

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

Greater Victoria School Board Signs First Local Education Agreement with Esquimalt Nation

VICTORIA, BC – The Greater Victoria School District and Esquimalt First Nation have entered into their first Local Education Agreement (LEA). This agreement will focus on the collaborative efforts needed to support the students and families of the Esquimalt Nation.

Over the past year and a half, the Esquimalt Nation and District have co-created an agreement to build effective working relationships and strategies that will provide wrap-around supports for Esquimalt Nation students and families. The agreement serves as a roadmap setting out specific goals while defining success, and outlines the respective roles in improving educational outcomes and graduation rates.

In 2018, the Province of British Columbia, the Government of Canada and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) entered into the [BC Tripartite Education Agreement](#) (BCTEA). As members of the BCTEA, the three entities will work together to make systemic shifts to support successful educational outcomes for all First Nation students, supported by funding that is responsive to the distinct needs of First Nation students and the Nation. Local Education Agreements apply to on-reserve students for the purchase of programs and services by First Nations.

This is the first Local Education Agreement to be signed between the Esquimalt Nation and the Greater Victoria School District. To review the Local Education Agreement: <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/local-education-agreements/>

Quotes:

Rob Thomas, Chief of Esquimalt Nation:

“The creation and implementation of this document is a historic moment for the children and families of Esquimalt Nation. I am very proud of my team and their collaboration with School District 61 in creating this accountability mechanism to ensure that our children receive the education that they deserve. As Rights-holders in education, working in partnership with SD61, it is our mutual responsibility to ensure that our students are not just “pushed through” the system, but that we take the time to walk alongside them and guide them towards a future that is full of opportunity. I look forward to working closely with the School District and fostering a new relationship that will serve all students for years to come.”

Kalie Dyer, Education Director Esquimalt Nation:

“It has been an honor and a privilege to work with Esquimalt Nation’s Chief and Council and School District 61 in creating this Local Education Agreement. It is our collective duty to ensure that the needs of Indigenous children are not lost within a system that was founded upon colonial values. All children

deserve a just and equitable education system that is responsive to their needs and promotes the positive development of their self-identity, upholds their values and culture, and supports them in meeting or exceeding grade level expectations. The implementation of this agreement is a powerful step in paving a brighter path forward for the students and families of Esquimalt Nation; together we walk with full hearts and strong spirits as we listen closely to community and support them into the future.”

Ryan Painter, Board Chair:

“The Greater Victoria School Board looks forward to working alongside the Esquimalt Nation to ensure that all students have the tools and support they need in order to become successful life-long learners. This agreement is a step towards strengthening our relationship with the local Nation and achieving the goals of our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. We are very excited about the meaningful work that lies ahead of us to enhance Indigenous educational opportunities, identities and well-being, and supports for all learners’ academic and personal success.”

Deb Whitten, Interim Superintendent:

“Improving outcomes for Esquimalt Nation students requires us to listen to the voices of the Esquimalt Nation as we have joint accountability in learning and moving forward. This Local Education Agreement creates the foundation for a strong relationship between the District and local Nation to flourish. Working together, with Indigenous students at the forefront of our minds, we can and will improve the outcomes for Esquimalt Nation students through continuous improvement.”

Shelly Neimi, Director of Indigenous Education, Greater Victoria School District:

“I would like to acknowledge the collective work over the last year and a half that the Esquimalt Nation and School District achieved together to arrive at this moment in time. The heart work that went into each meeting to ensure the focus remained with the students and families in the center of the agreement. I look forward to the work yet to come as we navigate forward on the implementation of this first Local Education Agreement and the great things we can achieve together for the students and families of Esquimalt Nation now and in the future, with sincere gratitude I raise my hands to each and everyone involved within this work.”

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For more information contact:

Lisa McPhail

Communications & Community Engagement
Greater Victoria School District
Office: 250.475.4103

 www.sd61.bc.ca |   @sd61schools

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