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Ministry of Education

First Nations Education Steering Committee

TWO NEW ABORIGINAL COURSES FOR B.C. STUDENTS

VICTORIA - Students in B.C. will have two new English courses to choose from in September, with the addition of English 10 and 11 First Peoples to the curriculum, announced Minister of Education Margaret MacDiarmid.

"It's a great pleasure to announce the addition of English 10 and 11 First Peoples to the curriculum on this, National Aboriginal Day," said MacDiarmid. "We are proud to continue supporting Aboriginal student achievement while encouraging all students to experience the rich culture and history of First Peoples."

English First Peoples is intended for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers and students. It represents an invitation to all learners to explore and discover First Peoples' worldviews through the study of literary, informational and media texts with local, Canadian and international First Peoples' content. English 10 First Peoples and English 11 First Peoples join English 12 First Peoples, which was introduced in 2008.

"The introduction of English 10 First Peoples and English 11 First Peoples is another important step towards a more respectful and inclusive curriculum," said First Nations Education Steering Committee President Tyrone McNeil. "We look forward to developing more opportunities for students to learn about B.C. First Nations' rich and diverse history and culture."

The Province has also just announced the addition of a 14th Aboriginal language, Kwak'wala, to the curriculum providing choice for students in the Vancouver Island North school district. As well, Langley and Arrow Lakes are signing Aboriginal education enhancement agreements for their districts, with Arrow Lakes being the 50th district to sign.

"Much progress has been made towards closing the gap between Aboriginal peoples and other British Columbians, but there is still much work to be done," said Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation George Abbott. "By increasing awareness of Aboriginal culture, history and traditions through initiatives like English First Peoples, we are moving closer to establishing a New Relationship based upon mutual respect and

recognition."

Aboriginal enrolment has nearly doubled in B.C. public schools since 1993. As of September 2009, there were more than 61,000 Aboriginal students, making up ten per cent of the total student population.

Provincial funding for Aboriginal education in the B.C. public K-12 school system is increasing from \$52.6 million to \$61.5 million for the 2010-11 school year. The funds are used to support Aboriginal language and cultural programs, Aboriginal support service programs, and other localized Aboriginal education programs.

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