

SOGI 1 2 3 Alberta End-of-Year Report – 2017/18

Introduction

This SOGI 1 2 3 Alberta end-of-year report shares successes, learnings and themes that have emerged to date during the 2017/18 school year.

ARC Foundation created SOGI 1 2 3 in British Columbia in October 2016 and launched in Alberta in September 2017 in partnership with Edmonton Public, Sturgeon Public and St. Albert Public school divisions. Through SOGI 1 2 3, ARC Foundation connects people and activity across multiple levels of the education system (provincial, district, school and classroom) where they currently exist in pockets. The expansion of SOGI 1 2 3 into Alberta is timely given the recent passage of Bill 10, Bill 24 and the corresponding Minister of Education's requirement that all school boards must now develop policies that specifically include LGBTQ students, staff, and families.

SOGI 1 2 3 has experienced significant success in Alberta over the past year. Edmonton Public, Sturgeon Public and St. Albert Public school divisions are participating in the Alberta SOGI Educator Network and over 250 Safe Contacts (also known as SOGI School Leads) are now active. ARC Foundation has confirmed a formal partnership with the Alberta Teacher's Association and has convened two meetings of the AB SOGI Advisory Group with provincial education partner associations. Provincially, SOGI 1 2 3 has the potential to reach over 39,300 educators and impact the well-being of 704,890 K-12 students in Alberta.

ARC Foundation has successfully secured funding for activities in 2018/19 from both the Alberta Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund, Edmonton Community Foundation and The Stollery Charitable Foundation.

While there is much to celebrate at the end of a successful year, we know that there are opportunities to further this work across the province. SOGI District Leads and SOGI School Leads tell us that while professional development opportunities are increasing, educator confidence in engaging in SOGI-inclusive education/activities remains low in many schools. The 2017/18 year has seen significant media attention around SOGI-inclusive education and both School and District Leads identify fear of parental opposition as a key barrier. The AB SOGI Educator Network is valued by the three founding districts and there is now an opportunity to grow this community of practice to include more diverse perspectives from across the province.

The alignment of education partners, continued funding and growth of the Alberta SOGI Educator Network demonstrates the province-wide support for building educator capacity to ensure all students feel welcome. The leadership in Western Canada continues to inspire other provinces across Canada, as all levels of government commit to ongoing LGBTQ+ support. SOGI 1 2 3's collaborative approach has become an exemplar model.

ARC Foundation would like to thank The Stollery Charitable Foundation for their seed funding that has supported the formation of the Alberta SOGI Educator Network and activities outlined in this report.

ARC Foundation Accomplishments - 2017/18

ARC Foundation has worked collaboratively with education partners, school districts, community organizations and other SOGI 1 2 3 champions to collectively achieve the following successes this year:

- **Three school districts** formed the AB SOGI Educator Network
- Over **250 safe contacts/school leads** are in place across participating districts
- **Six Network meetings** of SOGI District Leads took place
- ARC Foundation formalized their partnership with the Alberta Teachers' Association through a **Memorandum of Understanding** that outlines support for SOGI 1 2 3 Alberta

- ARC Foundation secured **\$148,000 in funding** from community foundations in Alberta to support the growth of SOGI 1 2 3 Alberta in 2018-19
- SOGI 1 2 3 convened two meetings of the Alberta provincial education partner associations who all expressed a desire to continue to meet as the **SOGI 1 2 3 Alberta Advisory Group**
- SOGleducation.org has reached over **100,000 unique visitors** since its launch in October 2016
- SOGI 1 2 3 Learning Modules and Learning Bursts have received over **27,000 views** since their release in November 2017

Metrics

Key metrics related to SOGI 1 2 3 Alberta as of June 2018 are below:

- **Eight** SOGI District Leads from **three** school districts are participating in the AB SOGI Educator Network
- **37.5%** of SOGI District Leads were new to the role this year
- **60%** of SOGI District Lead indicate that they have dedicated FTE for their role
- At least **75% of schools** in the Network have a SOGI School Lead/Safe Contact
- **250+** Safe Contacts/SOGI School Leads are now active in their role
- At least **75% of secondary schools** in the Network have a Gay-Straight Alliance or similar
- **100% of districts** in the Network have a standalone SOGI committee that works to implement policy and procedures.

Key Themes

ARC Foundation employs a comprehensive evaluation process that generates qualitative and quantitative data that is analyzed to understand trends, measure progress and demonstrate impact on the education system. The process includes regular formal and informal feedback loops with educators in the SOGI Educator Network to understand systemic barriers, key challenges, priority development/training content and tools.

The evaluation process was developed with input from the University of British Columbia Faculty of Education and reviewed by the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services at the University of Alberta.

This report has been compiled from the following sources of information:

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- SOGI District Lead Start of Year Survey (October/November 2017)
- SOGI School Lead Start of Year Survey (October 2017 – February 2018)
- Mid-Year Check in Meetings (January - February 2018)
- SOGI District Lead End of Year Survey (June 2018)
- SOGI School Lead End of Year Survey (June 2018)
- Ongoing feedback from education partners and from Alberta SOGI Educator Network meetings

Building on the mid-year report in February 2018, the following themes emerged from the end-of year evaluation process:

1. SOGI Educator Network

The Alberta SOGI Educator Network continues to demonstrate a successful model that meets the needs of individual school districts. Results from the District Lead survey in June 2018 demonstrates the growth and impact throughout the school year:

- 75% of District Leads report that at least 75% of their schools **have SOGI School Leads** (compared to 33% in November 2017)

- 100% of District Leads agree that their district **SOGI policy/procedures** are well known across the district (compared to 68% in November 2017)
- 60% of District Leads rate the SOGI Educator Network as the **most important source of information** to support their role
- 84% of School Leads agreed they have the **resources to plan and deliver SOGI initiatives** and activities (compared to 69% in November 2017)

Feedback sourced from the end of year evaluation process and conversations with district SOGI teams shows that all districts have found value in the following:

- Regular peer-to-peer meetings with other SOGI District Leads that provide an opportunity to share information, ask for advice and discuss current issues and trends
- The support and coaching from ARC Foundation in addition to the coordination of meetings, including scheduling and meeting notes, that takes administrative time away from educators and creates capacity for strategic conversation
- Customizable Learning Modules that are available for download and customization, reducing the time required for multiple districts to create their own professional development from scratch

SOGI District Leads and SOGI School Leads have requested province-wide opportunities to share resources, discuss ideas and connect and learn from their peers across Alberta. They value the relationships that the Network has fostered this year, and see value in growing these opportunities, and allowing educators across Alberta to experience the same.

2. SOGI 1 2 3 Resource Development

Feedback sourced through SOGI School Lead surveys, regional meetings and mid-year check-ins have demonstrated the need for Alberta-specific resources and tools. SOGI School Leads have requested the Alberta educator website (ab.SOGIeducation.org) be built out to centralize curated resources similar to the experience for educators in BC.

The following resources have been requested by Alberta SOGI School Leads:

- SOGI 1 2 3 Lesson Plans (elementary, intermediate and secondary)
- SOGI 1 2 3 Learning Bursts and Modules
- SOGI curriculum entry points
- SOGI book lists
- SOGI film lists
- SOGI policies and procedures
- SOGI School Lead best practices
- SOGI celebration day toolkits
- French translation of SOGI 1 2 3 resources

ARC Foundation has secured funding from the Alberta Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund to support the building out of ab.SOGIeducation.org with Alberta-specific resources and tools over the summer. SOGI District Leads participated in a focus group session in June 2018 where they discussed their priority needs for the site, and a new version based on their feedback will launch in September 2018.

3. Professional Development

Results from the end of year surveys show an increase in occurrences of and satisfaction with SOGI-related professional development since the beginning of the year.

- In June 2018, **80% of District Leads** agreed that they are satisfied with the SOGI professional development opportunities that have been previously offered to them, compared to only 33% in November 2017.
- In June 2018, **75% of School Leads** agreed that they are satisfied with the SOGI professional development opportunities that have been previously offered to them, compared to 67% in March 2018.

Looking ahead, comments from both surveys show that educators believe that increased opportunities for professional development will enhance the impact of SOGI 1 2 3 and other SOGI-inclusive education efforts. In particular, there remains a desire for content focused on how to collaborate with community organizations, how to integrate SOGI into the curriculum (particularly at the elementary level) and the intersection between mental health and LGBTQ+ youth. Opportunities for educators to be trained on how to facilitate professional development sessions in their district were specifically requested.

ARC Foundation is working with community funders across Western Canada to explore opportunities for developing enhanced professional development for educators looking for a 'level 2' experience.

Collaboration

ARC Foundation would like to thank the community foundations who generously support the important work taking place in Alberta and recognize that it would not be possible without their confidence and contributions. Further thanks are extended to the Alberta education partners and participating school divisions who continue to champion SOGI-inclusive education to their membership and peers. The province-wide leadership continues to demonstrate to all students that they are welcome in our schools and empowers educators to work proactively towards creating safer and more inclusive classroom environments.

ARC Foundation looks forward to working with provincial education partner associations in the coming years to explore opportunities for sustainable systemic change within the education system.

2018-19 Planning

ARC Foundation is looking forward to continuing to lead SOGI 1 2 3 in Alberta next year. The focus for 2018/19 will be on controlled growth of the AB SOGI Educator Network, the development of new educator resources and continuing to facilitate conversations with provincial education partner associations through the AB SOGI Advisory Group.

Activities planned for 2018/19 include:

- A new position of **SOGI Operations Lead (Western Canada)** has been created to lead SOGI 1 2 3 program operations in BC and Alberta. In Alberta, the position will coordinate the day-to-day operations of SOGI 1 2 3, including the AB SOGI Education Network, communications, evaluation and fundraising. This role has been funded by The Stollery Charitable Foundation (Alberta) and the BC Ministry of Education (BC) and will be hired in summer 2018
- The AB SOGI Educator Network will grow from three to approximately **nine districts**, building the geographical focus from Edmonton to a broader central/Northern Alberta region. New districts have been identified by the current Network and invited to join in 2018/19. The Stollery Charitable Foundation is funding this work in 2018/19
- ARC Foundation will develop new **Alberta-specific educator resources**, including lesson plans, with funding from the Alberta Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund
- ARC Foundation will continue to facilitate regular conversations with the **AB SOGI Advisory Group** with funding from the Edmonton Community Foundation