

TO: The Board of Education
FROM: Katrina Stride, Secretary-Treasurer
DATE: April 9, 2024
RE: **Talking Tables Event Report - March 7, 2024**

What is Talking Tables?

The Talking Tables Event was held on March 7, 2024 as part of the 2024-2025 Budget process. The purpose of the event was to inform the Board by:

- Providing an opportunity to discuss important topics and obtain feedback directly from the Four Houses, partner groups, and leadership
- Facilitating communication within a large, diverse group
- Encouraging open, honest conversation and respectful dialogue
- Building relationship, understanding and trust

Participation

There were 48 participants from the following groups:

Trustees	3	6%
Four Houses	3	6%
VCPAC (Parents)	1	2%
Principals and Vice Principals	13	27%
Teachers	10	21%
CUPE 947	7	15%
Exempt	11	23%
Total	48	100%

Opening Remarks

Opening remarks were provided by Deb Whitten, Superintendent.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

Event Format

- Participants were assigned to tables to ensure diversity
- Introductions of representatives from the Four Houses, Trustees and Senior Leadership Team
- Introductions at tables
- Dinner (45 minutes)
- Budget Presentation (15 minutes)
- Talking Tables (90 minutes)
 - 30 minutes each topic:
 - Topic 1 – Culturally Responsive Learning Environments
 - Topic 2 – Priority Students: Goals 1, 2 and 3
 - Topic 3 – Infrastructure (Facilities and Technology)
- Trustees had the option to move tables after each topic
- Facilitator at each table took notes for each topic

Closing Remarks

Closing remarks were provided by willing participants. The final closing remarks were provided by Nicole Duncan, Board Chair.

Appreciation

Thank you to all of the participants who were able to attend the event and share their voices at the table.

Supporting Documentation

The agenda is attached as Appendix A.

The presentation slides are attached as Appendix B.

Notes from table facilitators on each topic are attached as Appendix C.

Report

Following the meeting, this report will be posted on the District website on the Financial page under the heading of 2024-2025 School Year Budget at <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/financial/>.

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)

**Talking Tables
Budget 2024-2025
Thursday, March 7, 2024
5:00 – 8:30pm**

**Chief and Petty Officers' Mess, 1575 Lyall Street, Esquimalt
Rainbow Room (Downstairs)**

AGENDA

5:00 – 5:30	Gathering and Seating	
5:30 – 5:45	Welcome	
	Acknowledgement	
	Opening Remarks	
	Format for the Evening	
	Introductions	
5:45 – 6:30	Dinner	
6:30 – 6:45	Budget Presentation	
6:45 – 7:15	Topic 1: Culturally Responsive Learning Environments	Pgs. 2-6
7:15 – 7:45	Topic 2: Priority Students: Goals 1, 2 and 3	Pgs. 7-48
7:45 – 8:15	Topic 3: Infrastructure	Pgs. 49-74
8:15 – 8:30	Closing Remarks	

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
Talking Tables
Budget 2024-2025
Thursday, March 7, 2024

In preparation for the topic discussions at the Talking Tables event, please review the following supporting documentation:

Topic 1: Culturally Responsive Learning Environments

Introduction to Culturally Responsive Learning Environments through Pedagogy, Leadership and Governance



Indigenous Education Department

Greater Victoria School District No. 61
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Introduction to Culturally Responsive Learning Environments through; Pedagogy, Leadership and Governance

Prepared by: Dr. Shelly Niemi
Director of Indigenous Education
Greater Victoria School District No.61

This document is intended to provide you with a small sample of contextual knowledge that include some considerations, excerpts, and resources from scholars and authors whose research inform us about:

What is Cultural Safety? What are the Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Learning Environments and Education Systems? What is Culturally Responsive Practice Through; Pedagogy, Leadership and Governance?

Please Note: *This document serves merely as a brief introduction to this topic and does not include an exhaustive list of the scholars, authors, or resources that can be found to support the research within this area.*

Introduction

Culturally responsive teaching, leadership and governance is derived from the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy, which involve philosophies, practices, and policies that work towards creating inclusive school environments for students and families from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds. (Johnson & Fuller, 2014).

Becoming a culturally responsive education system is all about creating a movement away from oppressive structures within the education system and a focus towards the inequities that interplay with power, privilege, and bias. Being culturally responsive is not just about celebrating the diversity that exists within the education system, rather, it is intentionally focused on how you disrupt the impact of “sameness.”

If education systems have the courage and conviction to challenge their historical practices and move towards “newness” inspired by the knowledge of the lived experiences of the students and their families they serve then the education system can say they are doing the work of culturally responsive education (MacKinnon, 2018).

Bonnie Davis (2012) describes culturally responsive leadership by indicating that *“If we want to raise the academic achievement of all students in our schools, we must address the school culture and personal lens with which we view our students.”* This then must become the critical starting point for an education system if they are to make change towards becoming culturally responsive. (Davis, 2012, pp.37- 39).

Jessica Ball’s work with the Early Childhood Development Intercultural Partnership at the University of Victoria (Ball, 2009) states that Cultural Safety is:

“the outcome of interactions where individuals experience their cultural identity and way of being as having been respected or, at least not challenged or harmed”

Furthermore, it is imperative to understand that cultural safety is not determined by the provider of a service, rather that cultural safety is determined by the recipient of that particular service (Education, Healthcare, Social Services, Justice, etc.). Ball (2009) further examines that when there is a lack of cultural safety and/or a plan to increase cultural safety within an education system then cultural unsafety continues to occur even if it is unintended. Cultural un-safety is “a subjective sense that one’s cherished values, goals, language, identity, culture and ways of life are denigrated or threatened in an encounter, or that one is being asked to venture into a foreign culture without knowing how to function in it and without positive accompaniment” (Ball, 2009).

Culturally un-safe environments can still be found in all systems (Education, Healthcare, Social, Justice etc.) and the impact of culturally un-safe environments do causes stress and in some cases duress for the recipients of the service (Niemi, 2020).

If an education system is moving towards becoming culturally responsive all involved within that education system do require processes for where they can safely self-examine their own bias, privilege, beliefs, pedagogy, leadership and decision-making processes. As it is through these self-examination processes that one can begin to self-locate how their practice and decision-making impacts learning for students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Which, in turn have a direct impact on all of the students, families and communities they serve (Niemi, 2020, Ladson-Billings, G. 2011).

Cultural Safety is than viewed as an *‘outcome’* of culturally responsive practice and is only determined by the recipients of the service.

Some Books and Guiding Documents for Consideration

✓ **The Auditor General’s Report (2019) on the Education of Aboriginal Students within the B.C. Public Education System.**

The Ministry of Education has a responsibility to Indigenous students, their caregivers and communities to provide high-quality learning experiences and improve educational outcomes. The Ministry is committed to aligning those efforts with the commitments to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia’s Relationship with Indigenous Peoples. The Ministry fully supports the rights of Indigenous peoples to have control of, and decision-making responsibility for, Indigenous education, and is committed to continuing to work with First Nations partners who are interested in moving towards jurisdiction in education (Auditor General’s Report, The Education of Aboriginal Students in the B.C. Public School System, 2019).

✓ **Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit (Marie Battiste, 2013)**

Change process takes time, and moving a system towards becoming culturally responsive will require a plan, and space for vulnerability, decolonizing processes, and the ability to critically examine self-biases while being prepared to deconstruct and reconstruct worldviews (Battiste, 2013).

✓ **Culturally Responsive School Leadership (Muhammad Khalifa, 2018)**

Culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) has become important to research on culturally responsive education, reform, and social justice education. This book provides a comprehensive review and example framework for the expanding body of literature that seeks to make not only teaching, but rather the entire school environment, responsive to the schooling needs for students from diverse backgrounds. This book provides information to support CRSL and teacher preparation, CRSL and school environments, and CRSL and community advocacy and aligns literature on leadership, social justice, for culturally relevant education.

✓ **Street Data: A Next Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy and School Transformation (Shane Safir and Jamila Dugan, 2021)**

Education can be transformed if we eradicate our fixation on big data like standardized test scores as the supreme measure of equity and learning. Instead of the focus being on "fixing" and "filling" academic gaps, we must envision and rebuild the system from the student up -- with classrooms, schools and systems built around students' brilliance, cultural wealth, and intellectual potential. Street data reminds us that what is measurable is not the same as what is valuable and that data can be humanizing, and healing.

By breaking down street data fundamentals, what it is, how to gather it, and how it can complement other forms of data to guide a school or district's equity journey, Safir and Dugan offer an actionable framework for school transformation. Written for educators and policymakers, this book: Offers fresh

ideas and innovative tools to apply immediately and provides an asset-based model to help educators look for what's right in our students and communities instead of seeking what's wrong.

✓ **Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students (Zaretta Hammond, 2015)**

In this book, Zaretta Hammond draws on cutting-edge neuroscience research to offer an innovative approach for designing and implementing brain-compatible culturally responsive instruction and information on how one's culture programs the brain to process data and affects learning relationships. Hammond explores Ten "key moves" to build students' learner operating systems and prepare them to become independent learners; Prompts for action and valuable self-reflection while guiding an understanding of these techniques for educators.

✓ **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Working Towards Decolonization, Indigeneity and Interculturalism (Fatima-Pirbhai Illich, Shauneen Pete and Fran Martin, 2018)**

This book convincingly argues that effective culturally responsive pedagogies require teachers to firstly undertake a critical deconstruction of Self in relation to and with the Other; and secondly, to consider how power affects the socio-political, cultural and historical contexts in which the education relation takes place. The contributing authors are from a range of diaspora, Indigenous, and white mainstream communities, and are united in their desire to challenge the hegemony of Eurocentric education and to create new educational spaces that are more socially and environmentally just. In this venture, the ideal education process is seen to be inherently critical and intercultural, where mainstream and marginalized, colonized and colonizer, Indigenous and settler communities work together to decolonize selves, teacher-student relationships, pedagogies, the curriculum and the education system itself.

YouTube Links

Etuaptomuk: Two-Eyed Seeing | Rebecca Thomas

<https://youtu.be/bA9EwcFbVfg>

Cultural Safety Education as the Blueprint for Reconciliation | Len Pierre

<https://youtu.be/jmRFsVAXmiQ>

Cultural Safety: Respect and Dignity in Relationships

<https://youtu.be/MkxcuhdgIwY>

Zaretta Hammond "Culturally Responsive Teaching"

<https://youtu.be/ME8KjqyqthM>

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story

<https://youtu.be/D9Ihs241zeg>

Robin DiAngelo on "White Fragility" - EXTENDED CONVERSATION

<https://youtu.be/Qx-gUfQx4-Q>

Topic 2: Priority Students: Goals 1, 2 and 3

Strategic Plan

Enhancing Student Learning Report (ESLR)

Strategic Plan 2020-2025



Mission

We nurture each student's learning and well-being in a safe, responsive and inclusive learning community.



Vision

Each student within our world-class learning community has an opportunity to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations.

Goal 1

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

Strategy 1:

Develop and support high quality learning opportunities through the implementation of curriculum in order to improve student achievement.

Strategy 2:

Engage and collaborate with students, families and staff to provide an inclusive learning environment that will enhance and support student learning, identities and well-being.

Strategy 3:

Address the inequity of outcomes for diverse learners in literacy, numeracy, engagement and completion rates.

Goal 2

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

Strategy 1:

Critically examine personal and systemic biases, attitudes, beliefs, values and practices to increase student and staff understanding and appreciation of Indigenous worldviews, histories and perspectives.

Strategy 2:

Engage and collaborate with local Nations, Indigenous educators, Indigenous community leaders, Elders and families to enhance Indigenous student learning and well-being and identity.

Strategy 3:

Address the inequity of outcomes for Indigenous learners in literacy, numeracy, attendance and graduation rates.

Goal 3

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

Strategy 1:

Continue to provide professional learning opportunities to all staff in K-12 to further support implementation of social emotional learning, physical literacy and mental health literacy that improves outcomes for students and classrooms.

Strategy 2:

Work in collaboration with Ministry of Children & Family Development to provide joint educational planning and support for children and youth in care that helps develop the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest for current and future success.

Strategy 3:

Engage and collaborate with families to encourage awareness of and engagement in physical literacy and mental health literacy that improves outcomes for students in classrooms and at home.

Strategy 4:

Address the inequity of opportunity for all learners to maximize physical health and mental well-being.

Core Values

Engagement

We work to actively engage students in their education and make them feel connected to their learning

Equity

We give each student the opportunity to fulfill their potential

Innovation

We are innovative and consistently seek ways to make positive change

Integrity

We are ethical and fair

Transparency

We are accountable for the decisions we make and how we make them

Partnerships

We create open and respectful partnerships with each member of our learning community

Respect

We respect ourselves, others and the environment

Social Responsibility

We share responsibility to work with and inspire students to create a better world

Sustainability

We are proactive in the stewardship of the resources of our organization, our community and our planet



ENHANCING STUDENT LEARNING REPORT 2023

In review of the Greater Victoria School District five-year strategic plan that was renewed in 2020 (Year 4 of 5).

Approved by the Board on September 25, 2023



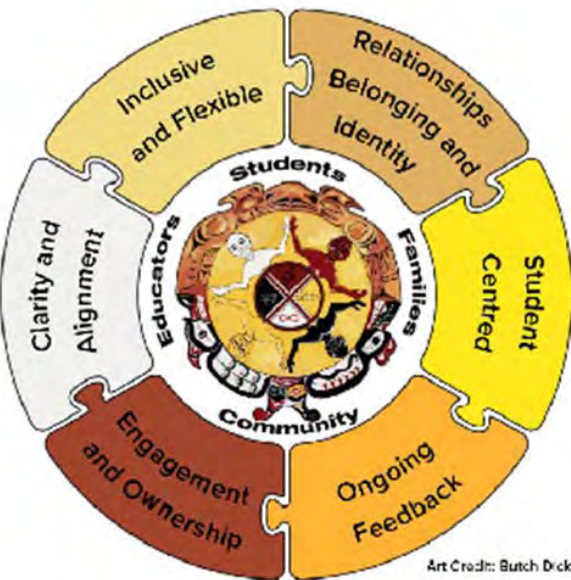
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District Context

The Greater Victoria School District No. 61 (the “District”) resides on the traditional territory of the lək̓ʷəŋən (Lekwungen) people. We would like to acknowledge the Songhees First Nation and the Esquimalt First Nation on whose traditional territories we live, work and play. Hay’sxw’qa—thank you.

The District is committed to supporting Indigenous learners by promoting practices informed by Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing. Our partnerships with local Indigenous communities are formalized through the education agreements we have with the Songhees First Nation, Esquimalt First Nation, Métis Nation Greater Victoria (MNGV) and the Urban Peoples’ House Indigenous Advisory (UPHIA), known as the Four Houses.



The term Four Houses refers to the localized structure co-created with the Indigenous communities to provide equitable opportunities for Indigenous Nations to have a voice within the District. This is in-line with the district committing to a distinctions-based approach as outlined by the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan.

The Greater Victoria School District by the numbers:

- 19,541 students
- 1,486 self-identified Indigenous students
- 1,491 international students
- 2,200 multi-language learners
- 29 elementary schools (K–grade 5)
- 10 middle schools (grades 6–8)
- 7 secondary schools (grades 9–12)
- 1 alternative school
- 1 K-12 school
- 1 continuing education program
- 6 municipalities
- 6 StrongStart Centres

The District is 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 provide quality educational programs for 19,541 students at 49 schools. Additionally, we offer a variety of Programs of Choice, including French Immersion, Sport Academies, Challenge, Leadership programs, and programming opportunities for students with disabilities or diverse abilities at Victor School, Arbutus Global Middle School, and Reynolds High School.

As a learning community, we are deeply committed to each student having the opportunity to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations. We recognize that achieving this goal will require us to continue to:

- Lean into Indigenous perspectives and considerations for systemic alignment
- Engage with community in a culturally responsive way that is open, transparent and collaborative
- Focus on aligning the human and financial resources of the system to meet the educational goals of the school district
- Increase our data literacy across the system
- Enrich early childhood experiences to set the foundation for learning and social and emotional health

Current Strategic Plan Priorities

The Greater Victoria School District has three goals identified in its [strategic plan](#). Each of the goals contain strategies to action the goal and are included in the tables below. Also included are the actions to date for the strategies.

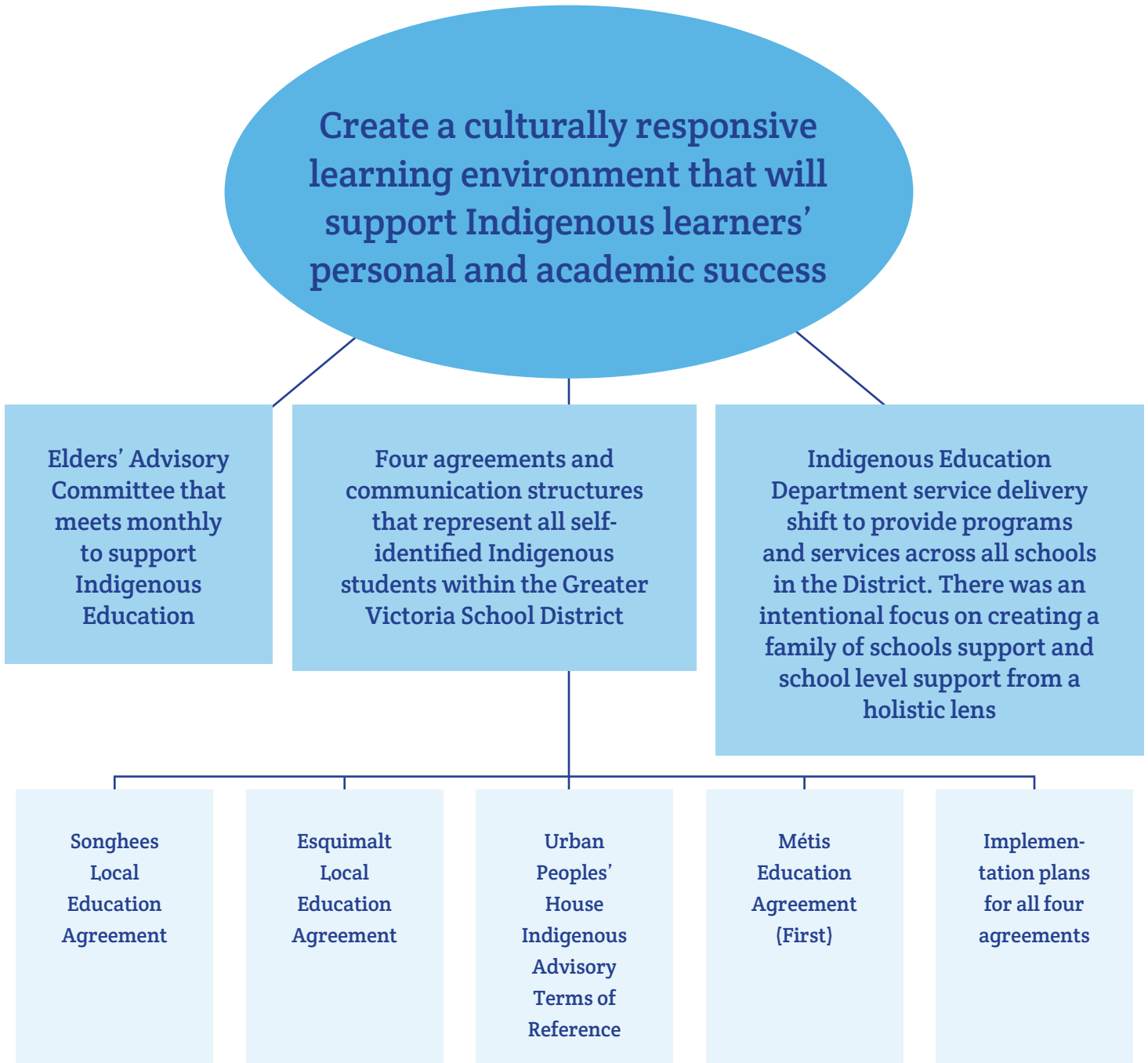
Goal 1: Create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that will support and improve all learners’ personal and academic success.			
	Strategy 1: Develop and support high quality learning opportunities through the implementation of curriculum in order to improve student achievement.	Strategy 2: Engage & collaborate with students, families and staff to provide an inclusive learning environment that will enhance and support student learning, identities and well-being.	Strategy 3: Address the inequity of outcomes for diverse learners in literacy, numeracy, engagement and completion rates.
ACTIONS TO DATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted professional learning offered through a variety of ways with a focus on literacy, numeracy and social emotional learning through the lens of culturally responsive teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the K-12 Career Education Curriculum, continue to create opportunities focused on personalized future orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase initiatives for students with diverse learning needs to connect with meaningful work experience, training, and post-secondary learning opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District professional learning options aligned with the strategic plan that prioritize culturally responsive learning environments and explicitly connect philosophy and pedagogy with a focus on increasing student connections, engagement and achievement will be a priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further implementation and support of Competency Based Individual Education Plans K-12— focus on engaging students and families (Year 4) Expanding of the Welcome and Learning Centre to support immigrant and refugee students new to Victoria (Sept 2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 3 of District multi-disciplinary ‘wrap-around team’ supporting school teams with programming implementation for diverse learners with the most complex support needs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> French oral language pilot with a family of schools to support the acquisition and strengthening of French oral language development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued work to support person centered planning and transitions K-12 and beyond with a focus for diverse learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 3 of early childhood educators working alongside teachers in kindergarten classrooms
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment Principles that focus on culturally responsive assessment and communicating student learning (document and video) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised welcome process for incoming Kindergarten students to prioritize family partnerships and inform program planning for the whole child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activation of the four agreements with Indigenous communities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued support with inclusion of SOGI-themed resources and activities through collaboration with SOGI school leads and targeted professional learning opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted early literacy supports in priority schools

District Successes: Goal 1



<p>Goal 2: Create a culturally responsive learning environment that will support Indigenous learners’ personal and academic success.</p>			
	<p>Strategy 1: Critically examine personal and systemic biases, attitudes, beliefs, values and practices to increase student and staff understanding and appreciation of Indigenous worldviews, histories and perspectives.</p>	<p>Strategy 2: Engage and collaborate with local Nations, Indigenous educators, Indigenous community leaders, Elders and families to enhance Indigenous student learning and well-being and identity.</p>	<p>Strategy 3: Address the inequity of outcomes for Indigenous learners in literacy, numeracy, attendance and graduation rates.</p>
<p>ACTIONS TO DATE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Education Learning Series Culturally Response Learning Series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Songhees Local Education Agreement—Implementation Plan Esquimalt Nation Education Agreement—Implementation Plan Métis Education Agreement—Implementation Plan Urban Peoples’ House Indigenous Advisory —Terms of Reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All departments and schools are working towards an implementation of a distinctions-based data approach as per DRIPA, our Local Education Agreements with Songhees Nation, Esquimalt Nation, our Métis Education Agreement and our UPHIA Terms of Reference in our work with addressing inequities in literacy, numeracy, attendance and graduation rates with Indigenous students in our school district. All of our agreements were co-created with each of the Indigenous communities and we meet regularly to discuss and activate the needs of their students and families as outlined in each of these agreements from a distinctions-based approach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Rights Tribunal—Special Programs Hiring Exemption Culturally Responsive Leadership Framework Equity Scan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Meetings with the Four Houses 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Education Learning Resource Library—with Approved Authentic Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elders Advisory Monthly Meetings 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Mental Health Framework (Locally Developed with the Four Houses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Education District Elementary, Middle and Secondary School Teams 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Education Agreements Métis Education Agreement Urban People’s House Indigenous Advisory—Terms of Reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Education Dept and District Team—Collaboration to support the work across the system 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elders Advisory 		

District Successes: Goal 2



Goal 3: Create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that will support all learners' physical and mental well-being.				
	<p>Strategy 1: Continue to provide professional learning opportunities to all staff in K-12 to further support implementation of social emotional learning, physical literacy and mental health literacy that improves outcomes for students and classrooms.</p>	<p>Strategy 2: Work in collaboration with Ministry of Children & Family Development to provide joint educational planning and support for children and youth in care that helps develop the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest for current and future success.</p>	<p>Strategy 3: Engage and collaborate with families to encourage awareness of and engagement in physical literacy and mental health literacy that improves outcomes for students in classrooms and at home.</p>	<p>Strategy 4: Address the inequity of opportunity for all learners to maximize physical health and mental well-being.</p>
ACTIONS TO DATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide in-school implementation support for district resources including Second Step, Mental Health Literacy, EASE for all grades K to 12 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted sessions for school counsellors and learning support teachers Counsellor collaboration sessions (several times throughout the year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement information strategy "one-by-each" with all Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) offices that have SD61 students to ensure accurate and timely information between schools and social workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide quarterly mental health and wellness Snapshots at all levels for families that include community resources and relevant research Share new and relevant community resources and opportunities as they become available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of an attendance and re-engagement strategy to better identify and support priority students (three meetings throughout the year with community partners to connect and share information on disengaged students and share promising practices)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing work with Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence to provide Physical Literacy Teacher Mentorship programming in 10 middle and several elementary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with MCFD host two sessions for staff from schools, MCFD and Indigenous Delegated Agencies to build better connections in support of our Children and Youth in Care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote in-school physical activities including clubs, intramurals and student led initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide membership access to local centres or programs for students and families with limited means
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning sessions focused on social emotional learning and behaviour as communication for educational assistants, teachers and administrators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support implementation of District CYIC Standard of Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and promote mental health campaigns through interactive posters in middle and secondary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with community agencies in the development of trauma-informed practice to support newcomers

District Successes: Goal 3

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

Opening of a centralized Welcome and Learning Centre to support immigrant and refugee students new to Victoria. The intention is to support successful transition into local schools through a trauma informed lens

As part of the Mental Health Framework, the establishment of community partnerships, including PISE, to support student and family physical and mental wellness

The continuation of the District Children and Youth in Care Standard of Practice

The establishment of collaboration sessions with MCFD and Indigenous delegated agencies to build better connections in support of Children and Youth in Care



Strategic Engagement

Public schools within the District play a key role in weaving communities and families together. We foster community connection by building partnerships with parents and guardians, students and staff, while remaining open to two-way communication.

What does engagement in the District look like?

The District strives to keep families informed and provides various opportunities throughout the school year for student, staff and public input. Each project or initiative requires a tailored approach depending on the participants and audiences involved. For example, engagement with staff and students regarding learning or classroom experiences will vary from the methods used when engaging with the broader public. Strategies used for internal and external engagement vary and depend on the scope of engagement. The District follows the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Foundations and Spectrum of Public Participation framework when developing engagement strategies and plans.

Anyone who may be affected by a decision should have the opportunity to provide input on the potential outcome. A key consideration in engagement planning is accessibility and reducing barriers for all community members to participate in best efforts to remain inclusive and transparent throughout the process. Some strategies include translating materials into different languages and utilizing various communication tools or platforms to adapt to the active participant's needs.

The District is always seeking ways to bring student, staff, and parent perspectives to the Board of Education. All input and data collected through engagement inform the staff's planning and the Board's decision-making. We strongly believe well-informed decisions lead to great governance.

See [Appendix A](#) for a brief overview of how the District engages with Rightsholders, students, staff, families, partners and the broader community.

Engagement Snapshot



Nearly **45,000** students, staff and members of the public have participated in online surveys and forums since 2020



~ **40,000** monthly visitors to our website



46 Parent Advisory Councils



30+ Public Board of Education and Committee Meetings



13 media requests per week (on average)

Student Performance Data Analysis & Interpretation

Intellectual Development

Literacy

Our goal in the 2022-23 Enhancing Student Learning Report was to improve the on track/extending literacy outcomes within our district. The Grade 4 Literacy Foundational Skills Assessment (FSA) data indicates student success within the district (all resident students) remains unchanged at 80% for literacy/reading. The provincial data indicates the province decreased from 75% to 73%. The FSA in Literacy 7 indicates a decrease from 73% to 67%, whereas the provincial data indicates a decrease from 73% to 69%. We recognize that provincial data can be an important comparative means for our district. However, our goals will focus on continuous growth over time rather than a comparative measure.

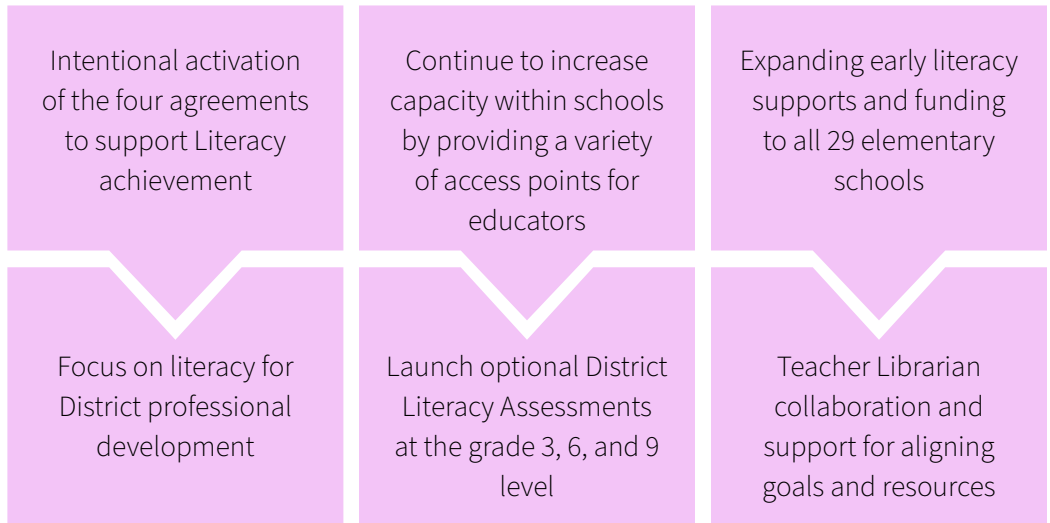
We recognize there is considerable work to do to support the literacy success of Indigenous students, Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities, and Children and Youth in Care in the District. Our commitment is to close the achievement gap between all resident students in our District and Indigenous students, Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities, and Children and Youth in Care.

Further priority work will be with distinctions-based data for Indigenous students as per the DRIPA Action Plan. As well, we will examine other data sets including street data that may be able to offer other insights into improving the success for all students in our District.

Literacy Focus for 2023-2024

- **Increase Indigenous students', Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities, and Children and Youth in Care achievement (on track and extending) on FSA 4,7**
- **Increase Indigenous students', Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities, and Children and Youth in Care achievement (proficient and extending) on Literacy 10**
- **Continue to increase student achievement in early literacy through the Early Literacy Collaboration Teachers in priority schools (year three—ten schools)**

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT LITERACY

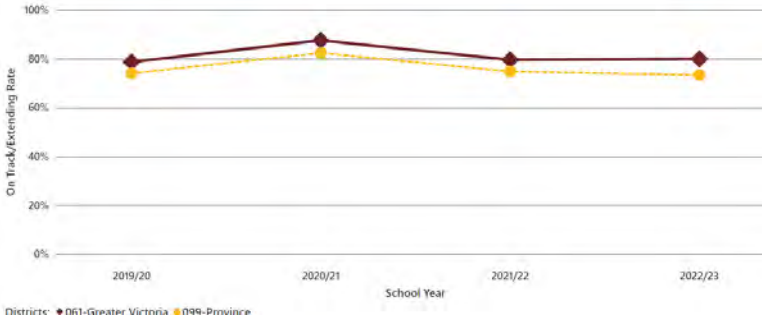


Grade 4 Literacy Measures

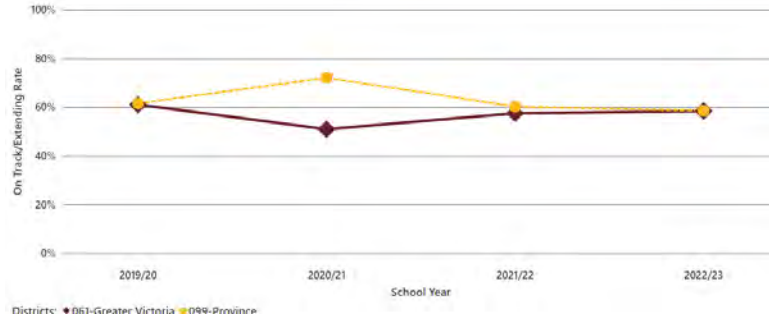
Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) Literacy/Reading—Grade 4

(Portion of Grade 4 resident writers ‘On Track’ or ‘Extending’ or who have ‘Met or Exceeded Expectations’ on the FSA)

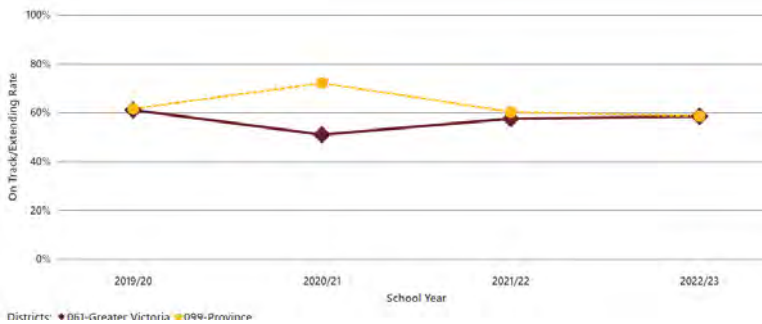
All Resident Students



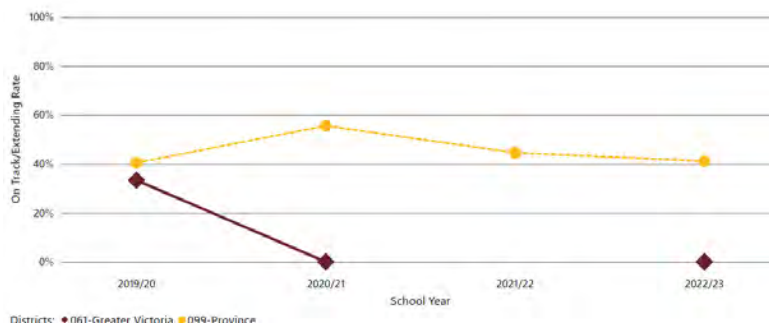
Indigenous Students



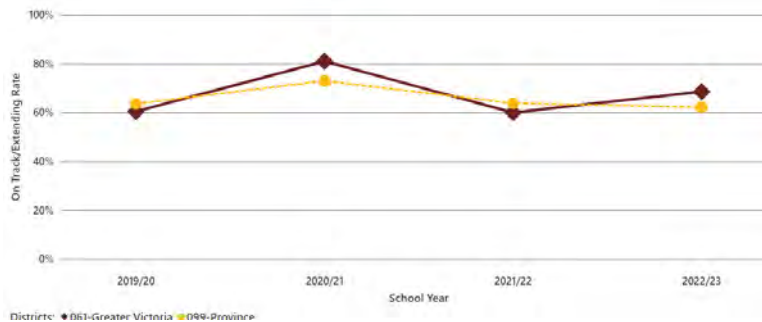
Indigenous Students Not on Reserve



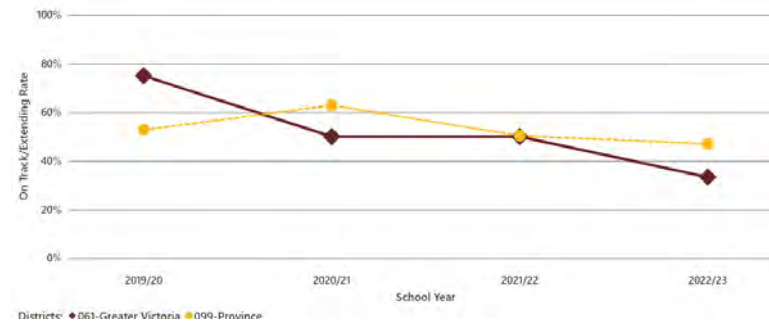
Indigenous Students On Reserve



Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities



Children/Youth in Care

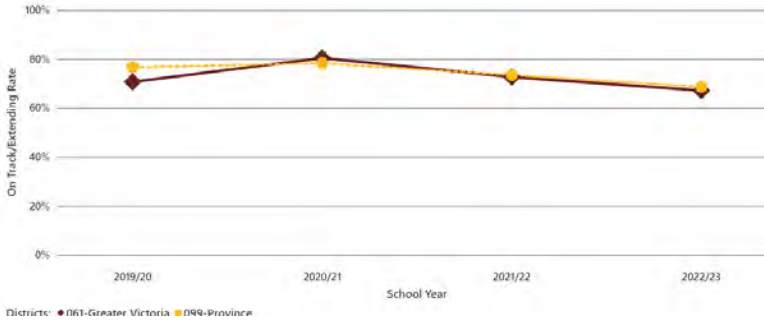


Grade 7 Literacy Measures

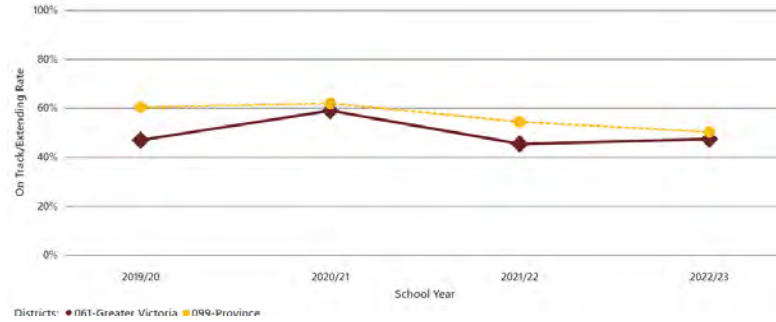
Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) Literacy/Reading—Grade 7

(Portion of Grade 7 resident writers ‘On Track’ or ‘Extending’ or who have ‘Met or Exceeded Expectations’ on the FSA)

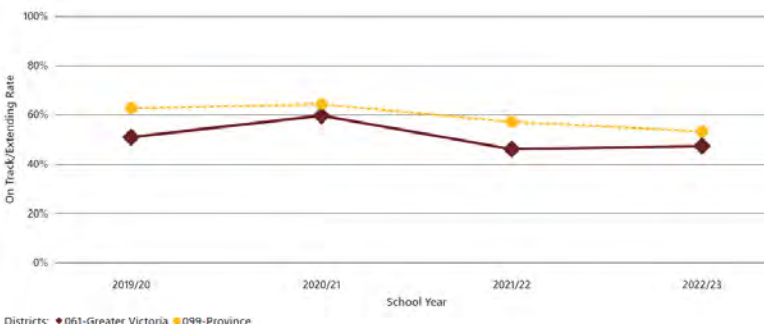
All Resident Students



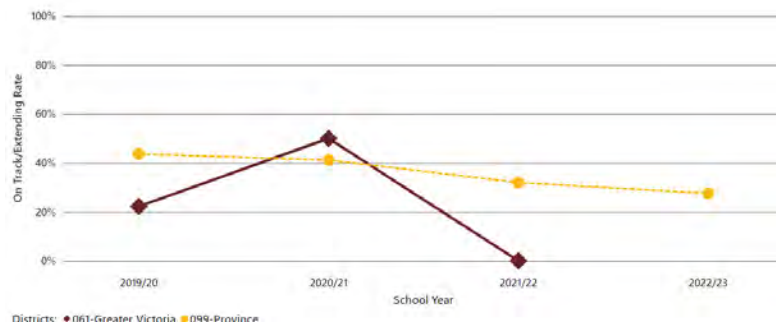
Indigenous Students



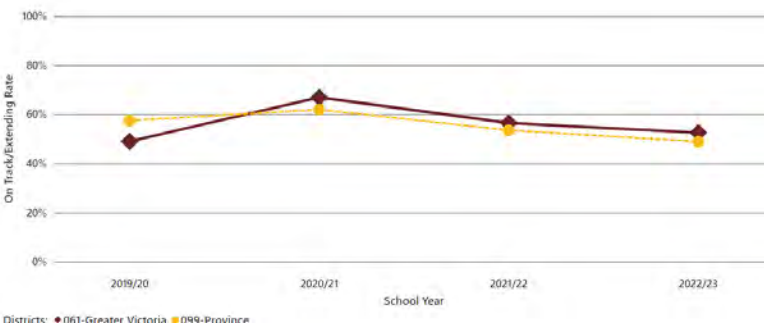
Indigenous Students Not on Reserve



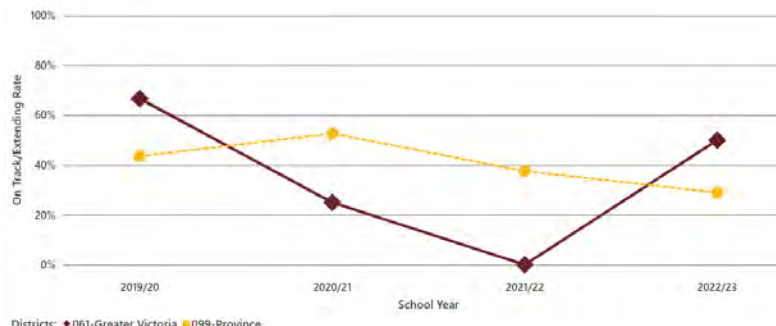
Indigenous Students On Reserve



Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities



Children/Youth in Care

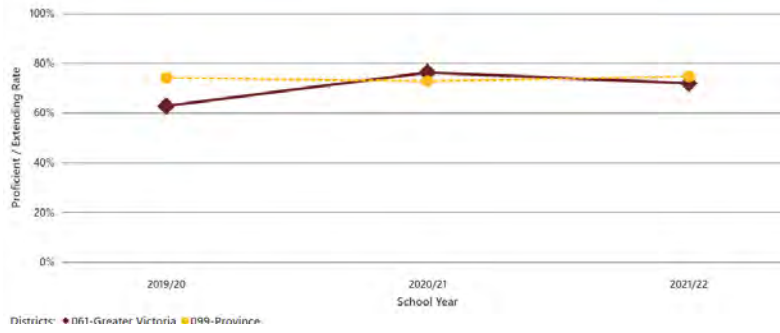


Grade 10 Literacy Measures

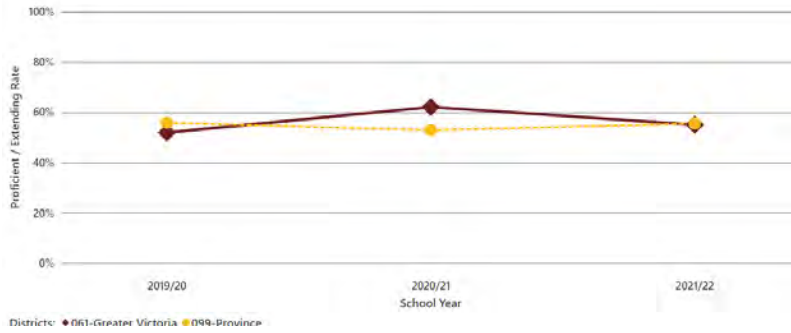
Graduation Assessment – Grade 10

(Portion of Grade 10 resident writers ‘Proficient’ or ‘Extending’ on Literacy 10)

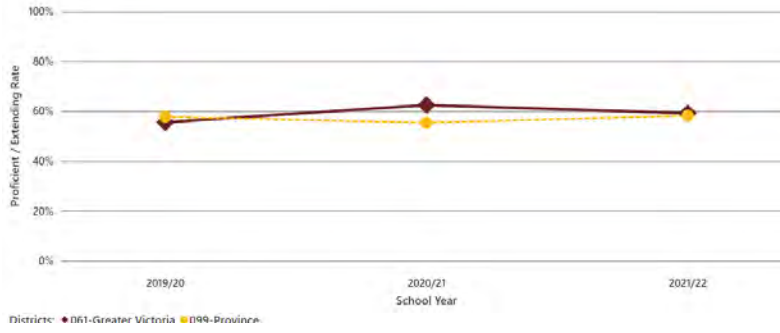
All Resident Students



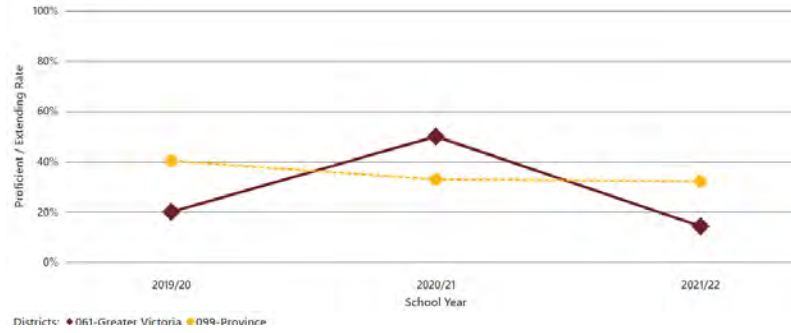
Indigenous Students



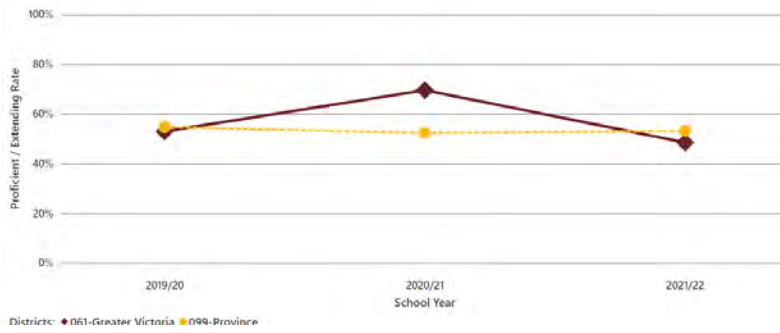
Indigenous Students Not on Reserve



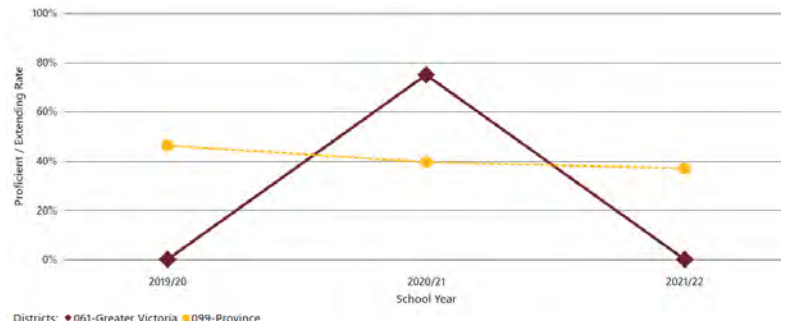
Indigenous Students On Reserve



Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities



Children/Youth in Care



Numeracy

In recent years, district professional learning has been focused on decolonizing numeracy instruction and shifting to supporting culturally responsive learning environments.

Numeracy assessment tasks for optional implementation in grades 3, 6, and 9 have been established and will be introduced in the 2023/24 school year. These tasks align with the provincial numeracy assessments and will be adjusted as provincial benchmarks/performance indicators are launched. A marked decline in student success occurs between Grade 4 and Grade 7. Notably, student (all resident students) success rates decrease from FSA 4 (69%) to FSA 7 (55%) to Numeracy 10 (41%). The previous year's data show FSA 4 (76%), FSA 7 (61%) and Numeracy 10 (41%), indicating a general decline in success rate in grades 4 and 7. A similar decrease in success rates for Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities and Children and Youth in Care is also noted from FSA 4 to FSA 7 to Numeracy 10.

Numeracy Focus for 2023-2024

- Increase Indigenous students', Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities, and Children and Youth in Care achievement (on track and extending) on FSA 4,7
- Increase Indigenous students', Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities, and Children and Youth in Care achievement (proficient and extending) on Numeracy 10
- Increase all resident students' achievement (proficient and extending) on Numeracy 10
- Co-create a Greater Victoria School District Numeracy Framework K-12
- Establishment of a Numeracy Lead position

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT NUMERACY

Intentional activation of the four agreements to support Numeracy achievement

Continue to provide access to resources such as *Educating Now—The Art of Teaching Math*

Support on-going District professional development in numeracy K-12

Launch optional District Numeracy Assessments at the grade 3, 6, 9 level

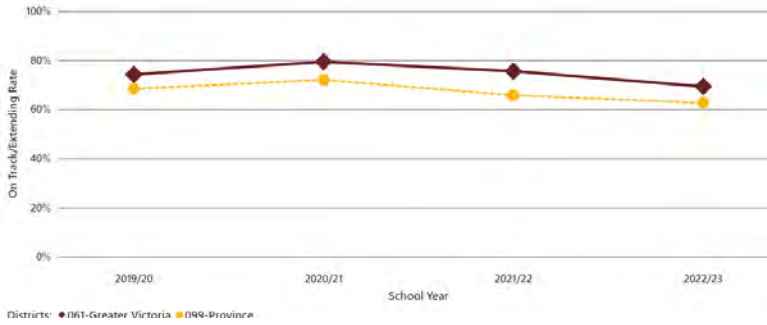


Grade 4 Numeracy Measures

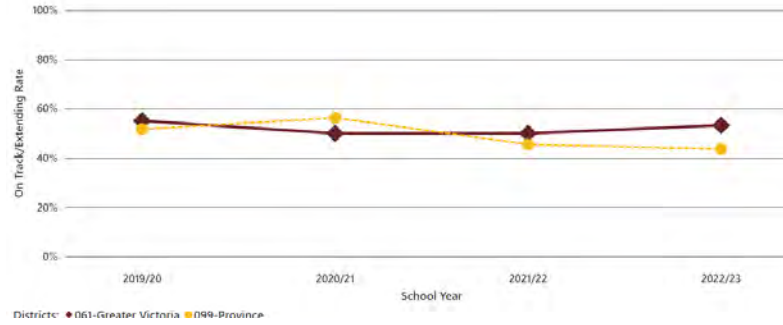
Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) Numeracy—Grade 4

(Portion of Grade 4 resident writers ‘On Track’ or ‘Extending’ or who have ‘Met or Exceeded Expectations’ on the FSA)

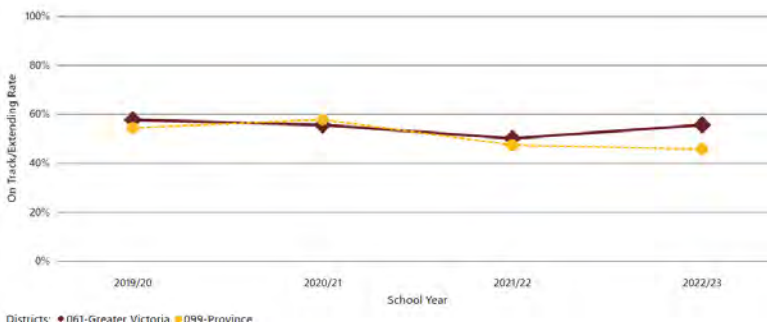
All Resident Students



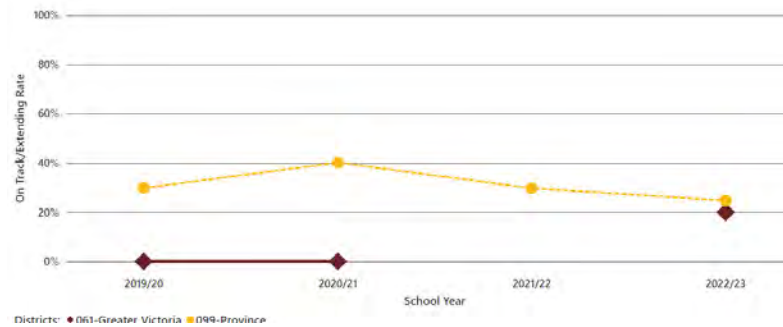
Indigenous Students



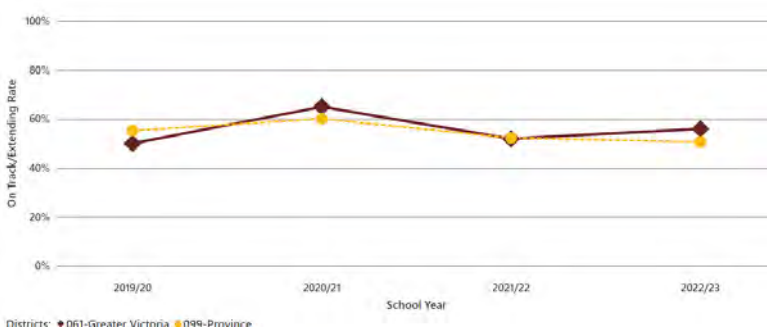
Indigenous Students Not on Reserve



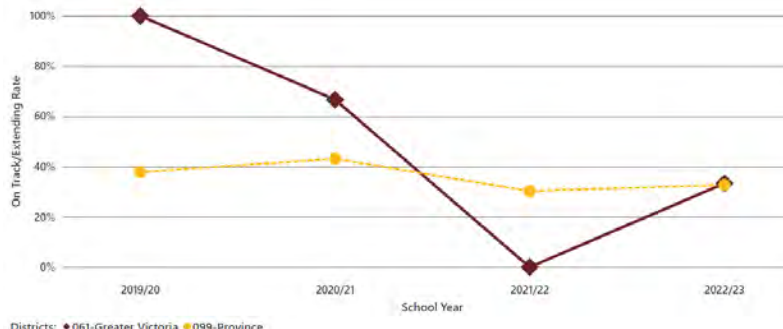
Indigenous Students On Reserve



Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities



Children/Youth in Care

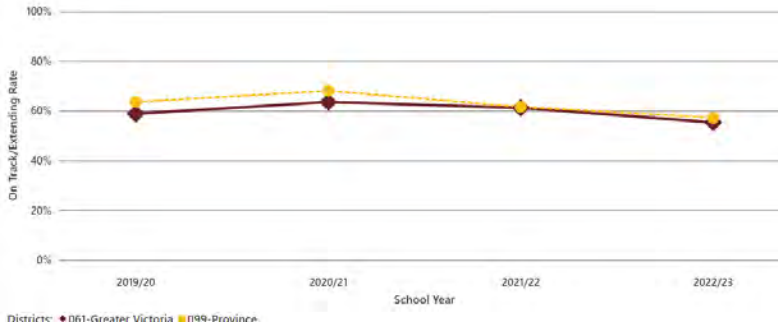


Grade 7 Numeracy Measures

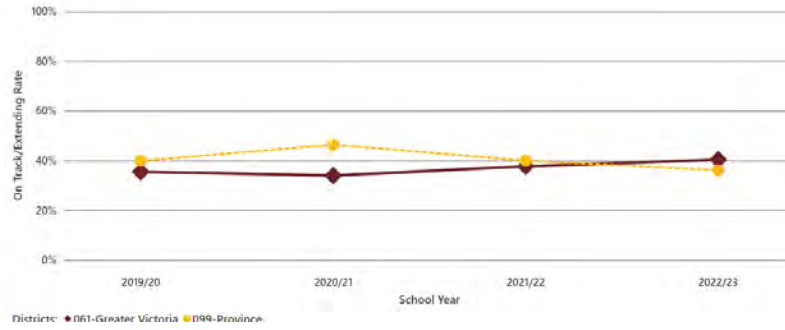
Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) Numeracy—Grade 7

(Portion of Grade 7 resident writers ‘On Track’ or ‘Extending’ or who have ‘Met or Exceeded Expectations’ on the FSA)

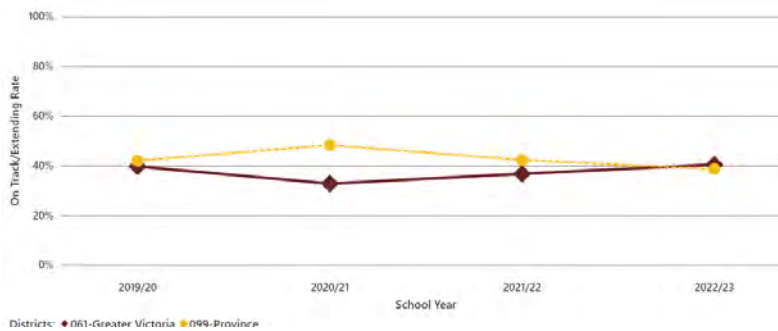
All Resident Students



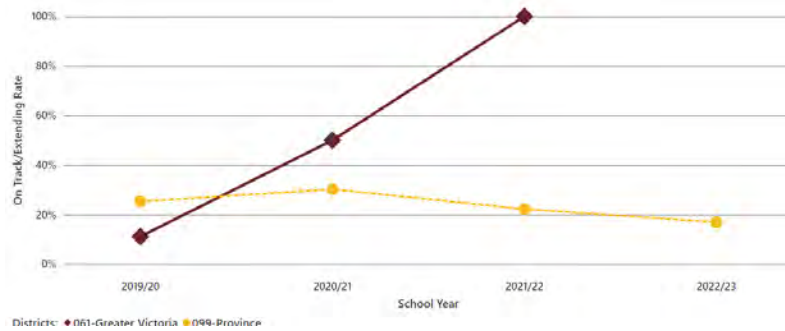
Indigenous Students



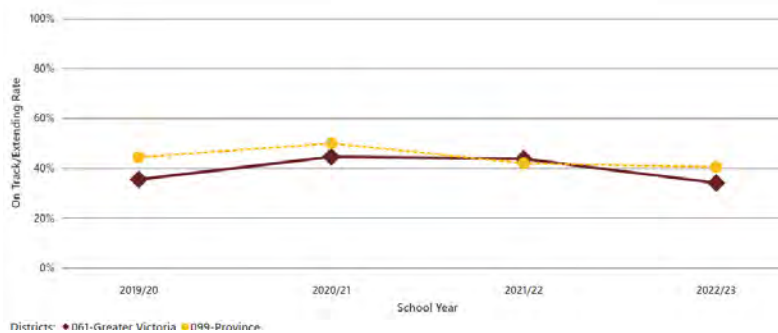
Indigenous Students Not on Reserve



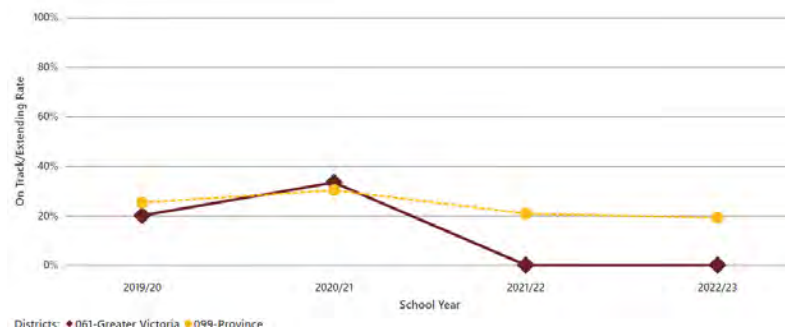
Indigenous Students On Reserve



Students with Disabilities and Diverse Abilities



Children/Youth in Care

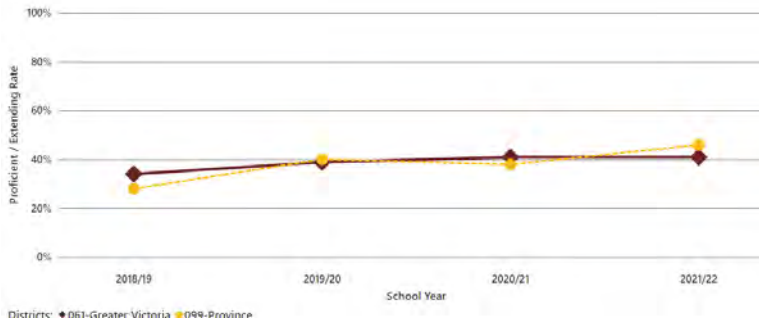


Grade 10 Numeracy Measures

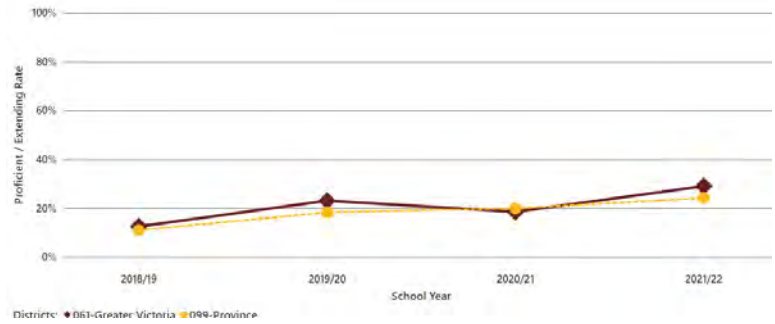
Graduation Assessment

(Portion of Grade 10 resident writers 'Proficient' or 'Extending' on Numeracy 10)

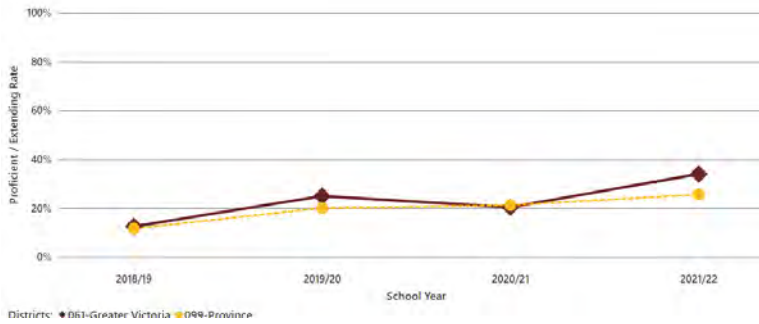
All Resident Students



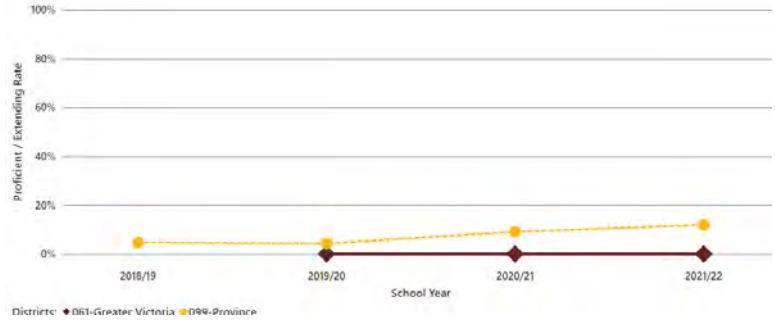
Indigenous Students



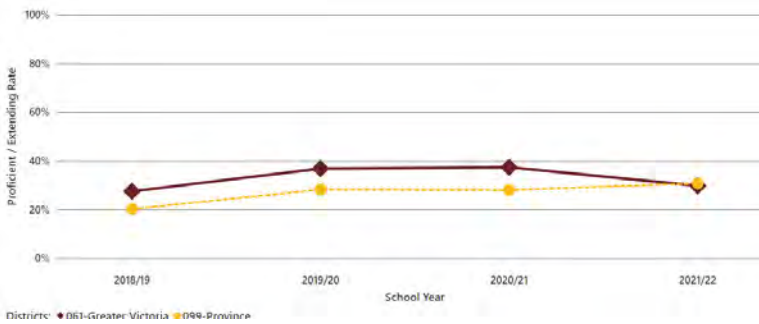
Indigenous Students Not on Reserve



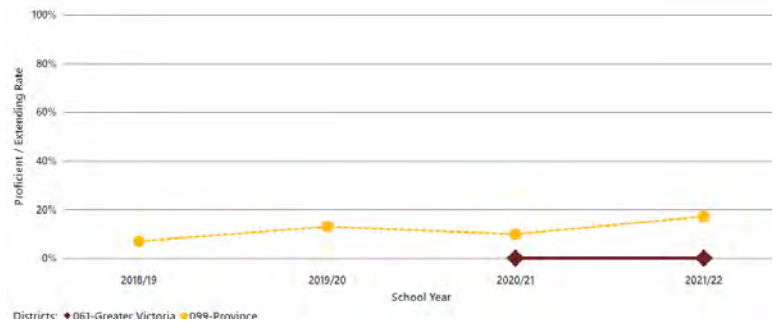
Indigenous Students On Reserve



Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities



Children/Youth in Care



Grade-to Grade Transitions

Although the data reflects positive success of grade-to-grade transitions for Indigenous students, Indigenous communities, through our Agreements, want to ensure that their students are transitioning with the courses and credits they need from kindergarten to grade 12.

Further examination of transition data is needed with grade level course success being examined.

Grade-To-Grade Transition Summary

District Grade 10-11

- 97% of all resident students transitioned to grade 11—consistent (+/- 2%) over the past 4 years
- 94% of all Indigenous students transitioned to grade 11—consistent (+/- 2%) over the past 3 years
- 93% of On Reserve students transitioned to grade 11—consistent with last school year

District Grade 11-12

- 96% of all resident students transitioned to grade 11—consistent (+/- 1%) over the past 4 years
- 91% of all Indigenous students transitioned to grade 11—consistent (+/- 2%) over the past 3 years
- 87% of On Reserve students transitioned to grade 11—5% decrease from last school year

Grade-to-Grade Transitions Focus for 2023-24

- **Maintain the current rate of grade-to-grade transitions using distinctions-based data to support Indigenous students and priority students**
- **Review success rates pertaining to:**
 - Regular Dogwood completion
 - Adult Dogwood completion
 - Evergreen completion



Human and Social Development

Students Feel Welcome, Safe, and Connected

As a School District, a 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. We recognize that creating culturally responsive learning environments supports improved outcomes for Indigenous students, families and communities.

We currently utilize data from both the Middle Development Instrument (MDI) grades 4 and 6 and Student Learning Survey data for grades 10 and 12 as well as Attendance Data to examine engagement and belonging. Moving forward, it is important to develop more avenues to collect and share other sources of data, including distinctions-based data, from the communities we serve.

Human and Social Development focus for 2023-2024

- Continue to be explicit with the philosophy and pedagogy required in culturally responsive learning environments that increase student connections, engagement and achievement
- Identify additional strategies and structures to include more voices in the District data set
- Increase staff knowledge and understanding of trauma sensitive approaches through the implementation of social emotional learning and mental health programs & resources
- Maintain the trend of increasing the number of students who indicate that they feel welcome, safe, and connected:
 - feel welcome: grade 10—from 66% in 2022 to 73% in 2023, grade 12—from 67% in 2022 to 73% in 2023
 - feel safe: grade 10—from 81% in 2022 to 82% in 2023, grade 12—from 82% in 2022 to 84% in 2023)
 - feel connected: grade 10—from 49% in 2022 to 57% in 2023, grade 12—from 49% in 2022 to 56% in 2023

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Intentional activation of the four agreements to support human and social development

Support on-going district professional development in the areas of social emotional learning, mental health literacy and culturally responsive learning environments

Implement the use of person-centered planning in secondary schools and extend the implementation of Competency Based IEPs K-12

Continuation of the Children and Youth in Care District Standard of Practice

Strengthen the relationships with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and delegated agencies

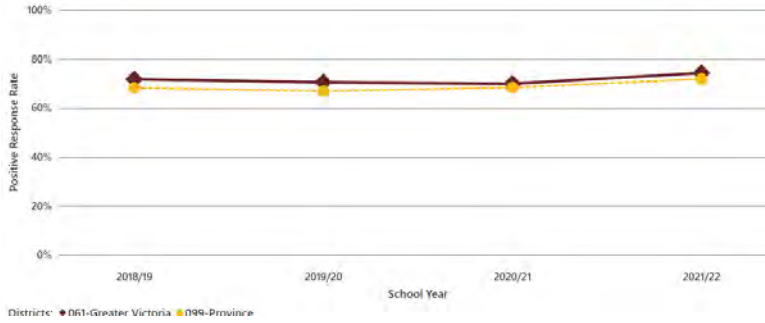
Strengthen the coordination between child care providers and school staff to nurture a seamless transition from early care to learning

Human and Social Development Measures

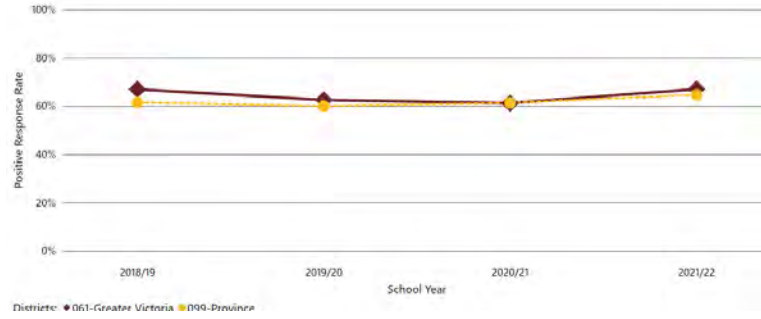
Student Learning Survey - Student sense of feeling welcome, safe, and connected at school

Feel Welcome

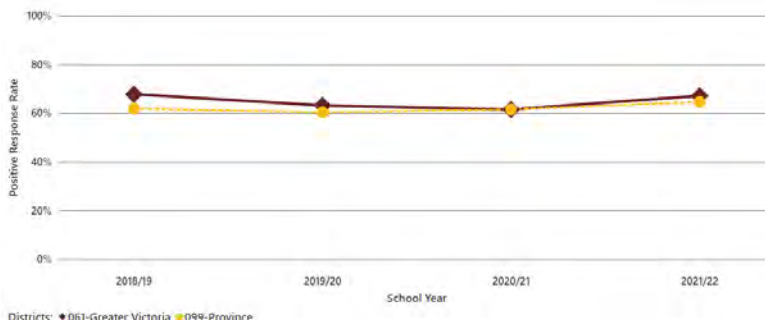
All Resident Students



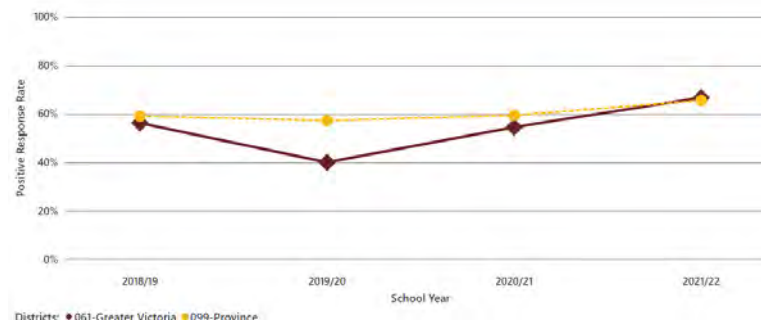
Indigenous Students



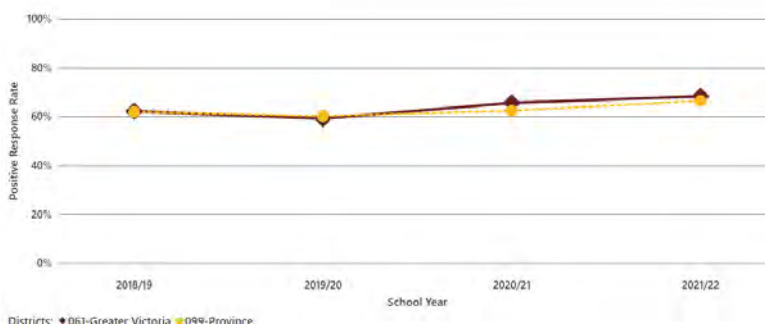
Indigenous Students Not on Reserve



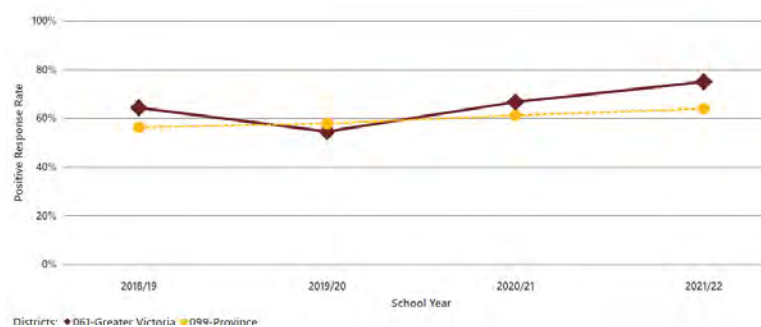
Indigenous Students On Reserve



Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities



Children/Youth in Care

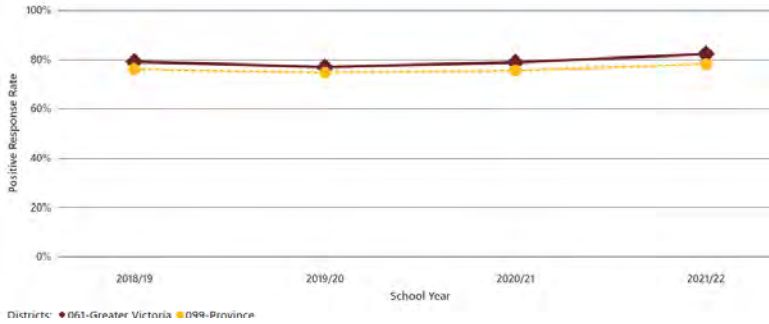


Human and Social Development Measures

Student Learning Survey - Student sense of feeling welcome, safe, and connected at school

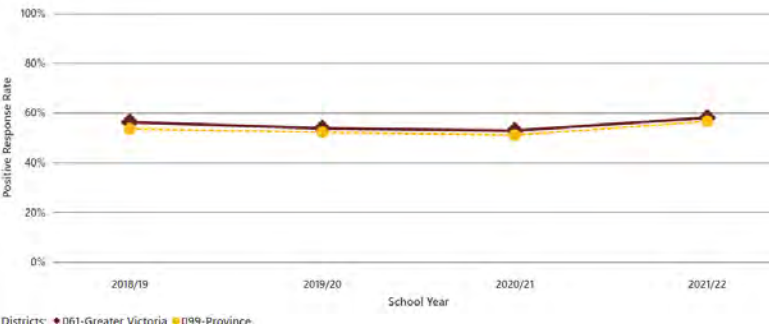
Feel Safe

All Students

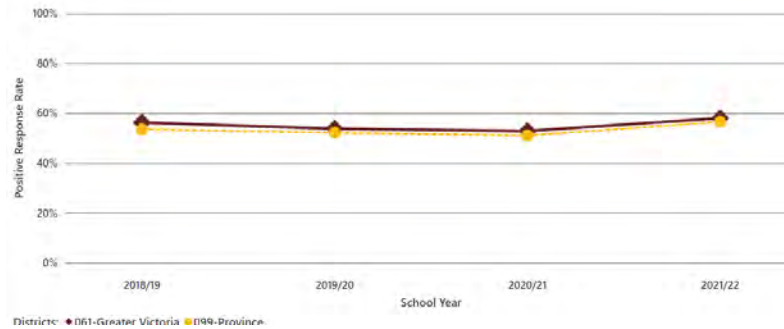


Feel Connected

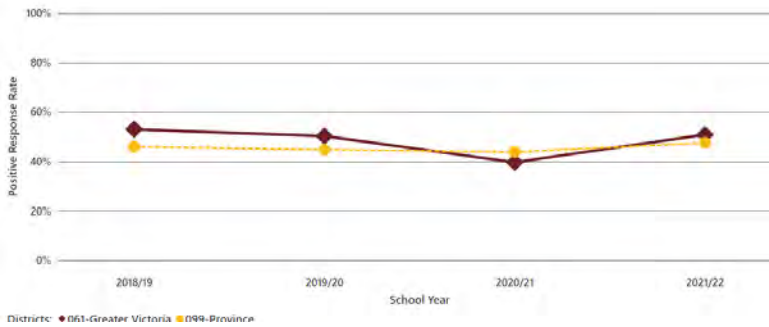
All Resident Students



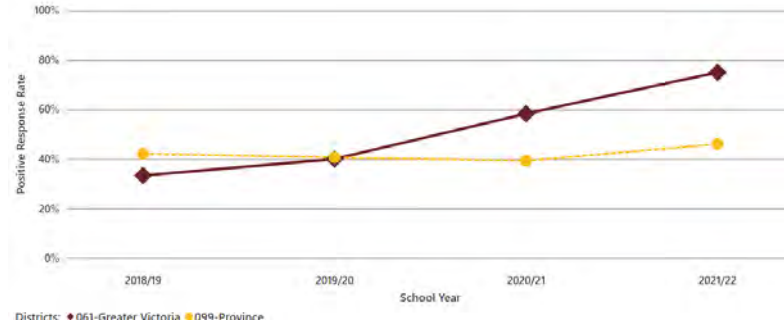
Indigenous Students



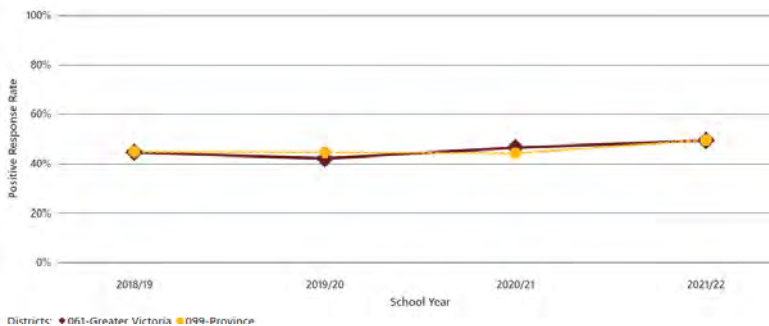
Indigenous Students Not on Reserve



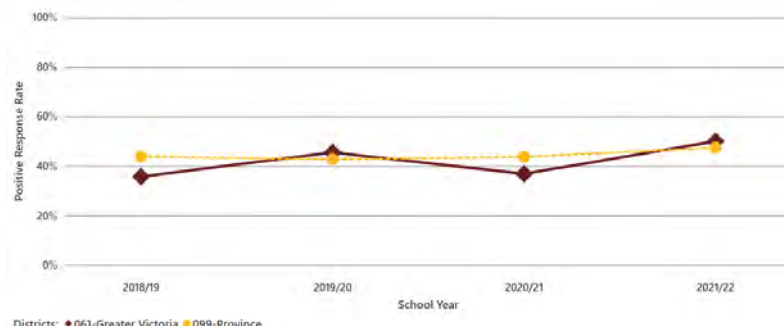
Indigenous Students On Reserve



Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities



Children/Youth in Care

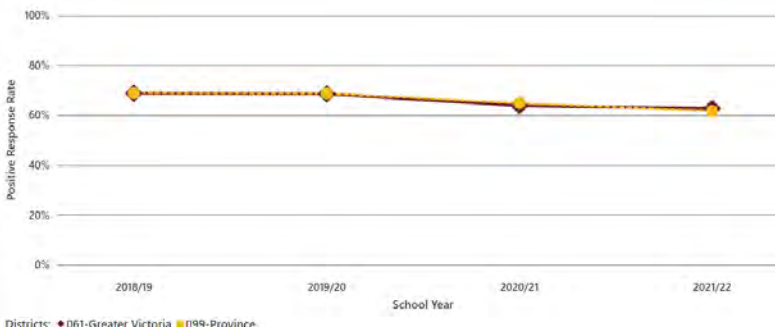


Human and Social Development Measures

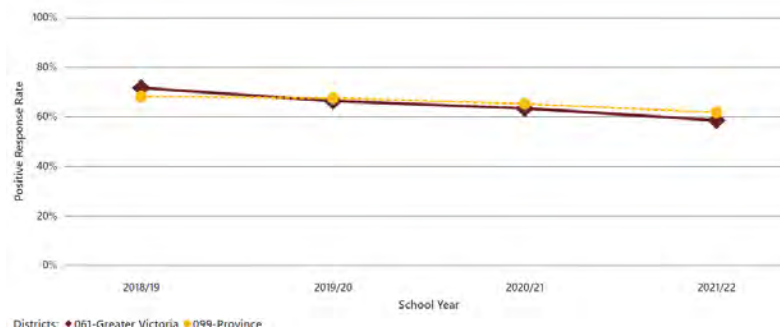
Student Learning Survey - Adults Care

Adults Care

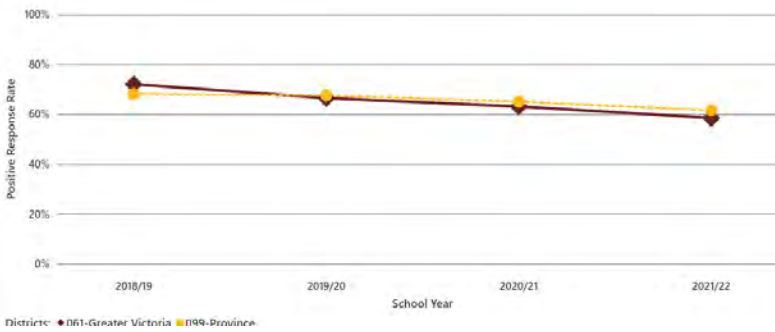
All Resident Students



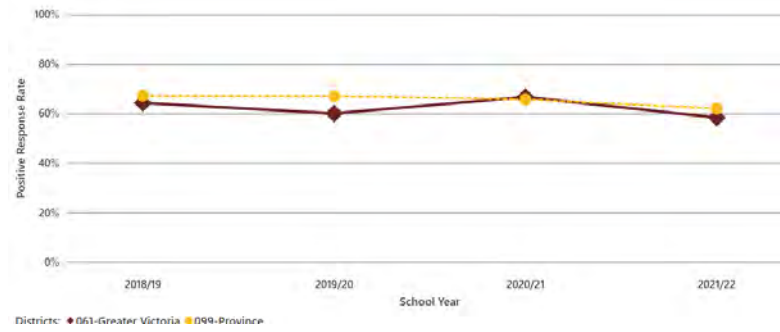
Indigenous Students



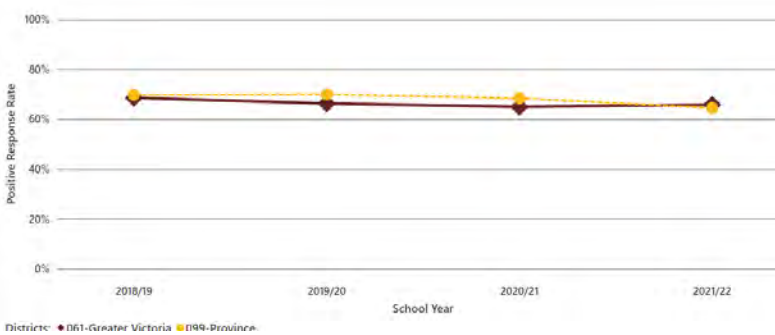
Indigenous Students Not on Reserve



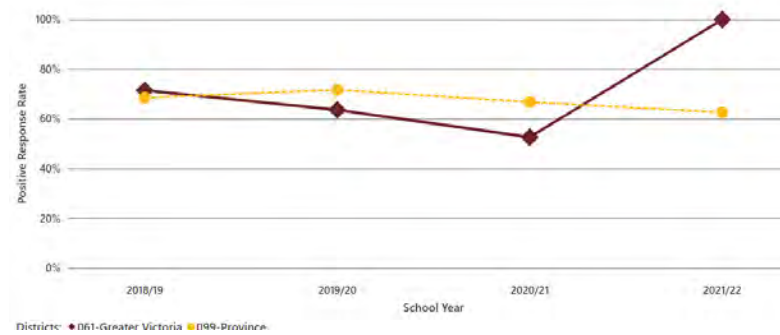
Indigenous Students On Reserve



Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities



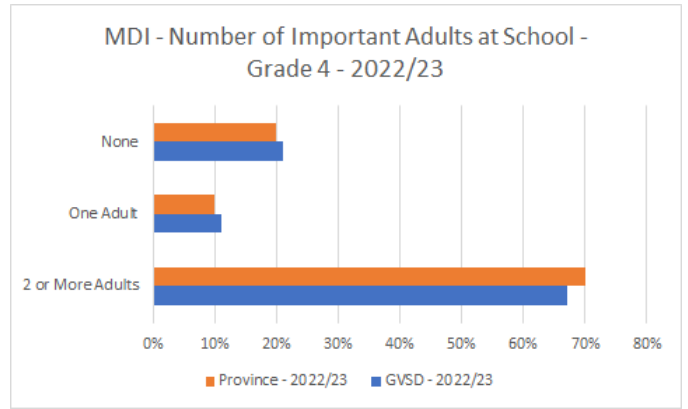
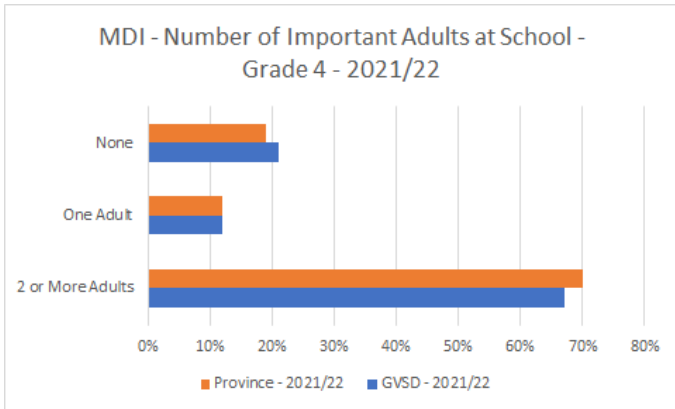
Children/Youth in Care



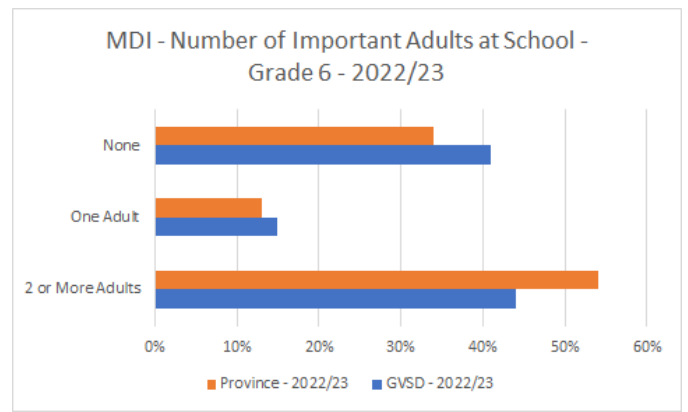
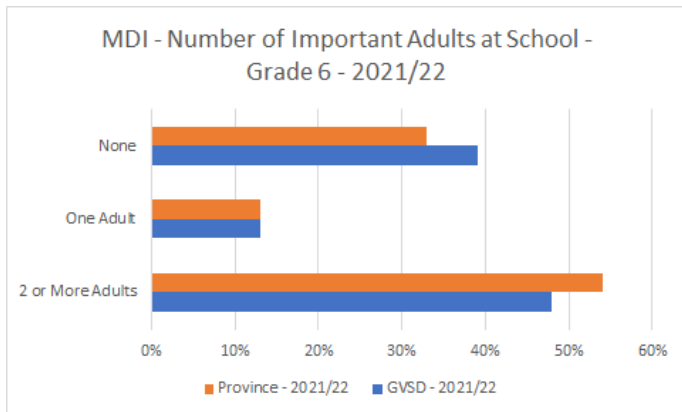
Human and Social Development Measures

MDI - Number of Important Adults at School

Grade 4



Grade 6



Career Development

The District designs opportunities and resources within Career Development in the K-12 environment to support all students through the lenses of equity and cultural responsiveness. The focus on a personalized future orientation leading to student success creates connection, engagement, and achievement.

Career Education in elementary, middle, and secondary focuses on self-discovery, growth in the core competencies, and learning in multiple contexts within the classroom, career centres, community, and the workplace.

We continue to be committed to creating avenues for all learners to succeed and feel a sense of purpose and belonging. The research that guides us proves that this sense of purpose has positive impacts on students' well-being, graduation rates, and transitions to post-secondary.

Career Development focus for 2023-2024

- Design opportunities for students to feel they belong, they have purpose, and they matter
- Improve rates of dual credit participation by Indigenous students, Children and Youth in Care, and Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities
- Improve the rates of participation in career education experiential learning activities by Indigenous students, Children and Youth in Care, and Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities
- Increase the number of Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities with person-centered planning including transition after Grade 12

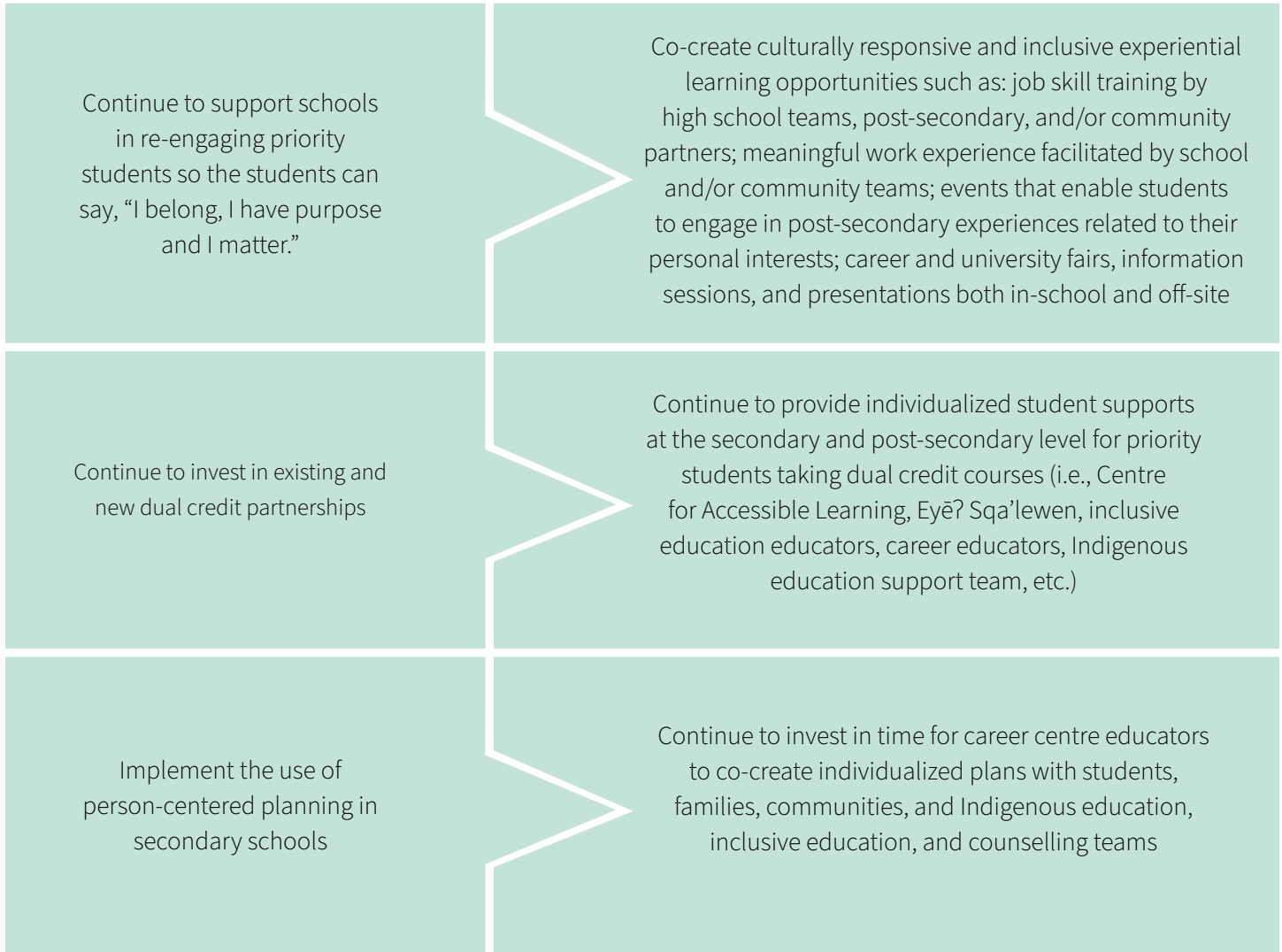
Ministry of Education and Child Care Data (from Dual Credit Policy Review, August 2022):

Dual credit increases student success:

- Participants are 16% more likely than peers to transition to post-secondary
- Participants are 7% more likely than propensity matched peers to complete high school
 - 8% for Indigenous students
 - 9% for students with diverse abilities and disabilities



STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CAREER DEVELOPMENT



Five-Year Completion Rate Data:

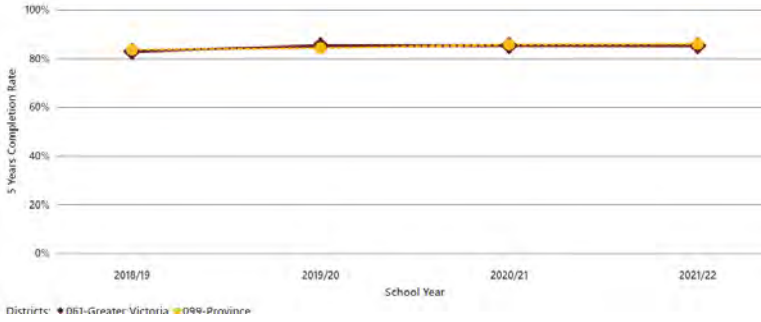
- Most recent data (2021/22) shows a sustained graduation rate for all resident students
- Indigenous student graduation has declined slightly between 2020/21 and 2021/22 for students On Reserve and Not on Reserve, equally
- Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities showed a slight uptick in graduation rates from the 2020/21 to 2021/22 school year
- Children/Youth in Care graduation rate decreased substantially from 2020/21 to 2021/22



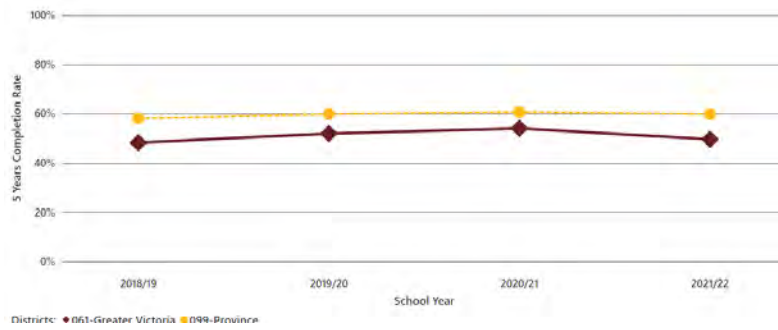
Students Will Graduate

Graduation - Five-Year Completion Rate

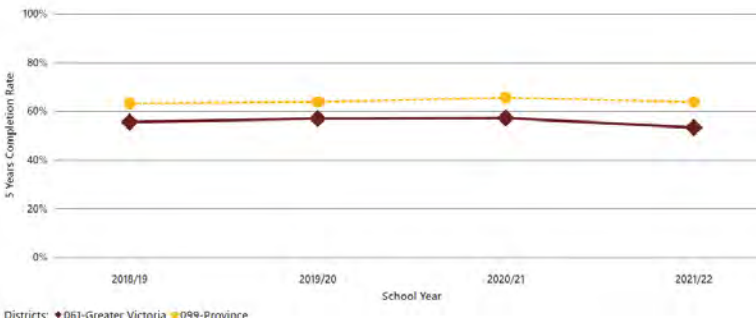
All Resident Students



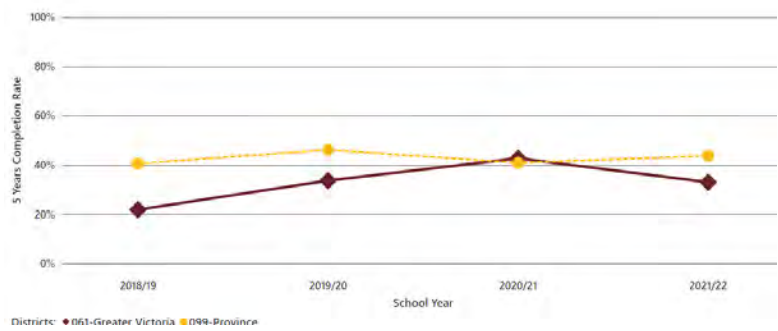
Indigenous Students



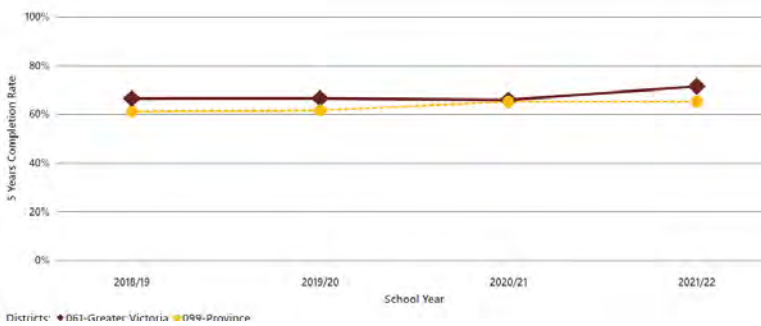
Indigenous Students Not on Reserve



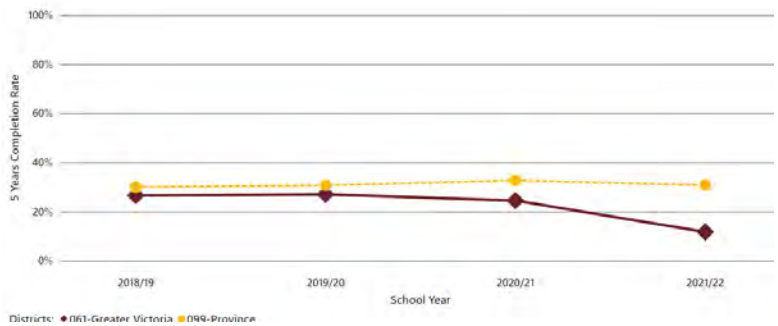
Indigenous Students On Reserve



Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities



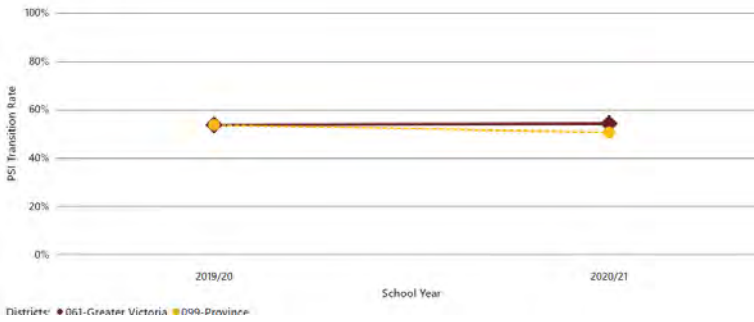
Children/Youth in Care



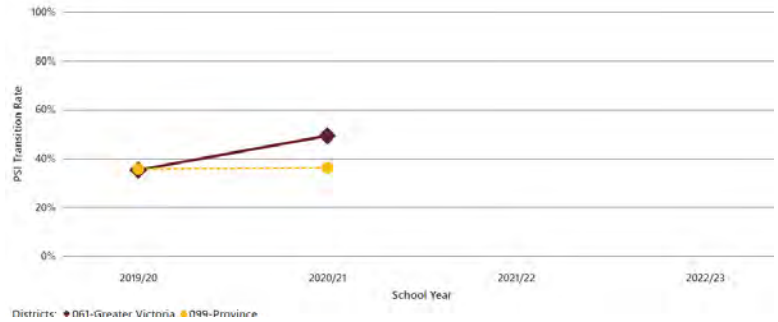
Post-Secondary Institute (PSI) Immediate Transition Rate

(Portion of resident students in the eligible-to-graduate cohort who have transitioned to a BC public PSI program in the year following graduation)

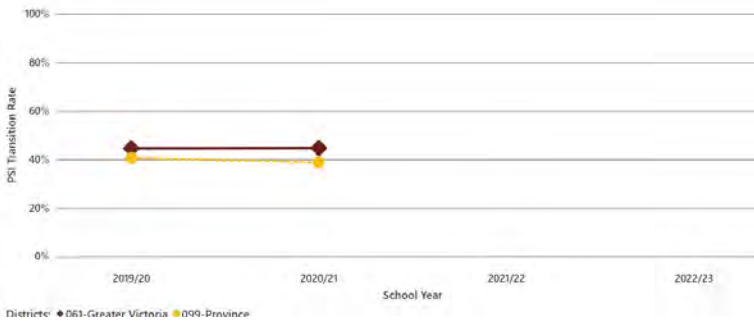
All Resident Students



Indigenous Students



Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities

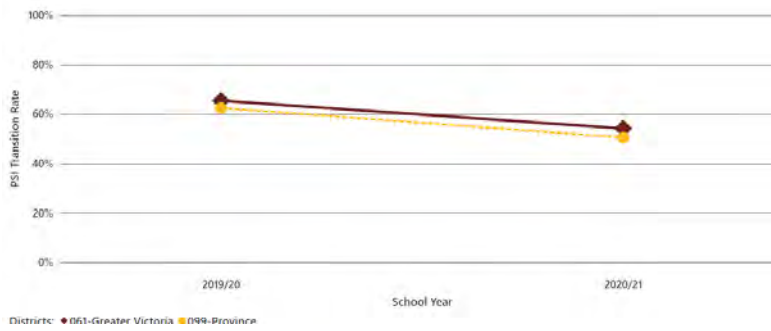


*No data for Indigenous Students Not on Reserve and On Reserve; no data for Children/Youth in Care

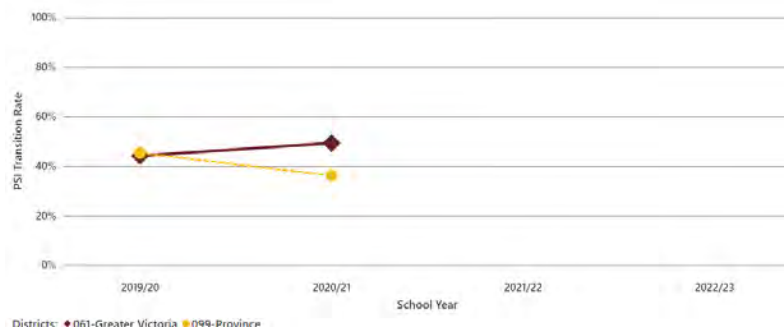
Post-Secondary Institute (PSI) 3-Year Transition Rate

(Portion of resident students in the eligible-to-graduate cohort who have transitioned to a BC public PSI program within 3 years of graduation)

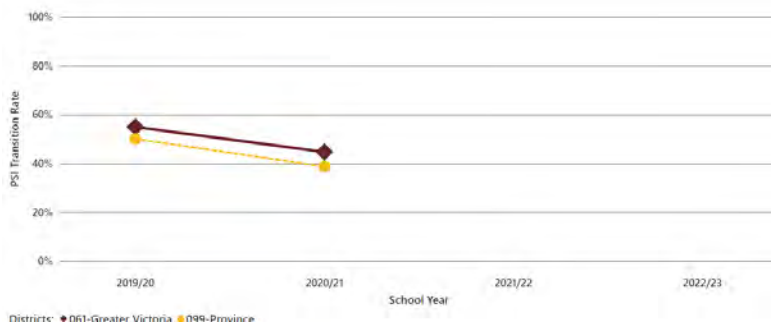
All Resident Students



Indigenous Students



Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities



*No data for Indigenous Students Not on Reserve and On Reserve; no data for Children/Youth in Care

Existing and/or Emerging Areas of Need

1. Use of distinctions-based data to support Indigenous student achievement in literacy, numeracy, grade-to-grade transitions and graduation with a Dogwood Diploma.
2. The development of a Culturally Responsive Leadership Framework to support culturally responsive learning environments.
3. Increase the structures, strategies and opportunities for engaging student voice.
4. On-going, targeted support for mental health and physical well-being.
5. Incremental growth in all completion rates and parity between Indigenous students and all residents is required.
6. Create a District numeracy sub-committee through JCCI and begin to develop a District Numeracy Framework K-12 in 2023-2024.
7. Establishment of an Accessibility Committee, an Accessibility Plan, and a feedback mechanism as required by the Accessible British Columbia Act.

Addressing Areas of Need



SD61's first-ever Student Forum on Inclusion and Anti-Racism was organized and led by district students of colour (May 2023)



SD61's second annual Indigenous Storytelling & Film Festival professional development event featured Indigenous films, authors, storytellers, land-based learning, and other offerings (May 2023)

Adjustments and Adaptations

District Departments

Our District Departments have worked collaboratively to identify one key goal to guide the work that operationalizes the Strategic Plan: To support schools to feel confident and capable in re-engaging priority students so the students can say, “I belong, I have purpose and I matter.” We recognize that the student learning experience is critical to student success.

- With the support of the Indigenous Education Department, we will lean into Indigenous perspectives and considerations for systemic alignment through the use of the following guiding documents:
 - i. Local Education Agreements, Métis Education Agreement and Urban Peoples’ House Indigenous Advisory Terms of Reference,
 - ii. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Call to Action,
 - iii. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA),
 - iv. British Columbia Tripartite Agreement (BCTEA), and
 - v. Standard 9—Professional Standards for BC Educators.
- We will continue to focus on increasing data literacy across the system.
- We will develop a District Numeracy Framework K-12.
- Implementation of the Accessibility Plan to deliver lasting accessibility improvements that reduce barriers for all members of our learning community.

Our District Departments have one key goal: to support schools to feel confident and capable in re-engaging priority students so the students can say,

“I belong, I have purpose and I matter.”



Indigenous Education Department

- Improving programs and service delivery model
- Implement the Indigenous Mental Health Framework
- Activation of the Four Agreements
- Review and adjust district allocation of funding as required
- Re-engagement of Equity Scan

Alignment for Successful Implementation

Strategic Plan

The District’s Strategic Plan 2020–2025, which was renewed by the Board of Education in June 2020, was developed and informed by students, Indigenous communities, staff, educational partners, administrators, and the Board of Education.

Guided by the Strategic Plan and its focus on student equity and well-being, District plans and processes are updated through research-based strategic adjustments that ensure continued alignment with the District’s Mission and Vision while addressing emerging areas of need.

Budget Development Process

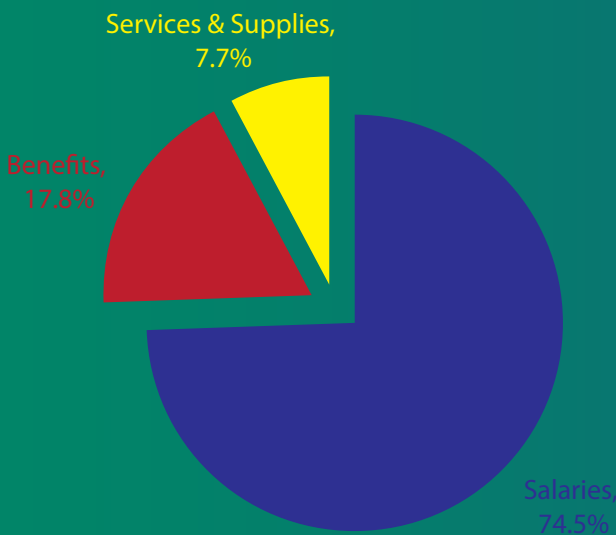
With a \$3.8 million deficit, the District was able to implement some one-time and ongoing reductions in the 2023-2024 budget and support student success by allocating resources in alignment with the Enhancing Student Learning Report and the Strategic Plan.

Budget Allocations

In the 2023-24 budget process, allocations linked to the Enhancing Student Learning Report (ESLR) and the Strategic Plan include:

- \$25,000 for professional development for Indigenous-focused grad requirement
- \$346,129 for five daytime shift custodians to address classroom/school cleanliness
- \$164,330 increase in Educational Assistant hours to 30 hours/week at five equity-seeking priority schools
- \$48,000 professional development for mental health
- \$64,172 additional Early Childhood Educator/Educational Assistant hours at five primary level equity-seeking schools
- \$572,000 to replace educator laptops in schools
- \$48,000 to repair student devices
- \$418,250 for network infrastructure updates
- \$428,680 for Indigenous Education supports beyond targeted funding
- \$575,000 for direct literacy support and/or supplemental funding to 29 elementary schools

Operating Expenses



Salaries and benefits make up approximately 92.3% of the budget

Everything else (services and supplies) such as technology, travel, janitorial supplies, library books, etc. makes up the remaining 7.7%

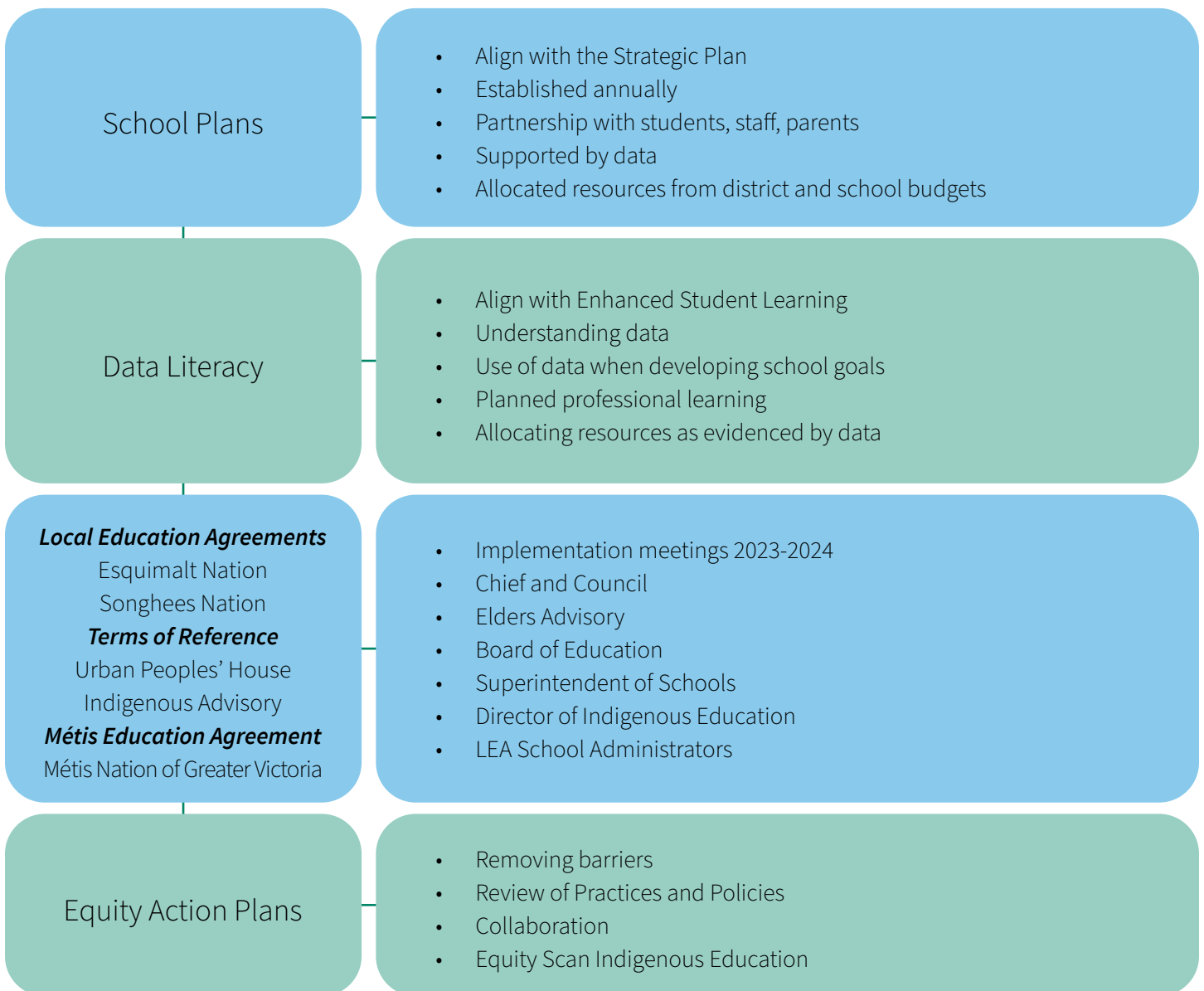
Operational Plans

For 2023-2024, planning is underway to update/create operational plans for district departments to ensure core functions and goals are in alignment with strategic goals and ensure resources are allocated to support the identified goals at the school and district level. Distinctions-based data will be used to identify and focus supports on closing the equity gap that exists in our district.

Operational plans by department include:

- Indigenous Education
- Human Resource Services
- Information Technology for Learning
- Facilities Services
- Financial Services
- International Program
- Modern Languages and Multiculturalism
- Inclusive Education
- Pathways and Partnerships
- English Language Learners
- Early Learning and Child Care

Alignment Strategies





Conclusion

Our Enhancing Student Learning Report (ESLR) is guided by our District mission, vision and core values and is grounded in evidence, research, and local knowledge. The ESLR reflects our District's Strategic Plan and a deep commitment to continue to improve results for all children, while focusing on those students who are currently the least successful in our system. Improving student achievement, physical and mental-well being and belonging, as well as closing the equity and opportunity gaps that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and furthering our Reconciliation with Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, Métis Nation Greater Victoria, and Urban Peoples' House Indigenous Advisory remain as the focus of our work.

Local Education Agreements, Education Agreements, Local Terms of Reference, activation of distinctions-based data, Equity Scan and guiding documents including Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan, and the BC Tri-Partite Agreement guide our journey through collaborative and transparent processes.

Appendix A: Audience Approaches

The District regularly engages through a culturally responsive lens with its learning community and uses the input collected to continuously improve upon practices, or inform critical considerations made by the Board of Education. The scope of engagement varies on each initiative or project and is communicated on the outset of any public engagement.

See below for a brief overview of how the District engages with Rightsholders, students, staff, families, partners and the broader community.

Rightsholders

- The District respectfully walks alongside the Four Houses when it comes to student and public engagement by first asking how the Four Houses would like to engage, and then working through the Indigenous Education Department as a conduit. It creates a space for meaningful conversations to strengthen relationships, and seeks the Four Houses' (Songhees Nation and Esquimalt Nation, Urban Peoples House Indigenous Advisory, and Métis Nation Greater Victoria) guidance on how to best support their children, youth and families.
- Senior staff meets with the Four Houses once a month to co-develop plans that set learners up for success. The District has the Four Houses set the table for conversation and actively listens.



Students

- School staff/teachers engage with students at the school level on important topics.
- The District has a Student Representative Advisory Council (SRAC) comprised of secondary students that informs senior staff about school-based initiatives or ideas. The SRAC communicates with their schools and collect input from peers to help inform district processes. The students and staff meet monthly, and SRAC students attend Board of Education Standing Committee and Board meetings.
- All schools have Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) clubs to create inclusive school cultures that support all students in feeling safe and welcome.
- Students are also invited to participate in school-level appropriate engagement activities on potential proposals that will impact them, including the annual budget. These activities include surveys, polls, meetings, or student symposiums.
- In 2023 senior students led the District's first Student Forum on Inclusion and Anti-Racism. Students of colour shared personal experiences to helped provide direction for senior staff in making the District's schools more equitable.



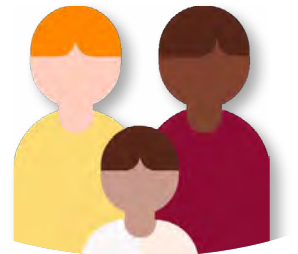
Staff

- Regular updates from the Superintendent and Departments to all staff.
- The Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent and the Associate Superintendent hold weekly school-level meetings with Principals and Vice-Principals.
- Monthly administrative meetings with all Principals and Vice-Principals.
- Monthly labour management or liaison meetings between staff and unions.
- Inception of budget advisory committee with representation from unions, VCPAC, etc.
- Staff from various departments, including teacher staff for music, provide presentations and expertise to the Budget Advisory committee.
- Talking tables, a facilitated discussion budget meeting, invites 10 representatives each from each union along with Principals/Vice-Principals, and the Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (VCPAC), as well as representatives of the Four Houses.



Parents/Guardians

- Regular communication is shared with families to keep them informed on multiple channels: email, websites, social media, meetings, etc.
- Families are always invited to provide input or feedback on big decisions such as student enrolment priorities, boundary review, seismic projects, and budget. Communication tools use include online surveys, polls, open houses, written submissions, and public meetings.
- Parents/guardians have opportunities to be part of committees.
- The Superintendent has regular conversations with VCPAC President.
- All families are invited to attend or present at monthly Standing Committee and Board Meetings.



Community Partners

- Community partners are invited to provide input or feedback on big decisions such as student enrolment priorities, boundary review, seismic projects, and budget. Communication tools use include online surveys, polls, open houses, written submissions, and public meetings.
- Community partners can attend or present at regular Standing Committee and Board Meetings, and have opportunities to be part of committees.
- Trustees are assigned as Board liaisons to municipalities in the District.



Educational Partners

- Joint Committee on Curriculum Implementation: regular committee meetings are held between District staff and Greater Victoria Teachers Association.
- Regular Meetings with Island Chapter of BC School Superintendents Association (BCSSA) and BC Association of School Business Officials (BCASBO), and BCSSA and BCASBO provincially.
- Regular meetings of the Vancouver Island School Trustees Association and BCSTA provincially.
- Educational partners can attend or present at Board of Education Meetings.



Ministry of Education

- Many of our staff participate in Ministry of Education and Child Care committees. In addition the Ministry holds an annual meeting for Board Chairs, Superintendents and Secretary-Treasurers to discuss initiatives at a high level. The District participates in pilot projects to support the Ministry.



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Topic 3: Infrastructure

Facilities Services

Information Technology for Learning



FACILITIES SERVICES

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Introduction

The Greater Victoria School District ('the District') has a total of 57 facilities; 49 active schools, 6 administration facilities / shops, and 2 facilities that were previously used for educational purposes which were closed by the Board of Education. These closed educational facilities have been retained by the District for other purposes, such as International Education, and seismic swing space. The District has over 3.1 million square feet (287,000 square metres) of space, and is growing, with the average age of our facilities being over 63 years old.

There are approximately 1,600 schools across 60 school districts in the Province of BC. The Ministry has been conducting Facility Condition Assessment on every school throughout the Province over the past number of years on a roughly five year inspection cycle. As a result of this ongoing process, the Ministry now has a full database of the condition of all schools across the Province. In addition, District staff update the Ministry annually on capital repairs and projects completed using the various Capital program funding allocations from the Ministry.

Provincially, the average age of all K-12 schools is 43 years old, with 60% of the schools older than 40 years (1894 – 2022). Based on the results of the Facility Condition Assessment data, the average Facility Condition Index for all school facilities across the province is 0.44. In other words, the deferred maintenance across the Province for all schools is equal to 44% of the replacement cost of those assets. Using any industry accepted facility condition index scale or rating, this means that the condition of the provincial education stock is rated as "Critical".

The overall Facility Condition Index of District 61 Facilities is **0.48** for both our active and inactive schools. From a Facility Condition Index rating perspective this reflects an overall **CRITICAL** rating using generally accepted industry standards/ratings. A critical rating indicates that some facilities have consistent issues with the building envelope and major building systems are likely to fail on a consistent basis, with unacceptable deferred maintenance levels.

A key component in the planning of the maintenance and repair of District facilities is knowing the condition and life expectancy of the District assets. Developing a plan to ensure that District staff keep our educational spaces clean, safe and healthy on a daily basis is of utmost importance. The District employs trades people who have the skills to regularly maintain and often replace wearable parts within components and thus are able to prolong the life of building components beyond the manufacturer's suggested life.

Notably, student population has increased by almost 10% since 2016, while the facilities budget, which is not linked to enrollment, has not increased enough to deal with even inflationary material costs. The facilities department has budgetary constraints on the repairs that can be completed within the budget allocated and over the years cuts to the Facilities Department has increased the maintenance within our buildings. These aging buildings and sites are continually requiring costly repairs, maintenance and upgrades to ensure the provision of safe, accessible and functioning schools. Costs continue to be

added to the facilities budget with no further budget allocation such as testing for lead in the water and purchasing the necessary lead filters, along with filter replacements every three months for the district ventilation requirements.

Facilities Management and Ministry Funding

Facilities staff manages the overall maintenance, repair, replacement and the supervision of all new construction activities associated with District facilities by applying for a number of annual grants funded by the Ministry. These include a series of capital grant programs to address specific areas of facility replacement, construction and repair activities. The following programs included:

- Annual Facilities Grant (AFG)
- School Expansion Program
- School Replacement Program (REP)
- Building Envelope Program (BEP)
- School Enhancement Program (SEP)
- Carbon Neutral Capital Program (CNCP)
- Seismic Mitigation Program
- Bus Replacement Program (BUS)

Historically, the District has applied for funding programs that are available and has consistently had a number of capital projects at the ready (“Shovel Ready”) to take advantage of last minute or unique funding opportunities that are made available from time to time such as the federal ventilation funding that enabled the district the opportunity to install unit ventilators in a number of the classrooms and the library at Doncaster Elementary.

The Annual Facilities Grant allocated to the District has been relatively stable since 2005/06. This has resulted in an overall reduction in the funding available for the maintenance and repair of our assets due to the effects of inflation. If inflation had been applied to the AFG during that period, the District would have received over an estimated \$6.6M in needed capital funds to help maintain and repair our schools.

Over the past five years, the District has received an average of \$5.68M per year in Capital funding from all Ministry programs. Capital funding details are included in Table 1 below. Not included in the capital summary is the funding received for the Vic High Seismic Upgrade and the Cedar Hill Seismic Replacement.

5 year Average Capital Funding – Ministry Capital Programs (\$M)

Table 1- GVSD Capital Funding Allocations – 2018/2019 – 2022/2023

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total	5 Year Average
AFG	3,983,030.00	3,983,030.00	3,983,030.00	4,155,614.00	4,155,614.00	20,260,318.00	4,052,063.60
SEP	800,000.00	1,800,000.00	1,200,000.00	1,250,000.00	1,100,000.00	6,150,000.00	1,230,000.00
BEP			32,000.00	539,350.00		571,350.00	114,270.00
CNCP		350,000.00	65,000.00	700,000.00	350,000.00	1,465,000.00	293,000.00
Sub-Total	4,783,030.00	6,133,030.00	5,280,030.00	6,644,964.00	5,605,614.00	28,446,668.00	5,689,333.60

Given the size and increasing age of our facilities, funding must address the District’s capital needs and recognize the inflationary pressures that the District is facing, especially on Vancouver Island where the availability of qualified trades is scarce due to an ongoing building boom and where costs have been consistently coming in well above planned budgets. These pressures have and will continue to affect the overall condition of District facilities.

The Ministry’s current 5-Year Capital Fiscal Plan and 10-Year Provincial Capital Plan do not have an on-going condition-based school replacement program based on data that is collected across the Province. The Ministry only considers schools for replacement based on the submission of a business case analysis showing, based on major component deterioration such as foundation failure or major structural deterioration, that it makes good financial sense to replace the school versus repairing it. In other words, with proper capital investment over the life of a building.

In addition to the maintenance and repairs to school facilities (buildings and sites), there are a number of other significant maintenance challenges that the District will continue to face. Some of these issues will require significant investments on behalf of the District, as well as the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

Seismic Program

The Ministry is committed to addressing the high-risk schools identified in the Seismic Mitigation Program (SMP). The Five-Year Capital Plan submission allows the Ministry to annually identify the highest priority projects that should be considered for major capital investment. Critical to this identification is an assessment of current seismic risk.

The Ministry works with structural engineers in the assessment and mitigation of seismic risks to public schools through the Engineers and Geoscientists BC (EGBC). The EGBC has developed the Seismic Retrofit Guidelines (SRG), by which all seismic assessments and seismic mitigation work is assessed and completed.

Boards of Education are responsible for funding the cost of seismic risk assessments or seismic risk reassessments, to be completed by a qualified structural engineer possessing the most recent SRG

training. All seismic risk assessments and re-assessments of schools must be pre-approved, in writing, by the Ministry.

If an approved seismic assessment or re-assessment of a school indicates a high seismic risk-rating, the documented results must be reported to the Ministry. The Ministry may then request the school district to complete a Seismic Project Identification Report (SPIR) for that school, which would be submitted as part of a future Five-Year Capital Plan submission.

The SPIR is a specifically formatted report developed by EGBC, which is to be used by SRG-trained structural engineers to document seismic mitigation options for a seismically deficient block in a school. A SPIR will define the preliminary scoping and costing for the mitigation strategy proposed. EGBC has provided a guideline for the completion of a SPIR, which also includes fee structures for structural engineers.

Since the 2004 inception of the SMP, the BC government has spent over \$1.9 billion to complete high-risk seismic projects throughout the province with approximately \$1 billion approved since September 2017. The ministry currently has another \$1.098 million allocated for high-risk seismic projects in their 3-year capital plan.

Provincially, the SMP has upgraded or replaced 233 high-risk schools, this includes 9 schools that are under construction. There are 265 high-risk schools in the Province that need to be addressed or are in various stages of planning.

In the District, the SMP has identified 43 high-risk schools, of these 11 are completed, 1 is under construction, and 3 are in business case development. The District has 28 high-risk schools that remain to be addressed.

Risk Ratings

Engineers calculate the seismic risk ratings based on the risk of damage from an earthquake to a building. This calculation is the foundation for decisions on prioritization of funding from the Province, as well as, how the school will be mitigated.

When SMP first started, the EGBC used a high, medium and low rating system, with High 1, 2 and 3 indicating a need to be mitigated.

In addition to the original seismic ratings, updates to the National Building Code have prompted the need for supplementary ratings and guidelines for seismic mitigation. The 2015 National Building Code resulted in the Seismic Retrofit Guidelines 3 (SRG3) and the 2020 National Building Code has resulted in the Seismic Retrofit Guidelines 2020 (SRG2020). The SRG3 updates focus on the 2% in 50-year seismic event (major event - 1 in 2,500 years) while SRG2020 provides focus on the 5% in 50-year seismic event (more moderate event - 1 in 1,000 years). The SRG3 updated ratings are based on probability factor or P-value which

reflects how a High-Risk block of a school will respond in a more moderate shaking event with P1 being most likely to be impacted. The SRG2020 guidelines will be implemented by Spring 2023.

Throughout 2018, all active schools in the School District were reassessed using the updated SRG3 to determine a current risk rating for each school. The results of these reassessments are now incorporated in the Ministry’s SMP Progress Report. Some of the schools that were previously mitigated have been returned to the list, but only for those blocks of the schools that were not previously mitigated due to a low risk rating under the previous guidelines. The previously mitigated blocks remain safe for students and staff.

The updated SRG3 P1-4 rating system has resulted in 7 high-risk schools that were previously mitigated being reassessed and added back to the SMP list. These school will require further mitigation.

Table 2 below provides an overview of the risk ratings used for B.C. schools:

Table 2 - EGBC Seismic Ratings and Definitions

Rating	Definition
High 1 (H1)	Most vulnerable structure; at highest risk of widespread damage or structural failure; not repairable after event. Structural and non-structural seismic upgrades required.
High 2 (H2)	Vulnerable structure; at high risk of widespread damage or structural failure; likely not repairable after event. Structural and non-structural seismic upgrades required.
High 3 (H3)	Isolated failure to building elements such as walls are expected; building likely not repairable after event. Structural and non-structural seismic upgrades required.
Medium (M)	Isolated damage to building elements is expected; non-structural elements (such as bookshelves, lighting) are at risk of failure. Non-structural upgrades required.
Low (L)	Least vulnerable structure. Would experience isolated damage and would probably be repairable after an event. Non-structural upgrades may be required.
SRG3 Rating	Definition (only applies to H1 blocks)

Probability 1 (P1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Damage • Highest Life safety consequences • Demolition post-event outcome
Probability 2 (P2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High probability of total damage • Highest Life safety consequences • Demolition probable post-event outcome
Probability 3 (P3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate probability of total damage • Moderate Life safety consequences • High post-event repair costs
Probability 4 (P4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low probability of total damage • Low Life safety consequences • Readily repairable post-event

The BC government is only approving projects to structurally upgrade schools that have a High-risk rating (High 1, High 2 or High 3) and has expressed interest in expediting structures within the High 1 rating that also have a corresponding SRG3 – P rating. At the District level, 41 schools were identified as being high risk, 10 of these have been mitigated. Of the 31 schools left to mitigate, 29 of them are H-1, the highest priority for mitigation.

Further Facility Concerns

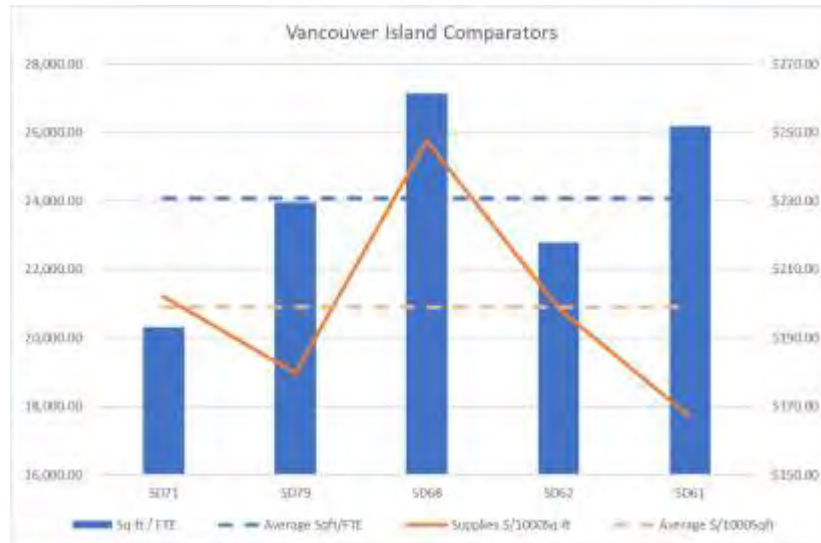
The Facilities Department is working to become a more pro-active department but in order to do so, it's imperative that the Facilities Department not only has the necessary and qualified staff, but receives adequate allocated funding. This last year alone the department had to deal with two emergent heating issues and fund the costly repairs from the operating budget, meaning other necessary repairs had to be put on hold throughout the District until funds became available. This is a normal occurrence within the department and one that Facilities is actively trying to overcome, so projects are planned, schools know when staff will be on site, and the team can take a pro-active approach to all projects large and small. Below are a few items, and not an exhaustive list, that highlight a few concerns throughout the Facilities Department.

Custodial Workforce

Student population within our District has increased by almost 10% since 2016, however custodial is not linked to enrollment, and custodial full time employment has been reduced by approximately 5% in this time. (Note: this includes the 10 FTE cut in 2022 and the 5 FTE add-back in 2023).

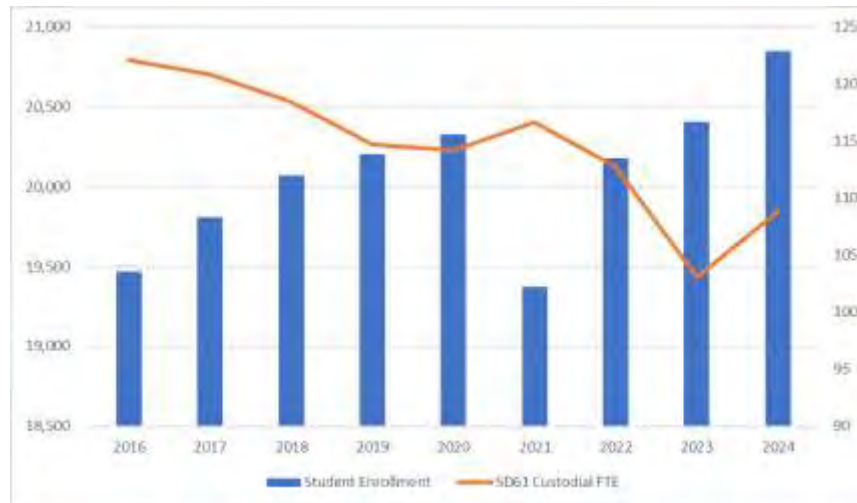
Using February 2023 data, when comparing Custodial funding in the District to other Districts on Vancouver Island, data shows that our District staff need to clean over 2,000 square feet more per day than the island average. Also highlighted is the current supplies budget is significantly less per 1,000 square feet and does not keep up with the demand. In our District, our custodial budget is \$32.06 less than the island average of \$199.04 to spend on every 1,000 square feet.

Chart 1 – Vancouver Island Custodial Budget Comparators (Feb. 2023 data)



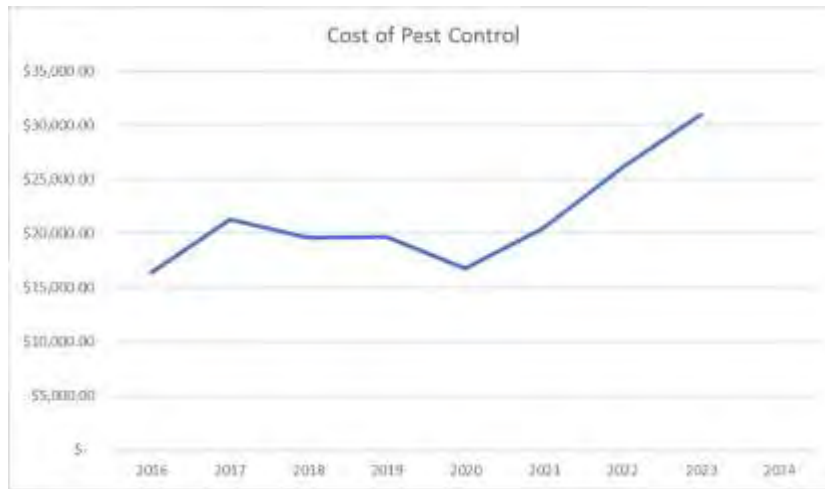
Our Custodial Workforce is not linked to Student Enrollment. A higher enrollment leads to an increased ingress of mud/dirt, and elevated washroom and classroom use.

Chart 2 - Student Enrollment and Custodial Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) assigned to clean SD61.



The cleanliness of schools can be measured by a number of methods. One method is to simply look at the pest control spending over the same time span.

Chart 3 – Cost of Pest Control



Drinking Water Safety

In the spring of 2016, the District conducted tests in a number of schools based on concerns about possible lead in the drinking water. These tests came back negative; however, to be sure, a limited testing of drinking water of all District schools was conducted in May/June 2016. At that time, the testing regime returned results that raised concerns in over 25 schools and the District embarked on an independent testing of all drinking sources in all of our facilities. This independent third party testing process ended in August 2016 with clear indications that the District had lead in drinking water issues in 40 of the 47 active schools. Some schools had minimal levels and others well in excess of Health Canada Guidelines. In many cases, the lead levels were quickly mitigated through flushing of the drinking water source lines at multiple times each school day, however, to err on the side of safety, the Board of Education approved the installation of in-line water filtering systems on all affected drinking water sources in each of schools. This installation process was completed in November 2017 followed up by the installation of water filling stations in many of our schools. There are approximately 679 water locations throughout the District that require mandatory lead water testing every three years and the district continues to add more with further childcare and water bottle filling station installations at various school sites. The locations throughout the school district range from medical rooms, classrooms, staff rooms, multi-purpose rooms, water bottle filling stations, kitchens, and classroom kitchens and child care spaces.

Facilities staff have continued to monitor lead in the water and changed out filters at an annually cost of at least \$65k per year, which includes labour, material and testing costs, all costs which are borne within the Facilities operating budget. Filter changes have become a significant ongoing expense and as such, the District is again faced with adjusting plans to ensure healthy water in our schools.

Ventilation

The school district has 57 facilities, which vary in age with different types of boilers and room configurations. There are a number of risks that the school district must consider, one being the sheer number of HVAC units the district must maintain, the different types of systems within our district and need for redundancy. The direct consequence of these risks is the requirement to recruit and retain qualified trades people, managers and consultant with the requisite funding that is required to mitigate these risks. The school district has roughly 40 portables that are used for general classrooms, or strong starts purposes and there is a further 26 child care units of various ages ranging from new builds to over 20 years old. The portables used for strong start or general classrooms are heated predominantly by electric baseboard heating with an HRV unit added for further ventilation.

The COVID pandemic saw the District install 25 Heat Recovery Ventilator (HRV) units in the summer of 2021 and a further 23 units in 2022/23. These HRV units, as with all our ventilation units, require regular filter changes which continues to be funded by the District Facilities operating budget. The District has a full time employee that reviews all ventilation units every three months and changes out the filters and changed belts etc.

Direct Digital Control (DDC) allows us to improve air quality, save energy and diagnose system issues efficiently. DDC offers the ability to tackle multiple issues within our schools with one upgrade. It also has the added benefit that, with a few equipment upgrades, improving the performance of our existing equipment. The District through COVID funding was able to upgrade DDC at three District sites, but there are schools that currently have old cougar DDC systems that need replacement as you can no longer purchase replacements parts. The direct cost for the maintenance and replacement of these older systems is borne within the facilities budget.

Boilers

While the Ministry CNCP funds assist to fund the replacement of aging boilers, it does not keep pace with the equipment failures. To keep pace with the District's aging boilers, there should be at a minimum two boilers replaced per year at a cost of over \$600k per site. On top of the boilers the District has over 145 unit ventilators heating various classrooms throughout the District that are nearing end of life and require replacement. A number of our sites have only one boiler thus if the unit fails there will be no heat for the building and the costs for the emergency repair or replacement is bourn by the facilities department budget.

Maintenance Costs

The opening of schools to assist with the district enrollment requirements, along with new child care units, and the project for the creation of inclusive spaces within every school site, has resulted in a further addition of square feet that require not only custodial commitment, but a maintenance, mechanical, electrical and security commitment as well. All these costs are borne by the facilities budget that has not seen a significant increase to cover these costs in decades.

The District has some of the oldest schools within the province with a number being either heritage registered or designated which significantly adds to the maintenance, repairs and permitting costs. A great example is the roof replacement at South Park which will cost the District well over \$3m dollars, some of which will be SEP funded.

Building Exteriors

The reductions in staffing and funding over the years have required facilities to increase the yearly cycles for maintenance at facility buildings. These increased intervals between a complete exterior/interior repaint have led to a deterioration of building envelopes and interior components. This has required the Facilities Department to assume a reactive role as opposed to a pro-active role. Currently the team is attempting to identify priority facilities and schedules to ensure that buildings are receiving the required pro-active necessary maintenance.

Fire Alarm Testing, Training and Sprinkler System Upgrades

In 2023, the District was notified that all District employees who certified the fire alarm panels moving forward required CFFA certification. Up to a year ago, District electricians had been re-certifying the fire alarm panels yearly. The cost of the certification was borne by the Facilities budget and was integral to ensuring the panels were re-certified yearly. Using District employees saves money on contractor costs and all work is completed over the summer. Along with the Fire Alarm certification, the various municipalities are requiring key pilasters which will contain key sets in the case of fire or natural disasters. All costs for this work is borne by the facilities budget.

School Access and Security

The safety and security of our students and staff is paramount for the District. In that regard, the District still has some key and lock systems that need attention in order to secure our facilities including while in lock down situations. The costs for this work is scheduled into the maintenance budget.

Elevators/Elevating Devices

In older buildings (1960/70's), the elevators are often the same age as the school. While many of these buildings have seen renovations and upgrades, the elevators have seen only minor repairs. These older elevators are in a critical state with some having seen control replacements last summer but are still causing technical difficulties.

Sites and Underground Services

Each school has significant site considerations including irrigation systems, positive drainage, playgrounds, hard surfaces (asphalt and concrete) and hard surface replacement and restoration that require regular maintenance and repair and eventually replacement. To date these assets are replaced at failure and little ongoing preventive maintenance is happening to ensure maximum life. With the fields remaining open during the pandemic and to date, they are in desperate need of maintenance. Future annual capital plans will include planned site services repairs and replacements as funding allows. The Facilities Department considers these play surfaces as vital and similar in need to a gym floor, which many of them are in dire need of replacement as well.

Trees

The District continues to have a comprehensive tree assessment and maintenance program with no dedicated funding. All tree work is paid for from the general grounds facility budget making budgeting extremely difficult. There are trees being added to the inventory yearly with no further funding to maintain or access trees. The trees in the District have all been tagged and are inspected on a four year cycle. The maintenance recommendations are prioritized on a scale of 1 to 5 and may include pruning, monitoring, bracing, closer examinations, or removal. The Priority 1 items are attended to immediately with Priority 2 being completed within the year, with the remaining priorities being completed as budget allows. The District needs to allocate funds and prioritize tree infrastructure to ensure safe and healthy school grounds. Some of the ways to complete this is through cyclical pruning of young trees, mulching, and reducing foot traffic over the interior root zones by installing fencing.

General Fleet & Equipment

Adopted industry standard is to ensure the age of any fleet vehicle is 15 years old or newer. The District owns 36 vehicles over 15 years old with ten being pre-2000. The oldest vehicle in our fleet is a 1989 Chevrolet that is used daily. We have 3 vehicles that could be issued ICBC collector plates due to age.

The age of our white fleet is also evident in our equipment. The District owns a dump truck that is over 25 years old and the district bobcat is over 30 years old. This equipment is used daily but has no reliability and at times is often down for weeks at a time. At this moment, both units are in outside repair facilities receiving repairs which impacts facility budgets and project budgets.

The District is in an excellent position as far as migration of our fleet towards Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV) in terms of electrical infrastructure and overall capacity at the Facilities Buildings. Future spending required for electrical infrastructure should be easily obtainable when also considering alternative energy source ZEVs (hydrogen). Our ability to move forward in this area will depend mostly on spending allocated towards ZEV purchases which would simultaneously address issues with our aging fleet while decreasing future operating costs due to fuel, maintenance, and carbon offsets.

Along with fleet vehicles the Facilities Department has been asked to consider moving towards environmentally friendly grounds equipment. A comparison between gasoline and battery-operated leaf blowers is in Table Three below. The gasoline models are quieter, lighter, have more blowing force at a quarter of the cost. Moving towards electric grounds equipment will require further funds from the District as the Facilities budget cannot incur these costs within the allocated budget.

Table 3: Comparison of Grounds Equipment

MAKE	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL COST FOR 13 REQUIRED	WEIGHT	TOTAL
MAKITA	CORDLESS BLOWER TOOL ONLY	\$10,387	15.8 LBS	\$41,574
MAKITA	POWER SUPPLY	\$31,187	28.4 LBS	
STIHL	CORDLESS BLOWER TOOL ONLY	\$9,171.37	15.4 LBS	\$28,508.74
STIHL	POWER SUPPLY	\$19,337.37	20.9 LBS	
STIHL	GASOLINE BLOWER	\$9,087	21.6 LBS	\$9,087

Network, Communications, Infrastructure and Security

Public Address (PA) Systems

PA Systems are used every day in schools for regular announcements and emergency messages. There are over 30 systems that are over 10 years old, 20 of those systems are over 20 years old. The process of upgrading or replacing these important systems across the district has started and needs to keep moving ahead.

Telephone Systems

There are currently 10 telephone systems on our high priority list for replacement. The daily wear and tear of aging equipment in classrooms and school offices results in over 300 repair requests per year that we need to respond to in a timely fashion. We are currently working with TELUS on their copper to fiber optic upgrade project that requires extensive support from our district technicians, so we don't go without service.

Security and Access Control Systems

There are 9 older code access systems still in use that have surpassed their end of life date and replacement parts are no longer available, 2 of which are scheduled to be replaced this year and 1 will

be eliminated with the new Cedar Hill Middle School. Following those, there are over 20 access control systems that will need to be replaced over the next few years as the communication technology continues to change. We have an in-house security technician who is keeping all our systems operational and slowly upgrading problematic sites and he has recently established an early alert system that provides us with immediate notification if a problem with one of our security systems arises. Over the course of the past year we have processed over 10,000 modifications to district staff access to our facilities.

Networks

The current network infrastructure was laid out and installed in the mid-1990s. We have been able to maintain and upgrade the infrastructure as needed from that point. Looking ahead, we have 7 sites that need some modification and in-house experts have laid out a solid plan that needs to be implemented. We are just over half way through upgrading the WiFi coverage in elementary schools, as the usage and technology have both changed drastically since it was first installed. We are also work together with the IT department to assist with day-to-day WiFi (and network) equipment upgrades and malfunctions. With an increasing demand for technology and network-based learning, our district relies heavily on our ability to respond to network issues in a timely manner in order to give staff and students the support they need to continue working and learning. We are also seeing an increase in building-control systems migrate to network-based connectivity, including irrigation, security, and heating and ventilation. These systems require constant communication to keep our buildings safe and secure.

Technology (Tec) Packages

We have over 1,300 Tec Packages and other projection systems installed throughout the District with more teaching spaces requesting them every day. Now that all of the regular use classrooms have been completed we need to look at the specialty teaching spaces: art rooms, music rooms, trades areas, foods classrooms, etc. The other consideration is the maintenance on these systems. The routine maintenance done on Tec Packages substantially increases the lifespan of the projectors. With over 850 work orders for Tec Package related issues per year, any decrease in this routine maintenance will result in an increase in lamp and projector replacement, as the projectors burn out from lack of servicing. Additionally, we aim to repair operational issues within 8 hours and any reduction in maintenance will increase this time, leaving teachers in a position of not being able to use their technology to teach their students.

CONCLUSION

Our District is made up of 57 facilities, some of which are the oldest schools in the province with a number of those being either heritage registered or designated which significantly adds to the maintenance, repairs, and operational costs. The Facilities Department has had to reduce staffing levels and work with less and less funding over the years, forcing us to take a more reactive approach instead of a preventative

approach to maintenance. Our team continues to make tough decisions to prioritize the problem areas and be as proactive as we can. However, when you take into account the increased number of students in our facilities which means added teaching spaces, plus the new childcare units and the addition of inclusive spaces within every school site, this all adds up to additional support required by facilities' departments in all areas including custodial, mechanical, electrical, grounds, carpentry, networks and security. All these costs are borne by the Facilities budget that has not seen a significant increase to cover these costs in decades. This approach results in ongoing delays, and what the Facilities Department should be addressing in our schools turns into what we can afford to ensure our schools are safe and functioning for both students, staff and the community.

Information Technology for Learning

Talking Tables

March 2024

Strategy & Planning

1 Current Status Assessment

We aim to provide best in class technology services for students and staff. Budget and staffing realities sometimes require us to operate at a more 'fit for purpose' prioritization.

The IT for Learning Department now supports more areas of the organization in greater depth than we have historically.

Growing areas are cyber security, privacy and data governance, communications and workflows, data analytics, project management, and business analysis.

2 Requirements & Planning

We are updating our technology plan. This will enable us to communicate our goals and expectations for the next three to five years.

Planning next steps will be to establish the scope of the technology strategy, and to build an operational plan that will allow us to successfully execute the prioritized initiatives.

Using stakeholder feedback and diagnostic tools we will gain insight into current services and gather requirements for new initiatives.

3 Points For Consideration

When reviewing the adjacent graphic, we ask ourselves, what is our current state, and where do we aspire to be in the next three to five years?

How can technology best support the goals of our strategic plan?

What resource allocations and prioritizations are required for this to be successful?



People & Positions

1 Current Status Assessment

We have a highly skilled technology team who are dedicated to supporting learning outcomes

Provincially, we put ourselves forward for new initiatives and receive excellent feedback for our work (e.g., SDWAN Network Initiative)

The team naturally foster a culture of sharing knowledge and supporting new staff for success.

The team are lifelong learners who embrace change and bring forward new initiatives.

2 Requirements & Planning

Regarding resource planning: we have requirements in the areas of Support Team management, Business Analysis, and Project Management.

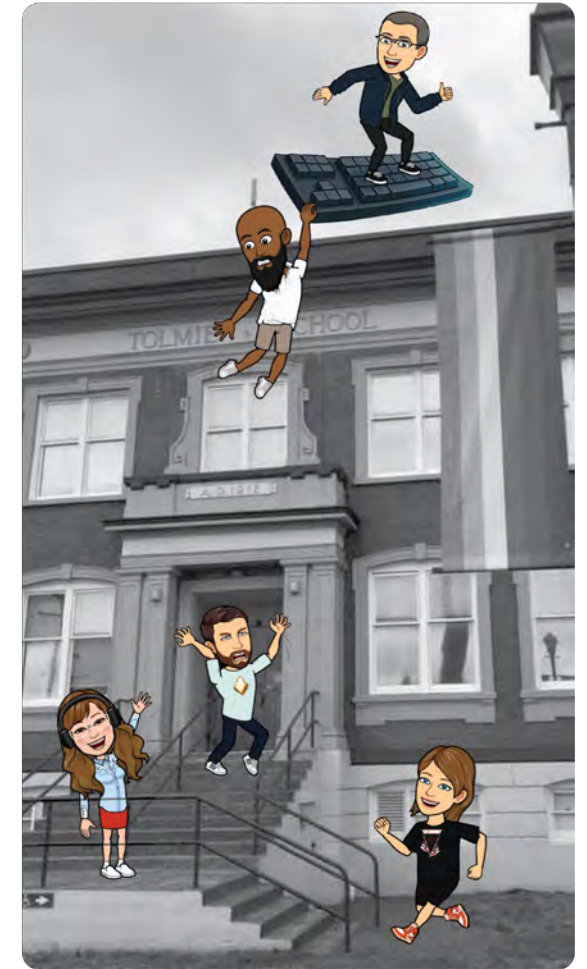
The growing area of privacy, and fully implementing our Privacy Program Management, requires dedicated staffing (e.g., a dedicated Privacy Officer).

New privacy and security education materials will be made available to staff in the coming year and we continue to share tech updates, news and tips via our monthly newsletter and Tech For Learning website.

3 Points For Consideration

Talent retention. We have supported several of our staff into new roles with local government ministries, and local colleges and universities. Reasons given have been salary and flexible work accommodations.

Working in technology requires adapting to changing priorities and initiatives, and a flexibility in how we organize our teams. Increasing our access to professional development resources to support these shifts may be required.



Student & Staff Devices

1 Current Status Assessment

We aim to provide equitable access to technology that empowers teaching and learning

iPads for students in the earlier grades. Chromebooks for grades 3 and up. Media workstation computer labs for secondary students.

We currently have a ratio of one mobile device for every two students.

Laptops for educators and itinerant staff travelling between sites. PCs for support staff. Cellphones for staff as required.

2 Requirements & Planning

The new laptop rollout will be completed by the end of February with just the high schools remaining

Phase 2 of the implementation will replace desktops with new monitors and docking hubs for the laptops. Phase 3 will upgrade the staff PCs.

Updating to Windows 11 will be our next significant operating system upgrade.

We promote a safe technology environment and continuously patch applications against the latest security vulnerabilities

3 Points For Consideration

Budgeting for lifecycle management. We have a wave of student devices aging out in the coming year.

We have not maintained annual investments to sustain replacement funds for current levels of student devices.

Through a significant increase in in-house repairs, we have extended the life of student devices for as long as possible.

We need to define our ratio of supported technology in schools and commit to the investment for sustainability.



Digital Tools & Workflows

1 Current Status Assessment

Successfully developed in-house and launched our student digital portfolios platform to replace FreshGrade and integrated it into our suite of applications under the CSL banner.

Transitioned from paper-based report cards to digital Learning Updates available in our Parent Connect and Student Connect portals.

Collaborated with our Learning Support staff to continue development of the Referrals application and digitize other workflows.

2 Requirements & Planning

Our next major digital transition will be into the Microsoft 365 platform. This has the potential to transform how we create, search and share information and how we collaborate as staff.

Successful implementation will require change leadership, project management, and a prioritization of resources beyond the technology team.

In application portfolio lifecycle management, we are assessing our suite of custom developed applications for improvements and consolidations.

3 Points For Consideration

Our ERP business software (Payroll, Purchasing, Financial Services, Human Resources) needs review. If an evaluation results in a proposal for a new implementation, then upfront investment will be required.

Our school and district websites also need prioritization. We are currently evaluating an in-place code upgrade to enable us to continue to patch the websites against current vulnerabilities.



Support & Service Management

1 Current Status Assessment

We maintain a low-cost service desk ticketing solution (Web Help Desk). We recently revised the request categories to modernize and simplify the service options for staff.

Our Support Team incorporates Help Desk staff at the Board Office and technologists who service zones of schools in person. The team diagnose and resolve software and hardware issues, advise solutions, repair aging devices, and implement new workstations, etc.

This team was reduced by one in a previous budget process.

2 Requirements & Planning

As we adopt key applications within the Microsoft 365 suite, such as Teams, we see new opportunities for service support and knowledge management.

In 2024 we will be evaluating many of these new features to prepare for the service desk of the next three to five years.

The team are also consolidating our knowledge management support articles into a 365 based platform to make them more searchable and accessible for the team.

3 Points For Consideration

We expect software costs to continue to rise as digital workflows replace paper-based processes, and more services move to a cloud-based subscription model with an enhanced feature set.

We are evaluating the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence tools in service management and how greater automation might enable more efficient support.



Infrastructure & Operations

1 Current Status Assessment

In the past year, we actioned a significant reprioritization of projects to focus on improving our cyber security posture as an organization. This was in recognition of the increased threat targeting school districts.

The team rearchitected our externally facing network services to 'harden' them against attack, and layered new firewall services in this area.

We also completed a school server upgrade project that required coordination with all schools and flexible shifts to minimize disruption.

2 Requirements & Planning

In the coming year, we are undertaking a review of operational processes including backups, disaster recovery protocols, and business continuity risk mitigation.

One element of this will be a cloud readiness review to enable us to plan the migration of legacy file systems into the digital collaboration workspaces that the Microsoft 365 platform offers.

We are midway through our current five-year network infrastructure plan and continue to support upgrading Wi-Fi in schools with our partners in the Facilities Department.

3 Points For Consideration

While we have made significant steps to improve the security posture of our infrastructure and operations, the work is not complete, and we must not become complacent. We must continue to focus resources in this area.

We need continued investment in our network infrastructure to improve performance and maintain a safe and resilient network. Apps increasingly incorporate video and graphics and require robust bandwidth and network connectivity. Student voice is strong in this area.



Data Governance, Privacy & Security

1 Current Status Assessment

We strive for privacy-by-design and security-by-design decision making in all project initiatives. This has redirected significant resources in the past year.

Our management team has taken on privacy policy and planning for digital tools. Every member of our team has stepped up to incorporate security best practices into their role. Security is a shared responsibility.

We continue to support MyEducation BC and Ministry data collections with a view to data governance best practice

2 Requirements & Planning

Privacy and security related policy and planning will continue to be a focus in the coming year.

We have identified prerequisites to improving our data governance posture which include: providing access to privacy and security education material for all staff; updating our data retention protocols to address risk of breach etc.; and scoping a data classification project to improve our information management.

These initiatives interweave with digital workflows discussions in other areas.

3 Points For Consideration

Regarding privacy impact assessments, we have concerns that we are not able to keep up with the growing inventory of digital tools being requested by schools with our current staffing compliment.

The next wave of emergent technology such as AI may further strain privacy and security assessment resources.

Further review is also needed on how best to share privacy and security materials with staff for personal education in these areas.

FIPPA

stands for

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act



Emergent Tech (Artificial Intelligence)

1 Current Status Assessment

Emergent tech such Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) has gained momentum as organizations such as ours evaluate the potential benefits to enhance the teaching and learning experience, improve operational efficiencies, and automate business processes.

Governments around the world are developing AI assessment methodologies and legislation. As these technologies are constantly evolving, our data governance protocols will also need to evolve to ensure the appropriate safeguards and controls are in place.

2 Requirements & Planning

This is a fast-moving area of technology that extends into all parts of the organization.

Cross-department and cross-district collaboration will be key to gaining a shared understanding of the applications and the new terminology and services.

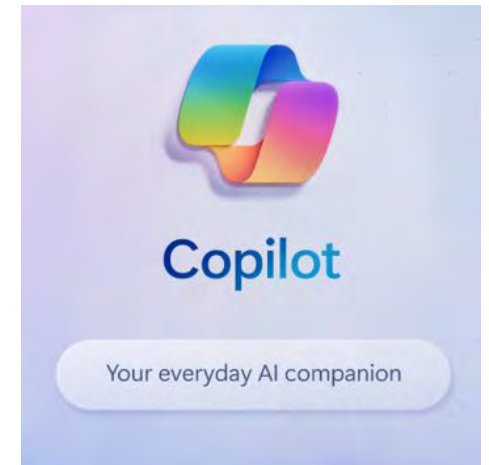
Responsible AI is the practice of designing, building and deploying AI in a manner that empowers students and staff in an environment that is safe, trustworthy, and sustainable.

3 Points For Consideration

Consumer tools are already in daily use. Vendors will be eager to highlight the 'AI' in their software offerings and not all AI is equal.

There will be an initial high cost of entry for more specialized resources.

Significant concerns need to be evaluated. The bias in the generation of information delivered as 'truth'. The ethics of the information. Poor data quality. Privacy and security risks.



Student 2:1 Ratio and Educator Devices 3 Year Projection

Equipment	Year - 2024/2025		Year - 2025/2026		Year - 2026/2027	
	Refresh	Budget	Refresh	Budget	Refresh	Budget
Student Devices						
Chromebooks & iPads	1482	\$ 666,900	1482	\$ 666,900	1482	\$ 666,900
Student Lab PCs		\$ -	300	\$ 371,400	300	\$ 371,400
Repairs and Peripherals	500	\$ 50,000	500	\$ 50,000	500	\$ 50,000
	Refresh Total	\$ 716,900	Refresh Total	\$ 1,088,300	Refresh Total	\$ 1,088,300
Staff Devices						
Educator Laptops	100	\$ 92,300	300	\$ 276,900	300	\$ 276,900
Monitors & Docking Hubs	250	\$ 63,000	250	\$ 63,000	250	\$ 63,000
Admin PCs	350	\$ 323,050		\$ -		\$ -
	Refresh Total	\$ 721,215	Refresh Total	\$ 339,900	Refresh Total	\$ 339,900
Totals		\$ 1,438,115		\$ 1,428,200		\$ 1,428,200

Student 2.5:1 Ratio and Educator Devices 3 Year Projection

Equipment	Year - 2024/2025		Year - 2025/2026		Year - 2026/2027	
	Refresh	Budget	Refresh	Budget	Refresh	Budget
Student Devices						
Chromebooks & iPads	784	\$ 352,800	784	\$ 352,800	784	\$ 352,800
Student Lab PCs		\$ -	300	\$ 371,400	300	\$ 371,400
Repairs and Peripherals	500	\$ 50,000	500	\$ 50,000	500	\$ 50,000
	Refresh Total	\$ 402,800	Refresh Total	\$ 774,200	Refresh Total	\$ 774,200
Staff Devices						
Educator Laptops	100	\$ 92,300	300	\$ 276,900	300	\$ 276,900
Monitors & Docking Hubs	250	\$ 63,000	250	\$ 63,000	250	\$ 63,000
Admin PCs	350	\$ 323,050		\$ -		\$ -
	Refresh Total	\$ 721,215	Refresh Total	\$ 339,900	Refresh Total	\$ 339,900
Totals		\$ 1,124,015		\$ 1,114,100		\$ 1,114,100

Student 3:1 Ratio and Educator Devices 3 Year Projection

Equipment	Year - 2024/2025		Year - 2025/26		Year - 2026/27	
	Refresh	Budget	Refresh	Budget	Refresh	Budget
Student Devices						
Chromebooks & iPads	319	\$ 143,550	319	\$ 143,550	319	\$ 143,550
Student Lab PCs		\$ -	300	\$ 371,400	300	\$ 371,400
Repairs and Peripherals	500	\$ 50,000	500	\$ 50,000	500	\$ 50,000
	Refresh Total	\$ 193,550	Refresh Total	\$ 564,950	Refresh Total	\$ 564,950
Staff Devices						
Educator Laptops	100	\$ 92,300	300	\$ 276,900	300	\$ 276,900
Monitors & Docking Hubs	250	\$ 63,000	250	\$ 63,000	250	\$ 63,000
Admin PCs	350	\$ 323,050		\$ -		\$ -
	Refresh Total	\$ 721,215	Refresh Total	\$ 339,900	Refresh Total	\$ 339,900
Totals		\$ 914,765		\$ 904,850		\$ 904,850

Technology Infrastructure Five Year Plan Completion - Years 4/5

Equipment	Year 4 - 2024/2025			Year 5 - 2025/26		
<i>School/Site Network</i>	<i>Refresh</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Refresh</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Refresh</i>	<i>Budget</i>
Wireless Contingency Fund		\$ 100,000		\$ 100,000		
Distribution Switches	20	\$ 38,000				
Access Switches	20	\$ 54,000	80	\$ 216,000		
PoE+ Switches			40	\$ 148,000		
Wireless Access Points	160	\$ 144,000				
	Refresh Total	\$ 336,000	Refresh Total	\$ 464,000		
<i>Data Center</i>	<i>Refresh</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Refresh</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Refresh</i>	<i>Budget</i>
Wireless LAN Controllers		\$ 200,000				
Wireless Auth Servers	1	\$ 200,000				
Wireless Mgmt Server			1	\$ 100,000		
Network Monitor Server	1	\$ 3,000				
Primary Domain Controller	1	\$ 5,000				
Database Server	1	\$ 10,000				
SCCM Servers	1	\$ 10,000				
Storage Array	*	\$ 10,000	1	\$ 200,000		
	Refresh Total	\$ 438,000	Refresh Total	\$ 300,000		
Totals	\$	774,000	\$	764,000		



Talking Tables Budget 2024-2025



March 7, 2024

Presented by
Katrina Stride,
Secretary-Treasurer





Agenda

5:00 – 5:30

Gathering and Seating

5:30 – 5:45

Welcome

Acknowledgement

Opening Remarks

Format for the Evening

Introductions

5:45 – 6:30

Dinner

6:30 – 6:45

Budget Presentation

6:45 – 7:15

Topic 1: Culturally Responsive
Learning Environments

7:15 – 7:45

Topic 2: Priority Students:
Goals 1, 2 and 3

7:45 – 8:15

Topic 3: Infrastructure

8:15 – 8:30

Closing Remarks

Welcome to Talking Tables



Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Traditional Acknowledgement

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations on whose traditional territories we live, we learn, and we do our work.

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Opening Remarks

Deb Whitten – Superintendent of Schools



Welcome

Dinner


Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing



Format for the Evening

- Introductions
- Dinner (45 minutes)
- Budget Presentation (15 minutes)
- Talking Tables (90 minutes)
 - 30 minutes each topic
 - Trustees may move tables after each topic
 - Facilitator at each table will take notes which will be incorporated into a report to the Board
- Closing Remarks (15 minutes)

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Introductions

General Introductions

Table Introductions (briefly share your name, title, and associated school or organization)

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Dinner



Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Budget Presentation



Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing



Values/ Guiding Principles

- **Students:** at centre, service for every student to succeed
- **Relationships:** respect, expertise, diverse opinions, civil discourse
- **Indigenous:** culturally respectful and responsive
- **Alignment:** Strategic Plan, Enhancing Student Learning Report
- **Timelines:** critical for staffing & collective agreement deadlines
- **Collaboration:** inclusive, understanding impacts, solution-oriented
- **Sustainability/Change:** efficiencies, surplus, long-term planning, environment

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing



Budget Process

- Meetings with student representatives at all secondary schools
- Meetings with representatives from partner groups and VPVPA
- Meetings with representatives from the Four Houses
- Budget Working Groups meetings between December and February
- Student Symposium Event – January 11, 2024
- Talking Tables Event
- Public Meeting – March 14, 2024
- Board Budget Bylaw Readings – April 9 and April 11, 2024

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

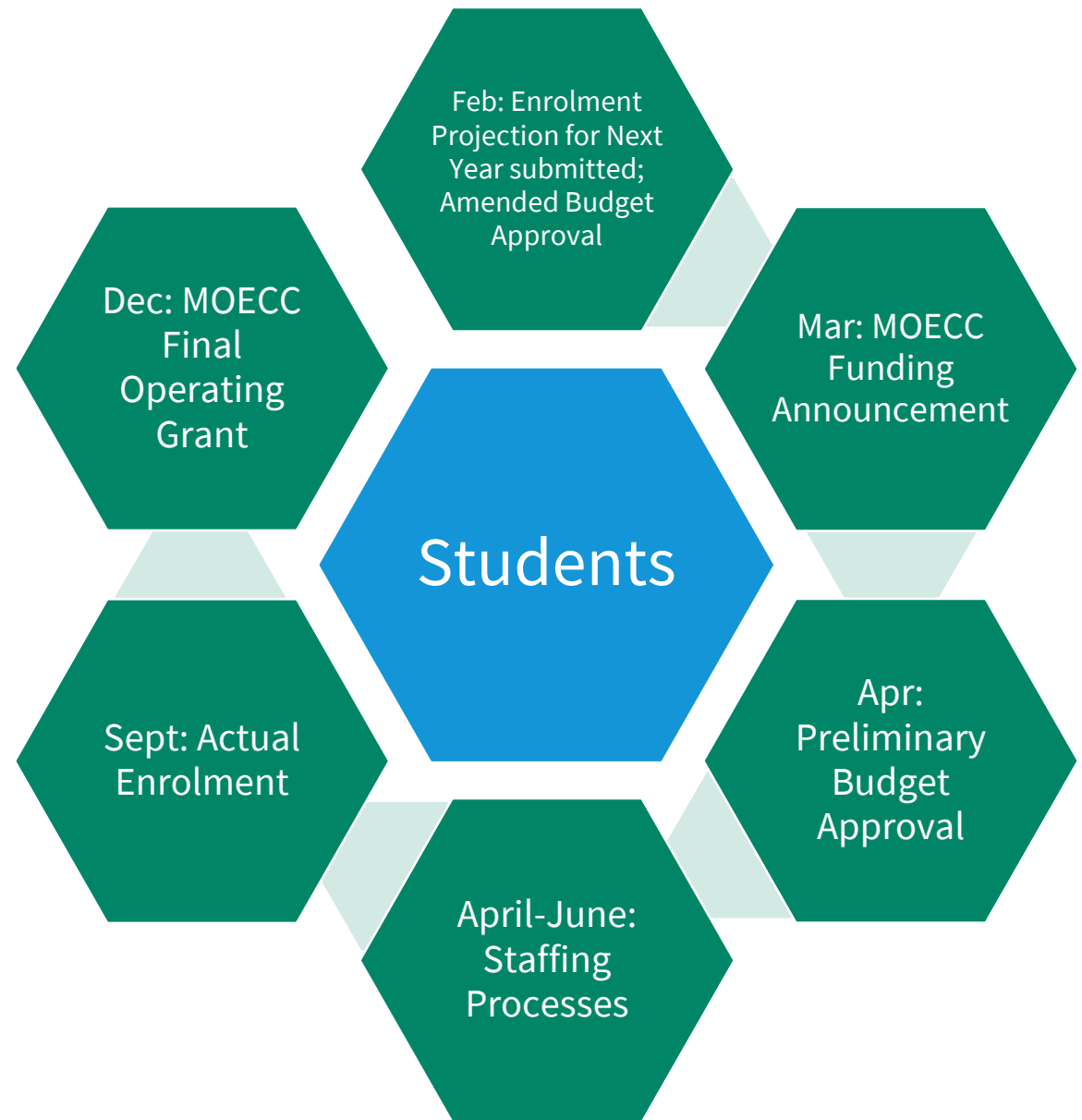
Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Budget Cycle



Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Enrolment Trends (Ministry Funded)

School-Aged Headcount excluding Continuing Education & The Link			
Year	Projected	Actual	% Change
2013-2014	18,124	18,158	0.2%
2014-2015	18,203	18,089	-0.6%
2015-2016	18,042	18,303	1.4%
2016-2017	18,374	18,519	0.8%
2017-2018	18,625	18,760	0.7%
2018-2019	18,696	19,015	1.7%
2019-2020	19,172	19,148	-0.1%
2020-2021	19,172	18,792	-2.0%
2021-2022	18,801	19,167	1.9%
2022-2023	19,278	19,420	0.7%
2023-2024	19,456	19,823	1.9%

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

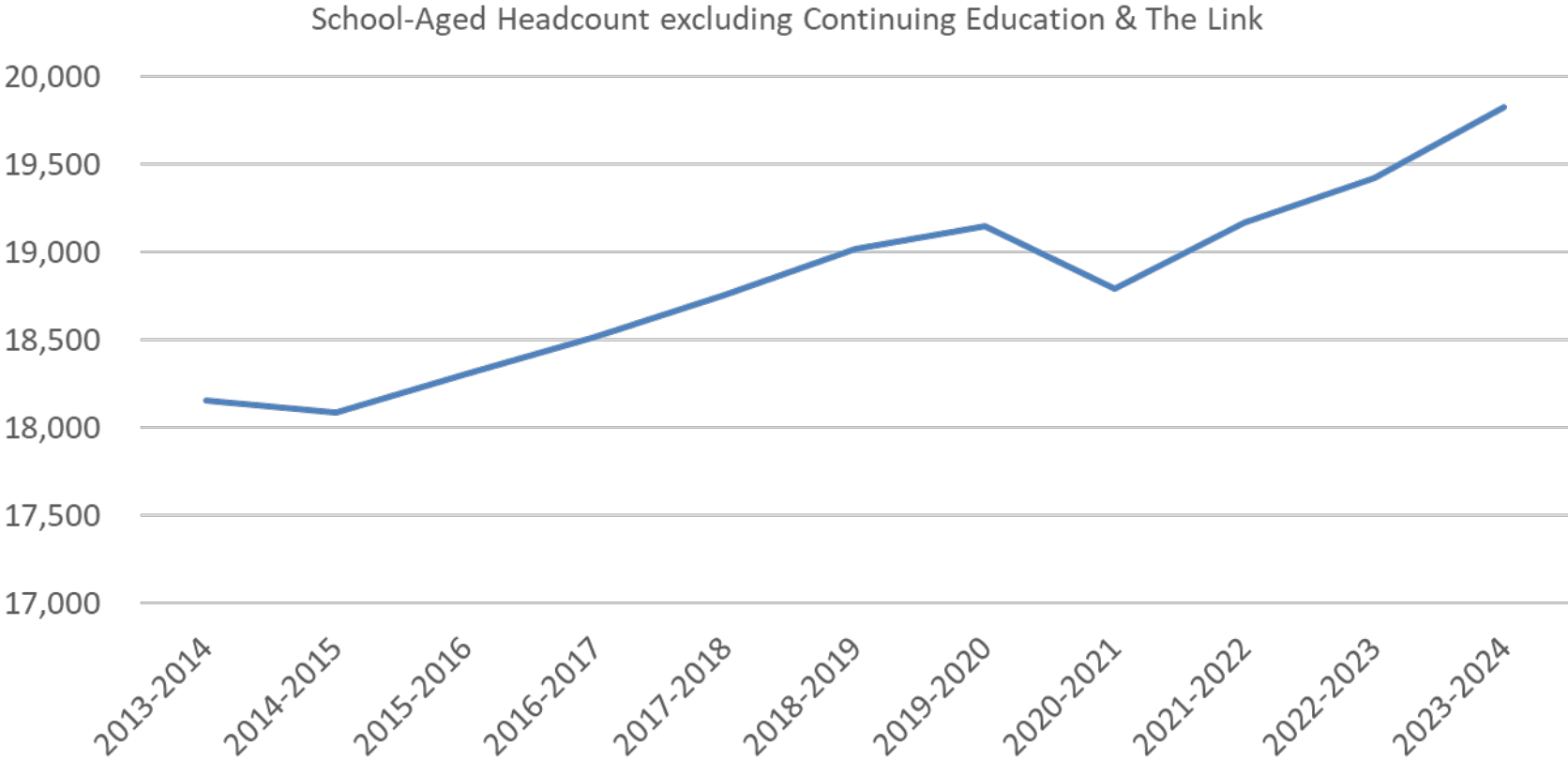
Topic 1

Topic 2

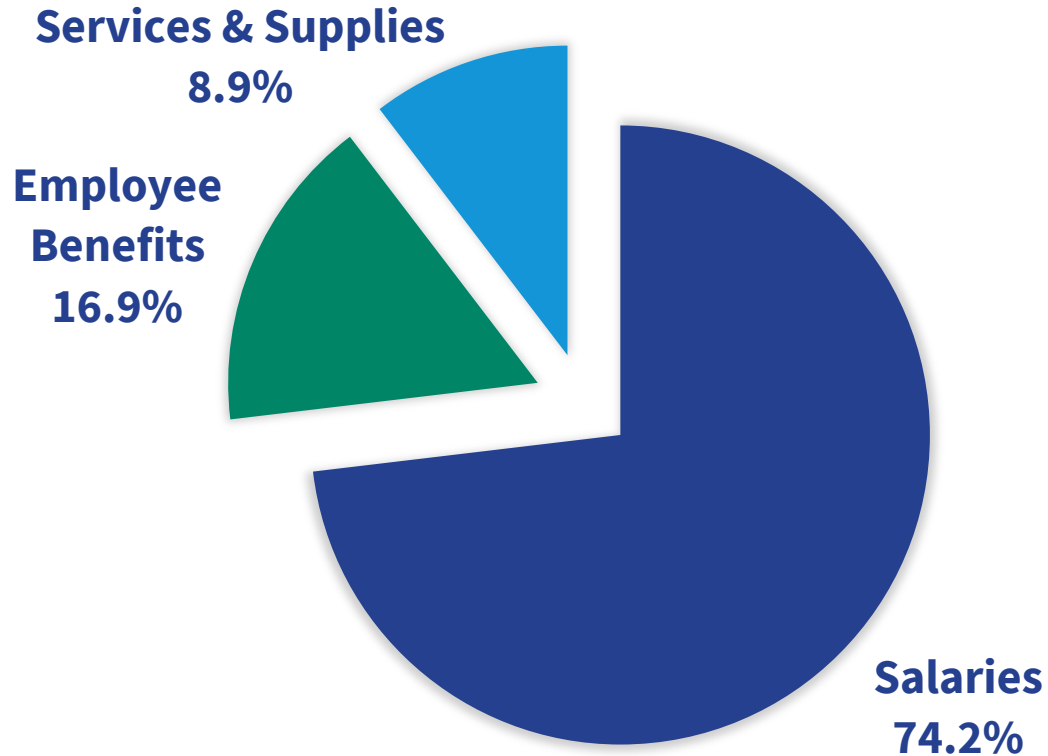
Topic 3

Closing

Enrolment Trends (Ministry Funded)



Operating Expenses



Salaries and Benefits make up approximately **91.1%** of the budget

Everything else (services and supplies) such as technology, textbooks, fuel, travel, toilet paper, library books, etc. makes up the remaining **8.9%**

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

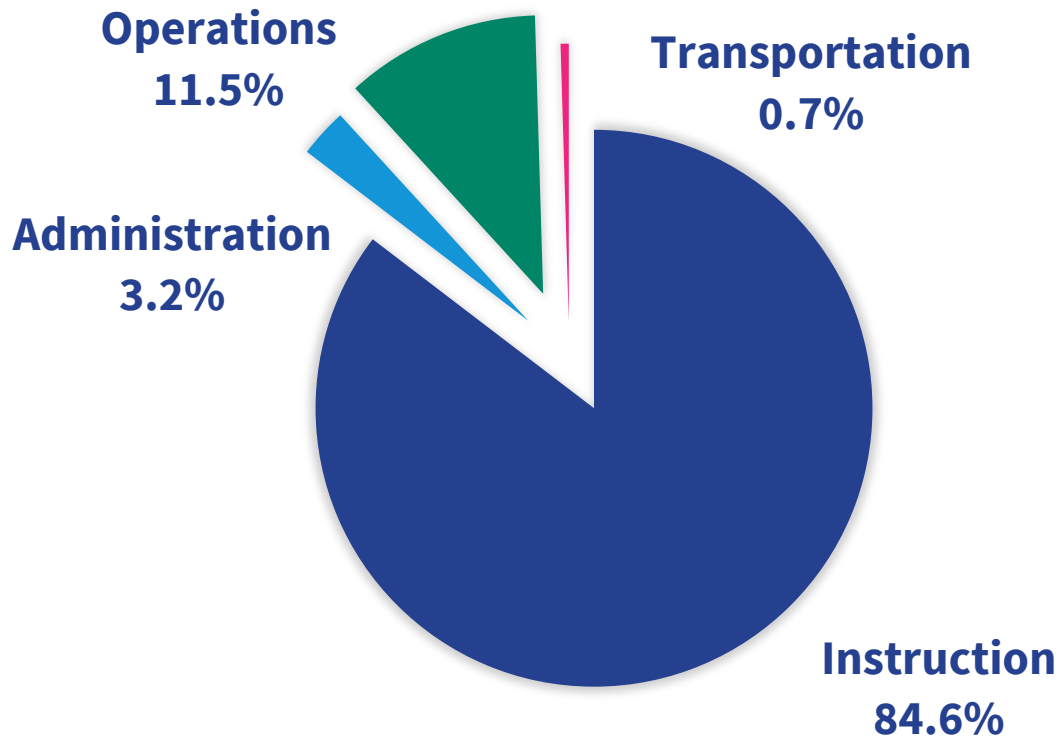
Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Operating Expenses



Instruction 84.6% – relates to **delivery of learning experiences**: Teachers, Principals and Vice-Principals, Educational Assistants, technology for the classroom, textbooks, curricular and extra-curricular travel

District Administration 3.2% – relates to **running the District**: Superintendent, learning and inclusion leaders, finance, human resources, payroll, software, legal, audit

Operations and Maintenance 11.5% – relates to the **maintenance and upkeep of buildings, grounds and technology**: plumbers, electricians, carpenters, custodians, groundspeople, computer technicians

Transportation and Housing 0.7% – relates to **getting students to and from school each day**: bussing staff, contractors and trips

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

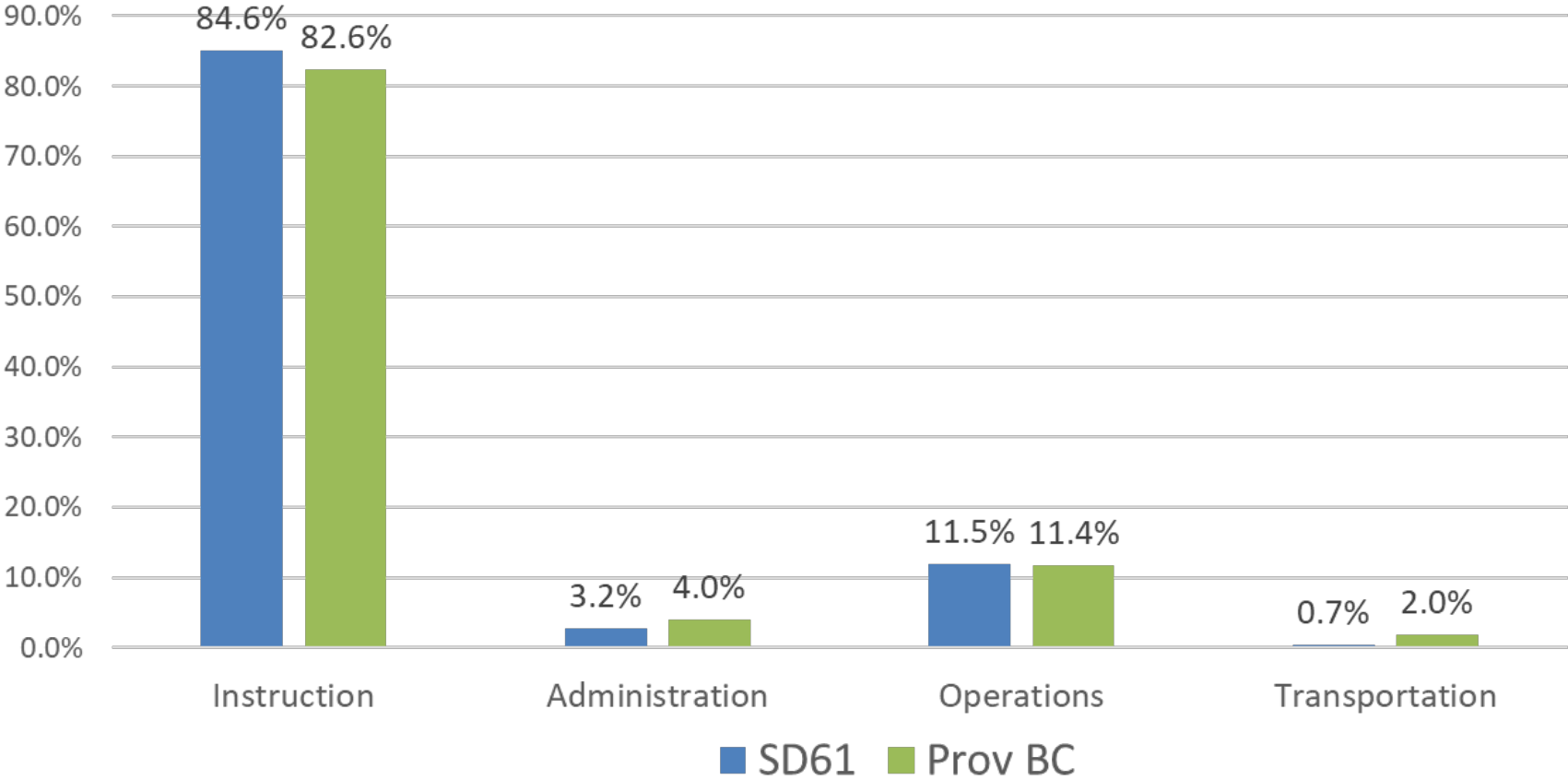
Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

How Do We Stack Up?



Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing



Structural Deficit

What is a Structural Deficit?

- Budgeted expenditures are greater than budgeted revenues
- Using prior year surplus and one-time savings to balance the budget

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Projected 2024-2025 Structural Deficit

- Current estimate \$6.4M
- Projected June 30, 2024 surplus to balance budget \$1.8M
- Many unknown factors
- Ministry of Education and Child Care funding announcement March 14, 2024

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing



Surplus

What is a Surplus?

- Amount by which revenues exceed expenses

Surplus can be:

- Restricted
 - Contractual obligations and commitments
 - To support operational planning for future years (balance future year budgets)
 - One-time expenses
- Unrestricted
 - Contingency/Reserve

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

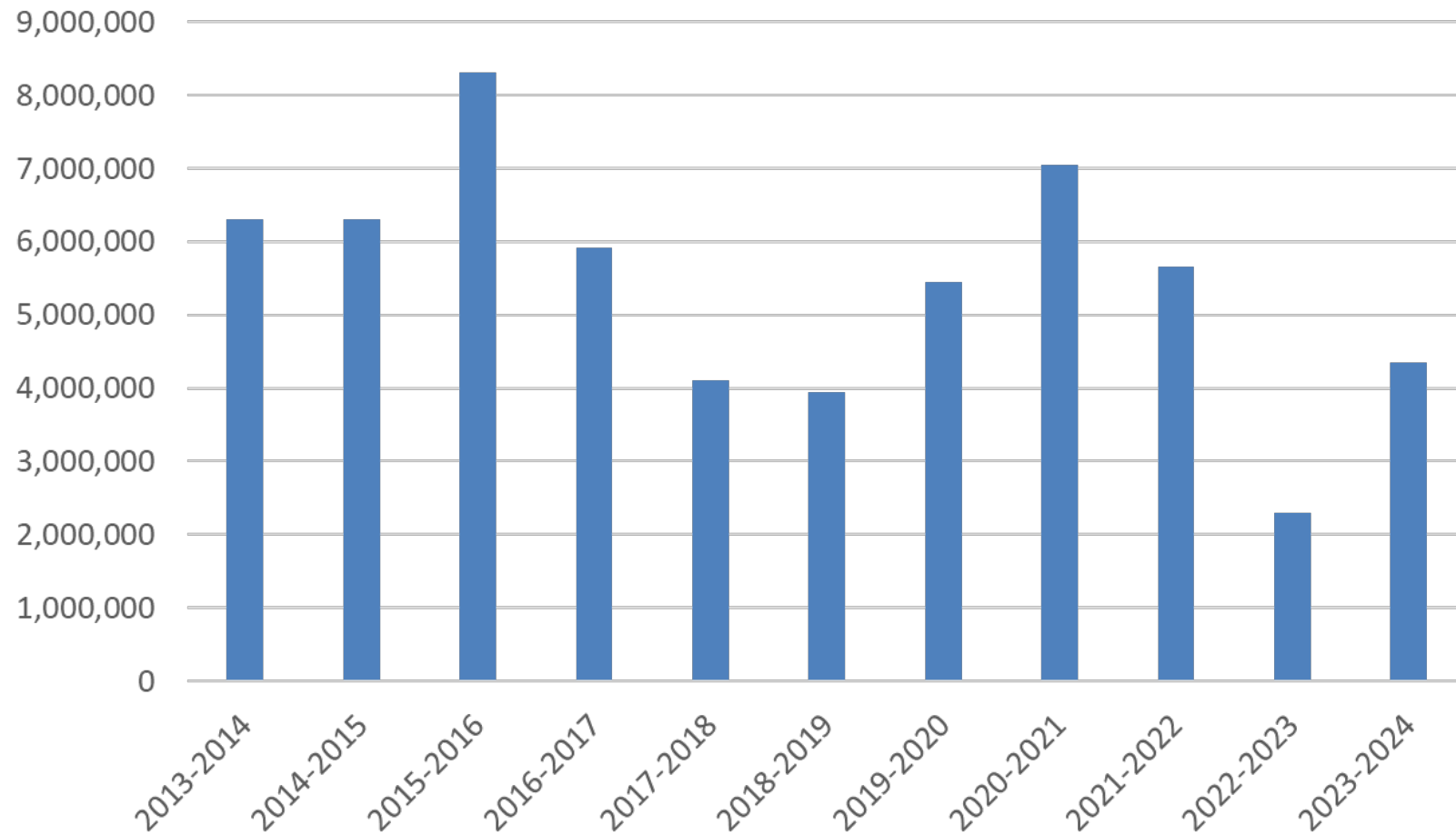
Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Surplus Used to Balance Budget



Welcome

Dinner

Budget

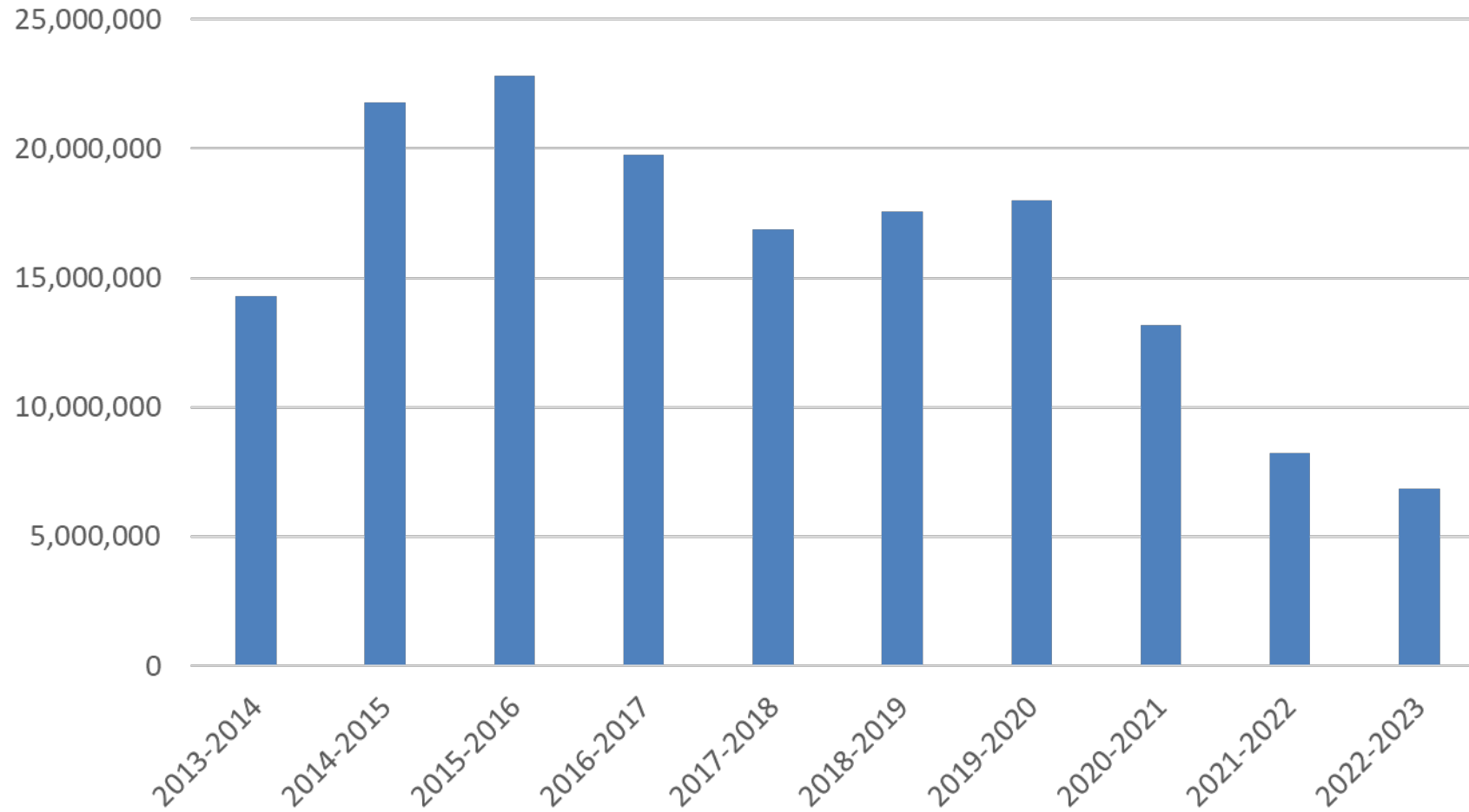
Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Surplus History - Overall



Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Surplus Philosophy & Strategy

- **District's Policy 3170 - Operating Surplus**
 - Based on K-12 Public Education Accumulated Operating Surplus Policy
 - Unrestricted operating surplus to be maintained at between 2 – 4% of previous year's operating expenses (should be \$4.59M - \$9.18M)
 - Currently at \$0.6M

Reserves – June 30, 2023

Operating Contingency

Unrestricted Operating Surplus - Contingency \$ 617,113

Total Operating Contingency (0.27% Prior Year Operating Expense) **\$ 617,113**

Local Capital Fund **\$ 557,564**

Ministry of Education and Child Care Restricted Capital **3,049,542**

\$ 3,607,106

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Talking Tables



Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing



What is Talking Tables?

- Provides opportunity to discuss important topics and obtain feedback from the Four Houses, partner groups, and leadership
- Facilitates communication within a large, diverse group
- Encourages open, honest conversation and respectful dialogue
- Builds relationship, understanding and trust

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Topic 1: Culturally Responsive Learning Environments

Culturally responsive teaching, leadership and governance is derived from the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy, which involve philosophies, practices, and policies that work towards creating inclusive school environments for students and families from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds. (Johnson & Fuller, 2014).

Becoming a culturally responsive education system is all about creating a movement away from oppressive structures within the education system and a focus towards the inequities that interplay with power, privilege, and bias. Being culturally responsive is not just about celebrating the diversity that exists within the education system, rather, it is intentionally focused on how you disrupt the impact of “sameness.”

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Topic 1: Culturally Responsive Learning Environments



When considering Culturally Responsive Learning Environments, where do we need to focus resources to intentionally improve outcomes for learners and become more culturally responsive?

Topic 2: Priority Students: Goals 1, 2, and 3

Goals 1, 2 and 3 are intentionally focused on creating a culturally responsive learning environment that will support learners' personal and academic success including physical and mental well-being. The strategies for each goal identify areas of focus to achieve these goals. These areas include critically examining personal and systemic biases, attitudes, beliefs, values and practices to increase student and staff understanding and appreciation of Indigenous worldviews, histories and perspectives. As well, the strategies provide opportunities to identify and address the inequity of outcomes for Indigenous learners, children and youth in care, and diverse learners in literacy, numeracy, mental health and well-being, attendance and graduation rates.

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Topic 2: Priority Students: Goals 1, 2, and 3



In review of the goals and strategies in the District's Strategic Plan and Enhancing Student Learning Report, how can we allocate resources to advance this work for priority students?

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Topic 3: Infrastructure

The District has 57 facilities, including 49 active schools, some of which are the oldest in the Province. Aging buildings and sites are continually requiring costly repairs, maintenance and upgrades to ensure the provision of safe, accessible, and functioning schools.

The District is in year three of a five-year network infrastructure plan to ensure it has a reliable and secure network. There are new cost pressures to defend against the increased risk of ransomware, hacking, and data breaches. Outdated staff and student devices need to be replaced to support learning outcomes for students, while the cost of technology has steadily increased.

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Topic 3: Infrastructure



What do we need to prioritize in resource allocation decisions when considering the aging infrastructure found throughout the District?

Infrastructure includes buildings, technology, climate action, transportation, equipment, playgrounds, fields, etc.

Closing Remarks

Closing Remarks – Open to floor

Final Closing Remarks – Nicole Duncan, Board Chair

Welcome

Dinner

Budget

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Closing

Thank You & Goodnight



Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

TOPIC 1 – CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Culturally responsive teaching, leadership and governance is derived from the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy, which involve philosophies, practices, and policies that work towards creating inclusive school environments for students and families from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds. (Johnson & Fuller, 2014).

Becoming a culturally responsive education system is all about creating a movement away from oppressive structures within the education system and a focus towards the inequities that interplay with power, privilege, and bias. Being culturally responsive is not just about celebrating the diversity that exists within the education system, rather, it is intentionally focused on how you disrupt the impact of “sameness.”

Question:

When considering Culturally Responsive Learning Environments, where do we need to focus resources to intentionally improve outcomes for learners and become more culturally responsive?

Table Talk Notes for Topic 1:

- Focus Resources
 - Could happen district wide
- Explain items into different languages, i.e. meet teacher, parent conference
 - New parents’ handbooks to explain so all understand
 - Some new parents don't know they can enter school. Parent handbook translated & consistent across District.
- List of translators for parent/teacher meetings in the District
 - List on hand, so easy to access (parent anxiety would decrease)
- Cultural day/week at school
 - Reason and explanation on culture
- Equity hiring agreement throughout the District
 - Systemic racism across the District is rampant.
 - Go on medical leave as can't bear the weight of the current system - micro-aggression.
 - Invite more in and provide more support across the entire District
 - How do we support employees?
 - Helpful to students to see themselves represented
- Rich professional development, as need to know and see.
 - Names alone can cause anxiety and stress.
- Welcome school in the morning and newcomers (correct, pronounced names).
 - First names, Mr., Mrs., etc.
- A number of years ago team worked to create culturally responsive framework
 - Budget decision - Inclusive.
 - Represent everyone.
 - Framework for policy / decision making for the District so equity-based lens

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 1 (Continued):

- Equity Framework for decisions
 - Training (required) for all staff on equity so operating from the same place.
 - Training for Facilities, as around kids all the time.
 - Join Pro-D-day as well. Not online.
 - Shows value - training in person for all staff.
 - Training at start of school year
- Get started and then modules are fine.
- Kids start day late, first day for training.
 - Shift for parents. Training required.
- Don't just check box. Make it count.
- Covid training days were good - now move to culturally responsive training.
- Contractually make it happen
 - 1st day after labour day and last day June
- Can do in-lieu for training (gets messy)
 - After school, people miss, hard to keep track of training.
- Mandatory training, same as confined space - make it mandatory for all.
- Advocate to the government for more funding.
- Make do with less
- Work together to obtain more funding.
- Plan A, B, C for school site
 - Elementary / Middle /Secondary Plan
 - Ministry not spending wisely
- Make more financially better decisions
 - Ease of cleaning
 - make it safe, functional.
- Improving outcomes - more informed adults, better for students
- Student awareness - navigating on-line to real world - how do we teach and students learn.
- Core Principles Gr 5 middle school.
 - Same Principles
 - Students experience big, hard things; how do students / adults deal - consistency
 - Kids aren't doing well as adults aren't doing well
- Health care and education - so much time in mental health daily
 - Part of school system now - more supports
- Combining childcare with education, take less underfunded female dominated and placed in education with no thought
- Underfunded
 - Not funded or planned properly
- Combine with post-secondary
- Not a whole lot to do with parents; focus on staff and students
 - Cultural sensitivity training (can't be optional)
 - Do a misstep must do a refresh on course

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 1 (Continued):

- 1st week school - all school meet in gym.
 - Student new to school asked inappropriate question; school spoke to Mom, who was mortified, mom enrolled full family in courses to "train" student; great learning opportunity.
 - Provide suggestions to parents; many may want similar training.
- All staff has to challenge their own biases
- Training staff (ongoing) *
- We need to be prepared
- Do we have the tools to deal with the chaos/war of our world; ex: Ukraine/ Russia, Israel / Gaza.
- Racism / racist language is becoming more prominent
- Acts of violence / graffiti - how do we follow up from these incidents?
- Local nations - need more time education with the local nations
- Generalization about Indigenous students
- Schools don't understand language revitalization; language has to come to the people of the nations first
- There is fear in staff
- Educating people on cultural safety - that is transferable to other cultures.
- Share information between schools /nations
- Local nations/history/education
- Have more Songhees members to work in SD61*
- What courses | IED courses
- Bridge Program – EA, teacher, admin
- Career Education - Indigenous learners in grade 11 and 12 - career opportunity
- More ways to engage indigenous learners
- Indigenous workers/ students - need flexibility with regards to cultural responsibilities and family priorities.
- Resources for teachers
- What is it?
- How do I find resources that are carefully vetted, authentic + SD61 approved?
- Indigenous support people - how do we access within schools? Or in SD61.
- Repository of resources that are authentic around multi-cultural perspective.
- Resources aligned
- Culturally responsive - how do we ensure that we are having this perspective that is CR?
- Ongoing professional development for leaders, senior teams, and teachers. Ongoing as in collective, collaborative, and individual, as needed.
- Varied needs based on expertise, number of years in service (support staff or teachers)
- Time to do professional collaboration! Mindset
- Having time - elementary collaborations have limited infrastructure
- Professional development: what does it truly mean?
 - Sharing experiences
 - How to
 - Resources shared
 - Having the time to talk
- Strategic Plan - School Growth Planning
 - School goals - resources are aligned

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 1 (Continued):

- Time for teachers = TTOC time for individuals, collaborative, whole group.
- Large scale - big group!
- Collaboration with others!
- Individuals - when books can be read; book clubs
- Students seem impacted by outside resources coming in and sharing experiences
 - Diverse groups and topics
- Bringing community
- Every student should come to school and feel belonging
- Provide cameras to students and asked: what you connect with? and what you find challenging?
 - Church seating with Indigenous art on it - was challenging
 - Appreciated places of comfort couches and cozy spaces where they feel “at home”
- Ask students - with a focus on Indigenous students - how can we make the school a place where all can connect and feel like they matter.
- Environment - murals, connections to art
- Offer voice - what do students think we need to be more CR?
- Struggle with this topic when it comes to BUDGET
 - Teaching resources for CR curriculum; yes, but isn't this about mindset?
- Would these questions be the same if we were in a surplus?
- Outdoor learning spaces
- How does this connect to budget?
 - Release time for collaboration for educators to learn from one another.
- For Ukrainian immigrants, ICA connect with family - having a place to ground families before transition in each school rather than a central location
- The community room at George Jay was a huge loss
- We can do anything we want; we can't do everything we want
- Read an article about SPLO; science teacher cites lack of real data - no peer reviewed study has been thrown out there - scared of decisions being made that are not based on real evidence (data) - how are we making decisions (reactionary)?
- Trans posters have been ripped down - resources should be put into educating staff in how to deal with or navigate some of the situations we are dealing with.
- When looking at multiple voices, it does not tell the story of the individual. When creating opportunity we will never please all - if we are looking at all perspectives, we lose focus on those who need to be heard - what voices should be at the table? Still a system that hears voices of privilege.
- Decisions all include the recipients of the service with checks and balances built together - are we affording psychological comfort for recipients of service or those who provide service?
- How are we putting CR at the forefront of our conversations about school improvement?
- We did a very short Pro-D on this, but it was not enough; we need more time to address this
- Example of microaggression - speaking for community instead of consulting them.
- With so many different cultures we don't have a system that works for everyone.
- Thought to have a whole District Pro-D on CR followed by Family of Schools follow up on the work at the school level.
- Would love to see more money towards paying for meaningful Pro-D.
- Support for Indigenization plan not paid for by targeted funds
 - Board should support this plan by financing it

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 1 (Continued):

- Training for all school staff in EDI and cultural safety.
- Training for all school staff in trauma-informed learning.
- EDI is not in the classroom. It's not at grassroots.
- Our schools are built to NOT do things for EDI.
- Everyone is used to doing things a certain way - we need to be trained.
- EDI training needs to start with Senior Admin.
 - Senior Admin brings it to administrators.
 - Administrators bring it back to their staff.
- The student forum last year at Uplands was great.
- We want the International students to go through the same process as the student forum.
- We need money dedicated to train staff, to "scan" our school district with an EDI lens, and to create goals that the whole school district can work towards.
- Toolkits: UVic using the "Cultural Intelligence Quotient"; it can be purchased for not much money.
- We need training on our own self-awareness.
- We need training on how the system is discriminatory.
- We need to work with the people who push back.
- Our schools have touched on this, but it needs to be way deeper; staff initiated it; it needs to be district wide.
- We need to commit to working towards it. There may be no finish line, but we need to move along the course.
- The hiring process for administrators needs to change. There are only 8 BIPOC administrators in the district. Part of the process needs to include looking at equity-seeking groups when they apply. Senior Admin needs to consider this when they are scanning resumes; last year they did NOT look at this.
- This won't happen by accident.
- We want EDI training to be mandatory at schools - a pro-D that all employees need to do.
- We are way behind other districts. It's ridiculous! For instance, Surrey has a Racial Equity Diversity Plan; they have a website they can refer to.
- Ad-Hoc committee for EDI with trustees, admin, teachers, CUPE, etc. They need to meet more than once a year - not just in May. There was no meeting at all last year. The terms of reference say to meet only once a year - this needs to change.
 - Spend money on training. ICA can do a deep dive with the administrators for a cost of a few thousand dollars. We would come away with goals and targets for the School District.
 - In-service training - not on our own time.
- Student Learning Survey - we suggest embedding questions pertaining to cultural safety according to students.
- Do students feel safe answering the questions with their teachers at school? Maybe they could do it at home with their parents.
- A few years ago, UVIC helped the district create some questions that could be included with the Learning Survey. It was too late to include them, but those questions are still around and ready to be used.
- Go further. Rights of LGBTQ+; broaden scope.
- Human resources most valuable.
- Support immigrant community.
- Prioritize teachers and EAs, plus other specialists.
- We are below Canadian Mental Health recommended counsellor's ratio.

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 1 (Continued):

- Training for staff needed; for teachers and EAs.
- Targeted Pro- D needed.
- Raised hours for EAs needed for retention and training for staff coming in from the bridging program.
- EAs support relationships and sense of belonging
- Current EA role is too focused on crisis management in the classroom.
- Role of EA is under-utilized; same for clerical staff in schools.
- Administration resources being cut has also compounded the issue.
- Longer hours for EAs = less FTEs; so less EAs in the building. One school went from 12 to 11.
- Systematic change is required.
- Indigenous Ed Dept supporting high quality Pro D.
- There is not enough meeting time in schools.
- Almost no budget for release time for meetings and training.
- Good work happening in schools re: LGBTQ+ but even less resources to support this.
- Community backlash on certain issues, e.g. Trans, immigration
- Students need to be safe, seen and supported.
- This is how admin target resources in schools.
- This work cannot happen in the book ends of the school days.
- Do not have the admin resources to lead these initiatives in schools or at the District.
- How do we get more money into the system?
- Can we generate more revenue by utilizing the empty building hours? Many business opportunities. This would also build community. Big push on rentals needed.
 - Workshops with unused facilities.
 - However, this could set a dangerous precedent to allow the government to say that education can be funded by private business.
- We need to advocate for greater funding, but increased taxation for education is unlikely to happen.
- Everybody needs to push and advocate together.
- Major concerns with the funding model.
- Anchor resources to the school goals and align the decisions.
- What happened to the initiative to build and sell learning studios?
- Space - traditional spaces are desks and chairs
 - Do we consider other spaces?
 - Outside spaces - challenging when weather is difficult
 - Students are asking for prayer spaces
 - Challenges when schools don't have space
- Awareness for teaching staff around significant cultural practices, i.e. Ramadan
 - No longer bulletin board information but put into practice
 - Teachers hesitant to try something different/new; afraid of making mistakes
- Students asking for adults/teaching staff from diverse backgrounds
 - Teachers hesitant on how to incorporate other cultural ways of knowing/understanding
- How do we help staff find and access these resources?
- Greater supports needed for immigrant families and students

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 1 (Continued):

- Creating more understanding and safety - listen more
- Structure of school can be challenging for immigrant families
 - Different understanding and expectations for how schools work
 - Demands on youth when parents might not available, i.e. homework at night when a parent is at work, student helping to care for siblings, student working at night to help pay for family expenses
- How can we alleviate stress for families to make school feel safe and welcoming?
 - Relook at structures
- How can we use student feedback and family input to reimagine how we allocate resources and be open to different ways of education/teaching/schooling?
 - How can we be open to trying something different?
- Appreciate how some educators are trying to bring other voices in classrooms
- Need smaller class sizes, more resources (EAs, Counsellors, Psychologists)
- Some kids coming from trauma base, need smaller class sizes, push in, pull out supports
- Population vulnerable – need more resources, more divisions for smaller class sizes for more meaningful connections
 - Can't service needs of all students when others need support
- How do we make better use of what we currently have?
 - Shift model
 - 4-day school week (Gulf Islands)
 - Change is challenging to families, but may get used to the new reality
 - Accommodating families needs e.g. send out one email to parent rather than each teacher emailing if they have multiple kids in the school
- Teachers today have to be psychologists, counsellors, teachers etc. to students
- How do we encourage EAs from the Nations? Children seeing themselves in the educator
 - Responsible adult (paid), but would need training
 - Bridge program
 - Talk to the Nations and ask what are they looking for, e.g. pay, type of work?
 - They do have LEA liaisons
- Must ask the right questions in interview situations to ensure that they have the right attitude and personality
- What do these kids need and how can we do the wrap around care?
 - Shoreline health hub expansion
 - Teacher training for culturally responsiveness (I want to, but I don't know how); opportunity for Pro-D days, such as May Pro-D Day
 - Community of practice within the district, case studies and talking through scenarios with others
- Indigenous point person to get training in every school and at district level; supportive way to have someone in every school (anti-racism, inclusion and accessibility lead as well)
 - Need funding for release time
 - Preventative measure rather than reactive approach
 - Enables sharing of ideas across the district
 - How do we break down the silos to share ideas and collaborate?
 - Shared drive on how-to
 - Lead gets to share at staff meetings

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 1 (Continued):

- Requirement for teachers and EAs to get training on trauma informed practice and annual or bi-annual renewal
- 60 – 70% of teachers at the District come from UVic (not diverse backgrounds)
 - No progress in teaching in the past 15 years and doesn't prepare you for teaching
 - Teachers should go through a 2 – 3-week module similar to bridge program
- Culture change; having honest conversations; nice to see support for culture related absences
- Hiring practices – representation from immigrated communities and indigenous communities; getting people to come in but they are getting burnt out because we don't have supports
- How do we share with students the different cultures when we don't have the backgrounds? Know that students are away but we don't really know why.
- Most of the teachers in the system are from the old education system and they need to be provided with an opportunity for professional development.
- See yourself reflected in the people teaching you is great, but filling positions is getting difficult.
- Help students understand their post secondary path sooner and what they need to achieve in Secondary school.
- Appropriate Pro-D and training will help with the culture
- Learn through stories, opera, book club, etc. or other methods that connect to other people that is not as structured, and then find ways to bring them to the classroom.
- Can be about so many things, e.g. physical space, comfort
- Working on connections and belonging. Working together collaboratively. All coming together to do this work.
- Had about \$15,000 to spend time on collaboration but don't have that anymore and don't have that much time.
- Even if they have the time, not sure if the individuals have the energy or capacity to meet and collaborate.
- A lot of burden to keep growing and learning
- Is there a charitable way to look at this? Can we get grants that will support time for collaboration?
- Trying more flexible ways to collaborate like Zoom, but there hasn't been many people showing up because people are burnt out and don't have the time after hours.
- EAs can't stay an extra hour because they aren't paid enough to stay without pay for an extra hour for collaboration after school.
- More time, more money, and more people.
- Advocate when the CA comes around for negotiations. Boards standing behind some of the recommendations from CUPE, GVTA, P&VP.

TOPIC 2 – PRIORITY STUDENTS: GOALS 1, 2 AND 3

Goals 1, 2 and 3 are intentionally focused on creating a culturally responsive learning environment that will support learners' personal and academic success including physical and mental well-being. The strategies for each goal identify areas of focus in order to achieve the goals. These areas include critically examining personal and systemic biases, attitudes, beliefs, values and practices to increase student and staff understanding and appreciation of Indigenous worldviews, histories and perspectives. As well, the strategies provide opportunities to identify and address

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

the inequity of outcomes for diverse learners and Indigenous learners in literacy, numeracy, mental health and well-being, attendance, and graduation rates.

Question:

In review of the goals and strategies in the District's Strategic Plan and the Enhancing Student Learning Report, how can we allocate resources to advance this work for priority students?

Table Talk Notes for Topic 2:

- 1% of students - most at risk, vulnerable etc.
- Victoria is in a bubble - very privileged.
- Communication is important; big voices.
- So far away from helping 1% students due to poverty, safety, building safe and clean.
 - In hierarchy of needs, SD61 at very bottom
 - Teachers can't meet basic needs before they teach students
 - Struggling to meet basic needs and struggling.
- Everyone has kids, not enough social structures in society
- Early intervention key - EA in every Kindergarten room; Base ++ model.
- Counsellors to assist; FTE - need more counsellors (Base plus)
 - 0.1 FTE - all they do is paperwork.
- Childcare - good as know what is coming in for students.
 - More childcare and in classrooms.
 - Shift CUPE - seamless childcare
- Put funding into kids and programs that can provide immediate instruction. Know what kids needs before they hit kindergarten.
 - SLP and school Psych need more funding for more training. Mandatory training.
 - Don't cut funding. Wait lists so long; keep them.
- Have to pull funding, but if recognize kids struggling early, less issues at higher grades
- Start small
 - EA - teacher - Admin partnership, magic.
 - More input from all
 - More flow
 - Work consistently across the board.
 - More support for students - seamless team
- Challenge to make sure partnering up and correct fit - make it happen.
 - Need more hours
 - Bring partnerships together, means everything.
 - Kids more, partnerships remain in place, better staff retention.
- Grade 1 - teachers can spot problems
 - Get pieces in place early, help will make a difference.
- Grade 12 - not graduating, as not ready. Parents surprised. Inform families early.
- Do push kids through the system - factory model.
- Policy - student advancement on age - wrong
 - Social downside, not truthful, dependent on kids.
- Complex kids through the system
 - Can't be expert on every designation.

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 2 (Continued):

- Need Speciality Teachers
 - Some kids ok in classrooms, some not.
- Funding insufficient for kids with needs.
- Morning classroom, afternoon different place.
 - Create school with allocated spaces.
 - Not serving kids.
- Draw boundaries
- Loss of community rooms. Need spaces at each site for community and for students (not classrooms)
 - There are schools with space
- Can move students to various schools.
- Mix students at times, other times separate.
 - Create empathy
- Decreased specialized programs - now violence in schools rampant.
 - #1 issue is violence.
 - Need transitional program for students
 - Ratio smaller in those classrooms
- Mental health suffering
 - All suffer
- Behavior programs, what are grad rates?
 - Students regulate emotions.
- Being prepared. Indigenous students have different (more) family/cultural responsibilities.
- Being informed about the cultural season of the nations
- Maximum flexibility / transportation is a simple thing / such a big obstacle.
- Cultural safety in the classroom.
- How do you fit into the colonial structure of school?
- Balance / to function in both worlds
- Stress and cost of living
- Staff/teachers are stressed
- Flexibility of on-line learning (how can we use this)
- Missing some people, not all the seats are filled
- Make movements in a way that is true/authentic
- Having a "safe" person to ask questions / help, not judge, me/protocols
- Career programs - more accessible
- Breakfast programs, flexible learning spaces, programs for middle; outside time
- Mental health supports / partner with ministry CYMH. *
- Secondary health clinics is a good example
- Good elementary foundation / support
- Ministry has a trauma response for many families
- More 1:1 staff to prevent workplace violence.
- Family of schools' support teams - YFC Counselors
- K-5 and middle - alternate programs/ spaces
- Food - make sure the students are fed - FFF
- make connections
- EAGs - funded in the morning to do a welcome connection to students who come early, CUPE who make food and serve food, greet + meet, and soft landing to the day

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 2 (Continued):

- More counselors to talk with students who are in crisis, need, or general conversation - certainly in elementary!
- Second Step funds continue!
- Work through early childhood, SEL - with young children. Start the connection early so that the foundation is strong.
- What are the exit points?
 - High School - connected to something - athletics, music, career centres (hands on)
- Ensure alternative "activity fees" are available for clubs.
- Many students are "outliers" and may find their place or people in a club. Clubs need funds to do activities, buy supplies, share in celebrations. Large funds are not needed to run clubs yet large results can result.
- Spaces - for students to have alternative spaces to regulate. Funds needed to outfit the space with seed money and maintenance money to sustain these spaces
- CUPE staff to be "family navigators", those important people who can support the stability of these spaces.
- Where do we lose kids?
- Engagement
- Outside agencies are important but largely rely on schools not the other way around.
- Investing early
- The more we work with children early the better off they'll be.
- Basic needs - Food security - what's going to happen next? Transitions?
- Fewer and fewer resources with more and more demand. Educators see themselves and they burn themselves out trying to make that difference. Slim budgets mean things have to be taken off the plate. Some things need to go to sleep and be dormant until we can afford it. Should be looking at other models? What do we put to sleep?
- Identify top priorities and fund them at the expense of things that are not top priority.
- Push trustees to advocate. How can we get money from other sources? System needs help and mental health is at epidemic rates.
- Kids have none of the resiliency they used to have
- EAS are underfunded; can't attract and retain them - they are amazing advocates for our kids
- Are we operating from a scarcity mentality? Are we actually appropriately funded but spending inappropriately? How do we keep the main thing?
- Are there red flag areas that you are aware of? One voice at the table said we tend to make snap decisions and we need to avoid being reactionary.
- We don't think staff have been adequately trained to do this at all. We need to allocate funds for training.
- We need to advocate to the Ministry - they've created an anti-racist document and allocated NO MONEY to do it.
- Ensure that there is representation of all equity-seeking groups among the staff and administrators.
- We need more money for our EAs. Our Priority learners are NOT receiving the extra help and support they needs.
- 16 years ago, one of our EAs at the table said that 80% of the time helping with academics and 20% dealing with social-emotional or behaviors. Now it is the exact opposite - 80% social-emotional and behavior and 20% academics.

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 2 (Continued):

- We don't have enough money for EAs in schools - every school doesn't have as many EAs as they need to support the priority students. The money that comes in from "designations" from the Ministry is FAR from enough. We request that the trustees allocate money to hire more EAs. That will go a long way with supporting our priority learners.
- There is also a lot of absences with EAs, and then they are not replaced. So having a skeleton staff, and then missing a couple of those every day is grinding things to a halt.
- The subsidy for daycare for families is a gamechanger!!!
- Even if we have the jobs available, we don't have people to do them. EAs need to have more HOURS, BENEFITS earlier, and BETTER PAY.
- **Advocacy by the trustees to the Ministry would be very helpful.
- The idea of EAs working in the childcare centers is something we think would work. We believe the district has opposed this? The pay would need to stay the same as during their day job.
- Retention of EAs - this is an issue.
- When we have priority students in French Immersion, they almost always eventually get moved out. The research does NOT support this. However, we have only 7 French-speaking administrators in our district, and I doubt these are all trained in French Immersion administration. When it comes to hiring, Senior Admin needs to prioritize hiring administrators that are trained to do French Immersion schools. 20% of our students are in French Immersion AND we keep asking why so many kids move to English. Every school-based team I've been on says they believe in keeping kids in French Immersion, EXCEPT for students who ...(insert student here)
- Train all administrators and staff to know that we don't move kids to English unless parent asked.
- Indigenous students - we're very depressed seeing those graphs. We need more Indigenous staff represented in our schools and in our administration.
- Let's have a time/space where our teachers and staff who are Indigenous can come together - not just those on the IED department. That might help them feel stronger and more able to represent where they come from to our students.
- If we spent money on "relationship", bringing the families in and connecting more to them would go a long way. We like the "family advocacy role" through IED now.
- It's important for our Indigenous students to feel connected and valued.
- It needs to be and feel like it's a true partnership with the communities.
- Keep working so staff understand they need to also learn about and in Indigenous culture.
- Promotion for school district staff to all try things like going to pow-wows, going to the rendezvous, learning drumming songs, etc.
- We like that when our priority International students are presenting with mental health problems, they can access counselling through Cascadia within a day!
- We have an excellent Indigenous Ed Dept to support the work.
- We need more targeted learning support for Indigenous students.
- EAs forming close relationships with priority students.
 - How can we improve that role?
 - More indigenous EAs?
 - Targeted bridge program for indigenous EAs?
- New Indigenous Grads from High Schools to be mentors. Work with the Camosun Indigenous EA program.
- It feels like there is an increase in numbers of students with mental health needs.

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 2 (Continued):

- Elementary students who cannot deal with school due to high anxiety.
- Many families in crisis - economic stresses.
- We are still in the aftermath of the pandemic trauma.
- How do we as adults co-regulate with our children in schools?
- Indigenous students often already dealing with trauma, so this is layered on top.
- We need learning support specialists to support educators dealing with trauma.
- It takes District Principals to organize the work and facilitate the multi-year planning.
- Who leads the district learning?
- The District team has been cut so much that this work can no longer happen effectively.
- Strategic investment is needed for long-term gain.
- Look at SOGI resources. At the district, very few hours to support systemic change.
- Work with different community agencies and partners, e.g. POPARD.
- Tap into community health initiatives.
- How can municipalities interact with schools?
- VIHA has supported training for EAs re: insulin for diabetics.
- Is our inclusion model working?
- There were budget efficiencies in the old model of inclusion.
- Do not force a student to be in a classroom where they are not comfortable.
- Support low incidence programs. The model can be a goal targeted resource for students.
- Is it possible to target resources for priority students (behavior/anxiety)?
- Hybrid classes were an interesting scenario to see for the one year. It was more related to anxiety. Why did we not continue this model? Schools saw some successes and connections.
 - Big challenge from the equity perspective. Not all families can support children being at home.
- See ILC cohorts in Saanich.
- More school visits required. Trustees need to see more of the school day.
- How is information gathered on school successes and then shared out?
 - Online platforms for engagement.
 - Half-day programming.
 - Re-entry - students not attending - safe re-entry.
 - Hybrid learning.
 - Land based learning.
- Resources don't need to be financial
- How do we create flexibility in all of our schools?
- How do we use current facilities to meet the needs of our current students?
- Schools are more complex social spaces than they were when they were built
- Counsellors - students are asking for more diversity and inclusion of adults who understand their diverse backgrounds
- The role has significantly changed for counsellors - it has expanded
 - Need more physical space and people to truly support student needs
- Advocacy for priority students and families important - often overlooked and challenging to access supports
- Sometimes parent and educator perspectives for what might best for the child are different
- How we do better understand and communicate with families regarding what is best for students and what is possible?

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 2 (Continued):

- Welcome Centre is helping immigrant families connect better to schools
 - Creates community for families new to Victoria/Canada
 - Opportunity for connection and support
- Indigenous EAs and Indigenous support workers are helping to advocate/support Indigenous students
- Need smaller class sizes, more resources (EAs, Counsellors, Psychologists)
- Diverse learners – can we also include disabled in the language? It's not offensive, it's a rights-based term
- 50 – 60 unfilled EA callouts, no EAs (limited pool), but 500 – 600 EAs
 - Bridge program to hire more EAs
 - EAG mentor role
 - How do we work with teachers and EAs in exercises to develop “teams” so EAs feel valued and respected? Need collaboration time.
 - EAs not included in IEP meetings but should be
 - 30-hour work weeks? Not enough of a draw at priority schools to attract positions. Some people don't want to work 30 hours, offer 20-hour work weeks to some.
- How do we priority hire in priority schools?
 - Up to the school
 - More specialized, harder to hire for
- Supplemental funding not enough
- All ideas cost money, but know there's a deficit so hard to recommend solutions that cost money
- Need release time for collaboration
- COVID year – first week was great as we had time to collaborate and work in classroom and photocopy and get ready for the year (half days first week)
 - Push start date of school to Wednesday after labour day
 - Community building and understanding each other's needs
 - First week back has to be flexible
 - Early dismissal once a week, no release time needed
- Grades 6 and 9 transition and transition between grades
 - Need collaboration between schools and classrooms to discuss
- All comes down to ongoing collaboration
- Lots of ways of providing inclusive environment – the model does not allow for the alternate options right now. Space and support for the student, and space and support for the EA, and the teacher.
- Provide space for the students to go to places outside of the classroom, need the space and the funding
- Student has to be in the classroom at all times for it to be inclusive – agree or disagree? Some disagree because some students need some time outside of the classroom
- Kids can be in the classroom and do the work, but it needs to be modified and there isn't always time for that.
- Increase in TTOC costs because they need to take mental health day because of the pressure
- What is a priority student – how do we prioritize, need YFCs can't live without them.
- YFCs are so important to help the students provide them the supports.
- More people in the schools with specialized skills – counselling, YFCs to support the students

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 2 (Continued):

- How do we bring in more supports into the schools – ex. Nurses which are funded by another ministry?
- Why won't MCFD help with the YFCs? Have you done any group applications to Jordan's Principle for supports?
- If an indigenous parent writes to the SD and we can't afford to provide an EA, we could get funding from Jordan's Principle
- YFC and counsellors have different skill sets and supports that they provide.
- How do we restructure the counselors so that they have time to provide mental health support instead of focus on academic support?
- Island Health – trying to address mental health, focus on Grade 5 and 6 kids. Can we create something new in the system? We would like counsellors, nurses.
- Developing partnerships are important with Island Health, MCFD
- Seeing that EA shortages are reflecting in the classroom already. How do we build supports back into the classroom?
- Inclusion – it is something I should feel. You might not feel included just because you are in the room. Inclusion is something that the student has to feel.
- EAs aren't included in the meetings about the students because the meetings are after school.

TOPIC 3 – INFRASTRUCTURE

The District has 57 facilities, including 49 active schools, some of which are the oldest in the Province. Aging buildings and sites are continually requiring costly repairs, maintenance, and upgrades to ensure the provision of safe, accessible, and functioning schools.

The District is in year three of a five-year network infrastructure plan to ensure it has a reliable and secure network. There are new cost pressures to defend against the increased risk of ransomware, hacking, and data breaches. Outdated staff and student devices need to be replaced to support learning outcomes for students, while the cost of technology has steadily increased.

Question:

What do we need to prioritize in resource allocation decisions when considering the aging infrastructure found throughout the District? Infrastructure includes buildings, technology, climate action, transportation, equipment, playgrounds, fields, etc.

Table Talk Notes for Topic 3:

- Election issue - to increase education funding.
- Education sector powerful - work together for proper education.
- Re-elect for elected funding.
- Funding is political
- Preventative forward thinking.
- Lucky to have skilled trades in SD61.
- Need more skilled trades.

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 3 (Continued):

- Capital infrastructure important.
- Some schools didn't have heat - crisis mode
- Less choices - bulk orders.
- More stuff in house
- Build furniture in house.
 - Shift piece.
- Costs not downloaded to school for new furniture.
- Schools have what they need
- Limit playground - Not what PAC wants.
- Standardized equipment & classrooms - bulk purchases
 - Buying calendar for new divisions.
 - Standardize classrooms K-2, 3-5, middle, secondary
 - Tracking system for excess furniture
 - One central Location
- Technology 3:1 ratio
- Over time PAC, etc. have increased technology; now 2:1
- Look at core mandate on what SD provides
 - 3:1 ratio
- Centralize PAC funds
 - Model 50% goes into central fund
- Some schools have everything, some nothing.
- 3:1 ratio - depends on level and teacher.
- Reduce paper, photo copying
 - Shifting costs if less technology
- Support staff (EA) - no technology and still need to do work online
 - EA use phone to look at school email some are disciplined
- Cell phone budget - can we save money on this line?
- Removing technology out of primary
- Students should be outside more
- Shoreline / Craigflower Health Hub - reinvigorating the plan
- Climate action / land-based learning *
 - Shade tents on playgrounds
 - See Australia examples – outdoor learning spaces.
- Outdoor cameras / to battle graffiti
- Safety issues
- Crossing guards
- Grants for the district
- Flexible schedules/ extended day in some secondary schools to accommodate family/cultural responsibilities.
- "After-thought-ish" to not consider the CUPE staff
 - going online to search info for students.
 - have access to updated technology to do the necessary work related to the role: timesheets, student work access, VIR
 - Increase for all employee groups
- Authenticator
- Grant writers in the school district access grants that are available.

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 3 (Continued):

- Communications - community engagement.
- Foundation work!
- Equity with the "extras" that are given - PAC, grants, parental donation
- Ensuring there are baseline equipment in each school - updates - equity.
- Bike Racks for staff + students.
- Discounts on bus passes
- Continue the focus on ensuring that practices continue to improve the cost savings over time in buildings: lighting, heating, use of other utilities
- Network security - keep it current to ensure we do not have any major network issues
- We do not need to have large scale Chromebooks; we do not need more Chromebook ratio increase for students. We need to ensure they are able to have writing basics, the ability to hold a pen, write words on a page, spell without technology, grammar without technology, even content, form and creativity without technology.
- Buildings - are we using our buildings to the best of their capacity for rentals. Beautiful buildings, rent them.
- Green playgrounds - rather than just spending on metal play structures, allow for green playgrounds.
- Murals - not just to paint a generic space and colour but allow for connectivity via murals (creativity, brightly cultural, artistic). Brings an individuality and uniqueness to a school and community.
- Often, we keep doing what we have been doing, because change is difficult. This time is a time when we need to stop, think deeply, and pivot in some areas.
- What do we want our students to leave knowing and doing?
 - Feeling safe
 - Being aware of the history of this place from a multicultural perspective and Indigenous perspective
 - Writing, connecting with that which makes students feel important (music, athletics, ESAs, clubs, spaces in the schools, etc.)
- Moving toward the system looking at itself as a collective
 - Experts in our house must be listened to
- Climate Action is not funded to the point that it can work.
- Custodian was a gem; once budget hit, he was replaced but his expertise was not.
- Climate change is not being addressed properly.
- Tech is something we are relying on too much. Old school teaching with chalk boards can do the Job. Tech people though are not funded properly. MyEd is brutal + a horrible platform.
- Can we look at modular building practices, get rid of Atco trailers and replace with better built edifices?
- Why is the government funding private schools?
- We have the right people in the house, but those voices are not being asked questions or they are just not being listened to.
- We need to live/work in a culture where these voices are heard, and it becomes commonplace to feel that they can have the right/expectation to offer solution focused options. How do we create a culture where it is psychologically safe to have talking table type conversations all over the district and not just once a year at this event?
- Ministry - why didn't the NDP change the model back to full funding when they were voted in?
- The Ministry isn't giving enough money for cyber security.
-

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 3 (Continued):

- The district owns a lot of land. Could we raise money by selling some of the extra land? (Some of us think this and others don't agree. It's unceded Indigenous land.)
- The budget groups changed this year compared to last year. Not sure if that is good.
- Technology for staff/students: We agree that we need a long-term plan for student/staff technology. This year our staff computers were getting replaced, and I had to beg to have our school moved up on the list, because half of our staff computers were broken. (Actually half, not just an exaggeration). Now our student Chromebooks are breaking, and they can no longer be fixed. It's hard to even keep a Chromebook cart intact for a class of students to be shared among many classes.
- Cyber attacks - this should be higher priority, and/or we should have a contingency plan. Going off-line could be very bad for so many reasons!
- We like the net-zero school, Cedar Hill, and we like the solar panels.
- We like the idea of community-shared buildings. That saves money and connects us to community. We want to reach out to the community, so it makes sense to have spaces for the community to do things at the school. WHAT HAPPENED?
- Idea: A portion of the rental revenue to go back to the school for their use.
 - Thought - can we make this equitable?
 - Slight increase to rental rates
- Custodians - having less custodian time; are we able to meet minimum hygiene levels? Students get nosebleeds, or throw up, and then the P or VP has to do the clean up. Is that a safe practice?
- We wish schools and PACs didn't have to fund playgrounds and school gardens :(
- Ideas for revenue
 - very few
 - Perhaps revenue increased coming from International Department
 - Perhaps rentals of our buildings to a greater degree
- Selling facilities is a short-sighted approach.
- Increased cost of cyber security.
- Priority should be safety in buildings and safety of data.
- Invest in technology for student engagement.
- Build a new school a year – will take 50 years! Need long term plan.
- Need appropriate technology for students. Preparing them for the real world.
- Need buildings that are healthy (address damp, mold, mice, hazmat, plumbing).
- Technology cannot be used beyond its secure lifecycle. We can no longer keep a spare on the shelf and run tech into the ground. We need to replace tech once it can no longer be secured.
- Need to understand the end-of-life timeline for our buildings and assets.
- Need to support proper maintenance.
- Why is the cost of playgrounds so high?
- Playgrounds and fields need to be safe for play.
- Aging elevators need replacing. Current state is not supporting accessibility.
- Need to re-allocate where we are overspending.
- Removing half of student devices would be like taking half the books away in years past.
- Chromebooks are very valuable; not just for online research but for teaching students how to actually use technology.
- Students need to have foundational tech skills. Access to self-reflection.
- Reducing student tech would be like cutting an artery. It makes no sense.

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 3 (Continued):

- Print needs will increase if student devices decrease.
- Chromebooks are also used to access provincial assessments now we have no student PCs. 300 students sit these assessments at a time.
- WIFI and Chromebooks - student symposium highlighted this need
- Investment in technology is a must
- Security concerns - personal information security worries
- Staff need functioning equipment that can be relied upon
- New laptops are great
- Appreciate the investment and that TTOCs have laptops now
- Not equitable between all partner groups, how can other groups access. ie laptops
- Need more equity among buildings
- Advocating for funding to support sustainable practices
- Investing in outdoor learning spaces that can be used by community
- Look for local partnerships with municipalities to enhance community use of buildings
- Equity with PACs
 - Schools have differing amount of involvement
- Accessibility – district needs to push back on government to fund this
 - Need to prioritize human rights
 - Aging elevators
 - Should have separate funding for it
- Climate action
 - Free or subsidized bus passes for staff, free parking
 - Proper bike storage for staff away from students
 - Light switches – teach students to turn off lights and conserve water
 - Reduction of paper – limit photocopying, print smaller
- Technology
 - Student voice – technology is old
 - Budget was cut last year – need to replace
 - Need to teach how to be responsible with tech
- Work with the municipalities to provide parking passes for 2-hour parking on the street
- Fields and playgrounds
 - Grants available – need grant writer
 - How can we be creative without the cost of playground equipment?
 - Big circle of stumps, free fallen trees – kids use their imagination
 - Dogs on fields – mud pit, remove the gate so that dog owners don't want their dog to run away
 - Signs on gate – no dogs, enforcement?
 - Make sure PACs are included in conversations around playground design to ensure accessibility
- Buildings
 - Multi-purpose rooms need to be built into new builds, extra space to fit more than one class
 - Regulatory, sensory spaces are needed in schools
- Maintenance – facilities can't keep up and then custodian tries to do it but then the pressure on custodian increases.
- Tech – provide estimate of student device ratio if we increase the device ratio.

Appendix C - Talking Tables Event Notes – March 7, 2024

Table Talk Notes for Topic 3 (Continued):

- The longer we delay the technology it is going to get harder to replace and more expensive.
- More of our buildings are aging and are becoming heritage buildings and they are more expensive
- Vic High – couldn't we lease the building to a non profit and then build on another part of the land?
- Lease opportunity – with all the changes around housing requirements are there leasing opportunities? Do something in collaboration and lease part of the building and keep part of the space for yourselves.
- Don't think that this board will sell land as an option.
- What are your sponsorship policies? We don't do sponsorships.
- The technology replacement is important because the Chromebooks are not keeping up with the updates.
- Is the need for technology the same across all levels of school Elementary, Middle, and Secondary?
- Can we partner with any companies for any additional tech support?

Other Comments (outside Topics)

- More time, money and people
- Personnel important at all levels and training to meet, work and collaborate with each other to support the system
- We have great ideas and programs, but there is nothing more to cut. Per student funding is not enough. Not fair to us and schools.
- Collaboration is the key to the success of the system. Encourage trustees to advocate for more funding.
- Hearing other perspectives is helpful to understand the strains on the system
- Encourage leadership in the district to engage with other ministries to help each other

End of Table Talk Notes