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LEARNING LIAISON COMMITTEE

FOCUS GROUP REPORT – MARCH 2022

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The Surrey Schools Learning Liaison Committee explores the Board's educational goals, how the Board is working to achieve these goals, and how Surrey Schools is performing as a district. The Committee is comprised of Board members, senior staff, CUPE representatives, DPAC representatives, SPVPA representatives, STA representatives, and student representatives.

In the Learning Liaison Committee's second annual meeting, committee members were asked to provide their feedback on the district's Strategic Plan and Findings from the 2020 Enhancing Student Learning Report (ESLR). Three overarching questions guided their discussion. The purpose of the current report is to systematically evaluate the committee's feedback to inform future planning and implementation of the district's Strategic Plan.

A thematic analysis of committee members' responses is presented for Question 1, Question 2, and Question 3 below. The committee members' written responses to each of the three questions appear in Appendix A at the end of the report.

KEY FINDINGS

- Committee members indicated that they value Surrey Schools' dedication to collecting and reporting data as well as developing evidence-based solutions and interventions in response.
- Committee members consistently mentioned the need to prioritize the mental health and well-being of students and staff.
- Committee members recommended increased training for staff, including anti-racism training, anti-oppression training, and cultural safety training.

QUESTION 1

How has the district reviewed, analyzed, and interpreted classroom, school, district, and provincial data to illuminate emerging areas of need and inequities of student learning outcomes and to determine progress being made?

Ten committee members separated into six groups to discuss the following question: *How has the district reviewed, analyzed, and interpreted classroom, school, district, and provincial data to illuminate emerging areas of need and inequities of student learning outcomes and to determine progress being made?*

Based on these discussions, they were asked to identify (a) the district's strengths; (b) suggestions for the district to consider; and (c) questions they had for the district. There were five responses to Question 1a, five responses to Question 1b, and five responses to Question 1c. These responses were thematically analyzed, resulting in a total of 54 mentions across 16 sub-themes. See Table 1 below for a breakdown of committee members' responses.

	Theme	Sub-theme	# (and %) of mentions
а.	Strengths $(n - 22) (41\%)$	i. Capturing and Transparently Reporting Large Amounts of Data	6 (11.1%)
	(n = 22; 41%)	ii. Responding to Areas of Need Identified in the Data	6 (11.1%)
		iii. Focusing on Literacy and Numeracy	4 (7.4%)
		iv. Promoting Student Voice and Leadership	4 (7.4%)
		v. Creating SEL Initiatives	2 (3.7%)
b.	Considerations (<i>n = 15; 28%</i>)	i. Prioritize the Mental Health and Safety of Staff and Students	6 (11.1%)
	(11 - 13, 20%)	ii. Shift Away from Reliance on Standardized Tests	3 (5.6%)
		iii. Develop More Music and Arts Programs	2 (3.7%)
		iv. Consider Adding Additional Data to Existing Data Sources	2 (3.7%)
		v. Provide More Clarity around Subgroups in Reporting	2 (3.7%)
c.	Questions (n = 17; 31%)	i. Can the District Further Clarify How to Interpret the Data?	5 (9.3%)
	(ii. How Does the District Welcome Diversity and Support ALL Children?	4 (7.4%)
		iii. How do Supports in the Home Affect Student Outcomes?	3 (5.6%)
		iv. How Does the District Support the Development of Life Skills and Critical Thinking?	2 (3.7%)
		 What Actions Will the District Take to Support the Wellbeing of Students and Staff? 	2 (3.7%)
		vi. How is Students' Literacy Improving Over Time?	1 (1.9%)

Table 1. District's Use of Data

QUESTION 2

How has the district activated an effective strategic engagement process, with priority on engaging Indigenous peoples and communities, First Nation communities, and other equity seeking groups?

Ten committee members separated into six groups to discuss the following question: *How has the district activated an effective strategic engagement process, with priority on engaging Indigenous peoples and communities, First Nation communities, and other equity seeking groups?*

Based on these discussions, they were asked to identify (a) the district's strengths; (b) suggestions for the district to consider; and (c) questions they had for the district. There were four responses to Question 1a, four responses to Question 1b, and three responses to Question 1c. These responses were thematically analyzed, resulting in a total of 32 mentions across 14 sub-themes. See Table 2 below for a breakdown of committee members' responses.

Table 2. District's Strategic Engagement Process

	Theme	Sub-theme	# (and %) of mentions
а.	Strengths (n = 13; 41%)	i. Collecting Evidence from a Variety of Sources to Identify Issues and Develop Appropriate Solutions	7 (21.9%)
		ii. Commitment to Identifying Systemic Racism and Inequities Within the District	3 (9.4%)
		iii. Facilitating Listening Circles	2 (6.3%)
		iv. Implementing SEL programs	1 (3.1%)
b.	Considerations (n = 11; 34%)	i. Provide Equity and Inclusivity Training	4 (12.5%)
	(/ 0)	ii. Understand and Value Diverse Abilities	2 (6.3%)
		iii. Demonstrate Value of Indigenous Workers and Their Cultures	2 (6.3%)
		iv. Engage Other Communities in Addition to Indigenous Communities	2 (6.3%)
		v. Focus on Providing SEL-Based Supports for Mental Health	1 (3.1%)
с.	Questions (n = 8; 25%)	i. What Will the District Do to Educate and Mentor Staff?	3 (9.4%)
		ii. How Will the District Allocate Resources to Support Mental Health and Well-Being?	2 (6.3%)
		iii. How Will the District Improve Sense of Belonging?	1 (3.1%)
		iv. How Has Daily Work Improved?	1 (3.1%)
		v. What Was the Outcome from the Aboriginal Education Council Presentation?	1 (3.1%)

QUESTION 3

How has the district adjusted their District Operational Plans to align with their student learning goals as articulated within the Board's Strategic Plan?

Ten committee members separated into six groups to discuss the following question: How has the district adjusted their District Operational Plans to align with their student learning goals as articulated within the Board's Strategic Plan?

Based on these discussions, they were asked to identify (a) the district's strengths; (b) suggestions for the district to consider; and (c) questions they had for the district. There was one response to Question 1a, one response to Question 1b, and one response to Question 1c (which was presented in the form of a statement rather than a question). These responses were thematically analyzed, resulting in a total of 3 mentions across 3 subthemes. See Table 3 below for a breakdown of committee members' responses.

Them	Theme Sub-theme		# (and %) of mentions
a. Strength (n = 1; 3.		i. District Allocates Resources Based on Evidence	1 (33%)
b. Consider (<i>n</i> = 1; 3.		i. Smaller Class Sizes	1 (33%)
c. Question (n = 1; 3.		i. Standardized Testing is not Beneficial to Student Learning	1 (33%)

Table 3. Adjustment of District Operational Plans to Meet Student Learning Goals

Appendix A Written Responses

Direct transcriptions of the committee members' written responses appear below. Please note that in some cases, words or characters enclosed in square brackets [] are added to support interpretation of the response.

Question 1

Group	Strengths	Considerations	Questions
1	 Variety of programs. Student voice -> leadership opportunities for students. SEL initiatives -> Human and social development. Focus on literacy/numeracy -> that's great. 	 Priority must be the mental health of all. Students & staff -> only then can learning happen. Get away from standardized testing -> need more resources STOP Foundation Skills Assessment -> how is this information being used to target additional supports We need more music/arts programs. Stop cross boundaries access. 	 How do you welcome and honour diversity? How do we support <u>all</u> children regardless of need/designations? How do we support life skills/critical thinking?
2	 Adding additional help where see it is needed Include variety of programs Student voice More leadership programs Focus on literacy & numeracy 	 Well being of students & staff has dropped considerably. Maybe more supports in this area. Students feeling safe has dropped a little. Can [a]ffect output in classes Mental health of all. Additional supports - more reasons Away from standardize test[ing] 	 What supports does the district plan to put in place to help the well being of staff & students after COVID? Mental health [is a] huge concern[;] can take time to bounce back.
3		 (Pg 6) Students feeling safe and calm in 2019/2020 were 84%. This number dropped to 62% in 1 year. The amount of teachers feeling calm and confident was 61% in 2019/2020 but it dropped to 46% in 2020/21. From this information it can be interpreted that safety measures within school environments should be strengthened. 	
4	There is a lot of data available to be able to determine where there are areas that need greater attention or more focus.		 How can this district simplify all the data so that the detail & depth is not lost - and continues to be used by staff to shape the instructional future, but to "dumb it down" for the general community to understand?
5	 Important to capture the diff[erent] learning groups This report breaks down the diff[erent] age groups[:] K-12 Incl[udes] plans/applications for 12 -> post secondary 	 ELPATS - data could incl[ude] if K students are engaged in community programs -> as it would provide or contribute to development of P.A. ICEL -> include socio-economic data 	 Literacy Initiatives -> could show how students are improving over span of time i.e., term 1, 2, 3 Supports in the home -> parents, siblings, family unit
6	 Clarity around what data/source data is used which provides transparency on the source Action plans or next steps in each section to support the progress & linked to the data. Can then be followed up on success of the interventions. 	 Definitions for some terms (e.g., literacy & numeracy) but not individual source of definitions for the 4 subgroups What % of the whole are the subgroups? 	 Does students w/ special needs or diverse abilities include "gifted" or p coded students? Is the sample size for the S.L.S a large enough one to be valid considering the number of students in Surrey? (other data sets are excluded for their size)

Question 2

Group	Strengths	Considerations	Questions
1	 Listening circles; Racing to Equity; SEL programs 	 Anti-racism training; anti-oppression training; cultural humility training; understanding & valu[ing] diverse abilities 	 What does coaching & mentorship look like? How has daily work improved? How will you align resources to support mental health? How will you improve well-being? How will you improve sense of belonging?
2	 Doing listening circles Looking at systematic racism and inequities 	 Cultural safety concerns Communication on each Nation's value More value to our Indigenous workers and their cultures 	What will district do to educate staff?
3	 (Pg 10-11) There are so many current evidence listed followed by specific responses. These responses have clearly illustrated that the District has successfully identified the problems and appropriate solutions for these problems. (Pg 15) The district has done a fabulous job of gathering input from different sources; Indigenous leaders, DPAC, etc. 		What was the output of the Presentation from the Aboriginal Education Council from Sep 21?
4		• Include people & communities outside of Indigenous peoples & communities to engage them in the solutions as well.	
5		 Focus on MH data – SEL; Site-based supports 	
6	• Good = Quantitative Evidence		

Question 3

Group		Strengths	Considerations	Questions
1			Smaller classes!	
2				
3				
4	•	Allocate resources as required based on evidence		
5				Standardized testing – not beneficial to student learning
6				



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LEARNING LIAISON COMMITTEE TRANSITIONS INITIATIVES – FOCUS GROUP REPORT, APRIL 2022

A MESSAGE FROM SURREY SCHOOLS

Surrey Schools is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Katzie, Kwan-tlen, Semiahmoo and other Coast Salish Peoples. It is B.C.'s largest school district where close to 12,000 employees serve almost 75,000 children in our diverse multicultural city. We have over 130 educational sites from early learning to adult education.

The District is committed to continuous improvement and success of all students through implementation of evidence-informed practices that enhance student learning, inclusivity and equity of outcomes. We welcome and honour diversity while supporting students' holistic growth —mind, body and heart—a commitment captured in our welcome video, Éy swayel / Bienvenue / Welcome to Surrey Schools.

Click to watch our welcome video, <u>Éy swayel / Bienvenue</u> / Welcome to Surrey Schools.

TITLE: Surrey School District's Learning Liaison Committee: Transitions Initiatives Focus Group Report - April 2022

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PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The Surrey Schools Learning Liaison Committee explores the Board's educational goals, how the Board is working to achieve these goals, and how Surrey Schools is performing as a district. Fundamental to this work is providing input on the Districts' Strategic Plan and Enhancing Student Learning Report. The Committee is comprised of Board members, senior staff, CUPE representatives, DPAC representatives, SPVPA representatives, STA representatives, and student representatives.

The Learning Liaison Committee met on April 26, 2022 to discuss and reflect upon stories of *Transitions* projects being implemented in five secondary schools in the district. Transition projects discussed were on the topics of mental health, cultural safety and wellbeing, and issues of confidence and belonging. Five schools were represented at the meeting: Clayton Heights, Fraser Heights, LA Matheson, Panorama Ridge Secondary, and Semiahmoo Secondary.

Three overarching questions guided the committee's conversations. Committee members listened to descriptions and details of projects undertaken to improve transitions for students at these schools. As they engaged with the specifics of the project, three overarching questions guided the committee's conversations:

- 1. What evidence is being gathered?
- 2. What structures are in place
- 3. What values or beliefs emerge?

This report provides the findings from these conversations towards planning current and future efforts to improve student outcomes – including developing appropriate instructional strategies and adequate supports for academic, social, and emotional learning.

A thematic analysis of committee members responses is presented below for the three aspects that were discussed at the meeting. The committee members' written responses to each of the three questions appear in Appendix B at the end of the report.

KEY FINDINGS

- Evidence was gathered around how students were being selected/self-selected for transitions support, including documentary evidence from records, direct evidence from students, and exploratory evidence in informal ways.
- Structures were implemented that offered supports through school structures, relational structures, and physical structures, keeping in mind student choice and voice.
- The values that emerged were that transitions projects emphasized **flexibility**, **student empowerment**, **and a sense of care and belonging**.

WHAT EVIDENCE IS BEING GATHERED?

School representatives shared stories of *transition interventions* in small groups of committee members and invited attendees. Stories included details of how students were identified, and their needs addressed through the projects. Themes within this aspect of the projects centered around three categories:

Documentary evidence:

Evidence for these stories were gathered from school attendance records, phone calls, report cards, and IEPs.

Direct evidence: At other times, evidence came directly from students through their sharing trauma/mental health/self-harm stories, stories explanations of their trying to make it to school,



presentations of student voice through artistic methods, and what was noted by committee members as "grey area" kids – interpreted as children who are seeking or waiting for designations, or might be identified by teachers as needing extra attention.

Exploratory/investigative evidence: Some schools conducted more formal ways of gathering evidence, including checking in with students, asking students informal questions, conducting interviews and surveys, inviting videos and journaling from students, and forming talking circles.

Some committee members' reflections centered around the idea that gathering these types of information needs to be comprehensive and ongoing, especially for "grey area" kids.

WHAT STRUCTURES ARE IN PLACE?

School representatives shared stories of projects in small groups of committee members and invited attendees. They shared about the steps they undertook to respond to student stories and create structural changes towards supporting students achieve their fullest potential.

School structures: Supports were offered in myriad ways including performing regular attendance checks and tracking classes, phoning parents and caregivers, offering flexible class times, designing transition blocks so that students get a break, setting goals (short and long term) with students, and presenting career search supports.

Social/relational structures:

Other types of supports came from social and relational structures in place for the students including from teachers, support teachers, youth care workers, CCW, and through peer mediation.

Physical structures: Other ways of ensuring supports involved re-imagining types of structures in place to include pull out/pull in programs, placing students in specific classrooms, including artistic materials/resources and supports for storytelling and student voice, and expanding culturally safe spaces.

A reflection that emerged from committee members' discussion on this aspect was around the question: Does support look different for different groups?



WHAT VALUES OR BELIEFS EMERGED?

An analysis of these stories and interventions highlighted four themes - *Flexibility*, *Empowerment, Belonging*, and *Care* - that thread through the Transitions projects. These themes capture the values and beliefs with which projects support students to successfully grow as learners and members of their school community.

The figure below presents a snapshot of the four themes that emerged from the analysis of the Transitions projects documented during Learning Liaison Committee conversations. While aspects of Flexibility and Empowerment were mentioned more often, themes of Belonging and Care scaffolded all conversations; and the four themes are represented as interconnected values for the projects (see Appendix A for a breakdown of the number of mentions across themes).



Figure 1: Transitions projects values matrix

Particulars and contexts that surfaced these themes are described below.

Flexibility: A prominent theme was the emphasis on flexibility for students. Projects took up diverse ways of *offering instruction* ranging from one-on-one classes, small group instruction with multiple ways of learning, integrating coursework, combining competencies in various classes, and the freedom to leave class and rejoin later. Flexibility in *scheduling* also included presenting students with adjustments to timetables (3 days per week etc.), reassessing schedules on a per week basis, and participating in a suitably prepared environment. Finally, flexibility in *attendance* embraced the intention of trying to attend school, considering classes and extra curriculars as part of this intention.

Empowerment: A second theme was rooted in values around student empowerment. A significant aspect of empowerment related to *resource sharing* – varying from showing and sharing useful academic resources with students, offering career search supports, sharing emotional awareness resources and mental health supports, and teaching methods for self-checks related to wellness. Empowerment also stemmed from *student ownership* in setting goals for their learning, in their involvement in education planning and scheduling, and actively seeking student input and feedback.

Belonging: A third theme focused on how these projects worked to create a sense of belonging and safety for students. By working with SEL values, focusing on surfacing students' authentic identities, encouraging students to tell their stories in their own ways, the projects focused on creating for students a sense of *trust from the school community*. Belonging was fostered through *careful socialization* and cultural safety with some classes taught by indigenous educators for indigenous students, and encouraging strong connections with peers, seniors, teachers.

Care: A final and consistent theme was the ethic of care that grounded the projects. The creation of caring spaces towards improved learning included staff across various teams *collaborating* to understand student needs, working with a trauma-informed approach and an awareness of student emotions, and goal setting with students to include self-check for wellness. *Demonstrating care* was an important aspect with staff consciously recognizing the pandemic as a real challenge for students (related to fears, new habits, etc.), creating empathetic connections, and recognizing the value of student stories and voices.

A reflection that resonated through committee members' comments was the idea: The goal is smaller classes with wrap around supports.

Appendix A Values and number of mentions

Across five feedback sheets, there were three aspects that were discussed about the Transitions projects. Based on the discussions, committee members' responses were thematically analyzed to understand values and beliefs that surfaced from the Transitions projects. This analysis resulted in a total of 36 mentions across 9 subthemes. See Table below for a breakdown of committee members' responses.

Value (Theme)	Sub-theme	# (and %) of mentions
Flexibility (n = 14; 39%)	Scheduling classes	
	Methods of offering and presenting instruction	4 (11.1%)
	Considering what constitutes attendance for students	3 (8.3%)
Empowerment (n = 10; 28%)	Goal-setting and planning for student ownership of learning	5 (13.8%)
	Sharing diverse resources for students' success	5 (13.8%)
Belonging (n = 5; 14%)	Creating trust in the school community	3 (8.3%)
	• Careful and thoughtful socialization with peers, seniors, Indigenous educators, teachers and support staff	2 (5.5%)
Care (n = 7; 19%)	Collaborating across teams for student needs	4 (11.1%)
	Demonstrating social-emotional learning values, empathetic connections, and a focus on wellness	3 (8.3%)

Appendix B Written Responses

Direct transcriptions of the committee members' written responses appear below.

What evidence is being gathered?

SCHOOL	RESPONDENT 1	RESPONDENT 2
Clayton Heights	 Third run through Phone calls 18 absences (6 weeks) - on watch list - no designation - Identifying why Start new - taken ownership Attendance and marks 	 Attendance Mental health story Individual story IEP - what does he need Math achievement Student voice
Semiahmoo Secondary	 Attendances/report card Kids without connection Mental health/self-harm No connection Attending - trying Dance - but alcohol At risk - trust there Self-check 	 Indigenous Long/short goal setting Self-assessment "grey area" kids - 28 Attendance - gaps Report card data trauma/not meeting expectations mental health Attending school and social counts
Fraser Heights	 Before and after comparison Attendance Who did not pass core course (9-12) Wanting kids to be involved in their own education plan How connecting with senior grades 	
LA Matheson	 Journal Video Survey Tracking of classes Interviewing Attendance records Success in other classes Artistic voices 	
Panorama Ridge Secondary	 Talking Circles Projects 1:1 staff time Pullout/pull-in support Check-ins Attendance Engage in activities Peer mediation 	 Asked questions Lack of confidence Lack in sense of belonging Lack of one-on-one support Conflicts Student Trauma

What structures have been put in place?

SCHOOL	RESPONDENT 1	RESPONDENT 2	RESPONDENT 3
Clayton Heights	 Two blocks assigned for teachers having voice (1 teacher) One block enrolling and 1 block enrolling individual attention, IAP, attendance checks, HUB team 	 Assigned support teacher Block/class of 18 Allow freedom to students to leave reg class to go back to Shawn's class 	
Semiahmoo Secondary	 Talked to teachers, counsellors Attendance/report card data Academic/career searching support Teacher to student Short/long-term goal setting Self-perception/reflection Specific Classroom 	 Identify grey areas; no case manager Attendance/report card -> (academic) team - counsellor, CCW 28 kids - 15 enrolling with 1 FTE Safe space - trust, relationships trauma 1 block with SEL and academic learning (catch-up), goal setting How is this different than LST The goal is smaller classes with wrap around supports! Does support look different for different groups 	
Fraser Heights	 Admin, EAs, Cloverdale HUB (intervention program), Counsellors/teachers, youth care worker Wrap program - timetable with flexibility - control - building relationships 		
LA Matheson	 Acting, drama, art, writing, artistic voice - taught by Indigenous for Indigenous-course Culturally safe and respectful environment Helps find your story and your passions Makes them feel at home for these students 		
Panorama Ridge Secondary	 Introducing new thing (counsellors, peer mediation, youth workers) - trauma as a child -> one class before spring break -> going to other class extra-curricular after spring break Phone calls with parents Join school for 3 days Class one on one time - social, academic, self Transitions blocks Teacher than can provide more support Do it one more week 	 Enrolling 10-15, non-enrolling 1-1 -> self-academic Bring supports to child Wrap around The goal is smaller classes with wrap around supports! Does support look different for different groups 	 2 blocks - enrolling block 10-15 Self/actual/academic/social Non-enrolling 1 on 1 support Student knows the teacher Counselor check in - youth care worker

What values or beliefs emerge?

SCHOOL	RESPONDENT 1	RESPONDENT 2
Clayton Heights	 Value input/feedback from student Support for student - setting goals/empowerment/student ownership Flexibility for ways of learning/growth Teamwork - network Awareness of emotional comfort/wellness 	 Connection Empowerment Self-awareness and belonging
Semiahmoo Secondary	 Data collection -> thorough Prepared environment - classroom SEL -> trust with teachers -> connection Require trauma informed approach -> deeescalate Support - small class size Goal setting including self-check for wellness 	 Collaboration of staff understanding student issues Pandemic aftermath Sense of belonging Mental health support
Fraser Heights	 Education is valued and important Importance of flexibility Ethic of care Importance of relationships Empathy and connection 	
LA Matheson	 The Indigenous Learner Reverence, own story Hope, identity Value of story - art (visual) 	
Panorama Ridge Secondary	 Dig to find out what is going on/what the student is experiencing Student is turning inward as a result of pandemic Value of connections, adapting students schedule Connecting and showing resources Value self-determination Student values resources she was being connected with SEL values Value engagement 	 No belonging > isolation > wanted to stay home (grade 9 girl) Meet her where she was at - 3-day - wrap team intervention Unity of care/supports/socialization/touch/confidence







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