

School District 87 (Stikine)

District Literacy Plan

2008-2009

School District 87 (Stikine) District Literacy Plan 2008-09

1. District and community context and demographics:

Covering an area of over 188,000 square kilometres, the Stikine region boasts several of the largest and most significant parks in Canada. Here can be found the mighty Stikine, Taku and Liard rivers, three of the last free flowing wilderness rivers in North America. The Stikine River has created the dramatic Grand Canyon of the Stikine -- A major geological wonder. Gorges up to 300 m (948 ft.) deep have been carved through sandstone, granite, and volcanic rock. The Stikine river basin, passing through two countries, abounds with a great variety of wildlife which still coexists in a natural balance between predator and prey.

The Tahltan, Tlingit and Kaska Peoples are the original First Nations of the region. The Tahltan traded their goods frequently using the coastal Tlingit tribes as middlemen. Today the Tahltan people are actively involved in managing the resources of this region, most specifically in the communities of Telegraph Creek and Dease Lake. The Tlingit First Nation is prominent in Atlin, while the Kaska First Nation populates the Lower Post community. Each community is distinct within the District and offers opportunities to celebrate cultures.

We live in a beautiful rural and remote area. Our small communities (the largest has a population of about 350 people) are spread throughout this vast region which stretches north to the Yukon and west to Alaska. The trip from Atlin, starting at the furthest north-west point to Lower Post to Dease Lake to Telegraph Creek, the furthest south-west point, is distanced by almost 1500 kilometres.

Our school population is composed mainly of First Nations students. Hunting, fishing and gathering are important to community and family life. In June we see a drop in enrolment as many students and families go to fish camp to catch and preserve their yearly supply of fish. Leaders in the First Nations community are working hard to maintain and promote traditional languages and culture. This task is difficult due to the influence of and economic wealth from high paying jobs generated by mining and development. These impacts create social, emotional and cultural issues.

In our communities, there are many single parent families, a high rate of family breakdown, domestic violence and poor health and lifestyles. Many teenagers are engaged in self-destructive behaviours including drug and alcohol abuse as well as sexual activity leading to unplanned pregnancies.

Still, there is a desire for education. Parents want their children to do well at school, although they may lack the knowledge and skills to provide practical support at home. Grandparents play a huge role in the success of young people and given time and a variety of opportunities, many students succeed.

The Stikine School District has much to offer our students. Small class sizes, dedicated teachers and support staff, well maintained schools and adherence to provincial curriculum and standards are in place. Educational programs and services are provided through two K to 9 schools in Atlin and Telegraph Creek, one K to 7 school in Lower Post and one K to 12 school in Dease Lake. Both Atlin and Telegraph Creek support High School enrolments from various age groups in the communities. Iskut runs the Klappan Independent School.

Young people in the Stikine Region face challenges as they complete their educations and move into adulthood. In communities where high school is not offered, the school district pays room and board to assist students to live in other areas while pursuing their educations. However, it is still difficult for students to leave their small communities and their families to attend school in towns such as Smithers, Terrace and Whitehorse. It often takes our students longer than expected to achieve their high school diplomas.

Options for alternate paths to achieving educational success exist. Our Satellite Program as one example. This program provides an outreach teacher who visits students at home in support of individualized distance education. We presently have a number of adults in the program, several of whom are employed by the school system as student assistants. They are working at completing their grade 12.

The challenges to delivering quality educational programs in our schools are many. The isolation of our communities makes it difficult to attract staff; there has historically been a high turnover rate among teacher, administrative, and district staff. Specialized student assessments and support services must be contracted out. This makes it difficult to provide service in a timely manner and limits ability to provide meaningful follow-up.

School staffs are small and a few people must share all the work of teaching, running the school, supervising students, and providing "extras." Most classes are multi-graded (three grades) and there is a relatively high proportion of special needs students. Student support staff, who are hired locally, often require extensive mentoring and skills training which is provided on-the-job by the classroom teacher and increases the teacher work load.

The distance between schools makes it difficult and costly to get teachers together for any reason. Leaving the district for an appointment or workshop requires a minimum of three days' absence: the closest large communities are Terrace, Smithers, and Whitehorse. Each is a seven hour drive away. In the winter, travel on our narrow, winding gravel roads can be treacherous and dangerous.

Demographics:

The Stikine's overall population:

2001 census is 1316, 2006 is 1109, a decrease of 15.7%

Stikine region covers 132,477 sq. km.

Population by school (2007-08):

School	Aboriginal	Non Aboriginal	Total
Atlin	18	36	54
Dease Lake	111	47	158
Denetia (Lower Post)	23	3	26
Tahltan(Telegraph Creek)	46	3	49

Total School Population Trend:

2001/02	328
2006/07	260
2007/08	287
2008/09	???

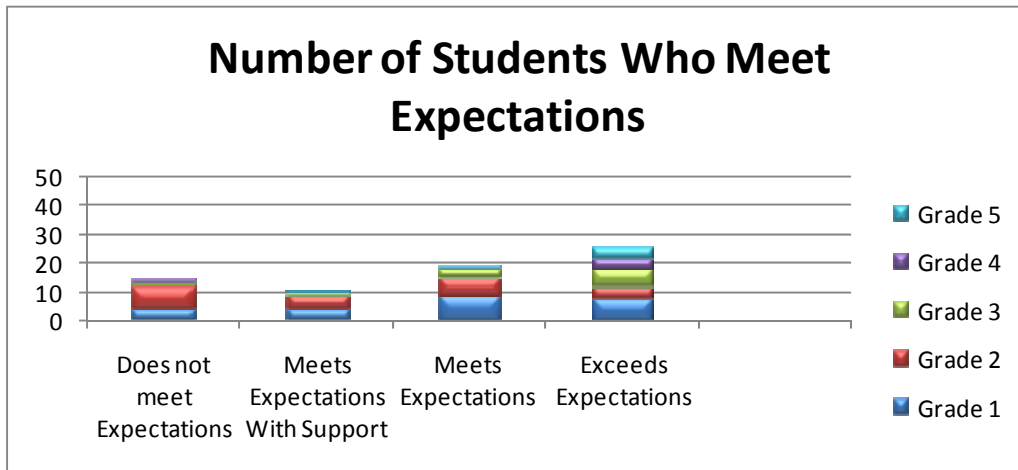
Family Structure of single parent families: 1996 = 14.3 2001 = 26.5 2006 = 21

Programs/Services: C (current), E (expected)

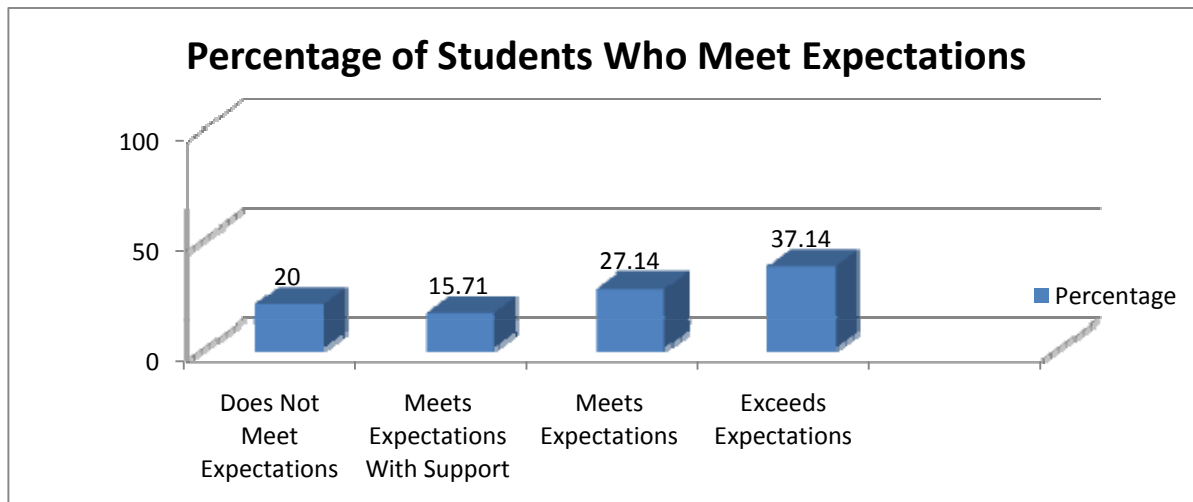
Service	Atlin	Dease Lake	Iskut	Lower Post	Telegraph Creek
Literacy Now	C	C		E	E
Northern Lights College	C	C			
Head Start	C	C	C	C	C
Strong Start	E	E		C	E
Day Care	C	C		C	C
Independent School			C		
Reading Center		C			
Library	C				
Building Blocks		C			
Pregnancy Outreach		C			
First Nations Center	C	C	C	C	C

Current Data:

PM Benchmark Reading Tests 2007/2008



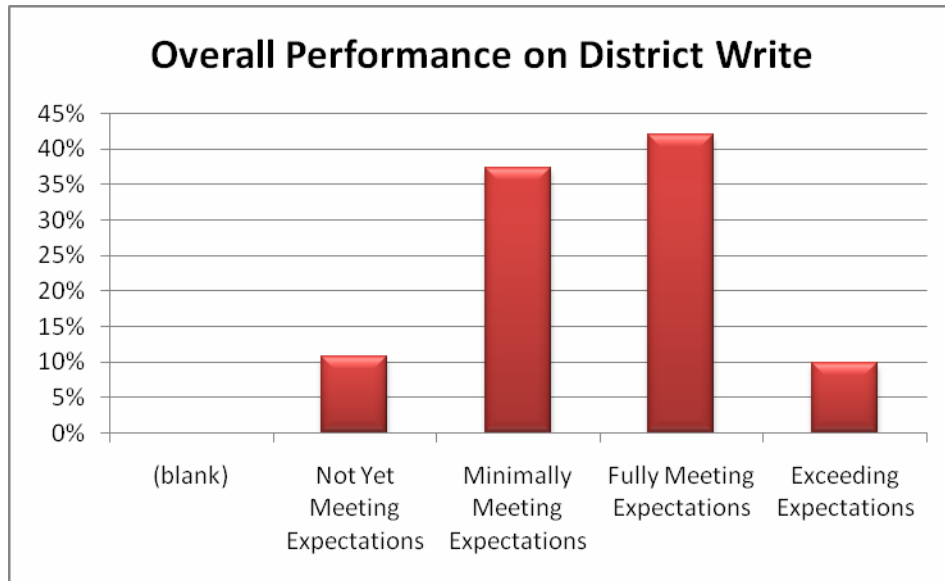
School	Grade	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations With Support	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
	1	4	4	9	8
	2	8	5	6	4
	3	1	1	3	6
	4	1	0	0	4
	5	0	1	1	4
TOTAL		14	11	19	26



District Wide Write 2008

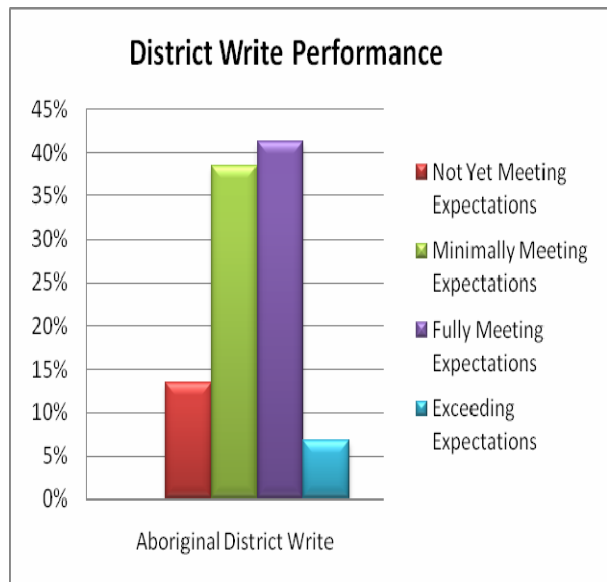
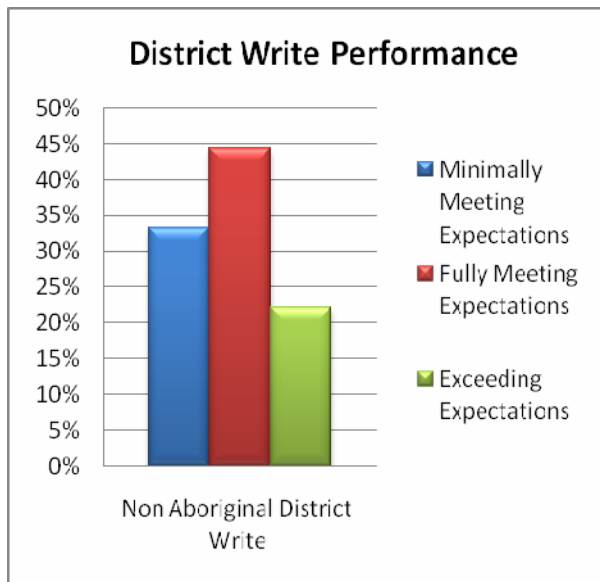
(Assessment using BC Performance Standards)

District Write 2008	Total Numbers	District Write 2008	Overall %
Not Yet Meeting Expectations	14	Not Yet Meeting Expectations	11%
Minimally Meeting Expectations	49	Minimally Meeting Expectations	37%
Fully Meeting Expectations	55	Fully Meeting Expectations	42%
Exceeding Expectations	13	Exceeding Expectations	10%
Grand Total	131	Grand Total	100%



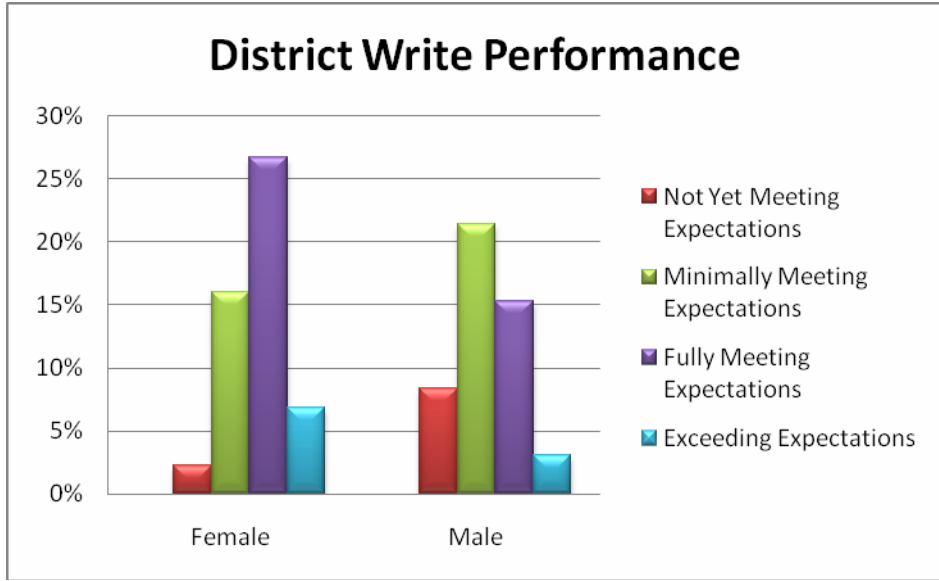
Overall Performance by Heritage	District Write 2008				Grand Total
	Not Yet Meeting Expectations	Minimally Meeting Expectations	Fully Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations	
Non Aboriginal	0	9	12	6	27
Aboriginal	14	40	43	7	104
Grand Total	14	49	55	13	131

Overall Performance by Heritage	District Write 2008				Grand Total
	Not Yet Meeting Expectations	Minimally Meeting Expectations	Fully Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations	
Non Aboriginal	0%	7%	9%	5%	21%
Aboriginal	11%	31%	33%	5%	79%
Grand Total	11%	37%	42%	10%	100%

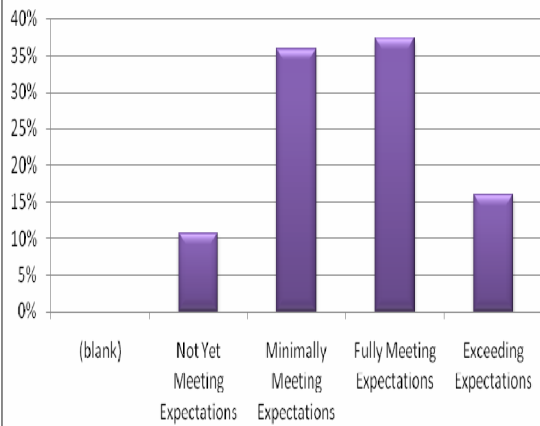


Overall Performance					
District Write 2008					
By Gender	Not Yet Meeting Expectations	Minimally Meeting Expectations	Fully Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations	Grand Total
Female	3	21	35	9	68
Male	11	28	20	4	63
Grand Total	14	49	55	13	131

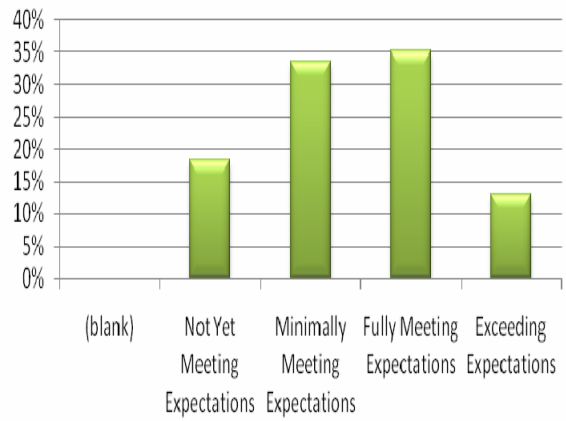
Overall Performance					
District Write 2008					
By Gender	Not Yet Meeting Expectations	Minimally Meeting Expectations	Fully Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations	Grand Total
Female	2%	16%	27%	7%	52%
Male	8%	21%	15%	3%	48%
Grand Total	11%	37%	42%	10%	100%



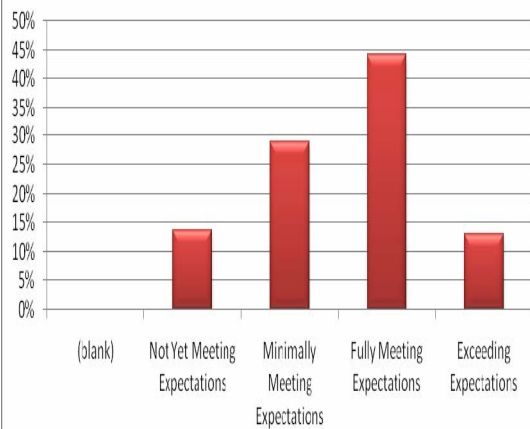
District Write Performance in Meaning



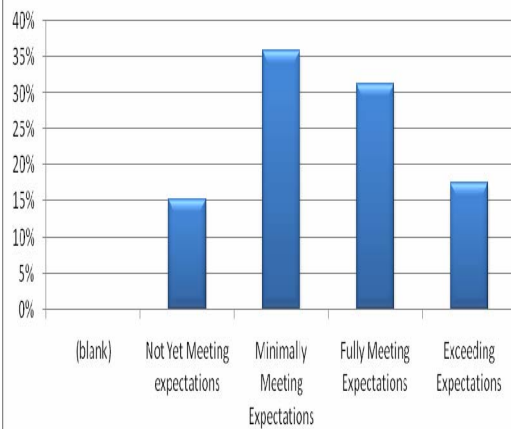
District Write Performance in Style



District Write Performance in Form



District Write Performance in Conventions



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

The current SD 87 Achievement Contract is the beginning of a process to move towards making data driven decisions. It is apparent that in the past, data was not collected in a systematic way; it was neither compiled nor used to make decisions. The District plans to address the issues around our small student population by developing an individual student profile for each student in the district. This way we can monitor individual student growth from year to year.

An analysis of the PM Benchmark Reading Tests and our FSA results reveal some interesting results. It should be noted that the sample size for the two tests were different; 14 grade 4 students and 16 grade 7 students took the FSA test where as 118 students were included in the PM Benchmark sample. Also two different instruments were used to test reading comprehension. However, the results were similar and could suggest they validate each other. The FSA test for 06/07 reveals that 58% of the grade 4 students and 50 % of the grade 7 students meet or exceed expectations. This is a big jump for both grades, but because of the low student number these results are suspect. It is interesting that the PM Benchmark reading tests support the FSA results. The Benchmark results reveal that 56% of the students in grades 1 through 5 are meeting or exceeding expectations. It will be interesting to see if this increase in reading scores continues for this year.

One aspect of the PM Benchmark testing that needs further evaluation is that it appears that the majority of the students either don't meet expectation or they exceed expectation. There are very few, only 15%, of the students that meet expectation with support or meet expectation. The numeracy results from the FSA are interesting in that they appear better than the reading results, and the grade 7 results appear considerably stronger than the grade 4 results. To better understand those results, feedback from the district team is required. The grade 12 exam results and the six year dogwood completion rates are very encouraging. It appears that given extra time the students can be successful.

Correlation to 2007/08 Literacy Innovation / District Literacy Plans Grant Application, January 2008

The Literacy Grant Application outlined that we plan to enhance literacy development through maintaining and extending past initiatives. At the time of the Grant Application it was important to continue to implement and promote a balanced literacy approach in K to 5. In addition, we needed to extend our plan to include a model for grades 6 through 12. This model will focus on key elements of learning, incorporating instructional practices that have clearly delineated procedures (connecting, processing, transforming and personalizing) which have been proven as best practice. The grade 6 to 12 model also includes proven strategies for assessment. Our guiding principles are to promote multiple means of engagement, processing, and expression.

There were provisions for in-service related to our initiatives. In-class modeling and mentoring for teachers will continue to be important extensions of the in-service plan. It is also critical that release time continue to be provided for district-wide and school-based teacher teaming. Instruction will continue to be supported through the purchase of teaching resources as needed.

We have begun to move towards making data driven decisions. It is apparent that in the past data was not collected in a systematic way; it was not necessarily compiled or used to make decisions. The District plans to address the issues around our small student population by developing a student profile for each student in the district. This way we can monitor individual student growth from year to year.

An analysis of the PM Benchmark Reading assessments and FSA tests reveal some interesting results. Keeping in mind the difference in sample size for the two tests (FSA tests at the grades 4 and 7 levels were completed by a total of 30 students, while 118 were included in the PM Benchmark sample), the results were similar and could suggest they validate each other. The FSA test for 05/06 reveals that 58% of Grade Fours and 50% of Grade Sevens meet or exceed expectations. The Benchmark results reveal that 56% of the students in grades 1 through 5 are meeting or exceeding expectations.

The PM Benchmark testing further indicates that the majority of students either do not meet or they exceed expectations. Only 15% of the students fall into the “meet expectations” or “meet with support” categories.

At the K through 5 levels the Balanced Literacy program will focus on teaching skills through read aloud, write aloud , shared reading, shared writing, guided reading, interactive writing, guided writing, independent reading, and independent writing.

At the Grades 6 through 12 levels, efforts will be made to improve literacy skills through instructional activities that promote the following key elements of learning: engagement, connections, questioning, structured talk, working alone and together, and ensuring descriptive feedback.

The Literacy Grant Application indicated that K through 12 literacy must continue to be a focus for SD 87. There is much work to do. Programs and procedures need to be aligned with best practice and we need to focus on our data collection procedures so that we have reliable data with which to make informed decisions. We need to continue to support our current teachers and principals to improve their skills and knowledge while making sure we inform and educate our new personnel with regard to the literacy model we are using.

3. Where applicable, explanation of the alignment between existing or developing Community Literacy Plans and the District Literacy Plan.

Once Literacy Now Committees have finalized plans, a feasibility review of the connectedness and supportive natures of the DLP and Literacy Now Plans will be implemented. The intent is to ensure an active and supportive relationship with all partners to ensure greater success of all goals outlined in all Literacy Plans.

Generally, the goals of the committees are to

- a. Promote the importance of Literacy
- b. Develop Literacy related programs
- c. Develop partnerships with business, Service Clubs and Essential Services to promote and deliver Literacy initiatives

- d. Coordinate the efforts of community services
- e. Improve Literacy levels and skills for all ages
- f. Clearly communicate and promote services
- g.

School District 87 is committed to support the efforts of these committees, through participation, sharing expertise and supporting a network of community services that strengthen Literacy skills and levels.

Numerous literacy services in each community rely on volunteers. The best examples are the Reading Center in Dease Lake and the Library in Atlin. With schools acting as advertisers of needs and promoters of activities and services, more people will be aware of the services and the need for participation in various ways to ensure a Literacy focussed community.

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

This responsibility has been given to the Director of Instruction who was hired February 1, 2008. Each community partner has been approached and engaged in conversations about Literacy development and the Transitional District Literacy Plan. In each case partners supported the concepts outlined in the TDLP and looked forward to continued communication and planning to meet the outlined goals.

Literacy Now provides the excellent opportunity to network with all partners in literacy and School District 87 is taking advantage of this. Both Atlin and Dease Lake communities have initiated a Literacy Now Committee and Plan. The communities of Lower Post and Telegraph Creek have asked for support to begin Literacy Now committees in the respective communities. School District 87 is actively involved with the Literacy Now Committees with teachers and the Director of Instruction actively participating in the planning and implementation stages. The District will be actively engaged in the two remaining Literacy Now initiatives, once they begin.

5. Goals and objectives to improve community literacy.

Goal 1: To improve Literacy skills of all learners

Rationale: Foregoing the obvious, this District Literacy Plan targets literacy development for all learners in each of our communities with specific focus on K-12. The District Achievement Contract clearly identifies the need for improved literacy rates while each of the four schools have identified literacy as an area for improvement.

Indicators of Success:

- 1) PM Benchmark results
- 2) FSA and Grade 12 examination results
- 3) District Wide Write Grades 1-12 students enrolled in English Language Arts
- 4) Readiness assessments for pre-school done by Kindergarten teachers such as the Early Development Instrument, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
- 5) Attendance at pre-school programs
- 6) Attendance at agency programs

- 7) Graduation rates for FTE in District
- 8) Graduation rates for returning adult students

Goal 2: To improve access and utilization of literacy services

Rationale: Each of the communities in The Stikine has resources available to support literacy development for all communities members. However, these resources are not always well publicized. At the same time the school is the hub of each community and could act as a conduit for information about these services. Awareness of programs and services is vital to success.

Indicators of Success:

- 1) Attendance for all current programs
- 2) Visibility of promotional materials for current programs
- 3) Adult utilization and program development

Goal 3: Develop a culture of learning within each community and District as a whole

Rationale: With strong partnerships and a network of services, community members will become more aware of initiatives and the importance of life-long learning. Empowering members and building capacity for involvement will enhance a learning culture.

Indicators of Success:

- 1) Literacy activities in communities
- 2) Participation rates in Literacy initiatives/activities/programs

6. Rationale for the selection of each goal based on analysis of literacy information.

Rationale is embedded in the previous section

7. Actions (Strategies/Structures) directly linked to each goal and/or objective.

- a. *Goal 1: To improve Literacy skills of all learners*
 - i. Continue with in-service and support for all staff regarding Literacy initiatives
 - ii. Provide opportunities to develop and practice formative assessment strategies, including BCELC broadcasts of archived sessions on assessment
 - iii. Introduce content area reading strategies and assessment practices through in-service and staff development opportunities
 - iv. Maintain District Wide Write initiative that includes a guided reading component
 - v. Promote and support writing and reading fairs in each school/community inviting community members to participate
- b. *Goal 2: To improve access and utilization of literacy services*
 - i. Maintain communication and involvement with Literacy Now committees and initiatives

- ii. Support advertising of literacy programs and services through school newsletters
- iii. Use school newsletters as conduit for advertising literacy services through bulk mail to all community members three times per school year
- iv. Establish Fall and Spring Book Fairs in each school
- c. *Goal 3: Develop a culture of learning within each community and District as a whole*
 - i. Promote the implementation of Book Fairs for all schools
 - ii. Offer 2 writing challenges/contests to all students during the school year
 - iii. Establish reading challenges/contests in all schools

8. Explanation of how the actions will be implemented and evaluated for effectiveness.

- a. *Goal 1: To improve Literacy skills of all learners*
 - i. Implementation:
 1. Providing professional reading materials that focus on Literacy development
 2. August and April Staff Development Days
 3. In-service of Reading and Writing strategies
 4. Learning Rounds demonstrating reading and writing formative assessment practices
 5. offering BCELC archived and live webcasts
 6. Review of and support for collaborative assessment of District wide Write
 7. Offer support for reading and writing fairs in each school
 8. Offering on-the-job training for Student Assistants to complete an SA course
 - ii. Indicators of success:
 1. Participation rates for reading material
 2. Assessment data – PM Benchmarks, School readiness, District wide Write, FSA, Classroom Reading Assessments
 3. Participation rates in webcasts series
 4. Participation rates in reading and writing fairs (schools, staff, community members and students)
 5. Successful completion rates of SA course
- b. *Goal 2: To improve access and utilization of literacy services*
 - i. Implementation:
 1. Participation in Literacy Now meetings
 2. Channel Literacy services and programs advertising into school newsletters
 3. Support bulk mail of school newsletters 3 times per year with opportunities for community services and programs to advertise, with usefulness survey attached
 4. Establish contact role in each school to ensure Book Fair(s) occur
 - ii. Indicators of Success:
 1. Participation rate of School District employees at Literacy Now meetings
 2. Participation rate of services and programs advertised

3. Newsletter usefulness survey results
4. Participation rates of students and community members
- c. *Goal 3: Develop a culture of learning within each community and District as a whole*
 - i. Implementation:
 1. Identify school-based volunteers to run Book Fairs and provide necessary support
 2. Introduce writing contests with categories to suit all grade levels and community groups
 3. Introduce reading challenge for all schools and communities
 - ii. Indicators of Success:
 1. Book Fair implementation rate
 2. Participation rates for students and community members
 3. Participation rates of students and community members in writing contests
 4. Data from random assessments of student samples from contests using Performance Standards
 5. Participation rates of students and community members
 6. Data on number of books read

9. Process for the approval of the District Literacy Plan.

The current District Literacy Plan will be reviewed by District Committee members, then it will be presented to the established Literacy Now Committees, who represent an excellent cross-section of partners in each community. The DLP will also be presented to the PACs early in the Fall of 2008. For communities still in the development stages of Literacy Now, community members will be invited to a community meeting in conjunction with the school PAC meeting in the Fall of 2008.

Once input has been provided and any necessary revisions are completed, the DLP will then be presented to the Board of Trustees. Upon completion of this process, the DLP will be publicized in the most communication-efficient manner available; most likely methods will be District Newsletters, School Newsletters, District Website and PAC and/or Literacy Now meetings in each community.