



Aboriginal Report

How Are We Doing?

2023/2024



Indigenous Student Profile

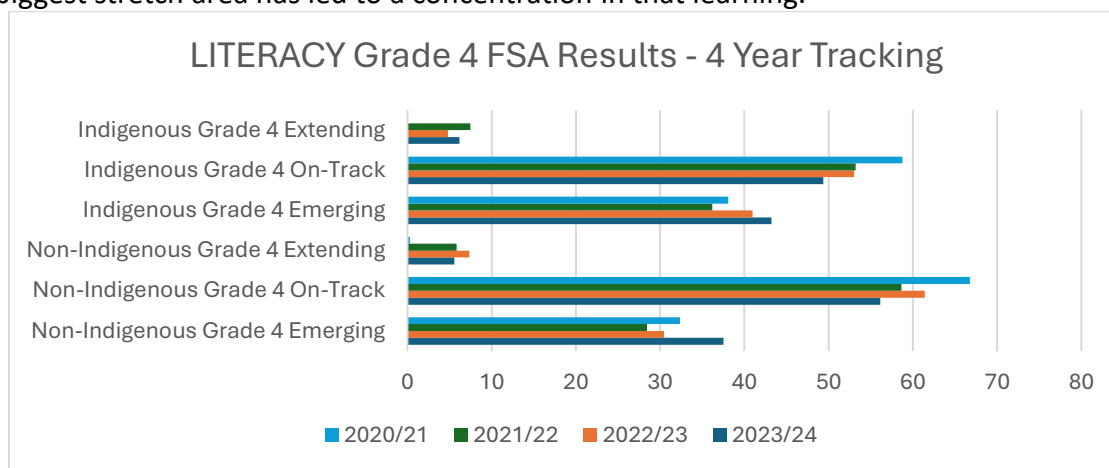
- The Ministry of Education and Childcare has not yet officially changed its terminology to “Indigenous” from “Aboriginal”, so that is why the title of the report contains the more dated term.
- Over the past several years, we have worked very hard in September confirming student participation in the Indigenous Education Program. We are required to confirm participation for audit compliance. The rate of students/families who have either opted out of participating in the program or who have not confirmed participation is steadily decreasing from a high of 5.3% in 2013-2014 to a low of 2.0% 2023-2024 (2.6% in 2022-2023).
- All the schools have at least 10% of the population who self-identify as Indigenous. In our district, 18.9% of the population self-identifies as Indigenous, which is relatively consistent with the past five years, with only slight variations. There is a slightly higher percentage of Indigenous girls at 10.8% of all students, compared to Indigenous boys at 10.1% of all students. This ratio is relatively consistent from year to year, but differs from the provincial ratio, which is the reverse.
- 8.75% of all Indigenous students in School District 83 live on-reserve, compared with 11.2% of all Indigenous students provincially. 1.65% of all students in School District 83 live on-reserve.
- The number of Indigenous students in Alternate Programs is 44%. This is an over-representation compared to Indigenous students being 18.9% of the total student population. However, it should be noted that this number is lower than the provincial average of 72.6%.
- 29% of all Indigenous students are categorized as having disabilities or diverse abilities, which is higher than the provincial rate of 25.6%. 38.6% of on-Reserve Indigenous students are categorized as having disabilities or diverse abilities, which is data that we have gathered locally, not from the report. This number is consistent year to year, but Indigenous students are over-represented in this area. 19% of all students in the district have a categorization. 13.4% of non-Indigenous students have disabilities or diverse abilities, which is higher than the provincial rate of 10.4%. Please note that this particular data is based on specific designations – E, F, Q, H, R, AND P – these are all designations specifically selected for the data because they are not based on medical diagnoses but instead assessments and processes that districts have control over.
- Most troubling, and generally a marker of systematic racism, 37.6% of all students who have a Behaviour/Mental Health category are Indigenous. This translates to 7.6% of all Indigenous students being categorized in the Behaviour/Mental Health areas (Categories H and R), compared to only 2.8% of non-Indigenous students. As a result of this concerning distribution of Behaviour/Mental Health categories, the files of all Indigenous students who have this designation will be reviewed, and all requests for new designations pass through our department for more oversight and questioning of these categorizations. Looking at the chart in the report is misleading, so we are looking strictly at the numbers.

Achievement Data

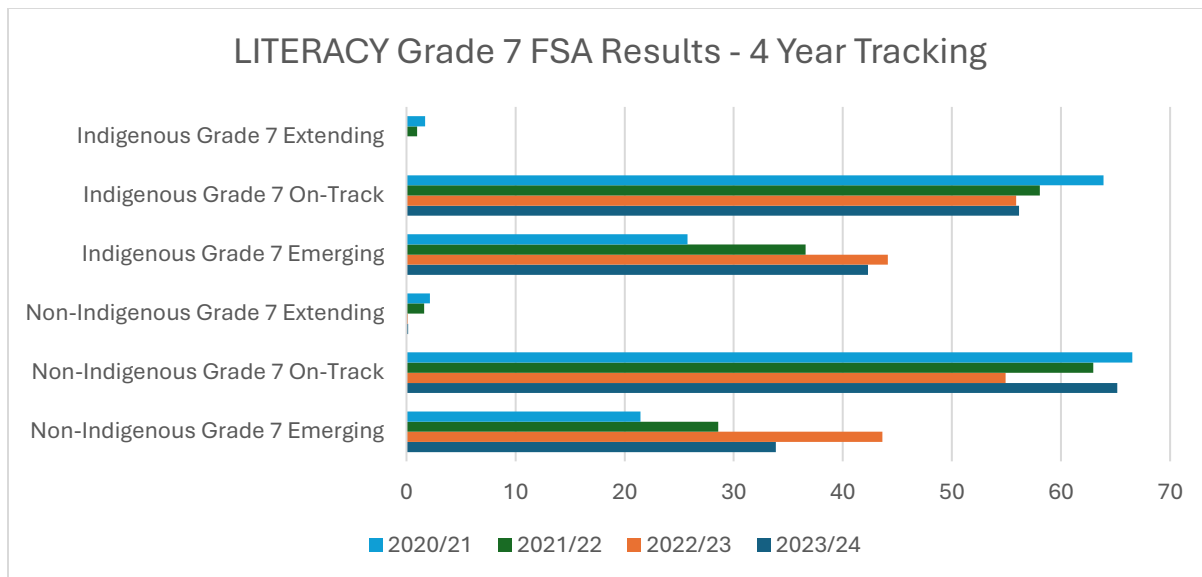
- FSA participation rates vary year to year by a few percent. The rates in 2021-2022 were particularly strong, but we saw a dip in 2022-2023. In all categories in 2023-2024, there was an increase in participation rates in all categories. Given that the cohort of Indigenous students in either Grade 4 or

Grade 7 varies between 80 and 130 students from year to year, a few percent is not statistically significant. Consistently being significantly above provincial participation rates (which range from 76-78% in Grades 4 and for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students), and consistently being comparable to (and in many cases actually higher than) participation rates of non-Indigenous students demonstrate our district's commitment to administering these assessments well.

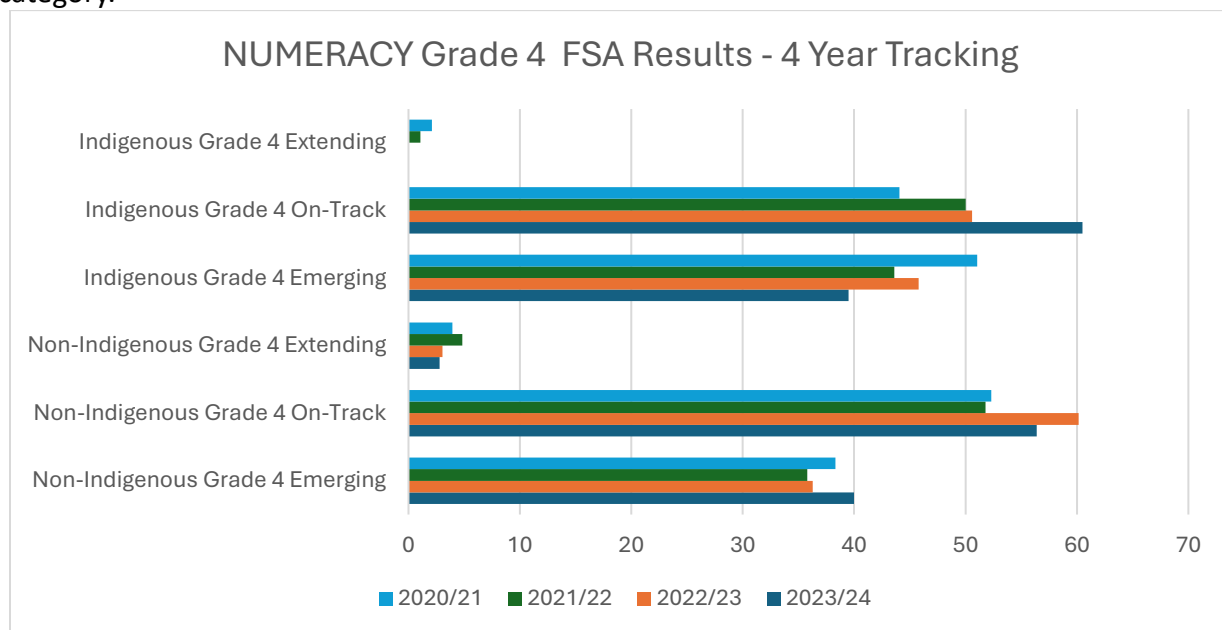
- The How Are We Doing Report often masks results for Indigenous students in the Emerging categories, so it is challenging to make comparisons. We do collect local data that is available through EdPlanInsight, so we are able to share that in chart form. If you have a PDF of the charts, you can “mouse over” the bar graphs to see the actual number.
- Provincial data can be found in the How Are We Doing Report that is not district specific. I have made an effort to make comparisons between Indigenous provincial peers and in-district peers.
- It should be noted that the consistently high participation rates in our district contribute to more reliability and validity of the results that we see. 88% participation is generally noted as a hinge point for large-scale assessments. While we can compare results with Indigenous and non-Indigenous results provincially, the overall participation rate is significantly below the “hinge” number.
- For Grade 4 Literacy, Indigenous students in SD83 are achieving at similar rates to their provincial Indigenous peers. There is a persistent gap between district peers and SD83 Indigenous students. The gap is consistent, only because non-Indigenous students in SD83 are also exhibiting lower results. For both groups, there is growth in the Emerging category and reductions in the On-Track category.
- We continue to have Indigenous Education Workers support teachers with literacy instruction, and, new this year, have collaborated with the Education Department to provide opportunities for para-professional learning with literacy support. Also new this year, in six higher-need schools with significant numbers of Indigenous students, have funded or partially ECE positions to support early learning. We are also continuing to work with staff on ensuring that their schedules are aligned with literacy teaching time in primary grades. The Education Department continues to support literacy learning for teachers because there is clearly a need for growth for all students. Identifying writing as the biggest stretch area has led to a concentration in that learning.



- For Grade 7 Literacy, SD83 Indigenous students are slightly outperforming their provincial Indigenous peers and there continues to be a persistent gap with SD83 non-Indigenous peers. There is a downward trend over time in the number of students in the On-Track category and an upward trend in the number of students in the Emerging category for both groups. In 2023/2024 (the last reported year in the report), there is an upturn in the percentage of Indigenous students (increase of 8% from 53 to 61%) and non-Indigenous students (increase of 9% from 58 to 67%), which makes us hope that some of our efforts are beginning to see some positive results. There tends to be great fluctuations in results for Indigenous students in our district with cohorts ranging from 85-130.

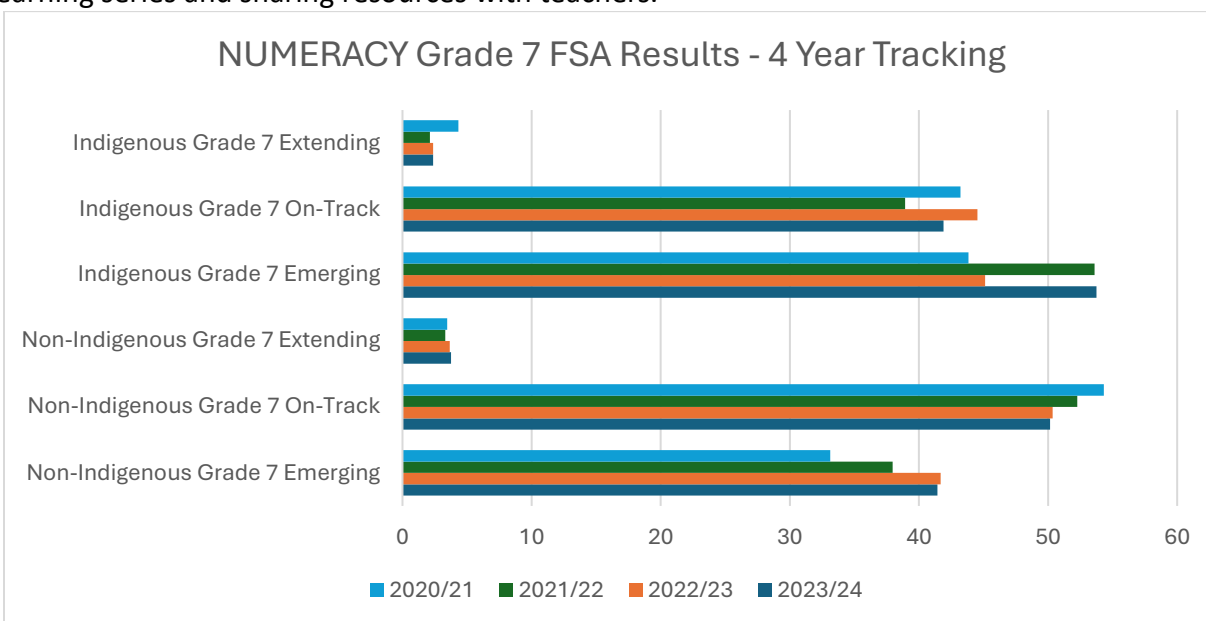


- For Grade 4 Numeracy, SD83 Indigenous students are slightly outperforming their provincial Indigenous peers. Compared to non-Indigenous peers in SD83, results are comparable. The real difference is that there are marginally more Indigenous students achieving in the Emerging category and no students in the Extending category. Non-Indigenous students are achieving below their provincial peers, which has been consistent for many years. We are observing a slight bump in percentage of students achieving in the On-Track category, which is fortunately mirrored by a slight downturn of students in the Emerging category.



- For Grade 7 Numeracy, the results are more concerning. Compared to Indigenous provincial peers, there are significantly more students in the Emerging category (44% provincially compared to 62% in SD83), and significantly less in the On Track category (55% provincially compared to 38% in SD83). This mirrors the disparity between provincial results and non-Indigenous SD83 peers, with significantly more students in the Emerging category (27% provincially compared to 53% in SD83), and significantly less in the On Track category (69% provincially compared to 43% in SD83). Comparatively, SD83 Indigenous students are performing at slightly lower levels compared to their non-Indigenous SD83 peers, which continues the persistent gap in achievement.
- While necessary for budget reasons, reductions in the FTE of Numeracy Helping teachers in the district are not a cause for the performance of students, but this does not help with improvement. The Education Department is piloting Mathology, which is an excellent Math resource for elementary

students. We do still have one Numeracy Helping teacher who is very active in leading professional learning series and sharing resources with teachers.



- **Graduation Assessment Participation:**
 - Students must write the Numeracy 10 Assessment, and the Literacy 10 and 12 Assessment before graduation. Ideally, they would write the assessments in either their Grade 10 or Grade 12 year. Having students write the assessment in those years has been steadily improving over the past five years.
 - 2023-2024 was only the third year for the Literacy 12 Assessment.
 - It is more challenging to locate unmasked Graduation Assessment data because of when students write the assessments, and the number of assessment sessions available throughout the year.
- **Grade 10 Numeracy Assessment:** The data for Indigenous students in both the Emerging and Extending categories is masked, which tells us that the numbers are so small they cannot be shared. The data that is available indicated that Indigenous students are achieving roughly at par with non-Indigenous students, but because of the cohort size and the masked data at either end, this could skew the data.
- **Grade 10 Literacy Assessment:** Like the Numeracy 10 Assessment, the data for Indigenous students in both the Emerging and Extending categories is masked, which tells us that the numbers are so small they cannot be shared. The data that is available indicated that Indigenous students are achieving roughly at par with non-Indigenous students, but because of the cohort size and the masked data at either end, this could skew the data.
- **Grade 12 Literacy Assessment:** Because this is only the second year of data available for the Literacy 12 Assessment, it is difficult to ascertain if any trends are emerging. Like the Numeracy 10 and Literacy 10 Assessments, the data for Indigenous students is masked in both the Emerging and Extending categories. Other results in Developing and Proficient appear to be in relationship with the results of non-Indigenous students.
- **Course Marks:** There is an overview of course marks for courses that lead to graduation, and generally, Indigenous students are performing at lower achievement rates than non-Indigenous students, especially in the “B or Better” category as a final mark. The information presented in the course marks also show the prevalence of students taking specific courses. Some courses are an “easier” route to graduation, such as Workplace Math 10/11 and Science for Citizens 11. These courses also limit pathways to academic and trades-based post-secondary programs.
 - In Workplace Math 10, which is the first course in Math that streams students, 45% of the students enrolled in that course are Indigenous, which is an over-representation but is also a

slight decrease from the previous year in which 49% of the students enrolled were Indigenous. This is compared to 28% of non-Indigenous students taking the course. We would prefer to see significantly lower numbers of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students taking Workplace Math entirely, because it leaves more post secondary doors open to students.

- In Pre-Calculus 11, only 29% of Indigenous students are enrolled, compared to 48.7% of non-Indigenous students, a course that is required for most post-secondary programs. This is a slight increase for Indigenous students. In the previous year only 25.9% of Indigenous students were taking Pre-Calculus 11.
- Another pathway to some post-secondary programs is Foundations of Math 11 and 12, and the numbers are masked for Indigenous enrollment in this course.
- 33.5% of Indigenous students take Science for Citizens 11 to meet their Science requirement, a course that is the minimum requirement for graduation but does not leave pathways to post-secondary programs open. This is a significant increase from the previous year in which 20.7% of Indigenous student took the course. 18% of non-Indigenous students take this Science, which is also a significant increase from the previous year in which 10.7% of non-Indigenous took the course. Courses like Life Sciences 11, Environmental Science 11, Chemistry 11, and Physics 11 are choices that leave more doors open. Some students take more than one Science course. If students are pursuing Sciences in university, they would also need to take Science courses at the grade 12 level.

Completion Rates

- Grade to Grade Transitions: All students are transitioning to Grade 8, but after that the disparity grows. Because of the cohort size, it varies year to year, but particularly concerning is the transition from Grade 10 to Grade 11, where there is a dip.
- The Five-Year Completion Rate indicates the percentage of students who enter in Grade 8 who successfully “complete” a Dogwood or Adult Dogwood in five years or “on time”. In 2023/2024, we are seeing a decrease to 71% for the Five-Year Completion Rate from 80% in 2022/2023. While this is cause for concern, there was also a slightly higher number of students on Evergreen pathways in that cohort. Students on Evergreen pathways show as non-completions in the data.
- The Six-Year Completion Rate indicates providing students with an extra funded year to complete graduation requirements. There is also a drop in that rate from 87% in 2022/2023 to 77% in 2023/2024.
- Numbers for Evergreen (School Completion Certificates) and Adult Dogwoods are so low that they are masked in the report. However, we have been making significant efforts to reducing the number of students achieving Adult Dogwood Diplomas by having Graduation Pathway Circles with all secondary schools and engaging in conversations about providing students with meaningful graduations. We have also developed an Administrative Procedure (AP) to guide schools with decision making about Adult Dogwood pathways. Provincially, Indigenous students are vastly overrepresented in the Adult Dogwood category, which is indicative of systemic racism and the racism of low expectations. One way to shift that practice is to help to shift attitudes of school leaders, and that has been very effective.
- The rates are not masked for the Five-Year Completion Rate and Six-Year Completion Rate with Adult Dogwoods removed. We are proud to note that once again, the “removed” number to adjust the rate for the Five-Year Completion Rate has gone down this year. There has been a steady downward trend in this category. The “removed” number for the Six-Year Completion Rate is stagnant, but this is the year when Adult Dogwoods are more appropriate. While the number is stagnant from the previous year, there has been a steady downward trend from an adjustment of 10 in 2019/20 and 12 in 2020/21 to 6 for the past two years.
- The Ministry of Education and Childcare tracks Student Transitions to BC Public Post-Secondary Institutions. Students who transition to post secondary institutions outside of BC are not counted, and

given the relatively high proportion of students from SD83 who transition to institutions in Alberta, the numbers in this category might be slightly misleading. That being said, for the second year in a row, there is a slightly higher percentage of Indigenous students (31.8% in 2020/2021 and 22.4% in 2021/22) compared to non-Indigenous students (19.3% in 2020/2021 and 19.1% in 2021/22) who immediately transition to post-secondary.

Student Learning Survey

- 67% of Grade 4 Indigenous students report that they like school compared to 59% of non-Indigenous students, which is a slight decrease from 71% the previous year.
- 61% of Grade 4 Indigenous students believe that adults in the school treat students fairly, compared to 68% of non-Indigenous students. This is a significant decrease from 81% the previous year.
- Concerningly, only 43% of Grade 4 Indigenous students report that they are learning about First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples at school, compared to 29% of non-Indigenous students. This is fairly consistent year to year and is concerning because there is supposed to be Indigenous content embedded in every grade, in every content area.
- 82% of Grade 4 Indigenous students feel safe at school, compared to 77% of non-Indigenous students.
- 46% of Grade 7 Indigenous students report that they like school compared to 42% of non-Indigenous students, which is fairly consistent year to year, but is a significant increase this year from 34% last year. It is still a concerning low number compared to Grade 4.
- 64% (increase from 48% the previous year) of Grade 7 Indigenous students report that adults treat all students fairly compared to 59% of non-Indigenous students, which is similarly concerning.
- Concerningly, only 44% of Grade 7 Indigenous students report that they are learning about First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples at school, compared to 34% of non-Indigenous students. This is fairly consistent year to year and is concerning because there is supposed to be Indigenous content embedded in every grade, in every content area. It is fair to assume the Grade 7 students would be more cognizant of what they are learning about.
- 71% of Grade 7 Indigenous students feel safe at school, compared to 76% of non-Indigenous students.
- 31% of Grade 10 Indigenous students report that they like school compared to 29% of non-Indigenous students, which is fairly consistent year to year. It is a concerning low number which is actually showing a slight decrease this year.
- 41% of Grade 10 Indigenous students report that adults treat all students fairly compared to 46% of non-Indigenous students, which is also an increase this year.
- Concerningly, only 49% of both Grade 10 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students report that they are learning about First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples at school, compared to 43% of Indigenous students and 38% of non-Indigenous students in the last report. In Social Studies 10, there are specific content learning standards about residential schools, so all students should be reporting that they are learning about First Peoples topics. This number is a solid increase from last year but we would like to see more promising results in the future.
- 41% of Grade 12 Indigenous students report that they like school compared to 51% of non-Indigenous students, which is fairly consistent year to year, but we see a solid increase in this report compared to last year, but still fits within the general picture.
- 57% of Grade 12 Indigenous students report that adults treat all students fairly compared to 6% of non-Indigenous students, which is an increase this year. This is more promising data and is also fairly consistent year to year.
- We also see more promising data when 66% of Grade 12 Indigenous students (up from 57% in the 2022/23) report that they are learning about First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples at school, compared to 68% (up from 55% in 2022/23) of non-Indigenous students. We were expecting to see an

improvement in this question in this year's report, because this is the first year of the Indigenous content graduation requirement. We would still like to see more improvement in this area.

Note: The entire report can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/reports/ab-hawd/ab-hawd-school-district-083.pdf>