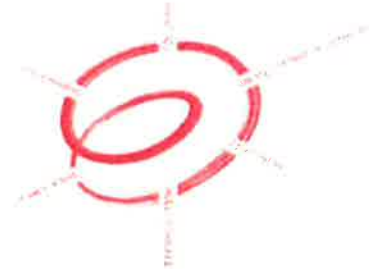




## New Hazelton Elementary School Growth Plan 2020 – 2021



**Submit to: Janet Meyer, Superintendent of Schools**

**1. School:** Our mission at New Hazelton Elementary is to provide students with positive learning and social experiences to enable them to participate successfully in society.

- ⇒ New Hazelton Elementary is a K-7 school on the traditional territory of the Gitksan people and is located in the District of New Hazelton
- ⇒ The larger school community is comprised of several small townships and seven reserves from two separate nations: the Gitksan and the Wet'su'wet'en.
- ⇒ We have a diverse student population, with many talents in art, technology, sports, music, and other areas of interest
- ⇒ Seventy percent of our students travel to school by bus
- ⇒ The student population is projected to be approximately 120 students, 80% of whom are Indigenous.
- ⇒ Fifteen percent of our students are Ministry-identified.
- ⇒ Parents and families have traditionally been strong supporters of school events, such as concerts, assemblies, fundraisers, and activity nights.

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

Although data from Spring 2020 is limited due to the closure of schools, previous data collected comes from the use of PM Benchmarks, the CMSD Numeracy Assessment, Kindergarten Screener, FSA results, attendance data from MyEd, and office referrals.

The 2019 inquiry noted concerns about math skills, with only 20% of students scoring in the proficient or extending range on the CMSD Numeracy Assessment (spring).

Another significant area of concern was student attendance, with 30% of students missing 30 or more days of school and 44% arriving late 20 or more times during the year. Improvements were noted in the shortened 2020 school year, after engaging staff (FNSW and principal) and enlisting

the support of Education Coordinators to be more pro-active in directly contacting families where attendance concerns were significant.

The COVID-19 pandemic and stricter health guidelines are currently impacting school attendance; while we will continue to monitor attendance and support families who are struggling with lates/absenteeism, collecting accurate and useful attendance data this year may not be possible given current circumstances.

*What is currently in place to support our learners? What are the opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing?*

- ⇒ Learner support in classes and in small targeted groups to support literacy and numeracy
- ⇒ Speech-language assistant support (3x week)
- ⇒ EA support in each class
- ⇒ EA trained to provide OT/PT support to designated students
- ⇒ FNSW workers targeted at supporting K-4 students and 5-7 students
- ⇒ FNSW workers connecting with families
- ⇒ Increased use of technology school-wide, including classroom laptops, iPads, 3-D printer, virtual reality system, woodworking tools/projects. Technology use focusses on cross-curricular activities, literacy development, and integrating Indigenous content throughout.
- ⇒ Classroom garden project – each class has a garden box in the school yard to grow vegetable, flowers, and other plants and provides a connection to the outdoors, the land, and regular hands-on activities. They also do composting. Cross-curricular connections to food/nutrition/cooking, science, and environmental education are made.
- ⇒ School counsellor, focussing on mindfulness and self-regulation strategies (Zones of Regulation, etc)
- ⇒ GSA/PRIDE student group
- ⇒ All students take Gitxsan Cultural Awareness (Grades K-7); 80 % of Grade 5-7 students take Gitxsan Language
- ⇒ The GLC teacher team-teaches with one classroom teacher each month to assist in developing resources/materials and to support the integration of Indigenous content and ways of knowing and learning in subjects such as social studies, math, science, and language arts.
- ⇒ Classroom teachers regularly include Gitxsan words and phrases into their daily routines and incorporate Indigenous content in their general practice
- ⇒ Breakfast is provided each morning for any student who needs it; snacks are also available throughout the day, and Gitanmaax Band offers a hot lunch program for anyone who wishes to sign up
- ⇒ After School Sports and Arts Initiative provides a range of healthy and fun activities
- ⇒ PALS program supports early literacy and the connection between home and school
- ⇒ All staff greet and welcome students into the building and their classrooms

3. **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.

Monique Gray Smith, Tom Hierck, Dr. Lorna Williams, and others have all told us that building a sense of community, belonging, and relationship is critical for student success, and that we must focus on creating safe, engaging learning environments where students see themselves and their culture reflected and where they know the adults in the building believe in them. Student choice and student voice need to be supported.

- ⇒ A continued focus needs to be on developing foundational skills:
  - Reading: comprehension, accuracy, fluency, vocabulary
  - Writing: meaning, style, form, conventions
  - Numeracy: computation, math facts
  
- ⇒ A focus on social-emotional learning is another important goal – self-regulation strategies, growth mindset strategies, trauma-informed practice, embracing the “four blankets of resilience”: sense of self, family, community, and culture. Embracing the First Peoples Principles of Learning can support this, as well as programs such as Zones of Regulation, MindUp, etc.
  
- ⇒ A focus on ensuring our students’ culture is authentically reflected in the school and shared with the school community is crucial.

### **OUR QUESTION:**

**Will we see increased student success academically and increased student engagement by focusing on embedding Indigenous content and using the First Peoples Principles of Learning throughout our teaching and learning practices?**

How can we get there?

- Teach and use common language around reading, writing, and numeracy
- Teach and use common language around self-regulation
- Continue to collaborate and co-create curriculum with the GLC teacher to embed Indigenous content authentically in all classes
- Create signage in Gitxsan throughout the school
- Showcase student projects (technology, art, literature, etc) throughout the school
- Continue to use the outdoors as a learning environment
- Weave culturally relevant activities into all learning
- Build partnerships with the communities to support culturally relevant activities
- Focus on trauma-informed practice and social-emotional learning strategies
- Use formative assessment and descriptive feedback to support student growth in learning

- Continue to promote the use of technology to support student learning
4. **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.*)

Many of our students enter school with low readiness skills in literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills; however, they usually arrive in the early years keen and eager to be at school and excited about their learning. This enthusiasm can decline by upper elementary, perhaps as students struggle to make sufficient gains in their learning and school becomes harder. This can lead to widening gaps in achievement and even further struggles as students progress to high school, as well as cause increases in absenteeism and challenges with behaviour in class as frustration mounts.

We know that every successful student has at least one (and preferably two) adults in their life who believe in them and support them in a positive way. As a school it is important that we create opportunities to allow students to be exposed to these individuals within our communities by building relationships both in the school and community. We need to ensure all staff subscribe to the idea of “all hands on deck”: all students are all of our responsibility.

We need to enable students to find and share their voices – to be able to express themselves in a variety of ways, with pride and competence. We need to help students develop strong critical thinking skills and resiliency skills in order to navigate through the challenges of the world they live in.

We need to ensure our students have access to a range of support services – mentorship, role models, peer support, academic support, counseling, career exploration, technology – to help them establish goals and vision for the future and to address issues that may impede the path to success.

We need to provide students with opportunities to deepen their engagement with their learning, to find relevance in their learning to the world we are preparing them for, and to support their academic and social-emotional needs.

We need to continue to teach all students about behaviour expectations, using a cultural lens for guidance and support, and with the same consistency that we teach about literacy and numeracy. Meaningful and on-going discussions about trauma-informed practice can support this practice.

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:

- Trauma informed practice
- Incorporating the First Peoples Principles of Learning in all our practices
- Cohesive literacy and numeracy strategies school-wide
- Positive behaviour support/interventions

Resources we can access/Opportunities for learning:

- Role model program
- Collaboration opportunities – within the school and with neighbouring schools
- First Nations Resource Centre at HSS
- Local authors, artists, etc
- Carole Fullerton In-service
- Opportunities for teacher observation in well-established literacy and numeracy rich classroom around the district
- Information from Student Voice Forums
- Allocate funds for teachers to participate in collaboration opportunities, professional learning opportunities, and to purchase resources to support initiatives

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 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?*

Tier 1 support is high quality instruction, guided by the First Peoples Principles of Learning, focussed on literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional learning. The Learner Support Teacher, Counsellor, Principal, Language and Culture Teacher, and EAs all play a role in providing this support alongside the classroom teacher: "all hands on deck" means all staff have roles in supporting students emotionally, behaviourally, and academically.

For those students needing more targeted supports in these areas, the school-based team (including all of those staff listed for Tier 1) can look at Tier 2 and 3 interventions, which may include small group instruction, making accommodations to teaching and learning strategies and the resources being used, making modifications to the classroom environment, offering more intensive one-on-one assistance, and the inclusion of education coordinators and/or outside agencies.

Other actions include:

- Structure class schedules to focus on literacy and numeracy
- Start the day with check-ins – how is everyone doing?
- Ensure clear criteria, learning intentions, visual schedules, formative assessment, descriptive feedback are the norm in every class
- Make sure students know what “great work” looks like and have multiple opportunities to show their learning and their growth
- Enhance and expand the use of Indigenous content and ways of learning; include the GLC teacher and FNSW in classes
- Foster strong relationships with our communities
- Embrace student voice and student choice and address what they identify as barriers to learning
- Continue to promote outdoor and land-based learning experiences
- Showcase and celebrate our students’ work, culture, successes in a variety of ways
- Consider establishing an education committee or professional learning committee (or similar) to focus on school initiatives or resources that teachers are interested in learning more about
- Revisit collaboration time in the weekly schedule – how best to structure it for maximum benefit?
- Encourage more parent and community involvement in school (more so when COVID restrictions ease)
- Ensure every student can name two adults in the building who believe in them and support them
- Explore school wide positive behaviour intervention system. All staff will work with students on behaviour.
- Continue to communicate information about learning, achievement, and other initiatives to staff and parents via the school website, school newsletters, meet the teacher nights, PAC, PAC Facebook page, etc.

7. **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?*

- Feedback from students and parents – check three times/year
- Improved attendance rates – check monthly via MyEd
- Reduced number of conduct reports – check monthly
- Improved results in reading (PM Benchmarks), writing (School Wide Writes), and numeracy (CMSD Numeracy Assessment) – fall/spring, and on FSAs
- More staff using formative assessment, UDL, and RTI practices to guide instruction, assessment, and interventions

School Principal Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

