



A “Team Approach” to School Development Planning

School-level strategic planning or “school development” is the primary vehicle for improving student achievement within the Baie Verte/Central/Connaigre School District (District 5). Through implementing their school development plans, schools work towards improved student learning. To develop a plan which accurately reflects strengths and needs, it is essential that schools start with sound information on student achievement and other aspects of school life.

An external, peer review of school development plans exists

to ensure the plan is based upon objective analysis of available data, was developed in collaboration with all stakeholders, and is achievable within the existing resources of the school. This review also helps to ensure school plans will be aligned with the strategic plan of the district. A school council may also have a higher comfort level approving a plan which has been independently reviewed. Similarly, the school will begin implementing the plan knowing it is supported by data and is based on good teaching practices.

The beginning of this “external peer validation” component of school development planning was the former School Assessment Pilot of the Royal Commission Implementation Secretariat. School District 5 has adopted, modified and

refined that initiative and incorporated it as a component of its school development model. The district is still in a developmental phase with respect to this initiative. All schools are expected to ‘come on stream’, but are doing so at a pace and within a time frame that works for them.

External team members are selected from a pool of volunteers whose home context closely matches that of the host school. Training is provided to each team by the district. A team, having received the draft School Development Plan in advance, will spend three days ‘on site’ gathering and analyzing data. A preliminary oral report is presented to the staff on the final day of the visit in order to provide staff with an opportunity to respond to the initial findings of the team. The team will then compile a final written report of their findings for the school.

Improved Learning is the Goal

School development planning focuses significant resources, efforts, talents, and energies on the goal of improving student learning. It is still early, but student

achievement data is showing an upward trend. Adult learning is important in school development planning too. The focus is on changing classroom practices in order to optimize learning for students. In addition, members of external teams report that the experience of being immersed in another school culture during the review process results in invaluable individual learning and growth. Many team members count the experience as being the most valuable professional development of their entire careers.

District 5 will continue to support the school development planning process with its external peer validation component. Professional development and allocation of school resources will become more closely linked to working towards achieving the school’s goals. Over time, district activities will become more and more responsive to the needs of schools as set out in their school plans. Finally, a system or framework for greater accountability will be implemented to ensure improved student learning is the actual outcome of this effort.

District 5 Profile

	2003-04	2002-03
Schools	45	46
Students	7788	8007
Teachers	601.8	623.0
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	12.5	12.5

