

NEWS RELEASE

May 31, 2017

For Immediate Release

ALEXANDER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WINS \$45,000 LITERACY GRANT

COWICHAN VALLEY, BC – Students, teachers and staff of Alexander Elementary school in Duncan were treated to a surprise last Thursday when the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation stormed their school with noisemakers, balloons, and a giant cheque in the amount of \$45,000 to support two literacy initiatives in the school.

The school was one of 30 Canadian schools who received the 2017 Literacy Fund grant from the foundation, who provides \$1.5 million annually to high-needs elementary schools across Canada in an effort to bolster literacy and give all children equal access to books.

“We are thrilled that Alexander Elementary was selected as a recipient of this grant,” said Candace Spilsbury, Chair of the Board of Education for the Cowichan Valley School District (SD 79). “Staff at the school have been very focused on ensuring every child has an opportunity to develop age-appropriate literacy skills, and this grant will allow the school to support two projects that will further support kids and their families.”

Last Fall, Alexander Elementary put together a proposal for the literacy fund, which included a request for two specific projects that will be supported by this grant: a home reading program and a library revitalization.

Many students at the school do not have access to age or reading-level appropriate books at home to help them improve their literacy skills. The home reading program will provide “just right” books that are age, reading-level and culturally appropriate for students to take home and enjoy with their families. To encourage families to read with their children and help build the success of the program, families will be invited to read in class at least once per month.

To further support the literacy needs of students at Alexander Elementary, the grant will also support the revitalization of the school library—including replacing damaged and missing books, adding to the audiobook collection, updating furniture, and adding new resources such as e-books and Makerspace baskets. The average age of the current book collection is 21 years, with a number of books that are outdated, damaged, or unappealing to current students.

“We know that reading, writing, and numeracy skills are vital to success in life, and we have a responsibility to ensure every child has the support they need to succeed,” said Rod Allen, Superintendent of SD 79. “The commitment to literacy at the school is inspiring, and I’m very proud that they received this funding to further support their efforts.”

Alexander Elementary school is home to more than 270 Kindergarten to Grade 7 students, with more than 83% of the student population identifying as Aboriginal. The Love of Reading

Foundation has committed over \$25 million to high needs elementary schools since 2004—the Literacy Fund grant specifically has committed \$19.5 million and an additional \$5.5 million has been committed through its other programs, such as Adopt a School. To learn more about the foundation, visit www.loveofreading.org.

-30-

Media Contacts:

Cowichan Valley School District:

Katie McLaughlin
Communications Specialist
Phone: 250-510-6044
Email: kmclaughlin@sd79.bc.ca

Indigo Books & Music Inc.:

Kate Gregory
Senior PR Manager
Phone: 416-364-4499 ext. 6659
Email: kgregory@indigo.ca