

District Review Report

School District No. 93 (Conseil Scolaire Francophone)

April 4-8, 2005

Submitted to the Minister of Education

By District Review Team Chair
David Osborne, Assistant Superintendent,
School District No. 43 (Coquitlam)

District Review Report
2004/2005

District Name:	Conseil Scolaire Francophone
District Number:	93
Superintendent:	Dr. Jean Watters
Date of Visit:	April 4-8, 2005
Team Chair:	Dr. David Osborne, Assistant Superintendent, SD 43 (Coquitlam)
Team Members:	Sophie Bergeron, French Programs Coordinator, SD 43 (Coquitlam) Timma Blain, Curriculum & Instruction Administrator, SD 57 (Prince George) Nancy Brennan, Principal, SD 37 (Delta) Elyn Dobbs, Parent, SD 39 (Vancouver) Janine Fernandes-Hayden, Education Officer, Ministry of Education Francesca Froehlich, Teacher, SD 78 (Fraser Cascade) Peter Gajda, Teacher, SD 50 (Haida Gwaii/ Queen Charlotte) Pierre Gilbert, Manager, Ministry of Education Patricia MacKenzie, Principal, SD 81 (Fort Nelson) Marilyn Merler, Principal, SD 22 (Vernon) Robert Swansborough, Principal, SD 45 (West Vancouver) Patrick von Hahn, Principal, SD 38 (Richmond)

Context

The Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (CSF) has existed officially for 8 years with the goal of offering programs to 3,424 students (2,753 Elementary, 671 Secondary) in 37 schools across the province, representing 77 communities. Sixteen of these schools are homogeneous, while the other 21 exist in a heterogeneous environment (a francophone school within an anglophone school belonging to another district in the region). Many classes are multi-level groupings due to low enrolment.

Access to programs is reserved for children that qualify according to Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These students and their families are becoming increasingly diverse and consequently, the schools of the CSF reflect this mosaic. Factors contributing to this diversity include:

- According to Statistics Canada 2001, findings referenced by the National Commission of Francophone Parents in 2003, approximately 80% of students are from homes where only one parent is francophone. As a result, many of these students do not speak French when they arrive at school;
- Many families have immigrated from non French-speaking countries, but nevertheless their children have the right to study in French, as, upon arriving in Canada, they started their education in a francophone school within Canada;
- Many families have immigrated from Francophone countries therefore their children have the right to study in French;

District Review Report

2004/2005

- There exist a wide variety of student needs, skill levels and language competencies in both French and English.

The vision of the CSF is to provide British Columbia Francophones with an education in French recognized for its excellence and for its contribution to the development of “French culture” in a multicultural setting. In its mission and in addition to providing educational opportunities for the learners that they serve, the CSF is committed and is statutorily required to enhance the full development and cultural identity of Francophone learners in the province. Furthermore, the CSF undertakes to participate actively in the development of the Francophone community in British Columbia.

The development and implementation of improvement plans, at the school as well as District level, are based on four focus areas emerging from the District’s Strategic Orientations document. The Strategic Orientations were the result of a consultation process that reflected the ideas and recommendations of education partners.

As a new District, the CSF has, by necessity, focused on developing school environments that provide viable educational opportunities in the French language. This task has consumed much energy on the part of the District. School acquisitions, service agreements with a number of host districts, and new school construction have been items of first priority.

In addition to these areas of urgency there has been the need to recruit, induct and supervise a rapidly growing and changing professional staff. Moreover, the CSF has faced the challenges of developing a District culture across the entire province, and of establishing a responsive organizational infrastructure.

Finally, this review has presented the first opportunity for the Ministry Accountability Framework, with its accompanying expectations of schools, to be translated into French. As this task was accomplished only recently, this review comes at an early stage of implementation without a full planning cycle having been experienced.

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 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.

District Review Report

2004/2005

In addressing these objectives, the Review Team reviewed the District's Accountability Contract, Ministry data related to the District, and individual school plans. The Review Team was divided into smaller groups in order to ensure that the majority of the schools within the CSF across the Province could be visited.

Sunday afternoon, April 3rd, the Review team met with Josette Desquins, Director of Instruction, Student Services, who presented the team with a comprehensive binder of information about the District. Ms. Desquins drew our attention in particular to the unique features of the District and to the preliminary initiatives at the district level to work with school-based and classroom-based assessment. During the evening of Sunday, April 3, the team was warmly welcomed at the home of Superintendent, Dr. Watters. Over the course of the evening, the Review Team met with several members of the Board, Principal representatives, the senior management team and representatives from the Francophone Teachers' Union. On the morning of April 4, the Review Team met officially with members of the CSF as well as with the Chairperson of the Board to review the contents of the District's Accountability Contract and planning documents. This presentation was followed by the opportunity for questions and further clarification.

Over the course of the week (April 4,5,6 and 7) the Team visited the following schools:

Campbell River:	École des Deux Mondes École Phoenix Secondary
Chilliwack:	École La Vérendrye
Comox:	École Aspen Park Middle École Robb Road
Coquitlam:	École Les Pionniers de Maillardville
Delta:	École du Bois-Joli
Kamloops:	École francophone de Kamloops
Kelowna:	École L'Anse-au-sable
Langley:	École Les Voyageurs
Mission:	École des Deux-Rives
Nanaimo:	École Princesse Anne
North Vancouver:	École André-Piolat
Port Alberni:	École des Grands Cèdres
Powell River:	École Côte du Soleil Centre de leadership et d'aventure en nature (CLAN)
Prince George:	École Franco-Nord
Richmond:	École des Navigateurs
Sechelt:	École du Pacifique
Squamish:	École Les Aiglons
Surrey:	École Gabrielle-Roy
Terrace:	École Jack Cook
Vancouver:	École Anne-Hébert École Kitsilano Secondary École Rose-des-Vents
Victoria:	École Victor-Brodeur
Whistler:	École La Passerelle

District Review Report

2004/2005

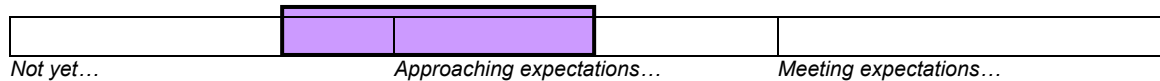
Two members of the Team also met with the director of the Fédération des Parents Francophones de la Colombie-Britannique.

Discussions at the school were based on the Ten Points of Inquiry, developed by the Ministry of Education. In the majority of schools, the Review Team met with the principal, teachers and parents belonging to the School Planning Council or the Parents Advisory Council.

Observations in Key Areas - Focus on Student Achievement

1. *Goals:*

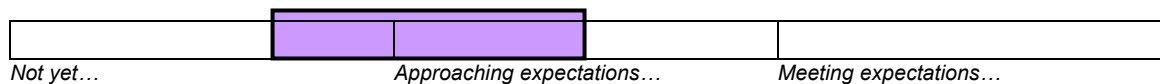
Improving districts and schools have a strong instructional focus. This focus is made visible in relevant goals for improving achievement for all students.



- The District goals are supported by the schools and their communities.
- Most school plans reflect the district literacy goal as well as the goal of the enhancement of French language and culture.
- Some schools have developed goals that are generally linked to student achievement and instruction.
- The District and some schools have identified specific subpopulations of students requiring attention, however these are not generally reflected under school objectives.
- Many school goals and objectives are linked to school events and activities rather than to student learning.

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.



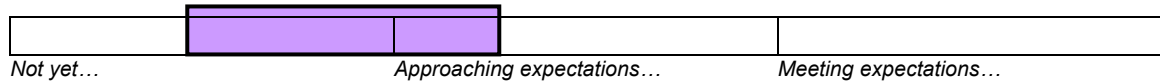
- Some schools are at the beginning stages of setting their individual goals based on the unique needs of their students.
- In many schools, the rationale for the selection of school goals is based primarily on consensus rather than district- and classroom-based evidence.
- At the District level, the literacy goal is based on some district, provincial and national data.
- The mandate of the CSF as well as the results of a survey conducted two years ago have played an important role in the development of the District's goals.

District Review Report

2004/2005

3. *Data:*

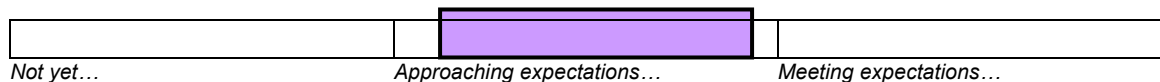
Improving districts and schools are actively considering at least three sources of evidence including classroom, school, district and provincial data. The analysis of this evidence informs the selection of the district goals and is used to monitor progress.



- Many schools recognize the need to further expand their sources of student achievement data in order to monitor progress.
- Sources of classroom and school data exist in all schools, and a few schools have begun to collect and organize this information.
- Some schools and the district are at the beginning stages in their analysis of data to monitor student performance and to inform instruction.
- The District is working with other jurisdictions to develop appropriate measures and instruments for assessment.
- The District has encouraged schools to examine reading achievement for their Aboriginal learners on an individual basis to determine needs and strategies for appropriate intervention.

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.



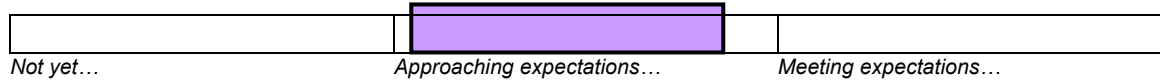
- The District has provided leadership in implementing literacy strategies, including French language development.
- Some schools are using classroom instructional strategies outlined in the literacy goal.
- Many strategies are focused on school level events and activities rather than on changes in classroom-based instructional interventions.
- A few schools are at the beginning stages of monitoring the effectiveness of strategies and drawing links to results.
- Some schools have developed strategies and structures of differentiated instruction, but resulting student progress has not yet been documented in most School Plans.
- A number of schools commented on their desire to have Performance Standards in French.

District Review Report

2004/2005

5. Structures:

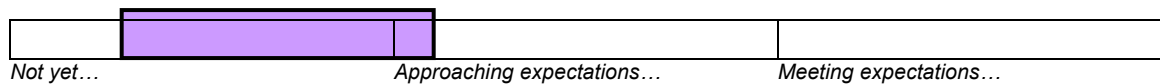
Improving districts and schools have aligned structures – resources, time, and organization – to get the results they want. This includes, but is not limited to, effectively differentiating resources in the areas of highest need for improvement.



- Some schools have made structural adjustments (eg. staffing, scheduling) to support their goals.
- The District has developed several innovative technological approaches and programmes with the potential to better support populations in rural areas and secondary schools, as well as the establishment of professional learning communities amongst educators. These structures are beginning to be more fully utilized.
- Collaborative structures for teacher interaction around student assessment are in their beginning stages.
- Schools in some heterogeneous situations face challenges that have forced them to create innovative solutions in order to meet their students' needs.

6. Results:

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

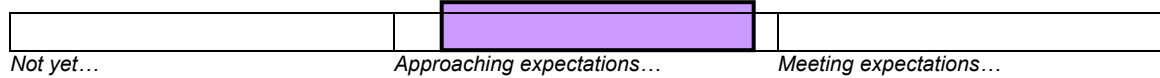


- There has been a gradual improvement in the district-wide reading results for Grades 4 and 7, as evidenced in the FSA.
- In many cases, until baseline data is established using school-based measures, more meaningful student progress cannot be identified or tracked.
- A few schools are beginning to analyze their data, reflect on their implications and make adjustments as necessary.

**District Review Report
2004/2005**

7. Communication:

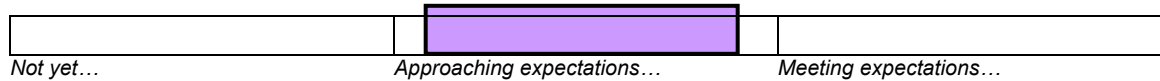
Improving districts and schools are involved in continuous dialogue about student achievement and make public their improvement goals and the progress being made in specific areas of focus.



- There is evidence of many ways of communicating with the community at the district and school level.
- Some schools include information on student achievement and school improvement plans in their communications to parents and the community.
- Some schools recognize the additional needs of families in which parents do not speak French and are therefore reaching out accordingly.
- Some schools make use of the district's innovative technology initiatives.

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 is beginning to establish structures for purposeful dialogue amongst educational stakeholders regarding the Accountability Framework.
- The District has begun to inform and guide schools in the development of their school plans.
- Many schools have begun to adapt their goals and school plans to reflect their individual needs and unique contexts.
- The District is still in the beginning stages of the Accountability Framework, and has not yet reached the point in the cycle where school data and student achievement are analysed at the district level.

District Review Report

2004/2005

9. *Teamwork – District and Parent Involvement:*

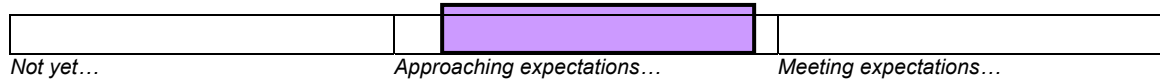
Improving districts and schools work as a team with parents, including specific groups of parents, to improve student achievement.



- Each school has a School Planning Council.
- Schools are in the early stages of engaging in data-driven dialogue within School Planning Councils.
- There is very clear evidence of strong parental support at the school level.
- In many schools, some parents are actively and passionately involved in the social activities and culture of the school.
- A few schools involve a wider parent community in the goal setting and decision-making process related to student achievement.

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.



- A strong positive culture is present at most schools to support teamwork between parents and staff.
- There is evidence of shared leadership at the district and school level.
- The District has established structures and strategies for developing the leadership capacity of students.
- Frequent movement of principals and teachers limits coherence and continuity as well as the development of leadership capacity.
- There is evidence of exemplary leadership amongst individual teachers, parents and administrators.
- The District's mentoring initiative for new teachers has the potential to be an effective means of building capacity.

District Review Report

2004/2005

Strengths

- The External Team encountered caring and committed staff, parents and students throughout the district.
- The team recognizes the dedication of the principals, many of whom work in challenging situations within a wide variety of school structures.
- The District and the schools are focused on their mission and beliefs as they relate to the well-being of their students. They are proud of their uniqueness and of their ability to offer students within the CSF a French education. They have worked extremely hard over the past eight years to become a District, in spite of all its complexities and its many challenges.
- The External Team has been impressed with the efforts to date of the District to coordinate their student achievement agenda. Great strides have been made in a very short time.
- The District has identified the needs of certain subpopulations of students across the CSF. Students requiring additional support in French, English as Second Language learners, new Canadians with settlement needs and Aboriginal learners have been identified.
- Many schools demonstrate an understanding of the next steps required to improve the achievement of their students. They have shown a desire to begin to disaggregate their data based on subpopulations of students. They have begun to delve deeper into linking goals, rationale, data, strategies and structures.
- The District is collaborating with other Francophone jurisdictions in order to share curriculum resources and assessment tools.
- Homogeneous schools share a common timetable at the secondary level. This permits students to participate in two common on-line courses. This beginning step has great potential to create more choices and flexibility for students and to resolve the problems of distance and the small numbers at the secondary level.
- The District Review Team found many examples of positive relationships that exist between District administration, principals, teachers, parents and students at the district and school level.
- The involvement, energy and dedication of parents are, as one principal said, “the soul of the program”. There is much potential to involve parents in future initiatives concerning student achievement, thanks to the enthusiastic involvement that already exists.
- The District has initiated a Masters of Education program in collaboration with St. Boniface College, University of Manitoba, as a way of addressing the leadership development needs of administrators.

District Review Report
2004/2005

Promising Practices

The team was impressed by District innovations to respond to the particular and unique needs of their students. For example:

- The District has developed a French Community Passport program. This initiative is intended to foster the desire to study in French at the secondary level and to counter the attrition rate, which seriously affects French students in a minority environment. This tool has great potential for integration with the Graduation Program portfolio.
- The District has begun a leadership center (Centre de leadership et d'aventure en nature – CLAN) in Powell River in order to contribute to the linguistic and cultural vitality of its students and to give them opportunities to experience enriching activities in French outside of the classroom.
- Several schools have developed family literacy and other support programmes that provide opportunities for family members to strengthen their French along with their children, and to provide students with reinforcement in both academic and social skills.
- The District has implemented TV-CSF, a television station, as a means of communication and in-service.

Recommendations

1. The Planning Process

As a result of its visit, the Team respectfully recommends:

- the reformulation of the District Accountability Contract and School Plan templates in order to better express goals in terms of student achievement and to reflect the subgroups and objectives already identified but not currently tracked;
- the establishment of baseline data for each goal at the school and district levels;
- the implementation of an annual planning cycle so that School Plans may inform the District Accountability Contract, and vice versa;
- the systematic monitoring of plans at the school level, and an annual review in order to link goals, objectives, rationale, data, strategies, structures and results;
- the continuation of work with the Ministry of Education, other francophone jurisdictions as well as other districts and organizations in the province with the goal of refining assessment tools for literacy, social responsibility, and linguistic and cultural vitality;
- the solicitation of support from the Ministry of Education for capacity building initiatives such as in-service on all aspects of student achievement. These activities should be supported with French presentations and materials.

District Review Report
2004/2005

2. Assessment Literacy

As a result of its visit, the Team respectfully recommends:

- the development of a plan to promote assessment literacy at all levels of the district;
- in-service and ongoing support provided to School Planning Councils in integrating the use of data driven dialogue with their school communities;
- collaboration of schools within School District 93, and possibly with other districts in the province, to share promising practices in assessment;
- the implementation of structures to build on the assessment and data expertise that is already being demonstrated within some schools.

3. Communications, Teamwork and Leadership Capacity

Distance, discontinuity and fragmentation continue to pose challenges to district coherence and to the development of leadership capacity amongst principals, teachers and parents.

As a result of our visit the team respectfully recommends:

- the provision for more frequent face to face interactions and electronic networks to promote the development of Professional Learning Communities within the CSF;
- the expansion of networking opportunities with current provincial organizations of educators and parents within British Columbia.