

## Aboriginal Report – How are we doing?

Jurisdiction: British Columbia

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Level: K-12

Theme: Government or board policies

### Description of Practice:

BC has **collected data** on self-identified Aboriginal students since 1996 and has published an annual report (entitled Aboriginal Report - How Are We Doing?) since 1998.

Each year the Ministry of Education publishes the *How Are We Doing?* report, providing information about the public school system's performance in serving students of Aboriginal ancestry.

Since it is published both provincially and by district, the report is a valuable tool for students, parents, community members and educators because it provides information on how Aboriginal students are doing in school, and points out areas where we can improve.

By tracking demographics and performance, the education system is better able to respond to the needs of Aboriginal students. The Ministry of Education provides \$45 million a year - \$950 per Aboriginal student - to support Aboriginal language and culture programs, Aboriginal support service programs, and other local Aboriginal education programs.

Performance data is used to inform discussions among school boards and Aboriginal communities as they work together to set goals for their Aboriginal students and to develop enhancement agreements.

### Background:

The practice of disaggregating Aboriginal student data arose from the desire of the education system to identify the needs of students and to determine why they were not succeeding in the public school system. For example, in 2001/2002, only 42% of students graduated with a Dogwood certificate within 6 years of entering Grade 8. By focusing efforts through the use of performance data on academic supports, language and culture programs, developing enhancement agreements and researching best practices, some improvements have been made.

### Development:

Initially there was some resistance to self-identification, due to issues of trust and uncertainty about the benefits of self-identifying as Aboriginal. Over time, however, as Aboriginal programs and services become more robust, and as Enhancement Agreements are implemented, the number of self-identified Aboriginal students has increased.

Today, the annual *How Are We Doing?* report is the only one of its kind in Canada. Aboriginal communities, students, parents, schools and school boards see this report as an important tool for improving the success of Aboriginal students.

Evidence:

We have seen improvements in Aboriginal student performance since we began collecting, monitoring and reporting on Aboriginal student performance data:

- Graduation rates have climbed from 42% in 2000/01 to 48% in 2004/05 (+6%)
- Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA), Grade 4 Writing has climbed from 78% meeting or exceeding in 2000/01 to 85% meeting or exceeding in 04/05;
- FSA, Grade 4 Numeracy has climbed from 65% meeting or exceeding to 72% meeting or exceeding in the same time frame;
- FSA, Grade 7 Writing has climbed from 61% meeting or exceeding to 75% meeting or exceeding.

Adaptability:

This practice would be adaptable to any jurisdiction.

Further information:

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