

Cariboo-Chilcotin

Regional Literacy Plan

July 15, 2010

Assisting partner agencies to connect with, support and serve their communities



Regional Literacy Plan Contents

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The Regional Literacy Plan Committee Mission

The mission of the Regional Literacy Plan Committee is to assist service providers and agencies within the region to connect with, support and serve their communities more effectively through improved communication and literacy skills development.

Preamble

Literacy planning is a community effort involving both School District and community literacy not-for-profit group and agency efforts. The diversity and complexity of our School District and resident communities has led to the necessity for the inclusion of a Demographic Context to this document. The demographics and geography of this region profoundly affect the planning, design, and implementation of literacy programs as it does for all areas of education. Demographics and geography cannot be overlooked as a contributing factor to both the success and challenges of delivering literacy programs.

Demographic Context

The region served by this Regional Literacy Plan falls within the geographic boundaries of School District No. 27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin) located in the Central Interior of British Columbia. This region has an area nearly equal to the size of New Brunswick. Williams Lake and 100 Mile House are the two primary urban centers while a number of smaller communities make up the rest of the region. The vast geographic nature of the area lends itself to the presentation of a cultural richness and diversity which is celebrated and honoured. The issue of geography, however, also provides special problems with respect to program delivery.

Socio-economic factors (SES) are related to the need for supports for communities within the region. The 2008-2009 SES indicators show that the West Chilcotin is most disadvantaged, Williams Lake Downtown and Chilcotin East are disadvantaged, 100 Mile House is average, Williams Lake North and Westside, as well as the 150 Mile House areas are advantaged, and the Mile 108 area is most advantaged in Socio-economic status.

Levels of overall vulnerability and specifically vulnerability to developing language and cognitive abilities for children aged 5 or less varied greatly across the District. In the first wave of data collection with the Early Development Instrument our region was the fifth most vulnerable region in the province, and although improvements have been noted in the most recent collection, our region is still an area of very high vulnerability for our youngest population.

Student population has been a major factor in the types of programming that can be offered and how schools are staffed.

Year	Schools	Total Students	Aboriginal	ESD/ESL	Special Needs
2008/2009	31	5625	25%	496	452
2009/2010	31	5468	26%	403	376

It must be noted that with the aboriginal population that 28% live on reserve, and 72% live off reserve. These percentages are consistent with past years were approximately 1/4 live on reserve and 3/4 live off reserve.

Apart from the School District, the demographics of the encompassed communities are also important. The two largest communities are Williams Lake and 100 Mile House. Beyond these two central communities, there are also 11 First Nations communities as well as a number of smaller rural communities.

Literacy work, at the community level, in the Williams Lake and 100 Mile House has been ongoing since 1997. This work has been organized and coordinated by organizations such as the Cariboo Chilcotin Partners for Literacy, the Child Development Centre, Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre, Women's' Contact Society, and Thompson Rivers University, to name a few. This work has involved family literacy coordination, adult literacy, infant literacy programming, tutoring, Roaming Advocacy work, workplace literacy initiatives, specialized interventions and parent and child programming.

Small rural communities and First Nations communities have also been implementing and planning literacy initiatives for a number of age groups, both in conjunction with the School District, the CCPL, and on their own.

The Literacy Improvement Process

The demographic context has outlined the involvement and interest of the School District and communities in literacy improvement.

Literacy development has been at the forefront of School District goals and initiatives for the past three years. This interest in literacy improvement has been part of a larger initiative to develop a sense of belonging in students in a school setting. Together sense of belonging and literacy initiatives are the base and bulk of the work, as they work hand in hand to develop one from the other. To accomplish improvement in these areas, schools have developed school literacy plans and sense of belonging plans which are implemented and evaluated on an annual basis.

Communities are also highly involved in literacy initiatives. These efforts take on many forms, some operating separately from School District efforts, some in support of, and some in partnership with the School District. Groups such as the Cariboo-Chilcotin Partners for Literacy, the Early Childhood Development Network, the Success by 6 Early Childhood Development Table, the Child Development Centre, all work to develop community literacy programs and interventions.

The ECD Networks support many community programs such as Roots of Empathy, Childhood Development Centres, playgroups, family festivals, childrens festivals, workshops, community tutoring and many more.

Together, communities and the School District have a wide variety of literacy initiatives to meet the needs of their constituents.

Links to the Read Now BC Pillars

An important tenet of the Regional Literacy Plan is that it must be tied to the four pillars of ReadNow BC. These pillars cover all learner age groups from infants to seniors, as well as First Nations learners. The Regional Literacy Plan is directly tied to the four pillars of ReadNow BC.

Read Now BC focuses on improving literacy skills by increasing:

1. The number of children entering school ready to learn;
2. The number of children who read successfully;
3. The number of adults who have the literacy and essential skills necessary to compete in today's labour market and to function in everyday life;
4. The number of Aboriginal students who read successfully.

The Number of Children Entering School Ready to Learn

The Data

One of the important pieces of information that has indicated urgency to becoming involved in early learning has been the Early Development Instrument results.

The Early Development Instrument

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a questionnaire designed to measure children's development in kindergarten. The EDI is a checklist that kindergarten teachers complete for each child in their class. The EDI has been implemented in many communities across Canada and increasingly in international settings.

The EDI is a population health measure. The results are reported at the group NOT the individual level.

The EDI comprises approximately 120 questions on five domains, or aspects, of children's development including Physical Health and Well Being, social competence, Emotional Maturity, Language and Cognitive Development, and Communication and General Knowledge.

For each domain there is a score somewhere between 0 and 10 that serves as a vulnerability threshold. The threshold or cut-off is the EDI score that distinguishes the bottom 10% of children in the province from the other 90%. Children who fall below that score are said to be vulnerable on that domain of development. The appropriate interpretation of vulnerability is that the child is, on average, more likely to be limited in his or her development than a child who scores above the cut-off.

Wave 1 results were collected from 2001 to 2004 and Wave 2 results from 2005 to 2007. Wave 3 was completed in 2009 and constituted the first year of annual collection of results. Annual collection will enable researchers to determine trends in a shorter time period than the previous three year measures.

EDI Results

- District wide, 31% of children were vulnerable on at least one scale of development in 08/09. This is a decrease from Wave 2 when vulnerability was 38%, yet it is still slightly higher than Wave 1 vulnerability (25.7%).
- 150 Mile / Horsefly had the lowest level of vulnerability of all of the neighbourhoods (25.5%). It also had the lowest vulnerability in Wave 2.
- Overall, four neighbourhoods had decreases of greater than 5% or representing a shift in quintile colour between Wave 2 and 08/09.
- The neighbourhood with the highest proportion of children vulnerable was Williams Lake-Westside (35.7%). Williams Lake-North had 35% of children vulnerable on at least one scale of development.
- 150 Mile/Horsefly and Williams Lake North both had increases of greater than 5% or representing a shift in quintile colour.
- District wide, the largest proportion of children vulnerable was on the Language and Cognitive Development scale (13.9%).
- The smallest proportion of children vulnerable was on the Communication Skills and General Knowledge scale (11%).

Neighbourhood Vulnerability

	Wave1	Wave 2	2008/09
Horsefly/Likely	30.5	20.5	25.5
Williams Lake North	25.8	33.3	35.0
Williams Lake Downtown	29.0	40.0	32.7
Williams Lake West	26.5	51.9	35.7
100 Mile House	25.0	36.2	26.7
108 Mile House	19.4	34.0	29.7
Chilcotin*	33.9		

* The Chilcotin area results were suppressed in Wave 2 due to the small sample size of children. Data from Wave 1 will be the information used in this plan.

Child Development Centre Data

The Child Development Centre provides services for children and youth across the region. Specialty services provided by the CDC are Speech and Language, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, SCD, and IDP.

Year	Total Children in Region on CDC Caseload	Total Children Receiving Special Service	Percent of Total CDC Caseload
2008/2009	662	104	41.9%

In 2009/2010 the CDC provided early intervention services for a monthly average of 381 children ages 0-4

Current Preschool Programs

A number of steps that have already been taken to specifically move literacy forward in both the School District and surrounding communities at the preschool level. At the core is the connection of District efforts with those of community literacy leaders and practitioners. The District has assigned a District Principal to take the lead in literacy initiatives, planning and implementation. This position has responsibility for literacy from early years to adult as well as responsibilities in the areas of First Nations achievement, ESD/ESL, and staff development, all areas which work together to enhance literacy. This provides focus and consistency to the literacy planning, implementation and assessment process.

Involvement by the District in local literacy committees, as well as working in conjunction with and agencies has enabled joint planning, coordination of programs and partnerships. The District has strong ties to both the Cariboo-Chilcotin Partners for Literacy, as well as the Early Childhood Development Networks. Together the concentration of efforts with local literacy groups has been on Early Years Education. The mechanism of collaboration has been the attendance of the District Principal to both the Cariboo-Chilcotin Partners for Literacy and Early Childhood Development Network meetings in both Williams Lake and 100 Mile House. These affiliations have enabled the District to move forward in the expansion of its literacy plan to include early years education and to implement a number of programs.

Two part time Early Years Itinerant teachers are employed by the School District under the management of the District Principal. These two teachers have direct responsibility for the support of the full time and outreach StrongStart Centres in Williams Lake, 100 Mile House and surrounding communities. These itinerant teachers also have responsibility for the implementation of ten week Ready Set Learn programs in 23 schools.

A number of community based programs also operate to prepare students for school. These programs are both infant and pre-school in nature. Examples of these programs are: Library Services Books for Babies,

BC Books for Babies, Family Enrichment Centre Family Connections program, library story times, Mother Goose/Father Goose Training, Cedar Crest Infant Development, community playgroups, etc.

At the pre-school level, community based programs such as CRD library story times, Toddler Time, After School Book Clubs, Mother and Father Goose programs, playgroups, playschools, Pre-Kindergarten Nursery program, Aboriginal HeadStart, Parent and Tot programs, and supported child development programs all play a role in preparing students for school.

In spite of the availability of numerous programs and services, the fact remains that a large number of children and families do not access them. The two main reasons for this are:

1. there are not enough programs and services to serve all the children in need; and
2. many families do not choose to access the programs and services. This may be due to a lack of awareness of the need for a value of the services or other barriers to participation.

Another significant factor affecting a child's success is parental interest, support and involvement. A major challenge of the Regional Literacy Plan is how to reach and engage parents.

One program aimed at parent/child engagement is the Bright Red Bookshelf project. This project places bright red bookshelves with children's books in strategic areas around the communities of 100 Mile and Williams Lake where parents and young children frequent. Some examples of these areas are arena complexes, doctors offices, dentists offices, etc. A "Bright Blue Bookshelf" is also underway.

The Number of Children who Learn to Read Successfully

The Data

The previous section spoke to programs within the District and communities that help parents prepare their children for entry into school. Once children enter school in kindergarten, a number of other school and community programs begin to prepare children for their futures.

The School District's main goal for the past three years has been literacy improvement. School efforts are guided by School Literacy Plans and encompass a number of literacy initiatives and programs aimed at improving literacy. These school based programs are supported by a number of community based programs.

As evidenced in the School District Student Achievement Plan, we have seen good improvement in literacy skills of primary students. Gains have also been made at the secondary level. At the School District level, a focus for the future will be the intermediate elementary level, where the least gains have been seen.

Community Based Programs for Children

The community partners have recognized that students aged 14—19 are a group that has needs that can and should be supported by community efforts. It has been recognized that even though solid programming is in place for this group that there is a definite need for learning support from the community.

Partner Assisted Learning—this community based tutoring program trains volunteers to work as one-on-one tutors with learners of all ages. It has been instrumental in providing assistance for students in this age group.

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Community partners provide a number of programs to help constituents be better readers. A number of school-aged community based programs include Roaming Advocacy, Cedar Crest Supported Child Development, After School Book Club and Crafts, the South Cariboo Community School, after school daycares, bookmobiles, tutoring and after school activities, One-to-One reading provided by parents to students in school, aboriginal community libraries, Community Access Programs, Child Development Centre therapy programs, FASD services, and Learning Disability Association services are all available.

School District Programs

Kindergarten Screening—Speech and Language Pathologists screen kindergarten children for developmental and learning issues

Early Development Instrument—Kindergarten teachers complete an instrument on each child to gain data on child development in Physical Development, Social Development, Language and Cognitive Development, Emotional Maturity.

Reading Recovery—kindergarten children are screened for possible participation in Reading Recovery. The lowest Gr. 1 students in each school receive Reading Recovery intervention.

Special Education Programs—the School District Special Education Department works closely with schools to develop and implement programs to meet the needs of children with special needs.

ESL/ESD Programs—the School District funds programs for English Second Language and English Second Dialect to support students with low language levels.

School Wide Write, DART, Provincial Foundation Skills Assessments—the School District utilizes these assessments to determine the progress of students in literacy development.

Community Based Programs for Children

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The Number of Adults who have the Literacy and Essential Skills Necessary to Compete in Today's Labour Market and to Function in Everyday Life

The Data

At the school level, School District 27 has a very active and vibrant career development program. This program involves a partnership with TRU to develop apprenticeship programs while students are still in school. Students begin training in their Grade 11 and 12 years, in which they spend half the year in high school academic programs and the other half in college apprenticeship training.

Currently, two English components are available to students, regular English which fulfills post-secondary university requirements, and the Communications stream which fulfills the Dogwood diploma requirements.

University bound students have their English needs met through the regular English courses, but the trades bound students are not having all their needs met through available English courses. A few areas of concern have been noted by students in trades areas. One example is the development of good comprehension skills, so that students have a better understanding of the texts and technical materials that they encounter in their trades programs.

Another area is the oral training needed for the job market. Oral interview skills that are so necessary in the workforce are not being well covered by English courses.

Technical writing is another area that is not well covered for trades bound students. Currently, approximately 90% of students in trades take the Communications stream of English courses, which are not fully meeting their needs in the trades areas.

The CCPL has established and has been working to develop workplace programs to assist adult learners to be better prepared for the work force. These programs are aimed both at participation in the workplace with lower levels of literacy, as well as the improvement of literacy.

Current Programs

Community partners offer a number of programs to help adults function in the workplace and to prepare them for the work force. They are:

- One-on-One Tutoring,
- Group tutoring
 - 100 Mile –20 learners attended group tutoring this year
 - These learners worked on courses such as Simply Accounting, PowerPoint, Excel, English 12, Citizenship Exam, C.O.R.E. Exam, Applied Business Technology Certificate, Biology, Photography, Medical Transcription, BA in Business & Diploma in Business.
 - Parenting discussions with learners
 - BING social networking - “Working with Others”
- Computer Literacy and Study Skills—12/16 learners completed and received certificates
- Literacy and Parenting Skills/Aboriginal Literacy and Parenting Skills
 - LAPS training completed
 - ALAPS—Worm Farm workshop completed with 20 children and parents.
- Making it Work -The Communication Workshop started May 28st at TRU with 4 learners attending.
- Women’s Centre Society/ESP Consulting/GROW—Sessions are ongoing with 30 clients attending to date.
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- Roaming Advocacy,
- Adult Basic Education,
- Partner Assisted Learning

- 100 Mile 23 PAL tutors worked with 39 learners in 2009/2010
- Williams Lake—11 tutors worked with 12 learners
 - 3 LPN students were helped with Study, Test Taking and Writing Skills
- Tutor Training—5 new tutors certified, 7 tutors attended In-Service
- ESL Settlement Assistance,
- Community Access Centres,
- Community Library programs,
- Book clubs,
- Parenting programs,
- workplace literacy coordination,
- Learning Disability programs,
- Elder college,
- Seniors advocacy,
- skill development centres (Creekside),
- college prep courses,
- trades programs,
- employability skills,
- career counselling to help adults be better prepared for their futures.
- ESLSAP Cafes—opportunities for new Canadians to get together to improve English skills.
- Senior's Book Club—Noreen Beer continues to facilitate weekly sessions with 12 or more seniors attending.
- Seniors & Young Ones—Noreen Beer continues to facilitate weekly sessions with 3 additional 4-H participants joining in the last few months for a total of 7 young ones.

From a District perspective, adult education through our Graduating Other Ways (GROW) program is leading the way to ensuring that adults are attaining the skills they need to be both educated and employable. GROW centres exist in many communities within the region, and constitute not only one of the main measures for adult high school completion, but even more importantly, their existence in First Nations communities constitutes one of the main ways that the needs of First Nations adults are also met. Currently, GROW Centres exist in 100 Mile House, Anaham Band, Esketemec First Nation (Alkali Lake), Toosey Band, and Williams Lake.

The Number of Aboriginal Students who Read Successfully

The Data

Our region contains 11 aboriginal communities. In 2006, the HELP map showed that these communities contained 719 aboriginal children between the ages of 0 and 6. Although the map is not consistent with each of the 11 communities, it shows that most communities contained between 1-50 youth between 0 and 6 years, with only Alexis Creek and Ulkatcho having between 51-120.

The Child Development Centre does work with children from newborns to youth of 18 years, with a significant amount of the work with 2-4 year olds (41.9%). Within this client base are a number of First Nations clients. Twenty-one percent (21%) of CDC clients are First Nations off-reserve residents, and a further 4.1% are on-reserve First Nations clients. With one quarter of their work being with First Nations clients, the CDC efforts are significant in the success of First Nations clients, and 41.9% of the work being done with 2-4 year olds, the CDC plays an important role in the development of school readiness for all children, including First Nations children.

CDC work in the predominantly First Nations communities of Canoe Creek, Anahim Lake, Dog Creek, Alkali Lake, Alexis Creek, Riske Creek, and Canim Lake make up 4.3% of the work.

Foundation Skills Assessment Reading Results

School District Foundations Skills Assessment Data shows that First Nations elementary school age students are significantly behind their non-First Nations counterparts in Reading. We have a good deal of work to do to bring them up to parity.

Having said this, it must be noted that FSA results in 2010 show that the gap between First Nations and all students has declined dramatically.

Grade 10 English

Performance of students in our School District was significantly below the provincial average. A look at the individual skills on the exam reveal that students were significantly below the provincial average in retrieving information, interpreting text, recognizing meaning, and analyzing text. Although students seemed to have comparable writing skills, their understanding of what they read, and using those understandings was below the provincial average.

Grade 12 English

An analysis of Grade 12 exam results indicates that reading comprehension continues to be an issue for secondary students in School District #27. Skills of interpreting text, analyzing text and retrieving information from text are important skills in the workforce, making remediation of these skills important to the overall improvement of young adult and ultimately adult literacy.

Current Programs

The improvement of Aboriginal student reading begins in the pre-school years. The District's full StrongStart Centres and now StrongStart Outreach programs are available to all families including First Nations families in both urban centres and the outreach programs extending into most small rural communities. These pre-reading skill and school readiness based preschools will help both parents and children in their efforts to have their little ones better prepared for school.

As well, community programs such as Little Mocassins preschool also do a wonderful job of preparing students for the school experience. Enhancing aboriginal youth school readiness is taken on in a big way by the Child Development Centre. The Centre works with children from across the region bringing a number of services to children and families. In relation to First Nations students, 21% of the CDC's clients are off-reserve First Nations, and a further 4.1% are on-reserve First Nations. The CDC offers programs such as Supported Child Development, Parent/Child Mother Goose, infant development programs and Speech and Language Therapy.

At the community level, BC Books for Babies, and CCPL Books for Babies serve most communities. Aboriginal communities that are supported by Books for Babies programs are Alexis Creek, Anahim Lake, Buffalo Creek, Canim Lake, Dog Creek, Nemiah Valley, as well as Williams Lake and 100 Mile House for which a number of off-reserve aboriginal children are served.

A number of schools and communities offer early years playgroups and playschools for preschool aged children. Most of these programs are operated on a weekly basis and supported through School District Early Years programming and community based literacy coordination through the Cariboo-Chilcotin Partners for Literacy.

School entry means full-day kindergarten for many First Nations students. In the fall, most rural schools will be designated as Full Day Kindergarten schools. This means that all rural First Nations kindergarten students will have access to a full kindergarten program.

Many Grade 1 First Nations students are served by Reading Recovery. Although efforts are being made to improve First Nations student skills in reading and other areas, this is still an area in which much improvement is necessary.

At the secondary level, a number of programs are available to aide in First Nations success. A number of First Nations students attend GROW and Skyline Alternate programs to complete their graduation requirements. The Partner Assisted Learning program is working with a number of First Nations communities to support secondary students in rural communities with their school development. PAL works in these communities doing tutoring, tutor training and Manager training. Also a PAL First Nations worker is working in First Nations communities on Head Start Curriculum, adult workshops, youth activities and workshops and event organization around literacy.

At the adult level, Thompson Rivers University has offered a number of programs such as Adult Basic Education, Fundamentals programs, Transition programs and the Cariboo-Chilcotin Aboriginal Training Education program to specifically meet the needs of First Nations adult learners.

Unfortunately, virtually all of the programs and services listed above are only available or primarily available, off-reserve. Several of the First Nations communities have Head Start programs, or schools on-reserve, but they experience the same kinds of problems as the rest of the region. In many cases the problems are more prevalent or serious and the resources are generally more limited.

Part of the District Literacy Plan has to address how we can better partner with and support First Nations communities.

Achievement of Regional Literacy Plan Committee Goals 2009-2010

1. *To implement the use of Literacy BC and Early Childhood Mapping project resources.*
 - a. *Train Family Literacy Outreach worker on the use of these resources*
 - b. *Have Family Literacy Outreach worker set up training sessions for agency front line workers*

Progress:

1. Roaming Advocacy

A. Williams Lake—The Literacy Outreach worker (Williams Lake), also known as the Roaming Advocate, left the position and a new worker was hired to take on the position in May 2010. Between the outgoing and incoming workers the following has been accomplished:

- updating of Literacy BC website was partially done.
- new LOC has been trained in updating Literacy BC resources
- contact with the City of Williams Lake regarding updating the ACCESS database

B. 100 Mile—The worker in 100 Mile has:

- trained and monitoring Literacy BC database for 100 Mile region

2. Early Childhood Mapping Project is now live online.

- data has been updated
- prototype version is currently online
- live version will be available mid-July

3. Binders have been established for front line workers to house the information about programs and availability in the region.

- Southend—binders have been in place since 2007
- Northend –Binders currently being put together by LOC

Actions for Future:

- train LOC to monitor and facilitate updates of Early Childhood Mapping Project database.
- once databases and resources are updated, LOC will plan training sessions for agency front line workers.

2. *Develop structures for literacy initiative network opportunities for agencies and community partners.*

- a. *The Family Literacy Outreach worker and Roaming Advocate organizing networking opportunities for shared knowledge, resources and gap analysis*

Progress:

1. Networking and training opportunities for Southend front line workers have been established.
2. To date, no networking and training opportunities have been established in the Northend.

Actions for Future:

-establish a series of networking and training meetings for front line workers and agencies in both North and South ends of region.

3. Continue to develop structures for client identification and connections to literacy services.

- a. The Family Literacy Outreach worker and Roaming Advocate to continue work to identify clients as well as organize networking opportunities to identify client bases.*

Progress:

1. Roaming Advocate and LOC continue to follow-up with potential clients and service providers to find ways to connect service providers with clients.

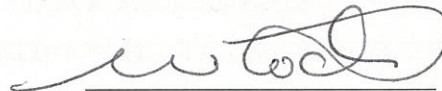
Goals 2010-2011

1. Train LOC and Roaming Advocate to monitor and facilitate updating of database and binder resources.
2. Have LOC and Roaming Advocate plan training sessions for agencies and front line workers to use the resources.
3. Establish networking meetings for agencies and frontline workers in both North and South end of Region.
4. Work with aboriginal governments to complete an environmental scan of literacy needs in Aboriginal communities.
 - Continue ALAPS train the trainer workshops
5. Work with seniors' groups to complete an environmental scan of seniors' literacy needs.
6. Establish workplace and workforce literacy programs in the region
 - financial, clear and plain language, and computer literacy workshops
7. Establish youth (ages 14-19) support programs in the region.
 - PAL support of youth of Anaham Band
8. Develop a Regional Literacy Advisory Group—TRU, SD 27, and CCPL
 - advise on matters of funding and coordination of partnership opportunities between the groups and communities.
9. Expand Bright Red Bookshelf project
10. Assist in the development and implementation in the Bright Blue Bookshelf project.

The undersigned acknowledge that this document represents the state of planning and implementation of the Regional Literacy Plan as of July 2010. They also acknowledge that this document is a living document which will evolve in terms of data, analysis, planning and implementation, and as such understand that the Regional Literacy Plan will evolve as the year progresses. They also understand that this evolution in planning and implementation will be presented to the Board of Education, Senior School District staff and the CCPL at regular intervals during the year to keep each of them abreast of developments in the plan.



Ms. Diane Wright
Superintendent of Schools
School District No. 27
(Cariboo-Chilcotin)



Mr. Wayne Rodier
Chairperson
Board of Education
School District No. 27 (Cariboo-
Chilcotin)