

SD71 Comox Valley District Literacy Plan September 2010 – June 2011



Submitted by:

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Background:

September 2010 to June 2011 is the third year of implementation of the Comox Valley Community Literacy Plan (July 2008) and the final year of Literacy Now funding. The Ministry of Education has committed funds to community-based literacy coordination, which has supported the Literacy Outreach Coordinator position, for the past three years (September 2008 to June 2011).

Implementation of the literacy plan is guided by the Comox Valley Literacy Now (CVLN) Steering Committee which includes representation from School District 71, North Island College, Adult Learning Centre, Wachiay Friendship Centre, Creative Employment Access Society, Vancouver Island Regional Library and literacy resource professionals. The Steering Committee meets monthly. A larger CVLN Committee meets three times a year to share literacy/learning information, services, and resources and to discuss literacy issues, events, and programs. The CVLN initiative is coordinated by Danielle Hoogland, Literacy Outreach Coordinator (LOC). The Steward of the CVLN funds is the Vancouver Island Regional Library (See Appendix 1: Comox Valley Literacy Now Community Members 2010/11).

Community Context:

Demographics

The population of Comox Valley continues to grow. The BC Stats 2010 population estimate is 64,642 and the population is projected to increase by almost 2% a year over the next 5 years. A significant proportion of residents are over the age of 50.¹ The number of students enrolled in School District 71 continues to decline. In 2006/07 there were 9104 school-aged students enrolled in SD71. In 2010/11 there were 8537 school-aged students. Enrolment trends, however, indicate the enrolment will begin to increase in 2012 (see Appendix 6: Enrolment trends). Youth aged 20-25 represent only 5.3% of the

¹ Comox Valley Labour Futures Project 2006, 4-2

population the Comox Valley.² A large number of young adults leave the Comox Valley for education, employment or travel opportunities.

Labour Market and Regional Development

For those individuals either in or entering the labour market, the Comox Valley offers challenging labour market conditions: a service and tourism based economy which offers mostly part-time, low-paid employment. Of those individuals who are active in the local labour market, only 41% has full time, year round employment.¹ The largest employer is the Canadian Forces Base 19 Wing Comox. Other top employers include Mount Washington, Crown Isle Golf Course, Kingfisher Resort and Spa, and the Coast Westerly Hotel and Conference Centre. The approximate breakdown of employees in the Courtenay Census Agglomeration by occupation grouping is as follows; Sales & Service (29%), Business & Administration (14%), Trades (14%), Management (10%), Health (7%), Primary Industry (7%), Natural & Applied Science (5%), Social Science (4%), Education (4%), Arts & Recreation (3%) and Processing, Manufacturing & Utilities (3%).³

Population growth and development have spurred investment in the Comox Valley by both government and business. These investments have created job opportunities for Comox Valley citizens. The following includes a list of current development projects:

- **Retail:**
 - Costco: Opened June 2nd. 300 employees, 150 internal transfers, 150 new hires from the community. Plus, 80 contractors hired to demo the food
 - Thriftys and Best Buy to build new plaza on Ryan Road near Crown Isle
 - Children's Place opening in Driftwood mall
 - 2013: Zellers Driftwood mall will change to Target
- **Construction:**
 - New hospital on Ryan Road
 - Trilogy Project – Cumberland (on hold)
 - Kensington Project – Union Bay Marina, Golf Course, new homes
 - Cumberland OCP - new home developments
- **Resource/Infrastructure:**
 - Raven Underground Coal Project: community consultations from draft environmental impact statement
 - John Hart Hydro Generating Station Upgrades, Campbell River – road upgrading commencing, upgrades to begin 2012 until 2017

² BC Stats Population 2009

³ Financial Post Canadian Demographics 2011

Goals and Actions of 2010/11

The following information details the realities of two groups of Comox Valley citizens that the Comox Valley Literacy Now Committee has identified as priorities in the Comox Valley Community Literacy Plan 2011: young adults who are transitioning into post-secondary education, adulthood, and the workforce; and vulnerable and isolated families (Appendix 2: Comox Valley Community Literacy Plan 2011).

Young Adults and Employment

Youth traditionally face higher than average unemployment rates across BC; however, young people in our community face substantially higher unemployment rates. This results in higher than average regional access rates of the social safety net: the 2008 results from BC Stats Local Health Areas-Courtenay Indicators of Youth at Risk show that 4.1% of the population between 19-24 years was on Employment Insurance (EI), almost double the BC average of 2.2%. The same study showed that 4.7% of youth in this age category were on income assistance versus the BC average of 3.0%.

Major barriers facing the youth demographic include: limited work experience, lack of confidence to sell their skills and talk to employers, and lack of job search and employability skills. At-risk youth are often caught in the cycle of unemployment due to lack of adult role models who value education and steady employment. Despite the desire to work, these youth are not prepared for the realities of work and their low employability skills means they are quickly let go.

Further barriers to youth employment are a lack of certification or credentials. According to the BC Education Ministry's Completion rate report, School District 71's secondary school graduation rate is just 71.3%, while the provincial average is 79.7%. The district has a large distributed learning program which attracts many out of district students, and hence the completion rate is higher than indicated when compared to the provincial average but in essence when students leave school before completion, skills gaps in skills become a barrier to employment.

Two community initiatives intend to support young adults who struggle to transition to further education, to work, or to deal with the realities of un(der)employment that exist in the Comox Valley. The first project, the **FunEmployment Office**, was initiated by Creative Employment Access Society and Courtenay Recreation Association in May 2010 to meet the needs of young adults who are looking for work but cannot access employment services because they are ineligible (in school or not yet 19 years old), and need immediate service (as opposed to making and meeting appointments). The FunEmployment Office offers drop-in employment services 3 afternoons a week with additional hours dedicated to outreach to the Nala'atsi program at the Aboriginal Education Centre, the Sandwich Technical Trades Centre, and Glacierview Alternate Program. Between May 2010 and May 2011, the FunEmployment initiative:

- Met with 132 youth
- Wrote 90+ targeted resumes
- Contacted 53 youth, of which 41 were employed

- Created and maintained a very popular youth oriented website
- Developed relationships with employers, schools, and community agencies such as John Howard and Wachiay Friendship Centre

For participant comments and further overview of the initiative, see Appendix 3. Unfortunately, the FunEmployment Office has now closed due to lack of funding.

The second initiative, entitled the **Essential Skills (ES) Partnership**, has a broader mandate of improving the essential skills of Comox Valley citizens. The ES Partnership evolved from the CVLN priorities of providing or supporting literacy programs/initiatives for young adults transitioning to post-secondary education, adulthood and the workplace; and providing and/or supporting literacy programs/initiatives to un(der)employed Comox Valley citizens (see Appendix 2: Comox Valley Literacy Plan 2011 , Goal #2). After seeking community and stakeholder input, the ES Partnership initiative was created in February 2011.⁴ The partnership includes the following members: Comox Valley Literacy Now, Comox Valley Adult Learning Centre, Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce, Creative Employment Access Society (CEAS), North Island College (NIC), North Vancouver Island Aboriginal Training Society (NVIATS), School District 71, Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL), and Wachiay Friendship Centre. Betty Yee coordinates the ES initiative. For further details of the ES Partnership initiative see Appendix 4. The ES Partnership initiative is funded until December 2011.

Vulnerable and Isolated families

CVLN and Success by Six initiated a second initiative to assess literacy and learning outreach opportunities to vulnerable and isolated families in response to the HELP recommendations (2010), the early childhood development vulnerability as identified in the Comox Valley EDI (2010), and observations of frontline literacy and learning practitioners that many families, for a variety of reasons, are not accessing learning supports. The Family Literacy Outreach Advisory Committee (FLOAC) was formed in September 2010, meets monthly, and includes representation from CVLN, Success by Six, School District 71 (including two Strongstart facilitators), Comox Valley Family Services, Pacific Care, VIRL, North Island College, Comox Valley Social Planning Society, Comox Valley Child Development Agency, and ECE-BC. FLOAC hired a Project Coordinator, Monica Hofer, to do preliminary research on outreach models, the needs of vulnerable and isolated families, and to connect with learning organizations who would like to provide outreach services but do not have the means to do so. Monica's anecdotal research and recommendations are included as Appendix 5.

Early Learning and Literacy

Community coordination structures have been well established to promote literacy and learning for children from birth to the transition into elementary schools through the Early Years Interagency Council

⁴ Two community meetings were held to seek input from community members and stakeholders in June 2010 and November 2010. For minutes of these meetings, see www.cvliteracy.ca.

and the School District's Early Years Steering Committee which is facilitated by the district. Also represented are Public Health, the Child Development Center, NIC Daycare, and Comox Valley Daycare.

Over the past five years, the School District has become much more active in establishing early learning programs (e.g. Welcome to Kindergarten, Strong Start programs, Mother Goose Programs, Aboriginal pre-school program, and full day Kindergarten programs), working with other community ECD professionals (e.g. conjoint professional development workshops), focusing on the transition to kindergarten (e.g. ensuring information about children is passed on from preschool and child care staff to school staff), and supporting community coordination efforts for this age group. The School District has become, along with public health and the libraries, a significant institutional supporter and leader in early learning and literacy efforts. Other community organizations such as the Child Development Association, Early Childhood Educators Comox Valley (ECEBC), Comox Valley Family Services and Aboriginal Head Start are actively involved. The ECE staff members have participated in various professional learning opportunities provided by the District to address early learning teachers and practitioners.

The Comox Valley school district will also open the StrongStart BC outreach program in September 2011 for local families living on Hornby and Denman Island, as well as in areas around Miracle Beach and Royston and Aspen Elementary schools. This new program ensures access for families who do not currently have a StrongStart BC program operating in their area.

The school district will receive \$52,000 for the new outreach program. This includes \$20,000 only in the first year to purchase new equipment and learning materials and \$32,000 annually to fund the operating costs, including staff, professional development, supplies and healthy snacks.

The successes in early learning provide a model for what might happen in the future in other areas. The early years learning and literacy agenda has been supported through:

- Increased public and professional awareness of the importance of early years learning and literacy;
- Use of regular data (e.g. the annual EDI results, SD K screening results) to evaluate and plan;
- The culture and infrastructure within the School District focusing on outcomes and concrete action priorities;
- The consistency of School District staff involved in the early years learning and literacy discussions;
- The readiness of the School District to commit sustainable resources (e.g. staff time and funds) to coordinate community efforts and to expand early learning and literacy programs and resources;
- Previous coordination experiences with children with special needs.

In effect, the School District, with its larger and more consistent resources as a public agency, has become an anchor for the work in the early learning and literacy area. This has happened because the School District has come to see and embrace the positive value that the collective work adds to the District's mandate and desired successes in its traditional K-12 programs.

Through successful early learning and literacy programs adults can become more engaged in their own learning and literacy work. These cross connections are beginning to happen more, and are welcomed by those concerned with adult learning and literacy issues.

School Learning and Literacy

The community literacy plan is not intended to duplicate information contained in documents prepared by the school district that outline literacy work that supports K – 12 learners. This information can be found in the District Achievement Contract and in the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement.

There are many district level initiatives that focus on literacy. Faye Brownlie and Leyton Schnellert have been working in our elementary and secondary schools on the reading/ writing connection. Carol Saundry has been working with our French Immersion students at the elementary level in the area of numeracy. Most schools are involved in professional partnerships where teachers are collaborating on best practices in the areas of literacy, numeracy and technology. Our district Literacy and Numeracy Lead teachers work collaboratively with their colleagues to make connections between educational research, curriculum, assessment, and classroom instruction. The Diversity Support Teachers in elementary schools provide mentorship and support services to teachers and students ongoing and literacy is a focus of the achievement contract.

There are also many active partnerships that support and augment the broad range of literacy activities that occur in schools. Many community groups are involved in partnerships with schools such as: Boys and Girls Club, Wachiay Friendship Centre, Courtenay, Comox and Cumberland Recreation Associations, Comox Valley Family Services, MCFD, MCFD Child Youth Mental Health Team, John Howard Society, North Island College, Community Living BC, RCMP, Seniors Reading Programs, Community Schools, Comox Valley Adult Literacy Centre.

In addition, CVLN continues to support the following family literacy initiatives:

- **Mother Goose and More:** For immigrant and ESL families. Piloted in 2009, this program continues to be popular among immigrant and ESL families. Partners include: School District 71, Immigrant Settlement Office, and Adult Learning Centre.
- **Little Learners:** A partnership between VIRL and CV Family Services, this program began in July 2009, to make the public library and its programs more accessible to vulnerable families. Expansion of this successful program is anticipated for September 2011 with support from School District 71, VIRL, Success by Six and CVLN. In the 2010 session, Little Learners ran 10 sessions with an average of 12 families per session.

Literacy and learning opportunities for adults

Upgrading, post-secondary education and non-formal adult education are readily available and accessible in the Comox Valley. North Island College offers adult education and upgrading courses at its Comox Valley campus. The new NIC Trades building has created opportunities for essential skills training and development for those individuals entering the trades. Essential Skills for Trades will provide students with a relevant, supportive and flexible learning environment. Students will gain the essential skills for successful entry into Automotive Service Technician, Carpentry, Joinery/Cabinetmaking and Welding, level C through taking courses in Intermediate English, math for trades, and Foundation skills (study skills, career and education planning, computer skills and cultural intelligence). Students interested in entering other trades related programs will need to complete either further upgrading courses or program specific assessments.

The School District also serves both young adults and adults. The number of adults accessing secondary programs and courses (predominantly through distributed learning) increased from 105 adults in 2006/7 to 1442 adults in 2010/11. This significant increase is due to the tuition free availability of any secondary course to both non graduated and graduated adults through North Island Distance Education School (NIDES). NIDES teachers provided opportunities for adults to access Biology 12 and English 12 support in the evenings. Young adults are served through regular programming. Alternate programs exist for some, ranging from independent learning support centers to specific career or work experience programs designed to interest students in acquiring specific technical skills.

Other community learning centres include the Adult Learning Centre, Immigrant Settlement services, Valleylinks, LUSH Valley, North Island Women's Services Society, the Comox Valley public libraries, Wachiy Friendship Centre, Valleylinks, and the community schools (Lake Trail Neighbourhood School and Cumberland Community School). A description of selected learning centres follows below.

The **Adult Learning Centre** serves adults over the age of 19. Programs include: adult literacy program, computer literacy, and English as a Second Language (ESL-SAP). Between September 2010 and June 2011, there were 72 learners (benchmarked) and 36 drop-in learners. 46 learners participated in small group computer literacy. The total number of learners served was 154. The ESL program enrolled 36 learners (currently 10 on waitlist). In the ESL Afternoon Conversation Groups (2 levels), 42 learners participated. 9 men participated in the evening men's group. 11 adults plus children participate in the ESL Singing Club. The ALC also coordinated and facilitated a Seniors Writing Circle which involved 31 seniors since 2009. Program partners included the Adult Learning Centre, CVLN, D'Esterre House, and the Women's Resource Centre. The Writing Circle program was expanded upon receiving a New Horizons grant.

The **North Island Women's Services Society (NIWSS)** continued the Women's Learning Shop workshop series in the fall of 2010 with CVLN's support. Workshops included: Automechanics for women, basic home repairs, and how to buy a good used car. A total of 56 attended the workshops.

The **Comox Valley public libraries** offered new technology classes for adults. These classes included Ebooks, New Catalogue Searching and Facebook. 230 adults participated in these programs.

Unfortunately, many of these organizations have been impacted by budget cuts. The ALC received significantly less CALP funding in 2010/11 compared to the previous year. Furthermore, they did not receive funding to continue the Parents As Literacy Supporters (PALS) program (previously coordinated between the Adult Learning Centre and School District 71). The NIWSS closed its doors on May 28th, 2010 due to funding challenges.

CVLN has continued to support the following initiatives for adults:

- Reaching Out initiative: a program between NIC and the Job Shop, to provide free assessments for adults hoping to enter NIC. 37 adults took advantage of this initiative.
- WCDES Collaborative Film Series: Partner organizations for fall 2010 included Amnesty International, NIWSS, NIC, CV Bee Keepers Association, Lush Valley, CV Growers and Seed Savers, and Mason Bee advocates. 160 people participated in the film evenings, presentations, and discussions.

Additional CVLN Actions for 2010/11:

CVLN highlights Family Literacy Day, January 27th, to generate awareness and promote literacy in the Comox Valley. This year CVLN and SD71 supported 26 learning organizations to organize literacy activities and events during Family Literacy Week (January 23rd-30th). Activities included storytelling circles, Scrabble and Cranium games, family literacy activities, and cultural literacy activities. CVLN also partnered with the Courtenay Library and hosted an open house for community members, families, and organizations. Activities included storytelling sessions, a bookwalk, and Captain Thunderpants. 100 literacy “bags” were handed out to families full of “play for literacy” activities, books, and information. 250 people attended throughout the day.

Indications of success 2010/11:

Community-based literacy planning in the Comox Valley continues to build both the human capital of Comox Valley citizens and the social capital of the community. Below are some of the successes that have come out of the CVLN initiative.

- Creation of two community tables to address community based literacy realities: ES Partnership and FLOAC. Both groups meet regularly. Each group has hired Project Coordinators thereby increasing the number of community-based literacy practitioners in the Comox Valley
- Stronger relationships between SD71 and community learning organizations. For example, SD71 representatives are members of both the ES Partnership Initiative and FLOAC; Funemployment outreach was able to provide service to SD71 alternate students.
- CVLN is recognized and used as a hub for literacy contacts, resources, and information through the website and list-serve

- New member participation in CVLN including the Chamber of Commerce, the Head Injury Society, and Hornby Island Educational Society
- Strong community support for Family Literacy Week from businesses (donations, prizes), municipal and provincial leaders (participation in Family Literacy Week activities), and learning organizations who held information tables and activities at the Courtenay library on Family Literacy Day
- Literacy promotion (particularly through Family Literacy Week activities and events) continues to increase awareness of literacy issues and barriers; increase referrals to literacy services; increase collaboration among organizations; and increase awareness of literacy services to the public.
- Non-profit organizations continue to embed literacy in their programming and delivery (Family Services, Head Injury Society, LUSH Valley, WCDES, NIWSS, CRA, CEAS, Valleylinks etc.)
- North Island College and SD71 have embedded essential skills training in selected programs (e.g. ES for Trades at NIC; BEST program offered through SD71)
- North Island College has supported the connection among North Island communities through community-based literacy outreach coordination. A North Island literacy gathering is planned for the fall of 2011
- School District 71 continues to move forward on their broad mandate of district-wide and community-wide literacy planning and implementation
- School District 71 has enhanced learning and literacy programs and resources for younger children and their families
- The work on developing transition processes between Early Learning and school communities has been very successful and assisted in a clear process that values the work of early childhood educators and is creating a more seamless transition for families
- School District 71 has been able to reach out to vulnerable and isolated families (e.g. Mother Goose and More) and youth (e.g. BEST program) who might not otherwise access learning/literacy resources/programs

Ongoing Challenges:

Community-based literacy planning is not without its challenges. Some of the more significant hurdles that CVLN encounters include:

- Sustained funding for the implementation of the community literacy plan
- Diminished capacity of some learning organizations to meet the needs of their learners due to reduced funding
- Lack of professional development opportunities for literacy practitioners
- Greater involvement of business community
- CVLN is not yet incorporated and therefore cannot access certain funds

Goals and Actions for 2011/12:

Fortunately, CVLN has retained sufficient funds to continue implementation of the Community Literacy Plan into 2011/12. CVLN consulted with the community (April 27, 2011) and solicited feedback on their updated Community Literacy Plan (Appendix 2). The plan, which has been approved by CVLN and the Steering Committee, will guide further action for 2011/12. The CVLN Committee reinforced that CVLN act as a hub for literacy contacts, information, and resources. As a hub, CVLN hopes to continue its work in:

- servicing as a convenor, connector and networker
- building capacity among community stakeholders
- coordinating, linking, and leveraging resources for literacy and essential skills activities (including professional development of literacy practitioners)
- cultivating relationships, partnerships, leadership and innovation
- raising awareness and creating a common vision among community stakeholders
- providing services and resources that fill gaps in the community literacy/ES sector
- fund raising and distribution to community stakeholders

CVLN is exploring different ways to evolve as a group and organization in order to sustain its work in community beyond 2011. In this regard, CVLN is currently investigating becoming a non-profit society with charitable status. CVLN also hopes to expand its partner base to build its capacity to support community-based literacy and essential skills initiatives.

Appendix 1: Comox Valley Literacy Now Community Members

Comox Valley Literacy Now Steering Committee

Danielle Hoogland	Comox Valley Literacy Now Literacy Outreach Coordinator
Tony Bellavia	NIC Dean – Developmental and Access Education
Karen Barr	CALLS – Adult Learning Centre - Manager
Roger Kishi	Wachiay Friendship Centre
Sheila Shanahan	SD71 - Assistant Superintendent
Mari Martin	VIRL – Courtenay Branch
Martin Petter	Literacy Resource Person – Former VP Education NIC
Bruce Brautigian	Creative Employment Access Society
Lynn Joseph	Literacy Resource Person – Former SD71 Principal Aboriginal Education and Aboriginal Education Council

Comox Valley Literacy Now Committee – 2010/2011

Betty Yee	Creative Employment Access Society/ Essential Skills Partnership Initiative
Deborah Ross	Programs Officer Employment and Labour Market Services Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Bruce Carlos	SD71 Aboriginal Education and Aboriginal Education Council
Bev Moquin	Valley links
Dorica Skobalj	Immigrant Settlement Office
Romana Frey	Womens Resource Centre (currently of North Island Community Development Initiatives Society)
Elizabeth (Bunny) Shannon	Comox Valley Social Planning Society/ LUSH Valley
Anthea Kennelly	VIHA Public Health
Joseph Dunn	Success By Six
Danielle Bernier	Military Family Resource Centre
Beverly Howden	The IMP Lady
Jane Hughes	CV Family Services Association
Trenna McCaffery	4R's Tutoring
Robin Rivers	Our Big Earth Media Co

Marie Ducharme	NIC- Reaching Out Committee
Karen Roe	Irlen Screening
Carlene Steeves	SD71 Literacy Outreach – Early Years
Colleen Friendship	SD71 Strongstart
Kathy Collins	Courtenay Recreation – the Linc
Kristine Klupsas	Courtenay Recreation – the Linc
Peter Ashmore	Beaufort Children’s Association
Toresa Crawford	Nala'atsi
Adda Vallevand	Volunteer Comox Valley
Randy Wiwchar	City of Courtenay
Heather Nye	CV Transition Society
Wayne Bradley Sally Gellard	World Community Development Education Society
Doug Hillian	City of Courtenay - Councillor
Allison Abraham	CV Head Injury Society
Monica Hofer	Family Literacy Outreach Initiative
Sue Warren	Pacific Care
Gabriel Dey	Adult Learning Centre
Mary Donlan	VIRL
Charlene Grey	ECE-BC, Tigger Too preschool
Bob Scales	Chamber of Commerce
Randy Grey	SD71 – Sandwich programs

Appendix 2: Comox Valley Community Literacy Plan Revised – June 2011

Vision: Literacy for Life

- Goal 1: Build a collaborative learning community
- Goal 2: Support 2009/2010 strategic priorities
- Goal 3: Build the capacity of new and existing literacy services and initiatives
- Goal 4: Continue the Comox Valley Literacy Now initiative beyond 2011

Abbreviations used in the following table:

- CVLN: Comox Valley Literacy Now
CVLN SC: Comox Valley Literacy Now Steering Committee
- ALC (Karen Barr), NIC (Tony Bellavia), Wachiy (Roger Kishi), SD71 (Sheila Shanahan), VIRL (Mari Martin), CEAS (Bruce Brautigam) and 2 community representatives (Martin Petter – former VP of Education at NIC, and Lynn Joseph – former SD71 Principal Aboriginal Education)
- ES: Essential Skills
- ES Partnership Coordinator – Betty Yee
- FLO: Family Literacy Outreach
- FLO Project Coordinator – Monica Hofer
- FLOAC: Family Literacy Outreach Advisory Committee
ALC: Comox Valley Adult Learning Centre (CALLS)
SD71: School District 71
NIC: North Island College
CEAS: Creative Employment Access Society
EYIAC: Early Years Interagency Committee
LOC: Literacy Outreach Coordinator – Comox Valley: Danielle Hoogland; Hornby Island: Mia Wood
MLU: Mobile Literacy Unit
CAVE: Comox Valley Aboriginal Visioning Empowerment
VIRL: Vancouver Island Regional Library
WCDES: World Community Development Education Society
PALS: Parents as Literacy Supporters

GOAL #1: Build a collaborative learning community

Objective	Strategies	Resources	Evidence
<p>Maintain and expand the CV Literacy Now Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN partners meet to connect and share information and resources CVLN remains connected to other interagencies through member participation (Frontline, Social Planning, EYIAC, CAVE, Lake Trail Community initiative) CVLN partners participate on additional subcommittees: ES Partnership and FLOAC Continue to engage non-traditional partners (local government, business community) through presentations & community meetings Continue to engage under-represented and multi-barriered people (and/or their representatives) from our community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN CVLN Steering Committee CV LOC ES Partnership Project Coordinator FLO Project Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN meetings occur; minutes distributed to partner organizations Relationships among partner organizations are strengthened Partnerships are created among organizations to address literacy realities Relationships created with local govt., and business community Literacy/ES presentations made to service organizations, interagencies, school board, etc. Under-represented and multi-barriered groups (and/or their representatives) participate in CVLN meetings, forums, and workshops.
<p>Create and develop effective communication strategies and a hub for literacy contacts and information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create effective means of communicating literacy information and resources (through email listserv, and website) Create a social media communication strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN website: www.cvliteracy.ca Valleylinks Literacy BC Resource directory ES Partnership website CVLN SC CV LOC Social media tools: Facebook, Twitter, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN members, community stakeholders, and learners are able to easily access literacy information and resources CVLN members are able to effectively communicate literacy and learning related news and activities CVLN engages social media as a means to share and disseminate literacy and learning information

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN is a hub for literacy contacts and information
CVLN continues to connect with North Island learning organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite NI partners to Comox Valley for selected literacy and learning events, meetings, workshops, etc. CV literacy practitioners attend NI meetings, conferences, etc. Continue to foster a North Island learning network Co-organize and host NI literacy practitioner event – Fall 2011 (NIC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV LOC Hornby LOC ES Project Coordinator FLO Project Coordinator ALC Volunteer Coordinator NIC “New literacy org” SD71 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV literacy practitioners are well represented at NI literacy events Strengthen relationships with NI literacy partner organizations North Island communities continue to network and connect, share resources and information, and support one another

GOAL #2: Support 2009/2010 Strategic Priorities⁵

Objective	Strategies	Resources	Evidence
<p>Support the Essential Skills Partnership Initiative (#1,2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVLN/SC supports ES Partnership initiative through participation on ES Advisory Committee • CVLN SC works with community partners to seek means to maintain and evolve the ES Partnership initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV LOC • CVLN SC • ES Advisory Committee • CV Chamber of Commerce • OLES • Unions • NIC • SD71 • CEAS • Ministry of Social Development and Housing • Ministry of Advanced Ed. • ALC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential skills partnership initiative is supported and sustained beyond 2011
<p>Support workplace literacy initiatives (#1,2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for workplace essential skills programs in the Comox Valley • CVLN SC and ES Partnership is aware of current effective workplace literacy resources and programs • CVLN SC and ES Partnership work together to create and/or support relevant workplace literacy programs (includes social-cultural and age relevant programs, as well as labour market relevance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Social Development and Housing • Ministry of Advanced Ed. • ALC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace essential skills programs are available in the Comox Valley • Businesses implement workplace essential skill programs

⁵ The three strategic priorities include:

1. Young adults in transition into adulthood, postsecondary education and the workplace (aged 15-25)
2. Literacy and learning related to the employability of unemployed/underemployed people
3. Outreach to isolated and vulnerable families and parents

<p>Support the Family Literacy Outreach initiative (#3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVL/SC supports the FLO Coordinator through participation on FLOAC Organizations participate in creating an MLU that provides outreach services and information to vulnerable populations in the Comox Valley (as identified by our EDI) CVL/SC works with community partners to find means to maintain and evolve Family Literacy Outreach initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV LOC CVLN SC FLOAC FLO Coordinator SD71 SD71 Literacy Outreach Service clubs/organizations Chamber of Commerce EYIAC ALC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MLU is operative and becomes a visible, recognizable presence ("billboard) for literacy outreach in the Comox Valley Organizations work together to build MLU EDI levels improve FLO initiative is supported and sustained
<p>Support literacy and learning initiatives/programs for young adults transitioning to PSE, adulthood and the workplace (#1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build capacity of new and existing literacy programs for young adults through advocacy, promotion, and outreach Engage young adults in community-based planning of literacy programs <p>Existing programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funemployment office (CEAS and Courtenay Rec.) Alternate programs – SD71 NIC ABE and UPgrading Bladerunners Valleylinks Youth Visions <p>New programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake Trail Community programs ES Partnership Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frontline workers CAVE SD71 NIC CVLN ALC Valleylinks CEAS ES Coordinator CVLOC Courtenay Recreation Lake Trail Community programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning organizations work together to address the literacy needs of young adults through partnership and collaboration New accessible literacy programs for young adults are available in the Comox Valley Number of young adults (aged 15-25) participating in literacy programs increases CVLN is aware of current realities of young adult community

GOAL #3: Build the capacity of new and existing literacy services and initiatives

Objective	Strategies	Resources	Evidence
<p>Generate awareness and promote learning and literacy in the Comox Valley</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate Family Literacy Day in January of each year • Create opportunities for organizations to promote their learning services and programs through advocacy and outreach • Marketing campaign in local media to highlight the importance of literacy and promote community literacy events/programs/initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVLN • CVLN SC • CV LOC • Family Literacy Day subcommittee • VIRL • SD71 • NIC • Service Clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families and community members participate in family literacy day activities and events • Learning organizations create exciting and innovative programs and activities that involve families in literacy and learning • Community wide promotion of life-long learning and literacy • Funds are allocated toward celebration of FLW
<p>Build capacity of cultural literacy initiatives</p>	<p>Existing cultural literacy initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide opportunities to connect and network with ESL community • Continue to support and advocate Mother Goose and More • Support Aboriginal youth art and language projects through presentation and dissemination of art <p>New cultural literacy initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Aboriginal groups in building libraries of culturally relevant books and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrant Support Services • ALC – ESL program • NIC – ELSAP • SD71 • CVLN • CVLOC • Wachiay, AEC, K'omoks First Nation • VIRL • Community Cafés (or others) • Art galleries (CVAG, Muir) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVLN connects regularly with ESL community and remains aware of the community's current realities • Partnerships are sustained among ESL service/learning providers • Promote and celebrate Aboriginal youth art projects in the community • Culturally relevant materials are available and accessible at Comox Valley public library branches and Wachiay • Funds are allocated to supporting cultural literacy initiatives
<p>Build capacity of Family Literacy Programs</p>	<p>Existing Family Literacy Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Learners • PALS, Aboriginal PALS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVLOC • CVLN • SD71 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing programs are sustained and the number of families participating in programs increases

	<p>New Family Literacy Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See FLO initiative (goal 2) • Literacy programs as part of Lake Trail Neighbourhood Learning Centre • ESL PALS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FLOAC • FLO Coordinator • ALC • Lake Trail Neighbourhood Connections • Comox Valley Boys and Girls Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVLN are aware of family literacy organizations/programs and advocates to sustain existing programs and create additional programs • Funds are allocated to supporting family literacy initiatives
<p>Build capacity of fundamental adult literacy programs</p>	<p>Existing programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CALP (through ALC) • ELSAP and ELSA • NIC – ABE and Upgrading • Reach out initiative – NIC/CEAS <p>New programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Literacy programs as part of Lake Trail Neighbourhood Learning Centre • Adult literacy outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALC • NIC • SD71 • CVLN • CVLN SC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing programs are supported and sustained • Funds are allocated to supporting fundamental adult literacy programs
<p>Connect literacy and learning to the Arts Community</p>	<p>Existing programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCDES learning film series • NIC Reads, English Dept., Writers groups and circles, youth zines etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVLOC • Aboriginal Community • Multicultural Society • ALC • Valleylinks • WCDES • Arts community (NIC Emily Carr, CVALG, IHOS, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film and media programs are available and accessible in the Comox Valley • Partnerships are created and maintained with Arts community
<p>Build community capacity to address literacy realities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV literacy practitioners connect and support each other (through meetings, correspondence, etc.) • Invest in and support the professional development of literacy practitioners • Organize and host learning forums/gatherings/workshops for CVLN and community stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV LOC • Hornby LOC • ES Project Coord. • ALC Tutor Coord. and tutors • FLO Project Coord. • Wachiyay • NIC Upgrading & ABE • SD71 • CVLN SC • CVLN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy practitioners share information and resources • Literacy practitioners participate in professional development activities • CVLN members and community stakeholders participate in learning forum and increase their knowledge of literacy practices • Funds are allocated toward professional development

GOAL 4: Continue the Comox Valley Literacy Now initiative beyond 2011

Objective	Strategies	Resources	Evidence
Change name	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek input from CVLN members on new name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN has a new name
Maintain LOC position beyond 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate to the Ministry of Ed. and the "new literacy organization" for continued funding and support of LOC positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN CVLN SC CV and Hornby LOC SD71 NIC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LOC position is continued beyond 2011
CVLN evolves as a committee and/or non-profit organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate becoming a non-profit society with charitable status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN SC CVLN VIRL (Steward) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN evolves into a non-profit organization or remains a Committee
CVLN SC continues to guide CVLN initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of terms of reference Monthly meetings Review of literacy plan and district literacy plan Review of budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN SC CVLN LOC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN SC is able to effectively guide initiative into the future
Sustain community-based planning process to address local literacy realities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate to the Ministry of Ed., Ministry of Advanced Ed., Ministry of Social Dev. And Housing for continued support Advocate to municipal, provincial, regional, and federal government representatives for continued support Maintain strong relations with the "new literacy organization" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVLN CVLN LOC CVLN SC Literacy stakeholders and supporters "New literacy organization" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue District Literacy Plan CVLN and literacy stakeholders continue to connect, share knowledge and information, partner and plan together Literacy initiatives are sustained in our community

Appendix 3: FunEmployment Office

Submitted by Betty Yee, FunEmployment Outreach Initiative
June 10th, 2011

Funemployment Office

- Opened May 2010 in partnership with Courtenay Recreation Association (CRA) with funding from North Vancouver Island United Way.
- Prior to opening, there was no year round targeted employment service for youth. Job Shop funding currently serves all unemployed Canadians aged 16+ with case managed job search support.
- School aged youth *in school* are not eligible for service at the Job Shop because they are technically not unemployed. As students, they are not considered active in the labour market. Students are considered to be funded by the Ministry of Education through the Planning and Grad Transitions courses; however, schools such as Lake Trail are leaning on the Job Shop for materials to support their programs.
- Youth at risk and youth in transition tend not to access services at the Job Shop, although they are eligible for service because our office is very much adult oriented. The appointment process and the paperwork are major deterrents to this demographic.
- In September 2009, the only year round youth employment service closed its doors at the Linc Youth Centre. We identified a gap in service and applied for United Way funding, which allowed us to open the Funemployment Office out of the Linc. We offer drop in employment services 3 afternoons a week with additional hours dedicated to outreach, where we've made strong connections and provide on-site service to the Nala'atsi program at the Aboriginal Education Centre, the Sandwick Technical Trades Centre, and Glacierview Alternate Program.
- The United Way provided seed money only and that funding ran out at the end of April 2011. We were able to self fund the operation of the service on reduced hours for the month of May to transition clients to Service Canada Centre for Youth that will run until August. We currently do not have the funding to reopen in September. The community is about to lose one of the few services available in our community to support all youth as they learn about finding and keeping their first jobs.
- We also run a very popular youth employment website: www.funemploymentoffice.ca which had 850 unique visitors in the last 6 months of 2010, and now attracts over 500 unique visitors a month in 2011! We have a great deal of community support but have exhausted all our funding options.

Year in Review:

- Met with 132 young folks
- Wrote 90+ targeted resumes
- Contacted 53 youth, of which 41 were employed

- Create and maintained very popular youth oriented website
- Developed relationships with employers, schools, and community agencies such as John Howard and Wachiay Friendship Centre

Here's what Funemployment Clients have to say:

"I got a job on Quadra Island -- \$14.50/hr. Get my bonus to \$15.50 soon, thanks for all the wonderful help. Thank you!!"

-KH, Youth Client

"I was just on the Funemployment website, and I'm loving what I see! Very cool you guys are doing this for students like myself"

-JW, Youth Client

"I just wanted to say THANK-YOU so much!! You helped me find information for working overseas and am leaving next year! Your program offers so much, thanks to you, my future is in the right place and heading in the right direction, thank you very much"

-CM, Youth Client

"I got a job, about a week after I dropped by actually! Thanks very much for your support, Betty!"

"I came in (to see you) at the start of October, I believe. I've been so busy since that I haven't emailed you, but I thought I'd let you know that I got a job the very next day after coming in and seeing you! You were a great help! Thanks so much"

-SE, Youth Client

"I got a job!! Thanks to you and all your wonderful help with my resume and in my job search. I will be working as an education assistant for School District 71. Thanks again Betty, keep up the great work!"

-KA, Youth Client

"Well, you emailed at the perfect time. I did get hired, however temporary it may be, I got a job and I love it"

-GB, Youth Client

Appendix 4: Comox Valley Essential Skills Partnership

Submitted by Betty Yee, Essential Skills Partnership Project Coordinator
June 10th, 2011

The Comox Valley Essential Skills Partnership (CVESP) has played a crucial role in educating the business and learner communities and building capacity in building Essential Skills (ES) awareness. The partnership members have identified a need: to support marginalized populations, particularly at-risk youth in transition, to access ES development services.

In order to initiate support services to support this demographic, the first step was to build capacity by expanding our understanding of ES through training. Since the implementation of the partnership, the program coordinator has had a number of opportunities to access professional development in Essential Skills and has been certified to deliver two ES assessments.

Her training includes:

Course	Institution	Dates	Costs	Costs (actual)
<i>Essential Skills Coursework:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction to Essential Skills ○ Essential Skills Assessment: Interpretation and Application ○ Essential Skills Portfolios 	Douglas College Training Group, Coquitlam	Feb 21-22, 2011	\$350	\$350 + wages + travel
		Feb 23-25, 2011	\$450	\$450 + wages + travel
		Mar 3-4, 2011	\$350	\$350 + wages + travel
	Certified TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills) Assessor	Bow Valley College	Mar 14, 2011	0
Essential Skills Pilot Program: Skills At	ASPECT (Association of	April 6, 2011	8 Hours in-kind wages	wages + travel + room +

Work	Service Providers for Employability and Career Training)			board *wages funded by CVESP *travel, room, board funded by ASPECT
Certified CAMERA (Communications and Math Employability Readiness Assessment) Assessor	PTP @ Literacy Victoria	May 9-11	\$1000	0 *wages, travel, and food funded by CVESP

This training has allowed her to bring ES back to the Comox Valley and strengthen the capacity of local organizations to best integrate essential skills resources with their specific client groups. The program coordinator does this in 3 ways: teaching the “language” of essential skills to the community; facilitating essential skills workshops with at risk youth; and sourcing, screening, and sharing resources with learners and agencies.

The “language” of Essential Skills

Before we are able to engage our community and garner its support, we need to educate the Comox Valley, particularly business owners, about ES and how we will all benefit from an increase of skill levels. Our goals are to create momentum in Essential Skills across the community by first increasing interest in and commitment to ES from the business community, who will provide opportunities to ES learners. These opportunities will pique the interest of learners and motivate them to pursue ES training, and build the momentum required to create a learning community that is self sufficient. The CVESP program coordinator has presented ES locally to the Comox Rotary Club, School District 71’s Board of Trustees, and to the Comox Valley Social Planning Committee. On a larger scale, she was also invited to speak about Essential Skills at the Vancouver Island Career Educators Association (VICEA) Conference in Victoria, which was attended by representatives from school districts from most regions of Vancouver Island.

Essential Skills Programming for At-Risk Youth

More often than not, youth, particularly marginalized youth seek training that is related to and transferable to the workplace. To give value to ES programming and encourage students to follow through, CVESP, information sessions were delivered to School District 71’s BEST

(Building Essential Skills Today) students. These information sessions helped students to make the direct connections to the workplace, which motivates them to complete training as sustainable employment is a common target. As well, Nanaimo Youth Services (NYS) has asked Betty to facilitate the full day Essential Skills workshop for the Bladerunners Construction and Trades Program in Courtenay and Nanaimo, and the Marine Tourism and Hospitality Program in Courtenay and Ladysmith. With few people with related training in the north island, our community has grown to include ES support for Bladerunners in communities south of the Comox Valley.

Sourcing, Screening, and Sharing Resources with Learners and Agencies

Once the business and learning communities are aware of ES and people begin seeking further services and programming, local agencies must be prepared to meet the demand. Bringing the training back to the community and sharing the knowledge and resources are priority. In the first quarter, CVESP has supported the Comox Valley Head Injury Society by providing relevant resources to support the development of their targeted Literacy program and has also worked closely with the School District's Career Programs Coordinator to review and evaluate ES resources for suitability in the classroom, with hopes of creating ongoing ES programs in all district schools.

As well, CVESP and CEAS are currently piloting an ES program called "Skills At Work", which has allowed job seekers working with Career Advisors at the Job Shop to develop and improve on four of their Essential Skills: Communication, Continuous Learning, Working with Others, and Thinking Skills. Participation in this pilot will result in one year of no-cost access to this program by the Job Shop and any other interested community agencies.

Essential Skills Partnership Year in Review

Literacy Now funded Betty Yee, Project coordinator, to work 14 hours a week building community capacity around ES and supporting the partnership organizations to work with ES. The following is Betty's current workplan with objectives completed and with objectives yet to complete.

Complete?	February Targets	Details
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and organize project details Feb 21-25: Complete Douglas College ES Training (Intro to ES & ES Assessment, Interpretation, Application) Feb 24: 2011 Chamber Showcase and Tradeshow Develop ES presentation/materials for employers Start inventory of ES support programming available, determine service deficits Review and assess existing ES materials for local applications Connect with 5 employers about ES Report and meet with literacy partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ES presented by Job Shop colleagues, little employer interest ES handbills, business cards made Press release and article in Job Shop quarterly newsletter published
Yes		
Yes		
Yes		
In process		
Yes		
Yes		
Yes		

Complete?	March Targets	Details
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and organize project details Create blog Continue inventory of ES support programming available, determine service deficits Continue review and assessment of existing ES materials for local applications Connect with service providers to determine how Essential Skill building can be integrated into existing programming Contact and book dates for Rotary Presentations (Courtenay x 2, Cumberland, and Comox clubs) Contact and book dates for Women's Business Network Presentation Start connecting with Educators, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present on ES to SD 71 board of trustees Present to BEST students Training at Douglas College (ES Portfolios) Meet with Joseph Dunn Meet with and provide curriculum to Allison Abraham, for Literacy Program through Head Injury Society Present to Comox Rotary <p>Still to do: Contact other Rotary Clubs Contact Women's Business Network Connect with Literacy Tutors (Fall) Present to Career Advisors (not possible until now due to rfp)</p>
Yes		
Yes		
In Process		
In Process		
Yes		
No		
Yes		

	<p>Guidance Counselors, Career Advisors, and Literacy Tutors. Start agency needs assessments. (Continuing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report and meet with literacy partners 	
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Complete?	April Targets	Details
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue connecting with Educators, Guidance Counselors, Career Advisors, and Literacy Tutors. Complete needs assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend West Coast Literacy Symposium • Present to Social Planning Committee • Attend ASPECT ES Pilot Training • Facilitate ES Workshop for Courtenay Bladerunners Construction and Trades • Review ES curriculum with Randy
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to connect with service providers to determine how Essential Skill building can be integrated into existing programming 	
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue inventory of ES support programming available, determine service deficits • Continue review and assessment of existing ES materials for local applications 	<p>Still to do: Supporting materials for teachers and employers for BEST pending</p>
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotary Presentations • Develop supporting materials to share with service providers and educators; train interested parties in ES assessment and support 	<p>Articles for Chamber and presenting at meetings. Contacted Dianne Hawkins, reply pending.</p>
No		
No		
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with school district contacts to determine possible service delivery options: in-house ES resource person, referral to work experience/employment programs • Distribute completed ES materials to employers via NEWS Coordinator 	
On hold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with employers about ES 	

No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with service providers and educators to identify clients in need of ES assessment, support, or referral 	
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update blog <p>Report and meet with literacy partners</p>	

Complete?	May Targets	Details
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up with interested Rotarians/Business people/Employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with Don McRae regarding program funding
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotary Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camera Training at Literacy Victoria
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue connecting with Educators, Guidance Counselors, Career Advisors, and Literacy Tutors. Complete needs assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak about ES at VICEA (Vancouver Island Career Educator's Association) Conference
In Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete inventory, compile and make available for distribution • Continue review and assessment of existing ES materials for local applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate ES Workshops for Nanaimo Bladerunners (Construction and Trades) and Ladysmith Bladerunners (Marine Customer Service and Hospitality)
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue sharing materials and training those interested ES assessment and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide further information for District Literacy Plan and Literacy Now Report
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue meeting with school district contacts to determine possible service delivery options: in-house ES resource person, referral to work experience/employment programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review CAMERA curriculum with Randy
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with youth in preparation for summer employment/creating and implementing learning plans 	<p>Still to do: Complete service inventory</p>
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with employers about ES 	
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update blog 	
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report and meet with literacy partners 	

Complete?	June Targets	Details
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with employed youth and their employers, assess progress in skill enhancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate ES Workshops for Courtenay Bladerunners (Marine Customer Service and Hospitality)
In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue review and assessment of existing ES materials for local applications 	
In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue connecting with Educators, Guidance Counselors, Career Advisors, and Literacy Tutors. Complete needs assessments 	
In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue training interested parties in ES assessment and support 	
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue meeting with school district contacts to determine possible service delivery options: in-house ES resource person, referral to work experience/employment programs 	
On hold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect with employers about ES 	
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update blog 	
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report and meet with literacy partners 	

Coming Up:

Creation of employer video to show work experience students (with ES focus)

Create map of the connections and gaps around ES service delivery

Development of materials aimed at teachers to engage in ES/BEST. Due to tough economic times, it may be difficult to reach employers since there are so many applicants for each advertised job. It would provide deliverables for the CVESP project, lay the foundation for the community based framework we are striving for, and hopefully create opportunities for further

funding. This will also give us time to prepare ourselves to work with employers, who will be interested in incentives and true costs involved in participating in an ES program

Working with Elder College to see if they are willing to work with current students in an employment context

Exploring possibility of ES program for Nala'atsi students or Vanier Aboriginal program through NVIATS (which will provide wage subsidy for employment placements, geared at grads for the year)

Successes and Challenges So Far:

- Main target of educating the community on the language of essential skills is working; info sessions and printed materials have been successfully distributed.
- Opportunities from youth employment hours at the Linc and outreach time to Nala'atsi and Sandwick has created relationships with staff and students to proceed with the ES partnership
- Great excitement and momentum in partner agencies and schools on the island around ES implementation
- Amazing Pro-D available that is attracting professionals from Newfoundland, Saskatchewan
- ES as a movement is intensifying with great interest (funding dollars) available federally and provincially indicating that ES implementation opportunities will be coming to the Valley. TD Bank's Craig Alexander speaks across Canada on ES and the economy.
- Provincial and National networking opportunities: The Centre (Summer in Smallywood), PTP (the developers of CAMERA), Literacy Victoria, VICEA, Nanaimo Youth Services Bladerunners Catchment areas, Douglas College.
- Partnership as launching pad for Development of BEST (Building Essential Skills Together) Program
- Limited employer activity, although there is great interest in theory. Due to a competitive labour market, employers receive a lot of applicants for each position. There is no motivation to seek out Essential Skills or to work with their current employees around ES because they are already able to hire the best.
- Limited buy in from educators, despite the benefit of ES to students. Teachers want to stay within their subject area. Currently, planning and grad transitions are taught by teachers who also teach other classes and may not have expertise in the area. SD would benefit from embedding ES in planning/grad transitions classes that are taught by teachers who specialize in the subject.

- Difficult to market ES to learners – even if they are interested in increasing skills, there are few learning or employment opportunities geared specifically to ES
- A plethora of ES activities exist, but all tend to be quite boring and repetitive. Difficult to prepare youth for future workplace skills when the materials available deal with aspects of work they have not yet encountered.
- Currently no incentive available to employers to hire a BEST student or to provide work experience.
- Closure of Funemployment and reduction of outreach hours means I have no direct contact with youth and am no longer able to go to the youth (at school, etc)
- 14 hours limiting in a number of ways. Not only is it too few hours to do the program justice, but due to the structure of the Job Shop schedule, those hours do not stand alone, and are intermixed with case management hours (resulting in reduced flexibility). More hours would be beneficial to the program; however, the Job Shop requires career advisors to have at least 21 hours of client contact hours per week, so changes to hours would have to be drastic – a move to a full time position.
- Intentions to train literacy tutors and career advisors to identify ES gaps and support up skilling, however, outside commitments (RFP) were barriers and has pushed the dates. The Adult Learning Centre will be going on summer break shortly, so tutor training will commence in the fall.
- Lack of ministry support of ES is preventing immediate progress in schools. At what ES level do Planning 10 students function? Could we test these students, give targeted ES practice opportunities and then retest during grad transitions year?
- SD 71's graduation rates are lower than some districts across the province. The students who are not graduating are in the greatest need for workplace skills training.
- There is an employer perception that youth don't stay, so why bother hiring them? Instead they hire from the large pool of work ready older workers. This results in youth having the perception that there are no jobs in the Valley, and they leave. This reinforces employer perceptions. How do we stop youth from leaving? Where is the meaningful work that is available to young people in our community?
- Lack of time. Literacy Victoria stated that it takes 3-5 years to get businesses on board. We have 10 months. With big ideas and large organizations ready to proceed, there isn't the time, infrastructure, policy, money, to implement during our current timeframes. Businesses are not yet prepared to work within an ES model, they need more time to understand, and process before they engage.

Appendix 5: Family Literacy Outreach Advisory Committee Interim Report

Research Findings: Needs assessment of literacy and learning supports, programs and opportunities in rural Comox Valley.

Submitted by Monica Hofer
drumdeva@shaw.ca
May 23, 2011

Background:

The following report was prepared for the Family Literacy Outreach Advisory Committee (FLOAC) by the Family Literacy Outreach Coordinator, Monica Hofer. The vision of FLOAC is raise and promote family literacy through outreach, advocacy and education. FLOAC contracted Monica to do a needs assessment of literacy and learning supports/programs/opportunities in rural Comox Valley including Cumberland, Merville/Black Creek, Fanny Bay, Hornby and Denman Islands, and Royston.

This report is a collection of conversations that Monica has had with families and practitioners between March 2011 and June 2011. Monica met with the following individuals/groups:

Interviews in Black Creek:

1. Kris Calver, Administrator, Parents and Peanuts
2. Michelle, Facilitator, Parents and Peanuts
3. Parent and Peanut families - 10 families including one father

Interviews in Cumberland:

1. Parents and tots gym time – 3 families
2. Strongstart facilitator – Joanne Murrell
3. Strongstart families – 7 families including one father

Interviews in Fanny Bay:

1. Parent and tot group – Evelyn Bally, facilitator
2. Parent and tot group – families

SUMMARY:

Some of the observations of the three communities were:

- Each community is distinct and has needs specific to their social, economical and cultural contexts. Families live in or access these communities for different reasons including: the vibe or energy of the community, to gather with others in the community (social/cultural), and because of their connections with the facilitators of programs.

- Each community has its own family gathering place whether it is the community hall, community school, or strongstart program. Facilitators would like to build the capacity of their programs through increased resources (both human and material). They are resistant to new programs replacing what already exists. Rather, they hope to strengthen their programs by collaborating with other community organizations (such as VIHA, VIRC, ECE practitioners, CDA, health and nutrition advocates, etc.). There is emphasis that these communities would like to empower themselves within their communities.
- A family literacy resource coordinator would enable knowledge and access to family literacy services and resources more readily
- Transportation continues to be an issue of accessibility for families
- The question of vulnerability depends on the definition of vulnerability. Many of the families accessing rural learning centres do not consider themselves vulnerable.
- Lack of affordable daycare
- The communities would like to see more partnership and collaboration with other agencies

Questions posed by Monica:

- Are there families in your community who would benefit from accessing more “local” family literacy and early years supports?
- What family learning supports exist in your community?
- Where are families currently likely to access these supports?
- How often would families likely be willing to participate in a family literacy/family learning program?
- What kind of activities would your families most likely be interested in? For tots? For families? For parents?
- How could you see your role as a partner in this initiative?
- Would you see a benefit to either a larger bus OR a smaller mobile literacy unit (MLU) coming to your area?
- Are there any community halls/buildings/churches/etc that you could see as being good “gathering/meeting” centres?
- What other agencies already provide ongoing outreach services to your area? (e.g. VIRC, VIHA, etc)

Questions were ‘tweaked’ when asked of the families themselves.

PARENTS AND TOTS GYM TIME in CUMBERLAND

Monica spoke with 3 families.

- They access Story Time at the library in Cumberland and are happy that there will be an expanded library there soon.
- They would rather access the library than have one come on a bus.
- They have accessed Mother Goose at the Strong Start classroom and would like to see that continue, but at that venue.

- They believe the demographics in Cumberland are challenging; there are no doubt vulnerable families, but many of them do not want to come out to events/programs. They have their own circles.
- If there were a bus, it would need to be “in your face”, very colourful and very easy to access. There may be issues with people feeling comfortable coming to some place they are not familiar with, with new people.
- The idea of the bus as ‘advertising’ was appealing.
- These three moms were members of an attachment parenting group and did not feel they needed access to any other services. They were in Cumberland because of what Cumberland had to offer and its “energy”. They were mobile and could access services in Courtenay.
- The other moms in the gym whom I was unable to interview came from Courtenay because they liked the space and atmosphere at the CRI.

Kris Calver, Administrator PARENTS AND PEANUTS, Black Creek Community Association

- P & P doesn’t necessarily see “vulnerable” populations. Kris feels they are perhaps only reaching the “fringe of vulnerability” but also questions the definition of vulnerability.
- There is no real centre or gathering place for Black Creek and she would like to see that happen as a community tie = a central meeting place that hosts all kinds of programs and events, where people know it is safe to come to, etc.
- Possible that some vulnerable pockets are on the McCauley Rd area and in Oyster River > check with Graeme Boyd, principal at Oyster River.
- P & P is very well attended but hard to reach populations don’t necessarily come.
- VIHA has a regular/once a month presence; they do immunization clinics at the Black Creek Hall. Brenda M and Anthea K are also brought in to do dental and health and nutrition as “guests”.
- There is also a busy preschool at the hall, but they tend to lose kids after that age = Kris would like to see more continuity and more programming for families. There is not a lot of support for over 6 years old.
- Kris feels that P & P can’t “do it on their own” and would like to partner with other initiatives to help families.
- They have applied for SX6 funding for summer programs for 0 – 10 yrs.
- As a partner they would be willing to offer: Space, promotion, being on a committee for input and decision making; she would like to have representation on the FLOAC committee as the initiative takes on more shape
- Kris believes that the more flexible a MLU is, the better; thus perhaps not wise to make a definitive, huge investments if we don’t know if there are vulnerable families, and where they are.
- She likes the idea of “association with a place”: the schools and community halls are places that stay put, people have a positive association with them, they are sustainable...why not use them?
- If there is an outreach program and a vehicle, it should bring people to the PLACE, and it should be a safe place. Kris believes it will likely be necessary to go and pick up families in the more isolated areas especially if we want to reach the more isolated folks.

**** Idea: use vehicle to transport folks to a central location, rather than to bring resources out to outlying areas??? *****

- For Kris the main question is: what comes first, the bus or finding the people?
- So, look at the model and ask if it is the right one for us.
- More important for her is the value of building partnerships with and within rural communities, and especially empowerment WITHIN the community. Also: build multi-generational neighbourhoods, and bring resources out to seniors and families, not just kids – there should be an indirect benefit to all the members of the community because everyone is being supported!

QUESTION: are we really getting to the people who really need the services?

BLACK CREEK – PARENTS AND PEANUTS, Michelle – Facilitator and Families

- Michelle believes there are lots of parents that would access extra services, and stated that there were not really any other agencies that make regular appearances in Black Creek
- She sees the P & P group and Colleen’s group in Oyster River mainly as social groups, and feels that most families access either one or both of these groups (NB: one mom was disappointed that the Oyster River group was only a play group and had been advertised as more of a Strong Start format)
- Michelle was not sure if the families would prefer to have a bus come to them (parked somewhere) or come to a central meeting place, such as the hall

Monica spoke with 10 families at the P & P group, including one dad:

- every family was clear on saying that the hall should be used INSTEAD of a bus, and that existing services should be built upon
- the hall is seen as a bigger, more versatile space, with an outdoor area that can be used
- the best use they could see for a bus was as a “book bus”
- some seemed aware that VIHA had a regular presence in Black Creek, but one mom just learned about the monthly immunization clinics the day I was there as a result of our discussion: this brought about the point that the most important thing that funds could be spent on should be a FAMILY RESOURCES BOOKLET that set out all of the programs, activities and resources that were available to families in the Black Creek area
- most families said they depended on the Friday group for the social aspect; otherwise they would be unlikely to leave the home
- one mom was from McCauley Road: she mentioned that there were always quite a few families/moms from that area who came to either P & P or the Oyster River program
- most agreed that what was missing in Black Creek was “books”, a “pool” and evening/gym time especially in the winter as well as activities for dads with their kids
- The dad in particular questioned the usefulness of a bus – he preferred the known, larger hall and the ability to be outside in the fenced in field in summer months. He said "if the hall is available, USE IT ! and get the families THERE!" He suggested we have a clear idea of who our TARGET POPULATION is and wondered if there truly were very many low-income, single parent (vulnerable) families in his area. He made the point that most people in that demographic would necessarily want to stick closer to city centres, especially if they didn’t have transportation because the bus system “sucks” out in Black Creek.

- One Grandmother suggested that it would be good to spend money on getting the HandyDart to come out to Black Creek rather than stopping at Merville.
- In the end most parents agreed that getting people to the hall, rather than taking a bus out to them, would be a better bet. They also all agreed that affordable day care was needed badly; in fact affordable services and activities in general were lacking, especially for youth and those involving seniors.

STRONGSTART, Cumberland – Joanne Murrell

- a lot of families have vehicles and can access things in Courtenay
- feels that most people don't currently make much use of library resources, so a push for this would be important (especially since library is being renewed/enlarged)
- her Strong Start program is younger than most (0 – 3 yrs) so she figures she has a lot of new families from other places in the Valley (yes, quite a few parents come from Courtenay/Comox and even further afield to access the SS at Cumberland!) and some of the younger pop. living in Cumberland
- most of her families seem well-educated and financially stable
- VIHA is not a big presence in Cumberland, and Joanne feels that health related resources will pull in families
- She also feels that getting some CDA presence into the community would be beneficial as people need to start to feel comfortable with them; also for dispelling myths and how to learn about kids with special needs = building stronger community
- Joanne's idea is to have different agencies send volunteers with outreach time in the community, such as from Family Resources, Employment services, CDA, VIHA, VIRL, etc (in other words, bring the resource people as well as the resources out to the community)
- Sustainability and finding funding might be an issue; she suggests having a liaison person who is a "buffer" and coordinator = a "community animator"
- How to find "vulnerable" families? > stand outside Kindergarten classrooms! And use people who already run programs in the community as outreach workers as they are familiar faces (as well as their "spaces" being familiar – may not need a bus?)
- Check out Boys and Girls Club as a useful resource and perhaps partner?

PARENTS AT CUMBERLAND STRONG START

Monica spoke with 7 families at the program, including one dad.

- Having nurses on a regular basis would be useful
- Mother Goose was of interest and was successful
- Don't feel that "vulnerable" families necessarily access programs, but depends on the definition of vulnerable (many of them expressed having financial difficulties, everyday difficulties, etc that made it important to get out doing things with the children that were cheap/free and readily accessible)
- Most liked the big bus "concept", especially if nutritionist, dental hygienist, music teacher and someone from Pacificare and CDA (for daycare placement and referrals to speech therapy, etc) were on board regularly, but didn't know if it was sustainable.

- But most also said that Strong Start already a wonderful program and WHY NOT use this already existing program as the disseminator of information and build on it?
- More people would access these services either way if they only knew about it: so the challenge is really GETTING THE WORD OUT!
- Many wished they had known about services EARLIER.
- Some said that public transport services upgrades/improvements would be more important to them than getting a “big bus” out to Cumberland.
- As in Black Creek, the idea came up that having busses for picking up folks and bringing them to a central, known location would almost be better and more important than getting a bus to park somewhere and hoping that people would squish themselves on board.
- One mom said that there was already something to do every day in Cumberland and that word of mouth was the way that info got around.

PARKSVILLE GROWING DREAMS TRAINING - Lorraine

Lorraine who coordinated and worked on the Words on Wheels bus in Parksville had some interesting insights:

- Firstly, she said that one doesn't always reach “vulnerable” families, but that it doesn't matter. The people who need the resources come. She also mentioned that many times “vulnerability” is “under the radar” in mainstream families.
- Secondly, she addressed the “what comes first – the chicken or the egg?” question by saying that they had to first get the bus, have faith, use trial and error, park it and see who came (it took TIME)
- Thirdly, she said that there absolutely had to be one person responsible for the bus, a full time employee who coordinated the whole shebang!
- Next, it was important to build trusting relationships with the folks; this sometimes already exists within programs running in a community, and so it might be easier to build on spaces and people that are already there?
- Having said that, though, and lastly: she really feels that the large bus is the way to go as: 1) it is tangible and very visible and 2) because of this it is much, much easier to get funding.

I think it is also important to remember that Parksville/Qualicum have the FULL SUPPORT of their School District!!!! This seems ESSENTIAL...

FANNY BAY PARENT AND TOT GROUP, Evelyn Bally and families

- Evelyn feels strongly that you should use what you already have in your community and build on it, including bringing in elders.
- Again, not reaching a lot of “vulnerable” families, but every family has “vulnerabilities”
- Issues for not attending: no vehicle, weather, social aspects such as it being hard to come out of isolation once you're in it and not wanting others to see some of your child's behaviours.
- Would a bus be useful? Yes, but better to do it on a different day than the already existing group so that people who aren't accessing the Parent and Tot group might feel more comfortable

doing something “new” = use a different location as well, such as ferry terminal or Pepper Shell (Tempo gas station).

- On the other hand: it would be good to build on existing services, so one could also picture bringing people to an existing location and adding on resources to those that already exist > she emphasized that an existing program BENEFIT from and not be adversely effected by something new being brought to the neighbourhood.
- Getting the word out could happen by Fanny Bay Flyer, posters, emailing and use of the FB Hall marquee.
- What is missing in Fanny Bay? Library resources, so one way or another bring books and computer resources out, and evening activities for 0 – 6 with families (there is enough for youth apparently); also something for DADS
- There is no regular VIHA presence
- Evelyn finds that many resource people don't want to make the trip all the way out to Fanny Bay!!
- She also believes that however it happens, people would come out to see a dental hygienist, librarian, etc if they came on a REGULAR BASIS.
- As for the Bowser bus, it seems that moms like the bus, dads like the more open space of the school gyms and libraries.

It is important to note that out of all the families I spoke to, only these had already had some access to a bus (the one in Bowser).

- some of the families access the bus in Bowser on a regular basis, and the Strong Start program in the Bowser School library
- many said they were financially strapped, so enjoy a service that is free
- they especially like the fact that these programs (bus and parent/tot in Fbay) teach socialability and learning skills before Kindergarten (Kindergarten readiness)
- most said they would happily access a local bus instead of going to Bowser
- PHN and other resource people once a month would be of interest
- One mom comes all the way from Comox and made the point that wherever you make friends, that's where you'll go: make it familiar, safe, encouraging, and a place where especially women can share about things like PPD, etc
- However, although most liked the bus idea, they all said: “why have a bus when you've already got a wonderful community centre and a program that already exists?”
- Why not build on programs? Fanny Bay needs more BASICS like Mother Goose, and development from just simple play groups to groups that teach basic skills and readiness (which they find on the bus, so why not expand that onto the existing program in Fbay?)
- All families said that a mobile library would be awesome – it's hard to take an active 3 year old to a place where they're supposed to be quiet! So instead of taking uncooperative kids who aren't engaged to a quiet space, why not bring it all to the families in their own communities?
- One mom said that a bus would have a huge impact of kids and parents – but would see it as a separate entity to the already existing program; she figures that sometimes existing programs can be intimidating for some people, so something new might bring in more folks
- Having Home Depot-type building projects for dads and seniors was mentioned.

- One mom who was used to accessing both the busses in SD69 and Munschkinland said these programs were great for making friends before school starts, and for getting parents to do stories and songs with their kids.

In addition, from the EDI Discussion at SD71 on May 19th, 2011 it seems that some of the more vulnerable places are inner-city and south Courtenay and not necessarily in the outlying areas. This information may provoke some more thought as to which populations FLOAC wants to reach out to?

STILL TO CONTACT (or contact has been made but no progress as of yet):

Cumberland El, Dirk Den Otter
 Oyster River El, Graeme Boyd
 Miracle Beach El, Erica Black
 Denman/Hornby Els, Erika Moser
 Royston El, Barb Robertson
 Janice Caton, Black Creek P.O.
 Mia Woods (we'll meet next week)
 M'Kola Housing
 Lake Trail Jr, Lori Carpenter
 Foursquare Church, Pastor Scott
 Comox United Tot Stop
 Brooklyn StrongStart, Maureen Wagner
 CFB Comox Play and Tumble, Roberta/Natalie
 Airport El, Brian Goodwin
 Courtenay El, Kyle Timms
 Arden El, Geoff Manning
 Port Hardy
 Port Alberni
 Campbell River (where the bus idea didn't take)
 Duncan (also doing something different; contact from Joseph)

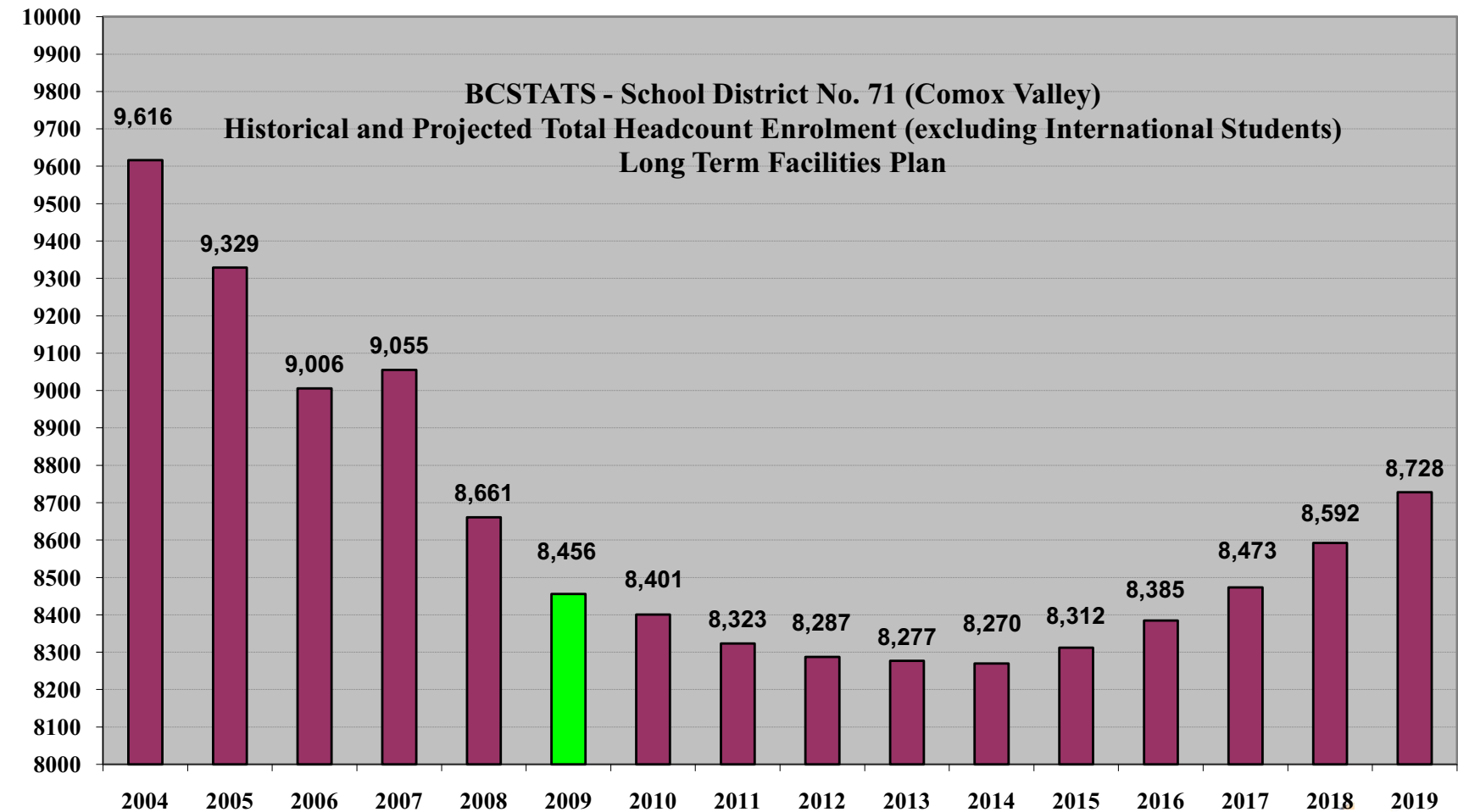
Powell River: A questionnaire was sent out asking other communities who had the outreach bus about their programs. Powell River emphasized that they had the SD on board from the get-go, they have a coordinator just for the bus, and that they used anecdotal and experiential evidence from people already working with families to help make the decisions about where to put the bus. They did not have specific goals in the beginning, planning stages – but rather overall goals of closing gaps in service. The biggest challenge was finding the bus and the people to “manage” it. In the end, perseverance and the goodwill of the community won out. Success By Six and the SD partnered to keep things running. SD very involved. Strong Start is on the bus. Got BIG funders! And continue to fundraise. A local gas station provides gas, LeFarge pays for ferry to Texada and Save On provides snacks.

Appendix 6: Enrolment Trends – School District 71

The graphs attached outline the enrolment trends and projections for school aged children in the Comox Valley.



Enrolment Trends – SD71 (Comox Valley) - Total

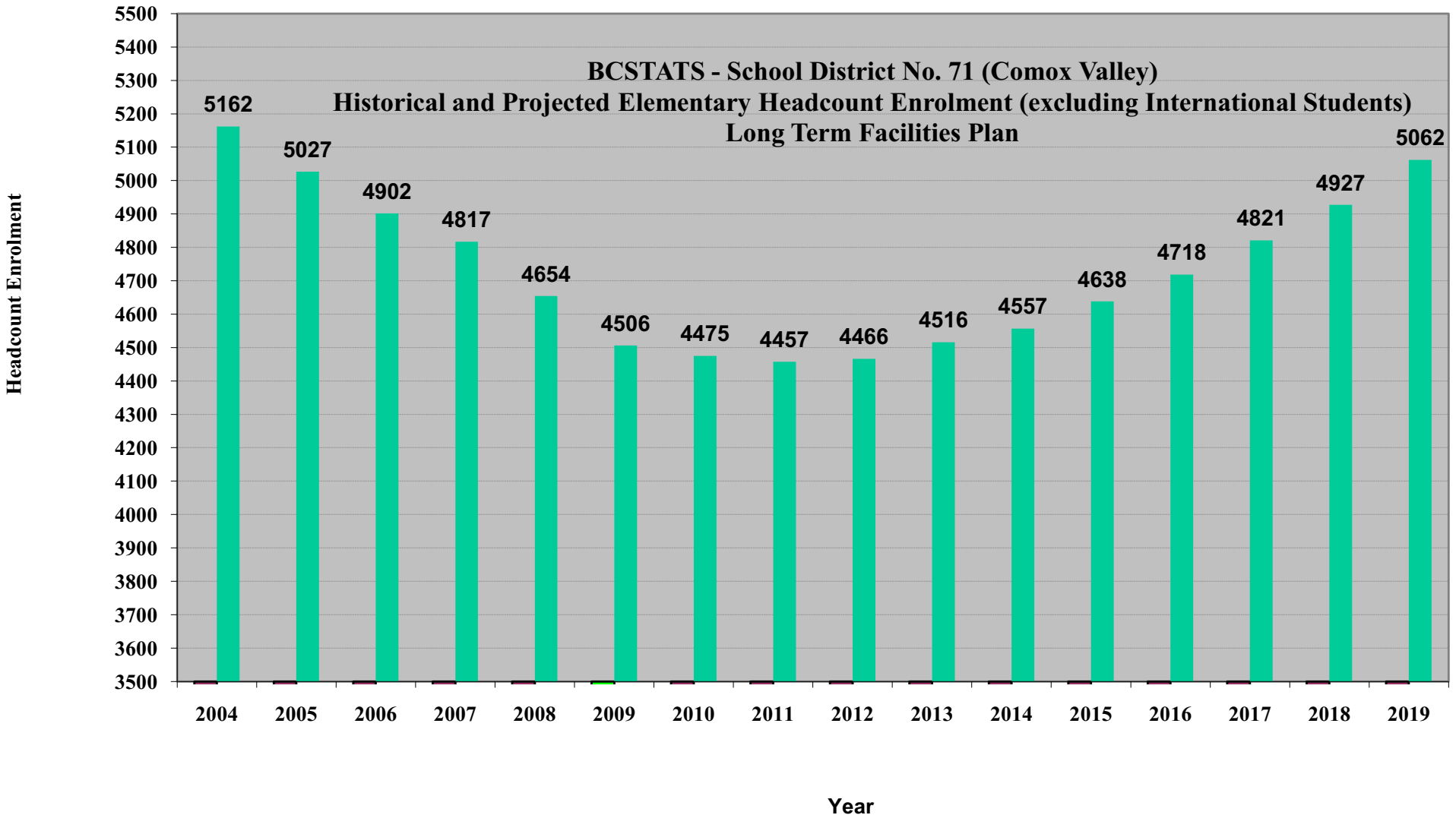


Source: BC Stats – April 2010

Year



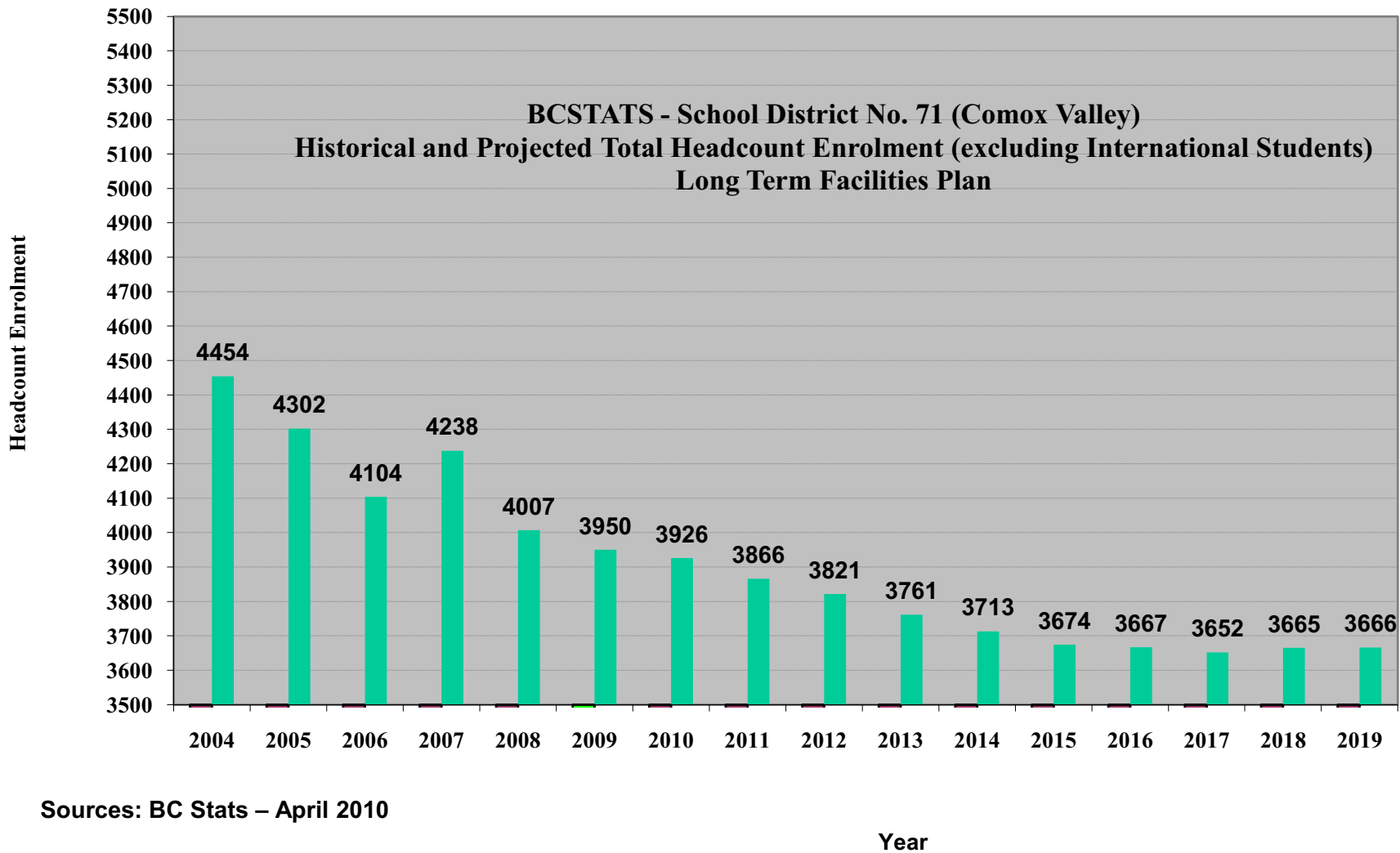
Enrolment Trends – SD 71 (Comox Valley) – Elementary



Source: BC Stats – April 2010



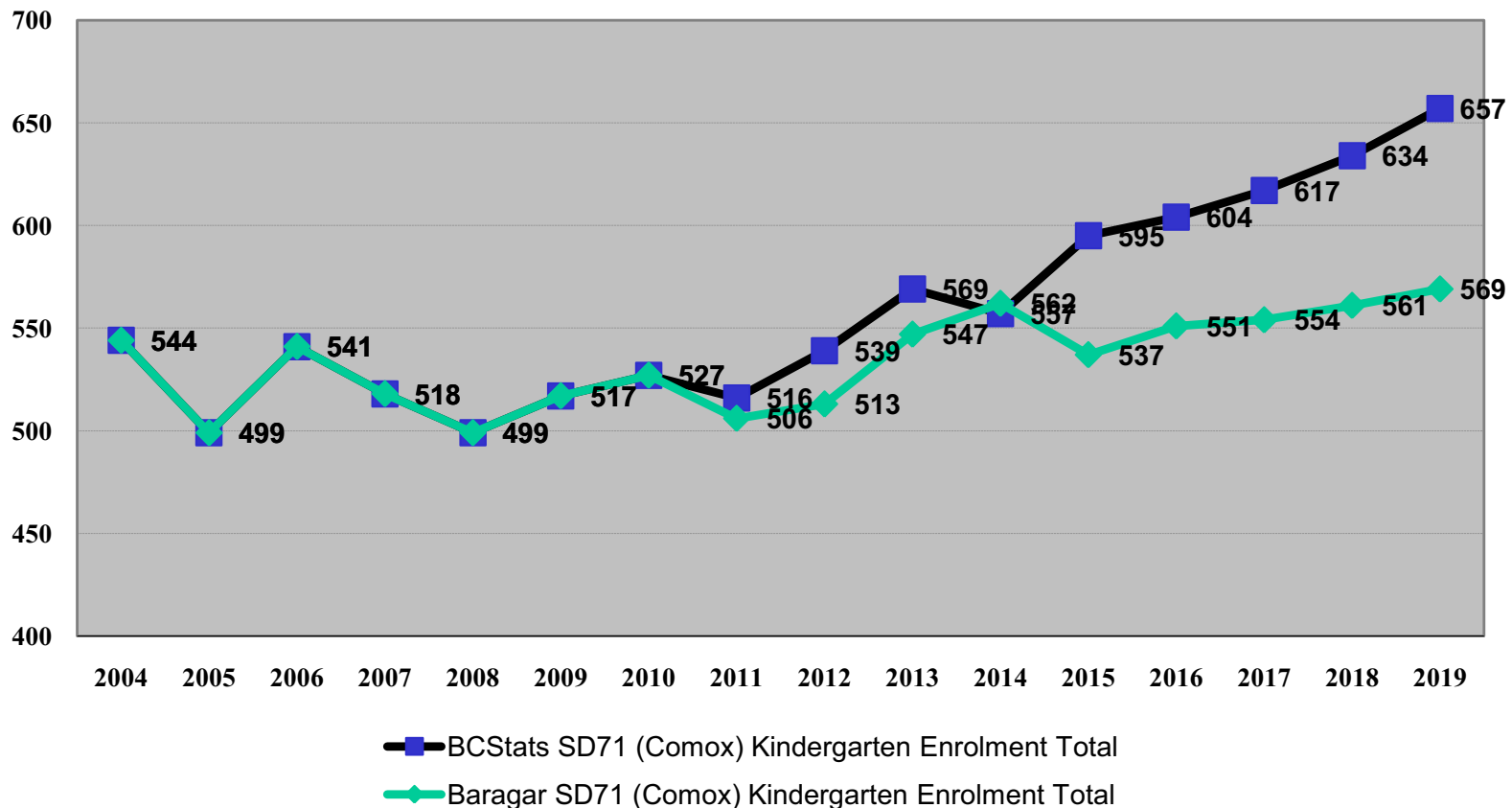
Enrolment Trends – SD71 (Comox Valley) – Secondary





Enrolment Trends – SD71 (Comox Valley) – Kindergarten

School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) Kindergarten Headcount Enrolment Projection



Sources: BC Stats – April 2010

Baragar – Fall 2009