



## **SKWXWÚ7MESH SNÍCHIM POLICY**

Policy Title:	Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim Policy - Language Policy
Policy Number:	TBD
Brief description:	Governance policy for language revitalization
Effective date	July 2021
Approved by	Squamish Nation Council
Motion	TBD
Policy Holder	Samaya Jardey
Responsible Department	Ta na wa Ns7éyxnitm ta Snewíyelh
Policy Contact	Samaya Jardey
Supersedes	TBD
Last reviewed/updated	December 15, 2021
Applies to	Squamish Nation Council, Nation Staff, Volunteers, Committee Members, Academic Institutions, and External Partners

### Reason for Policy

This Policy is the essential first step in our language revitalization program. It is one component of our language revitalization plan and is intended to:

- guide, provide for, and protect the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim;
- provide the Squamish Nation’s vision for good governance and planning for the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim; and
- implement best practices in language revitalization and maintenance to ensure efficient and impactful revitalization efforts.

**Table of Contents:**

I. Introduction _____	3
II. Definitions: _____	3
III. Policy Purpose _____	4
IV. Principles _____	4
V. Roles & Responsibilities _____	5
VI. The Language Commission _____	7
Purpose _____	8
Responsibilities _____	8
Commission Members _____	9
Chair and Deputy Chair _____	10
Governance _____	10
Funding: _____	11
VII. Official Language Strategy _____	11
VIII. Oral Proficiency Certification _____	12
IX. Teacher Certification: _____	13
X. Naming Approval _____	14
XI. Standardization _____	14
XII. Funding, Accountability and Reporting _____	15
XIII. Policy History _____	15
XIV. Review & Amendment _____	16
XV. Implementation _____	16
XVI. Appendix _____	16

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ta na wa Nexwíwn ta a Ímats,<sup>1</sup> first language speakers from the late 1980s to early 1990s, collected together to teach their grandchildren the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim. This group of grandmothers and grandfathers taught their grandchildren the Skwxwú7mesh language and culture. The elders at that time were mostly first language speakers, and consequently there was no consideration or requirement for structured language governance, as it was just the language.

Currently, Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim has no first language speakers, and the language itself is severely endangered, as analyzed by the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, and is more likely better categorized as critically endangered, as our second language speakers speak the language only partially and infrequently.

This policy is to guide, provide for, and protect the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim. Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim resources currently include undocumented artifacts and stories from the Squamish Language Elders Advisory Group, of which there is only one surviving elder, Lila Johnson. This policy outlines the governance to re-establish Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim as a primary language in the Nation.

## II. DEFINITIONS:

The following words and terms have the following meaning:

1. "*Academic institutions*" means primarily post-secondary educational institutions.
2. "*Citizen*" means members on the Squamish Nation membership list maintained in accordance with the Squamish Nation's Membership Code.
3. "*Language Commission*" means the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim Commission created under this Policy.
4. "*Council*" means the Squamish Nation Council elected in accordance with the Squamish Nation election regulations or laws.
5. "*Director*" means the Director who reports to a senior administrator and oversees Language & Cultural Affairs.
6. "*Language revitalization*" means the process to move the language through the stages of language revitalization, from endangered to first language speakers.

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<sup>1</sup> Ta na wa Nexwíwn ta a Ímats means "Teachings for your Grandchildren".

7. "*Minutes*" means documentation of all decisions and discussions considered in a meeting of the Language Commission.
8. "*Official Language Strategy*" means a strategy adopted by Council to guide all strategies for revitalization and survival of the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim.
9. "*Records of Decision*" means documentation of all main motions considered in a meeting of the Language Commission.
10. "*Skwxwú7mesh*" means the name of the Squamish People, language, and River.
11. "*Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim*" means the Squamish language.
12. "*Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw*" means the Squamish Nation.
13. "*Squamish People*" means all people with Squamish ancestry.
14. "*Standardization*" means the standard rules to be followed to communicate effectively with one another in the written language.

### **III. POLICY PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to enable the development and maintenance of highly proficient and fluent speakers of Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim. This policy is also intended to support Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim revitalization, maintenance, documentation, research, and use, as well as the delivery of language initiatives, programs, and services for the Squamish People, employees of the Squamish Nation, volunteers, committee members, academic institutions, and external partners.

This Policy does not have oversight over Nation citizen's use of the language or methodologies to learn the language. Language revitalization includes and recognizes all efforts, including those outside of this policy.

This policy aims to convey the Squamish Nation's objectives for language revitalization and maintenance and the responsibilities of the persons and groups that are accountable to ensure successful language revitalization and maintenance.

### **IV. PRINCIPLES**

The following are principles of the Squamish Nation regarding Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim.

1. Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim is a language belonging collectively to the Squamish People.

2. The Squamish Nation affirms and recognizes that the right to speak, learn, and transmit the language is held collectively and individually by all with Squamish ancestry.
3. Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim is the official language of the Squamish Nation.
4. Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim is a living, breathing entity, enriched by new words every year that foster its growth and evolution.
5. All Squamish People have the right to speak, use, learn, and teach the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim.
6. The Squamish Nation affirms, in this policy, Articles 13 & 14 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:
 

“Have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons”

“Have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning”
7. The orthography developed by Randy Bouchard and Dr. Louis Miranda, with changes made from time to time, is the official orthography for Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim.
8. The Squamish Nation prioritizes language resources and efforts to Squamish People but also encourages the appreciation of the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim with all to promote reconciliation and relationship with the language of our territory.

## V. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility:
<b>Council</b>	<p>The Council is accountable to its citizens to revitalize the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim. Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appoint or remove all members of the Language Commission;</li> <li>• review and consider decisions by the Language Commission;</li> <li>• consider requests for amendments to this policy (new, revised, and removed); and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>determine if policy and/or procedure document/s require cross functional review from other departments within the Nation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Director(s)</b></p>	<p>The Language &amp; Cultural Affairs Director conducts work, projects, and activities as per this Policy and the Official Language Strategy. The Director will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recommend updates and/or changes to policies, procedures or processes to the Language Commission;</li> <li>maintain policies and procedures related to language;</li> <li>ensure accessibility, as directed, to internal and external stakeholders;</li> <li>ensure procedures and processes are consistent with this Policy and updated to reflect status;</li> <li>prepare budgets to fulfill this Policy &amp; the Official Language Strategy;</li> <li>review this Policy and any supporting procedures; and</li> <li>confirm that revisions incorporate the requirements of applicable legislation, laws, regulations, and standards.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Language Commission</b></p>	<p>The Language Commission is the delegated authority, appointed by Council, to pursue desired Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim outcomes as established by this policy. The Language Commission will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>abide by this policy and related governance documents;</li> <li>follow the Terms of Reference for the Commission;</li> <li>oversee the development and implementation of the Official Language Strategy;</li> <li>approve official additions to the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim lexicon based on word requests or words that have entered the vernacular among Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim speakers;</li> <li>approve guidelines, exams, and certified examiners for oral proficiency, translator, and teacher certification;</li> <li>report to Council on its activities on an annual basis;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be assigned a budget and will have authority within the budget to achieve strategic priorities; and</li> <li>• recommend amendments to this policy or relevant governance documents.</li> </ul>
<b>Commission Chair</b>	<p>The Commission Chair will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prepare Language Commission meeting agendas for consideration by the Commission;</li> <li>• effectively lead Language Commission meetings; and</li> <li>• oversee the development of the annual workplan for the Language Commission in collaboration with the Language Commission and Squamish Nation staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Commissioner</b>	<p>Commissioners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attend all meetings when possible;</li> <li>• participate in all meetings by being prepared for meetings and ready to contribute to the deliberations; and</li> <li>• participate on subcommittees when necessary.</li> </ul>

## VI. THE LANGUAGE COMMISSION

1. The Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim Commission (“the Language Commission”) is created and founded by order of the Squamish Nation Council (“the Council”).
2. The Language Commission is the official Language Authority for the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim for the Squamish Nation with the powers, authorities, and responsibilities as set out in this policy, and is a Language Authority within the meaning of the Teacher Regulation Branch’s policy with regards to the recognition of First Nations Language Authorities and other policies or regulations requiring a Language Authority.
3. The Language Commission is a language authority appointed by the Squamish Nation Council from time to time to carry out the purposes and functions as outlined in this policy.
4. The Language Commission’s fundamental role is to assist in the revitalization of highly proficient and fluent speakers of Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim.

## **Purpose**

5. The purpose of the Commission is to act on behalf of the Skwxwú7mesh People to:
  - a. provide leadership in promoting the health and well-being of the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim for Skwxwú7mesh, and at the community level;
  - b. support, inform, and influence the Nation's initiatives in protecting, promoting, and revitalizing the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim;
  - c. in conjunction with the appropriate Directors, provide oversight of, and direction to, the Squamish Nation on the education of Squamish children and lifelong learners in the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim;
  - d. act as a forum for Skwxwú7mesh to discuss activities, opportunities and issues regarding the preservation and promotion of Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim as the language of use and choice for all Skwxwú7mesh in all aspects of their private and public lives and to further develop and spread the use of Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim;
  - e. act as a forum for Skwxwú7mesh to identify actions that the Squamish Nation, each of its departments, other parties having jurisdiction in the Skwxwú7mesh Homeland and all Skwxwú7mesh can take that will result in the preservation, promotion and development of Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim; and
  - f. provide recommendation to Council concerning actions, methods and opportunities for preserving and promoting Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim.

## **Responsibilities**

6. The responsibilities of the Commission are to:
  - a. take such steps as are reasonably necessary in the opinion of the Commission to give effect to the status of Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim as an official language of Squamish Nation;
  - b. promote the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim as a living language and as an ordinary means of communication;
  - c. oversee, monitor, and consider the development and implementation of the Official Language Strategy and recommend it to Council for consideration;
  - d. consider reports from the Director on matters relating to the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim;

- e. grant proficiency certificates in accordance with this policy;
- f. prepare, maintain, and publish a register of persons who hold certificates granted under this Policy, including any endorsement of a certificate;
- g. provide advice on programs that contribute to the implementation of the Official Language Strategy;
- h. approve official signage with Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim on territorial land;
- i. assist Directors or other senior managers who have responsibilities relating to the purpose of this Policy to identify relevant issues, develop solutions, and take opportunities to collaborate with other parties in matters relating to the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim;
- j. provide advice and guidance to Squamish Nation entities on how they may contribute to developing or implementing the Official Language Strategy;
- k. be responsible for creating or approving new words to add to the official lexicon;
- l. be responsible for recommending to Council a standardization of the written Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim;
- m. consider an annual workplan to be approved by the Director;
- n. receive reports on the implementation of the Official Language Strategy; and
- o. perform other functions conferred on the Commission by this Policy or any other resolution of the Council.

### **Commission Members**

- 7. The Director shall post a call for applicants in conspicuous places Squamish Nation members would see to recruit applicants for the Commission when there are vacancies on the Commission.
- 8. The Director will recommend to Council up to nine (9) Commissioners, with any of the following skills:
  - a. an understanding of language policy;
  - b. experience with Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim planning in family and Skwxwú7mesh community contexts;
  - c. academic background in sociolinguistics and language planning;

- d. high levels of connectivity with Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim community initiatives; or
  - e. a high level of proficiency in the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim.
9. Except for those nominated by community members, applicants will be required to include the following in their application to be considered for the Commission:
- a. a list of speakers of Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim who recommend their appointment to the Commission; and
  - b. any relevant information regarding required skills.
10. Council will consider the recommendations of the Director and speakers of Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim in their decision to appoint.
11. The term for the Commission will be four (4) years.

### **Chair and Deputy Chair**

12. The Commission will appoint, from amongst its members, a Chair and Deputy Chair.
13. The Deputy Chair will perform the roles and responsibilities of the Chair when the Chair is unable to do so.
14. The Chair may delegate any of its responsibilities to the Deputy Chair.
15. The Chair and Deputy Chair should have the relevant skills and abilities to effectively prepare agendas, manage meetings, and assist with implementing the annual workplan.
16. Training can be offered to the Chair and Deputy Chair to assist them in performing their duties.

### **Governance**

17. The Language Commission must maintain meeting minutes that include:
- a. the date, time, and location of the meeting;
  - b. the purpose of the meeting;
  - c. the names of attendees, regrets, and those who were unable to attend;
  - d. agenda items;
  - e. decisions that were made; and
  - f. action items, including timelines, deadline(s), and those assigned responsibility for the action items.

18. The Language Commission must approve and maintain a Terms of Reference that includes:
  - a. Roles and Responsibilities;
  - b. Annual Objectives; and
  - c. Reporting Timelines.
19. Commissioners will be expected to abide by confidentiality and conflict of interest declarations approved by the Director.
20. Commissioners will be remunerated for their services.
21. Appointment details will be confirmed in a letter of engagement.

### **Funding:**

22. The Language Commission shall be funded by the Squamish Nation at a level to carry out its functions.
23. In preparation for the Annual Budget of the Squamish Nation, the Director shall prepare a budget for review by the Language Commission and submit as a part of the regular budget process as set out in other policies or instructions by the Squamish Nation.
24. Commissioners will be compensated for their time based on approval budget allocations and at the discretion of the Director.

## **VII. OFFICIAL LANGUAGE STRATEGY**

1. To assist in achieving the purpose of this Policy, the Language Commission must prepare for Council consideration an Official Language Strategy that sets out:
  - a. a vision for the revitalization and maintenance of Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim across all Squamish Nation departments, entities, community groups, partners, families, and individuals;
  - b. the Nation's long-term strategic direction, including five-, ten-, and twenty-five-year objectives and targets to revitalize the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim;
  - c. initiatives and tactics matched to objectives and targets, including groups identified in Section VII Subsection 4; and

- d. a summary of policies, and related matters, relevant to the revitalization and maintenance of the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim.
2. Before submitting an Official Language Strategy for consideration, the Commission must consult any person or organization that the Director considers ought to be consulted.
3. The Official Language Strategy shall be the official programs and services of the Squamish Nation and related Squamish Nation entities offered to all Skwxwú7mesh.
4. The Squamish Nation will deliver programs, services, and resources for the following groups consistent with the Official Language Strategy that will lead to measurable changes in the quantity of proficient speakers at each proficiency level each year:
  - a. Lifelong learners;
  - b. Pre-Kindergarten;
  - c. Elementary School Students;
  - d. Secondary School Students; and
  - e. Post-Secondary Students.
5. The Director will take all reasonable steps to partner with institutions and organizations to implement the strategy in these categories.
6. The Director shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the Language Commission is knowledgeable in proficiency testing and proficiency benchmarks.

## **VIII. ORAL PROFICIENCY CERTIFICATION**

1. The Language Commission shall grant a certificate of oral proficiency in the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim to any person who applies to the Commission for such a certificate and satisfies the Commission that they are qualified to be the holder of such a certificate.
2. For the purposes of determining whether an applicant for a certificate is qualified to hold such a certificate, the Language Commission must prepare and publish, as it decides, criteria by which oral proficiency in the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim is to be assessed.
3. The Language Commission must approve and maintain Official Oral Proficiency Guidelines that determine the interpersonal speaking, oral presentation, and interpretive skills of speaker of the language at each of the following Proficiency Levels:
  - a. Novice;

- b. Intermediate;
  - c. Advanced;
  - d. Superior; and
  - e. Distinguished
4. The Language Commission must appoint certified examiners with the powers to certify at each level who must have some of the following skills:
    - certified proficiency at least one level above what they can certify;
    - strong command of the language at their level; and
    - ability to perform examinations according to the Oral Proficiency Guidelines.
  5. An examiner grants certificates of proficiency in the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim based on the Official Oral Proficiency Guidelines and Exam.
  6. The Language Commission's certified testers are authorized to conduct oral proficiency exams as approved by the Commission and certify speakers at the level they demonstrate proficiency.
  7. Certification lasts for two (2) years and must be updated once it expires to be valid.
  8. The Language Commission must prepare, maintain, and publish a register of persons who hold certificates granted under this Policy on the Squamish Nation's website.

## **IX. TEACHER CERTIFICATION:**

1. The Language Commission shall grant a teaching certificate in the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim to any person who applies to the Commission for such a certificate and satisfies the Commission that they are qualified to be the holder of such a certificate.
2. The Language Commission shall grant Teacher Certification to individuals who are certified Advanced speakers and:
  - a. have completed some level of training, formal or informal, to the satisfaction of the Commission;
  - b. are skilled in curriculum planning and implementation;
  - c. are skilled in classroom management; and
  - d. are skilled in proficiency assessment.

3. The Language Commission may create guidelines to advise potential teacher certification applicants on criteria and requirements to achieve certification.

## **X. NAMING APPROVAL**

1. The Language Commission shall be the governing body responsible for creating or approving new words to add to the official Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim lexicon.
2. The Language Commission is also responsible for approving contemporary names for entities seeking a name in Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim.
3. The Language Commission may establish a committee of its members to assist in recommending names to the Commission for approval.
4. The Language Commission may establish a process for receiving, reviewing, and approving name requests.
5. The Language Commission may decline a name request on any grounds it sees fit.
6. For clarity, the Language Commission is not responsible for matters involving kw'shámin (ancestral names) or niná7min (nicknames; pet names) habitually received through a cultural ceremony.

## **XI. STANDARDIZATION**

1. The purpose of this section is to:
  - a. express the importance for a literary standard to be developed for the delivery of the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim;
  - b. assist with standardizing the Skwxwú7mesh orthography to guide the on-going promotion, development, and production of materials in the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim; and
  - c. provide terms for the development of a standard for written Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim.
2. The Language Commission shall identify specific orthographic issues through consultation with elders, teachers, linguists and proficient Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim speakers.

3. The purpose of the official orthography is to:
  - a. aid in the retention, survival, and revitalization of the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim;
  - b. create standard rules so people can communicate effectively with one another;
  - c. ensure consistent application in Skwxwú7mesh documents, materials, and publishing;
  - d. support learners with productive learning;
  - e. support speakers with clear communication;
  - f. increase the ease of teaching literacy in written Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim; and
  - g. increase the ease of readability and comprehension of literature in written Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim.
4. The standardization may include, but is not limited to:
  - a. alphabetical order;
  - b. diacritics;
  - c. capitalization; and
  - d. punctuation (i.e., question marks, quotation marks, exclamation marks, periods, and commas).

## **XII. FUNDING, ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING**

1. The Director shall prepare, in accordance with Squamish Nation budget procedures, a budget to implement this policy and the Official Language Strategy.
2. The Director must annually prepare and present a report to the Language Commission and Council on the progress and status of the implementation of the Official Language Strategy.

## **XIII. POLICY HISTORY**

1. The number of Commissioners was changed from five (5) to nine (9).
2. A nomination process was added to the application process.

#### **XIV. REVIEW & AMENDMENT**

1. This Policy shall be amended by Council Resolution.
2. The Language Commission shall review this policy biannually and recommend changes to Council for consideration.
3. Resources shall be provided by the Director to assist with any review by the Language Commission.
4. The Director may recommend amendments to the Language Commission for consideration.
5. The Policy may be amended from time to time to correct minor grammar and/or spelling errors.

#### **XV. IMPLEMENTATION**

1. The following sections shall come in effect on the following dates:
  - a. Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12 come into effect upon approval of this policy.
  - b. Parts 5 and 6 are to come into effect by January 31, 2022.
  - c. Parts 7, 8 are to come into effect by April 31, 2022.
2. This section may be omitted once all Sections come into effect.

#### **XVI. APPENDIX**

1. Commission Terms of Reference
2. Commission Workplan
3. Official Language Strategy