

Superintendent's Report to the Board

October 2024



A Message from the Superintendent

Ama sah / Good day,

The 2024-25 academic year for Coast Mountains School District 82 (CMSD82) presents opportunities for new beginnings – new classes, faces, courses, materials and sometimes a new community. This is especially true for me as Superintendent. Newness alone, however, cannot produce transformation. We ourselves must be willing to be caught up in the growth that is possible with each year. It presents us with the opportunity to make plans, design instructional strategies, and implement ideas. Whether one's responsibility is supervising, teaching, or as a member of the support staff, there is always room for improvement and designing ways to do a good job even better.

We can be very proud of what we achieve in our schools. However, our achievements are not due to complacency and satisfaction with the status quo. Our success is what it is because a staff of dedicated, aspiring personnel have a common goal – to do what is best for the learners – and are always looking for ways to achieve that goal.

We fully embrace the values and goals of CMSD82. We actively strive to emphasize respecting others, relationships and caring for people; fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming, and inclusive; decision making through discussion and consultation; working together for a common cause; and serving and providing the best for learners. Adherence to these beliefs and societal values and their impact on the human condition will ensure a successful year for us.

The Coast Mountains Board of Education is making strides to address education issues and introduce new initiatives. This will be achieved with commitment, dedication, and leadership on many fronts. Consequently, we, at CMSD82, have a major role to play. We must employ visionary leadership that focuses on stewardship and inspiration. To be a steward is to lead by example; to lead is to inspire; to inspire is to communicate. As communicators we must create opportunities and recognize the true human potential of our learners and staff for the good of the school community. Therefore, we will be regularly promoting the positives that occur in our schools. I have had the opportunity to visit some of our schools and communities and attend public presentations. I have been impressed with what I have seen, experienced and learned. My interaction with educators and the public has been rewarding.

We wish you well and encourage you to seek ways to regularly enhance the educational experiences of our learners. We welcome you to the 2024-25 academic year at CMSD82.

Sincerely,

Tracey MacMillan
Superintendent



*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 Gitksan, Haisla, Nisga'a and
Ts'msyen peoples.*

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Pole Raising at Kitimat's Haisla Bridge

Superintendent Tracey MacMillan met teachers, students, parents and toddlers at the Haisla Bridge pole raising held in Kitimat on September 30 in recognition of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. A pole was raised adjacent to the new Haisla Bridge marking a historic moment for local reconciliation.



In December 2023, the District of Kitimat with support of Haisla Nation announced the selection of Nathan Wilson to carve a pole to be installed at Haisla Bridge. This pole and its place next to the Kitimat River is aimed to reflect the history and culture of the x̄á'isla nation. This event coincided with other planned activities held throughout the weekend hosted by the District of Kitimat, Haisla Nation and Tamitik Status of Women. The installation of this pole is part of ongoing reconciliation efforts between the District and Haisla. The Haisla Bridge replacement



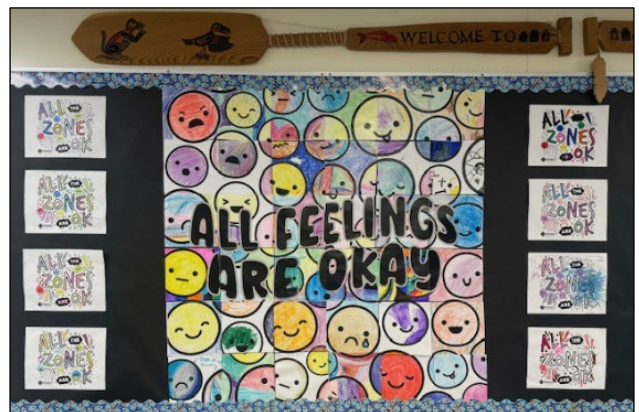
Cory Boguski (MEMSS Teacher), Janet Meyer (Interim Superintendent), Tracey MacMillan (Superintendent) and Ayelet Freedman (Nechako Elementary School Teacher) joined the journey towards reconciliation on September 30.

has been such an important step for x̄á'isla representation in the community, both with its construction and the commitment to display Haisla art," says Haisla elected Chief Councillor Crystal Smith. "It is very exciting to see this latest installation that will share important pieces of our Nation's culture for the wider community." The Haisla Bridge also includes panel art along its railings, with designs provided by Nathan Wilson and Paul Windsor.

World Mental Health Day – October 10

World Mental Health Day was celebrated on October 10, 2024. Schools play an important role in raising the awareness of Mental Health Literacy with students.

We know that taking care of our physical health is important to keep our bodies strong and healthy, it is also just as important to take care of our mental health. Mental Health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being, which means it affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress in our lives, relate to others, and what choices we make.



Bulletin board photo courtesy of Kildala Elementary School.

Many schools run programs in their class such as Open parachute, Mental Health Literacy, Second Step, etc. Access the following links to learn more:

⇒ <https://mentalhealthliteracy.org/what-is-mental-health/>

⇒ <https://www.openparachute.ca/>

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Gitanmaax Meet & Greet – October 7

A Meet & Greet hosted by the Gitanmaax First Nation was held on October 7 at 5:00 p.m. to start the school year with an opportunity to celebrate Gitxsan Immersion accomplishments. Students, parents-caregivers, CMSD82 Staff, GWES First Nations High School (Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en Education Society) and Kispix Community School Staff were invited to participate in this event held at the Gitanmaax Hall with dinner provided.



Members of CMSD82's District Education (l-r Tina McDonald, Tracey MacMillan, Julia Nieckarz) join Gitanmaax Meet & Greet organizers, Pansy Wright-Simms (Gitanmaax Education Coordinator) and Stephen Robinson (Administrative Assistant to the Gitanmaax Education Coordinator) to celebrate and recognize the Gitksan Immersion IRP.

Attending for CMSD82 staff included Superintendent Tracey MacMillan, members of the District Education Team (Julia Nieckarz, Phillip Barron and Tina McDonald) and Hazelton School Principals, Vice Principals and Staff.

Nikateen and Gyetim Galdo'o, Gitanmaax Hereditary Chiefs and the Gitanmaax Chief Councillor & Council welcomed participants and a blessing of food was extended. A cultural welcome dance performance followed by the Ksan Performing Arts. Attendees were gifted with t-shirts inscribed with the words "Our Majagalee, Our Future" encapsulated a specially created cultural hand design by Michelle Stoney, local Gitksan artist, representing all children of the communities.

The work of the Gitksan Integrated Resource Package (IRP) Committee was acknowledged and recognized with the development of the Gitksan Immersion program launched in September 2024. The IRP Committee

consisted of linguists, language teachers, knowledge keepers, advisors, language curriculum consultants and more. The Meet & Greet guest speakers included members of the curriculum development team and knowledge holders who spoke to the IRP program development of Gitksan language and Gitksan culture, along with rich discussions about the benefits to learners, families and the community stemming from the implementation of the Immersion program. The goal of the IRP Committee is to provide a Gitksan Immersion program within the public school system, so students can go from the Language Nest to Grade 12 knowing their language, culture, history, and traditions. The enriching evening session ended with door prizes and a closing prayer.



Phillip Barron, District Principal (r) participates in the Gitanmaax Meet & Greet with Hazelton Secondary School Teachers, Ryan McCann and Zach Fraser (l-r).

The heritage, culture, language, and traditions of the Gitksan people provide strength to their communities as well as enriching the broader society. First Nations students from the seven local bands make up approximately 87% of the student population in the four district schools in Hazelton. It has long been the desire of the Gitksan people for all their children to learn their own language. The development of the Gitksan IRP for primary students would enable schools to offer this program in addition to the current Gitksan IRP language offered to grades 5 to 12 since September 2012. Coast Mountains School District operates in service to diverse Indigenous learners and families on the traditional unceded territories of the Gitksan, Haisla, Nisga'a and Ts'msyen Peoples.

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October is National Principals Month

National Principals/Vice Principals Month is celebrated in October that recognizes the essential role that principals and vice principals play in making a school great. Every day, they lead our teachers and support staff to fulfill our commitments to our students. *We express our gratitude to our principals and vice principals for their vision, leadership, and dedication providing success for all learners and the positive investment they bring in their lives!*



Superintendent Tracey MacMillan and our District Education Team hosted a Principal & Vice Principals Forum on October 16 at the Northwest Trades & Employment Centre in Terrace. Forum topics included a cultural smudging acknowledging a new season with a new beginning, building relationships, sharing school successes, supporting program changes in schools, and group activities to enhance leadership skills. We thank our District Education Team – Janet Meyer (Interim Superintendent), Julia Nieckarz (Director of Instruction, Learner Support), Phillip Barron (District Principal, Mentoring & Learner Engagement), Tina McDonald (District Principal, Early Learning & French Immersion) and Beverly Azak (District Vice Principal, Indigenous Education) for their efforts and support during the forum.

We share some pictures from the Principals & Vice Principals Forum illustrating our principals, vice principals and District Education Team engaged in new learnings and strategies to incorporate this school year in many areas including literacy, inclusive education and more towards transforming schools and advocating for inclusive, caring, and welcoming spaces for all students.



Principals and Vice Principals from all CMSD82 schools are pictured engaging in the Principals & Vice Principals Forum held on October 16 at the Northwest Trades & Employment Training Centre in Terrace. The forum was hosted by Superintendent Tracey MacMillan and our District Education Team.



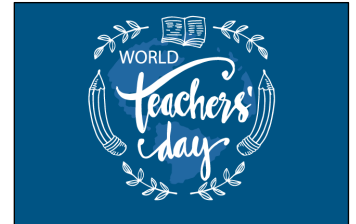
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World Teachers' Day – October 5

In honour of World Teachers' Day on October 5, we acknowledged the incredible teachers in Coast Mountains School District. On World Teachers' Day, and every day, we celebrate teachers and give thanks for all they do to support students! This year's World Teachers' Day theme, Valuing Teacher Voices: Towards a New Social Contract for Education, highlights the essential role that educators play in shaping our educational system and school district. *Thank you to all the teachers who have positively impacted our lives and who are currently working tirelessly in support of students.*



Mentorship Support for New Teachers

In Coast Mountains School District, we prioritize mentorship support for teachers who are new to the profession, new to the district and those who are working in our communities on a Letter of Permission (LOP). We presently have nearly 50 teachers who are new to the district, all of whom have the opportunity to benefit from mentorship support.

Experienced mentors provide guidance, share best practices, and offer constructive feedback, creating a safe space for new educators to ask questions and navigate challenges. This supportive relationship not only helps new teachers develop effective instructional strategies but also cultivates a sense of belonging within the school community. Additionally, mentorship can help reduce feelings of isolation, empower new teachers to innovate in their teaching, and ultimately contribute to improved student outcomes. By investing in mentorship programs, schools can create a more collaborative and effective teaching environment. This is exciting work, and our District Education Team looks forward to the collaboration and collegial learning in the year ahead.



October Individual Education Plan Meetings



Bulletin board photo courtesy of Nechako Elementary School.

Individual Education Plan meetings are happening during the month of October with school teams. An IEP is a written educational plan for special education students designed to describe programming modifications and/or adaptations and to indicate specific services provided. The IEP is a "living" process that has the potential to guide assessment, planning, collaborative communication and teaching. An IEP need not be a lengthy document but must include evidence of planning for student needs, demonstrate a plan to utilize varied instructional strategies

and/or assessment procedures, and list clear goals for future activities and planning. It is necessary to have an IEP to focus a child's learning activities, aid in the facilitation of communication, and to provide inter-team and inter-agency accountability.

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Literacy Initiatives in CMSD82

With the support of LNG Canada, CMSD82 has introduced many new initiatives since the 2023-24 school year began. Our appreciation is extended to our community partner LNG Canada for their generous donation towards the success of our learners.

This school year, we are working with our teachers as they continue the journey of supporting our students improve in literacy. Providing K-3 teachers with in-service in UFLI Foundations (University of Florida Literacy Institute), using the resource for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions, as well as providing teachers with in-service Acadience, our new literacy assessment tool.

Other initiatives happening this school year in literacy include:

- ⇒ Acadience assessments in grades 4-6
- ⇒ Acadience pilot in grades 7-8
- ⇒ Pilot project in two schools with a grade 4 & 5 literacy tool called Links
- ⇒ Pilot project with a few teachers on Self-Regulated Strategy Development writing
- ⇒ Supporting teachers with Tier 2 interventions
- ⇒ Supporting teachers with Progress Monitoring using the Acadience tool
- ⇒ Completing a 90-minute Literacy Framework in grades K-3
- ⇒ Developing a 90-minute Literacy Framework in grades 4-6
- ⇒ Continuing to collaborate with the Teacher Focus Group on literacy initiatives
- ⇒ Fostering Educational Leadership among our administrators and literacy leads with a Leadership Series surrounding this initiative

With the support of both of our Literacy Lead Teachers, Laura Gray and Hayden Drygas, we are working with our administrators and school-based literacy leads to plan for success for all learners.

This month, our Literacy Team has been in every school assessing all grades 4-6 students, while our K-3 teachers have been gradually released to start the process of assessing their own students.



Terri Scott, Teacher at Bear Valley School in Stewart conducts UFLI training.



A CMSD82 student participates in a literacy assessment.

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Northwest Community Student Support Fund

Once again, school staff, parents and caregivers can access the Student Support Fund assistance for school fees and other costs related to school. This year we have \$83,000 in funding provided by LNG Canada and \$33,000 carry forward funding from the Ministry of Education and Child Care to support students and families. Assistance may be available for the purchase of school supplies, winter clothing, participation in field trips and school-based extracurricular athletic or cultural activities and more. The assistance form is available on the school district's website at <https://www-dev.cmsd.bc.ca/northwest-community-student-support-fund>. Hard copies are also available through School Principals. Any inquiries about the Northwest Community Student Support Fund should be directed to the School Principal.

This Month On Social Media...



@CoastMountainsSchoolDistrict



@CoastMountainsSchools



@CoastMtnSD



CMSD82 Trades Van was on the move again, travelled to Stewart. Thank you to LNG Canada for their generous support of the Discover Trades Program.



All families are invited to visit the Halloween Early Year Fair to be held on October 26 between 10am and 2pm at Cassie Hall Elementary School. Welcome!



Upcoming Dates

- October 23 – Hybrid Board Meeting (Kitwanga Elementary School)
- October 25 – Provincial Professional Development Day (non-instructional day)
- November 6 – Business & Education Committee Meetings (virtual)
- November 8 – Indigenous Veterans Day
- November 11 – Remembrance Day (schools are not in session)
- November 19 – Hybrid Board Meeting (Terrace)