



DISTRICT PARTNERS WITH TAKE A HIKE

June 28, 2023

Kelowna, BC – Central Okanagan Public Schools announces a new partnership with the Take a Hike Youth Mental Health Foundation (Take a Hike).

Take a Hike partners with school districts to engage priority youth in an alternative education setting that uses a trauma-informed, evidence-based model that supports a full-time mental health and emotional well-being program implemented by a full-time mental health clinician.

"We are glad to work together with Take a Hike to build on our capacity to support priority youth in our schools," said Lee-Ann Tiede, Chairperson for the Board of Education. "We always seek to create more opportunities for all students to flourish, and this partnership will bring more access to the mental health supports and educational activities that can change lives."

The Take a Hike program will be offered to students in Grades 8-9 who are open to the activities that the Take a Hike model supports. Take a Hike also engages youth in land-based learning within the program. The model is built on four pillars:

- Mental Health
- Academics
- Land-Based Learning
- Community

"Part of our district's success is because we meet each learner where they are and ensure that they can be part of a caring community with opportunities to thrive," said Kevin Kaardal, Superintendent of Schools/CEO. "The Take a Hike model allows us to build on our existing supports to create new prospects for priority youth to succeed, both as students and as citizens in a global community."

Take a Hike has worked in partnership with public schools in BC since 2000, with the first program introduced in Vancouver. Since then, they have grown to have programs in the West Kootenays (2013), Burnaby (2014), Delta (2019), Nanaimo (2019), Cowichan (2021), Saanich (2021), Merritt (2021), Sooke (2022), Stz'uminus (2022) and will be launching in three new communities, including the Central Okanagan, this coming school year.