

# ANNUAL EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND DIVERSITY REPORT

September, 2019



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73  
(Kamloops - Thompson)

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# Executive Summary

Achieving equity and excellence is ambitious but 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.

School District No. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson), 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's 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; and,
- Encourage students to respect others and become educated citizens.

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

In 2019–2020, the equity, inclusion and diversity action plan will support this goal, as outlined by the action plan in the following section.

# Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Action Plan 2019-20

## Action Plan Items

1. Expand the vision screening program for each Grade 3 and Grade 6 student in the District.
2. Introduce the Preventure program to Grade 9 students at three pilot schools to enhance substance use problems programming.
3. Develop a multi-agency plan to reduce student vaping across the District.
4. Create an administrative procedure for partial day programs and communicate it broadly.
5. Develop and implement a formal District program for middle and secondary school transitions for Aboriginal youth.
6. Develop a comprehensive District-wide plan for implementing evidence-based social-emotional learning for Kindergarten to Grade 7 (K–7) students. This plan will provide educator training to primary and intermediate lead teachers throughout the year.
7. Offer trauma-informed practice training sessions to education staff members, through after-school sessions and professional development days.
8. Form a District-level gender sexuality alliance group to plan for District events and create collaborative opportunities between school sites and District and community groups.
9. Provide Options for Sexual Health (OPT) curriculum training to physical and health education (PHE) teachers.
10. Develop a refreshed interagency protocol on violence threat risk assessment (VTRA).

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, harassment and violence, educational excellence and equity are attainable.

# Introduction



## Equity, Inclusion and Diversity in the District

The District's vision seeks to enable students to go beyond receiving a graduation certificate to become 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 develop toward fulfillment of 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; and,
- We provide high quality education to all learners in a setting that is most enabling and least restrictive.

Aligned to the Ministry of Education's diversity in BC schools 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; and,
- 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.

District students are monitored twice annually, via the District Engagement, Well-Being and Resiliency Survey (DEWRS), regarding their perceptions of student belonging. According to the Fall 2018 survey, students reported a positive sense of belonging, as follows: Grade 4 students, eighty percent (80%); Grade 7 students, sixty-eight percent (68%); and Grade 10 students, sixty-two percent (62%). These results point to the District’s need to focus on improving a positive sense of student belonging.

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 seven principles of learning that are intended to build engagement and connectedness through positive emotions and motivation; these principles support the following:

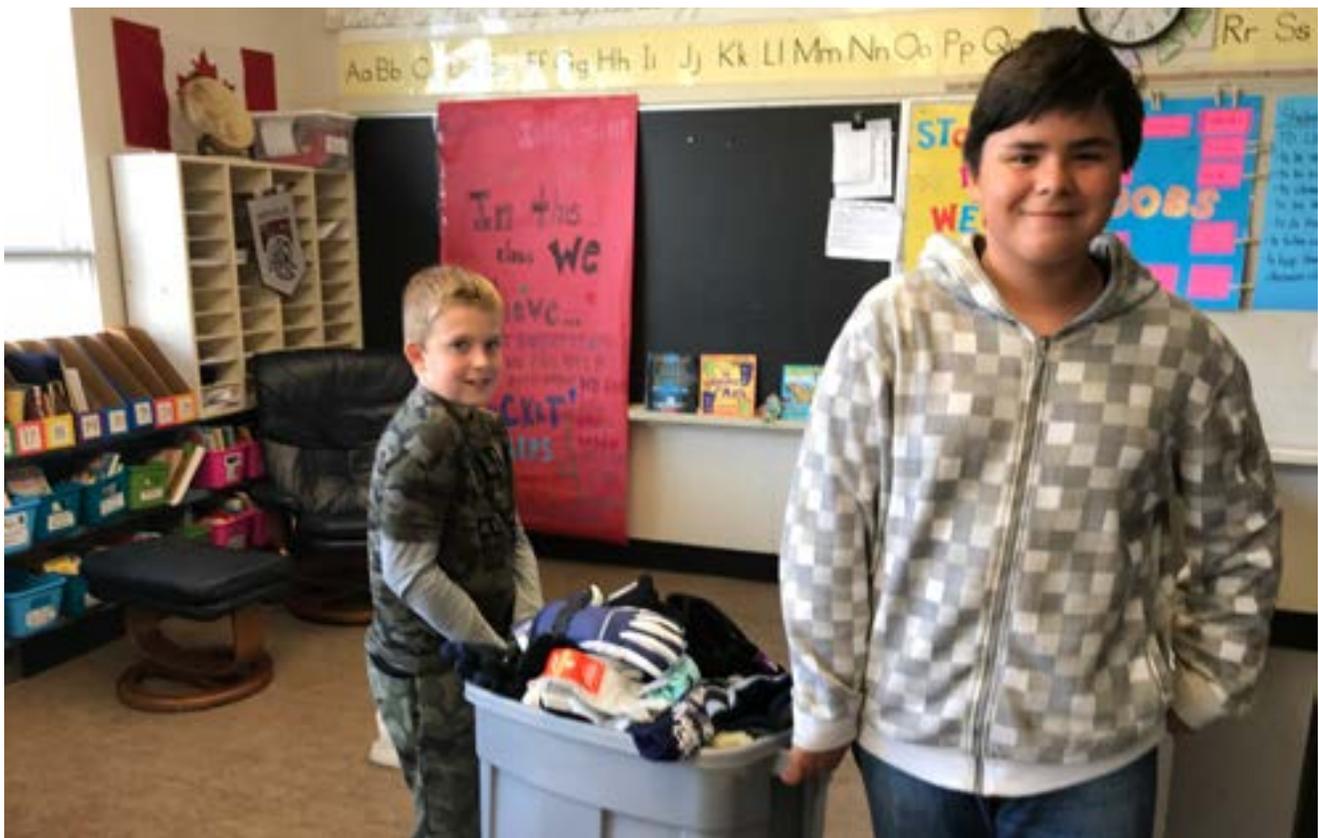
1. Learners at the centre;
2. The social nature of learning;
3. Emotions as integral to learning;
4. The recognition of individual differences;
5. The stretching of all students;
6. Assessment for learning; and,
7. The building of horizontal connectedness.

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 attempt to formalize 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; and,
- 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 an Aboriginal background, who are English language Learners (ELL) or who have special education designations. Recognizing that its learners are unique and have specific 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 its 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 School 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

Since all learners are unique, 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.



Over the past two school years, the District has provided UDL training to small school-based teams. In 2019–2020, a UDL network and collaboration with SET-BC is taking place. Ten pilot schools will get a combination of professional development training, collaborative time to plan learning and observation from an educational leader, in order to foster District teachers' understanding of UDL.

The District uses a multi-tier approach, response to intervention (RTI), 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, special educators and District inclusive education staff and community support personnel. 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.

# 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 unique learners, a variety of services are provided through Inclusive Education Services (IES):

- School psychologists;
- Speech and language pathologists;
- Home/hospital services;
- Hearing resource teachers;
- Vision resource teachers;
- Inclusion support teachers;
- School and family consultants;
- Drug and alcohol counsellors;
- District mental health clinician;
- English language learning (ELL);
- District Inclusive Education Services (IES) coordinator;
- District resource rooms;
- Children's Therapy and Family Resource Centre (CTFRC);
- Provincial outreach programs; and,
- Partial day planning.



## School Psychologists

School psychologists are responsible for providing psycho-educational services for students from their entrance to Kindergarten through 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, in a Ministry of Education special needs category.

## Speech and Language Pathologists

Speech and language pathologists address common communication problems, including articulation, language challenges and neurologically based and/or structural communication disorders, such as stuttering and verbal output.

Speech and language pathologists are assigned to offer speech and language services and augmentative alternative communication (AAC) consultation services to students attending District resource rooms. AAC services provide communication systems for students who have no or limited verbal output.

AAC consultation services may include:

- Assessment of a student's current communication level;
- Exploration of communication devices;
- In-service to school-based teams;
- Acquisition of or development of resource materials;
- Liaising with agencies such as SET-BC and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children;
- Consultation; and,
- Facilitation of networking between teams.

## Home/Hospital Services

Home/hospital services are provided for students who are home 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. Hospitalized students are also eligible for home/hospital teacher services.

## Hearing Resource Teachers

Hearing resource teachers provide 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 Teachers

Vision resource teachers work with students who are visually impaired as per the Ministry of Education guideline for Category B (deaf/blind) or Category E (visual impairment). Services available are wide ranging and include direct instruction, arranging for orientation and mobility services, liaising with outside agencies and supporting assistive communications technology.

In 2018–2019, the District partnered with the Lions Club to pilot a vision screening program for Grade 3 and Grade 6 students at three elementary schools. During 2019–2020, grades 3 and 6 students in each District elementary school will receive free vision screening.

## **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), modelling and team-teaching social-emotional and behaviour programs in the classroom. They also work with other teachers in the standard classroom to develop strategies to meet the needs of students with behavioural problems.

## **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 Child and Youth Mental Health. 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 services in the form of consultation and classroom-based presentations regarding substance use problems issues. The Phoenix Centre provides additional drug and alcohol counsellors to the District's secondary schools.

To better support students who have substance use problems challenges, new programming will be developed. SD73 will introduce the evidence-based Preventure program to Grade 9 students at three pilot schools. As well, a multi-agency working group will develop a plan to reduce student vaping across the District.

## **District Mental Health Clinician**

This jointly funded position works as a liaison between the District and Child and Youth Mental Health to provide direct service to children, youth and families. This clinician provides direct counselling services 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. The clinician's focus is on increasing effective coping skills for identified students who present with initial or mild symptoms including, but not limited to, anxiety, depression, loss, grief and anger.



## 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.

## 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 thirteen District resource room programs. They are designed to provide individualized programming at primary, intermediate and secondary levels for students with complex special 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 & 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 ensure that professionals from each organization have in-depth knowledge of students' needs to facilitate students' successful transitions.

## 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.

Partial day program data from 2018–2019 demonstrates that partial day program use needs to be examined. There is limited data available regarding partial day programming; therefore, the available data likely under-represents the number of students placed in partial day programs.

The data shows that thirty-one (31) students in Kindergarten to Grade 7 were placed in partial day programs. The data clearly demonstrates inequity regarding such placements. Approximately ninety percent (90%) of the students are male. In addition, forty-two percent (42%) of the students have Aboriginal ancestry. Overall, eighty-seven percent (87%) of students have behaviour designations.

Currently, the District is in need of a thorough partial day program administrative procedure outlining the appropriate application of partial day programming. Such an administrative procedure would outline a process detailing how to connect students and families to community agencies and how a partial day program can help meet the needs of learners who have difficulty managing in their academic settings and have reduced attendance as a result.

# Cultural Diversity



## First Peoples Principles of Learning

SD73 acknowledges that we reside in Secwepemcúl'ecw and recognizes the Secwepemc as the keepers of their traditions and knowledge.

The District believes that a relevant and positive learning experience is necessary in order to maximize the success of Aboriginal students in the pursuit of their formal education. The District also believes that truth and reconciliation are fundamental principles that must underpin the learning experience of every student and ensures that equity, opportunity, and the meaningful inclusion of Aboriginal learners in order to improve student achievement.

The District respects the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#), specifically those regarding education for reconciliation.

The District is committed to including the Aboriginal perspectives of teaching and learning in its schools. SD73 is also committed to supporting local First Nations communities in language revitalization efforts.

Through the District Engagement, Well-Being and Resiliency Survey (DEWRS), the District asks learners about the impact of Aboriginal education on their learning. In this survey, students are asked if they learn in a way that makes them feel connected to Aboriginal culture. In secondary schools, thirty-three percent (33%) of students agree or strongly agree. In elementary schools, fifty-nine percent (59%) agree or strongly agree.

Elementary school students are also asked if they are learning about Aboriginal people in the District's region and in Canada. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of these students agree or strongly agree. Secondary school students are asked if they learn about Aboriginal people and the impact of colonialism in Canada and other places. Sixty percent (60%) of these students agree or strongly agree.

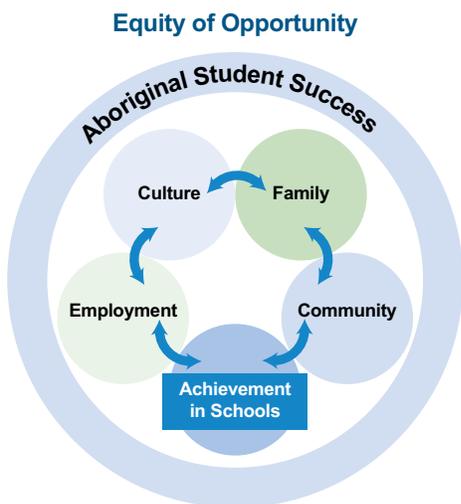
The results of this survey indicates that a greater degree of impact is required in student learning in this area.

## Planning for Equity of Aboriginal Learners

Consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action and the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General Report on Aboriginal Education, the District is developing a focused action-oriented, practical plan – the Equity in Action project – to address equity and inclusion for Aboriginal students. The foundation for this project responds to both provincial and District evidence that indicates the need to re-examine District assumptions and practices regarding Aboriginal learners. Currently, the District has a seventy-eight point two percent (78.2%), six-year completion rate for Aboriginal students as compared to an eight-nine point five (89.5%), six-year completion for all resident students. The completion rate for status on reserves drops to seventy-five point nine percent (75.9%).

With an intentional focus on student achievement, the District has undertaken a multi-year project to develop, pilot and implement the Equity in Action project in partnership with the Ministry of Education. Part of this project will be to identify barriers and challenges that Aboriginal learners experience within the school system.

The Equity in Action project is outlined by a focus in the following areas: culture, family, community, achievement in schools and employment, as illustrated next:



The project has, over the past school year, included four half-day Aboriginal school leader sessions. These sessions include school teams consisting of a school teacher leader, an Aboriginal education worker and school administrators from all forty-four District schools. These sessions also include District teacher leaders, community members and students. Part of the work has been to conduct a scan on the four main pillars identified by the Ministry of Education and informed by the OECD: learning environment, learning profile, pedagogical core, and policy and government. The purpose of the scan is to identify barriers to equity and inclusion for Aboriginal learners, then to develop action items in the areas of these four main pillars.

## 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.

It is paramount to create a climate that supports children, youth and families and that is respectful, welcomes diversity and acknowledges cultural consideration. Teachers, 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)

SD73 English language learning (ELL) students and Thompson Rivers University (TRU) international students continue the connections that began in the spring of 2019 with a Mind the Gap project. This year's focus is on intercultural communication, a vital component in the success of students who are new to Canada and who are immersed in a multicultural setting at school and in the community. In addition to ELL students, the international student program enrolls approximately 200 full time equivalent (FTE) students from approximately twenty (20) countries. These students are embedded in seven (7) District high schools and provide a global context for all District learners.

ELL students initially meet as a large group to foster a sense of connection and community. Next, they visit TRU, where they work with and are mentored by two research assistants and participate in exchanges and discussions with English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

ELL students learn how to embrace the richness of their cultures. The first goal of this Mind the Gap project is to encourage students to embrace the diversity of Canadian culture while preserving and celebrating their own culture. The second goal is to continue to make connections with TRU so that they will continue their post-secondary studies there.

ELL resource teachers act as case managers and provides inclusive education that supports students to achieve cultural and linguistic competency and proficiency. ELL teachers support students in acquiring strong foundational skills and core competencies, personalized learning experiences and appreciation for vast cultural worldviews and perspectives.

An ELL resource teacher:

- Assesses and evaluates ELL students to determine their level of language proficiency in oral language, reading and writing;
- Consults and communicates with learning assistance resource teachers (LARTs), classroom teachers, administrators and parents to prepare and successfully implement the Annual Instruction Plan for ELL students;
- Recommends and provides appropriate print, digital, and multi-media resources specifically written and created for ELL students; and,
- Provides continual support for successful teaching strategies and appropriate adaptations that are universally designed for ELL students.

ELL resource teachers have organized professional development for educators to address the core competencies, Ministry of Education curriculum and the ELL standards. Educators are provided with tools and best practices, such as UDL, for teaching ELL students.

# 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

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 2018–2019, 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	50	34	10	0	28	12	72

Prior to the beginning of Kindergarten, District employees attend daycares to observe students and determine what support will be helpful.

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.

During the 2019–2020 school year, a formal District program for middle and secondary transitions for Aboriginal students will be developed.

## 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.

In addition to hosting the annual transitions fair, in 2019–2020 the District will collaborate with CLBC to offer four consecutive family support workshop sessions, Welcome to CLBC, to help youth and their families prepare for adulthood.

To further support transitioning, the District has partnered with TRU to take advantage of Mind the Gap project grants, helping students transition from secondary school to TRU. In the past year, many schools participated in various projects that involved senior secondary students visiting the TRU campus and learning about its programs and services. During 2018–2019, three grants were received to support learners in the areas of ELL, sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) and TRU's Education and Skills Training (ESTR) program.

During the 2019–2020 school year, a pilot program through a Mind the Gap project grant will strengthen the transition of Grade 12 students with diverse exceptionalities to TRU. The project is intended to help these students recognize the variety of services on campus. Additionally, students will recognize how these services can support and benefit their academic career at TRU. This project will also involve a variety of stakeholders: secondary counsellors, secondary LARTs, Grade 12 students, and staff members from TRU's student access and academic supports departments.

Senior secondary students will have the opportunity to visit and shadow programs offered in the ESTR program, which is 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. SD73 students will spend time in the ESTR kitchen assistant, career exploration and retail training components.

## Aboriginal Transitions to Post Secondary

The District works with TRU to host a one-day Aboriginal transition event to introduce Grade 10 students, well before they are of post-secondary age, to Aboriginal programs, services and opportunities in a post-secondary institution. In 2018, over 100 students attended this event; they toured both the trades and academic areas at TRU and heard from current Aboriginal post-secondary students regarding their experiences with Aboriginal post-secondary services.

## Trades and Transitions

SD73's Trades and Transitions offers ongoing events to secondary school students that expose them to career opportunities within the trades. These programs often guarantee seats to students with Aboriginal ancestry.



# 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; and,
- 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. It is important to note that Aboriginal students participating in a student panel earlier in 2019 identified mental health as a key priority for the District. In addition, secondary students participating in Student Voice, as well as the Youth Advisory Council, indicated that students would benefit from a greater focus on mental health literacy skills.

*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

The District supports several programs to support social and emotional learning for all students.

### 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 7. 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. SD73 will continue to offer professional development to K–7 teachers, as well as train a second EASE District-level trainer to build teacher capacity to deliver the 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.

### Aboriginal Boys and Girls Groups

Aboriginal Boys and Girls Groups are based in elementary, middle and secondary schools. The purpose of these groups is to create a healthy understanding of gender identity within the context of cultural identity. The groups provide marginalized and at-risk Aboriginal girls and boys with the opportunity to explore their experiences and challenges in a safe, non-threatening environment. Programs are held in both rural and urban settings. The groups are supervised and run by Aboriginal family counsellors, with support from school-based Aboriginal education workers.

In 2018–2019, sixteen (16) schools had active Aboriginal Boys and Girls Groups, with participants as shown in the following table:

Grade Level	Males	Females	Students with Aboriginal Ancestry	Rural Students	Urban Students
K–7	78	54	132	34	98
8–12	114	97	211	40	171

## 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 2018–2019, six (6) elementary schools received full staff training in MindUP. Also, over 150 educators attended MindUP training.

## Healthy Relationships Programs

During 2019–2020, the District's healthy relationships coordinator is performing a social-emotional learning scan across the District so that SD73 will have a cohesive District healthy relationships program and can plan to meet the related needs of its students. Many District schools are currently using different approaches to social-emotional teaching and learning.

During 2019–2020, a comprehensive system-wide plan for implementing an evidence-based social-emotional learning plan for K–7 students will be developed. The coordinator will provide professional development and work with educators to successfully implement evidence-based, age-appropriate resources. This plan will provide educator training to primary and intermediate lead teachers throughout the year.

## Mental Health Literacy

Stop Wondering, Start Knowing is an introductory resource for mental health literacy that is based on best practices designed to help teachers and students to better understand and be more aware of mental health. The topics covered by this resource include helping people to recognize the early signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges, as well as to decrease the stigma around mental health. Students reflect and share ideas about mental health and learn about the resources available for support.

The District's health promoting coordinator trained and mentored seven (7) lead teachers in Stop Wondering, Start Knowing and piloted this program to seven (7) classes of Grade 7 students. In addition, twenty-seven (27) secondary students were trained as peer mentors for intermediate students. This program will be expanded throughout the 2019–2020 school year.

The District has fully implemented Dr. Stan Kutcher's Bringing Mental Health to Schools curriculum. This is an evidence-based mental health literacy curriculum that focuses on understanding how to obtain and maintain good mental health. The learning objectives include understanding mental health disorders and their treatments, decreasing stigma regarding mental health and increasing help-seeking efficacy. Extensive training occurred during the previous school year and included thirteen (13) secondary counsellors and thirty-eight (38) PHE teachers. The target group was Grade 9 students; however, many schools taught to multiple grade levels. Clearwater, Logan Lake and Chase delivered this learning to 126 students from grades 8 to 10. Over 1600 students at various schools in Kamloops learned this curriculum.

## Trauma-Informed Practice

In 2018–2019, Dr. Linda O’Neill provided trauma-informed educator professional development to District schools on Kamloops’ North Shore and to Summit Elementary. This year, O’Neill is scheduled to provide trauma-informed practice and trauma-specific interventions training to approximately 200 CUPE staff members and 200 Kamloops Thompson Teachers’ Association (KTTA) members. O’Neill assists counsellors, educators and other helping practitioners who are working in isolated settings to understand secondary trauma experienced by practitioners, complex trauma (developmental trauma disorder), and historical and intergenerational trauma.

During the 2019–2020 school year, sessions on trauma-informed practice will be offered in after-school sessions and during professional development days to education staff members. Also, an engagement session for parents and community providers will be offered.

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; and,
- Resolving critical safety concerns and responding to violence threat risk assessment (VTRA) situations.

The District supports comprehensive training for employees so as to support the principles of a safe and caring school environment. This training is overseen by the Director of Instruction – Elementary Education and Learning Services, 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 provide programs and services to students.

The safety of students is of paramount concern to District employees. According to the 2018 District Engagement, Well-Being and Resiliency Survey, seventy-seven percent (77%) of Grade 4 students, eighty percent (80%) of Grade 7 students and seventy percent (70%) of Grade 10 students feel safe attending school. Through improved programming and supports for learners, all learners can feel safe.

# Student Safety

An 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 third year of developing sustainable PBIS, with fidelity within elementary schools. To date, ten (10) elementary schools have completed a full pilot school program, with additional support from inclusion support teachers. Each year, six (6) more elementary schools to join the PBIS network. This will continue until all schools have been thus supported.

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.

During the 2019–2020 school year, a refreshed interagency protocol on violence threat risk assessment (VTRA) will be developed.

# 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.

During 2018–2019, twenty-seven (27) teachers were trained to deliver BOKS bursts (movements in small spaces or classrooms). A focus group of ten (10) elementary schools with over 1217 grades 3 to 7

students participated. Seven (7) elementary schools participated in a before-school BOKS program, and 457 students and parents participated in an online pre/post survey to determine attitudes and perceptions of well-being for a twelve (12)-week period. Approximately 400 students wore pedometers pre/post a twelve-week BOKS period for eight (8) days each time to determine the impact of moderate to vigorous exercise on physical and mental well-being.

The District provides professional development to educators to meet the K–12 PHE curricular competencies: physical literacy, healthy and active living, and mental well-being. This professional development includes training educators in the DANCEPL3Y (dance-play) curriculum. This curriculum develops physical literacy through dance. DANCEPL3Y uses simple movements and interpersonal coaching skills from a variety of world dance styles (including hip hop, urban, ballroom, Aboriginal, Bollywood, African, jazz/funk) to develop fundamental movement skills and foster positive mental health. Through playful group formations, teachers learn how to create engaging classes in which students can develop confidence through dance, get interactive with their peers and meet the requirements for moderate to vigorous activity. To date, thirty-four (34) elementary teachers have received training to deliver DANCEPL3Y.

## After-School Programming

SD73's after-school program is the largest such program in the province. The program aims to connect students to their passions and interests, connect students with a safe and caring adult and provide quality programming for students during the vulnerable after-school hours. Last year, seventy (70) programs were offered at nine (9) urban and three (3) rural sites. Over 1030 hours of instruction were provided, and 2047 students registered for the program (165 students participated in more than one program). Students are offered programming that focuses on movement and sports, arts and Cook It, Try It, Like It. Note that the following table does not include data regarding Cook It, Try It, Like It participants.

Total Students	Non-Aboriginal Students	Students with Aboriginal Ancestry	Children in Care	Designations	Rural Students	Urban Students
1071	811	260	5	173	150	1732

The Let's Play program, in association with the Rick Hansen Foundation, has donated sport wheelchairs to support inclusive physical activity opportunities for School District 73. Every year, 3000 elementary students in Kindergarten to Grade 7 District-wide have the opportunity to participate in wheelchair sports. The District is entering its eighth year of scheduling sport wheelchairs from October to June. The wheelchairs are used from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM every day and are fully booked. Every two weeks (every week in small schools), the District transportation system delivers ten (10) sport wheelchairs for use in SD73's elementary physical education classes, intramurals and after-school programs.

Students have the opportunity to try out a variety of activities and games in the wheelchairs, including basketball, hockey, relay races and tag games, and to explore creative play. Instruction focuses on establishing new physical literacy in fundamental skills, knowledge and abilities needed to confidently participate and play with peers.

The outcome of integrating these wheelchairs into the physical education curriculum has raised the playing field for inclusion by increasing awareness of the mobility challenges that some students face and has encouraged physical activity for all. Sport wheelchairs provide freedom for those individuals with mobility impairments who otherwise may not have been able to actively participate in physical activities with their peers.

Kamloops Adapted Sports Associations (KASA) provides opportunity to SD73 secondary students in grades 8 to 12 to integrate wheelchair sports into physical and health education classes. Last year, the District had approximately 1000 riders, even though participation is dependent on SD73's transportation availability.

# Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

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 addition to educational opportunities, creating and maintaining partnerships and dialogue with LGBTQ2S+ communities to increase cooperation and collaboration between home, school and community is a priority. Each District K–12 school has a sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) lead teacher who provides age-appropriate curriculum resources, community partner information and support for students, families and colleagues. Professional development is provided throughout the year so that educators learn how to create school settings and learning environments that are safe, inclusive spaces for all learners. The number of diversity resources signed out of the District learning commons doubled from the previous year and more diversity kits, literacy circle kits and diversity books were signed out.

All secondary schools have an active gender sexuality alliance group, facilitated by a teacher sponsor. In addition, the District hosts District-wide social activities for students. Six (6) senior secondary students who identified as being members of the LGBTQ2S+ community also participated in a TRU Mind the Gap program in the 2018–2019 school year that consisted of TRU students acting as peer mentors to SD73 students. These students met with adult educators facilitating the sessions, in an effort to ease the transition to TRU.

To enhance services in the area of SOGI during 2019–2020, a District gender sexuality alliance group 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 PHE curricular competencies of social and community health and mental well-being through delivering Options for Sexual Health (OPT) education. OPT curriculum focuses on building the lifelong health of young people by providing 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 in K–10. Over eighty (80) educators attended professional development sessions in the last school year. During 2019–2020, PHE teachers will receive Options for Sexual Health curriculum training.

# Conclusion

All of our SD73 learners are unique learners and have the right to equitable access to, and equitable participation in, quality education. It is our belief that the District and its schools will value diversity and respond to the diverse social and cultural needs of the individuals and 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, harassment and violence, educational excellence and equity are attainable.



