

2011 SCHOOL DISTRICT 63/COMMUNITY LITERACY PLAN UPDATE

The District Literacy Plan provides a way for School Districts to work with community partners to improve literacy. The School District is one of many partners. District Literacy Plans are not intended to duplicate information already contained in documents prepared by School Districts that outline literacy work to support K-12 learners such as Achievement Contracts and Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements.

School District #63 (Saanich) submits this document as an update to the Saanich Community Literacy Plan, 2009 and the Saanich Literacy Project: LOC Final Update: Year One Implementation, January – October, 2010. The District/Community Literacy Plan update for 2011 reflects the progress and highlights the literacy work of the School District and community.

The Saanich Community Literacy Plan was completed in December, 2009 and work on implementing year-one of the plan goals began in January, 2010. At that time, the LOC from the planning stage was offered the contract. On October 8, 2010 that contract ended and since then Saanich has been without an LOC. In addition, the District faced budget shortfalls resulting in the loss of the District Literacy Support Teacher who was a member of the Community Literacy Task and Advisory Team (CLT). Both of these posed challenges to the continuity of the work of the CLT and to the support for literacy initiatives within the School District.

In November 2010, the Community Literacy Management Group asked the READ Society to steward the contracts and funds from the Legacies 2010 for the Community Literacy Task Group representing the geographic boundaries of School District #63, Saanich. In March 2011, the first meeting was called by the steward.

March 15, 2011: Representatives from Vancouver Island Regional Library, READ Society, School District #63, Peninsula Connections for Early Childhood, Tsartlip First Nation, Paquachin First Nation, Beacon Community Services attended the first meeting of the Saanich District Community Literacy Task Group under the stewardship of the READ Society. At that meeting, decisions were made to:

- contact original members and representatives from new groups in an attempt to increase membership
- coordinate and post Literacy Outreach Coordinator job
- review the existing Community Literacy Plan
- to circulate proposed meeting dates to a wider group

May 3, 2011: Meeting of the Community Literacy Task Group

- findings from the review of the existing plan were shared
- Literacy Outreach Coordinator position will be re-posted
- proposed initiative for new LOC: Literacy and Learning Fair (October, 2011)
- establish Community Literacy Task group Management Team (Saanich School District was asked to have someone on this team)
- update the District Literacy Plan
- other: Summer programs, space for adult programs

Community Collaboration and Community Development Early Learning:

We are pleased to highlight and celebrate the activities and programs to support young children and families that have evolved over the last year as a result of the collaborative efforts between the Saanich School District and community partners (including Peninsula Connections for Early Childhood and Beacon Community Services).

StrongStart Centres:

The programs at Brentwood Elementary, Lochside Elementary and Sidney Elementary continue to connect families and communities and provide rich, playful, literacy experiences for young children and caregivers.

The success of the StrongStart programs is reflected in the high attendance numbers which are monitored through BCESIS. As of May 2011 there were 253 children registered at Lochside StrongStart, 172 children registered at Sidney StrongStart, and 140 children registered at Brentwood StrongStart. The average actual daily attendance from January 4, 2011 to March 4, 2011 at Lochside was 28, Sidney 20, and Brentwood 16.

Ready Set Learn:

All elementary schools host open houses for pre-schoolers and their families in January. Various community groups (such as libraries) provide information and resources for this event. In many schools Kindergarten teachers and StrongStart facilitators welcome children and families, plan a range of playful activities (such as literacy, art, and music) and introduce them to the school environment.

Child Care:

While not directly related to literacy initiatives, the relationships support quality care for young children ultimately enhancing early literacy development.

'Little Spartans' Child Care Program is located at Claremont High School and continues to support staff requiring child care. This partnership with Kids Klub serves up to 8 children.

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Teen Education and Motherhood (T.E.A.M.) Day Care at Stelly's Secondary and the new location at Saanichton continue in partnership with Beacon Community Services and the school community. Both programs are operating close to their capacity of twelve spaces.

Before School, After School and KinderCare continue to be offered in each of the elementary schools. The Child Care programs are operated by non-profit, fully licensed organizations independent of the school district.

Roots of Empathy:

This year, in collaboration with Beacon Community Services, Roots of Empathy programs are being offered at four elementary schools. Children in the host classrooms develop understanding of early child development. They begin to understand how babies communicate and observe the development of language.

Beacon Community Services is applying to Success By Six for funding to train two more facilitators.

Professional Development Evenings:

In November 2010, Saanich School District, Peninsula Connections for Early Childhood, and Beacon Community services hosted an evening which brought together school administrators, kindergarten teachers and early years professionals together in to share ideas and learn together. Guest speakers from the early years community presented *The Images of Learning Project*. This project makes visible the competencies of children and the important work of educators of young children. The photos and reflections tell stories of learning and encourage dialogue about rich learning environments that best support all aspects of early learning including literacy development.

In June 2011, a second session will be hosted by the Saanich School District and Peninsula Connections for Early Childhood and Beacon Community Services. This time, invitations have been extended to include Grade One as an extension of conversations with teachers, district teachers and administration around the question, "How do we continue to support the development of literacy in a playful way as children move through the primary grades?"

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Inspiration Through the Reggio Emilia Approach presented by Colleen O'Dowd (Camosun College Instructor) will provide a glimpse of Reggio Emilia. This approach is based on principles of respect, responsibility and community. Exploration and discovery in a supportive and enriching environment based on the interests of the children form the basis for the co-construction of an emergent curriculum. Early childhood providers, community resource people, kindergarten and grade one teachers and administrators will have an opportunity to make connections, learn and share together.

Community Programs/Projects:

The 'PCEC "1000x5" Children's Book Recycling Project' continues to thrive and gain momentum. It is supported by the Saanich School District and has become a focus for student leadership projects at Claremont and Bayside as well as several elementary schools.

New students entering Kindergarten in the fall will receive a book at the Kindergarten orientation session in May/June.

7th Annual Children Count Fair:

This community event is supported by PCEC and community partners including SD#63, Success By Six, Beacon Community Services, and Peninsula CO-OP and took place on Saturday, April 2, at Brentwood Elementary School. It is an opportunity for parents/caregivers and children living within the Saanich School District to learn about community resources and at the same time have fun. In addition to the many community resource people present, teachers from Saanich School District shared information and resources about English as a Second Language, Speech and Language Development, Kindergarten and Literacy Development, and StrongStart programs.

Early Years Community Liaison:

This position provides information and assistance with accessing a variety of resources (including literacy related resources) and programs in the community and offers ongoing support to parents and caregivers. In addition the liaison visits the three School District 63 StrongStart Centers meeting caregivers and children and being available to answer questions.

K-12

Goal 2 of the Saanich District Achievement Contract is to improve literacy achievement. This information can be found in the District Achievement Contract and in the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement posted on the School District website. In addition many schools have literacy as a goal in their school plans.

The following are examples of some school literacy initiatives that engage community with learners in our schools:

- Many schools host local authors to share their work and the writing process with students.
- Family Literacy Day brings community members into the schools to share stories with students.
- ‘DROP EVERYTHING AND READ’ at an elementary school joins members of the 55+ group with students to share books, stories and ideas. We value the time the 55+ members have donated to supporting literacy in our school.
- Art and Writing Fair brings the community into the school to view the work of students.
- At the middle school, students involved in a project that linked learning across content areas created a museum as a way to represent their learning. They invited the community to a guided viewing of the museum. This event was so well attended that it was extended to several evenings.
- After school reading club for K-5 First Nations students is well attended. Students have a chance to read to self, read to someone, and listen to a story read by a guest reader.
- Volunteers from the community listen to children read and read to children
- First Nation support teachers and Educational Assistants liaise with homework/study clubs located on reserve.

Beyond Grade 12:

- The Continuing Education School located at the Saanichton Individual Learning Center began operation in October 2010. They are currently exploring different continuing education options to support the needs of the adult learner.
- Flexible programming for adult learners is provided through South Island Distance Education (SIDES)

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