

District Literacy Plan – School District No. 62 (Sooke)

1. District and Community Context and Demographics

School District No. 62 (Sooke) is located west of Victoria, and encompasses the communities of Colwood, Highlands, Langford, Metchosin, Sooke and Port Renfrew. The population of these communities is 53,548 according to the 2006 Census. This is approximately a 10% increase in population since the previous census was completed in 2001. This population increase can be evidenced in the expansion of both residential housing and business development in the Western Communities.

Additionally, according to the 2006 Census, the Aboriginal population in these communities is 3,535 and the average family income is \$43,319 based on full time, full year earners.

School District Demographics:

- Approximate student population is 8,060
- 18 elementary schools (K-5 or K-6)
- 4 middle schools
- 3 secondary schools
- 1 trades-focused secondary school
- 2 continuing education centres

Students at a Glance:

- 3,853 elementary school students
- 1,976 middle school students
- 2,230 secondary school students
- 1,179 continuing education students
- 740 Aboriginal students
- 1,098 designated special needs students
- 479 low incidence special education students
- 619 high incidence special education students

School District No. 62 (Sooke) completed a District Review process in fall 2007. In response to this review, the key stakeholder groups are engaged in a regular mediated process to improve labour relations. The District is hopeful that the work of this group will lead to a shared vision and common goals for the future.

2. Alignment with the K-12 literacy plan in the District Achievement Contract

Improving student literacy is one of three goals in our District Achievement Contract. The rationale, objectives, performance indicators, targets, and actions are identified below. Many of the actions identified address not only the identified grade level but also preceding grade levels with an understanding that early intervention impacts future performance.

Rationale:

- The District is below the provincial average in the following areas:
 - Grade 7 writing and reading (FSA)
 - Grade 4 males - writing (FSA)
 - English 10 Pass Rate
 - DART Results confirm Provincial Results
- There is a gap between our Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students' performance in reading
- There is a gender gap between our Grade 4 males and females in reading

Evidence:

The District will continue to use data from:

- Provincial FSA (Foundation Skills Assessment) reports.
- provincial Exam reports grades 10, 11, 12.
- provincial Survey information.
- BC Performance Standards.
- report card marks.
- DART.

Objectives:

3.1 Increase writing success of all Grade 7 students

<i>Writing FSA Results – All Students</i>								
Evidence	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Grade 7	84%	81%	78%	82%	58%			
Target						60%	62%	64%

Targeted Curriculum Team Actions to Address Objective:

- Support the implementation of the new Language Arts IRP K-7 by supporting the piloting of Nelson, Pearson or Scholastic literacy materials for Grades 4, 5 and 7
- Support teachers and TOCs through a 4-part workshop on *6+1 Traits of Writing*
- Pilot a .125 or .25 FTE curriculum support teacher at each middle school to build the capacity of teachers
- Offer a 3-part grading and reporting workshop series for middle school teachers to encourage the use of qualitative feedback among other best practices

Examples of S.P.C. Actions to Address Objective:

- Use of DART in fall and spring for Assessment for Learning purposes
- Use collaborative time to encourage professional dialogue and team planning

3.2 Increase writing success rates Grade 4 – males

<i>Writing FSA Results - Grade 4 Males</i>								
Evidence	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Grade 4	82%	87%	84%	80%	65%			
Target						67%	69%	71%

Targeted Curriculum Team Actions to Address Objective:

- Support the implementation of the new Language Arts IRP K-7 by supporting the piloting of Nelson, Pearson or Scholastic literacy materials for Grades 4, 5 and 7
- Support teachers and TOCs through a 4-part workshop on *6+1 Traits of Writing*
- Build capacity among teachers in writing instruction at elementary schools demonstrating lowest performance rates in FSA and DART
- Offer a final session of the 3-part grading and reporting workshop series for intermediate elementary school teachers to encourage the use of qualitative feedback among other best practices

Examples of S.P.C. Actions to Address Objective:

- *Staff Development Actions* including, but not limited to, participation in an inquiry team, professional book clubs, use of school wide professional resources such as *6+1 Traits of Writing*, facilitating opportunities for teachers to observe one another teach, and establishing a school literacy committee
- *Parent Education Actions* including, but not limited to, promoting information about school goals in the newsletter, providing parent workshops, and offering parent information nights
- *Instructional Structures* including, but not limited to, school wide literacy events, focusing 2 of 4 Family Grouping Days on multi-aged writing, and USSW (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Writing)
- *Assessment Actions* including, but not limited to, school wide writes and using the performance standards as an assessment tool and as a planning tool for instruction

3.3 Increase pass rate of English 10

<i>English 10 Pass Rate (C- or Better) – All Students</i>							
Evidence	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
English 10	94%	92%	90%				
Target					92%	94%	96%

Targeted Curriculum Team Actions to Address Objective:

- Support the implementation of the new English IRP Grades 9-12 by surveying teachers and supporting them with release time to discuss relevant topics
- Pilot a .125 or .25 FTE curriculum support teacher at each middle school to build the capacity of teachers
- Provide 3 secondary schools with funds to release teachers for professional dialogue, to attend workshops, or to participate in a professional book club

- Pilot *Bridges to Your Future*, a project-based learning program at Metchosin Technical School, for 32 Grade 9 students with daily literacy tutorials to address individual needs of students

Examples of S.P.C. Actions to Address Objective:

- Address diverse learning needs by improving the support system for incoming Grade 10 students
- Begin conversation on Brain Based strategies and send interested staff members to the annual conference
- Support vertical teaming within departments
- Set up an academic team to outline pathways with AVID
- Embed literacy strategies within core subject areas

3.4 Increase reading success rates for all Grade 6 - 9 students

<i>Reading FSA Results – All Students</i>								
Evidence	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Grade 7	74%	75%	70%	73%	57%			
Target						59%	61%	63%

<i>DART Comprehension Scores 3-4 Results- All Students</i>								
Evidence	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007-08	2008-09	2009/10	2010/11
Grade 6			21%	45%	53%			
Target						55%		
Grade 9			25%	59%	45%			
Target						47%		

- DART Comprehension scores of 3-4 represent students’ understanding at or above what is usually expected at that grade level.

<i>DART Fluency Scores 4-5 Results- All Students</i>							
Evidence	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007-08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Grade 6		49%	45%	48%			
Target					50%		
Grade 9		45%	53%	40%			
Target					42%		

- DART Fluency scores of 4-5 represent students’ fluency above what is usually expected at that grade level.

Targeted Curriculum Team Actions to Address Objective:

- Support the implementation of the new Language Arts IRP K-7 by supporting the piloting of Nelson, Pearson or Scholastic literacy materials for Grade 7

- Pilot a .125 or .25 FTE curriculum support teacher at each middle school to build the capacity of teachers
- Offer a 3-part grading and reporting workshop series for middle school teachers

Examples of S.P.C. Actions to Address Objective:

- Use of DART in fall and spring and Alberta Oral Diagnostic for Assessment for Learning purposes
- Use collaborative time to encourage professional dialogue and team planning and support individual teacher action research projects
- Provide parent education
- Promote reading for enjoyment for approximately 20 – 30 minutes per day
- Purchase reading material with greater interest for boys
- Use of school-based reading strategies program

3.5 Increase reading success rates Grade 4 – males

<i>Reading FSA Results-Males</i>								
Evidence	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Grade 4	79%	75%	74%	67%	75%			
Target						77%	79%	81%

<i>DART Comprehension Scores 3-4 Results- Males</i>								
Evidence	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Grade 3			35%	52%	52%			
Target						54%		
Grade 4			29%	36%	35%			
Target						37%		

- DART Comprehension scores of 3-4 represent students’ understanding at or above what is usually expected at that grade level.

<i>DART Fluency Scores 4-5 Results- Males</i>						
Evidence	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Grade 3	51%	43%	43%			
Target				45%	47%	49%

- DART Fluency scores of 4-5 represent students’ fluency above what is usually expected at that grade level.

Targeted Curriculum Team Actions to Address Objective:

- Support the implementation of the new Language Arts IRP K-7 by supporting the piloting of Nelson, Pearson or Scholastic literacy materials for Grade 4
- Build capacity among teachers in reading instruction at elementary schools demonstrating lowest performance rates in FSA and DART

- Offer Adrienne Gear workshop on reading comprehension strategies in Spring 2008
- Offer support in utilizing Fall DART data to plan and focus instruction

Examples of S.P.C. Actions to Address Objective:

- *Staff Development Actions* including, but not limited to, participation in an inquiry team, discuss reading strategies at staff meetings, use of school wide professional resource such as *Reading Power*, providing school funds for teachers to attend in-service, and establishing a school literacy committee
- *Parent Education Actions* including, but not limited to, using P.A.R.T.N.E.R.S. to assist parents in developing their child’s reading skills at home, offering Mother Goose programs, hosting Literacy Nights, offering parent reading workshops and using incentives to encourage participation in the home reading program
- *Instructional Structures* including, but not limited to, administration and Literacy Support teachers assist with guided reading groups, providing high interest level books for boys, ensuring large blocks of time in timetable for literacy instruction and organizing students into multi-aged leveled groups for reading instruction
- *Assessment Actions* including, but not limited to, use of DART two times per year for Assessment for Learning purposes, using assessment to plan for instruction, and using observations surveys

3.6 Increase reading success of all Aboriginal Students – Grades 3 – 9

<i>Reading FSA Results – Aboriginal Students</i>								
Evidence	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Grade 4	73%	61%	58%	65%	59%			
Target						61%		
Grade 7	57%	59%	50%	65%	37%			
Target						39%		

<i>DART Comprehension Scores 3-4 Results-Aboriginal Students</i>								
Evidence	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Grade 3			85%	43%	51%			
Target						53%		
Grade 6			16%	28%	53%			
Target						55%		
Grade 9			18%	46%	18%			
Target						20%		

- DART Comprehension scores of 3-4 represent students’ understanding at or above what is usually expected at that grade level.

Targeted Aboriginal Education & Curriculum Team Actions to Address Objective:

- Build capacity among First Nations Teachers and Aboriginal Early Literacy Support Teachers in reading instruction strategies

- Offer support to First Nations Teachers and Aboriginal Early Literacy Support Teachers in utilizing Fall DART data to plan and focus instruction
- Introduce teachers to relevant Aboriginal content resources through Literacy Network meetings
- Offer academic support via Aboriginal Teachers and Support Workers at middle and secondary schools
- Support literacy needs at elementary schools via three (3) Aboriginal Early Literacy Support Teachers

Examples of S.P.C. Actions to Address Objective:

- Coordinate Support Services Team, including Aboriginal Education support workers, to provide support for students in a concerted fashion
- Aboriginal Literacy Teacher to work with Aboriginal students daily in order to boost their comprehension
- Offer school planning day in-service to First Nations Teacher/Support Worker
- First Nations Support Teacher will help students of Aboriginal descent develop their reading strategies through daily intervention of Reading Recovery, and small group and individual intervention for intermediate students needing support

District-Wide Literacy Actions:

Literacy Support provided by Curriculum Team:

- Promote the use of common assessment tools, such as DRA or DART, for assessment for learning purposes
- Continue Spring DART throughout the District in Grades 3 to 9
- Support teachers and administrators through the Literacy Curriculum Advisor and Vice-Principal of Staff Development via co-teaching, demonstration lessons, professional book clubs, Literacy Innovations Grant funded inquiry teams, and workshops
- Continue networks of literacy representatives from each elementary school in order to improve communication and leadership capacity district wide
- Implement Early Intervention and/or Reading Recovery at every elementary school through staffing for Literacy Support positions
- Ensure that District is represented at Island Net, Island Literacy Network, and South Island Literacy Network to share information and resources with other districts across the Island
- Continue to enhance programs for preschoolers such as Ready, Set, Learn Open Houses, Mother Goose Programs, PALS Programs, Success by Six Music Conservatory Programs, and three (3) StrongStart Centres

Glossary of Terms

DART	District Assessment of Reading Team
FSA	Foundations Skills Assessment
DRA	Developmental Reading Assessment
SPC	School Planning Council
PALS	Parents As Literacy Supporters
PARTNERS	Parents Are Ready to Teach and Nurture Effective Reading Skills

Note: District Curriculum Team members focused on literacy for 2008/09 include the District Vice-Principal of Staff Development, the District Literacy Curriculum Advisor K-5, and four (4) part-time middle school curriculum support teachers.

3. Alignment between existing or developing Community Literacy Plans and District Literacy Plan

School District No. 62 (Sooke) submitted an Expression of Interest to Literacy Now on behalf of the community of Sooke, B.C. in spring 2007 and the Western Communities in spring 2008. Literacy Now approved both applications and Gillian Petrini was hired on a contract-basis to be the Community Literacy Plan Coordinator for both communities.

The Sooke Community Literacy Plan is currently in *Stage Two – Preparing the Community Plan* and the Western Communities are in *Stage One – Getting Started* of the Literacy Now process. An extensive literacy plan update for the community of Sooke is detailed below. A meeting to expand the literacy conversation with other community members in the Western Communities is planned for September 2008, with a Launch anticipated in late fall 2008.

4. The Board's process for consultation with key literacy stakeholder groups

Gillian Petrini and the Sooke Community Literacy Plan Task Force extended invitations to 120 individuals in an effort to include all key literacy stakeholder groups in the Sooke Launch on April 8, 2008. There was representation from the following community organizations, totaling about 50 individuals, at the Launch: community colleges/post-secondary institutions, community service groups/volunteer organizations, community members, First Nations organizations/cultural groups, school districts, sports and recreation organizations, continuing education programs, municipal government, literacy organizations, pre-schools, trade unions, and the Spirit of B.C. Community Committee. All individuals who attended the Launch were invited to participate in the regular Sooke Community Literacy Plan Task Force meetings. Additionally, Gillian Petrini has met with several focus groups, such as VIHA health care workers and parent groups, since the Launch to solicit their input into the plan.

Members of the Sooke School District's curriculum team regularly participate in the Regional Literacy Advisory Group meetings organized by Jan Dupuis, the Regional Literacy Coordinator for the Capital Region. These meetings provide valuable opportunities to network with literacy stakeholder groups in our region.

5. Goals, objectives, rationale, and actions to improve community literacy – Sooke Community

As a result of the April 8th Launch and subsequent focus group meetings, a summary of what Sooke community members would like with regard to community literacy initiatives (“goals”) is being developed. (See Appendix A for a mid-June 2008 summary). A literacy inventory questionnaire is currently being drafted and will be mailed or emailed to literacy stakeholder groups this summer 2008. In September 2008, community meetings will be held to analyze the data described above and to determine strengths, gaps, challenges, and opportunities. It is anticipated that a draft Sooke Community Literacy Plan will be prepared by the beginning of October 2008 and that a final plan will be adopted in fall 2008.

6. Process for the approval of the District Literacy Plan

The District Literacy Plan is submitted to the Education Standing Committee and is then subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Appendix A

Summary of What Sooke Community Members Would Like – prepared in mid-June 2008 by Gillian Petrini

Early Years (0 – 5 years)

In the early years, ages 0-5, family literacy was a high priority. There was a desire to have more parental and family involvement in the development of children. Suggestions were to offer more parent and tot classes, circle and story times in the community, as well as have opportunities to teach parents how to bring literacy into their homes and into their daily lives. It was important to ensure that books are getting into homes to help encourage parents to read to their children. Also, identifying children at risk for having literacy problems was another high priority. This includes vision and hearing checks, early and regularly, also recognizing those who are non-readers early on and identifying families who are at risk. Once any problems have been recognized then the supports need to be in place to help these individuals and families. Lack of daycare and preschool availability was another issue.

Elementary School Years

In the elementary years, the need for more parent involvement was recognized. In terms of schools, it was strongly stressed that class sizes need to be smaller. Also, it was strongly noted that learning in the classrooms needs to be fun and relevant to students. Many different types of exciting literacy activities were recommended- reading rewards programs, cool boys' book clubs, pen pals, guest speakers, buddy reading, and community book bins. Professional development and ongoing updating of practices may help to offer exciting lessons and material to students. This professional learning could also include networking with various community members and organizations to address issues and build on one another's programs/ strengths. Integrating more community connections into the classrooms was also highlighted. It was acknowledged that teachers need to be supported to do the best job they can. There is a need to have additional supports for both teachers and learners by hiring more teacher aids and increasing the number of volunteers. A full time librarian would be very beneficial to everyone. Grade 4 was recognized as the plateau year and this should be examined further and addressed. Also, transient families need to be assisted in integrating into the community, through ESL support, military resources, etc. Those needing further assistance outside of school should be able to find tutors for an affordable rate.

Middle and Secondary School Years

There were many elementary issues continuing into the middle schools and secondary years. Parental involvement was still key as was the need for smaller class sizes and engaging teaching practices. Again, more professional learning opportunities, community linking and classroom supports for teachers, as well as support for transient families and the need for affordable tutoring were noted. For pre-teens and teens, there is a strong need for more activities in the community and spaces specifically designed for this age group. Other suggestions were the need for more counselors in schools and more attention paid to the transitions between elementary and middle school, middle school to secondary. Classes in both middle and secondary school levels should be relevant to students and at the higher grades more practical life/work preparation courses should be offered. Also at the secondary level, having alternative options for students, such as directed learning, on line, alternative programs etc. was stressed. EMCS West provides an option but should be a sustainable program and well resourced. The challenges of high school students (transportation to school, staying engaged, nutritious eating, and school start time) should continue to be

examined. Support for teens dealing with substance abuse was recognized as another priority.

Young Adult Years

For young adults the identified needs were clear. There needs to be a place that provides easily accessible learning opportunities, ie high school courses, tutoring, upgrades etc, and other learning assistance for filling out forms, testing, learning disabilities support, etc. Many young adults go outside of the community to find this assistance, having a learning centre, either as a satellite office of a city based learning organization or otherwise, is essential. A phone in service was another idea, one where someone could call for a non-emergency literacy related question. An increase in workplace literacy was also highlighted. Many employed individuals face literacy issues, and therefore the implementation of workplace literacy initiatives would be a way to access this group of people. Integrating more of the youth with community was another suggestion - there are many ways that this could happen such as apprenticing, mentoring, coaching etc. Also, there are young adults in the community with children, and it was noted again that parenting and family literacy programs would be beneficial.

Adult Years

The need for a learning opportunities space in Sooke was again highlighted for adults, as well as workplace literacy initiatives and the potential of a phone-in service. Also important for this age group was supporting parents through ongoing parenting education- examining parenting ideas, issues, etc, teaching parents how to engage their children in literacy activities, and financial literacy. Support for transient families, single parents, and those facing substance abuse were all important issues.

Senior Years

For the senior population of Sooke the most important priority noted was to connect seniors with the younger community and create more intergenerational links. This could be through buddy reading, mentorship, or volunteering opportunities etc. Also, important was to have used books available to seniors especially ones with large type, have access to technology/ computer classes and have a trusting resource person available for assisting with contracts, prescriptions information, forms etc.

General Comments

In the community as a whole, there were a few important suggestions to note. The library was recognized as an excellent resource; however, there were suggestions to have longer hours, specific reading rooms, and ultimately a larger library. The community should also be promoting literacy awareness whenever possible so that those facing problems with literacy know they are not alone and there is support. Having Book Bins out in the community that offer free second hand books was suggested for getting books into the community and having a mobile book library for those places that are not easily accessible. Finally, it is important to recognize the link between literacy and poverty in the community as well as the impact of mental health issues.