

School District No: 39

School District Name: Vancouver School District

1. Improving Areas of Student Achievement and Evidence confirming this improvement

Literacy Results

Continued improvement for at-risk early learners

- In June 2014, 53% of students identified as at-risk in Kindergarten within 49 Early Intervention schools met or exceeded expectations in reading by the end of Grade Three (26% had relocated prior to Grade 3). There continues to be an increase in the rate of improvement for at-risk learners between Kindergarten and Grade 3, as the Early Intervention Initiative progresses.

Aboriginal Student Success

Increase in six year completion rates of Aboriginal students

- Between 2009/10 and 2013/14 the Six Year Completion Rate for Aboriginal students increased from 25% to 43%. The percentage rate was the same for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Increased percentage of Aboriginal students graduating with a Dogwood certificate

- Between 2009/10 and 2013/14 the percentage of Aboriginal students graduating with a Dogwood certificate increased from 29% to 47%, with an increase of 6% between 2012/13 and 2013/14.

2. Challenging Areas

What trends in student achievement are of concern and what evidence supports this?

Literacy Results

Improving the literacy skills of at-risk early learners

District data indicates that 44% of Kindergarten students in 49 Early Intervention schools are identified as being at-risk in the area of literacy development in January of their Kindergarten year. This percentage of identified at-risk students remains fairly constant on an annual basis. The Board of Education has adopted a Five Year Early Intervention Initiative, expanding the program to additional elementary schools between 2012 and 2017. To meet the needs of all the identified at-risk students, the provision of targeted interventions will need to expand across schools, as well as increase in density within school sites.

Improving the literacy skills of at-risk late primary, intermediate and secondary learners

Beyond the Early Intervention Initiative at the Kindergarten and Grade 1 levels, there is a need to develop a district-wide supportive strategy for consistent assessments and targeted interventions and strategies within the classroom and school setting from elementary through to Secondary school.

Aboriginal Student Success

The completion and graduation rate of Aboriginal students (43.3%) is significantly less than the overall student population (86.7%) in Vancouver School District. Some areas of the district have a highly transient Aboriginal student population, and this disruption can impact transition and completion rates for these students. Absenteeism has been identified as an issue that needs to be addressed explicitly, for many Aboriginal students, and for other students, within vulnerable populations. There continues to be a significant decrease in transition rates between grades 10 and 11, and to the extent that this is linked to school absenteeism, the district will focus on developing an attendance strategy and implementation plan prior to September 2015.

In addition, because of our unique urban Aboriginal student population, we monitor our internal data and track graduation rates for students who enter their Grade 12 year in our schools. For this cohort, which generally consists of approximately 115-125 students, there is a 70% or better rate of graduation.

A new Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement will be signed in 2015 and will contain specific strategies and targets expected to improve outcomes for students.

3. Programs / Performance / Results & Intervention

Comment on the effect of interventions and programs with specific reference to goals and targets set out in your last Achievement Contract. Based on acquired evidence, what efforts appear to be making a difference?

Early Intervention Initiative

- June 2014 data indicates that the number of at-risk Kindergarten students in the 2013-14 school year decreased from 44% to 8% between January to June through focused small group work, and classroom intervention in the Early Intervention (EI) schools.
- In Grade One, the number of children identified as at-risk through An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement decreased by nearly two-thirds through Reading Recovery, small group intervention and comprehensive classroom literacy practice.

Through this initiative, continued gains are being made in improving the achievement of students identified as at-risk in Kindergarten and Grade One. Strengths of the initiative include:

- Consistent assessment tools and practices
 - The Kindergarten assessment in January of the Kindergarten year
 - An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement at the beginning of Grade One
 - Benchmark reading assessments in Grade One to Three
 - Three Step Writing Assessment
- Continuous, supported professional development
 - Reading Recovery training
 - Small Group Instruction Using Guided Reading Format
 - Comprehensive Classroom Literacy Program with Differentiated Instruction
 - Inquiry focused professional learning groups
 - Changing Results for Young Readers

- Support to Tier 1 schools
 - A one-year pilot project which placed an ECE/SPED trained Student Support Assistant (SSA) in Kindergarten classes in Tier 1 schools for 2014/15, to assist with transition from pre-K to K for vulnerable students.

Aboriginal Student Success and Cultural Enhancement

- Rates for Six Year Completion and acquisition of a Dogwood Certificate continue to increase.
- Expanded use of data in the Aboriginal Intervention Management System (AIMS) for tracking student attendance, achievement, interventions and impacts.
- All School Plans include a goal for student learning and/or cultural enhancement.

At the district level and at the school level, staff continue to take a team approach to addressing the issue of Aboriginal student success, on a student by student basis. The AIMS system provides valuable data for monitoring and planning for student success at an individual, school and district level. An increased emphasis on the goal of Mastery has provided a clear focus for the work of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Teachers in supporting students with their academic achievement, and in meeting graduation requirements. During 2013-2014 success plans were completed and updated at 3 reporting periods for Aboriginal Secondary school students. An electronic copy of the student success plan will be integrated into AIMS in 2015, and by September 2015 e-versions of success plans will be in place for all Aboriginal students.

List any other Achievement programs you may have implemented in addition to previous years goals and targets and their results.

- Expanded Early Intervention initiative to 58 schools as of September 2014
- Expanded participation to 8 new elementary schools in the Changing Results for Young Readers initiative with the Ministry of Education
- Supported the expansion of a District Inquiry facilitation team model to support schools in their Collaborative Teacher Inquiry projects around student learning and engagement. Facilitators include teachers, school administrators, and District Learning Services staff.
- Expanded the Multi-Interdisciplinary Support Team (MIST) model to provide timely resources and support to schools in areas related to Special Education

4. Targets (Summarize the targets set out in your Achievement Contracts)

I.) Literacy: Identify your district's target(s) for literacy, and state the specific evidence and measures of student achievement in literacy and the results that have been realized.

To increase the percentage of students who are meeting or exceeding expectations in reading by the end of Grade 3.

Evidence of improvement is being tracked through the Early Intervention Initiative which was expanded to 58 schools as of September 2014. The data indicates that 53% of students identified as at-risk, are meeting or exceeding grade level reading expectations by the end of Grade 3.

II.) Completion Rates: Identify your district's target(s) for completion rates and state the specific evidence and measures of student achievement for completion rates and the results that have been realized.

The six year completion rate is the percent of students who complete within six years of beginning grade eight for the first time.

Improvement in the 6 year graduation rates of one to two percent for all students.

Improvement in the 6 year graduation rate of one to two percent for Aboriginal students.

Evidence of achievement is based on the Ministry of Education Six-Year Completion Rates from District Reports. The results below show a slight change from the prior year for all students, and for Aboriginal students. The target of 1 -2 % improvement was not met.

- All students in District 39 had an 87.4% Six-Year Completion Rate in 2014 in comparison to an 86.7% Six-Year Completion Rate in 2013.
- Aboriginal students in District 39 had a 42.7% Six-Year Completion Rate in 2014 in comparison to a 43.3% Six-Year Completion Rate in 2013.

III.) Aboriginal Education: Identify your district's target(s) for aboriginal student improvement and state the specific evidence and measures of student achievement for Aboriginal students and the results that have been realized.

To increase Aboriginal Student Six-Year Completion rates.

- From 2002 to 2014 the Six-Year Completion Rate of Aboriginal students has increased from 21.1% to 42.7%. As noted previously, the district data shows that the graduation rate for Aboriginal students in Vancouver, who are present in schools in September for Grade 12, is approximately 70%.

5. Children in Care

Summarize the work and your efforts in meeting the needs of Children in Care. What categories of Children in Care have been successfully identified and are being monitored?

The district maintains a central data base of names for children in continuous custody. MCFD provides a revised list in March which is then reviewed and amalgamated with our district data base. This information is updated on an ongoing basis as information is received from MCFD offices and from school principals. Principals are provided with the names of the children in continuous custody. At the school level, principals are best positioned to be aware of children who may be moving in and out of care. They take the lead in understanding, and advocating on behalf of children in care, as well as providing connections between home, school, and involved agencies.

Principals are requested to send copies of the required documentation of progress to the Director of Learning Services. This includes:

- Copies of current year's report cards
- A copy of the current IEP for those who are identified in special education funding categories.
- A copy of the current AIP for ELL students.
- Information on Aboriginal students' progress is also recorded and accessed through the Aboriginal Intervention Management System (AIMS).

What structures are in place to provide effective communications among MCFD offices, social workers, foster parents and schools?

- Informal and ongoing meetings that are called on an as-needed basis, both school based and district. These can be related to a specific student or related to a topic or issue emerging through MCFD, Health or Education.
- Formal ICM or IEP opportunities that include the parent and or guardian as well as MCFD and education personnel.
- Senior staff meet with community partners in MCFD and VCH to exchange information, review protocols and develop initiatives.

What results are being achieved by students within the identified categories?

We continue to work on developing closer connections with community partners in VCH health, MCFD, and the VPC around the support for Children in Care for the benefit of all students whom the agencies serve.

- The student outcomes are related to the structures, resources, services and supports provided through a variety of educational frameworks.
- Students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are tracked through their growth on individual goals and measures. Their achievement is also represented through data collected for the purpose of informing literacy initiatives such as the Early Intervention work described in our district plan.
- Aboriginal students' progress is viewed through the lens of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement and data is recorded in the Aboriginal Intervention Management System (AIMS). The Aboriginal Student Success Plan meetings at the school level address the interventions required by students, in all aspects of their schooling.
- Regular meetings occur between district staff and agencies, related to students in the multi-agency Alternative Programs at the secondary level.

6. Early Learning

What strategies are in place to address the needs identified in Early Learning?

- All K students in Early Intervention schools are assessed to determine whether they are at-risk for barriers to learning to read. The data is disaggregated according to Ministry designation (Aboriginal, ELL, Special Needs).
- From January to June Kindergarten students are monitored, given small group support and classroom instructional interventions, and reassessed in June.

- The district has adopted an Early Intervention 5 Year Plan for 2012-2017, which will provide for the expansion of this initiative to all schools.
- Nineteen StrongStart programs support families in developing children's readiness for Kindergarten.
- Welcome to Kindergarten (WTK) orientation occurs at the majority of elementary schools. A pilot initiative to include Physical Literacy is being expanded for spring 2015.
- Two early learning/intervention pilot projects were held in summer 2014 to support Kindergarten readiness
 - Building on the proven effectiveness and success of the Learning Partnership's "Welcome to Kindergarten" (WTK) program; the Summer Early Learning program was developed together with the Learning Partnership staff. The purpose was to promote Kindergarten readiness for preschool students who had limited or no exposure to preschool learning opportunities, prior to their entry to kindergarten. This included a focus on the development of independence and social skills such as sharing and turn taking; play based learning; the importance of parent involvement; social emotional development, and community connectedness. There will be an expansion of the program for summer 2015.
 - Providing family and child friendly general health and wellness screening and assessments to children entering Kindergarten who were planning to attend Strathcona, Macdonald, Britannia and Seymour Elementary Schools or who lived/ attended childcare in these catchment areas. This pilot was instigated by district staff, and developed, coordinated and delivered by partners from Provincial Health Services including BC Children's Hospital (RICHER - Responsive Intersectoral Children's Health, Education and Research Initiative), Sunny Hill Health Center, and Vancouver Coastal Health, as well as Ray-Cam Co-Operative Center and the BC Centre for Ability. Discussions are underway as to the possible continuation and/or expansion of the initiative.

7. Other Comments

Vancouver School District #39 has a highly diverse district with a student population representative of a wide socioeconomic demographic. Among the varied student population are a high percentage of ELL students, students living in poverty, and urban Aboriginal students. Many of these students are also very transient and move in and out of schools and to other districts, and provinces, within the school year.

Support for Vulnerable Students – Due to Poverty

As noted in the 2013 Child Poverty Report Card, B.C. child poverty rates continue to be the highest in the country, and the impact of this is evident in the challenges faced by many Vancouver students in their readiness and ability to achieve success in school.

In March 2014 the Board adopted the Final Report for Re-visioning Inner City and CommunityLINK Resources in Vancouver Schools which contained a number of recommendations for implementation over two school years from 2014-2015 through to 2015-2016. Since the adoption of the report, a number of the recommendations have been addressed or are underway. As noted in the report, 'what works' in terms of supporting children who are disadvantaged due to poverty, includes these major areas: literacy, including early learning and early intervention; social emotional growth, including resiliency building; parent involvement; attendance, and community connections.

Underway is the development of a focused district and school-based strategy including the key measures, targets, and strategies related to the major areas, in order to provide ongoing monitoring and review of the impact of the supports upon learners. Priorities for September 2015 include a focus on the measures, targets and strategies related to literacy development, and the implementation of an attendance strategy, in support of student achievement, transition and graduation; a realignment of the goals and responsibilities of the CommunityLINK and Enhanced Support staff, along with other district-based staff in the Aboriginal Education and Special Education departments.

Continuing to grow the connections between community organizations and schools will remain a key strategy of the work, as well.

The district continues to advocate for, and seek resources and strategies to support these students, with inter-related organizations.

Social Responsibility and Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

The district continues to be engaged in the use and application of the data related to student readiness and social-emotional learning through last year's participation in the EDI and MDI with the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP). Workshops and district support is offered for staff in such evidence-based SEL Programs as FRIENDS, MindUP, Second Step, various abuse prevention programs and other sessions aimed at increasing capacity in developing students' SEL competency, online and off-line. Staff are working with the Inner City Review team to address plans for SEL promotion, and addressing SEL, mental health and well-being and support. The District participated in a unique event exploring the importance of SEL by hosting the Dalai Lama at John Oliver Secondary School for a youth-led dialogue about educating the heart.

The district has begun a project, funded by the Ministry of Education to engage educators in development of lesson examples and samples to address the Personal Awareness and Responsibility Competencies in the new BC curriculum and assessment.

ERASE Strategy

The ERASE strategy has been supported through actions such as the following:

- Distributed the Principals' and Vice Principals' Fall Safe School To Do Checklist, with reminders about establishing the schools' VTRA and CIR Teams; updating and sending in their Code of Conduct; reminding staff about the importance of reporting threat-making behaviour or behaviour that may indicate suicidal ideation; reminding staff about procedures for reporting suspected abuse and neglect; and a reminder about the VSB guidelines for adults interacting with students.
- Implementation planning for the updated Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities Policy, as well as offering *Pridespeak* sessions and working with *Out in Schools*.
- Established, and continue to support a Safe Contacts network and encouraged establishment of GSAs in Secondary Schools; distributed anti-discrimination resources.
- Planning for ERASE training sessions with school staff and community partners; arranged for training for key staff who had not been trained in VTRA, including VPD School Liaison Officers.
- Continued presentations for Grade 8 students on safe ways to report, including to trusted adults, through CrimeStoppers and the ERASE reporting tool.
- Implementing the City of Vancouver funded project, in partnership with LiveWires Design to update and deliver sexual exploitation prevention education in grade 6 – 9 Vancouver classrooms.

- Revised Guidelines for Intervening with Potentially Suicidal Students, and informed counselling and administrative staff; undertaking a review of training and detailed support for counselling staff.
- Planning to participate in a Training of Trainers session with Dr. Stan Kutcher, in collaboration with UBC Faculty of Education and other school districts, on the Adolescent Curriculum on Mental Health.

8. Board approval date: January 26, 2015.
