

Indigenous Education Program Review

Presented to the Board of Education for School District 71 Comox Valley

Julie MacRae and Bruce Carlos, March 2019

Program Review Committee Members

- ▶ Jason Cobey, Principal, Miracle Beach
 - ▶ Charlene Everson, Chair, Indigenous Education Council,
 - ▶ Bryce Mercredi, Comox Valley Métis Association
 - ▶ Lelaina Jules, Indigenous Support Teacher, Secondary Schools
 - ▶ Jeannine Lindsey, Indigenous Support Worker, Lake Trail Middle School
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- ▶ Co Chairs: Bruce Carlos, District Principal, Indigenous Education, SD 71 and Julie MacRae, Education Consultant

Review Process

- ▶ **Mandate: Environmental Scan/ Assess Alignment and Coherence**
 - ▶ Engagement with Stakeholders
 - ▶ Identify Successes/ Possible Areas for Change or Improvement
 - ▶ Make Recommendations to Superintendent and Board
 - ▶ Inform the development of a new Enhancement Agreement
- ▶ **Activities Undertaken**
 - ▶ Parent and Educator Surveys, Student and ISW Discussion Groups, IEC Consultation, Four Committee Meetings
 - ▶ Focus of the feedback was on the four goals of the current Enhancement Agreement

Program Review Engagement Activities

- ▶ Student Discussion Groups (52)
- ▶ Parent/Caregiver Surveys (72)
- ▶ Teacher Surveys (36)
- ▶ Principal Vice-Principal Surveys (14)
- ▶ ISW Discussion Group (1)
- ▶ Indigenous Education Council (1)



Program Strengths

- ▶ High Indigenous FTE count permits enhancement for about 20% of District students
- ▶ Highly committed staff
- ▶ Parent satisfaction levels (survey) were high
- ▶ Teacher satisfaction levels (survey) were high
- ▶ Student satisfaction levels (discussions with ISW's) were high
- ▶ Well-developed structures to engage community/ support the program (IEC, IPAC, Community Resource, Elders, FN Kindergarten)
- ▶ Access to ISW service has been provided District wide (Equity)
- ▶ Broad range of cultural activities being provided (Inclusion)

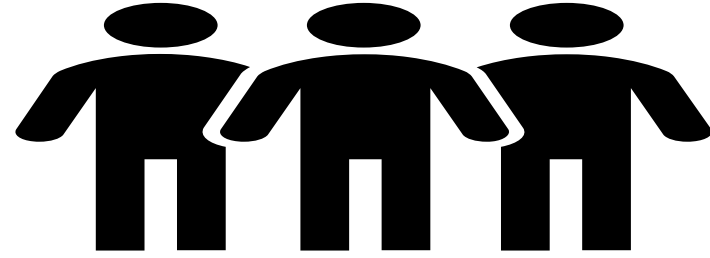
Financial Matters

- ▶ The District Principal administers a \$1.7 million annual budget, all derived from targeted funding. The money is intended to enhance services for Indigenous students.
- ▶ Department administration costs currently account for 10% of the staffing budget. This increases to almost 15% if the administrative assistant positions are included. Staffing costs account for 80-85% of the targeted funding.
- ▶ The finance department reports that the department budget is well-managed.
- ▶ Indigenous student enrolment numbers appear to be stable over time: while there is pressure on school space in some areas, the solutions are well within the scope of normal operations for the foreseeable future.

Sense of Belonging/Opportunities for Leadership

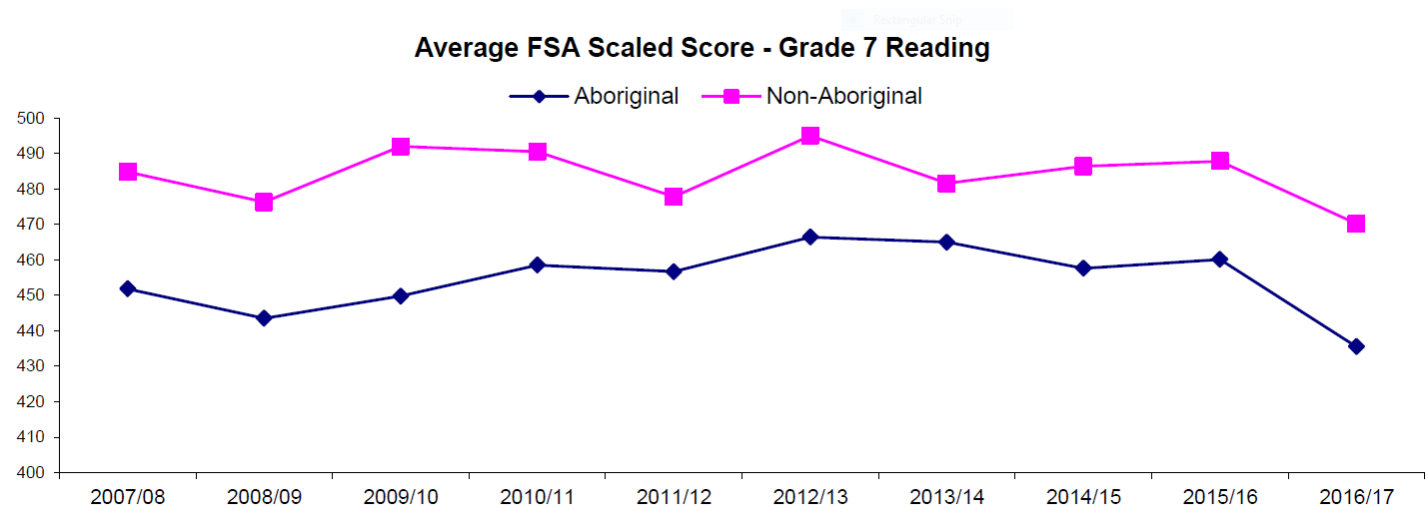
- ▶ Students viewed their schools as welcoming places, were positive about the work of the Indigenous Support Workers, and about the cultural activities being provided.
- ▶ High school student perceptions about leadership opportunities were positive, with most students able to give examples of opportunities for leadership in school and out.

Academic Success



- ▶ There is much to celebrate at the high school level relative to the province and many other districts. However.....
 - ▶ Gaps in performance of elementary indigenous students persist particularly in Reading and Math, as measured on FSA
 - ▶ Only 2 of every 3 indigenous students earn a Dogwood Certificate; while they out-performed non-indigenous students by 4% in 2016/2017, more typically they lag by 6 - 9 %, based on 5 years of data (How are We Doing Report)
 - ▶ The current Enhancement Agreement does not report achievement results or quantify progress.
 - ▶ 60% of IE staffing budget is allocated for ISW's who for a variety of reasons do not always provide academic support, but are more focussed on social, emotional, and cultural support.

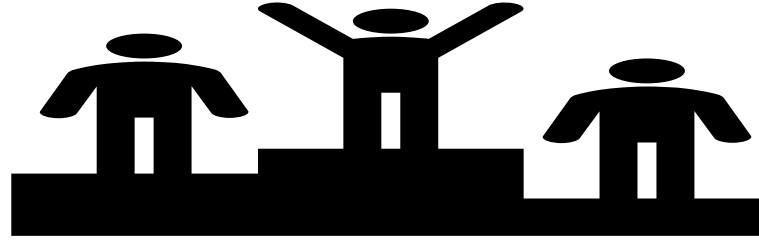
Grade Seven Reading FSA



Awareness of FNMI history, traditions, and culture for ALL students.

- ▶ Providing access to/activities to more non-indigenous students is desired but the constraints around the use of targeted funding makes this a challenge.
- ▶ The expressed (and worthy) goal is to provide this awareness and learning for ALL students; progress has been made, but there is room for improvement.

Champions



- ▶ The program's greatest champions at present are the Indigenous Support Workers, the Support Teachers, and the Indigenous Education Council.
- ▶ The obligations and opportunities created by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, increasing societal awareness, and changing federal and provincial policies on Indigenous issues, will require that championship will need to be embraced more widely through out the school district and the community. This will have significant impact on the expectations and the responsibilities of school-level and school district level leaders, both now and in the future.
- ▶ The designation of the liaison teachers, one per school, is an important first step in widening the circle/creating more champions.

Coherence

- ▶ Parental feedback seems to suggest that elementary programming could be improved; FSA achievement data suggests the same
- ▶ ISW role description is diffuse/ duties idiosyncratic/ services are sometimes personnel dependent
- ▶ Current efforts and expenditures in Indigenous Education have been appropriately focussed on Indigenous students; the need to have non-indigenous students develop more awareness of indigenous history and issues has been identified as a goal, but resources and responsibilities to not appear to have been assigned.

Alignment

- ▶ The goals of the current Enhancement Agreement align well with the school district's mission and values.
- ▶ Alignment with the Education Evolution strategy could be improved by;
 - ▶ A) finding more opportunities for creativity and innovation in the Indigenous Education program.
 - ▶ B) increasing the emphasis on Truth and Reconciliation at all levels of the organization and in the new Enhancement Agreement
 - ▶ C) moving from an 'expansion' mindset for Indigenous program planning/service delivery, to a more of an 'evolution mindset i.e., not more of what we already have, but rather something different than what we currently have
- ▶ Community engagement is a strong feature of the Indigenous Education program which aligns well with the Board's commitment/strategic direction. The IEC is a strong vehicle/ example of community engagement in action.

Future Focus Questions

- ▶ Goal 3 in the current EA and the Education Evolution section of the Board's strategic plan both reference ALL students. How will this be articulated, actioned, and supported in a new Enhancement Agreement? In a new strategic plan? In day to day operations?
- ▶ What are the implications of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its Calls to Action for the future of the Indigenous Programs in SD71?
- ▶ How will ALL SD71 personnel be supported in embracing and incorporating the First Nations Principles of Learning into their practice?
- ▶ How can the next Enhancement Agreement be useful in making progress on these matters?

KUDOS!

- ▶ Staff Commitment is second to none!
- ▶ Student Success, particularly the parity evident in high school courses
- ▶ Equity of Access to Indigenous Support Workers
- ▶ Structures; IEC, IPAC, Cultural Resource Program, Aboriginal K/1
- ▶ Engagement
- ▶ Quality of Documentation*
- ▶ Focus/emphasis and awareness of Enhancement Agreement goals
- ▶ Earned Respect of Province



WHY DO MORE?



- ▶ “GRADUATIONS ARE LIKE COOKIES: THERE SHOULD BE ONE FOR EVERYONE IN THE CLASS!”