

Indigenous Education Report



June 2026





Table of Contents

Gratitude and Acknowledgment

National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day	3
---	----------

Message from the Director of Indigenous Education

Community Events & Indigenous Education Council Gathering	4
---	----------

Indigenous Education 2025-2026

Year at a Glance	7
------------------	----------

New Hazelton Elementary School

Celebrating Community	8
-----------------------	----------

Caledonia Secondary School

Celebrating Identity – Indigenous Photoshoot	9
--	----------

Parkside Secondary School

Building Skills, Confidence, and Future Pathways	11
--	-----------

Nechako Elementary School

Building Connections and Gratitude	13
------------------------------------	-----------

Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School

Exploring Formline Art	14
------------------------	-----------

Kitwanga Elementary School

Tradition Regalia Making	15
--------------------------	-----------

Hazelton Secondary School

Media Arts and Photography – Expanding Outdoor Learning – Nisga’a On-the-land Trip- Drama Students Shine – Elder in Residence	16
---	-----------

Hazelton Secondary School

2 nd Annual Cultural Day	21
-------------------------------------	-----------

Suwilaawks Community School

Land-Based Learning – Mini Feast Fridays	24
--	-----------

1.31 Indigenous Targeted Funds

Approvals to support language, culture, land-based learning, and student wellness initiatives	26
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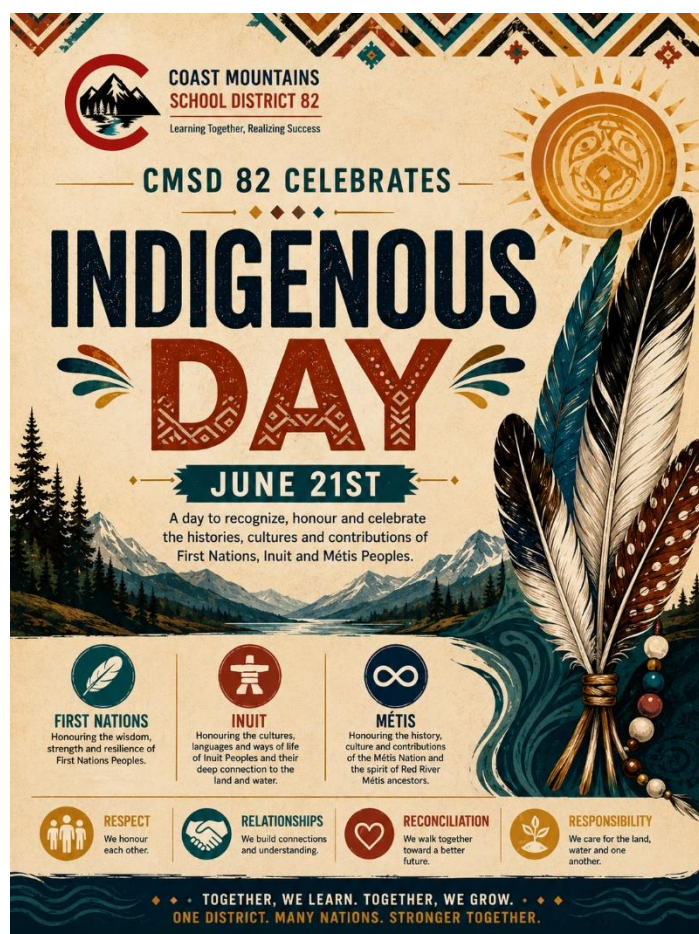
Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Gratitude and Acknowledgment

This report reflects learning, cultural connection, and relationship-based initiatives that took place across the district at the end of April and May. These efforts demonstrate our shared commitment to supporting Indigenous students through culturally grounded education rooted in identity, belonging, and community.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Indigenous Support Workers, Educators, Administrators, Elders, Knowledge Holders, and Community partners whose dedication strengthens student engagement and well-being across our schools. Through collaboration and respectful partnership, Indigenous knowledge and culture continue to be honoured as living and essential aspects of learning.



National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day

June is National Indigenous History Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the rich histories, cultures, languages, and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples across Canada. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the importance of truth, reconciliation, and ongoing learning while honouring the strength, resilience, and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples.

Throughout the month, schools across Coast Mountains School District are participating in cultural celebrations, land-based learning experiences, language activities, student showcases, and community events that highlight Indigenous perspectives and strengthen connections to culture, identity, and community. Many schools are also recognizing National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21 through gatherings that celebrate Indigenous traditions, arts, music, dance, storytelling, and community partnerships.

The activities featured throughout this report reflect the district's ongoing commitment to creating culturally responsive learning environments where Indigenous students see themselves reflected, valued, and celebrated, and where all students have opportunities to learn about the histories, cultures, and contributions of Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

A Message from the Director of Instruction, Indigenous Education



Chante Simms, ISW; Andrea Williams, ISW; Alisha Wilson, ISW; Adriana Jackson, ISW; Donna Mortimer, Director of Instruction, Indigenous Education; Alberta Milton, ISW

Ama Sah, Good Day,

It was an honour to attend Hazelton Secondary School's 2nd Annual Cultural Day alongside Tracey MacMillan, Superintendent, to witness firsthand the powerful connections being built between learners, families, schools, and community members. The theme, *Connecting Learners, Community and Culture*, was beautifully reflected throughout the day's performances, teachings, and celebrations.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation for the invitation to attend the Kitwanga Elementary School Song and Dance Showcase with Director of Instruction, Learning Services, Phillip Barron. Watching students share their learning through song, dance, language, and cultural teachings was both inspiring and moving.

What stood out most was the intergenerational sharing of knowledge. Elders, knowledge holders, educators, families, and students came together to ensure that language, culture, and protocols continue to be passed

on to future generations. These moments remind us that education extends far beyond the classroom. Learning happens through stories, songs, dances, relationships, and the guidance of those who carry cultural knowledge.

I want to acknowledge the tremendous effort of the staff, Indigenous Support Workers, community partners, and volunteers who dedicated countless hours to making these events possible. Your commitment creates meaningful opportunities for students to see themselves, their cultures, and their communities reflected in their learning.



Seeing students proudly participate, learn, and share their culture reinforces the importance of this work. These experiences strengthen identity, foster belonging, and build bridges between generations. They ensure that Indigenous languages, traditions, and protocols remain vibrant and strong for years to come.

On behalf of Coast Mountains School District Indigenous Education, thank you for welcoming us into your communities and for allowing us to be part of such meaningful celebrations. We leave with renewed appreciation, stronger relationships, and a deep respect for the work being done to honour and revitalize Indigenous cultures and languages.

Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Reflections on the First Annual Northern Chapter Indigenous Education Council Regional Conference



Donna Mortimer, Director of Instruction, Indigenous Education; Jericho Collison, IEC Chair (Kitselas); Freda Wright, Kitselas IEC Member; Wendy Wesley, Gitsegukla IEC Member;
Missing: Joe Samphere, Gitsegukla IEC Member

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to attend the First Annual Northern Chapter IEC Regional Conference held on the unceded territory of the Lheidli T'enneh in Prince George on May 21–22, 2026. This inaugural gathering brought together Indigenous Education Council representatives, educators, and partners from across Northern British Columbia to engage in meaningful dialogue, learning, and relationship building.

I was honoured to attend alongside four Indigenous Education Council representatives from Coast Mountains School District, including two representatives from Kitselas and two representatives from Gitsegukla. Their participation and perspectives

contributed greatly to the discussions and reflected a shared commitment to supporting Indigenous student success.

Throughout the conference, participants engaged in numerous learning opportunities focused on Indigenous education governance, legislation, land-based learning, Indigenous languages, and promising practices from across the region. These sessions provided valuable capacity-building experiences that will strengthen the work of our Indigenous Education Council and support informed decision-making moving forward.



One of the most meaningful aspects of the gathering was the opportunity to strengthen relationships with our local education partners from Kitselas and Gitsegukla. Learning together, sharing experiences, and



Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

discussing our collective goals helped deepen our partnerships and reinforced the importance of working collaboratively to support Indigenous learners, families, and communities.

As the first gathering of its kind, the conference created an important space for connection, collaboration, and collective learning. It highlighted the strength that comes from bringing together Indigenous Education Council representatives and educational leaders to share knowledge, build capacity, and support one another in advancing Indigenous education.

I am grateful to the Northern Chapter organizers, presenters, and participants for creating such a welcoming and engaging learning environment. I look forward to continuing to build upon the relationships established during this gathering and working alongside our IEC representatives and community partners to support Indigenous student success across our region.

T'oyaxsut 'nüün, I Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Mortimer".

Donna Mortimer



Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Indigenous Education 2025-2026

Year at a Glance

Throughout the 2025-2026 school year, Indigenous students across Coast Mountains School District engaged in meaningful learning experiences that strengthened culture, identity, belonging, wellness, and academic success. Through the dedication of Indigenous Support Workers, Elders, Knowledge Holders, Educators, Families, and Community Partners, students were provided with opportunities to learn both within and beyond the classroom.

Highlights from this year include:

- Cultural learning experiences led by Elders, Role Models, and Knowledge Keepers across the district
- Traditional arts and skills development including beading, drum making, regalia creation, formline design, cedar work, and traditional medicines
- Land-based and outdoor learning experiences focused on environmental stewardship, cultural knowledge, wellness, and connection to place
- Increased opportunities for student leadership, career exploration, and future pathways planning
- Strengthened partnerships with Indigenous communities, Nations, organizations, and families
- Expanded opportunities for students to celebrate and express their cultural identities through photoshoots, cultural gatherings, performances, and community events
- Support for language learning and cultural revitalization through classroom activities, immersion experiences, and community partnerships
- Student participation in regional and provincial experiences that fostered confidence, resilience, teamwork, and personal growth

Together, these experiences have helped create learning environments where Indigenous students feel valued, supported, connected, and proud of who they are. The stories featured throughout this report reflect the strength of Indigenous education across our district and the positive impact of relationship-based, culturally responsive learning.

New Hazelton Elementary School Celebrates Community Through All-Clans Feast

At the end of May, New Hazelton Elementary School welcomed nearly 200 students, families, staff, and community members for its annual All-Clans Feast. Rooted in the values of respect, belonging, gratitude, and relationship, the gathering provided students with meaningful opportunities to experience and participate in Gitxsan cultural protocols while celebrating the strength of community.

The feast was organized by Gitxsan Language and Culture Teacher Lynzee Nyce, with support from Indigenous Support Workers Andrea McRae and Ashtan Burns. Students proudly shared a welcome in Gitxsanimx, demonstrating the importance of language revitalization and cultural continuity. Intermediate students also took on leadership roles by serving guests seated at clan tables, helping strengthen their understanding of kinship, identity, and community responsibilities.

A highlight of the day was a performance by Kindergarten students who had spent the year learning drumming, dancing, and singing alongside the Gitanmaax Language Nest. Their confidence and pride reflected the power of introducing cultural learning at an early age and nurturing it through strong community partnerships.

The event also demonstrated the generosity of the school community. Through a Gweeya collection, more than \$1,700 was raised in support of the Wrinch Memorial Hospital Long-Term Care Unit, reflecting the values of caring for Elders and giving back to the community.

- Contributed by Taylor Murrell, Vice Principal



The All-Clans Feast was more than a celebration—it was a powerful expression of language, culture, identity, and belonging. Through shared food, stories, songs, and traditions, students experienced first hand the importance of community connections and Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Caledonia Secondary School – Celebrating Identity Through the Annual Indigenous Photoshoot



"Honouring Our Graduating Indigenous Students"

Caledonia Secondary School recently hosted its annual Indigenous student photoshoot, providing students with an opportunity to celebrate their culture, identity, and achievements in a meaningful and memorable way.

With more than 45 students signing up to participate, the photoshoot highlighted the pride students have in their cultural identities and the strong sense of belonging fostered within the school community. Students were invited to wear regalia,

ribbon skirts, beaded items, and other meaningful cultural pieces that reflected their individual journeys, families, and Nations.



This year, special recognition is given to the graduating Grade 12 students who participated in the photoshoot as they prepare to move on to the next stage of their educational and career pathways. The event provided an opportunity to honour their accomplishments while celebrating the strength, resilience, and contributions of Indigenous youth.

Indigenous Education Report

June 2026



The annual photoshoot continues to be a powerful way for students to see themselves reflected and celebrated while creating lasting memories that recognize both their achievements and their cultural connections. Through events such as these, students are encouraged to take pride in who they are and the unique gifts they bring to their school and community.



- Contributed by Stephanie Louie, ISW

Parkside Secondary School – Building Skills, Confidence, and Future Pathways



Parkside Secondary School continues to create meaningful opportunities for students to achieve personal goals, explore career pathways, develop practical life skills, and strengthen connections to culture and community. Through individualized support and hands-on learning experiences, students are building confidence and preparing for success beyond graduation.



This year, Parkside celebrated the accomplishments of graduating students Matthew Greycloud and Kai Mercer Bright, who are pursuing careers in the fire service. Through career exploration opportunities and visits to the Thornhill Fire Department training facilities, students gained firsthand experience with firefighter training, equipment, and emergency response services. These experiences helped students connect their interests with future employment opportunities and develop a clear pathway toward their chosen careers.

Supporting student independence has also remained a key focus. More than ten senior students were supported in obtaining their



learner's licences this year. Students who successfully earned their "L" were provided with professional driving lessons, helping them build the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed for safe and responsible driving. Staff also worked closely with students to obtain the identification required to access licensing and other important services, reducing barriers and supporting future success.



Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Students also developed practical life skills through hands-on projects focused on sewing, clothing repair, and traditional crafting. Sisters Jazmine and Amber learned sewing techniques while creating traditional medicine bags, building patience, problem-solving skills, and self-sufficiency through meaningful project-based learning.



Cultural learning remained an important part of student engagement at Parkside. Student Bree completed a moccasin-making project that integrated Indigenous cultural knowledge, artistic expression, and academic learning. Through the design and creation process, Bree earned credit in Art, English, and Social Studies, demonstrating how experiential and culturally connected learning can support student achievement across multiple subject areas.



- Contributed by Alexis Stephens, ISW

The work taking place at Parkside reflects a commitment to meeting students where they are and supporting their individual strengths, interests, and goals. Whether pursuing career training, earning a driver's licence, developing practical life skills, or engaging in cultural learning, students are gaining the confidence, knowledge, and experiences needed to move forward successfully into the next stage of their lives.

Nechako Elementary School – Beading Connections and Gratitude



Students in two Grade 6 classes at Nechako Elementary School have been participating in a meaningful beading project led by **Indigenous Support Workers Angie Desrosiers and Lauren Alex**. Beginning in late April, students have gathered weekly during their group sessions to learn beading techniques while creating personalized lanyards.

As students worked on their projects, they developed patience, focus, creativity, and fine motor skills while engaging in a hands-on activity that encouraged reflection and connection. Each lanyard is being created as a special gift for a staff member who has had a positive impact on the students' time at Nechako Elementary.

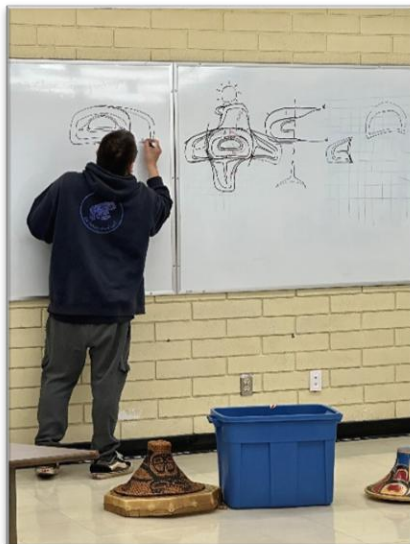
Prior to Grade 6 Commencement, students will present their completed lanyards as a gesture of appreciation and gratitude, recognizing the relationships and support that have helped them throughout their elementary school years. The project has provided an opportunity for students to celebrate the people who have encouraged, guided, and inspired them while creating a meaningful keepsake that reflects both learning and connection.

- Contributed by Lauren Alex, ISW



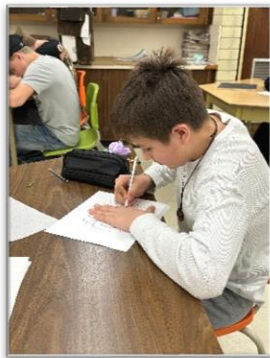
Through this activity, students are strengthening important skills while learning the value of gratitude, respect, and community as they prepare for their transition to secondary school.

Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School– Exploring Northwest Coast Formline Art



Students in an Art 9–12 class at Haisla Secondary School participated in a Northwest Coast formline art workshop led by a **Haisla Role Model Dustin Gaucher**. Through this hands-on learning experience, students were introduced to the foundational elements of formline design, including ovoid's, U-shapes, and S-shapes, while learning about the cultural significance and storytelling traditions reflected in Northwest Coast Indigenous art.

Students explored the creative process behind traditional and contemporary Indigenous design, developing artistic skills while gaining a deeper appreciation for the history, meaning, and cultural importance of formline art. The workshop encouraged creativity, focus, and cultural understanding as students applied their learning to their own artwork.



-Contributed by Nigel Martyres, ISW

Through experiences such as these, students are building connections to Indigenous ways of knowing while celebrating the rich artistic traditions of the Northwest Coast.

Kitwanga Elementary School – Traditional Regalia Making

Students at Kitwanga Elementary School worked alongside **Role Models Chelsea Watts and Vina Johnson** to create traditional vests that would be worn during cultural performances and activities. Over several days, students learned how to trace, cut, pin, and sew while gaining a deeper understanding of the time, skill, and care involved in creating traditional regalia.

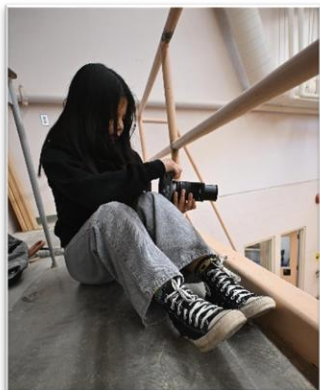


A highlight of the project was seeing students wear their completed vests during Cultural Days at Hazelton Secondary School. The experience strengthened students' sense of identity, belonging, and pride while providing meaningful opportunities to connect with culture through traditional teachings and creative expression. Students also gained a greater appreciation for the knowledge, effort, and craftsmanship involved in creating regalia and the important role it plays within community and cultural celebrations.

-Contributed by Darlne Williams, ISW

Through hands-on learning, students developed sewing skills, patience, and confidence while working closely with the role models. As the project progressed, students became increasingly proud of their accomplishments and demonstrated respect for both the process and the cultural significance of the regalia they were creating.

Hazelton Secondary School – Media Arts and Photography

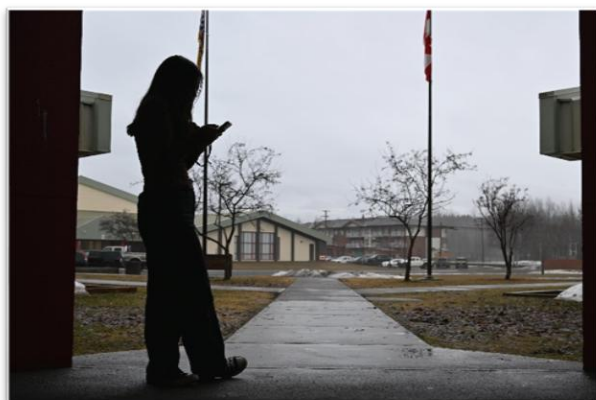


Students at Hazelton Secondary School have been expanding their creative and technical skills through Media Arts and Photography using new professional-grade cameras and lenses purchased through project funding.

Throughout the year, students participated in hands-on workshops, guided photo walks, and classroom-based photography projects that explored composition, lighting, perspective, and visual storytelling. Using DSLR and mirrorless cameras equipped with a variety of lenses, students learned how to adjust camera settings such as aperture, shutter speed, and ISO to capture high-quality images in different environments and lighting conditions.

As students became more familiar with the equipment, they demonstrated growing confidence and independence in their work. The project provided opportunities for students to develop both technical photography skills and creative expression through student-led photo projects, collaborative shoots, and curated displays of their work.

A highlight of the program was seeing students take pride in producing professional-quality images while discovering new ways to share stories and perspectives through photography. Many students reported feeling more engaged and invested in their learning, with one student reflecting that using a professional camera helped them “see the world differently,” while another shared that the experience inspired a new passion for photography and visual storytelling.



- Contributed by Richard Pesik, Educator

Through this project, students strengthened creativity, confidence, critical thinking, and collaboration skills while gaining valuable experience with industry-standard equipment and digital media practices.

Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Hazelton Secondary School – Expanding Outdoor Learning Through Canoeing



Through the support of 1.31 funding, Hazelton Secondary School has expanded opportunities for students and staff to participate in outdoor and experiential learning through the purchase of a fleet of canoes and related safety equipment.

Planning for the project began following the funding approval in late 2025, with time dedicated to sourcing equipment and building staff capacity. In October, educators participated in canoe safety certification training at Ross Lake with Raven Rescue, developing the knowledge and skills needed to safely facilitate water-based learning experiences for students.

The canoes were first used with a Grade 8 Outdoor Education class, where students spent time on Ross Lake learning paddling techniques, water safety, teamwork, and outdoor skills. Youth on Water, through the Skeena Watershed Conservation Coalition, joined the learning experience and provided instruction, activities, and games that helped students build confidence and strengthen their connection to local waterways.



In May, Hazelton Secondary staff participated in an additional professional development session focused on safety procedures, canoe handling, transportation, and curriculum connections to support future programming. These learning opportunities have helped build confidence among staff while creating new possibilities for outdoor education across multiple grade levels.

The canoe program continues to grow and will support upcoming field experiences with Earth Science 11, Outdoor Education 11–12, Leadership students, and students from Ms. Reagan's class, and all Grade 8 students. Youth on Water will continue partnering with several of these learning experiences, helping students connect environmental stewardship, recreation, and place-based learning.

The funding was used to purchase eight Clipper canoes, a canoe trailer, paddles, personal flotation devices, whistles, throw bags, safety rope, and other equipment required for safe canoeing activities.

- Contributed by Ryan Samson, Educator

Through these experiences, students are developing water safety skills, teamwork, leadership, confidence, and a deeper appreciation for the local environment. The canoe program has created lasting opportunities for outdoor, land- and water-based learning that will continue to benefit students for years to come.

Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Hazelton Secondary School – Nisga’a On-the-Land Camping Experience



Students from Hazelton Secondary School recently participated in the Nisga’a On-the-Land overnight camping trip, a hands-on learning experience that fostered connection to land, culture, wellness, and community.

Throughout the trip, students engaged in hiking, camping, outdoor living skills, and team-building activities while exploring the natural environment of the Nisga’a territory. Learning on the land

provided opportunities for students to develop confidence, resilience, and independence while strengthening relationships with peers and staff outside of the traditional classroom setting. As part of the experience, students also visited the Nisga’a Museum, where they learned about Nisga’a history, culture, and governance through exhibits featuring traditional artifacts, carvings, and regalia. Students explored the significance of totem poles and cultural belongings that have been repatriated to the Nisga’a Nation, gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving and reclaiming cultural heritage. The visit provided meaningful opportunities to learn about the stories, teachings, and histories carried within these important cultural treasures.



The experience encouraged students to deepen their understanding of land stewardship, environmental responsibility, and the connection between culture, wellness, and the natural world. Through shared experiences, reflection, and cultural learning, students gained a greater appreciation for the knowledge, resilience, and traditions of the Nisga’a Nation.

- Contributed by Ryan McCann, Vice Principal

For many students, the trip was a meaningful opportunity to step outside their comfort zones, build new skills, and strengthen their sense of belonging and connection. Experiences such as these continue to support student well-being while creating lasting memories and fostering a deeper respect for the lands, histories, and communities that surround them.

Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Hazelton Secondary School – Drama Students Shine at National Theatre Festival



Hazelton Secondary School – Drama Students Shine at National Theatre Festival

Hazelton Secondary School Drama students recently travelled to Vancouver to present their original production, *Stick to the Script*, at the Vancouver STAR Theatre Festival, a national event that brought together more than 30 middle and secondary school drama programs from across Canada.

Throughout the five-day experience, students

participated in workshops focused on acting, improvisation, voice, musical theatre, and technical theatre. They also performed at UBC's Freddy Wood Theatre, where they received professional feedback and adjudication from theatre artist Noah Drew. Preparing and presenting a full production on a larger stage challenged students to work collaboratively, adapt to new environments, and support one another as an ensemble. Students also had the opportunity to visit the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, where they explored exhibits featuring Indigenous and international artifacts, including displays connected to Gitksan culture and history. The visit encouraged reflection on cultural preservation, storytelling, and the importance of Indigenous knowledge.



The experience fostered significant growth in student confidence, collaboration, independence, and leadership. Through travel, performance, and cultural learning, students developed valuable skills while creating lasting memories and meaningful connections with peers from across Canada.

- Contributed by Ryan McCann, Vice Principal

To extend the impact of the project, a short documentary is being developed in partnership with filmmaker Farhan Umeldaly of VoVo Productions to capture student learning and celebrate the opportunities made possible through the support of the 1.31 Enhancement Proposal Funding.

Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Hazelton Secondary School – Elder In-Residence Program Year-End Reflection

The Elder In-Residence Program at Hazelton Secondary School has played an important role in strengthening connections between students, families, culture, and community throughout the school year. Through mentorship, storytelling, cultural teachings, and relationship-building, Elders have created meaningful learning opportunities that extend beyond the classroom and support student well-being and success.

Working closely alongside Indigenous Support Workers, Elders have helped guide cultural programming and supported students through a variety of hands-on learning experiences. Students participated in activities such as drum-making, traditional arts, medicine teachings, and cultural projects that fostered pride, engagement, and connection to Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Elders also contributed directly to classroom learning by sharing knowledge about Indigenous governance, Gitxsan Ayookw (law), traditional protocols, territorial boundaries, traditional medicines, and lived experiences. These teachings provided students with authentic opportunities to learn from local knowledge holders while connecting curriculum to community history and culture.

A particularly meaningful outcome of the program has been supporting students in learning about their family histories, lineages, and cultural roots. For many students, these conversations have strengthened their sense of identity, belonging, and connection to community. The program has also provided a welcoming and culturally affirming space where students, particularly those requiring additional support, have been able to build positive relationships with trusted adults and community members.

The impact of the program has extended beyond students. Relationships between families, school staff, and Elders have continued to grow through ongoing communication and shared support for student success. Elders have also valued the opportunity to learn from one another, share knowledge, and strengthen relationships across communities.

A highlight of the year will be the participation of the Elder team in Hazelton Secondary School's Graduation Ceremony, where they will deliver a speech to graduates, recognizing the importance of culture, community, and lifelong learning.

- Contributed by Ryan McCann, Vice Principal

Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Hazelton Secondary School – 2nd Annual Cultural Day



Hazelton Secondary School's Indigenous Support Team was proud to plan and host the HSS 2nd Annual Cultural Day on June 3, 2026. The goal of this event is to bring together learners, families, and community members to celebrate Culture. Hazelton Secondary School partnered with the Office of Gitanmaax, Hagwilget Band and Wila Dildil'sdi'm, which is the family services department of Gitanmaax Band. The 2nd Annual Cultural Day was a huge success with visitors of all ages from surrounding First Nations communities and the Hazelton's.



The day started with our MCs, a Knowledge Keeper from Gitanmaax Band and an HSS Elder in-Residence welcoming guests and housekeeping. Sim'oogit Nikateen welcomed guests to the Territory, which was followed by a welcome to the Hazelton Secondary School by both the Superintendent, Tracey MacMillan and Donna Mortimer, Director of Instruction, Indigenous Education Department.

The Gitxsan Territory is made up of 6 First Nation Communities: Gweets (Western) and Gigeenix (Eastern). The dance groups include two groups from elementary schools, one from early years program and a group of adults, teens, children and toddlers. The groups include Wo'umxhl Simalgyet School (Gweets), Kitwanga Elementary School (Gweets), K'san Performing Arts (Gigeenix) and the Early Years group included Gitanmaax Nursery, Language Nest and Majagaleehl Gali Aks Elementary School's K/1 class (Gigeenix). The K/1 class also shared on mic the Gitxsan Introduction.



Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

The Song & Dance portion also encouraged participation from all attendees, including the HSS Principals, Superintendent Tracey MacMillan, Director of Indigenous Education Director Donna Mortimer, as well as Elders, Family members, HSS staff and students.

HSS Indigenous Support Workers put a call out for vendors, organizations and knowledge keepers in March/April, and 28 people/small businesses signed up. All tables were set up in the gymnasium, cafeteria, and hallway. Some vendors sold food, drinks, jewelry and apparel (traditional and contemporary).



Our knowledge keepers shared information on traditional art, tanning, cedar weaving, feast systems as well as set up a table on hunting, trapping and Territory protocols. We also had organizations set up information tables for Wila Dildil'sdi'm (Family Services), Youth on Water, Women on Water, Fire Fighter Recruiters, and Fire Keepers. All were well attended and shared contact info to further the conversations.

As for food, the planning committee organized with HSS Foods teacher and cafeteria staff to

cook 6 pots of soup and hired local bakers to make 400 pieces of fried bread. Alongside the food vendors in the cafeteria, Tony's Takeaway food truck and the Bulkley Scoop ice cream truck were invited to set up in the parking lot. The office of Gitanmaax also provided, free of charge, the Bouncy castles and staff to supervise children jumping and having the best time ever.

To encourage attendance, the Indigenous Support Team provided a professional photographer, Sons Photography who set up a photobooth. The pictures are available on his Facebook page; he had 75 visits, between 10-2pm. The Office of Gitanmaax also provided a professional photographer, Beth Larson, to take photos throughout the event and whose pictures are also available for download on her Facebook page. The planning committee also provided, free of charge, someone to braid hair. Kira Jack provided service to people of all ages, and her booth was busy all day.



Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Hazelton Secondary School could not be the success it was, without the help of many people...

Thank you to the Office of Gitanmaax – Education Coordinator Pansy Wright-Simms, who provided guidance, bouncy castles, staff, the main door prize of Airpods and contact information for Song & dance groups.

Thank you to K'san O&M staff for setting up the tent, inflatables, and providing 20 extra tables.

Thank you to Gitanmaax Office bus drivers for providing transportation to the local elementary schools and Early Years program.

Thank you to Hagwilget Band for providing \$500 worth of gift cards, which was used for main door prizes.



Thank you to Wila Dilsiltsdi'm for providing gift bags of cups, as well as provide staff to help set up and clean up.

The school groups that assisted us, including Student Leadership, Drama Club, Outdoor Ed class, Foods class, cafeteria staff, Operations & Maintenance staff, Administration staff, and all the teachers who brought their classes to join in the festivities. A special thank you to teacher Carol Bob who handed out fried bread, water and sat with Elders. Thank you also to Mr. Frazer who had his class set up the tables and chairs the day before. Thank you to the HSS Photography class for taking pictures and for taking videos. Thank you to Brad, for setting up the Mic for our MCs.

And finally, thank you to the Indigenous Education Council for approving our 1.31 proposals. The 2nd Annual Cultural Days' attendance doubled from last year's event, and there were more pictures posted on social media. The HSS Indigenous Support Worker Team are already thinking of ways to enhance the HSS 3rd Annual Cultural Day in 2027.



"Beautiful to see the community, children and youth come together to celebrate culture, traditional songs and dance. Very uplifting and powerful to see the majagalee being reared in the language and learning this in their respective education facilities. Brought tears to my eyes throughout the day witnessing everything evolve. Hands up to the Indigenous Support Worker team at HSS for coordinating this event. Thank you, Grace Williams, Chate Simms, Adriana Jackson, Alberta Milton, Alisha Wilson, & Andrea Jagoda. Hamiyya ni'ii losim 🧡🙏 such gratitude in my heart to the dance groups for their participation, vendors, knowledge keepers and community for your support"

- Pansy Wright-Simms

- Contributed by Grace Williams, ISW

Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Suwilaawks Community School – Land-Based Learning at Lakelse Lake

Grade 6 students from Suwilaawks Community School recently enjoyed a memorable day of land-based learning at Lakelse Lake. Surrounded by mountains, water, forests, and sunshine, students had the opportunity to learn outside the classroom while strengthening their connections to the land, to community, and to one another.

Throughout the day, students learned from local role models, explored the natural environment, and participated in Indigenous learning activities that encouraged curiosity, reflection, and appreciation for the land. Through shared experiences, stories, laughter, and time spent outdoors, students developed a deeper understanding of the importance of relationships, stewardship, and learning from the world around them.

The experience provided meaningful opportunities for students to build confidence, strengthen friendships, and engage in learning through Indigenous perspectives and place-based experiences. We are incredibly proud of our Grade 6 students for the respect, kindness, curiosity, and enthusiasm they demonstrated throughout the day.

Land-based learning experiences such as this help foster a sense of belonging while encouraging students to develop a lifelong connection to the lands and communities that support them.

- Contributed by Pam Kawinsky, Principal



Photo credit: Marissa Harris, ISW

Suwilaawks Community School – Mini Feast Fridays

Mini Feast Fridays at Suwilaawks

Learning feasting protocols through setting up, preparing, serving, and honouring



Gathering Together



Sharing Feasting Protocols



Grade 6 Leadership

Our Grade 6 role models are taking the lead — helping younger students learn, serve, and honour together.

 Suwilaawks Community School

- Contributed by Pam Kawinsky, Principal

Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

1.31 Indigenous Targeted Funded Projects 2025-2026

The following projects were reviewed and approved by the Indigenous Education Council & Indigenous Education Department to support culturally responsive programming, student wellness, land-based learning, language revitalization, and relationship building across the district.

Hazelton Secondary School:	
- Indigenous Plants - Elder In Residence - Sparkle Project Hygiene	- STAR Drama Trip - Indigenous Plants
Cassie Hall Elementary:	
- Laxgalts'ap Trip to explore the Nisga'a Territory/Outdoor Education - Kitimat Trip to Explore the Haisla Nation and Hatchery Tour/Outdoor Education - Swimming- Water Safety and Cultural Connections - Salmon Journey - Oolichan Journey- Skeena River	- Fried Bread Friday - Transport - Visiting Indigenous Art in the community - Indigenous Supports - Cedar Signs
Skeena Middle School:	
- Connections Group - Hoobiye Dance Group	- Moccasin Making - Indigenous Day Feast
Kitwanga Elementary:	
- Orange Shirt Project - Cultural Connections Gitanyow Student Teaching Feast	Traditional Regalia Vests
Suwilaawks Community School:	
- Outdoor Learning, Plants and Trees - Hoobiye and Leadership	- Indigenous Supports - Gwax Ts'eliksit Salmon Camp
New Hazelton Elementary:	
- Primary Gitxsan Resources - Intermediate Gitxsan Resources	- Formline Impressions - Gitxsan Artistry
Parkside Secondary:	
Tumpline Weaving	Medicine Bags and Traditional Plant walk
Caledonia Secondary:	
- Connections Programming-Dudes and Girls groups - Nisga'a Hot Springs and Museum - Indigenous Supports	- Oolichan Fishing - Greenhouse Project Indigenous Planting - Salmon Smoking and Preserving
NTETC:	
Crest design for projects	

Indigenous Education Report

June 2026

Elder & Knowledge Holder Role Model Program 2025-2026

Approved role model initiatives support cultural teachings, mentorship, and intergenerational learning across schools. These partnerships provided students with access to community knowledge, strengthened identity, and reinforced Indigenous ways of knowing as integral to learning.

School	Project	Knowledge Keeper/Elder
Caledonia	Cultural Identity, Intergenerational Trauma, Residential Schools Girls Group Facilitator Guys Group Facilitator Remembrance Day Novel Study Connection and Medicine Bags Form line Northwest Coast Art Beading Traditional Plants and Uses/Devils Club	• Billy Morrison • Lilian Bramley • Job Daniels • David Wells • Kimberly Godfrey • Erica Davis • Gladys Radek • Jolene Wesley
Hazelton Secondary	Visual and Oral storytelling English First Peoples 11 and 12 Truth and Reconciliation Speaker Remembrance Day Sciences & Biology	• Phillip Stewart • Mavis Banek • Archie McRae • Taylor Wale • Skyla Lattie
Suwilaawks	Local Artist, Clans and Crests Paintings Feasting Drumming	• Sabrina Williams • Jenine Klein • Christopher Peal
Cassie Hall	Monthly Drumming Sessions Remembrance Day Feasting Cedar Weaving	• Christopher Peal • Roxanne Woods • Anne McDames • Jenine Klein • Erica Davis
Majagaleehl Gali Aks	Language Immersion Elders/Knowledge Language Holders	• Shirley Lattie • Rosie Muldon
Thornhill Primary	Truth And Reconciliation Speaker Drumming Feasting Systems and protocol Story Telling and Cedar Mats	• Anne McDames • Jenine Klein
Kitwanga Elementary	Drum Making Rattle Making Traditional Vests Bent Wood box designs Gitksan Song and Dance	• Barry Sampare • Darryl Moore • Calvin Hyzims • Alvin Hyzims • Wendy Hyzims • Sharon Johnson • Vina Johnson • Tammy Courtney • Justine Mitchell
Skeena Middle School	Elder in class local culture and History, Social Studies Project. Remembrance Day	• Anne McDames • David Wells
Ecole Mountainview	Feasting systems and protocol	• Jenine Klein
Kitimat City High	Art and Drums	• Sheila Duncan
Uplands Elementary	Traditional Plants Identification and Knowledge	• Trish Paulson