

District Literacy Plan
2008/2009

School District No. 53
(Okanagan Similkameen)

History

School District No. 53 has had a focus on literacy since 1996. As of 2000, it has been a priority for **all** schools. Although there has been some district direction, schools have mostly based this on the needs of their students. The district has supported these efforts through provision of Curriculum Implementation and Staff Development funds while schools have supplemented with school based funds. The background includes:

- 1996/97 District adhoc committee formed by the District Principal for Special Education. Early intervention/literacy strategies were discussed and planned on a school-by-school basis. Held a District primary summer institute with Penny Clouser.
- 1997/98 District adhoc committee meetings continued. Schools introduced a variety of strategies related to early intervention. The District supported Stefan Cieslik to participate in Reading Recovery training in Kamloops. District supplied resource funding of \$1500 per school on a matching basis to each school to purchase 'levelled' literacy materials.
- 1998/99 Secondary schools investigated late literacy initiatives with financial and staffing support from district. Region formed an Early Literacy committee which has shared strategies on early literacy and intervention.
- 1999/00 Region formed late literacy group to share strategies to address literacy at the Grade 6 to 12 levels. Reading 44 was introduced to all schools on a voluntary basis. Individual schools began to look at measuring student performance and data collection in reading and writing. Several schools trained in Kamloop's Benchmark program and B. C. Performance Standards.
- 2000/01 District received a grant for developing Kindergarten assessment and intervention strategies. Tools were developed for implementation in June 2001 and November 2001. Schools continued with school-based initiatives around literacy.
- 2001/02 Kindergarten assessment tool for November and June were implemented. One school piloted the DIBELS instrument in September. Training in classroom phonemic awareness interventions occurred.
- 2002/03 Implemented BC Performance Standards for Grades 1 to 7 District-wide, Fall and June. Implemented PM Bench Marks for Grades 1 to 3 and revised both Kindergarten assessment tools.
- 2003/04 Formed three District Literacy committees at the primary, intermediate and secondary levels. Elementary Literacy Support program implemented and began to use Reading for Information (SD 44) to assess Grade 3 to 7 Reading Comprehension on a District-wide basis.
- 2004/05 Changed our Grade 3 to 7 Reading assessment to the Peters/Gardner Whole Class reading assessment. Piloted Read and Rec' at Cawston Primary, Okanagan Falls Elementary, and Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary. Developed a secondary school plan for literacy which included a literacy helping teacher and funds for teacher release time for demonstration lessons and coaching. Established a link with SmartRead in New Westminster for training support for our Literacy Helping Teachers.
- 2005/06 Implemented the secondary school plan for literacy which included SmartRead training of literacy helping teachers for each school. Robin Speed of New Westminster mentored the LHTs and visited the district to do demonstration lessons. We provided workshops on PM Benchmarks, Whole Class Reading assessment and how to incorporate the assessment information into instructional planning to build understanding and consistency. Grade 8 and 9 District-Wide Write was implemented and results collected.
- 2006/07 Continued with the secondary literacy plan implementation. Secondary schools developed support systems for at risk students, this work continues. Grade 8 and 9 District-Wide Write was revised and continues. Elementary schools continued to inservice on new reading strategies. Help with PM Benchmarks and Whole Class assessment was provided.

2007/08 As a member of the Okanagan-Similkameen Literacy Now Task Group worked to develop Weaving a Tapestry of Stories: A Community Plan for the South Okanagan Similkameen. We implemented our second StrongStart BC centre at Oliver Elementary and a third such centre (Early Learning Centre) at Osoyoos Elementary. We developed two preschool partnerships, one at Okanagan Falls Elementary and one at Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary. Our in-service program for early childhood educators in the district and region was a great success. We continued to develop skill and consistency in our assessment practices for reading and writing programs. We worked with our Aboriginal partners through our Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee. Finally, we expanded our summer intersession literacy programs by piloting a Rhyme and Rec' program for "at-risk" students entering the first grade.

Introduction and Rationale

The District Literacy Plan recognizes the contributions, uniqueness and degree of success inherent in each school, as well as the differences that exist amongst our schools, students, and communities. Its purpose is to:

1. Support the District's Achievement Plan which has the goal: *"To improve student success in literacy"*.
2. *Support early literacy (age 0 – 5) and late literacy in our communities (19+)*
3. Set a target for both reading and writing.
4. Set out common assessment practice in line with BC's Ministry of Education curriculum and standards.
5. Provide an in-service strategy that is "teacher driven", recognizing the experience and expertise of our teachers.

We want to promote optimum literacy development for all students K to 12.

What are our key areas of focus?

- To have 90 to 95% of our students meeting expectation in reading and writing depending on grade level
- To make early literacy intervention a priority in all elementary schools
- To have balanced and effective literacy programs in place throughout the grades
- To have common language and expectations throughout the district for literacy
- To have an effective and efficient model for support and in-service of staff
- To use available resources in the most effective and efficient manner
- To provide literacy support for StrongStarts, Early Learning Centres and preschools in our schools and communities
- To work in partnership with other community agencies and post-secondary institutes in developing adult literacy skills

Responsibilities

District:

In consultation with teachers and school administrators, the District will provide inservice opportunities focused on classroom instruction. Surveys will be used as part of the consultation process. District will work with Communities for Kids consortium and the Region's Literacy Now Task Group to evaluate and support early childhood and adult literacy development.

School:

Each school will continue to develop school plans with goals to raise literacy performance, with targets and strategies specific to the school.

Measuring progress and success K - 12:

A combination of content standards (Performance Standards, FSA, etc.) and teacher assessment documentation will be used. School level baselines will be established and progress towards desired targets will be reported as part of the school planning process. Although schools may wish to use additional assessment instruments, the following assessments and data collection will be required for all students in grades K through 10:

- Teacher assessments of students.
- Common assessments given twice yearly (Fall and Spring) to assess student writing and reading. The September/October assessment allows the teacher to diagnose individual students in order to plan instruction. The May assessment will provide individual and class growth information. Only May results will be reported to district office as part of district data collection process.
- The BC Performance Standards will be used for Writing and Reading.
- The Peters/Gardner Whole Class Reading Assessment for Grades 3 to 7 (aligned with the BC Performance Standards).
- FSA data for Reading and Writing at the Grade 4, and 7 levels will be evaluated by schools.
- District Wide Write for Grades 8 and 9 provide pre and post information on writing and reading.
- Provincial exams for Grade 10.
- District constructed Kindergarten Assessment Tools (November and June) is used to inform school intervention.

K – 12 Literacy Components

All Grades

- provide Literacy release time funds for demonstration lessons and coaching
- strategies for explicit instruction of oral language inservice and focus for all. What it looks like and how to assess. Easy and deliberate strategies for classroom instruction.
- support attendance at Okanagan-Mainline Regions early and late literacy meetings
- encourage attendance at the Academy of Learning with Faye Brownlie
- encourage schools to find time for grade group meetings (literacy/staff development funds, creativity, etc.)

- use staff development funds to ensure “the trainer”/staff has time to share/teach workshop content
- time to learn new writing rubrics being developed by regional group
- meetings to provide collaborative time /sharing between schools
- look at ways to support mentor/helping teachers at the school level
- survey teachers re: in-service and training needs to support literacy instruction

Kindergarten

Assessment

- assessment tools developed by District teachers are administered in November and June

Follow-up

- review/update the Kindergarten assessment documents “November Kindergarten Survey” and Kindergarten June Assessment” and align with new IRPs. Consider using the Early Learning Project continuums
- training for K teachers in the animated alphabet and phonemic awareness
- expand the Rhyme and Rec’ program (2 schools added for summer ’08)
- continue to encourage collaboration and networking between K teachers and Early Childhood Educators
- consider/investigate the PALS (Parents as Literacy Supporters) program
- consider the Welcome to Kindergarten program

Grades One to Three

Assessment

- Use BC Performance Standards Writing and PM Benchmarks for Reading. BC Performance Standards (Peters/Gardner Whole Class Reading Assessment) will be used at year-end for Grade 3.

Follow-up

- for consistency, review PM Benchmarks administration for school rep
- discussion about students exceeding level 30 for PM Benchmark and use of the Peters/Gardner Whole Class Assessment at grade 3 - practice only or for data?
- training for new primary teachers in use of assessments
- continue training teachers to use meta-cognitive strategies with students
- teacher in-service for classroom based strategies (trainer-of-trainer model or evening, dinner workshops).
- continue to provide Read and Rec programs at all schools

Grades Four to Seven

Assessment

- Use BC Performance Standards for Reading (Peters/Gardner Whole Class Reading Assessment) and Writing

Follow-up

- provide training for new intermediate teachers in use of the Peters/Gardner Whole Class Reading Assessment
- continue work with training teachers to use meta-cognitive strategies with students in-service for teachers around classroom based strategies (evening, dinner workshops)

Grades Eight to Twelve

Assessment

- Use the Provincial 6 point scale (BC Performance Standards) for Writing and Reading. District-Wide Write at the end of January (semester courses) and June (semester/linear courses). Continue to investigate more specific reading assessments.

Follow-up

- Continue to work with school administration in developing strategies in support of literacy
- hold regular meetings for staff rep (helping teacher) to develop specific plans for secondary literacy support
- time to develop District-Wide Writes materials
- monitor school-based literacy plans and supports (research based)
- provide in-service opportunities for meta-cognitive strategies (SmartRead) and Pearson Education's "Stepping Out" program

Early Learning Development

(StrongStart BC Early Learning Centres and Preschool Partnerships)

Assessment

- Participation in annual Early Development Instrument with HELP BC.

Follow-up

- September establish a fourth StrongStart (Early Learning) centre in Cawston. Presently we have 2 StrongStart BC centres (Okanagan Falls, Oliver Elementary) and 1 Early Learning Centre (Osoyoos)
- Continue to seek a preschool partnership at Osoyoos Elementary (preschool partnerships for Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary and Okanagan Falls Elementary were established in 2007/08)
- Continue early literacy in-service program for early childhood educators working in StrongStart BC centres and preschool partnerships. These will include a summer institute in August in partnership with School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) and 3 coaching and in-service sessions during the school year (fall, winter and spring).
- Reallocate Ready, Set, Learn (RSL) funding to support a series of RSL sessions at each school, ECE in-service, and new Kindergarten orientation in the spring. Schools will work with Early Learning personnel to deliver RSL program.

Aboriginal Learners

We continue to address Aboriginal learning through consultation with our Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee. Their voice provides direction and perspective relevant to their needs and issues and all schools develop plans with Aboriginal learners in mind. Our goals and objectives, along with our measures and results are available in our Enhancement Agreement.

Community/Adult Literacy

During the 2007 2008 school year, the school district collaborated with the South Okanagan/Similkameen Literacy Now Task Group to develop a plan for increasing literacy levels which values and supports inclusion, life-long learning and builds on the many strengths of our diverse region. In doing so, our task group commissioned a literacy plan "Weaving a Tapestry of Stories: A Community Literacy Plan for the South Okanagan-Similkameen". A brief summary follows and the complete plan is available at www.sd53.bc.ca

The first part of this document is foundational information for the reader. It describes the Literacy Now community planning process, including community involvement, a demographic profile, and a literacy asset inventory.

The second part of the plan includes our 3 regional goals for literacy and learning, and related actions. An outline of our literacy goals and actions follows:

Goal #1 – Community members must be aware of literacy issues and literacy programs and resources.

Actions:

- Provide structures to implement the community literacy plan by hiring a coordinator and by continuing to hold regular Task Group meetings.
- Improve awareness, coordination and communication among service providers.
- Increase broad community awareness of literacy and learning issues and resources.

Goal #2 – Community members must be able to access literacy programs and resources.

Actions:

- Increase access to and involvement in literacy and learning by removing barriers to participation.

Goal #3 – A range of literacy programs and resources must be available to community members.

Actions:

- Maintain and extend successful literacy programs for babies and young children, elementary school age children, youth, adults and seniors.
- Develop employer/employee workplace literacy.
- Improve health literacy by supporting the capacity of all individuals to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services.

Okanagan-Similkameen Literacy Now Task Group has recently hired a coordinator who will work closely with our district in refining our plans.

School District No. 53 is committed to community literacy through participation on the South Okanagan-Similkameen Literacy Now Task Group. We continue to work closely with our this time, the district provides free space for ESL services and our Learning Centre provides courses for graduation and for literacy to adults. On October 10, 2007 the Board of Education approved the delivery of 'free' courses to adult graduates, as per Ministry of Education Policy.