



The Board of
Education North
Okanagan-Shuswap
SCHOOL DISTRICT
#83

**SUPERINTENDENT'S
ACHIEVEMENT REPORT
TO THE
NORTH OKANAGAN-SHUSWAP
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

January 27, 2009

Superintendent's Annual Report on Student Achievement for the North Okanagan-Shuswap School District #83

Introduction

The Annual Report on student achievement is intended to serve two main purposes:

- (a) Ensure transparency and accountability for each district in terms of its responsibility for improving student achievement.
- (b) Provide information that will facilitate subsequent planning for continuing improvement of student achievement at the school and school district level as school plans and district achievement contracts are developed.

This report substantially reflects the information provided in the District's Achievement Growth Plan for 2008-2009 as approved by the Board of Education. Where available and relevant the most current data and/or evidence has been used to support the statement and basis for conjecture.

Context:

It is important to contextualize the information within this report in "light" of the many factors in play for School District #83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap).

These factors include:

- a) the district within the last four years has planned , restructured and implemented three middle schools with subsequent restructuring of eight elementaries from K-7's to K-5's,
- b) the re-organizing of a Grade 11/12 school to Grade 9-12 school with two campuses,
- c) the removal of two junior secondary schools through reconfiguration,
- d) approximately 40% of the school administrators are new to the position or role,
- e) two central staff are new to their positions with the restoring of another position in progress,
- f) the district student enrollment is in rapid decline which impacts many of the smaller elementary schools and program choices at the smaller secondaries, and
- g) approximately 30% of our experienced teachers have retired with the hiring of younger teachers newer to the profession.

These major changes have subsequent ramifications as we try to sustain our achievement agenda and move forward to the targets set in our accountability growth plan. As can be expected there are segments of our district where individuals and "schools" experience the proverbial implementation "dip". This is not illustrated for excuse purposes but to reflect the reality of the context in which we carry out our responsibilities.

Improving or sustained areas of student achievement:

- What is improving or sustained?
- What evidence confirms this area of improvement?

Areas of Improvement	Evidence Sources
<p>Our Aboriginal six year Dogwood completion rate of 54.9% continues to show a modest trend upwards. There appeared to be downward % this year which is inconsistent with the % of graduates over a period of time. This may very well be explained by the fact that many more self-identified aboriginal students were added to our rolls thus making the completion rate appear lower. This will likely be self-correcting and tend to re-align to our normal upward trend. We still exceed the provincial average of 47%.</p>	<p>Ministry Data with input from district</p>
<p>The recently released 2007/2008 Completion Rates (percentages of students who graduate with a Dogwood diploma within 6 years of starting Grade 8 for the first time) show SD83 just slightly above the 78% mean for public schools in British Columbia with a rate of 78.3%.</p>	<p>Ministry Data</p>
<p>It might be tempting to congratulate ourselves for having a higher completion rate than 39 of 59 districts as well as still being above the provincial average but we are concerned as our average completion rate has been 82.2% over the past 5 years while the provincial mean over that time has been 79.8%.</p>	
<p>There are at least three possible explanations being investigated.</p> <p>The first explanation is that our educational practices are not adequately serving the goal of having more students achieve a Dogwood diploma within six years of entering Grade 8. We would find this outcome to be very surprising as middle and secondary schools have devoted energy and resources in implementing several structures and strategies designed to increase retention and success over the past five years. The district and schools have worked together to create and support</p>	<p>District Data being gathered</p>

alternative structures such as alternate programs, distributed learning, and a vast array of career programs to meet the varying needs of students. In addition, schools are piloting a variety of academic intervention programs with goals of building relationships and increasing opportunities for academic success. Staffs have and are also working on a variety of measures increase students' attachment with their schools and measuringg the impact of strategies with online student survey instrument entitled, Tell Them From Me. While some of these structures and strategies are newly implemented in the 2008/09 school year, many have been in place for three or more years.

Another explanation for the data variance may have to do with a change in how the data is being manipulated by the Ministry of Education. In a student-by-student data analysis done three years ago by school administrators, we found our retention rates to be increased by an average of 2%. Our postulate was that Ministry data was unable to track students who passed away or who moved out of the province to continue their education. We also wonder if adult students who have not graduated but are currently enrolled in Grade 11/12 courses at our schools are somehow skewing the results. The district has contracted with Data Consultant, Peggy Wellwood, to investigate this possible explanation.

The third is the possibility of a statistical anomaly, namely that the cohort measured does not reflect our trend over time. If the two other explanations being investigated do not yield satisfactory answers, we may need to allow time to provide us with an answer.

CHALLENGING AREAS:

- What trends in student achievement are of concern?
- What evidence gives rise to this concern?
- What plans are in place or under development in these areas of concern?

Trends of Concern	Evidence Sources	Plans to Address Concerns
<p>The District EDI was completed for 414 Kindergarten students. The vulnerability index showed that 136 students or 32.9% of the kindergarten children were vulnerable on at least one EDI domain. In addition 21% or 87 children were vulnerable on at least two EDI Domains.</p> <p>The Domains include Physical health and well being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development; communication skills and general knowledge.</p> <p>The outcomes of the EDI indicators re-affirmed schools and areas that have previously been identified by our Special Education Department as high needs areas.</p>	<p>Early Development Indicators Report from the Human Early Learning Project. February 2006</p>	<p>Additional resources through LINKS funding have been applied to schools receiving larger numbers of vulnerable children. In three of the most high needs schools and areas we have initiated StrongStart Centres which will enhance our current PALS and Ready,Set, Learn Initiatives.</p> <p>Our Speech Pathologists are being assigned to work with students identified.</p>
<p>It has become evident through a review of grade level report card results, and FSA results, that we need to focus on having more students achieve at the C+ or better results level in reading and writing (literacy).</p>	<p>Grade level report cards 5, 7, 9, 11. FSA Results Grades 4 &7. EDI results used to differentiate needy schools. Provincial exam results Grades 10 and 12. Performance Standards Classroom Assessment Grades 1-9.</p>	<p>Direct resources for in-service as outlined in objective 1.1 of the Achievement Contract (pages 5 & 6). (see www.sd83@bc.ca) Continue to assist the development of skills for classroom teachers with assistance from District Literacy (side by side mentoring) support teacher. (District Literacy Helping teacher .5 Sept-June 2009 – see Pro-D/In-service calendar.) Research the three topics as suggested in the Goal 1: Objective 1.1 of the (page 6) Achievement Contract.</p>

<p>Special needs students' performance is an important factor to consider as well.</p>	<p>Ministry and District Data</p>	<p>Achievement Contract: Objective 1.2 of Goal 1 (pages 6&7) Structures and Strategies to be applied to address special needs concerns.</p>
<p>Trends of Concern</p>	<p>Evidence Sources</p>	<p>Plans to Address Concerns</p>
<p>Once again, a review of our students' performance in Numeracy skills indicates much room for improvement even though we are reasonably successful.</p> <p>We are in the process of identifying new resources for teachers so that we can address the perceived lack of numeracy skills and understanding of our students.</p> <p>A district committee has been working on selecting and developing appropriate diagnostic instruments which will further refine our perceptions and areas needing to be addressed.</p> <p>Although our Aboriginal students are performing above the provincial average, we recognize that they are not at the same level of performance on all measures. We have a long term commitment to level the achievement 'playing' field.</p>	<p>District grade level report card results 5,7,9,11; FSA results Grades 4&7; Provincial exam results, Grade 11 and 12. Vancouver Island Diagnostic Assessment (Gr. 2-8) Professional opinion of mathematics teachers about the need for better alignment of Math IRP and assessment tools and practice.</p> <p>FSA results: Grades 4 & 7 Completion Rates for Aboriginal students. District Evidence through phone call follow up.</p>	<p>Outlined in District Achievement Contract. Goal 2; Objective 2.1 (page 8)</p> <p>Develop District Assessment for Numeracy K-10 based on Performance Standards.</p> <p>Numeracy Helping teacher hired .5 -Feb-June 2009.</p> <p>See Pro-D/In-Service calendar for numerous sessions to assist with shift in pedagogy of new IRP and building comfort with Math Makes Sense.</p> <p>Achievement Contract Goal 3, Objective 3.2 and 3.3 (pages 11 & 12)</p>

OTHER:

- What other observations, inferences or conclusions are drawn from district data?
- How does district evidence and data inform planning for improved student achievement?

Other Observations	Evidence/Data Sources	Response
<p>The students of this District are performing at or near the provincial average and in a number of cases, above the average.</p> <p>Unfortunately at the end of their public school career, a significant number of students are not at a level of performance that leads them easily into a wide range of post-secondary training options. They either must take an additional year for upgrading or seek remediation in special alternative programs.</p>	<p>Ministry and District Assessments. Grade and subject level performance marks.</p>	<p>We are pursuing long term intervention strategies for Grade 9 students through the AVID program and short term intervention strategies at all levels (K-12). Additionally, we have developed and encouraged many career opportunities in trades programs. As a district we have a proportionally high level of pre-apprenticeships and ACE-IT students registered.</p> <p>Our success rate for transitioning students into successful career options other than university or academic training is an indicator that the majority of students need viable alternatives upon graduation.</p> <p>These opportunities can be started early and lead to a seamless and successful graduation into a career.</p>
<p>The continued disparity between male and female achievement is of concern. We have in the past tried to close the gender gap of achievement but have not been totally successful.</p>	<p>Ministry and District Data</p>	<p>Form a committee of elementary, middle and secondary teachers to consider and develop strategies which might address this issue.</p>

As more vulnerable and disadvantaged students, enter our schools, it becomes even more imperative that we review the performance of each child and design programs which will support their success. This will require our commitment, perseverance, and intelligence in devising the appropriate interventions which will ensure a positive outcome for all students. Teachers and support staff will require the in-service support to learn the skills which can best tailor the learning needs for students. The administrators and district staff have the task of continuing to set the stage for this important work to happen.

Respectfully submitted,

D. Pearson,
Superintendent of Schools