

District Review Report

**School District No. 45 (West Vancouver)**

February 28 - March 2, 2005

Submitted to the Minister of Education

By District Review Team Chair  
Wendy Herbert, Superintendent, School District No. 64 (Gulf Islands)

## District Review Report

2004/2005

District Name:	West Vancouver
District Number:	45
Superintendent:	Geoff Jopson
Date of Visit:	February 28 to March 2, 2005
Team Chair:	Wendy Herbert, Superintendent, SD 64 (Gulf Islands)
Team Members:	Jean Borsa, Director of Education, SD 73 (Kamloops/Thompson) Judy Connor, Principal, SD 36 (Surrey) Tom Hierck, President BCPVPA, SD 8 (Kootenay Lake) Candice Morgan, Superintendent, SD 69 (Qualicum) Carolynn Schmor, Teacher, SD 75 (Mission) Afton Wright, Senior Evaluation Advisor, Ministry of Education Jim Yurkowski, Parent, SD 57 (Prince George)

### Context

#### **Demographics**

The District population of 55,000 is affluent, well-educated, and relatively homogeneous. It is comprised of the municipalities of Bowen Island, Lions Bay, and West Vancouver. Approximately 25% of the students come from non-English speaking homes.

The student enrolment of 6,690 has rebounded from 6,480 in 2001-2002. Despite projections of declining enrolment, the enrolment is relatively stable, in part because the International Student program attracts 500 students from 18 countries. Approximately 400 students enroll from outside the District. There are 360 English as Second Language students and 23 Aboriginal students.

#### **Unique Characteristics & District Strengths**

The District competes successfully with the three private schools located within the community. Up to 23% of student graduates receive provincial scholarships, and 93.6% of students graduate in their Grade 12 year. Participation rates and achievement results on provincial measures are consistently high, in the top percentile of the province, and are well above provincial averages. In addition to its strong academic focus, the District has initiated a focus on student pro-social behaviour. Instilling social responsiveness, leadership skills, and service to others will enable individuals to contribute to positive change both at school and in the community. In conjunction with UBC, the District has developed Safe Student Surveys (elementary and secondary). These surveys have been identified by the Canadian Public Health Association as being among the most promising for school assessment in social responsibility.

The District provides choice through a variety of programs, such as Career Preparation, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, and Early and Late French Immersion. The Hockey Academy is one example of the SuperAchievers program that allows students to pursue a particular passion in a strong academic setting. A full-day, user-pay, Kindergarten Plus program has expanded to 11 school sites. A new International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program will begin at one site in September 2005.

## District Review Report

2004/2005

### Summary of Process

The major purpose of the District Review is to provide feedback and recommendations to the District, the Ministry of Education and the public regarding the District's work in improving student achievement. The specific purposes of the 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 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 addressing these objectives, the Review Team reviewed the District's Accountability Contract, Ministry data related to the District, and individual school success plans.

At the beginning of the review visit, the Team enjoyed a presentation by District staff and an informal dinner meeting with trustees, School Planning Councils and stakeholder representatives. The presentation provided the Review Team with an overview of School District No. 45. This included the educational context, areas of strength, main goals of the District Accountability Contract, highlights of a number of district and school programs and initiatives, and links to the Ten Points of Inquiry.

Two members of the Review Team met with the executive representatives from the District Parent Advisory Council, the West Vancouver Teachers' Association, the West Vancouver Municipal Employees Association, and the West Vancouver Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association. Two team members met with the Youth Leadership Focus Group, and two team members met with the senior management team.

The Team reviewed the Annual School Plans for Strategic Improvement according to the Ten Points of Inquiry at: Hollyburn, Gleneagles, Westcot, Ridgeview, Caulfeild, Chartwell, West Bay, École Pauline Johnson, Irwin Park elementary schools; Cypress Park, Lions Bay, Eagle Harbour primary schools; and Bowen Island Community School; and Rockridge, Sentinel, and West Vancouver secondary schools.

The review meeting at each school included School Planning Council representatives and members of the school community.

At the conclusion of the review visit, the Team met with District senior management, Board and other school and community representatives to present a draft of the Review Report.

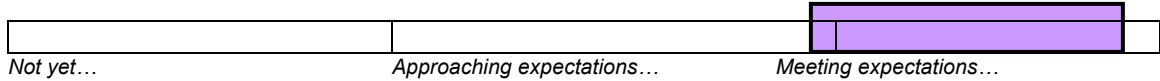
The Team appreciated the warm, welcoming, and open reception provided throughout the District during the review process. School District No. 45 demonstrates a culture of professionalism, collaboration, positive working relationships and high expectations.

**District Review Report  
2004/2005**

**Observations in Key Areas - Focus on Student Achievement**

**1. Goals:**

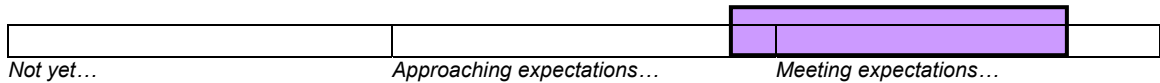
Improving districts and schools have a strong instructional focus. This focus is made visible in relevant goals for improving achievement for all students.



- District goals are relevant, based on evidence and focused on student achievement.
- The majority of school goals are relevant, based on evidence, and focused on student achievement.
- Some goals in a few schools are in the early stages of development and baseline data is being gathered.

**2. Rationale:**

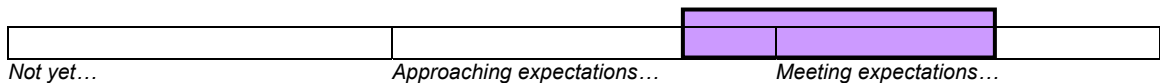
Improving districts and schools have a thorough and connected set of reasons, based on evidence, for the selection of their student achievement goals.



- District goals are based on evidence from multiple sources of data and are linked to student achievement.
- The majority of school plans have rationales based on evidence from multiple sources of data and are linked to student achievement.
- The rationale for some school goals did not show clear evidence of being based on multiple sources of relevant data.

**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.

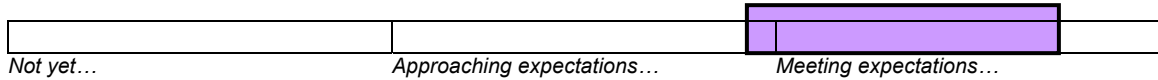


- The District is consistently analyzing data and working with schools to plan and monitor for student achievement.
- Schools are on a continuum in their capacity to consistently analyze data to plan and monitor for student achievement.
- Most schools are consistently analyzing classroom, school, district and provincial data sources to determine areas of need, to plan for improvement and to monitor progress.

**District Review Report**  
**2004/2005**

4. **Strategies:**

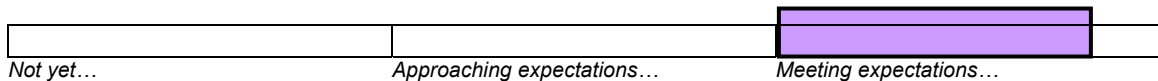
Improving districts and schools have focused, well organized improvement plans in place. The strategies selected to achieve the goals are an intelligent blend of research, best practice, and innovative thinking.



- Professional learning opportunities at the District and school level are focused on assessment and instructional strategies to support student improvement goals.
- Leadership at the District and school level plays a key role in the provision of staff development linked to goal achievement.
- Some schools are implementing a variety of research-based strategies and have yet to determine which ones will have the greatest impact on student learning.

5. **Structures:**

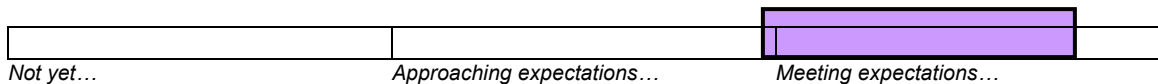
Improving districts and schools have aligned structures – resources, time, and organization – to get the results they want. This includes, but is not limited to, effectively differentiating resources in the areas of highest need for improvement.



- The District provides a variety of structures to support student achievement in the areas of highest need.
- Schools are aligning structures in a variety of ways to support student achievement.

6. **Results:**

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



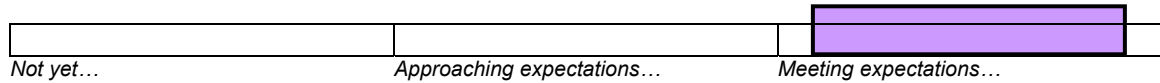
- The District consistently monitors results and supports adjustments to improve student achievement.
- The majority of schools consistently monitor results of most goals and make adjustments to improve student achievement.

## District Review Report

2004/2005

### 7. *Communication:*

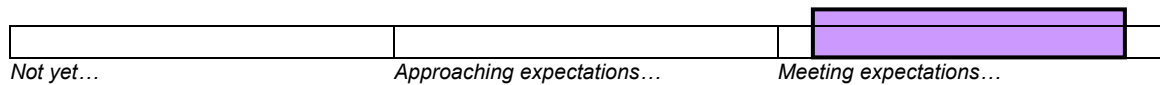
Improving districts and schools are involved in continuous dialogue about student achievement and make public their improvement goals and the progress being made in specific areas of focus.



- Communication between district, schools and the community is substantive, meaningful, and focused on student achievement.

### 8. *Teamwork – District and School Coherence:*

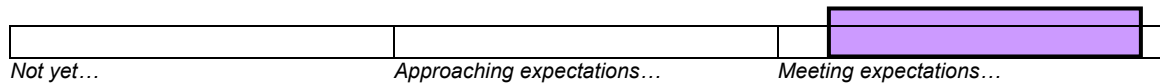
Improving districts and schools have an interactive strategy for connecting school and district goals. School uniqueness and district directions are both valued.



- The District values and celebrates the uniqueness of individual schools and their plans.
- All school plans have at least one goal aligned with district goals.
- The District plays an active role in assisting in the development of school goals.

### 9. *Teamwork – District and Parent Involvement:*

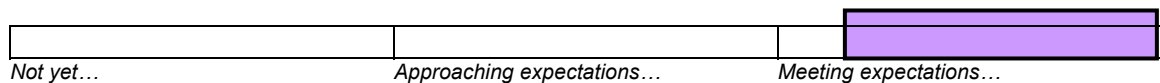
Improving districts and schools work as a team with parents, including specific groups of parents, to improve student achievement.



- It was clear at all schools that parents are meaningfully engaged and are actively involved in working together with their school and the District to improve the achievement of all students.

### 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.



- Throughout the District, there is consistent evidence of collaborative leadership focused on improving student achievement.
- Leadership development at all levels and in all roles is strongly encouraged and supported.
- Parents, teachers, students, support staff and administrators demonstrate leadership focused on improving student achievement.

**District Review Report**  
**2004/2005**

**Strengths**

The Team congratulates the District on the following strengths:

- The concept, development, and implementation of the collaborative team model with the cooperation of the District administration, school administration and the West Vancouver Teachers' Association in all schools and across the District.
- District level "Touch Back" meetings as a structure which provides opportunities for teachers to share professional and instructional resources, current research, and success of implementation strategies.
- Meaningful, timely, relevant, sequenced and research-based professional learning opportunities for all stakeholders.
- Exemplary leadership by the District senior management team in support of professional learning and student achievement.
- The District's responsiveness to identified staff and school needs.
- Meaningful involvement of parents in the improvement of student achievement.
- Distributed and collaborative leadership by all stakeholders.
- Wide variety of student leadership opportunities at all levels including the involvement of students in community activities such as the Youth Advisory Committee (Municipal) and Interact (Rotary).
- The support provided for students for whom English is not a first language, including after school and summer programs.
- The welcoming and respectful environment provided at schools for families new to Canada.

**Promising Practices**

The Team recognizes the following District and school practices that could be helpful to other Districts with a similar focus:

- The implementation of the collaborative team model, with the cooperation of the District administration, school administration and West Vancouver Teachers' Association for ongoing professional learning conversations to support student improvement.
- The comprehensive Safe Schools Surveys developed and refined in collaboration with UBC.
- The Service Learning Model which allows students to make connections between course work and issues in their community. Students have the opportunity to apply knowledge to real-life problems and effect changes in their community.
- Community Forums for parents, staff and students that educate, create awareness and offer opportunities for input.
- The variety of ways in which families for whom English is not a first language are welcomed and supported such as partnering of families and parental outreach.

## District Review Report

2004/2005

### Recommendations

The Team respectfully suggests the following to strengthen the school and district focus on student achievement and for improving results:

- Continue to review and analyze the types of data collected to determine the most relevant and useful assessment strategies and practices to improve student achievement.
- Continue to review, analyze and define specific instructional strategies that impact student achievement.
- Continue and expand the implementation of the Service Learning Model.
- Continue work in developing the awareness of, and willingness of, individuals to take personal responsibility dealing with bystander/witness behaviour as identified in the Safe School Surveys.