

Comox Valley Schools

SD#71



Comox Valley Schools

A Community of Learners

INNOVATIVE • INQUISITIVE • INCLUSIVE

Enhancing Student Learning Report

September 2024

In Review of Year 2023/2024 of Board of Education Strategic Plan, 2019-2023



Approved by Board on October 22, 2024

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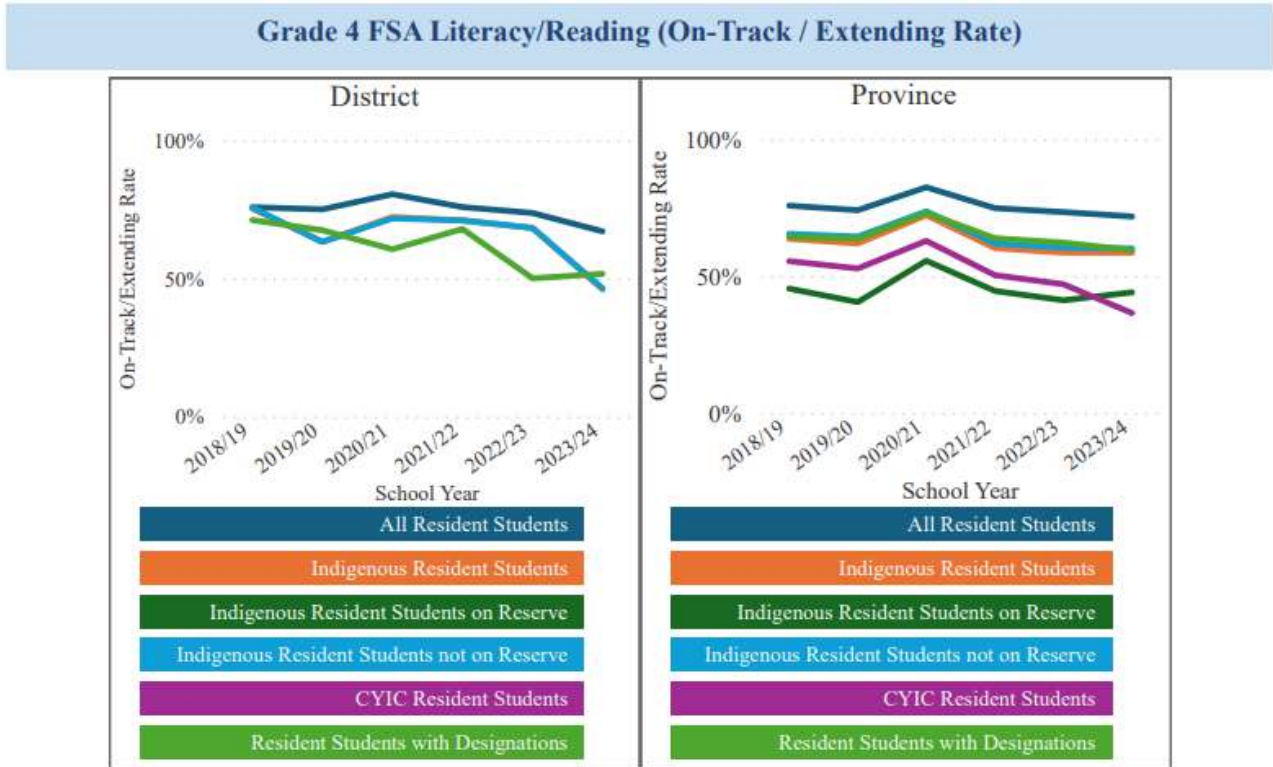
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Section A: Reflecting on Student Learning Outcomes

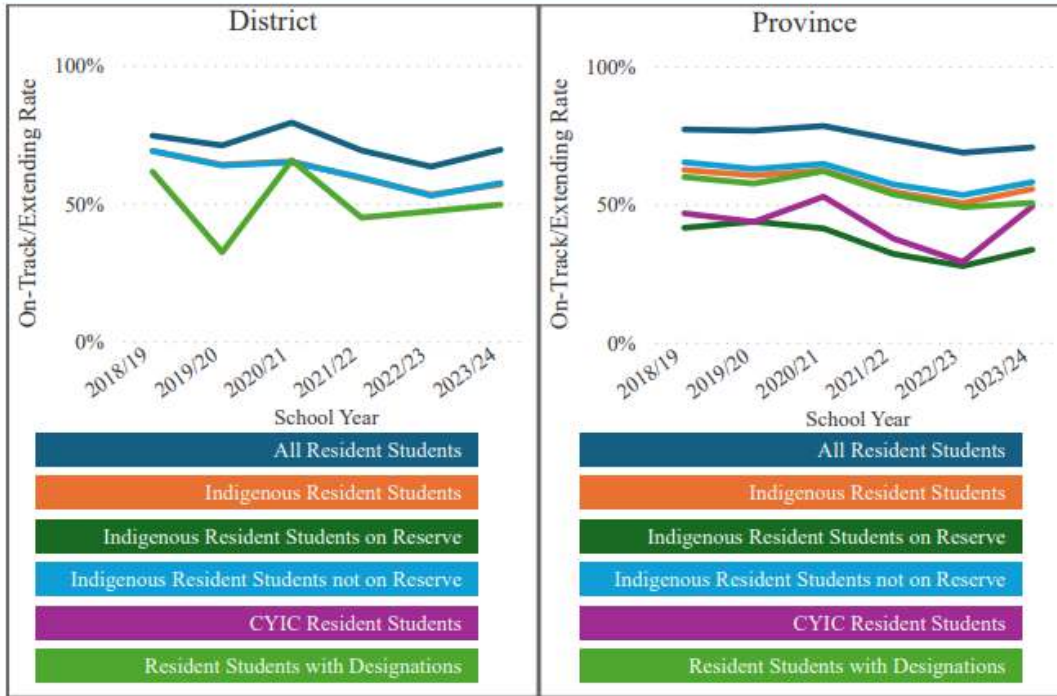
Intellectual Development

Educational Outcome 1: Literacy

Measure 1.1: Grade 4 & Grade 7 Literacy Expectations

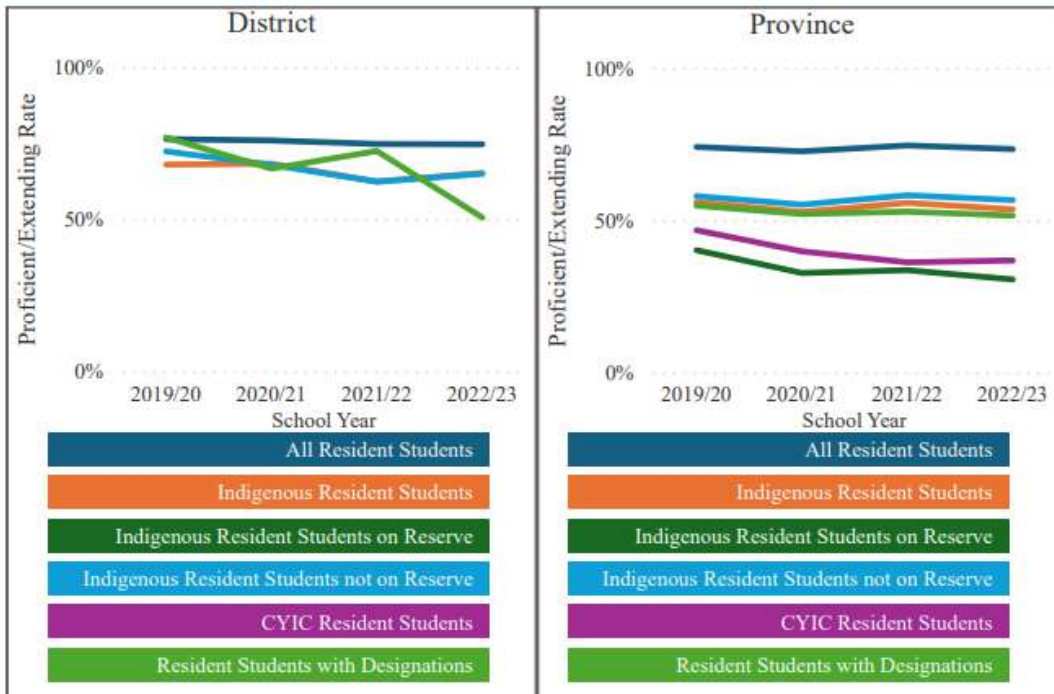


Grade 7 FSA Literacy/Reading (On-Track / Extending Rate)



Measure 1.2: Grade 10 Literacy Expectations

Grade 10 Grad Assessment Literacy (Proficient / Extending Rate)



Analysis and Interpretation

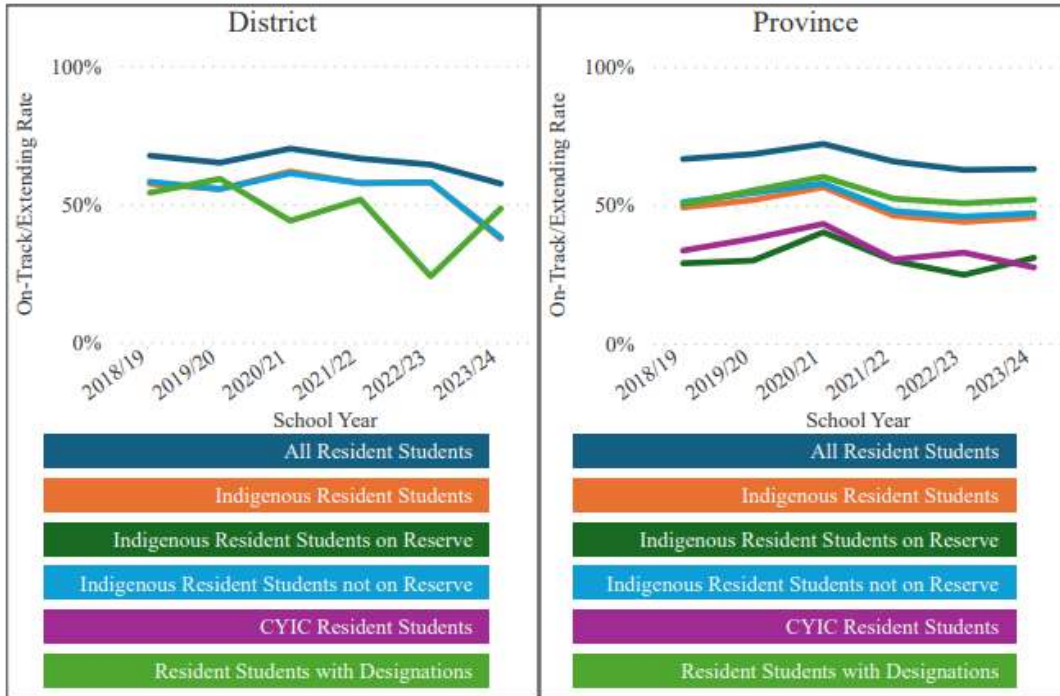
Outcome 1: Literacy

- The results of the Literacy component of the Grade 4 FSA indicate that there is a downward trend across all student populations for the last 3 years, and students with unique needs and Indigenous students are experiencing a greater opportunity gap in literacy learning in comparison to peers.
- The Indigenous Resident Student Grade 4 literacy data indicates a 3-year trend downward, accompanied by a persistent gap between this priority population and All Resident Students. Particularly concerning is the larger gap appearing in 2023-2024.
- The masked Indigenous Resident Student On-Reserve - Grade 4 literacy district data illuminates that an opportunity gap exists between this priority population and Indigenous Resident Not on Reserve students in SD71.
- The results of the Literacy component of the Grade 7 FSA indicate that 69% of students are “on track” and “extending” in their proficiency, and students with unique needs and Indigenous students continue to experience a greater opportunity gap in literacy learning in comparison to peers.
- Indigenous Resident Students Not on Reserve grade 7 literacy data tracks closely with All Resident Students, indicating a moderate V shaped 3-year trend with the 2023-2024 reaching back to 2021-2022 levels.
- The masked Indigenous Resident Student On-Reserve – Grade 7 literacy data over 3 years indicates large swings in achievement due to extremely small cohort size. However, 3-year trends also indicate an opportunity gap exists between this priority population and Indigenous Resident Students Not on Reserve.
- Like previous years, the results of the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment indicate that 75% of students are “on track” and “extending” in their proficiency, and students with unique needs continue to experience a significant opportunity gap in literacy learning in comparison to peers.
- The Indigenous Grade 10 Grad Assessment for Literacy data indicates that while SD71 district data tracks higher than the provincial average, a persistent opportunity gap exists between Indigenous Resident Students Not on Reserve, and All students. Indigenous students at proficient / extending were at 65% compared to 75% for All Students.
- The 3-year trends indicate stagnant or stable achievement rates for Indigenous Resident Students Not on Reserve, slightly lower than 68% in 2020-2021.
- The masked Indigenous Resident Student On-Reserve Grade 10 Literacy Graduation Assessment data indicate much higher success rates than the provincial average, and higher rates than All Resident Students in two of the last 3 years.

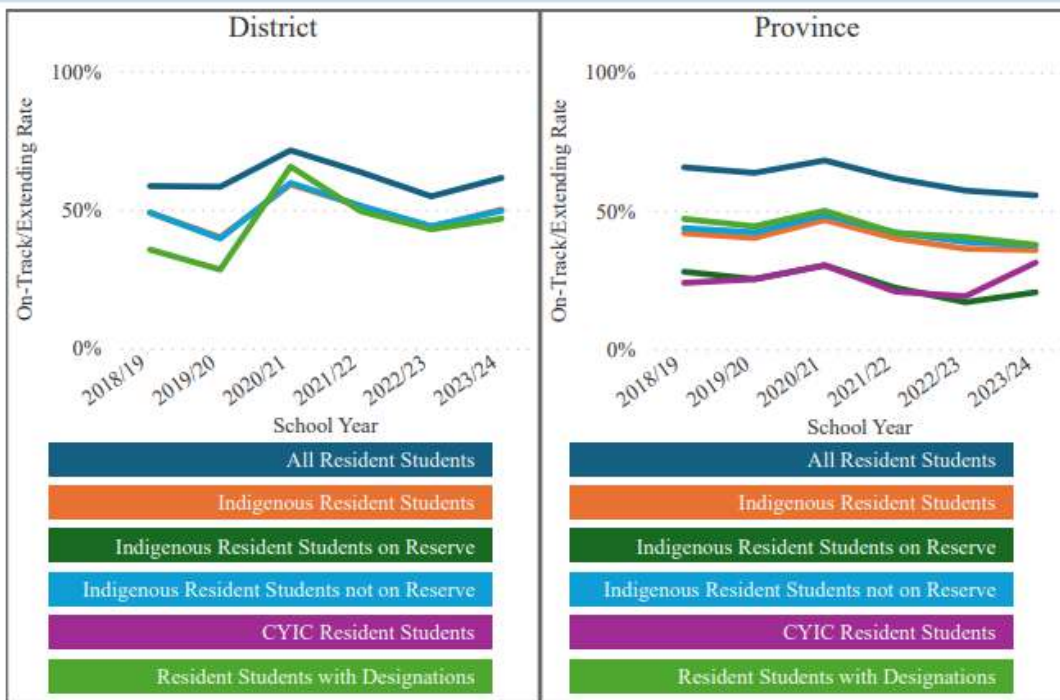
Educational Outcome 2: Numeracy

Measure 2.1: Grade 4 & Grade 7 Numeracy Expectations

Grade 4 FSA Numeracy (On-Track / Extending Rate)

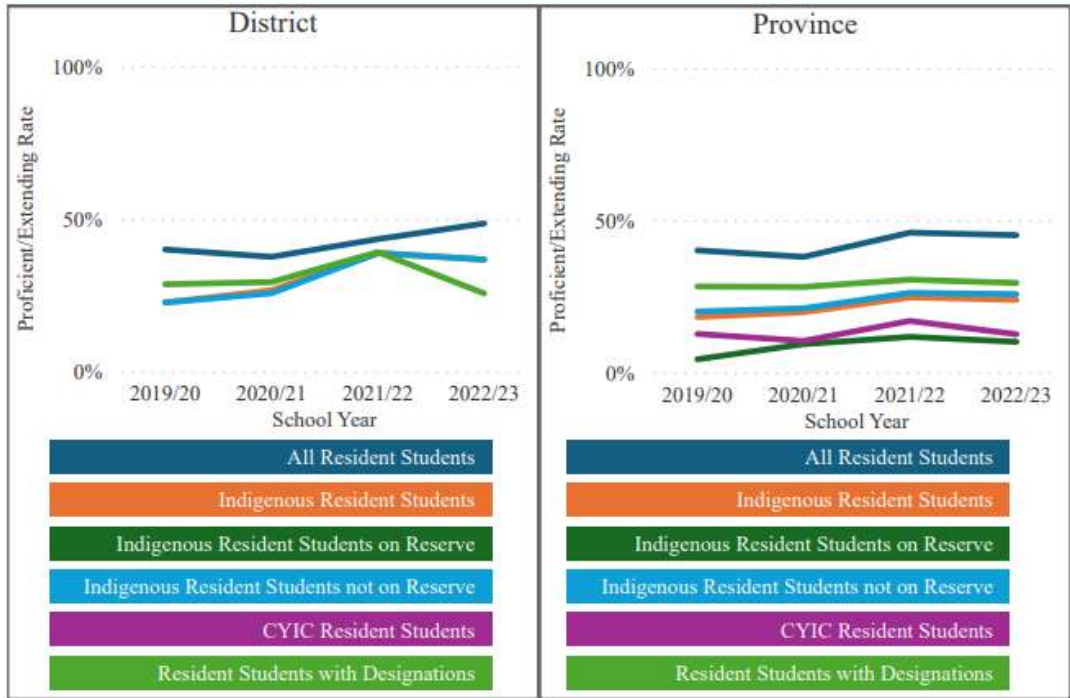


Grade 7 FSA Numeracy (On-Track / Extending Rate)



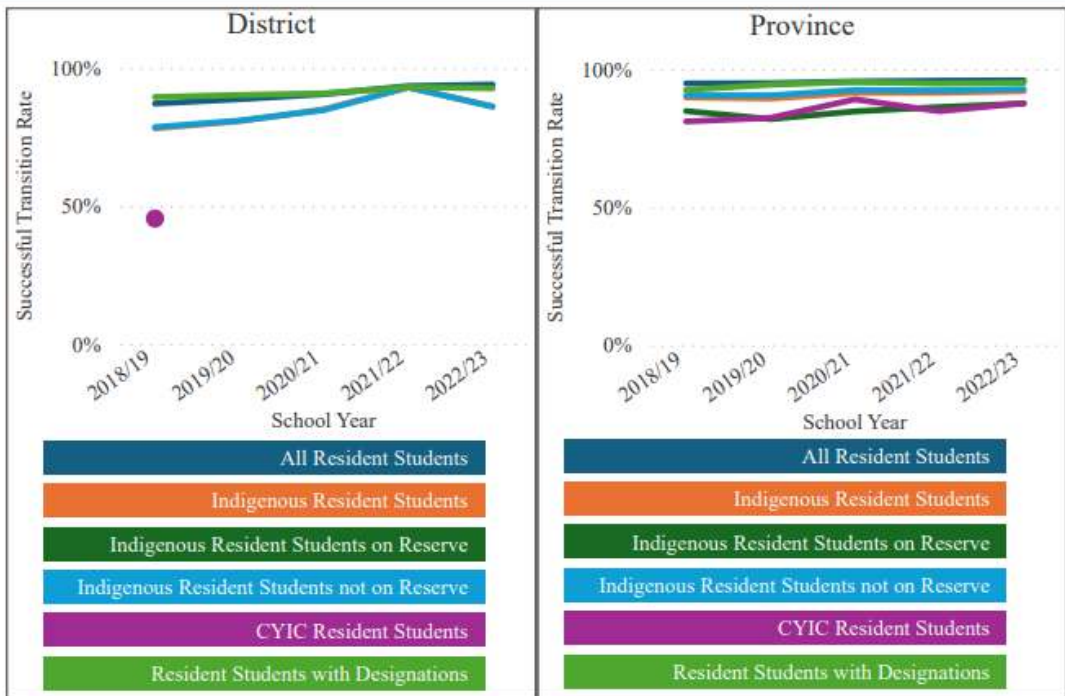
Measure 2.2: Grade 10 Numeracy Expectations

Grade 10 Grad Assessment Numeracy (Proficient / Extending Rate)

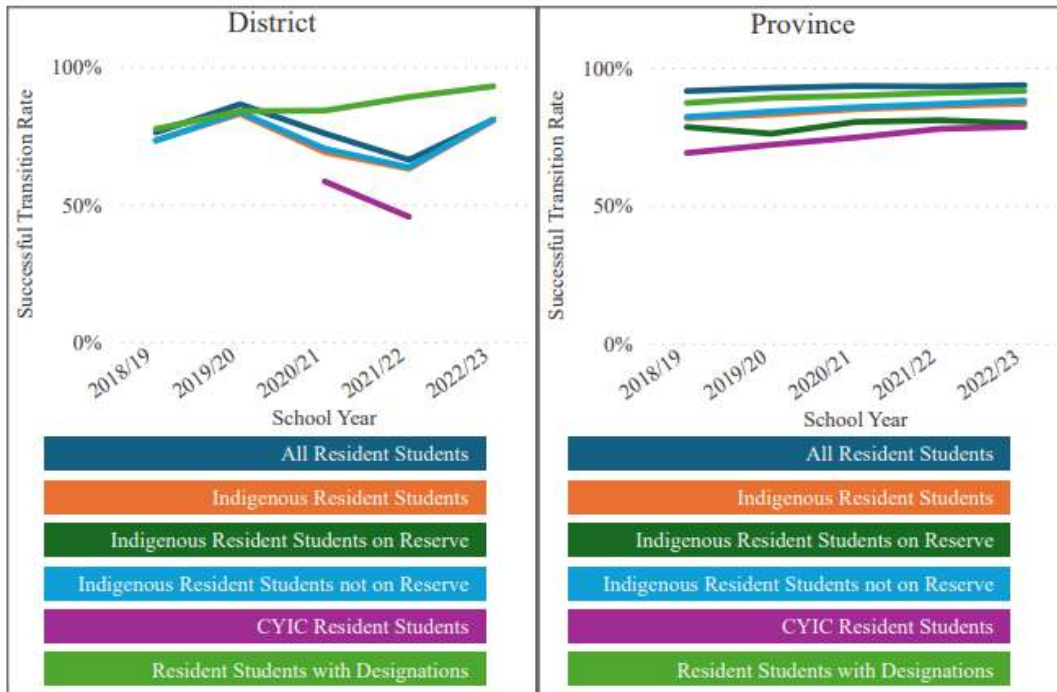


Measure 2.3: Grade-to-Grade Transitions

Grade 10 to 11 Transition Rate



Grade 11 to 12 Transition Rate



Analysis and Interpretation

Outcome 2: Numeracy

- The results of the Numeracy component of the Grade 4 FSA indicate that there is a downward trend across all student populations for the last 3 years, and students with unique needs and Indigenous students are experiencing a greater opportunity gap in numeracy learning in comparison to peers.
- The Indigenous Resident Student Grade 4 numeracy data indicates a 3-year trend downward, accompanied by a persistent gap between this priority population and All Resident Students. Particularly concerning is the larger gap appearing in 2023-2024. Indigenous Off-Reserve students on track/extending were 38% compared to 57% for All Students.
- The masked Indigenous Resident Student On-Reserve - Grade 4 numeracy district data illuminates that a concerning opportunity gap exists between this priority population and Indigenous Resident Not on Reserve students in SD71.
- The results of the Numeracy component of the Grade 4 FSA indicate more students are “on track” and “extending” in their proficiency than last year’s cohort, yet students with unique needs and Indigenous students continue to experience an opportunity gap in numeracy learning in comparison to peers.
- Grade 7 Indigenous Resident Students Not on Reserve grade 7 numeracy data dropped precipitously between 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years, below provincial averages at 38% compared to 57% for All Students.

- The masked Indigenous Resident Student On-Reserve Grade 7 numeracy data indicate a much higher success rate than the provincial average, as well as highly fluctuating rates over the past 3 years due to cohort size.
- Although the results of the Grade 10 Graduation Numeracy Assessment indicate that more students are “on track” and “extending” in their proficiency than previous cohorts, these results continue to represent a minority of students in all populations.
- The Indigenous Grade 10 Grad Assessment for Numeracy data indicates that while SD71 district data tracks higher than the provincial average and is considerably higher than two years ago, a persistent opportunity gap exists between Indigenous Resident Students Not on Reserve, and All students. Indigenous students at proficient/extending were at 37% compared to 49% for All Students.
- The masked Indigenous Resident Student On-Reserve Grade 10 data indicate a persistent opportunity gap between this priority population and Indigenous Students Not on Reserve.

Intellectual Development Summary

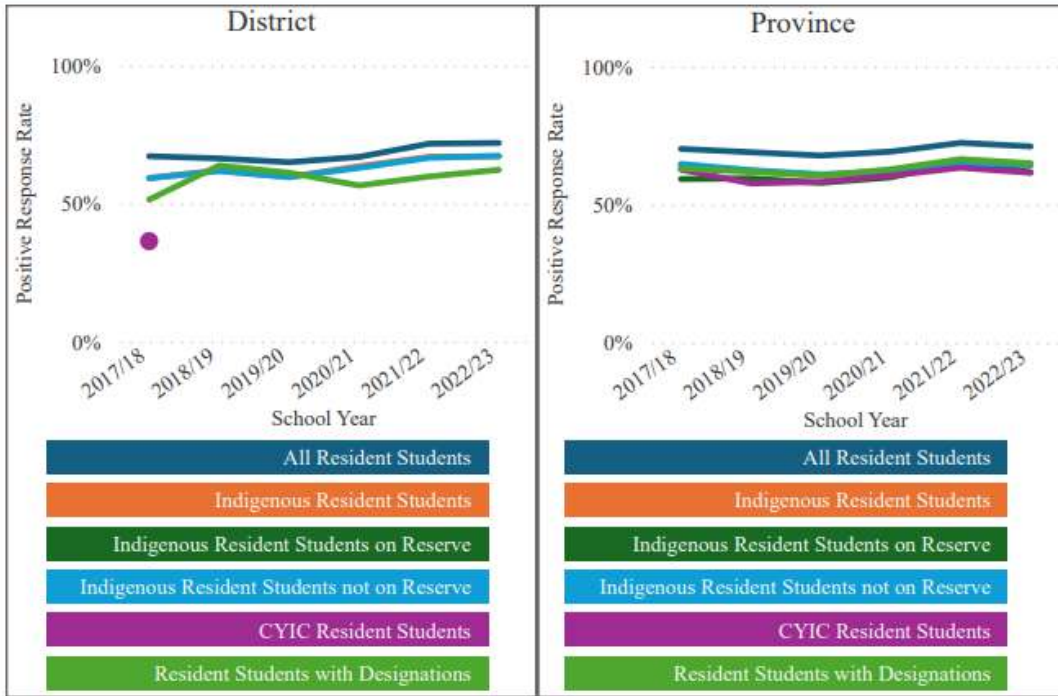
- Generally, the results of all provincial assessments indicate a continuing need for growth across all student populations and grade levels in both literacy and numeracy development.
- Aside from the Indigenous Grade 10 Graduation Assessment of Literacy outcomes for On-Reserve students, the district’s current approaches are underserving Indigenous On-Reserve and Off-Reserve students. Therefore, the district is required to collectively uncover and address the systemic barriers to success for these priority populations.
- Particularly concerning is the 3-year downward trend of Grade 4 Indigenous Resident Students in Literacy & Numeracy.
- Acknowledging that a very small cohort size greatly impacts the data reflecting Indigenous Students Living On-Reserve, aside from some promising outcome data found in grade 10 literacy and grade 7 numeracy, there remains a persistent opportunity gap experienced by this priority population.
- The analysis of the numeracy data indicates the need for collective capacity building to ensure Indigenous students are equitably served and systemic barriers are acknowledged and addressed by all SD71 staff.
- A persistent opportunity gap exists for Indigenous Students Living On-Reserve, indicating the need for greater districtwide collective attention to systemic barriers faced this priority population.

Human and Social Development

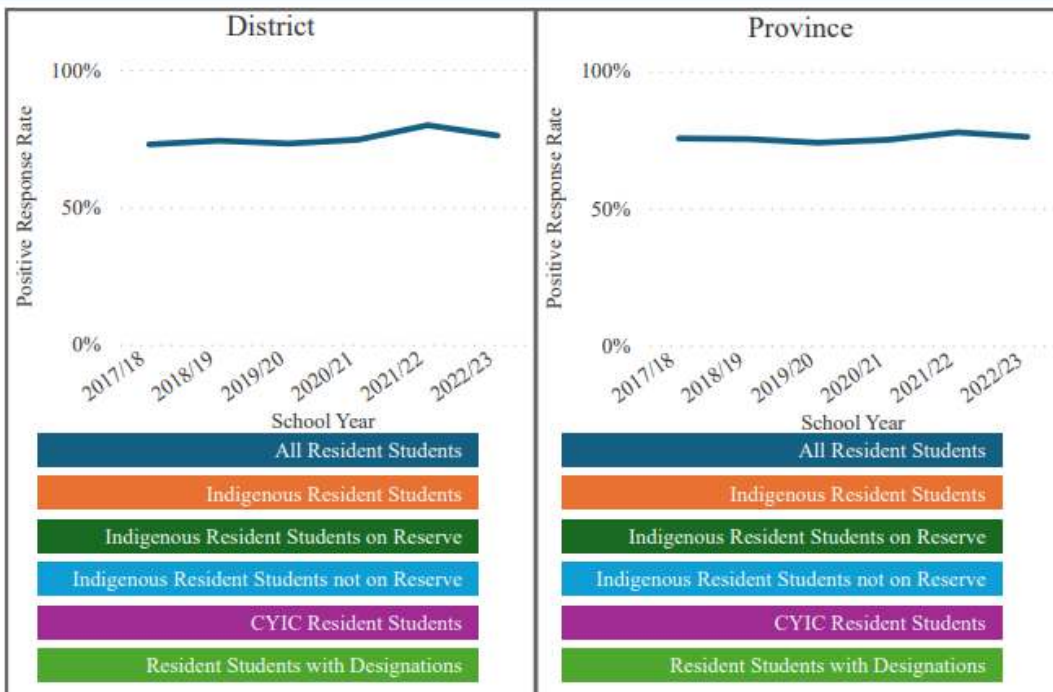
Educational Outcome 3: Feel Welcome, Safe, and Connected

Measure 3.1: Students Feel Welcome and Safe, and Have a Sense of Belonging at School

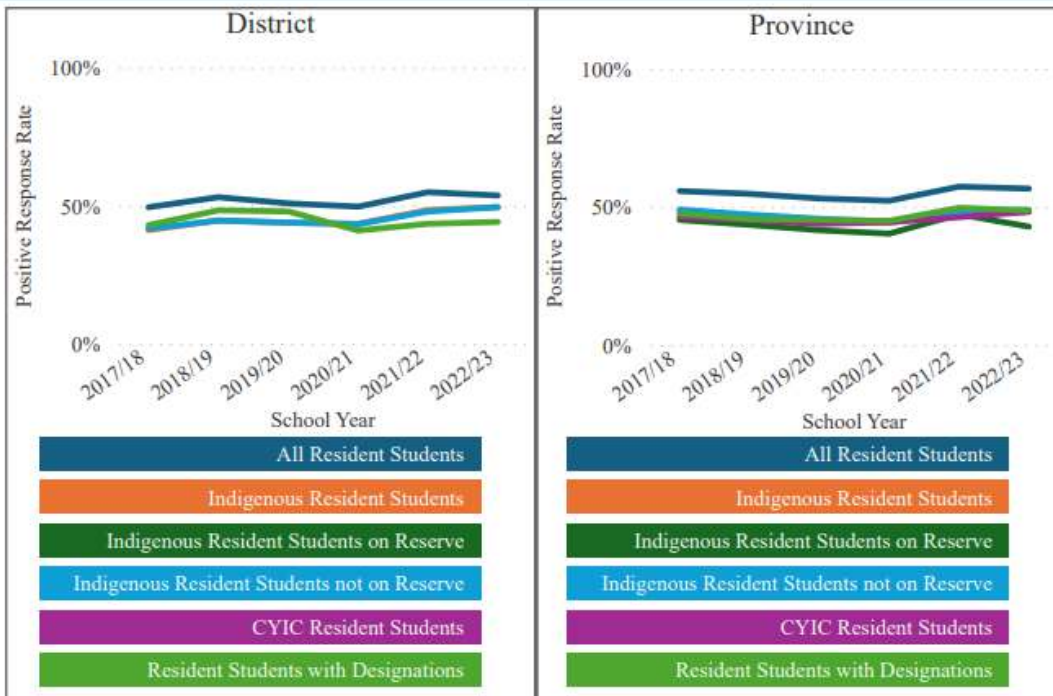
Feel Welcome (Positive Response Rate for Grades 4, 7, and 10)



Feel Safe (Positive Response Rate for Grades 4, 7, and 10)

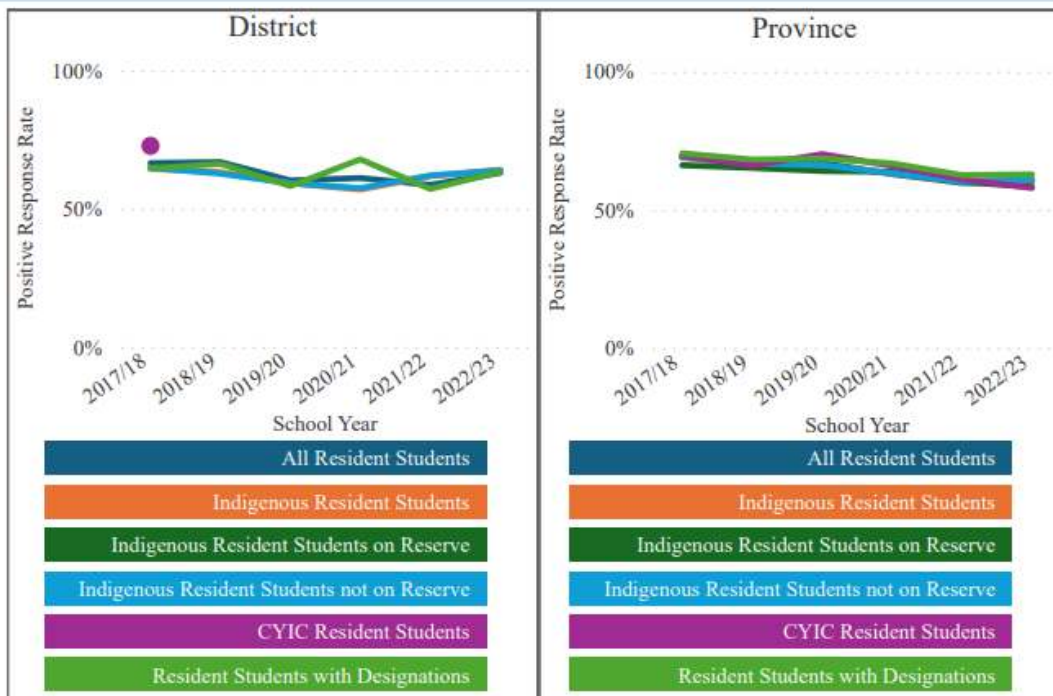


Sense of Belonging (Positive Response Rate for Grades 4, 7, and 10)



Measure 3.2: Students Feel that Adults Care About Them at School

2 or More Adults Care (Positive Response Rate for Grades 4, 7, and 10)



Analysis and Interpretation

Outcome 3: Students Feel Welcome, Safe, and Connected

- Presented below is data from the McCreary Report 2023, offering insights into key trends observed regarding mental health and well-being.

How students rate their mental health			
	Comox	North Island	Province
Fair, Good or Excellent	89%	87%	88%

How students felt their life was going well			
	Comox	North Island	Province
Agreed or Strongly Agreed	70%	67%	66%

- Students feel safe at school similar to the provincial average for each grade level.
- SD71 rate their mental health and how they felt their life was going above the North Island and the province of BC.
- The majority of students reported feeling hopeful for their future, with 62% feeling quite or very hopeful. 15% were not at all or only a little hopeful.
- 60% felt happy most of the time, 1% never felt happy.
- Four in five students who experienced stress felt they had handled it well.
- When considering students who feel welcome at school, the Indigenous Resident Students not living on Reserve, Grade 4, 7, & 12 data indicate a stagnant 3-year trend. While district data are above provincial levels, the gap between this priority population and All Students increased between 2020-2021 and 2022-2023 for Grades 4 & 7. There also remains a persistent gap between this priority population and All Students.
- The masked Indigenous Resident On-Reserve 3-year data trends indicate much higher results than provincial data. Further, these results are also higher than All Students data in grades 4 & 7. Unfortunately, this trend does not continue in grade 10 or 12.
- Promisingly, Grade 10 Indigenous Resident students Not Living On Reserve have trended upwards over 3 years and exceeded All Students for the first time in 2022-2023.
- When considering students who feel safe at school, the Indigenous Resident Students not living on Reserve, Grade 4, 7, & 12 data indicate a downward 3-year trend and are below All Students. Promisingly, grade 10 Indigenous students have seen a 20% increase in feeling safe in schools at 82%
- When considering students who Have a Sense of Belonging at School, the Indigenous Resident Students not living on Reserve, Grade 10 data indicates a rising 3-year trend of positive responses, from 34% to 54% (above All students for the 2022-2023 school year). However, Grades 4 & 12 indicate a concerning downward trend with double digit gaps when compared to All Students.

- The masked Indigenous Resident On-Reserve 3-year data trends indicate a concerning gap between this priority population and Indigenous Resident Students Not living on Reserve.

Human and Social Development Summary

- Social emotional support has been a focus of SD71 Mental Health Committee through parent & family workshops and staff professional development.
- The physical plan of all schools has been reviewed for safety and belonging and the necessary changes made. These include gender neutral washrooms, gradual curbs, and hand-free entrances.
- SD71 Accessibility Committee has been created and feedback avenues available for staff, students, and community.
- District emphasis on restarting school support groups – boys’ groups, girls’ groups, GSA clubs and LGBTQ2S+.
- Implemented “Consent Awareness Week” to address and prevent Gender based violence.
- One of our focus areas moving forward is on student access to the mental health resources. There were four main reasons identified in the McCreary Report why students did not access mental health services:
 1. Thought the problem would go away
 2. Did not want their parent/guardian to know
 3. Did not know where to go
 4. Too busy to go
- SD71 needs to develop structures to identify students that do not feel they have 2 or more adults in the school that they feel connected to.
- Parental workshops designed to strengthen relationships with students. DBTA (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy), White Hatter.
- The school district trained a handful of staff on Compassionate Systems: Building on Existing Relationships (Peter Senge).
- SD71 embarked on two major initiatives that support the human and social development of our students.
 1. Pathways to Hope: Integrated Child and Youth Care Services.
 - SD71 has implemented a community based multidisciplinary team which delivers wrap-around services and supports for children and youth. The integrated team (MCFD, Health Authority and SD71) work collaboratively to address needs in a safe and secure environment.
 - SD71 has hired three ICY Counsellors - [Integrated Child & Youth Teams](#)
 - SD71 has hired two peer support workers who have started seeing students.
 2. SD71 has implemented a 3-pronged approach to supporting mental health.
 - Compassionate Systems:
 - Building on existing relationships (self-awareness, mindfulness, authentic connections).
 - Six staff trained through Stanford University.
 - Part of Sr. Leadership meetings.

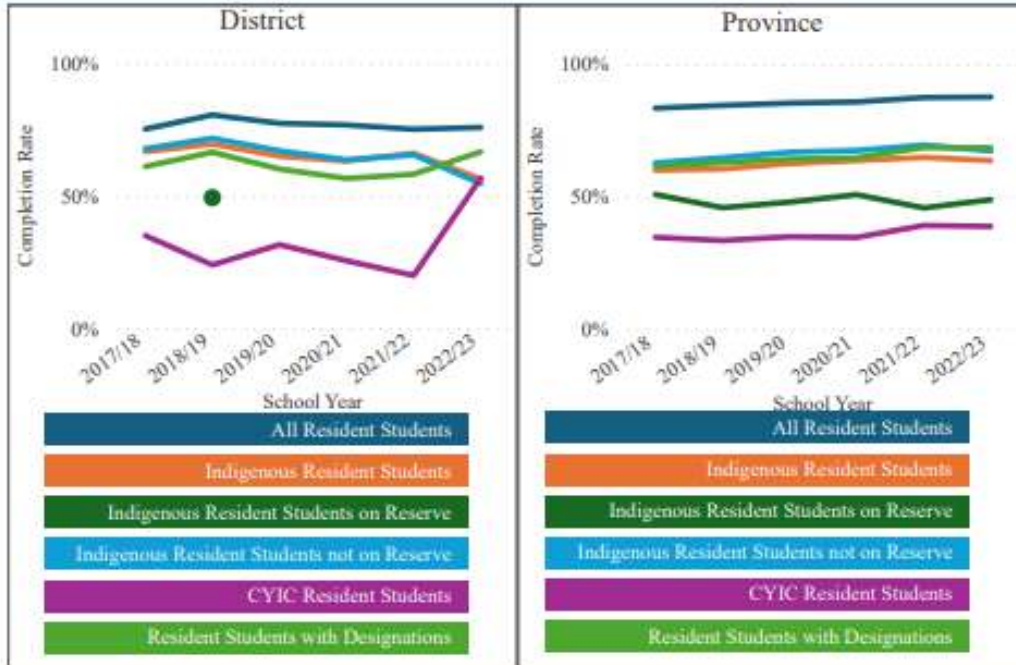
- Mental Health Literacy:
 - Consistency with the language, understanding and beliefs, management, and prevention.
 - Staff trained through UBC.
 - Analyzing the McCreary Report 2023
- Parent/Community Focus
 - Increasing the education and communication with parents and families about mental health supports
 - Focus on the families/caregiver's capacity to understand and support their child's mental health.
- Organizational structure changes made in support of these initiatives:
 - Assigned a district leader to lead SD71 mental health initiatives (Karma Taiji, Principal of Glacier View)
 - Assigned a district outreach counsellor to provide social emotional guidance and act as a resource for staff (Karla Lasota, Jill Kotapski)
 - Posted a Secondment for a district leader of anti-racism and equity.
 - Assigned Tara Ryan, a Vice Principal and Registered Clinical Counsellor to oversee the school counsellors and Youth and Family Workers
- SD71 developed a Mental Health webpage.
- SD71 has added PreVenture, an evidence based mental health wellness and prevention program for youth aged 12-18. PreVenture focuses on healthy coping and decision-making skills.
- [Mental Health Kits](#) were developed to support and enhance schools and teachers in educating students about the diverse range of mental health topics.
- A teacher was contracted to develop health stations that assessed learning outcomes on topics like mental health disorders, stress responses, breathing techniques, personal health choices, and Mental Health Kits.
- The Districts' "[Work 2 Wellness](#)" program continues to be a very strong support program for all employees. The District continues to invest in the wellness of all our staff, students, and families.
- SD71 collated all the Mental Health Community Support resources found within the Comox Valley that can be utilized by schools, students, and parents. [Comox Valley Schools Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Mental Health and Wellness Support for Staff](#) included our Counsellors Corner, Social Emotional Learning, and Grief Supports.
- Existing areas for growth continue to be gaps between Indigenous students and all students for many Student Learning Survey results.
- A stagnant or downward trend in many fields requires careful consideration moving forward. We will be digging into these systemic barriers for Indigenous students through a fulsome Equity Scan this school year.
- A new area of growth will be looking into why On-Reserve students' higher sense of belonging for grades 4 & 7 is not continued in grades 10 & 12. This will require a deeper investigation into the structures and supports available to students as they move towards their graduation trajectory.

Career Development

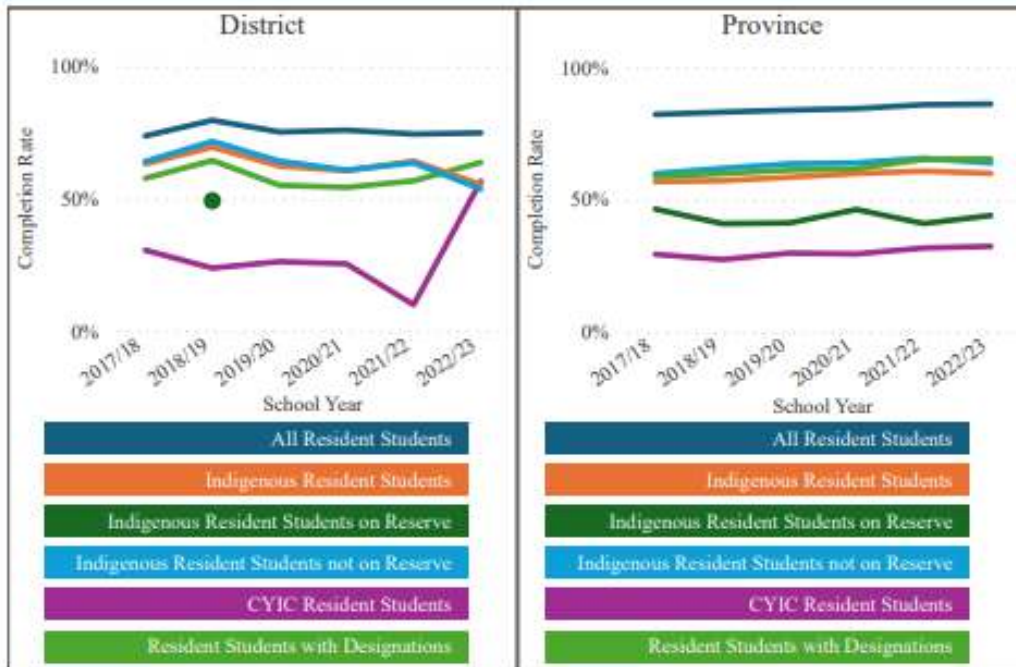
Educational Outcome 4: Graduation

Measure 4.1: Achieved Dogwood within 5 Years

5-Year Completion Rate (Dogwood & Adult Dogwood)



5-Year Completion Rate (Dogwood Only)



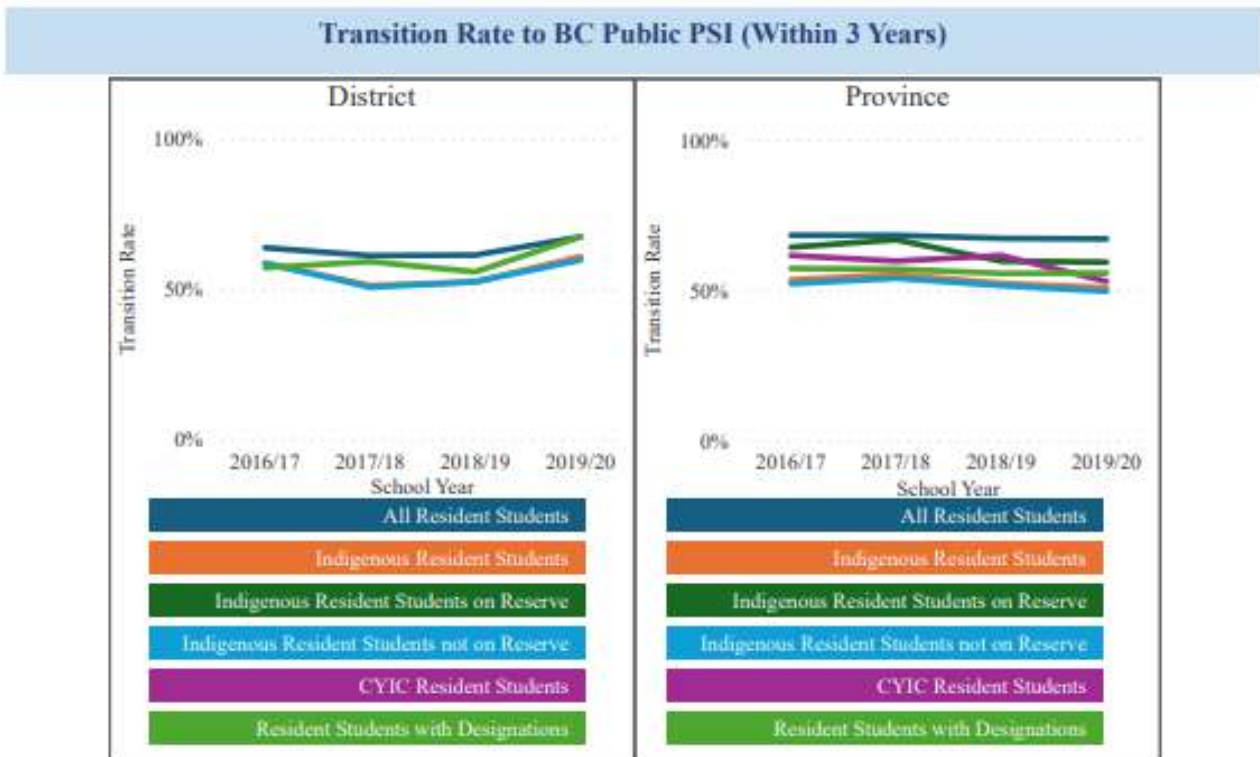
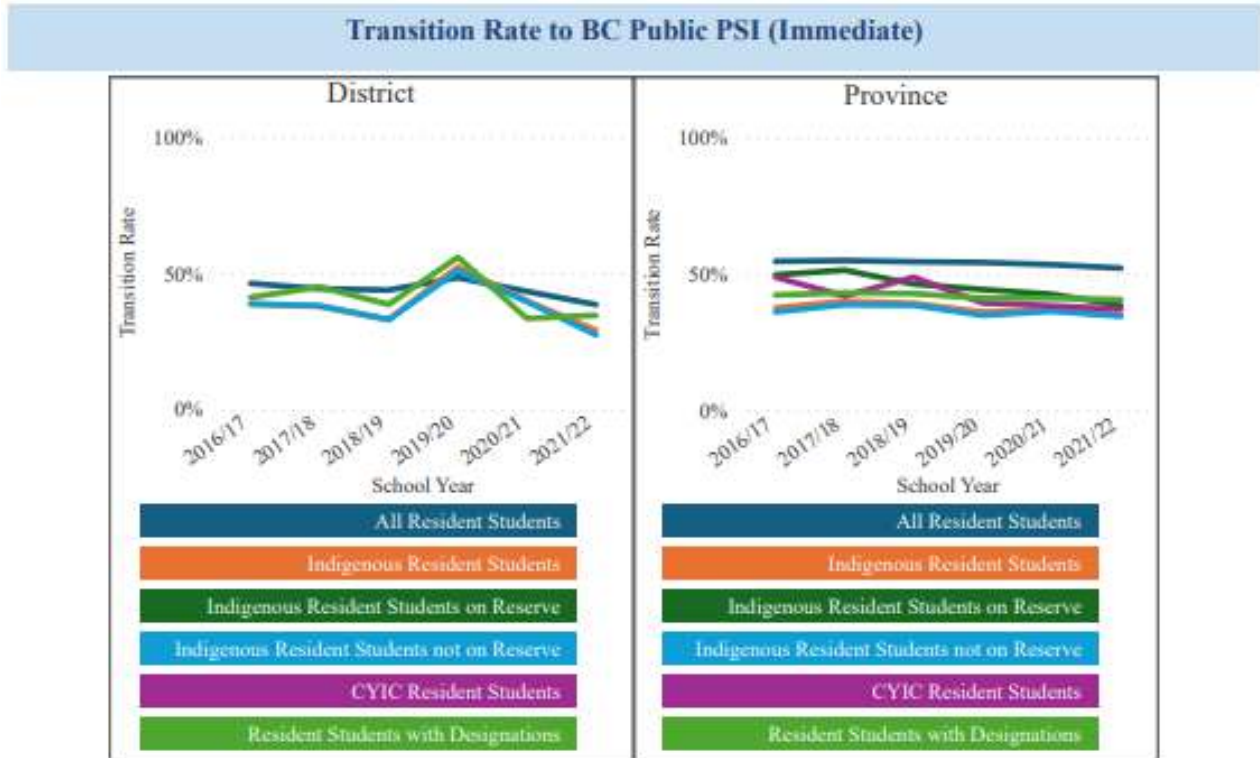
Analysis and Interpretation

Outcome 4: Graduation

- All Students show a generally increasing trend.
- Locally we are beginning to analyze data in several different ways. In 2023 SD71 invested in the hiring of a Data Analyst who has begun building a local data dashboard using Power BI. With the support of our Data Analyst our district intends to dive deeper into our success rates to help identify areas where we can begin to increase and exceed provincial averages.
- In review of the measures outlined above we are consistent to success in previous years. However, there is much work to be done.
- An observation that we have made is the increase in completion rates when we review our Online Learning school (NIDES). It is understood that due to the transient enrollment at NIDES, many students may enroll at NIDES then leave to return to their home district resulting in lower overall district completion rates for SD71.
- Once we remove the NIDES data our rates reflect what we deem is more accurate. Generally, our completion rate is consistent with an approximate rate of 90% over the past 5 years, which is in close alignment with the typical provincial range throughout British Columbia.
- The Indigenous Resident Student 5-Year Completion data indicates a 3-year trend downward (from 63% in 2020-2021 to 56% in 2022-2023), accompanied by a persistent gap between this priority population and All Resident Students hovering at 80%.
- The masked Indigenous Resident Student On-Reserve 5-Year Completion rate (Dogwood Only) data indicates higher outcomes than All Students for two of the last three years.
- The Indigenous Resident Student 6-Year Completion data indicates a small trend upward (from 75% in 2020-2021 to 77% in 2022-2023). However, a persistent gap between this priority population and All Students exists (from 83% in 2020-2021 to 85% in 2022-2023)
- It is important to note that Indigenous students constituted 38% of all adult Dogwood recipients in the 2021-2022 school year despite being approximately 16% of the student population. Furthermore, in 2022-2023, Indigenous students were more than 50% of all students in alternate programs.
- This requires an in-depth scan into the policies and practices of district schools that may be leading to these inequitable outcomes.
- This data reveals that longstanding barriers to equity persist for Indigenous learners when compared to All Students.

Educational Outcome 5: Life and Career Core Competencies

Measure 5.1: Post-Secondary Transitions



Analysis and Interpretation

Outcome 5: Post-Secondary Transitions

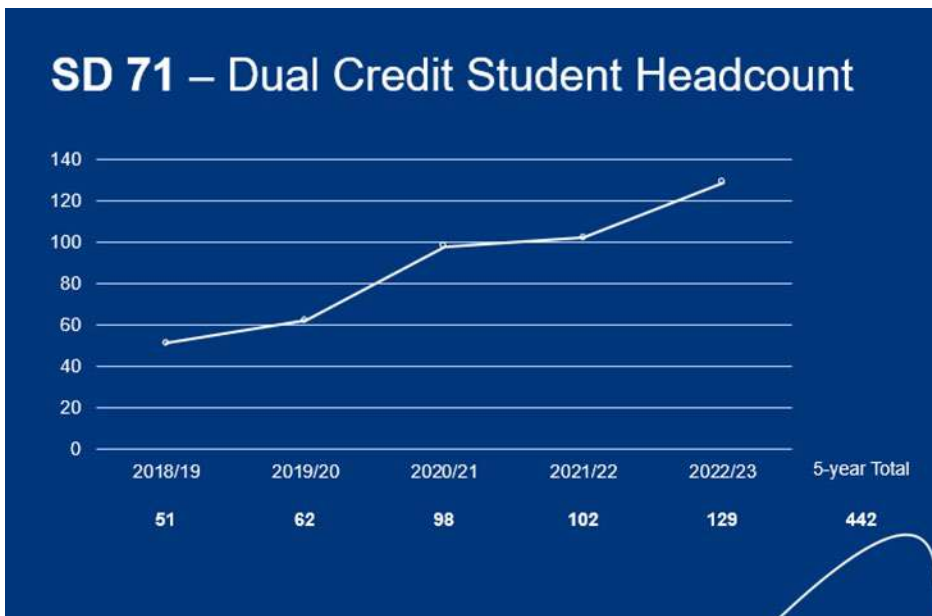
- Both district and provincial rates for all other students remain relatively high and stable over the years. This consistency suggests that the majority of students are receiving adequate support and resources to graduate on time.
- The graduation rates for resident students who immediately proceed to BC Public Post-Secondary Institutions (PSI) show a steady increase. However, recent data indicates a decrease in PSI transition rates following the pandemic closures of in-person learning at post-secondary institutions. This raises questions about the long-term effects of the post-pandemic environment on PSI rates and whether current labor demands will impact students' decisions to advance immediately to post-secondary education.
- The Comox Valley Careers Department works diligently to engage and support students in exploring pathways throughout grades 10 to 12. There is strong student interest in Dual Credit Academics, which is expected to help improve PSI transitions.
- Many students are ready to enter college and university in their grade 12 year, with some even in their grade 11 year. Presentations, tours, and college representatives at high schools provide essential support as students consider their next steps.
- Over the past three years, the department has expanded academic offerings beyond English and Psychology. Students are now taking advantage of certificate and diploma programs, either through 1-4 University Transfer classes or full-year programs within their grade 12 year.
- Student surveys and enrollment data reflect interest in programs such as Health Care Assistant, Digital Marketing, Business, and Fine Arts Diploma courses. University transfer courses, including English, Biology, Psychology, Business, and Math, remain the most popular options.
- The department maintains an excellent relationship with the trades community, supporting students interested in pursuing trades through the Youth Work in Trades.
- The Careers Program continues to work collaboratively to establish additional PSI relationships and certificate program opportunities. The Careers Program has begun working closely with K'omoks' Success Advisor and K'omoks Nation to enhance opportunities for work experience and PSI dual credit opportunities.
- Despite the improvements, there are still noticeable disparities between Indigenous students (both on and off reserve) and all other students. This highlights the need for continued focus on equity and support for Indigenous students.
- The decrease in PSI transition rates following the pandemic closures and the potential impact of labor demands on students' decisions to pursue post-secondary education are areas of concern that need to be addressed.
- The significant improvements at the district level for Indigenous students suggest that localized, targeted interventions can be highly effective.
- The rate for Indigenous Resident Students On Reserve at the district level shows a gradual increase from 2016-2017 to 2019-2020. This indicates that local efforts to support these students might be yielding positive results.
- Similarly, the provincial rate for Indigenous Resident Students On Reserve also shows an upward trend, though the increase is more modest compared to the district rate. This suggests that while there are improvements, challenges remain at the broader provincial level.
- For Indigenous Students Not On Reserve, the district rate shows a significant improvement over

the years. This could be due to targeted interventions and support systems in place for these students.

- The provincial rate for Indigenous Students Not On Reserve also shows a positive trend, suggesting that the overall educational environment for Indigenous students not on reserve may be improving.
- Due to masking, it is challenging to assess the exact transition rates to BC PSI immediately, or within 3 years.
- All Students and all priority populations indicate a 3-year downward trend in immediate transition rates to BC Public PSI.
- All Students and all priority populations indicate a 3-year upward trend in transition rates to BC Public PSI (within 3 Years).

Career Development Summary

- In supporting career development, one of our goals in SD71 is to support as many students as possible with post-secondary learning opportunities. As seen in the chart below, courtesy of North Island College, we have continued to increase our students' post-secondary enrollment and opportunities over the past five years. More and more students are starting to see the benefits of taking Dual Credit courses and programs that support their next steps. Our goal is to continue to grow our Dual Credit student numbers and support as many indigenous students, and students with diverse needs, so that all our community members see the benefits of these Ministry supported learning opportunities.



SD 71 – Dual Credit Enrolment by Program Area

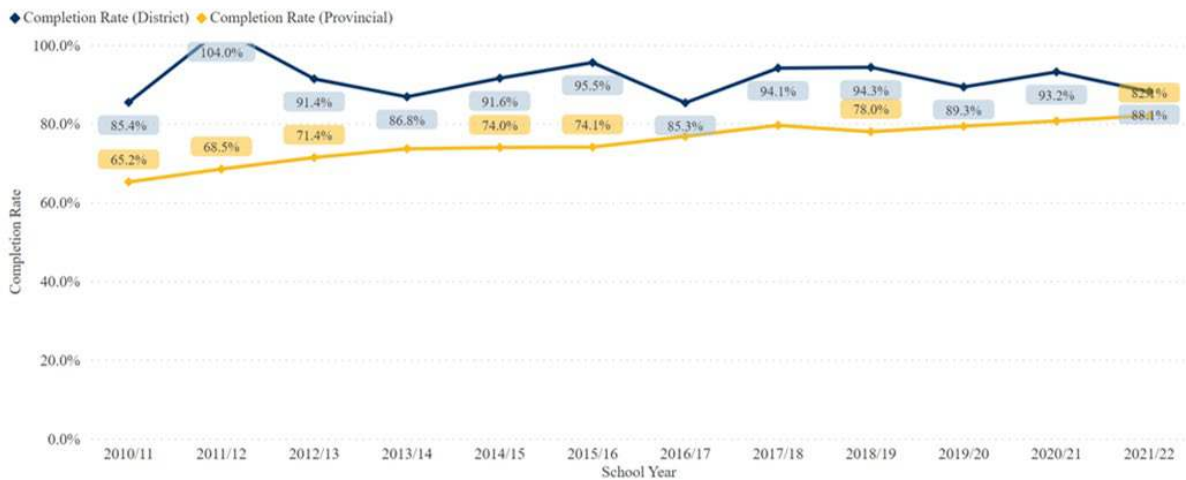
Program Area	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	5-year Total
Health & Human Services		msk	msk	msk	msk	21
Trades/Technical/Apprenticeship	35	19	38	37	41	170
University Transfer						
Business 1 st Year	msk	msk	msk	10	msk	34
Computer Science		msk				msk
Digital Design + Development				msk	msk	msk
Biology & Chemistry			10	msk	msk	14
English	10	24	49	46	44	173
Humanities (English Excluded)		msk	msk		msk	msk
Math & Statistics		msk	msk	msk	msk	msk
Modern Languages			msk			msk
Social Sciences 1 st Year	msk	14	15	17	10	57
Visual Arts	msk	msk	msk	msk	msk	20
University Transfer Subtotal:	16	35	61	57	62	231
Total Unduplicated Student Headcount*:	51	62	98	102	129	442

* Excludes 4 enrolments in other program areas

- Regarding our student numbers and Dogwood graduation rates, our district has recently hired a data analyst who has been tasked with working with the Careers team on tracking and reporting dual credit students, tracking course results, and tracking transition rates.
- Below is a 6-year completion rate chart that compares Provincial and District 71 (face to face programs), including Indigenous student, completion rates (excl. online/alternate). You will notice that SD71 completion rates are above the provincial average on a continuous basis, including our indigenous students' transition rates.

6 Year Completion Rate: District 71 & Province, Indigenous Students, Standard Schools (No Online/Alternate)

6 Year - Completion Rate



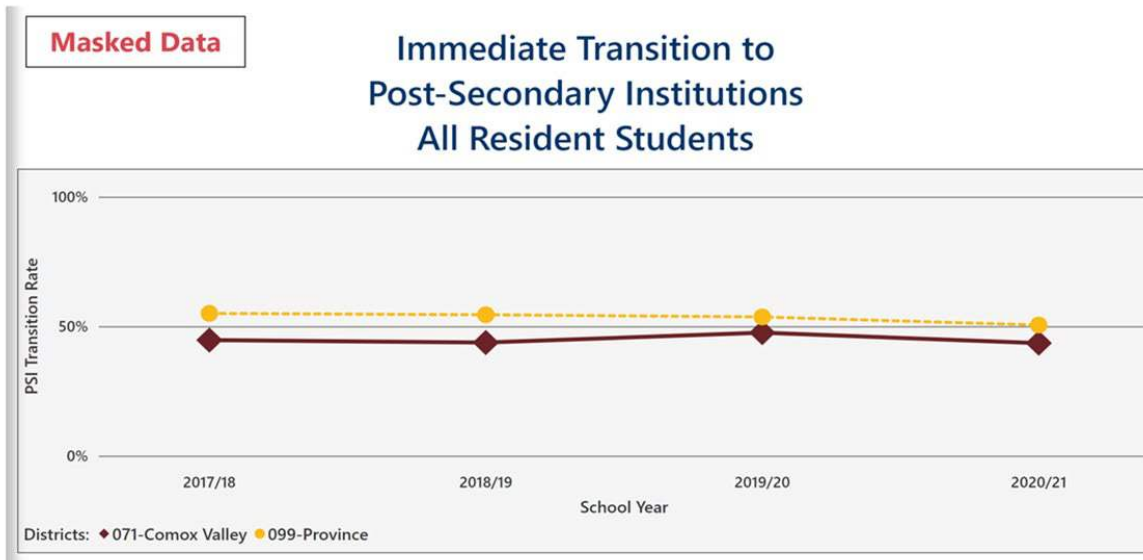
Completion Rate Graph

Difference to Province

Student Data

District Data

Province Data



- When looking at transition rates to post-secondary directly from secondary school our rates are slightly lower than Provincial average.
- We are working with our data analyst to establish a method for extracting post-secondary data so that we can compare these results with non-dual credit students. This is data we hope to have established this coming year for years ahead.
- The Comox Valley school district has developed a Local Educational Agreement with the K'omoks Nation with guiding principles that we follow within the Careers Department. These include communication with families and fostering positive relationships between school, home, and the student. The agreement also holds SD71 employees accountable to support the success of our K'omok's Nation learners while including and considering cultural values and traditions as we work with Indigenous students to support them in their chosen educational/career pathways. Together they support students interested in learning more about Dual Credit, as well as outreach through presentations in their classroom spaces. Students learn about all academic and trade opportunities, alongside Work Experience and Youth Work in Trades. There is also a local Vancouver Island University (VIU) collaborative program that we support, called the Guardian Program. This is a program that is widely respected and supported with youth in the Comox Valley. Students work with local Guardians and gain workforce knowledge and training days, where they can then apply to VIU to take the First Nations Stewardship Technicians Training Program.

Section B: Moving Forward

Planning and Adjusting for Continuous Improvement

Introduction: District Context

Comox Valley Schools is the fourth largest school district on Vancouver Island. Our district consists of the following local governments: City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, and the Comox Valley Regional District. We are located on the beautiful traditional territories of the Pentlatch, Ei'ksan, Sahtloot, and Sasitla peoples of the K'omoks First Nation.

Comox Valley Schools (SD71) enrolls approximately 11,000 students with 1,760 students identifying as Indigenous, including thirty-one K'omoks First Nation students living on reserve.

We have fifteen elementary schools, one middle school, three secondary schools, two alternative schools, and a provincial online school. Five of our schools are developed as community schools.

We are currently the largest employer in the Comox Valley with 1,918 employees. Our annual operating budget is \$127 million.

Current Strategic Plan Priorities

We are very excited about the new Strategic Plan for the district, with a clear learning focus. The learning goal statement for the strategic plan is:

Comox Valley Schools is committed to creating inclusive, wholistic, and personalized learning environments in order to enhance student's development of the core competencies over time.

It was shaped and created through extensive community input and was written by a team of close to forty people that consisted of students, parents, Indigenous representatives, teachers, support staff, principals, trustees, and senior leadership. In addition, a significant amount of time and effort went into determining how we can measure progress in our learning goal as well as how we can best support the professional learning needs to accomplish our aspirations.

In the writing of the Strategic Plan, we did a deep dive into learning data for our district which highlighted areas where our priority learners experience different outcomes within our system. As we formally work through the Equity Scan framework this year, the work last year in the strategic planning process will form a starting point as we look at different ways to close the opportunity gaps within our system.

Furthermore, the values, purpose, and vision statement have been updated and are reflective of the desires, aspirations, and needs expressed through the strategic planning process.

Values

Learning

Centering learning in all we do.

Equity

Leading with diversity as a strength and inclusion as a right.

Relationships

Connection, compassion, and respect in all that we do.

Safety

Learning communities where all feel safe and belong.

Integrity

High ethical standards through transparency, honesty and accountability.

Truth and Reconciliation Commitment

We are deeply committed to learning, unlearning, and relearning and taking action for lasting Truth and Reconciliation.

Purpose Statement

To create safe, equitable learning environments that lift each learner to thrive, to grow, and to share their unique gifts.

Vision Statement

Compassionate, connected, and personalized learning for all.

Looking Back on the Year: Effectiveness of Implemented Strategies

During the 2023-2024 school year, the district maintained and expanded several initiatives that provided support for Indigenous students on and off reserve. While many of these initiatives have extensive qualitative data attesting to their efficacy, we have not yet utilized quantitative data to assess how effective these efforts have been at closing longstanding gaps in opportunity for Indigenous learners. The 2024/25 year will be spent scanning and assessing the impact of many strategies, including those listed below.

As part the SD71 Local Education Agreement commitment, the K'ómoks First Nation Student Success Teacher is now in their 3rd year. The teacher/advisor provided direct teaching support for all KFN students. This year she was provided a data dashboard to provide accountability in serving On and Off Reserve First Nations students.

Every school (aside from two island schools) had dedicated spaces for Indigenous Support Workers. This was a relatively new development in SD71, due to the tireless advocacy of the Indigenous Education Council (IEC).

There are Indigenous Support Workers (ISW) in every school. The district maintains a ratio of 50:1 in every site to ensure each student has adequate support. As ISW's continue to be the primary support for students, SD71 has heavily invested in recruitment and retention of 31.6FTE local Indigenous professionals, along with extensive training through a very effective Indigenous Education Coordinator. In the 2024/25 school year this Coordinator was elevated to a manager position given the scope and importance of the role.

SD71 is honored to have Ni'noxsola (Elders/Wise Ones) supporting students across the district. Further, these Elders worked alongside ISW's bringing professional development opportunities to schools and ran "girls group programs" for Priority Learners who require extra love and support. For info on our Ni'noxsola program visit, <https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/indigenous-education/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2021/10/ninoxsola-info-package-revised-2021.pdf>

The district provided Indigenous Program Workers (2FTE), who worked to re-engage priority Indigenous students and families who were experiencing barriers and difficulties in attending school. These positions continue to serve as a relational link to community and families.

The district supports an Indigenous focused alternative school called Nala'atsi. This entirely Indigenous cohort of students has boasted 100% graduation rates for a few years. This is due to the culturally safe environment that Nala'atsi provides, including program delivery (embracing Indigenous epistemologies), trips out on the land, careful staffing, and creative timetable options for students. Qualitative data from students indicate that this program was vital in their achieving success in SD71. An example of this qualitative data is from a recent priority 2024 graduate who stated that they would not have made it if not for Nala'atsi. While the district is looking at expanding this program to include a "Junior Nala'atsi" (at the behest of student advocacy), we acknowledge that we also must do better to create anti-racist and culturally safe environments in all schools.

Existing and/or Emerging Areas for Growth

The district recognizes the need for continuous improvement in all areas of literacy and numeracy learning K-12. Collective capacity building to ensure all students grow in literacy and numeracy development continues to be a focus area and in alignment with our district's new Strategic Plan.

In order to improve literacy and numeracy learning for all students and ensure equitable opportunities, the district has just completed development of the Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks to enable a collective and systemic approach to instruction and assessment of K-12 across schools. During the 2023-2024 school year, educators across the district collaborated to co-construct common Kindergarten and Grade 2 literacy assessments and numeracy assessments and diagnostics for K-8. All Kindergarten and Grade 2 teachers have received training in how to implement the new district literacy assessments, and during the 2024-2025 school year, schools and the district will collect baseline data for instructional planning and supplemental learning purposes. Additionally, schools ready to

trial the new numeracy assessments will be supported by the district to do so, with full implementation of the Grade 3 and 5 numeracy assessments planned for next school year. Development of further district literacy and numeracy assessments are ongoing. The focus for the 2024-2025 school year is on completion of the Grade 6 literacy and K-8 problem-solving (numeracy) assessments.

Each of our elementary/middle schools has a Curriculum Support Teacher who supports and collaborates with school-based colleagues to address the literacy and/or numeracy goal for their school. As a Community of Practice, the group meets regularly to discuss literacy and numeracy research, work on effective instructional and assessment strategies in support of all learners and explore ways to embed the First Peoples Principles of Learning.

An existing area of growth highlighted in the SLS data in Section A indicates that On-Reserve students in grades 10 & 12 do not enjoy the higher sense of belonging and connection of their younger peers in grades 4 & 7.

Another area for growth is addressing the 3-year downward trend of 5-year completion rates for Indigenous learners. This inequity is accompanied by a persistent gap between this priority population and All Resident Students.

An emerging area of concern is that Indigenous students were awarded more than twice the number of adult Dogwoods between 2021-2022 & 2022-2023 (7-18), whereas non-Indigenous students experienced a sizable reduction in adult Dogwoods over the same time period (54 - 30).

Another emerging area of growth is the concerning 3-year downward trend of Indigenous students not living on reserve reporting that they feel safe at school, in grades 4, 7, & 12.

Ongoing Strategic Engagement (Qualitative Data)

The district collaborated extensively with local First Nation leadership and other Indigenous community members and students through the formation of the new strategic plan.

The district collaborated with K'ómoks First Nation through Local Education Agreement meetings throughout the 2023-2024 school year. It is recognized that much more collaboration with Rightsholders is necessary to deliver equitable service to On-Reserve students. Therefore, the following school year will include robust consultation and collaboration with K'ómoks First Nation including scheduled and ad hoc meetings. The district will also schedule Equity Scanning meetings in the community during the 2024-2025 school year to hear directly from families, leadership, and students, and action that feedback to better support KFN students.

During the development of the new Strategic Plan, it was noted that the district needed to create a fulsome engagement plan with the students whom it serves. As a result, during the 2024-2025 school year, the district will host four Student Advisory Forum sessions.

These sessions will amplify diverse student voices spanning grades 9 through 12, with representation from all secondary schools. This will provide an opportunity to collect the qualitative data required to respond to student voice.

The district collaborates through monthly meetings with the Indigenous Education Council who directs the targeted funding budget throughout the year and guides other decisions made by the district. The composition of this Council (while currently under review) reflects the diverse Indigenous student population of SD71, including local First Nations, MIK'ISIW Metis Association, and other Indigenous community members.

Moving forward, the new Indigenous Associate Superintendent, will continually outreach to K'omoks First Nation Leadership and Hereditary Chiefs to build and maintain reciprocal, and respectful relationships, ensuring that community voice, is at the forefront of the decolonizing and Indigenizing efforts of the school district. This will be done through attending local cultural events and ceremonies.

The school district humbly walks alongside and gratefully receives the corrections of Rightsholders and Indigenous community members as we work to address the systemic barriers faced by Indigenous learners and families. The Superintendent and Associate Superintendents aspire to model cultural humility for all staff as we collaborate with Rightsholders and Indigenous community members.

Adjustment and Adaptations: Next Steps

An existing area of growth highlighted in the SLS data indicates that On-Reserve students in grades 10 & 12 do not enjoy the higher sense of belonging and connection of their younger peers in grades 4 & 7. In previous years we have not had a districtwide plan to address this gap beyond the hiring of an the K'omoks First Nation Student Success Teacher. Moving forward this will be an area of focus for the K'omoks First Nation Student Success Teacher, as well as the Indigenous Support Team (IST) comprised of the Principals/Vice-principals, Counsellor, Indigenous Support Worker, and Teacher, multiple times throughout the school year. Furthermore, we will reach out to K'omoks First Nation students, and family members through our Equity Scan to hear directly from them how to make our schools safer and more welcoming for this priority population.

To address the 3-year downward trend of 5-year completion rates for Indigenous learners and persistent opportunity gap, previous strategies have been an Indigenous Education Support Teacher at .387fte in one of the large high schools. This was a new position in 2023-2024 supported by the Indigenous Education Council and was a partnership between Indigenous Education and School Based funds. In future years we are looking at expanding this strategy with other high schools across the district.

Given the increase in Indigenous students' adult Dogwoods doubling between 2021-2022 & 2022-2023, senior leaders will work with Principals and Vice-Principals to investigate and address possible early streaming towards an adult Dogwood for Indigenous learners. Further, the district is in the process of developing accessible Power BI data dashboards,

and subsequently will build the capacity of Principals/Vice-principals to ensure collective responsibility for Indigenous student success.

The 3-year downward trend of Indigenous students not living on reserve reporting that they ***feel safe at school***, in grades 4, 7, & 12 is concerning. One current strategy to address this has been a Ni'noxsola program of Elders in residence at schools. These Elders have been extremely well received across all grades with Indigenous students. In future years we would like to expand this program as we have received rich qualitative data indicating how appreciated their presence has been for the students whom we serve.

Lastly, the district has amplified the impact and scope of the Indigenous Education Department through the new appointments of the Associate Superintendent of Indigenous Education, Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education, and Manager of Indigenous Education.

Alignment for Successful Implementation

Alignment and coherence will be a central theme to our work in the district this year. While we engage in the Equity Scan process along with the new Strategic Plan, we need to do the work of aligning our departmental and operational plans, school plans, budget process, as well as our professional growth plans for leaders in our district. The work alignment this year is significant and requires the action and commitment from all areas of our district.

During the formation of the new Strategic Plan a commitment was made to ensure that a committee worked through this year to ensure that a comprehensive professional learning plan was developed to support the adult learning required to embrace the design principals in the Strategic Plan. Some money has been set aside to begin this work of supporting the professional learning plan.

We are committed to a cycle of continuous improvement and the alignment and coherence of our plans will be critical in improving outcomes for students. The new Strategic Plan focuses our efforts, and each member of our district is critical in the work of supporting students.

Conclusion

Comox Valley Schools is deeply committed to improving outcomes for all students which is the sole focus of the Strategic Plan. We recognize that there are inequitable learning outcomes in our system that require our attention, support, and commitment to change. We are excited about the direction we are taking as we collaborate with community to enhance support and improve outcomes for the learners entrusted in our care.