



SOGI 1 2 3

by
ARC Foundation

SOGI-inclusive education hasn't always been as easy as 1-2-3.

In fact, the acronym SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity), was not particularly well known in 2016 when the BC Ministry of Education and a group of Provincial Education Partners made a commitment to create meaningful change to improve the lives of students of all sexual orientations and gender identities in BC schools. Over the last five years, we have seen remarkable progress, helping make BC schools safer and welcoming for all students.

Many teachers and administrators had been working for years to build the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to support 2SLGBTQ+ students and families; however, many more were still unsure where to start. Pockets of great work were happening throughout the

province, but there continued to be a need for system-wide change. In the 2015-16 school year, ARC Foundation partnered with the Delta School District to provide funding for .2 FTE position to establish a SOGI Lead role, who would in turn create a structure of support and resources for educators in the district. The goal was to build capacity and awareness to make schools more inclusive.

The SOGI District Lead engaged volunteers at each school who began building a professional network within the district to share SOGI-inclusive practices and create resources together. The model of the SOGI District Lead supporting the SOGI School Leads was highly successful, and became the framework for the structure that has now grown throughout BC.

As a result of the successful experience, ARC Foundation partnered with the Ministry of Education to invite other districts to participate in the model that has come to be known as the SOGI Educator Network. By the end of June 2016, nine districts had signed on to be part of the SOGI Educator Network.

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In July 2016, a change to the BC Human Rights Code to include gender identity and expression as a prohibited grounds of discrimination became the catalyst for action by the BC Ministry of Education and school districts. On September 8, 2016, all BC school districts were advised of the requirement to put in place District and School Codes of Conduct and policy that aligned with the change to the Human Rights Code. At that time, school districts were in various stages of readiness to implement strategies and policy and needed support, thus garnering momentum for SOGI 1 2 3.

ARC Foundation held the first SOGI Summit on October 19, 2016, an inspirational day that brought together 140 educators from the nine pilot districts to share stories of success and

learning. That same day saw the broader launch of SOGI 1 2 3 and the website SOGIeducation.org. The website shares proven SOGI-inclusive tools and resources in three key areas:

SOGI 1:

Policies & Procedures

The key components of effective policies and procedures that explicitly reference SOGI.

SOGI 2:

Inclusive Environments

Inclusive operations, language, and practices to help create positive and welcoming environments for all students.

SOGI 3:

Teaching Resources

Lesson plans and other resources – created by educators, for educators – in age-appropriate approaches from K-12 that teach diversity and include examples of SOGI topics. These resources provide opportunities for learning to reflect the SOGI diversity in students' lives and society.



The SOGI 1 2 3 website also offers a resource section for parents that includes terminology, a parent brochure, and a set of videos. To better support families where English is not their primary language, the [Parents' Page](#) is available in Mandarin, Punjabi, and French. The parents' brochure has been translated into nine different languages: French, Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi, Russian, Arabic, Farsi, Korean, and Tagalog.

The nine-district SOGI Educator Network pilot was a success, and was opened to the province for the 2017-18 school year. That year, fifty-four of sixty public school districts took part in the provincial SOGI Educator Network. The following school year saw the Network expand into all sixty school districts across BC, all of whom continue to participate to this day.

In addition to the efforts of the SOGI Educator Network, forward momentum with SOGI-inclusive education in BC is also being championed by a dedicated group of Provincial Education Partners, known as BC's K-12 SOGI Collaborative. The K-12 SOGI Collaborative includes the BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association, BC Teachers' Federation, BC School Superintendents Association, BC School Trustee Association, BC Ministry of Education, BC Association of School Business Officials, CUPE, BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, First Nation Schools Association, First Nations Education Steering Committee, and Federation of Independent School Association, with ARC Foundation as facilitator. This group meets regularly to identify, support, and provide advice on strategic actions that will facilitate SOGI-inclusive education and policies in BC schools.

One of the priorities identified by the K-12 SOGI Collaborative was to develop a [SOGI-Inclusive Education Resource Guide](#) to share practices recommended by educators who, for many years, have been actively supporting students of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The BC K-12 SOGI Collaborative prioritized the development of the resource guide, and all contributed and provided substantial input. The Resource Guide was created in 2020 and launched in January 2021. By the end of the school year, the SOGI-Inclusive Education Resource Guide had been accessed more than 7,300 times.

"As the parent of a transgender child, from the bottom of my heart, I thank you for this document," a local parent shared. "The guide is clear and accessible. It will very much help school leaders and teachers to understand how to better support LGBTQ+ students. My family's experience with the school system has been overwhelmingly positive. Everyone we've connected with at the school and district level has wanted to support us and has worked hard to do so. But not everyone we've worked with has known how to do that or what support looks like. This Resource that you've put together will serve as a guide for people with less experience supporting LGBTQ+ students and should help ensure kids have a more consistent experience."

The Resource Guide builds on the [BC Ministry of Education SOGI Policy Guide](#). While the Policy Guide focused on what to include, the Resource Guide provides many more details on how to implement and support SOGI-inclusive education efforts.

The Resource Guide is broken down into six sections designed to help schools, administrators, and educators no matter where they are along the journey to more SOGI-inclusive education:

Who is the SOGI Lead in
your School or District?

If you're not sure, please
reach out to us at

info@sogieducation.org

and allow us to
connect you!

- Policies and Procedures: Building Effective Policies and Procedures that Work Together
- SOGI Teams and Committees: A Collaborative Approach to SOGI-Inclusive Education
- Professional Development: A Holistic Approach to SOGI Pro-D and Ongoing Learning
- Students in Transition: Facilitating a Student-Centred Support Plan
- Washrooms and Changerooms: Short, Mid, and Long-Term Considerations
- Rainbow Displays: Creating an Impact with your Rainbow Display

The SOGI-Inclusive Education Resource Guide brings together ideas gathered from the BC K-12 SOGI Collaborative, a vast range of educators and stakeholders, and input from more than 2,500 SOGI Leads who, both directly and indirectly, provide feedback to ARC Foundation. The Guide, while written by ARC Foundation, was created from the thoughts and recommendations of these generous contributors.

The start of the new school year brings an opportunity to reflect on BC's SOGI-inclusive education journey, including a look back to celebrate the incredible achievements that have been made so far, and a look forward to determine where additional efforts may be needed.



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The SOGI 1 2 3 model is working successfully across BC, systemic change is taking place within the education system and more educators have access to the tools and resources needed to create SOGI-inclusive learning experiences for students and families. Part of the program's success has been the consistent, ongoing support system-wide, and the impact that the Educator Network has on educators. While ARC Foundation and SOGI 1 2 3 facilitate discussions, learning, and new resource development, it is the educators themselves who are liaising professionally across this network, both intra-district and inter-district, creating professional connections and learning in a more accelerated and networked approach. Success can also be attributed to the dedicated and continuous support that the BCPVPA has provided to SOGI 1 2 3 – the leadership, participation in the BC SOGI K-12 Collaborative, and overall support from the organization has been invaluable in helping ensure alignment and progress on improving the education environment for students of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

Building on those successes, and with a strong SOGI Educator Network in place, work on supporting more nuanced needs in various education settings is underway, from working with the Federation of Independent Schools Association (FISA), to developing more culturally competent tools, expertise, and guidance when adapting the model to First Nations schools and Indigenous learners.

Both the First Nation Schools Association (FNSEA) and First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) are already supporters of, and participants in, the K-12 SOGI Collaborative. Additionally, there are a small number of First Nations schools that are working together as part of the SOGI Educator Network. In collaboration with FNSEA, FNESC, and educators who are involved in this work, a series of Dialogue Circles will take place this fall to further

Looking for ways to incorporate SOGI 1 2 3 into your back-to-school planning?

1.

**Talk to your SOGI School Lead!
Ask them what they need from
you and build a plan together.**

2.

**Check out the [SOGI-Inclusive
Education Resource Guide](#) for
ideas on how to implement and
support SOGI-inclusive education
efforts in your school.**

3.

**Small changes can make a big
difference. Take a look at our
[Inclusive Environments](#) page
and see if there is one thing that
you can commit to for the year
ahead. Feel free to share that
commitment with your team and
encourage them to do the same!**

examine how to encompass First Nations approaches to pedagogy, culture, and learning. Work will then take place to build a plan that will both respond to and tailor the programming approach in a culturally competent and respectful manner that aligns with how best to deliver SOGI-inclusive education within, and from the perspective of, First Nations teachings.

Another area of continued focus for SOGI 1 2 3 is Youth Voice & Leadership. There are some inspiring examples of this leadership taking place around the province. In many schools and districts, students hold advisory positions on SOGI committees to help guide the work, or take leadership roles in supporting their local GSAs (Gender-Sexuality Alliance). There are countless stories each year of successful student-led professional development, peer learning opportunities, and public displays of inclusivity. Students know what they need, and can provide fundamental guidance on how to make their schools and learning experiences feel safer and more inclusive. Finding ways to include student input, feedback, and participation – alongside SOGI Educators and the SOGI K-12 Collaborative – should help guide and improve the efforts of SOGI 1 2 3 in BC.

Lastly, this fall will see the return of the annual SOGI Educator Summit, scheduled to take place on October 27, 2021. Every October, SOGI District Leads from across British Columbia come together for a full day of knowledge exchange, connections, and conversations around SOGI-inclusive learning. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, last year's Summit was offered virtually for the first time. The virtual format proved to be successful, and even removed barriers to participation for some attendees. This year's Summit programming will be available virtually once again while we work to determine when and how to re-introduce in-person elements.

The BCPVPA has been instrumental in helping start and continue fostering SOGI-inclusive education in BC through the efforts of SOGI 1 2 3. BCPVPA's leadership and voice is a big factor in helping create alignment and ensuring this marginalized group of students can feel safe and welcome, and see themselves – and be seen – in the school community.

For more information and resources on SOGI 1 2 3, please visit [SOGIeducation.org](https://sogieducation.org) or contact us at info@sogieducation.org.

