


Acknowledgement that we are on the Secwépemc territory and land of the Secwépemc People:

*Secwepemcúl'ecw yi7élye ell, re tmicws re Secwepemc n7élye.*

School District No. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson) acknowledges that we reside in Secwepemcúl'ecw and recognizes the Secwépemc 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 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 Enhancement Agreement), all students must have the opportunity to develop toward the fulfillment of their individual potential. Toward this objective, in 2016, the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) and the District collaboratively implemented the fourth Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement. Respectful, inclusive and ongoing consultations between SD73 and its Aboriginal partners resulted in this 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. This agreement expired in June 2022. The Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) and the District are currently undergoing a review and renewal of that agreement. The four goals of the Agreement are outlined later in this report.

Targeted enhancement funding, which is provided to SD73 by the Ministry of Education and Child Care, is spent on enhancing Aboriginal education programs and services to Aboriginal learners. Such funding is not used to replace other funded programs such as Inclusive Education 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 interest of all District Aboriginal learners in the areas of academic, social-emotional, cultural and language enhancements that improve such learners' school experience and academic achievement.

Targeted Aboriginal educational enhancement funding based on 2,911 full time equivalent (FTE) students for 2021–2022 is shown in the Funding and Budget Summary of this report.

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic also had an influence on how the District, in collaboration with the AEC, supports Aboriginal student success through 2021-2022. Due to restrictions in gatherings at the beginning of the year, cultural opportunities were limited. The District also experienced staffing challenges, and in many cases were unable to fill or replace staff throughout the year despite active recruitment.

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

# Action Items

To address the continued educational achievement improvements, the following action items will be addressed during the 2022–2023 school year.

The District will:

- Explore partnerships with Thompson Rivers University (TRU) and other post-secondary institutions to develop training for Aboriginal Education workers and teachers.
- Implement the mutually agreed upon Local Education Agreements (LEAs) between each local Secwépemc First Nation and the Board of Education.
- Finalize the next five-year Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement.
- Continue to support the Aboriginal Parent Group (SD73 Indigenous Family Voices for Education) to represent Aboriginal parent voice and advocacy, as well as to foster a culture of inclusion and acceptance.
- Continue to support a District Aboriginal Student Leadership Council (DASLC) for Aboriginal learners in grades 8 through 12.
- Continue to expand the number of professional development opportunities to increase staff members' capacity to build effective social-emotional skills and trauma-informed practice.
- Continue to create regular AEC bulletins to improve communication and better inform students and families about educational programs and services.
- Create a district-wide system of accountability to ensure that each school is monitoring the success of its Aboriginal learners, as evidenced in each School Learning Plan.
- Through the Aboriginal School Lead Sessions, support learning about the Aboriginal people in the region and support learning about cultural sensitivity, Truth and Reconciliation, and the impact of colonialism in Canada.
- Continue developing a plan to construct a traditional winter house at McQueen Lake Environmental Education Centre.
- Proactively implement the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) Action Plan.
- Develop a Secwepemctsin framework, curriculum, and implementation plan.
- Support the implementation of the new Indigenous content graduation requirements.
- Work collaboratively to support Aboriginal Early Learning under the new Child Care responsibilities of the Ministry and the District.

# 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.

The District provides a public education to approximately 16,000 students, of which approximately 2,911 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 rural communities including Chase, Barriere, Logan Lake, Westwold, Savona, and Clearwater.

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

*Supporting learning opportunities and environments which inspire students to thrive.*

*Fostering educated and resilient citizens empowered to contribute to a diverse, inclusive, caring, and sustainable society.*

Through the educational experience, the enactment of this Mission and 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 toward the fulfillment of 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 enhancement funding and resultant educational achievement outcomes, this report summarizes progress on the District's commitment to the Agreement.

## District Strategic Priorities

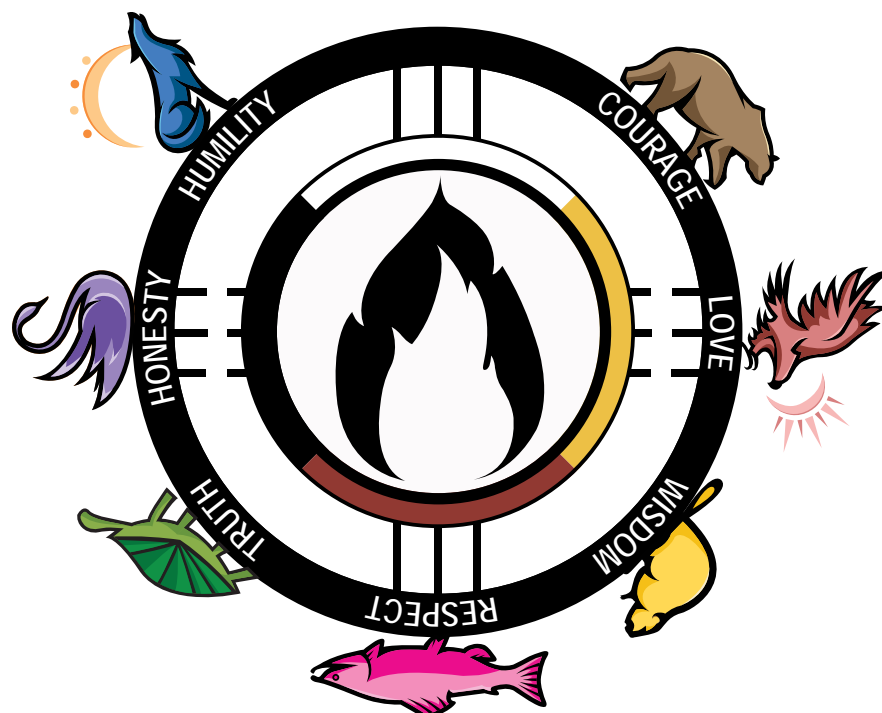
Moving forward and as outlined in its [Five-Year Strategic Plan](#), the District's vision of ensuring success for all students aligns to the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement and imbeds Aboriginal education in all five of the District's strategic priorities. Aboriginal education is part of the District's core responsibility to ensure that its graduating Aboriginal students cross the stage with dignity, purpose, and opportunities.

The District's four Value Commitments, as envisioned through the Seven Grandfather Teachings, reflect and demonstrate the District's commitment to Aboriginal learners and Truth and Reconciliation.

The Value commitments are:

1. Connections/Relationships
2. Equity
3. Well-Being
4. Sustainability

The Seven Grandfather Teachings are what the District and community lives to achieve the Mission, Vision, and Values.



## Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

In 2016, the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) and the District collaboratively implemented the fourth [Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement](#). This Agreement, the result of respectful, inclusive, and 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. Currently, the District and the Aboriginal Education Council is in the process of renewing what will be the fifth five-year Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement.

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 members, 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 aligned to the Agreement and enhance the District's commitment to the continuance of collaboration between the District and its Aboriginal partners.

# 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:

1. Improve the success of Aboriginal learners.
2. Support all students in their learning about Aboriginal peoples.
3. 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 and Child Care - Indigenous Education in British Columbia](#)

[Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act - DRIPA Action Plan](#)

[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 \(BCTEA\)](#)

[BC Teachers' Council: Professional Standards for BC Educators Standard 9](#)

[Aboriginal Report \(2021\) How Are We Doing?](#)

[Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement](#)

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

[Local Education Agreements](#)

# Funding and Budget Summary

To support access to equitable educational outcomes, the Ministry of Education and Child Care 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 Aboriginal Education funding. Application of these funds requires the collaboration of Boards of Education and 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 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.

The provincial government has increased the targeted funding amount by \$365 per student since 2019.

Targeted Aboriginal funding based on 2,911 FTE (an increase of about 153 students) for 2021–2022 is shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1. Targeted Aboriginal Enhancement Funding for 2021–2022\*

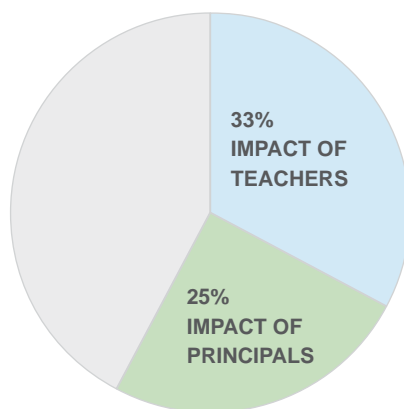
Funding	Revenue
Ministry of Education	\$4,555,715.00
	Expenses
Staffing	\$3,082,480.00
Benefits	652,006.00
Supplies / Services / Supports	78,385.00
Cultural Enhancement	384,754.00
Academic Enhancement	150,912.00
Social-Emotional Enhancement	45,832.00
Language Enhancement	69,463.00
Total Expenses	\$4,463,832.00
Net Carryover	\$91,882.00

\*Note: 98% of the revenue in 2021-2022 was expended. However, the accumulated carryover from 2020-2021 was not addressed and has been included in the 2022-2023 budget line. A significant part of this was due to unfilled positions during the 2021-2022 school year despite ongoing efforts to hire.

# Staff and Staff Development

The focus of Aboriginal education in SD73 is Aboriginal student success. According to the Organization 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 and Child Care'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

The District Aboriginal Education department was overseen by the Assistant Superintendent of Inclusive Education and is supported by one (1) FTE District Principal of Aboriginal Education.

The District Principal of Aboriginal Education is to report out on the work and supervise staff charged with implementing the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement and matters regarding Aboriginal education. The District Principal of Aboriginal Education ensures good governance by communicating the work of the Aboriginal Education Council, establishing meeting agendas, developing budget reports and ensuring the meeting functions according to established guidelines and protocols.

The District Aboriginal Education department is supported by:

- One (1) FTE District Principal – Aboriginal Education
- 0.6 FTE District Aboriginal Education department administrative assistant
- Four (4) FTE District Aboriginal Education resource teachers; one (1) elementary, one (1) secondary, one (1) on the land teacher, and one (1) Aboriginal School Completion Support Teacher
- One (1) FTE District Coordinator, Aboriginal Education
- Forty-One and a half (41.5) FTE Aboriginal Education Workers
- Three (3) FTE Secwepemctsin (Secwépemc language) teachers
- Six (6) Aboriginal secondary school support teachers: two (2) support blocks in Chase Secondary and one (1) support block in each NorKam Senior Secondary, South Kamloops Secondary, Sa-Hali Secondary, Valleyview Secondary, and Brocklehurst Middle School
- Three (3) FTE Aboriginal Community Outreach Workers
- Seven and half (7.6) FTE Aboriginal Family Counsellors/Youth and Family Consultants

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 enhancement funds and District operating funds.

## Staff Development

The District follows a hiring policy for new Aboriginal staff that requires consultation 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.

Support staff, such as Aboriginal Education Workers, often bring a wealth of cultural knowledge and Aboriginal ways of knowing and learning to 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 a certified education certificate. SD73 will continue to support TRU in the creation of this program as well as the exploration of other post-secondary options and in-district supports and training.

## Professional Development Day – Indigenous Focused

Through the BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA) (2018), all school districts and teaching staff are required to designate one professional development day annually to have an Indigenous focus. During 2020-2021 the District Aboriginal Education department focused professional development supports on the February 4, 2022 professional development day. This included keynotes from Dr. Kevin Lamoureux, the Educational Lead for the Center for Truth and Reconciliation in Winnipeg and co-author of *Ensouling Our Schools*. Dr. Lamoureux also did a general session for staff after his keynote that focused on trauma-informed practice with an Indigenous lens.

The District Aboriginal Education department also offered all schools and staff access to three professional learning modules titled *“Continuing Our Learning Journey: Indigenous Education in BC”* as well as a link to the SD73 Aboriginal Education professional learning site if staff wished to build their own learning journey.

Due to continued pandemic concerns and restrictions, these options, including the keynote and focused staff general session with Dr. Kevin Lamoureux, were all offered virtually.

Throughout the year, the department supported teachers with resources to embed Aboriginal content in the curriculum as well as access to professional learning on Indigenous Education topics and awareness like the Blanket Exercise and through the [SD73 Aboriginal Education website](#).

School leaders also participated in a professional development training focused on Truth and Reconciliation. Facilitators included author, Monique Gray Smith and founder of the Orange Shirt Day, Phyllis Webstad. The team learned valuable information regarding residential school, inter-generational trauma, cultural humility, the importance of land acknowledgements and how to use a trauma-informed lens to support students. School leaders received a copy of Monique Gray Smith’s book, *“Speaking Our Truth.”*

# Community Collaboration

## Key Priorities and Goals

### Ministry of Education and Child Care - Aboriginal Branch

Targeted Aboriginal education funding requires the collaboration of boards of education and 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.

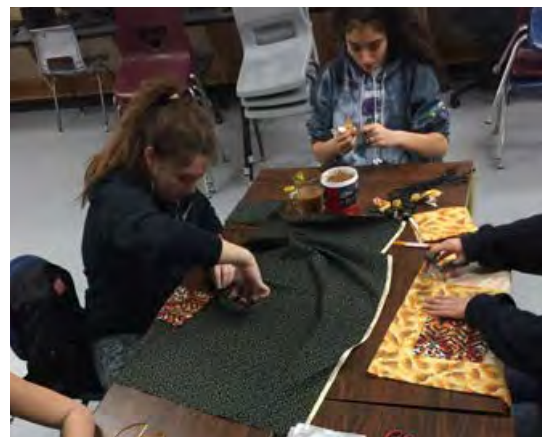
### District Learning Plan (2018-2022)

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

### Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (2016-2022)

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.

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 culture and all 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 2016–2020 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 the SD73 Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee members. The [Aboriginal Education Council Strategic Plan](#) clearly identifies goals for 2020–2022 in the areas of student success, language and culture, parent and community engagement, and District and school culture. This Strategic Plan will be reviewed as part of the renewed Enhancement Agreement process.

# Advisory Committees

## Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee

The Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee discusses items related to the delivery of Aboriginal education programs and services in SD73.

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 Aboriginal Education Council (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, Secwepemctsin programs, data collection, strategies for involving Aboriginal parents, cultural awareness within the District, program reviews, and other relevant areas related to Aboriginal education.

## First Nations Advisory Committee: Chase

The First Nations Advisory Committee: Chase 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 data 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, Metis, Inuit, and Aboriginal families and learners in Barriere and Clearwater.

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

## 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 the Board of Education, enabling them to collaborate in supporting First Nation learners. Currently, the District has seven (7) LEAs with local Bands on whose territory the District resides and serves. All seven (7) LEAs are in effect from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2025.

## SD73 Indigenous Family Voices for Education

During the 2019–2020 school year, the Aboriginal Education Council supported exploring the idea of creating a District Aboriginal Parent Advisory Council starting in the 2020–2021 school year. This would encourage Aboriginal parent voice, advocacy, and opportunities to build positive relationships throughout the District. A parent / guardian group was formed in 2020-2021. The group named itself SD73 Indigenous Family Voices for Education due to compliance around Parent Advisory Councils in the School Act. They have been actively collaborating with the District PAC, BCCPAC, and have presented provincially around Indigenous Parent Voice. They have also been involved in lending their voice to the development of the District Strategic Plan. They are currently developing their Bylaws and have five executives that meet virtually on a monthly basis. SD73IFVE work with the District on any matter concerning Aboriginal students relating to public education to ensure that Aboriginal parent perspective and voice is consistently represented and heard, and to foster a culture of acceptance, diversity, and inclusion in District schools.

## District Aboriginal Student Leadership Council

During the 2019–2020 school year, the Aboriginal Education Council supported the idea of creating a District Aboriginal Student Leadership Council (DASLC), starting in the 2020–2021 school year. This created a venue for Aboriginal student voice, advocacy, leadership, and opportunities. The DASLC has Aboriginal student representation from all secondary schools in the school district. They meet regularly during the school year and advise the District on matters 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

1. *School Act*
2. Ministry of Education and Child Care - Aboriginal Education Branch
3. BC Auditor General's Report on Aboriginal Education
4. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
5. 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 center of this challenge lies the goals of inclusion and equity – leading to improved social cohesion.

## Key Equity and Inclusion Projects

According to the Organization 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 (3) 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 School Lead Sessions

SD73 funded release time for four (4) half-day Aboriginal School Lead Sessions during 2021–2022 (November, February, April, and May). These morning sessions were attended by Aboriginal Education School Lead Teams from each school. Teams consisted of an Administrator, a teacher leader, an Aboriginal Education Worker, and a Learning Assistance Resource teacher. District coordinators and counsellors were also present.

Attendance was impacted by the ability to provide release time for staff and due to continued pandemic concerns, all four sessions were offered virtually. Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives were woven into and modelled throughout each session, and cultural sensitivity, including issues regarding courageous conversations about race and privilege.

The areas of attention in these sessions was Aboriginal-focused social-emotional learning (SEL), mental health literacy, and trauma-informed practice. The purpose was to encourage Aboriginal School Lead Teams to develop a climate within each learning environment that supports children, youth, and families that is respectful, welcomes diversity, and acknowledges cultural consideration.

The District partnered with Alex Shevrin-Venet, author of *Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education*. Alex facilitated three of the four sessions.

## Equity in Action Project

The Equity in Action project was implemented in a partnership between SD73 and the Ministry of Education and Child Care. 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 2021–2022, 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 2022–2023 school year that will assist the District in moving toward equity for Aboriginal learners.

The District reviewed the six-year completion rate inequities for District Aboriginal learners. Using the learning profile tool provided by the Ministry of Education and Child Care, 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.

During 2021–2022, Equity in Action focused on the framework’s four pillars: the Pedagogical Core, the Learning Environment, the Learning Profile, and Policy and Governance (Figure 2).

According to the 2021–2022 Equity Scan, the following indicates where the District exhibits (a) strength in and (b) need for work on:

1. 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.

*Identified areas SD73 had the most strengths in for 2021-2022:*

- Providing professional growth in equity and Aboriginal education.

*Identified areas to improve on from the 2021-2022 results:*

- Having evidence that the adults (staff) believe that students will be successful and have inclusive professional and strategic supports in place to ensure success.
- Addressing the 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.
- Reviewing learning assessments for biases.

2. 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.

*Identified areas SD73 had the most strengths in for 2021-2022:*

- Understanding the context of the community and families and is there a feeling that the professionals are respectful and inclusive of Aboriginal learners, families, and communities.

*Identified areas to improve on from the 2021-2022 results:*

- Developing collaboration practices and plans for reviewing instructional practices for potential biases.
- Providing and inviting Aboriginal students, families, and communities input into the learning environment.

### 3. 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.

*Identified areas that SD73 had the most strengths in for 2021-2022:*

- Being able to describe the individual achievement profiles of Aboriginal learners and if their achievement results are improving.

*Identified areas to improve on from the 2021-2022 results:*

- Describe what happens when an Aboriginal learner is not achieving a year's worth of progress in a year's worth of schooling.

### 4. Policy and Governance:

School and District Learning Plans and collaborative structures are known to and supported by all partners. These plans enable equity and inclusion work; collaborative structures routinely focus attention on and review equity and inclusion in the school. Action plans around equity and inclusion are obvious to all.

*Identified areas SD73 had the most strengths in for 2021-2022:*

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

*Identified areas to improve on from the 2021-2022 results:*

- The school or the district has a process developed to ensure that local Aboriginal languages are a visible and valued part of every learner's experience.

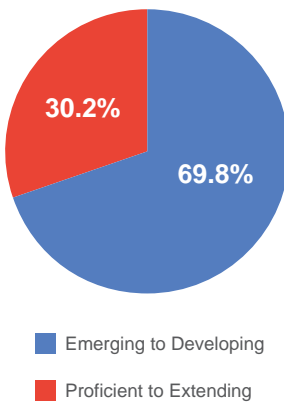
## Equity

Every District school is at a different place and context in the journey to address equity. Through developing Aboriginal Education School Lead Teams and supports through the Aboriginal Education School Lead Sessions, 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.

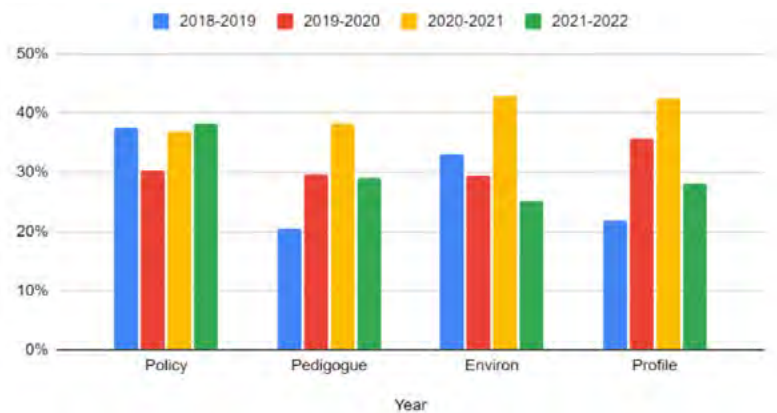
Preliminary data from the 2021–2022 Equity Scan and planning tool reveals general trends for the Equity in Action project team to examine during 2020–2021 in assessing whether there can exist more district-level general supports.

The chart reveals where, according to equity scans from 2018 to 2022, SD73 staff feel they are regarding the framework’s four pillars.

### 2021-2022 Overall Equity Results



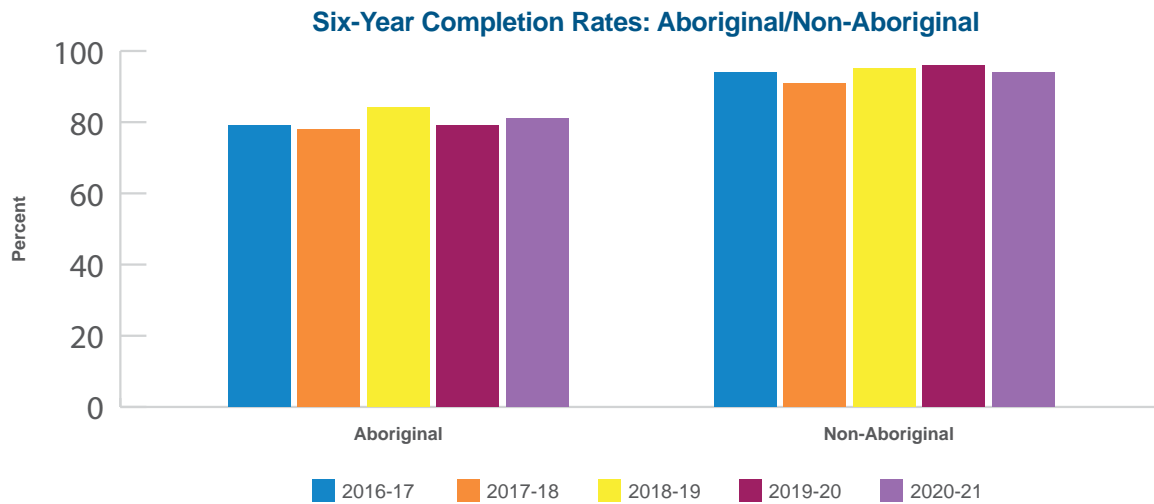
### Equity Pillars - Proficient to Exceeding Trend Over Time



## School Completion Rates

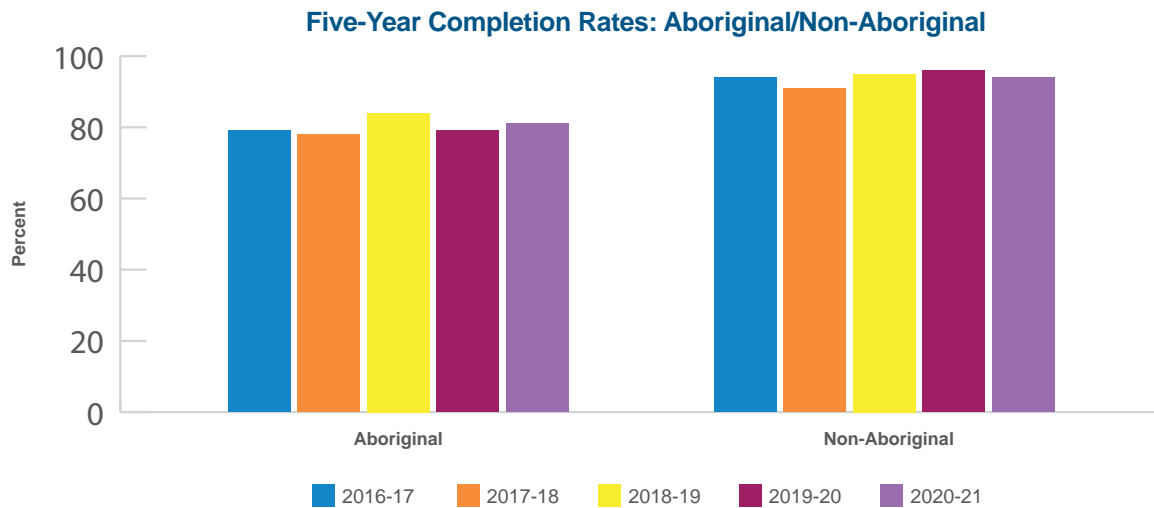
Note: The following data is obtained from the Ministry of Education and Child Care’s [Aboriginal Education How Are We Doing Report](#). At the time of this report, the Ministry of Education and Child Care had not released the 2021-2022 results, as the provincial reports are not released until the following January.

A measure of success within the District is the six-year completion rate. In 2020–2021, the District had an eighty-one percent (81%) six-year completion rate for Aboriginal learners as compared to ninety-four percent (94%) for non-Aboriginal students. Whereas the provincial (public schools) six-year completion rate was seventy-two (72%) for Aboriginal learners as compared to ninety-three (93%) for non-Aboriginal students.



The five-year 2020-2021 completion rates in SD73 of seventy-two (72%) for Aboriginal learners and ninety-two percent (92%) for non-Aboriginal learners depict a gap of twenty percent (20%) between these two groups of learners.

Provincially, this gap extends to twenty-six percent (26%), as the five-year completion rates are sixty-three percent (63%) for Aboriginal learners and eighty-nine percent (89%) for non-Aboriginal learners.



SD73's six-year and five-year Aboriginal completion rates are both nine percent (9%) higher than the provincial completion rates.

Although this is relatively successful compared to the province, Aboriginal learners in the District are below parity with non-Aboriginal students, revealing that SD73's aspiration toward equity has not yet been achieved. More work is required of the District. Achieving equity requires that the success and school achievement results of; (1) learners who are of Aboriginal ancestry, and (2) learners who are status on reserve be reviewed by each school to ensure that learners' needs are being met in order to graduate with dignity, purpose, and opportunities.

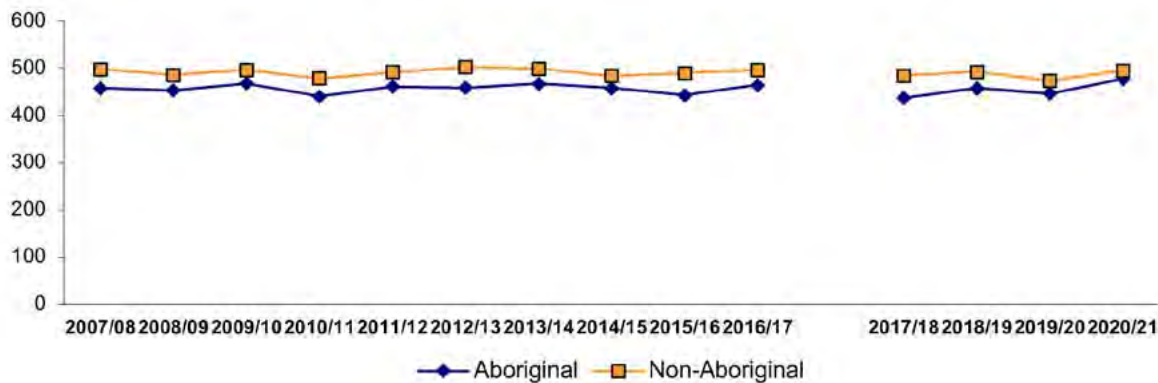
SD73 also recognizes that support and intervention plans must be created when learners are enrolled in earlier grades. To this end, District staff will assist schools in developing support systems that promote success for all Aboriginal learners.

## Reading, Writing and Numeracy Achievements

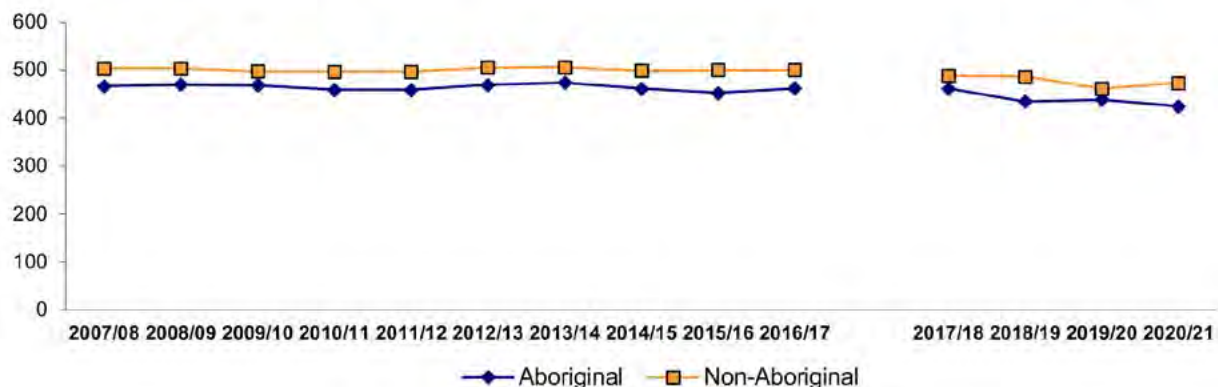
The 2020–2021 provincial Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) demonstrates elementary students' achievement in three foundational skills: reading, writing, and numeracy. The FSA is one assessment tool used to indicate student progress. For this report, the Ministry of Education and Child Care's [Aboriginal Education How Are We Doing Report](#) was used. The 2021-2022 data was not available at the time of this report.

### Reading - SD73 2020-2021 FSA

#### Average FSA Scaled Score - Grade 4 Reading



#### Average FSA Scaled Score - Grade 7 Reading

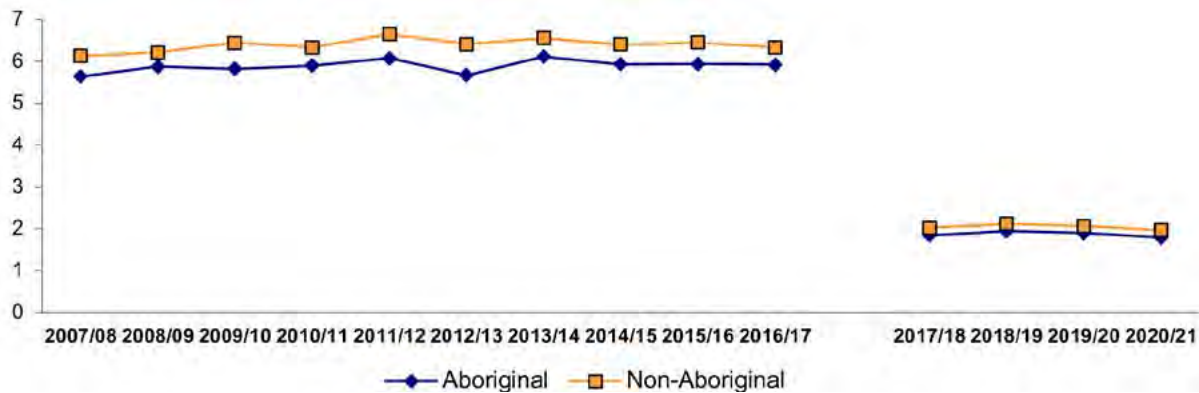


Overall, for the District's 2020-2021 FSA reading results, the gap between grade 4 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners meeting or exceeding was six (6%) percent. The gap between grade 7 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners meeting and exceeding was twenty-one (21%) percent.

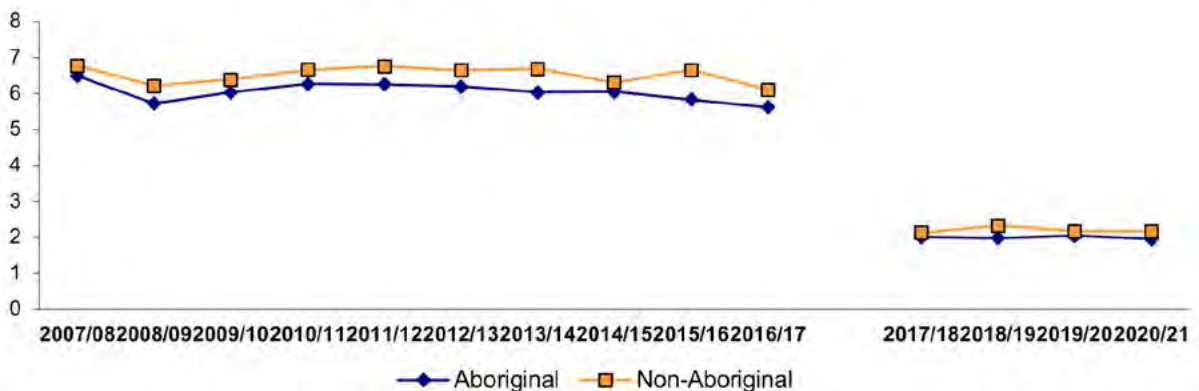
Compared to the province, the number of Aboriginal students in SD73 grade 4 meeting and exceeding was six (6%) percent higher and for grade 7 meeting and exceeding the results were the same.

## Writing - SD73 2020-2021 FSA

### Average FSA Score - Grade 4 Writing



### Average FSA Score - Grade 7 Writing

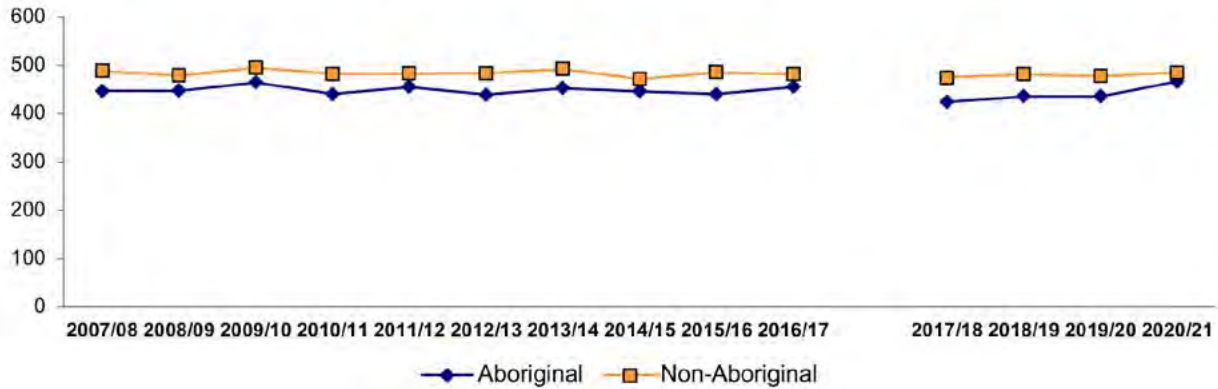


Overall, for the District’s 2020-2021 FSA reading results, the gap between grade 4 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners meeting or exceeding was thirteen (13%) percent. The gap between grade 7 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners meeting and exceeding was ten (10%) percent.

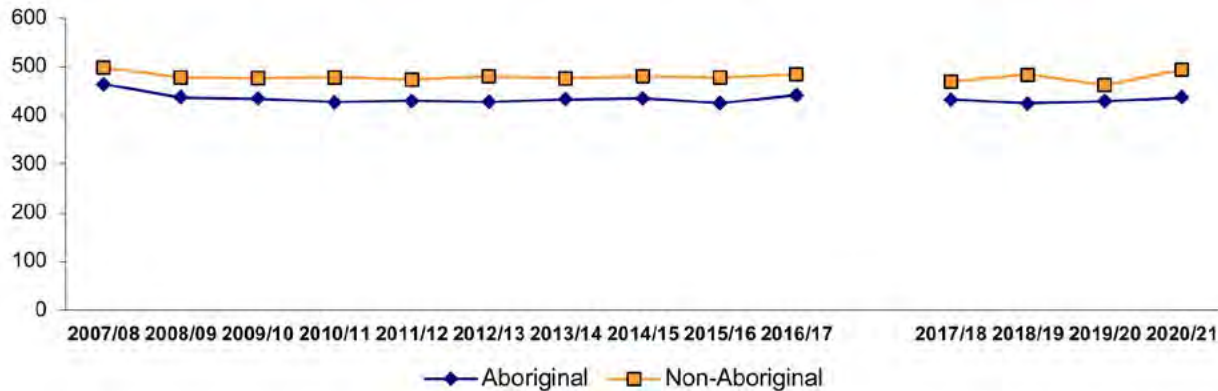
Compared to the province, the number of Aboriginal learners in SD73 meeting and exceeding was one (1%) percent higher for grade 4 students and three (3%) percent higher for grade 7 students.

## Numeracy - SD73 2020-2021 FSA

### Average FSA Scaled Score - Grade 4 Numeracy



### Average FSA Scaled Score - Grade 7 Numeracy



Overall, for the District’s 2020-2021 FSA reading results, the gap between grade 4 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners meeting or exceeding was ten (10%) percent. The gap between grade 7 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners meeting and exceeding was twenty-two (22%) percent.

Compared to the province, the number of Aboriginal learners in SD73 meeting and exceeding was seven (7%) percent higher for grade 4 students and seven (7%) percent higher for grade 7 students.

## Aboriginal Learners with Diverse Abilities

The District is guided in its Inclusive Education policy and procedures by the School Act and by the Ministry of Education and Child Care's [Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines](#) which guide the implementation of support for SD73's diverse learners.

The District had approximately 1,900 students identified with diverse abilities in 2021-2022. About twenty (20%) percent of Aboriginal learners are identified with diverse abilities compared to about eight (8%) non-Aboriginal learners.

## Alternate Programs

Aboriginal learners were also over-represented in alternate programs. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of students in alternate programs are Aboriginal as compared to forty-three percent (43%) non-Aboriginal students.

## BC School Completion (Evergreen) Certificates

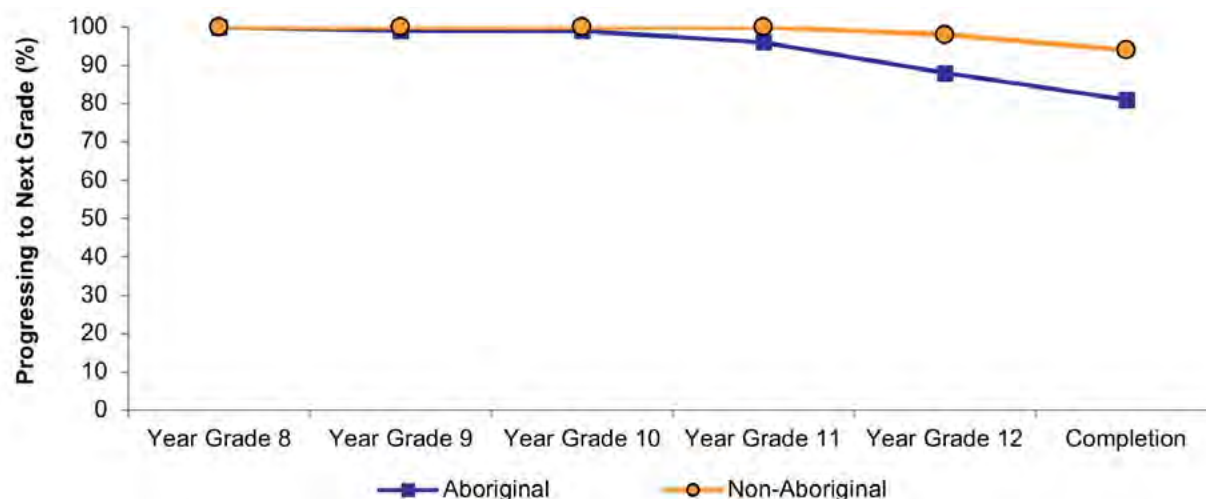
The School Completion (Evergreen) Certificate is intended to celebrate success in learning that is not recognized in a Certificate of Graduation.

In SD73 the percentage of Aboriginal students receiving a School Completion (Evergreen) Certificate was four (4%) percent compared to three (3%) of non-Aboriginal students.

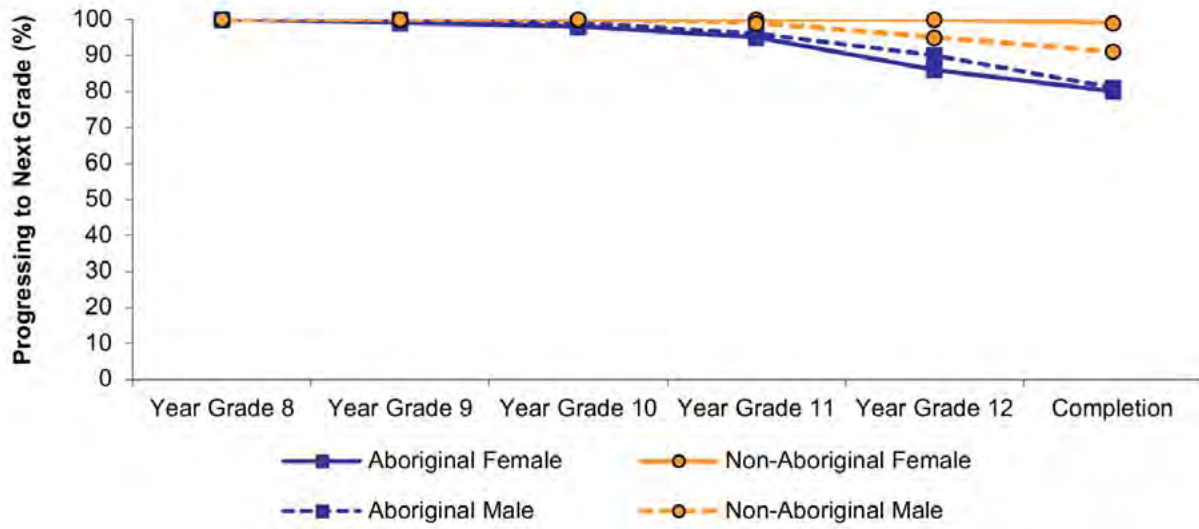
## Progress of Students Entering Grade 8 - Transitions

The following graphs represent the progress of students as they transition from grade to grade through to completion. The transition gap is similar for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners (within 1%-2%) up until grade 11. In grade 11 the gap increases from one (1%) percent in grade 10, four (4%) percent in grade 11, ten (10%) percent in grade 12, and thirteen (13%) percent for later completion. This gap is even more significant for Aboriginal males.

### Progress of Students Entering Grade 8



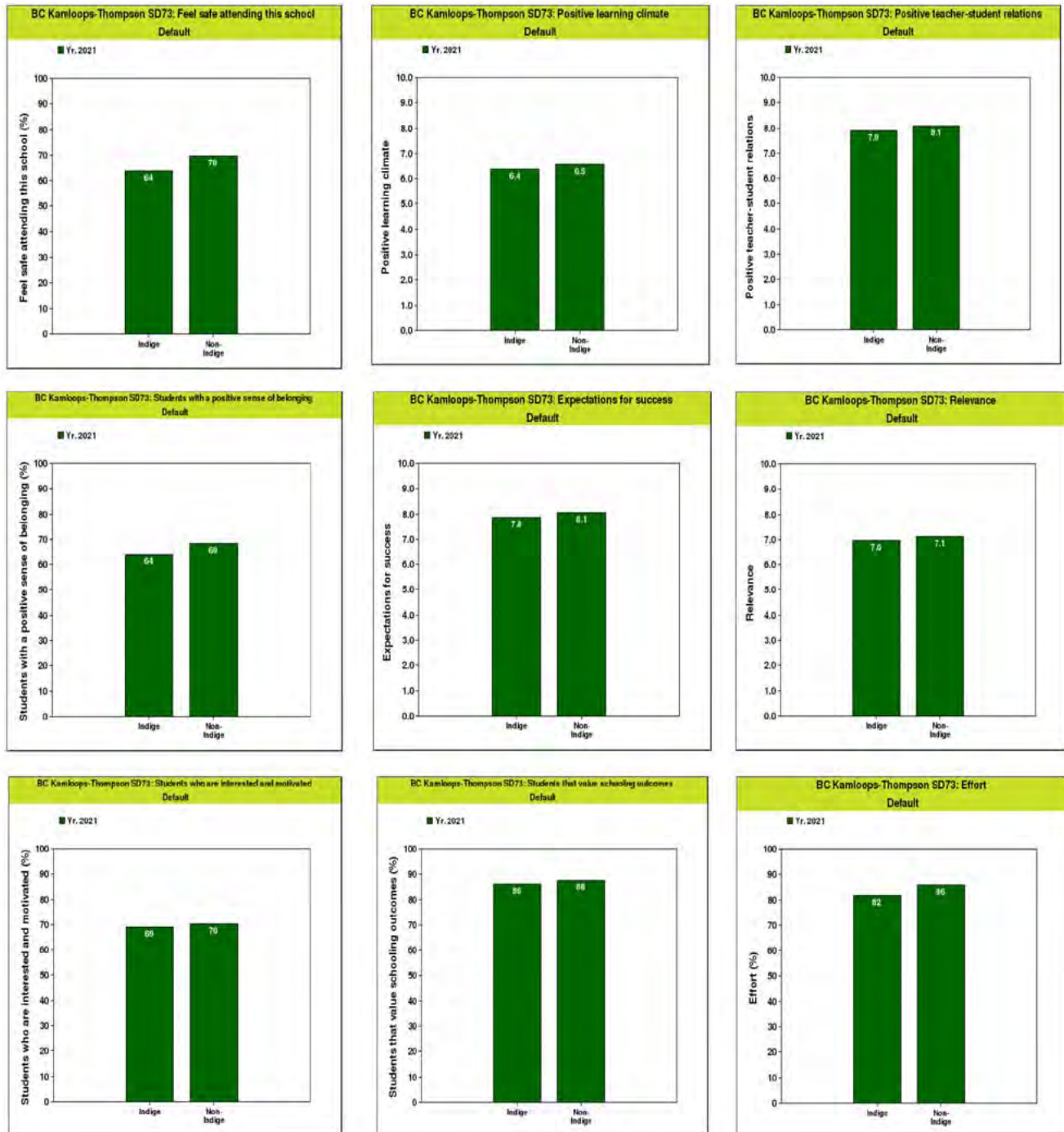
### Progress of Students Entering Grade 8: Gender



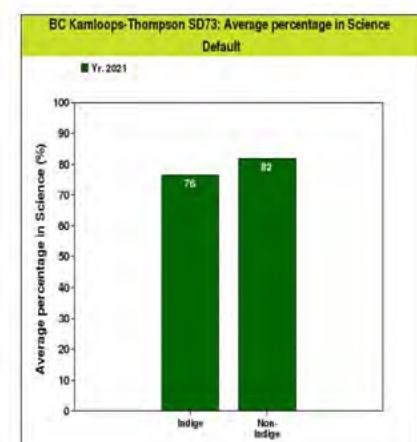
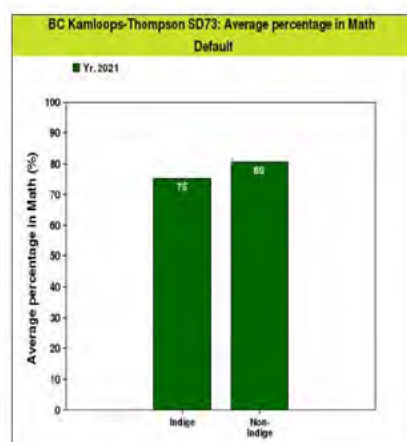
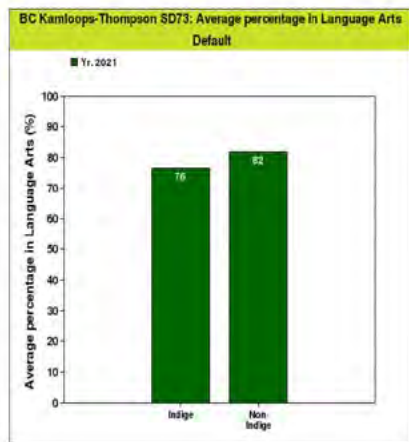
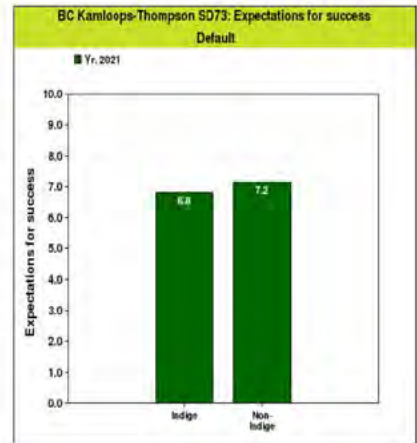
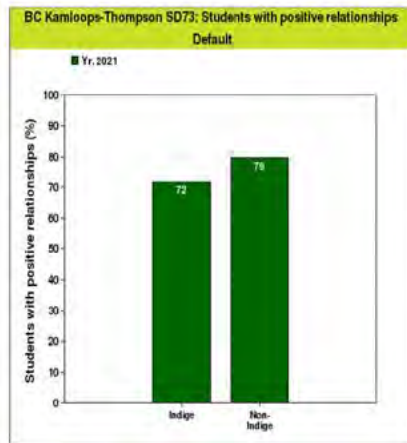
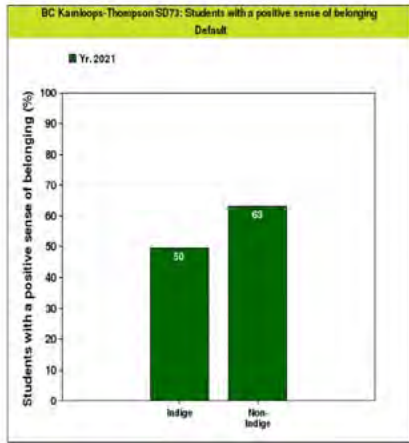
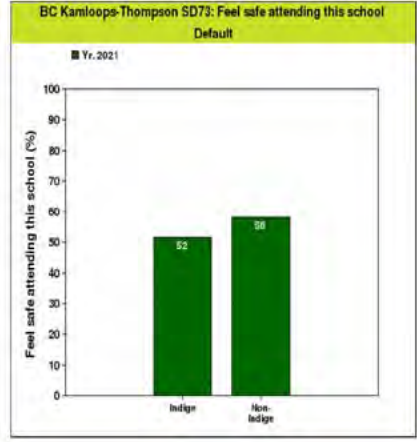
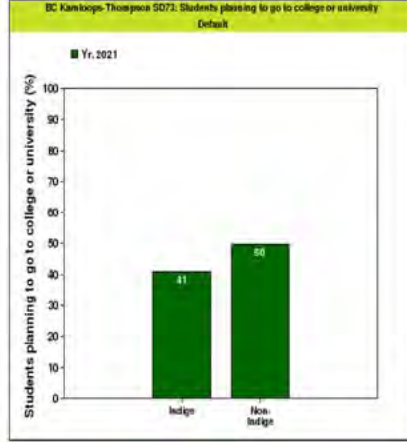
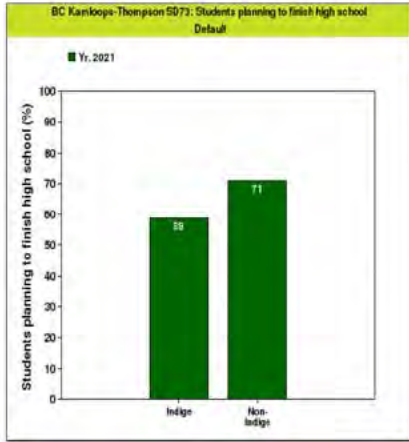
## District Engagement, Well-being, and Resiliency Survey (DEWRS)

In 2021-2022 the District used the DEWRS survey to ask students about their engagement, well-being, and resiliency. The following charts reflect the results for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students in elementary and secondary.

### Elementary

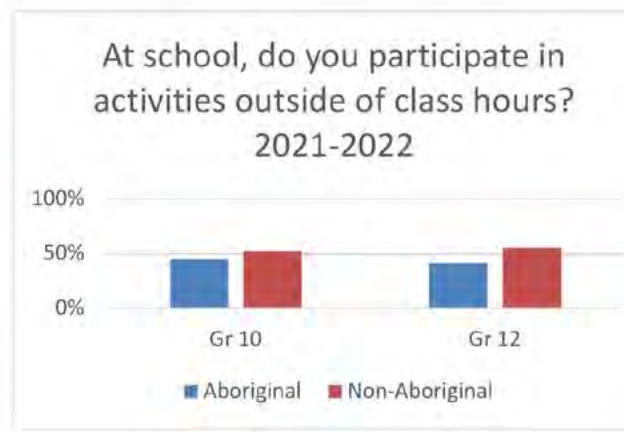
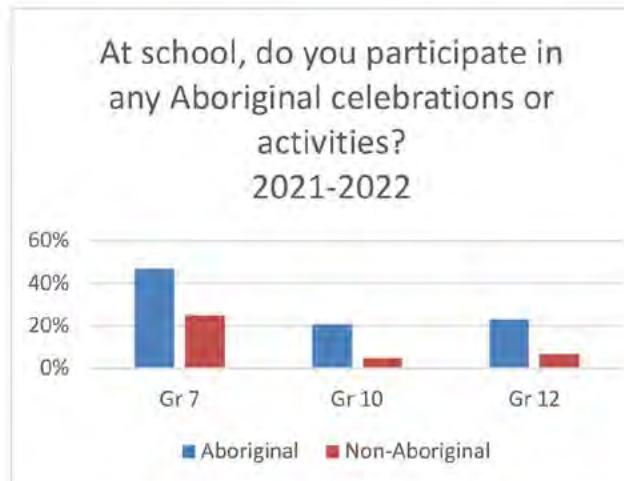
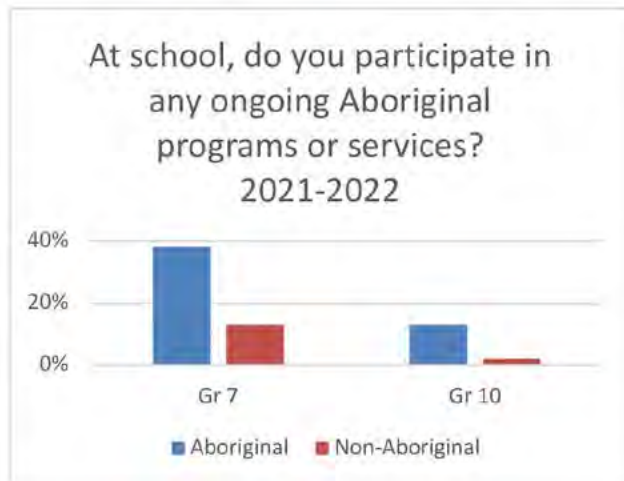
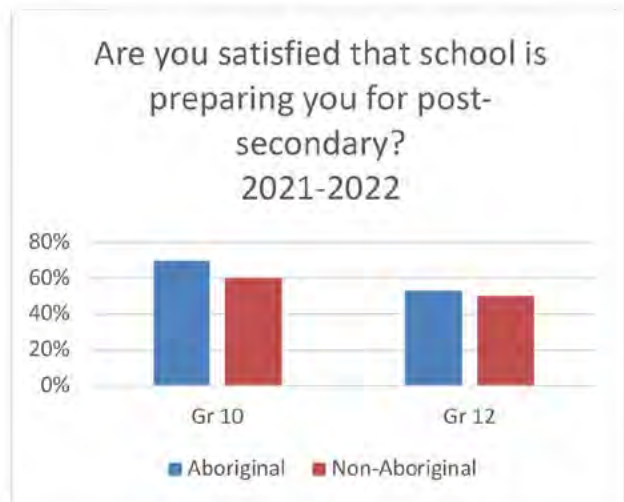
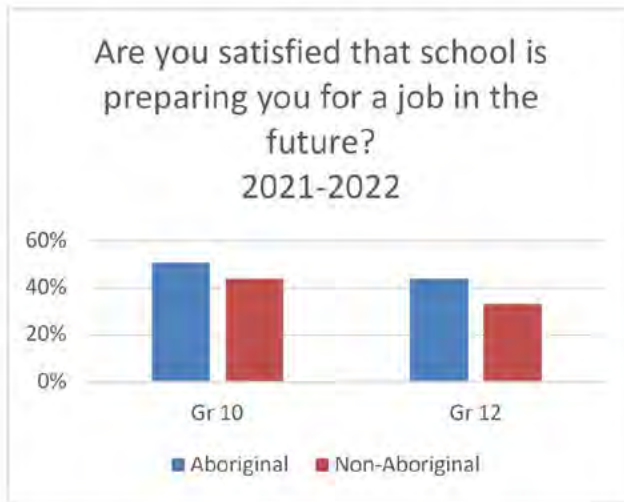


## Secondary



## B.C. Student Learning Survey - 2021-2022

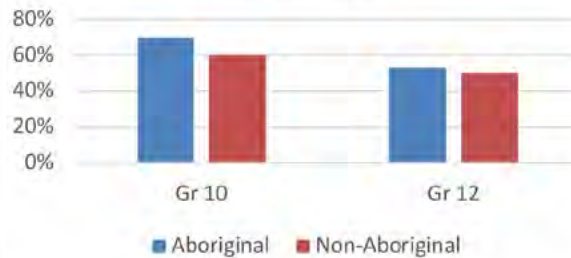
In the Student Learning Survey, students in grades 4, 7, 10, and 12 in BC are asked to reflect upon their learning experience. The charts below are the results of some of the questions from students in the District.



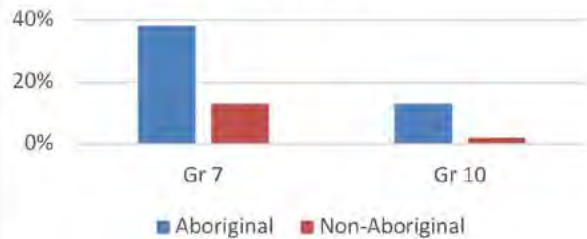
Are you satisfied that school is preparing you for a job in the future?  
2021-2022



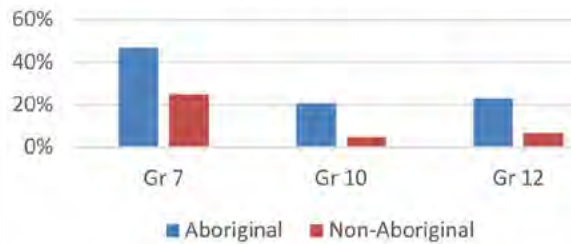
Are you satisfied that school is preparing you for post-secondary?  
2021-2022



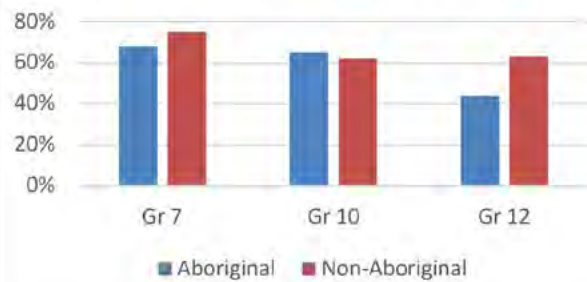
At school, do you participate in any ongoing Aboriginal programs or services?  
2021-2022



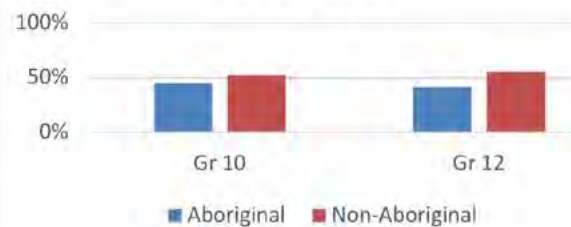
At school, do you participate in any Aboriginal celebrations or activities?  
2021-2022



Are you being taught about local First Nations?  
2021-2022



At school, do you participate in activities outside of class hours?  
2021-2022



# 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

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 of 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 2021–2022. 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 McQueen Lake to support cultural understanding and Aboriginal education programming. The experiential aspect of this project was to be realized when students help plan and construct such a house at McQueen Lake Environmental Education Centre; however, delays in organizing an archeological survey through the local nation, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, followed by the COVID pandemic have resulted in the project being delayed. A site was chosen at the McQueen Lake Day Centre and the first stage of the archeological survey was completed during the summer of 2022. It is intended that the next stage of planning can start during the 2022-2023 school year.

Once constructed, the winter house will remain as a centre for further cultural educational activities at McQueen Lake, 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 a dugout canoe, which classes can visit during field trips to learn about Aboriginal communities and ways of life.

### TEK (Traditional Ecological Knowledge) Program Canoe Project

Brocklehurst Middle School expanded their TEK 8 program in 2018–2019 from Grade 8 students to include Grade 9 students. This was a project-based learning course focused on building a traditional hand-carved dugout canoe and has continued into a fourth year (2021-2022). Students did this by working with local master carver Frank Marchand. They also conducted research, explored the natural environment, accumulated field notes, interacted with elders, and took part in traditional activities. The Brock TEK program, by centering on the communal carving of a canoe, focused on how Aboriginal people lived and worked together and how this enabled prosperity in the natural environment. The project also has a source of pride for the students as they welcome guests to their school to view the project and discuss what they are learning and has been shared with the community and provincially.

Continuation of this project into 2022–2023 has already been approved by the Aboriginal Education Council and Brocklehurst Middle School.

### National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30)

Orange Shirt Day and now also the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, is a legacy of the St. Joseph's Mission (SJM) 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'at'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.

The government declared September 30 a National Holiday (Truth and Reconciliation Day) in 2021. Schools in the District were encouraged to make the week a week of learning about Reconciliation and make September 29th, 2021 the day we wear orange and acknowledge September 30. Because of the topic, schools were also reminded to make sure they were trauma-sensitive and age-appropriate when covering the material. They were encouraged to hold ‘acknowledgement’ activities and gatherings. A special Truth and Reconciliation Bulletin went out to schools with information, resources, and suggested activities for schools.

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation held a Canada wide virtual event which included activities for the whole week and was sent out to all district schools.

## Moose Hide Campaign

In May 2022, the District continued raising awareness of the Moose Hide Campaign, which stands up against violence toward women and children. The campaign distributes moose hide squares across Canada, and participants wear the squares to signify their commitment to honour, respect, and protect women and children. Schools were encouraged to organize activities or events in recognition of this day and the Aboriginal Education department organized resources to share with district schools.

## Day of Sucwentwécw

This year, the 9th Annual Day of Sucwentwécw was held on Thursday, April 7, 2022. The Day of Sucwentwécw occurs only in School District No.73 and takes place to recognize and celebrate the history of the Secwépemc people and other Aboriginal people residing within the territory of the Secwépemc Nation (Secwepemcúl’ecw.). Sucwentwécw means acknowledging one another.

The theme for April 7 was “*Well-Becoming through emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual Indigenous values*”. Some of the teachings for this theme came from the medicine wheel as well as the First Peoples Principles of Learning. Schools organized gatherings, learning, and celebrations. The Aboriginal Education department organized resources for the week and day, and community was invited to schools to be involved.



## Aboriginal Graduation

Aboriginal graduates were invited to cross the stage with dignity, purpose, and opportunities at McArthur Island Sportsplex on June 10, 2022. There were 201 Aboriginal graduates in 2022. The District gave out 12 Aboriginal scholarships worth \$6,500 in total.

## Acknowledgement of Le Estcwiwéy (215)

The District and schools honored the one-year anniversary of the announcement of the 215 (Le Estcwiwéy – the Missing) unmarked graves on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School. The District joined in recognizing this anniversary over a series of days (May 23-27) through events, presentations, classroom and school activities, and a District Powwow to honour those lives lost and all of those impacted by the tragic findings.

## Aboriginal Youth Wellness Conference 2022

In celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day in Canada, SD73 hosted its first district-wide Aboriginal Youth Wellness Conference for students in grades 8 and 9 on June 22 at Thompson Rivers University. The theme for the conference, as identified and selected by students, was *Yecwestsút-ca* which means 'to care for oneself'.

This gathering presented a unique opportunity to learn how Aboriginal culture, used as the foundation for health and wellness, is effective not only for Aboriginal individuals, families, and communities, but for everyone. The event is based upon the principal belief that Aboriginal health must be approached from a holistic view, which encompasses body, mind, and spirit.

Gino Odjick, an Indigenous hockey player and a former Vancouver Canuck, and Peter Leech, a former professional Indigenous hockey player, keynoted the event with Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour and Madelaine McCallum Mendez joining as special guests. Each student had the opportunity to participate in two 45-minute breakout sessions with the sessions ranging from archery, medicine making, healthy relationships, jiggling, consent, jewelry making, bush party safety and awareness, celebrating Two-Spirit people, and more.

## National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and LGBTQ2S+

The Board of Education honored the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and LGBTQ2S+ People on May 5, 2022, which called for our district community to speak out against violence against Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2S+ people and to celebrate Indigenous peoples' history, culture, and diversity.

## National Indigenous Peoples Day

The District and schools acknowledged National Indigenous Peoples Day on Tuesday, June 21, 2022. Schools were given resources and suggested activities to acknowledge the day. Classes, staff, and schools were also encouraged to be involved in the local community events happening during the day. South Kamloops Secondary School also organized a district-wide Lahal tournament for all secondary schools to enter. The Aboriginal Education Council and the District supported the event by providing busing for Lahal teams as well as resources for kits and food. The tournament was well attended and they hope to grow participation in 2023.

## SD73 Powwow

Historically, Twin Rivers Education Centre (TREC) has hosted an annual powwow but the District wished to expand this event to allow for greater participation. The planning committee partnered with Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and collaborated with local community to help host the first district-wide Powwow at the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Arbour grounds just below the site of the old Kamloops Indian Residential School. The District bused over 1,000 elementary students from grade 5 to attend and participate. The day included learnings about traditional powwow as well as an acknowledgement of the first anniversary of the announcement of the findings of Le Estcwicwéy – the Missing at the Kamloops Indian Residential School grounds.

## KAIROS Blanket Exercise (KBE)

The KAIROS Blanket Exercise (KBE) is a unique, participatory history lesson developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and educators. The KBE fosters truth, understanding, respect, and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

In 2018, SD73 obtained a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with KAIROS Canada to train and facilitate the KBE within the District. In 2018–2019, the District trained twenty (20) of its staff members to facilitate the exercise. Because the KBE is an exercise that requires physical participation, it had been put on hold during pandemic restrictions. Trained staff have been able to offer limited opportunities for schools to participate in 2021-2022 but hope to expand offering of the exercise in 2022-2023.

## Indigenous Cultural Safety, Humility, and Competency Guide

In the spring of 2022, the District developed an [Indigenous Cultural Safety, Humility, and Competency Guide](#). This guide was shared out to all School Leaders as well as staff through the Aboriginal Education department Monday Memo. The guide was meant to support staff on the topic of cultural safety, humility, and competency as it is concerned with Indigenous education in public schools. The guide will be implemented strategically through professional learning opportunities and on-boarding for staff during the 2022-2023 school year.



## Aboriginal Education Parent Nights

During the 2021-2022 school year, the Aboriginal Education Department offered five virtual parent engagement evening sessions.

With the increased inclusion of First People's content in the changing BC curriculum, there was a need to incorporate these perspectives in the classroom at all levels. A series of three parent engagement sessions in January, February, and April looked at how this could look in a classroom in the areas of understanding local land, title, governance, math, science, and careers. The sessions also provided parents with tips on how to advocate and support these curricular changes at home and in the community.

In April 2022, a session on Trauma, Resilience, and Navigating Reconciliation was presented by Dr. Kevin Lamoureux, University of Winnipeg and former Education Lead for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Dr. Lamoureux is also the Co-Author of 'Ensouling Our Schools' which all district schools have a copy of and are familiar with through the Aboriginal Education School Lead Sessions. Dr. Lamoureux addressed the concept and understanding of reconciliation and what that looks in the Canadian landscape. As well, he touched on the role of trauma and resiliency for children and families in the current public school system.

A session was also offered in March on Parent Involvement Strategies presented by SD73 Indigenous Family Voices for Education Parent Group. Research has shown that student engagement is directly impacted by parent engagement. This session provided parents with ideas and tips on simple ways Indigenous parents can get involved with their school that will make big differences and how the SD73 Indigenous Family Voices for Education can support them.

## Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society

SD73 has a contract with the Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society to provide the services of a cultural worker to schools, which can be booked to provide workshops and activities to students and staff members. The cultural worker also sits on several district committees, as an advisor.

## Secwépemc Museum

The District has a contract with Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc to provide the services of a cultural worker to District schools. Schools can book the cultural worker to offer cultural workshops and activities to students and staff members. The cultural worker also sits on several District committees, as an advisor and works with the Aboriginal Education department to provide advice around local protocol and culture. This contract includes discounted and priority access for District students and classes to the Secwépemc Museum and 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.

## Aboriginal School Completion Support Teacher

An Aboriginal School Completion Support teacher was hired and put in place early April 2022. This support teacher connected with identified Aboriginal students in grade 12 that were at risk of not completing and graduating. The teacher also participated in school-based team meetings for students who required wrap-around supports.

Preliminary reports and feedback indicated that this significantly increased the success rates of the identified students. A budget was approved to continue this position into 2022-2023 and also to be proactive in supporting Aboriginal students who have indicators that they might be at risk earlier in their secondary schooling.

## Aboriginal Transitions to Post-Secondary

According to the provincial Student Learning Survey 2021-2022, fifty-three (53%) percent of Aboriginal students in grade 10 felt the school was preparing them for post-secondary learning. Forty-nine (49%) percent of Aboriginal students in grade 12 also felt that school was preparing them for post-secondary learning.

In recent years, the District has partnered with TRU for the annual Aboriginal Transitions to Post-Secondary 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 post-secondary. Aboriginal learners hear stories and experiences from current post-secondary learners.

On November 25, 2021, approximately one hundred secondary students attended the Aboriginal Transitions to Post-Secondary Day at TRU.

For SD73, one of the purposes of this event is to address equity in school completion for Aboriginal learners as well as address student engagement and interest in post-secondary options. 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 exposing District Aboriginal learners to post-secondary options and creating an atmosphere of safety and inclusion, SD73 can build toward equity and opportunities for future learning and options.

## 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 (3) 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;
- Girls Exploring Trades and Technology;
- Heavy Metal Rocks (which retains spaces for Aboriginal students)
- RCMP Youth Academy

## 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 Tutoring Programs

During the 2021-2022 school year, the District, through the Aboriginal Education Council, offered several grants to support tutors in schools and in communities. The District collaborated with both Simpcw First Nation in Barriere and the Adams Lake Indian Band in Chase to offer tutoring programs for students that could be accessed both in the community and at the schools.

## Aboriginal Support Teachers

Aboriginal support teachers had blocks in five (5) secondary schools to start the 2021-2022 school year. The intent was to provide additional supports for Aboriginal learners in academics, self-awareness and engagement.

- ❑ Chase Secondary School (two [2] blocks)
- ❑ South Kamloops Secondary School (one [1] block)
- ❑ NorKam Senior Secondary School (one [1] block)
- ❑ Brocklehurst Middle School (one [1] block)
- ❑ Sa-Hali Secondary School (one [1] block)



# 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 (11) percentile points, but it also increases prosocial 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 and 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

In 2021-2022, the District employed six (6) Aboriginal Family Counsellors. The six family counsellors provided one-to-one Aboriginal 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; and,
- Anxiety.

## Aboriginal Youth and Family Consultants

In 2021-2022, the District employed two (2) Aboriginal Youth and Family Consultants to:

- Provide advocacy, support, and consultation for Aboriginal families and students, particularly during inclusion planning in schools
- Provide community and cultural connections for families and students
- Provide culturally relevant group social skills at identified schools

## Aboriginal Community Outreach Workers

The Aboriginal Community Outreach Worker position was added in the spring of 2021. For 2021-2022 the District employed three (3) outreach workers and they had a case load of approximately 200 Aboriginal students. These positions do not support students with counseling or tutoring services, and are accessed by referral from the school.

Areas the Community Outreach positions support students are:

- Creating connections or reconnecting Aboriginal families and their communities
- Provide 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 school district
- Facilitating the implementation of student success plans
- Frequent check-ins with families/students to ensure that a plan is being implemented and followed

## Boys and Girls Groups

Aboriginal Social Groups are based in elementary, middle, and secondary schools. The purpose of these groups is to create a healthy understanding of social skills and social well-being within the context of cultural identity.

The groups provide marginalized and at-risk Aboriginal learners with the opportunity to explore their experiences and challenges in a safe, non-threatening environment. Programs are held in both rural and urban settings.

In 2021–2022, the district supported twenty-two (22) schools with thirty-five (35) active Aboriginal Social groups.

YouPower provided facilitator training in December 2021 and certified twenty-three staff members as Aboriginal Social group facilitators.

# 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 Ministry of Education and Child Care system has focused on reflecting First Nations' rights; First Nations' languages, cultures, values, and traditions; and First Nations' commitment to quality education and improved student 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:

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

In April 2022, the Government of BC also introduced the Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) Action Plan. Section 4.29 of the Action plan states: Establish an Indigenous-led working group to develop a strategy for the revitalization of Indigenous languages in BC, including potential legislative supports. (Ministry of Education and Child Care).

The District is reviewing the existing Secwépemc language curriculum which was developed in 1999 and is forming a working group for a future local language framework.

## Secwépemc Language Programs

The District employs three (3) Secwépemc language teachers, who offer Secwépemc language lessons in four (4) secondary schools and three (3) elementary schools, as follows:

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

## Secwépemc Language Curriculum

SD73 is one of nineteen (19) districts with a language curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education and Child Care. 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 for 2022–2023.

# Conclusion

The *Aboriginal Education Annual Report 2021-2022* has reported on the four goals set out in the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement as well as the goals in the 2018-2022 District Strategic Plan. This report brings to light 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.

The highlight of this report is the number of support services provided to continue to address equity and the success of Aboriginal students and families the District serves as we move out of the pandemic. Although in comparison to many provincial counterparts, the District is doing extremely well, there is more work to be done!

SD73 strives to eliminate the educational achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners, address systemic racism, address truth and reconciliation, and develop active strategies and interventions. District schools will be implementing and enhancing academic success, social-emotional learning (SEL), and opportunities to access Aboriginal language and learning as well as embedding Indigenous ways of knowing and doing in the learning culture.

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





