

COAST MOUNTAINS BOARD OF EDUCATION
School District 82
School Growth Plan 2023-2024

MOUNT ELIZABETH MIDDLE SECONDARY SCHOOL
1491 Kingfisher Avenue
Kitimat, B.C.
V8C 1E9



School Mission Statement: "Success for All Learners"

We at Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School believe in an environment in which self-respect and respect for others are developed as we strive for personal and academic excellence. We are committed to:

- Building capacity for all learners in a collaborative culture intended on maintaining positive connections
- Supporting student centered strategies that promote engagement, excitement, inquiry, and a love of learning
- Honouring and respecting culture and diversity for all members of our school community

Mount Elizabeth is a dual track (English/French Immersion) school: Grades 7-9 Middle School and Grades 10-12 Secondary. We are in Northern British Columbia in the city of Kitimat, on the Traditional Territory of the Haisla Nation.

Mount Elizabeth receives students from four elementary schools: Nechako Elementary, Kildala Elementary, St. Anthony's, and Haisla Community School. We also welcome new students from outside of our community.

Our student population in September 2023 is estimated at approximately 485 students with 55 staff members. Our population of Indigenous learners is 29% and approximately 80 identified learners. We are starting to notice an influx of families with school age children that are associated with the industrial nature of our community coming to register their children at our school. Many of these new registrants are from other countries, diversifying our school even more.



2. Scanning:

Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School strives to meet the needs of all students from Grades 7 to 12 in the community of Kitimat. Our school provides many educational programs and extra-curricular activities. Programs include but are not limited to: Academic, Outdoor Education, Physical Education, Home Economics, Technical Education, Robotics, French Immersion, Fine Arts, Youth Train/Work in Trades, Special Education, Modern Languages, Career Life Education, First Nations Support, Personal Wellness Initiatives, and various Clubs and Teams.



We also have many clubs and sports teams including: travel club, tech club, yearbook club, student council, craft club, volleyball, soccer and basketball. We have a junior and senior band that hold a concert at least 3 times a year, as well as our drama class that does a production once a year.

We have a cultural room that is a safe space for anyone during recess and lunch and provides nutrition to those who may need it. Our Indigenous support workers also connect with students and track it in their notes, soon to be iPads, to share how they made a connection to the students.

Our cafeteria is very busy with high stimulus, so we have also provided a quiet lunchroom as well as 2 lunchrooms for our grade 7 wing. The apartment also has supervision for students from our life skills program to eat lunch in a safe space.

The evidence we consider includes:

Student Voice — Student Forums

Informal and formal conversations with students and parents/guardians (For example, students at MEMSS collaborated with staff in developing the Dress Guidelines)

Teacher Voice – Staff provides feedback and responds actively to Student Voice forums

Year-end IEP reviews and Student Intervention tracking

Attendance

School Based Team meetings

Student Learning Surveys

Report Cards

Graduation Rates

Numeracy Assessments including Foundations Skills Assessment (FSA)

Middle Years Development Index (MDI)

Youth Development Index (YDI)
Literacy Assessments
Office Referrals
Inter-Agency meetings
Kitimat Situation Table

Upon scanning of the school, it has become evident that although the population of the school is 29% Indigenous, it is not being reflected in the school as such. Meaningful changes need to and will be made to remedy this oversight. There are two cultural rooms in the school, one for grades 8 – 12 and the other for the grade 7 wing. The cultural room is a quiet, safe space for students to visit during recess and lunch. It is also available to provide food for those who need it.

Since COVID hit as a worldwide pandemic, attendance in our school has plummeted because of fear of the new normal. We also believe there is a fear of coming back because of the amount of school that students have missed. Basic academic skills have been missed during the pandemic. This is becoming evident in the academic abilities of our student population. Staff have noticed a lack of drive to achieve high scores, complete work, hand in assignments, and at times attend classes.

Focusing:

“Take Mount Elizabeth School Back”, is a saying that was coined by a staff member and brought up at our most recent staff meeting. Staff were excited by this because they want more for our students. They want a plan to fall back on in September so we can set the bar high, stick to expectations of the students, and feel that sense of school community again. Based on that, we have come up with *three main goals for the coming school year:*

- **Attendance:** We believe that if students feel like they belong and are truly seen at a school, they will want to come. I would like the staff at our school to focus on developing a comfortable working relationship with the students. As the Principal, I would also like to lift the school spirit and the morale of students and staff. I want students and staff to feel a sense of being part of something bigger than compartmentalized classrooms, subjects, and departments. This will be done with Monday morning announcements with events of the week, trivia, recognition of student/staff accomplishments and a weekly draw. I will also do daily learning walks as well as daily supervision to learn more about the students and staff of Mount Elizabeth.
- **Academics:** A huge misconception among students at MEMSS is the belief that grades 7 – 9 don't matter because students know they will pass anyway. Staff are committed to changing this mindset by emphasizing that those grades are building blocks to grades 10 – 12 when students must pass to achieve the credits in order to

graduate. We are also committed to meeting students where they're at since the pandemic has created an academic divide from lack of attendance.

- **Bridging the generational gap:** The staff and I have made a realization that we have a generational gap between a majority of the staff and our student population. This year we are committed to learning and understanding more about the generation we are teaching as well as sharing with our students stories about 'the good ol' days'. In doing this, we hope to accomplish a stronger sense of relationship in our classrooms and hallways.

Developing a Hunch:

I feel that making Mount Elizabeth a more welcoming, warm and cohesive environment where all staff are on board to create this feeling, attendance will improve. With this improved attendance, I hope that a mutual trust is developed with staff and students where students will want to learn and succeed. If all students feel respected and seen for who they really are we will be able to build a strong foundation for a healthy school community.

Professional Learning:

Professional learning will happen at each staff meeting as well as throughout the school year. I'd like to have guest speakers come to MEMSS to teach about Indigenous cultures and Truth and Reconciliation.

I'd also like to find professional learning opportunities around healthy working relationships with students in the classroom. The idea around "every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be". ~Rita Pearson

Taking Action:

Mount Elizabeth staff have already begun the journey to 'take back Mount Elizabeth' by attending a voluntary meeting in June. It is here we discussed attendance, academics, and lack of motivation in the student population.

We are committed to welcoming students when they arrive, establishing a comfortable relationship with students, learning our students' stories, and building a safe, non-threatening, and welcoming learning environment.

Checking:

Periodically throughout the year it will be important to do a check-in with students and staff about how they are feeling in the school. We will continue to track attendance and hopefully see a decline in absences. We will also be looking at interim reports and flag students who need to meet the Principal, counsellor and parents to hopefully get each student with I-plans back on track.

If/when necessary, it is important upon 'checking' that changes to the SGP be revised, updated, or in some cases when accomplished, create new goals. I reserve the right to claim that this is a working document that can be revisited throughout the year to either keep us on track or to celebrate successes with both students and staff where warranted.

I am looking forward to a productive new school year for Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School. I wish only the best for our students and staff.



Julia Jacobs

Principal, Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School

