

Superintendent's Report on Student Achievement 2014/2015.

Ministry of Education School Act

Section 22 of the School Act states the following:

"A board must appoint a superintendent of schools for a school district who, under the general direction of the board..., (b.1) must, on or before December 15 of a school year, prepare and submit to the board a report on student achievement in that district for the previous year.

Section 79.3 goes on to say:

"On receipt of a report submitted by a superintendent of schools under Section 23 (1)(b.1), the board must, on approval of the report,

- A) Immediately, and in any event no later than January 31st 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."

School District No: 60 School District Name: Peace River North

Preamble

SD 60's Achievement Contract lists two goals - improved academic achievement through active student engagement and increased social responsibility. To assess progress towards these goals the district uses a combination of traditional metrics including FSA and Provincial Exam results, grad rates and other data, as well as other instruments that inform the district about how students feel about themselves, their learning and district programs.

Our district is innovative and not afraid to take risks. To this end some of our achievements are measured in district willingness to implement new programs aimed at personalizing learning, providing multiple career pathways, utilizing alternative and innovative learning spaces and in making use of technology to better instruct and assess students.

Traditional measures of success remain important to SD 60 but we are open to and searching for new ways to promote and assess student achievement. Whether shifting our student support model to a learning services model to promote UDL practices for all learners, designing and implementing our own dashboard of assessment tools, or by identifying vulnerable target populations for additional supports, district practices keep student learning in mind and remain true to the district motto "Together We Learn"

1. Improving Areas of Student Achievement

Transitions in administrative personnel, and the vagaries created by job action often made it difficult to gather accurate district data via usual techniques. The uncertain labour climate had an impact on student achievement. However, positive trends remain evident in the areas of social responsibility with increasing numbers of students feeling safe and cared for at schools. Much work remains to be done, but satisfaction survey data and other indicators show district efforts to have students engage and feel good about being at school, and what goes on there are having a positive impact.

This level of connectedness is particularly evident in our community based K - 12 schools in Prespatou and Hudson's Hope. Graduation rates at these schools are at 100%, as the close ties generated between students and their schools create supportive communities that we hope to replicate within our larger schools based within the larger centre of Fort St John.

Pockets of strength continue to be in evidence within subject based academic subjects Writing skills continue to be an area of strength as evidenced in FSA results at grades 4 and 7, and English Exam scores in grades 10 and 12. Social Studies and Civics 11 results continue to be strong. An ongoing focus on subject for and about Aboriginal students has led to stronger results in English 12 First Peoples and BC First Nations Studies 12.

There is a new awareness of the importance of school connectedness for students, especially with

concern to transitions between elementary and middle school and middle school and secondary programs. Project based learning forms the basis of inquiry work done by students at the Energetic Learning Campus, our innovative campus located within a community sports complex. Our grade 12 students are resilient and achieve strong results. Multiple career pathways are open to them. The district does an excellent job of connecting students in the graduation program to programs that will contribute to their future success, whether these be in trades, academic pursuits or other areas.

Evidence

Grade 12 Graduation rates

District 280/299 - 94% of eligible grade 12 students

NPSS – 93% NBCDES – 94% (second consecutive year at or above 94%)

Prespatou Secondary School 100% (4th consecutive year)

Hudson's Hope 100% (2nd consecutive year)

Writing

Grade 4 FSA 84% meeting or exceeding Province 73

Grade 7 FSA 82% meeting or exceeding Province 72

Grade 10 English 92% pass 61% C+ or better (up 5%)

Grade 12 English 97% pass 68 % C+ or better (up 2%)

Social Studies/Civics

Civics 11 100% Pass (fourth consecutive year)

Social Studies 11 95% pass (5th consecutive year at 95% or higher)

64% C+ or better (5th consecutive year at 63% or higher)

Courses with Special Emphasis on First Nations

First Nations Studies 12 98% pass (5th consecutive year at 94% or higher)

55% C+ or higher – up 13%)

100% pass 57% C+ or higher for Aboriginal students

English 12 First Peoples 100% pass 55% C+ or higher

100% pass 63% C+ or higher for Aboriginal students

Satisfaction Survey Data

Grade 12 Students

136/140 respondents felt safe all or most of the time - improvement of 8% over previous year

124/142 respondents felt connected to two or more adults - improvement of 7%

Grade 10 Students

240/290 respondents felt connected to two or more adults - improvement of 6 %

Grade 7 Students

311/372 respondents felt connected to two or more adults - improvement of 5%

2. Challenging Areas

Awareness in itself does not turn around results. Traditional metrics around six year school completion rates and achievement scores in numeracy and mathematics continue to be flat or show downward trends. It is also a concern that district scores on provincially examinable subjects such as Science 10 continue to lag behind provincial averages. Transitions from elementary to secondary programs remain a focus. Students who carry on and persist in their pursuit of graduation or school leaving credential continue to achieve well, but too many students are experiencing obstacles, road blocks or challenges that cause them to withdraw from programs, or take longer than they should to complete their studies.

Evidence

Six Year Completion rate continues to hover below 70%

Numeracy FSA results at grade 4 and 7 continue to be below provincial average

Math 10 results continue to be below provincial averages with pass rates at or below 70%

Science 10 results demonstrating an acceptable pass rate but declining rate of C+ or better

Grade to grade transitions from grade 9 to higher at 86% - 10% behind provincial average

3. Programs / Performance / Results & Intervention

All students in the district now have a Learn60 Gmail account, which allows for easier sharing of information and assignments between teachers, students and parents. This platform is consistent with the tenets of 21st Century learning and of engaging our students in a variety of ways. We have seen a substantial increase in the number of secondary teachers providing this option to their students as well as using many other technology tools.

Through the Ministry of Education ERASE training program, we continue to offer bullying-prevention workshops and threat assessment training to our staff. All our administrators are now trained at Level 1 and 2. This has fit well with our goal of Social Responsibility and we have continued to see a decrease in the number of suspensions across the district. We also continue to see a reduction in the number of students who have six or more behaviour referrals.

We have implemented a web-based assessment dashboard called ASSESS, which incorporates our IEP template, report card information, behaviour referrals and reports as well as district literacy assessments. This tool allows teachers to consider a variety of assessment information to be used in their formative processes for planning and intervention. This online "student file" allows for more effective team-based meetings around student progress.

One of our most effective programs is the coaching and collaboration available to all our schools. This program continues to build capacity and establish best practice for literacy and numeracy across the district. Master teachers work with a range of colleagues around specific goals for student achievement and success.

Our district continues to offer rich and diverse professional development. All our administrators attended a one-day workshop with John Hattie during the summer, and we have continued to review his research through book clubs and administration team meetings. We are also working with Leyton Schnellert from UBCO throughout the year to strengthen our school-based teams so that we can provide more effective interventions for our struggling students.

SD 60 is also working hard to meet the targets set out in the Blueprint for Learning and creating opportunities for to participate in hands on learning experiences as well as learning about potential careers.

Through the "Should Tapper" initiative we are working on the "Make it Work" program. The goal of this program is for each grade 6 to have a hands-on learning experience at either Northern Lights College or North Peace Secondary School and learn about possible career pathways they may choose.

The district is working to connect Aboriginal students and "At Risk" students to Work Experience, Secondary School Apprenticeship, and Dual Credit Programs. The hope is increase engagement for those students still in school and to reconnect students who have left the school.

The ACE-IT and Dual Credit programs continue to be an area of strength for the district and this year

cohorts of Early Childhood Education and Health Care Assistant programs have been added to help address the needs of the community.

4. Targets

For early literacy district cohort data, 80% Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students are to reach the year-end reading targets of Level 16 for grade 1 and Level 22 for grade 2.

The target for FSA reading and writing results for grades 4 and 7 is to meet or exceed the provincial average for all our students.

The target for our grades 3-9 reading assessment is for 80% Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal to be meeting or exceeding in the area of comprehension.

The target for English 10 is for 95% of all students to pass the provincial exam. 90% of students initially enrolled in the course will take the exam.

Most of these results will become available in the Spring. Due to job action, we do not have complete district literacy assessment results this year.

II.) Completion Rates:

After years of improving completion rates, SD 60 experienced a step back of 5% in 2013/14 for five and six year completion rates. The seven year completion rate continued a positive trend. As previously noted SD 60's completion rates lag behind the provincial average, and continue to be an area of concern. We are continuing efforts to connect with every student who does not complete their education within the commonly accepted time lines in order to understand the circumstances surrounding them and to better support them so that they can complete their education journey in a timely and positive manner.

III.) Aboriginal Education:

a. Demographics

In 2013/2014 1,198 (20.2%) of SD 60 students self identified as Aboriginal. This number has remained relatively constant for the past three years and is significantly higher than the provincial average of 11.2%

District Targets for Aboriginal Student Improvement

Graduation is seen by our Aboriginal communities as a key indicator of success. The gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal graduation rates has been on an increasing curve for the past five years peaking in 2012/13 at 25%. SD 60 recognizes a need to implement new and different measures our Aboriginal student success.

In the 2013-14 school year, SD 60 developed and deployed an Aboriginal Student Sense of Belonging Survey. Through this survey it became apparent that many aboriginal learners see paid employment as an alternative preferable to attending school. Fort St. John is a booming community with ample opportunities for employment in the service, oil and gas, energy and forestry sectors. Given traditional views of schooling and, the lure of paid employment appears to be a more attractive option than dealing with challenges that come up in classrooms.

In grades 7-9, 58 of 178 or 30% Aboriginal students reported working part time. Fully 50% of the district's 186 Aboriginal students in grades 10 - 12 were working. A quarter of these students reported working more than 20 hours a week.

District targets for Aboriginal students include closing the graduation gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners, and increasing the graduation rate to well above 90%. Strategies currently deployed include the use of transition coaches to make more personal connections with Aboriginal students and increased access to transition to trades and work experience programs in order that students can see education as both more relevant, important and a pathway to better paid employment instead of as an unpleasant alternative to working.

A second target is to close the achievement gap and reduce the number of students leaving school prior to graduation. At the elementary levels, Aboriginal achievement scores mirror trends found within the non-Aboriginal population. At grade 4 there is no significant gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student performance on FSA assessment. By grade 7 Aboriginal performance continue to mirror the performance patterns of non-Aboriginal student but has begun to lag a few percentage points behind. The gap widens on grade 10 exams, then narrows again in grade 11 and 12, as the number of students remaining in the graduation program drops off. The implementation of a transition coach to connect with Aboriginal students in middle school, combined with a more aggressive recruiting of Aboriginal students into trades program are being monitored this year are strategies being monitored to determine if better connectedness can lead to improved achievement and graduation data.

Evidence in Support of Connectedness Initiatives

Satisfaction Survey Data

Does Staff treat all students fairly?

Grade 10 respondents

Aboriginal students

Non-Aboriginal Students

77 polled 62% say most or all the time

214 polled 57% say most or all the time

increase of 13% from previous year

Do teachers help when you need it?

Aboriginal Students

Non-Aboriginal Students

78 polled 71% say most or all the time

219 polled 66% say most or all the time

increase of 9% from previous year

5. Children in Care

Children in Care benefit from SD 60's move from a Student Support Service model to the more inclusive District Learning Services (DLS) model. Elementary counselors as determined by DLS, assist school based teams to meet regularly to review the needs, required supports and achievement progress of children in care. DLS annually reviews students in care or under temporary custody orders. Communication occurs with school administrators as a cross reference and as a means of highlighting ongoing supports provided through school based teams.

SD 60 utilizes technology resources to monitor and track its students in care or on temporary custody orders. A common process exists for entering information on CCO and TCO students within BCeSIS, and a district-wide online resource provides consistent data and links to appropriate ministry and web based resources. Using technology in the manner allows for the availability of consistent information to support practice independent of staff turnover and transition.

DLS and senior district staff have initiated ongoing connections with our partners in care at the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Health. Breaking down silos while respecting privacy rights allows the partners to avoid duplication of efforts, provide better coordinated support and allow students to experience greater success at school.

6. Early Learning

We were able to hire a qualified ECE worker for our StrongStart program. We will also be expanding

our service at one of our rural schools (Prespatou) to offer two days of contact time for parents with their children. Our three regular StrongStart programs continue to be strong and stable.

Our Early Learning coordinator and literacy coach continue to work with the ECD table on pamphlets, radio spots and general promotion on the topic of tips for parents for language development in young children.

The Roots of Empathy program continues to be strong with nine kindergarten classes in our district taking part.

We continue to be part of the EDI network, sharing and working with our community partners on early learning needs and programs.

7. Closing Comments

SD 60 has a proud tradition of innovation and having the courage to try new and different strategies aimed at improving student achievement. We have taken a long hard look at where we are currently and look forward to taking on the challenge of improving our practice to attain results all stakeholders can be proud of.

8. Board approval date: December 15th, 2014