

School District #53 – Okanagan Similkameen
SCHOOL INQUIRY – YouLearn.ca
2020-21: A One-Year Plan

1. Our School Story

YouLearn.ca is School District #53's Distributed Learning and Continuing Education School. Our main office is in Oliver, BC, on South Okanagan Secondary School's campus. We have a store front office in Keremeos, a classroom in Osoyoos Secondary, and a presence in other communities such as Kelowna, the lower mainland and the Yukon. We typically serve three types of students: those who choose to enroll full-time with us, those who cross-enroll for only one or more courses, and adults. This year, however, we are also currently providing the educational programming for 155 Transition Students from every school in our district.

Transition Students are those students who are unable/unwilling to attend traditional brick-and-mortar schooling at this time because of COVID-19 related issues. These students are dually enrolled between us and their home school; helping these Transition Students and families is the focus of our inquiry this year at YouLearn.

Apart from the work which we will be doing with our Transition Students, we remain a full-fledged K-12 DL and CE school and have four valuable partnerships:

1. Ashnola at the Crossings (a residential drug and alcohol treatment centre),
2. Venture Academy (a Kelowna drug and alcohol treatment centre),
3. the Okanagan Correctional Centre, and
4. Aurora Virtual Education (a partnership established between SD53 and the Yukon Ministry of Education).

This year, due to COVID-19, educational programming for Ashnola at the Crossings has stopped as the program remains shut down, and instructional services assigned to OCC have decreased 89%, as a result of the teachers continuing to be locked out of the facility. Both of these situations are being reviewed by the Ministry of Health and Corrections, respectively. Changes to these programs are TBA. As a result, surplus staffing from these areas has been redistributed to cover unexpected enrolment increases associated with our district Transition Students, as well as our own school of record students in our 10-12 and adult divisions. In total, we have 103 school of record students in these divisions.

As always, we view our student and family diversity as a strength, something that unites us. Our learners come to, and engage, with us for a variety of reasons. Some choose us, some are forced. Some upgrade courses, some repeat courses they've failed. Some take courses with us because of 'broken' timetables, some take courses to get ahead and

accelerate their learning. Some are elite athletes and need the flexibility, some are bullied or overwhelmed with anxiety. The stories are numerous and often complex. This year is no different, particularly when we take into account our 155 Transition Students and their unique needs and challenges. This plan is about supporting them as long as they are with us, while working to transition them back to where they want and need to be.

Transition Student enrolment began spiking following the Ministry of Education's cohort model announcement in mid-August. This plan is our attempt to address this dynamic with the short time we have had and is best viewed as a work in progress, or true spiral of inquiry.

2. Inquiry Question

School-Wide Umbrella Question:

How do we most effectively support our district Transition Students and families in our DL program?

3. What will help us have achieve the biggest impact? (FOCUSING)

Three sub-questions sit underneath our umbrella question and will be used to help us define "effectively support" and assure we are making a difference:

1. *How should we start our Transition Students?*
2. *How should we teach our Transition Students?*
3. *How can we help our Transition Students return to their school of record?*

Further to the above, preliminary scanning evidence has revealed unique elementary and secondary needs. As a result, one additional elementary school question and one secondary question will further focus our inquiry and efforts:

K-7 Focus Question: *How do we most effectively train and empower parents/guardians to deliver our program in a manner that fits their skills and situation?*

8-12 Focus Question: *How do we reshape our Mentorship Program to address the unique challenges of our Transition Students and families?*

Supporting our Transition Students is a SD53 priority. This plan directly aligns with that focus. Also, this plan aligns with the District's commitment to support our Indigenous students and will evolve as needed to address the needs of our 79 Indigenous Transition Students who make up 51% of all Transition Students.

4. What do we know about our Transition Students? (SCANNING)

First off, Transition Students are defined as follows:

Transition Students are those K-12 students who have chosen to not return to a brick-and-mortar school at this time due to COVID-19 related issues. Instead, they have enrolled with YouLearn, and since the beginning of the year, have been working through the curriculum following a teacher-directed, parent-supported, independent-study DL model. Transition Students' School of Record (SOR) remains the school they left and are anticipated to return to. As such, these schools, not YouLearn, are responsible for providing our district Transition Students with all the essential student support services needed. Intra- and inter-school coordination and collaboration will be essential to the success of Transition Students.

Although we are still scanning this population, what we currently know about our 155 Transition Students from reviewing some of their records is as follows:

- 60 are from the Keremeos, Cawston, and Hedley areas
- 79 (or 51% of them) are Indigenous Students
- 36 are on IEP's
- 7 were connected to English Language Learner Programs last year

Beyond this, two rounds of initial anecdotal evidence from teacher-student-parent meetings and a teacher constructed survey ([Transition Student Survey](#)) issued at the end of September has revealed the following:

- Many students were unsuccessful with remote learning last spring
- Most students and families do not have DL experience
- Several students/families are scared, isolated, and struggling with DL while dealing with nuclear and/or extended family health concerns or issues
- Some are wanting a change of pace and school
- Some are strong students who want DL and didn't realize until recently that it was an option
- 58, or 76% of 76 families surveyed in K-7, have declared they want to be with YL all year long
- 32, or 60% of 53 students and families assessed, show preliminary signs of DL Proficiency
- At the 10-12 grade levels, 19, or 59% of 23 students/families surveyed, have declared they want to be with YL all year long; no preliminary DL Proficiency assessments have been conducted yet on these students.

Ongoing scanning is needed and continuing. Understanding what's going on for our Transition Students and families sooner than later, and how to address their needs, is a key part of our plan.

5. What have we done already? What will we do differently? (ACTION)

At the K-9 Level

- Teachers emailed all parents and students welcome emails and preliminary learning activities and assignments the first week of school
- Teachers collaborated and redesigned our initial family intake meetings
 - during initial intake meetings teachers met with families to determine needs, reviewed preliminary work assigned to students, issued an additional two weeks of learning activities and scheduled a second intake/review meeting with each family.
- During students' second intake/review meeting (at least an hour long) teachers performed a full intake, rounding out the students' timetable/study schedule for the term, oriented students/parents to Google Drive (for K-7's) and Moodle (for 8-9's), and assisted with setting term/semester goals.
- For students in grade 8 or 9, coordinated intake/review meetings with all grade 8-9 teachers were held to better orient students and families to our school and staff. In addition, four our IEP or Indigenous students, CRT's and Indigenous Advocates were invited to add input. Recently, invitations went out to school of record liaisons teachers as well to create stronger connections.
- Individual Personalized Learning Plans (PLP's) in Google Drive for all K-7 Transition Student were created and are in the process of being shared with school of record stakeholders. This will lead to more effective communication, documentation and collaboration.
- Teachers came together and developed a Parent Expectation document and Handbook of Procedures for programming K-9 students, which has clarified and streamlined our intake process for current and new staff.

At the 10-12 Level

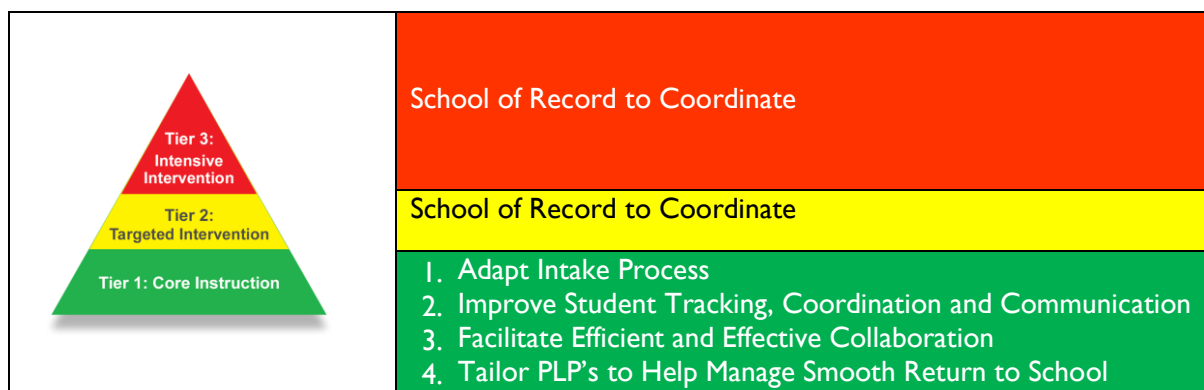
- All new students were sent a welcome email/survey to fill out, which was followed up by an initial phone call from assigned mentors.
- Students were given First Assignments for one course, with a follow-up appointment for two weeks to finalize semester schedules.
- During full intake meetings reviewed grad requirements, and assisted students with establishing semester goals, timelines, timetables and study scheduling (weekly, daily). Students were also Oriented to Moodle courses, as most students have never worked online before.
- Student profiles and individual PLP's in OneNote were created for all 8-12 Transition Students and are in the process of being shared.
- Grad check were completed and emailed to parents.

- Two-week review meetings were set up to follow up on student progress.
- If the student was on an IEP or Indigenous or both, CRT's and Indigenous Advocates were invited to add input.
- Regular communication and documentation plans are under development to improve collaborations and stream line students' return to traditional school.

At the Office Level (Actions implemented to support teachers and student learning.):

- From our online registration spreadsheet, advanced formulas and functions were created to import, collate, and help staff manage and process our unexpected increase in enrollment. Currently, we have 155 Transition Students and 151 DL school of record students, not to mention new cross-enrolled students.
- A District Homeroom (HR-YL) was created and standardized across the district, which is used to track Transition Students in MyEd.
- A new process for HR-YL students was created to assure student registration and return to school is accurately communicated in MyEd. In addition, XAT-COVID courses in MyEd were created to assure schools would be able to see YL case managers for all our Transition Students.
- A Transition Enrollment Summary spreadsheet was created to track Transition Student movement and vulnerable students over time.
- Created school level MyEd filters and field sets to more easily access Transition Student data. These filters will be copy to the enterprise level and shared across the district.

Following a Response to Instruction (RTI) approach, we have decided as a staff to invest in four Tier I, or classroom level interventions (green section of RTI Triangle) to support our non-school of record Transition Students as follows:



6. What do we need to learn to be effective? (LEARNING)

To accommodate increases in enrolment this year due to COVID-19, YouLearn teachers needed to be reassigned. All but one teacher is currently teaching in one or more areas where they lack training, experience or both. In addition, one new full-time and two part-time teachers have been added to our staff to further support our Transition Students.

As a result, learning for staff from now until January will be centred on teachers learning how to teach inside unfamiliar divisions and programs of our school. To facilitate this, mentor teachers have been established and schedules have been aligned to increase teacher overlap to promote collaboration. Further, newly created training manuals outlining roles and responsibilities, expectations, timelines continue to be refined. “How to” training manuals and videos to help staff navigate the various technology platforms on which our programs run are also being developed.

Staff learning and staff needs to support our Transition Students will be reevaluated in December and new directions charted for January as necessary.

7. How will we know we are making a difference? (CHECKING)

Evidence that our plan is successful will come in three forms:

1. Transition Students who are not a good fit for DL transition smoothly and quickly back to their school of records.
2. Transition Students who are not a good fit for DL yet remain in YouLearn are appropriately supported by their school of record.
3. Transition Students who are a good fit for DL and wish to remain in DL are actively engaged and academically and socioemotionally on track.

Currently, we are collaborating with brick-and-mortar administrators, CRT’s, counsellors and Indigenous Advocates on strategies to address scenarios 1. and 2. Internally, we have created a student tracking system, whereby everything from student assessments to meeting notes is being shared between us and students’ school of records. Regular review meetings, midterm and semester review meetings are scheduled to happen for all Transition Students. Data from all these areas and measure to help transition students back to school and monitor student progress are quickly being developed.

8. Our Indigenous Learners

Currently, the District and its schools are working in conjunction with Indigenous communities to address our high number of Indigenous Transition Students. At YouLearn, we have met with various District and school staff, Indigenous Advocates, parents, and community stakeholders in the process of coordinating support plans. Continued

participation in these planning and collaboration meetings is essential to the success of our Indigenous Transition Students. We look forward to being given more direction from the District and students' school of record on how we can contribute to helping our students and families who are in an unfortunate situation due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.