

*Secwepemcúl'ecw yi7élye ell, re tmicws re Secwépemc n7élye*

School District No. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson) acknowledges that we reside in Secwepemcúlecw, and recognizes the Secwépemc People as the keepers of their traditions and knowledge.

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# Executive Summary

School District No. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson), also referred to as “the District” and as “SD73”, acknowledges that we reside on Secwepemcúl’ecw and recognizes the Secwépemc People as the keepers of their traditions and knowledge. The District believes that an equity-centered, relevant, and engaging learning experience is necessary to maximize the success of Aboriginal learners. Truth and reconciliation through equity and inclusion are principles that are fundamental to the positive learning experience of every student. Ensuring equity is the foundation for improving student achievement and is central to each learner’s experience and engagement.

As outlined in the [Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement \(2016-2022\)](#), also referred to as “the Agreement”, all students must have the opportunity to develop and fulfill their individual potential. In 2016, the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) and the District collaboratively implemented the fourth Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement to prioritize this objective. Ongoing consultations between SD73 and its Aboriginal partners resulted in the Agreement, which is based upon mutual values of reciprocated respect and consensus building and is focused on the goals and strategies that lead toward academic and personal success for all district Aboriginal learners. The Enhancement Agreement will expire in June 2022. During the 2021-2022 school year, the AEC and the District will be participating in a full review and renewal of the Agreement. The four goals of the Agreement are outlined later in this report.

Targeted Aboriginal Education Funding, which is provided to SD73 by the Ministry of Education, is spent on enhancing Aboriginal education programs and services for Aboriginal learners. Such funding is not used to replace other funded programs, such as Inclusive Education Services or English Language Learning (ELL), nor is it used to deliver the provincial curriculum.

Instead, in partnership and collaboration with the AEC, the District allocates this funding and oversees the interests of all Aboriginal learners in the areas of academic, social-emotional, cultural and language enhancements that improve such learners’ school experiences and academic achievements.

Targeted Aboriginal Education Funding, based on 2,758 full time equivalent (FTE) students for 2021-2022, is shown in Chart 1 in the Funding and Budget Summary of this report.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic influenced how the District, in collaboration with the AEC, supported Aboriginal student success during the 2020-2021 school year. Due to provincial restrictions on gatherings and events, cultural opportunities were limited. Also, our focus shifted in an effort to keep Aboriginal students and families engaged and to prioritize student mental health and well-being.

Finally, the District completed the signing of seven Local Education Agreements (LEAs) in the spring of 2021, to be in effect from September 2020 through to June 2025. These LEAs outline the relationship and responsibilities between the Board of Education and the seven participating Bands concerning the education of their students.

# Action Items

To address the continued achievement improvements, the following action items will be prioritized during the 2021-2022 school year.

The District will:

- Develop a strategy to acknowledge Truth and Reconciliation, as well as National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21) and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30).
- Work with the seven local Bands to implement the newly signed Local Education Agreements.
- Collaboratively renew the five-year Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement, which expires in June 2022.
- Continue with the Ministry of Education's Equity in Action Project, which includes developing strategies to address equity in outcomes, including systemic barriers in policy and governance, the pedagogical core, learning environments, and the learning profile.
- Continue to support the objectives of the District Aboriginal Parent Group (SD73 Indigenous Family Voices for Education).
- Continue to support the formation of a District Aboriginal Student Leadership Council.
- Develop a strategy to address and support Aboriginal education staffing needs.
- Develop strategies to address mental health and well-being, racism, truth and reconciliation, as well as strategies to acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous Peoples and learners.
- Expand the number of professional development opportunities to increase staff capacity in equity-centered trauma-informed practices, and cultural awareness and sensitivity.
- Develop school leadership teams focused on reconciliation, equity, and trauma-informed practice that are reflected in School Learning Plans.
- Expand cultural offerings and gatherings that promote learning and knowledge, and celebrate local Aboriginal traditions, including a District Powwow, Cultural Days, Day of Suwentwécw, McQueen Lake Local Indigenous Cultural Centre, and Métis traditions.
- Develop a strategy to expand Secwépemctsin in district schools.
- Develop resources to support and enhance early learning for pre-K Aboriginal students.

# Introduction

Accommodation of Aboriginal culture and identity should be regarded as a core responsibility of public institutions rather than as a special project to be undertaken after other obligations are met. As summarized in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996), educational institutions have a pivotal role in transforming the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Canadian society.

Therefore, the District supports the provision of the most enabling learning environment for all district Aboriginal learners. The District supports equitable access to education for all Aboriginal learners, while honouring the diversity that each learner contributes to society.

The District provides a public education to approximately 15,000 students, of which 2,758 are of Aboriginal ancestry. District residents live in the territories of seven bands or First Nations: Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, Skeetchestn Indian Band, Whispering Pines/Clinton Indian Band, Simpcw First Nation, Neskonlith Indian Band, Adams Lake Indian Band and Little Shuswap Lake Band. Most district residents are in Kamloops. Others are in surrounding rural communities including Barriere, Chase, Clearwater, Logan Lake, Savona, and Westwold.

Linking student achievement to equity, inclusion and diversity promotes learner well-being, engagement and school connectedness, which results in the creation of educated citizens. Therefore, the concepts of equity, inclusion and diversity are central to the District's vision, which is:

*“To be a dynamic school district achieving success for all students through a commitment to equity and excellence.”*

Through the educational experience, the enactment of this vision enables Aboriginal learners to not only receive a graduation certificate but to also become resilient and engaged citizens with positive life outcomes. It ensures that learners can succeed personally and academically, regardless of background, identity or personal circumstances.

As outlined in the Agreement, all learners must have the opportunity to develop and fulfill their individual potential. The District supports the provision of the most enabling learning environment for all Aboriginal learners, and it supports equitable access to education for those learners, while honouring the diversity that each one contributes to society.

Through a review of the District's use of Targeted Aboriginal Education Funding and the associated educational achievement outcomes, this report summarizes progress on the District's commitment to the Agreement.

## District Strategic Priorities

As outlined in SD73's [Five-Year Strategic Plan](#), which is in the process of being renewed during the 2021-2022 school year, the District's vision of ensuring success for all students aligns to the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement and embeds Aboriginal education in all six of the District's strategic priorities. Aboriginal education is part of the District's core responsibility to ensure that Aboriginal students cross the stage with dignity, purpose, and opportunities.

The District's third strategic priority, which is specific to Aboriginal learning, demonstrates the District's commitment to:

1. Ensure that every student acquires strong foundational skills and core competencies.
2. Connect students to their passions and interests.
3. Honour the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) and honour Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives.
4. Foster an inclusive, adaptable and accountable district culture.
5. Strengthen partnerships to enrich the way that the District leads, learns and works.
6. Ensure the sustainable use of resources.



## Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

In 2016, the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) and the District collaboratively implemented the fourth [Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement](#). This Agreement, ongoing consultations between SD73 and its Aboriginal partners, is based upon mutual values of reciprocated respect and consensus building and is focused on the goals and strategies that lead toward academic and personal success for all Aboriginal learners in the District.

### *This Agreement focuses on four goals:*

#### 1. Student Success

- To increase the educational success of all Aboriginal learners.
- To increase the sense of identity, belonging and pride in all Aboriginal learners.

#### 2. Language and Culture

- To increase the awareness and understanding, amongst all students and staff, of Aboriginal culture, traditions, languages, historical contributions and contemporary contributions.

#### 3. District and School Culture

- To increase Aboriginal learners' sense of belonging, including sense of place, personal and cultural identity, and self-esteem in caring, safe, inclusive environments.

#### 4. Aboriginal Parent and Community Engagement

- To enhance, nurture and value positive relationships between the District, parents and communities.

The District's strategic and learning plans and its schools' learning plans are all aligned to this Agreement and enhance the District's commitment to the continuance of collaboration between the District and its Aboriginal partners.





N'we Jinan Artists

# Policy and Governance

As outlined in the *School Act*, all school-age residents are entitled to enrol in the District's schools. The District's mission as an educational entity is summarized in the preamble to the School Act:

*...it is the goal of a democratic society to ensure that all its members receive an education that enables them to become literate, personally fulfilled and publicly useful, thereby increasing the strength and contributions to the health and stability of that society;*

*...the purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable all learners to become literate, to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.*

Therefore, as a District, we are guided by the following statements:

- We believe in the equitable participation and contributions of all learners;
- We promote understanding, acceptance, dignity, mutual respect and inclusion, in order to make our school communities equitable for all learners; and
- We provide high quality education to all learners in a setting that is most enabling and least restrictive.

Aligned to the Ministry of Education's [Diversity in BC Schools Framework](#), SD73 provides conditions that foster success for all students. These conditions include:

- Equitable access to and equitable participation in quality education for Aboriginal learners;
- District and school cultures that value diversity and respond to the diverse social and cultural needs of the communities that the District serves;
- School cultures that promote understanding of others and respect for all;
- Learning and working environments that are safe, welcoming and free from discrimination, harassment and violence;
- Decision-making processes that give a voice to all members of the school community; and
- Policies and practices that promote fair and equitable treatment of all learners.

In accordance and alignment with the stated priorities of the Ministry's Aboriginal Education Branch, the District recognizes that its learners are its future.

Therefore, the District strives to:

- Improve the success of Aboriginal learners;
- Support all students in their learning about Aboriginal peoples; and
- Assist teachers in their efforts to bring Aboriginal knowledge into their teaching practice.

Several guiding documents drive Aboriginal education in the District and create a framework of action for Aboriginal student success:

[School Act](#)

[Ministry of Education Indigenous Education in British Columbia](#)

[United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)

[An Audit of the Education of Aboriginal Students in the B.C. Public School System](#)

[BC Tripartite Education Agreement: Supporting First Nation Student Success \(2018\)](#)

[BC Teachers' Council: Professional Standards for BC Educators](#)

[Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement](#)

[School District No. 73 District Learning Plan](#)

[School District No. 73 Policy 16](#)

[School District No. 73 Administrative Procedure 203](#)

[Local Education Agreements](#)



# Funding and Budget Summary

To support access to equitable educational outcomes, the Ministry of Education provides Targeted Aboriginal Education Funding. School-age students who self-identify as being of Aboriginal ancestry and who participate in Aboriginal education programs and services offered by public schools are eligible for such funding. Application of these funds requires the collaboration of the District and the local Aboriginal communities to develop and deliver education programs and services that integrate academic achievement and Aboriginal culture and/or language.

Targeted funding provided to the District is spent on the provision of Aboriginal education programs and services to Aboriginal learners. The delivery and outcomes of these programs and services are documented through the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement. These funds are not used to replace other funded programs, such as Inclusive Education Services or English Language Learning (ELL), nor are they used to deliver provincial curriculum. Instead, they are used to enhance student programming for the purpose of equitable educational outcomes for Aboriginal learners.

In 2019–2020, the provincial government increased the targeted funding amount to school districts from \$1,200 to \$1,450 per student and then again in 2020-2021 from \$1,450 to \$1,500 per student.

Targeted Aboriginal Education Funding based on 2,758 FTE (a decrease of approximately 65 students) for 2020–2021 is shown in Chart 1.

**Chart 1. Targeted Aboriginal Education Funding for 2020–2021\***

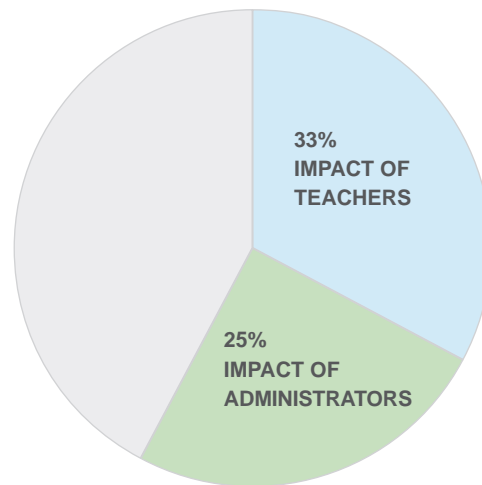
Funding	Revenue
Ministry of Education	\$4,137,000.00
	Expenses
Staffing	\$2,782,029.00
Benefits	\$575,247.00
Supplies / Services / Supports	\$268,725.00
Cultural Enhancement	\$352,166.00
Academic Enhancement	\$692,568.00
Social-Emotional Enhancement	\$89,000.00
Language Enhancement	\$311,658.00
Total Estimated Expenses for 2020-2021	\$5,071,393.00
Total Carry Over from 2019-2020	\$937,393.00
Anticipated Net Carryover for 2021-2022	\$3,000.00
Actual Carryover for 2021-2022	\$1,491,000.00

\*Note: The budget reflects anticipated expenses by June 30, 2021. Due to school closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were unanticipated carryovers from unspent budgets. The most significant increase in carryover was due to staffing shortages starting in the 2019-2020 school year.

# Staff and Staff Development

The focus of Aboriginal education in SD73 is Aboriginal student success. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), one of the key factors for such success is the capacity of the staff (OECD, 2001). See Figure 1.

**Factors Affecting Student Achievement**



*Figure 1. Factors Affecting Student Achievement. Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005.*

Accountability to meet the Ministry of Education’s targeted funding requirements for programs and services requires the allocation of staffing resources in schools. These resources address the requirements and provision of services.

This aligns to the following Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada: Calls to Action:

- 63(ii) Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
- 63(iv) Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

This also supports two of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement goals:

- Goal 1: Student Success; and
- Goal 2: Language and Culture.

## Staffing

In 2020-2021, the District Aboriginal Education Department was overseen by the Director of Instruction – Elementary Education and Learning Services and was supported by the District Principal – Aboriginal Education.

The District Principal – Aboriginal Education was to report on the work and supervise staff charged with implementing the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement and matters regarding Aboriginal Education. The District Principal – Aboriginal Education ensures good governance by communicating the work of the AEC, establishing meeting agendas, developing budget reports, and ensuring the meetings function according to established guidelines and protocols.

The District Aboriginal Education Department was supported by:

- One 1.0 FTE District Principal – Aboriginal Education
- One 0.6 FTE Aboriginal Education Administrative Assistant
- Two 1.0 FTE District Aboriginal Education Resource Teachers; one elementary and one secondary
- One 1.0 FTE District Coordinator - Aboriginal Education
- Thirty-two 1.0 FTE Aboriginal Education Workers
- Three 1.0 FTE Secwépemctsin (Secwépemc language) Teachers
- Four 1.0 FTE Aboriginal Secondary School Support Teachers: two support blocks in Chase Secondary and one support block in each: South Kamloops Secondary School, Sa-Hali Secondary School, and Brocklehurst Middle School
- Two 1.0 FTE Aboriginal Youth and Family Consultants
- Six 1.0 FTE Aboriginal Family Counsellors

Due to COVID-19 and a surplus in funding from the unanticipated challenges it presented, the AEC in collaboration with the District, approved additional temporary support staff that included:

- One 1.0 FTE On-the-Land District Resource Teacher
  - Implemented in the Spring of 2021
- Two 1.0 FTE Aboriginal Community Outreach Workers
  - Implemented in the Spring of 2021
- One 1.0 FTE Aboriginal Youth Support Worker
  - Implemented in the Spring of 2021, but unable to fill the position due to lack of qualified applicants

- One 1.0 FTE Aboriginal Family Counsellor
  - Implemented in the Fall of 2020, but unable to fill the position due to lack of qualified applicants
- One 1.0 FTE Secwépemc Language Support Worker
  - Implemented in the Spring of 2021
- Two Elders in Residence
  - Unable to fill the positions due to COVID-19 pandemic barriers

This staffing structure is designed to:

1. Support student success;
2. Provide programs and services to all self-identified learners, based on the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement; and
3. Provide programs and services that support the direction given in the BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA).

Staffing is funded through a combination of Targeted Aboriginal Education funds and district operating funds.

## Staff Development

The District follows a hiring policy for new Aboriginal staff that requires consultation, during the hiring process, with the AEC. Many support staff and teacher leader positions have human rights exemptions to support the hiring of staff with Aboriginal ancestry. Historically, the District has struggled to fill these positions with people who have such ancestry and who possess local knowledge of the communities and this has been particularly challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Support staff, such as Aboriginal Education Workers, often bring a wealth of cultural knowledge and Aboriginal ways of knowing and learning to their students. However, outside of informal collaboration and mentorship, there is no process for formal training in instructional practices. Currently, an annual orientation reviews District processes, as well as the specific management and administrative skills that Aboriginal Education Workers require.

In 2019, the District began discussions with Thompson Rivers University (TRU) regarding the creation of a dual credit program specific to Aboriginal learners and obtaining a Certified Education Assistant Certificate. SD73 will continue to support TRU in the creation of this program. The District has also been reviewing and developing a strategy to provide its own in-house training for potential candidates. Unfortunately, much of this was delayed due to the continued restrictions of the pandemic and the closed campuses. The District is looking forward to continuing these conversations and planning in 2021-2022.

## Professional Development Day – Indigenous Focus

Through the BC Tripartite Education Agreement 2018 (BCTEA), all school districts are to designate one professional development day annually to have an Indigenous focus. For the 2020-2021 school year, the District provided Indigenous focused professional development on February 5, 2021. This included keynote speaker Dr. Kevin Lamoureux, the Educational Lead for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in Winnipeg and co-author of *Ensouling Our Schools*, and Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafound, who headed the 2020 report on addressing racism in BC Health Care.

Throughout the year, the Aboriginal Education Department supported teachers with resources to embed Aboriginal content in the curriculum. In many cases, the Aboriginal staff were guest presenters in classrooms, and they modelled lessons that teachers could repeat in the future.

The department also provided professional development sessions, augmented by an online resource bank of lessons, throughout the 2020–2021 school year.



Photo Credit: SKSS

# Community Collaboration

## Key Priorities and Goals

### Ministry of Education Aboriginal Branch

Targeted Aboriginal Education Funding requires the collaboration of the District and the local Aboriginal communities to develop and deliver Aboriginal education programs and services that integrate academic achievement and Aboriginal culture or language or both.

### Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada: Calls to Action

10. We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples.

### District Learning Plan

Priority 5: Strengthen partnerships to enrich the way in which we lead, learn and work.

### Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

Goal 4: Aboriginal Parent and Community Engagement

When schools and community organizations work together to support learning, everyone benefits. Partnerships can serve to strengthen, support and even transform individual partners, resulting in improved program quality, more efficient use of resources, and better alignment of objectives and curricula. Learning partnerships can support student educational achievement outcomes.



## Aboriginal Education Council

The Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) oversees the interest of all Aboriginal learners in the support, implementation and assessment of programs and services that improve the school experience and academic achievement of those learners. The Aboriginal Education Council consists of a representative from each of the seven local First Nations, as well as the Métis Nation, the Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society, the North Thompson Aboriginal Society, and the Board of Education.

To support student achievement, the AEC is mandated to:

- Advise and hold accountable the Board of Education regarding the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement and Aboriginal education matters.
- Develop a budget that outlines how targeted funds will be used to achieve the goals of the Agreement and Aboriginal education.
- Monitor progress toward reaching the four goals of the Agreement and Aboriginal education through an annual report published each February.
- Honour and acknowledge the Secwépemc People.
- Increase the awareness and understanding of Secwépemc and all other Aboriginal cultures.
- Provide direction, guidance and support for the activities and initiatives of the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee.

## Aboriginal Education Council Strategic Plan

The Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) has developed and identified four goals that align within the missions and goals listed in the 2016–2022 Enhancement Agreement and that will guide the AEC’s collective work in SD73. The AEC Strategic Plan is the direct result of an external review that was completed in October 2019 and co-constructed by members of the AEC in November of 2019, with feedback from staff members, students, and SD73 Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee members.

The AEC Strategic Plan clearly identifies goals for 2020–2023 in the areas of student success, language and culture, parent and community engagement and district and school culture.



## Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee

The Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee discusses items related to the delivery of Aboriginal education programs and services in SD73. The AEAC consists of representatives from CUPE, KTTA, KTPVPA, TRU, the seven local Bands, the Métis Nation, the Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society, the North Thompson Aboriginal Society, and the Aboriginal Education department.

This committee reviews performance measures to ensure individual and systemic accountability for Aboriginal learner achievement. As well, the committee's goals are to:

- Provide research, data and information to the AEC as requested;
- Recommend and advise funding priorities related to Aboriginal targeted funding;
- Provide general advice to the AEC on issues related to Aboriginal education; and
- Make recommendations related to program initiatives, Secwépemc language programs, data collection, strategies for involving Aboriginal parents, cultural awareness within the District, program reviews and other relevant areas related to Aboriginal education.

## Chase Aboriginal Advisory Committee

The Chase Aboriginal Advisory Committee discusses items related to the delivery of Aboriginal education programs and services in Chase in collaboration with the three local bands: Adams Lake Indian Band, Little Shuswap Lake Band, and Neskonlith Indian Band.

This committee reviews performance measures to ensure individual and systemic accountability for Aboriginal learner achievement and collaborates with Chase schools to provide support for student success.

## North Thompson Education Advisory Committee

The North Thompson Education Advisory Committee, formed in 2019, discusses items related to the delivery of Aboriginal education programs and services in the North Thompson region in collaboration with Simpcw First Nation and other First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Aboriginal families and learners in Barriere and Clearwater.

This committee reviews performance measures to ensure individual and systemic accountability for Aboriginal learner achievement and collaborates with North Thompson schools to provide support for student success.

## Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIE)

The Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIE) is a voluntary network of inquiry-based schools and school districts in BC and beyond. Using an inquiry-oriented, evidence-based approach to learning and teaching through the Spiral of Inquiry, the NOIE is dedicated to the following principles:

- Every learner crossing the stage with dignity, purpose, and options.
- Every learner leaving educational settings more curious than when they arrived.

- All learners gaining an understanding of and respect for Indigenous ways of knowing.
- Through collective efforts, eliminating racism in schools.

Schools participate on an annual basis by engaging in the Spiral of Inquiry and, at the end of the year, submitting case studies to share their learning. The schools in the NOIIE share resources, case studies and reflections, in a spirit of generosity, curiosity and growth. Network schools are supported by educational leaders throughout BC and the Yukon, as well as in Australia, in working toward improving outcomes for all learners.

Two SD73 schools participated in NOIIE during the 2020–2021 school year:

- Barriere Secondary School; and
- Valleyview Secondary School.

## Local Education Agreements

Local Education Agreements (LEAs) are an important mechanism to increase accountability and to promote and achieve effective working relationships between First Nations and local boards of education, enabling them to collaborate in supporting First Nation learners. The LEAs between the seven local Secwépemc First Nations and the Board of Education expired June 30, 2020.

The Board and all seven First Nations collaborated into the Spring of 2021 to develop new LEAs. Although the process was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the District is happy to announce the seven LEAs have been signed, thus completing the new agreements each for a five-year term expiring June 2025. Once the pandemic allows, the Board of Education will gather with each First Nation to acknowledge and celebrate the signing of these agreements.

## District Aboriginal Parent Group (SD73 Indigenous Family Voices for Education)

During the 2019–2020 school year, the District and the AEC supported exploring the idea of creating a District Aboriginal Parent Advisory Council (DAPAC). In the fall 2020, the district formed the first Aboriginal parent group called SD73 Indigenous Family Voices for Education (SD73 IFVE), which is unique in the province. This parent group encourages Aboriginal parent voice, advocacy and opportunities to build positive relationships throughout the District. The SD73 IFVE currently collaborates with the District on matters relating to public education to ensure that Aboriginal parent perspective and voice is consistently represented and heard. They also foster a culture of acceptance, diversity and inclusion in district schools.

## District Aboriginal Student Leadership Council

During the 2019–2020 school year, the District and the AEC supported the idea of creating a District Aboriginal Student Leadership Council (DASLC). In the winter of 2021, the district formed the first DASLC. This would create a venue for Aboriginal student voice, advocacy, leadership, and opportunities. The DASLC would advise the District on any matter relating to public education to ensure that Aboriginal learner perspective and voice are consistently represented and heard.

# Equity and Inclusion

## Key Priorities and Goals

### Guiding Documents

- School Act
- Ministry of Education Aboriginal Education Branch
- BC Auditor General's Report on Aboriginal Education
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC): Calls to Action

### Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada: Calls to Action

- 7. We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
- 10(i) ...close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.
- 10(ii) Improving education attainment levels and success rates.

### District Learning Plan

- Priority 3: Honour the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) and honour Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives.
- Priority 4: Foster an inclusive, adaptable and accountable District culture.
- Priority 5: Strengthen partnerships to enrich the way in which we lead, learn and work.

### Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

- Goal 3: District and School Culture

Meeting the educational needs of students is part of the development of equitable provision in an inclusive society in which individual rights are recognized and protected. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that all children have a right to education and, therefore, the right to make progress. Failure to provide education and create the conditions for individual progress may be a denial of a child's rights. At the centre of this challenge lies the goals of inclusion and equity – leading, ultimately, to improved social cohesion.

## Key Equity and Inclusion Projects

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) *Education Policy Analysis* (2003), there are four basic equality practices that should be applied to educational policy and practice:

According to the OECD *Education Policy Analysis* (2003), there are four basic equality practices that should be applied to educational policy and practice:

1. Equity of access or equality of opportunity;
2. Equity in terms of learning environment or equality of means;
3. Equity in production or equality of achievement (or results); and
4. Equity in using the results of education.

This section outlines three key projects in which the District is invested to address equity and inclusion: Aboriginal School Lead Sessions, the Equity in Action project and equity scans.

### Aboriginal Education School Lead Sessions

SD73 funded release time for four half-day Aboriginal School Lead Sessions during 2020-2021. Due to COVID restrictions, these sessions were attended virtually by teams from each school. At minimum, teams consisted of an administrator, a teacher leader, an Aboriginal Education Worker, and a Learning Assistance Resource Teacher. District coordinators and counsellors were present, as well as representatives from TRU.

Each session was attended by approximately 160 to 170 educators. Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives were woven into and modelled throughout each session, and cultural sensitivity, including issues regarding courageous conversations about race and privilege, were also reviewed.

Some schools have since developed their own Aboriginal school advisory groups to work on plans derived from these Aboriginal School Lead Sessions.

In the areas of social-emotional learning (SEL), mental health literacy and trauma-informed practice, the District is establishing programming that meets learners' diverse needs. The purpose is to create a climate within each learning environment that supports children, youth, and families and that is respectful, welcomes diversity and acknowledges cultural consideration. Teachers, Aboriginal Education Workers, Certified Education Assistants and school leaders are valued conduits for such programming. Therefore, ongoing professional development opportunities to increase capacity and foster understanding are crucial components of district programming.

Further, SD73's valued partnerships with community agencies continue to help the District to support the needs of students and their families.

A specific focus in 2020 – 2021 was partnering with the Inclusive Education department to promote diverse instructional practices using Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Also guest presenter, Kevin Lamoureux, an Education Lead from the Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and co-author of *Ensouling our Schools*, an Indigenous informed UDL support method, led the February and April session around trauma-informed practices.

## Equity in Action Project

The Equity in Action project was implemented in a partnership between SD73 and the Ministry of Education. Equity in Action's student success framework addresses equity and inclusion for Aboriginal learners. Equity and inclusion are reflected in all areas of the plan and through sustainable staffing resources, community collaboration, cultural enhancement, reconciliation and awareness, academic enhancement, social-emotional enhancement, and language enhancement.

Figure 2 illustrates this framework and its four pillars, which are: the pedagogical core, the learning environment, the learning profile, and policy and governance.

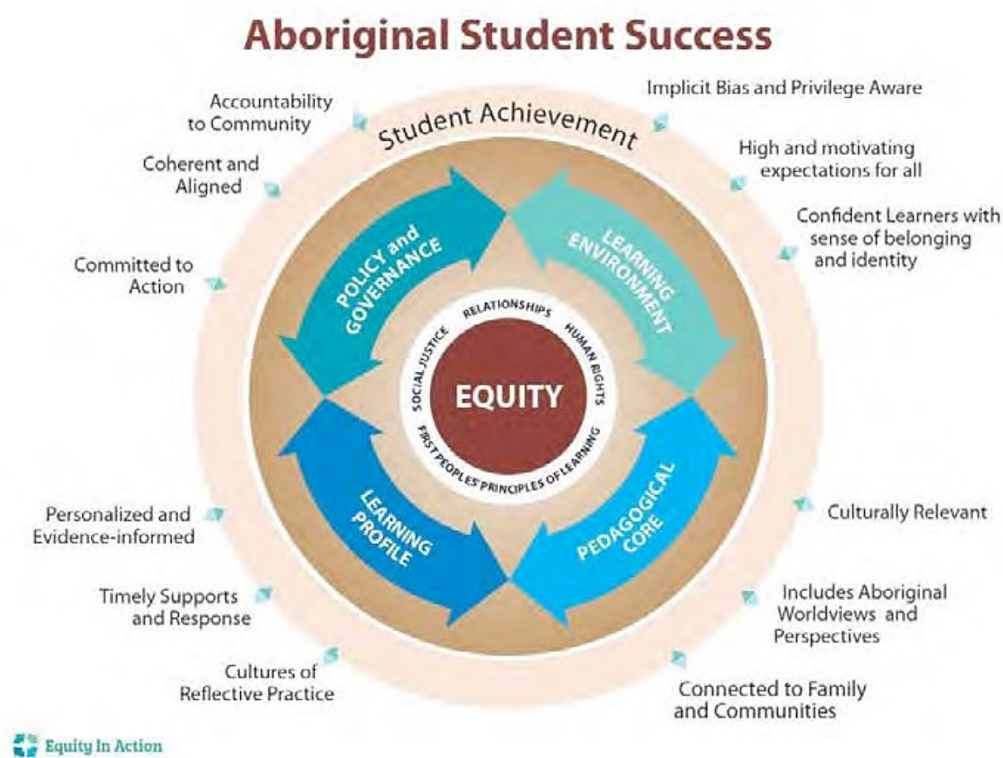


Figure 2. Aboriginal Student Success. Equity in Action, 2016.

During 2020-2021, the Equity in Action project team focused on:

- Unpacking the framework's four pillars in collaboration with Aboriginal school teams within the Aboriginal School Lead context;
- Conducting an equity scan/equity profile;
- Involving staff and community voice in the equity scan;
- Building a framework for courageous conversations around systemic barriers for Aboriginal learners in schools and the District;
- Identifying key areas to address in the 2021–2022 school year that will assist the District in moving toward equity for Aboriginal learners.

The District reviewed the six-year completion inequities for District Aboriginal learners. Using the learning profile tool provided by the Ministry of Education, as well as our own data tool, the team began accessing and assisting those individual learners who had a profile that indicated they were at risk of not graduating. This process included identifying such learners and connecting them with the appropriate supports.

According to the 2020-2021 Equity Scan, the following areas indicate where the district exhibits some strengths, as well as areas to work on within the four pillars of the Equity in Action Project:

### ***Policy and Governance***

School and District Learning Plans are collaborative structures that are recognized and supported by all partners. These plans focus on, and enable, equity and inclusion work in schools.

It was reported the District was strongest in:

1. Having specific structures in place that reflect a dedication to equity and inclusion in budgets, resources, and specific services to Aboriginal learners.

It was reported the District needed the most work in:

1. District and schools having a specific and formal Aboriginal parent, family and community engagement plan.
2. Inviting participation and representation of local Aboriginal communities in the decision making and change process to programs and services that directly affect their children.
3. Creating specific and formal school team plans helps students to access Aboriginal languages and culture.

## ***Pedagogical Core***

The pedagogical core is responsible for the equity of opportunities for all learners. Learners are empowered to challenge themselves to succeed. Using Ministry approved resources, learners recognize that their cultural background is respected. Learning experiences are intentionally designed to promote opportunities for all learners. Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives are always present. Classrooms are highly connected to families and communities.

It was reported the District was strongest in:

1. Providing professional growth in equity and Aboriginal education.
2. Addressing equity and opportunity gaps for Aboriginal learners in growth and learning plans.

It was reported the District needed the most work in:

1. Reviewing learning assessments for biases.
2. Addressing issues of implicit bias and systemic racism and looking at how this might be impacting the nature of instruction, assessment, participation, and opportunities for extra-curricular activities for Aboriginal learners.

## ***Learning Environment***

The learning environment has a high degree of bias and privilege awareness. Each learner experiences high and motivating expectations for their learning and their future. The learning environment upholds values of equity. Learners are confident and have a profound sense of belonging to their classroom, school and district.

It was reported the District was strongest in:

1. Inviting Aboriginal families and communities to feel welcome and valued as part of the learning environment.
2. Informing Aboriginal families about the curriculum, teaching practices, and graduating requirements impacting their children.

It was reported the District needed the most work in:

1. Developing collaborative practices and plans for reviewing instructional practices for potential biases.
2. Routinely scanning for equity in areas of transportation, attendance, extra-curricular activities, codes of conduct, and specialized programs including Inclusive Education, transitions, academic, etc.

## Learning Profile

Learning profiles are robust and evidence informed. Up-to-date profiles, resourcing and interventions are made in time to make a difference. Cultures of reflective practice dominate the professional environment. There is a high degree of advocacy for learners, and empowering systems of belief are evident.

It was reported the District was strongest in:

1. Reviewing and considering student learning trajectories, particularly in transitions (grades, schools, graduation, etc.) on an annual, timely (for supports) basis.

It was reported the District needed the most work in:

1. Considering multiple points of data when assessing the abilities and learning needs of Aboriginal learners.

## Equity Scan

The goal of the Equity Project is to move the culture of School District No. 73 to proficient in the four pillars – Pedagogical Core, Learning Profile, Learning Environment, and Policy and Governance – supported by the Ministry of Education’s Equity in Action project. This project was initiated to address the needs outlined in the BC Governor General’s report on Aboriginal Education, the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, and recently the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is a framework to address the apparent inequity of achievement results in British Columbia for our Indigenous students.

Every district school is at a different place and context in the journey to address equity, and it was important for the District to acknowledge this. Thus, for the introduction of the Equity in Action project in 2020 – 2021, the District intentionally started with school-based action plans. Through developing Aboriginal education leader teams and supports, each school could focus on specific, school-level areas of equity. This approach resulted in engagement in and ownership of the project in individual schools. It also resulted in broader engagement district-wide.

The results are from three years of feedback on Equity Scan questions. The intention of the Equity Scan is not to provide a ‘grade’ but to provide a baseline to guide collaboration and planning on addressing potential systemic inequities for Aboriginal learners.

Data from the 2020 – 2021 Equity Scan and planning tool reveal general trends for the District to examine during 2021 – 2022.

2020-2021 Overall Equity Scan Results

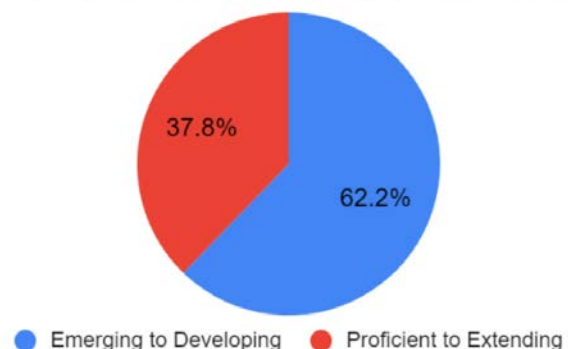
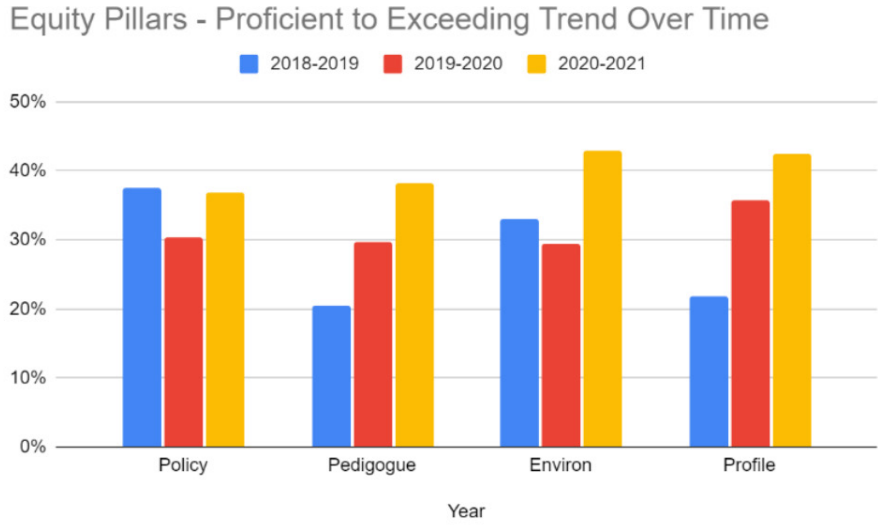
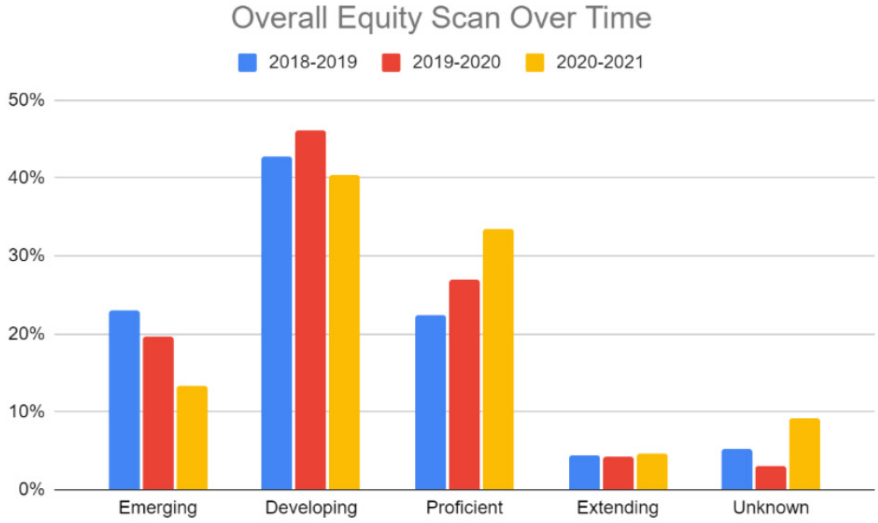


Chart 2 reveals where, according to Equity Scans from 2018–2019, 2019–2020, 2020–2021, SD73 staff feel they are overall in regard to the provincial Equity Project framework's four pillars.



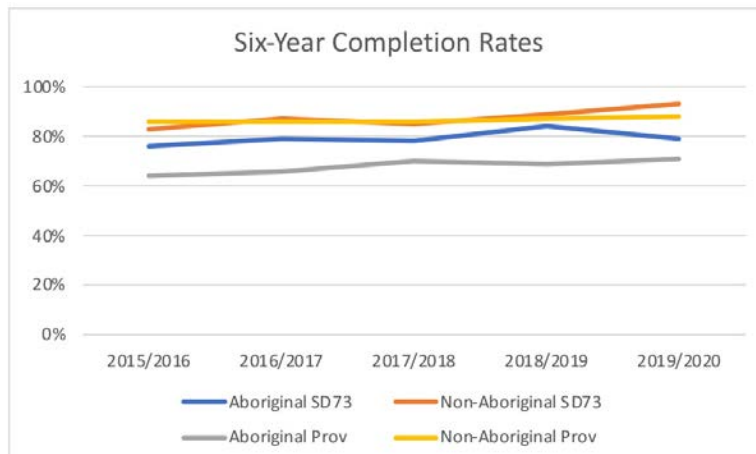
# Educational Achievement Outcomes

One of the main sources the District uses to track data on the outcomes for Aboriginal learners is the [ABORIGINAL HOW ARE WE DOING REPORT](#) (AHAWD). At the time of this report, the 2020-2021 AHAWD report was not available. In some cases, the report also compares Aboriginal results with ALL students. The District has been undergoing the disaggregation of that data to compare Aboriginal students with non-Aboriginal students to get a better understanding of outcomes. The data in this report allows the District to identify historical trends to better plan how to address inequities of outcomes moving forward.

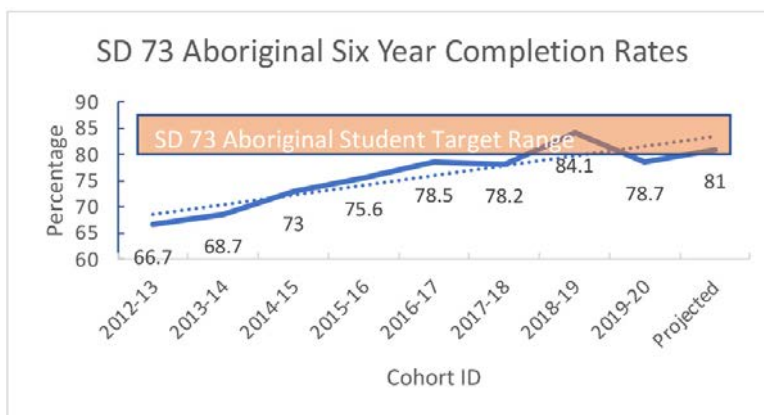
## School Completion Rates

One measure of success within the District is the six-year completion rate. In 2019–2020, the District had a seventy-nine percent (79%) six-year completion rate for Aboriginal learners as compared to ninety-three percent (93%) for non-Aboriginal students. This reflects a thirteen percent (13%) completion gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in the 2019-2020 school year.

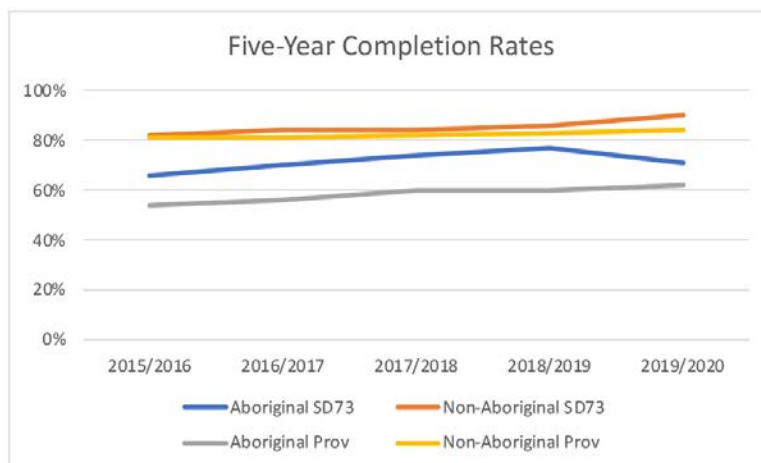
The provincial (public schools) six-year completion rate for 2019-2020 was seventy-one percent (71%) for Aboriginal learners as compared to eighty-eight percent (88%) for non-Aboriginal students. A seventeen percent (17%) completion gap.



The District has done their own preliminary look at completion results for 2020-2021.



Recently, the District has been taking a closer look at trends in the five-year completion rates to have a better understanding of student completion within the parameters of expected completion outcomes within a standard K-12 education framework, which would indicate a student completing grade 12 within five years.



### Completion Rates by Gender

What is also evident in the AHAWD report is that the gap for Aboriginal males in the District who complete are significantly lower compared to Aboriginal females by thirteen percent (13%) and to their non-Aboriginal counterparts by nineteen percent (19%) as compared to the one percent (1%) difference between non-Aboriginal males and females. The difference is even more pronounced when looking at the five-year completion rates. The same trend is reflected in the province, and the gap for Aboriginal males in the District compared to the provincial gap is more significant when compared to completion outcomes for females.

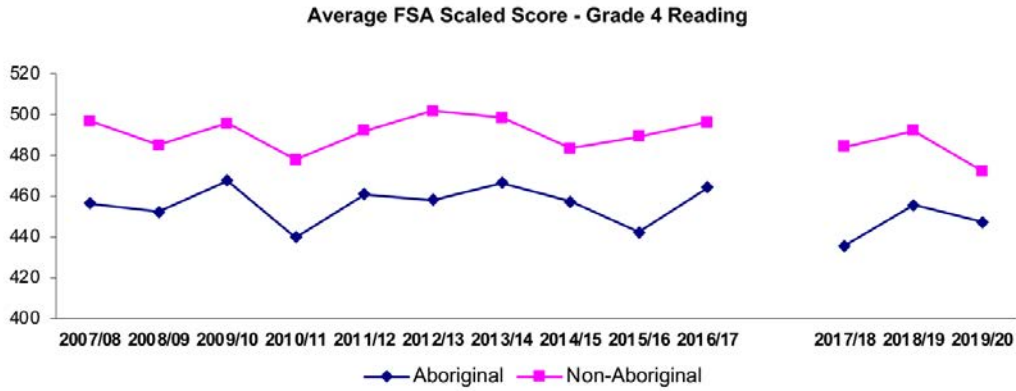
Some things to consider moving forward:

- A closer look at why Aboriginal males have a significantly lower completion rate than females when compared to both Aboriginal, Non-Aboriginal, and provincial results, particularly in the five-year completion rates.
- Examine the drop in completion for Aboriginal students that starts between grade 9 and 10, particularly for males, compared to a slight drop for non-Aboriginal students that starts between grade 10 and 11.

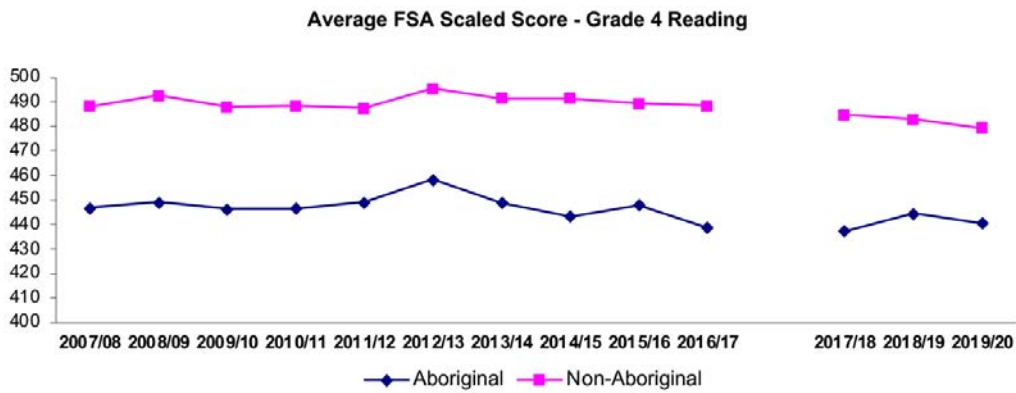
### Reading, Writing, and Numeracy Achievements

The 2019–2020 provincial Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) demonstrates elementary students’ achievement in three foundational skills: reading, writing and numeracy. The FSA is one assessment tool used to indicate student progress. The District also uses the Non-Fiction Reading Assessment and the revised District Numeracy Assessment. For this report, the provincial data for 2020-2021 was not available. A look at the available data is used to indicate historical trends to indicate where a deeper dive into the data might be made through district assessments to identify potential inequities and future strategic supports. For this report, the average scaled score from FSA results was used to indicate the historical trend in achievement for Aboriginal students compared to non-Aboriginal students.

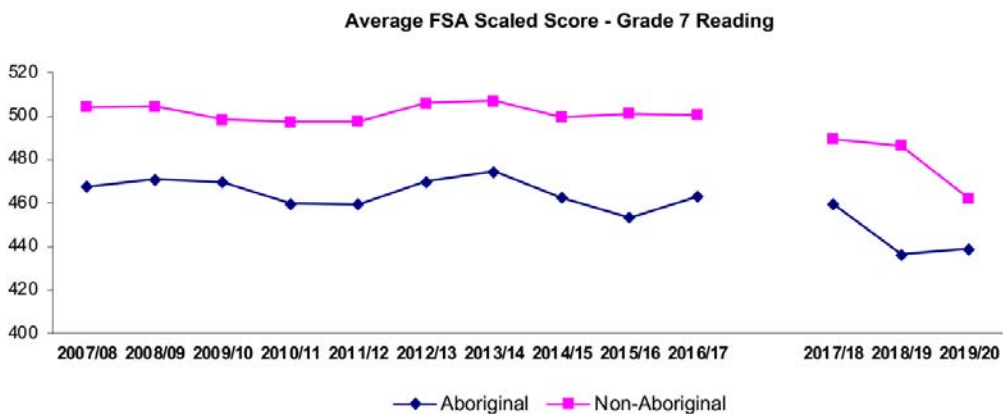
SD73 Reading – Grade 4



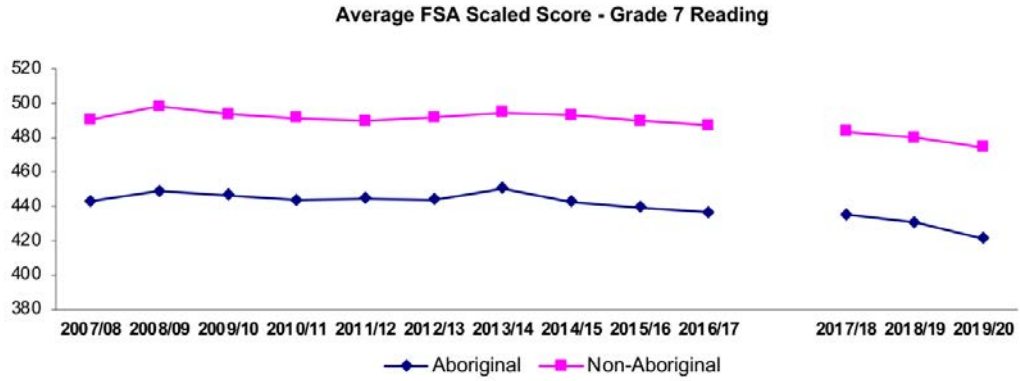
Provincial Reading – Grade 4



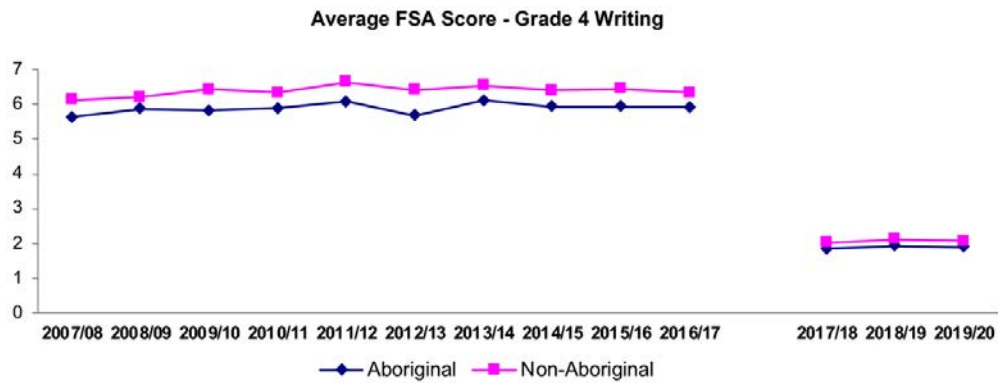
SD73 Reading – Grade 7



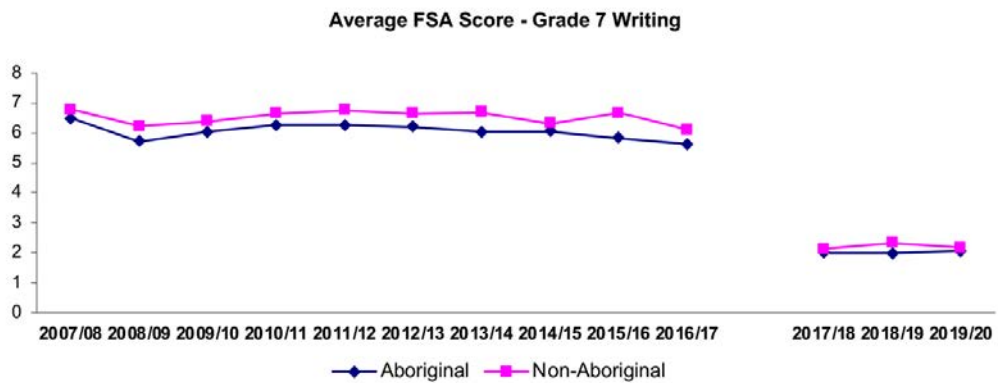
Provincial Reading – Grade 7



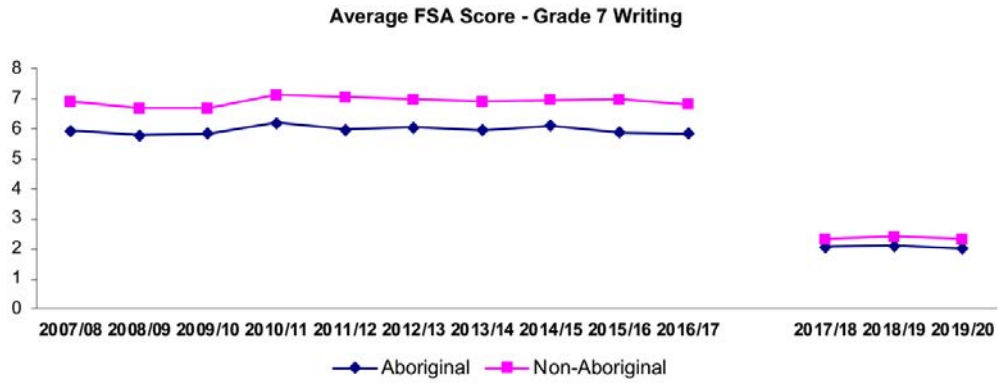
SD73 Writing – Grade 4



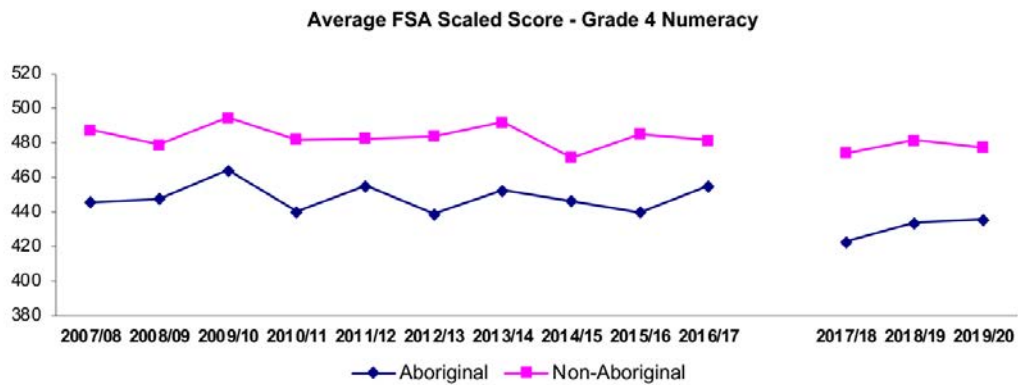
SD73 Writing – Grade 7



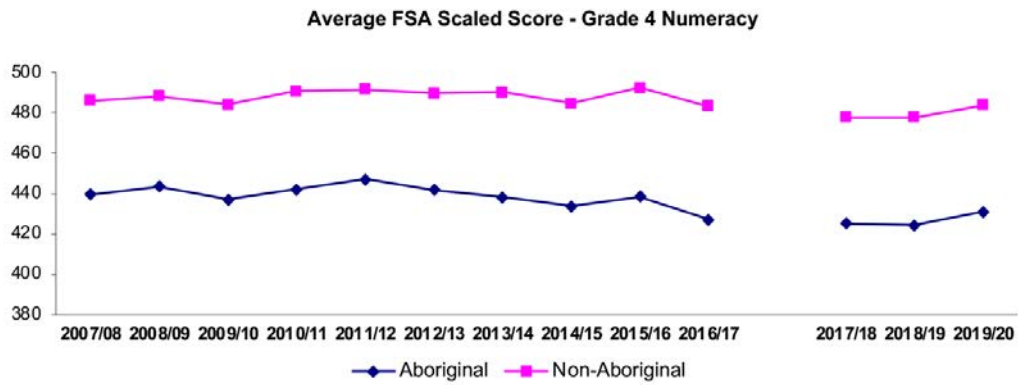
Provincial Writing – Grade 7



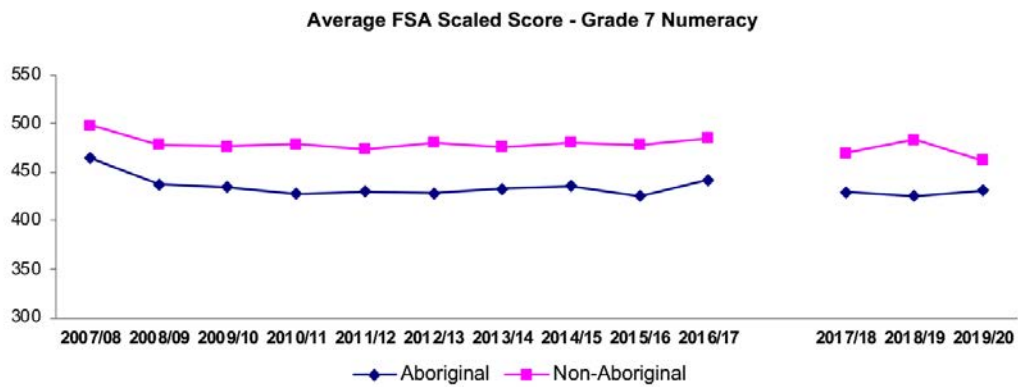
SD73 Numeracy – Grade 4



Provincial Numeracy – Grade 4



SD73 Numeracy – Grade 7

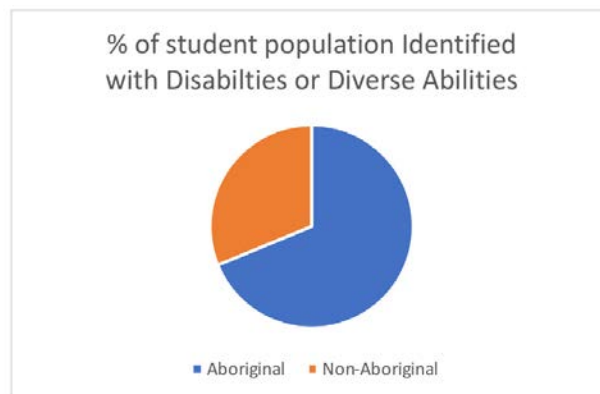


## Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities

The Inclusive Education Services Program is guided by SD73's Administrative Procedures, as well as the School Act and the [Ministry of Education's Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines](#). A more comprehensive report will be given in the Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Annual Report. However, there are a few areas worth highlighting in this report.

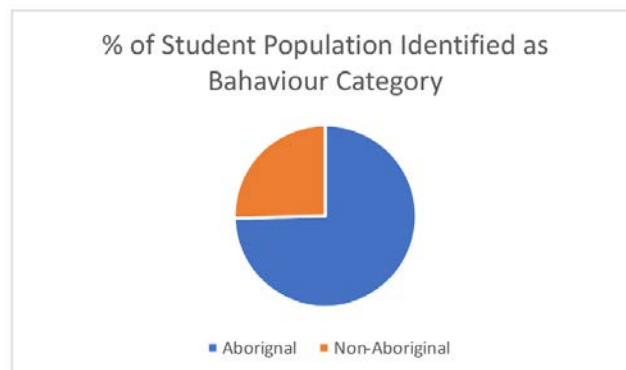
### *Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities (Overall)*

Students with disabilities or diverse abilities may require additional support and accommodations to enable them to access and participate in educational programs. The Ministry's vision is to provide inclusive and responsive learning environments that recognize the value of diversity and provide equal access, opportunity and outcome for all students including students with disabilities and diverse abilities. Approximately twenty percent (20%) of the Aboriginal student population is identified as having a disability or diverse ability, compared to approximately nine percent (9%) of non-Aboriginal students.



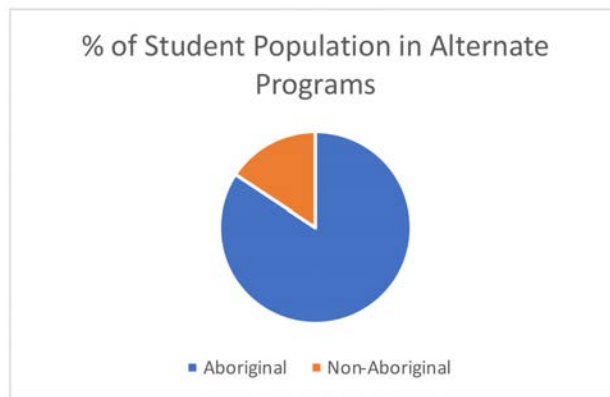
### *Behaviour Disabilities*

In the area of behaviour disabilities, the following data includes students in category H (Intensive Behaviour Interventions/Serious Mental Illness) and R (Moderate Behaviour Support/Mental Illness). In 2020-2021, approximately five percent (5%) of Aboriginal students were identified as either category H or R, compared to about one and a half percent (1.6%) of non-Aboriginal students.



## Alternate Programs

The graph below indicates the 2020-2021 percentage represented by Aboriginal or Non-Aboriginal students enrolled in alternate programs in the District. About four percent (4%) of the Aboriginal student population is enrolled in alternate programs in the District, as compared to less than one percent (1%) of non-Aboriginal students.



## Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework

To address and implement equity and inclusion moving forward, the District has undertaken to provide training in the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, a pedagogical approach that helps give all students equal opportunities to succeed. This includes incorporating an Indigenous focused UDL framework utilizing the book "Ensouling Our Schools: A Universally Designed Framework for Mental Health, Well-Being and Reconciliation", written by Jennifer Katz and co-written by Kevin Lamoureux. The UDL framework offers flexibility in how students access and engage with material and how they show what they know. This framework is based on neuroscience research that has identified three primary networks (recognition, strategic and affective) that impact learning. This has been in partnership with the Inclusive Education Services department and has been integrated into the Aboriginal Education School Lead Sessions.

- The **recognition** network deals with incoming stimuli and affects what students learn.
- The **strategic** network mediates how, based on their experience or background knowledge, students process incoming information.
- The **affective** network regulates why students want to learn and engage, and it considers students' attitudes and feelings about incoming information as well as their motivation to engage in specific activities.

All schools have received copies of the book "Ensouling Our Schools". In addition to this, ten pilot schools received a combination of professional development training, collaborative time to plan learning, and observation from an educational leader to foster teachers' understanding of UDL.

## ***District Engagement, Well-Being, and Resiliency Survey (DEWRS)***

Since 2010, the District has participated in a District Engagement, Well-Being, and Resiliency Survey. This survey measures twenty-four indicators based on the most recent research on school and classroom effectiveness. The survey breaks the indicators into two general categories:

1. Social-Emotional Outcomes
2. Drivers of Student Outcomes

In 2020-2021, Aboriginal students showed stronger outcomes in two of the twenty-four indicators. These were not statistically significant (5% or higher difference).

1. Aboriginal students scored point one percent (0.1%) higher than non-Aboriginal students when asked if they felt teachers showed an interest in their school, asked how well they are doing in school, and encouraged them to do well in school.
2. Aboriginal students scored two percent (2%) higher than non-Aboriginal students when asked if they planned on pursuing a trade or apprentice program.

In the remaining twenty-two indicators, Aboriginal students scored lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Thirteen of the twenty-two indicators are considered statistically significant (5% or more difference). These indicators are:

1. Students with a positive sense of belonging - Aboriginal students scored thirteen percent (13%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. This includes:
  - a. I make friends easily at school
  - b. I feel accepted for who I am
  - c. School is a place where I feel like I belong
  - d. I feel accepted by other kids my age
2. Students with positive relationships - Aboriginal students scored seven percent (7%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. This includes:
  - a. Do you have close friends at school that you can trust?
3. Intellectual engagement - Aboriginal students scored six percent (6%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. This includes:
  - a. A composite of questions asking students how engaged they are in the courses they are currently enrolled in, including relevance, motivation, effort, effective learning time, and rigor.

4. Language Arts - Aboriginal students scored seven percent (7%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. This includes:
  - a. A composite of questions specifically directed to language arts courses they are currently enrolled in, including relevance, motivation, effort, effective learning time, and rigor.
5. Science - Aboriginal students scored five percent (5%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. This includes:
  - a. A composite of questions specifically directed to science courses they are currently enrolled in, including relevance, motivation, effort, effective learning time, and rigor.
6. Effort - Aboriginal students scored nine percent (9%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. This includes:
  - a. I try hard to do well in Language Arts
  - b. I try hard to do well in Math
  - c. I ask for help when I need it
  - d. I participate in class discussions
7. Average percentage in Language Arts - Aboriginal students scored five percent (5%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.
8. Average percentage in Math - Aboriginal students scored six percent (6%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.
9. Average percentage in Science - Aboriginal students scored five percent (5%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.
10. Feeling safe attending their school - Aboriginal students scored eight percent (8%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. This includes:
  - a. I feel safe at our school
  - b. I feel safe on my way to school
  - c. I feel safe on my way home from school
  - d. Had something stolen at school
  - e. Been in a physical fight at school
  - f. Stayed home from school because they felt unsafe

- g. Given money to someone because they have threatened to hurt you
  - h. Witnessed a fight on school property where someone got hurt
  - i. Heard a student threaten to hurt another student
11. Advocacy outside of school - Aboriginal students scored five percent (5%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. This includes:
- a. Family members ask me how well I am doing with my school work
  - b. Family members talk to me about any problems I might have at school
  - c. Family members ask me how well I am getting along with kids at school
  - d. Family members show interest in my school projects
  - e. Family members encourage me to do well at school
12. Students planning to finish high school - Aboriginal students scored twelve percent (12%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.
13. Students planning on going to college or university - Aboriginal students scored nine percent (9%) lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.



# Cultural Enhancement, Reconciliation, and Awareness

## Key Priorities and Goals

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada: Calls to Action

63(iii) Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

## District Learning Plan

Priority 3: Honour the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) and honour Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives.

## Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

Goal 1: Student Success

Goal 2: Language and Culture

Goal 3: District and School Culture

Goal 4: Aboriginal Parent and Community Engagement

As a responsibility of reconciliation, the TRC: Calls to Action, specifically 63(iii), calls on governments and public education to build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect. Part of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement addresses this call to action through its goals to increase a sense of belonging for Aboriginal learners, as well as to raise awareness for all students about the traditions and cultures the Secwépemc and other Aboriginal peoples represented in district schools.

The four goals of the Agreement, honouring the local First Peoples and Secwepemcúl'ecw, and teaching Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives, build upon the following:

- Valuing diversity;
- Being culturally self-aware;
- Understanding the dynamics of cultural interactions; and
- Institutionalizing cultural knowledge and adapting to diversity.

## Cultural Enhancement, Reconciliation and Awareness Programs

The following lists some of the key cultural enhancement, reconciliation and awareness programs and services for 2020–2021. Note that these programs and services were in addition to the cultural, reconciliation and awareness programs and services in each school.

### *McQueen Lake Aboriginal Cultural Centre*

During 2018–2019, a plan was developed to build a traditional winter house at the McQueen Lake Environmental Education Centre to support cultural understanding and Aboriginal education programming.

The experiential aspect of this project was to involve students in the planning and construction of the house. However, delays in organizing an archeological survey through the local First Nation, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (TteS), followed by the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in the project being delayed. A site has been chosen and as soon as the pandemic allows, an archeological survey will be completed, and the winter house construction put to tender. It is the District's hope that construction will begin in the Spring of 2022.

Once constructed, the winter house at McQueen Lake will be a centre for further cultural education activities and will be accessible to students district-wide. Eventually, this winter house will be surrounded by other traditional items, such as a summer home framework, fish baskets and dugout canoe, which classes can visit during field trips to learn about Aboriginal communities and ways of life.

### ***Orange Shirt Day***

Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of the St. Joseph's Mission residential school commemoration project and reunion events that took place in May 2013, in Williams Lake. This project was the vision of Alkali Lake (Esk'etemc) Chief Fred Robbins, a former SD73 student. It brought together former students and their families from the Secwépemc, Tsilhqot'in, Southern Dakelh and St'át'imc nations, along with Cariboo Regional District municipalities, school districts and civic organizations.

The events commemorated the residential school experience, witnessed, and honoured the healing journey of the survivors and their families and committed to the ongoing process of reconciliation. Chief Justice Murray Sinclair challenged all who participated to keep the reconciliation process alive.

Since then, SD73 has been recognizing Orange Shirt Day through various school activities, in which participants wear orange. Phyllis (Jack) Webstad, wearer of the first orange shirt, is Northern Secwépemc (Shuswap) from the Canoe Creek Indian Band (Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation) and was invited to the District in September 2018 to give presentations in two secondary schools. In 2019, all elementary and secondary schools were provided with teacher resource packages and copies of Phyllis' Story. This was continued in 2020 and schools were provided with more resources. All schools acknowledged the day, wore orange, and provided learning experiences for students.

### ***Day of Sucwentwécw***

On April 7, 2021 the eighth annual Day of Sucwentwécw (Acknowledging One Another) was held in all district schools. The Day of Sucwentwécw is an initiative that recognizes and celebrates the history of the Secwépemc people (Secwepemcúl'ecw) and other Aboriginal people residing within the territory of the Secwépemc Nation. The theme was "Learning together in memory, history, and story using Aboriginal perspectives." based upon the First Peoples Principles of Learning.

The Day of Sucwentwécw was acknowledged in each school and was supported virtually. Each school was given a locally written book "How Coyote Lost the Animal People's Voices" written by Kenthen Thomas and illustrated by Desiree Roy Alexis.

### ***Aboriginal Graduation***

Due to COVID-19, Aboriginal graduation ceremonies were held in small cohorts over a five day period. Graduates were able to invite a few family members to attend at scheduled times and watch them receive congratulations and acknowledgement. Students were wrapped traditionally in either a First Nations blanket or a Métis sash. Ceremonies were held at the Henry Grube Education Centre for local graduates and in the communities of Barriere, Clearwater, and Chase for rural graduates.

We had 211 Aboriginal graduates signed up and each was given a commemorative hoodie. Every graduate also received an Aboriginal Education bursary to help pursue post-secondary education/training. Thirty additional scholarships and bursaries were also awarded, for a total of \$17,000.00.

### ***North Shore/South Shore/Westsyde Cultural Days***

The District had to cancel the North Shore, South Shore, and Westsyde cultural days due to COVID-19 restrictions. Pending provincial health recommendations and restrictions, the District will continue with these day in 2021-2022.

### ***National Indigenous Peoples Day***

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the District was unable to follow through with original plans to acknowledge National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21, 2021. We continued to encourage each school to celebrate the day and acknowledge, and be sensitive to, the recent announcement of the 215 graves discovered at the Kamloops Residential School on Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. Schools and district staff worked with Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc on how to respectfully proceed.

### ***SD73 Powwow***

Historically, Twin Rivers Education Centre (TREC) has hosted an annual powwow in May. The District had planned to expand this event to allow for greater participation. The planning committee had booked the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (TteS) Powwow Arbour for the event and collaborated with local community to help host. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the event was postponed again. With the permission of TteS, the committee hopes to move forward with the powwow in the spring of 2022.

### ***Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society***

The District has a contract with the Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society to provide the services of a cultural worker to district schools. Schools can book the cultural worker to provide cultural workshops and activities to students and staff. The cultural worker also sits on several district committees, as an advisor.

### ***Secwépemc Museum***

The District has a contract with Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (TteS) to provide the services of a cultural worker to district schools. Schools can book the cultural worker to provide cultural workshops and activities to students and staff. The cultural worker also sits on several district committees, as an advisor. This contract also includes discounted and priority access for district students and classes to the Secwépemc Museum & Heritage Park and to the Kamloops Indian Residential School tour.

# Academic Enhancement

## Key Priorities and Goals

### Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada: Calls to Action

- 10(i) ...to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.
- 12. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.

### District Learning Plan

- Priority 1: Ensure every student acquires strong foundational skills and core competencies.
- Priority 2: Connect students to their passions and interests.
- Priority 3: Honour the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) and honour Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives.

### Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

- Goal 1: Student Success

Enhanced programs and services are available to self-identified Aboriginal students. These programs and services support the equitable educational achievement of learners.

## **Early Learning**

Early learning continues to be an area of need for Aboriginal learners. Currently, the Aboriginal Education Elementary Resource Teacher is involved in the District's Kindergarten screening process when Aboriginal learners and families are involved. The Aboriginal Education Council allocated funds for an Aboriginal Early Learning working group to assess current programs and identify areas of need and support. This working group will meet early in the 2021–2022 school year to begin the process, working closely with the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee.

## **Aboriginal Transitions to Post-Secondary**

In recent years, the District has partnered with Thompson Rivers University (TRU) for the annual Aboriginal Transitions Day, providing an opportunity for SD73 Aboriginal secondary learners in grades 10 and 11 to experience a day on campus. The day offers information regarding post-secondary options available to students after graduating from either an academic or trades stream. Students learn about the supports and mentors available for post-secondary Aboriginal learners and listen to stories and experiences from current post-secondary learners.

During the 2021-2022 school year, SD73 and TRU invited Aboriginal students from grades 10 to 12 to join them virtually over two days in February. Guest speakers were invited to talk with students in break out groups, and panels of post-secondary Aboriginal students and instructors were available to answer questions from students. Finally, TRU offered overviews of post-secondary supports for students, including Aboriginal supports.

For SD73, one of the purposes of this event is to address equity in school completion for Aboriginal learners. The TRC: Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the Auditor General of BC's report on Aboriginal Education all point to the need for public education to create equitable opportunities and options for Aboriginal students.

The District hopes to continue partnering with TRU in offering this enriching experience for its Aboriginal learners. By providing district Aboriginal learners with access to post-secondary options and creating an atmosphere of safety and inclusion, SD73 continues to work towards creating parity.

### ***Career Education, and Trades and Transitions***

The Aboriginal Education department collaborated with the District Career Education Coordinator to co-create the *Career Resource Guide*. This guide contains links directly to Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives and to the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL). Professional development for career coordinator training reflects on how the FPPL deeply connects to students' life journeys and career development.

Three resources that the Career Education department highlights to support Aboriginal learners are:

- BC's Career Guide for Indigenous People (WorkBC);
- Health Careers Guidebook (First Nations Health Authority); and
- Career Journeys First Nations Career Role Model Program (First Nations Education Steering Committee [FNESC]).

The Trades and Transitions programs support Aboriginal learners and include the following programs:

- Aboriginal Transitions to Post-Secondary; and
- Heavy Metal Rocks (which reserves spaces for Aboriginal students).

### ***Four Directions Secondary School***

Four Directions Secondary School provides an alternate learning environment designed to serve secondary school Aboriginal learners who are more likely to succeed in a smaller, more personal and more flexible setting.

This is an academic program taught through an Aboriginal lens: it includes a significant focus on Aboriginal culture and a variety of out-of-school activities. Entry to the program is based on a referral from the student's home school to Twin Rivers Education Centre (TREC).

## ***Aboriginal Secondary Support Blocks***

Aboriginal support teachers have blocks in five secondary schools. The intent is to provide additional supports for Aboriginal learners in academics, self-awareness and engagement.

Schools that currently have support blocks are:

- Chase Secondary School (two blocks)
- South Kamloops Secondary School (one block)
- NorKam Senior Secondary School (one block)
- Brocklehurst Middle School (one block)
- Sa-Hali Secondary School (one block)



Photo Credit: SKSS

# Social Emotional Enhancement

## Key Priorities and Goals

### District Learning Plan

- Priority 2: Connect students to their passions and interests.
- Priority 3: Honour the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) and honour Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives.
- Priority 4: Foster an inclusive, adaptable and accountable district culture.
- Priority 5: Strengthen partnerships to enrich the way we lead, learn and work.

### Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

- Goal 1: Student Success
- Goal 3: District and School Culture
- Goal 4: Aboriginal Parent and Community Engagement

SD73 schools are increasingly multicultural and multilingual, with students from diverse social and economic backgrounds. Educators and community agencies serve students who have different motivations for engaging in learning, behaving positively, and performing academically. Social emotional learning (SEL) provides a foundation for safe and positive learning and enhances all students' ability to succeed in school, careers, and life.

Research shows that SEL not only improves achievement by an average of eleven percentile points, but it also increases pro-social behaviours (such as kindness, sharing and empathy), improves student attitudes toward school, and reduces depression and stress among students (Durlak et al., 2011). Effective social emotional learning programming involves coordinated classroom, school-wide, family and community practices that help students develop. The District provides several key supports and services for its Aboriginal learners.



## ***Aboriginal Family Counsellors***

Starting in 2019, the District employed six Aboriginal Family Counsellors, who transitioned from being independent contractors, working under the direction of the AEC administrator. Six family counsellors supported Aboriginal Education Workers in boys and girls groups and provided one-to-one student counseling support for the following:

- Alcohol and drugs;
- Grief and loss;
- Cultural support;
- Sexual abuse;
- Parenting skills;
- Suicide;
- Violence;
- Depression;
- Parent-child conflict;
- Self-esteem;
- Low motivation;
- Self-harm;
- Anger management;
- Sex education;
- Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity; and
- Anxiety.

## ***Aboriginal Youth and Family Consultants***

With the transition of Aboriginal Family Counsellors to the District in 2019, two Aboriginal Youth and Family Consultant positions were created to:

- Provide advocacy, support and consultation for Aboriginal families and students, particularly during inclusion planning in schools; and
- Provide community and cultural connections for families and students.

## ***Boys and Girls Groups***

Aboriginal boys and girls groups are based in elementary, middle and secondary schools. The purpose of these groups is to create a healthy understanding of gender identity within the context of cultural identity. The groups provide marginalized and at-risk Aboriginal girls and boys with the opportunity to explore their experiences and challenges in a safe, non-threatening environment. Programs are held in both rural and urban settings.

During the 2019–2020 school year, the focus and facilitation of boys and girls groups changed due to increasing demand and the need to expand the availability of these groups to Aboriginal students. In the past, these groups were run by Aboriginal Family Counsellors only, along with support from Aboriginal Education Workers. The District employs only six Aboriginal Family Counsellors, and the demands of the groups took away from the opportunities for one-to-one counselling supports. To adjust, Aboriginal Education Workers were trained as facilitators of groups, with Aboriginal Family Counsellors available for supports when needed.

In 2020-2021, twenty-four schools had active Aboriginal boys and girls groups. With a total of 46 groups.

YouPower provided facilitator training in 2020 and certified thirty staff members as boys and girls groups facilitators.

## ***Aboriginal Community Outreach Workers***

- In the spring of 2021, the District hired two Aboriginal Community Outreach Workers. The main purpose of these positions is to help our Aboriginal students and families, who have disconnected from their education and communities, reconnect for the purpose of supporting their success at school. This role supports students and families in the following ways:
  - Creating connections or reconnecting Aboriginal families and their communities;
  - Providing referrals to community programs/services that are appropriate to each family;
  - Identifying factors that lead to families disconnecting/withdrawing from the education system;
  - Identifying risk factors that are preventing student success;
  - Re-engaging families and students in school-based activities/events

- Creating positive rapport and relationships between Aboriginal families, students, and professionals within the District;
- Facilitating the implementation of student success plans; and
- Providing frequent check-ins with families/students to ensure that a plan is being implemented and followed.

By June 2021, the District had received close to 300 referrals for support from the Aboriginal Community Outreach Workers.

### ***Monique Gray-Smith: The Ripple Effect of Resiliency***

In the spring of 2021, the District assigned 50 staff to participate in Monique Gray-Smith’s “The Ripple Effect of Resiliency: Strategies for Fostering Resiliency with Indigenous Children”. This is a six-module course meant to be completed within a year.

The course covers the following content:

- Recognize and identify how stress and trauma impact the wellness of those we work with and why we may see various behavioural disruptions and challenges in attachment, attention, and attunement. We will also explore tips for supporting these individuals.
- Deepen your knowledge of the truth. This includes increasing your awareness of federal, provincial, and territorial legislation and policies that have and continue to impact Indigenous people and the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.
- Describe the historical role and importance of love and joy as it pertains to the raising up of children and working with Indigenous children, youth, and families.
- Explore what Reconciliation means to you by developing your own personal definition, and identify action steps to weave the definition into your life.
- Be introduced into the Cultural Resilience Model Monique has created, the four blankets of Resilience: Strong sense of Self, Family, Community, Culture, and Language. This will include choosing one of the Blankets to weave into your everyday ways of being, learning, and doing.

# Language Enhancement

## Key Priorities and Goals

### Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) of Canada: Calls to Action

- 10(iv) Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.

### BC Tripartite Education Agreement

- Schedule E: Language and Culture

### District Learning Plan

- Priority 2: Connect students to their passions and interests.
- Priority 3: Honour the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) and honour Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives.
- Priority 4: Foster an inclusive, adaptable, and accountable district culture.
- Priority 5: Strengthen partnerships to enrich the way in which we lead, learn and work.

### Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

- Goal 1: Student Success
- Goal 2: Language and Culture
- Goal 3: District and School Culture

The BC First Nations Education System has been created to build upon and reflect First Nations' rights; First Nations' languages, cultures, values, and traditions; and First Nations' commitment to quality education and improved students' outcomes. The loss of First Nations languages and cultures that resulted from Canada's colonial history and the limited resources that have been available to address this serious problem has detrimentally affected First Nations students in terms of their self-esteem and self-identity, in addition to the health of their families and communities.

Revitalization, preservation, and maintenance of languages is integral to the well-being of First Nations communities. Canada and BC have expressed the priority of, and have made commitments to, the revitalization of Indigenous languages and to the endorsement and implementation of the UN Declaration, which recognizes:

1. First Nations' right of self-determination and right to education that is rooted in their languages and cultures, and
2. The TRC: Calls to Action, which include a number of calls to protect, preserve and promote Indigenous languages (BCTEA, 2018).

The District is developing a current language curriculum, as well as offering Secwepemctsin in six district schools.

## ***Secwépemc Language Programs***

The District employs three Secwépemc Language Teachers, who offer Secwépemc language lessons in four secondary schools and three elementary schools, as follows:

- Arthur Hatton Elementary School
- Brocklehurst Middle School
- Chase Secondary School
- Haldane Elementary School
- Marion Schilling Elementary School
- Valleyview Secondary School

## ***Secwépemc Language District Resource Teacher***

In the spring of 2021, the District employed the services of a District Secwépemc Language Resource Teacher to advise and support the implementation of Secwepemctsin in schools. This position will continue into 2021-2022 and will explore using technology to expand access for students across the District.

## ***Secwépemc Language Curriculum***

SD73 is one of nineteen districts with an Indigenous language curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education. The last updated version of this curriculum was in 1999. In 2018, the District Aboriginal Education department, in compliance with the direction from the BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA), began exploring the process of updating the Secwépemc language curriculum and connecting it with the current BC curriculum and core competencies. Conversations and consultation with local language Knowledge Keepers started in 2018 and will continue into 2021–2022.



# Conclusion

The *Aboriginal Education Annual Report 2020–2021* has reported on the four goals set out in the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement. This report highlights the commitment and achievements of students and staff, who are striving to meet these goals. Through the commitment of all educators, connections made with parents and community members continue to improve. These connections, in turn, are instrumental in improving the success and the personal well-being of all district students.

As SD73 endeavours to eliminate the educational gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners, effective strategies and interventions within district schools will be implemented to enhance academic success, increase social-emotional learning, and provide more opportunities to access Aboriginal language and culture.

As the District moves forward in its work, the focus must remain on ensuring that each Aboriginal learner can develop the necessary skills and knowledge to be successful after graduation.

Conclusion



Photo Credit: SKSS

