



School District 8
Kootenay Lake

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION CONTINUOUS LEARNING REPORT 2022-2023

Prepared January 10, 2023



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge, respect and honour the First Nations in whose traditional territories the Kootenay Lake School District operates and all Aboriginal people residing within the boundaries of School District No. 8.



CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | i |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | iii |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| DISTRICT CONTEXT | 3 |
| EVIDENCE OF LEARNING | 10 |
| SPECIALIZED SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORTS | 18 |
| SUPPORTED TRANSITIONS | 20 |
| FOCUS AREAS | 21 |
| EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ENGAGEMENT | 22 |
| STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND DIRECTION | 23 |
| CONCLUSION | 24 |
| GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS | |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

School District No.8 (Kootenay Lake) (SD8) believes that an equity-centered, culturally safe, supportive, and engaging learning experience is necessary to maximize the success of all learners, preparing all students to graduate from high school. Truth and Reconciliation through equity are principles that are fundamental to the positive learning experiences of every student in SD8. Equity is the foundation for improving student achievement and is central to each learner's experience and engagement. Aboriginal Education is guided by the district's values and vision and supported by school learning plans.

SD8's strategic goals are literacy, numeracy, inclusion and Indigenization. The district's vision focuses on excellence for all learners in a nurturing environment. These goals and vision align with the goals and best practices of the Ministry of Education and Child Care's "Service Plan 2022-2025."

All students must have the opportunity to develop and fulfill their individual potential. In 2022, the Aboriginal Committee of Education (ACE) and the District collaboratively drafted and implemented an Aboriginal Education Focus Goal district document, to guide Aboriginal programming and supports for self-identified students. Ongoing consultations with Rightsholders, families, and students, based upon mutual values of reciprocated respect and consensus building, designed these department goals over the course of two years. These goals guide Aboriginal Education support programming toward student success and well-being for self-identified Aboriginal learners. The Focus Goals document is a continuation from the previous Enhancement Agreement process which expired in June 2019. The Aboriginal Education Focus Goal document is a district document supported through community voice and collaboration.

In collaboration with ACE and Lower Kootenay Band, Aboriginal Education supported Aboriginal student success during the 2021-2022 school year. The Aboriginal Education department offers many shared and virtual learning opportunities. These prove to be well-attended, meaningful, and authentic learning

for all with broad, district-wide classroom and community reach. In addition, individual Continuity of Learning Plans are designed for all Lower Kootenay Band students.

In 2022-2023, the Board will continue to extend the invitation to Lower Kootenay Band to continue jointly drafting and completing a Local Education Agreement (LEA).

The items in this report's action plan will be given priority for the 2022-2023 school year. SD8 Aboriginal Education district department, in partnership with Aboriginal Education staff in schools and the district senior leadership team, monitors these priorities to ensure continuous improvement for all Indigenous learners.

Priority areas from the 2021-2022 "Enhancing Student Learning Report" (ESL) are addressed within school-based Aboriginal Education supplemental supports and include the following:

- Implement three-year literacy and numeracy plans to improve literacy and numeracy
- Increase graduation rates for all learners and ensure parity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners
- Ensure all learners are supported through social-emotional learning and trauma informed practice
- Enhance equity for all learners

Aligned with the district and the province's priorities, Aboriginal Education continues to focus on Aboriginal student strengths and celebrate learner successes, while working toward closing the achievement and opportunity gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners. In reference to data-informed decisions, planning and practices, and by listening to families, communities and Rightsholders, the Aboriginal Education Department leads in Reconciliation and steps forward.

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ACTION PLAN 2022-2023

To address the continued achievement improvements, the following action items will be prioritized during the 2022-2023 school year:

1. Facilitate BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA) priorities including Joint Nominal roll processes, BCTEA Transportation, Professional Development for Building Aboriginal Student Success, and BCTEA Extra-curricular funding for nominal roll students.
2. Continue to build Aboriginal awareness and learning opportunities.
3. Complete District Academic Reviews and Primary Success meetings with all schools, dedicated to improving the completion rates and literacy rates of Aboriginal learners through monitoring and individualizing supports.
4. Co-lead the District Indigenous Professional Development Day in partnership with the District Pro-D Committee, to support learning about cultural sensitivity, Truth and Reconciliation, and the impact of colonialism in Canada. Support schools and Aboriginal Education staff to develop school specific Plans for supplemental supports, aligned with Aboriginal Education Focus Goals.
5. Support schools and Aboriginal Education staff to develop school specific Plans for supplemental supports, aligned with Aboriginal Education Focus Goals.
6. Highlight Aboriginal initiatives district-wide including National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Rock your Mocs, Orange Shirt Day, Moosehide Campaign, National Indigenous Peoples Day, Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Awareness Day.
7. Support the development of the new Indigenous Grad requirement for school year 2023-2024.
8. Support the ongoing work of the Anti-racism and Cultural Safety and Administrative procedures development in SD8.



INTRODUCTION

Aboriginal Education in the District

SD8 recognizes that equity is foundation for improving learner achievement, central to the learner's experience and engagement. Aboriginal culture and identity should be regarded as a core responsibility of public institutions, supported coherently across the system and all departments. As summarized in the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), educational institutions have a pivotal role in transforming the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Canadian society. Furthermore, as summarized by the Auditor General of British Columbia in the report of 2019, while there is improvement in education for Indigenous learners, there is still a need to improve outcomes and close gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners.

The District supports the provision of the most supportive learning environment for all Aboriginal learners. The District supports equitable access to education for all Aboriginal learners, while honouring the diversity that each learner brings.

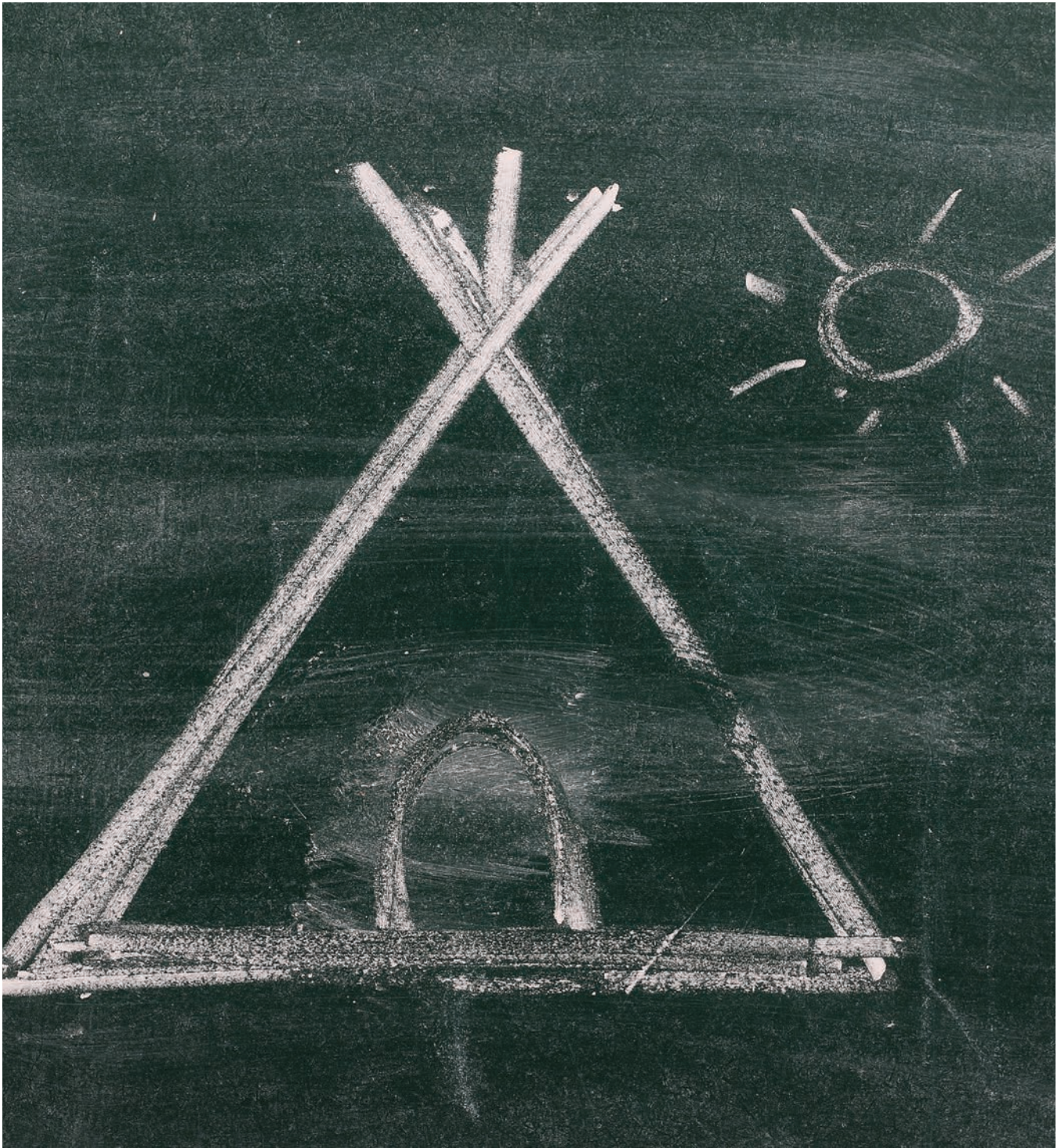
The District provides public education to approximately 5,000 students, of which just under 1000 are of self-identified Aboriginal ancestry. District residents live in the territories of Nation Partners and Rightsholders and district residents are in the communities of Nelson, Salmo, Creston, Kaslo, Crawford Bay, Slocan Valley and other surrounding rural communities.

Collectively, we understand that student achievement is interrelated with literacy, numeracy, inclusion and Indigenization results, as aligned with SD8 Kootenay Lake's Strategic Plan.

Through the educational experience in SD8, the enactment of this vision builds up Aboriginal learners to not only receive a graduation certificate but to also become resilient, brave, courageous and engaged citizens with positive life outcomes. It ensures that learners can succeed personally and academically, with cultural identities intact. SD8 is committed to addressing "racism of the low expectations" and striving to eliminate inequalities of outcomes.

All learners must have the opportunity to develop and fulfill their individual potential and to dream big. The District supports the provision of the most responsive learning environment for all Aboriginal learners, and it supports equitable access to education for those learners.

This report summarizes progress on the District's commitment to growing pathways to graduation for all self-identified Aboriginal students.





DISTRICT CONTEXT

As outlined in SD8's Enhancing Student Learning Plan, the District's vision of ensuring success for all students in a nurturing environment includes a learning goal of Indigenization for all and an alignment of the First Peoples Principles of Learning. Aboriginal Education is part of the District's core responsibility to ensure that Aboriginal students cross the stage with dignity, purpose, and opportunities.

Aboriginal Education Focus Areas

Aboriginal Education in SD8 is guided by the *Focus Areas* of the department.

The [Aboriginal Education Focus Areas](#) document represents the results of community consultations throughout the district from 2018 to 2022, as a continuation of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement process and history. This document is a district document to guiding Aboriginal Education programming in the district and in schools. This document was designed in consultation with as many Aboriginal voices as possible to help us move forward with pathways to success for Aboriginal students.

One: Nurture wholistic Aboriginal resilience and brilliance through belonging, pride, and identity.

Two: Hold high hopes and expectations of success for all Aboriginal students.

Three: Aboriginal students, families, and communities guide Truth before Reconciliation.

Four: Provide opportunities to share stories of Aboriginal history, culture, and diversity: "The truth about stories, is that is all we are." T. King.

The [School Act](#) states that "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". Aboriginal Education Focus Goals support this Ministry purpose while continuing to grow student success as specified in the Statement of Education Policy Order.

Aboriginal Education Policy and Procedure

The Aboriginal Education supplemental programming is guided by the [Ministry of Education and Childcare Funding Policy](#). For the 2022-2023 year, Aboriginal Education supports 871 self-identified Aboriginal Education students.

Aboriginal Education programming is guided by the [Ministry of Education and Childcare Policy Statement](#): To provide culturally-appropriate educational programs and services to support the success of Indigenous students.

School-age students who self-identify as being of Aboriginal ancestry and who participate in Aboriginal Education programs and services offered by public schools are eligible for supplemental supports. The process for enrolling in Aboriginal Education supplemental support is renewed annually each fall, with students and families. Additionally, families have the opportunity to amend their information annually.

Ministry of Education and Child Care Indigenous Education

[Indigenous Education](#) seeks to improve success and supports for Indigenous students, and increase the presence of Indigenous culture, languages and history for all students. It also aims to help teachers bring Indigenous knowledge into their teaching practice.

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

The follow [Calls to Action](#) guide the district in delivering the Aboriginal Education program:

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

Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL)

We continue to engage Indigenous communities and Partners through the Aboriginal Committee of Education (ACE), inviting Rightsholders' voices to the committee table to support Aboriginal student success and offer guidance to the district Aboriginal Education department and Board. In 2022-2023, ACE has invited all Rightsholders to the table, as outlined in the Terms of Reference outlined in Board 121 Policy, Committees of the Board of Education.

Aboriginal Council of Education (ACE)

Membership

- District Principal of Aboriginal Education
- Superintendent
- 2 Trustees
- 1 Principal or Vice Principal
- 2 KLTF representative
- 1 CUPE representative
- 1 Representative from each Nation: Sinixt (Lakes), Syilx (Okanagan), Secwepemc (Shuswap), and Métis Nation
- Elders and/or Knowledge Keepers
- 2 Aboriginal Education Students
- District Indigenization Coordinator

**As of 2021-2022, Lower Kootenay Band has requested to be removed from the ACE Committee Terms of Reference.*



Terms of Reference

- Chaired by District Principal of Aboriginal Education
- Meets four times annually
- Makes recommendations to District staff and the Board

Mandate

To provide support, guidance, and wisdom between Aboriginal communities and the District.

Values

Our Aboriginal Committee of Education (ACE) believes in:

- Honouring partnerships with Sinixt (Arrow Lakes), the Syilx (Okanagan), and the Secwepemc (Shuswap) peoples
- Honoring partnerships with the Métis Nation
- Making “Our children our focus” – the ACE will focus our discussion on the educational needs of our students, not on political issues
- Protecting the integrity and accountability of targeted funding for Aboriginal Education
- Sharing Aboriginal worldviews
- Sharing responsibility in providing quality education for our children and families
- Respecting and honouring the cultural diversity with the Aboriginal community
- Working together in the spirit of cooperation ensuring a safe, respectful environment for voices to be heard

Responsibilities

ACE will work in partnership with School District 8 Kootenay Lake to:

- Support the District Aboriginal Education team
- Support and provide feedback for the revision and renewal of our Enhancement Agreement and/or next steps forward
- Identify needs and gaps in services for Aboriginal students
- Provide general advice and direction around Aboriginal Education
- Support the development of localized resources
- Attend graduation ceremonies and other district events and contribute to the visible presence within the school district

Local Education Agreements

Local Education Agreements (LEAs) are an important mechanism to increase accountability and to promote and achieve effective working relationships between First Nations and local boards of education, enabling them to collaborate in supporting First Nation learners. The LEA between Lower Kootenay Band and the Board of Education expired June 30, 2020. Upon a joint decision-making process between the district and the Lower Kootenay Band, an extension to the LEA was granted for one year.

Aboriginal Education Culturally Responsive Supports

The purpose of the Aboriginal Education is to prioritize improved educational outcomes for Indigenous learners by promoting practices informed by Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing. Everyone has an important role to play in ensuring the success of Indigenous students, and in supporting all learners in developing their understanding of Indigenous cultures and worldviews as the basis for creating inclusive learning environments and an equitable society.

Additional supports and actions from Aboriginal Education include the following highlights:

1. Implement the Aboriginal Education Focus Areas 2022–2027 honouring the collaboration of Aboriginal voices of students, communities, and staff through a consultative process.
2. Facilitate Family/Food Affordability funding for nominal roll and all self-identified Aboriginal Education students.
3. Facilitate a Joint Review Process for nominal roll, in collaboration with Lower Kootenay Band.
4. Collaborate with Lower Kootenay Band on the BC Tripartite Agreement, funding and granting processes, for individualized bussing services for all Lower Kootenay Band students.
5. Promote the equitable access of BC Tripartite Agreement funding for extra-curricular transportation for all Lower Kootenay Band students.
6. Coordinate the District Aboriginal Committee of Education to increase a distinctions-based approach to guidance from Rightsholders, students, and staff on all Aboriginal Education topics in SD8, guiding supports for Aboriginal students.
7. Develop weekly Aboriginal Education blog posts to improve communication, highlight Indigenous brilliance, student learning, and better inform students and families about educational programs and services.
8. Monitor the monthly Aboriginal Education system of accountability to ensure that each school is supporting the success of individual Aboriginal learners, as presented in each School Learning Plan.
9. Host online Aboriginal Education offerings and opportunities for students and staff to engage with and learn from community role models, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers.
10. Continue the SD8 District Pow Wow and Pow Wow teachings to provide an opportunity for students District-wide to appreciate and celebrate Aboriginal diversity and local First Nations teachings and traditions.
11. Continue to offer District Aboriginal Education scholarships to all high schools.
12. Continue to individualize Aboriginal Education supports through a culturally safe and equity-focused lens.
13. Support Aboriginal Education staff to grow capacity, self-care and cultural knowledge to best support Aboriginal student success.
14. Continue Aboriginal Education graduation honouring ceremony as part of the SD8 Pow Wow.
15. Support early literacy initiatives such as gifting of early reading books to self-identified Aboriginal Education kindergarten students.
16. Grow District Aboriginal Education Resource Library and facilitate district-wide lending of resources.
17. Grow Nation Partnerships with Rightsholders through initiatives such as Fish in Schools (FINS), professional development, and Culture Camps etc.
18. Continue to seek opportunities for professional partnerships with the local colleges: College of the Rockies and Selkirk College.
19. Continue the KAIROS Blanket Exercise activity to foster truth, understanding, respect and Reconciliation among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Additional supports and actions (cont.)

20. Develop strategies to address racism and Truth and Reconciliation, as well as strategies to acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous Peoples and learners.
21. Grow transition supports between secondary students and Selkirk College and College of the Rockies to assist students with role models, program options, and Q & A opportunities with college staff.
22. Support students with Aboriginal specific funding for post-secondary education.
23. Grow partnerships with local Aboriginal agencies including COINS, Kootenay Kids, Ktuanxa Kinbasket Child and Family Services, Jordan's Principle regional supports and community-based counselling services to share support resources widely with Aboriginal students and families.
24. Support holistic health supports and interventions with the District Based Team.
25. Support students and families with additional and equitable funding to support learning success.
26. Collaborate across the larger region with the Okanagan-Mainland Indigenous Education leaders and BCSSA regional Indigenous leads, to share best practices, resources, and supports to support student success.
27. Build district wide-awareness on SOGI, in particular Two-Spirit awareness through role models, stories, teachings and professional development.

Guiding Documents

Several guiding documents drive Aboriginal Education in the District and create a framework of action and responsibilities which guide Aboriginal student supports:

- [School Act](#)
- [Ministry of Education and Child Care Indigenous Education Branch](#)
- [Ministry of Education and Child Care Service Plan](#)
- [Ministry of Education and Child Care Policy Order](#)
- [BC Auditor General's Report on Aboriginal Education](#)
- [The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People](#)
- [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#)
- [Declaration Act Action Plan](#)
- [Anti-racism Data Act](#)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\): Calls to Action](#)
- [First Peoples Principles of Learning](#)
- [Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)
- [BC Tripartite Education Agreement: Supporting First Nation Student Success \(2018\)](#)

Aboriginal Education - Equity in Action

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

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

This section outlines key projects in which the district is invested to address equity.

The Equity in Action project was implemented in a partnership between SD8 and the Ministry of Education and Childcare. Equity in Action's student success framework addresses equity for Aboriginal learners. Equity is reflected in all areas of the plan and through sustainable staffing resources, community collaboration, cultural enhancement, Reconciliation and awareness, academic supports, and social-emotional-spiritual supports. This is a holistic model to continue to grow equity awareness and skills district wide.



Figure 1. Aboriginal Student Success. Equity in Action, 2016.

Next Steps: What else is being done to move toward Equity for Aboriginal students in SD8?

- At all high schools, individualized 3-year Grad Plans are supported by the Aboriginal Academic Success Teachers. This is a collaborative school-based opportunity for the planning of supplemental students supports for Aboriginal Education students as they attain their graduation goals.
- As well, district staff meet with school teams to discuss individual grad plans for this school year. Aboriginal Education staff continue to monitor these plans with students and teachers, trying to build in academic supports individually and proactively.
- Students can access tutoring from the Aboriginal Education department.
- Aboriginal Education supports school teams on both FSA's and school assessments, to include both academic support and analysis.
- During 2022-2023 year, the Equity in Action working group reflected on data from previous years and set a specific equity goal for the school year:
 - » Grow district wide and school-based structures to hear student voice and build student agency. From this goal, every school in the district will have a focused Aboriginal Education talking circle, facilitated through the Aboriginal Education department, to hear students concerns, successes, and dreams.

Practices: Building relationships with community. Indigenous perspectives, First Peoples' Principles of Learning and Aboriginal Ways of Knowing and Being are being implemented in classrooms across the district. Students are sharing the Territory Acknowledgement in assemblies and events across the district. Staff across the district are open to learning and engaging in this process to ensure Aboriginal achievement and success.

This is a reminder that Reconciliation is a shared journey. There is a lot of work to do and this will take time and patience, a timeless teaching from the First Peoples Principles of Learning. Academically, the Aboriginal Education department is focusing on academic supports and individual monitoring, in partnership with school teams. We want to continue to structure academic interventions earlier to close the achievement and opportunity gap. Partnerships with school teams will be essential in this work. We will all need to have patience as we continue this journey together, and as our collective understanding grows.





EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

SD8's work in the areas of equity, inclusion and diversity reflects the goals and objectives of the Education and Child Care (MOECC) "Service Plan 2022-2025."

The Ministry of Education and Child Care (MOECC) aims for the education system to provide inclusive and responsive learning environments: ones that recognize the value of diversity and provide equity of access, opportunity, and outcomes for all students, from early years to graduation.

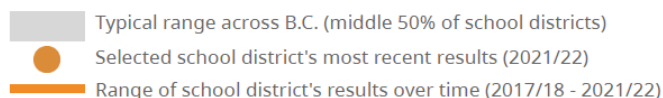
MOECC's 2022-2023 target for the performance measure for "equity in high school completion rates for Indigenous learners, learners with disabilities and diverse abilities, and children and youth in and from care relative to all other learners" is greater than 75%. The ministry is committed to addressing "racism of low expectations" and striving to eliminate the inequalities of outcomes for Indigenous learners, learners with disabilities/diverse abilities and children and youth in and from government care, to ensure each learner has equitable access to educational opportunities and outcomes.

One of the main sources the District uses to track data on the outcomes for Aboriginal learners is the Aboriginal How Are We Doing Report (HAWD). In some cases, the report also compares Aboriginal results with all students. The District has been undergoing the disaggregation of that data to compare Aboriginal students with non-Aboriginal students to get a better understanding of outcomes. The data in this report allows the District to identify historical trends to better plan how to address inequities of outcomes moving forward.

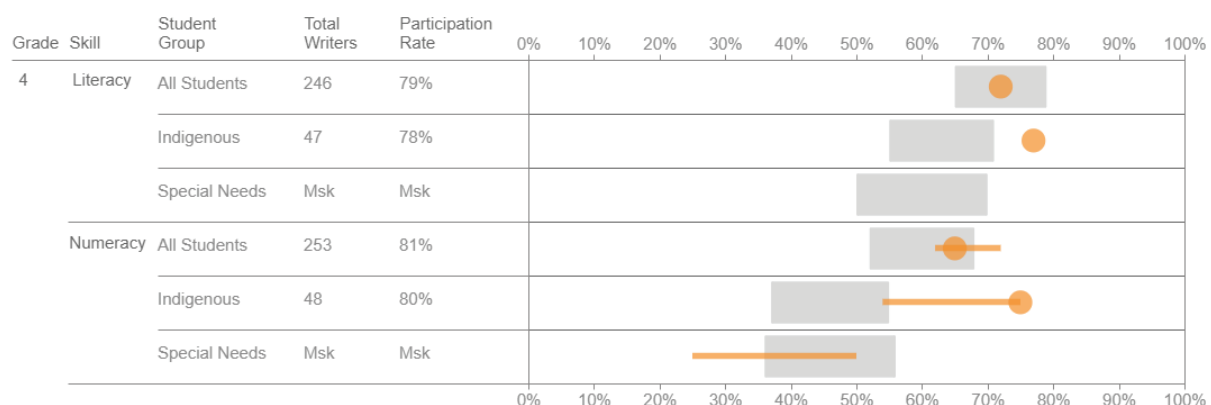
With the overarching belief that literacy is fundamental to learning and to learner success in school and beyond, and consistent with the ministry's "Service Plan 2022-2025," SD8 has set a goal of improving literacy proficiency for all learners and meeting or exceeding numeracy expectations for all grade levels.

The following data tables provide information about the performance of SD8 over time in the area of literacy from the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) and the Graduation Literacy Assessment (GSA) provincial assessments and compares them to the provincial average.

The typical range across BC, the middle 50% of schools in BC is represented by the grey highlighted bar. SD8's most recent results from 2021-2022 is represented by the orange circle. A five-year range from 2017/18-2021/22 is represented by the thin, orange line.



Foundation Skills Assessment - Grade 4



Literacy: Grade 4

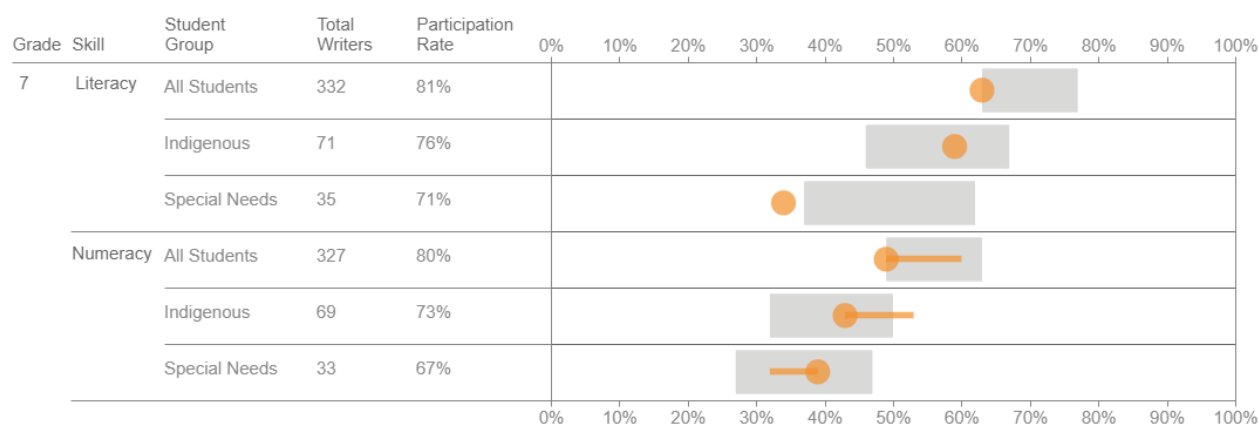
In 2021–2022, SD8 Aboriginal ancestry students were higher in literacy skills than their peers. Aboriginal ancestry students were at 77%, on track or extending for the district, and all students were at 72% on track or extending.

Numeracy: Grade 4

In 2021–2022, SD8 Aboriginal ancestry students were higher in numeracy skills than their peers. Aboriginal ancestry students were at 75%, on track or extending for the district, and all students were at 65% on track or extending. The five-year range low for the district for Aboriginal ancestry students is 54% for on track or extending; this marks a 21% increase in the past five years for grade 4 numeracy. In comparison to BC provincial data, the five-year low is 37% on track or extending and the provincial high on track or extending is 55% for Aboriginal ancestry students on track or extending.

FSA Grade 7 Literacy and Numeracy

Foundation Skills Assessment - Grade 7



FSA Literacy Grade 7

In 2021–2022, SD8 Aboriginal ancestry students were lower in numeracy skills than their peers. Aboriginal ancestry students were at 59%, on track or extending for the district, and all students were at 63% on track or extending.

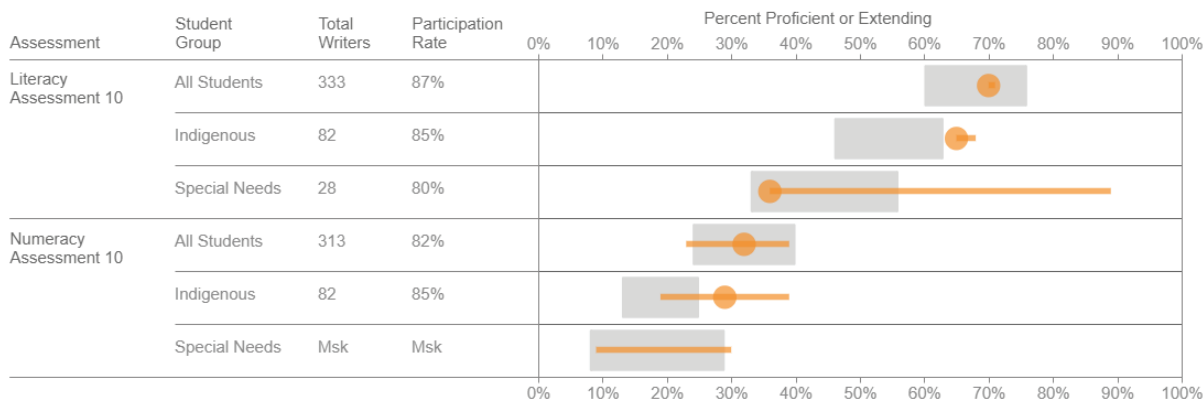
FSA Numeracy Grade 7

In 2021–2022, SD8 Aboriginal ancestry students were lower in numeracy skills than their peers. Aboriginal ancestry students were at 43%, on track or extending for the district, and all students were at 49% on track or extending.

Literacy and Numeracy Grade 10

- Typical range across B.C. (middle 50% of school districts)
- Selected school district's most recent results
- Range of school district's results over time

Graduation Assessment



Grade 10 Literacy

Grade 10 provincial literacy assessment data shows that Aboriginal ancestry students are at 65% proficient or extending in their literacy levels compared 70% for their peers.

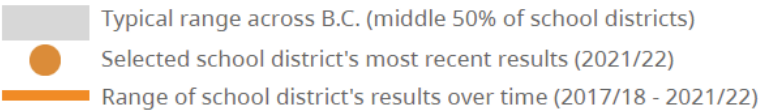
Grade 10 Numeracy

Grade 10 provincial numeracy assessment data shows that Aboriginal ancestry students are at 29% proficient or extending in their literacy levels compared 32% for their peers.

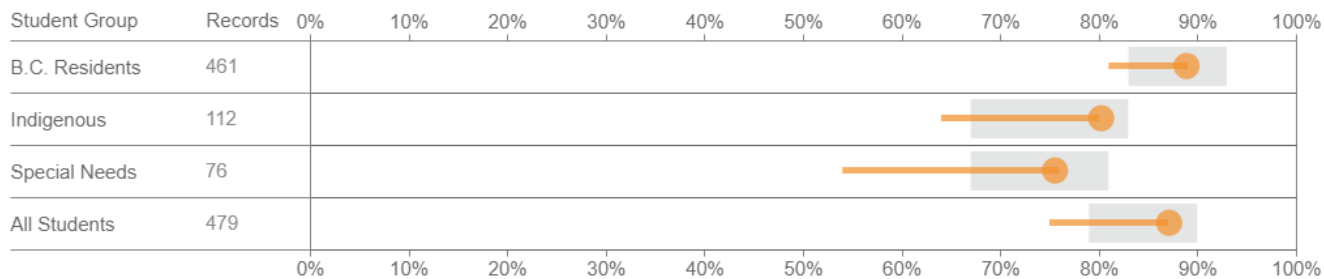


SD8 School Completion

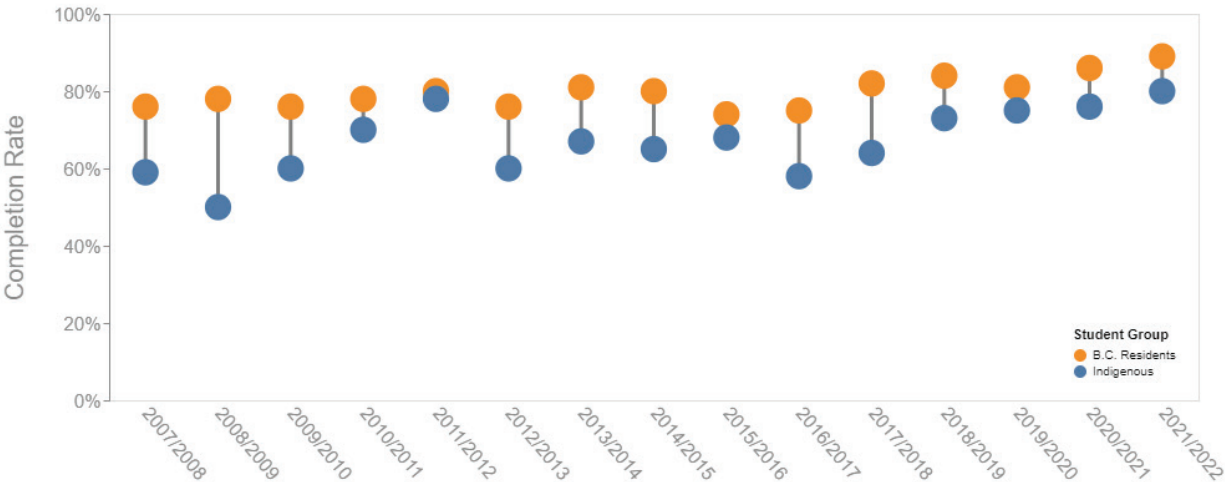
One measure of success within the District is the six-year completion rate. In 2021-2022, the District had an eighty percent (80%) six-year completion rate for Aboriginal learners as compared to eighty-nine percent (89%) for non-Aboriginal students. This reflects a nine percent (9%) completion gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in the 2021-2022 school year (see below). An important note is to also recognize that 6 years past, the Aboriginal completion rate was 58%, a startling 22% lower than 2022. Additionally, this is the highest completion of Aboriginal students in the past 15 years.



Completion Rates



School completion is measured by the number of students who graduate after six years of secondary education. Additional trends can be seen below with a steady increase in the past six years for Aboriginal student completion.



School Connectedness and Learner Belonging

SD8’s goal for school connectedness and learning belonging match provincial goals and objectives as set by the Ministry of Education and Childcare.

For learners to be able to develop and learn, they must feel physically and emotionally safe. The Ministry of Education and Childcare believes in an approach where school leaders, teachers, staff, and parents/guardians all have roles to play in ensuring that learners are engaged, feel a sense of belonging, and understand the importance education has in their lives. Learners also need to know that adults genuinely care about their well-being. Research shows that one caring adult can make a significant difference in a learner’s life and increase that learner’s outcomes.

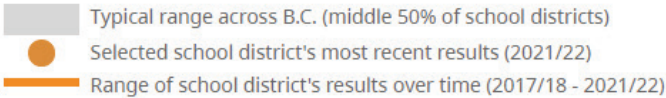
The Ministry of Education and Childcare target for the measure, “Percentage of learners in grades 4, 7 and 10 who feel welcome, safe, and have a sense of belonging in their school” for 2022–2023 is greater than 70%. Learners who feel safe, have a strong sense of belonging, and feel that adults in their school care for them are more engaged and more likely to move through their education program on pace.

The Ministry of Education and Childcare also sets a target for the measure, “Percentage of learners in grade 4, 7 and 10 who feel there are two adults or more at their school who care about them.” For the 2022–2023 school year, this target is greater than 76%.

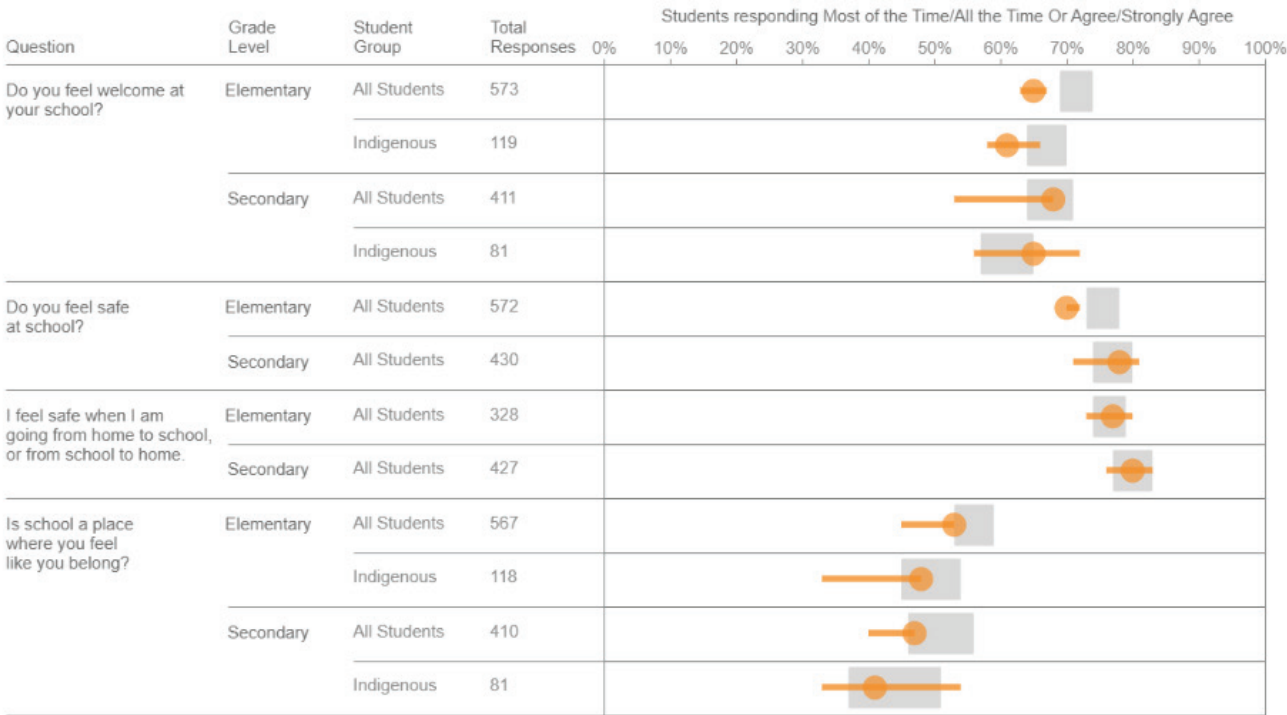
In SD8, the goals and objectives of the ministry for school connectedness and learner belonging are supported in the 2021–2022 Enhancing Student Learning Report (ESL). Data from the SD8 Student Learning Survey for students in grades 4,7,10 (2021–2022) is shared below.

Welcome and Belonging

The number and percentage of students with Aboriginal Ancestry who indicate that they who feel welcome and have a sense of belonging in their school is indicated below:



Student Satisfaction and Wellness



Elementary students with Aboriginal ancestry reported most of the time or all of the time welcome at school at a rate of 61% compared to their peers at 65%.

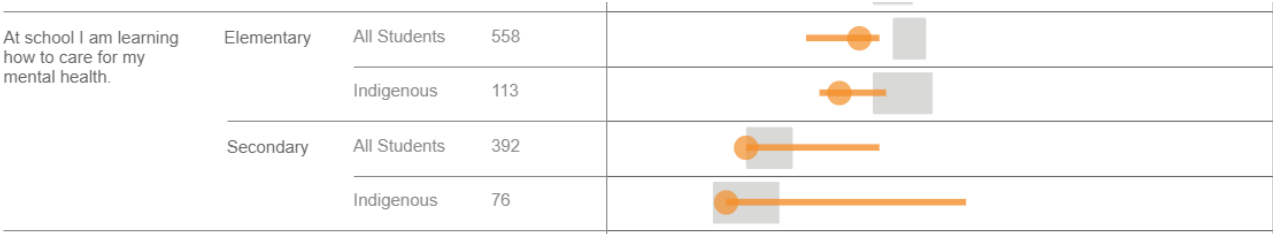
Secondary students with Aboriginal ancestry reported most of the time or all of the time welcome at school at a rate of 65% compared to their peers at 68%.

Elementary students with Aboriginal ancestry reported most of the time or all of the time belonging at school at a rate of 48% compared to their peers at 53%.

Secondary students with Aboriginal ancestry reported most of the time or all of the time belonging at school at a rate of 41% compared to their peers at 47%.

Mental Health

SD8 focuses on implementing the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care “Mental Health in Schools



Elementary students with Aboriginal ancestry reported agreeing or strongly agreeing that they are learning to care for their own mental health at school at a rate of 35% compared to their peers at 38%.

Secondary students with Aboriginal ancestry reported agreeing or strongly agreeing that they are learning to care for their own mental health at school at a rate of 18% compared to their peers at 21%.

Aboriginal Education resources provide schools with the tools and supports to build capacity for holistic men- tal-health promotion, including:

- Understanding and sharing regalia teachings to honour our spirits and ancestors
- Two-Spirit and SOGI teachings
- Traditional bead work to teach and nurture Indigenous wellness



Physical Health

Below, data provides information on student perspectives on physical health:

| | | | | |
|---|------------|--------------|-----|--|
| How would you describe your physical health? (students responding Good/Very Good/Excellent) | Elementary | All Students | 323 | |
| | | Indigenous | 71 | |
| | Secondary | All Students | 391 | |
| | | Indigenous | 76 | |
| At school I am learning how to care for my physical health. | Elementary | All Students | 562 | |
| | | Indigenous | 112 | |
| | Secondary | All Students | 392 | |
| | | Indigenous | 76 | |

When asked to describe their physical health, elementary students with Aboriginal ancestry reported good/very or good/excellent at a rate of 63% compared to their peers at 69%.

When asked to describe their physical health, secondary students with Aboriginal ancestry reported good/very or good/excellent at a rate of 57% compared to their peers at 71%.

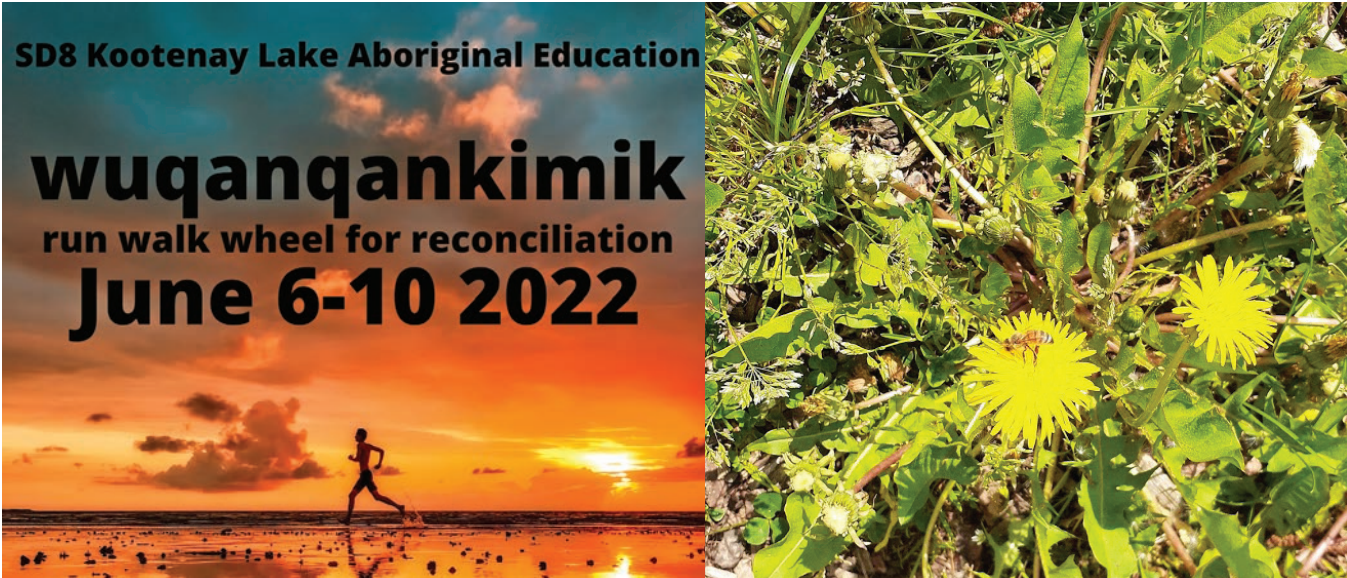
When asked if they are learning how to care for their physical health, elementary students with Aboriginal ancestry reported agree or strongly agree at a rate of 44% compared to their peers at 48%.

When asked if they are learning how to care for their physical health, secondary students with Aboriginal an-cestry reported agree or strongly agree at a rate of 46%, similar to their peers.

Aboriginal Education resources provide schools with the tools and supports to build capacity for physical health promotion:




- Indigenous Sports
- Land Based learning and Indigenous physical literacy
- Traditional foods and traditional medicines

Aboriginal Education Continuous Learning Report 2022-2023



Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Data below shares student perspectives on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity:

| | | | | |
|--|------------|--------------|-----|---|
| At school, have you experienced discrimination on the basis of your sexual orientation or gender identity? | Elementary | All Students | 327 |  |
| | | Indigenous | 71 |  |
| | Secondary | All Students | 411 |  |

Both elementary and secondary students with Aboriginal ancestry, when asked if they experience discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, reported agree or strongly agree at a rate of 6%, identical to their peers.

Resources will provide learners and staff with the tools to understand, respect and respond to diversity, in particular to diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity which include:

- Two-spirit role models highlighted
- Professional development on two-spirit, Indigiqueer teachings
- Pronoun pin workshop for professional development



Sturgeon-nosed canoe from L.V. Rogers Secondary



SPECIALIZED SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORTS

Reconciliation and Awareness Initiatives

As a responsibility of Reconciliation, the TRC: Calls to Action, specifically 63(iii), calls on governments and public education to build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

The following lists some of the key cultural enhancement, Reconciliation and awareness programs and services for the 2022–2023 year.

Orange Shirt Day

Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of the St. Joseph's Mission residential school commemoration project and reunion events that took place in May 2013, in Williams Lake. This project was the vision of Alkali Lake (Esk'etemc) Chief Fred Robbins. Provincial events commemorated the residential school experience, witnessed, and honoured the healing journey of the survivors and their families and committed to the ongoing process of reconciliation. Chief Justice Murray Sinclair challenged all who participated to keep the reconciliation process alive.

SD8 Kootenay Lake has recognizes and honours Orange Shirt Day through various school and district activities. Orange is everywhere. Phyllis (Jack) Webstad, wearer of the first orange shirt, is Northern Secwépemc (Shuswap) from the Canoe Creek Indian Band (Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation). All elementary and secondary schools were provided with teacher resource packages and links to of Phyllis' Story and the Orange Shirt Day website with resources. All schools acknowledged the day, wore orange, and provided learning experiences for students. Many schools link Orange Shirt Day and the Terry Fox Run together, to honour the Metis heritage of Terry Fox, as well.



Note: 2022 Orange Shirt Day SD8 design submission from Sophie Packham and Eryn Larson.

This shirt design honours the story of Anne Jimmie from Lower Kootenay Band, as shared with students.

TRC's call to Action: 63(iii) Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

Aboriginal Graduation Honouring

Each year, Aboriginal graduates are honoured with a special gift (a hand carved, silver pendant) to acknowledge their achievements. Typically this happens in person during a special honour ceremony at the SD8 Youth Pow Wow with an Honour Song. Additionally, Metis students are gifted with a sash in school graduation ceremonies from the West Kootenay Metis Association.

wuqanqankimik Reconciliation Run/Walk

This school year, each school across the district will participate in the wuqanqankimik Reconciliation Run/Walk through an event at their school. Schools participate in virtual training programs in the lead up to the event through the provincial Indigenous Run/Walk program. Students will have the opportunity to hear from community leaders, Elders, and knowledge keepers.

Culture Camp and Awareness Building

For the 2022-2023 school year, we will be hosting awareness learning opportunities in partnership with Rightsholders. Activities planned for these months will be in consultation with Rightsholders.

Connections Culture Camp events will be held in January, February, and March as part of the Awareness Month activities. This year will be ensuring that we have a focus on highlighting Two Spirit role models through these offerings.

National Indigenous Peoples Day

Each year individual schools observe and honour National Indigenous Peoples Day in a way that is meaningful for their school communities.

SD8 Youth Pow Wow

In May 2022, SD8 hosted our second Virtual Pow Wow! We hosted a full month of events in the lead up to the main Pow Wow event in which over 5000 students attended. In the month leading up to the Pow Wow, students participated in zoom workshops with dance teachers and Elders including Deanne Hupfield, Shirley Hill, and Luke Whiteman. The event was MC'd by Ruben Littlehead and featured Northern Cree Singers as the lead drum.

For 2023, we will be back in person and look forward to celebrating the official "10th Annual SD8 Youth Pow Wow!" We are looking forward to providing this opportunity again for students.

Beadwork Circles

For the 2021-2022 year as well as the 2022-2023 school year, the Aboriginal Education department has been offering virtual beadwork circles. This has provided an opportunity for students to come together from different schools and learn traditional handwork skills. These circles have also provided an opportunity for staff to grow their skills. This year, the focus will be on beading poppies to honour Indigenous veterans.

Métis Awareness Month

In November 2022, SD8 observed the fifth annual Métis Awareness Month in partnership with the West Kootenay Métis Association. Some of these events offered virtually this year included: jigging with Madelaine McCallum, Métis artistry with JD Hawk, youth leadership and identity with youth role models from Métis Nation of British Columbia, and Métis music with JJ Guy. We also hosted a book club for Lisa Bird-Wilson's *Probably Ruby*. Resources were also purchased for every school.



SUPPORTED TRANSITIONS

The Aboriginal Education department is committed to ensuring supported transitions for students and families.

Early Years

Over the last year, we have been building relationships with the Aboriginal Early Intervention Coordinator at Kootenay Kids Society in Nelson as well as the Metis Nation Family Connections Navigator for the West Kootenay. To ensure families have a smooth transition into the K-12 system, these relationships will be important.

Kindergarten

As part of welcoming kindergarten students to the Aboriginal Education program, each Aboriginal Kindergarten student were gifted the book “What’s My Superpower” by Indigenous author Aviaq Johnston. This initiative supports early literacy and honours Indigenous gifting protocols.

Transitioning from One Grade to the Next

Aboriginal Education staff regularly track academic performance of all Aboriginal students through reviewing report cards, tracking attendance, attending School Based Team meetings, and checking in with classroom teachers. These processes ensure that students are supported as they transition from grade to grade.

Changing Schools within SD8

Staff from elementary schools and middle schools schedule meetings with staff at secondary schools to talk about students transitioning. Some schools schedule joint activities between the schools so that Aboriginal students can meet older students as well as the Aboriginal Education staff at the new school.

Transitioning from Grade 12 to the Community (Post-Secondary or Work)

To support transitions to the community, all secondary school staff are part of the graduation planning process to ensure students are on track to graduate. One-on-one meetings are held with individual students and Aboriginal Academic Success teachers to discuss grad planning and post-high school planning. The department organizes and supports scholarship and bursary planning by sharing out information on our website as well as scheduling information sessions with agencies such as the Metis Nation to share information with students about how to access supports.

The Aboriginal Education department is also working with Selkirk College and College of the Rockies to strengthen transitions, information, and funding to ensure students have smoother access to supports.



FOCUS AREAS

Aboriginal Education in SD8 Kootenay is guided by the Focus Areas of the department.

The Aboriginal Education Focus Areas District document represents the results of community consultations throughout the district from 2018 to 2022, as a continuation of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement process and history. This document was designed in consultation with as many Aboriginal voices as possible to help us move forward with pathways to success for Aboriginal students.

One: Nurture wholistic Aboriginal resilience and brilliance through belonging, pride, and identity.

Actions:

- Opportunities for students to gather such as culture camp, awareness month events, reconciliation run, and Pow Wow.
- Highlighting Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Role models for students to see examples of brilliance in the community.
- In May 2022, students at each secondary school were invited to participate in an awareness campaign for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit people. Students were featured on posters distributed throughout the district to raise awareness.
- Student learning and excellence is highlighted regularly on the Aboriginal Education blog.

Two: Hold high hopes and expectations of success for all Aboriginal students.

Actions:

- Student attendance, report cards, and graduation plans reviewed regularly by Aboriginal Academic Success teachers and Aboriginal Education support staff. Further liaison with families and teachers is implemented to support growth and support for individual students.
- Student achievement is celebrated and honoured.
- Support for transportation for wellness and cultural supports available for nominal roll students.

Three: Aboriginal students, families, and communities guide Truth before Reconciliation.

Actions:

- School Aboriginal Education Equity Circles to hear Aboriginal Education student voice, stories, interests.
- “Students Tending the Fire”, anti-racism leadership in 2021–2022
- Annual student participation in Pow Wow and Reconciliation Run

Four: Provide opportunities to share stories of Aboriginal history, culture, and diversity: “The truth about stories, is that is all we are.” T. King

- Professional development opportunities, including honoured guests in 2022–2023 Chief Cadmus Delorme and Dr. Percy Lezard.
- Authentic Aboriginal resources distributed to schools
- Weekly Aboriginal Education blog posts



EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND ENGAGEMENT

Professional Learning

For the 2022–2023 school year, Aboriginal Education gathered together to learn and share teachings on ribbon dress and shirt making, in October provincial Pro-D day. These teachings will be brought back into schools for student learning. Aboriginal Education department also provided a collated collection of professional development online learning opportunities, augmented by an online resource bank of lessons.

In November 2022, high school English teachers attended a session facilitated by the First Nations Education Steering Committee on the new Indigenous graduation requirement.

In December 2022, ten Aboriginal Education staff attended the First Nations Education Steering Committee Aboriginal Education conference.

In January, the District welcomes Dr. Percy Lezard, from the Syilx Nation for an important workshop. Dr. Lezard engages in an intersectional analysis of Indigeneity and gender diversity in the context for educators who work with school age children. They illustrate the rich history and continued resilience and teachings of 2 Spirit people in Indigenous communities. Together, we will grow a better understanding of 2SLGBTQQIA+ issues, a better understanding of colonialism on 2 spirit/Indigiqueer people in Indigenous Communities and reflect on measures against microaggressions in the classroom.

Additionally, staff will have the opportunity to continue to learn about the hand craft of traditional beadwork, with district Indigenization Coordinator, Danica Weager and the implications for classroom learning K–12.

Professional Learning and Improving Success of Aboriginal Learners

Through the BC Tripartite Education Agreement 2018 (BCTEA), all school districts are to designate one professional development day annually to improving success of Aboriginal students. On April 17th 2023, the District will welcome Chief Cadmus Delorme from Cowessess First Nation, as key note speaker. Chief Cadmus will be inspiring us with teachings on Reconciliation and shared leadership. The District Pro-D Committee will plan specific workshops focusing on success for Aboriginal learners.

Throughout the year, the Aboriginal Education Department supported teachers with resources to embed Aboriginal content in the curriculum. Often these resources are collated around thematic learning opportunities and are shared widely through Aboriginal Education blog posts. In many cases, the Aboriginal staff are guest presenters in classrooms, and they model lessons that teachers repeat and learn from – Indigenization in Action. Aboriginal Education invites all learners into the learning circle.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & DIRECTION

This annual “Aboriginal Education Report” supports the learning goal outlined in the district’s strategic plan. SD8 provides opportunities for all learners to achieve success in the following areas:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Inclusion
- Indigenization

SD8 provides conditions that foster success for all learners, 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.

Future Directions

SD8’s “Focus. Learn. Excel.” initiative concentrates on learning goals from the board of education strategic plan. These goals are addressed by:

- Improving learning and assessment
- Supporting vulnerable learners
- Literacy and numeracy
- Enhancing learner supports

Staff engage in robust professional learning opportunities facilitated by renowned education professionals. Staff also have opportunities to contribute to district communities of practice in several educational domains, such as literacy, numeracy and early learning.



CONCLUSION

The Aboriginal Education Annual Report has reported on the Focus Areas set out in the Aboriginal Education Department. This report highlights the commitment and achievements of students and staff, who are striving to meet these goals. Through the commitment of all educators, connections made with parents, community members and Rightsholders continue to improve. These connections, in turn, are instrumental in improving the success and the personal and holistic well-being of all students. After all, what is good for Aboriginal students is good for all students!

As SD8 endeavours to eliminate the achievement and opportunity gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners, effective strategies and interventions within schools are implemented to support pathways to graduation for self-identified Aboriginal students.

As the District moves forward in its work, the focus remains on ensuring that each Aboriginal learner can develop the necessary skills and knowledge to be successful after graduation – with dreams that open doors and opportunities and cultural identity strong and intact!



GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ACE – Aboriginal Committee of Education

AEAA – Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

AHAWD – Aboriginal How Are We Doing Report

FESL – Framework for Enhancing Student Learning

FINS – Fish in Schools

FTE – Full Time Equivalent

LEA – Local Education Agreement

MOECC – Ministry of Education and Child Care

TRC – Truth and Reconciliation

UNDRIP – United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

