

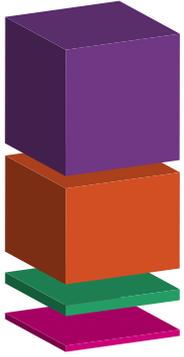


Vancouver
School Board

DISTRICT PLAN FOR STUDENT LEARNING

2014/2015





Enrollment

29,000 Elementary students

23,000 Secondary students

1,750(FTE) Adult Education students

830 Students in distributed learning programs



 21% of K - Gr 12 students are designated ELL

 50% speak a language other than English at home

126 languages have been identified in our schools

 13% of elementary students are French Immersion learners

 5% of secondary students are French Immersion learners

 10% of elementary and secondary students are special education learners

 16% of students participate in a school meal program

 4% of secondary students are Aboriginal learners
2056 self-identified Aboriginal students representing 600 bands and nations attend Vancouver schools



- Our schools reside on Musqueam and Coast Salish Traditional Territory
- **92 elementary** schools, including **16 elementary annexes**
- **18 secondary** schools
- **6 Adult Education** centres
- One Distributed Learning School - Vancouver Learning Network that serves both elementary and secondary students
- District Programs of choice at both the elementary and secondary level, including early and late French Immersion, Intensive French, Mandarin Bilingual, Fine Arts, Gifted, International Baccalaureate, Montessori, Mini Schools and Academies.
- District alternate programs that address a wide range of learning needs and alternate pathways to graduation.

Mission Statement

To enable students to reach their intellectual, social, aesthetic and physical potential in challenging and stimulating settings which reflect the worth of each individual and promote mutual respect, cooperation and social responsibility.

District Context

The Vancouver School District is a large, urban and multicultural school district that includes some of the most affluent and impoverished urban neighbourhoods in the country. This setting provides wonderful opportunities as well as serious challenges. The Vancouver School District is among the most diverse of public school systems in Canada, with an annual enrolment of approximately 52,000 students in Kindergarten to Grade 12. In addition, the Vancouver School District provides Adult Education programming at six centres, as well as Continuing Education non-academic programs for the broader community. Our programs and services address extraordinary combinations of challenge, need, opportunity and potential that exist in every student we serve.

On the one hand, many students living in this urban environment are able to take advantage of opportunities to experience and learn from diverse cultures and reap the benefits of involvement with highly sophisticated and experienced arts and recreational groups that you would expect to find in a world-class city. Vancouver schools are involved in a wide range of partnerships with cultural, arts and service organizations. The district also offers a variety of services and program options to meet diverse student interests and needs.

On the other hand, many children, due to poverty and other inhibitors, are excluded from the choices and opportunities that a city the size of Vancouver can offer. The issues facing these children and their families are becoming more complex. The district continues to work closely with other community agencies and organizations to address these challenges.

The District Plan for Student Learning

The District Plan for Student Learning is informed by the [VSB Strategic Plan 2011-2016](#) which contains the following goals:

1. Students are fully engaged in learning
2. All students are included and have the opportunity to succeed
3. Our communities, families and educational partners are effectively engaged in supporting student success
4. Our school district is efficient, effective and sustainable

In support of the Strategic Plan, the district continues to focus on Literacy development as a key determinant of student success. We have clear data that our early intervention initiative is resulting in improved learning and achievement for students. The adoption of the Five Year Early Intervention Plan has provided further targeted staffing in support of this initiative, which expanded to 48 schools this year.

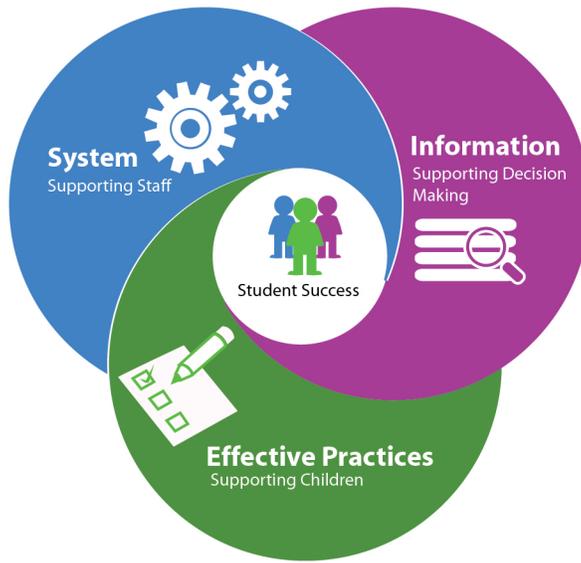
The District Plan for Student Learning is also closely aligned with the goals and implementation processes of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA). As a District we continue to identify practices which are resulting in learning success for Aboriginal students, and in improved graduation rates. Each of our School Growth Plans in 2013-2014 included a goal related to the development of Aboriginal cultural awareness, as well as identifying strategies and structures to support the learning success of individual Aboriginal students within each school. Much of the year was spent reviewing the implementation of the first AEEA and using this review to identify directions for the second AEEA. The initial plan was to complete and sign the second AEEA in June 2014. This has been extended into fall 2014 to enable all stakeholder groups to participate fully in the process.

The Board approved the February 2014 Re-visioning Inner City and CommunityLINK Resources in Vancouver Schools report. This review focused on the development of an action plan for “improving the coordination and integration of the Inner-city Schools Program and CommunityLINK programs and services”. As a result of the re-visioning process, an outline for a 2 year implementation plan was proposed, and this will inform the district’s work in the areas of early learning support and literacy development, as related to vulnerable students.

And for all students we are committed to increasing engagement in learning, through opportunities for student voice, leadership, and program choice.

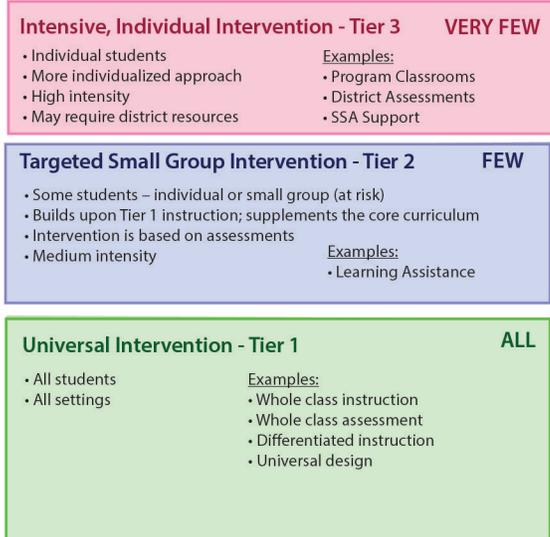
Our Vision of Student Success

Success for Each Student

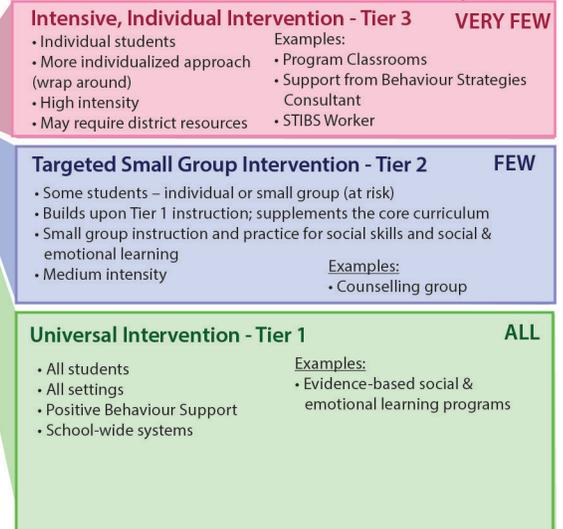


Response to Intervention

Learning Systems



Social - Emotional, Behavioural Systems



Our vision of success for each student, as illustrated in the Success for Each Student graphic, is based on the Response to Intervention framework, which encompasses both academic (Learning Systems) and behaviour (Social-Emotional, Behavioural Systems). Each tier of this model represents increasingly intense services that are associated with increasing levels of learner needs. Interventions at all three tiers are based on assessment information, and aimed at improving student response to instruction, and student outcomes.



Tier 1: At the **Universal Intervention** level, the phrase 'each student' refers to every student enrolled in a regular classroom. This represents high quality instruction, assessment, and monitoring of student success to support academic and social emotional functioning.



Tier 2: **Targeted Small Group Interventions** are determined by a collaborative School Based Team process. The assessment focus is increasingly narrow to determine the specific areas that are interfering with a student's ability to learn or demonstrate learning. Instruction is designed to increase success. Small group instruction may support learning, support social emotional functioning, enrich or restore cultural learning, and enrich or extend learning experiences.



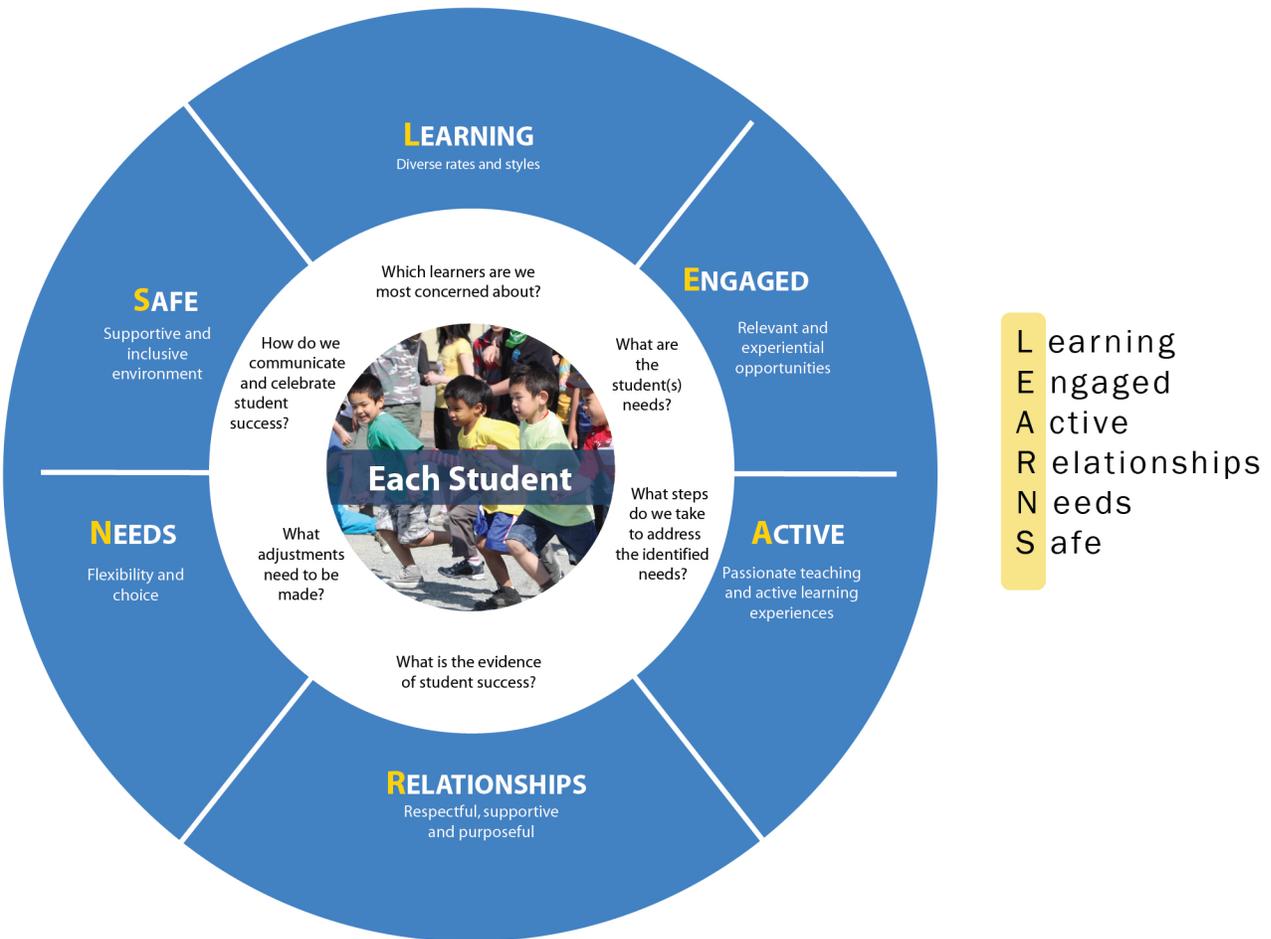
Tier 3: **Intensive, Individual Intervention** refers to the set of services, supports, strategies and instructional approaches that are required to create conditions of success for students whose needs are highly defined. At this level, a highly individualised approach is taken to both assessment and instruction. Each intervention is carefully monitored for its effectiveness.

The Vancouver School District is committed to working with families and outside agencies to further provide for the success of each student. We promote the values of meaningful consultation when working to make decisions regarding services, supports or placement decisions. This works most effectively when we are able to collaborate with families as early as possible. We have structures in place to assist with programming transition from pre-Kindergarten years to Kindergarten.

Foundations for Student Success

Introduction

Three years of work on an Appreciative Inquiry resulted in our identifying six underlying conditions for successful learning. We know that the best learning occurs when there is recognition of and support for a diversity of rates and styles of learning; when engaging experiential learning opportunities are presented within and beyond the classroom; when active learning experiences are created by passionate teachers, when relationships are respectful, supportive, and purposeful; when there is flexibility and choice in the system, and when there is a safe and supportive environment. We continue to embrace this set of understandings and are committed to ensuring these conditions underpin our work in supporting teachers and students.



Areas of Focus

The research is clear that attending to the social and emotional needs of children and youth, and providing quality early learning experiences are fundamental to preparing students to learn, and for creating the conditions for student success. In our district we have developed programs, initiatives and partnerships to support these foundational areas. We place emphasis on providing supports for vulnerable students, and in particular, on improving the chances for success of our Aboriginal learners.

“Emotions can facilitate or impede children's academic engagement, work ethic, commitment and ultimate school success”

Durlak et al., 2011

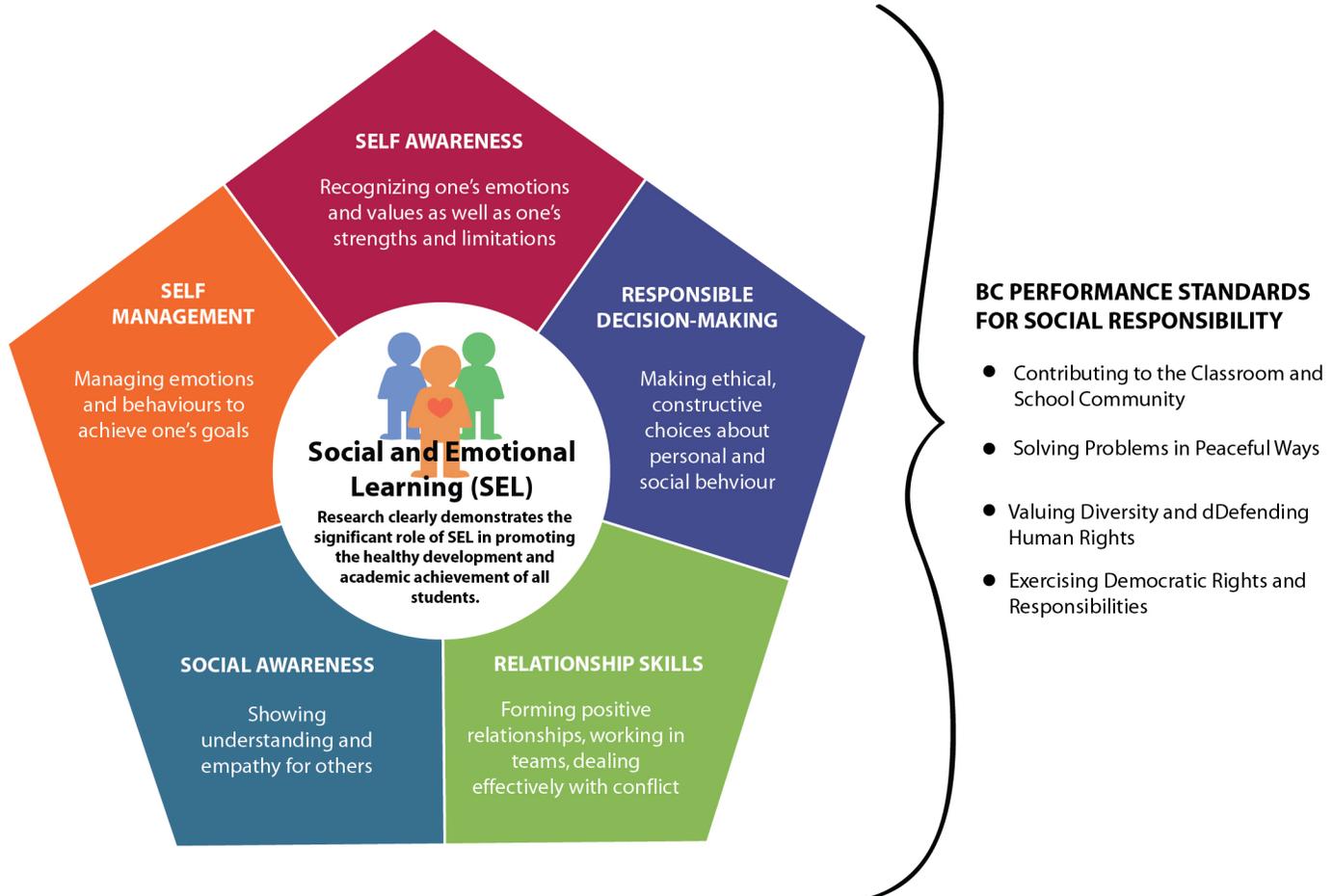
Social Responsibility

The Vancouver School District considers a focus on social responsibility and social and emotional learning (SEL) to be foundational to each student's success, and expects that all schools intentionally attend to these areas, ensuring that learning takes place within a context of positive relationships and within a safe, caring, and inclusive environment. There is broad understanding that when schools explicitly teach and provide opportunities for students to develop and practice their social and emotional competencies, student learning is improved. To that end, an updated scope and sequence chart of selected evidence-based SEL and prevention programs was distributed to elementary schools this year.

Within a safe, caring and inclusive school environment, students are more likely to thrive. Vancouver School District's approach aligns with key themes underlying the provincial ERASE initiative, such as the importance of positive school climate, student connectedness, and inclusive respectful learning environments to preventing bullying behaviour and enhancing school safety.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING:

SEL is the process whereby children and adults develop essential social and emotional skills, knowledge, and attitudes related to:



Student sense of belonging continues to be an important value shared with the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement. Schools continue to aim to increase each student's sense of belonging and safety, paying particular attention to the needs of vulnerable students. Schools establish strategies to address the needs of vulnerable students, increase equity and inclusion, and support successful transitions, particularly the transition between elementary and secondary school; these strategies are supported by members of the Aboriginal Education department, and Community School Teams as well as by counsellors and other staff members.

Early Learning

Early learning focuses on young children's physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and creative potential. Making the most of young children's capacity for learning, and their natural curiosity and desire to learn in the early years, is central to success for our students.

We know from the research and work of the Human Early Learning Partnership (H.E.L.P.) that twenty-five percent (25%) of learners are vulnerable even before they enter Kindergarten, and that this is not necessarily due to poverty. Furthermore, research indicates that the environments where children spend their time in their early years sculpt their brain and affect health and behaviour as well as learning (H.E.L.P.) Additionally, developmentally appropriate practice, especially play experiences and experiences in the arts, develops self-regulation in young learners, which has a profound effect on learning.



In our District, we recognize and support the principles of early learning for our culturally, linguistically, and socially diverse students so that they become successful and lifelong learners.

The District LEARNS framework corresponds to the Ministry of Education [BC Early Learning Framework](#) with a mutual focus on active, experiential learning, diversity, safe and caring relationships, and more.

The District's continuing emphasis on literacy is also congruent with the Early Learning Framework's focus on language and literacies. Literacy is fundamental to learning and students' success both in school and beyond. Early literacy includes the important role of talk; dialogue and scaffolding with adults; making meaning of a variety of texts; emergent reading and writing; multi-literacies (multi-media, the arts). These are all important facets of early learning.



In working towards success for our students, the District works in partnership with community organizations to support early learning/ literacy. Over the past year, the District has partnered with the City of Vancouver, through Parks and Recreation, and the Vancouver Public Library, to extend the learning opportunities offered through initiatives such as:

- Ready, Set, Learn (RSL)
- Strong Start Centres
- Welcome to Kindergarten (WTK)

Several schools have participated in a pilot to add a physical literacy component to both RSL and WTK events. Another set of schools have partnered with neighbourhood library branches to bridge the WTK experience into the Kindergarten year, by providing related literacy support activities.



In order to meet the needs of individual learners along a continuum of learning 0 to 8 years, the District continues to implement and strengthen the above programs, and recognizes the importance of partnering with families and caregivers in providing these early learning experiences.

Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

The Vancouver Board of Education continues to honour its commitment to the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement, in support of the three goal areas: Belonging, Mastery, and Culture & Community.

Over the past 14 months, the District restructured the service delivery model for Aboriginal students. This began with a pilot project in April 2013, and was expanded to the whole department for September 2013. At the District level and at the school level, staff are taking a team approach to addressing the issue of Aboriginal student success, on a student by student basis. School teams have been diligently engaged in the development of Aboriginal Student Success plans at the Grades 7 and 12, focusing on these important transition years.

Each Aboriginal Education Enhancement Teacher (AEET) was assigned a caseload of students, to provide specific support and interventions related to the goal of Mastery, for improving academic achievement, and meeting graduation requirements. The Aboriginal Education Enhancement Workers (AEEW) continue to provide the wrap-around services and connections which support the overall success of individual students. Through the Aboriginal Intervention Management System (AIMS), there is a tracking of the type and number of interventions which are provided to each student over the year, by AEETs, AEEWs, and other staff within the schools.

The Aboriginal Education staff have raised the profile and recognition opportunities for Aboriginal students through events such as the well-attended Grade 7 celebration and the Grade 12 graduation ceremonies; both of which were positively received by the broader community. The District continues to support the [Aboriginal Focus School](#) at Macdonald Elementary in its development. Staff have developed and compiled classroom resources which integrate Aboriginal cultural and traditional knowledge into lessons and activities.

For 2013-14, each school included the following goal in its School Plan: To increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all students. A new position of Aboriginal Cultural Coordinator was created: to coordinate and facilitate cultural learning experiences and connections for students and staff across the District; and to provide workshops and learning opportunities, along with the Aboriginal Education Resource Teacher. The Musqueam Band has welcomed many schools into their community, for professional development workshops in support of the Culture and Community awareness goal.

On February 21st 2014, the District welcomed former National Chief Shawn Atleo who spoke on the topic of Public Education and Urban Aboriginal People: Reconciliation and Collaboration. The ongoing reconciliation process is fundamental to creating a culture of support for Aboriginal students in achieving success in school, and beyond.



The VBE continues to work in partnership with First Nations organizations to connect with cultural programs, workshops, and people, in order to provide meaningful experiences to students and staff. The District values the contributions made by representatives of Aboriginal community organizations and governmental agencies, as well as post-secondary institutions. The development of the Cultural Carving

Pavilion in partnership between VBE, City of Vancouver, Native Housing Society and Britannia Community Centre has been successful, with a construction schedule set for this summer. We continue to build formal and informal networks in support of Aboriginal student success within and outside the school setting.

Literacy Goal

Each student will read, write, speak and listen with competence, confidence and enjoyment.

Objectives

1. To improve student reading comprehension
2. To improve student written expression
3. To improve oral communication skills

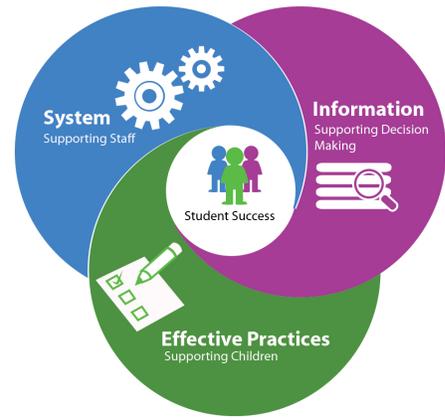
Actions and Results

Focus on Early Intervention

The District continues to develop the Early Intervention plan in support of success for each student. This Three Pillars Tiered approach (evidence-based classroom practice, small group instruction, and one-to-one intervention) is the key strategy to supporting our most at-risk learners.

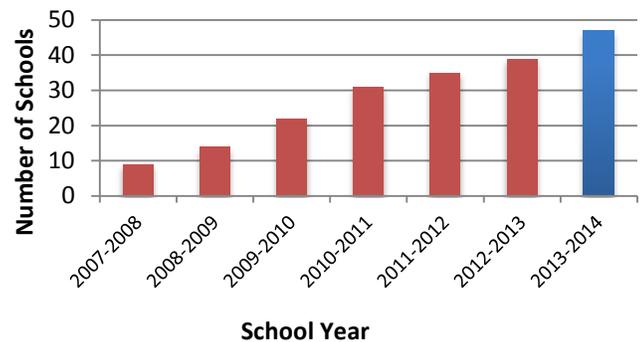
The plan includes:

- supporting evidence-based assessment and intervention practices for the development of early literacy success;
- providing comprehensive training for teachers at Early Intervention schools, with ongoing professional development, mentorship and support from Reading Recovery teacher-leaders; and,
- using data to inform instructional practice in order to provide appropriate levels of support for students.



In 2011-12 the Board of Education approved the Early Intervention Five Year Plan 2012-17, in principle. Since its inception in 2006, the initiative has expanded annually and is now in 48 of the 92 English and French Immersion elementary schools (Table 1). In September 2014, there will be 58 schools participating in the initiative.

Table 1
Growth of Participation
in VSB Early Intervention Initiative



The Early Intervention Plan continues to show positive results for at-risk students as indicated by the following evidence.

Table 2 data show a consistent 50% decrease in the at-risk designation among all Kindergarten students, between the January and June assessments, as a result of explicit classroom-based teaching interventions. English Language Learner (ELL) students, in particular, show a high rate of improvement; there are gains with Aboriginal students, although not as dramatic, and a small degree of effect for students with special needs.

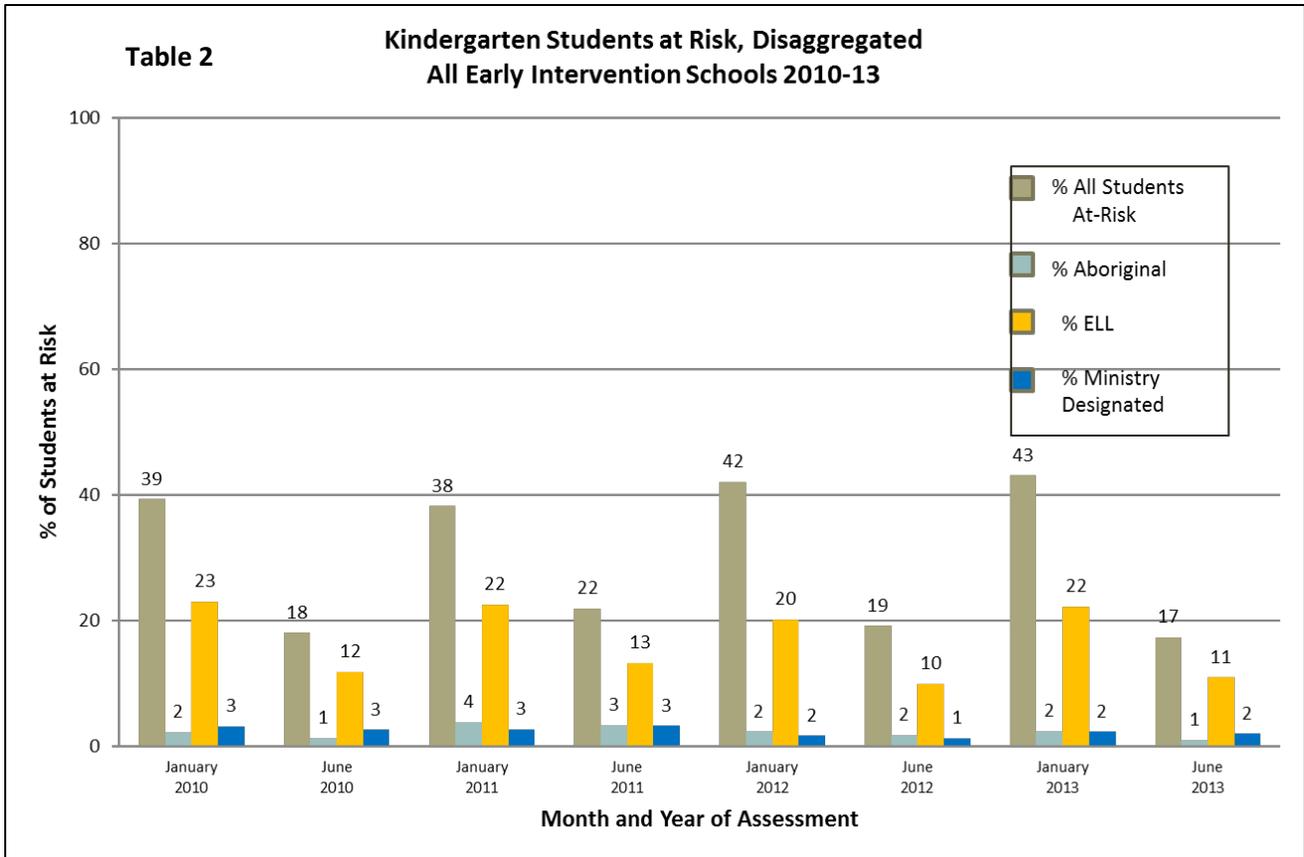


Table 3 illustrates the gains that at-risk students have made over a four year period, to June 2013. This table will be updated in the fall of 2014 to include 2013-14 data, as available.

Table 3

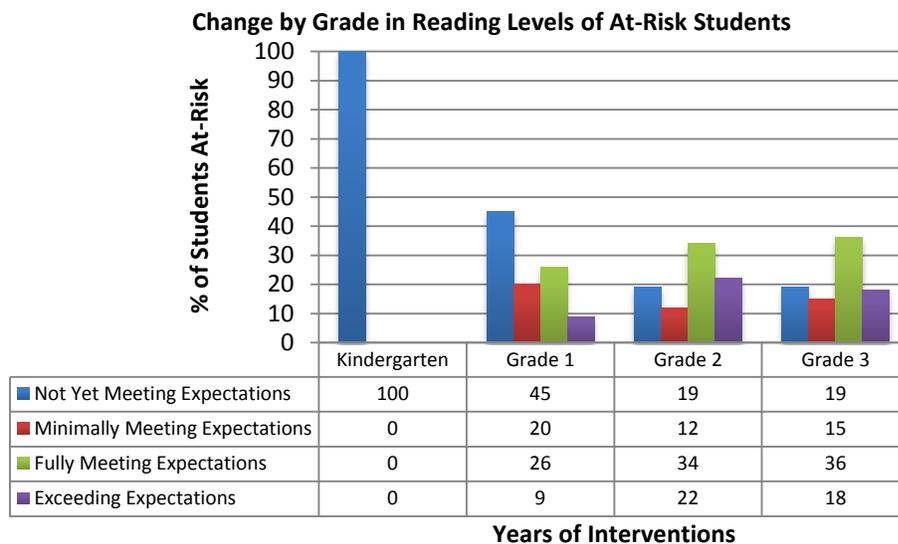
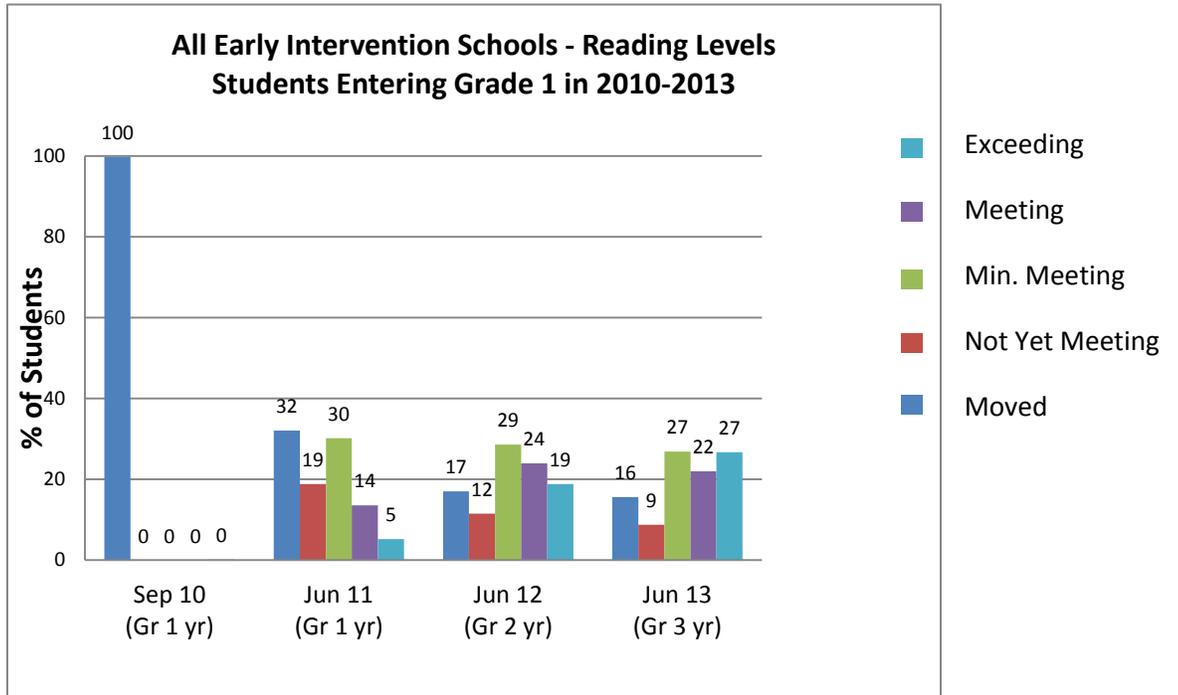
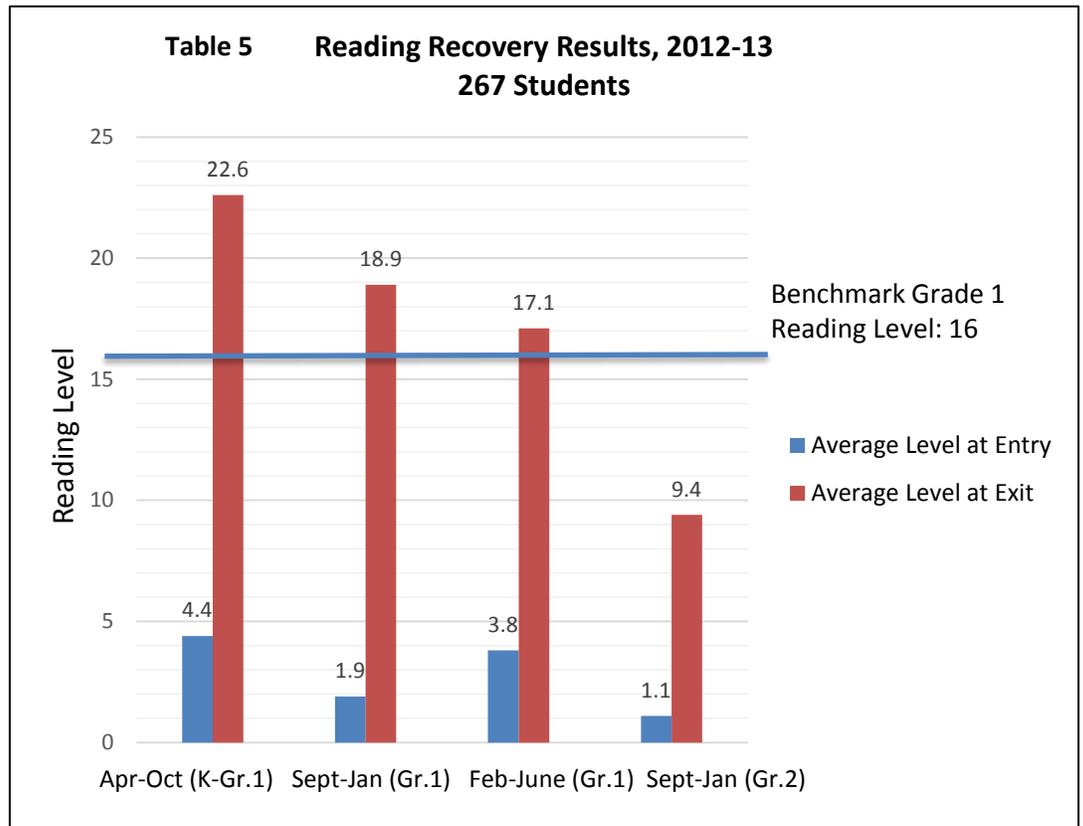


Table 4 shows the tracking of a single cohort of students over a 3 year period. The 100% refers to the total ‘at-risk’ cohort who entered Grade 1, and illustrates their gains in literacy development over the 3 year period, as a result of one-to-one Reading Recovery intervention and subsequent targeted literacy supports (i.e. small group work with leveled text). By the end of Grade 3, 58% of these at-risk students were meeting or exceeding expectations; only 15% of these students were still not meeting grade level expectations in reading; and 27% of students had moved from the schools so their progress was not determined.

Table 4



Data from June 2013 was collated in the fall of 2014 (Table 5). A benchmark reading achievement levels for the end of Grade 1 is Level 16. The results indicate that the students most at-risk in April of their Kindergarten year, met or exceeded the Level 16 benchmark as a result of the intervention. The gains were significantly greater for those who received these interventions earlier in their Grade 1 year.



Tracking student literacy results

Beyond the Early Intervention initiative, the District is still needing to engage in the exploration of evidence-based approaches to a systematic district-supported collection of data. At this time one consistent source of data available is the language arts letter grades, as reported by teachers on final report cards. At the school level, that data is reviewed by staff to identify patterns of achievement and areas for intervention. Schools are asked to review disaggregated results by gender, and for ELL, and Aboriginal learners.

We continue to support Assessment for Learning practices and have the ongoing goal of working with teacher representatives and administrator associations to develop consistent district-wide assessment tools, and practices for the purpose of informing instruction and intervention strategies. As well, we need to determine an effective means of collating and representing district data on student achievement in literacy, to provide rationale and directions for allocation of funding, resources, and professional development opportunities.

Focus on Aboriginal Learner Success

The District has put systems into place to build consistency and accountability in the ways we support and monitor learning success for Aboriginal students. This includes strategic planning and reviewing available data at all levels; at the school-based team level; within the Aboriginal Education department; and with the senior staff at the district level. Staff continue to address the barriers that exist for some Aboriginal students in meeting graduation requirements. A target has been to increase the number of students who participate in provincial exams for both English 10 and English 12, and Social Studies 11 and to ensure students are completing Planning 10. Secondary schools were asked to create a plan for supporting students in meeting these requirements, and in finding ways to encourage students to attend and write these exams.



It is our expectation that due to the labour dispute, there will be a lower participation rate of Aboriginal students, as well as others, in the provincial exams in June. The data on participation rates and results will be available in the fall of 2014.

At the elementary school level, staff were provided with a summary of the literacy and numeracy report card information for each Aboriginal student, and asked to work within their school-based team to assess learning needs for these students, with a goal to increasing grade transition rates and improvements in achievement. The District Principal of Aboriginal Education, along with the Directors of Field Services, have met on a regular

basis to review student progress information and plan for supports to schools and students.

Improving School Completion Levels



The Vancouver Board of Education offers students several program paths to graduation; through secondary schools, alternative programs, VLN-S online program, and the Adult Education Centres.

The Ministry of Education provides annual data on the District's Six Year Completion rate. The overall rate, for all students, has increased slightly every year over the past five years and was at 86.7% in June 2013.

Improving the Six Year Completion Rate for Aboriginal students is a priority for the District. Each senior student's Transcript Verification Record was reviewed to determine their readiness for meeting graduation requirements, and individual plans were developed to provide at-risk students with a personalized plan of action. This included ensuring that students had met outstanding learning outcomes and completed Planning 10 and provincial exam requirements.

In the December 2013 Superintendent's Report on Achievement, it was noted that, between 2002 and 2013, the 6 Year Completion Rate of Aboriginal students increased from 21.1% to 43.3%. As well, the District is tracking its own internal data sets. Sixty percent (60%) of the Aboriginal students enrolled in Grade 12, in September 2012, graduated in June 2013 with a Dogwood degree or School Leaving Certificate. While this percentage is significantly lower than the overall District student graduation rate and continues to be of great concern, it does provide another view of the achievement of Aboriginal students who are present in Vancouver schools during their Grade 12 year.

We also are tracking the transition and retention levels of Aboriginal students between grades. Our current information shows that the intake and out-flow of students at each grade tends to not impact total student population numbers. It does, however, affect our ability to provide continuous focused support to individual students.

Supporting Learning and Instructional Practice

In partnership with the teachers' union and the administrators' associations, the District oversees processes related to the allocation of the Teacher Collaborative Inquiry Fund. This fund is available to teams of teachers at each school, and across the district, in support of release time to explore inquiry questions and to share ideas/knowledge around effective teaching practices and learning principles. Improved student learning is not necessarily a direct outcome of the inquiry, but is the overarching intent.

The District provided the following opportunities in support of inquiry-based professional development:

- September workshop on developing inquiry questions and projects
- Training of facilitators to provide support to teams engaged in the inquiry process
- Pro-D school team planning sessions in the spring
- Professionals Investigating Learning Opportunities with Technology (PILOT) series involved 33 school teams of teachers, teacher-librarians and administrators
- Celebration of Inquiry Learning – planned sharing event for May was postponed and may be rescheduled for fall 2014

Other opportunities for engaging in the inquiry approach to professional development, and for networking, have included:

- Year 5 of the Assessment for Learning series offered by Drs. Linda Kaser and Judy Halbert
- District teams participating in the Ministry of Education initiatives: Changing Results for Young Readers (CR4YR) and Changing Results for Young Adolescents (CR4YA)
- Supporting the development of a Learning Commons model in school libraries, with the leadership of the Teacher-Librarian mentor
- Learning Technology mentors supported teachers and students in 65 schools.
- A variety of workshop offerings, book clubs, and direct individual support to teachers and staffs, as provided by members of Learning Services staff

Connecting with Community



In partnership with community organizations the District works to support literacy initiatives from a broader perspective. This includes our work through the District's Community School Hub teams in the school and neighbourhood hubs. We participate on the Early Years/WINDOWS table, along with representatives from City of Vancouver (CoV) Social Planning department, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Ministry of Child and Family Development. The District connects with the CoV in planning for the provision of childcare and early learning programs within available school facilities. We are engaged in a number of initiatives with the Vancouver Public Library in support of families and children, around literacy development in the early

and middle years, from a public and school library perspective.

The District works with community organizations to support adult learners through outreach programs from the Adult Education centres. These partnerships are a reflection of the District's recognition that students have the greatest chance of success when we align our services, programs and efforts with partnering organizations.

District staff in CommunityLINK have provided supports to Pacific Community Resource Society (PCRS) in developing the plan to bring the Pathways service opportunity into the Strathcona area place-based Graduation Strategy initiative.

Conclusion

In the coming year these will be key areas of focus in support of student learning and literacy development:

- Early Intervention
 - Continued implementation of the Early Intervention Five Year Plan 2012-17
 - Expansion to 10 new schools for a total of 58
 - Continued participation in the Changing Results for Young Readers (CR4YR) initiative
- Implementation of the action plan as outlined in the February 2014 Re-visioning Inner City and CommunityLINK Resources in Vancouver Schools report. This review focused on the development of an action plan for "improving the coordination and integration of the Inner-city Schools Program and CommunityLINK programs and services". As a result of the re-visioning process, an outline for a 2 year implementation plan was proposed, and this will inform the district's work in the areas of early learning support and literacy development, as related to vulnerable students. It will include:

- Introduction of Transition Teacher(s) to support identified vulnerable student populations in transition from Grades 7-8. This staff will be closely aligned with Aboriginal Education Enhancement Teachers
 - Defining role of the Literacy Teachers for September 2015
 - Reviewing summer pre-K assessment clinic model
 - Exploration of place-based model (e.g. Strathcona Graduation Strategy)
- Extension of the Aboriginal Student Success plan approach to include grades beyond Grade 7 and 12
 - Expansion of the Multi-Interdisciplinary Support Team model to provide timely resources and support to schools in areas related to Resource services, psycho-educational assessments, speech and language assessments/interventions, counselling, and positive behaviour supports
 - Strengthening of district-wide assessment practices and development of district data reporting and collection
 - Further development of inquiry-based professional development and networking opportunities for staff and students to share their learning and successes

As a District we look for ways to build on our strengths and to celebrate our successes. We believe that by working together we can make a difference for our students, and we will continue to refer to data which informs our decision making and practices.