

Sing.Gaay 'laa / Singaay 'lāa

Welcome to SGaahlan K'al Kun¹ (Yellow Cedar Month) | SGáa.n Kungáas² (Killer Whale Month)

As we collectively congratulate and take pride in the graduating class at both our high schools, we are reminded that just as these students complete their K-12 journey, we conclude another school year. Many of you are familiar with the African proverb, *"it takes a village to raise a child,"* which conveys the message that it takes many people to provide a healthy, safe environment for children. In such an environment, children are given the security they need to develop, flourish, and realize their hopes and dreams. We also recognize that in many communities today, the concept of *"the village"* is changing, becoming more fragmented, and increasingly isolated. The idea of helping others is facing new challenges.



GidGalang Kuuyas Naay June 15th Graduation

While I am certain that elders and knowledge holders on Haida Gwaii will speak to these community changes, as an external observer, I have been touched by the sense of *"village"* that exists on these islands and its impact on children and youth. Yes, there is work to be done in our schools and communities, but please know that you have chosen to live in a unique ecosystem. I am not referring solely to

the stunning beauty of Haida Gwaii, but rather to the sense of *'village'* that continues to exist and is felt by young people, as recently highlighted by local students in their Haida Gwaii Adolescent Health Survey.

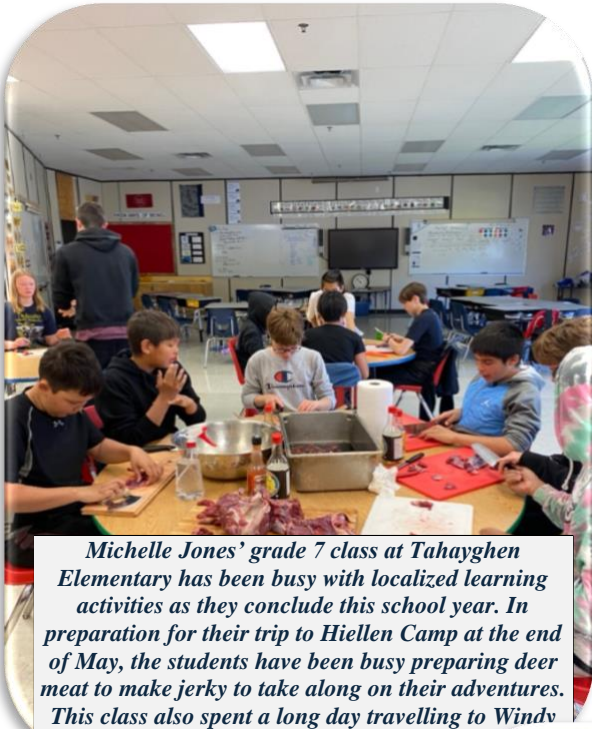
In my December report, I expressed gratitude for several of our external *'village'* partners. As we conclude this school year, I would like to specifically recognize two partners who are making a significant difference in the health and aspirations of our students:

- **K'aayxada Adventure Camp:** This camp provides our students with the opportunity to embark on multi-day trips at least three times during their K-12 journey. I frequently receive messages from staff and parents about the positive impact of this experience on students. These types of opportunities do not happen in isolation and so I want to extend my sincere thanks to **Etchi, Cal and their Board and staff** for the vision and hard work in creating this uniquely local and enriching experience.
- **Gwaii Trust:** Gwaii Trust continues to be a catalyst for change on Haida Gwaii, and our school district greatly benefits from their support. Their contributions to our food programs and substantial subsidies for student travel are invaluable. A glance at any of our school's weekly menus shows that we have moved beyond the days of pizza and hot dogs. Thank you to **Carla and the entire Gwaii Trust team** for their dedication and support.

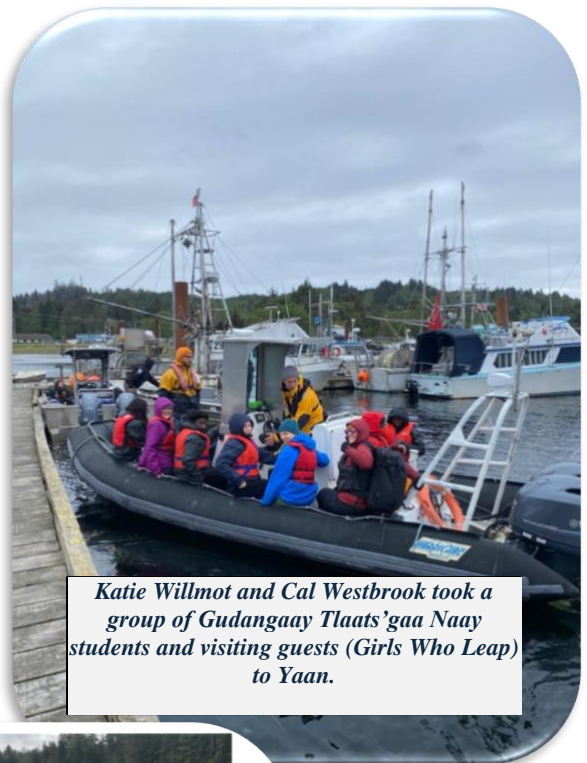
As you may recall from previous reports to the Board and the public, I enjoy sharing stories and photographs from our schools that align with our strategic priorities. Given the busy end-of-year activities at each of our schools, I've chosen to focus on highlighting some of the remarkable field trips that are taking place or have recently occurred that so meaningfully represent our strategic goal of *'Embracing Unique Culture and Territory.'*

¹ Xaayda kil

² Xaad kil



Michelle Jones' grade 7 class at Tahayghen Elementary has been busy with localized learning activities as they conclude this school year. In preparation for their trip to Hiellen Camp at the end of May, the students have been busy preparing deer meat to make jerky to take along on their adventures. This class also spent a long day travelling to Windv Bay/Hotsprings.



Katie Willmot and Cal Westbrook took a group of Gudangaay Tlaats'gaa Naay students and visiting guests (Girls Who Leap) to Yaan.

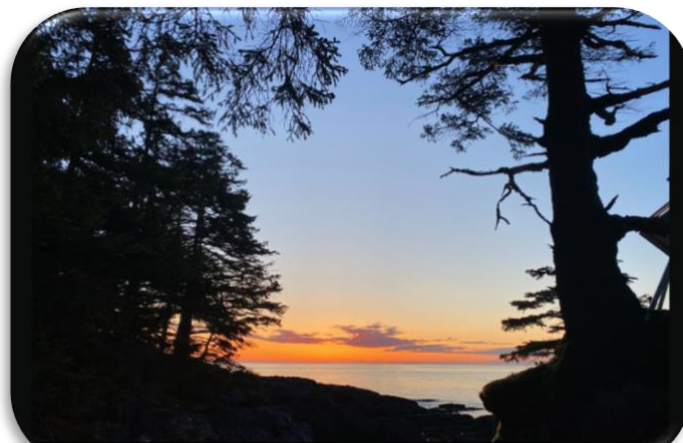


Port Clements Students and Staff spent a day at Mayer Lake practicing canoeing and paddleboarding. Look at the smiles!

Mayer Lake



Dave Wahl's class from Sk'aadgaa Naay Elem. have worked incredibly hard this school year to travel to T'aalan Stl'ang from June 16 - 19. Enjoy!



Joe Hallé and 9 GidGalang Kuuyas Naay students will travel to East Limestone Island for a few days to assist Laskeek Bay researchers with data collection. Amazing citizen science in action!

As we conclude another school year, we turn our attention to the upcoming changes and preparations for the year ahead. In this final report of the year, I would like to recognize and highlight several significant announcements and transitions:

- Tahayghen Elementary:** On Thursday, June 20th, Tahayghen Elementary will host a school closing ceremony. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Claudette and the Tahayghen staff for their thoughtful planning of this event which will recognize and celebrate the 54 years of service to the children of northern Haida Gwaii that this elementary school has provided.



- Daaxiigan Sk'adáa Née:** Opening ceremonies for Daaxiigan Sk'adáa Née will take place on Wednesday, Sept. 4th. Cal Westbrook and Ian Keir will provide further details at tonight's Board meeting.

Behn Cochrane, Dennis and Cathy Baran took the Agnes L. Mathers Intermediate class to Smugglers Cove and other locations on four separate trips to practice kayaking and water safety.





• **Sk'ad'a Principles:** I am pleased to confirm that Dr. Sara Davidson will continue her work with the Haida Gwaii School District by joining interested educators in exploring the Sk'ad'a Principles for schools and classrooms.

• **Trauma-Informed Practice:** In the coming year, our educators will also have the opportunity to enhance their trauma-informed teaching skills with Dr. Erika Cheng, Director of Beyond the Cycle of Trauma Institute.

• **Maureen Benoit:** The Haida Gwaii School District bids farewell to Maureen Benoit, our HR Manager, and her husband, Peter, as they relocate to

Powell River. Maureen has been a dedicated member of Haida Gwaii for 37 years, serving the school district for nearly 25 of those years. Her contributions have been invaluable, and she will be greatly missed. We wish her the best in her move closer to her family.

- **Congratulations to Ken Evans:** We welcome Ken Evans as our new HR Manager. Ken has been with the Haida Gwaii school district for many years and has held various roles, including President of our CUPE local and, most recently, Financial Services Manager.
- **Congratulations to Lisa Waring:** Lisa has recently been hired as our new Financial Services Manager. Port Clements Elementary School has expressed their sadness at losing Lisa but congratulate her on her new role.
- **Farewell to Jaskwaan Bedard:** It is with mixed feelings that we see Jaskwaan Bedard leave us to join Simon Fraser University. For 9 years, Jaskwaan has been a key member of our Haida Language and Culture department as our Haida Curriculum Implementation teacher, and was instrumental in the recent initiative, 'Ten Ways to Honour the Haida Language.' We wish her continued success in her new work.
- **Best Wishes on Your Retirement:** We wish the very best to Marcie Watkins and Yvonne Hughes on their well-deserved retirements.
- **Welcome Lisa Bernoties-McCullough:** Finally, I am delighted to welcome Lisa as Haida Gwaii's new Superintendent of Schools. Having worked with Lisa over the years, I know she is a passionate advocate and champion for education that makes a difference, ensuring equity and inclusiveness in each of our schools and classrooms.

Thank you, Hawaa, for allowing me to serve in this role for the past two years. I look forward to remaining connected to the continued excellent work ahead, albeit in a smaller capacity. Wishing all our students and staff a safe, healthy, and enjoyable summer break!

Manu
Interim Superintendent

