

BC's Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL)

by

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In the 2020-2021 school year, the Province will implement the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) across all school districts. FESL is about collectively improving the K-12 public education system to support student success. Ensuring students' needs are put first requires everyone in the K-12 education system to collectively work together, and Principals and Vice-Principals have a key role in this. It may sound fairly straight forward, but there is no one silver bullet to achieve this.

The Framework is as much about actions as it is about cultural shifts throughout the system, cultural shifts that embrace greater coherence, continuous improvement and accountability at all levels, and actions that include strategic planning, operational planning, reporting and capacity building. Efforts in this regard need to remain focused and to value the learner as a whole, including their intellectual, human and social, and career development.

The new accountability framework ensures that students' needs are the focus of all School Board decisions. School Districts will be accountable for strategic planning focused on students first including: students with diverse needs, Indigenous students, children and youth in care, children whose first language isn't English or French, kids living in poverty and other vulnerable students.

In simple terms, this means that School Districts need to be looking at their student data and asking probing questions. For example: is there equity of outcomes for Indigenous students in the School District? If not, what are the barriers and what strategies can be developed to address this. We know that all students can learn, and there is absolutely no reason for educational outcome disparity. So, what pedagogical strategies need to be deployed to address this and – further – what systemic barriers need to be tackled? This becomes the foundation of the strategic plan.

Aligning operational plans with strategic plans is critical. Investing financial, human and technological resources to support student focused strategies is the only way to achieve success. Operational decisions need to align

the needs of student support. For example, if a key strategy is enhancing supports for students in elementary years with numeracy and literacy, it wouldn't make sense if your financial plan didn't allocate resources to this initiative.

Principals and Vice-Principals have a key role in this work. Just as we need to ensure that operational plans align with strategic plans, we also need to ensure that the school plans align. Aligning the strategic plan and school plan is a bit like using Google Maps and zooming in on a certain area. The School District plan is going to be at the 1000-foot level, and the school plan needs to be at the 100-foot level. Principals and Vice-Principals will need to think about what the District strategies mean in their school, and how to bring these to life on the ground.

Another important component of developing the School District strategic plan is including parents, caregivers and community members in the development. Understanding the unique needs and interests of communities and families needs to be taken into consideration when developing the strategic plan. Principals and Vice-Principals know their communities best, and will have a role ensuring that these perspectives are brought forward in discussion.

The framework will raise the bar of the entire education system by putting student achievement at the centre of strategic planning, and ensuring that the allocation of financial and staffing decisions are in students' best interests. This means ensuring that student outcomes, such as graduation rates and school satisfaction survey results, are continuously monitored and publicly reported so that gaps in student achievement are identified and services can be planned based on proven strategies.

By focusing on students first, and better engaging parents and the community in the education system, the entire education system becomes better.

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Guiding Principles

The Framework for Enhancing Student Learning

- Is grounded in the belief that all education partners are responsible for student learning, with each having unique responsibilities
- Creates a system-wide focus on student learning, to ensure each student in BC achieves their full potential
- Is meaningful, impactful, flexible, realistic, and sustainable
- Addresses differences in performance among particular groups of students, most notably Indigenous students, children in care and students with special needs
- Is measurable and strength-, support-, evidence- and results-based
- Reflects system-wide commitment to continuous improvement and life-long learning
- Continues to build public confidence in BC's education system
- Focuses on the intellectual, career, and human and social development
- Includes evidence-based strategies for improvement that are measurable and outcome focused