



March 28, 2025

Ref: 308323

Trish Smillie, Superintendent
School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake)
Email: trish.smillie@sd8.bc.ca

Dear Trish Smillie:

The Ministry of Education and Child Care is committed to meaningful truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and improving Indigenous graduation rates. This annual letter is intended to highlight progress and identify challenges as we collectively pursue equity for Indigenous learners attending British Columbia public schools.

The “Aboriginal How Are We Doing?” Report (AB:HAWD) provides administrators, teachers, schools, school districts, First Nations, Indigenous Education Councils (IECs), and the Ministry with important information on Indigenous student outcomes. This information should inform areas of action identified within your district strategic plan and your annual Framework for Enhancing Student Learning report to the Ministry.

In alignment with the purpose and mandate of IECs, this data should also inform the planning and delivery of comprehensive and equitable education and support services for Indigenous students, including those delivered through Indigenous Education Targeted Funds and other targeted grants.

Across the province, the 2023/24 six-year completion rate for Indigenous students in public schools was 75.5 percent compared to 93.8 percent for non-Indigenous students. The five-year completion rate was 64.8 percent for Indigenous students compared to 89.9 percent for non-Indigenous students. This information must inform our collective work.

Another piece of data that needs our attention is the number of Indigenous students receiving Adult Dogwood credentials who are under 19 years of age. In 2023/24, 60 percent of Indigenous students who received the Adult Dogwood were under 19 years of age, compared to 36 percent for non-Indigenous students. It is an area of priority focus at the provincial level and must be a priority for you at the district level to ensure the racism of low expectations is not continuing to occur. It continues to be our collective responsibility to be active partners in driving better educational outcomes for Indigenous students.

In your school district, the Indigenous five-year completion rate has increased by 20.5 percentage points from 68.0 percent in 2019/20 to 88.5 percent in 2023/24. With the removal of the Adult Dogwood, the Indigenous five-year completion rate has increased by 22.8 percentage points to 87.4 percent in 2023/24.

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First Nations rights holders and Indigenous partners have also expressed the importance of the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) which provides an important line of sight for all of us into the learning trajectories for Indigenous students and all students.

In your school district, FSA participation and results are as follows:

Grade 4 Literacy: With 91 percent participation, 65 percent on-track or extending for Indigenous students compared to 66 percent on-track or extending for non-Indigenous students.

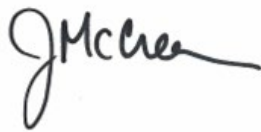
Grade 7 Literacy: With 89 percent participation, 63 percent on-track or extending for Indigenous students compared to 74 percent on-track or extending for non-Indigenous students.

Grade 7 Numeracy: With 86 percent participation, 45 percent on-track or extending for Indigenous students compared to 64 percent on-track or extending for non-Indigenous students.

You have a link to the secure SharePoint site that contains your district's AB:HAWD. If you need this link again, please email Jeremy Higgs, Executive Director, Governance and Analytics Division at Jeremy.Higgs@gov.bc.ca. This version contains unmasked results, even where cohort numbers are below 10. Key highlights of your school district's AB:HAWD are attached. Public masked versions of the provincial and local 2023/24 AB:HAWD (including your FSA results) are available on the [Student Success](#) website.

Continue strengthening relationships with the local First Nation(s) and your IEC using these results as a foundation for the conversation. Please send this letter to your IEC Chair and Secretariat. If you are in the process of setting up the IEC, please share this letter with the IEC Chair and Secretariat once named. Honest discussions about the present state of achievement are one way for districts, First Nations, and Indigenous partners to work collaboratively to benefit and improve learning and attendance for Indigenous students and all students.

Sincerely,



Jennifer McCrea
Acting Deputy Minister

Appendix 1 - Highlights SD 8 (Kootenay Lake)

cc: Dawn Lang, Board Chair, School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake)
Laury Carriere, Indigenous Education Lead
Chair, Indigenous Education Council
Jeremy Higgs, Executive Director, Governance and Analytics Division, Ministry of
Education and Child Care

Highlights – SD 8 (Kootenay Lake)

Foundation Skills Assessment

Grade 4 Literacy assessment: 77% of Aboriginal learners participated in 2019/20 compared to 91% in 2023/24. Persistent gap in On Track & Extending between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal learners in 2023/24 (65% vs. 66%).

Grade 4 Numeracy assessment: 79% of Aboriginal learners participated in 2019/20 compared to 92% in 2023/24. Persistent gap in On Track & Extending between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal learners in 2023/24 (57% vs. 61%).

Grade 7 Literacy assessment: 85% of Aboriginal learners participated in 2019/20 compared to 89% in 2023/24. Persistent gap in On Track & Extending between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal learners in 2023/24 (63% vs. 74%).

Grade 7 Numeracy assessment: 81% of Aboriginal learners participated in 2019/20 compared to 86% in 2023/24. Persistent gap in On Track & Extending between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal learners in 2023/24 (45% vs. 64%).

Completion Rates

Five-year Completion Rate for Aboriginal learners has increased by 20.5 percentage points from 68.0% in 2019/20 to 88.5% in 2023/24. The rate for Non-Aboriginal learners has increased by 13.1 percentage points from 77.2% in 2019/20 to 90.3% in 2023/24.

Five-year Completion Rate - Dogwood only (Adjusted Rate) for Aboriginal learners has increased by 22.8 percentage points from 64.6% in 2019/20 to 87.4% in 2023/24.

Six-year Completion Rate for Aboriginal learners has increased by 17.9 percentage points from 74.7% in 2019/20 to 92.6% in 2023/24. The rate for Non-Aboriginal learners has increased by 8.8 percentage points from 82.2% in 2019/20 to 91.0% in 2023/24.

Six-year Completion Rate - Dogwood only (Adjusted Rate) for Aboriginal learners has increased by 21.3 percentage points from 70.1% in 2019/20 to 91.4% in 2023/24.