
BRIEFING NOTE

To: Board of Education

Prepared By: Dave Eberwein
Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Indigenous Education Council (IEC)
Terms of Reference (TOR)

Date: October 16, 2025

BACKGROUND

IEC Requirement

Indigenous Education Councils are a requirement of all 60 public school districts in British Columbia. Bill 40 (School Amendment Act, 2023) was introduced in the late fall of 2023.

IECs are independent from Boards of Education and prioritize membership to First Nations on whose territory school districts reside (i.e. WSÁNEĆ First Nation). Trustees and district staff can attend IEC meetings, if invited, but will not be voting members.

Boards do not direct the IEC. This means that Boards do not approve the Terms of Reference. These are written and approved by the IEC or, in this case, the WSÁNEĆ School Board and its administration. IEC voting members will most likely be comprised of WSÁNEĆ School Board members.

IEC Purpose

- To integrate Indigenous world views and perspectives
- To advise the Board on Indigenous student achievement
- To advise the Board on the distinct languages, cultures, customs, traditions and history of First Nations
- To advise the Board on other grants (e.g. Feeding Futures) in relation to Indigenous students
- To review and approve plans / reports related to Indigenous Education Targeted funds

Evolution of IEC Implementation

- Nov 2023
 - Bill 40 becomes law
- Jan 2024
 - Conversations with the WSÁNEĆ FN on IEC development

- Jan 2024
 - Provincial Terms of Reference (TOR) guidelines expected in Spring 2024; delayed to Fall 2024
- Sept 2024
 - Board-to-Board Retreat; IEC development conversation
- Nov 2024
 - The Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) acknowledged that IEC implementation is complex and will take more time than anticipated to complete
 - MECC provides a TOR template
 - Regular communication begins with the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board CEO on the development of the IEC TOR
 - Superintendent communicates regularly with MECC on the IEC development
- Oct 2025
 - The Superintendent, the District Principal of Indigenous Education (on leave), the District Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education, and most recently the Director of HR, met with the CEO of the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board and members of his administrative team to finalize the IEC TOR
 - Final IEC TOR is completed and approved by the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I am pleased to report that there is an approved IEC TOR from the Nation that is respectful and representative of local FN distinctions, in line with MECC expectations, operationally feasible, and aligned with Board policy. The dialogue and collaboration between the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation and the District were extensive requiring several meetings. The tone was professional, respectful and solution focused. Expressions of appreciation for our positive relationship and mutual trust were regularly shared between the parties. Both parties agree that this initial IEC TOR is a starting point and will likely evolve over time.

Currently, we do not yet have the names of the members of the IEC as they are still being determined by the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board.

The IEC TOR is being presented to the Board as an Information Item.

These IEC Terms of Reference will be submitted by the Superintendent to the Ministry on behalf of the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation and the IEC

IEC MEETING DATES

There will be three (3) scheduled meetings of the IEC every year, likely one per school term. Other meetings may be called by agreement between the IEC Chair and the Indigenous Education Department lead.

The plan is to schedule the first IEC meeting before the Winter Break (Nov/Dec 2025) which will include a conversation on Indigenous Education Targeted Funds. District representation is expected to consist of the Board Chair (or designate), Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer, and the District Principal for Indigenous Education. The date of this meeting is still being determined.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DE', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dave Eberwein, Superintendent

DE/klg

Attachments:

- INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL Saanich School District No.63 (Saanich) Terms of Reference
- Indigenous Education Councils – Initial Implementation (2-pager) - March 2025



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL Saanich School District No. 63 (Saanich)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

NAME

The official name will be the *Indigenous Education Council –School District No.63 (Saanich)* herein referenced as the ‘Council’. These Terms of Reference are intended to align with provincial legislation and the requirement for each Board of Education to establish and maintain an *Indigenous Education Council (IEC)*, as per Bill 40, School Amendment Act, 2023.

PREAMBLE

The Council is the lead voice for WŚÁNEĆ First Nations students and families, and all Indigenous students and families in Saanich School District No. 63, herein referenced as the ‘District’. The Council is not a committee of the Board of Education and is a standalone entity, meaning the Board of Education cannot direct the Council.

PURPOSE

The Council will work in partnership with the District to ensure the provision of ongoing comprehensive and equitable education and support services relevant to the needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in District schools to improve Indigenous student outcomes. This includes advising on the appropriate integration of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives, advising on grants in relation to Indigenous students, and ensuring respect for local WŚÁNEĆ ĆELÁÑEN, in whose Territories the Board of Education operate by giving priority to local cultural content, protocols and language.

The parties to this agreement recognize the distinctions-based approach and legacy relationship of the WŚÁNEĆ School Board, made up of the four independent WŚÁNEĆ First Nations of BOŖÉĆEN, SŖÁUTW, WJOŁEŁP, and WŚÍKEM, with continued inherent rights to self-government and self-determination, and unceded territorial rights as declared in the Saanich Indian Territorial Declaration.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) became law in Canada on June 21, 2021, and the Province of British Columbia passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA, Declaration Act) into law in November 2019.

The Council recognizes the Saanich Indian Territorial Declaration, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Declaration Act (DRIPA) as a Rights Based Framework for its work.

MISSION

Aligned with the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board, the Council's mission is to provide wholistic and inclusive learning environments that connect the cultural, emotional, physical, mental and spiritual needs of all learners with a priority focus on SENĆOŦEN SKÁL, SNEPENEK, W̱SÁNEĆ Values and ČELÁNEN ŁTE.

PHILOSOPHY: W̱SÁNEĆ VALUES

ŚWĒLOKE (Family)

W̱,Í,Í,ŁEN (Self-Respect)

ŦELÁNEN (Initiative)

ŁKIL (Confidence)

QENÁŁ (Responsibility)

Á,TOL E ŦE ELTÁNENW SŁÁs I, ŦE SKÁLS (Respect for the rights and values of others)

W̱U,ŁZEN I, ČÁ,ČI OL ŠXENÁNS (Positive attitude and willingness to work hard)

MEŦENÁN (Pride)

ŦE,ITKEN (Honesty)

ÍY, SLÁLE OL SŦO,ŦEM,ENEŁ (Safety)

BELIEFS - WE BELIEVE IN:

- Honouring W̱SÁNEĆ jurisdiction of this Territory and recognizing the importance of leadership in guiding Indigenous Education in Saanich Schools to ensure our children and families are a priority and deserve quality service.
- A holistic approach to improve educational success and equity of opportunity for students of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit ancestry.
- The scope of Indigenous Education Programs must include a focus on continuous improvement in the academic performance for Indigenous students based on evidence informed approaches and promising practices.
- Creating a welcoming, safe, respectful and inclusive climate in schools that builds self-esteem and community connections for all learners and their families.
- Increasing knowledge of and respect for W̱SÁNEĆ culture and language, and other Indigenous cultures, languages, and histories which empowers a greater understanding for everyone.

- Recognizing parents, families, communities and partner organizations as full partners in supporting learner success.
- Open and respectful communication at all levels.

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY: A GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The Council is committed to the collective responsibility of Indigenous communities and the school district working for the success of all W̱SÁNEĆ, First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners. All partners will work together to foster success for Indigenous students through relationship building and partnerships with parents, families and communities. We acknowledge the importance of this continuing relationship and commit to working towards establishing, maintaining, and improving our connections.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND OPERATIONS

The Council will work in partnership with the District to support Indigenous student growth and success as follows:

- a) Advising the Board on any matter relating to:
 - Providing comprehensive and equitable education programs and services to Indigenous students;
 - Improving Indigenous student achievement; and,
 - Integrating into learning environments Indigenous worldviews and perspectives, with a strong focus on W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations.
- 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 language, culture, customs, traditions, practices and history of W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations.

CONSULTATION ALSO INCLUDES:

1. To promote and monitor Indigenous education programs and services delivery by assisting in identifying educational needs and services, participating in review of annual goals, program design and evaluation, and partnering with First Nations in acquiring additional funding.
2. In partnership with the District, develop and approve spending of the annual Indigenous targeted funding grant and the Indigenous Education Council capacity funding.
3. Consult on the District's annual operating budget at times mutually agreed upon with the District. This may include community engagement meetings and other types of consultations.
4. To make recommendations on hiring procedures when recruiting for programs and services focused on the delivery of Indigenous histories and worldviews, and ways of knowing, being and

doing, or whose roles involve significant interaction with Indigenous students. Consultation may include reviewing proposed job descriptions, advising on posting and sharing current job opportunities, and participating in hiring processes. Additional strategies may include ensuring a Council voting member, Chair, Vice-Chair or designate participates in the District selection process for Principals/Vice-Principals and senior staff recruitment, including for the position of Superintendent of Schools. Recommendations may include the hiring of First Nations and other Indigenous persons, as well as providing suggestions to increase the number of employees with Indigenous ancestry.

5. Consulting on activities and resources related to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and National Indigenous Peoples Day, as well as seeking advice and protocols from W̱SÁNEĆ perspectives.
6. Consulting on training and professional learning related to cultural competencies, and the Professional Standards for BC Educators (BC Teachers' Council, Standard 9), including enhancing Indigenous student achievement or integrating Indigenous worldviews and perspectives into learning environments.
7. Consulting on reporting for the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning with a focus on Indigenous students.
8. Consulting on Board of Education policies that have a significant impact on Indigenous student success.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Members consist of the following **Voting Members**:

Two (2) representatives or two (2) alternates from each of the four W̱SÁNEĆ Nations:

BO̱ÉĆEN - Pauquachin, S̱ÁUTW̱ - Tsawout, W̱JO̱ELP̱ - Tsartlip, W̱SÍKEM - Tseycum

Designated members for the Council will be assigned in writing on a two (2) year term basis by the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board and/or individual Chief and Councils. Nations and organizations can determine the written form of member appointments via email, letter on letterhead, or Band Council Resolution (BCR) submitted by the signing authority for respective organization(s).

Membership consists of the following **ex-officio/non-voting Members**:

One (1) School District Trustee as determined by the Board of Education;

Two (2) members of school District Executive Leadership with one being the Superintendent;

Two (2) members of W̱SÁNEĆ School Board management, and one (1) W̱SB CEO, or designate(s);

School District Indigenous Education lead;

One (1) parent representative per W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, of W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations student(s) (may not be employees of School District) appointed by the Council;

One (1) Elder per W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation, selected and appointed by W̱SÁNEĆ Nation or by the Council;

Recording secretary(s) as required.

Other guests from W̱SÁNEĆ based advocacy agencies, post-secondary institutions, education partner groups, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders may be invited by the Council as required. Should a member of the Council resign for any reason, that member will notify the Chair and the secretariat in writing.

QUORUM

Quorum for the Council is five (5) voting members.

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

The Council will strive for effective and efficient decision-making processes. Consensus decision-making is defined by seeking agreement from all members, prioritizing the inclusion of every voice and ensuring that concerns are addressed before reaching a final decision, rather than relying on a majority vote. This approach values collective wisdom and interconnectedness within the community.

The Chair will monitor the group and ask for consensus when no dissenting opinions are voiced. If no decision can be made efficiently, the Chair will facilitate a majority vote restricted to voting members.

CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected by the Council voting members at the initial meeting of the new school year for a one (1) year term.

The role of the Chair is to facilitate meetings of the Council, work with the District to establish meeting agendas, identify materials for meetings and oversee meeting minutes.

In addition, the Chair will review advice and recommendations to be submitted to the Board of Education to ensure an accurate reflection of the Council's advice. The Chair may be invited to participate in various meetings with the District, including the Board of Education's standing committees.

The Chair will serve as a spokesperson as required. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will assume the role of Chair, or the Chair can delegate tasks or duties to another member where appropriate. The Chair and Vice Chair shall not be School District employees or a Trustee.

The School District Indigenous Education lead (District Principal) will develop and collaborate a meeting agenda in consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair at least 5 workdays prior to a scheduled meeting and then circulate this agenda to members of the Council. The District will also provide a main point of contact for the Council to assist in membership tracking, setting priorities, providing information and liaising between the District and the Council. This may be the School District Indigenous Education lead, or another person as designated.

Recommendations and advice from the Council will be provided to the Board in writing through the Chair.

MEETINGS

At least three (3) meetings will be held in person per school year, and meeting schedules will align with the annual calendar to support District and community priorities. In addition, and in consultation between the Chair and the School District Indigenous Education lead, ad hoc meetings of the Council may be called to address urgent matters, committee work or community engagement planning as necessary. The first Council meeting will typically be in October following the confirmation of September enrollment numbers. Meetings are considered 'closed' meetings, adhering to the Terms of Reference for membership. If, in the opinion of the Council, the public interest so requires, and to protect the personal information of persons including personnel and students, persons other than Council members and the recording secretary may be excluded from a meeting. Minutes are to be recorded at every meeting by the secretariat or an appointed minute taker and approved at the subsequent meeting. These minutes will be made publicly available, except where in-camera.

Funding for honoraria, travel and meeting costs incurred to attend and host meetings will be provided by the Indigenous Education Council Capacity grants, if funds are available. Honoraria and travel costs for voting members will be provided by the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board (WSB) as per WSB honoraria rate(s) and W̱SÁNEĆ School Board travel claim policy processes. Non-voting representatives from First Nations or non-staff representatives may also receive an honorarium and travel costs as determined by the Council.

COMMITMENT

Three (3) hours will be the allocated meeting time (which may be extended, if necessary, and with the approval of the Council and others who are invited and required). The Terms of Reference are to be reviewed and updated at the request of the Council. The Council Chair/Vice-Chair will contact the First Nation if a voting member is unable to attend meetings on a regular basis with a request to appoint new representation.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Treat People with caring, respect, and kindness.

- Bring out concerns in a good way (tact).
- Be respectful of others and their perspectives in the role of leadership.
- Act and speak with pride and dignity, honour the belief of supporting unity.
- Be appreciative of diversity, honest with opinion, and respectful of others even in disagreement.

Provide support for one another by:

- Working cooperatively with each other to solve problems and support mutual concerns.
- Honouring and respecting commitments to family, community, and organizations.
- Supporting and working towards ongoing development of programs and services to students.
- Recognizing that all individuals bring insights to the work from diverse life experiences.
- Committing to information sharing, reinforcing cultural teachings, and a holistic approach to life-long learning and child family development.

Make decisions with a clear mind by:

- Attending meetings on time, in a proper frame of mind.
- Welcoming information and the best available advice while reserving the right to arrive at a decision based upon one's own judgment.
- Accepting that at times a decision may be made by the Council that is not one's own decision.
- Providing feedback in a constructive way and when suggesting alternative considerations.
- Recognizing that time and energy may be limited.
- Endeavoring to keep disagreements and controversies impersonal, thereby promoting unity.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of Interest means:

- Being directly or indirectly interested in gain for oneself, one's friends, or one's family in any existing or proposed contract, transaction, or arrangement with School District(s) and the Council.
- Promoting a family member's interest over the interest of others.

DUTY

Each member will act in utmost good faith towards the Council. No member shall place themselves in a position where there is a conflict or a perceived conflict between duties as a Council member and other interests. A perceived conflict of interest exists when a Council member's private interests would appear to a reasonable person to conflict with their Council responsibilities, even though there may not actually be a conflict.

DISCLOSURE

Every Council member who is, in any way, directly or indirectly interested in any existing or proposed contract, transaction, or arrangement with the District and the Council, or who otherwise has a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest, will declare the interest fully at Council meetings and shall leave the meeting until such time as the conflict matter has been dealt with and shall refrain from discussion and decision-making in that matter.

TIME OF DECLARATION

A member will disclose any conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest at the first possible meeting when the issue will be discussed.

EFFECT OF DECLARATION

If a Council member has made a declaration of their conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest and has refrained from discussion and decision-making, the member is not accountable to the Council.

NON-DISCLOSURE

When a member has reason to believe that another member has failed to declare a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest, that member may request their colleague to participate and ask the member to declare the conflict. The Council will decide whether the member is in conflict and record its decision.

RECORD

Every declaration of conflict of interest will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

REMOVAL

Any Council member who contravenes this conflict-of-interest standard may be removed from the Council based upon a review by the Council.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Council members will not divulge information that has been termed confidential concerning any matter (e.g. students, staff, projects, or proposal submissions to any persons) whether they are directly involved or not. Any member who breaks confidentiality may be removed from the Council based on a review by the Council.

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Working committees of the Council are created on an ongoing basis when needed and participation is voluntary. Council Committees are made up of Council members and can be ongoing from year to year as well as temporary for a variety of initiatives. Invitations to serve on committees are conducted annually at the first meeting of the Council. Some committees may include, but are not limited to:

- Education Enhancement Agreement (EA) and Equity in Action Project (Equity Scan)
- Local Education Agreement (LEA)
- Enhancing Student Learning and Student Achievement
- Hiring
- Budget
- Indigenous Education School Projects & Special Events
- Indigenous Education Council Scholarships & Bursaries
- Terms of Reference

HIRING PREFERENCE

Preferential hiring will be in place for all Indigenous Education positions designated through application to the Human Rights Tribunal under section 42 of the Human Rights Code in the following order:

1. Preference will be given to a person meeting job qualifications, experience and seniority (where applicable) of WSÁNEĆ ancestry;
2. Preference will be given to a person meeting job qualifications, experience and seniority (where applicable) of Indigenous ancestry; and,
3. A candidate meeting all job qualifications and experience.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Authority for signatures for the IEC Terms of Reference rests with the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board Chair and/or Vice-Chair, as the Board is comprised of the four W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation's Chiefs and Councils. If the Chair/Vice-Chair of the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board identify a signatory designate, this name must be provided in advance to the Council in writing.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties have executed this Agreement as of:

Implementation Date: _____

Authorized Signatures: _____

Indigenous Education Councils

– Initial Implementation



Indigenous Education Councils (IECs) are intended to reflect and support the distinct and diverse Indigenous student population in their school district, while respecting local First Nations in whose territories the board and the IEC operate. Each board of education must establish and maintain an IEC.

STEP 1: A board must invite each local First Nations to designate two persons (or more) to be members of the IEC, and the board must appoint those persons designated.

1.

The First Nation(s) determine who their representative is. This may be a member of Chief and Council, an education coordinator, an Elder, etc.

It is up to First Nations to decide whether to accept an invitation to designate representatives to an IEC, and who to designate as representatives.

STEP 2: Using their student data, a board must consider the distinctions and diversity of the Indigenous student population served by the board and **must seek the advice of local First Nations** on establishing an IEC that reasonably reflects that Indigenous student population.

2.

The board must then invite additional persons to the IEC that bring perspectives relevant to the Indigenous student population. Such persons may be individuals who bring perspectives of local First Nation students, First Nation students from other parts of British Columbia or outside of BC, Métis students, or Inuit students.

The board must endeavor to achieve an IEC where the total number of representatives of local First Nations are not outnumbered by the additional representatives.



3.

STEP 3: Once established, **an IEC creates its own Terms of Reference**, including determining a decision-making process. This is one of the first tasks of the newly formed IEC. Template IEC Terms of Reference are provided – and are expected to be used as the minimum standard Terms of Reference for an IEC.



REMINDERS

1. Boards will maintain **secretariat and administrative support** for the IEC, including covering reasonable costs of holding meetings and IEC member travel to attend meetings when they are held in-person.
2. **IEC capacity funding** for the 2024/25 school year has been provided as a targeted grant to cover costs associated with establishing and maintaining IECs, including secretariat support, activities, and costs related to IECs carrying out their purposes. For clarity, IECs will approve and be involved in the planning, spending, and reporting of IEC Capacity Funding.
3. Once established, an IEC may create its own rules related to inviting non-voting guests to attend IEC meetings, consistent with the *School Act* and the IEC Order. **School board trustees and employees are not eligible to be voting members of an IEC**, pursuant to section 87.004 (2) of the *School Act*.
4. A board **must seek the input and advice**, and obtain the approval, of the IEC on the board's Indigenous Education Targeted Funding (IETF) plans, spending, and any reporting. For clarity, **the board may only implement the IETF plan with IEC approval**. The minimum amount of IETF spending is set by the Ministry. IETF spending must align with the Ministry of Education and Child Care's IETF policy.
5. **An IEC advises and makes recommendations to the board on supporting the Indigenous student population**. The IEC members bring forward perspectives relevant to the distinctions and diversity among that student population, while being respectful of the perspectives of local First Nations.
6. A board must seek the advice of **local First Nations on any matter relating to the distinct languages, cultures, customs, traditions, practices, or history of the local First Nations**, and must consult with those First Nations on how those matters may be integrated into learning environments or staff training offered by the board.
7. A board must consult the IEC on procedures **to recruit and hire staff** that develop and deliver programs and services for Indigenous students, or whose roles involve significant interaction with Indigenous students. Consultation may include reviewing proposed job descriptions, advising on posting or sharing current job opportunities to reach potential candidates, and IEC participation in hiring processes.