



# Enhancing Student Learning Report 2021-2022

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School District No. 58 – Nicola Similkameen

Strategic Plan – Success for ALL Learners ~ Today and Tomorrow

Strategic Plan Year – Year 2 of 3 (Possible Extension)

Board Approval – Confirmed September 28, 2022



We recognize that we learn, teach and work on the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the Nl̓eʔk̓əpm̓x and Syilx people and we acknowledge our Metis communities and their contributions to the Aboriginal ways of being, knowing and doing in Canada

Success for ALL Learners ~ Today and Tomorrow

## Framework for Enhancing Student Learning

The Framework for Enhancing Student Learning brings a formalized approach to the planning and reporting expectations for schools with a focus on enhancing student learning and success. It combines accountability with evidence-informed decision making and system-wide continuous improvement to support equity of outcomes for all students in the provincial K-12 public system. The Framework also reflects a public commitment by Indigenous peoples, Indigenous rightsholders, education partners and communities to work together to improve student learning and enhance the intellectual, social and career development of all learners.

In School District 58, the Enhancing Student Learning Framework is built on a commitment to co-create, align, and implement planning documents at the classroom, school, district, and governance levels. The ongoing planning process is also aligned with the goal of operationalizing the [Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action](#) and embedding the Indigenous Principles of Learning into everything we do. These processes also support the Ministry of Education's vision of the Educated Citizen and Policy for Student Success.

## District Context

The Nicola-Similkameen District is found in the traditional, unceded territories of the Nle?kepmx and Syilx people and we acknowledge our Metis communities and their contributions to the Aboriginal ways of being, doing and knowing in Canada. The district serves approximately 2400 students with over 40% of our students declaring Indigenous ancestry. We are proud to have strong relationships with our six local First Nations communities and this is reflected in our day-to-day work, as well as the district's commitment to operationalizing both our joint Local Education Agreement and our Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement. Our vision is to provide 'Success for ALL Learners ~ Today and Tomorrow' and our guiding principles include inclusion, innovation, relationship, well-being, honoring of culture and language of our traditional territories, and pursuit of personal excellence.

Operationalization of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action was one of our five objectives this year and examples of this commitment are embedded in the work we do across the district. We look forward to strengthening what we believe are promising practices in this area through our involvement in the Equity in Action project which was initiated with our first orientation meeting in November 2021.

Last year was perhaps the most challenging year in School District No. 58's history. A summer of wildfires resulted in the evacuation of Merritt and approximately three quarters of the student population. The entire district was then severely impacted by floods on November 15<sup>th</sup>. The flood resulted in significant property damage in Princeton, Merritt and surrounding communities and a second evacuation, as well as the closure of all schools within the district. Three Princeton schools relocated into one school with part-time schedules for two weeks in December because of water infrastructure damage. Three flooded schools in Merritt relocated into two churches, three host schools, a portion of Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and subsequently a re-opened middle school. During this time the district board office and maintenance shop were unavailable due to flood damage resulting in a makeshift office in a closed bakery. Two of the three schools were re-opened in April while the third, and largest elementary school, reopened in September of this year. Both operations and the board

office were able to return to their repaired spaces in late July. Three of the four Princeton schools remain without drinking water; however, we are pleased to report that as of September 2022 all students and staff are back in their original, repaired spaces. We respectfully acknowledge that for many families and communities, the impact of the flood continues to be a significant challenge impacting their day to day lives.

The wildfire and flooding events combined with the pandemic has impacted both our planning and our ability to implement the necessary strategies and structures to meet our strategic plan goals and objectives. With that said, it is important to note that the district, with help from local, regional, and provincial partners, was able to provide much needed assistance in the following areas: relationship and mental health support, identifying immediate needs and finding solutions, and returning to an educational focus while still ensuring that appropriate individual supports are in place. We are grateful to be looking towards a year where we hopefully can leave crisis response mode and return to the privilege of teaching the whole child while still serving families during challenging times.

We are proud of the work that was done, and we are grateful for the ongoing support that was provided.

### Current Strategic Plan Priorities

The plan outlines the [three goal areas](#):

- Meaning and Purpose,
- Appreciation and Respect, and
- Meaningful Connections.

Due to the challenges of last year, the strategic plan priorities remain the same:

1. Completion of the Equity Scan,
2. Development of District Positive Mental Health and Compassionate Care Plan,
3. [Completion of District Communication Plan](#),
4. Operationalizing Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action for All, and
5. [Continuing Literacy and Numeracy Professional Learning Opportunities](#)



### District Successes

Like other districts, we have seen a positive trend in both our graduation and completion rates. This increase has been the result of a combination of very specific structures, strategies, and partnerships across the district. Examples of this includes implementing class profiles and Diploma Verification Reviews, engaging in Local Education Agreement Data Sharing, and intensely focused Post-Secondary Transition and Completion support.

After a lengthy planning process due to the Pandemic, the [Strategic Plan](#) was completed and presented to the Board in June 2021. This process left the district optimistic and energized; however, fires and floods meant that many of the implementation plans had to be re-envisioned. Our ability to meet our learning community where they are at during a time of crisis highlights that the goal areas of the Strategic Plan are relevant, meaningful, and impactful to staff, students, and families.

A final strength to note for this report is the determined work that is being completed in Indigenous education. A commitment to equity and a focus on reconciliation continues to move the district forward in the important areas of embedding local First Nation Principles of Learning, culture, language, technology, and traditional ways of knowing and being into the day-to-day school experiences of students. Culture camps, language classes, First Nations Support workers, elder connections, MMIWG committee work, Ed Coordinator collaboration, and welcome dinners, just to name a few strategies, all speak to the commitment that the district has to improving the experiences of indigenous students and families.

### Strategic Engagement

The Strategic Plan infographic and [video](#) above outlines the process that the Strategic Plan Committee completed in June of 2021.



The dreams, goals, objectives, and actions items were developed during a very challenging time; however, the district is very grateful to the over 450 voices that contributed to the appreciative inquiry process and is proud that both the committee and stakeholders have reported feeling proud, optimistic, and energized by the final plan.

### Student Performance Data Analysis and Interpretation

#### *Literacy (Intellectual Development)*

*Analysis of Data:* (Due to flooding the FSA 2021/2022 FSA Could not be completed. 2020/2021 information is below)

Participation rates for grade 4 and 7 students in the areas of reading and writing have been relatively stable over the last three-year period. Grade 4 writing and Grade 7 reading rates have been consistently higher than the average provincial rate. Indigenous student rates also reflect this trend with the district being higher than the average Provincial rate for Indigenous students. Rates for students with diverse needs are lower within the district when compared to all students; however, the rates overall remain higher than the average Provincial rate for students with diverse needs.

*Interpretation of Data:*

The importance of high participation rates is emphasized by the district and supported by the Board of Education. With this being said, there is a consistent application of the process for excusing students when a hardship is identified at the school level.

#### *Performance*

Grade 4 Reading results for 2020/2021 indicated that 78% of students are 'On Track' or 'Extending'. 71% of grade 4 students performed as either 'On Track' or 'Extending' in writing. Grade 7 Reading results for 2020/2021 indicated that 75% of students are 'On Track'. 83% of grade 7 students performed as either 'On Track' or 'Extending' in writing. The three-year trend is somewhat difficult to analyze due to a relatively small cohort size; however, the district is pleased to see a higher rate in the 2020/2021 year and continues to focus on this important measurement. A general analysis of population groups points to the need to reduce the achievement gap between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students, while also addressing the clear gap between students living off reserve vs student living on reserve, as well as the gap between students with diverse needs and all students.

#### *Interpretation of Data:*

A comparison of the overall district results for all students, Indigenous students, students living on reserve, students living off reserve, and students with diverse abilities with the average Provincial rates indicate that the district's results are generally lower. There is an ongoing commitment to improve and reduce the gap; however, it is important to recognize the improvement that is taking place at the elementary level across the district.

#### **Grade 10 Literacy Assessment:**

##### *Analysis of Data:*

118 grade 10 students took part in the Grade 10 Literacy Assessment in their Grade 10 year. This represents 78% of our total grade 10 students. A review of the Indigenous students' results also indicate that the participation rate was fairly consistent, as all groups of students were between 73% and 78%.

##### *Performance*

60 of the 118 writers were 'proficient' on the Grade 10 Literacy Assessment. This represents 52% of the overall cohort. Indigenous students performed lower than non-Indigenous students, as did students with diverse needs compared to all students. Of note was the low number of Status – On Reserve students that scored at either at a proficient or extending level – 15%

#### **Student Learning Survey Results:**

- Gr. 3 & 4 - I feel I am getting better at reading – 76%
- Gr. 7 – I continue to get better at reading – 68%
- Gr. 10 – I continue to get better at reading - 58%
- Gr. 12 – I continue to get better at reading - 51%
- Gr. 3 & 4 - I feel I am getting better at writing – 76%
- Gr. 7 – I continue to get better at writing – 54%
- Gr. 10 – I continue to get better at writing - 56%
- Gr. 12 – I continue to get better at writing - 62%

#### *Interpretation of Data:*

As stated earlier in the document due to the flood Foundational Skills Assessment results for 2021-2022 school year are not available. The Grade 10 Literacy Assessment data did indicate a slight increase from 47% to 52% of students performing at a proficient level; however, a performance gap remains between

the district and the province in Literacy. The district is performing at a lower rate at the secondary level and as a result there is a further need to analyze the data and support improvement strategies in this area.

*Response to Data:*

Due to the flood the district was unable to fully implement the plan below and as a result we will continue with this important work.

Over the past several years, the Nicola-Similkameen district has invested heavily in literacy support at the Kindergarten, Gr.1 and Gr. 2 levels. Literacy 2021 is a District wide research-based initiative lead by Dr. Janet Mort and continues to have a positive impact on our youngest students as well as our staff. The lessons learned and the associated implemented strategies will now be moved into our late primary and intermediate years across the district. This work, along with a focus on updating our district wide assessment plan and our involvement with the updated Provincial Performance Standards, will continue to support reading and writing at the elementary level. The Grade 10 and 12 Literacy Assessment results are of concern to the district and require further review and response. The district will be striking a Secondary Literacy Assessment Committee to review the data further and to suggest strategies for improvement. This aligns with the district objective to continue with literacy and numeracy professional learning opportunities.

***Numeracy (Intellectual Development)***

***Analysis of Data: (Due to flooding the FSA 2021/2022 FSA Could not be completed. 2020/2021 information is below)***

Participation rates for grade 4 and 7 students in the areas of numeracy have been relatively stable over the last three-year period. Grade 4 and 7 numeracy rates have been consistently higher than the average Provincial rate. Indigenous student rates also reflect this trend with the district being higher than the average Provincial rate for Indigenous students. Rates for students with diverse needs are lower within the district when compared to all students or other groups; however, the rates overall remain higher than the average Provincial rate.

*Interpretation of Data:*

The importance of high participation rates is emphasized by the district and supported by the Board of Education. With this being said, there is a consistent application of the process for excusing students when a hardship is identified at the school level.

*Performance:*

**FSA Numeracy Grade 4 and Grade 7**

Grade 4 Numeracy results for 2020/2021 indicated that 62% of students are 'On Track' or 'Extending'. Grade 7 Numeracy results for 2020/2021 indicated that 58% of students are 'On Track'. The three-year trend is somewhat difficult to analyze due to a relatively small cohort size; however, results are consistently below the Provincial average. A general analysis of student groups points to the need to

maintain or reduce the equity gap between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students while addressing the clear equity gap between students living on reserve and off reserve, as well as the recent gap between students with diverse needs and all students.

### Numeracy 10 Assessment

68% of writers completed the Numeracy 10 Assessment in the grade 10 year during the 2020-2021 school year. 19% of students performed at 'Proficient'. This is an increase of 4% from 2019-2020. Substantial gaps for the 2020-2021 data between Indigenous Students (12%) and Status – On Reserve Students (4%) compared to All Students was also noted.

### Student Learning Survey Results:

- Gr. 3 & 4 - I feel I am getting better at math – 70%
- Gr. 7 – I continue to get better at math – 65%
- Gr. 10 – I continue to get better at math 55%
- Gr. 12 – I continue to get better at math 45%

### Interpretation of Data:

Numeracy results are, and have been, consistently lower across all grade level and population groups when compared to the Provincial average.

### Response to Data:

Due to the flood the district was unable to fully implement the plan below and as a result will continue with this work. Numeracy is an area of concern for the district and will be a priority for the 2022-2023 year and beyond. The district will initiate a Secondary Numeracy Assessment Committee to analyze the results and implement improved strategies going forward. At the elementary level, professional learning will be offered to support teachers with the new curriculum and at the elementary level the lessons learned from Literacy 2021 will be developed and implemented in numeracy as we use district assessment tracking to inform classroom instruction and school goals in numeracy.

### Human and Social Development

#### Analysis of Data:

Example - [Student Learning Survey Results](#)



In three of the four questions asked above, our percentage of positive responses tends to be lower than the provincial average responses. Our indigenous students generally have similar rates of positive

responses when compared to all student responses, and in some cases have a higher percentage of positive responses. Of note and concern for us last year when looking at the data, were grade 10 indigenous students' responses around both feeling welcomed and feeling as if they belong. This year we have seen a reduction in the grade 10 gap between Status – Off Reserve and Status – On Reserve students.

#### *Interpretation of Data:*

Both Merritt and Princeton are communities that have provincially high rates of social, emotional, and economic vulnerability. The surrounding indigenous communities are similarly often faced with considerable challenges. Our data would support the premise of schools being reflections of the community at large: if students don't feel a sense of safety/stability/belonging at home or in the community, it may be harder for them to recognize and acknowledge that schools can be and are positive places. Similarly, due to the fires and floods, schools will need to recognize that given the considerable stress and trauma that face many of our students, we need to continue to provide compassionate and trauma-informed care to students of all ages. We need to ensure that all students have every opportunity to be welcomed, feel safe, and celebrated by adults and their peers. We also need to ensure that assumptions are not being made about who are and who are not feeling like they are a part of a caring and secure school community. The adults need to be intentional both in support of individual students as well as for the school community at large.

#### *Response to Data:*

The Nicola-Similkameen District believes it needs to respond with the following action items:

1. Look at the previous years and determine how much of this has been impacted by COVID, fires, floods, and students' traumatic experiences?
2. Using an RTI lens, look at specific schools to determine if there are site specific needs that need to be addressed and meet with school teams to discuss results. Meet with Social Emotional Learning Team and admin team to plan levelled interventions/supports based on data review and qualitative discussions; have this planning be a part of informing the District Mental Health Plan.
3. Be strategic and clear in ensuring that every student has access to positive mental health support and mental health literacy teaching and similarly involve staff and families in this learning.
4. Our alternate programs will continue to focus on the youth they serve using trauma informed, culturally appropriate and place-based pedagogy. Our partnership with Take a Hike will help to build a community of professional learning and mental health supports for youth that will have benefits far across the district and in community.
5. Continue to offer diverse extracurricular activities to increase engagement and lifelong learning opportunities.
6. The Family Affordability Grant will be used to strategically address needs as identified by stakeholder partners.



## Career Development

### Analysis of Data:

#### Example – [Five Year Completion Rate](#)

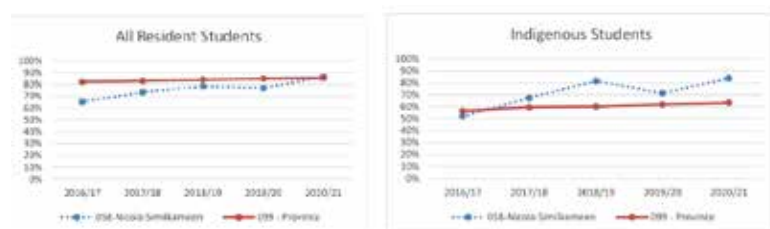


Figure 67: 5 Year Completion Rate - All Resident Students. Figure 68: 5 Year Completion Rate - Indigenous Students

The data indicates that the Nicola-Similkameen's First-Time Grade 12 Graduation Rate has increased over the previous five years. This includes Indigenous students, students living on reserve, and students living off reserve. Results for the students with diverse abilities varies widely due to having a small cohort group. The six-year completion rate has also increased over the last five-years, and it is fair to say that the equity gap in the district between non-Indigenous students and Indigenous students is relatively small. The rates overall have been typically lower than the Provincial average; however, this year we are pleased to report that the 5-year completion rate for All Students was slightly above.

### Interpretation of Data:

Improving graduation rates, and specifically the six-year completion rate, has been a top priority of the Nicola-Similkameen District for the past seven years. It was very apparent that the six-year completion rate for all students was unacceptable, and as a result several improvement strategies at the secondary level were put in place.

In terms of students with diverse abilities' graduation rates, the small cohort groups do have an impact on a year-to-year basis; however, it is the goal of the district to maintain the recent improvement for all students and to address any gaps experienced by students with diverse abilities.

### Response to Data:

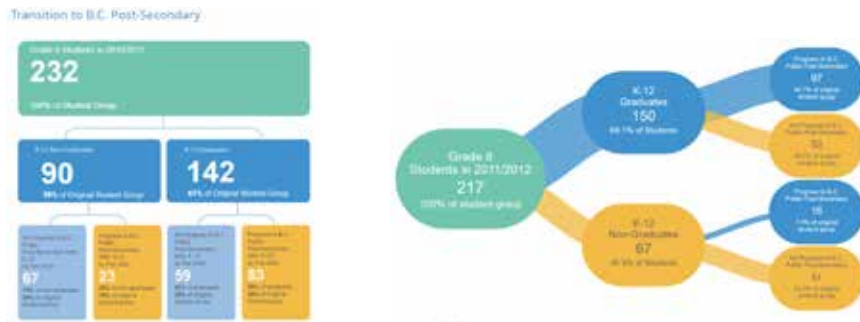
As stated last year, the most important strategies to date include the development of class profiles across the district and regular Diploma Verification Review meetings at the gr. 10, 11 and 12 levels. These processes have supported the important focus that needs to be on students throughout their graduation years. This increased level of understanding of each student has provided secondary teams with the information they need to quickly and successfully intervene when a student is experiencing barriers along their graduation path. This RTI strategy, has pushed the six-year completion rate in 2018/2019 and most recently the five-year completion rate, to an all-time high. During the 2018/2019 year we experienced a crossing of the equity line with 89% of our Indigenous students graduating. Students living on-reserve have been supported through a data and information sharing strategy via our Local Education Agreement. Community Education Coordinators are provided with individual student

results three times a year and are invited to regular DVR meetings. This strategy will be expanded to the students living off-reserve in 2022-2023.

## Post-Secondary Transition (Career Development)

### Analysis of Data:

#### Example of Post-Secondary Transition Data



Post-Secondary Institute Immediate Transition Rate for the 2019-2020 school year for All Students was at 40% which is a very slight decline from the previous year. This is approximately 10% lower than the Provincial Average. The Indigenous Student transition rate is higher than the District All Student rate as well as the Provincial Indigenous student rate by approximately 10%. The Post-Secondary Institute 3 Year Transition Rate is also higher for All Students and Indigenous Students. The Indigenous Student rate is 70% and surpasses the Provincial rate by approximately 15%. A complete analysis of the data remains somewhat difficult; however, it is a goal of the district to continue to examine the post-secondary transition rates more effectively as the goal is to have all rates at or above the Provincial average.

Student responses for the 2020/2021 Student Learning Survey indicate that 28% of grade 10 students and 36% of grade 12 students are satisfied that school is preparing them for post-secondary education with Indigenous students responding higher in grade 12 with a rate of 39%. 18% of all students indicated that they are satisfied that school is preparing them for a job in the future.

### Interpretation of Data:

As noted last year post-secondary transition rates similar to completion rates were identified as a concern within the district approximately five years ago. Alongside the focus and strategies to improve graduation and six-year completions rates was a commitment to implementing strategies to improve the post-secondary transition rate.

### Response to Data:

We are confident that we are seeing improvements in the student transition rate to post-secondary opportunities. The district will continue to support the partnership with the Nicola-Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) to maintain and expand on the [post-secondary transition support](#) listed below.

- Academic counseling
- Application completion support
- Mentoring
- Post-secondary transition workshops
- First year post-secondary support

### Existing and/or Emerging Areas of Need

Analysis and interpretation of the data clearly indicate that there continues to be a need to address the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, as well as the disparity in achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. Although the completion rates are strong, students need to improve their overall achievement rates and strong literacy and numeracy skills will support this.

### Adjustments and Adaptations

The 2021-2022 school year posed challenges never experienced before in the district. Due to these challenges the original plans for enhancing student learning needed to be temporarily put aside. 2022-2023 has begun with a sense of normalcy and a renewed energy for the return to a focus on student wellness, learning, the Strategic Plan, and the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning. During the 2021-2022 school year the district participated in the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Self-Evaluation process and Peer Review. The following considerations will be implemented into the 2022-2023 strategic planning work.

#### Numeracy

- include relevant cohort data in addition to providing data trends over time
- share how qualitative sources are being used for information and evidence to identify strategic goals
- conduct an analysis of evidence and data to reveal inequities, with special attention to indigenous students, children and youth in care, and students with disabilities or diverse abilities

#### Strategic Planning

- document a clear and transparent engagement process and communicate this information to the local community
- develop additional paths for students to give and receive information and ensure student trustees represent the diversity of the student population

#### Alignment

- align district annual financial plan, operational plans and school plans to the strategic plan

### Alignment for Successful Implementation

School District 58 has a strong connection to the development of the Enhancing Student Learning Framework. Below you will see that the District Enhancing Learning plan aligns with the June 2021 Strategic Plan. This includes updated Enhancing Learning Plans for each of the schools across the district. The district is planning to return to the annual Enhancing Student Learning Café in April of 2023 and looks forward to showcasing the plans and work completed at both the school and district level. The linked [diagram](#) illustrates the district's planning process and the ongoing alignment of the planning documents.