



Welcome to T'aaGaaw Kung¹ (Snow Month) | Tade Kungáas² (Cold Month)

December already! We have reached the four-month mark of this school year, and I was reflecting on the strong sense of community and collaboration that exists on Haida Gwaii. Over this past month, I have had a chance to meet staff from Haida Child and Family Services and am thankful for the multitude of services they provide to our students and families. I understand that we have a new [MCFD Mental Health Therapist](#), welcome Emily, who is being well-received by our schools.

Hawaa/Haw'aa to both the [Skidegate](#) and [Old Massett Band Councils](#) for their contribution of Haida Knowledge Holders that contribute to our school language programs. Both communities and the [Council of the Haida Nation](#) also regularly contribute food to our school food programs for which we are extremely thankful.

Our Early Learning Forum is scheduled for our Feb 28th day of Professional Learning. The many learning opportunities on this day would not be possible without our valued community partner, [Childcare Resource and Referral](#).

Leighann, our District Principal of Early Learning, connected with [North Coast Community Services](#) staff, who are busy setting up a new office in Masset to help Haida Gwaii children and youth from newborns to 19-year-olds.

Our partnership with [Haida Gwaii Recreation](#) is long-standing, and the level of services offered by this hard-working team is outstanding. We value all that they do for our communities.

Trustee Denooij, Leighann, our District Principal of Early Learning, and I attend the monthly meeting of [SD50's District Parent Advisory Council](#). In my experience, not all school districts have a strong, hard-working group of parent representatives who gather monthly to learn about initiatives and how to support parents across the Island. Thank you, **Sean, Melissa, Mecca, Merewyn, Meghan, and Stephanie!** In addition, thank you to the many parents/guardians who attend monthly school PAC meetings.

Although this list is not nearly complete or comprehensive of the partnerships required to support our schools, students and families, December is an excellent time for us to recognize and thank everyone who contributes to the health and well-being of Haida Gwaii's young people. All elementary parents should have received a Child Care Demand Survey from their school, and we appreciate you completing this to assist us and the Ministry of Education and Child Care in determining the need for child care spaces on Haida Gwaii.

On behalf of myself and our Board of Education, I wish all our students, families, and staff a well-deserved Winter Break full of family, friends, and joy!

Enjoy the stories from across the school district!

Respectfully,

Manu

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.*

AGNES L. MATHERS (Shared By Behn Cochrane)

ALM students presented a Coho fishing workshop at the Sandspit Wild Harvest Festival and sold Apple Crumbles with locally harvested apples as a fundraiser to buy more fishing rods and tackle.

ALM students also recently participated in a field trip to the Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Llnagaay as part of our participation in the Growing Innovation in Rural Sites of Learning project with the University of British Columbia.



HAWAA!

Hawa to **Janine Wilson** and her family, **Kris, Arilyn, Emma, and Raina** who went out on the weekend and collected trees for our south end schools!

DEC. 12TH STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE UPDATE

EQUITY SCAN – STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS

The next phase of our Equity Scan process is to gather student voice on their experiences in our schools. We are partnering with Student Trustees, other student leaders and our friends at the McCreary Centre to engage in this work. We are in the very early stages of planning this work but the goal of having student researchers gather the experiences of their peers promises to provide us with authentic data. Stay tuned for more on this project in the coming months.

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*

DECEMBER EVENTS AT SCHOOLS

All our schools are busy with holiday events in the coming weeks. These are the two that I am aware of, but I would encourage parents to connect directly with their school's newsletter and/or [Facebook page](#).

- On December 22, **Gudangaay Tlaats'gaa Naay** students will participate in a special COASt Day to celebrate the completion of the school year. COASt (which stands for Cultural Outdoor Alternate Studies) are special days built into our school year for students to engage in learning beyond the classroom and what our small school can offer. This COASt Day (affectionately called COASt-Mas) starts with a pancake brunch for all students. The remainder of the day will be spent on alternate activities which we are currently planning. COASt-mas activities are designed for students to relax and enjoy each other's company prior to the winter break but also provide students with an opportunity to make hand-made gifts for family.
- **Port Clements** is joining the seniors lunch on Friday, Dec. 8th with students sharing cards and songs. The school will also host its annual Gingerbread and Craft Night on Dec. 19th. Students are busy collecting food items that will be donated to the local food hamper program.

HAWAA STEVE! (Shared By Deavlan Bradley)

Gidgalang Kuuyas Naay wanted to thank IT manager **Steve Goffic** for installing a backup generator for our school. During the power outage on Monday, Dec. 4th, the school had internet, power to the downstairs gender-neutral washroom, and the emergency lights stayed on all day in half the building. Principal Deavlan Bradley shared a video of a very happy math teacher who was able to continue his teaching using the internet!



HAWAA BRODY! (Shared By Behn Cochrane)

ALM hosted a student teacher who has now completed his final practicum. **Brady Grove**, from Prince George, was a part of our school community for 10 weeks and completed a number of teaching units in his time at our school. On his first two days as part of our school community, he participated in two school field trips to Copper Bay and Gray Bay, where he participated in kayaking, Coho fishing, and Haida language learning activities.

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*

GARDEN & GATHER CLASS @ GUDANGAAY TLAATS'GAA NAAY (Shared By Dave Quinn)

I was lucky in early November to help out in **Dan Schulbeck's** Garden and Gather class at Gudangaay Tlaats'gaa Naay Secondary. Students were working on setting up a third hydroponic tower in the school to help produce fresh greens throughout the winter for the school's daily free student lunch program. Working with

their hands, learning about the chemistry and physics of hydroponic tower gardening, and helping feed themselves and the school helps students feel empowered to be a part of the larger school community.

Self-sufficiency has always been at the core of local culture, and local growing and harvesting is a part of that.

Students shared their expertise in setting up, planting, and adding nutrients to the hydroponic system, and worked together to weed and prepare the garlic beds before planting. To the left is **Ryder**, helping plant garlic in the school's outdoor garden. The garden adds to the produce grown in the school greenhouse to help augment the school's outstanding food program, which provides students with free, healthy lunches daily.

The photo to the left shows **Aiden** planting lettuce in the hydroponic towers. These greens go to the school lunch program to help feed students through the winter months.

WELCOME TO SANDSPIT, CANADA AND TO AGNES L. MATHERS SCHOOL (Shared By Behn Cochrane)

Our school community has had the opportunity and pleasure of welcoming three Palestinian students this school year. They have been adjusting and engaging with school in a very pleasant way!

SO MANY SMILES AT SD50 PALS (PARENTS AS LITERACY SUPPORTS)



Uncle Billy was Isabel's PAL recently while Rian and her daughter Noa were PALS.

Such great work ... way to go Isabel and Noa!



FEEDING FUTURES ACROSS THE DISTRICT

- **Agnes L. Mathers Elementary** provides healthy snacks and lunch every day using Gwaii Trust and Feeding Futures funding.

- **Gudangaay Tlaats'gaa Naay**

We've enhanced our school food program by hiring a 25-hour/week Food Coordinator. **Dini Martiniuk** joined our staff at the beginning of November and has been instrumental in ensuring that there are snacks every day for students and that our universal hot lunch program runs well each day. Dini helps Food Studies classes make soups, stews, buns, pizza, tacos, desserts, and other home-cooked items. We strongly emphasize sourcing local ingredients, and our fall menu has been full of deer, salmon, and halibut. We will also use the Feeding Future funding to increase our capacity to grow food on-site by building several raised beds. We also purchased several items, including stainless steel tables and processing equipment, allowing us to work on local foods with students.



- **Gidgalang Kuuyas Naay**

Our school welcomes **Dana Adams** as our 20-hour/week Food Coordinator. This is an increase of 14 hours/week due to Feeding Futures funding. Food is available to everyone in our building. We estimate the entire student population utilizes the breakfast program daily, either first thing or as snacks between classes. Here is a photo of our Breakfast food offerings.



- **Port Clements Elementary**

With the help of the Feeding Futures Funding, we have added 10 additional hours to our Food Coordinator, **Jessie Fletcher**. This has allowed us to move from one hot lunch/week to every day. The monthly menu allows for in-class discussions about upcoming meals, nutrition and healthy foods for healthy living.

Haw'aa to Jessie for her commitment and creativity. The care and attention she puts into making healthy meals that our students want to eat is appreciated. The friendly encouragement as Jessie serves our students helps to foster positivity towards healthy food choices and promotes well-being.

- **Tahayghen Elementary**

With the help of the Feeding Futures Funding, we have increased our Food Coordinator to 25 hours/week, resulting in full hot lunches for our students Monday to Thursday, quite the feat when cooking for 80 young people. In addition, our nutritious snack program, consisting of many fruits and vegetables, is handed out daily to all five classes. The plates return to the kitchen empty so I know they are appreciated and enjoyed by all students.

Our breakfast program is varied as two days a week, the staff cook pancakes, and French toast with sausage or bacon. The other three days we offer cereal with milk, toast with jam and wow butter and sometimes a piece of fruit. We are currently looking at adding more protein to our breakfast with the addition of yogurt and hard-boiled eggs.

Haw'aa to **Vikram, Anne** and **Candace**, who make this all happen and go above and beyond to make sure all students are fed.

Port Clements Elementary in November



Making Christmas Cards for the Seniors



November

Port Clements Elementary School



First Batch of Christmas Cookies



Felt Advent Calendars made by the Intermediate Class. These were sent home to families

