

Superintendent's Report on Student Achievement

2014/2015

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

Data and evidence used to report student achievement should include provincial and local (district) measures. Local data could include a number of district wide instruments commonly used, district designed measures such as school assessments and teacher classroom assessments.

Districts may report additional areas of student achievement arising from the most recent achievement contract.

The Superintendent's report is a public document, should be "reader friendly" and easily understandable.

The Superintendent's Report

- Should be brief and to the point.
- Should be focused on results and evidence of acquired results.
- Should be a useful point of departure for future planning.
- Must be submitted by email by January 31

Section 22 of the School Act states the following:

"A board must appoint a superintendent of schools for a 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 year.

Section 79.3 goes on to say:

"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,

- Immediately, and in any event no later than January 31st of the school year in which the board receives the report, submit that report to the minister, and
- As soon as practicable, make the report available to the public."

Ministry of Education School Act

Please use this form to insert the required elements of the Superintendent's Report.

The completed report will be published on the Ministry website, as a PDF document.

Questions and/or concerns

Direct questions and/or concerns to the Ministry by email: EDUC.Achievement@gov.bc.ca Submission

Submit your document, by January 31, to the Ministry by email: EDUC.Achievement@gov.bc.ca

School District No: 91

School District Name: Nechako Lakes

1. Improving Areas of Student Achievement

What is improving?

1. Graduation rates
2. Grade 10 English results

What evidence confirms this area of improvement?

1. Graduation rates: Successful school completion for each of our students is our primary goal. To measure this goal we consider all students who have either received a Dogwood Certificate or an Evergreen Certificate (formerly known as School Completion Certificate) to have successfully completed school. Additionally, we disaggregate success data to look at our standard schools (our local high schools) and our non-standard schools (Continuing Education/Alternate and Distance Learning Schools) separately. In our standard schools, the six-year completion rate for all students was 84%. While this represents a 4% decrease over the previous year, it is still 14% higher than it was in 2008/2009. On a positive note, our success rate for Aboriginal students in our standard schools rose by 1% over last year and now sits at 76%. This represents a 19% increase over the 2008/2009 results. We are also encouraged by the continued rise in success rates in our non-standard schools. The current success rate for all students in a non-standard school is 47%, which represents a 23% rise from the 2008/2009 data. The success rate for our Aboriginal students in our non-standard schools has risen to 49% which represents a 31% rise over the 2008/2009 data.
2. Grade 10 English results: Since 2009/2010 there has been a 12% increase in the number of students achieving a C+ or better on the Provincial exam, according to the latest Provincial Required Examinations report. It is important to note that for Aboriginal students this increase has been 14%. In addition, according to our District Key Information Report, our percentile rank on this exam has risen from a low of 15% in 2007/2008 to 59% in 2013/2014 which is our highest ranking. It is promising to note that the percentage of our grade 10 students getting an "A" on this exam has risen from a low of 5.8 % in 2004/2005 to its current level of 14%. One final encouraging point is that the exam's mean score percentage has also risen by 5% from the 2007/2008 school year and now is at 69%.

2. Challenging Areas

What trends in student achievement are of concern to you?

1. Math 10 Provincial Exam results
2. Literacy rates
3. Achievement gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students
4. Achievement gaps between males and females

What evidence indicates this is an area of concern?

1. Math 10 Provincial Exam results: According to the latest Provincial Required Examinations report, fewer than 50% of our students achieved a C+ or higher on the government exam. In the Apprenticeship and Workplace Math course only 16% of our students who took the exam scored a C+ or higher. While this is 1%

higher than the provincial average, it is still cause for concern. On the Foundations Math and Pre-calculus exam, 62% of the students in the province achieved a C+ or higher while 49% of our students scored C+ or higher. While this represents a 6% increase over last year and is our highest level of success on this exam, it is still cause for concern. To address this issue, a district staff officer has been tasked with working with schools to examine ways to improve math results across all grades.

2. Literacy rates: We are concerned that we are not increasing our literacy rate at a quick enough pace and are re-examining our practices to determine where we need to make adjustments. We are now refining our literacy framework. This framework identifies the standard we expect to see in each classroom. This framework will guide decisions regarding staffing supports, staff development, as well as resource development and purchases.
3. Achievement gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students: The achievement gap between Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students is, in virtually all areas, slowly closing. However, the District has a sense of urgency in closing this gap.
4. Achievement gaps between males and females: Male students are not performing as well as female students. This holds true in academic areas, our success rate, as well as for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. One interesting trend is in classes with a required exam we see, on average, male students score lower on the class mark than do the female students. However, on the exam, this trend is reversed. As a district we are considering ways to more deeply engage males in the classroom experience and we are exploring ways to ensure assessment practices accurately reflect the learning that is taking place. Improved assessment can be used more powerfully by staff, students, and parents to understand how to improve student learning.

3. Programs / Performance / Results & Intervention

Comment on the effect of interventions and programs with specific reference to goals and targets set out in your last Achievement Contract.

The district has been engaged in district-wide literacy assessment, a data system to track student achievement, and schools creating intervention plans for those who are not learning. The district literacy team has been engaged in the pilot of RAD to replace DART for the district wide assessment. In addition, the team has been training resource teachers to use DRA for those learners who are out of scope for the RAD. This training has generated rich conversations for staff.

The literacy coordinators worked with teams from schools to develop the district literacy framework. The framework is a five-year plan to outline the districts expectations for the teaching of literacy and the roles of district, principals and teachers.

Please include comments on the effect of interventions and programs. Based on acquired evidence, what efforts appear to be making a difference?

The VIU project has started to produce increases in literacy skills in the schools involved. The skills of struggling readers in the intermediate classes engaged have increased.

4. Targets (Summarize the targets set out in your Achievement Contracts)

I.) Literacy: Identify your district's target(s) for literacy

1. By June of 2016, 100% of grade 4 students will be reading at grade level, or meeting their IEP goals for reading.
2. By June of 2016, 100% of grade 8 students will be reading at grade level, or meeting their IEP goals for reading.
3. By June 2016, 100% of the students who entered grade 8 in 2013 will pass the grade 10 English Exam with a score of 60% or higher.

State the specific evidence and measures of student achievement in literacy and the results that have been realized.

Standard School Results

2014 Grade 4 FSA Reading: Meeting to Exceeding Expectations:

Total student group = 55%

Aboriginal = 35%

2014 Grade 7 FSA Reading: Meeting to Exceeding Expectations:

Total student group = 47%

Aboriginal = 40%

2013 (spring) Grade 10 Provincial Exam, % of Students Scoring 60% or higher

Total student group = 70%

Aboriginal = 47%

II.) Completion Rates: Identify your district's target(s) for completion rates.

Long-term Target

100% of our students will successfully complete school with either a Dogwood Certificate or an Evergreen Certificate, with the 21st century skills required to be successful.

2014 Target

90% of all students will complete school successfully.

85% of Aboriginal students will complete school successfully.

State the specific evidence and measures of student achievement for completion rates and the results that have been realized.

To gain a more complete picture of our success rates, as in previous years, we look at the success rates in our standard schools and in our non-standard schools separately. Successful completion includes all students who have received a Dogwood Certificate, an Evergreen Certificate, or an Adult Dogwood within 6 years of entering grade 8.

Type of School	Success Rate	Target (2014)	Target On-track
Standard Schools Total Population	84%	90%	No
Standard School Aboriginal	76%	85%	No
Non-Standard School Total Population	47%	90%	No
Non-Standard School Aboriginal	49%	85%	No
All Schools Total Population ¹	63%	90%	No
All Schools Aboriginal ¹	49%	85%	No

Note: Standard schools are our local high schools and the non-standard schools are our Distance Learning and Continuing Education/Alternate programs.

¹*This is the data the Ministry reports and it combines the standard and non-standard schools and does not include Evergreen Certificates*

III.) Aboriginal Education: Identify your district's target(s) for Aboriginal student improvement.

See the targets for completion rate and literacy as listed above.

State the specific evidence and measures of student achievement for Aboriginal students and the results that have been realized.

Specific to the target of Grade 4 FSA Reading scores, 39% of Grade 7 Aboriginal students were Meeting to Exceeding Expectations. This represents a slight increase from the previous year. In general, the Grade 4 FSA percent of Aboriginal students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Reading Comprehension, Writing and Numeracy each showed a decrease from the previous year. The Grade 7 Reading scores have remained relatively stable ranging between 39% and 41% of student meeting or exceeding expectations. When the FSA data over the past six years are taken into consideration, the Grade 4 scores for meeting to exceeding have declined substantially. While the percent of Grade 7 students meeting or exceeding expectation in Writing has dropped slightly, the difference in scores over the past six years has a 4% range of separating the highest from the lowest score.

The target for 45% Aboriginal students passing English 10 with a mark of C+ or higher was not met. The percent of students passing with a C+ or higher has steadily climbed to a high of 43% in 2012/2013 but there was a slight decline in 2013/2014. Although the target was not met, there are indicators of growth. When performance gaps are considered and cohort groups are followed there is positive growth. Specifically, the performance gap between the C+ scores between Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students has decreased from a high of 32% in 2009/2010 to a low of 12% in 2013/2014. Also, when the Grade 10 cohorts are followed to their Grade 12 year, the percent of students scoring C+ or better on the English 12 exam marks for each cohort from 2008/2009 to 2012/2013 has improved.

Aboriginal Six-Completion rate has declined from a high of 57% in 2012/2013 to 49% for 2013/2014. There is a long way to go to reach the target, but along the way there are signs of strength. For example, the eligible to graduate rate has remained relatively high ranging between 89% and 96% over the past 7 years. Over the past 7 years, an average of 93% of Aboriginal students who were eligible to graduate graduated from standard schools. When Alternate Schools were considered on their own, 80% of Aboriginal students who were eligible to graduate

graduated from an Alternate school. When Standard and Alternate schools are combined 87% of Aboriginal students who were eligible to graduate graduated from a district school.

The data is trending toward growth but it is not in a steady line. There are years when growth is substantial and other years when the decrease is notable and at other times performance plateaus. It is clear much work is still needed to both increase Aboriginal student performance data and to decrease the academic and completion gap.

5. Children in Care

Summarize the work and your efforts in meeting the needs of Children in Care.

All Children in Care are identified at the beginning of the year or as required due to mid-year transfers. Where circumstances change for a student (i.e. new care orders or a change of foster home) both the school and district are notified by a form letter stating the foster parents' and social worker's name and contact information. This information is passed on to the school contact person responsible for the monitoring of Children in Care. We continue to be concerned that the local Ministry of Children and Families offices have large turnovers and are understaffed. In addition, many learners are in the care of the Aboriginal delegated agency which can add to the complexity of the work for schools.

What categories of Children in Care have been successfully identified and are being monitored?

For example: continuing custody orders, temporary custody orders, other...

Children in Continuing Care Orders are mostly identified and monitored, particularly, when foster placements are maintained or constant over time. The availability of foster placements "close to home" does not always exist in our small communities, so children can be moved out of their home communities or moved around. The closing of the only group home in the school district has caused more learners to be transient within the system.

It is more difficult to monitor and effectively serve Children Under Temporary Care Orders due to changes in placements and staff who work with them. These learners do not always have an opportunity to settle into new communities before placements change. This presents difficulties for the learners and for all staff concerned with the well-being of the learners.

What structures are in place to provide effective communications among MCFD offices, social workers, foster parents and schools?

Each school has a person designated to manage the Children in Care case load and liaise between all parties. This is an administrator in some cases, or a teacher in others. Regular meetings are typically scheduled or held as emergent situations arise. When individual children in care are in crisis, teams come together as quickly as can be arranged and in positive ways in support of the child/children.

What results are being achieved by students within the identified categories?

The numbers of students in care in each grade are so low that we must mask achievement data for privacy reasons. However, it is clear that Children in Care, on average, continue to achieve at below average results.

6. Early Learning

What strategies are in place to address the needs identified in Early Learning?

School needs are identified by the use of the Early Development Index (EDI) data and past Kindergarten (K) assessments. Extra funding is given to these schools for early intervention. Individual learner needs are identified with the K assessment and instruction is targeted in the identified areas of need. The K assessment is administered at the beginning of Kindergarten and the end of the school year. The focus on intervention leads to rapid growth between our September assessment and our May/June assessment for all students and, in particular, for Aboriginal students. Learners who are identified on the spring assessments as still requiring intervention are targeted in grade 1.

We also continue to be engaged in a variety of other early learning initiatives. We operate three StrongStart Centres and four Outreach programs. As a district we participate as a partner with Success by Six and the local Early Childhood Development (ECD) tables. Our staffs are part of the ECD committees and also share resources with Success by Six and Make Children First. We are also participating in Welcome to Kindergarten and Ready Set Learn to help parents and children be ready for school.

7. Other Comments

Education transformation

Although the lengthy BCTF job action has had an impact on our transformational agenda, we believe that our continued focus on strengthening relationships and providing meaningful staff development, combined with the lengthy negotiated BCTF collective agreement, is helping to put us back on track.

Key priorities and projects for Nechako Lakes School District include:

- Wider implementation of structures and supports for Middle Year Learners across the district based on the Nechako Valley Secondary grade 7/8 Project and our continuing relationship with Dr. Nancy Doda.
- An increased focus and support on meaningful assessment across all grades. We have recently invested in a large group of educators learning more about assessment and have confirmed visits by Damian Cooper, Education Consultant who specializes in helping school districts improve their instructional and assessment skills, to our district next school year. Over the next year, we plan to support some of our school communities in implementing alternate assessment structures.
- Continued focus on providing high school students with key hands-on learning activities through our extensive community projects. We anticipate the addition of our recent 'shoulder-tapper' position will increase opportunities for students and community partners.
- A continued focus on meaningful collaboration for all educators continues to be a key district structure that supports our key initiatives.
- Using data collection tools from Paradigm Shift Technologies allow us to quickly analyze key assessment indicators to provide structures and resources to students requiring educational interventions.

Safe Schools

Our school district remains strongly committed to the principles and practices related to maintaining safe schools. With the help of our various district teams, our schools are constantly improving their ability to respond quickly and successfully to bullying and issues of violence, as well as other threats to student safety. We have found that the key to this success is quick access for schools to trained and experienced teams for collaboration and support when issues arise.

In February 2014 the district hosted another major training session with Kevin Cameron from the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response. Mr. Cameron has worked with our district at various times for several years and has contributed to our threat assessment and trauma response processes in a variety of ways. Attendance at the session included 18 members of community partner groups such as RCMP, MCFD, area counselors and representatives of local First Nations bands. Thirty-six district employees attended, including administrators, senior staff and district counselors. This event contributed significantly to our district response team's skill level, collaborative structure and best practices when responding to crises involving students.

Our district worked hard to engage teachers in a recent opportunity for ERASE and VTRA training with Theresa Campbell in Prince George. Unfortunately, our ongoing crisis in hiring teacher replacements combined with the impact of the teachers' strike made it extremely difficult for district employees to attend. We look forward to better attendance in the future.

Overall, we are pleased with the manner in which our schools respond to issues of bullying and violence. As staffing complements change and our skills improve through gaining knowledge and experience, our ongoing training opportunities become more and more important for maintaining and improving our district standards in this area.

8. Board approval date: December 15, 2014
