



## **STATEMENT AGAINST ANTI-SOGI PROTESTS**

September 19, 2023

Kelowna, BC – In response to the planned demonstration in downtown Kelowna tomorrow, the Central Okanagan Board of Education reiterates its commitment to safe and inclusive places to learn. The demonstration called to remove educational resources and other supports for trans and gender diverse people from schools, which would compromise the inclusion of LGBTQ2SAI+ students, staff and their families.

As BC Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender points out, peaceful demonstration protects democracy and generates debate, but "the human rights of trans and LGBTQ2SAI+ people are not up for debate."

Central Okanagan Public Schools is committed to inclusive places to learn and work. We do not tell people who they should be, we welcome everyone as they are. We will always uphold the safety and human rights of students and staff. This is why we reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that vulnerable young people can have a sense of belonging so they can focus on their learning priorities.

As Premier David Eby noted in his letter to the BC Teachers' Federation, the "BC SOGI Educator Network helps to make our schools more inclusive and welcoming so that children express themselves in their own unique way." Central Okanagan Public Schools, along with 59 other BC districts and the Federation of Independent School Associations, is a member of the Provincial K-12 SOGI Collaborative that is supported by all parties in the BC Legislature. Along with our Provincial mandate to ensure safe, inclusive schools, our own Strategic Plan affirms our commitment to inclusive learning cultures that value the unique identities and diverse contributions of each learner.

Education remains the key to understanding and including everyone in our beautifully diverse community so that Together We Learn.

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For comments, please contact:

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