



SOGI 1 2 3 Alberta End-of-Year Report – 2018-2019

Introduction

This SOGI 1 2 3 end-of-year report shares learnings and themes that have emerged in the 2018-2019 school year.

SOGI 1 2 3 has continued to experience significant growth and success in Alberta in the time since the 2018 Start-of-Year report was released in the fall. ARC Foundation is steadily building supportive relationships with all SOGI stakeholders in the 6 districts currently participating in the Alberta SOGI Educator Network, through which over 300 active SOGI School Leads and their District SOGI Leadership Teams are providing support for students across the province. SOGleducation.org has now received over 181,000 visitors to date and SOGI 1 2 3 YouTube video content has had over 52,000 views since their launch.

While remarkable progress has clearly been made in Alberta, there remain areas where the beneficial impact of this work can be extended. A May 2019 survey of 59 SOGI School Leads in 4 school districts participating in the Alberta SOGI Educator Network demonstrated that while 87% of SOGI Leads agreed that their school provides a safe and inclusive environment for sexual minority students, and 84% for gender minority students, 48% agreed that educators in their schools have enough resources and understanding to confidently facilitate SOGI-inclusive education. This calls attention to the ongoing necessity of providing SOGI professional development opportunities, resources and materials, and other forms of support for educators working to foster safe, accepting, and inclusive learning environments for students of all sexual orientations and gender identities in Alberta districts.

The synergism modelled by the Alberta and British Columbia SOGI Educator Networks continues to have a national ripple effect, inspiring educators across Canada to actively engage in the development of more inclusive schools. Continuing to build relationships with school districts, education partners, and community organizations contributes to a Western Canada approach to SOGI-inclusive education that offers unique opportunities for cross-provincial learning and collaboration.

ARC Foundation would like to thank The Stollery Charitable Foundation, Edmonton Community Foundation and the Alberta Human Rights Commission for their funding of the activities outlined in this report.

Metrics & Accomplishments

Key metrics related to SOGI 1 2 3 as of June 2019 are below:

- **8** SOGI District Leads and **3** district leadership representatives from **6** school districts 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
- **300+** SOGI School Leads are now active in their role across all six participating districts
- **100%** of SOGI District Leads indicated that their District has a SOGI-inclusive policy/procedure in place
- ARC Foundation facilitated **six meetings** of SOGI District Leads this year
- SOGleducation.org has had over **181,000 visitors** since its launch in October 2016. The new ab.SOGleducation.org website has been visited over **3,300 times** since its launch in September 2018
- A new **SOGI + Intersectionality learning module** (Powerpoint and facilitator guide) was created in response to educator feedback as the first 90-minute deeper-dive learning module
- ARC Foundation delivered **SOGI 1 2 3 presentations** at conferences of the Alberta School Boards Association, Public School Boards of Alberta and Alberta School Councils' Association
- **Six meetings** of education partner associations **and three meetings** of community partners took place this school year
- **Memorandum of Understandings** are now in place between ARC Foundation and Alberta School Councils' Association

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, and priority development/training content and tools.

The following themes emerged from the SOGI 1 2 3 Alberta evaluation in 2018-19:

1. Professional Development

Results from the SOGI District Lead survey in May 2019 demonstrates that there continues to be a need for additional professional development and other resources to aid Leads in fulfilling the responsibilities of their role. **80% of District Leads** agreed that they currently have the support needed to carry out their duties, a significant increase from the 57% recorded in the Start-of-Year Survey. While it is evident that overall satisfaction is improving, largely due to the connections made and resources shared in the SOGI Education Network, evaluation data also indicated that there is a desire for deeper-level professional development in several areas, especially with regard to the development and implementation of SOGI strategic plans for districts.

In addition to the findings shared above, End-of-Year survey results indicated the following:

- **74%** of School Leads agreed that they are satisfied with the SOGI professional development opportunities that have been previously offered to them – **an increase from 59%**
- **48%** of School Leads agreed that educators in their district are confident engaging in SOGI-inclusive education/activities – **an increase from 39%**
- **71%** identified lack of knowledge/understanding regarding how to integrate SOGI into the curriculum as a barrier to addressing SOGI with students

School Leads indicated that they would appreciate SOGI-specific professional development opportunities that address how to best support educators, parents/guardians, and other school community members who are struggling with SOGI topics, starting and sustaining a school Gay-Straight Alliance or similar student club, and facilitating SOGI-inclusive initiatives and activities in primary and elementary classrooms

2. SOGI Educator Network

With six districts currently participating, the Alberta SOGI Educator Network continues to prove successful in meeting the needs of individual school districts. Recent feedback indicates that the SOGI District/School Lead model remains an important source of support for all districts, and that SOGI District Leads are working collaboratively to expand educator capacity to facilitate SOG-inclusive initiatives and activities across districts.

Feedback sourced at SOGI District Lead meetings and evaluation process 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
- Operational support from ARC Foundation, including coordination and facilitation of meetings, that enables participants to focus on strategic conversation and 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

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 District Lead surveys and regional meetings have demonstrated the need for Alberta-specific resources and tools. Last year, SOGI District Leads have requested an Alberta-focused video on SOGI 1 2 3 and a deeper dive on SOGI-related topics. As a result, the SOGI 1 2 3 Alberta video and SOGI + Intersectionality module was launched in January 2019.

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, especially those that can be used to increase educator familiarity with and confidence regarding SOGI topics
- Educational online resources and materials that can be easily shared with school staff and parents/guardians
- Resources and materials geared toward specific 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.

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.

ARC Foundation has secured funding from the Government of Alberta Ministry of Children's Services and Edmonton Community Foundation (for a second year) to support SOGI 1 2 3 Alberta activities in 2019-20.

Activities planned for 2019/20 include:

- **Expansion of the Edmonton region** of the SOGI Educator Network from six to approximately nine school boards (funded by Edmonton Community Foundation)
- Consideration of a **'virtual region' of the SOGI Educator Network** to engage school boards outside of Edmonton. This region would meet via video-conference and would mitigate the cost of travel
- Continuation of facilitated meetings with **education partners** and **community leaders** in Edmonton (funded by Edmonton Community Foundation)
- Delivery of a **Supportive Parents Network pilot** in Strathcona County with a focus on suicide prevention, in collaboration with The altView Foundation (funded by Government of Alberta Ministry of Children's Services)