

## **Indigenous Perspective and Knowledge**

British Columbia has long had the goal of improving school success for all Indigenous students. Achieving this goal will require that the voice of Indigenous people be heard in all aspects of the education system; the presence of Indigenous languages, cultures, and histories be increased in provincial curricula; and leadership and informed practice be provided.

### **What is Smudging?**

Smudging is a tradition, common to many Indigenous People, which involves the burning of one or more medicines gathered from the earth. Four sacred medicines used in Indigenous ceremonies are tobacco, sage, cedar and sweetgrass. The most common medicine used in the Okanagan territory is sage.

Smudging has been passed down for generations and there are many ways and variations on how a smudge is done. Each family has their own way of smudging and have their reasons for smudging. The list below are some examples:

- We smudge to clean our minds so that we will have good thoughts
- We smudge our eyes so that we will only see good
- We smudge our ears so that we will only listen to positive things
- We smudge our mouths so that we will speak well of others
- We smudge our whole being so we will portray only the good part of our self through our actions

Smudging allows people to stop, slow down, become mindful and centered. It allows people to remember, connect and be grounded in the event, task or purpose at hand. Smudging also allows people to let go of any negativity and is a way of cleansing oneself.

### **Smudging is voluntary**

Respect for all is the guiding principle in any Indigenous tradition. It is completely acceptable for a person to indicate that he/she does not want to smudge, they may choose to step out of the circle but, remain in the room or they can choose to leave the room during a smudge.

### **Smudging Protocols in SD 53 Schools**

The smudge will be facilitated by Indigenous Education Advocates or a designated Elder. The Indigenous Advocates will work with their administrator to:

- 1) Find a location in their building and/or an outside location (when weather permits) where smudging may take place.
- 2) Once a location is determined, the director of facilities should be notified.
- 3) Each school will create a protocol document so that staff know when a smudge is taking place (e.g.: secretary notify staff via email).
- 4) Signage will be created and posted around schools, indicating that smudging occurs in or around the facility.
- 5) Facilitators will share pertinent information and review smudging protocols with participants prior to a smudge.