

District Review Report

**School District No. 82 (Coast Mountains)**

April 17 - 20, 2006

Submitted to the Minister of Education

By District Review Team Chair  
Harry Janzen, Superintendent, School District No. 70 (Alberni)

**District Review Report  
2005/2006**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| District Name:   | Coast Mountains  |
| District Number: | 82   |
| Superintendent:  | Randy Smalbrugge   |
| Date of Visit:   | April 17-20, 2006  |
| Team Chair:      | Harry Janzen, Superintendent, SD 70 (Alberni)  |
| Team Members:    | Charlie Coleman, Principal, SD 79 (Cowichan Valley)<br>Timothy Dunford, Parent, SD 63 (Saanich)<br>Lisa Gunther, Literacy Resource Teacher, SD 70 (Alberni)<br>Kathleen King-Hunt, First Nations District Principal,<br>SD 85 (Vancouver Island North)<br>Sherry Mohoruk, Liaison Team, Ministry of Education<br>Eric McMahon, Enhancement Agreements Coordinator,<br>Ministry of Education<br>Sharon Sola, Principal, SD 67 (Okanagan Skaha)<br>Jennifer Turner, Vice Principal, SD 51 (Boundary) |

**Context**

School District No. 82 (Coast Mountains) last received a District Review in 2002/03.

The District is situated among the pristine mountains of Northwest British Columbia. The District is comprised mainly of five centres including: Terrace, Kitimat, Hazelton, Kitwanga and Stewart. These communities are largely recognized for the services they provide in forestry, tourism, paper manufacturing, chemical products, natural gas and ore exports. Kitimat is located at the head of the Douglas Inlet and is 70 kilometres south of Terrace. Hazelton is located 150 kilometres, and Kitwanga, 100 kilometres east of Terrace. Stewart is located 400 kilometres from Terrace.

The District serves a student population of 5,500 students. Within the student population, 35 percent are of Aboriginal ancestry. The Northwest Region has experienced a steady population decline since the mid 1980s. Over the years, the population decline has accelerated with economic downturn in the region.

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**Summary of Process**

The major purpose of the district review is to provide feedback and recommendations to the District, the Ministry of Education and the public regarding the District's work in improving student achievement. The specific purposes of the review are to:

- Review school district and school achievement data.
- Review the school district accountability contract, Aboriginal Education enhancement agreement (if applicable) and school plans to improve student achievement.
- Determine the capacity of the school district to support schools in improving student achievement.
- Make recommendations to the school district and the Minister about improving student achievement.
- Identify promising practices that might assist other school districts and schools in their plans to improve student achievement.

At the beginning of the visit, the Team met with the District Leadership Team. The Team visited with all schools and met their School Planning Councils.

Meetings were also conducted with the Aboriginal Inter Tribal Education Committee (ITEC) and members of the District Parent Advisory Committee.

At the conclusion of the review, the Team met with the District Leadership Team and partner group representatives to provide an overview of the District Review Report.

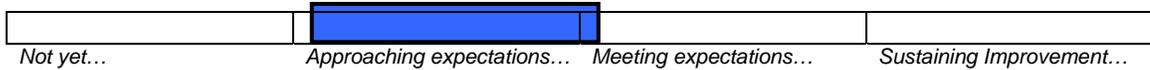
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**Observations in Key Areas - Focus on Student Achievement**

*1. Setting Directions: Goals and Objectives*

Improving districts and schools have a strong instructional focus. This focus is made visible in relevant goals and objectives for improving achievement for all students.

| Not yet  | Approaching expectations  | Meeting expectations  | Sustaining improvement   |
|--|---|---|--|
| Goals and objectives have little focus on student achievement. | Some goals and objectives are based on evidence and focused on student achievement. | All goals and objectives are relevant, based on evidence, and focused on student achievement. | All goals and objectives are relevant, based on a range of evidence, and focused on student achievement. Goals and objectives are systematically reviewed and revised. Consideration is given to all students. |



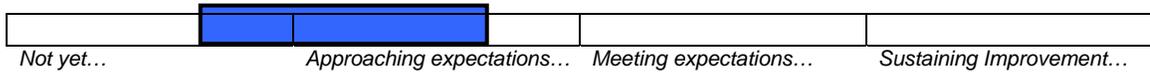
- District goals are reflected in school plans and school plans inform the District Accountability Contract.
- Some schools have goals and objectives that are based on evidence and are focused on student achievement.
- Many of the links between many goals and objectives are unclear.
- Many objectives lack a focus on student achievement.
- Goals and objectives for Aboriginal students are lacking.

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2. *Setting Directions: Rationale*

Improving districts and schools have a thorough and connected set of reasons, based on evidence, for the selection of their student achievement goals and objectives.

| Not yet   | Approaching expectations  | Meeting expectations  | Sustaining improvement   |
|---|---|---|--|
| Reasons for the selection of goals and objectives appear to be based on little consideration of evidence from data. | There is some evidence that the reasons for the selection of goals and objectives are based on relevant data. | Reasons for the selection of goals and objectives are based on evidence from a variety of sources and focused on student achievement. | Reasons for the selection of goals and objectives are consistently based on evidence from a variety of sources and focused on the achievement of all students. |



- The rationale for school goals reflects the use of limited evidence.
- Some schools have recently revised their goals and objectives to reflect relevant evidence.
- The basis for determining the priorities for specific groups of students is unclear.

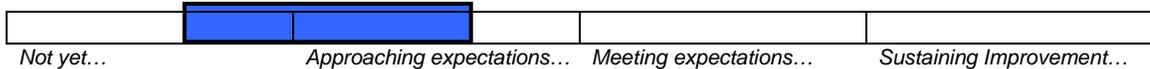
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### 3. *Setting Directions: Data (Evidence)*

Improving districts and schools are actively considering at least three sources of evidence including classroom, school, district and provincial data. The analysis of this evidence informs the selection of the district goals and objectives and is used to monitor progress.

| Not yet   | Approaching expectations   | Meeting expectations   | Sustaining improvement   |
|---|--|--|--|
| It is unclear what data are used to determine areas of need and plan for improvement. | Evidence from data is used or beginning to be used to determine areas of need, plan for improvement, and monitor progress. | The district and schools consistently analyze classroom, school, district, and provincial data sources to determine areas of need, plan for improvement, and monitor progress. | The district and schools consistently analyze classroom, school, district, and provincial data sources to determine areas of need, plan for improvement, and monitor progress of all students. Data are disaggregated, participation rates are considered, and trends are tracked over time. |



- Many schools are aware of the need for relevant data.
- Some schools are beginning to explore meaningful classroom and school-based data sources.
- A few schools are beginning to disaggregate school data.

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### 4. *Organizing for Improvement: Strategies*

Improving districts and schools have focused, well-organized improvement plans in place. The strategies selected to achieve the goals are a blend of research, best practice, and innovative thinking.

| Not yet  | Approaching expectations  | Meeting expectations   | Sustaining improvement  |
|--|---|--|---|
| Strategies are not connected to school and/or district goals and objectives. | The district and schools have improvement strategies in place with some connection to goals and objectives. | The district and schools have practical, research-based strategies in place to achieve goals and objectives. Strategies link to staff development and other improvement efforts. There is evidence of monitoring and adjusting strategies as required. | The district and schools have practical, research-based strategies in place to achieve goals and objectives. Strategies are in place to address areas of highest need and link to staff development and other improvement efforts. The district and schools consistently monitor and adjust strategies as required. |

|                   |                                    |                                |                                  |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                   | Approaching expectations...        |                                |                                  |
| <i>Not yet...</i> | <i>Approaching expectations...</i> | <i>Meeting expectations...</i> | <i>Sustaining Improvement...</i> |

- Some schools have strategies that directly link to objectives.
- Many practical, research-based strategies are evident in schools.
- Strategies are not routinely adapted or refined based on the monitoring of evidence.
- Effective strategies are not implemented in a selective and focused manner.

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5. *Organizing for Improvement: Structures*

Improving districts and schools have aligned structures – resources, time, organization – to get results. This includes, but is not limited to, effectively differentiating resources in the areas of highest need for improvement.

| Not yet  | Approaching expectations   | Meeting expectations   | Sustaining improvement   |
|--|--|--|--|
| The district and schools have not aligned structures to support school and/or district goals and objectives. | The district and schools have some structures in place to support school and/or district goals and objectives. | The districts and schools have structures in place to support school and/or district goals and objectives. Structures support areas of highest need and align with strategies. | The districts and schools have structures in place to support school and/or district goals and objectives. Structures support the areas of highest need and align with strategies. Structures are consistently monitored and adjusted as required. |



- Innovative structures to support student achievement are evident in some schools.
- District funding structures to support student learning are not clear or transparent to all.
- Aboriginal communities seek to be involved in shared decision making processes.
- Some structures at the secondary level potentially limit the success of some students.

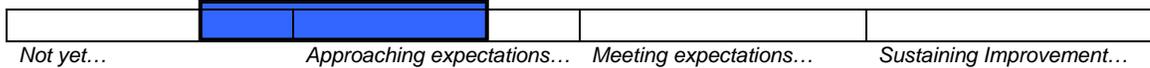
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6. *Organizing for Improvement: Coherence/Alignment*

In improving districts, there is a connection between school and district goals and objectives. School uniqueness and district directions are both valued. Schools connect with other schools to build capacity.

| Not yet   | Approaching expectations   | Meeting expectations   | Sustaining improvement   |
|---|--|--|--|
| There is little connection between school and district plans, and there is little evidence of efforts to develop connections. | The district and schools are developing connections between school and district plans. | Connections between the district and schools are interactive and reflect both school uniqueness and district directions. | Connections between the district and schools are interactive and reflect both school uniqueness and district directions. Schools connect with other schools to build capacity. |



- School uniqueness is evident.
- Schools express a need to connect with other schools to build capacity.
- The connections between school plans and the District Accountability Contract lack coherence.

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7. *Building Learning Communities: Dialogue and Communication*

Improving districts and schools maintain relationships that promote continuous dialogue about student achievement and make public their improvement goals and the progress being made in specific areas of focus.

| Not yet   | Approaching expectations  | Meeting expectations  | Sustaining improvement   |
|---|---|---|--|
| There is no consistent approach to communicating about student achievement. | The district and schools communicate about student achievement and make public their improvement goals and the progress being made. | The district and schools communicate in multiple ways about improving student achievement. There are opportunities for dialogue, and community input is valued. | The district and schools communicate in multiple ways about improving student achievement. There are ongoing opportunities for dialogue, and community input is actively sought and valued. These practices are embedded in school and district culture and are sustained over time. |



- There are limited opportunities for system-wide dialogue regarding student achievement.
- The Aboriginal communities express an immediate need to strengthen relationships with the District.

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8. *Building Learning Communities: Parent Involvement*  
Improving districts and schools work with all parents to improve student achievement.

| Not yet  | Approaching expectations  | Meeting expectations   | Sustaining improvement   |
|--|---|--|--|
| There is little evidence of parent involvement. Few ideas are sought or heard in setting goals and working collaboratively to improve the achievement of all students. | Some groups of parents have a role in setting goals and working collaboratively with schools and the district to improve the achievement of all students. | Parents, individually and collectively, are actively involved in setting goals and are working collaboratively with schools and the district to improve the achievement of all students. | Parents, individually and collectively, are actively involved in setting goals and are working collaboratively with schools and the district to improve the achievement of all students. Efforts to engage less active parents as well as specific groups of parents are evident. Parental involvement is embedded in school and district culture and sustained over time. |



- Examples of meaningful parent involvement are evident in many schools.
- Schools are seeking ways to engage more Aboriginal parents.
- Parents express the need for two-way communication with the District.

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### 9. *Building Learning Communities: Leadership*

Leaders in improving districts and schools have a clear vision for, and commitment to improving achievement for all students. Leadership at all levels, in all roles, is encouraged and systematically developed in a collaborative learning community with a focus on improving student achievement.

| Not yet   | Approaching expectations                            | Meeting expectations   | Sustaining improvement   |
|---|---|--|--|
| There is little evidence of collaborative leadership. | There is some evidence of collaborative leadership. | Leadership is collaborative at all levels of the system with a shared commitment to improving student achievement. | Leadership is collaborative at all levels of the system with a shared commitment to improving student achievement. Efforts to build and sustain leadership capacity at all levels are evident. |



- There is some evidence of collaborative leadership at the school level.
- A systemic district plan for developing a collaborative learning community is lacking.
- The Aboriginal communities express a need for a district role focused on the achievement of Aboriginal students.
- Schools express a need for additional support to implement school and district plans.

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### 10. *Achieving Results*

Improving districts and schools improve results. They monitor and make adjustments in key areas of student achievement – in classrooms, schools and the district.

| Not yet  | Approaching expectations   | Meeting expectations  | Sustaining improvement   |
|--|--|---|--|
| There is little evidence of monitoring results and adjusting to improve student achievement. | The district and schools are beginning to monitor results and make adjustments to improve student achievement. | The district and schools monitor results and make adjustments to improve student achievement. There is evidence of improving results. | The district and schools consistently monitor results and make adjustments to improve student achievement. There is evidence of improving results over time. |

|                   |                                    |                                |                                  |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                   | [Progress Bar]                     |                                |                                  |
| <i>Not yet...</i> | <i>Approaching expectations...</i> | <i>Meeting expectations...</i> | <i>Sustaining Improvement...</i> |

- School Dogwood completion rates are improving.
- Schools are tracking results in a variety of ways.
- Much of the data collected does not inform instructional practice at the classroom level.

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**Strengths**

- Genuine care and concern for meeting individual learner needs.
- Partnerships with the North West Community College.
- Strong focus on promoting healthy living.
- Willingness to explore current research-based instructional strategies.
- Stand-alone alternate and distance education programs are innovative and are meeting student needs.

**Promising Practices**

- CARE (Community and Reading Embrace) Book House at John Field Elementary.
- Books and Bannock Program at Kiti K'Shan Elementary.
- The Connections Program in secondary schools.
- Grad Portfolio Support Program at Caledonia Senior Secondary.
- Reading program for First Nations students delivered by First Nations Reading Assistant at Thornhill Primary.

**Recommendations**

**School Plans**

- Make use of a common template for school plans.
- Work with schools to develop clearly defined and focused goals and objectives.
- Adjust the district planning cycle to enable the effective follow through, monitoring and adjustments to the accountability contract and school plans.

**Evidence**

- Require that data collected is relevant and informed by the BC Performance Standards.
- Require that data reflect a blend of classroom, school, district or provincial assessments.
- Provide principals/vice-principals and teachers with district wide, developmental and ongoing *assessment literacy* in-service.
- Create systems to aggregate and disaggregate data.

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### **Aboriginal Education**

- Foster trusting relationships through collaboration and shared decision-making between all Aboriginal communities and the District.
- Develop specific and focused goals and/or objectives in school plans and the District Accountability Contract.
- Create, in consultation with the Aboriginal communities, a district administrative position with specific responsibilities for Aboriginal education.
- Fully engage all Aboriginal communities in the development, completion and implementation of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement.

### **Learning Community**

- Engage in a process to develop a shared vision of a district wide learning community.
- Create the structures and processes to develop the capacity to achieve this vision.
- Establish communication processes that are open and transparent.