

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Indigenous Education Council (IEC) of the Central Okanagan Public Schools acknowledges and honours the traditional territory and history of the Okanagan (syilx) People and Westbank First Nation as the host community. Located in south central British Columbia, Canada, Westbank First Nation is one of eight communities of the syilx nation and is the only Self-Governed Nation. Okanagan Indian Band, located at the head of the Okanagan Lake in Vernon, British Columbia, is also one of the communities of the syilx nation. The syilx traditional territories extend from the south central interior of B.C. to north central Washington, USA. The syilx people are a division of the Interior Salish, speak the nsyilxcən language, and have inhabited the territory since time immemorial. We acknowledge the traditional teachings of all our Elders and the wisdom of our culture.

1. PURPOSE

The Indigenous Education Council will work with the Board of Education, in collaboration, to support, enhance, and increase school success for all Indigenous students in the Central Okanagan School District. As part of this commitment, The Central Okanagan Public Schools aims to integrate Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and worldviews into curricula, programs, and services, and to provide culturally relevant training for those teaching and interacting with Indigenous students.

Furthermore, the purposes of the IEC include:

- a) Advising the board on any matter relating to:
 - Providing comprehensive and equitable educational programs and services to Indigenous students;
 - Improving Indigenous student achievement; and
 - Integrating into learning environments Indigenous worldviews and perspectives, in particular, those of the First Nations in whose territory the board operates.
- b) Advising on grants provided under the School Act in relation to Indigenous students;
- c) Approving plans, spending and reporting of targeted grants related to Indigenous students;
- d) Advising the board in relation to the distinct languages, cultures, customs, traditions, practices or history of the First Nations in whose traditional territory the board operates, through advice from the Indigenous Education Council members representing those First Nations.

2. IEC MEMBERS

- a) In accordance with the *School Act* and Ministerial Order⁽¹⁾, members representing a First Nation Band or Indigenous organization will be appointed by using the respective First Nation Band or organization process (First Nation Band Council/Organization Resolution). Indigenous Education Council members cannot be Board of Education Trustees or employees of Central Okanagan Public Schools.

b) Indigenous Education Council Membership:

Fourteen (14) voting Indigenous Education Council members will be the appointed representatives or alternates as follows:

- Four representatives from Westbank First Nation (WFN) – two from Chief and Council, two appointed by Chief and Council
- Two representatives from Okanagan Indian Band appointed by Chief and Council
- Two representatives from Kelowna Métis Association
- Two representatives from Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society
- One representative from Lake Country Native Association
- Two representatives from the Indigenous Parent and Family Education Council – one parent representative must be from Westbank First Nation or Okanagan Indian Band
- One Elder representative from the Okanagan Territory appointed by Westbank First Nation Chief and Council.

c) Length Of Term

- i. Up to a three-year term, with a letter from the First Nation Band or respective organization, confirming the appointment or reappointment.

d) IEC Member Resignation

- i. Should an IEC member resign for any reason, that member will notify the Chair and the Secretariat in writing.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

- a) The members of the Indigenous Education Council shall work together in the spirit of cooperation ensuring a safe, respectful environment for all voices to be heard.
- b) Indigenous Education Council members are expected to attend Indigenous Education Council meetings to ensure representation and quorum is reached at each meeting. In the absence of the IEC member, each organization must provide an alternate to ensure representation at each meeting. Alternates may sit in on an IEC meeting as a witness only, unless the alternate is replacing an absent member.
- c) Indigenous Education Council members are expected to reflect the interests, concerns and perspectives of the organization on whose behalf they are representing.
- d) It is also expected that the representatives will provide the means through which these interested organizations be kept informed about the affairs and decisions of the Indigenous Education Council.

4. BOARD OF EDUCATION TRUSTEES AND DISTRICT STAFF

- a) Indigenous Education Council members, Trustees, and District Staff will engage in reciprocal sharing of information.
- b) Two Central Okanagan Public Schools Board of Education Trustees will be non-voting members of the Indigenous Education Council.

- c) School District Staff will provide resources and support to the Indigenous Education Council:
 - Superintendent of Schools and/or designate
 - Director of Instruction – Indigenous Education and Equity and/or District Vice Principal(s) of Indigenous Education
 - The Central Okanagan School District will appoint a Secretariat to the Indigenous Education Council to take attendance of Indigenous Education Council members present and record and distribute minutes of the meeting.

5. CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

- a) The Chair will be appointed by Westbank First Nation Chief and Council.
- b) The Chair will be responsible for presiding at all meetings, maintaining order and performing such other duties as may be assigned by the Indigenous Education Council.
- c) The Chair shall be responsible for making any Indigenous Education Council recommendations and/or reporting to the Board of Education.
- d) In the absence of the Chair, or at the request of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will act in the place of the Chair.
- e) The Vice-Chair will be elected on an annual basis in October, or as needed, by the Indigenous Education Council.
- f) The Chair and Vice-Chair will collaborate with Central Okanagan Public Schools staff to set meeting agendas.
- g) The Chair will work with the Secretariat to establish meeting agendas, identify materials for meetings of the IEC and prepare IEC meeting minutes,
- h) The Chair, with the support of the Secretariat, will identify, receive, and share with the IEC all information relevant to the IEC's business and needed to fulfill its purposes, including from the Board of Education and the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

6. SECRETARIAT

- a) The IEC will work collaboratively with and provide direction to the Secretariat to liaise with the district on specific topics, including the planning, spending and reporting of Indigenous education targeted funds, and other grants supporting Indigenous students.
- b) The IEC will develop administrative processes with the Secretariat associated with IEC business, such as member travel, meeting costs, room costs, food and beverages, and stipends or honoraria for members or guests.
- c) The Chair, with support of the Secretariat, will establish an IEC meeting schedule that aligns with any School Act mandated reporting deadlines to ensure the IEC is able to have discussions and prepare advice, recommendations, or make decisions, to support the Board of Education in a timely manner.

- d) The IEC will provide direction to the Secretariat for communicating and sharing the dates, times, locations, agenda, and meeting materials to all IEC members prior to each meeting.

7. MEETINGS

- a) The Indigenous Education Council will meet five times during the school year and may meet at such other times as necessary to carry out its responsibilities. At the direction of the IEC, a subcommittee may be formed to provide information back to the IEC.
- b) Currently the IEC has 14 voting members. A quorum of 8 is required to hold a meeting of the Indigenous Education Council. A quorum means 50% plus one additional voting member in attendance. Attendance may include video conferencing.
- c) The Chair, or designate, with support of the Secretariat, will ensure meeting minutes are prepared and shared with all IEC members within a reasonable period of time following a meeting.
- d) The Indigenous Education Council and the Board of Education will meet annually to enhance their relationship and shared responsibilities.
- e) The IEC may, from time to time, host an Incamera meeting with voting members only.

8. STRUCTURE AND OPERATION OF THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL

- a) The Indigenous Education Council will advocate for Indigenous interests in the design, implementation, and assessment of culturally relevant programs and services that will enhance equity, the holistic school experience for Indigenous learners, and academic achievement of Indigenous students.
- b) The Indigenous Education Council will:
 - i. Review on an annual basis the implementation of the Five-Year Equity in Action Agreement for Truth & Reconciliation.
 - ii. Review and approve on an ongoing basis the Targeted Funding budget.
 - iii. Review and provide input on shared funding initiatives (i.e., Jordan's Principle, SSHRC funding, and other federal, provincial, and private sources).
 - iv. Make recommendations to the Board of Education, on any Ministry or locally initiated changes to curriculum or services that will affect Indigenous students.
 - v. Review District and Ministry of Education and Child Care policies related to Indigenous students and recommend District policy changes to the Board of Education.
 - vi. Ensure that nsiyilxcən (syilx) language, history, culture, traditions and protocols are embedded in the school curriculum at all grade levels.
 - vii. Ensure that Indigenous language, history, culture, traditions, and contributions of Indigenous people to Canadian society are embedded in the school curriculum at all grade levels.
 - viii. Inform, communicate, and engage with each respective Indigenous community and parents on an ongoing basis to share information and gather feedback on the District's

Indigenous programs and services.

- ix. Advocate for the hiring of Indigenous people within all District programs and services.
- x. Advocate for ongoing research regarding Indigenous education inequities.
- xi. Promote Okanagan (syilx) Protocol and Indigenous cultural awareness and understanding within all staff groups in the District.

9. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- a) Most matters will be decided through general discussion and consensus of the IEC.
- b) If the IEC cannot reach consensus or voting is tied, the Chair will determine a dispute resolution process.
- c) Only Westbank First Nation and Okanagan Indian Band members of the IEC may advise on local First Nation languages, cultures, customs, protocols, traditions, practices, history, world views, and perspectives.
- d) The Board of Education must consult with the IEC and the IEC will engage with the Board on recruitment and hiring of Board staff who develop and deliver programs and services for Indigenous students or whose role involves significant interaction with Indigenous students.

10. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESSES

- a) If there is a dispute, the Chair or Vice-Chair will determine if the Enowkinwixw process is necessary to reach a resolution.

11. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- a) Disclosure
 - i. Every Indigenous Education Council member who is in any way directly or indirectly interested in any existing or proposed contract, transaction or arrangement with the Central Okanagan School District and the Indigenous Education Council, or who otherwise has a conflict of interest, will declare the interest fully at Indigenous Education Council meetings and shall leave the meeting until such time as the conflict matter has been dealt with.
 - ii. The Indigenous Education Council member may give a prepared statement regarding the conflict of interest, but shall leave the meeting for the decision-making process. The Indigenous Education Council reserves the right to recall the member to answer questions that would provide further clarification.
- b) Time of Declaration
 - i. A member will disclose any conflict of interest at the first possible meeting when the issue will be discussed.

c) Effect of Declaration

- i. If an Indigenous Education Council member has made a declaration of their conflict of interest and has refrained from discussion and decision-making, they are not accountable for the decision made by the Indigenous Education Council.

d) Non-Disclosure

- i. When there is a perception of a conflict of interest, another member may request an agenda item to ask the member to declare the conflict. The Indigenous Education Council will decide whether the member is in conflict, and record its decision.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

a) The following are not within the mandate of the Indigenous Education Council:

- Personnel matters
- Personal and confidential information on students, parents, teachers, other employees and members of the school community
- Performance or conduct of individual employees, students, parents and members of the school community
- Terms and conditions of employment contracts

b) Individual Indigenous Education Council members involved in a staff selection process may have access to confidential information and will need to sign a Confidentiality Agreement.

13. REVIEWING AND AMENDING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- a) The Indigenous Education Council will review the Terms of Reference at least once every three (3) years or one year prior to the signing of the Five Year Equity in Action Agreement for Truth and Reconciliation and make recommendations to the Board of Education.

⁽¹⁾Section 87.005 of the *School Act* authorizes an Indigenous Education Council (IEC) to make rules governing terms of reference in relation to the IEC that are consistent with the *School Act*, the regulations, or the orders of the Minister, including MO 217/2024, the Indigenous Education Council Order (the IEC Order).

As set out in the IEC Order, an IEC must comply with the following rules in the conduct of its business:

- (a) the protocols, laws, customs and traditions of local first nations must be respected;
- (b) the Indigenous Education Council must:
 - (i) be guided by the need to support strong and effective relationships between the Board of Education and local First Nations,
 - (ii) acknowledge its work is undertaken in the local First Nations' territory and have deference to the views and perspectives of members representing local First Nations, and
 - (iii) consider the distinctions and diversity of the Indigenous student population in advising the Board of Education.