

November 16, 2007

From the desk of ...

Jacquie Taylor, Superintendent of Literacy and Lifelong Learning

When we think of success for each of our students, it is impossible not to acknowledge literacy as a foundational element of student learning. As Superintendent of Literacy and Lifelong Learning, I am excited to join Paige MacFarlane, Assistant Deputy Minister of Partnerships and Planning, to work with the Literacy Branch to lead the literacy file across ministries within government and in the field with districts, community agencies and service providers.

As in any new position, my first endeavours involve understanding the work that is underway. Last week it was a pleasure to join the Partnerships and Planning Division to learn more about the work of each branch. It was great to spend some time with Eve Gaudet, Tanis Carlow, Virginia Rego, Greg Balicki and Betty Ryland. This is the team that has been working tirelessly on numerous initiatives such as ongoing management of Literacy Innovation Grants and the Kindergarten Learning Project, implementation of District Literacy Plans, and work on a Pan-Canadian Literacy Action Plan.

Ministry goals will resonate with district staff and principals as they align with school and district goals and initiatives. In short, the Ministry is working to improve student achievement, provide a high quality education system, and improve literacy for all British Columbians.

In the coming weeks and months, I will be reviewing School District Achievement Contracts, District Literacy Plans and School District Innovation Grant Reports to learn more about the initiatives and challenges that face

the field. There is a great deal of good work going on in BC in the area of literacy. One of my challenges will be to find ways to share effective practice throughout the province and also to find ways for us to inquire and think together about our most difficult literacy issues.

Let me know if you have some ideas about how we can work on our literacy goals together. My email is Jacquie.Taylor@gov.bc.ca

Did you know that in BC one million adults can't read safety information, a recipe, or identify the correct amount of medicine to give to a child? Individuals in these circumstances find themselves confined to low wage work, have low job mobility, and are cut off from literature. If they are parents, they have difficulty supporting literacy development in their children. Premier Gordon Campbell aims to make British Columbia the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent, and the Ministry of Education and Boards of Education are taking the lead in accomplishing this aim.

The Provincial Literacy Action Plan titled ReadNowBC focuses on 4 strategic components:

1. Early Learning Success for Young Children
2. Reading Success in Schools
3. Reading Success for Adults
4. Reading Success for Aboriginal People

Through the Ready, Set, Learn initiative, elementary schools around the province have found many ways to welcome and introduce preschool children and their parents to the school environment. StrongStart Centres are being introduced into districts throughout the province, and Family Literacy Programs are found in every BC community.

Literacy is 'core' to the work of schools, and in every school and district in our province programs and initiatives are being implemented to support increased literacy development for our students.

Boards of Education are being asked to develop "District Literacy Plans" by communicating with and facilitating collaboration among post secondary institutions, Aboriginal communities, public libraries, early learning organizations, community organizations, business and other community agencies. Seven District Literacy Plan Forums have been held throughout the province over the past few months. At these forums school district and community partner representatives have gathered to learn more about the requirements for the District Literacy Plan and to hear of the work that is being done by lead districts in each region. The forums have revealed that school districts and their community partners are very concerned about literacy issues and have a sincere desire to work together, now and in the future, to support literacy throughout the lifespan of their community members. Many initiatives are already underway in the area of early learning. The area that is more difficult to tackle is workplace literacy.

A provincial District Literacy Plan Forum is being held January 31, 2008. This forum will provide an opportunity to share effective practices and showcase the work of the 10 school districts that have been asked to take on a leadership role in developing District Literacy Plans.

Assessment for Learning

On October 17, 2007, the first session of the Assessment for Learning webcast series was presented to a record number of participants across the province. Educators Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser led a highly successful program entitled 'Creating the Case for Assessment Practices' to set the stage for the 2007/08 series and introduce participants to the theme of Assessment for Learning.

This year marks the 4th year of the widely received Webcasting for Professional Development series. In 2007, the Ministry of Education partnered with the BC Education Leadership Council. After careful consideration, BCELC selected 'Assessment for Learning' as the series theme, based on its importance to the BC learning agenda.

This year's webcasts will provide participants with the opportunity to:

- Understand and explain the concept of Assessment for Learning;
- Incorporate key current research findings into their daily work;
- Identify, explain and find use for the key Assessment for Learning strategies;
- Explore, describe and plan for ways to create the conditions for increasing Assessment Literacy; and,
- Become involved in action research between webcasting sessions.

In the October session, Judy and Linda focused their presentation on two key questions to encourage participant interest and engagement in the concept of assessment:

- Why is assessment for learning important and valuable for educators?
- How will it make a difference for learners?

Feedback from participants was highly positive – comments focused on the relevance and importance of Assessment for Learning. One participant noted that *"there is a positive energy around formative assessment. That the Primary Program and the Kindergarten Learning Project are models of success and can help the energy to become change."*

Another noted that the session was *"Excellent – very relevant, practical and powerful"*.

I encourage participation by all of your educators and school leaders in the upcoming webcasts:

- November 21, 2007: **Practical Strategies**
Faye Brownlie
- January 16, 2008: **Practical Strategies K – 12**
Caren Cameron
- February 13, 2008: **Practical Strategies K – 12**
Yrsa Jensen
- April 16, 2008: **Pulling it all Together**
Faye Brownlie and Caren Cameron
- May 7, 2008: **Pulling it all Together**
Judy Halbert, Yrsa Jensen, Linda Kaser

Kloss was named “Most Valuable Player” for his team. Luke also and won the “Golden Boot” award, a trophy awarded to the individual player who scores the most goals during the course of the 3-day provincial tournament.



Emery Dossdall, Ed D
Deputy Minister of Education

Webcast archives can be found online at:

<http://bcelc.insinc.com/webcastseries>

SAMSS Takes Home Awards at Provincial Soccer Tournament

After much hard work fundraising, training and successfully winning the northern zones, Sir Alexander MacKenzie Secondary from the Central Coast School District qualified for the Single ‘A’ Provincial Soccer tournament recently held in Langley, competing as one of the top 12 teams in the province.

Says Coach Gerry Kloss, “Not only did we place 9th out of the 12 teams, we did this with a co-ed team in an all-boys tournament and we come from the smallest school in the province. This team has spent years playing together in the Valley Soccer League and on the SAMSS school team, they work extremely well together and it shows in the way they play on the field.”

In addition to their 9th place finish, the team came away with the “Fair Play” award for their outstanding sportsmanship on and off the field, and striker Luke