

# **Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements**

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# Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements

## Creating an Enhancement Agreement

- It is a working agreement between a school district and all local Aboriginal communities.
- It involves shared decision-making.
- It recognizes and honours traditional Aboriginal culture.

## BCTF message

Assessment: If we are favouring literacy and numeracy then we are not taking into account the whole child. Look to provide alternatives to the accountability cycle.

## Authenticity

An example of an Enhancement Agreement (EA) that addresses the needs of the whole child is the Burnaby Board of Education's agreement.

(To view, see [www.sd41.bc.ca/aboriginal\\_education/pdf/aboriginalAgreement.pdf](http://www.sd41.bc.ca/aboriginal_education/pdf/aboriginalAgreement.pdf))

A successful implementation of an EA is central to maintaining the positive relationships between public schools and the Aboriginal communities.

## Accountability

- Not about standardized testing.
- All about taking responsibility.

Working together to enable vision and goal-setting in all areas for Aboriginal students and, ultimately, all students.

## Nine elements of the Enhancement Agreement

1. The Aboriginal communities must be represented by a unified body, whose authority to speak for the Aboriginal communities, is accepted by the Aboriginal communities.
  - It is not necessary to have the answer on how to get to this point, but at least ask the question.
  - The goal/key is to have parents at the table.
  - When there is no Band, i.e., urban and rural traditional territory, representation may look very different.
2. Shared decision-making by the Aboriginal communities and the school district must be an established practice.
  - Team building has to happen before you can get to shared decision-making.
3. Both the Aboriginal communities and the school districts must support participation in the Enhancement Agreement.
  - Local teacher union participation is crucial.
  - We don't want segregated thinking, "them and us."

4. Joint consultation and collaboration between the Aboriginal communities and the school districts will enable vision and goal-setting in all areas of education for Aboriginal learners.
  - Aboriginal people understand that education has a purpose; it should help students to identify their passion for learning.
  - Currently, the primary focus is on literacy, numeracy, and social responsibility.
5. The Aboriginal communities and the school district track key performance indicators at the student level.
  - Are we tracking the “whole” child?
  - Share the different ways of assessment.
  - Use *spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional* areas as guides for assessment tools.
6. Aboriginal communities and the school district must be committed to regular reporting of results.
  - What does commitment involve?
  - Where is the “whole” child in the reporting?
  - Who will pay for it?
7. The scope of the Aboriginal Education program must include a focus on continuous improvement in the academic performance of all Aboriginal students.
  - Is there undue pressure put upon the child and teachers?
  - Where is the “whole” child?
  - Why just academic performance?
8. Meeting the cultural needs of Aboriginal students in all aspects of learning includes resources, strategies, and assessment.
  - How do cultural needs fit into these strategies?
  - The Ministry of Education must provide for the in-services and resources.
  - What is the process for selecting the strategies that are used?
9. Focus on increasing knowledge of, and respect for, Aboriginal culture, language, and history enables a greater understanding for everyone about Aboriginal people.
  - Learning about each other’s culture and history opens up cross-cultural exchanges, thereby enabling a greater understanding for everyone.

### **For further information**

Please contact Gail Stromquist, Aboriginal Education Program co-ordinator at 604-871-1854 or toll free 1-800-663-9163 (local 1854)  
email: [gstromquist@bctf.ca](mailto:gstromquist@bctf.ca), website: [bctf.ca](http://bctf.ca)