

It Takes a Whole Community

*A Literacy Plan for the
Sunshine Coast*



**Submitted to the BC Ministry of Education and
2010 Legacies Now
By the Sunshine Coast Literacy Council and
School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)
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Executive Summary

This report presents a Community Literacy Plan for the Sunshine Coast. As a collection of small towns and rural areas stretching 80 kilometres along a narrow peninsula the



Sunshine Coast is not one but many communities. Together these communities comprise a whole known to locals as, simply, “The Coast.”

The Sunshine Coast is experiencing rapid population growth and is expected to maintain past growth rates and to add more than 7,000 residents to its current population of approximately 28,000 – for a projected population of 35,000 by 2036. Change and how to manage change are constant themes on the Sunshine Coast. Rapid growth and development are raising questions about how to balance the community’s social, cultural, environmental, and economic values. Development is changing the physical landscape while the demographic makeup of the community is in transition. Young people are leaving the Coast and an aging population coupled with the migration of retirees into the community is raising the age profile. A still small but growing immigrant population is beginning to change the face of the community. A cultural divide affects access to and participation by aboriginal people in community programs and services, including literacy.

In September 2009 a newly formed Sunshine Coast Literacy Council began the first phase of implementation of the plan. Organizations that are members of the Literacy Council Steering Committee include School District No. 46, Capilano University, Sechelt Public Library, Sunshine Coast Community Services, Sunshine Coast Employment Centre, Pender Harbour Community School and Gibsons Public Library. Sandy Middleton of Capilano University is the Literacy Outreach Coordinator.

The Council appointed a Chair and developed Terms of Reference that guide its activities (the Terms of Reference can be read at www.sunshinecoastliteracy.org). The Chair is Iris Loewen, retired Chief Librarian of Sechelt Public Library. Helen Prosser, the current Chief Librarian, will step into the role of Chair in September 2010.

Three principles that inform our view of literacy also guided our planning and continue to influence how we implement the plan: literacy is the foundational skills and competencies that facilitate further learning and full participation in life; literacy is embedded in different social contexts; and culture and identity are conduits to literacy and learning. These principles led us to articulate a vision for literacy on the Sunshine Coast: ***All residents of the Sunshine Coast have opportunities to develop literacy throughout their lives; to achieve their educational, work and social goals; and to realize their potential.***

The plan includes an inventory of the range of assets across the lifespan that we can draw from on the Sunshine Coast in order to achieve that vision. At the same time, we have documented a range of issues that leave some residents excluded from full participation, including:

- Poverty
- Addictions
- Domestic abuse
- Mental health issues
- Learning disabilities among children and adults and requirements for speech therapy among children
- Low literacy skills among parents, including those who home school their children
- Homelessness and transience
- Lack of child care
- Lack of transportation to support participation in programs and after-school activities especially for geographically isolated individuals and families
- Racism and cultural misunderstandings and divides
- Language barriers
- Reluctance to participate because of feelings of shame, stigma, fear of “exposure”

Given the range of issues, the Literacy Plan includes the following five priority areas:

- **Low-income Individuals and Families:** Low-income individuals and families live all along the Sunshine Coast and their poverty has a severe impact on their opportunities for learning and on their overall life chances.
- **Marginalized Populations:** Despite the welcoming environment community agencies and institutions strive to create, there are people in the community who do not access programs and services because they do not feel comfortable or that they belong. Individuals from the aboriginal and immigrant communities also have specific language and literacy needs.
- **Youth:** How to reach our youth and meet their needs, and the importance of mentoring youth through the challenges of life, is a major concern in a community whose population is quickly ageing and whose youth are leaving.
- **Pender Harbour and Egmont:** The communities of Pender Harbour and Egmont at the north end of the Coast are characterized by physical and social isolation, serious underlying social issues, and a lack of services, including more limited access to education.
- **Cooperation and Coordination:** The importance of inter-agency cooperation in working together to meet the needs of the whole person is of critical importance to organizations and institutions on the Sunshine Coast. So too is the need for communities to work together to meet the needs of the whole region. Geography and history make it challenging for residents of the Sunshine Coast to see themselves – and to act – as one community.

In 2010 the Literacy Council identified two additional priority areas:

- **Dialogue between our formal educational institutions:** The need to promote dialogue between local secondary schools and post-secondary institutions

in order to ensure graduating students are prepared for the demands of post-secondary education

- **Adults and youth with special needs:** The need for literacy by adults and youth with special needs and developmental disabilities.

In addition the Literacy Council renewed its commitment to work with Aboriginal communities on the Sunshine Coast, specifically, to engage Aboriginal people in the Literacy Council itself, to partner with Aboriginal colleagues in exploring literacy opportunities, and to facilitate the participation of Aboriginal people in the day-to-day activities of our educational institutions and community learning programs.



Author Nicola Campbell reading to elementary school students during Family Literacy Week.

2010 Revised Action Plan

Strategy 1: Build active partnerships among community organizations, First Nations, educational institutions, libraries, government agencies and the private sector to increase literacy programs, services and opportunities on the Sunshine Coast.

Actions

- Actively seek new partners to enhance the community literacy table and community literacy work, especially from sectors not currently represented including the private sector and municipal government. In particular, work in partnership with municipal government and municipal government planning processes.
- Develop diverse opportunities for partners to participate in the work of the Council in various ways and at different levels of involvement.
- Identify and access – with partners – sources of government and non-governmental funding to enhance literacy programs and services on the Sunshine Coast and work towards enhancement and sustainability of programs and services.
- Work with other partners and sectors to find ways to create dialogue, and to build connections and trust between different cultural groups on the Sunshine Coast.
- Work with other partners and sectors to make the case for more community gathering places, including an Aboriginal Friendship Centre.
- Work with other partners and sectors to increase opportunities and support for intergenerational interaction and learning.
- Develop a cross-sectoral approach to professional development and training in literacy-related areas including the development of clear language and strategies for embedding literacy learning in other programs and services.

Statement of Success: New partnerships at varying levels of involvement increase literacy capacity on the Sunshine Coast.

Indicators: Number and type of new partnerships; examples of collaboration; examples of different levels and type of involvement; examples of new initiatives and successful funding applications; movement towards the creation of new gathering places including an Aboriginal Friendship Centre; examples of partnerships and new initiatives related to intergenerational learning; number of professional development and training workshops and number of participants; evaluation of workshops by participants

Strategy 2: Promote community awareness of literacy on the Sunshine Coast and, in particular, of the priorities and actions identified in the Community Literacy Plan and the relationship of literacy to other social issues

Actions

- Produce a newsletter twice a year to keep the community informed of the work of the Council and the implementation of the Community Literacy Plan.
- Host an annual forum to share information about literacy on the Sunshine Coast and to invite and facilitate discussion with partners and community members about new ideas, strategies and actions.

- Use existing initiatives such as Family Literacy Week, International Adult Learners Week, National Aboriginal Day and International Literacy Day, among others, to promote literacy and learning on the Sunshine Coast and to draw in new partners and champions.
- Nurture a relationship with local media to keep literacy visible in the community.

Statement of Success: Community members, organizations, institutions, and businesses are more aware of literacy needs on the Sunshine Coast and of the contributions they can make to finding and implementing creative solutions.

Indicators: Examples of changes in public perception; number of newsletters distributed and number of newsletter recipients from x number of sectors; number of participants and breadth of representation at annual forum; number of literacy-related events and initiatives tied to special initiatives/days; examples of new ideas, strategies and actions put forward; amount and diversity of coverage about literacy in local media;

Strategy 3: Support aboriginal people to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

- Collaborate with aboriginal educators to discuss and develop holistic literacy initiatives for youth and adults that are culturally sensitive and grounded in aboriginal principles of community and culture.
- Address a skills gap among aboriginal youth to improve their reading skills and facilitate bridging to ABE and other post-secondary programs.
- Collaborate with aboriginal educators to develop innovative strategies and programs that assist aboriginal children, youth and adults to develop their English skills and to develop and retain their traditional languages.
- Collaborate with aboriginal educators to articulate and document ways that literacy and other learning and employment related programs in the community can facilitate participation by aboriginal learners.
- Collaborate with aboriginal educators to explore and articulate ways of redefining how success is measured for aboriginal people in the context of literacy and learning.
- Explore opportunities for learning from and building on the intergenerational learning traditions of aboriginal people.

Statement of Success: Aboriginal and non-aboriginal educators and agencies work together to increase literacy and learning opportunities and success among aboriginal learners.

Indicators: Examples of collaboration; examples of enhanced and new literacy initiatives; number of aboriginal youth who increase their reading skills and bridge to ABE; documented increase in number of aboriginal learners participating in literacy programs on the Sunshine Coast; examples of new insights and learnings about aboriginal approaches to intergenerational learning and measures of success

Strategy 4: Support adults with low literacy skills to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

- Work with agencies on the Sunshine Coast to embed literacy in other contexts such as health, social welfare and justice.
- Develop a plan to introduce a four-component family literacy model to communities on the Sunshine Coast, one that addresses the literacy skills of parents.

- Liaise with the Community Access to Literacy and Learning (CALL) program at Capilano University to ensure collaboration and complementarity of services.

Statement of Success: Adults with low literacy skills have increased opportunities to improve their skills.

Indicators: Number of partner agencies collaborating on an integrated approach to literacy skill development; examples of new approaches to embedding literacy; a plan for family literacy programming on the Sunshine Coast; increased enrollment in CALL.

Strategy 5: Support youth and young adults to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

- Create a Youth Planning Table that takes a cross-sectoral integrated approach to working with out-of-school youth and youth-at-risk.
- Develop specific outreach strategies for youth with low literacy and innovative programming options that speak to youth.
- Explore the possibility of a mentorship program for youth and other opportunities for intergenerational interaction and learning, with literacy as a foundation.

Statement of Success: Agencies on the Sunshine Coast employ a holistic and integrated approach towards engaging youth in literacy development and other aspects of life.

Indicators: A Youth Planning Table is created; examples of new outreach strategies and programs for youth; new examples of intergenerational learning involving youth.

Strategy 6: Support immigrants to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

- Collaborate with existing initiatives to increase options for more second language learning opportunities.
- Collaborate with existing initiatives to identify immigrants' needs and to develop programs and services to meet those needs.
- Explore opportunities to assist immigrants in securing employment.

Statement of Success: Community agencies and institutions are working together to identify and address needs within the immigrant community.

Indicators: Examples of collaboration and new initiatives

Strategy 7: Develop creative solutions to reduce isolation and improve access and participation to literacy and learning opportunities in Pender Harbour and Egmont

Actions

- Collaborate with the newly formed Pender Harbour literacy committee to work on this strategy.
- Collaborate with existing programs, for example the literacy and ESL programs at Capilano University among others, to extend services to the area.
- Explore and develop outreach and access strategies for those most in need and least able to participate.

Statement of Success: Agencies and institutions are working together to identify and address needs in Pender Harbour and Egmont.

Indicators: A sub-committee is in place; examples of a greater presence in the area by existing programs; examples of new learning opportunities and increased participation.

Strategy 8: Sponsor two events in 2010/2011 to explore/promote opportunities for local secondary schools and partner post-secondary institutions to dialogue (including services for ABE/upgrading, special needs, ESL and Aboriginal students). Topics will include: numeracy skills, oral communication skills, writing process and standards, reading levels, knowledge of literature, etc.

Actions

- Plan and host an initial event in fall 2010 between representatives of SD 46 and Capilano University
- Plan and host a follow-up event in spring 2011

Statement of Success: The school district and the post-secondary sector are working in partnership to ensure student success.

Indicators: Two meetings take place; strategies for further collaboration are identified and implemented.

Strategy 9: Dialogue, collaborate, plan and coordinate – as a cadre of community services concerned with literacy – to create a continuum of programs and services to develop inclusive and formal learning opportunities – including literacy and numeracy – for youth and adults with special needs and developmental disabilities.

Actions

- Follow-up the spring 2010 meeting of concerned organizations with a written report identifying the issues and gaps in services and programs
- Work with partner organizations to develop creative ways to fill the gaps

Statement of Success: Organizations on the Sunshine Coast are working together to address gaps in literacy services and programs for adults and youth with special needs.

Indicators: Written report is completed; examples of collaboration; ideas for new services and programs are identified

Introduction

Planning and Implementation

This report represents a merging of two processes: the development of a Community Literacy Plan funded by 2010 Legacies Now, and the development of a District Literacy Plan for School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) as required by the Ministry of Education. As such it exemplifies the collaborative approach guiding the planning process.

In September 2009 a newly formed Sunshine Coast Literacy Council began the first phase of implementation of the plan (See **Appendix A** for information about the prior planning process). Organizations that are members of the Literacy Council Steering Committee include School District No. 46, Capilano University, Sechelt Public Library, Sunshine Coast Community Services, Sunshine Coast Employment Centre, Pender Harbour Community School and Gibsons Public Library. Sandy Middleton of Capilano University is the Literacy Outreach Coordinator.

The Council appointed a Chair and developed Terms of Reference that guide its activities (the Terms of Reference can be read at www.sunshinecoastliteracy.org). The Chair is Iris Loewen, retired Chief Librarian of Sechelt Public Library. Helen Prosser, the current Chief Librarian, will step into the role of Chair in September 2010.

Our Approach to Literacy

Three principles in particular inform our view of literacy: literacy is the foundational skills and competencies that facilitate further learning and full participation in life; literacy is embedded in different social contexts; culture and identity are conduits to literacy and learning. These principles are expanded on in more depth below.

Traditionally, literacy has been narrowly defined as just reading and writing. Literacy was seen as a set of discrete skills that you learned in school and that were transferable from one context to another. It used to be defined as something that you either had or didn't have. However, over the past decade new ideas about literacy have been surfacing that give us a broader view. Today, we look at literacy as the ability to accomplish tasks and to participate in the world around us. Literacy is about how we are able to use what we learn and to apply our knowledge. In addition to reading, writing and numeracy literacy encompasses those foundational skills and competencies that we need to fully participate in social, economic, family and community life such as computer use, oral communication, problem-solving, and being able to work well with others.

New approaches to literacy emphasize the importance of context and the fact that literacy is not an abstraction but a set of socially embedded practices or literacies (Ewing). The New Literacy Studies, for example, talk about multiple literacies in a range of social situations, community settings, and cultural contexts where people integrate written language into their lives in a multiplicity of ways. To meet these multiple needs, community literacy provides opportunities for literacy development in context and works with people on the issues that are important and immediate in their lives – for example, health, housing and homelessness, job preparation, learning more about parenting or grandparenting, helping kids with their homework, and all kinds of other issues.

The skills, competencies and approaches that are valued in mainstream society are often different and disconnected from those of traditional cultures. Aboriginal perspectives and values are not typically reflected in the curriculum of educational institutions, or the program content of non-aboriginal literacy groups. (BC Select Standing Committee on Education). Aboriginal literacy reflects aboriginal worldviews and philosophical approaches to learning. From aboriginal perspectives, traditional methods of teaching and learning by and for aboriginal people can nurture a positive identity and provide aboriginal people with connections to the land, their families, their communities, their languages and their ancestors (Antone).

Community Profiles

The Lay of the Land



The Sunshine Coast is a narrow strip of land sandwiched between the sea and the mountains. Located northwest of Vancouver, it is accessible only by sea and air. The major form of transportation to and from the Coast is a 40-minute ferry ride on the Queen of Surrey from Horseshoe Bay to Langdale. Sometimes mistaken for an island, the Sunshine Coast is actually a peninsula stretching 80 kilometres between two BC Ferries terminals at Langdale in the south and Earl's Cove in the north. Wonderful beaches and lush forests, a vibrant cultural life, and a laid-back atmosphere characterize this rural and semi-rural community and make it a popular tourist and retirement destination.

Highway 101 – the world’s longest highway – connects the small communities of the Sunshine Coast. Outlying islands with even smaller populations dot the coastline. In 2006 the population was 27,759. Almost half the population lives in either the District of Sechelt (30.5%), or the Town of Gibsons (15.1%). The majority (51.4%) of the population is rural and lives in the five Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) electoral areas of Egmont/Pender Harbour, Halfmoon Bay, Roberts Creek, Elphinstone, and West Howe Sound. Three per cent live within the Sechelt Indian Government District (SIGD).

Following are brief descriptions of the cultural and geographic communities on the Sunshine Coast.

The Communities

Aboriginal Communities

The shíshálh or, in English, the Sechelt people enjoyed a thriving community before the arrival of European settlers, one that was rich in culture and family traditions. Their



ancestral territory extends from the head of Queen’s Reach in Jervis Inlet to the western entrance of Howe Sound on the south coast of British Columbia. Their immediate neighbors to the west and to the east were – and still are – the Sliammon people and the Squamish people respectively. In the past the shíshálh consisted of four main groups with settlements at Pender Harbour (*kálpilin*), Deserted Bay (*ts’unay*), the head of Queen’s Reach in Jervis Inlet (*xénichen*) and the head of Narrows Inlet.

In addition, Chekwelps of the Skwxwú7mesh uxwumixw (Squamish Nation), occupied land east of Gibsons harbour. The Chekwelps lived here for several thousand years until a small pox epidemic in the late 1800’s resulted in relocation of the remaining Chekwelps to Squamish. In fact, the smallpox epidemic devastated the entire native population, taking the lives of over 90%.

The language of the shíshálh is sháshíshálem. Their language, as well as their culture and traditions, were suppressed for many years under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church and the Sechelt Residential School. The residential school was established in 1912 and burned down in 1975. Thirty-three per cent of adults from the Sechelt Indian Band (SIB) attended residential school and 96% of adults have a family member who attended. Many of the negative impacts of the residential school system still affect the shíshálh people today, particularly in the area of parenting. Parents we interviewed reported that they do not utilize resources in the community because of the residential school experience – they have no confidence and dealing with authority has not been a good experience.

The Sechelt Indian Band was the first indigenous band in Canada to develop its own constitution and to withdraw the lands of the reserve from the Indian Act. The Sechelt

Nation became an independent self-governing body in 1986. For more than 20 years the SIGD has held jurisdiction over its lands and has the authority to provide services and education for its members. In the recent past the SIB has worked to help the community heal from the effects of residential school, to reclaim their lost heritage and to restore pride in their unique culture.

The SIB has about 900 members and other aboriginal peoples on the Sunshine Coast totals about 2620. The latter population – including people from the Squamish Nation and of Metis and Inuit descent – has grown considerably in the past three decades.

Most SIB members are employed on band lands – very few are employed off band lands and there is very little employment of any aboriginal people in local stores and businesses.

Town of Gibsons

In 1886 George Gibsons and his sons, caught in a storm in the Strait of Georgia, sailed into the protected harbour of what later became known as Gibson's Landing. The



Gibsons settled in the area, creating the basis for a community that would later bear their name. An influx of Finnish immigrants arrived around 1905.

Known to most Canadians as the setting for the former TV show, *The Beachcombers*, Gibsons today is a town divided into two main sections. Upper Gibsons includes shopping malls, fast food outlets, and a light industrial area. Lower Gibsons, or Gibson's Landing, retains the character of a small fishing village and is a popular tourist destination. To walk from Lower to Upper Gibsons requires a long climb up a steep hill. In the words of an interviewee, Gibsons is "nothing but hills."

A short drive from Gibsons and the Langdale ferry terminal is Port Mellon, home to the largest employer on the Sunshine Coast, Howe Sound Pulp and Paper. The mill is BC's oldest forestry operation and produced the first sheet of paper printed using wood fibre from BC trees. The first piece of paper rolled off the No. 1 pulp machine in October 1909. Although forestry and fishing were once the backbone of economic life in Gibsons, today tourism and retirement are emerging as growth sectors.

The current population of Gibsons is almost 4,000 and is expected to double within 25 years. Gibsons Elementary School is designated an "inner city school" reflecting the fact that there is a high percentage of low-income families in Gibsons, many of them single-parent.

Roberts Creek

Roberts Creek lies midway between Gibsons and Sechelt. Its population of 3,300 is expected to double within 20 years. “The Creek” as it is known, is named after Thomas



Roberts who established the beginnings of the present community in 1889 when he built a cabin for his family in the area, clearing and working the land and raising livestock.

Commercial development is minimal in Roberts Creek and there is no industry. Home-based businesses and services flourish and Roberts Creek is the home of many artists, artisans and craftspeople.

Roberts Creek has the highest annual median household income on the Coast – \$55,486. It also has the highest percentage of children under 19 residing at home and the number of adult residents below retirement age is higher in Roberts Creek than in any other community on the Coast.

District of Sechelt

Sechelt means “land between two waters” in sháshishálem. It is located about halfway up the Sunshine Coast on an isthmus separating the Strait of Georgia from Sechelt Inlet.



The District of Sechelt – which surrounds the Sechelt First Nations reserve – includes the distinct neighbourhoods of Wilson Creek, Davis Bay, Selma Park, Sandy Hook, Tuwanek, Sechelt and West Sechelt.

European pioneers began to settle in the Sechelt area in the late 1860's. The early economy was oriented towards logging, fishing and tourism. In those days most of Sechelt's economy was geared to traffic from the water but with the construction of the highway in 1952 the focus gradually shifted inland away from the ocean. Because it lies pretty much in the middle of the Coast Sechelt is the home of many services including St. Mary's Hospital, Capilano University, a combined courthouse and RCMP building, and a relatively new public recreation centre and pool.

Sechelt's population increased by 8.7% in the last 5 years (an average of 1.7% per year). The total population was estimated at 8,454 in 2006 with one out of every four residents 65 years or older. Out of 89 BC communities that have a population of 5,000 or more, Sechelt ranks 11th in having the lowest percentage of youth (below age 15).

Halfmoon Bay



The small community of Halfmoon Bay – population 2,558 – sits on a curve in the coastline about 10 minutes drive north of Sechelt and marks the end of the road for public transit on the Coast. It has a heritage general store, post office and, like the rest of the Sunshine Coast, it is home to many artists and artisans and home-based businesses such as beds and breakfasts.

Pender Harbour

The geographic area called Pender Harbour lies 37 kilometres north of Sechelt and is actually several small communities – Madeira Park, Garden Bay, and Irvines Landing – that cover 52 kilometres of shoreline and have a total population of 2,624. Before there were roads connecting these communities residents had to use the waterways of Pender Harbour to travel back and forth and the area became known locally as “the Venice of the North.”



Originally famous for sport fishing Pender Harbour today is a favourite spot for artists and photographers, as well as canoeists and kayakers. Arts and tourism have replaced commercial fishing and logging as major economic drivers.

There are still families in Pender Harbour who live without running water and residents note that substance abuse and domestic abuse are common social problems in the area.

Egmont

The tiny village of Egmont lies at the trailhead for the Skookumchuck Narrows Provincial Park. Skookumchuck means strong or turbulent water in the Chinook language. The park offers a view of the Skookumchuck rapids, the second largest salt water rapids in the world.



Egmont is also close to Earl’s Cove and the ferry terminus to Powell River. In the other direction, Egmont is an hour and a half drive from Gibsons and an hour from Sechelt. The closest school and grocery store are in Madeira Park, a half hour drive away.

Egmont hosts a small general store and pub as well as a Heritage Centre, fire hall, and community hall. The community hall is occasionally used to hold potluck dinners at Christmas, or for weddings and funerals.

The population of Egmont is unclear but estimated at about 200 permanent residents. The population appears to be decreasing as people are moving away to be closer to services and other opportunities. At the same time, an increase in the transient population has been observed. In Egmont, it is quite common to hear about people of all ages – including local teenagers – living in the bush in dilapidated trailers or in tents.

There is no public transportation in and out of Egmont so the community is dependent on private vehicles but the roads into Egmont are not on a priority list for improvement or maintenance during extreme weather. The school bus is also used by locals for transportation but the daytime and weekday only schedule – the bus enters Egmont at 7:30 am and 4:00 pm Monday to Friday – make after school sports programs and/or tutoring impossible for daytime working families or those without vehicles. It is common for residents of Egmont to be unable to leave Egmont more than once a week or,

sometimes, less often. Hitchhiking, longboarding and skateboarding are popular forms of transportation, particularly among the youth.

Egmont also has limited cell phone service and no cable service. Power outages of several hours to several days duration are a common occurrence. Some families live without electricity or indoor plumbing.

Characteristics of the Region¹

The Sunshine Coast is experiencing rapid population growth and is expected to maintain past growth rates, adding over 7,000 residents to its population by 2036. A recent report of the SCRD's Regional Growth Strategy describes a growing community and some of its growing pains:

The population in the Regional District grew by 8.4% between 2002 and 2006. Ferry ridership increased by 6% during that same period, while the number of personal vehicles increased by 10% and the number of commercial vehicles increased by 9%. Numbers support what residents know; the highway and ferries are much busier, housing prices have increased making home ownership unattainable for some residents, and rental costs unaffordable for many others; and permanent good-paying jobs are decreasing due to downturns in some aspects of the resources sector.

(Sunshine Coast Regional District Update Report, p. 3)

Following are some key characteristics of the area.

Age

One of the salient characteristics of the Sunshine Coast population is its age. The increasing age of the population is a result of a steady flow of migration to the Sunshine Coast by retirees, many of them from the Lower Mainland. A significantly higher proportion of people above the age of 45 (56%) live on the Coast compared to the province as a whole (42%). The Sunshine Coast also has a higher percentage (18.6%) of seniors 65 years and older than the provincial average (14.0%). Ten years from now, seniors will comprise 21.7% of the population. By 2036, it is projected that there will be 9.5 dependents for every 10 working people on the Coast.

The aging of the population has an impact on the social and economic life of the community in a variety of ways. Research has found that families with young children feel the focus of the community is on the needs of the retired population and not on their needs. (Sunshine Coast Early Childhood Development Planning Table, p. 6). And, as the population ages, young people are leaving the community. A visioning process by the District of Sechelt noted difficulty in attracting young families and retaining youth after graduation:

“Many young families expressed concern about the lack of affordable, ground-oriented housing and community services targeting young children. Youth, on

¹ Statistics are compiled from several sources. See **Appendix B**, List of Secondary Resources.
Sunshine Coast Literacy Plan July 2010

the other hand, were frustrated about the lack of activities and opportunities geared to their needs, with many commenting that they were frequently bored.”
(District of Sechelt, p. 78)

Income and Employment

The local economy is in transition from a resource-based economy to one that is more diverse and focused on tourism and the public sector. Income for Sunshine Coast residents is largely dependent on a few basic sectors including forestry, public service, and construction and other forms of income such as government transfer payments (employment insurance, income assistance, old age security and Canada Pension Plan), and other non-employment income such as corporate pension plans and investments. From 2001 to 2006 there was a decrease in the proportion of primary industry occupations (from 7.3% of the job market in 2001 to 5.8% in 2006) while the housing boom helped the construction industry to grow and created a strong demand for skilled trades. Occupational areas that have seen notable growth since 2001 are business and finance, arts and culture, and trades, transport and equipment operation. Retail and tourism are vital service industries. Occupations in the processing, manufacturing and utilities areas have seen the most significant decrease.

Only three private sector organizations employ more than 200 employees: Howe Sound Pulp and Paper, BC Ferries, and Construction Aggregates. In the public sector, organizations with a large employee base include School District No. 46, and St. Mary's Hospital. Just 40% of the workforce works full-time year round and 25% are self-employed. Approximately 600 people regularly commute to the Lower Mainland to work.

Average income levels (\$34,376) are lower than the BC average (\$35,834) although since 2004 the average per capita income has increased by 16%. Much income goes unreported, however, as the Sunshine Coast has a widespread underground economy.

Unemployment rates as a whole on the Sunshine Coast are lower than the provincial average but the percentage of the population (0-64) receiving income assistance benefits is higher than in BC – 4.0% compared to 3.5%. For children (0-18) the percentage is 3.4% compared to 3.1% in BC and for youth (19-24) it is 2.6%, the same percentage as in BC. Approximately one in five families with young children on the Sunshine Coast cannot regularly afford enough healthy food. (Sunshine Coast Early Childhood Development Planning Table)

Education and Early Development

The percentage of the population (25-54) that has not completed high school is 16.3%, as compared to 17.2% in BC. Almost 25% have attended post-secondary school with architecture and engineering, business and management, and health and recreation the most common areas of study.

One of the most vulnerable age groups is youth. Almost 32% of 18 year olds (averaged over the period 2004-06) did not graduate.

Early Development Instrument results for the Sunshine Coast (http://www.help.ubc.ca/unit/School_District46.htm) show that the Sunshine Coast is among the least vulnerable districts in the province and overall vulnerability decreased between Wave 1 (2001- 2004) and Wave 2 (2005 – 2007). At the same time, critical considerations emerge from the EDI, which shows that there is vulnerability in all areas of the Sunshine Coast. In particular, nearly 30% of children in Sechelt are vulnerable. The highest proportion of vulnerability was found on the Language and Cognitive Development domain and the largest increase on the Communication Skills and General Knowledge domain. The EDI results indicate disparity or difference between neighbourhoods, reflecting that children on the Sunshine Coast have had disparate qualities of experience before school entry.

Research has found that the Sunshine Coast has a high rate of child abuse and neglect compared to the provincial rate (Sunshine Coast Early Childhood Development Planning Table).

Housing and Homelessness

The Sunshine Coast has an extremely high percentage of single detached homes at 83.8% – well above the BC average of 52.3%. Only 11.5% of occupied private dwellings are in a multi-unit building, compared to 44.9% for BC. Affordability of housing is a major issue on the Coast. Housing prices have skyrocketed in the past five years and remain high despite the recent economic downturn. Much of the new construction now taking place is “high end”, leading to a concern for creating diverse and affordable housing. In 2001, 19% of homeowners and 49% of tenant households spent more than 30% of income on housing, which is considered unaffordable.

An Affordable Housing Study in 2006 identified low-income renters with incomes under \$20,000 annually, individuals with special needs, young families, and seniors with support needs as those most in need of affordable housing stock. And, in the last few years the Sunshine Coast has experienced a problem common in urban areas – homelessness. In this rural community homelessness tends to be hidden because homeless people live not on the streets but in tents in the bush. The Council of Senior Citizens Organizations of BC reports an increase in the number of seniors facing homelessness on the Coast with long waiting lists for low-rent developments.

Transportation

Highway 101 – the main connector along this ribbon community – also serves as a local road. Indeed, as the population of the Sunshine Coast continues to grow, increased traffic volume on Highway 101 has become a major concern. Collision rates on all sections of the highway are above provincial average with often tragic consequences. Sunshine Coast residents are highly dependent on automobiles – 88% of households own at least one vehicle and 89% use a vehicle to get to work, either as driver or passenger.

A comparison of transit services in seven BC communities found that only the Comox Valley and Vernon had higher hours of transit service relative to population. Nevertheless, given the distances between communities and the hilly landscape, limited transit service is a barrier for many on the Sunshine Coast and an important community

issue. There is no public transportation beyond Halfmoon Bay. Bus service runs only every hour. A transportation study by the Lighthouse Learning Network found that residents wanted to see more frequent service, more buses, more routes, and extended hours of service.

The travel distances between Sunshine Coast communities and the distribution of services can result in social isolation. Because the Sunshine Coast is not one but several spread out geographic communities, residents often need to travel to different places to access services. In fact, depending on the need, they may have to travel to the Lower Mainland. Research has found that “The ‘ribbon’ of programs along the Coast makes accessibility challenging for families (if they have a car) and very difficult or impossible for families without cars. Parents must go from community to community for programs/services for different members of their family.”

(Sunshine Coast Early Childhood Development Planning Table, p. 8).

Transportation is a particularly acute problem in the communities of Pender Harbour and Egmont. Teens from Egmont are unable to attend an after-school program, for example, because of lack of transportation. Safety is an issue as well – especially travel at night. Finding creative ways to address transportation challenges is a constant theme on the Sunshine Coast, particularly in the northern end.

Immigrants

The Sunshine Coast has not traditionally had a large immigrant population. Today, immigrants comprise 17% of the population including English-speaking immigrants from the United Kingdom and the United States.

Beyond the statistics, relatively little is known about the immigrant population on the Sunshine Coast except that it seems to be a growing population but one that is not yet fully integrated into the life of the community. Both Capilano University and School District No. 46 offer services or programs for adults and children who speak English as a second language and have served adults and families from a wide variety of countries including the Philippines, Thailand, China, Japan, Korea, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Tunisia, Mexico, Peru, Costa Rica, Russia, Poland, and Italy, among others.

Communities in Transition

Change and how to manage change are constant themes on the Sunshine Coast. Rapid growth and development are raising questions about how to balance the community’s social, cultural, environmental, and economic values. Development is changing the physical landscape while the demographic makeup of the community is in transition. Young people are leaving the Coast and an aging population coupled with the migration of retirees into the community is raising the age profile. A still small but growing immigrant population is beginning to change the face of the community. Community members are reflecting on issues such as: How much development and what kind of development is right for our community? How can we balance development with preservation of our forests and natural habitat? Can we – how can we – achieve more

economic diversity to support a growing population and still preserve the Sunshine Coast lifestyle? How can we ensure affordable housing for those in need? How can health services and universal access to those services be assured for an aging population? How can we ensure the Sunshine Coast remains an attractive place to live for young families and young people?

Literacy cannot be looked at in isolation but is always embedded in context. Similarly large and complex issues, therefore, surfaced as we investigated literacy on the Sunshine Coast. The questions that emerged included: How can we work together as a community to ensure access to high quality child care? Why are 25% of children on the Sunshine Coast living at poverty level and how can we change that? How can we make a difference for our youth, especially those who are “high risk” and disengaged from school, family, and community? Are the literacy skills of our youth providing them with a strong enough foothold for future success in life? How do we create learning environments for all life stages that encourage excellence and innovation and produce a sense of safety and belonging? What more can we do to reach the most vulnerable individuals and groups with our services and programs? How can we foster more inter-agency cooperation and create a holistic approach that supports the whole person? What can we do to honour the diversity of cultures on the Sunshine Coast and promote greater integration of people from cultural minorities into community life?

As the Literacy Now Task Force discussed these and other questions and looked at the results of the research, we documented a range of assets to draw from and build on and identified gaps and priority areas for action.

Inventory of Assets

There is a range of existing programs and services on the Sunshine Coast. These are documented in detail over the next several pages using a life stages approach: the early years (0 – 6), school-age, youth including out-of-school youth, adults, and seniors. The charts indicate that several organizations on the Sunshine Coast deliver literacy and literacy-related programming and services including Capilano University, School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast), Sechelt Indian Band, Sunshine Coast Community Services, the four community schools, Lighthouse Learning Network, and both public libraries.

The charts tell us that there is a good base of resources and services across the lifespan. The plan that follows builds on this strong foundation. The purpose of the plan is not necessarily to create new programs but to draw on, build from and enhance existing assets and strengths. The purpose of the plan is also to draw on other less tangible community assets such as a history of collaboration and the trusting relationships that have developed among community agencies and institutions on the Sunshine Coast, and among service providers and their clients or students.

Personal relationships that are built on trust and that empower people by building on their strengths are seen as an important community strength. For example, staff and faculty at Capilano University point to the small size of the campus, its “homey” feel, and

the friendly relationships between instructors and students as an asset in making people feel safe and comfortable in their learning. The approach at Community Services is to develop trusting and non-judgmental relationships with clients so that they feel safe, supported and empowered. The Early Learning Teacher at School District No. 46 establishes a personal relationship with new parents even prior to birth to provide them with support and information throughout their child's early years. The Community Resource Centre focuses on involving people in the process of learning and doing things for themselves. These approaches are characteristic of the inclusive approach adopted by community agencies and institutions that serve the residents of the Sunshine Coast.



Members of the Japanese community at the Literacy Council's celebration of Multiculturalism Day, June 27, 2010

Assets for the Early Years and School-Age

Community Services – Early Years/School Age

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION(S)	CONTACT
Bellies and Babies	A pre and post-natal nutrition program. Through individual support and informal groups that includes a hot lunch, this program aims to improve the nutrition of pregnant and postnatal mothers and to encourage breast-feeding.	Pregnant women and mothers with babies up to 1 year	Gibsons and Sechelt, each once a week.	Kim Oka (604) 885-5881 ext.227 kimokacpnp@dccnet.com
Bridges Children's Physical and Occupational Therapy	Offers physical and occupational therapy for children and includes home visits. Services provided on an as-needed basis.			Occupational Therapy Physical Therapy 604-885-5881
Childcare Resource and Referral Program (CCRR)	Provides support for childcare providers and parents with an extensive toy and book lending library, networking, workshops, support visits, childcare referrals and childcare subsidy information. Most importantly, CCRR advocates for quality childcare and the need for childcare spaces on the Sunshine Coast.	Childcare providers, both licensed and license-not-required, parents and other caregivers	Gibsons Sechelt Pender Harbour	Hilary Griffiths (604) 885-5657 hilarygriffiths@dccnet.com
Infant Development Program	Home visits, assessments, toy and resource library, infant massage training, and play group. The playgroup meets on Thursdays from 10:00-12:00 at Community Services.	Families of children 0-3 with developmental challenges or delays.	Sechelt	604-885-5881 ext 242
Mother Goose	A facilitated group experience for parents and their babies and young children, focusing on the pleasure and power of using rhymes, songs and stories together. Parents are helped to gain skills and confidence, which can enable them to create positive family patterns during their children's crucial early years.	Parents with babies and young children.	Gibsons Sechelt Pender Harbour	Patrice Pollack (604) 885-5881 ext. 225 patrice@dccnet.com

Community Services – Early Years/School Age (continued)

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION(S)	CONTACT
Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program	A six-week parenting program for parents with children from birth to age 5.	Parents with children from birth to age 5.	Gibsons Sechelt Pender Harbour	Patrice Pollack (604) 885-5881 ext. 225 patrice@dccnet.com
Parent-Tot Drop-In	A morning family support program combining play and learning activities for children 0-6 with opportunities for parents and caregivers to have fun with their children, meet others, share parenting stories and access information and resources.	0-6; Universal program	4 locations: Gibsons, Roberts Creek, Halfmoon Bay and Pender Harbour	Patrice Pollack (604) 885-5881 ext. 225 patrice@dccnet.com
Supported Child Development	Helps to ensure children who require extra support are included and able to participate in "typical" community child care settings chosen by their parents.	Birth to 12 years	Coast-wide	Gayle Duncan, Coordinator 604 885-5881 ex. 223, gayle_duncan@dccnet.com

Public Libraries and Reading Rooms – Early Years/School Age

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION	CONTACT
Beanbags and Jellybeans	Stories, songs, games, rhymes and a simple craft all developed around a weekly theme.	Children 3 – 5 years and their adult caregiver	Sechelt Public Library	Bonny Creak, 604-885-3260 bonny.creak@sechelt.bclibrary.ca
BookFLIX	Online literary resource which pairs video storybooks with related nonfiction eBooks to build a love of reading and learning	Young children	Gibsons Public Library	Children's Librarian, Gibsons Public Library 604-886-2130
Pre-School Literacy Kits	A circulating collection of books and related items for pre-schoolers and their parents.	Pre-school children and parents	Sechelt Public Library	Bonny Creak, 604-885-3260 bonny.creak@sechelt.bclibrary.ca
Storytime	Stories told and read to children in library settings.	Young children	Roberts Creek and Pender Harbour Reading Rooms	
Teen Reading Club	For teens interested in reading and connecting with other teens across the country. Teens chat online with favourite authors, read and submit book reviews, participate in discussion forums, and check out the list of recommended reads.	Youth	Online	
TumbleBook Library	Online animated talking picture books collection, which teach kids the joy of reading. TumbleBooks add animation, sound, music and narration to existing picture books.	Young children	Gibsons and Sechelt Public Libraries	Bonny Creak, 604-885-3260 bonny.creak@sechelt.bclibrary.ca Children's Librarian, Gibsons Public Library 604-886-2130

School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) – Early Years/School-Age

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION(S)	CONTACT
District Aboriginal Education Support	In collaboration with students, parents, principals and classroom teachers, establishes relationships with and directly supports students of Aboriginal ancestry to reach or surpass their academic goals. Provides education on Aboriginal culture and history to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Supports students and families through life-transitions associated with school years and beyond, helps to give voice to parents and the Aboriginal community, and provides support and assistance (including co-teaching) to classroom teachers and school administration.	ALL students of Aboriginal ancestry	All schools and alternative programs	Kerry Mahlman Principal District Aboriginal Programs and Services District Partnerships Office 604 886 3741 Cell (please leave a message) 604 885 8345 cmahlman@sd46.bc.ca
District Early Years Teacher	Supports early years development and parents through a wide variety of programs and services.	Parents and children 0-6 in the community	Coastwide	Kirsten Deasey 604-740-7949 kdeasey@sd46.bc.ca
District Literacy Teacher	Supports literacy across the curriculum and supports and coordinates the network of teachers across the District.	Teachers and students in District schools	Coastwide	Bev Craig 604- 741-7808 bcraig@sd46.bc.ca
District Numeracy Teacher	Supports numeracy development in District schools.	Teachers and students in district schools	Coastwide	Bob Benmore 604- 886-8811 bbenmore@sd46.bc.ca
Dolly Parton Imagination Library	Mails an age-appropriate book directly to homes in the child's name once a month at no cost to families.	Birth to five years old.	Every elementary school in SD 46	Kirsten Deasey 604-740-7949 kdeasey@sd46.bc.ca
Early Years Fair	Annually connects families with a variety of non-profit agencies in the community that provide support to families with young children.	Families with children birth to 5 years old.	Chatelech Secondary School, Sechelt	Kirsten Deasey 604-740-7949 kdeasey@sd46.bc.ca
KinderSPARK! Program	Empowers parents as their child's first teacher and familiarizes parents and children to school culture and environment.	Parents attend with 4 and 5 year old children in the spring prior to kindergarten.	Available in the majority of elementary schools	Kirsten Deasey 604-740-7949 kdeasey@sd46.bc.ca

School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) – Early Years/School-Age (continued)

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION(S)	CONTACT
K-PALS	Peer-assisted literacy supports	School-age children	School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)	Kirsten Deasey 604-740-7949 kdeasey@sd46.bc.ca
Niwapatén Program	School-based projects which provide direct support to students of Aboriginal ancestry with a view to improving academic achievement in Numeracy, Literacy or Science and/or improving Social Responsibility	ALL Aboriginal schoolchildren	District schools	Kerry Mahlman Principal District Aboriginal Programs and Services District Partnerships Office 604 886 3741 Cell (please leave a message) 604 885 8345 cmahlman@sd46.bc.ca
Ready, Set, Learn	Every year, families with three year old children are invited to attend an event at their local school, where they receive an information package and a children's book.	Families with three-year-old children.	Every elementary school in SD 46	Kirsten Deasey kdeasey@sd46.bc.ca (604)740-7949
S.P.A.R.K!	Parents learn strategies and activities they can do with their child to support their child's learning. Toys, learning aids, and written hand-outs are given to parents at each class.	Families with children birth to five years old.	Every elementary school in School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)	Kirsten Deasey 604-740-7949 kdeasey@sd46.bc.ca
SPIDER – Students Participating in Distance Education Resources	An on-line learning program for home education. Offers courses leading toward high school graduation using the internet. Provides teacher support and learning resources.	Kindergarten to adult	Online	Paul Bishop 604-886-8647 spider@sd46.bc.ca
StrongStart BC	Free, drop-in. Early childhood educators lead learning activities, including stories, music and art to help children get ready for success in kindergarten. Story times, play activities, and healthy lunch. Caregivers discover new ways to support children's learning and make valuable connections.	Children under five and their caregivers	Gibsons Elementary Sechelt Elementary Madeira Park Elementary	Kirsten Deasey 604-740-7949 kdeasey@sd46.bc.ca

Sechelt Indian Band – Early Years/School Age

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION	CONTACT
Education Department	Contributes to the support services at Kinnikinnick Elementary, Sechelt Elementary, Chatelech Secondary and the Sunshine Coast Alternative School. They support home-school coordination; academic, social and/or cultural support (including counseling); outdoor education and tutorial assistance for shíshálh (Sechelt) Nation students. The SIB also partners with School District No. 46 Aboriginal Education Department Support Program to support shíshálh students who attend other schools in the district.	shíshálh students in SD 46	District Schools	Lenora Joe, Education Coordinator Sechelt Indian Band 604-885-2273 lenorajoe@secheltnation.net Kerry Mahlman, Principal District Aboriginal Programs and Services District Partnerships Office 604 886 3741 Cell (please leave a message) 604 885 8345 cmahlman@sd46.bc.ca
ECD Building Blocks	Outreach worker program aims to increase the ability of parents to support the healthy development of children from pre-conception to age six.	Parents of children ages 0-6	Education Centre at 5545 Highway 101 in Sechelt.	Madeleine August 604-885-6016
Family Fun Fair	An annual event that connects families with a wide variety of non-profit agencies in the community who provide support to families with young children. A wide variety of activities are available for the children to participate in during the fair.	Families with children age 0-6	Education Centre at 5545 Highway 101 in Sechelt.	Roberta Paton 604-885-5044
Family Resource Centre	A lending resource centre where families can access toys, games, high chairs, car/booster seats, books, etc.	Families with young children	Education Centre at 5545 Highway 101 in Sechelt.	Jan Miettinen Hart 604-885-6016

Sechelt Indian Band – Early Years/School Age (continued)

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION(S)	CONTACT
Family Literacy Program	Activity room for parents and children where they engage in various activities like painting, quilting, sewing, baking, reading, science, singing. Lending library has a collection of resources, toys, and car seats, high chairs, etc. for borrowing. Pre-school teachers can borrow activity bins. Family nights each month – prepare for Halloween, Christmas, etc. Baby swims are offered, the Tunic project – parents make tunics for their child’s pre-school graduation. There is a Baby Welcoming Ceremony – baby vests are made, blankets knitted, cds and books given to everyone.	Families	Sechelt Band Lands	Jan Miettinen Hart 604-885-6016
Homework Club	Runs 2 days per week. Students are assisted with math, English, social studies and science. The computer lab is open to students.	Schoolchildren	Sechelt Band Lands	Darren Dixon 604-885-6016
Mom-Ay-Mon Child Care	Licensed Group Child Care Centre. We provide hearing/speech/vision screening, speech therapy, language classes in the Sechelt language, hot lunch and snack program, indoor and outdoor play, field trips	Children 30 months to six years	Sechelt Band Lands	Roberta Paton 604-885-5044, fax 604-885-6071 momaymon@telus.net.
sháshishálem Language Program	The SIB sháshishálem offers an Elementary curriculum	Elementary schoolchildren	Kinnikinnick Elementary School	Lenora Joe, Education Coordinator Sechelt Indian Band 604-885-2273 lenorajoe@sechelnation.net Lenora Joe
Supported Child Development	Matches resources available in each community so that children that require extra support can be included in regular child care settings. is in its capacity-building stages	Parents of children ages 0-6	Education Centre at 5545 Highway 101 in Sechelt.	Jan Miettinen Hart 604-885-6016

Other Providers – Early Years/School Age

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION	CONTACT
Early Childhood Development (ECD) Planning Table	Mandate is to champion, develop and implement the community's ECD Strategic Plan. A group of professionals whose work in some way impacts families with children aged 0-6 meets monthly.	Early years 0-6	Coast-wide	Sarah Pond, ECD Community Facilitator, 604 740-7884 ecd@dccnet.com http://ecdcoast.wordpress.com
Speech and Language Program	Assistance to develop a child's feeding, play, pre-speech and communication skills. Services include assessment, consultation, therapy and parent training.	0-5 year olds.	Services provided on an as-needed basis in home, daycare or clinic.	Sechelt Health Unit 604-885-5164

Community Schools – Children, Youth and Families

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION(S)	CONTACT
Chatelech/Sechelt Community School	Elementary or secondary schools that place a special emphasis on the value of community involvement, integrating the school and the neighbourhood the school serves. Community Schools bring community partners and the school together to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, and families. They run school-related programs before and after school. They look for gaps in services for vulnerable children and families in the community and fill those needs through services such as homework clubs, after-school care, kinder care, youth groups, and breakfast clubs.	Children, youth, and families in the neighbourhood	Sechelt	Heather Gordon, Coordinator heathergordon@dccnet.com
Gibsons Community School			Gibsons	Kate Tauber, Coordinator gibsonscmschool@sd46.bc.ca
Halfmoon Bay Community School			Halfmoon Bay	Sue Lamb, Coordinator 604-885-2177 slamb@sd46.bc.ca
Pender Harbour Community School			Pender Harbour/Egmont	Jan Smalley, Coordinator 604-883-2826 phcs@dccnet.com
Roberts Creek Community School			Roberts Creek	Stacia Leech, Coordinator 604-885-3481 rccs@dccnet.com

Assets for Youth, Adults and Seniors

Capilano University – Youth, Adults and Seniors

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION(S)	CONTACT
Adult Basic Education – English, Math, Science and Computers	<p>Individualized instruction in English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Computers. Students select subjects depending upon their educational, occupational and personal goals. Students can work towards a Grade 12 equivalency, prepare for entry into programs at post-secondary institutions, or improve general skills for writing, math and use of computers.</p> <p>Classes are offered Monday through Friday during the fall and spring terms and a reduced schedule during May and June.</p> <p>ABE courses are tuition free. New students pay a \$25 application fee plus a \$24 registration fee. Returning students who have not taken a break of one semester or more from their studies pay a \$24 registration fee.</p>	Adults and youth over 18 who have been out of the public school system for at least one year.	Sechelt Campus	<p>John Field, ABE Department Head and Science Instructor, jfield@capilanou.ca</p> <p>Cathy McLean, ABE English Instructor cmaclean@capilanou.ca</p> <p>Adrian Belshaw, ABE Math Instructor abelshaw@capilanou.ca</p> <p>Becky Wayte, Computers Instructor, bwayte@capilanou.ca</p> <p>604-885-9310, Reception</p>
Career Access Centre – Coaching	One-on-one coaching for community members in life skills, computers, literacy and other areas as needed.	Adults and youth in the community who would like individual assistance with specific tasks and skills upgrading	Sechelt Campus	<p>Carol Nielsen 604-885-9310 cnielsen@capilanou.ca</p>

Capilano University – Youth, Adults and Seniors (continued)

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION(S)	CONTACT
Community Access to Literacy and Learning (CALL)	A volunteer-based literacy program. Volunteer tutors are trained and matched up with a learner and the tutors and learners work together to meet the learner's goals. CALL also provides small group learning for particular purposes, for example, driver's education.	Adults and youth who want to improve their literacy skills and achieve a particular learning goal	Coast-wide – Program is coordinated through the Sechelt campus and tutors and learners meet at various locations	Carol Nielsen, Coordinator 604-885-9310 cnielsen@capilanou.ca
Elder College	A forum for sharing ideas, knowledge and experience through an eclectic mix of courses taught by volunteers from the community.	Adults 55 and older	Sechelt campus and other locations	Lyle Wharton 604-885-9310
English as a Second Language Settlement Assistance Program	A volunteer-based program that offers one-to-one and small group instruction to immigrants and refugees. Goals are to assist them to improve their English language skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. The program is also designed to increase their knowledge of Canadian society and their ability to participate in the life of their community.	Immigrants and refugees who want to improve their English skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing	Coast-wide – Program is coordinated through the Sechelt campus and a weekly small group meets in Sechelt. Tutors and learners meet at various locations	Sandy Middleton, Coordinator 604-885-9310, ext. 5928 smiddlet@capilanou.ca
Literacy Outreach Coordinator	The Literacy Outreach Coordinator supports the community/district literacy planning and implementation processes. The LOC also: raises public awareness about literacy in the region; develops partnerships and fosters sustainable literacy initiatives and programs; engages in strategic planning to influence public policy in support of literacy; and provides professional development and support for literacy practitioners and programs.	Agencies and institutions in the community, public, and private sectors.	Coastwide	Sandy Middleton Literacy Outreach Coordinator 604-885-9310, ext. 5928 smiddleton@capilanou.ca
First Nations Liaison	The First Nations Liaison supports aboriginal students in post-secondary studies, and builds partnerships and relationships between the post-secondary system and the Sechelt Indian Band.	Aboriginal students	Coastwide	Sue Perry, First Nations Liaison, 604-885-9310 sperry@secheltnation.net

Community Services – Youth/Adults/Seniors

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION(S)	CONTACT
Parent Support Circles	Help and encourage parents to learn positive parenting – learning to distinguish punishment from discipline, knowing that children’s rights don’t undermine parental rights, valuing children for who they are instead of who we think they should be. Confidential self-help groups offering weekly, two hour meetings facilitated by trained volunteers. Participants can enter the group at any time, between meeting support is offered by facilitators and co-participants. The circles give parents a chance to share concerns, support each other, and learning parenting and life skills. They also connect participants with other services and resources in the community.	Parents of young children	Gibsons Sechelt	Community Services 604-885-5881
Youth in Transition to Adulthood	Prepares youth discharged from care for life outside care and a smooth transition to adulthood. One to one counseling and group work to identify a mentor for ongoing support, life skills training, opportunity to complete high school or GED, and more.	Youth discharged from care.	Coastwide	Steve Oka 604- 885-5881, ext 229

Lighthouse Learning Network - Youth, Adults and Seniors

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION(S)	CONTACT
Essential Skills Program	A project funded by the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills to deliver essential skills training to specific groups on the Sunshine Coast.	Adults, youth, immigrants, and aboriginal people with low literacy skills	Coastwide	Heather Gordon, Project Manager 604-885-7330 heathergordon@dccnet.com

School District No. 46 – Youth Adults and Seniors

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION(S)	CONTACT
Gibsons Alternate Program (GAP)	A small, intensive school environment, which integrates therapeutic intervention, social skills acquisition, conflict resolution and problem solving into every aspect of the educational program. A program of the Sunshine Coast Alternative School.	Grade 8 - 12	Gibsons	Sally Thicke Principal 604-886-8647 sthicke@sd46.bc.ca 604
SPIDER – Students Participating in Distance Education Resources	An on-line learning program for home education. Offers courses leading toward high school graduation using the internet. Provides teacher support and learning resources.	Kindergarten to adult	Online	Paul Bishop 604-886-8647 spider@sd46.bc.ca
Sunshine Coast Alternative School	Provides learner-centered programs that assist children and youth in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to build a healthy community. Welcomes individual differences within an atmosphere of mutual respect and co-operation. Ten self-contained programs located at different sites. These are district programs that take both school, and self or family referrals. Students are referred to district programs by schools when students' educational needs, emotional or behavioural difficulties prevent their home school from being able to provide an educational program. Students may self-refer when his/her educational needs require alternative paths from the regular school environment.	Children and youth	Sechelt	Sally Thicke Principal 604-886-8647 sthicke@sd46.bc.ca
Pathfinders Program	Self-paced, independent learning environment. Uses a combination of on-line and paper-based courses.	Adults wishing to upgrade/graduate; students looking for alternative or accelerated program; out of school youth	Gibsons Sechelt Pender Harbour	Sally Thicke Principal 604-886-8647 sthicke@sd46.bc.ca

Sechelt Indian Band – Youth, Adults and Seniors

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP	LOCATION(S)	CONTACT
Adult Education Department	Services for post-secondary education (on and off reserve). Copies of college and university calendars from across BC are available as well as labour market information and assistance with job search skills.	Sechelt Band members	SIB	Raquel Joe 604-885-6016
Cultural Program	Provides workshops about general history and art workshops both in the museum and in the classrooms, at various festivals and outreach work at summer camps. Mostly restricted to teaching SIB members with the exception of teaching art classes at Kinnikinnick Elementary School.	Sechelt Band members	SIB	Joni Esterbrook 604-885-6016
Residential School Healing Program	Follows the Chronic Disease Self-Management Model with additional information and activities relating to healing from residential school.	Sechelt Band Members	SIB	Noelle Hanuse 604-885-9404
Sechelt Nation and First Nation Employment Society AHRDA	The location of services is in the caption area of Egmont to Port Mellon. The Sechelt Nation Employment Centre is part of the First Nations Employment Society, which represents 10 First Nations from Vancouver to the Sunshine Coast. Offers one-on-one employment counseling, job placement services, free internet access, free photocopying and fax, job posting board, resource area for career and job search, referral to community agencies, training programs and support services, funding for training for eligible clients, small business assistance.	All Aboriginal community members		Marita Paul-Franke 604-885-9404

Gaps and Priority Areas

The inventory of assets tells us that there are a range of assets to draw from across the lifespan. Yet, there are community members who remain isolated and excluded from full participation because of a range of issues that include:

- Poverty.
- Addictions
- Domestic abuse.
- Mental health issues.
- Learning disabilities among children and adults and requirements for speech therapy among children.
- Low literacy skills among parents, including those who home school their children.
- Homelessness and transience.
- Lack of child care.
- Lack of transportation to support participation in programs and after-school activities.
- Racism and cultural misunderstandings and divides.
- Language barriers.
- Reluctance to participate because of feelings of shame, stigma, fear of “exposure.”

The following have been identified as priority areas:

Low-income Individuals and Families

“I’m too poor to think.”
Client at the local Food Bank

Low-income individuals and families live all along the Sunshine Coast and their poverty has a severe impact on their opportunities for learning and on their overall life chances.

Situational barriers to participation related to income – especially lack of child care, transportation, and money for program fees – were cited as roadblocks to participation during the research. Many programs try to address these types of barriers but, even so, it was pointed out, people still have to get **to** the program in a community where services can be at a significant travel distance from home and the bus comes only every hour. Indeed, on the Sunshine Coast some people can only be reached by boat. There is a clear sense that programs and services serve those who are mobile and, in particular, drive.

Marginalized Populations

“You’re not a failure at being a human being, you’re a failure at being a European.”

Interviewee

There is a need to address more social issues before addressing literacy... but the very agencies that need to do the supporting, are the ones Aboriginal people are the most afraid of.

Report by Noelle Hanuse

Despite the welcoming environment community agencies and institutions strive to create, there are people in the community who do not access programs and services because they do not feel comfortable or that they belong. Our research found a cultural divide that affects access to and participation by aboriginal people in community programs and services, including literacy. Interviewees commented that there was no aboriginal representation at the Roberts Creek Daze or Sea Cavalcade (annual summer festivals) and that there are very few aboriginal people employed in local businesses and stores. One interviewee remarked on the lack of First Nations culture visible on the Coast and felt that “people are not used to diversity here.”

As noted previously, the majority of the aboriginal population comes from nations other than the Sechelt Nation, and many SIB programs and services are for band members only. However, there is no Aboriginal Friendship Centre that could help to build a sense of unity, strength and belonging and that could serve as a meeting place where cultures could be shared, connections made, and programs and services delivered.

Aboriginal people on the Sunshine Coast who attended residential school were forced to give up their own language and English became their language of use but they were not given a strong foundation in English, circumstances that are passed down through generations. These adults and children are recognized as English as a Second Dialect (ESD) learners. Because language and culture are so interconnected, ESD learners would benefit from opportunities to acquire a solid linguistic base in English and to preserve and embrace their traditional language and culture.

In 2010 the Literacy Council renewed its commitment to work with Aboriginal communities on the Sunshine Coast, specifically, to engage Aboriginal people in the Literacy Council itself, to partner with Aboriginal colleagues in exploring literacy opportunities, and to facilitate the participation of Aboriginal people in the day-to-day activities of our educational institutions and community learning programs.

In a different context English as a Second Language learners have similar language and cultural needs. Immigrants need to acquire proficiency in English in order to become full participants in the life of the community. And, in a rural community like the Sunshine Coast where the number of immigrants from a particular country of origin is small immigrants may have little or no support from their own ethnic community to draw from. Indeed, the number of immigrants *in total* on the Sunshine Coast, although growing, is small and there are no gathering places or social supports specifically for immigrants. As a result, immigrants would benefit from increased opportunities to

acquire English, to meet other immigrants, and acculturate to Canadian customs and values in order to support their integration into the community, including work.

Our research found that many immigrants have difficulty finding and keeping work because of limited English skills. In some cases immigrants with professional qualifications are required to work in jobs with very little opportunity for advancement, such as jobs in fast food outlets or cleaning jobs, because of limited English and the fact that their professional credentials are not recognized in Canada. Many immigrants also face practical barriers to participation in work and community such as not having a driver's license and need to improve their English before they can obtain one.

Youth

“When you have survival needs – for example, a roof over your head – literacy gets shoved down the list.”

Youth Worker

Youth, especially older youth and young adults at the early stages of wage earning, often do not have the ability to advance in the labour market and to successfully move forward in life. Many youth say that there is no significant adult in their lives. More than one interviewee described a “lost generation” and reflected on the difficulties some youth experience in their lives with school, work, and family life. The prevalence of alcohol and drugs in the lives of some of our youth was also cited as a community issue. Research among the aboriginal community found that girls/young women who become parents face challenges in acquiring a higher education. Young men in the work force are reluctant to go back to school because they may be earning a good income. When they become parents, they do not have the skills to participate in their children's literacy. How to reach our youth and meet their needs, and the importance of mentoring youth through the challenges of life, was a major theme in the research.

This gap emerged in the context of the changing demographics of the Sunshine Coast. Interviewees noted that “our youth are disappearing” – a declining birth rate, an aging population, and the need or desire of youth to move off the Coast to pursue further education and employment are all contributing factors. A youth survey found that over 80% of youth planned to live elsewhere after graduating from high school. Of those planning to move away only 28% were doing so to pursue a post-secondary education or training. (District of Sechelt). If we are to retain and support our youth there is a clear need to develop creative opportunities and workable strategies that assist them to engage in learning, work and community life.

It is worth noting, however, that the population trend among Aboriginal people presents a different picture. Although we do not have statistics specifically for the Sunshine Coast, BC statistics tell us that 50% of Aboriginal people in BC are 25 or under compared to just 32% of the non-Aboriginal population. While the proportion of young Aboriginals is higher than that of the non-Aboriginal population, the reverse is true when looking at the elderly population. Aboriginals 55 or older constitute 8.5% of the Aboriginal population, while in the non-Aboriginal community, they account for 21.3%.

Pender Harbour and Egmont

“A mother is only able to get out of Egmont once a week for her daughter’s swimming lessons and then has to race around doing all the necessary errands for the week.”

Kim Foster, Egmont

The communities of Pender Harbour and Egmont at the north end of the Coast are characterized by physical and social isolation, serious underlying social issues, and a lack of service, including more limited access to education. Of all the communities on the Sunshine Coast, Pender Harbour and Egmont demonstrate the highest need for increased literacy services and opportunities and for creative solutions to meet these needs. In particular, there is a need to develop informal learning opportunities that bring community members together in different ways that are positive and celebratory.

Inter-agency Cooperation and Coordination

“When somebody has a mouth full of rotten teeth and they’re four, you have to look at ways to address those basic needs because that’s part of literacy work.”

Kirsten Deasey, Early Literacy Teacher, School District No. 46

The importance of inter-agency cooperation in working together to meet the needs of the whole person was mentioned many times during the research. Specific needs – such as assistance in developing clear language materials to improve agency communication with the public – were identified.

There is also a need for Sunshine Coast communities to work together to meet the needs of the whole region. History and geography make it challenging for residents of the Sunshine Coast to see themselves – and to act – as one community.



Members of the Gibsons Family Network visiting SuperValu as part of a health literacy project

Dialogue between our Formal Educational Institutions

There is a need to promote dialogue between local secondary schools and post-secondary institutions in order to ensure graduating students are prepared for the demands of post-secondary education

Adults and Youth with Special Needs

There is a need for literacy by adults and youth with special needs and developmental disabilities.

The Plan

Vision

Three visioning meetings produced a rich tapestry of ideas to guide the development of a community literacy plan. Using five life stages – early years, school-age, youth, adults, and seniors – participants described the ways in which life in our community would be better for people at each life stage. The following key elements of the vision have been distilled from the discussions:

- The community encourages and supports the exchange of knowledge and skills across the lifespan and values the contributions of all.
- Different generations come together to share their perspectives, strengths, knowledge and skills – from seniors supporting young families as grandparents to youth and seniors engaging in storytelling to adults mentoring youth through the challenges of life.
- The critical role of parents and other significant adults in their children’s development through the early years to the end of adolescence is valued and supported by the community.
- Parents know how to – and have the time to – actively support their children’s literacy and learning.
- Parents nurture their children’s emotional development and feelings of connection to others and the world around them.
- The community mobilizes to address the childcare crisis to ensure high quality affordable childcare for all.
- Children are given time to just “be.”

- Children experience authentic, out of doors learning about their back yards, their forests, and their oceans – and share their knowledge in a rich, social environment.
- Books and reading are present in the lives of all families and remain fun, enjoyable and “cool” through to adolescence and adulthood.
- Children grow up seeing and feeling that their cultural heritages are vibrantly present, not only in Aboriginal communities, but in every community.
- Early childhood learning opportunities are responsive to and reflective of Inuit, Metis, and First Nations cultures and world views.
- The cycle of poverty creates low literacy, low literacy creates poverty, is broken and there is no poverty.
- People have the capacity and the means to get to a program or service and/or the program or service comes to them.
- No one is prevented from attending a program or accessing a service because of situational barriers such as lack of child care, lack of transportation, and lack of money.
- Social agencies and educational institutions work together to support the whole person and provide a seamless service.
- The community offers real, authentic, and diverse learning opportunities in a variety of settings across the life span.
- Multiple pathways to literacy and learning are offered – arts-based approaches, mentoring, fostering leadership and civic participation, among others.
- People feel safe and comfortable participating.

The visioning and other conversations throughout the planning process distilled for us some of the shifts we see taking place on the Sunshine Coast in terms of our understanding of and approaches to literacy and that will guide our planning:

<i>Shift from</i>	<i>Shift to</i>
Literacy in a box as reading and writing	Understanding literacy as the foundational skills and competencies that enable further learning and participation in life.
Stand-alone programs	Embedding literacy in programs and services that meet people where they are.
Working in silos	Developing integrated approaches that provide a seamless continuum of programs and services that meet the needs of the whole person.
Deficit approaches	Emphasizing the strengths and abilities people can draw on and from to help themselves and the gifts they have to offer to their families and their communities
Traditional modes of delivery	Creative modes of delivery that take programs and services to people and bring people to programs and services.

Vision Statement

All residents of the Sunshine Coast have opportunities to develop literacy throughout their lives; to achieve their educational, work and social goals; and to realize their potential.



A grandmother and grandson who performed a welcoming song for participants at the Multicultural Day celebration in June 2010.

Updated Action Plan 2010

Strategy I: Build active partnerships among community organizations, First Nations, educational institutions, libraries, government agencies and the private sector to increase literacy programs, services and opportunities on the Sunshine Coast.

Actions

- Actively seek new partners to enhance the community literacy table and community literacy work, especially from sectors not currently represented including the private sector and municipal government. In particular, work in partnership with municipal government and municipal government planning processes.
- Develop diverse opportunities for partners to participate in the work of the Council in various ways and at different levels of involvement.
- Identify and access – with partners – sources of government and non-governmental funding to enhance literacy programs and services on the Sunshine Coast and work towards enhancement and sustainability of programs and services.
- Work with other partners and sectors to find ways to create dialogue, and to build connections and trust between different cultural groups on the Sunshine Coast.
- Work with other partners and sectors to make the case for more community gathering places, including an Aboriginal Friendship Centre.
- Work with other partners and sectors to increase opportunities and support for intergenerational interaction and learning.
- Develop a cross-sectoral approach to professional development and training in literacy-related areas including the development of clear language and strategies for embedding literacy learning in other programs and services.

Statement of Success: New partnerships at varying levels of involvement increase literacy capacity on the Sunshine Coast.

Indicators: Number and type of new partnerships; examples of collaboration; examples of different levels and type of involvement; examples of new initiatives and successful funding applications; movement towards the creation of new gathering places including an Aboriginal Friendship Centre; examples of partnerships and new initiatives related to intergenerational learning; number of professional development and training workshops and number of participants; evaluation of workshops by participants

Strategy I: 2010 Update

The Literacy Council has collaborated with several organizations to support existing literacy work or facilitate new initiatives. This collaboration has been instrumental in strengthening literacy delivery, in building partnerships with key organizations such as Community Services and the Sechelt Indian Band, and in creating new partnerships with non-profit organizations such as Gibsons Family Network, Habitat for Humanity, and the Community Resource Centre.

In 2009-10 the Literacy Council collaborated with:

- **Sunshine Coast Community Services Society:** The Council partnered with Community Services to support their work on several fronts including literacy supports for early years initiatives: the development of literacy kits by the Child Care Resource and Referral Program; Mother Goose training for family resource workers; and teaching aids for the pre-natal program Bellies and Babies. In addition, the Council supported a program that assists women as they navigate custody of and access to their children in the aftermath of abuse. The support/information group offers women a safe way to build their confidence and communication skills so that they can advocate for themselves within the justice and family court systems. The women obtain important information, learn about their options, and connect to other women in similar circumstances. They also receive assistance in interpreting and filling out forms.
- **Celebrating Authors, Books and Children (CABC):** The Council partnered with the CABC program (an initiative of the Festival of the Written Arts, School District No. 46, Sechelt Public Library and the Sunshine Coast Arts Council) to celebrate Family Literacy Week in January 2010. With support from the Literacy Council the CABC program brought writers Nicola Campbell and Ivan Coyote to schools on the Coast.
- **Community Resource Centre:** The Council partnered with the Community Resource Centre on a project focusing on document use. The Resource Centre has created an instructional manual and on-line toolkit to simplify the process of understanding and completing key government forms such as applications for employment insurance, income assistance, disability benefits and others.
- **Sechelt Public Library:** The Council partnered with the Sechelt Public Library to support an outreach program by the Children's Librarian. She has offered story time and playtime to groups of pre-schoolers at the Sechelt Indian Band and in Pender Harbour – two communities traditionally underserved by the library and identified as priorities in the Literacy Plan.
- **Sechelt Indian Band (SIB):** The Council partnered with SIB to create a film documentary that takes a bilingual approach to storytelling and that contributes to the revitalization of the She shashishalhem language. The film (not yet completed) will document the translation of a traditional story by Elders and illustration of the story by Sechelt youth.
- **Gibsons Family Network (GFN):** GFN represents families on the Sunshine Coast who have a family member with a developmental disability. The Council partnered with GFN to offer a health literacy course to 10 young people ranging in age from 19 to early 30's. The young people learned how to make healthy choices by cooking and eating healthy food. They also learned how to read food labels and became aware of all the ingredients in packaged foods.
- **Habitat for Humanity:** The Council partnered with Habitat for Humanity to support computer training for volunteers at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore. The training is helping volunteers increase their computer skills and contribute to the success of the ReStore. The Council has also explored with Habitat for Humanity ways to assist families with financial literacy related to owning a home.

In 2010 Family Literacy Week partners included:

- Capilano University
- CABC
- Chatelech-Sechelt Community School
- Childcare Resource and Referral Program
- Coast Reporter
- Gibsons Public Library
- Halfmoon Bay Community School
- Pender Harbour Community School
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- School District No. 46
- Sechelt Fire Department
- Sechelt Public Library
- Sunshine Coast Arts Council
- Sunshine Coast Community Services

Strategy 2: Promote community awareness of literacy on the Sunshine Coast and, in particular, of the priorities and actions identified in the Community Literacy Plan and the relationship of literacy to other social issues

Actions

- Produce a newsletter twice a year to keep the community informed of the work of the Council and the implementation of the Community Literacy Plan.
- Host an annual forum to share information about literacy on the Sunshine Coast and to invite and facilitate discussion with partners and community members about new ideas, strategies and actions.
- Use existing initiatives such as Family Literacy Week, International Adult Learners Week, National Aboriginal Day and International Literacy Day, among others, to promote literacy and learning on the Sunshine Coast and to draw in new partners and champions.
- Nurture a relationship with local media to keep literacy visible in the community.

Statement of Success: Community members, organizations, institutions, and businesses are more aware of literacy needs on the Sunshine Coast and of the contributions they can make to finding and implementing creative solutions.

Indicators: Examples of changes in public perception; number of newsletters distributed and number of newsletter recipients from x number of sectors; number of participants and breadth of representation at annual forum; number of literacy-related events and initiatives tied to special initiatives/days; examples of new ideas, strategies and actions put forward; amount and diversity of coverage about literacy in local media;

Strategy 2: 2010 Update

Several activities have raised public awareness of literacy, the Literacy Council, and the community partners:

- **The development of a literacy web site by the Literacy Council:** www.sunshinecoastliteracy.org offers information about the Literacy Council, the Literacy Plan, activities, projects, etc.
- **The development of a web site for aboriginal people created by a partnership among School District No. 46, the Sechelt Indian Band, and Capilano University:** www.allnationscoast.net offers information about learning opportunities for Aboriginal people living on the Sunshine Coast.
- **Family Literacy Week, January 2010:** The Literacy Council and partners sponsored and hosted a series of events during Family Literacy Week to promote awareness of family literacy and community literacy. Events included a pancake breakfast followed by story time at the RCMP detachment and the Sechelt Firehall; a birthday party for all babies born in 2009 at Sechelt Public Library; a storytelling workshop for families; and author visits to schools as part of the CABC.
- **Coast Reporter Insert:** The Literacy Council published a four-page insert entitled “Literacy in Action” in the *Coast Reporter* May 21, 2010. The insert used the theme of “The New Literacies” to highlight Literacy Council activities, projects and partnerships in 2009-10.
- **June 1 Literacy Forum:** The Literacy Council hosted a community literacy forum on June 1 in Roberts Creek. The forum was well attended by a cross-section of the community. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator presented the Literacy Plan, the Assistant Superintendent of School District No. 46 spoke about the role of the district in the literacy planning and implementation process; and a panel representing partner agencies described their literacy work and its impact on people’s lives.
- **Canadian Multiculturalism Day:** The Literacy Council hosted a “Day of Welcoming” on Canadian Multiculturalism Day, June 27, to celebrate diversity on the Sunshine Coast, congratulate new Canadians, and promote the 2009 Community Accord.
- **Preparation for newspaper ad on September 8, 2010:** A full-page newspaper ad is being prepared for publication on September 8 to celebrate International Literacy Day and to promote the Literacy Council’s fall activities.

Strategy 3: Support aboriginal people to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

- Collaborate with aboriginal educators to discuss and develop holistic literacy initiatives for youth and adults that are culturally sensitive and grounded in aboriginal principles of community and culture.
- Address a skills gap among aboriginal youth to improve their reading skills and facilitate bridging to ABE and other post-secondary programs.

- Collaborate with aboriginal educators to develop innovative strategies and programs that assist aboriginal children, youth and adults to develop their English skills and to develop and retain their traditional languages.
- Collaborate with aboriginal educators to articulate and document ways that literacy and other learning and employment related programs in the community can facilitate participation by aboriginal learners.
- Collaborate with aboriginal educators to explore and articulate ways of redefining how success is measured for aboriginal people in the context of literacy and learning.
- Explore opportunities for learning from and building on the intergenerational learning traditions of aboriginal people.

Statement of Success: Aboriginal and non-aboriginal educators and agencies work together to increase literacy and learning opportunities and success among aboriginal learners.

Indicators: Examples of collaboration; examples of enhanced and new literacy initiatives; number of aboriginal youth who increase their reading skills and bridge to ABE; documented increase in number of aboriginal learners participating in literacy programs on the Sunshine Coast; examples of new insights and learnings about aboriginal approaches to intergenerational learning and measures of success

Strategy 3: 2010 Update

The Literacy Council has renewed its commitment to working with aboriginal individuals, organizations, and communities. School District No. 46 has collaborated with aboriginal communities in several ways:

- ▶ **The Aboriginal Sharing Circle**, a monthly gathering of aboriginal people on the Sunshine Coast. Aboriginal people come together to share food and cultures. The Sharing Circle includes literacy activities – participants read to each other, including material they may find difficult. Other activities include exploring upgrading and career exploration options, and helping each other with information and support on a variety of topics.
- ▶ **Reading with the Bear**, a display and reading of aboriginal children’s books during Family Literacy Week and, this past winter, at Pender Harbour Community School.
- ▶ **On Mother’s Lap**, in collaboration with Gibsons Community School, evenings for parents to read aboriginal children’s books with their children.
- ▶ www.allnationscoast.net, a web site about learning opportunities for aboriginal people on the Sunshine Coast, created through a partnership of School District No. 46, Sechelt Indian Band, and Capilano University.

Strategy 4: Support adults with low literacy skills to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

- Work with agencies on the Sunshine Coast to embed literacy in other contexts such as health, social welfare and justice.
- Develop a plan to introduce a four-component family literacy model to communities on the Sunshine Coast, one that addresses the literacy skills of parents.
- Liaise with the Community Access to Literacy and Learning (CALL) program at Capilano University to ensure collaboration and complementarity of services.

Statement of Success: Adults with low literacy skills have increased opportunities to improve their skills.

Indicators: Number of partner agencies collaborating on an integrated approach to literacy skill development; examples of new approaches to embedding literacy; a plan for family literacy programming on the Sunshine Coast; increased enrollment in CALL.

Strategy 5: Support youth and young adults to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

- Create a Youth Planning Table that takes a cross-sectoral integrated approach to working with out-of-school youth and youth-at-risk.
- Develop specific outreach strategies for youth with low literacy and innovative programming options that speak to youth.
- Explore the possibility of a mentorship program for youth and other opportunities for intergenerational interaction and learning, with literacy as a foundation.

Statement of Success: Agencies on the Sunshine Coast employ a holistic and integrated approach towards engaging youth in literacy development and other aspects of life.

Indicators: A Youth Planning Table is created; examples of new outreach strategies and programs for youth; new examples of intergenerational learning involving youth.

Strategies 4 and 5: 2010 Update

In 2009-10 the Literacy Council focused on building the capacity of our community to assist adults and youth who have limited reading skills. The Council recognized a need to strengthen knowledge and skills in teaching reading at the community level. Volunteers at Pender Harbour Community School and in the Community Access to Literacy and Learning (CALL) program at Capilano University work with adults and youth to improve reading skills. These volunteers require and appreciate continuous professional development in order to increase their expertise and help them to teach reading as effectively as possible.

To this end, the Literacy Council sponsored a two-day training workshop on an approach to teaching reading called "That Reading Thing." (www.thatreadingthing.com) A variety of people attended the training including the Literacy Outreach Coordinator, the Coordinator of the CALL program at Capilano University, three CALL tutors, three volunteers from Pender Harbour/Egmont, a representative of Gibsons Family Network, and the First Nations Liaison at Capilano University.

The training was excellent and offered a useful tool in working with adults and youth who may have difficulty decoding. A review workshop will be offered in September 2010 and ongoing support provided by the trainer and the Literacy Outreach Coordinator.

The training offered by the Literacy Council echoes reflections by a school principal about students who lag with reading development, most commonly those who struggle with comprehension and making meaning from text. The principal notes that these students need specific intervention in very small groups or one-to-one because their needs are individual. He advocates for a reading specialist to work intensively with

these students to boost their reading skills and suggests that without targeted and effective instruction these students struggle with reading all through school. His comments underscore that reading difficulties require specific interventions for children, youth and adults and that helping people in all age groups become fluent readers is a critical literacy goal.

In 2009-10 we also began to look more closely at the issue of special needs among adults and youth with low literacy skills. We hosted a meeting of community agencies in April 2010 to identify the range of special needs that exist in tandem with low literacy among adults and youth on the Sunshine Coast such as addictions, mental health, experiences of trauma and abuse and other issues. The meeting also focused on the particular needs of adults and youth with developmental disabilities. The information gathered is being used to inform the Literacy Plan.

Finally, the Literacy Council supported projects – described under Strategy 1 – that contributed to the literacy development of children, youth, and adults through partnerships with CABC, Sechelt Public Library, Gibsons Family Network, the Community Resource Centre, Community Services, Habitat for Humanity, and the Sechelt Indian Band.

Strategy 6: Support immigrants to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

- Collaborate with existing initiatives to increase options for more second language learning opportunities.
- Collaborate with existing initiatives to identify immigrants' needs and to develop programs and services to meet those needs.
- Explore opportunities to assist immigrants in securing employment.

Statement of Success: Community agencies and institutions are working together to identify and address needs within the immigrant community.

Indicators: Examples of collaboration and new initiatives

Strategy 6: 2010 Update

The Literacy Council allocated resources towards continuing the work begun in 2009 by Capilano University and Chatelech-Sechelt Community School with funding from the Welcoming Communities initiative of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. That work was highly successful in raising awareness of the immigrant population on the Sunshine Coast, involving the immigrant population in planning and participating in events and celebrations, creating a community accord that was signed by several organizations and community leaders, and building community partnerships. This work will now continue under the umbrella of the Literacy Council and it will also focus on referring immigrant adults and families to services in the community that can assist them with settlement and language needs.

A first event – a “Day of Welcoming” – took place June 27 in celebration of Canadian Multiculturalism Day at the Seaside Centre in Sechelt. More than 120 people attended the event! The Mayor of Sechelt, Darren Inkster, gave a speech and participants were

treated to performances and stories by immigrants from a range of cultures including Japan, China, Nepal, Quebec, and Latin America. The event was highly successful and showcased the growing diversity on the Sunshine Coast.

Strategy 7: Develop creative solutions to reduce isolation and improve access and participation to literacy and learning opportunities in Pender Harbour and Egmont

Actions

- Create a sub-committee of the newly formed Sunshine Coast Literacy Council to work on this strategy.
- Collaborate with existing programs, for example the literacy and ESL programs at Capilano University among others, to extend services to the area.
- Explore and develop outreach and access strategies for those most in need and least able to participate.

Statement of Success: Agencies and institutions are working together to identify and address needs in Pender Harbour and Egmont.

Indicators: A sub-committee is in place; examples of a greater presence in the area by existing programs; examples of new learning opportunities and increased participation.

Strategy 7: 2010 Update

The Literacy Council has allocated resources to the Pender Harbour area to support literacy in that community. The Pender Harbour Community School, Pender Harbour Reading Room, and the Egmont Community Club have created a literacy steering committee and are working with other community partners to identify gaps, priorities, and solutions to advance literacy in their community.

This community development approach gives organizations in Pender Harbour/Egmont the opportunity to make their own decisions about how best to meet literacy needs in that area. The Pender Harbour/Egmont literacy steering committee works in consultation with the Literacy Outreach Coordinator and the Literacy Council.

New Strategies 2010

Strategy 8: Sponsor two events in 2010/2011 to explore/promote opportunities for local secondary schools and partner post-secondary institutions to dialogue (including services for ABE/upgrading, special needs, ESL and Aboriginal students). Topics will include: numeracy skills, oral communication skills, writing process and standards, reading levels, knowledge of literature, etc.

Actions

- Plan and host an initial event in fall 2010 between representatives of SD 46 and Capilano University

- Plan and host a follow-up event in spring 2011

Statement of Success: The school district and the post-secondary sector are working in partnership to ensure student success.

Indicators: Two meetings take place; strategies for collaboration are identified and implemented.

Strategy 9: Dialogue, collaborate, plan and coordinate – as a cadre of community services concerned with literacy – to create a continuum of programs and services to develop inclusive and formal learning opportunities – including literacy and numeracy – for youth and adults with special needs and developmental disabilities.

Actions

- Follow-up the spring 2010 meeting of concerned organizations with a written report identifying the issues and gaps in services and programs.
- Work with partner organizations to develop creative ways to fill the gaps.

Statement of Success: Organizations on the Sunshine Coast are working together to address gaps in literacy services and programs for adults and youth with special needs.

Indicators: Written report completed; examples of collaboration; ideas for new services and programs identified.



Chief Fire Officer Bill Higgs gives safety instructions to families prior to a tour of the Sechelt Fire Hall for Family Literacy Week 2010.

Strategy and Actions	Timeframe	Required Resources ²
<i>Strategy 1: Build active partnerships among community organizations, First Nations, educational institutions, libraries, government agencies and the private sector to increase literacy programs, services and opportunities on the Sunshine Coast.</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively seek new partners to enhance the community literacy table and community literacy work, especially from sectors not currently represented including the private sector and municipal government. In particular, work in partnership with municipal government and municipal government planning processes. 	Over 3 years	Existing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop diverse opportunities for partners to participate in the work of the council in various ways and at different levels of involvement. 	Over 3 years	Existing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and access – with partners – sources of government and non-governmental funding to enhance literacy programs and services on the Sunshine Coast and work towards enhancement and sustainability of programs and services. 	Over 3 years	Existing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with other partners and sectors to find ways to create dialogue, and to build connections and trust between different cultural groups on the Sunshine Coast. 	Over 3 years	Existing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with other partners and sectors to make the case for more community gathering places, including an Aboriginal Friendship Centre. 	Over 3 years	Existing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with other partners and sectors to increase opportunities and support for intergenerational interaction and learning. 	Over 3 years	Existing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a cross-sectoral approach to professional development and training in literacy-related areas including the development of clear language and strategies for embedding literacy learning in other programs and services. 	Over 3 years	New resources needed
<i>Strategy 2: Promote community awareness of literacy on the Sunshine Coast and, in particular, of the priorities and actions identified in the Community Literacy Plan and the relationship of literacy to other social issues</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a newsletter twice a year to keep the community informed of the work of the Council and the implementation of the Community Literacy Plan. 	Over 3 years	Existing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host an annual forum to share information about literacy on the Sunshine Coast and to invite and facilitate discussion with partners and community members about new ideas, strategies and actions. 	Spring 2011	Existing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use existing initiatives such as Family Literacy Week, International Adult Learners Week, National Aboriginal Day and International Literacy Day, among others, to promote literacy and learning on the Sunshine Coast and to draw in new partners and champions. 	Over 3 years – International Literacy Day ad September 2010	Existing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nurture a relationship with local media to keep literacy visible in the community. 	Over 3 years	Existing
<i>Strategy 3: Support aboriginal people to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with aboriginal educators to discuss and develop holistic literacy initiatives for youth and adults that are culturally sensitive and grounded in First Nations’ principles of community and culture. 	Over 3 years	Existing

² Existing resources include 2010 Legacies Now implementation funds and Capilano University Regional Literacy Coordination

• Address a skills gap among aboriginal youth to improve their reading skills and facilitate bridging to ABE and other post-secondary programs.	Over 3 years	New resources required
• Collaborate with aboriginal educators to develop innovative strategies and programs that assist aboriginal children, youth and adults to develop their English skills and to develop and retain their traditional languages.	Over 3 years	Existing
• Collaborate with aboriginal educators to articulate and document ways that literacy and other learning and employment related programs in the community can facilitate participation by aboriginal learners.	Over 3 years	Existing
• Collaborate with aboriginal educators to explore and articulate ways of redefining how success is measured for aboriginal people in the context of literacy and learning.	Over 3 years	Existing
• Explore opportunities for learning from and building on the intergenerational learning traditions of aboriginal people.	Over 3 years	Existing
<i>Strategy 4: Support adults with low literacy skills to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.</i>		
• Work with agencies on the Sunshine Coast to embed literacy in other contexts such as health, social welfare and justice.	Over 3 years	Existing
• Develop a plan to introduce a four-component family literacy model to communities on the Sunshine Coast, one that addresses the literacy skills of parents.	First year – Then seek funding opportunities	Existing – new resources required for funding of program
• Liaise with the Community Access to Literacy and Learning (CALL) program at Capilano University to ensure collaboration and complementarity of services.	Over 3 years	Existing
<i>Strategy 5: Support immigrants to achieve their educational, employment, and social goals.</i>		
• Collaborate with existing initiatives to increase options for more second language learning opportunities.	Over 3 years	Existing
• Collaborate with existing initiatives to identify immigrants' needs and to develop programs and services to meet those needs.	Over 3 years	Existing – new resources required to develop programming
• Explore opportunities to assist immigrants in securing employment.	Over 3 years	Existing
<i>Strategy 6: Support youth and young adults to achieve their educational, employment, and social goals.</i>		
• Create a Youth Planning Table that takes a cross-sectoral integrated approach to working with out-of-school youth and youth-at-risk.	Second year	Existing
• Develop specific outreach strategies for youth with low literacy and innovative programming options that speak to youth.	Over 3 years	Existing
• Explore the possibility of a mentorship program for youth and other opportunities for intergenerational interaction and learning, with literacy as a foundation.	Second year	Existing
<i>Strategy 7: Develop creative solutions to reduce isolation and improve access and participation to literacy and learning opportunities in Pender Harbour and Egmont</i>		

• Collaborate with the newly formed Pender Harbour Literacy Committee to work on this strategy.	Over 2 years	Existing
• Collaborate with existing programs, for example the literacy and ESL programs at Capilano University among others, to extend services to the area.	Over 3 years	Existing
• Explore and develop outreach and access strategies for those most in need and least able to participate.	Over 2 years	Existing
<i>Strategy 8: Sponsor two events in 2010/2011 to explore/promote opportunities for local secondary schools and partner post-secondary institutions to dialogue (including services for ABE/upgrading, special needs, ESL and Aboriginal students). Topics will include: numeracy skills, oral communication skills, writing process and standards, reading levels, knowledge of literature, etc.</i>		
• Plan and host an initial event in fall 2010 between representatives of SD 46 and Capilano University.	Second year	Existing
• Plan and host a follow-up event in spring 2011.	Second year	Existing
<i>Strategy 9: Dialogue, collaborate, plan and coordinate – as a cadre of community services concerned with literacy – to create a continuum of programs and services to develop inclusive and formal learning opportunities – including literacy and numeracy</i>		
• Follow-up the spring 2010 meeting of concerned organizations with a written report identifying the issues and gaps in services and programs.	Second year	Existing
• Work with partner organizations to develop creative ways to fill the gaps.	Over 2 years	Existing

Appendix A: The Planning Process

The planning process was guided by a Task Force comprised of a range of partner agencies:

- Jean Bennett, Dean, Capilano University, Sunshine Coast
- Bev Craig, District Literacy Teacher, School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)
- Heather Gordon, Project Manager, Lighthouse Learning Network
- Tom Hierck, Assistant Superintendent, School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)
- Iris Loewen, Chief Librarian, Sechelt Public Library
- Kerry Mahlman, Principal of District Aboriginal Programs & Services, Partnerships, School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)
- Sue Perry, Adult Education Coordinator, Sechelt Indian Band
- Jan Smalley, Coordinator, Pender Harbour Community School

In January 2008 the Task Force hired Sandy Middleton, Regional Literacy Coordinator, Capilano University to facilitate the overall planning and writing of the report. The Task Force also decided it was important to focus additional energy in two particular areas.

The first area of focus was geographic – the isolated communities of Pender Harbour and Egmont at the northern end of the peninsula. In February 2008, Kim Foster, a resident of Egmont, was hired to undertake research in Pender Harbour and Egmont.

The second area of focus was aboriginal communities. Aboriginal communities include members of the shíshálh or Sechelt First Nation as well as a variety of aboriginal individuals and groups – Squamish Nation, Metis, and Inuit, among others – who make their home on the Sunshine Coast. In May 2008 Noelle Hanuse was hired to undertake research among aboriginal communities.

The information collected by Kim and Noelle has been incorporated into the current report.

Six meetings of the Task Force were held from fall 2007 to fall 2008. Community meetings – visioning processes – were held in Sechelt on May 29 and in Gibsons on June 4. A community meeting was held in Pender Harbour on September 29 and a third visioning meeting for aboriginal community members was held in Sechelt on September 30. Sixty-eight people participated in the community meetings and/or were interviewed singly or in groups from February to November 2008. Some of the interviewees were attached to agencies or institutions; others were community members, students, and clients of services such as the food bank. Below is a list of agencies that participated in the process:

- Capilano University
- Cedar Grove Elementary School, School District No. 46
- Chatelech Sechelt Community School
- Coast Reporter
- Community Resource Centre, Sechelt

- Egmont Community Club
- Egmont Heritage Centre
- Employment Action Centre
- Gibsons Community School
- Gibsons Public Library
- Gibsons Rotary Club
- Halfmoon Bay Community School
- Lighthouse Learning Network
- M. Magas & Associates, Sunshine Coast Employment Centre
- Pender Harbour Community School
- Roberts Creek Community School
- School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)
- Sechelt Chamber of Commerce
- Sechelt Indian Band
- Sechelt Public Library
- Sechelt Seniors Activity Centre
- Service Canada
- Sunshine Coast Community Services
- Vancouver Coastal Health

In addition, community members were interviewed individually or in groups, including students at Capilano University, clients at a range of community organizations and services such as the Food Bank, and a variety of aboriginal people.

An interview guide was used as follows:

For staff in community organizations and institutions

1. What kind of services related to learning does your organization provide?
Who do they serve?
2. What works well and why?
3. What gets in the way of people taking advantages of these services?
4. What learning services and resources are missing in the community and what additional learning programs should be developed?
5. What could local agencies do differently so more people can access and use these services?

For current or potential participants in courses, programs and services:

For current participants:

1. Why did you come to this program? What do you like about it? How could it be improved? What other courses, resources, or information do you need or would you be interested in?

For potential participants:

2. Have you ever participated in a learning program as an adult? If yes, please tell me about it. If no, have you ever wanted to: What stopped you?

For all:

3. Are there any courses or learning opportunities that you would like to take? Please tell me more about them.
4. What would make it easier for you to participate in educational programs?
5. What could local agencies do differently so more people can participate in educational programs?

Appendix B: Secondary Resources

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Appendix C: School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) District Literacy Plan 2009 Update

Overview

At the direction of the Ministry of Education through the British Columbia School Act (81.1) and ReadNowBC, school districts have taken on the challenge of helping communities assess and build local literacy among students and the larger population.

It is expected that school districts will develop working relationships within the community concerning literacy and the potential for positive change is great.

Representatives of School District No. 46 have and will continue to work with community literacy organizations and other stakeholders through the Sunshine Coast Literacy Council to reflect on the community's literacy levels, set goals and help to offer people a full and seamless array of services.

The Province of British Columbia is supporting school districts as they work in partnership with their communities to create literacy plans.

What is a District Literacy Plan?

A *District Literacy Plan* is, in fact, a *Community Literacy Plan*. It is a statement of commitment by a school district to work with community partners to improve literacy locally – all part of ongoing community development. It outlines the state of planning and implementing literacy programs in the community – and how the school district connects with or partners with that. As *Literacy Plans* are submitted, the annual *District Literacy Plan* becomes a reflection on the work of the previous year and comments on work anticipated in the coming year.

Our District Literacy Plan for 2009

The first *Community Literacy Plan* and *District Literacy Plan* of this format were submitted to the Ministry as separate documents but together July 15, 2008 and an updated *Community Literacy Plan* was submitted in February, 2009. This latest February edition has been sent to each Board of Education member by e-mail.

The next plan is due July 15, 2009. Direction from the Superintendent of Literacy & Lifelong Learning is that, if the *Community Literacy Plan* has just been completed in the 2008-2009 year, then that document will be submitted as the *District Literacy Plan* for 2009. On July 8 the School District 46 *District Literacy Plan* will be submitted as an appendix to the *Community Literacy Plan*. We want to align strongly with the community vision and strategies and connect our district work to those when and where we can. The *District Literacy Plan*, then, will be a statement of partnership, a
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confirmation of the stage of current literacy planning in the community, and a confirmation of the connections being made between school and program initiatives and community initiatives.

Statement of Commitment to Partnership for Literacy

Partnerships have long been a part of the history of innovation and strong community involvement of School District No. 46. The key to past success and the guarantee of positive experiences in the future is an openness to opportunity based on the goals and characteristics of the partners involved. Literacy planning and implementation is a community-wide process that includes the school district as one of many partners. School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) is committed to working with community partners concerning literacy.

Stage of Literacy Planning in the Community

The District and Community together are in stage two - at different stages of planning depending on the strategy or the specific community concerned. In general, collaboration between district schools or programs and community initiatives is at the implementation stage. We are ready to take the actions.

Reflecting on Where We Are Now

In process of development for the September 2009 start up of the Sunshine Coast Literacy Council are:

- An Implementation Plan
- A Communication Plan
- A Web Site Plan
- A Timeline/Annual Calendar Decisions and Events
- A process to select a confirmed Chair of the Sunshine Coast Literacy Council

Making Connections:

A number of the action plan strategies in the Community Literacy Plan connect to or are supported by the situation or literacy activities within school communities or within district program(s) / services.

Looking Forward

The plan for 2009/2010 is for the district to continue to collaborate with and as part of the community regarding the Vision and the Strategies (including the refining of the strategic statements and indicators of success) and the implementation of relevant actions.

The personnel who will maintain a formal relationship with the Sunshine Coast Literacy Council will be the:

- Superintendent of Schools
- Assistant Superintendent of Schools
- District Literacy Resource Teacher
- District Numeracy Resource Teacher
- Principal of District Aboriginal Programs and Services

Vision Statement

All residents of the Sunshine Coast have access to a diverse continuum of opportunities to develop literacy across the lifespan, to achieve their educational and work aspirations, and to realize their potential.

Action Plan

Strategy 1: Merge the Sunshine Coast Literacy Advisory Council and the Literacy Now Task Force to create a new Sunshine Coast Literacy Council that directs the implementation of the Community Literacy Plan over the next three years.

Strategy 2: Build active partnerships among community organizations, First Nations, educational institutions, libraries, government agencies and the private sector to increase literacy programs, services, and opportunities on the Sunshine Coast.

Strategy 3: Promote community awareness of literacy on the Sunshine Coast and, in particular, of the priorities and actions identified in the Community Literacy Plan and the relationship of literacy to other social issues.

Strategy 4: Support Aboriginal people to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

Strategy 5: Support adults with low literacy skills to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

Strategy 6: Support immigrants to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

Strategy 7: Support youth and young adults to achieve their educational employment and social goals.

Strategy 8: Develop creative solutions to reduce isolation and improve access and participation to literacy and learning opportunities in Pender Harbour and Egmont.

Appendix D: School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) 2010 District Literacy Plan Update

Introduction

Representatives of School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) work in partnership with community literacy organizations and other stakeholders to reflect on the community's literacy levels, set goals in a *literacy plan*, and offer people a full and seamless array of services.

On the Sunshine Coast, the District Literacy Plan and the Community Literacy Plan are the same document. By creating a joint plan, the school district is making a **statement of commitment** to work with community partners to improve literacy at the local level – all part of ongoing community development. The Sunshine Coast Literacy Council directs the implementation of the literacy plan and three school district personnel work directly with the Council: Bob Benmore, District Numeracy Teacher; Bev Craig, District Literacy Teacher; and Kerry Mahlman, Principal, District Aboriginal Programs and Services and District Partnerships.

The plan describes the planning and implementation of literacy initiatives in the community – and how the school district connects with and partners in that process. Our school district wants to align strongly with community goals and strategies and connect to those when and where we can. Information has been gathered from principals and other sources in order to comment on work done within the school district related to the Literacy Plan and to look ahead to the work for 2010/2011.

As Literacy Plans are submitted over the years, they become a reflection on the work of the previous year and the work anticipated in the coming year. The next plan will be submitted to the Ministry of Education by July 15, 2010.

The following update will be embedded in the 2010 District Literacy Plan.

Reflections on the Year Past

Priorities and Objectives From 2009

Our 2009 District Literacy Plan listed eight strategies. Every strategy has been addressed in some way. Following is a description of the activities undertaken for each strategy.

Strategy 1: Merge the Sunshine Coast Literacy Advisory Council and the Literacy Now Task Force to create a new Sunshine Coast Literacy Council that directs the implementation of the Community Literacy Plan over the next three years.

The goals in Strategy 1 have been achieved. A newly formed Sunshine Coast Literacy Council has directed the first year of implementation in 2009-10. The Council has met every month since September and has representation from a variety of agencies including School District No. 46, Capilano University, Sunshine Coast Community Services, Sunshine Coast Employment Centre, Sechelt Public Library, Gibsons Public Library, and Pender Harbour Community School. In addition, two community members, one representative of the aboriginal population on the Coast and one of the immigrant population have contributed to the Council. Sandy Middleton of Capilano University is the Literacy Outreach Coordinator.

The Council appointed a Chair and developed Terms of Reference that guide its activities (the Terms of Reference can be read at www.sunshinecoastliteracy.org). The Chair is Iris Loewen, retired Chief Librarian of Sechelt Public Library. Helen Prosser, the current Chief Librarian, will step into the role of Chair in September 2010.

Strategy 2: Build active partnerships among community organizations, First Nations, educational institutions, libraries, government agencies and the private sector to increase literacy programs, services and opportunities on the Sunshine Coast.

The Literacy Council has collaborated with several organizations to support existing literacy work or to facilitate new initiatives. This collaboration has been instrumental in strengthening literacy delivery in our community, in building partnerships with key organizations such as Community Services and the Sechelt Indian Band, and in creating new partnerships with non-profit organizations such as Gibsons Family Network, Habitat for Humanity, and the Community Resource Centre.

In 2009-10 the Literacy Council collaborated with:

- **Sunshine Coast Community Services Society:** The Council partnered with Community Services to support their work on several fronts including literacy supports for early years initiatives: the development of literacy kits by the Child Care Resource and Referral Program; Mother Goose training for family resource workers; and teaching aids for the pre-natal program Bellies and Babies. In addition, the Council supported a program that assists women as they navigate custody of and access to their children in the aftermath of abuse. The support/information group offers women a safe way to build their confidence and communication skills so that

they can advocate for themselves within the justice and family court systems. The women obtain important information, learn about their options, and connect to other women in similar circumstances. They also receive assistance in interpreting and filling out forms.

- **Celebrating Authors, Books and Children (CABC):** The Council partnered with the CABC program (an initiative of the Festival of the Written Arts, School District No. 46, Sechelt Public Library and the Sunshine Coast Arts Council) to celebrate Family Literacy Week in January 2010. With support from the Literacy Council the CABC program brought writers Nicola Campbell and Ivan Coyote to schools on the Coast.
- **Community Resource Centre:** The Council partnered with the Community Resource Centre on a project focusing on document use. The Resource Centre has created an instructional manual and on-line toolkit to simplify the process of understanding and completing key government forms such as applications for employment insurance, income assistance, disability benefits and others.
- **Sechelt Public Library:** The Council partnered with the Sechelt Public Library to support an outreach program by the Children's Librarian. She has offered story time and playtime to groups of pre-schoolers at the Sechelt Indian Band and in Pender Harbour – two communities traditionally underserved by the library and identified as priorities in the Literacy Plan.
- **Sechelt Indian Band (SIB):** The Council partnered with SIB to create a film documentary that takes a bilingual approach to storytelling and that contributes to the revitalization of the She shashishalhem language. The film (not yet completed) will document the translation of a traditional story by Elders and illustration of the story by Sechelt youth.
- **Gibsons Family Network (GFN):** GFN represents families on the Sunshine Coast who have a family member with a developmental disability. The Council partnered with GFN to offer a health literacy course to 10 young people ranging in age from 19 to early 30's. The young people learned how to make healthy choices by cooking and eating healthy food. They also learned how to read food labels and became aware of all the ingredients in packaged foods.
- **Habitat for Humanity:** The Council partnered with Habitat for Humanity to support computer training for volunteers at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore. The training is helping volunteers increase their computer skills and contribute to the success of the ReStore. The Council has also explored with Habitat for Humanity ways to assist families with financial literacy related to owning a home.

In 2010 Family Literacy Week partners included:

- Capilano University
- CABC
- Chatelech-Sechelt Community School
- Childcare Resource and Referral Program
- Coast Reporter
- Gibsons Public Library
- Halfmoon Bay Community School
- Pender Harbour Community School
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- School District No. 46

- Sechelt Fire Department
- Sechelt Public Library
- Sunshine Coast Arts Council
- Sunshine Coast Community Services

Strategy 3: Promote community awareness of literacy on the Sunshine Coast and, in particular, of the priorities and actions identified in the Community Literacy Plan and the relationship of literacy to other social issues.

Several activities have raised public awareness of literacy, the Literacy Council, and th3 community partners:

- **The development of a literacy web site by the Literacy Council:** www.sunshinecoastliteracy.org offers information about the Literacy Council, the Literacy Plan, activities, projects, etc.
- **The development of a web site for aboriginal people created by a partnership among School District No. 46, the Sechelt Indian Band, and Capilano University:** www.allnationscoast.net offers information about learning opportunities for Aboriginal people living on the Sunshine Coast.
- **Family Literacy Week, January 2010:** The Literacy Council and partners sponsored and hosted a series of events during Family Literacy Week to promote awareness of family literacy and community literacy. Events included a pancake breakfast followed by story time at the RCMP detachment and the Sechelt Fire Hall; a birthday party for all babies born in 2009 at Sechelt Public Library; a storytelling workshop for families; and author visits to schools as part of the CABC.
- **Coast Reporter Insert:** The Literacy Council published a four-page insert entitled “Literacy in Action” in the *Coast Reporter* May 21, 2010. The insert used the theme of “The New Literacies” to highlight Literacy Council activities, projects and partnerships in 2009-10.
- **June 1 Literacy Forum:** The Literacy Council hosted a community literacy forum on June 1 in Roberts Creek. The forum was well attended by a cross-section of the community. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator presented the Literacy Plan, the Assistant Superintendent of School District No. 46 spoke about the role of the district in the literacy planning and implementation process; and a panel representing partner agencies described their literacy work and its impact on people’s lives.
- **Canadian Multiculturalism Day:** The Literacy Council hosted a “Day of Welcoming” on Canadian Multiculturalism Day, June 27, to celebrate diversity on the Sunshine Coast, congratulate new Canadians, and promote the 2009 Community Accord.
- **Preparation for newspaper ad on September 8, 2010:** A full-page newspaper ad is being prepared for publication on September 8 to celebrate International Literacy Day and to promote the Literacy Council’s fall activities.

Strategy 4: Support aboriginal people to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

The Literacy Council has renewed its commitment to working with aboriginal individuals, organizations, and communities. See “Adjustment to the 2009 Plan” page 3.

School District No. 46 has collaborated with aboriginal communities in several ways:

- **The Aboriginal Sharing Circle**, a monthly gathering of aboriginal people on the Sunshine Coast. Aboriginal people come together to share food and cultures. The Sharing Circle includes literacy activities – participants read to each other, including material they may find difficult. Other activities include exploring upgrading and career exploration options, and helping each other with information and support on a variety of topics.
- **Reading with the Bear**, a display and reading of aboriginal children’s books during Family Literacy Week and, this past winter, at Pender Harbour Community School.
- **On Mother’s Lap**, in collaboration with Gibsons Community School, evenings for parents to read aboriginal children’s books with their children.
- www.allnationscoast.net, a web site about learning opportunities for aboriginal people on the Sunshine Coast, created through a partnership of School District No. 46, Sechelt Indian Band, and Capilano University.

Strategy 5: Support adults with low literacy skills to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

Strategy 6: Support youth and young adults to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

In 2009-10 the Literacy Council focused on building the capacity of our community to assist adults and youth who have limited reading skills. The Council recognized a need to strengthen knowledge and skills in teaching reading at the community level. Volunteers at Pender Harbour Community School and in the Community Access to Literacy and Learning (CALL) program at Capilano University work with adults and youth to improve reading skills. These volunteers require and appreciate continuous professional development in order to increase their expertise and help them to teach reading as effectively as possible.

To this end, the Literacy Council sponsored a two-day training workshop on an approach to teaching reading called “That Reading Thing.” (www.thatreadingthing.com) A variety of people attended the training including the Literacy Outreach Coordinator, the Coordinator of the CALL program at Capilano University, three CALL tutors, three volunteers from Pender Harbour/Egmont, a representative of Gibsons Family Network, and the First Nations Liaison at Capilano University.

The training was excellent and offered a useful tool in working with adults and youth who may have difficulty decoding. A review workshop will be offered in September 2010 and ongoing support provided by the trainer and the Literacy Outreach Coordinator.

The training offered by the Literacy Council echoes reflections by a school principal about students who lag with reading development, most commonly those who struggle

with comprehension and making meaning from text. The principal notes that these students need specific intervention in very small groups or one-to-one because their needs are individual. He advocates for a reading specialist to work intensively with these students to boost their reading skills and suggests that without targeted and effective instruction these students struggle with reading all through school. His comments underscore that reading difficulties require specific interventions for children, youth and adults and that helping people in all age groups become fluent readers is a critical literacy goal.

In 2009-10 we also began to look more closely at the issue of special needs among adults and youth with low literacy skills. We hosted a meeting of community agencies in April 2010 to identify the range of special needs that exist in tandem with low literacy among adults and youth on the Sunshine Coast such as addictions, mental health, experiences of trauma and abuse and other issues. The meeting also focused on the particular needs of adults and youth with developmental disabilities. The information gathered is being used to inform the Literacy Plan.

Finally, the Literacy Council supported projects – described under Strategy 2 – that contributed to the literacy development of children, youth, and adults through partnerships with CABC, Sechelt Public Library, Gibsons Family Network, the Community Resource Centre, Community Services, Habitat for Humanity, and the Sechelt Indian Band.

Strategy 7: Support immigrants to achieve their educational, employment and social goals.

The Literacy Council allocated resources towards continuing the work begun in 2009 by Capilano University and Chatelech-Sechelt Community School with funding from the Welcoming Communities initiative of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. That work was highly successful in raising awareness of the immigrant population on the Sunshine Coast, involving the immigrant population in planning and participating in events and celebrations, creating a community accord that was signed by several organizations and community leaders, and building community partnerships. This work will now continue under the umbrella of the Literacy Council and it will also focus on referring immigrant adults and families to services in the community that can assist them with settlement and language needs. A first event – a “Day of Welcoming” – took place June 27, 2010 in celebration of Canadian Multiculturalism Day.

Strategy 8: Develop creative solutions to reduce isolation and improve access and participation to literacy and learning opportunities in Pender Harbour and Egmont.

The Literacy Council has allocated resources to the Pender Harbour area to support literacy in that community. The Pender Harbour Community School, Pender Harbour Reading Room, and the Egmont Community Club have created a literacy steering committee and are working with other community partners to identify gaps, priorities, and solutions to advance literacy in their community.

This community development approach gives organizations in Pender Harbour/Egmont the opportunity to make their own decisions about how best to meet literacy needs in that area. The Pender Harbour/Egmont literacy steering committee works in consultation with the Literacy Outreach Coordinator and the Literacy Council.

Major impacts and outcomes

Major outcomes of the literacy work in 2009-10 are:

- **Increased awareness of and interest in the mandate and activities of the Literacy Council.** The Literacy Council has become better known and there is more interest among community members in being involved in some way. This growing interest was clearly evident at the literacy forum hosted by the Council in Roberts Creek in June 1. Indeed, participants at the forum suggested that the Literacy Council look for additional ways to share information and keep literacy in the public eye.
- **New understandings about literacy.** The public awareness activities of the Literacy Council have framed literacy in ways that resonate with people. The framework of “The New Literacies” makes literacy relevant to everyone in the community. This broader notion of literacy speaks to the tools we need to navigate our way through all areas of life with confidence and includes numeracy; using computers and other technologies fluently; communicating effectively with family, friends, and co-workers; understanding and using forms and other documents; analyzing and solving problems; making informed decisions; finding information; and thinking critically. The new literacies emphasize that we no longer think of literacy as a single discrete skill but as a range of *literacies* we need throughout our lives in different contexts.
- **New partnerships, strengthened partnerships.** Partnerships are at the heart of literacy work and, as described above, 2009-10 saw the development of new partnerships with a range of organizations and the strengthening of existing partnerships with key organizations.
- **Changes in people’s lives.** The projects supported by the Literacy Council in 2009-10 have touched people directly and had an impact on their lives, for example: kids in Pender Harbour and the Sechelt Indian Band have opened up to the world of books and are now encouraging their parents to visit the library; a group of young people in Gibsons have learned about nutrition and how to make healthy choices; a group of women who have experienced abuse have learned how to navigate the justice and family court systems and advocate for themselves in relation to issues of custody and access; a group of volunteers in the non-profit sector now have the computer skills they need to help their agency flourish. The impacts of literacy work often reach beyond what can be told but these and other stories of change are major outcomes of the work of literacy partners in 2009-10.

Factors contributing to success

A variety of factors contributed to success in 2009-10:

- The Literacy Council functioned well as a collaborative decision-making body.
- The Literacy Outreach Coordinator was there as a resource for the Literacy Council and the community. In addition, the Literacy Outreach Coordinator position was enhanced by Capilano University which continued to fund a Regional Literacy Coordinator position in 2009-10 at the Sunshine Coast campus after the loss of provincial funding for that position in the summer of 2009.
- New partnerships were developed and existing partnerships were strengthened.
- Meaningful literacy work took place that impacted people's lives.

Changes in our community

Cuts to social services including literacy signal significant change. Many literacy-related services and programs were cut in 2009-10 including literacy grants to libraries, Regional Literacy Coordination, legal aid funding, and more. This debilitated funding environment has considerable ripple effects. It raises the issue of sustainability and how we as a community will ensure that people's literacy needs continue to be met as services and programs are lost.

Another significant change on the Sunshine Coast is a renewed consciousness that we are losing our youth. A decided demographic shift is taking place as youth leave the Coast in ever greater numbers. The loss of youth affects the workforce and it means fewer children to balance an ageing population.

Learnings

The work in 2009-10 demonstrated the need for continuous outreach and the importance of staying open to new possibilities. Although a comprehensive research process was undertaken in 2008-09 to describe literacy needs on the Sunshine Coast, in 2009-10 new needs were discovered, new partnerships were developed, and new approaches to literacy development were uncovered. Feedback from principals and other school district sources suggests new avenues to explore in 2010-11 such as parent education and digital literacy for adults and children.

The work in 2009-10 also demonstrated the need for a variety of communication strategies to keep literacy in the public eye. At the same time it is critical to bring people together face-to-face because of the energy, connections, and sharing of information that happens when people are in the same room.

Finally, there is a need to develop more effective ways to channel and utilize the energy, enthusiasm, expertise, and commitment of community members who want to contribute to literacy on the Sunshine Coast.

Reflecting on the Year Ahead

Adjustments to the 2009 Plan

In 2010-11 we will build on the previous year's achievements and continue to work on the following strategies:

1. Build active partnerships among community organizations, First Nations, educational institutions, libraries, government agencies and the private sector to increase literacy programs, services, and opportunities on the Sunshine Coast. *Continue to look for new partners particularly in the business sector.*
2. Promote community awareness of literacy on the Sunshine Coast and, in particular, of the priorities and actions identified in the Community Literacy Plan and the relationship of literacy to other social issues. *Continue our public awareness activities including new initiatives, for example, International Literacy Day ad, local cable television, mall displays.*
3. Support Aboriginal people to achieve their educational, employment and social goals. *Make a renewed commitment to engage and bridge with Aboriginal people more in both Literacy Council activities and in the day-to-day activities in our schools and community learning programs (including Capilano University). We will work on the concept of an "elder in residence" in a number of locations like libraries, schools, and adult/post-secondary learning programs.*
4. Support adults with low literacy skills to achieve their educational, employment and social goals. *Continue to build expertise and experience in teaching reading and writing to adults with low literacy skills. Look for new opportunities to embed literacy development in other contexts.*
5. Support youth and young adults to achieve their educational, employment and social goals. *Continue to build expertise and experience in teaching reading and writing to youth and young adults with low literacy skills. Look for new opportunities to embed literacy development in other contexts.*
6. Support immigrants to achieve their educational, employment and social goals. *Continue to work with the immigrant community to assist immigrants to get involved in the community and feel a sense of belonging, to connect to community services and programs to meet their settlement and language needs, and to celebrate our diversity on the Sunshine Coast.*
7. Develop creative solutions to reduce isolation and improve access to and participation in literacy and learning opportunities in Pender Harbour and Egmont. *Continue to work with the Pender Harbour/Egmont literacy steering committee.*

The 2010-11 Literacy Plan also contains two new strategies reflecting priorities identified this past year:

8. Sponsor two events in 2010/2011 to explore/promote opportunities for local secondary schools and partner post-secondary institutions to dialogue (including services for ABE/upgrading, special needs, ESL and Aboriginal students). Topics

will include: numeracy skills, oral communication skills, writing process and standards, reading levels, knowledge of literature, etc.

9. Dialogue, collaborate, plan and coordinate – as a cadre of community services concerned with literacy – to create a continuum of programs and services to develop inclusive and formal learning opportunities – including literacy and numeracy – for youth and adults with special needs and developmental disabilities.

Measuring progress

The Literacy Plan includes a detailed action plan against which progress is measured. The Literacy Council meets regularly to discuss and reflect on progress and make adjustments to the plan as required.

In addition, the Literacy Council and partner agencies recognize the power of stories in demonstrating change. Stories can open hearts and minds, generate new perspectives and ideas, and unite people towards a common purpose. In 2010-11 the Literacy Council will explore different ways to bring stories of literacy and stories of change to the community using both face-to-face and digital forums.