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
- b) First Nations in British Columbia have control of, and decision-making responsibility for, First Nations education.
- c) First Nations have a central role in the education of their students, regardless of where they attend school.

First Nation Students Access to Quality Education

- d) First Nation Students, at all levels of education, must have access to educational opportunities that:
 - I. ensure that they are confident in their self-identity, their families, their communities and traditional values, languages and cultures;
 - II. give them the skills they need to thrive in contemporary society, including 21st century technological skills; and
 - III. prepare them to access any opportunities they choose for higher learning, employment and life choices.

Reconciliation & Collaboration in First Nation Education

- e) First Nations education in British Columbia is highly complex, engaging federal, provincial and First Nation authorities, roles and responsibilities and, therefore, requiring collaboration and cooperation to ensure that all First Nation Students are supported to achieve successful education outcomes.

- f) The gap in educational outcomes between First Nation Students and non-First Nation students is a persisting legacy of colonialism, and concerted efforts and proactive measures are required to eliminate this gap and contribute to reconciliation in education.
- g) The Parties have a shared interest and priority in supporting excellence in First Nations education, including supporting First Nation Students to fulfil their educational potential by having access to and receiving quality education that is respectful and reflective of their unique culture and history.
- h) Strong, effective and inclusive educational systems provide a fundamental opportunity for building relationships and advancing reconciliation between the Crown and First Nations, as expressed in the TRC's Calls to Action and the UN Declaration.
- i) Quality First Nations education includes standards, programs, services, school supports and investments that provide appropriate tools and resources aimed at achieving successful First Nation Student outcomes and achievements, while addressing their unique needs.
- j) Curriculum, materials and resources will meaningfully reflect the First Nations' culture, values, language and traditions, as approved and determined by the First Nation or its designate.
- k) LEAs are an important mechanism to facilitate relationship-building, from negotiation through to ongoing implementation.
- l) The standards set by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* apply to First Nations education.
- m) The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action set out a framework for reconciliation, including with regard to First Nations education, that must inform the relationships and collaboration between First Nations, the Province and boards of education.

Parental Choice

- n) Parents have the right to decide where their children will be enrolled to receive the benefit of an education program.

First Nation Student Safety

- o) First Nation Students have a right to feel safe at school, including safety from racism (students and staff), indifference, bias, marginalization, bullying and stereotyping.

Shared Accountability and Data-Sharing

- p) LEAs are more than a mere financial transaction and serve as a core shared accountability mechanism for both First Nations and boards of education regarding First Nations education in the BC Public Schools.
- q) Timely and relevant data is required to inform decision-making to support First Nation Students.