

District Review Report

**School District No. 33 (Chilliwack)**

March 14-16, 2005

Submitted to the Minister of Education

By District Review Team Chair  
Geoff Jopson, Superintendent, School District No. 45 (West Vancouver)

## District Review Report

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District Name:	Chilliwack
District Number:	33
Superintendent:	Jacquie Taylor
Date of Visit:	March 14-16, 2005
Team Chair:	Geoff Jopson, Superintendent, SD 45 (West Vancouver)
Team Members:	Ron Broda, Parent CoPACs Pres., SD 63 (Saanich) Ted Cadwallader, Coordinator, Ministry of Education Brian Jackson, Vice-Principal, SD 41 (Burnaby) Susan Kinkela, District Program Coordinator, SD 54 (Bulkley Valley) Carolynne Muncer, Teacher, SD 74 (Gold Trail) Doug Phyll, Principal, SD 72 (Campbell River) Keiko Taylor, Teacher & Curriculum Coordinator, SD 64 (Gulf Islands) Nancy Walt, Coordinator, Ministry Education

### Context

The community of Chilliwack, consisting of approximately 67,000 people, has several distinct areas from which students attend schools. It has an urban center within which there is a greater percentage of vulnerable families. On the south side, there are new housing developments and a new shopping mall. Rural farm areas include East Chilliwack, Rosedale, and Yarrow. Additionally, there is the Cultus Lake recreation area.

Over the past six years, there has been consistency in the number of schools and teachers in Chilliwack. With minor fluctuations, this also applies to the student population. The District consists of approximately 13,000 students and 700 educators. There are 20 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 2 secondary schools, 1 distance education school, and 3 alternate schools. The percentage of Aboriginal students (11.1%) is higher than the provincial percentage (7.8%). The percent of students in French Immersion has increased over six years from 2.2% to 2.9%.

Chilliwack is a district that is working hard to provide appropriate educational experiences for students that are congruent with its social, economic, and geographic situations. Examples include the strong apprenticeship program and the extensive and varied work experience program.

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**Summary of Process**

The Review Team was welcomed on Sunday afternoon with a District orientation provided by School Trustees, the District Executive Team and representatives of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee. Also attending were representatives of the District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC), the Teachers' Association, and the Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association.

On Monday morning, District staff highlighted key initiatives and programs. Eight school visits followed: A D Rundle Middle, Chilliwack Senior Secondary, Cultus Lake Community School, East Chilliwack Elementary, Sardis Senior Secondary, Tyson Elementary, Vedder Middle School and Yarrow Community School. Late Monday afternoon, the Review Team met with the DPAC executive.

School visits continued on Tuesday morning to: Chilliwack Central Elementary Community School, Little Mountain Elementary, McCammon Elementary, Robertson Elementary, Rosedale Elementary, Rosedale Middle School, Strathcona Elementary and Unsworth Elementary. Team members also visited the Fraser Valley Distance Education School and Sto:lo Alternate.

On Wednesday afternoon, the Team met with the Board of School Trustees, District staff and representatives of all partner groups to present a draft of the Review Report.

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

**1. Goals:**

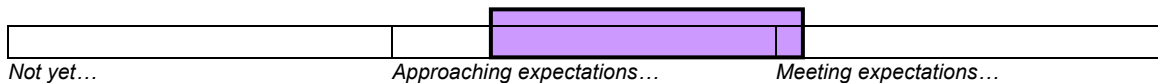
Improving districts and schools have a strong instructional focus. This focus is made visible in relevant goals for improving achievement for all students.



- Many schools have goals directly based on student achievement.
- Some school goal statements could be better linked to measurable student achievement.

**2. Rationale:**

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

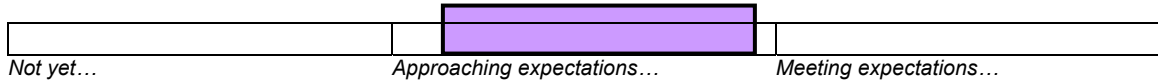


- Some schools have effectively linked goals and evidence.
- Some schools are in the process of developing rationale based on evidence from multiple sources of data.

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3. *Data:*

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 is used to monitor progress.



- Most schools are in the early stages of collecting, interpreting and analyzing data.
- Some schools are disaggregating data to gain a deeper understanding of the evidence.
- A few schools are doing an outstanding job of using data to inform instruction.

4. *Strategies:*

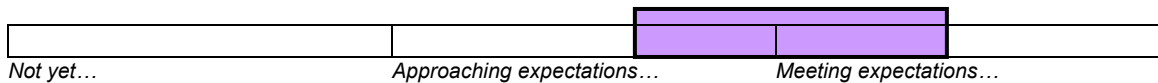
Improving districts and schools have focused, well organized improvement plans in place. The strategies selected to achieve the goals are an intelligent blend of research, best practice, and innovative thinking.



- The District has chosen strategies based on current research and best practice.
- Most schools have selected strategies through a collaborative process.
- Most schools are implementing innovative strategies that reflect the context of their community.
- The District and schools plan carefully for successful student transitions.

5. *Structures:*

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

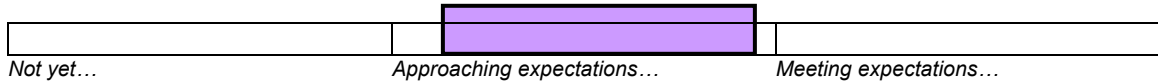


- The District has made a considerable effort to align structures to support literacy and numeracy goals.
- The District provides many staff development opportunities to support student achievement.
- Most schools have made structural changes in support of strategies that are well connected to goals.

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6. *Results:*

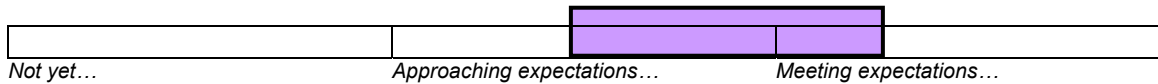
Improving districts and schools monitor and make adjustments to get improved results – at the classroom, school and district levels.



- Many schools are developing processes for monitoring results.
- A few schools are effectively using results to make adjustments to improve student achievement.

7. *Communication:*

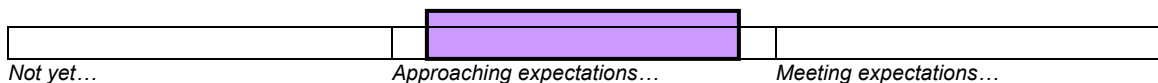
Improving districts and schools are involved in continuous dialogue about student achievement and make public their improvement goals and the progress being made in specific areas of focus.



- The District has made a considerable effort to extend the discussion regarding student achievement throughout the community.
- Schools and the District are continuing to explore ways of effectively communicating with the entire Aboriginal community.

8. *Teamwork – District and School Coherence:*

Improving districts and schools have an interactive strategy for connecting school and district goals. School uniqueness and district directions are both valued.



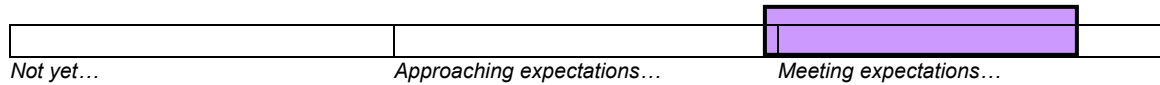
- At a number of sites, the school and District plans for improvement of student achievement are closely aligned.
- At a few schools, further discussion between school and District staff would facilitate the development of more specific goals that better address the needs of the local community and the District.

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### 9. *Teamwork – District and Parent Involvement:*

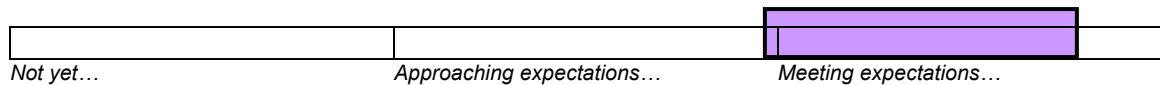
Improving districts and schools work as a team with parents, including specific groups of parents, to improve student achievement.



- The District has adopted a highly inclusive and collaborative approach to decision making.
- Parents at individual schools and those serving on the District Parent Advisory Council are actively engaged in the efforts to enhance student achievement.

### 10. *Leadership / Teamwork:*

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.



- The district has effectively built capacity for leadership at all levels.

## Strengths

The Team commends the School District with regard to the following:

- The widespread involvement of parents at every level.
- The dedication and commitment of staff throughout the organization.
- The thoughtful planning for successful student transitions between elementary, middle and secondary levels.
- The development of comprehensive frameworks to improve student achievement in literacy and numeracy.
- The strong relationship between the School District and Sto:lo Nation.
- The extensive and well-developed apprenticeship and work experience programs.
- The innovative learning opportunities provided by the Fraser Valley Distance Education Centre through the creative use of technology.
- The School Board's development of a strategic plan that focuses on better results for students.

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**Promising Practices**

District or school practices that could be helpful to other districts with a similar focus:

- The Literacy Project, including the use of a literacy framework, literacy teams, helping teachers and staff development.
- The comprehensive integration of community services including health and family services at Chilliwack Central Elementary Community School.
- The AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program designed to help more middle and secondary students prepare for post-secondary education.

**Recommendations**

The Team respectfully recommends that the District:

- Consider reducing the number of goals in their Accountability Contract.
- Provide ongoing assistance to School Planning Councils to ensure that all school goals are reflective of student achievement data.
- Continue to build the understanding of assessment literacy throughout the District.
- Actively pursue an Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement that addresses the needs of all Aboriginal students.
- Consider differentiating resources to meet the needs of those schools enrolling a significant percentage of vulnerable students.
- Continue to support both the Literacy Project and the numeracy initiative.