

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 53 (OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN)
ACCOUNTABILITY CONTRACT
2005-2006

Introduction:

The intent of the School District Accountability Contract is to focus district attention and resources on improving student achievement.

Demographics:

- The District covers the Similkameen Valley from Hedley to Cawston and the Southern Okanagan Valley from Okanagan Falls to the U.S. border. Rural population is 51.0%. Approximately 9.6% of the homes are non-English speaking and 4.9% are Aboriginal (1996 census). The local economy is based on farming, ranching, forestry, wineries, light manufacturing and tourism.
- Enrolment is and has been decreasing since 1999. It is projected to decrease each year until 2010 and then rise in 2011 when enrolment is projected to be 2702.
 - 1585 elementary
 - 1236 secondary
 - 235 Aboriginal students
 - 143 English as a second language students
 - 141 in low incidence/high cost (levels 1, 2, 3) special Education programs.
 - 97 in Career Preparation programs
 - 9 in Secondary School Apprenticeship program

Unique Characteristics and District Strengths:

As with many districts outside of the lower mainland, the District faces the challenge of declining enrollment due largely to economic and demographic changes within the region. Each of our schools is unique and we are proud of our hard-working staff which strive to meet the needs of students and communities. Nine schools, ranging from 13 students to over 630 students provide a full offering of academic and career preparation programs. Our Outreach program enrolls over 100 kindergarten to Grade 12 students and our Learning Centre, with three branches, provides programming for approximately 300 additional school-age and adult learners.

As a small rural district with declining enrolment, we face many challenges including:

- Providing varied and complete programming for secondary students.
- Meeting the needs of a growing ESL population.
- Supporting a growing population of students with severe physical and learning needs.
- Serving a low socio-economic population.

Despite these challenges, our district is moving forward on a planned agenda to enhance student results. We are particularly appreciative of the work our teachers and schools are doing in the area of literacy and numeracy and look forward to improved results in both areas. Our schools have done excellent work over the past seven years with EBS and other behaviour initiatives, providing safe schools for all students.

District and School Connections:

The connection between the district and schools is illustrated by the relationship between the District Priorities, the School Plans, and the District Accountability Contract. District Priorities to support student learning are set by the Board of School Trustees at the beginning of each three year term after considering input from the school planning councils (SPC) and other information and data from the Ministry, District and schools. The SPCs then build their school plans to address the priorities and needs of the schools. The District Accountability Contract is subsequently prepared to reflect the District Priorities and the various School Plans. This alignment allows the district to support all schools by providing specific in-service, resources and structures, while schools, being provided with targeted school funds, also address their specific goals and strategies.

The School Plan is the school vehicle to demonstrate a purposeful planning for achieving the school goals and district priorities. It is developed through the work of the School Planning Council, staff and parents. This plan considers a variety of information including: classroom, school, district, and provincial data; school and parent priorities; as well as available resources. The School Plan includes the school mission statement, information on how decisions were made to develop the plan, school goals, strategies, a summary of required training and resources, and expected student outcomes.

In late spring, a provisional School Plan is established by the School Planning Council, reviewed by a committee of the Board then approved by the Board before June 30. A review of the School Plan occurs in October and February. In October of each year, principals, on behalf of the School Planning Council, produce an Annual School Report based on the previous School Plan including relevant data details. This report is then distributed to parents, trustees and other interested parties such as other schools and the general public.

The District monitors School Plans throughout the school year:

- In October, district staff meets with each school planning committee to discuss progress with school plan.
- From November to March, Inter-School Visits occur when schools are paired with another school. Principals from the teamed schools confer with their staff and then set a date, determine the nature and format of the visit as well as the focuses for the visiting and hosting teams. The goals of the visits is to:
 - Support the School Plan
 - Share best practice
 - Allow participants the opportunity to see what is happening with school structure, instructional strategies and teaching styles.
 - Open dialogue, sharing and discussion among all participants, as well as reflection upon teaching and learning.
 - Provide host school with an opportunity to share goals, strategies and results with visiting colleagues. (pride in school and what we are doing.)
 - Provide visiting school with an opportunity to ask questions and explore areas of interest.
- In May, district staff will meet with the principal to review the School Plan and progress of School Plan development for the coming year.
- In late May or early June, School Plans are reviewed by committees of the Board. Each school SPC presents their School Plan to their local committee in their community. The local committee will pose questions and make recommendations for modifying the plan. The SPC then makes necessary revisions to the plan and submits it to the Superintendent for Board approval.

District Priorities 2004 – 2007

Based on School Plans and District Priorities, District No. 53 (Okanagan Similkameen) has pinpointed five objectives for the overall improvement of student achievement for the next three years. For each of the district objectives, a trend of gains, over time, is expected to fulfill our expectation for continual student improvement. Measures have been developed to show specific growth and to meet the February 2003 District Review team's recommendations.

District Priorities represent the District direction to support student learning:

- In curriculum, by demonstrating improvement in literacy and numeracy performance.
- Through instruction, by advancing student learning through the use of effective instructional and assessment practices.
- And, enhancing culture and climate, by promoting personal and social responsibility and respect within a safe school community.

Our objectives for the coming year are:

- To increase reading comprehension so 90% of our students meet or exceed the BC Performance Standards for Reading.
- To improve numeracy skills so 90% of our students meet or exceed the BC Performance Standards for Numeracy.
- To teach aspects associated with student safety in our schools.
- To enhance the success rates for boys.
- To enhance the success rates for Aboriginal students.

Objectives:

1. To increase reading comprehension so 90% of our students meet or exceed the BC Performance Standards for Reading.

Rationale:

Analysis of reading comprehension results in FSA indicated a lower than expected level of success with students in grades 4, 7 and 10 significantly below expectations. Beginning in 2003/04 the district focused on improving the reading comprehension scores of all students in Grade 3 through 10.

Performance Indicators/Evidence:

- We expect to see improvement in student learning in all the following indicators. It is important to note that the district has had District-wide assessments for reading at the grade 1 to 7 levels for two years and during the 2004/05 school year implemented a district-wide write process which is also used to look at reading comprehension of grades 8 and 9 students. We will be investigating better ways of measuring reading comprehension in the 2005/06 school year.
- FSA results in Reading at the grade 4 and 7 levels; Language Arts report card results; district-wide assessments (PM Benchmarks for grades 1 – 3, BC Performance Standards for Reading for grades 3 – 7). Although each assessment provides a score of how students are performing, we will be improving the reliability of scores at each level during 2005/06 through further training of teachers in using the assessment and by adopting an improved assessment tool at the intermediate level.

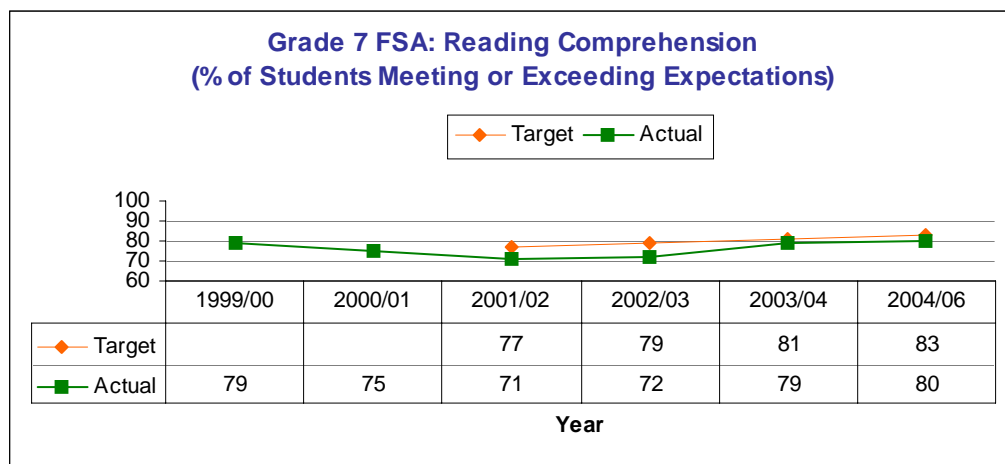
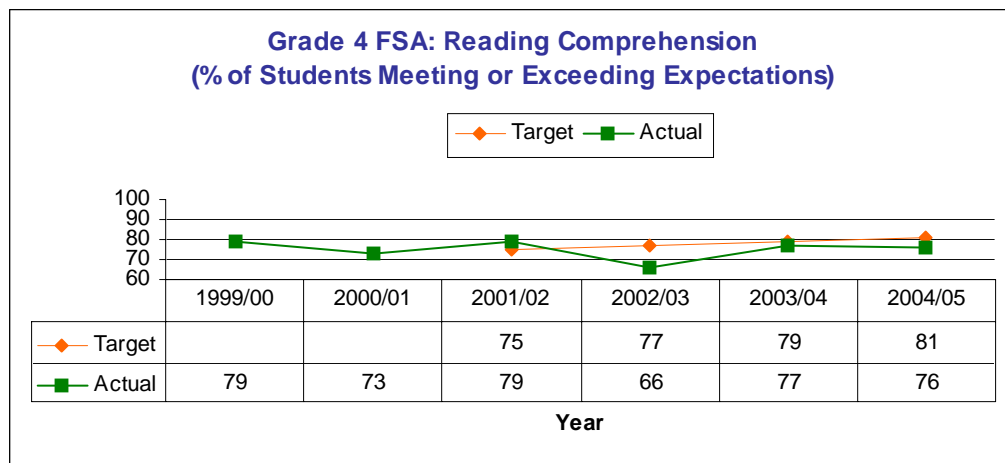
- We have introduced a District-Wide Write process at the grade 8 and 9 levels. Through this process, we set a task that allows us to determine the reading comprehension scores of our students. We hope to refine this process during the 2005/06 school year. We will also provide the Writing results.
- At this time we are still waiting to see what the nature of cognitive information will be available from the Grade 10 English/Language Arts Provincial Exams. We will provide our success rates at this time.
- At the secondary levels, our literacy initiative will introduce SmartRead to each of our three schools. Literacy Support teachers are in the process of being trained and have begun to work with other teachers as well as groups of students in developing reading skills. Through SmartAssessment, we will be able to better assess reading at the secondary level.

Performance Targets:

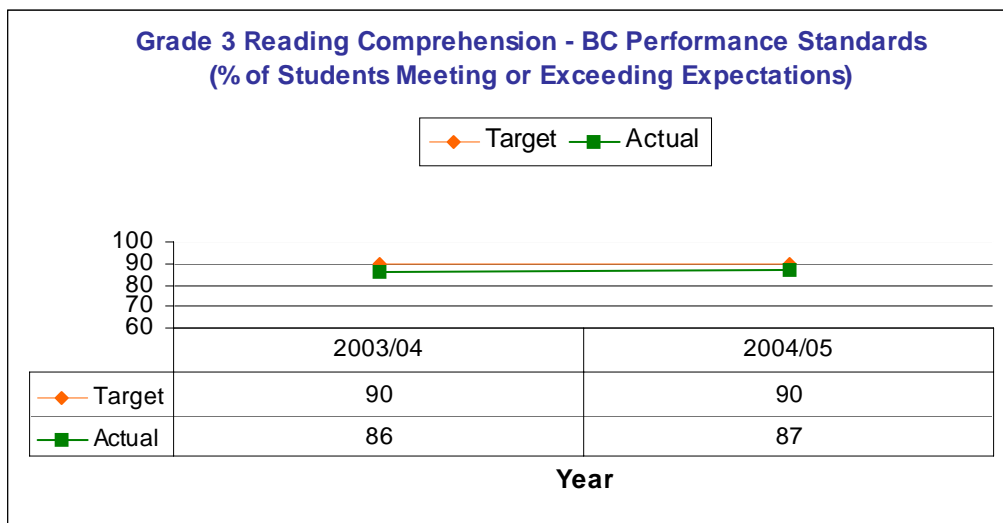
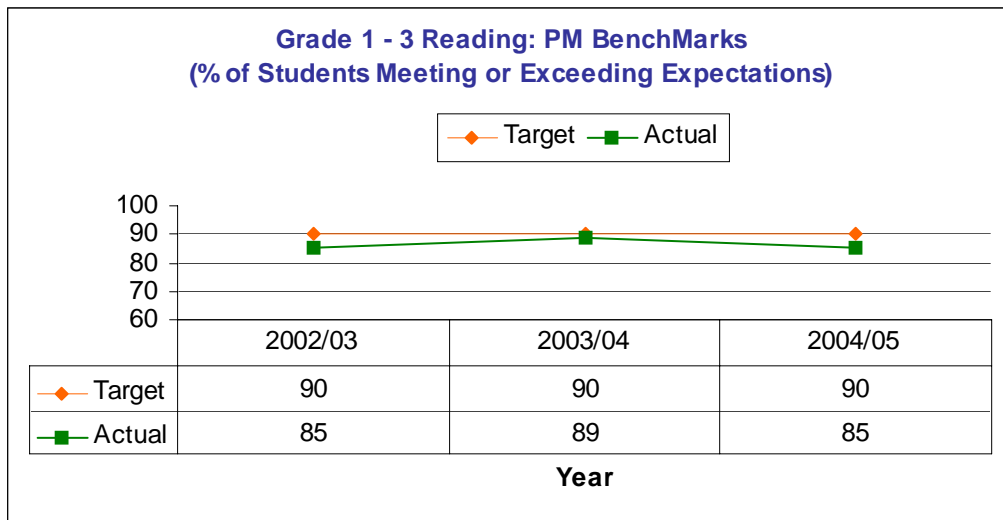
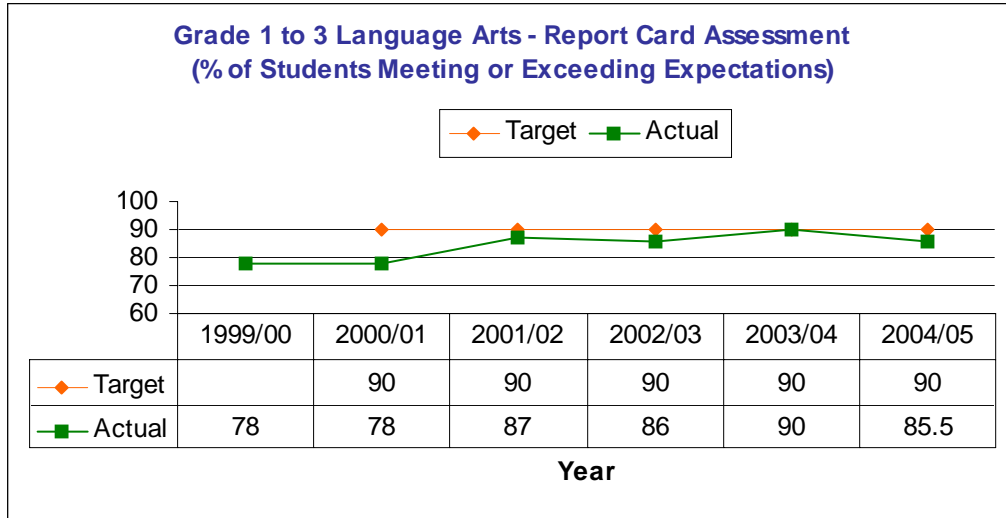
- Our long term target is to have 90% of all students reading at grade level.
- Yearly targets are provided and are increased by 2 percent annually until they are met. In some cases, baselines are being established as assessments are implemented.

Achievement of Performance Targets:

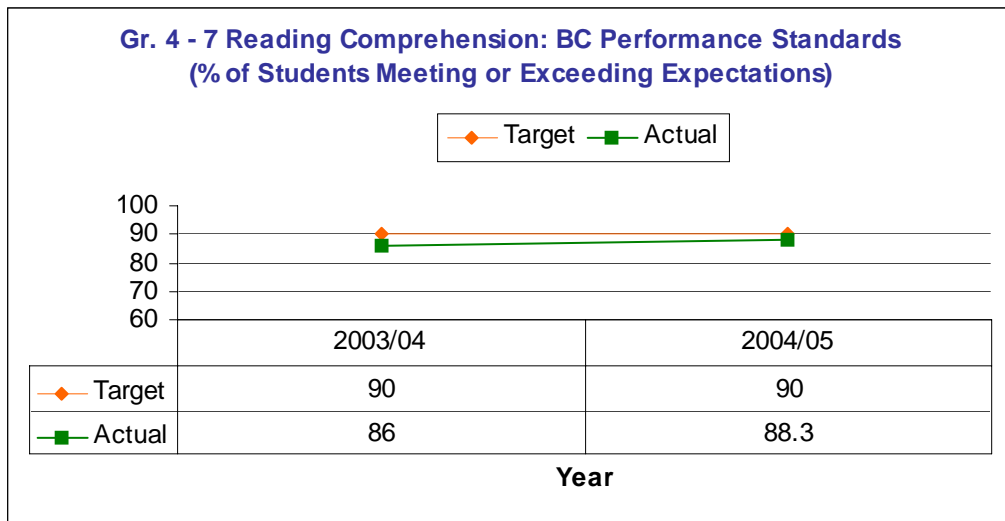
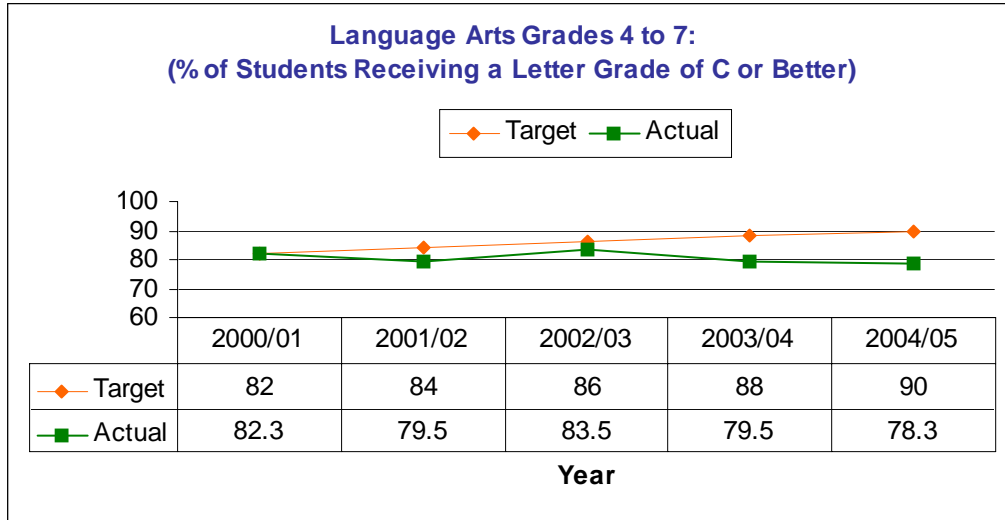
a) Foundation Skills Assessment:



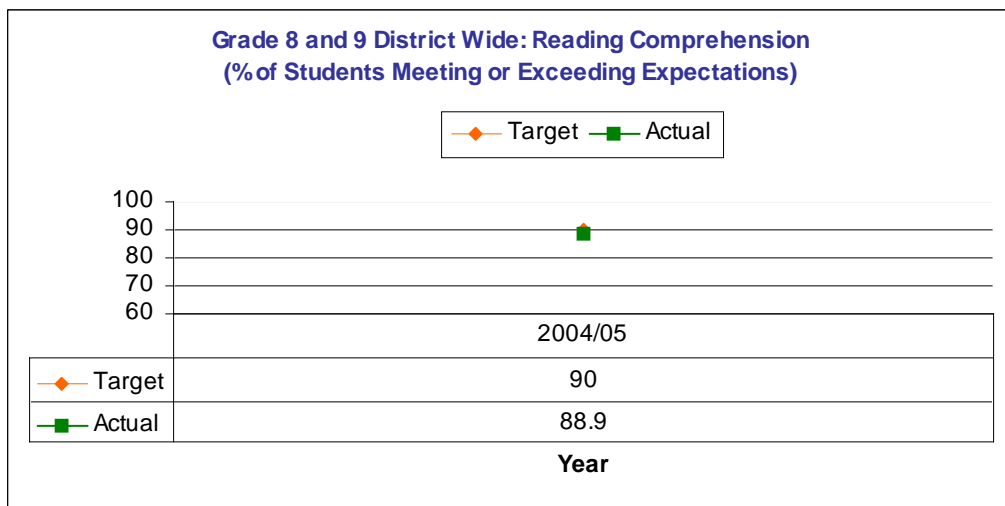
b) Grade 1 - 3 Reading:



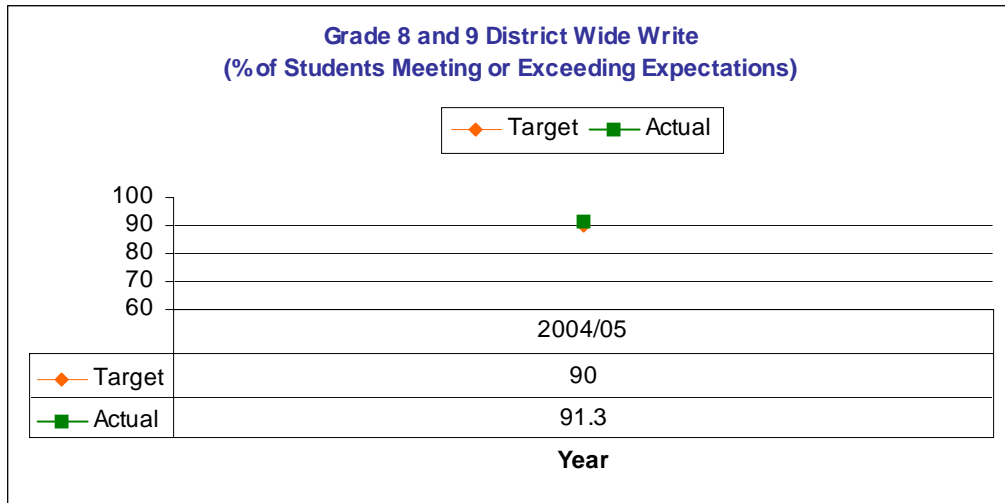
c) Grades 4 – 7 Reading:



d) Grade 8 and 9 Reading and Writing:

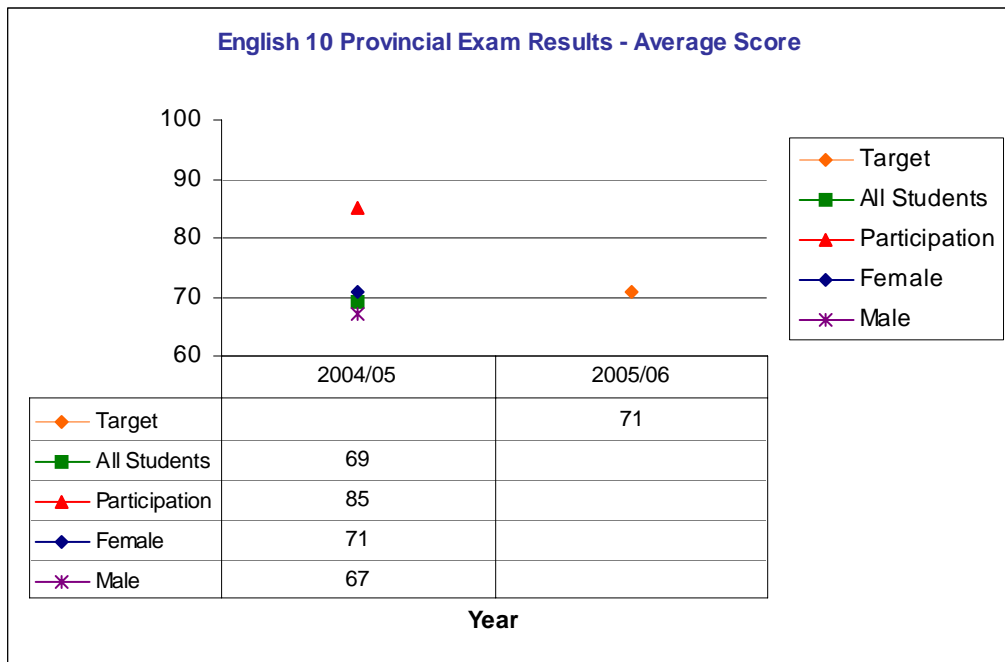


*Note: 2004/05 is the baseline year.



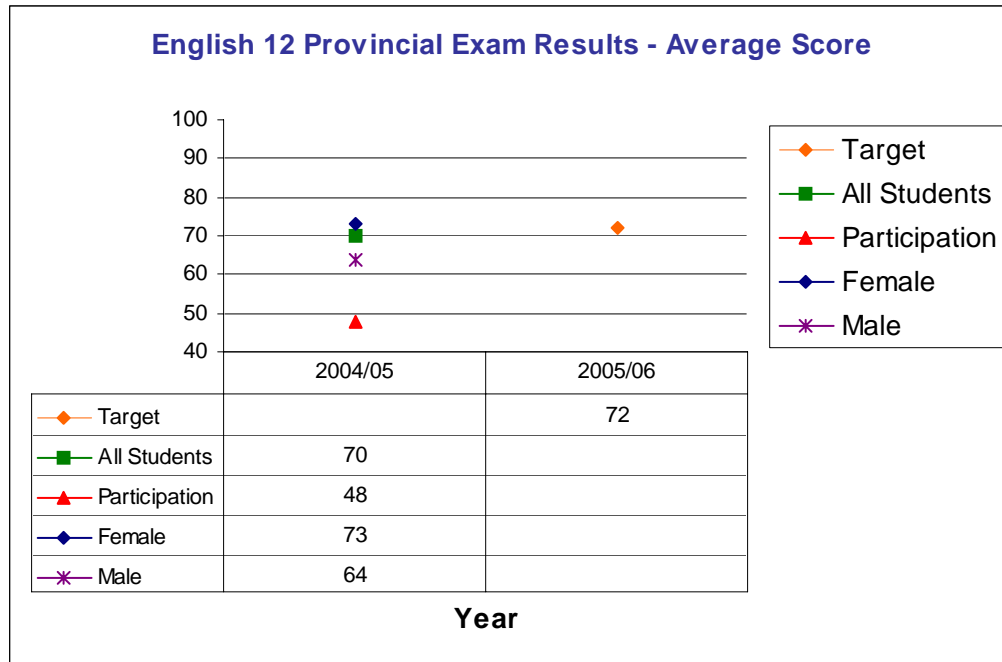
*Note: 2004/05 is the baseline year.

e) English 10 Provincial Exam Results – Average Score:



*Note: 2004/05 is the baseline year. Target is for “Average Score”, not participation.

f) English 12 Provincial Exam Results – Average Score:



***Note: 2004/05 is the baseline year. Target is for results, not participation.**

g) Comments:

With error included (+/- 3.0 at Grade 4, +/- 2.7 at Grade 7), we came fairly close to meeting our targets. The grade 4 results did drop slightly. It was encouraging that even though three of our schools dropped significantly, the other two (who have scored low in the past), pulled up the overall district score. We are beginning to get more consistent results now. The Grade 7 has improved for the fourth straight year.

Although we didn't show an increase with PM Benchmarks at Grades 1 – 3, we have maintained a pretty steady pattern over the past three years. Our results for Grades 4 – 7 using the Performance Standards also show a consistent pattern.

Although are still developing our literacy program and measures at the Grade 8 – 10 years, we are extremely pleased with the attitude and collaboration of our teachers in working towards a strong process and improvement in student reading and writing results. Continued focus on and support of literacy should result in continued improvement.

Strategies:

- Early intervention is a key component of our program and we need to continue to use the Kindergarten screening tools being used in November and June as we investigate better ways to assess this age group by participating in the Kindergarten Portfolio Project.
- Continue with the Literacy initiatives as outlined in the District Literacy Plan (attached).
- Continue to develop a District Assessment Plan for Grades K – 10, encompassing classroom, school and district practices and procedures. We will endeavour to improve the reliability of scores at each level during 2005/06 through further training of teachers in using the various assessments and by adopting an improved assessment tool at the intermediate level.

- Continue the secondary Literacy initiative with SmartReading strategies being used for students experiencing reading difficulties at the secondary level. Secondary Literacy Helping Teacher in each secondary school trained in SmartReading (Susan Close).
- Begin to bridge between elementary and secondary initiatives, providing support for intermediate teachers wishing to be involved in SmartReading.

Monitoring:

District Literacy Committees at Primary, Intermediate and Secondary levels.

2. To improve numeracy skills so 90% of our students meet or exceed the BC Performance Standards for Numeracy.

Rationale:

Analysis of our 2003 FSA numeracy results indicates a lower than desired level of success with students in grades 4 and 7. We feel that more students should be enrolled in the more academic Math courses in secondary schools. Although we feel we have made some meaningful gains in numeracy over the past few years, we feel that more of our students should be meeting or exceeding expectations on assessments.

Performance Indicators/Evidence:

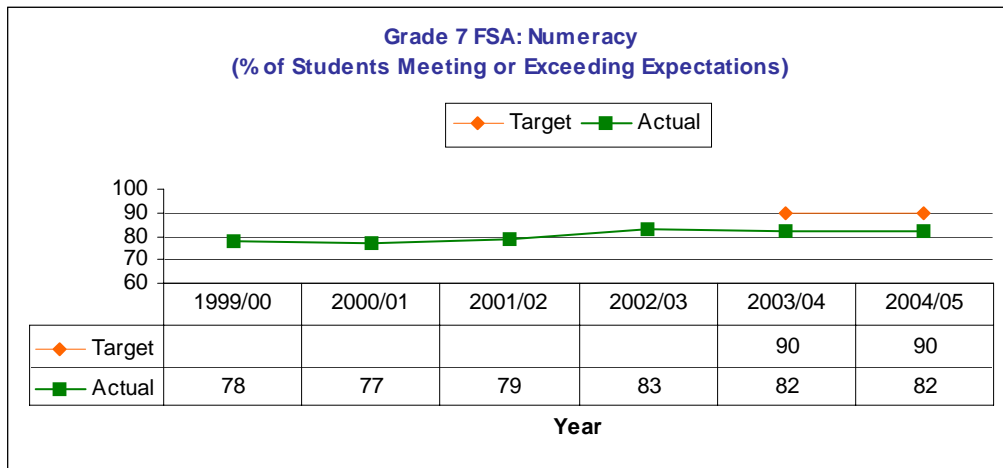
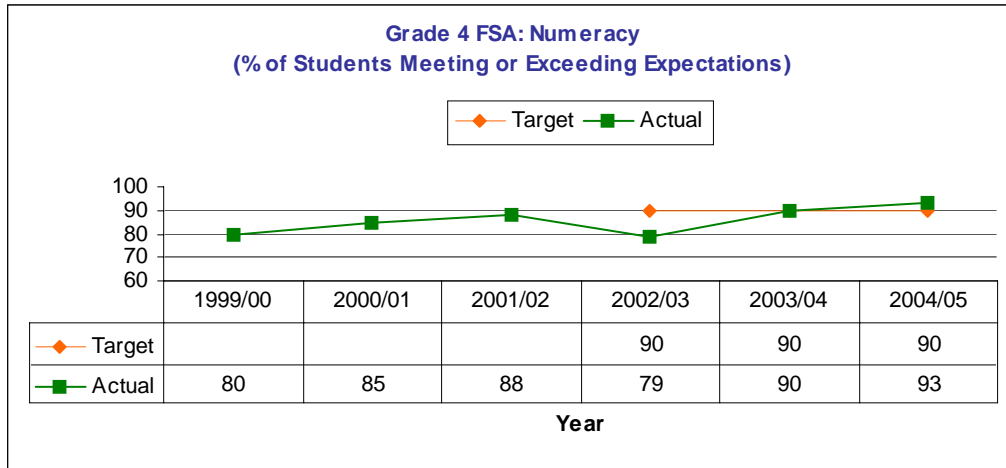
- FSA scores for Grades 4 and 7.
- The District has developed Grade 8 and 9 District-wide Math assessment with a component that measures numeracy or core skills.
- We will consider how the Grade 10 Provincial exams may be used as a measure.
- We will begin developing District-wide assessment strategies for Grades K to 7 during the 2005/06 school-year.

Performance Targets:

- Our long-term target is to have 90% of all students meeting or exceeding grade level expectations.
- We want to see more students participating in Applications and Principles at the Grade 10, 11, and 12 levels.
- Yearly targets are provided and are increased by 2 percent annually until they are met. Over the next year, base lines will need to be established for District-wide assessments at all levels.

Achievement of Performance Targets:

a) Foundation Skills Assessment



- b) Development of District-wide assessments for levels K – 7 will begin during the 2005/06 school year.
- c) District-Wide Grade 8 and 9 assessments:
Note: Not available at this time due to teacher work action.

d) Math 10 Provincial Exam Results:

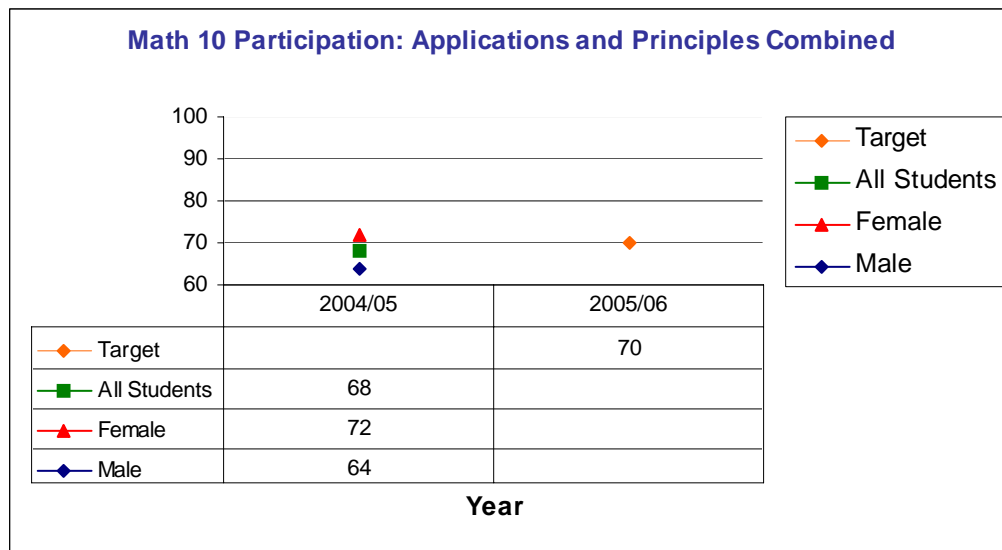
Applications of Math 10	2004/2005			2005/2006			2006/2007		
	All	Female	Male	All	Female	Male	All	Female	Male
Participation	10%	10%	10%						
Provincial Average Score	-	-	-						
Average Score	57%	54%	59%						
Target (Avg. Score)	-	-	-	59%					
Success Rate	74%	62%	86%						

Essentials of Math 10	2004/2005			2005/2006			2006/2007		
	All	Female	Male	All	Female	Male	All	Female	Male
Participation	15%	11%	18%						
Provincial Average Score	-	-	-						
Average Score	58%	55%	59%						
Target (Avg. Score)	-	-	-	60%					
Success Rate	83%	80%	84%						

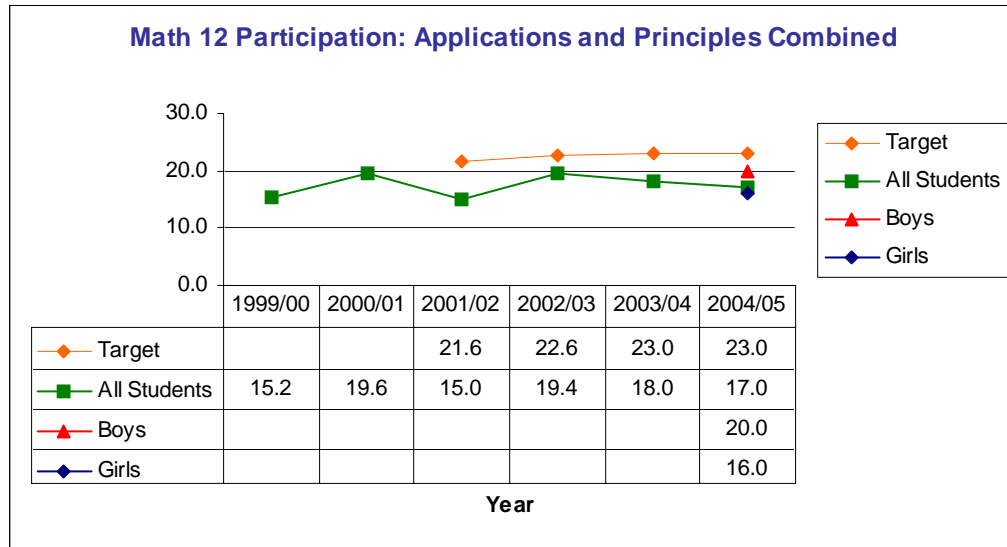
Principals of Math 10	2004/2005			2005/2006			2006/2007		
	All	Female	Male	All	Female	Male	All	Female	Male
Participation	58%	62%	54%						
Provincial Average Score	-	-	-						
Average Score	65%	65%	65%						
Target (Avg. Score)	-	-	-	67%					
Success Rate	94%	90%	97%						

*Note: 2004/05 is the baseline year. Provincial Average Score not available at time of printing.

e) Participation In Applications and Principles of Mathematics 10:



f) Participation In Applications and Principles of Mathematics 12:



g) Comments:

Although targets were made in our Grade 4 FSA, our Grade 7 FSA have leveled out.

We have just begun to look at our results for the Grade 10 provincial exams. We would like to see an increase in the number of students participating in Applications and Principles of Mathematics.

Improvement in results in Math examinations and numeracy assessments continues to be a priority. Initiatives such as the District Math/Numeracy committee and District Coordinators should provide direction and support to improve results in the coming years.

Strategies:

- Implementation of a District Numeracy committee in early 2006. This did not happen in September 2005 because of teacher work action.
- A secondary Math/Numeracy Coordinator was appointed for September 2005. He will continue to work with secondary Math teachers to refine the usefulness of the Grade 8 and 9 assessment tools and to develop strategies to improve numeracy.
- Offer Applications of Mathematics at all secondary schools.
- We have also budgeted to hire an elementary Math/Numeracy Coordinator to develop District K – 7 assessments, review resources and develop, in collaboration with teachers, strategies to improve numeracy.

Monitoring:

District Numeracy Committee and monitoring of the data gathered through the above assessment tools.

3. To teach aspects associated with student safety in our schools.

Rationale:

Student safety is a top priority for our District as all students should feel safe and welcome in school. When a student feels safe and the parent's confidence in the school is high, the student will have a higher likelihood for academic success. At all levels we must be proactive in teaching students about safety, citizenship and social responsibility and be diligent in dealing with behaviour in our district. We feel that we are strong in these areas but must continue to improve what we are doing.

Performance Indicators/Evidence:

- We will continue to look at the Safety aspect of the Ministry of Education's (Grade 4, 7, 10, 12), staff, and parent survey results from 2001/02.
- For the next three years it will be a District Priority to "Implement the BC Performance Standards for Social Responsibility with all our students. We will look at ways to gather information based on these standards.

Performance Targets:

- Our long-term target is to have 90% of all students meeting or exceeding grade level expectations on the BC Performance Standards for Social Responsibility. A baseline will need to be established once we have developed a system for collecting the data.
- Our target is to have High to Very High (4 or 5) ratings on all aspects of the Ministry surveys at all schools. In 2003/04 we began to report results on a District basis.

Comments:

Although all schools have implemented a wide variety of programs to improve student safety and behaviour, there are some areas of concern. According to the Provincial survey data, there are perceptions among secondary students, parents and staff regarding consistent enforcement of rules related to behaviour. This also needs to be addressed.

A second concern is the over-representation of Aboriginal students in the Ministry Behaviour categories. The newly formed Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee is presently addressing this as part of the first Aboriginal Education Enhancement agreement.

A third concern is the amount of drug use among all our students. This is an issue that we have begun to address through review of our discipline policies and support for students.

Achievement of Performance Targets:

- a) District Information from Ministry surveys.
Key: Percent reporting “Many Times” or “All of the Time”

1	2	3	4	5
0 – 59%	60 –69%	70 – 79%	80 – 89%	90 – 100%

Target for 2004/05 = 5 (90 – 100%)

Grade		01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	Province
3/4	Do you feel safe at school?	3	4	5	4	4
	Do you know how your school expects students to behave?	N/A	N/A	4	5	4
7	Do you feel safe at school?	3	4	3	3	3
	Do you know how your school expects students to behave?	N/A	N/A	3	4	3
10	Do you feel safe at school?	2	2	4	2	3
	Do you know how your school expects students to behave?	N/A	N/A	3	3	2
12	Do you feel safe at school?	3	4	4	4	3
	Do you know how your school expects students to behave?	N/A	N/A	4	3	2
Elementary Parent	Does your child feel safe at school?	4	4	5	5	4
	Does your child's school provide clear expectations for student behaviour in the school?	N/A	N/A	5	5	4
	Are the rules related to behaviour enforced consistently at your child's school?	3	3	4	4	3
Secondary Parent	Does your child feel safe at school?	3	3	3	3	4
	Does your child's school provide clear expectations for student behaviour in the school?	N/A	N/A	3	4	3
	Are the rules related to behaviour enforced consistently at your child's school?	2	1	2	1	2
Staff	Is your school a safe place to work and learn?	5	5	5	4	5
	Does your school provide clear expectations for student behaviour in the school?	N/A	N/A	3	3	4
	Are the rules related to behaviour enforced consistently at your school?	2	2	2	1	3

Strategies:

- Schools will continue to implement effective behaviour support type strategies.
- District Safe Schools committee will continue to explore initiatives and keep schools informed.
- Implementation of the BC Performance Standards for Social Responsibility.
- Secondary schools will develop strategies related to behaviour enforcement consistency.
- The district will continue to support students in relation to drug use.

Monitoring:

District Safe Schools committee will monitor student safety aspects.

4. To enhance the success rates for boys.

Rationale:

FSA, Provincial Exams and other District data indicate that the academic performance for boys lags behind that of girls. Also the percentage of boys graduating in 6 years after entering grade 8 for 2000/01 was 59.4% as compared to 67.8% for girls. By better addressing the instructional needs of boys, we should be able to enhance their academic success and at the same time raise the academic performance for all our students.

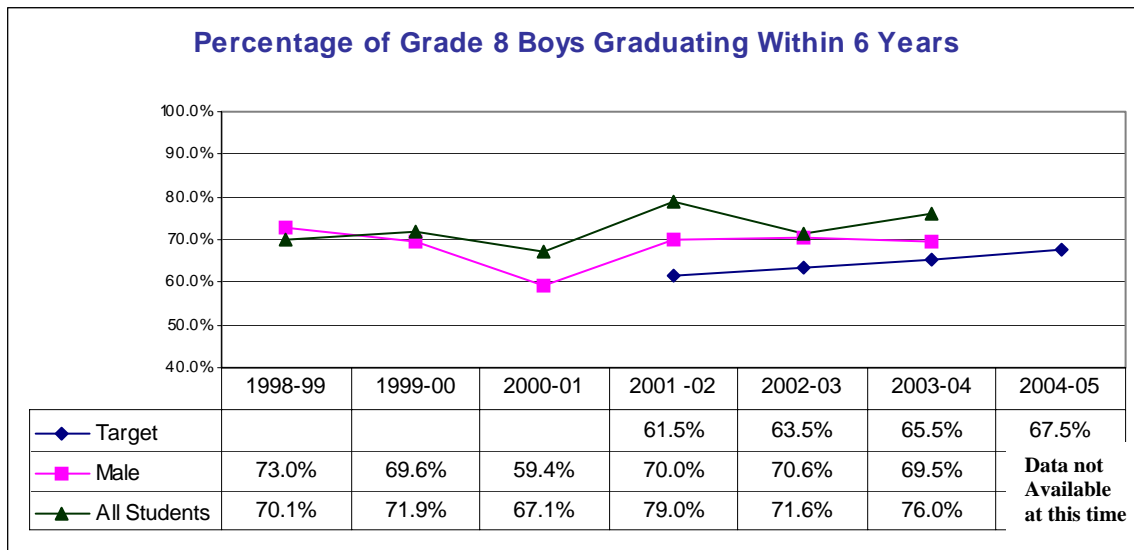
Performance Indicators/Evidence:

- Ministry data on Grade 8 boys “graduating within six years”.
- We would like to begin collecting all student data based by gender.

Performance Targets:

- Long-term target is to enhance Grade 8 boys’ graduation rate equal to that of girls, without lowering that of girls.
- We have been looking for an annual short-term gain of 2%, but our targets have been below results for the past two years, therefore we are raising it to 72.5% for the 04/05 year.

Achievement of Performance Targets:



Strategies:

Schools will continue to look at strategies to support boys. Examples of these are:

- Use of non-fiction literature in reading
- Modifying timetables in ways to support learning styles dominant in males (middle schools within secondary schools, linear timetables).
- Instructional strategies to support learning styles dominant in males.

Monitoring:

School plan monitoring by school and district.

5. To increase the success rates for Aboriginal Students.

Rationale:

FSA, Provincial Exams and other District data indicate that the academic performance for Aboriginal students' lags behind that of the total student population. Over the past few years there has been a great deal of funding and effort associated with Aboriginal Education with positive results. We must continue to work with the Aboriginal community and review our programs so that Aboriginal education may be enhanced.

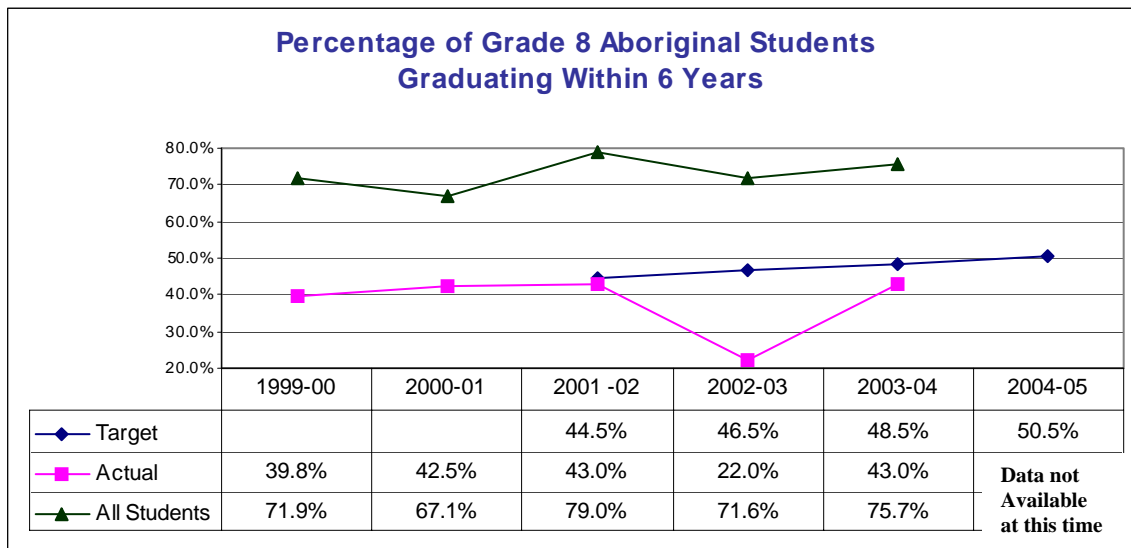
Performance Indicators/Evidence:

- Ministry data on Aboriginal students "graduating within six years".
- We also gather data and present in an annual report on Aboriginal education. In the coming year we hope to develop an Enhancement Agreement with our Aboriginal partners, which will set goals around a variety of data.

Performance Targets:

- Our long-term target is to have the Aboriginal graduation rate the same or better than that of the total population.
- We have been looking for an annual short-term gain of 2%. The results for 2002/03 were disappointing, coming in at 22.0%, far below what is the normal. This raises a lot of questions around the validity and reliability of this measure in isolation from other measures. With an Enhancement Agreement in place, a more reliable set of data should replace this one measure. This will be the last year of its use in isolation.

Achievement of Performance Targets:



Strategies:

- We will continue to support our Aboriginal students through our support services. Many of the initiatives in the district will address many of the needs of this group of students. Some of these include:
- Working with each Aboriginal community to enhance the success of our Aboriginal students, including the development of an Enhancement Agreement.
- Literacy initiatives.
- Modifying timetables in ways to support students experiencing difficulties.
- Instructional strategies to support all learning styles and integration of the Aboriginal culture into all subjects.
- Tracking Aboriginal student data as presented in our annual report (on the District web site).

Monitoring:

A priority in the area of Aboriginal Education has been to develop an Enhancement Agreement working with representatives of our Aboriginal Communities. Excellent progress has been made and it is planned to have an agreement ready for signing early in 2006. The Enhancement Agreement incorporates an Aboriginal Education Advisory Council that will monitor achievement results.