



## **NEW AGREEMENT FOSTERS EQUITY FOR INDIGENOUS LEARNERS**

February 19, 2020

KELOWNA, BC – Indigenous education and student success in Central Okanagan Public Schools will take a historic step forward tomorrow, at a signing ceremony for the *Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation Agreement*. The celebration continues the journey to ensure the practice of equity for all learners throughout the District's 45 schools and 3 learning centres.

"This agreement helps us realize a shared vision of how we will support our Indigenous learners," said Moyra Baxter, Chairperson for the Board of Education. "As educators, we must learn from the past together and work together now to make sure that each student has opportunities for a bright future."

The *Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation Agreement* sets specific and measurable strategies to increase opportunities for Indigenous learners in all public schools, in accordance with provincial mandates for Truth and Reconciliation. The document also ensures that the voices of Indigenous students and Indigenous leaders guide education, so that all students can benefit from Indigenous perspectives and ways of learning.

"It is encouraging to see that our educational institutions are implementing the TRC Calls to Action," says Chief Christopher Derickson, Westbank First Nation. "This agreement demonstrates our ongoing commitment to work with our partners in creating space for our Indigenous learners and knowledge systems."

Alongside Westbank First Nation, Okanagan Indian Band, the Okanagan Nation Alliance, local Indigenous community partners, and the Ministry of Education, the District created the new five-year agreement.

"We teach learners to collaborate so they can thrive in a changing world," said Kevin Kaardal, Superintendent of Schools/CEO. "We are grateful to everyone who collaborated to make this agreement possible, including the Board of Education Trustees, the Indigenous Education Council, the Equity in Action Committee, and several representatives from local Indigenous communities."

The signing ceremony will take place at the Sensisyusten House of Learning tomorrow night. We invite media to join over 400 invitees to witness the momentous occasion.

Event: *Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation* Signing Celebration

Date: February 20, 2020

Time: 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Sensisyusten House of Learning, 1920 Quail Lane, Westbank First Nation, V4T 2H3

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For comments, please contact:

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