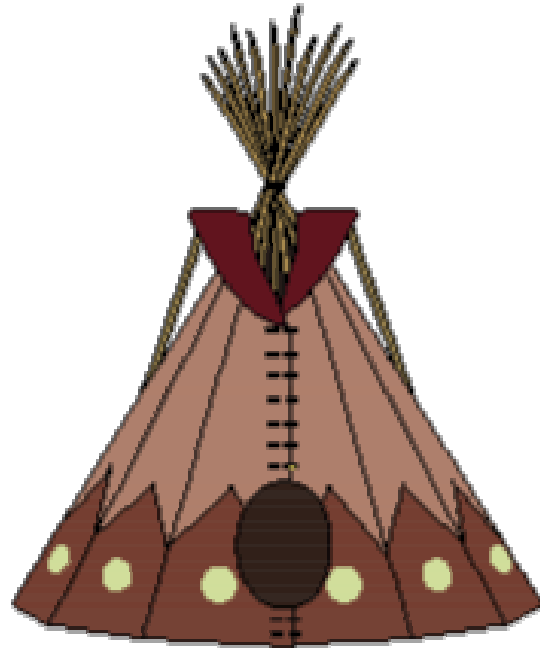


SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 53 (OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN)



**School District No. 53  
(Okanagan Similkameen)**



**2002/2003  
First Nations Education Report**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 53 (OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN)**

**FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION REPORT**

**2002 – 2003**

The Annual First Nations Education Report is prepared so that the First Nations and District leaders may use the information to develop strategies for improving First Nations students' success. The First Nations data collection initiative is part of the district-wide data collection as guided by policies approved by the Board of Trustees.

The purpose of the First Nations data collection project is to gain insight and understanding into the educational experience and achievement levels of First Nations students. As the trail of data is recorded and analyzed over time, it is hoped that positive changes in the achievement levels of First Nations students will be observed. The data is an important source of information for decision-makers regarding the success of programs and services that have been put in place for First Nations students. In addition, the data can provide necessary information for program and service planning.

Please note that the data collection process has progressed through a series of revisions over the past several years. With each year, both the data quality and collection process have improved. Where data is considered questionable, it will be noted. As the reporting process becomes more complete and accurate, the interpretation of the data will also become more reliable. The data that is being reported, however, remains a valuable source of information related to First Nations students in the District.

At the beginning of 2003, members of the Aboriginal and District communities were brought together to discuss the information from the 2001/02 report and to make recommendations to the schools, the Bands and the District. This was to serve as a model for individual schools and communities to set goals to support each School Planning Council in developing their school plan. It is understood that real change will occur when all partners work together in a concerted effort to improve Aboriginal student success.

Respectfully submitted: James D. Insley, Assistant Superintendent

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## Overview

Aboriginal Education has been a major focus in School District No. 53 for many years now. The district is concerned about the achievement gap that exists between our Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students. This report is to aid members from the school and Aboriginal communities in dialoging about student results and discussing the direction schools, Bands and the District may take in regards to the achievement of Aboriginal students.

In agreement with the Bands, the District has taken a geographical approach in promoting ongoing communication with the Aboriginal communities. Regular consultative meetings take place with all bands on a bi-monthly basis. The Upper Similkameen Indian Band and Lower Similkameen Indian Band meet jointly with District and school administration to dialogue about school issues in the Keremeos, Cawston and Hedley communities. The Osoyoos Indian Band meets to discuss school issues in Oliver. The meetings deal with emergent concerns regarding programs, issues around individual and groups of students, and planning for intervention. At this time, off reserve and Metis groups are not represented but this does not seem to be an issue.

Over the years, the District has sponsored training and inservice sessions for support workers and Okanagan Language teachers. During 2002/03, the Okanagan Mainline Regions Support Worker and Language Instructor Conferences were not held. School District No. 53 will take its traditional lead and sponsor these conferences in April 2004.

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS SUMMARY

### Okanagan Language Instruction

Okanagan Language instruction was provided in all facilities with significant Okanagan student populations. During the 2002/2003 school year, 114 students were enrolled at the elementary level and 19 at the secondary level. The offerings vary from school to school, depending on student enrolment and available resources. In all schools, Okanagan Language is open to all students, including non-aboriginal. Some Okanagan parents/students choose French as a language option, feeling that this opens more options for the student as they progress through school.

#### Elementary

Elementary Okanagan Language programs tend to be well established within the district. They are seen at all schools as being important programs for Aboriginal students as, besides language, they have a large focus on the Okanagan culture. Students learn a great deal about their culture and community's values and develop a strong sense of pride about who they are.

##### Cawston Primary School:

- 6<sup>th</sup> year of program
- 23 students were involved, Kindergarten to Grade 4
- Students receive 80 minutes of instruction weekly
- At Grade 4, Okanagan Language is scheduled with French instruction and parents must choose which language they wish their child to have instruction in.

##### Hedley Elementary School:

- 6<sup>th</sup> year of program
- All students (21) were involved in the program, Kindergarten to Grade 4
- Students receive instruction on Fridays, integrated with the rest of their studies
- Students are assessed on communication, comprehension, translation and pronunciation

##### Similkameen Elementary Secondary School:

- 8<sup>th</sup> year of program
- 30 students were involved in the program, Grade 5 to 7.
- Students receive 80 minutes of instruction weekly
- Okanagan Language is scheduled with French instruction and parents must choose which language they wish their child to have instruction in.

##### Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary School:

- 15<sup>th</sup> year of program
- 44 students were involved in the program, Kindergarten to Grade 7
- Students receive 80 minutes of instruction weekly
- Okanagan Language is scheduled with French instruction and parents must choose which language they wish their child to have instruction in.

## SECONDARY

Secondary Okanagan Language has been offered for four years. This offering resulted after the completion of an Okanagan Language IRP, subsequently approved by the local Band councils and the Ministry of Education. In the beginning, there were issues around scope and sequence, instructional planning, and rigor of the program. Developing a scope and sequence along with thematic lesson plans during the summer of 2000 has alleviated some of these concerns. The most pressing issue today continues to be the securing of qualified instructors who have the ability to teach in a classroom setting of 24 to 30 multi-ability students.

### Similkameen Elementary Secondary School:

- 4<sup>th</sup> year of program
- A few Grade 8 students took course in 2002/03 year
- Offered during a regular secondary course block
- Scheduling with elementary timetable is an issue. The secondary timetable rotates weekly and the elementary one doesn't. The school has developed a new timetable to alleviate this problem in 2003/04.

### Southern Okanagan Secondary School:

- 4<sup>th</sup> year of program
- 14 students involved in three offerings; Introductory Okanagan 11, Okanagan Intermediate, and Okanagan 8
- Offered during a regular secondary course block
- This program is supported by regular school teaching staff.

## ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Instructors for Okanagan Language are not plentiful. Our present instructors are nearing retirement age and/or have other commitments. This sometimes results in inconsistent attendance, diminishing the effectiveness of the program. We have been investigating a variety of alternatives to acquire the services of a qualified instructor dedicated to the position.

This past year we explored the possibility of hiring, in cooperation with the Osoyoos Indian Band, an instructor on a full time basis to provide instruction to students at Sen-Pok-Chin School (O.I.B. Band School), Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary School and Southern Okanagan Secondary School. We feel that a full time position will enable the teacher to commit to development of a truly effective program and develop the skills necessary to deliver it. However, timetabling concerns made it necessary to postpone the project to future years. As a result of the uncertainty of having a qualified teacher at Southern Okanagan School, students did not sign up for the course resulting in it not being offered during the 2003/04 year, thus ending a four year program.

## TRAINING

Time and assistance to develop curriculum and instructional resources is offered to Okanagan Language teachers on a yearly basis. Support for new language instructors is provided through orientation and mentorship programs.

## ARTICULATION WITH POST SECONDARY

Articulation of Okanagan Language with the various universities and colleges is as follows:

- Simon Fraser University:
  - IOK 11 and IOK 12 are accepted as Language 11 credits for entrance
  - IOK 12 is accepted as a fifth “academic 12” course for admission for the 2002 and subsequent secondary graduates
- University of Victoria:
  - IOK 11 and IOK 12 are accepted as Language 11 credits for entrance
  - In order for IOK 12 to be accepted as an “academic 12” course for admission, application would have to be made to admissions.
- University of British Columbia:
  - Is looking into it. Would probably give consideration to Aboriginal student wishing to use as entrance credit.
- University of Northern British Columbia:
  - Does not require a second language for entrance
  - Would accept IOK 12 as a fifth “academic 12” course for admission.
- Okanagan University College:
  - Is looking into it, but progressing slowly.

There are few students committed to the program making further articulation pointless at this time.

## Aboriginal Support Programs

### ABORIGINAL SUPPORT WORKERS

The Aboriginal support workers program is well established in all schools with a significant Aboriginal student population. Aboriginal support workers are supervised by the school's Administrators and with general direction from appropriate teachers. They are expected to demonstrate initiative and flexibility in carrying out their duties including:

- Assisting with bridging cultural differences
- Assisting Aboriginal students with their studies
- Assisting the school in promoting increased effective participation of First Nations students and parents in the school community. This includes the liaison with families to achieve these objectives. (Please see Appendix E for the job description.)

There are two Aboriginal support teachers in the district, one assigned to Southern Okanagan Secondary School and the other to Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary. Ms. Helen Gallagher, Aboriginal teacher at Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary, also has district duties and supports aboriginal students at Oliver Elementary School as well as providing resource services at other schools around the district. She also represents the District at regional and provincial meetings. As teachers, their role is much expanded with emphasis on planning and programming for Aboriginal student success.

Aboriginal support workers and teachers are expected to meet on a regular basis and work with Band Educational Coordinators to provide the necessary support for students both at school and in the community.

### **TRAINING**

Over the past five years, the district has supported an ongoing training program for support workers. All staff have now been trained in Solution Focused Counseling. A review session will be provided during the 2003/04 school year. Support workers, with the permission of the school principal, have available to them funds for individual training and in-servicing.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SCHOOLS

### Cawston Primary & Hedley Elementary Schools

Principal meets bi-monthly with the Lower Similkameen Indian Band and Upper Similkameen Indian Band to discuss student results and educational topics. Joint initiatives arise from these meetings.

The program has one Aboriginal Support Worker:

- Works four days at Cawston Primary and one day at Hedley Elementary
- Works with students both within and out of class
- Works with administration, staff, parents, and community members
- Meets once a month with the Upper and Lower Similkameen Bands to discuss student progress, concerns and events
- Coordinates the Success Maker Computer Program. Arranged further training for herself and other support workers to further utilize the program. Acquisition of Success Maker was made possible through the Federal Aboriginal Technology Grant. Success Maker is a highly structured program, which allows students to move from level to level at their own rate, once they have mastered the work of each level. Teachers are pleased with the students' progress and have commented on greater ability in phonemic awareness, more confidence with reading unfamiliar material and applying strategies to daily work.
- Works with Okanagan Language/Culture program
- Provides cultural experiences to students during Aboriginal day including activities such as making Indian Ice Cream and discussing dried food.
- Indicators of success for 2002/2003 goals:
  - Cawston and Hedley purchased First Nations material for the libraries
  - Students have gone into the community for First Nation's events and all students have experienced performances from First Nation's performers
  - Grade 4 students visited Inkameep Desert Park.
- Goals for 2003/2004 school year:
  - Evaluate Okanagan Language program
  - Create First Nations' Week combined with Western Week or Multicultural Education Week activities
  - Develop First Nations Students portfolio

Similkameen Elementary Secondary School

Principal meets bi-monthly with the Lower Similkameen Indian Band and Upper Similkameen Indian Band to discuss student results and educational topics. Joint initiatives arise from these meetings.

The program has two Aboriginal Support Workers.

**Elementary:**

- In-class support was available for the First Nations students. Worked with individual students on Math, Reading, etc.
- Support of a 45 minute homework block, twice weekly
- Members of School-based team
- Provided One-to-One Reading program for students
- Work with individual students experiencing behaviour difficulties with social skills.
- Assist teachers with students in a variety of different ways.
- Provide a life-skills program to students
- Goals for the coming year:
  - Phone absent students immediately in an attempt to improve attendance.

**Secondary:**

- A major focus is attendance as this would lead to improved performance
- Focus on students who were getting "Incompletes" in their academic courses. A homework block was arranged so students could work on assignments that were overdue.
- In-class support was available for the First Nations students who would benefit from scribing or reading course material
- Provided scholarship or bursary information to eligible students
- Worked at increasing number of parents attending parent/teacher interviews
- Attended IEP meetings. These were held with extra attention to parent concerns/issues.
- Goals for 2003/2004:
  - Final agreement on the Federal Aboriginal Technology Grant
  - Improve attendance
  - To support teachers in developing a greater understanding of the Okanagan culture by holding a joint workshop during summer Pro-D.

Southern Okanagan Secondary School

The program has a support worker and a support teacher.

- Administration, support worker and support teacher meet bimonthly with the Osoyoos Indian Band Education Council reporting student progress, attendance and discipline issues.
- Continued Aboriginal Support blocks in which students may choose to receive extra help and time in completing their studies. Tutored students outside the classroom.
- Support worker was scheduled into the classroom for two blocks in each semester. Students experiencing difficulties were grouped in specific classes so that she could assist them in organization, assignment completion, homework and test writing. Assistance was provided in two Math classes during semester one and one Science class and one Social Studies class during semester two.
- The "Great Beginnings" concept was introduced. In June, an informal dinner at Sen Pok Chin was held with First Nations students making the transition from Grade 7 into Grade 8, their parents, Grade 8 teachers, administrators and District staff attending to get to know one another. The following morning, the students, the support worker from Tuc-el-Nuit and the principal from Sen Pok Chin were invited to the school for an orientation provided by our support worker. The students enjoyed the morning touring the school and learning about school policies and expectations. The First Nations students also participated in a scavenger hunt to see who could remember their way around the school.
- The First Nations Group met on Thursdays during lunch break. Although the group was small, the students worked toward goals set by themselves such as trips to powwows. The group also made tremendous contributions to projects taken on by the First Nations program such as the Multicultural Week activities and the Great Beginnings dinner. The group hopes to attract more new member next year and their goal is to do a student exchange with another FN group in British Columbia.
- Cool Schools was introduced to support Aboriginal students.
- Students participated in the Changes Program, a twelve week drug and alcohol rehabilitation day program. These students received CAPP credits. This was a joint venture between the Osoyoos Indian Band, the Kelowna based ARC Program and Southern Okanagan Secondary School.
- Some students took part in a Youth Suicide Prevention Walk
- Comedian Don Burnswick was sponsored by the OIB to talk to students about the issue of racism.
- Students attended the Substance Abuse/Sexual Exploitation Conference sponsored by the Okanagan Skaha School District.
- Vice-Principal Phil Rathjen and Mrs. Batchelor visited the Merritt and Kamloops First Nations programs.

Goals for 2003/2004:

- Continue to seek FN parent and community support.
- Encourage student leadership through participation in peer tutoring, peer counseling and the FN Group.
- Continue to communicate homework, student progress and behavior referrals to parents/guardians.
- Continue to provide academic support through the Aboriginal support block.
- Continue to participate in Multicultural Week activities.
- Continue to group students for TA support.
- Continue to review student timetables for balance and individual needs.
- Continue to take students to educational conferences.
- Expand student use of technology through Aboriginal technology Grant purchases.
- Continue our focus on increasing the graduation rate of FN students.
- Continue to collect relevant data.

Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary

The program has a support worker and an Aboriginal Education teacher.

- Administration, support worker and support teacher meet bimonthly with the Osoyoos Indian Band Education Council reporting student progress, attendance and discipline issues.
- Aboriginal Education teacher coordinates in Okanagan Language and cultural instruction, as well as special events. Assists school administration and behaviour resource teachers as a liaison with the Band and parents and guardians of students.
- Full day Kindergarten is offered with an emphasis on language development
- Aboriginal Education teacher provides tutorial time after school for students having difficulty completing homework.
- Aboriginal Education Teacher provides one-to-one reading sessions with all primary students.
- Have software and hardware purchased through the Federal Aboriginal Technology Grant to support student success. Software includes Success Maker, Accelerated Reader, Auto Skill (The Academy of Reading) and other Electronic Teacher Resources. Three other programs, including "Co-Writer", have been reviewed to help improve reading and writing skills. Have purchased internet sites for Success Maker.
- Bi-monthly progress reports using Success Maker are provided for all Aboriginal students.
- Support Worker worked with Intermediate students on improving social skills. In addition, regular sessions of twelve weeks were scheduled for students to work with SuccessMaker to improve reading, writing and mathematics.
- Cultural activities included:
  - Okanagan Nation Unit - 6 weeks
  - Okanagan Days were a great success. Supported by Aboriginal elders and resource people.
  - Drumming for Grade 4/5, dancing and loom beading for Grade 6/7
  - Selected students in Grades 4 – 7 assisted with Okanagan Days crafts.
- Goals for 2003/2004:
  - To improve reading skills for Aboriginal students
  - To improve attendance rates
  - To maintain the after school tutorial program
  - To use the remainder of the technology grant money to purchase additional software and new computers to improve student results.
- An Aboriginal Education plan was appended to the School Plan to support the above goals.

### Okanagan Similkameen Learning Centre

Between 1993 and 1999 only a small number of Aboriginal students attended the Learning Centre in Osoyoos and Keremeos. Once Oliver Learning Centre opened in September 2000, many more Band members, both of school age and beyond, have taken advantage of our courses and flexible schedules. Last year there were 48 students of Aboriginal ancestry attending the three Learning Centre locations, with the majority in Oliver. Please note that the Learning Centre does not receive Aboriginal funds.

There have been many successes among the Aboriginal students:

- Five have graduated over the past two years.
- Four more will graduate in 2003/04
- Several have been able to return to regular secondary schools, where they are now in the academic program.
- Many are continuing their education or have definite plans for future education:
  - Attending UVic Fine Arts
  - Enow'kin Centre – 2 are currently attending
  - Nursing at OUC – Completed Care Aid course first
  - US Army Fort Benning
  - Centre for Arts and Technology in Kelowna – Audio Sound Diploma
  - Nicola Valley Institute Fisheries program
  - Hairdressing school
  - Full time employment
  - SAIT – Hotel Management

There is regular consultation between the school and the Band Education Coordinator, and additional contact if emergent issues arise. The Centre also shares reports about the attendance and progress of Aboriginal students with the Band via the Education Coordinator. Although we are unable to provide Okanagan Language instruction, we do have the Ministry of Education First Nations 12 course available for students.

The student population at Okanagan Similkameen Learning Centre varies enormously. Consequently, the school has set priorities to address some areas where we hope to see improvement in the academic achievement of our students. Among these priorities there are specific goals for Aboriginal students. Of particular concern are attendance, course completion and graduation. Students sign an attendance commitment form, and our goal is a 10% improvement in all three areas above.

Last year the Centre added a counsellor, who assists students with academic decisions and is available for consultation. This year, we have created the “TLC group” for students with behaviour and other defined problems. They receive special attention and are invited to attend meetings with speakers and topics of interest to them. The Learning Centre provides our students with the best education possible, giving them the opportunities and support needed to succeed.

**DISTRICT ABORIGINAL EDUCATION STAFF**

Aboriginal Support Workers:

- Marty Marchand Cawston Primary/Hedley Elementary
- Joannie Allison Similkameen Elementary Secondary
- Marcie Trotter Similkameen Elementary Secondary
- Muriel (Ducky) Tanner Southern Okanagan Secondary
- Burnadette Briscoe Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary

Aboriginal Support Teacher:

- Pat Batchelor Southern Okanagan Secondary

Aboriginal Education Teacher

- Helen Gallagher Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary

Okanagan Language/Culture Instructors:

- Theresa Dennis Cawston Primary  
Similkameen Elementary Secondary
- Theresa Ann Terbasket Hedley Elementary
- Modesta Betterton Southern Okanagan Sec. /Tuc-el-Nuit

## **ANNUAL ABORIGINAL EDUCATION REPORT FOCUS MEETING SUMMARY**

On February 6, 2003, band leaders, elders, parents, students, support workers, teachers, school administrators, trustees and District administrators met to dialogue about 2001/2002 student results.

The goals of the meeting were:

- To review what we are doing.
- To look at how our students are achieving.
- To recommend future action for schools, bands and District.

The participants worked in school groups as they were led through a process, which included the following:

- Discussing school and band programs in place to support students.
- Looking at student achievement data.
- Considering satisfaction with these results and determining what things seem to be working.
- Making recommendations to schools, bands and district.

Following are some of the ideas for action by participants over the coming years:

### **Cawston Primary School and Hedley Elementary School**

- Roots of Empathy Program (Lend a classroom)
- Year Round Schooling – balanced calendar
- Preschool/Junior Kindergarten/Headstart
- More sensory integrated activities
- Include high school students (role models)
- Integrate First Nations culture throughout the curriculum
- Continued funding for breakfast and lunch programs
- Band needs to go after Linda Reid, Minister of Early Childhood development for funding early childhood programs.
- Development of a committee “Primary Education Council”. Preschool to Grade one support each other with education strategies and goals to meet the needs of all students (share resources).
- Parenting Wisely course: appropriate time for parents
- Split Primary and Intermediate program at Hedley
- More parent support: student academic achievement

- District support for long-term teacher (contractual) at Hedley. Relationship between community, family, Band and teacher.
- Teachers: understanding culture (provide inservice, training experiences)
- Field trips, career days
- District/Administrators addressing parent concerns
- Student led conferences

### **Similkameen Elementary Secondary School**

- Native PAC group
- Have an elder on school staff (discipline option, potentially lowering suspensions)
- Cultural Sensitivity workshop (Pro-D activity)
- Add an Okanagan Studies component (adding voice to history)
- Add a Native Studies course (or integrate Native studies components into Social Studies.)
- Non Native teacher liason
- Information packages on IRPs for parents
- Teachers attending Band open house (opportunity to get to know more about the community)
- Aboriginal teachers
- Native orientation for Grade 7's [entering grade 8]; expectations, etc.
- Experiential learning model (based more on personal learning)
- Special Education criteria
- Resource Centre (access to materials)
- Deal with racism issues (acknowledge that it exists)
- Next focus meeting should be held in a First Nations community

### **Southern Okanagan Secondary School**

- Promote parent involvement in schools:
  - First Nations Parent Night
  - Aboriginal Support Worker contact parents for Parent/Teacher Interviews.
- Find ways to emphasize achievements of First Nation students
  - Good News calls
- First Nation peer counseling training (incorporate traditional FN practices)
- Encourage First Nation students to access Peer Tutoring opportunities (as tutors and tutees)
- Investigating and visiting successful First Nation programs in other districts
- Band – school mini conferences at 10 absences
- Male Aboriginal role models in Support/Teacher positions.

### Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary School

- Breakfast program
- Funded after school program
- Utilize OIB resources (re: attendance, health issues)
- Use Sen-Pok-Chin during summer months for internet SuccessMaker
- Create reading contracts sponsored by the Band (movie pass, swimming pass, etc.)
- Have Band look into a reading program starting at birth and up
- Continue with present day successes.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

We continue to see some steady improvement in most areas we are tracking as a District. It is encouraging to see the data become more consistent from year to year, in most cases, having increased over the past four years. Across the District:

- All types of suspension data for elementary Aboriginal students decreased over the year. Attendance for all groups was down slightly. There was a decrease in the number of secondary students absent for twenty or more days and an increase for elementary students.
- Academic results continue to be encouraging. Trends, including FSA scores continue to show improvement for primary and intermediate Aboriginal students in Language Arts and Mathematics.
- The number of incompletes (I) was again down for Aboriginal students at the elementary level and the rate of resolving these successfully was up. At the secondary level, the number of incompletes issued was down and the number successfully resolved was also down.
- Aboriginal students participation rate in English 8 – 10 was down, although the success rate was significantly up. Participation in English 11 and 12 was again up but with a slightly lower success rate.
- The participation and success rates were up for Math 8 and 9. FSA Numeracy results remained about the same.
- FSA Reading Comprehension results continued to show steady increase.
- District Aboriginal FSA First Draft Writing was down slightly, but still showed significant gains over the past three years.
- The trend for Six Year Dogwood Completion (D – 1) dropped to 21 percent in 2002/03. It is important to note that completion rates are determined by tracking the number of students entering Grade 8 who graduate within six years. Many of the students tracked as our Grade 8 cohort may have left the district long before Grade 12 as we also have a high mobility rate. The graduation rate in comparison is calculated by tracking the number of students who are enrolled in Grade 12 as of September 30 who graduate within one year. Our Aboriginal Ancestry graduation rate for 2002/03 was 63%.

We need to continue the good work in these areas and consider the other areas where a positive impact is still needed:

- Reading comprehension is still a priority. The District comprehension initiative at the intermediate level should have a positive impact.
- Aboriginal students are still over represented in the Behaviour categories and Discipline areas.

- Although participation is up for English 11 and 12, there is still a very large gap between the number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students taking and passing the English 12 exam.
- Aboriginal student participation in Principals of Math 12 is almost non-existent.

On February 6, 2003 we met as a community of teachers, support workers, parents and students to look the trends and to consider next steps in addressing student achievement. The dialogue and commitment at the meeting, as well as the results we are seeing, should be encouraging to us all. We need to involve parents and the community in the education process and stay vigilant in our task to provide our students with the very best education possible. Parents must become more involved in the schooling of their children if all students are to have the support and opportunity to succeed in school.