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1. Linda Mitchell appointed chair of the Premier's Advisory Panel on Literacy

Premier Gordon Campbell has appointed Linda Mitchell, Executive Director of Literacy BC, as chair of the Premier's Advisory Panel on Literacy.

"The advisory panel's first task will be to assess the literacy challenges in our province and pinpoint the most urgent needs," says the Premier. "From there, members will develop recommendations that will help us formulate a provincial literacy strategy that will let us meet those challenges."

In addition to Linda, the Panel includes representatives from business, local government and non-profit service agencies. Panel members are: Sarbjit Bains, United Realty; Enzo Guerriero, Britannia Community Centre; Kristin Rabnett, Community Relations, CIBC; Chuck Van der Lee, President & CEO, Rogers Video; Paula Amos, Aboriginal Tourism BC; Debbie DeMare, City Councillor, Williams Lake; Carol Matusicky, BC Council for Families; Peter Podovinokoff, Envision Credit Union; Dennis Skulsky, Pacific News Group/Canwest Global; and Dr. Peter Wong, General Medical Practitioner. [Background on panel members](#)

The Panel was launched at a **Literacy Summit** in Vancouver on November 3 attended by 130 people from literacy and related fields, government, business and the media. Ministers in attendance included **Shirley Bond and Tom Christensen from the Ministries of Advanced Education and Education** respectively. Also there were: **Murray Coell, Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services; Susan Brice, Minister of Human Resources; Stan Hagen, Minister of Children and Family Development;** and **Linda Reid, Minister of State for**

Early Childhood Development. The Summit included a presentation by T. Scott Murray, Director, Culture, Tourism & The Centre for Education Statistics, Statistics Canada about current trends from the new International Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey and an hour and a half question and answer period facilitated by the Premier.

The Panel and the Summit are part of a series of initiatives that indicate literacy is on the provincial government's policy agenda in a major way. Determined to make BC "the most literate location in North America by 2010" the government has doubled the funding available through the **BC Adult Literacy Cost-Shared Program** from \$700,000 to \$1.4 million; introduced a new \$5-million program for literacy innovation grants to B.C.'s public schools; initiated the first of six pilot projects under Literacy Now, a \$5-million program of community-based planning and project delivery funded by the provincial government, and allocated \$12 million of added funding over three years for public libraries, which will bring broadband Internet into every branch, provide a 24-hour virtual reference desk and set up a one-card system to give every British Columbian access to books from any library in the province.

"These bold initiatives are encouraging for the literacy community," says Linda Mitchell. "I look forward to working with the Premier and the Panel members to ensure all British Columbians have the opportunities and the resources they need to continue learning."

2. Help move a national literacy strategy forward

On the national front, Literacy BC continues to be involved in encouraging the federal government to move forward on the recommendations from the HRDC Standing Committee Report, *"Raising Adult Literacy: The Need for a Pan-Canadian Response."*

There have been promising indications from the federal government that a pan-Canadian literacy strategy is still a priority. Recently, the **Honourable Joe Volpe, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada**, listed "the creation of a pan-Canadian framework for literacy and related strategies" as one of the challenges for his department. However, there has been a discouraging lack of concrete action. Please join the **Movement for Canadian Literacy** in sending a message to Members of Parliament about the importance of developing a comprehensive literacy strategy along with the resources to carry it out. [Participate in MCL's petition and make your voice count.](#)

3. Meet the 2004-05 Literacy BC Board of Directors

The Literacy BC Annual General Meeting in October was a smashing success as friend and colleagues joined us to celebrate our achievements and launch another year of good work. Jim Powrie, associate researcher at [The New School Canada](#), gave a presentation about the wonderful achievements of The New School project. Jim's presentations included video clips of some of the New School kids telling us how their attitudes and lives have changed since coming to The New School.

Friends and colleagues joined us to say goodbye to retiring Board members Leslie Kiehlbauch (Okanagan), Leslie Lindsay (Malaspina/North Island), Dave Manahan (Northwest), and Rhiann Piprell (Fraser Valley).

We also welcomed new Board members Carol Forbes, Colleen Hanscom, Val Keeler Kate Nesbitt, and Diana Twiss.

The 2004-05 Literacy BC Board of Directors

Melanie Austin (Camosun)

Melanie is the new President of Literacy BC. Melanie was Executive Director at the Victoria READ Society from 1990 until 2001. Since leaving READ she has become self-employed as a tutor, and is enjoying working with students again. She has served on the boards of Project Literacy Victoria, the Adult Basic Education of BC (ABEABC) and Literacy BC.

Leanne Caillier-Smith (East Kootenay)

Leanne is the literacy coordinator and instructor for the Fundamental ABE program at College of the Rockies, Fernie. She also teaches ABE up to the provincial level. Leanne has served on the East Kootenay Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL) Advisory Committee for four years and she coordinates learner events for her region.

Jennifer Cliff-Marks (Selkirk)

Jennifer is the Regional Literacy Coordinator for the Selkirk College Region (West Kootenays) and a member of the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy. Jennifer teaches English as a Second Language and Spanish, and has worked as a substitute Adult Basic Education instructor at Selkirk College in Nakusp for the past six years.

Jim Cooke (Capilano)

Jim is the Past President of Literacy BC and Dean of Student Services and Foundation Programs at Capilano College in North Vancouver. In this capacity, Jim is responsible for the Adult Basic Education and the English as a Second Language departments, as well as Community Development and Outreach. He has been active in both provincial and national forums which deal with post-secondary education for over 25 years.

Carol Forbes (Malaspina/North Island)

Carol has been with School District 72 Campbell River, Continuing Education as the literacy program coordinator and tutor trainer since 1992, and is one of the founding directors of the Campbell River Community Literacy Association. She recently won the Canada Post Literacy Award for Educator of the Year. See our portrait of Carol in **Faces of Literacy** below.

Laurie Gould (Lower Mainland)

Laurie was a founding member of Literacy BC, the ABE Association of BC and the Literacy Materials Committee. She has been a literacy instructor at Vancouver Community College since 1974, where she currently serves as Basic Education Department Head.

Colleen Hanscom (Okanagan)

Colleen has been teaching literacy and numeracy for 33 years. Her experience in the field includes working as an elementary classroom teacher, reading resource room teacher, and volunteer tutor for adults. She currently works as an instructor at Okanagan University College in Kelowna.

Shelly Joyner (Cariboo)

Shelly has been the Regional Literacy Coordinator for the Cariboo Region since 1999, where she has also worked to spearhead many family literacy initiatives. Over the

past 10 years, Shelly has also taught in college, public and band-operated school systems.

Val Keeler (Northern Lights)

Val moved to Fort Nelson with her family in 1987 and returned to school as a mature student in 1990, graduating from Northern Lights College in the Alaska Highway Consortium of Teacher Education program. She completed her teaching certificate and a Bachelor of General Studies from SFU and in 1996 she became an Adult Basic Education Instructor at the college in Fort Nelson

Jerry Laidlaw (Member at Large)

Jerry lives in Mission. He is involved in literacy both as a student at the University College of the Fraser Valley and as a member of the Mission Literacy Association.

David Moddle (Malaspina)

David is Literacy BC's Vice President. He is the owner-manager of Lifeworks! Consulting Inc, which provides employment services in Nanaimo and the Island. For several years David was involved with Literacy Nanaimo, where he served as President for two years.

Kate Nesbitt (Northwest)

Since becoming involved in literacy in the late 1990's, Kate, who lives in Telkwa, has given several public presentations on what it is like to live with low literacy skills and has also served on the Board of Houston Link to Learning. In 2003 Kate bought a quilting store and has been busy putting to good use all the things she learned on her literacy journey to be a successful business woman. She is now teaching others how to quilt and is in the process of publishing her own patterns.

Norma Smith (Member at Large)

Norma lives in Victoria. She is an ABE student at Camosun College, where she also serves on the board of the First Nations Student Society.

Marcia Timbres (New Caledonia)

Marcia has lived in Prince George since 1978. She has worked at the College of New Caledonia since 1980. For the past 20 years Marcia has been involved in the administration of developmental programs, including literacy. Currently, Marcia is Dean, College Foundations at the College of New Caledonia.

Diana Twiss (Capilano)

Diana works for Capilano College in North Vancouver in the Community Development and Outreach Department. She started working with adults in 1993 and her background includes teaching in an elementary school on a remote reserve in Northwestern Ontario, English as a second language/literacy, college study skills courses, workplace education, tutor training, community development, and research. Diana currently studies with the Knitting Guild Association and is working towards becoming a Master Knitter.

4. Literacy BC Projects 2004-05

We have another great year ahead of us as we work on a number of new and continuing projects. The following projects for 2004-05 are funded by the **BC Adult Literacy Cost-Shared Program** and began September 1, 2004:

Research in Practice in Adult Literacy in BC: Developing Research Capacity

In collaboration with RiPAL-BC, and other partners across the province, Literacy BC is working to support and promote research in practice in adult literacy. The project has three goals: (1) develop a partnership structure that can sustain and further cultivate practitioner-based research; (2) provide substantive support for research-related professional development and aiding in the dissemination of practitioner research; and (3) promote research in practice more widely and recruiting new participants. For further information email ripal-bc@thehub.literacy.bc.ca

Provincial Family Literacy Development and Coordination: Keeping the Core Strong

[Provincial Family Literacy Development](#) provides leadership, coordination and support to family literacy in BC. Activities/events included within the scope of the project are: Raise-a-Reader Day, International Literacy Day and Family Literacy Week. This project works across sectors and interest groups towards a common vision and strategic plan for family literacy, and includes raising awareness, partnership-building and networking/training opportunities for practitioners.

2005 Summer Literacy Institute

The theme of the upcoming Institute in July 2005 is: **Literacy and Language Development for a Changing World**. The Institute is an opportunity for literacy practitioners to participate in building and strengthening the provincial literacy/ABE network, share knowledge and create alternative training methods.

Regional Literacy Coordination

This project provides consultation, support and coordination for the regional literacy coordinators across BC. This year the project will encompass an external evaluation of the project across the years 1994-2002 and make recommendations for a long-term strategic plan to build capacity at the regional and provincial levels. [View the list of Regional Coordinators](#)

BC Literacy Electronic Network and Conferencing Service: The Hub

Since 1996 The Hub, an electronic network and conferencing service, has provided the BC adult literacy field with opportunities to collaborate and participate in new forums for discussion, learning, critical reflection, professional development and training. This year The Hub will continue to offer special web-based events for a wide audience. See below for information on a current Hub conference, **Talking Teaching: An electronic conference about innovative approaches and promising practices in adult and youth literacies**.

Provincial Community Practitioner Training and Development

In October 2004, Literacy BC brought 12 people to Vancouver for two days of orientation and foundational training. The participants were new to their positions as literacy coordinators and/or practitioners. The training was part of our project to plan, develop and implement provincial and regional professional development for community literacy coordinators and practitioners.

Provincial Literacy Information, Referral and Resource Services

This project provides funding for Literacy BC's core services – which include the provincial toll-free information and referral line; our resource centre/library and a range of other information services.

5. Talking Teaching: An electronic conference about innovative approaches and promising practices in adult and youth literacies

Join **Heide Spruck Wrigley**, a researcher in adult literacy who specializes in making connections between research and practice, to talk online about innovative approaches and promising practices in adult and youth literacy. Heide will moderate an electronic conference on The Hub from December 2 – 18, 2004.

The conference is offered free of charge and takes place in asynchronous time. All you need to participate is a web browser. A conference ID and password will be assigned to you when you register for the conference.

Registration deadline is November 30, 2004, 9 am Pacific time. Please register early as there is a maximum of 50 participants.

When registering, please include the following information:

- Your first and last names.
- Your organizational affiliation and city/town of residence.
- A short paragraph that describes your work and your interest in the conference topic.

Detailed description of the conference

6. The Faces of Literacy: Carol Forbes

The "Faces of Literacy" puts a personal "face" on the people and organizations who are making a difference in BC. From learners, to practitioners, administrators and researchers, and from small community-based agencies to large community colleges and school districts, these faces of literacy define our community.

Our Face of Literacy this month is a winner of this year's **Canada Post Educator Award– Carol Forbes**.

Stay tuned for the next Literacy BC e-bulletin coming soon!

If there are changes to your contact information, or if you do not wish to receive the e-bulletin, please let us know by replying to e-bulletin@literacy.bc.ca.

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