

Vancouver Island West School District #84



Enhancing Student Learning Report September 2023

In Review of Year 3 of [*Strategic Plan, 2020-2025: Our Framework for Enhancing Equity and Achievement*](#)



Approved by Board of Education on September 11, 2023

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction: District Context.....	1
Section A: Reflecting Back <i>2022-23 Student Learning Outcomes</i>	2
Intellectual Development	2
Educational Outcome 1: Literacy	2
Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?.....	6
Educational Outcome 2: Numeracy	8
Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?.....	10
Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?.....	12
Human and Social Development.....	13
Educational Outcome 3: Students Feel Welcome, Safe, and Connected	13
Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?.....	15
Career Development	16
Educational Outcome 4: Students will Graduate	16
Relevant Additional/Local Data and Evidence	17
Educational Outcome 5: Life and Career Core Competencies	18
Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?.....	19
Section B: Moving Forward <i>Planning and Adjusting for Continuous Improvement</i>	20
Current Strategic Plan Priorities	20
Celebrating our Successes for the Past Year.....	21
Existing and/or Emerging Areas for Growth (So what?).....	22
Strategic Engagement	23
Adjustment and Adaptations: Next Steps	25
Alignment for Successful Implementation	27
Conclusion	28

Introduction: District Context

The Vancouver Island West School District #84 (SD84) acknowledges and gives thanks that we work, play and live on the traditional territory of the Nuuchahnulth peoples, specifically the Ehattesaht, Ka:yu:k't'h/ Che:k'tles7et'h', Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Nuchatlaht Nations. We honour our relationship with these Nations and with all other First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples who reside in the territories we serve.

SD84 is composed of five small schools in the communities of Gold River, Kyuquot, Tahsis, and Zeballos, and a district Continuing Education program. The district also offers a strong outdoor education program and our international program hosts a small number of students each year. Three of our schools offer Kindergarten to Grade 12 in multi-graded classrooms, typically consisting of three or more grades combined. Gold River has two schools, an elementary and a secondary.

We are a rural, remote district with a student population of approximately 330 students. Approximately 60% of SD84 students identify as Indigenous, and the majority of Indigenous students live on-reserve. Approximately 19% of students in SD84 are students with disabilities or diverse abilities. Our school district enrolls very few children and youth in care (CYIC), and the small numbers of students in care results in CYIC data being masked throughout this report. The median income and parental post-secondary rates in our communities are significantly lower than provincial averages, and the percentage of families receiving social assistance is higher than provincial average.

Due to the remote geography of our school district, services for students and families are limited. Families must travel to larger population centers in order to access groceries, banks, and dental services, often travelling over gravel logging roads and in some cases by water taxi. Access to community agencies and programs for youth are very limited. The remote nature of our schools also contributes to challenges associated with high teacher turnover and difficulty hiring qualified staff, particularly in our most remote schools. Our small size and remote nature also offer some powerful positive opportunities for learning, such as the ability to form close connections with each student and family, rich Nuuchahnulth culture, and abundant outdoor learning opportunities.

Section A: Reflecting Back

2022-23 Student Learning Outcomes

Intellectual Development

Educational Outcome 1: Literacy

Measure 1.1: Grade 4 & Grade 7 Literacy Expectations

Foundation Skills Assessment, Grade 4

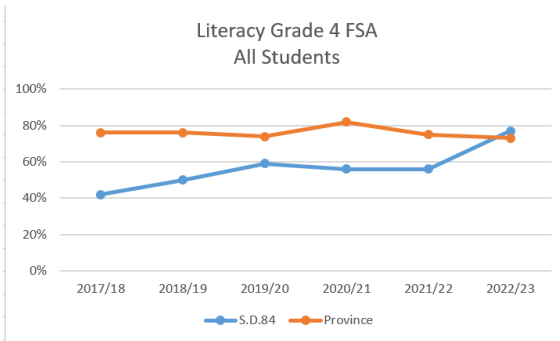


Figure 1.1a

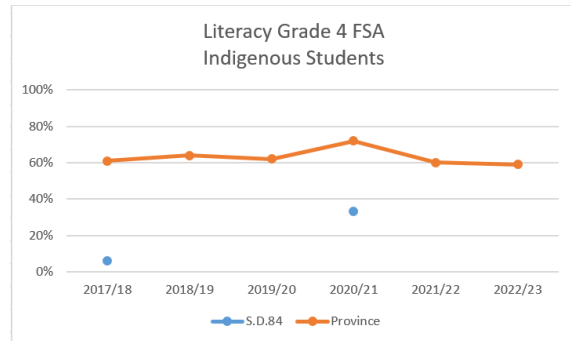


Figure 1.1b

Foundation Skills Assessment, Grade 7

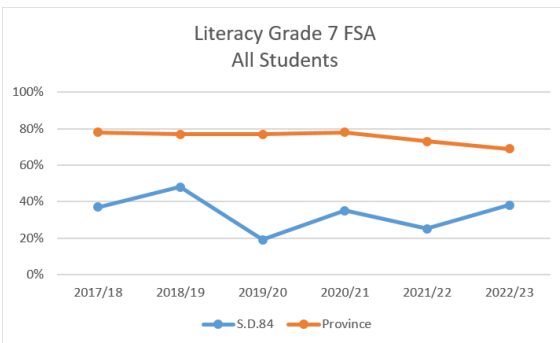


Figure 1.1c

Note: Most data for priority populations has been masked according to FOIPPA guidelines to protect student privacy. District considerations of masked results is included in the Analysis section of this report.

Measure 1.2: Grade 10 Literacy Expectations

Graduation Assessment, Grade 10

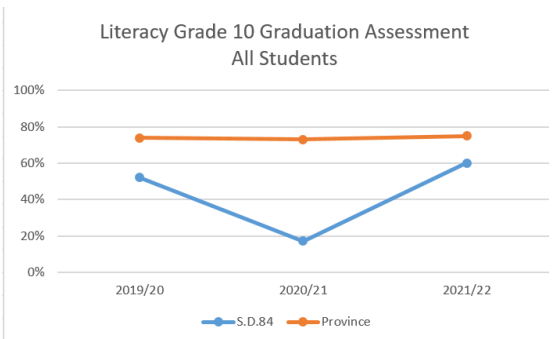


Figure 1.2a

Note: Data for priority populations has been masked according to FOIPPA guidelines to protect student privacy. District considerations of masked results is included in the Analysis section of this report.

Relevant Additional/Local Data and Evidence

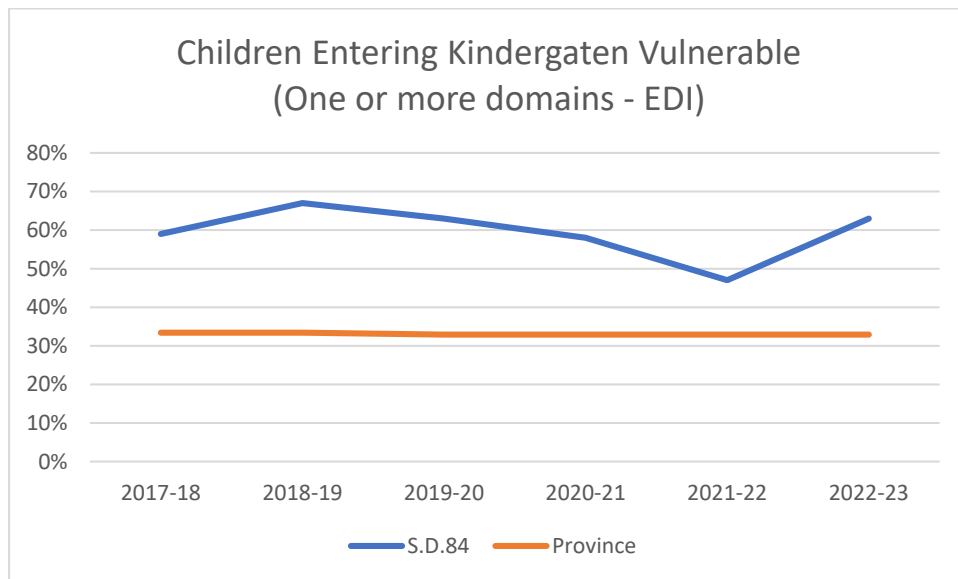


Figure 1.3

READING (GR 1-5 BENCHMARKS)

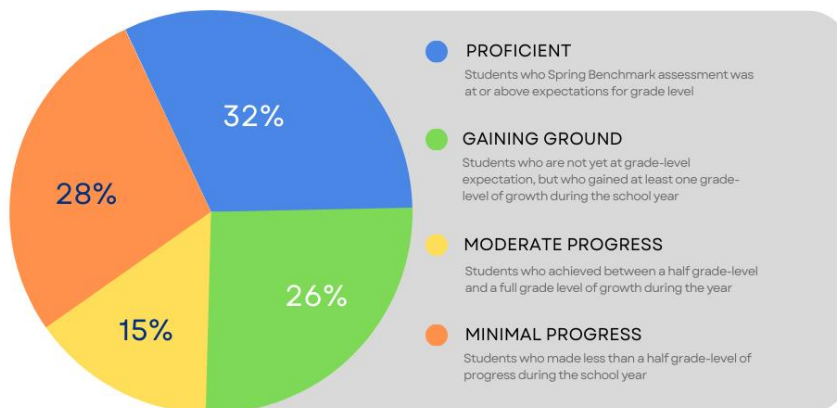


Figure 1.4

READING COMPREHENSION

DART / EPRA READING ASSESSMENT, GRADES K - 9

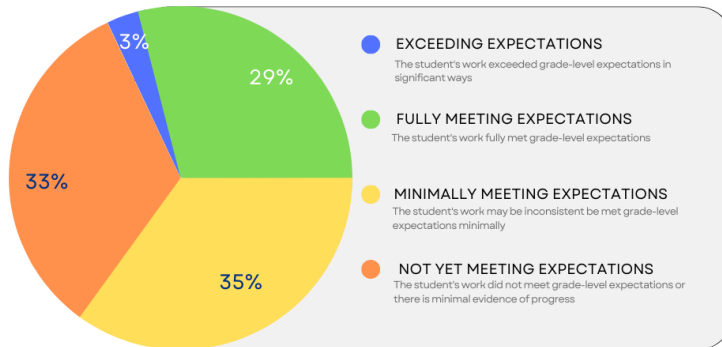


Figure 1.5

READING INTERVENTIONS

STUDENTS (GR 1-10) WHO BEGAN THE YEAR NOT YET MEETING EXPECTATIONS

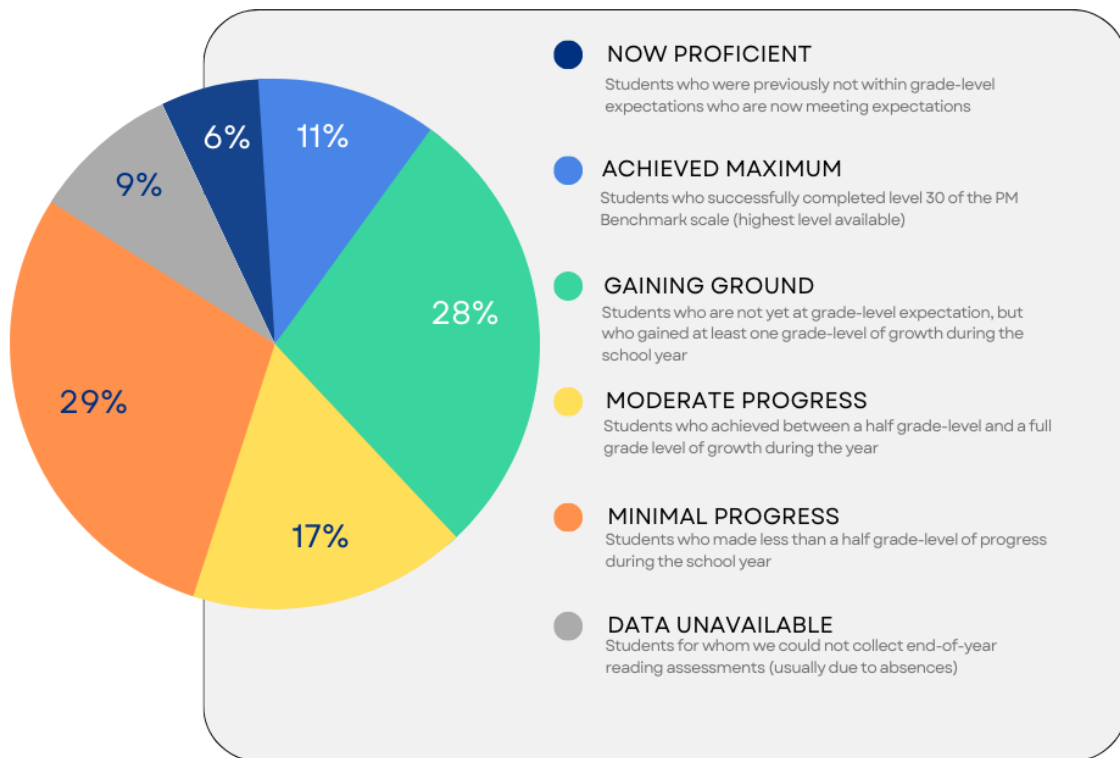


Figure 1.6

Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?

Improving student literacy achievement, particularly for Indigenous learners, has been a top focus of SD84's Strategic Plan. Both provincial and local assessment data present a similar picture of achievement and equity in our district – we see positive and improving results for all students and all priority populations in the primary grades, with declining results as students get older. This demonstrates the need for increased attention and capacity-building for educators working with intermediate, middle-year, and secondary students, as well as the need for robust intervention for learners who are slower to develop as readers and writers.

Early Literacy (Kindergarten – Grade 4)

Our district's Early Development Instrument (EDI) data has consistently shown that learners in SD84 enter Kindergarten amongst the most vulnerable in the province. Because of this, we put a significant amount of resources into building the capacity of our school teams to support early literacy. We see these efforts having a positive effect over time, as Grade 4 literacy results have been consistently improving over the past five years, particularly for Indigenous learners. Internal review of masked results for priority populations enables us to report that each priority population of students in SD84 achieved at or above provincial averages on the FSA 4 Literacy assessment! Within our schools, our local Benchmark and District Assessment of Reading Team (DART) reading assessment data show that most students are making moderate progress or better.

Later Literacy (Grade 7 and Grade 10)

Results have not been rising as rapidly in the Intermediate years, as seen on our FSA Literacy 7 results; results for most priority populations in grade 7 have remained relatively flat and below provincial averages. There may be a slight upward trend for Indigenous learners in Grade 7 over the past four years; however, when the fluctuations due to small sample sizes are considered, this upward trend may not be significant. Results for Indigenous learners living on reserve and CYIC have been masked, but are significantly below provincial averages. Similarly, results on the Grade 10 graduation literacy assessment have shown some improvement for most priority populations with the exception of Indigenous students living on reserve (source: internal review of masked results), though this improvement is slight and may be due to small sample size.

The lower results in Grade 7 and Grade 10 indicate the need for more robust support and intervention for students who demonstrate that they are not yet meeting expectations for literacy.

Interventions

New this year, we are reporting on the progress of students who entered the school year significantly behind commonly-held grade-level expectations for reading. These are students who have not been making steady progress as readers in previous school years. Of this group, 45% made significant progress:

- 6% of students “closed the gap” and are now reading at grade-level
- 11% of students achieved the maximum level measured by the PM Benchmark
- 28% of students achieved more than a grade-level of progress through the school year. Though not yet meeting grade-level expectations, they are closing the gap

This indicates that for many of our learners requiring the most support for reading, we have provided appropriate interventions that have changed their trajectories as readers; if they are not yet at grade-level they are now on course to get there. However, this also means that there exists a group of students for

whom we have not yet been able to provide adequate intervention and support; this group of students requires more intensive support as we move forward.

Equity

We have made significant gains in primary literacy – based on FSA 4 Literacy results there are no significant equity gaps for any priority populations in 2022-23. The district's effort and focus on primary literacy appears to be bearing fruit, and results have been consistently improving, especially for Indigenous learners. Though most data points have been masked, all priority populations achieved at or above provincial averages in Grade 4 in 2022-23, continuing a multi-year trend of improvement in the primary grades.

However, in Grades 7 and 10, we do have a persistent equity gap for Indigenous learners (particularly for Indigenous learners living on reserve) that requires increased attention and support. While results for students with diverse abilities and children and youth in care should be viewed cautiously due to small population sizes, results have been consistently inequitable for those learners in the middle and secondary years.

Educational Outcome 2: Numeracy

Measure 2.1: Grade 4 & Grade 7 Numeracy Expectations

Foundation Skills Assessment, Grade 4

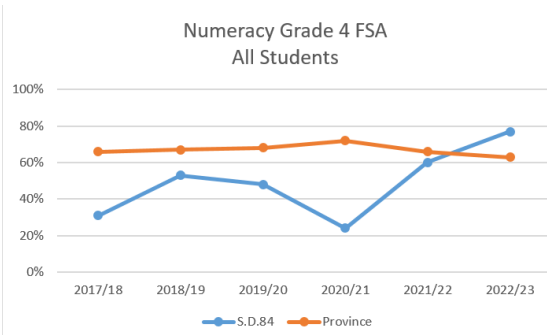


Figure 2.1a

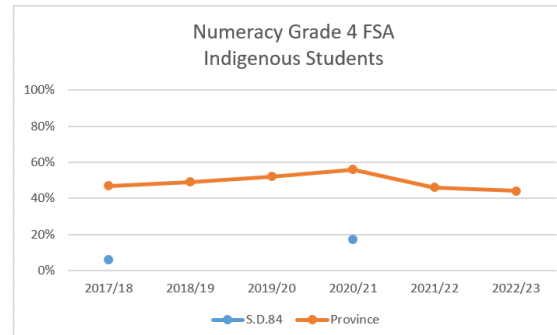


Figure 2.1b

Foundation Skills Assessment, Grade 7

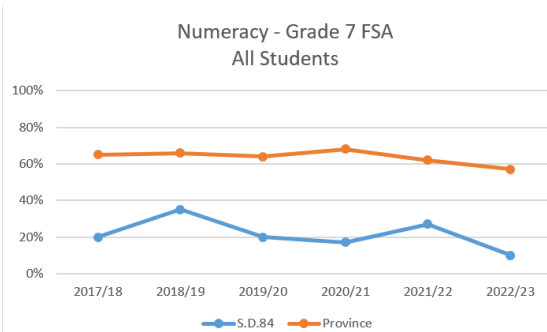


Figure 2.1c

Note: Most data for priority populations has been masked according to FOIPPA guidelines to protect student privacy. District considerations of masked results is included in the Analysis section of this report.

Measure 2.2: Grade 10 Numeracy Expectations

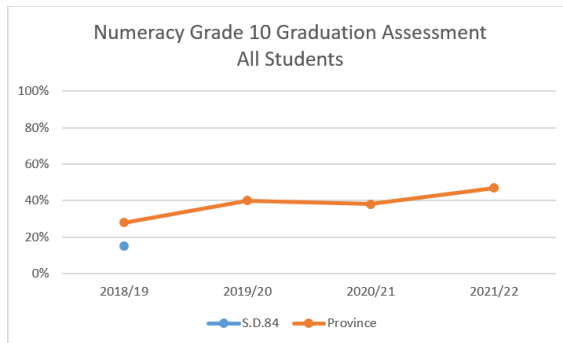


Figure 2.2a

Note: Most data have been masked according to FOIPPA guidelines to protect student privacy. District considerations of masked results is included in the Analysis section of this report.

Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?

Numeracy has not received the same amount of attention and resources as literacy in recent years. The school district has invested a great deal of time, attention, and resources to building the capacity of our teachers to support literacy development, and while that appears to be showing positive results, we have not devoted the same attention, or seen the same results, in numeracy. While we are seeing some success in the early years, results in Grade 7 and Grade 10 are very low.

FSA Numeracy Grade 4:

At the Grade 4 level we have seen a noticeable improvement in results for all students, including masked results for Indigenous students living off reserve, and students with disabilities and diverse abilities. However, achievement for Indigenous students living on-reserve have been steadily declining. This disparity for Indigenous students living on reserve requires further examination and collaboration with First Nations in order to determine appropriate responses.

FSA Numeracy Grade 7:

Results for all student groups in Grade 7 are disappointing and show a gradual and steady decline over time. Very few students from any priority population were meeting expectations for numeracy in Grade 7. Again, this warrants investigation.

FSA Numeracy 10 Graduation Assessment:

There has been some improvement this year in the numeracy graduation assessment results. Students in SD84 achieved at a similar level to students across the province, and Indigenous learners in SD84 achieved above provincial norms. This improvement has been largely driven by improved results for Indigenous learners living off reserve. Indeed, while overall achievement has improved, results remain inequitably low for Indigenous learners living on reserve, students with disabilities or diverse abilities, and children and youth in care.

Equity:

The most significant area of inequity in Grade 4 exists for Indigenous students living on reserve. Though results have been masked, results can be reported to be significantly lower than for all students in the district and significantly lower than for Indigenous students not living on reserve. Results in numeracy are low across all SD84 populations in Grades 7 and 10, though results for Indigenous learners (specifically those not living on reserve) improved in Grade 10 in 2022-23. As results for all priority populations are disappointing in Grades 7 and 10, the overall low level of achievement in numeracy in those grades points to the need for more universal numeracy support.

Our Numeracy Story

While we have been experiencing some success with numeracy in the primary grades, numeracy results in Grade 7 are very low. Numeracy has not been a main focus of our current strategic plan, and has not received the same level of attention and resources as literacy. In particular, we need to devote more attention and resources to developing numeracy for Indigenous students living on reserve, students with disabilities and diverse abilities, and children and youth in care, particularly once they have left the primary grades.

Measure 2.3: Grade-to-Grade Transitions

Grade 10 Transitions

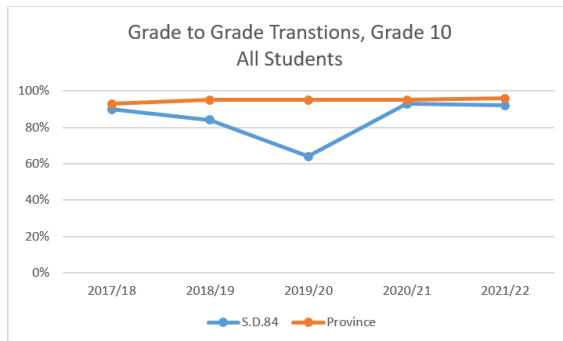


Figure 2.3a

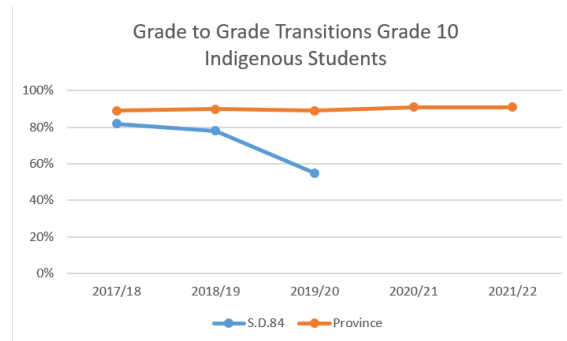


Figure 2.3b

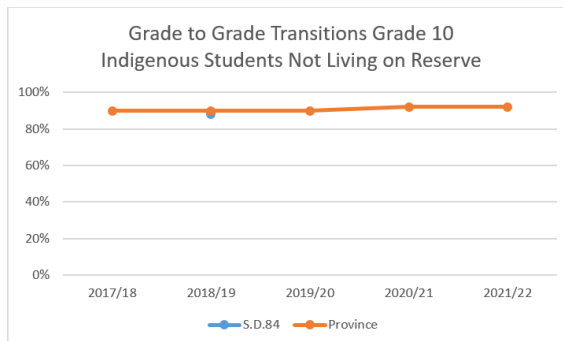


Figure 2.3c

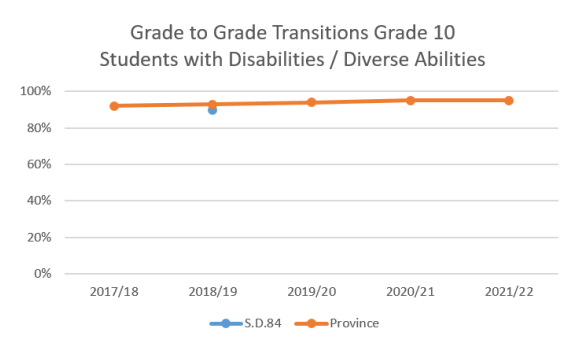


Figure 2.3d

Grade 11 Transitions

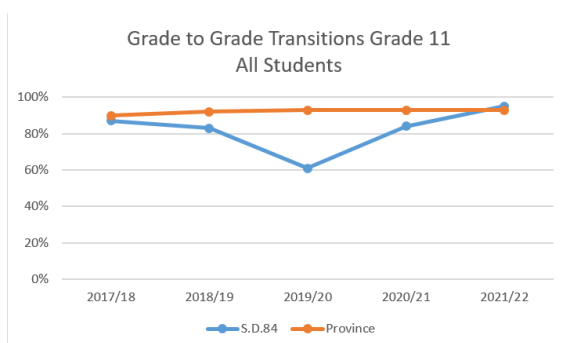


Figure 2.3g

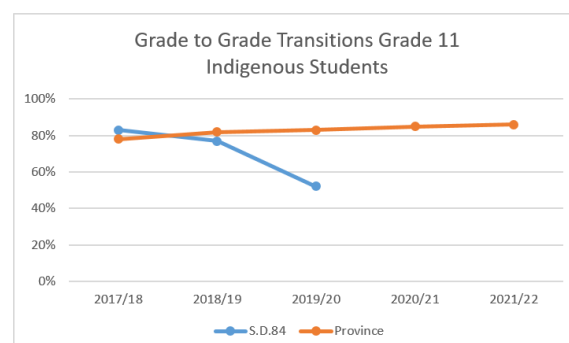


Figure 2.3h

Note: Some data points have been masked according to FOIPPA guidelines to protect student privacy. District considerations of masked results is included in the Analysis section of this report.

Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?

Analysis of SD84 grade to grade transition data needs to begin with the transfer of the Tsawalk alternate learning centre to SD68 in 2021. The introduction of the alternate program in 2016 had a significant impact on decreasing grade to grade transition rates, as many students in the alternate program were focused on a gradual return to formal education and thus did not complete a full course load. Readers will see this effect in the fluctuating grade to grade transition rates between 2017 and 2021.

Once the alternate program and students were transferred to the receiving school district, grade to grade transition rates have returned to their historical levels which are at or above provincial norms. This return to provincial norms is not evident in the publicly available data included in this report because results for many priority populations have been masked in recent years. Further, internal review of the masked data shows that the most recent results for grade to grade transitions have returned to above provincial norms for all priority populations with the sole exception of children and youth in care. Though there are very few children and youth in care in SD84, the continued low rate of grade to grade transition for these students deserves attention. Given the very small number of students involved, this analysis will be best accomplished as individual case studies by school based teams at each school to ensure that children and youth in care are receiving necessary supports.

Human and Social Development

Educational Outcome 3: Students Feel Welcome, Safe, and Connected

Measure 3.1: Students Feel Welcome

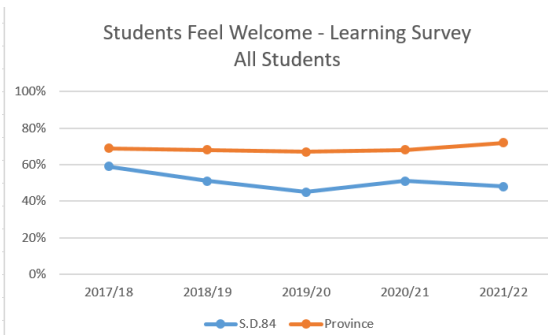


Figure 3.1a

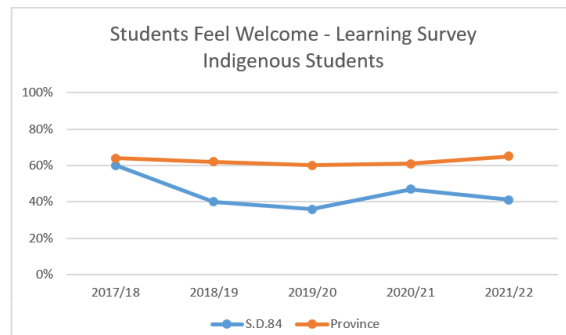


Figure 3.1b

Measure 3.2: Students can identify two or more adults who care about them

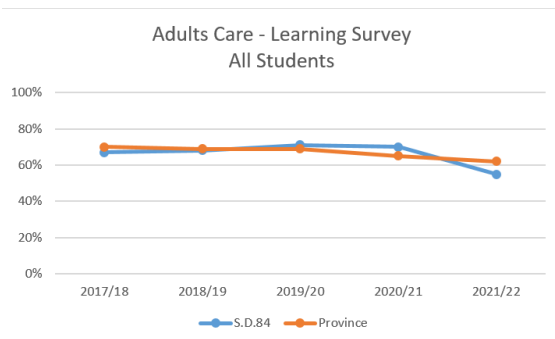


Figure 3.2a

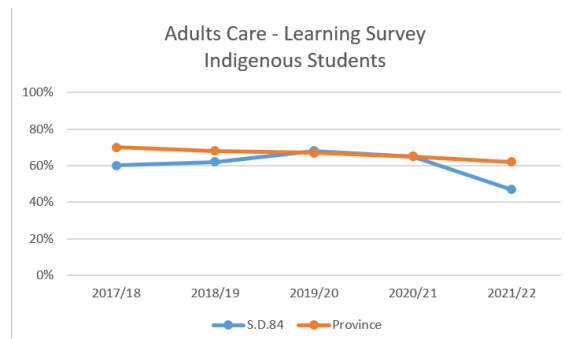


Figure 3.2b

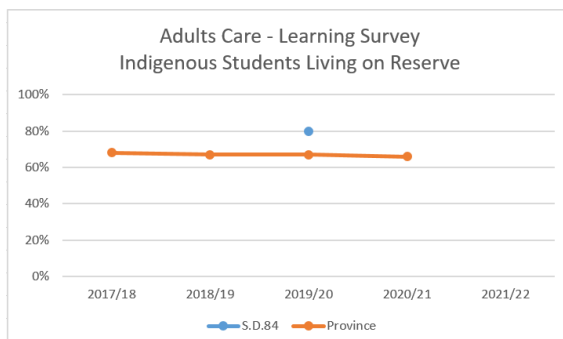


Figure 3.2c

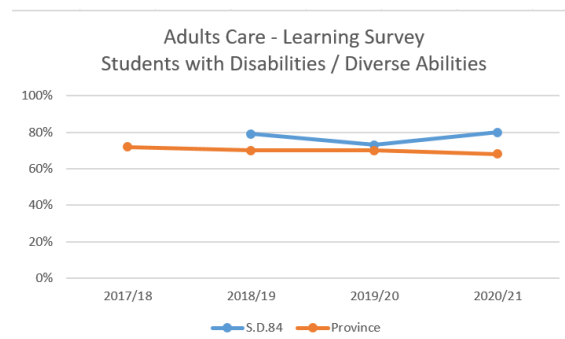


Figure 3.2d

Measure 3.3: Students who feel safe at school

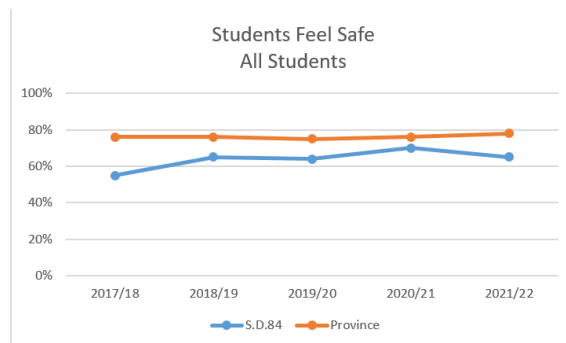


Figure 3.3

Relevant Additional / Local Data

Measure 3.4: Students who report a Sense of Belonging at school

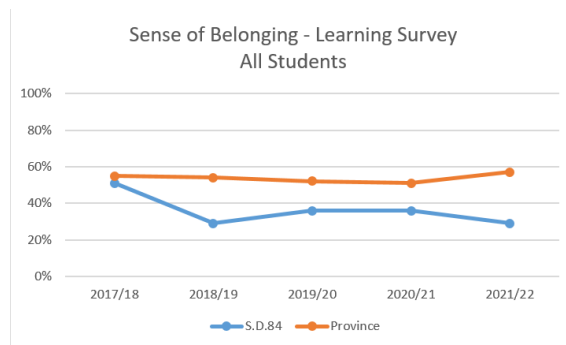


Figure 3.4a

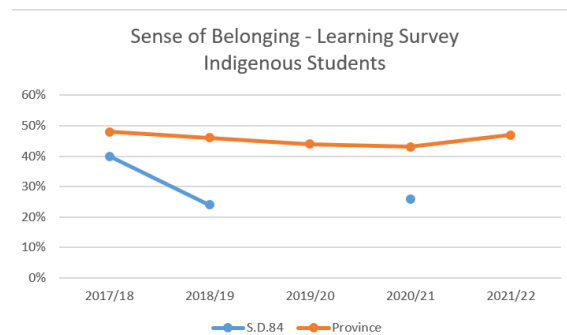


Figure 3.4b

Note: Most data for priority populations have been masked according to FOIPPA guidelines to protect student privacy. District considerations of masked results is included in the Analysis section of this report.

Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?

The most significant trend in analyzing whether students feel safe, welcome, and cared for at school is that students in SD84 are less likely than students across the province to answer positively; this lower reported sense of safety and connection holds true across multiple years and for every sub-group of students (with the exception of children and youth in care, whose results fluctuate greatly due to tiny population size). All groups of students (Indigenous, non-indigenous, living on reserve or off reserve, with or without disabilities) consistently report feeling less safe at school, less welcome at school, less sense of belonging at school, and are less likely to say that adults care about them than their provincial counterparts. As a school district that places a high value on relationship and connectedness, this is difficult information to receive but it does represent a call to action.

Overall results on each of the measures of connectedness are relatively flat or slightly declining. It is noteworthy that a significantly higher percentage of students identify that the adults at school care about them, though again this percentage is declining slightly over time. Indigenous students, particularly Indigenous students not living on reserve, are less likely to report feeling a sense of belonging or that adults at school care about them. The majority of students with disabilities or diverse abilities report not feeling welcome at school and not feeling a sense of belonging at school, and their percentage of positive responses are lower than for students as a whole.

The percentage of students who report feeling safe at school has been gradually increasing, though not yet meeting provincial averages. Note that results for this measure cannot be disaggregated into designated sub-groups because this question is asked anonymously on the Student Learning Survey.

Each of these pieces of data begs further questions. For students who do not feel safe at school, it is important that we find out what it is that is making them feel unsafe; for those who don't feel welcome, we need to know what is happening to send that message. This upcoming year, as part of our Indigenous Pathways program, we will endeavor to listen to individual students to gain these insights. A newly designed Pathways interview will have educators meet individually with students to ask these questions (e.g. "do you feel welcome at school?") as well as follow-up questions that can inform our actions and interventions ("what do adults at school do that makes you feel welcome / unwelcome?"). By listening to individual student experiences, we hope to be able to improve our students' experiences of safety, welcome, and caring at school.

Career Development

Educational Outcome 4: Students will Graduate

Measure 4.1: Achieved Dogwood Within 5 Years

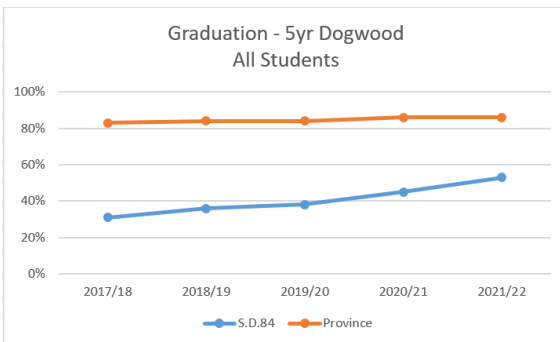


Figure 4.1a

Note: Data for all priority populations has been masked according to FOIPPA guidelines to protect student privacy. District considerations of masked results is included in the Analysis section of this report.

Relevant Additional/Local Data and Evidence

Pathways to Success – What happened to S.D.84’s students (Class of 2022)?

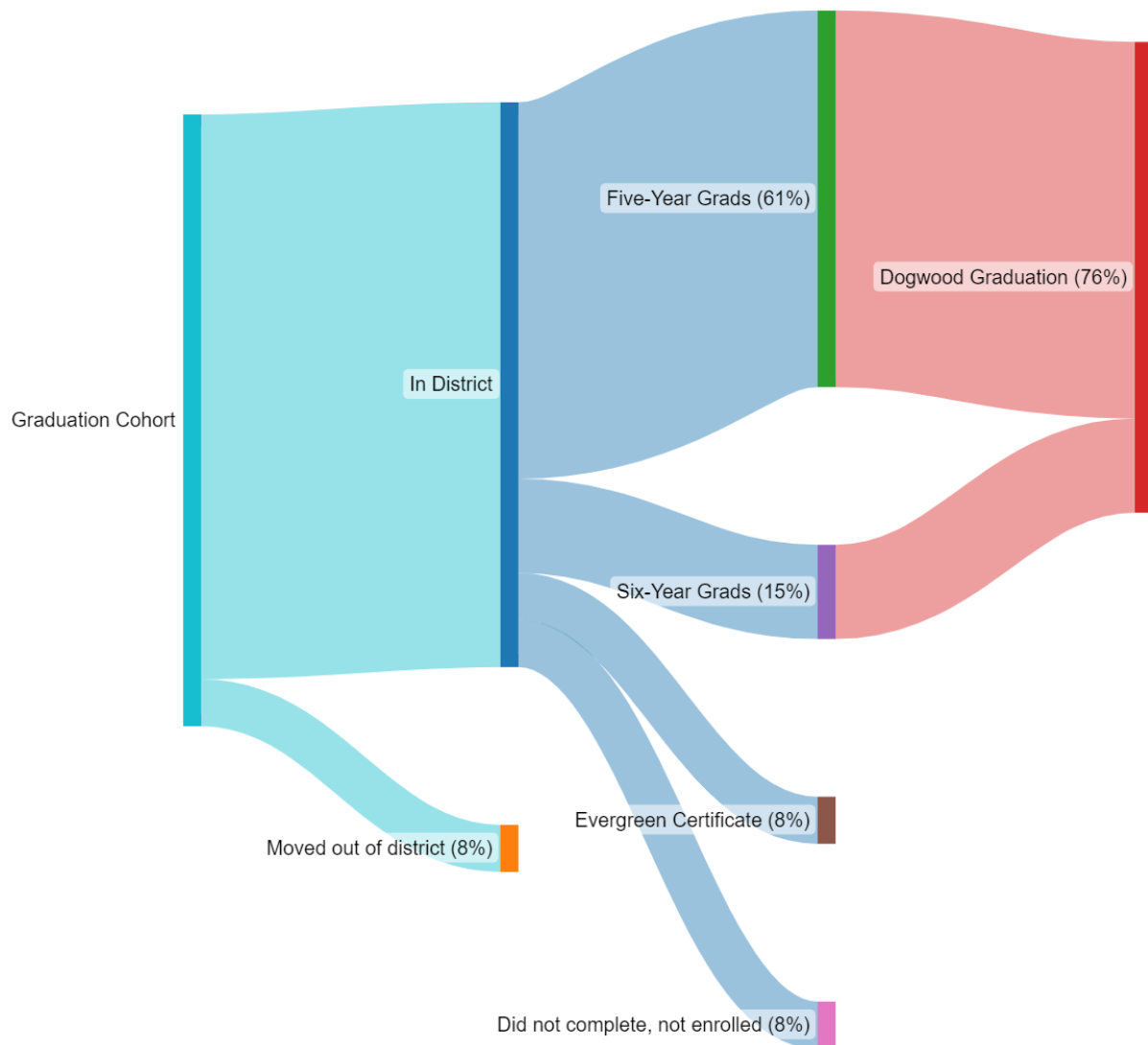


Figure 4.2

This visualization shows the pathways for the cohort of SD84 students since they entered Grade 8. The graduation cohort is first separated into students who stayed in district and those who moved out of the district (8% of the cohort). For those who stayed in the district, we can see the percentage of students who graduated with a Dogwood diploma (76%) – 61% within 5 years, and an additional 15% with an additional sixth year. Eight percent of students finished school with an Evergreen certificate, marking the successful completion of their individualized goals in the Individual Education Plan (IEP), and eight percent of student did not finish school and are not enrolled (i.e. “dropped out”).

Educational Outcome 5: Life and Career Core Competencies

Measure 5.1: Immediate transition to Post-Secondary (within one year of graduation)

Note: Immediate post-secondary transition data has been masked according to FOIPPA guidelines to protect student privacy. District considerations of masked results is included in the Analysis section of this report.

Measure 5.2: Transition to Post-Secondary (within three years of graduation)

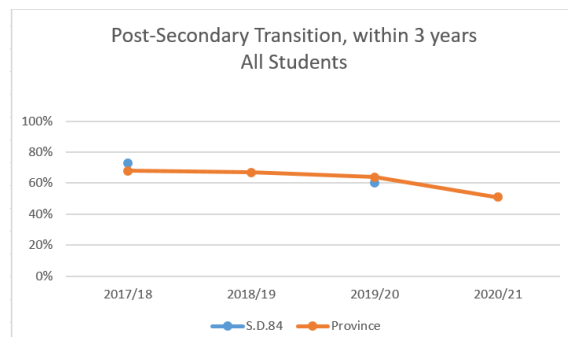


Figure 5.2a

Note: Most 3-year post-secondary transition data has been masked according to FOIPPA guidelines to protect student privacy, including all data for Indigenous students, those living on and off reserve, students with disabilities, and children and youth in care. District considerations of masked results is included in the Analysis section of this report.

Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?

Graduation rates in SD84 have been steadily and consistently rising over the past five years. This increase has been more pronounced for Indigenous students in the district, with sizeable increases in 5-year graduation for both Indigenous students living on reserve and Indigenous students not living on reserve. There is a long-term trend of improvement as well for students with disabilities and diverse abilities, though 2021-22 saw a one-year reversal of that trend. While results for Children and Youth in Care are masked, it should be noted that 5-year graduation rates for these students are very low.

Though 5-year graduation rates for the district and for most priority populations have been steadily increasing over the past five years, results remain below provincial averages (with the exception of Indigenous students living on reserve, where SD84 students graduated at a higher rate than Indigenous students living on reserve across the province). Though we are seeing consistent improvement, more work remains in order for students in SD84 to achieve equitably with students across the province.

Within the school district, there is an equity gap in five-year graduation rates for students with disabilities and for children and youth in care. Total enrollment for both of those groups of students are very low, so results can fluctuate greatly between years and should be interpreted with caution, but the overall trend for both groups is that 5-year graduation is much lower than the graduation rate for all students in the district and in the province. There is little disparity within the district in 5-year graduation rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Recognizing the 5-year graduation rates are only one measure of successful school completion, the school district did an analysis of the 2021-22 graduation cohort (figure 4.2). We examined what happened for each of the students who should be included in the graduation cohort, and found that our rates of successful school completion can be viewed as much higher than indicated by the provincial 5-year graduation rate. We found that 61% of students graduated within 5 years, and an additional 15% of students graduated the following (6th) year. In addition, 8% of students were awarded an Evergreen certificate; though this is not considered graduation, it is recognition that those students with significant disabilities have successfully completed their individualized program goals. One interpretation of these results is that 84% of students successfully completed school within 6 years (6-year graduation rate of 76% + Evergreen rate of 8% = 84% success rate). If students who moved out of the district to other communities or other provinces before reaching grade 12 are removed, our expanded success rate reaches 91%.

Regardless of which measure of success is used, there are still students who did not successfully complete school. Every year, school principals in SD84 reach out to non-graduates and students no longer enrolled in school to encourage and support their return to an education program. Every year this work has proved fruitful in re-engaging students with education, and this year we once again saw students return to school after significant absences and achieve Dogwood graduation.

It is difficult to draw conclusions about successful transitions after graduation from provincial post-secondary transition rates. Most of the data is masked - not just masked publicly, but masked from the district as well. Of the data that we do receive, we can see that students from SD84 transition to a post-secondary institution at a rate slightly lower than provincial average, as measured by both immediate transition rates and 3-year transition rates. The lone data point that we have for Indigenous students shows that the Indigenous transition rate was slightly higher in SD84 than the provincial average, and Indigenous graduates in SD84 were slightly more likely to transition to post-secondary than non-Indigenous graduates. Internal data shows that students with disabilities and diverse abilities are significantly less likely to transition to post-secondary education.

Section B: Moving Forward

Planning and Adjusting for Continuous Improvement

Current Strategic Plan Priorities

School District #84 Vancouver Island West has just completed Year 3 of our five-year [Strategic Plan](#).

Our Big Goal:

Students will develop as independent learners who can effectively communicate a strong sense of personal and cultural identity and engage with their goals for learning and their future.



Focus 1: Building a Strong Foundation of Literacy



Focus 2: Student Engagement & Connection to School



Focus 3: Equipping Learners for Success

Each of our core areas of focus has strategic targets and measurable outcomes, which can be found in the district's [Strategic Plan](#).

The [Strategic Plan](#) describes a variety of strategies that will be implemented in order to improve results for learners. These strategies are built upon our Theory of Action:

By creating systemic structures that develop our district and schools into collaborative learning communities that are focused on learning, results, and community based partnerships, we commit to creating learning environments that are:

- *equitable,*
- *culturally responsive,*
- *trauma-informed, and*
- *inclusive*

where all students receive the supports they need to develop as independent learners and effective communicators with positive personal and cultural identities.

Strategies are adjusted each year in response to the feedback received through our strategic engagement process and in response to their effectiveness for our learners.

Celebrating our Successes for the Past Year

Focus 1: Building a Foundation of Literacy

SD84 is pleased to report that our focus on literacy, particularly early literacy, is having a noticeable impact on student learning. We have achieved the first strategic objective of our district strategic plan - that Indigenous students in SD84 will achieve at or above provincial average in reading comprehension by the end of Grade 3. In the 2022-23 school year, SD84 students performed above the provincial average on the FSA Grade 4 literacy assessment, and Indigenous students in SD84 also performed above the provincial average for all students. For the first time, we met our ambitious target of 75% of Indigenous students meeting expectations on the FSA Grade 4 literacy assessment. Compared to five years ago, when less than 10% of Indigenous students in SD84 were meeting expectations on this assessment, this marks a significant increase worthy of celebration.

While it is important to ensure that all students build a strong foundation of literacy in the early years, we must ensure that we have robust and responsive interventions for students who are not yet meeting expectations for reading. Using local assessment data (PM Benchmark) from our common assessment framework, we were able to see that of the students who require additional support in reading (students who were not yet meeting expectations), 45% of those students made significant reading progress, improving their assessed reading level by at least one grade-level or more. For these students who have previously struggled with reading, this represents a change in trajectory and significant improvement over the last school year.

This demonstrable improvement in literacy should be attributed to the hard work and dedication of the district's teachers, support staff, and administrators, who have put significant focus and effort on improving literacy. Some of the strategies from our strategic plan that support this work include:

- Creation of district support positions (District Principal for Literacy, Indigenous Learning Support Teacher) to support teachers and build expertise
- Collaborative Learning Teams that provide regular bi-weekly opportunities for educators in the district to work together and develop practice
- Common district assessment framework used district-wide to assess student literacy progress
- Growing instructional leadership capacity of school and district administrators
- Investment in school and classroom libraries to ensure students have easy access to a wide variety of engaging, appropriately challenging, and culturally relevant books
- Student Learning Reviews which take place 3-4 times per year to review student achievement and progress towards school and district goals

Focus 2: Student Engagement and Connection to School

Though we have not yet met our target, we are pleased to report that student 5-year graduation rates have continued to increase for the fourth year in a row. Graduation rates continued to improve for Indigenous students, including students living both on reserve and off reserve. Our internal data, which looks at the school trajectories of our graduation cohort, shows that our success rate may be higher than what is reported in the provincial 5-year graduation rate. For the 2021-22 graduation cohort, 76% of students graduated with a Dogwood after 6 years (61% graduated at 5 years and an additional 15% graduated with an additional 6th year); when combined with the students who successfully completed their individualized

programs for an Evergreen certificate, our success rate was 84% if the 8% of students who moved away from the district are considered unsuccessful.

Working Together with Indigenous Rightsholders:

The school district continued to work collaboratively with Indigenous rightsholders to better support the learning of Indigenous students in the district. The district's Indigenous Education Council (IEC) met monthly, bringing together representatives of

- each of the local Indigenous nations,
- the Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council (NTC),
- each school,
- school district senior leadership, and
- the Vancouver Island West Teachers Union (VIWTU)

to support Indigenous students in the district, culminating in a district-wide Student Cultural Gathering hosted in Gold River. Students put a great deal of effort and dedication into learning local Indigenous protocols, songs, and dances that were shared at the Cultural Gathering.

Another example of the collaborative work between the school district and Indigenous rightsholders was the district's annual Curriculum Implementation Day. Education representatives from the NTC worked together with the district's curriculum implementation committee to collaboratively plan the day's activities. The learning activities for staff focused on hearing stories and personal narratives from members of the Mowachaht Muchalaht First Nation upon whose lands we gathered. This was an opportunity for all educators in the district to listen to the voices and lived experiences of local Indigenous community members. Feedback from both staff and community on this day was very positive.

Existing and/or Emerging Areas for Growth (So what?)

The district's achievement results and strategic engagement process reveal some trends about what is happening across the school district:

- 1) There is demonstrable improvement in literacy achievement. Literacy results have improved consistently and significantly in the early years, and this year SD84 was able to meet our target of having Indigenous students achieving at or above the level of all students in the province. Growth has been slower in intermediate and middle years, though local assessment data shows that many of the students who have fallen behind in literacy are on track to catch up.
- 2) Graduation rates are steadily increasing. The five year Dogwood graduation rate has been climbing over multiple years, with significant growth for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. When we look at internal data about what happens to our cohorts of potential graduates, we can see that success rates are much higher than those reported in provincial 5-year graduation data.
- 3) Inequities in achievement remain throughout the district. Though there is relatively little inequity on early years measures of achievement (i.e. Grade 4 FSA), disparities in achievement are present

in most other measures for Indigenous learners, including those living both on and off reserve. Inequities are even greater for learners with disabilities or diverse abilities and for children and youth in care (though this data is often masked for privacy). Inequities become more pronounced in higher grades.

- 4) Achievement results are higher in Grade 4 than our achievement results in Grade 7 and Grade 10.
- 5) Grade to grade transitions have improved, though this can be attributed to the transfer of the district's Tsawalk alternate program to a neighbouring school district.
- 6) Numeracy has not received the same attention as literacy has in the district strategic plan, and achievement results in numeracy are very low, particularly at the Grade 7 level.
- 7) The proportion of students who report feeling safe, welcome, cared for, and that they belong at school has been slowly and steadily dropping. While these results are disappointing, they point to the need to ask further questions to obtain more fine-grained information. Our Pathways interviews with students, which will be implemented in the fall, will provide an opportunity to hear directly from individual students about factors that make them feel safe and unsafe, and what connects them to their school and community.
- 8) Though not reported in the FESL report, student attendance remains a significant challenge. Students in our district miss a significant amount of school, which is believed to negatively impact achievement.
- 9) The district's strategic engagement with Indigenous rightsholders is helping to build a positive and productive partnership to improve outcomes for Indigenous children.

Strategic Engagement

Goals for the [Strategic Plan](#) were determined in consultation with education partners and Indigenous rights-holders through an examination of district and school achievement data. Our processes for strategic planning reflect the Board's commitment to work in partnership with stakeholders, communities, and Indigenous rights-holders in a process of continuous improvement and increased student success.

SD84's strategic engagement initiatives are ongoing throughout the year. The district's Indigenous Education Council (IEC, described above) meets monthly from September to June. Equity Scan community conversations took place in community with the Ehattesaht, Ka:'yu:'k't'h/Che:k'tles7et'h', Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Nuchatlaht Nations in the fall of 2022. The dialogue about equity was continued in the spring of 2023 with a district and community multi-day Equity Scan dialogue. The Board also held two formal consultations in each community in the district, hosting consultation in the fall and late winter in Gold River, Kyuquot, Tahsis, and Zeballos.

Indigenous Education Council

As seen in the timeline for strategic engagement, the district Indigenous Education Council (IEC) is central to our engagement with Indigenous rightsholders. The IEC meets monthly between September and June, with the goal of improving educational opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous students. Some of the significant topics that the IEC will engage in include measures of Indigenous student achievement, provision of Nuuchahnulth language and culture programming, partnerships between schools and communities, use of targeted Indigenous funds, and partnerships for learner and adult learning opportunities.

Examples of significant district initiatives that have come from the IEC include:

District-wide Indigenous Cultural Gathering (described above in “Celebrating our Successes”)

Rural Teacher Education Program (described below in “Adjustments and Adaptations”)

Equity Scan: Community conversations and district gathering

School District #84 continues to engage in an Equity Scan process to help identify and remedy systemic barriers to Indigenous student achievement that may exist. This year, the Equity Scan process had leadership from SD84 and leadership from NTC travel to each of our communities to hear directly from community members. This year’s equity scan process uncovered the following significant themes, with associated strategies:

Equity Scan Themes 2022-23	Associated Strategies
Training for staff in decolonizing and understanding Nuuchahnulth ways	<input type="checkbox"/> ILRP 100 and EDUC 450 (Nuuchahnulth/VIU co-instructed courses for staff) <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Teacher Education Program - local teacher education program to train Nuuchahnulth people as teachers
Working with trauma	<input type="checkbox"/> ongoing trauma sensitivity training for staff with established trainers <input type="checkbox"/> increased counseling and youth mental health supports <input type="checkbox"/> develop individual Pathways learning plans for students
Language and Culture	<input type="checkbox"/> implement BAA Nuuchahnulth Leadership 10-12 <input type="checkbox"/> explore language immersion options and opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> continue with Student Lead Cultural Event
Community Voice	<input type="checkbox"/> continued Equity Scanning with communities <input type="checkbox"/> develop community surveys <input type="checkbox"/> increase community/school interactions
Land and Sea	<input type="checkbox"/> implement BAA Nuuchahnulth Leadership 10-12 <input type="checkbox"/> adapt Nootka Sound Outdoor Program to be more culturally relevant

Community Consultation Summary:

Community consultations take place within each community twice each school year. These consultations provide opportunities for the Board to engage with and receive feedback from parents, staff, and community members in order to inform and adjust strategies, and to inform the Board budget process.

Some major themes emerged from this year’s community consultation process. These themes are listed below, with some associated strategies (note: there is significant overlap in feedback from the equity scan

and community consultations. Strategies listed in the equity scan section above are not re-listed in this section).

- Improved communication and relationships between schools and homes
 - Strategy: see “training for staff” above
- Concerns with school facilities
 - Strategy: Partner with local governments and province to make best use of our assets
- Staff retention
 - Strategy: explore options for recruitment and retention incentives
 - Strategy: seek opportunities for more affordable and appealing housing for teachers
- Student mental health supports
 - Strategy: see “Working with trauma” above
- Student learning opportunities
 - Strategy: see “Language and Culture” and “Land and Sea” above
 - Strategy: offer opportunities for Education Assistant and Early Childhood Education certifications for local community members

Areas for future growth in Strategic Engagement:

Reviewing our process for strategic engagement, we believe that we have a healthy and productive engagement process with Indigenous rightholders that includes both Indigenous governance organizations and engagement with each individual community. Engagement with non-Indigenous stakeholders has been less robust, and options for increasing engagement with diverse stakeholders are being considered.

A clear area for growth in our strategic engagement process is to involve students directly into the process. Almost all of the formal engagement takes place with adults; we are missing students’ voices in our strategic engagement.

Adjustment and Adaptations: Next Steps

Based on our improved achievement results in literacy and graduation, SD84 will be continuing and/or expanding on some of the existing strategies from our strategic plan that are showing evidence of success. Some strategies that are currently having an impact that will be continued are:

- a) Collaborative Learning Teams:
Collaborative learning teams are groups of educators who meet every two weeks to build their adaptive expertise to meet student learning needs. Participants examine evidence of student learning and to collaboratively share ideas and plan instruction; participants for the past two years have reported feeling more confident in their ability to teach literacy and in their connection to colleagues. Update for 2023-24: Learning Teams will be expanded to include a greater number of middle-years and secondary school teachers. Our focus this year will be on student goal-setting and self-assessment of the core competencies.
- b) District Assessment Framework:
This common set of literacy assessments is done 2-3 times each year with every student in Grades K-9. This allows for monitoring of student progress, identification of students requiring extra support, and a common language about literacy for teachers across the district. Update for 2023-24: Greater support for the SNAP (Student Numeracy Assessment and Practice) numeracy assessment.

- c) **School Learning Reviews:**
School administrators meet with district leadership quarterly to review evidence of student learning, discuss progress towards goals from the district strategic plan and annual school plans, and adjust strategies and supports. These school learning reviews are helpful in identifying areas requiring additional support, and in keeping a keen focus on student learning.
- d) **District Support Positions:**
As part of the strategic plan the school district added the positions of District Principal for Literacy and District Indigenous Learning Support Teacher. Each of these positions provides support for teachers, administrators, and school teams in the areas of literacy and Nuuchahnulth ways of knowing respectively. These support positions provide important expertise and support the growing capacity of school-based educators.
- e) **Indigenous education courses for staff:**
SD84 has partnered with Vancouver Island University to provide Indigenous education courses (ILRP 100 and EDUC 450) for our staff. These courses explore Nuuchahnulth language, culture, and ways of knowing and the impact of this understanding on school and classroom practices.
- f) **Equity Scan:**
The equity scan process is an effort to address systemic barriers to Indigenous student success. It involves a review of policies and practices that may be creating obstacles for Indigenous students in the district. It is also an important opportunity to hear from community not only about challenges faced, but also about opportunities to make a difference.
- g) **Rural Teacher Education Program:**
SD84, Vancouver Island University (VIU), and NIC have partnered to provide an innovative teacher education program that takes place entirely within the communities of Vancouver Island West. Through this program, we are training a cohort of local community members, most of whom are Indigenous, to be certified teachers with coursework and practicums taking place in our local schools. By certifying local and Indigenous teachers we aim to make our schools and classrooms more culturally responsive and at the same time address our staffing challenges.
- h) **Staff Development in Trauma Sensitive Practice:**
Understanding the impact of trauma on learning is important for our educators. Through a combination of workshops and individual coaching opportunities, we will continue to work on building our intrapersonal and interpersonal skills as trauma sensitive practitioners. New for 2023-24: On-demand access to a trauma-sensitive practice online learning series is provided to all staff.

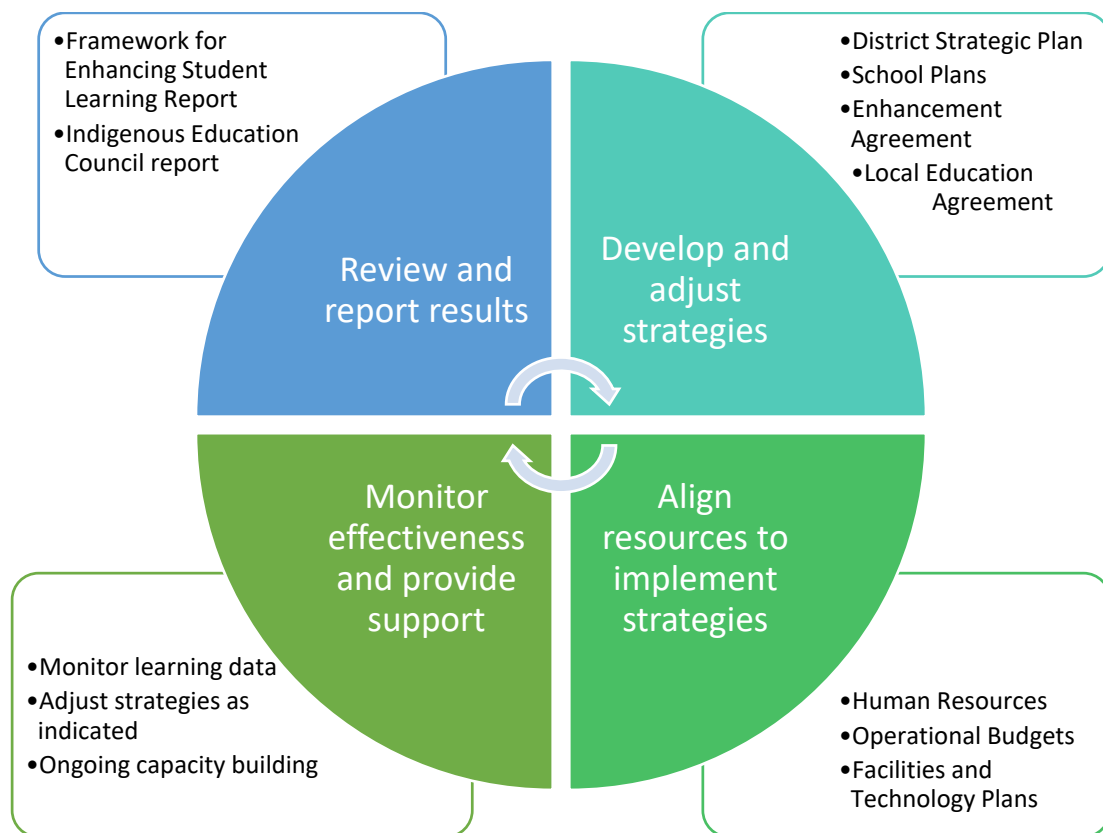
In addition to continuing and enhancing the strategies from our strategic plan listed above, SD84 will be implementing the following new strategies this year:

- i) **Additional counselling time:**
Based on feedback received through equity scan and community consultation strategic engagement efforts, the district will be adding an additional counselling position to support student mental health and well-being. This initiative should also help address the declining numbers of students who feel safe, welcome, and connected to school.

- j) Pathways interviews listening campaign to hear student experiences:
In order to gain greater insight into student experiences, staff will conduct one-on-one interviews with students. These interviews will ask students about their connections to school, to their culture, and to their community; results will be used for both individual planning and as a method for including student voice in our strategic engagement.
- k) Competency based Individual Education Plans:
Results for students with disabilities and diverse abilities have been inequitable in SD84. Competency-based Individual Education Plans will be more closely connected to the curriculum than our prior format, and more intentionally built upon student strengths.

Alignment for Successful Implementation

School District 84's strategic plan sets ambitious targets for student learning, with a focus on closing the equity gap between Indigenous learners and their non-Indigenous peers. The plan aligns closely with the district's Enhancement and Local Education Agreements, with many goals and strategies overlapping between documents. Goals are set through ongoing consultation with Indigenous rights-holders and district stakeholders around evidence of student learning.



School plans are developed and revised each year – these plans both inform, and are informed by, the district's strategic plan. School plans are submitted to the Board of Education each spring for approval. During the school year, school progress towards the goals of the district strategic plan and the individual

school plan are reviewed quarterly with district leadership in a process known as Student Learning Reviews.

Operational budgets, Human Resources, and facilities plans are developed in alignment with the strategic plan, providing both the human resources and other resources necessary to carry out the strategies outlined in the strategic plan to improve equity.

Throughout the school year, the district provides support to build the capacity within each of our schools to support both district and school goals. Ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of the district and school plans, through both regular informal and quarterly formal check-ins, ensure that progress is being made and allows for strategies to be adjusted as necessary.

Strategic Engagement processes, including monthly Indigenous Education Council meetings, bi-annual community consultations, and equity scans take place throughout the year. Feedback from this strategic engagement is used to inform and adjust existing strategies, and to plan new strategies to improve student achievement.

At the end of each school year, the district engages in a review of results and a formal reporting-out process. Results of provincial and local assessment and learning data are examined and strategies are adjusted as needed in light of new evidence. The Framework for Enhancing Student Learning report to the Minister is submitted, and a meeting to report results is held with Indigenous rightsholders through the Indigenous Education Council.

Conclusion

This report is a comprehensive look at SD84's current progress towards the goals of our strategic plan. Through the hard work and dedication of our staff, we have achieved some significant progress in the areas of literacy and graduation, closing and in some cases removing the equity gaps in those areas. There is still a great deal of improvement to be made, and work to be done, especially in the areas of numeracy and student well-being, and for Indigenous learners, learners with disabilities and diverse abilities, and children and youth in care. The district takes seriously our responsibility to continuously improve, and to improve the outcomes and life chances for every one of our students.