

November 30, 2007

## How Are Our Kids Doing?

On Wednesday, November 28, the results of a recent Grade 4 international reading assessment were released. In 2006 more than 4,000 BC Grade 4 students from 148 schools participated in PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study). This was the first time BC participated in this assessment, and our kids did extremely well. British Columbia, along with Alberta and Ontario were among the highest achieving participants. Based on the overall score, BC was fifth, among 40 participating countries and five Canadian provinces. Only Russia, Hong Kong, Alberta and Singapore had higher scores, and in no case was the difference statistically significant.

But more importantly, 24% of BC students scored in the advanced level - only Singapore, Russia, Alberta and Bulgaria had higher proportions at the advanced level. BC had only 12% of its students in the lowest performance level. BC girls did better than BC boys - but only by a slim margin. In other words, BC schools and BC families are doing a good job of narrowing the gaps in reading achievement and helping improve the life chances of our children. Furthermore, the majority of BC students reported that they read for pleasure every day or almost every day - and reading for fun leads to higher achievement in reading. Details about PIRLS 2006 are found at: <http://pirls.bc.edu>

## Rural Educators Use Online Professional Development Tools

The Rural Steering Committee is striving to scaffold the professional online learning series off of the conversations that were started at the Rural Conference

in order that the main learning event – the conference - doesn't turn into a one off event but is the catalyst for ongoing learning. The key concepts of the online series are: educators networking across the province, improvement in classroom practice by sharing 'what's working' and minimizing the costs by using technology to connect folks around the province.

The online learning series is organized around the following four themes: **Exemplary Practice** led by Linda Kaser and Judy Halbert, **Learning and Thinking** led by Faye Brownlie, **School Completion** led by Okanagan Mainline and **The Power of Technology and E Learning** with presentations from educators around the province. We've had four scheduled sessions already since the conference and our early assessment is that these sessions are better attended than any of the sessions last year.

Online presentations are archived and made available on the LearnNowBC site along with the sessions that were archived last year. In order to make the content presented more useable and relevant, many of the sessions will be broken down into ten minute or shorter lessons by either editing the archive or by pre-recording specific components of this session.

The Professional Online Series runs every Monday afternoon at 3:30 and is accessible from any computer with an internet connection. Upcoming sessions include:

<b>Date:</b>	December 3, 2007
<b>Training Session Description:</b>	Web 2.0 - Wikis and Blogs
<b>Theme:</b>	Technology
<b>Presenter:</b>	Andy and Raven Sundahl

<b>Date:</b>	December 10, 2007
<b>Training Session Description:</b>	Advanced Placement Online
<b>Theme:</b>	Exemplary Practice/Technology
<b>Presenter:</b>	Brent Sawatzky

<b>Date:</b>	December 17, 2007
<b>Training Session Description:</b>	Quality Online Learning Forum
<b>Theme:</b>	Technology
<b>Presenter:</b>	BC Learning Network/Distributed Learning Unit

<b>Date:</b>	January 14, 2008
<b>Training Session Description:</b>	Inter-Action Strategies for Math
<b>Theme:</b>	Learning and Thinking
<b>Presenter:</b>	Faye Brownlie/Carole Saundry

The Full Series Schedule is located at:

[http://www.learnnowbc.ca/educators/Rural\\_Education/Prof\\_Learning\\_Login.aspx](http://www.learnnowbc.ca/educators/Rural_Education/Prof_Learning_Login.aspx)

This session is directed at both Elementary and Secondary. The session occurs at 3:30 and can be accessed from any computer with internet and speakers (microphone optional). <https://sas.illuminate.com/m.jnl?p?sid=659&password=M.4A14DBB9315C0E4FAB0AC0E657654E>



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