



# **Dawson Creek Community Literacy Plan**

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**Contractors: Charlie and Mary Parslow**

**Task Group Members:**

**Marlene Deith, School District 59**

**Jennifer Neis, DC Literacy Society**

**Beth Wilson, Obair Economic Society**

**Donna Desmet, Job Search & Support Services**

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**Lynn Haugen, Chiron Learning Centre**

**Dorothy Smith, Parkhill Community School**

**Dorothy Michiel, Community Member**

**Carole Taylor, Child Care Resource and Referral**

**Heidy Kux-Kardos, Success by 6, ECD Coalition**

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# Community Literacy Plan Process Summary

**Nov 9, 2006 - Expression of Interest** – Our community had the readiness and willingness to participate in the initiative. Marlene Deith – Literacy Coordinator SD59, Collette Bourque – Family Support SD59, Jennifer Neis – Literacy Coordinator, DC Literacy Society and Christabelle Kux-Kardos – Regional Literacy Coordinator, NLC met to work on the EOI and it was submitted to Literacy Now for approval.

**We identified and invited community members following the Literacy Now suggestions and continued to follow the guide thoroughly throughout the process. Information about Literacy Now and the launch meeting were sent out at the end of November by email, newspaper, posted around town and by telephone.**

**Dec 11, 2006 – Launch meeting** was held at Northern Lights College. 30 diverse community members attended. Leona Gadsby from Literacy Now presented the initiative. The group participated in a brain-storming activity to look at assets, gaps and a vision for Dawson Creek. Participants filled out a form provided by Literacy Now indicating whether they wanted to be a Task Force Member, Community partner or Supporter.

Information gathered from the brainstorming activity was summarized and a Literacy Now community contacts list was created, both of which were forwarded via email to all participants.

**Jan 9, 2006 – First Task Group Meeting** to review the outcomes of the launch meeting and to put together a Planning funds application. Northern Lights College was appointed as the Steward of the \$10,000 planning funds, providing the administration of the funds as an in-kind contribution to the project. Christabelle Kux-Kardos was hired on contract as the Literacy Now facilitator.

**Feb 12, 2006** – Task Group met to review the 8 step process and assign tasks.

**March 8, 2007 - Step 1: Create a vision, mission, and guiding principles** – Contracted Charlie Parslow to help facilitate the session using information gathered from the community visioning exercise done at the launch meeting and from working sessions by the Task Group. The results were collated and input was requested and provided via email. The outcomes from this were continuously referred to when setting our goals and creating our action plan.

**Step 2: Develop a Community profile** - Donna Desmet of Job Search and Support Services completed a Community Profile in accordance with the planning guide, identifying the geographic, historical, demographic, social and economic setting as well as the main social and economic issues/challenges that could be addressed by a community literacy initiative. For the geographic boundaries of our community to be included in the plan we used the school districts bus route area. The Task group reviewed and provided feedback.

**Step 3: Develop a Literacy inventory** – The facilitator used the inventory identified at the Launch meeting plus the Kiwanis Enterprise Centre’s community directory and sent out information requests to the community via email, phone calls and meetings in order to put together a comprehensive Literacy Resources and Services list from pre-natal to Seniors. [The Task force then reviewed it for additions or omissions.](#)

**April 11, 2007 – Step 4: Setting Goals** – A half day session with Charlie Parslow was used for the task force and additional community partners to review and evaluate the current literacy assets, funding sources, resources and programs in our community, as well as the gaps, links and overlaps in order to explore opportunities, challenges, strengths and needs. [We chose focus areas, based on the gaps and challenges. The four goals were established based on the guiding principles. The success indicators came from the “visions” of the community. All information from the session was collated and forwarded via email to participants to review and add further feedback.](#)

**May 14, 2007 - Step 5: Making an Action Plan** – A half day session with Charlie was used to put the goals into actions. **What** are the tasks and activities that need to be done in order to reach the objective? **Who** needs to be involved in this activity? Who is responsible for making sure it happens? **Resources:** What materials, equipment, partners, places, skills and knowledge are needed to carry out this objective? **When** do these activities need to be done? [All information from the session was collated into an action plan grid with success indicators and terms for gathering information. The plan was forwarded via email to participants to review and add further feedback.](#)

**June 11, 2007 - Step 6: Evaluating our Program** – The task group fine tuned the action plan. A time-line grid of the actions was also created.

[Via email, constant feedback from the task group was requested and incorporated. At each meeting we would review the previous tasks and only move forward once a consensus was reached.](#)

**Step 7: Write the Community Literacy Plan** – Facilitator compiled the information which is to include:

- Summary – describing the process and the plan
- Process – how the task group members were involved, how guiding principles were maintained, how areas of need were chosen
- Profile – summarize profile, inventory
- Plan – action plan and success statements for each focus
- Budget – done by Steward

Mary Parslow was commissioned to do a visual of the Community Literacy Plan to have as a back-drop for the Community Literacy Coordinators Office and for all community members to have as a reference.

**June 27, 2007 - Step 8: Take the plan to the Community Partners for approval**

**Submit to 2010 Legacies Now for implementation funds**

# **Community Literacy Resources Inventory**

**Note: Many of the following resources are overarching and offer services for a multitude of age groups, cultures and needs. This list may not be comprehensive.**

## **Prenatal & Perinatal:**

- Northern Health - Positively Pregnant, Intervention programs, Parenting (prenatal), assessments
- GAIA Program – Pregnancy Outreach
- Nawican Friendship Centre – Baby’s Best Chance
- CDC – Teen Pregnancy Support
- Physicians

## **Birth to Five Years:**

- South Peace Child Development Centre – various Family support services
- Early Childhood Development Coalition
- Childcare Resource and Referral – Mother Goose and other educational programs, various support services - Licensing - preschools (3), group daycare (3), family child care (10)
- Dawson Creek Aboriginal Family Services – Machitawin Family Learning Centre, Building Blocks
- Dawson Creek Public Library – Babies and Books, Pre-school Story-time, Computers, Summer Reading Club
- Success by 6, Ready Set Learn, Words On Wheels Bus, Munchkinland, Strong Start Centres

## **Kindergarten to Grade 7:**

- Public/private school literacy programs – i.e. PALS, Reading Recovery, Raise a Reader
- School District 59 Resource Centre and employees
- Out of School Care (6)
- City of Dawson Creek – Parks and Recreation programs/workshops
- Parkhill Community School
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters
- Pouce Coupe Municipal Library - Computers, Summer Reading Club

## **Grade 8 to 12/Young Adults:**

- O'Brien School – Distance Education
- YO 360 – Youth program
- Reconnect Youth Services
- The Ark Christian Youth Centre

## **Adults:**

- Dawson Creek Literacy Society – Adult one on one tutoring (literacy and ESL) – Volunteer Tutor training – ESL Café – Group lessons
- Chiron Learning Centre – Community Assistance Program
- Northern Lights College – Adult Basic Education, Continuing Education, Trades, University Transfer, Adult Learning Centre, Job Education & Training Program
- O’Bair Economic Society – employment
- Job Search and Support Services – employment
- North East Native Advancing Society – aboriginal employment Dawson Creek
- Society for Community Living – Various supports for adults with disabilities
- Independence Networking Services – Various supports for adults with disabilities
- Community Futures – Self-employment program/Business Planning Workshops
- Kiwanis Enterprise Centre – Computer training/ workshops
- Chamber of Commerce – Workshops

## **Seniors:**

- Seniors Halls – Pouce Coupe and Dawson Creek
- Public Libraries – Friends of the Library seniors programs, Home Book Drop
- Northern Health - Home Care and Support
- CDC – Rec Programs
- Advocacy groups and organizations

## **Other services and support:**

- Regional Literacy Coordinator
- Nawican Friendship Centre – Food Bank, Programs
- Dawson Creek Aboriginal Family Services – Various Family support programs
- North East Métis Society
- Ministry of Children and Families – Various services including probation
- Axis Family Resources Ltd. – support and training for Foster Parents
- Mental Health and Addictions – Children, Youth, Adult
- South Peace Community Resources Society – Various services for families
- R.C.M.P. – programs i.e. D.A.R.E and support
- Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance
- Various Church organizations – Salvation Army
- Service Canada
- Dawson Creek Native Housing
- Community Living BC
- Peace River South Retired Teacher’s Association
- Toastmasters International
- Service Clubs – Rotary, Shriners, Kiwanis, etc.
- Kiwanis Performing Arts Centre – Arts and culture programs
- Recreation Clubs

## **Gaps/Challenges**

**Note: These were identified outcomes in the initial community brainstorming session and are in no particular order. They may not be comprehensive.**

### **Highest Priority:**

- Financial assistance for tutoring – ABE funding (no CSL)
- Parent education for young parents with childcare provided
- Assessment for preschoolers
- Basic needs – home, food, warmth
- High scope preschool (parents participate and take the learning home - continuation of learning)

### **High Priority:**

- No youth or community centre in Dawson Creek
- Lack of childcare for parents to attend programs
- Lack of assistance in helping people know how to talk to government institutions, doctors, etc. and ask questions
- Lack of coordination
- Public Transportation - more bus services with special passes for 'learners'

### **Also noted:**

- Lack of childcare – 0 to 3 years
- Lack of assistance with tasks like forms, bank machines, etc
- Lack of awareness of services
- Fear as a major barrier to accessing services
- Technology demands - Technology evolves so quickly that we can't keep up
- No formal, accessible assessment for basic readiness for Kindergarten
- Lack of night school for full ABE (not enough money)
- Lack of volunteers
- Losing BCIT programs
- Not enough learning support
- Isolation in community, between communities and as individuals
- Lack of support for teachers by parents at home
- Lack of English support for new Canadian children

# **Community Vision**

**Note: These outcomes are from the visioning session during the launch meeting. The task group referred to these when setting their goals for the Community Literacy Plan. Not every note was able to be addressed in the plan.**

## **Highest Priority:**

- EDI vulnerability score will be lower
- Coordinated community effort
- Have a community literacy coordinator
- Have a 'hub' centre for all organizations open for all ages 0 -...
- Our community adult literacy will improve
- Be known as a 'learning community'
- High awareness of the importance of literacy among all community members

## **High Priority:**

- All parents are aware of how they can contribute to their child's early/on-going literacy success
- Increased Inter-agency partnerships
- A place where learners can feel safe to express their inadequate education. Caring atmosphere – not talked down to – for adult learning particularly
- Easy access to computers and training for all
- All of the Dawson Creek labour force is fully employed and earning a living wage
- Basic needs of learners are available

## **Also noted:**

- Colleges/schools will be seen as user friendly for all
- Use of Dawson Creek Public Library will increase
- Volunteers available in abundance
- Housing is not an issue!

## **Mission and Vision Statements**

**Mission statement:** To promote, coordinate and improve life-long learning in our community.

**Vision statement:** We are a community that values and supports learning for all people in all phases of life and provides opportunities for success.

## **Guiding Principles**

**Improvement:** We will see improved skill levels in all sectors of our community.

We will work for sustained improvement in life-long learning by:

- collecting and sharing information, seeking input from consumers
- enhancing existing successful, local programs
- adopting best practices which meet the needs of our community
- adjusting programs based on experience and new information
- seeking new partnerships
- securing long-term commitments from agencies, businesses and people

**Empowerment:** We will have empowered caregivers and educators who are equipped to support learning for all people.

We will empower people by:

- planning on an individual basis
- coaching them through their challenges
- providing resources to help them navigate change
- encouraging them to be active and involved in community events, culture and activities
- consulting with caregivers and caregivers about their needs
- advocating for life-long learning in the home, school, work and community
- supporting community members to achieve to the best of their ability.

**Collaboration:** We will be a collaborative community with established partnerships making access to learning available in all of our neighbourhoods.

We will foster collaboration by:

- establishing dynamic partnerships with agencies, people and businesses
- enabling processes that lead to shared involvement, ownership and responsibility
- communicating roles, ideas, needs and concerns on an on-going basis
- building consensus
- pooling resources such as funding, staff, expertise and other resources

**Accessibility:** We will have learner-friendly centres that are safe and accessible.

We will make learning accessible by:

- Being inclusive and open to all
- Recognizing and valuing cultural differences
- Providing safe, respectful and engaging environments
- Making life-long learning available in all neighbourhoods
- Ensuring life-long learning is individualized, flexible and affordable

## **Goals based on Guiding Principles**

**Goal 1: Improved skill levels in all sectors of the community**

**Goal 2: Caregivers and educators will be equipped to support learning**

**Goal 3: Increased collaboration and partnerships throughout the community**

**Goal 4: Establish safe and accessible neighbourhood centres**

## Dawson Creek Literacy Now Community Literacy Action Plan

### Goal #1: Improved skill levels in all sectors of the community

Success statement - Indicators	How will we work to achieve the Success Statement?	Who do we plan to be involved or responsible?	What resources are needed?	When will activity need to occur?	Gather Info
<b>Child development milestones are understood and used in regular assessment of all children</b>	<p>We will advocate and support the use of reliable literacy assessment tools in ECD services</p> <p>We will support parents/caregivers on how to assess progress</p>	Community Literacy Coordinator, SD59 ECD Coordinator, SB6, CCRR, CDC, Library, Public Health	<p>Cooperation of community ECD agencies – staff time, space, equipment, assessment materials</p> <p>– training workshops and/or outreach</p>	Fall 07 – on going	<p>Ask the ECD services about their use of tools</p> <p>Count the number of workshops provided</p>
<b>75% of individuals who access community based programs will improve on the essential skills levels based on pre and post assessment levels</b>	We will encourage all community based programs to use pre- and post assessment levels	NLC/RLC, Job Search, Obair, community based programs	Staff time to develop/collate existing tests, train program coordinators or deliver testing, funding for materials, “buy-in” from programs/ individuals	Sept 07– inventory existing tools Fall 08 – evaluate/ collate results from agencies	We will collect and assess data and share info (with establishment of protocols for collecting data)
<b>60% of agencies/ businesses in our community will be offered a Literacy Audit of their services</b>	<p>We will raise awareness and understanding of literacy among community service providers and businesses by offering them a literacy audit</p> <p>We will facilitate accessing literacy training</p>	RLC or consultant	Staff time, literacy audit tool kit, interest from service providers, list of training resources	Oct 07 - ongoing	Track the number of agencies who are offered and undergo an audit

<p><b>All ESL learners in our community wishing to work will be working in positions which match their work skills and experience</b></p>	<p>We will support the CALP proposal from DC Literacy Society to advocate for a full range of ESL services available for employees.</p> <p>We will support coordination of service delivery between agencies to ensure employees and employers are aware of such resources and services</p>	<p>Literacy Task Force, DC Literacy Society, Job Search</p>	<p>Brochure of ESL specific services, Chamber of Commerce to send out info to businesses, staff time, IMSS in PG</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ask DC Lit Society and Job Search if the employment type and rate of ESL Learners working is met</p>
<p><b>There will be a 25% increase in the number of adults including retirees in our community with access to and the ability to work with technology</b></p>	<p>We will support KEC in working to secure funding for E- Computer training for adults</p> <p>We will develop a resource list of computer access and training</p> <p>We will recruit student volunteers from South Peace to work with adults as part of the school curriculum</p>	<p>KEC, Task Force</p> <p>KEC/CLC</p> <p>SD59, KEC</p>	<p>Staff time, materials, support from Library, SD 59, Soft Ware Emporium, KEC</p>	<p>Sept 07 – ongoing</p> <p>Aug 08 - assess</p>	<p>Ask KEC if funding secured and to report on numbers</p> <p>Will have a resource list</p> <p>Will review if volunteers have been recruited from the school</p>
<p><b>25% of employers surveyed will report having increased success in hiring skilled labour locally</b></p>	<p>Develop and distribute survey for employers to assess their ability to hire skilled local employees</p>	<p>Job Search</p>	<p>Staff time, materials, support from CLC</p>	<p>June 07 – develop</p> <p>July 07 - Distribute</p> <p>Jun 08 – redistribute</p> <p>July 08 - Collate and report to coordinator</p>	<p>Will collate data from survey</p>

**Goal #2: Caregivers and educators will be equipped to support learning**

<b>Success statement - Indicators</b>	<b>How will we work to achieve the Success Statement?</b>	<b>Who is involved or responsible?</b>	<b>What resources are needed?</b>	<b>When will activity need to occur?</b>	<b>Gather Info</b>
<b>There will be a 75% increase in the number of volunteers who support students and parents in gaining literacy skills</b>	<p>Develop a marketing plan with sponsorship opportunities for raising community awareness of literacy and volunteer opportunity.</p> <p>Create a community literacy resource list and website.</p> <p>Provide training/orientation sessions for volunteers.</p>	<p>CLC , KEC, Job Search, SD 59, RLC, DC Literacy Society</p> <p>Literacy BC</p> <p>DC Lit Society</p>	<p>KEC – Volunteer DC, Lit Now Asset inventory, sponsorship for Tutor trainer and materials, various media forms and sponsorship to advertise/ printing, website developer, staff time, space,</p>	<p>Aug 07 - marketing plan, Sept 07 – awareness campaign (ongoing), Oct 07 (ongoing) - Volunteer training sessions</p>	<p>Track number of new volunteers</p>
<b>Tutor services to support literacy made available for all age groups and in a variety of locations</b>	<p>Create a resource list of tutors and distribute list to community organizations</p>	<p>CLC, DC Lit Society, SD59, NLC, Obair, JSSS, Chiron, KEC</p>	<p>Staff time, support from tutors, printing/updating list, space</p>	<p>Oct 07 - ongoing</p>	<p>There will be a comprehensive tutor list</p>
<b>There will be a 25% increase in attendance at literacy focused forums/workshops and in the use of lending resources available in the community for caregivers and educators in the community</b>	<p>Enhance community’s awareness of literacy based workshops and the availability of lending resources.</p> <p>Create a “lending” resource list.</p> <p>Collect data</p>	<p>CLC, RLC, Workshop facilitators</p> <p>CDC, CCRR, SD59, NLC, Libraries, KEC, DC Lit Society, Public Health</p>	<p>Staff time, advertising venues, printing of resource list, workshop evaluation forms, data collection form</p>	<p>Sept 07 – resource list Ongoing awareness June 08 - Collect data, July/Aug 08 – facilitate sharing of best practice Sep08 – new approaches</p>	<p>There will be a “lending” resource list.</p>

**Goal #3: Increased collaboration and partnerships throughout the community**

Success statement - Indicators	How will we work to achieve the Success Statement?	Who is involved or responsible?	What resources are needed?	When will activity need to occur?	Gather Info
<p><b>There will be increased knowledge of literacy programs in the community with an increased number of organizations participating in discussions and/or working together to offer joint programs/events</b></p>	<p>CLC will attend Community Service Network meetings and other related community meetings to establish relationships</p> <p>Create literacy services resource list and website and distribute info to all agencies and employers</p>	<p>CLC, City of DC (website) - KEC, RLC, literacy organizations</p>	<p>Staff time, City of DC approval for addition to website and staff time, tracking tool to measure increased participation</p>	<p><b>Aug 07 - Hire CLC</b>, Sept 07 – resource list/website Ongoing - CSN meetings, establish/track relationships</p>	<p>CLC to track numbers of organizations participating in literacy discussions/partnerships</p> <p>There will be a resource list and website</p>
<p><b>The school district, SC, MCFD, MEIA and public health will have the information to be able to refer “vulnerable” people to literacy programs</b></p>	<p>We will meet and work together with these organizations on developing protocols and a package of literacy information and materials to facilitate the referral process</p>	<p>Lit Now Task Force, CLC, RLC, SD 59, MCFD, MEIA, Public Health</p>	<p>Staff time, partnership agreements and/or protocols/ materials</p>	<p>Jan - Feb 08  Sept 08</p>	<p>Meetings will occur, agreements will be made, packages will be developed Programs will report the number of low literacy learners accessing the community programs</p>
<p><b>60% of all businesses know how to contribute to literacy in the community</b></p>	<p>We will develop a Power point presentation and a package of literacy information and materials, including sponsorship possibilities, to take/send to businesses</p>	<p>CLC, Task Force, Job Search, Chamber of Commerce RLC</p>	<p>Staff time, printing, Literacy audit kits and sponsorship for facilitating</p>	<p>Oct 07 - ongoing</p>	<p>Deliver info to businesses – follow up with businesses.</p> <p>Track whether new or more businesses are involved or contributing to Literacy programs</p>

<b>Citizens will be made aware of what literacy is and its value and importance in our society</b>	We will develop a media campaign to raise awareness about Literacy and its importance	CLC, RLC, Task Force, SB6, ECD Coalition, Media reps	Staff time, media partnerships, marketing planner	Sept 07 – ongoing	There will be various forms of media coverage on an ongoing basis
	We will look for sustainable options for continued success in coordinating and promoting literacy	CLC	Staff time for proposal writing	Mar 08	Funding possibilities will be brought forward for continued coordination

#### Goal# 4: Establish safe and accessible neighbourhood centres

<b>Success statement - Indicators</b>	<b>How will we work to achieve the Success Statement?</b>	<b>Who is involved or responsible?</b>	<b>What resources are needed?</b>	<b>When will activity need to occur?</b>	<b>Gather Info</b>
<b>There is a 20% annual increase in the number of individuals and groups of people, who have not traditionally accessed the services, enrolled in programs</b>	There will be a central hub/one-stop centre which has all the community info, the ability to refer and/or has services available for all ages and needs including a flexible schedule  Media campaign	Task Group to find space (City, Obair, KEC, CCRR)  (same as above)	Space, equipment,  (same as above)	June 07 – Find space  Aug 07 - ongoing  (same as above)	There will be a physical location and a contact person  Ask programs about enrolment  (same as above)
<b>There are various levels of local English Language Learning opportunities and settlement services available and shared with all ESL community members</b>	DC Lit Society & Job Search to evaluate the possibility of a partnership with IMSS of PG to expand their services  DC Lit Society/NLC to expand levels of ESL training SD 59 to look at expanding English Language Learning opportunities support	DC Lit, JSSS, SD 59, NLC	Research and discussions with partners, brochures, staff time, increased funding for delivery	Sept 07	Ask partners if the ability to help ESL members is being met

<b>There will be a 20% increase in the number of employees with low literacy skills involved in distance education, college, workplace training, and community programs</b>	Target businesses re: Workplace Literacy	NLC/Job Search/Obair	Interest from business, staff time, specific courses	Sept 07 - ongoing	Workplace Essential Skills workshops are being delivered to business in the community
<b>There will be pre-school and/or youth programs available in every EDI neighbourhood</b>	We will encourage and support existing programs to provide outreach to as many neighbourhoods as possible	SD59, CCRR, SPCRS, CDC, Library, CLC, SB6, YO360, BBBS, Reconnect	Space, staff, sponsorship, materials, coordination, collaboration	Sept 07 - ongoing	We will ask programs about their outreach measures

## Community Literacy Action Plan Summarized – Time Line

### Specific Activities

<b>Date of Activity</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Involved in doing</b>	<b>Person to gather info (if different)</b>
June 07	Acquire office space for CLC/central location	CKK – Task Group	
June – July 07	Develop, distribute and assess survey for employers to assess their ability to hire skilled local employees	JSSS	Report back to Task Group
July 07	Meet and advertise for CLC position	CKK – Task Group	
Aug 07	Interview and hire a Community Literacy Coordinator	CKK – Task Group	
Aug 07 – ongoing update	Develop/obtain resource list of computer access and training – forward to READ234 Website and distribute list to community organizations	KEC	RLC - CLC

Aug 07 – ongoing update	Finalize community literacy resource list - forward to READ234 website and distribute list to community organizations	CLC - RLC	
Aug 07-Sept 07 – ongoing	Develop and implement a marketing/media campaign plan for raising community awareness of literacy and its importance including sponsorship and volunteer opportunities	CLC – Task Force ECD Coalition/SB6 - Media	CLC to implement
Sept 07 - ongoing	DC Lit Society & Job Search to research partnership with IMSS of PG to expand immigrant settlement services  DC Lit Society to expand levels of ESL training  SD 59 to look at expanding support for English Language Learning opportunities	DC Lit Society, JSSS  DC Lit Society  SD 59	Report back to Task Group
Sept 07	Create a lending resource list and distribute list to community organizations	CLC –Community organizations	RLC - CLC
Sept 07 - ongoing	CLC will attend Community Service Network meetings and other related community meetings to establish relationships and will track numbers of organizations participating in literacy discussions/partnerships	CLC	
Sept 07 – Oct 08	Inventory Existing Assessment Tools	CLC –Community organizations	
Sept 07	Recruit student volunteers from South Peace to work with adults as part of the school curriculum	KEC	CLC
Sept 07 – ongoing	Target employees/businesses re: Workplace Essential Skills workshops	NLC – RLC JSSS/Obair	Report back to Task Group
Sept 07 – ongoing	WOW bus, Strong Start Centres, existing youth and pre-school programs to provide outreach to ensure every EDI neighbourhood has available program	Community Organizations	CLC
Oct 07 On-going update	Create a resource list of tutors and distribute list to community organizations	CLC –Community organizations	RLC - CLC
Oct 07	Develop a Power point presentation and a package of literacy information and materials, including sponsorship possibilities, to take/send to businesses	CLC - RLC	
Oct 07 - ongoing	Offer Literacy Audits/training to businesses and service providers in the community	RLC	Report back to Task Group

Oct 07 - ongoing	Provide training/orientation sessions for volunteer tutors	Tutor Trainer – DC Lit Society	CLC
Jan 08 – Feb 08	Begin meeting and working with organizations such as school district, SC, MCFD, MEIA and public health on developing protocols and a package of literacy information and materials to facilitate the referral process to community literacy programs	CLC – RLC - Task Force	
March 08	Look for sustainable options for continued success in coordinating and promoting literacy	CLC – Task Force	
June 08	Redistribute and assess employer survey results	JSSS	Report to Task Group
June 08	Collect data from post assessment	CLC – Community Organizations	
June 08 July/Aug 08 Sept 08	Collect data of workshop participation/evaluation Facilitate sharing of best practices of workshops Implement new approaches	Workshop facilitators	CLC Task Force
Sept 08 – Oct 08	Report on # of referrals from organizations such as school district, SC, MCFD, MEIA and public health	Community based programs	CLC

### On-going Supporting Activities

<b>Date of Activity</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Start Fall 07	Advocate and support the use of reliable literacy assessment tools in ECD services  Support parents/caregivers on how to assess progress	Community Literacy Coordinator /task force - SB6, CCRR, SD59, CDC, Library, Public Health
On-going	Support DC Literacy Society to advocate for a full range of ESL services available for employees  Support coordination of service delivery between agencies to ensure employees and employers are aware of such resources and services	Literacy Task Force, DC Literacy Society, Job Search
On-going	Support KEC in e-growth sustainability	Task Group
On-going	Enhance community's awareness of literacy based workshops	CLC – RLC – Workshop facilitators

## Appendix 1

### Dawson Creek Literacy Now Participant List

First Name	Last Name	Title	Organization	Participation	Email
Christabelle	Kux-Kardos	Reg Literacy Coordinator	NLC	Task Group	<a href="mailto:ckux-kardos@nlc.bc.ca">ckux-kardos@nlc.bc.ca</a>
Marlene	Deith	Literacy Teacher	SD 59	Task Group	<a href="mailto:marlene_deith@mail.sd59.bc.ca">marlene_deith@mail.sd59.bc.ca</a>
Jennifer	Neis	Literacy Coordinator	DC Literacy Society	Task Group	<a href="mailto:dawcrls@telus.net">dawcrls@telus.net</a>
Dorothy	Michiel	Community Member		Task Group	<a href="mailto:pmichiel@pris.ca">pmichiel@pris.ca</a>
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## Appendix 2

### **Dawson Creek Community Profile** By Donna Desmet, Job Search and Support Services

#### **Geographic location**

Dawson Creek is located in Northeast BC in an area referred to as the Peace River Region. The city is four hours North by road from BC's Northern Capital, Prince George, 73km southeast of Fort St. John and only ten minutes from the Alberta border. Dawson Creek is a major transportation hub due to its location, having many major highways from BC and Alberta travelling through.

#### **Community History**

The Peace River region was originally home to nomadic tribes of Sekanni and Beaver peoples and later, Cree. These Aboriginal peoples, the Métis and fur traders were the sole residents of the area for many years. In 1879, a geologist, George Mercer Dawson studied the area in order to assess the feasibility of a railway line by the CPR. It was not until the gold rush days of 1898, when gold seekers travelled the area heading up to the Yukon that white settlers started to take up residence in the Peace River Country and small businesses started to emerge. Dawson Creek was started in order to accommodate settlers heading west along the Northern Alberta Railway.

From 1919 to 1930 the hamlet grew slowly, mainly made up of British War Veterans who filed claims on land in the area. Colonization schemes added to the population bringing people from the Sudeten area of Czechoslovakia in 1938. These immigrants settled near Tupper, 20 miles southwest of Dawson Creek.

In 1942, the building of the Alaska Highway began. The Dawson Creek population of 750 grew in a short period of time owing to thousands of civilian workers and soldiers working on this extensive construction project. Dawson Creek suddenly became a boom town and centre for many industries, some of whom have remained an integral part of the economy. Dawson Creek became a city in 1958 and has grown steadily, solidifying its agricultural economy, diversifying industry and expanding its retail and service sectors. In the last three years the community has seen increased growth related to economic activity in the oil, gas and mining sector creating opportunities, increasing immigration and migration to the area and creating spin-off jobs in the service sector.

## **Demographic Scan**

Dawson Creek has a current estimated population of close to 12,000 people and a trading area population of 60,000. 13.3% of the population is Aboriginal, which is high when compared to the provincial average of 4.4% for British Columbia. 2.8% of residents are visible minorities, much below the provincial rate of 21.6%. The community has experienced higher than average growth over the past two years due to increased economic activity. We are a young community with 37% of residents aged under 25, 6% higher than the Provincial average. Children aged below 15 years of age represent 22% of our total population.

The 2001 Census reflects 34% of residents over 15 are single and 45% are married; 21% of families in Dawson Creek are headed by single parents and live on incomes 44% lower than that of married or common-law families in the community.

## **Education**

Educational levels in the community are noticeably low at all age levels when compared to provincial averages. 24.1% of residents aged 20-34 have less than a high school graduation certificate, compared to 14.6% for BC, and only 9.2% locally of this same age group have a university certificate, diploma or degree, compared to 23.5% across BC. The same pattern is visible in 35-44 and 45-64 age groups also. Data shows that more residents complete Trades certificates or diplomas on average than the rest of BC, possibly reflecting the demand for skilled trades people in the Northeast job market.

School District #59 (Peace River South) statistics for 2005 show that a significant 40.6% of 18 year-olds did not graduate between 2003 and 2005, almost double the provincial rate of 24.4%. Similarly 40.9% did not complete the Grade 10 English Provincial Exam in 2004/5 compared to an average of 23.6 for the whole Province. An Early Child Development Mapping Project undertaken within the School District researched children's readiness for school as a reflection of early development and prediction of performance later in life. Analysis of results from 2003 and 2006 shows Peace River South is now in the most vulnerable quintile of districts province-wide. All of the area neighbourhoods studied had more than 30% of children vulnerable. 46% of children within Dawson Creek Centre neighbourhood were assessed as vulnerable over five areas of child development including language and cognitive development.

## **Economic Situation**

Dawson Creek has a well-diversified economy. Major industry sectors include mining and oil and gas extraction, construction, wood product manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, transportation and warehousing, agriculture, healthcare and social assistance.

Being part of the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin geologic hydrocarbon area, Northeast BC as a whole has experienced a rise in oil and gas activity and revenue due to exploration and production of oil and gas products. In the last few years several large

oil and gas companies including, EnCana Corporation, Talisman, Shell, Conoco Phillips, Canadian Natural Resources and BP have been active around Dawson Creek. Such investment in the community has created direct employment and resulted in spin-off jobs within the sales and service sector.

Agriculture is an important part of the economy of Dawson Creek. Approximately 7% of the labour force and 5% of total community income comes from agricultural activities. The Peace River area accounts for around 90% of total provincial grain and canola production, as well as the majority of its forage seed. The Peace is also the largest cow/calf producing region of BC.

The majority of the labour force works in sales and service occupations, followed closely by Trades, transport and equipment operation and related occupations. The current unemployment rate for Northeast BC is zero. The current unemployment rate for BC is 4.3%. These figures can be misleading as they are based on Employment Insurance recipients only.

It is crucial to note that much of the labour market in Dawson Creek involves a degree of seasonal employment including construction, paving, farming, tourism and oil and gas related employment. The market is also affected strongly by shifting global markets and resource industry slow-downs which has a spin-off affect on all sectors of the local economy.

Small business and self-employment annual growth rates in the Northeast have been the highest in the province over the past five years.

Because Dawson Creek is so centrally located and is serviced by many highways, workers who live in Dawson Creek commute to jobs in other municipalities such as Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd, Taylor and Fort St. John. The rural population is also able to travel into Dawson Creek for work and commerce.

Despite there being low unemployment, the rising costs of living in the area, increased property values, zero vacancy rates and high gasoline prices make it difficult for many residents to manage financially. Workers have moved out of the less financially rewarding sales and service industry and into better paying occupations. Although the minimum wage currently sits at \$8 per hour, most employers are paying a minimum of \$10 per hour in an attempt to retain staff. Companies are also targeting seniors and minors as prospective employees and it is not uncommon to see children less than 15 years of age in regular employment. Employers in the area have also hired new immigrants in recent months in an attempt to meet the shortage of skilled workers in technical occupations.

## **Main Social and Economic Issues/Challenges**

**Note: These are in no particular order and may not be comprehensive. Some of the issues may be indirectly addressed by the Community Literacy Initiative.**

- Students below standard in reading - 31% as compared to 21.6% BC
- Preschoolers scoring high for vulnerability – lowest 10<sup>th</sup> percentile in BC
- High Juvenile crime rates, drug use/charges, teen pregnancies, increasing # of violent crimes related to drug use
- Fluctuating labour market demands; high seasonality of work; affected by global markets
- Rising cost of living
- Lack of childcare options
- Transient population; many migrant workers in area
- Larger Aboriginal population with higher unemployment, incarceration rates, rates of children in care
- Need for skilled workers for growing economy; technical trades; local labour pool not always equipped
- Increased need for computer literacy in workplace and to access benefits/programs/jobs; many adult workers and seniors do not possess these skills
- Young people growing up in techno age; not so much focus on old-style basic communication and literacy skills
- Few employers offer literacy programs for workers
- Social isolation; geography, winter climate
- Poverty
- High number of single parents
- Housing shortage
- High number of population dependent on safety net
- Young people leaving school early; lower functional literacy and lower attachment to labour market. School district unable to mandate attendance.
- Traditional jobs now legislated and require training ability to pass tests etc.
- Lack of workers in sales/service industry
- Limited services or networks for new immigrants in the community