

S.D. #81 Fort Nelson
SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
December 15, 2009

The annual report on student achievement is intended to serve two main purposes;

- Ensure transparency and accountability for each school district in terms of its responsibility for improving student achievement by providing a public vehicle for the Superintendent of Schools to annually comment on student achievement in their district;
- Provide a mid-year look at student achievement by reflecting on progress to date as well as considering new information that will facilitate subsequent planning for continuing improvement of student achievement at the school and school district levels as school plans and district achievement contracts are developed.

Areas of Improvement

Early development and Kindergarten to Grade 4 reading and numeracy are areas of improvement for S.D. #81 Fort Nelson.

Our EDI results show that the percentage of children vulnerable in Fort Nelson decreased by 9.7% between Wave 2 and 08/09. District wide, the largest proportion of children vulnerable was on the Physical Health and Well-being scale with the smallest proportion of children vulnerable was on the Communication Skills and General Knowledge scale. Our two Strong Start Centres have a combined registration of about 100 children and we are seeing an improvement in parents participating in play activities with their child rather than social interaction with other parents. We have just opened an indoor playroom to enhance our Strong Start experience that is in use during the school day as well is operated by the Fort Nelson Recreation Centre on weekends.

We are seeing improvement in our Kindergarten students' Phonemic Awareness skills. We are using the Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Awareness as a pre and post assessment and working with identified students of letter sounds and rhyming. Our data shows an increase from 57% to 81% of students in Kindergarten are now in the range of emerging to phonemically aware, before entering Grade 1.

Our FSA Grade 4 Reading results have remained strong with 96% of students meeting or exceeding expectations and 100% of Aboriginal students meeting or exceeding expectations. We are seeing similar results in our On the Mark Reading Assessment. We are continuing to use the Great Leaps Reading program, Precision Reading and Guided Reading with identified at risk students. We held a very successful district in-service this year with Adrienne Gear on Reading Power and cognitive strategies for use with fiction and non-fiction books to support our teachers' use of higher level thinking, questioning and writing strategies. While we are continuing our work in reading, our schools are now focusing on increasing student achievement in writing as well using the Six Traits of Writing, Performance Standards and providing formative feedback to students.

Our FSA Grade 4 Numeracy results have also shown improvement with 92% of students meeting or exceeding expectations and 100% of Aboriginal students meeting or exceeding expectations. We continue in our use of the Vancouver IslandNet Math Diagnostic and have found that its pre and post test format has provided teachers with useful student information for the development of unit timelines and for the review and reinforcement of concepts. We have provided in-service on Math Makes Sense and continue to provide Math Recovery support for identified at risk students in K to Grade 4. With the support of Imperial Oil, we have just completed Jump Math workshops for teachers in grades K to 7 and this will be another resource used this year for at risk math students. This year we also have a District Elementary Math Coordinator who works with teachers from K to 7 modeling math strategies and discussing math ideas and initiatives.

We hope that these strategies will result in improved achievement beyond Grade 4.

Evidence Sources for Improving Areas

EDI; Strong Start registration and observations; Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Awareness; FSA; On the Mark Reading Assessment; Great Leaps Reading Program; Vancouver IslandNet Math Diagnostic; Math Recovery.

Challenging Areas

Secondary School student attendance continues to be a challenging area and one that undoubtedly has a negative impact on student achievement. Last year the Fort Nelson Secondary School developed an Attendance Policy with staff, parent and student input. Guidelines for attendance were tied to extra-curricular participation which includes school dances and travel for team sports. Each term begins as a 'clean slate'.

Term 1 Sept. to Nov. 2008

166 Aboriginal students enrolled

66 Aboriginal students (40%) 'not eligible to participate'

231 Non-Aboriginal students enrolled

65 Non-Aboriginal students (28%) 'not eligible to participate'

Term 1 Sept. to Nov. 2009

149 Aboriginal students enrolled

98 Aboriginal students (66%) 'not eligible to participate'

239 Non-Aboriginal students enrolled

94 Non-Aboriginal students (39%) 'not eligible to participate'

We are not seeing an improvement in attendance and the policy appears to be having little effect on students who do not participate in team sports or do not attend school dances. The school-based committee will be meeting again this year to review this data and strategize further to decrease the number of student absences.

Evidence Sources for Challenging Areas

Attendance data; Report card data

Other **Challenging Areas** are discussed later in this report.

Ministry of Education Data

District 081 - Fort Nelson

All Students

	2005/06		2006/07		2007/08		2008/09	
Six-Year Completion Rate	62		82		61		71	
English 10 Avg. Exam & Course Mark	Exam	Course	Exam	Course	Exam	Course	Exam	Course
	65	64	65	61	60	62	64	71
*FSA Gr. 4 Reading Meeting-Exceeding	79		55		100		97	

Aboriginal Students

	2005/06		2006/07		2007/08		2008/09	
Six-Year Completion Rate	41		89		50		49	
English 10 Avg. Exam & Course Mark	Exam	Course	Exam	Course	Exam	Course	Exam	Course
	62	55	65	63	55	58	58	62
*FSA Gr. 4 Reading Meeting-Exceeding	85		43		100		100	

* Beginning in 2007/08 students completed the FSA in February, almost three months earlier than in previous years. Consequently, the 2007/08 and 2008/09 results cannot be compared to those of previous years.

In the 2008/09 school year, we had 60 students listed by the ministry as not graduating within 6 years. In looking at this data, one-third (15/60) of these students had either moved out of the province, was an exchange student (1/60), were School Completion students (2/60) or returned and did graduate (3/60).

Our Aboriginal 6 year completion rate for the 2008/09 school year, indicates that we had 23 Aboriginal students not graduating within 6 years. Our records indicate that 26% of these students had either moved out of the province (5/23) or had completed a School Completion certificate (1/23).

Fort Nelson remains somewhat transient with its ties with Alberta and the Oil and Gas industry. Fort Nelson also has very low unemployment rates and many well-paying jobs, some not requiring completion of formal educational requirements. We continue to have a number of students who withdraw and go to work as well as a number of students who

return to our Band independent school and do not graduate due to a lack of success in both systems.

Our English 10 Average Exam and Course Marks have remained fairly consistent over time. We were hoping that our students would show increased achievement on the Grade 10 Provincial Exam as we had students from the School Planning Council speak to each class on the importance of the exam and the importance of students taking the exam seriously and doing their best. We observed a higher rate of students who stayed working on the exam until the end of the scheduled time. This however, did not result in increased exam scores.

The gap between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students on the English 10 could be a result of the greater absenteeism of Aboriginal students suggested earlier in this report. Our Aboriginal students are provided with educational assistant support in class as well as lunch time support.

This year, as outlined in our Achievement Contract, we have implemented Humanities Booster blocks at the grade 7, 8 and 9 level for students not meeting grade level learning outcomes to ‘boost’ their outcome completion through sustained reading and writing activities. This will better prepare at-risk students for English 10. We have also implemented tutorial time for junior students at the high school for I Plan, homework assistance and course support.

To provide more instructional time in the 2009/10 school year, the high school has reduced the number of ‘exam days’ in each semester. This will enable students to have several more hours of instruction in each class at the end of both semesters. It is hoped that this additional time will benefit students in English 10 and other subjects by helping them meet course outcomes as well as prepare for summative assessments.

We are hopeful that these structure and strategies will assist our Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students in being more successful in the English 10 course and exam.

We are very proud of our Achievement in Grade 4 Reading on the FSA and have discussed this under Areas of Improvement in this report.

Other areas of progress made with respect to goals and targets set out in our last achievement contract are cited elsewhere in this report.

The connectedness of all of our educational plans is success for all. Ultimately, we all want the children, youth, and adults in our community to have options. In providing a strong early foundation; improved literacy; increased academic and social success of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal learners; adult programs that show “it is never too late” to learn, we are providing for increased options and opportunities.

Many of our goals in our educational plans overlap. This provides the opportunity to share and discuss common strategies and assessments and a sharing of resources and

space with other community partners that has helped build collaborative and positive working relationships. This common vision has assisted in developing a larger and shared community perspective of strengths and needs.

Implementation of Recommendation #5 of the Representative of Children and Youth regarding Children in Care.

	Yes/No	Comment
Is a person appointed in each school to monitor the success of children in care (CIC) and promote appropriate interventions?	✓	Yes, a person has been appointed at each school though currently all children on continuing and temporary care are at our high school.
Have initial rosters of CIC been updated in consultation with local MCFD offices?	✓	Yes. This was made more difficult due to having had more than one interim MCFD managers in the last 6 months.
Is information shared between district, schools and MCFD in a manner consistent with the interests of CIC?	✓	Yes information is shared and future meetings are planned.
Are children in temporary care arrangements, by agreement or in the home of a relative included in monitoring and support functions?	✓	Yes. We have 7 children in care, 5 in continuing custody and 2 in temporary care. Three of these children are living in the home of a relative. All are included in our monitoring and support functions.

Monthly meetings with the MCFD manager and individual social workers are planned to discuss and update information on our children in care. Interim and term reports will be gathered to monitor the need for further supports. We will have key staff members meet with our children in care on a regular basis to identify needs, issues and to hear from them on their goals and interests for course and extra-curricular options and how we can support them.

The use of interim and term reports; attendance reports; behavioral referral reports; observations from Aboriginal Support Worker; and conversations with children in care will be used to monitor the educational attainment of children in care in S.D. #81 Fort Nelson.

Respectfully submitted,
 Diana Samchuck
 Superintendent of Schools
 S.D.#81 Fort Nelson