

# Superintendent's Report on Achievement 2007/2008

Presented at a Public Meeting of the North Vancouver Board of Education

December 9, 2008

## *Building upon our ongoing strengths*

The North Vancouver School District continues to plan effectively for the ongoing improvement of student achievement and as acknowledged by the District Review completed in 2007. The District Review Team focused its comments on four key areas for the school district to support student achievement: Setting Directions, Organizing for Improvement, Building Learning Communities and Achieving Results.

Examples of ongoing strengths in each of these areas are provided below:

### **Setting Directions**

- Understanding the need to find more authentic assessment practices in support of consistent planning for improving student achievement
- The positive learning environment in North Vancouver schools and connections to the School District's safe and caring schools initiative
- The District's strategic visioning process using the principles of Appreciative Inquiry

### **Organizing for Improvement**

- Strong curricular and instructional initiatives including the *Instructional Institute*, Collegial Conferencing, and a range of action research projects
- The District's processes to provide interventions for early learners
- The continued implementation of the *Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement*, the strength of the partnerships with the First Nations and the effectiveness of the District Aboriginal Advisory Council

### **Building Learning Communities**

- The rich relationships that exist among partner groups and individuals throughout the district and the partnerships with the Squamish and Tsleil Watuth Nations
- Participation of partner groups, including students and parents, on district committees
- The cohesive and thorough professional development opportunities provided through the *Instructional Institute* and Collegial Conferencing which provides educators with a wealth of tools to meet the needs of all students

### **Achieving Results**

- Strong student achievement overall in the School District.
- The considerable attention being paid to Aboriginal achievement and completion rates, including improving transition rates for Aboriginal learners
- The successes of many North Vancouver schools with large numbers of vulnerable students.

## *Specific examples of student achievement that are established strengths*

Student achievement within the North Vancouver School District continues to be very strong with the school district averages exceeding the Provincial average in six-year completion rates and in all mandatory examinable subjects; English 10, Mathematics 10 and Science 10.

Six year completion rates have been maintained above the Provincial Average for all students as provided in Table 1 below. These rates include all international students. The adjusted rate for 2006/07, excluding international students is **84%**, up from **82%** reported in the Ministry reports.

<b>Table 1</b>						
<b>Six-Year Completion Rate</b>						
	<b>2002/03</b>	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>
All Students (North Vancouver)	<b>81</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>81</b>
All Students (Province)	79	79	79	79	80	
Girls (North Vancouver)	<b>82</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>84</b>	
Girls (Province)	83	83	83	83	84	
Boys (North Vancouver)	<b>79</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>79</b>	
Boys (Province)	75	75	76	76	77	
Aboriginal (North Vancouver)	<b>38</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>32</b>	
Aboriginal (Province)	46	46	48	47	48	

Distribution of letter grades by course reported by the Ministry of Education provides an indicator of student achievement for each of the required examinable subjects at Grade 10; English, Mathematics and Science. The Final Mark for students is a blended mark that accounts both for the classroom assessment (school mark) and the provincial examination (exam mark).

<b>Table 2</b>			
<b>Subject: English 10 (2007/2008)</b>			
	<b>C+ (good) or better</b>	<b>C (fair) or better</b>	<b>C- (pass) or better</b>
North Vancouver	<b>71.4</b>	<b>85.4</b>	<b>97.1</b>
Public Schools	63.8	79.5	95.1
Province	65.4	80.5	95.4

Student achievement results in North Vancouver for **English 10** (Table 2) are significantly better than those reported for public schools and the province (includes both private and independent school results) at all three levels indicated [C+ (good) or better, C (fair) or better, and C- (pass) or better].

<b>Table 3</b>			
<b>Subject: Mathematics 10 (2007/2008)</b>			
	<b>C+ (good) or better</b>	<b>C (fair) or better</b>	<b>C- (pass) or better</b>
North Vancouver	<b>58.9</b>	<b>74.5</b>	<b>94.2</b>
Public Schools	57.2	72.4	91.7
Province	58.6	73.5	92.1

Student achievement results in North Vancouver for **Mathematics 10** (Table 3) are better than those reported for public schools and the province (includes both private and independent school results) at all three levels indicated [C+ (good) or better, C (fair) or better, and C- (pass) or better].

<b>Table 4</b>			
<b>Subject: Science 10 (2007/2008)</b>			
	C+ (good) or better	C (fair) or better	C- (pass) or better
North Vancouver	<b>67.7</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>95.6</b>
Public Schools	58.4	74.4	94.0
Province	60.1	75.8	94.5

Student achievement results in North Vancouver for **Science 10** (Table 4) are significantly better than those reported for public schools and the province (includes both private and independent school results) at all three levels indicated [C+ (good) or better, C (fair) or better, and C- (pass) or better].

### ***Improving areas of student achievement***

An analysis of the “trend line” for the six-year completion rate indicates gradual improvement in the six-year completion rates (as reported in Table 1) for all students and for the female and male sub-groups.

Continued improvement has been made in the area of interventions for students identified at risk through early intervention measures in literacy and numeracy. Continued improvement has also been experienced in readiness of Kindergarten students, including Aboriginal students, in both reading and numeracy. Evidence of improved reading readiness for Kindergarten students is through the administration of the TOPA (Test of Phonological Awareness) following the implementation of intervention strategies. Evidence of improvement in numeracy is through the implementation of the District’s K/1 Numeracy Assessment. Evidence of continued improvement for students with special needs has been observed through their accomplishments in relation to their Individual Education Plans and through the successful accomplishment of School Completion Certificates.

While reading achievement continues to be strong throughout Grades 1 through 7, improvement has been noted in the percentage of students who are achieving success in reading at Grade 10. This result is reflected in the strong final marks in English 10.

### ***Challenging Areas***

#### ***Trends in student achievement of concern***

The success rate for Aboriginal students continues to be of significant concern. While there has been some evidence of improvement in reading and numeracy, particularly in relation to Kindergarten and early intervention, the early success experienced in achievement results does not appear to have had a lasting effect. Six-year completion rates for Aboriginal students (reported in Table 1) continue to be well below the provincial average and significantly lower than that of non-aboriginal students. These results are subject to significant ‘shifts’ as a result of the low number of aboriginal students reported. While there have been improved transition rates, this has not yet resulted in improved completion rates. This trend is of particular concern for aboriginal boys when coupled with the lower ‘transition rates’ being experienced.

English 10 results for Aboriginal Students (Table 5) are significantly below the district average. Transition rates for Aboriginal students are of continued concern with only 68% students transitioning from Grade 8 to 9 and higher and 64% transitioning from Grade 11 to 12.

<b>Table 5</b>						
<b>English 10 All Students compared to Aboriginal Students</b>						
	<b>2004/05</b>		<b>2006/07</b>		<b>2007/08</b>	
English 10 Exam & Course Mark	Exam	Course	Exam	Course	Exam	Course
All Students	72	73	73	74	74	73
English 10 Exam & Course Mark	Exam	Course	Exam	Course	Exam	Course
Aboriginal Students	60	63	60	65	60	63

While the six-year completion rate for all students is consistently above the Provincial average and has been improving on a gradual basis, the level and pace of such improvement has been somewhat disappointing. There is an increasingly growing belief among our educators that six-year completion rates should be considerably stronger in the North Vancouver School District than are presently being achieved.

There appears to be a discrepancy between the high levels of success indicated in the Final Marks for English, Mathematics and Science 10 and the current six-year completion rates. Given the very strong results in these subjects, it would be reasonable to expect a higher level of six-year completion than is presently occurring.

Through our review of the ‘non-graduates’ data, we also determined a number of factors that require our increased attention.

***Actions/interventions to address identified areas of concern***

We continue to work closely with the First Nations through our Aboriginal Advisory Committee and through the dedication of specific resources to support Aboriginal learners. We are actively ‘linking’ district services with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to assist with the successful integration of resources.

We have been successful in establishing and developing our relationships with our First Nations community and have achieved greater acknowledgement and integration of First Nations people, customs, traditions and culture. There is evidence of improved transition rates for our Aboriginal learners. Discussion and planning at the Aboriginal Advisory Committee is moving more directly into specific areas of teaching and learning to address the needs of our First Nations learners.

We are continuing to build our capacity to systematically track students more effectively through the use of software that will improve our ability to deepen our understanding of learners and school populations to assist us in monitoring early intervention and identifying those strategies that have made a difference for student achievement.

There is a need to ensure that ‘at-risk’ students are identified early, are engaged, supported, monitored and encouraged during their high school experience. Our analysis of the ‘non-graduates’ data has revealed a disproportionate number of aboriginal, special needs and alternate program students who have not completed graduation requirements within six years.

There is a need to engage secondary students and their parents more directly in discussions related to the graduation requirements, to monitor progress and to intervene at an earlier stage when there are indications that a student is at risk of not fulfilling graduation requirements in a timely manner and to ensure that current and accurate records are maintained for all students.

We have recently completed a Program Review of Keith Lynn Alternate Secondary School and are now in the process of implementing recommendations to help improve our services and supports for 'struggling' secondary aged students. The recommendations within this Review have implications for the supports provided to students in all secondary schools.

We will be reviewing the results of our 'non-graduates' review with secondary principals, vice principals and counselors to discuss the implications of our findings and to develop specific action plans at each school and for the school district. Our experience with contacting our 'non-graduates' directly was very beneficial to help determine the factors that contributed to their challenges to achieve completion within the six-year period and to help identify what actions and interventions may have made a difference for these students.

### ***Linking our planning to our Achievement Contract and improved student achievement***

We expect that the actions identified within this report will be complementary to the strategies identified within the District Achievement Contract: to continue to improve student achievement, most notably for those students who are not yet meeting expectations for reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking as measured by the performance standards; to improve completion rates for students; and to provide academic support for our aboriginal students, particularly in the area of literacy.

The School District has continued to build upon the feedback and recommendations provided through the 2007 District Review to increase our capacity for the analysis of student achievement data, focusing on the use of authentic assessment evidence in ways that are useful, first and foremost, to teachers.


Our focus on Assessment *of, and, and for learning* through the *Instructional Institute*, Collegial Conferencing, Action Research and Understanding by Design are helping contribute to the increased knowledge and application of effective instructional interventions to help all students achieve improved success.

### ***Other observations and conclusions***

Student achievement in the North Vancouver School District continues to be at a consistently high level in relation to provincial averages. There is an ongoing commitment to professional development and staff in-service to continue to improve instructional practice, particularly in the areas of assessment *of, and, for learning* in support of consistent planning for improving student achievement.

The School District has developed comprehensive strategies within the *District Achievement Contract (2008-09)* that are closely integrated with the challenges identified within this report. We are confident that these plans will help address the challenges identified within this report and support our ongoing efforts to improve student achievement.

Respectfully submitted,



John Lewis  
Superintendent of Schools