

# SCHOOL DISTRICT #81 FORT NELSON

## District Literacy Plan June 2013



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### **Introduction**

The Fort Nelson Board of Education recognizes the importance of improving access to literacy programs for all. *“As a community of learners we embrace opportunities to build successful futures.”* (S.D. #81 Mission Statement) The District Literacy Plan is a statement of our commitment to work collaboratively with key community stakeholders to improve literacy within the Fort Nelson community.

Action planning has continued to focus on enhancing and integrating our work on the four pillars of Literacy: Early Literacy Success for Young Children, Reading Success in Schools, Reading Success for Adults and Reading Success for Aboriginal People.

### **Reflecting on the 2012/2013 Plan:**

Our priorities have continued to follow the path of our original goals, increasing outreach, engagement and awareness in our community. The Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society has continued to offer a variety of programs as an organization as well as in partnership with the Fort Nelson Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Northern Rockies Children and Family Action Committee, NEAT and Northern Lights College. Special events and small group workshops have taken place at the Northern Lamplighters, Chalo Independent School at Fort Nelson First Nation, Phoenix Theatre and School District #81 Fort Nelson schools.

Though attendance in literacy programs and events is on the rise, we still see increasing and maintaining participation as one of our strongest challenges as well is the understanding and awareness of how literacy relates to the programming community members are participating in. We have continued to be attentive in seeking input before scheduling times and locations of events/programs speaking with program participants and performing evaluations and community surveys. We have also continued to promote awareness of literacy services being offered in our community by having a presence at many community events and by jointly coordinating events with other agencies and service providers.

The Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society continues to grow and expand on its many programs, engagement and awareness activities. As a result of our coordinated efforts in recruitment and retention the Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society continues to experience growth in the number of learners attending, as well as the number of service hours provided. As we have not yet experienced a huge influx in our population, we continue to contribute the growth and increase in participants to the continued outreach efforts and awareness activities on behalf of the action committee and the dedicated staff and volunteers at the Society.

We continue to use participation rates as part of our evaluation along with Community & Adult Learning Program Benchmarks (CALP), Canadian Language Benchmarks as well as intake and exit assessments. Our schools continue to use a combination of provincial, district and school data that includes: Benchmarks, DRA, Yopp-Singer, FSA and Provincial exam results, Smart Writing and Great Leaps data.

The Literacy Outreach Coordinator position, as part of the Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society, has allowed for continued collaboration with community partners in helping our focus on the four pillars of success.

Participation in regular Community Round Table meetings, Fort Nelson District and Chamber of Commerce meetings, Northern Rockies Children and Family Action Committee meetings and the Northern Rockies Social Planning Council meetings continues to build collaborative and positive working relationships, develops a better understanding of community perspectives and literacy needs and increases awareness of literacy programs provided by organizations throughout the Fort Nelson community.



We are very proud of the many literacy events, on-going programs and awareness events undertaken this year. The following are 2012/2013 highlights:

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Parenting Series took place with keynote speakers and workshops happening from October through March. Keynote speakers included Dr. Deborah MacNamara and Dr. Martin Brokenleg. This series was made possible through partnerships between Northern Rockies Children and Family Action Committee, School District #81, Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society, Fort Nelson Family Development Society, Children's First, Success by Six, Encana, Northern Health, BCGEU and Central Mountain Air. Huge successes and wonderful feedback from participants. Series was a huge success reached approximately 108 cross generational participants.
- The Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society offered multiple senior specific workshops and literacy events including a computer training series in partnership with the Fort Nelson Public Library as well as dance lessons.
- We celebrated Family Literacy Day in January. The Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society staff led community members, staff and students from the School District elementary schools and Chalo School in active reading activities and a presentation on literacy.

- Northern Lights College’s Career and College Prep continues to offer continuous intake literacy courses for adults.
- In-town tutoring for adults, ESL and skill upgrading continued to be available through the Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society. An ESL Conversation Group is on-going with up to 12 participants interacting at one time. FNCLS offers job seeking mentorship to new ESL community members as well as a Family Practice Group designed to introduce families of all cultures to each other in a fun and interactive learning atmosphere.
- The Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society and Northern Lights College have partnered to offer ESL language classes. The partnership on this pilot program has provided the opportunity to offer language training in a classroom setting which the Literacy Society will continue to offer throughout the summer and on a semester basis as long as interest in the classes continue. Currently there are up to 18 learners participating in these classes.
- Family Adult Literacy Programs were held. These programs are designed to enhance the lives of families by embedding literacy into activities that take into consideration the diversity of our community. We also create awareness and promote additional adult education opportunities available through community partners. The Family Tutoring program designed to promote a healthy homework time relationship with children and parents, as well as improve literacy skills of both adult and child has been very successful in the past year seeing over 8 families participating on a weekly basis any given week.
- The Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society held the 5th Annual International Adult Learner’s Week celebration at the Phoenix Theatre. An awards ceremony was held to recognize learner success in many categories. Learner created artwork was displayed in the lower gallery of the Phoenix Theatre and a slideshow was presented outlining the programming and accomplishments in literacy in Fort Nelson over the past year.
- S.D. #81 Fort Nelson continues to have a focus on literacy in its schools. A variety of literacy strategies are being used from Kindergarten to Grade 12, many using iPads. Targeted reading interventions have increased literacy outcomes for students by the end of Grade 4.



- The Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society promoted awareness through assisting in the organization, planning, advertising and support of many community events and committees including the Fort Nelson Social Planning Council, the Preschool Health Round Up, International Day of Reconciliation and National Family Week celebrations.
- Ready Set Learn was offered in partnership with the Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society, School District #81 and the Northern Rockies Children and Family Action Committee called Families in Motion – Ready Set Learn. Children and parents from 0-6 were engaged in developmentally appropriate guided play activities and literacy activities that they can use at home.
- Through funds made available to the Northeast region from the North Peace Savings and Credit Union the Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society delivered a Basics of Money Management four part financial literacy series. Eight participants attended and a wide cross section of our demographic improved their financial literacy skill level.
- Fort Nelson’s EDI (Early Development Inventory) scores show less vulnerability for Kindergarten students.
- The MDI (Middle Years Development Instrument) was given to Grade 4 students for the first time in 2012-2013. One of the key findings of the MDI is that children’s health and well-being is directly related to the presence of the following assets: Supportive relationships with adults, Supportive relationships with peers, After school activities, Proper nutrition and sleep and Positive school experiences. The most significant scores indicate that only 73% of Grade 4 children report having a Supportive Relationship with Adults and only 65% of Grade 4 students participate in enriching After School Activities. Children who score high on at least 4 out of 5 dimensions of well-being are considered thriving. The 5 dimensions are: Optimism, Happiness, Self-Esteem, General Health and Absence of Sadness. The scores indicate that 63% of the Grade 4 children who participated in the MDI are Thriving.

### **Thinking about the 2013/14 Year:**

The Fort Nelson Literacy Society’s Strategic Plan is aligned with our Community Plan that was developed in 2005.

Long Term Goals:

- Have appreciation for and build upon the strengths of existing learning programs and resources that allow all community members to become literate and develop enthusiasm for lifelong learning.



- Create learning programs and resources to support youth and adults who are not well served by the mainstream learning programs.
- Embed learning and literacy activities in all community settings, for example: workplace, senior's complex, recreation pursuits, youth programs, health programs, churches etc.

**For 2013/2014:**

We are looking forward to continued partnering and collaboration with the Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society, Northern Lights College, and the many community partners working to enhance literacy in Fort Nelson.

The Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society is will be expanding their newcomer programming to build an inclusive and supportive community for new immigrants through the Welcoming Communities contract. Maintaining core programming and continuing to evaluate and improve current programming will continue to be the focus in 2013/2014.

