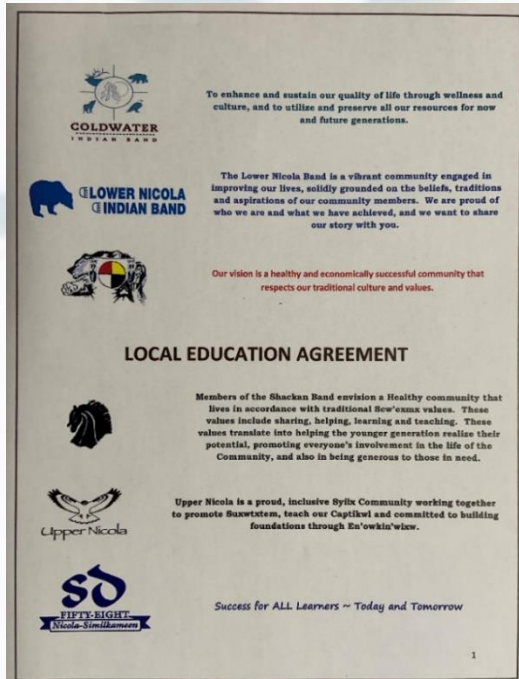


**School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen)**  
**News Release**  
**October 5, 2020 – Local Education Agreement Signed**



The Board of Education (Nicola/Similkameen) and the Local Education Agreement (LEA) working committee are extremely pleased to announce the signing of a joint Local Education Agreement. This important document underpins the essential relationship between School District #58 and the local First Nations Communities of Coldwater, Lower Nicola, Nooaitch, Shackan and Upper Nicola. These relationships are grounded in the understanding that First Nations have a central role in the education of their students, regardless of where they attend school.

By working together, both the District and local communities have been able to improve the level of success experienced by our students. Completion rates have been steadily increasing during the last five years, reaching an all-time high in 2018-2019 of

89%. This could not have been realized without the understanding that First Nation Students must have access to educational opportunities that ensure they are confident in their self-identity, families, communities, traditional values, language, culture, and academic success.

Both the Board of Education and the LEA Committee believe that the guiding principles and the joint responsibilities and commitments outlined in the LEA will continue to foster reconciliation, collaboration, and successful educational outcomes. Past highlights of this work have included a commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation process within all facets of the district, a comprehensive and constantly expanding set of local culture programs, and long standing local language learning at both the elementary and secondary level.

Prior to going forward we would like to give thanks to the elders, knowledge keepers and educators across the communities and the School District for the years of dedication and efforts to improve educational outcomes and experiences not only for First Nations students but for all students. With this thanks also comes our commitment to putting the joint LEA into action, and a promise to continue to move us forward to the District goal of "Success for ALL Learners – Today and Tomorrow".

In closing we would like to express a sincere thank you to all our local Chiefs, Council Members, and our Education Coordinators. It is abundantly clear that both the current and future success of students is enhanced when we maintain our strong relationships, work together, and jointly commit to the actions and outcome identified in the Local Education Agreement.