

Updated Oct 1 2020

Memorandum of Understanding  
Between the  
Cowichan Valley Métis Association

And

The Board of Education of School District No.79  
(Cowichan Valley)

October 1, 2020

## Introduction

This Memorandum of Understanding provides a significant opportunity for the Cowichan Valley Métis Nation and School District 79 Cowichan Board of Education to focus attention on excellent educational outcomes for Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students and on developing the relationship necessary to accomplish that mutual goal.

The gap in educational outcomes between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students is a persisting legacy of colonialism, and concerted efforts and proactive measures are required to eliminate this gap and contribute to reconciliation in education.

The *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* provide a framework for reconciliation for the Board of Education. This requires the parties to work together to change policies, practises and programs in School District 79 in a concerted effort to repair the harm caused by residential schools and the governmental policies of assimilation and oppression.

THIS AGREEMENT made and entered into this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of February, 2021 shall be effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of September 2020.

BETWEEN:

**The Cowichan Valley Métis Association Elected Board**  
(herein after called Cowichan Valley Métis Nation)

AND:

**THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 79 Cowichan Valley**  
(herein after called the “Board of Education”)  
(collectively called the “Parties”)

**WHEREAS** the Cowichan Valley Métis Association Elected Board, as the governing body of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation, has a vested interest in and commitment to the education of it’s members.

**AND WHEREAS** Cowichan Valley Métis Nation places great value on our children and their educational success.

**AND WHEREAS** the Board of Education has the authority under section 86 (3) of the School Act to enter into an agreement with the Cowichan Valley Metis Nation Chartered Community with respect to the education of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students.

**AND WHEREAS** it is recognized that the Board of Education is the legislated authority relating to the governance and operation of public schools, school personnel and students as per the *School Act 1996* and as may be amended from time to time;

**AND WHEREAS** Cowichan Valley Métis Nation desires that these services will be respectful and reflective of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation culture and linguistic heritage with emphasis on satisfaction and pride for Cowichan Valley Métis Nation and the Board of Education.

**The Parties** wish to enter into this agreement to set out processes and content by which they will continue to work together to provide education programs and additional educational service for Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students who attend schools within School District No. 79 Cowichan Valley.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 This Agreement recognizes and confirms the benefits of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation and the Board of Education working together for the success of all students, but in particular for the success of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students.
- 1.2 The agreement identifies accountabilities, responsibilities, communication protocols, between Cowichan Valley Métis Nation and the Board of Education.

## **2.0 Guiding Principles and Values**

### **2.1 Cowichan Valley Métis Nation Role in Education**

- a) Cowichan Valley Métis Nation families and community have the right to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, education and well-being of their children.
- b) Cowichan Valley Métis Nation has a central role in the education of their students.

### **2.2 Cowichan Valley Métis Nation Students Access to Quality Education**

- c) Cowichan Valley Métis Nation Students must have access to excellent educational opportunities that:
  - i. ensure that they are confident in their self-identity, their families, their communities and traditional values, languages and cultures;
  - ii. give them the skills they need to thrive in contemporary society;
  - iii. prepare them to access any opportunities they choose for higher learning, employment and life.

### **2.3 Reconciliation & Collaboration in Education**

- d) Cowichan Valley Métis Nation student education **requires collaboration and cooperation with a trusting, respectful relationship, building understanding and being innovative** so that all Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students are supported to achieve successful education outcomes.
- e) The Parties have a shared interest and priority in supporting excellence in education, including supporting Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students to fulfil their educational potential by having access to and receiving **quality education that is respectful and reflective of their unique culture and history**.
- f) Curriculum, materials and resources will meaningfully reflect Cowichan Valley Métis Nations' culture, values, language and traditions, teachings and heritage as approved and determined by Cowichan Valley Métis Nation or its designate.

#### **2.4 Parental Engagement**

- g) Parents are an integral part of the educational journey of each Cowichan Valley Métis Nation student and as such, must be included in the planning and decisions regarding their child's education.

#### **2.5 Student Safety**

- h) Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students have a right to feel safe at school, including safety from racism (students and staff), indifference, bias, marginalization, bullying and stereotyping.

#### **2.6 Shared Accountability and Data-Sharing**

- i) Timely and relevant data is required to inform decision-making to support Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students.
- j) Open and effective communication benefits Cowichan Valley Métis Nation student success.

### **3. Shared Responsibilities**

Consistent with the principles and term of this agreement, Cowichan Valley Métis Nation and the Board of Education will continue to work together to:

- a. Support and provide for the development of policies, programs, services, curriculum and other educational opportunities that promote the success of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students.
- b. Enhance and affirm a strong **identity, pride in heritage and healthy self-esteem in Cowichan Valley Métis Nation** students.
- c. **Actively involve Elders and other Cowichan Valley Métis Nation knowledge keepers** in the education of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation and other Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.
- d. **Assess, respect and understand the educational needs of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students** with their families and /or advocate(s) and deliver individual, personalized services that will meet these needs.
- e. Ensure that supports and services are available for all Cowichan Valley Métis Nation learners who are involved in Cowichan Valley Métis Nation cultural activities that may for certain periods take them away from attending school. These circumstances shall be reviewed by Cowichan Valley Métis Nation or designate and the Board of Education or designate to determine supports and/or academic credits that may apply.
- f. Make sure a **holistic comprehensive educational plan is developed and implemented for each Cowichan Valley Métis Nation student that supports any areas of vulnerability** with particular attention to the development of strong literacy, numeracy and Core Competencies.
- g. Ensure that each Cowichan Valley Métis Nation student who is capable, graduates with a **Dogwood Certificate**, ready to

pursue any life path they choose including post-secondary education or employment.

- h. Ensure supports and services are available to all Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students requiring **learning assistance or other educational supports**, including but not limited to students with special needs and /or in foster, adoptive, or other types of care.
- i. Develop a future looking plan in collaboration with the parent/guardian, student (as appropriate), Cowichan Valley Metis Nation and School District staff that provides support and opportunities for those students who, based on appropriate assessment and designations, have a **significant cognitive impairment** that will preclude them from graduating with a Dogwood. This plan will be designed to assist the student in achieving success after completing school.
- j. Jointly address Cowichan Valley Métis Nation student **early leavers** by developing and implementing strategies or programs to re-engage each student and keep them in school, working towards regular attendance and graduation.
- k. Create a plan to **engage parents** on a regular basis and in an inclusive way.
- l. **Co-present to the Board of Education and Cowichan Valley Métis Nation Board** the progress, success and challenges faced during the school year. The reporting will occur in May of each year on a mutually agreed upon date.
- m. Work together for the continuing recruitment and hiring of Métis support staff, teachers and administrators in the Indigenous education department and throughout the district.
- n. To actively involve, support and ensure an **awareness of this Agreement**, its deliverables and responsibilities by all those who play an important role in the success of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students:
  - i. From Cowichan Valley Métis Nation: The Board, the Elders, and Community;

- ii. From the Board of Education: Trustees, senior management, administrators, teachers and support staff, the Indigenous Education program staff, district support team, and school based teams.
- o. Promote and support regular in-service and professional learning activities focused on developing awareness, understanding, and appreciation for Cowichan Valley Métis Nation culture, traditions, teaching, heritage and Michif language.

#### 4. Board Responsibilities

4.1 In accordance with the terms of this Agreement the board agrees to:

- a. Ensure that Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students have equitable access to educational programs;
- b. Ensure that any learning assessments required are conducted in a timely manner and that early screening of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students for areas of vulnerability occur throughout the student's educational journey as needed.
- c. Dedicate Indigenous Education staff to district schools that have Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students and to make certain that these workers are duly qualified to provide the necessary supports to enhance and engage Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students with a main objective of meeting their educational goals.
- d. Explore and identify alternate discipline models such as restorative justice for Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students, **working together with Cowichan Valley Métis Nation** and consistent with the Board Code of Conduct, existing Board conflict resolution practices, policies and Ministerial Order Code of Conduct.



- p. Promote an understanding of and appreciation for the history, language and culture of Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, including required curriculum on the residential school experience, with a focus on Métis Nation history, Michif language and culture;
- q. Promote the offering of, and enrollment in, English First Peoples 10, 11 and 12 and BC First Peoples 12, Contemporary Indigenous Studies 12, and BAA courses with Indigenous focused content and activities for all students;
- r. Allocate \$13,000 year to Cowichan Valley Métis Nation for the delivery of the 5-day Métis camp program.
- s. Allocate \$8,000 year to support innovative Métis focused classroom/school projects and/or events. This fund will be distributed through an application process where teachers will submit applications to a joint Métis Nation/SD selection group consisting of up to 2 individuals as delegated by the Métis Nation and up to 2 individuals as delegated by the Board of Education.

## 5 Reporting

### 5.1 Annual Report:

Once a year the School District Indigenous Education lead and Métis Nation lead will prepare an annual report which they will **co- present to the Board of Education and Métis Nation. The report will describe** the progress, success and challenges in regards to the implementation of this agreement.

The report will also include:

- i) financial reports related to this Agreement, which are prepared by the Board of Education in the regular course of its operation and which include a copy of the audited financial statements;
- ii) a financial report on the Targeted Indigenous Education Funding;
- iii) attendance rates;
- iv) percentage of students who are on track or extending for reading, writing and numeracy in grades 4 and 7;
- v) grade to grade transition rates, including retention rates;
- vi) graduation and six-year graduation rates;
- vii) proportion of students awarded an Evergreen Certificate;

- viii) number of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students eligible to move on to post-secondary education;
- ix) a list of courses and programs offered that emphasize Indigenous knowledges and cultures;
- x) How many Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students are accessing Indigenous Education services and the type and frequency of the services accessed.
- xi) An overview of the Métis focused events or initiatives that have occurred over the course of the school year.

5.2 In early October of each year, the Board of Education will provide to Cowichan Valley Métis Nation current 1701 data including, but not limited to, how many Cowichan Valley Métis Nation students are enrolled in each school, the proportion of students who are Métis, and other relevant information. They will also provide an overview of Indigenous Education staffing including the number of Métis people in the department.

5.3 In early May of each year, the Board of Education will provide Cowichan Valley Métis Nation with the number of students and list of schools where Métis students are graduating.

## **6 Cowichan Valley Métis Nation Responsibilities**

6.1 In accordance with the terms of the Agreement, Cowichan Valley Métis Nation agrees to:

- a) Promote the active participation and involvement of Parents and other community members of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation in the education of their children, including the promotion of regular attendance, seeking help when needed and attending School District or School activities;
- b) Provide a point of contact for the Board.

## **7 Joint Working Group**

7.1 The Board of Education and the Cowichan Valley Métis Nation will form a staff Joint Working Group within 20 working days of the signing of the Agreement. The Joint Working Group will include the district lead for Indigenous Education and the Cowichan Valley Métis

Nation lead for education. Other individuals may be invited to the meetings as needed. The district will act as secretariat for these meetings, preparing agendas and recording minutes. The group will meet in September of each year to set areas of focus and a meeting schedule.

7.2 The overall purpose of the working group will be to coordinate the implementation, monitoring, and progress reporting of this Agreement.

7.3 Cowichan Valley Métis Nation and the Board of Education agree additional services or programs not contemplated by this Agreement may be provided by the Board of Education if Cowichan Valley Métis Nation and the Board of Education agree to the terms and the costs for such services or programs.

## **8 Termination and Default**

8.1 Either Cowichan Valley Métis Nation or the Board of Education may terminate the Agreement for any reason by providing the other party written notice by March 31 in any year to be effective the following August.

8.2 Once this Agreement has been terminated, obligations of Cowichan Valley Métis Nation and the Board of Education to each other, will cease subject only to federal and provincial legislation and regulations.

## **9 Dispute Resolution**

If a dispute arises between parties in relation to this Agreement, the parties agree to use their best efforts to resolve such disputes in a reasonable and timely manner, in good faith and in a way that fosters an improved, ongoing and respectful relationship between Cowichan Valley Métis Nation and the Board of Education.

## **10 Term**

10.1 This agreement will be in effect for the 2020 - 2021 school year and will continue until the end of the 2023 - 2024 school year unless terminated earlier as provided in this agreement.

10.2 The parties will review this agreement prior to the end of March of each year and may make amendments to the agreement at that time: such amendments will be effective on the following August 31<sup>st</sup>.

## 11 Notice

Any notices or communications pursuant to this Agreement shall be in writing and shall be delivered to, or sent by prepaid courier or confirmed by email, addressed as follows:

Cowichan Valley Métis Nation Education  
Attn: Elected Leader, Richard Lewis  
60 Queens Road  
Duncan, B.C.  
V9L 2R1  
Email: [presidentcvmn@gmail.com](mailto:presidentcvmn@gmail.com) and [cvmn@shaw.ca](mailto:cvmn@shaw.ca)

In case of communication with the Board  
Attn: Superintendent of Schools, Robyn Gray  
Board of Education of School District No. 79 (Cowichan Valley)  
2557 Beverly Street  
Duncan, BC. V9L 2X3  
Email: [rgray@sd79.bc.ca](mailto:rgray@sd79.bc.ca)

## 12 General

12.1 The Board and Lake Cowichan each reserve the right to delegate the implementation of this agreement to one or more of their employees.


12.2 This Agreement will be governed by and construed in accordance with the law in force in the Province of B.C.

Updated Oct 1 2020


**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** Cowichan Valley Métis Nation and the Board have caused this Agreement to be executed by their duly authorized representative and signatories as of July 1, 2020


**Cowichan Valley Métis Nation:  
EDUCATION**

**THE BOARD OF  
DISTRICT NO.79 (COWICHAN VALLEY)**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Elected Leader,  
Cowichan Valley Métis Nation Elected Council

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson,  
School District No. 79

  
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Education Representative,  
Cowichan Valley Métis Nation Elected Council

  
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Superintendent of Schools,  
School District No. 79