



School Growth Plan 2020 – 2021

What for our learners?
How?
What matter?



SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT: “Success for All Learners”

KITIMAT CITY HIGH MISSION STATEMENT:

“The comfortable, welcoming, inclusive, atmosphere at Kitimat City High will facilitate the celebration of learning, self-esteem, safety and empowerment of all.”

Address: 1426 Cormorant Street
Kitimat, B. C.
V8C 1R8

Telephone: (250) 632-2811
Fax: 1-888-520-6903

Website: <http://kitimatcityhigh.cmsd.bc.ca/>

SCHOOL PROFILE:

Kitimat City High is an alternate school in which any student in the district is able to attend if they choose. Kitimat City High takes pride that we are a relationship-based program. We have caring adults who are well connected with our students. We stress the importance of the staff, students, family and community working together for the best interest of all our learners. Kitimat City High offers flexible programs that meet the diverse needs of all students, a supportive culture with clear and high expectations, and physical, emotional and social safety for all - physically, emotionally and socially.

The Alternative school is for adolescents who have experienced academic, behavioural, and or social difficulties within the context of the traditional high school. We are able to explore options that are the best fit for our students. We have a highly dedicated staff who collaborate and problem solve and help create personalized programs to meet the needs of all our learners. We make every effort to provide educational opportunities that are cross-curricular, engaging, meaningful and connect with the students' interests and passions. Kitimat City High works closely with many community supports and partnerships on a daily basis in order to help students meet their needs. We offer several support programs such as Food Safe, St, John's Ambulance First Aid, Bear Aware, Anger Awareness, and Healthy Lifestyles through outside agencies and our academics, Robotics, Textiles, Foods and Nutrition, Fine Arts, Outdoor Educational opportunities through our staff at Kitimat City High. We also had the Trades Program in collaboration with Coast Mountains School District 82 and Coast Mountain College here at KCH from September to December. We had 12 successful KCH participants start and finish the Youth in Trades Program. The students covered theory and hands on learning and experience in the areas of electrical, plumbing, welding and carpentry. A new program being offered in 2020-2021 is the Farm to School Gardens. The students will build raised beds to grow vegetables and haskap, and gain knowledge to take care of the honeybee beehives. Currently we have 52 students enrolled in grades 10-12. Our learners are referred from Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School, other alternate schools from different communities or they may be self-referred. Approximately, 56% of our students are of Aboriginal descent.

1. Scanning: What's going on for your learners? How do you know?

- ⇒ *What student achievement evidence are you looking at? Include the evidence (non-student specific, i.e. Benchmarks, School Wide Writes, DMA (Island Net Math), English 10 Provincial Exam, 6-Year Completion)*
- ⇒ *What have you learned from your students when gathering their answers to:*
 1. *What helps you to learn?*
 2. *What are barriers in our school to your learning?*
 3. *What do we need to do in our school to remove these barriers?*
 4. *What is it adults do that shows they believe you will be a success?*
- ⇒ *What are the opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing?*

Our evidence on what is going on with our learners is based on extensive quantitative and qualitative data. The team at Kitimat City High are continually scanning to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our learners. Our team members change the program style and teaching approach in order to meet all of our individual learner's needs. We accept students who have not been successful in the traditional school setting, students who have social emotional needs and have fallen behind both academically or students who would like to work on a self-paced academic program. We provide our new students with credit recovery in the courses that they did not complete, in their previous school. This allows the student to be

less frustrated and they can move forward and feel that their time that they have put in is not wasted and can feel a sense of accomplishment.

Despite the fact that our students have diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, they have a strong sense of school community. Our dedicated and passionate staff has assisted in fostering a positive school climate over the school year. It is this dedication that has led to strides in motivating students to reach their full potential. At school, negative behaviours are often the result of experiences outside of the school. This combined with anxiety and depression, has posed its share of challenges as we work to meet our learners' needs.

The students continue to be able to “voice” their thoughts and opinions during regular forums. They feel safe and trusted that they can make informed decisions about their courses and personal well being without judgement. Our students know that their opinion is valued. These conversations have led to changes in how and what we teach and what we can offer in terms of curriculum. In the fall of 2020, the staff at Kitimat City High will continue to listen to student “voice” so we can continue to increase student engagement across all curricular areas. The students continue to voice that they learn better with experiential learning. They want to be actively involved in the experience and reflect on what they are doing, rather than reading about it in a text book. This is why our Gully Project, Skateboard Project and Honey Bee and Garden project have been successful for the past few years and will continue to be successful.

Our students continue experiencing academic success. This year we had 17 students graduating with a regular dogwood, 46% of whom are indigenous. Our relationships with our students, parents/guardians and outside agencies are strong and enable us to work together to support our learners in their goal: receiving their Dogwood; crossing the stage with dignity, purpose and options. This is clearly evident with COVID-19. We know many of our students were not able to work online and continue with their learning, however, constant connections and check-ins continued to be made. We held a KCH K.A.R.E.S (Keeping All Relationships Established and Safe) BBQ on May 12th. We were amazed by the high turn out. This affirmed that we are doing things correctly. Relationships and connections are critical components to success. On June 1st, when schools reopened, we had a waiting list with students who were wanting to come to school and move forward in their learning. It was so enlightening to hear and see how excited they were to return.



We were very pleased with our students' achievement with the Grade 10 Literacy and Numeracy assessments. Three grade tens wrote the literacy assessment and the results that were achieved were two scores of 3; proficient and demonstrates that they have a complete understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to their expected learning. The third student received a score of 4; extending and demonstrates that they have a sophisticated understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to their learning. We have also noticed that the Numeracy Assessment scores have increased over the last two years. The students who wrote these assessments this year were mostly in grade 11 and 12. Over their time at KCH with the guidance of their highly respected and knowledgeable teachers, they have developed skills and strategies to help guide them through course with a more positive understanding and belief that they can do it. Our school provides a safe and trusting environment that allows the students to realize that they are intelligent and capable of achieving great success.

We will continue focus on our School Inquiry, "This is Our Home". With this inquiry, we hope to continue to prepare our students to become lifelong learners with a deep knowledge of what they learn and continue to build on their social skills so that they continue to learn with creativity, inquiry and collaboration.

56% of Kitimat City High's students are of Aboriginal descent. We are living in an environment that is deeply steeped in Aboriginal Culture. Focusing on Aboriginal ways of knowing and Aboriginal ways of learning is key for our student population. Opportunities which develop a deeper understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing are being provided through course offerings such as BC First Nation Studies 12, English First Peoples and our Outdoor Classroom Project. Most courses offer First Nations assignment options. Students have access to a full-time First Nations Youth Support Worker.

The outdoor classroom project has widened its collaborative group to include Northwest Trades & Employment Training Centre in Terrace, Farm to School BC, the Principal at the Gitga'at First Nations School in Hartley Bay, the whale observation stations on Finn Island in the local Douglas Channel, local community gardeners, and Greenskills in the nearby town of Terrace who offer gardening workshops and advice on growing techniques. By working collaboratively with these partners, we continue to develop the scope of place-based experiences and authentic learning that can be offered. Furthermore, we have partnered with Nass Valley Medicines, a First Nations group who produce teas and oils from local traditional plants, to offer a program of workshops for our students focused on recognising, harvesting and using such plants. The intention is to develop students' sense of place and in so doing improve overall positive well being.

Kitimat City High strives for Cultural Competence ensuring respect and having an understanding of culture, traditions and family practices. First Nations Support Worker and all staff collaboratively continue to communicate and interact with all students of various cultural backgrounds. It is imperative that all students have a voice with regards to their cultural experiences. Discussions, check ins with students to ensure that their cultural needs in their place of learning are met. Culture is implemented and tailored to meet the unique needs of our students and families.

We are very excited that we received a \$1900 Farm to School Grant to help us with our inquiry. This grant will be renewed as we establish and grow our school garden. We are very fortunate for the help from [REDACTED] the District Vice Principal of Career/Trades. He has come to help and guide our students and staff with several projects. He had an active role in helping our students build and design bridges for our Gully Project, raised flower beds for beautifying our school and helping kids develop techniques and skills in building shoe racks for our use in the winter to make our entrance welcoming and organized. The students and staff look forward to his guidance and knowledge as we grow and build *our garden*.

Our self-paced program allows for flexibility when students are participating in cultural events or other matters that take them away from school. We recognize that learning requires patience and time and that students learn in different ways and at different rates. We support the well-being of the family with our program and our regular communication with parents and care givers. We promote recognizing the consequences of one's actions through our contract system and conversations with sponsors and youth support workers.

Our students have a variety of learning styles, and we continue to strive to meet all of our learners needs. Some students learn best by doing, others learn best by working independently. We recognize that each child is unique and learns differently. Many students like working with their peers in small groups, some enjoy working independently where it is quiet and they listen to their devices to drown out noise. Our students enjoy the opportunity to be able to try new things, and to be shown how to apply their knowledge.

2. **Focusing:** Where does your focus need to be? What is your specific inquiry question? Why is this important? Where would you concentrate your focus to change the results and the experience of your learners? Must reflect one of the Board Goals and a focus on Aboriginal students.

Through the ongoing scanning, "Student Voice" discussions, and collaboration amongst the KCH team, our focus over the next few years, will be to continue incorporating the initiative to increase student engagement across all curricular areas, with a multi-disciplinary, experiential learning approach. We have noticed an increase in student success with "hands on projects" as well as an increased self-confidence and pride in Haisla students when involved in Haisla cultural activities. This project focuses on the community and seasonal rounds of the Haisla peoples of Kitamaat. The title of the project is, "This is Our Home." With this in mind, we will continue to implement a school wide inquiry project that will increase the equity and quality for all of our learners based on the questions:

Can we increase engagement levels for both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous alternate school students with a school wide inquiry project that includes multi-disciplinary, hands on and land-based approaches?

- *How do we learn from our past experiences, assess our present practice, to prepare students for their future?*
- *How have Haisla culture and traditions shaped the community of Kitamaat and Kitimat, and how does that influence our learners?*
- *How can we create and foster positive relationships within our community?*
- *What aspects of Kitamaat and Kitimat do our students identify with as their home?*
- *How do stories shape us and our perceptions of home?*
- *How do our connections with the land affect our sense of place?*

This inquiry question reflects all of the three Board Goals:

- *Raise literacy and numeracy levels for all our learners.*
- *Graduation for every learner; crossing the stage with dignity, purpose and options.*
- *Enhance learner engagement, opportunities and choice through personalized learning.*

It also covers the all of the First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- *Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits and the ancestors.*

Adapted from Dr. Judy Halbert and Dr. Linda Kaser "Spirals of Inquiry: For Equity and Quality"

- *Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential and relational.*
- *Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.*
- *Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.*
- *Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.*
- *Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.*
- *Learning involves patience and time.*
- *Learning requires exploration of one's identity.*
- *Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.*

3. Developing a Hunch: What practices in your school are leading to this situation? *(Focus on the areas over which educators have control – not parents, the system or the learner)*

We are fortunate for the 2020-2021 school year that we have 100% of returning staff. "This is Our Home" a school wide project will continue to incorporate each member of the staff as well as experts from the community. Potential Community Partners: Rio Tinto, Haisla Nation Council, Haisla Elders, Haisla Role Models, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Kitimat LNG, LNG Canada, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Kitimat Museum, Kitimat RCMP/Fire Department, District of Kitimat, Hatch Ltd., Kitimat Marine and Kitimat Search and Rescue, McElhanney, Kitimat Lodge, Gitga'at Cetacean, Rushing Rivers Apiaries, Farm to School, Safer Schools and Kitimat First Nations Resource Center.

Curricular Areas:

The staff will collaboratively plan interdisciplinary inquiries with the students to increase engagement and encourage deeper learning for all of our students. Some examples of interdisciplinary projects could be:

- Social Studies/Science/English/Photography/Art/ Haisla Language/Media Arts through creating calendars or posters including photographs taken around Kitimat which contain Haisla phrases that relate to the seasonal rounds
- Math/Science/Outdoor Education/Social Studies/English/Art through creating an outdoor classroom which encompasses beehive, outdoor garden and greenhouse.
- Art/Cultural Competencies/Song Creation which encompasses drum making, design, drumming and singing.
- Science/Math/English/Technology will be used to assess, present, and reflect on soil/water sample findings from the Kitimat area
- Foods/Haisla and Tsimshian Culture/Science will harvest/gather plants, berries, and other edible foods from around the area using traditional Haisla methods of preservation, which will be used in the hosting of a traditional feast.
- PE/Career Ed will inquire about sports as cultural events, culminating in the planning of a sporting event to bring people together

These are examples of the possibilities; however, we plan to expand on these, keeping them flexible to allow for collaborative planning with students. This will make this an organic process which will help us create curriculum that will meet individual needs.

Our team envisions this initiative as something that will expand over time. In accordance with our school growth plan, this initiative will increase opportunities for our school to partner with the Haisla and our community as a whole. In the initial year it may be a series of student led mini inquiries that eventually lead to all curriculum being covered through larger student lead inquiries. This idea focuses on making KCH a community of learners helping each other grow in the understanding of "Our Home." This process is meant to be flexible, allowing for self-reflection and revision as needed.

4. **Professional Learning:** What do the professionals in your building need to learn? How will this learning occur? What resources can you access? How will you build in multiple opportunities for learning?

The KCH team is very cohesive and work well together in order to meet and do the best for all our learners. We will be continuing a book club that meets periodically to discuss what we have read, share in discussion and collaborate on what direction we need to explore. We will continue with "*Onward – Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators*" by Elena Aguilar.

5. **Taking Action:** What are you doing about it? What will staff do differently? How will you know if it's working? (Incorporate the 3 levels of Response to Intervention and a focus on First Peoples Principles of Learning)

- ⇒ *What are the roles of Teachers, Support Staff, Principals and Vice-Principals in the inquiry?*
- ⇒ *What actions/ changes are happening based on what the students have identified as barriers to learning?*
- ⇒ *How are you communicating this to parents and incorporating their feedback?*

The staff will continue to collaboratively plan interdisciplinary inquiries with the students to increase engagement and encourage deeper learning for all of our students. Our team envisions this initiative as something that will expand over time. In accordance with our school growth plan, this initiative will increase opportunities for our school to partner with the Haisla and our community as a whole. This idea focuses on making KCH a community of learners helping each other grow in the understanding of "Our Home." This process is meant to be flexible, allowing for self-reflection and revision as needed.

We will communicate with parents through our website, contract signings, IEP and SLP meetings and parent-teacher interviews. On a more frequent basis, we will communicate through phone calls home by the sponsor. We regularly discuss parent feedback and suggestions and will continue to do so.

1. **Checking:** Have you made enough of a difference? What evidence will you be seeking to know you are making a difference?
 - ⇒ *When will you check in and how often?*
 - ⇒ *How can you do it in a way that allows for immediate adjustment?*
 - ⇒ *How does your connection to place continue to help with mental health?*

For evidence we know that we are making a difference when we see the students engaged, collaborating and sharing their learning experiences and knowledge. In addition, at the end of they year we have all students write a reflection which provides feedback regarding what has engaged them and helped move them forward. This inquiry goes hand in hand with the new Ministry curriculum. Assessment will be done often, for with an inquiry of this nature, ideas and events have to be discussed on an ongoing basis. Our data that we will use will continue to be both quantitative and qualitative.

We will check in regularly during our Student-Based Team meetings at the end of each week during which we discuss student behaviours and issues. In addition, we will discuss the inquiry progress regularly in depth. During COVID-19 it was affirmed that connection and relationships are powerful. It was truly evident during our May 12th, KCH K.A.R.E.S BBQ when we had the majority of our students attend a physically distanced and safe get together on our school grounds.



X *Nancy Tormene*

Nancy Tormene
Principal - Kitimat City High