

School District 50 Haida Gwaii  
**Integrated Resource Package (IRP)**  
**Haida Language (Xaayda Kil/Xaad Kil)**  
Overview

Integrated Resource Packages (IRP) provide much of the basic information teachers require to implement curriculum. This (IRP) sets out the provincially prescribed curriculum Xaayda Kil/Xaad Kil, Grades 5 to 12. In the senior grades the IRP, as approved by the Minister of Education permits districts to offer credits. The IRP, as prepared by District Principal Joanne Yovanovich and Jaskwaan Bedard, has now been delivered to the Minister of Education and we are anxiously awaiting sign-off on this document.

The Haida Language comes from and is spoken on the land of Haida Gwaii. *Haida* means People, and *Haida Gwaii* means Islands of the People. During a time not so long ago, there existed many dialects of the Haida language belonging to the many different villages on the archipelago of Haida Gwaii. After vast population loss due to disease epidemics in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, the many Haida villages congregated into the present day communities of Skidegate in the South and Old Massett in the North, and the dialects also converged, into the two remaining dialects of Skidegate and Old Massett: Xaayda Kil and Xaad Kil respectively. Xaayda Kil and Xaad Kil mean “The language of the People,” and the language embodies the relationship between our land, culture and language. From here on the Haida language will be referred to as Xaayda Kil/Xaad Kil for the purposes of this Integrated Resource Package.

The Haida language is a language isolate, meaning there are no known languages that are similar to it. In this regard, Xaayda Kil/Xaad Kil is unique in British Columbia in that it is not a part of a language family.

The Haida language is listed as Critically Endangered in the UNESCO scale of language Endangerment. This means that the fluent speakers remaining are in the “great-grandparent” generation (in their 80s and 90s), and there are very few new fluent speakers. Community initiatives have long been in effect to create new fluent speakers and maintain our Indigenous Haida language. The offering of effective Haida language school programming on Haida Gwaii is one of many ways community language revitalization can be successful.

In addition, Haida Language continued to decline because of residential schools. Children who attended the Indian Day Schools on Haida Gwaii as well as those who were sent away to Residential school were forbidden to speak their Haida language. Upon returning home from these schools, the children’s families accommodated their loss of language by generally speaking only English to them.

At the time of the writing of this Integrated Resource Package, there were an estimated 40 fluent speakers of the Haida language remaining. There are few new Haida speakers in our communities. However, there are numerous Haida language learning initiatives, programs, and resources available within the communities of Haida Gwaii. These Haida language programs and multitude of resources will be utilized within this Haida language IRP Grades 5-12, with

contributions from the organizations of Skidegate, Old Massett, and the Alaska Haida language learning community.

Students and teachers of the Haida language deserve the support of their community and School district in their efforts to honor the Indigenous language of this land, Haida Gwaii. It is in this spirit of *yahguudang* that the Haida language IRP is developed and executed.

The study of Haida language and culture is intended to enable learners to communicate purposefully in Xaayda Kil/Xaad Kil and to provide opportunities for students to gain insights into Haida culture and ways of being that are directly connected to the language.

When teachers and students see the Haida language as a practical means of communication and not just a narrow field of language study, many opportunities open up for integration with other curricula. **The prescribed learning outcomes are deliberately open-ended in nature to encourage teachers and students to make links to other areas of study such as mapping, graphing, music, or visual arts.** In secondary schools, teachers could make efficient use of this open-endedness through joint planning and joint evaluation tasks. (See Appendix C for examples of integrated units.) Integration in the elementary classroom is easier and may begin with daily routines and procedures conducted in the Haida language. In this way, students will see Xaayda Kil/Xaad Kil as a useful means of expression.

Throughout the history of Haida language teaching in the communities of Haida Gwaii, there has been and continues to be an extreme effort expended by many educators, Haida language speakers, Elders, learners and other community members that is fueled by a love of Haida culture, a belief in the Haida people, and a commitment to the Haida language.

Underlying all of these efforts is the understanding that with hard work, dedication, and a commitment to our children, those yet to be born, and to our ancestors who kept the Haida language alive, that Xaayda Kil/Xaad Kil will once again flourish on Haida Gwaii. It is the many voices and hands of these special people that have made this document possible.

Haawa to our ancestors, who without whom we would not be here today.

Haw'aa to the Haida Elders and Knowledge keepers who keep the language and culture with us.

Haawa to all who have created Haida language resources and curriculum that contributes to this Integrated Resource Package

Haw'aa to those who have passed on but left language behind through recordings and other resources.

For more information on the SD 50 Haida Language IRP, please contact:  
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