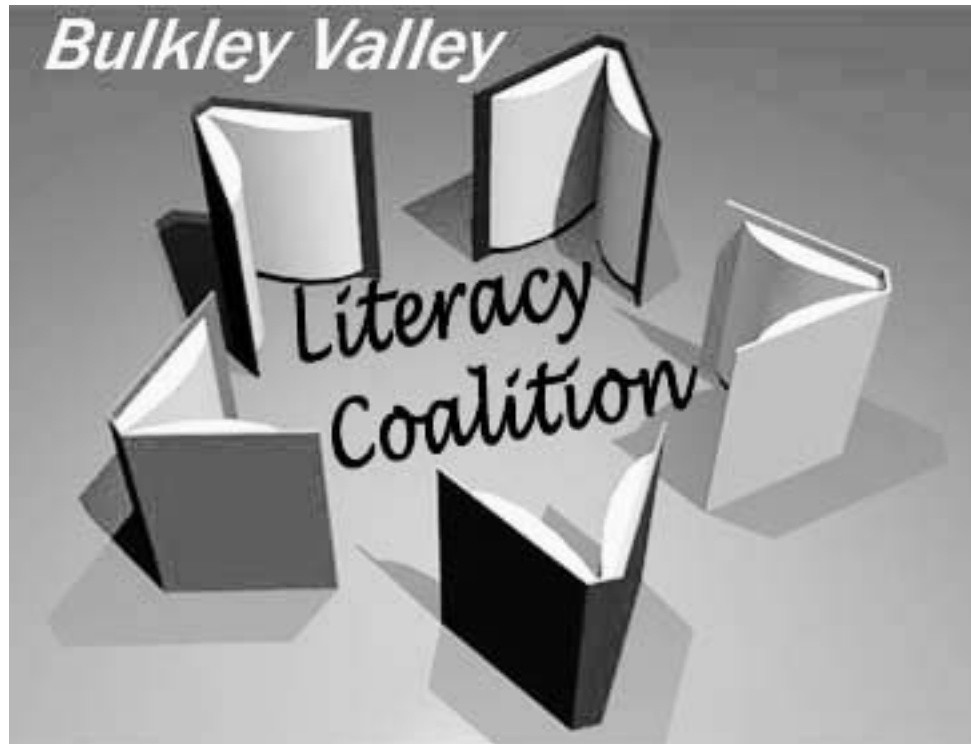


School District No. 54 (Bulkley
Valley)

District Literacy Plan
2009-2010

Moricetown, Smithers, Telkwa, Houston



A collaborative community based plan

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Introduction

This year's District Literacy Plan for School District #54 outlines the results of a process which brought people, groups, and organizations together to remove systemic barriers, fill gaps and support innovative approaches to literacy development. This process began in the spring of 2007 with the new literacy mandate of the Ministry of Education. School District #54 recognized the opportunities and benefits of bringing together different perspectives to better understand the complex literacy issues in our community and to develop integrative solutions that go beyond an individual vision.

Located in the northwest region of the province, the 4 communities within our school district boundaries stretched along a 110 mile corridor of Highway 16. Each community is unique in their culture, social and economic climates. Our people live in towns, villages, and rural environments. The School District sits on traditional Wet'suwet'en territory and approximately 23% of our school population is of Aboriginal ancestry. A large percentage of our population is dependent on a resource extraction economy which brings complex social and economic issues. (See Appendix 1, 2, and 3 for Moricetown and Telkwa overview and Smithers and Houston Community Plans for more details on the social and economic realities for each community).

School District #54 (Bulkley Valley) serves a student population of 2,400 students in nine schools: six elementary, two secondary, one Distributed Learning school, 2 Strong Start Centres and one Strong Start Outreach. Over the last eight years the district has experienced declining enrolment by approximately 700 students. In addition, there are 5 independent schools and one federally funded band school within the district.

School District #54 participated in the last 2 rounds of the Early Development Instrument testing (EDI). District wide, 26.5% of children were vulnerable on at least one domain of their development in Wave 1 and 26.4% in Wave 2. Our District EDI results do indicate considerable disparity or difference between neighbourhoods, reflecting that children within the district have had disparate qualities of experience before school entry. (see EDI table for details)

Both Smithers and Houston have adult literacy programs that have been active for more than 20 years and have positioned the communities as leaders in the community literacy sector. Both have Community Literacy Plans developed under the LiteracyNow funding and have been active in community based literacy research projects. Our district has a strong history of working collaboratively on literacy issues.

Definition of Terms

In order to ensure active participation in this planning process we have identified the importance of developing a common language. Throughout this document the following terms will be referred to.

Coalition: A process of participation through which diverse organizations work together in a mutually beneficial and well defined relationship towards results that they are more likely to achieve together than alone (adapted from Ryerson University Course Content Community Collaborations in Support of Children and Youth)

Community: The children, youth, family, and adults who live in the geographic boundaries of SD #54.

District: School District #54 geographic area which comprises Moricetown, Smithers, Telkwa, Quick and Houston.

Literacy: The ability to understand and use printed information in daily activities at home, at work, at school and in the community.

Transition: Any event or non-event that results in change in relationships, routines, assumptions, and/or roles within the settings of self, work, family, health, education, and/or economics.

Early Development Instrument (EDI): A questionnaire designed to measure the state of childrens' development at Kindergarten in the domains of

- Physical health and well being
- Social competence
- Emotional maturity
- Language and cognitive development
- Communications skills and general knowledge

The Bulkley Valley Literacy Coalition

The Bulkley Valley Literacy Coalition was formed with community representation from across the District. The following is a list of partners and stakeholders that School District #54 has committed to working with the on the District Literacy Plan:

- Houston Literacy Committee,
- Smithers Literacy Outreach Committee
- Smithers Community Learning,
- Smithers Public Library,
- Northwest Community College,
- Houston Public Library,
- Houston Link to Learning,
- K'yah Weget Education Society (Moricetown Band),
- Telkwa Reading Center,
- Dze L' Kant Friendship Center,

- Houston Friendship Center,
- Regional Literacy Coordination,

Values:

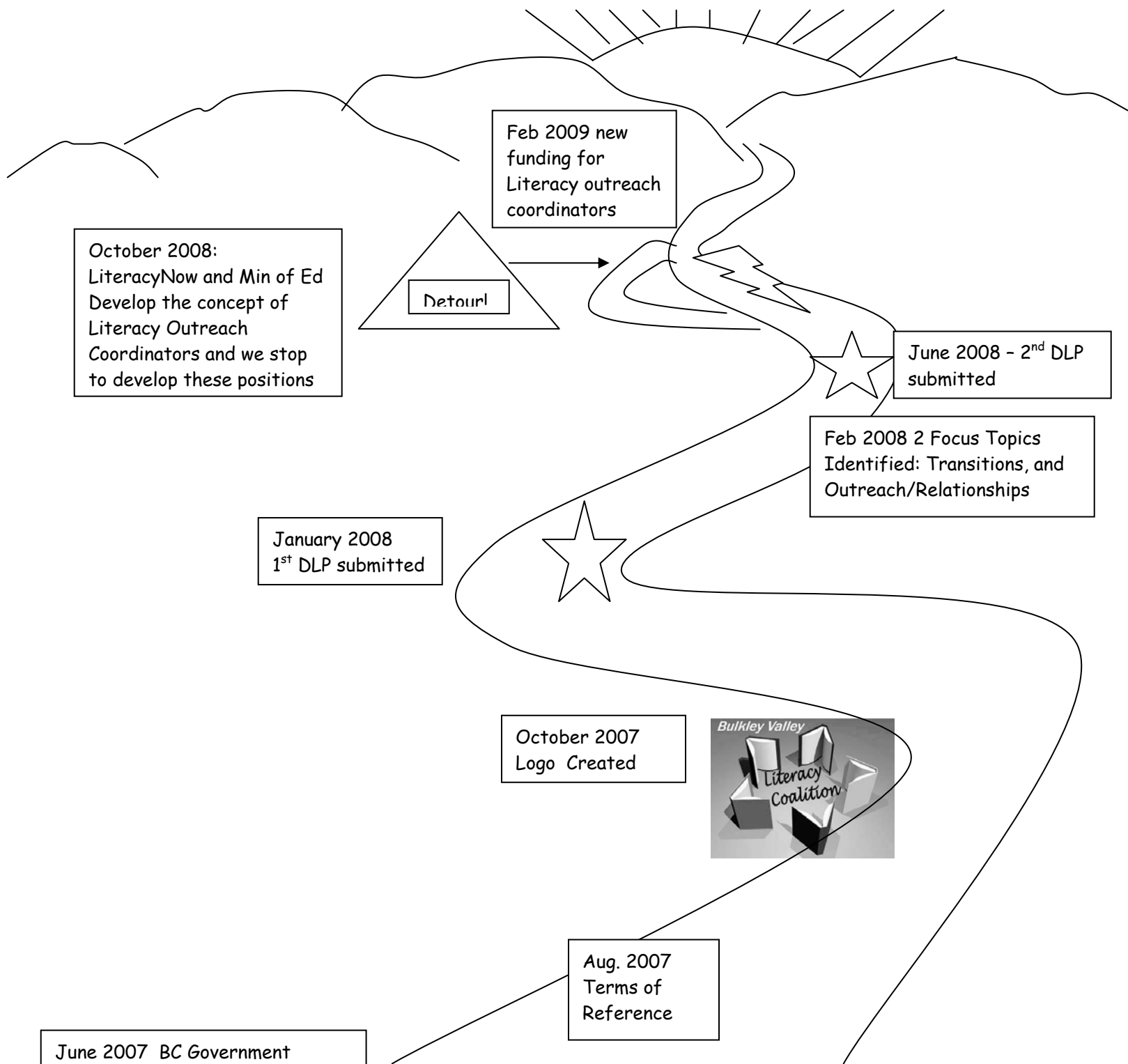
- As a coalition we recognize that each member is a distinct entity with a specific mandate. We recognize that no member will be expected to change their mandate as a result of membership in the coalition.
- Each organization has an equal voice at the table.
- We hold the guiding principles of Literacy Now

For further details please see Appendix 4 for our Terms of Reference

During the 2008/2009 year, the BV Literacy Coalition met approximately every second month. At each meeting we take the time to share and learn from our experiences. We develop forms and questions to help literacy practitioners describe and examine their successes and challenges and how they related to our common goals for literacy development. This process has been important for developing connections and relationships which allow us to work collectively for change. The conversations that take place during this sharing of experiences spark new ideas for partnerships, open opportunities for referrals, and foster program development.

The membership of the coalition went through some changes over the past year as funding shifted and certain programs were discontinued by the Provincial Government. This included funding for aboriginal literacy through the Friendship Centres. Staffing changes in some of the member organizations have resulted in some temporary gaps in representation. We anticipate returning to full membership in the fall of 2009.

We have experienced challenges in developing separate coalition goals while still acknowledging and supporting the goals of each member. This has been a learning experience for all the members.



The progressive development of the Bulkley Valley Literacy Coalition. Formed as a community response to the changes in government policy, the coalition is made up of organizations which have literacy as part of their mandate and are located within the geographic boundaries of School District #54. The goals are to work together to develop and activate an integrated District Literacy Plan linking all programming relating to literacy.

Reflections on 2008/2009

Goals and Objectives

In 2007 the Coalition started its planning process by identifying the following long term Goals:

Create a culture of learning

Improve access for everyone to learning opportunities

Coordinate quality programs that meet community needs

Focus on the whole learner in the development and delivery of programming

In 2008 we focused on the theme of **transitions** and developed the following goals to target our collective energies.

1. Improve the transition of children to Kindergarten so that more students enter kindergarten ready to be successful.
2. Improve the transition rates of students from kindergarten to grade 12.
3. Improve the transition rates of young adults and adults to work and to live independently in the community.
4. Improve the transition for aboriginal learners to school, within the school system and from school to work or post secondary education and training.
5. Improve transition of services around early learning services providers, school age service providers, and adult service providers.
6. Build capacity within the literacy sector of our communities.

For each of the above goals the coalition reports on the success and learning that occurs for early learners, k-12 learners, adult learners, and aboriginal learners. The table that follows documents some of the new literacy initiatives taken with our district over the past year and outlines the resources required, the barriers encountered and some of the evidence of success. As we are still working on developing ways of capturing data on the broad impacts of the DLP and the actions of the coalition and its members, this table is intended to serve as a illustration of activities rather than a comprehensive inventory of district wide activities and achievements. We wish to acknowledge that there is substantial work being done in all the communities which may not be adequately reflected here.

New Partnerships and Initiatives

Project	Target Goals	Partners	Resources	Barriers that were overcome	Evidence of Success
Step Up Summer Tutoring program	2, 4	School district, NWCC, SCSA,	Funding for staff	The program came closer to being sustainable	The program is able to operate this year.
Outreach to Fort Babine	4, 6	NWCC, SCSA	Time, funding for staff, trust and buy in from the community	Community employment situation has changed	None yet
Smithers Ground to Griddle Neighborhood Kitchen	1, 3, 4, 6	HLL mentored LOC Smithers SCSA, NWCC	Time. Information, expertise Relationships, referral and planning support	Arranging funding	15 families & 5-7 children participated
Moricetown Art access program	3, 4	NWCC	Instructor time, money, Community buy in	Getting people to stay committed	Established innovative programming
Books from Quick school closure	2, 6	School, SCSA, One Sky	Transportation relationship	Developing awareness of the opportunity	500 books shared
Aboriginal Lit Awareness in Smithers	3,4,5, 6	LOC Smithers Friendship Centre, NWCC	Time, trust, relationship First nations access coordinator (NWCC) mandated to do outreach to low lit learners & support them	Getting "buy in" 2 positions at college and F. Centre are empty. Programs are stop and go and when a person is finally ready to start, many changes have happened in staffing and programming	45 First Nations people participated
Free Pre-K in Houston is more sustainable and got access to a target group	1	HLL, SD #54	Money, time, sharing the strong start space and staff made it affordable	Sustainability is a challenge starting up earlier so that kids in need get identified earlier.	

Project	Target Goals	Partners	Resources	Barriers that were overcome	Evidence of Success
SD # 54 supporting Moricetown Adult Ed program	6	Moricetown and SD #54	Relationship fostered at the coalition	Previously there had been less communication between these partners and a lack of relationship building opportunities	25 students being supported
Cookie Monster Program (Aboriginal Family Lit)	1,3,4	SCSA and Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre	Space, funds for ingredients, staffing	Finding Participants	6-8 parents and 8-1 kids participated regularly
Smithers Awareness Events	6	LOCSmithers, SCSA, SD #54, NWCC	Time relationship, sharing of cost of awareness campaign	Communicating about mandates and levels of coordination, resource sharing, reaching out to target groups	50 people talked to us and took lit information at kick off event, We are seeing increase in adults asking for help with lit issues
ACE-IT Program	3, 4	SD#54, NWCC	Funding and coordination time		

Examples of the impacts of coalition generated or DLP activities:

Changes to Learners lives:

- More programs and events to access.
- One client has received relevant employment training and is in the process of pursuing some more.
- Programs have put people in touch with services they might otherwise not know about.
- More clients registering for one on one tutoring.
- More volunteer tutors.
- 11 tutors received literacy awareness training.
- Put learners in touch with alternative literacies such as connection to culture and environment.

Impacts to the Community:

Literacy related discussion has improved people's knowledge of what educational opportunities are available in our community. The programs listed above have helped strengthen our community by bridging culture and socio-economic groups and allowed people to access some basic needs such as food.

Educational opportunities such as a field trip to Driftwood with local indigenous plant expert, Jean Christian, has provoked thought and memory, and improved participants knowledge of their environment in areas such as: identifying some of the edible plants in our region and learning the seasonal value of harvesting.

Coordination – Working Together Better

The 2008/2009 year brought unexpected opportunities and challenges. LiteracyNow offered to provide financial support for Literacy Outreach Coordinators to support the development and implementation of Community Literacy Plans in Houston and Smithers. Our challenge was to clarify all the coordination happening at the local community level, district level, and the regional level. We also had the opportunity to pool our resources. We identified the following considerations to keep in mind when deciding how our time and money is distributed.

- a) Getting change to the learner
- b) Addressing gaps
- c) Diversity and access for each community

Using these principles, we were able to distribute our human and financial resources to support local community plans with a link to the District literacy and regional planning.

We are also aware that in order to sustain the work of the coalition we need to ensure the coalition is meeting the needs of its members and stays productive and meaningful. We reviewed our terms of reference (see Appendix 4) and how we structure ourselves to help the practitioners identify how coming together can best support the work they do as individuals as well as our common work. In order to keep everyone engaged we developed a reporting out mechanism where members complete a form beforehand and decide what they will be working on for the next meeting and submit a copy to the District Literacy Coordinators at the end of each meeting. (see Appendix 5 for form templates).

Regional Coordination: Our regional literacy coordinator is a resident of SD 54, and so the Bulkley Valley Literacy Coalition has allowed her to work closely with one school district on one district plan. While the BV Literacy Coalition is by no means the norm in terms of the northwest region, it provides her with a strong model in which to develop ideas for further regional literacy development and also provides her with ways to support other school districts and community organizations.

Challenges of the Community Coordination

In rural communities we have individuals who wear multiple hats and often this means that the same people are asked to sit on several committees. A challenge in linking the Coalition activities with the Literacy Outreach Committees is ensuring effective representation at each level.

We also realized the challenge that this new way of operating (linking school and community more directly) hasn't worked its way to the schools and classrooms yet. It is part of our recognized need for more outreach and need for awareness raising about the DLP and Literacy issues throughout our communities. We must consider whose role this will be and how we will achieve it.

It is important to acknowledge the investment of SD#54 in supporting the coordination function of the coalition. It is also important to recognize the resources needed to support the costs of connecting across this large district (travel, expenses, and carving out meeting time from direct program delivery hours). Without adequate funding, the work of, and participation in, the coalition would be severely hampered.

This year we have switched from compiling a community inventory of literacy services to the new provincial directory model developed by Literacy BC. The LOC's are coordinating this function.

Planning: We have learned that creativity has to be fostered and out of that, strategies and innovation occur spontaneously. Some of our most exciting innovations arose out of the sharing and processed thinking time we did at coalition meetings and opportunities that arose in the midst of discussion.

New Relationships Build Bridges

At a regular meeting last year, Dianne Mattson, the coordinator for the adult education program in Moricetown invited the members of the coalition to the ceremonies for the first ever graduation class of the adult education program. Superintendent Bev Young and Assistant Superintendent Chris Van derMark from School District #54 seized the opportunity and attended this wonderful ceremony. Moricetown residents were very pleased that the School District came to honor their graduates and many people came up and mentioned how much it meant to them that Chris and Bev were there. This has opened the doors for stronger relationship and better ongoing communications between the Kyah Wiget education society and the school district. Now, School District #54 is partnering with Kyah Wiget Adult Education program. In this partnership, the school district will provide services such as record keeping in the provincial student information system and TRAX details, technical advisement and potential hardware ordering, communication regarding resources and learning programs, and additional courses via online learning (i.e. access to Moodle PE 10). For the purpose of enrolment, these adult students are registered as Bulkley Valley Learning Centre (BVLC); however, they are not under the administrative umbrella of BVLC.

Evaluation and measurement of district wide literacy activity continues to be a challenge and is identified as a goal for next year. Evaluation has been anecdotal to date but we are beginning to define the data and statistics we need to measure and analyze. One of the great challenges is sorting out the successes and challenges which would have occurred without the DLP and coalition and which are directly related to this district wide integrated approach to planning and working.

Planning for 2009-2010

The urgency that keeps us at the table continues to be reaching community members who are difficult to engage, ensuring all students are supported, making literacy services accessible to all, and optimizing our limited resources.

Goals and Objectives to Improve Community Literacy

1. To improve the transition of children to Kindergarten so that more students enter kindergarten ready to be successful.

Strategies	Resources	Allies	Expected Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link with early learning networks ▪ Recruit Make Children First Coordinator to coalition 	Coordination	LOC's Make Children First staff Coalition Coordinators	Early learning practitioners will have increased capacity to support transitions of their clients to school.

2. To improve the transition rates within the school system

Strategies	Resources	Allies	Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tutoring in summer ▪ School year support (PALS, PAC programs, & extra curricular activities) ▪ District support and follow up with schools regarding this goal 	Evaluation methods Professional Development Money	SD#54 Kyah Wiget SCSA Office of the Wetsuweten Coalition	Ability to evaluate and show small changes More parent involvement School staff more aware of the DLP and its goals

3. To improve the transition rates of young adults and adults to work and to live independently in the community

Strategies	Resources	Allies	Expected Outcomes
Work to identify strengths in each community re youth literacy and engagement Share resources Consider innovative ways to share learners and increase participation	Practitioners Time	Teachers in the high schools, college instructors	More youth engaged in learning activities More youth accessing options and opportunities in each community More supports for youth learning in each community
Continue to apply for workplace literacy programs that fit the needs of the community	Funding opportunities	College Community organizations and businesses	Program that meets the needs of learners to transfer skills to workplace situations
Supporting youth industry training programs	ACE-IT, Yes2It, Apprenticeship programming and Career Education Programs	SD#54, NWCC ITA	

4. To improve the transition for Aboriginal learners to school, within the school system and from school to work or post secondary education and training.

Strategies	Resources	Allies	Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support & facilitate awareness of issues ▪ Sharing data around transitions ▪ Tracking systems to follow individual learners in the system 	Time to examine and study results Structures for accountability Money	Moricetown community Kyah Weget Society Office of the Wetsuweten NW Community College Corporate and	Increased transition and graduation rates. Increased successful transitions to post secondary and work Success for learners and the system

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on the Belonging Goal in the achievement plan (ACE IT program) 		business community Community Agencies	
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5. To improve transition of clients between service providers

Strategies	Resources	Allies	Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More interventions Opportunities to reach kids Family and child Advocacy Identify who is not at the table and why 	Time Space Money	Services providers Coalition SD #54	Documented successful transition stories by previously unsuccessful learners.

6. To build capacity within the literacy sector of our communities

Strategies	Resources	Allies	Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use specific coalition meetings to provide training for members on topics of choice Conduct public meetings and do outreach in the community 	Member training resources and connections Coordination	Coalition members LOC's	Members will have increased ability to plan, implement and evaluate their literacy programs The broader community will be aware of local literacy issues and the DLP

7. To understand who our learners really are; related to culture, motivation, barriers, and skills

Strategies	Resources	Allies	Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop relationships with specific populations we know are not making progress ▪ Identify barriers at each transition level 	<p>Time</p> <p>Relationships</p> <p>Dedicated thought</p>	<p>Coalition</p> <p>Learners</p>	<p>Address learner needs through programming (buy-in, trust and participation)</p> <p>Some crossover with Goal #4 and 5</p>

8. To develop a “universal” method of capturing evaluation data so that we can more effectively measure progress across the district

Strategies	Resources	Allies	Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compare evaluation processes within our member organizations and from this pull common threads to track data and evaluation 	<p>Coordinators and evaluators</p> <p>Use “From the Ground Up” tools</p> <p>Examine existing data already being collected</p>	<p>Coalition</p>	<p>Ability to measure the impact of strategies on literacy rates</p> <p>Measurements will be comparable in each community</p>

Coordination

During our process of identifying gaps in literacy coordination and awareness, we realized that many functions are being carried out by several people in the various layers of the literacy field.

Our next step is to clarify which target groups are being reached and by whom, and which groups are not being reached by existing coordinators.

- We will develop a plan that ensures we are working together to make sure the high risk target groups have the support of a coordinator and are aware of literacy programming available to them.
- Each LOC will do this review in their community as they do their inventory of services and refine their community plans.

- We will use the directory information collected by LOC to link with DLP.
- We will provide transition support to new LOC on Houston Literacy Now and Smithers Literacy Now coordinator so that they develop their capacity to take on an active role in the District Literacy Planning Process.
- Given that we have 3 levels of coordination that each require reporting, we need to review and design our reporting processes and mechanisms so they flow seamlessly into each other.
- We will set 4 meetings a year for the main coalition for big updates etc, (no travel funds assigned for these but it will rotate locations within the district). Then a few topic centered coalition meetings and then small group meetings are inserted between the main meetings

Regional Coordination: Over the next year, the RLC will be working closely with the two Literacy Outreach Coordinators as well as with our Coalition Coordinators on the work of the district, and with the other LOCs and the other four school districts, along with other literacy advocates in the region, to produce the regional literacy strategic plan. The work of each of these five district plans will inform the regional plan, specifically in terms of adult literacy development across the region.

During the district planning process, the regional literacy coordinator provides a regional lens on literacy issues and offers updates re specific federal, provincial, or regional initiatives.

Appendices

- 1 Smithers Community Plan
- 2 Houston Community Plan
- 3 Community descriptions for Moricetown and Telkwa
- 4 Coalition Terms of Reference
- 5 Templates for new forms developed
- 6 Local statistical data: EDI data & School Transitions data

Appendix 1 – Smithers Community Plan



Smithers - a Learning Community

The Literacy NOW Plan

Submitted by the Smithers Literacy NOW Steering Committee
To Legacies 2010, Literacy NOW
Updated June 2009

Introduction

Smithers is a community characterized by pride. Most citizens value the opportunity to live and work in this coveted valley in Northern British Columbia. They value the diversity of the area's amenities, such as outdoor recreation, the music, art and cultural programs and the many services provided by the civic government, service organizations and businesses. In return, the people of Smithers are generous with their donations of financial support, time, skills and energy for projects that strengthen their community.

However, like many other communities, Smithers has distinct socio-economic divides. Statistics tell us Smithers' average income is above the provincial average, yet the unemployment rate is also above the provincial average.¹ While the causes of unemployment and the subsequent socio-economic associations are complex, one clearly identified, substantive factor is literacy.

Improvement in the levels of literacy in our community will have direct, measurable and valuable results for every citizen of the Town of Smithers.

Smithers - a Learning Community is a community-composed document that provides a clear and cohesive plan to achieve this change. Through the implementation of the goals, objectives and strategies, Smithers is poised to become one of the province's leading "learning communities", a potentially defining asset that will result in positive social and economic outcomes.

To address the needs of learners throughout the community requires a clear understanding of the definition of literacy today. Literacy is *"an essential academic and social practice that involves reading, writing and understanding in the various situations in which we live and work. It enables us to communicate and represent knowledge in various ways and allows us to access ideas from a variety of sources and technologies. Literacy is used to enhance skills, opportunities and quality of life."*² By embracing the principles of life-long learning in Smithers, people of all ages within a wide range of literacy skills will more effectively contribute to their quality of life by increasing their participation in Smithers' work, pleasure and education opportunities.

Currently, there are several excellent literacy programs in operation through various organizations in the community, such as School District #54, Smithers Community Services Association, Northwest Community College and the Smithers Public Library, to name only a few. However, the development of a formalized combined solutions approach began in 2005 when Smithers was chosen among six other communities to serve as a pilot project for the provincial Literacy NOW initiative.

¹ Refer to Smithers Community Profile, Appendix A

² Literacy NOW! An Innovative Provincial Strategy for Communities

Supporting the development of “learning communities” is a high priority of the provincial government, based on the well-documented economic and social outcomes. Recognizing the need for each community to identify and address opportunities specific to their community’s profile, funding was granted for the development of a *Literacy NOW Community Plan*. The criteria for the funds were simple: create a plan that is designed by the community, for the community, tailored to build on the strengths and meet the challenges of the Smithers community.

A dynamic and committed Smithers Literacy steering committee, working in partnership with both traditional and non-traditional literacy stakeholders, actively researched and identified the goals and potential solutions around literacy. The result is the plan, ***Smithers - a Learning Community***. This document serves as a base on which the ongoing work has been built. It was developed based on these principles:

- Build upon the current strengths
- Maximize the effectiveness of all funding
- Find creative and sustainable solutions
- Ensure the process involves the entire community

Through implementation funding from the Legacies 2010, Literacy NOW, and the financial and attitudinal support of the Smithers civic government, service organizations, businesses and individuals, Smithers has worked to make significant and lasting changes to evolve into an active learning community.



Smithers - A Learning Community

Vision 2010

The value of life-long learning is visible and fully integrated into the Smithers community. All citizens are aware of and able to participate in a diverse range of learning opportunities without barriers of stigma or access. *A Learning Community* is a defining asset of the Town of Smithers.



Recommendations for creating Smithers, a Learning Community

Goals: Creating a Learning Community

The first steps taken towards evolving Smithers into a learning community included soliciting candid feedback from a diverse representation of our community through the public forum and the community focus group sessions, researching and compiling existing information around literacy and creating a preliminary Literacy Assets Report.

These resources were synthesized and used to assist the Literacy NOW steering committee to identify the common strengths and challenges for Smithers as a Learning Community today. These key points served as the basis for developing the community's Top 5 goals, as below.

- 1. Complete and implement a community-driven, sustainable and measurable Learning Plan.**
- 2. Expand the kinds of learning programs to more fully fulfill the new definition of literacy and broaden the base of stakeholders of Literacy beyond traditional literacy agencies.**
- 3. Increase the awareness, visibility, access and usage of existing literacy programs and assets in Smithers and area.**
- 4. Identify high-priority learners and better serve their needs through a more targeted, creative outreach supported by an increased understanding and decrease of barriers to learning.**
- 5. Identify, prioritize and fulfill gaps in learning programs.**

Strategy: A Learning Community Model

While researching and analyzing the community feedback and with the guidance of literacy stakeholders, the Literacy NOW steering committee implemented a unique approach for making the VISION for *Smithers - a Learning Community* a reality.

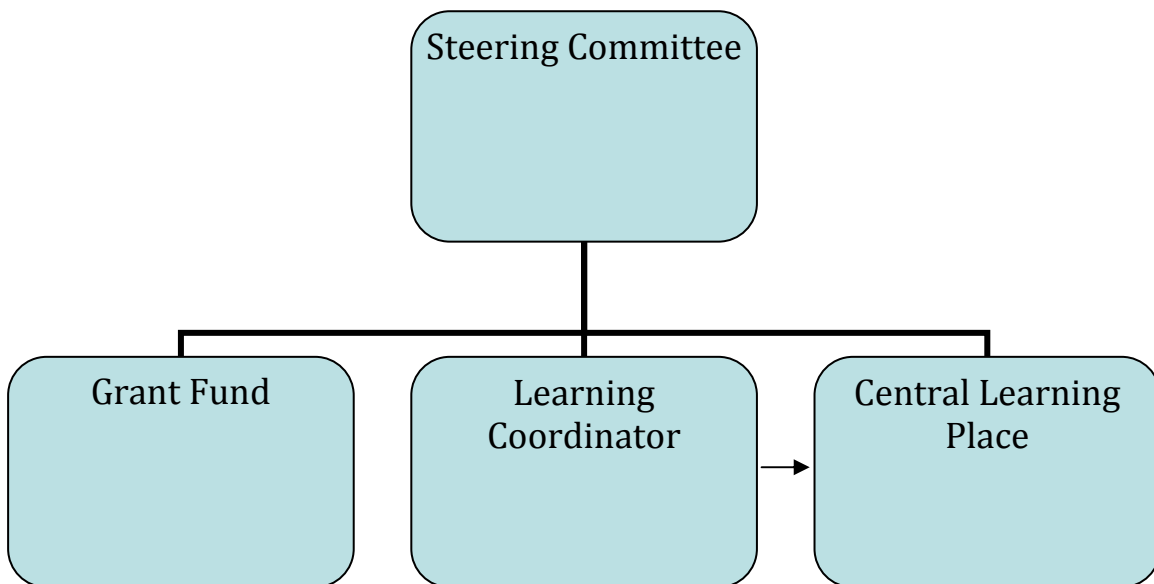
The approach is an interactive, community-driven model to meet the interconnected goals of the Literacy NOW Plan. This model is called the *Learning Community Model*.

By implementing this combined solutions approach, each action has multiple and interconnected results. This approach is both cost-effective and efficient.

The *Learning Community Model* is illustrated in the chart below with the following four objectives:

- I. Learning Community steering committee**
- II. Learning Community Grant fund**
- III. Centralized Community Learning Place**
- IV. Learning Community Coordinator**

A Learning Community Model



To follow are detailed summaries of each of the four objectives with associated strategies.

Objective and Strategy Details

I. Objective: Establish a Learning Community steering committee

Purpose: The steering committee is the representative group of community stakeholders who guide the development of the project over time. They develop and oversee the budget, establish the priorities and ensure the fulfillment of the strategic plan. They hire the coordinator, direct the grant fund, and help ensure the accountability for the program.

Strategies:

Steering committee members are representative of the community: including but not limited to representatives of arts and culture, business, learners, parents, school district, government, teachers, sports and recreation, etc.

The steering committee to establish Learning Community Grant criteria

The steering committee will evaluate and award Learning Community Grant submissions

The steering committee will hire and supervise the Learning Coordinator and access and tap into community expertise as needed

June 2009 update:

In the spring of 2007 Literacy Now Smithers hired a Literacy Learning Coordinator to manage the implementation of the community learning plan. During the same time, a new literacy mandate was passed down to the district school board by the Ministry of Education. In response, a Bulkley Valley Literacy Coalition was formed to better understand the complex literacy issues in our region. As many of the Literacy Now Steering Committee members were called to sit on the Bulkley Valley Literacy Coalition, we found ourselves in a period of confusion and uncertainty.

We continued working along, without clear understanding of specific and diverse roles. It took a lot of talking with stakeholders on both committees to finally understand how Literacy Now Smithers fits into the BV Literacy Coalition and how each committee can support the work of the other committee.

Leona Gadsby's presentation and analogy of the bridge during a visit to Smithers in October 2008 and the Literacy Infrastructure training session in February 2009 finally made the picture clear to us.

II. Objective: Manage the Learning Community Grant fund

Purpose: This is to provide a mechanism for funding community based learning-related initiatives. Rather than put the weight of responsibility solely on the committee, the ideas for projects will come from the community. In this way, only ideas that are ready to “birth” will be brought forward, and the wider community will become directly involved in the development of increased learning opportunities and capacities.

Strategies:

The Learning Community Grant funding will be provided to groups to use for learning programs that meet the established Learning Community Grant criteria. These grants will be used to expand capacity and participation in learning programs by “non-traditional” literacy providers and create learning opportunities for under-served learners. It will be operated by a combination of paid and volunteer staff. The fund will grow annually as we gain more community sponsors.

June 2009 update:

The Learning Community Grant fund has not been developed. However, Literacy Now Smithers has collaborated with community organizations and groups to increase access to learning opportunities and build capacity.

The Literacy Outreach Coordinator has worked with community groups to access funding opportunities to support the work of traditional and non-traditional literacy providers in our community. For example, Lit Now Smithers has facilitated and supported the initial start-up of the *Ground-to-Griddle* Community Kitchen, which is a partnership of several community organizations to support high-priority learners. The LOC has assisted with proposal writing to support the continued work of the Community Kitchen beyond 2009.

III. Objective: Create and manage a centralized *Community Learning Place*

Purpose: The planning and development process has identified that there is a real need for a single centralized source of contact, resource, and accessible participation.

Strategies:

Ideally, this store-front will be located in a space that maximizes exposure to a broad spectrum of Smithers learners and it will be internally and externally designed to meet the environmental needs of learners, described as inviting, comfortable, and not intimidating. Ideally located in the heart of the community, on or near Main Street, the *Community Learning Place* (working name only) will:

- Serve as the central information resource for all learning programs, resources and partnerships between all literacy stakeholders and organizations
- Increase participation in learning programs by providing accessible telephone and walk-in guidance and information to learners about all learning opportunities
- Provide a loaning-system of books, resources and learning programs in partnership with the Public Library and NWCC
- House literacy programs that involve community mentors and volunteers

Initially (possibly for the first 3 years), the learning center will have to be housed in a location shared with a community partner while capital funds, or increased operational funds are found to enable it to be located on its own.

June 2009 update:

Literacy Now Smithers continues to work towards meeting this goal and has researched and documented three models that could work in Smithers. Many existing literacy providers were struggling to maintain learner numbers, and the Steering Committee felt that we needed to focus on identifying high-priority learners, reach out to this population and then support them in their learning goals.

In the fall of 2008, the Literacy Steering Committee consulted with literacy providers to discuss the challenges of recruiting and retaining adult learners in our community. The unanimous response to why each organization struggled with basic literacy learners was overwhelming: a vast majority of our target population experienced food security issues. A community kitchen was identified as the best approach to address this need and to support potential learners. We received mentorship and support from the Houston Community Kitchen to develop our own kitchen.

Now only five months after opening the *Ground-to-Griddle* Community Kitchen, participants are beginning to express interest in more formal learning opportunities. Interested participants have been paired with one-to-one tutors to identify learning goals and develop an informal learning plan.

In partnership between Smithers Community Services (SCSA), Northwest Community College (NWCC), the Community Kitchen and Literacy Outreach Smithers plans are being formalized to support adult and senior learners through community-based learning sessions. Space was found at a subsidized housing complex, which will serve as a community learning centre. This space is being provided free-of-charge until we can establish solid participation in a variety of learning programs.

IV. Objective: Hire a Learning Community Coordinator:

Purpose: There is always the critical need for a paid staff person to have the responsibility of taking care that the operation of the plan is carried out and that the steering committee is kept fully informed.

Strategies:

This position will achieve the following job responsibilities:

- Implement Smithers Literacy NOW Plan as directed by the Learning Community steering committee
- Create new and build on existing partnerships with government (local and provincial), School District #54, service groups, arts organizations and businesses
- Coordinate meetings and increased communications with connected literacy organizations
- Create and implement a targeted multi-level community communication plan by working in partnership with local media to create and promote messages and events that build on and revise traditional literacy campaigns and/or establish new communications strategies
- Research and implement a fundraising plan to contribute towards the sustainability of the Smithers Learning Plan
- Identify and propose projects to steering committee to meet gaps and needs
- Inform and advocate for community learners
- Build relationships with existing and new community learning stakeholders
- Manage the daily operation of the *Community Learning Place*; coordinate volunteer staff
- Complete a live and relevant Literacy Inventory Resource that completes work in process, is maintained to be current and relevant and designed to be user-friendly for both learners and literacy-providers

Appendix 2 – Houston Community Plan

The **Houston** Community Literacy Plan

by the Houston Literacy Committee

**August
2008**



This project was made possible with funding support from
2010 Legacies Now - Literacy Now Communities Program



Prepared by N. Brien and A. Newell

Houston Link to Learning

Appendix 3 Community Descriptions

Telkwa: Located between Smithers and Houston on Highway 16, Telkwa is a village of approximately 1000 residents. It sits at the confluence of the Telkwa

and Bulkley Rivers and is considered a bedroom community of Smithers. It is home to an elementary school, a small library known as the Telkwa Reading Centre and a busy early childhood education centre known as Normas Ark. There is strong community spirit in this little village and the community is made up of a healthy mix of all ages and incomes. Literacy initiatives in the community include Ready Set Learn, Mother Goose, and summer reading programs for children.

Moricetown: Moricetown is a Wet'suwet'en Village located along highway 16, approx 30 km west of Smithers. There are five Wet'suwet'en clans: Gilseyhu (Big Frog), Laksilyu (Small Frog), Gitdumden (Wolf/Bear), Laksamshu (Fireweed), and Tsayu (Beaver clan).

The community is in a development phase of literacy planning and does not have Literacy Now funding or a formal literacy community plan. However, the literacy work that is growing is innovative and cutting edge in terms meeting the literacy needs of the community. Some of literacy programs and supports in place include: an Adult Education Centre, a Health Centre, a Band Elementary School, a Head Start Program, Healthy Babies Healthy Families Program, A manufacturing centre is also being built that will provide training, employment, and literacy supports to community members

Appendix 4 – Terms of Reference

Bulkley Valley Literacy Coalition Terms of Reference

The coalition exists to:

- Be a venue for community input to the District Literacy plan mandated by the ministry of Education
- Work collaboratively and support individual organizations to activate the district literacy plan
- Work collaboratively to identify and remove systemic barriers, fill delivery gaps, and support innovative approaches to literacy development.
- Ensure efficient use of existing money and make best use of resources in the Bulkley Valley
- act as a group to access funding that may become available
- Coordinate and support actions of literacy organizations

Guiding Principles or core values:

- As a coalition we recognize that each member is a distinct entity with a specific mandate. We recognize that no member will be expected to change their mandate as a result of membership in the coalition.
- Each organization has an equal voice at the table.
- We hold the guiding principles of Literacy Now

Guiding Principles of Literacy Now

Relationships and Collaboration

Communities build and support networks, partnerships, and mentoring relationships.

Innovation

Communities value new ways of viewing existing programs, new partnerships, and new ideas for programs.

Respect

People will be treated with respect and will be encouraged to freely share their ideas. Diversity will be welcomed and valued.

Capacity Building

Initiatives promote and sustain lifelong learning for all participants and focus on improving the life changes of children and adults. People feel empowered to act.

Access for All

All community members have the opportunity to be part of the planning process and the programs. Community members respect the hopes and dreams of everyone and there is a place for all.

Strength Building

Success grows from long-term, sustained commitment to literacy learning.

Sustainability

Communities respect, build on, and enhance past and current practices.

Joy

People are involved in friendly and enthusiastic ways, celebrating success from time to time.

Membership:

- Every organization in the Bulkley Valley which has a literacy mandate is welcome to send a designated representative who would consistently attend.
- Membership is renewed on an annual basis by indicating commitment at the first meeting of the year.

Governance:

- The group will designate the position of the chair annually who will call meetings, develop meeting agendas with the assistance of the coordinator, and will speak on behalf of the coalition when required. This does not prevent all members from being advocates for the coalition and/or speaking about literacy issues.

Coordination of Group

- A specific person will be delegated to coordinate, take minutes, circulate information, hold the email address, receive inquiries

Meetings:

- Meetings will be held minimum of 4 times a year or more frequently if required.
- Sub-committees will be formed and meet as needed.

Appendix 5 - Templates for new forms developed

1) Literacy Coalition - Updates Form

Use this rubric to describe the success and challenges you have had working towards the Literacy Coalitions Goals. Please complete in preparation for each meeting. Only fill in what you can.

Pillars	Early Learners		K-12 Learners		Adult Learners		Aboriginal Learners	
	Success	Challenge	Success	Challenge	Success	Challenge	Success	Challenge
Create a Culture of Learning								
Improve access for everyone to learning opportunities								
Coordinate quality programs that meet community needs								
Focus on the whole learner in the development and delivery of programming								
Improve transitions of life stages and among services								
Outreach								

Updates from last meetings action plans:

2)Literacy Coalition

Action

Form

Reflecting on what I heard during the meeting today

Here is what I learned....

Here is who I want to connect with

Here is an idea(s) I want to work on.

Here is the first step(s).

Here is how we will know if it made a difference

Form Completed by:

Date:

Appendix 6 – School District #54 Data:

Transition Rates

Aboriginal	Grade 6 to higher	Grade 7 to higher	Grade 8 to higher	Grade 9 to higher	Grade 10 to higher	Grade 11 to higher
2001/02	94	96	98	78	76	57
2002/03	100	90	97	88	79	68
2003/04	98	95	94	81	70	54
2004/05	100	98	84	79	80	69
2005/06	100	100	94	69	83	68
2006/07	100	97	84	95	92	80
2007/08	98	100	98	87	73	74
Non Aboriginal						
2001/02	98	98	99	94	91	78
2002/03	97	97	99	95	96	86
2003/04	96	98	97	95	93	86
2004/05	97	99	95	96	91	88
2005/06	98	95	96	94	92	85
2006/07	100	98	99	97	93	81
2007/08	99	100	99	96	93	83

Education Attainment of Population Aged 25-64 (source: Canada Census)

Note: Age categories and education attainment categories are different between 2006 Census and earlier. Therefore only latest (2006) is shown.

STUDENT AND DISTRICT CONTEXT: DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS

	District 2006 %	Province 2006 %
University certificate or diploma above bachelor level	17.1	12.4
Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry	32.4	25.9
No certificate, diploma or degree	15.3	12.0
High school certificate or equivalent	16.5	19.6
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	4.3	6.1
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate/diploma	9.9	15.2
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	2.1	2.4

Graduation rates:

- consistently above provincial average. 07-08 80 % (prov avg 78%)
- aboriginal graduation rate 07-08 53% (prov avg 58%)

EDI Results - 2001-2003 vs. 2004-2007

Proportion of Students (%) Vulnerable on EDI Subscales:

District Subscale:	2001-2003	2004-2007
Physical Health and Well-being	12.4	11.8
Social Competence	14.8	11.8

Emotional Maturity	11.9	11.1
Language & Cognitive Development	13.0	11.8
Communication Skills & General Knowledge	8.6	11.1