



Date: June 17, 2024
For Immediate Release

Cowichan Valley School District and Cowichan Tribes receive \$10,000 Reconciliation Partnership Award

Cowichan Valley - The Board of Education for the Cowichan Valley School District and Quw'utsun Syuw'entst Lelum/Cowichan Tribes are thrilled to announce they are the recipients of the inaugural \$10,000 Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA) National Partnership Reconciliation Award.

The CBSA National Partnership Reconciliation Award is a testament to the unique commitment of the Board and Cowichan Tribes in fostering reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. This partnership has prioritized preserving and promoting the Hul'q'umi'num' language and culture, the elevation of Indigenous representation in staff roles, and the cultivation of culturally appropriate learning and teaching methods, including a strong focus on land and place-based learning. These distinctive initiatives have been the bedrock of the Cowichan Valley School District's work and have been integral to the district's strategic plan, 'Beyond Education,' since 2020.

"We are deeply grateful to have been chosen, in partnership with Cowichan Tribes, as the first recipients of the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA) National Partnership Reconciliation Award. This recognition is a testament to our strong bond and our thorough efforts to acknowledge and respect Indigenous language and culture within our school district," expressed Cathy Schmidt, Chair of the Board of Education for the Cowichan Valley School District. "We are grateful to our Superintendent, Robyn Gray, for nominating Trustee Joe Thorne and the Board of Education for their outstanding efforts."

"This award from the Canadian School Boards Association is a wonderful recognition of the partnership between Cowichan Tribes' Quw'utsun Syuw'entst Lelum department and the Cowichan Valley School District. One example is the collaboration that has gone into to the building of the new Quw'utsun Secondary School. I especially want to congratulate Chuck Seymour, our Language and Culture Manager, for his work and our Education Director, Roxanne Harris for nominating him. Together with the District, our staff have been working to transform educational approaches and create positive, inclusive, and culturally enriching classrooms where all learners can shine," said Chief Cindy Daniels. "Reconciliation is an ongoing process

and we look forward to continuing to work with the Cowichan Valley School District to incorporate Quw'utsun ways of knowing and Hul'q'umi'num' language and culture into the learning journey," added Daniels.

Representatives from both organizations will attend the annual CSBA National Trustees Gathering on Indigenous Education and Congress to receive the \$10,000 award in person for the closing ceremonies on July 5, 2024, in Toronto. This money will be used to further enhance Indigenous education and collaboration between both organizations.

-30-

Jeff Rowan, Assistant Superintendent
Communications and Community Engagement
2557 Beverly Street, Duncan BC
250-710-7120
www.sd79.bc.ca

Our Journey is **Beyond Education**