



Kent Elementary School

**Literacy Plan
2008-2009**

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Overarching Purpose:

The overarching purpose of the Kent Elementary School Literacy Plan is to have adults and peers work with students to master basic literacy skills and to leave our school as confident engaged readers.

Breakthrough Question

What are 5 actions that Kent School can do by June 30, 2009 that will result in children at Kent School mastering basic literacy skills and developing a true interest in reading so that they eventually leave Kent School as confident and engaged readers?

1. Continue to work with the community to develop literacy for all members, including our students.
 - a. Local Literacy Group
 - b. Buddy Reading
 - c. Literacy Contests
 - d. Show Kids You Care
 - e. Friends of the Library
2. Continue to offer a variety of successful programs and events for students in grades K through 6 designed to develop and master students' basic literacy skills.
 - a. Early intervention reading groups
 - b. Intermediate reading groups
 - c. Successmaker
 - d. Accelerated Reader
 - e. Book Club and Literacy Circles
 - f. Literacy-based challenges
 - g. Library classes
 - h. Individual teacher examples
3. Demonstrate and model literacy by having adults and community members read and read to the students at Kent School.
 - a. Show Kids You Care
 - b. Chilliwack Bruins
 - c. Silent Reading with staff participation
4. Work with the community and the Strong Start Centre to enhance literacy in children prior to entering Kent School (birth to kindergarten)
 - a. Strong Start Centre
 - b. Materials available to parents
 - c. PALS
5. Work with students to encourage them to select and read books that they have a genuine interest in.
 - a. First Nation books and speakers
 - b. Selection at library
 - c. Book fair
 - d. Silent Reading

Action 1:

1. Continue to work with the community to develop literacy for all members, including our students.

Process:

The school's Literacy Plan continues to be developed and implemented through ongoing consultation with school partner groups, through the Local Literacy Group, staff meetings, and sharing at PAC and School Planning Council meetings. Consultation with the district librarian is also valuable and ongoing. Fran Froehlich, the school librarian is a very involved member of the Local Literacy Group (LLG). Fran meets with community members for one hour once a month to develop and deliver community programs for literacy (adults and children).

The LLG has attempted to implement "Buddy Reading", whereby adults from the community are matched up with children to read at the public library. Notices have been sent home to parents through the students at Kent School; so far, there has not been much participation by both adults and students so the group will be looking at investigating new strategies to encourage more participation.

A kindergarten through grade 9 contest has been developed by the LLG to have students show why they enjoy reading and writing and how adults can help them to improve. "49 Ways to Improve Literacy" will result in 49 students being chosen to attend a celebration at the library; in addition, the top 49 ideas will be displayed at the library. All grade levels at Kent School have entered this contest.

"Show Kids You Care", which is a part of the LLG, has an extensive "Reading in the Park" program during the summer. Different guest readers read to children in the park once a week. Families attend these popular readings and all students receive a free book. In order to support this program, fundraising events are held in the community. More specifically to Kent School, Show Kids You Care runs the Early Intervention Reading Group on Tuesday and Thursday mornings in the school library. Adults read to students who need assistance with reading for 15 minutes each.

Fran also belongs to the Agassiz-Harrison "Friends of the Library". The role of this program is to raise money for the local library. A book fair is used to promote literacy as well as raise funds; this brings in about \$1500 annually.

Action 2:

- Continue to offer a variety of successful programs and events for students in grades K through 6 designed to develop and master students' basic literacy skills.

Process:

The foundation of our literacy program at Kent School is the "Early Intervention Reading Groups". The philosophy behind this is that if each student is placed in a smaller group with students at a similar literacy level, they will receive the best support and thus develop basic skills in the most efficient manner.

At the beginning of the year, students are assessed by teachers and then placed in a reading group at the appropriate level. We use a number of resources in the school, including non-enrolling teachers, to create groups that are much smaller than class size. This allows more individual student attention derived from a significant

increase in teacher-student interactions. In addition, because of the smaller groups, students are more comfortable reading aloud, asking questions, and voicing their opinions on the reading material.

The students are assessed on a continual basis and, every few months, all the teachers meet to discuss moving students to different reading groups to ensure the students are being challenged and reading at the appropriate level. Part of the school budget is allocated to hire a TOC to relieve teachers during reading assessments. Cathy Van Laerhoven is the teacher that leads this program and works to ensure that there are adequate materials and that any new teachers are shown the strategies used in the program.

For students that do not go through this program (or continue to struggle with reading) and are in grades 4 through 6, our school librarian works with them in intermediate reading groups of 3-4, again based on their individual reading level. As many of the students in these groups also have behavior challenges, we have found that the addition of healthy snacks have encouraged them to stay more focused and enjoy the formed relationship with Fran.

Although teachers Donna Gallamore and Rob Gallamore have used this program in the past, the "Accelerated Reader Program" has been used more extensively this year. The previous program was becoming a challenge as it relied on old technology, thus the school purchased the online version of the program for students in grades 3-6. The students read a book of their choice (from the list of Accelerated Reader books), log on to the Renaissance website, and then do the quiz for the book. Students earn points for the quizzes and can monitor their individual progress. We have noticed a significant increase in the number of books that both struggling readers as well as male students have been reading; the students actually get excited to complete the book, write the quiz, and monitor their progress.

We have also started a "Choices" program at the school for students on Wednesday afternoons. The students choose from a number of activities, one of which is the Book Club for primary students and Literature Circles for intermediate students. We have offered this for two 6 week programs and have had 10-20 students sign up each time.

We have used Fran's leadership on entering the majority of our students in District Challenges. Events like Historica, Spelling Bees, Reading Link Challenges, and Public Speech Contests all encourage those students to challenge themselves by working with parents, peers and community members in a project that enhances literacy.

Through our library program (one period per week that is additionally supported by classroom teachers), all students are read to for a designated amount of time and all intermediate students are guided to develop research skills such as bibliographies, note-taking, internet literacy, and project development. Also, Fran has worked with students on the theory of Multiple Intelligences which has helped students to realize the strengths they have in certain areas. A continuation of this has been the development of individual student portfolios in classes where students showcase what they have learned in school, both selected by students as well as teachers.

Individual teachers have also developed or participated in programs that further our goal for the mastery of basic literacy skills. John Dumas has a "Reading Morning" once a month in which students in his grade 6 class bring in pillows and teddy bears and they spend the morning reading a novel of interest laying on comfortable floor mats. The students are completely engaged in what they are reading and the pillows and teddy bears help to model that reading can be thoroughly relaxing and enjoyable. A few teachers on staff have joined with younger classes to have the older students read to the younger ones. Our grade one teachers encourage all parents to participate with their children in a home reading program that is monitored by these teachers. In addition, the majority of teachers on staff participate with their class, generally after lunch for 15-20 minutes, in uninterrupted silent reading; during this time, students are encouraged to read something of interest to them. During silent reading in a few classes, students are given the freedom to read on couches, in cubbies, outside in our new garden, on mats, and other areas that show that reading is not something that is only done in desks.

The staff at Kent Elementary all realize the importance of modeling and encouraging literacy in all grades. Beginning in the early intervention reading program and moving up to reading challenges and literacy-based projects, it is our goal to continue to enhance literacy at our school.

Action 3

- To demonstrate and model literacy by having adults and community members read and read to the students at Kent School

Process:

Although this has been discussed in the other actions, there are events that need mentioning here.

- Donna Gallamore invites the Chilliwack Bruins WHL team in to read to her grade 6 class. The players discuss and model the importance of literacy.
- For the younger students, Show Kids You Care provides adult volunteers to come in and read to children twice a week in the library.
- Our First Nation Support Worker, Kasey Chapman, often reads to a number of students in the First Nation room. Moreover, Kasey has developed a First Nation Enhancement group that writes stories of local events as discussed by elders that Kasey has invited to come in and speak.
- Classes often attend authors' readings at the public library.
- Also, during silent reading, teachers participate to demonstrate that literacy is important and reading can be a relaxing escape.

Action 4

- Work with the community and the Strong Start Centre to enhance literacy in children prior to entering Kent School (birth to kindergarten)

Process:

We have had the pleasure of having the Strong Start Centre in our school this year; this has opened the door for more avenues on which we can encourage literacy for children from birth to kindergarten. Patsy Campbell, the Strong Start educator, reads to the participants of the program every day; along with this, during clean-up time, the parents are encouraged to borrow a book, find a place in the room and quietly read to their son/daughter. On Fridays, our librarian reads to the Strong Start Participants for 15 minutes. I am a firm believer that Strong Start can only enhance the literacy at Kent School.

Through the connections with the Strong Start Centre, Fran has made a number of materials available for parents to read with their children. Furthermore, she has encouraged parents to form a relationship with the public library.

The school is also involved in the PALS (Parents As Literacy Supporters) program in which parents are invited into the Kindergarten classroom to discuss and observe the importance of literacy. The program is sponsored by Envision Financial and directed by Audrey Dove and Nancy Pennier (with the support of Rod Peters).

Action 5

- Work with students to encourage them to select and read books in which they have a genuine interest.

Process:

Our librarian has worked tirelessly to ensure that there are a number of interesting books for students of all levels. If a student would like to read about a topic that is not in our library, Fran or the classroom teachers order the desired books. We have added a number of books specific to the interest of male students as well as those that might grab the interest of our First Nation Students. With the help of Fran, Kasey, Nancy Pennier, and Rod Peters, the library at Kent school has a tall bookcase that is filled with resources and stories written by Aboriginal authors.

For those intermediate First Nation students who have a keen interest in their culture, Kasey has worked with them to complete a novel study of a book that engages the students. This year, Kasey has worked with some grade 5 students to complete the novel, "My Name Is Sepeetza", a story about a girl's experience in a residential school in Kamloops.

As stated, a common goal is for students to understand that reading should be enjoyable. During silent reading and library, students are encouraged to read something that is of interest to them; projects like Historica also provide students with choice in what they would like to read about and present.

Measurement of Success:

This plan is a working document that will be discussed at staff and School Planning Council meetings. Literacy is a goal in every classroom at Kent School. Ongoing assessments will be done to ensure students are reading at an appropriate level and where there is a need, some of the aforementioned intervention strategies will be put in place.

At Kent School, we believe literacy is an ongoing process and challenge. We are always faced with new students who struggle with literacy and we will continue to work together, along with the community, to develop each students' basic skills and help them to focus on literature that interests them so that they can eventually leave our school as confident and engaged readers.