

## Our District

The Greater Victoria School District No. 61 (GVSD) resides on the traditional territory of the lək'wəŋən (Lekwungen) people. We would like to acknowledge the Songhees First Nation and the Esquimalt First Nation on whose territory we live, work and play. Həyšx'wəŋə – thank you.

We are located in the capital city of British Columbia which includes the municipalities of Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Victoria, View Royal and a portion of Saanich and Highlands.

We continue to provide quality educational programs for 20,000 students in 28 elementary schools (Kindergarten to grade 5), 10 middle schools (grades 6 to 8), and 8 secondary schools (grades 9 to 12). More than 1,000 International Students from across the globe attend schools in our District, and each year, over 650 adult learners register in the Continuing Education Program. Our District also offers a variety of Programs of Choice, including French Immersion, and Sport Academies.

As a learning community, we are deeply committed to each student having the opportunity to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations. We are becoming increasingly more data literate and are dedicated to having all of our schools inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments.

The GVSD five-year Strategic Plan was renewed in 2020. The consultation began in 2019 and reflects the voices of the Four Houses: students, staff, educational partners and administrators. The renewal of the strategic plan aligns with the District's vision where each student within its world-class learning community has the opportunity to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations.

## Strategic Plan

### Goal 1

Create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that will support and improve all learners' personal and academic success.

### Goal 2

Create a culturally responsive learning environment that will support Indigenous learners' personal and academic success.

### Goal 3

Create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that will support all learners' physical and mental well-being.

# Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Report 2021

Our Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) is guided by our District mission, vision and core values and is grounded in research and local knowledge. The FESL complements the District's Strategic Plan and summarizes all students' culturally responsive educational outcomes as well as the goals and strategies for continuous improvement.

**Goal One of the Greater Victoria School District's Strategic Plan is to create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that will support and improve all learners' personal and academic success.**

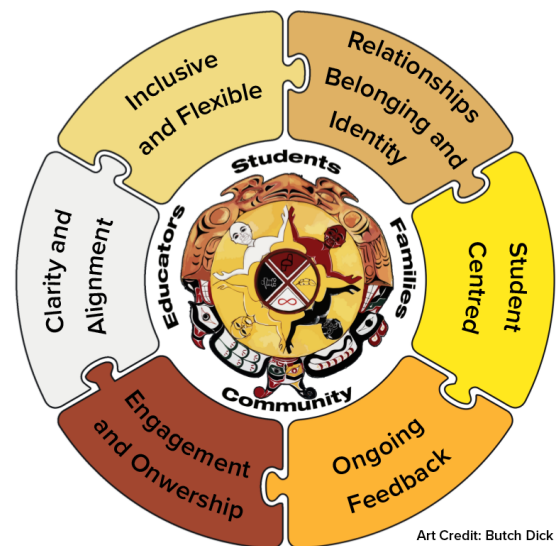
Over the last five years, students in School District No. 61 performed at a rate of one percent lower than the province in the five-year completion rate (see Appendix p. 13). When we analyze the data, we continue to see disparities for students who identify as Indigenous and students with disabilities or diverse abilities. In order to continue to close the achievement gap, Goal One focuses on those students currently experiencing the least success in our system.

To realize this goal, three strategies were developed:

1. Develop and support high-quality learning opportunities
2. Engage and collaborate with students, families, and staff to provide an inclusive learning environment
3. Address the inequity of outcomes for diverse learners

## Cultural Responsiveness

Our primary focus Pre-K to grade 12 is developing culturally responsive learning environments where all students are connected to their learning and feel seen, heard and valued. Currently, learning happens through collaborative teams, side-by-side teaching, learning rounds, staff meetings and a myriad of professional development opportunities. A strategic focus from the District, through all initiatives, is to be explicit with the philosophy and pedagogy required in culturally responsive learning environments to increase student connections, engagement and achievement.

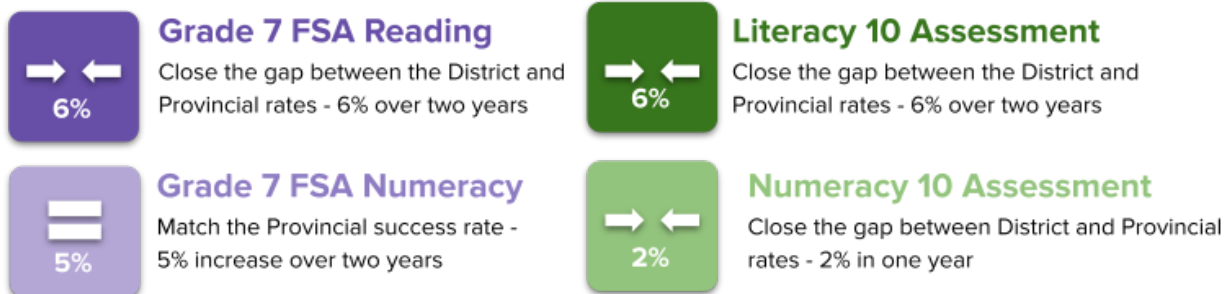


## Culturally Responsive Assessment Principles

Creating opportunities for our students to develop the ability to assess their own learning, interests, skills and values in order to achieve the highest level of success and match to their future orientation is a key objective. One example is our newly developed, culturally responsive, assessment principles that we have begun to share with school leaders. Recognizing that effective assessment is foundational to student learning, it was necessary to review our principles through a culturally responsive lens. Through a collaborative process, we will continue to engage our system and community to deepen our understanding and implementation of the principles.

## Connecting Assessment and Learning

As we continue our learning focus with a culturally responsive lens, on-going professional development will prioritize instructional design and assessment, recognizing that literacy and numeracy are essential skills for student success. Provincial assessments indicate that student success in literacy and numeracy declines as students move through the system. Our intention is to increase student success on provincial indicators in the areas of literacy and numeracy as follows (see Appendix pp. 2-3, 5-6):



A key focus area will be to support Indigenous student success as outlined in Goal Two of our strategic plan.

## Strategies

- Continue to provide multiple entry points for all educators to engage in high quality professional development. The following options will be available: webinars (archived for future access), professional development days - school-based, District-wide, levelled (elementary, middle and secondary), learning rounds, workshops, learning series,

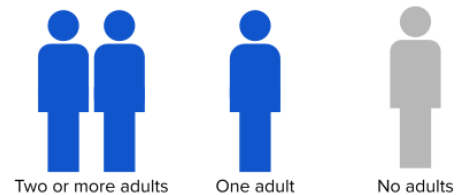
collaborative networks for new teachers, building connections with Indigenous community, community agencies and post-secondary institutions.

- Increase opportunities for principals and vice principals to examine school, District and Provincial data to increase data literacy in order to identify areas of focus to better support all students.
- Create and implement local literacy and numeracy assessment tools in grades 3, 6 and 9 to provide additional data points to better inform instructional priorities.
- Create collaboration teams in elementary schools with a focus on literacy inquiry. Opportunities for collaboration will be on-going, job-embedded and supported alongside district team members and consultants.

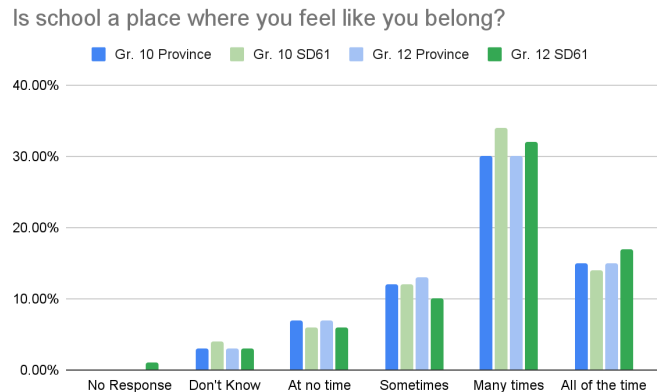
## Connection and Belonging

Data from Middle Development Instrument (MDI) for grades 4 and 6 and Student Learning Survey for grades 10 and 12 indicate that a significant number of students struggle to feel a sense of connection and belonging to school. Research (Kuperminc et al., 2008) indicates that belonging is positively related to academic achievement in K-12 students and belonging can increase motivation in school (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Walton et al., 2012). Given the current context with COVID-19, it is even more important to focus on connection loss and develop a strong foundation to support academic progress and success for students. Although the cohorts will change year to year, our target is to increase the number of students who feel like they belong by five percent at each grade level represented in the surveys.

### CONNECTION TO IMPORTANT ADULTS AT SCHOOL



|                    |     |     |     |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Grade 4 GVSD       | 61% | 13% | 26% |
| Grade 4 Provincial | 68% | 11% | 21% |
| Grade 6 GVSD       | 48% | 13% | 39% |
| Grade 6 Provincial | 50% | 13% | 37% |



## Strategies to support learning, identity and well-being include:

- Expand competency-based Individual Education Plan training and implementation, connected to our newly developed Connecting Assessment, Planning and Programming (CAPP) website.
- Expand secondary School-Based Team (SBT) focus to offer the series K-12. The series will continue to build out and implement a framework for an effective and responsive SBT.
- Targeted professional development opportunities that include: enhanced planning and programming for students with complex needs, connecting behaviour and communication, increasing understanding and implementation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) philosophy and strategies into school and classroom environments, building and strengthening an understanding of resiliency with school counsellors and learning support teachers.
- Implementation of the District Children and Youth in Care Standard of Practice which includes creating a holistic “Success in School Plan” for students that is strength-based and incorporates cultural identity.

## Early Learning and Future Orientation

In addressing the inequity of outcomes for diverse learners, we examined data from the Early Development Instrument (EDI). Early Childhood Educator (ECE) hours were added to specific schools in order to support transition, and early learning. Our six Strong Start centres with ECE’s were also provided additional hours to work in Kindergarten classrooms each afternoon.

# Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Report 2021



## Vulnerable on one or more of the 5 EDI scales

As measured in the GVSD EDI Data Wave 7 (2016-2019), 416 children out of 1397.



## Emotional Maturity

Prosocial and helping behaviours, as well as hyperactivity, inattention and aggressive, anxious and fearful behaviour. 224 children.



## Physical Health & Well-being

Gross and fine motor skills, physical independence and readiness for the school day such as motor control, energy level, daily preparedness for school and washroom independence. 187 children.



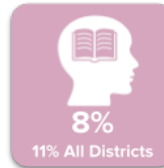
## Communication Skills & General Knowledge

English language skills, ability to clearly communicate one's own needs, participate in storytelling, and general interest in the world. 193 children.



## Social Competence

Overall social competencies, capacity for respect and responsibility, approaches to learning, and readiness to explore new things. 203 children.



## Language & Cognitive Development

Basic and advanced literacy skills, numeracy skills, interest in math reading and memory. 105 children.

Utilizing the Early Learning Framework, and recognizing the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our students, ECE's and classroom teachers continue to be provided opportunities focused on collaborative dialogue, oral language, storytelling and play-based inquiry through an equity lens.

Ten elementary schools were identified for specific, targeted literacy support. Two schools will receive funding for Reading Recovery and eight schools will receive support from an Early Literacy Collaboration Teacher with a focus on K-3 learners, for a total of four full-time teachers. Our goal with the eight elementary schools will be to create baseline data, early in the school year, in literacy achievement. Targeted support will be implemented throughout the year and achievement will be revisited to determine growth and effectiveness of the strategies.

In order to provide more meaningful programming for students with complex needs, we will be exploring implementing a person-centered planning approach for each student. This information will inform programming and transitional support that is individualized, relevant and meaningful.

We will continue to expand the opportunities available to students with designations to support their transition out of high school and "to prepare students to attain their career and occupational objectives." (The Educated Citizen) Our goal is to develop baseline data on the current graduation pathways (Evergreen, Adult Grad, non-grad, Dogwood) for students with complex needs. This information will inform next steps to further enhance appropriate and successful transitions out of the K-12 system. We will continue to support and enhance through the following options:

# Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Report 2021

1. **Pathways for Life & Work** - Camosun College and Pathways and Partnerships program designed specifically for students with a variety of learning challenges to prepare for entry level employment in food service, customer service, and gardening.
2. **Community Work Experience** - Increase the number of students with diverse abilities and needs taking part in work experience in the community, through collaboration between the career center and inclusive education teams.
3. **Community Partnerships** - Expand the number of community partnerships, and strengthen current partnerships with organizations that can support students with meaningful training and work transitions. For example: Community Living Victoria, Garth Homer Society, John Howard Society.
4. **District Programs** - Continue to support students with designations by building transitional workplace skills through Pathways and Partnerships District programs: youth apprenticeships, trades training, AutoTech, Aviation, Dual Credit, Seed the City, Graphic Design, Outdoor Adventure Tourism, etc.
5. **Post-Secondary Support** - Connect students to post-secondary transitional support centers, such as Camosun's Centre for Accessible Learning.

Culturally responsive schools build an environment that is welcoming for all students and reflects community aspirations for their children.

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To achieve our targets, budget allocations and resources have been committed and include:

- District professional development, curriculum implementation and learning opportunities (professional development days, learning series etc.) \$125,000
- K-5 Literacy Initiative \$612,000
  - Four newly created literacy teacher roles to support eight identified schools
  - Literacy support for new educators
  - Literacy collaboration and resources
  - Continued support for Reading Recovery
- Expand the K-12 School-Based Team initiative \$25,000
- Additional funding to support our six Strong Start programs \$32,350
- Implementation of Competency Based IEPs \$20,000
- Core French - TPRS series for FSL and ELL \$38,750
- Literacy series focused on oral interaction for French Immersion \$38,500



**Goal Two of the Greater Victoria School District's Strategic Plan is to create a culturally responsive learning environment that will support Indigenous learners' personal and academic success.**

To realize this goal, three strategies were developed:

1. Critically examine personal and systemic biases
2. Support Indigenous student identity through collaboration with Indigenous community
3. Address the academic inequity of outcomes for Indigenous learners

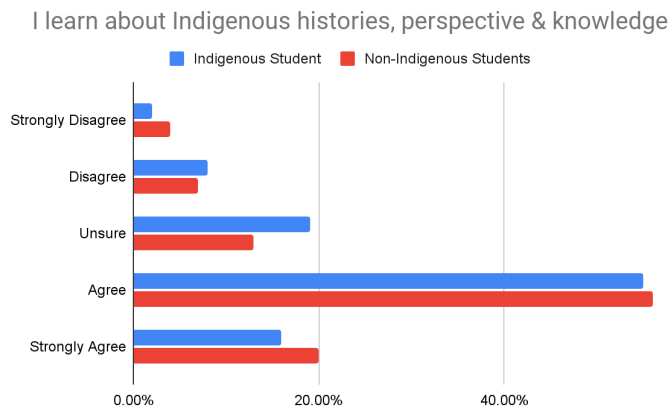
GVSD, located on the traditional lands of the Lekwungen peoples of the Songhees Nation and Esquimalt Nation, is committed to equity of opportunity and outcomes for Indigenous learners. The Indigenous Education Department, in collaboration with schools, provides programs and services throughout the school-year to K-12 students who have self-identified as having Indigenous ancestry. Each educational services department (Learning Team, Pathways and Partnerships, Indigenous Education) as well as Information Technology for Learning, Facilities, and Human Resource Services are participating in various learning activities and actions related to Goal Two of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025. The shared work of achieving Goal Two is guided by Indigenous community, families and partners, including the Songhees Nation, Esquimalt Nation, Métis Nation Greater Victoria, and Urban Indigenous Council representatives (the Four Houses).

## Cultural Responsiveness

Creating a culturally responsive learning environment provides GVSD a path forward to improved outcomes for Indigenous students and improved relationships with Indigenous families and communities. It opens the door to examining personal perspectives and biases, as well as structures and decision-making processes that may impede learners' personal and academic success. One of the primary tools is participation in the Ministry of Education Equity in Action initiative. GVSD began the Equity Scan in 2020-21 and will continue to move through the process that will result in an Equity Action Plan.



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Work underway in GVSD to support staff in understanding and developing culturally responsive practices include the Bentwood Box Learning Series, providing Indigenous training to Educational Assistant's new to the District, and Anti-Racism Training. The Board of Education has allocated \$50,000 for the 2021-22 school-year toward Anti-Racism training for District leadership staff. In addition, the development of a comprehensive Cultural Competency Framework is underway which will shape and guide our mindset and practices across the District. We are also establishing consistent Human Resource practices that support the hiring of Indigenous staff.

## Local Education Agreements

GVSD core values include partnership, engagement and respect. It is in this spirit that we continue to build formal and informal relationships with the Indigenous community and partners. Work established and underway includes a renewed Local Educational Agreement with Songhees Nation, a pending local Educational Agreement with Esquimalt Nation and the development of "Letters of Understanding" with the Metis Nation Greater Victoria and Urban Indigenous Council. To support the implementation of the Local Education Agreements in our schools, the District and the Nations will provide training for school administrators. Our district has established an Elders' Advisory Council and meets with the Four Houses on a monthly basis.

## Operation Equity

GVSD has developed robust Indigenous cultural programs as well as an abundance of quality K-12 Indigenous teaching resources. This has promoted a sense of belonging and identity for many Indigenous students but it hasn't always translated to academic success. The work of the

# Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Report 2021

District with respect to Goal Two is to close the achievement gap that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

By the end of year 2 of the Strategic Plan we expect to see improved literacy and numeracy results for Indigenous learners (K-5) and continued improvement to end 2025 (See Appendix to Indigenous Students Grade 4 FSA Results for Literacy [p.2] and Indigenous Students Grade 4 FSA Results for Numeracy [p.5]).

Further, by the end of year 2 of the Strategic Plan we expect to see improved completion rates for Indigenous students, and overall improvement by 15% by the end of 2025. (See Appendix Indigenous student 5 Year Completion Rate [p.14])

## Indigenous Ways of Knowing

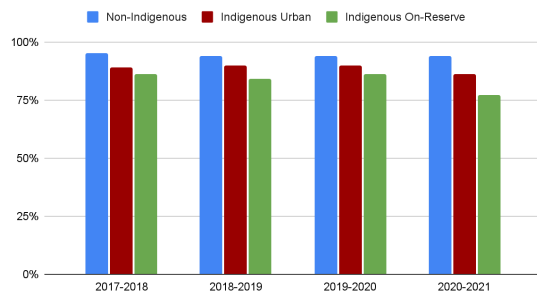
GVSD has undertaken many initiatives to amplify the relevance and importance of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy, and to build good relationships with Indigenous students and families in order to change the narrative and the academic outcomes for Indigenous students. These initiatives include the development of First Peoples Principles of Learning K-12 Professional Learning modules, establishing an Indigenous Education Liaison Teacher contact for each school, and the development of a learning app for educators to record and support academic growth and attendance of Indigenous learners. Work in the coming school-year will also include supporting the implementation of School Growth Plans to improve outcomes for Indigenous Learners, development of metrics and templates for schools' use of data, and support for ECE's and K-3 teachers in the implementation of the Early Learning Framework and Indigenous Worldviews.

## Student Engagement

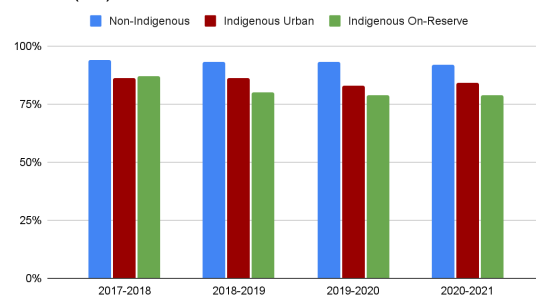
Attendance is considered one of the key indicators of Indigenous student engagement. By the end of year 2 of the Strategic Plan we expect to see improved attendance for Indigenous students K-12 and continued improvement to the end of 2025.

# Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Report 2021

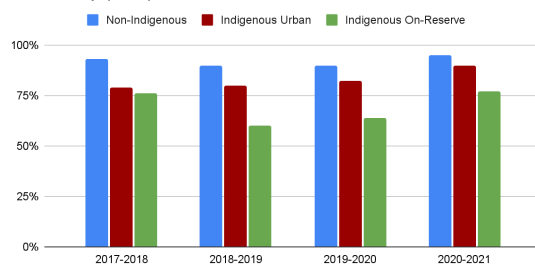
Elementary (1-5) Attendance Rate %



Middle (6-8) Attendance Rate %



Secondary (9-12) Attendance Rate %



**Goal Three of the Greater Victoria School District's Strategic Plan focuses on creating an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that will support all learners' physical and mental well-being.**

To realize this goal, four strategies were developed:

1. Provide Professional Learning Opportunities for all staff
2. Create a Collaborative Children and Youth in Care team
3. Engage and collaborate with families
4. Address inequity of opportunity

## Professional Learning

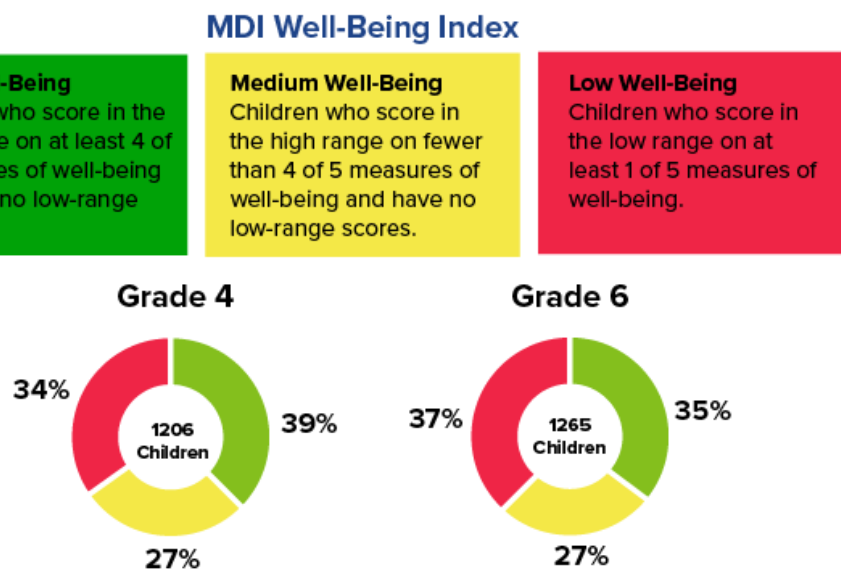
Our primary focus in grades K-7 to support physical and mental well-being is the implementation of physical literacy curricula and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programming; research indicates that being physically active promotes positive mental health in children. By implementing developmentally appropriate play-based activities in our elementary schools, we hope to give students the confidence, motivation and competence to move and be physically active throughout their life. Additionally, engaging in SEL opportunities promotes our students'

# Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Report 2021

capacity to learn and integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviours to deal effectively with daily tasks and challenges. Ongoing training and professional development that supports K-7 staff in creating school and classroom environments that integrate physical literacy and SEL continues with the social emotional learning program Second Step and physical literacy curricula provided through the Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence. Both have been well received by staff within our District and have proven to be beneficial to student well-being and learning.

## Data

Our current data highlights the need to be explicit and intentional in helping students to identify and understand the skills they are gaining through physical literacy and mental well-being programming and curricula. The Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) Well-Being Index data for our District, shows 39% of grade 4 students are thriving compared with 35% of our grade 6 students. Our target is to increase the percentage of students thriving by 5% for grade 4 and grade 6 students.

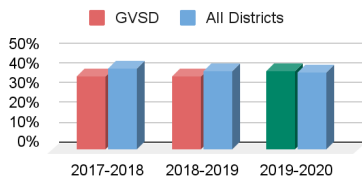


Data from the Student Learning Survey also provides evidence that more explicit instruction is needed as to why we are undertaking certain activities or curricula as it relates to mental health and physical literacy. Our students do not correlate the opportunities for physical literacy and mental health curricula as learning about their mental health. We believe that this explicit focus will result in improved health and understanding for students and their role in their own physical and mental health. Our target is to exceed the Provincial average (blue bars) for each grade level when students are asked if they are learning about how to care for their mental health. The red

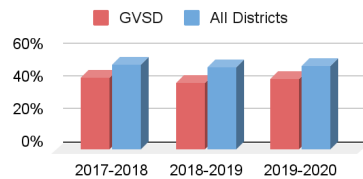
# Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Report 2021

bars show where we are behind the Provincial average, the double blue bars are where we have met the average, and the green bar shows where we have met our target.

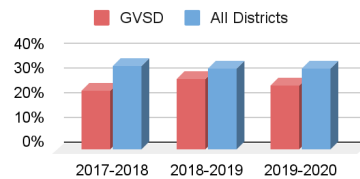
Grades 3-4



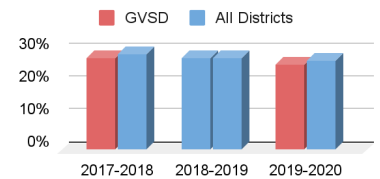
Grade 7



Grade 10



Grade 12



## Mental Health Framework

Mental health literacy curricula for grades 8-12 provides a framework that supports universal mental health and well-being promotion, prevention and intervention in our middle and secondary schools. We know mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being; it impacts how we think, what we feel and the way we act. It also affects how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. With the goal of providing an evidence based mental health framework, District wide training and implementation of TeenMentalHealth.org began in our middle schools in the 2018/2019 school year and was expanded to include our secondary schools in the 2020/2021 school year.

School staff are an integral part of our mental health framework as evidenced by data from the 2018 Adolescent Health Survey where youth were more likely than their peers five years earlier to approach school staff for help.

In the past year:

- 55% of students had asked a teacher for help (vs. 41% in 2013)
- 31% asked a school counsellor (vs. 27%)
- 23% asked other school staff (vs. 16%)

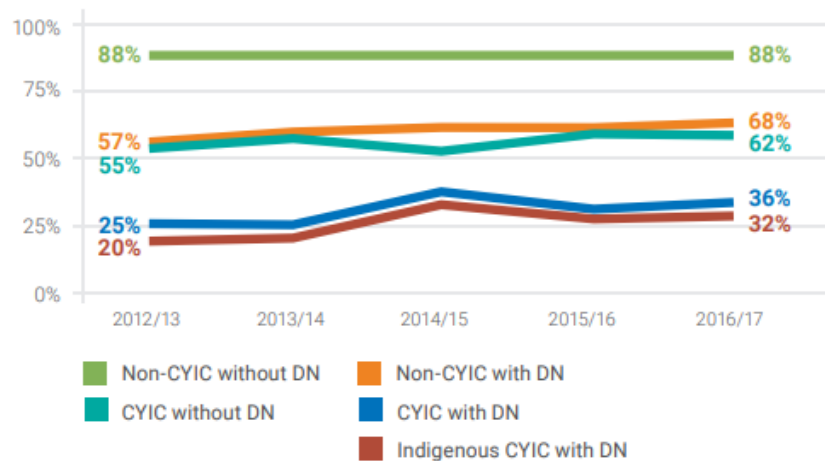
Staff well-being is an influential factor in supporting student well-being. It is essential that staff have the tools and skills to support their students and their own mental health. By providing opportunities to participate in strength based research programs such as trauma-informed practice, as well as using a compassionate systems approach with staff, we hope to improve their confidence and competence in providing support to their students.

## Children and Youth In Care

As stated in the Joint Educational Planning and Support for Children and Youth In Care Report, children and youth in care may have medical or developmental issues that can affect their ability to learn. In addition, they may be experiencing emotional difficulties due to stressful events in their lives such as family breakdown, domestic violence, trauma, moving on or off reserve, separation from siblings, or the intergenerational legacy of residential schools. These events and transitions can potentially have significant impacts on these children and youth – on their ability to learn and on their educational outcomes. Strong benefits are acquired by children and youth in care when those responsible for their care operate as a team and communicate about the child/youth's strengths, talents, needs and educational progress.

We have been working collaboratively with staff from the Ministry of Children and Family Development and delegated agencies including Surrounded by Cedars and representatives from the local Nations to develop and provide joint educational planning and support for Children and Youth In Care (CYIC) that helps develop the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest. The 2018 Ministry of Education report *How Are We Doing? Children and Youth in Government Care and Youth on Youth Agreements* acknowledges that CYIC have a much lower six-year completion rate than non-CYIC and that CYIC that are Indigenous and/or have a designation have even lower success rates.

FIGURE 8. SIX-YEAR COMPLETION RATES CYIC & NON-CYIC WITH & WITHOUT DIVERSE NEEDS



Working together, we can improve the outcomes for these students. We have appointed a District Youth and Family Counsellor to coordinate our District's standard of practice which includes a

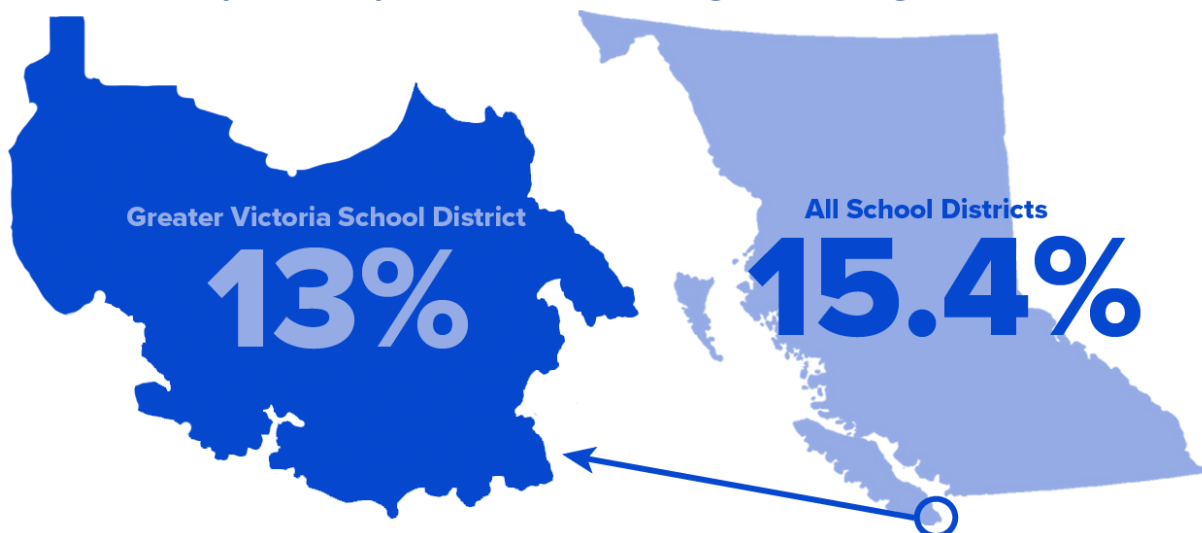
data tracking system, development of a Supporting Success in School Plan (SPP), a communication mechanism with our partners and delegated agencies and additional resources to support schools in this work. Our target is to have a Supporting Success in School Plan developed for each of the 160 identified children in care within our District.

## Reducing Barriers

COVID-19 has presented some challenges for our CYIC and other vulnerable students in our District. To support these students and families transitioning back to school and accessing community support, we have hired two District outreach transition support workers. Reducing barriers and improving coping skills for our most vulnerable students and families is a priority within our District.

Information from the Early Years Development Instrument (EDI) indicates the need for us to examine our data carefully and use it to identify and action our engagement with families who may not have access to community resources such as opportunities for physical activity and access to mental health support. We know that creating relationships with our community partners will support improvements in student educational outcomes. By building strong connections between schools, families and community partners, we hope to reduce inequities of opportunity and improve outcomes for students. Our target is to reduce the vulnerability average on the physical health and well-being scale by 2% from 13% to 11%.

### Vulnerability on the Physical Health & Well-being Scale Average For All Students





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To achieve our targets, budget allocations and resources have been committed and include:

- Two 1.0 FTE Community Outreach Workers
- One 1.0 FTE Youth and Family Counsellor
- Social-Emotional Learning \$50,000
- Physical Literacy \$50,000
- Mental Health Supports \$50,000
- Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) \$20,000
- Resources \$50,000
- COVID Recovery Plan Funding \$65,395
- Early Actions Initiative Funding \$48,000