

School District Approaches to Supporting Vulnerable Students



Introduction

Many school districts have years of experience in providing programs and services that support vulnerable students. This guide is a compilation of approaches that school districts know are effective in producing positive outcomes for vulnerable children and youth in their schools. These examples will provide ideas and guidance as school districts, together with their communities, begin to implement CommunityLINK.

The examples are based on school district experiences that provided the School Meal, Inner City School, Community Schools, Healthy Schools and School-Based Support Worker Programs.

Examples are organized by the components of successful service delivery:

- ⇒ **A Clear Plan, with a Focus on Goals and Timelines**
- ⇒ **Services Focussed on Delivering Positive Outcomes for Vulnerable Children and Youth**
- ⇒ **Co-operation between Schools, Service Providers and Funding Sources**
- ⇒ **Participation by Parents and the Broader Community with Schools, Teachers, Staff and Students.**
- ⇒ **Effective Partnerships with other Community Agencies and Groups**
- ⇒ **Commitment to Evidence-Based Decision-Making**
- ⇒ **Creation of Better Accountability and Evaluation Systems**

A Clear Plan with a Focus on Goals and Timelines

School District No. 41 (Burnaby)

School District Leadership and Vision in Supporting Vulnerable Children, Youth and Families

Context:

The school district has a clear plan with the following components:

- Overriding guiding principles
- School district social responsibility vision
- School Board's role in addressing needs of vulnerable children/youth , framework, continuum of commitment
- Community Education Division committed to an integrated holistic approach to school linked strategies
- Community School model providing the infrastructure and accountability for integrated service delivery on a local level
- Leadership

The components are well organised, measurable and accountable. Leadership by the school district and key players move the vision forward in an effective, sustainable, integrated manner. Implementation of the plan has resulted in meaningful, cost effective and sustainable partnerships between the school district, the City of Burnaby, service agencies and community partners. As a result there is a framework for interagency connection and community input.

The School District developed a model plan with a framework and vision:

1. Guiding Principles

- Inclusiveness
- Lifelong Learning
- Sharing of Resources
- Self-determination and Localization
- Self-help and Leadership Development
- Responsiveness
- Integrated Delivery of Services

2. A commitment to social responsibility

3. The School Board's framework

When presented with an important issue regarding the needs of vulnerable children and youth they approach the issue in four stages. First, they act as an advocate or champion for a program or project by writing a letter of support. If more support is requested, the school board will go to step two and ask school staff to assist. The third level of support is to search for other agencies to bring services into the schools. Finally, if the above steps can't bring about a satisfactory solution, the school board may make a political decision to fund a program or project to address the specific need presented.

4. Community Education Division

The Community Education Division approaches school-based programming in an integrated holistic manner. Each component, alternative programs, school meals, community schools and support for inner city students, is seen as part of the whole. For each part, the district plan

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delineates the program goals which are supported by specific strategies/activities, the anticipated outcomes, and the indicators of success both specific and general indicators.

The district seeks to meet the identified needs of students at risk who may drop out or fail through an individualized education plan. This plan includes an integrated case management/wraparound approach with a high staff to student ratio. Designated program goals, strategies/activities, anticipated outcomes, and indicators of success direct the 10 programs in the district.

The school meal program helps children who come to school hungry achieve academic success. The program is administered in a confidential, universal and cost effective manner that encourages parental and community contributions. Designated program goals, strategies/activities, anticipated outcomes, and indicators of success direct the 13 schools with meal programs.

The Inner City Education Program provides support to vulnerable students at risk due to economic, social and cultural circumstances. Designated program goals, strategies/activities, anticipated outcomes, and indicators of success direct the four designated Inner City Programs in the school district.

The Burnaby School District and City of Burnaby pioneered the community school model where core funding is provided by the school district, the City of Burnaby and the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD). In their Official Community Plan, the City of Burnaby identified community schools as part of the city's infrastructure.

The community school model is based on the principles of community education. Elementary schools function as neighbourhood centres for a network of community residents, government services, agencies and organisations committed to meeting community needs and expanding learning opportunities for all members of the community.

The community schools provide a wide range of early intervention and prevention services for children, youth and families. With core funding the community schools and their community partners leverage additional funding multiplying the budgets by two to four times. Designated program goals, strategies/activities, anticipated outcomes, and indicators of success direct the seven designated community schools in the school district.

The school district demonstrates leadership through their guiding principles and clear plan, from which programs can be measured and held accountable. The framework and philosophy enables the district to examine supports for vulnerable students in a community-wide, holistic, integrated manner, ensuring sustainability. Leadership is modelled by key players from the school district, the city and service agencies. Together they demonstrate the value of effective partnerships and create positive spin-offs for the community.

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School District No. 35 (Langley)

APEX Secondary School – An Evidence Based Clear Plan with Accountability through Evaluation and Exemplary Communications

Context:

The school district was concerned about the number of students not succeeding in secondary school programs. In 1995, they held a series of focus groups with youth, parents, foster parents and youth service providers. These groups identified the targeted students and what made their needs different, they determined why the current system wasn't working and how to address the student's needs. A task force developed a clear plan based on evidence and research in line with school district mission statement and graduate profile, with modifications for students with behavior difficulties. The resulting program model had the following components:

- Guiding principles
- A mission statement
- A philosophy that was aligned with the school district's philosophy
- A staff training and development program
- A code of conduct with three key principles
- Growth targets – graduate profile in line with district growth targets but modified for the APEX's student population
- Growth targets and definition of roles for staff with on-going weekly three- hour training sessions
- A research driven therapeutic educational model based on the Metabolized Therapeutic Model
- Commitment to a “wrap around” model, utilizing integrated case management that incorporates various agencies and partnerships, such as: MCFD, Ministry of Education, RCMP, drug and alcohol and other community counselors, doctors, and community service agencies such as Langley Family Services and Langley Mental Health..
- The APEX Advisory Committee, who advise and support the staff and program, is made up of APEX staff, MCFD representative, school district psychologist and school counselors
- Staff Committees

The APEX therapeutic approach is based on the Metabolic Therapeutic Model. this approach develops a concrete methodology to address maladaptive student thoughts resulting in poor school performance, social avoidance/dysfunction, self-esteem/mental health and post-traumatic effects. Therapeutic restructuring is a technique of cognitive therapy that enables students to identify negative, irrational beliefs and behaviours and replace them with truthful, rational statements and positive behaviours.

Students are given the opportunity to change their dysfunctional culture and cognitive thinking within the classroom, which functions as a “modeled community”. The therapeutic aspects of the classroom include:, staff and students spending as much time together as possible, built in interaction and dialogue with large enough groups to facilitate group concepts, peer support, staff functioning as mentors, participation in school activities and overt discussion about their communities, and community participation and consultation.

To facilitate student culture changes APEX does the following:

- Identifies the students' old assumptions (anomalies) and dysfunctional thinking
- Uses the Longitudinal Model to introduce new anomalies and help students to perceive them
- Provides clearly defined high expectations
- Builds trust by role modeling expectations

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- Gives students time in a "neutral zone", but uses "confrontation" as a tool of reflection through multiple layers of support and feedback (Metabolized Therapeutic Model) Provides a safety net for learning
- Students and Staff "Seed" the environment through self-reinforcing community paradigms

The APEX program, which has a researched focused core, is a longitudinal model based on students spending one to five years at the school. Each year the program progresses through four distinctive steps. First, trust is developed, then students are integrated into an Individual Education Plan, then there is an antecedent-based focus on the causes of a student's dysfunction, and finally, students become peer tutors, active role models themselves in the elementary schools and with younger APEX students.

APEX clearly and effectively communicates the program through reports, a school web site and presentations to the School Board and other educational institutions. The school is becoming a research school with links to John Hopkins University, Harvard Graduate School of Education as well as a training facility for students from local universities and colleges and the school district.

APEX has a strong school culture. Students take pride in, and enjoy being a part of, the school and often rise to high academic expectations. Academically, APEX takes a 'gifted' approach, with a significant focus on critical thinking, examining cause and effect, social dynamics, and encouraging students to engage in self and peer analysis.

Students attend five days a week with a full day academic program and elective options in a consistent classroom with a teacher and youth worker. Students have multiple stable relationships with staff trained in counselling and psychology. These sessions occur in an enclosed community system of supporting and educational mechanisms individually designed.

Additional components of APEX include a daily lunch program, drug and alcohol counselling (both internal and external), anger management support and coordination, family counselling and support, career planning/work experience, district apprenticeship program support, after hours basketball program, peer counselling and tutoring program, recreational leadership classes, a music studio, and physical education and various wellness and elective programs.

Links to parents include a monthly parents night. Community presenters involved in weekly classes present to the parents first thereby creating structured dialogue within the family. A family support worker does home visits and offers parenting support and training.

APEX continues to support alumni in post high school training, has Alumni Nights, and invites past students back to act as role models and speak to classes.

Guiding principles:

- Be flexible
- Treat youth as people not as problems
- Provide continuity and stability while meeting basic needs
- Develop strong mentorship relationships with adults
- Include 'invisible' girls (emphasizing the difference in how "at-risk" signs/markers are manifested between girls and boys)
- Facilitate the involvement of community members and community services

Apex will provide a supportive environment that will empower students to make positive choices for their life and learning.

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Staff Development Mission: Restructuring a culture for the purpose of helping children learn to deal more effectively with each other in meaningfully satisfying and gratifying relationships requires a process.

Evaluation is done regularly throughout the year:

- group and individual assessments,
- social responsibility assessment,
- student tracking forms,
- family forums and alumni's success in other schools and training programs,
- and various other weekly reports and committee assessments.

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School District No. 35 (Cariboo/Chilcotin) Alternative Programs – A Continuum Model with a Clear Plan

Context:

The school district was concerned that there were high school students with differing levels of behavioural and academic problems. These problems could not be addressed within a single secondary school alternative program. A task force of teachers, counselors, administrative officers, a youth street worker and staff from MCFD and Mental Health met for over a year. An alternate program offering a continuum of programs was established. Students who can cope with regular programming do so in an alternative school setting, located on-site in the secondary schools. These students may take from one block to a full program in this setting.

Students who cannot cope in a large school environment attend full-time in a smaller self-contained off site program. Students who have been out of school for an extended time or whose lifestyle does not allow them to attend on a regular basis, attend 'Storefront Programs'. This programming has worked well for 13 years.

A clear plan was devised based on the philosophy that adolescents have choices and are responsible for those choices. The role of the adults in the program is to give adolescents real information and connect them with services. The wrap around academic and life skill programs are individualized for each student's learning style and pace.

Services focussed on delivering positive outcomes for vulnerable students:

1. School Based Alternative Programs are designed for students who are academically capable but unable to function in regular school programs.
2. Community Based Alternative Programs are designed for students who are academically capable but have had a lack of success in school due to social/emotional difficulties and have a history of poor attendance, confrontation with teachers/students, and or suspension.
3. Homebound is designed for students unable to participate in or benefit from regular school programs or alternate programs.
4. GROW is designed for adult students, Grade 12 students or students referred by high school principals who wish to upgrade basic skills in order to complete graduation on the Adult or Dogwood programs.

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5. A relevant community-based program for severe behaviour disordered youth over 16 is in the planning stages. It will be supported by agencies in the community including the school district.

Goals:

- Students recognize they have choices and will take responsibility for their choices
- Program structure will provide an appropriate student-centred academic, social and vocational experience for students
- Students move along the continuum from 'Storefront' to the regular program or post-secondary education or work
- Students attain realistic goals delineated by them and supporting adults in their Individual Education Plans, goals range from re-integration into the regular school, course completion, increased attendance, increased self-reliance and ability to set realistic goals, anger management and healthier life styles.
- Provide students with success in and enthusiasm for learning.
- Students acquire needed life skills.
- Students increase their feelings of self-worth, self-esteem and self determination

There is co-operation between schools, service providers and funding sources through several mechanisms. The Screening Group, made up of school district staff including administrative officers, teachers, counsellors, front line workers, MCFD staff and probation officers (when appropriate), meet on a regular basis to systematically provide information, discuss and provide in put on individual students and programs.

Teachers, Youth Care Workers, and Counsellors connect and help facilitate positive student involvement with community agencies. These might include MCFD, Mental Health, the Drug Treatment Centre, Cariboo Mental Health Association, NUPA Youth Centre run by the Boys and Girls Club, Choices for Youth, family doctors, Public Health, RCMP liaison officers and others.

Staff from these agencies are welcome regular visitors at the Alternate Program sites. The RCMP officers come out of uniform to maximise the comfort and connection to students. School district staff are also made to feel welcome at partner agency offices.

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School District No. 39 (Vancouver)

Vancouver-Britannia Community Services Centre: Strategic Plan Based on Community Mapping

Context:

Britannia Community Services Centre developed a clear strategic plan with a vision and mission statement, principles and a focus on goals in key areas. The principles include collaboration, two-way communication, equity, facilitation, inclusion, community involvement in development, delivery and evaluation of programs, neighbourliness in terms of being available as a resource and facility for community social action, quality in all realms and responsibility in ensuring goals are met.

Major areas and goals are:

- **Board Development:** To have a Board that is representative of our diverse community, and is able to effectively govern the Centre and develop supportive relationships with elected representatives in city and provincial governments.

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- **Community Development:** To be a centre for social action, a place where people meet to discuss local and neighbourhood problems and work together to solve them.
- **Community Education:** To enhance and extend learning opportunities for children, youth and adults while promoting a healthy, resilient and resourceful community.
- **Facilities:** To provide well-maintained, safe and accessible facilities to meet the educational, recreational, library, social service and community development needs of the Grandview/Woodland and Strathcona communities.
- **Finances:** To develop a financial plan that will enable the Centre to sustain present programs and meet future program and service needs.
- **Human Resources:** To recruit and support staff and volunteers who will implement the programs and service priorities of the Board of Management.
- **Partnerships:** To promote the value and benefits of integrated service delivery among existing partners and encourage the development of further partnerships with other agencies and community groups.
- **Programs and Services:** To provide high quality programs that are accessible, responsive and inclusive, and meet community needs.

Each goal is supported by an action plan.

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Services Focussed on Delivering Positive Outcomes for Vulnerable Children and Youth

School District No.61 (Greater Victoria) School Meal Program Changes for 02/03

Context:

The possibility of reduced funding for school meals led the school district to reorganize the delivery of meals ensuring continued meal service to the greatest number of vulnerable children. They decided to continue hot lunch service to 1,025 elementary students and to provide a cold sandwich lunch to the 'neediest of the needy' at the secondary schools. The program at the secondary level is no longer a universal program. Students can seek out a counselor and ask to be on the program or counselors, may offer the program to a student. Students pick up a bag lunch from a central location.

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School District No. 20 (Columbia Kootenay) A New Targeted Approach to Providing School Meals

Context:

The school district identified that the school meal program was not cost effective due to a decentralized model that required high staffing levels. The meal program was comprehensive and inclusive. The kitchens were staffed by school district employees in a number of locations, providing hot meals and available to all families. On examination, they determined that the program did not emphasize to parents that the focus of participating in the meal program was need, rather than convenience. The school district wanted to achieve two things:

1. Meals provided based on student need
2. A cost-effective and self-sufficient program

New Approach: 2002/03 School Year

For the 2002/03 school year the school district implemented the following changes:

- Meal preparation was consolidated to one site, with the cold, bag lunches transported to the identified schools. This resulted in a reduced number of employees being required to prepare the meals. The bag lunches are delivered to the schools, based on the identified number required at each school.
- Parents self identify and fill in a form requesting assistance, declaring they are in need of the support of the meal program for their children. Parents are still encouraged to contribute what they can towards the cost of the meal.
- If there are families who want to participate in the program as a convenience, they are able to do so, by paying the full cost of the meal.
- Schools and counsellors can also make recommendations for students to be included in the meal program. This is based on their observations of children who are not bringing a lunch, and knowledge of the family circumstances.
- The district was concerned that the provision of the lunches would not be stigmatizing for the students. Schools have established their own approaches that work for their students., In some schools the children pick up their lunch at recess and put it in their pack whereas in other schools staff put the lunch in the students pack or boxes in their cloakroom.

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Benefits of the New Approach

- The support is focussed on the children and youth that are most in need.
- The school district has determined a cost effective approach to meet the needs of the most vulnerable students
- There are efficiencies through the use of a centralized kitchen.

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School District No. 40 (New Westminster)

District Strategy to Maximise Community School Funding to Reach Vulnerable Students and Families

Context:

The school district was able to garner funding for only four community schools but was committed to addressing all pockets of vulnerable students as well as 'needy' schools. Through consultation and leadership the community and parents identified 10 schools to become community schools. A key coordinator funded by 'You Can Do It If You Think You Can' assisted in the district community school plan resulting in 10 community schools with coordinator support of .3 - 1.5 FTE, depending on the need in the school. A Community Access grant from Industry Canada enabled the district to top up the coordinator time as well as provide increased technical access for the schools. Effective community partners looking for a means to address the needs of vulnerable youth, such as Parks and Recreation have been formed. Seniors and arts groups also partner with individual community schools. The community schools are accountable to the school district.

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School District No. 74 (Gold Trail)

District Strategy to Maximise Community School Funding to Increase School Readiness

Context:

The school district identified that many students were starting Kindergarten without the skills necessary to become engaged learners. The district had received funding for two community schools but felt that early literacy and school readiness supports should be in more schools. The decision was made to spread the community school funding equally to five elementary schools and communities in order to support school readiness for the district's most vulnerable population. The district made it clear that community school funding would go to pre-school and school-aged students. Also, any continuing education for adults is provided only on a cost recovery basis.

Plan:

The school district offered funding to five communities to organize school programs focusing on the pre-school population. Each community received \$25,000 supported by a program coordinator

Goals:

- Improve pre-school readiness in six communities
- Encourage community schools to engage community and partners to maximise limited community school funding
- Increase parent involvement in and ownership of the schools
- Improve social skills for pre-schoolers
- Link young families together

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- Assess oral language, print awareness, phonological awareness, and mathematics development pre K and post grade one
- Track developmental performance for Grade K-three

Indicators of Success:

- A Synopsis of Comparative Results Between First Nations and Non-First Nations Students in 2001 and 2002 shows parity between First Nations and Non-First Nations Grade 1 students
- Developmental Reading performance has increased every year since inception of pre-school programs
- Community and school district support for community schools
- Kindergarten teachers note that students who were involved in on-site pre-schools showed significantly more readiness to learn

Staffing:

Part time co-ordinators in five elementary schools and one secondary school and supported by principals.

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School District No. 91 (Nechako Lakes) Behaviour Support for Vulnerable Early Primary Students

Context:

The district identified that some Kindergarten children were coming to school with severe behaviour problems and not understanding appropriate group behaviour. Some of these children were exposed to the teaching of social skills at school but were unable to demonstrate the skills in either structured settings or unstructured settings such as the playground.

A program was developed in one elementary school where a room was set aside in which a youth support worker worked part time with specific Kindergarten and early primary children with severe behaviour issues. The youth support worker reviewed, rehearsed, and used appropriate social behaviours. Appropriate behaviors were increased through positive reinforcement, lessons and practice in behavior management.

Indicators of success included improved personal interactions between children on the playground, in bus lineups and in the hallways, fewer discipline referrals to the office and less violence and aggression.

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School District No. 91 (Nechako Lakes) Behaviour Support with Weekly Goals for Vulnerable High School Students

Context:

For 12 years, Valhalla High School Alternate Education Program has ensured vulnerable students receive the best education and most positive preparation for life possible. Students arrive in the program with histories of stealing, vandalism, fighting, drug involvement and low academic achievement. The program is designed to work one-on-one with students who are able to handle a module system of studies.

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Each student receives an Individual Education Plan and two social/emotional goals to concentrate on each week. At the end of the week students write an example of progress made on their social/emotional goal and discuss the week with the youth care worker. Students struggling in a particular area develop, with staff, an action plan.

Students are given the opportunity to discuss current events, goal setting, thoughts for the week, vocabulary words and concerns each morning. Priority concerns are addressed privately by the youth care worker later in the day.

Systems are in place to encourage a positive attitude, including the ‘positive bucket’ where students, who often come with a negative attitude, put their name in for a weekly draw when staff observe positive or courteous behavior.

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The Association for Community Education in BC (ACEbc) Community Schools: A Handbook of “Best Practices”

Context:

The Association for Community Education in British Columbia, a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering and promoting all aspects of Community Education and Community Schools, has developed a handbook of ‘best practices’. This handbook, a document in progress, clearly and concisely delineates the steps to developing a new Community School, governance and roles, and on-going ‘best practice’ strategies in interfacing with the community and the school.

Specifically the following is covered:

- Definition of Community Education and Community Schools
- Steps to developing a new Community School
- Maintaining relationships and support in the community
 - Governance
 - Roles and Responsibility
 - Program Development
 - Community Education and the School Curriculum
 - Using the School Building
 - Interagency Coordination and Cooperation

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School District No. 61 (Victoria) Opportunity Rooms, a Strategy for Vulnerable Elementary Students

Context:

Five elementary schools and one secondary school in the school district have an Opportunity Room. The program provides ‘front line’ support for students who arrive at school unable to function in a classroom setting without additional help. Students engage in group and individual programs to learn appropriate social skills, managing behavior in crisis situations, help with processing traumatic experiences, engage in activities that promote pro-social behaviour, self-awareness, and develop skills in making friends.

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School District No. 39 (Vancouver) Bridge Program

Context:

The school district identified that many at risk students had a difficult time making the crucial transition from elementary to secondary school. The Bridge Program for grade 8 students was put in place to address this need and to provide support to this specific population in making a successful transition to secondary school.

Program Description:

The programs are offered in a structured and supportive environment to:

- encourage curiosity, independence and competence in school work;
- foster self-confidence and self-esteem, and
- promote the use of appropriate social skills.

Outcomes:

The students return to their regular school for grade nine, equipped with the skills to be successful and remain in school.

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School District No. 36 (Surrey) Youth Educational Support (YES) Program

Goals:

- Improve literacy and numeracy skills for students
- Improve social skills and attitudes among students
- Increase parent involvement in their children's education
- Increase the number of school/community partnerships formed to support learning opportunities for children
- Enhance learning opportunities through the provision of curriculum-related field trips, special cultural presentations, and leadership skills development opportunities

Staffing

YES Coordinator

YES Workers

- Students from the local college and universities on practicum placements
- Volunteers – many practicum students continue to volunteer once their practicum placement has ended

Linkages

The YES Coordinator meets regularly with:

- Teachers of at-risk students that are supported by YES
- Counsellors and Administrators
- Aboriginal Support Worker
- Youth Care Worker
- Parents
- Social Workers and Family Support Workers

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- Local businesses
- School-based Team

Examples of YES programming for vulnerable, at risk students

- Homework Club providing one on one tutoring
- Individual student support plans designed in collaboration with staff and other professionals who provide support to the students.
- Attendance program
- Academic counselling and support
- Increasing student problem solving strategies and coping behaviours
- Facilitates peer tutoring and peer mediation
- Home visits to support the student and their family
- Going into the community – local mall and restaurants where the students go – to prevent problems from occurring and to build positive relationships between students and local businesses
- Provide activities students would not otherwise have access to; often with the support and contributions of local businesses
- Provide opportunities for at risk students to take on leadership roles in the school and community

Indicators of Success

- Improved connection to the school demonstrated by increased numbers of students involved in individual conferences, workshops, the lunch program, study sessions, recreational activities
- Improved attendance patterns of YES students
- Improved parent/school/student interactions demonstrated by home visits, phone contacts, mediation
- Increased positive community connections demonstrated by links established with community agencies and programs, social workers and agencies, and involvement by local businesses
- Numbers of volunteers, and the length of time they who commit to participate with the youth in the program

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Co-operation between Schools, Service Providers, and Funding Sources

School District No. 33 (Chilliwack)

Families in Motion, Community Based Family Literacy and School Readiness Program

Context:

Families in Motion is a good example of a community pulling together around the issue of literacy development. It is a community-based, multi-cultural family literacy program situated in the heart of the Fraser Valley. The project began in September 1992 with the establishment of a community advisory committee, the Chilliwack Family Literacy Council.

The Council chose the Kenan model, from the National Center for Family Literacy (Seaman & Popp, 1991). This was selected largely because of the flexibility to accommodate a broad definition of family literacy as well as providing each family participant with equal access and program time. The Council decided to address literacy development through Families in Motion, family literacy programming.

Program:

Families in Motion takes place in several community locations including McCammon Elementary School. The program supports parents as their children's first and most important teachers by bringing families together to learn and participate in school and community activities. Families in Motion offers an adult program including academic upgrading, computer literacy, parenting skills using the VIRTUES model, communication skills, family reading skills, and volunteer work experience. Equal time is provided for preschoolers in the developmental children's program. Parents and children also spend time together in activities led by the children.

Families in Motion is offered to vulnerable families at no cost incorporating the supports of a light breakfast, transportation and child care. Families in Motion programs increase school readiness and learning skills of preschoolers, while increasing parents' literacy, parenting and advocacy skills at the same time. Family relationships are enriched through shared activities in a multi-cultural environment. Additional demonstrated outcomes for children and families include a 15% increase in FAS scores for primary children at McCammon Elementary School, stronger relationships between families and between vulnerable families and the school, as well as decreased isolation and transience in the community.

Vulnerable families who have been involved in Families in Motion feel connected to the school, volunteer more in the school, attend meetings and are comfortable with school staff. Program parents become involved by volunteering for media interviews to publicize events and taking on responsibilities such as the breakfast program, fundraising, recruiting, and taking on leadership by sitting on Council.

Community partners and agencies provide shared staffing, facilities, in-kind support, and volunteers. Effective partnerships with other community agencies and groups are extensive and include MCFD, the School District, Human Resources Development Canada, Fraser Valley East Literacy Association, Skwah Indian Band, Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, Vancouver Foundation, Chilliwack Landing Preschool, Sto:lo Nation, Upper Fraser Valley Health Unit, University College of the Fraser Valley and more.

Evaluation:

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The program underwent an extensive evaluation at the end of its pilot year. Since that time there have been two further evaluations:

1. The first evaluation was adapted for the Families in Motion program from the Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutor Program Evaluation Kit (Thomas, 1989). The evaluation was based on seventeen 'good practice statements' in the areas of philosophy, planning, community involvement and linkages, awareness activities, access, facilities and equipment, administration, participation, staff training and development, volunteer support services, adult assessment, family support services, instructional strategies, materials, program evaluation, and funding.
2. Four questionnaires (Bate, 1996) were developed by staff to gather information for a program review regarding general information on the program such as schedule, time, hours of instruction, staff, and volunteers. The questionnaires measured program performance on the good practice statements, measured outcomes of the parent and children's programs, facility hosts' satisfaction and support for the program.

The evaluation confirmed the direction the program was taking, renewed the energy of the staff and Council, strengthened the commitment to build and expand the program, and helped to raise funds and signal success.

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School District No. 73 (Kamloops/Thompson) Senior Level Agency Collaboration: Social Equity Steering Committee

The school district will act in a leadership role to reach as many vulnerable students as possible through school based funding. District planning for school linked services is done collaboratively by senior staff on an on-going basis. The Social Equity Steering Committee is made up of senior School District and senior MCFD staff, including the Community Services Manager, the Manager of Early Intervention and Prevention and a Mental Health representative.

The Social Equity Steering Committee evaluates, orders reviews and manages programs in an ongoing manner. Funding is adjusted between programs in an effort to maximize efficiency and meet identified needs. MCFD and the School District together are developing jointly funded and staffed programs in specific areas of high need. This would include programs for students with autism, students in acute crisis, and students with extreme behaviour and/or psychiatric disorders.

Contact: Dan Cairnie, Director of Support Services (250) 374-0679 dcairnie@sd73.bc.ca

School District No. 69 (Qualicum) "Building Learning Together" A Cooperative Community Literacy Project using Effective Partnerships

Context:

The school district is committed to breaking the cycle of illiteracy and school failure by supporting strong family relationships and community capacity. They expect to break this cycle through effective learning opportunities that teach parents to assist their children in developing pre-school and primary level social and literacy skills.

A growing number of families in the school district communities were struggling with poverty and low levels of literacy. In addition, they did not have the knowledge of local resources nor access to

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transportation.. Many parents were also unaware of their important role as the first educator in their young children's lives.

The initial steering committee, representing many community agencies, Health agencies, Federal and Provincial government, education, First Nations and police, looked at joint strategies to assist overlapping clientele. Goals included:

- improving family literacy,
- building community relationships and partnerships to support early literacy (zero-six),
- increasing parents involvement in their children's early learning,
- enhancing children's education,
- improving linkages among services and community agencies, and
- increasing family awareness of existing services and agencies.

The school district has shown their support by funding a part-time Community Literacy Liaison (CLL) position to partner on coordination with a staff person from the Regional Child Care Resource and Referral Program. Other strong community partners include MCFD, Project Literacy and Public Health. The coordinators connect community agencies with the school district to share resources and expertise, work with community partners to identify vulnerable families at risk for literacy weaknesses, and develop initiatives where parents have the opportunity to act as their children's first educator.

Initiatives undertaken or planned:

'Building Learning Together' began as a series of satellite 'Mother Goose' early literacy sites and expanded in response to need or partner initiatives to include the following:

- Parent-Child Mother Goose Program, a educational program using rhymes, songs, and storytelling in 10 satellite locations
- Grand-buddy Program, a volunteer initiative involving seniors and others
- Through a partnership with White Spot: Hug a Book and Read to Me, a program encouraging parents to maintain a daily reading program by using a special calendar to track home reading. The program is then returned to a Mother Goose site or daycare for a White Spot coupon
- Through a Community Policing partnership: Top Cops, a home reading incentive for school age students children increase their 'rank' from constable to commissioner with awards such as getting a ride to school in a police car
- Mother Goose goes to School bridges pre-school and school by bringing young children into the school libraries for activities and book borrowing
- Mother Goose Birthday Party , an annual celebration where two to five year olds receive a book and then participate in activities like storytime, crafts, music or puppet/drama session facilitated by Grandbuddies
- A Mother Goose mascot participates in parades and community events, raising the awareness of early literacy in the community
- Books for Babes, a program in which baby bags, sewn by seniors, and containing a book, toy and community children's services information, are given to new parents
- Treasure Boxes: lending libraries in child care centres
- Words on Wheels, is a community bus donated by the school district. The bus has been gutted and refitted by volunteers and students and is run by volunteer bus drivers, grand-buddies and community visitors. It has a computer, books, videos and goes to locations where young families gather, i.e. the malls and parks.
- Munchkin Land is a miniature community of child sized buildings for children to explore and strengthen language skills and social interactive opportunities

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'Building Learning Together' has been extremely effective in building partnerships with other community agencies and groups. The coordinators actively involve the community by reaching out to increase donations, partnerships, and volunteers.

Fifteen schools, agencies, and churches provide sites for Building Learning Together Programs free of charge. Over 60 community businesses, schools, churches, individuals and agencies have contributed to the program as well as MCFD, HRDC, CAPC the Royal Bank, Vancouver Foundation and the school district. Over 200 volunteers from the 'Grand-Buddy Program', school district students, the senior's lodge and the Rotary Club also support the project.

Contact: Deborah Davenport, Community Literacy Liaison 250 248-0467
ddavenpo@sd70.bc.ca windsongcom@shaw.ca
Candice Morgan, Assistant Superintendent (250) 248-4241 phone; (250) 248-5767 fax

School District No. 85 (Vancouver Island North) Alternative Program Selection Committee: An Integrated Coordinated Approach

Context:

The Alternative Program provides supports to those students requiring additional support services to function in the education system. The school district has a community-based team in place to ensure there is an integrated approach to supporting the needs of these students.

There is a formal process, written in the school district special services handbook, for the 'Selection Committee of the Alternate Program' to address the placement and release of students in the district alternate program. This process is also published for the community so everyone is knowledgeable about the process. The formal process ensures continuity, which is especially important given the significant turnover of staff in the partner agencies.

Referrals to the committee come from schools, families, students, MCFD social workers, MCFD probation workers, MCFD mental health workers, as well as First Nations and community agencies.

The Selection Committee is made up of representatives from:

- The school district: i.e. alternate program teacher, child and youth care worker, school-based team member, Principal, District Administrator for Special Services
- MCFD: Team leader and/or the Probation Worker
- MCFD Mental Health: when appropriate
- Public Health: when appropriate
- First Nations / Tribal Council: when appropriate

If it is determined the student does not meet the criteria for the alternate program, contact is made with the School Based Team to develop a plan with the student and their family to provide an appropriate educational experience.

Having an open process facilitates the development of an integrated, coordinated approach to supports for students and their families.

Contact: Anne LeBeau, District Principal Special Services (250) 949-6618 alebeau@sd85.bc.ca

School District No. 52 (Prince Rupert) Kid Specific

Context:

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Social agencies in the community were finding that some children and youth were falling through the cracks. The school district, MCFD, local First Nations Bands and community agencies formed Kid Specific where front-line professionals and organizations meet approximately every two weeks to discuss specific high risk children and youth. The meetings centre on prevention in a wrap-around collaborative approach. MCFD is the lead agency and a staff member chairs the meetings.

Kid Specific participants identify young people at risk and develop individual action plans in collaboration with the other community organizations. The goal is to provide coordinated services to school-aged children and youth in the community and minimize the potential for duplication and manipulation of services. The meetings also create an excellent opportunity to provide a collaborative approach to support a child or youth that is new to the district or who may be in need of assistance.

Administration meetings of senior staff from agencies involved in Kid Specific were initiated to deal with policy issues. This committee also meets regularly and provides leadership for integrated support services for vulnerable children and youth.

Both the front-line and senior staff have indicated their support for the Kids Specific meetings and programs.

A core group of participants attend the Kid Specific meetings on a regular basis with others attending if necessary. Representatives from agencies providing services to at risk youth in Prince Rupert area include:

- school counselors and principals from local schools,
- Prince Rupert substance abuse workers,
- community health nurses from the Health Authority,
- R.C.M.P. community liaison,
- MCFD youth probation,
- MCFD youth mental health,
- MCFD social workers
- Community Enrichment Society,
- Nisg'a social workers,
- Northwest Inter-tribal Family and community services social workers,
- street workers,
- youth support workers,
- Lax Kw'alaams family counselling,
- Prince Rupert Friendship House, and
- youth residential staff.

Contact: Brian Kangas, Director of Instruction (250) 627-0770 bkangas@sd52.bc.ca

School District No. 51 (Boundary) and the Ministry of Children and Family Development Co-location and Linking of Community Services and Schools, Broadening the Model

The school district made plans to co-locate many community service agencies and programs in several schools to help link schools and services to children and youth. Due to declining enrolment, classrooms and facilities are available to support this initiative. The school district is providing space at little or no cost to MCFD and Ministry of Health for programs and services. This will broaden the presence of service providers in the schools and the opportunity for coordination and collaboration of services with the school district.

An example of co-location includes housing of early childhood programs such as Make Children First and Infant Development, and contracted early childhood services for example 'Young Moms' being held in the Perley School annex. In addition, two elementary schools and the former school board office have made renovations and reconfigured rooms to be used by community services that link to the schools. As an example, two elementary schools are renovating a classroom to include a bathroom, office space, and meeting room with private access for use by MCFD and other contracted agencies anytime day or evening. The former School Board office is also being

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reconfigured to accommodate MCFD Contracted Services, Public Health, and visiting space for other agencies providing services such as Drug & Alcohol counselling.

Another examples which provide an excellent opportunity to link with the school and serve children with minimal disruption to their learning activities include providing office space in an elementary school for a Mental Health Worker. MCFD staff are also provided with space in the school to meet and interview families.

In addition, integrated case management meetings are an integral to service delivery in the community. Participation in these meeting varies but includes any combination of elementary or high school counselors, vice-principals, Learning Assistance teachers, childcare workers, parent/s and youth as well as staff from the Alcohol and Drug programs, Mental Health, Child Protection., and Adult Mental Health.

Schools and school staff further partner or link with Mental Health and Youth Services in the following examples:

- Mental Health Services chaired the sub-committee of the Child & Youth Committee to develop Suicide Prevention Guidelines for Grand Forks/Boundary.
- School and MCFD counselors have done group counseling together at both elementary and high school levels.
- School, Mental Health and Youth Services staff partner on presentations to parents and school staff.
- Mental Health Services is collaborating with the school district to identify needs and facilitate groups in the elementary schools. Topics include children of divorce and loss and grief.

Contacts: Denny Kemprud, Superintendent Phone: dkemprud@sunshinecable.com Phone: 250-442-8258 Fax: 250-442-8800
Marion Kolesnikoff, Registered Psychologist, MCFD
Phone: (250) 442-8672 Marion.Kolesnikoff@gems2.gov.bc.ca

School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) Joint Management and Joint Advisory Committee

Representatives from MCFD and the school district have met regularly since 1997 to oversee the development of programs funded by MCFD. Through a Joint Management Committee and Joint Advisory Committee issues related to social responsibility and school based services are addressed. At least once a year a report is presented to the Board of School Trustees. The 2002/03 Joint Management and Joint Advisory Committee have been expanded to include representatives from the Vancouver Island Health Authority, the District Parents Advisory Committee, CUPE, Nanaimo Teachers Association, and Nanaimo Principals Association.

Contact: Micheline Cawley, District Principal, Student Support mcawley@sd68.bc.ca

School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) Community Schools Collaboration and Team Approach

Context:

The school district wanted to address community development in a cost-effective manner and to support vulnerable students in as many schools possible within the disadvantaged area of Harewood. The school district took two funding allocations and spread it to the six Harewood Family of

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Community Schools, four of which have on-site coordinators. The schools are located in the inner city and work as a team with a school counselor/ team leader to provide integrated community development for the community of Harewood.

The Harewood Family of Community Schools with a combined enrolment of approximately 3000 students has one of the highest poverty rates within the Nanaimo area. In early 2002, the Harewood Family of Community Schools and the Harewood Project Society merged to form the Harewood Neighbourhood Association. This association has BC Society Status.

The schools work towards improving educational outcomes for vulnerable students and help students learn and grow while supporting and strengthening their families and community. The Harewood Family of Community Schools brings together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families, and communities – before, during, and after school, and during the summer holidays.

Programming partners include Boys and Girls Clubs of Nanaimo; Nanaimo Parks, Recreation, and Culture; Human Resources Development Canada and Industry Canada; Pacific Sports; Snuneymuxw First Nations; Malaspina University College; Central Vancouver Island Multi-cultural Society; the RCMP; Nanaimo Badminton Club, Nanaimo Food Share's Community Kitchen and Summer Lunch Munch Programs, and Central Island.net.

Partnerships have enabled the Harewood Family of Community Schools to offer programs such as:

- parenting classes to develop strong parenting skills
- pre-school programs encouraging parent and toddler bonding and supporting early learning readiness
- primary reading enrichment programs
- Kindergarten introduction programs
- summer academic programs for vulnerable students
- ESL summer school
- Family Reading Evenings
- 'So This is High School' for at risk students in partnership with the School Liaison RCMP Officer
- 'Good Food Box' which provides good quality local vegetables and fruit at low cost to community families
- Summer Munch provides 6,000 lunches for area children during the summer
- Life Skills Programs
- Community Kitchens programs in cooperation with Nanaimo Food Share

Contact: Micheline Cawley, District Principal, Student Support mcawley@sd68.bc.ca

Participation by Parents and the Broader Community with Schools, Teachers, Staff and Students

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) James Bay Community School Diverse Volunteer Base

Context:

James Bay Community School has a tradition of volunteerism and commitment to their community. Through volunteer opportunities, the school strengthens connections between students, families and community members. As a result, the students have developed an increased sense of social responsibility and connections with their community. Volunteers include students, families, community members (especially seniors), developmentally disabled adults and special needs students. The volunteers support both programs for students in the school and programs for the community.

Supporting Academic Achievement:

Community members are trained by the school to work one-on-one with children requiring additional support in reading. The volunteers, who visit the school weekly, work with two or three primary students, assisting the students through a series of leveled reading materials.

Building Community Connections:

There is a large population of seniors and retired people living in James Bay, many in apartment complexes near the school. The James Bay Community School Society has operated a twice-weekly seniors dinner program where a group of 10 to 14 active seniors have volunteered for 25 years. The program provides a meal to between 75 and 110 seniors with funding from a minimal meal charge and a grant from the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

The Children who are enrolled in the School Age Care program assist senior volunteers set tables for dinner. The weekly dinners provide a nutritious meal and opportunities for the isolated elderly to eat in a congregate setting. They can socialize with others, volunteer in the program, or in other programs taking place at the school. For the children and families in the school, this program models the importance of connecting with seniors in their community.

'Win Win' Opportunities:

The Community School Association provides a café for the community. Community Active Living clients volunteer in the café on a regular basis. In addition, twice a week a team of five developmentally challenged adults provides service, by helping to assemble bag lunches for the school meal program.

Source: Submission by Jesse Hyder, Coordinator James Bay Community School
Contact: Jesse Hyder, Coordinator jhyder@sd61.bc.ca
Note: e-mailed Jesse on 03/28 for feedback

School District No. 72 (Campbell River) School Meal Program Contracted to PAC

Context:

The school district wanted to refocus the school meal programs to concentrate on the most vulnerable students, and to encourage sustainability by building partnerships.

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Parent Advisory Councils (PAC) were invited to apply to the school district for funding a meal program to provide meals/snacks to those students that require support. One of the principles was to determine an approach that would be sustainable once provincial funding was eliminated.

To apply for the funding the PACs developed a written plan that included:

- the budget,
- how the program would operate,
- the number of meals to be supplied at no cost,
- the number of meals to be supplied with cost, and
- an evaluation plan.

The school district hosted a workshop by a PAC member who had developed and operated meal programs as an in-service opportunity for the PACs in setting up their new programs.

Contact: John W. Spry, Assistant Superintendent, Phone (250) 830-2349
john.spry@sd72.bc.ca

School District No. 41 (Burnaby) Increased Parent Contributions to School Meals

The Burnaby School District has developed a district-wide strategy to manage increasing demand for the school meal program in light of the fixed level of funding available from the provincial government to support the program.

The strategy calls for a combination of increased communication, a district-wide standardized menu, on-going monitoring of costs and student, and school and community support. A strong effort is made to reinforce with parents that contributions are needed to keep the program running. Parents of students participating in the program are requested to contribute \$45 per month. This amount covers the total cost of food and program infrastructure. Not all families will be able to contribute the total amount but are encouraged to pay what they can afford.

The school district has been very successful in increasing parent contributions, in part due to ongoing communication. Letters are sent to all parents two or three times a year, stressing the importance of the contributions as an essential addition to the MCFD funding. As well, parents are supportive of the standardized four-week hot lunch menu in place, thus increasing participation. The school meal coordinator monitors the monthly contribution rates, manages staff, and supervises the quality of the food, menu selection, safe food handling, nutritional standards and financial details. Community contributions consist of donations from individuals, service clubs, businesses and specific grants from provincial and national organisations and foundations.

The district has been able to feed 700 additional students since the district strategy was introduced. The school meal program has a well-developed student component providing many students with their first job. They obtain food safe skills, develop increased social responsibility and receive a letter of recommendation. Without the enthusiastic support of student volunteers, the program would not operate as effectively.

Contact: Elliott Grieve, Associate Superintendent of Schools, phone: 604-664-8385
egrieve@sd41.bc.ca

Town of Oliver

Food for Thought provides breakfast to South Okanagan Secondary School students

The Town of Oliver depends on agriculture, tourism and other related industries as their main employer. The population is diverse, a blend of many ethnic background and age groups. More than 50% of the community is retired or on sources of fixed income. At the other end of the scale, there are two elementary schools and a senior secondary school. The total school population is about 1480 students.

During a community use council meeting in the fall of 2001, the issue of obstacles to learning was discussed. One of the obstacles addressed was the possibility of kids not eating breakfast in the morning. The following spring a pilot project was launched by the mayor. She organized a Food for Thought committee providing breakfast twice per week for ALL students in the secondary school, to avoid labelling hungry students.

The community bakes muffins (500 home-made muffins per week), the local packinghouse supplies apples at no cost and fruit juice boxes are partially donated from SunRype headquarters in Kelowna. BuyLow Foods, who is the major sponsor, supplies bananas, milk, breakfast bars and some juice every month (250 of each item!). The Town Council supports the project with \$1000 from the 'Assets for Youth' program. This program provides funds in areas where local youth feel less than valuable in their community, supporting initiatives that connect adults and youth. A nutrition grant from Breakfast for Learning, Canadian Living Foundation completed the donations, that are used to purchase fruit juice only. Donations received totalled \$3,626. The expenses for the program from October 2002 to March 2003 total \$2,400.

Program goals:

1. express the value of local youth
2. feed hungry students breakfast
3. connect adults to youth

The program runs twice per week serving 250 students per day with the full support of the secondary school administrators and staff. Community volunteers deliver the food and give out breakfast foods to students from a table at the entrance to the school. Volunteers include members of the local RCMP detachment, the Mayor and other community members. Students have expressed a greater comfort with community adults and adult volunteers are less fearful of local teens. The students are choosing healthier food, appear happier and have longer attention spans.

Contact: Mayor Linda Larson (250) 498-3404

Effective Partnerships with Community Agencies and Groups

School District 39 (Vancouver)

Supporting Early Childhood Development through Partnerships

Britannia is one of the original community schools and has been in existence for 25 years. Based on the University of British Columbia Asset Mapping, the Britannia catchment area is the most disadvantaged in Vancouver in terms of health, income, employment, language development and social competence.

Britannia's exceptional strength is the high degree to which it works with other community organizations, agencies, business and three levels of government. Britannia Community Education acts as a catalyst to bring in funding and programs into the Britannia complex for the benefit of children, youth and families. Britannia leverages limited core funding into a budget exceeding \$450,000 annually through co-operation, expertise in grant administration and other areas, leadership, goodwill and trust which enables Britannia to sustain valuable working partnerships. Home Instruction for Parents with Pre-school Youngsters (HIPPPY) is a good example of just one initiative in which sixteen partners are involved.

In developing HIPPPY, the community school worked with neighbourhood partners to identify a support program that would positively influence the outcomes for young children in the community and increase their readiness to learn when they entered the school. The community, after considerable research identified HIPPPY as the approach they wanted to implement. The Community School facilitated the development of the partnership, and has provided space for the program coordinator.

Note: This program is not funded through the MCFD school-based funding, it is an example where the MCFD school-based funding has provided the infrastructure to support the community to access the required funding.

The partners in the implementation of HIPPPY are the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Britannia Community Services Centre, Simon Fraser University (Community Education Programs and the Faculty of Education). Funders include the federal and provincial governments as well as private foundations.

Program objectives include supporting parents as the child's first educator and improve child/parent interactions, improve the academic performance of HIPPPY children, provide jobs and training to parents who typically experience multiple employment barriers and contribute to the development of strong, active communities.

The program is a combination of weekly outreach with the Home Visitors connecting with the parents in their home, bi-weekly group meetings and monthly special events for all the participants. The first evaluation of outcomes for kindergarten children whose families participated in HIPPPY show positive outcomes and indicate the children have entered school ready to learn and succeed. The families are also becoming more connected to programming and supports available in the community.

Contact: Mike Evans, Britannia Community Education Coordinator (604) 713-8273
mevans@vsb.bc.ca

School District No. 39 (Vancouver)

Tupper Young Parent Services, a Partnership

The Vancouver School Board, Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School, the YWCA and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority have partnered to deliver Tupper Young Parent Services to vulnerable

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teenage parents and pregnant teens. The program goals are to facilitate high school completion for teenage parents, 12-19 with a flexible education program. This program supports the teenage parents with parenting education, providing childcare for the infants, personal support and basic needs stabilization. The program is situated in a comfortable classroom at the high school and staffed with a Youth and Family Worker (YFW). Students are fully integrated into regular grade classes but spend their breaks and spares in the program classroom or at the Childcare Centre.

A team including the YFW, the Vice-Principal, YWCA Coordinator of Children's Services, YWCA Child Care Supervisor, and the Community Health Nurse meet monthly to discuss students and the program.

Liaison and referral agencies and partnerships include MCFD, Pacific Community Resources, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Ministry of Human Resources, Broadway Youth Resource Centre, YWCA, ACCESS Parenting, BC Women's Hospital, BCACEPP, and Healthiest Babies Possible.

Contact: Jennifer Palmer, School Principal jpalmer@vsb.bc.ca

School District No. 52 (Prince Rupert)

Roosevelt Park Community School's Effective Partnerships

Roosevelt Community School has offered Holiday Fun Seekers Day Camp for the last eight years. The program is a partnership between Human Resource Development Canada, the school district and the Roosevelt Community School Society.

The nine week summer program begins with two weeks of leadership training, team building and developing conflict resolution strategies as well as planning for the youth hired to be junior day camp leaders. Each junior member of the summer camp plans, organizes, and implements a fun filled week in a theme of their choice and completes a self-evaluation form at the end of the week. A student who has participated as a junior leader in past summers acts as the senior summer program co-ordinator. They are responsible for ensuring the success of the junior leaders and also assists with the Program Coordinator's evaluation of the program.

The summer camp program is highly valued by community families and is offered at a minimal cost for middle and low-income families.

For many of the teen camp leaders Holiday Fun Seekers is their first job. They receive a letter of recommendation, feel successful, expand their knowledge of the community and resources, are given leadership training, and are further prepared for the future job market.

Contact: Donna McNeil-Clark phone: (250) 627-5128 dmc@sd52.bc.ca

School District No. 71, (Comox Valley)

School Meals Community Partnerships

Context:

The school board was committed to reaching as many at risk students as possible they look for innovative ways to maximize the funding. As a result, there are no paid staff positions. While there was originally a salaried position in one elementary school (based on the original application), on the retirement of the incumbent, the Board directed that a more equitable distribution of resources be implemented.

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Community Programs/ School District Partnerships

Ecole Puntledge Park Elementary:

There is a long history of a parent run lunch program at this school. The program is completely operated by parent volunteers, including fund-raising, administration, meal planning and preparation. The volunteers have liaised with the community nutritionist regarding the menu planning to ensure it meets standards. The School District allocated \$5,000 to this program as a contribution, thus making it a community/school district partnership.

Dry Foods Program:

Two community members approached the school district wishing to contribute to the well being of at risk students. The Dry Foods Program is the result. The community members fund raise, purchase the food items, arrange delivery of supplies to one of the secondary schools and do the administration and record keeping for the program.

Every school in the district may submit an order monthly to stock up their food cupboard with non-perishable nourishing food items. The schools monitor access to the cupboard to ensure it is for at risk students, not just those who forgot their lunch. The school orders are put together and delivered by the life skills class at the secondary school as a work experience activity.

The School District has agreed to match community donations to this program as a contribution, thus making it a community/school district partnership. This year the contribution is about \$6,000.

Innovative Approaches

- The school meal funding to a grade seven to nine alternate school is used as part of the CAPP program. The students participate in the planning, shopping and preparation of the meals as part of the curriculum.
- A community school association has been awarded the contract for the provision of meals for that school. The funding supports both the provision of meals and nutrition education at the school for students and their families.
- Other schools have from \$250 to \$1,500 allocated to address emergency situations or to provide breakfasts, snacks or lunches to the most at risk students. This funding may also provide 'cafeteria tickets' to at risk students or to fund at risk students when hot meals are brought into the school. In one secondary school this funding also provides meal support within a teen mom's program.

Contact: Liz McKenzie Phone: (250) 334-5500 Liz.McKenzie@sd71.bc.ca
Note: e-mailed to Liz for feedback 03/31

School District No. 22 (Vernon) School Meal Program Partnerships

School Administration informed the Vernon and District Association for Community Living about an opportunity to bid for the School Meals Program contract. The association, which had the infrastructure and certification to prepare meals, was awarded the contract for two elementary schools.

Developmentally disabled clients at Vernon and District Association for Community Living, shop, bake, put together the lunches and deliver them to the schools. Through this, the program

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participants have developed a strong sense of pride in helping to feed hungry children while the students have come to accept and appreciate the special needs adults.

Contact: Vernon and District Association for Community Living (250) 542-2374
vdac@shawcable.com

School District No. 39 (Vancouver) Canucks Family Education Centre

This is partnership between Britannia Community Services Centre, Canucks for Kids Fund, Literacy BC, Vancouver School Board, Vancouver Public Library, SFU, UBC (Human Early Learning Partnership HELP), BC Council for Families, BC Association for Family Resource Programs, Vancouver Sun's Raise a Reader program.

It is a pilot program to positively impact low literacy levels in Vancouver's Eastside. The program has four components that provide a comprehensive approach to family literacy:

- Children's literacy programs in schools and pre-schools
- Adult programs through school, college or continuing education programs
- Involving parents in their children's education in schools or libraries and reading together programs (building on the success of the HIPPIE program that works with pre-school children)
- Teaching parenting skills to adults thus creating a more positive, learning-friendly environment for the children

Parents will be trained to work in classrooms with their children to promote reading and literacy. Parents will then have sessions with a literacy instructor to provide support in their own literacy as well as preparing them to work with the children in the classroom and at home.

HELP is conducting a formal evaluation.

Contact: Mike Evans, Britannia Community Education Coordinator (604) 713-8273
mevans@vsb.bc.ca

School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake) W. E. Graham Community School Donations, Services and Government Cost Savings

Context:

The W.E. Graham Community Service Society serves the village and the outlying rural community of the Regional District of the Central Kootenays from Slocan south. Community issues include poverty, isolation, lack of services, vandalism, drug and alcohol abuse, literacy, transportation, unemployment, lack of youth programs & services; lack of resources for families and single parents. Average education levels, household income, family income, employment income, and incidence of low income are lower in Slocan than the rest of the Central Kootenays. The unemployment rate and incidence of low income are higher in Slocan than the rest of the Central Kootenays. Slocan is a resource-based area in terms of its economy and economic diversification is critical to the long-term health of this rural area.

The society was incorporated in 1997 and is governed by a community board of volunteers. With the official recognition as a community school, funding was provided to hire a coordinator and to act on the request of residents for specific programs, services, and events. The community school has a broad-based community system of family supports and services focused on delivering positive outcomes for vulnerable children, youth and families.

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Examples of Supports for Vulnerable Children

Summer Day Camp:

- The camp spans eight weeks divided between two age groups five to eight and nine to 12.
- The cost is \$35.00 per week for those that can pay and free for those who can't
- The camp includes at least one major out-trip in each week depending on that week's theme and age group i.e.; River Rafting, Kayaking, Horseback Riding, Rock Climbing etc.
- Vulnerable children are identified by teachers and given Day Camp vouchers on awards day (this is very low key and could be given for example as a citizenship award). Last year there were 10 kids in that category and they were there for a number of reasons such as social skill development, parent respite, or just as a supervisory tool. Everyone had a wonderful summer and the experience made a positive difference in each child's school experience this year.
- Many low-income children attended camp for free. It's the only summer vacation that many kids in our community have.

Kids as Authors:

Kids as Authors is a collaboration between a classroom teacher, a community volunteer (who is also an adult student in our alternate program) and our computer lab administrator. This program encourages grade four students to write and illustrate a series of stories. Working one on one with the adult volunteer and with the help of our CAP site technician the stories are typed, the illustrations scanned and a book is created to put in the school library. There have been amazing results and there is now a waiting list of kids who want their turn to be a published author. The program is an excellent enhancement to learning and a great builder of self-esteem for our most vulnerable students.

Wilderness Program Bursary: Each year the society sponsors a grade nine or 10 student, chosen by the program teacher and the school administrator, to attend. The Community School Society pays the \$750 tuition fee that many families can't afford.

After School Program:

The Program provides kids with a place to go after school, a nutritious snack, a little home work help if they feel motivated to do it, (this isn't a homework club). This program came out of need identified at a parenting conference to address concerns about keeping the most vulnerable children fed and off the streets without singling them out. The program is funded by the Columbia Basin Trust.

Effective Partnerships

The W.E. Graham Community Service Society depends on community expertise, existing services, volunteers, and partnerships. In addition to \$75,000 community school funding from the Ministry for Children and Family Development, the society has leveraged \$377,550 through additional grants and donations, government cost savings, volunteer time, space donations, and services in kind. The community school has a broad-based community system of family supports and services focused on delivering positive outcomes for vulnerable children, youth and families.

Partners include:

- Ministry for Children and Family Development;
- the School District;
- Selkirk College;
- Open Learning Agency;
- Slovan Lake Family Literacy Project;
- Industry Canada;
- Regional District of Central Kootenay Area H;
- Village of Slovan;
- the Columbia Basin Trust;
- Slovan Forest Products;
- Slovan Valley Recreation Commission;
- HRDC;
- Youth Employment Services;
- Youth Community Action Program;
- Individual Artists;
- Smiling Otter Kayaks and Canoes;

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- Ministry of Community Aboriginal and Women's Services;
- Gifts In Kind International;
- West Kootenay Women's Council;
- The Advocacy Centre;
- West Kootenay Family and Childcare Society;
- Childcare Connections;
- Kootenay Boundary Community Health Service Society

Quote from a support letter written by a community member:

"The greatest joy in my life in the last several years has come from volunteering at the community school. Our sense of community and ability to meet the needs of our small population has grown every year, and we have come to see ourselves as a community that can set goals, and accomplish them."

"As we face difficult economic times, the community school discerns what services are most needed by the community, and finds ways to provide those programs and services. This is the kind of attitude in a community that has, and continues to build a solid base that is not easily shaken by the tides of resource based economics.

In these difficult times, we need community spirit, and real solutions available to us here, where we live, delivered by others who live here, and know the realities first hand. People have learned to come to the community school for all kinds of help, whether they are unemployed, undereducated, dealing with addiction, abuse, or loneliness."

Contact: W.E.Graham Community Services Society, Box 10, Slocan B.C. V0G 2C0
Ph: (250)355-2484 Fax: (250)355-238 E-mail: comschl@netidea.com
Attn: Joanne Ellis / Carol Hockley Coordinators

Commitment to Evidence-Based Decision Making

School District No. 36 (Surrey) Surrey School District Inner City Literacy Program

Context:

In 1998/99 the Surrey School Board was concerned that students in schools located in communities with high poverty were disadvantaged relative to students in other schools. To address this the board initiated a pilot project allocated a literacy teacher to address the needs in the identified schools.

Research Findings:

Grade one results:

- Project schools averaged a grade equivalent score one month ahead of the control schools
- Project schools achieved the national average of 50th percentile while control schools were at the 42nd percentile

Grade two results:

- Project schools averaged a grade equivalent score four months ahead of control schools
- Project schools reached the 57th percentile while control schools were at the 43rd percentile.
- Gains in the five month period:
- Project schools gained nine months (grade one) and 10 months (grade two) while the national average is seven months for grade one, and six months for grade two.

Phonemic Awareness Test Results (administered in the Fall and Spring)

- Regular students' scores raised to 89.5 in the spring, from 61.4 in the fall.
- ESL students' scores raised to 81.6 in the spring, from 25.2 in the fall.
- Special Project students' (identified as being at high risk) scores raised to 73.8 in the spring, from 17.0 in the fall.

Conclusions:

- When a school and group of teachers within the school focus on a specific improving student learning goal, significant, measurable success is possible
- A combination of strategies offers the best opportunity for success
- Having a particular focus of attending to the most at-risk students in the early grades will have the greatest effect given the extra resources provided It cannot be assumed that new teachers have the pre-requisite skills to deal with the specific needs of at risk students. In-service and a culture of collegiality and collaboration are essential for these teachers.

As a result of the study, the program has been expanded to the 10 elementary schools with the highest levels of poverty and transience.

School District No. 35 (Langley) Literacy Support Programs: Reading Recovery

School District 35 has been tracking the progress of students who received Reading Recovery support in Grade one by reviewing their FSA results in Grade four. The results show that the majority of the lowest achieving students in grade one who received Reading Recovery intervention were able to maintain average levels or better in Grade four reading and writing.

Reading Recovery, a program developed in New Zealand in the 1970's, is designed to dramatically reduce the number of students with literacy difficulties in an education system, and to reduce the cost to the system of long term support for those children. It is designed to accelerate the progress of the lowest achieving readers and writers to average levels in an average of 12 – 15 weeks. The Canadian

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Institute of Reading Recovery, located at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, holds the trademark for Reading Recovery and has the responsibility to ensure standards and quality control.

Contact: Barbara Hill, Reading Recovery Teacher Leader,
Langley Reading Recovery Centre, (604) 530-9718
bhill@sd35.bc.ca

Note: Many school districts provide Reading Recovery to increase literacy skills

Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and School District No. 39 (Vancouver) Cooking Fun for Families Programs In Vancouver Inner City Schools

Cooking Fun for Families is a weekly afternoon program for school children and their parents facilitated by a coordinator, school staff and volunteers. Children participate in cooking, games, and nutrition-related activities while parents participate in menu planning, cooking and clean up. The program emphasizes learning how to read labels, introducing new foods and food-related terms, and preparing healthy, economical foods that children will enjoy. At the end of each class, participants share a healthy and delicious meal together.

Cooking Fun for Families programs are currently being developed or are running in 10 Vancouver inner-city elementary schools. Programs are individualized according to the unique needs and resources available to each school.

The program model was developed out of a health promotion research project funded by the BC Health Research Foundation in 1994-97. This program complements school breakfast and lunch programs and has been endorsed and recommended as a core program for inner city schools by the Inner City School Advisory Committee, Vancouver School Board (May 1999). The Community Nutritionist is a key partner, taking on the responsibility for the coordination of the program. This includes program development, liaison with school administrators and community programmers, grant and report writing, fundraising, development of quality nutrition and food safety standards, training and coordination of staff and program evaluation. Inner city school staff, with the assistance of parent volunteers, run the program in the schools.

There is a process and outcome evaluation project underway with the UBC Faculty of Agriculture Sciences - Food, Nutrition and Health Program and Institute of Health Promotion Research. The results of the study will help with accountability and evidence of program benefits in these schools.

Cooking Fun for Families is a food skill-building program that supports families around a variety of issues including food security, life skills, socialization and integration within the school-communities.

Program Goals:

To strengthen families and communities and improve nutritional well being and food security by addressing needs in an integrated school-community context.

Program Philosophy:

Active learning, parent participation and enjoyment

- Active learning enables everyone to explore, discover, try and experiment with food and recipes through cooking and tasting
- Parent participation enhances family learning and the integration of new skills into daily habits.
- Enjoyment and pleasure in making and eating new foods together assists learning and the subsequent adoption of new food habits.

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Inter-Agency Collaboration: Programs are built on collaboration between school, community, families and the University of British Columbia (UBC)

Schools – staff includes local and area administrators, neighbourhood assistants, multicultural workers, project teachers, district staff and counsellors.

Community – includes community centre programmers, community nutritionist, KidSafe Society, Vancouver Food Bank, Boys’ and Girls’ Club, neighbourhood house staff and funders. Funders include the Royal Bank, Central City Mission Foundation, Vancouver Foundation and United Way.

Families – includes interested parents, children and parent advisory committees.

UBC – Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Institute of Health Promotion Research are assisting with an evaluation with funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2001-04).

Benefits:

- A safe place for families to learn and play
- A setting where parents and children can participate together enhancing the family unit
- Skill development in budgeting, meal planning and food preparation
- Increases awareness of healthy foods and good nutrition
- Opportunity for networking and socializing
- Cultural exposure
- Enhances parent comfort in accessing the school in a positive way
- Provides parents with increased access to services such as counselling, parenting classes and pre-employment skill development

Sample Activity Schedule*

Prior to Program Day

Plan menu
Order food from Food Bank – usually one week ahead
Organize children’s games and activity sheets

Morning of Program

Shop for fresh fruit and vegetables, pick up Food Bank order, photocopy activity sheets

Afternoon

1:00-3:00 Parent Participation
Menu planning, prepare snacks for children, prepare main meal
3:00-4:00 Children join parents
Enjoy after-school snack together, participate in baking and cooking activities, play games, do homework
4:00-5:00 Enjoy meal together, clean up

*The program model is flexible to allow schools to adapt the program to meet the unique needs of families and the availability of school-community kitchen facilities and staff in each setting.

Contact: Barbara Crocker, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, 604-714-3400.

Website: www.communitykitchens.ca/cookingfun.htm

Creation of Better Accountability and Evaluation Systems

South Vancouver Island School Based Youth and Family Counsellors' Association

Youth and Family Counsellors in the districts recognized a need for the creation of better accountability and evaluation systems. The South Vancouver Island School-Based Youth and Family Counsellors' Association has developed a written evaluation format.

The South Vancouver Island School-Based Youth and Family Counsellors' Association has developed a consistent evaluation and reporting system which links outcome and indicator measurements to a sample service plan, report template, student and parent surveys, an evaluation checklist and annual school report. The Youth & Family Counsellor Program Outcome and Indicator Measurement form clearly delineates outcome goals and indicators and measurement tools. The annual school report of accumulated data gives a clear snap shot of an individual school's service outcomes and includes recognition of school and community issues and recommendations for the upcoming year.

The South Vancouver Island School-Based Youth and Family Counsellors' Association is willing to share their evaluation and reporting system with other school districts as one example of a possible outcomes-based accountable practice.

Contact: Anne Field, Youth and Family Counsellor (250) 388-5456 afield@sd61.bc.ca

School District No. 82 (Coast Mountains)

***Connections*, an Accountable In-School Suspension/ Intervention program**

The school district implemented this program at Hazelton Secondary School, to address concerns about increased inappropriate behavior, office referrals and suspensions. The program is based on a model in place at Rick Hansen Secondary in Abbotsford. The Hazelton program has used the format, structure and forms of the Rick Hansen Secondary Program as the foundation for *Connections* while making significant changes to ensure the program meets the needs of their student population. Planning and implementation is fully supported by the school district.

Connections is staffed with a teacher and a Rehabilitation Worker who recognize that chronic inappropriate behaviour requires specialized intervention. *Connections* takes an educational rather than a punitive approach in working with individual students to address their issues. Students are referred by their teacher, the school administration or themselves to have a *Connections* block in their timetable to address academic, behaviour, social, personal, or emotional issues. As well, *Connections* provides a location for structured in-school suspensions.

The goals of *Connection* are to decrease and prevent the escalation of inappropriate behavior, build self-esteem, decrease suspensions and office referrals, provide pro-active interventions and increase attendance (a direct result of using the program as an in-school suspension site). Hazelton Secondary School, recognized by the Fraser Institute for being the most improved secondary school, has seen a decrease in classroom referrals for inappropriate behaviour, increased attendance, lower drop-out rates and higher graduation rates since *Connections* was piloted. Students who have had chronic behaviour, attendance and academic issues are successfully reintegrating to regular classrooms and experiencing success at school.

The program has clear student and staff referral and in-take forms, an action sheet, in-School suspensions decisions and consequences forms and an expectations sheet all of which create better accountability and can be used for additional evaluation.

School District Approaches to Supporting Vulnerable Students

Contact: Dawn Martin, Director of Instruction (Student Support Services) (250) 638-4414
dmartin@cmsd.bc.ca
Chris van der Mark, Vice-Principal (250) 842-5214 cvandermark@cmsd.bc.ca

School District 36 (Surrey)

Strategies to Increase Cost Effectiveness in the School Meal Program

The school district has experienced increasing demand for the meal program within the confines of the existing budget. The program had to establish practices to increase efficiency and maximize resources.

The following are examples of such practices:

- Absentee rates among School Meal Program participants may be higher than average. This is an interesting trend to follow. Once the pattern is established, staff reduce their order by the average number of expected absentees. They keep some items that thaw quickly in their freezer in case they need more food on short notice. (Pizza is a favourite.)
- Keep food for absentees refrigerated. If not needed for that day's meals, this food should be frozen and the order for a future meal reduced or (if safe) used for lunch the next day.
- In keeping with food safety requirements, leftovers are not sent home. Food is consumed at school. (Our only exception would be a parent who came to the school at lunch time to pick up an absent child's lunch for that day, and this does not happen frequently.)
- Some foods can be kept safely for another meal, and the order for the upcoming day reduced. e.g. apples, juice boxes, condiments
- By monitoring the amount and type of food discarded in the garbage cans, establish a target consumption standard (e.g. 90% for an entree). Menu items not meeting the standard will be redesigned or dropped from the menu.
- Ask staff to actively promote new menu items by providing advance notice, advertising and samples, if possible.
- Participate in retail contests, like the BC Dairy Foundation's Moo You Win, to increase food acceptance and consumption.
- One staff member may be able to organize meals at more than one school, if there is someone designated for a short time (15 to 30 minutes) to oversee distribution.
- Providing parents with a sealable envelope for their payment improves confidentiality and encourages parent contributions. Printers may supply envelopes at a discount to support the purpose of the program and supply discontinued stock at a further discount).

Contact: Julie Stephenson, Manager of Food Services 604-592-4279
Stephenson_j@fc.sd36.bc.ca

School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)

Indicators to determine Inner City School Status

The district, through its Poverty Initiatives Committee, looked at a wide range of indicators to determine the level of student poverty at individual schools. While the district recognizes that some of the individual indicators may not be current, by examining a wide range of indicators, any problems inherent in individual indicators will be overcome. The data will be updated and refined on an annual basis. This year the results from the Early Development Instrument will provide valuable information to assist in assessing student poverty and needs in schools.

Indicators currently being used in School District #68 include:

- Transience (School District data)

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- Absenteeism (School District data)
- Percentage of students designated as requiring Intensive Behaviour Support (School District data)
- FSA Scores (School District data)
- Percentage of lone parent families (1996 Census data)
- Percentage of rental dwellings (1996 Census data)
- Percentage of population with Grade 12 (1996 Census data)
- Percentage with family income less than \$20,000 (1996 Census data)
- Unemployment rate (1996 Census data)

Based on these indicators, the district has grouped schools into three levels of Inner City Schools.

Contact: Micheline Cawley, District Principal, Student Support mcawley@sd68.bc.ca

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) Allocation of Community *LINK* Funding

The school district modified the approach it had been using for the former Social Equity Envelope allocation in the past to allocate Community *LINK* funding.

The school district determined the number of vulnerable students at each school by calculating the number of students from families on income assistance, the number from low-income families and the Aboriginal population. The school district did not have data on transience. The schools ranking the highest on vulnerability were identified to receive Community *LINK* funding.

A set amount is allocated for each vulnerable student. Additional funding, ranging on a six point scale from \$75 to \$200, is added to the per pupil amount based on the percentage of the school population that is vulnerable. This acknowledges that a school with a high percentage of vulnerable students encounters more difficulties in the area of student achievement and social responsibility.

The district is continuing to operate the school meal program as a centrally administered program. Schools, in consultation with their communities are responsible for determining the Community *LINK* supports and services that will be provided through the funding to increase the educational outcomes for vulnerable students.

Contact: Marilyn Bradley, District Vice-Principal, 250-385-3441 or mbradley@sd61.bc.ca