

ANNUAL EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND DIVERSITY REPORT

September, 2019



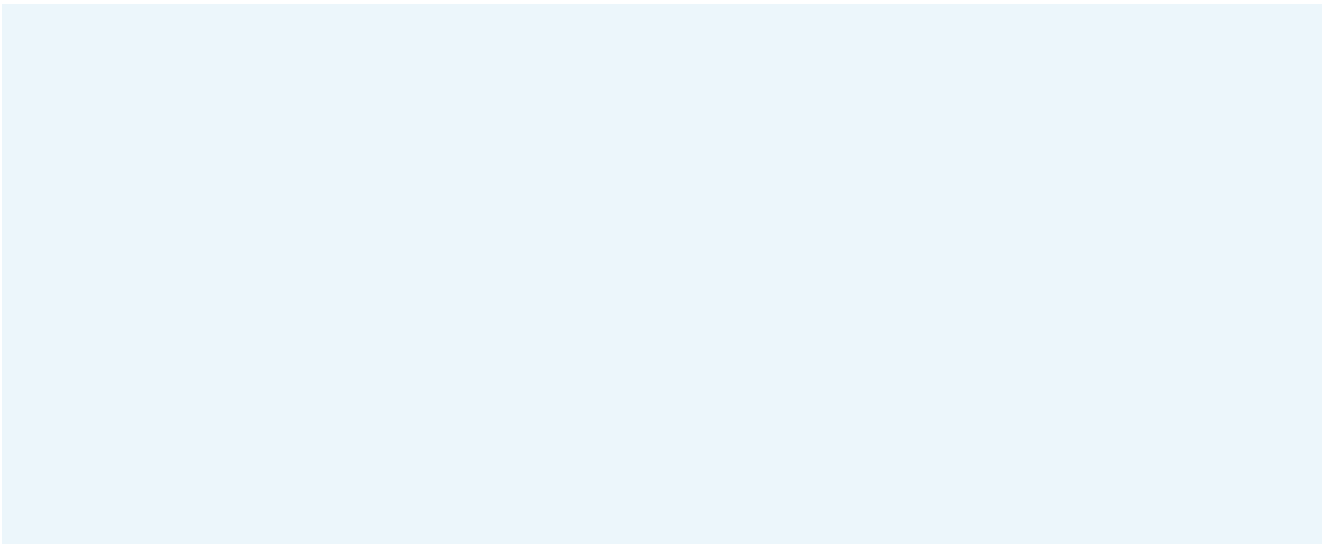
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Introduction







School connectedness and belonging are related to a student's ability to build and maintain positive relationships. BC curricula and the District's policies and administrative procedures attempt to formalize the importance of these concepts. Health and career education, career planning and graduation transitions all support the social and emotional development of students in understanding and maintaining positive relationships.

The Ministry of Education supports school connectedness and a focus on social and emotional learning to:

Minimize negative aspects of school life by reducing bullying and harassment, injury, truancy and absenteeism;

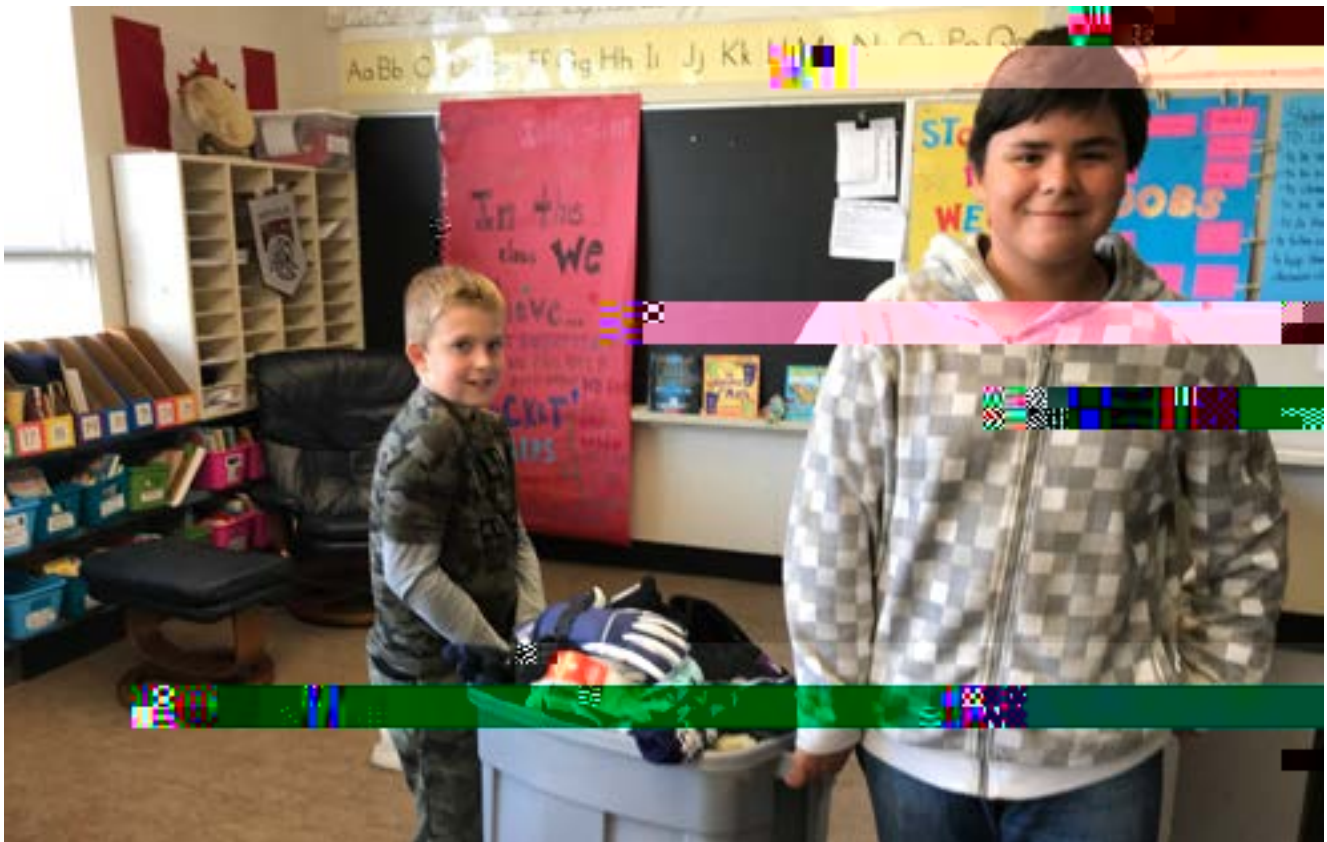
Diminish stereotyping and prejudice, fear, anxiety, depression and loss of motivation;

Enhance feelings of well-being during childhood;

Provide sound foundations for positive health in later adolescence and adulthood; and,

Encourage students to respect others and to respect their surroundings.

By supporting students' ownership of learning, building positive relationships within the learning community, and developing and supporting social-emotional learning, District students will be afforded the potential for success.



Background

The District receives specific funding to support those learners who are identified as having an Aboriginal background, who are English language Learners (ELL) or who have special education designations.



Over the past two school years, the District has provided UDL training to small school-based teams. In 2019–2020, a UDL network and collaboration with SET-BC is taking place. Ten pilot schools will get a combination of professional development training, collaborative time to plan learning and observation from an educational leader, in order to foster District teachers' understanding of UDL.

The District uses a multi-tier approach, response to intervention (RTI), to identify and support students with learning and/or behavioural needs. The RTI process begins with high-quality instruction and interventions to support students in the general education classroom. Interventions are introduced at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate the students' rate of learning. These services are provided by general education teachers, special educators and District inclusive education staff and community support personnel. Student progress is monitored and educational decisions are made following a review of student data. SD73's processes and procedures are developed with this approach in mind.

Neurological and Physical Diversity

The District's neurological and physical diversity approach to education recognizes that physical abilities and neurological differences between learners constitute natural variations between individuals. This represents a way of seeing individual differences as unique learning abilities rather than disabilities.

To support SD73's unique learners, a variety of services are provided through Inclusive Education Services (IES):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| School psychologists; | District mental health clinician; |
| Speech and language pathologists; | English language learning (ELL); |
| Home/hospital services; | District Inclusive Education Services (IES) coordinator; |
| Hearing resource teachers; | District resource rooms; |
| Vision resource teachers; | Children's Therapy and Family Resource Centre (CTFRC); |
| Inclusion support teachers; | Provincial outreach programs; and, |
| School and family consultants; | Partial day planning. |
| Drug and alcohol counsellors; | |



School Psychologists

School psychologists are responsible for providing psycho-educational services for students from their entrance to Kindergarten through to their transition out of Grade 12. School psychologists are active participants in the District's consultation process and are also responsible for determining whether students are placed, based on appropriate documentation, in a Ministry of Education special needs category.

Speech and Language Pathologists

Speech and language pathologists address common communication problems, including articulation, language challenges and neurologically based and/or structural communication disorders, such as stuttering and verbal output.

Speech and language pathologists are assigned to offer speech and language services and augmentative alternative communication (AAC) consultation services to students attending District resource rooms. AAC services provide communication systems for students who have no or limited verbal output.

AAC consultation services may include:

- Assessment of a student's current communication level;
- Exploration of communication devices;
- In-service to school-based teams;
- Acquisition of or development of resource materials;
- Liaising with agencies such as SET-BC and ..

Inclusion Support Teachers

Inclusion support teachers build the capacity of schools to respond positively and with a variety of strategies to meet the behavioural and learning needs of students. These teachers are responsible for supporting positive behaviour intervention and support (PBIS), modelling and team-teaching social-emotional and behaviour programs in the classroom. They also work with other teachers in the standard classroom to develop strategies to meet the needs of students with behavioural problems.

School and Family Consultants

School and family consultants provide social-emotional consulting, short-term counselling, assessment of students as needed and other intervention support to students, parents and school staff members. They are available to provide counselling support in both elementary and secondary schools when a critical incident, such as a death in a family or school, occurs. These consultants are available to support schools in completing suicide risk assessments, preparing safety plans and following up with parents and Child and Youth Mental Health. They are also responsible for assisting school teams in completing violence threat risk assessments (VTRA) or worrisome behaviour forms.

Drug and Alcohol Counsellors

The District drug and alcohol counsellor supports students who find themselves challenged by substance use problems. SD73 partners with the Phoenix Centre in providing direct clinical counselling within the school setting. This counsellor provides students and District staff members with prevention services in the form of consultation and classroom-based presentations regarding substance use problems issues. The Phoenix Centre provides additional drug and alcohol counsellors to the District's secondary schools.

To better support students who have substance use problems challenges, new programming will be developed. SD73 will introduce the evidence-based Preventure program to Grade 9 students at three pilot schools. As well, a multi-agency working group will (PBIS) Txa0s to roduce studena vpling crosse



English Language Learning (ELL)

Each District school supports English language learning (ELL) students with learning assistance resource teacher services. ELL students are supported to learn English while being immersed, during classroom-based instruction, in the English language.

District Inclusive Education Services (IES) Coordinator

The District Inclusive Education Services (IES) coordinator arranges the student transition to high school and placement in District programs and coordinates the purchase of service school programs for students attending the Chris Rose Therapy Centre for Autism.

District Resource Rooms

There are thirteen District resource room programs. They are designed to provide individualized programming at primary, intermediate and secondary levels for students with complex special needs. Students are placed in District resource rooms through the District screening process, which takes time and careful planning. Often, the process starts up to a year in advance of the District screening itself, as this gives both the family and the school time to make good decisions about possible student placements.

Children's Therapy and Family Resource Centre (CTFRC)

SD73 works closely with the Children's Therapy & Family Resource Centre (CTFRC) to meet the needs of students throughout the District. CTFRC employees meet with students, families and education staff members to implement physiotherapy, occupational therapy and other needed support. CTFRC employees also assist schools to ensure that equipment, and facilities are accessible and inclusive. The District and CTFRC work together in Kindergarten planning meetings to ensure that professionals from each organization have in-depth knowledge of students' needs to facilitate students' successful transitions.

Provincial Outreach Programs

The Ministry of Education funds a number of provincial outreach programs to help meet the educational needs of low-incidence students in school districts. SD73 accesses these programs for consultations, resources and in-service in the areas of inclusion, autism, special education technology, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, early intervention and other specific learning needs.

Partial Day Programs

Many diverse learners require a flexible schedule or setting in order to learn to their potential. Partial day programs are intended to accommodate and support students' particular needs. An intervention



Planning for Equity of Aboriginal Learners

Consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action and the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General Report on Aboriginal Education, the District is developing a focused action-oriented, practical plan – the Equity in Action project – to address equity and inclusion for Aboriginal students. The foundation for this project responds to both provincial and District evidence that indicates the need to re-examine District assumptions and practices regarding Aboriginal learners. Currently, the District has a seventy-eight point two percent (78.2%), six-year completion rate for Aboriginal students as compared to an eight-nine point five (89.5%), six-year completion for all resident students. The completion rate for status on reserves drops to seventy-five point nine percent (75.9%).

With an intentional focus on student achievement, the District has undertaken a multi-year project to develop, pilot and implement the Equity in Action project in partnership with the Ministry of Education. Part of this project

English Language Learning (ELL)

SD73 English language learning (ELL) students and Thompson Rivers University (TRU) international students continue the connections that began in the spring of 2019 with a Mind the Gap project. This year's focus is on intercultural communication, a vital component in the success of students who are new to Canada and who are immersed in a multicultural setting at school and in the community. In addition to ELL students, the international student program enrolls approximately 200 full time equivalent (FTE) students from approximately twenty (20) countries. These students are embedded in seven (7) District



Supported Transitions

Effective transition planning is important and can impact learners' experiences of connectedness and belonging. Comprehensive transition planning that reflect a student's strengths provides the foundation for successful transitional experiences. By developing individualized learner transition needs, equity and resiliency can be fostered in all learners and in their educational programming.

Early Years

Kindergarten planning for students with diverse learning abilities takes place each spring. The purpose of this planning is to effectively transition children into Kindergarten by collaboratively sharing information between families, community agencies and District employees.

During 2018–2019, the following Kindergarten planning meetings occurred to support incoming learners:

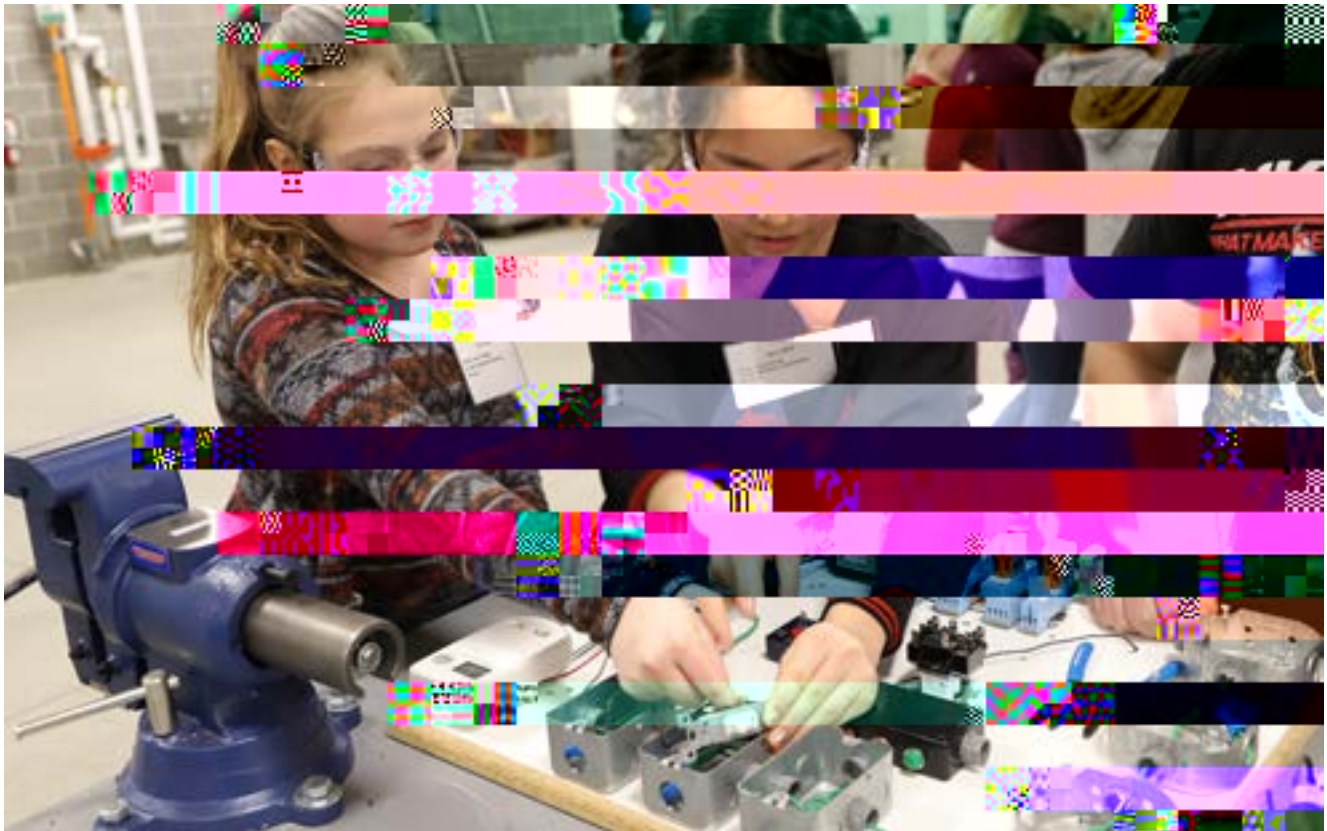
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Aboriginal Transitions to Post Secondary

The District works with TRU to host a one-day Aboriginal transition event to introduce Grade 10 students, well before they are of post-secondary age, to Aboriginal programs, services and opportunities in a post-secondary institution. In 2018, over 100 students attended this event; they toured both the trades and academic areas at TRU and heard from current Aboriginal post-secondary students regarding their experiences with Aboriginal post-secondary services.

Trades and Transitions

SD73's Trades and Transitions offers ongoing events to secondary school students that expose them to career opportunities within the trades. These programs often guarantee seats to students with Aboriginal ancestry.



Mental Health and Well-Being

The District's Mental Health Literacy programming and services support and promote mental health and well-being for students. Planning in this area helps identify students who are at risk of developing mental health challenges and provides access to specialized support for students who require more intensive intervention.

The District's Mental Health Literacy programming and services focus on:

- Fostering social-emotional learning;
- Enhancing mental health literacy; and,
- Supporting trauma-informed practice.

Fostering social-emotional learning is a key competency for success at school and in life. Social and emotional learning is a set of specific skills that help students set goals, manage their behaviour, build relationships and process or remember information. These skills impact a person's mental well-being and are connected to educational success and employment. School leaders have identified the need for more teacher professional development in the area of social-emotional learning.

Mental health literacy is the knowledge and understanding of how to develop and maintain mental well-being, identify risk factors and signs of mental health challenges, and access help when needed. It is important to note that Aboriginal students participating in a student panel earlier in 2019 identified mental health as a key priority for the District. In addition, secondary students participating in Student Voice, as well as the Youth Advisory Council, indicated that students would benefit from a greater focus on mental health literacy skills.

Trauma-informed practice promotes the provision of inclusive and compassionate learning environments, understanding coping strategies, supporting independence and helping to minimize additional stress or trauma by addressing individual student needs. The significance of addressing trauma through research-based pedagogies is critical for ensuring that our most vulnerable students are successful in school.

Schools play an important role in supporting the development and maintenance of well-being for children and youth. Mental Health Literacy is focused on addressing student mental health by helping educators create emotionally healthy learning environments, promoting early identification of students who may be struggling with mental health issues, reducing the stigma of mental health and providing support for access to specialized supports.

Fostering Social-Emotional Learning

The District supports several programs to support social and emotional learning for all students.

Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE)

The Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE) program was developed by the Ministry of Children and Family Development in collaboration with Anxiety Canada. EASE is a collection of evidence-informed anxiety prevention and resilience-building resources for use with students in Kindergarten to Grade 7. These standalone resources align with BC's social-emotional learning curriculum and are designed to benefit all students by fitting into existing classroom routines and practices. SD73 will continue to offer professional development to K–7 teachers, as well as train a second EASE District-level trainer to build teacher capacity to deliver the program.

Kids in the Know (KITK)

Kids in the Know (KITK) is a personal safety program for K–8 students. It is a research- and evidence-based program that deals with sexual exploitation and personal safety. KITK aligns with the Physical and Health Education (PHE) curriculum and with core competencies of personal and social responsibility, as well as communication skills. KITK's purpose is to help educators teach children and youth effective personal safety strategies in an engaging, age-appropriate and interactive way that builds resiliency skills and reduces students' likelihood of victimization in both the online and offline worlds.

Aboriginal Boys and Girls Groups

Aboriginal Boys and Girls Groups are based in elementary, middle and secondary schools. The purpose of these groups is to create a healthy understanding of gender identity within the context of cultural identity.

The groups

MindUP

MindUP is a robustly researched social-emotional program that uses the practice of mindful attention to positively change the structure and development of the parts of the brain needed for social awareness and learning. The program features lessons to improve students' behaviour and learning. The lessons are teacher friendly and require minimal training. MindUP provides students with emotional and cognitive tools to help them manage emotions and behaviours, reduce stress, sharpen concentration and increase empathy and optimism.

In 2018–2019, six (6) elementary schools received full staff training in MindUP. Also, over 150 educators attended MindUP training.

Healthy Relationships Programs

During 2019–2020, the District's healthy relationships coordinator is performing a social-emotional learning scan across the District so that SD73 will have a cohesive District healthy relationships program and can plan to meet the related needs of its students. Many District schools are currently using different approaches to social-emotional teaching and learning.

During 2019–2020, a comprehensive system-wide plan for implementing an evidence-based social-emotional learning plan for K–7 students will be developed. The coordinator will provide professional development and work with educators to successfully implement evidence-based, age-appropriate resources. This plan will provide educator training to primary and intermediate lead teachers throughout the year.

Mental Health Literacy

Stop Wondering, Start Knowing is an introductory resource for mental health literacy that is based on best practices designed to help teachers and students to better understand and be more aware of mental health. The topics covered by this resource include helping people to recognize the early signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges, as well as to decrease the stigma around mental health. Students reflect and share ideas about mental health and learn about the resources available for support.

The District's health promoting coordinator trained and mentored seven (7) lead teachers in Stop Wondering, Start Knowing and piloted this program to seven (7) classes of Grade 7 students. In addition, twenty-seven (27) secondary students were trained as peer mentors for intermediate students. This program will be expanded throughout the 2019–2020 school year.

The District has fully implemented Dr. Stan Kutcher's Bringing Mental Health to Schools curriculum. This is an evidence-based mental health literacy curriculum that focuses on understanding how to obtain and maintain good mental health. The learning objectives include understanding mental health disorders and their treatments, decreasing stigma regarding mental health and increasing help-seeking efficacy. Extensive training occurred during the previous school year and included thirteen (13) secondary counsellors and thirty-eight (38) PHE teachers. The target group was Grade 9 students; however, many schools taught to multiple grade levels. Clearwater, Logan Lake and Chase delivered this learning to 126 students from grades 8 to 10. Over 1600 students at various schools in Kamloops learned this curriculum.

Trauma-Informed Practice

In 2018–2019, Dr. Linda O’Neill provided trauma-informed educator professional development to District schools on Kamloops’ North Shore and to Summit Elementary. This year, O’Neill is scheduled to provide trauma-informed practice and trauma-specific interventions training to approximately 200 CUPE staff members and 200 Kamloops Thompson Teachers’ Association (KTTA) members. O’Neill assists counsellors, educators and other helping practitioners who are working in isolated settings to understand secondary trauma experienced by practitioners, complex trauma (developmental trauma disorder), and historical and intergenerational trauma.

During the 2019–2020 school year, sessions on trauma-informed practice will be offered in after-school sessions and during professional development days to education staff members. Also, an engagement session for parents and community providers will be offered.

The District strives to provide optimal environments for learning by fostering school connectedness and by preventing and intervening in instances of bullying and other worrisome behaviours.

To develop and maintain safe and caring school environments, the District focuses on:

Developing positive school cultures and encouraging positive social behaviours;

Student Safety

An area where schools promote safety and consistent behavioural expectations is through Positive Behaviour Intervention and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a multi-tiered framework for learning to support clear and consistent expectations across the school community. SD73 is in its third year of developing sustainable PBIS, with fidelity within elementary schools. To date, ten (10) elementary schools have completed a full pilot school program, with additional support from inclusion support teachers. Each year, six (6) more elementary schools to join the PBIS network. This will continue until all schools have been thus supported.

A robust response to threatening or worrisome behaviours also supports the perception of safety by learners. The violence threat risk assessment (VTRA) and worrisome behaviour procedures are used to assist in creating and maintaining an environment where students, staff members, parents and others feel safe when there is a threat of violence. The VTRA protocol may be used in situations where there is a threat of violence by or toward members of the school community. If the school-based VTRA team identifies indicators that a student may be on a pathway toward violence, the team can intervene in order to decrease the risk of violence, prevent injury and assist the student in accessing needed support.

During the 2019–2020 school year, a refreshed interagency protocol on violence threat risk assessment (VTRA) will be developed.



After-School Programming

SD73's after-school program is the largest such program in the province. The program aims to connect students to their passions and interests, connect students with a safe and caring adult and provide quality programming for students during the vulnerable after-school hours. Last year, seventy (70) programs were offered at nine (9) urban and three (3) rural sites. Over 1030 hours of instruction were provided, and 2047 students registered for the program (165 students participated in more than one program). Students are offered programming that focuses on movement and sports, arts and Cook It, Try It, Like It. Note that the following table does not include data regarding Cook It, Try It, Like It participants.

Total Students	Non-Aboriginal Students	Students with Aboriginal Ancestry	Children in Care	Designations	Rural Students	Urban Students
1071	811	260	5	173	150	1732

The Let's Play program, in association with the Rick Hansen Foundation, has donated sport wheelchairs to support inclusive physical activity opportunities for School District 73. Every year, 3000 elementary students in Kindergarten to Grade 7 District-wide have the opportunity to participate in wheelchair sports. The District is entering its eighth year of scheduling sport wheelchairs from October to June. The wheelchairs are used from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM every day and are fully booked. Every two weeks (every week in small schools), the District transportation system delivers ten (10) sport wheelchairs for use in SD73's elementary physical education classes, intramurals and after-school programs.

Students have the opportunity to try out a variety of activities and games in the wheelchairs, including basketball, hockey, relay races and tag games, and to explore creative play. Instruction focuses on establishing new physical literacy in fundamental skills, knowledge and abilities needed to confidently participate and play with peers.

The outcome of integrating these wheelchairs into the physical education curriculum has raised the playing field for inclusion by increasing awareness of the mobility challenges that some students face and has encouraged physical activity for all. Sport wheelchairs provide freedom for those individuals with mobility impairments who otherwise may not have been able to actively participate in physical activities with their peers.

Kamloops Adapted Sports Associations (KASA) provides opportunity to SD73 secondary students in grades 8 emiif trict 4.9n thTd(Every twohare pd)ximo SrmeF004

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Honouring the human rights of students and their families and reducing homophobia, transphobia and other barriers serves to support a safe and supportive environment. Services and programs to support learners in inclusive education commits to the provision of education and awareness opportunities for students that focus on valuing diversity and respecting differences, as well as on such topics as human rights and responses to discrimination.

In addition to educational opportunities, creating and maintaining partnerships and dialogue with LGBTQ2S+ communities to increase cooperation and collaboration between home, school and community is a priority. Each District K–12 school has a sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) lead teacher who provides age-appropriate curriculum resources, community partner information and support for students, families and colleagues. Professional development is provided throughout the year so that educators learn how to create school settings and learning environments that are safe, inclusive spaces for all learners. The number of diversity resources signed out of the District learning commons doubled from the previous year and more diversity kits, literacy circle kits and diversity books were signed out.

All secondary schools have an active gender sexuality alliance group, facilitated by a teacher sponsor. In addition, the District hosts District-wide social activities for students. Six (6) senior secondary

Conclusion

All of our SD73 learners are unique learners and have the right to equitable access to, and equitable participation in, quality education. It is our belief that the District and its schools will value diversity and respond to the diverse social and cultural needs of the individuals and the communities in which we learn, lead, and work. By promoting the understanding of others and respect for all and by creating safe and welcoming learning environments that are free from discrimination, harassment and violence, educational excellence and equity are attainable.

