

ENHANCING STUDENT LEARNING REPORT 2022 - 2023

In Review of
Nechako Lakes School District
Strategic Plan
Year 3 of 5



Submitted to SD91 Board of Education on: Sept. 26, 2022

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ABOUT US

Nechako Lakes School District is situated on the traditional territories of fourteen [First Nations](#) encompassing the Dakelh, Nedut'en and Wet'suwet'en peoples. The school district encompasses five municipalities: the Districts of Fort St. James and Vanderhoof and the Villages of Fraser Lake, Burns Lake and Granisle. Our region has been traditionally reliant on forestry, mining, agriculture but has seen an emerging tourism sector over the last decade. This large geographic region has a population of just under 40,000 people; and, in the 2021 / 22 school year we served just under 3000 students in our community schools, with just over 40% of them being Indigenous. Each of our communities has experienced declining enrolment for several years; and we are now predicting stabilization and modest growth across the region. We operate a total of 18 schools in our communities: 9 elementary schools, including a dual track school in Vanderhoof, 3 elementary – secondary schools, 3 secondary schools and 3 alternate schools.

In addition to these 18 community schools, we also operate [EBUS Academy](#), a non-standard, online learning school that enrols in excess of several thousand full and part time students. EBUS is one of the largest online schools in British Columbia serving families and students across the province.

Our annual operating budget for the 2021 / 22 school year was just over \$60 million.

We currently have five-year Learning Education Agreements (LEA) with 8 of the 14 Indigenous communities we serve. Some of our smaller nations are being supported by other members of the Aboriginal Education Council and First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) in getting to a completed LEA which we hope will happen in the coming year. Our school district has been involved in the [Ministry of Education's Equity Scan](#), which has contributed significantly to our strategic goals and objectives; click [HERE](#).

Our Early Development Index (EDI) trends over the last several years indicate that 37 – 39% of our incoming kindergarten students are 'vulnerable' on one or more scales of the EDI. Complete EDI data for our district can be accessed [HERE](#).

Figure 1 shows the results of SD91's Wave 7 EDI data compared to the provincial context.

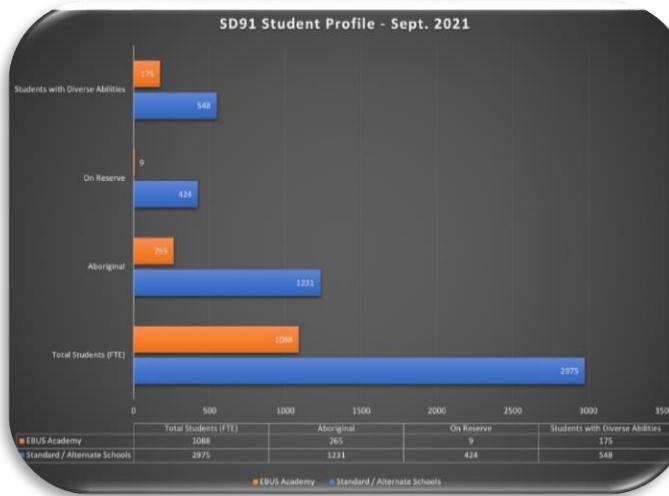


Figure 1

these students are concerning and require our attention.

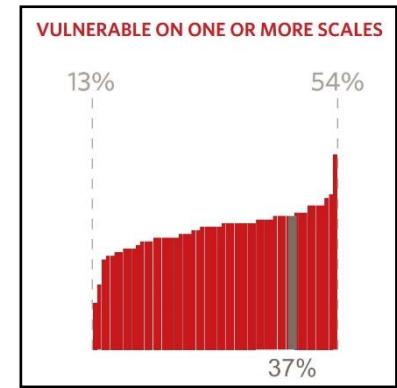


Figure 2

Figure 2 provides a September 2021 student profile of the numbers of students served by our regular schools and EBUS. Throughout this document, data for children-in-care has been masked due to the small number of students in this cohort. Regardless, our data indicates that performance and outcomes for

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

We are entering year 3 of our [Strategic Plan](#), and it is accompanied annually by a [strategic priority workplan](#). The plan articulates four primary goals:

- Honour Diversity
- Engage our Workforce
- Create Student Success
- Enhance Connections

These goals are accompanied by various objectives and activities guiding our work for the next several years. *Monthly reporting* to the Board is centred around these four strategic goals, and these reports are widely shared with our stakeholders, including municipalities, Indigenous communities, and parents.



Our current Strategic Plan is an evolution from our district's first Strategic Plan that took us from 2018 to 2020. The development of our plan was done in conjunction with representatives from all our stakeholders and was facilitated by Dr. Dustin Louie, the Director of UBC's Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NITEP). Our trustees spent much of 2019/2020 presenting the plan to external groups and the majority of our employees and then used feedback from those presentations to edit the final copy of the plan.

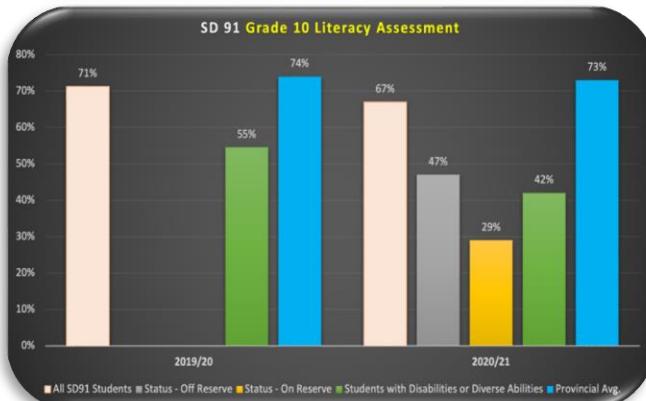
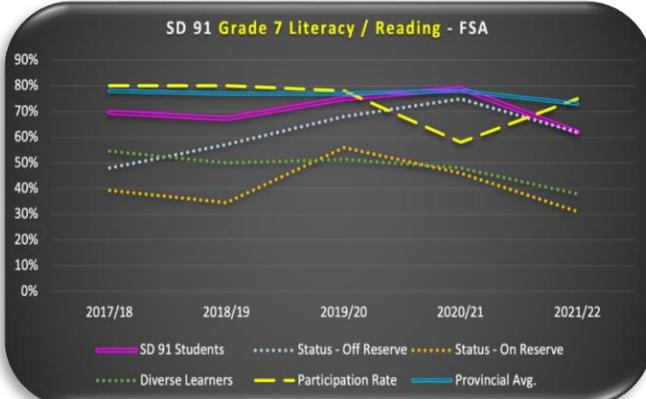
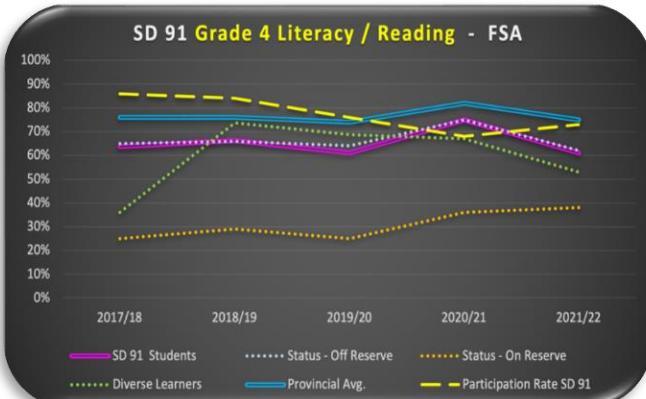
Although the Strategic Plan had been broadly shared with our employees and partners, including the Aboriginal Education Council representing the Indigenous communities we serve, annual follow up on the plan and annual priorities came to a halt during the 24+ months of the pandemic. The Board and senior leadership team look forward to reconnecting to stakeholders in the coming 36 months. We are committed to improving our internal process to align our financial resources with our strategic goals directly.

The school district utilizes a variety of school, district, and ministry assessment information to inform our focus on continuous improvement annually. Schools are expected to use their student data to create annual *school plans* that align with the district's strategic focus. These plans are published and communicated to our communities annually.

Based on feedback to our 2021 FESL submission, we have added the 'Mediative Questions' provided by the Ministry of Education directly to school plan templates for consideration by school communities. We have also actively sought out student input and feedback related to FESL and local and provincial assessments. As expected, these conversations with students are creating rich new learning for us.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Literacy



Notes:

- We narrowed our focus with the RAD assessment in the 2021-22 school year to measuring the following components of non-fiction reading: *Main Ideas, Comprehension Strategies, Details, Word Solving*.
- Students did not write RAD in the Spring of 2019 – 20.

What does the literacy data tell us?

- ✓ **FSA Participation Rates** in both grades 4 and 7 bounced back in the 2021 / 22 school year which is encouraging and perhaps speaks to the impact of the pandemic. We still are below 80% participation and will need to focus on increasing this over the coming years.
- ✓ **Grade 4 'on-reserve' Indigenous students** were performing 40% below all students in Literacy / Reading in 2017/18 which has been reduced to 24% in 2021/22. **Still not acceptable but an encouraging trend.**
- ✓ **The opportunity gap that exists in reading** has closed significantly for off-reserve students in grades 4 & 7 as per the FSA.
- ◆ **Grade 4 students** are performing 12% below the provincial average in literacy / reading over the last 5 years, and this gap has remained consistent.
- ★ **Grade 7 students** fell 13% below the provincial average in literacy/reading in 2021 / 22. A concerning single-year decline when we had been at or just above the provincial average the two years before.
- ★ **Grade 7 literacy/reading** declined by 17% in 2021 / 22 and deserves some attention and follow-up following the 2022 / 23 FSA.
- ★ **Literacy 10 assessment** shows that Indigenous students are performing significantly below all students.
- ★ **On-Reserve students** in every literacy assessment are performing significantly below all students.

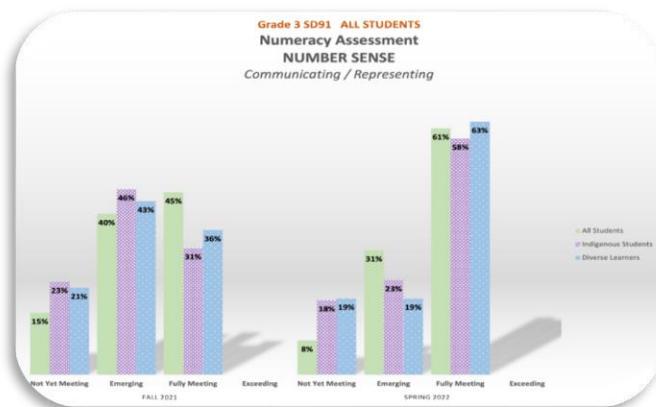
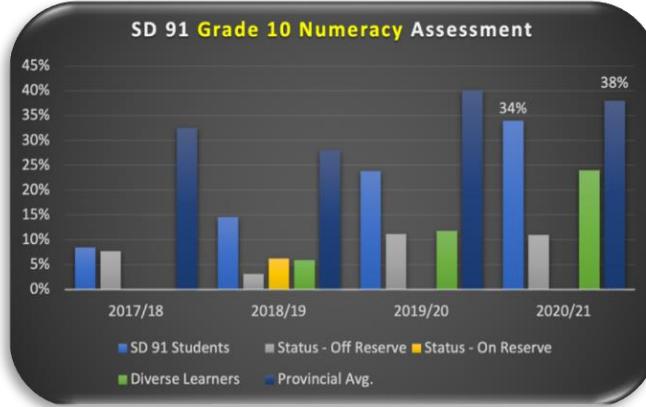
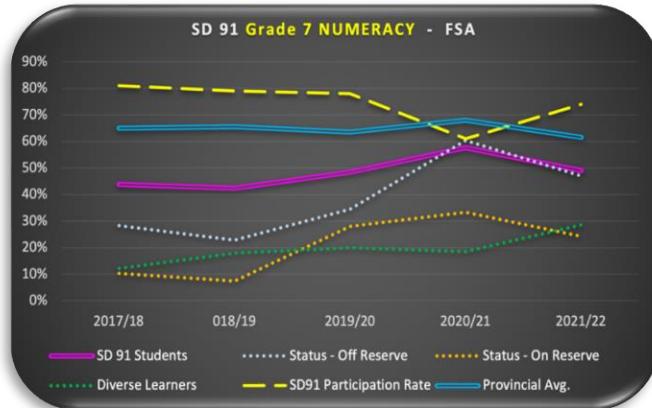
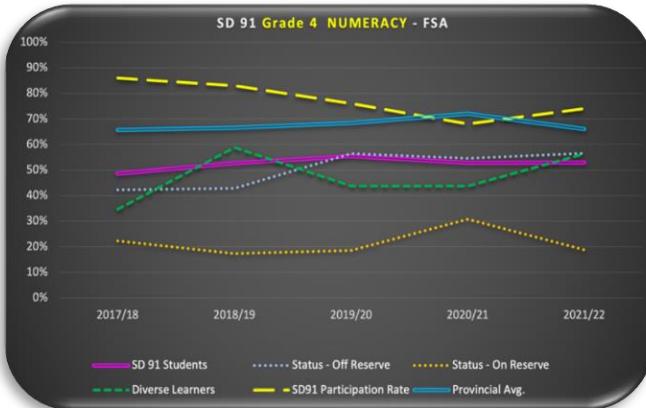
Our response to the literacy data:

- Literacy continues to be a core strategic focus as captured under the goal 'Create Student Success.'
- Collaborate with schools to look at school-based data to see if similar district literacy trends are mirrored at individual schools.
- Explore primary literacy interventions and supports specifically for 'on-reserve' learners.
- Professional learning with Faye Brownlie and Jo Chrona over the 2022/23 year to support both intermediate and secondary teachers with literacy strategies and incorporating Indigenous content.
- Increase our District Literacy Helping Teacher to 0.9 fte district time.
- Continue to share district literacy assessment data with schools shortly after administration.
- Ensure that Literacy is captured as a key school goal with accompanying strategies in all school plans.

Wonderings:

- ? What opportunities and specific strategies will be presented within the new expanded Early Years mandate to positively impact literacy outcomes for our youngest learners?
- ? What specific literacy strategies and supports can be offered between grades 7 and 10 to positively impact literacy results on graduation assessments for Indigenous learners?
- ? What additional school-to-home strategies should be considered district-wide to support literacy.

Numeracy



What does the numeracy data tell us?

- ✓ **Off-reserve Indigenous students** in both grades 4 and 7 are at identical levels of performance in the FSA numeracy assessment as other SD91 students.
- ✓ **Grade 10 students** have improved year over year in the grade 10 numeracy assessment and are now only 4% below the provincial average.
- ✓ **Our FSA participation rates** seem to be rebounding which is encouraging.
- ◆ **Numeracy results** for all our **grade 4** students have remained nearly identical for 5 years.
- ★ **FSA Numeracy results** for **on-reserve** learners have declined over the last year.

Our response to the numeracy data:

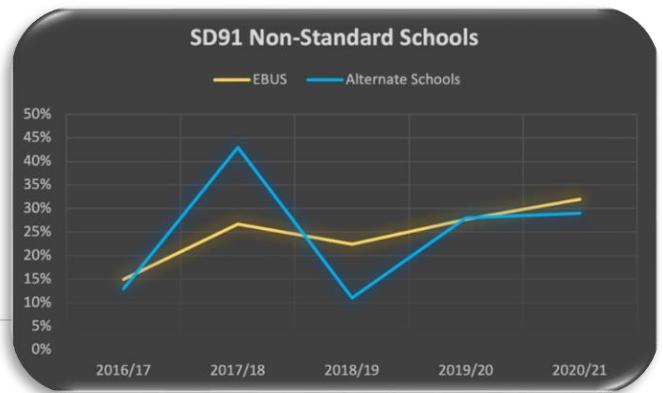
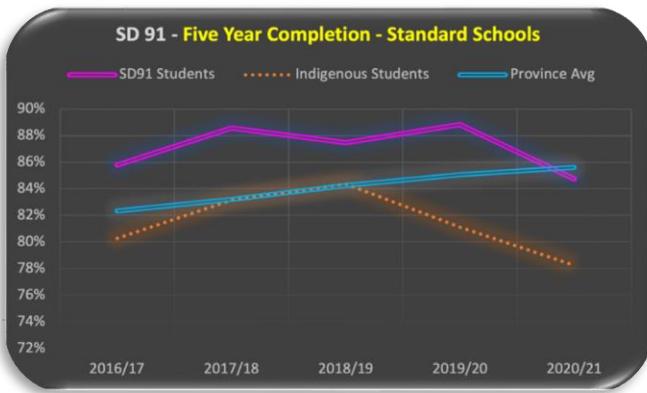
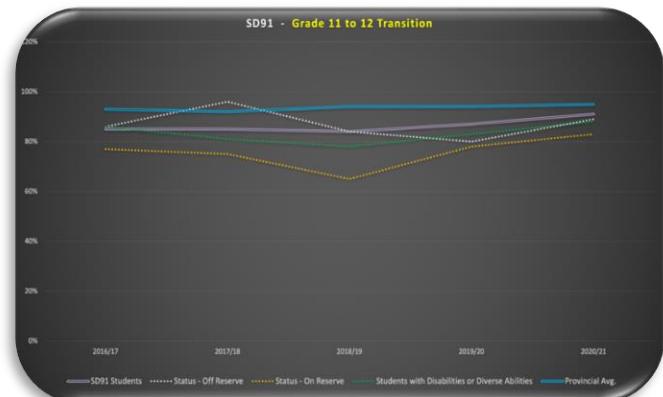
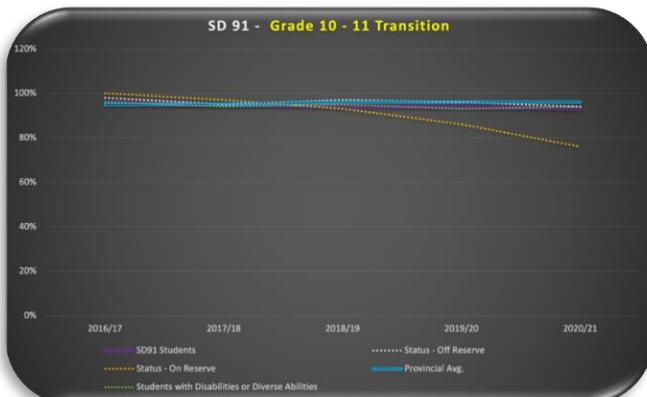
- In the 2021 -22 school year we adapted our district numeracy assessment (collaborated on with a number of other districts) to focus on the competencies associated specifically with 'Number Sense' and 'Problem Solving.' The graph for grade 3 students above is inserted as an example of the data that we are looking at from both a district and school level to ensure that we have a sense of where our focus needs to be.
- Prioritize district Numeracy assessments, SNAP and DNA, to look specifically at 'Number Sense' and 'Problem Solving' as identified through collaboration with district teachers.
- Increase the District Numeracy Helping Teacher allocation to 0.9 FTE.

- Continue supporting the evolution of our approach to numeracy assessment through collaboration between a group of SD91 math teachers and other partner school districts.
- Commitment to Dr. Peter Liljedahl working with SD91 teachers over the course of the 22 – 23 school year specific to 'Thinking Classrooms.'
- A strategic objective for the next several years is to have high schools explore and implement strategies to support students with graduation numeracy assessments including repeated attempts.
- Identify and support schools in looking at specific numeracy curricular competencies related to 'computation' and 'shape and space' activities across all grades.
- Establish a 90% participation rate target for grade 9 students using the DNA.
- Our 3-year average DNA results indicate that some specific attention to Computation Skills as well as Shape & Space may be helpful at all grades.
- A continued focus on Number Sense in the intermediate and secondary grades seems to be indicated by grade 6 & 9 results.

Wonderings:

- ? In addition to our increased, specific focus on supporting elementary teachers with 'number sense' and 'thinking' strategies, are there other numeracy-specific strategies that should be prioritized?
- ? What opportunities and specific strategies will be presented within the new expanded Early Years mandate to positively impact numeracy outcomes for our youngest learners?
- ? We need to inquire why the gradual increase in grade 10 Numeracy Assessment results for all learners and students with diverse abilities is not being mirrored for our Indigenous Students.

Grade to Grade Transitions & School Completion Data



What does the numeracy data tell us?

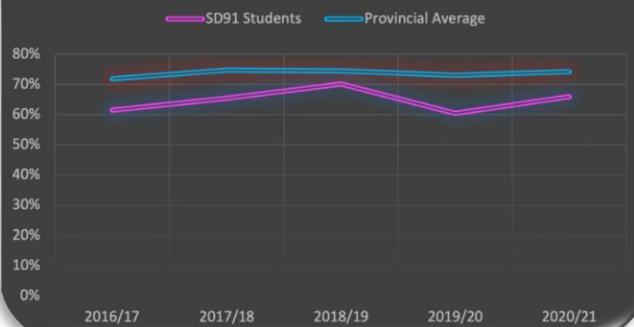
- ★ Although the majority of our students are transitioning well from grade 10 to 11, there is a worrisome trend over the last two years for our **Indigenous on-reserve students**. We have data that shows that pandemic effects were more severe for these students and this transition data seems to show it. We have been working over the last 18 months to reconnect to these students and families and so hope that this transition date is positively impacted over the coming year.
- ✓ Three years ago, our data for students transitioning from **grade 11 to 12** was at 84%, 10 % below the provincial average, and in 2020/21 we were at 91%, only 4% below the provincial average.
- ✓ The trend for our Indigenous students transitioning from grade 11 to 12 over the last two years is encouraging.
- ★ Five-year completion data is trending downwards for all and Indigenous learners in the last years which we think is directly related to the pandemic but will be a focus of analysis and conversation in the coming year.
- ◆ Due to the large enrolment of students from across the province into EBUS Academy, we are displaying 5-year completion data separately for our 'standard' schools (FSJSS, NVSS, FLESS and LDSS) and for our non-standard schools (alternate schools and EBUS Academy). As EBUS cross enrolls many students who are not on track to a 5-year completion, their completion rates are significantly below that of our standard schools but in line with similar distributed learning schools within the province.
- ✓ Our **non-standard schools**, EBUS and three alternate schools, are trending upwards in their 5-year school completion data.
- ◆ The **5-year completion** rate at our four standard schools has been above the provincial average but is now showing a worrisome trend line.

Our response to this data:

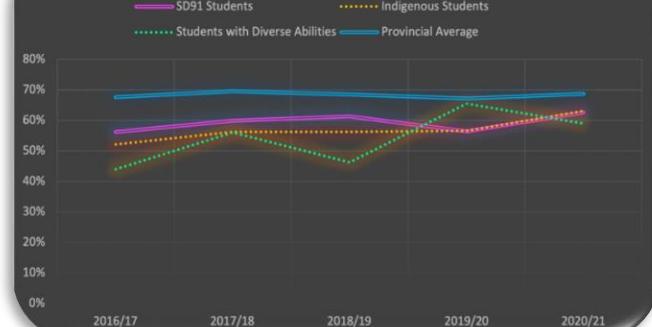
- An alternate programs review was completed over the 2021 – 22 school year and the recommendations and strategies emerging from that review will be put into place over the coming school year.
- Work with our Aboriginal Education Council to share the trends for Indigenous on-reserve students transitioning from grades 10 -11 and continue our "reconnection and return" strategies.
- Disaggregate SD91 5-year school completion data by each of our high schools to determine if lowering trend lines are specific to a particular school and community.

HUMAN & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

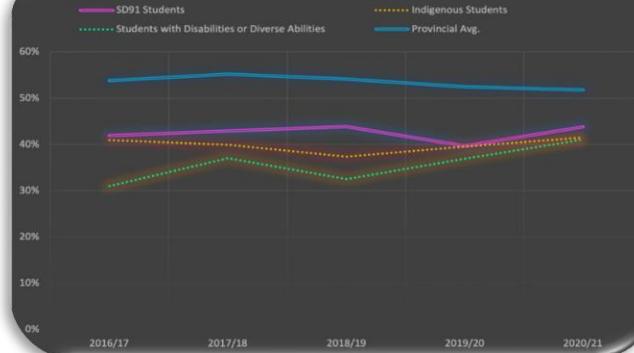
SD91 - "Feel Safe" - Student Learning Survey



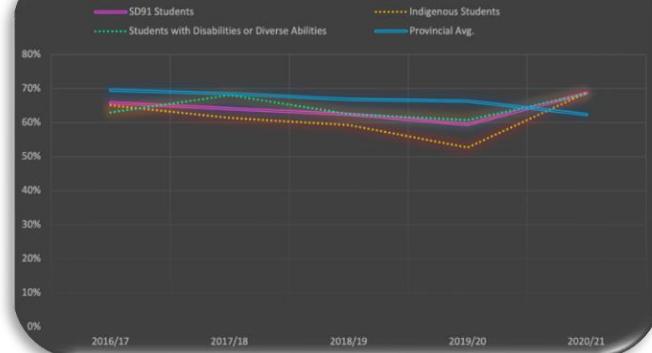
SD91 - "Welcome" - Student Learning Survey



SD91 - "Belonging" - Student Learning Survey



SD91 - "Caring Adults" - Student Learning Survey



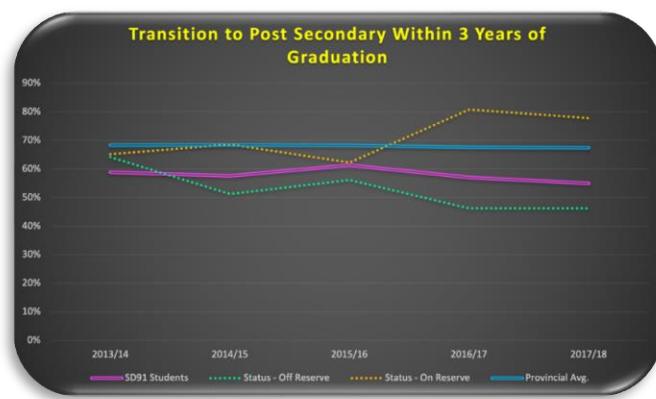
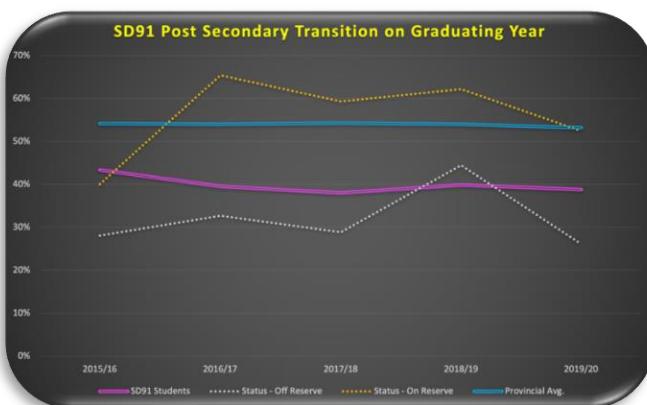
What does the data tell us?

- ◆ Please note that due to a variety of circumstances, only one of our high schools was able to complete **'Our School'** data for the 2021 – 22 school year and so it is not included in this year's FESL report.
- ✓ We have spent time and focus on looking at the **'belonging'** data with our schools and the encouraging upward trend is positive, however the overall data to this question is still discouraging.
- ✓ It is positive that each of these Student Learning Survey questions related to **school connectedness** is showing a positive upward trend with the question regarding **'Caring Adults'** now trending above the provincial average.
- ★ Even though we are trending in the right direction regarding **'Caring Adults'**, the fact that 30% of our students cannot positively identify caring adults in their school is concerning.

Our response to this data:

- *The glaring omission of localized 'Our School' data specific to school connectedness is concerning and will be corrected this school year.*
- *Validate the work of schools and principals in sharing the positive upward trend in Student Learning Survey questions related to **school connectedness**. These questions mirror the key question data captured in elementary school plans and so this should be encouraging news.*
- *Focusing on Social Emotional Learning is a key goal within our Strategic Plan. Ensuring that we continue to work around increasing the sense of belonging for every student is important and critical work. We were concerned with student mental health prior to the COVID context, and the past 18 months have only exacerbated issues with student mental health across our region and so we are continually working with partners to increase and strengthen mental health supports across our school district.*
- *Share what we are learning about student mental health with communities and partner agencies to better advocate for additional services.*
- *Continue the school-based focus to strategize and implement evidence-informed ways to increase student belonging in the coming school years.*
- *Supporting schools to ensure they are welcoming to the diversity of learners we serve which includes our LGBTQ2+ and Indigenous learners and their families. This work includes supporting our SOGI school leads, school administrators, as well as continuing our understanding of decolonization.*
- *Collaborating with schools to determine how to specifically demonstrate adult caring for all students will continue to be a district-wide priority.*
- *Collaborating with our Student Voice Leadership group to hear directly from students as to their thoughts on this data set.*

CAREER DEVELOPMENT



What does the data tell us?

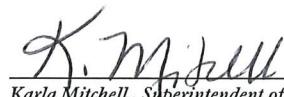
- ✓ As per last year's report, **Indigenous on-reserve students** are transitioning to post-secondary both in the year following graduation as well as within 3 years of graduation at rates higher than other students in the district and at rates higher than the provincial average.

- ◆ *2021 – 22 is showing a **declining transition to post-secondary** for all Indigenous students that will need to be watched. This could be a direct result of the pandemic.*
- ◆ *The gap between SD91 students transitioning to post-secondary compared to the provincial average has remained mostly consistent.*

Our response to this data:

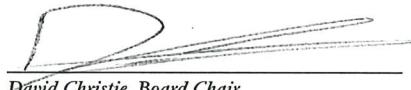
- *The past two years drastically diminished our conversations with post-secondary partners specific to supporting transitions for SD91 students. It is expected and hoped that as we deliberately reengage with post-secondary partners, it will have a positive impact on students transitioning to post-secondary.*
- *Continue to strengthen our post-secondary relationships under our current MOUs with the College of New Caledonia (CNC), the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), and with SFU's Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology.*
- *Continue to work with UNBC to explore an early entry initiative to provide students with a 2-to-3-year pathway to post-secondary transition beginning in grade 10.*
- *Partner with our parent and student groups to look at this data and identify specific obstacles to post-secondary transition.*
- *Share transition data with our high school counsellors and careers department to get their thoughts on specific strategies to increase opportunities for post-secondary exposure.*

SIGNATURES



Kayla Mitchell

Kayla Mitchell, Superintendent of Schools



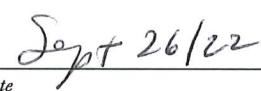
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David Christie, Board Chair



Sept 26/22

Date



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Date