

**Connecting Generations:
Community and District Literacy Plan and Implementation Report
2009-2010**

**Submitted to
BC Ministry of Education and 2010 Legacies Now Society**

**Submitted by
Prince Rupert School District 52 and North Coast Literacy Now**

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Introduction

Connecting Generations: Community and District Literacy Plan has been developed and implemented collaboratively by North Coast Literacy Now and Prince Rupert School District 52. The ongoing plan focuses on building strength at all age levels, birth through Elders, while connecting generations through mutual learning. This plan combines North Coast Literacy Now and Prince Rupert School District 52 District goals, strategies, and activities.

North Coast Literacy Now and Prince Rupert School District will continue to work together and with other partners to implement the combined plan over the coming years.

This report incorporates the *Community and District Literacy Plan for 2009-2010* and the *North Coast Implementation Report for 2008-2009*. The *Community and District Literacy Plan* supports and builds on previous planning, including the North Coast Community Literacy Plan, the School District Literacy Plan, the School District Achievement Contract, and the Aboriginal Education Partnership Agreement. Previous years of planning and implementation have provided the opportunity for the *Community and District Literacy Plan* to align with the School District's goals and objectives, to respect and acknowledge ongoing community literacy planning and programs, to expand the School District's understanding and involvement in literacy learning within the community, to document the process of collaborative planning and implementation, to identify joint goals and action plans, and to describe implementation processes.

The vision for *Connecting Generations: Community and District Literacy Plan* was developed through the initial two years of community planning and guides the work of community and School District partners:

We recognize that our diverse communities are located on traditional Ts'msyen territory and therefore we envision the respectful development and integration of community resources, ranging from individual, organizational and cultural to local, provincial and federal partnerships. This will be undertaken in an effort to broaden the potential of people in the region, through implementation of community-based programs that reduce barriers to the lifelong acquisition of knowledge and literacy.

Prince Rupert School District 52 and North Coast Literacy Now acknowledge, with sincere gratitude, the contributions and support of the Ministry of Education and 2010 Literacy Now, without which it would be impossible to effectively implement the joint Community and District Literacy Plan.

North Coast Literacy Now also wishes to thank the Board of Education of School District 52 for its support over the past three years during which it contributed to community literacy coordination, before provincial funding for coordination was available.

Community and District Context and Demographics

The North Coast of British Columbia includes six communities: Prince Rupert, Port Edward, and the villages of Gitga'ata (Hartley Bay), Gitxaala (Kitkatla), Lax Kw'alaams, and Metlakatla. Prince Rupert School District 52 administers public schools in four of these communities. Students from Metlakatla travel by water taxi to attend school in Prince Rupert. Schooling in the village of Lax Kw'alaams is provided by the Coast Tsimshian Academy, a private institution. The school in Gitxaala (Kitkatla) will become a Band-operated school beginning in September 2009. The community also includes Annunciation School, which is administered by the Diocese of Prince George.

Aboriginal Community

Aboriginal people make up one-third of the population of the North Coast. They are Ts'msyen, Haida, Nisga'a, Gitksan, and members of other First Nations. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the population of the villages is Aboriginal.¹ The villages of Gitga'ata, Gitxaala, Metlakatla, and Lax Kw'alaams are vital Ts'msyen communities and are part of the greater Ts'msyen Nation, which extends from the mouth of the Nass River to the north, along the Skeena River for 200 km to the east, and south to the central coast community of Kitasoo.

In September 2008, fifty-eight percent of the student population—approximately 1500 students—were Aboriginal. The Aboriginal Education Partnership Agreement, signed by twelve partners in October 2001, outlines a vision and goals for Aboriginal students in the school district. The Partnership Agreement Annual Report has tracked student progress for the past 6 years. The Agreement is being revised following a two-year consultation process throughout the North Coast communities.

Prince Rupert School District

Prince Rupert School District 52 currently provides educational services to approximately 2,600 students in 11 schools—6 elementary, two secondary, two village schools, and Pacific Coast School (Grades 10-adult). Enrollment has steadily declined from 4000 students in September 1997. This is due to a significantly changing local economy and concurrent population decline. The school district currently enrolls 440 students who have a Special Education designation (approximately 17% of the student population) and 500 students requiring English Language Development programming (approximately 20%). The school continues to experience significant budget cuts, resulting in ongoing changes in staffing and programs.

¹ 2006 Census.

Community and District Literacy Action Plan

A major goal of planning for literacy and life-long learning is to build and strengthen community relationships through collaboration among community partners. Many organizations within our communities, like our schools, are comprised of people who are passionate about their work and how it contributes to the health and strength of the people who live here. Planning and implementation have enabled us to better understand the significant role that the school district plays within our communities and the equally significant role that community organizations play in the education of people of all ages.

Through collaboration, joint planning, and implementation we have focused on the following goals, which cover the lifespan:

1. Develop a regional framework that builds and strengthens partnerships to enhance literacy and lifelong learning in our north coast communities
2. Provide healthy development for infants, toddlers, and young children
3. Improve reading comprehension for every student in our schools
4. Enable every student to successfully complete Grade 12 and make a smooth transition to post-secondary employment or education
5. Maximize opportunities for life choices for youth, adults, and Elders and reduce barriers to the lifelong acquisition of knowledge, literacy, and essential skills
6. Honour and support every Elder in our communities; support connections and learning between generations

The Community and District Action Plan builds on these goals and indicates the progress that has been made over the past year. Please note that the actions/strategies in this section do not duplicate ongoing school and district goals, actions, and strategies to support literacy and reading comprehension. There are many more initiatives that support the goals of reading comprehension and Grade 12 graduation that appear in other plans and documents mentioned earlier in this report.

The following Action Plan indicates our goals, actions/initiatives, partnerships, and status at the end of the first year of implementation.

Goal 1: Develop a regional framework that builds and strengthens partnerships to enhance literacy and lifelong learning in our communities

Actions/Strategies	Partnerships	Status
<p>Ensure that membership of the literacy steering committee equitably represents the communities; assess steering committee terms of reference</p>	<p>Steering Committee</p>	<p>The steering committee continues to include representation from the villages and we budget to provide transportation and accommodation, when needed.</p> <p>We continue to expand our ongoing communication through other means, such as membership on Success by Six Council.</p> <p>Our terms of reference and Steering Committee membership will be reviewed next year.</p>
<p>Determine financial guidelines for community literacy leadership</p>	<p>Steering Committee</p>	<p>We have jointly developed clear and easily completed application forms and reporting forms for projects and initiatives. So far, these have worked well. We'll review these if they become cumbersome.</p>
<p>Determine protocols for equitable distribution of resources to support community-based initiatives</p>	<p>Steering Committee</p>	<p>We decided that we did not want to require groups to compete for funding. So far, we have been able to work out equitable distribution of funds through cost-sharing and other means.</p> <p>In order to support initiatives, we will also help groups search out and apply for grants.</p>

Actions/Strategies	Partnerships	Status
Use appreciative inquiry to evaluate planning frameworks, protocols, steering committee composition, resource distribution, and other areas	Steering Committee	We have not yet been involved in any organizational evaluation. When we do, we will use positive methods and processes to determine what is working for us and how we can enhance our contributions.
Begin a library of community literacy resources, covering all age levels and accessible to community organizations.	Steering Committee School District Aboriginal Education Services	This is a new initiative which has already begun and will continue next year.
Sponsor large and small celebrations at milestones and within communities	Steering Committee	Alas, we have not yet had any celebrations. We will try to include these in the coming year.

Goal: Provide healthy development for infants, toddlers, and young children

Actions/Strategies	Partnerships	Status
Develop joint goals, actions, and strategies for literacy for young children	Aboriginal Education Council School District The Early Years Group	There is joint representation on the Early Years Group; to date there are not specific joint goals for early learning.
Continue current school district early learning initiatives	Aboriginal Education Council School District	We are continuing and will expand the early learning programs identified below, within the school and community.
Continue Kindergarten Sm'algyax Language Program in All-Day Kindergarten classes	Aboriginal Education Council School District	We will continue the Kindergarten Sm'algyax Language Program in All-Day Kindergarten classes

Additional programs and initiatives for young children, ages birth through 6 years old	
Books for Babies Aboriginal Head Start Day Care Centres Pre-School/Nursery Centres Supported Child Care Infant Development Program Kindergarten Learning Program (KLP) StrongStart Roots of Empathy Let's Play All-day kindergarten Talking Tables PALS (Parents as Literacy Supporters)	POPS (Parents of Primary Students) Speech/Language Services Ready, Set, Learn Welcome to Kindergarten Success by Six PACES 'Hub' Aboriginal Cross-Curricular Units Aboriginal Role Model Program Helping Our Children Learn Family Workshops Mother Goose Program Berry Patch Resource and Referral Program Moe the Mouse Summer Read and Play

Goal: Improve reading comprehension for every student in our schools

Actions/Strategies	Partnerships	Status
Work toward smooth transitions for students within K-12 by identifying literacy expectations for students from Kindergarten through Grade 12	Elementary schools Secondary Schools Aboriginal Education Services	We have started this initiative by providing assessment to develop benchmarks, beginning grade configuration discussions, and gathering data about student transitions. We will continue this in the coming year.
Continue the LUCID Initiative (Learning for Understanding through Culturally Inclusive Imaginative Education)	Aboriginal Education Services School District Simon Fraser University	The LUCID program incorporates culturally responsive education within an Imaginative Education framework. The school district has been part of a 5-year project in collaboration with Simon Fraser University. LUCID has continued beyond the timelines of the research project with groups of teachers within elementary and secondary grades.
Continue Universal Design for Learning	Special Services Department School District and schools SET-BC	This is a continuing, cross-district, cross-grade initiative integrating technology and curriculum and enabling differentiated learning for all students. Universal Design for Learning incorporates instructional resources, hardware, software, and ongoing professional development.

Goal: Enable every student to successfully complete Grade 12 and make a smooth transition to post-secondary employment or education

Actions/Strategies	Partnerships	Status
Plan and implement an Aboriginal Entrepreneur Course for Aboriginal secondary students	Aboriginal Education Council Charles Hays Secondary School Paul Martin Family of Toronto Business and industry sectors in Prince Rupert	This course began in January 2009 and will continue next year. It has had a very successful start, with co-teachers and community involvement. This program will continue next year.
Continue Ace-It Program to offer secondary/college credit for trades programs	School District Aboriginal Education Council Northwest Community College	This program is a partnership with Northwest Community College and will continue next year.
Plan and incorporate appropriate adult literacy materials and strategies for secondary school adolescents with lower levels of literacy	Secondary Schools Northwest Community College	This has not yet been done; however, collaboration between Northwest Community College and the School District has continued and expanded this year.
Work toward smooth transitions for students from secondary to post-secondary training and employment	Secondary Schools Aboriginal Education Services Northwest Community College Other community-based post-secondary institutions	This is a continuing initiative and takes place through joint programs and collaboration. A joint secondary school/NWCC session was co-sponsored by PRDTU, NWCC, and North Coast Literacy Now. During the coming year, we anticipate continue collaboration between the College and the villages.

Actions/Strategies	Partnerships	Status
Maintain and enhance connections between families, the community, and schools	Schools Aboriginal Education Services Community groups	This is an ongoing process and includes a number of programs and initiatives, including the Helping Our Children Learn family workshops, PALS, POPS, Summer Read and Play, Family Resource Workers, and others.

Additional programs and initiatives for school children, ages 5 through 18 years old, to promote reading comprehension and to enable students to graduate from Grade 12:

Sm’algyax Language Program in Kindergarten and Grades 5-12

Talking Tables

PALS (Parents as Literacy Supporters)

POPS (Parents of Primary Students)

Summer Read and Play

French Immersion

Homework Clubs

Speech/Language Services

Special Education Services

Teen Parents Programs

Aboriginal Cross-Curricular Units

Aboriginal Role Model Program

Aboriginal Counsellors

Aboriginal Family Resource Workers

Honouring the Salmon materials

Restorative Justice

Goal: Maximize opportunities for life choices for youth, adults, and Elders and reduce barriers to the lifelong acquisition of knowledge, literacy, and essential skills

Actions/Strategies	Partnerships	Status
Continue the NWCC College and Career Preparation Advisory Committee and workplace training programs	Secondary Schools Aboriginal Education Services Northwest Community College	This is a continuing partnership between the School District and Northwest Community College,
Increase opportunities for Aboriginal students to qualify for employment in the businesses of Prince Rupert	Port of Prince Rupert Prince Rupert Chamber of Commerce Aboriginal Education Council Aboriginal Education Services Department	This is a continuing focus of many programs and initiatives within the School District and the Community. Two significant programs that began this year and will continue are the Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program and English 12 First Peoples.
Develop an easily accessible, seamless process for adult education and literacy programs	Northwest Community College Prince Rupert Literacy Project School District Fraser Street Tutors	A group of adult literacy practitioners meets to discuss issues in adult literacy. The Fraser Street Tutoring Program provides a range of programs to reach throughout the community. These will continue.
Continue Ts'msyen Developmental Standard Term Certificate Program and development of Sm'algyax resources	Aboriginal Education Council University of Northern BC School District	This program has completed the third year for adult students. Through the partnership, students receive a Developmental Standard Term Certificate recognized by the College of Teachers and enabling them to teach in public schools. 18 students have completed the certificate and many are continuing on to study for the B.Ed. degree.

Actions/Strategies	Partnerships	Status
Support technology training for adults	Aboriginal Education Services Department School District Fraser Street Tutoring Northwest Community College	Although there are some programs available in technology training, we hope this coming year to make these more available and accessible.
Develop a Community and District Literacy website	School District North Coast Literacy Now	Planning has begun for this website, which will be attached to the school district site as well as to the provincial Literacy BC, 2010 Legacies Now Society, and Ministry of Education Literacy sites. We hope to have this operative by fall 2009.

Additional programs and initiatives for youth and adults:

Teen Parents Program Planet Youth Public Library Programs The Edge Youth Employment Centre Prince Rupert Literacy Project Career Resource Centre North Coast First Nations Training and Skill Development Hecate Strait Employment Development Society Friendship House Programs North Coast Transition Society	North Coast Victim Support Services Community Futures of the Pacific Northwest Community Living Services Community Enrichment Society Gitmaxmak'ay Nisga'a Society NW Inter-Nation Family and Community Services Salvation Army Adult Graduation Programs Basic Literacy for Adults Northern Health Programs
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Goal: Honour and support every Elder in our communities; support connections and learning between generations

Actions/Strategies	Partnerships	Status
Work with the Elders' group to organize and host the BC provincial Elders' Gathering	Friendship House Aboriginal Education Council Aboriginal Education Services	This very successful event took place in July 2008.
Support initiatives to connect generations and intergenerational learning	Friendship House Aboriginal Education Council Aboriginal Education Services Department School District Fraser Street Tutoring Northwest Community College	North Coast Literacy Now supported a program at Coast Tsimshian Academy bringing Elders and school-aged children together for Talking Circles/Reading Circles. North Coast Literacy Now supported the Metlakatla community in offering an adult Sm'algyax Language program. The Ts'msyen Developmental Standard Term Certificate Program brings Elders as mentors and teachers to those who will be teaching Sm'algyax Language and Ts'msyen culture in Prince Rupert public schools.

Additional programs and initiatives for elders and seniors:

Friendship House Elders Group Northwest Community College North Coast Victim Support Services Community Enrichment Society Gitmaxmak'ay Nisga'a Society	Salvation Army Home Support Programs Seniors' Centre Public Library Programs
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Community and District Literacy Plan Implementation: North Coast Literacy Now

Community Changes

- The North Coast, like communities elsewhere in BC and the world, have felt the impact of economic and ecological changes. Although the economic situation in the North Coast was challenging to begin with, recent changes have meant that the optimism that is occasionally evident has been tempered.
- Unemployment remains higher than elsewhere and populations continue to decline, primarily due to global impacts on resource communities.
- On the positive side, people in our communities have always helped each other through difficult times and they continue to do so. The sense of community remains strong and programs and initiatives to build greater strength continue. Organizations are eager to collaborate to meet the needs of those who live here.

Priorities for 2008-2009

- Early learning collaboration and initiatives
- Collaboration between secondary schools and Northwest Community College
- Aboriginal Entrepreneur Program
- Universal Design for Learning
- Elders' conference

Priorities for 2009-2010

- Continue priorities from 2008-2009
- Continue activities/initiatives in 209-2010 plan
- Collaboration between Northwest Community College and secondary schools
- Collaboration between Northwest Community College and villages
- Adult Literacy Programs
- Community and District Literacy website
- Technology programs for adults
- Regional meetings with other Community Literacy groups and coordinators

Community Impact

- We believe that the Community and District Literacy Plan is only beginning to make an impact on the community. There are many who do not yet know about either the District Literacy Plan or North Coast Literacy Now. However, we are becoming more visible as we deepen our partnerships and begin working with other groups. Without doubt, greater collaboration will eventually make a difference in our community.
- North Coast Literacy Now has been able to be a coordinating partner with the Prince Rupert and District Teachers Union and Northwest Community College in collaboration around secondary-post secondary transitions. North Coast Literacy Now is represented on the Success by Six Council. In addition, there have been joint projects by North Coast Literacy Now and the Coast Tsimshian Academy, the Metlakatla community, Success by Six, and Kaien Anti-Poverty Society.

Adjustments to Literacy Plan

- We have made very few adjustments to the Literacy Plan. These are noted in the Action Plan above.

Vision Statement

The Vision Statement has remained intact since our initial Community Literacy Plan in December 2006:

- *We recognize that our diverse communities are located on traditional Ts'msyen territory and therefore we envision the respectful development and integration of community resources, ranging from individual, organizational and cultural to local, provincial and federal partnerships. This will be undertaken in an effort to broaden the potential of people in the region, through implementation of community-based programs that reduce barriers to the lifelong acquisition of knowledge and literacy.*

Steering Committee

- Our Steering Committee includes representation from Prince Rupert and the villages and includes 33 people. Of these, about 10-15 people attend the meetings.
- At our initial launch, a number of community sectors were represented. Since then, the Steering Committee has included those who are most closely related to literacy in our community. At our last meeting, we talked about expanding the Steering Committee representation to include more political and business representation.

- Northwest Community College is our steward and the principal of the Prince Rupert campus is an ongoing member of the Steering Committee. She is also the president of the Chamber of Commerce and contributes a great amount to the community through her work.
- We have frequent, less formal meetings between the North Coast Literacy Now chair, the Community Outreach Coordinator, and the Assistant Superintendent of the School District.
- Generally, we try to have 3-4 meetings a year of the entire Steering Committee. This year, we also had an additional meeting with the village representatives only.
- We are becoming more visible on other councils and committees within the community.
- We have Terms of Reference for our Steering Committee, which we drafted early in its history; we intend to review these next year.

Coordination and Funding

- Coordination has been sporadic until now and that has affected our progress. We began with informal, unpaid coordination by the chair of a related organization. With 2010 Legacies Now planning funds, we were able to hire a coordinator from September 2005 to December 2006, to take us through the planning process and writing the initial plan.
- Since January 2007 we have again had a combination of informal/unpaid coordination and short spans of very part-time coordination.
- We are very appreciative of the support of Prince Rupert School District 52, who committed to providing us \$10,000 per year over three years to support coordination. This began in 2007-2008 and continues with the final \$10,000 for 2009-2010.
- The \$30,000.00 funding we received through the Ministry of Education and 2010 Legacies Now Society has helped greatly in our coordination endeavours.
- We have had part-time coordination from February 2009 through August 2009. The same person has committed to coordinating through next year, September 2009-August 2010. This consistency makes it much easier to commit to long-term collaboration processes.

Community Organizations/Collaborations

We have many established partnerships within our communities and we are strengthening newer relationships through the implementation of the *Community and District Literacy Plan*. Establishing, identifying, and nurturing partnerships and alliances remains a work-in-progress. Community and School District partnerships have supported joint initiatives that were previously in place and new initiatives that were implemented this year for the first time through the Literacy Plan.

Previous and continuing initiatives include—

- Restorative Justice partnerships, including the Loomsk Resource for Emotional Health and Well-Being, alternatives to school suspensions, and other models of problem solving;
- Universal Design for Learning, in partnership with SET-BC and the Ministry of Education;
- Success by Six partnerships for early learning, with support from the United Way and the Northern Savings Credit Union;
- Work experience and career programs in partnership with Northwest Community College, the Port of Prince Rupert, the Chamber of Commerce, and other business/industry partners;
- Parenting Seminars, in partnership with TD Bank and Northern Savings Credit Union;
- Aboriginal Education Partnership Agreement, with multiple partners that support PALS, POPS, Summer Read and Play, and other programs for families and students;
- LUCID Program, in partnership with Simon Fraser University;
- Early Learning Group, with multiple early learning community partners;
- Social programs in partnership with Community Enrichment Services;
- Ready/Set/Learn and Welcome to Kindergarten in partnership with the Ministry of Education;
- Playground and recreational partnerships with the City of Prince Rupert;

Initiatives that were implemented over the past year through the *Community and District Literacy Plan* include—

- Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program, a joint project by the Aboriginal Education Council, School District 52, and the Paul Martin Family;

- Ts'msyen Developmental Standard Term Certificate Program, a joint project by the Aboriginal Education Council, the University of Northern British Columbia, and School District 52.
- Adult Sm'algyax Language Programs, a joint project by North Coast Literacy Now and Metlakatla Village;
- Talking Circles/Reading Circles, a joint project by North Coast Literacy Now and Coast Tsimshian Academy
- Collaboration between the secondary schools and Northwest Community College to enhance transitions, a joint session sponsored by Prince Rupert District Teachers Union, Northwest Community College, and North Coast Literacy Now;
- Moe the Mouse program, a joint project by Kaien Anti-Poverty Society (KAPS) and North Coast Literacy Now;
- Planning for Mother Goose program, a joint project by North Coast Literacy Now and Success by Six;
- Membership on the Success by Six Council by North Coast Literacy Now.

New Initiatives

- Generally, our 2009-2010 plan continues from the previous plan, with some additions noted above.

Successes and Challenges

- Successes primarily include beginning the processes of ongoing collaboration among groups focusing on literacy. Another success is being able to have some sustainability in community literacy coordination.

Resources and In-Kind Contributions

- In addition to funding received from 2010 Legacies Now since February 2005, North Coast Literacy Now has received \$30,000 from Prince Rupert School District 52 for coordination from 2007-2010.
- We have received approximately \$50,850.00 worth of in-kind contributions. These came in the form of personnel, facilities, materials and resources, and clerical.
- A Financial Report previously submitted to 2010 Legacies Now indicated details of financial and in-kind contributions to North Coast Literacy Now.

Evaluations

- We have not yet conducted any formal evaluations of our work. We discuss our goals and initiatives at each Steering Committee meeting and in other venues. Next year, we shall consider how to evaluate the community literacy process and our effectiveness.

Lessons Learned

- We have re-affirmed that there is great value in collaboration among organizations in our communities.
- We have learned that community literacy planning, implementation, and collaboration are slow processes and that awareness is built over time.
- We have learned that it is extremely difficult to gain momentum without ongoing, consistent coordination.
- We have learned that we must plan for sustainability if we are to continue.
- We have learned that it is difficult to involve everyone in the community, across sectors. Those who are most involved are those whose personal and professional passions focus on life-long learning and literacy.

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