



MGA School Inquiry 2022/2023



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 Gitxsan Language and Culture Program Mission Statement:

“Dim Hooyimhl gan wiixoo’osxw gi’namihl gani ye’etxw’m dim gan gwalx yeehl ayoog’m ganhl algyax’m ts’im wilp suu wilaaksa dim gan 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 Gitxsan Language and Culture, for the purpose of maximising the development of gifts within the Gitxsan learner, fulfilling the Gitxsan perspective on learning as a lifelong journey.”

Who are our students and staff?

Majagalehl Gali Aks (MGA) is a dual track public school that offers French Immersion and Gitxsanimx. It is situated in Gitanmaax Village and serves approximately 120 students who come from four bands: Gitanmaax, Glen Vowell, Hagwilget, Kispiox, and four other villages: Hazelton, New Hazelton, South Hazelton, and Two Mile.

Students at MGA enjoy sharing their learning with their families and communities. We see this when they have opportunities to create and share science projects, survival kits, and music; when they have opportunities to learn about and share Ksan Dancing, our school garden project, feasts, Christmas concerts; and when guests are visiting classrooms and volunteering their time to work with the students. Our students enjoy participating in extra curricular activities such as: the After School Sports Program, community soccer, Gitxsan dancing, and hockey. They participate in community soccer leagues, join school basketball teams, and play in the local hockey league

Staff at MGA care about the students and the communities we serve and are working to engage in what we know is “best practice” - instructional strategies grounded in research to support the students. On staff we have teachers who are currently enrolled in diploma and master degree programs that target special education, province wide mentorship programs; and educational assistants who have completed or are completing their certification in Education Assistance. We have worked with UNBC to support student teachers in their first and final teaching practicums.

Now that we can look to step away from the COVID 19 restrictions of the past two years we look forward to our parents and families giving strong support to school events that showcase student engagement and success including attending sporting events, Christmas concerts and feasts.

2. Scanning:

Evidence of learning is qualitative and quantitative and is drawn from teacher and educational assistant formal and informal observations in the classroom and on the playground. The formal quantitative assessments consist of: Foundation Skills Assessments, PM Bench Marks, Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments, Kindergarten Screening, CMSD Numeracy Assessments, and School Wide Writes.

What are we noticing?

Many students at MGA 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 the intermediate grades, as indicated by our data (PM Benchmarks, School Wide Writes, and Foundation Skills Assessments ((the FSA's for the 2021/2022 school year were not available at the time that Inquiry was completed))).

Many students have difficulty reading and comprehending the problems on the assessments and on class assignments. Teachers also noticed that students struggle with retention of what they have been taught in class. For example, students who have been working on computation throughout the year, struggled significantly on the computation portion assessments like the FSA.

What is currently in place to support our learners?

Culturally

- We continue working to implement the First Peoples Principles of Learning in every classroom with the intent of supporting engagement and the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and social emotional development.
- MGA displays local indigenous artwork throughout the building. This includes two totem poles, a large panel "Raven Brings the Light" in our gym, a display of photos of local elders, and a language wall.
- Gitxsan Talking/Singing Wall – Gitxsan words and phrases are available to students, parents and community.
- Much of our literacy program includes indigenous authors and encourages students to write about their own experiences.
- We continue to work to have good, consistent communication with the parents and communities our school serves.

Academically

- Working to continue and to develop literacy and numeracy support, providing targeted interventions that are guided by robust assessments and supported with collaboration among classroom teachers. This work has provided collaborative teaching time (.1) between the 4/5 classroom teacher and the 2/3 English and 5/6/7 French Immersion teacher. this time targets literacy instruction.
- Indigo Love of Reading Grant that consisted of \$38,000 has been used to purchase books for classroom libraries, bins for the books, science kits, phonological awareness materials, and theme kits for each class
- Targeted Literacy Intervention Program (blitzing) we refer to it as Dim ts'axw (in the future will be Ts'winaa-clever ones)
- Teachers are requesting that we focus on pushing supports into the classroom and move away from the past practice of pulling students out of the classroom for support. This is a good tier 1 and tier 2 RTI strategy.
- Teachers have requested support for continuing to develop inclusive strategies as well as Universal Designs for Learning. This includes the use and implementation of effective support plans for students
- We recognize the need to use low, middle, and high tech technological supports for all students. These include things like the use of pencil grips, phones and ipads, and speech to text as well as text to speech programs.

Social Emotionally

- First Nations Support Workers spend a minimum of 1.5 hours per day supporting K/1 classrooms
- Staff are targeting making the school that students walk into an emotionally safe environment to be in. Strategies that support this effort include: decluttering the classrooms and hallways, displaying culture in the hallways and classrooms, greeting students at the door as they enter, following consistent routines, and ensuring that instructional time is structured and consistent.
- All staff recognize the need to take care of themselves in order that they can look after the students who come through the doors. This includes pursuing strategies that support personal wellbeing.
- We recognize that effective support plans need to be written and implemented in order that appropriate supports are in place for students.

3.Focusing:

We know that before learning can occur, it needs to be relevant for learner and the learner need to feel safe and supported (Hierck et al. 2013). Our focus is on creating safe, engaging learning environments where the learning is relevant. Students and community need to feel they belong, and that they have some ownership of their school.

Our target areas:

1. Giving students and community a sense of place at our school, through authentic celebration of Gitxsan culture and traditional learning and embedding First Peoples Principles of Learning daily in our classrooms and interactions with our students.
2. Using RTI and UDL practices effectively to increase 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. Staff are working to engage in good conversations about what this looks like and are working to use RTI and UDL strategies to guide best inclusive practice.
3. Supporting our learners with educational opportunities that are purposeful and meaningful. We hope that by teaching and modeling respect to our learners we continue to support students with developing the skills they need in order to be as independent as possible, to be successful in their pursuits, and to be able make positive contributions to their communities.

Our inquiry question:

To what extent will we see increased student success and engagement in learning by further developing relationships with our students and community through embedding Gitxsan culture and The First Peoples Principles of Learning; and through high quality instruction guided by an effective use of UDL and RTI strategies and administered with high fidelity?

Supporting Statement:

All staff want to work collaboratively to develop and to use effective instructional strategies, such as RTI and UDL, specifically targeting literacy, numeracy and social responsibility across grades throughout the school.

4. Developing a Hunch:

We need to continue to embed First Peoples Principles of learning in all instructional activities. Additionally, Hierck 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 RTI and UDL strategies, quality instruction and classroom structures that support the diverse needs of MGA students. We continue to work on becoming a Trauma Informed School.

Staff are hoping to build partnerships with, and collaborate with, other schools and colleagues in our area and across the province to provide learning opportunities for students and to learn together. Locally, these partnerships include: Hazelton Secondary School, Kispiox Elementary, New Hazelton Elementary School, Moricetown and

Gitsegukla Elementary schools, Smiles and Gitanmaax Nursery. Provincially, these partnerships include: UNBC, University of Victoria, provincial mentorship programs.

Staff attend workshops on literacy and numeracy instruction and continue to work to develop our phonological support program. Staff are implementing targeted literacy and numeracy instruction and supports in classes. MGA staff are also focusing on implementing First Peoples Principles of Learning, RTI, UDL, and Carol Fullerton math resources and assessments. Staff requested the purchase of all Carl Fullerton resources and the recommended manipulatives to support student numeracy skills.

5. Professional Learning:

We need to learn and practice strategies for:

- incorporating RTI strategies to guide our instruction
- incorporating inclusive education strategies and UDL
- teaching social responsibility, literacy and numeracy
- embedding First Peoples Principles of Learning daily
- implementing trauma informed strategies
- implementing robust assessment strategies

Resources that can be accessed are:

- Teacher professional development. Teachers are enrolled in Master of Special Education Programs as well as diploma programs.
- Collaboration with neighboring school staffs
- First Nations Resource Centre – HSS
- First Peoples Principles of Learning
- BC Performance Standards and new K-9 curriculum
- Staff who are currently engage in mentorship programs, master degree programs, and diploma programs are our future staff leaders

Opportunities for learning will be created through:

- Allocating funds to provide release time for staff to meet and collaborate with other teaching professionals
- Allocating funds to support teachers who are engage in best practice that is guided by robust research.
- Working to schedule/create co-teaching opportunities between teachers
- Identifying and providing time for teachers on staff to work with and support one another in creating a common literacy and numeracy program

6. Taking Action:

Tier 1

We recognize that all students need to feel safe in school if they are to experience success and meet the learning outcomes for their grades. This begins with having a clean, clutter free learning space where students have room to learn and can relax and take risks in their learning. Staff are working to declutter and clean their classrooms and hallways making these environments that support student learning.

Tier 1 is high quality core instruction that uses current instructional strategies guided by RTI, inclusive instructional strategies, and complimented by First Peoples Principles of Learning.

- 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, 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, CMSD Numeracy Assessments, School Wide Writes, PM Benchmarks, and other reading assessments will continue
- 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) looking towards partnering 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 acknowledged are important for student success and would like to implement to support our learners' diverse needs:

Numeracy:

- 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
- Use media and technology to support learning in the classroom
- 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
- continue to use Anchor Charts posted in classes – review, use common language, consistent
- continue to use District Writing Framework
- continue to use robust literacy strategies such as those shared by Adrienne Gear, Reading Rockets, Curriculum Based Measures.
- 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
- 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

Reading:

- have students set own reading goals (working very well in French Immersion Gr. 2-4)
- continue blitzing reading/phonological awareness 5 days per week – assess, targeted direct instruction and practice/repetition, re-assess
- use common language, modelling and strategies across grades
- celebrate success monthly – assemblies, newsletters (students reading to each other)
- buddy programs – pair up grade levels and have older students reading to younger students
- school wide reading events – “funniest book contest”
- school wide themes based on local stories and books (class sets of Dr. Smith’s books, for example)
- 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)
- making a priority to connect with individual students to build relationships with them

Tier 2

- Students who are not responding to initial Tier 1 (we will identify these students through reliable assessments such as Curriculum Based Measures) supports require interventions

such as, more time and different teaching strategies as well as supports. These strategies and 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. The focus continues to be “push in supports” rather than “pull out supports”.

- Assessment must occur on a regular basis in order that the school based team can determine if these interventions are successful.

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.
- Robust assessment continues to be a necessity to measure how successful the interventions are for students.

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 2022- Overall Math Assessment scores

		Emerging	Developing/ Proficient/Extending
Numeracy	Representing/describing	17	83%
	Operational	35	65%
	Partitioning	35	65%
	patterning	40%	60

Spring 2022– Classroom Assessments based on PM Benchmarks and BC Performance Standards

	Reading		Writing	
	NYM	Approaching/MM/EE	NYM	Approaching/MM/FME
Gr 1	79%	21%	0	100
Gr 2	75%	25%	33	67
Gr 3	58%	42%	22	78
Gr 4	82	18	0	100
	Reading		Writing	
	NYM	Approaching/MM/EE	NYM	Approaching/MM/EE
Gr 5	70	30	40	60
Gr 6	0	100	30	70
Gr 7	16	84	14	86

Foundation Skills Assessment 2021 (this year's FSA – 2021/2022 was not available)

Grade 4	Not Yet Meeting Expectations	Reading – 88% Writing – 75% Numeracy – 25%
Grade 7	Not Yet Meeting Expectations	Reading – 58% Writing – 25% Numeracy – 83%