



NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EDUCATION COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING

INFORMATION SHEET

DATE: February 2, 2022
TO: Education Committee
FROM: Laura Tait, Assistant Superintendent and Jacque Poulin, Director of Instruction
SUBJECT: Focus Schools/ NLPS Assessment Data Collection

Background

Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools' (NLPS) Focus Schools program is currently in its seventh year. Within NLPS, like most districts, there are schools that experience more challenges and vulnerabilities than others. These challenges often present as social and/or economic challenges. In NLPS we have a variety of socio-economic areas. However, we have a distinct group of schools that experience greater than average challenges, in this regard. In addition, many of these schools also have a higher than average Indigenous student population.

The Focus Schools program was started with the primary goal to increase reading success for all students, with an increased focus on providing additional measures to make Indigenous students successful.

Discussion

NLPS Focus Schools

NLPS currently has six Focus Schools – Bayview/NK, Fairview, Brechin, Georgia Avenue, North Oyster and Qwam Qwum Stuwixwulh.

Focus Schools are provided additional supports, such as increased administration time, increased literacy coordinator time, a full time Child Youth Family Support Worker, access to literacy grant funds and additional leadership and professional development opportunities for staff.

Focus Schools' reading success continues to demonstrate an upward trajectory over time. The Focus Schools continue to experience above average complexity as compared to the rest of NLPS. Most schools report that their Indigenous students are on par with their growth in reading.

Some successes to build on:

- Hold literacy time sacred
- Schools are taking ownership over their reading focus, not top down
- Additional resources and supports are paramount for success
- Itinerant specialists interact in Focus Schools in a deeper, more collaborative way, than previously
- Educators are taking more risks with their practice
- Increased use of data to inform instruction
- Common language around instructional practices

NLPS Assessment Data Collection

Report Card Data

Reading rates are a critical determinant in school success as well as a clear indicator for life chances. Report card data is the “**map data**” and we are currently working on ways to extract historical report card data where we can look at cohorts over time.

Report Card data includes all areas of the curriculum, for the purposes of Focus School data we focus only on the: reading, listening and viewing components of literacy (literacy also includes the writing, speaking and representing components).

The Elementary Electronic Report Card System (ERC) is a locally developed and maintained program, created to meet our report card needs, not our data needs, so the pulling of data is quite labour intensive.

NLPS Reading Assessment

NLPS reading assessment focuses on specific skills, meant to inform instruction and guide the needs of students.

The Primary Assessment of Reading (PARS) focuses on specific foundational skills of reading. The intent of this assessment is to be a tool created ‘by teachers, for teachers’, to be one more piece of teacher’s classroom formative assessment that looks very closely at specific building blocks in reading and at reading comprehension. This tool was designed to help inform classroom teachers in the instructional needs of the students in their class at the start of the year. It is only one of many tools used by classroom teachers; and only looks at one aspect of a very broad language arts curriculum. It is also designed to help teachers add to their understanding of their class each year to know what each student and/or groups of students need.

The Intermediate (grade 4-7) assessment is in the process of being updated. This assessment currently focuses on comprehension questions with an ability to use a supplementary tool to further explore foundational reading skills as needed.

Last year, our own locally developed data entry system (E-Assess) was created and introduced. This assessment is meant to look at very specific information to help inform instruction and to determine supports needed. This data could also be used at the school level to look at specific grades to see the areas of success or areas that need more focus. It could guide the allocation of school resources and supports.

Formative assessment of this information helps to guide instruction; it is teachers using a variety of formative assessment tools that guides their instruction and overall planning so that in the end we will continue to see the growth over time amongst our cohorts.

