

# DISTRICT LITERACY PLAN 2013 – 2014

## North Peace



# **NORTH PEACE DISTRICT LITERACY PLAN 2013/2014**

The **North Peace Literacy Alliance** was the name given to the literacy task force, established four years ago within the geographic region of School District 60 in the Peace River Valley. With a population of 64,000, this region includes the communities of Fort St. John, Prespatou, Upper Pine, Clearview, Taylor and Hudson's Hope. Fort St. John is the largest regional service centre in northeast B.C. with a population of over 18,000. Three industries employ the majority of people in Fort St. John: oil and gas, agriculture and forestry. Taylor is located on Mile 30 of the Alaska Highway, 18 km south of Fort St. John. It is home to 1,400 residents. Hudson's Hope is situated 90 km. west of Fort St. John and is a town of 1,200 people. Fort St. John is a hub for the Northern B.C. Treaty 8 First Nations Communities; included in this region are three reserves: Blueberry River, Doig River and Halfway River First Nations. There is a growing immigrant population in the area, with approximately 3,000 people speaking English as a Second Language.

## **1. TASK GROUP**

### **a) Who takes part in the Task Group?**

The North Peace Literacy Alliance (task group) has 88 representatives from education, industry, government, business, non-profit agencies and local First Nations communities. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator continually updates the NPLA contact list to include regional stakeholder organizations and individuals with an interest in community literacy.

Each task group meeting since 2010 usually involved up to 15 participants. These task force members play active roles in assessing the literacy needs of the communities, as well as planning local literacy programs and collaborations. Regular attendees to NPLA meetings include representatives from: City of Fort St. John, School District 60, Fort St. John Literacy Society, Fort St. John Friendship Centre, Fort St. John Public Library, Success by 6, Fort St. John Women's Resource Centre, North Peace Community Resource Centre, Metis Nations BC, Employment Connections, Rising Spirit Aboriginal Youth Centre, Blueberry First Nations, Family Friendly Initiative and Myriad Consulting.

### **b) How is the work of this group organized?**

Since July 2010, the Literacy Outreach Coordinator held up to five meetings yearly with the task group to identify and prioritize local literacy needs. This task group have assessed barriers to access services, identified potential community partnerships, and brainstormed specific initiatives and outcomes.

However in the 2012-2013 year due to issues the Literacy Outreach Coordinator position wasn't filled until January 2013. The task forces meetings were not held on a regular basis and the new LOC does not have the specific information of the dates and agendas discussed.

Date	Purpose
May 27, 2013	NPLA meeting to identify continuing and new issues, and prioritize goals for 2013-2014

## **2. COMMUNITY CONTEXT**

**What happened in the community over the past year that impacts people in the community and the ability of organizations to support literacy development?**

Positive:

The community continues to embrace literacy programming, awareness campaigns, and other initiatives. Task group members and other key stakeholders further their understanding of informal learning opportunities, as well as the importance of community literacy initiatives.

Negative:

Many service providers in the community operate at capacity. They are faced with limited resources and time in which to plan and implement additional programming. As the population and birth rate rise, service providers struggle to keep up. As well, a considerable number of primary industry workers have undiagnosed learning disabilities, minimal education, and other literacy barriers. There has been an increase in foreign workers being recruited and the majority of these workers have minimal English.

## **3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND LITERACY COLLABORATION**

**a) What are the important collaborations that have taken place to support literacy and the work of the Task Group?**

**Community Stakeholder Meetings:**

The Literacy Outreach Coordinator has regularly attended community roundtable meetings to keep updated on the activities and needs of local organizations, service

providers, and clients. Through presentations to these groups, she has discussed available literacy services in the community and encouraged collaborations for literacy programs. Roundtables she attended regularly included the following:

- 1) Early Childhood Development / Families First (30 community organizations with a stake in issues affecting children 0 - 6 yrs of age and their families)
- 2) NP3 Table – for Executive Directors of community non-profit agencies
- 3) Welcoming & Inclusive Communities & Workplaces Program planning table
- 4) Healthy Living Alliance – Northern Health roundtable
- 5) Literacy Coalition Table – School District 59 & 60

The Literacy Outreach Coordinator was involved in planning initiatives and activities for specific events, linking community groups and facilitating collaborative projects. These included:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>Family Literacy Day</b> (Week long events: January 12-27)	Community Early Learning Coordinator, FSJ Public Library, School District 60	- LOC promoted literacy and literacy week activities in the media; LOC and local restaurants engaged in week long activities; library held a camp-out
<b>International Literacy Day</b> September 8	Local media	

### **Other Activities:**

The Literacy Outreach Coordinator participated in the following regional and provincial activities:

- 1) Presentation to Aboriginal Success by Six
- 2) PALS Training Session
- 3) UNBC Open House
- 4) Regional Strong Start
- 5) Social Service Worker Advisory Committee Meeting
- 6) Personalized Learning and the Ministry of Education Visions Conference
- 7) Regional Literacy Outreach Coordinator Meeting
- 8) 2010 Energy Conference
- 9) Fort St. John Friendship Society Community Luncheon
- 10) BC Association of Social Workers Conference
- 11) Presentation to School Boards 60

- 12) Presentation to Fort St. John City Council
- 13) MLA Open House
- 14) Economic Development Commission Open House
- 15) Presentation to Peace River Regional District
- 16) United Way Community Engagement Dinner
- 17) SD #60 Parent Conference
- 18) Northern Health Men's Event

## **b) What are the essential ongoing collaborations?**

The essential collaborations take place between community groups sitting at the NPLA round table.

As new LOC these meetings have not be determined at this time.

Confirmed for 2013-2014 are monthly meetings with Early Childhood Development meetings the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month.

Ongoing collaborations will also continue with the Fort St. John Literacy Society, SUCCESS, SWIS/School District 60, and the City of Fort St. John.

## **c) What makes collaborations work so well?**

As a small community, agencies often come together to discuss community needs and issues at roundtables with a myriad of focuses including early learning, healthy living, newcomers to Canada, literacy, etc. By interfacing on a variety of fronts, individuals from these agencies develop relationships that encourage collaborations for projects.

Because of effective local community roundtables, stakeholders are aware of local programming and can easily see ways to share resources and collaborate on specific initiatives. This awareness also helps when assessing literacy needs in the community. Task force members are quick to identify critical areas of focus for future literacy programming.

## **4. GOALS AND ACTIONS FOR THE CURRENT YEAR**

**What priorities, goals or objectives have you addressed this year? What actions were taken to reach these? What organizations and groups participated in these actions?**

- i) Actions to be spearheaded by the Literacy Outreach Coordinator:

<b>Identified Need</b>	<b>Goals/Outcomes</b>	<b>Target Groups</b>	<b>Initiatives</b>
Awareness Campaign	Address regional stigma and disregard towards literacy	-general public -employers -potential clients	- articles and information about literacy and community literacy programs on N.P.L.A. website, Facebook, Twitter, and Energeticcity.ca, -Family Literacy Day event -media - monthly newsletter
	Create a positive attitude shift towards supporting literacy		
	Increase regional knowledge of literacy services		
Database of Organizations	To provide "one stop shop" for clients, agencies and the general public looking for specific information and services that include a literacy component	-agencies -clients -general public	- maintain a current database of organizations who provide literacy services and resources
Website	Maintain a website for the N.P.L.A. that includes community links, information for learners and service providers, and information on community literacy	-agencies -clients -general public	- provide information about local literacy resources and initiatives, as well as educate the public about literacy in general

## ii) Early Learning

Fort St. John has a supportive, active, and effective group of early learning service providers. Every year, there are children that are not ready for kindergarten, despite the ongoing and excellent early learning opportunities available to families.

Fort St. John hospital continues to see the highest birth rate per capita. High birth rates require more programs for children in the community.

A province wide early childhood development survey by UBC in 2006 reported that children living in the northeast BC, including the geographic region of School District 60, are among the least ready to start kindergarten in areas of language and cognitive

development. Many programs have been implemented and are ongoing which address this issue. A new survey should find that this trend has been reversed.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Target Groups</b>	<b>Community Partners</b>
<u>Words on Wheels bus:</u> review and maintain stops, lending library and home-based activities	- Aboriginal communities, rural families	-NPLA r/table; SD#60
<u>Daddy and Me/Strong Start Gym Nights:</u> to engage dads with pre-school aged children by combining two established programs and offering them at non-traditional times (evenings/weekends);	- men with pre-school aged children	-School District # 60; North Peace Community Resources; NPLA wants to encourage fathers to take part in essential skill-building activities with their children
<u>Mother Goose for ESL Families :</u> to provide additional ESL supports for newcomers and build capacity of the existing “Mother Goose Program”	- newcomers to Canada; English-speaking Canadians	- Literacy Society; North Peace Community Resources; SUCCESS; Fort St. John Literacy Society
<u>Collaborating on Professional Development Opportunities:</u> collaborate around training opportunities and open learning events to partner groups; example: P.A.L.S. – Parenting as Literacy Supporters, Train the Trainer Workshop	- community agencies and daycares offering early childhood education programs - ECD Roundtable	- SD #60

### iii) Kindergarten to Grade 12

Tutoring students is an ongoing priority. The region suffers from young people taking high paying jobs that do not require a high school diploma.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Target Groups</b>	<b>Community Partners</b>
<u>Tutoring for Youth:</u> to provide academic support to youth including homework help, ESL support, and support for LDs during evening youth tutoring program at Rising Spirit Aboriginal Youth Centre	- for youth 14-18 yrs of age including aboriginal learners; new Canadians; low-literacy/ vulnerable learners	- Rising Spirit Aboriginal Youth Centre; Literacy Society; SD #60 (Settlement Workers in Schools)

iv) Adult/Senior

Essential skill building programs for marginalized adults and seniors are not abundant in Fort St. John.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Target Groups</b>	<b>Community Partners</b>
<u>Women's Financial Literacy Project:</u> to create a financial literacy workshop series for women to cover budgeting, understanding credit and banking; debt management; financial goals	- marginalized women	- FSJ Women's Resource Centre; Healthy Living Alliance; Credit Union; Royal Bank of Canada; LOC
<u>Computer Skills Training:</u> basic computer skills training and information literacy, working one-to-one with computer educator on self-determined learning goals;	- adults/seniors; low-income; marginalized individuals, seniors	- FSJ Public library; FSJ Women's Resource Centre

**What adjustments were made to the plan? That is, as the year progressed were there new opportunities or were there changes that did not allow for some actions to be taken?**

A gap in service occurred when the Literacy Outreach Coordinator position was not filled. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator was understaffed until Jan 2013. This disruption in service makes data unavailable.

**5/6. INDICATIONS OF SUCCESS & CHALLENGES:**

**a) How do you know that actions taken are working to support literacy? What impact have the literacy initiatives had? It is important to include examples to illustrate the impact.**

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Measurable Outcomes:</b>
<u>Awareness Campaign</u> Since January 2010 followers on Facebook, Energeticity.ca and Twitter increased significantly.	<u>January 2010:</u> · <i>Energetic City:</i> 3 blogs created; 300 to 400 hits per blog · <i>Facebook:</i> 9 Members · <i>Twitter:</i> 11 Following; 3 followers

	<p><u>June 2011:</u>  <i>Energetic City:</i> 2 Blogs created; 300 to 400 hits per blog  <i>Facebook:</i> 48 Members  <i>Twitter:</i> 57 following; 77 followers</p> <p><u>June 2013:</u>  Twitter: 96 followers</p>
<p><u>Community Events:</u> Family Literacy Day (Jan 27, 2013)</p>	<p><i>Family Literacy Day</i> included numerous activities that took place throughout Fort St. John and Taylor.</p> <p>The week during Family Literacy Day several events were planned. Families were asked to take pictures of themselves playing together and submit it; local restaurants had activity booklets and families were asked to take pictures of themselves playing and submit them; families were asked to write a poem or song and submit it for a prize. Local businesses provided some great prize packs for the winners who were chosen at random.</p> <p>The library had a camp-out for Family Literacy Day.</p> <p>Community partners included: School District 60, Fort St. John Public Library, Fort St. John Literacy Society, Mr. Mikes, JD Fitzgeralds, Tony Roma's, City of Fort St. John, Encana Events Centre, MooseFm, Astral Radio</p>

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Measurable Outcomes:</b>
Daddy and Me Strong Start Gym Nights	<u>Participation:</u>  <u>Duration:</u>

Impact Statement:

Due to the staffing challenges of the NPLA and the LOC position it is unsure what the outcomes were for the Daddy and Me Strong Start Gym Nights

Challenges:

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Measurable Outcomes:</b>
Mother Goose for ESL Families	<u>Participation:</u> 18 Adults 26 Children  <u>Number of resources given away:</u> 20  <u>Duration:</u> April 7 <sup>th</sup> to June 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2011

Impact Statement:

Due to the staffing challenges of the NPLA and the LOC position it is unsure what the outcomes were for the Mother Goose Program

Challenges:

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Measurable Outcomes:</b>
Tutoring for Youth	<u>Participation:</u> Pending

Impact Statement:

Due to the staffing challenges of the NPLA and the LOC position it is unsure what the outcomes were for the Daddy and Me Strong Start Gym Nights

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Measurable Outcomes:</b>
Computer Skills Training	<u>Participation:</u>  <u>Duration:</u>

Impact Statement:

Due to the staffing challenges of the NPLA and the LOC position it is unsure what the outcomes were for the Daddy and Me Strong Start Gym Nights

Challenges:

**b) What are the things that support literacy work?**

- Collaborative Projects
- Roundtables, Conferences, and Meetings
- Awareness Campaigns at Key Community Events
- Family Literacy Events
- Internet-based Awareness Campaign
- Public Presentations on Literacy

**CHALLENGES**

**c) What are the challenges? What would help?**

Many service providers in the community operate at capacity. Although key stakeholders are excited to take a lead on capacity building projects that address literacy needs, they and their collaborators run the risk of exhausting their staff and resources.

For this reason, it has been difficult to diversify the active members of the task group. However, the organizations that are planning and implementing initiatives are doing so very successfully. As the group continues to operate successfully and make big impacts in the community, my hope is that other task group members will become more involved.

## **7. FOR THE COMING YEAR**

### **Task Force Goals**

In June 2013, the NPLA Task Force met to further assess gaps in service for literacy clients. The Task Force identified four key goals. These goals will be addressed by projects that will commence in September/October 2013 through the next round of NPLA implementation funding.

<b>Identified Need / Goals</b>	<b>Target Groups</b>	<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<b>Men's Literacy</b>	Adult/Senior, Aboriginals, newcomers	TBD	-Fort St. John Literacy Society - Salvation Army -Northern Health -Employment Connections -SUCCESS - Fort St. John Public Library
<b>Women's Literacy</b>	Adult/Seniors, Aboriginals, single mothers, newcomers	TBD	-Fort St. John Literacy Society - Northern Health -Employment Connections -Success - Fort St. John Women's Resource Society Women's Resource Centre - Fort St. John Public

			Library
<b>Youth Literacy</b>	Youth	TBD	-Fort St. John Literacy Society -North Peace Community Resource Society -Rising Spirit Aboriginal Youth Centre/NENAS -Northern Health - School District 60 -SWIS - Rising Spirit Aboriginal Youth Centre/NENAS - Fort St. John Public Library
<b>Parental Engagement</b>	Parents	TBD	-School District 60 -PACs -North Peace Community Resource Society -ECD Roundtable -Babybear Daycare

### Literacy Outreach Coordinator Goals

<b>Identified Need / Goals</b>	<b>Target Groups</b>	<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<b>Awareness Campaign</b>	Community. Potential task force members	- N.P.L.A. Website - Facebook Page - Twitter Account - Energetic City Blog - Media Campaign - Family Literacy Day - One Stop - Newsletter - Family Literacy Day	- Early Childhood Development - School District 60 - Rising Spirit Aboriginal Youth Centre (NENAS) - North Peace Community Resource Society - S.U.C.C.E.S.S. - Fort St. John Literacy Society - City of Fort St. John - Northern Groove - Moose FM - District of Taylor

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- District of Hudson's Hope</li> <li>- Healthy Living Alliance</li> <li>- Family Friendly</li> <li>- Doig River First Nation</li> </ul>
<b>Website and Community Database</b>	Community	Maintain a N.P.L.A. website, which includes a updated list of organizations that offer literacy services, resources, and programming	Community and district-wide initiative

A number of community literacy needs, goals and initiatives were identified and have been implemented by the North Peace Literacy Alliance to support individuals and organizations in literacy development. These initiatives included continuing with an awareness campaign, maintaining a website and database of literacy services, and facilitating specific community-based programs. These initiatives support the nine essential skills of literacy: reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, continuous learning, thinking skills, computer use and financial literacy.