

# RESOURCE PACKAGE



**“IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT”**

**SCHOOL PLANNING COUNCIL  
DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP**

**2008**

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## **SESSION OUTLINE**

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Beginning With What We Know
3. Overview of:
  - The Legislation
  - Board Policy (Interim)
4. The School Planning Council
  - Mandate, Purpose and Structure
  - Roles and Responsibilities
5. The School Improvement Process
  - Overview of the School Improvement Planning Process
  - Components of the School Improvement Planning Process
6. Data and Information
  - What is data?
  - What is good data?
  - What is information?
  - What is the importance of baseline data?
7. School Community Context
8. Involving the School Community
  - The Importance of Inclusion
  - Strategies for Involving the School Community
9. School Plans
  - Characteristics of Effective School Plans
  - Guidelines for School Plans
  - School Plan Template
10. Where Do We Go From Here?

## OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SESSION

Participants will have opportunities to develop a shared understanding of:

- The purpose, mandate and structure of the School Planning Council (SPC)
- The roles and responsibilities of members of the SPC
- The components of the School Improvement Planning Process including key elements and timelines
- The importance of acquiring and interpreting relevant data in making planning decisions
- The characteristics of an effective School Plan
- Strategies and suggestions to ensure consultation with the school community.

# LEGISLATION

## SCHOOL ACT

BC Ministry of Education

Governance and Legislation Unit C-18 October 10, 2003

### **School planning council**

- 8.1** (1) A board must establish a school planning council for each school, except a Provincial resource program, in its school district.
- (2) At the request of 3 parents of students attending a Provincial resource program, a board may establish a school planning council for the Provincial resource program.
- (3) A school planning council for a school consists of the following persons:
- (a) the principal of the school;
  - (b) one of the teachers at the school, elected annually by secret ballot by the teachers who teach at the school;
  - (c) 3 representatives of the parents' advisory council who are
    - (i) parents of students enrolled in the school, and
    - (ii) elected annually by the parents' advisory council;
  - (d) if the school enrolls students in grade 10, 11 or 12, one student of school age enrolled in one of those grades at the school, appointed annually by the principal of the school after consulting with the students enrolled in those grades at the school.
- (4) One of the representatives elected under subsection (3) (c) must be an elected officer of the parents' advisory council.
- (5) A board may appoint a person to fill a vacancy on a school planning council if
- (a) there is no parents' advisory council for the school,
  - (b) the parents' advisory council for the school does not elect 3 representatives under subsection (3) (c),
  - (c) the teachers at the school do not elect a representative under subsection (3) (b), or
  - (d) the principal of the school does not appoint a student under subsection (3) (d).

- (6) The term of office of a person appointed or elected under this section to the school planning council must not be more than one year.
- (7) An employee of any board is not eligible for election under subsection (3) (c) or an appointment in the circumstances referred to in subsection (5) (a) or (b).

### **Role of a school planning council**

**8.2** A board must consult with a school planning council in respect of the following:

- (a) the allocation of staff and resources in the school;
- (b) matters contained in the board's accountability contract relating to the school;
- (c) educational services and educational programs in the school.

### **School plan**

- 8.3** (1) In each school year, a board must approve a school plan for every school in the school district.
- (2) By a date set by the board, a school planning council must prepare and submit to the board a school plan for the school in respect of improving student achievement and other matters contained in the board's accountability contract relating to that school.
- (3) A school planning council must consult with the parents' advisory council during the preparation of the school plan.
- (4) The board may approve, approve with modifications or reject a school plan submitted under subsection (2) or (6).
- (5) Before approving a school plan, the board may
- (a) consult with the school planning council about modifications to the school plan, or
  - (b) direct the school planning council to modify all or part of the school plan by a specified date.
- (6) The board may direct the principal of a school to prepare and submit to the board a school plan for the school by a specified date if:
- (a) the school planning council does not submit a school plan under subsection (2),
  - (b) the school planning council does not comply with a direction of the board under subsection (5) (b), or
  - (c) the board rejects the school plan submitted under subsection (2).

- (7) A board must make a school plan approved under subsection (4) available to the parents of students attending that school.

## Board Policy

See District Policy Book and ask at your school for a copy of the policy.



## SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PAC AND THE SPC

PAC	SPC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose is to assist, advocate for, inform and communicate with parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General mandate is to help improve student achievement.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operates in accordance with its Constitution and By-Laws.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operates in accordance with Provincial Legislation and Board Policy.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to entire parent body and is the officially recognized voice of parents at the school level. PAC executive is elected annually in accordance with the PAC's Constitution and By-Laws and coordinates the work of the PAC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprised of: three parents (one of whom must be an officer of the PAC) who are elected by secret ballot by the PAC; one teacher rep also elected by secret ballot by the teaching staff; the principal of the school; and in the case of secondary schools, a student from Grades 10-12 selected by the students.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings are open to participation by all parents of children in school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to observers.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal, staff liaison, students and community members may be invited to attend meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students and support staff may be invited to attend meetings.</li> </ul>

PAC	SPC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings are generally held monthly throughout the school term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings are to be held at least three times a year, or more frequently as needed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May advise the Board and principal of any matter relating to the school other than matters assigned to the SPC, and at the request of the SPC, assist the SPC in carrying out its functions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expected to prepare and submit to the Board a school plan to improve student achievement and other matters contained in the Board's accountability contract relating to the school.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers elected for one year by show of hands or secret ballot and may be re-elected for more than one term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent reps and the teacher rep will be elected annually and may be re-elected. No employee of any Board may represent the parents.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decisions made by consensus, by unanimous agreement or by a majority vote on a formal motion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No votes will be taken except on approval of a school plan. The SPC will operate on a consensus model.</li> <li>If members cannot agree on a response, the SPC will so report. Members may submit their own reports to the Board in this case.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will establish a means (through the principal and its parent reps) to promote effective two-way communication between the school community and the SPC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expected to report at every PAC meeting and obliged to consult with the PAC during preparation of the school plan. Expected to maintain open, two-way lines of communication throughout.</li> </ul>

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### The School Planning Council:

- The School Planning Council is an advisory body
  - The Council is composed of:
    - The principal
    - Three parents (elected by the members of the PAC - one of whom must be on the PAC Executive)
    - A teacher (elected by the teaching staff)
- In the case of secondary school SPCs:
- A student in Grades 10-12 (elected by the student body)
- The major responsibility of the Council is to consult with the school community and ensure that the advice given reflects the characteristics, values, needs and views of the school community.
- In keeping with the legislation, the School Planning Council provides advice to the school and to the School Board regarding:
  - Allocation of staff and resources in the school
  - Matters contained in the Board's accountability contract relating to the school
  - Educational services and educational programs in the school
- The School Planning Council does not engage in discussion or provide advice regarding:
  - Personal/confidential information on students, parents, teachers or any other employees
  - Complaints about individuals
  - Personnel matters

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following is a working list of the roles and responsibilities of the members of the School Planning Council. It is subject to discussion, clarification and refinement over time.

### **The Principal:**

- Provides leadership in the collaborative work of the School Planning Council
- Communicates purpose and timelines to the school community
- Informs parents, teachers, other staff and students about the work of the School Planning Council
- Assembles existing information related to school-level student achievement and the school district accountability contract (*This information includes required achievement indicators as well as the results of analysis and interpretation.*)
- In collaboration with the Parent Advisory Council and the school staff, establishes mechanisms to promote effective two-way communication between the school community and the Council
- Ensures that the School Plan is the result of consultation with the entire school community including parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, and students

### **The Parents:**

- Represent the views and interests of parents in the development of the School Plan
- Solicit input from a representative cross-section of parents and other members of the school community
- Ensure that the views and perspectives of parents are part of the discussions and deliberations of the SPC
- Participate actively in the review of data regarding student achievement and the development of goals, objectives and targets for improved student learning
- Communicate regularly, on a two-way basis, with the PAC and the parent community

**The Teacher:**

- Represents the views and interests of teachers and other staff members in the development of the School Plan
- Ensures that the views and perspectives of staff are part of the discussions and deliberations of the SPC
- Assists the principal in helping to ensure that all members of the SPC appreciate the educational implications of what is planned
- Participates actively in the review of data regarding student achievement and the development of goals, objectives and targets for improved student learning
- Communicates regularly, on a two-way basis, with the staff

**The Student** (in the case of secondary school SPCs):

- Represents the views and interests of students in the development of the School Plan
- Solicits input from a representative cross-section of students
- Ensures that the views and perspectives of students are part of the discussions and deliberations of the SPC
- Participates actively in the review of data regarding student achievement and the development of goals, objectives and targets for improved student learning
- Communicates regularly, on a two-way basis, with the Students' Council

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Teaching Staff:**

Although the teaching staff is represented by its elected member on the SPC, there is value in clarifying the role of the teaching staff in relation to the school improvement planning process and the work on the SPC. The roles and responsibilities of the teaching staff include:

- Gathering and reporting achievement data to the principal and the rest of the staff
- Collaborating in the analysis and interpretation of the achievement data
- Identifying relevant performance indicators and sources of data
- Identifying and proposing strategies for the improvement of student achievement with a focus on selected priorities
- Identifying and implementing the improvement strategies
- Helping to monitor student progress on an on-going basis

## **OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PROCESS**

1. The primary goal of the school improvement planning process is to identify areas of need and develop a plan for improving the opportunities of students to grow, learn, achieve and succeed.
2. In the past, school improvement plans came about as a result of the accreditation process. Starting with the 2002-03 school year, all schools have a School Plan which was developed by the newly-established School Planning Council (SPC).
3. The major responsibilities of the School Planning Council in the school improvement process include:
  - becoming apprised of the achievement levels attained by students
  - assisting with communicating information regarding achievement to the school community
  - consulting with the school community (all parents, students, administrators, teachers and support staff) regarding matters concerning student achievement
  - providing advice to the principal and staff with respect to developing or reviewing and revising the School Plan for improving student achievement
  - serving as an advisory body with respect to the monitoring of the implementation of the plan
  - endorsing the School Plan prior to its submission for approval to the Superintendent and Board of Trustees.
4. The School Planning Council assists in the analysis and review of data collected by the school related to the school's goals and objectives.
5. Each member of the School Planning Council plays an important role in the planning process as each person brings an important set of skills, knowledge, experience and insight to the process.

6. In so far as possible, there should be alignment between the goals in the School Plan and the District Performance Plan if the school-based data indicate similar student learning needs.
7. Prior to the end of the school year, the School Planning Council will reach closure on its School Plan and submit the Plan to the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of School Trustees for review and approval.

## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PROCESS**

<b>WHAT IT IS</b>	<b>WHAT IT IS NOT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A holistic process to facilitate on-going examination, improvement, and reporting of school and student performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A separate activity isolated from the day-to-day operations of a school</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracking evidence trends and distributions over time (annual cycle)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single event evaluation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-wide evaluation of policies, programs and results to ensure focus is on student achievement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personnel evaluation</li> <li>• Finding fault</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A process that defines the school community's expectations for student achievement within the provincial standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A process to evaluate schools against a provincial absolute</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strategy for setting priorities for school and student improvement, attending to performance of different student groups within the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About everything schools want or about matters other than student achievement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A process that enhances the professional responsibilities of the educators and the consultative/ advisory role of parents</li> <li>• An inclusive, collaborative process in consultation with the school community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A process that diminishes the professional responsibilities of the educators or a process that negates the consultative/advisory role of the parents</li> <li>• An individual activity or process</li> </ul>



# ***Components of the School Improvement Planning Process***

*“School Plans are to focus on specific areas of student achievement. Student achievement includes intellectual, human and social development, and career development. The primary focus is on intellectual development.”*  
Interim Guidelines, Ministry of Education.

Consultation is required in all four components of the school improvement planning process.

The four components are:

- 1. IDENTIFICATION, COLLECTION AND INTERPRETATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA**
- 2. IDENTIFICATION OF STRENGTHS AND AREAS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT**
- 3. DEVELOPMENT OR REVISION OF THE SCHOOL PLAN**
- 4. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF PROGRESS ON THE SCHOOL PLAN**

# IDENTIFICATION, COLLECTION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

## IDENTIFY AND COLLECT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA

**WHO:** The principal, in collaboration with the staff, collects the data and provides the School Planning Council with a report.

**WHAT:** The following are examples of data which might be considered:

- Data provided by the Ministry including:
  - Graduation rates
  - Grade to grade transitions (grades 6 -12)
  - Foundation Skills Assessments (the past three years – Grades 4,7)
  - Grade 10 Language Arts examination results (when available)
  - Grade 12 examination results (the past three years)
  - Parent, student and staff satisfaction survey results

See Web Sites: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reportfinder/publicschoolsdistrict.php](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reportfinder/publicschoolsdistrict.php)  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/school\\_perf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/school_perf).

- Data gathered by the School including:
  - Year-end report card results
  - Results of cross-grade assessments, where applicable
  - Attendance
  - Other information about student performance specific to the school's priority improvement goals.

## INTERPRETATION OF ACHIEVEMENT DATA:

**WHO:** The teaching staff, in collaboration with the principal; the results are reported to the School Planning Council and shared with the school community

**WHAT:** Factors to be considered might include:

- the school context
- the range and distribution of achievement data
- any gender differences
- any trends over time
- identified special populations or subgroups with unique needs such as Aboriginals, ESL, etc.
- comparisons to provincial performance standards, district results, etc

*“Averages often hide more than they reveal.”*

*“Numbers, scores, statistics, are just stuff until they are given meaning.”*

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS ON ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

1. Identify school context features that are important to the discussion, interpretation, and degree of satisfaction with respect to the results.
2. List and summarize the observations seen to be important – e.g. high degree of consistency, discrepancies, patterns over time, and levels of significance.
3. Identify unanswered questions raised in the discussion of the achievement data.
4. Develop a summative consensus which includes the following, where applicable:
  - a) Areas of strength
  - b) Areas for improvement
  - c) Areas for further investigation
  - d) Aboriginal and or specific subgroup information
  - e) Ideas, suggestions for further consideration.

## IDENTIFICATION OF STRENGTHS AND AREAS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

### ESTABLISHING THE PRIORITIES:

The school's learning priorities reflect the results of the analysis and interpretation of the achievement data.

**WHO:** The principal and teaching staff, together with the School Planning Council, discuss a list of possible goals and objectives arising from the analysis of student achievement data.

The principal and the teaching staff, together with the School Planning Council, then select the goals and specific objectives.

**WHAT:** Review the analysis and interpretation to identify areas of strength and areas that require improvement.

Narrow the planning frame by choosing or affirming between two and four goals for inclusion in the School Plan.

### HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

- Focus on goals and objectives that will have the most positive impact on student achievement.
- Celebrate your strengths. How might you communicate them to your school community?
- List important possible goals not chosen as top priorities and keep them on file as "Areas for Future Consideration".

## DEVELOPMENT OR REVISION OF THE SCHOOL PLAN

**WHO:** The School Planning Council in collaboration with the school staff.

**WHAT:** Develop, refine and revise the School Plan which meets the following criteria:

- Clearly stated goals which focus on student learning
- Clearly stated objectives for each goal
- An analysis and rationale for the selection of the goals
- An indication of baseline performance, if appropriate
- Specific performance targets for improving student achievement along with timelines for meeting the targets
- A description of the indicators that the school will use to track progress
- An indication of the strategies to be used to improve student performance

As a guide, the goals in a School Plan should be “**SMART**”

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**imely

### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

**Clarity:** Does the plan specifically state what is to be accomplished?

**Feasibility:** Is the plan realistic with respect to timelines and scope?  
Are the necessary resources available?  
Are the strategies likely to succeed?

**Measurability:** How will the success of the plan be monitored?

## IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF PROGRESS ON THE SCHOOL PLAN

### IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN:

**WHO:** The school staff, in collaboration with the principal, monitor the results and prepare progress reports for sharing with the School Planning Council.

**WHAT:** In implementing and monitoring progress in relation to the School Plan, it will be necessary to have answers to the following kinds of questions:

- What indicators will the school staff and the School Planning Council use to monitor student achievement and progress towards the selected goals?
- When will data relating to each of the indicators be gathered?
- What process will be used in the analysis and interpretation of the data that is gathered?
- How will the resulting information be communicated to the school community?
- Does the allocation of resources (time, dollars and material resources) reflect and support the priorities established in the School Plan?

## DATA AND INFORMATION

### **What is data?**

Data can be numbers, scores, symbols, categories, descriptors – singly or in combinations. For example:

4 out of 10    68%    B    Exceeding Expectations    Weak

### **What is good data?**

Good data is relevant, meaningful, appropriate, complete, consistent, valid and reliable, while bad data is just the opposite. Good data relates directly to what we are trying to measure or understand. Consequently, we need to be clear about what we are trying to measure or understand and what kinds of data would be good to use in each case.

### **Where can we find good data?**

We are surrounded by data but we need to identify the data which tells us clearly and accurately about what it is we are trying to measure or understand. Good data is available from individual assessments, classroom assessments and school-wide measures as well as from external sources such as the district or the Ministry of Education. In measuring student achievement in a specific area, it is important to recognize what is good data and work from there. But data alone is just data. It doesn't become truly useful until we use it to create **information**.

### **What is information?**

In the context of student achievement, information is the meaning extracted from the analysis of data. One can have a complete set of scores on a test – this is data. Information is produced when one looks at the set of scores to see what can be deduced or interpreted from them. For example:

1. What is the mean, mode or average?
2. What does the distribution of scores in relation to the mean, mode or average tell us?
3. How does student performance on this test compare with previous tests?

4. Are there clusters of scores and, if so, what can we interpret from that?
5. Are the scores of identifiable subgroups of students (i.e. males, Aboriginals, ESL, students with previously-determined difficulties in reading, etc.) consistent or equally distributed?
6. What might be concluded on the basis of this set of scores in terms of things which may have to be taught again or approached from a different perspective?

### **What is baseline data?**

Baseline data is a set of scores or measures which is collected at the beginning of a period of time and used as the foundation for future measures and comparisons. For example: a school might collect baseline data on reading ability for students in Grades 5 – 7.

### **Why are baseline data important?**

Baseline data represent the “starting place”. Teachers use baseline data to determine where they are starting from with individuals and groups of students. They use these data to form their instructional plans and practices. After a period of instructional intervention (i.e. a day, a week, a month, a term, a year), another measure is taken and the resulting data are compared with the baseline data in order to ascertain progress.

Baseline data also provide a foundation for making predictions and setting targets. For example: a teacher may look at the baseline data for a group of his/her students and predict that a particular instructional strategy should result in an improvement in future scores. Similarly, a teacher or group of teachers may set a target for improved student performance and then work toward helping students to achieve that target.

It all begins with assembling baseline data and working from that starting point toward a more desirable outcome in terms of student achievement.



## SCHOOL COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Goals and plans should reflect the unique needs of students and the relevant characteristics of the school community.

A task for the School Planning Council is to reach agreement on the unique student, school and community characteristics considered important to the analysis and interpretation of achievement data and to the setting of realistic targets or expectations for student performance.

### **Considerations:**

1. Cultural Diversity
2. School Resources
3. Student Characteristics
4. Parent Characteristics
5. Community Characteristics
6. Unique Features of Your School

The school profile data can be a valuable source for much of this information. School profile data are available at:  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/school\\_perf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/school_perf).

## **INVOLVING THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

A major responsibility of the School Planning Council is to provide advice based on consultation with the school community concerning developing, monitoring, and reviewing school plans for improving student achievement.

- Consulting with parents provides opportunities for meaningful involvement through input and two-way communication with the various groups which make up the school community.
- Staff must be actively involved in collaborative problem-solving with a focus on areas in need of improvement and finding ways of better meeting the learning needs of all students.
- Similarly, it is important to involve members of the support staff, especially education assistants, in order to tap into their expertise and insights.
- Finally, student involvement in the secondary schools is essential as School Plans are all about what will make student learning more effective.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR ENSURING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:**

1. Reach out and take a proactive stance in getting members of the school community involved in the consultation and problem solving.
2. Use focus groups for specific subgroups
3. Seek assistance from the PAC in order to ensure that the diversity of the parent group is represented in all discussions and deliberations
4. Include a section regarding student achievement and the school improvement plan in every newsletter
5. Avoid votes and strive for consensus
6. Take time to celebrate strengths and successes as well as to focus on areas of need

## CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PLAN

- Reflects the characteristics, values and needs of the school community as well as the priorities outlined in the District Performance Plan
- Parents and staff are actively involved in the process of reviewing student achievement data and selecting the goals, objectives and targets
- A variety of relevant data taken from a range of sources (i.e. classroom, school, district and Ministry) is collected and considered
- A thorough analysis of the data is conducted in order to ascertain strengths as well as areas for improvement in terms of student learning
- The goals and objectives are focused on student learning and “SMART”:
  - Specific**
  - Measurable**
  - Achievable**
  - Relevant**
  - Timely**
- The performance indicators and targets are clearly stated, specific, relevant and appropriate
- The strategies for achieving the objectives are based on professional experience, research and insights into “best practice”
- The School Plan is shared with all members of the school community and endorsed by the SPC

## GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL PLANS

The following is an excerpt from ***District Accountability Contract Guidelines: 2003-2004*** (B.C. Ministry of Education; August 2003) and provides the context for District (and School) Accountability Contracts.

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***Introduction***

*Improving student achievement is the top priority for the Ministry of Education. The intent of the District Accountability Contract is to focus district attention and resources on improving student achievement.*

*The primary purpose of this document is to outline the rationale for the Accountability Contracts, to provide a basic framework with some key elements and to clarify common expectations. This is not a “how-to” guide and does not prescribe any particular process for the development of Accountability Contracts. Each district, in consultation with its education community and parents, will design a district planning process that suits its unique needs and circumstances.*

### ***Background of the District Accountability Contract***

*The public is increasingly calling for accountability regarding the way public resources are being used to achieve designated goals, and parents are consistently requesting meaningful information that will help them make informed choices for their child’s education.*

*Recent amendments to the School Act created a new accountability cycle that requires each school, each district and the Ministry of Education to review performance measures and to develop goals and strategies for improvement annually. School Boards have the autonomy to allocate available resources according to local needs and priorities. School boards are expected to report the results of their efforts to improve achievement to parents and the public.*

*The Accountability Contract, rooted in the School Act, is an integral part of the accountability cycle and reflects the Board’s commitment to improve student achievement. Aligned with school priorities, the Accountability*

*Contract confirms evidence-based decision making, clear education goals for the district and intended outcomes for student improvement. Progress toward achieving district priorities is reported annually in the Accountability Contract.*

*Meaningful collaboration in education planning increases both district and school accountability and supports the development of shared goals. The involvement of principals, teachers, and parents in matters related to student achievement has been formally acknowledged in the requirements for School Planning Councils outlined in the School Act.*

*District Accountability Contracts were introduced during the autumn of 2001, when the Deputy Minister of Education met with Superintendents across the province. Subsequently, Superintendents were asked to draw up Accountability Contracts with the Minister of Education for the first time in 2001.*

*In Spring 2002, preliminary guidelines were developed to provide some consistency across districts. A review of the 2001/02 and 2002/03 Accountability Contracts has highlighted the importance of shared understanding of key elements of the accountability framework. In response, these guidelines have been developed using current research, reflections, observations and examples taken from current Accountability Contracts. The following guidelines are intended to provide support and clarity without being prescriptive about process or presentation.*

*\* \* \* \* \**

The balance of this document is based extensively on the Ministry guidelines. However, it represents a customization in order to provide a better fit for school plans in Burnaby.

## **GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL PLANS IN BURNABY**

Effective schools have a clear focus on improving student achievement. Decisions are based on data and supported by effective planning and resource allocation. Regular monitoring and reviewing of priorities and strategies includes the education community and parents. Progress towards achievement is reported regularly.

### **Key Elements of School Plans in Burnaby**

#### **1. Context**

The context includes the mission statement for the school, the enrolment and demographic information regarding the school as well as any unique characteristics, strengths, features and values of the community it serves. The context must also include a clear description of the involvement of parents, staff and students in the development and implementation of the School Plan.

#### **2. Review of School Goals for the Previous Year**

Now that all schools have existing School Plans, it is necessary to summarize the work done during the previous year and the progress made in achieving the previous year's goals and objectives. This will likely include a description of efforts and initiatives (past and present) which the school has undertaken to improve student performance in various areas. It is also common to show the link between the school's goals and the district's goals in order to show the on-going alignment and connections.

The summary should provide:

- baseline data relating to students' skills or performance in the goal area(s)
- illustrations of strategies employed to help students to improve their achievement in the goal area(s)
- data relating to student achievement in the goal area(s) during the course of the year
- illustrations of both successes and areas for further investigation in relation to the objectives, the performance indicators, the performance targets and the strategies employed.

This section helps to set the stage for the plan for the coming school year.

### 3. Goals and Objectives for the Coming School Year

#### a) Goals

Goal statements help to focus the school's efforts to assist students in improving their learning and performance. Goals result from the school having taken measures of student performance in a selected area and found evidence of needs where the school decides to focus attention.

A goal statement should always be stated in terms of improved student learning and achievement. Schools are strongly advised to:

- limit their focus to two to three clear goal statements based on evidence of student performance;
- allow for sufficient time to achieve the goals (because some goals will take longer than a school year to achieve, it is strongly recommended that schools indicate whether the goal is seen as short-term or longer-term). For this reason, some schools have elected to have three types of goals: primary (main focus); complementary (secondary focus); emerging (exploratory stage).

#### b) Objectives (Specific Areas of Focus Which Contribute To Achieving the Goal)

In order to make the achievement of a goal more manageable, a short series of specific objectives should be developed on the basis of the data collected which will help to focus the school's efforts in more concrete ways. Although schools are obviously concerned with the performance of all students, objectives may focus attention on a specific group of under-performing students based on the data collected.

#### **Example:**

Goal: To increase the reading proficiency of students

Objective 1: Improve reading skills in K – 3 with a specific emphasis on \_\_\_\_\_

Objective 2: Increase the reading scores of Aboriginal students who are not yet meeting, or are minimally meeting, expectations

Objective 3: Improve the reading skills of Grade 5 – 7 boys with a particular emphasis on \_\_\_\_\_

Objective 4: Increase the reading enjoyment of all students

#### 4. Analysis and Rationale

This section provides the rationale for the selection of each goal and its objectives. It summarizes the data collected and the conclusions reached on the basis of the data. It usually provides a focus on the specific student needs to be met over the coming period of time.

#### 5. Performance Indicators (Data Sources and Evidence)

Performance indicators are specific measures or pieces of evidence which the school will use to determine student progress towards attainment of goals and objectives. In the process of selecting specific performance indicators, the school identifies the data which will be gathered as well as the sources of the data. By selecting a manageable number of relevant indicators, the school can readily accumulate relevant data and extract key information in order to ascertain whether or not the school's efforts to enhance student performance are working.

##### Example:

Objective: Improve reading skills of students in K – 3

Performance Indicators:

- Results of the Early Identification Screening Tool
- Results of local assessments translated in terms of the B.C. Performance Standards for Reading
- Results of a Benchmark Reading Levels Assessment developed at the school or district level
- Results of a phonemic awareness assessment
- Language Arts report cards results

#### 6. Performance Targets (Expected Results)

Performance targets are clearly stated expectations for short-term and long-term results. They are directly linked to the goals and objectives and outline both the desired level of student performance to be attained and the anticipated timeframe for the improved achievement.

##### Example:

According to the Grade 3 reading assessment conducted in May of 2004, 78% of Grade 3 students were 'fully meeting or meeting expectations' in terms of the B.C. Performance Standards Reading – Literature. The target is to increase the percentage of Grade 3 students who are 'fully meeting or meeting expectations' to 80% by the end of the 2004-05 school year and continue this positive trend during the 2005/06 school year, and beyond.



## 7. Strategies

Once the goals, objectives and targets have been set, then the school needs to identify a number of strategies which research, experience and innovative thinking indicate would be promising ways of achieving the intended goals and objectives. This section might include processes which will be used, specific steps which will be taken, and instructional strategies which will be employed. Although the focus of the plan is the school, consideration might also be given to the possibility of including strategies which parents could use at home to reinforce school's efforts, particularly in areas such as reading and social responsibility.

**Example:**

Objective: Increase the percentage of students in K – 3 who are 'meeting or exceeding expectations' in reading.

**Strategies:**

- In-service on using the B.C. Performance Standards for Reading
- Select and/or develop an instrument for screening students at risk for reading failure
- Implement selected strategies from the Kamenui and Siegel resource manuals
- Introduce the "Firm Foundations" Program (Reading 44)
- Place an emphasis on the timely development of phonological awareness
- Use "WiggleWorks", an early reading software program, with all primary learners

## 8. Structures and Resources

Structures and resources are part of the means by which the strategies for improving student learning are implemented. **Structures** involve such things as the organization of learners, the creation of task-specific committees and the implementation of an overall teaching-learning strategy. **Resources** include such things as instructional materials, targeted financial allocations and the specific services provided by personnel.

### Examples of Structures:

- Regroup primary classes twice a week with help from the resource teachers in order to focus on specific reading needs of clusters of students
- Target resource teacher time periodically during the year to assist with assessing the progress of “at-risk” learners in Grades 5 and 6
- Establish a Later Literacy Committee to develop recommendations for helping intermediate students with reading difficulties
- Organize an Action Research Network which focuses on finding ways of enhancing the performance of male students in reading and writing

### Examples of Resources:

- Provide each teacher with a copy of Reading 44
- Allocate \$2,000 for the purchase of high-interest, non-fiction reading materials
- Implement the new Nelson series in Language Arts starting in 2004-05

# SCHOOL PLAN TEMPLATE

**NOTE:**

The district is in the process of developing a standardized template for school plans which will be made available to schools before the end of the calendar year. This template will help to facilitate the writing of the plan and ensure that all plans in the district follow the same format.

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## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

### **Activity 1: Getting Started**

Review the suggested roles and responsibilities listed on pages 10 and 11 and try to arrive at a common understanding and consensus. Be realistic with respect to the expectations including the number of times the School Planning Council will meet to receive reports, provide input and endorse the components of the school improvement planning process.

### **Activity 2: The School Plan**

The principal and teacher on the School Planning Council are asked to apprise the parents on the School Planning Council regarding all aspects of the school's current improvement plan for the 2004/2005 school year. Specifically, they need to indicate how the goals and objectives for school improvement were determined; what and how the strategies for implementation were chosen; and how progress will or is being monitored.

Using the information presented in your current School Plan, ensure that the parent members of the Council understand the current plan and how it was developed.

### **Activity 3: Timelines, Tasks and Expectations**

Using a copy of the worksheet attached, work your way through the list of tasks and activities and try to come to consensus on who will do what and by when. It is important to be realistic regarding how much can be done and by when. The key is to work toward a common understanding of what needs to be done and what everyone can reasonably expect. Be prepared to review and revise on an on-going basis.

### **Activity 4: School Community Context**

Refer to page 23 of the handout and use the six categories to describe your school. Make note only of those contextual features that you consider important to the analysis and interpretation of achievement data and to the setting of realistic expectations for improvement.

### **Activity 5: Communicating with the School Community**

Review the information provided on page 24 of the handout materials. Brainstorm ways to ensure there is good communication with all members of the school community. Keeping in mind the roles and responsibilities of the principal, the staff, and the School Planning Council, and the characteristics of your school community, identify strategies for communicating with each of the following:

- Teachers
- Support Staff
- Parent Advisory Council
- Parents
- Specific groups of parents
- Students
- School Board

## TIMELINES, TASKS AND EXPECTATIONS

The following is a list of tasks which must be completed as a part of the school improvement planning cycle. The School Planning Council will need to develop an outline of who will be involved in which activities and by when each activity will need to be done.

For each of the following, establish a date for completion and indicate who will be primarily responsible for the completion of the task: Staff (**S**); School Planning Council (**SPC**); or Both (**B**)

In the process, the members of the School Planning Council will have to decide how many times the SPC will meet in the course of a school year. (Note: it's important to be realistic and practical regarding time constraints for the Council, the principal and staff.)

DATE	WHO	TASK
_____	S/SPC/B	Review and endorse the school's current plan
_____	S/SPC/B	Identify all student performance data to be collected
_____	S/SPC/B	Collect and assemble all performance data
_____	S/SPC/B	Analyze and interpret student performance data
_____	S/SPC/B	Select top priority areas to be addressed
_____	S/SPC/B	Establish goals and objectives; identify baselines and set targets
_____	S/SPC/B	Identify improvement strategies for each goal/objective
_____	S/SPC/B	Establish clear timelines and assigned responsibilities for implementation
_____	S/SPC/B	Identify required resources and in-service needs
_____	S/SPC/B	Establish method(s) and timeline for monitoring progress
_____	S/SPC/B	Submit the School Plan to Superintendent and Board of Trustees for approval
_____	S/SPC/B	Establish communication plan with the school community
_____	S/SPC/B	Monitor implementation and progress