

# Indigenous Education

## Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework



learning | **as unique** | as every student



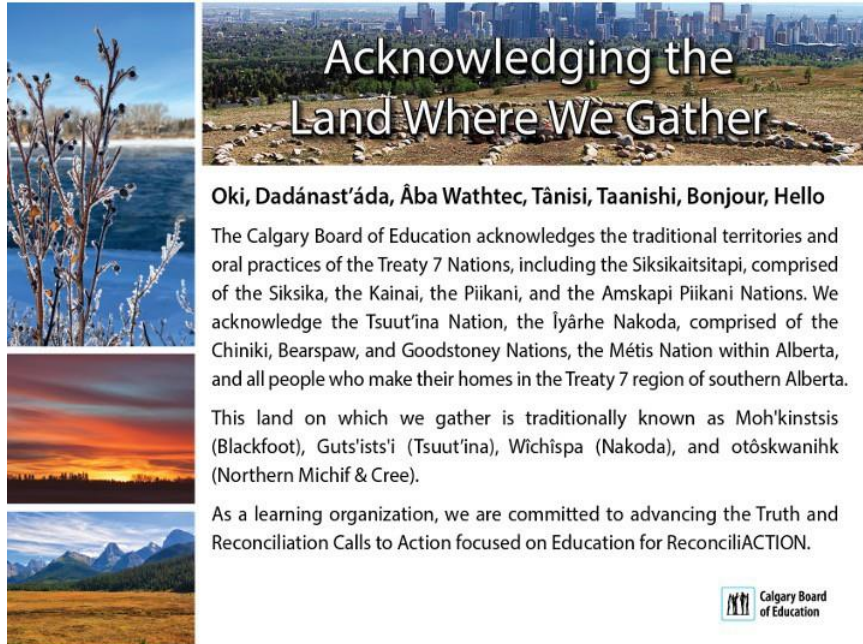
Calgary Board  
of Education



# Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework

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## Acknowledging the Land Where We Gather

**Oki, Dadánast'áda, Âba Wathtec, Tānisi, Taanishi, Bonjour, Hello**

The Calgary Board of Education acknowledges the traditional territories and oral practices of the Treaty 7 Nations, including the Siksikaitsitapi, comprised of the Siksika, the Kainai, the Piikani, and the Amskapi Piikani Nations. We acknowledge the Tsuut'ina Nation, the Îyârhe Nakoda, comprised of the Chiniki, Bears paw, and Goodstoney Nations, the Métis Nation within Alberta, and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of southern Alberta.

This land on which we gather is traditionally known as Moh'kinstsis (Blackfoot), Guts'ists'i (Tsuut'ina), Wichispa (Nakoda), and otôskwanihk (Northern Michif & Cree).

As a learning organization, we are committed to advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action focused on Education for ReconciliACTION.



Acknowledging the land where we gather demonstrates our ongoing commitment to the original spirit and intent of Treaty 7, also known as the Blackfoot Treaty. This agreement is to share the land and live well together, in peace for 'as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow.' This acknowledgement is an act of Truth and Reconciliation to honour the Indigenous peoples who have cared for their traditional territories since time immemorial and leads us to consider our individual and collective roles and responsibilities to the treaty relationship.

Ayy, Siyisgaas, îsnî'yes, maarsii, ay hay, thank you to the following Elders and Knowledge Keepers for holding space with us as we walk together to improve our work on behalf of all students.

- Bastien, Leonard – Piikani Nation
- Bottle, Saa'kokoto Randy – Kainai Nation
- Comstock, Edmee – Métis Nation
- Crowshoe, Dr. Reg – Piikani Nation
- Crowshoe, Rose – Piikani Nation
- Eagletail, Hal – Tsuut'ina Nation
- Holloway, Henry – Stoney Nakoda Nation
- Lerat, Marion – Kahkewistahaw Nation
- Manywounds, Lottie – Tsuut'ina Nation
- Moore, Kerrie – Muskoday Nation & Métis Nation
- Wolfleg, Miiksika'am Dr. Clarence Sr. – Siksika Nation

## Note to Educators

Indigenous ways of being, belonging, doing, and knowing enhance learning for all students and staff. As we engage in developing our “knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis and Inuit” (Alberta Teaching Quality Standard, 2020, p. 5) educators are required to weave in Indigenous knowledge for the benefit of all students. This requires care. As shared by The Alberta Teachers’ Association in “Professional Learning Pebbles” (2017, p. 40):

*“Make sure the system protects and delivers Indigenous practices that are ethical, that our students will be proud of” (Dr. Reg Crowshoe, Piikani Elder, 2021).*

Misconceptions and stereotypes of Indigenous peoples can be perpetuated with appropriation of cultural practices, symbols, ceremonies and items. Educators must be mindful when choosing to incorporate Indigenous culture into their practice so as not to misrepresent, or inaccurately convey aspects of Indigenous culture. If uncertain, educators should consult local Indigenous community members. Making space for authentic learning experiences from local Indigenous community members might be a better option than trying to teach aspects of culture that an educator does not fully know or understand.

Indigenous teachings belong to Indigenous communities. To ensure we are entering into cultural appreciation ‘in a good way’ we must seek permission and understanding from those to whom the culture belongs. This

*“Utilize Elders and Knowledge Keepers in sharing our traditional stories and Indigenous knowledge” (Henry Holloway, Stoney Nakoda Elder, 2021).*

may result in an invitation to learn about the culture, participate in the cultural experience led by an Elder or member of the community, or you may gain permission to use or continue these practices on your own. The importance is in ensuring that we are not the ones making the decision in how to proceed in participation, that we must seek permission and guidance from those who hold the cultural practices.

School leaders are encouraged to apply this same lens to decisions regarding school-based logos, professional learning, activities, events, guest speakers, etc.

To learn more, check out the resource [Cultural Appropriation vs. Appreciation](#), developed by the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (2019).

For additional support, Calgary Board of Education schools and service units are invited to connect with the Indigenous Education Team via email [IndigenousEducation@cbe.ab.ca](mailto:IndigenousEducation@cbe.ab.ca).

*“All employees in the CBE need to be educated and have an understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing” (Lottie Manywounds, Tsuut’ina Elder, 2021).*





## Looking Back, Walking Forward 'In a Good Way'

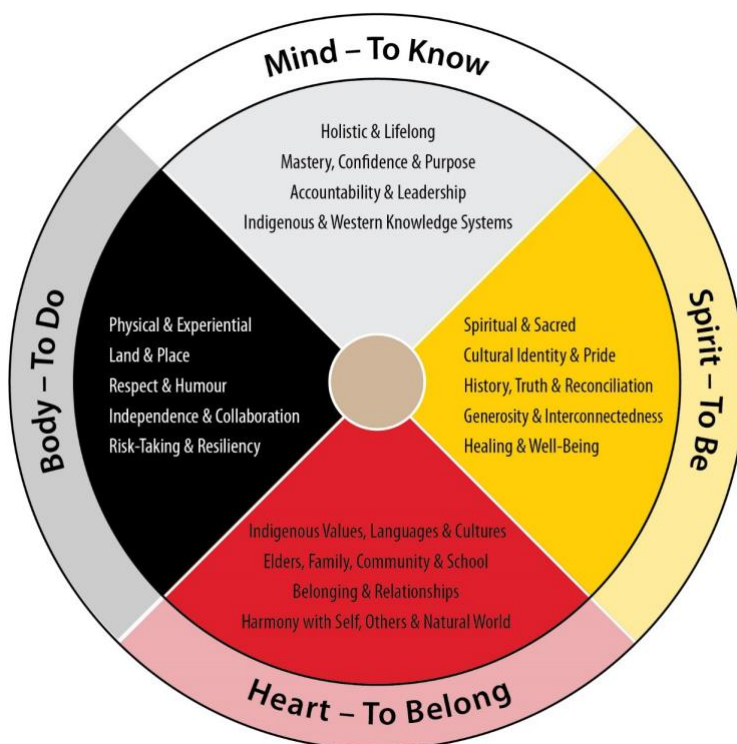
'In a good way' is an expression used by many Indigenous peoples. As defined by Anishinaabe (Saulteaux) scholar, Mizowaykomiguk paypomwayotung Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann:

In a good way. This may sound obvious but for many Indigenous peoples it is still a challenge to be heard, to be taken seriously, and to be included at important decision-making tables...In a good way packs a punch...It reminds us to walk and talk with truth and integrity. In a good way also has us remember our ancestors and to learn from patterns in the past, so we can clearly understand our current realities...as what is decided today will impact our tomorrow. (October 15, 2021)

'In a good way' recognizes where we are located (traditional territories of the Blackfoot Nations, Tsuut'ina Nation, Stoney Nakoda Nations, and Métis Nation Region 3) and our connection and responsibility to this land and place, and the stories and songs that have lived here for thousands of years.

At the Calgary Board of Education (CBE), we are looking back to walk forward 'in a good way' with the creation and implementation of the Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework. The framework expands on the Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Visual (Figure 1) that was inspired by the UNESCO Four Pillars of Education (1996), the work of the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) (2007), and knowledge shared by Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Passed on through stories, Elders and Knowledge Keepers have offered significant wisdom and guidance to design a framework representative of traditional and contemporary Indigenous ways of being, belonging, doing, and knowing. As told to us by Kainai Elder Saa'kokoto Randy Bottle (2021), when receiving teachings from Elders and Knowledge Keepers we must remember that what each individual shares represents and acknowledges "a way of life" for that individual and not all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. The CBE Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework is informed by many teachings from many Elders from many nations and does not represent ways of being, belonging, doing and knowing of one singular nation. Rather, the diverse sources of knowledge gathered provide the foundation for the framework in a way that values the many voices and lived experiences of Indigenous peoples living in and around this land and place known as Moh'kins'tsis to the Blackfoot, Guts'ists'i to the Tsuut'ina, Wîchîspa to the Stoney Nakoda, Rivière Coude to the Michif Métis, Otôskwanihk to the Cree, and Calgary to most.

Figure 1 – Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Visual with Key Attributes



## Outcome

The CBE is committed to acknowledging and supporting the implementation of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\) 94 Calls to Action](#) specific to education. Namely, we commit to supporting improved achievement, equity, and well-being for students who self-identify as Indigenous, and creating opportunities for all students, staff, and school communities to engage in practices that facilitate reconciliation. To meet these commitments, the Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework positions us to develop the professional capacity of all CBE staff to work towards achieving the [CBE Education Plan, 2021-24](#) key outcome: **Students who self-identify as Indigenous are supported to experience improved achievement and well-being** through relevant key actions:

*"I see the value and impact that the framework will have on student success" (Hal Eagletail, Tsuu'tina Knowledge Keeper, 2021).*

- implement CBE Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework;
- offer professional learning for all CBE staff to acquire and apply foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students, staff, and the system as a whole;
- acknowledge and support the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action;
- enhance the collection and use of holistic data to monitor achievement and well-being for students who self-identify as Indigenous;
- build and sustain relationships with Indigenous parents/caregivers; and
- collaborate with Indigenous Elders, leaders, organizations, and community members to establish strategic policy directions in support of Indigenous student achievement and well-being.

*"We need to make ourselves ready to receive this knowledge as we are all part of the Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework" (Miiksika'am Dr. Clarence Wolfleg Sr., Siksika Elder, 2021).*

The Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework sets out the structure of foundational knowledge (four domains) and the underlying attributes essential to ensuring our success as an organization in achieving these key actions over three years and beyond. **This framework is not a "how-to" guide for Indigenous Education or a recipe for closing gaps.** Rather, it provides a foundation upon which individual staff members, teams, schools (including students and community), service units, and our district can meaningfully position and deepen our individual and collective knowledge, decisions, and actions to meet the holistic needs of all students.

Our commitment to support improved achievement and well-being for self-identified Indigenous students can only happen when we do more than incorporate holistic approaches to learning that address students' spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual (spirit, heart, body, mind) needs. As a school district, we must prioritize building our collective capacity to engage in reconciliatory, decolonizing, and anti-racist praxis to ensure welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environments that foster a sense of belonging for Indigenous students, staff, families, and community. Building and applying this system-wide professional capacity will require strategic and collaborative efforts across current and future CBE Frameworks ([Literacy](#), [Mathematics](#), [Indigenous Education](#), [Well-being, and Professional Learning](#)), [CBE CARES! \(Collaboration for Anti-Racism and Equity Supports\)](#), and CBE Service Units including School Improvement, Finance and Technology Services, Facilities and Environmental Services, Human Resources, Legal Services, and Communication and Engagement Services. Our collective actions on behalf of the Indigenous students we serve will benefit all CBE students, staff, families, and community.

*"...there will need to be much more to our conversations than 'gaps' in educational outcomes" (Métis educator and poet, Rita Bouvier in Battiste, 2013, p. 9).*

## Sources of Knowledge

Looking back to walk forward ‘in a good way’ requires that we gather the voices and stories of Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, self-identified Indigenous students, staff, and community to inform our decision-making, planning, implementation, evaluation, and celebratory processes. Our learning, decisions, and actions as a district are also guided by and gain strength from many other sources of knowledge, such as:

- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action](#)
- [Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)
- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [Alberta Education Professional Practice Standards](#)
- [Learning: The Treasure Within. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century](#)

Indigenous scholars and community research have offered significant wisdom and guidance to the design of the Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework, and we will continue to rely on their knowledge as we walk forward ‘in a good way.’ The incredible work of the CCL (2007) in gathering voices of First Peoples from across Canada to develop three Holistic Lifelong Learning Models ([First Nations](#), [Métis](#), and [Inuit](#)) positioned and supported our work with Elders and Knowledge Keepers and the development of our local Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Visual and Framework. In the CCL (2007) document, [Redefining How Success is Measured in First Nations, Metis and Inuit Learning](#), the identified “Key Attributes of [Indigenous] Learning” (p. 5) offered significant inspiration:

- Learning is holistic.
- Learning is a lifelong process.
- Learning is experiential in nature.
- Learning is rooted in [Indigenous] languages and cultures.
- Learning is spiritually oriented.
- Learning is a communal activity involving family, community and Elders.
- Learning is an integration of [Indigenous] and Western Knowledge.

*“Every day is a learning experience”* (Rose Crowshoe, Piikani Elder, 2021).

*“Decolonization is the pathway forward”* (Leonard Bastien, Piikani Elder, 2021).

Mi'kmaw scholar Marie Battiste's book, *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* (2013) and additional work has offered critical knowledge and understanding in the development of the framework and supporting resources as we consider approaches to decolonizing education to nourish the learning spirit of all students, staff, and the system as a whole.

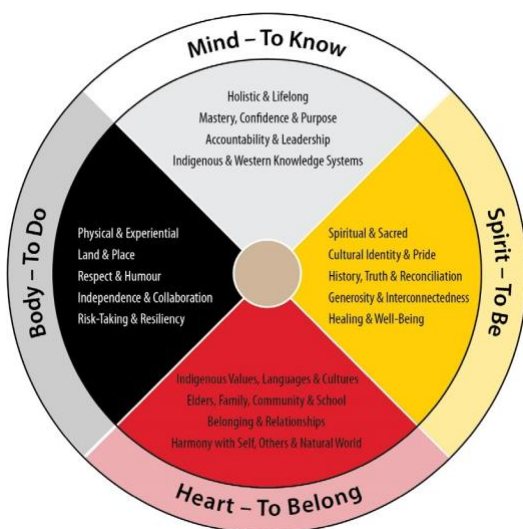
# Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Visual

The Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Visual with key attributes (Figure 1) is the pictorial representation and the primary source of knowledge for the framework, implementation planning, supporting resources, and professional learning. Working with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, we have chosen the medicine wheel to represent our framework based on its holistic, cyclical roots, and how it holds space for us to come together in support of individuals and their learning

journey. The circle at the center of the visual represents each individual and is enclosed by the following four interconnected domains:

*"Let's make our circle strong"*  
(Saa'kokoto Randy Bottle, Kainai Elder, 2021).

Figure 1 – Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Visual with Key Attributes



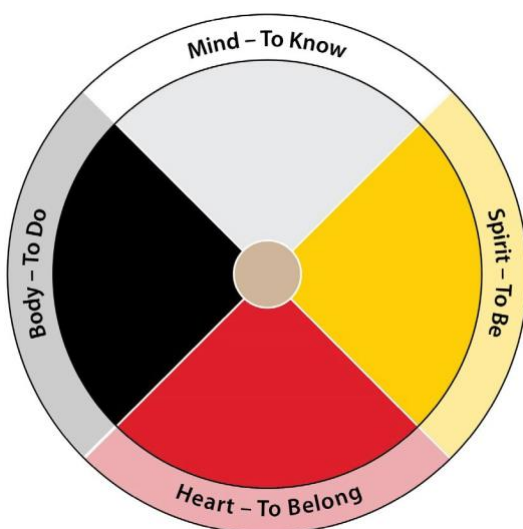
- Spirit – To Be
- Heart – To Belong
- Body – To Do
- Mind – To Know

## What is a Medicine Wheel?

As represented in the framework visual, Anishinaabe scholar Dr. Pamela Toulouse (2016, p. 7) defines a medicine wheel as:

...a circle of life that is continuous and never-ending. It demonstrates that everything is connected and everything is sacred. All of life is equal. All of life is deserving of respect, care and love...Each domain reflects aspects of a human being that makes them whole...Balance in each is key.

Figure 2 – Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Visual without Attributes



Not all Indigenous people use medicine wheels and not all knowledge systems shared through medicine wheels are alike, which is why it is critical for us to expand and deepen our knowledge from Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers. For now, the Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Visual exemplifies the value and importance of Indigenous ways of being, belonging, doing, and knowing, and is how we gather to envision and enact holistic lifelong learning in the CBE. As we continue to learn and apply our understanding of the knowledge systems of the Blackfoot, Tsuut'ina, Stoney Nakoda, Métis, and Cree Nations, we will work with Elders and Knowledge Keepers from these communities to consider and share their local teachings and visuals.

*"For me, I look at it – it makes sense to me. I have no problem with it based on my Blackfoot knowledge. The holistic lifelong learning attributes that I see here – these are the things that I want taught to the Blackfoot student"* (Leonard Bastien, Piikani Elder, 2021).



## What is Holistic Lifelong Learning?

Intrinsic to its holistic “everything is connected” principle, the medicine wheel also embodies “learning as a lifelong process connected to all stages of human development...Knowledge and wisdom, acquired through a lifetime of learning are transmitted to younger learners in a process that repeats itself with successive generations” (CCL, 2007, p. 6). Holistic lifelong learning means that we will walk forward with a universally balanced framework to honour, support, and enrich learning for each CBE student, employee, and the organization as a whole.

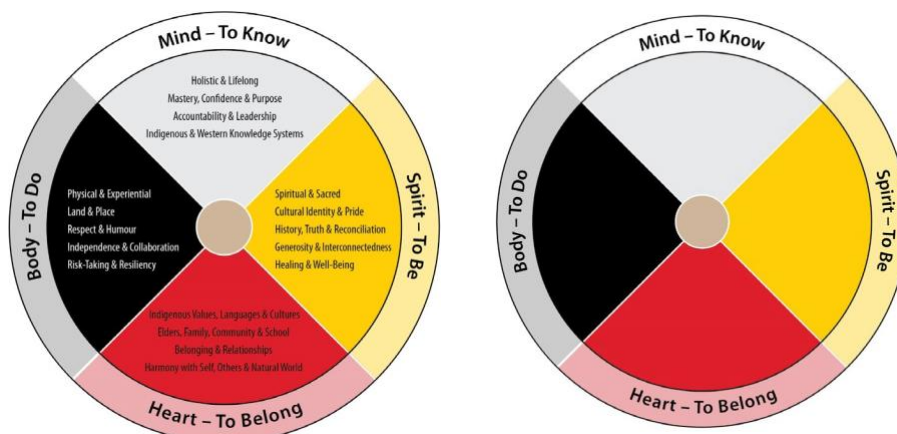
*“We are all raised differently so we understand the medicine wheel differently. It’s called a medicine wheel because our medicines are the most important”*  
(Marion Lerat, Cree Elder, 2021).

In the process of publishing this framework, we planted a seed with the sharing of the visual with key attributes (Figure 1) and the visual without key attributes (Figure 2) with CBE staff. We invited them to invest in building and applying knowledge about Indigenous knowledge systems, the medicine wheel and holistic lifelong learning within their unique contexts and environments. In support, we modeled possibilities for reflection, learning, planning, and application. As a result, staff and students across the district have responded in positive and impactful ways. Many have invited Elders and Knowledge Keepers to share teachings with students and staff, while others have engaged in online professional learning, book studies, land-based learning, etc. The incredible response by CBE staff and students signals readiness for implementation across the district. As we look back to walk forward ‘in a good way’ we will plant more seeds, nurture continuous growth, reflect, and renew the Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework and Visual. We will continue to learn and work with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to ensure our responsiveness in meeting the holistic needs of students, staff, and the district as a whole.

## The Four Domains

The four domains of the Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework (Spirit - To Be, Heart – To Belong, Body – To Do, Mind – To Know) represent the essential elements required to achieve the [CBE Education Plan, 2021-24](#) key outcome: ***Students who self-identify as Indigenous are supported to experience improved achievement and well-being.*** Relevant key actions will be achieved across the CBE via:

- [Alberta’s Programs of Study](#) and [Locally Developed Courses](#)
- [Alberta’s Professional Practice Standards](#)
- [CBE Policies and Regulations](#)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)

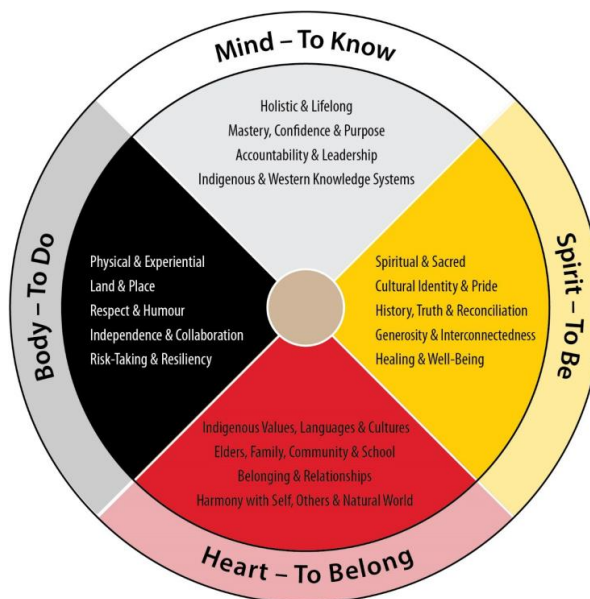


*“We must make certain that all student needs connected to Spirit, Heart, and Body are met to ensure they are ready to engage in learning through the Mind. Learning is holistic, and engages all domains of self”* (Kerrie Moore, Cree/Métis Elder, 2021).

The four domains of the framework must not be considered in isolation. As symbolized in and through the medicine wheel, the domains are interconnected and reliant on a holistic, balanced approach. Spending too much time focused on one domain will cause an imbalance across others. Implementation of this framework in a balanced way will ensure that “the learning process simultaneously engages and develops all aspects of the individual—emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual—and of the collective” (CCL, 2007, p. 5). Since the 2015 release of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Final Report](#), former Canadian senator and chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, The Honourable Murray Sinclair has shared widely that there are four questions that all children should be able to explore and answer through their lifetime of learning:

1. Where do I come from?
2. Where am I going?
3. Why am I here?
4. Who am I?

Further to this, he has shared that for children who attended Residential Schools, these “questions went unfulfilled. The answers that they were forced to accept ran counter to much of the knowledge they already carried from their early lives as children in their own families and communities” (Sinclair, 2014, p. 7). Education for Reconciliation calls on education systems to ensure that each Indigenous student is provided with opportunities and support to seek answers to these questions. These learning experiences are equally essential to all students and their success in school and in life.



*“We don’t all come from the same place – we all have our own doorways. When you learn that, your life changes because now you know where you come from” (Marion Lerat, Cree Elder, 2021).*

*“Honouring the four directions is important for Stoney Nakoda people” (Henry Holloway, Stoney Nakoda Elder, 2021).*

To support actualization of each domain, several key attributes (CCL, 2007) have been identified and placed in each quadrant. Drawn from the voices of Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, students, staff, research, and wise practice, applying the key attributes to our professional practice will bring the Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework to life in schools and service units. Like the domains, the attributes are interconnected and must be considered through a balanced approach. The attributes are not exhaustive or prescriptive, leaving space for additional attributes to be explored.

**We enter the framework in the East direction, in spirit. Once in spirit, the journey through each domain occurs in a clockwise motion.**

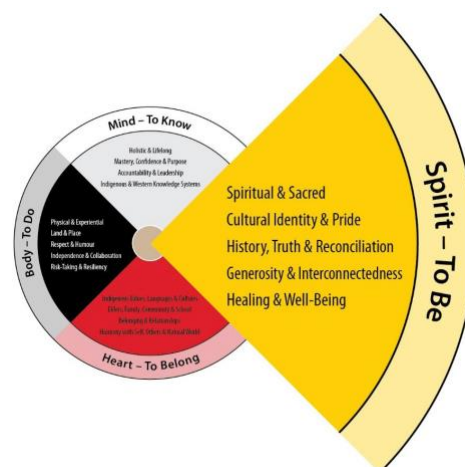
Further information for CBE staff, such as guiding documents for schools and service units, exemplars, resources, tools, and professional learning, will continue to be designed and shared on the CBE’s intranet, Insite, on Indigenous Education pages.

# Spirit – To Be

Elders and Knowledge Keepers have taught us that entering the Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework through the eastern door and in spirit is vital in our efforts to ensure that students who self-identify as Indigenous are supported to experience improved achievement and well-being. As we work to implement the TRC Calls to Action, we are committed to offering opportunities for Indigenous students to

*“Reconciliation means advocating for the power of education, knowing full well, the hurt and harm it has caused” (Métis scholar Yvonne Poitras Pratt, 2021).*

engage in learning that supports Indigenous spiritual revitalization following the destructive impact and legacy of policies, practices, and lived experiences related to Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop, and ongoing settler colonialism via the Indian Act, the Land Claims Policy, etc. Within the **Spirit Domain – To Be**, we hold space for Indigenous students and all CBE students to relate with their ways of being in and through their learning at school.



The Spirit Domain and key attributes are not synonymous with religion. Siksika Elder Miiksika’am Dr. Clarence Wolfleg Sr. (2021) teaches us that “the Spirit Domain is the spiritual and sacred part. At this time, you start to learn who you are, you learn about yourself and what is your purpose.” CBE students who self-identify as Indigenous have shared that they value and need more opportunities to explore their spiritual and cultural identities at school while sharing pride in their culture for the benefit of all school community members. Alignments with the Spirit Domain can be made to the Alberta Programs of Study with spiritual wellness being identified as one of the five dimensions of wellness in the [Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education](#): “Spiritual wellness is an understanding of one’s own values and beliefs leading to a sense of meaning or purpose and a relationship to the community” (Alberta Education, p.3). As taught to us by Cree/Métis Elder Kerrie Moore (2021):

*“The Spirit Domain is the spiritual and sacred part. At this time, you start to learn who you are, you learn about yourself and what is your purpose” (Miiksika’am Dr. Clarence Wolfleg Sr., Siksika Elder, 2021).*

Everyone, no matter where you come from, has a way of starting in spirit. Love, kindness, respect, accountability all live in spirit. Being in spirit is an awareness of who you are. This creates a sense of belonging, hope, peace and purpose which connects to everything around us.

When we consider how ‘being in spirit’ relates directly to student learning, Mi’kmaw scholar Dr. Marie Battiste (2010) offers guidance through Indigenous knowledge:

*“Being able to look back on yourself and see all the things you’ve overcome; being able to say you’re a strong person, better than you were before” (Gathering Indigenous Student Voice, 2021).*

What guides our learning (beyond family, community, and Elders) is spirit, our own learning spirits who travel with us and guide us along our earth walk, offering us guidance, inspiration, and quiet unrealized potential to be who we are. It has a hunger and a thirst for learning, and along that path it leads us to discern what is useful for us to know and what is not. Our individual gifts for fulfilling our purpose are expressed in ourselves, in our growing talents, and in our emerging or shifting interests. (p. 15)

Through the Spirit Domain, the learning spirits of Indigenous students, and all students and staff will be honoured through the intentional development of their gifts, capabilities and strengths within and beyond the school environment. Indigenous **ways of being** benefit all CBE learners.

*“Every part of the body tells a story, connection of the mind, heart, and spirit. Nourishment is not just food for the body, it is understanding the connection and respect for others” (Edmee Comstock, Métis Elder, 2021).*

## Key Attributes of the Spirit Domain – To Be

The following key attributes and provocations are offered as possible entry points for bringing the Spirit Domain to life in schools and service units.

- **Spiritual & Sacred** – Be intentional to acknowledge and foster each individual's unique identity (spiritual) and include community ways of being, belonging, doing, and knowing (sacred).
- **Cultural Identity & Pride** – Engage the school community to create calendars that acknowledge and celebrate significant cultural observances and events (e.g., Winter/Summer Solstice & Spring/Fall Equinox, Treaty 7 Day, Métis Week).
- **History, Truth & Reconciliation** – Acknowledge and respond to the TRC Calls to Action.
- **Generosity & Interconnectedness** – Create opportunities for students and staff to build and nurture a spirit of reciprocity with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers where we give as much as we take.
- **Healing & Well-Being** – Create physical spaces where students and staff can engage in spiritual and sacred ways of being, belonging, doing, and knowing (e.g., smudging).

*“Everyone, no matter where you come from, has a way of starting in spirit. Love, kindness, respect, accountability all live in spirit. Being in spirit is an awareness of who you are. This creates a sense of belonging, hope, peace, and purpose which connects to everything around us” (Kerrie Moore, Cree/Métis Elder, 2021).*

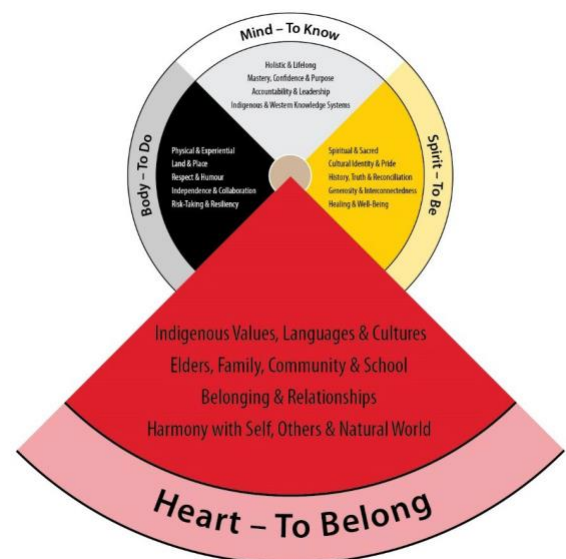
## Heart – To Belong

As we move south to the **Heart Domain – To Belong**, emphasis is placed on fostering and strengthening relationships with Indigenous Elders, students, families, and the community required to advance the efforts of schools and service units to value, consider, and include

*“We need to include our stories too” (Rose Crowshoe, Piikani Elder, 2021).*

learning about and through Indigenous ways of being, belonging, doing, and knowing for all CBE students and staff. Through this relationship building, we know that all members of the CBE community

will be provided with a “welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging” (CBE Administrative Regulation 6031 - Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning and Work Environments). Establishing and nurturing these relationships also requires an awareness of what each unique individual requires ‘To Belong.’





In our work to gather voices of CBE students who self-identify as Indigenous, they have told us that having positive relationships with staff and peers at school directly influences their level of engagement in their learning and participation in academic and extra-curricular activities. This critical insight is supported by Indigenous knowledge:

*"I feel like I belong when teachers are open about traditional knowledge & Indigenous histories; discussing it with other students so that there's understanding" (Gathering Indigenous Student Voice, 2020).*

Intrinsic to [Indigenous] learning is the nurturing of relationships among the individual, the family, the community, the nation, and all of Creation. Learning encompasses shared values and identity, developed through the learner's relationship to other persons and to the environment. Individual development and personal responsibility are viewed within the larger context of contributing to the collective. [Indigenous] learning can be viewed as a process that naturally builds on social capital—a term that generally refers to the development of social relationships and networks based on trust and shared values that ultimately foster community well-being. (CCL, 2007, p. 5)

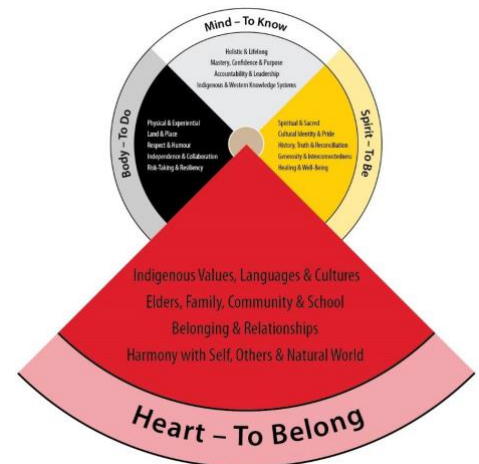
*"Students cultivate and maintain healthy relationships with the self, others and the earth; acknowledging the sacredness of all these beings that surround them" (Toulouse, 2016, p. 9).*

More explicitly, Indigenous students have shared that having at least one adult at school that they have a meaningful relationship with and can go to when they need guidance and support creates safety and a sense of belonging. This is true for all students. Students' sense of belonging is further uplifted when their cultures and languages are valued and authentically reflected in their learning environments. Indigenous **ways of belonging** benefit all CBE learners.

## Key Attributes of the Heart Domain – To Belong

The following key attributes and provocations are offered as possible entry points for bringing the Heart Domain to life in schools and service units.

- **Indigenous Values, Languages & Cultures** – Offer Indigenous Studies courses and opportunities to learn Indigenous languages in schools.
- **Elders, Family, Community & School** – Invite Indigenous Elders and community members to share knowledge across learning disciplines (Math, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies, Fine Arts, etc.) and CBE service units (Finance, Facilities, Human Resources, Communications, etc.).
- **Belonging & Relationships** – Offer cultural safety training to CBE staff to support the advancement of anti-racist education.
- **Harmony with Self, Others & Natural World** – Be intentional in efforts to establish positive and trusting relationships.



## Body – To Do

*“It is important to know what our bodies tell us about our well-being. We need to listen” (Hal Eagletail, Tsuu’tina Knowledge Keeper, 2021).*

Moving west to the **Body Domain – To Do**, individuals and communities are supported to experience their learning by the physical act of doing that happens through place. This includes the use of the physical body, the physical environment, and the natural environment. For example, when students and staff are provided with consistent opportunities to learn on, from, and with the land, their whole being (spirit, heart, body, and mind) is

nourished. Creating space for Indigenous science knowledge across subject areas and professional learning is central to actualizing the Body Domain. As offered by Battiste (2013, p. 121):

While Indigenous knowledge is as encompassing as Eurocentric knowledge, the science of the Indigenous world view is founded upon an understanding of how humanity fits with nature. Indigenous science is not a collection of observations, facts, and measurements, but rather a dynamic, living process of watching, listening, connecting, responding, and renewing. Indigenous science embodies a holistic view of the world in which all human, animal, and plant life are perceived as being connected, related and interdependent. All things are imbued with spirit and thus have energies that interact at both an earthly level and a spiritual level.

Potawatomi biologist and author, Robin Wall Kimmerer, in her book, “Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants” (2013, Preface), shares the following as an example of the ‘living process’ of learning on, from, and with the land:

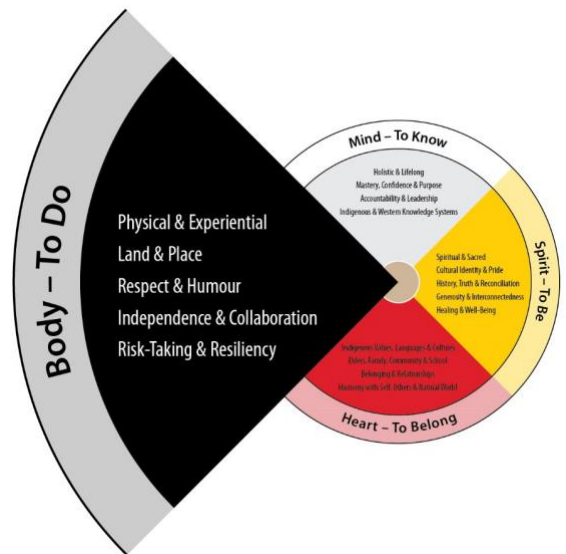
Hold out your hands and let me lay upon them a sheaf of freshly picked sweetgrass, loose and flowing, like newly washed hair. Golden green and glossy above, the stems are banded with purple and white where they meet the ground. Hold the bundle up to your nose. Find the fragrance of honeyed vanilla over the scent of river water and black earth and you understand its scientific name: *Hierochloa odorata*, meaning the fragrant holy grass. In our language it is called wiingaashk, the sweet-smelling hair of Mother Earth. Breathe it in and you start to remember things you didn’t know you’d forgotten.

*“When I’m up on Nose Hill it is quiet, and I feel peaceful and calm. I feel a connection to the land and want to explore that some more” (Gathering Indigenous Student Voice, 2020).*

Indigenous **ways of doing** benefit all CBE learners. In the example above, the “living process” of learning by doing, positions learners to touch, watch, listen, connect, smell and renew their learning and understanding through Indigenous ways of doing and coming to know. “This type of learning creates a connection and relationship to the land as a living entity worthy of respect and care” (Poitras Pratt, 2022).

Humour and community building are universally important in Indigenous communities, offering opportunities to connect with others and heal. Kainai scholar Leroy Little Bear (2000) shares that these relational connections “create and sustain ‘good feelings.’ Maintaining good feelings is one reason why a sense of humour pervades [Indigenous] societies” (p. 2). It is through these “good feelings” that independence, risk-taking, and resiliency will be promoted.

*“Métis people laugh a lot. We use humour to heal” (Edmee Comstock, Métis Elder, 2021).*

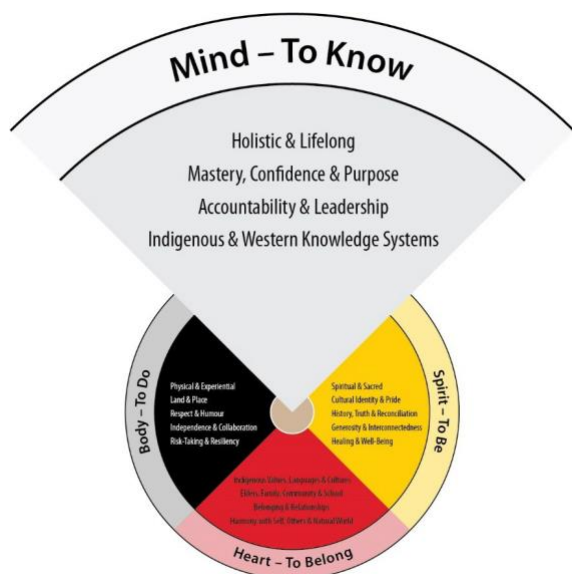


## Key Attributes of the Body Domain

The following key attributes and provocations are offered as possible entry points for bringing the Body Domain to life in schools and service units.

- **Physical & Experiential** – Engage in land-based learning (learning on, from, and with the land).
- **Land & Place** – Learn about the land where your school or service unit is located. Share your learning and make a commitment to reconciliation through the [CBE Land Acknowledgement](#).
- **Respect & Humour** – Include learning resources (e.g., books, videos, poetry, oral stories) that include Indigenous humour.
- **Independence & Collaboration** – Empower students to have voice in learning, assessment, and decision-making.
- **Risk-Taking & Resiliency** – Commit to building knowledge to advance truth and reconciliation through un-learning colonial ways (learning the truth) and re-learning (engaging in reconciliation).

## Mind – To Know



Moving north to the **Mind Domain – To Know** emphasis is placed on the value and influence of a balanced, holistic, lifelong learning experience for all. Also known as the intellectual domain, coming ‘To Know’ for students is:

...based in natural curiosity and love for learning...a sense of personal responsibility for their own wellness...and humbly share these strategies with others...students internalize and implement appropriate strategies to solve a multitude of issues/problems, with personal humility and collective integrity at the heart of it. (Toulouse, 2016, pp. 1-11)

CBE students who self-identify as Indigenous have shared that when their teachers have high expectations for their

learning and success, they are more engaged and confident as learners. Engaging the spirit, heart, body, and mind in and through learning is how we locate the uniqueness of each student, build relationships with them and their families, and create space for ways of being, as they build the knowledge and skills that will empower them to achieve their potential.

As we consider accountability, leadership, and the validation of knowledge systems to inform our work on behalf of all students, the CBE Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework positions us to acknowledge and support the TRC Calls to Action. With a focus on Education for Reconciliation, we are committed to building our knowledge of Indigenous ways of being, belonging, doing, and knowing to ensure a balanced representation of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems within leadership practices,

*“I like learning spaces that are structured, but not to the point of “strict”...I like quiet spaces and having choices for an appropriate work space; people supportive of everything I have going on (mental health); people that are fun to be around, engaging, entertaining”*  
(Gathering Indigenous Student Voice, 2021).

*"If we continue to start with Western knowledge, we will continue to get the same result. Indigenous and Western knowledges need to be cross validated. We need an ethical space between them so we can understand and learn from one another" (Dr. Reg Crowshoe, Piikani Elder, 2021).*

policies, approaches, and resources. The Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework calls on us to create ethical spaces where Indigenous and Western paradigms of education sit alongside each other in harmony. Piikani Elder Dr. Reg Crowshoe has taught us that ethical space is a gathering place where two different knowledge systems can understand each other, and that it is within this ethical space that we must gather to support students. Indigenous **ways of knowing** benefit all CBE learners.

## Key Attributes of the Mind Domain

The following key attributes and provocations are offered as possible entry points for bringing the Mind Domain to life in schools and service units.

- **Holistic & Lifelong** – Design student and staff learning tasks that intentionally activate the spirit, heart, body, and mind.
- **Mastery, Confidence & Purpose** – Design and implement structures and processes that maintain and support high expectations for learners and staff.
- **Accountability & Leadership** – Engage all CBE service units in conversations and action planning focused on learning and applying Indigenous knowledges.
- **Indigenous & Western Knowledge Systems** – Decolonize curriculum resources by replacing stories that favour Western worldviews with Indigenous worldviews from Treaty 7 Nations (Blackfoot, Tsuu'tina, Stoney Nakoda), Treaty 6 Nations (Saulteaux, Nakota, Dene), Treaty 8 Nations (Cree, Dene Tha', Danezaa, Denesuline), and the Métis Nation.

## Walking Forward...

As we walk forward with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, students, staff, families, and community, we will continue to invest in un-learning colonial ways (learning the truth) and then re-learning (engaging in reconciliation) to improve our organization for all students and staff. One way that we are acting on this commitment is through the allocation of an annual day of un-learning and re-learning for all CBE employees. In fall 2021, we held our first system-wide Indigenous Education Professional Learning Day, where we identified through staff self-assessment that while many staff have an emerging foundation of

*"Don't fear the truth. Ask questions" (Lottie Manywounds, Tsuut'ina Elder, 2021).*

knowledge, we still have significant work to further build and apply this knowledge to our decisions and actions on behalf of all learners. As an organization, we are committed to continuing our un-learning and re-learning, and expect the resulting actions that occur over time to be significant and will support the restoration of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.



# Okkakiosatoo (Oh kia kio sii toap) – “Look Carefully”

When considering how the Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework can be reflected in classrooms, schools, and service units across the school district, while also influencing the broader community, the following table offers examples of standards that we aspire and expect to see when we “Okkakiosatoo (Oh kia kio sii toap) – ‘Look Carefully’ in Blackfoot” (likiinayookaa Marlene Yellow Horn, 2022).

Classrooms	Schools	School District	Community
Acknowledge history and diversity of students	Establish strong, reciprocal relationships with students, staff, families, Elders, and community	Seek guidance about Indigenous teachings from Indigenous people	Decolonize the curriculum
Develop a sense of purpose for students, reclaiming identity and revitalizing culture	Ensure inclusivity of Indigenous voices	Engage all staff in professional learning	Connect policies and practices of colonialism to intergenerational challenges today
Promote student identity, self-esteem, and self confidence	Balance Indigenous and Western perspectives to create ‘ethical space’	Adopt and implement TRC Calls to Action	Continue engaging all voices in supporting solutions and sharing story and history
Create cultural safety in learning environments	Leverage connections to the land school is situated on and land-based learning	Un-learn colonial ways (learn the truth) and re-learn (engage in reconciliation) together	Provide opportunities for: Student leadership Academic mentorship Youth development Post-secondary support Sport and recreation Indigenous programming
Provide opportunities to explore and practice cultural practices and learn protocols	Design School Development Plans to improve achievement and well-being outcomes for Indigenous students	Maintain and expand on Chief Superintendent Elder Advisory Council	Offer cultural and family wellness programming to strengthen the family circle and build healthy, resilient communities
Design learning connected to student’s lives and experiences	Offer professional learning inclusive of equity, inclusion, diversity, and reconciliation	Consider organizational structures that support equity, inclusion, diversity, and reconciliation: Focus groups Policies Professional learning strategies Action plans	Strengthen and establish internal and external relationships and partnerships with: Students Parents/Guardians Staff Community Agencies Indigenous Community Faculties of Education Other External Organizations
Build relationships with all students	Establish culturally responsive and respectful approaches to learning, school processes, and resources	Allocate budget to Indigenous equity, inclusion, diversity, and reconciliation	
Seek student voice	Understand intergenerational trauma and apply trauma sensitive or trauma informed practices	Commit to Acknowledging the Land in all spaces and places while deepening understanding of what this means and responsibilities	
Create inclusive student leadership opportunities	Promote well-being in indoor and outdoor safe spaces, practices, and activities	Establish opportunities for school, area, service unit, district, community collaboration	
Provide opportunities for land-based learning	Invite and make visible culturally diverse role models	Offer opportunities for staff to foster understanding about cultures and languages other than their own	
Develop strength-based instructional and assessment approaches that examine and celebrate incremental growth and progress	Celebrate significant cultural dates as a school community	Increase inclusive hiring and promotional practices that reflect diversity of communities	
Braid Indigenous pedagogical approaches, perspectives, languages, and cultures in learning tasks and classrooms	Promote formal and informal inclusive learning opportunities	Celebrate significant cultural dates as a district	
Provide multiple entry points for tasks to encourage risk-taking and resiliency	Actively seek community agency support	Establish strong partnerships with community organizations	
Design interdisciplinary learning tasks		Consider re-naming spaces and places	
All: Gather and utilize holistic data sources to monitor progress, inform decision-making, and celebrate success!			

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