

# Equity in Action Agreement for Truth & Reconciliation 2020 – 2025

## 1<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021



*Elder Maureen Ziprick and Central Programs and Services students paddling in the canoe they helped to carve through the Land Based Learning Program.  
June 2021*

**Equity empowers each learner to thrive holistically**



**Central Okanagan  
Public Schools**  
Indigenous Education



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Equity in Action Agreement 2020-2025

Central Okanagan Public Schools and the District's Indigenous Education Council acknowledge and honour the traditional territory and history of the Okanagan (Syilx) People and Westbank First Nation as our host band. We also acknowledge the traditional teachings of all our Elders and the wisdom of their Indigenous culture.

### EQUITY IN ACTION AGREEMENT IS BETWEEN

Central Okanagan Public Schools

AND

Westbank First Nation, the Okanagan Indian Band, Okanagan Nation Alliance,  
Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, Lake Country Native Association, Kelowna Métis Association  
Indigenous Parent and Family Education Council

AND

The Ministry of Education in the Province of British Columbia



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# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation

### Our First Year (2020-2021)

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Way' [Hello] everyone,

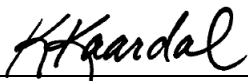
The 2020-2021 school year marked a time in world history when we all had to adapt and shift our behaviours and habits to respond to the challenges of the global pandemic. It has taken slx<sup>wa</sup>?sp?ús [courage] each day/every day to stay safe, healthy, and ready to support each learner (K-12), staff member, parent, and community member.

Over the past year, we have been reminded of the importance of human connection as well as the necessity to advocate for the dignity, respect, and human rights of all peoples. Since the February 20, 2020 signing of the Equity in Action Agreement for Truth and Reconciliation, we have remained committed to implementing the first year of the Equity in Action Agreement.

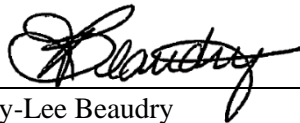
This report reflects our shared responsibility and progress during the 2020-2021 school year towards equitable opportunities for our District's Indigenous, First Nation, Métis and Inuit K-12 learners.

May the stories and images, embedded within this report, inspire us with musÍs [hope] as our journey toward equity is just beginning.

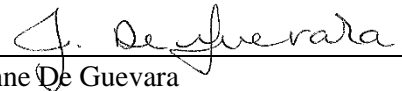
Limlmt [Thank-you],



Kevin Kaardal  
Superintendent of Schools/CEO



Terry-Lee Beaudry  
Deputy Superintendent of Schools



Joanne De Guevara  
District Principal of Indigenous Education



Please Note: Each school and workplace, in Central Okanagan Public Schools, is on a journey towards equity. This report reflects only some of the work being done in each of the goal areas.

# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## How Are Our Indigenous Learners Doing?

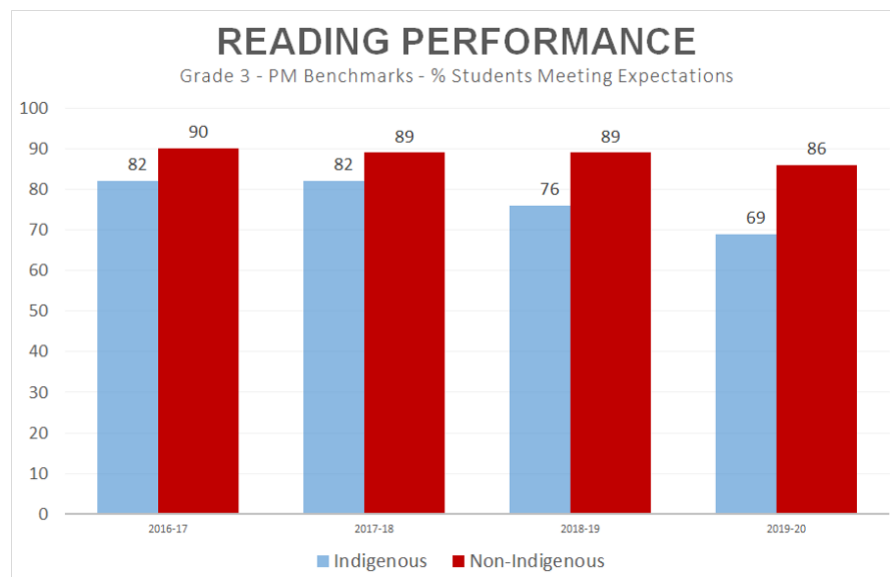
Within Central Okanagan Public Schools, more students, each year, identify as having Indigenous ancestry. The Ministry of Education's How Are We Doing Report reflects a growth rate of over 800 Indigenous students in the past ten years.

In the 2010/11 school year, 2,208 students claimed Indigenous ancestry. In 2020, Central Okanagan Public Schools enrolled 3,077 Indigenous students (K-12), representing 13.3% of the District's student population.



### Reading Performance

The following reflects reading performance of Grade 3 Indigenous and non-Indigenous early learners:



To address disparity of literacy results, the Collaborative Learning Services Team (Early Learning, Instructional Leadership, Indigenous Education, Student Support Services) are focusing efforts to provide additional classroom support in schools with the highest priority students. The 2021 Literacy Summer Camps offered at 7 regional sites served to target interventions for striving readers. Early learning support for priority Indigenous students will continue to be a focus in the 2021 – 2022 school year.

"EQUITY EMPOWERS EACH LEARNER TO THRIVE HOLISTICALLY"

# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## How Are Our Indigenous Learners Doing?

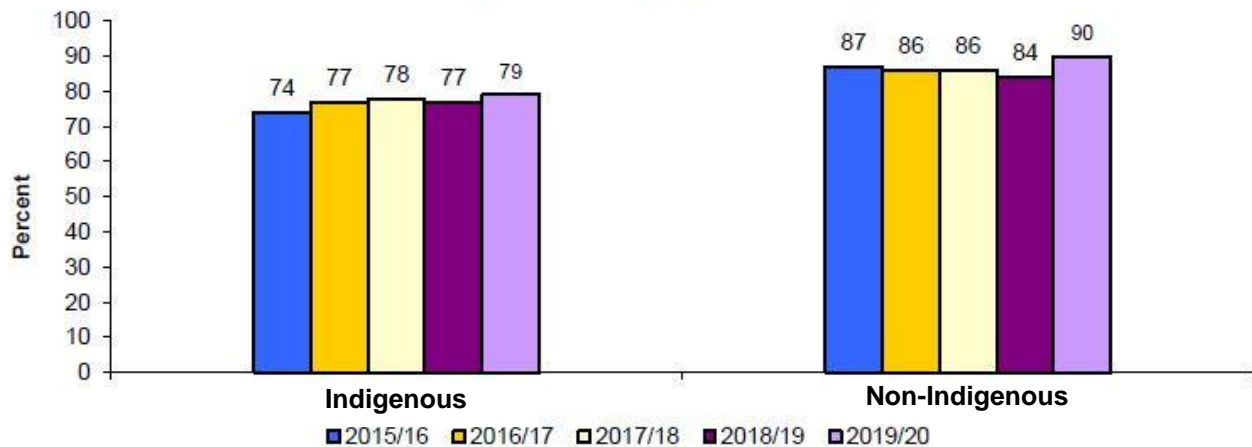
### SIX-YEAR COMPLETION RATE: 2015/16 – 2019/20

The six-year completion rate is the percent of Grade 8 students who graduate with a Certificate of Graduation within 6 years, adjusted for outmigration. It is not the inverse of a "dropout rate" as students may graduate after the six-year period.

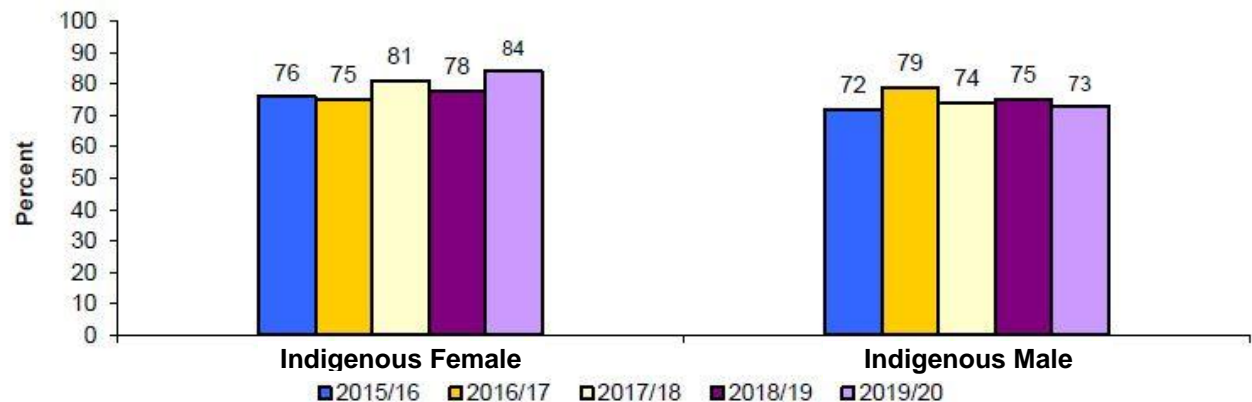
### SIX-YEAR COMPLETION RATE

School Year	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	All Students %	Female %	Male %	All Students %	Female %	Male %
2015/16	74	76	72	87	89	85
2016/17	77	75	79	86	87	85
2017/18	78	81	74	86	86	85
2018/19	77	78	75	84	85	83
2019/20	79	84	73	90	92	89

Six-Year Completion Rate: Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal



Six-Year Completion Rate: Aboriginal by Gender





# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## How Are Our Indigenous Learners Doing?

In celebration of this year's **230** Indigenous student graduates, individual blanket ceremonies were held at all secondary schools and at Central Programs and Services during the latter part of June. This is the largest number of Indigenous students graduating in the District's history.

*(In 2020, the six year completion rate was over 80%. 100% of all Indigenous students living on reserve met all graduation requirements.)*



*"Being wrapped in a blanket is one of the highest honours one can receive in Indigenous communities and is a custom that is shared by many nations across Turtle Island. This recognition is a reminder of one's responsibility within their community and throughout life's journey." (Jordan Coble, Westbank First Nation)*

**Please refer to the Ministry of Education's "How Are We Doing" Report for all Indigenous student achievement results** (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/reports/ab-hawd/ab-hawd-school-district-023.pdf>).

# Central Okanagan Public Schools

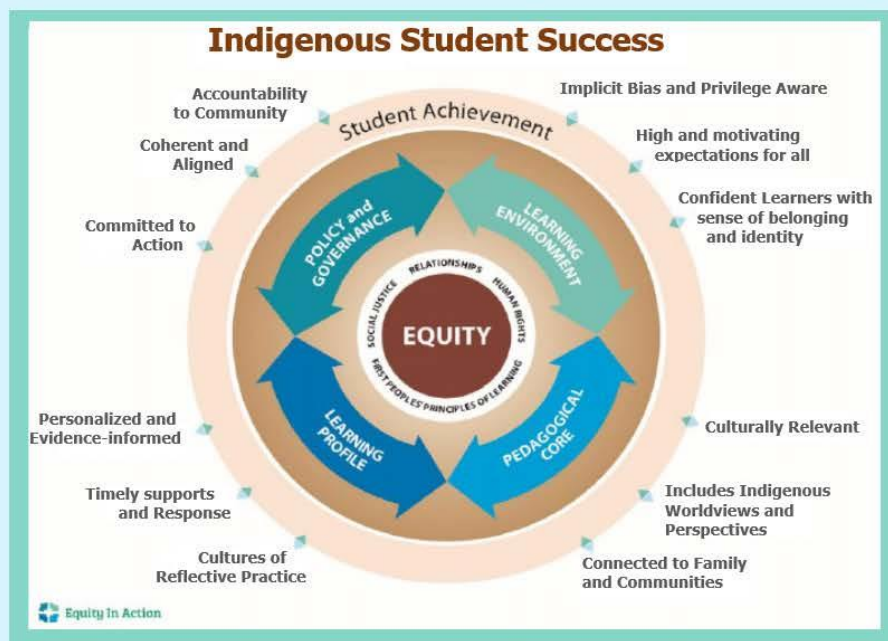
## Equity in Action Agreement – District Responsibilities 2020-2025

### Policy and Governance

- Maintain a District Multi-year Equity Committee
- Request the Board of Education review policies to support equity
- Request the Superintendent to review administrative procedures to support equity
- Provide annual reports on the goals of the Equity in Action Agreement

### Learning Environment (School Culture)

- Implement and expand Elders in Residence programs, ensuring access to Elder wisdom
- Reflect a strong culturally-appropriate Indigenous presence in each school
- Ensure quality, culturally relevant space or Gathering Rooms in every school



### Learning Profiles

- Continue to develop a holistic definition of success for each learner, with a focus on personalizing the learning journey
- Develop a timely response plan for 5th & 6th year, Grade 12 and year after Grade 12
- Collaborate to implement culturally responsive interventions and alternatives to suspension

### Pedagogical Core

- Embed Truth & Reconciliation in teaching and learning K-12
- Ensure Indigenous worldviews are incorporated into classrooms and embedded into school culture
- Create understanding with ALL students through authentic Indigenous presence
- Continue to foster partnerships between Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and non Indigenous educators through reciprocal learning opportunities
- Continue to foster community relationships through ongoing collaboration
- Incorporate culturally relevant land-based learning for all students

**EACH SCHOOL'S JOURNEY TOWARDS EQUITY WILL BE EMBEDDED WITHIN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEARNING PLAN, UPDATED REGULARLY AND SHARED WITH PARENTS.**

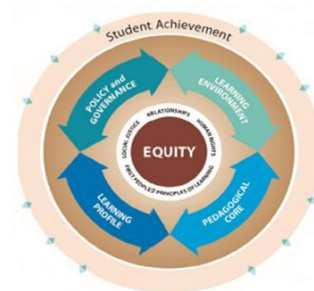


# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Policy and Governance

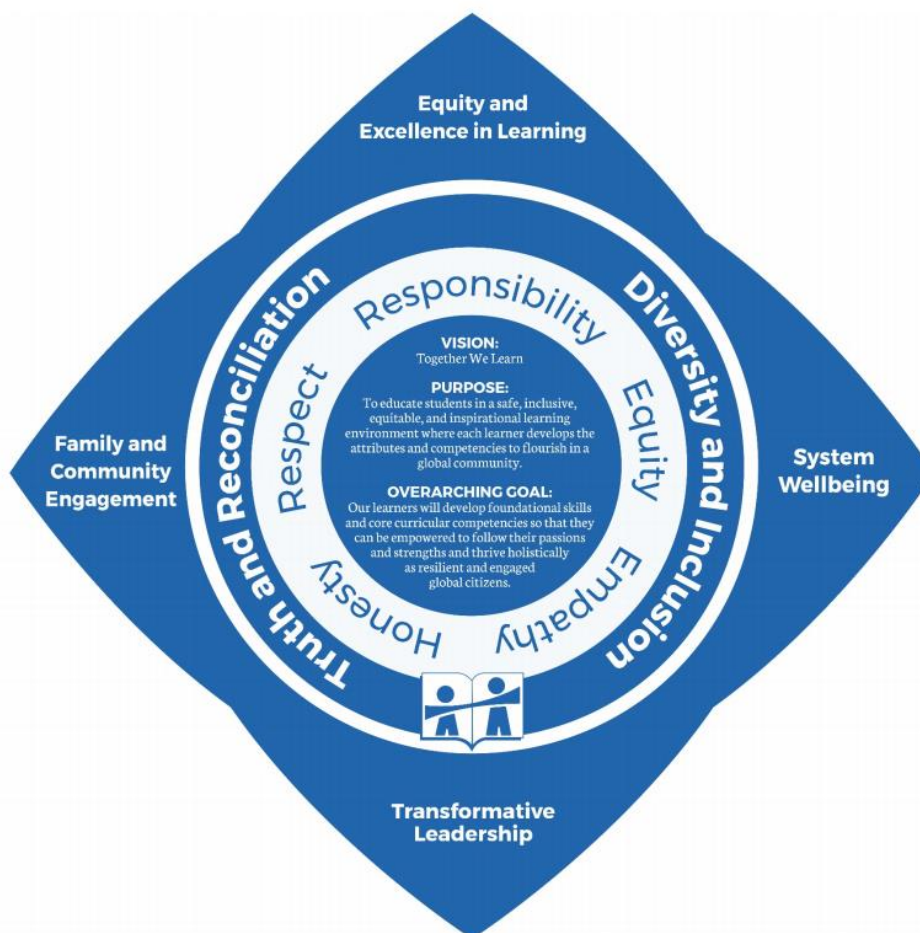
### We believe:

- "Each Central Okanagan Public School student, Kindergarten to Grade 12, has a right and responsibility to learn" (Board Policy 401 – Role of the Student K-12).
- Creating a District culture of equity will affirm our commitment to inclusiveness and appreciation and respect for our District's diverse learners.



### Our Progress:

One of the greatest areas of success this year was the engagement of a District-wide process to revise the **District's Strategic Plan**. After a comprehensive consultation process with all stakeholders, staff, and community members, the District's revised Strategic Plan includes a focus on: **Truth and Reconciliation, Diversity, and Inclusion** with the added core value of **equity**. The District's Strategic Plan now aligns with the Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation Agreement.



*"It is heartwarming to see that Truth and Reconciliation is a prominent part of the District's new Strategic Plan."*

(Chief Chris Derickson, Westbank First Nation)

"EQUITY EMPOWERS EACH LEARNER TO THRIVE HOLISTICALLY"



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Policy and Governance

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Board of Education also approved the following motion (20P-112):

**THAT:** The Central Okanagan Public Schools Board of Education put in place a process to assess and support education throughout the School District regarding systemic racism; anti-racist education; and historic and contemporary content by and about Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour.

Additionally, the following Board Policies include new language specific to equity:

Policy 540 – Proposals for Substantive Change (Distinct Schools, Unique Programs, and Specialty Academies) and Policy 541 – Board Authority/Authorized (BAA) Courses include the following language:

- *Curricula that upholds the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the inclusion of indigeneity*
- *Learning resources that are inclusive of anti-discrimination and anti-racism initiatives*

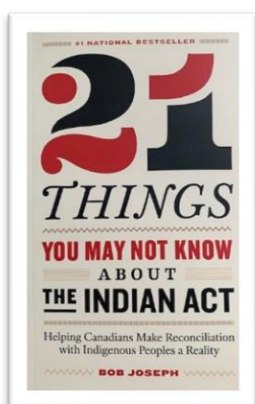
The revisions to the two aforementioned Board Policies ensure that all new proposals for substantive change and Board Authority/Authorized Courses include discrimination-free and anti-racism learning resources and equitable practices.

The Board of Education also approved the following proposals for substantive change, reflecting indigeneity, equity and reconciliation:

- [Academy of Indigenous Studies \(George Elliot Secondary School\)](#)
- [District Academy of Land-Based Learning for Middle School Indigenous Students](#)
- Board Authority/Authorized (BAA) [Indigenous Leadership 10, 11, and 12](#)
- Board Authority/Authorized (BAA) [Indigenous Art Studio 11 and 12](#)

***"The Board of Education, assuming the responsibility for policy and governance, continues to review all Board Policies and practices through the lens of equity and reconciliation."***

Moyra Baxter, Board Chairperson  
Central Okanagan Public Schools



Resources shared with Central Okanagan Public Schools administration and staff to be discussed with site-based staff.

**"EQUITY EMPOWERS EACH LEARNER TO THRIVE HOLISTICALLY"**

# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Learning Environment

### We believe:

- Confident learners will have a strong sense of belonging and identity within each learning environment.

### What we are doing:

- Central Okanagan Public Schools is committed to providing opportunities for staff and administration to acknowledge, discuss and learn deeply about implicit bias and racism. Discussing implicit bias and privilege with the Equity in Action Committee led to deeper understanding. The District also invited guest speaker, Kevin Lamoureux, who spoke on Equity and Deconstructing Otherness, continuing the discussion on allyship and awareness through personal reflection, broadened perspectives.



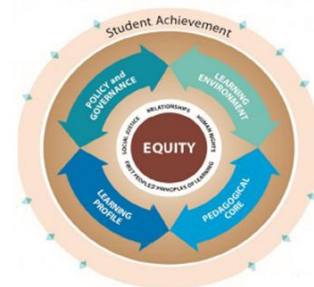
In conjunction with the District's Harmony Day, Kevin Lamoureux spoke to middle/secondary students, teachers, administrators, and the District Leadership Team.

- Truth and Reconciliation and Equity are at the forefront of the Central Okanagan Public Schools Strategic Plan. Over the school year, the School District's commitment to the Calls to Action was evident as school teams shared the ongoing learning through Community Learning Plans and shared and captured pictures that told their story and journey. Time and space was provided for site-based staff to critically examine their own biases, attitudes, beliefs, values and practices to facilitate change.



Davidson Road Elementary School staff responses after reading the Equity in Action Agreement.

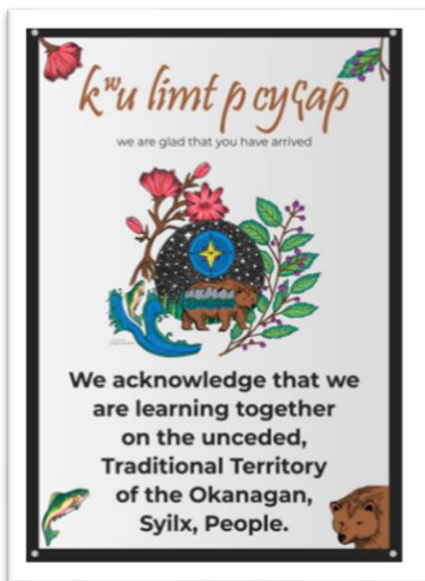
Vice-Principal of Chute Lake Elementary School, Steve Labrie, encourages educators to [See Through Two Eyes](http://flip.matrixgroupinc.net/bcsb/2021/spring/#page=12) (<http://flip.matrixgroupinc.net/bcsb/2021/spring/#page=12>) when designing inclusive learning environments.



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Learning Environment

- Central Okanagan Public Schools understands the importance of acknowledging the territory on which we learn, live and play each day. As a regular practice, acknowledgement of territory is included in all District meetings, assemblies and events to honour the First Peoples who have been on these lands since time immemorial. Some schools have students acknowledge the local territory on morning announcements. Acknowledgement signs have also been installed at the entrance of every School District site, inclusive of the local nsyilxcen language, and recognizing the Okanagan, syilx peoples.



Principals/Vice-Principals and staff may access the recording of the Okanagan Song, sung by Westbank First Nation, Phoenix Prince (to be included in assemblies and events).

- Revitalization and presence of Indigenous Language and culture is evident throughout many Central Okanagan Public Schools. The School District works closely with our host nation, Westbank First Nation, to ensure the implementation of Indigenous Language and Culture is done in an appropriate and respectful manner. Teaching of the nsyilxcen language, a fully credited course, is included as part of the Academy of Indigenous Studies offered at secondary schools. Nsyilxcen is seen in school offices and throughout school sites incorporating place and room names. Many schools have had the opportunity to have nsyilxcen language speakers visit classroom and implement language learning. Partnerships with syilx Language House enabled Kindergarten students to participate in language learning and activities.

Teachers from the Syilx Language House visited Kindergarten classrooms at Chief Tomat Elementary School, once a week, until the end of June 2021 to teach students some of the Syilx language.



Welcome sign at Okanagan Mission Secondary School.

"EQUITY EMPOWERS EACH LEARNER TO THRIVE HOLISTICALLY"



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Learning Environment

- Reflecting a strong culturally appropriate Indigenous presence in each school is important to build a sense of belonging and identity for Indigenous students and families. School entrances, classrooms and common areas celebrate Indigenous peoples across Canada with a strong presence of the local, Okanagan, syilx people's artifacts and teachings.



We would like to acknowledge artist, Coralee Miller, for her beautiful representation of the local syilx teaching of the Four Food Chiefs. Schools around the District have the images displayed on office windows, walls and bulletin boards.



Rose Valley Elementary School Playground Project. Elders and Knowledge Keepers from Westbank First Nation, staff, students, and community collaboratively designed a new playground reflective of local Indigenous teachings.



George Elliot Secondary School honouring Métis Peoples.



Artist, Sheldon Louis, painting four pillars at Constable Neil Bruce Middle School. Students assisted in painting the Four Food Chiefs at the entrance of the school.

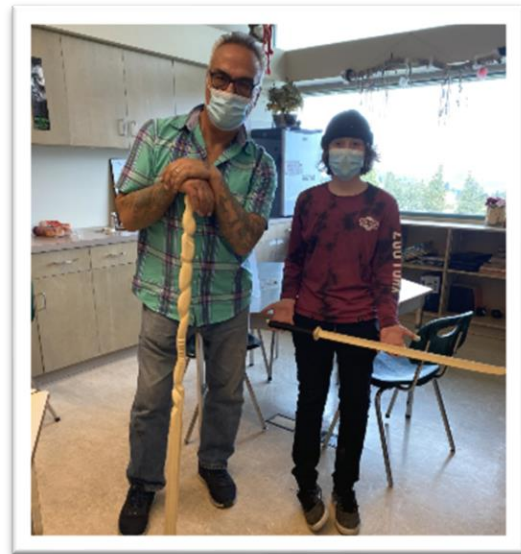
# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Learning Environment

- Central Okanagan Public Schools' Elders in Residence Program continues to be in early stages of development. The School District fully respects and understands that through this challenging year due to COVID, and for the protection of our Elders, the program was not in full swing. However, we honour the wisdom and contribution of the few Elders that were able to come alongside students, educators and families in and out of schools. Elders assisted in event openings, worked alongside students in groups as well as worked on a one-to-one basis when needed. The importance and appreciation of our Elders' presence was easily witnessed through the many interactions with both students and staff.



Elder Bonnie Coble providing traditional teachings and guidance at Constable Neil Bruce Middle School.



Elder / carver, Darren McKenzie, sharing his skills with students at École Glenrosa Middle School.



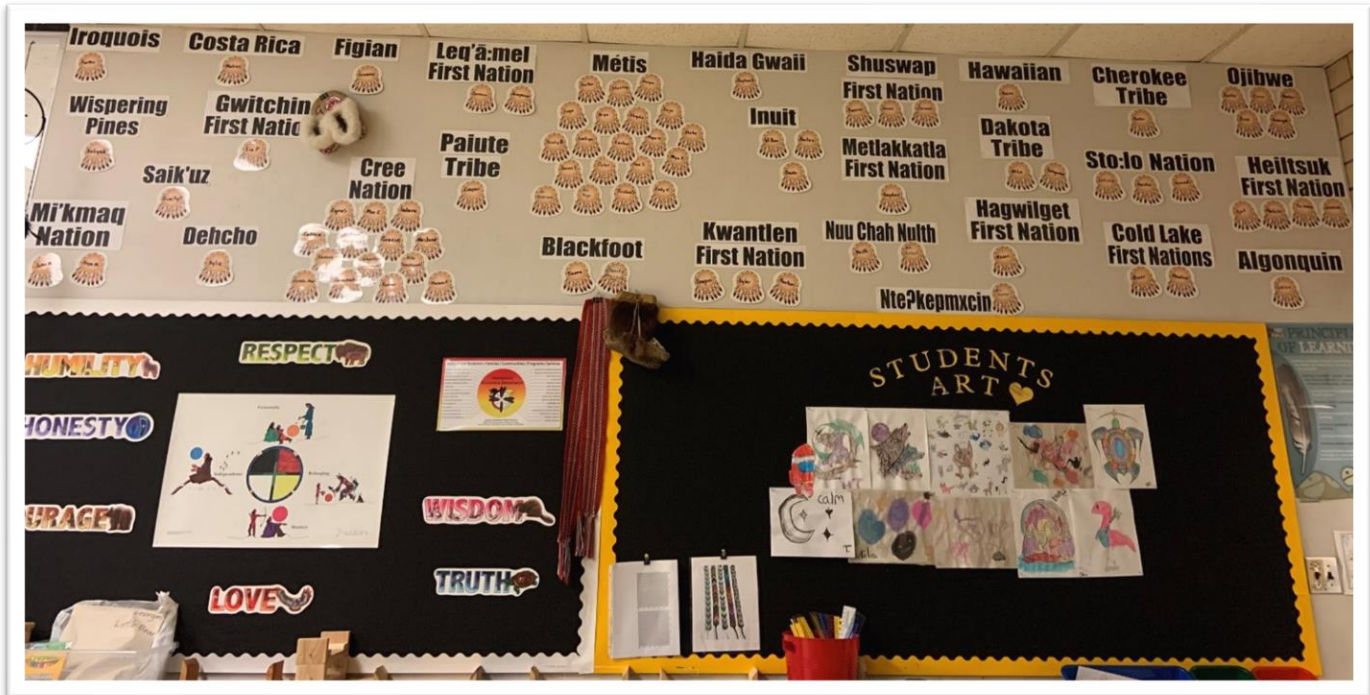
Elder Maureen Ziprick practicing the Okanagan Song with students and staff at George Elliot Secondary school in preparation for Remembrance Day.



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Learning Environment

- Indigenous students experience more success having a strong sense of belonging and connection to school. Schools throughout the District provide gathering spaces for Indigenous students to access support with academic and social/emotional needs. Indigenous culture is present and reflected both visibly throughout the gathering spaces and through the teachings of the Indigenous Education Department. The Indigenous Student Advocates and Indigenous Program secondary teacher tutors provide welcoming, supportive spaces where both students and families can experience a strong sense of place and identity.



Gathering Room space at Springvalley Elementary School.  
Indigenous Student Advocate honouring students in the school from all Nations.



Gathering Room signs are in each school Gathering Room, shown in both  
syilx and English.



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Learning Profiles

### We believe:

- Learner success is achieved through personalized learning, timely supports and culturally relevant interventions.

### What we are doing:

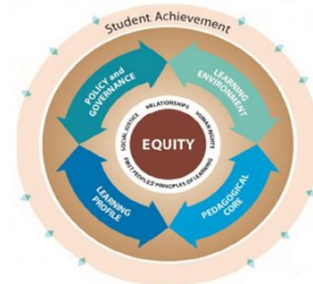
In the 2020-2021 school year, the Administrative Procedure – [Student's Adjusted School Schedule Plan](#) was edited to include:

- For students with a Ministry designation, the appropriate District Consultant must be a member of the team assessing and planning for the adjusted schedule, and must liaise with the District Principal of Indigenous Education for Indigenous students being considered for an adjusted school schedule.

The District continues to develop a definition of success which focuses on the personalized learning journey for Indigenous students. We understand the importance and power of culture and connection and relationship to the land as our teacher. Many opportunities and programs were put in place to respond to Indigenous Learners' interests and learning styles, including multiple ways of assessing learning.

### Jordan's Principle

Jordan's Principle is named in honour of Jordan River Anderson, a young First Nations child from Norway House Cree Nation in northern Manitoba, who spent his entire life in hospital while caught in a jurisdictional dispute between the governments of Canada and Manitoba. The ongoing dispute prevented Jordan from returning to his home community to receive in-home care. Through advocacy efforts, Jordan's Principle has now become a legal requirement, resulting from the Orders of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle with a primary purpose to eliminate inequities and delays for First Nations children. The principle states that any public service ordinarily available to all other children must be made available to First Nations children without delay or denial.



A number of Central Okanagan Public Schools have applied for support, through Jordan's Principle, and received funding to assist in assessment support, health care, and school-related resources.

# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Pedagogical Core



The Healing Garden at Springvalley Middle School, created by Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, students, and staff, is used as a place for self-reflection and opportunities to engage in culturally-responsive interventions.



Elder Maureen Ziprick, working with Indigenous students in the Land Based Learning Program.

On June 11, 2021, students and staff from around the District had the opportunity to launch the Central Programs & Services Canoe. This project began in January of 2021. In consultation with our Indigenous Education Department, Indigenous Elders, and Master Carver Frank Marchand, students and staff began chipping away at a 20-foot, snow-covered cottonwood log. Six months later, after the contributions of many throughout the District and community, the canoe was completed and launched into the water after a special ceremony lead by William Poitras. A huge thanks goes out to Westbank First Nation Elder Grouse Barnes, Master Carver Frank Marchand, Cultural presenter William Poitras, the Indigenous Education Department, Principal Randy Horne and Vice-Principal Nathen Elliott of Central Programs and Services, and all who contributed to this project. The journey was long and the process was meaningful. What a powerful land-based learning opportunity for our students, staff and all involved.



**"EQUITY EMPOWERS EACH LEARNER TO  
THRIVE HOLISTICALLY"**

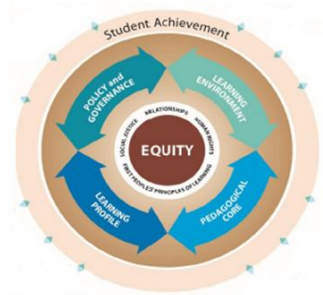


# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Pedagogical Core

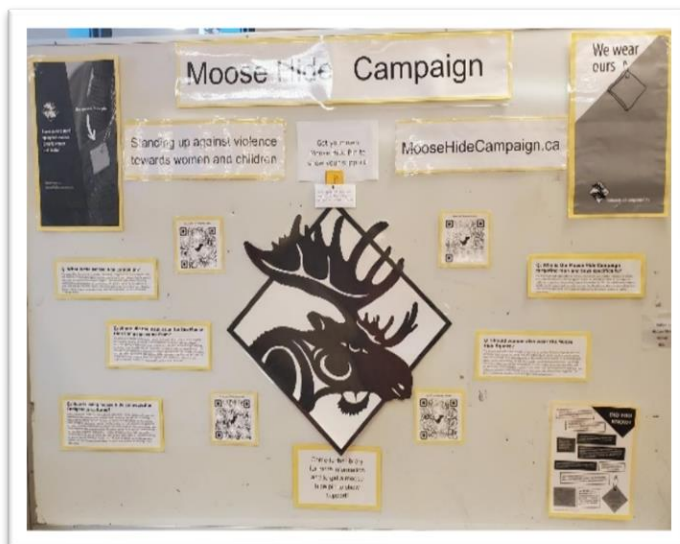
### We believe:

- Reimagining teaching and learning with a shared responsibility for inspiring social justice and equity, understanding truths, and commitment to reconciliation.
- Integration of Indigenous world views and perspectives and First People's Principles of Learning are at the core of instruction, assessment and learning.
- Incorporation of local culturally relevant curriculum builds understanding with ALL children through an authentic Indigenous presence.



### What we are doing:

- Throughout the year, schools deeply engaged in activities that honoured and celebrated Indigenous Peoples. School wide initiatives and classroom learning included Orange Shirt Day, teachings on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (Red Dress Project), Moosehide Campaign, National Indigenous Peoples Awareness Day, Indigenous Role Models, and ongoing acknowledgements of contributions of Indigenous Peoples.



Moose Hide Campaign,  
George Elliot Secondary School



Red Dress Project,  
Rutland Senior Secondary School



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Pedagogical Core



Orange Shirt Day,  
École George Pringle Elementary School



North Glenmore Elementary honouring  
the 215 Indigenous children's graves  
located at Kamloops Residential  
School.

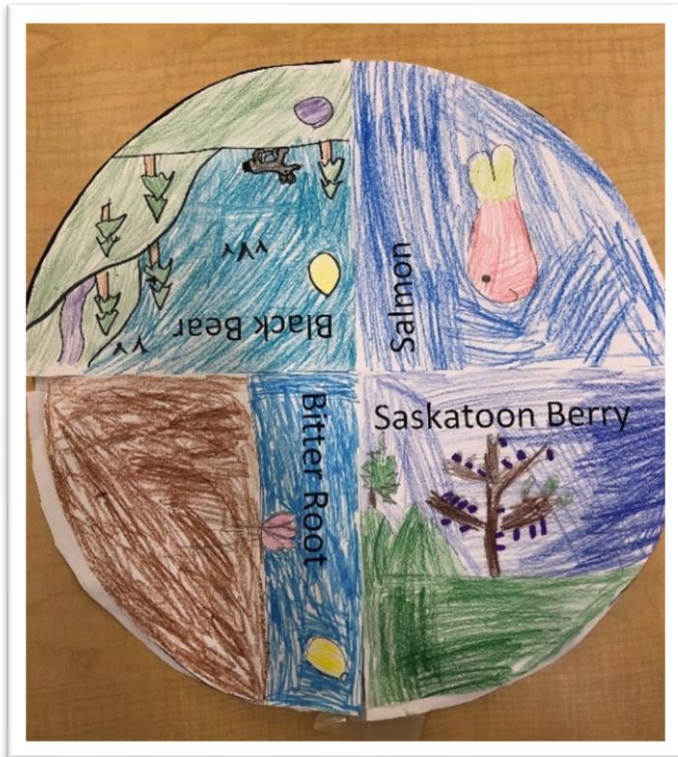
- Central Okanagan Public Schools upholds the BC Standards for BC Educators and Standard 9 to foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, and the histories and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Professional Development opportunities, workshops, ongoing collaboration and modelling Indigenous pedagogical practises, created environments of learning for educators to feel confident in the decolonizing, integrating and implementation of Indigenous perspectives, ways of knowing and curriculum content. A strong focus has been on local teachings perspectives. Along with the ongoing work in Indigenous Education throughout the schools, the District dedicated the October Implementation Day entirely to focusing on Indigenous Education. A centralized Indigenous Resource portal was created so educators have access to authentic [Indigenous resources and pedagogies](#).



At Davidson Road Elementary, many classes participated in Land Based Learning. Teachers attended Land Based Learning activities on the District Implementation Day and collaborated with Indigenous Student Advocate, Cara Koebel, to provide teachings of and on the land.

# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Pedagogical Core



Rose Valley Elementary School students learning about identity and the teachings of the Four Food Chiefs.



Students in Ms. White's grade 2/3 classroom at Pearson Road Elementary School worked with Deanna Necan, Cultural Coordinator for the Indigenous Education Department, to learn about the Medicine Wheel and the teachings of the four quadrants. The students made beaded necklaces that they wore proudly for the rest of the school year. This session resonated so much with the students that they asked to share the Medicine Wheel teachings and matching beaded necklaces with their pen pals in Winnipeg, Manitoba. A Teams Meeting online with their pen pals revealed that the Winnipeg students had also been learning about the Medicine Wheel in their classroom and they were thrilled to receive the necklaces to wear. It was a powerful experience for the students both in Kelowna and Winnipeg to connect on the medicine wheel teachings and their own learning.



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Pedagogical Core

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All Grade 10 students from École Kelowna Secondary School participated in a Blanket Exercise facilitated by trained students and staff from the Indigenous Education Department. The Blanket Exercise brought powerful teachings and awareness about Residential Schools and the impact on Indigenous Peoples across Canada.



### Outdoor Classroom Inquiry

Staff at École Kelowna Secondary School (KSS) collaborating with Indigenous Community Partners and the Indigenous Education Team to begin designing an outdoor classroom on site at KSS.



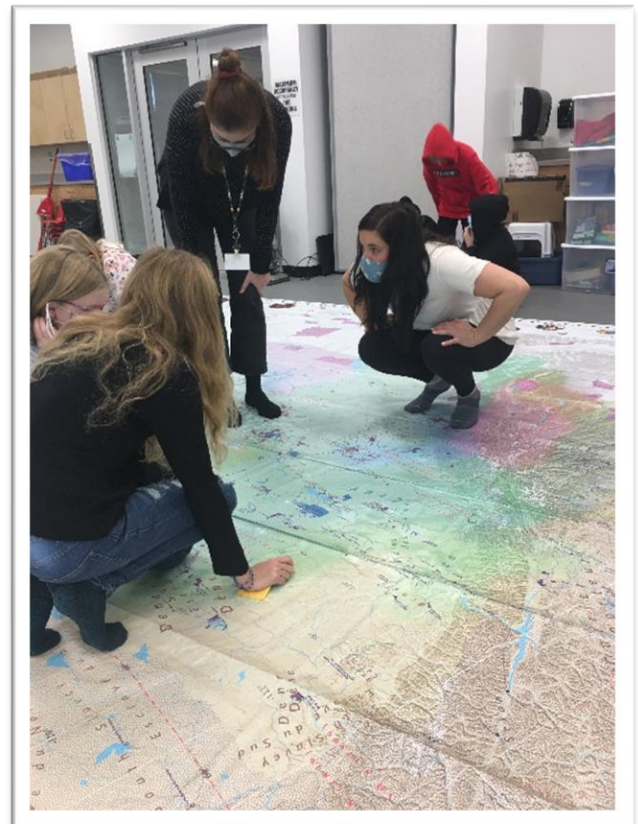
# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Year One Progress – Pedagogical Core

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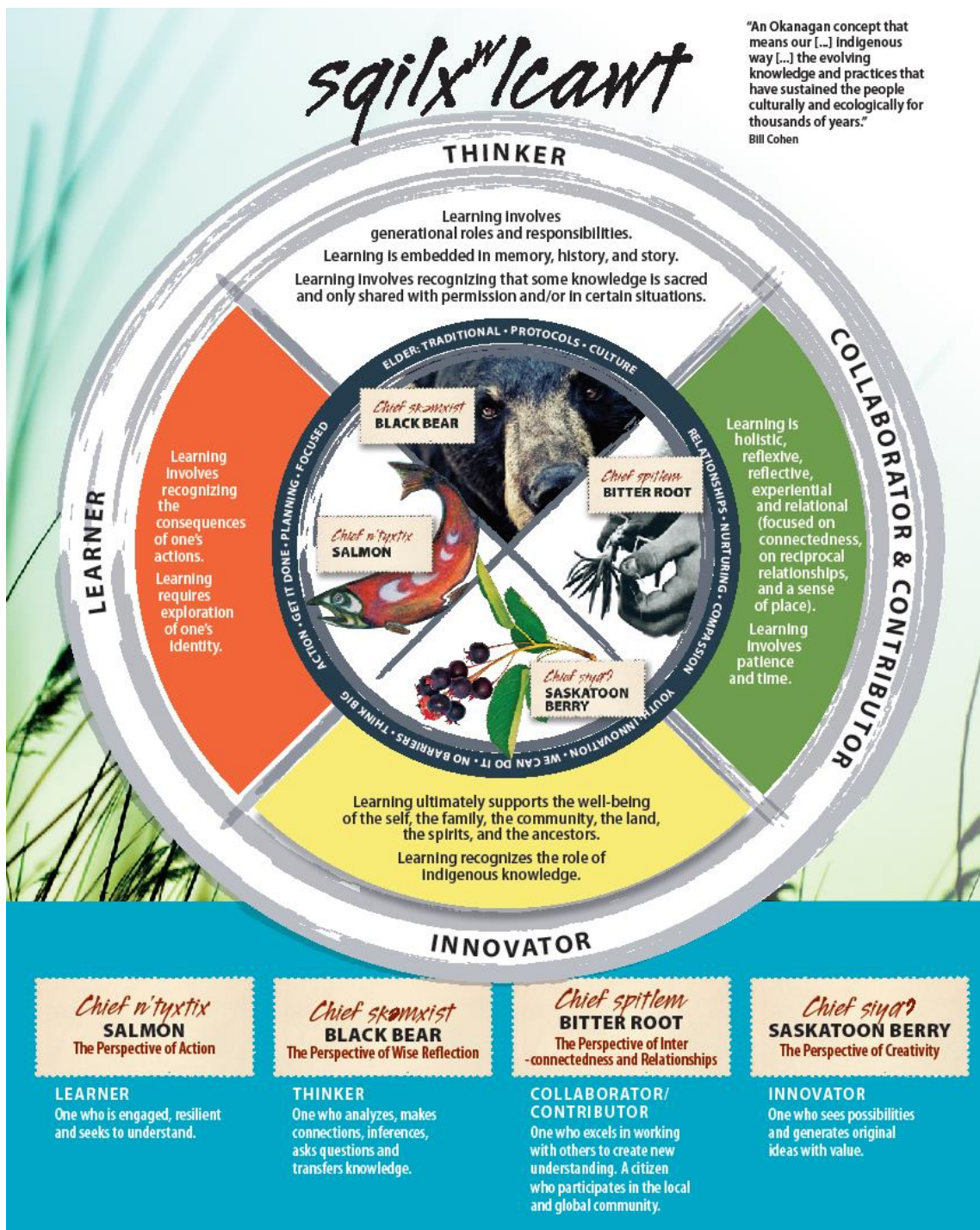
Oyama Traditional School's Grade 3 class visited Clint George's Feather sculpture with Indigenous Advocate Rose Alexis after having a zoom visit with the artist and learning about the significance and meaning of the sculpture.



The District's Instructional Leadership Team worked collaboratively with the Indigenous Education Department to bring awareness and understanding to students and staff throughout the District using the Indigenous Peoples of Canada floor map.

# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Equity in Action Agreement – Our Indigenous Education Responsibilities



"An Okanagan concept that means our [...] Indigenous way [...] the evolving knowledge and practices that have sustained the people culturally and ecologically for thousands of years."  
Bill Cohen

### FOUR FOOD CHIEFS ATTRIBUTES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEARNER



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With grateful acknowledgment to the Okanagan Nation/Sylix People for these Four Food Chiefs images and concepts.  
For more resources that reflect the First Peoples Principles of Learning, visit the First Nations Education Steering Committee at [www.fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples](http://www.fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples).

"EQUITY EMPOWERS EACH LEARNER TO THRIVE HOLISTICALLY"



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Equity in Action – Our Indigenous Education Responsibilities

### Chief spitlem Bitter Root

#### Our Commitment:

*Relationships, nurturing, compassion*

We are committed to fostering reciprocal relationships for the health and wellbeing of each Indigenous learner, inspiring confidence and a sense of connectedness to others.



#### What we are doing:

- The Indigenous Education Department's 75-member staff (Indigenous Student Advocates, teacher tutors, Indigenous Youth Wellness workers, Indigenous Resource/Support teachers, Cultural presenters and administration) strive to support all Indigenous students in a compassionate and nurturing manner. Strong connections and relationships foster emotional well being. Support in and out of the school is provided through Indigenous wellness perspectives and practises.

#### Land Based Learning

Land based learning provides students with an opportunity to be on *tmx<sup>w</sup>ulax<sup>w</sup>* (the land) with teachers, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers, to complete course assignments. Indigenous students experience local Indigenous culture known as *na'ʔk<sup>w</sup>ulamən* (the things that we do) and are exposed to ways of knowing that have been in the area since time immemorial. This is a unique and innovative opportunity for students to gain a greater sense of how their interaction with local Indigenous culture can provide confidence in their ability to tackle new learnings and coursework.



Constable Neil Bruce Middle School students making arrows.

For further information, please read Kevin Kaiser's article [Equity Through Land-Based Learning in 2020](http://flip.matrixgroupinc.net/bcsb/2020/fall/#page=8) (<http://flip.matrixgroupinc.net/bcsb/2020/fall/#page=8>), recently published in *InspirEd*.



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Equity in Action – Our Indigenous Education Responsibilities

### Horseworks – Equine Assisted Learning

Many students had the opportunity to participate in sessions, alongside horses and Horseworks facilitators, in the Equine Assisted Learning program (EAL). This is a youth-centered program that identifies needs and strengths as a basis for building skills and competencies in the youth. The goal is to support all youth with their social skills development and to foster strategies that will lead to a happy and productive life.



Students alongside Indigenous Student Advocate, Raquel Michaud, from Springvalley Middle School, participating in Equine Assisted Learning.



Central Programs & Services student Arne Gairdner Loe.



Elder Maureen Ziprick, Indigenous Student Advocates Jackie Garbitt and Melissa Madden, with elementary Indigenous kindergarten students wearing the ribbon skirts and shirts made by students at Central Programs and Services.

# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Equity in Action – Our Indigenous Education Responsibilities

### Chief sīya? - Saskatoon Berry

#### Our Commitment:

*Innovation, we can do it, no barriers, think big*

We are committed to co-creating cultural opportunities that strengthen home, school, and community connections.

#### What we are doing:

- Indigenous students at all grade levels have the opportunity to participate in a variety of cultural opportunities throughout the school year. In and out of the school, students participate in classroom presentations, lunch and after school programs. (District-wide events, inclusive of family participation, will be rescheduled when appropriate.) The Indigenous Education Department strives to strengthen home, school and community connections through cultural teachings.



Grade 12 Indigenous students at all secondary schools had an opportunity to design a paddle.  
Mount Boucherie Senior Secondary student Breezie Meeches.



Lisa Middleton, Advocate, South Rutland Elementary School, storytelling to Grade one students.



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Equity in Action – Our Indigenous Education Responsibilities

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Rutland Senior Secondary School students  
designing paddles.

Grade 12 Indigenous students design paddles as part of the Grade 12 annual Grad Retreat. This activity helps prepare them "paddle through" challenges they may face post-graduation.

Students at Hudson Road Elementary School making dreamcatchers alongside Indigenous Early Learning Support Teacher Erin Reid.



École KLO Middle School Indigenous students,  
alongside Cultural Presenter and Land Based Learning  
teacher, Will Poitras.





# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Equity in Action – Our Indigenous Education Responsibilities

### Chief n'tyxtix - Salmon

#### Our Commitment:

*Action, get it done, focused*

We are committed to empowering each Indigenous learner to take action to explore and strengthen their personal identity.

#### What we are doing:

- The Indigenous Education Department is committed to empowering each Indigenous learner to take action to explore and strengthen their personal identity.



Constable Neil Bruce Middle School Implementation Day – Students shared with staff traditional dance. A former CNB student spoke to staff about trauma informed practices and intergenerational trauma. The student shared her experiences as an Indigenous learner and ways to ensure classrooms and schools are safe and inclusive spaces for Indigenous youth.

# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Equity in Action – Our Indigenous Education Responsibilities

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Hayden Wilson, Honour Drum Recipient, George Elliot Secondary School. Students are chosen by their Indigenous Student Advocates taking into consideration their participation in cultural activities, leadership and/or academic achievements.



Indigenous students at Peachland Elementary School participated in a Harmony Day/Anti-Bullying activity with the school.



Nicole Spletzer, École Kelowna Secondary School, proudly posing with her Blanket Exercise Training certificate.



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

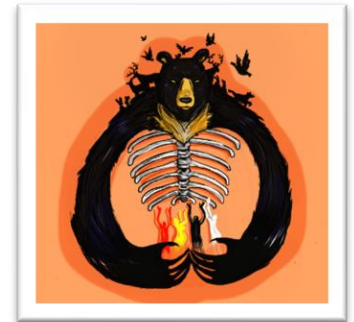
## Equity in Action – Our Indigenous Education Responsibilities

### Chief skəmxist - Black Bear

#### Our Commitment:

*Traditional, protocols, culture*

We are committed to fostering intellectual and culture growth through an Indigenous mindset.



#### What we are doing:

- The Indigenous Education department provides academic support to Indigenous learners K-12, in a variety of ways:
  - Indigenous Student Advocates provide support in and out of classrooms, attend academic support meetings fostering home and school connections, and provide one to one academic assistance in Indigenous Gathering spaces at all school sites.
  - Secondary School Indigenous Education Teacher Tutors provide academic support to all Indigenous Students grades 9-12. Secondary Indigenous students are tracked on an ongoing basis to ensure we are responsive to ongoing needs and responding in a timely manner.
  - Indigenous Education Early Learning Support teachers provide early literacy support to Indigenous Learners K-6, with a strong emphasis on early Literacy intervention for Indigenous Learners K-3.
  - Academy of Indigenous Studies at secondary schools provide opportunities for Indigenous students to receive credit in courses such as English First Peoples, BC First Peoples, and Indigenous Leadership with Indigenous curricular content taught through Indigenous ways of knowing and being.



Constable Neil Bruce Middle School  
Indigenous Leadership Class learning  
on the land.



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Equity in Action– Our Indigenous Education Responsibilities



Indigenous Academy Leadership students at Mount Boucherie Secondary School actively promoted Indigenous Knowledge and Understanding throughout the school year. Awareness campaigns included, but were not limited to, projects on Residential Schools and the recent discovery of the 215 unmarked graves,

Orange Shirt Day, Red Dress Project and sharing the Okanagan Language. The Red Dress project was included in the following Daily Courier Article: [https://www.kelownadailycourier.ca/news/article\\_dfd82bf0-a796-11eb-b37c-6f772445d816.html?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_campaign=user-share](https://www.kelownadailycourier.ca/news/article_dfd82bf0-a796-11eb-b37c-6f772445d816.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=user-share)



Indigenous Education Early Learning Support Teacher, Erin Reid, working with Indigenous Learners at Hudson Road Elementary School on Literacy and Identity.



Erin Reid providing early learning support to students at Chief Tomat Elementary School.

# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Establishes New Partnership to Support Equity in Action

As Canada seeks responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, university researchers and local partners have come together to seek respectful ways for educators to align their teaching practices toward reconciliation.

UBC Okanagan is receiving a \$1 million Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant to establish a partnership research initiative for the next five years.

The project—**Co-Curricular-Making: Honouring Indigenous Connections to Land, Culture and the Relational Self**—is led by Margaret Macintyre Latta, Director of UBC Okanagan's School of Education. Community partners include the Okanagan Nation Alliance, Central Okanagan Public Schools, IndigenEYEZ, Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna Museums Society and the universities of Alberta and Ottawa.

The partnership will bring local Elders and Knowledge Keepers together with participating educators and the extended community. By the end of the five-year project, teachers and their students will have gained deeper understandings of Syilx culture with teachings that connect land, culture and understandings of self in the world.

University and community partners will design and deliver learning opportunities that will help teachers in confronting and challenging the colonizing practices that have influenced education.

These experiences will study the education conditions that challenge participation in reconciling conversations, grapple with personal narratives, and grow understandings of the histories of colonized and colonizers.

**Over 75 educators have expressed interest in being a part of the year one research project.** The university will also employ a research assistant who will work closely with the Indigenous Education Department to document the progress towards reconciliation and equity in action. The goals of the SSHRC grant align with the goals of the Equity in Action Agreement, enabling further advancement of the Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation Agreement.



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Our Seven Priorities for the 2021/2022 School Year

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The following seven priorities will be a focus during Year 2 of Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation:

- Implementing targeted interventions for priority students with a focus on Indigenous early learners.
- Implementing the Academy of Land-Based Learning for Indigenous Middle School students.
- Broadening the Elder in Residence Program to include more schools.
- Expanding culturally-responsive interventions as an alternative to students on suspensions.
- Implementing Year One of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Grant Project – [Co-Curricular Making: Honouring Indigenous Connections to Land, Culture and the Relational Self \(https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uYmyPOly7S8GOhYU3E2iY1oO1\\_0m0I9M/view\)](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uYmyPOly7S8GOhYU3E2iY1oO1_0m0I9M/view).
- Co-partnering with the Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna Museums, and Sncewips Heritage Museum to support the [Witness Blanket Exhibition Implementation \(https://drive.google.com/file/d/146z1\\_d2T-oExHw05E37jkwM1CzN\\_vu0k/view\)](https://drive.google.com/file/d/146z1_d2T-oExHw05E37jkwM1CzN_vu0k/view).
- Continuing to support cultural competency learning for staff and students.

### **IF WE BELIEVE...**

**That equity is everyone's responsibility**

**That equity fuels the art of possibility for each Indigenous learner**

**That equity requires transformative change through partnerships with  
Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and reciprocal learning**

**And, that equity is about nurturing the spirit**

### **THEN...**

**Together, we will create the conditions that empower each Indigenous  
learner**

**to be cultural, confident, and courageous.**



# Central Okanagan Public Schools

## Acknowledgements

The District's Equity in Action Working Committee met, virtually, four times during the 2020-2021 school year to deepen shared understandings of equity, deconstructing otherness, allyship, and reconciliation.

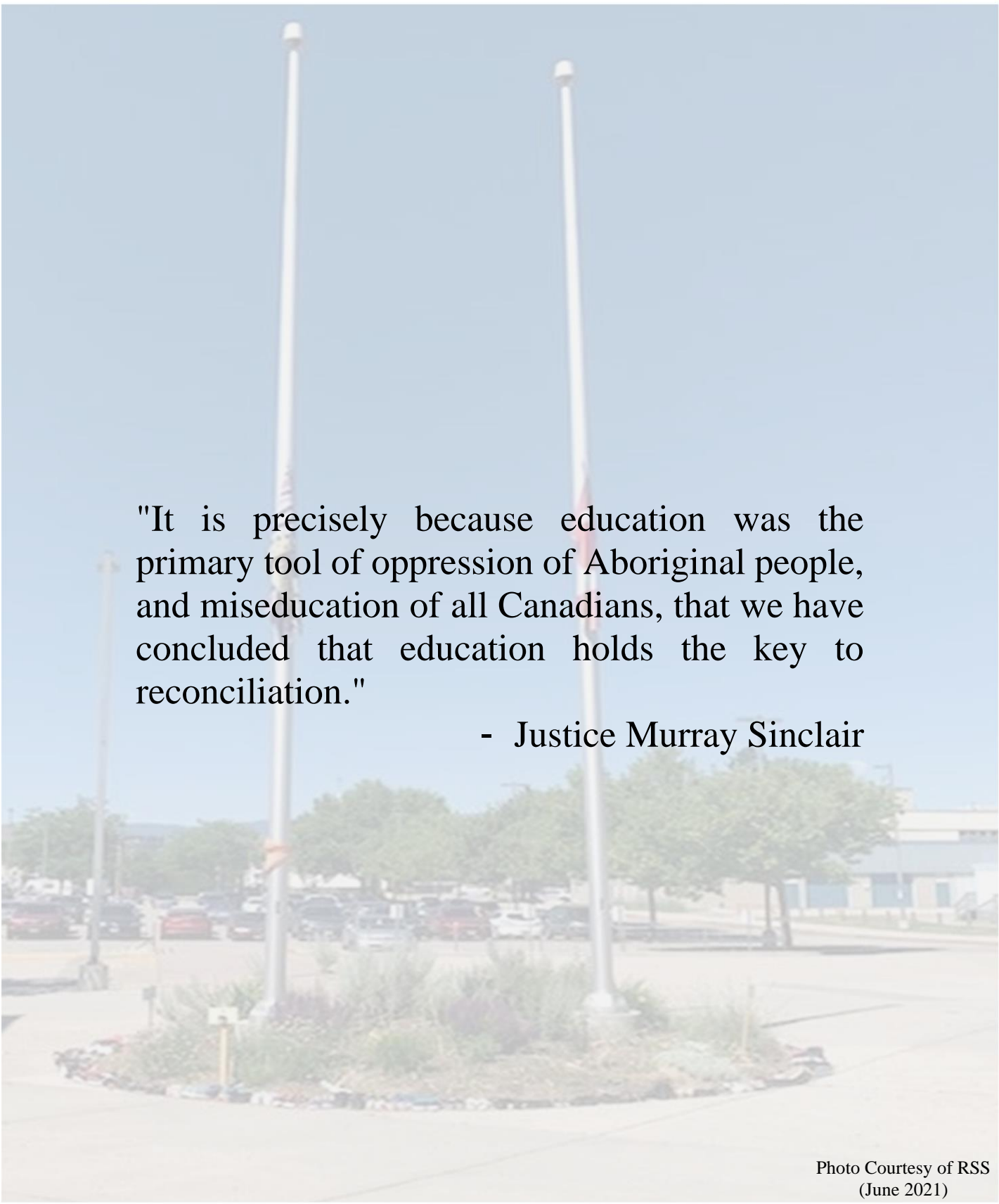
Limlœmt (Thank you) to all involved in supporting and coordinating the District's journey towards equity.

### Equity in Action Working Committee

Adrian Zuyderduyn – BME Vice-Principal	Kevin Kaiser – Indigenous Education Resource Teacher
Amanda Berry – Indigenous Youth Wellness Worker	Kyle Hamilton – University of British Columbia
Ann Bell – Lake Country Native Association	Lori Dawson Bedard – COTA 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President
April Mercereau – Indigenous Student Advocate	Margaret Macintyre Latta – University of British Columbia
Brad Kuhn – ELE Principal	Michael Ross – Teacher
Bill Cohen – University of British Columbia	Misty Smith – Teacher
Christey Hughes – Vice-Principal, École Kelowna Secondary School	Monique West – AME Principal
Christina Pulice-Smith - Teacher	Nathen Elliott – CPS Vice-Principal
Darryl Smith – Vice-Principal, George Elliot Secondary School	Nina Ferguson – PSE Principal
Denise Clough – Education Services Manager, Westbank First Nation	Pamela Barnes – Westbank First Nation Elder
Deanna Necan – Indigenous Student Advocate	Raquel Steen – Assistant Superintendent
Erin Reid – Indigenous Education Resource Teacher	Roberta Robin Dods – Kelowna Friendship Society
Fernanda Alexander – Councillor, Westbank First Nation	Ryan Mansley – MBS Vice-Principal
Greg Hyslop – Teacher	Sherri McKinnon – District Principal, Learning Support Services
Harley Johnson – Indigenous Youth Wellness Worker	Simone Gauthier – Indigenous Student Advocate
Jarret Atkins – RSS Vice-Principal	Stephanie Mason – Indigenous Student Advocate
Jasmeet Virk – SMS Vice-Principal	Steven Labrie, CLE Vice-Principal
Jeremy Sanbrooks – PGE Vice-Principal	Sue Stevenson – NGE Principal
Joanne De Guevara – District Principal, Indigenous Education	Terry Beaudry – Deputy Superintendent of Schools
Kelly Terbasket - IndigenEYEZ	Tracy Cramer – Teacher
Kevin Kaardal – Superintendent of Schools/CEO	Violeta Malfair – District Administrator, International Education and Welcome Centre
	Wynter Oakes – MBS Vice-Principal

### 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Report Prepared By

Terry-Lee Beaudry	Deputy Superintendent, Central Okanagan Public Schools
Joanne De Guevara	District Principal of Indigenous Education, Central Okanagan Public Schools

A photograph of two tall flagpoles in a parking lot. The flagpoles are silver and stand on a circular concrete base with some low-lying plants. In the background, there are parked cars, trees, and a building under a clear blue sky. A rainbow gradient bar is at the top of the page.

"It is precisely because education was the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people, and miseducation of all Canadians, that we have concluded that education holds the key to reconciliation."

- Justice Murray Sinclair

Photo Courtesy of RSS  
(June 2021)