

School Planning Council

**WEST HEIGHTS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

GROWTH PLAN

Plan for Improving
Student Achievement



APRIL 2010

School and Community Context

Unique Features:

West Heights Elementary School is a lively, interesting, and busy school in the centre of the community. It is a hub school. Currently, our student population sits at approximately 300 students from kindergarten to grade 7. We have a core group of families at our school; however, our transiency rate continues to be high. New families coming into the neighbourhood are welcomed into a diverse, accepting and friendly environment. We offer a well-rounded program of academics, fine arts, and athletics. The school prides itself on our diversity, which is evidenced by the wall murals, Aboriginal gatepost, and multicultural events. Our Full Day Kindergarten classes work in concert with the



StrongStart Centre, sharing ideas and resources. This year, we continued with a Peer Leadership program where our older students took on a leadership role within the school providing support to both primary and intermediate students. Our leadership group of Grade 6 and 7 students participated in International Me to We Day in Vancouver. Our students also demonstrate leadership by volunteering as Reading Buddies, as StrongStart volunteers, and through service to their school in a variety of ways. This year we are excited about creating a proposal for our school's name to be changed to "West Heights Community School".

Community Partnerships/Initiatives:

- WHIN (West Heights Inclusive Neighbourhood) Project
- WHARP (West Heights After School Recreation Program)
- StrongStart Centre
- YES 2 IT (Youth Exploring Skills to Industry Training - a joint initiative of the Industry Training Authority and Ministry of Education)
- Network Of Performance Based Schools (Aboriginal focus)
- BC Fruit & Vegetable Program provides fresh fruit or vegetable products for our students every two weeks
- Mission's Diwali Celebration was held at West Heights this year
- Mission Restorative Resolutions supports our students with restorative practices via classroom circles
- Mission Secondary supports our students with restorative practices when appropriate
- Me to We students support a variety of charities through fundraising
- Pitch In Program – a community cleanup program in which we participate each spring
- Ready, Set, Learn activities (for example, Books for Bedtime) provide early learning opportunities throughout the year

Parent Involvement:

Every morning, our primary wing comes alive with parents and children reading together and sharing the joy of reading. Our active Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meets monthly and sponsors numerous fundraising events throughout the year to support our students. Our parents run a daily breakfast program, daily noon hour kitchen and free emergency lunch program, as well as a monthly hot lunch event. West Heights' parents are committed to making our school the best place for their children, and to that end support our learning initiatives and school activities. Once again, parents sponsored the West Heights Caring Club. The Caring Club is based on the philosophy that caring kids can make a difference both locally and globally.

Goal: Improve Student Social Responsibility Skills

Objective 1: Improve student behaviour (Kindergarten to Grade 7)

Objective 2: Improve interpersonal skills of our students

Data Sources:

- 1.) The Early Development Index (EDI) information shows that for the past six years a significant portion of the kindergarten students entering West Heights Elementary are vulnerable when entering kindergarten.
- 2.) Number of office referrals (by month):

	January 2010		February 2010		March 2010		2010 (Average)	
	# of Office Referrals	# students > 1 referral	# of Office Referrals	# students > 1 referral	# of Office Referrals	# students > 1 referral	# of Office Referrals	# students > 1 referral
Female Referrals	41	9	33	7	26	5	33	7
Male Referrals	107	19	90	19	88	18	95	19
Total # of Referrals	148	28	123	26	114	23	128	26

Rationale:

Many of our students are vulnerable learners who struggle to close the learning gap between “where they should be” and “where they are” with their learning. If our staff develops a better understanding of the differences between our beliefs and values, as compared to those of our most vulnerable learners, we will be more effective in our ability to work effectively with them. (Ruby Payne Modules 1 – 7)

Many of the students of West Heights continue to need support in their making of positive behaviour choices, particularly in less structured environments. The number of “student management” referrals to the administration each month is high. We will continue supporting students to solve problems peacefully via the WITS strategies, and will use restorative practices when appropriate.

Evidence of Change:

- The information from the Early Development Index remains constant
- Our data on Office Referrals is Baseline Data (we do not have evidence over time)

Targets (Over 3 Years):

Baseline data re: office referrals will be collected in 2010/2011 and targets will be set at that time.

Comment / Summary of Progress:

We are creating and building a school-wide program of Social Responsibility at West Heights Elementary to improve the interpersonal skills and general behaviour of our students.

Action Plan: These are the actions we believe will accomplish our objectives...

All students can become anxious at one time or another, and our school is no different. If we are able to reduce anxiety in our students, they will perform better socially and academically. We intend to continue using the *Friends Program*—twelve lessons which teach students skills in handling new situations and dealing with anxiety, worry, and nervous responses. This program dovetails nicely with the *Virtues Project*, which inspires students to live more authentic, joyful lives and allows educators to create safe, caring and high performing learning communities.

• Continuing Practices that are working well in our school

- WITS strategies to solve problems peacefully (implementation phase K – 7)
- Restorative Practices – classroom circles, Mission Restorative Resolutions in grade 5 classroom, and Mission Restorative Resolutions supporting through RJ Circles school wide (when required)
- Peer Leaders (several of our grade 6/7 students took the training in the fall of '09)
- Behaviour Plans – support of District Counsellor and Youth Care Worker
- Friends Program for grades 4 and 5

• What things will we do differently?

- Staff Development – expand the use of restorative practices school wide
 - introduce staff to Ruby Payne Modules 1 – 7 to help better understand student behaviour and how to deal effectively with it
- Experiment with Social Responsibility Scales to rate students (perhaps a source of data)
- Virtues Project – school based Pro D led by West Heights staff member
- Develop Reflection Sheets based on WITS strategies (perhaps collaborate with Mission Central Elementary)

• How will we provide for staff development and collaboration?

- Staff Development Plan
- use monthly Pro D staff meetings to work through Ruby Payne modules
- Staff Development funds – work with Social Responsibility Scales in grade groupings

• How will we involve parents?

- Principal's Report at monthly PAC meetings
- Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences
- WITS posters in hallways
- Ministry of Education Satisfaction Survey

How will we monitor and adjust our actions?

- office data will be ongoing and monthly reports will be shared at monthly staff meetings
- review of Behaviour Plans and Team Meetings (students with most challenging behaviours)



Goal: Improve Student Literacy Skills

Objective 1: Improve student literacy skills K - 7

Objective 2: Improve student writing skills K – 7

Data Sources:

Please note that the assessment date and format of the FSA's were changed after 2006. The FSA's dates were moved to February (rather than later in the school year) and a portion of the assessments were administered electronically.

School / District Based Assessment

Literacy Data Over time	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Target (2011)
DRA	78%	60%	60%	59%	60%	75%
DART	81%	74%	86%	90%	89%	90%
FSA Reading	51%	52%	48%	54%	55%	75%
FSA Writing	79%	83%	67%	65%	63%	85%
School Wide Write	84%	88%	83%	92%	80%	95%

School / District Based Assessment

DART 2009 % at each level	Not Yet Meeting		Minimally Meeting		Fully Meeting		Exceeding	
	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal
Female	6%	8%	48%	58%	39%	33%	6%	0%
Male	16%	0%	49%	75%	26%	17%	8%	8%
Total Participation #	11%		49%		33%		7%	

Ministry of Education Assessment

FSA Reading (Gr. 7) 2009 % at each level	Performance Level Unknown		Not Yet Meeting		Meeting		Exceeding	
	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal
Female	7%	masked	33%	Masked	53%	masked	7%	masked
Male	37%	masked	16%	Masked	47%	masked	0%	masked
Total Participation #	24%	masked	24%	Masked	50%	masked	3%	masked

Ministry of Education Assessment

FSA Reading (Gr.4) 2009 % at each level	Performance Level Unknown		Not Yet Meeting		Meeting		Exceeding	
	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal
Female	13%	unknown	33%	unknown	54%	unknown	0%	0%
Male	17%	unknown	25%	unknown	58%	unknown	0%	0%
Total Participation #	14%	22%	31%	22%	56%	56%	0%	0%

Ministry of Education Assessment

FSA Writing (Gr. 7) 2009 % at each level	Performance Level Unknown		Not Yet Meeting		Meeting		Exceeding	
	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal
Female	7%	Masked	20%	Masked	73%	Masked	0%	Masked
Male	37%	Masked	11%	Masked	53%	Masked	0%	Masked
Total Participation #	24%	Masked	15%	Masked	62%	Masked	0%	Masked

Ministry of Education Assessment

FSA Writing (Gr. 4) 2009 % at each level	Performance Level Unknown		Not Yet Meeting		Meeting		Exceeding	
	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal
Female	13%	unknown	25%	unknown	63%	unknown	0%	0%
Male	17%	unknown	25%	unknown	58%	unknown	0%	0%
Total Participation #	14%	22%	25%	22%	61%	56%	0%	0%

Rationale:

Analysis of FSA Reading, District Assessments (DRA, DART, District Wide Write) indicate that a lower than expected level of success for students in all grades. Trends in FSA data for grade 4 & 7 reading comprehension over the past 5 years indicate a need for continued focus in this area.

While DART scores appear to be strong, 16% of our males in grades 3 – 7 are not yet meeting expectations. Further, 49% of our boys and 75% of our Aboriginal boys are only minimally meeting expectations. Our girls are faring slightly better, with 48% of our girls and 58% of our Aboriginal girls meeting minimal expectations. It is clear that we need to shift students from the minimally meeting category and into the fully meets category.



Evidence of Change:

Fewer of our Kindergarten students were at risk last year than in the past 5 years (dropping from 55% at risk in 2008 to only 19% at risk in 2009 according to DRA results). Primary Staff indicates that the StrongStart Program has been beneficial, and is likely contributing to our students' success. The number of grade 1 and grade 2 students at risk (56% and 43% respectively) is still a concern. When one compares our DRA results to our DART results (only 11% of our grade 3 – 7 students at risk) it is clear that our students' literacy skills are improving.

Targets (over 3 years):

- see chart for intended targets (DRA, DART, FSA Reading, FSA Writing, and School Wide Write)
- reduce the number of students at risk (not yet meeting expectations on the DART) to 5% by 2012
- reduce the number of students minimally meeting expectations (DART) to 25% (shifting them into the fully meeting category) by 2012
- increase the number of students fully meeting expectations (DART) to 58% by 2012

Comment / Summary of Progress:

We will continue to focus our efforts on early intervention in the primary grades. We expect that the benefits of having Full Day Kindergarten classes, along with the StrongStart Program, will help reduce the number of primary students at risk.

Action Plan: These are the actions we believe will accomplish our objectives...

- **Continuing Practices that are working well in our school**
 - SMART reading strategies
 - Use of District Literacy Support Teachers (primary and intermediate)
 - Learning Assistance supported Buddy Reading Program
- **What things will we do differently?**
 - Focus on oral language (formal register) K – 7
- **How will we provide for staff development and collaboration?**
 - Continue as a Network of Performance Based School
 - Professional Development Staff Meetings once a month
 - Encourage attendance at Early Success and Late Literacy Meetings
- **How will we involve parents?**
 - Ready, Set, Learn opportunities
 - Promote our StrongStart Centre
 - Continue various home reading programs
 - Morning Parent Buddy Reading
- **How will we monitor and adjust our actions?**
 - We will monitor our actions by continuing to collect and review data about our students' learning and continue our dialogue with colleagues so that we can reflect, review, rethink, assess and refocus our classroom and



school wide practices during Pro D Staff Meetings. Using *Assessment for Learning* strategies, we will continue to review and collect information about our students' learning; and through staff dialogue we can review, rethink, assess and refocus our classroom and school wide strategies.

Goal: Improve Student Numeracy Skills

Objective 1: Improve students' ability to process and solve mathematical problems

Objective 2: Improve students' confidence in their ability to solve mathematical problems

Data Sources:

Please note that the assessment date and format of the FSA's were changed after 2006. The FSA's dates were moved to February (rather than later in the school year) and a portion of the assessments were administered electronically.

% at each level	Performance Level Unknown		Not Yet Meeting		Meeting		Exceeding	
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Target (2011)		
FSA Grade 4	59%	68%	69%	69%	36%	80%		
FSA Grade 7	69%	84%	63%	35%	41%	75%		
GNAP Gr. 5	n/a	65%	81%	67%	43%	85%		

Gr. 4 FSA (2009)	Performance Level Unknown		Not Yet Meeting		Meeting		Exceeding	
	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal
% at each level								
Female	13%	Unknown	58%	Unknown	29%	Unknown	0%	0%
Male	17%	Unknown	33%	Unknown	50%	Unknown	0%	0%
Total Participation #	14%	22%	50%	11%	36%	67%	0%	0%

Gr. 7 FSA (2009)	Performance Level Unknown		Not Yet Meeting		Meeting		Exceeding	
	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal
% at each level								
Female	7%	Masked	60%	Masked	27%	Masked	7%	Masked
Male	37%	Masked	16%	Masked	42%	Masked	5%	Masked
Total Participation #	24%	Masked	35%	Masked	35%	Masked	6%	Masked

GNAP 5 (2009) % at each level	Not Yet Meeting		Minimally Meeting		Fully Meeting		Exceeding	
	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal	All Students	Aboriginal
<i>Female</i>	40%	masked	60%	masked	0%	masked	0%	masked
<i>Male</i>	61%	masked	33%	masked	5%	masked	0%	masked
<i>Total Participation #</i>	57%	masked	39%	masked	4%	masked	0%	masked

Rationale:

Analysis of FSA results, GNAP classroom based assessment and informal observation indicate a lower than expected level of success with students. Our results for 2009 are particularly disappointing. One of the factors affecting our FSA results recently, is that a large number of our students are being excused from the FSA's (14% of our Grade 4's and 24% of our Grade 7's last year). Concerns surrounding problem solving strategies and the connection to real world examples appear to be a major area of weakness.

Evidence of Change:

Our results on the FSA's for numeracy have dropped significantly in the past year. Similarly, our students' results on the GNAP for grade 5 have also dropped. It is clear that an emphasis on mathematical problem solving is required.

Targets:

See projected targets on chart (above)

Comment / Summary of Progress:

Both FSA and GNAP results indicate a significant decline in growth in the percentage of students achieving success in numeracy. We will continue to implement the *Math Makes Sense* Program K – 7, we will purchase math manipulatives and supporting resource materials (e.g. *Math to the Max*) to support classroom teachers. Math problem solving will become a focus K – 7 next year.

Action Plan: These are the actions we believe will accomplish our objectives...

Continuing Practices that are working well in our school

- Continue to implement *Math Makes Sense* K – 7
- Use of math manipulatives to reinforce understanding
- Connect math to real life situations via problem solving

What things will we do differently?

- Focus on problem solving strategies school wide
- Reinstate Problem of the Month (based on problem solving strategies studied)
- Supplement math manipulatives and supplementary materials (*Math to the Max*)
- Feedback for Learning strategies for student self-assessment of skills



How will we provide for staff development and collaboration?

- Discussion of Feedback for Learning strategies at monthly Pro D staff meetings
- Sharing of Problem Solving strategies at Pro D staff meetings
- Implementation through Staff Development Plan

How will we involve parents?

- Problem of the Month in Newsletters
- Math Problem Solving Night
- Parent/Student/Teacher conferences
- Principal's Report at PAC Meetings

How will we monitor and adjust our actions?

- Discussions at ongoing staff meetings and professional development days
- Continue to gather data



Submitted by:

School Planning Council

This school growth plan has been written, reviewed and supported by:

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_____ Teacher Member's Name	_____ Signature	_____ Date
<u>Murray Butt</u> Principal's Name	<u>[Signature]</u> Signature	<u>April 15, 2010</u> Date

Superintendent

Board

Date