

District Review Report

School District No. 69 (Qualicum)

Date April 18 - 20, 2005

Submitted to the Minister of Education

By District Review Team Chair

Anne Cooper, Superintendent, School District No. 19 (Revelstoke)

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District Name:	Qualicum
District Number:	69
Superintendent:	Candice Morgan
Date of Visit:	April 18 - 20, 2005
Team Chair:	Anne Cooper, Superintendent, SD 19 (Revelstoke)
Team Members:	Janine Fernandes-Hayden, Education Officer, Ministry of Education Nonie McCann, Teacher, SD 74 (Gold Trail) Bryan Morgan, Assistant Superintendent, SD 71 (Comox Valley) Scott Robinson, Principal, SD 43 (Coquitlam) Laurey Roodenburg, Parent, SD 28 (Quesnel)

Context

School District No. 69 (Qualicum) is located on the east coast of Vancouver Island and serves Parksville, Qualicum, and the neighbouring rural communities of Bowser, Coombs, Whiskey Creek, French Creek, Errington, Lasqueti Island and Nanoose Bay. The District enrolls 5,106 full-time equivalent students attending 17 schools (elementary, middle, secondary, alternate, continuing education and distributed learning schools).

The community is made up of a significant population of retired persons and the District has capitalized on this resource. The District has approximately 400 students of Aboriginal ancestry with approximately 10% coming from the Snaw-Naw-As and Qualicum First Nations. The District has signed an Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement which establishes baseline data for achievement of Aboriginal students.

The District has experienced declining enrolment which is impacting the district's capacity in a number of areas. Despite the decline, the District has a commitment to maintain the neighbourhood school concept.

The District plans collaboratively and integrates effectively with services provided by other government and community agencies as evidenced by three exemplary programs, the Early Intervention Community Literacy Liaison / *Building Learning Together* project, E.N.I.T.Y. (Educating New Ideas Towards Youth), a peer education project co-sponsored with Public Health, and YouthLINK, a project designed by district staff and representatives from the Ministry of Children and Families and associated agencies to assist youth ages 12-18 and their families.

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Summary of Process

The Qualicum School District Review is 1 of 20 school district reviews being undertaken in the province in 2004-2005.

The 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 by:

- reviewing district and school achievement data;
- reviewing the District Accountability Contract and school plans to improve student achievement;
- making recommendations to the Board and to the Minister about improving student achievement; and
- identifying promising practices that will assist other districts and schools in their efforts to improve student achievement.

District Review Team Activities

The Review Team was welcomed with an informal evening orientation with Trustees, senior district staff, school administrators, DPAC (District Parent Advisory Council) and PAC (Parent Advisory Council) representatives and district Aboriginal and student services staff. The District Review Team received a comprehensive overview of the district through a presentation the next morning by district staff on the School District Performance Agreement and information about school district programs and services.

Subsequently, the Team met with representatives from the School Planning Council in every school in the District. In some schools, other members of the school community joined the meetings. In addition to these meetings, the team reviewed:

- the District's Accountability Contract (District Performance Agreement);
- school plans for all of the schools in the District;
- the progress of the schools and district in meeting their goals and performance targets;
- the structures and strategies employed at the school and district levels used to support the District Performance Agreement and school growth plans;
- district and school data provided by the Ministry of Education, the School District and individual schools;
- the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement; and
- information provided by school and district staff as evidence of work they are doing to achieve their school goals.

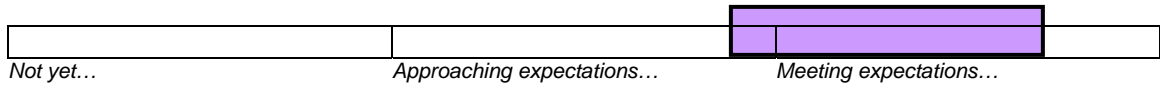
At the conclusion of the visit, the District Review Team met with trustees, district staff, several school administrators and parent representatives to summarize the observations and conclusions made by the Review Team. The Team wishes to thank the School District for its hospitality, its professional preparation for the Team's visit and the warm welcome it received. The Team was impressed with the commitment and dedication of school trustees, staff, parents and students in their efforts to enhance student achievement.

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Observations in Key Areas - Focus on Student Achievement

1. Goals:

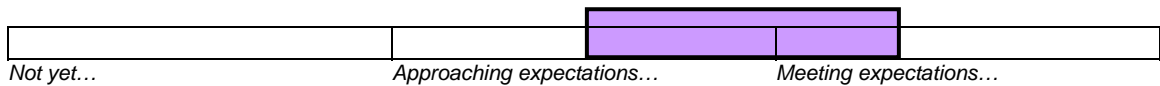
Improving districts and schools have a strong instructional focus. This focus is made visible in relevant goals for improving achievement for all students.



- All schools have goals directed towards student achievement.
- The District has five goals, four of which are clearly developed.
- Schools are in the process of gathering relevant evidence to support their goals.

2. Rationale:

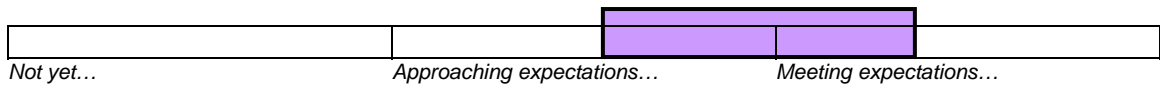
Improving districts and schools have a thorough and connected set of reasons, based on evidence, for the selection of their student achievement goals.



- Many schools have developed a variety of data sources and some are beginning to connect this data to their student achievement goals.
- At many schools, attention is being given to specific groups of students.
- The District has carefully considered the performance of Aboriginal students, as articulated in the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement.

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.



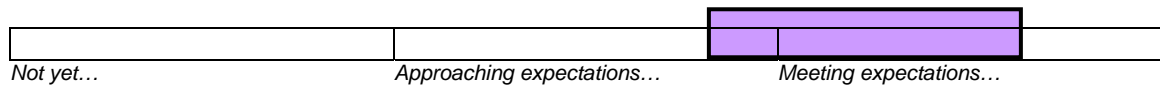
- Schools are shifting from a reliance on provincial data to more authentic school and classroom data.
- Many schools are participating in the District DART (District Assessment Reading Team) initiative.
- The District emphasis on assessment literacy is supportive of school efforts to obtain meaningful data.
- As additional district, school and classroom sources of data become available, monitoring and analysis will assist in refining and shaping goals and objectives.

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4. *Strategies:*

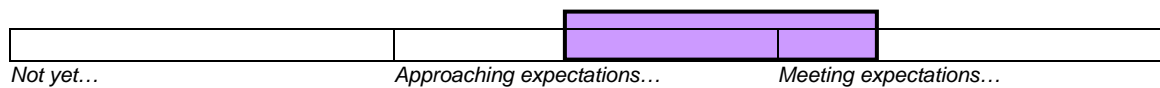
Improving districts and schools have focused, well organized improvement plans in place. The strategies selected to achieve the goals are an intelligent blend of research, best practice, and innovative thinking.



- Most schools are practicing well-researched instructional strategies to support their goals.
- The District has a focused improvement plan in place for literacy, while strategies to improve numeracy are still in the formative stage.
- It is obvious that strategies to support social responsibility have resulted in numerous promising practices.
- There are extensive opportunities for staff development that are aligned to goals and directions.

5. *Structures:*

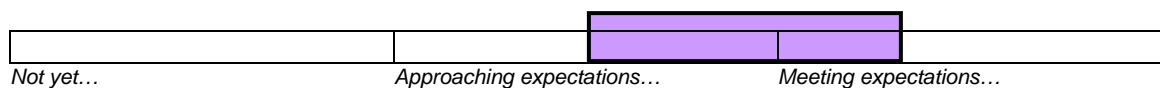
Improving districts and schools have aligned structures – resources, time, organization – to get the results they want. This includes, but is not limited to, effectively differentiating resources in the areas of highest need for improvement.



- Some schools have made structural changes in support of their goals.
- At the district level, there are numerous structures to support the literacy goal as articulated in the literacy plan.
- Structures in support of the numeracy goal are in the process of being developed.
- A number of schools have the capability to provide leadership in this area.

6. *Results:*

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

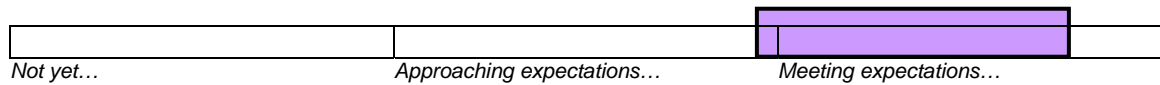


- Many schools are monitoring and making adjustments in some goal areas.
- As authentic assessment becomes more embedded in planning processes, both the district and schools will have the ability to monitor and make further adjustments.
- Aboriginal program staff are consistently monitoring student performance data.

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7. *Communication:*

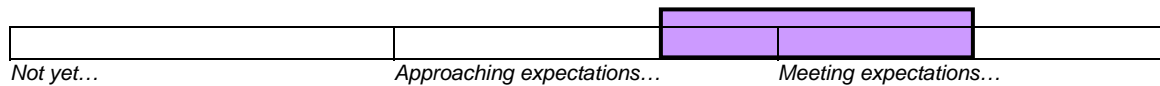
Improving districts and schools are involved in continuous dialogue about student achievement and make public their improvement goals and the progress being made in specific areas of focus.



- Many schools have made a commitment to solicit feedback from parents and students and are using multiple ways of communicating their achievement efforts.
- The District facilitates and models dialogue among community partners.
- Respect is both valued and modeled in communication throughout the district.

8. *Teamwork – District and School Coherence:*

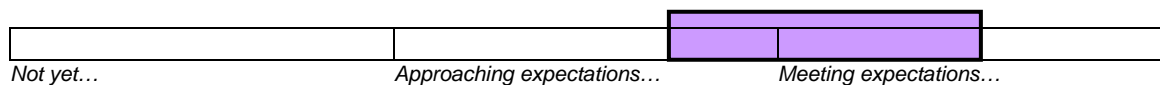
Improving districts and schools have an interactive strategy for connecting school and district goals. School uniqueness and district directions are both valued.



- Both school uniqueness and district directions are clearly visible and valued.
- The District has analyzed school plans to shape the District Performance Agreement.
- Numerous strategies for connecting school and district goals exist.

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.



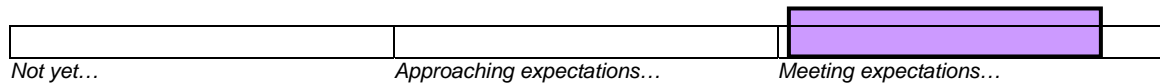
- Parent Advisory Councils actively support schools.
- Parent turnover on School Planning Councils represents a challenge and some parents are uncertain as to their role. The District/DPAC fall orientation and spring de-brief provide support for the growth of the councils.
- In many schools, high levels of collaboration and equality of participation are noted.

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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.



- It is evident that there is a shared commitment to improve the achievement of all students.
- There is a strong vision towards assessment for learning.
- Collaborative committees support district goals.
- At the school and district level, focused opportunities are available for leadership development and many individuals are exhibiting exemplary leadership.

Strengths

Team observations of strengths include:

- Overall attention to student learning and achievement
- Evidence of the Board's Guiding Principles throughout the District
- Highly motivated, enthusiastic and dedicated District and school administrators, staff and parents
- Community pride, connections and collaboration
- A shared commitment towards the development of social responsibility
- A climate of inclusion in the District; special education staff and services play an integral role in supporting and monitoring district and school goals for the success of all students.
- A breadth of successful Aboriginal education programs and services
- The collaborative culture that permeates the District with many examples of professional learning communities
- The long-standing and effective district literacy initiative
- Assessment literacy focus and ongoing dialogue
- School transition processes
- PAC and DPAC involvement in support of schools

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Promising Practices

Team observations of promising practices include:

- Early Reading Intervention Program that supports students who are challenged in the acquisition of literacy.
- The YouthLINK initiative connecting all associated agencies in support of youth 12-18 and their families.
- The Building Learning Together initiative (BLT) supported by 86 community partners, 225 Grand-buddies, 51 childcare facilities and 47 community agencies.
- Kindergarten assessment continuums.
- District-wide spring SPC de-brief and sharing.
- Collaborative Educational Alternative Program for Home Learning Families (CEAP).

In addition, there are many initiatives at the school level which may well become promising practices.

Recommendations

The Team respectfully recommends the District consider the following recommendations to strengthen school and district focus on student achievement:

- Continue to provide district leadership and support to schools to enhance understanding regarding assessment literacy and the thoughtful use of multiple data sources.
- In relationship to School Planning Councils;
 - Continue to nurture the meaningful involvement of parents on School Planning Councils.
 - Review the process to provide feedback to School Planning Councils regarding their school growth plans.
 - Consider formats for school growth planning that address the Ten Points of Inquiry and have the capacity to organize and represent increasing amounts of information.
- The District consider the optimal number of goals that can be supported and sustained.