



## POLICY 8560

### INDIGENOUS SPIRITUALITY

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#### Rationale

Rocky Mountain School District Board of Education is committed to fostering inclusive environments that respect and reflect the diversity of Indigenous Peoples, including learning about the values and worldviews that have shaped Indigenous communities across Canada. This policy affirms the right of students and staff to learn about Indigenous spiritual practices in a manner that is respectful, voluntary, and educationally appropriate.

The District is committed to the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action**, particularly:

- **Call to Action 62:** Advocating for age-appropriate curriculum on Indigenous history and spirituality.
- **Call to Action 63:** Building capacity for intercultural understanding and mutual respect.

We also support the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**, specifically:

- **Article 12:** The right of Indigenous Peoples to practice and revitalize their spiritual and religious traditions.
- **Article 34:** The right to promote and protect their cultural institutions and practices.

British Columbia's **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)** affirms the application of UNDRIP within provincial law and provides a legislative framework for reconciliation. This policy aligns with DRIPA's mandate to respect and integrate Indigenous rights, including spiritual and cultural practices, into K-12 classrooms.

#### Guiding Principles

- The District supports students and staff in **learning about Indigenous spiritual practices**.
- Indigenous content and ways of knowing are woven through all BC curricula. It is expected learning for all students.
- Indigenous spirituality and cultural practices are inseparable from Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and understanding these is a vital part of advancing Truth and Reconciliation.

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#### REFERENCES: LIST AND HYPERLINK APPROPRIATE REFERENCES

[National Centre for Truth & Reconciliation – Reports](#)  
[United Nations - Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)  
[British Columbia - Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#)

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**Amended:**



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## Policy Statement

The Rocky Mountain School District is committed to:

1. **Integrating Indigenous perspectives** throughout curriculum and school culture.
2. Ensuring **staff and students are well-informed and prepared** before participating in Indigenous spiritual activities.
3. Affirming that supporting Indigenous spiritual practices **does not breach the secular mandate** of public education.
4. **Collaborating directly with Indigenous Rights Holders and Partners** to guide and support the respectful inclusion of Indigenous spirituality in schools.

## Key Definitions

- **DRIPA (Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act):** Enacted by the Province of British Columbia in 2019, DRIPA establishes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as the provincial framework for reconciliation. DRIPA supports the recognition of Indigenous rights, including spiritual and cultural practices, within public institutions such as education.
- **Indigenous Spirituality:** The spiritual beliefs, ceremonies, and practices rooted in the traditions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples. These may include smudging, drumming, storytelling, seasonal ceremonies, and land-based practices.
- **Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being:** Holistic approaches to understanding the world that are rooted in Indigenous cultures, languages, and relationships with the land. These ways emphasize interconnectedness, respect, reciprocity, oral traditions, and experiential learning. They reflect the values, teachings, and lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples and are passed down through generations.
- **Rights Holders:** Indigenous individuals or groups who hold inherent rights recognized under Canadian law and international frameworks such as UNDRIP.

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- **Secular Education:** Education that is not affiliated with or promoting any particular religious doctrine, while allowing for the respectful study of spiritual traditions as part of cultural and historical learning.
- **Truth and Reconciliation & 94 Calls to Action:** A national process in Canada aimed at acknowledging the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism and the residential school system on Indigenous Peoples. It seeks to promote healing, justice, and respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) issued **94 Calls to Action** in 2015, urging governments, institutions, and citizens to take concrete steps toward reconciliation, including reforms in education, health, language, and cultural preservation.
- **UNDRIP:** The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, an international instrument affirming the rights of Indigenous Peoples globally.

#### Implementation Considerations

- Schools shall provide opportunities for students and staff to learn about Indigenous spiritual practices in culturally appropriate ways.
- Participation in spiritual practices shall be entirely voluntary and operate on an “opt-in” basis. Staff and students will be informed in advance of any ceremony or observance.
- The Indigenous Education Council, Elders, and Knowledge Holders shall be consulted and invited to contribute to educational programming.

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[United Nations - Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)  
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