

Delta School District Aboriginal Education Review

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Executive Summary

The major goals of this review were to identify the successes and challenges of Aboriginal education in the Delta School District. The review focused on four key themes:

- How is Aboriginal Education in Delta School District perceived by its students, teachers, support staff, principals/vice-principals, district leadership, parents, and Aboriginal community members? What are the strengths and challenges of Aboriginal Education in Delta School District?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal program staff and school/district leaders, teachers, parents, and community members in implementing the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement? Should the roles and responsibilities be revised? Why?
- How do schools and the school district recognize the strengths and achievements of individual Aboriginal students? Of Aboriginal teaching staff? Of teachers who contribute to Aboriginal education? Of leadership in Aboriginal education?
- What should be the top priorities for Aboriginal education in Delta School District? Why?

The Review team from the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia used multiple research methods to undertake this review of the Delta School District's Aboriginal Education. In addition to an initial discussion with a district Review Steering Committee and fact-finding conversations with district personnel to sketch the scope of the project, the research methods included:

1. face to face individual interviews;
2. World Café style focus group sessions;
3. a survey;
4. analysis of Delta School District documents and five other districts' Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements;
5. a workshop/World Café session with Aboriginal students and short questionnaire; and
6. secondary data analysis.

Behavioural Research Ethics Board approval was granted by The University of British Columbia (certificate H15-01978).

Findings

In reporting on the review findings, the results are grouped into four broad themes corresponding to the questions we asked. The themes are: (1) Perceptions, Strengths and Challenges; (2) Roles and Responsibilities; (3) Recognition of Aboriginal Education Contributions; and (4) Top Aboriginal Education Priorities. Unless otherwise stated, each theme section begins with a summary of the findings from group discussions and interviews, followed by the survey findings.

1. Perceptions, Strengths, and Challenges

Aboriginal High School Students Perceptions

The students completed a short questionnaire before the chart activity began. This section highlights the findings from that questionnaire. Friends, teachers, Aboriginal support workers and other support staff were given as examples of two people who believed that they would be successful. Four students listed no one. The same three groups listed here were also the top reasons that students enjoyed school.

For learning, their major purposes included various job-career related areas such as early childhood education, trades, business, professional sports, acting, being a police officer, marine biologist. Not all students identified a career or job.

For challenges, students mentioned subject areas such as math, science, and writing, while other challenges were more personal such as getting to school, focusing on school work, handing assignments in on time and completing homework.

Students gave examples of teacher feedback that related to: positive academic habits that students demonstrated such as being on task, being a good worker; or words of advice for how they could do better, such as do homework, don't skip class, and to ask for help.

Strengths

Participants indicated that those in district-wide leadership positions are increasingly promoting the importance Aboriginal education, especially after the current superintendent assumed her role in 2010. The interest in and need to address Aboriginal education seemed to be a common response amongst all stakeholder groups. This wide-spread interest is an important strength that will be very useful as the Delta School District moves forward in Aboriginal education. Parents identified social-emotional support as the top strength of the Aboriginal education programs and next was culture.

Challenges

Issues about insufficient communication regarding Aboriginal education range from not knowing about the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement or the scope of Aboriginal education programs and services; lack of communication between school positions such as principal, teachers, Aboriginal support workers and parent/family about student designations; to information about new Aboriginal education positions. Almost half of the parent and Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN) members (group sessions) said that they did not know which Aboriginal education programs were available for their children.

Addressing the cultural/identity diversity of Aboriginal students was often presented as a tension where some felt too much focus was on Tsawwassen First Nation to the exclusion of other Aboriginal cultural groups or vice versa (group discussions). Addressing Musqueam culture was not mentioned, yet school district representatives indicated that the school district was also located on the traditional territory of both Tsawwassen and Musqueam.

There were differing views about the value of the “pull-out” Aboriginal program in which Aboriginal students were taken out of their classrooms for about one hour per week to attend an Aboriginal cultural program or activity facilitated by the Aboriginal support worker. The positive impact was described as creating a safe environment for the Aboriginal students where they could learn about their cultural identity, receive social-emotional support, or be with other Aboriginal students in an environment free of racism. Teachers/VPs identified social-emotional support as the greatest benefit to the pull-out program.

Negative impacts identified focused on the instructional time that Aboriginal students missed when they were taken out of the classroom; the quality of the educational or cultural value was questioned; excluding non-Aboriginal students in cultural learning was an important issue; and lack of communication and lack of working together were identified as major challenges.

Survey Responses for Rating Aboriginal Education

There was strong agreement among all three groups that Aboriginal education for Aboriginal students was *poor/very poor* (35% of all respondents). Parents were most likely to see Aboriginal education for Aboriginal students as good/very good (36%) and teachers least likely (16%).

Aboriginal support services provided to Aboriginal students received a less positive rating from parents (47% indicating *poor/very poor*) compared to both the leadership (20%) and school based (29%) respondents.

The leadership group was more likely to indicate the commitment for Aboriginal education was good or excellent (89%) compared to school based respondents (63%), both of which were much higher than the parents’ rating at 31%.

70% of all respondents indicated that parental engagement with both schools and the district is perceived to be poor or very poor.

For all leadership, school and parents the most frequently identified strength was the District’s commitment to and focus on Aboriginal education as a priority and the top challenge was building strong community connections, which was identified by both the leadership and school based groups.

From the parent perspective, a top challenge was communication.

From the school based group, the top challenges were training and professional development to assist educators in understanding the needs of Aboriginal students, to learn about “sensitive material,” as well as the culture, traditions and history of Aboriginal peoples.

A top challenge for parents was ensuring student support was available. This challenge included supports “beyond culture”, such as ensuring academic success, and graduation completion.

Aboriginal Support Workers were identified as a top challenge by both the leadership group and parents. The leadership group saw “finding and keeping” “good” and “effective” Aboriginal support workers was a challenge as was inconsistency, accountability, and staffing “dynamics.” Clarifying roles and job descriptions was also mentioned.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

This review question asks about roles and responsibilities in relation to the district’s Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA). The majority of responses in the group sessions indicated a lack of awareness and knowledge about the existing agreement. However, there is interest in knowing more about and being involved in the next 2016-2021 agreement (group sessions).

Survey findings showed that many parents did not know about the agreement, but they indicated that they would like to be informed about it. School-based and leadership groups were more likely to be aware of the existence of the agreement, but not necessarily the contents. Survey findings show that groups tended to receive an adequate (38%) or good/excellent (30%) rather than poor/very poor (32%) rating when asked to rate how well various groups had carried out their roles and responsibilities with respect to the 2011-16 Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement.

Relationship-building, teaching Aboriginal curriculum/topics, supporting teacher professional development, supporting Aboriginal school and district initiatives, engaging Aboriginal parents and community, and parental support are all important components and starting points for further development and clarification of roles and responsibilities.

3. Recognition of Aboriginal Education Contributions

Survey findings on the recognition of Aboriginal education contributions included the following.

Students - inviting students to participate in some kind of event or ceremony.

Aboriginal teaching staff - the most frequent response was by participating in learning opportunities such as workshops and collaborative learning.

Support workers - recognition came through participating in or leading educational activities or ceremonies, being included in meetings or events, and being made to feel welcome.

Teachers - recognition was most often seen to be in the form of professional development.

Leadership - recognition was seen to take the form of acknowledgement such as during leadership activities/meetings, via the website or newsletters, and greater involvement in activities, meetings and planning related to Aboriginal education.

4. Top Aboriginal Education Priorities

Interview and Café findings of top priorities for Aboriginal education in Delta School District were that:

- Aboriginal education is a district priority with explicit goals, values, and outcomes;
- Aboriginal education is for all students; and
- Aboriginal education addresses Tsawwassen and Musqueam First Nations.

School based priorities focused on:

- School-based responsibility for Aboriginal student success and support services;
- Aboriginal student data for planning and evaluation; and
- School-based Aboriginal education mentors for consistent teacher support.

Working relationships and communication focused on:

- Clarifying and communicating roles and responsibilities for better working relationships;
- Respectful working environment for effective working relationships; and
- Multiple communication processes working seamlessly together.

Decision-making to include Aboriginal students and families:

- Aboriginal parent and community engagement for decision-making purposes; and
- Aboriginal student engagement for decision-making purposes.

Aboriginal culture focused on:

- Aboriginal culture is diverse and inclusive.

Five major themes were identified in the open-ended survey comments:

- Define a model of Aboriginal education service delivery;
- Professional development/ in-service training;
- Aboriginal student success;
- Aboriginal education curriculum development; and
- Building stronger relationships.

Survey results found that for parents, the top priority was Aboriginal student success; for the school-based group, the top priority mentioned most often was professional development/in-service training; and, for the leadership group, defining a model for Aboriginal education service delivery was a top priority. The priority for each group seems to indicate what they are most concerned about in relation to their role.

Recommendations

Our report's recommendations include:

1. Define and Report on Aboriginal Student Strengths and Successes

- 1.1 Identify school-based academic, cultural, social, and emotional goals for Aboriginal students. Include an appreciative identification of individual student strengths as part of these goals.
- 1.2 Develop a school-based team approach with effective communication and cooperative efforts, where roles and responsibilities are clearly known.
- 1.3 Develop district-wide mechanisms for Aboriginal student and parent involvement in making decisions about services and education they receive, such as an Aboriginal Student Council and an Aboriginal Parent Council.
- 1.4 Use data, where appropriate, in a District logic model to identify and track student and stakeholder success. Strengthen the quality and usability of data currently collected by the Delta School District.
- 1.5 Use an inquiry based model to develop a deeper understanding of current data stories. For example:
 - Evergreen program transition
 - Aboriginal student success
 - Transitions to postsecondary
 - Aboriginal student attendance
 - Aboriginal student special education designation.
- 1.6 Provide training in data collection, interpretation and use for users at the district and school levels.

2. Develop a model of Aboriginal education (AE): Goals/Outcomes, Values, Approaches, and Evaluation

- 2.1 Identify Aboriginal education as a priority of the Delta School District with goals and outcomes such as: (1) Increase the academic, social, emotional, and cultural success of Aboriginal students; and (2) Learning about Aboriginal history, culture, and knowledge is for all students. A priority at the district level would mean that goals, values, measurable outcomes, and funding would be identified and reported on regularly. Being an institutional priority would ensure that Aboriginal education becomes part of the district's vision and that communication about AE would be included in various district communication processes.
- 2.2 Involve Elders and cultural knowledge holders in developing the values and approaches for the Aboriginal education model, to ensure cultural relevance.

- 2.3 Address Aboriginal cultural diversity to include both recognition of and learning about local Tsawwassen and Musqueam First Nations and other Aboriginal cultures represented in the Aboriginal student population.
- 2.4 Continue to address issues and actions identified by Tsawwassen First Nation and to implement the Local Education Agreement that the District has with TFN.
- 2.5 Revise, clarify, and communicate roles and responsibilities of groups such as district leadership, school principals/vice principals, teachers, Aboriginal support workers, and Elders in relation to the Aboriginal education model. Priority needs to be given to the roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal support workers and the District Aboriginal Advisory Committee.
- 2.6 Examine professional training and preparation required for carrying out roles and responsibilities for the Aboriginal education model- update where necessary, change job descriptions where necessary, examine reporting structure and process of job evaluation.
- 2.7 Elders who are district Elders should have some office space in the district office as an indication of their important system-wide role.
- 2.8 Produce annual District and School Level Aboriginal Student Data Profiles to inform educators and parents/communities on changes over time that would impact the design and evaluation of the Aboriginal education programs and services.

3. Develop a school-based Aboriginal education mentorship program

- 3.1 Develop a school-based approach for teacher mentorship/coaching about including Aboriginal education in instruction and working with parents/community. A teacher with this interest or expertise would receive some teaching release and then be mentored by district leadership for this role. There is already a coordinator of inquiry at each school. This AE mentoring program may be a longer term plan where a set of teachers could be given some professional development opportunities in order to undertake this role.
- 3.2 Reconsider the Aboriginal ‘pull-out’ program approach. If the purpose is to enhance Aboriginal cultural identity or to provide additional academic or social/emotional support, then this type of program may be scheduled at either noon hour or after school. Students miss out on valuable learning experiences when they leave the classroom during instructional time.

4. Build stronger relationships by improving communication processes

4.1 Improve mechanisms for communication throughout the district about Aboriginal education that is consistent in its output. Communication can inform, ask for input, and share information about events, teaching resources and teaching ideas.

4.2 Improve communication methods with Aboriginal parents and parents of Aboriginal students.

4.3 Continue to host semi-annual district-wide gatherings for Aboriginal parents and parents of Aboriginal children to build relationships and communication about Aboriginal education.

Introduction

Terms of Reference

Representatives of the Delta School District asked University of British Columbia, Faculty of Education researchers Jo-ann Archibald, Victor Glickman and Colleen Hawkey to conduct a review of Aboriginal education within this school district based on district stakeholder groups' perspectives and the examination of Aboriginal student data.

The major goals of the review were to identify the successes and challenges of Aboriginal education in the Delta School District. The following review questions were developed through various individual and group discussion sessions in July-September 2015.

Review Questions

- How is Aboriginal Education in Delta School District perceived by its students, teachers, support staff, principals/vice-principals, district leadership, parents, and Aboriginal community members? What are the strengths and challenges of Aboriginal Education in Delta School District?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal program staff and school/district leaders, teachers, parents, and community members in implementing the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement? Should the roles and responsibilities be revised? Why?
- How do schools and the school district recognize the strengths and achievements of individual Aboriginal students? Of Aboriginal teaching staff? Of teachers who contribute to Aboriginal education? Of leadership in Aboriginal education?
- What should be the top priorities for Aboriginal education in Delta School District? Why?

Brad Bauman, Director of Learning Services, Special Programs and Diane Jubinville, District Vice-Principal, Aboriginal Education Programs were the district's leads for this project.

Methodology

The review team used multiple research methods to undertake this review of Aboriginal education in the Delta School District. In addition to initial discussions with a district Review Steering Committee, fact-finding conversations with district personnel to sketch the scope of the project, the research methods included:

1. Face to face individual interviews;
2. World Café style focus group sessions;
3. a survey;
4. analysis of Delta School District Documents and five other districts' Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements;
5. A workshop/World Café session with Aboriginal students and a short questionnaire; and
6. Secondary data analysis.

Behavioural Research Ethics Board approval was granted by The University of British Columbia (certificate H15-01978).

A contextual description of each of the methodologies employed is provided below.

Face-to Face Interviews

Dr. Jo-ann Archibald conducted 12 face-to-face individual interviews with district personnel (4), Elders (2), Aboriginal support workers (4), and staff from the Tsawwassen First Nations (2). Interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes each and were held between Oct 29 – Dec 18, 2015. Two of the interviewees chose not to have their interview audio recorded so notes were taken instead. Ten of the 12 interviewees consented to having their interview audio recorded which were then transcribed verbatim. Interviewees were given an opportunity to review their own transcripts to note any errors or to delete any text. The interviews explored roles and responsibilities, successes and challenges in these roles, working relationships with stakeholder groups, what educational success would look like for Aboriginal students, AE strengths and challenges, and suggestions for district priorities and improvement. Interview data were analyzed for themes related to both the challenges and successes that the interviewees had experienced in their role with the district.

World Café Focus Group Sessions

Seven focus group/small group discussions were held with approximately 198 individuals that constituted the following groups: principals and district wide personnel (40); grades 9-12 Aboriginal students (28) Tsawwassen First Nation parents and family (15); Aboriginal student parents/family (45); vice principals and teachers (55); district Aboriginal Advisory Committee and review Steering Committee (15). These sessions took place over a period of 5 weeks from Oct 29 – Dec 3, 2015 and were facilitated by Jo-ann Archibald.

The small group discussions used the World Café format where participants were divided into small groups to discuss a question written on chart paper. Participants could write their responses to the question and then move on to another chart paper/question for further discussion and recording. Check marks were used to indicate agreement with previously written comments. After the small group discussions, a plenary with the whole group was held to discuss highlights from the chart paper and the other questions for discussion. A Talking Circle format was used with the Aboriginal parent and Aboriginal student sessions. Each person was given the opportunity and choice to share her/his perspective or to not share a comment. The majority of participants voiced their opinions and suggestions. Note-takers recorded plenary group comments. All comments were later coded for common ideas and areas of difference.

Survey

Before the start of the World Café sessions, a survey was distributed to district leaders including district Aboriginal Advisory and Review Steering Committee, principals and vice-principals, teachers, and Aboriginal student parents/family. Tsawwassen First Nation parents did not complete the survey; however, their discussion session addressed similar questions included in the survey. Participants were asked to take 15-20 minutes to fill it in. The survey focused on the strengths and challenges of Aboriginal education in the school district, parental and community engagement with the district; rating stakeholders' roles; the perceived impact of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement; and Aboriginal education priorities for the district. A total of 133 usable surveys were completed. The quantitative items were analysed using SPSS and all written comments were coded and summarized to ensure all responses would be included in the data analysis.

Environmental Scan of Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements

A comparison of five Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements (AEEA) was undertaken in order to provide content for the review. The district agreements included in the review were selected based on proximity to Delta School District, Aboriginal student numbers and comparable and contrasting types of work that had been undertaken in AEEAs. The AEEA purpose, goals, scope of involvement of Aboriginal communities, staff roles and range of programs were included in the review.

Workshop/World Café Session with Students

Twenty-eight Aboriginal high school students (grades 9 – 12) participated in a student workshop that was conducted in a manner similar to the World Café. Students were asked to reflect on fun experiences when learning about Aboriginal culture and topics, to discuss how Aboriginal education could be improved, how their parents and family members support their learning in school; and if “Aboriginal education?” was a colour (or colours), what would it be and why? Chart paper was used to record students' reflections and this information was later coded for common ideas and areas of difference. In addition, students were asked to write their own answers to specific questions about their perceptions of the purpose of their learning, their successes and challenges, future plans, and if they could identify two people in their school who believed that student could be successful. They also participated in a Talking Circle after the chart exercise. All responses were later also coded for analysis.

Secondary Data Analysis

Delta School district attendance data and BC Ministry of Education administrative and assessment data were used for secondary data analysis in order to provide background information and to highlight possible data gaps for further analysis. Where possible, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student outcomes were presented.

Aboriginal Education in the Delta School District

In this section of the report, we ask what Aboriginal education looks like? As a qualitative backdrop for the Delta Aboriginal Education story; we undertook an environmental scan of Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements in five school districts. To set a quantitative backdrop for the Delta Aboriginal Education story, we undertook a data profile of Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) and non-Aboriginal students using District and Ministry of Education Data.

We began by examining district documentation relating to Aboriginal education programming activity. These documents included:

- The Aboriginal Kids In My Class -2007
- Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement - October 2011
- The Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN) Final Agreement 2013
- Achievement Contract 2012 - 2015
- Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement Annual Report - 2013/2014
- Superintendent's Annual Report on Student Achievement - 2012-2015
- Aboriginal Education Program Webpage – January 2016

Aboriginal Kids In My Class -2007

This 2007 document contains basic information about Aboriginal students and Delta's Aboriginal Program, and suggestions for effective instruction. The document has useful descriptive content but it is also out of date in several areas. It was not referenced in our exploration by district educators or with the various communities in the consultations.

The Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN) Final Agreement 2013

TFN's Education and Skills Development Department delivers the following programs and services: Smuyuq'wa' Lelum Early Childhood Development Centre (infant/toddler program, preschool, and group daycare program); support programs for K-12 education; administration of a Local Education Agreement for the delivery of K-12 education by Delta School District; post-secondary funding for Tsawwassen Members; HeadStart (outreach services to parents with children aged 0-6); and Youth Program (offering outings such as fieldtrips, activities which encourage sportsmanship and teamwork, computer access for educational purposes, and counselling).

Local Education Agreement for the delivery of K-12 education by Delta School District

Local Education Agreements (LEAs) are a mechanism for First Nations to have a voice in the education of their children and to help improve educational outcomes for First Nations learners. LEAs serve as a tuition agreement whereby a First Nation pays the tuition for its students (for whom the First Nation receives funding) who attend provincial public or independent schools off-reserve, while correspondingly setting out the roles and responsibilities of school districts and First Nations for the education of First Nation learners. In this regard, the LEA is an

accountability mechanism to ensure that First Nations learners receive appropriate education services for the funding that is provided to the school district.

Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) Annual Report - 2013/2014

The Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) Annual Report - 2013/2014 identifies key activities for each AEEA goal. The list of initiatives is set out in Appendix B.

Superintendent's Report on Achievement 2012 – 2015

The Superintendent's Report on Achievement 2012 – 2015 describes initiatives relating to Aboriginal education. The district monitors:

- students with Aboriginal ancestry who have been identified as academically at-risk; and
- the Six-Year Completion rate for students with Aboriginal ancestry in Delta.

Aboriginal Education Program Webpage

The web site includes the following information:

Delta School District is committed to bringing Aboriginal culture and history to all learners across all of the grades. The new Ministry curriculum will have Aboriginal perspectives embedded throughout the learning outcomes and the district is working to develop a curriculum framework specific to Delta to support this new mandate. All students in schools today have a right to learn about their country's Aboriginal culture and history, both past and present. Learning first about the local First Nations people and their territory is important before learning about the Aboriginal groups in the rest of the country.

In Delta, the Aboriginal Education Department consists of:

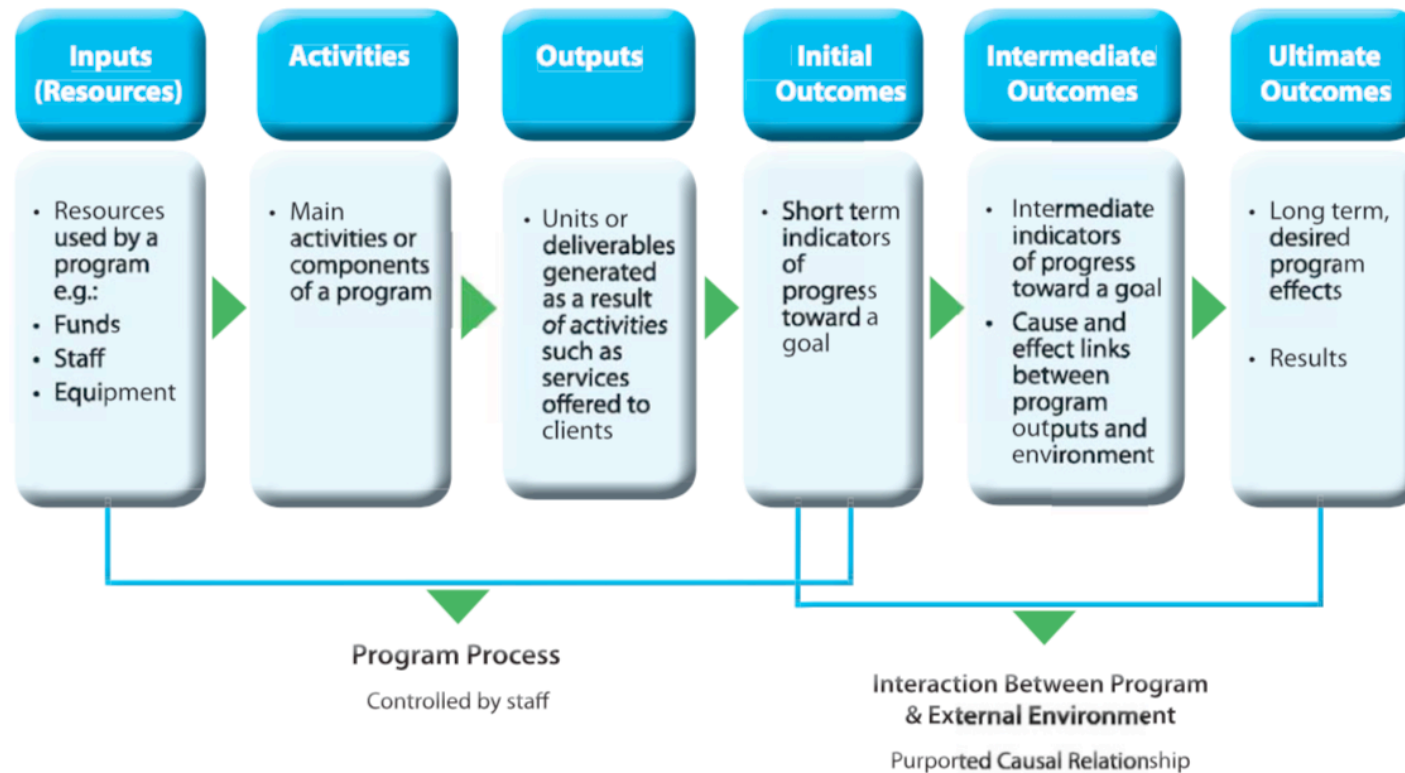
- District Vice-Principal, Aboriginal Education
- Aboriginal Success Co-ordinator,
- Aboriginal Support Workers working in all 31 schools.

The Delta School District has six Aboriginal Support workers working in 24 elementary schools whose primary goal is to help provide cultural awareness to Aboriginal students and to liaise with families that have children of Aboriginal ancestry to ensure the needs of students are being met. *Source:* <http://web.deltasd.bc.ca/content/programs/aboriginal>

These multiple sources present important information about Aboriginal Language/Cultural programs, Aboriginal Support Services and Aboriginal programs other than Language/Cultural or Support Services in the district.

We suggest the Delta School District consider using a logic model tool to organize the Aboriginal education programs/services described in district documents. Logic models illustrate the relationship between the resources (inputs) applied to a program, the activities and outputs as a result of spending those resources (the costs), and the outcomes (benefits), both short and long-term, from those outputs and activities. A generic logic model is set out below.

Generic Logic Model¹



A Delta Aboriginal Education Programs/Services logic model would assist the district in pulling together information currently presented in multiple sources about Aboriginal Language/Cultural programs, Aboriginal Support Services and Aboriginal programs other than Language/Cultural or Support Service. The logic model could then serve as a "District Roadmap", showing the chain of results connecting activities to the final outcomes and, thus, identifying the steps that the District and schools have taken and would demonstrate progress toward their achievement.

¹ Source: <http://www.fnesc.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PUB-IAHLA-Costs-Benefits-Research-Main-Rprt-Nov-2010-web-vers.pdf>

Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements

For the review we undertook a comparison of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements (AEEA) in five school districts. An AEEA is a working agreement between a school district, all local Aboriginal communities, and the Ministry of Education and is designed to enhance the educational achievement of Aboriginal students. The aim of the AEEA is to establish a collaborative partnership between Aboriginal communities and school districts that involves shared decision-making and specific goal setting to meet the educational needs of Aboriginal students.

AEEAs highlight the importance of academic performance and more importantly, stress the integral nature of Aboriginal traditional culture and languages to Aboriginal student development and success. Fundamental to all AEEAs is the requirement that school districts provide strong programs on the culture of local Aboriginal peoples on whose traditional territories the districts are located. Enhancement Agreements:

- are intended to continually improve the quality of education achieved by all Aboriginal students;
- support strong cooperative, collaborative relationships between Aboriginal communities and school districts;
- provide Aboriginal communities and districts greater autonomy to find solutions that work for Aboriginal students, the schools and the communities; and
- require a high level of respect and trust to function.

We looked at the AEEAs for the Delta School District, Richmond School District, Abbotsford School District, Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District and North Vancouver School District. The summary table below provides selected background information for each district.

Summary of Reports and Demographics

Table 1: AEEAs in Five districts, reports and demographics

	<i>Delta School District</i>	<i>Richmond School District</i>	<i>Abbotsford School District</i>	<i>Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District</i>	<i>North Vancouver School District</i>
AEEA Report Dates	2005 – 2010 2011 – 2017	2010 – 2016	2007 – 2013 2014 – 2019	2001 – 2006 2006 – 2011 2011 – 2017	2006 – 2011 2011 – 2016
Annual Reports Available	2012 – 2013 2013 – 2014	2012 – 2013 2013 – 2014	2011 – 2012	2012 – 2013	2012 – 2013 2013 – 2014
Students in District	16,000	23,000	19,000	13,7000	16,323
Self-	500	250	2,090	2,081	645

**identified as
Aboriginal**

Percentage of Aboriginal Students	3%	1%	11%	15%	4%
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Our study looked at each AEEA's stated purpose, goals, intent of goals, scope of involvement of Aboriginal communities, staff roles, range of programs and improvement notes.

Purpose

Two districts did not report a purpose to the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement. One district stated two general purposes including enhancement of education for Aboriginal learners and reliable data collection to monitor progress. One district gave four detailed goals specific to the district including social and academic success of Aboriginal students, revitalization of culture and governance of local First Nations, celebration of accomplishments, and acknowledgement of culture as an important part of schools. One district stated the purpose is to increase academic and personal success of Aboriginal students through a continued collaborative partnership with local First Nations, all other Aboriginal peoples, the school district, and the Ministry of Education.

Goals

Each district reviewed stated 4-5 goals for the AEEA, which varied in length and complexity. The goals of some districts had multiple goals within one, and some had one focus per goal. Each of the districts had a ***social-emotional*** component. Terms interpreted as social-emotional include: safe, respected, included, independence, self-advocacy, pride, support from the Aboriginal community, sense of belonging, confidence, and presence.

Two districts had an element of ***culture***. One was focused on students of Aboriginal ancestry developing awareness of culture, and one stated all students will develop an understanding and appreciation of histories, languages, and culture. Another commonality was a focus on ***academic success***. Three districts explicitly stated academic success as a goal. One district highlighted improved transition rates; one chose reading skills and graduation rates; and one focused on core curricular courses and graduation rates. Two districts had a goal for ***health*** with one focusing on lifestyle and the other on choices.

A goal that is unclear is to ensure Aboriginal learners are ***successful***. The term successful is not defined and this may be a result of the goals being posed as questions. Other goals that appeared in only one district were increasing ***leadership*** abilities and opportunities, and ***increasing system belief*** that Aboriginal students can succeed.

Intent of goals

The intent of goals was stated for all districts with the exception of one. Intents common to each include social, emotional, cultural, and academic. Two districts had community as an intent of their goals. One district had physical health as an intent for their goals.

Scope of Involvement of Aboriginal Communities

Three districts explicitly stated which Aboriginal groups were members of the AEEA committee or Aboriginal Advisory Committee, while the other two listed groups they invited to be part of the committee or who they acknowledge and honor. Groups mentioned in both categories include local First Nations, Aboriginal Education Enhancement Workers (AEEW), teachers, administrators, district staff, a trustee, community members, parents and guardians, students, Aboriginal organizations such as centers or service societies, and Métis organizations.

Avenues through which Aboriginal communities engaged with schools included: community gatherings including feasts and year-end graduation, residential school professional development, District Elder involvement in a variety of school-based projects, school-wide and district-wide Truth and Reconciliation events, district collaboration with local First Nations on language and educational programming, youth conferences, cultural events and workshops, former students returning, youth safe nights, Aboriginal staff linking students to Elders and programs in the community, provision of culturally appropriate materials for elementary students, First Nation language classes offered in schools, and wrap around services offered in collaboration with external supports.

Staff and Roles

Each district listed personnel in the position of district administration. There were varying teaching positions including Aboriginal Success Coordinator, Aboriginal Success Teacher, Aboriginal Resource Teacher, Aboriginal Support Teacher, and Aboriginal Education Teacher Consultant. The role of teaching staff varied and included combinations of academic support, curriculum and instruction support, design and implementation of professional development, and pull-out for cultural experiences.

While all districts report having AEEW, only three reported the number of AEEW working in schools. The district with the most significant staff support reported has 39 AEEW, 12 teachers, and one district administrator for 29 elementary schools and 6 secondary schools serving over 2000 students of Aboriginal ancestry. The role of the AEEW varied across districts and included combinations of recording their services, tracking student progress, promoting positive self-image, providing social-emotional support and referral as necessary, advocating for students, liaising with families, raising cultural awareness in schools, facilitating pull-out cultural support/programs for students, collaborating with teachers to provide culturally relevant programming for all students, providing in-class academic support, and providing services to each Aboriginal student that includes the four pillars of the AEEA.

Range of Programs

Programs included here are specific to Aboriginal students and were not previously mentioned in another section of this review. Range of programs include planning with a holistic view of the student, *Soar to Success* learning support, representation of Aboriginal interests on district committees, after-school cultural opportunities, presence of an Aboriginal Advisory Council, talking circles, ancestry exploration, *REaDY Summit* with integration of Musqueam teachings, District Aboriginal Reading Intervention, mentoring, out of district presenters, learning services

staff collaborating with Aboriginal Education staff to support vulnerable learners, weaving teachings from professional development into every day consideration, and collaboration with post-secondary institutions.

Improvement Notes

Improvement notes were taken from the most recent annual report on the AEEA where progress of the AEEA goals was the focus. One district had an annual report from the previous AEEA so more recent goals could not be evaluated. The remaining districts used a combination of sources to report progress.

Cultural events and programs were identified most frequently as proof for achievement of AEEA goals. Additional school-based and district-wide improvements include staff collaboration, professional development, resources available, formation of committees, school-wide activities, new courses developed, school-based programs developed, and collaboration with First Nations groups community members. Improvement in student engagement was also identified including student recognition for achievements as described by an increase in student participation in community programs and events, an increase in student participation in school-based and district opportunities available, and a rise in self-identification. The presence of academic and transition support were also identified as proof for achievement of goals.

Quantitative data was also collected. The number of students meeting expectations in reading, writing, and math in grades 4 or 7 was a common measure used. Other achievement measures used include the review of achievement in all core curricular subjects at grade 4 and 8, Foundation Skills Assessment, graduation rates, attendance records, and a locally developed Aboriginal learning progression measure. Data from surveys administered to Aboriginal students and parents was also used for quantitative proof of achievement of goals.

Data Profile of Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) and non-Aboriginal students

This data profile of Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) and non-Aboriginal students uses District and Ministry of Education Data to set a quantitative backdrop for the Aboriginal Education story in the Delta School District.

We have produced 12 tables for Delta School District's data profile. A technical note in Appendix E describes the original data research questions and a rationale for the tables produced below.

Student Population

Table 2 shows that over a five year period the percentages of Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal students has remained stable with overall student numbers declining slightly since 2011-12. In the 2014-15 school year, there were 17,154 students in the Delta School district, 561 (3.3%) of whom were Aboriginal students².

² Unless otherwise indicated, data have been provided by the Delta School District

Table 2: Count of Non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal students by year, 2010-2014

	Non-Aboriginal Students	Aboriginal Students	Total
2010-2011	16697	532	17229
2011-2012	16830	529	17359
2012-2013	16681	551	17232
2013-2014	16643	538	17181
2014-2015	16593	561	17154

Of those with Aboriginal ancestry, the majority (93%) were living off reserve (Table 3).

Table 3: Number of Aboriginal students living on and off reserve

School Year	Non- AB	Aboriginal		Total
		Off	On	
2010-2011	16697	488	44	17229
2011-2012	16830	488	41	17359
2012-2013	16681	516	35	17232
2013-2014	16643	504	34	17181
2014-2015	16593	524	37	17154

When examining the 2014-15 data by special needs categories, Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference between percentages of Aboriginal (39%) and non-Aboriginal (12%) students with designations; Aboriginal students are approximately three times more likely to have a ministry designation.

Table 4: Designations summary, 2014-2015

2014-15			
	Ministry Designation	#	%
Non-Aboriginal	No	14564	88%
	Yes	2029	12%
		16593	
Aboriginal	No	343	61%
	Yes	218	39%
Total		561	

Table 5 shows the designations by category. Aboriginal students are less likely to be in the Gifted category and more likely to receive Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment, Intensive Behaviour Intervention/Serious Mental Illness, Learning Disability, Moderate Behaviour Support / Mental Illness. The data clearly illustrate the concern raised during the review that Aboriginal students are more likely to receive a special education designation compared to non-Aboriginal students. The reviewers were given examples where parents did not know their child was given a special designation by school staff.

The How Are We Doing³ reports prepared by the Ministry of Education show that at the provincial level, Aboriginal students are more likely to have Behaviour Disability designations and are less likely to receive Learning Disability or Gifted designations. Aboriginal students in Delta (41%) are more likely to receive Behavioural Disability designations than are Aboriginal students in the province as a whole (31%).

Table 5 Designations category

Ministry Designation	Non-Aboriginal		Aboriginal		District totals	
A	masked	-	masked	-	masked	-
B	masked	-	-	-	masked	-
C	66	3.3%	-	-	68	3.0%
D	262	12.9%	55	25.2%	317	14.1%
E	12	0.6%			12	0.5%
F	41	2.0%	masked	-	42	1.9%
G	176	8.7%	14	6.4%	190	8.5%
H	319	15.7%	52	23.9%	371	16.5%
K	53	2.6%	6	2.8%	59	2.6%
P	299	14.7%	7	3.2%	306	13.6%
Q	579	28.5%	37	17.0%	616	27.4%
R	214	10.5%	42	19.3%	256	11.4%
X	masked	-	masked	-	masked	-
Total	2029	100.0%	218	100.0%	2247	100.0%

'A' = Physically Dependent

'B' = Deafblind [formerly Deaf / Blind]

'C' = Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities

'D' = Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment

'E' = Visual Impairment

'F' = Deaf or Hard of Hearing

'G' = Autism Spectrum Disorder [formerly Autism]

'H' = Intensive Behaviour Intervention/Serious Mental Illness

³ https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/ab_hawd/037.pdf;
https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/ab_hawd/Public.pdf

'J' (= former name of Category Q – Learning Disability)

'K' (= Mild Intellectual Disability)

'M' (= former name of Moderate Behaviour Support, which is now incorporated into Category R)

'N' (= former name of Mental Illness, which is now incorporated into Category R)

'P' = Gifted

'Q' = Learning Disability

'R' = Moderate Behaviour Support / Mental Illness

Student Attendance

An analysis of attendance data shows that Aboriginal students are more likely to be absent and to be absent for more days. In addition to showing a break down by increments of days, Table 6 shows that 11% of non-Aboriginal students have no absentee days in 2014-15 compared to 6% of Aboriginal students. Starting at 11 or more days, Aboriginal students are more likely to be absent.

Table 6: Days Absent, 2014-15

	Non-Aboriginal		Aboriginal		Total	
Zero	1753	11%	35	6%	1788	10%
Fewer than 5	4555	27%	105	19%	4660	27%
Between 5 and 10	4481	27%	138	25%	4619	27%
Between 11 and 20	3852	23%	152	27%	4004	23%
Between 21 and 30	1216	7%	60	11%	1276	7%
Between 31 and 40	422	3%	48	9%	470	3%
More than 40	314	2%	23	4%	337	2%
Total	16593	100%	561	100%	17154	100%

Table 7 shows that 23% of Aboriginal students are more likely to be absent more than 20 days compared to 12% of non-Aboriginal students.

Table 7: Days Absent, K-12 summary, 2014-15

	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal
Zero	11%	6%
Between 1 and 20	78%	70%
More than 20	12%	23%

There was less variation in absenteeism patterns between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal elementary students (Table 8). At the secondary level however, there are striking differences with 37% of Aboriginal compared to 13% of non-Aboriginal students missing more than 20 days.

Table 8 Days absent by Elementary and Secondary, 2014-15

K through 7*					8 through 12**				Total Dist	
Days Absent	non-Aboriginal		Aboriginal		non-Aboriginal		Aboriginal			
Zero	458	5%	12	4%	1295	16%	23	10%	1788	10%
From 1 to 20	7037	84%	274	82%	5851	72%	121	53%	13283	77%
From 21 to 149	916	11%	47	14%	1036	13%	84	37%	2083	12%
Grand Total	8411	100%	333	100%	8182	100%	228	100%	17154	100%

The attendance data suggest that an exploration of barriers to attendance for Aboriginal students would be useful, especially at the high school grades.

Grade-to-Grade Transition

Ministry of Education grade-to-grade transition data (2013-14)⁴ show that the rate is lower for Aboriginal students by about 2 to 4 % from grades 6 through 10 and then this difference increases to 7% in grade 11 (Table 9). The data indicate that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students struggle most starting in grade ten.

Table 9 Grade-to-grade transition, 2013-2014

	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
All	1113	98	1055	99	1290	98	1330	98	1427	95	1398	95
AB	54	96	47	96	45	96	47	94	43	91	57	88

Foundations Skills Assessment Reading Comprehension

In Table 10, grade 4 foundations skills assessment data for the 2014-15 school year⁵ show that Aboriginal students are less likely to write the assessment and there are fewer Aboriginal students meeting (74%) and exceeding (5%) expectations compared to non-Aboriginal students.

⁴ <https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/district.php?mode=District&report-school-district=Delta+SD%23037&district-index=17>

⁵ <https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/district.php?mode=District&report-school-district=Delta+SD%23037&district-index=17>

This difference is also evident when comparing Aboriginal students in the province⁶ to all students.

Table 10 Foundation skills assessment results, Reading comprehension, grade 4, 2014-2015

Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) Results: Reading Comprehension, Grade 4, 2014-15								
	Writers Only	Participation	Not Yet Meeting		Meeting		Exceeding	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
AB	19	58	4	21	14	74	1	5
non-AB	765	76	125	16	543	71	97	13

In grade seven the participation rate is still lower for Aboriginal students, but those meeting or exceeding expectations are comparable.

Table 11 Foundation skills assessment results, Reading comprehension, grade 7, 2014-2015

Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) Results: Reading Comprehension, Grade 7, 2014-15								
	Writers Only	Participation	Not Yet Meeting		Meeting		Exceeding	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
AB	27	51	6	22	19	70	2	7
non-AB	852	78	185	22	584	69	83	10

At the provincial level⁷, Aboriginal students are less likely to participate in Foundation Skills Assessments, and there are fewer Aboriginal students meeting and exceeding expectations.

Graduation and Completion Rates

Ministry of Education data show clearly that Aboriginal student Dogwood certificate graduation rates⁸ are significantly lower than non-Aboriginal students (Table 12) in the Delta School District. For the year 2014-15, the graduation rate for Aboriginal students was 67% compared to 77% for non-Aboriginal students.

⁶ https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/fsa/fsa_writers_only/prov.pdf; including public and independent schools combined.

⁷ https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/fsa/fsa_writers_only/prov.pdf; including public and independent schools combined.

⁸ <https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/district.php?mode=District&report-school-district=Delta+SD%23037&district-index=17>

Table 12 BC Certificate of Graduation rates, 2014-2015

BC Certificate of Graduation ("Dogwood" Diploma)						
School Year	Aboriginal			Non-Aboriginal		
	September Gr 12 Students	BC Certificate of Graduation		September Gr 12 Students	BC Certificate of Graduation	
	#	#	%	#	#	%
2014/15	72	48	67	1,575	1,211	77

As shown in Table 13, the six-year completion rates also varied significantly with 63% of Aboriginal students completing, compared to 88% of non-Aboriginal students. Also worth noting is that the completion rates for female Aboriginal students, while significantly below their non-Aboriginal counterparts (77% to 90%), are significantly higher than Aboriginal male completion rates (51%).

The six-year completion rate for all students in the province was 84% compared to 63% for all Aboriginal students at the provincial level⁹.

Table 13, Six-year completion rate, Aboriginal Status and gender, 2014-2015

Six-year completion rate* (Aboriginal status and gender)						
	Aboriginal			Non-Aboriginal		
	All			All		
	Students	Female	Male	Students	Female	Male
%	63	77	51	88	90	87

The sad lived experience story that emerges from the data presented above tells us that Aboriginal students represent 3.3% of the overall student population, yet 39% of the Aboriginal student body had special designations which imply physical disability, chronic health issues, and

⁹<https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/graduation/prov.pdf>; including public and independent schools combined.

a range of behaviour difficulties; 37% of the Aboriginal high school students missed 20 or more days of school; grade 10 is a problematic one grade transition; Aboriginal male students do least well academically; Aboriginal students do less well on Foundation Skills Assessment Reading Comprehension; and that their Dogwood certificate graduation rate is 10 percentage points lower than non-Aboriginal students. Despite the challenging situation presented by the limited set of data presented in this section, this story is a starting point in which the District and all those involved have a new opportunity to create happy and better stories of Aboriginal student achievement.

The data profile provides information that can be used to inform an Aboriginal education planning and assessment process (see the logic model discussed previously) as useful reference points for understanding and communicating the impacts of District and school initiatives and services to educators and the community over time.

Findings

Introduction

We found that district-wide leadership, principals, vice-principals, and teachers expressed a heightened interest in and need to address and strengthen Aboriginal education in the Delta School District. An external factor contributing to this interest includes the revised provincial school curriculum that recommends Aboriginal topics for instruction for each grade level and subject area from kindergarten to grade nine, with intentions to continue to grade 12. Aboriginal parents, Tsawwassen First Nations parents and community leadership, Aboriginal support workers, district Aboriginal education staff, and Aboriginal students expressed their strong commitment and keen interest in being involved in district Aboriginal education decision-making processes.

The four major review questions were used to organize the findings of this report. We begin with the thematic analysis of interview and Café data. This analysis includes findings from the 12 individual interviews, the 7 World Café /focus group sessions.

We then present key findings from the survey. The 10-item questionnaire was distributed to participants prior to engaging in one of the World Café focus group sessions; participants were asked to take 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire and to return it to the reviewers at the end of the Café session. The Aboriginal students completed a different and shorter questionnaire.

A total of 133 questionnaires were returned from representatives of 6 roles which, to safeguard confidentiality of respondents, were aggregated into 3 groups for analysis:

- School Based (Aboriginal education support workers, School counselors and Teachers)
- Leadership (District leadership, Elders and Principals and Vice-principals), and
- Parents (Parents or Family members).

In reporting on the review findings, the results are grouped into four broad themes corresponding to the questions we asked. The themes are:

1. Perceptions, Strengths and Challenges
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Recognitions of Aboriginal Education Contributions
4. Top Aboriginal Education Priorities

1. Perceptions, Strengths, and Challenges

How is Aboriginal Education in Delta School District perceived by its students, teachers, support staff, principals/vice-principals, district leadership, parents, and Aboriginal community members? What are the strengths and challenges of Aboriginal Education in Delta School District?

1.1. Perceptions

1.1.1 Aboriginal Students' Perceptions

At the Nov 2, 2015 Aboriginal high school student session approximately 28, grades 9-12 students from various district high schools attended. They were given a short questionnaire that included four main questions that are summarized in this section: (1) Name two people in your school who believe that you will be a success in life; (2) What is the purpose of your learning?; (3) What are your challenges and successes in learning?; (4) Where are you going next with your learning; what feedback have you received from your teachers? Twenty-five questionnaires were completed. The students also completed the chart activity/small group discussion and participated in a Talking Circle, which are reported in the subsequent sections about the major review questions.

Friends (14), teachers (12), Aboriginal support worker (11) and other support staff (4) were listed for examples of two people who believed that they would be successful. Four students listed no one. The same three groups listed here were also the top reasons that students enjoyed school (chart/group discussion).

For the purpose of learning question, the major purpose included various job-career related areas such as early childhood education, trades, business, professional sports, acting, being a police officer, marine biologist. Not all students identified a career or job. One indicated the relationship between career and contributing to community: "...get an ECE...make a difference in my community through the children." Another career response was in defiance to adults' perceptions: "The purpose of my learning is to become [a named profession] what everyone around me thinks I can't achieve." At least 8 responses mentioned continuing on to post-secondary education, both college and university, to achieve their job-career goals. Another interesting set of responses (5) was about the purpose of learning to enjoy life more and for altruistic purposes: "...gain as much knowledge as I can....My main goal is to leave a positive impact in the world and influence people to do what's right." The majority of the students' responses indicate that they do not have plans for how they will achieve their future career or learning goals.

For challenges, students mentioned subject areas such as math (4), science (1) and writing (1), while other challenges were more personal such as getting to school (2), focusing on school work, handing assignments in on time and completing homework (6). Two students mentioned that they found completing high school a challenge "without the Aboriginal educational support" (from an EA). One response demonstrates a philosophical perspective worth sharing: "everything

is a challenge in school; it's how you deal with these challenges that affect your successes or failures.”

A variety of one or two word answers were given in response to the question about successes that students experienced, such as sports, art, swimming, writing, good grades, good projects, love learning, and science.

Students gave examples of teacher feedback that related to: positive academic habits that students demonstrated such as being on task, being a good worker; or words of advice for how they could do better, such as do homework, don't skip class, and to ask for help. Some students noted some phrases that they had received from teachers: “You can do anything”; “My teachers often say I am insightful”; “I am smart and a joy to have in class”; and “It is not possible for me to go where I want to in life.”

One of the chart questions asked students to identify a colour that represented Aboriginal education and to explain their choice. There were 12 positive responses, 6 negative, and 3 that did not know. The actual colour is not the important consideration, but the meaning associated with the colour. Examples of positive perceptions of AE included: “...because it's vibrant”; “...because [colour] is powerful”; “...for positively spiritual.” Examples of negative AE perceptions included: “...because some people are ashamed to be Aboriginal”; “...because it is mistaken for different things and sometimes missed”; and “...it's not always happy.”

1.2. Strengths

Participants indicated that those in district-wide leadership positions are increasingly promoting the importance Aboriginal education, especially after the current superintendent assumed her role in 2010. Her enthusiasm, publicly stated commitment, and support for Aboriginal education is evident in the increase of district positions dedicated to Aboriginal education, starting with a full time vice principal of Aboriginal education (VPAE) appointed in February 2013. The VPAE subsequently created district Elders' positions in 2013 and 2014, an Aboriginal Success Coordinator in 2014, and a Teacher Mentor for Aboriginal Curriculum Implementation in Oct 2015. Teachers and principals/vice principals expressed their appreciation for the recent increase in their Aboriginal education professional development.

Other strengths that were mentioned included examples of pedagogical activities such as the district-wide teachers' professional development day at the Tsawwassen First Nations, where some teachers said that this experience was the “best professional day” (Plenary discussion, Nov 30, 2015). Teachers and vice-principals also noted that district and teacher/vice-principals' commitment to improving Aboriginal education was one strength (13).

Parents (10) and TFN (2) members identified social-emotional support as the top strength of the Aboriginal education programs and next was culture (Parents, 8 and TFN, 2).

1.3. Challenges

1.3.1. Communication

Issues about insufficient communication regarding Aboriginal education range from not knowing about the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement or the scope of Aboriginal education programs and services; lack of communication between school positions such as principal, teachers, Aboriginal support workers and parent/family about student designations; to information about new Aboriginal education positions. Almost half of the parent and TFN members (group sessions) said that they did not know which Aboriginal education programs were available for their children. The parent group, during the group session indicated their order of communication preference with teachers as follows:

- Email (21)
- Parent-teacher interviews (15)
- Lack of communication (10)
- Phone (9)
- Face to face (9)
- Planners (9)
- Parent Connect or other online (9)
- Newsletters (3) – note, two asked for printed newsletter.

1.3.2. Addressing Aboriginal Cultural Diversity

Addressing the cultural/identity diversity of Aboriginal students was often presented as a tension where some felt too much focus was on Tsawwassen First Nation to the exclusion of other Aboriginal cultural groups or vice versa (group discussions). Addressing Musqueam culture was not mentioned, yet school district representatives indicated that the school district was also located on the traditional territory of both Tsawwassen and Musqueam.

Indigenous protocol acknowledges the people whose traditional territory one is located; therefore, Tsawwassen and Musqueam need their own particular attention. The TFN have a local education agreement with the Delta School District that needs to be honoured. At the same time, the majority of Aboriginal students are not from TFN; therefore, their diversity must also be acknowledged and addressed. Aboriginal education within the district needs to address Aboriginal student diversity that includes both TFN and other Aboriginal cultures.

1.3.3. Pull-out Aboriginal program approach

There were differing views about the value of the “pull-out” Aboriginal program in which Aboriginal students were taken out of their classrooms for about one hour per week to attend an Aboriginal cultural program or activity facilitated by the Aboriginal support worker. The positive impact was described as creating a safe environment for the Aboriginal students where they could learn about their cultural identity, receive social-emotional support, or be with other

Aboriginal students in an environment free of racism. Teachers/VPs identified social-emotional support as the greatest benefit to the pull-out program (51).

There were also major negative impacts that focused on the instructional time that Aboriginal students missed when they were taken out of the classroom; the quality of the educational or cultural value was questioned; excluding non-Aboriginal students in cultural learning was an important issue; and lack of communication and lack of working together were identified as major challenges.

- Teachers/VPs identified a significant *challenge to pull-out* is the loss of instructional time (15), as did principals (7)
- Teachers/VPs identified lack of inclusion the greatest challenge to pull-out (30), and principals identified this as one challenge to pull-out because of lack of belonging in the classroom as a result of being pulled out (6)
- Teachers/VPs identified a lack of communication as the second greatest challenge of pull-out (16)
- Principals identified the main challenge to pull-out is that ASWs and teachers are not working together (9).

1.3.4. Educators' capacity

An urgent need was articulated to develop educators' professional capacity to address the scope of Aboriginal education, which falls into two distinct but inter-related areas: (a) to teach the revised K-12 provincial curriculum to all students that includes Aboriginal topics at each grade level and in each subject area; and (b) to improve the learning success of K-12 Aboriginal learners. Since the BC Ministry of Education expects the revised curriculum to be fully implemented in 2016-17 and onwards, teachers are more anxious about meeting this teaching expectation and requesting professional development assistance from the district office (interviews). This expectation is reinforced by the recent 2015 release of the BC Auditor General's Report on Aboriginal education that recommends increased action to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and to develop system-wide approaches to Aboriginal education. The points below reinforce participants' perspectives about the importance of strengthening educators' capacity for Aboriginal education:

- The need to strengthen teachers' capacity to address Aboriginal education was identified as the top challenge by teachers/VPs (27), as well as principals (6)
- Building educators' capacity was the second highest priority for principals (6), a moderate priority for teachers/VPs (9), and a priority for one TFN member (1)
- Teachers/VPs identified increasing educators' capacity as the third most important improvement needed for Aboriginal students (7)
- Parents identified increasing educators' capacity as one improvement needed for all students to appreciate Aboriginal Education (5), as well as a need to increase number of Aboriginal staff members (3).

Rating Aboriginal Education: Survey finding

One approach to understanding how Aboriginal education is perceived is to ask how respondents would rate Aboriginal education in the district. Respondents were asked to rate: the district on its Aboriginal education specifically for Aboriginal students; support services for Aboriginal students, and the District commitment to Aboriginal education. A five-point scale was used ranging from very poor at one end to excellent at the other. The scale was then collapsed into 3 groups: poor/very poor; adequate; excellent/good.

First, respondents were asked to rate the district with regard to Aboriginal education programs specifically for Aboriginal students.

On this item, there was strong agreement among all three groups that Aboriginal education for Aboriginal students was *poor/very poor* with 35% of all respondents selecting this option and little variation among the three groups at this end of the scale; percentages ranged from 32% (school based) to 38% (parents). Overall, however, the views of parents tended to be more dichotomous with greater percentages selecting either *good/very good* or *poor/very poor*. Parents were most likely to see Aboriginal education for Aboriginal students as good/very good (36%) and teachers least likely (16%).

Table 14 Aboriginal education programs specifically for Aboriginal students

	Leadership		Parent/family		School Based		Total	
Good/Excellent	13	25%	14	36%	5	16%	32	26%
Adequate	21	40%	10	26%	16	52%	47	39%
Poor/Very Poor	18	35%	15	38%	10	32%	43	35%
Total	52	100%	39	100%	31	100%	122	100%

Respondents were then asked to rate Aboriginal support services provided to Aboriginal students. This item received a less positive rating from parents (47% indicating *poor/very poor*) compared to both the leadership (20%) and school based (29%) respondents.

Table 15 Aboriginal support services provided to Aboriginal students

	Leadership		Parent/family		School Based		Total	
Good/Excellent	16	32%	9	24%	6	19%	31	26%
Adequate	24	48%	11	29%	16	52%	51	43%
Poor/Very Poor	10	20%	18	47%	9	29%	37	31%
Total	50	100%	38	100%	31	100%	119	100%

Third, respondents' rating of the district's commitment for Aboriginal education showed the greatest variability. The leadership group was more likely to indicate the commitment was good or excellent (89%) compared to school based respondents (63%), both of which were much higher than the parents' rating at 31%.

Table 16 District commitment for Aboriginal education

	Leadership		Parent/family		School Based		Total	
Good/Excellent	47	89%	12	31%	20	63%	79	64%
Adequate	6	11%	9	23%	11	34%	26	21%
Poor/Very Poor		0%	18	46%	1	3%	19	15%
Total	53	100%	39	100%	32	100%	124	100%

Notable about all three of these tables is the variability among the three groups in terms of how they rate each of the three aspects of Aboriginal education in the district. The leadership and school based groups overall are more likely to rate these three areas of Aboriginal education more positively while the parent group was most positive when rating Aboriginal education specifically for Aboriginal students.

Comments¹⁰ related to this item provide some insight into this variability. Many of the comments related to *program delivery and quality* from the leadership and school based groups focused on the need to deliver programming that is consistent across all schools both in terms of personnel and content. The differences between program delivery at the elementary compared to the secondary levels was also mentioned, with respondents indicating that there were fewer options for students at the secondary level.

Parents were more likely to suggest that there needs to be stronger *communication* about what programming is currently available to students and what plans exist for strengthening Aboriginal education in the future.

Respondents from all three groups noted that there has been *progress* in the district in terms of focusing on Aboriginal education and efforts at the district level to make Aboriginal education a priority. There was some indication that these efforts had yet to filter to school and community levels in tangible ways.

Another indicator of how Aboriginal education is perceived in the district is related to engagement of both parents and members of the community.

Table 17 below shows a clear pattern across all three groups with almost 70% indicating that parental engagement with both schools and the district is perceived to be poor or very poor.

Table 17 How would you characterize Aboriginal parental engagement with the schools/district?

	Leadership		Parent/family		School Based		Total	
Good/Excellent	4	9%	5	13%	2	7%	11	9%
Adequate	12	26%	9	23%	6	20%	27	23%
Very Poor/Poor	31	66%	26	65%	22	73%	79	68%
Total	47	100%	40	100%	30	100%	117	100%

¹⁰ Of the 124 respondents who answered this question, 80 wrote additional comments.

Interesting there is very little change in the parent/family group when asked about community engagement (64% of parents respond very poor/poor) as compared to both the leadership (57%) and school based (60%) groups which perceive that it is either adequate or good/excellent. (See Table 18)

Table 18 How would you characterize Aboriginal community engagement or community partnerships with the schools/district?

	Leadership		Parent/family		School Based		Total	
Good/Excellent	10	19%	4	10%	3	10%	17	14%
Adequate	20	38%	10	26%	15	50%	45	37%
Very Poor/Poor	22	42%	25	64%	12	40%	59	49%
Total	52	100%	39	100%	30	100%	121	100%

Respondents were asked to write down what they thought were the top 4 strengths¹¹ of Aboriginal education in the Delta school district. One hundred and twenty-nine respondents wrote approximately 360 comments in this open-ended format.

Table 19 What are the top four strengths of Aboriginal education in Delta School District?

Strengths	Leadership	School	Parents
1	Focus and Commitment	Focus and Commitment	Focus and Commitment
2	ASW	Resources	ASW
3	Relationships	ASW	Student support
4	Leadership	Relationship	

Table 19 shows the top strengths by group. For all groups the most frequently identified strength was *the District's commitment to and focus on Aboriginal education as a priority*.

It was noted that the district has made Aboriginal education a priority and that there was growing evidence of openness to change and a commitment to improvement. Respondents wrote about a desire on the part of the district to facilitate change that may sometimes be difficult, a desire to “do what is best” to make Aboriginal education “strong”, to continue to grow their understanding of Aboriginal peoples in their district and improve on current practices.

It was noted that there is a stronger Aboriginal presence in the school culture that was evidenced, for example, in the recognition of First Peoples’ traditional lands during meetings and ceremonies or school assemblies and by bringing Aboriginal ways of “doing and being” into the culture of the district and schools.

Other examples of the commitment to Aboriginal education included making changes in district structures, having staffing resources dedicated to Aboriginal education and a greater “take up” in

¹¹ Due to small numbers, only the top 3 parent priorities are noted

the classroom. “Growing” resources were mentioned a number of times and included such things as books, media library kits, and field trips.

“Good” *relationships* that were continuing to grow and build were mentioned primarily with regard to the Tsawwassen First Nation, but also in terms of “all stakeholders”.

Aboriginal Support Workers were mentioned as a strength of Aboriginal education in Delta. Some respondents mentioned specific individuals while other mentioned the value of the ASW position.

Leadership was also identified as a strength of Aboriginal education in this district. Some respondents mentioned individual district leaders while others wrote about leadership in terms of having a vision for Aboriginal education and providing support in moving Aboriginal education forward.

A less frequently identified strength was *student support*. Some commented that support for students was available or that extra support was available if needed. Others wrote about support in terms of academic, emotional and cultural support.

Table 20 What are the top four challenges of Aboriginal education in Delta School District?

	Leadership	School	Parents
1	Community	Training/PD	Communication
2	Curriculum	Community	Funding
3	ASW	Communication	ASW
4	Training/PD	Curriculum	Student support

Table 20 above shows the areas that respondents identified as top challenges for the district. Building strong community connections was seen as a top challenge by both the leadership and school based groups. Most often references to the community related to building strong relationships with parents, the Tsawwassen First Nation, and other “local Aboriginal communities”. Similar comments referred to “more direct” involvement of parents with the district and schools, “reaching communities and families” and hearing the voices of Elders and other members of community partners.

From the parent perspective, a top challenge was communication with respondents writing simply that better and more communication with parents was needed. Specific examples included communicating services and “community resources” available to their children; being transparent about goals and expectations; and communicating what their children are learning about Aboriginal culture and history.

A challenge identified most often by the school based group was training and professional development to assist educators in understanding the needs of Aboriginal students, to learn about

“sensitive material” and the culture, traditions and history of Aboriginal peoples. Helping educators deliver information in respectful ways while at the same time giving them the tools to feel confident that they were not “doing Aboriginal Education wrong” was also seen as a challenge.

Funding was identified as a top challenge primarily by parents. Most often details were not given and “funding” was simply written down. Several parents wrote that there should be transparency of funding spent on Aboriginal students, another wondered whether funds designated for Aboriginal education were not spent on other programs, and another noted that being good stewards of resources would benefit all students.

School based and leadership group respondents identified curriculum challenges such as implementation, weaving themes into the curriculum, honouring Aboriginal ways of knowing more explicitly, and having confidence in the meaningful integration of Aboriginal content. It was noted that there would be challenges delivering new curriculum across grades in the district, developing the curriculum to be used in the classrooms, and that there was a “lack of experts” and differing levels of understanding of the rich Aboriginal cultures and history. Parents noted that currently the curriculum was Euro-centric, that they had not seen a course outline.

A top challenge for parents was ensuring student support was available. This included supports “beyond culture”, ensuring academic success, and graduation completion. Related to student success were comments about Aboriginal Support Workers.

Aboriginal Support Workers (ASWs) were identified as a top challenge by both the leadership group and parents. Parents most frequently noted that there was a lack of ASWs, that a support worker was not replaced when someone was away, and that ASWs were available only a few times per week rather than on a more “regular” basis.

The leadership group saw “finding and keeping” “good” and “effective” Aboriginal support workers was a challenge as was inconsistency, accountability, and staffing “dynamics”. Clarifying roles and job descriptions was also mentioned.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

What are the roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal program staff and school/district leaders, teachers, parents, and community members in implementing the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement? Should the roles and responsibilities be revised? Why?

This review question asks about roles and responsibilities in relation to the district's Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA). The majority of responses in the group sessions indicated a lack of awareness and knowledge about the existing agreement. However, there is interest in knowing more about and being involved in the next 2016-2021 agreement (group sessions). This section will still address roles and responsibilities, but it will focus more on the topic of Aboriginal education rather than the AEEA. The feedback and suggestions will be valuable for both Aboriginal education and the future AEEA, since both are very intertwined.

Major daily responsibilities for Aboriginal education, especially those working directly with Aboriginal students were focused on a few positions such as Aboriginal support workers. Of course teachers would have daily responsibilities for teaching Aboriginal students; however, they were not perceived as providing social-emotional, specialized academic or cultural support for Aboriginal students. District responsibility for Aboriginal education increased with the appointment of a full-time district vice principal of Aboriginal education, two Elders, and two AE temporary positions that were described above.

When asked how various groups such as district leaders, district Aboriginal Advisory Committee, teachers, principals, vice principals, and Aboriginal support workers contribute to Aboriginal education responses included the following:

- Teachers/VPs identified their own relationship-building with students as their greatest contribution to Aboriginal Education (15)
- Teachers/VPs identified the greatest contribution of VPs is supporting school and district initiatives (12)
- Teachers/VPs identified increasing staff capacity as the VP's second greatest contribution to Aboriginal Education (10)
- Teachers/VPs indicated teachers embedding Aboriginal curriculum in all classes as the third greatest way teachers contribute to Aboriginal education (5)
- Principals contribute to Aboriginal education by engaging Aboriginal students and TFN members (8)
- Students identified parent help with schoolwork as the top form of parent involvement with their education (11), followed by encouragement of schooling (9), parents identified homework help (4), as did one TFN member (1).

Relationship-building, teaching Aboriginal curriculum/topics, supporting teacher professional development, supporting Aboriginal school and district initiatives, engaging Aboriginal parents

and community, and parental support are all important components and starting points for further developing and clarifying roles and responsibilities.

All those interviewed clearly and succinctly identified the scope of their major Aboriginal education roles, responsibilities, and activities. During the group sessions and in some interviews, participants mentioned a lack of district-wide knowledge, clarity, and acceptance of Aboriginal education roles and responsibilities. The two groups whose roles and responsibilities most need attention are the district Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the Aboriginal support workers.

2.A. Aboriginal Advisory Committee

The school district's Aboriginal Advisory Committee was formed about a year ago with representation from the trustees, school district leadership, teachers, principals/vice principals, Aboriginal support workers, teachers, Elders, union, parents, and Tsawwassen First Nation. The district vice principal for Aboriginal education formed this advisory group and they are at the beginning stages of carrying out their role. In the group discussion session, they indicated a need to revisit their purpose, role, and priorities that included increasing communication about the Aboriginal Advisory Committee and to include Aboriginal student voice in their responsibilities (see responses below). Members of the Aboriginal Steering Committee that provided initial guidance about this review were invited to join the Aboriginal Advisory Committee, thus the acronym; DAASC is used for this group discussion.

- The top priority for the DAASC is a clearly defined purpose to strengthen their role (8)
- DAASC identified increased communication as one role and responsibility of DAASC (2), and a requirement for the DAASC to strengthen their role (4)
- A need to increase student voice was the top suggestion for the role and responsibility of the DAASC (4), the third greatest priority for the DAASC (2), and the second greatest requirement for the DAASC to strengthen their role (5).

2.B. Aboriginal Support Workers' Roles

The Aboriginal support workers' responses about the scope of their roles and responsibilities include providing 1-1 or small group emotional, cultural, social, and academic student support; providing a safe environment in the Aboriginal room; helping students deal with racism; working with families; participating in school-based meetings about students; running the pull-out student program; being the liaison between school, family, and outside agencies; providing holistic cultural teachings (i.e., Medicine Wheel); and assisting teachers with a cultural program.

The range of ASW responses to their roles and interactions with other district staff included positive feelings about their roles when they were included and valued as part of the school-based team approach for individual students and negative feelings of working within a rigid hierarchy. A heavy caseload of Aboriginal students with special needs or not having enough time to address student needs were mentioned as concerns.

Some ASWs mentioned that for a few years they had a positive working relationship with some school district personnel and with each other and met fairly regularly to discuss their successes and challenges. The ASWs wanted to have more opportunities to share their challenges and to offer suggestions for each other because they deal with difficult issues and can feel isolated. They voiced the need to feel part of a team, to be involved in making some decisions, and to improve morale amongst their group.

Others' perceptions regarding the roles and impact of the Aboriginal support workers, range at the positive end, where examples were given when ASWs helped some Aboriginal students address their intense emotional/social difficulties and the students eventually completed high school (parent plenary session). The following responses indicate the social-emotional and cultural support that some parents and students appreciated and that principals identified as an important role for ASWs. Parents also indicated the need for ASW consistency and active engagement.

- The main benefit of ASWs was identified as social-emotional support by parents (23) and students (12), and a minor benefit by one TFN member (1)
- Culture was identified as the second highest benefit of ASWs by parents (10)
- Parents identified the ASW as a strength of Aboriginal education (6)
- Principals describe social-emotional support as the main benefit of ASW (9) and the main role of ASW (9)
- Parents identified that the most important improvement needed for all to appreciate Aboriginal Education is to have ASWs that are more consistent and more active (25).

At the negative spectrum, comments focused on not knowing what ASWs do, or not trusting what they do, to questioning their ability and qualifications to undertake the social, emotional, and academic support of Aboriginal students (various group discussions and interviews). Examples of difficult working relationships or negative interactions between some ASWs and school district educators were shared, which indicates that procedures for a respectful working environment also need district attention.

The history of these roles was described as one where ASWs determined their responsibilities with schools, with limited school district or school supervision for many years (interview responses). The school district will need to grapple with re-examining the role, responsibilities, desired impact, supervision, and annual evaluation of Aboriginal support workers in view of the following recent changes and contextual influences: (1) the addition of new full-time Aboriginal education leadership positions; (2) the revised provincial curriculum; and (3) the recommendation from the BC Auditor General that concerted system-wide effort is needed to significantly improve Aboriginal students' academic success.

Roles and Responsibilities: Survey findings

Respondents were asked to rate how well various groups have carried out their roles and responsibilities with respect to the 2011-16 Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement. Overall groups tended to receive an adequate (38%) or good/excellent (30%) rather than poor/very poor (32%) rating. However, there were notable differences within groups.

Table 21 below shows Aboriginal education district support workers were more likely to be rated as *good/excellent* in carrying out their roles and responsibilities as perceived by all groups (Leadership – 43%; Parents 52%; School based 47%).

The school-based respondents rated a number of groups as *adequate or good/excellent* in carrying out their roles: Aboriginal education advisory committee (86%); district leaders (81%); and the Aboriginal education district support workers (80%).

Parents tended to rate district leaders (52%) and the district Aboriginal education advisory committee (46%) and themselves (50%) less favourably (that is, as *very poor/poor*).

However, when filling out the questionnaire, respondents were less likely to answer this question (compared to other questions) with the total number ranging from a low of 86 (65%) when referring to the district Aboriginal education advisory committee to a high of 101 (78%) with reference to Aboriginal education district support workers. The open-ended comments associated with this question suggest that the lower response rate may be due to a lack of knowledge and understanding about what the various groups do.

This analysis was supported by those who did answer the open-ended question. The majority of the comments (almost 60%) provided by all three groups related to a lack of knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of the groups listed, in addition to not having enough knowledge about the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement itself. There were a number of comments about confusion regarding individual roles and the need for more communication and direction to clarify roles and responsibilities. Professional development was suggested as one approach to remedy this for school based and leadership groups; greater communication with parents from the district was suggested to understand better the content and goals of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement. Giving the agreement more visibility on the district website was also suggested.

Table 21 Rate how the following groups (not individuals) have carried out their roles and responsibilities for the 2011-16 Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement?

a. Aboriginal education district support workers								
	Leadership		Parent		School		Total	
Good/Excellent	18	43%	15	52%	14	47%	47	47%
Adequate	14	33%	6	21%	10	33%	30	30%
Very Poor/Poor	10	24%	8	28%	6	20%	24	24%
Total	42	100%	29	100%	30	100%	101	100%
b. District Aboriginal education advisory committee								
	Leadership		Parent		School		Total	
Good/Excellent	15	38%	3	12%	9	43%	27	31%
Adequate	17	44%	11	42%	9	43%	37	43%
Very Poor/Poor	7	18%	12	46%	3	14%	22	26%

Total	39	100%	26	100%	21	100%	86	100%
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c. District leaders

	Leadership		Parent		School		Total	
Good/Excellent	27	59%	4	16%	11	39%	42	42%
Adequate	17	37%	8	32%	12	43%	37	37%
Very Poor/Poor	2	4%	13	52%	5	18%	20	20%
Total	46	100%	25	100%	28	100%	99	100%

d. School principals and vice-principals

	Leadership		Parent		School		Total	
Good/Excellent	13	30%	7	25%	9	32%	29	29%
Adequate	18	42%	11	39%	8	29%	37	37%
Very Poor/Poor	12	28%	10	36%	11	39%	33	33%
Total	43	100%	28	100%	28	100%	99	100%

e. Teachers

	Leadership		Parent		School		Total	
Good/Excellent	8	19%	4	15%	5	18%	17	18%
Adequate	21	50%	13	50%	12	43%	46	48%
Very Poor/Poor	13	31%	9	35%	11	39%	33	34%
Total	42	100%	26	100%	28	100%	96	100%

f. Parents

	Leadership		Parent/family		School Based		Total	
Good/Excellent	3	8%	6	23%	3	13%	12	14%
Adequate	15	41%	7	27%	6	25%	28	32%
Very Poor/Poor	19	51%	13	50%	15	63%	47	54%
Total	37	100%	26	100%	24	100%	87	100%

Overall all groups (45%) were more likely to indicate there was *no or very little* impact associated with the 2011-2016 AEEA (Table 22). Parents (54%) and school based (47%) groups were least likely to perceive an impact and the leadership group (39%) most likely. Parents were least likely to rate the impact as fair or high (11%).

Table 22 Please rate the impact of Delta School District's 2011-2016 Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement.

	Leadership		Parent		School		Total	
A Fair Amount/High Impact	15	37%	3	11%	7	23%	25	25%
Adequate	10	24%	10	36%	9	30%	29	29%
None/Very Little	16	39%	15	54%	14	47%	45	45%
Total	41	100%	28	100%	30	100%	99	100%

Over 55% of the open-ended comments reflected a lack of awareness of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement or little knowledge of its contents or goals. Many of the parents who did not know about the agreement indicated they would like to be informed about it or that they had not yet received anything, suggesting that better communication about the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement would be well received. School-based and leadership groups were more likely to be aware of the existence of the agreement but not necessarily the contents, or what ‘was being done’ to achieve its goals. A number of comments from the school based and leadership groups also noted that Aboriginal education and the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement were a priority in the district.

3. Recognition of Aboriginal Education Contributions

How do schools and the school district recognize the strengths and achievements of individual Aboriginal students? Of Aboriginal teaching staff? Of teachers who contribute to Aboriginal education? Of leadership in Aboriginal education?

Recognition of Aboriginal education contributions was not explored directly in the World Café or individual interviews. This section focuses only on survey findings.

Recognition of Contributions: Survey findings

The questionnaire was used to explore Aboriginal education contributions in the district by asking respondents to comment on how the strengths and achievements of different groups are recognized by schools and the district. Overall, many respondents indicated that they did not know how to answer this question (with reference to individual Aboriginal students – 23%; Aboriginal teaching staff – 42%; Aboriginal support staff – 33%; and teachers 22%; and leadership 32%).

Respondents were first asked to comment on how schools or the district recognize the strengths and achievements of *individual Aboriginal students*. The vast majority of comments (60%) across all groups related to inviting students to participate in some kind of event or ceremony. Of these comments, about 35% referred specifically to events or ceremonies that celebrated Aboriginal culture sometimes within an Aboriginal class (such as pull-out classes), within the school as a whole, and as was mentioned several times, through the Tsawwassen First Nation. Button blankets, potlatch, TFN graduation ceremony are examples given. A few respondents were of the view that nothing was done.

With reference to *Aboriginal teaching staff* the most frequent response was by participating in learning opportunities such as workshops and collaborative learning. “Verbal recognition” was mentioned a number of times.

With respect to *Aboriginal support staff*, the most common response was that there was nothing formal or anything of which respondents were aware. Several respondents noted that recognition

came through participating in or leading educational activities or ceremonies, being included in meetings or events, and being made to feel welcome.

When respondents provided a specific comment, recognition for *teachers* who contribute to Aboriginal education was most often seen to be in the form of professional development activities and involvement in some type of event. However, almost 30% said there was nothing they were aware of or had seen publicly.

Finally respondents were asked to comment about recognition of the strengths and achievements of *leadership* in Aboriginal education. Most often recognition was seen to take the form of acknowledgement such as during leadership activities/meetings, via the website or newsletters, and greater involvement in activities, meetings and planning related to Aboriginal education.

4. Top Aboriginal Education Priorities

What should be the top priorities for Aboriginal education in Delta School District? Why?

Aboriginal Education Priorities

The Aboriginal education priorities identified during the group discussions and individual interviews have been combined in this section of the report. The priorities were succinctly stated in phrases during the chart exercise, and sometimes elaborated upon during the plenary discussion after the chart activity. Individuals or small groups added a check mark if they agreed with an idea or suggestion. The individual interviews also provided an opportunity for expansion of perspective or information about particular questions. Bringing the major points from each of these two review methods together seemed appropriate, given the inter-related nature of participants' roles and responsibilities.

4.1. District-wide Priorities

4.1.2. Aboriginal education is a district priority with explicit goals, values, and outcomes

Various responses indicated that Aboriginal education (AE) needs to become an explicit district priority with institutional commitments about the district's responsibilities for AE. A priority at the district level would mean that goals, values, measurable outcomes, and funding would be identified and reported on regularly. Being an institutional priority would ensure that Aboriginal education becomes part of the district's vision and that communication about AE would be included in various district communication processes. Currently, the district vision does not mention Aboriginal education, and many participants knew little to nothing about the current Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement.

Another dimension of demonstrating the importance of Aboriginal education is to provide office space for the district Elders. Being housed in the district office signals a district-wide scope of one's responsibilities. A suggestion was mentioned about having Tsawwassen/Musqueam welcoming poles at the district office and other Aboriginal cultural art symbols throughout the district. These representations of art are also educational and could symbolize the important values and goals of Aboriginal education.

The dimensions of what constitutes Aboriginal education would be part of the priority setting process, which will be discussed in subsequent sections below. Some suggestions for goal setting were noted in responses:

- The third highest *priority* for parents is to increase graduation rates (8) followed by a desire for more academic support in class (7); increased graduation rates was the third highest priority for teachers/VPs (10); and the top priority identified by TFN members (5)
- Teachers/VPs identified the need for increased academic success as an improvement needed for Aboriginal students (15)
- The second greatest improvement needed for Aboriginal Education suggested by students is an increase in opportunities, programs, and clubs (8).

4.1.3. Aboriginal education is for all students

A response that was common for the majority of the participant groups, voiced support that all students in the district needed to learn about and be exposed to Aboriginal education. Often this phrase meant that all students should learn about Aboriginal history, culture, issues, and contributions in all classrooms. This growing interest in Aboriginal curriculum is fueled by the recent revision to the BC provincial curriculum that requires more attention to Aboriginal topics and resources.

Many felt that learning more about AE through this curriculum requirement was also a way to enhance learning for all students and to develop better awareness and understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and adults. Culturally responsive curriculum also has had a positive impact on academic achievement. Addressing the BC provincial curriculum reinforces the need to have a clear, consistent, communicated direction for Aboriginal education programs. It also substantially increases the need for more professional development for teachers and principals/vice-principals. The following responses reinforce this priority.

- The top priority for teachers/VPs (24), as was for principals (7), is to embed Aboriginal programs within all schools
- The top suggestion for improvement needed for Aboriginal Education from TFN members is Aboriginal Education for all (5)
- Parents identify Aboriginal Education for all as a significant improvement needed for all to appreciate Aboriginal Education (22)
- Parents identified a major challenge is that Aboriginal Education is not for all students (9), as did teachers/VPs (6)

- Increased communication was of significant importance for parents as a way for all to appreciate Aboriginal Education (25).

4.1.4. Aboriginal education addresses Tsawwassen and Musqueam First Nations

Another important dimension of Aboriginal education requires addressing the district's responsibility to Tsawwassen and Musqueam for ethical, educational, cultural, and political reasons (as discussed earlier). It appears that the district has recently begun to work with Tsawwassen First Nation to examine individual TFN student progress through bi-weekly team sessions. This example is an important cooperative step. However, during this review, the TFN community leadership had sent a letter to the school district identifying their concerns about the large number of special designations of TFN students (50% of 51 students), the concern about the "pull-out" program, and other issues. They also recommended some actions about their concerns, which emphasizes a cooperative decision-making effort between TFN and the school district. There are TFN specific educational issues and future community development opportunities that if addressed would improve educational success for their students, and ultimately benefit their community and the region. Addressing TFN does not mean that other Aboriginal cultures are excluded.

4.2. School-Based Priorities

4.2.1. School-based responsibility for Aboriginal student success and support services

Responses emphasized that responsibility for Aboriginal education at the school level needs to be increased and carried out, often the term "take ownership" was used in this regard. The scope of responsibility included academic, social-emotional support services for Aboriginal students and portraying a growth and potential mindset toward Aboriginal students. There was a perception that Aboriginal students are often not encouraged or considered for positive student programs such as the district student leadership initiative.

Those working in the school as teachers, principals/vice-principal, and support staff such as ASWs all have important roles to carry out, but comments were shared where there was a lack of communication or relationship between teachers and ASWs or that ASWs were not included in school-student planning sessions. At times, the school left the communication and student/family follow-up to solely the ASW and did not engage with the family on some student issues. Even though the ASW was perceived to be an important link to families, participant responses also indicated that school and parent/family working relationships and communication were also necessary. The responses below reinforce the need and recommendations for Aboriginal student social-emotional and academic support that is consistent and equitable.

- Teachers/VPs identified social-emotional support as the greatest need for improvement for Aboriginal Education (20), as did parents (14), as well as one TFN member (1)
- The top reason students like their school is because of social-emotional support (14)
- Parents described not enough Aboriginal students receiving support at the top challenge of Aboriginal Education (21)
- Parents' top need for improvement for Aboriginal Education is that all schools and families receive the same level of support (23), and students' top concern is more academic support from ASW (11) with a lesser concern being a lack of funding (5)
- The top reason students dislike their school is because of insufficient support (12).

4.2.2. Aboriginal student data for planning and evaluation

Participants also wanted the school and district to use Aboriginal student data to track academic progress and to facilitate planning and evaluating the impact of AE programs and support (interview responses). The development of student transition plans at key milestones such as moving from elementary to high school and then having a plan for after graduation were part of the student data/tracking concept (interview responses).

4.2.3. School-based Aboriginal education mentors for consistent teacher support

Some of the district leaders suggested an approach to increase teachers' AE knowledge and teaching practice (interview responses). The school district currently has school-based teacher/coordinators of inquiry where a teacher receives some release time to assist colleagues with inquiry pedagogical approaches. This model of a school-based teacher mentor or coach could be used for Aboriginal education, to develop a professional learning community for teaching Aboriginal topics and for helping teachers work more effectively with Aboriginal students, their families, other support staff. Those who work at the district-wide level could provide the professional development training to the school-based teachers, which increases the scope and depth of teachers' capacity to address Aboriginal education (interview responses).

4.3. Working relationships and communication

4.3.1. Clarifying and communicating roles and responsibilities for better working relationships

This priority was addressed in the review question about roles and responsibilities discussed earlier (section 2). It is no surprise that it was reinforced in response to this question. Earlier, the emphasis was on prioritizing the roles and responsibilities for the District Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Aboriginal Support Workers. However, all groups' roles and responsibilities will need to be addressed in regards to how they will contribute to achieving the district's vision, goals, and outcomes in relation to Aboriginal education.

4.3.2.

Respectful working environment for effective working relationships

As stated earlier, some participants noted difficult interpersonal experiences between groups and within groups, which has caused emotional difficulties and has had a negative impact on working relationships. In order to have an eco-system or working environment that facilitates safety, cooperation, and trust a system-wide policy about respectful working environment conditions could be beneficial.

4.3.3. *Multiple communication processes working seamlessly together*

The various Aboriginal education levels and complexities make consistent communications difficult, but not impossible. Many responses indicated very little to no knowledge about Aboriginal education programs, projects, and staffing. Communication can range from basic information about programs, services, projects, and events, to communication between groups such as school-based staff to family/community members or school-based staff to district staff. Communication is certainly both a challenge and priority noted by many in the parent group.

- Need for increased communication was identified as the greatest challenge of Aboriginal Education for parents (23), second greatest challenge for teachers/VPs (14), second greatest challenge for TFN members (4), and a moderate challenge for principals (2)
- Increased communication was the top priority for Aboriginal parents for the updated AEEA (22)
- Parents noted poor communication/relationship between themselves and the district (43).

4.4. Decision-making to include Aboriginal students and families

4.4.1. Aboriginal parent and community engagement for decision-making purposes

Both Aboriginal parent and Tsawwassen First Nation family groups were very enthusiastic about being invited to give feedback and suggestions during the review process. For many, it was the first time that they were able to meet other Aboriginal parents and foster parents of Aboriginal children, to learn about Aboriginal education in the school district, and to give suggestions about AE. Both groups wanted this engagement process to continue in the future. The large number of Aboriginal parents/foster parents/family (45) and TFN parents/family/community (15) who attended the group sessions indicates keen interest. The TFN group also wanted to have more educator sessions in their community. The Aboriginal parent group wanted to have a district-wide Aboriginal Parent Advisory Committee (APAC). This group also wanted more opportunities to learn about Aboriginal culture because some had been separated from their Aboriginal cultural groups and had not had that opportunity. Increasing the opportunities and mechanisms for Aboriginal and TFN parent/community involvement is very important and would address some of the challenges noted below:

- Parents identified lack of parent & community involvement as a major challenge of Aboriginal Education (11), as did teachers/VPs (6)
- Teachers/VPs identified increasing parent & community involvement as the second greatest priority for Aboriginal Education (19)
- Teachers/VPs identified increased parent/family involvement as the second greatest improvement needed for Aboriginal Education (14).

4.4.2. Aboriginal student engagement for decision-making purposes

The Aboriginal student group was also very enthusiastic about having a district-wide Aboriginal Student Council where they could have some input to planning and decision-making about AE programs and services (group session). However, they also identified a number of concerns that revolved around whether their perspectives and suggestions would be taken seriously as noted by these comments: “Could work if people actually listened to us”; “So far we have been saying lots of things and no one is doing anything with it”; As a student council, you would get ideas about what is successful, powerful and take it from the school to the district.”

4.5. Aboriginal culture

4.5.1. Aboriginal culture is diverse and inclusive

As mentioned previously, responses indicated the importance of addressing local and other Aboriginal cultures, so that the approach is not an “either-or” but “both-and”: Tsawwassen and Aboriginal cultures. The responses below provide a sample of opinions about culture as a priority. Parents can also have an important role in contributing to cultural education in schools.

- Culture is the second highest priority for parents (10) for the new AEEA
- An increase in cultural teaching about various Nations was the second most frequent suggestion for improvements for Aboriginal students by parents (22), then bringing the district powwow back (4)
- Students identified cultural projects as the main focus (19) of experience with learning culture and cultural teachings are what they enjoyed most about the experience (6)
- Parents identified culture as a point of involvement with their child’s education
 - Parents or family teach their child culture (6)
 - Parents willing to share culture with school with assistance of Elder (5)
 - Parents want more cultural teaching for child (5).

Aboriginal Education Priorities: Survey findings

When asked to comment on the top priorities for Aboriginal education in the Delta School District, survey respondents wrote over 300 suggestions. Those suggestions were coded into themes and sorted by group. Table 23 below illustrates the top 3 coded priorities for each group.

It is worth noting that the top priority for each respondent group differed: for parents, the top priority was Aboriginal student success; for the school-based group, the top priority mentioned most often was professional development/in-service training; and, for the leadership group, defining a model for Aboriginal education service delivery was top priority. The priority for each group seems to indicate what they are most concerned about in relation to their role. In all, five major themes were identified.

Table 23 Top three priorities for Aboriginal Education in the Delta SD

Priority	Leadership	School	Parents
1	Define a model for Ab Ed service delivery	Professional Development/In-service	Aboriginal Student Success
2	Professional Development/In-service	Ab Ed curriculum development	Define a model for Ab Ed service delivery
3	Build Stronger Relationships	Define a model for Ab Ed service delivery	Build Stronger Relationships

Aboriginal student success-the parent priority

From the perspective of parents, Aboriginal student success was the most frequently identified priority for the Delta School District. Although not in the other two groups' top three, all groups, commented on student success in terms of improving graduation rates, the importance of "reading, writing, math" (focus on academic success), and transition to post-secondary education or other career pathways.

It was also noted that school should be a place where Aboriginal students feel encouraged and supported and where there can be a focus on identity and self-esteem. Learning supports should be provided for students who struggle academically; leadership opportunities should be provided to students at the secondary level; and supports should be provided for at-risk students. There were a number of comments about promoting and celebrating Aboriginal student successes and recognizing achievements both at school and in the community.

Define a model for Aboriginal Education service delivery-the leadership priority

A recurrent theme throughout the survey analysis was the need to define a model for Aboriginal education service delivery. This topic was the top priority for the leadership group, the second

priority for the parent group, and the third priority for the school-based group. It was seen as important to be transparent and explicit about goals. Respondents called for clarity about what constituted the Aboriginal education programs in Delta school district, at all levels, in terms of roles, responsibilities, structure and purpose.

Respondents talked about developing a vision for a sustainable model of Aboriginal education that was part of the learning experience for all students in every school. It was thought that Aboriginal education should be the ‘norm’ in terms of school culture and that there should be a common framework for understanding and doing the work. The “pull-out” program was mentioned several times, with each respondent suggesting that keeping children in the classroom where all students learned the curriculum and Aboriginal students were not singled out was a priority.

Part of defining a model or framework would mean defining roles and responsibilities at the district, school, and community levels. Articulating the expectations for Aboriginal support workers was mentioned several times, as was the need for a “more specific program” for Aboriginal support workers. One respondent talked about not understanding/clarifying “who was who” while another mentioned the need to consider how support was provided to students. Also noted was the need to clarify the roles and responsibilities for “admin” and “to hold admin” accountable for those responsibilities. Staff support plans, clear job performance criteria and annual evaluations were suggested.

In addition to defining a model for Aboriginal education, supports for delivering the model were identified. Suggestions included providing “more support workers”, hiring Aboriginal staff members, including Elders in advisory roles, having Elders support teachers at the school level, and additional targeted staff for at-risk Aboriginal students. However, it was also noted that a clarification of roles and responsibilities was needed before building human resource capacity.

The review team has developed Appendix A, *Resources for the Development of an Aboriginal Education School District Model* to complement recommendation #2 noted in the next section that emphasizes the development of such a model. National, provincial, and school district exemplars are highlighted, which present ideas, guidelines, and approaches for developing components such as a vision, principles, goals, holistic understandings, performance indicators, roles and responsibilities, parent/community engagement and decision-making, programs and services, and assessment. These exemplars were selected because they had Aboriginal community participation, were based on Indigenous knowledge systems, and had indications of success. There are many more exemplars that could be used. The purpose of including exemplars in this appendix is to use them as a catalyst for generating questions, ideas and action. We are not recommending that the Delta School District adapt these exemplars, but we are recommending them as starting points for inquiry and discussion.

Professional Development-the school-based priority

All groups mentioned professional development and in-service training frequently, however, it was the dominant priority among the school-based respondents and the second priority for the leadership respondents. For the school-based group, “deepening” knowledge about Aboriginal ways of knowing, Aboriginal culture, and Aboriginal “content” was an important step in supporting educators in delivering Aboriginal education to all students across all grades.

Aboriginal Education Curriculum Development

Aboriginal education curriculum development was the second priority for the school-based group. They felt that support was needed to help educators “grow their confidence” in implementing a new curriculum that honoured Aboriginal cultures, perspectives and history. It was noted that a fear of violating protocol or “handling” sensitive topics can be a barrier to Aboriginal education and professional development would help mitigate this barrier. Mentoring was suggested as a professional development strategy. It was also noted that the collection and sharing of resources to support curriculum delivery was an important professional development activity and that local First Nations groups should be involved.

Building Stronger Relationships

The third priority for both parents and the leadership group was building stronger relationships among key stakeholders in the Delta School District. This included building trust between parents and schools as well as engaging parents in meaningful ways. Engaging the Tsawwassen First Nation as partners was also mentioned. Stronger relationships were identified as a way of supporting students and families in and out of schools and helping educators connect with Indigenous peoples.

Other comments

The final item on the questionnaire asked respondents to provide any additional comments they would like to make regarding Aboriginal education in the Delta School District. Most often in this space on the questionnaire respondents took the opportunity to acknowledge the efforts and progress made by the district in their efforts to advance Aboriginal education and to acknowledge or thank efforts of specific individuals. Others used the space to reiterate key issues raised in other parts of the questionnaire.

Recommendations

This review suggests recommendations in four major areas: (1) focus on Aboriginal student strengths and successes; (2) develop a model of Aboriginal education for the Delta School District; (3) develop a school-based Aboriginal education mentorship program; and (4) build stronger relationships through improved communication processes. Each area has specific actions that were often discussed or recommended by the review participants during the focus group discussions, interviews, and surveys. Some are connected to the student data profile that was presented in the early section of this report.

Together these recommended areas certainly address recent national and provincial reports such as the 2015 *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action for education* and the 2015 BC Auditor General's Report, *An Audit of the Education of Aboriginal Students in the B.C. Public School System*. The recommended areas will facilitate the implementation of the recently revised provincial curriculum that includes Aboriginal worldviews and knowledge throughout the grades and subjects. They could also become the foci of the next Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement.

Recommendations

Our report's recommendations include:

1. Define and Report on Aboriginal Student Strengths and Successes

- 1.1 Identify school-based academic, cultural, social, and emotional goals for Aboriginal students. Include an appreciative identification of individual student strengths as part of these goals.
- 1.2 Develop a school-based team approach with effective communication and cooperative efforts, where roles and responsibilities are clearly known.
- 1.3 Develop district-wide mechanisms for Aboriginal student and parent involvement in making decisions about services and education they receive, such as an Aboriginal Student Council and an Aboriginal Parent Council.
- 1.4 Use data, where appropriate, in a District logic model to identify and track student and stakeholder success. Strengthen the quality and usability of data currently collected by the Delta School District.
- 1.5 Use an inquiry based model to develop a deeper understanding of current data stories. For example:
 - Evergreen program transition

- Aboriginal student success
- Transitions to postsecondary
- Aboriginal student attendance
- Aboriginal student special education designation.

1.6 Provide training in data collection, interpretation and use for users at the district and school levels.

2. Develop a model of Aboriginal education: Goals/Outcomes, Values, Approaches, and Evaluation

- 2.1 Identify Aboriginal education as a priority of the Delta School District with goals and outcomes such as: (1) Increase the academic, social, emotional, and cultural success of Aboriginal students; and (2) Learning about Aboriginal history, culture, and knowledge is for all students. A priority at the district level would mean that goals, values, measurable outcomes, and funding would be identified and reported on regularly. Being an institutional priority would ensure that Aboriginal education becomes part of the district's vision and that communication about AE would be included in various district communication processes.
- 2.2 Involve Elders and cultural knowledge holders in developing the values and approaches for the Aboriginal education model, to ensure cultural relevance.
- 2.3 Address Aboriginal cultural diversity to include both recognition of and learning about local Tsawwassen and Musqueam First Nations and other Aboriginal cultures represented in the Aboriginal student population.
- 2.4 Continue to address issues and actions identified by Tsawwassen First Nation and to implement the Local Education Agreement that the District has with TFN.
- 2.5 Revise, clarify, and communicate roles and responsibilities of groups such as district leadership, school principals/vice principals, teachers, Aboriginal support workers, and Elders in relation to the Aboriginal education model. Priority needs to be given to the roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal Support Workers and the District Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- 2.6 Examine professional training and preparation required for carrying out roles and responsibilities for the Aboriginal education model- update where necessary, change job descriptions where necessary, examine reporting structure and process of job evaluation.
- 2.7 Elders who are district Elders should have some office space in the district office as an indication of their important system-wide role
- 2.8 Produce annual District and School Level Aboriginal Student Data Profiles to inform educators and parents/communities on changes over time that would impact the design and evaluation of the Aboriginal Education programs and services.

3. Develop a school-based Aboriginal education mentorship program

- 3.1 Develop a school-based approach for teacher mentorship/coaching about including Aboriginal education in instruction and working with parents/community. A teacher with this interest or expertise would receive some teaching release and then be mentored by district leadership for this role. There is already a coordinator of inquiry at each school. This AE mentoring program may be a longer term plan where a set of teachers could be given some professional development opportunities in order to undertake this role.
- 3.2 Reconsider the Aboriginal ‘pull-out’ program approach. If the purpose is to enhance Aboriginal cultural identity or to provide additional academic or social/emotional support, then this type of program may be scheduled at either noon hour or after school. Students miss out on valuable instruction time when they leave the classroom during instructional time.

4. Build stronger relationships by improving communication processes

- 4.1 Improve mechanisms for communication throughout the district about Aboriginal education that is consistent in its output. Communication can inform, ask for input, and share information about events, teaching resources and teaching ideas.
- 4.2 Improve communication methods with Aboriginal parents and parents of Aboriginal students.
- 4.3 Continue to host semi-annual district-wide gatherings for Aboriginal parents and parents of Aboriginal children to build relationships and communication about Aboriginal education.

Appendices

Appendix A- Resources for the Development of an Aboriginal Education School District Model

This appendix provides exemplars that could be examined for useful catalytic ideas, guidelines, and approaches for developing a school district model of Aboriginal education. The exemplars include national First Nations, Métis, and Inuit lifelong holistic approaches to learning, BC Ministry of Education *First Peoples Principles of Learning*, Aboriginal education resources, and school district approaches. These resources were selected because they had Aboriginal community participation, were based on Indigenous knowledge systems, and had indications of success. There are many more exemplars that could be used. Those selected have some relevance to the recommendations of the *Delta School District Review of Aboriginal Education*.

A. National Exemplars of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Models of Learning

1. Canadian Council on Learning. (2007). *Redefining How Success is Measured in First Nations, Inuit and Métis Learning. Report on Learning in Canada 2007*.

http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/5_2007_redefining_how_success_is_measured_en.pdf

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people developed their respective lifelong learning models. This report outlines some common elements of Aboriginal learning and introduces the three Aboriginal models of learning (see Chapter 1, pp. 5-7 and Chapter 4, pp.18-22)

2. Canadian Council on Learning. (2009) *The State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada: A Holistic Approach to Measuring Success*. Accessed Feb 27, 2016.

http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education2/state_of_aboriginal_learning_in_canada-final_report_ccl_2009.pdf

This report uses statistical data from national surveys about Aboriginal educational, social, cultural, health, and employment indicators as they relate to holistic components of learning. The three main components of this framework include: Sources and Domains of Knowledge, The Lifelong Learning Journey and Community Well-being (p. 4). This framework was developed for Canadian Aboriginal communities to adapt and use for their own planning and assessment purposes.

B. BC Ministry of Education

1. First Peoples Principles of Learning

<https://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com/learning-requires-exploration-of-ones-identity/>

The *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FPPL), which reflects First Peoples pedagogy, were first developed for the *English First Peoples 12* course. The BC Ministry of Education has embedded the FPPL in **all** K-12 provincial curriculum and assessment.

2. Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom: Moving Forward (2015) by the Province of British Columbia https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/awp_moving_forward.pdf

BC educators developed this booklet. This resource compliments the *First Peoples Principles of Learning*. Characteristics of Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives, attributes of responsive schooling, and indicators of success that include societal, school system, school-based educators, and student focused indicators are exemplified throughout the document. The BC Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education, also has a PowerPoint presentation that presents background information for the booklet and guiding questions for professional development workshops (see link below). School-based or district-wide discussions with Aboriginal parents/community could use the workshop questions to begin the development of an Aboriginal model of education.

<https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/documents.htm#curriculum>

C. BC School District Exemplars

1. Sea to Sky School District 48

<http://sd48aboriginaleducation.org/about-us/>

The Sea to Sky School District has significantly increased Aboriginal student success over a four-year period. Its Aboriginal student six-year completion rate increased from 39% in 2010 to 81% in 2014 with an 8% improvement from 2012-13. This district's Aboriginal student transition rates now exceed the provincial average with the transition from grade 11 to 12 at 68% in 2010 to 90% in 2013.

This district's Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement, 2015-2019 features a holistic approach with goal statements, performance indicators, recommended actions, and responsibilities of Aboriginal education teams that is a useful framework.

<https://sd48seatosky.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/signed-enhancement-agreement-2014.pdf>

District 48's strategic plan also brings together, an Indigenous holistic approach with Howard Gardner's *Five Minds for the Future* (2009): learn, create and innovate, think critically, contribute, and collaborate.

<https://sd48seatosky.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/sd48strategicplan.pdf>

2. Nanaimo Ladysmith School District 68

This district's web site includes the identification of Aboriginal values, a major goal of collective ownership for Aboriginal education is outlined, and information about replacing a large Aboriginal Education Leadership Council with a smaller Leaders for Learning Executive Group is portrayed.

http://www.sd68.bc.ca/?page_id=515

District 68's Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement, 2011-2016 includes an inquiry-based approach to fulfill their success goals. The way that this district has linked goals and inquiries is excellent.

<http://www.sd68.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/AEEA.pdf>

3. Vancouver School District 39

This district exemplar is included for its identification and communication of the Aboriginal education staff's major roles and responsibilities and the method of collecting and analyzing student data. In addition, it is worth noting that in 2013-14, all schools were required to address the goal of increasing all students' knowledge of Aboriginal history, culture, and contributions as part of their School Growth Plan. These plans, actions, and achievements are listed on individual school's web sites. This district uses the *Aboriginal Intervention Management System* (AIMS) to identify and track AEEA goal actions and programs. See web site:

<https://www.vsb.bc.ca/programs/aboriginal-education>

<http://www.vsb.bc.ca/sites/default/files/AEEA%20Year%204%20Report%20and%20Year%205%20Summary.pdf>

4. Central Okanagan School District 28

This district's *Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement, 2014-2019*, uses a holistic approach through the Medicine Wheel, and adds 40 Developmental Assets that are positive experiences and qualities to help students become caring, responsible adults (see p. 6). The district's Aboriginal Education Council uses a seasonal framework to review progress and to receive feedback from parents and community (see p. 17). The six-year Aboriginal student high school completion rate for this district rose from 55.3% in 2008/09 to 73% in 2013/14. The district's goal is 90%.

<http://www.sd23.bc.ca/ProgramsServices/AboriginalEducation/Publications/Enhancement%20Agreement%202014-2019.pdf>

5. Kamloops/Thompson School District 73

<http://sd73aboriginaleducation.weebly.com/>

This district has a rich variety of web based Aboriginal education teaching resources on all subject areas and grade levels (see tab, *Teaching Resources*). The scope of Aboriginal education programs and projects are also described on their web site. The district has also developed 4

Handbook for Parents of Aboriginal Students in School District 73 (Kamloops Thompson) that includes information about the roles and responsibilities of all who are involved in educating and providing services to Aboriginal students, along with suggestions for how parents can help their child succeed and graduate.

http://sd73aboriginaleducation.weebly.com/uploads/3/9/9/9/39998163/a_handbook_for_parents_aboriginal_students_1.pdf

Appendix B- Letters of Support



October 14th, 2015 DRAFT

To Whom It May Concern:

We have asked Drs. Jo-ann Archibald, Victor Glickman, and Colleen Hawkey of the University of British Columbia, to assist us with our Delta School District Aboriginal Program Review. To facilitate this work I authorize them to use the Delta School Board offices and selected school space as needed; and to work with us to contact District staff and students for the purposes of this research.

As well, I will be providing District Staff to act as hosts and provide the UBC team with any on-site resources as needed.

Sincerely,



Brad Bauman
Director of Learning Services
Special Programs
Delta School District
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Delta, BC V4K 5B4
604 952-5323 | bbauman@deltasd.bc.ca
Twitter: @bradrbauman

Delta School District authorizes Edudata Canada, their contractor, to access data from Edudata MED data sets and the Delta School District to answer the following project research questions listed below.



Brad Bauman
Director of Learning Services

Research Questions	Source	Data set
<p>What are the Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) and non-Aboriginal student demographic differences in student mobility patterns with Delta SD? (By special needs flag, program type, gender etc).</p> <p>How many schools do Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) students enroll in by year and grade (controlling for expected school-to-school transition)? (By special needs flag, program type, gender etc).</p> <p>What is the profile of grade-to-grade transitions? Who are the Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) students in kindergarten (over 5 years) and what are their transition patterns over a 12 year period? (By special needs flag, program type, gender etc).</p>	<p>Ministry of Education</p> <p>Delta SD</p>	<p>Retention (grade to grade transition) course</p> <p>Achievement data?</p> <p>Historical attendance data</p>
<p>Based on report card information, who are the Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) at-risk students at transition grades? (By special needs flag, program type, gender etc).</p> <p>Based on report card information, what</p>	Delta SD	Report Card

Research Questions	Source	Data set
are the Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) performance scales at the elementary levels? (By special needs flag, program type, gender etc).		
<p>What are the Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) and non-Aboriginal student attendance patterns by demographics? (By special needs flag, program type, gender etc).</p> <p>What are the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) student attendance patterns by demographics? (By special needs flag, program type, gender etc).</p>	Delta SD	Attendance, demographic
<p>What are the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) student patterns of success evident in FSA Cohort transitions at Grade4 and Grade 7? What are their participation rates? (By special needs flag, program type, gender etc).</p> <p>What are the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) student patterns of success are evident in Grade 7 FSA reading, Grade 10 English and Grade 12 English cohort analysis? (By special needs flag, program type, gender etc).</p>	Ministry of Education	<p>Retention (grade to grade transition) course</p> <p>Achievement data?</p>
<p>What are graduation rates by special education, Aboriginal ancestry, band and off-reserve, graduation program. (By special needs flag, program type, gender etc).</p> <p>What is the achievement profile of the 2014 graduating class? By demographics and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (on and off Reserve)? (By special needs flag,</p>	Ministry of Education	<p>Retention (grade to grade transition) course</p> <p>Achievement data?</p>

Research Questions	Source	Data set
program type, gender etc).		
What are the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (on and off Reserve) student transitions to post-secondary education for the grade 12 cohorts from 2010 through 2015? (By special needs flag, program type, gender etc).	Ministry of Education	STP

Appendix C – Key Activities

Key Activities - Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) Annual Report - 2013/2014

Key activities for each AEEA goal were found in the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) Annual Report - 2013/2014. They are listed below.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aboriginal Support Workers -pullout program;• Two resource teacher academic support at North Delta & Delta Secondary.• Curriculum committee workshops for teachers to show them why and how Indigenous knowledge can be incorporated into the curriculum;• Six Delta schools involved in the Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network (AESN);• In 2013-14, Aboriginal Studies was offered at Delta Secondary with 19 students with Aboriginal ancestry registered
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aboriginal support workers have offices and meeting spaces within the schools so that Aboriginal students have a place they can go for different purposes: attend the pullout program, which emphasizes cultural teachings; get extra help with academic coursework; receive emotional support; get advice and one-on-one support; connect socially with peers; have some food.• Homework clubs supervised by Support workers aid the students all year long but particularly during exam weeks. Without this support, some students would not make it through their academic year.• Support workers attend meetings for students who are struggling including: connecting with parents via phone calls, one-on-one meetings; parent-teacher conferences; school-based-team meetings or meeting with counselors, administrators and teachers to develop plans for success.• Talking Circles and holistic learning are conducted in small group settings and in classroom settings which builds positive connections with students, provides a School Satisfaction Survey Data in Grades 3/4, 7, 10, 12 safe environment, builds confidence, encourages a sense of belonging and increases self-esteem, speaking, listening and social responsibility skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targeted school support for at-risk learners (those receiving “Not Yet Meeting”, “Approaching” or “C- or below” on their report cards).• Extra support from Educational Assistants in 17 schools• One block of Aboriginal support at 2 High Schools• Regular visits with the Education Manager of TFN and the District Vice-Principal. We met to review some of the TFN student files and together with some school principals we met to brainstorm ideas about helping TFN with an after school program.• Trades related work opportunities are extended to students in High School. Last

February one student attended the Roofing Apprenticeship program and passed with high grades. He continues to work in that field.

- Increased support in Grade 12 to ensure graduation: homework club, monthly school based support teams specifically for students with Aboriginal ancestry.
- Transition support for all grade 7 students going into grade 8
- Scholarship and bursary packages are handed out to students as well as post-secondary information. Students are helped with funding options through ACCESS.
- An evening with post-secondary reps from KPU, VCC, SFU, NVIT, and The Justice Institute was organized at none school and former students were invited to share their stories of post-secondary choices. 12 former graduates and 30 current students with their parents attended.
- 34 students attended the Indspire Conference in May 2014 held at the Pan Pacific
- Post-secondary options presented to students: S.F.U nursing sciences, B.C.I.T., Kwantlen, UBC
- Some students visited the Kwantlen and Native Education campuses.

- Breakfast club at one High School ensures students are getting the nutrition they need to study and attend classes.
- Students are taken on nature walks to Burns bog or through the forest at Sands Secondary. The students are taught to identify different medicines.
- Medicine Wheel teachings include how to live a healthy live style: eat properly, exercise in fresh air, hygiene, spiritual growth and how to take care of Mother Earth. Aboriginal games are also taught.
- Hot lunch program once every 3 weeks and a breakfast program from 8:00-8:35 in one High School. Lunchtime drop-in program at another high school
- A few times a year, youth safe nights where the students meet for a meal, receive Elder teachings (Jere Peters, Liz Dawson), play games, watch a movie etc.

Appendix D - Survey

Delta School District Aboriginal Education Program Review Questionnaire

Please take 15 minutes to answer the following questions. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the review at any time. Your consent to participate in this review is assumed once you have completed the questionnaire.

Please indicate your role in Delta School District. (Check one)

- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ School counsellor
- ☐ Aboriginal education support worker
- ☐ Elder
- ☐ Principal or vice-principal
- ☐ District leadership
- ☐ Parent or family member
- ☐ Community member
- ☐ Other

Please specify: _____

1. Please rate Aboriginal education in Delta School District as it currently exists in the following areas:

- | | Very poor | Poor | Adequate | Good | Excellent |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Aboriginal education programs for specifically for Aboriginal students | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Aboriginal support services provided to Aboriginal students | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. District commitment for Aboriginal education | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please use this space for additional comments.

2. How would you characterize Aboriginal parental engagement with the schools/district?

- ☐ Very poor
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Excellent

3. How would you characterize Aboriginal community engagement or community partnerships with the schools/district?

- ☐ Very poor
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Excellent

4. What are the top four strengths of Aboriginal education in Delta School District?

5. What are the top four challenges of Aboriginal education in Delta School District?

6. Please rate the impact of Delta School District's 2011-2016 Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement.

- ☐ None
- ☐ Very little
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ A fair amount
- ☐ High impact

Please use this space for additional comments.

7. Rate how the following groups (not individuals) have carried out their roles and responsibilities for the 2011-16 Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement?

	Very poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent
a. Aboriginal education district support workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. District Aboriginal education advisory committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. District leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. School principals and vice-principals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this space for additional comments.

8. How do schools/district recognize the strengths and achievements of the following.

a. individual Aboriginal students:

b. Aboriginal teaching staff:

c. Aboriginal support staff:

d. Teachers who contribute to Aboriginal education:

e. District leadership for Aboriginal education:

9. What should be the top four Aboriginal Education priorities for Delta School District? Why?

10. Other comments that you would like to make regarding Aboriginal Education in the Delta School District.

Appendix E – Interview and World Café /Focus Group questions

Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee

Group discussion

1. How has the District's Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee contributed to Aboriginal education to date?
2. What should be the future roles and responsibilities of the District Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee?
3. What does the District Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee require to strengthen its role and contributions?
4. What are the top four priorities that you think should be addressed in the 2016-2021 Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement? Why?
5. Are there other comments that you would like to make regarding Aboriginal education in the Delta School District?

Vice-Principals and Teachers

Group discussion

1. How do vice-principals contribute to Aboriginal education success in Delta School District?
2. How do teachers contribute to Aboriginal education success in Delta School District?
3. What are the major strengths of Aboriginal education in the Delta School District? Why?
4. What are the major challenges? How can these challenges be addressed?
5. What improvements would you like to see for Aboriginal students who attend the Delta School District?
6. What improvements would you like to see for all students to appreciate Aboriginal education in the Delta School District?
7. Given that students are pulled-out of their regular classroom to attend a session with the Aboriginal support worker, what are the benefits of the pull-out session?
8. Given that students are pulled-out of the regular classroom to attend a session with the Aboriginal support worker, what are the challenges of the pull-out session?
9. What are the top four priorities that you think should be addressed in the 2016-2021 Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement? Why?
10. Are there other comments that you would like to make regarding Aboriginal education in the Delta School District?

Tsawwassen First Nations Parents/Family

Group discussion

1. What school or district programs or services are you aware of for Tsawwassen students?
2. How are you involved in the education of your family member? How would you like to be involved in the future?
3. How would you communicate with your children's teachers and vice versa?
4. What benefits does your child receive from the Aboriginal support worker?
5. What are the major strengths of the Aboriginal education in the Delta School District? Why?
6. What are the major challenges of Aboriginal education in the Delta School District? Why?
7. What improvements would you like to see for Aboriginal students who attend the Delta School District?
8. What are the top four priorities that you think should be addressed in the 2016-2021 Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement? Why?
9. Are there other comments that you would like to make about Aboriginal education in the Delta School District?

Principals

Group discussion

1. How do principals contribute to Aboriginal education success in Delta School District?
2. What are the major strengths of Aboriginal education in the Delta School District? Why?
3. What are the major challenges? Why?
4. What are the roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal support workers?
5. How do Aboriginal support workers contribute to Aboriginal education success in the Delta School District?
6. What are the benefits of the pull-out sessions with the Aboriginal support workers and what are the challenges?
7. Given the redesigned curriculum in what way does the current model of the Aboriginal education department assist in meeting the new objectives?
8. What are the top four priorities that you think should be addressed in the 2016-2021 Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement? Why?
9. Are there other comments that you would like to make about Aboriginal education in the Delta School District?

Support Workers Individual interview questions.

1. Please tell me how long you have worked for the Delta School District in your current position and what did you do before taking on this position?
2. Please tell me about your major responsibilities that you carry out in your role as an Aboriginal support worker?
3. What do you like most about your job?
4. What do you like least about your job?
5. Tell me about the students with whom you work ? How do you work with them? How do student benefit from their time with you? How do you know? How do you contribute to student success?
6. Could you share a story about a successful experience that you have had working for the Delta School District? (probe for what made the experience successful- why is was memorable- how she/he contributed to this success)
7. Could you share a story about a challenging experience that you have had working for the Delta School District? (same probes as noted in question 4)
8. How do you contribute to student success?
9. Tell me about how you collaborate with other support workers, teachers, others?
10. Do you feel that district employees are aware of and understand your role?
11. If you could change three things about your job or working conditions what would they be?
12. What should be the top priorities for Aboriginal education in the district?
13. Other comments that you would like to share about the quality of Aboriginal education in Delta School District.

Elders' individual interview questions

1. Please tell me how long you have been an Elder for the Delta School District?
2. How do you carry out your Elder role? What are your major responsibilities and activities?
3. Could you share a story about a successful experience that you have had being an Elder for the Delta School District? (probe for what made the experience successful- why it was memorable- how she/he contributed to this success)
4. Could you share a story about a challenging experience that you have had being an Elder for the Delta School District?
5. What would educational success look like for an Aboriginal student who graduates from grade 12?
6. How could the Delta School District be more successful for Aboriginal students?
7. If you could focus on one major strategy that would act as a catalyst for improving other aspects of Aboriginal education what would that be? Why is it so important?
8. What should be the top Aboriginal education priorities for the Delta School District?
9. Other comments that you would like to share about the quality of Aboriginal education in Delta School District.

Aboriginal high school student session

Use small group and large group discussion

1. What do you like most about your school? Why?
2. What do you like least about your school? Why?
3. If “Aboriginal education?” was a colour (or more), what would it be and why?
4. Can you share some fun experiences that you have had learning about Aboriginal culture and topics? What made the learning fun? What did you learn?
5. How could learning for Aboriginal students be improved?
6. How could learning about Aboriginal topics be improved?
7. What do your parents think about what you learn regarding Aboriginal topics?
8. How do your parents or family members support your learning in school?
9. Are there other comments that you would like to share about the quality of Aboriginal education in Delta School District?

Aboriginal Parent Session (not Tsawassen)

Group discussion

1. How would you describe the relationship that you as a parent/family/community member have with the Delta School District?
2. What school, district programs, services are you aware of for Aboriginal students in Delta?
3. How do you communicate with your children's teachers & vice versa?
4. What benefits does your child receive from Aboriginal support workers?
5. What are the major strengths of Aboriginal education in the Delta School District? Why?
6. What are the major challenges? Why?
7. What improvements would you like to see for Aboriginal students who attend the Delta School District?
8. What improvements would you like to see for all students to appreciate Aboriginal education in the Delta School District?
9. How are you involved in the education of your family member? How would you like to be involved in the future?
10. What are the top four priorities that you think should be addressed in the 2016-2021 Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement? Why?
11. Are there other comments that you would like to make about Aboriginal education in the Delta School District?

District Aboriginal Education leaders- individual interview

1. Please tell me how long you have worked for the Delta School District in your current position and what did you do before taking on this position?
2. How do you address Aboriginal education in your role as? What are your major responsibilities and activities for Aboriginal education?
3. Could you share a story about a successful experience that you have had working for the Delta School District? (probe for what made the experience successful- why is was memorable- how she/he contributed to this success)
4. Could you share a story about a challenging experience that you have had working for the Delta School District? (same probes as noted in question 3)
5. Tell me about how you collaborate with support workers, teachers, Elders, parents, others?
6. What would educational success look like for an Aboriginal student (moving from elementary to high school; graduating from grade 12)?
7. How could the Delta School District be more successful for Aboriginal students?
8. What are the strengths of Aboriginal education in Delta School District?
9. What are the major challenges to Aboriginal education in Delta School District?
10. If you could focus on one strategy that would act as a catalyst for improving other aspects of Aboriginal education what would that be? Why is it so important?
11. Other comments that you would like to share about the quality of Aboriginal education in Delta School District.

Appendix F – Data note

Three data sources were available to use for this review: Ministry of Education standard public reports; Ministry of Education administrative data; and Delta School District student information system data. Within the time frame of the review we were able to answer questions on student attendance, designations, achievement and completion.

Data gaps were identified. Due to data limitations such as small numbers, lack of confidence in data quality, or data availability, we were unable to answer a number of questions within the time available. Further data analysis related to postsecondary transition; Evergreen program transitions; mobility, and success patterns could be undertaken.