

Equity in Action Project

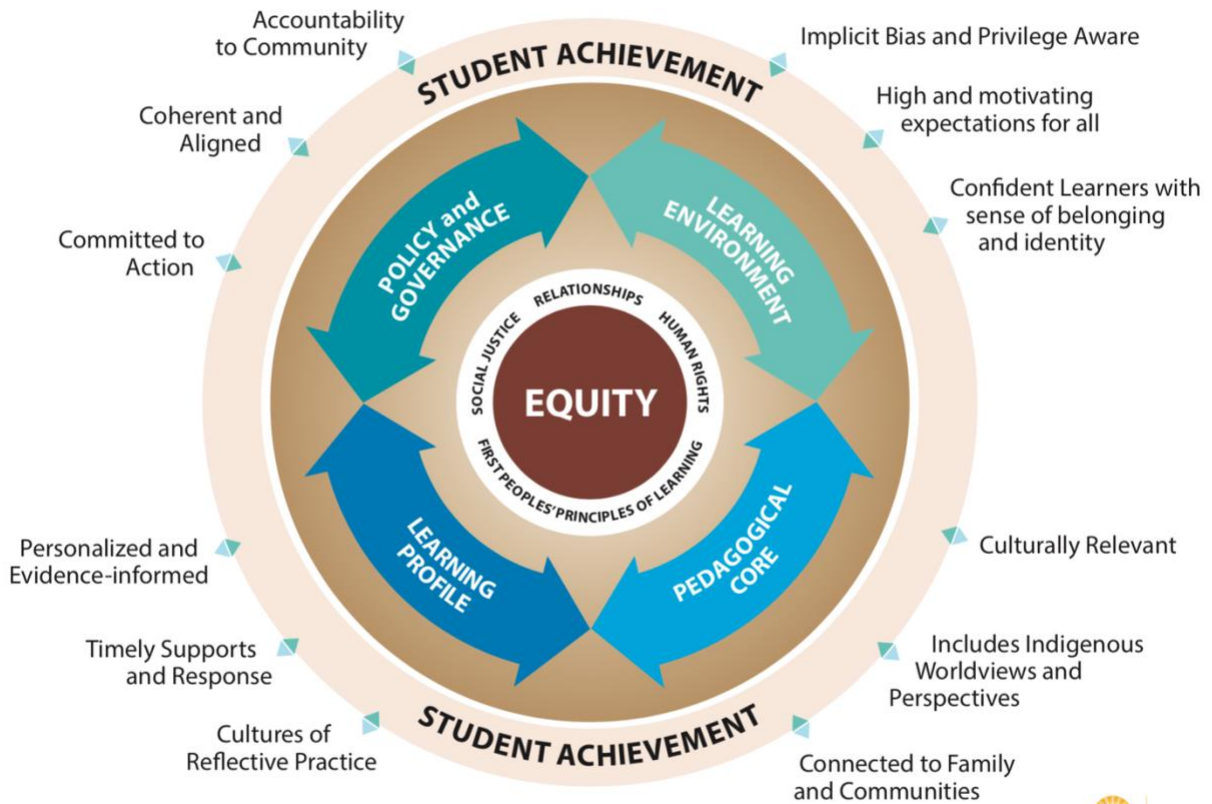
EQUITY ACTION PLAN

School District No. 19 (Revelstoke)

2020/2021

Equity in Review

Indigenous Student Success



Introduction

Thank you to school districts and partners who have embarked on the implementation of the Equity in Action Project this year. As one of 46 participating school districts, the Ministry of Education is grateful for your contributions and commitments to this collaborative and iterative process. Please consider using this template (as well as the Equity in Action Orientation document provided at the Fall 2020 initial meeting) for reference in reporting your feedback on this year's growth and progress, and in development of your District Equity Action Plan. The Action Plan submission is part of a growing base of knowledge and practice that is having a positive impact on equity. This emerging collection of wisdom will be used to inform and inspire the equity community across the Province.

COVID-19 Considerations

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted many initiatives and programs across British Columbia this school year. With this in mind, we are aware that many Equity focussed gatherings and events planned from March 2020 onwards have been greatly impacted. Therefore, please submit your findings and Action Plan to the best of your ability. Further, please respond to the questions ("**Equity During a Pandemic**") that relate specifically to the provision of Equity of opportunity for Indigenous learners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Creating an Equity Action Plan

To complete the final component of the Equity Scan process for this calendar year, District Equity Teams will draft and submit an Equity Action Plan. The Plan will emerge from your collective processes, engagement across learning communities, findings based on the equity scan guiding questions, and the 'Learning Profile' district data profile (provided via the Ministry of Education). We invite you to be intentional in your responses, including your approaches and actions to address equity gaps that you may have identified.

Please respond to each of the sections below that are directly related to the Equity Scan processes as part of a collective responsibility model for equity and transformation.

Thank you.

Ch'íthométsel

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The Equity Scan Process - School Districts will:

- Build an Equity Scan Team
- Conduct the Equity Scan
- Develop a District Equity Profile
- Construct a Theory of Change
- Create an Equity Action Plan

1. Project Overview:

1.1 Describe your approach to Equity in Action this year.

- The district offered a system wide invitation to district staff and community partners to engage in our scan and planning process led by the District Principal of Student Services and Indigenous Education. Regular virtual meetings were held with an open discussion and guided question format and included participants from administration, teaching staff, Indigenous Education support staff, Board of Education Trustees, Indigenous community members as well as representation from the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Feedback was achieved from students through the Indigenous Connections class and a lunchtime meeting with interested students.

1.2 How did you engage the process and how was the experience received in your district?

- Initial gatherings provided time for experiential discussion and open dialogue to build a safe and caring circle. It was noted through the process that at times the conversation would be difficult and conversational norms were highlighted. All meetings were held virtually, and creativity was necessary to provide an open forum which provided voice for each participant. Breakout groups were often used with a reporting back format to the larger conversation. Participants appreciated the efficiency of the conversation and opportunity to express their feelings and beliefs.

2. Building an Equity Scanning Team:

2.1 How did you engage rightsholders (First Nations), and other key partner groups in your district's Equity Scanning Team? How did you communicate and bring people to the table?

- Our community does not have any close relationships with First Nation bands nearby and therefore members from the local Friendship Society were invited to participate as well as other Indigenous community members. Each gathering was communicated via email and discussion notes were shared following each meeting. Regular updates were provided to the Board of Education as well as the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee and were documented and published in meeting minutes. Individual Schools utilized staff meeting time to gather feedback on specific focus questions who then shared the information with the ES steering committee.

2.2 What strategies did you employ in developing your equity scanning team and what were the results?

- Opportunities were provided for members of both our ES team and our Indigenous Education Advisory Committee and school administration to participate in workshops throughout the year that highlighted issues and understanding of Equity. During each meeting the importance of conversation and personal stories were highlighted utilizing the 32 questions to guide conversation. Groups were limited in size to ensure voice for each participant and honesty and discomfort was acknowledged and respected. It was evident early in our scan that building knowledge and understanding within our internal system would be a primary component to long term growth. It is acknowledged that our community does not have a strong Indigenous Peoples voice or representation and therefore it is key that Equity remains a focus within our school system.

2.3 How did you determine whether anyone was missing and how did you ensure that all voices were included?

- Representation from all levels of our system including administration, teaching, support, student, community and Indigenous peoples maintained ongoing engagement as we worked through our scan and action plan. Indigenous members noted that none of us have lived experience of being visibly Indigenous, with the racist experiences that entails, or with the cultural immersion needed to be fully qualified for this process. Community and student engagement at times was limited but we acknowledge that further involvement through surveys and focus groups will be necessary once we have built our capacity within our system and as our goals and objectives evolve. Although it had been the teams wish to create an open, in-person opportunity for dialogue it was not feasible in current health climate under COVID restrictions which further limited engagement of specific partner groups.

3. Conduct the Equity Scan:

3.1 How did you approach the Equity Scanning processes?

- Our initial meetings began with opportunities for participants to provide their own story and understanding of equity in a personal context. Our dialogue encouraged honesty and openness creating an atmosphere where it was safe to share bias and personal truths. Ongoing meetings then began to focus on the pillar questions, taking one pillar for each meeting maintaining a timeline of one hour for each meeting. It was recognized that Equity was only one topic of many for our members and therefore efficient time management remained a goal of each session. Information gathered from the virtual meetings was shared and a summary was provided which was scored utilizing the rubrics provided. Each member was requested to provide their score within each rubric. Utilizing a 'where are we at' and 'what are our next steps' format we began to build our Action Plan.
- 3.2 Describe your approach to engaging the 32 guiding questions of the Equity Scan Workbook.
- The Equity Action team reviewed the group of questions within each pillar at separate meetings throughout January to March. Individual target questions were presented to school staff during monthly staff meetings and small student groups reviewed specific questions including touring each of the schools to review and gather evidence (or lack of) specific to the question they were reviewing. Each question was presented with a request to provide or discuss evidence that demonstrated it was **not in place /a stretch; developing / in progress; or established / strength**.
- 3.3 Who did you engage in your scanning and what strategies did you use?
- Our Equity Action steering committee gathered and reviewed responses that were gathered at the committee level as well as information gathered from each of the schools. Although the focus at this time mainly centered around school staff, information was also gathered through targeted self-identified Indigenous students and allies who were approached for feedback. Entire school staffs were requested to respond to a small number of specific questions, while the steering committee reviewed all 32.
- 3.4 Did you add, edit, reduce or cohort the guiding questions provided for your district scanning process?

- Key questions were chosen while gathering feedback from individual schools and student focus groups including question 14 *Does the learning environment readily reflect the First Peoples Principles of Learning?* and question 22: *Are issues of implicit bias and racism raised and addressed as possibly impacting the nature of instruction, assessment and learning for Indigenous learners?* The steering committee met and reviewed each pillar in individual meetings. Questions were divided into groups of 2 to 4 and allocated to individual breakout groups. The groups would report back to the larger committee for further discussion and feedback. Although questions were interpreted into local context, additional questions were not added at this time. This will be further explored as we re-scan and dig deeper into our local context and planning.

3.5 What artifacts and structures were created through the Scanning Process?

- Performance charts were generated for each pillar/question group. Discussion notes and chart paper records from school-based staff meetings discussions were shared with the steering committee.

4. Develop a District Equity Profile:

4.1 What themes emerged from your findings?

- A key theme that emerged from our scan is the need to further build understanding of equity, bias and racism and its impact across our system as well as continue to enhance our understanding and practice of Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Learning. When opportunities are available for learning for our educators, we acknowledge that we often only reach a small portion of our target audience. Our Professional learning opportunities often do not attract a large percentage of our staff and inclusion of Indigenous teaching and learning is often presented as an event rather than being embedded in our practice. Historically, the school district has a strong system of assimilation and it is recognized that our Indigenous students are treated with equality, but not necessarily with equity. Although our Indigenous learners demonstrate similar success to our greater student population, their care and personal circumstance remains the responsibility of support staff rather than from a full school support process.

4.2 What parity and equity gaps exist for Indigenous learners?

- The Indigenous student population within our schools is relatively small and therefore reviewing data trends is statistically difficult to track on an annual basis. However, when comparing trends over time our Indigenous students follow very similar success and trajectories as our general population in school success as

indicated in provincial assessments and satisfaction on student learning surveys. Indicators of grade-to-grade transitions as well demonstrate similar positive results over time. The school district currently does not have a process in place to measure or track traditional knowledge, culture or personal history for Indigenous learners.

4.3 Describe the key findings specific to each of the following Equity Scan Framework quadrants. Please utilize the rubric in your 2020 Fall Orientation Workbook to score your district on each of the quadrants.

4.3(i) Policy and Governance (score: 2) – Key findings:

Our scan indicated that at this time we do not have policies along with governance procedures and practices that include principles of equity for Indigenous learners and peoples nor do we currently have a formal process to guide future work or consultation with Indigenous community members and groups.

4.3(ii) Learning Environment (score: 2) – Key findings:

District expectations for Indigenous learners and community input into the learning environments are not currently articulated or in practice in a consistent manner. Although we have strong allies both within our school system and community there is not a system wide understanding or focus for Indigenous learners, for the Indigenous community or for the First People's Principles of Learning.

4.3(iii) Pedagogical Core (score: 2) – Key findings:

The common theme in our scan is that our system is in the beginning stages with teacher professional learning around our shared history, privilege and bias awareness along with the visibility of Indigenous language and culture. We currently have in place Indigenous Student Support workers who support individual students, however the responsibility is not perceived as being shared. When professional learning opportunities for deeper understanding and knowledge are provided participation is often low and those who do participate are generally consistent. Our scan acknowledges the need for further developing skills and deepening understanding of Indigenous worldviews, perspectives and pedagogies including greater awareness and understanding of implicit bias and racism and the impact on learning.

4.3(iv) Learning Profile (score: 2) – Key findings:

With our small cohorts we naturally look at student results and success and acknowledge that our Indigenous students align with the same positive trajectory of our population. Much of this success however is due to the advocacy of dedicated staff rather than a culture of community. It is important that as a system we understand the negative impact of assimilation and the importance of equity for all learners and that we continue to focus on potential and individual strengths. Although this is easy for those who are invested, we acknowledge further growth as a whole community is possible and necessary.

4.4 What are your insights into how to maintain momentum and ensure that equity remains a key focus?

As a community of learners, we must continue the discussion of equity and racial bias. Many of our learners, including our staff may not know what they are looking for and having the hard conversations and self-reflection is key to understanding. As we continue our conversations it will be imperative that we take the time to understand and see the value of the First Peoples Principles of Learning in order to frame our equity lens. When this is achieved, we can then approach our learning, our instruction and our practices with equity.

5. Theory of Change and Equity Action Plan:

5.1 Describe your district's Theory of Change.

We recognize that our Action Plan will be a living document involving regular scans and adjustments where change will occur in increments over time. Our process will begin with furthering a deeper understanding for each member of our school community in their understanding of the role they play in the outcomes for Indigenous learners in our schools through increased awareness of implicit bias and the First Peoples Principles of Learning along with Indigenous ways of knowing and learning.

5.2 What findings and learning have emerged through this process that will contribute to growth and progress for your organization?

While we have strong advocates and allies for our Indigenous learners and for the First Peoples Principles of Knowing and Learning it is believed that this is not the case as a system. It is our goal to further increase awareness and understanding broadly across our schools and community to further enhance

the success for all students.

- 5.3 **Definitively state your Equity Action Plan**, including intentional strategies, actions and practices that your school district has committed to in addressing inequities and systemic barriers that may exist.

We have established the following action plan with key areas of focus within each pillar of the Equity Profile:

Policy and Governance

- Ensure ongoing success for Indigenous students through regular goal setting and review utilizing existing structures such as the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning.
- Review, revise and create Board of Education policies, procedures and administrative protocols to ensure equity is a foundation which they are developed and implemented upon.
- Maintain a focus on equity for district committees ensuring ongoing progress is reviewed and equitable practices are maintained and or deepened.

Learning Environment

- Maintain time and space for Indigenous culture, language and history
- Ensure high expectations of success for Indigenous learners including Indigenous excellence.
- Enhance professional learning focusing on the First Peoples Principles of Knowing and Learning throughout the district
- Establish professional learning that develops cultural competency and focuses on bias and privilege awareness and understanding
- Support brave conversations around privilege and implicit bias
- Further build relationships and partnership with the Indigenous nations of the region

Pedagogical Core

- Continue to explore equitable opportunities for Indigenous learners at a school level through ongoing staff development and Indigenous Education
- Encourage and support ongoing participation in staff development opportunities of Indigenous ways of knowing and learning
- Develop a common language and understanding of how implicit bias and racism impacts the nature of instruction, assessment and learning for Indigenous

learners

- Continue to build capacity to ensure Indigenous worldviews and the First Peoples Principles of Learning and Knowing are incorporated into classrooms and school culture

Learning Profile

- Enhance communication of learning trajectories of Indigenous students through data informed student-centered decision making
- Collaborate to build responsive interventions that focus on the personalized needs of each student

5.4 Please list all forms of qualitative and quantitative data you will monitor to track your progress towards Equity. (e.g., six-year completion rates, student satisfaction survey results, FSA and district numeracy and literacy measures, mental health indicators, grade transitions, qualitative interviews, etc.)

- Maintain ongoing anecdotal dialogue through staff meetings and district committees within the four pillars of equity for student achievement
- Review Student Learning Survey data for student connections to school and success
- Review Early, Middle and Youth Development instrument data for student well-being and connections (EDI, MDI, and YDI)
- Track student success in Literacy and Numeracy through FSA and Provincial Gr 10 Literacy and Numeracy assessments
- Maintain and review school-based student learning profiles for students in K-7 and transition meetings for elementary to secondary transfer
- Maintain School Based Team meetings to support individual students
- Ensure district Framework for Enhanced Learning highlights Indigenous student progress including assessment data and grade to grade and post-secondary transition data as reported in Ministry Sharepoint.

6. Community Engagement / Travel:

6.1 How have you utilized the grant monies provided by the Ministry of Education to work alongside rightsholders (First Nations), and key partners in your district to encourage meaningful community engagement?

- In person meetings were restricted during our period of equity scan. Partners were invited to attend virtual meetings through friendship society members. There are no band councils within our school district.

6.2 Please indicate if meetings occurred in community, on district property, etc.

- All meetings were held virtually

7. The Learning Profile - Impact Statement:

7.1 Describe how your district utilized the 'Learning Profile' provided to your district through the confidential Ministry SharePoint site.

- Information was included in district FESL which was shared with Equity steering committee

7.2 Please provide **qualitative and quantitative** examples of how your district leadership teams may have used this information.

- This data supplements school-based data. Due to our small population of Indigenous learners our results show drastic changes from year to year. We tend to review trends rather than annual data points.

7.3 Was the learning profile tool useful at the district, school and individual student level?

- The learning profile tool often reflects and reinforces anecdotal and school-based data and therefore is useful as a checkpoint.

7.4 Did access to this data lens support individual student interventions?

- We have not yet used this information on an individual student basis as we are able to review student progress on a more personal level both with the student, family and individual teachers.

7.5 Has it made a difference to student achievement in your district this year?

- Not at this time

7.6 Is it useful to continue to provide parity targets as part of your district's achievement profile?

- Yes, we foresee incorporating more of this information as we move from systemic goals to more individualized goals.

7.7 Was the Learning Profile tool readily accessible to the District Principal of Indigenous Education?

- Yes, the District Principal of Indigenous Education readily has accessibility.

7.8 Was this tool used to facilitate conversations with school staff?

- Not at this point, future use is expected.

8. Equity During a Pandemic:

8.1 How are you ensuring the delivery of equitable services and direct supports to Indigenous learners during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Ongoing dialogue with students, families, support staff and teachers. Students who are deemed a high priority are connected with staff who liaise with classroom teachers to assist with adapting and further supporting students in the appropriate learning environment for their individual needs.

8.2 How is your district communicating, planning and reporting out continuity of learning plans with First Nations and Indigenous students and parents?

- Communication is through regular school channels as well as one to one connection as needed.

8.3 How are you ensuring that Indigenous worldviews and perspectives are included in the continuity of learning plans with Indigenous parents, students and First Nations?

- District Indigenous Education Support worker is consulted and collaborates with staff in the support of Indigenous students.

8.4 How are you ensuring that Indigenous language and cultural experiences continue in a remote learning environment?

- District Indigenous Education Support worker assists in the planning and support for remote learning of Indigenous students who currently focus on supporting academic and social/emotional development. Cultural experience occurs on a very limited basis with little to no Indigenous language programming.

9. Recommendations/Additional Comments:

9.1 How can the Ministry improve our collaborative and co-constructive approaches to the Equity in Action Project moving forward?

- We have been pleased with the support of the Equity in Action Project and the focus on Equity in provincial learning opportunities.

9.2 What barriers or challenges need to be overcome to ensure a successful Equity Scan process in your district?

- Continued access and focus on equity, bias and racism information and resources to maintain the conversation including helping individuals understand that they have their own bias and racism, and supportive, non-judgemental educational conversations to move forward.

10. Appendices: Please consider sharing any artifacts as part of your report submission, i.e., localized guiding questions, student/parent/community surveys, presentations, resources, learning tools and other locally developed sources.

<p>SIGNED AND DELIVERED on the ____ day of _____, 2021, on behalf of the Superintendent</p>	<p>SIGNED AND DELIVERED on the ____ day of _____, 2020, on behalf of the Indigenous District Lead</p>
<p>_____ (signature)</p> <p>_____ (print name) Superintendent School District No. 19</p>	<p>_____ (signature)</p> <p>_____ (print name) District Principal of Indigenous Education School District No. 19</p>
<p>SIGNED AND DELIVERED on the ____ day of _____, 2021, on behalf of Equity in Action Community Member</p>	<p>SIGNED AND DELIVERED on the ____ day of _____, 2021, on behalf of the Province by its duly authorized signatory</p>
<p>_____ (signature)</p> <p>_____ (print name) Equity in Action Community Member</p>	<p>_____ Director, Indigenous Education Learning Division Ministry of Education</p>

APPENDICES