

The Importance of Diversity

Sport and physical activity can bring students of all cultures together. When students share an engaging sport or physical activity experience with classmates from the various cultures and countries represented in the B.C. school system, they have the unique opportunity to make friends with people of all sorts of nationalities. The more diversity they encounter, the more they will learn to respect their peers no matter their background.

B.C. schools are firmly committed to recognizing and honouring the diversity of all students. Diversity among people, including students, is one of the most prominent features of B.C.'s society and schools.

Why Promote Diversity in Sport and Physical Activity?

Promoting diversity helps in encouraging understanding, acceptance, mutual respect and inclusion, in order to make schools and society as a whole more equitable for all people.

Diversity in Practice

This means:

- equitable access, and equal opportunity, to participate in quality physical activity for all students;
- a school physical activity culture that values diversity and responds to the diverse social and cultural needs of the communities it serves;
- a physical activity culture that promotes understanding of others and respect for all;
- a participation and competition environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and violence;
- a recognition that some activities or standard rules used in some games will need to be adapted to accommodate cultural or religious sensitivities;
- participatory decision-making processes in physical activity and sport that give a voice to all members of the school community; and
- participation and competition policies and practices that promote fair and equitable treatment of all students.

Racism

A key component of acceptance is the elimination of racism through addressing the effects of historic, organizational, systemic, and attitudinal racism. This is accomplished largely through awareness, education and empowerment. Students will learn from the example set by their educators and the interactions they have with their classmates that everyone is to be included, and that inclusive activities are non-negotiable.



“Sport should be positioned as a highly effective tool in a broader toolkit of development practices, and should be applied in a holistic and integrated manner with other interventions and programs to achieve optimal results.”*

*Right to Play, What is Sport for Development and Peace? Retrieved from www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/downloads/what_is_sport_for_development_and_peace.pdf

Promoting Diversity Through Activity

Indigenous Perspectives

Incorporate knowledge of Indigenous perspectives of physical activity and sport. By connecting with your District's Aboriginal/Indigenous Education Department, you can request support with protocol to engage students in land-based and cross-cultural activities that highlight and celebrate diversity.

This could include a walking curriculum that incorporates plant identification and discussing the ethical and reciprocal relationship with the land. Support students in learning about the territory they live in and how to properly honour it.

Discuss the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG), have students choose a sport represented at NAIG, give a brief history of the sport, and complete a warm-up. Talk to students about the Premier's Awards for Indigenous Youth Excellence in Sport, a recognition program that honours outstanding youth athletes, and identify a past recipient. Discuss the history of lacrosse, first played by Indigenous people and adopted as Canada's official summer sport.

Build on the Paralympic Games. Diversity includes celebrating the games and sports played by persons with disabilities. The Canadian Paralympic Committee has put out wonderful activity guides for elementary students so that they can learn about Paralympic sport and Canada's inspiring Paralympians. Demonstrate that sport is for all by profiling Paralympians on the class bulletin boards, inviting an athlete with disabilities to visit the class, or teaching a sport like wheelchair rugby or goalball.

Hold mini-Olympic celebrations. Assign groups of children (classes) to represent different nations. Make national flags, learn about assigned countries and their sports and recreational activities in social studies, march in opening ceremonies, and compete in a range of diversity-themed events. Hold closing ceremony with teams mingled.

Have students interview their caregivers about games they used to play as children. Have the students learn to play the game from their elders, and teach the game to the rest of the class.

