

# Our Commitment to Student Success

*Responding to the B.C. Tripartite Education Agreement*

## “Tth’ele Mukw’ihwet – Heart of the People.”

Joe Thorne, BCSTA Elder and Knowledge Keeper (Hul’q’umi’num)

Indigenous students must have access to educational opportunities that ensure they are confident in their identity, their families, their communities and traditional values, languages and cultures.

The BCTEA:

- a. recognizes that all students, particularly those of Indigenous ancestry, should have the opportunity, when possible, to learn an Indigenous language with the support of the Indigenous community;
- b. commits to better understanding communities’ needs for language revitalization initiatives, and how it can support initiatives, particularly those related to Indigenous language learning curriculum, program development, teacher training, professional development, and policy; and
- c. continues to ensure a collaborative, co-created process to support K-12 Indigenous language learning, including consultation with Indigenous language learning educators and experts, Indigenous communities, and school districts

B.C. is home to 34 Indigenous languages, half of Canada’s Indigenous languages. Today, fewer than 4,200 people speak one of B.C.’s original languages.

Boards are working with local First Nations towards realizing the first principle outlined in the BCTEA: “Indigenous families and communities have the right to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, training, education and well-being of their children, consistent with the rights of the child, and Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.”

Districts are also working to add endangered languages to the provincial curriculum (such as SD57, 91 and 28, where the Dakelh language spoken by the Lheidli T’enneh First Nation in Prince George and by other communities in north central and northwest B.C.).

Indigenous members of our committee invite you to review resources from their districts:

School District 28 (Quesnel) ✦

School District 79 (Cowichan Valley)

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The First Peoples’ Language Map  
Native Land

### TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s (TRC) Calls to Action are focused on addressing the historical and ongoing damage caused by the residential school system.

Recommendation 13: “Language and culture - We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.”

Recommendation 14 reinforces that “the preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.”

In 2018, B.C. made a historic \$50 million investment to support the First Peoples’ Cultural Council’s work to revitalize Indigenous communities language and culture. The First Peoples’ Cultural Council (FPCC) is an Indigenous-led, provincial crown corporation that works in partnership with Indigenous communities to support their cultural revitalization goals. In 2019/20, FPCC provided \$15.68 million to communities and created 3,134 language immersion opportunities across B.C.

There are 18 First Nations languages with curriculum approval to be taught in B.C. schools, with more in development.

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) Annual Report. ✦

Indigenous peoples include the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

For more information contact Gordon Li,  
Director Education Services, [gli@bcsta.org](mailto:gli@bcsta.org)

### RESOURCES ✦

BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA)

B.C. Declaration on the Rights  
of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)



Indigenous  
Education  
Committee