



**NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING
INFORMATION SHEET**

DATE: January 14, 2026
TO: Strategic Directions Committee
FROM: Brett Hancock, Director of Priority Populations
SUBJECT: Truth and Reconciliation

Background

Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools formalized Truth and Reconciliation as a Board of Education goal on January 30, 2019. As a district, we have come a long way in deepening our knowledge and understanding of the truth of Canada's history. Being part of a system that has hurt Indigenous people for the past 150 years, we are committed to creating systems, structures and environments of equity – where Indigenous students and families feel a true sense of belonging in the school setting, and strong connections to the people within them. We acknowledge that our schools are located on the traditional lands of the Stz'uminus, Snuneymuxw, and Snaw-naw-as First Nations and are committed to building strong and healthy relationships with each nation and our urban Indigenous partners; Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Mid Island Métis Nation and the Inuit families we serve.

Discussion

The district is committed to making sure that education is meaningful, inclusive and successful for all Indigenous students. Through the support of the Indigenous Education Council (IEC) we look to build a culturally responsive mindset with the goal of cultural safety throughout the district. This is the first full school year the district's IEC has been in place since Bill 40 was passed in July 2024. Bill 40, guided by the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, mandates a formal IEC in every BC public school district. IECs provide advice on programs, services, and strategies to improve Indigenous student success. They guide the integration of local Indigenous worldviews, languages, history, cultures, traditions, and customs into district planning. IECs also oversee targeted Indigenous education grants—reviewing, approving, and advising on their use and reporting.

As part of this board goal, all employees will annually recognize and honour days relevant to the local First Nations and urban Indigenous communities. We have been advised by the IEC that the recognition and honouring of these days cannot just fall on Indigenous communities and Indigenous staff, however we are appreciative for the IEC, cultural workers, support teachers, and land and language teachers that help us move this goal forward in a good way.

School and district leaders spent the month of September and October creating learning experiences that were educational, reflective, and action orientated as we recognized the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30th. The purpose was focussed on Commemoration and Remembrance, Education and Awareness, Reflection and Action, and Honouring Indigenous Resilience. We put the wellness of Indigenous staff and families at the centre of this work and provided brushings and smudging opportunities for them after September 30th.

November 8th was National Indigenous Veteran's Day and provided lots of learning in our schools and community. Indigenous soldiers were honoured, and their contributions were celebrated. Many schools were fortunate to have Indigenous soldiers present at their school assemblies and gatherings.

Curriculum Implementation Day was held on December 5th, and it brought all NLPS staff together through learning language, culture, and history. The day began with Indigenous staff singing the Coast Salish Anthem. Representatives from each nation welcomed us to territory and then we all sang and drummed Patrick Aleck's Equality Song. The day included interviews with staff, students, and families about the impact and importance of leading Truth and Reconciliation work. Snuneymuxw Land and Language Teacher, Yutustanaat (M. Jones), shared the sacred tradition of witnessing and NLPS staff took time to reflect and create their own quarter bags.

Hul'qumi'num can be heard in every school in our district. Our team of language teachers continues to grow and there is now a Hul'qumi'num language teacher in every secondary school. School leaders greet students, staff, and families in the language of this land. It is good to see so many approach language learning with 'uy'shqqaluwun.

Next Steps

In January, the district will engage with the IEC to help review more cultural awareness and professional learning opportunities for staff. We will begin the development of a cultural competencies guide to help support school and district staff to provide a safe and supportive experience for all Indigenous students, families, and staff. The Syeyutsus Reconciliation Framework reminds us that the land is our teacher, and we are all one family. It is vital that we establish a sense of belonging and connectedness to each other and the environment. IEC will continue to help advise the district with the best ways to bring local Indigenous culture and values into teaching and learning.

Summary

We use the words of Indigenous Elders, scholars, and knowledge keepers to guide the learning and key actions moving forward. When the land speaks in this territory, it speaks Hul'qumi'num. The land is central to everything and is our first teacher. We must always remember that we are all connected to one another, and all connected to the land. Truth and Reconciliation is a responsibility of all NLPS staff.

