

SD67 Vision & District Goals

“Improving the Achievement of All Students”

2002 – 2006

It was in 2002 that we first began the process of developing a shared focus in the schools and district. As a result, we consulted and engaged all education partners in pursuing three district goals - **Literacy, Social Responsibility and Numeracy**.

Our prime strategic effort had been to build capacity by increasing people's collective power to move forward. In so doing, we focused on three interrelated themes: **professional learning, student intervention and assessment practices**.

1) Professional learning: Staff had pursued this in various ways and at various levels by – developing greater understanding of the achievement goals (literacy, numeracy and social responsibility); engaging in collaborative learning activities; supporting development of teacher leaders and school leaders throughout the district; action research and pursuing more powerful classroom instructional strategies. Parent Advisory Councils, School Planning Councils and the District Parent Advisory Council had been involved in the learning process.

2) Student intervention: Identification and intervention programs for students at risk in reading (early, middle and late) have been established in each of the schools.

3) Assessment practices: Teachers and administrators at all levels have been engaged in learning about the use and development of formative assessments - assessments to help people learn rather than judge whether they have learned.

2006 – 2007

During the 2006-07 year, we began to shift and reshape some of our strategies and actions.

The **use of data** (at the school and district level) had become more focused. Individual student and school results (eg. aboriginal, special needs, transitions, completion) had also been considered. As well, data collected from the impact of and presence of various initiatives/services (student intervention, community agency involvement, critical support services, relevant program choices, engaged classroom learning, supportive home-school connections and positive adult-student relationships) had provided valuable feedback for planning and development activities.

We also reviewed the **relevancy and currency of the district goals** and made some adjustments to the plan, programs and support structures:

1) Literacy: This goal was expanded to include early and later learning in the schools and community.

2) *Numeracy: New curriculum program materials were being implemented and formative assessments in numeracy actively considered.*

3) *Social Responsibility: Initiatives such as Tribes, Transitions, Roots of Empathy, Effective Behavior Support, Restitution, Friends, and Student Leadership had been integrated in meaningful ways into many classrooms and schools across the district. Social Responsibility had been most successful in those schools and classrooms that have integrated it as core values and as a foundation for learning. The Tribes process, for example, fostered a sense of belonging, which is vital to a student's ability to feel safe, respected, and engaged. In other words, students who feel part of a community, who value and respect each other and their teachers, learn.*

4) **School Completion and Transitions:** *This new district goal emerged and gained wide-spread support. The prior work and readiness building in the middle and secondary schools had helped to create momentum for focused plans and programs to develop.*

2007 – 2008

The **two cornerstone strategies** of our improvement effort had been to: 1) develop student transition/intervention strategies in order to close the achievement gap; and 2) increase student engagement in classrooms in order to accelerate learning for all. Such long term improvement efforts were, of course, dependent on shared leadership, support and resources.

These efforts will not, however, immediately result in improved achievement results for all 7,000 students. **System change** was, after all, **incremental**.

When we first started down this path seven years ago, we looked to promising classroom practice before school results. We are now at the stage of looking at promising school results before district results. A few years from now, the cumulative effect of changed classroom and school practice will, no doubt, yield improved district results.

The Ministry of Education Review Team visited the school district on April 6-10, 2008 and offered this observation in its report:

“The District is a progressive, fiscally responsible, well managed and performance-oriented school district. Trustees, and District and school-based staff are to be commended for their unity of purpose in addressing the success of individual students. Their commitment to continuous learning and building positive relationships is based upon trust and mutual respect. There is also a strong commitment to well researched practices that enhance teaching and learning. The district is well on its way to establishing a strong culture that values learning, teaching, shared leadership, ownership and responsibility for student learning at all levels.”