FNESC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Reconciliation through Education

December 3-5, 2026 I Vancouver, BC

PROGRAM & WORKSHOP GUIDE

Updated November 19, 2026

About the Conference

The annual FNESC Education Conference is focused on advancing quality First Nations education in British Columbia.

This year's conference theme, ***Reconciliation through Education***, recognizes education as a powerful tool for advancing reconciliation. Transformative changes in educational policies, practices, and learning environments are key to advancing reconciliation in BC. The conference will explore effective approaches that center First Nations learners and create respectful and inclusive education systems.

Event News

First Nations Education Steering Committee

https://www.fnesc.ca/conference/

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Highlights



Keynote Address

Jessica Wood

Si Sityaawks (Woman Who Creates Change)

Si Sityaawks (Jessica Wood) is from the Gitxsan and Tsimshian First Nations, with extended roots among the Tahltan and Nisga'a Nations. The first Indigenous person to serve as a Deputy Minister in British Columbia, she led the development of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and subsequently established and led the Declaration Act Secretariat. Her work has focused on advancing Indigenous rights, transforming public institutions, and translating commitments to reconciliation into meaningful action. A lifelong advocate for human rights and systemic change, Jessica brings a powerful perspective on leadership, accountability, and creating a future grounded in Indigenous self-determination.

Schedule (subject to change)



Thursday, December 3rd

Opening Social Evening and Benefit Auction

After checking in for the conference, join us for an engaging evening of entertainment, connection, and lively bidding.

Proceeds from the Toonie Auction and Silent Auction go to the Seventh Generation Arts Promotion Initiative. From hotel vouchers to First Nation artwork and more, there is something for everyone.

Come ready to bid on items to support BC First Nations students to explore and develop their artistic abilities.

Light refreshments, coffee and tea will be served. Watch for more news about our performances!

Program

6:00 pm	Conference Registration (available until 8:00 pm)
6:00 pm	Ballroom and Auctions Open
7:00 pm	Social Evening with Performances and Benefit Auction
9:00 pm	Closing

Friday, December 4

7:30 am Registration
8:00 am Breakfast
9:00 am Welcome to the Territory
9:10 am Opening Remarks
9:35 am Keynote Address, Jessica Wood, Si Sityaawks (Woman Who Creates Change)
10:30 am Nutrition Break
10:45 am Workshop Session 1

1a Łi'webidu - Small Cedar Bark Mat (weaving)
1b Land-Based Cultural Skills and Learning Outcomes
1c A School District and Community Collaboration
1d Indigenizing Mathematics with Tla'amin Nation
1e Bringing Learning to Life: Relational Approaches to the Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement
1f Together We Are Kind: Resources for the Classroom
1g Łaxwe Yasans Yakandasi' - The Strength of our Voices: Singing and Song Traditions in the Classroom
1h BC First Nations Tripartite Post-Secondary Education Model
1i Attendance Counts! Tools for Parents, Schools, and Communities
1j Looking at Alternate Education, the Adult Graduation Diploma Program, and the School Completion Certificate Program
1k Q'ushin'tul Journey Alongside our Elders from Grief to Medicine
1l Sagaytgawdi: Grounding Classroom Assessment in Indigenous Knowledges for Equity and Well-Being
1m Strengthening Community Connections for First Nation Learners

12:00 pm Lunch
1:15 pm Workshop Session 2

2a Łi'webidu - Small Cedar Bark Mat (weaving)
2b Land-Based Cultural Skills and Learning Outcomes
2c A School District and Community Collaboration
2d Indigenizing Mathematics with Tla'amin Nation
2e Bringing Learning to Life: Relational Approaches to the Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement
2f Together We Are Kind: Resources for the Classroom
2g Łaxwe Yasans Yakandasi' - The Strength of our Voices: Singing and Song Traditions in the Classroom
2h A Strategy for First Nations Teacher Recruitment and Retention
2i Attendance Counts! Tools for Parents, Schools, and Communities
2j Reconciliation Through Education with your Indigenous Education Council
2k Advancing Education for First Nations Children and Youth in Care
2l First Nations Perspectives on Climate Change Teachers' Handbooks
2m Sagaytgawdi: Grounding Classroom Assessment in Indigenous Knowledges for Equity and Well-Being

2:30 pm Nutrition Break
2:45 pm Workshop Session 3

3a Łi'webidu - Small Cedar Bark Mat (weaving)
3b Land-Based Cultural Skills and Learning Outcomes
3c A School District and Community Collaboration
3d Indigenizing Mathematics with Tla'amin Nation
3e Bringing Learning to Life: Relational Approaches to the Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement
3f Łaxwe Yasans Yakandasi' - The Strength of our Voices: Singing and Song Traditions in the Classroom
3g A Strategy for First Nations Teacher Recruitment and Retention

3h Promoting Parent and Family Engagement
3i Reconciliation Through Education with your Indigenous Education Council
3j Advancing Education for First Nations Children and Youth in Care
3k Strengthening Community Connections for First Nation Learners
3l First Nations Perspectives on Climate Change Teachers' Handbooks

4:00 pm End of the Day

Dec. 4, 4:30 to 6:00 pm UBC Event: NITEP Alumni and Friends Reception (Cypress Room)

Saturday, December 5

8:00 am Breakfast
9:00 am Opening Remarks
9:20 am Reconciliation Through Education (Panel)
10:30 am Nutrition Break
10:45 am Workshop Session 4

4a Reframing Math Learning Through Cross Curricular Play: A Celebration of Indigenous Math Knowledge
4b On the Land Learning: Teaching Land Based Learning in Public and Immersion School Settings
4c Three Years Later: Navigating the Design and Delivery of Téméxw te ì - The Land of this Place, an Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement Course
4d Good Walking, Good Talking: The First Nation Provincial Teacher Mentorship Pathway
4e Building Better Opportunities Through Skilled Trades
4f Exploring First Nations Language Fluency Degrees
4g Nt̓ákmen - From Vision to Action: Building Land-Based Learning Through Partnership
4h Learning Language Through Song and Games
4i Music and Story as a Pathway to Reconciliation: Bringing Steven Point's BC Song to Life
4j Science First Peoples Teacher Resource Guides (Gr. 5-9 and Secondary)
4k Effective Implementation of Indigenous Education Councils
4l Reviving the Story – Oral Tradition, Language Revitalization and Reconciliation Through Education

12:00 pm Lunch
1:15 pm Workshop Session 5

5a Reframing Math Learning Through Cross Curricular Play: A Celebration of Indigenous Math Knowledge
5b On the Land Learning: Teaching Land Based Learning in Public and Immersion School Settings
5c Three Years Later: Navigating the Design and Delivery of Téméxw te ì - The Land of this Place, an Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement Course
5d Good Walking, Good Talking: The First Nation Provincial Teacher Mentorship Pathway
5e Building Better Opportunities Through Skilled Trades
5f Exploring First Nations Language Fluency Degrees
5g Nt̓ákmen - From Vision to Action: Building Land-Based Learning Through Partnership
5h Learning Language Through Song and Games
5i Music and Story as a Pathway to Reconciliation: Bringing Steven Point's BC Song to Life
5j BC First Peoples 12 and BC First Nations Land, Title and Governance Teacher Resource Guides
5k Effective Implementation of Indigenous Education Councils
5l Reviving the Story – Oral Tradition, Language Revitalization and Reconciliation Through Education

2:30 pm Reflections and Door Prizes
3:00 pm End of the Day

Venue & Accommodation

The Westin Bayshore Hotel, 1601 Bayshore Drive, Vancouver

Parking

Parking at The Westin Bayshore is available at 1620 Bayshore Drive. Parking instructions will be sent to registrants prior to the event.

Guests staying at The Westin Bayshore can access a discounted parking rate of $35.50 per day for 24-hour self-parking.

For those attending the conference but with accommodation elsewhere, there is a discounted self-parking rate of $27.50 per day from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Meals

Light finger foods and refreshments will be served on the evening of December 3rd at the opening night social and benefit auction.

Breakfast, lunch and nutrition breaks will be provided on December 4th and 5th.

Sharing Table

Do you have an amazing resource that you want to let others know about?

The Sharing Table is a space for displaying information about learning resources, professional development opportunities, and other initiatives relating to First Nations education. When you arrive at the conference, drop off your brochures/resources at the information and directions desk to be put out on display. FNESC reserves the right to choose which items are displayed.

Benefit Auction

The December 3rd opening night of the conference is a social event and benefit auction to support the Seventh Generation Arts Promotion Initiative.

The toonie auction will take place during the December 3rd evening event while the silent auction will begin Thursday evening and run until Friday.

The benefit auction relies on the generous contributions of participants, First Nations, partners, and exhibitors.

If you will be contributing an item for the auction, please contact us at conference@fnesc.ca and we will plan to connect with you. All contributions are greatly appreciated.

Health

Please stay home if you are feeling unwell. Only registered participants are eligible to attend.

Photography & Recording

This is a public event at which photography and videorecording will take place. The images and recordings will be used by FNESC for promotional purposes. In case of questions, please contact conference@fnesc.ca.

Audio and video recording, AI transcription, and use of other AI tools by participants to record at this event is not permitted.

Questions?

Please contact us at conference@fnesc.ca.

Workshop Descriptions (alphabetical)

Advancing Education for First Nations Children and Youth in Care (2k 3j)
Brad Baker, Senior Advisor, Indigenous Relations & Superintendent, Indigenous Education, Ministry of Education and Child Care (ECC)
Jeremy Y'in Neduklhchulh Williams, Assistant Deputy Minister and Indigenous Child Welfare Director, Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)
Rebecca Fontaine, Director, Policy & Programs, Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS)
Deborah Jeffrey, Executive Director, FNESC

First Nations children and youth in BC are over-represented in the provincial care system, including those under the care of the MCFD Director, in the care of kin, and on a Youth Agreement. The 2020 First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol commits the ECC, PSFS, and MCFD, along with the First Nations Leadership Council and FNESC, to improving educational outcomes for First Nations children and youth currently and formerly in care. This workshop will provide data, context, and information about funding and public data reporting for the K-12 and post-secondary education systems, as well as upcoming FNESC priorities for 2027.

Attendance Counts! Tools for Parents, Schools, and Communities (1i 2i)
Karen Linkert, Director, Instructional Services, FNESC
Barb Kavanagh, FNESC Consultant

This workshop will focus on the critical topic of student attendance. It will review why attendance is such an important issue, some of the reasons why students might not always attend school, and how school staff, families and communities can work together to help all First Nations students achieve success by being in school as much as possible. The workshop will share information and materials that have been developed by FNESC, which include research-based strategies that can be used to encourage students to attend school regularly.

BC First Peoples 12 and BC First Nations Land, Title and Governance Teacher Resource Guides (5j)
Jo Chrona (Ni' K'am Gyoos 'Nexł) Speaker, Author, Consultant

This workshop provides educators with the opportunity to explore FNESC/FNSA's *BC First Peoples 12 Teacher Resource Guide* which supports the teaching of BC First Peoples 12 and other courses at the secondary level. The workshop also includes an examination of the *BC First Nations Land, Title and Governance Teacher Resource Guide*, which was designed to support teachers from Grades 2-12 in helping students to develop an understanding of traditional and contemporary forms of First Nations governance in BC. Both resource guides include introductory material and thematic units that teachers can use to help students understand both historical and contemporary relationships between First Nations and Canada (with a specific focus on the BC context). Participants will receive copies of the guides, explore the units, discuss implementation of the lessons, and connect with other educators.

BC First Nations Tripartite Post-Secondary Education Model (1h)
Eliana Sinicropi, Manager, Post-Secondary Education Policy, FNESC

Since 2018, FNESC has been working under the direction of First Nations and First Nations leadership to advance the BC First Nations Tripartite Post-Secondary Education Model (the BC PSE Model) with the goal of improving education outcomes and experiences for First Nations learners in the post-secondary system. This workshop will explore specific initiatives under each of the BC PSE Model's four pillars: 1. First Nations Learners; 2. First Nations-Mandated Post-Secondary Institutes; 3. Community-Based Program Delivery; and 4. Respectful and Responsive Public Post-Secondary System.

Bringing Learning to Life: Relational Approaches to the Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement (1e 2e 3e)
Diamond Point, Director of Indigenous Relations and Initiatives, West Point Grey Academy
Jenise Boland, Global Studies Coordinator, West Point Grey Academy
Sara Sjerven, English Teacher/Coordinator of Professional Development, West Point Grey Academy

The Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement has created an important opportunity for BC schools to not only consider what students learn about Indigenous peoples, but also how that learning is approached and carried out within the classroom and beyond. Drawing from teaching Contemporary Indigenous Studies 12, BC First Peoples 12, and English First Peoples 10, the session explores how the graduation requirement can move beyond meeting a mandated requirement and instead create opportunities for deeper and meaningful learning grounded in relationship and responsibility. Participants will see examples of lesson and unit design, student learning, classroom resources, and experiential learning opportunities from across the three courses.

Building Better Opportunities Through Skilled Trades (4e 5e)
Steve Beier, Principal, Lalme' Iwesawtexw (Seabird Island Community School)
Penawan Elliott, Instructor, W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Secondary School
Keenan Johnston, Coordinator, Indigenous Programs, SkilledTradesBC

Skilled trades is a rewarding career path and there are supports and resources available to bring trades training into First Nations schools and communities. The session shares the impacts of these programs, how to start a program, and how to keep it going. This workshop will consist of a presentation and panel discussion, followed by a quiz for the audience. The presentation will showcase Trade Samplers at school districts and First Nations schools. Participants will learn about the impacts of skilled trades training for youth and how to develop programs with support and collaboration from SkilledTradesBC. Different funding supports and resources are available to develop programs in school and support youth interested in skilled trades from interest to certification.

Effective Implementation of Indigenous Education Councils (4k 5k)
Brad Baker, Senior Advisor, Indigenous Relations and Superintendent, Indigenous Education, Ministry of Education and Child Care
Deborah Jeffrey, Executive Director, FNESC

The Ministry of Education and Child Care and FNESC co-developed legislative amendments to the *School Act*, a Ministerial Order, and an Indigenous Education Council (IEC) Policy. IECs are required in all 60 public school districts across BC. In this workshop, FNESC and the Ministry will discuss effective implementation of IECs to support improved outcomes and attendance for First Nations students in BC public schools, in alignment with the *School Act* Amendments, IEC Ministerial Order, and IEC Policy. The workshop will provide an overview of the IEC Capacity Funding Interim Policy co-developed by FNESC and the Ministry and will highlight key topics in K-12 public education that can be raised at IEC tables.

Exploring First Nations Language Fluency Degrees (4f 5f)
sumaxatkʷ *Tracey Kim Bonneau, Executive Manager, Arts, Culture & Adult Higher Learning, En'owkin Centre and Chair,IAHLA*
Shanney Nuyens, Manager, Strategies and Indigenous Initiatives, UBC Okanagan
Helen Copeland, Community Liaison and Instructional Coordinator, Interior Salishan Studies Centre, St'at'imc Language Fluency, UBC Okanagan

First Nations in BC are working in partnership with public post-secondary institutions to develop and deliver full degrees focused on developing fluency in their languages - with dozens of fluent graduates already working in their communities across a wide range of sectors. Hear directly from the language experts carrying out this important work and learn about the broader fluency degree framework being advanced by FNESC and the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association.

First Nations Perspectives on Climate Change Teachers' Handbooks (2l 3l)
Harmony Bjarnason, Climate and Environment Policy Analyst, First Nations Summit
David Zandvliet, Workshop Facilitator

The First Nations Leadership Council is working with a First Nations educator and education resource specialist to develop a secondary school level handbooks on *First Nations Perspectives on Climate Change*. The handbook is intended to fill a resource gap with respect to climate change education resources from a First Nations lens and support Professional Standard 9 of the Professional Standards for BC Educators. It is designed for use in First Nations schools, public schools, and every school where First Nations perspectives support climate learning. This workshop will share a selection of draft content and lesson plans from the handbooks, test content with educators through interactive activities, solicit teachers input for additional resources or curricula linkages, and ask teachers to reflect on and respond to the content. Post-conference, the findings from the workshop will be used to revise and improve the handbooks. The handbooks will connect First Nations perspectives on climate change to the BC curriculum and will provide a ready-to-use, short, quick reference resource for teachers.

Good Walking, Good Talking: The First Nation Provincial Teacher Mentorship Pathway (4d 5d)
Jessica Knott, Director of Indigenous Programs and Engagement, University of British Columbia (UBC)
Irene Issac, First Nations Branch Coordinator, UBC
Lori Huston, Co-Director of Strategic Development, Innovation and Partnerships, UBC

In response to a growing need for First Nations teachers, FNESC, IAHLA, ECC, and PSFS established a Working Group to identify strategies to enhance the recruitment and retention of First Nation teachers across BC. One initiative emerging from this collaboration is the First Nation Teacher Mentorship Program offered through the University of British Columbia. This interactive workshop will introduce participants to the program and highlight the collaborative work that has shaped its development. Participants will explore the program's online learning resources, learn about mentorship pods connecting First Nation teachers across the province, and consider opportunities for collaboration within and across school districts. Participants will explore what meaningful mentorship looks like for First Nation teachers and work together to develop a shared understanding of culturally grounded mentorship. Participants will also have opportunities to navigate the program's resources and consider how they can be used to put First Nation teacher mentorship into practice within local contexts.

Indigenizing Mathematics with Tla'amin Nation (1d 2d 3d)
Sheena Tan, Limited Term Lecturer, Simon Fraser University
ošil Betty Wilson, Elder, Tla'amin Nation

In this session, the presenters will share resources developed in partnership with Tla'amin Nation, focusing on their food harvesting practices that include foods provided by both the sea and land. The session seeks to better attend to the emergence of diverse mathematical ideas and relationships that are more grounded to the context and the environment. In the development of these resources, First Peoples Principles of Learning were incorporated and students were engaged in the doing and learning of Tla'amin knowledge and mathematics. These resources also integrate Tla'amin Nation language ʔayʔajuθəm, in recognition of its importance to the Tla'amin Nation's culture and ways of being. Participants will experience parts of these resources, including a picture book, hands-on basket weaving activities and exploration of stone fish traps. The presenters will also share their learning in relation to the innovative approaches in developing these resources and strategies for their implementation in schools along with possible challenges.

Land-Based Cultural Skills and Learning Outcomes (1b 2b 3b)
Crystal Johnson (Adams), Tahltan Culture and Language Coordinator
Curtis Rattray, Indigenous Curriculum Advisor, SD 87 (Stikine)

This workshop will describe how SD 87 *(Stikine)* is changing educational practices by shifting learning environments to the land. The presenters will describe how the land-based teaching of cultural and bush skills is used to achieve learning outcomes and enhance student grades. The workshop describes the cultural skills, the land-based learning activities, and how grade enrichment assessment is being created. It

also features the planning of land-based learning, like campouts, which include risk management, land as a classroom, safety and camping equipment considerations. Finally, the presenters will touch on the training and capacity development for outdoor leaders by sharing training options, industry safety standards, and their draft safety procedures. The participants will take home resources such as land-based safety procedures, list of links to outdoor leadership training options, wildlife safety training, and risk management resources.

Łaxwe Yasans Yakandasi' – The Strength of our Voices: Singing and Song Traditions in the Classroom (1g 2g 3f)
Kaleb Child, Musgamdzi Kwakiutl Educator and Traditional Singer (CEO, W̱SÁNEĆ School Board)
Tom Child, Namskam'kala, Kwakiutl Educator and Traditional Singer (Council Member, Kwakiutl First Nation)

Traditional singing, drums and song teachings are a valued part of cultural learning and protocols in First Nations communities and schools. This interactive workshop will engage participants in active learning and participation connecting learning and teaching of traditional songs, language learning, and the use of archival and educational resources. Participants will engage in curricular connections bridging classroom learning strategies and First Nations singing traditions that they can take away and localize in their respective roles and territories. Participants are invited to bring a drum to the session if they choose. Each will be invited to actively engage in several singing activities throughout the session, and engage in a summary presentation on cultural teachings, protocols, song history, education connections, as well as school and curricular models that can be applied in their home communities and schools.

Learning Language Through Song and Games (4h 5h)
Janice Wilson, Indigenous Learning Coordinator (Hulquminum Language Teacher), SD 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)
Colleen Manson, Hulquminum Language Teacher, Qwam qwum stuwixwulh Elementary, SD 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)

Learning the language of the people on whose land you reside/teach is an actionable act of reconciliation. The workshop leads participants through specialized games and songs geared towards learning the hulquminum language. Learning language through games allows the learner to be fully immersed in the language using their whole body to learn and feel the language. Learn games and songs that can be modified for any language.

Łi'webidu - Small Cedar Bark Mat (weaving) (1a 2a 3a)
Donna Cranmer, Namgis Artist & Educator
Anthony Hunt, Kwaguł Artist

The Kwakwa̱ka̱wakw (Kwak'wala speaking people) call red cedar bark "Tłaga̱kw." This wonderful resource was used to create many objects important for day-to-day life. Łi'we' (cedar bark mats) were very important pieces used throughout our gi'gukwdzi (bighouses) in life prior to contact. Many sizes of łi'we' were used to cover and protect canoes, put food on, sit on, sleep on, etc. In this hands-on workshop Anthony and Donna will teach participants how to make a set of mini łi'we'. Participants will use natural and dyed cedar bark to create their projects.

Looking at Alternate Education, the Adult Graduation Diploma Program, and the School Completion Certificate Program (1j)
Connor Morris, Director, Public K-12 Policy and Communications, FNESC
Morag Champagne-Holland, Manager, Education Policy and Research, FNESC

First Nations learners are overrepresented within Alternate Education programs, the Adult Graduation Diploma Program, and the School Completion Certificate Program, demonstrating the "racism of low expectations" identified in the 2015 Auditor General report. In this workshop, FNESC will provide an overview of key student outcome data for these programs, as well as information about FNESC's advocacy efforts regarding the Adult Graduation Diploma, School Completion Certificate, and alternate education.

Music and Story as a Pathway to Reconciliation: Bringing Steven Point's BC Song to Life (4i 5i)
Steven Point, OC OBC (Xwelíqwetel) Skowkale First Nation
Rick Joe, District Indigenous Enhancement Teacher, SD 33 (Chilliwack)
Melissa Davis, Grade 4/5 Teacher, Cultus Lake Swilhcha Community School

Participants will explore the story of the BC Song, a gift from Steven Point to BC schools, and examine how it serves toward reconciliation through music, storytelling, and shared learning. The workshop shares the journey of how the BC Song came to life in two Grade 4/5 classrooms, where students' curiosity and love of music began by playing the school's set of First Nations hand drums. Through story and song, students were inspired to explore local histories, Indigenous perspectives, and the role of music as a powerful way of carrying knowledge, strengthening relationships, and advancing reconciliation. It also highlights how this learning extended beyond our classrooms, creating authentic opportunities for students and communities to learn, connect, and perform together. Participants will create a handcrafted wooden bookmark featuring elements from the BC Song, as a meaningful reminder of their commitments in reconciliation.

Nt̓ákmen - From Vision to Action: Building Land-Based Learning Through Partnership (4g 5g)
Tara Smith, Mental Health in Schools Team and School Counsellor, SD 48 (Sea to Sky)
Leah Dan, Indigenous Advocate Supervisor, Lil'wat
Steve Evans, Teacher and Instructional Leadership Team, SD 48 (Sea to Sky)

The Nt̓ákmen Journey is a collaborative, accredited, land-based learning initiative developed through a partnership between Pemberton Secondary School and Lil'wat Nation. The program brings Indigenous students onto the land alongside Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Cultural Workers, school staff, and community partners to strengthen cultural identity, belonging, relationships, leadership, and connection to school. The presenters will share the story of the Nt̓ákmen Journey from its beginnings and to what the program looks like today. Participants will leave with practical ideas for building partnerships, accessing funding, navigating systems, and developing Indigenous-led, land-based programming, while considering how this work can create change beyond an individual program.

On the Land Learning: Teaching Land Based Learning in Public and Immersion School Settings (4b 5b)
Ada Jules, Language Teacher, Chief Atahm School
Charmayne Jules, On-the-Land Resource Teacher, Henry Grube Education Center

This workshop explores how land-based learning can be meaningfully implemented by centering the land as the classroom and grounding education in local context. Participants will engage with approaches that weave together land-based learning, Secwepemc language, cultural practices, and community knowledge systems. Participants will consider how learning on and with the land supports student identity and well-being, and can inform curriculum design and classroom practice. Participants will leave with strategies for creating learning experiences that are authentic, place-responsive, and grounded in respect for Indigenous knowledge systems.

Promoting Parent and Family Engagement (3h)
Karen Linkert, Director, Instructional Services, FNESC
Barb Kavanagh, FNESC Consultant
Kylee Mayers, Manager, Funding Programs, FNESC

When families and schools work together, transformative change is possible – benefitting students, families, schools, and communities. Effective family engagement doesn't happen on its own; it requires thoughtful planning and ongoing attention. To help make that possible, this session will explore a *Toolkit for Schools: Promoting Family Engagement – What's Possible?* and other related supports available from FNESC.

Q'ushin'tul Journey Alongside our Elders from Grief to Medicine (1k)
Gordon Li, Director Education Services, BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA)
Joe Thorne, BCSTA Knowledge Keeper, Former Trustee SD 79 (Cowichan Valley)
Tracy Loffler, Board Chair BCSTA President, Mission Public Schools

Diane Jules, School Trustee BCSTA IEAC Chair, SD 73 (Kamloops-Thompson)

This session will share the significant steps BCSTA has taken in its learning journey towards reconciliation. The foundation for this work includes: The creation of a Memorandum of Understanding with the FNESC and the BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA); The BCSTA Leadership Series, *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Act* (DRIPA) Action Plan and the many lessons from our elders; Bill 40 and the work of BCSTA in supporting school districts; The BCSTA's Indigenous education learning guide; and, The BCSTA's Indigenous education committee's knowledge series. The presenters will share their journey, with the guidance of the elders, since the Association's first Indigenous Days of Learning.

Reconciliation Through Education with your Indigenous Education Council (2j 3i)
Dianne Bassendowski, District Principal for Indigenous Education, SD 59 (Peace River South)
Christy Fennell, Superintendent, SD 59 (Peace River South)
Asher Atchiqua, Councillor and IEC member, West Moberly First Nations

SD 59 (Peace River South) will share the impact of having an Indigenous Education Council (IEC) that works together, keeping students at the heart and center of every decision. We will share how we got to where we are today, how we work together, and some practical strategies that are improving success for Indigenous students. The presenters will also share how the IEC supports the structure of SD 59's Education Department, the above-and-beyond services offered to Indigenous students, and the structure of a collaborative enhancement meeting that brings principals, Indigenous Education staff and the IEC together.

Reframing Math Learning Through Cross Curricular Play: A Celebration of Indigenous Math Knowledge (4a 5a)
Brandi Leigh Price, Indigenous Educator, SD 44 (North Vancouver)
Johanne Nielsen, Indigenous Educator, SD 44 (North Vancouver)

The workshop aims to foster understanding about how Indigenous cultures use math concepts through real-world practices and math's connection to community, place and environment. The presenters will share how they employed Dr. Jo-ann Archibald's *Indigenous Storywork* as a framework to guide learning experiences by hosting math culture and games day within SD 44 (North Vancouver). Focusing on playing through hands-on experience, participants can discover math beyond abstract worldviews, reflect, and discuss collaboratively. Educators will take home new ideas on how to promote Indigenous math learning within their respective schools and school districts.

Reviving the Story: Oral Tradition, Language Revitalization and Reconciliation through Education (4l 5l)
Toby Joseph, Senior SENĆOŦEN Apprentice, W̱SÁNEĆ College
Tye Swallow, Director SX̱Á,SEN TŦE SENĆOŦEN Language Revitalization and Apprenticeship Program, W̱SÁNEĆ School Board

This workshop explores oral tradition as a living tool for Indigenous language revitalization, cultural transmission, and reconciliation through education. Through traditional and personal stories, ȻELEȻILEM Toby Joseph, language and culture teacher at W̱SÁNEĆ College, will share teachings, humour, history and life lessons that demonstrate how much knowledge lives within a story. The workshop will also explore what happens when an oral story moves beyond the moment of telling and becomes literature. Supported by SX̱Á,SEN TŦE SENĆOŦEN, the W̱SÁNEĆ language apprenticeship and revitalization program, this work creates opportunities for fluent speakers, language teachers, apprentices and students to work together to carry SENĆOŦEN into new forms. Drawing on a W̱SÁNEĆ College experience, participants will explore transforming oral stories into written, illustrated and self-published SENĆOŦEN-English resources.

Sagaytgawdi: Grounding Classroom Assessment in Indigenous Knowledges for Equity and Well-Being (1l 2m)
Jo Chrona (Ni' K'am Gyoos 'Nexł) Speaker, Author, Consultant
Brooke Moore, Educator, Author

When grounded in First Nations pedagogies, classroom assessment can propel learning, deepen belonging, honour identity, and support well-being and achievement. Assessment for Learning (AFL) approaches can

have a significant impact on moving learning forward for students. However, the use of AFL alone is insufficient for achieving equity for learners who have been historically marginalized. Grounding AFL in First Nations pedagogies demonstrates value for diversity and student voice, empowers all learners to achieve, and supports their well-being. Workshop participants will explore how the convergence of First Nations pedagogies and AFL approaches take classroom assessment practices beyond student compliance and ranking, toward equity-oriented, culturally sustaining practices that support all learners to achieve and thrive.

A School District and Community Collaboration (1c 2c 3c)
Aaron Burgess, Executive Director of Education, Kyah Wiget Education Society
Birdy Markert, District Indigenous Education Principal, SD 54 (Bulkley Valley)

What do you get when a First Nation community member is in a leadership position with the local school district and a non-community member is in a leadership position with the First Nation? In this workshop, the presenters will share how the school district and First Nation have been working together. Improved working relationships have supported the development of the Indigenous Education Council and the Local Education Agreement, defining a unified approach for children from the community. Strategies to unify educational delivery for students of all ages aim to increase student engagement and attendance; develop relationships at the student, family, staff, and governance level; and ensure smooth transitions. The presenters will share what has worked with relationship building, what has presented challenges, and what the vision is for a continued successful partnership.

Science First Peoples Teacher Resource Guides (Gr. 5-9 and Secondary) (4j)
Jo Chrona (Ni' K'am Gyoos 'Nexł) Speaker, Author, Consultant

The *Science First Peoples Teacher Resource Guides (Gr. 5-9 and Secondary)* support educators to respectfully integrate BC First Peoples scientific knowledge and perspectives into their classrooms. The guides include background information on how First Peoples' perspectives in science can be recognized and included in science inquiry. They also offer curriculum planning suggestions and provide examples of fully developed multi-grade thematic units that correspond with the BC curriculum. The guides can be used in conjunction with resources that are developed by, or in collaboration with, local communities. Come and explore the guides and bring home copies of these resources for your school.

A Strategy for First Nations Teacher Recruitment and Retention (2h 3g)
Linda Beddouche, Director, Workforce Development, Ministry of Education and Child Care (ECC)
Betty-Anne Johnson, Director, Post-Secondary Engagement and Partnerships, Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS)
Thane Bonar, Director of Education Policy, FNESC

The *BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan commits the Province to develop and implement an effective recruitment and retention strategy to increase the number of Indigenous teachers in the public K-12 education system. To address the shortage of First Nation teachers, FNESC, the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association, ECC and PSFS established a working group to identify key strategies to improve the recruitment and retention of First Nations teachers. This workshop will provide an overview on key actions taken, including community-based teacher education programs and information on available grants and bursaries that support First Nations in teacher education programs.

Strengthening Community Connections for First Nation Learners (1m 3k)
Tara Maloney, Outreach Teacher, Doig River First Nation
Melanie Jansen, First Nation Education Liaison Coordinator, SD 60 (Peace River North)
Sharon MacDonald, Education Manager, Doig River First Nation
Amanda Gauthier, Education Coordinator, Doig River First Nation

Through exploring the unique partnership between Doig River First Nation and School District 60, participants will see how rethinking traditional educational partnerships and centering First Nations priorities can lead to meaningful approaches to Truth and Reconciliation. Drawing on lessons learned from a

collaborative model that shares responsibility and bridges organizational boundaries, the workshop will offer practical strategies for building relationships, navigating challenges, and honouring local protocols. Participants will leave with tools, templates, and ideas they can adapt to strengthen partnerships that support students, families, and communities.

Three Years Later: Navigating the Design and Delivery of Téméxw te ì - The Land of this Place, an Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement Course (4c 5c)
Peggy Janicki, Indigenous Mentor Teacher, SD 75 (Mission), Nak'azdli Whuten & Skowkale First Nations
Johnny Williams, Cultural Worker/Member of Sq'éwlets First Nation, SD 75 (Mission), Sq'éwlets First Nation

In June 2022, the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care introduced a new graduation requirement, marking a significant shift in provincial education. Since its first delivery in September 2023, educators and communities have been working to transform policy into meaningful learning experiences for students. Three years later, this workshop offers an opportunity to reflect on that journey and share insights from implementation. With the intentions of léts'e mó:t (good mind), léts'e th'á:le (good heart) and sqwálewel (good feeling), participants will explore how a provincial policy became a living, evolving course in schools and districts. This session will highlight success, challenges, unexpected lessons, unintended results and promising practices.

Together We Are Kind: Resources for the Classroom (1f 2f)
Monique Gray Smith, Author
Jennifer Everett, Early Childhood Educator, Qualicum First Nation Culture Program
Pam Moore, Qualicum First Nation Culture Program Manager, Qualicum First Nation Culture Program

Join Monique Gray Smith and the Qualicum First Nation Culture Program as together they share the new resources created for a Together We Are Kind kit. The workshop focuses on four of Monique's books, *My Heart Fills with Happiness, When We Are Kind, I Hope* and her upcoming new release, *My Grateful Heart*. With each book, the presenters share teachings, ideas and ways to utilize and extend the books in the classroom. In addition to learning many creative ways to expand the books with the children, each participant will be gifted a story bag to go with each of the four books shared in the session. The story bags contain play-based materials created based on the contents and message of the books. They will share teachings, ideas and ways to utilize and extend Monique's books in the classroom.