



Coquitlam School District 43

## Aboriginal Education Department

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604-945-7386

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<http://www.sd43.bc.ca/AbEd>

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## For All Coquitlam School District Parents and Students

For your information, the revised curriculum now being implemented across the province as per the Ministry of Education, includes integrated material related to Aboriginal culture, history and ways of knowing in each grade, K-12. The best summary of why this is important for all students is embedded in the First Peoples Principles of Learning:

### ***First Peoples Principles of Learning***

*Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.*

*Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).*

*Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.*

*Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.*

*Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.*

*Learning is embedded in memory, history and story.*

*Learning involves patience and time.*

*Learning requires exploration of one's identity.*

*Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.*

For more information on this topic, please access the Ministry website at:

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/documents.htm#curriculum>

In addition to letting you know about this important work, we are particularly interested in addressing the diverse needs of all our Aboriginal students. Coquitlam School District 43 is committed to the academic success, cultural connection and socio-emotional development of all Aboriginal Learners. We have one of the highest Aboriginal graduation rates in the Province, and are very proud of the work of all our educators and the Aboriginal Education Department. We wish to continue this excellent work and improve even more, with the renewed emphasis from the revised curriculum and embedding the First People's Principles of Learning across all curricular areas. As such, self-identification is important.

### **Self-Identification**

#### **What does "self-identification" mean?**

It means that if you have any kind of First Nation (status or non-status), Metis or Inuit Ancestry in your family tree, no matter how far back in generations, you can "self-identify" as having ancestry. Official documentation or paperwork is not required.

#### **Why self-identify yourself or your child?**

Once students self-identify they may access a wide variety of academic, cultural and social/emotional supports, programs and activities (see examples below). Even if students do not access most the services available, self-identification helps assure programs and activities will be available for other students.

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## How Do We Self-Identify?

Please email our office at [abedinfo@sd43.bc.ca](mailto:abedinfo@sd43.bc.ca) and provide the following information:

- Student name, birthdate and home school
  - Parent name and contact information
  - Type of Ancestry (Status, Non-status, Metis, Inuit)
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### Common Questions

#### **What types of support are available?**

Aboriginal Education support may include such things as:

- Field trips
- “Rites of Passage” day camp in grades 5 & 8 for students moving on to new schools
- Cultural programs & activities in some schools
- Support from one of our staff members to “check in” with, make a connection and be available to talk or assist with personal issues
- Breakfast and lunch programs at some schools
- Aboriginal Youth Leadership Council for secondary students
- Invitation to Aboriginal Education community events
- Annual Honouring Ceremony for secondary students recognizing achievements and completion of grade 12. This ceremony is over and above school-based awards
- Awareness of, and applying for Aboriginal scholarships and bursaries for post-secondary.

#### **Will student be pulled out of classes for extra support?**

The only time a student will be taken from class for support is when this arrangement has already been made between the parent and either the classroom teacher or school-based support team. The department will be available to enhance the support once the decision is made.

There are some programs offered to middle and secondary school students (such as our Aboriginal Youth Leadership Committee or post-secondary institution visits) but these types of activities require parental-signed permission forms. If these events are during school hours, you will have a full description and notification.

#### **Is there a choice to self-identify and NOT receive extra supports?**

There are cases where parents and students choose to self-identify but do not want any additional supports. Due to funding regulations, we need to provide regular contact with all students who self-identify. Our goal is to honor and empower indigenous perspectives for all community learners through advocacy and support. Our department will work collaboratively with parents, students and staff to address the unique needs of each child. Other supports could include monitoring attendance and school progress, advising you of special events or simply just checking in with your child.

#### **How do I find and contact the Aboriginal Education staff member assigned to student’s school?**

Your school office can provide you with this information or call our Aboriginal Education office directly at 604-945-7386.

### **Continuation of Aboriginal Education Services**

We will continue to provide service to all children with Aboriginal Ancestry for this 2019-2020 school year. If you do not wish support from our department, please let us know by email. Unless we hear otherwise from you, we will assume that your child/children will continue with our program for this school year.

#### **Department Contact**

Should you have any questions or concerns throughout the school year, we encourage you to contact our office at 604-945-7386 to arrange an appointment with our District Principal, Ms. Gayle Bedard.