



Dang ad dii guuda ga – *Nice to be with you!*¹

Dáng kings .ahl 'áng dil xáng.áelgang – *It's good to see you!*²

Welcome to September - Sk'aagli Kung¹ (Chum Salmon Month) | Hlgid.ún Kungáas² (Goose Month)

Although the first few weeks of the school year have flown by, the excitement of Sept. 5th was palpable in each of our schools. In addition to wishing our 2023 graduates the very best with all they have planned for this year, I want to warmly welcome each of our students and their families to this school year. I am including a photograph of my great-niece Neena headed to her first day in grade 2. The joy in Neena's face, accompanied by the many ways her school has immensely benefitted her, reminds me of the many reasons I LOVE public education. I often hear how many stories Neena shares at supper time about her school days, so I hope that dinner tables across Haida Gwaii are filled with stories of all that is happening in our schools.



In addition to welcoming students, I also want to welcome all new and returning SD 50 staff. Hawaa for choosing SD 50 to share your talents. I look forward to meeting you all at some point this school year and hearing your stories.

To welcome students and staff to our schools, our schools had to be ready for the first day of school and, so thank you to all SD 50 staff that worked over the summer months to prepare our schools for Sept. 5th! I want to give a special shout-out to the small group of individuals who have been working hard to plan for the Unite Youth Conference in Masset on Oct. 13th. To create a day focussed on student mental health for all SD 50 high school students is no small feat, so please know how thankful we are!

This year, all British Columbians will recognize the newly announced statutory holiday recognizing the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Our schools will organize activities for [Orange Shirt Day](#) on Sept. 29th, and there will be no school on Monday, Oct. 2nd, as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation falls on the weekend. In recognizing the importance of this day, I encourage our staff, our students and their families to consider participating in one of the many events that will be taking place on Haida Gwaii.

Our board worked hard last year to finalize our 2022 – 2026 [SD 50 Strategic Plan](#). The Strategic Plan and the '[Action Plan](#)' accompanying that document will guide our work for the next several years. I have added 2023 – 24 strategic objectives to each goal area page in this report and have highlighted in yellow, those objectives being reported on within the report. Readers may notice that I have edited the formatting of my monthly report to the Board to better align with the newly created [Strategic Plan Poster](#) that our talented IT Manager, Steve Goffic, designed.

This promises to be an excellent school year, and I welcome you all back!

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.*

OUTDOOR LEARNING AT AGNES L. MATHERS (B. COCHRANE)



ALM has committed to getting students on the land as much as possible in order to help them see the value of where they live and how the land contributes to their health and well-being.

In September, we picked huckleberries from our school forest and blueberries from a local farm. We have also committed to field days at Grey Bay within the Kunx̄alas Heritage Site/Conservancy and Copper Bay at the end of September, supported by the Haida Role Model program and local retired teachers. ALM students have also utilized the Haida ways of being to brainstorm and create a list of classroom and school norms.

LEARNING WITH DR. SARA DAVIDSON

We are so pleased that SFU Assistant Professor Dr. Sara Davidson, author of Potlatch as Pedagogy - Learning Through Ceremony in collaboration with her father, renowned Haida artist Robert Davidson, will be joining SD 50 principals at each of their monthly meetings this school year to deepen our understanding of the Sk'ad'a Principles. As described in a CBC article, the book "explores how traditional Haida cultural practices, like those used in the potlatch, can form the basis of a holistic system of learning."

In *Potlatch as Pedagogy: Learning Through Ceremony*, Davidson shares nine principles, or sk'ad'a, which in the Haida language means "to learn."

Davidson says these principles, rooted in her father's life experiences, form a foundation for learning and teaching. These include strong relationships, authentic experiences, curiosity, observation, history and story, among others."



FOOD HARVESTING AND PREPARATION AT PORT CLEMENTS ELEMENTARY



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*

GUDANGAAY TLAATS'GAA NAAY WELCOME BACK BARBECUE (C. WATROCK)

Our school recently held our first annual "Welcome Back Barbecue." The event welcomed all students and their families to join the staff at GTN for burgers and hotdogs. Staff volunteered their time to set up, prep, and flip burgers and had a wonderful time visiting with families. The night was a huge success and we look forward to inviting our community into school in more informal fashions regularly.



ACCESSIBLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

SEPT '23 UPDATE

As part of the Accessible BC Act, our school district invites feedback from community members who interact with us regarding accessibility in our organization. There is a form available [HERE](#) for community members to provide input. We appreciate your time in completing the feedback form.

The Accessible British Columbia Act aims to support the identification, prevention, and removal of barriers that people with disabilities face in their day-to-day lives.



We have been working with other Northern BC School Districts to create an [Accessibility Plan](#). We are also pleased to have an Accessibility Committee to assist and advise with this work.

ALM STUDENTS RAISE \$1815.60 FOR TERRY FOX FOUNDATION (S. COCHRANE)

ALM students recently raised \$1815.60 for the [Terry Fox Foundation](#). We held our Terry Fox Run on September 15; all students and community members participated.



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*

DID YOU SAY "CHICKEN RUN?" (C. WATKINSON)



GTN recently held its fourth annual "Chicken Run" event. This event creates collaboration across all school grades and is a yearly well-loved icebreaker. Students are selected to randomly generated teams, including participants from grade 8-12 and at least one staff. Senior students are then asked to lead participants through a series of tasks that are videotaped/pictured. No one team wins the event, but instead, students are put forward who show marked leadership through the event. One student from this pool, after some deliberation, is awarded the annual "Chicken Run Necklace" for outstanding leadership!



ALM HEALTHY LUNCH AND SNACK EVERYDAY (B. COCHRANE)

ALM has ensured that there will be healthy snacks and a lunch everyday. We will use feeding futures and remaining Student and Family affordability funding to cater lunches and increase our food coordinator time. We have scrapped the fee for lunch that was previously charged and we provide a monthly calendar of meals so that parents and guardians can plan student lunches accordingly.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH UPDATE

Sept 23 UPDATE

- ✓ SD 50 will roll out the [PreVenture Program](#) to all grade 8 students this fall. SD 50 PreVenture Facilitators have just completed their training as of Sept. 22nd.
- ✓ McCreary Center Staff will conduct Youth Focus Groups at our high schools in early October and present at the UNITE Youth Conference on Oct. 13th in Masset.
- ✓ Confirmation that SD 50 will be participating in [SFU's Youth Development Index](#).
- ✓ Exploring partnership with [Kelty Mental Health Support for School Districts](#). First planning meeting: Sept. 25th '23

OTHER NEWS

EARLY SEPTEMBER ENROLMENT



• School enrolments will be finalized as of Sept. 30th, so these numbers may change slightly.

• We had estimated an enrolment of 463 students, and we are currently at 480.

MASSET SCHOOLS UPDATES

September 19, 2023 –	Monthly Project Update
August 10, 2023 –	Monthly Project Update
July 14, 2023 –	Monthly Project Update
June 13, 2023 –	Monthly Project Update

EARLY YEARS UPDATE (L. ROOME)

SEPT '23 UPDATE

We have had a start to the school year. I've provided some specific bullet points below, but we look forward to a great year with many wonderful opportunities for children and families.

- ✓ *StrongStarts are up and running in all of our elementary schools. We are excited to be welcoming families to take part in a wide variety of fun and educational early years programming. Please check out your school's Strong Start Facebook page.*
- ✓ *Our District continues to participate in the [Changing Possibilities for Young Children](#) project. This Ministry of Education and Childcare initiative is focused on developing partnerships with school-based and community-based educators. We currently have 14 people signed up from various communities, including educators from both SD50 and local daycares.*
- ✓ *The Early Learning Forum is in the very initial phases of planning. We are working with the local Childcare Resource and Referral to ensure we have an excellent day planned for February 28.*
- ✓ *The daycare in Masset continues to be a high priority to ensure it will be operational upon its opening. There is a community-minded planning process underway involving SD50, Childcare Resource and Referral and [Niisla Naay Healing House Society](#) to work towards supporting a society in operating the facility upon its completion.*
- ✓ *PALS will start in October and run by our early learning coordinator, Janine Wilson, in all elementary schools.*
- ✓ *We are meeting with CCRR (Child Care Resource Referral) and Niisla Naay Healing House to discuss plans for a non-profit society to help manage and run Masset Daycare when completed.*