



STRATEGIC PLAN

2023–2028



DISTRICT CONTEXT

We respectfully acknowledge that Surrey Schools reside on the traditional, unceded and shared territories of Coast Salish peoples: The q'í'c'əy' - Katzie, the q'w'a:n'á'ən' - Kwantlen and the SEMYOME - Semiahmoo First Nations: the stewards of this land since time immemorial. We highlight this history knowing that relationships and partnerships based on respect with the Indigenous peoples of this land are important for truth and reconciliation.

Surrey Schools proudly serves the City of Surrey, the City of White Rock, and the rural area of Barnston Island. As the largest and fastest-growing school district in British Columbia, we provide quality education to over 80,000 students that are enrolled in our 21 secondary schools, 103 elementary schools, five learning centers, and a variety of satellite programs, including an online distributed learning program.

A rich mosaic of cultures is represented within the student population, with over half of our students speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 196 languages represented in our schools, the most prevalent spoken at home are English, Punjabi, Mandarin, Hindi, Tagalog, and Arabic. There are also more than 3,000 students of Indigenous ancestry (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) enrolled in our district.

The district's vision, *Learning By Design*, is to prepare our learners to think creatively and critically, communicate skillfully, and demonstrate care for self and others. We are committed to continuous improvement and the success of every student, championing evidence-informed practices that enhance learning, inclusivity, and equity of outcomes.

At Surrey Schools, we celebrate and embrace diversity, and foster the holistic development of our students, nurturing their minds, bodies, and spirits.

+80,000

**STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN
THE SURREY DISTRICT**

103

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

21

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

5

LEARNING CENTERS



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Central to Surrey Schools is our districtwide vision for education, aptly named [*Learning by Design*](#). This comprehensive vision not only encapsulates our core values and beliefs, with a strong emphasis on fostering effective learning and engagement, but also underscores our unwavering commitment to the principles of truth and reconciliation.

Rooted firmly in the First People's Principles of Learning, this vision serves as our foundational narrative, grounding us in both our geographical context and our history. Our overarching goal, as articulated through this vision, is to equip our

learners with the skills and competencies required to excel in a world in which they think creatively and critically, communicate skillfully, and demonstrate care for self, others, and the world beyond.

Aligned with the [Ministry of Education and Child Care’s Framework for Enhancing Student Learning](#), our Strategic Plan serves as a roadmap for fulfilling our vision and is steered by our priority areas of inquiry, which center around the following key elements:

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



To ensure accountability and transparency, we continually ask ourselves three fundamental questions:

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- How does our evidence inform and shape our practice?

The inquiry process is used both at the district level and by individual schools, channeled through their Student Learning Plans, to actualize our district’s vision. Each of our priority areas of inquiry is reinforced by a wealth of evidence, contextual understanding, and information.

Our strategic plan offers an insightful glimpse into each area of inquiry, complete with direct links to our [Enhancing Student Learning Report](#). This report serves as a comprehensive resource which provides the evidence to inform and drive how our district vision becomes a reality.



Acknowledging that learning is a dynamic and individualized journey, our district fully embraces and leverages diverse sources of evidence to highlight our achievements and successes. Our commitment to this approach extends across numerous district initiatives, allowing us to capture real-time snapshots of student progress and comprehension, as well as our educators' valuable insights into their own teaching and learning experiences. This process transcends traditional assessments, delving into the intricate mosaic of learning encounters that occur within and beyond the classroom.

By weaving together diverse forms of evidence, our district gains a holistic perspective of our learners. Qualitative data and teacher narratives, which form a substantial part of our evidential foundation, offer a unique window into the classroom environment. They empower us to reflect upon and navigate the multifaceted landscape of education within Surrey Schools. The dedication to utilizing evidence of learning as a driving force underpins our commitment to informed decision-making, responsive teaching, and the creation of meaningful learning opportunities.



STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

Strategic communication and public engagement are foundational to the realization of our strategic plan. As a school district entrusted with the education of over 80,000 students and supported by nearly 13,000 staff members, the district has a responsibility to foster a dynamic and collaborative relationship with partners, stakeholders, rights-holders, and target audiences to ensure transparency, inclusivity, and shared ownership of our educational vision and priority areas.

To proactively shape and advance our educational initiatives, Surrey Schools has implemented a comprehensive strategy that places community voices at the forefront. This strategic approach underscores our commitment to continuous improvement and the well-being of our educational community.

Key components of our strategy include:

- **Vision-Centric Approach:** Our district will ensure strategic alignment of all communication and engagement efforts with the overarching Learning by Design vision. This ensures that every initiative is not only guided by but also strategically reinforces our district's vision and strategic priorities.
- **Scope of Responsibility:** Recognizing our profound responsibility of delivering high-quality education to a student body exceeding 80,000, supported by thousands of staff members, we will continue to cultivate and strengthen relationships with rightsholders and a wide spectrum of stakeholders, partners, and audiences.
- **Transparency:** The district places an emphasis on transparency, ensuring critical information about educational initiatives, policies, and decision-making processes are shared with stakeholders.
- **Inclusivity:** We acknowledge the importance of inclusivity within our engagement efforts and strive to engage diverse voices and perspectives in our decision-making processes while ensuring our communications and initiatives embrace inclusivity.
- **Shared Ownership:** Through proactive engagement with partners, rightsholders, stakeholders, and target audiences, we will work to cultivate shared ownership of our vision and strategic priorities, fostering a sense of community investment in our collective success.
- **Proactive Engagement:** We commit to a proactive approach that will actively shape and advance educational initiatives, reaffirming our dedication to driving positive change.
- **Community Voices:** Central to our engagement strategy is the elevation of community voices, ensuring that the input from our diverse community is not only heard but also valued and integrated into our decision-making processes.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Our strategy is built on a commitment to continuous improvement, echoing our commitment to continually refine and enhance our educational programs and services.

Beneath this strategic umbrella, a comprehensive toolkit of tactics, communication channels, and tools are used to realize these goals. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of the strategy and adjust as needed.



INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS AND RECONCILIATION

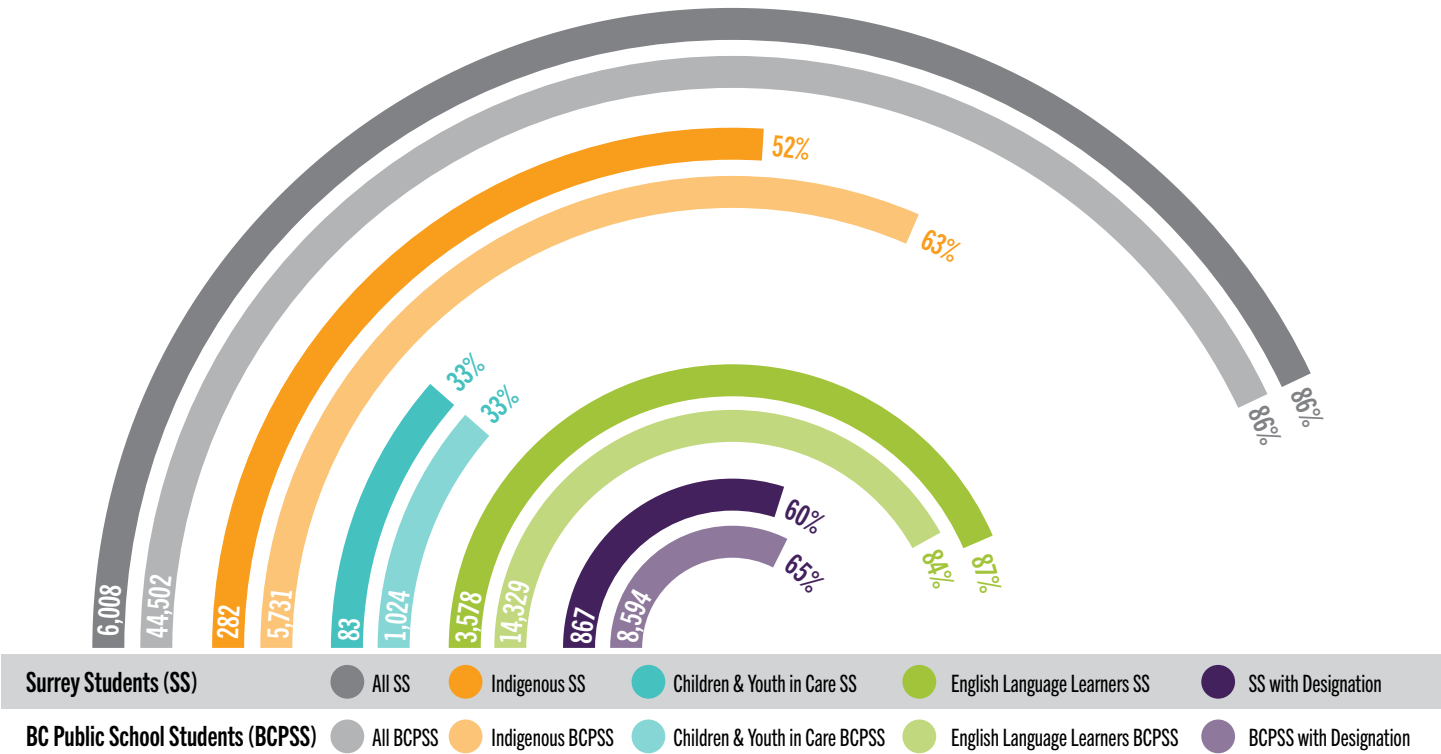
Indigenous students in British Columbia are demonstrating remarkable resilience and cultural revitalization on their educational journey. Keys to supporting this progress are listening to and taking the advice of Rightsholders, Elders, and Indigenous parents, dedicated support services, and an unwavering commitment to the process of reconciliation.

Our district is guided by the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. Additionally, our internal Indigenous Education team works closely with the Indigenous Leadership Council, who provide critical leadership and direction on district programs, services and initiatives. The Council includes district representatives and leadership from Katzie and Semiahmoo First Nations, Métis Nation BC, and Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association.

These collective efforts underscore the shared commitment to meaningful action, shaping a future that is inclusive, equitable, and deeply rooted in reconciliation principles.

The Surrey School District is dedicated to delivering comprehensive support for Indigenous students across academic, social, emotional, and cultural dimensions. However, a pressing concern that demands a strategic approach is the notable disparity in graduation rates between Indigenous learners in Surrey and their counterparts among all Surrey students and the provincial average. This imbalance is further exacerbated by the overrepresentation of Indigenous learners in categories such as Children & Youth in Care and Students with Designations.

Five-Year Graduation Rates 2021–2022



Success is multifaceted, and while graduation rates are one aspect, it's crucial to acknowledge that this data is indeed cause for alarm, signifying the need for an intensified commitment to support Indigenous learners within the school district. We recognize the urgency of addressing these disparities and are committed to implementing targeted strategies to promote equitable educational outcomes for Indigenous students.

In response to this data, the Surrey Board of Education has taken decisive action in 2023 and identified a district-wide goal to enhance the graduation rate of Indigenous students by 15-20% by 2028. To realize this goal, principals and vice-principals of every secondary school are prioritizing the support of Indigenous students as a core school objective. This commitment is

further strengthened by engaging in both school-based and district-wide inquiries, focusing on strategies tailored to bolster Indigenous learners' achievements.

Recognizing the profound and enduring impact of colonialism and racism, particularly through institutions such as residential schools, we acknowledge the immeasurable harm inflicted upon Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, it is incumbent upon every member of the Surrey School District to fully understand the truth and champion the well-being, growth, development, and educational attainment of Indigenous students. This collective effort aligns with our broader mission of contributing to reconciliation and fostering an inclusive and equitable educational environment for every student.



LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Literacy and Numeracy serve as foundational pillars for building our learners' thinking skills. Classroom environments that foster critical and creative thinking, comprehension, effective communication, information processing, problem solving, and metacognition provide students with the cognitive tools necessary for navigating complex issues and thriving in a rapidly changing world.

The thinking skills cultivated through literacy and numeracy not only support academic achievement, but also empower students to advocate for themselves, make informed decisions, access information, and recognize that often there is not one correct answer but multiple answers that need to be weighed and evaluated.

Literacy

Surrey's strategic approach to literacy learning and teaching emphasizes a balanced and comprehensive plan that integrates reading and writing, thinking routines, comprehension strategies, phonics, vocabulary development, and student choice. District initiatives explore how we can help our learners become readers, writers and thinkers who do more than decode, recall, summarize and answer questions accurately. Our aim is to develop literacy learners who think creatively, critically, collaboratively, and compassionately.

Ongoing assessment and monitoring of student learning is critical to the district's literacy strategy. Identifying individual needs, adjusting instruction accordingly, using authentic, culturally relevant-texts, recognizing the importance of student choice and ownership, and teacher modelling through think-aloud protocols all play a significant role in our efforts to empower students to become proficient readers and writers who read with curiosity, grapple with ideas, and make sense of the complexities of the world in which they live.

Numeracy

Central to the district's work in numeracy is the emphasis on creating classroom environments that promote mathematical inquiry, collaboration, and deep thinking. Evidence gathered from district initiatives demonstrate our shift from traditional teaching and assessment methods to more student-centered, inquiry-based approaches. Students are encouraged to engage in mathematical exploration, questioning, and problem-solving. As the emphasis is on presenting students with rich mathematical tasks and challenging problems that do not have immediate solutions, the district's evidence of learning centers on what students know and can do within mathematics.

The district's strategic focus further promotes standards-based assessment, descriptive feedback, supportive mathematics classrooms, instructional strategies that embrace different perspectives, and diverse points of entry for students to explore numeracy concepts. By implementing these equity-based approaches, the district's aim is to support teachers in cultivating mathematically competent and confident learners who can tackle complex problems and engage in meaningful mathematical discourse.





STUDENT WELL-BEING

The district embraces Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as an indispensable facet of education; one that goes beyond academic achievement to empower students to understand themselves, connect with others, and navigate the complexities of life with resilience and empathy.

To this end, we believe that to create the conditions for students to engage in SEL, it is necessary to foster a supportive staff community that promotes our educators' own social, emotional, and cultural competence. Examining the various social and cultural identities of oneself and others, understanding and appreciating diversity from a strengths-based lens, and recognizing and responding to cultural differences and opportunities is central to our SEL initiatives.

Our evidence speaks to our firm belief that SEL is not a curriculum but a way of being and expectation within educational settings. We highlight the tenants that empower learners to flourish in school, socially, and throughout their lives: empathy for others, self-awareness and self-management, sense of belonging, critical thinking and decision making, healthy relationships, and school engagement and achievement. We are committed to evaluating the impacts of our initiatives with the goal of nurturing the whole child and equipping our learners with the skills and mindset they need to succeed in school, in their communities, and in their lives beyond the classroom.



The Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) is the primary tool for measuring student well-being. The MDI is a self-assessment of student wellness and includes physical, intellectual, and community measures. The Early Years Development Instrument (EDI) is an assessment instrument used by kindergarten teachers to assess students' early development and well-being.

In the coming school years, we will continue to use both EDI and MDI as pieces of evidence to inform our decisions on staffing and resources in areas of vulnerability. We will also use the district's Early Literacy Phonemic Awareness Test Surrey (ELPATs) and 'What Do They Know' (WDTK) evidence to inform our efforts to develop literacy and numeracy competencies. We will annually review and compare our EDI and MDI data to analyze trends and to adjust programs as required.

To promote staff well-being, we have implemented both coaching and mentorship programs and use surveys to conduct qualitative assessments to gauge staff well-being. Our early research in this area has demonstrated that those who participate in coaching and mentorship programs have an increased sense of well-being and report being more confident in their daily work.

Our goals are to continue to target staffing supports toward mentorship and coaching and monitor the impact of these supports through staff surveys. In addition, our instructional strategies and regional SEL teacher leads will continue to work with teachers to develop their specific comfort and competence with SEL and again surveys will be our main instrument of data collection.



RACIAL EQUITY

In June 2023, the Surrey Board of Education approved the district's [Racial Equity Strategic Plan](#), which charts a course over the next five years to address systemic racial disparities, promote cultural responsiveness and empower every individual within our diverse school communities.

The plan outlines four main priorities for the district between now and 2028: advancing racial equity initiatives, responding to all forms of racism, ongoing education and professional development, and infusing culturally responsive curriculum and resources. The plan was developed with extensive input from Indigenous, Black and other racialized students, staff and families in Surrey and White Rock.



Each priority contains a comprehensive list of strategies and actions to be implemented in efforts to achieve racial equity. These actions include:

- Establishing a racial equity district policy
- Reviewing and strengthening existing district and human resources policies through a lens of equity
- Improving the process for reporting and responding to racism and discrimination in schools
- Training and professional development on racial equity for all staff
- Connecting and supporting educator and leadership networks in racial equity
- Providing culturally responsive curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Increasing diverse resources in classrooms and libraries

The roots of the Racial Equity Strategic Plan began in the spring of 2021 with a [racial equity environmental scan](#) across the district, with more than 500 students, parents, staff and school community members sharing their lived experiences of racism in 39 listening circles.

The information gathered from this scan led the Surrey Board of Education to approve and establish the district's Racial Equity Department in September 2022, with the first item of business being the preparation of the five-year roadmap, described above, to enact meaningful change and address racial discrimination in every school and department.



STUDENT TRANSITIONS

Student transitions refers to changes or movement from one stage to another, at significant points in our students' lives, which often require the provision of extra care and attention to student needs.

When we think of transitions, we think of moments in time such as:

- The move from early childhood to kindergarten, and the formal structures of school.
- Ensuring a continuity of play and learning as students move through their elementary school years.
- Moving from elementary to secondary school, where students begin to see more adults and establish more cross-student connections and begin to consider life beyond school.
- The Graduation Program in the final years of Grades 10–12 when students lay down the foundation for life after they leave our school system.
- The emergence into adulthood and life after school when students continue to develop their independence and the seeds that were sown in K–12, allowing them to pursue their adult passions and interests.



District evidence shows that there is a decline in grade-to-grade transitions beginning in Grade 9. The decline is most significant for Indigenous students, students with diverse abilities and needs, and students in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

The District has allocated an extra 0.5 FTE of teacher staffing to every secondary school to improve student transition rates, and, as we do this work, we will collect evidence on the impact that the levels of literacy, numeracy, and students' sense of belonging and well-being have on their ability to successfully transition to the next grade level. We will also collect evidence on the effectiveness of the supports that are put in place to inform future interventions. The district's goal is to increase the grade-to-grade transitions rates, specifically in Grades 10-12 for Indigenous students, for students with diverse abilities and needs, and for students in care.



BUSINESS BY DESIGN

Based on population estimates from the Provincial Government and the City of Surrey, it is clear that enrolment will continue to increase at a rapid pace in almost every school community. In September 2023, the district saw more than 2,400 new students enrol since the previous September, bringing our student population to more than 80,000.

With this level of growth, it is critical that the district ensure all business aspects of the district, from strategy and operations to budget, facilities, and decision-making are aligned and focused on creating value, fostering innovation, and achieving our strategic priorities.

As the district expands, the need for robust business structures has become critical to ensure there is a solid foundation to accommodate this growth and provide accountability and transparency. It is important that we continually improve business practices to facilitate efficient operations and uphold the highest standards of governance.



Several key areas require our focused attention to support our growth trajectory effectively:

- **Workforce** – Succession, recruitment, and retention form the foundation of our human resources strategy. As we strive to attract and retain skilled employees, we recognize the importance of nurturing a supportive and inclusive work environment. By implementing comprehensive succession planning and enhancing recruitment efforts, we can ensure a strong and capable workforce that meets the evolving needs of our district.
- **Information Technology** - The role of Information Technology (IT) as a strategic partner is paramount in today's digital age. By leveraging technology effectively, we can enhance student learning, streamline administrative processes, and foster innovation. By nurturing a collaborative relationship between IT and educational stakeholders, we can leverage technology as a powerful tool to achieve our strategic priorities.
- **Capital Planning** - Capital planning emerges as a vital aspect of our strategic approach. With a growing student population and the need for many more facilities, it is imperative we align our infrastructure investments with long-term educational goals. By developing a robust capital plan, we can make informed decisions that optimize resource allocation and create sustainable learning environments.
- **Systems and Process Renewal** - In order to ensure continuous improvement, we need to prioritize systems and process renewal. By regularly reviewing and refining our operational systems and processes, we can enhance efficiency, streamline workflows, and eliminate unnecessary redundancies. This proactive approach empowers us to adapt to changing needs, deliver exceptional services to our students, staff, and community, and realize additional resources that could be directed towards the board's strategic priorities.



- **Budget Methodology** - During 2022–2023 school year, the District began revising its’ budget methodology to allocate resources strategically and maximize their impact. By further designing a data-informed budgeting process, we can align financial decisions with our district’s goals and priorities. This approach promotes accountability and ensures that resources are directed to areas that yield the highest educational outcomes.
- **Endowment and Advancement** - To enable the district to invest more resources into innovative programs and initiatives, ensuring that every student across our district has equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities, we will improve our ability to accept donations and generate alternative revenue sources. Our strategic focus in Endowment/Advancement is to secure sustainable funding, enabling innovative programs for equitable education across the district. We’ll enhance donation acceptance and explore new revenue sources, nurturing donor relationships to propel our district’s vision forward.
- **Effective Governance** - Finally, strong governance practices are essential to guide decision making and foster trust within our community. By upholding principles of transparency, integrity, and stakeholder engagement, we can maintain a governance structure that supports effective leadership and decision-making processes.

By focusing on these critical areas, our school district is well-positioned to navigate its rapid growth while upholding accountability, transparency, and educational excellence. Through strategic planning and implementation, we can lay a solid foundation for the success and future of our educational community.



INCLUSION

Our district's strategic plan is firmly anchored in the core belief that fostering connectedness and a sense of belonging is pivotal across all facets of learning. We are committed to nurturing inclusive environments where diverse identities, abilities, stories, experiences, and perspectives guide and strengthen the pursuit of our vision.

To facilitate this commitment, we have established an Accessibility Advisory Committee, working in tandem with a dedicated Working Group. These teams collaborate to identify, eliminate, and prevent barriers, enhancing accessibility for individuals with diverse needs and abilities. Leveraging the invaluable feedback received through our public feedback channels, these teams play an integral role in shaping and updating the District's Accessibility Plan.

Core to this belief is that the Surrey School District cherishes, values, and supports children and families of all sexual orientations and gender identities. SOGI-inclusive education is about facilitating children’s understanding of their identities and the diversity of the world in which they live. This empowers children to embrace their uniqueness and fosters a culture of valuing others and treating everyone with dignity and respect. Our goal is to cultivate an environment where every child thrives, feels a sense of belonging, and recognizes their inherent significance.

Surrey Schools acknowledges its unique position as a school system within one of the largest and most diverse regions in the country. This recognition carries a profound responsibility—to ensure that the cultures, abilities, values, and beliefs of all students and families are not just acknowledged but also celebrated and reflected in the vibrant learning culture of our schools.

By deliberately weaving the principles of inclusion, equity, diversity, and belonging into the fabric of our strategic planning initiatives, we are not merely shaping a brighter future for our educational community; we are nurturing the seeds of a more inclusive and equitable society, one that embraces and celebrates the richness of all its members.





CHARTING THE COURSE AHEAD: OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

This strategic plan represents our unwavering commitment to providing a remarkable educational experience for each and every student. It serves as a compass guiding our journey towards a brighter future, one where every learner thrives, and their potential is realized. Together, we will continue to innovate, adapt, and aspire, working hand in hand to achieve the goals and aspirations outlined in this document.

As we embark on this transformative path, we do so with unity, purpose, and the shared vision of building a world-class educational experience for every student across Surrey, White Rock, and Barnston Island. This plan and our work are the culmination of extensive consultation with stakeholders, community members, staff, students, and rights-holders, resulting in our strategic priorities and a shared vision of *Learning by Design*. Aligned with the Ministry's Framework for Enhancing Student Learning, this plan guides our ongoing efforts, with progress measured and reported through the [Enhancing Student Learning Report](#).

Thank you for your dedication and support for this exciting journey ahead.