

Superintendent's Report to the Board

April 2024



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A Message from the Superintendent

Ama sah,

It has been a pleasure in recent weeks to witness several exciting projects taking place around Coast Mountains School District. One personal and professional highlight for me has been the Gitksan K-4 Language information sessions held in four different communities during the month of April. It is evident from the sessions that there is great interest in launching this immersive language revitalization program for our youngest learners, and that there is abundant support within the local Gitksan community to ensure the program thrives over time. Hamiyaa to all those who attended the sessions, and to the Gitksan Language Curriculum Development Team members for their dedication to this project which is of vital importance to both the Gitksan Nation and school district.

This semester schools in Coast Mountains have benefited from an influx of students from around the globe participating in the district's International Student Program. Joe Dominquez, Program Administrator, and Vice Principal at Caledonia Secondary School, has worked to grow the program largely with the intentional promotion of the wonderful opportunities in this part of the province as well as the incorporation of a home stay component. Participants are experiencing success on all fronts, building relationships and learning a great deal about our Northwest communities, and the program anticipates further growth in 2024-25.



CMSD International Students experienced the oolichan harvest recently on an excursion to Kincolith in the Nass River Valley.

Efforts aligning with the Board of Education's Strategic Plan continue to be prioritized as the 2023-24 Action Plan unfolds. Since the last report there has been a focus on the professional growth of teachers and administrators with K-3 literacy training, further consultation and development of the K-12 Mental Health & Wellness Plan, school-based engagements to activate student voice and agency, and ongoing recruitment of qualified teachers to fill vacant teaching assignments in the fall. There is much work to do, and I have a great deal of appreciation for all those who are working intentionally with a lens of equity to improve outcomes for learners across all corners of the district.

Sincerely,

Aaron Callaghan
Superintendent



Upcoming Dates

- April 23 – All Our Relations | Equity in Action Meeting
- April 28 – National Day of Mourning
- May 5 – National Day of Awareness of MMIWG2S
- May 7 – Business Committee Meeting
- May 8 – Elders & Role Models Gathering
- May 8 – Education Committee Meeting
- May 20 – Victoria Day (No Classes)

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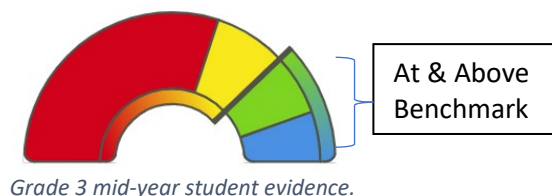


Updates on Strategic Plan 2023-24 Action Plan

Goal – All students will realize their full potential.

Literacy has been identified as a primary driver of student success in school and life, and this year has been the first year of implementation of the K-3 Literacy Plan. Many teachers have been participating, implementing UFLI as a tool for instruction and intervention. Acadience, a Literacy diagnostic tool, has also been implemented to assess student skills across fundamental Literacy pillars and support student progress monitoring. Ongoing learning is taking place among teachers and school leaders with student growth anticipated over time with professional capacity and appropriate resource allocation. **Mid-Year Student Evidence** (February) indicates the following across K-3:

Grade Level	% On Track or Extending
Kindergarten	19%
Grade 1	26%
Grade 2	30%
Grade 3	24%



Goal – We will honour and respect culture, diversity & inclusion.

Students achieve their full potential in environments that are equitable, free of racism and systemic barriers, and where they feel safe, respected, and valued. As part of this year's Student Voice engagements and aligning with the district Action Plan, secondary learners responded to questions specific to racism in our schools. With over 100 students participating, responses were as follows:

Question	Yes	No
Have you witnessed racism at school?	60%	40%
Have you been discriminated against at school this year?	38%	62%

Select responses to "What can your school do to eliminate racism?" include:

- Educate more about these problems.
- Increase the number of Indigenous staff.
- Teach about racist behaviour.
- Talk about it more / school assemblies for example.
- Don't walk past it / enforce consequences.

Goal – We will facilitate well-being across the district.

The School District Mental Health Working Group has continued to make progress towards the development of a **K-12 Mental Health & Wellness Plan** in cooperation with BC Children's Hospital. With input from more than 300 survey participants, possible priority areas include:

- Digital Safety
- Mental Health Literacy
- Building Relationships with Students, Staff & Communities

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Gitxsan Language K-4 Immersion Program

Four community information sessions were held across the traditional Gitxsan laxlip (territory) during the month of April to share details of the proposed Gitxsan Immersion program launching as early as September 2024. Discussions were



Members of the Gitxsan Language Curriculum Development Team following a session at Hagwilget Hall.

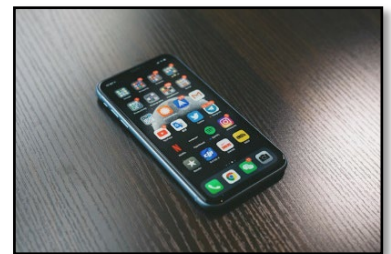
led by Monica Simms (Gitxsan Government Commission) and Pansy Wright-Simms (Gitanmaax First Nation) and included insights from knowledge holders and several members of the curriculum development team. The story of Gitxsanimx language and Gitxsan culture were shared, along with rich discussions about the benefits to learners, families and the community stemming from the implementation of the Immersion program including:

- Increased communication with Elders.
- Appreciation of Gitxsan culture and learning culturally important words and ideas.
- Connections with family members who are language speakers.
- Strengthened sense of identify and self-expression.
- Passing along knowledge gained with future generations.

Families interested in learning more about the program can contact Monica Simms with the Gitxsan Government Commission. The School District will be sharing more about the possible program launch in the coming weeks.

Student Use of Cell Phones in Schools – Community Engagement

Well over 500 learners, parents, staff and community partners recently provided input to the School District on students' use of cell phones in school. Participants were surveyed as to their perspectives on the need for additional measures, beyond those identified in Policy 1090: Bring Your Own Technology, to support student safety and minimize distractions for learners caused by cell phone use. Participants were also asked to weigh in on what additional measures might look like for learners at elementary, middle and secondary grade levels. The results from the surveys are currently being reviewed by the district's Policy Committee, with any policy updates (if necessary) coming into effect for the beginning of the 2024-25 school year.



Coast Mountains School District is in service to diverse First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners and their caregivers who live, learn, and play on the traditional lands of the Gitxsan, Haisla, Nisga'a and Ts'msyen peoples.

Superintendent's Report to the Board April 2024



This Month On Social Media...

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February 28 was Pink Shirt Day where allyship was promoted across schools, creating spaces where all feel safe, valued and heard.



Dr. Jane Smith offers closing thoughts at the Gitksan Language Information Session held at the Gitanmaax Hall.



Secondary learners from Parkside and Caledonia Schools participated in a Youth Trades Sampler hosted by our partners at Kitselas Five Tier Systems (K5T).



The All Our Relations Working Group gathered to dialogue around improving outcomes for Indigenous children and youth in Coast Mountains School District.