

2008 – 2009

District Achievement Contract Guidelines

Available on the Ministry of Education website
www.gov.bc.ca/bced/



April 2008

Guidelines for District Achievement Contracts: 2008-2009

Introduction

The *School Act* requires each Board of Education in British Columbia to prepare and submit to the Minister of Education, an Achievement Contract with respect to standards for student performance and plans for improving achievement in the district. The Contract includes a focus on literacy, programs to support early learning and any other matters as determined by the Minister. These matters may be addressed through the completion of an addendum to the Achievement Contracts.

Overview:

The Achievement Contract is a public statement of commitment by a Board of Education to improve success for each student in the district. Each Contract is developed collaboratively, on an evidence-based assessment of the needs and priorities of the students in the district. The Contract identifies areas of focus for the improvement of student success, describes strategic actions and outlines processes to monitor progress and make adjustments intended to improve results.

Questions to assist planning efforts are listed in Appendix A.

The Achievement Contracts will:

- Be three-year plans, annually updated and connected to the superintendent's annual report on achievement to the board.
- Focus on continuous improvement for all students in the district.
- Provide a summary statement of progress made in the achievement of performance targets related to goals and objectives.
- Be developed based on the analysis of evidence of the needs of students in the district.
- Have targets in place to address district needs and priorities, with specific targets for Literacy K-12, completion rates and Aboriginal student improvement.
- Require consultation with the Superintendents of Achievement.
- Combine strategies and structures into specific actions to address goals, as well as provide a description of how the actions will be evaluated for effectiveness.
- Provide an explanation of the connection between the Achievement Contract and the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (EA), the Literacy Plan and Early Learning programs.
- Be reviewed by the Ministry, with feedback provided early in the fall, which may include a request for further information on specific elements.

Description of Achievement Contract Elements

Context

The context is a brief statement about the district and may include:

- Demographic data identifying major community groups (such as ESL, Aboriginal, Special Education) as well as student enrolment information;
- Unique characteristics of the district; and
- Two or three areas of strength based upon student performance.

District Review Response

The district briefly outlines its progress in addressing the recommendations from the most recent District Review.

District and School Connections

Efforts to improve student achievement are enhanced through a common vision, shared goals, effective use of resources and connections among district, school and parent priorities which include:

- A description of the connection between district and school plans.
- A description of the process used to approve school plans and the process used to consult with School Planning Councils regarding:
 - a) the allocation of staff and resources in schools,
 - b) the contents of the district plan in relation to school plans,
 - c) educational services and educational programs in schools.
- A description of the connections with other improvement initiatives including the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (EA), the District Literacy Plans, and Early Learning Programs.

Goals and Objectives

Goals

Clear goals help focus district priorities for improving student learning. District priorities are stated in two to three goals, based on the analysis of a range of student performance data.

Goal statements from the previous contract are carried forward each year until the goal is no longer applicable. Plans for improvement may require changes as a result of circumstances in the district. If a goal is eliminated from a previous contract, an explanation for the decision is provided.

Objectives (Specific Area of Focus)

A manageable number of objectives help focus district goals into specific areas of concern. When determining objectives, the district considers the performance of all students, including any group of under-performing students.

Objectives from the previous contract are carried forward each year until the objective is no longer applicable. If an objective is eliminated from a previous contract, an explanation for the decision is provided.

Rationale/ Summary of Progress

Providing a rationale/summary of progress demonstrates that districts have considered the performance of each of their students, school/community context and values when identifying goals and determining objectives. The rationale/summary of progress statements connect the analysis of student performance (classroom, school, district and provincial data), the achievement of previously established targets and other pertinent information with goal decisions. A clearly understood rationale/summary of progress builds commitment to the goals and objectives.

Performance Indicators/Evidence

Performance indicators are measures used to indicate progress towards attainment of goals and objectives over time. A variety of indicators, generate a more complete picture of student achievement in a district. Appropriate indicators include sources of information drawn from classroom, school, and district results from provincial data¹. Indicators should emphasize school and district data that impact success for each student and lead to changes in classroom practice. Once performance indicators have been identified, expected results are set (see Performance Targets).

Performance Targets (Expected Results)

Clearly articulated expectations for short-term (one to two years) and long-term (three or more years) results support district planning for enhancing student performance. They help to determine progress towards meeting goals and objectives. Performance targets are directly linked to established goals and objectives, expressing both the desired level of student performance to be attained and the anticipated timeframe for achievement.

Although a manageable number of targets may be set in a number of district priorities including early learning, it is expected that as of July 15, 2008, each district will have targets for Literacy (K-12), completion rates and Aboriginal student improvement.

¹ Please refer to Ministry website (<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/>) for information about provincially collected data.

Progress Made in Achieving Performance Targets

Achievement or progress towards achievement, of established performance targets informs ongoing district planning. A statement of progress in the achievement of stated performance targets is presented as “met” or “not met”. A summary statement of the progress made in the overall achievement of district goals and objectives is also provided **and may be included in the rationale section of the document**. When targets are not met, districts provide a description of actions that will be taken to improve the success of each student. When targets are exceeded districts consider establishing more challenging targets or focusing on other priorities for improvement.

Actions (Strategies/Structures)

Clearly articulated actions (formerly strategies and structures) connect district efforts and activities with desired student results. They are a combination of the specific actions, activities, resources, time, personnel and organizational planning directed toward, and supportive of, improved student learning. Actions are clearly linked to the district goals and objectives. Actions are selected to achieve the goals and objectives and are drawn from research, best practice, and innovative thinking. It is expected that districts will provide an explanation of how the actions will be evaluated for effectiveness at meeting achievement targets.

Reporting

The Achievement Contract is submitted on or before July 15, 2008 as follows:

A paper copy is sent to:

Honourable Shirley Bond
Minister of Education
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

An electronic copy (PDF format) is sent to:

EDUC.AMR@gov.bc.ca

The District will ensure that a copy of their Achievement Contract is submitted to the Minister July 15, 2008, and is available for public review in the District office, in both electronic and a hard copy formats. The Ministry will also place each Achievement Contract on the Ministry website.

Appendix A

Achievement Contract Questions

Please consider the following questions as you complete your Achievement Contract:

1. What contextual factors are important to understand the work of the district to improve success for each student?
2. How have the most recent District Review recommendations influenced planning and actions related to improving success for each student?
3. How are school and district plans connected?
4. How has the Superintendent's Report informed the development of the Achievement Contract?
5. What are the connections between district and school planning and the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement, the District Literacy Plan and Early Learning Programs?
6. What are the results of your efforts to improve success for individual students?
 - a. What specific actions are you taking when targets are not met?
7. What are the major areas of focus for the district? (goals and objectives)
8. What performance indicators or evidence are used to track student performance?
9. What are the performance targets?
 - a. What are the timelines for the achievement of identified targets?
10. What specific actions will be initiated or adjusted to meet your achievement targets in order to improve student success?
 - a. How will you know that the actions implemented are achieving the expected results?