



Date: June 19, 2024 **Agenda Item:** 8.4

To: Board of Trustees

From: Shawna Warren, Superintendent

Originator(s): Jonathan Konrad, Deputy Superintendent, Education Services
Shannon Campbell Requa, Director, Education Planning

Governance Policy: [Board Policy 225: Role of the Board](#)
[Board Policy 700: Superintendent of Schools](#)

Additional Reference: [Indigenous Education: Alberta Education](#)

Assurance Domain: Student Growth & Achievement
Learning Supports

Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS)
SLQS Competencies ([SLQS](#) / [Board Policy 700](#)):
Building Effective Relationships
Visionary Leadership

Subject: **Indigenous Education Report**

Purpose:

For information.

Background:

This report highlights the Division’s ongoing commitment to enhancing the educational experiences and outcomes for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. It aligns with the Board’s mission to create safe, respectful and collaborative learning environments. By fostering partnerships with Indigenous communities, students are motivated to pursue their unique paths to future success. Key strategies outlined in the report, such as growing local community partnerships and providing individualized holistic student support, are direct reflections of the Board’s commitment to excellence in teaching and shared responsibility.

The Indigenous Education Report showcases progress and the Division’s dedication to continuous improvement in meeting the diverse needs of students.

Administration is prepared to respond to questions at the June 19, 2024, Public Board meeting.

Attachment(s):

1. Indigenous Education and Student Success Report 2023 - 2024



Indigenous Education and Student Success in 2023 - 2024

Demographics

The percentage of students self-identifying as First Nations, Métis and Inuit has remained relatively stable over the last year. There is an overall increase in students self-identifying as Métis this year.

Students self-identifying as:	2022-2023		2023-2024	
	#	%	#	%
Métis	320	6.2 %	349	6.7 %
Non-status First Nation	128	2.5%	132	2.4 %
Status First Nation	260	5.0%	263	5.0 %
Federally Funded First Nation	36	0.1%	31	0.1%
Inuit	22	0.004%	21	0.004%
Total	730	14.11%	765	14.59%

Key Strategies for Indigenous Success in 2023 - 2024

1. Growing Local Community Partnerships and Intergenerational Connections
2. Strengthening Community and Family Engagement
3. Providing Individualized, Holistic Student Support
4. Fostering Safe, Caring, and Representative School Environments
5. Creating Systemic Change

1. Growing Local Community Partnerships and Intergenerational Connections

Partnerships and Collaborations with Elders and Knowledge Keepers

A number of key partnerships were fostered and blossomed this year. With support from Helen Arcand, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Counsellor, students at Four Winds and Camilla schools have had the honour of learning from and with 13 individuals including Elders and Knowledge Keepers recognized in Alexander First Nation. These teachings included storytelling, crafting, turtle teachings, regalia and pow wow teachings among other





topics. Students were given the opportunity to teach about their personal regalia alongside Knowledge Keepers from the community.

Additionally, the Division has fostered a relationship with Elder Adam North Peigan who has guided staff and supported students in Redwater and Lilian Schick schools. His expertise and time have been very meaningful to students in class and during the Indigenous Family Night event hosted at Lilian Schick School. He also honoured SPS by attending the CASS Indigenous Gathering with our staff. Elder Adam is the past President of the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta and has served public office as a Governor to the South Fraser Health Region in BC and Piikani First Nation Chief and Council. Elder Adam has developed training programs used by the College of Alberta Registered Nurses Association, the Alberta Teachers Association and the City of Calgary Police. In addition to educating students at the University of Alberta, University of Calgary and University of British Columbia, in 2023, Elder Adam was awarded the Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee Medal for his significant contributions to the Province of Alberta in moving reconciliation forward for all Canadians. Currently, Elder Adam is the Senior Engagement Advisor in the Indigenous Wellness Core working with the Wisdom Council at Alberta Health Services and President of the Legacy of Hope Foundation.

For the first time, the Division will be hosting a Division National Indigenous Peoples Day event. Indigenous student leadership groups from Camilla, Four Winds and SCHS came together to lead the planning. Over 30 community guests will provide interactive learning stations allowing groups of students to engage with Pow Wow, Inuit Culture, Métis Fiddle and Jig, crafting, storytelling, games, lacrosse, bannock making and other activities. Student leaders will actively host the day with support from the Indigenous Education Lead Team.

The Division continues to strengthen academic course connections with First Nations partners. SCHS Health Sciences students learned about traditional healing with Knowledge Keeper Joanna Campiou and Aboriginal Studies students participated in weekly Cree language learning with Alexander First Nation language instructor Kaitlin Arcand. There is an expansion of the Aboriginal Studies Program at SCHS with 10 and 20 level credits now being offered.

Many school leads are independently fostering meaningful community connections and relationships creating wonderful learning experiences in their schools (Brian Janvier, Elder Bill Sewepagaham, Tammy Lamouche, Dallas Arcand and others)

Cultural Events

This year, we have expanded inter-school learning experiences with Kipohtakaw Education Centre (KEC) with the following activities for students:

- Fox Creek Medicine Harvesting Trip October 25 (8 SCHS students attended)
- Hinton Sr. High School Conference March 5-7 (7 SCHS Students attended overnight)





- KEC Elementary Culture Camp June 4 -6 (hosted classes of students from Gibbons, Four Winds, and Camilla Schools)
- School leaders (including Director, Coordinator, Principals, and Division Principal) participated in Tipi Teachings, Medicine Harvest, and Feasts with KEC this year.
- Indigesteam visited LS with a digital Pow Wow program. This event combined STEAM challenges with robotics and traditional storytelling and cultural teachings from an Elder.

Reciprocal Relationship with KEC

We continue to foster healthy relationships with KEC and considerable headway has been achieved in strengthening this connection.

- KEC and SPS Leadership met as an opportunity to discuss current and future collaborative work (in attendance, SPS Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Director, KEC Director of Education, Assistant Director, Cultural Advisor, and Principal)
- Held 4 leadership meetings as key communication touchpoints (Oct, Dec, Feb, Apr), with a final meeting on June 13
- Hosted 2 Student Success meetings at each school. Decided as a collective team to host 3 Student Success meetings at each school next year (early Nov, Feb, and May) allowing for increased timelines of communication
- SPS staff provided PD Opportunities for KEC staff
- Worked together to create collaborative learning experiences for students (Culture Camps, Conference, Land-based Learning experiences)

2. Strengthening Community and Family Engagement

Family Nights, Conversations and Connection

This year, Indigenous Family Nights were introduced to encourage engagement and celebrate Indigenous family connections around Sturgeon Public Schools. Events included:

- Camilla School with Elder Isabelle Arcand in community conversations (Jan 23, 2024)
- Lilian Schick with Adam North Peigan offering prayer and teachings about feasts to support community engagement (Jan. 24, 2024)
- Four Winds with Beverly Burnstick in community conversations (Feb 12, 2024)
- Redwater School with Joanna Campiou offering prayer and smudge (May 1, 2024)

3. Providing Individualized, Holistic Student Support

Student Counsellors, Success Coaches and Personal Connection

This year the Division welcomed a new First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Counsellor to Camilla and Four Winds schools. This has been a wonderful addition to the Indigenous





Education lead team and Helen Arcand has provided invaluable guidance and has served as an amazing connector between Sturgeon Public Schools and local community members, knowledge keepers and Elders. The Student Success Coaches, Daniel Lehman and John Valliere, in SCHS, Redwater School and Lilian Schick School connected with students and helped staff consider approaches in learning aligned with Indigenous ways of knowing and being. In tracking the number of daily student touchpoints, collectively there have been over 3200 student connections throughout the 2023-2024 school year. Indigenous Student Success Coach Year Plans (ISSC) were completed at the school level, and student support will continue next year through School Counselors and Learning Support Leads.

4. Fostering Safe, Caring and Representative School Environments

Visible Cultural Connections and Indigenous Spaces within Schools

This year, “Apiwikamik” continues to be a well utilized central space at SCHS. Opportunities for kinship, academic support and holistic wellness exist in this space. Next year, the school plans to have this space as a ‘homebase’ for the Indigenous Education Coordinator and First Nations Cultural Liaison. Providing opportunity for visibility and continued student support in SCHS. This year, Lilian Schick School also dedicated a learning and support space for Indigenous Students just off their learning commons. Cultural connections, smudging and support have led to high, regular usage. Anecdotally, this room has been highly valued by students, staff and school administration. We continue to review, refine and add to our school libraries. This year we introduced new resources around Métis culture and heritage.

5. Creating Systemic Change

Learning and Experience for all Staff

This year, all teachers and educational assistants (EAs) participated in the SPS Division-wide PD day (March 11, 2023) with a keynote focusing on Teacher Quality Standard (TQS) 5 and Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) 5. The Division welcomed a panel of scholars from the University of Alberta which included: Etienna Moostoos-Lafferty, Karen West and Megan Tippler. These academics, who are all also certified teachers, introduced unique perspectives on teaching through place study.

The Division Call to Action Cohort is composed of over 30 volunteers who prioritize and lead-out learning back at their schools. This year, the Division focused on broadening the membership and Included Indigenous Student EAs, advisors from Alexander First Nation, and Etienna Moostoos-Lafferty, Indigenous Scholar from the University of Alberta. This work focused on refining our understanding of Indigenous pedagogy by focusing on elements of learning from and with people, place and process.





Looking Forward

- Continuing Call to Action Cohort with increased focus of staff bringing their experiences to all staff within their school and building connections with local Elders and Knowledge Keepers by school.
- Deepening partnership and connection to Alexander First Nation, with plans for reciprocal professional learning opportunities, local school partnerships between classes within Kipohtakaw Education Centre (KEC) and continuing cultural camps and trips.
- “Apiwikamik” at SCHS will be a ‘homebase’ for the Indigenous Education Coordinator and First Nations Cultural Liaison.
- Opportunity through Legacy of Hope for partnership for learning displays throughout the Division.
- Exploring the opportunity to work with a Scholar from the University of Calgary, Jennifer Markides and partners from KEC on a collaborative research project to better meet student needs.
- Expansion of Aboriginal Studies program to include 10, 20 and 30 level credits.

