



THE EDI (EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT) IMPACT STUDY
HELP, HUMAN EARLY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

BC School Districts: Embracing Young Children and Their Families

Janet N. Mort
University of Victoria
Email: jnmort@shaw.ca

October 1, 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

Introduction - Researcher's Comments	Page 2
Purpose and Scope Of The Research	Page 6
Highlights Conclusion	Page 8
Key Findings	Page 9
Implications for Action Relative to The Findings	Page 16
Highlights Summary	Page 21
Bibliography	Page 22

APPENDICES: STORIES AND QUOTES

Appendix A: The Process and Initial Response	Page 23
Appendix B: The Value of the Process	Page 31
Appendix C: Problems and Issues That Arose	Page 43
Appendix D: Initiatives and Projects That Resulted	Page 54

OVERALL CONCLUSION

Participating Districts	Page 80
--------------------------------	----------------

INTRODUCTION

The Researcher's Comments

Every expectant mom just wants a developmentally healthy baby; every kindergarten teacher on the first day of school just wants a class of developmentally healthy five-year olds. What happens (*or doesn't happen*) in between birth and age five that means that one child *out of every four* are challenged developmentally in the first year of school in British Columbia?

Dr. Clyde Hertzman, Director of HELP (Human Early Learning Partnership) and prominent health researcher at UBC, has affirmed through his research that in many communities in the province, up to 25 % of kindergarten children struggle with developmental issues that interfere with literacy and learning tasks. In some kindergarten classes, the percentage of vulnerable children rises to 40% or more. The trend continues in later years. Ministry of Education statistics reveal that in 2003, by the end of grade four, approximately 23% of the students assessed were not meeting expectations, as measured by the Foundation Skills Assessment. In the same year, only 79% completed high school (the number of students who entered grade eight and graduated from grade 12 within six years). These school statistics are indicators of a trend that appears to have started in the preschool years.

In spite of parents who did the best they could under their circumstances; in spite of major reforms in the school system resulting from the Sullivan Royal Commission Report of 1989; in spite of fifteen years of innovation, implementation of new programs, and vigorous effort on the part of highly-skilled school professionals (especially the primary teachers of the province), the 'early years' experience for one out of four young children in BC schools is not good enough.

Dr. Hertzman's research is providing us with compelling new information about the early years and a child's developmental needs. He has been a leading proponent for change and a rich source of research in this field. Since 2002, Dr. Hertzman's organization, HELP, has implemented the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Mapping Project province wide and reported its findings on a neighborhood basis.

School districts became involved as kindergarten teachers played a major role in administering the EDI (Early Development Indicators) measurement tool which established a subjective measure of each child's language, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

This researcher attended one of the many presentations Dr. Hertzman has made throughout the province to Health, Education, Social Services, and other community agencies to report on the EDI results. I was not prepared for what I witnessed. He described the results of his mapping project which clearly identified the characteristics of neighborhoods in each geographical location, identifying the needs of young children and where they lived. The room was crowded, standing room only. As he spoke, the audience burst into enthusiastic applause in recognition, and in support as he raised key issues. Contentious issues were put on the table in an uncharacteristically candid way while teachers, nurses, and social workers nodded their heads in unison. The questions and debates that followed his presentation were professional, positive, and intense.

He summed up his presentation with a powerful and promising statement: "Relatively small differences [in what we do] can accumulate to make a large difference eventually" (Hertzman, 2004). By the end of the presentation and discussion, it was clear that participants were eager to proceed with planning for how they could make a difference in their communities.

I came away with a sense that I had just participated in an extraordinary event, one that raised the stakes and the hope for young children. I believed that we had just been introduced to a visionary force in the person of Dr. Hertzman; there was a momentum—a passion—in the room that I had not witnessed among educators in a long time. I experienced (for the first time in my career) Health, Social Services and Education professionals gathered in the same room, sharing the same passion about a common concern.

Many of us who have been in the profession for thirty years or more have done our best, but we still have not been able to make a difference in the lives of about 25% of our young children. We believed we knew the reasons but we felt powerless working in a public school system, often under-funded and under-resourced, with a mandate that

limited our work to the 5 to 18 year-old population: We had little evidence about the vulnerabilities of the children entering our schools and no mandate to shift resources to children younger than those in kindergarten. Now, finally, we have ‘hard data’ in EDI that helps to explain and validate the struggle that we have witnessed for so long in so many of our young children’s lives.

Their life experiences appear to be complicated by ‘**systemic flaws**’: barriers to access of services for many families, a lack of coordination between agencies, communication gaps, territorial issues and inequitable distribution of resources, to name a few.

In the preface to their book, *What’s Worth Fighting For Out There?*, Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan (1998) conclude:

“The relationship between those in the school and those outside it must be fundamentally reframed. In a world of growing complexity and rapid change, if we are going to bring about significant improvements in teaching and learning within schools, we must forge strong, open, and interactive connections with communities beyond them. To do this we must go ‘wider’ by developing new relationships with parents, employers, universities, technology and the broader profession” (p. xi).

Is it possible that HELP, EDI, and the growing number of coalitions in the province can generate the relationships that create new connections between Education, Health, and Social Service professionals? Is this the beginning of what Michael Fullan urges schools to embrace?

Other questions came to mind:

1. Would and could school districts become serious partners in the education of children aged 0 to 5?
2. Would school districts value the EDI in the long term, or see it as a one-time only initiative?
3. Could all relevant agencies, including schools, work cooperatively with an interagency focus?
4. Would school boards be willing to redefine their roles given these compelling new data?
5. Would the government commit to providing the necessary resources to empower the momentum of leaders in the field?
6. Can and will traditional issues of territory and power be set aside?

With these questions, the focus of this research project was established.

I approached the task with excitement, some trepidation at the magnitude of it with the short timelines, as well as an intense desire to be helpful. Thank you to Dr. Alison Preece, my advisor, for her guidance, advice, and support. Thank you to those of you who took the time to share your district's experience. Commitment and passion were familiar themes in the conversations and they were inspiring! I look forward to working with you on future projects on the early development of young children.

Janet Mort, 2004

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

“The ECD Mapping Project brings together academic, government and community partners to help us understand early child development in neighborhoods across BC. The project develops neighborhood-based maps on three components: child development, community assets/resources and socio-economic characteristics. The Early Development Instrument (EDI), a key component of the project, is being implemented province-wide [by kindergarten teachers] to help measure children’s school readiness” (HELP Web Site: Mapping, p.1). Many school districts that participated in the study have implemented projects to support the development of young children. The purpose of this study is to research participants’ views of the process, the value they place on it, and to document projects that are underway as a result of the EDI process and findings.

Participants and Procedures

Superintendents of the 49 districts that participated in the study were invited to identify a district contact person to be interviewed. The District Contact was asked how the district managed the EDI process, how the process was valued in the district, any problems or issues that arose, and what projects or initiatives (if any) were implemented as a result of the data. Once the telephone interview was complete, the responses were collated, summarized, and formed the basis of this report. Stories and quotes about individual districts were returned to the district for approval prior to the completion of the report.

Of the 49 districts contacted:

1. Two districts declined to be part of the study
2. Five districts did not respond
3. 42 districts agreed to be interviewed
4. 41 districts were interviewed

Development of the Research Report

The data were collated and summarized into four key areas:

1. The process for and initial response to the examination of the EDI results.
2. The perceived value of the EDI results and process.
3. Issues or problems that arose as a part of the EDI process.
4. Initiatives and projects resulting from or connected to the EDI.

Fourteen districts implemented EDI in either 2001 or 2002 while 35 others began working with the EDI results in 2003. All public schools participated as well as a small number of band schools and private schools. There was a wealth of material generated from the interviews and many important stories told; not all could be included in this report.

Appendices A to D present a generous sampling of the stories and quotes which provide a window into the exciting initiatives being implemented throughout the province.

Quotations and stories of district contacts are presented because they convey the depth and dimensions of the response to the data across the range of districts surveyed.

Stories were chosen that provided an insight into comments made, or that demonstrated the variety of viewpoints and activities described. In some cases, the results are summarized, in some cases stories are told, and in some cases direct quotes are provided. An effort was made to maintain the ‘voice’ of the District Contact.

APPENDICES: STORIES AND QUOTES

Appendix A: The Process and Initial Response	Page 23
Appendix B: The Perceived Value of the Process	Page 31
Appendix C: Problems and Issues That Arose	Page 43
Appendix D: Initiatives and Projects That Resulted	Page 54

The complete final report is available on the HELP Web site (www.earlylearning.ubc.ca).

HIGHLIGHTS CONCLUSION

This researcher concludes that, in general, school districts have begun to embrace a new role and responsibility by examining developmental indicator data at school entry, by planning interventions in response to the data, and by partnering with other agencies to serve the needs of young children and their families. While a number of districts had already begun to move in this direction, the EDI process and the resulting numerical data provided to school districts, has played a significant role in establishing the need and the confidence to move forward.

In my opinion, so much momentum has been generated in the past two years by the EDI project, it may be difficult, perhaps impossible, and certainly undesirable, to stop it or slow it down. It needs to be nurtured, guided, and funded through the intersectoral coalitions that are blossoming across the province.

KEY FINDINGS

Finding 1: School districts in the province value the EDI process and want it to continue under the leadership of Dr. Clyde Hertzman and HELP. (See Appendices A, B and C for quotes and anecdotes.)

Of the districts interviewed, only one District Contact saw no further need for EDI activity. In contrast, most of the other 40 districts are eager to continue to refine the process and move forward with further planning, such as linking the EDI data with other measurements, and developing the Community Asset Mapping. In most school districts, Dr. Clyde Hertzman or members of his staff were available to present the data to community meetings as well as school district groups. Most districts invited teachers, administrators, community groups, and other guests such as town councillors and business leaders to hear Dr. Hertzman's presentation.

Different districts managed the data in different ways depending on local circumstances. In some communities, the cohort was too small to make results reliable. In others, results were not distributed to schools because of sensitivities about the data, while in still others, the data were broadly shared. Kindergarten teachers felt validated by the process and valued as professionals. They appreciated the release time from UBC to administer the EDI instrument.

The most frequently-raised issue was the interpretation of the maps. Twelve districts commented that the maps were problematic because specific school catchment areas were not identified. Instead, neighborhoods were identified, which sometimes resulted in two or three school catchment areas overlapping. Other districts were satisfied with the maps themselves, but Contacts commented that they needed additional support beyond the HELP staff visits to make effective use of them.

There was unanimity on the part of those who attended presentations by Dr. Hertzman, that his role in the presentation process had a pivotal effect on those who attended his meetings. Almost all contacts commented on the importance of his contribution. They spoke of his knowledge, passion, and commitment; they were

appreciative of the energy and time he gave the EDI project. Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan, in *What's Worth Fighting For Out There?* (1998), explore the concept of the importance of forming new alliances and assert that: "Seeking external support, in fact, strengthens internal confidence and resiliency" (p. 113).

HELP appears to be an external alliance with which the intersectoral groups have resonated, complete with an agenda and a mission that all parties can commit to with passion: the well-being of young children.

District Quotes:

“Dr. Hertzman's presentations are dynamic and fascinating” (**District Contact, SD 57 Prince George**).

“Other than some confusion over the mapping, Dr. Hertzman has generated 'a standing in the aisle' interest in this field” (**District Contact, SD 61 Victoria**).

“I would do nothing but sing the praises of Dr. Hertzman and EDI. We feel that we are at the beginning stages of a much higher commitment to preschoolers and the district's involvement with them. We knew what we wanted as a district but it is difficult to get the system to buy in. EDI helped (**District Contact, SD 83 North Okanagan-Shuswap**).

“The EDI has given us an objective ‘talking stick’. I have so much respect for how respectful Dr. Hertzman is about the data” (**District Contact, SD 50 Haida Gwaii-Queen Charlotte**).

Finding 2: The most significant change agent in this process is, and must be, the intersectoral coalition in each community. (See Appendix D for quotes and anecdotes.)

Thirty-eight of the 41 districts involved in the study reported that they have either formed or joined an intersectoral coalition that meets together to share data from different sources and to plan allocation of funds and other resources. Of the remaining 38 coalitions, this researcher would rank approximately 20 as strong coalitions and fully

functioning, 11 as moderately strong and developing, and about 11 in the beginning and formative stages. For some districts, opening new doors and forming new relationships has been an exciting experience because of the intersectoral interest in the development of young children; the momentum is growing quickly. All districts reported that identifying these coalitions was one of the most significant outcomes of the EDI process and results.

Dr. Hertzman speaks of the importance of developing ‘social capital’, as does Andy Hargreaves in his book, *Teaching in the Knowledge Society*: “Teachers who teach beyond the knowledge society develop not only intellectual capital in their students but also social capital: the ability to form networks, forge relationships, and contribute to, as well as draw on, the human resources of the community and wider society” (p. 54).

Within the structure of an intersectoral coalition, all interest groups have the opportunity to form networks, forge relationships, and draw on the human resources of the community in a spirit of shared values, cooperation, and trust. The developing coalitions in BC appear to be serving young children well.

District Quotes:

“A huge problem in school districts is that due to under funding of education schools are being closed as soon as there is room to squeeze those students into other schools. This leaves little opportunity for the ideal placement of early child services within the school buildings. We know the value of bridging the gap between services; however, no one seems to be looking at it from an interministerial perspective. We are too narrow in our focus: we are too divided. That is the advantage of a coalition like ours where we can have all agencies and services at the table to dream bigger” (**District Contact, SD 06 Rocky Mountain**).

“I think that EDI has really made a difference. People are starting to figure out that we all actually want to move in the same direction; we are talking about it and planning together. We just may get to where we want to go. I think that Dr. Hertzman's work has catalyzed people. Our district now has an appetite to work with other agencies on behalf of the 0 to 5 population. We have to figure out ways to bring these kids up as a community and EDI has stimulated that talk. There is a real will right now for people to work together and get this 0 to 5 plan going” (**District Contact, SD 75 Mission**).

Finding 3: School districts understand the important role they can play in the education of young children and are enthusiastic, for the most part, about taking on this agenda. (See Appendix B and D for quotes and anecdotes.)

Schorr (1997), in his book *Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America*, says: “Successful programs see children in the context of their families, and deal with families as part of neighborhoods and communities. What if society were to become a more active part of schooling rather than a place where schools simply deposit their graduates? Couldn't many schools and teachers, not just a few, begin to make a difference then? Moving towards the danger means establishing new partnerships in which entire systems are the focus of change: schools, families, neighborhoods, and cities in concert. New relationships are also about gaining allies” (p. 6-7).

This researcher found a wealth of such activity in the province--districts knowingly ‘moving towards the danger’ and accruing allies along the way. Many of the projects described in the interviews were a result of the work of coalitions; all were connected to the EDI results either directly, in a causal relationship, or indirectly as validating information. Many districts confirmed that the hard data presented by the EDI gave them the courage to make decisions to respond.

About half the districts surveyed have taken steps to connect the preschools to the public schools, as follows:

- preschools reside within school buildings;
- teachers attend primary professional development sessions; special preschools have been established to address developmental needs;
- many districts hold preschool fairs and events to begin making early connections; some districts are just entering the planning stages.

Family literacy is featured in many districts through strategies such as drop in centers, ‘Books for Babies’ programs, preschool readiness classes, summer reading programs, or partnerships with Parks and Recreation for summer literacy activities. One

district is providing free office space to a family literacy organization. A number of school districts are implementing the PALS (Parents as Literacy Supporters) program. In Abbotsford, three coalition-sponsored Family Resource Centers will open in September 2004—all inspired by EDI. Each site serves as a preschool, a neighborhood drop-in center, a family support center and a family literacy center conceived, developed and implemented by a coalition within a one-year time frame.

As a result of the EDI process the Richmond district has established five ‘Action Teams’ that have used the EDI data extensively. The teams conduct research in their respective areas with a focus on community assets, communication, families, diversity issues, and screening instruments. The Action Teams research, plan, and report back as a stimulus for exploring potential projects and addressing needs.

Many districts are using the EDI results to determine the allocation of resources. Some have added literacy staff to needy schools while others have employed a person with a coordinating function for large projects. Still others have applied resources to professional development for primary teachers. The Boundary School District has assigned resources to identify and remediate a nutrition problem in their schools. They have also developed a dental, vision, and hearing screening program for all young children with the help of a million-dollar community trust fund.

District Quotes:

“Partnerships and personalities that are committed to young children are the essential component to make this kind of initiative for young children a success. Without it, it won’t happen--we are interested in the ‘development of social capital’. Breaking down the barriers is essential and this is the story of our Family Centers. You come to the table you bring your assets and your resources, and you check your ego outside”

(District Contact, SD 51 Boundary).

“These programs have made a huge difference in these communities. In one school, which is surrounded by a low-income housing development, the program was a parenting program which was self-actualizing. In a presentation the parents made to the (school) board at the end of the year, the head of the parent committee, who had been on welfare, said, ‘After working on this at the school and with all of the success we have

had, I don't feel poor any more'. This is an example of the tremendous success – of how a community can change its view of itself into a can-do situation” (**District Contact, SD 43 Coquitlam**).

Finding 4: New funding structures and communication systems need to be put in place so that funding is dispersed and applied in more coherent and equitable ways. (See Appendix D for quotes and anecdotes.)

The most consistent issue raised was that of funding. School boards, while informed about and willing to support the needs of young children, are experiencing their own difficulties financially and are concerned that if they do use existing funding to support preschool programs, there will be increased expectations without additional funding. These additional responsibilities could negatively impact existing K to 12 programs, their legislated mandate. Boards are more willing to apply funds to serve young children in the primary school years to address the identified needs at the 5 to 8 age levels. Some school boards believe that forging new partnerships with other community groups could be one way to fund ECD, and that active participation in intersectoral relationships could generate significant activity with limited expenditures. Some districts, for example, are providing space in schools at no cost to other agencies.

A second major issue raised was the lack of coordination in the way that funds are dispersed from different agencies. One District Contact identified 14 different sources of funding that her district had attempted to access. Another Contact reported applying for 20 grants but obtained only two. Some of the agency agendas are seen as competing and working at cross purposes. Sometimes, funds are allocated; an excellent program is started, and then has to shut down when funding is not available the following year. The time required to write proposals for funding can be excessive and is often frustrating. Funding agencies sometimes operate in isolation; therefore their planned programs may not be cohesive or complementary. There is no provincial or national vision for the allocation of funds, which means, of course, that equal access to quality programs is not likely to be a reality.

District Quotes:

“The Board has been very supportive about establishing the parenting and literacy centers with the understanding that there is not much in the way of dollars to be applied; however in the new site that will be opening there is classroom space available within the school. Staff is applying to numerous foundations and organizations to supplement the space that the Board can provide. Staff has also applied for numerous grants that they haven’t received. It’s amazing to me... what I found by working with the coalition is just how terrible the funding is for young children under the age of school. The question is always will we have our program for next year [in early childhood] but we never know until it appears” **(District Contact, SD 05 Southeast Kootenay)**.

The Kootenay Districts, with their coalition, brought a multidisciplinary team into the geographical area so that children could be assessed without having to go to the large urban centers. “This was done through the Make Children First grant; however MCFD has indicated it will not be funded again. This came directly from the exploration of EDI results. The coalition recognized that it would be important to have children arriving at the school door already supported in areas where they needed assistance. Now a number of children are arriving at kindergarten with child care assistants already assigned because needs have been identified ahead of time. The Team comprised psychiatrists, pediatricians, psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists--very similar to what the Children’s Hospital in Vancouver offered in terms of assessment. This was important because many small communities are unable to sustain these kinds of services within the community. The Team assessed 70 children” **(District Contact, SD 05 Southeast Kootenay)**.

Has this sparked any change in policy? It will be too soon to expect policy to have been affected but it certainly has affected administrative behavior. The school board is fascinated with the predictability of the data and somewhat understandably cautious about applying it literally to the system. If government is influenced by the importance of the data it certainly will affect policy” **(District Contact, SD 61 Greater Victoria)**.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION RELATIVE TO THE FINDINGS

The involvement of school districts in intersectoral coalitions working in ECD is a relatively new phenomenon, much of it inspired by the EDI process. The unanimous response from school districts is that this is a desirable circumstance if resources are put in place to support school districts in this endeavor. In proposing the implications for action, little attempt is made in this report to designate responsibility for taking action. As this is a rapidly emerging development based, by necessity, on cooperation, collaboration, and intersectoral coalitions, it is most appropriate that the coalitions work with each other and with government agencies to determine, for themselves, who should play a leadership role in support of the EDI initiative and how action should be taken.

It is critically important that, whatever action is taken, it be implemented at the local level based on the varied needs of individual communities. It was clear in the interview process that there is a passion for self-determination at the community level; implementation will be most successful at arm's length from government. The recommendations that follow reflect the voices of those interviewed and their view of the most desirable next steps.

1. Recommendations about the Leadership Provided by HELP

Districts were unanimous in their respect for and appreciation of the work of HELP and specifically, Dr. Clyde Hertzman. The following recommendations are offered for consideration:

- That the EDI continue to be implemented in order to support districts and to build a longitudinal data profile for each district.
- That HELP and Dr. Hertzman continue to play a significant role in support of the intersectoral coalitions and specifically, in this context, school districts.

- That, as a part of the work already begun, HELP establish a network of District Contacts, who would gather together at least biannually to examine new information and strategies, share successful coalition activities, and train in areas such as mapping, measurement strategies, and data interpretation.
- That HELP establish a presence at major educational conferences and gatherings of other coalition professionals, to build on the EDI initiative and related projects, to heighten awareness and to maintain a high profile and priority on the ECD agenda.
- That HELP establish other communication strategies, such as an electronic magazine, specifically dedicated to the promotion of activity that advances opportunities for young children and their families.

(See Appendix A, B and C for quotes and anecdotes.)

2. Recommendations about the Intersectoral Coalitions

Intersectoral coalitions are flourishing across BC. The strength of these coalitions is, without question, the most critical variable in providing quality service to young children. Therefore, providing support to the coalitions should be high on the agenda of all agencies. The following recommendations are offered for consideration:

- That coalitions be encouraged to continue to develop and apply funding in ways that are most suitable for each community's unique needs.
- That coalitions be encouraged to seek diversity in their leadership; no one agency or person should be the logical natural leader. Leadership should be shared and perhaps change over time as circumstances and priorities shift.
- That research be conducted on the variety of ways that successful coalitions have been formed with a focus on the ways they have responded to unique local circumstances and the strategies that have made them most successful.

- That once these case studies are completed, they be publicized so that developing coalitions can learn from them.
- That research continues to be conducted world-wide on successful systems and strategies that could be applied to British Columbia.

(See Appendix D for quotes and anecdotes.)

3. Recommendations about School District Involvement

The EDI process has demonstrated powerfully to most school districts the need for, and possibilities of, supporting preschool children as a critical investment in greater school success for young students. Indeed, many school districts have already taken strong action in response, with a long-range view of improving graduation rates. The following recommendations are offered for consideration:

- That government clarifies its expectations of school districts with respect to mandate, and create enabling legislation, including benefits and funding. This would support the connection between school districts, community coalitions, and services to the 0 to 5 population and their families. School district resources are already limited and districts will need support especially in the area of facilities, human resources, and funding.
- That school districts develop policies and procedures in advance of opportunities, to be prepared to engage in new relationships with other sectors of the coalition. Many districts have physical facilities with unused space and could therefore begin to play a key role in ECD as community planning evolves.
- That school districts designate key staff to represent them in coalition discussions. There is much to learn about the function of other agencies so consistency in school district staff representation on the coalitions will be important.

- That school districts offer the facilitation skills of staff, and school facilities, to support community initiatives. There are many skilled and trained facilitators in school districts and well-equipped meeting facilities which could be used to support the developing agenda.

(See Appendix A, B, C and D for quotes and anecdotes.)

4. Recommendations about Funding

Throughout the interviews frustration was expressed about the fragmentation of funding and the exorbitant amount of time required finding funding agencies and preparing proposals, many of which are not successful. The following recommendations are offered for consideration:

- That funding agencies work together to develop a seamless and cohesive system for funding ECD so that coalitions can access funding in a more equitable and streamlined way. For example: Government might consider establishing a provincial agency that would be responsible for collecting and dispersing all available funds from all Ministries on an equitable basis to coalitions that meet specified criteria and standards of effectiveness. In the first year coalitions might receive a start-up grant of 10%, then a two-year grant of 80% and finally a performance grant of 10%. In this way coalitions would have a predictable funding base and accountability. The annual searching for funding agencies would be eliminated and programs, therefore, more stable.
- That coalitions at the community level establish some type of public trust (perhaps through established funding agencies such as school districts), so that all funds received could be managed by a public trustee. The intersectoral coalitions could then consider and make decisions about projects for their communities strategically, with all parties participating to establish their community priorities.

- That at the provincial and the local level, public awareness campaigns be launched to raise the consciousness of communities about the importance of ECD, with the specific purpose of generating funding in communities through community and corporate partnerships.

(See Appendix D for quotes and anecdotes.)

SUMMARY

Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) believe early childhood education is worth fighting for: “Further, we showed earlier that investment in early childhood education is crucial. In their international review of ‘Combating School Failure’, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD (1997) found that a solid system of early childhood education is one of the most consistent preventors of later school failure (and all the costs of dealing with it as a society)” (p. 69).

It is no surprise to those who teach in the school system that one out of four students struggle. What EDI has brought to the school districts of BC is what they regard as irrefutable evidence and clear direction in the form of valuable data about the developmental needs of young children and their families in neighborhoods throughout BC. School districts are already embracing the concept and recognizing the potential.

With committed education professionals, with the strength of coalition forces, with community conviction, with a coordinated, coherent funding plan, and with the leadership of committed researchers like Dr. Hertzman, **all** early learners will finally have a chance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clay, Marie M. (1991). *By different paths to common outcomes*. Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Hargreaves, A. (2003). *Teaching in the knowledge society*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Hargreaves, A. & Fullan, M. (1998). *What's worth fighting for out there?* Toronto: Ontario Public School Teacher's Federation.

HELP (Human Early Learning Partnership): <http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca>.

Goodlad, J. (1994). *Educational renewal: Better teachers, better schools*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Schorr, L. (1997). *Common purpose: Strengthening families and neighborhoods to rebuild America*. New York: Doubleday, Anchor Books.

APPENDIX A

The Process for and Initial Response to The EDI Results

District Contact Quotes and Anecdotes

The Process for and Initial Response to The EDI Results

District Contacts' Quotes and Anecdotes

Audience for the Presentations of EDI Results

In most districts Dr. Clyde Hertzman or members of his staff were available to present the EDI data to community meetings as well as school district groups. In almost all districts the audience included members of intersectoral coalitions where formal coalitions were in place. In districts where no formal coalitions have yet been formed, a variety of interested agencies attended including representatives from Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), literacy groups, preschools, funding agencies, Parks and Recreation and programs such as Success by Six and Make Children First. Other guests included community members such as, in one case, the entire City Council, in another the mayor and in another the Rotary Club requested that Dr. Hertzman speak to the topic at its luncheon. In several districts where no formal coalition had existed, this community meeting resulted in a decision to formalize a coalition for further action related to the EDI results and a desire to join forces to begin to address young children's needs in a collaborative way.

Within the school district settings, most districts presented the results to combined groups of kindergarten teachers and administrators, with special presentations to School Boards or special Board Committees. A number of districts invited their Teacher's Association representatives and preschool teachers. Districts with small cohorts felt more comfortable making the public presentations after they had acquired at least two years worth of EDI data. Several districts reported that although they reviewed the data at the district level, they did not yet feel comfortable sharing the data school by school because of the small cohort which might risk the identification of individual children or families, or because they were uncertain of the

accuracy of the data because they were in the first year of using the instrument and were concerned about the reaction of school staff.

District Anecdotes

SD 05 Southeast Kootenay made a significant effort to find and include all home-schooled children, band schools and independent schools where children would not normally have been assessed using the EDI. When the results were returned, all kindergarten teachers were released to attend Dr. Hertzman's presentation so they would best understand the interpretation of the results. They used their district literacy money to free teachers from their classrooms.

SD 08 Kootenay Lake received information which ranked the schools, finding it valuable information to have at the district level. This information was not shared with the schools as there was concern about how the schools would receive it, but the district felt it was interesting information. When the results were received the district decided to only present schools with the numbers of vulnerable children, according to the Vancouver cut-offs.

SD 22 Vernon presented the results to kindergarten teachers and administrators but the district has not yet completed the task of reviewing and responding to the EDI results. More recently Dr. Hertzman has made a presentation to a community group using the findings and the maps.

SD 28 Quesnel was one of the last groups that the HELP group visited. They brought all of their community groups together to review the results including the Mayor, other interested citizens, and anyone providing services to youth and families.

SD 36 Surrey delayed presenting the results to staff because there was some need to revisit the mapping. Originally 70% of the district participated voluntarily – very important in this district - but now they have close to 100% participation. District Staff visited some schools to persuade kindergarten teachers to participate. They would like to work in more depth with their kindergarten teachers in the future and with the Surrey Teachers Association who did support the process. The support of the Teachers Association was very important. The kindergarten teachers put so much work into it the district wants to spend more time with them in this coming year to focus on and really take advantage of the data.

SD 38 Richmond invited Dr. Hertzman to attend a community meeting to present the data in connection with Make Children First (MCF). Locally this initiative is known as “Richmond Children First”. This meeting included school district personnel, parents and other members of the involved community groups. It was video taped so that other sessions could be held to supplement the initial one. They also provided summary notes about presentations to the Board and information was distributed to elementary schools. Results were shared with the Education Committee of the Board and the entire Board at a public meeting and with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

The **SD 39 Vancouver** Elementary Teacher’s Association was very cooperative about collaborating on the EDI instrument and the district made sure that the Association was actively involved in the discussions that followed. Their first meeting included the trustees and union representatives; it was very positive. One of the reasons for this degree of cooperation is that EDI reflects the kind of information the Association would like to see being used, as opposed to the kinds of measurements the Fraser Institute uses. The district gave schools their own data but had no further public events.

When **SD 57 Prince George** first received the results, they did not get the school-by-school results so they did not examine them in depth. When they received the school-by-school data it was extremely useful to consider because they differentiate their allocation of resources based on demonstrated needs.

In **SD 61 Victoria** Dr. Hertzman’s presentation to kindergarten teachers and principals made a significant difference. EDI, combined with the emphasis from the Ministry on the importance of gathering data in all areas, has resulted in a general willingness to move in this direction on the part of educators.

SD 63 Saanich supplemented the funding that was provided by UBC and applied it over the course of two years. In September of 2003 the district held their first meeting with representatives from UBC. Kindergarten teachers and some administrators came for an afternoon to a presentation about the results. In January 2003 Kindergarten teachers were also provided with a half-day substitute afternoon so they could become familiar with the instrument.

In January of 2004 a special meeting was held with the Kindergarten teachers to examine and process the results. The following questions were used to guide the discussion:

- What are the characteristics of a community where children have the opportunity to

achieve optimal development?

- How can we in Saanich schools facilitate, enhance, promote, influence and enable the necessary opportunities for children 0-6 (in the coming year)?

Additional research studies and articles on the same topic were shared.

SD 71 Comox Valley only received its data recently in the fall of 2003 so little has occurred to date. The data were presented to the School Board Education Committee in a summary form.

SD 74 Gold Trail has been meeting with their speech pathologists to review the results and review all of their community resources, discussing which communities had support and which did not. Staff then planned for how they could begin networking in their communities, but felt June was too late in the year for a community meeting.

SD 85 Vancouver Island North had been approached but was not prepared to approve the EDI process initially. The District Contact met with each kindergarten teacher individually to explain the importance of the process and then received 100% support to move ahead.

The district has just begun to explore the EDI data and took the EDI data to the Community Links funding meeting in mid June of 2004. The EDI results made an immediate impact on the committee and its decision-making. Their Community Links group consists of Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), representatives of the five First Nations Bands and the Friendship Center as well as others. The community is very well represented in the process.

The Initial Response to the Presentations

A small number of districts reported that there had been some initial reluctance on the part of kindergarten teachers to participate in the EDI process. However, almost all reported that after some discussion--which sometimes required intervention on the part of supporters of the process (either colleagues or district staff)--most kindergarten teachers felt validated by the process. (Refer to Appendix A and B for stories and anecdotes.) Many districts reported enthusiasm as a general response particularly on the part of members of the coalitions.

There was unanimity on the part of those who attended presentations by Dr. Hertzman, that his role in the presentation process had a pivotal effect on those who attended his meetings. Those who spoke about him were eloquent. They expressed respect for his knowledge, his passion, his commitment, his presentation style and were appreciative of the energy and time he invested in their presence. Perhaps their response to his presentations can be explained by Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan in *What's Worth Fighting For Out There?* (1998). Exploring the concept of the importance of forming new alliances, they propose that “seeking external support, in fact, strengthens internal confidence and resiliency” (p. 113). They proceed to make the point that leaders cannot foster and support cultures of collaboration effectively (which would seem to be the main task of a successful intersectoral coalition) without incorporating external alliances. In a school district culture, dedicated to the well-being of children, but restricted by mandate to a 5 to 18 year old age grouping, it is possible that educators and other professionals regard Dr. Hertzman and HELP as dynamic, new allies in the shared goal of finding new paths to success for young children.

District Contact Quotes

“I have listened to Dr. Hertzman three or four times now. He is so passionate about his message. How can you not get caught up in it? And it just resonates with people because it is what we want to do” (**District Contact, SD 20 Kootenay-Columbia**).

“There is a really important piece of all of this that is Dr. Hertzman himself. He presents so well. He is down to earth and he is credible. We were drawn to his work. We could have spent weeks with him” (**District Contact, SD 28 Quesnel**).

“After Clyde Hertzman’s presentation, everyone in the staff room was talking about the presentation of EDI and the socio-economic mapping of communities using a geographic map. We have learned that information can be looked at in a different way; we are learning to overlay different snapshots of our communities. It’s a germinating thing that is going on. Dr. Hertzman comes across as if educators would really understand and value it, so they do” (**District Contact, SD 46 Sunshine Coast**).

“Dr. Hertzman’s presentations are dynamic and fascinating” (**District Contact, SD 57 Prince George**).

“Other than some confusion over the mapping, Dr. Hertzman has generated ‘a standing in the aisle’ interest in this field” (**District Contact, SD 61 Greater Victoria**).

“Staff left the meeting by committing to personal action” (**District Contact, SD 63 Saanich**).

“I would do nothing but sing the praises of Dr. Hertzman and EDI. We feel that we are at the beginning stages of a much higher commitment to preschoolers and the district’s involvement with them. We knew what we wanted as a district but it is difficult to get the system to buy in. EDI helped” (**District Contact, SD 83 North Okanagan-Shuswap**).

District Contact Anecdotes

A presentation was made to **SD 08 Kootenay Lake** School Board; it succeeded in catching the Board’s attention. The board was intrigued with the report that their children were doing relatively well compared to other communities and were alerted to the potential of the problem of limited daycare for younger children.

In **SD 53 Okanagan-Similkameen** a group of one hundred people met regionally with school district representatives who presented the information to interest groups in their districts. This was the second presentation; people were much happier because the mapping made a lot more sense to them. The public health nurses, pre-school teachers, and administrators attended

as well as representatives from different cultural groups – which was stressed as being very important.

SD 72 Campbell River found Dr. Hertzman to be very motivating and very effective in his presentations of the data; his presentation was an extremely important part of the process of helping people understand the possibilities. Staff had anticipated a real reluctance on the part of kindergarten teachers to participate, but were surprised to find that teachers were very supportive; they believed that they would be making a contribution to the literacy of young children by participating in this project.

SD 75 Mission reported that Dr. Hertzman's presentations have been really well attended. Health, MCFD, and Parks and Recreation attended as well as the school district. "Dr. Hertzman is a brilliant man. I could listen to him days on end. He speaks with no notes and you just have to say he is brilliant."

SD 85 Vancouver Island North had been approached but was not prepared to approve the EDI process initially. The District Contact met with each kindergarten teacher individually to explain the importance of the process and then received 100% support to move ahead.

APPENDIX B

The Value of the EDI Process and Results

District Contacts' Quotes and Anecdotes

The Value of the EDI Process and Results

District Contacts' Quotes and Anecdotes

Districts responded to the questions: “Did you value the EDI process and results? If so, how were they valuable and if not, what were the issues or problems you confronted?” Districts were unanimous in identifying the EDI process as one that was valuable in some way; specific districts identified different reasons. The responses are grouped according to the topics districts identified as being of particular value.

Collaboration with and Connections to Communities and Coalitions

Of particular value to school districts was the use of the data with community groups and coalitions. For some districts this meant forging new relationships and opening doors to discussions with groups who shared an interest in the development of young children; for others with established coalitions, it meant reviewing discussions and decisions using the EDI data to make new plans for the allocation of funding, to confirm decisions already made or to raise new questions that needed to be addressed. Regardless, districts were unanimous in identifying the development of or the cementing of intersectoral coalitions as the most significant value of the EDI process and results.

District Contact Quotes

“We absolutely value this process and information. We definitely knew in general terms about the issues our young children had but the way Dr. Hertzman presented the issues of barriers to access and how we could reach out to these families was a highlight through his

presentation. We have a chance now. Our hope is that the recognition of this project provincially and nationally might bring new funding to our communities” **(District Contact, SD 28 Quesnel)**.

“While the community sees the value of the results of the EDI there is a strong desire on the part of the community groups to see the school district play a significant role in meeting the needs of the pre-school population. They are saying that the school district could be a major player and a major beneficiary of this proposed partnership. We have been treating the already damaged long after the damage has occurred. It’s like doctors putting a lot of money into treating lung cancer but if you haven’t done any educating on the damage that smoke causes, then you are not spending your dollars wisely – even though you have to do both” **(District Contact, SD 48 Howe Sound)**.

“I had the pleasure and opportunity to listen to Dr. Hertzman a number of times; his concept is that we don’t just target those areas where we think children are vulnerable, but our intent is to raise the level of all children by looking at a wide range of services and support so that we are raising the levels of all, not just in the targeted schools or the targeted needy children.

I think EDI is terrific! I really like the whole concept. At the community meeting I was at just last week we were able to take one area and look at it from some of the information that we received from Dr. Hertzman asking ‘What kind of neighborhood is this; is it high need or is it pretty varied or is it lower need?’ I was really excited to listen to members of community groups saying ‘Okay, based on that what do we do with our services? How do we structure it? How do we make it more accessible? How do we assign health services in this community?’

One suggestion was that maybe vulnerable schools need to have a parent room so nurses can come in. The district looks forward to repeats of the EDI process so that trends over time can be established; I am uncertain that the one application of EDI is enough to provide sufficient information” **(District Contact, SD 71 Comox Valley)**.

“All the social services are paying attention to EDI together. The conversation is really in earnest now, asking if we can coordinate our efforts to be more effective -- not only communicate what is available but how we are going to work together to help these 0-6 year olds” **(District Contact, SD 75 Mission)**.

The following are a series of quotes from the **SD 75 Mission** District Contact:

“I think that EDI has really made a difference. People are really starting to figure out that we are all actually moving in the same direction; we are talking about it and planning together. We just may get to where we want to go in the end. I think Dr. Hertzman’s work has catalyzed people to be talking about it. At all our meetings people are saying ‘hey, have you seen that information?’ All the people in our MCF Committee are familiar with Dr. Hertzman’s work. We are just making a strategic plan and EDI has become the basis for our planning; all the partners are there; EDI is the basis, certainly one of the strongest ones, of how we are developing our strategic plan.”

“EDI confirmed some of the things we already knew but also opened our eyes to some things that surprised us--we have the biggest discrepancy in physical development, some kids with well-defined skills while the other end of the spectrum with poor physical development. So we started to talk about that as a community--going to bed on time, having set times and routines, and nutrition that has become an area we are going to look at as a community. We asked what can we do as a community to help people strengthen those areas? So we don’t have the discrepancy anymore and we narrowed that gap for those kids. Our district now has an appetite to work with other agencies on behalf of the 0-6 population...we have to figure out ways to bring these kids up as a community and EDI has stimulated that talk.”

“There is a real will right now for people to work together and get this 0-6 plan going. For a long time in the system we have known that but we didn’t take any ownership for it because it was out of our jurisdiction; now we are saying ‘All right we can work with other people; we have to have those opportunities for these kids because it is too hard when they are coming into the system without those opportunities.’ I think it is within reach. EDI had a lot to do with this. The EDI has been a common element that all of us in different agencies can focus on and agree to; without EDI, I don’t think we would be working together.”

(District Contact, SD 75 Mission).

District Anecdotes

SD 05 Southeast Kootenay reported that Interior Health supported them by creating their data bases for them. Their coalition is very strong; they have used the EDI results to target which programs would be most effective for the application of the coalition’s dollars, in support of parents and young children. The coalition became more aware of the value of this type of information, creating a drive to get more meaningful data.

In **SD 53 Okanagan-Similkameen** a number of community people attended Dr. Hertzman’s presentation; they really grew to understand the importance of the at-risk population and appreciated that something needed to be done. “It has really increased awareness now; when we talk about community needs, people know what we are talking about, why we are having meetings and why we are implementing vision screening; they know we are doing it all to get kids ready. General awareness has really increased. People who otherwise wouldn’t have felt involved, such as pre-school teachers, are now included. We tried to get the small business community to attend and a few did. Librarians have been very involved.”

SD 63 Saanich reports that one of the values of the EDI process is that now people see the need to connect with preschools and engage in early conversations with parents about how children develop. “There is on-going discussion about how to generate these conversations in a very deliberate way. The district has questioned the value of gradual entry into kindergarten in September, due to inconsistent practices across the district. There is discussion now about making these conversations with each parent more consistent and more deliberate. EDI was valued highly by participants in the district.”

The EDI results provided **SD 70 Alberni** with some surprises. Staff members thought that they had always distributed their resources to the areas that were most in need; however, the school that showed up with the most vulnerability was the last one that they would have suspected. As a result, along with local community groups, they have begun to investigate topics such as how libraries are used in that area, and how day cares are used in that area, in an effort to identify why it is an issue there. The EDI data have raised many important questions for them to consider over this next year in their planning.

Response of Kindergarten Teachers

Many districts commented with appreciation on the support provided by UBC in the form of release time for teachers to administer the EDI. A number of the smaller districts commented that they would not have been able to participate without that support; a number of districts expressed the hope that the process would continue with the funding provided. Staff commented on the importance of Kindergarten teachers administering it as they are seen to have such intimate knowledge of their students. Many Kindergarten teachers felt valued by the process, and felt that it gave them credibility within the profession and within the community. They expressed an appreciation for the additional knowledge it provided them about their students.

District Contact Quotes

“Dr. Hertzman talks about kindergarten teachers as the ‘canaries in the mine’ and he thereby highlights the importance of the work of kindergarten teachers with young children” **(District Contact, SD 05 Southeast Kootenay).**

“Our kindergarten teachers are benefiting from talking about what the possibilities are through EDI. Suddenly the kindergarten teachers are being taken seriously and are a very important partner in the community. Kindergarten teachers had their own language and their own culture. Suddenly, we have a common language that is emerging from EDI” **(District Contact, SD 46 Sunshine Coast).**

“We found it was very helpful to go through the data with the administrators to see whether there were any surprises. It was very helpful as a perception check. Many of the teachers believed their children to be very vulnerable and were surprised to find that fewer than they expected were vulnerable in the different schools. We have been trying to implement kindergarten screening for a number of years. Since EDI more kindergarten teachers are on board with the concept of screening at this level. That was very helpful. It gave the district some very specific information and although we have always differentiated staffing we feel that we can be much more specific now. We are targeting monies and starting programs related to the higher needs areas” **(District Contact, SD 83 North Okanagan-Shuswap).**

District Anecdotes

In **SD 37 Delta** many kindergarten teachers were pleased with the instrument and thought it was a good way to look at child development, a better instrument than others available. They felt it was very reflective of what they see in their daily work with students and saw value in it particularly from a planning level; they valued the process and would appreciate engaging in it regularly. It confirmed that Delta's needs-based plan for establishing the degree of Learning Assistance in each school was accurate and it was reassuring in this regard. Delta runs full day kindergarten classes in their district and although EDI wasn't the reason that they started the kindergartens, the data confirmed that they needed to be doing it and that the sites have been placed in the right areas.

The Importance of the Data and Its Application

For some districts the collection of district data for students at this age level is a relatively new experience, while for others the EDI data served as supplementary data that provided additional or complementary insights into child development issues. Many districts are using the data to establish resource allocations both for funding and for human resources, to assist in district planning processes, and to use in discussions with community agencies.

District Contact Quotes

As the District Contact from **SD 85 Vancouver Island North** described it, "This EDI is one of the most important things that has ever happened in my 30 years of teaching. It has the potential to be that impactful. We need this kind of support for another couple of years until districts can learn to use the tool independently. It is very, very valuable for this age group and we have never had this kind of support before" (**District Contact, SD 85 Vancouver Island North**).

“There has been a tremendous grouping of the community around this. One of the things that has been particularly valuable to the district has been the work UBC has done to link the data to the FSA. From the linkages that were made, the district has experienced some surprises in that schools that they thought were doing well were not doing as well as expected and vice versa. This has resulted in a questioning of old assumptions and opinions that people have had about where needy schools are; they have been declared so in the past, as much by reputation and aggressive discussions rather than based on data. The EDI data has brought balance to the discussion. It has adjusted our thinking and deliberations as to where we put staff and how we try to provide extra support for children in some areas. It has been the basis for discussion for school staff with respect to programs that need to be put in place, and it has formed the basis for our discussions now, as we look at reallocating funds that we have traditionally received from outside organizations for programs such as School Meals, etc. It has had a profound effect on decision making - which is fortunate. Should we do this more? Yes” **(District Contact, SD 43 Coquitlam)**.

“We are able to pull all kinds of information from the data. For instance, now we might consider mapping where our playgrounds are. There are new possibilities and there is a comfort amongst people that questions can be asked openly” **(District Contact, SD 46 Sunshine Coast)**.

“This is such a valuable process. We must professionally pay attention to research as baseline information that tells us what our kids need to know. Quantitative data informs us where our resources need to be put” **(District Contact, SD 50 Haida Gwaii-Queen Charlotte)**.

“Dr. Hertzman and the EDI data results have been incredibly validating of the direction our seven Family Centers are moving. The district was applying the Family Center model with no road map and operating on the instinct that more data was required to clarify the direction, the emphasis being on prevention in the pre-school area. The EDI data reinforced that we were on the right track. Resources have been gradually shifting over the past five years in the district. When Dr. Hertzman first became involved four years ago, prior to EDI, he was able to affirm that the direction the district and the community was taking around early interventions was the correct one. Dr. Hertzman has been to our district three times for community conferences. We are commencing a project to do Community Asset Mapping so that we can put data into the context of making decisions and putting the resources where our needs are” **(District Contact, SD 51 Boundary)**.

“It is a ‘must’. We value it to the point where we re-assigned dollars to provide additional funds to schools so they could put together a plan to support [vulnerable] children using the EDI information...and we want more!” (**District Contact, SD 59 Peace River South**).

“In the past, **SD 61 Greater Victoria** has tried to be scientific and objective about staffing issues. They now have data about the profound vulnerabilities of some young children and will assign resources accordingly. For example, there are 7 FTE staff available for assignment; one of the plans is to lower the class size in inner city schools. One of the schools is attempting to demonstrate that this will make a difference in literacy results and is gathering data to demonstrate this; this school has made it part of their school planning process around areas of literacy and social responsibility. The EDI results have prompted the district to take the area of statistics and accountability more seriously” (**District Contact, SD 61 Greater Victoria**).

District Anecdotes

SD 36 Surrey reports that EDI confirmed some of the areas where staff have started initiatives; it showed there were real pockets in Surrey that were high need. There were no big surprises; it confirmed that the resources that had been put in place for phonemic awareness and the inner city literacy projects were appropriately placed and that they should be continued and expanded in some cases.

Surrey has just started to use EDI specifically and it looks as if it will be used extensively, especially the 5 subsections of the instrument; they look forward to being able to see it at the school level. It has proven to be an additional piece to add to their already existing demographic information and very useful in that regard. EDI is a slant that they haven’t had before. The data confirmed a great deal and will be very important in resource acquisition and allocation.

SD 37 Delta staff used the data to confirm the previous data that they had been generating from Learning Assistance, FSA results and kindergarten assessments confirming information on student need and validating original results. Staff have shared it with principals and included it in their data binder for schools which is used for setting goals and school planning. They also used the data to assist with intervention planning for the pre-school committee. Staff is considering trying to measure where children are when they come into the

school, then measure how they move developmentally even though they start significantly behind. This is necessary so that schools that have many really challenged children can feel confident that they are making a difference even though the children are starting at a different point. They believe there is a great opportunity here for a longitudinal study.

SD 38 Richmond has a great deal of interest in the EDI results. Coincidentally the district also does a kindergarten assessment called Discover Learner Strengths based on Gardner's multiple intelligence frameworks. The profiles and the results of these two sets of data are very similar. Discover does not provide the demographics but the district profile on EDI was very similar to the district profile from Discover and that was exciting to them.

The EDI results started the 'data conversation' in **SD 62 Sooke**. Historically in the district there has not been a lot of data collected. It raised the awareness of the value of data in school districts; this thinking is now being applied to other areas. They used the data to support political initiatives both at the local level and the provincial level such as integrating services between agencies like MCFD and Aboriginal Education.

Increasing Confidence on the Part of School Boards that ECD and the Preschool Agenda is Important

A number of District Contacts expressed the view that the EDI data had impacted the view of School Boards about the importance of addressing the needs of young children and about including this consideration in school district planning agendas. Even though there was an obvious new interest generated by the EDI data, most districts expressed concern that they might be expected to fund initiatives from existing dollars which are already challenged by the K-12 agenda.

District Quotes

The results were really valued in the **SD 57 Prince George** district. "The trustees, in particular, have quoted some of the results to demonstrate that they are a district with big city challenges and small city resources, a point that Dr. Hertzman made well. Using the community

mapping process they were able to say ‘Look at how needy our schools are and what few resources they have.’ It really clarified the broad differentiation between schools and the needs of the students. We immediately knew that there was a broad differentiation but to be able to say ‘This is the data’, to be able to say ‘These are the differences between our high socio economic area and our low’ was very significant. The EDI information confirms the broad distribution that we deal with in our district” (**District Contact, SD 57 Prince George**).

District Anecdotes

In **SD 70 Alberni** the EDI data persuaded the Board to sign on to the Vancouver Island Health Authority agreement. In the beginning they had been uncertain about signing with a concern about being expected to reallocate district dollars into pre-school programs. The Board is now awaiting a staff recommendation for a proposal for what type of program to proceed with; it is expected they will approve a program to begin in the fall of 2004, in support of vulnerable children as identified in the EDI results.

SD 74 Gold Trail was not surprised by many of the results because the speech pathologists previously had a pretty good sense of what was going on in the community. But they did feel there would be value if the Ministry of Education could come to recognize how urgently they need services at the pre-school level and the importance of putting funds in place to get some programs underway. For that reason it was very worthwhile doing the assessments with the students.

The New Connections with HELP

A number of districts commented on the important new connections that the relationship with HELP brought to the table in terms of human resources, connections to other agencies, new programs and momentum.

District Contact Quotes

SD 06 Rocky Mountain reports that one of the other benefits from being involved with Dr. Hertzman is that he is so connected to so many government agencies and people linked to other ECE projects like Mary Gordon with Roots of Empathy: “One of the biggest values of EDI is that it has brought so many of us together, to share together and make things happen. The children in Rocky Mountain showed up as doing better than children in some of the needy areas of Vancouver. This was very helpful as it was reassuring to people in the community that they are on the right track. EDI is affiliated with McMaster’s University and UBC and has provided us with new knowledge around the early years. It has connected us with people like Mary Gordon, founder of the Roots of Empathy and brought a high profile and credibility to the early years. It has allowed us to have common talk around the services and direction related to the early years and for everyone to be on the same page. This has been supported through our connection with Dr. Hertzman” (**District Contact, SD 06 Rocky Mountain**).

“For whatever reason, the individuals responsible for the HELP program and elements of research are wonderful human beings. They have helped us to say to each other ‘let’s collaborate and find out what we can do together’. The four universities have been brought together for the first time in such a meaningful way making contributions to their communities at no charge” (**District Contact, SD 46 Sunshine Coast**).

APPENDIX C

Issues or Problems that Arose as Part of the EDI Process

District Contacts' Quotes and Anecdotes

**Issues or Problems that Arose as Part
of the
EDI Process**

District Contacts' Quotes and Anecdotes

Considering the scope of the EDI implementation and the sensitive nature of using screening devices in schools with young children, there were surprisingly few complaints or objections expressed in the interviews. When they were expressed there was considerable commonality which can be grouped within the following topics: mapping issues, the management of the data, the response of kindergarten teachers and a concern for what will happen in the future with respect to kindergarten screening, specifically the EDI.

Mapping Issues

The most frequently raised issue concerned the maps that were created as a result of EDI data. Many District Contacts said they found the maps useful while an equal number found them to be problematic. Others commented that changes had been or are being made to the maps and that the improvements are making a positive difference. Many commented that the maps were useful when presented by Dr. Hertzman and his staff but, when left to explain them in presentations at a later date, they found themselves unable to do so.

The most serious issue seemed to be the lack of synchronicity between the boundaries of school catchment areas and neighborhoods as defined by HELP. Part of the reason for the frustration over the maps may be that many schools and some districts would have preferred to access data that was specific to the population in their catchment area, whereas the HELP agenda was to map areas by neighborhood; this often resulted in one neighborhood map including school catchment populations from two or three schools.

Only a few districts mentioned the issue of timing. Several felt that the length of time between the teacher's assessment and the return of the data and maps from HELP was too great.

District Contact Quotes

“The maps were not initially as useful as they might have been to SD 36 Surrey so a team from our research department went from the district to UBC to assist in redesigning the maps. The result were maps that were more realistic in size, better reflecting the needs of the area and it became easier to target the schools and their areas of need as a result. The problem with the mapping was that some of the geographical areas were very large; when you say ‘x’ percent of the students in that area, it is a very large number and therefore very difficult, compared to smaller districts with smaller geographical areas” **(District Contact, SD 36, Surrey)**.

“There has been some difficulty with the interpreting of the maps. It might be a good idea to have one expert in every district whose job it is to understand and be able to interpret the maps. The expert might need extensive training from UBC in order to do this but it would be a way to turn over the interpretation responsibility to districts, to get maximum use of the mapping. We need a champion in each school district. We need to be able recreate the dialogue that Dr. Hertzman has started and be able to be a bridge to our teachers. We need to intrigue and interest them rather than download it so that they discover it. We need to get our communities to rattle on the doors saying we need you and asking schools to participate rather than taking the position that we have the answers” **(District Contact, SD 46 Sunshine Coast)**.

“The maps are not difficult when he explains them but they are difficult when we try to explain them to somebody else--it is because it is new and it's because you never get enough time with him--we need intensive training and constant updating” **(District Contact, SD 75 Mission)**.

“The maps were a problem but recently HELP has been redoing them to make them easier to understand. That piece was hard for us. When Dr. Hertzman was with us we understood everything but when he left us with the maps and the data it was still very

challenging. Now that the new maps are arriving, we are finding it easier to explain the data to others” (**District Contact, SD 28 Quesnel**).

“Timing is a problem. If the district is not going to get accurate maps until the end of 2004 then it seems too soon to be re-testing in 2006; this is very little time to initiate and implement something and measure whether it is making a difference” (**District Contact, SD 22 Vernon**).

“We are a little stunned at the notion of doing it again so soon, because it was such a very big job. Three years apart is already a year old. I have a question about whether the dynamics will change all that dramatically in a three year period; perhaps five would be a better time span” (**District Contact, SD 36 Surrey**).

District Anecdotes

SD 06 Rocky Mountain reports they had some difficulty making the distribution charts because they believe they did not have enough information. They are still not sure how to use that information. They needed another day with Dr. Hertzman or more time with the data to talk with him; a working session would have been helpful after the presentation. “If Dr. Hertzman is the only one who can deliver the message powerfully, then let’s get him on tape about how to use it or some other mechanism where we can actually get hands on. It would be helpful to slow the process down and do it well instead of moving ahead so rapidly or find some way to educate people within our communities” (District Contact, SD 06 Rocky Mountain).

While **SD 37 Delta** was able to compare one area of the district to another, somehow the boundaries became mixed up. Staff are not sure if mapping the data is helpful although it may be for other districts (the data told them basically what they knew already; they would prefer that the data be broken out by school.) There appeared to be a difference of opinion about how the data should be collected among the Ministry, the Municipality and the Health professionals.

SD 44 North Vancouver would like to see boundaries for data mapping changed so that they follow individual school boundaries. If populations are too small in individual schools they suggested that schools should be paired in some logical way to best facilitate development of meaningful data, and that the data be totaled by ‘families of schools’ (each secondary plus the

feeder elementary schools). There is concern that the boundaries are distorted and therefore distort the data making it of less use to schools.

SD 62 Sooke experienced some frustration regarding the mapping. The administrators felt that there was not enough exactness. There was too much overlapping, for example, between View Royal in the Greater Victoria school district and students in the Sooke school district. Some schools are tightly configured, for example, three schools are in a small area where it is difficult to sort out which data were applicable for which school.

The maps were somewhat of a problem for **SD 63 Saanich** in that it took a long time to absorb them; it was hard to relate to individual school data because it was done by postal code not by neighborhood. In this regard it is very important to have at least one individual in the district that develops expertise in the area of mapping and analysis of the EDI data. The summary tables were more helpful. “The maps were great as a stimulus to start the discussion but overall not as useful” (**District Contact, SD 63 Saanich**).

Management of Data

Issues about the management of data were raised in connection with the mapping, in connection with the accuracy or lack thereof of the instrument, the use of Vancouver as the ‘cut-off’ and the interpretation of the data. Approximately one-third of the districts expressed concern over confusion about the maps. Only a few questioned the validity of the results; the majority reported that the EDI results were reflective of other data gathered, with very few surprises.

(Note: References were made from time-to-time in the stories and anecdotes about the ‘Vancouver cut-off’. Explanation – Vancouver ‘cut-offs’ were used to provide standard categories to which other areas could compare because the sample was large and its size (statistically) was capable of averaging high and low values, providing representative values. The cut-off was established as 10%. The bottom 10% of the scores is categorized as ‘vulnerable’ or at-risk.)

District Contact Quotes

“When **SD 05 Southeast Kootenay** was compared to Vancouver it looked as if the results of what they were doing were superior, when in fact staff does not believe that this is true. It would be more helpful to say ‘Here is the percentage of kids that are entering school who are not ready for literacy’ instead of comparing the district to Vancouver. We are very supportive of the EDI process but want to ensure that they have other sources of data at the same time”
(District Contact, SD 05 Southeast Kootenay).

“The data is accessible but it is the process of exploring the data that is so important. There is a danger of leading to wrong conclusions. The use of Vancouver as a cut off may or may not be useful. At times it provides perspective; at other times it confuses the interpretations” **(District Contact, SD 63 Saanich).**

“The district was surprised that so few children at risk showed up and wondered about the subjectivity of kindergarten teachers and possible Hawthorne effect” **(District Contact, SD 20 Kootenay-Columbia).**

District Anecdotes

The Vancouver cut-off became a problem for **SD 08 Kootenay Lake** when the schools received their school data because it made it appear as if they had very few children who were vulnerable. Teachers felt agitated because for years they had believed they had a range of vulnerable children. Therefore they were somewhat skeptical about and didn’t feel validated by the results. The district wonders now whether it should have sent that data out to the schools. They also found it difficult to translate the data that came from UBC and interpret it at the school level. The reason for that was that it was sent in different formats; sometimes it was reported as the number of students and sometimes as percentages; then when new results came it was still difficult to interpret because the format had changed again.

SD 51 Boundary felt that such a small cohort made it very difficult to make major decisions as to where resources need to be so they are intending to repeat the EDI testing for a

3rd year in order to give them the data they need. They are hoping that HELP will support them by bringing their data in for the 3rd year and cover the costs of the support. The district will release teachers if necessary to complete the assessment.

Response of Kindergarten Teachers

By far the majority of District Contacts reported that Kindergarten teachers felt validated by the results and by the emerging role they could see themselves playing in early childhood education. There were ten districts that raised some concerns, however. Because Kindergarten teachers play such a critical role in the process their comments are worthy of particular consideration.

District Contact Quotes

“This is becoming a hard sell. The kindergarten teachers find it to be an onerous process. Unfortunately the timing of the EDI assessment was at the same time as other assessments were going on – maybe our fault – the most common complaint was that there wasn’t enough time. They thought the questions were unclear and open to interpretation and subjectivity; they took longer than the 20 minutes allocated, ½ hour was needed per child. Part-time teachers objected less as they used their own time to do some of the testing but full time teachers found it to be too big a job. Full time teachers resented being out of their classrooms for an extended period of time and they resented what they saw as double time in preparing for a TOC. They questioned how the data would be used and how it would help them do a better job with the children; this is where some criticism and anger emerged when they reported that they were being told they had few children at risk, when in fact they believed that not to be true. They were concerned that because the district looked like it was doing well, they would receive fewer Community Links dollars, learning assistance time or other resources to meet the needs of their children” **(District Contact, SD 08 Kootenay Lake).**

“When the first results from the mapping came out, the kindergarten teachers could not see the value of it even though they saw through the maps that some communities were more

vulnerable than others; they didn't believe that anything would be done about it. Time is always an issue. This took up a significant amount of time for administrators as well as teachers. Senior administrators were organizing meetings, arranging for the assessments to be done, and organizing TOC time" (**District Contact, SD 53 Okanagan-Similkameen**).

"There were very few problematic issues raised. However, some teachers did say this was information we already knew; what we really need is strategies to help these kids; this is where the district role becomes so important. The district's response was 'That's the data from a researcher; now it is our job to do something with it.' The question therefore became 'Maybe we knew in our own way that these areas were problematic, but were we working on it together with our community?' (**District Contact, SD 78 Fraser-Cascade**).

What Next?

While most District Contacts were enthusiastic about the new insights gained through EDI, some described anxiety amongst staff about what the next steps might be. Some of the concern was over funding issues; other issues were about leadership, the challenge of building meaningful coalitions and the issue of mandate. Even while they were expressing concern or frustration, the optimism and desire on the part of the majority of districts to move forward was apparent. Of great concern was the issue of funding as districts, while open to taking on this additional birth to age 5 agenda, expressed concern that funding is not adequate as it is without having to expand their mandate. Even so, over half of the District Contacts expressed a passionate belief that the time has come for school districts to play a significant role, along with community partners, in the nurture and education of young children and their families.

Despite the fact that the following responses were generated by the question "What problems or issues did you encounter through the EDI process?" most of the issues raised were related to how to get past the problems and get on with implementing new programs.

District Contact Quotes

A series of quotes from the District Contact, **SD 06 Rocky Mountain**:

“One of the things the Coalition is concerned about now that we are ready to implement a number of the initiatives is, will there be funding to support these initiatives or is this yet another survey of what is needed without appropriate follow-up funding? Service agencies are exhausted by searching for funding year by year.”

“We need a clearing house. We need somebody to help us set up a provincial network.”

“We feel isolated a lot of the time but through the coalition we are having such a good time being isolated.”

“I think one of the things we see through Dr. Hertzman’s research is, he gets in there and reports it to the people who need to hear it. I think what we need is someone who can carry this work forward and make the links to see the services are funded. We are getting a very good sense of what we want to do as a result of what is showing up in the EDI results, but we are not confident the services will be funded.”

“A huge problem in school districts is, due to under funding of education, schools are being closed as soon as there is room to squeeze those students into other schools. This leaves little opportunity for the ideal placement of early child services within the school buildings. We know the value of bridging the gap between services; however no one seems to be looking at it from an inter-ministerial perspective. We are too narrow in our focus: we are too divided. That is the advantage of a coalition like ours where we can have all agencies and services at the table to dream bigger.”

District Contact, SD 06 Rocky Mountain

“We as a school district do not have the money to deal with the preschool, birth-6 age level issues. We are enthusiastic about being a part of anything that starts to develop at that level but there is a lack of funding for MCFD so they are only able to do the emergency work – triage versus doing preventative work. If we had the right opportunity, our region would go in the right direction” (**District Contact, SD 28 Quesnel**).

“Getting the teacher association on side was extremely important and took some discussion and then they agreed to collaborate. When you talk about all of this you think ‘Why haven’t we been doing this all along?’ Partly it is a matter of an orientation that teachers have about assessments and their concern about how you use the information--getting teachers on side by assuring them the information they provide will not be misused--that is always a concern” **(District Contact, SD 39 Vancouver)**.

“As the school district works more and more closely with other child-centered services in the community, we see the need to engage in a community based study of the impact of early childhood screening, identification and intervention. We need to see which processes work for supporting children in their transition from pre-school to school, and which processes need to be changed or to be replaced. Of particular importance are our students with special needs. In order to do this we need to develop an effective tracking and information management system as well as an effective communication channel so that our findings can be put to the best use” **(District Contact, SD 46 Sunshine Coast)**.

“Partnerships and personalities that are committed to young children are the essential component to make this kind of initiative for young children a success. Without it, it won’t happen. We are interested in the ‘development of social capital’. Breaking down the barriers is essential and this is the story of our Family Centers. You come to the table you bring your assets and your resources and you check your ego outside” **(District Contact, SD 51 Boundary)**.

“It’s bigger than the issue of change; it’s also about power and turf and money. If we can get past that there is potential for action in multi-service sites” **(District Contact, SD 61 Greater Victoria)**.

“Communication is a big issue. I think we are all working on 0-6 and working very hard on it but we are not communicating very well about what we are doing. Wouldn’t it be amazing if Health was saying literacy is important, MCFD was saying literacy is important, doctors were saying literacy is important and Parks & Recreation were saying literacy is important; even if we all said it in our own way, maybe parents would start getting the message when they heard it from all of us in the early years. Maybe doctors should be speaking at our primary teachers meeting like Dr. Hertzman did; maybe pre-school teachers should be speaking to primary teachers about what they do; maybe we need to start intermingling professionally. We need a provincial campaign for reading and literacy in pre-school. We need a week in the spring where

the entire Province is registering children for kindergarten at the same time, with all sorts of public service announcements about the importance of it. We need a provincial communication plan to be continually driving home the point about literacy and reading to our children and participating in community events around literacy. Somebody needs to do that! That would make total sense. Why wouldn't we do that provincially? And who will? It would be really exciting to see this '0-6' thrust pushed through by somebody provincially" (**District Contact, SD 75 Mission**).

District Contact Anecdote

District staff in **SD 36 Surrey** was unaware of the extent of the opportunity available through the Make Children First group for some time, unaware of the availability of funding and opportunities for collaborative initiatives. They gradually invited themselves into the group; once the connection was established it became obvious there were many opportunities for kindergarten teachers and pre-schools. "It is so important to have the right person in the district connected to the right agency. In many districts people are self identifying because they have a passion for developing the topic, then momentum builds" (**District Contact, SD 36 Surrey**).

APPENDIX D

Initiatives and Projects Resulting From or Connected To The EDI (Early Development Instrument)

District Contacts' Quotes and Anecdotes

Initiatives and Projects Resulting From or Connected to EDI

District Contacts' Quotes and Anecdotes

Social Context

Andy Hargreaves in his book *Teaching in the Knowledge Society* says: “social capital depends on social learning—much of it informal. Children who move schools a lot or who live in urban neighborhoods where the jobs and businesses have disappeared find it hard to gain access to or develop social capital. Isolation and polarization within society destroy social capital and limit the educational opportunities and learning capacities of young people. Social capital supports learning, feeds it, finds an outlet and a purpose for it....Social capital is foundational to prosperity and democracy. Developing it is educationally essential” (p.54).

While most of the initiatives that evolved from or are connected to the EDI results could be characterized as an investment in social capital, the Coquitlam, Abbotsford and Boundary districts and their coalitions provide three good examples of a coordinated effort in this regard (as do a number of others mentioned elsewhere in this document).

The Coquitlam ‘Social Capital’ Story

SD 43 Coquitlam is part of a community coalition that was originally formed by the Fraser Society for Children and Youth. The school district became involved in order to support the program; it provides an excellent example of a community responding to community needs with a social agenda. “The project has an advisory board of 65 people from all walks of community life that has developed a 60-page Community Action Plan. The group became so large they had to create a sub group, an executive committee, to further develop the plan. The coalition is planning a public consultation gathering to present the Community Action Plan in September 2004.

One of the first projects that evolved from the EDI data, in conjunction with other community agencies was a parenting program piloted at one of the schools for parents and children over three and four years of age who had not been part of a pre-school program previously. It was a play group designed to support socialization; as well there was a parenting component that proved to be so successful that funding was accessed to develop a similar 3-year program at three other schools. Sites were chosen using the data from the EDI results.

These programs have made a huge difference in these communities. In one school, which is surrounded by a low-income housing development, the program was a parenting program which was self actualizing. In a presentation the parents made to the Board at the end of the year the head of the parent committee, who had been on welfare, said ‘After working on this at the school and with all of the success we have had, I don’t feel poor any more’. This is an example of the tremendous success – of how a community has changed its view of itself into a can-do situation.

In one of the early programs there were at least 3 or 4 cases of hearing impairment identified that had previously gone undiagnosed. These impairments would have resulted in language impairment of some sort had they continued to go undetected. There was also a case of spousal abuse uncovered and appropriate supports were put in place. As a result of these programs the schools found that the children adjusted more easily to school entry with respect to socialization and school routine” **(District Contact, SD 43 Coquitlam)**.

The following quotes from participants who participated in an evaluation of the parenting programs tell the story best:

- There were amazing differences in the school as a result of that program being in place and the opportunities for agencies to see each other as being complementary in supporting the same goals were established in those projects as well (Tri City Pre-School Program).
- My kid became social and learned a lot. I have learned about government assistance programs and recreational, library and legal matters which were fully explained. I enjoyed all of the days of the program.
- We are going to miss coming. It was the only time we had out. My child learned to be more open to play with other kids and began to talk English. He didn’t do that before.
- She has learned to trust again. I saw a new side to my child. I thought she was much more capable of doing things that previously I didn’t think she could do. I found I

underestimated her and I will no longer do so.

- It made both of us excited about the school, setting a great precedent for next year. Who knew schools could be such fun? It actually made me enroll again in school too.
- I wanted my child to have a gentle introduction to school. This program more than met my expectations. It gave me a chance to meet other parents in my community. The same goes for my child.
- The guest speakers were also fantastic. The part that I enjoy least is that the program is over.

(Parent Quotes, SD 43 Coquitlam)

“As well, there was a position established through a United Way grant for a person to coordinate the activities in the region. A parent resource center was set up at one of the schools which had been identified as a needy site from the EDI data. It is being run by a community-based social agency. A parent drop-in center was established at another school where needs had been identified as high in the EDI results. A number of PALS programs were also set up (Parents as Literacy Supporters). The data has been used recently by outside agencies such as MCFD in conjunction with the community committee, to develop a protocol for access to the EDI data - for people in the region who might want to have data for helping to deliver programs. As a result of EDI, interest in the Roots of Empathy program grew to try to enhance social development skills. Funding was received from MCFD to support this program. Five schools piloted the program and, in this past year, expanded to include 20 schools. Another cluster, including elementary and middle schools, will be added in the coming year.

Momentum is growing; EDI has been very helpful. There has been an amazing amount of achievement here” **(District Contact, SD 43 Coquitlam)**.

The Abbotsford ‘Social Capital’ Story

The District Contact from **SD 34 Abbotsford** says: “One thing that has been strengthened and probably done better because of EDI is the work our Community Early Childhood Committee that emerged directly from the EDI discussion. One of the sub committees is what we call the Family Resource Center Committee. It is made up of pre-school providers, Ministry of Children

& Family Development (MCFD), Understanding the Early Years representatives and a few other people for a total of about 10 people; our mandate is to oversee the implementation of a concept that we call Neighborhood Place. Health is not yet a part of the initiative although the district looks forward to them coming to the table. In a sense it is the creation of small ‘c’ community schools in areas that need it most based on the EDI data and data provided by the school district and MCFD. The centers will be designed to respond to the needs of preschoolers and their families in a school site.

The school district (34) has put about \$30,000 into this project, MCFD about \$98,000. This will establish three ‘Neighborhood Place’ sites and funds are presently being sought to establish two more—each in each of the five sectors in the district. Each site consists of a Family Resource Center operating out of each school as well as a preschool. They will open in September, 2004 after only one year of planning. Each site is a preschool, a neighborhood drop-in center, a family support center, and a family literacy center; it will include whatever the neighborhood needs in the way of support. The district has put in funding to provide the space and some additional resources.

The Neighborhood Place objectives are:

- to develop inclusive, accessible and welcoming family resource center sites,
- to develop programming that focuses on the optimal healthy development of children”

(District Contact, SD 34 Abbotsford).

The Boundary ‘Social Capital’ Story

SD 51 Boundary, together with all community partners, had begun the development of an extensive network of seven Family Centers located at school sites before the EDI implementation; however the EDI results have proven to be invaluable in further planning.

“We have a very active and collaborative Children and Youth Committee (CYC) and sub-committees from the CYC group. Each of the members of the CYC group take the information about something like the EDI results back to their relative groups, resulting in deep penetrations of the information throughout the organizations. They took the broad brush strokes of the EDI results, analyzed what the results were telling them and approached the Phoenix Foundation (a

community foundation designed to benefit children and families in the area) which provided \$2500 for a nutrition study. This need had been identified by the EDI data which was analyzed school-by-school. This will be a continuing study. The district has contracted with a local contractor to develop a questionnaire; the questionnaire was provided to administrators, teachers and other staff who were requested to complete the questionnaire in an effort to identify the incidence of hunger in their schools. The nutrition study resulted in a breakfast program being provided in the schools. The need was first identified in the K class; however the questionnaire facilitated the need being identified throughout each school. For example, in one elementary school 40% of the children coming to school were not adequately nourished, 24% in a different school.

As a direct result of the EDI data, the district decided to specifically look at dental care, vision and hearing assessments. Because the public health authority no longer administers vision screening and hearing screening, the district contracted with a local health nurse who screened all of the K-3 children in the system--approximately three hundred children. The district then contacted parents on school letterhead accompanied by a referral form to inform them of the results and to ask parents to ensure their children's needs were being cared for. In September we will be doing a follow-up to see if action was taken. None of this activity required a lot of money, just attention as a result of the EDI data--many hands make light work” (**District Contact, SD 51 Boundary**).

Of the seven Family Centers where all agencies work together on school sites, the District Contact says: “Rather than having families learning how to live with their difficult situations, this program presents alternatives coupled with a supportive environment to facilitate personal competency and enhance existing family strengths. The focus of the MCFD is family capacity, the district focus is literacy but the two are partners and depend on each other” (**District Contact, SD 51 Boundary**).

***School Districts, Communities, Coalitions and Partnerships:
Intersectoral Coalitions***

In his book *Educational Renewal: Better Teachers, Better Schools* John Goodlad talks about a new “powerfully productive symbiosis” between schools and external agencies which, he argues, “depends on:

1. distinctive differences between the courting parties;
2. the complementarity between these differences—the degree to which each side contributes to the other’s lack;
3. the extent to which the courting parties first envision and then comprehend through experience how much this complementarity depends on fully shared commitment and effort; and
4. the powerful contextual needs or demands such as societal priority or available resources” (p. 103-104).

District Contacts were more than enthusiastic and sometimes surprised by the strength and resulting achievements of the developing intersectoral coalitions. Most of the school districts interviewed indicated that they are members of community coalitions or partnerships, have initiated such relationships themselves or are in the process of establishing a coalition or partnership with other community agencies. Some are very well established and others in the formative stages. In some cases the EDI process was the initiating event in the formation of the coalition; in others EDI served to strengthen the coalition. Only three districts indicated that no coalition or partnership existed at the time of the interviews.

District Contact Quotes

The **SD 05 Southeast Kootenays** and **School District 06 Rocky Mountain** have collaborated in establishing their coalition and action plan: “The key to this district and the Southeast Kootenays is the coalition that came together about four years ago addressing the question ‘What are the issues around children and youth?’ The highest priority item identified was early childhood development. We looked for a place to start and the nucleus within the coalition became EDI; it was known, it was proven, it was a way of knowing discriminately what

the needs were and the fact that we were able to get release time for the teachers to do the task made it possible.

The coalition made sure that it was seen as an agency that would support community groups that were already underway, not to take over or control their work and to collect information about what was happening in the regions. It operated as a communication agency and had an open table to which anyone was invited. It began with eight people but we now have over one hundred people who receive the minutes. Out of the hundred who are invited, about thirty or forty people sit at the table.

The coalition made a decision that its members would be collaborative and would seek funding together rather than competitively. That has worked very well, as each person seems to have their specific expertise to bring to the table. As an example, the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, which is well connected and skilled at developing proposals, has assisted a number of us in applying for funding. We were considered for a number of projects, and were given dollars to begin a Make Children First site in the region. One of the first things we did with the MCF money was to hire a Coordinator who is a ‘mover and shaker’ so now we have the capacity to make decisions for the coalition and have them followed through by the Coordinator. We get a lot of work done even though for many who sit on the coalition the work is off the side of our desk.

So, all of this started with the EDI. The coalition has been formed but the coalition got its direction from the EDI. The MCF money came as a direct result of EDI. All of this is about relationships. When you connect with each other like this you develop a relationship and it means when you are in a tight spot you can phone someone else and get a really good opinion.

We also used EDI to determine where to put Community Links funding. We then brought together significant people from the agencies as well as accepted proposals from their schools; we examined EDI data as a way to make decisions. We linked our speech pathology services for pre-schools with the school district speech pathology service and that has permitted us to provide a stronger service and maintain speech language pathologists financially. It is about relationships. It is about the fact that we don’t have a pre-determined way or notion of how it needs to work. There is a lot of openness. There are no egos at the table. We come as equals [about the coalition]” **(District Contact, SD 06 Rocky Mountain)**.

The District Contact for **SD 36 Surrey** reports: “The data was used extensively with the Make Children First group of which there are approximately 120 people. This group really took off once they got the data. The group includes all parties who are interested in enhancing the lives of young children including aboriginal people, Health, MCFD--targeting young parents and young children; that triggered a lot of activity and a Coordinator was hired through MCFD. As a result of the information-sharing a strategic planning committee of about 20 people was pulled together. The final report which was developed by the strategic planning committee has just been produced; it speaks to the EDI results as well as data gathered from other sources and it paints a picture of the high need areas. As well there was a higher-level group established of senior administrators from a variety of different agencies with a goal of looking at how they could pull themselves together to coordinate and collaborate on services. It has helped them to understand better what services need to be provided and has helped them design a policy for pre-school daycare. There is a lot of momentum for ECD building. It is coming from a variety of directions and it will be really important to coordinate it to make sure we are not duplicating anything” (**District Contact, SD 36 Surrey**).

SD 39 Vancouver has been part of a coalition called Windows of Opportunity which received \$300,000 from MCFD; the coalition decided on early childhood development as one of the areas they wanted to invest the money. They used EDI results to determine the sites to assign the funding. “In general we have used EDI to further the equitable distribution of resources; equity is a key emphasis in our district so it has been very helpful in that regard. Windows of Opportunity has been looking at child development in its many forms including child care, parent programs and pre-school programs. The coalition has recently started to bring higher level officials from Health and Ministry for Children & Family Development together to formalize an agreement about collaboration because there is so much going on but little coordination. It is difficult to get any kind of on-going funding. Everything that is happening is on ‘this grant and that grant’ so we are trying to pull things together and build an infrastructure that might make it possible to have more of these things happening. I don’t think Health knows what we are doing; we don’t know what Health is doing. We are all putting resources into the same issues but with no coordination or looking for where the gaps are. So I think research here would be very helpful in that sense” (**District Contact, SD 39 Vancouver**).

“The district also offered a panel in June for parents. The panel included kindergarten teachers, community health, experts and early intervention specialists resulting in a great evening with 40 in attendance and a request for more sessions. The district has developed a close working relationship with the local Squamish community and pre-school. We have developed a school-based team at the pre-school level including the speech language pathologist and representatives of the Squamish Family Centre. This has been a big step towards preparing these aboriginal preschool students for school” (**District Contact, SD 44 North Vancouver**).

SD 75 Mission has launched their ‘West Heights Project’. This is a combined effort that grew out of the EDI data. Starting September, 2004 partners include the MCFD, Health, and aboriginal groups. “There was a real will; everyone knew they could do the job better if they worked together. We are going to run a pre-school program three mornings a week; we will be running an aboriginal preschool program in the afternoons in a classroom we already had; we are restructuring a classroom into three offices which the Ministry of Children & Family Development and Community Living will use. There will be an on-site person for 20 hours a week. Health is planning to run immunization clinics out of the site in the mornings when it is not being used for pre-school. Parents are saying ‘We can use it as a drop-in center’. Once you invite people to sit down and generate ideas it is amazing how it works! This project is a huge piece from the EDI. The principal is determined to make this work as a critical and integrated part of the culture of the school. This is a geographical area where access has traditionally been difficult for people. Now we are going to try and get Parks & Recreation to offer programs on that site after school so that the community has access to programs in the geographical area. We are also talking about literacy activities, homework clubs and looking at how we can fund some of those. We know the kids will come; it has just always been a question of the dollars. This totally makes sense for this community. It’s on its way!” (**District Contact, SD 75 Mission**).

District Anecdotes

SD 06 Rocky Mountain also launched a program called Ready Set Grow. It’s a 3 and 4-year-old fair held in the schools at which all agencies and services for young children are represented--speech language pathologists, occupational therapists and other health professionals

to deal with language, vision and hearing, Mother Goose pre-school representatives and others. The advantage of the coalition is that at the table they decide where and when to offer the fairs and the services in a coordinated way. The fair runs from 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm in a school gymnasium so that families can come together. Families have the opportunity to meet the professionals, have conversations, express concern, pick up brochures and pamphlets and engage in activities. A package is created for each child with a balloon; as they go to each station they can add the information they want into their envelope and take it home with them. Through the fairs, the coalition and the community team try to spot at-risk families as early as possible.

SD 20 Kootenay-Columbia has launched new initiatives because of EDI. Because of declining enrolment they have space developing in schools. They believed that opening the doors of their schools to the community would further enhance the present offerings and also provide support for families. They have a plan in the 2004/2005 school year to integrate pre-school experiences into their schools. As a result of the EDI information they arranged for a part-time Coordinator to bring together all interested community agencies because there was no family coalition group already existing. The district took the leadership role in setting that in motion. The district has set aside \$60,000 and it intends (with the support of Community Links funding) to fund pilot projects to explore the interface between early education and schools with a focus on bridging between entry into kindergarten as well as providing support for families especially in the area of literacy: “We have also met with the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy group (funded by the Columbia Trust) which provides services to promote literacy and to families. We are looking at providing space for them free of charge to help coordinate literacy for families especially in the early childhood development range. All of the above came as a result of Dr. Hertzman’s work and thinking about how the school system could extend into the community to provide leadership in this area. It came directly out of the presentations he made. After Dr. Hertzman’s meeting the district offered to provide a coordinating and facilitative role, not to take over the initiative; it was from there that the meetings began. We are heading towards a true family coalition group” (**District Contact, SD 20 Kootenay-Columbia**).

SD 35 Langley has well-established intervention programs and found the EDI data to be useful as a confirmation of its application of resources. One of their interesting community projects involves events in the mall on special occasions such as Easter or Halloween. The mall

sponsors the event, encouraging children and families to attend to raise awareness about early literacy and developmental needs. The money raised is donated to the district's PALS (Parents as Literacy Supporters) program. "The EDI brought together all the people in the community who matter. That was the most powerful thing. We will be looking at it [the results] again."

SD 37 Delta incorporated the EDI data into their Community Link analysis to inform themselves about the distribution of resources. As a result of EDI data they started a kindergarten readiness program with pre-school partners and now have a much better link with the pre-schools. Using the EDI data they chose the schools where they would run a 10-week program in the spring for children who had not had a pre-school experience. It was funded by pre-school dollars and the data was very helpful in selecting those sites. At kindergarten registration parents were asked whether their children had been to pre-school; if they had not they were offered this opportunity. Multi-cultural workers attended the kindergarten registration to assist as 80-90% of the kids are from Punjabi-speaking homes.

In **SD 38 Richmond** the Richmond Children First Steering Committee is a community partnership that brings all sectors in the community together. It has created five Action Teams that have used the EDI data extensively. For instance, the Mapping Team has mapped all the programs and services in the district on top of the HELP maps addressing where the services are and how they relate to the needs as identified by EDI. The teams also pursue additional data to support the information from EDI. As a result of this exploration, they are asking themselves the question "What does all this mean for the next steps we have to take?" For example, they have come to the conclusion that more screening is needed by nurses because they found that only 10% of their young children even see a nurse; they had believed that that service was more universal but the additional data identified the lack of service.

The Action Teams are playing an important role in paying attention to the data.

The Action Teams consist of:

- the Information Action Team – to develop a communication campaign, website developments, directory and newsletter,
- the Community Mapping Action Team – to develop mapping methods and oversee mapping processes such as where do single families live, where they live regarding whether they graduated from high school, where are the daycare centers, recreation and community centers,

- the Family Action Team – to develop parent surveys, reach isolated families, health/family fair, parent conference
- the Growth & Development Action Team – to develop a comprehensive review of screening tools and implementation of a plan for a universal screening tool
- the Diversity Action Team – to ensure that diversity is reflected and considered throughout all aspects of the initiative

“There is a lot of excitement about what we are learning from the data and the process. We surveyed parents to find out what they knew about programs and services for children 0-6 in the district. We asked what the favorite activities of families were, the frequency of their involvement in them and where they spend their leisure time. That was enlightening. For example, we discovered that many people go to the mall with their families so one idea that is developing is to make sure there is lots of information available at the malls – a drop in place where parents can get information. No one realized until the survey was done how many people use the mall as a destination, whether shopping or not” (**District Contact, SD 38 Richmond**).

SD 44 North Vancouver established an EDI follow-up committee, now called the North Shore Early Childhood Network involving 59 people. This was a direct result of the EDI data presentation. At these meetings a number of issues are discussed – community resources, coordination, information about partner’s services, establishing participant contact networks, EDI boundaries, asset mapping plans and funding sources. Their vision statement was adopted recently as follows: ‘North Shore community partners, working together with family, to promote and build a healthy and successful beginning for children six and under.’

Further work will proceed to develop the mission, goals and objectives statements. The membership includes all community service groups, libraries, First Nations groups and meets monthly. It will be breaking into smaller action groups for further study such as accessing funding, new maps, and screening.

SD 63 Saanich is planning a community meeting to initiate action in the fall of 2004. The community meeting will include all representative community members including representatives of service clubs, businesses, peninsula community services, government agencies and any other

group that expresses an interest in attending. The purpose of the day will be to look at the information that has been gathered and to begin processing it with a view to planning action.

Other Districts have taken steps towards establishing important but less formal partnerships:

- **SD 78 Fraser Cascade** decided to invite the ‘Community Champion’ to all primary teacher meetings. A decision was made at one of the most recent teachers meetings to provide a video called *Let’s Read: Ways to Support Your Child’s Reading* to all schools. The Community Champion was also given the video so that she could distribute it among the people in her community groups.
- **SD 74 Gold Trail** plan to invite pre-school teachers to be a part of their professional development processes and relevant meetings because their training is limited and many are not aware of the skills children need to be successful in school.
- “Part of the strategic plan for **SD 75 Mission** will be a communication plan so that we start informing each other better, a focus on how we share information...so the same brochure shows up in the doctor’s office, the Parks and Recreation office and the school office so we are working together on the same information. We don’t typically coordinate that very well” **(District Contact, SD 75 Mission)**.

Literacy

In her book *By Different Paths to Common Outcomes* (1998) Marie Clay says: “the challenge of literacy improvement is fine-tuning programs that are already satisfactory to get better results. To ensure that by the age of nine no children will have fallen dangerously behind their peers in literacy development, special attention must be paid in the preschool years, the first two years of literacy instruction, and early interventions that provide catch-up experiences” (p.197).

The EDI results caused many districts to initiate new programs and complemented or confirmed existing literacy projects in others.

1. School-based literacy projects

District Contact Quotes

SD 85 Vancouver Island North District Contact reports, they are going to try something very new. “We have very few resources to spare and a small population but decided to allocate .1 of a teacher to supervise a Language Literacy Outreach Worker. This Outreach Worker will be the person who works directly with identified children in the area of vocabulary development and language development. The .1 teacher will teach students once per week. The Language Literacy Worker will then see the identified children during the week to provide practice and repetition of the skills taught by the .1 teacher. The .1 teacher will supervise the Worker and work collaboratively with the Speech Language Pathologist. The targeted children will initially be of aboriginal descent and the grade levels expanded from K to grade 6” (**District Contact, SD 85 Vancouver Island North**).

District Anecdotes

In **SD 36 Surrey** a group of principals worked together with administration to develop a policy related to the question: ‘what does it mean to have 0-6 programs in the school?’ They addressed questions such as what are the responsibilities of the school for preschool programs, how does the school program merge with the pre-school program, how are facilities shared? There is an implied understanding that preschool programs will likely be in place in many schools in the future.

SD 39 Vancouver has been involved in many early literacy initiatives based on Australian research that focuses on nine or so elements of early literacy prior to the EDI results. “However, the EDI results provided compelling information that we would not otherwise have had about why it was important to be doing so. So it was more motivating for some schools to get involved. Involvement has been voluntary” (**District Contact, 39 Vancouver**).

SD 57 Prince George has a very specific project called the Primary Project which is an inner city project focused on the three inner city schools offering reduced class size, focused professional development for teachers and a focus on improving reading. They were able to use the EDI results directly to inform their decision about which schools needed the support. The EDI

results were used as part of the research to support the development of this project. “We think this is one of the most significant projects that we have implemented in literacy in the past number of years. The EDI did not necessarily inspire the project but it prompted the realization of the huge differences that we needed to address. So to some extent it strengthened our thinking in addressing the question of what could we do differently for our inner city schools. EDI provided us with concrete evidence to be able to say there is a huge need here and we need to do something different.” SD 57 has another project related to EDI where they provide school-based literacy coaches to all the schools. “The reading project was in place before EDI but EDI helped us to be able to say we are not just looking at FSA results in order to determine which schools should receive funds for literacy coaches first” (**District Contact SD 57 Prince George**).

After examining the EDI results and other data **SD 60 Peace River North** has identified language development as an area of weakness for many kindergarten students. In September the district will be implementing a new language development program in all kindergarten classes to ensure that all students have access to experiences that will help them develop foundational skills in this area. Their contracted speech language pathologist is designing the program. Kindergarten teachers will have a 1 day in-service session in September and an assessment process will be developed.

SD 61 Greater Victoria District Contact reports that “the Esquimalt family of schools held a full day in-service session at a May Pro-D day focusing on literacy. What does this have to do with EDI? The answer is ‘a lot’. Everyone is talking about success for young children. It is becoming a coalition of forces for kids.”

In **SD 63 Saanich** another outcome of the EDI results was a decision to move towards a kindergarten assessment device with sensitivity to developmentally appropriate practice.

As a follow-up to the EDI results **SD 72 Campbell River** formed an early literacy community group--this emerged from sharing the data with the community agencies at one of their meetings. (There had been an adult literacy group in the community prior to that.) The EDI results spurred action towards ensuring that there was a literacy component in local daycares and pre-schools; this had been on the district agenda for some time but the EDI results provided the impetus for it to become a reality. This, in turn, resulted in a professional development for 30

preschool educators in a 'Keys to Literacy' program. The education center hosted the event and the district offered their resources and equipment to support this activity. The Keys to Literacy program also resulted in good quality books being provided to the preschool and daycare centers.

SD 72 Campbell River is launching a project to map literacy in the community--the EDI results will play an important role, informing the services that will be provided. EDI data have caused them to work on their relationship with Parks and Recreation who offer a free program in one of the neediest areas. Through this program the school district trains the Parks and Recreation leaders how to read to kids and supplies the books that they use in the program, to keep summer reading a priority. Another school has organized a summer program to keep the library open in order to support summer reading for children, by inviting children to come for story time and book selection activities. One of their teacher librarians is completing a Master's degree and is going to develop data about the difference it makes when children have access to libraries during the summer.

SD 74 Gold Trail is assigning the five neediest schools .2 additional staffing to work on early intervention, a direct result of EDI.

SD 79 Cowichan is proud of the progress it is making, in cooperation with its coalition, to support early literacy. Staffing is differentiated based on the EDI results with additional staff assigned to four schools. A community early literacy teacher has been hired to operate a Play and Learn program out of two schools in an effort to reach the 0 to 6 population. The Cowichan Family Resource Center has opened and the school board is expressing interest in further activity to connect public schools with the preschool community. The EDI provided the evidence required for this momentum to be established.

SD 83 North Okanagan-Shuswap had already initiated training for a number of interested teachers in the PALS program (breakfast and books in the morning, pizza and books after school). "Since the EDI results came out the schools with highest need were given grant money to implement the PALS or a similar program. The district provided the funding through Community Links. One school has had as many as fifty or sixty parents for breakfast and books in the morning including many dads. The program at that school has been so successful it is being expanded to intermediate grades for parents and students to be involved in study skills. EDI succeeded in galvanizing teachers who had not yet been involved, reinforcing the PALS program, and supporting the expansion of it.

These programs such as PALS are all drawing in the pre-school kids--it is like the teachers have turned the corner. Principals are now supporting such programs too. To me EDI is hugely significant in providing the momentum and I appreciate the fact that Dr. Hertzman was willing to come to town to share the results. All of these little things became very important to get the momentum going. I don't think teachers in our district would say EDI started all of this. They would say that they had already started the literacy program but we can see it from the big picture perspective. Teachers are hoping the EDI screening will happen again because there was release time for training. They felt like they were a part of a significant project" (**District Contact, SD 83 North Okanagan-Shuswap**).

2. Family Literacy Projects

While many of the projects described in the preceding section could be considered Family Literacy projects, several districts are developing cohesive programs that seek to impact broader community literacy initiatives ultimately benefiting preschool children as well as their parents.

District Contact Quote

SD 75 Mission is designing strategies to enhance early aboriginal student success: "We are starting a new project at the elementary level where aboriginal education will have some after-school programs running. We are going to run a full day aboriginal kindergarten. Our aboriginal children are spread out in our area so last year we started a program where we bussed them in to one school in the afternoon and we said 'Let's give it a try and see what happens.' All of our schools have a half-time kindergarten program. We started this program with an academic as well as a cultural focus; it has been very well received. We also use the EDI information to inform us as to how to assign the Community Links dollars--social equity dollars, the pre-school subsidized spots to support aboriginal children, the bussing for aboriginal children, the Meals Program for needy children--those are all related to EDI" (**District Contact, SD 75 Mission**).

District Anecdotes

SD 05 Southeast Kootenay District has established a Parenting Center with an early childhood educator in the most vulnerable school and is seeking funding to set up a second site. The district provided the centers with surplus kindergarten materials. The classroom is set up like a typical preschool or kindergarten classroom but is designed to be more appropriate for younger children. The parents attend with their children; it is not a drop off center; opportunities are provided for parent interaction. The educators model reading aloud and other kinds of literacy activities. There are some structured activities for the children but the emphasis is on informality and support for parents and children. It started out just a few parents at a time but it is growing quickly. The district has been tracking where parents are coming from and is in the process of designing and evaluating the system. Many parents say they are coming because it provides a support group for them.

SD 46 Sunshine Coast District has approached the local Starbucks manager seeking literacy support (part of Starbucks' corporate agenda); however the district has asked Starbucks to consider a different approach. The plan is to have a drop-off center for books in a variety of community agencies such as shopping markets, all to be coordinated by Starbucks. There would be book bins where community members could drop off books. Anyone who wants to pick up a free book and take it home is welcome to with an invitation to return it, exchange it, or keep it. The EDI data was used to demonstrate the need to the manager of Starbucks and up to \$6000 may be committed as a startup fund for the project. Other agencies will be approached in the fall of 2004.

SD 69 Qualicum had an extensive community outreach program underway prior to EDI results; however the EDI results have served to inform and confirm programs. The district has approximately twenty early literacy projects which include:

- thirteen Mother Goose and Friends sites where they serve approximately three hundred participants every eight weeks (the EDI brochure went out to all parents in those programs),
- a Mother Goose Goes to School program in four schools (the brochure went out to them as well),
- an Early Literacy Bus donated by the school district (2 days a week, 500 visitors a

- month, designed for the outreach population) with community guest speakers, volunteer bus drivers and community sponsors,
- a grand buddy program of 200 seniors and
 - others.

SD 74 Gold Trail has recognized that access is an issue; many people don't have vehicles so when they are running parenting events they are arranging for school busses to bring parents.

Organizational Change

Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan in *What's Worth Fighting For Out There?* say: "in turning schools into stronger communities, school reforms should not be separated from wider urban reform. They depend on each other...The full solution lies outside the schools as well as within. This is not an excuse for schools to sit back and wait for the city to change. It is a rallying cry for the two to work together more closely. However that doesn't mean you have to work on all issues at once. Rather, as Walsh (1997) says: 'the best projects tackle what they are best positioned to make a difference on and work out from there.' " (p.13).

Districts are changing to respond to the EDI data and providing leadership to manage the change within their districts as well as in the broader community (as previously described in the section on community coalitions).

District Quote

SD 28 Quesnel has indicated to its pre-school communities that there is the possibility of offering preschool in its schools where there are empty classrooms. "We have also talked with our aboriginal groups about how they might like support to address their issues. The district is currently in the planning process regarding secondary restructuring. This may not seem connected to EDI; however when we examined the community maps there appears to be an opportunity to do something differently in the secondary restructuring process by supporting a secondary school within a common geographical area where families need support, for example, where new soccer

fields and training facility might be built, a linking of school needs and city needs” (**District Contact, SD 28 Quesnel**).

District Anecdotes

In **SD 08 Kootenay Lake** EDI results have played a very important role. The district is considering including the EDI data in their district accountability agreement and in school growth plans. A report was completed at the end of the school year about the application of community links dollars, specifically identifying the numbers of vulnerable children in each school as reported by the EDI results and the early intervention data the district had collected. The report included data regarding hungry children, numbers of high cost students, high incidence students, etc. including an analysis of the funding applied in each area. Both the Vancouver cut-off data and local data were used to create a very comprehensive report on the existing situation. The results were shared with the Early Intervention Steering Committee which is an official district committee that reviewed the results and provided related recommendations.

The district is considering using the EDI results and other available district data such as early intervention after two to three years to reallocate resources accordingly, a sensitive issue in their District.

The **SD 38 Richmond** Contact reports that they have a strong coordinator for their Richmond’s Children First Initiative without which many projects would not be possible. They have initiated, as a result of their ‘Discover’ data, a kindergarten professional development series which addressed the district profile from Discover and incorporated findings from EDI. District profiles suggest that students are not very strong in interpersonal skills and that correlates with the results from EDI in the social-emotional area. At the same time it was discovered that there was a relative strength in the logical, mathematical, and spatial ability. The in-service was designed to help kindergarten teachers pay attention to how the strengths could be used to address areas of need. Many practical ideas emerged about designing new experiences that addressed the results of the district profiles basically using problem solving skills as a theme throughout the series--‘How can kids use problem solving to address literacy skills?’

They intend to meet with all administrators to consider the meaning of the data from a community neighborhood perspective. ‘What does the data mean for their school community and

how could the data influence what they do in their schools and with their parents?’ Another connection to EDI is the Richmond district’s annual *Learning and the Brain* Conference. This Conference has been held for the past five years and is focused on providing information to parents and other caregivers about the importance of the early years in a child’s life and how to nurture his/her development. Dr. Hertzman has been the keynote speaker twice at this Conference.

In **SD 44 North Vancouver** four full day kindergarten classes are being established with bursaries available for children of families with financial needs for the extra half-day; the bursary covers about 60% of the cost. The district is using the same five areas identified in EDI to write a full day curriculum for the full day kindergartens.

SD 46 Sunshine Coast and other community partners such as Community Services and Public Health have applied for a grant for the next step of mapping our community assets. The partners are planning to develop a strategic plan based on the data and an action plan to map all assets in the community as an overlay to HELP’s maps. The district and other partners are looking into developing strategies for communicating more effectively with the aboriginal community to help aboriginal adults understand that this is not about cultural issues; it is about developmental environmental issues for all children. The School District will offer leadership by contributing facilitators for community dialogue about the assets of the community and about the strategic plan.

SD 62 Sooke has already used the EDI data to readjust their staffing, using it as a base line for allocations of special needs staff as well as some of the information from Statistics Canada. Staff members believe they can now prove that some schools have higher needs than others. The data has supported their intuitive awareness of the needs of the schools and they are therefore changing the assignment of learning assistance, special education support and Reading Recovery where needed. In the case of Reading Recovery, the assignment is almost double what it was prior to EDI results. As well they have reapplied the Community Links resources of youth and family counseling. The entire EDI initiative has raised their consciousness about the importance of early childhood services in the community.

SD 62 Sooke staff took the analysis of the data to a school board meeting identifying the deficiencies in the system. Using EDI results, their provincial external review, and best practices

research -- through their Early Success Curriculum Advisory Committee--they have made two significant decisions:

- To create an Early Success Curriculum Advisor whose tasks are to develop, adopt and implement a kindergarten screening tool, manage and analyze the data from the kindergarten screening tool, develop and maintain relationships with formal and informal pre-school organizations, implement the new math curriculum at the kindergarten level, in-service and plan in-service for K and grade 1 teachers and to work with preschools to make the transition to the school system more successful.
- To create a position for a K-12 Literacy Curriculum Advisor whose tasks are to implement the DART writing program from K-9 and implement the Smart Write Program as well as develop strategies for strong transitions from primary to intermediate to secondary.

In **SD 78 Fraser-Cascade** the EDI data was used in individual school plans so that schools automatically review their EDI data to examine how they are applying their resources to make a difference in weak areas.

In **SD 83 N. Okanagan-Shuswap** using the EDI mapping information, a decision was made to provide all of the high-needs schools with extra resources for a variety of student needs, whether it is literacy or nutrition or support for field trips, wherever vulnerable children and parents need support.

Political Will and Policy at the School District Level

Almost all initiatives identified in this paper and almost all projects described involved the participation of school districts and therefore the implicit and at times explicit approval of school boards. Almost all District Contacts described the tension that exists between the recognition of young children's vulnerabilities and needs as revealed in the EDI data and the scarcity of resources in the school system. At the same time most District Contacts expressed a desire to have the mandate and the resources required to address these needs in conjunction with their

community coalitions. The following are additional examples of explicit action on the part of school boards in spite of the lack of mandate and related funding:

District Quotes

“The Board has been very supportive about establishing the parenting and literacy centers with the understanding that there is not much in the way of dollars to be applied; however in the new site that will be opening there is classroom space available within the school. Staff is applying to numerous foundations and organizations to supplement the space that the Board can provide. Staff has also applied for numerous grants that they haven’t received. It’s amazing to me... what I found by working with the coalition is just how terrible the funding is for young children under the age of school. The question is always will we have our program for next year [in early childhood] but we never know until it appears” **(District Contact, SD 05 Southeast Kootenay)**.

The Kootenay Districts, with their coalition, brought a multidisciplinary team into the geographical area so that children could be assessed without having to go to the large urban centers. “This was done through the Make Children First grant and came directly from the exploration of EDI results; however MCFD has indicated it will not be funded again. The coalition recognized that it would be important to have children arriving at the school door already supported in areas where they needed assistance. Now a number of children are arriving at kindergarten with child care assistants already assigned because needs have been identified ahead of time. The Team comprised psychiatrists, pediatricians, psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists--very similar to what the Children’s Hospital in Vancouver offered in terms of assessment. This was important because many small communities are unable to sustain these kinds of services within the community. The Team assessed 70 children” **(District Contact, SD 05 Southeast Kootenay)**.

“Has this sparked any change in policy? It will be too soon to expect policy to have been affected but it certainly has affected administrative behavior. The School Board is fascinated with the predictability of the data and somewhat understandably cautious about applying it literally to the system. If government is influenced by the importance of the data it certainly will affect policy” **(District Contact SD, 61 Greater Victoria)**.

“At this point the board has not provided specific direction about how to proceed. The intention is that in the fall the senior management team will sit down to review the data to consider what the school district might be able to do. Because of low cohorts the Teachers Association has some concern as to the value of the data in some areas. The management team sees great value in it as one important piece of information; it will be important to use other information as well. It will also be important to use this and other data with community groups for planning purposes as well” (**District Contact, SD 71 Comox Valley**).

District Anecdotes

Staff of **SD 05 Southeast Kootenay** School District used the results of EDI to persuade the Board to provide a portable at one of the vulnerable-school sites and to cover costs such as heat in order to provide a parenting center. This center is successfully underway. Applications went forward to Make Children First with EDI results as part of the rationale in order to establish another center. Each center operates two days a week with the same staffing moving from center to center for the 2004/5 school year. In the second year of operation a 3rd day was added at one of the centers through funding from a different partner group.

In **SD 73 Kamloops/Thompson** the community groups and the school district have always worked closely together. There are approximately 12 pre-schools in school spaces. Some inner-city schools have also been receiving nutrition and after school care. EDI results reinforced for the Board that children need more support at a young age so the Board set aside funding for summer school for grade 1. Five schools were identified in total, two inner city schools; the program offered is a combination of recreation and reading for 4 weeks/4 days a week. The children received intense reading instruction. It is staffed by a qualified primary teacher with resources provided. “They partnered with UCC [Cariboo] to get volunteers from their programs to assist in the morning program; the City of Kamloops, the TNRD [the regional district] and the Village of Chase covered the cost of the team leaders for the afternoon recreational program. In addition UCC in partnership with all other sectors will provide a mobile unit also equipped for the assessment of early childhood development to make this service available to outlying communities and to families without transportation who can access this at shopping malls or schools” (**District Contact, SD 73 Kamloops/Thompson**).

OVERALL CONCLUSION

Andy Hargreaves (2003) summarizes by challenging educators to achieve five tasks. Two of them are directly linked to the EDI agenda and the work that has resulted in BC schools.

“...we will need to help build a *social movement* that galvanizes public opinion in favor of investing in an ingenious and inclusive educational system and society that benefits everyone rather than a divided system that suits only those who have the privilege of mobility and choice” and “...we will need to show political courage and integrity by reconnecting the agenda for educational improvement with a renewed assault on social impoverishment” (p. 207).

He summarizes with a warning: “The knowledge society is beckoning. It is time that everyone in education be granted his or her right to have access to and engage with the highest levels of it. Ingenuity, investment, and integrity, as well as cosmopolitan identity, are required from all of us. Otherwise, insecurity and worse will be all that we have, and no less than we deserve” (p. 207).

Appendix D is rich with anecdotes about professionals in BC with a passion for making schools a better place for young children, people with the ingenuity and integrity of which Andy Hargreaves speaks. British Columbia’s schools, in partnership with the intersectoral coalitions and HELP, continue to invest in young children—now with an additional focus on children from birth to age five. The personal and professional investment of those involved is evident; the development of social capital is one of the obvious and desired outcomes.

If the collective voice of the District Contacts could be heard, it would be heard emphatically saying the following:

We now have ‘the hard data’ in the EDI results; we understand and believe in the need; we are ready and willing to invest in the future of the young children in our communities. What we need now is a declared mandate for schools to officially assume shared responsibility for children from birth to age five, in collaboration with the intersectoral coalitions—and a cohesive funding plan to infuse the existing momentum and sustain it.

(Please reference pages 17 to 21 for a summary of the recommendations that resulted from the 41 interviews with the District Contacts.)

**EDI IMPACT STUDY
PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

SD 05 Southeast Kootenay
SD 06 Rocky Mountain
SD 08 Kootenay Lake
SD 20 Kootenay-Columbia
SD 22 Vernon
SD 28 Quesnel
SD 34 Abbotsford
SD 35 Langley
SD 36 Surrey
SD 37 Delta
SD 38 Richmond
SD 39 Vancouver
SD 43 Coquitlam
SD 44 North Vancouver
SD 46 Sunshine Coast
SD 48 Howe Sound
SD 50 Haida Gwaii-Queen Charlotte
SD 51 Boundary
SD 53 Okanagan-Similkameen
SD 57 Prince George
SD 59 Peace River South
SD 60 Peace River North
SD 61 Greater Victoria
SD 62 Sooke
SD 63 Saanich
SD 64 Gulf Islands
SD 68 Nanaimo
SD 69 Qualicum
SD 70 Port Alberni
SD 71 Comox
SD 72 Campbell River
SD 73 Kamloops/Thompson
SD 74 Gold Trail
SD 75 Mission
SD 78 Fraser-Cascade
SD 79 Cowichan Valley
SD 82 Coast Mountains
SD 83 North Okanagan-Shuswap
SD 85 Port Hardy
SD 87 Stikine
SD 91 Nechako Lakes

THANK YOU!