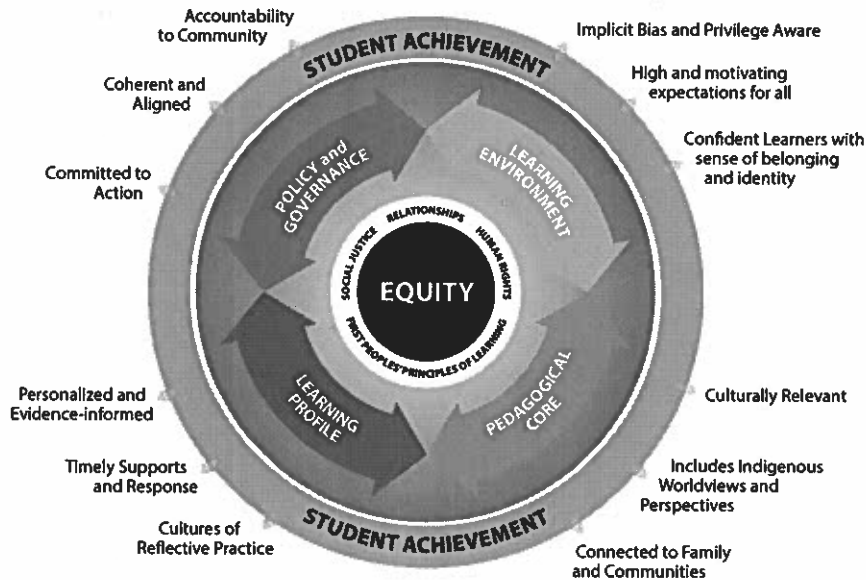


Indigenous Student Success



Background

Beginning in 2016, the Ministry of Education created an Equity Scan Framework and vision to support school districts in identifying promising practices as well as barriers that are impacting Indigenous student achievement and success, in response to the (OAG) report on Aboriginal Education (2015), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. The collaborative phase and consultations across the field for this work were completed in 2017/2018 and the Ministry expanded the number of participating districts in 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 respectively.

During the Equity Scan experience, school districts will work collaboratively with the Ministry team. During the process, districts will: **Scan**, construct an **Equity Profile**, determine a **Theory of Change** and develop an **Equity Action Plan** in service to Indigenous learners, families and communities.

Project Rationale

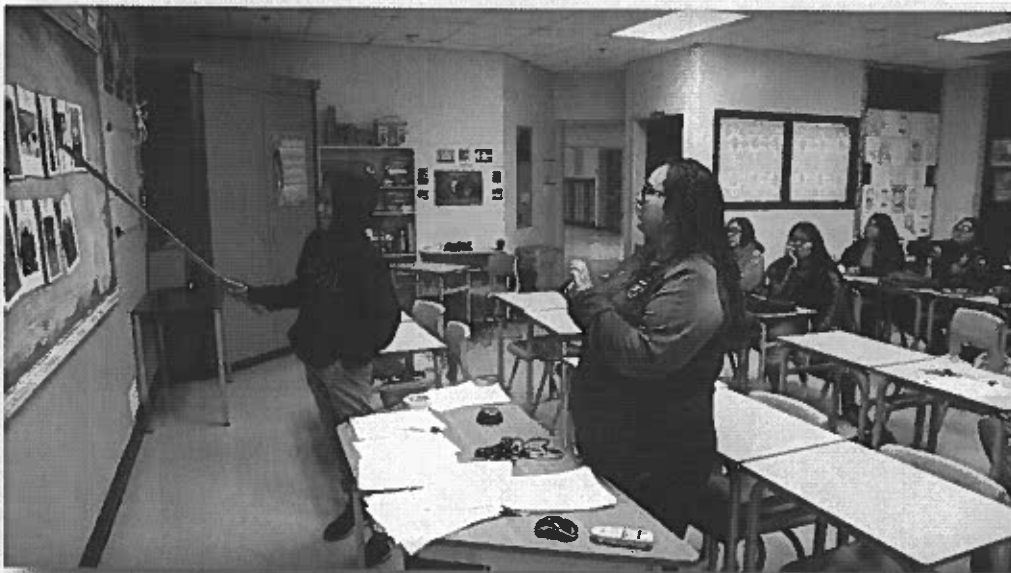
“Accommodation of Aboriginal culture and identity should be regarded as a core responsibility of public institutions rather than as a special project to be undertaken after other obligations are met. Educational institutions have a pivotal role in transforming the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Canadian Society.” Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1986

“B.C.’s Framework for Enhancing Student Learning reflects a public commitment by education partners to work together to continuously improve student learning. They commit to addressing long-standing differences in performance among particular groups of students. These include Indigenous students.” Framework for Enhancing Student Learning, 2019

As school districts and educators organize and plan for socially just learning experiences for all students, it is essential to be self-reflective, open and responsive to the voice of community, families, and the students that are served by our schools. As lead educators and partners across British Columbia, we must consistently work towards making necessary social change, acknowledge bias that unfairly and detrimentally characterizes learners, and create the learning conditions focussed on providing equity of opportunity for all learners. In particular, we are called to further action in service to Indigenous learners, families and communities. Repairing the conflicted relationship between the education system and Indigenous Peoples has been consistently referenced as integral to the way forward in our society.

“Significant differences in student outcomes exist among Indigenous and vulnerable learners...B.C. schools must do everything possible to prepare all students for their future...This commitment depends on using evidence to make decisions, having the courage to adjust and improve programs and policies that are not optimal for students, enabling equity of access to quality education for every student.” British Columbia’s Policy for Student Success, 2019.

The Equity Scan project will define and formalize a process for school districts and the Ministry of Education to enter into a genuine and meaningful assessment dialogue about the experience of education for Indigenous learners and to respond strategically to create conditions for success.



“The mindset that works for whole system reform is the one that inevitably generates individual and collective motivation and corresponding skills to transform the system.” Michael Fullan, 2011

A number of dimensions are explored in the Equity Scan process. First, the **Student Learning Profile** is looked at for key indicators of achievement and student learning trajectories. Then, the scan allows for reflection on the **Policy and Governance** in school districts and communities that have an impact on

results for Indigenous learners. Third, the scan looks at the **Pedagogical Core** and the experience of learners in relation to curriculum, the presence of relevant cultural experiences and values placed on Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives. Finally, but perhaps most important, the scan looks at human and educator bias as part of the **Learning Environment**. Educator beliefs about a student's potential academic achievement influence daily classroom decisions and actions (Miller and Satchwell, 2006). The Office of the Auditor General pointed to this phenomenon in the November, 2015 Audit of the Education of Indigenous Students in the B.C. Public School System by citing the "racism of low expectations".

"Since they came to be, schools have been designed to shape the societies in which they were situated, and all societies have used education as a means of social control. The question for us is what kind of society is it that we desire? And how do we best achieve that through what we teach?" Joanna Larson, BCTF Teacher Newsmagazine, May/June 2013.

The Equity Scan Toolkit will enable school districts to inquire into the four key dimensions as they relate to the way Indigenous students, families and communities are served by education. Justice Murray Sinclair, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chair, said of the Commission Report, "We have described for you a mountain. We have shown you the path to the top. We call upon you to do the climbing." As educators embrace social justice and societal change, we are called upon to examine our own practices, beliefs, and attitudes such that we ensure high expectations and rich learning environments for all students.

The Equity Scan Process

School Districts will:

1. Build an Equity Scan Team
2. Conduct the Equity Scan
3. Develop a District Equity Profile
4. Construct a Theory of Change
5. Create an Equity Action Plan

School District Equity Teams

Equity Teams serve as the central representative body for the Equity Scan process and represent the collective responsibility for Indigenous student achievement. Teams are diverse and represent the various rights holders, partners and contributors to the effort of serving all learners in the district and creating equity of opportunity. Equity Teams are normally chaired by the Superintendent/CEO of the district; however, in unique circumstances the chair may be assumed by another member of the Team. Meeting frequency and timelines are determined by the needs of the project and the Team may self-organize into sub-groups to accomplish specific tasks. All major decision-making and determinations of goals and direction should be made at meetings of the full team. Equity Teams may wish to develop terms of reference for the Scanning Process.

Equity Teams may include the following:

- Superintendent of Schools
- School District Senior Leadership members - Assistant Superintendent, Director(s) of Instruction
- Trustee(s)
- District Principal/Administrator Indigenous Programs
- Member(s) of Indigenous Education Council
- Principal(s)
- Teacher(s)
- Indigenous Support Workers and Support Staff
- Other Community partners in Equity, ie. Friendship Centre, First Nations Health, Post-Secondary, etc.

Conducting the Scan and Developing the Profile

The first phase of the Equity Scan is designed to lead Teams toward new understandings and insights about service to Indigenous learners through the guided inquiry questions and rubrics in the four quadrant areas. Teams are encouraged to work collaboratively to include the voices of students, families, and communities. The results from the scanning phase form the Equity Scan Profile.

Construct a Theory of Change

The next step in the process is to determine a desired future and a Theory of Change for getting there. This is key to the success and integrity of the scan and will form the basis for networking and sharing among and between districts across the province. Change, as we know, is complex and demands much of the organization and the people within it; however, the need for growth and change is compelling and, in British Columbia, we have the capacity to articulate the pathways for success.

It is expected that the individual Theories of Change will be unique and will represent the strengths in your district. School Districts will draw upon their experience with models and processes to best position for success the changes they identify. This is about finding what works, who needs to do what, and doing what it takes to be successful. This is about putting forward our beliefs about systemic growth and the levers that will facilitate change. When we operationalize our Theory of Change, there should be a tangible difference seen and felt in the district.

Creating an Equity Action Plan

To complete the final component of the Equity Scan Toolkit, District Equity Teams will formalize an Equity Action Plan. The Plan will emerge from your collective focus and can be organized to include short and long term goals for equity and transformation.



The Equity Scan is an evidence-informed process utilizing the Ministry created student 'Learning Profile'. As such, Equity Teams build data literacy skills to be able to "see" inequities and 'gaps' then respond in professional and intentional ways. Principles of data literacy include:

1. Approach data with a research lens (curiosity)
 - Inform and understand student learning by using multiple sources of information: classroom, school, district and provincial data
 - Determine how to interrupt negative trajectories and promote positive student pathways by providing appropriate interventions, improving environments and conditions for student success
2. Approach the micro data with Equity and Parity goals in mind
 - Look for student outliers, challenge areas and trends to focus attention and resources
 - Focus on each individual student, and the overall goals of improving the unique conditions for learner success
 - Each student's success story contributes to the overall parity target for the district
3. Data exploration is an iterative process, the work is never finished or complete
 - What may be true last year is not necessarily true this year or next. Continue to ask questions and adapt to new insights
 - Data are not provided solely to explain why something happened, but rather to illuminate where opportunities for improvement lie

Equity savvy systems are forward thinking and strive for continuous improvement

A consistent student information lens is essential in order to scan student learning trends and the impacts of change on achievement. While districts will have diversified and unique approaches to data and how to report on it, the Equity Scan Learning Profile utilizes a number of key points of information provided to districts from the Ministry of Education.

In evidence-informed systems, student learning information becomes knowledge that informs adjustments to practice and services. The complex nature and pace of the learning environment requires that we create knowledge about the system itself such that accountability, capacity building, and strategic thinking can be influenced in order to make a difference in the learning trajectory of students in real time. The Learning Profile is provided to each district in an interactive electronic platform, organized into District, School, and individual student level formats. Districts access the Learning Profile through the secure Ministry SharePoint site.

