



# Indigenous Education Report February 2025

Submitted by Superintendent Tracey MacMillan  
on behalf of the Indigenous Education Department

## Hobiyeer Nisga'a New Year

Hobiyeer is the Nisga'a New Year celebrated every February or March. It signifies the emergence of the first crescent moon and begins the month of Buxw-laks (February). This year, Hobiyeer will be celebrated on February 28 and March 1, 2025 with a Welcome Feast on February 27.

The Halayt (Spiritual Leader, Medicine Man), Simgigat (Nisga'a Chieftains) – in the past centuries studied stars and the moon. They studied the Buxw-laks moon, the moon of February, and noted the different shapes leading up to the full moon. Over time, they observed whenever the crescent moon (thin-shaped) is in the shape of the Hoobix (the bowl of the Nisga'a wooden spoon with the ends pointing upward) meant abundant resources, such as oolichan, salmon and berries in the harvesting season to follow in K'alii-Aksim Lisims (the Nass Valley).

And so, the Nisga'a say "Hobiyeer means, the Spoon is Full". When the Hobiyeer moon is sighted, the grandfathers would immediately throw their arms up in the shape of the "Hoobiyee moon" and run out into the village shouting "Hobiyeer! Hobiyeer!" with the children right behind copying them.



## Gitlaxdax Nisga'a Dance Group Performs Hobiyeer Celebration

The Indigenous Education Department hosted a Hobiyeer celebration for students and staff performed by the Gitlaxdax Nisga'a Dance Group held on February 20 at the REM Lee Theatre.



Special thanks to Anna Ashley, Indigenous Education District Teacher Mentor, who coordinated this Indigenous education activity which recognizes the upcoming annual Hobiyeer event, the Nisga'a New Year, and the significance of the annual event's connection to local Indigenous community and on-the-land learning.



Skeena Middle School Vice Principal, Joel Ewald is pictured in the centre participating in the Hobiyeer dance celebration performed by the Gitlaxdax Nisga'a Dance Group.

The Gitlaxdax Nisga'a Dance Group provided two engaging performances to the delight of students and staff, one each in the morning and afternoon. A livestream option was available for all schools to view via the REM Lee Theatre YouTube Channel.

To view the Hobiyeer celebration slide show of pictures, access the school district's website main page News section at [www.cmsd.bc.ca](http://www.cmsd.bc.ca).



Ethan Wiebe, Teacher at Skeena Middle School joins the Hobiyeer dance celebration held on February 20 at the REM Lee Theatre.

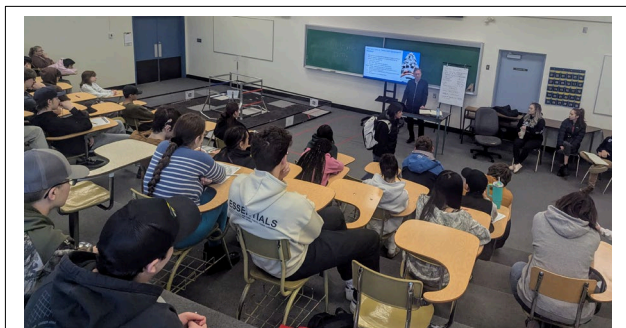
# Indigenous Education Report – February 2025 (cont'd)



## Indigenous Cultural Activities at Caledonia Secondary School

In the spring of 2024, Daina Horne, Teacher at Caledonia Secondary School, was working on bringing in multiple levels of government as guest speakers for her Social Studies 10 class, including the local First Nations Chief Councillor and Council. The Mayor of Terrace was available to speak to her class. Simultaneously, Tristan Cox, Teacher at Caledonia Secondary School was arranging a student vote through the Social Studies department and CIVIX Canada (registered charity dedicated to strengthening democracy through civics and citizenship education for school-aged youth), as well as running mock trials in Law 12. In the fall of 2024, the Kitselas First Nation Chief Councillor and Council were invited to speak to multiple classes about the upcoming treaty vote, the treaty process, including the roles and responsibilities of the

Chief Councillor and Council. Following the meeting with the Kitselas team of Chief Councillor Glenn Bennett, Councillor Cyril Bennett-Nabess, Intern Zoey Bevan, and Chief Negotiator Dr. David Try, they came together with the idea of a treaty simulation for Semester 2. For the remainder of Semester 1, they worked to develop pre-learning assessments and early assignments as well as make arrangements for various levels of government to speak to all three classes that will be involved, English First Peoples 10, Social Studies 10, and the Introduction to Trades group B students (covering Social Studies 10 and EFP 10) as illustrated in the photo above.



Dr. David Try, Kitselas First Nation Chief Negotiator speaks to Caledonia Secondary Students on the upcoming treaty vote, the treaty process including the roles and responsibilities of the First Nations Chief Councillor and Council.

In late December 2024, students at Caledonia Secondary decided that they wanted to form a drum group as a way to take back and share their culture and reaffirm their Indigenous identity so they could see themselves in the school. Together with cultural identity and how our school is steadfastly upholding the 97 Calls to Action, particularly "63. i) Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools." - Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015. Students debuted their skills and knowledge during the annual February 14 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) march held in Terrace. Not only did the students take a lead role in the march, they performed in front of 100 people and found the courage to publicly speak and share their stories.



Caledonia Secondary School's Indigenous Drum Group debuted their drumming skills and knowledge during the annual February 14 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls (MMIWG) march held in Terrace.

# Indigenous Education Report – February 2025 (cont'd)

## Indigenous Education Council Information Session

On February 19, Coast Mountains School District hosted an Indigenous Education Council (IEC) Information Session, bringing together First Nations Council representatives, First Nations Education Coordinators, Board of Education Trustees, and District Senior Staff for an in-depth discussion on the formation and role of the IEC. The session was held at the district's Northwest Trades & Employment Centre (NTETC) located in Thornhill.

This session provided an opportunity to establish a shared understanding of the IEC's purpose, explore its legislative framework, and discuss key priorities for ensuring meaningful Indigenous representation in education. Participants engaged in thoughtful dialogue about strengthening partnerships between First Nations communities and the district, integrating Indigenous culture into schools, and creating equitable opportunities for Indigenous learners.



IEC Information Session participants engaged in an in-depth discussion on the formation and role of the Indigenous Education Council. Pictured front row (l-r) Marian Laval-Kotowich, Kitsumkalum First Nations Education Coordinator, Lindsay Harder, IEC Secretariat, Board Chair Margaret Warcup, Trustee Karen Jonkman – pictured back row (l-r) Trustee Ed Harrison, Pansy Wright-Simms, Gitanmaax First Nations Education Coordinator, Monica Simms, Inter-Tribal Education Committee Chair & Education Advisor for the Gitksan Government Commission, Superintendent Tracey MacMillan and Tracey Sam, Kitsumkalum K-12 Support Liaison. Missing in the photo is Thelma Marsden, Gitsegukla First Nations Councillor and Freda Wright, Kitselas First Nation Education Coordinator.



The co-facilitators of the Indigenous Education Council information session held on February 19 at the Northwest Trades & Employment Training Centre (NTETC) included Superintendent Tracey MacMillan (r) and Lindsay Harder (l), IEC Secretariat.

*Coast Mountains School District extends its heartfelt gratitude to all attendees for their time, insights, and commitment to advancing Indigenous education. The valuable feedback and perspectives shared will play a pivotal role in shaping the IEC's structure and guiding its ongoing work in supporting Indigenous student success.*

The presence and dedication of local First Nations representatives are vital to the success of this initiative, and we look forward to continued collaboration in fostering an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment for all students.



Kitselas First Nations Education Coordinator Freda Wright (l) provided the Welcome to the Kitselas Territory (the Gitselasu, People of the Canyon) as the opening for the IEC information session with appreciation from Lindsay Harder (l), IEC Secretariat and Superintendent Tracey MacMillan (centre). Freda also joined and engaged in the IEC information session.

# Indigenous Education Report – February 2025 (cont'd)

| <b>1.31 Indigenous Targeted Funded Projects – 2024/2025<br/>Reviewed and Approved by the Inter-Tribal Education Committee</b> |
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| <b>Cassie Hall Elementary School:</b>   |
| • Kitselas Canyon Guided Field Trip Tour  |
| • Laxgalts'ap Museum/Hot Springs Trip   |
| • Purchase Cedar for Weaving Cedar Basket Project   |
| <b>Hazelton Secondary School:</b>   |
| • Fall Moose Hunt   |
| • Back to the Land  |
| • Nisga'a Lava Bed Tour   |
| • Outdoor Classroom Completion  |
| • Salmon and Berries/Preserving   |
| • Film Production/Visual and Performing Arts Equipment (Indigenous Story)   |
| • Trip to Gitwagak Battle Hill  |
| • Carving Knives Sharpening and Repair/Teach How to Maintain  |
| • Nisga'a Tour Trip/Camping   |
| • Visual Body Software Licenses   |
| <b>New Hazelton Elementary School:</b>  |
| • Devils Club Salve/Moose Hide Rattles  |
| • On-the-Land Learning, Teaching of Frogs and Learning of the Frog Clan   |
| • Processing Traditional Foods/Canning  |
| <b>Skeena Middle School:</b>  |
| • Mural (Indigenous Artists)  |
| <b>Suwilaawks Community School:</b>   |
| • Cross-Country Skiing Trips (On the Land)  |
| <b>Thornhill Elementary School:</b>   |
| • Kitselas Canyon Guided Field Trip Tour  |

## Cassie Hall Elementary Celebrates Hobiye on February 19



# Indigenous Education Report – February 2025 (cont'd)

| <b>Knowledge Keeper/Role Model Requests - 2024-2025</b><br><i>Reviewed and Approved by the Inter-Tribal Education Committee</i> |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| School  | Project   | Knowledge Keeper/Elder   |
| Caledonia Secondary   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential School</li> <li>Oral Traditions and Story</li> <li>Form Line Design Drawing</li> <li>Treaty Law/Self Governance</li> <li>Trapping/Harvesting Sustainably</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Darlene Morgan</li> <li>Jolene Wesley, Angie Brown</li> <li>Alexander Erickson</li> <li>Glenn Bennett</li> <li>Tegan Anaka</li> </ul> |
| Cassie Hall Elementary  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cedar Basket Weaving</li> <li>Drum and Dance (monthly)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vivian Carlick, Chris Peal</li> <li>Roxanne Woods</li> </ul>  |
| Hazelton Secondary  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cedar Weaving</li> <li>Orange Shirt Day Assembly</li> <li>Residential School</li> <li>Teaching of Trapping, Hunting</li> <li>Plant ID, Knowledge, Uses</li> <li>Tanning Hides</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mavis Banek</li> <li>Victor Robinson, Michelle Stoney</li> <li>Ray Jones</li> <li>Jordon Muldoe</li> <li>Ross McRae</li> </ul>        |
| Kildala Elementary  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Haisla Drumming and Dance</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shelley and Cassidy Bolton</li> </ul>   |
| Mount Elizabeth Middle/Secondary  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Haisla Art</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alexander Erickson Sr.</li> </ul>   |
| Nechako Elementary  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dance/Drumming/Storytelling (monthly)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shelley and Cassidy Bolton</li> </ul>   |
| Parkside Secondary  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning to Bead</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carley Nabess</li> </ul>  |
| Skeena Middle School  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to Make Fried Bread</li> <li>Learning Pottlach and Feast</li> <li>Traditional Teas and Indigenous Plants</li> <li>Food Security/Salmon</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shalane Pauls</li> <li>Shalane Pauls</li> <li>Shalane Pauls</li> </ul>  |
| Suwilaawks Community  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous Clans</li> <li>Residential School</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sabrina Williams</li> <li>Anita Davis</li> </ul>  |
| Thornhill Primary   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drum Making/Repairs</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gerald Brown</li> </ul>   |
| District  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hobiyee 2025 Nisga'a Dance</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gitlaxdax Dance Group</li> </ul>  |

## With Best Wishes Beverly!

Coast Mountains School District announced on February 7, 2025 that Beverly Azak, District Vice Principal, Indigenous Education, has accepted an appointment to the position of Vice Principal/District Vice Principal, Indigenous Education with Nisga'a School District No. 92 effective March 1, 2025. This is an exciting opportunity for Bev as she wishes to return to her Nisga'a village of Gitwinksihlkw to be closer to her family.

Beverly rejoined Coast Mountains School District in June 2023 in her current position of District Vice Principal, Indigenous Education. She previously worked for the School District from September 2000 to October 2004, where she began her teaching career working at Caledonia Senior Secondary School. We extend our sincere thanks to Beverly for her service and contributions during her tenure for her dedication and support of Indigenous learner success and their communities. Our best wishes are extended to Beverly for success in her future endeavors.

