POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that School District No. 57 exists on the traditional territories of the Lheidli T’enneh and Tse’khene First Nations.

DEFINITIONS:

“Aboriginal ancestry” includes First Nation (both Status and non-Status, on-reserve and off-reserve), Inuit and Métis people. Aboriginal designation is made through self-declaration, as prescribed by the Ministry of Education.

“Aboriginal community” refers to the community that is composed of the parents/guardians, siblings and other representatives of the Aboriginal children to attend school in School District No. 57.

“Aboriginal education” is the incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives and philosophies in all curricular areas to inform all students of the past and contemporary lifestyles, indigenous knowledge and histories of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Aboriginal education encompasses the rich traditions and values of the various Aboriginal people and applies those concepts to relevant issues facing Aboriginal children and youth today, throughout curriculum and cultural activities in positive, student-centered learning experiences.

“Aboriginal Education Board” is an advisory council to the Board of Education on any matter relating to Aboriginal education, including the design of programs and services to enhance the success of Aboriginal students. The Aboriginal Education Board is responsible for collaborating with the Board of Education on the allocation of targeted Aboriginal education funding received from the Ministry of Education.

“Aboriginal Education Department”, led by the District Principal of Aboriginal Education or a designate as determined by the Superintendent of Schools, is composed of itinerant and school-based employees of School District No. 57 who provide enhanced Aboriginal services and programs to students.
“Approved Aboriginal programs and services” are those that are developed, defined, approved and delivered by the Board of Education in collaboration with the Aboriginal Education Department, the Aboriginal Education Board and the Aboriginal communities served by School District No. 57.

“Aboriginal languages” are the ancestral languages of the Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal languages for the area within School District No. 57 are Dakelh (Lheidli dialect) and Ts’ekhene.

“Aboriginal support services” are designed to assist Aboriginal students to achieve success. Services shall be provided by personnel who are culturally competent in the Aboriginal world view and sensitive to the values, beliefs and needs of Aboriginal students.

“Cultural competency” is the development of the knowledge, skill and confidence to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into all aspects of educational endeavours, as well as the ability to work respectfully with Aboriginal people.

“Elders Advisory Council” is a group of Aboriginal elders who meet monthly. Members share wisdom, knowledge and ancestral teachings with members of School District No. 57 in order to achieve cultural equity in education for Aboriginal students, families, staff and the community.

“Targeted Aboriginal education funds” are provided by the Ministry and requires the collaboration of Boards of Education and local Aboriginal communities to develop and deliver Aboriginal education programs and services that integrate academic achievement and Aboriginal culture and/or language.

“Traditional teachings” are an Aboriginal cultural group’s accumulated knowledge, skills, values and principles passed down from generation to generation for the well-being and survival of its people.
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

PREAMBLE

The Board of Education serves a diverse population and is committed to making education meaningful for, responsive to and inclusive of cultural diversity that characterizes Canadian society. One aspect of that commitment is the recognition of significant Aboriginal populations within the district.

The Board of Education:

- supports the development and delivery of Aboriginal programs and services that enhance and benefit both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

- will involve the Aboriginal community in the design of programs, services and curriculum delivery for Aboriginal students.

- acknowledges and values the role of the Aboriginal Education Board in advising the Board of Education on any matter relating to Aboriginal Education.

- acknowledges and values the role of the Elders Advisory Council in enhancing and supporting Aboriginal education.

The Aboriginal community has made known its understanding of Aboriginal education to mean holistic education that is inclusive of Aboriginal perspectives, including values, languages, histories and cultures.

This policy reflects the belief that education is a lifelong learning process that encompasses Aboriginal students, parents/guardians and the community. The Board of Education will work with all partners in the educational process to ensure that an education of high quality is provided, leading to social leadership, environmental stewardship and global citizenship.

Approved: 2011.06.28
REGULATIONS:

1. Aboriginal Choice School
   1.1. The principal of the Aboriginal Choice School will ensure the integration of Aboriginal values, languages, histories and cultures in all aspects of education at the school.

2. Aboriginal Languages
   2.1. Within the requirements of the School Act and Board policy, School District No. 57 will work cooperatively to establish Aboriginal language programs, with priority given to Dakelh (Lheidli dialect) and Ts‘ekhene.

3. Early Childhood Learning Initiatives
   3.1. The Board of Education shall support early childhood learning initiatives and the early assessments of the learning abilities of Aboriginal students.

4. Employment Equity
   4.1. The Board of Education shall recruit people of Aboriginal ancestry to provide positive role models for Aboriginal students and to enrich Aboriginal cultural and historical knowledge in our schools.
   4.2. The Board of Education shall maintain a Human Rights Special Program (Section 42) in order to recruit and develop a workforce that is representative of the Aboriginal communities within its jurisdiction in all job classification areas.

5. Evaluation and Assessment
   5.1. The Curriculum and Instruction Department and the Aboriginal Education Department will partner in the ongoing evaluation and assessment of programs. The assessment of educational programs will take into consideration the philosophy and goals of Aboriginal education.

6. Cultural Competency
   6.1. In collaboration with the Aboriginal Education Department, all school plans will include strategies to increase the awareness, understanding and knowledge, for all staff and students, of Aboriginal histories, cultures and issues in order to provide an inclusive learning environment.
6.2. With the guidance of the Elders Advisory Council, the Aboriginal Education Board and the Aboriginal Education Department, members of the Aboriginal community will be welcomed in the development and implementation of Aboriginal awareness and cultural competency programs.

6.3. All School District No. 57 students, employees and administrators are responsible for fostering the understanding that the Aboriginal peoples have a valid historical and contemporary contribution to make to society.

7. **Curriculum**

7.1. School District No. 57 shall provide ongoing curricular support through the Aboriginal Education Department and the Curriculum and Instruction Department to ensure that Aboriginal perspectives, including the histories of Aboriginal peoples, their cultures, languages, indigenous knowledge and contemporary diversity of lifestyles are integrated throughout the curricula.

7.2. School District No. 57, through the Aboriginal Education Department and in collaboration with the Aboriginal Education Board, will continue to develop, support, coordinate and enhance initiatives in Aboriginal education.

8. **Parental Engagement in Education**

8.1. School principals in collaboration with the District Principal of Aboriginal Education or a designate as determined by the Superintendent of Schools and the Aboriginal Education Department, shall be responsible for developing respectful strategies to ensure active and meaningful participation of Aboriginal parents/guardians in the educational process.

9. **Responsibility**

9.1. The District Principal of Aboriginal Education or a designate as determined by the Superintendent of Schools, with the Aboriginal Education Department, shall be responsible for operationalizing the vision for Aboriginal education defined by the Board of Education and the Aboriginal Education Board.

9.2. The Aboriginal Education Department, led by the District Principal of Aboriginal Education or a designate as determined by the Superintendent of Schools, shall be responsible for working collaboratively with other members of School District No. 57 such that equity of opportunity is realized by all Aboriginal students, the rich traditions and indigenous knowledge of local Aboriginal peoples are understood and celebrated and
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

the teachings and learnings within the education system are inclusive of Aboriginal perspectives, including values, languages, histories and cultures.

Approved: 2011.06.28