

School District 84
Vancouver Island West

District Literacy Plan

July 2011

Vancouver Island West School District 84 serves 429 students enrolled in the District's five schools:

School Name	Community	Grades	Projected FTE 2011-12
Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School (CMESS)	Tahsis	K-12	54
Kyuquot Elementary Secondary School (KESS)	Kyuquot	1-12	53
Gold River Secondary School (GRSS)	Gold River	8-12	116
Ray Watkins Elementary School (RWES)	Gold River	K-7	154
Zeballos Elementary Secondary School (ZESS) - includes Continuing Education	Zeballos	K-12	52

Three of the schools, Kyuquot, Zeballos, and Captain Meares, are located in remote rural communities. Travel to these schools from the District Office in Gold River requires a commute by logging road of one and a half hours to Tahsis, two and a half hours to Zeballos and four hours to Kyuquot by logging road and water taxi.

The District serves a diverse student community which includes:

	# of Students	% of Total Students
Aboriginal	223	52
Special Needs	81	19
English Second Dialect	93	22

In the Achievement Contract 2011-2012, the District lays out two goals:

- 1) Improve student literacy
- 2) Improve the success of the District's Aboriginal students

The District recognizes that in order to address these goals successfully, we must be in partnership with our communities. To address the success of Aboriginal students, the District has signed and is implementing our first Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement. To improve student literacy, the District is working in partnership with three community literacy committees: Gold River, Tahsis and Zeballos.

Gold River:

Community Context:

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?

Changes in our community have had both positive and negative effects on our ability to support literacy development. Mowachat/Muchalaht First Nations formed an Education Authority which focuses on education in Tsaxana. North Island College offered a Cultural Heritage Resource Management bridging program in Tsaxana which revitalized an interest in education in that community. Seven adults completed their G.E.D. As well, North Island College restructured their Adult Basic Education programs resulting in increased services in Gold River and Tsaxana.

The Gold River Literacy Society opened a Resource Centre, giving a public face to the organization. A variety of programs and services have been provided through the Centre.

Economic hardships continue to plague our community members. Most recently, a cedar mill was forced to shut down resulting in job losses affecting over a dozen families.

Finally, the annual community registration fair was not held last September. This is an opportunity for community groups to connect with the public and was missed. There are plans for it to go ahead in September 2011 and the Gold River Literacy Society will play an active role in its implementation.

Task Group:

Who takes part in the task group?

Directors:

Sandra Reynolds (teacher)

Roz Latvala (teacher)

Travis Lapointe (teacher/counselor)

Members:

Ann Henkelman (Circulation Supervisor, VIRL Gold River)

Arlene Fehr (principal, GRSS)

Cathy Nesbitt (teacher)

Christina Logue (administrative assistant)

Dawn Dakin (business owner)

Jessie Smith (school board chair)

Nadine Simpson (college instructor)

Stefanie Cunningham (speech and language)

Stephen Larre (district principal)

Carrie Tarasoff (Literacy Outreach Coordinator)

How is the work of this group organized?

Under the direction of the Directors and with the advice and support of the members, the LOC implements all programs and the running of the Resource Centre. Society members volunteer as needed.

Community Development and Literacy Collaboration:

What are the important collaborations that have taken place to support literacy and the work of the task group?

We have collaborated with a number of groups this past year including:

Ray Watkins Elementary School	St. John Ambulance Society
Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nations	Freecourse.ca
Village of Gold River	Coho Books
Little Dinos Daycare and Preschool	School District #84
Agnes George Preschool	Success By 6
Vancouver Island Regional Library	North Island College
Gold River Secondary School	Gold River Artists
The Record	Gold River Ladybugs
Alan Farey, tax consultant	Gold River Road Rally
Niki Flynn Photography	Gold River Days
	Irly Garden Centre
	Grant MacEwan University

What are the essential ongoing collaborations?

The essential ongoing collaborations are with Ray Watkins Elementary School, Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nations, Success By 6, North Island College, the Village of Gold River and local business connections.

What makes collaborations work well?

Collaborations work well when there is good communication and a mutual benefit for all involved. We also feel a small town contributes to good cooperation.

Goals and actions for the current year:

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

While many of our goals are ongoing, we have addressed all the goals from our previous Community Literacy Plan:

GOAL A – Sustainability: Structures, resources, connections and communication in place to maintain vitality and viability of literacy plan

GOAL B - Provide literacy support for adult members of the community whose literacy levels are currently a barrier to fully participating in life at home, at work and in the community

GOAL C - Provide free supported computer access to community

GOAL D – Provide opportunities for community celebrations of and around literacy at least once a year

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

The first action in reaching Goals A, B and C was when the Gold River Literacy Society becoming a society on May 13, 2010. This allowed us to take on stewardship of our finances. We opened a Resource Centre on October 2, 2010. The Centre offers computer access and a variety of programs for adults, children and families. We offered three adult learning workshops: income taxes, photography and gardening. We also ran two Pleasure Craft Operator Card study group, a Book Club and a Writers' Club.

Goal D was reached by our involvement in a number of community events. We hosted an Open House and Book Giveaway to kick off the opening of our Resource Centre. We participated in a Book Swap and Readers' Café at the elementary school. We were a stop on the very popular Gold River Road Rally and we sponsored events at Gold River Days.

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?

One major change that we made to the plan was to add a focus on family literacy. We offer two Mother Goose story time sessions per week, one at the Resource Center and one in Tsaxana. These have been very well received in both communities.

Indications of Success:

How do you know that actions taken are working to support literacy? What impact have the literacy initiatives had?

We have a sustainable, public face in the community. Our Resource Centre is a visible presence.

We have computers available for public use.

We have built relationships with many community groups and local businesses.

We provide a place for online students to write exams.

We have several writers in Gold River who have revived their craft and now enjoy sharing their work with others

Five people received their Pleasure Craft Operator Cards.

A man received help in filling out a medical form for his son.

A senior woman is facing her long held fear and is learning how to use a computer.

A Korean woman is learning to speak English.

Children were delighted to receive free books that they could take home and keep!

What are the things that support literacy work?

Good communication, volunteers, and good funding support literacy work. It is important to have Literacy Outreach Coordinator in order to ensure that people's efforts and financial support are put to the most effective and efficient use.

Challenges:

What are the difficulties?

The most difficult challenge we have faced is reaching adults who need literacy help. For this first year, we have focused on building relationships in the community and making our presence known. As we continue to do this, people will come to know we are a safe place to seek help.

What would help?

New ideas are always welcome. For this reason, networking, LOC meetings, e-newsletters and other ways of sharing information are a tremendous help. A regional coordinator would also help as each community has unique challenges and opportunities. A regional coordinator would be able to provide more focus on each community.

For the coming year:

Are there new opportunities, challenges, or issues in your community? How will you respond to those?

As has been evident for many years in Gold River, unemployment continues to offer challenges to our citizens. Child poverty and young, uneducated parents continue to challenge our community. Mother Goose and other similar programs could be used to reach these needs.

Recently we lost our TD Agency which forces residents to travel to Campbell River for even simple banking transactions. However, this may give us an opportunity to teach people about telephone and internet banking.

BC Healthy Communities have been active in promoting a connection between the communities of Gold River and Tsaxana. Maintaining this sensitive relationship could be a great opportunity for the Gold River Literacy Society.

What goals, priorities or objectives will you work on in the coming year? What actions are planned against those goals?

We plan on continuing to develop Goals A, B and C through our Resource Centre and programs. We also plan on adding a focus on family literacy. Our celebrations and events will also have a family focus.

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

We will need ongoing support from the new literacy organization, Decoda Literacy Solutions. Not only financial support but, continued resource sharing, advice and information are all vital.

Tahsis:

This report is being prepared on behalf of the Tahsis Literacy Society to document the work completed to date according to our Literacy Action Plan.

Programs Supported in Tahsis:

Phase 3 of our funding allowed us to develop plans to support the sustainability and growth of literacy programs in our community. Notably to work with First Nations families in the community, youth and seniors, in addition to continuing nutritional literacy, a community garden project and a Farm to Schools Program.

The Tahsis Literacy Society task group consists of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and 5 directors.

Based on our Action Plan which was prepared and approved at our Annual General Meeting in November of 2010, we have been funding and supporting various literacy related initiatives including:

- **YOUNG CHILDREN**

CMESS Strong Start – Received one computer from the Tahsis Literacy Society to use in the classroom and engage young learners.

Puddle Ducks Day Care – Received two computers from the Tahsis Literacy Society to supplement their program for young learners.

- **YOUTH**

Bookmark Contest – The students of Captain Meares Elem. Sec. School participated in a bookmark contest with the theme “What I like most about reading”. Bookmarks were re-produced by the Tahsis Literacy Society and used in the community to promote childhood literacy and to advertise the Tahsis Literacy Society website (www.tahsisreads.com). Winners from each grade were chosen and the first place winners participated in a bookmark signing at the Spring Bazaar. The winners had the privilege of signing their name and a personal message on the back of their creation for each member of the community.

(Total funding \$100.00, total participants 48 students and 44 community members)

Tahsis Literacy New Year’s Eve Party – On the evening of Dec 31, residents – mostly children with their families came out to celebrate. This was a great evening sponsored by the Tahsis Literacy Society and local businesses. The evening included two family interactive shows by a magician, door prizes and finger foods.

(Total funding \$1000.00, total participants 85)

FAMILY LITERACY DAY – Literacy Day was celebrated in the community by having Sing-a-long for the preschoolers in the afternoon and a PJ and Board game event for the older children in the evening.

(No cost, total participants 32)

CMESS Missoula Theatre Production of “Treasure Island” – Another year of funding was provided to the children and youth of CMESS to participate in a live and professional theatre production for the community. This year, there were 2 shows offered. One was a free afternoon show and the later was a popular dinner and theatre combination for \$20.00.

(Total funding \$2650, total participants 45 plus 80 community members in audience)

Spring Break Week – For the whole week of Spring Break, the Tahsis Literacy Society planned events every day. The events included pool games at the local Recreation Centre, board games, knitting lessons, an afternoon of scrapbooking and a week of guitar lessons. The Twang Gang (guitar and ukulele players) was created and has since performed at the Spring Bazaar and CMESS talent show.

Mad Science – The Tahsis Literacy Society helped sponsor a visit from a group of Mad Scientists. Mad Science delivers unique, hands-on science experiences for children that are as entertaining as they are educational. Mad Science is proud to introduce millions of children to a world of discovery while sparking their imagination. Mad Science encourages scientific literacy in children in an age when science is as vital as reading, writing and arithmetic.

(Total funding \$1000.00, total participants 56)

Junior Rangers – The Junior Canadian Ranger Program offers young people in remote and isolated communities across Canada a unique opportunity to participate in a variety of fun and rewarding activities in a formal setting. The Tahsis Literacy Society provided funding to support their efforts and desire to learn more about orienteering. The group was able to obtain resources and have adequate supplies to build local shelters.

(Total funding \$1000.00, total participants 8)

Outreach Program – The Youth Outreach Program is new to the community of Tahsis and is offered by a local young adult. The object of the program is to provide a safe haven for the kids. The kids participate in skill building and team work building activities through games, and relays. They also play sports, and 'trust' games. The outreach program is an opportunity for the kids to get to know each other better and socialize more with each other and utilize leadership skills. The focus is trying to get the kids to gain a better understanding of living a healthier lifestyle by showing them that there are better things to do with their time than make bad decisions.

(Total funding \$1000.00, total participants 10)

- **ADULTS**

Creative Writing Workshop – Local West Coast Author, Anne Cameron, hosted a creative writing workshop for adults within the community. The workshop was a chance for residents to express their creativity, share stories and chat about various authors and their writing styles.

(No cost, total participants 8)

- **SENIORS**

Seniors Life Long Learning – All the funding has been forwarded to the local Heritage Society to complete their work with interviewing and capturing videos of the lives and stories of long time Tahsis residents.

Programs that are in development:

- 1) **Ubedam Theatre group**
- 2) **Nutritional Literacy**

Total Funding remaining from the budget for program implementation for the balance of the year is \$6800 which will be used for the above programs and other literacy related projects in the community as they are presented to TLS.

New Innovative Programs New to TLS:

Tahsis Food Security/Community Garden Group – This group just received another \$10,000 to sustain the existing garden and to purchase additional equipment required. The Community Garden will provide locals with improved access to fresh vegetables and fruits and promote healthy food choices.

Farm to School Program – This program launched April 01, 2011 at CMESS. The F2S salad bar program aims to improve the health of school aged children by increasing access to locally grown, nutritious food and to increase participant knowledge about local food production and nutritional health.

Going forward – The Future of TLS:

2010 Legacies Now has provided funding for a Literacy Outreach Coordinator (LOC) for Tahsis through to April, 2013. We have a part-time coordinator under contract who has great ties in the community and also works at the Tahsis Branch of the VI Regional Library, effectively giving TLS a store-front presence in the community.

Our Literacy Coordinator works closely with the principal and staff at CMESS to identify and support literacy opportunities.

The Tahsis Literacy website is currently being updated with information such as our minutes, various programs and pictures. Check out www.tahsisreads.com soon.

The Tahsis Literacy Society received Phase 3 funding as well as an additional two years of coordinator funds. Additional funding has proven the importance of Literacy in our community. There are still allocated funds within our budget for early, youth, adult, and nutritional literacy to be dispersed over the next year.

Zeballos:

Background

In March 2008, Literacy Now provided funds to Vancouver Island West School District #84 to consult with the three remote communities it serves; Tahsis, Zeballos and Kyuquot. The intent of the consultations was to discover in, as exact detail as possible, precisely what the literacy needs of each community are. In Zeballos, the Ehattis Band undertook the community literacy program. The program failed to realize the goals and objectives of the community at large.

In the fall of 2010 the literacy program was revitalized by the creation of a new task force. The remaining funds held by the Ehattis Band were used by the new task group to strengthen existing literacy programs in the community. The task group, named the Zeballos Literacy Group (ZLG), hired Kim Johnson as the literacy coordinator.

Zeballos Literacy Group (ZLG)

Natalie Nelson
Linda Harris
Margaret El Tantawy
Alison Barber
Adam Barber
Audrey Smith
Joanne Hlagy
Darlene Lariviere

In the fall of 2010, the Zeballos Literacy Group (ZLG) began discussion meetings to identify the needs and latent demands for literacy programming. The members also identified capacity gaps in the existing literacy programs.

Vision Statement

To create, facilitate and sustain a community of learners □

Identified Needs

Adult Education

- Adult Basic Education (reading, writing and numeracy) upgrading
- Adult Dogwood Certificates – grade 12 equivalency
- Entry level work place skills
- Industry and employer training requirements

Early Literacy Foundations (ages 0-5)

- Provide support and further enhancement of the Strong Start program
- Establish new program initiatives to support early literacy foundations

K-12 Literacy Programs

- Establish a school wide reading program
- Provide contemporary resources for the reading program and to the library
- To assist the school in training resource people to use new programs
- To investigate new programs to support school literacy

Support

The Zeballos Literacy Group is supported by the following organizations:

School District # 84

The Village of Zeballos

Nuu Chah Nulth Tribal Council

Ehattis Band

Nuchatlaht Band

Vancouver Regional Library - Zeballos Community Library

Zeballos Elementary Secondary School

Literacy

Literacy is about what we do and how we do it every day. It shapes the way we understand the world, and how we process our personal and community history. It flows from our day-to-day conversations with friends, families and co-workers. Our strength and knowledge as individuals is informed by our literacy skills and shapes how we address the concerns and the hopes we have for our families, and our community.

Community Literacy Action Plan

The *Community Literacy Action Plan* is a community literacy plan that expresses the hopes and concerns of residents of Zeballos as described by community representatives. It also attempts to provide an integrated strategy that supports literacy delivery, as an engine for community-based efforts to respond to community needs. The Zeballos Literacy Group has planned a three-phase implementation strategy to address community needs. The *Community Literacy Action Plan* is based on building capacity, expanding capacity and sustaining capacity.

Phase 1 Strengthening School Literacy Programs

The first phase of our plan is to build the capacity of school programs and to strengthen community partnerships in the delivery of programs. Our initial goal is to expand the capacity of school programs and to establish collaborative working relationships between the school and potential service providers.

Phase 1 included the establishment of processes and procedures for the new Zeballos Literacy Group to qualify for contribution agreements and to meet fiscal accountability requirements.

Management and stewardship of the Legacies Now program was transferred from the Ehatiis Band to the ZLG. The ZLG completed the literacy goals of phase 1 as well as the reporting requirements of the initial funding provided for the Zeballos community.

Phase 2 Develop and establish new initiatives in the community

The second phase of our plan is to establish new programs that meet the needs of the expressed latent demand in our community. The majority of the needs identified by this community and its stakeholders involve supporting and expanding our existing programs. Currently more than fifty percent of our employment aged residents have not graduated from grade 12. The ZLG will explore options to provide grade 12 equivalency and work place readiness training.

Phase 3 Supporting the sustainability of Zeballos Literacy Programs

The final stage of our *Community Literacy Action Plan* is to review our community literacy programs. The focus of this phase will be to support the sustainability and growth of literacy programs in our community.

2010-2011 Phase 1 Strengthening School Literacy Programs

The Zeballos Literacy Group's goal this past year was to to enhance our existing Literacy programs and implement new ones to strengthen learning opportunities for students. We identified the following 4 target areas to help us reach our literacy objectives:

- 1) Expand our Guided Reading program
- 2) Expand our Writing Program
- 3) Implement the Accelerated Reader Program
- 4) Provide library reading resources to ZESS

Summary of the Project

*"In primary grades children are learning to read
and in upper grades they are reading to learn." Anonymous*

Guided Reading Program

Guided reading is a strategy that helps students become good readers. The teacher provides support for small groups of readers as they learn to use various reading strategies (context clues, letter and sound relationships, word structure, and so forth). Although guided reading has been traditionally associated with primary grades it can be modified and used successfully in all grade levels. For example, older students may need to learn new strategies to understand how to read an information book in a way that is going to give them access to the information they are seeking.

Through the grant provided we bought 13 scholastic guided reading kits to complete the entire grade 2-4 set of resources. The school also received a grant from the NTC to add First Nations content book sets to each of these guided reading kits.

Writing Program

The ZLG supported ZESS by providing the Write Trait Program's for K-7 classes. The school district provided the trainers and training time to teaching and support staff. Poster sets have been installed in every class room to support and remind students of the writing steps.

Accelerated Reader Program

The Accelerated Reader Programs provides reading practice for pre-K through high school. Accelerated Reader enables teachers to personalize reading practice, differentiate instruction, monitor progress, and make data-driven decisions to guide each students' reading. AR gives teachers the tools to set and monitor reading goals for every student, while reducing time-consuming paperwork. Through the grant provided we were able to provide the Accelerated Reader program to all ZESS staff, students and parents. We have a 6 month subscription to access their comprehension testing bank.

Contemporary Library Reading Resources

Giving students a wide variety of choices in what to read lets them take control of their own learning, and shows benefits in terms of the amount of reading students choose to do for pleasure. We expanded our existing reading resources to better reflect what boys and girls are choosing to read at home. We also expanded our resources to include parent and teacher professional resources.

Entry Level Workplace Skills and Industry Training Requirements

Our preliminary needs assessment revealed a need for entry level training for youth and young adults in our communities. We began our workplace skill training program by providing Babysitting certification to youth ages 10-13. Fifteen youth successfully completed the course. First Aid training was offered to youth and adults, twelve participants received certification.

Adult Education

The communities of Zeballos, Ehattis and Oclucje were surveyed to assess the interest and need for an adult dogwood program. Community statistics have revealed > 50% of adults in the community have not completed high school. The response indicated that many adults were in interested in pursuing educational options. A partnership arrangement with the school was established. The school will provide the facility and teaching staff for course registrants. The ZLG will open the computer lab and provide staffing to allow students access to computers and the internet to complete assignments. The Ehattis Band is funding the staffing of this position. North Island College is funding some of the curriculum resources needed for the adult courses.

The response to the new program has been much higher than anticipated. As of June 15, 2011 thirty adults have registered for 5 classes each. There are a number of adults just completing one to two courses. The program began in May with partial course offerings for the spring session. Full course offering will begin in September. We anticipate our numbers increasing significantly in the fall as the program information becomes more disseminated in the communities.

Next Steps

The main focus of ZLG phase 2 is to support the school in providing adult education and ensuring students have access to computers and the Internet. The ZLG will provide student support services to youth and adults at risk to promote dogwood completion. Plans are underway to increase targeted library resources for our male readers. We will also continue to support annual updates for new fiction materials to sustain interest for young readers. The ZLG will continue to entertain expressions of interest from it's communities to provide funding for work skills programs and training.

SD84:

The District has worked with each community's literacy committee either through District or school staff. The District has opened its facilities for community literacy activities, supported Adult Education programs in Tahsis and Zeballos, and is actively working through the Enhancement Agreement and other strategies to build the literacy of the students and communities we serve.

The District continues to operate a dual site StrongStart program serving the preschoolers and parents of Tahsis and Zeballos. The Early Childhood Educator commutes between the two communities on a weekly basis and opens the Center two or three days per week in each community depending on the schedule for the week. The enrolment has increased substantially this year to 30 registered children between the two communities.

School District 84 and the Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nation are continuing their partnership for the staffing and operation of the Houpitsas Kindergarten Preschool. The program is staffed by the District while the Band maintains its authority for the school's program content and daily operations. Prior to this agreement the Kindergarten/Preschool was operated solely by the Band. This partnership has created a much closer link between the programs and initiatives of the Kindergarten/Preschool and Kyuquot School.

The District sent 13 staff members to Port Alberni to learn about Precision Reading in 2009/2010. This research based reading intervention holds much promise both as an intervention and scaffolding program to support student literacy. The program was piloted in three schools in April/May 2010 and was implemented in all District schools in 2010/2011.

Precision Reading Intervention as measured by DART and PM Benchmarks	2009-2010 (Baseline)				2010-2011 (Intervention)			
	NY	MM	FM	EX	NY	MM	FM	EX
	68	14	14	4	46	35	14	5

NY = % Not Yet Meeting Expectations

MM = % Minimally Meeting Expectations

FM = % Fully Meeting Expectations

EX = % Exceeding Expectations

For Precision Reading, the data compares the same cohort of students pre and post intervention.

This year's data shows a significant improvement in the percentage of those students taking part in the Precision Reading Intervention who improved from Not Yet Meeting Expectations to Minimally Meeting Expectations in Reading over the past school year. It will be interesting to track these students to see if this program will continue to move them forward to the point where the majority are Fully Meeting Expectations.

Based on this data, the District will focus its actions on continuing the programs which appear to be leading to increased student achievement in reading while researching and implementing new programs to continue to improve student literacy.

Conclusion:

Literacy is a priority for the communities and schools of District 84. Our remote geography and sparse population present many challenges; however, by working together we are able to overcome many of these obstacles and move literacy forward in all our communities.