

District Review Report

School District No. 44 (North Vancouver)

April 19 - 21, 2004

Submitted to the Minister of Education

By District Review Team Chair
Fred Renihan, Superintendent, School District No. 36 (Surrey)

**District Review Report
2003/2004**

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| District Name: | North Vancouver |
| District Number: | 44 |
| Superintendent: | Robin Brayne |
| Date of Visit: | April 19-21, 2004 |
| Team Chair: | Fred Renihan, Superintendent, SD 36 (Surrey) |
| Team Members: | Carolyn Anton, Teacher, SD 75 (Mission) Judy Arnold, Ministry of Education Julio Galleguillos, Ministry of Education Brenda LeClair, Deputy Superintendent, SD 35 (Langley) Valerie Overgaard, Associate Superintendent, SD 39 (Vancouver) Keith Spencer, District Principal for Aboriginal Education, SD 28 (Quesnel) Lori Tedrick, Parent, SD 6 (Rocky Mountain) |

Context

North Vancouver is a School District of 18,000 students from K-12 and over 15,000 learners registered in a variety of adult and community education programs and services. There are two bands, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh and a number of off reserve Aboriginal students. The District has 32 elementary schools, 2 alternate school programs and 7 secondary schools.

The District has a comprehensive K-12 education program consisting of over 200 provincially and locally developed programs and services including Early French Immersion, Late French Immersion and secondary bilingual programs.

The District has several nationally recognized programs, including Band and Strings, Reading 44, Firm Foundations, Math 44 and the Artists for Kids Program.

There is a summer school providing comprehensive programming in remediation, enrichment, fine arts, full credit senior secondary school courses, as well as, integrated ESL and International Programs. There are a variety of specialized services for students with exceptional learning needs and adults with learning disabilities. The District also has short- and long-term International Education Programs, attracting over 300 learners from around the world.

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Summary of Process

The purposes of the District Review are to:

- Review School District and school achievement data;
- Review the School District accountability contract and school plans to improve student achievement;
- Determine the capacity of the School District to support schools in improving student achievement;
- Make recommendations to the School District and to the Minister about improving student achievement; and,
- Identify promising practices that might assist other school districts and schools in their plans to improve student achievement.

In conducting the review of North Vancouver, the District Review Team:

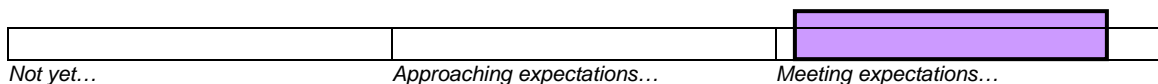
- Were introduced to members of the district staff, trustees and partner groups on the first evening.
- Participated in an initial meeting focused on an overview of the accountability contract.
- Reviewed school plans and the 10 Points of Inquiry with the School Planning Councils at the following 16 schools:
 - Blueridge, Braemer, Brooksbank, Cove Cliff, Eastview, Highlands, Lonsdale, Lynnmour, Montroyal, Norgate, Queensbury and Sherwood elementary schools, Argyle, Carson, Handsworth and Windsor secondary schools.
- Met with the School Planning Council Steering committee.
- Met with representatives of the District Parent Advisory Council.
- Met with members of the Aboriginal community, some of whom were members of staff associated with the Aboriginal Department of the School District.

The External Team is appreciative of the open and welcoming hospitality of all partners in the North Vancouver School District community. Of particular note was the pervasive sense of commitment, dedication, and pride evident in all schools.

Observations in Key Areas - Focus on Student Achievement

1. *Goals:*

Improving districts and schools have a strong instructional focus. This focus is made visible in relevant goals for improving achievement for all students.

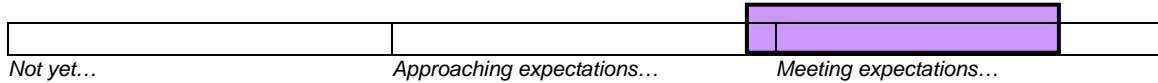


- Goals are clearly focused on student learning in the areas of literacy, numeracy, Aboriginal education and safe and caring schools.
- The high achievement levels of several schools in literacy and numeracy suggest that these schools consider developing enrichment objectives in these two goal areas.

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2. *Rationale:*

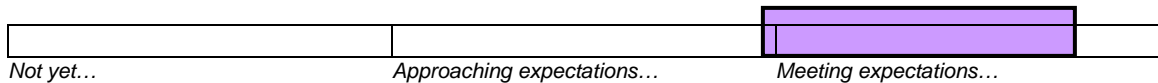
Improving districts and schools have a thorough and connected set of reasons, **based on evidence**, for the selection of their student achievement goals.



- The District has a connected set of reasons for goal selection.
- Some schools used classroom data to develop objectives.
- Many schools used availability of resources and/or district direction as the rationale for the selection of goals.
- A few schools did not have a clearly articulated rationale to support the specific achievement objectives for their students.

3. *Data:*

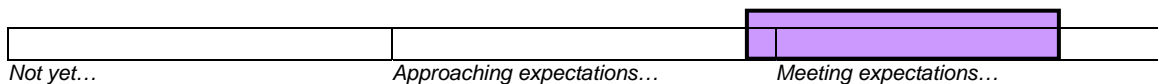
Improving districts and schools are actively considering at least three sources of evidence including classroom, school, district and provincial data. The analysis of this evidence informs the selection of the district goals and is used to monitor progress.



- The District has extensive data and an efficient process for its distribution.
- The new Edudata system, report central and IEP central are excellent examples of the use of technology to manage data.
- Some schools are beginning to gather and use data at the classroom level.

4. *Strategies:*

Improving districts and schools have well-organized, focused improvement plans in place. The strategies selected to achieve the goals are an intelligent blend of research, best practice, and innovative thinking.

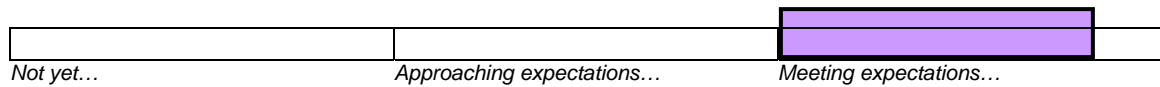


- The District has a well-orchestrated set of organizational and instructional strategies that are carefully aligned with the goals it wants to achieve.
- Instructional interventions related to Reading 44, Math 44, Firm Foundations and Safe and Caring Schools are widely and effectively used across the district.
- Many schools have developed and implemented complementary instructional practices.
- The District has developed a bold plan which involves a five year commitment to enhance instructional practice by building on the research of Barrie Bennett.
- The District should continue to build its research-based bank of strategies specific to Aboriginal learners and communicate these strategies in the district.

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5. *Structures:*

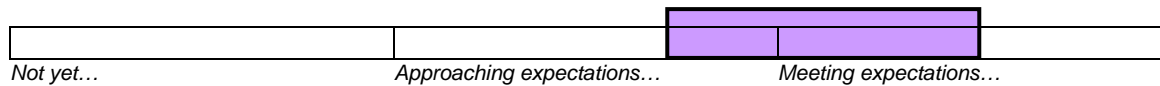
Improving districts and schools have aligned structures – resources, time, organizations – to get the results they want. This includes, but is not limited to, effectively differentiating resources in the areas of highest need for improvement.



- The District has a comprehensive professional development program. This program is tightly aligned to district and school wide goals.
- Teachers and administrators are encouraged to engage in thoughtful reflection on their practice.
- The District has directed resources to support achievement in the four goal areas.
- Structures are in place to monitor progress toward goals and to refine interventions.
- The District is encouraged to intensify resources in order to support opportunities for success for Aboriginal students.

6. *Results:*

Improving districts and schools get improved results – at the classroom, school and district levels.



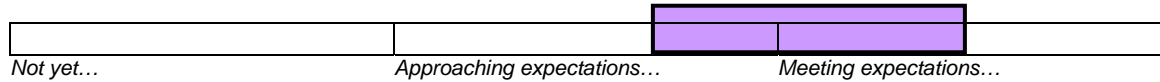
- The District has established effective means for systematically tracking and monitoring student results and is working to assist schools to access and use these data sources.
- The District is achieving high levels of success in reading and mathematics. The District and schools should continue to focus attention and resources on success for Aboriginal students.
- Schools have collected good baseline data for their first plans and will be able, over time, to use these data to focus on improving achievement and to monitor results.
- In some schools, there appears to be a dependency on district and provincial data to track student progress. Schools should work to complement these data using school and classroom assessment measures.

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7. *Communication:*

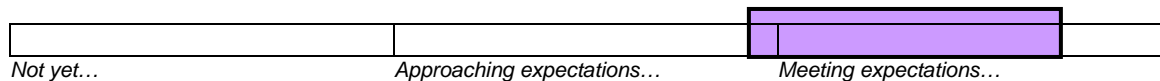
Improving districts and schools are involved in continuous dialogue about student achievement and make public their improvement goals and the progress being made in specific areas of focus.



- The School Planning Council Steering Committee has had a positive influence in the development and work of the School Planning Councils.
- The Review Team acknowledges the work that is presently underway and would encourage the district to further develop strategies to deepen communication with Aboriginal parents, families and communities.
- Many schools are using information technology and other strategies to enhance communication between home and school.
- There is an effective process for reporting to partner groups and the public on student achievement.
- The District and schools should continue to develop strategies that encourage input from the community.

8. *Teamwork – District and School Coherence:*

Improving districts and schools have an interactive strategy for connecting school and district goals. School uniqueness and school-district directions are both valued.



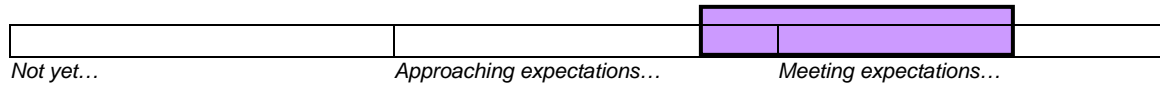
- There is an obvious and effective connection between district plans and school plans.
- There is direct and intended district influence on the plans developed by school planning councils.
- The District might consider an iterative planning process through which schools and district partners have more influence on district goals.
- The Review Team encourages the District to foster opportunities for schools to develop goals that will enhance their own respective identities.

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9. *Teamwork – District and Parent Involvement:*

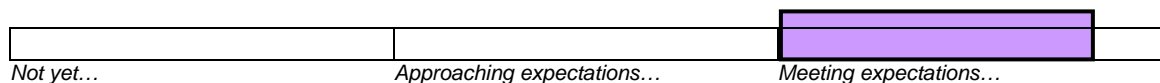
Improving districts and schools work as a team with parents, including specific groups of parents, to improve student achievement.



- All schools have well-established School Planning Councils and there is an inclusive approach to improving student achievement.
- The District has provided strong leadership for the development of School Planning Councils.
- It is evident that School Planning Councils are focusing on student achievement.
- School Planning Councils should continue to find ways to build parent involvement around student achievement.
- Some schools are showing evidence of reaching out to engage less active parents e.g. parent sessions at different times of the day, day care for parents to participate in the Safe School Audit and family evening events celebrating school accomplishments.
- The District should continue to build an inclusive planning cycle with School Planning Councils, school PACs and DPAC.
- In order to further collaboration with the First Nations and Aboriginal communities, the establishment of an Aboriginal Advisory body that represents all Aboriginal people in the district is encouraged.

10. *Leadership / Teamwork:*

Leaders in improving districts and schools have a clear vision for, and commitment, to improving achievement for all students. Leadership at all levels, in all roles, is encouraged and systematically developed in a collaborative learning community with a focus on improving student achievement.



- The characteristics of effective learning communities find expression in schools and in the District
- The building of leadership capacity is encouraged and is focused on student learning.
- The District is encouraged to consider ways to increase collaborative leadership opportunities for parents.

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Strengths

- Strong district leadership in terms of planning and implementing a focus on student achievement.
- Outstanding attention to the systematic management and use of data.
- A culture of learning, reflection and engagement in professional growth.
- Curriculum development and support for school based practitioners.
- A culture of interdependence and professional collaboration among professionals in schools.
- This District has created a systemic approach to the improvement of student achievement.

Promising Practices

- Reading 44: A Core Reading Framework
- Math 44: Teaching for Proficiency
- Firm Foundations: Early Literacy Teaching and Learning
- School Safety Audits
- Long term and systemic approach to fostering best instructional practice (Barrie Bennett)
- Online report card and IEP initiative (*ReportCentral and IEPCentral*).
- Artists for Kids Trust

Recommendations

The team respectfully suggests that the district consider:

- Continuing to deepen the outstanding work related to the use of data and information to improve student achievement.
- The establishment of a systematic way for staff to share promising practices.
- An Aboriginal advisory body representing all First Nations and Aboriginal people to support the development of an Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement.