



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73
(Kamloops-Thompson)

2024-2025 Indigenous Education Annual Report

School District No. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson)

May 2026

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.

We are grateful to be guests on the territory of seven Secwépemc First Nations: Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, Sexqeltqin (Adams Lake Indian Band), Skwlāx te Secwepemcúl' ucw, Neskonlith, Simpcw, Pellt'iq't (Whispering Pines Clinton Band), and Skítsesten (Skeetchestn Band).



Our Mission: Supporting learning opportunities and environments which inspire students to thrive.

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

Our Values: Connections / Relationships, Equity, Well-being, Sustainability

SUMMARY

Advancing Indigenous Student Success Through Strong Partnerships and Systems Alignment

The 2024–2025 school year was marked by steady progress in strengthening supports for Indigenous learners across School District No. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson) [SD73]. Serving approximately 3,150 self-identified Indigenous students in 49 schools, the Indigenous Education Department focused on improving graduation pathways, strengthening early intervention supports, expanding student leadership opportunities, and deepening culturally grounded learning experiences.

A key priority was ensuring Indigenous students received timely, targeted academic and relational support. Support from Indigenous Education Workers (IEWs), expanded Grad Success Teacher capacity, attendance monitoring, and literacy interventions contributed to more coordinated support systems at the school level. District and school-based teams provided positive opportunities and proactive responses to attendance, credit accumulation, and student engagement concerns.

The Indigenous Education Department also prioritized student belonging. Indigenous student leadership initiatives grounded in the Circle of Courage framework provided space for identity development, peer connection, and voice. Cultural programming and strengthened partnerships with local First Nation Bands and community organizations continued to reinforce that Indigenous identity is a strength within our schools.

While student-focused work remained central, the year also required careful attention to governance

alignment following the introduction of Bill 40 and related changes to School of Choice provisions. The Indigenous Education Council (IEC) Terms of Reference were reviewed and finalized in February 2025 to ensure compliance with updated legislation and to clarify representation and decision-making structures. This work strengthened transparency and stability within the district's Indigenous governance framework ensuring that decision-making structures remain clear and student-centered.

Engagement with local First Nation Bands and with Métis Nation BC helped the district better understand how legislative changes affected representation and the responsibility to support all Indigenous learners, including First Nations, Métis, and off-reserve students.

In parallel, the department continued advancing a Joint Local Education Agreement (LEA) with six local Secwépemc Bands, reinforcing shared accountability for student success under the BC Tripartite Education Agreement.

Responsible stewardship of Indigenous Education Targeted Funding (IETF) remained a focus. Strategic planning ensured that carry-over surplus funds were directed toward high-impact initiatives, including expanded Grad Success support, literacy programs, and exploration of community-based language partnerships.

Overall, the 2024-2025 school year strengthened both the student support systems and the governance structures that sustain them. The Indigenous Education Department continues to move toward deeper systemic integration, ensuring Indigenous student success is embedded as a core district priority.



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

2024-2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

Key Programs

Department Mandate

The Indigenous Education Department supports the success, belonging, and achievement of all Indigenous students through equitable access, culturally grounded programming, strong partnerships with local First Nation Bands and community organizations, and accountable stewardship of Indigenous Education Targeted Funding.

Highlights and Achievements



Expanded Grad Success Reach Strengthened secondary support by extending Grad Success outreach into Grades 10 and 11 to prevent credit gaps and improve graduation pathways.

Indigenous Student Leadership & Regional Summit

150+ Indigenous students from several school districts attended the third annual OMRIE Indigenous Student Summit, hosted by the Indigenous Student Leadership Council, focused on mental health, anti-racism, and belonging.



Indigenous Community Outreach Expansion

Increased community-based outreach support to strengthen attendance, family engagement, and coordinated wraparound services.

1000+ Students and staff gathered at local powwow grounds for experiential cultural learning and community connection at the fifth annual District Powwow.



Grad Success Program (Early Secondary Focus)

Proactive academic and relational support for Indigenous students in Grades 10-12, with earlier intervention to improve attendance and credit accumulation.

Indigenous Community Outreach Worker Program

Expanded the Indigenous Community Outreach Worker program to strengthen early identification of attendance concerns, improve family engagement, and reduce barriers impacting student success.

District Indigenous Student Leadership Council

Student-led forum amplifying Indigenous youth voice, culminating in a regional summit addressing mental health, anti-racism, and bullying.

Grade 5 Educational Powwow Experience

District-wide experiential learning opportunity promoting cultural understanding, identity, and belonging for over 1,000 participants.

Moving Forward

In 2025-2026, the department continues strengthening early intervention supports, expanding community-connected outreach, deepening student leadership structures, and embedding culturally grounded practices across schools. Focus will remain on measurable improvements in attendance, credit completion, graduation rates, and student belonging and ensuring Indigenous student success remains central to district planning and decision-making.



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73
(Kamloops-Thompson)

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

2024-2025 PRIORITIES, KEY INSIGHTS, AND STRATEGIC RESPONSE



3,150
Indigenous Students
21% of district population



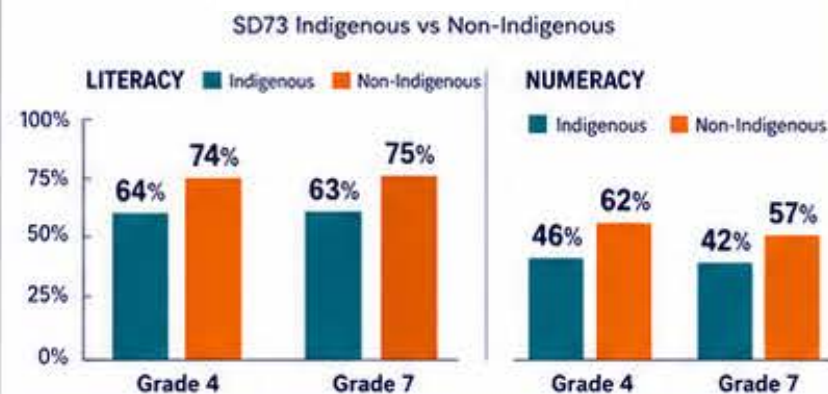
49
Schools
supported across SD73



7
Community Partnerships
Ongoing partnerships with 7 Secwépemc First Nations and Indigenous organizations

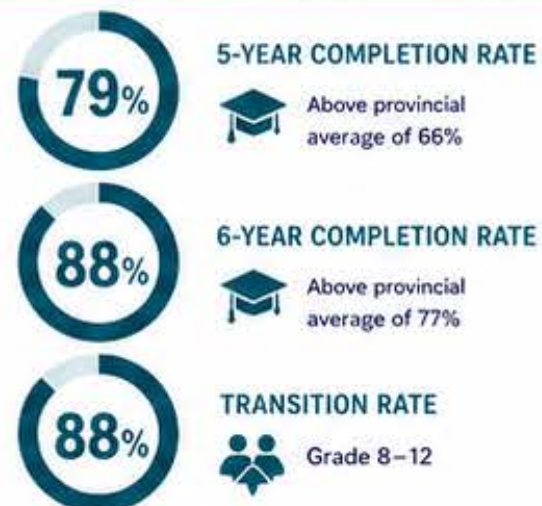
STUDENT OUTCOMES AT A GLANCE

1. LITERACY & NUMERACY PERFORMANCE



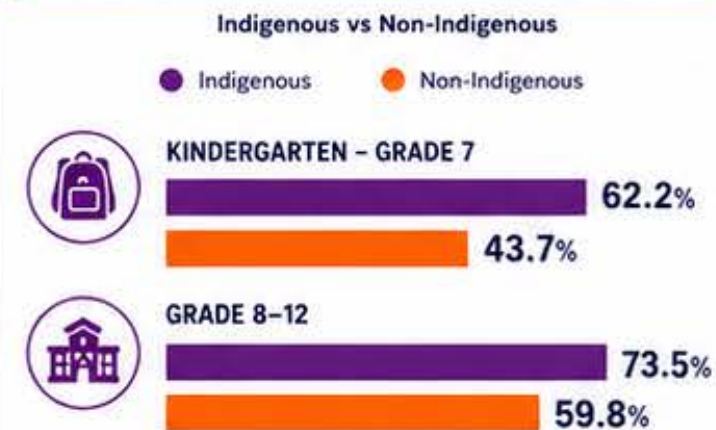
- KEY TAKEAWAYS**
- Indigenous students perform above provincial Indigenous averages in literacy.
 - Gaps persist in numeracy, exceeding 20% by Grade 7.

2. COMPLETION & TRANSITIONS



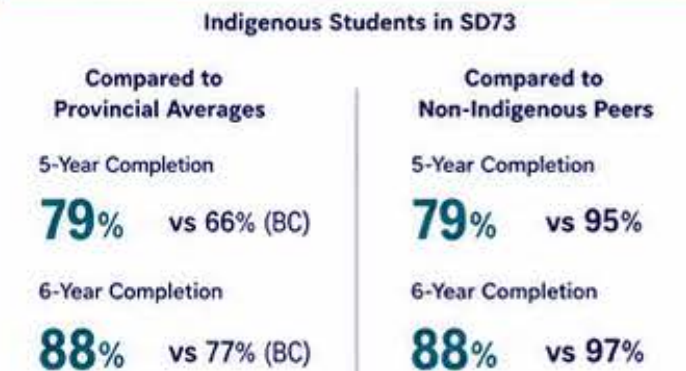
★ Indigenous students in SD73 graduate at rates significantly above provincial averages.

3. ATTENDANCE (CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM)



- Attendance is improving year-over-year across all groups.
- Attendance remains one of the strongest predictors of graduation and long-term success.

4. CAREER DEVELOPMENT (COMPLETION RATES)



- Indigenous students in SD73 are graduating at rates significantly above provincial averages.
- A persistent gap remains within the district.
- Early intervention is critical to maintaining academic pathway integrity.

OUR IMPACT FRAMEWORK: FIVE PILLARS OF INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS



1. INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Focus: Literacy, numeracy, transitions, and academic achievement.
Evidence: Improved attendance trends and increased connection through outreach and student leadership.

Key Insights

- Indigenous students in SD73 perform above provincial Indigenous averages in literacy, indicating positive impact of instructional and intervention strategies.
- Gaps persist within the district, particularly in numeracy, where differences exceed 20% by Grade 7.
- Transition rates remain strong, demonstrating effective continuity of support across grade levels.

Strategic Response

- Early literacy and emerging numeracy intervention (Tier 2/3 supports).
- District Resource Teacher support (Elementary & Secondary).
- Proactive identification of learning gaps using formative assessment.
- Decolonizing literacy and numeracy practices through professional learning.
- On-the-Land learning and culturally connected instruction to strengthen engagement.



2. HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Focus: Attendance, belonging, engagement, and well-being.
Evidence: Improved attendance trends and increased connection through outreach and student leadership.

Key Insights

- Attendance is improving year-over-year across all groups.
- Indigenous students continue to experience higher rates of chronic absenteeism.
- Attendance is a key driver of graduation and long-term success.

Strategic Response

- Indigenous Community Outreach Workers help bridge home and school by supporting transportation, family engagement, and attendance planning.
- Indigenous Youth & Family Consultants and Family Counsellors support mental health, well-being, and family connection.
- Indigenous Education Workers provide daily connection, advocacy, and cultural support within schools.
- Student Voice and Leadership Opportunities strengthen belonging through identity and engagement.

OUR IMPACT FRAMEWORK: FIVE PILLARS OF INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS



3. CULTURAL AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Focus: Identity, belonging, cultural safety, and student voice.

Evidence: Student Summit, Powwow participation, and expanded cultural programming.

Key Insights

- Cultural identity and belonging drive success.
- Student voice is a powerful driver of system improvement.
- Schools that embed cultural learning and relational approaches demonstrate stronger student connection and participation.
- Ongoing access to student leadership, cultural programming, and community-connected learning opportunities across the district.

Strategic Response

- **Indigenous Student Leadership and Voice:** District Indigenous Student Leadership Council, Regional Indigenous Student Summit, and student-led dialogue on mental health, anti-racism, and belonging.
- **Cultural Programming and Experiential Learning:** District Powwow and community-based cultural events, on-the-land learning opportunities, and integration of local First Nations knowledge, language, and perspectives.
- **Community Partnerships:** Ongoing collaboration with local Secwépemc Bands, engagement with Indigenous organizations and Knowledge Keepers, and strengthening relationships through Local Education Agreements.
- **Professional Learning and System Capacity:** Indigenous School Lead Sessions, cultural humility, anti-racism, and identity-focused learning modules, and support for staff in embedding Indigenous perspectives across curriculum and school environments.



4. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Focus: Graduation pathways, credit completion, and post-secondary readiness.

Evidence: Increased completion rates and earlier Grad Success interventions reduce credit gaps.

Key Insights

- Indigenous students in SD73 are graduating at rates above provincial averages.
- A persistent gap remains within the district when compared to non-Indigenous peers.
- When adjusted for Dogwood-only completion, results indicate a reliance on Adult Dogwood pathways.
- Early intervention is critical to maintaining academic pathway integrity and high expectations.

Strategic Response

- **Proactive Graduation Support (Grad Success Model):** expansion of Grad Success Teacher support into Grades 10 and 11, early identification of credit gaps, attendance concerns, and disengagement, and individualized planning with regular academic check-ins.

- **School-Based Team Alignment:** collaboration between administrators, teachers, IEWs, and District Resource Teachers, shared monitoring of student progress and coordinated intervention strategies, and increased responsiveness when students begin to disengage.
- **Relational and Cultural Supports:** Indigenous Education Workers providing daily connection, advocacy, and mentorship, integration of cultural identity and belonging into graduation planning, and strengthening student confidence, motivation, and sense of purpose.
- **Pathway Planning and Transitions:** supporting students in exploring post-secondary education, trades, and career pathways, increasing awareness of options and opportunities through student leadership and experiential learning, and strengthening transitions beyond graduation.



5. SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

Focus: Governance, system alignment, resource stewardship, and accountability.

Evidence: Joint LEA development, IEC governance alignment, and strategic use of Indigenous Education Targeted Funds.

Key Insights

- Indigenous students represent 21% of the district population, requiring system-wide responsibility and coordinated supports across all 49 SD73 schools.
- Indigenous student success requires coordinated effort across all departments and roles.
- Increased alignment between school-based teams and district supports has strengthened responsiveness to student needs.
- Strategic use of funding is essential to ensure sustainability and measurable impact.

Strategic Response

- **Governance and Partnership Development:**
 - **Indigenous Education Council (IEC):** review and refinement of Terms of Reference to align with updated legislation (Bill 40), clarification of roles, representation, and decision-making processes.
 - **Local Education Agreements (LEAs):** continued advancement of a Joint Local Education Agreement with six Secwépemc Bands to strengthen shared accountability for student success and align district practices and community priorities.
 - **Ongoing Engagement with Indigenous Partners:** collaboration with local First Nations and Métis Nation BC, and strengthening communication, consultation, and relationship-based decision-making.
- **Strategic Resource Stewardship:**
 - Strategic allocation of resources toward high-impact areas, including Grad Success supports, literacy and emerging numeracy intervention, community outreach, and attendance supports.
 - Ongoing monitoring of funding to ensure alignment with Ministry expectations, audit requirements, and District Strategic Plan priorities.
 - Recognition that effective use of funding requires clear role definitions, evidence of impact, and sustainable planning that balances immediate needs and long-term system capacity.



EVENT SPOTLIGHT

Amplifying Indigenous Student Voice: Regional Student Summit

In 2024–2025, the District Indigenous Student Leadership Council deepened its impact by hosting a regional Indigenous Student Summit focused on mental health, anti-racism, and belonging. The Summit brought together Indigenous student leaders from across the district and 12 neighboring districts, creating a space where youth voice was not only heard but centered.

Throughout the year, student representatives met regularly to identify priority issues affecting Indigenous learners. Students consistently raised concerns about mental health supports, experiences of racism and bullying, and the need for stronger identity affirmation in schools. The Summit was designed in response to these priorities.

The event featured student-led discussions, keynote speakers, and collaborative workshops grounded in cultural identity and resilience. Students shared lived experiences and co-developed recommendations for schools to improve safety, inclusion, and engagement. The Summit reinforced that Indigenous youth are not passive recipients of programming but they are leaders and co-creators of change.

Beyond the event itself, the Student Leadership Council has become an important advisory voice within the district. Feedback gathered through the Summit has informed ongoing work related to anti-racism resources, staff awareness, and school-based belonging initiatives.

By investing in structured student voice, the district is strengthening not only engagement, but confidence and agency among Indigenous youth. When students see their experiences reflected and respected, they are more likely to attend, participate, and succeed.

The 2024–2025 Student Summit demonstrated that Indigenous student voice is a powerful driver of system improvement and a critical component of long-term student success.

SUCCESS STORY

Strengthening Graduation Pathways Through Early Grad Success Support

Graduation remains one of the most significant milestones for student success. In 2024–2025, the Indigenous Education Department expanded its Grad Success model to reach students earlier in their secondary journey, particularly in Grades 10 and 11.

Historically, intensive graduation support often focused on students nearing completion. This year's shift recognized the importance of earlier intervention by identifying attendance concerns, credit gaps, and barriers before they compound.

The Grad Success Teacher worked closely with school-based teams to monitor attendance, track credit accumulation, and provide relational mentorship. Students received individualized planning, academic check-ins, and connection to cultural and wellness supports. The emphasis was not solely on credit recovery, but on sustained engagement.

Early indicators show that proactive outreach helped reduce the number of students entering Grade 12 significantly behind in credits. More importantly, students reported feeling supported and known within their school communities.

This expansion also reinforced collaboration between Indigenous Education staff and school administrators. By aligning efforts around attendance and credit tracking, schools were better positioned to respond quickly when students began disengaging.

The work reflects a broader shift from reactive intervention to preventative support. By focusing on earlier grades, the department is strengthening graduation pathways and reinforcing the message that every Indigenous student is capable of success.

The 2024–2025 expansion of Grad Success represents an important step toward improving long-term graduation rates and ensuring Indigenous learners have the support they need well before their final year.





STUDENT SUCCESS

Expanding Indigenous Community Outreach to Strengthen Attendance and Belonging

Attendance is one of the strongest predictors of academic success. In 2024–2025, the Indigenous Education Department expanded the Indigenous Community Outreach Worker (ICOW) program to better support students and families facing barriers to consistent school attendance.

Indigenous Community Outreach Workers provide culturally responsive, relationship-based support that bridges home and school. Their work includes connecting families with community resources, addressing transportation or attendance challenges, facilitating communication between schools and caregivers, and supporting students during transitions.

The expansion of this program allowed for earlier identification of attendance concerns and more coordinated responses. Rather than waiting for chronic absenteeism patterns to set, Outreach Workers collaborated with school teams to engage families proactively and identify underlying barriers.

The ICOW program recognizes that attendance challenges are often connected to broader factors such as housing instability, mental health, transportation, or family circumstances. By working relationally and respectfully with families, Outreach Workers help reduce stigma and build trust.

Schools reported improved communication with families and more consistent follow-through on attendance plans. The presence of Outreach Workers also strengthened wraparound supports, ensuring students were connected to both academic and wellness resources.

The expansion of Indigenous Community Outreach reflects the district's commitment to addressing barriers outside the classroom that directly impact learning inside it. By strengthening family partnerships and community connections, the department continues to reinforce the foundation necessary for Indigenous student success.



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