

ANNUAL EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND DIVERSITY REPORT

November, 2021



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73
(Kamloops - Thompson)

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Executive Summary

Achieving equity and excellence is ambitious, necessary, and attainable.

Equity, achieved through the meaningful inclusion of all learners while honouring their diversity, builds a school system that supports the achievement of each individual learner's potential and the well-being of all learners.

Kamloops-Thompson School District No. 73 recognizes that ensuring equity is the foundation for improving student achievement—it is central to the learner's experience and engagement. Linking student achievement to equity, inclusion, and diversity will highlight areas of learner well-being, engagement, and school connectedness.

This Annual Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Report supports the six priorities outlined in the District's Strategic Plan. These six priorities are central to the District vision, which is:

- To be a dynamic school district, achieving success for all students through a commitment to equity and excellence.

It is vital to ensure that the District addresses how each individual's potential connects to SD73's mission, which is as follows:

- We connect each student to their future by transforming the way all partners collaborate to create relevant, innovative and inclusive learning environments.

This report outlines how SD73 supports school connectedness and focuses on neurological, physical, and cultural diversity; mental and physical wellness; and student safety in order to:

- Minimize negative aspects of school life by reducing bullying and harassment, threats, injury and student disengagement
- Diminish stereotyping and discrimination, fear, anxiety and depression
- Enhance feelings of well-being and focus on positive mental and physical health
- Encourage students to respect others and become educated citizens

To afford our students the potential for success, the District supports students' ownership of learning, builds positive relationships within our learning communities and develops social-emotional learning. SD73's goal of achieving equity within the District is enacted by valuing diversity and striving for inclusion in all learners.

In 2021–2022, the equity, inclusion, and diversity action plan will support this goal, as outlined in the following section.

Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Action Plan 2021–22

Action Plan Items

1. Improve learning outcomes for students with diverse abilities by:
 - a. ASD support teacher to work with staff at Chris Rose Therapy Centre / schools
 - b. Professional development (Shelly Moore) for teachers.
2. Develop a support process for Children and Youth in Care that ensures consistent and regular meetings with caregivers, outside support agencies, and school staff who use data to identify the effectiveness of wrap-around support structures and strategies.
3. Develop a system-wide scan of students and staff around their lived experiences of racism to inform a District anti-racism plan.
4. Formalize a support framework to inform decisions about student placement in the School Leaving Certificate pathway that includes the voices of students, caregivers, outside support agencies, and school district staff.
5. Review the availability and provision of alternative support programs.
6. Provide in-person and online training for secondary teachers to implement the newly released Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Secondary Educators (EASE) program.
7. Expand the training of the Stop Wondering Start Knowing mental health literacy program to teachers of grade 5 students.
8. Continue partnering with our community YMCA–YWCA to expand programming (Y Mind) for youth who present with mild to moderate anxiety.
9. Continue providing opportunities for students identifying as LGBTQ2S+ to develop a positive sense of identity through fostering a sense of community in their home schools and while transitioning to new schools.
10. Provide six school communities with an opportunity to participate in a pilot program that includes a wrap-around approach to Social-Emotional Learning and Trauma Informed Teaching. This involves community partnership with Child and Youth Mental Health, LMO and Interior Health.

Introduction

The District acknowledges that its learners are unique individuals, all of whom have the right to equitable access and participation in quality education. The District and its schools value diversity and will respond to the diverse social, cultural, and educational needs of the individuals and of the communities in which we learn, lead, and work. By promoting the understanding of others and respect for all and by creating safe and welcoming learning environments that are free from discrimination, and harassment and violence, educational excellence and equity are attainable.

Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity in the District

The District's vision seeks to enable students to go beyond receiving a graduation certificate to becoming resilient and engaged citizens with positive life outcomes. It ensures that learners have the opportunity to succeed personally and academically, regardless of background, identity or personal circumstances.

Ensuring equity is the foundation for improving student achievement and is central to the learner's experience and engagement. Linking student achievement to equity, inclusion and diversity will highlight areas of learner well-being, engagement and school connectedness.

As outlined in the District's Inclusive Education Services Handbook, all students must have the opportunity to fulfill their individual potential. The District supports the provision of the most enabling learning environment for all students, and it supports equitable access to education for all learners, while honouring the diversity that each learner contributes to society.

As outlined in the School Act, all school-age residents are entitled to enrol in the District's schools. Our mission as educators is outlined within the School Act's preamble, as follows:

...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
- 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 policy, SD73 provides conditions that foster success for all students, including:

- Equitable access to and equitable participation in quality education for all learners
- District and school cultures that value diversity and respond to the diverse social and cultural needs of the communities 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
- Policies and practices that promote fair and equitable treatment of all learners

District Strategic Priorities

This Annual Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Report supports the six priorities outlined in the District's strategic plan, which are to:

1. Ensure 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 and Aboriginal worldview and perspectives.
4. Foster an inclusive, adaptable, and accountable district culture.
5. Strengthen partnerships to enrich the way we lead, learn, and work.
6. Ensure the sustainable use of our resources.

The importance of equity, inclusion, and diversity is addressed in each School Learning Plan (SLP).

School Connectedness and Student Belonging

This Annual Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Report supports school connectedness, which is recognized by the Ministry of Education, as “students’ active engagement in the academic and social opportunities at their school based on their understanding that teachers and other adults at school care for them as individuals, as well as for their learning.” [Ministry of Education, School Connectedness](#)

School connectedness supports students in becoming educated citizens, to develop strong foundational skills and core competencies and to maintain positive mental health.

School connectedness is developed as a result of a positive school environment in which teachers and other adults create opportunities for students to feel valued, supported, and respected, and in which students develop individuality, mastery, and purpose while engaged in the learning community.

The District engages students annually in the District Engagement, Well-Being and Resiliency Survey (DEWRS) to gain information on their perceptions of student belonging. Below are two data sets, one for students in elementary (grades 4 to 7) and the other for students in secondary (grades 8 to 12).

Elementary Students—Grades 4 to 7

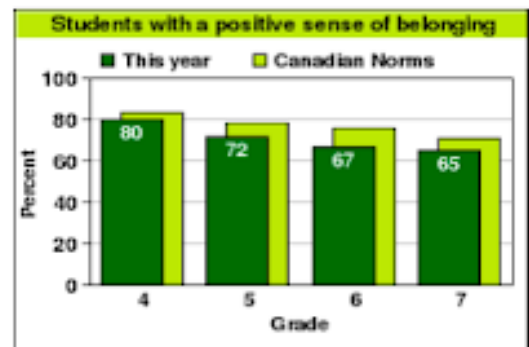
In elementary, both the 2019 and 2020 results indicate that students’ sense of belonging drops as students move up the grades in elementary schools. Further, students in our District consistently report a lower sense of belonging when compared to averaged data from students across Canada. This data speaks to the need for prioritizing student connectedness in elementary schools, especially for students enrolled in upper elementary grades.

Fall 2019

Students with a positive sense of belonging

Students who feel accepted and valued by their peers and by others at their school

- 71% of students in this district had a high sense of belonging; the Canadian norm for these grades is 77%.
- 71% of the girls and 74% of the boys in this district had a high sense of belonging. The Canadian norm for girls is 75% and for boys is 79%.

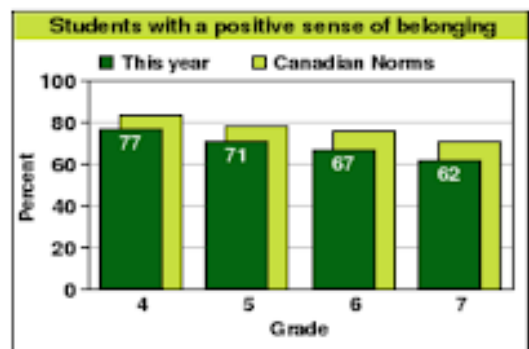


Fall 2020

Students with a positive sense of belonging

Students who feel accepted and valued by their peers and by others at their school

- 69% of students in this district had a high sense of belonging; the Canadian norm for these grades is 77%.
- 69% of the girls and 72% of the boys in this district had a high sense of belonging. The Canadian norm for girls is 75% and for boys is 79%.



Secondary Students—Grades 8 to 12

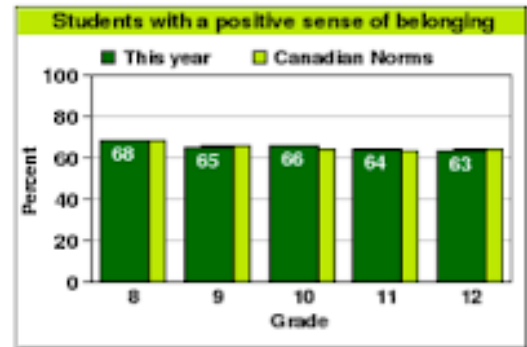
In secondary, the 2019 and 2020 show similar results in that both years students' sense of belonging is relatively flat throughout the five high school grades. When compared to Canadian norms, secondary students in our district report very similar levels of a positive sense of belonging. Even though this data is in line with the Canadian average, with an average of only 64% of students in secondary environments reporting a high sense of belonging, there is more work to be done to better connect to students in our high schools.

Fall 2019

Students with a positive sense of belonging

Students who feel accepted and valued by their peers and by others at their school

- 65% of students in this district had a high sense of belonging; the Canadian norm for these grades is 65%.
- 63% of the girls and 71% of the boys in this district had a high sense of belonging. The Canadian norm for girls is 60% and for boys is 70%.

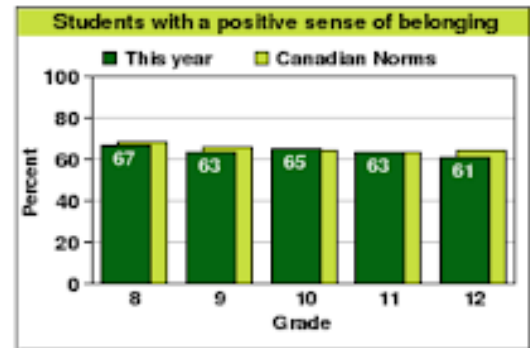


Fall 2020

Students with a positive sense of belonging

Students who feel accepted and valued by their peers and by others at their school

- 64% of students in this district had a high sense of belonging; the Canadian norm for these grades is 65%.
- 60% of the girls and 70% of the boys in this district had a high sense of belonging. The Canadian norm for girls is 60% and for boys is 70%.



According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report, [*The Nature of Learning. Using Research to Inspire Practice \(2010\)*](#), engaging students in a school setting and attending to the social-emotional aspects of learning supports positive health and life outcomes for those students. The OECD report outlines the following seven principles of learning that are intended to build engagement and connectedness through positive emotions and motivations:

1. Learners at the centre
2. The social nature of learning
3. Emotions as integral to learning
4. The recognition of individual differences
5. The stretching of all students
6. Assessment for learning
7. The building of horizontal connectedness

School connectedness and belonging are related to a student's ability to build and maintain positive relationships. BC curricula and the District's policies and administrative procedures formalize systemically the importance of these concepts. Health and career education, career planning and graduation transitions all support the social and emotional development of students in understanding and maintaining positive relationships.

The Ministry of Education supports school connectedness and a focus on social and emotional learning to:

- Minimize negative aspects of school life by reducing bullying and harassment, injury, truancy, and absenteeism
- Diminish stereotyping and prejudice, fear, anxiety, depression and loss of motivation
- Enhance feelings of well-being during childhood
- Provide sound foundations for positive health in later adolescence and adulthood
- Encourage students to respect others and to respect their surroundings

By supporting students' ownership of learning, building positive relationships within the learning community, and developing and supporting social-emotional learning, District students will be afforded the potential for success.

Background

The District receives specific funding to support those learners who are identified as having Aboriginal ancestry, who are English Language Learners (ELL) or who qualify for special education designations. Recognizing that our learners are unique and have diverse learning requirements, SD73 spends approximately 20% greater than the specific operating funds to ensure that equity, inclusion, and diversity of learners is honoured in all of our schools and programs.

The District monitors the school connectedness, engagement, progress and achievement of its diverse learners through formal measures such as the District Engagement, Well-Being and Resiliency Survey (DEWRS), the Ministry of Education Student Learning Survey and several specific programming measures, including report cards, ministry data and inclusive education service data.

Inclusive Education Policy and Procedure

The District is guided in its inclusive education policy and procedure by the *School Act* and by [Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines](#), which guides the implementation of support for SD73's diverse learners.

All Learners are Unique Learners

The District recognizes that all our learners are unique. To support our unique learners, the District adheres to the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, a pedagogical approach that helps give all students an equal opportunity to succeed. 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:

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

Successful teaching and learning includes simultaneous involvement of all three neurological networks. Based on these networks, UDL's three principles are for educators to offer:

- Multiple means of representation: Give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge.
- Multiple means of expression: Provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know.
- Multiple means of engagement: Tap into learners' interests, offer appropriate challenges and increase motivation.

Last school year, the District collaborated with SET-BC to provide professional development training, collaborative time to plan learning and in-class observation feedback from an educational leader to teachers from six pilot schools. In 2020–2021, our District coordinator of Inclusive Education Services will continue this learning, working closely with teacher teams. This collaboration will include professional development sessions and in-classroom support. Teachers will receive professional development to best organize learning opportunities that can meet the needs of all students. Teachers will be observed while teaching lessons and receive feedback. Following this, teachers will engage in further professional development sessions to plan next steps. This process will be repeated throughout the school year.

The District uses a multi-tier response to intervention (RTI) approach, to identify and support students with learning and/or behavioural needs. The RTI process begins with high quality instruction and interventions to support students in the general education classroom. Interventions are introduced at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate the students' rate of learning. These services are provided by general education teachers, learning assistance teachers and specialists. Student progress is monitored and educational decisions are made following a review of student data. SD73's processes and procedures are developed with this approach in mind.



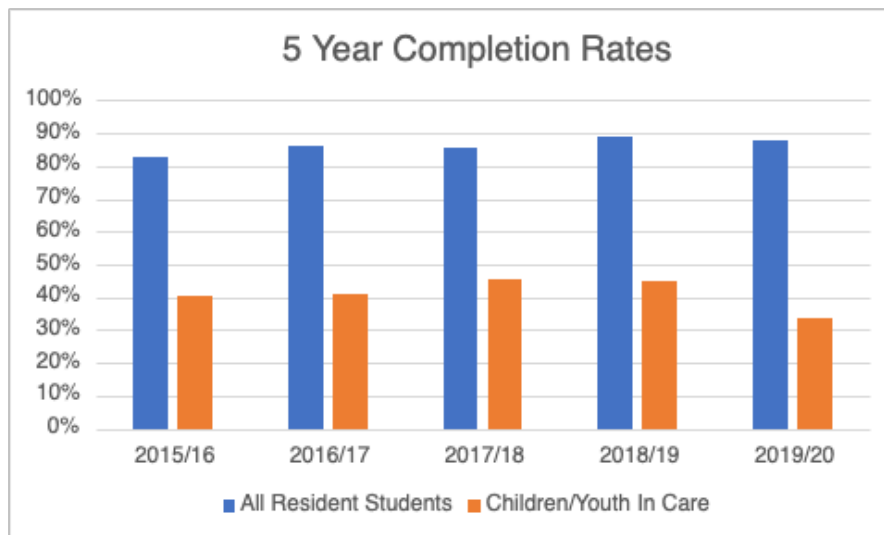
Examining Achievement Data

Children and Youth In Care

Students who are placed in both temporary and continuing care are less likely to experience academic success, and graduate, in School District 73 and throughout the Province of British Columbia compared to students who are not placed in care. Children and youth in care (CYIC) refers to a child or youth who is in the custody, care or guardianship of a Director (CFCSA) or a director of adoption designated under the Adoption Act, or on a Youth Agreement. This cohort includes students identified in the B.C. K–12 education system as children under a Continuing Custody Order (CCO), Youth Agreement (YAG), interim and temporary custody orders, children under Special Needs or Voluntary Care agreements, and children under orders from another province or jurisdiction.

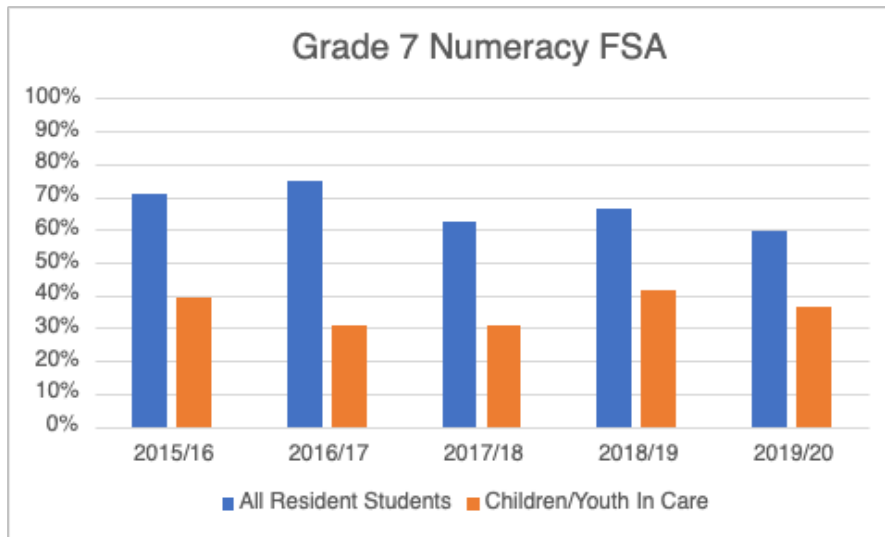
[As per the How Are We Doing?— Children and Youth in Government Care and Youth on Youth Agreements Report \(2018\)](#), children in government care can face exceptionally challenging circumstances. For these children to thrive, the government, schools, families, and community support agencies need to work together to ensure children are adequately supported to reach their goals. This work is a priority in School District 73, as evidenced by the data on the achievement of students in CYIC environments provided below.

Graph 1 compares the 5 year completion rates of all resident students to students who have been in care at some point in their school years. There is a clear gap in the success of students who are not in care with those who have been in government care. The 2019/2020 year represents the largest gap in the graph with a 53% difference in completion rates between the two categories of students.

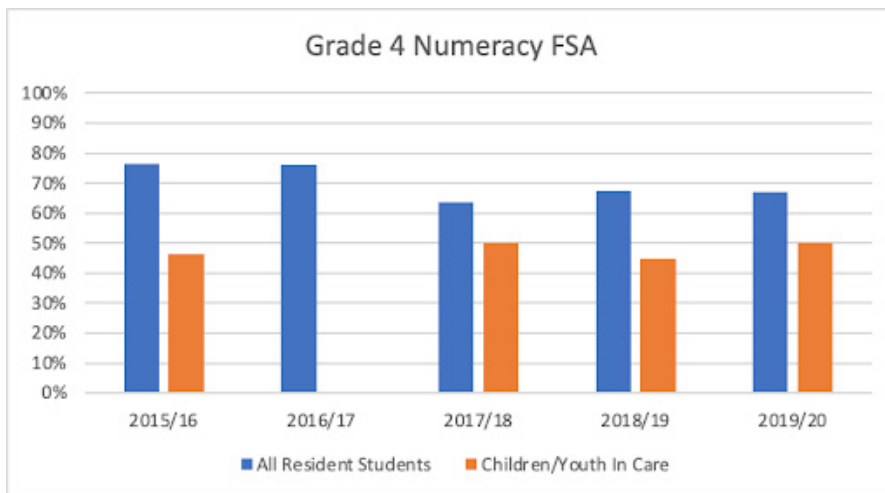


Graph 1 — 5 Year Completion Rates (All Resident Students / CYIC)

The gap in achievement between students in care and those not in care exists earlier in district data, indicating the need for both elementary and secondary school teams to strengthen the communication with families and government agencies and solidify the process of monitoring the effectiveness of supports for Children and Youth in Care. Graphs 2 and 3 examine grade 7 and grade 4 student results in the Numeracy section of the Foundation Skills Assessment. This achievement data mirrors the gap in completion rates that exists between all students and Children Youth in Care. The gap in achievement (and seen in completion rates) appears to grow as students enrol in the higher grades. It is clear from this data that there is the need to enhance the support District staff provide students who are in Ministry care.



Graph 2 — Foundation Skills Assessment—Grade 7 Numeracy (All Resident Students / CYIC)



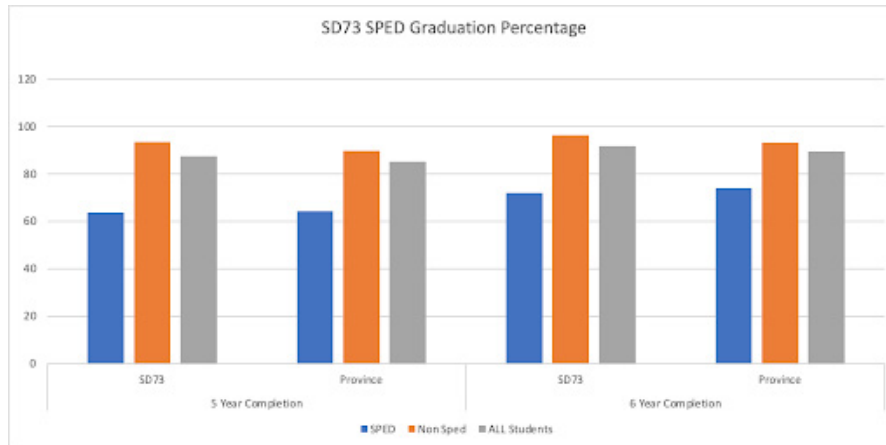
Graph 3 — Foundation Skills Assessment—Grade 4 Numeracy (All Resident Students / CYIC)

Diverse Ability Learners and Students with Disabilities

Students who have diverse abilities or disabilities do not experience academic success at the same rate of neurotypical students in our district and throughout the province. This inequity is evidenced in the graphs 4 and 5 which show a significant gap in both graduation completion rates and percentage of students achieving On Track or Extending on the Numeracy sections of the Grade 4 and Grade 7 Foundation Skills Assessment.

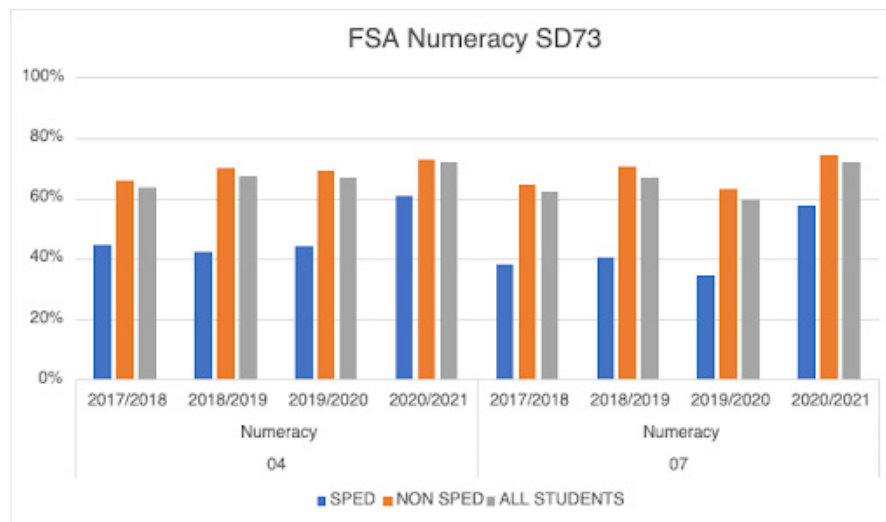
In graph 4, students with diverse abilities or disabilities graduate in our District at approximately the same rate as the provincial average. Further, our District data comparing the graduation rate for students with special education designations with students without special education designations mirrors provincial results for both 5 and 6 year completion rates. Regardless of this equivalence with provincial results, the thirty percent gap in

5 year completion rates and the twenty-five percent gap in 6 year completion rates between students with special education designations and those students without any designations is proof of the need to guide and support enhancing structures and strategies for diverse learners in our District.



Graph 4 — 2019-2020 5 and 6 Year Completion Rates (Students with Special Education Designations)

The achievement gap between students with diverse abilities or disabilities and students without any special education designations is evident from the Foundation Skills Assessment Numeracy data shared for both students in grades 4 and 7 below. The data from 2020-2021 is encouraging as it shows a noticeable narrowing of this gap especially with the grade 4 Numeracy assessment results. Both the grade 4 and grade 7 results for students with a ministry designation showed strong improvement with the percentage of students achieving On Track or Extending going up 18 and 21 percent respectively. One year of growth, albeit encouraging and worth acknowledging, does not yet constitute a trend. Further, even with this growth an achievement gap of 15 to 21 percent still exists. This evidence informs that the work of improving classroom level support provided to students who have ministry designations needs to begin early in the primary years.



Graph 5 — Foundation Skills Assessment—Grade 7 Numeracy (Students with Special Education Designations)

Neurological and Physical Diversity

The District's neurological and physical diversity approach to education recognizes that physical abilities and neurological differences between learners constitute natural variations between individuals. This represents a way of seeing individual differences as unique learning abilities rather than disabilities.

To support SD73's diverse learners, a variety of services are provided through Inclusive Education Services:

- School psychologists
- Speech and language pathologists
- Home/hospital services
- Hearing resource teacher
- Vision resource teacher
- Inclusion Support teachers
- Student and family consultants
- Drug and alcohol counsellors
- District mental health clinician
- Assistive technology supports
- District Inclusive Education Services coordinator
- District resource rooms
- Children's Therapy and Family Resource Centre
- Provincial outreach programs
- Partial day planning



School Psychologists

School psychologists are responsible for providing psycho-educational services for students from their entrance to kindergarten to their transition out of grade 12. School psychologists are active participants in the District's consultation process and are also responsible for determining whether students are placed, based on appropriate documentation and assessment, in a Ministry of Education special needs designation. School psychologists ensure that students diagnosed with learning disabilities or those who might qualify for services through CLBC have an updated assessment prior to their graduation.

Speech and Language Pathologists

Speech and Language Pathologists support students with a range of communication disorders from simple developmental communication disorders to complex communication disorders that are often associated with other physical differences or neurodevelopmental disorders. Speech and Language Pathologists work with other professionals in the School District and in the community to provide differential diagnosis regarding specific types of communication disorders as specified in the DSM-5.

Speech and Language Pathologists work with families, teachers, and certified education assistants to provide strategies and programs for students whose communication disorders impact their academic and social learning. Augmentative communication supports are provided and supported by Speech and Language Pathologists for students with physical or neurodevelopmental disorders that limit their ability to communicate verbally.

Home/Hospital Services

Home/hospital services are provided for students who are at home or in hospital for an extended time due to physical or mental illness, an accident, or (in some cases) a refusal to attend school. Home/hospital services are temporary and not considered an educational program; however, the majority of referrals require additional support to transition students back into classrooms. Transition planning support includes consultation with school staff, parents, the students themselves, community agency representatives, and School District staff (where appropriate) to identify and address specific concerns.

Hearing Resource Teacher

The hearing resource teacher provides services to District students who may be experiencing difficulty in school because of hearing impairment or loss. Any student at any grade level who has significant hearing impairment or loss that results in substantial educational difficulties is eligible for direct service. Consultative services may include providing information to students, parents and classroom teachers or managing auditory equipment.

Vision Resource Teacher

The vision resource teacher provides wide ranging services that include direct instruction, teaching to the Expanded Core Curriculum for students with visual impairments, provision of resources from the Provincial Resource Center for the Visually Impaired, ensuring accessibility to print material by way of transcription and conversion using alternative formats such as braille and large print, supporting assistive technology needs for access, arranging Orientation and Mobility and liaising with families and outside agencies.

continued...

In previous years, the District partnered with the Lions Club to provide vision screening for grade 3 and 6 students at 18 elementary schools. The initial goal was to provide this screening to all grade 3 and 6 students. This project was put on hold last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This project will resume when it is safe for the Lions Club members to reconvene this support.

Inclusion Support Teachers

Inclusion support teachers build the capacity of schools to respond positively, and with a variety of strategies to meet the behavioural and learning needs of students. These teachers are responsible for supporting positive behaviour intervention and support (PBIS) and consulting on social-emotional and behaviour programs in the classroom. Inclusion support teachers also work with school teams to develop employee safety plans and student behaviour plans.

School and Family Consultants

School and Family Consultants provide social-emotional consulting, short-term counselling, assessment of students as needed and other intervention support to students, parents, and school staff members. They are available to provide counselling support in both elementary and secondary schools when a critical incident, such as a death in a family or school, occurs. These consultants are available to support schools in completing suicide risk assessments, preparing safety plans and following up with parents and community agencies. They are also responsible for assisting school teams in completing violence threat risk assessments (VTRA) or worrisome behaviour forms.

Drug and Alcohol Counsellors

The District drug and alcohol counsellor supports students who find themselves challenged by substance use problems. SD73 partners with the Phoenix Centre in providing direct clinical counselling within the school setting. This counsellor provides students and District staff members with prevention based presentations regarding substance use problem issues. The Phoenix Centre provides additional drug and alcohol counsellors to the District's secondary schools.

District Mental Health Clinician

This jointly funded position works as a liaison between the School District and Child and Youth Mental Health to provide direct service to children, youth and families. This clinician provides direct 1:1 counselling services and therapeutic/psychoeducational groups to students and their parents who are at risk of developing a mental health disorder and to students showing mild and/or early signs whose functioning is impacted in home, school and social settings.

Assistive Technology Supports

The District recognizes the importance of providing our diverse learners with technology support to help them access, develop, and showcase their learning. SD73 students are supported with both hardware support (machines, devices) and software support (learner accommodation programs). The Assistive Technology lead teacher held four (4) professional development sessions and provided technology, classroom workshops, training sessions for school staff or consulted school staff on how to implement technological supports in 41 of 47 schools in 2020–2021.

District Inclusive Education Services (IES) Coordinator

The District Inclusive Education Services (IES) Coordinator arranges the student transition to high school and placement in District programs and coordinates the purchase of service school programs for students attending the Chris Rose Therapy Centre for Autism.

District Resource Rooms

There are ten District resource room programs. They are designed to provide individualized programming at primary, intermediate, and secondary levels for students with intellectual disabilities and complex needs. Students are placed in District resource rooms through the District screening process, which takes time and careful planning. Often, the process starts up to a year in advance of the District screening itself, as this gives both the family and the school time to make good decisions about possible student placements.

Children's Therapy and Family Resource Centre (CTFRC)

SD73 works closely with the Children's Therapy and Family Resource Centre (CTFRC) to meet the needs of students throughout the District. CTFRC employees meet with students, families and education staff members to implement physiotherapy, occupational therapy and other needed support. CTFRC employees also assist schools to ensure that equipment, and facilities are accessible and inclusive. The District and CTFRC work together in Kindergarten planning meetings to organization have in-depth knowledge of students' needs to facilitate their successful transitions. ensure that professionals from each

Provincial Outreach Programs

The Ministry of Education funds a number of provincial outreach programs to help meet the educational needs of low-incidence students in school districts. SD73 accesses these programs for consultations, resources and in-service in the areas of inclusion, autism, special education technology, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, early intervention and other specific learning needs.

Partial Day Programs

Many diverse learners require a flexible schedule or setting in order to learn to their potential. Partial day programs are intended to accommodate and support students' particular needs. An intervention plan includes strategies and interventions that will contribute to improved attendance and success at school.

During the 2020–2021 school year any student who was being placed in a partial day program was required to complete a document that outlined a return to full in-class instruction plan. District staff, such as the Inclusion Support Teacher, were required to be a part of the planning team. If a student with Aboriginal ancestry was being placed in a partial day program, an Aboriginal Youth and Family Consultant was required to be a part of the planning team to help advocate for the family and connect the family to community support. Schools are required to send names of all students on partial day programs to the Assistant Superintendent of Inclusive Education.

Cultural Diversity

Aboriginal School Lead Sessions

In the areas of social-emotional learning, mental health literacy, and trauma-informed practice, the District is establishing programming that meets learners' diverse needs. To address well-being, a positive sense of belonging and academic success, the Aboriginal School Lead sessions expanded in 2019–2020 to include a Learning Assistance and Resource Teacher. Since then, school teams have received professional development with opportunities to self-assess areas for improvement in their pursuit of equity.

It is paramount to create a climate that supports children, youth, and families 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. Finally, SD73's valued partnerships with community agencies continue to help the District to support the needs of students and their families.

English Language Learning (ELL)

Each District school supports English language learning (ELL) students with learning assistance resource teacher services. ELL students are supported to learn English while being immersed during classroom based instruction, in the English Language. Each school is assigned an ELL resource teacher who assesses and evaluates ELL students to determine their level of language proficiency in oral language, reading and writing. The ELL resource teachers consult and communicate with learning assistance teachers (LARTs), classroom teachers, high school counsellors, inclusive education staff, administrators, and parents to prepare and successfully implement the Annual Instructional Plan (AIP) for ELL students. Intercultural goals are also included.

ELL resource teachers recommend and provide appropriate print, digital, and multimedia resources specifically written and created for ELL students. They provide continual support for successful universal teaching strategies and appropriate adaptations that are universally designed for ELLs and at the same time benefit all students. ELL teachers also organize professional development for educators to address the core competencies, Ministry of Education curricula, ELL standards, cultural proficiency, and best practices in teaching language proficiency such as UDL.

In 2019–2020, SD73 English Language Learners (ELL) and Thompson Rivers University (TRU) international students continued their connections that began in the spring of 2018 with two Mind The Gap projects. Throughout this last year, the Mind the Gap projects had been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now that TRU has resumed classes on campus, the ELL Resource Teachers will work with TRU staff to investigate the possibility of restarting these Mind The Gap projects for the 2021–22 school year.

The purpose of the Mind the Gap projects is twofold. English Language Learners learn how to face the challenges of living in two cultures and how to accommodate those challenges while sharing the richness of living in those cultures. The end goal is to embrace Canadian culture while preserving and celebrating their own cultures. The second purpose is to allow English Language Learners to continue to make connections with TRU so that they can see for themselves that they have equal opportunity to find success as they continue their post secondary studies in any field at TRU.

Anti-Racism Working Group

In 2020, the District created Administrative Procedure 170: Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights. This comprehensive administrative procedure covered expectations around conduct, student and staff training, assessment and placement, responding to incidents and home, school and community relations. As stated in Administrative Procedure 170, *The District acknowledges the diversity of the Kamloops-Thompson communities and shall not tolerate racism, homophobia, transphobia or any other form of discrimination within the District that is contrary to the BC Human Rights Code. Further, The District supports educational programs that promote awareness, understanding, and acceptance of the diversity that exists within our society—differences that are visible (such as race, ethnicity, sex, age, physical ability) and differences that are less visible (such as culture, ancestry, language, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic background, mental ability).*

A working group consisting of the Library Learning Commons Coordinator, principals, vice principals, district principals, former students, the Kamloops Immigrant Society and the Director of Elementary Education was formed. Training was provided to all school leaders and staff through a common slidedeck that covered how to respond to discriminatory behaviour. A school lead session included training, education regarding curriculum, resources and professional development. Former SD73 graduates spoke of their lived experience in SD73 regarding racism and offered strategies to implement anti-racism education. A student diversity group met to highlight positive and negative experiences and practices within the District, as well as to offer strategies to improve. Students were invited to join the Motion in Colour group started by two former students and the Kamloops Immigrant Society. This group helped facilitate student sessions where reports of racism occurred.

In 2021–2022, The District’s working group will continue to create resources and opportunities to make schools more inclusive spaces that promote anti-racism. A student Antiracism team will be developed and work closely with the working group to perform a system-wide audit to gauge students’ lived experience with racism in schools. These groups will create an action plan to address systemic racism in SD73, and improve anti-racism education in curriculum. As per the DEWRS results, sixty percent (60%) of intermediate students (grades 4–7) agreed or strongly agreed that they had choices to learn about their own language and culture. Amongst secondary students (grades 8–12), thirty-three percent (33%) agreed or strongly agreed that they learn in a way that makes them feel connected to their culture. This data provides evidence of the need to expand learning opportunities about the diversity of our students’ cultures for all of our learners.



Supported Transitions

Effective transition planning is important and can impact learners' experiences of connectedness and belonging. Comprehensive transition planning that reflect a student's strengths provides the foundation for successful transitional experiences. By developing individualized learner transition needs, equity and resiliency can be fostered in all learners and in their educational programming.

Early Years

Early years kindergarten planning for students with diverse learning abilities takes place each spring. The purpose of this planning is to effectively transition children into Kindergarten by collaboratively sharing information between families, community agencies, and District employees.

During 2020–2021, the following kindergarten planning meetings occurred to support incoming learners:

	Males	Females	Children with Aboriginal Ancestry	Children in Care	Children with Special Education Designations	Rural Children	Urban Children
Number of Incoming Learners	53	20	9	1	32	14	89

To prepare for Kindergarten, the parents of children entering Kindergarten are invited to attend District engagement sessions. In addition, a Kindergarten transition night is planned with community agencies for the parents of children with diverse learning needs.

Once students enrol in school, Inclusive Education Services (IES) staff members provide direct service and consultation, together with school-based teams, on an as-needed basis to meet individual student's needs.

Middle and Secondary Transitions

Each spring, middle and secondary school-based teams meet with elementary school-based teams at their feeder schools to bridge individual student programming. Middle and secondary school transitioning includes school tours and individual tours by Aboriginal family counsellors or other supportive staff to introduce students to key staff members at incoming schools.

The District's transition planning for youth with diverse learning abilities provides the framework necessary for smooth transitions to middle and secondary school. Learning assistance resource teachers (LARTs) develop a plan for these transitions, which includes writing a transition goal in the student's learning plan. This transition planning is a collaborative effort that involves school psychologists ensuring that assessments are updated where needed and families are connected to additional agencies and to a social worker specialist in child and youth with special needs.

To foster successful transitions to middle and secondary schools for English language learning (ELL) students, ELL resource teachers facilitate sessions for ELL secondary students to gather with ELL students enrolled in feeder schools.

Secondary School to Post-Secondary

As students turn sixteen (16) years of age, transition planning continues and extends to making referrals to Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) and Community Living BC (CLBC). The District hosts an annual transition fair to provide families with an opportunity to identify further supports and services available. Teachers have their students meet School Completion (Evergreen) Certificate Program requirements through completing a transition guide at least once over the three-year period from grades 10 to 12. During 2020–2021, the District worked with CLBC to connect families to the Welcome to CLBC virtual workshop sessions, which help youth and their families prepare for adulthood.

Due to COVID-19, senior secondary students did not have the opportunity to visit and shadow programs offered in the Education and Skills Training program (ESTR) at Thompson Rivers University (TRU). The ESTR programs are designed for students with disabilities or learning challenges who are as yet without the academic qualifications for regular university programs. ESTR is individualized to meet student needs and includes opportunities for work experience in the community. ESTR programs include kitchen assistant, career exploration, and retail training components. Now that TRU is once again having students on campus, Inclusive Education Services staff will work with TRU to provide this opportunity for students for the 2021–2022 school year.

Trades and Transitions

The Trades and Transitions program is managed by the SD73 Career Development Department and offers students access to dual-credit trades and occupational training, and events that expose students to post-secondary education and career opportunities. The Career Development Department supports equity, diversity, and inclusion in the following ways:

- Annual review of program enrollment to identify under-represented populations.
- School-based Trades and Transitions (TNT) Coordinators work with Learning Resource teachers to establish an IEP framework goal outlining access to accessibility services at TRU.
- District Coordinators provide one-on-one support for Youth Train in Trades students with IEPs at TRU by providing adaptive services during formal testing.
- District Career Development staff provide support for Youth Train in Trades students living on their own and struggling to meet basic needs. Fresh and dry food baskets are organized and delivered to each student. Students without access to technology are loaned chrome books.
- Career Development talks for Aboriginal groups in secondary schools with Aboriginal Education Workers.
- Promotion of Aboriginal resources for Career Education teachers such as The Career Journeys First Nations Career Role Model Resource Guides

Mental Health and Well-Being

Mental Health and Well-Being

The District's Mental Health Literacy programming and services support and promote mental health and well-being for students. Planning in this area helps identify students who are at risk of developing mental health challenges and provides access to specialized support for students who require more intensive intervention.

The District's Mental Health Literacy programming and services focus on:

- Fostering social-emotional learning
- Enhancing mental health literacy
- Supporting trauma-informed practice

Fostering social-emotional learning is a key competency for success at school and in life. Social and emotional learning is a set of specific skills that help students set goals, manage their behaviour, build relationships and process or remember information. These skills impact a person's mental well-being and are connected to educational success and employment. School leaders have identified the need for more teacher professional development in the area of social-emotional learning.

Mental health literacy is the knowledge and understanding of how to develop and maintain mental well-being, identify risk factors and signs of mental health challenges, and access help when needed. An important aspect to mental health literacy education is the elimination of the stigma of mental health illness and the empowering of student self-efficacy in managing mental health. In 2020–2021, a significant component of mental health education continued to be a focus on educating students on vaping, and the relationship of substance use with mental health.

Trauma-informed practice promotes the provision of inclusive and compassionate learning environments, understanding coping strategies, supporting independence and helping to minimize additional stress or trauma by addressing individual student needs. The significance of addressing trauma through research-based pedagogies is critical for ensuring that our most vulnerable students are successful in school.

Schools play an important role in supporting the development and maintenance of well-being for children and youth. Mental Health Literacy is focused on addressing student mental health by helping educators create emotionally healthy learning environments, promoting early identification of students who may be struggling with mental health issues, reducing the stigma of mental health and providing support for access to specialized supports.

Fostering Social-Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. Broadly, SEL encompasses five interrelated competencies underlying virtually all aspects of human functioning, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, healthy relationships, and responsible decision making. As of such, SEL is considered a “mastery skill” and is inextricably linked to school success. In recognition of recent research in developmental and cognitive neuroscience indicating the correlation between emotion, social functioning, learning, and well-being, SD73 is committed to translating the science for policy and practice into integrated, meaningful SEL initiatives within school communities.

Over the 2021/2022 school year, Inclusive Education Services (IES) will implement a collaborative, proactive, and data-driven approach to advancing evidence-based, trauma-informed SEL practices into classrooms. In 6-week phases, SEL facilitators will work alongside students, staff, and administrators of participating schools to develop a sense of collective efficacy in implementing curated, purposeful SEL programming. Weekly, facilitators will dedicate two full days to on-site teaching, modelling, and measuring progress across multiple classrooms. In partnership with SD73, Child and Youth Mental Health clinicians will offer ongoing staff sessions focusing on trauma-informed pedagogy. This component is integral to ensuring provision of inclusive and compassionate learning environments, contextualizing SEL as in alignment with a universal design for learning (UDL) framework, and characterizing SEL as fundamentally about cultivating connection. By June 2022, IES aims to have fulfilled intended outcomes at 16 schools by completing three, team-led phases of the outlined district SEL-enhancement initiative.

Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE)

The Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE) program was developed by the Ministry of Children and Family Development in collaboration with Anxiety Canada. EASE is a collection of evidence-informed anxiety prevention and resilience-building resources for use with students in Kindergarten to grade 12. Included in these resources is the French language AISE K–7 program. The EASE Grade 8 to 12 program was just released in October 2021. These standalone resources align with BC’s social-emotional learning curriculum and are designed to benefit all students by fitting into existing classroom routines and practices.

The EASE program is offered through three online learning opportunities that are free to access and self-paced so staff have flexibility for when they choose to engage in this learning. The EASE program is consistently advertised and encouraged on all professional development days. Learning resources, which include books and visual kits, to support the EASE program have been created for teachers and are accessible through the Henry Grube Education Centre Learning Commons. There are two EASE trainers/liaison that continue to support the implementation of EASE in classrooms across the district. To date, 126 district staff have completed the EASE training program.

Worry Bugs/Worry Dragons

Worry Bugs is a locally developed four week program for children in kindergarten or grade one and their caregivers. The group is for children who are showing signs of anxiety without significant behaviour concerns.

Taming Worry Dragons is a six week program for children ages 8 to 11 created through BC Children's Hospital to address anxiety issues through education and by learning various anxiety reduction "tools". This group is for children who are facing anxiety challenges without significant behaviour concerns.

Both of these programs were adapted to be provided to families virtually during the 2020–2021 school year. District Mental Health Clinicians created work bundles, made up of books, handouts, and hands-on materials. These bundles were delivered to participants' homes so that parents could engage their children in the lessons that were provided virtually. In total, 20 families participated in the virtual program.

Kids in the Know (KITK)

Kids in the Know (KITK) is a personal safety program for K–8 students. It is a research- and evidence-based program that deals with sexual exploitation and personal safety. KITK aligns with the Physical and Health Education (PHE) curriculum and with core competencies of personal and social responsibility, as well as communication skills. KITK's purpose is to help educators teach children and youth effective personal safety strategies in an engaging, age-appropriate and interactive way that builds resiliency skills and reduces students' likelihood of victimization in both the online and offline worlds.

MindUP

MindUP is a robustly researched social-emotional program that uses the practice of mindful attention to positively change the structure and development of the parts of the brain needed for social awareness and learning. The program features lessons to improve students' behaviour and learning. The lessons are teacher friendly and require minimal training. MindUP provides students with emotional and cognitive tools to help them manage emotions and behaviours, reduce stress, sharpen concentration and increase empathy and optimism.

In 2020–2021, 60 teachers and a further 35 CEAs were supported with MindUp training and materials.

Y Mind Teen and Youth Groups

The district is partnering with the YMCA to deliver Yminds—a free, early-intervention psycho-education support group for young people experiencing symptoms of stress, worry and mild-moderate anxiety. The group sizes are 8–12 participants and are co-facilitated by 2 mental health practitioners. There is an intake process conducted by the co-facilitators to identify participants who experience mild-moderate symptoms of anxiety and who would benefit from the group. The group sessions are delivered once per week for 7 weeks and provide a safe, supportive environment where young people can meet others who have had similar experiences, and include strategies taken from mindfulness practice and Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT). Students are provided with take-home resources to help cope with stress and anxiety between weekly group sessions. The sessions are fun and interactive, and students leave with a full tool-box of self-regulation skills. Yminds was piloted in two high schools last year with excellent results, and this year two more high schools will be providing this support group for students. The YMCA organization offers ongoing support and financial resources to schools involved in delivering the program.

Mental Health Literacy

Mental health literacy is defined as: understanding how to obtain and maintain good mental health; understanding mental disorders and related treatment; decreasing stigma about mental illness; and enhancing help-seeking efficacy. SD73 has implemented two MHL curricula for grades 6 to 10 students that emphasize the science of mental health, understanding mental illness/disorders that appear in children/youth, and the development of healthy lifestyles.

In the classroom setting, we are looking to bridge the knowledge gap in mental health literacy with continuity of learning from grades 5 to 9 utilizing a combination of age-appropriate content where one year scaffolds the next with the intention of students feeling more empowered to address mental health needs. The combination of these age-appropriate mental wellness resources equip teachers with a robust curriculum focusing on basic brain functions determining both mental health and illness.

In the past 2 school years, we have added additional content at all grade levels addressing the stress response due to increased pandemic challenges creating more stressors in all our lives. Reframing stress by combining social emotional skills such as recognizing and managing emotions and developing positive relationships enhances students' ability to cope with the pressures and challenges of life. By developing mental health literacy competencies in students, we hope to foster a sense of positive self-identity as an active strategy to identify, apply, and reflect on the interconnections within ourselves and others to practice personal health building skills.

During the 2020–2021 school year, 29 of 30 schools had grade 6 or 7 teachers participate in Mental Health Literacy training. Of the 79 teachers available, 68 engaged in learning how to provide a mental health curriculum to students. Near the end of the school year, surveys were conducted with 136 students to measure the impact of the Mental Health Literacy curriculum at the grade 7 level and to provide feedback for ways to improve this learning. A further 258 students in grades 5 and 6 were surveyed to plan for curriculum design and implementation for teachers of grade 5 students beginning in the Fall of 2021.

At the secondary level, teachers new to the Physical and Health Education (PHE) course were trained in the Teen Mental Health (TMH) curriculum. All PHE teachers received updated curriculum changes that were made to the Teen Mental Health curriculum. The TMH curriculum was expanded to the grade eight students in 2020–2021 through pilot lessons delivered in 6 secondary schools. To assess the effectiveness of the Teen Mental Health curriculum from the students' perspective, post instruction surveys were completed by 218 grade 9 students, and a further 21 grade 9 students were interviewed. The information from these surveys and interviews will be used to improve the curriculum provided to students during the 2021–2022 school year.

Vaping Education

Vaping has become an epidemic among teens and young adults, with the majority of new users having never smoked cigarettes. Vaping devices can contain very high quantities of nicotine as the active ingredient, making them highly addictive. Nicotine can be particularly harmful to developing brains and these devices are contributing to a new generation becoming addicted to nicotine. Vaping devices can also deliver THC and other active ingredients that can be especially harmful to youth users.

During the 2020–2021 school year, student learning on vaping expanded to students in grades 5 to 7. A pre-learning scan of 1241 students was completed to customize presentations and learning for students based on students' wonders, interests, and knowledge level. Over 2500 students in grades 5 to 7 in 101 classrooms engaged in vaping education virtually.

Trauma-Informed Practice

In 2019–2020, the District worked closely with Dr. Linda O’Neill and Monique Gray Smith to provide numerous sessions on trauma-informed practice and intervention strategies for staff and caregivers. In 2020–2021, some schools worked closely with Child and Youth Mental health clinicians to provide education to their staff during staff meetings and professional development days. At a school district level, school leaders began the year with a session on psychological first aid to prepare for students returning to in-class schooling within the context of a pandemic. School and family consultants worked closely with many staff members to foster trauma-informed lenses in their practices.

The District was fortunate to have keynote speakers for the February professional development day that focused on the impact of trauma, and how educators can be positive partners in the journey of reconciliation. Kevin Lamoureux and Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond shared knowledge regarding trauma and strategies to break down systemic racism and appropriately support students who have experienced trauma. Three months after this session, the findings of unmarked graves at the former Kamloops Indian Residential were announced. Kevin Cameron from the National Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response provided school leaders with tools to support staff, students and families. Many staff were in roles that would involve supporting youth in dealing with the traumatic effect of the findings while, at the same time, being personally impacted by the findings. Regular check-ins with Aboriginal education workers and Aboriginal family counsellors occurred.

In 2021–2022, training will continue for all staff and families. Monique Gray Smith’s online course, “The Ripple Effect of Resilience: An Indigenous Perspective” is being made available to staff. Kevin Lamoureux will be the keynote speaker for the February professional development day and be providing strategies for educators to practically use a trauma informed lens in their classrooms and practices. The Aboriginal education school lead sessions will feature author, Alex Shevrin Venet, facilitating sessions based on her book, “Equity Centered Trauma-Informed Education.” The District has received funding from the Ministry of Education to provide counselling support to the Aboriginal family counsellor staff. Lastly, the District is trying to secure Dr. Jody Carrington to provide trauma informed sessions to staff and caregivers.

Student Safety

Student Safety

The safety of students is of paramount concern to District employees. Results from the Fall 2019 and 2020 District Engagement, Well-Being and Resiliency Survey (DEWRS) on students feeling safe attending school indicate, in general, students at the elementary level feel more safe in school than our secondary students. Further, the survey results at the secondary level for all students 8 to 12 are lower than Canadian norms for those grades, with the exception of the grade 8 students in the 2020 survey, who were slightly above Canadian norms.

Elementary Students — Grades 4 to 7

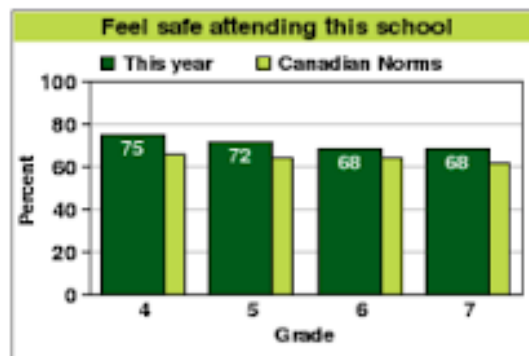
At the elementary level, the percentage of students who feel safe attending school has remained relatively stable for the last two years of data. Student survey results show district students in grades 4 to 7 feel safe at school at a higher level than the Canadian average for each of those grades. The downward trend of feeling safe at school as students enroll into higher grades continues to be consistent in the data.

Fall 2019

Feel safe attending this school

Students who feel safe at school as well as going to and from school

- 71% of students felt safe attending the district; the Canadian norm for these grades is 64%.
- 71% of the girls and 72% of the boys felt safe attending the district. The Canadian norm for girls is 65% and for boys is 63%.

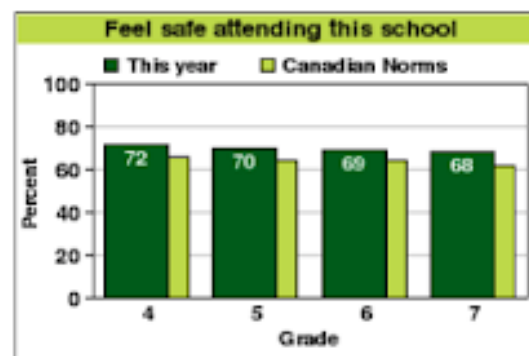


Fall 2020

Feel safe attending this school

Students who feel safe at school as well as going to and from school

- 70% of students felt safe attending the district; the Canadian norm for these grades is 64%.
- 74% of the girls and 69% of the boys felt safe attending the district. The Canadian norm for girls is 65% and for boys is 63%.



Secondary Students — Grades 8 to 12

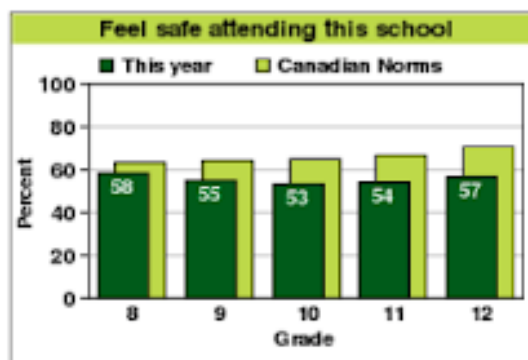
The 2020 survey results showed encouraging increases in secondary students feeling safe attending school across all grades 8 to 12. Survey data from both years show that grade 10 is grade in District schools in which students feel the least safe attending school, while students in grade 8 report feeling the most safe. There is an ongoing gap in safety among girls and boys at the high school level, with girls reportedly feeling 5 to 6 percent less safe attending school than boys. This data continues to provide the information school teams and district leaders need to review and improve safety practices at both the school and district level.

Fall 2019

Feel safe attending this school

Students who feel safe at school as well as going to and from school

- 55% of students felt safe attending the district; the Canadian norm for these grades is 66%.
- 54% of the girls and 59% of the boys felt safe attending the district. The Canadian norm for girls is 64% and for boys is 67%.

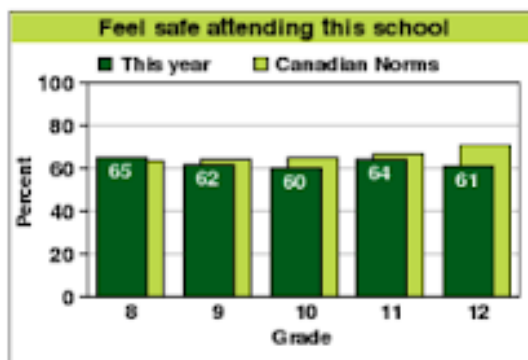


Fall 2020

Feel safe attending this school

Students who feel safe at school as well as going to and from school

- 62% of students felt safe attending the district; the Canadian norm for these grades is 64%.
- 60% of the girls and 66% of the boys felt safe attending the district. The Canadian norm for girls is 64% and for boys is 67%.



One area where schools promote safety and consistent behavioural expectations is through Positive Behaviour Intervention and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a multi-tiered framework for learning to support clear and consistent expectations across the school community. SD73 is in its fourth year of developing sustainable PBIS, with fidelity within elementary schools. Inclusion support teachers continue to work closely with elementary schools to strengthen PBIS structures and procedures. Expanding the scope of PBIS in schools without this support structure will be a focus for the inclusion support teachers this year.

The District supports comprehensive training for employees to support the principles of a safe and caring school environment. This training is overseen by the Assistant Superintendent of Inclusive Education, who acts as the District's safe school coordinator.

The District has a critical role in educating youth, in partnership with parents, about healthy boundaries and relationships. SD73 strives to be a strong voice for positive change in its students' lives by addressing issues, such as sexual misconduct and violence, that continue to plague communities and disproportionately impact the lives of girls and Aboriginal youth. The focus on safety and healthy relationships is central to providing programs and services to students.

The District strives to provide optimal environments for learning by fostering school connectedness and by preventing and intervening in instances of bullying and other worrisome behaviours.

To develop and maintain safe and caring school environments, the District focuses on:

- ❑ Developing positive school cultures and encouraging positive social behaviours
- ❑ Using school-wide efforts to build a school community, fostering respect, inclusion, fairness, and equity
- ❑ Promoting trauma-sensitive behaviour in schools
- ❑ Outlining clear expectations of conduct
- ❑ Teaching students how to value diversity, defend human rights and solve problems in peaceful ways
- ❑ Resolving critical safety concerns and responding to violence threat risk assessment (VTRA) situations.

A robust response to threatening or worrisome behaviours also supports the perception of safety by learners. The violence threat risk assessment (VTRA) and worrisome behaviour procedures are used to assist in creating and maintaining an environment where students, staff members, parents and others feel safe when there is a threat of violence. The VTRA protocol may be used in situations where there is a threat of violence by or toward members of the school community. If the school-based VTRA team identifies indicators that a student may be on a pathway toward violence, the team can intervene in order to decrease the risk of violence, prevent injury and assist the student in accessing needed support.



Physical Wellness and After School Programming

The District prioritizes physical wellness for students as a way of engaging learners and building school connectedness through instructional and after-school physical literacy. Several programs and services reinforce this focus.

The District has been using the BOKS program for many years. BOKS is a moderate to vigorous physical activity curriculum designed to establish healthy habits and routines that might protect students from chronic diseases, including obesity, heart disease and mental illness. This program is run by staff or volunteers before, during or after school. BOKS aligns with the K–7 PHE curricular competencies: physical literacy, healthy and active living, social and community health and mental well-being.

BOKS includes daily lessons either in a gym or outside and quick breaks in classrooms or hallways. Physically, the goals are for students to develop endurance, strength and flexibility. Emotionally, the play-based games and vigorous activity are designed to help students deal with stress, improve attention span, fit in with peers and be more resilient.

To promote physical activity during the pandemic impacted 2020–2021 school year, the District Healthy Schools Coordinator collaborated with students and teachers in five schools to create online physical literacy mentors. The online physical literacy mentorship worked with 36 classes across the district to promote various forms of moderate to vigorous opportunities including: making pre-recorded videos, leading physical activities via Zoom, and creating socially distanced activity stations outside.

After-School Sports and Arts Initiative (ASSAI)

The After-School Sports and Arts Initiative (ASSAI)'s objective is to enhance children's lifelong well-being through creative arts, sport, and physical activity. SD73's after-school program strives to (a) connect students to their passions and interests; (b) connect students to a safe and caring adult; (c) provide inclusive programming by reducing barriers to participation; and, (d) build a community of trust and support.

During 2020–2021, fifty four (54) 8-week ASSAI programs were offered at the elementary level while twenty four (24) 10-week programs were offered at the middle and secondary levels. In total, we had twelve (12) participating schools at the elementary level and seven (7) at the middle and secondary levels with fifteen (15) urban and four (4) rural sites. Each program runs for two hours in length and we offer a fall, winter, and spring program cycle. This year we had 1,494 unique participants for 1,274 hours of program instruction. Of these unique participants, 918 were at the elementary level and 576 at the middle and secondary levels.

Total Students	Non-Aboriginal Students	Students with Aboriginal Ancestry	Students in Care	Students with Designations	Rural Students	Urban Students
1494	1080	414	18	296	127	1367

Two years ago, SD73 was selected as one of three districts in the province to pilot a three year ASSAI project at the middle and secondary levels. The pilot program is intended to empower female high school students to strive for their full and equal position in sport, the arts and society. We were recently informed by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport that this pilot project was the only provincial initiative to see an increase in girls' participation in sport and physical activity since the start of the pandemic.

Program highlights from 2020–2021 school year:

- 96% of participants reported an increase in school connectedness/sense of belonging as a result of their participation in the ASSAI.
- 71% of parents/caregivers reported an increase in their child's sense of belonging / school connectedness as a result of their participation in the ASSAI.
- 99.4% of participants indicated feeling safe at all times during the ASSAI.
- 87.2% of participants indicated that if they weren't at the ASSAI, they would be at home alone, playing video games, or on a technological device.
- Brock Middle School had 197 unique participants for the art program.



Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)

Honouring the human rights of students and their families and reducing homophobia, transphobia and other barriers serves to support a safe and supportive environment. Services and programs to support learners in inclusive education commits to the provision of education and awareness opportunities for students that focus on valuing diversity and respecting differences, as well as on such topics as human rights and responses to discrimination.

In 2020–2021, school lead teachers participated in training that included reviewing Administrative Procedure 174: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, the resources available on MySD73 and meeting community partners. The District GSA composed of students, CUPE members, KTTA staff, principals, and district staff met four times throughout the year to discuss actions that would make SD73 more inclusive for students identifying as LGBTQ2S+. Elementary and secondary students participated in student champion groups to foster a sense of community, discuss strategies to make schools more inclusive and build social connections.

To enhance services in the area of SOGI during 2021–2022, the District GSA and SOGI champions will be focusing on holding a SOGI Summit for students, staff and caregivers. Secondary GSA students will be working with elementary school lead teachers to help elementary students start diversity clubs and transition to their next school. A District gender sexuality alliance group composed of students, support staff, teachers, school leaders and managers will be formed to plan for District events and to create collaborative opportunities between school sites and various groups.

Inclusive Sexual Health Education

The District continues to support the physical and health education curricular competencies of social and community health and mental well-being through the delivery of inclusive sexual health education. Inclusive sexual health provides youth with comprehensive and accurate sexual health information that is appropriate for their age, cognitive development and cultural context. Professional development focuses on developing teachers' confidence, knowledge-base and competence so that they can deliver inclusive and shame-free lessons.

During the 2020–2021 school year, 32 secondary PHE teachers and 46 grade 6 and 7 teachers participated in inclusive sexual health professional learning. The District continues to focus on supporting teachers in grades 4 to 9 to build confidence in teacher delivery of this curriculum.

These inclusive sexual health sessions are focused on modelling age-appropriate sexual health facilitation where gendering bodies is taken out of the presentation, leaving the focus on the science of a body, healthy relationships that centre on the need for consent, and sexual identity. The key underpinning concept of these sessions is that everyone should be able to see themselves in a healthy relationship.



Conclusion

All learners in the District are unique and have the right to equitable access to, and equitable participation in, quality education. The District and its schools value diversity and are expected to support the diverse social, and cultural needs of the individuals within the communities in which we learn, lead and work. District and school leaders, along with the Inclusive Services team, promote the understanding of others and respect for all by creating safe and welcoming learning environments that are free from discrimination, harassment and violence, so that educational excellence and equity are attainable.

