

SOGI 1 2 3 Alberta Start-of-Year Report – 2018/19

Introduction

This SOGI 1 2 3 start-of-year report shares learnings and themes that have emerged in the 2018/19 school year.

SOGI 1 2 3 has experienced significant growth and success in Alberta in the past four months. The Alberta SOGI Educator Network grew from 3 to 6 districts and over 300 active SOGI School Leads. SOGleducation.org has now received over 158,000 unique visitors to date and SOGI 1 2 3 Learning Modules have had 42,000 views since their launch.

While there is much to celebrate at this point in the year, there continues to be opportunities to further this work in Alberta. An October 2018 survey of 88 SOGI School Leads in 5 school districts participating in the SOGI Educator Network demonstrated that while 87% of SOGI Leads agreed that the educators in their districts general attitude towards sexual minority students is accepted and appreciated, and 85% for gender minority students, 57% of Leads agree they are satisfied with the SOGI tools and resources that have been offered to them this year. These results highlight that educators continue to require support, resources and professional development to create safe, welcoming and inclusive schools for all students in Alberta.

The alignment of education partners and the growth of the SOGI Educator Network in both British Columbia and Alberta continues to impact and inspire other provinces across Canada. Relationships with school districts, education partners and community organizations have created a Western Canada approach that offers unique collaboration and learning opportunities in both provinces.

A more detailed report will be developed in June 2019 that will include results from the Alberta SOGI Educator Network end-of-year evaluation surveys and interviews.

ARC Foundation Activities - 2018/19

ARC Foundation's approach to accelerating change has focused on three key areas:

- 1. Provincial Alignment:** SOGI 1 2 3 helps build bridges between provincial institutions and associations so that more effective, sustainable, and accelerated change can take place.
 - ARC Foundation continues to engage provincial education partners in SOGI 1 2 3 activities, including facilitating consultation around the SOGI 1 2 3 resources, delivering professional development sessions and providing content for communications activities
 - These activities are being funded by Edmonton Community Foundation in 2018-19
- 2. Educator Networks:** The AB SOGI Educator Network has grown from a 3-school district pilot to 6 school districts, enabling more educators to learn from each other and bring the benefits of collaboration back to their other colleagues. The model includes:
 - A central *SOGI District Lead* position in each school district to provide consistent SOGI support to staff and SOGI School Leads across the district (8 educators currently in roles)
 - A school-based *SOGI School Lead* role to support students and educators with SOGI in a volunteer capacity (currently over 300 educators active)
 - A *District SOGI Toolkit* provides educator resources and operational tools and templates to support the implementation of this district model (currently over 180 shared resources)
 - The operations of the AB SOGI Educator Network are funded by The Stollery Charitable Foundation in 2018-19

3. **Accessible Resources:** SOGI 1 2 3 creates professional development and classroom resources for educators that are ready to use, easy to access, and open to customization.
- An updated Alberta educator website with Alberta-specific SOGI content was launched in September 2018 (www.ab.SOGIeducation.org).
 - ARC Foundation will be launching a SOGI 1 2 3 in Alberta video in January 2019. This video provides a high-level introduction to SOGI-inclusive education and how SOGI 1 2 3 can support Alberta educators.
 - ARC Foundation is currently creating a SOGI 1 2 3 module on SOGI and Intersectionality. This includes a 10-minute video, facilitation guide, and PowerPoint. The module is being developed in collaboration with educators and community organizations in both Alberta and BC as part of the Western Canada approach to building on existing tools. The module will be launched in January 2019 and education partners will receive draft communications content as part of the roll-out to educators.
 - The development of these new resources is funded by the Alberta Human Rights Commission in 2018-19

Metrics

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

- **8** SOGI District Leads and **3** district leadership representatives from **6** school divisions are participating in the Alberta SOGI Educator Network: Aspen View Public Schools, Edmonton Public Schools, Elk Island Public Schools, Red Deer Public Schools, Sturgeon Public Schools, and St. Albert Public Schools
- **50%** of SOGI District Leads are new to the role this year
- **300+** SOGI School Leads are now active in their role
- **72%** of the SOGI District Leads indicated that they have **75-100%** of SOGI School Leads in place in their districts
- **Three meetings** of SOGI District Leads took place between September 2018 and December 2018
- SOGIeducation.org has had over **158,000 unique visitors** since its launch in October 2016
- Since the launch of the new ab.SOGIeducation.org in September 2018, the website has been visited over **1,500 times**
- SOGI 1 2 3 Learning Modules and Learning Bursts have received over **42,000 views** since their release in November 2017

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:

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

The following themes emerged from the start-of year evaluation process:

1. Professional Development

Results from the SOGI District Lead survey in November 2018 show that there is a desire for additional support and training to carry out their duties. 71% of District Leads agreed that they are satisfied with the SOGI professional development opportunities offered to them while only 57% of District Leads agree they currently have the support they need to carry out their role.

- 59% of School Leads agree that they are satisfied with the SOGI professional development opportunities that have been previously offered to them
- 34% of School Leads agree that educators in their district are confident engaging in SOGI-inclusive education/activities
- School Leads indicated that they would like professional development on training that addresses how to navigate educator-student discussions about SOGI topics, best practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students, how to start a GSA, and opportunities to collaborate with Leads from other schools.
- A significant number of educators also highlighted a need for more advanced professional development beyond basic terminology, including support for trans students and staff GSAs.

2. SOGI Educator Network

With three new districts to the SOGI Educator Network and three in their second year, the Alberta SOGI Educator Network continues to prove successful in meeting the needs of individual school districts. The SOGI District/School Lead model is highly valued by all districts, with some districts working to grow their districts capacity to support by having multiple SOGI School Leads at a school.

Feedback sourced at SOGI District Lead meetings and Start-of-Year Check Ins shows that districts have found value in the following:

- Consistent regional meetings with other SOGI District Leads that provide a chance to share updates, best practices for implementing SOGI-inclusive education, and resources for SOGI policy implementation at a district level.
- The support from the SOGI Operations Lead with the coordination and facilitation of meetings that enables participants to focus on developing peer-to-peer relationships.
- ab.SOGIeducation.org as a go-to resource to share with community members that have questions and concerns about how SOGI 1 2 3 impacts students in Alberta.

A significant example of the value of the Network is that SOGI District Leads across the province have been empowered to learn from the experiences of school districts who have faced community push back around SOGI education and to create proactive strategies to engage parents and families in their communities using central, customizable tools.

SOGI School Leads indicate that the biggest barriers for educators in addressing SOGI issues with students include:

- 65% identify lack of confidence
- 64% identify lack of knowledge/understanding regarding how to integrate SOGI into the curriculum
- 54% identify lack of training and/or resources

SOGI School Leads have requested province-wide opportunities to share resources, discuss ideas and connect and learn from their peers across Alberta. A continued strength of the SOGI Educator Network is SOGI District Leads inviting other districts to professional development opportunities offered to their educators in the district in increase capacity for training and support for educators.

3. 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. Last year, SOGI School Leads have requested an Alberta educator website (ab.SOGIeducation.org) be built out to centralize curated resources. In September 2018, the new website was launched to share information on SOGI policies and procedures, inclusive environments, teaching resources, and the Alberta Educator Network.

SOGI School Leads expressed positive reception of their new role, but feel they need more tools and resources to be able to carry out any change at the school or classroom level. The following resources have been requested by Alberta SOGI School Leads:

- More lesson plans, videos, and books that incorporate SOGI content
- Resources and materials geared toward specific grade levels
- Educational resources and materials for parents

The AB SOGI Educator Network participants are currently co-creating some teaching resources that are informed by this feedback for launch in early 2019. The resources will include a holistic checklist for SOGI-inclusive lessons that will be applicable to all subjects and grade levels.

Collaboration

ARC Foundation is grateful for collaboration funding for SOGI 1 2 3 Alberta activities in 2018-19 from The Stollery Charitable Foundation, Edmonton Community Foundation and the Alberta Human Rights Commission. ARC Foundation continues to apply for funding for the expansion of SOGI 1 2 3 and the AB SOGI Educator Network across the province in 2019-20.

We would also like to thank Alberta education partners who are champions for SOGI-inclusive education. Thank you for your commitment to ensuring that students of all sexual orientations and gender identities feel safe, valued, and respected in Alberta schools.