

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan 2014/2015

Literacy Matters Association Abbotsford



Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

Table of Contents

<u>Reflections on the Current Year</u>	3
1) Task Group	3
2) Community Context	4
3) Community Development & Literacy Collaboration	6
4) Goals and Actions	7
5) Indications of Success.....	12
6) Challenges	13
<u>Thinking About the Upcoming Year</u>	14
1) Challenges and Opportunities	14
2) Continuing Goals and Actions	14
3) Requirements to Meet Goals & Employ Actions	17
4) Measuring Success.....	17

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

Reflections on the Current Year

1) Task group:

a. Membership in the task group:

- i) Literacy Matters Abbotsford membership represents community perspectives through a variety of associations. Current members include:

Community Members
Fraser Valley Métis Association
Business Community Member
Abbotsford School District #34
University of the Fraser Valley
Fraser Valley Regional Library
Community Aboriginal Centre Representative
Abbotsford Community Services
Children First/Abbotsford Early Childhood Committee
School Trustee
Central Abbotsford Community School Society
West Abbotsford Community School Society
Women's Resource Society of the Fraser Valley
MSA Museum
Rotary Club of Abbotsford/Sumas
Abbotsford Works

b. How is the work of this group organized:

- i) Literacy Matters Abbotsford Task Group is comprised of a voluntary committee, an elected board and the Literacy Outreach Coordinator. Literacy Matters Abbotsford is represented at the Child and Youth Committee. As per the goals of the previous Community Literacy Plans, two working tables, the Aboriginal table and the Adult table have been established. They meet regularly and have members that differ from those on the Task Group. Both tables report back to the Task Group.
- ii) The Aboriginal Literacy table is comprised of membership from the following organizations:
Community members
Fraser Valley Métis Association
Matsqui First Nation
Sumas First Nation
Abbotsford School District
United Way
Fraser Valley Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

- iii) The Adult Literacy table is comprised of membership from the following organizations:
 - University of the Fraser Valley
 - Community Access to Literacy and Learning Program
 - Abbotsford Community Services
 - New Beginnings
 - Fraser Valley Regional Library
 - Temples of Abbotsford
 - Abbotsford School District
 - Elizabeth Fry Society
- iv) As needed various ad hoc groups are formed; they report back to their table of origin as well as to the Task Group. Ad hoc tables for this year include:
 - Community Reading Challenge
 - Family Literacy Project
 - Terms of Reference
 - Adult Literacy Networking
 - Community Literacy Plan
 - Essential Skills Committee
 - Reading Buddies
 - Raise a Reader Distribution

2) Community context:

Abbotsford resides within the traditional ancestral territory of the Sumas and Matsqui First Nations. It is the third most ethnically diverse community in Canada. Abbotsford is making significant strides in its effort to meet the learning needs of the English as an Additional Language community. The Early Development Inventory data indicates that our vulnerability of children has increased from 28% to 33% which is above the provincial average. Early learning issues continue to be a major focus in Abbotsford. The community, through various agencies, seeks to increase capacity and strengthen the provision of literacy supports, particularly in communities with vulnerable families.

With regards to adult literacy, most programs for formal adult learning and essential skills training are provided by the University of the Fraser Valley. However, the current system of program delivery falls short of meeting the learning needs of many local adults not accessing formal programs. Although community-based literacy programs offer services that target adult learners, they face ongoing sustainability challenges due to a lack of core funding. Further inquiry into the bridging of formal versus non formal learning will be critical.

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

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?

i) Positive

1. Raise a Reader funds: The funds have been dispersed through a collaborative process of determining community needs. These funds have provided the ability for programs to increase their capacity to serve families. One of the guidelines of disbursement is to ensure stability of the past years' programs while examining the needs of new programs in the community.
2. The Adult Table and the Aboriginal Table have brought together services providers and community members with interests in specific areas of literacy. The membership at the tables has remained consistent throughout the year. Meetings are held on a regular basis with meeting dates determined in advance in order to ensure maximum participation.
3. Increased networking: Abbotsford News has responded positively regarding Literacy Matters Abbotsford events as well as a news spread on literacy in January. Displays and presentations to the Abbotsford community (Abbotsford Connect; Winter Festival; Family Literacy Day; Abbotsford Early Childhood Committee; Abbotsford Child and Youth Committee; South Abbotsford Church; Harvest Box distribution; Parenting Skills for Newcomers Program; Family Gatherings; Abbotsford Pow Wow) has resulted in a greater community awareness of Literacy Matters Abbotsford. In turn, more community members and service providers sit at the various tables as well as volunteer in various capacities such as literacy tutors.
4. Literacy Matters Abbotsford Website: A website has been developed to increase the profile of Literacy Matters Abbotsford and its partners.

ii) Negative

1. Uncertainty of funding affects the ability of service providers to offer literacy programs. Funding is unstable and programs struggle with downsizing or the possibility of being eliminated.
2. The Early Development Inventory data in wave 5 indicates that our vulnerability of children has increased from 28 to 33% which is above the Provincial average.

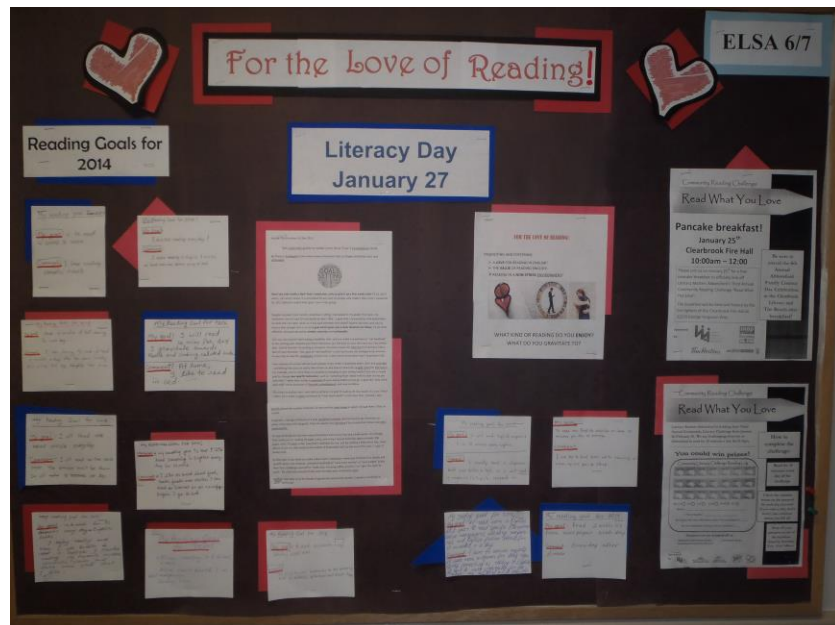
Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

3) Community development and literacy collaboration:

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

- i) Community Reading Challenge: In conjunction with the Abbotsford Family Literacy Day Celebration, co-hosted by the Clearbrook Library (member of Fraser Valley Regional Library) and The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford, the third annual pancake breakfast took place in January 2014. The breakfast served as the launch of the Community Reading Challenge, Read What You Love. Community partners participating in the breakfast included: Clearbrook Fire Fighters; Fraser Valley Regional Library; Abbotsford School District; Abbotsford Early Childhood Committee; Tim Hortons; Real Canadian Superstore; Costco; International House of Pancakes and The Mad Butcher. The Community Reading Challenge partners included: Fraser Valley Regional Library; Abbotsford Community Services; School District 34; Abbotsford Early Childhood Committee; Abbotsford News; The Bookman; MSA Museum; Old Spaghetti Factory. Participation in the pancake breakfast and the reading challenge increased by 50% over the previous year. The public was receptive to this initiative and positive feedback included, "I had fun filling out my reading log after reading 15 minutes a day". This year there were a number of inter-program and inter-agency challenges which had a positive impact on participation numbers. Plans are in place to continue this initiative for 2015. Emphasis will be on individual and small group challenges to again increase participation.



Bulletin Board, Abbotsford Community Services

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

4) *Goals and actions for the current year:*

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

- i) Aboriginal literacy: increase literacy of Aboriginal people in the community
 - 1. Continue the development of a library space at the Community Aboriginal Centre
 - 2. Continue the development of programming at the Community Aboriginal Centre
- ii) Adult literacy: increase literacy of adults in the community
 - 1. Facilitate the provision of seamless integrated literacy programs and services for adult learners
 - 2. Explore ways to increase awareness of adult literacy in the community and engage the business community in the workplace skills enhancement projects
- iii) Family Literacy: increase literacy of families in the community
 - 1. Continue to focus on supporting family literacy
 - 2. Continue to support the Reading Buddies program
 - 3. Find new ways to connect to the community re: literacy

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

- i) Aboriginal Literacy
 - 1. As in previous years, the focus for the Aboriginal table is to support the delivery of sustainable, culturally relevant literacy programs for Aboriginal learners. Partnerships have been developed with the Matsqui First Nation, Sumas First Nation, and the Fraser Valley Métis Association. Actions including programs and initiatives that have taken place are discussed below.
 - a. Continue development of the library space at the Community Aboriginal Centre: The vision for the Aboriginal Community Library was established in the fall of 2011 and came to fruition by the fall of 2012. Partnerships included the Abbotsford School District; the Aboriginal Table of Literacy Matters Abbotsford;

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

University of the Fraser Valley; Fraser Valley Regional Library; and Success by Six. This year a naming ceremony was held with the naming of the library after Ray and Millie Silver, Sumas First Nation Elders.



Kevin Godden and Ray Silver at naming of the Ray and Millie Silver Aboriginal Library

A volunteer has now been recruited to catalogue new books and re-shelve returned books. There are currently around 3,000 Aboriginal titles in the Ray and Millie Silver Aboriginal Library.

A sponsorship program has been created, with a letter writing campaign, where individuals/businesses can buy a library shelf and have their name on a plaque.

- b. Continued development of programming at the Community Aboriginal Centre:
 - 1. Aboriginal Parents as Literacy Supporters starting in March 2014 and ran monthly through to June. This program will continue again in the fall. Partners in this program include Stol:lo

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

First Nation, Abbotsford School District,
and Literacy Matters Abbotsford.

2. A Partnership between Fraser Valley Aboriginal Services Society (Xyolhemelh) and Literacy Matters Abbotsford's Aboriginal Table has resulted in evening programming including Pow Wow dancing and Regalia making. Current funding will allow this programming to run until December 2014.
3. Food Skills for Families, a six week nutritional literacy program, was implemented at Matsqui First Nation. This program was introduced to Chief McKay through Literacy Matters Abbotsford. The partners included Matsqui First Nation Care Committee, Canadian Diabetes Association, and Literacy Matters Abbotsford.

ii) Adult Literacy

1. The focus for the Adult table is to work to meet the gaps in the community re: adult literacy through networking and collaboration. Actions include:
 - a. Facilitating the provision of seamless, integrated literacy programs and services for adult learners: Work is continuing re: partnering with service providers. The Women's Resource Society of the Fraser Valley is a new member of Literacy Matters Association and is planning to send a representative to the Adult Table in the fall. Fraser Valley Aboriginal and Family Development Services Society has become a member of Literacy Matters Abbotsford; Works BC has committed to sending a representative to the Adult Table as well.

Discussions are continuing as to how best address the needs of low skilled adults. The Abbotsford School District is looking at their role in partnering with this population of learners.

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

The Adult Literacy Networking ad hoc group is planning a fall Essential Skills project with the goal of creating awareness around Essential Skills and the programs available.

- b. Explore ways to increase awareness of adult literacy in the community and engage the business community in workplace skills enhancement projects: Presentations to various business groups (Rotary groups, Indo-Canadian Business Association) have promoted dialogue around literacy and adult learners and issues.

iii) Family Literacy

1. The focus is for Literacy Matters Abbotsford to network with and support existing family literacy programs and services.
 - a. Continue to engage family literacy providers/early learning at the Task Group table through dialogue around Raise a Reader funds: This year saw the funds being distributed among the following programs: Reading Rascals; Pajama Playtime; Family Education Parenting Program; Aboriginal Parents as Literacy Supporters/Ray and Millie Silver Aboriginal Library; Story Time in the Park; Family Paths to Literacy
 - b. Explore alternate models/partners for the Family Literacy Project: Literacy Matters Abbotsford is currently in discussion with the Abbotsford School District re: potential for developing a family literacy program for adults with low level literacy skills.
 - c. Continue to participate in community events: By attending a number of community events in Abbotsford, the profile of Literacy Matters Abbotsford is being raised. This is an opportunity to provide information, link people to programs and to find volunteers for literacy programs (e.g. Community Access to Learning and Literacy, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada).
 - d. Continue to hold the yearly "Read What You Love" campaign: As mentioned in 3a, plans are underway to

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

continue with this campaign next year. The many community sponsors make this event low cost (we made a profit of \$200 on the free pancake breakfast) and hosting this event yearly makes it more recognizable to the community.

- e. Continue to fund the Reading Buddies coordinator position while actively exploring other funding sources: Currently presentations are being booked with two community organizations in order to secure funding for the Reading Buddies coordinator position.
 - f. Expand Reading Buddies to other areas of the community: Reading Buddies continues to be offered at Clearbrook Library and has expanded to Abbotsford Community Library.
- c. *What adjustments were made to the plan? Were there new opportunities or were there changes that did not allow for some actions to be taken?*
- i) New opportunities:
 - 1. Programming at Matsqui First Nation – Food Skills for Families program was run in April and May. This was in conjunction with a current interest of a weight loss challenge being run at Matsqui First Nation.



Matsqui First Nations Food Skills for Families - new aprons!

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

ii) Changes:

1. Aboriginal Parents as Literacy Supporters was held at the Community Aboriginal Centre rather than Matsqui First Nation due to the low numbers of children in the early years age group.
2. Adult Table Networking Event was cancelled due to low enrollment.
3. Support establishment of adult reading programs within temples was changed to "support of adult reading programs" in general

5) *Indications of success:*

- a. *How do you know that actions taken are working to support literacy? What impact have the literacy initiatives had? It is important to include examples to illustrate the impact*

- i) Ray and Millie Silver Aboriginal Library: Library resources have been used by community members as well as teachers in the Abbotsford School District. This is tracked by people signing out the resources.
- ii) Aboriginal Parents as Literacy Supporters: This program began in March of this year with monthly sessions to June. Each session there has been new families attend. In May one child, attending for the first time, exclaimed, "I have three new books in my bag!" The excitement was evident on her face.
- iii) Food Skills for Families: Meeting the needs of Matsqui First Nation has strengthened the working relationship with Literacy Matters Abbotsford. Chief McKay stated, "I look forward to working with you again."
- iv) Reading Buddies Program: This year there were 102 Little Buddies matched with 92 Big Buddies, an indication of high interest in this successful program. The program is now offered in two locations in order to ensure more accessibility for families. The Reading Buddy coordinator has conducted a satisfaction survey of both the learners and the volunteers to assure accountability of this program.
- v) The ongoing face-to-face meetings within the various tables have allowed for networking of services as well as the dissemination of information. By keeping community members abreast of services,

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

organizations, and opportunities learners' needs are more effectively met.

- vi) Solidification of relationships results community capacity building within Abbotsford. There have been numerous opportunities to learn about and respond to needs in the community, thereby removing roadblocks for learners. Some examples of capacity building include:
 - 1. Building of relationships among members of different agencies, service providers have enhanced the bridging of learners from non-formal to formal learning contexts.
 - 2. Interagency sharing of information and distributing of materials for broader dissemination has been available to the Abbotsford community. For example, webinars and workshop events have been broadcast throughout the community.

b. *What are the things that support literacy work?*

- i) Having a Literacy Outreach Coordinator who encourages collaboration by supporting, monitoring, and following through on needed actions and delegating responsibilities appropriately;
- ii) A strong network of community partners dedicated to the enhancement of literacy initiatives at all levels;
- iii) Maintaining the momentum of collaborative work by having regular Task Group meetings and reporting on actions taken;
- iv) Having Task Group members sit at community tables to raise awareness of literacy issues when these arise;
- v) Having the Literacy Outreach Coordinator make presentations to various service clubs, organizations, and businesses has broadened the awareness of literacy issues and initiatives within the Abbotsford community.

6) *Challenges:*

a. *What are the difficulties?*

- i) Time for Literacy Matters Abbotsford meetings and projects in addition to work commitments;
- ii) Funding to support ongoing collaborative literacy projects;

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

- iii) Uncertain Literacy Outreach Coordinator funding undermines the commitment of community stakeholders.

b. *What would help?*

- i) Stable and ongoing funding to support the development and sustainability of programs to assist learner;
- ii) Stable and continuous funding would encourage stakeholders to engage in and commit to long term literacy projects.

For the Upcoming Year

1) *Challenges and Opportunities:*

- a. *Are there new opportunities, challenges or issues in your community? How will you respond to those?*
 - i) Based on unemployment levels in Abbotsford, workplace/employment literacy challenges may be of concern. Attention needs to be focused towards creative/alternative approaches to “pathways out of poverty”. Bridging between the informal/non-formal and formal learning opportunities (an adult learning centre) will provide a “pathway out of poverty”).
 - ii) There is a lack of awareness regarding Essential Skills in the community. The Adult Table will consider ways in which Essential Skills can be marketed to the community at large. Literacy Matters Abbotsford will address this as one of the actions under the Adult Literacy goal by reaching out to the business community. Partnering with employers to the value of increased Essential Skills will be a focus.
 - iii) The Early Development Inventory data in wave 5 indicates that Abbotsford’s vulnerability of children has increased from 28 to 33 % which is above the Provincial average. Continuing to support family literacy through Raise a Reader funding will be one approach to decrease vulnerability. New opportunities to work with Abbotsford School District will provide more collaboration and community partners/resources to meet the growing needs of families.

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

- a. Goal: increase literacy of Aboriginal people in the community

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

Objective: Support the expansion of the Ray and Millie Silver Aboriginal Library at the Community Aboriginal Centre

Actions:

- i) Promote increased use of the library resources through various means (brochure distribution, social media, presentations)
- ii) Increase library holdings through Raise a Reader funds and other agency support

Objective: Continue the development of programming at the Community Aboriginal Centre

Action:

- i) Explore ways to continue bring afternoon/evening programs to the Community Aboriginal Centre including Aboriginal Parents as Literacy Supporters

Objective: Continue developing relationships and programming with the Aboriginal community (Matsqui First Nation, Sumas First Nation, and Fraser Valley Métis Association)

Action:

- i) Sponsor Family Gatherings at First Nations communities
- ii) Collaborate with Sto:lo Nation to explore family literacy opportunities.

b. Goal: to increase literacy of adults in the community

Objective: Facilitate the provision of seamless integrated literacy programs and services for adult learners

Actions:

- i) Continue to host adult literacy networking/workshop events with a greater focus on broadening the participation of community members
- ii) Continue to work in partnership with women's and men's service providers; family focused service providers; Work BC; Corrections Canada i.e. Elizabeth Fry Society
- iii) Establish new partnerships with various community members i.e. health representatives and family wellness

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

- iv) Support establishment of adult reading programs where a need is identified
- v) Explore the creation of an adult learning centre where individuals can access support from a range of literacy service providers
- vi) Continue to explore how Abbotsford can provide more effective bridging to prepare low skilled adults to qualify for entry-level semi-skilled jobs or enter college occupational certificate programs

Objective: Explore ways to increase awareness of adult literacy in the community and engage the business community in workplace skills enhancement projects

Actions:

- i) Continue to make presentations to various business organizations
- ii) Explore how to raise awareness of Essential Skills within the community by working together with local employers and labour groups to better understand the literacy needs of Abbotsford most vulnerable adults, including social assistance recipients and/or those with low education/low skills, in finding and retaining local living wage jobs.
- iii) Explore ways to promote digital literacy in the Abbotsford community.

c. Goal: to increase literacy of families in the community

Objective: Continue to focus on supporting family literacy

Action:

- i) Continued work with the Abbotsford School District and its early literacy initiatives
 - 1. Promote family literacy through:
 - i. Strong Start programs and subsequent family support
 - ii. Ready Set Learn events
 - iii. Shared Learning annual parent evening
 - 2. Implementation of the inquiry-based learning opportunities for parents and preschoolers
- ii) Continue to engage family literacy providers/early learning at the Task Group table through dialogue around Raise a Reader funds

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

- iii) Explore alternate models/partners of the Family Literacy project
- iv) Continue to participate in community events i.e. Abbotsford Family Literacy Day Celebration
- v) Continue to hold the yearly "Read What You Love" campaign

Objective: Continue to support Reading Buddies program

Action:

- i) Continue to fund the Reading Buddies coordinator position while actively exploring other funding sources i.e. community grants

Objective: Find new ways to connect with the community re: literacy

Action:

- i) In partnership with Rotary Club of Abbotsford/Sumas provide book bins in the community where families can access free books
- ii) Submit a series of articles to the local newspaper showcasing various service organizations
- iii) Explore future opportunities to support a family/community initiative that gathers and publishes stories; youth, elders and families interview, transcribe, discuss, edit oral history to produce literacy materials

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

- a. Meeting the above goals and actions will require commitment; communication; relationship building; concrete partnership projects as well as continued engage and support of new and existing projects.

4) How will you measure the success of actions taken to address those goals?

- a. Review the goals, objectives, and actions above in September, January, and April. Through input and feedback from table members, changes will be made as needed.
- b. Specific goals:
 - i) Increase literacy of Aboriginal people in the community

Abbotsford District Literacy Plan

June 2014

1. Track evidence of new partnerships made and programs implemented
 2. Track of attendance and/or participation levels in various programs
- ii) Increase literacy of adults in the community
1. Track evidence of new partnerships created
 2. Track attendance/participation at adult literacy networking/workshop events
 3. Track creation of new initiatives targeted at low literacy level adult learners
- iii) Increase literacy of families in the community
1. Track of attendance/participation of families attending events to support family literacy
 2. Survey responses from community members attending these events
 3. Track number of referrals as a result of Nipissing screening.
 4. Track creation of new initiatives targeted for families