

# District Literacy Plan

## Community Literacy Plans



**July 15, 2011**

**School District No. 57 (Prince George)**



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## Acknowledgments

The District Literacy Plan is a statement of commitment by a school district to work with community partners to improve literacy for young children, school-aged children, adults and Aboriginal people. District Literacy Plans provide a new way for school districts to support all members of a community, as individuals and organizations work together to promote literacy. Literacy planning is a community-wide process that includes the school district as one of many partners. The most important aspect of building the plan is developing working relationships within the community.

This plan includes a summary of literacy initiatives both within the general communities. We would like to acknowledge all of the efforts of our community partners to promote literacy in our communities and to thank them for their efforts in this area. We hope that we can continue to build strong supportive structures to improve literacy.

Lisa Carson  
District Principal, Curriculum and Instruction  
School District No. 57 (Prince George)

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## Table of Contents

### Contents

Introduction.....	4
District Context.....	4
Overview.....	4
Mackenzie Community Literacy Plan .....	5
McBride Community Literacy Plan.....	5
Prince George Community Literacy Plan .....	6
Valemount Community Literacy Plan .....	10
Future Planning – District Literacy Plan .....	15
Summary .....	15

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## **Introduction**

This District Literacy Plan (School District No.57) is grounded in the belief that building strong relationships between the community and the school district is a crucial component for life-long learning. The purpose of this document is to continue to develop and sustain working relationships within our community. The intent of this document is to be inclusive from early learning through to adult learning. This District Literacy Plan has been collaboratively developed with direct input from literacy outreach coordinators in McBride, Prince George and Valemount.

## **District Context**

School District No. 57 (Prince George) is located in the centre of the province, extending north to Mackenzie, south to Hixon, and east to McBride and Valemount. The district encompasses 52,000 square kilometers and is the second largest school district in the province in geographical size. It has a student population of approximately 13,500 students enrolled in 31 elementary schools, 8 secondary schools, and a Centre for Learning Alternatives which includes Continuing, Distance, International and Alternate Programs. The district administers a budget of \$126,000,000 and employs 750 (f.t.e.) teachers and 485 (f.t.e.) support staff.

## **Overview**

Since School District No. 57 includes four distinct community areas, this District Literacy Plan includes a summary of literacy planning in all four communities. Each community's literacy planning is at a different stage of development. Community literacy planning and initiatives in McBride, Prince George and Valemount are reflected in the tables below. Mackenzie continues to be at the awareness stage.

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## **Mackenzie Community Literacy Plan**

### **Planning Stage:**

At this time, due to significant changes in the community, Mackenzie has not moved towards establishing a community literacy plan.

**Literacy Committee:** N/A

## **McBride Community Literacy Plan**

**Literacy Outreach Coordinator: Jennifer Quam**

### **Planning Stage:**

**Literacy Committee:** N/A

**Goal / Focus Area:** McBride Adult Literacy Program

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Who (responsibilities and partnerships)</b>	<b>Progress to Date &amp; Considerations for the Future</b>
<b>Book lending library</b>	This program and the Robson Valley Recreation Centre	-Library setup and being used. -Continue to supply books
<b>Women's Fair</b>	Robson Valley Support Society and year to year funders	Began planning in February of 2011 and hosted in April of 2011
<b>Seniors Community Calendar</b>	This program	Publish Seniors Activity Calendar in the local newspaper monthly.
<b>Christmas card writing</b>	This program	Will assist seniors with their Christmas card writing and letters
<b>GED Training</b>	This program	Will continue to provide tutoring and preparation classes for adults taking the GED exam
<b>Computer Assistance/ Resume building</b>	This program	Will continue to assist drop-in clients and referrals from the EAS program with Robson Valley Support Society.

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## **Prince George Community Literacy Plan Literacy Outreach Coordinator: Helen Domshy**

**Planning Stage:** 3<sup>rd</sup> year implementation.

### **Literacy Committee:**

Marc Sanders (PG Public Library), Sharel Warrington (Trustee, School District No. 57), Carolyn Tiefensee (Prince George Native Friendship Centre), Lisa Carson (School District 57), Jackie Stokes (College of New Caledonia), Rod Mulligan (Community member), Cathy Wiegand (Carney Hill Neighborhood Centre), Gohar Ashoughian, UNBC Chief Librarian, August Horning, (Director, Learning Difficulties Centre.)

**Goal / Focus Area:** Adult Literacy

### **Family Literacy Day**

- Re-useable bag of literacy related materials for children (magnetic numbers, letters, crayons etc), which parents filled with books for all family members.
- Games to play on-site, including property of the gymnasium. Table top games, snacks, free books and a CD of baby songs and nursery rhymes.
- Learning Circle, PG Native Friendship Centre set up a display about their one-on-one tutoring program.

### **Organized by the PG Literacy Outreach Coordinator.**

- South Fort George Family Resource Centre (donated their gymnasium space)
- Prince George Citizen (reduced advertising cost)
- PG Free Press ( reduced advertising cost)
- Great White Toys Comics and Games, (reduction in games costs)
- Save on Foods (Reduction on all snacks and drinks costs)
- Books and Co. (Reduction on CD costs)
- Northern Health, Population Health Team (display, handouts and personal discussions)
- Vantage Vision and Reading (display and one-on-one discussion about vision. Vantage Vision and Reading provides information, initial diagnosis of commonly missed eye problems and training for parental-based corrective exercises)
- P Kelly Consulting (van and men to move and carry materials)
- Community Volunteers, some of which were tutors we trained this year.
- PG Native Friendship Centre (display, on-to-one consults, filled gift bags for children, assisted in planning the event)
- Zellers, Canada (donated books)

### **Progress to Date and Considerations for the Future**

I would recommend that this event be continued and expanded to a two-day event due to its initial success. This was the first year for this initiative, so word of mouth and personal experience will make this event bigger every year. Some short, ongoing presentations could be incorporated, such as literacy tips for parents across the three early-learning stages. The high costs associated with this event need to be reviewed and a more cost effective delivery planned.

## **Train the Tutor 3 and 4**

Recruitment for both of these Train the Tutor events was expanded to the general public. The response from the community was significant and reflected the willingness of the people of Prince George to come to the assistance of others in a positive and meaningful way.

### **Organized by the P.G Literacy Outreach Coordinator**

Students attending this training included people from Aim Hi, Prince George Urban Justice Society, Corrections Canada, P Kelly Consulting, College of New Caledonia, PG Native Friendship Centre, as well as many individual community members. Participants also came from Fort Saint James and Bear Lake.

### **Progress to Date and Considerations for the Future**

There were 20 tutors trained in the first session in October 2010, and 14 in the following session in January 2011. It is felt that training 34 adult literacy trainers in Prince George this year, reflects the acknowledgement by the community of the need for increasing literacy levels for some members of our Prince George community. I feel that this program has been successful. It has been noted that there is an increasing need for numeracy, nutrition, and health literacy in our community. There has also been inquires around the coordination of connecting tutors with learners. At present, learners are being referred to the PG Native Friendship Centre, and several of the tutors trained by this initiative, volunteer their services at this Centre.

## **Special Speakers' Day**

Special Speakers' Day is held on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of each Train the Tutor session. The purpose behind inviting this special group of agencies was to give the new tutors a glimpse of what their learners may bring to tutoring sessions. Adult learners are not monochromatic, but rather come with all the problems and barriers to learning that can be imagined. Having an introductory look at a few areas will allow the tutor to see "outside the box" and perhaps give them insight and understanding into different issues.

The intent was not to be able to "diagnose and treat", but rather to be able to adjust the lesson plan to fit the student more effectively, and also to have some additional contact resources. These days have been open to the general public as well, and have been well received.

### **Organized by the PG Literacy Outreach Coordinator.**

Speakers brought their professional perspectives on barriers to learning, from:

Personal Support Centre	Tutor skills for avoiding/handling certain learner related problems
Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Education and Training Association (PGNAETA)	Introduction to the TOWES Workplace Essential skills Testing and Training tool.
Learning Circle Literacy Program. Prince George Native Friendship Centre (PGNFC)	Cultural barriers to learning. Cultural sensitivity
Vantage Vision and Reading	Visual barriers to learning
BC Schizophrenia Society	Mental Health barriers to learning
Centre for Learning Disabilities	Introduction to multisensory learning
College of New Caledonia	Disabilities as a barrier to learning
Baldy Hughes Treatment Centre	Addictions as a barrier to learning

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### **Progress to Date and Considerations for the Future**

Although these sessions were originally offered as an optional fourth day, they proved to be well attended, provided a forum for lots of audience/presenter questions and dialogue. The opportunity for networking and the chance for the face-to-face types of interactions with both the presenters and each other was such an amazing and affirming experience for the organizer. These two days reflected the wishes of the participants and guests to have the presenters return and do a longer workshop as versus an introductory presentation.

These days were an unqualified success and the concept will be used again. Follow-up workshops with these speakers will be put on as participants request them. Attendance at these events, including tutors and community guests averaged 29-30 per session.

### **Plain and Clear Language and Writing Workshops (2)**

Clear language helps improve service through clearer forms, documents and letters. Time and money are saved when people can communicate openly and honestly. The Plain and Clear initiative has been identified as integral to health literacy strategies.

#### **Organized by the PG Literacy Outreach Coordinator.**

Partner: Prince George Public Library

Attendees: Prince George Native Friendship Centre, B.C. Corrections, Central Interior Logging Association, North Central Local Government Association, Prince George Urban Aboriginal Justice Society, R.C.M.P., Canadian Hearing Care, Child Development Centre, City of Prince George, Prince George YMCA.

### **Progress to Date and Considerations for the Future**

These workshops were held December 2010, and February 2011. Both events had 16 participants. Clear language and literacy work hand-in-hand to provide equal opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds, including those with low literacy skills, to understand, participate, and be heard in all aspects of society. Having representatives from agencies, employers or community volunteers starts the movement for clarity in both verbal and written communications. I would recommend that this workshop be offered at least twice during 2011-2012.

### **Orton Gillingham Workshop**

This workshop was selected by participants from the 4 *Train the Tutor* sessions delivered in 2010-2011.

#### **Organized by the PG Literacy Outreach Coordinator**

Attendees: Prince George Native Friendship Centre, B.C. Corrections, Northern Family Health Society, Child Development Centre, our previous workshop participants as well as new community members.

### **Progress to Date and Considerations for the Future**

The workshop was held April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011, and had 28 registrants.

The initial introduction to this multisensory method of teaching persons with disabilities was at all of the Special Speakers Days. Although the request was identified by participants registered in all of our programs, the invitation was sent to members of the general public as well.

I saw many new faces and agencies with the outcome that many new networks were formed. This workshop was a huge success and I would recommend we put it on again. There were other

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choices given to our correspondents, and since their choices were rated, I can create several more opportunities which reflect the interests of our community.

## **Parents Tip the Scales for Success**

### **Organized by the PG Literacy Outreach Coordinator.**

Partners/supporters, space and recruitment: South Fort George Family Resource Centre, Child Development Centre, Project Parent North, Northern Family Health Society, Elizabeth Fry Society

### **Progress to Date and Considerations for the Future**

This was a pilot project which was run to determine content, recruitment methods, level of interest and costs for this type of workshop. The thrust of the project was to give parents tips for supporting their children with their reading. We had heard comments from educators and other literacy groups about the importance of early literacy skills—those developed before starting school and that a few at-home literacy tips for parents—would support early childhood literacy. We focused on the high-risk demographic as identified by the EDI. The three identified age groups were 0-3, 3-5, then Kindergarten to grade 3, each with specific tips and resources. We had 5 participants, who thought the workshop was beneficial and who made suggestions for improvement. We gave away books, CDs, DVDs, as well as a small gift certificate for Save on Foods. I recommend we put this workshop on in the fall, but feel that recruitment will continue to be an issue. There are many groups that can be invited to another session. Post-workshop evaluations indicate that on-site childcare is a necessity. The workshop content will be expanded and reviewed to better reflect the needs of the parents. Note: if the number of participants does not support the expense of this workshop, it may not be a feasible endeavor.

## **Developing community partnerships**

### **Organized by the PG Literacy Outreach Coordinator**

Coordinator designed working partnerships between *Raise a Reader*, *Success by Six*, and *Children First*. Raised awareness about literacy by speaking to community groups and via interviews with the *PG Citizen*. These roles promoted the expansion of the scope of literacy and its subtle, but long term, ramifications.

### **Progress to Date and Considerations for the Future**

Our previous work of meeting with service providers, combined with the more visible membership on community boards, makes recruitment for our existing programs more successful. At times, the workshops are filled with persons or agencies on my contact lists, with no media advertising required. I suggest stronger partnerships with Northern Health, Elizabeth Fry, Corrections Canada, Multicultural groups, and agencies that support persons with disabilities.

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## Valemount Community Literacy Plan Literacy Outreach Coordinator: Kim Thorn

### Reflections on the current year

#### *Community context:*

Valemount continues to struggle economically. Several more businesses have closed their doors this past year; the main business core now has seven closed businesses/storefronts and thirteen open ones.

The 2011 Census is expected to reflect a considerably lower number of residents in the area and lower levels of income than reported in 2006. A substantial number of families have moved (in whole or in part) for employment reasons.

Most local organizations have had their budgets cut over the past year. Regardless of such challenges, a continued desire to support literacy initiatives and programs exists for many.

A new non-profit society, Canoe Valley Community Association (CVCA), was incorporated March 2011, with a commitment “to foster an environment that supports and encourages growth in literacy skills and life-long learning”, embedded in its Constitutional Statement of Purposes. The Community Literacy Coordinator for the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL), Valemount is an active part of this society and will continue to work with the CVCA towards the goal of creating a Community Hub/Neighbourhood House in Valemount.

#### *Community Literacy Planning Committee (CLPC):*

Kelly Barmby	Public Health Nurse, Northern Health
Irene Blackman	Aboriginal community member
Wendy Cinnamon	Head Librarian, Valemount Public Library
Penny Courtoreille	Aboriginal community, Valemount Elementary PAC
John Grogan	Retired, Canoe Valley Community Association
Sarah Keatley	Teacher, Valemount Elementary School
Dan Kenkel	Principal, Valemount Secondary School
Louise MacLean	Retired
Andru McCracken	Manager, Valemount Community TV
John McGuire	Aboriginal Education Board
Pat Powell	Adult Literacy Coordinator, Valemount Learning Centre
Bobbie Roe	Councilor, Village of Valemount; Seniors Housing Soc.
Andrea Rusnak	Administrator, Valemount Health Clinic
Bob Smith	Mayor, Village of Valemount
Priscilla Soucy	Principal, Valemount Elementary
Kim Thorn	CLC, Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy; Success By 6
Kathy Udot	Tete Jaune Community Club, Aboriginal community
Jan VanderZwan	Valemount Secondary School PAC

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Members were invited for their commitment to and/or involvement in the community's literacy endeavours. Three meetings a year cover current plans and programs, progress toward the goal of promoting stronger literacy skills within the community and local response-based planning for the future.

This document is dependent on submissions from CLPC members and others and may or may not be a complete record of literacy initiatives in the community.

### ***Community development and literacy collaborations***

As reflected in last year's CLP, strong collaborative efforts continue throughout the community and are largely unchanged this year.

#### **Important collaborations that support literacy have taken place between these organizations, (listed in alphabetical order):**

- Canoe Valley Recreation Centre
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- Children First
- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy
- Learning Disabilities Association of B.C.
- Parent Advisory Councils of Valemount Elementary and Secondary Schools
- Robson Valley Support Society, which includes:
  - Infant Development Program (IDP): 0-3
    - Supported Child Development (SCD): 3-19
    - Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA) counseling
    - Stopping The Violence (STV) counseling
  - STV Outreach Services
    - Safe Shelter Program (SSP)
    - Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH)
    - Family Support services (FSS)
- School District #57
- Success By 6
- Valemount Arts and Culture Society
- Valemount Community Television
- Valemount Health Centre, which includes:
  - Public Health
- Northern Health
- Valemount Learning Centre, which includes:
  - Adult Literacy
- College of New Caledonia (Valemount Campus)
- ESL
- Valemount Lions Club
- Valemount Public Library, which includes:
  - North Central Library Federation
  - Public Library Services Branch/CAP
  - Valemount Secondary School
  - Village of Valemount

**Essential on-going collaborations (in alphabetical order) include:** Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy Children First

- Robson Valley Support Society and its affiliates
- Success by 6
- Valemount Public Library and its affiliates

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**Collaborations work well as a result of:**

- on-going belief in literacy and life-long learning
- remote location of the community

**Challenges to collaborations working well include:**

- time/schedule constraints due to “sole-charge” positions of service providers

***Goals and actions for the current year***

**Priorities, goals and objectives addressed this year include:**

- to strengthen and support emerging literacy skills (0 – 6)
- to strengthen and support the family literacy skills growth
- to encourage and support learning and literacy in elementary school-aged children
- to encourage and support learning and literacy in secondary school-aged children and youth
- to identify and support Aboriginal literacy needs in the community
- to provide support for children/youth in life skills, coping mechanisms and learning
- to provide school-based violence prevention awareness programs
- to support Seniors in their literacy needs and opportunities
- to support women’s personal growth and life-skills
- to provide awareness of domestic violence and its impact
- to support and adapt to literacy needs of health care system users
- to provide training opportunities towards growth in literacy skills
- to support community celebration of literacy and life-long learning
- to promote literacy through the sharing/recycling of books
- to raise awareness, promote understanding and offer support for individuals and families with learning difficulties
- to bring literacy to the forefront in everyday community living
- to support the literacy needs of Food Bank recipients
- pursuit of a Community Hub/Neighbourhood House

**Actions and collaborations include (listed first with the name of the organization submitting this information):**

- **Play & Learn** - CBAL, Valemount Lions Club, Success By 6, Children First  
- successful program
- **On The Gift Of Dyslexia** - CBAL, Valemount Lions Club, Valemount Public Library, Village of Valemount  
- successful program
- **Community Book Exchange**- CBAL, Canoe Valley Rec. Centre, Valemount Public Library  
- on-going success
- **Orton-Gillingham Tutor Training Workshop** - CBAL, Valemount Adult Literacy, Valemount Public Library  
- on-going success
- **Books for Babies**- CBAL, Valemount Public Library, Northern Health  
- on-going success

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- **Family Literacy Day** - CBAL, Valemount Public Library, Valemount Lions Club  
- moderate success
  - **Aboriginal resource purchases** (tipi, books, etc.) - CBAL, Success By 6, Children First, Aboriginal community  
- projected success
  - **David Bouchard public presentation**- CBAL, Valemount Public Library, Success By 6, Children First, VSS Aboriginal students, Aboriginal community members  
- projected success
  - **Community Hub**- CBAL, CVCA, Success By 6, Valemount Economic Development, Columbia Basin Trust  
- progressive success
  - **Brain Gym Workshop**- CBAL, Valemount Lions Club  
- successful event
  - **Cookbook Swap**- CBAL, Valemount Lions Club  
- moderate success
  - **Jammytime Tales**- CBAL, Valemount Public Library  
- unsuccessful program
  - **Reading Between The (White) Lines**- CBAL, Valemount Public Library  
- cancelled program
  - **Student drivers' training**- CBAL, Valemount Secondary School PAC  
- cancelled program

### ***Indications of success***

The CBAL Play and Learn program has been deemed a success by the participants, staff, volunteers and many outside observers. Participants engaged in multi-sensory learning techniques, comparative children's literature and the collective empowerment of writing and submitting a letter of support for the Community Hub proposal; all of these literacy exercises were relatively new experiences and were embraced by the participants. The program also offered a nutritional component, with participants helping to prepare a group pot of soup for lunch and an accompanying end-of-year cookbook. All participants are looking forward to next year's program and have commented on improvements in their children. It is believed that the program has promoted and supported the literacy skills growth of both the participants and their children.

The CBAL program *On The Gift of Dyslexia* and the *Orton Gillingham Tutor Training* have led to a greater understanding of learning differences and certification of seven Level 1 tutors in the community. All tutors report successes with their students.

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## ***Challenges***

Many Valemount and area residents are reticent to register for literacy programs is prevalent among both the general and the “at risk” populations and suggests a more casual drop-in approach may be more successful in attracting program participants.

## **Plans for the coming year**

### ***New opportunities, challenges, or issues***

- to define “literacy” in the broadest terms, including the ability of all individuals to become fully engaged in civil society

### ***Goals, priorities, objectives and related actions***

- to improve literacy opportunities for families with young children
  - extended, enhanced CBAL Play and Learn program
  - continued efforts toward a Community Hub/Neighbourhood House
- to secure public, fully accessible space for community literacy endeavours
  - continued efforts toward a Community Hub/Neighbourhood House
- to continue to explore ways to engage “at risk” individuals
  - continued efforts toward a Community Hub/Neighbourhood House

### ***Requirements to meet goals and employ actions***

- political will and associated funding
- commitment from Community Literacy Planning Committee
- a focus on renewed hope for the future and development of meaningful strategies to help assuage systemic apathy

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## **Future Planning – District Literacy Plan**

District staff is committed to continuing to work with community partners to support literacy initiatives in Prince George, Mc Bride, Mackenzie and Valemount.

District staff will

- work with the Literacy Now Coordinators to explore and identify ways in which we can work together and benefit from having a District Literacy Plan
- continue as members of the local Literacy Now groups
- continue to explore the expanding area of early childhood literacy programs
- expand district participation in community events that promote literacy

## **Summary**

The District Literacy Plan (School District No.57) is grounded in the belief that strong relationships between the community and the school district are a crucial component of life-long learning. The purpose of this plan is to document working relationships that support literacy within our communities. The plan encompasses initiatives from early learning through to adult learning. The District Literacy Plan has been collaboratively developed with input from literacy outreach coordinators in McBride, Prince George and Valemount. It is a statement of commitment by School District No. 57 to work with community partners to improve literacy.

By working as a community we can increase the life chances of everyone in our community.