



**School District 70**

Port Alberni • Bamfield • Tofino • Ucluelet

District Literacy Plan

2013-14

School District 70 (Alberni)

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## Chapter 1: Progress on Literacy Development

### Overview

School District 70 (Alberni) is one partner in the literacy development activities coordinated through Literacy Alberni, the Bamfield Community School Society, and the Coastal Family Resource Coalition. The district literacy plan summarizes projects and progress in literacy development in the communities of Port Alberni, Bamfield, Tofino, and Ucluelet. Within the Alberni Valley, the school district also collaborates with the Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council to support literacy initiatives within the Tseshaht First Nation, Ditidaht First Nation, Hupacasath First Nation, and Uchucklesaht First Nation. In addition, the literacy plan includes efforts to improve literacy in our First Nations communities: Hot Spring Cove (Hesquiaht First Nation), Ahousaht (Ahousaht First Nation), Opitshat and Esowista (Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation), Ittatsoo (Ucluelet First Nation), Macoah (Toquaht First Nation), and Anacla (Huu-ay-aht First Nation).

The SD70 (Alberni) District Literacy Plan is the result of combined efforts from the Community Literacy Plans developed by Literacy Alberni, the Bamfield Community School Society and the Coastal Family Resource Coalition.

### Progress to Date

The primary role of SD 70 (Alberni) is to participate as a community member and partner in the development and implementation of community-based literacy initiatives. In addition, the district literacy plan allows opportunities for sharing literacy resources and coordination of literacy development initiatives within the region. One of the challenges in preparing the district literacy plan is synthesizing and aligning initiatives and priorities from three separate community literacy plans. This report presents a summary of literacy development programs, initiatives, and priorities within the geographical region served by School District 70 (Alberni). Rather than replicating information provided in other documents, the community Literacy Plans and the District Achievement Contract available as separate reports.

### Anticipated Next Steps

School District 70 (Alberni) continues to be an active partner in the development of community-based literacy initiatives. School-based programs and initiatives emphasize literacy development in the K-12 student population. The school district now has three school-based Strong Start programs and one Outreach Strong Start program to provide early learning programming throughout the district.

The district Achievement Contract, Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements, School Growth Plans, and the School Review process all emphasize the development of literacy skills as a critical aspect of our improvement strategy as students transition from early learning

through school completion and on to the post-secondary opportunities in the work force or in higher learning.

Building connections between our three community-based literacy plans and establishing networks with other community literacy programs will provide additional opportunities for sharing literacy improvement strategies, initiatives, and identify promising practices for further investigation. Potential opportunities for enhancing literacy awareness within the geographical region include:

- Building capacity in literacy instructional practices and assessment procedures.
- Developing collaborative literacy-focused networks within the district and with other regional entities.
- Establish a communication strategy to emphasize literacy related issues and community development.
- Continue the collaborative work with all organizations interested in literacy issues that contributed to the success of the April 2011 West Coast Literacy Symposium

## 2. Literacy Alberni

### Port Alberni – Community Literacy Report

By: Charmead Schella, Literacy Outreach Coordinator

#### Community Impacts:

Port Alberni has a rich history of having established and grown upon the solid foundations of the forestry and fishing industries. Both of these industries have been dramatically declining in recent decades, leading to an inevitable downturn in the health of both the local economy and social state of the community.

Whilst struggling to redefine itself amongst this downturn with new ideas for rebranding such as tourism, eco-farming, attracting and maintaining international students, and diversification of the town's deep-sea port, Port Alberni has suffered and continues to. Unemployment rates stay relatively high, and small locally-owned shops continue to shut their doors permanently.

A high percentage of local males continue to seek employment outside of the Alberni Valley, predominantly looking toward the wealth of British Columbia's oil-rich neighbor, Alberta. These oil field workers maintain their homes and families in Port Alberni, but commute to their points of employment. Although logistical, this trend creates fractured nuclear families with one caregiver left in town to single-parent in the other parent's absence, often straining emotional and psychological bonds of partners and children. Real estate prices continue to decline, as both residential and commercial sales become less frequent, year-on-year, based on monthly comparisons. Port Alberni has, for the third year running, the lowest real estate prices on Vancouver Island (VIREB, May 2013 report). Residential property taxes rose this past year by slightly higher than eight percent (City of Port Alberni). Port Alberni also has high vacancy rates in the rental arena.

#### 1. Task group:

##### a. Who takes part in the task group?

Literacy Alberni Society, the task group, is comprised of Alberni Valley community members who share the same concern for literacy issues in the community and the same passion about addressing them. We are fortunate that in such a small community, we possess such engaged, committed, and visionary individuals who volunteer their time and expertise to making literacy a priority in the community. Members include: several SD70 partners including the district principal and the director of instruction, the local principal and regional director of North Island College, education director of the Tseshaht First Nation, two VIREB employees (library manager and children's librarian), two local literacy students, a museum curator, a Chamber of Commerce employee, a government worker employed under the Ministry of Social Development, and several retired pedagogues.

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

The Literacy Outreach Coordinator, Charmead Schella, organizes the literacy task group. This past year, Literacy Alberni members met as a collective when necessary at the Literacy Alberni Society community learning centre, and communicated regularly via email and telephone. Information and ideas were gathered and shared throughout the year during scheduled literacy task group meetings, themed workshops, community events, conversations with community members, PALS directive meetings, and Make Children First Network meetings. The role of the LOC is to provide a summary of activities, share ideas and information, present and encourage opportunities, facilitate discussion, support task group activities, and implement and evaluate the goals and activities of the task group.

## **3. Community context:**

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

**Consider both positive and negative impacts.**

On a socio-economic level, Port Alberni has faced several challenges over the past year that have added to the current economic burden under which the community sits. It is believed that the community's high illiteracy rate (40 percent) is greatly influenced by the local socio-economic situation.

A high percentage of males continue to seek employment outside of the Alberni Valley, creating fractured nuclear families with one caregiver endeavouring to single-parent in the other parent's absence.

Real estate prices continue to decline, as both residential and commercial sales become less frequent annually based on monthly comparisons. Port Alberni has, for the third year running, the lowest real estate prices on Vancouver Island (VIREB, May 2013 report). Residential property taxes rose this past year by slightly higher than eight percent. Port Alberni also has high vacancy rates in the rental arena.

SD70 announced that in order to meet budget cuts, it was going to close an elementary school in Port Alberni. The community rallied passionately for months around each of the three schools earmarked for the cutting blocks and, in the end, no school was closed this year. The process was a divisive one for the community, though, and was followed closely by media and the public. Community anxiety still remains about school closures for the 2013-2014 academic year.

In February-March, the provincial government announced that it was cutting \$1.5 million from the \$2.5 million budget allotted to literacy coordination in British Columbia. This same cut occurred last fiscal year, but Decoda Literacy Solutions, the not-for-profit organization responsible for dispersing literacy coordination funds in BC, made up the \$1.5

million difference. This year, Decoda was financially unable to do the same again. Although Port Alberni was slotted to receive its full amount of LOC funding, the fact remained that 60 percent of the province's budget had been reduced, yet 102 literacy task groups remained and were in need of funding assistance. Port Alberni's Literacy Task Group rallied with its brother and sister literacy organizations, writing letters to Decoda and Minister McRae in support of dispersing whatever available LOC funds evenly throughout the province for sustained literacy efforts. By the end of March, Education Minister Don McRae and his cabinet 'found' the cut monies and allocated it accordingly through the province. This potential budget cut created an anxiety within the literacy provider sector of British Columbia that has not been abated. It is unclear what 2014 will hold for literacy coordination funds.

In early May, a brutal murder in the local First Nation community rocked the town. A young aboriginal man stabbed his younger brother to death in a highly marginalized area of Port Alberni, unearthing community-wide analysis and discussion of socio-economic tendencies relating to local poverty, aboriginal issues, foster parenting, and the illegal drug scene. Education was not exempt from this dialogue.

And, in mid-May, SD70 announced that it would be eliminating cross-boundary school bus service as it struggles to balance its budget for next year. SD70 is dealing with a 68 per cent transportation funding cut made by the provincial government. This hot-button issue is already making waves in the community as many rural families will be forced to consider pulling their children from non-catchment schools like the only French immersion school in the community, Ecole Alberni.

Provincially, British Columbia saw an election on May 14 that brought the Liberals back for their next term of service to the taxpayers of the province. And, although locally the Alberni area voted its NDP candidate in for another term, there was dissention amongst the general population about the future of the province's literacy concerns and funding under the umbrella of the Liberal Party.

On a positive note, however, strides are being made to push the community ever into the progressive future. SD70's brand-new high school, Alberni District Secondary School (ADSS), opened on time in September 2012 and was well worth the wait. It is a state-of-the-art building, boasting contemporary technology and amenities. It has a wide and varied library, housing many books and leading technology. Make Children First Network meets regularly in the new facility, as do many other local interest groups pertinent to literacy efforts. It has become a positive and comfortable meeting place, as well as educational centre.

#### **4. 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?**

Important collaborations that have taken place this year in order to support literacy and the work of the task group include:

- Literacy Alberni, in conjunction with Decoda Literacy Solutions, hosted the Bamfield Literacy Symposium & Retreat in late October, at which 18 literacy outreach coordinators and other literacy providers from all points of Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coastal areas met for three days to sit workshops, share ideas and information, and collaborate.
- Literacy Alberni participated in Family Literacy Day (February 2) that was organized by providing two volunteers and a booth equipped with free books as give-aways, information about LAS and Klitsa Tutoring programs, Frisbees, and an on-going literacy puppet show for very young children.
- Literacy Alberni, in collaboration with Decoda Literacy Solutions, offered a one-day PALS (Parents as Literacy Supporters) training workshop in Port Alberni in early January 2013. This workshop trained teachers and other literacy providers to be PALS program facilitators. Nineteen facilitators and two trainers attended.
- SD70's alternative education centre, VAST, and LAS partnered in April 2013 to create an educational advisory position on-site at the LAS learning centre. This was created to provide more support to high school students in the community who struggle to attend and complete their schooling at the mainstream local high school, ADSS.
- Literacy Alberni partnered with First Book Canada, commencing in December, to receive and distribute new books to Port Alberni children. Literacy Alberni has received several thousand books to date, which are distributed at literacy events in the community.
- Literacy Alberni is partnering with Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) in June, July, and August to design and direct literacy focused summer camps for school children in the most marginalized areas of Port Alberni. LAS will provide free books, volunteer readers, and volunteer camp facilitators.
- LAS and Make Children First Network collaborated on several noteworthy community projects this past year, in particular: 'Here We Come' (SD70 driven project focused on three year-old children), 'Alphabet Promotion', a Shaw TV serial that featured SD70 kindergarten children, and 'Pathways to Literacy' that had large, colourful stencils of engaging words permanently scribed along paths in local parks and trails.

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

All collaborations are essential to the success of our literacy programming. Significant on-going collaborations include:

- VAST-LAS partnership in which SD70 provides a .5 teaching position at Literacy Alberni Society learning centre to provide educational support, guidance, and advice on-site. Thirteen students graduated from the VAST program in Port Alberni this year; an increase of 12 graduates from last year.
- WesCAN and SEEDS programming again took place at Tseshaht First Nation, under the direction of Literacy Alberni teacher, Michelle Van Nice. This program



- PALS (Parents as Literacy Supporters) offered 16 sessions throughout the Alberni-Clayoquot region from October-June 2013, catering to approximately 400 participants (children, caregivers, and PALS facilitators). Collaborations created through PALS this past year were: SD70 (Eighth Avenue Elementary School, Wood Elementary School, John Howitt Elementary School, Alberni Elementary School, Gill Elementary School, Macquinna Elementary School, Alberni Valley Community School, Wickaninnish School – Tofino, Bamfield Community School - Bamfield), John Paul II Catholic School, Shining Star Daycare, Stepping Stones Daycare, and Hilton Children’s Centre.
- The LAS-ICE Book Donation partnership continues to provide area residents with new multicultural books for free.
- Literacy Alberni continues to collaborate with ACAWS (Alberni Community and Women’s Services) and VIHA (Vancouver Island Health Authority) for the purpose of furthering nutritional awareness in the community via a weekly community cooking class to which everyone is welcome.
- LAS works with the Alberni Valley Community School, the Alberni Valley Childcare Society, and the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council Family and Child Services in various ways, positioned as a support for specialized community educational events, days, and pedagogical support.
- LAS provides an on-site tutor to the Port Alberni Friendship Centre (Knee-waas) for the purpose of making educational planning, execution, and completion an accessible and attainable goal to the aboriginal population of the community.
- North Island College and LAS partner.
- LAS partners with INEO Employment Services (Work BC) and Alberni Valley Employment (Work BC) for the purpose teaching computer literacy to their clients.
- LAS and Make Children First Network partner.

### **c. What makes collaborations work well?**

The key factors that make literacy collaborations work well are: communication, understanding, literacy, respect, openness, clear goals and vision, common interests and goals, shared resources, flexibility, energy, support and partnerships. Community involvement, volunteering, and funding support are imperative to maintaining the literacy work that occurs in the Alberni Valley. Collaborations are created, nurtured, and maintained in Port Alberni surrounding literacy because most people seem to understand that a healthy community is built upon a solid foundation of literacy, self-sufficiency, and vision.

## **4) Goals and actions for the current year:**

### **a. What priorities, goals, or objectives have you addressed this year?**

Literacy Alberni has endeavoured to:

- Reduce barriers to programming by: providing free and/or subsidized transportation, providing a safe and supportive learning environment, providing access to nutritional food, providing inexpensive computers, providing trained tutors and qualified teachers;
- Engage community members in the issue of high illiteracy rate in Port Alberni (via Raise-a-Reader fundraising efforts and other community-wide events bringing literacy into the public eye);
- Maintain an up-to-date website, Facebook, and Twitter presence on the social media platform;
- Provide computer literacy classes, 1:1 tutorials, and drop-in support times for targeted outcomes (i.e.: resume writing, cover letter writing, email set-up, etc.);
- Provide nutritional literacy classes via collaborations with VIHA, IHN, ACAWS, Jericho Road Church, and Salvation Army;
- Provide adult literacy classes and 1:1 tutorials via SD70 and NIC collaboration;
- Provide English as a Second language classes and 1:1 tutorials;
- Provide driver's license acquisition classes via collaboration with SD70;
- Provide Canadian Citizenship examination preparation classes;
- Provide social literacy skills support;
- Provide family literacy support and opportunities via PALS programming, Make Children First Network, VIRL, and SD70 collaboration;
- Provide and support early learning opportunities via PALS programming, Make Children First Network, VIRL, and SD70 collaboration;
- Fostering an early love of reading in children and teens via First Book Canada and ICE free book collaborations;
- Provide affordable computers to low-income families/learners via our Computer Refurbishment program.

**b. What actions were taken to reach these? What organizations and groups participated in these actions?**

This past year, we addressed the already-mentioned needs through various and creative collaborations, as already outlined. We achieved these goals through the essential and generous collaboration with sister-organizations:

- SD70
- North Island College
- Alberni Community and Women's Services (ACAWS)
- Alberni Valley Community School
- Make Children First Network
- PALS task group
- Salvation Army
- Vancouver Island Health Authority
- Integrated Health Network

- Jericho Road Church
- Vancouver Island Regional Library
- Tseshaht First Nation
- Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council Family and Child Services (Usma)
- INEO Employment Services (Work BC)
- Alberni Valley Employment Centre (Work BC)
- Port Alberni Friendship Center
- Decoda Literacy Solutions.

**c. 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 new opportunity that arose, unexpectedly, mid-year for Literacy Alberni was the chance to work collaboratively with SD70. Together, Literacy Alberni Society and SD70 (VAST) hired a full time program coordinator to assist with managing learner and tutor files, hours, schedules, assessment, and intakes. This move spoke to the growth in volume of the literacy centre and its client base. The hire was a positive move that assisted the society in the short-term after the dissolution of an integral staffed position.

**5) Indications of success:**

**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.**

- The PALS (Parents as Literacy Supporters) is the program demonstrating the most effectiveness, according to audience reached in 2012-2013 via our literacy efforts. This past year, PALS saw a 100 percent increase in sessions run, as well as participants served.
- Enrolment at the Literacy Alberni Learning Centre has also increased in the 2012-2013 year, up in numbers from the 2011-2012 year, proving: the need for literacy support in the community, the access to our programs in the community, and the recognition of our services in the community.
- Collaborative partnering has increased for our literacy group this past year, also, illustrating that we are spreading our tendrils and working more effectively with other agencies and organizations in the community to achieve our mandate of raising literacy levels in the Alberni Valley (partnerships cited above).

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

- Leadership, organization, and a clear vision of the community's strengths, weaknesses, and needs.
- A literacy coordinator who can research, plan, execute, and evaluate the efforts of the literacy task group.

- Financial support - to hire additional staff and ensure that programming and services are continued and enhanced.
- Volunteers, in-kind donations, and funding; overall support from community members.
- Collaboration and partnerships.
- Communication and transparency.
- Professional development; the opportunity for LOCs to meet, learn about each other's programs, and share ideas.

## **6) Challenges:**

### **a. What are the difficulties?**

- Maintaining adult learner motivation and reducing their learning barriers.
- Uncertainty of continued funding.
- Transportation for some learners.
- The absence of basic living amenities for some of our learners (i.e.: nutritious food, adequate and safe housing, etc.).
- Increasing need for literacy in all aspects of a healthy and balanced community.
- Exhausting the limited number of volunteer tutors/teachers who work with our literacy learners on an on-going basis.
- Positive community engagement and the ability to create risk free community discussions.
- Limited access to resources.
- Cultural barriers.

### **b. What would help?**

- Wider advertisement of our programs enabling the appropriate people to take advantage of the opportunities that are available.
- Continued funding.
- Continued support from a provincial literacy organization.
- Continued task group support and engagement.
- Opportunities for professional development and 'networking' in order to share stories, ideas, challenges, and successes; learning from other communities' successes.
- Rural development and collaboration.

### **For the coming year:**

#### **1) Are there new opportunities, challenges, or issues in your community?**

The challenges and issues present in the Alberni Valley pertaining to literacy, its acquisition, and elevation are the same ones that have been present for years: socio-economic divide, a faltering industrially-based economy, high unemployment rates, racism, the backlash of the residential school system on our surrounding First Nations'

communities, a low importance traditionally placed upon formal education in the community.

### **How will you respond to those?**

- Optimism, open-mindedness, and a kind heart.
- Advertising, word-of-mouth, and persistence.
- Continuing to offer courses, workshops, and opportunities to the community.
- Creating, maintaining, and growing partnerships and collaborations.
- Continuing to seek-out and apply for funding grants.
- Making events pertinent, timely, and relevant.
- Offering training, support, and appreciation to our volunteers.

### **2) What goals, priorities, or objectives will you work on in the coming year?**

- More nutritional literacy classes done in collaboration with Salvation Army, Canadian Diabetes Association, ACAWS, VIHA, and IHN;
- Increase community awareness of PALS programming even further, with the goal of doubling sessions and community attendance again;
- Continue to work in tandem with VAST, SD70, to provide on-site opportunities for alternative secondary school education;
- Increased number of computer literacy for seniors programming;
- Collaboration with North Island College for the purpose of offering ABE and ESL literacy classes on-site;
- Securing more funding to expand the above programs such.

### **What actions are planned against those goals?**

- Advertising and community engagement;
- Workshops and lectures on nutrition, diabetes, and addiction;
- Essential Skills and Job Skills workshops offered in collaboration with INEO Employment Services and Alberni Valley Employment Services;
- Computer classes – levels I and II;
- PALS programming;
- CDA nutritional literacy and cooking classes offered on-site;
- ‘Cooking Out of the Box’ nutritional literacy cooking classes offered off-site in collaboration with Salvation Army at its kitchen;
- A new NIC collaboration with Literacy Alberni Society whereby an NIC ABE teacher will work at Literacy Alberni two afternoons per week, teaching ABE and ESL literacy to adults;
- A continued collaboration with VAST whereby a VAST, SD70, teacher works at Literacy Alberni two mornings per week, advising and teaching adults toward the goal of Dogwood acquisition;

- Summer elementary school-aged children’s literacy camps – math, English, Precision Reading, French, science, outdoor education, environmental issues, nutritional literacy, physical education, fine arts, and theatre arts;
- Summer elementary school-aged children’s literacy camps in collaboration with VIRL, focused on reading and outdoor programming;
- Art workshops;
- Family Literacy Day events.

**3) What will be required to meet the goals and effectively employ actions for the coming year?**

- Volunteers;
- Community engagement and support;
- Leadership of Literacy Alberni Society;
- Funding;
- Collaboration and meaningful partnerships;
- Support from SD70;
- Support from NIC.

### 3. Bamfield Community School Society

#### **Bamfield/Anacla, B.C.**

Bamfield and Anacla are small, isolated communities located on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. The area is the traditional territory of the Huu-ay-aht First Nations, one of seven Nuu-chah-nulth tribes whose territory covers parts of Barkley Sound. In the 1800s Bamfield was founded as a small fishing community. Bamfield and Anacla are neighbouring villages about 5 km apart and are located at the end of a gravel road, 80 km from Port Alberni.

#### **1. Task Group:**

##### **a. Who takes part in the task group?**

The Literacy Task Group is composed of a wide variety of individuals, including the Bamfield Community School Association Board of Directors and various community members.

Andrea Butler	Teaching Assistant, Bamfield Community School; PAC
Bob Baden	Business Owner
Catherine Thompson	Literacy Outreach Coordinator and Community School Coordinator, BCSA
Charlie Clappis	Councillor, Huu-ay-aht First Nations
Dave Riddell	Marine Science Educator and University Instructor, Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre
Diana Dube	Head teacher, Bamfield Community School
Donna Dunn	VIHA Outpost Nurse
Eileen Scott	Retired; active volunteer
Hana Kucera	Marine Science Educator and University Instructor, Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre
Jean Richardson	Researcher, Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre
Louis Druehl	Retired; Professor Emeritus, Simon Fraser University; active volunteer
Sheila Charles	Councillor, Huu-ay-aht First Nations
Suzanne Jennings	Retired, School Teacher; active volunteer

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

The work of the Literacy Task Group is organized by the Literacy Outreach Coordinator (LOC), Catherine Thompson. The individuals involved meet as needed and communicate regularly through email. Information and ideas are gathered throughout the year during events and conversations with community members; during Bamfield Community School Association Board of Directors meetings and at Literacy Task Group Meetings.

The role of the LOC is to share ideas and information, offer opportunities, facilitate discussion and implement and evaluate the goals and activities of the Task Group.

## **2. Community Context:**

**a. What has happened in the community over the past year that impacts people in the community and the ability of organizations to support literacy development? Consider both positive and negative impacts.**

This year the Huu-ay-aht First Nations in conjunction with the Bamfield Community School Association (BCSA) did not receive a Community Adult Literacy Program (CALP) grant, this significantly reduced our ability to support adult learners. The BCSA and Huu-ay-aht First Nations continue to support adult learners by providing access to volunteer tutors and available resources.

The Bamfield Community School started the school year with a new teacher; she has brought new ideas, and her training and expertise has allowed us to implement a fun and informative Parents As Literacy Supporters (PALS) program for preschoolers and their families.

The communities of Bamfield and Anacla continue to experience changing demographics and a decrease in the year round population. There are few full time jobs available to community members, which makes it difficult for the community to support and attract families. High numbers of summer residencies have led to fewer rental properties and changing community dynamics.

With a small population it is often the same individuals volunteering their time and supporting various organizations and societies. In turn many of the same groups are vying for the same resources and support.

The implementation of the Maa-nulth Treaty and First Nations governance continues to bring about changes in the community. Recently the Huu-ay-aht First Nations purchased a local business, which will provide jobs and opportunities for development.

Jack Purdy, a land and business owner has promised to invest \$60 million dollars into local development, this would include repairing and maintaining a number of buildings which have been left empty over the years, this would be a welcome change.

## **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?**

Important collaborations which have taken place this year in order to support literacy and the work of the task group include:



- School District 70
- Bamfield Community School staff
- Bamfield Community School Association
- Bamfield Volunteer Fire Department
- Community Access Program Youth Internship
- Vancouver Island Regional Library
- Huu-ay-aht First Nations
- Literacy Alberni
- North Island College
- Paawats Language Nest
- Community Affairs
- Bamfield Arts Council
- Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre
- Bamfield Historical Society
- Music By The Sea
- New Bamfielder Publication
- Local Businesses

**b. What are the essential ongoing collaborations?**

All collaborations are essential to the success of our literacy programming. Significant ongoing collaborations include:

- **School District 70-** supports the ongoing work of the Bamfield Community School Association and provides us with office space and resources.
- **Huu-ay-aht First Nations-** support a variety of literacy programs and initiatives through funding and in kind donations of staff time, resources and space.
- **Literacy Alberni-** provides training opportunities, resources and funding for various literacy programs.
- **Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre-** supports literacy programming through in-kind donations of educational programming in lab and field settings.
- **New Bamfielder-** a local publication which raises dollars to support extracurricular activities, such as sewing and art classes, and piano lessons, for students in Bamfield and Anacla.
- **Vancouver Island Regional Library-** coordinates a book swap with the Bamfield Community Library every 3 months ensuring that the students and community have access to new materials and resources.

**c. What makes collaborations work well?**

Collaborations have worked well because there are clear goals and an interest in providing opportunities for community members.

The key factors that make collaborations work well are:

- communication,
- understanding,
- literacy,
- respect,
- openness,
- clear goals and vision,
- community involvement,
- energy,
- flexibility,
- shared resources,
- funding,
- partnerships.

#### 4) Goals and actions for the current year:

##### a. What priorities, goals or objectives have you addressed this year?

The literacy priorities and goals that have been addressed in the current year include:

- Adult Literacy
- Essential Skills
- Computer Literacy
- Health Literacy
- Family Literacy
- Early Learning- Preschool
- Literacy opportunities for our elementary aged students
- Cultural Literacy
- Environmental Literacy
- Music Literacy
- Youth mentorship
- Engaging community members

##### b. What actions were taken to reach these? What organizations and groups participated in these actions?

- **Adult literacy** was encouraged through one-on-one tutoring opportunities for individuals completing high school graduation through CHOICES, a distributed learning school operating out of School District 70; as well as workshops on essential skills.
- A **Toastmasters club** has been formed and is running 2 times per month. Our membership is increasing steadily. This is a great opportunity for individuals to learn communication, leadership and public speaking skills.
- **Adult Cooking Classes** are happening monthly during the winter/spring season. Community members cook together and enjoy a meal while learning cooking and nutrition tips that they can take home.

- **Digital Storytelling Project-** 10 community members took part in a digital storytelling workshop facilitated by 2 individuals from Royal Roads University. In the end we had 9 stories sharing the wisdom, stories and skills of our seniors and Elders. This workshop involved the use of computers, literacy skills, cultural expertise and mentorship between multiple generations.
- **Computer classes** were made available through funding from the Community Access Program Youth Initiative (CAP-YI). Our CAP Youth Intern offered 6 beginner adult computer classes. Individuals had the opportunity to learn about Microsoft Office, basic internet skills, downloading photos and social media.
- **Family Literacy Day** was celebrated with a lunch, a literacy game show and resources for families to take home.
- **Parents As Literacy Supporters (PALS)** program was made possible through funding from Literacy Alberni, Raise A Reader and Alberni Children’s First. The program invites preschoolers, kindergartens and their guardians to enjoy dinner and activities and provides a chance for parents and their children to interact in a fun, supportive, social setting. Each session includes take home resources and a book to keep.
- **Times Colonist grant** has expanded our preschool and elementary libraries with the purchase of children’s books and puppets.
- **Short Story & Poetry Competition** engages and challenges individuals to submit a unique story and read their work in front of an audience at *Oysters, Authors & Ale*. This year *Oysters, Authors & Ale*, an adult literacy fundraiser, will take place in September.
- **After School Club** offers a chance for the elementary school students to engage in literacy activities out of class time. The After School Club is run three times a week in partnership with the Huu-ay-aht First Nations.



*Scratch and sniff name cards during  
Afterschool Club*

- **Summer camps** promote a wide variety of literacies for the children, youth and parents in Bamfield and Anacla. The Bamfield Community School Association, Huu-ay-aht First Nations and Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre as well as many other community groups’

work together to provide a variety of fun and educational activities for children and their families. Activities included: trips with the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre to visit the intertidal zone and the Whale Lab to learn about ocean life and look in microscopes; cultural activities including Huu-ay-aht language, drumming, singing and dance; science experiments; supporting the VIRL Summer Reading Club, which decreases the effects of summer learning loss; music lessons with world renowned musicians visiting for Music By The Sea; dance classes and theatre.



*Practicing drumming at  
Anacla during the summer camps*



*Science experiments during  
Science Week*

- **Monthly Newsletters** provide information about community events, how to get involved and information on important resources. Promoting citizenship, participation and literacy.
- **The New Bamfielder** is a local publication; all monies raised support mentorship opportunities for youth in the community. This year donations have provided 55 private half hour piano lessons, and sewing and art classes for our elementary school students.
- The HUU-ay-aht First Nations continue to make transportation available for various programming and community events.

**c. 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 new opportunity that arose this year provided a chance to support early learning in our communities. In January, Literacy Alberni and Decoda Literacy Solutions provided training to become certified Parents as Literacy Supporters (PALS) facilitators. We then received a

grant from Literacy Alberni, Raise a Reader and Alberni Children's First to run a Parents As Literacy Supporters (PALS) program.

With the loss of the Community Adult Literacy Plan (CALP) grant we were no longer able to offer some of the opportunities that have been made possible with this funding.

Fortunately we still have a base of volunteer tutors and space to support learners.

We had planned to provide education on animal care but did not have the time or resources to make this a possibility.

## 5) Indications of success:

**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.**

- At the beginning of the year a **community survey** was conducted to find out what services and programs community members were interested in. The results have given the Literacy Task Group a good understanding of what we are doing well and what opportunities we can use to engage people. We are currently offering 4 of the top 5 literacy activities on a regular basis. We also received a lot of feedback on the things that we are doing well.

A few quotes from the survey:

*"Actively engaging and including both communities (Bamfield/HFN) and promoting literacy"*

*"A great community service provider hearing what the communities needs are and working to provide the support necessary"*

*"The library with rotating books from VIRL is fantastic. You have a solid line of programming – very diverse and accessible. BCSA is very inclusive and makes a real effort to provide something for everyone and encourage everyone to come out and work together."*

- We have 2 active volunteer tutors paired with learners and a number of other community members who have volunteered as tutors and can be called upon if needed.
- Our recently formed **Toastmasters club** has 8 members and our first official meeting had 12 individuals in attendance. Interest from community members is increasing as people become aware of this unique opportunity.
- **Adult Cooking and Nutrition Classes** have been very popular, class size is limited to 12 individuals and all of our classes have been full. After each class I have had individuals thanking me and telling me what a wonderful time they had. The cooking classes provide a fun, social atmosphere where people can practice their literacy skills, learn about nutrition and meet others. It also acts as an outreach tool to individuals,

engaging people in the work that we are doing. There has already been lots of discussion about different themes for when the classes start up again in the Fall.

- **Digital Storytelling Project-** This project involved the development and use of multiple literacy skills, including writing, computers, oral and cultural. I watched as participants mentored each other and saw people developing their computer skills so that they could share their stories. When all of the projects were finished we held 2 community screenings, there were 85 people in attendance; 53 people attended the Bamfield screening and 32 people attended the screening at Anacla. The videos are now posted on YouTube giving everyone a chance to learn about the history, stories and skills of our seniors and Elders. There will be another round of stories produced in the Fall.

*“Wonderful to have the funding available to create these great videos. The learning for those involved was invaluable.”*

*“A wonderful evening shared viewing the work, insight, history and artistic endeavors of our peers.”*



*10 community members took part in the Digital Storytelling workshop*

- **Computer classes** were attended by 4 adults and we have had requests from 5 adults to run another series of classes. All of the individuals involved have been thankful for the opportunity to practice and learn new skills. The classes also promote the Community Access Site and make individuals aware of the fact that support is always available.
- **Attendance** at events and workshops are a sign of success and an indication that people understand the importance of literacy. We had over 50 people participate in



**Family Literacy Day** celebrations and have had over 100 different people at various events and workshops throughout the year.

- Our numbers in the **Parents as Literacy Supporters** program have increased from 3 to 11 individuals and we have seen increased participation from parents. The feedback on our evaluation forms has been very positive, parents like the support, information, new ideas and the variety of activities that are offered.

*"I learned to use song and dance in teaching letter sounds and memorizing."*

*"I liked the instructional support, ideas and the open activities."*

- We are currently running the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual **Short Story & Poetry competition**. The winners will read their work at *Oysters, Authors & Ale* which will take place in September. Community members are excited to see this event happen again and in the past have made generous donations to this fundraiser supporting adult literacy.
- **Summer camps** saw over 30 different children in attendance, as well as a number of parents who took part in a variety of activities.
- The **Afterschool Club** has made a difference in the lives of our elementary school children. The children appreciate having a place to be after school, receiving help with their learning, playing new games and taking part in a variety of activities. Literacy is always an important part of the Afterschool Club, there is always an interactive story and an activity associated with the story.

*One day that stands out in my mind is when we decided to do an anti-bullying day, the children read "Enemy Pie" and then we made an enemy pie together by writing down all of the things we would feed our enemy. After we talked about the way bullying made us feel and then made posters to put up around the School. It was a very open and honest day, we used our literacy skills to understand how bullying make others feel and spread the word around the community.*

#### **b. What are the things that support literacy work?**

- Leadership and organization.
- Clear vision of the community's strengths, wants and needs.
- A Literacy Outreach Coordinator to coordinate the efforts of the group- to plan, implement and evaluate programs and events.
- Funding to hire additional staff and ensure that programming and services are continued and enhanced.
- Volunteers and in kind donations; support from community members.
- Collaboration and partnerships.
- Communication.
- Professional development, the chance for Literacy Outreach Coordinators (LOCs) to get together; learn about programs and share ideas.

## **6) Challenges:**

### **a. What are the difficulties?**

- Keeping learners motivated.
- Reducing barriers, especially when you do not know what they are.
- Knowing what individuals are interested in.
- Ensuring people know about what opportunities are available and being offered.
- Individuals not taking advantage of available opportunities. Ensuring people are aware of the skills they need to join the work force and be successful in a changing world. An increasing need for literacy in all aspects of life.
- Uncertainty of continued funding.
- The loss and delay of funding that took place this year.
- Distance between Anacla and Bamfield presents a challenge as many individuals do not have access to reliable transportation.
- Many of the same volunteers take part and over commit themselves.
- Positive community engagement and the ability to create risk free community discussions.
- Limited access to resources.
- The location of the BCSA, which is associated with and housed in the Bamfield Community School, some adults are not comfortable using the School as a place of meeting and learning.
- Location of the communities makes it difficult to plan last minute activities, details or changes.
- Limited professional development. As the only full time employee in an isolated community it is important to have the chance to work with and learn from others.
- Sometimes it feels like there is not enough time in the day.

### **b. What would help?**

- Community members taking part in programming and the literacy task group.
- Active volunteers
- Continuing to explore what activities interest community members.
- Encouraging people to take advantage of the opportunities that are available.
- Continued and reliable funding.
- Continued support from a provincial literacy organization.
- Opportunities and information about professional development. Get togethers so Literacy Outreach Coordinators can share stories, ideas, challenges and successes; learn from other communities successes.
- Rural development and collaboration.

### **For the coming year:**



### **1) Are there new opportunities, challenges or issues in your community?**

- Bamfield and Anacla continue to suffer from economic challenges and limited opportunities.
- Our community has received another New Horizons for Seniors Program grant to run a series of workshops and gatherings focusing on the transference of Life Skills from seniors and Elders to other generations. This is an opportunity to engage with multiple generations in the community, share the wisdom and skills of our seniors and Elders and provide a chance for individuals to mentor each other. The end result will be a book of the different skills that were learned, compiled and published by participants.
- There continue to be opportunities to work with the HUU-AY-AHT First Nations under the new Treaty.
- The loss of the Community Adult Literacy Program grant has affected the Adult Literacy Program but there still are opportunities to work with the HUU-AY-AHT First Nations to support our adult learners through our volunteer tutors, CHOICES, Toastmasters, workshops and computer classes.

### **How will you respond to those?**

- Advertising, word of mouth and persistence.
- Continuing to offer courses, workshops and opportunities to the community.
- Creating and maintaining partnerships.
- Continuing to locate and apply for grants.
- Making events applicable and enjoyable.
- Focusing on offering workshops and events that are well-attended.
- Effectively communicating plans to various community groups.
- Offering support and appreciation to our volunteers.

### **2) What goals, priorities or objectives will you work on in the coming year?**

- Adult Literacy
- Essential Skills Training
- Computer Literacy
- Health Literacy
- Life Skills
- Family Literacy
- Cultural Literacy
- Environmental Literacy
- Physical Literacy
- Community engagement
- Successful programs and events will be continued in the coming year

### **What actions are planned against those goals?**

- Continuing to work with the Huu-ay-aht First Nations to facilitate and support adult education and the tutoring program
- Essential Skills workshops
- Expansion of Toastmasters Club
- Oysters, Authors & Ale
- Short Story & Poetry Competition
- Computer Classes
- Adult Cooking and nutrition classes
- Life Skills workshops including cedar weaving, fish smoking, canning, gardening and knitting
- Another round of Digital Storytelling workshops and Screenings
- Family Literacy Day celebration
- Parents As Literacy Supporters
- Summer camps, which will target elementary and preschool aged children as well as their parents. Providing opportunities to engage in literacy and recreational activities throughout the summer
- Working with the Huu-ay-aht First Nations to promote and support of the Active Living Society
- Dance classes
- Art workshops

**3) What will be required to meet the goals and effectively employ actions for the coming year?**

- Interest, community involvement and participation.
- Staying aware of community interests.
- Volunteers.
- Guidance of Literacy Task Group.
- Leadership and organization.
- Funding is needed to continue programming and the work of the Literacy Outreach Coordinator.
- Support from SD 70 is critical.
- Collaboration and partnerships.

## 4. Central West Coast Dual Literacy

*Literacy is a key lever of change and a practical tool of empowerment on each of the three pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social development and environmental protection.*

*-Kofi Anan, then Secretary General of the United Nations, September 9, 2005.*

*(2012 Decoda Literacy Solutions, Community Literacy Planning Guide, p. 37)*

This report includes the following West Coast communities: Hot Spring Cove (Hesquiaht First Nation), Ahousaht (Ahousaht First Nation), Opitsaht and Esowista (Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation), Hitacu (Yuulu?it?aht First Nation), Macoah (Toquaht Nation) and the Districts of Ucluelet and Tofino.

During the past year as the LOC for the Central West Coast of Vancouver Island region, I took on more of an overseer position to support the progression of the literacy plan. Marika Swan was hired to do some in-community work and brought with her the experience of utilizing technology. Her and Marcie DeWitt (Coastal Family Resources Coalition facilitator) worked closely together and kept me updated as the year evolved.

### **1. Task Group:**

The Coastal Family Resource Coalition (CFRC) continues to fulfill the role of the Task Group for our dual-language literacy plan and represents a wide range of service providers, educational perspectives, and community voices. These include the Westcoast Community Resources Society, Vancouver Island Health Authority, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development, Service Canada, Service BC, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, Nuuchahnulth community agencies such as USMA, Parks and Recreation departments for Ucluelet and Tofino, Pacific Rim Hospice Society, School District 70, and representatives from the RCMP detachments in Ucluelet and Tofino.

The West Coast Literacy Outreach Coordinator works in conjunction with Marcie DeWitt, the facilitator for the CFRC. Marika and Marcie effectively and efficiently utilized the monthly CFRC meetings to report on the progression of the literacy plan. They also brought forward any issues or situations that required funding decisions in order to maintain transparency with a regional perspective. They were able to ensure a regional perspective since the eight communities of the West Coast region host the monthly CFRC meetings on a rotation basis.

## **2. Community Context:**

In the Fall of 2012 a Tech-In-Balance conference was held with Ross Alarid as the presenter. One night was hosted in Tofino and the second night in Ucluelet. The focus of the conference was to promote the use of technology in balance with social, education, work, family and community responsibilities. The original idea for the conference came from a concern voiced by a First Nation person and the end result was a collaboration that included all the West Coast communities.

Over the past year there has been an increase of employment-based training and educational opportunities offered on the West Coast. For example, the Educational Assistant program was offered in Ahousaht and from March to May 2013 English upgrading and two courses in the Early Childhood Care and Education certificate program was offered through North Island College in Tofino.

The Alberni Clayoquot Regional Health Network is an organization entrusted to support Port Alberni and the West Coast communities to develop a health plan that will address regional issues. Specific funds have now been allocated to Port Alberni and to the West Coast region, with community consultation and collaboration evident in the various projects underway. For the West Coast the Food Security Network is moving forward to address access to healthy and affordable food in all eight of the communities.

## **4) Goals and actions for the current year:**

The various projects that the Literacy Plan had worked in conjunction with the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) were completed this year. Those included transferring the Nuu chah nulth Language and Culture program from Ucluelet Elementary to Wickaninnish Elementary in Tofino. A Food Skills course was presented to the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation families which links strongly with the food security issues in the region. The Roots of Empathy program was delivered in both elementary schools and it included a First Nation family's baby. There was also a teen girl's program to address substance abuse issues and promote a more positive healthy life style. As well, there was a Children's Interpretive Walk created in Ucluelet that extended literacy to the outdoor environment.

Support was given to transport six vehicles of people to attend the Language Conference in Port Alberni. This conference provided the participants an enriched learning environment and moved the Nuu chah nulth languages forward in a positive manner.

There were two family events held at the Ucluelet Elementary School that were supported through the literacy funds. Each night there were literacy activities for the children and their families to discover ways to incorporate literacy at home in everyday activities.

There were community events such as The Coming Together Forum and the Here We Come events in Ahousaht, Tofino and Ucluelet that were supported by the literacy funds. Those events are the collaborated efforts of multiple agencies and organizations to build capacity in all the communities, as well as individual family units.

Support was also provided to Ivy Martin of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation in the development of four funding proposals to benefit their communities in a holistic manner. There was also an emphasis on creating community partnerships with other communities in the region.

Work was also done in conjunction with Gisele Martin to develop a community radio project that would involve several Nuu chah nulth dialects. The audio clips will also be available on the Coastal Family Resources Coalition website to provide families with ongoing access to the material.

Additional meetings were organized with the Ucluelet Language and Toquaht Language groups to further traditional teachings in these areas. As well, specific material by Henry Kemmlar was collected to aid in future language learning material and resources. A meeting with the Hesquiaht Dictionary Coordinator also provided valuable information.

One of the main focuses during this year was the preliminary work for a Nuu chah nulth language app. This will be an ongoing project the will require collaboration across the region, but it is an exciting venture.

### **Future Plans: 2013 – 2014**

During the next year there will be continued support given to Marcie with the Coastal Family Resources Coalition meetings and the compilation of the minutes. The monthly meetings will remain the avenue for reporting on the developments pertaining to the West Coast Literacy Plan. As well, a continued partnership with the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust will support the on-going literacy projects within the region.

Support for the Nuu chah nulth language app will continue, as well as the various language classes and traditional teachings. Furtherance of the radio project and Coalition website will be monitored by the LOC.

The Here We Come events are projects of School District 70 and if they are to continue next year, the Literacy Plan will definitely support those endeavors. The same holds true to the other yearly family events hosted in the various communities. This is recognized as an effective way to support family and health literacy. Work will also continue in conjunction with the Food Security Network and their plans for the coming year.

The 2013 announcement of cuts to the LOC position on the West Coast did have a negative influence on preliminary planning for the 2013 – 2014 year. With the renewed commitment for funding for this year, there is still a cautionary feeling as we move

forward. Plans will be formulated in the September and October Coalition meetings as to what the regional literacy priorities are and we will continue to align those with the original West Coast Dual Literacy Plan.

As the next year will afford new possibilities and opportunities, the West Coast region stands ready to venture forward in the promotion of literacy skills within the areas of: problem-solving, social skills, decision-making, reading, math, writing and technology.

Respectfully Submitted By:  
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