

Taanuud dii 'láa jiihlíi ga – Fall is my favourite [season].¹

Cháanúuds dlúu dil gudangée 'láa jahliilgang – Fall is my favourite [season].²

Welcome to 'WahlGahl Kung¹ (Potlatch Month) | Kálga Kungáas² (Ice Month)

As expected, there is lots going on in all our schools as you will see in this monthly report. Hawaa / Haw'aa to the many staff that contributed stories and pictures for this report to the Board. It is clear from the breadth of activities across schools that there are many excellent opportunities for students at all Haida Gwaii schools.

October is also Foster Parent Month in British Columbia, and I would like to recognize, celebrate, and honour these caregivers, both on Haida Gwaii and across the province. As the BC Foster Parent Association mentioned, this month "offers an opportunity to celebrate the selfless dedication of over 2,000 foster parents who open their hearts and homes to help vulnerable children, youth, and families. In addition, 42% of all adoptions in BC are foster parents adopting the children in their care, providing much-needed permanency and stability. We would like to thank all of BC's amazing foster parents for everything you do for the children, youth, families, and the community!"



The Unite Conference on Oct. 13th was a huge success. Over 140 grade 8 – 12 students gathered at Gudangaay Tlaats'gaa Naay and participated in various activities and workshops. These types of events don't happen without the hard work of a small group of people, and

so I want to extend much gratitude to the creative team that was responsible for making this day happen!

I also want to recognize the ten Haida Gwaii teachers who chose to work with Roberta Toth on strengthening numeracy through Thinking Classrooms. These teachers invited Roberta into their classrooms to model lessons and then joined her for a day of professional learning on Saturday, Sept. 30th. Thank you:

- Janet Gray
- Vanessa Wahl
- Stephen Querenjung
- Ian Keir
- Josina Davis
- Rachel Fraser
- Monika Hausmann
- Marcie Watkins
- Jenny Kellar
- Martin Wood

Enjoy the stories from across the school district!

Respectfully,

Manu Madhok
Interim Superintendent



¹ Xaayda kil

² Xaad kil

EMBRACING UNIQUE CULTURE AND TERRITORY

2023 – 24 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen community connections as per Equity Scan.
- Support place-based learning in schools.
- Principals working with Dr. Sara Davidson
- Annual report to the Haida Education Council on all SD 50 Haida Language and Culture initiatives.
- Extension of Human Rights Special Hiring program to increase number of Indigenous leaders and role models in our system.

HAWAA RYDER! (Shared By Erica Reid)

On September 30th, the [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#), one of our grade 5 students at [Sk'aadgaa Naay Elementary](#), Ryder Sterritt Buxton, said a public meal prayer in Xaayda Kil before sharing lunch to honour residential school survivors. He proudly and clearly infused ceremony into our day by speaking the language of his ancestors.

APPLES, APPLES AND MORE APPLES! (Shared By Emmy O'Gorman)

Each season of each school year, the students at [Agnes L. Mathers](#) visit an 80-year-old apple tree and harvest apples. Our school has done this for over 30 years. We estimate and then count how many we pick (206 most recently!). We use them for print art and snacking. We bake apple crumbles for our school table at the [Sandspit Wild Harvest Festival](#), where we are hosting a coho fishing workshop.



WEAVING AT SK'AADGAA NAAY (Shared By Vanessa Wah)

The grade 5/6 class at [Sk'aadgaa Naay Elementary](#) has completed a unit on weaving. Students learned about the history of weaving on Haida Gwaii and watched videos of one of our local Haida weavers, **Evelyn Vanderhoop**. Students designed their own simple weaving patterns as part of the [Applied Design, Skills and Technologies curriculum](#). Students used locally grown wool and learned about the different textures of wool.

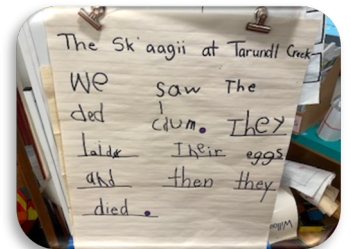
THE SK'AAGII AT TARUNDL CREEK (Shared By Marcie Watkins)



On a drizzly October 4, our grade 1/2 class went to [Tarundl Creek](#) to see the chum salmon (sk'aagii) spawning. We met with **Terry-Lynn Wood**, our [Streamkeepers](#) "fish scientist" for a lesson about the spawning pairs, and to dissect a salmon on the river bank. After our lesson, we picnicked under an old spruce, and spent the afternoon playing in the estuary. Years ago, the late **Nathan Young**, one of the hereditary chiefs from Skidegate, had told me about going there in the fall with

his family each year, to harvest chum salmon and dig clams. They had a seasonal home on the point, where midden shows us that people have been coming to that area for thousands of years.

For our young group of kids, they learned that for thousands of years, children have been coming to the creek in the fall, working and playing in the estuary, just as they did that day.



EMBRACING UNIQUE CULTURE AND TERRITORY

GIDGALANG KUUYAS NAAY GRADE 11S VISIT MOUNT MORESBY ADVENTURE CAMP

(Shared By [Dave Quinn](#))

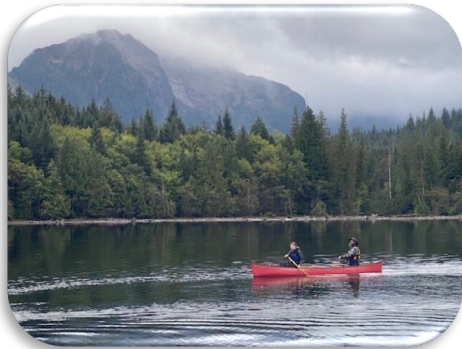


I was privileged to spend a week in Cumshewa territory with [Gidgalang Kuuyas Naay](#) Grade 11's at [Mount Moresby Adventure Camp](#), October 2-6, along with fellow teacher James Warner. I was there as MMAC staff alongside Leila, Stu, Dan and incredible cooks Zina and Allison. It was a great chance to connect with students and watch them learn and practice new skills, build deeper connections to the land, and push their limits as individuals and as a team. We had a chance to paddle canoes and kayaks to the back of Mosquito Lake on a windy, wet day, set up a basecamp, and then students

either climbed Mosquito Mountain or explored the lake in canoes the following day. We all had to work together to make it to camp in the strong headwinds, set up tarps and tents in the rain, and get a fire going with soggy wood. Students not only succeeded but made sure everyone succeeded with smiles! We also worked on various team-building projects, including the fire and water boil challenge, knots, lashing and splicing activities, and a host of communal games and activities, including kayak rescues, fishing, local plant ID, and traditional uses.



Daily Splash and Dash swims with lifejackets and leaders start the morning out with a chilly but invigorating dip in Mosquito Lake for keen students, who get the benefit of facing and tackling a perceived challenge (jumping in a cold lake!) with the reward afterwards (a feeling of refreshment, accomplishment and energy from the lake!)



MMAC offers a unique opportunity for students to live communally in traditional long-house structures. This is a unique pathway to connection with the wonder of cedar and the history of human shelter and community on Haida Gwaii. We all work together to make camp a better place, be on the land with a sense of gratitude and respect for all living things, and work to really understand and experience how all things rely on everything else, and how we humans are just a part of the larger world. We learned and used the local Haida names for places and neighbours

and learned about some of the many native and introduced species and their roles and impacts on the Haida Gwaii ecosystem.

This week is very enjoyable for everyone, but with all the challenges that come with being outdoors, having adventurous goals, and being part of a large group. Students worked to share ideas, feelings, challenges, and offer/request

support each morning at group check-in, and at a respectful fire-sharing circle each night, where sharing and listening respectfully are practiced. Students had to help each other out to all make it to the end of the lake in difficult windy and wet conditions and needed to support students who were struggling.



Students learned about a few of the local mushrooms, liverworts, mosses, as well as some local plants that provide gifts of medicine, food, and materials. Students got to collect and identify local microplants and liverworts, slugs and snails, and toads and introduced frogs.

WORKING TOGETHER

2023 – 24 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- *Strengthening Relationships*
- *Supporting Parent Learning with SD 50 DPAC*
- *Strengthen SD 50 Crisis Response Processes*
- *Support Student Voice*
- *Support a PAC at Each of Our Schools*
- *Adhere to Accessible BC Act*
- *Focus on Recruitment & Retention*

TRUTH & RECONCILIATION DAY COLLABORATION (Shared By

James Reid, Stephen Querenjung, Robert Vogstad)



Last year Stephen Q. created some orange plywood shirts with the intention of putting these outside at the board office. One of my senior students worked on creating stencils for all of the shirts, and they stayed up as a well-received and successful piece of public art until Stephen and I

(James) decided they looked faded and needed to be repainted. We had some senior students prime the wooden shirts again and fairly quickly started working on new designs. The primary teaching points artistically were intellectual property, stencil creation, and imagery intended to be viewed from a distance. We were pressed for time to have the shirts displayed on time, so

Robert helped create art for the signs with a dedicated crew of students and myself. By the time the maintenance staff, Shannon and Jason, were there to move and mount the signs, they were ready.



WORKING TOGETHER AT SK'AADGAA NAAY (Shared By Vanessa Wah)

Gidinjaad, **Erica Reid**, [Sk'aadgaa Naay's](#) Learning Resource teacher, led the school in a song for Orange Shirt Day, and Grade 5 student **Ryder Sterritt-Burton** led the school in a Haida prayer using Xaayda Kil. The entire school joined for halibut jum and fried bread in the gym. Haawa to all the cooks and organizers who ensured there was enough food for everyone!

OLD MASSETT GRADE 7 TRANSITION CEREMONY (Shared By Tammy Gates)

Although this photograph is from June, I wanted to share this picture of the beautiful blankets that Haida grade 7 students received at the transition celebration in Old Massett, especially because it happened after the June Board meeting.



WORKING TOGETHER

MASSET AND OLD MASSETT CELEBRATE ORANGE SHIRT DAY (Shared By Ian Keir)

This year, all three northern Island schools, [Gundangaay Tlaats'gaa Naay Secondary](#), [Tahayghen Elementary](#) and [Chief Matthew Elementary](#), chose to meet on the morning of Sept. 29th to celebrate Orange Shirt Day. After meeting together at the Howard Phillip Hall, students and staff marched through the community of Masset, proudly wearing their Orange shirts.

Following the March, the [Village of Masset](#), the [Haida Gwaii Society for Community Peace](#), the Masset RCMP, and the [Niislaa Naay Healing Centre](#)

hosted a barbeque for students and staff. It was an excellent day!



PITCHING IN AT GUDANGAAY TLAATS'GAA NAAY (Shared By Ian Keir)

Haw'aa to **Dan Schulbeck** and his Garden and Gather class for helping to gather and process local food at our school. Thank you also to **Kieran Wake** for constructing a new deer hang for our Haida classroom.



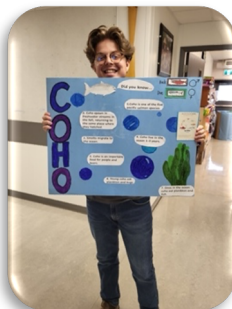
Our Cross Country Team had their first run at Port Clements. Thank you to coaches **Cal Westbrook** and **Katie Wilmot**.



Our volleyball teams have also started their seasons. Thank you to girls' team coach, **Cora Camire**, and boys' team coach, **Clifford Young**.

CRUMBLE SALES & COHO (Shared By Emmy O'Gorman)

After raising almost \$300 in apple crumble sales, Agnes L. Mathers ordered two new fishing rod & reel set-ups. Local boat shop, Bridgeview Marine, donated \$150 of coho lures & hooks. Here are some photos of our fishing unit and community presentation. Thank you to my student teacher, **Brady Grove**, for his help in my classroom.



STUDENT WELL-BEING

2023 – 24 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- *Development of SD 50 Literacy Framework*
 - *Use Fountas & Pinnell Assessment to gather district literacy data for all grade 2 students*
 - *Support Student Mental Health*
 - *Support Numeracy Staff Development*
- *Sustain & Expand Early Learning / Childcare*
 - *Ensure Safe, Welcoming and Inclusive Schools*
 - *Technology supported learning*
 - *Focus on Successful K-12 Project in Masset*

DISTRICT SPORTS DAYS (Shared By Vanessa Wah)

[Port Clements Elementary](#) hosted a beautiful district soccer tournament. Approximately 70 students participated. Coaches worked hard to try and incorporate more playing time and opportunities for students who identify as female to develop their skills. Groups played in shifts, with a mixed 4/5 group starting the play, followed by a girls group, then a boys group and ended with a 6/7 mixed group. Students enjoyed the day, and some wonderful skills were highlighted. Schools mixed together and showed great sportsmanship. High school students also participated in the day by refereeing every game.



The next elementary sports event is basketball which will be taking a new style of 4x4 to teach students half-court rules. [3x3 basketball](#) is a growing sport and part of the Olympics. [Michael Linklater](#), an Indigenous basketball player, was ranked number 1 in Canada for 3x3 basketball.

COAST DAYS AT GUDANGAAY TLAATS'GAA NAAY (Shared By Ian Keir)

The first of many Coast Days happened on Oct. 6th at our school. Students were welcome to participate in one of the many activities offered during the day, including:

- Kayaking
- Bike ride and playing disc golf at new course in Masset
- Traditional golfing
- Mushroom Harvesting
- Salmon river fishing
- Cooking / Food Processing



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OCT. 17TH '23 UPDATES

SUPPORT 'PLACE-BASED' LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

- June '23 meeting with [MMAC](#) Executive Director and Board Chair to review the 2022-23 MMAC - SD50 program. There are so many strengths to our work with MMAC and we agreed to work together to solve obstacles and improve communication.
- Continue to highlight existing localized learning opportunities for students and begin to understand what additional supports may be needed in schools to encourage local learning opportunities.
- In the 2023-24 school year, we increased the honorarium amount for local knowledge holders working and sharing within our schools.
- Recent professional learning with numeracy helping teacher Robert Toth emphasized using local context within numeracy teaching strategies.

STRENGTHEN SD 50 CRISIS RESPONSE PROCESSES

- In the 2023-24 school year, a budget for 'Safe Schools' has been established with SD50's Safe Schools Coordinator, Deavlan Bradley, as the budget manager. Deavlan started the work of examining SD50 crisis response in 2022-23 and will continue this work with other district staff this school year.

SUPPORT A PAC AT EACH OF OUR SCHOOLS

- Other than Port Clements Elementary, each of our schools has a PAC. Gudangaay Tlaats'gaa Naay and Tahayghen have a combined PAC, and Sk'aadgaa Naay has a PAC after a few years of not having one. Hawaa Sk'aadgaa Naay parents!
- The SD50 District Parent Advisory Council continues to have strong membership and meets monthly with the Superintendent, Trustee Denooij, and the District Principal of Early Learning.

IMPLEMENT DISTRICT LITERACY ASSESSMENT

- [Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Assessment](#) kits have been purchased for each school, allowing classroom and school literacy assessments from grades 1 to 9.
- In 2023-24, we will do a district-wide grade 2 literacy collection in the Fall and Spring using the Fountas and Pinnell Assessment.
- Grade 2 teachers will be supported by literacy coach **Christine Fraser** in both the November and May collections.

ENSURE SAFE, WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

- In August, \$1400 of library books specific to sexual orientation and gender identity education ([SOGI](#)) were purchased and distributed to schools.
- Continuing work with principals to examine questions from the Student Satisfaction Survey related to safe, welcoming schools. See [2023-24 Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Report](#).
- Work on strategies this school year to gather student voices specific to safe, welcoming schools.
- The school district in partnership with DPAC, [Haida Gwaii Child Care Resource & Referral](#), and the SD50 Professional Development Committee, will welcome Kerri Isham of [PowerUP](#) for school and community sexual health presentations in late October / early November.

FOCUS ON SUCCESSFUL K-12 PROJECT IN MASSET

- [September 19th Update](#)
- We will be sending Invitations to potential representatives for the 'School Naming Committee' prior to the end of October 2023