



School District 36 (Surrey)

Superintendent's Report on Student Achievement

December 10, 2009

Section 22 of the *School Act* requires the superintendent of schools to:

(b.1) ... on or before December 15 of a school year, prepare and submit to the board a report on student achievement...for the previous year.”

The School Act further directs that: “On receipt of a report submitted by a superintendent of schools... the board must, on approval of the report,

- (a) immediately, and in any event no later than January 31 of the school year in which the board receives the report, submit that report to the minister, and
- (b) as soon as practicable, make the report available to the public.”

In placing this item on the public Board meeting agenda for Dec. 10, 2009 and sharing it electronically with employees and with the District Parent Advisory Council following approval by the Board, I am intending to ensure:

- there is transparency, accountability and dialogue in our community on key issues related to student achievement and the successes and challenges encountered as the district strives for ongoing improvement, one learner at a time;
- there is accessible and understandable information to facilitate focused planning for student success at the school and school district levels and there is evidence of coherence and alignment in future school plans and district achievement contracts.

Context: The Surrey School District Board of Education has received an “Improving Student Learning Report” from staff in the fall of each of the past 15 years. This annual local requirement accomplishes many of the same desired outcomes that the provincially mandated Superintendent’s Report does, and serves as a context-rich resource providing coherence to the district’s priority work. The ISL Report presents information and commentary associated with each of the Board’s student achievement goals. The ISL committee is made up of educators with direct responsibility for specific goal areas: literacy, numeracy, Aboriginal student success, and social responsibility. The committee’s attention to student success and to monitoring results makes a substantial difference in the way the district allocates its resources, adjusts practices as a result of emerging trends and ensures that priority efforts are sustainable. Readers of the *Superintendent’s Report on Student Achievement* are encouraged to refer to the

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15th Annual Report on Student Achievement submitted by the Improving Student Learning Committee available on the district's website, www.sd36.bc.ca for a more complete picture of the work of the Surrey Board of Education.

The evidence and commentary in the *Superintendent's Report on Student Achievement* highlights priority areas where improvement is being achieved and other areas where current challenges and concerns indicate a need to increase and/or refine the strategies currently in place.

I. Provincial trends and comparisons

A) Six Year Completion Rate

- i) Overall: The school district's six year Dogwood completion rate indicates the percentage of students who completed grade 12 within six years of beginning grade 8. Completion rates for Surrey students (83%) continue to exceed the rate for all B.C.'s public schools (78%). This area of success is particularly notable given the increasing diversity of the student population, with 44% of students in the district coming from homes where a language other than English is spoken. School and district programs to support English Language Learners enable students to more quickly and completely engage in the full curriculum and achieve success in meeting their graduation aspirations.
- ii) Aboriginal students: In 2008-09, Surrey had over 2700 students of Aboriginal ancestry. Of that population, approximately 300 had entered grade 8 six years earlier (2003-04) and 42% graduated by June 2009. While the total number of students in this cohort is small, it is troubling to note that a 42% success rate is a decline over the results in recent years, and compares negatively to the provincial Aboriginal school completion rate of 49%. The failure to engage and support Aboriginal learners so they can participate and succeed on par with their non-Aboriginal peers is an area of great concern to the Board of Education, its staff and to educators and communities throughout the province.

Six Year Completion Rate				
District	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
All Students	84%	83%	83%	83%
Aboriginal Students	41%	49%	48%	42%

It is important to acknowledge that there are many emerging success stories in the district's work with Aboriginal learners, including evidence of the gains resulting from a focus on early learning and literacy. Such efforts will take several years before they impact graduation rates. The district anticipates

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positive returns from a strategic realignment of services to secondary school students to ensure greater consistency and quality in the support they receive in the classroom and from other wrap-around services.

None of us can feel satisfaction or a sense of accomplishment while the gap between Aboriginal learners and the rest of the student population is so great. The Board and its Aboriginal communities have entered into an Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement (see www.sd36.bc.ca) with the following four goals:

- To advance the literacy achievement of Aboriginal learners from Kindergarten to Grade 12;
- To increase awareness and understanding of Aboriginal history, traditions, and culture for all students;
- To enhance Aboriginal students' sense of belonging so they can be successful;
- To increase the transition rates and graduation rates for Aboriginal students.

Taking action on these goals has increased the alignment of efforts between and among schools, district departments and families towards a common goal.

While the school district and the Aboriginal communities celebrate successes of many Aboriginal learners and honour their accomplishments in scholarship, extra-curricular activities and leadership, we must remain focused on increasing the percentage of Aboriginal learners completing grade 12.

B) English 10 Exam and Course Mark:

All students are required to complete English 10 as a course toward graduation. Since 2005/06, the province has administered a provincial English 10 examination.

Surrey students have performed consistently over time and the average exam score is at or close to 70% (+/- 1%). It is notable that students' average course marks (based on teacher professional judgment of classroom-level assessments) have been almost identical to the average result from the examination. Aboriginal students taking the English 10 exam have demonstrated a relatively high and consistent level of success, achieving between 65% and 67% on the exam since 2005/06. There are two areas of particular interest related to Aboriginal students and the English 10 exam:

Aboriginal students taking the English 10 exam have a pass rate of 87%, with 45% achieving a C+ or better on the exam. Aboriginal students in Surrey are

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above the provincial Aboriginal pass rate by 6% and above the C+ or better rate by 2%.

The participation rate for Aboriginal students in grade 10 for the the English 10 exam was 57%, compared to 88% for all students. This low participation is due to some students being a year behind in English (taking English 9 in their Grade 10 year) or to students dropping out of English 10 prior to the exam date. Both scenarios require attention and action as does the consistently higher percentage of Aboriginal students who achieve a C- or F on the course mark compared to the exam mark. There is no expectation that provincial exam scores and classroom-based assessments will be similar, although they often are. Some students are able to demonstrate their mastery of learning outcomes in the classroom environment with its wide range of assessment opportunities more successfully than they can on a single exam. However, more Aboriginal students are successful, that is a higher proportion get a C or above, on the Grade 10 English exam (72%) than in the course (57%).

C) FSA Grade 4 Reading Results:

The Foundation Skills Assessment was changed in 2007/08, both in timing and in format. Therefore, consideration of trends over time is not helpful except in looking at district versus provincial comparisons for participation rate. It is notable that participation rates in FSA tests for Surrey students are higher than the provincial participation rate and are significantly higher than rates in some school districts that would otherwise be used for comparison purposes.

FSA Reading Grade 4 Participation Rate	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
District	92%	92%	91%	87%
Province	89%	88%	90%	84%
Difference	3%	4%	1%	3%

Beginning in 2007/08, students completed the FSA in February, almost three months earlier than in previous years. In Grade 4, Surrey students (67%) were meeting or exceeding expectations in 2008/09 and were within 2% of the province. Aboriginal students (47%) achieved the same success, but this rate was lower than the province by 5%. We anticipate that the district-wide focus on early literacy will increase student performance on school, district and provincial assessments over time.

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- II. **Review of Progress toward meeting Goals and Targets listed in the district's Achievement Contract (see www.sd36.bc.ca):** There are three goals in the district's Achievement Contract. They are:

GOAL 1: IMPROVE LITERACY – KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12

- a) **Early literacy success:** The school district is achieving strong and positive results in its efforts to build literacy skills in our youngest learners. Kindergarten and early primary literacy strategies have been developed in the classroom and in association with parents as literacy partners. This is particularly important and rewarding when integrated into our StrongStart program in the district's inner city schools. The *Kindergarten Phonemic Awareness* strategy assists students who may have difficulty learning phonemic awareness skills (recognizing letters and associated sounds). Using a test developed by Surrey educators called the Early Literacy Phonemic Awareness Test Surrey (ELPATS), all kindergarten students are assessed in January and those identified as having difficulties are assisted and reassessed again in May. The assessment information guides instruction through the implementation of a new instructional program "Links to Literacy." This summer, the district piloted an intervention program for Kindergarten students in our inner city schools who continued to be at risk in June to ensure every chance of success in Grade one. Results consistently show marked improvement, particularly for Aboriginal students as illustrated by the following: In January 2009, 32 % were at risk for early literacy levels, but by May this has decreased to only 10% of the group.

The Inner-City Early Literacy Project supports the most vulnerable kindergarten and Grade 1 students at 12 inner-city schools with additional staffing and reading and writing resource materials. The Language, Literacy and Learning (LLL) Kindergarten project supports teachers in developing a high quality, developmentally appropriate all day kindergarten program. This strategy allows school communities to focus resources to improve student literacy skills. At grade one, the results for the inner city group on the RAD36 Reading Assessment are comparable to the overall district results.

- b) **Increased Literacy focus across the curriculum:** Improving reading skills in the content areas should yield achievement gains in all reading-intensive curriculum areas. The Developing Readers initiative, developed in Surrey, involves elementary and secondary schools in exploring effective ways to support critical reading skills in content areas across the curriculum. This initiative is in its fifth year with over 90 schools involved. A new Grade 7 and Grade 8 transitional writing project matches grade 7 teachers with grade 8 teachers to explore effective writing practices and

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the links between reading and writing. Results from pre-test and final assessments using RAD36 (district reading assessment resource) shows a substantial increase in the percentage of students meeting and exceeding grade level expectations in the final assessment.

RAD36 Reading Assessment 2008/09 % Meeting to Exceeding						
Group	Grade 1 to 3		Grade 4 to 7		Grade 8 to 10	
All Students	Initial	Final	Initial	Final	Initial	Final
	79%	90%	84%	91%	77%	81%

- c) Improved English 10 and English 12 Results:** Surrey students have achieved slightly below the pass rate on the English 10 exam over the past five years and have not reached the provincial results for achievement of C+ or better as a final letter grade in English 10. As mentioned earlier in this report, it is important for staff to explore and remedy the reasons for the low percentage of Aboriginal grade 10 students who participate in the English 10 exam. District results in English 12, both on the provincial exam and the final letter grade, have been at (+/-1%) of the provincial results for the past 5 years.

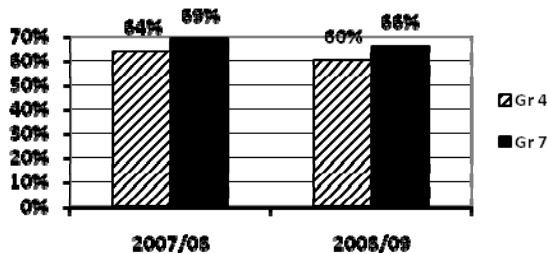
Blended Final Mark						
English 10		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
District	Pass Rate	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
	C+ or better	64%	63%	60%	63%	62%
Province	Pass Rate	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
	C+ or better	65%	65%	65%	65%	66%

Blended Final Mark						
English 12		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
District	Pass Rate	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
	C+ or better	67%	69%	69%	68%	65%
Province	Pass Rate	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
	C+ or better	68%	69%	68%	69%	66%

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GOAL 2: IMPROVE NUMERACY – KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 9

The district is in the early stages of building a system-wide numeracy strategy to increase students' ability to reason with numbers and other mathematical concepts, and to apply those skills in



Percentage of Surrey School District students meeting or exceeding expectations in numeracy (FSA)

“real life”. As with the district's approach to literacy, there are several initiatives aimed at assisting students to understand and improve their numeracy skills. The F.S.A. numeracy chart included in this report and other evidence from internal and provincial comparisons (see the *Improving Student Learning Report*) indicate the importance of

the district's attention to building district momentum in the area of numeracy so that students will reach or surpass provincial achievement levels. Fundamental to the numeracy effort is the district's initiation of a summer school Grade 7/8 “Transitions” program, targeting students who have struggled in the core areas of numeracy and literacy in their intermediate elementary years. Student success in Math 8 is being monitored to determine the effectiveness of this strategy.

GOAL 3: IMPROVE THE SIX YEAR COMPLETION RATE:

As illustrated earlier in this Report, the district's six year completion rate has remained relatively stable between **83 to 84%** and is above the provincial rate. Aboriginal student completion rates are dramatically below the levels of their non-Aboriginal peers and are also below the provincial Aboriginal completion rate. Successes in the area of school completion data include:

- In 2007-08, 95% of students eligible to graduate, achieve graduation status; (2008/09 not available)
- In 2007/08, 40% of Surrey students graduated with honours (a 'B' or better average in Grades 10 through 12 in courses leading to graduation); (2008-09 not available)
- In 2008/09, the district is at (+/- 1%), or above the pass rate for the province in seven out of ten provincial examinations for Grades 10 through 12; and,
- The district is at (+/-1%) or above the pass rate) or better on four out of five required provincial exams

The school district recognizes that school completion goes beyond a focus on students in their grade 12 year. Grade to grade transition in secondary school (Grade 8-12) is an area of attention in each of the 19 secondary schools for the overall student population and most urgently for Aboriginal learners. The area of

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greatest concern is the Aboriginal student transition rate between grades 10/11. In 2007/08, 65% of the Aboriginal group made a successful transition to the higher grade compared to 90% of non Aboriginal students. Schools are developing approaches to increase the level of support, engagement and relevance for learners in their secondary school experiences.

III. Additional Areas for Comment: The school district learning community deserves recognition for the many positive results being achieved in classrooms and programs throughout the district. There has been substantial growth in enrolment and participation in many areas including Fine Arts, Applied Skills, Career Education programs, as well as involvement by students in school sports, leadership and social responsibility. In all of the district's 125+ schools, there is strong evidence of commitment to ensuring students have high quality learning experiences aimed at providing a well-rounded education. Readers of this report are encouraged to read the *Improving Student Learning Report* to get a sense of the efforts being made on behalf of all learners.

IV. Alignment, Sustainability and Coherence: connecting the work described in the Achievement Contract, Superintendent's Report, District Literacy Plan, Early Learning Plan and Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement. Surrey School District is a large, complex and diverse organization. In order to ensure that the district's resources are effectively being used to maximum benefit for our learners, the Board has directed its focus on common themes and initiatives that cross over many of the district's priorities. Those include:

- a) **Early learning and literacy** as a foundation for children, for their families and for the community. The district recognizes literacy as foundational to individual and community capacity. The Board's makes every effort to ensure that children receive focused early literacy support and that parents understand their vital roles as partners;
- b) **Equity** is fundamental to the Board's assignment of resources and its strategic plan to improve student achievement. The various contracts and plans listed above are designed to ensure that there is sustainable support provided disproportionately where the need is greatest. Programs and services are designed and delivered for students attending inner-city schools, for students of Aboriginal ancestry, and for students arriving new to our community from challenging circumstances, including Refugee camps;
- c) **Staff Capacity** is an essential pre-requisite for student success. The district's service plan identifies a number of resources, including staff training and in-service, materials and supplementary professional support to the classroom teacher.

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V. Progress on Responsibilities for Children in Care: This year, there is a new requirement for the Superintendent's Report to include information about the educational progress of Children in Care. In its first year of implementation as a requirement, superintendents have been asked to provide a brief update on the status of work being done to align the efforts of various agencies in ensuring Children in Care receive the support necessary to help them build capacity for success.

	Yes/No	Comment
Is a person appointed in each school to monitor the success of children in care (CIC) and promote appropriate interventions?	Yes	The principal of each school has been identified as the person responsible to monitor the planning and success of each child in care at their school.
Have initial rosters of CIC been updated in consultation with local MCFD offices?	Yes	However, even with the strong commitment to collaborate from our MCFD partners, there is currently a lack of centralized coordination to produce one student list that is comprehensive across MCFD jurisdictions and school districts. Surrey Schools have Children in Care who may have a social worker located at MCFD offices in Chilliwack. This situation becomes more complex due to the communications challenges between Community MCFD and Aboriginal MCFD. We continue to work with our MCFD partners to develop a more efficient and sustainable mechanism to communicate up to date information to our schools with respect to CIC.
Is information shared between district, schools and MCFD in a manner consistent with the interests of CIC?	Yes	For the past two years, the Surrey School District has focused on developing better practices at the school level with respect to Integrated Case Management (ICM) for students with special and unique needs. This work has helped establish and foster more effective collaboration with our local MCFD representatives. The CIC initiative is a natural "fit" as we continue to improve our practice in a collaborative, "wrap around" approach to meeting the needs of students.
Are children in temporary care arrangements, by agreement or in the home of a relative included in monitoring and support functions?	Yes	Upon implementation of the CIC initiative, our principals were asked to include students in care agreements other than CCOs as part of the overall school monitoring strategy. We are continuing to work with our local MCFD and Aboriginal MCFD to determine how we can ensure that accurate lists are available for the next school year that will include all students currently on care agreements.

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What further steps and activities is the district planning to undertake to make effective the Representative's recommendation?

- Our district has established a CIC Working Group to guide the success of the initiative. The primary goal of this working group has been to ensure the success of the initial implementation of the CIC strategic plan. A future direction would be to have this working group transition to become a CIC Advisory Committee with a mandate to help guide the long-term monitoring and direction of the initiative over the next several years. It is envisioned that the CIC Advisory Committee would include representation from:
 - Surrey Board of Education
 - Superintendents' Department
 - Principals
 - Aboriginal Education
 - Special Education
 - MCFD
 - Aboriginal MCFD
- It has been planned that the case manager of the identified CIC will ensure that a review of each student's progress takes place each reporting period. All individuals involved with supporting each particular child will be invited to participate in the review and subsequent planning that takes place.

What measures and evidence will be used to monitor the educational attainment of Children in Care in your School District?

- Student Profile - It will be important to note if the student:
 - has a special education designation
 - is on a modified or adapted educational program (I.E.P.)
 - is working toward School Completion vs. Dogwood program
 - has been identified as being of Aboriginal ancestry
 - has any other individual needs that have an impact on the student's ability to meet their full potential at school.

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- Student strengths
- Available Curriculum based data, including report card data
- Psycho-educational assessment data (if available)
- Attendance data
- Hawthorne Problem Behaviour and Emotional rating scale profile
- Ministry Process Planning Tool information (if relevant)
- Any additional assessment information from the other sources (i.e. medical reports, etc.)
- F.S.A. (if available for the student)

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike McKay
Superintendent of Schools/CEO