



Year 1 Implementation Report

To the Provincial Leadership Team from the
Following Their Voices Leadership Team

2015-16

(March 10, 2017)





A Message from the Following Their Voices Priority Owner

On behalf of the Following Their Voices Leadership Team, I am pleased to provide the Following Their Voices Leadership Team Year 1 (2015-16) Implementation Report.

In accordance with Cycle 2 Extended: 2015-17 of the Education Sector Strategic Plan the Following Their Voices Leadership Team was tasked with implementing the following priority: *In partnership with First Nations and Métis stakeholders, implement the Following Their Voices initiative.*

In 2015-16 the Following Their Voices Leadership Team provided oversight, advice and direction for Year 1 implementation. Members included:

Elder Mary Lee

Elder Michel Maurice

Pat Bugler, Director of Treaty Six Education Council and Priority Owner

Tim Caleval, Executive Director, Ministry of Education

Angie Caron, Métis Education Consultant in a Partnership Role Between the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education

Randy Fox, Director of Living Sky School Division

Ben Grebinski, Director of Prairie Valley School Division

Maureen Taylor, Lead Facilitator, Ministry of Education

The report includes an overview of the Year 1 (2015-16) implementation components, actions, data results, and key accomplishments and challenges.

I would like to recognize and thank the five First Nation and 12 provincial schools who participated in Year 1 implementation. The Strategic Change Leadership Teams and participating teachers in each of the schools have demonstrated their commitment to the initiative to improve First Nations, Métis and Inuit student outcomes by engaging and supporting students through changes in student-teacher relationships, interactions, teacher instructional practices and the learning environment.

The participating schools are supported by a Provincial Following Their Voices Facilitation Team through in-person visits, telephone calls, emails and other support as required. The team includes:



Sue Carriere
Pauline McKay
Sandy Pinay-Schindler
Maureen Taylor

As a Saskatchewan-made initiative, guided by the knowledge and advice of Saskatchewan Elders and Knowledge Keepers, Following Their Voices is foundational to improving First Nations, Métis and Inuit student achievement and graduation rates.

Respectively submitted,

Pat Bugler,
Director of Treaty Six Education Council and
Following Their Voices Priority Owner



**Following Their Voices
Year 1 Implementation Report
2015-16**

*Education that promotes accelerated learning for
First Nations, Métis and Inuit students where
learning is joyful, culture is affirmed and students
are given real choice for their future.*

Preamble

Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond

In October 2012, Premier Brad Wall announced the **Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond**. The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth is a strategy designed to secure a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people. To achieve this vision, the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth has two overriding goals: to ensure Saskatchewan continues to grow and to ensure the province is meeting the challenges of growth. As a result, the Ministry of Education launched **Student First**.

Student First is an approach to help unify and reorient the provincial education system on what matters most - the student. Student First will help the education system meet the targets identified in the Plan for Growth, while addressing local priorities, and bringing them together into one plan for action. Student First is not an initiative, but an approach to the work as a sector.



Education Sector Strategic Plan (April 2014)

Deputy Premier and Minister of Education Don Morgan announced the Education Sector Strategic Plan in April 2014. The Education Sector Strategic Plan is the first ever province-wide plan to be developed in co-operation with education sector partners, approved by the 28 school boards and accepted by the Government of Saskatchewan. It incorporated the feedback of more than 1,000 people, including public school divisions, Catholic school divisions, Conseil des écoles fransaskoises, First Nations education directors and principals, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Métis-Nation Saskatchewan, Ministry of Education, school boards and students.

The Education Sector Strategic Plan is the action plan that prioritizes and deploys the work the sector needs to do in order to achieve the common goal of supporting every student to reach their full potential, as well as fulfilling the targets in the Plan for Growth.

Moving forward, the ministry and each division uses the Education Sector Strategic Plan to develop regional plans, evolving from the Student First discussions and priorities identified in the Education Sector Strategic Plan.

The Education Sector Strategic Plan outcome for Following Their Voices (2015-17) states that, *“By June 30, 2020, collaboration between First Nations and Métis and non-First Nations and Metis partners will result in significant improvement in First Nations and Métis student engagement and will increase three-year graduation rates from 35% in June 2012 to at least 65%.”*



Following Their Voices

Education Sector Strategic
Plan Priority
2015-17

*In partnership with First
Nations and Métis
stakeholders, implement the
Following Their Voices
initiative.*

Following Their Voices Background

Following Their Voices is an initiative designed to raise the educational achievement and participation of Saskatchewan's First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. Following Their Voices focuses on enhancing relationships between students and teachers, creating structures and



supports for teachers and school administrators to work together to improve teaching and learning interactions with students, and creating safe, well-managed learning environments. Following Their Voices is based on Seeking Their Voices research that was conducted in September 2014 with First Nations and Métis engaged and non-engaged students, parents/caregivers, teachers and school administrators. The research explored what is needed in order to be successful as a First Nations or Métis student in school.

The voices in the Seeking Their Voices research said education that is relational and culturally responsive is most important in improving student achievement for Indigenous students. This can be demonstrated by:

- a focus on responding within areas of influence;
- a commitment to continuous learning, unlearning and re-learning; and
- a change in practice that accelerates achievement for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students learning as First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.

These understandings can be demonstrated by teachers in the following ways:

- caring for and believing in First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and their cultures;
- having high expectations that First Nations, Métis and Inuit students are self-determining, can participate and can achieve;
- creating secure, well-managed learning environments reflective of First Nations, Métis and Inuit content and perspectives;
- engaging in teaching and learning interactions that are responsive to student interest and needs;
- using a range of strategies to promote accelerated growth; and
- using evidence from First Nations, Métis and Inuit student outcomes for critical reflection and for identifying strategic actions that promote accelerated growth.

The themes from the Seeking Their Voices research are consistent with the following four themes that emerged from the 2013-14 province-wide Student First engagements:

- Relationships;
- Engaging the Student/Learner;
- Learning Environment; and
- Shared Responsibility.

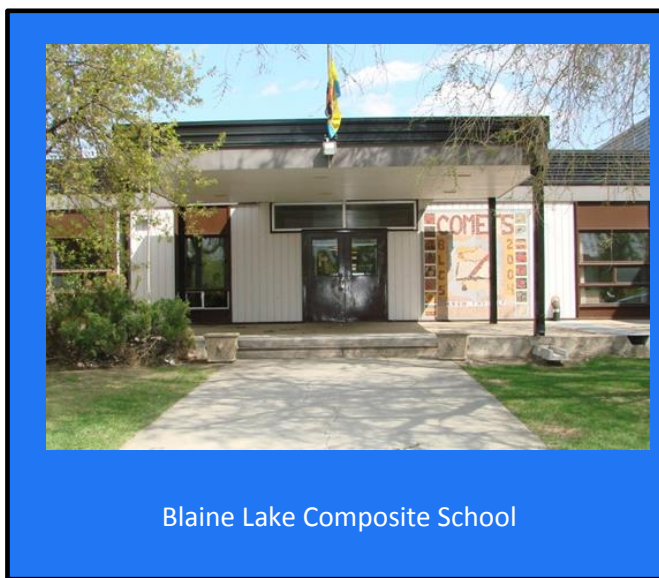
The voices and insights in the Seeking Their Voices research, along with international research, formed the foundation of Following Their Voices. Through listening to the voices and reflecting on the intent, a vision was developed. The vision guided the work as it moved into schools:



Education that promotes accelerated learning for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students where learning is joyful, culture is affirmed and students are given real choice for their future.

Development and Field Test

In the spring of 2014, foundational work based on research was undertaken to prepare for field testing. Several supports were put in place to ensure a successful field test including: a set of resources and tools; required technology; engagement with Elders and Knowledge Keepers; and professional learning and development sessions.



Blaine Lake Composite School

The Following Their Voices field test began on January 27, 2015 in five provincial schools and one First Nation school (Appendix A) and ran until the end of June 2015. The key purpose was to test the tools, processes and resources prior to Year 1 (2015-16) implementation.

Year 1 Implementation

In Year 1 (2015-16), 17 schools, 12 provincial and five First Nations (see Appendix B), began their first year of the three-year implementation of Following Their Voices.

Supports for Implementation

Each school participating in Following Their Voices has a Strategic Change Leadership Team who is responsible for school-based implementation of the initiative. The Strategic Change Leadership Team, comprised of the school principal, a lead teacher and a school-based facilitator, are trained by a provincial team of Following Their Voices facilitators at provincial professional learning and development sessions. The Strategic Change Leadership Team in turn, provides professional learning and development to the school cohort teachers. The



school-based facilitators in each of the Following Their Voices schools then work with the school cohort teacher to:

- observe teachers teaching and their students' engagement;
- provide feedback and work with individual teachers to develop an action plan to support students' growth; and
- provide ongoing support to teachers.

Information Technology

Participating Following Their Voices schools received an iPad to use for data collection via the online tools. Information technology support for the professional learning and development tools and resources was provided through the Ministry of Education's Priority Action Team and the provincial Following Their Voices facilitators. The Priority Action Team led and supported the development of the tools and assisted in the testing and deployment.

Elders and Knowledge Keepers

First Nations and Métis Elders provided guidance during the development of Following Their Voices. Their continued advice and support throughout implementation is critical to the success of Following Their Voices. Elders and Knowledge Keepers were engaged and participated in the Elders' Gatherings and focus groups. Their wisdom and guidance is honoured.



Elder Mary Lee (Plains) and Elder Michel Maurice (Métis) are an important part of the Following Their Voices Leadership Team.



Provincial Professional Learning and Development Sessions

Professional learning and development sessions were facilitated by provincial Following Their Voices facilitators. The Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit assisted in the co-facilitation of two sessions for the Strategic Change Leadership Teams.

The professional learning and development sessions occurred in the spring of 2015 and provided support and learning to the Strategic Change Leadership Teams. Session content was based on a combination of school-based and Following Their Voices initiative needs. Schools were divided into two groups to optimize learning.

The following chart summarizes the focus of the sessions conducted in 2015-16:

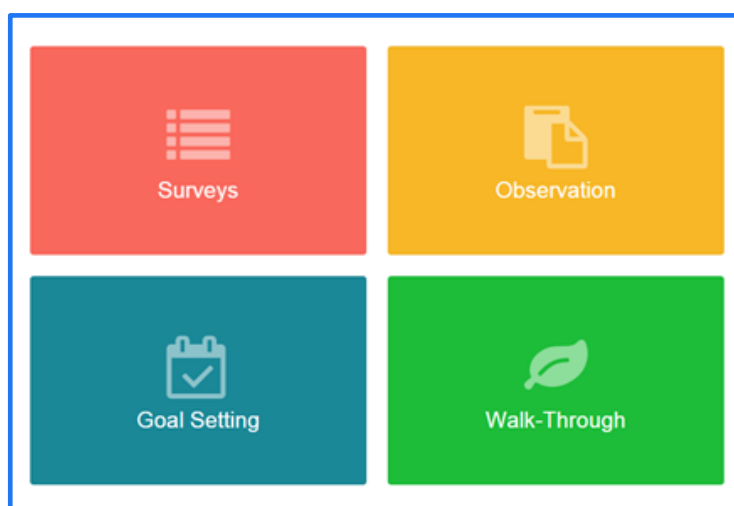
Date	Facilitators	Purpose
September 2015 (3 days)	Provincial Following Their Voices Facilitators	To support participants in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding the moral imperative of Following Their Voices and the connections it has to the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2. Gaining a deeper understanding of the Following Their Voices components, tools and processes 3. Developing personal awareness of one's influence on learning interactions, relationship and environments 4. Building understanding of First Nations and Métis history, experiences and worldviews 5. Developing knowledge, skills and understandings necessary to facilitate school-based professional learning and development
October 2015 (1 day)	Provincial Following Their Voices Facilitators	To support participants in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflecting on and sharing learning from the initial school-based professional learning and development sessions 2. Developing understanding of Following Their Voices components, processes and tools
November 2015 (2 days)	Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit	To support participants in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building understanding and developing skills to have Learning Focused Conversations



February 2016 (1 day)	Provincial Following Their Voices Facilitators	To support participants in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing awareness of critical factors needed to implement new initiatives 2. Creating school-based scalability and sustainability plans for Following Their Voices 3. Deepening awareness of discursive strategies and how to use them 4. Deepening understanding of Co-construction Meeting agendas and processes 5. Building understanding of year two implementation, funding and school planning processes
March 2016 (1 day)	Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit	To support participants in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deepening understanding and developing skills to have Learning Focused Conversations
June 2016 (1 day)	Provincial Following Their Voices Facilitators	To support participants in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflecting and celebrating the work done in Following Their Voices this year 2. Making connections and deepening understanding of strategic alignment and goal setting 3. Understanding the expectations and framework for professional learning and development with school cohorts for 2016-17 4. Understanding the school expectations and initiative support plans for 2016-17

Critical Learning Cycle

The Critical Learning Cycle is a planned eight week cycle that is repeated throughout the school year. School-based facilitators lead the Critical Learning Cycle by providing structured support to teachers through: Peer Observations, Goal Setting, Shadow Coaching, Huddles, Co-construction Meetings and Classroom Walk-throughs. This allows teachers to use evidence collected to enhance



interactions, build deeper relationships with students and create secure, well-managed learning environments.

The Critical Learning Cycle provides teachers with an opportunity to refine their teaching practices through a gradual release of responsibility model. In 2015-16, participating teachers were involved in five Critical Learning Cycles. This number will be reduced in year two to three cycles and in year three, only two cycles.

The implementation order of the components of the Critical Learning Cycle is:

	Activity		
Week One	Observation Feedback and Goal Setting Meeting	Huddle	Shadow Coaching
Week Two		Huddle	Shadow Coaching
Week Three	Co-construction Meeting	Huddle	Shadow Coaching
Week Four		Huddle	Shadow Coaching
Week Five	Walk-through Feedback Meeting	Huddle	Shadow Coaching
Week Six		Huddle	Shadow Coaching
Week Seven	Reflection	Huddle	Shadow Coaching
Week Eight	Observation (possible)	Huddle	Shadow Coaching

Participation results for the five Critical Learning Cycles conducted in 2015-16 are identified in the following chart:

Critical Learning Cycle Component	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	Cycle 5	Total
Observations	183	132	151	138	72	676
Goal Setting - Individual	25	92	113	90	45	365
Walk-throughs	1	22	58	61	6	148



Surveys

The Following Their Voices surveys are customized, holistic perceptual surveys used to assist the Strategic Change Leadership Team and school gather and report data. The surveys ask questions related to the three foundational underpinnings and six indicators of Following Their Voices that are derived from the research: student-teacher relationships, their interactions and the learning environment. The compiled responses:

- provide a snapshot of Following Their Voices implementation;
- provide an opportunity for those involved with Following Their Voices (students, teachers, parents/caregivers, Strategic Change Leadership Team members) to share their perceptions; and
- assist with planning and continued implementation of Following Their Voices at the school level.

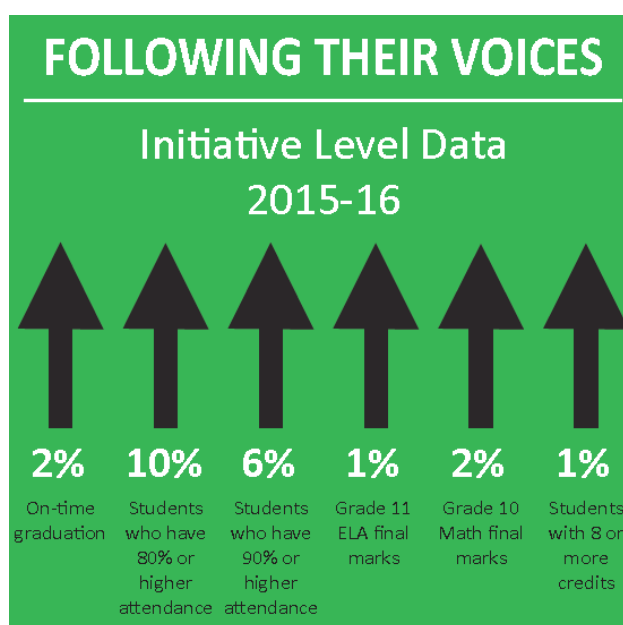
Surveys are completed three times a year by:

- students in participating Following Their Voices classrooms;
- teachers implementing Following Their Voices;
- parents/caregivers who have a child/children in a Following Their Voice classroom; and
- Strategic Change Leadership Team members.

Data

Following Their Voices initiative level data (see Appendix C) for Year 1 (2015-16) indicates First Nations, Métis and Inuit students have achieved:

- a two per cent increase in on-time graduation rates;
- a ten per cent increase in the number of students who have an 80 per cent or higher attendance rate;
- a six per cent increase in the number of students who have a 90 per cent or higher attendance rate;



- a one per cent increase in Grade 11 English Language Arts final marks, while status quo was maintained for English Language Arts final marks for grades 10 and 12;
- a two per cent increase in Grade 11 Mathematics final marks; and
- a one per cent increase in students attaining eight or more credits.

In addition to overall increases in First Nations, Métis and Inuit students' graduation rates, credit attainment, average final marks and attendance, Following Their Voices successes reported by teachers/schools from Year 1 (2015-16) also included:

- a decrease in behavioural incidents, e.g., one school had 1065 incidents compared to 1871 incidents over the same time frame in 2014-15; another school had 5.25 students being referred to the office in February 2016, by May 2016 this was reduced to 0.3 referrals to the office each day;
- student achievement, e.g., increases by more than 20 per cent in achievement measures related to reading comprehension;
- a shift in teacher practice and approaches that has positively changed the way teachers work with students; and
- professional development, e.g., staff reflection and collaboration has increased, i.e., there has been a shift from discussions focusing on student behaviour to focusing on student learning.

“Relationships have had a big impact on me. The staff boosts your confidence. They talk one on one . . . Thanks to all the teachers for believing in us. Without them believing in us, we likely wouldn’t believe in ourselves. Keep giving the smile each morning and the joke. It can change a student’s life. Keep doing what you are doing.”

Student, Following Their Voices

Key Accomplishments

Key accomplishments in Year 1 (2015-16):

- ongoing engagement of Elders and Knowledge Keepers in provincial professional learning and development sessions and in Following Their Voices Leadership Team meetings;
- facilitated an annual Elders’ Gathering;



- implemented Following Their Voices in 17 schools (12 provincial and five First Nations education organization schools);
- established baseline data;
- developed and disseminated a report (informed by the baseline data) for all Following Their Voices schools;
- provided professional learning and development sessions;
- established a plan for future professional learning and development;
- ongoing refinement of the Critical Learning Cycle;
- created and deployed four online tools;
- worked with the Elders to create a logo and banner;
- engaged and enhanced relationships with current education sector partners;
- initiated conversation and explored partnership with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.

Challenges

Challenges during Year 1 (2015-16):

- short timeliness to acquire and onboard staff;
- legislative limitations regarding disbursement of funding to First Nation schools led to additional administrative processes;
- government fiscal year and school year are not aligned and do not allow for schools to do advanced planning;
- development and implementation of functional online tools;
- the absence of a common location/repository where resources could be stored, shared and accessed by those implementing the initiative;
- providing clarity and understanding of expectations for those implementing Following Their Voices;
- geography and distance, including travel time required, to provide equitable supports to schools spread out across the province;
- travel time required for schools to attend professional learning and development; and
- development of a model to scale up and sustain the initiative.



Summary

Following their Voices has experienced successes and challenges during its first year of implementation.

While 2015-16 was the first year of implementation, there was significant development and implementation work that continued throughout the year on the tools and processes.

The feedback, support and patience from the Strategic Change Leadership Teams, participating teachers, First Nation Schools and educational organizations, and provincial schools and school divisions has been appreciated. There is a willingness for everyone to work together in moving the initiative forward to support what is in the best interest of the student.

In spite of the challenges there is early evidence that Following Their Voices is on track and has started to make a difference for Métis, First Nations and Inuit students.

Successes derived from the data are evident such as the improvement in student attendance and changes in teacher practice, to anecdotal evidence that shines a light the difference that implementing Following Their Voices has had in individual students, schools and teachers. Challenges have provided opportunities for initiative improvement and have been used to enhance Following Their Voices implementation.

Following Their Voices Year 2 (2016-17) implementation continues in 16 schools and involves approximately 280 teachers. Further actions that are being applied in Year 2 (2016-17) implementation will include:

- development of two additional online tools;
- website development and deployment;
- initiative implementation research;
- implementation model expansion;
- partnership with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada; and
- continued Elder and Knowledge Keeper engagement.

In order to achieve the improvement target and reach the Education Sector Strategic Plan outcome, Following Their Voices implementation must continue to be implemented with fidelity in order to continue to gain momentum and support throughout the province as a promising practice.



Appendix A: Field Test Schools (January – June 2015)

The six field test schools included:

- Bedford Road Collegiate – Saskatoon Public Schools
- Blaine Lake Composite School – Prairie Spirit School Division
- Eagleview Comprehensive School – Onion Lake First Nation
- E.D. Feehan Catholic School – Saskatoon Public Schools
- Scott Collegiate – Regina Public Schools
- Wesmor Community High School – Saskatchewan Rivers School Division

Appendix B: Participating Schools Year 1 (2015-16)

Implementation began at the start of the 2015-16 school year with approximately 200 teachers in 17 schools (five First Nation schools and 12 provincial schools) participating:

- Bedford Road Collegiate – Saskatoon Public Schools
- Bert Fox Community School – Prairie Valley School Division
- Blaine Lake Composite School – Prairie Spirit School Division
- Cando Community School – Living Sky School Division
- Charlebois Community School – Northern Lights School Division
- Constable Robin Cameron Education Complex – Beardy's & Okemasis First Nation
- Eagleview Comprehensive School – Onion Lake First Nation
- E.D. Feehan Catholic High School – Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division
- Kamsack Comprehensive Institute – Good Spirit School Division
- Keeseekoose Chiefs' Education Centre – Yorkton Tribal Council
- Minahik Waskahigan High School and Elementary School – Northern Lights School Division
- Mount Royal Collegiate – Saskatoon Public Schools
- Raymore School – Horizon School Division
- Scott Collegiate – Regina Public Schools
- St. Louis School – English River First Nation
- Sturgeon Lake Central School – Sturgeon Lake First Nation
- Wesmor Community High School – Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division



Appendix C: Initiative Level Data

On time (three year) graduation rates:

	2014-15 3 Year Graduation Rate		2015-16 3 Year Graduation Rate		Increase/ Decrease in FTV schools
	Province	FTV Schools	Province	FTV Schools	
All students	76%	46%	76%	50%	4%
FNMI students	41%	32%	42%	34%	2%
Non-FNMI students	85%	66%	85%	67%	1%

Extended time (five year) graduation rates:

	2014-15 5 Year Graduation Rate (percentage)		2015-16 5 Year Graduation Rate (percentage)		Increase/ Decrease in FTV schools
	Province	FTV Schools	Province	FTV Schools	
All students	83	58	83	62	4%
FNMI students	56	48	60	48	no change
Non-FNMI students	89	74	89	80	6%

Year-to-date attendance:

	2014-15 (percentage)		2015-16 (percentage)		Increase/ Decrease in FTV schools
	Province	FTV Schools	Province	FTV Schools	
All students - 80% attendance or higher	92	65	92	69	4%
All students - high attenders	83	50	82	50	no change



FNMI students - 80% attendance or higher	75	46	74	56	10%
FNMI students - high attenders	56	28	54	34	6%
Non-FNMI Students 80% attendance or higher	96	84	96	84	no change
Non-FNMI students - high attenders	88	72	88	70	-2%

