



# DISTRICT/COMMUNITY LITERACY PLAN 2010 / 2011

*“Committed to each student’s success in learning  
within a responsive and safe environment”*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>District Context</b>	<b>3</b>
• Demographic Data	
<b>District and Community Literacy Plan</b>	
• History	<b>4</b>
• Next Steps	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
• Appendix A: Terms of Reference Community Literacy Steering Group	<b>9</b>
• Appendix B: Community Literacy Plan – GVSD #61	<b>11</b>

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## INTRODUCTION

The Greater Victoria School District and its community partners enjoy a respectful and highly interactive relationship. The District Community Literacy Plan serves as a wonderful example of how when various groups come together for a common cause and higher purpose, positive outcomes occur. We are pleased with the progress made to date.

## DISTRICT CONTEXT

### Demographic Data

The Greater Victoria School District serves students from the municipalities of Saanich, Esquimalt, View Royal, Oak Bay, the Highlands, the City of Victoria, and the following Nations and Aboriginal organizations: Esquimalt Nation; Songhees Nation; Métis Nation of Greater Victoria; Métis Community Services; Victoria Native Friendship Centre; First Nations Interagency Team; and Hulitan Social Services. Schools draw from urban, semi-urban, and suburban areas.

Five MLAs represent the Greater Victoria area. Approximately 197,000 people reside within the School District. Of these:

- 8% of the homes are non-English speaking
- 2.5% of the homes are Aboriginal
- 8% of school-aged children have Aboriginal ancestry

In British Columbia, visible minorities represent approximately 21% of the population. In the Greater Victoria School District, 11% of the population represents visible minorities.

Students come from diverse socio-economic levels with 25 schools qualifying for CommunityLINK (Learning Includes Nutrition and Knowledge) funding.

### **Enrolment 2009-2010**

Our September 30, 2009 enrolment was 18,809 Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTE). This represents an enrolment decline of 243 FTE students from the 2008/09 school year. The enrolment in the Greater Victoria School District has been declining since 1996. We enroll:

- 7352 FTE Kindergarten through Grade 5 students
- 4071 FTE Grade 6 through Grade 8 students
- 6970 FTE Grade 9 through Grade 12 students

Included in the above enrolment are the following students:

- 1451 Aboriginal ancestry students
- 659 International students
- 15 Home-school students

- 975 Students registered in Distributed Learning Programs
- 1464 Students with English as a Second Language
- 2663 Early French Immersion students
- 191 Late French Immersion students
- 2268 Students designated for Special Education Services

## **DISTRICT AND COMMUNITY LITERACY PLAN**

### **History 2006 - 2010**

In 2006 Camosun College hosted a forum of literacy educators, service agencies, school districts, and a temporary regional literacy coordinator to discuss regional literacy needs on south Vancouver Island. Greater Victoria School District was invited to this forum. A subgroup met throughout the summer to identify gaps and priorities and became the Regional Literacy Advisory Group.

In January 2007 British Columbia school districts were mandated by the Ministry of Education to create a community literacy plan, to be revised and submitted on an annual basis in July of each year.

In October 2007 The Ministry of Education provided a Vancouver Island SD orientation to the new district literacy planning process in Campbell River. Island school districts and the regional literacy coordinators discussed beginning plans for community collaboration.

In December 2007 twelve draft district literacy plans were submitted to the Ministry of Education in December and were available as a resource to other school districts in January 2008.

In 2007 Victoria SD 61 received \$10,000 in provincial funding to create a district literacy plan.

In January 2008 an orientation to literacy planning guidelines was provided to all provincial school districts. School districts and communities were in a variety of stages in literacy collaboration and were encouraged to proceed at the pace set by the community.

In January 2008 Community and SD Literacy Planning Guideline booklets (2) were provided for community and school district literacy planning.

In February 2008 the Regional Literacy Coordinator (RLC) met with Eileen Eby of SD 61 to discuss potential processes for developing the literacy plan e.g. the Regional Literacy Advisory Group (RLAG) and agreed to work together to apply for Legacies Now funding.

In March 2008 SD61 and RLAG met to discuss working together, including applying for funds from Legacies Now to augment the SD61 funding. A proposal with a budget was written, reviewed and submitted to Literacy Now by RLAG, which includes Eileen Eby, for the purpose of the literacy planning initiative. The funding request was for \$20,000. The request was submitted by Literacy Victoria, as steward of the funds.

In February, March and May of 2008 the RLC held 3 regional literacy roundtable meetings. One of the primary purposes of the meetings was to inform the community of the community planning initiative and request a) participation on the Steering Committee and/ or b) availability for tasks and resources for the

initiative. Leona Gadsby of 2010 Legacies Now and Diana Twiss of Literacy BC attended the first meeting to provide further detail and answer questions about the literacy plans. These meetings served as a launch of the literacy planning initiative.

In April 2008 the RLC attended a SD Public Education and Policy meeting to discuss the role of the RLC and the literacy planning initiative. Literacy Victoria received confirmation of the \$20,000 Legacies Now funding. Involved agencies discuss implementation plans.

In April 2008 RLAG and SD 61 met to discuss a process for working together including a) pooling Legacy Now and School District funds and b) contracting a literacy planning coordinator. Subsequently, terms of a literacy coordinator contract, including deliverables and timelines, was completed.

In May 2008 a Community Literacy Planning Steering Committee was formed and included members of RLAG and 2 other community members.

In May 2008 funding was secured from Literacy Now for community literacy planning. Literacy Victoria is the steward of the funds.

In May 2008 the steering committee met twice and then with the contractor to review purpose, mandate, principles, scope, membership, accountability. (Appendix A)

In June 2008 the contractor prepared the first deliverable which includes:

- a) A review of the literacy planning process to date
- b) A community profile template (Appendix B)
- c) A data source list for the community profile
- d) A literacy asset inventory template (Appendix C)
- e) An inventory data source list

In June 2008 the steering committee and the contractor met to review deliverable #1. The committee approved the elements of the profile and asset inventory templates. Additional data sources and ways of organizing were discussed.

In July 2008 the community engagement strategy was developed. The goal of the engagement strategy was to determine literacy assets, needs and to make recommendation for literacy initiatives within in the Greater Victoria School District region.

In July 2008 the community profiles for Victoria, Esquimalt, View Royal and Oak Bay were completed.

Between September and December 2008 the community engagement process was implemented. This involved Focus group meetings, individual consultations and two community forums.

In October 2008 the community engagement report was submitted for review to the Steering Committee.

In December 2008 a report on the findings incorporating all data from the community engagement process was submitted for consideration to the Steering Committee.

In December 2008 a meeting was held between members of RLAG (Regional Literacy Advisory Group) and Ms. Leona Gadsby from 2010 LegaciesNow/Literacy to review the Greater Victoria School District draft Community Literacy Plan.

Between January and February 2009 the Community Literacy Plan document was reviewed and edited.

In February 2009 Literacy Victoria received confirmation of \$30,000 Legacies Now funding targeted for the hiring of a Literacy Outreach Coordinator.

In March 2009 Literacy Victoria received confirmation of \$40,000 Legacies Now funding, intended to support the goals of the Community Literacy Plan.

In March 2009 the Community Literacy Plan report was reviewed and accepted by RLAG (Regional Literacy Advisory Group).

In March 2009 RLAG made recommendations to Literacy Victoria regarding the hiring of an LOC (Literacy Outreach Coordinator) and a contract was negotiated.

In April 2009 goals listed in the Community Literacy Plan were prioritized for action.

## **May 2009 – June 2010**

### ***Goal #1: Provide support for Persons with Disabilities***

The Persons with Disabilities (PWD) application form has been analyzed by the Literacy Outreach Coordinator (LOC), the Together Against Poverty Society, (TAPS), and the Community Literacy Plan (CLP) advisory group. Issues as they relate to those possessing literacy challenges have been identified. These have been brought to the attention of MH&SD and others in a quest to gain further understanding and to, where appropriate, seek adjustments.

The ministry, in response to the information exchange, will investigate front-line processes as they relate to people possessing low-literacy skills. The ministry has undertaken to communicate these findings to the LOC in a timely manner.

Following further consultation with the CLP and others, applications from TAPS and the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) to provide scribing support were reviewed. \$8,500 from the year one implementation fund was allocated to implement a program that trains volunteers to facilitate and support those clients who need to access a scribing service.

### ***Goal #2: Literacy Support for vulnerable populations, which include those living in poverty, those involved with the justice system, those with mental health issues, women in shelters, those who are homeless.***

Actions described under goal #1 also positively impact some of those in need as delineated in goal #2.

An application received from Literacy Victoria and the Vancouver Island Regional Corrections Center received favourable reviews. A pilot project using volunteers and targeting the literacy needs of prisoners is

now in place. \$16,000 from the year one implementation fund has been allocated to help support this initiative.

***Goal #3 Support for youth (15-18 years) who have dropped out of school or youth (19-24) who are out of school with a high school diploma but are not working or involved in continuing education.***

Stories are being gathered about youth and their reasons for leaving the school setting.

Youth surveys, seeking input on attitude and reasons are distributed through Volunteer Victoria.

Information was organized on youth programs and this data has been added to the new Community Literacy website.

The LOC and the Community Literacy Program advisory group identified strategies that might reach out to youth described in goal #3.

A joint application received from the READ society and the Boys and Girls Club received favourable reviews. \$8,500 from year one implementation fund has been allocated to support this initiative that involves training people to use the PRAXIS approach.

***Goal #4: Create a website for literacy programs and services in the SD61 area.***

The LOC organized literacy data and readied this for input. A website technologist formatted this information and this now resides at [www.learnnowvictoria.com](http://www.learnnowvictoria.com).

## Next Steps

The Literacy Outreach Coordinator (LOC) will create and implement a website promotion plan, including free promotion opportunities, printed materials, social media (Facebook and Twitter), and links to websites via community organization websites. LOC will assess budget required for promotion strategies.

The LOC will meet with organizations to demonstrate how to use the website and upload information to it.

The LOC will continue with established management activities, including ongoing consultation with the District Community Literacy Plan advisory group.

The LOC will gather literacy stories, including video, for website.

The LOC will proceed with activities underway with the MH&SD and local agencies re: PWD processes.

The LOC will continue to monitor and support all funded initiatives.

The LOC will develop implementation funding guidelines and processes for Year 2 funding and liaise with community re: proposals.

# Appendix A

## Terms of Reference Community Literacy Steering Committee Greater Victoria School District 61

### 1. Purpose/Mandate

The mandate of the Community Literacy Steering Group is to provide guidance to the Greater Victoria School District Literacy Now community literacy planning initiative.

The steering group will guide this planning initiative, identify priorities, and, based on community consultations, make recommendations on program and/or system needs. A report on the planning process and outcomes will be submitted to SD #61 for the District Literacy Plan report required by the British Columbia Ministry of Education.

### 2. Principles

The Steering Committee operates on a set of guiding principles:

- Provide opportunities for all community members to be included in literacy planning process.
- Operate in ways that are uniquely responsive to each community.
- Network and collaborate with interested individuals, groups, programs, organizations, and businesses that support literacy and life long learning
- Maintain a participatory and democratic organizational structure.
- Increase awareness of the importance of literacy and continuous learning opportunities across the community.
- Incorporate an inclusive understanding of literacy: early years and youth, family literacy, adult, Aboriginal, immigrants, ESL, and workplace.
- See literacy as part of community capacity building without duplicating services.
- Maintain a learner focused approach as planning process.
- Work collaboratively to address gaps.

### 3. Scope

The Steering Committee focuses on planning for:

- Aboriginal learning
- Adult literacy, including seniors
- Child and Youth literacy
- Continuous learning
- Family literacy
- Workplace literacy
- Immigrants including ESL

The Steering Committee has responsibility for:

- Assessing needs, interests, and priorities in the communities
- Developing recommendations for literacy initiatives, based on community consultations
- Supporting and working with community organizations, practitioners and community members
- Reporting to the community through personal and work contacts
- Hiring a coordinator
- Guiding and overseeing the Coordinator in the delivery of the Literacy Now planning project as outlined in the Community Literacy Planning guide
- Building partnerships for lifelong learning.

#### **4. Membership**

Membership in the steering committee is diverse, reflecting history, programs, and community characteristics and can include representation of any number of early years, K-12, adult, and Aboriginal groups. New members are welcome to join the Steering Committee at any time.

#### **5. Accountability**

The Steering Committee is accountable to the community and to 2010 Legacies Now for ensuring the completion of the community literacy planning process. The Steering Committee is fiscally accountable to 2010 Legacies Now for the funds allocated to it. Funding is stewarded by Literacy Victoria.

#### **6. Consultation**

A Community Literacy Advisory Group, comprised of those concerned with or active in the pursuit of literacy goals, will, through the literacy outreach coordinator, provide meaningful input throughout the year to the steering committee.