



“Just like the ‘North Star’ is a navigational guide in its constant and bright spot in the sky, success for all students for today and tomorrow must be the constant guiding light for the work of all educators and communities.” (R. Spina)

Success for ALL Learners ~ Today and Tomorrow



**FINAL REPORT
OF THE
STRATEGIC PLANNING
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MAY 2014**

**FOUR STRATEGIC
PRIORITIES
2014-2019**

**REVISED VISION, MISSION, AND
VALUE STATEMENTS
SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen)**

“Educators will remain the most important resource in the battle to provide every child with a quality education, and thus leaders must commit to creating conditions in which those educators can continue to grow and learn as professionals.”

Learning by Doing



“The Nicola-Similkameen area has a significant Aboriginal population. With the collaborative and robust support of the Aboriginal Education partners, School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen) has the opportunity to lead the province in Aboriginal student and community success.”

Ross C. Spina

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS.....	4
INTRODUCTION	5
ASSUMPTIONS.....	5
METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	6/7
DISTRICT CONTEXT.....	9
PROVINCIAL CONTEXT	10/11
PROPOSED VISION, MISSION AND VALUES STATEMENTS	12
FOUR PROPOSED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES; DEFINITIONS AND SUGGESTED GOAL AREAS	13
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	16
RECOMMENDED GOAL AREAS.....	17
APPENDICES	18

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INTRODUCTION

The Board of Education of School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen) endeavors, through effective governance, policies, and modeling to foster the educational success, well-being, and dignity of ALL learners of the District.

As part of its commitment to quality public education, the Board of Education initiated a comprehensive and inclusive strategic priorities planning process in January 2014.

Mr. Ross Spina, retired Assistant Superintendent, was asked to facilitate the planning process and to work with a District Advisory Committee made up of representatives from the public and partner groups to fulfill the following Board mandate:

- Review and update School District No. 58's Vision, Mission, and Values statements based on extensive consultation with all partner groups.
- Develop a planning process and framework for determining strategic priorities.
- Compile a final report for the Board of Education and the Superintendent.

The work of the Strategic Priorities Advisory Committee was guided by the following three pillars:

INTERNALLY DRIVEN - The District and the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee shall oversee the development and implementation of a strategic planning framework and process that fits the needs of School District No. 58 (Nicola- Similkameen).

INCLUSIVE - The strategic priorities planning process shall involve extensive consultation with all partner groups and the public.

TRANSPARENT - All phases of the strategic planning processes, partner group/public consultations, timelines, findings and reports will be posted on the District Website.

ASSUMPTIONS

The Strategic Priorities Advisory Committee made the following assumptions:

1. The Board of Education of School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen) is committed to strategic planning as an effective process to set district priorities, focus energy and resources, engage students, parents, staff and community and insure that the district, schools and partner groups are working to fulfill the District's vision.
2. The Board of Education recognizes that strategic planning is an ongoing process involving:
 - a) Alignment of district plans, goals and processes with the District's strategic priorities and vision, mission and values.
 - b) Continuous monitoring and measurement of progress on goal attainment.

- c) Adjustment of objectives and strategies when evidence suggests that progress in goal achievement is stalled.
- d) Annual public reporting on District goals.

CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGY FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Planning Advisory Committee engaged in three full-day meetings to develop the planning framework and methodology, develop the public survey, analyze the community results; review and make changes to School District No. 58’s current Vision, Mission and Value statements, and give input and feedback on the draft and final report.

The Conceptual Framework adopted for the strategic priorities planning process included five steps:

1. Broad environmental scan (internal and external)
2. Assessment of Vision, Mission and Values
3. Identification and development of Strategic Priorities involving the Strategic Priorities Advisory Committee, Education partner groups and public consultation
4. Development of a Draft Strategic Priorities Report, vetted by the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee
5. Final Report for the Superintendent and the Board of Education for endorsement.

The strategic priorities planning process involved:

- Determining the District’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats through S.W.O.T exercises. (See appendix 9).
- Reviewing global, provincial and local education issues, including the B.C Education Plan. (See appendix 2).
- Surveying the public and partner groups on strategic priorities. (See appendix 3).
- Consulting with 10 educational partner groups and 2 public meetings to acknowledge their aspirations and expectations with respect to educational priorities (See appendix 1,4,7,8,9).

Meetings were held in Merritt and Princeton throughout March and April with the following Partner Groups as well as a public meeting in both Princeton and Merritt:

1.	RCMP, Community Advocates, Post-Secondary Institutions, Industry Employers
2.	Nicola Valley and Princeton Teachers Union and CUPE employees
3.	Parents, Parent Advisory Council, School Planning Council, students, grandparents, foster parents and future parents.
4.	Aboriginal representatives, First Nations, Metis and First Nations Support Workers
5.	Special Education/Student Support Services, Health and Social Agencies, Early Learning Groups and Self-Identified Groups
6.	Principals and Vice Principals

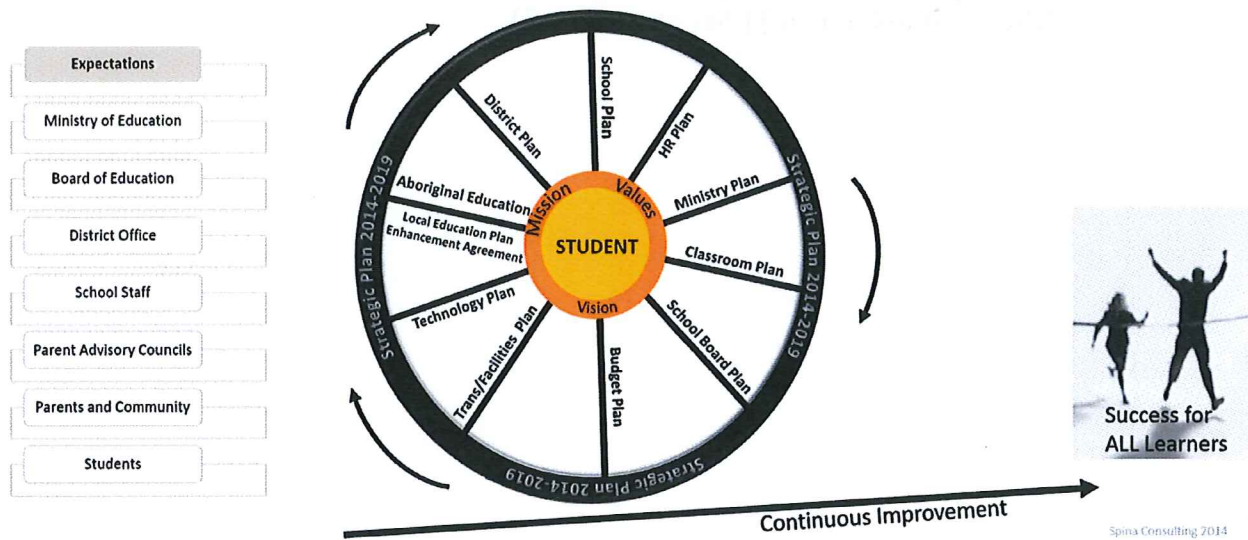
7.	Community Voice Meetings in Princeton and Merritt
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- Providing partner groups an opportunity to give their input and feedback on the proposed Vision, Mission and Values Statements and the proposed Strategic Priorities and goal areas.(See appendix 6)
- Engaging the Strategic Priorities Planning Committee over a three month period and in three full working days to plan, guide, advise, and act on the mandate as requested by the Board of Education of School District No.58 (Nicola-Similkameen) (See appendix 5)

STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The following diagram illustrates what the Strategic Priorities Advisory Committee believes is needed for effective strategic planning.

This framework must be viewed as a coherent whole and underlines the importance of alignment, coherence and continuous improvement. More importantly, it illustrates how each part is essential to realize the inspiring vision of Success for ALL Learners.



- begin with the end in mind -“ Success for ALL Learners”.
- foster a learning community with a focus on continuous improvement.
- align district planning and goals, evaluation and reporting with the District’s stated Vision, Mission, and Values and with the adopted Strategic Priorities.
- promote awareness in understanding the aspirations and expectations of the education partner groups and the public.

DISTRICT CONTEXT

School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen), enrolled approximately 2397 students in the fall of 2013, serving a general population of approximately 17000 people living in the communities and surrounding areas of Merritt and Princeton (BC Stats). Four industries: mining, forestry, the public sector, and tourism, employ most of the people in this area. Approximately 37.3% of the district's population is classified rural.

There has been a decrease in student population for the last ten years. The decrease will continue until approximately 2017 when we will see it level off or increase slightly. The percentage of students declaring Aboriginal ancestry has increased. Forty-five percent of the student population of School District No. 58 is Aboriginal, with some schools registering 50% or more of their students as Aboriginal. Trends in student achievement, particularly the Six Year Completion Rate has been positive; however, there continues to be a need for improvement in many educational outcomes being measured.

With that said, there are significant challenges and opportunities for improving achievement in School District No. 58. The challenges are outlined not as justification, but in recognition of the hardships and difficulties our students must overcome to achieve their potential. *BC Stats: Local Health Statistical Profiles 2012* ranked 57 British Columbia School Districts and eighty-four Health Regions from best to worst:

Local Health Statistic Profiles

Index	Ranking out of 57 School Districts	Princeton Ranking out of 84 Regions	Merritt Ranking out of 84 Regions
Youth at Risk	51 st	18 th	80 th
Children at Risk	47 th	35 th	75 th
Health	49 th	70 th	72 nd
Crime Rate	50 th	38 th	81 st
Economic Hardship	40 th	31 st	71 st
Education	43 rd	37 th	72 nd
Socio-Economics	46 th	39 th	75 th

The 2011/12 – 2012/13 results for the District from the Early Development Instrument indicated that the overall vulnerability rate is 35%. District wide, vulnerability was the highest on the Physical Health & Well-Being scale at 25%. Child vulnerability was lowest on the Language & Cognitive Development scale at 11%. Over the last (*four Waves*), the vulnerability rate has remained stable with approximately a third of Nicola-Similkameen's kindergarten population being vulnerable.

Finally, economics continue to be a concern in both Merritt and Princeton. Average incomes in both communities fall well below the provincial average and the percent of population relying on income assistance and employment insurance are double the provincial average in Merritt and sixty percent higher in Princeton.

So although there are significant challenges in developing improvement plans in the district, there are benefits as well, including the small size of the communities and each of the schools. This combined with effective teachers, and a culture of reflection and commitment to continuous improvement can be a significant advantage to the improvement of student success.

PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

The Provincial Mandate is included in this report to demonstrate the alignment between the BC Ministry of Education Goals for Education, and the Four Strategic Priorities proposed for School District No. 58.

The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

A quality education system assists in the development of human potential and improves the well-being of each individual in British Columbia Society.

Goals of Education

Prime Goal of Public Schools - Supported by the Family and Community

- Intellectual Development - to develop the ability of students to analyze critically, reason and think independently, and acquire basic learning skills and bodies of knowledge; to develop in students a lifelong appreciation of learning, a curiosity about the world around them and a capacity for creative thought and expression.

Goals that are shared among Schools, the Family and Community.

Schools are expected to play a major role, through learning experiences and supervised practice, in helping students to achieve the following goals:

- Human and Social Development - to develop in students a sense of self-worth and personal initiative; to develop an appreciation of fine arts and an understanding of cultural heritage; to develop an understanding of the importance of physical health and well-being; to develop a sense of social responsibility and a tolerance and respect for the ideas and beliefs of others.
- Career Development - to prepare students to attain their career and occupational objectives; to assist in the development of effective work habits and flexibility to deal with change in the work place.

Attributes of the Public School System

- Accessibility – a variety of programs is available in the province to meet the full range of student needs.

- Relevance – programs are current, and relevant to the needs of the learner.
- Equity – resources are allocated fairly.
- Quality – professional teaching and administration are of high quality.
- Accountability – resources are allocated in a cost-effective manner; parents and the community are informed of the progress of schools and are involved as parents in planning

BC Ministry of Education
Governance and Legislation Branch
August 1, 2013

PROPOSED VISION, MISSION AND VALUES STATEMENTS

“Success for ALL Learners ~ Today and Tomorrow”

PROPOSED MISSION - The District will do this work by:

- Supporting **excellence** in teaching and learning
- Challenging and supporting staff and our students to pursue their **personal best**
- Recognizing and celebrating **cultural diversity** and the **heritage** of our communities
- Encouraging **parental involvement** with students at home and school through meaningful relationships with families and communities
- Fostering **resiliency, resourcefulness, respect and independence**
- Inspiring **curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking** in all students and staff to achieve their full potential
- Providing **safe and nurturing** learning environments for **ALL** students to achieve their full potential
- Recruiting the best qualified personnel, providing ongoing, systematic professional development and retaining outstanding staff
- Providing timely, relevant and useful information and data to students, staff, parents and partner groups

PROPOSED CORE VALUE STATEMENTS - The District values:

- **Inclusive** education and partnerships
- **The diversity** of our communities
- **Fairness** and **due process** in decision making
- **The heritage** and **culture** of Aboriginal (Inuit, Indian and Metis) and First Nations people, with **recognition** of the traditional territory of the local Nle'kepmx and Syilx peoples
- **The dignity** of all individuals
- The important role of parents and caregivers in **support** of their child's education
- The pursuit of **excellence** and **personal best**
- **The well-being** of students and staff
- Parental and student **choice with respect to how, when, and where learning takes place**
- Responsible **Citizenship**
- Regular, effective and relevant communications
- Positive relationships based on trust and mutual respect
- Innovation and promising educational practices

FOUR PROPOSED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES DEFINITIONS AND SUGGESTED GOAL AREAS

FOUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2014-2019

Definitions and suggested goal areas

LEARNING

Learning is the core work of the school district. Learning involves students actively engaged in gaining knowledge, skills, understanding, and attitudes to be successful in and adaptable to a changing world. Teachers, support staff and district staff are committed to and engaged in continuous learning and improvement of programs and services offered to ensure success for all learners.

"...In a community, the learners-including staff-are enriched by collective meaning-making, mentorship, encouragement and an understanding of the perspectives and unique qualities of an increasingly diverse membership...." Learning Spaces (2006)

Suggested goal areas:

- Student and staff engagement
- Personalized Learning and Differentiation
- Fundamental Skill development in literacy and numeracy
- Early identification of critical learning outcomes and continuity of assessment and support throughout school life
- Citizenship Responsibilities (local, national, global)
- Teacher learning for improving student learning outcomes
- Learning empowered by technology
- Inclusion -"Inclusion is a sense of belonging - people are valued, respected and included."
- Fine arts learning and appreciation
- Extra-curricular, athletics, and experiential learning opportunities
- Communication
- Aboriginal Student Achievement Targets
- Teacher Learning around indigenous people and colonial history
- Canada's colonial history
- Teacher Mentoring
- Peer Learning
- Teacher collaboration
- Skilled trades opportunities

WELL BEING

Well-being is a term describing learning and working conditions that are physically, socially and emotionally supportive and safe. Well-being also involves the teaching and learning of knowledge, skills and attitudes about healthy living, healthy relationships, physical health, safety, pro-social behaviour, resilience, resourcefulness, and family, community and global responsibility. It is also safe to assume that when the social and emotional well-being of staff is supported, their teaching and work is more fulfilling.

“Research shows that when students’ social and emotional well-being is supported, their academics dramatically improve.” (SELT Team 2014).

Suggested goal areas:

- Safe/Healthy Schools Initiatives
- Inclusive Practices - all individuals regardless of background, origin, age, race and ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual orientation/identity, and different abilities are culturally and socially accepted, welcomed, and fairly and respectfully treated
- Student - support for their physical, emotional and mental health
- Staff - support for their physical, emotional and mental health
- Communication
- Aboriginal Student Support
- Advocacy (both for oneself and others)
- Support for Children-in-care

COMMUNITY

Involves individuals and groups working and learning interdependently to improve quality of life for all.

School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen) has a culturally rich and diverse community that can contribute positively to the learning experiences of students. Connecting students with their community encourages everyone to take responsibility for the human, social and career development of students and their transition to adulthood.

“...In a community, the learners-including staff-are enriched by collective meaning-making, mentorship, encouragement and an understanding of the perspectives and unique qualities of an increasingly diverse membership...” Learning Spaces (2006)

Suggested goal areas:

- Partnerships-working with community partners to identify and access resources and to build relationships that enhance opportunities for student learning, inclusiveness, and shared responsibility

- Cultural diversity - prioritize programs and practices that support diversity and intercultural understanding, including the rich heritage and traditional Aboriginal teaching, learning and knowledge
- Inclusion in terms of community - “Inclusion is a sense of belonging - people are valued, respected and welcomed”
- Community, Global, and Digital Citizenship understanding and responsibilities
- Communication

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Organizational excellence requires staying true to the Vision, Mission and Values of School District No. 58. It is a commitment to improving student achievement and success through quality teaching and relevant programs, effective use of data for planning and decision making, and development of strategic goals/strategies that focus on continuous improvement for students and staff.

Suggested goal areas:

- Staff learning – enhancing instructional practices based on research and promising practices that improve student engagement and achievement
- Organizational alignment in planning, measuring and reporting on student and district success
- Employee well-being- supporting the mental, physical and emotional health of staff
- Communication
- Align Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements with District planning and goal setting
- Process, structures, hierarchy (clarity of roles and responsibilities)
- Innovation and promising educational practices
- Partnership with outside organizations

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

1. Adopt the proposed Vision, Mission and Values statements.
2. Adopt the four proposed Strategic Priorities: Learning, Well-Being, Community, and Organizational Excellence.
3. Initiate a comprehensive process for widely broadcasting the revised Vision, Mission and Values Statements and the Four Strategic Priorities and recommended goal areas, including an updated and refreshed District Webpage.
4. Align district goals with the Four Strategic Priorities.
5. Ensure that the District Implementation Plan includes clear goals, strategic objectives to achieve the goals, and measures and evidence that will be used to determine and communicate goal achievement.
6. Adopt an annual public reporting process for broadly communicating (internally and externally) alignment and progress on the Strategic Priorities Goals.

RECOMMENDED GOAL AREAS

The Strategic Planning Committee members discussed and identified the following recommended goal areas for submission to the Trustees of the Board of Education. This extensive list was based on evidence the committee gathered through meetings, discussions with committee members, survey results, SWOT, and reflection on input from the public meetings. It is also understood that these goals are recommendations and that they will continue to be prioritized and reduced in number through the annual implementation process.

LEARNING

- Create learning environments that support student and staff engagement.
- Support teachers and schools in implementing personalized learning and differentiation.
- Achieve learning standards in numeracy and literacy that meet or exceed provincial averages.
- Implement consistent processes for the early identification of students' needs in order to provide effective support and intervention.
- Create inclusive, vibrant learning environments where people are valued, respected and have a sense of belonging.

WELL-BEING

- Engage students, parents, staff, and community partners on defining well-being and safety from their perspectives.
- Foster a culture of Health, Safety, and Wellness for all persons, community partner groups working and learning in School District No. 58

COMMUNITY

- Consult with parents, students, schools, education partner groups, and the public on preferred and effective communication methods.
- Strengthen relationships/partnerships with education partners and community organizations to support student transitions and to broaden educational opportunities for students.
- Enhance two-way communication between schools, parents and the community through access to information about curriculum, fine arts, extra-curricular, and athletic programs.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- Enhance two-way communication mediums at all levels (internally and externally) to keep staff and community informed.
- Develop processes for aligning district plans with school plans.
- Model and promote innovative thinking and practices.
- Foster life-long learning for staff, students and community, and support professional learning for staff.

Appendices:
Key documents. *TO BE ADDED*

S.W.O.T
Minutes
PowerPoint's
Survey results
Handouts

“Timely feedback is a critical element in any process to promote continuous improvement and ongoing learning. Individuals and teams must have access to the data and information that enable them to make adjustments as they are engaged in their work, rather than when it is completed.”

Learning by Doing

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest appreciation to the parents, students, educational partner groups and the public for their valuable contributions to this final report.

Thank you to Jason McAllister for his work in maintaining and posting current strategic planning information of the District Website.

I owe special gratitude to Carla Bacon for she has been invaluable in maintaining minutes and notes of every partner group, public and Advisory Committee meetings. As well, I thank her for her assistance in formatting the final report.

I extend my appreciation to Karen Goetz for chairing the Strategic Priorities Advisory Committee and for her skilled assistance in editing the final report.

My heartfelt thanks to the members of the Strategic Priorities Advisory Committee for their patience, good counsel, insights and engagement throughout the strategic priorities planning process.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Robert Peacock, Superintendent, and his Senior Staff, and the Board of Education of School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen) for giving me the opportunity to facilitate this important work and process.

