



Mothers' Day at StrongStart

# District Literacy Plan

June 2009

## **A. BACKGROUND TO DISTRICT LITERACY PLANS**

The Ministry of Education requires that School Districts be responsible for submitting an annual District Literacy Plan that focuses on *four pillars* of literacy:

1. Early literacy success for young children
2. Reading success in schools
3. Reading success for adults
4. Reading success for Aboriginal people

The District Literacy Plan is a commitment by a school district to work with community partners, in a community-wide process in which school districts are one of many participants. The annual plan is intended to update the previous year's plan and to describe the partnerships, trends in programming, issues, barriers, goals and strategies related to literacy throughout the community.

## **B. BUILDING ON THE COMMUNITY LITERACY PLAN**

The North Shore is in the somewhat unique position of having two school districts involved in the creation of the Community Literacy Plan for the North Shore area. This means that two District Literacy Plans are being submitted for this region.

The District Literacy Plan adopted by the North Vancouver Board of Education represents the District of North Vancouver and City of North Vancouver regions.

The District Literacy Plan to be adopted by the West Vancouver Board of Education represents the municipalities of Bowen Island, Lions' Bay and West Vancouver. There are two Community Literacy plans within this geographic region.

The North Shore Community Literacy Task Force has been in place for several years, and had applied for and received implementation funding prior to the submission of the first District Literacy Plan in July 2008. The Bowen Island Community Literacy process began in October 2007 and led to a symposium in June 2008 prior to the submission of the plan to 2010 Legacies Now in January 2009. Lions' Bay municipality is a very small community in which the school is the main assembly area and focal point for the community. There will not be a separate community plan for this area.

In June 2008 the North Shore Community Literacy Task Force submitted its [Community Literacy Plan](#) for the North Shore which contained the following three-year goals:

- Community organizations work together in a collaborative way on literacy issues
- A continuum of literacy supports is available to all residents
- The literacy needs of marginalized groups are understood and acted upon
- Residents support each other in addressing literacy issues
- Individuals, children, youth and families are actively engaged in literacy in increasing numbers

Bowen Island submitted the [Bowen Island Community Literacy Plan](#) in January of 2009 which contains the following objectives:

- Create awareness of the existing resources and facilities on the island
- Ensure access to programs through improved transportation, subsidies for low-income residents, and adequate communication about availability of and access to programs
- Ensure sustainability for existing programs through adequate and long-term funding
- Support inter-generational learning and community building
- Strengthen linkages between organizations so opportunities for collaboration can arise

### **C. PLANNING TOGETHER**

In September 2008, a Literacy Outreach Coordinator was hired by the North Shore Community Literacy Task Force, with funds provided by Literacy Now BC. For this first year of implementation the Task Force chose to focus on the literacy needs of English as Second Language (ESL) learners, in recognition of the significant increase in this population across the North Shore.

Initially the West Vancouver School District was the only West Vancouver School District geographic area representative on the Steering Committee of the North Shore Community Literacy Task Force. In order to more specifically address literacy issues in the West Vancouver School District geographic area, the Literacy Coordinator supported the formation of a West Vancouver Literacy Sub-Committee, with participation from the District of West Vancouver, West Vancouver Memorial Library, Community Centres, North Shore Multicultural Society, WeCAN (North Shore Early Years Table), and the West Vancouver School District. Both the North Shore Community Literacy Task Force and the West Vancouver Literacy Sub-Committee now have representation from the Bowen Island municipality. ([See committee members list](#)).

The West Vancouver Literacy Sub-Committee chose to maintain the same focus as the North Shore Community Literacy Plan. Between the 2001 and 2006 Census there has been a 4.6% increase in recent immigration to the municipality. There has been anecdotal reporting from early learning centres, the library, and schools that more children are arriving at school without previous experience in speaking English.

As a result of planning at WeCAN (North Shore Early Years Table), and with West Vancouver regional partners, we were able to increase opportunities and access for families and early learners (ages 0-5), provide parenting/caregiver courses, and offer after-school experiences for middle years students (9-12) and their families. Many of these opportunities specifically targeted the needs of English as Second Language (ESL) learners.

## D. COLLABORATION

As the District Literacy Plan geographic area is relatively small, and the working relationships are well-established, the process for collaboration is often efficient and effective. Over the past year we have been able to enhance literacy opportunities for community members through a number of new initiatives in addition to those ongoing activities and supports which are summarized in the [Community Literacy Plan Asset Inventory](#) and in the [Bowen Island Community Literacy Plan](#).

### ***PILLAR 1: School Readiness in Young Children***

As a community we are increasingly able to provide services which address the literacy needs of young children. Understanding that the development of children's literacy is dependent upon rich early learning experiences, we have provided opportunities for parents to develop and be supported in experiences which support early childhood development. Wherever possible services have been co-located in informal and formal hub settings within the community.

#### **Ongoing Strategies/Structures**

- Assist Kindergarten teachers in completing the **EDI (Early Development Survey)** in order to assess the community's success in meeting the early development needs of children
- Support parent participation programs such as **Mother Goose, StrongStart Centres and Family Places**
- Continue to host a **West Vancouver Early Childhood Education Fair** and provide support to the **Ready, Set, Learn** programs at each elementary school
- Continue to support **Welcome to Kindergarten** program at each elementary school with assistance from **Bowen Island Public Library** and the **West Vancouver Memorial Library**
- Promote awareness, communication and alignment of services by all partner organizations through WeCAN
- Continue to provide a variety of opportunities for families and early learners (e.g. Mother Goose, Grandfriends) through programming at **Bowen Island Public Library, Bowen Island Community School, West Vancouver Memorial Library, West Vancouver Community Centre and Gleneagles Community Centre**
- The **Supported Child Development Program (SCDP)**, assisting families of children with extra support needs to access inclusive child care. The program, funded by the *Ministry of Children and Families* and hosted by the NSNH, is intended to serve children from birth to 12

## 2008-09 Updates

- Expanded **StrongStart program** to Eagle Harbour Primary School
- Accessed three years of [Success By 6©](#) funding through the Understanding the Early Years (UEY) project with WeCAN in order to provide the following programs to families in West Vancouver.
  - **Farsi Parenting Course** (Family Services of the North Shore)
  - **Family Support workers** for StrongStart Centres and West Vancouver Family Place (Family Services of the North Shore)
  - **Circle of Care** for nannies and caregivers (North Shore Child Care Resource and Referral)
- Received funding from the **Strengthening the Community Connections Grant** in order for the West Vancouver Memorial Library to purchase book collections for use at the StrongStart Centres and West Vancouver Family Place.
- Facilitated workshops for Kindergarten teachers and elementary administrators on the topics of the [Early Learning Framework](#), the [Kindergarten Early Learning Assessment Project](#), [Understanding the Early Years \(UEY\) report](#), and [Welcome to Kindergarten](#)
- Coordinated a **Block Play** workshop for Kindergarten teachers with Fiona Morrison of **Literacy Now**
- Expanded **Welcome to Kindergarten** program to include all English and French-stream elementary schools
- Increased West Vancouver Memorial Library staffing in order to provide support to **Welcome to Kindergarten** programs
- Received support from the **Bowen Island Public Library** for the school's **Welcome to Kindergarten** and **Ready Set Learn** programs.
- Relocated West Vancouver Family Place to the new Community Centre which includes **new co-located services** with Vancouver Coastal Health
- Hired a **hub coordinator** to oversee renovation and rental of Ambleside Play Centre and Gordon House, which will provide infant/toddler child care
- **Municipal Child Care Working Group** developed and presented a revised development amenity policy which was passed by council

## Looking Ahead to 2009-10

- **WHEELS** to visit major parks on the North Shore throughout the summer, with staff from ChildCare, VCH, and a settlement worker, providing parent information for early childhood learning
- Expanding **StrongStart program** to Bowen Island Community School for September 2009
- Municipal Child Care Working Group is bringing forward a **revised Child Care Zoning** bylaw proposal to the June 2009 council meeting for consideration
- Providing increased access to services and information through the new **West Vancouver Community Centre hub**
- Furthering **parent/child outreach programs** at Woodcroft and Park Royal Towers
- Continued **focus on collaboration** with the early learning community through networks and professional development

## ***PILLAR 2: Reading Success in Schools***

The Ministry of Education requires each school district to have a literacy goal within the District Achievement Contract. The objectives for 2009-2011 are directly connected to the first and second pillars of the District Literacy Plan, and are as follows:

- To increase the reading comprehension of all students
- To increase the reading and writing proficiency of ESL students
- To improve the digital literacy of all students

### **Ongoing Strategies/Structures**

- An established **continuum of assessment practices from K-12** targeted at the early identification of learners who are demonstrating difficulty in their development of literacy skills
- **Focused intervention** based on assessment and identification of learning needs
- Professional development model of **collaborative learning teams** which focus on student achievement
- Participation in the **Network of Performance Based Schools** by an increasing number of schools
- **School-based team** meeting structure to plan for student success
- **West Vancouver Memorial Library** provides library outreach and hosts reading clubs, author readings, and **BOOKtopia**, the West Vancouver Children's Festival Annual meeting of school librarians and public librarians to share information on programming, resources, summer programs, and opportunities for collaboration

### **2008-09 Updates**

- Appointed a **Coordinator of Student Support Services** to work with School Based Teams to identify, track and plan for teaching interventions with students who are "not yet within" or "minimally meeting" expectations for literacy achievement
- Created a **.4 FTE Elementary Literacy Support** teacher position to work with teaching staff around the support of literacy instruction and assessment at the classroom level.
- Increased training and access to **Corrective Reading** and **Reading Mastery** programs for students who are not yet within expectations for literacy achievement
- Supported **Assessment for Learning** practices, including **Understanding by Design (UbD)** and the **Secondary Formative Assessment Initiative**
- Provided workshops on **strategies for differentiating instruction** with **Faye Brownlie**, and by the **District ESL Resource** teacher
- Participated in the **ARC-BC project (through SETBC)** to provide high quality digital and alternate format materials for students with physical or cognitive disabilities
- Bowen Island Community School presented its **inaugural Bookfest** which featured a storytelling tent for K-grade 4, a special K-12 book section (divided into different age categories, of course), a display about the Chicklit program at BICS for girls in grade 6/7, a Community Literacy table with information on the launch

of the Bowen Plan and information for youth including the N.Shore story walk, the summer Reading Club, Katimavik, local arts programs and other programs for K-12

- Established the Bowen Island Community School **Youth Service Providers Coalition** whose prime mandate is communication, information sharing, identification of community needs and creation of partnerships related to youth services and programs

### **Looking Ahead to 2009-10**

- Continuation of **Secondary Futures work**, in particular the increased emphasis on student 'voice' in relation to assessment practices
- Continue to provide professional development to all ESL teachers in order to **ensure ESL practice and assessment is aligned** with Ministry of Education guidelines and policy
- Increasing emphasis on the **development of literacy skills in a digital world**
- Teacher **development of assessment rubrics** related to the International Society of Technology Educators (ISTE) [National Educational Technology Standards \(NETS\)](#)

### ***PILLAR 3: Reading Success for Adults***

The leadership of the Literacy Outreach Coordinator and the on-going collaboration and partnerships established by the North Shore Community Literacy Task Force and the West Vancouver Literacy Sub-Committee have helped increase awareness, at the School District level, of specific literacy needs among adults living on the North Shore, and of the services and programs available in the community. Many of the community-based adult literacy initiatives are now included in the 2009 District Literacy Plan. However, on-going updates to these inventories will be necessary as needs in the community are identified and new programs are implemented.

### **Ongoing Strategies/Structures**

- Work in collaboration with the West Vancouver Literacy Sub-Committee, the North Shore Community Literacy Task Force and other community partners, including business and industry, to identify opportunities for community-based and
- workplace literacy programs
- Provide ESL classes and transition-to-university programs through **Capilano University**
- Work in collaboration with community partners to support general interest programs to adults in the community
- Collaborate with community organizations to increase awareness of Early Learning programs that also provide literacy support for parents and caregivers (e.g. **Farsi Parenting** program, **StrongStart**, **Family Place**, **Mother Goose programs**)
- **North Shore Multicultural Society** offers extensive free and low cost ESL classes for youth, adults, and seniors at various locations across North Vancouver

- Bowen Island Community School Coordinator organizes **BICS Community Learning programs** for parents in collaboration with other agencies
- West Vancouver Memorial Library offers programming for adults, including **English conversational corner, computer classes, and social opportunities for caregivers**
- West Vancouver Seniors' Centre offers **computer instruction**

#### **2008-09 Updates**

- Introduced **Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)** to support and connect families who speak Farsi or Korean with available community programs and services
- The **North Shore Welcoming Communities Initiative** is currently developing a database of resources available to newcomers to the region. ESL learning opportunities will be an important component of this directory.

#### **Looking Ahead to 2009-10**

- The North Shore Community Literacy Committee is currently considering providing Literacy Now implementation funding for a number of new initiatives in the community; priority will be given to expand on-going adult literacy programs on the North Shore, or to support new programs based on identified needs in the community

#### ***PILLAR 4: Reading Success for Aboriginal People***

Aboriginal students throughout British Columbia face literacy challenges, low graduation rates and a lessened opportunity for success as adults across the province. This has been a major focus of the Ministry of Education and school districts are required to enter work with the Aboriginal community to develop Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements. As well, District Achievement Contracts and the District Literacy Plans must make direct reference to the achievement and successes of Aboriginal learners. In the 2006 Census 155 people in the West Vancouver School District geographic area indicated that they were of Aboriginal ancestry. The number of students who have been designated as having Aboriginal ancestry is also very low compared to other regions of the province or other areas on the North Shore.

#### **Ongoing Strategies/Structures**

- Continue to develop **Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement** through the West Vancouver School District
- Continue the work of the Aboriginal Enhancement sub-committee of WeCAN
- Continue to provide Early Learning programs that support literacy learning for children, parents and caregivers (e.g. Mother Goose) for the Squamish and Tsleil Waututh communities
- Track individual achievement of K-12 Aboriginal learners on an annual basis in the District Achievement Contract and provide interventions as required



## **2008-09 Updates**

- Maintained a focus on the literacy needs of Aboriginal People through the work of the North Shore Community Literacy Task Force and the North Vancouver School District initiatives

## **Looking Ahead to 2009-10**

- Introduction of **SummerStart** (modeled on StrongStart) at Cap Little Ones for summer 2009; a partnership initiative by the Squamish Nation, NVSD, CAPC, FSNS, WeCAN, and WHEELS
- Continue to develop **Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement**
- Development of new **Bowen First Nations and friends afterschool art program** for youth at Bowen Island Community School

## **E. SUSTAINING THE WORK**

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

The West Vancouver Literacy Sub-Committee has begun discussions of how to raise literacy awareness in meaningful ways with the broader community.

Some suggestions have included a variation on the North Shore Story Walk model which was piloted in North Vancouver this year. This literacy awareness project gathered stories of North Vancouver residents and learners and shared them on printed postcards distributed at locations throughout the area. In 2012 the District of West Vancouver will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and this event would be an opportunity to provide experiences that promote literacy awareness and celebration as a community.

Bowen Island's Literacy Plan has a goal to "support inter-generational learning and community building". This goal would also serve as a good focus for the District Literacy Plan in creating opportunities for youth and adults to work together around community literacy initiatives.

As the West Vancouver School District has responded to budget shortfalls with the cancellation of its Continuing Education and Community Learning programs, there will be a need for partner groups to identify and communicate existing opportunities for adult learners to the community. The District of West Vancouver is working with the School District to incorporate some of the second language courses into their programming. Capilano University has the key role on the North Shore as the lead provider and/or facilitator of formal programming for adults.

As the North Shore Community Literacy Task Force begins to allocate funding to support literacy initiatives in the West Vancouver region, the Sub-Committee will need to work with partner groups to evaluate and report upon successes achieved through this process.

It is essential that a Literacy Outreach Coordinator continue to be in place in order to facilitate the ongoing District Plan, to strengthen connections between existing networks and institutions, and to provide overall coordination between the West Vancouver School

District Literacy Plan regional partners, and the broader North Shore Community Literacy Task Force initiatives. Updating the [BC Literacy Directory](#) will be an ongoing task that requires supervision by the Literacy Coordinator. Funding for this position is necessary to ensure sustainability of the work that has been started.

## **F. REPORTING**

The plan will be presented to the West Vancouver Board of Education and submitted to the Ministry of Education by July 15, 2009.

## **G. COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### ***North Shore Community Literacy Task Force:***

Pat Hodgson Regional Literacy Coordinator  
Surya Govender Literacy Outreach Coordinator  
Joanne Robertson North Vancouver School District #44  
Maureen Ciarniello West Vancouver School District #45  
Sarah Haxby Bowen Island Community School Coordinator  
Elizabeth Jones North Shore Multicultural Society  
Tricia Andrew North Shore Neighbourhood House

### ***West Vancouver Literacy Sub-Committee***

Ann Goodhart West Vancouver Library  
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