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May 15, 2008

The Honourable Shirley Bond, Deputy Premier  
Minister of Education  
Rm. 248, Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister,

As your Special Advisor respecting matters relating to the Cowichan Valley Board of Education, I have the pleasure of submitting herewith my report.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "LEE Southern". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the "S" in "Southern".

Dr. Lee Southern

**Report of the Special Advisor  
Respecting  
The Cowichan Valley Board of Education**

Submitted to The Honourable Shirley Bond, Deputy Premier  
Minister of Education

Submitted By: Dr. Lee Southern

May 15, 2008

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Report provides recommendations and discussion to facilitate the decision-making of the Cowichan Valley Board of Education summarized as follows:

### **Student Achievement**

The Board has not successfully focused directly on its primary responsibility to improve student achievement. Its students experienced significantly lower levels of learning success for the past five years compared to similar students in a similar BC school district. This comparison indicates that neither socio-economic factors nor funding levels necessarily prevent learning improvement.

The report sets out the critical elements required to improve student achievement based on successful school district practice including, inter alia, improving classroom instruction. It describes the elements of an approach for the Cowichan Valley Board and superintendent to begin to improve the current learning results including: an assessment of the state of student achievement; the development of professional collaboration amongst principals and teachers in all schools; and, the forging of a partnership with First Nations communities to specifically improve learning success for aboriginal students.

### **Finances**

The Board has appropriate professional oversight of its finances including the recent restoration of its annual facilities grant to its intended purpose. The 2008-2009 budget is expected to be balanced through making trade-offs that are within the parameters of budget balancing facing boards of education across the province.

Special attention should be paid to developing an accurate projection of the extensive shifting demographic trends across the school district to inform Board decision-making about capacity to support the future delivery of educational services.

### **Planning**

The Board does not have satisfactory planning processes in place. The report outlines the main characteristics of successful school district planning. The Board is seriously interested in revitalizing its planning decision-making. Development of a strategic planning framework by the superintendent is recently underway. The Report recommends some directions addressing issues including school closures, aboriginal education programming, French immersion programming and grade configuration.

### **Stewardship of Capital Assets**

Over the past four years, the Board has received five major reports on facilities but it has not adequately followed through on the recommendations. Facilities personnel capacity has been recently strengthened. If the Board acts on the issues of school closures and grade configuration referenced above it will be in a good position to make progress on the backlog of facilities decision-making. It is recommended that it seek continued Ministry assistance to advance its facilities management agenda.

## **Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**

### **Executive Summary**

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#### **Community Consultation**

The Board's community consultation processes are not working well. The report sets out characteristics of good consultation practice for representatives elected by the public. It offers specific approaches to improving consultation both with the school community through a review of the Board committee structure based on an existing study; and, with the general public through completing its school closure process and beginning a dialogue on French immersion program planning.

#### **Management Capacity**

The Board has experienced a remarkable turn-over in the superintendency. In addition, over the past five years a new management team (17 new appointments) crossing all district education and business operations has been recruited. The superintendent and secretary-treasurer are confident that previous weaknesses in management capacity have been addressed by these changes.

The report recommends that a performance planning and review process be put in place for the superintendent and the secretary-treasurer. In particular, the superintendent's performance should be linked to improvement in student learning success, alignment of operating and capital resources with educational directions, and support for Board decision-making.

In conclusion, the Report states that the success of the Cowichan Valley Board of Education depends solely on how well the level of student learning success improves beginning in the next school year. While this is the democratic responsibility placed upon locally elected school trustees its fulfillment requires community engagement.

To that end, the Report concludes: if the school trustees work together to ensure the Board's leadership efforts meaningfully engage all the parties there is no reason to believe that the Board cannot achieve a measure of success that not only generally satisfies the Cowichan Valley community but also meets the Minister's expectation for all boards.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Student Achievement**

#### Recommendation 1 (p.11)

That the Board of Education make its primary focus the improvement of student achievement based on the premises: that given time and the right instruction all students can succeed in learning; and, that through professional collaboration teachers and principals can improve classroom instruction to attain that learning objective throughout the school district.

#### Recommendation 2 (p.11)

That the Superintendent begin a detailed analysis of the state of student achievement across the district for the purpose of developing and implementing, through professional collaboration amongst the principals and teachers, instructional and related strategies designed to close the gap in student performance identified in the similar district comparison data.

#### Recommendation 3 (p.12)

Within the process called for in Recommendation 7, that the Superintendent work with the Cowichan Tribes begin the development of a three year plan to continuously improve the learning results of aboriginal students.

#### Recommendation 4 (p.12)

That a Ministry Superintendent of Achievement be engaged to work with the superintendent to facilitate his development of the professional collaboration within and among all schools.

### **Finances**

#### Recommendation 5 (p.14)

That the Board consider commissioning a demographer to develop as accurate a picture as possible of the shifting demographic trends across the school district in order to inform Board decision-making about the capacity for supporting the future delivery of education services.

### **Planning**

#### Recommendation 6 (p.17)

That the Board reconsider its original plan for school closures with the guidance of the Superintendent with a view to keeping open Koksilah, Mill Bay, and Tansor; accommodating Somenos students at neighbouring schools; and, consider keeping the Somenos school building open and available to the community at cost.

#### Recommendation 7 (p.17)

That the Board invite the Chief and Council of the Cowichan Tribes to meet at the earliest opportunity for the purpose of developing a process of working together to resolve issues around the education of Cowichan Tribes students; with a view to plan ways and means of combining talent and other resources to raise the level of learning success for aboriginal students across the school district to the highest level in the province, with an eventual target of surpassing the provincial average for all BC students.

#### Recommendation 8 (p.19)

## **Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**

### **Recommendations**

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That the Board in consultation with interested parents pursue the planning, development and implementation of a comprehensive K-12 French immersion program.

#### *Recommendation 9 (p.19)*

That the Board consider reviewing and revising as appropriate the school district's grade configuration with a view to balancing the educational, demographic, facilities and funding requirements of the school district.

### **Stewardship of Capital Assets**

#### *Recommendation 10 (p.20)*

That the Board seek continued Ministry assistance and advice as appropriate to facilitate an expeditiously planned approach to advance its facilities management agenda through the decision-making process.

### **Community Consultation**

#### *Recommendation 11 (p.23)*

That the Board consider reviewing its committee structure beginning with a consultation with the school community focused on the questions: What recommendations do you agree with in the Fleming Report? Why? What recommendations do you disagree with in the Fleming Report? Why?

#### *Recommendation 12 (p.24)*

Contingent upon the Board's favourable consideration of Recommendation 6 respecting school closures, that the Board clearly inform the public how it considered the input it received along with new information resulting in a revised judgment about school closure.

#### *Recommendation 13 (p.24)*

That the Board announce its intention to consult with the public on various strategic planning issues beginning with the development of a comprehensive French immersion program plan.

### **Management Capacity**

#### *Recommendation 14 (p.26)*

That the Board put in place a performance planning and review process for the Superintendent and the Secretary-Treasurer.

### INTRODUCTION

In April 2008, the Minister of Education appointed a Special Advisor to the Cowichan Valley School “to inspect and evaluate and, as appropriate, make recommendations respecting the following matters:

- (a) The level of student achievement when compared with students in school districts with similar socio-economic compositions.
- (b) The state of the Board’s finances.
- (c) The effectiveness of long term planning processes and a risk assessment of the efficacy of those plans.
- (d) The Board’s stewardship of capital assets in view of demographic trends in the community and the age, location and serviceability of buildings and equipment.
- (e) The effectiveness of processes for community consultation and the Board’s responsiveness to community views.
- (f) The Board’s management capacity and its ability to plan and maintain oversight and control functions.
- (g) Other matters arising from this inspection and evaluation as required by the Minister.”

The Special Advisor conducted his work in the following ways:

- a series of interviews with: each member of the Board of Education, the Superintendent, the Secretary-Treasurer, and President of the Cowichan Valley Teachers’ Federation.
- a series of meetings with:
  - the parent groups representing the schools previously designated for closure: Koksilah, Mill Bay, Somenos and Tansor; and the principals of those schools;
  - the Chief of the Cowichan Tribes, and representatives of the Cowichan Tribes Cultural committee;
  - the regional Chief of the BC Assembly of First Nations;
  - the two Cowichan Valley Members of the Legislative Assembly
- a series of working sessions with the superintendent, secretary-treasurer and a senior retired BC superintendent retained to consult on related subjects;
- an analysis of documentary evidence including:
  - the four major external studies on the school district from 2004-2008 (consultants- Yates, Fleming, Rubadeau & Connolly- see pp 20 & 22)
  - the most recent school district review, accountability contract and superintendent’s report on student achievement
  - numerous submissions and presentations from those interviewed and those in attendance at meetings
  - comparative school district financial, socio-economic and student achievement data prepared by the Ministry of Education
  - district documents on budgets, school closures, Cowichan Place project, alternate education, etc.
  - various unsolicited submissions on: childcare capacity, special needs education, etc.
- discussions with selected Ministry of Education officials.



## **Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**

### **Introduction**

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Without the substantial input by all of the aforementioned individuals and groups the Special Advisor could not have conducted his work. Appreciation is also extended to the executive assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer who provided valuable assistance with meeting logistics, and document retrieval and copying.

The Report's organization corresponds to the elements in the Special Advisor's mandate.

## **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

*“The special advisor will inspect and evaluate and, as appropriate, make recommendations respecting.....(a) The level of student achievement when compared with students in school districts with similar socio-economic compositions.”*

The key work of boards of education is improving student achievement through community engagement. Most importantly, the gap in student learning between the students who are doing well and those who are struggling must be closed.

A board of education must be in a position to confidently tell its public (both the school community and the public at large) about how well the students are doing, what plans are in place to help those who are not succeeding at acceptable levels and how the public will know if the plans are effective. If a board of education is not doing this it is failing to fulfill its democratic electoral mandate.

As to student achievement, boards of education should operate on the following bases:

- all students can learn to high standards given sufficient time and the right support;
- all teachers can teach to high standards given the right assistance;
- high expectations and early intervention are essential; and,
- teachers need to be able to articulate what they do and why they teach the way they do.

In this key work, boards of education are required to incorporate provincial expectations and measures for student achievement. As well, however, they are free to create expectations and measures that reflect the particular values and interests of their unique local communities.

All successful boards of education have good working relations with their superintendents. It should be the board's expectation for the superintendent to ensure that there is an assessment system to evaluate the effectiveness of the district's educational work; with particular emphasis on the effectiveness of classroom instruction. This latter focus is because the single greatest determinant of student learning is not socio-economic factors or funding levels: it is instruction. And unlike socio-economic context and funding support, effective instruction is something which boards, superintendents, principals and teachers have within their control to improve. Finally, it is also a fact that instruction can improve significantly and reasonably quickly through existing, straightforward and accessible knowledge and arrangements for teachers and principals.

This work cannot succeed, however, until the level of student achievement in a school district is clearly determined, and communicated amongst the school community and , importantly, to the public. Accurate determination of level of student learning identifies problematic areas and makes for uneasiness. It is important, therefore, for boards and the public to view whatever the level of student learning as the point of departure for making improvement. It requires the collective effort and support of educators, school trustees, parents and the general public if the standard of student achievement is to be raised while at the same time the gap between those succeeding and those not is to be closed.

## **Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**

### **Student Achievement**

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As a basis for beginning to determine the level of student achievement in the Cowichan Valley school district a comparison was made with a similar BC school district (SD#22 Vernon= see Appendix I). The purpose of this comparison is to describe some general indicators as a basis for Cowichan Valley educators to raise questions (as illustrated below) to facilitate their analysis of the student learning in their district.

These two school districts are similar in the following elements (in no particular order):

- student head counts by grade, grade range and selected student groups,
- program offerings,
- enrolment: funded FTE
- class size average
- educators headcount/FTE: teachers (male & female); principal/vp
- educators: salaries and age
- number of public schools
- funding: operating grant, capital funding, aboriginal funding and special needs
- census: demographics by age group
  - educational attainment of population
  - employment /unemployment/income assistance
  - family structure: lone parent families, families with children at home, average number of children per family
- EDI results: vulnerable, school readiness average scores
- Socio-Economic: median family income, lone parent families, unemployment rate

These two school districts are similar in all major dimensions, including numbers and kinds of students, and funding; and further, their communities are similar in demographics and socio-economic structure.

As to learning outcomes, the comparison includes (in no particular order):

- FSA results,
- provincial exam marks,
- grade to grade transitions,
- six-year completion rate: all students/aboriginal students
- multi-year measure of achievement controlling for socioeconomic

While the comparison is not a wholly definitive statistical treatment, it does show in general terms when compared over a five year period with similar students in a similar school district, the students in Cowichan Valley schools are learning at a notably lower level. This also holds true for the level of success of aboriginal students. Cowichan Valley schools are underperforming.

Notably better results are being achieved with the same kinds of students in a comparable school district with similar funding to the Cowichan Valley school district. This difference, therefore, is not attributable to socio-economic or funding factors.

## **Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**

### **Student Achievement**

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It is reasonable to expect similar learning outcomes for similar students from similar family backgrounds in similar schools, similarly funded. This expectation is not being met in the Cowichan Valley school district.

Turning to the critical issue of what is to be done to effectively remedy low student learning outcomes, the first question is not what ought to be done but what ought not to be done under any circumstances: namely, to search for and assign blame to individuals or groups. No one in the school district set out to obtain this result. No educator works to be ineffective about student learning. No school trustee sought election to govern for low learning results.

The appropriate approach would begin with a detailed analysis of the comparison data by the Cowichan Valley educators asking questions such as:

- Why is there a discrepancy in grades 4 and 7 in numeracy scores and why does the gap widen between grades 4 and 7?
- Why do grade to grade transition rates decline markedly in senior secondary grades?
- Why is it that the number of students writing grade 12 required graduation program exams appears small compared to district enrollment?
- Why do a much smaller proportion of grade 10 students write English and Principles of Math 10 exams compared to a like district?
- Why does an analysis of FSA scores show district and school results that are significantly lower than which would be predicted based on socio-economic factors?

Focusing on the nature of the specific problems in student learning is the necessary first step. The next step is for the Board and Superintendent to engage the community in working together with them to improve the current results.

**Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**  
**Student Achievement**

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To that end, recommendations ensue:

**Recommendation 1**

*That the Board of Education make its primary focus the improvement of student achievement based on the premises that given time and the right instruction all students can succeed in learning and that through professional collaboration teachers and principals can improve classroom instruction to attain that learning objective throughout the school district.*

Discussion: The teachers, principals, parents and school trustees interviewed gave little specific indication that student achievement was a major direct focus of their concerns. Much of their concerns focused on school closures, grade configurations, day care access, funding levels, lack of confidence in current directions, etc. These are all legitimate concerns but only if placed in the primary context of what the schools are all in aid of: successful learning for all students. For example, any board's litmus test question about a potential school closure should be: will the students do as well or better in the proposed destination school and what is the rationale for that answer?

By focusing all its decision-making through the lens of any proposed decision's impact on the learning success of the students; or more particularly- its impact on teachers' efforts to improve the effectiveness of their instruction, the Cowichan Valley Board will be in a better position to fulfill their electoral mandate. If the agenda item's connection to the student achievement context is remote then it probably should not be on the board's agenda.

**Recommendation 2**

*That the Superintendent begin a detailed analysis of the state of student achievement across the district for the purpose of developing and implementing, through professional collaboration amongst the principals and teachers, instructional and related strategies designed to close the gap in student performance identified in the similar district comparison data.*

Discussion: Research has shown and there is no reason to believe that Cowichan Valley would be any different, that there is normally intra-district variance in student achievement. This means that some district schools are doing better than others with the same kinds of students and also within schools, students are doing better in some classes than others. If the superintendent's analysis shows this, it means that the professional knowledge required for improvement exists among the Cowichan Valley teachers and principals. This is good news if, and only if, they commit to work collaboratively to regularly and continuously share this knowledge as it applies to individual student learning. It is the superintendent's main job to see that such professional collaboration exists and to support increasing its effectiveness.

## Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education

### Student Achievement

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#### **Recommendation 3**

*Within the process called for in Recommendation 7, that the Superintendent work with the Cowichan Tribes begin the development of a three year plan to continuously improve the learning results of aboriginal students.*

Discussion: Aboriginal students are the single largest group of students being less well served educationally across the province when compared with non-aboriginal students. In closing the gap between those students who are struggling to succeed and those who are doing well there is no other group of students more worthy of focused attention than the aboriginal students.

This is particularly important in the Cowichan Valley because its aboriginal students appear to be even less well served than their counterparts elsewhere in BC. The unique requirements of aboriginal students including recognition of their particular ways of learning requires for educational planning to be effective, that a full partnership be entered into with the Cowichan Tribes for its design and implementation. This partnership should be, in due course, expanded to include all First Nations in the school district. This partnership should call upon other resources in BC as appropriate to inform and support its work; for example, the Ministry of Education section responsible for aboriginal learning, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNEESC) and various BC school districts which are leading the way in the improvement of aboriginal student learning success.

#### **Recommendation 4**

*That a Ministry Superintendent of Achievement be engaged to work with the Superintendent to facilitate his development of the professional collaboration within and among all schools.*

Discussion: Notwithstanding the acknowledged capacity of the educators within the district, their professional collaboration to improve classroom instruction to meet the analyzed needs of individual students could be enhanced by a superintendent of achievement introducing new relevant knowledge both from international research and existing practice in other BC school districts.

As an illustration, the outcomes of the professional collaboration work in district schools facilitated by the superintendent of achievement might include application of the following set of principles for teacher/staff learning:

- Professional learning experiences that focus on the links between particular teaching activities and valued student outcomes are associated with positive impacts on those outcomes.
- Information about what students need to know and do is used to identify what teachers need to know and do.

## **Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**

### **Student Achievement**

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- Changing teacher practices in significant ways requires multiple opportunities to learn new information – and then to understand the implications for practice in a trusting and challenging learning environment.

Professional collaboration seeks to entrench high quality interactive teaching and learning amongst teachers and between teachers and students. This involves understanding students' learning needs to inform teachers' learning needs leading to changing teaching practice resulting in improvement of the learning success of all students. The superintendent of achievement could introduce current research based on successful schools which describes how this interactivity can be achieved in the Cowichan Valley school district.

#### **Concluding Note**

Student achievement in the Cowichan Valley has been at a low level for five years. With a genuine professional collaboration to demonstrably improve instructional practice in all schools by educators and the senior educational leadership, it is not unreasonable to expect some initial progress to be made in the ensuing school year. It is up to the Board of Education to set some achievable benchmarks for annual progress. The new efforts towards improving student learning should be described in the Board's next accountability contract and in the new superintendent's first achievement report. The Board should be addressing in its monthly meetings ways and means to support the Superintendent and educators to be successful in the attainment of the benchmarks and related student learning objectives.

The commitment must begin now. Initiatives will undoubtedly evolve and change as experience is gained. Some failures or less-than-planned-for results will inevitably occur but these can be used to inform changes in the ongoing work. Some early, if small, successes can also be reasonably expected. Regardless of the results in the fall school trustee election there is no reason to expect that the newly elected Board should not continue with the same focus on student learning success for that is the generic key work of all boards of education.

It is reasonable for the public and the parents in the Cowichan Valley to expect in five years that the babies born this month will enter Kindergarten in a high performing school and the rest of the students should be learning well in all grades in a high performing school district.

## **FINANCES**

*“The special advisor will inspect and evaluate and, as appropriate, make recommendations respecting.....(b) The state of the Board’s finances.”*

There will never be enough money to do all the good things that boards of education would like to do to improve the education of their students. This constraint on funding to apply to the mandate holds true for all levels of government, in all jurisdictions.

It is also true that more money is not always necessary to effect all improvements. As discussed in the report section on student achievement, improvement in classroom instruction which is the single most critical determinant in improving student learning is not necessarily constrained by lack of funding.

Turning to the specific case of the Cowichan Valley school district finances the relevant points follow:

To balance the budget for 2008/2009 the shortfall to be found through proposed expenditure reduction is approximately 1% of the school district budget. The trade-offs required to make these reductions are difficult ones but well within the parameters of budget balancing facing all boards across the province. All levels of government are required to make such choices. There is no reason to think that they are beyond the capacity of the Cowichan Valley Board of Education, notwithstanding keeping open the schools referred to in Recommendation 6.

More challenging than the immediate budget balancing exercise, however, is the challenging reality facing many boards, including the Cowichan Valley Board, of shifting demographics. Declining student enrolment is the factor which is particularly problematic because it is not a reasonable assumption that the province will see its way clear to continue the current financial protections for declining enrolment indefinitely into the future.

### **Recommendation 5**

*That the Board consider commissioning a reputable demographer to develop as accurate a picture as possible of the shifting demographic trends across the school district in order to inform Board decision-making about the capacity for supporting the future delivery of education services.*

Discussion: While the school district enrolment projections have been fairly accurate recently the shifting demographic trends which are different in various parts of the school district warrant a specialized study. The specialized nature of such a study requires advanced demographic expertise. To address what is essentially a long term permanent issue facing the Board it is imperative to have reliable comprehensive demographic information as a basis for planning future education services.



## **Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**

### **Finances**

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#### **Concluding Note**

It is recognized that the Board has re-implemented the Annual Facilities Grant for its intended purpose and as noted in the Connolly report the costs of deferred maintenance poses a significant fiscal challenge. The Special Advisor did not examine the financial accounting systems of the district. However, there are financial implications related to all aspects of this report. In extensive discussions with the superintendent and secretary-treasurer in the course of the Special Advisor's examination of these aspects it became evident that appropriate professional oversight of funding allocations exists within the school district. In particular, the teacher of student ratio is tightly controlled.

Provided the board of education approves a balanced budget as required by law, there appears no need for any oversight of the district's finances beyond what the ministry typically performs with all school districts.

## **PLANNING**

*“The special advisor will inspect and evaluate and, as appropriate, make recommendations respecting.....(c) The effectiveness of long term planning processes and a risk assessment of the efficacy of those plans.”*

The signature characteristics of effective planning include: gathering information, analyzing and integrating it into a presentation to support decision-making.

Translating these planning aspects into good school district practice suggests making simple plans focused directly on straightforward actions; that is, building planning into the doing, feedback and corrective action at all levels.

To illustrate, in terms of the Report’s discussion of student achievement, research indicates that useful planning for improvement in instructional practice – the key element within the control of the school district to improve student learning success – takes the following form:

*arrange for teachers to analyze their achievement data, set goals, and then meet at least twice a month – for 45 minutes or so. That way, they can help one another ensure they are teaching essential standards and using assessment results to improve the quality of their lessons.\**

Planning through such goal-oriented teamwork is more effective than planning exercises devoted to producing large planning documents as an exercise segregated from action at the implementation level.

Similarly at the board level, the expectation is that school trustees and the superintendent work together to address two key planning goals:

First, the boards must be attentive to provincially planned directions; for example, the ministry introduction of technological advances in management and student information systems, provincial learning network, web-casting, virtual school learning, etc.

Second, boards must be diligent in assessing the changing demography of their communities including projected enrollment changes in order to manage into the future their capital facilities, with particular attention to property acquisition and disposal.

Boards use this planning information to inform decisions about educational directions and activities and the alignment of operational and capital budgets to support these decisions.

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\* Mike Schmoker, *Results Now, How We Can Achieve Unprecedented Improvement in Teaching and Learning*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia, USA, 2006, p.34.

## Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education Planning

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Within that planning framework, what is the state of the planning processes of the Cowichan Valley Board of Education?

The short answer is: unsatisfactory. It is accurate to say that neither the parents, educators, senior management or the board members are satisfied with the recent planning work in the school district. That work ranges from “no planning” in terms of facilities maintenance to “false start planning” on educational programming where programs start but have no planned course through to fruition. The remarkable turn-over in the superintendency\* largely contributed to the unsatisfactory planning process. Educational planning requires consistent senior level educational leadership. Combined with this lack of consistent leadership, the Board’s diversity of views as to the preferred directions has prevented the consensus building required to plan meaningfully and effectively.

There are present signs, however, that the current board has the will to seriously attempt to move planning ahead through to decision-making around some key issues including: school closures, grade configurations, capital planning and facilities maintenance. Indeed, the superintendent is currently developing a strategic planning framework to advance the work of the Board around these issues. The intention is to use this framework to guide the board’s decision-making including the commencement of a renewed community consultation process around the key planning issues.

The Special Advisor has been collaborating closely with senior management in this work. Through the office of the Deputy Minister, the Special Advisor was able to retain the services of a senior educational consultant to assist this work. It is the special advisor’s view that the Superintendent’s strategic planning initiative has good potential to enable the Board to make decisions on a more informed and timely basis including the exigent issues of school closures, and grade configuration for which recommendations follow.

As well, recommendations are presented on other associated planning issues: aboriginal education, and French immersion education.

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\* Superintendent Appointments 2000 – 2008:  
G. Johnson, July 1, 1993 to May 11, 2000  
A. Selder, May 11, 2000 to June 1, 2000  
B. Hoole, July 1, 2000 to July 31, 2005  
P. Porte, August 1, 2005 to September 27, 2006  
E. Milne, September 27, 2006 to December 21, 2007  
D. Boudreault, January 1, 2008

**Recommendation 6**

*That the Board reconsider its original plan for school closures with the guidance of the Superintendent with a view to keeping open Koksilah Mill Bay, and Tansor; accommodating Somenos students at neighbouring schools; and, consider keeping the Somenos school building open and available to the community at cost.*

Discussion: As in other school districts, the school closure issue has been highly controversial in the Cowichan Valley. The situation has been exacerbated by the turnover of superintendents, publicly perceived weaknesses in the case for closure, the articulately argued cases for keeping schools open, and the extra-ordinary degree of politicization within both the community and the board. After originally supporting and presenting the Board's case, the newly appointed superintendent has reviewed the public feedback, visited the schools in question, and received new demographic data and information. This has resulted in an evolution in his thinking about the original closure plan. The senior consultant and the Special Advisor have closely reviewed this matter with the superintendent. The Special Advisor has also reviewed the information received from interviews with the parents and principals of the schools previously identified for closure. The Superintendent's revised view on school closures as outlined in the above recommendation is well considered.

**Recommendation 7**

*That the Board invite the Chief and Council of the Cowichan Tribes to meet at the earliest opportunity for the purpose of developing a process of working together to resolve issues around the education of Cowichan Tribes students; with a view to plan ways and means of combining talent and other resources to raise the level of learning success for aboriginal students across the school district to the highest level in the province, with an eventual target of surpassing the provincial average for all BC students.*

Discussion: The level of learning success for aboriginal students is unacceptable. There is no compelling evidence to suggest that closing Koksilah school will improve that situation. The Special Advsiior has discussed this matter with representatives of the Cowichan Tribes who have indicated their willingness, indeed their high commitment to work with respectful partners to improve learning success for their students. This partnership should be enhanced as quickly as reasonably possible to include the chiefs and council of the smaller First Nations in the school district. This represents an exciting opportunity to make tangible progress in the immediate future and reverse present failure to adequately serve these students.

There is a high degree of common interest between the Board and the Cowichan Tribes as represented by the Chief and Council. To date, no mutually satisfactory process for moving this critical agenda forward has been established. It is recognized that the ministry and province have a strong interest in aboriginal education as it is a central element in government-to-government relations with First Nations. This suggests that the Board could benefit from consulting with ministry and other government officials, as appropriate, as it develops a process of collaboration with the Cowichan Tribes and other First Nations in the school district.

**Recommendation 8**

*That the Board in consultation with interested parents pursue the planning, development and implementation of a comprehensive K-12 French immersion program.*

Discussion: It is an acceptable public expectation that the Board should as wholly as reasonably possible support the full development of any program which the Board decides to operate. The École Mill Bay parents are ready, willing and able to facilitate this work. As with the aboriginal education program, the long term objective for the French Immersion program should be to make it unsurpassed in BC in terms of student learning.

**Recommendation 9**

*That the Board consider reviewing and revising as appropriate the school district's grade configuration with a view to balancing the educational, demographic, facilities and funding requirements of the school district.*

Discussion: One configuration may not fit all but ten (the current number in the district) may be too many. This issue must be resolved now in part so that planning for Cowichan Secondary School can move forward. Configuration can be a contentious issue; research is suggestive but not conclusive. In the end, configuration is not a strongly determinative factor in improving instruction which is the key to achieving greater learning success. Enough studies and reports on this subject with specific reference to Cowichan Valley exist, there is little new to be added. It is a question of the senior educational management giving its best advice to the Board for its decision. This decision requires only limited further public input.

**Concluding Note**

The Board is prepared to begin anew in making planful decisions. Senior management and in particular, the Superintendent are working to prepare advice and rationale in support of the Board moving forward on critical issues. The efficacy of these prospective planning decisions will be ultimately measured over the course of the next school year and beyond by whether the student learning success is improved. If that doesn't materialize then what schools remain open, what grade configuration exists, how comprehensive is the French immersion program planning, etc. will little matter.

Provided senior management gathers, analyzes, integrates, and presents information as illustrated in the superintendent's new strategic planning initiative, the Board should be in a reasonably good position in terms of information and advice to make sound educational planning decisions.

It is important to note, however, that the Board must make re-vitalize its efforts to communicate with the public around its strategic decision-making. This will be addressed in a following section on community consultation.

## **STEWARDSHIP OF CAPITAL ASSETS**

*“The special advisor will inspect and evaluate and, as appropriate, make recommendations respecting.....(d) The Board’s stewardship of capital assets in view of demographic trends in the community and the age, location and serviceability of buildings and equipment.”*

The Cowichan Valley Board has three general studies and a specific one addressing stewardship of facilities, as follows:

- Comprehensive Strategic Facilities Plan, Yates, Thorn & Associates, February 2004
- Recommendations Regarding Capacity and Utilization of the Educational Facilities of Cowichan Valley Schools, Dr. Ron Rubadeau, November 2006
- Report to the Ministry of Education-School District 79 (Cowichan Valley) Facilities & Maintenance Review, Rick Connolly, March 25, 2008
- A.B. Greenwell Elementary School Condition Report, CEI Architecture, March 2008

In addition, the Board has recently decided to re-enter negotiations for a replacement site for Cowichan Secondary School in the Cowichan Place Project based on an investigation commissioned by the Board conducted by Ralston Alexander, QC, in March 2008.

On the assumption that the Board makes decisions as discussed earlier in this report respecting school closures and school configuration; carries out the implementation of the technical facilities maintenance recommendations of the Connolly Report; acquires a site for Cowichan Secondary School; and decides on replacement/repair option for AB Greenwell – it will be attentive to its stewardship responsibilities for its capital facilities.

It will then be in a position to act on the Connolly report recommendation to develop a comprehensive School District Facilities Plan including addressing, in partnership with the Ministry, Connolly report recommendation to work with the Cowichan Valley Regional District about its bylaw 3074/3075 respecting the future use of school properties.

The accumulation of these facilities issues has created an exceedingly large agenda. Indeed, this is an agenda which potentially threatens to crowd out any attention to the Board’s key work of improving student learning success.

### **Recommendation 10**

*That the Board seek continued Ministry assistance and advice as appropriate to facilitate an expeditiously planned approach to advance its facilities management agenda through the decision-making process.*

Discussion: The expectation would be that once progress has been made on this agenda with ministry assistance, the Board could rely on its business management officials to carry the normalized load of capital asset stewardship as in regular school district practice.

## **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

*“The special advisor will inspect and evaluate and, as appropriate, make recommendations respecting.....(e) The effectiveness of processes for community consultation and the Board’s responsiveness to community views.”*

Public consultation is a vital integral process for elected representatives of the people. The people give their informed consent to their elected representatives to define the public interest and use public money to advance it. The elected representatives fulfill this governance mandate through making law, policy, regulations, etc. Although the representatives are directly accountable to the people at elections, continuous two-way communication between the elected and the people they represent must occur.

School trustees must both inform the public of their work as Boards of education in improving student learning success and listen to the public about their views on how the schools are doing. Boards must consider what the public has said and judge what is in the best interest of the school district as a whole and direct and rely upon the educators to deliver the education and support services according to best professional practice.

The definitive standard for how an elected representative should carry out this duty of communication with the public was articulated by Edmund Burke over 200 years ago:

*“Certainly.....it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinions high respect, their business unremitting attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasure, his satisfaction to theirs, - and above all, ever, and in all cases to prefer their interest to his own.*

*But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from pleasure, - no, nor from the law and the Constitution. These are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.”*

Judgment about what is in the public interest ultimately rests with the elected representative. As a member of a board of education her judgment has to be cast in the mix of judgments of board colleagues in a process of dialogue and compromise to develop at a minimum a majority consensus to move the agenda forward. The board decides and that decision becomes, by democratic definition, the public interest. It is then the duty of each member of the board to support that decision.

In communicating a decision to the public, a prudent board explains what it has heard both from the public and its educators and the reasoning upon which it has based its collective decision. Segments of the public may disagree but the Board has been elected to make such decisions,

## **Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**

### **Community Consultation**

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implement them and be accountable at the subsequent election. To govern is to choose and on major matters, the choices can be highly controversial. If a choice after implementation appears not to be achieving its purpose then a board should review the issue.

As to the Cowichan Valley Board of Education consultation processes, this discussion focuses on two main aspects of public consultation: the Board's consultation with the school community through its committee structure and the board's consultation with the general public.

#### **The Board's Committee Structure**

General dissatisfaction with the functioning of the Board's committee structure in early 2006 lead to the commissioning of a report\* to review that structure with a focus on the question of whether a committee of the whole process was more effective than a standing committee process. The report recommended the use of standing committees of trustees supported by staff and advised by advisory committees on which education partners could make input.

As well the report advised further review be undertaken of:

- The major communications processes used by the Board and its partner groups.
- The processes for raising and resolving issues other than through reference to Standing Committees.
- The process for access to the Board by concerned citizens, partner groups, special interest groups, and individuals.

In response the Board created of a committee of the whole for Management/Finance which holds open meetings on finance and operations matters with audience question periods and closed meetings on human resources matters. No structural changes were made to the Policy and Education committees.

The report author, a senior professional educational leader noted: "Almost any system of committees will work if all parties are comfortable with the arrangement and the decision-making power of the Board is not impaired." He goes on to list a common set of problems around committees: committees think they have power delegated by the board; non-trustee committee members think that they have a direct rather than an advisory role in board decision-making; boards assume their decision-making is adequately communicated in committees; committee agendas can become too broad; and, committees are over-used when other procedures for raising issues with the Board are lacking and committees are used as a funnel to gain board attention.

Today in the Cowichan Valley none of the parties "are comfortable with the arrangement" so the system isn't working well.

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\* Report from the *Review of Policy 1100: Standing Committees: Membership and Mandate*, Jack Fleming, February, 2006.



**Recommendation 11**

*That the Board consider reviewing its committee structure beginning with a consultation with the school community focused on the questions: What recommendations do you agree with in the Fleming Report? Why? What recommendations do you disagree with in the Fleming Report? Why?*

Discussion: The Fleming report provides a well articulated rationale based on successful BC practice for Board committees and a set of well considered recommendations which have not been thoroughly addressed by the Board. It seems reasonable and logical to address an issue around consultation with a consultation amongst those parties who are dissatisfied with the current structure. The Board can then into account this input in combination with their own views and reach an informed decision about any revisions it may make to the current committee structure to address the concerns of the school community and the individual board members. The Board can then communicate its decisions and the reasons for them back to the school community. This need not be an extended process for the Fleming report is self-explanatory, the public concerns are well formed, and can be easily gathered and incorporated into the Board review.

Conducted well, this exercise could serve to demonstrate to the public that the Board is capable of renewed genuine consultation. This will serve to enhance public confidence in the Board's work.

**The Board's Consultation with the general public**

The Board is currently engaged in a public consultation process about school closures. While the Board has not yet completed this process, it is accurate to say that the school community especially, and some board members are dissatisfied with the process. There is a perception that the case for keeping some schools open was more compellingly argued than was the Board's case for closure. To be fair, rarely will any board make a case for school closure in an environment that is not controversial and emotionally charged because schools are important to communities and, in particular, to the parents whose schools are designated for closure. Such debates also provide fodder for political advocacy projected at the provincial level. And while most, if not all, school districts experience some degree of politicization on issues it is also accurate to say that the Cowichan Valley school district exhibits an extra-ordinary degree of organized political action both within the school community and on the Board of Education. If the Board can transform what many believe to be a strongly flawed consultation process to date on school closures into an outcome that tangibly reduces the current dissatisfaction it will have gone some significant way towards re-building public confidence in its consultation process.

**Recommendation 12**

*Contingent upon the Board's favourable consideration of the Recommendation 6 respecting school closures, that the Board clearly inform the public how it considered the input it received along with new information resulting in a revised judgment about school closure.*

Discussion: In speaking with the public the best approach for an elected body is to be open and transparent. In this case, if the board does change its decision, the truth will be that the Board changed its collective mind when it heard what the public said about school closures and was sufficiently persuaded by that input combined with an analysis of additional information made by the Superintendent in the time since the original board direction was set. The board can point out that the consultation was successful in the sense it gave the Board a perspective that the board was duty bound to weigh seriously and it did. If these circumstances come about not everyone's prayers would be answered "yes" but that is not a prerequisite for genuine consultation. What is necessary and sufficient is that the Board gives serious consideration to its public's views, examines a new analysis of closure factors and comes to a revised judgment and then communicates all that to the public.

**Recommendation 13**

*That the Board announce its intention to consult with the public on various strategic planning issues beginning with the development of a comprehensive French immersion program plan.*

Discussion: Like many school districts Cowichan Valley faces some difficult long term challenges related to demographic changes. Some examples illustrate: How to enhance the quality of education in areas of the district which are continuing to experience declining population = through virtual schools, other ways and means? How to close the gap more quickly in learning success for aboriginal students?

These consultations will allow the Board to put out some of the ideas circulating in the wider education world on these issues and get feedback on them, combined with additional ideas from the public's perspectives grounded in the Cowichan Valley experience. The results of such consultations will serve to give the Board a sense of feel for which ideas ought to be further pursued by district educators with a view to making steady progress over time with the issues that will be with the district for the foreseeable future.

**Concluding Note**

The importance of clearly communicating the Board's work to the public and engaging the community in that work causes larger boards to employ communication directors. As the Cowichan Valley Board revitalizes its community consultation processes, it may be useful to contract on a short-term basis professional communication services.

## **MANAGEMENT CAPACITY**

*“The special advisor will inspect and evaluate and, as appropriate, make recommendations respecting.....(f) The Board’s management capacity and its ability to plan and maintain oversight and control functions.”*

Time and prioritization of the critical issues relating to other elements in the Special Advisor’s mandate did not allow for a thorough examination of the Board’s management capacity. Notwithstanding that limitation some observations follow.

Management capacity requires leadership; and, importantly, leadership at the top of the organization. In the Cowichan Valley school district the two senior leaders have in the case of the Secretary-Treasurer been in place for five years, and in the case of the Superintendent, his tenure dates back to January of this year.

Between 2002 and 2008 virtually the entire excluded staff district team has been re-built. In addition to the two senior leaders, this re-building includes new appointments in the following areas (in no particular order): directors in elementary, middle and senior secondary; assistant secretary-treasurer; director, operations; managers in facilities, human resources, and benefits; two senior executive assistants; BCeSIS Coordinator; etc., for a total of 17 new personnel.

The Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer believe that an experienced team is now in place and past management capacity weaknesses are addressed. For example, district personnel are actively following up on implementation of the Connolly report recommendations and the district’s transportation system criticized in the Rubadeau report is under review (with the assistance of BC Transit and the regional district). In consequence, some measure of the capacity of this relatively new team will emerge in the coming weeks when this and related work is brought to the Board for review.

As to the business management leadership, as discussed in the report’s finance section, the Secretary-Treasurer has a firm grasp of the district’s financial matters and his role in the recruitment of a new staff indicates progressive success in building a management team. Because it is assumed that, as part of normal professional management practice, members of this team will be appropriately evaluated in a timely manner no recommendation is made for this purpose.

The Superintendent has not been in the job long enough for any conclusive assessment of capacity. One of his first acts within days of assuming office was to publicly present a position on the school closure issue which he believed was supportable but was not of his making. That this position has been highly attacked speaks more to the controversial nature of the subject than the performance of the superintendent. Since that rather dramatic beginning, the Superintendent has been immersing himself in the myriad of issues facing the district and building relations within the school community. In the interviews conducted by the Special Advisor, the general impression is that the Superintendent has not been in the job long enough for any fair judgments to be made but that people were hopeful about his future success.

## **Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**

### **Management Capacity**

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Of critical importance to management success is developing a positive and productive relationship between the superintendent and the board. To this end, both parties have a serious duty. In the short course of the Special Advisor's work, it can be fairly said that the Superintendent is attentive to the board's requirements and its need for solid advice and guidance from senior management and is working to provide it.

#### **Recommendation 14**

*That the Board put in place a performance planning and review process for the Superintendent and the Secretary-Treasurer.*

Discussion: A well conceived capacity building performance planning and review process wherein each party is clear and agreed at the outset about the expectations for performance is necessary. BCSTA has successfully assisted boards of education in such work. As the Cowichan Valley Board begins what is essentially a re-newed effort to address its work this would be a propitious time to ensure a tight alignment of expectations for what has to be jointly accomplished is in place between the board and its senior leaders.

The Board's expectations for the superintendent's performance should relate to:

- improvement in student learning success linked to the benchmarks set by the board and school based professional learning collaboration practice as discussed above in the student achievement section;
- alignment of operating and capital resources with educational directions; and,
- support for the Board's decision-making, including provision of information and advice and representation of board interest in public consultations.

#### **Concluding Note**

The ultimate judgment of the management capacity of any board of education is this: as the chief executive officer, the superintendent's job is inextricably linked with the board's job so that the measure of success for both will be how well student learning progresses over the next couple of years. To that end, leadership requires the superintendent to take professional ownership for ensuring student learning improves on his watch.

## **CONCLUSION**

Summed up, the Cowichan Valley Board of Education has been and is addressing a complex array of issues: the recruitment and retention of a superintendent (following a remarkable turn-over over the past five years exceeded); the building of a competent management team; the exigencies of declining enrolment and the resultant asset management pressures to deal with excess physical capacity including always controversial school closure decisions; major capital decisions including the future of Cowichan Secondary School; an extra-ordinary degree of politicization within the community and on the Board; a serious health and safety issue around mould in schools; and, an inability to plan adequately with consequent difficulty in conducting satisfactory public consultation processes.

Above all, the student achievement level in the school district remains plateaued at an unacceptable level. Improving learning success for its students is the primary responsibility of any board of education and the Cowichan Board needs to do what is necessary to get the job done. If the level of student learning does not begin to improve in the next school year and continue upward this Board will have failed to do its job.

Taken together, the scope and complexity of the issues in this school district would challenge any board of education. Indeed, it is a formidable challenge, but not one that is by any means insuperable if the parties work together. As discussed in the report's section on student achievement: how to improve learning success is known, straightforward and attainable if there is a commitment to focus on it. The comparison with school district 22 demonstrates that neither socio-economic factors nor funding level are causes preventing better student learning.

Commitment buttressed by will, knowledge applied through leadership from the board, the superintendent and distributed through the principals and amongst the classroom teachers can and should get the job done.

The governance responsibility ultimately rests on the shoulders of each school trustee on the Cowichan Valley Board of Education. Partnerships are necessary, engagement with the community is necessary, support from the Ministry especially from the superintendents of achievement is necessary but at bottom it is up to the Board to perform.

If the school trustees work together to ensure the Board's leadership efforts meaningfully engage all parties there is no reason to believe that the board cannot achieve a measure of success that not only generally satisfies the Cowichan Valley community but also meets the Minister's expectations for all boards.

**APPENDIX I: COMPARISON DATA: COWICHAN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT/VERNON SCHOOL DISTRICT**

# Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education

## Appendix I

### SD 79 (Cowichan Valley)

#### Headcount: Each Grade, 2007/2008

Grade	#
Kindergarten	503
Grade 1	535
Grade 2	581
Grade 3	563
Grade 4	646
Grade 5	618
Grade 6	649
Grade 7	695
Elementary Ungraded	5
Grade 8	719
Grade 9	763
Grade 10	863
Grade 11	933
Grade 12	753
Secondary Ungraded	290
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,116</b>

### SD 22 (Vernon)

#### Headcount: Each Grade, 2007/2008

Grade	#
Kindergarten	519
Grade 1	602
Grade 2	529
Grade 3	603
Grade 4	632
Grade 5	617
Grade 6	653
Grade 7	721
Elementary Ungraded	-
Grade 8	770
Grade 9	803
Grade 10	891
Grade 11	886
Grade 12	972
Secondary Ungraded	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,227</b>

#### Headcount: Grade Range, 2007/08

Grade	#	%
Grades K-7	4,795	52.6
Grades 8-12	4,321	47.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,116</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Headcount: Grade Range, 2007/08

Grade	#	%
Grades K-7	4,876	52.8
Grades 8-12	4,351	47.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,227</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Headcount: Selected Programs, 2007/2008

Programs	#
Career Preparation Program	416
Career Technical Program	6
Secondary School Apprenticeship	17
Co-operative Education Program	-
French Immersion	626
Continuing Education Program	241

#### Headcount: Selected Programs, 2007/2008

Programs	#
Career Preparation Program	1
Career Technical Program	19
Secondary School Apprenticeship	14
Co-operative Education Program	-
French Immersion	888
Continuing Education Program	133

**Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**  
**Appendix I**

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**SD 79 (Cowichan Valley)**

**Headcount: Selected Student Group,  
2007/2008**

<b>Group</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Aboriginal	1,509	16.6
Special needs	1,038	11.4
ESL	396	4.3
French Immersion	626	6.9

**SD 22 (Vernon)**

**Headcount: Selected Student Group,  
2007/2008**

<b>Group</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Aboriginal	1,136	12.3
Special needs	756	8.2
ESL	57	1
French Immersion	888	9.6

**Enrolment: Funded FTE, 2007/2008**

<b>Group</b>	<b>#</b>
School-aged only	8,758
school-aged plus Adults	8,870

**Enrolment: Funded FTE, 2007/2008**

<b>Group</b>	<b>#</b>
School-aged only	8,679
school-aged plus Adults	8,734

**Class Size: Average, 2007/2008**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>#</b>
Kindergarten	17.8
Grades 1-3	20.9
Grades 4-7	27.0
Grades 8-12	25.7

**Class Size: Average, 2007/2008**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>#</b>
Kindergarten	17.9
Grades 1-3	20.8
Grades 4-7	26.0
Grades 8-12	24.9

**Educators: Headcount and FTE, 2007/2008**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Teacher - Male	142	135
Teacher - Female	363	326
Principal/Vice-Principal	43	42
<b>Total*</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>510</b>

**Educators: Headcount and FTE, 2007/2008**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Teacher - Male	181	173
Teacher - Female	343	303
Principal/Vice-Principal	42	41
<b>Total*</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>525</b>

*\* Includes teachers, principals/vice-principals, other administrative staff and school board based educators*

**Educators: Salary and Age, 2007/2008**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Avg. Age</b>
Average Salary (per FTE)	66,479
Average Age	46

**Educators: Salary and Age, 2007/2008**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Avg. Age</b>
Average Salary (per FTE)	66,387
Average Age	44



**Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**  
**Appendix I**

**SD 79 (Cowichan Valley)**

**Number of Public Schools, 2007/08**

Categories	#
Public Schools	28

**SD 22 (Vernon)**

**Number of Public Schools, 2007/08**

Categories	#
Public Schools	25

**Funding, 2007/08**

Categories	Amount
Operating Grant	69,347,702
Capital Funding	2,133,268
Targeted Funds	
Aboriginal	1,330,368
Special Needs	4,136,000

**Funding, 2007/08**

Categories	Amount
Operating Grant	68,020,399
Capital Funding	2,514,821
Targeted Funds	
Aboriginal	1,030,224
Special Needs	4,836,000

**Recent Funding History for SD 79 and SD 22**

**SD 79 (Cowichan Valley)**

School Year	FTE Enrolment	% Change	Block Funding	% Change	Per FTE Average
2002/03 Final	9,975		63,681,624		\$6,384
2003/04 Final	9,667	-3.1%	62,762,683	-1.4%	\$6,492
2004/05 Final	9,546	-1.3%	64,247,602	2.4%	\$6,730
2005/06 Final	9,398	-1.6%	65,900,974	2.6%	\$7,012
2006/07 Recalc	9,054	-3.7%	68,717,459	4.3%	\$7,589
2007/08 Recalc	8,870	-2.0%	69,347,702	0.9%	\$7,818
2008/09 Estimated	8,454	-4.7%	69,347,702	0.0%	\$8,203

**SD 22 (Vernon)**

School Year	Enrolment	% Change	Block Funding	% Change	Per FTE Average
2002/03 Final	9,462		59,386,728		\$6,277
2003/04 Final	9,316	-1.5%	59,867,306	0.8%	\$6,426
2004/05 Final	9,251	-0.7%	61,513,360	2.7%	\$6,649
2005/06 Final	9,095	-1.7%	63,770,499	3.7%	\$7,011
2006/07 Recalc	8,816	-3.1%	66,296,344	4.0%	\$7,520
2007/08 Recalc	8,734	-0.9%	67,644,786	2.0%	\$7,788
2008/09 Estimated	8,601	-1.5%	68,962,602	1.9%	\$8,018

Autumn recalculation totals only; excludes mid-year Distributed Learning and special needs enrolment growth

Enrolment is Funded FTE, including school-age and adult students

# Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education

## Appendix I

### SD 79 (Cowichan Valley)

#### Census: Demographics, 2001

Group	%
Age 0-4	5.1
Age 5-9	6.5
Age 10-14	7.7
Age 15-19	7.3
Age 65+	16.9

#### Census: Education Attainment Population Age 20+, 2001

Group	%
University Degree	12.7
University without Degree	8.1
Post-Secondary (non-University) Trade Certificate, Diploma, Other	40.3
Grade 9-13 with Certificate or Diploma	11.9
Grade 9-13 without Certificate or Diploma	21.5
Less than Grade 9	5.6

#### Census: Employment, 2001

Group	%
Population in Labour Force	60.7
Unemployment Total	9.7
Unemployment Age 15-24	18.5
Income Assistance - Age 19 or less*	4.4

\* Source: BC Stats

### SD 22 (Vernon)

#### Census: Demographics, 2001

Group	%
Age 0-4	4.6
Age 5-9	6.0
Age 10-14	7.0
Age 15-19	7.2
Age 65+	17.8

#### Census: Education Attainment Population Age 20+, 2001

Group	%
University Degree	10.1
University without Degree	7.8
Post-Secondary (non-University) Trade Certificate, Diploma, Other	38.8
Grade 9-13 with Certificate or Diploma	13.1
Grade 9-13 without Certificate or Diploma	22.6
Less than Grade 9	7.8

#### Census: Employment, 2001

Group	%
Population in Labour Force	60.0
Unemployment Total	10.8
Unemployment Age 15-24	18.9
Income Assistance - Age 19 or less*	3.0

\* Source: BC Stats

**Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**  
**Appendix I**

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**SD 79 (Cowichan Valley)**

**Census: Family Structure, 2001**

<b>Group</b>	<b>%</b>
Lone Parent Families	15.5
Families with children at home	54.9
Average number of children per family	1

**SD 22 (Vernon)**

**Census: Family Structure, 2001**

<b>Group</b>	<b>%</b>
Lone Parent Families	17.3
Families with children at home	55.2
Average number of children per family	1

**EDI Results, 2000 - 2004**  
**Language and Cognitive Development**

<b>Group</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>EDI</b>	
Vulnerable	8
School Readiness Avg. Score	8

**EDI Results, 2000 - 2004**  
**Language and Cognitive Development**

<b>Group</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>EDI</b>	
Vulnerable	7
School Readiness Avg. Score	8

<b>Socio-Economic Data</b>	
Median Family Income	52,029
Lone Parent Families	16
Unemployment Rate	12

<b>Socio-Economic Data</b>	
Median Family Income	47,619
Lone Parent Families	17
Unemployment Rate	12

**Report of the Special Advisor: Cowichan Valley Board of Education**  
**Appendix I**

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**SD 79 (Cowichan Valley)**

**FSA, Grade 4 - Reading Comprehension,  
 2002/03 - 2006/07**

Year	Student Enrolled	Meeting or Exceeding	
		#	%
2002/03	718	462	72
2003/04	693	457	75
2004/05	674	465	74
2005/06	637	420	76
2006/07	622	368	69

Year	Student Enrolled	Participation	
		#	%
2002/03	718	660	92
2003/04	693	619	89
2004/05	674	642	95
2005/06	637	577	91
2006/07	622	549	88

**SD 22 (Vernon)**

**FSA, Grade 4 - Reading Comprehension,  
 2002/03 - 2006/07**

Year	Student Enrolled	Meeting or Exceeding	
		#	%
2002/03	661	488	80
2003/04	660	503	80
2004/05	701	519	80
2005/06	623	395	77
2006/07	602	407	75

Year	Student Enrolled	Participation	
		#	%
2002/03	661	619	94
2003/04	660	630	95
2004/05	701	663	95
2005/06	623	539	87
2006/07	602	548	91

**FSA, Grade 7 - Reading Comprehension,  
 2002/03 - 2006/07**

Year	Student Enrolled	Meeting or Exceeding	
		#	%
2002/03	868	548	73
2003/04	830	539	74
2004/05	723	478	72
2005/06	760	406	65
2006/07	719	385	61

Year	Student Enrolled	Participation	
		#	%
2002/03	868	761	88
2003/04	830	738	89
2004/05	723	671	93
2005/06	760	674	89
2006/07	719	648	90

**FSA, Grade 7 - Reading Comprehension,  
 2002/03 - 2006/07**

Year	Student Enrolled	Meeting or Exceeding	
		#	%
2002/03	786	561	76
2003/04	755	565	78
2004/05	757	562	78
2005/06	712	436	71
2006/07	727	462	71

Year	Student Enrolled	Participation	
		#	%
2002/03	786	741	94
2003/04	755	723	96
2004/05	757	723	96
2005/06	712	634	89
2006/07	727	667	92

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**SD 79 - Cowichan Valley**

**FSA, Grade 4 – Numeracy, 2002/03 - 2006/07**

Year	Student Enrolled	Meeting or Exceeding	
		#	%
2002/03	718	536	83
2003/04	693	498	82
2004/05	674	506	82
2005/06	637	424	79
2006/07	622	429	80

Year	Student Enrolled	Participation	
		#	%
2002/03	718	659	92
2003/04	693	613	88
2004/05	674	636	94
2005/06	637	556	87
2006/07	622	550	88

**SD 22 – Vernon**

**FSA, Grade 4 - Numeracy, 2002/03 - 2006/07**

Year	Student Enrolled	Meeting or Exceeding	
		#	%
2002/03	661	558	90
2003/04	660	555	90
2004/05	701	574	88
2005/06	623	441	86
2006/07	602	482	89

Year	Student Enrolled	Participation	
		#	%
2002/03	661	624	94
2003/04	660	622	94
2004/05	701	665	95
2005/06	623	518	83
2006/07	602	546	91

**FSA, Grade 7 - Numeracy, 2002/03 - 2006/07**

Year	Student Enrolled	Meeting or Exceeding	
		#	%
2002/03	868	587	79
2003/04	830	569	79
2004/05	723	470	73
2005/06	760	469	75
2006/07	719	401	69

Year	Student Enrolled	Participation	
		#	%
2002/03	868	754	87
2003/04	830	736	89
2004/05	723	662	92
2005/06	760	646	85
2006/07	719	626	87

**FSA, Grade 7 - Numeracy, 2002/03 - 2006/07**

Year	Student Enrolled	Meeting or Exceeding	
		#	%
2002/03	786	586	81
2003/04	755	577	81
2004/05	757	590	83
2005/06	712	504	84
2006/07	727	518	80

Year	Student Enrolled	Participation	
		#	%
2002/03	786	740	94
2003/04	755	723	96
2004/05	757	725	96
2005/06	712	607	85
2006/07	727	659	91

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**Provincial Exams - Final Marks, 2006/07**  
**SD 79 – Cowichan Valley**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of Sept and/or Feb Students in Grade</b>	<b>Students Assigned Blended Final Mark</b>	<b>C- (Pass) or Better</b>	<b>C+ (Good) or Better</b>
English 10	932	714	699	527
Mathematics 10, Applications of	932	213	212	121
Mathematics 10, Essentials of	932	100	96	49
Mathematics 10, Principles of	932	438	432	291
Science 10	932	733	721	448
Social Studies 11	1,008	627	615	422
BC First Nations Studies 12	699	10	10	4
English 12	699	564	562	392
Communications 12	699	103	102	67

**Provincial Exams - Final Marks, 2006/07**  
**SD 22 - Vernon**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of Sept and/or Feb Students in Grade</b>	<b>Students Assigned Blended Final Mark</b>	<b>C- (Pass) or Better</b>	<b>C+ (Good) or Better</b>
English 10	934	816	776	503
Mathematics 10, Applications of	934	106	100	38
Mathematics 10, Essentials of	934	178	166	82
Mathematics 10, Principles of	934	538	492	325
Science 10	934	798	731	422
Social Studies 11	885	702	679	460
BC First Nations Studies 12	1,046	28	28	18
English 12	1,046	670	642	418
Communications 12	1,046	83	80	45

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**SD 79 (Cowichan Valley)**

**Grade to Grade Transition, 2006/07**

Subject	Number of Eligible Students in Grade	Transition Rates	
		#	%
Grade 6	692	669	97
Grade 7	719	691	96
Grade 8	725	694	96
Grade 9	748	688	92
Grade 10	830	706	85
Grade 11	842	626	74

**SD 22 (Vernon)**

**Grade to Grade Transition, 2006/07**

Subject	Number of Eligible Students in Grade	Transition Rates	
		#	%
Grade 6	720	702	98
Grade 7	711	694	98
Grade 8	752	715	95
Grade 9	796	757	95
Grade 10	835	745	89
Grade 11	815	715	88

**Six-Year Completion Rate**

Year	All Students %	Aboriginal %
2002/03	70	39
2003/04	71	34
2004/05	70	36
2005/06	71	40
2006/07	71	31

**Six-Year Completion Rate**

Year	All Students %	Aboriginal %
2002/03	85	60
2003/04	83	55
2004/05	85	61
2005/06	82	62
2006/07	79	56

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**Staffing Comparison: SDs 22, 79 and Provincial Total, 2005 to 2007**

	2005			2006			2007		
	SD 22	SD 79	Province	SD 22	SD 79	Province	SD 22	SD 79	Province
Funded School-Age FTE	8,974.69	9,270.00	558,115.45	8,741.69	8,913.00	546,721.00	8,679.06	8,758.19	542,301.68
FTE Teachers	472.65	502.43	31,098.15	472.29	483.55	31,416.80	482.25	470.68	31,298.77
Students/Teacher	18.99	18.45	17.95	18.51	18.43	17.40	18.00	18.61	17.33
FTE Administrators	47.00	47.54	2,591.45	46.20	48.86	2,673.04	43.20	44.53	2,677.16
Students/Administrators	190.95	194.99	215.37	189.21	182.43	204.53	200.90	196.68	202.57
FTE Other Professionals	9.00	21.93	1,515.00	12.00	23.00	1,586.99	22.00	23.50	1,627.79
Students/Other Professionals	997.19	422.65	368.39	728.47	387.52	344.50	394.50	372.69	333.15
FTE Educational Assistants	83.29	92.64	7,656.20	90.49	95.21	8,062.47	84.67	87.00	8,340.42
Students/Educ Assistants	107.76	100.06	72.90	96.60	93.61	67.81	102.50	100.67	65.02
Funded Special Needs School-Age FTE	335.00	280.50	20,421.50	337.00	313.00	20,744.50	373.50	310.00	21,159.00
FTE Special Needs Teachers	55.06	47.88	3,357.89	53.21	44.52	3,442.85	54.20	39.97	3,448.47
Special Needs Students/Teacher	6.08	5.86	6.08	6.33	7.03	6.03	6.89	7.76	6.14
Aboriginal School-Age FTE	996.00	1,281.00	50,330.50	1,004.00	1,256.50	50,636.50	1,016.00	1,312.00	51,470.00
FTE Aboriginal Teachers	0.63	7.29	197.09	0.63	8.21	196.05	4.62	7.00	193.35
Aboriginal Students/Teacher	1,591.05	175.82	255.37	1,603.83	153.08	258.29	219.91	187.43	266.20
FTE Total Staff	797.02	845.21	53,947.23	806.69	837.23	54,774.22	809.99	820.97	55,109.81
Students/Total Staff	11.26	10.97	10.35	10.84	10.65	9.98	10.71	10.67	9.84



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### Staffing Comparison: Student FTE Ratios for Specialist Educators, SD 79 to Province

Year	2003/04		2004/05		2005/06		2006/07		2007/08	
Province	Number	FTE Ratio	Number	FTE Ratio	Number	FTE Ratio	Number	FTE Ratio	Number	FTE Ratio
Librarians	704.6	826.6	692.6	833.3	741.3	770.1	746.6	749.6	729.9	749.7
Counsellors	920.2	633	906.4	636.8	901.6	633.2	908.6	615.9	915.8	597.5
LAT/SPED	3455.5	17.6	3311.6	18.6	3357.9	18.1	3442.9	16.9	3448.5	16
ESL	812.7	69.1	827.8	68.3	848.6	69.7	829	72.1	788.6	74.7
<b>Province Total</b>	<b>5893</b>	<b>98.8</b>	<b>5738.4</b>	<b>100.6</b>	<b>5849.4</b>	<b>97.6</b>	<b>5927.1</b>	<b>94.4</b>	<b>5882.8</b>	<b>93.0</b>
<b>SD 79</b>										
Librarians	+	924	+	917	+	986	+	1014	+	956
Counsellors	+	828	+	788	+	732	+	734	+	819
LAT/SPED	-	11	-	12	-	11	-	12	-	14
ESL	-	66	+	148	+	101	+	86	+	78
<b>SD 79 Total</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>133</b>

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#### CD Howe Institute's Multi-year Measure of Achievement (with Controlling for Socioeconomics)

Source: The David Johnson/C.D. Howe Institute; British Columbia School Performance Database (2008)

CD Howe Institute has taken the BC Foundation Skills Assessment results for three years (2003/04 - 2005/06) and created an average school-level result after controlling for the socio-economic characteristics of the students in the school based on their aggregate characteristics from the 2001 Census.

By taking the difference between this predicted result and the observed result, the Institute can create a distribution of differences by school and calculate the percentile into which each school falls based on this measure.

#### School District (079 Cowichan Valley) Percentiles

Grade	Weighted Success Rate	Weighted Predicted Success Rate	Difference	Squared Deviations	z score (Difference / std dev)	Percentile (look up in z table of normal distribution)
4	73.8	77.4	-3.6	12.7	-1.3	9.6
7	69.5	74.5	-5.1	25.5	-1.7	4.2

#### School District (022 Vernon) Percentiles

Grade	Weighted Success Rate	Weighted Predicted Success Rate	Difference	Squared Deviations	z score (Difference / std dev)	Percentile (look up in z table of normal distribution)
4	78.1	78.5	-0.5	0.2	-0.2	43.2
7	77.3	76.4	0.9	0.9	0.3	62.5

**APPENDIX II: DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SPECIAL ADVISOR**

The following documents were submitted to the Special Advisor from:

- Richard Nelson, President Cowichan Valley Teachers Federation
- Representatives of the Cowichan Tribes / Koksilah School
- Representatives of École Mill Bay School
- Representatives of Somenos Rural Traditional School
- Representatives of Tansor School

In addition, three separate submissions are on file with the Ministry of Education, as follows:

- École Mill Bay and the French Immersion Program
- Koksilah Elementary School
- Somenos Rural Traditional School