

Western School District Director's Report to Board

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Welcome to all staff in the new school year. The Western School District will continue efforts this year to achieve our collective vision of a learning organization in which all students achieve their maximum potential. I thank you all for your continued commitment to the Western School District, and most importantly, to the students and families we serve throughout our district.

~ FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING ~

■ Provincial Assessment Result, 2011-12

Results from provincial assessments at Grades 3, 6 and 9, and Public Exams at Level III were made available to the Western School District in September. Results have been sent to individual schools to help inform further teaching and learning.

The Grade 3 demand writing scores improved from 71.1 % at Level 3 and above in 2011 to 81.2 % in 2012. Non-fiction reading scores made a 13.9% gain, moving from 48.8% to 62.7% of students performing at Level 3 and above. Assessments were, however, below provincial average in all strands assessed (demand writing, poetic and non-fiction reading) in both constructed and selected response items.

Grade 3 Mathematics results showed gains in student performance from 2011 to 2012 at district level. Students scored 10% higher in 2012 than in 2011 in the areas of Reasoning, Communication, Connections and Representations, indicating improvement in learning in these areas. Problem-solving also showed district gains by a 3.5% increase in performance. Nonetheless, the District performed below the province in all four processes. Students were below in selected and written response in all number components as well as mental math. They were above in shape and space in both types of questioning.

In English Language Arts, Grade 6 students scored above the province in constructed response in Poetic and Non-Fiction Reading. Scores in Demand Writing and Selected Response in Poetic and Non-Fiction Reading were below the province.

Grade 6 student results in Mathematics were above the Province in all strands of constructed response. Except for mental math, Grade 6 students were on par or above the province in all strands in both selected and written response.

Grade 9 results on the provincial assessment in English Language Arts remain strong. In Writing and Poetry, Western School District leads the province, falling slightly below the province (-1%) on Informational Text.

Grade 9 Mathematics results on the provincial assessment exceed the provincial mean by approximately 3-4% for all

strands, which includes numbers, patterns and relations, shape and space, statistics, and probability.

In English 3201, the district was slightly below the province in the exam mark at 59.9% in comparison to the provincial exam mark of 60.5%. In English 3201, the district had a final exam mark of 65.1%, while the province scored at 64.9%.

In both Mathematics 3204 and 3205 students scored within 1% of the provincial mean for both examinations with an average score of 58.8% and 75.6 % respectively.

In Public exams in World History 3201 and World Geography 3202, students scored above the provincial mean for both exam and final course marks. In Biology 3201 and Chemistry 3202 the District average on the Public Exam was above the provincial average. In Biology 3201 there was a 4.6% improvement over the previous year. In Physics 3204 and Earth Systems 3209, the District average on the Public Exam was below the Provincial average, but the results did improve compared to the District results last year.

Public examinations results in French 3200, Francais 3202, and Histoire mondiale 3231 show that our students performed above the province in French 3200 and Histoire mondiale 3231. Our results from the Francais 3202 exam indicate that we are fairly on par with provincial performance.

One of the most encouraging results is the increase of 9.6 % of students graduating with an Academic and/or Honours standing over the past two years (58.6 % in 2010, 63 % in 2011, to 68.22 % in 2012). Students graduating with General Status decreased from 41.4 % in 2010, 37.1% in 2011, to 31.7 % in 2012. Nonetheless, the District is still below the province in the numbers of students graduating with Academic/Honours standing.

■ District Common Assessment Results, 2011-12

In addition to the external examinations administered by Department of Education, many students wrote common district final examinations in June. A detailed item analysis of the selected response for these common examinations as well has been sent to individual schools to help inform further teaching and learning.

In English Language Arts, Grade 8 and English 2201 student achievement results showed gains from the previous year. Student achievement results in Mathematics 8, Math 2204, and Math 2205 showed gains from the previous year. In each of the Level II Science exams (Biology 2201, Chemistry 2202, Physics 2204) the District average on the final exam improved over the previous year. The biggest improvement came in Physics 2204 with an 8% increase. In Grade 9 Science there was a 7% improvement on the final exam compared to the previous year.

Grade 8 Science had a common final exam for the first time, but the results were very good with an exam average 70.6%.

Common assessment results for Grade 9 Core French indicate that results are improving every year. The biggest area of growth has been in students' writing. The percentage of students scoring a three or higher on the writing rubric has made a steady increase from 59.12 % in 2010 to 76.89% in 2012.

■ **Intermediate New Course Implementation**

New course implementation will continue to take place in 2011-12 in English Language Arts, Grade 9. Teachers will have a half-day of independent professional learning to familiarize themselves with the new resources, and view the Professional Learning website of the Department of Education, followed by one full day of professional learning during regional district professional development opportunities.

■ **Level II Mathematics Implementation**

Western School District is currently in the process of implementing the new Mathematics curriculum in Level II, specifically Mathematics 2200 (Advanced), Mathematics 2201 (Academic), and Mathematics 2202 (Applied). Each teacher with teaching responsibilities in these courses will engage in a total of two days of professional learning focused on the new curriculum.

■ **French Programming/New Program Implementation**

French Immersion continues to grow in our district. This year saw the beginning of two full streams of French Immersion Level II at Corner Brook Regional High. Enrollment in the Early French Immersion program remains healthy in both the Corner Brook and Stephenville areas. A new curriculum guide and resources for *Français* is being implemented in Grade 9 and Level 1 French Immersion. Teachers will attend implementation sessions in St. John's in the near future.

Intensive Core French is now offered in eight schools in our district: St. James Elementary, Stephenville Middle School, Our Lady of Mercy Elementary, St. Michael's Elementary J.J. Curling Elementary, Sacred Heart Elementary, Xavier Junior High, and Gros Morne Academy. All Intensive Core French teachers in our district will be invited to a district session in late October regarding accommodating all students in the ICF classroom.

The province is in the third year of implementation of a new Core French program at the Senior High level. We now have new courses in French 1200, 2200 and 3200. With this new program came new resources, a new curriculum guide and professional development opportunities. This year, schools received new resources to support the new French 3200 program. Teachers will attend implementation sessions in St. John's in the near future.

■ **Safe and Caring Schools Programming**

In partnership with the Canadian Red Cross, \$45,000 in funding has been secured to support various initiatives in schools this year. This funding will augment financial support obtained through a provincial Wellness Grant for *Beyond the Hurt*, a train the trainer program for five junior high guidance counselors and training resources. The Newfoundland and Labrador Credit

union has also provided funding for *Beyond the Hurt*, a high school program which will take place in four high schools. A grant from Oceanex has provided funding for a First Responders Program consisting of First Aid training for one teacher and twenty students, along with necessary equipment. The goal is that students will use their training at sporting events, concerts and other extra-curricular functions, as well as set up displays and do presentations to other students about first aid and safety.

■ **Inclusive Education**

Training for Phase 4 schools has started with a full staff inservice that took place on September 7 at Hampden Academy. Plans will be made for this training to be delivered to the Labrador schools early in October and all remaining schools will be trained before the Christmas break. An itinerant meeting was held at the Department of Education on September 20 and 21. During this meeting, discussion took place as to how the Phase 4 Initiative will roll out, with an action plan to be developed for the school year. By June, 38 schools will have received training and the resources associated with the Inclusive Schools Initiative.

■ **Assistive Technology**

The Western School District has purchased ten iPads that will have different applications installed, to be used with students who are non-verbal. The intent is for schools to borrow them to use with students on a trial basis to determine if this is an effective tool that will help enhance a students' communication skills. If it is determined that it is an effective communication device for an individual student, then application can be made to the Department of Education through the Assistive Technology program to provide the student with his/her own device for daily use.

~ FOCUS ON ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING ~

■ **New Teacher Orientation**

Beginning Teachers Orientation was held August 29 - September 1 in Corner Brook with 16 new teachers participating. Professional learning sessions were delivered on the following: Facilitating Learning for ALL Students; Organizational Learning; Professional Growth and Development Program and Professional Learning Plans; Safe and Caring Schools and Positive Behaviour Supports with emphasis on sustaining student motivation through differentiated instruction and inclusionary classroom engagement; Sharing of Experiences by a Teacher Induction Team; Using Social Media; and Supporting New Teachers. Sincere appreciation is extended to the NLTA and Johnson Insurance for partnering with us in this orientation program.

■ **School Development and Assessment Report**

Schools are actively engaged in the school development process and planning to meet student needs, as identified through various sources of data. All schools will be reviewing assessment data in detail and adjusting their school development plans to address the academic challenges indicated by their individual school results. The district is assisting schools in the analysis of their assessment data through the development of charts and templates that closely examine trends in student achievement.