



Coast Mountains Board of Education School District 82

## MGA School Inquiry 2020 - 2021



### 1. School: Mission Statement:

To provide positive educational experiences that will inspire students to achieve their full potential, enabling them to become responsible, fulfilled community members, who contribute with dignity and purpose.

### MGA Gitksan Language and Culture Program Mission Statement:

*“Dim Hooyimhl qan wiixoo’osxw gi’namihl qani ye’etxw’m dim qan gwalx yeehl ayoog’m ganhl algyax’m ts’im wilp suu wilaaksa dim qan nemdi tkalkw’ootxwhl wila dildiljim.”*

**“We will use, in the House of Learning, the wisdom and knowledge of our Grandfathers and Great Grandfathers, that has been passed on to us as portrayed through the medium of our Gitksan Language and Culture, for the purpose of maximising the development of gifts within the Gitksan learner, fulfilling the Gitksan perspective on learning as a lifelong journey.”**

### Who are our students?

Majagaleehl Gali Aks is a public school that offers French Immersion and Gitksanimx. It is situated in Gitanmaax Village and serves 116 students who come from five villages: Gitanmaax, Glen Vowell, Hagwilget, Kispiox, Gitsegukla, and four other communities: Hazelton, New Hazelton, South Hazelton, and Two Mile.

Students at Majagaleehl Gali Aks enjoy sharing their learning with their families and communities. We see this during school-wide science projects, connecting to the territory and land, Ksan Dancing, the school garden project, survival kits, class music, cross-country runs, speaking contests (French and Gitksanimx), singing for the elders, school assemblies, feasts, Christmas concerts (honouring an individual from the community), Elders’ Luncheon’s, and when guests are visiting classrooms and volunteering. Our students have a lot of success with sports, particularly soccer, volleyball, gymnastics, taekwondo, Gitksan dancing, basketball, and hockey. They participate in community soccer leagues, join school volleyball and basketball teams, and play in the local hockey league. Students really enjoyed the Parent/Student basketball match.

Our parents and families give strong support to school events that showcase student engagement and success. Families attend sporting events, Christmas concerts and feasts. In the past few years, we have seen record attendance to Term Report Student Led Conferences.

## **2. Scanning: What's going on for our learners? How do we know?**

Evidence of learning is drawn from standardized and teacher assessments such as PM Benchmarks and Island Net Math assessments, Foundation Skills Assessments, Kindergarten Screening and numeracy assessments created with Carole Fullerton.

What are we noticing?

Many students at Majagaleehl Gali Aks are entering Kindergarten with low readiness skills (literacy, numeracy and social emotional development), as indicated in our Kindergarten Screening data, numeracy assessments and qualitative assessments. Though these students do make gains each year, they continue to struggle to meet expectations at their age-appropriate grade levels throughout intermediate grades, as indicated by our data (PM Benchmarks, Island Math Diagnostic Assessments, School Wide Writes, and Foundation Skills Assessments).

We noticed that many students had difficulty reading the problems on the Island Net Math Problem Solving questions. They had difficulty understanding what they were reading, including math language/terminology like "sum" or "subtract". Other teachers noticed that students, who had been working on computation throughout the year, struggled significantly on the Computation portion of the assessment.

It was noted that students who were Not Yet Meeting (NYM) on assessments often corresponded to those currently on SIP's and IEP's.

### **What is currently in place to support our learners?**

- Inquiry – full team of teachers, support staff and admin working to implement First Peoples Principles of Learning in every classroom to improve engagement, literacy and numeracy skills, and social emotional development
- Continuation of Literacy and Numeracy Support/ELL, providing targeted interventions and support in collaboration with classroom teachers. This model will also continue to provide supports to the Gr. 4/5 class (.1) while classroom teachers work collaboratively to provide targeted literacy instruction to classes, including with/for the Grade 5, 6, 7 French Immersion class.
- Speech and Language Assistant/Support
- Indigo Love of Reading Grant – all of \$38,000 grant has been used to purchase books for classroom libraries, bins for the books, science kits, phonological awareness materials, and theme kits for each class
- First Nations Support Workers spend a minimum of 1.5 hours per day supporting K/1 classrooms
- Ongoing professional development for FNSW's provided by Agnes Casgrain, Director of Instruction - First Nations Education
- Dim ts'axw (in the future will be Ts'winaa-clever ones) – Targeted Literacy Intervention Program (blitzing)
- Gitxsan Virtues, Clan of the Month Board and Ts'winaa monthly student acknowledgement
- MGA students (all) attend Gitxsan Language and Culture classes a few times per week

- Gitxsan Virtues integrated culture in the classrooms project. All classes have monthly information, activities and books on the Gitxsan Virtue of the month
- Hands on and creative: Garden Project, Magnificent Thing/Box Project, The Project of Heart Tiles and The Reconciliation Care Bear, Robotics/ coding, science kits (magnets, circuits, etc.)
- We received a grant to have a mural carved "Raven Bringing Light"
- Grade 2/3 students illustrated a book that was written by Dr. Smith in English and Gitxanimx
- Planted a Heart Garden with [REDACTED]
- Majagaleehl Dancers (Gitxsan Dancing) and Majagaleehl Singers
- Technology: Smart Boards for all classrooms, 1 mirroring TV (grade 2/3) and 1 jTouch for Language and Culture classroom, one class set of iPads on trolley and iPads for each teacher, one teacher is piloting mirroring technology, robotics/coding (French & English)
- Gitxsan Talking/Singing Wall – Gitxsan words and phrases are available to students, parents and community at the push of a button
- We have spent most of a \$50,000 grant from Jordan's Principle (swimming lessons, publishing a book, Terry Fox Totem carved, Raven Bringing Light mural/carving—3 panels, technology in classrooms for students and staff—iPads for all teachers and mirroring TV and jTouch, 10 podiums—1 for every classroom, moving costs for donated baby grand piano

### **3.Focusing:**

Dr. Lorna Williams, (2014) and Tom Heirck, have both stated that before learning can occur, the environment needs to be safe, supportive and relevant for the learner. Our focus is on creating safe, engaging learning environments at Majagaleehl Gali Aks. Students and community need to feel they belong, that learning is relevant and that they have some ownership of their school.

#### Our focus targets three areas:

1. Giving students and community a sense of place at our school, through authentic celebration of Gitxsan culture and traditional learning, embedding First Peoples Principles of Learning daily. Majagaleehl Gali Aks leads in this area.
2. Increasing the percentage of students who are at least minimally meeting expectations in literacy and numeracy to one hundred percent by the end of grade 3.
3. Supporting our learners by developing understandings that purposeful respect is a First Peoples tradition that is expected and modeled authentically within our learning community, developing our future leaders within our school and in turn, our communities.

#### Our inquiry question:

Will we see increased student success by further developing relationships with our students and community through embedding Gitxsan culture and The First Peoples Principles of Learning?

Supporting Statement:

To what extent will we see increased student success and engagement in learning through a continued effort to build relationships with our students and community, embedding the First Peoples Principles of Learning daily in our classrooms, and working collaboratively to develop common language and strategies, specifically targeting literacy, numeracy and social responsibility, across grades throughout the school?

**4. Developing a Hunch:** What's leading to this situation? (Focus on the areas over which educators have control - not parents, the system or the learner)

Dr. Williams has stated that one challenge facing Indigenous students and educators is that Indigenous people *shed their culture at the school doors as they enter, and participate in a system that is predominantly a Western system*. We need to continue to embed Gitxsan culture and learning, implementing First Peoples Principles of Learning daily. Additionally, Heirck and Weber state in their book *Pyramid of Behaviour Interventions* that school teams need to be teaching students how to behave at school with the same focus that they give to teaching literacy and numeracy.

Staff at Majagaleehl Gali Aks are concerned about their students and are committed to implementing targeted strategies, instruction and classroom structures that support the diverse needs of MGA students, including embedding First Peoples Principles of Learning daily. We continue to work on Zones of Regulation and mindfulness, learning about and celebrating Gitxsan Virtues, and are learning more about becoming a Trauma Informed School. Our counsellor provides individuals with supports and services and runs mindfulness based groups, friendship groups and grief and loss groups.

Staff at Majagaleehl Gali Aks have strong ties to Gitxsan culture and have developed exemplary practices that celebrate Indigenous understandings. We see this in the signage throughout our school (Gitxsanimx̱, French and English) and in the posters of staff Gitxsan names on doors, in our Welcome Feast, our Christmas Concerts, our Gwee'ya's, our Terry Fox totem celebration, our leadership programs, Elders' Luncheons and Elders' Teas, our Elder's in the classroom partnership with Gitanmaax Band, our Aboriginal Day celebrations, our Gitxsan speaking and Gitxsan 100 word challenge contests, our field trips (out on the land: berry picking, gardening, forestry tours) and Ksan tours, our Virtues project, our Gitxsan word and phrase of the week, our talking/singing wall, and in daily classroom activities. Students have cared for a Reconciliation Care Bear, created their own Reconciliation Tiles and planted a "Heart Garden" with [REDACTED]. Resources are shared and efforts are made to integrate culture into our literacy and social development programs.

Staff are building partnerships with, and collaborating with, other schools and colleagues to provide learning and sports opportunities and to learn together: HSS, Kispiox Elementary, NHE, Moricetown and Gitsegukla (sports), Smiles and Gitanmaax Nursery.

Staff have built classroom libraries with our Love of Reading Literacy Grant, have attended workshops on literacy instruction and strategies, including 4 teachers and the principal shadowing Pat Mouland and some of the teaching staff at CHE for a day to learn about their literacy blitzing program, we have piloted our MGA form of literacy -- blitzing (Dim ts'axw - will eventually become Ts'winaw /clever ones) and will be further implementing this model, and staff are implementing targeted literacy and numeracy

instruction and supports in classes. MGA scheduled ½ hour each morning for each class to target literacy. The Dim ts'axw team are scheduled throughout each morning and all day on Friday to work with small groups of students on literacy skills. MGA staff are also participating on our Inquiry Committee, focusing on implementing First Peoples Principles of Learning and have been introduced to Carol Fullerton math resources and assessments. Two staff and the principal attended a full day workshop with Carol Fullerton and shared back to staff. Staff requested the purchase of all Carol Fullerton resources and the recommended manipulatives to support student numeracy skills. We purchased the resources and some of the manipulatives. More manipulatives will be purchased as staff determine what is still needed for student success and learning.

**5. 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?

We need to learn more about:

- Teaching social responsibility, literacy and numeracy while honoring, respecting and embedding Gitksan culture
- Embedding First Peoples Principles of Learning daily
- Trauma Informed Strategies

Resources that can be accessed are:

- Teacher collaboration time
- Collaboration with neighboring school staffs
- First Nations Resource Centre – HSS
- Local authors/books – Dr. Jane Smith (class sets)
- First Peoples Principles of Learning
- BC Performance Standards and new K-9 curriculum

**Opportunities for learning will be created through:**

- Collaboration time —30 mins. per week
- Allocating funds to provide release time for staff to meet and collaborate with other teaching professionals
- Scheduling/creating co-teaching opportunities between teachers
- Identifying and providing time for one teacher on staff to work with and support other teachers in creating a common literacy program

**6. 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)

#### **Tier 1**

This is high quality core instruction that, guided by First Peoples Principles of Learning, specifically targets, social-emotional behavior, literacy, and numeracy. Collaboration time for staff will be scheduled 1/2 hour per week and rotated amongst staff, supported by support staff and administration. Release time will be provided for one teacher to work with colleagues supporting



them implementing targeted literacy strategies that incorporate common language and instruction.

- a) Essential social-emotional skills necessary for success at school will continue to be defined and taught consistently throughout the school, supported by the administration/office.
- b) The teaching team recognizes it is essential to define specific standards around social responsibility and literacy that students must know in each grade
- c) We will continue to implement trauma informed strategies, use *Gitxsan Virtues*, Social Responsibility Standards and elements of MindUp, the Zones of Regulation and other, similar “mindfulness” or “self-regulation” programs throughout the school, as well as provide students leadership training (including the Leadership Club, Youth 2 Youth/Right to Play Leadership Program and buddy programs ), and continue to use the Friends Program.
- d) Regular school wide assessments through the use of Kindergarten Screening, Island Math (or other designated math assessment tool), School Wide Writes, PM Benchmarks, and other reading assessments will continue
- e) Continue to schedule literacy block for entire school for ½ an hour first thing each morning
- f) Share and celebrate success regularly with students, our parents and community
- g) Continue to engage and invite community into the school (flyers, newsletters, online, being in community)
- h) Continue to partner with Gitanmaax Band for our Elder program (2 elders come into classrooms 2—1/2 days per week) and for our after school programs

*The following strategies are what staff have recommended and would like to implement to support our learners’ diverse needs:*

#### Numeracy:

- Daily Math – skills and 1 problem solving question each day (repetition)
- Use Anchor Charts posted in classes to review and refer back to concepts (consistent)
- Use of common language (across grades)
- More hands on and use of manipulatives
- One classroom will be piloting an online math program (Mathletics)
- Use media and technology more in the classroom – closed groups (Khan Academy, Fresh Grade, Teacher Tube)
- Librarian will continue to incorporate math programs (including French programs) during computers. These programs and student progress will be available to teachers (Follett Destiny – Home)
- Collaboration across the grades and staff, including collaborating with math teacher from HSS

#### Writing:

- Modelling, Guided Writing
- Use of common language
- Gitxsan resources and books (embed culture)
- Tie to cross-curricular
- Continue to use Anchor Charts posted in classes – review, use common language, consistent
- Continue to use District Writing Framework

- Continue to use Adrienne Gear strategies, books and resources (sharing resources)
- Classes can access all resources through Follett Destiny
- Have regular School Wide Writes (3 times per year – common topic)
- Class writes- modelling on board
- “Poetry Month” or other school wide themes – posted on bulletin boards
- Student Celebration Bulletin Board – highlighting achievements (Twin’saa/Les Lumieres)
- Computers – editing skills during computer time
- Contests – speech and writing (Gitsanimx, French and English)
- Oral language development everyday - story-telling, talking about vocabulary, talking about the day (the story of the day), using the Story Marker strategy for all grades.
- Collaboration across the grades
- Paired discussion – partner talks daily

#### Reading:

- Have students set own reading goals (working very well in French Immersion Gr. 2-4)
- Paired discussion – partner talks daily
- Continue blitzing reading/phonological awareness (Dim Ts’axw) 5 days per week – assess, targeted direct instruction and practice/repetition, re-assess (engagement is key)
- Use common language, modelling and strategies across grades
- Library will challenge students to read from each Dewey Decimal section
- Celebrate success monthly – assemblies, newsletters (students reading to each other)
- Buddy programs – pair up grade levels and have older students reading to younger students
- Reading Clubs – discussion, comprehension
- School wide reading events – “funniest book contest”
- Story Club – teacher, local author, elder, parent volunteer, etc. reads to students at recess
- School wide themes based on local stories and books (class sets of Dr. Smith’s books, for example)
- Staff sign up for regular, themed, school wide events and activities
- Strong Nations books and Dr. Smith books - translated into Gitxsanimx and French project (teachers collaborating) – *now need to publish*
- Use student writing for reading events in school (Gr. 2/3 books, *Making a Splash in the Gitxsan Waters, student book of plays, etc.*)
- Have elders in for reading events

#### Social Responsibility:

- Gitxsan Virtues taught through GLC and in classrooms with stories/themes (embedded throughout school and celebrated on Virtues Bulletin Board by office)
- Each month, do school wide culture, literacy and numeracy activities
- Celebrate student successes
- Use common language and expectations (Gitxsan Virtues, Zones of Regulation, MindUp, mindfulness/self-regulation strategies, Friends program)
- Leadership club and programs, buddy programs
- Making a priority to connect with individual students to build relationships with them

Tier 2 – Students who are not responding to initial Tier 1 supports require more time and supports. These supports will continue to be given in the classroom by one or more members of the teaching team. Members of the teaching team include: the classroom teacher, administration, education assistants, the learner support teacher, and parents. Tier 2 Interventions will begin with the teaching

team looking at changes that could be made to the physical space in the classroom, the daily schedule, the teaching strategies and teaching resources to provide more time for students to learn grade-level content.

Tier 3 –This is the provision of intensive supports along with Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports for students who are multiple grade levels behind their peers. In addition to the above team members, there may also be education coordinators from the local band offices, counsellors working with students outside of the school, and district psychologists. Individualized Education Plans may be in place to allow for significant adaptations.

**7. Checking:** Have you made enough of a difference? What evidence will you be seeking to know you are making a difference?

We will continue to use formal and informal methods of assessment to determine if what we are doing is making a difference. We will utilize ongoing assessment practices to allow for adjustments to instruction, strategies and programs that meet diverse student needs (formative assessment).

Additionally, the school will participate in School Wide Writes in the fall, winter and the spring and will continue to use PM Benchmarks and other reading assessment tools and Island Net Math (or other designated math assessment) ongoing, as well as seek direct feedback from students about their learning.

School Principal Signature:





## Appendix A

### Spring 2019

**NOTE:** This year's Spring Data was not collected due to the Pandemic and subsequent ending of face-to-face instruction. Data will be collected the fall of 2020, winter of 2021, and spring of 2021. This data will be used as universal screeners and to guide Tier 2 and Tier 3 implementation. Additionally, it will be used to support selection of Curriculum Based Measures.

		NYM	ME
Communication (English) (5 students)	Phonological Awareness	40%	60%
	Letter Sounds Recognition	20%	80% (40% EE)
	Expressive Language	20%	80%
	Receptive Language	0%	100%
Communication (French) (12 students)	Phonological Awareness	33%	67%
	Letter Sounds Recognition	25%	75%
	Expressive Language	25%	75%
	Receptive Language	17%	83% (1 EE)
Numeracy (English)	Role Counting	40% (2 students)	60%
	Number Recognition	40% (2 students)	60%
Numeracy (French)	Role Counting	0%	100% (1 EE)
	Number Recognition	25%	75%

#### Spring 2018 – Classroom Assessments based on PM Benchmarks and BC Performance Standards

	Reading			Writing		
	NYM	MM	FME	NYM	MM	FME
English Gr 1(4 sts.)	50%	0%	50%	50%	50%	0%
English Grade 2/3	36%	14%(2 sts.)	50% (29%EE)	50%	29%	21% (1 st. EE)

English Grade 4/5	25%	30%	45%	30%	35%	35%
English Grade 6/7	32%	68%	0%	30%	45%	25%
	<b>Reading</b>			<b>Writing</b>		
	<b>NYM</b>	<b>MM</b>	<b>FME</b>	<b>NYM</b>	<b>MM</b>	<b>FME</b>
French Gr 1(6 sts.)	17% (1 st.)	33%(2 sts.)	50%(3 sts.) EE	17%	17%	67%
French Grade2/3/4	21%	68%	11%	0%	37%	63%
French Grade4/5/6	0%	25%	75% 10% EE (2 Sts)	0%	60%	40% 15% EE (3 sts)

**Spring 2018 – Classroom Assessments based on the Island Net Math DA**

<b>Numeracy</b>		
	<b>NYM</b>	<b>MM, ME (EE)</b>
<b>Grade 2/3 (English)</b>		
Multiple Choice	43%	57%
Computation	57%	43%
Problem Solving	50%	50%
<b>Grade 4/5 (English)</b>		
Multiple Choice	15%	85%
Computation	35%	65%
Problem Solving	60%	40%
<b>Grade 6/7 (English)</b>		
Multiple Choice	85%	15%
Computation	95%	5% (1 st.)
Problem Solving	40%	60%
<b>Grade 2, 3, 4 (French)</b>		

Multiple Choice	47%	53%
Computation	47%	53%
Problem Solving	47%	53%
<b>Grade 5, 6, 7 (French)</b>		
Multiple Choice	30%	70% (50% EE)
Computation	50%	50%
Problem Solving	40%	60% (15% EE – 3 sts.)

<b>Foundation Skills Assessment 2018</b>		
Grade 4 (8 students)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations	Reading – 88% Writing – 75% Numeracy – 25%
Grade 7 (12 students)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations	Reading – 58% Writing – 25% Numeracy – 83%