

# FOLLOWING THEIR VOICES

Year 9 Implementation Report

2023-24





## A Message from the Following Their Voices Priority Owner

The 2023-24 school year was the ninth year of implementation of the Following Their Voices (FTV) initiative. This report provides an overview of implementation and the impact the initiative had on teacher practice, student engagement, attendance and achievement.

Year nine of implementation for FTV was an exciting year in the area of information technology infrastructure. All information technology infrastructure was updated and launched, while new technology was introduced to access student voice and assist teachers in planning and implementing relational and culturally responsive teaching practices. Saskatoon Public Schools began their second year as the accountable partner and continued to support the schools and divisions in their understanding of local FTV budgeting.

Provincial Facilitators continued to be a valuable resource to participating schools, connecting through phone calls and video conferencing. Jessica Blacklock, the Manager of Program Development and Performance, worked alongside this team providing support, guidance and direction. Thanks to the team for their steadfast support and guidance to schools. The team included:

- Richelle Ackerman
- Carla Bernier
- Geraldine Delorme-Bouvier
- Scott Hepworth
- Curtis Howie
- Elisa Hryniuk
- Jana Ross

I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues on the Following Their Voices Leadership Team who provided oversight, advice and direction throughout this year. Members included:

- Mary Lee, Elder
- Davin Hildebrand, Deputy Director of Education, Northwest School Division
- Brent Hills, Deputy Director of Education, Saskatoon Public Schools
- Jennifer Hingley, Superintendent of Schools, Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division
- Angella Pinay, Superintendent of Indigenous Education, Good Spirit School Division
- Sheila Pocha, Program Head, SUNTEP/Gabriel Dumont Institute
- Tim Caleval, Executive Director, Priority Action Team, Ministry of Education

The Following Their Voices Elders and Knowledge Keepers continued to play a critical role in supporting the initiative. Due to continuing teacher job action around contract negotiations, the annual blessing and gathering was postponed to the fall of 2024. Provincial Facilitators,

however, remained in close contact with the Elders and Knowledge Keepers to provide updates about the work taking place in the field.

Last, I would like to express my appreciation to Treaty Six Education Council for their ongoing support for me to continue as the Lead of Following Their Voices.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Pat Bugler', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Pat Bugler, Director of Education, Treaty Six Education Council  
Following Their Voices Lead

**Following Their Voices  
Year 9 Implementation Report  
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*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.*

**Background**

Following Their Voices (FTV) is an initiative designed to raise the educational achievement and participation of Saskatchewan's First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. FTV focuses on enhancing relationships between students and teachers, creating structures and supports for teachers and school administrators to co-construct teaching and learning interactions with students and creating safe, well-managed learning environments.

FTV is based on research that was conducted with First Nations and Métis engaged and disengaged students, parents/caregivers, teachers and school administrators about what is needed to be successful as a First Nations or Métis student in school. The 'voices' of these people were profound in terms of the issues they identified. Their words and insights, along with international research, and guidance and advice from Elders and Knowledge Keepers, are the foundation of this educational initiative.

To operationalize the work, the Priority Action Team (PAT) was established. Under the guidance of a sector leadership team, the Ministry of Education and the Elder's Council, this team have supported the implementation of the initiative in provincial and First Nation schools for almost a decade, demonstrating positive, incremental growth in Métis, Inuit and First Nation student participation and achievement.

## Collegial Practices

FTV personnel work directly with school-based teams, called Strategic Change Leadership Teams, to improve teachers' relational and culturally responsive pedagogy and student achievement through ongoing job-embedded professional learning including:

1. ongoing teacher observation and feedback;
2. ongoing use of student feedback to inform teachers' instructional decisions;
3. teachers setting individual and group co-construction goals and action plans for improvement;
4. teachers reflecting on progress towards goals; and,
5. ongoing use of data to inform decision-making.

The cornerstone of FTV is to build *teacher collective efficacy*, where colleagues work together to support and challenge one another, creating a shared belief that through their actions they can improve outcomes and increase student achievement. FTV employs a train-the-trainer model, where each school-based team, made up of a system leader, the principal, a School-based Facilitator and a Lead Teacher, receives intensive professional learning and development and in turn, delivers this to their teachers. Schools are provided significant up front support that lessens over time. The *School-based Facilitator* is a crucial member of the school-based team, working directly with all the teachers in the school, supporting their efforts to improve their relational and culturally responsive pedagogy and student achievement.

*Provincial Facilitators* work directly with school-based teams to build their capacity to implement the initiative with fidelity. Provincial Facilitators are a mix of ministry employees and *secondments* from school divisions who serve as the point of contact between schools and the initiative. They meet regularly with school-based teams to ensure teachers are using the tools, data and processes to inform actions and improve outcomes.

Seconding teachers from participating schools provides the ministry with staff who have experienced implementation at the local level. The ministry provides secondments with the knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities to support successful school and system implementation. When secondments return to their school division, their experience as a Provincial Facilitator helps support school division implementation, increasing local understanding and capacity.

See Appendix A for a complete list of current schools and those that have participated in the past.

## Capacity Building

FTV focuses on building schools' capacity to improve outcomes for Indigenous students. Over the course of implementation, teachers engage in deep learning to strengthen teachers' relational and culturally responsive pedagogy and schools are provided guidance to set, manage and achieve goals.

## Professional Learning and Development

Provincial *professional learning and development* provides FTV personnel with the opportunity to connect with and train school-based teams to deliver the initiative back at their schools. FTV has constructed learning outcomes and a scope and sequence for all provincial professional learning and development. Each participating school-based team attends a set number of professional learning and development sessions each year, some virtual and some face-to-face, depending on the year of participation the school is in. Provincial Facilitators lead the planning, development and facilitation of these sessions.

The *Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Professional Learning* is a partner in the development and delivery of provincial professional learning and development, specifically supporting the development of *Seekers*. Seekers are teachers from participating schools who apply to participate in the design and delivery of provincial professional learning and development. Seekers gain skills in planning and facilitation and develop a deep understanding of the initiative, which they are able to use back in their home schools. Each year, FTV delivers a minimum of 40 provincial professional learning and development days to over 900 teachers.



## Elders

Since inception, Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers have been involved in the development and implementation of the initiative. The *FTV Elders' Council* provides advice and guidance to the initiative, with representation from all the Indigenous language groups in the province. Members of the council participate in ad hoc committee work and are involved in the planning and delivery of all provincial professional learning and development sessions.



## Professional Reading Series

The professional reading series is an opportunity for school-based team members to read and discuss texts that build participants' foundational understanding of FTV. Every year, three different opportunities are offered, building strong connections between relevant research and local implementation. These online meetings offer FTV participants from around the province an opportunity to develop collegial relationships with one another as they grow their own understanding of pedagogical practices.

## Pre-FTV

Schools with high proportions of self-declared Indigenous students are approached to participate in professional learning and development prior to formal inclusion in the initiative. School teams read the research that was used to create the framework for improvement and engage in discussion, reflection and self-assessment to ensure they are prepared to commit to implementation.

## Information Technology Infrastructure

The *FTV website* (<https://www.followingtheirvoices.ca/>) serves as the central hub for the initiative, hosting both public and private sides. The *public-facing side* provides background information, including participation statistics, research and reports. The *private-facing side* provides access to users by role. This side houses a suite of online tools, real-time reports, resources and a calendar. Every tool used in FTV has a suite of reports designed to be used to inform actions and improve outcomes. The *Resources* section provides users with access to more than 130 downloadable resources to aid in



implementation. The online *Calendar* pushes invites through email to FTV events, allowing participants to register and access required materials for each event. The private-facing platform currently has over 28,000 active users.

### Critical Learning Cycle

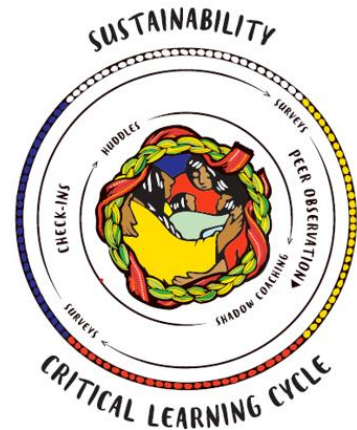
The Critical Learning Cycle is the process teachers engage in to support and improve their relational and culturally responsive pedagogy. School-based Facilitators provide structured support to

teachers through observations, goal setting, shadow coaching, huddles, co-construction meetings and classroom walk-throughs. The table below shows the number of completed

Traditional Critical Learning Cycle



Sustainability Critical Learning Cycle



Observations, Goals, Walk-throughs and Reflections for the 2023-24 school year. Schools that have been involved for more than four years employ a peer observation process rather than having the School-based Facilitator conduct all teacher observations. This is one example of schools undertaking practices that create long-term sustainability and ownership for the implementation of the initiative.

Tool Usage	
Tools	2023-24 School Year
Observations	888
Individual Goals	858
Co-constructed Goals	129
Walk-throughs	913
Reflections	701

Source: Following Their Voices website

## Following Their Voices Surveys

Three times a year FTV surveys students, teachers, parents or caregivers, and school-based team members to share their perceptions through a short, anonymous survey. Below is a table showing completion rates of the different FTV surveys over the 2023-24 school year.

Survey Usage	
Survey Types	2023-24 School Year
Student Survey (Grades 3-5)	2,750
Student Survey (Grades 6-12)	11,677
Parent Survey	1,617
Teacher Survey	1,819
Strategic Change Leadership Team Survey	329
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18,192</b>

Source: Following Their Voices website

Survey data are indicative evidence that provides schools with insight into how respondent groups feel about the school's efforts to improve teaching and learning. Survey reporting allows teachers and school-based teams to see trends over time and see how perceptions of students, teachers, administration and families are similar or different. Data informs the development of action plans to improve relationships, the school environment and interactions between students and teachers. Having three survey windows every year allows schools to track perceptions over time and continue or modify action plans based on this perceptual data. Some schools have started using key questions from the survey to interview students to gain more insight and further hone action plans. This is another example of shared ownership and spread demonstrated by FTV schools.

## Student Attendance

The table below presents year-to-date average attendance data for non-Indigenous students and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students at both the provincial level and initiative level. The table displays data from the 2021-22 school year and the 2023-24 school year. Data indicate improvements in average attendance for all students in FTV schools, however, slightly lower than the increases seen at the provincial level. Important to note the increase in the number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in FTV schools over the last two years.

Average Annual Attendance						
Measures	Non-FNMI Students			FNMI Students		
	2021-22	2023-24	% Change	2021-22	2023-24	% Change
Province	89%	92%	3% ↑	73%	78%	5% ↑
FTV Schools	85% (n=5,580)	88% (n=6,597)	3% ↑	67% (n=5,903)	70% (n=7,643)	3% ↑

Source: Student Data System. Data from January 2025.

### Student Achievement

The tables below show 3-year graduation rates, five-year graduation rates and the percentage of students attaining eight or more credits per year for non-Indigenous students and First Nations, Métis and Inuit students at the provincial level and initiative level. The tables display data from the 2012-13 baseline school year and the 2023-24 school year. Results from the baseline year are compared to the 2023-24 school year results, which are displayed as a percentage change over time.

Percentage of Students Graduating Within 3 Years From Baseline to Last School Year						
Measures	Non-FNMI Students			FNMI Students		
	2012-13 Baseline	2023-24	% Change	2012-13 Baseline	2023-24	% Change
Province	85%	88%	3% ↑	38%	47%	9% ↑
FTV Schools	76% (n=958)	80% (n=971)	4% ↑	32% (n=713)	43% (n=1,028)	11% ↑

Source: Student Data System. Data from January 2025.

There are 214 more First Nations, Métis and Inuit students that graduated within three years in FTV schools compared to baseline data from 2012-13. FTV schools are experiencing increases in graduation rates greater than that of the provincial rate over the same time. Data for non-Indigenous students also is increasing at a higher rate than that of the province over the same time.



Percentage of Students Graduating Within 5 Years From Baseline to Last School Year						
Measures	Non-FNMI Students			FNMI Students		
	2012-13 Baseline	2023-24	% Change	2012-13 Baseline	2023-24	% Change
<b>Province</b>	87%	92%	5% ↑	51%	57%	6% ↑
<b>FTV Schools</b>	79% (n=1,038)	89% (n=982)	10% ↑	51% (n=733)	56% (n=1077)	5% ↑

Source: Student Data System. Data from January 2025.

There are 229 more First Nations, Métis and Inuit students graduated within five years in FTV schools compared to baseline data from 2012-13. FTV schools' five-year graduation rates for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students are similar, but slightly lower than that of the province over the same time. Non-Indigenous students in FTV schools experienced an increase in 5-year graduation rates double that of the province over the same time.

Percentage of Students Attaining 8 or More Credits a Year, Grade 10-12 From Baseline to the Last School Year						
Measures	Non-FNMI Students			FNMI Students		
	2012-13 Baseline	2023-24	% Change	2012-13 Baseline	2023-24	% Change
<b>Province</b>	71%	73%	2% ↑	30%	32%	2% ↑
<b>FTV Schools</b>	59% (n=3,310)	69% (n=3,563)	10% ↑	24% (n=3,679)	30% (n=4,453)	6% ↑

Source: Student Data System. Data from January 2025.

There are 453 more First Nations, Métis and Inuit students that attained 8 or more credits per year compared to baseline data from 2012-13. There are also 506 more non-Indigenous students that attained 8 or more credits per year compared to baseline data in 2012-13. Provincial data for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students over this time is relatively flat, whereas data from FTV schools demonstrates substantive growth.

## Key Accomplishments and Challenges

Over the last two years, FTV has been redesigning information technology infrastructure. At the start of the school year, the new system was launched. The new system is designed to be more intuitive and easier to use, however, it took time for users of the old system to navigate through the new system and gain familiarity with the functionality of all the updated tools, reports and structures. It was also challenging for users to register into the FTV environment due to increased online security measures established by divisions and education authorities. By working closely with school division and education authority information technology support personnel, FTV was able to successfully get users into the system. Another challenge was not all the reporting and calendar functionality found in the old system was in place when the new system was launched. This functionality was still in development when the new system was launched, so it was integrated over the course of the school year as it was developed.

An underlying challenge throughout the ninth year of implementation was teacher contract negotiations and rotating job action. As a result of job action, several provincial professional learning and development opportunities as well as regularly scheduled meetings between school-based teams and provincial facilitators needed to be rescheduled or cancelled.

FTV also recognized the tools that have been used for years to effectively support goal setting but are not able to provide data on the impact teachers are having on day-to-day student learning. Studies in educational reform that focus on improving minoritized student outcomes suggest schools and teachers need to improve *student-teacher relationships* and *teaching practice* in order to achieve long-term, sustained improvements in student achievement. A combination of improved relationships but not teaching skills, or vice versa, creates short-term positive impact, but not the lasting improvement required for students to have real choice for their future.

Te Kotahitanga, the large-scale reform that FTV is based on, found that teachers were successful in creating positive relationships with students but were unable to increase their effectiveness or skills:

. . . while many teachers took on board the need to develop . . . relationships in their classroom, they did not follow it up by taking on board the need to change their teaching practices from traditional to dialogic and interactive (discursive) . . . there were sufficient numbers [among those studied] to provide us with a clear picture of the importance of establishing relationships for improving pedagogic interactions and student engagement. However, the large number of . . . teachers tell us what is needed is a means of moving teachers up the continuum from [having low relationships and low teaching skills] to [having high relationships and high teaching skills]. (Bishop, 2019, p. 29-30)

FTV has demonstrated improved relationships, but there is little data on the degree to which teacher practice has changed.

To address these needs, FTV conducted a field test using three new online tools.

1. The student *Check-in Tool* measures the extent to which a teacher's lessons, including the teaching practices used, have an impact on students' learning and well-being.
2. *Clarity Packs* support teachers by helping create learning intentions, customizable student learning progressions (rubrics), key vocabulary and focused questions to help students move from one level to another on the learning progression. Clarity Packs also provide suggested teaching strategies and learning activities to enhance lessons.
3. The *Peer Observation Tool* allows teachers to watch one another teach, develop a goal, create an action plan and later reflect on the degree to which the goal was achieved.

Eight schools participated in the field test over the course of the 2023-24 school year. There were 200 teachers actively using these tools, running 1,500 Check-ins with students, receiving 22,000 student responses and creating 700 Clarity Packs. Teachers also completed over 130 peer observations.

<b>Student Check-in Tool Data</b>					
<b>Percentage of students who can clearly explain what they are learning</b>					
<b>All Students</b>			<b>FNMI Students</b>		
<b>October</b>	<b>February to June</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>February to June</b>	<b>% Change</b>
30%	50%	20% ↑	24%	47%	23% ↑

Source: Following Their Voices website. Data from July 2024.

At the onset of the field test, 30 per cent of all students and 24 per cent of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students were able to clearly explain what they were learning in classes. By the end of the school year, 50 per cent of all students and 47 per cent of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students were able to clearly explain what they were learning in classes, an increase of 20 percentage points for all students and 23 percentage points for Indigenous students, respectively.

<b>Student Check-in Tool Data</b>					
<b>Percentage of students who can use appropriate vocabulary self-assess their learning</b>					
<b>All Students</b>			<b>FNMI Students</b>		
<b>October</b>	<b>February to June</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>February to June</b>	<b>% Change</b>
10%	16%	6% ↑	8%	16%	8% ↑

Source: Following Their Voices website. Data from July 2024.

Additionally, 10 per cent of all students and 8 per cent of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students were able to use appropriate vocabulary to self-assess their learning at the beginning of the school year. By the end of the year, 16 per cent of all students were able to use appropriate vocabulary to self-assess their learning, an increase of 6 percentage points. Sixteen per cent of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students were also able to use appropriate vocabulary to self-assess their learning, an increase of 8 percentage points.

The tools demonstrated impact on student learning, especially the learning of Indigenous students. Generally, the tools were positively received, with notable increases in user engagement as teachers became more familiar with them. Most important, teachers were able to better understand the impact of their teaching on student learning than ever before. Teachers also expressed appreciation for how Clarity Packs save on planning time. In the upcoming school year, FTV plans to expand the usage of these tools to all schools involved in the initiative.

## **APPENDIX A: Participating and Non-participating Schools (year of inception)**

### **Participating Schools**

#### **Provincial Schools (funded)**

1. Archbishop M. C. O’Neill High School – Regina Catholic Schools (2022-23)
2. Cornwall Alternative School – Independent alternative school in Regina (2022-23)
3. Cut Knife School – Living Sky School Division (2020-21)
4. École Arthur Pechey Public School – Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (2020-21)
5. Gateway Middle School – Northwest School Division (2020-21)
6. Jonas Samson Middle School – Northwest School Division (2020-21)
7. Jubilee Elementary School – Northwest School Division (2021-22)
8. King George Community School – Saskatoon Public Schools (2021-22)
9. Kinistino Public School – Saskatchewan Rivers School Division (2022-23)
10. Lakeview Elementary School – Northwest School Division (2021-22)
11. Oskayak High School – Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division (2020-21)
12. Prince Albert Collegiate Institute – Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (2020-21)
13. Queen Mary Public School – Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (2021-22)
14. Spiritwood High School – Living Sky School Division (2021-22)
15. St. Louis Public School – Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (2021-22)
16. St. Mary School – Light of Christ Roman Catholic Separate School Division (2021-22)
17. Transition Place Education Centre – Northwest School Division (2021-22)
18. Turtleford Community School – Northwest School Division (2022-23)

#### **First Nation Schools (funded):**

1. Kakisiwew School – Ochapowace First Nation (2021-22)

#### **Joint Provincial and Federal School (funded):**

1. Sakewew High School – Battlefords First Nations High School Joint Board of Education (2017-18)

#### **Provincial Schools (Sustainability Funding)**

1. Balfour Collegiate – Regina Public Schools (2018-19)
2. Bedford Road Collegiate – Saskatoon Public Schools (2015-16)
3. Bishop Murray High School – Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division (2018-19)



4. Carlton Comprehensive Public High School – Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (2017-18)
5. Carpenter High School – Northwest School Division (2018-19)
6. E.D. Feehan Catholic High School – Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division (2015-16)
7. John Paul II Collegiate – Light of Christ Catholic School Division (2017-18)
8. L. P. Miller Comprehensive School – North East School Division (2018-19)
9. Mount Royal Collegiate – Saskatoon Public Schools (2015-16)
10. North Battleford Comprehensive High School – Living Sky School Division (2018-19)
11. Rossignol High School – Ile-a-la-Crosse School Division (2017-18)
12. Scott Collegiate – Regina Public Schools (2015-16)
13. Valley View Community School – Northern Lights School Division (2018-19)
14. Wesmor Community High School – Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (2015-16)

#### **First Nation School (Sustainability Funding)**

1. Canoe Lake Miksiw School – Canoe Lake Cree First Nation (2017-18)
2. Pelican Lake First Nation School – Agency Chiefs Tribal Council (2018-19)

#### **Schools No Longer Participating**

##### **Provincial Schools**

1. Balcarres Community School – Prairie Valley School Division (2018-19)
2. Bert Fox Community School – Prairie Valley School Division (2015-16)
3. Blaine Lake Composite School – Prairie Spirit School Division (2015-16)
4. Cando Community School – Living Sky School Division (2015-16)
5. Charlebois Community School – Northern Lights School Division (2015-16)
6. Churchill Community High School – Northern Lights School Division (2017-18)
7. Ducharme Elementary School – Northern Lights School Division (2017-18)
8. Kamsack Comprehensive Institute – Good Spirit School Division (2015-16)
9. Minahik Waskahigan High School – Northern Lights School Division (2015-16)
10. Pleasant Hill Community School – Saskatoon Public Schools (2020-21)
11. Punnichy Community Elementary School – Horizon School Division (2021-22)
12. Punnichy Community School – Horizon School Division (2018-19)
13. Raymore School – Horizon School Division (2015-16)
14. Stobart Community High School – Prairie Spirit School Division (2017-18)

### **First Nation Schools**

1. Ahtakakoop School – Treaty Six Education Council (2018-19)
2. Birch Narrows Dene Community School – Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Birch Narrows Dene Nation (2018-19)
3. Chief Gabriel Cote Education Centre – Cote First Nation (2017-18)
4. Constable Robin Cameron Education Complex – Beardy’s and Okemasis First Nation (2015-16)
5. Cowessess Community Education Centre – Cowessess First Nation (2017-18)
6. Eagleview Comprehensive School – Onion Lake First Nation (2015-16)
7. Keeseekoose Chiefs’ Education Centre – Yorkton Tribal Council (2017-18)
8. Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation School – Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation (2018-19)
9. Mistawasis Nêhiyawak High School – Mistawasis Nêhiyawak Nation (2020-21)
10. Senator Myles Venne School – Lac La Ronge Indian Band (2018-19)
11. St. Louis School – English River First Nation (2015-16)
12. Sturgeon Lake Central School – Sturgeon Lake First Nation (2015-16)

## References

Bishop, R. (2019). *Teaching to the north-east: Relationship-based learning in practice*. NZCER Press.