

**NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING
INFORMATION SHEET**

DATE: April 8, 2026
TO: Strategic Directions Committee
FROM: Brett Hancock, Director of Priority Populations
SUBJECT: Aboriginal Report: How Are We Doing? 2024/2025

Background

The Aboriginal Report – *How Are We Doing?* is an annual public report published by the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care. Its primary purpose is to provide transparent, data-driven information about the educational experiences and outcomes of self-identified Indigenous students—including First Nations (status and non-status), Métis, and Inuit learners—across British Columbia.

BC has reported on Indigenous student data since 1998, following the introduction of voluntary self-identification in 1996. The report was created in response to the need for accurate, disaggregated information to understand why many Indigenous learners were not achieving equitable outcomes in the public education system. By highlighting performance trends and demographic information, the report helps districts, schools, and Indigenous communities identify strengths, inequities, and areas requiring targeted action.

Discussion

Enrollment & Demographics

- In 2024/25, 17% of SD68 students self-identify as Indigenous, higher than the provincial average of 11%.
- Indigenous students attend off-reserve and on-reserve schools and participate in varied learning environments but were overrepresented in district alternate programs (52%).

Learning & Achievement

- **Foundation Skills Assessments (Grades 4 & 7):**
Participation rates for Grade 4 have improved from 44% in 2020/21 to 86% in 2024/25. Grade 7 rates improved from 38% in 2020/21 to 78%. Overall Indigenous students continue to perform below non-Indigenous peers in both literacy and numeracy, reflecting ongoing achievement gaps.
- **Course Marks (Grades 10–12):**
Indigenous students earn fewer C+ or better course marks across most academic subjects compared to non-Indigenous students. The class presenting the lowest success rates for Indigenous students was Workplace Math 10. Only 39% of students received a C+ or higher. The class with the highest success rate was Life Science 11 where 72% of students received a C+ or higher.

Graduation & Completion Rates

- Five-year completion rate: 67% for Indigenous students compared with 82% for non-Indigenous students.
- Six-year completion rate: 82% for Indigenous students compared with 91% for non-Aboriginal students.

These longstanding gaps highlight the need for continued, focused support.

Children & Youth in Care

- Indigenous children are significantly over-represented among students who have ever been in care. Outcomes for students in care—Indigenous and non-Indigenous—remain lower than the general population, making this an important area for targeted intervention.

Student Voice (Student Learning Survey)

Across Grades 4, 7, 10, and 12:

- Indigenous students generally report similar levels of school belonging, safety, and fairness as their peers, though slightly lower in some areas.
- Most Indigenous students report being taught about Indigenous peoples, and many report having multiple adults who care about them at school—an important protective factor.

Overall Themes

- Achievement gaps persist across literacy, numeracy, course marks, and graduation.
- Engagement and belonging indicators show consistent disparities.
- Completion rates are improving, particularly the six-year rate.
- Cultural courses and Indigenous-focused learning show student success.
- Attendance and overrepresentation in specific designations remain key areas for improvement.

Next Steps

- Strengthen Relationships and Belonging: Belonging is one of the strongest predictors of both attendance and long-term graduation—something we've seen play out repeatedly for Indigenous students in NLPS.
- Partner With Families & Nations in Attendance Planning: Attendance improves when families feel respected, involved, and not judged.
- Identify Barriers: Conduct an "Attendance Listening Interview" with students and caregivers
- Boost Cultural Safety & Identity Affirmation: When Indigenous students feel a school honours who they are, attendance rises.
- Increase Access to Basic Needs & Wraparound Supports: Attendance improves dramatically when basic needs are met.
- Create Learning Environments Students *Want* to Attend: For many students with high absence, school feels irrelevant or overwhelming.
- Monitor Data Early and Intervene Quickly: Data shows chronic absence patterns start early and persist.