



**School District 53
Okanagan Similkameen**

**Aboriginal Education
Annual Report 2016-2017**



Mission Statement:

syyuselx i? scm amaya?. ma?łspu?usəlx ali? i? sqilx^w
cawtət k^{wu} p̄xam. ixi? ǰspiwt.

‘Enhancing students’ pride and success through
traditional Okanagan and Similkameen people’s ways of learning.’



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Introduction

In September of 2016, School District No.53 signed the third Enhancement Agreement with other Aboriginal partners: the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, the Osoyoos Indian Band, the Upper Similkameen Indian Band and representatives of parents of students with Aboriginal Ancestry.



This report provides demographic information about the district and progress made on each of the goals in the Enhancement Agreement (EA). Although the report covers activities up to June 2017, the data is from the September 2016 provincial snapshot. We have used the goals of our new Enhancement Agreement to frame our data.

Aboriginal Education Advisory Council

The School District No. 53 Aboriginal Education Advisory Council (AEAC) meets four times each year and its role is to:

- Oversee EA goals to improve the performance of Aboriginal students;
- operate under the AEAC Terms of Reference;
- monitor the implementation of the Enhancement Agreement;
- periodically evaluate performance data and Aboriginal programs as set out in the EA;
- share information about programs;
- recommend and facilitate the implementation of new programs to provide better service to Aboriginal students; and
- provide strong communication and connection to Band Councils and parents.

The AEAC is composed of the following members appointed by their organization.

- School District: Trustee, Superintendent and/or designate, District Aboriginal Teacher, Elementary School Administrator, Secondary School Administrator.
- Three representatives (elder, Education Coordinator, Parent) from each of the bands*
- One representative of parents of students with Aboriginal ancestry for the South Okanagan Valley and one for the Similkameen Valley.
- Similkameen Schools and Southern Okanagan Schools: Two student representatives each, one for grades 7 - 9, one for grades 10 -12 (see Definitions for election criteria).

Various groups and/or individuals may be invited to meetings to participate in discussions and provide information as appropriate. Aboriginal Education Support Workers (ASW) are invited as well as school administrators. These guests do not have a vote in decisions.



District Demographics

	All Students			Aboriginal Ancestry		
	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Total for District	2400	2342	2339	471	463	453

Aboriginal Students On- or Off- Reserve									
		On-Reserve				Off-Reserve			
School	Aboriginal Students	Aboriginal Females	Aboriginal Males	Total Aboriginal	Aboriginal Females	Aboriginal Males	Total Aboriginal		
Year	#	#	#	#	#	#	#		#
2013/14	474	56	43	99	176	199	375		
2014/15	471	52	51	103	166	202	368		
2015/16	463	51	50	101	159	203	362		

Promising Practices for the 2016-2017 school year

- SOSS started a Parent Club with our grade 8 and 9 parents. Had 7 parents and their children.
- Orange shirt day – ASWs promoted throughout district and were pleased with the support from teachers and students.
- Aboriginal Graduation was in Keremeos this year on Aboriginal Day June 21st
- South Okanagan Secondary school for a second year will offer the EPIC program (Experiential Project Based Indigenous Community based learning) with OIB community member and teacher Ryan Baptiste. This program is comprised of aboriginal and non-aboriginal students: eleven Gr 9 and five Gr 10.
- ASWs and some teachers attended the workshop “We are culturally competent, now what?”. They did an excellent job explaining the impact of the residential schools on the survivors and their children and developing our understanding of how trauma impacts learning. We are now going to offer the workshop to teachers in district as a pro-d option and educational assistants.
- NITEP – Presentations were given to the 3 band communities. We also had a couple of people from Penticton Band attend. We are hoping to get a NITEP center started in the South Okanagan. We also have invited Okanagan College to speak to prospective teachers and share about the Associate Arts degree available at the Penticton campus for those interested in teaching who do not want to leave their local communities.
- Held our Okanagan/Similkameen Day for all grade 3 students in the district with Oliver Elementary School hosting and their students participating (the largest elementary school in district). All of our ASWs were presenters as well as other Okanagan Nation members as resource people. The primary and intermediate classes have separate stations that are done at their level.
- Two ASWs and Aboriginal Teacher attended the training for Girl Power and 2 B Boys in Salmon Arm and we started our clubs in two of our elementary schools. There is a Girls’ Group



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already running at one of our high schools and the training has given them more ideas to keep their group running until the end of the year.

- Our 10th annual pow wow was held and we had visitors from 2 other districts. We had all the grade 3 students from our district and our 2 band schools attend as well. We had a special tribute to our late Emcee, Nelson Leon, and had the drum group from his community to be our host drum.
- We purchased the AIMS program from SD 23.
- Hosted successful yearend gatherings with all our kids (high school and elementary) double ball, Nylintn hikes, visit to Spotted Lake, salmon fry release and digging speetlum. EPIC students both participated and took on leadership roles in these events.
- Completed our pilot project with Knowledge Keepers in all three secondary schools and five elementary schools. Knowledge Keepers rotated from school to school working three full days a week for eight weeks allowing each school three days of visits. Knowledge Keepers met with school principals, teachers and students to bring culture, tradition and language into the schools.
- Collaborated with LSIB for a cultural awareness day for teachers to be offered as an August professional development day. Teachers will travel by bus from LSIB Band office, Cawston BC to Palmer Lake, Washington. Then travel by boat across Palmer lake and visit Split Rock in order to develop teachers protocol knowledge and cultural awareness.

Requiring further effort for the 2017-2018 school year

- Deepening connections with secondary school off-reserve students
- Continue to close the gap between the number of Aboriginal students within alternative learning programs and all students.
- Increased understanding by staff of the Aboriginal support workers role in supporting Aboriginal students in schools.
- Continue efforts to engage parents
- Monitoring and support to SESS as they pilot the infusion of land based learning into the Grade Five to Grade Seven exploration/elective classes.
- Continue Knowledge Keepers project next year to allow schools to develop relationships with Knowledge Keepers.

Enhancement Agreement

The purposes of the Enhancement Agreement are to:

- collaborate with students, parents, elders, band staff, as well as district and school staff to build awareness and appreciation for sukənaqin and sməlqmix cultures;
- work collectively for the success of all Aboriginal learners attending public and band schools;
- continually enhance the academic performance of Aboriginal learners;
- honor and support the histories, cultures, and languages of the Aboriginal people whose traditional territories School District No. 53 lies within;
- support the involvement of all learners in Aboriginal cultural activities and the arts; and



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- foster greater understanding and sensitivity of the sukənaqin and sməłqmix culture among all district staff so that Aboriginal student's participation in traditional community activities may be supported.

Guiding Principles

The performance areas selected for improvement are those where there is assurance that the data can be:

- used to implement effective strategies and interventions;
- used to encourage best educational practice district-wide;
- tracked with integrity over time;
- related to the goals of School District No. 53 (Okanagan Similkameen) strategic plan and goals of the Band Councils;
- used to monitor the culture of school community and the impact on Aboriginal learners and parents; and
- evaluated in an ongoing manner and reported on annually.

Performance Goals and Measures

The data for assessing the performance goals will be reported in the district's *Annual Report on Aboriginal Students*. The annual report will be submitted to the ministry through the Aboriginal Education Learning Division.

Goal No. 1: to increase efforts to engage parents and families

Rationale: Positive relationships with parents and families in order to work together for student achievement will result in improved success for students. Research has shown the positive effects of parent involvement on children, families and school when schools and parents continuously support and encourage the children's learning and development. The school system can increase efforts and methods to engage parents and families in supporting our collective efforts. Having the parents/elders/knowledge keepers in the classrooms as resource people and to share their stories and knowledge will help them feel more included and welcomed in the schools.

Objectives:

1. To increase positive relationships with parents and families to work together for student achievement
2. To increase opportunities to engage parents
3. To increase awareness of opportunities for post-secondary education, career planning and goals beyond high school



Measurable Indicators:

- Increase efforts to meet off site and closer to homes
- E-portfolios
- Connections with Aboriginal Support workers
- Aboriginal Parent Advisory Committee
- Cultural activities in schools
- Use of various media to engage and inform
- Implement FNEHC/Mental Health programs for parents
- Increase school and district connections with OIB, USIB, and LSIB



	OKF	TEN	OES	SOSS	OSES	OSS	CPS	SESS
Parent/Family Night								
Okanagan Days (grade 3-4)								
Knowledge Keepers in classrooms/field trips								
E-Portfolios/Jupiter/First Class								
Parent Club								

Goal No. 2: to increase a sense of belonging and social emotional competencies for all Aboriginal students.

Rationale: While we have made good efforts in having our schools reflect the culture and traditions of the local Aboriginal people, it is critical that we increase efforts so that all students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, know and understand Aboriginal culture and traditions. Research indicates that the more students feel a sense of belonging in their school, the greater the chances of regular attendance as well as the higher chances of school completion. Working for a better understanding for all (all students, all staff) of the traditional values of Aboriginal People and the recognition that these values have been passed on for generations will help Aboriginal children feel respected, proud and welcomed in our schools. This will lay the foundation for academic success.

Objectives:

1. Aboriginal values and culture are understood, respected and valued in our schools.
2. Aboriginal students build confidence to express feelings, opinions and offer leadership in classrooms, schools, District, and community.



3. To provide more curricular opportunities with Aboriginal perspectives and choice.

Measurable Indicators:

- Provide in-service for educators in local cultures and the First Peoples’ Principles of Learning
- Review protocols with staff members
- Increased opportunities and visibility of Aboriginal culture
- Continue with FRIENDS programs
- Increase presence of Elders in schools
- Engaging Aboriginal Students Network to work with teachers to implement First Peoples Principles of Learning and Aboriginal Perspectives across grades and subject areas
- Student forums
- Identify and encourage student leadership
- Increase the showcasing of student work
- Increase the involvement and reflection of aboriginal students in assemblies
- Boys’ and Girls’ Groups
- Building resiliency and promoting a growth mindset
- Mental health support
- Guiding or navigating societal pressures
 - Drug and alcohol
 - Social media

	OKF	TEN	OES	SOSS	OSES	OSS	CPS	SESS
Boys & Girls Club								
Elders in Classrooms								
Culture Camps Teacher participant								
Student Leadership / AEAC / Assemblies								
Aboriginal Art & Artifact Displays								
Okanagan Language & Culture								
District Cultural Gathering with Aboriginal Students								



Goal No. 3: to improve the academic performance of aboriginal students

Rationale: We want all students to graduate with dignity, purpose and options. To do so, we need to examine instructional practices and structures to support confidence and achievement in reading, writing, numeracy as well as in courses leading to graduation. Personalized and relevant learning experiences will engage students in their learning and increase success.

Objectives:

1. To increase kindergarten readiness and participation in pre-school programs
2. To improve the number of students who fully meet or exceed expectations in reading, writing and numeracy

Measurable Indicators:

- Personalized learning
- Place-based and project-based learning
- Staff reflection exercises on the First Peoples Principles of Learning
- Include ASW/Aboriginal Contact Teacher at school based meetings
- To continue to look for innovative ways to connect students to their learning
- To continue to look for innovative ways to personalize learning for students
- To incorporate Aboriginal world views and perspectives in classrooms
- Strategies of goal setting, time management, organization and study skills

	OKF	TEN	OES	SOSS	OSES	OSS	CPS	SESS
Epic Program / Gateway to the Trades								
Restorative Justice / Indian Act								
Blanket Exercise with Teachers (Aboriginal History)								
Okanagan Nation Unit - Discontinued								
Cultural Activities with Pre schools								



Goal No. 4: to increase transitions and school completion rates for all Aboriginal Students

Rationale: We recognize that transition times for students such as school entry into kindergarten, from elementary to secondary school, from grade nine to the graduation years, and from secondary school into careers or post-secondary opportunities are critical times for learner success.

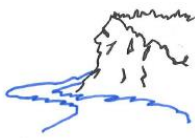
Objectives:

1. To inform and support students and their families with information and guidance related to post-secondary opportunities, application requirements, bursaries, and planning.
2. To improve grade 10 and 11 transition rates
3. To increase completion rates for all Aboriginal students
4. To develop partnerships with post-secondary institutions to coordinate a mentorship program for high school students

Measurable Indicators

- Tracking of individual students from school entry to grade eight
- Implement transition meetings with parents and students in Grades 7 & 9 to be held at band offices and close to homes
- Forge stronger links between early learning programs and Kindergarten
- After school tutoring programs
- Independent Studies Partnerships for credit for learning done outside of school
- Hands-on Career Fairs and exploration
- Hosting of transitional meetings from band schools to SD53 schools
- Implement a practice whereby counsellors meet with children and parents of grade 9 students to plan their graduation program for grades 10 to 12
- Focus on the core competencies and the First Peoples Principles of Learning

	OKF	TEN	OES	SOSS	OSES	OSS	CPS	SESS
Community dinner / meeting with Support Workers & Administrators								
Career Fairs at Post Secondary Institutions								
After school support								
Transition meetings Grade 7s with High School Personnel								



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Concluding Remarks

The new curriculum has created more opportunities for Aboriginal Support Workers to connect with teachers. Aboriginal Support Workers have been encouraging teachers to teach new material and to become familiar with protocols and local culture. Teachers are interested and are requesting more field trips out on the land and for a deeper knowledge of how the local land can be connected to student learning. There is still work to be done and with the ongoing positive support of the district this will come with time.

Thank you to our students, teachers, administrators, communities and aboriginal education department for their dedication to our students and perseverance in our mission.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Gallagher
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School District 53 Okanagan Similkameen

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District Principal
School District 53 Okanagan Similkameen