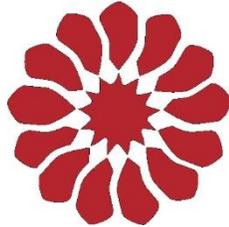


# JOINT NEWS RELEASE

For immediate distribution: October 19, 2021



The ʔaq'am Community and Purcell Collegiate Incorporated (PCI) are pleased to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two parties. The signing took place on Tuesday, October 12 at ʔaq'am and is the result of 19 months of collaborative discussions and cooperative initiatives. The MOU articulates the parties' groundbreaking partnership on PCI's in-development international boarding school, Purcell Collegiate, and lays the groundwork to expand ʔaq'am's role to include shares in PCI and a seat on its corporate board of directors.

## ABOUT PURCELL COLLEGIATE

Purcell Collegiate Incorporated (PCI) is building a world-class international boarding school in Kimberley, British Columbia. The school, Purcell Collegiate, will be licensed as a Group 4 Independent School under the BC Ministry of Education classification scheme. The school will employ BC-certified teachers and deliver the world-renowned BC curriculum to international and Canadian students in grades 7 – 12. In addition to core academic courses, it will offer specialized elective classes in the areas of sustainability, outdoor education, STEM, business and entrepreneurship, leadership, and fine arts. There will also be advanced coaching and training opportunities for student athletes in multiple sports academies beginning with hockey and expanding to soccer, golf, and other scholarship-qualifying sports. All aspects of the learning experience at PCS will be informed by and infused with the First Peoples Principles of Learning and Indigenous Ways of Knowing as guided and facilitated by the ʔaq'am Community of the Ktunaxa Nation.

Other key features and attributes include:

- the school is targeting LEED GOLD accreditation based on the most applicable LEED rating system version at the time of submitting the application to the Canada Green Building Council;
- the school will incorporate as many sustainability aspects and amenities as possible. Some examples already included in the design are rain-water collection, living walls/roofs, solar energy production capacity, and food-production capabilities (greenhouse, forest farm, apiaries);
- the school is targeting Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) Certified Gold status per the foundation's rating system criteria and toward ensuring the entire campus is as accessible and engageable as possible;

- the school will include a child-care facility as an extension of Purcell Preschool + Daycare’s existing operations at our Meadowbrook School campus to provide child care for Purcell Collegiate staff and the Kimberley community and to provide learning opportunities for Purcell Collegiate students, particularly those interested in careers in education;
- the school will foster inclusivity and acceptance for all students regardless of nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, and/or disability and will incorporate design accommodations and enhancements with that in mind;
- the school will encourage and enable healthy living with physical and intellectual outlets and opportunities already included in the design;
- the school will highlight Ktunaxa language, culture, and history with design implements and operational participation as guided by ʔaq̓am Community representatives;
- the school will provide integrated learning and engagement opportunities for community members including but not limited to after-school clubs and sports open to local public-school students, evening classes for adult community members, and publicly-accessible learning and multipurpose spaces for community activities, events and presentations; and
- the school will foster and support psychological well-being; Purcell Collegiate will be a healthy, productive environment for living and learning.

PCI has chosen to locate Purcell Collegiate School in the centrally-located suburb of Marysville for the express purpose of creating benefit for the local communities of Kimberley, ʔaq'am, and Cranbrook and looks forward to extending and enhancing the opportunities it will produce to maximize its economic and social impact. PCS’s pioneering engagement model was designed to support and complement the local public-school system. As such, the only local students who will attend PCS will be high-level athletes who would otherwise have to leave the local area to attend sports academy programs in larger school districts or distant private schools. PCS will afford these students (and their families) the opportunity for them to remain at home. Local students will otherwise not be permitted to attend PCS ensuring enrolment numbers at Selkirk Secondary School in Kimberley and Mount Baker Secondary School in Cranbrook are not negatively impacted. That said, students enrolled in both local public high schools will qualify to participate in PCS’s suite of after-school clubs and sports which will provide learning and training opportunities only found in large metropolitan areas. This unique engagement model enables and ensures both maximum benefit and minimum disruption while simultaneously enhancing the value proposition afforded to international students whose opportunity to live and learn in Canada will be extended beyond the cohort of students at Purcell Collegiate to include those with similar interests and goals in the other two local high schools.

#### ABOUT ʔAQ'AM'S PARTICIPATION

The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, has repeatedly highlighted education as the key to reconciliation, stating, “Education got us into this mess and education will get us out of it.”

Working together, PCI and ʔaq̓am are taking up this mantle. As such, Purcell Collegiate will not be a traditional or conventional “private school.” It will be a paradigm-shifting Group 4 independent school purpose-built to change the way education is offered and engaged in British Columbia. The human, social, cultural, and educational capital being contributed by the ʔaq̓am Community distinguishes the school as a learning opportunity for students and elevates it as a social impact incubator and economic

development generator in support of the Truth and Reconciliation process and as a lighthouse project toward a decolonized future.

## QUOTES

Chief Joe Pierre of the ʔaq̓am Community: “I am very happy that the Community of ʔaq̓am and Purcell International have signed this Memorandum of Understanding – having the opportunity to work hand in hand with the school in receiving students from around the world is very exciting. I want the students to know that they have come to the homelands of the Ktunaxa people from the moment they arrive on campus, as well when they return home, I want them to be able to speak eloquently about their Ktunaxa hosts. ʔaq̓am looks forward to the future with our neighbours up in K’ukamaʔnam (Ktunaxa name for Kimberley).”

Purcell Collegiate Board Chair Jaret Thompson: “After 19 months of working towards articulating shared goals for and mutual benefit from this MOU, we are honoured to welcome ʔaq̓am as new key partners. This relationship aims to realize what we know will be a paradigm-shifting project and model a new way of working together. With a better understanding of our common ground and what we can achieve together, it feels like the beginning of new and more balanced way to do business by holding Truth and Reconciliation as an important part of how we plan and operate. Both parties have articulated a long-term vision and offer a balanced approach that will help carry us through the inevitable highs and lows of a new partnership. With much work jointly accomplished, we are pleased to have ʔaq̓am formally involved, helping guide this project in a more substantive way as we learn and grow together.”

Carl Ninine, CAO of the ʔaq̓am Community: “This MOU is a great step to position the ʔaq̓am Community in the education of youth. With the cultural and educational capital that ʔaq̓am brings, we will give future generations greater understanding of Ktunaxa traditions, language, and culture, what we need in Truth and Reconciliation and eventually a decolonised ʔaq̓am future. *ʔaq̓amnik* (ʔaq̓am people) are guided by *Ka Kniʔwi-tiyata* (ʔaq̓am thinking) and this is how we have persevered – we are resilient and we drive forward. With this MOU, through education we guide youth and create a future we desire.”

Duncan MacLeod, CEO and Head of School for Purcell Collegiate Incorporated: “The ʔaq̓am Community has already contributed significantly to and helped guide the development of Purcell Collegiate School. The MOU recognizes those contributions, establishes pathways and mechanisms for ongoing cooperation, and actualizes PCS’s acknowledgement that it sits on the traditional and ancestral homeland of the Ktunaxa peoples. Our pioneering work together will now be extended to include the collaborative promotion of the unique corporate engagement model the MOU articulates. It is our shared goal to attract government attention to what we are doing, how we are doing it, and why.”

For further information, contact ʔaq̓am CAO, Carl Ninine, at [cninine@aqam.net](mailto:cninine@aqam.net) or Purcell Collegiate Incorporated CEO/Head of School, Duncan MacLeod, at [dmacleod@purcellcollegiate.ca](mailto:dmacleod@purcellcollegiate.ca).

## Attachments:

- 1) Architectural rendering of Purcell Collegiate School featuring Ktunaxa Nation flag at main entry (courtesy Berry Architecture + Associates)
- 2) Photo of MOU signing ceremony (front row, left to right: Joe Pierre, ʔaq̓am Community Chief; Duncan MacLeod, Purcell Collegiate Incorporated CEO/Head of School; back row, left to right: Arthur Luk, Purcell Collegiate Incorporated Corporate Director; Jaret Thompson, Purcell

Collegiate Incorporated Corporate Board Chair; Julie Birdstone, ʔaq'am Community Councillor;  
Jason Andrew, ʔaq'am Community Councillor)

LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION

- <https://www.aqam.net/>
- <https://purcellcollegiate.ca/>
- <https://purcellpreschool.ca/>