

Superintendent's Report on Achievement 2009/2010

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

December 14, 2010

Section 22 of the *School Act* was amended in the spring of 2007 to include the following:

“A board must appoint a superintendent of schools for the school district who, under the general direction of the board...

(b.1) must, on or before December 15 of a school year, prepare and submit to the board a report on student achievement in that district for the previous school year.”

Section 79.3 continues:

“On receipt of a report submitted by a superintendent of schools under section 23 (1)(b.1), the board must, on approval of the report, (a) immediately, and in any event no later than January 31 of the school year in which the board receives the report, submit the report to the minister, and (b) As soon as practicable, make the report available to the public.”

The annual report on student achievement is intended to serve two main purposes:

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

In response to the Representative for Children and Youth and the Provincial Health Officer's report entitled *Kids, Crime and Care (Health and Well-Being of Children in Care: Youth Justice Experiences and Outcomes)*, the Achievement Report also includes information relating to Recommendation 5 of the report, which states that:

“...every school in British Columbia assign a single staff person to oversee education planning, monitoring and attainment of children in care that attend their school. This function should be in place and functioning by September 2009.”

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

- Developing more authentic assessment practices to support consistent planning for improving student achievement as an integral component of instruction
- Increasing attention on Social Emotional Learning (Social Responsibility Curriculum) and the reconfiguration of our alternate programs to support improved achievement rates
- Focusing on Aboriginal and ‘at-risk’ learners, including children in care, and students at risk for behavioural and mental health concerns
- Identifying implications for practice within the context of the School District for Personalized Learning in the 21st Century

Organizing for Improvement

- Developing a seamless and enhanced continuum of early care and learning through: our partnerships with Early Learning Foundations’ preschools and childcare facilities, StrongStart centres, and the implementation of Full Day Kindergarten in 22 of our schools, supported by the effective use of assessments and programs, *Our Turn to Talk*, and *Firm Foundations*, and structured opportunities for in-service and networking among early learning educators.
- Supporting instructional practices and curricular initiatives including the *Instructional Institute*, Collegial Conferencing, Action Research projects, and the development of curricular materials supporting learning in Oral Language, Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Information and Communication Technology, and Fine Arts.
- Partnering with the First Nations community for the continued implementation of the *Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement* in the development of a second generation *Enhancement Agreement* through the Aboriginal Education Advisory Council
- Developing work and career experience programs with a focus on trades with dual credit options with post-secondary institutions.

Building Learning Communities

- Enhancing the ‘family of schools’ learning community to more effectively track the progress of students from Kindergarten through Grade 12; focusing on the transition from Grade 7 to 8
- Implementing strategic directions in Instructional Practices including in-service in the areas of Curriculum Design, Social Emotional Learning (Social Responsibility), Universal Design for Learning and Assessment and Reporting
- Providing cohesive and comprehensive professional development opportunities by the Student and Program Services Department and through the *Instructional Institute*, Collegial Conferencing and Action Research projects to enable collaborative projects to support teachers to meet the needs of all learners
- Fostering rich relationships among partner groups and individuals throughout the district and in partnership with the Squamish and Tsleil Waututh Nations.

Achieving Results

- Focusing on strengthening relationships through social emotional learning and student engagement through personalization of their learning to support increased student success and student achievement in the School District
- Increasing attention for Aboriginal student achievement, including improving transition and completion rates for Aboriginal learners
- Monitoring successes of many of our schools with large numbers of vulnerable students and students designated with special needs

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 averages in six-year completion rates and in all mandatory examinable subjects: English 10, Mathematics 10 and Science 10.

Six year completion rates have achieved the highest level in the past decade improving from 84% to 87% over the past year and from 81% to 87% over the past two years, continuing to surpass the Provincial Average for all students (including private and independent schools), as provided in Table 1. These rates include all international students attending our schools, the majority who are enrolled for a limited period of time that prevents them from being able to achieve completion in the six-year completion time frame. The Six-year Completion Rate for Aboriginal students improved upon the highest level in the past decade established last year, improving slightly from 51% to 52%.

Table 1

Six-Year Completion Rate					
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
All Students (North Vancouver)	84	83	81	84	87
All Students (Province)	79	80	79	79	80
Females (North Vancouver)	87	86	84	85	91
Females (Province)	83	84	82	82	83
Males (North Vancouver)	80	80	78	82	83
Males (Province)	76	77	76	77	77
Aboriginal (North Vancouver)	40	33	34	51	52
Aboriginal (Province)	47	48	47	49	50

The Ministry of Education's report on the distribution of letter grades by course 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).

Table 2

Subject: English 10 (2009/2010)		
	C- (pass) or better	C+ (good) or better
North Vancouver	97	69
Province	96	68

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

Table 3

Subject: Principles of Mathematics 10 (2009/2010)		
	C- (pass) or better	C+ (good) or better
North Vancouver	94	57
Province	93	60

Student achievement results in North Vancouver for **Principles of Mathematics 10** (Table 3) are better than those reported for public schools and the province (includes both private and independent school results) at C- (pass) or better, and slightly below C+ (good) or better.

Table 4

Subject: Science 10 (2009/2010)		
	C- (pass) or better	C+ (good) or better
North Vancouver	97	65
Province	95	63

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

Number of Graduates and Graduates Achieving Honours Standing

The total number of North Vancouver School District students graduating with a Dogwood, School Completion Certificate and Adult Graduation Diploma reported by the Ministry of Education for 2009/2010 is 1,737. Of this total, 1,717 students received their ‘Dogwoods’, while 16 students received School Completion Certificates.

A total of 1333 students graduated through our secondary schools with another 404 achieving graduation through Continuing Education, Distributed Learning and Alternate Programs. Distributed Learning program experienced significant growth by recording 79 graduates.

The 314 adults achieving graduation through Continuing Education, the Esliha7an Learning Centre, and Distributed Learning is an indication of the continuous commitment of the School District to learners beyond the six-year time frame established by the Ministry of Education as a ‘system performance indicator’. The North Vancouver School District proudly celebrates the accomplishment of students achieving their graduation in their seventh, eighth, and additional years.

In order for a student to achieve Honours Standing, the student must have a Grade Point Average (GPA) higher than 3.0 (a better than B average). Over 51% of our secondary students and 3% of our Continuing Education and Alternate Program students graduated with Honours Standing in 2009/2010. Handsworth Secondary School students achieved the highest percentage of graduates with Honours Standing at 65%.

Improving areas of student achievement

An analysis of the “trend line” for the six-year completion rate indicates improvement in the six-year completion rates (as reported in Table 1) for all students and for the female and male sub-groups. A further analysis of the improved completion rates for Aboriginal students (Table 5) indicates significant improvements in the School District’s Eligible Grade 12 Graduation rate over the prior year from 77% to 89% (meeting the Provincial average) and the First-time Grade 12 Graduation Rate from 59% to 68% (exceeding the Provincial average).

Table 5

Graduation Rates for Aboriginal Students (BC and NVSD)				
	Eligible Grade 12 Graduation Rate (BC)	Eligible Grade 12 Graduation Rate (NVSD)	First-time Grade 12 Graduation Rate (BC)	First-time Grade 12 Graduation Rate (NVSD)
2005/2006	89	63	52	40
2006/2007	87	69	57	42
2007/2008	90	86	58	55
2008/2009	90	77	59	59
2009/2010	89	89	59	68
Change from prior year	-1%	+ 12%	0%	+ 9%

One of the factors identified by Principals as contributing to the improved graduation rates of our Aboriginal students is the school-based staffing model, rather than the previous district-based model. The school-based staffing model has strengthened connections with students and staff ownership for their individual and collective success. We are examining our data further to identify additional factors contributing to the continued improvement in graduation rates.

Evidence of continued improvement for students with special needs has been evidenced in relation to Six-year completion, their Individual Education Plans (IEP), and through the successful accomplishment of School Completion Certificates.

While student achievement continues to be strong throughout Grades 1 through 7, the School District has not yet leveraged the reporting capacity of *ReportCentral* to provide district-wide evidence of the achievement of students in relation to provincial Performance Standards. We anticipate being able to commence the aggregation of report card data during the 2010-2011 school year to report elementary student achievement in a more comprehensive and meaningful manner than currently available through the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) results.

FSA scores at the District and school levels have become unreliable indicators of student progress as a result of the number of parents in North Vancouver School District keeping students home on the days when tests are written, and the shift to local marking of the FSA tests making local comparisons with provincial scores and scores in other districts less reliable.

Challenging Areas

Trends in student achievement of concern

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 this improvement remains somewhat disappointing. The achievement levels attained by students attending our alternate programs have been significantly below the district average. Our dedicated educators remain firm in their resolve that our six-year completion rates will continue to improve in coming years.

While strong gains have been experienced in the Six-Year Completion Rates for our Aboriginal Students in the past year, the success rate for self-identified Aboriginal students remains an area of concern. Six-year completion rates for Aboriginal students (reported in Table 1) are above the provincial average for 2009/2010, but remain significantly lower than those for All Students. These results are subject to significant ‘shifts’ as a result of the number of aboriginal students reported.

English 10 results for Aboriginal Students (Table 6) have improved considerably in the past year, but remain well below the district average.

Table 6

English 10 Blended Marks						
	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10	
	C- (pass) or better	C+ (good) or better	C- (pass) or better	C+ (good) or better	C- (pass) or better	C+ (good) or better
All Students	97	71	97	68	97	69
Aboriginal	93	26	90	26	95	50

Continued emphasis on literacy initiatives for our First Nations Learners and early interventions are intended to strengthen the performance of our students in this area.

Actions/interventions to address identified areas of concern

We continue to ‘link’ district services with the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee to strengthen the successful integration of teaching and learning resources. These include ‘buddy reading’ literacy programs, early learning in-service by North Vancouver School District teachers with the *Capilano Littlest Ones Program* staff, and after-school homework clubs.

We have established collaborative relationships with our First Nations communities and achieved greater acknowledgement and integration of First Nations people, customs, traditions and culture. In the development of our second *Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement*, our planning at the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee is moving more directly into specific areas of teaching and learning that will increase our focus on meeting the academic needs of all First Nations learners.

Our successful collaboration with the Squamish Nation in providing of Summer Start (StrongStart) program at Capilano Little Ones for children aged two to six, as well as summer school through the Eslha7an program that enabled First Nations learners to achieve graduation during the summer was continued during the 2009/2010 school year.

We continue to build our capacity to make greater use of Performance Standards. This will become evident as the District moves toward the 2010-2011 implementation of *RubricCentral*, an online application that enables teachers to access, customize, and bank Performance Standards rubrics in all subject areas and grade levels.

We continue to analyze the ‘non-graduates’ data to address the foundational importance of social-emotional learning in our schools and to engage secondary students and their parents more directly in discussions related to the graduation requirements.

While we have developed an increased capacity to monitor progress and intervene more quickly when a student is at risk of not fulfilling graduation requirements, we have been financially challenged to maintain the administrative staff that has previously provided this important service for students.

Building upon the previous District Review of Keith Lynn Alternate Secondary School and consultations regarding our Alternate Programs, we are proceeding with the development of a consolidated alternate program that will enhance student achievement. This program will also incorporate the key elements of personalized learning.

Linking our planning to our Achievement Contract and the improvement of student achievement

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.

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

Implementation of the recommendation of the Representative of Children and Youth

In response to the recommendation of the Representative of Children and Youth regarding Children in Care, the following procedures have been implemented in the North Vancouver School District:

- 1) A staff member has been appointed in each school to monitor the success of children in care (CIC) and promote appropriate interventions.
- 2) Initial rosters of CIC have been updated in consultation with local MCFD offices.
- 3) Information is shared between district, schools and the MCFD in a manner that is consistent with the interests of CIC.
- 4) Children in temporary care arrangements, by agreement or in the home of a relative, are included in our monitoring and support functions.

The School District will continue to use BCeSIS (student information system) reporting capabilities and locally developed software to assist with the monitoring and tracking of students' achievement data, grade transitions, attendance, and behaviour.

Conclusion

Student achievement in the North Vancouver School District continues to be at a consistently high level in relation to provincial averages and some notable improvements have been evidenced in the past year. Our educators are deeply committed to engaging students in their learning and to support their individual development. There is an enduring commitment to professional development and staff in-service to advance instructional practices, with particular emphasis on the areas of assessment *of, as, and for learning* to support continuous improvement in student achievement.

Additional emphasis on the importance of social, emotional learning and the personalization of learning for the 21st Century will help ensure that our primary focus remains on every learner.

The School District has developed comprehensive strategies within the *District Achievement Contract (2008-11)* that are closely integrated with the strengths and challenges identified within this report. We are confident that these plans will help advance our ongoing efforts to improve student achievement. As a School District, we are proud of the gains that have been made this past year and are determined to continue to make important improvements for the benefit of each of our learners.

Respectfully submitted,

John Lewis
Superintendent of Schools