

Indigenous Education Report November 2025

Gratitude and Acknowledgement

This report highlights the many events, projects, and learning experiences that took place across the district mid October-mid November. These initiatives reflect the dedication of our Indigenous Support Workers (ISWs), now a team of 40, whose work continues to uplift, guide, and inspire students every day. Their efforts, together with the meaningful contributions of Culture and Language teachers, administrators, Elders, Knowledge Holders, and community partners, bring Indigenous education to life in the classrooms, on the land, and throughout our school communities.

A Message from the Director of Instruction, Indigenous Education

Honouring Connection, Culture, and Community



It was a true honour to emcee the First Annual Indigenous Education Engagement Night on behalf of Caledonia Secondary School. The evening brought together students, families, Elders, educators, and community partners in a powerful celebration of connection,

culture, and collaboration. Guided by the theme *“Building Connections: Supporting Indigenous Learner Success,”* the event reminded us that education is not built in isolation; it grows through relationships, shared stories, and the collective strength of community.

In my remarks, I shared that Indigenous education has always been about more than lessons and textbooks; it is about identity,



IN THIS REPORT:

- Gratitude and Acknowledgment
- Message from Director of Indigenous Education
- Indigenous Student Enrollment and Demographics
- Indigenous Education Council update
- Kitimat City Learning on the Land
- Kitwanga Elementary School Drum Project
- HSS Filmmakers
- Caledonia Connections Caledonia
- Cultural Connections SMS
- Indigenous Perspectives in Remembrance Day Across the District
- Upcoming events
- 1.31 Enhancement Proposals and Role Model Requests and Approvals

Indigenous Education Report November 2025

belonging, and the connections we build with one another. When students see their culture, language, and values reflected in their learning, they know they matter. They begin to see themselves as capable learners and leaders. When culture and academics walk side by side, learning becomes alive, connecting the heart and the mind.

We witnessed this so clearly through the voices of our student speakers, whose stories of resilience and pride inspired everyone in attendance.

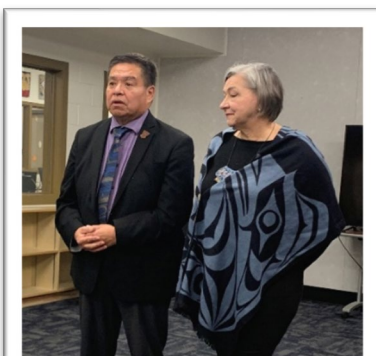


Director of Instruction, Indigenous Education, Donna Mortimer and Kitselas Chief Councillor, Glen Bennet

I extend heartfelt gratitude to the entire Caledonia team, our community partners, and the Kitselas and Kitsumkalum Nations for their contributions to this meaningful evening. Events like this reaffirm our shared commitment to ensuring Indigenous perspectives continue to guide and enrich education across our district. Together, we are building a circle of learning grounded in respect, belonging, and shared purpose, where every Indigenous learner knows with confidence: *“I matter. I belong here.”*



Director of Instruction, Indigenous Education, Donna Mortimer, and Vice Principal, Spencer Edwards



Kitselas Chief Councillor, Glen Bennet and Kitsumkalum Education Coordinator, Marian Kotowich-Laval

Indigenous Education Report November 2025

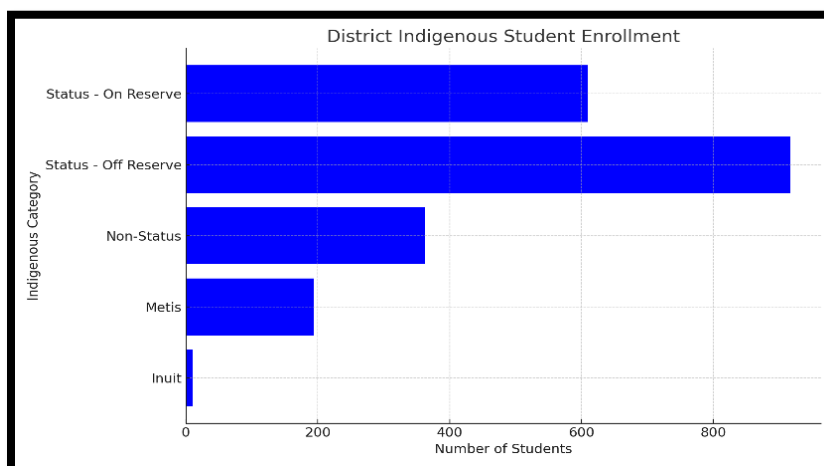
CMSD 82 Indigenous Student Enrollment and Demographics

Demonstrating a strong commitment to enhancing educational experiences for Indigenous students is essential for fostering trust, accountability, and meaningful progress within Coast Mountain School District. Regularly reporting on insights related to Indigenous student enrollment, demographics, and achievement helps ensure that decisions are informed by accurate, transparent data and that supports are aligned with the unique needs of learners and their communities. By monitoring trends and identifying both strengths and gaps, the district can better allocate resources, improve culturally responsive programming, and uphold its commitments outlined in Local Education Agreements and the First Peoples Principles of Learning. This ongoing analysis not only strengthens partnerships with Indigenous Nations but also reinforces the district's responsibility to create equitable, culturally grounded learning environments where every Indigenous student can thrive.

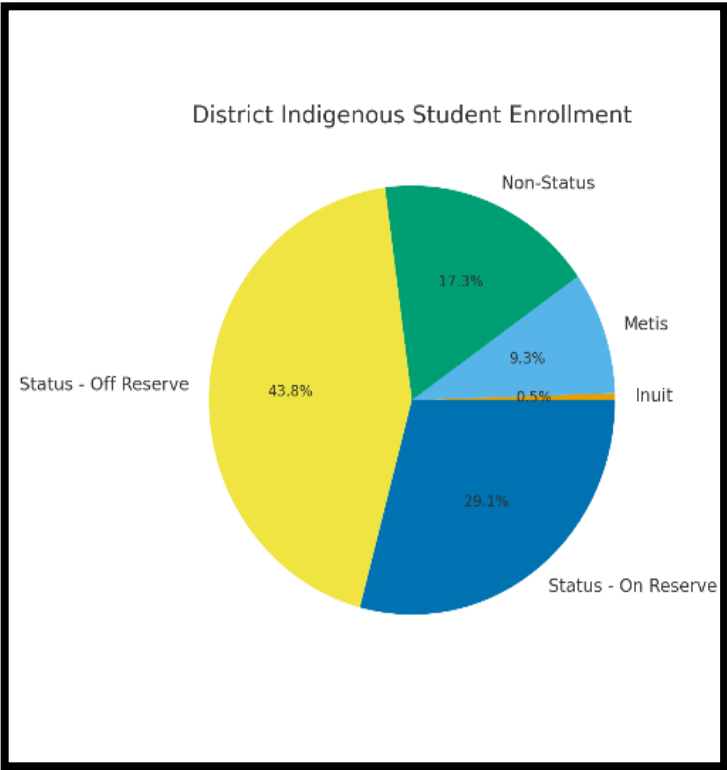
Status of On Reserve Students (Band of Residence)

Band Name	Count	Band Name	Count
GITANMAAX	114	GITSEGUKLA	42
GITWANGAK	88	KITSUMKALUM	35
KITSELAS	87	HAGWILGET	31
KISPIOX	67	GLEN VOWELL	30
HAISLA (KITAMAAT)	57	Unspecified:	03
GITANYOW (KITWANCOOL)	56	Total:	610

Total CMSD82 Indigenous Student Enrollment and Demographic



Indigenous Education Report November 2025



The district’s enrollment data shows a strong and diverse Indigenous presence, with Indigenous students making up a significant portion of the overall student population. The largest groups are Status First Nations students living off reserve and on reserve, together representing more than half of all Indigenous learners. Non-Status and Métis students also contribute substantially to the total, demonstrating the wide range of Indigenous identities reflected across the district. Even smaller groups, such as Inuit students, are consistently represented. This broad distribution shows that Indigenous learners are deeply woven into every school community, highlighting the importance of culturally grounded programs, Nation partnerships, and ongoing support for Indigenous success. The data reflects not only strong representation but also the district’s responsibility to honour, uplift, and respond meaningfully to the needs of Indigenous students and families.

Indigenous Education Report November 2025

Indigenous Education Council Update

Coast Mountains School District is proud to celebrate the inaugural meeting of the Indigenous Education Council (IEC), an important milestone in our continued dedication to Indigenous education and student success.

The newly formed IEC brings together representatives from the Gitxsan, Haisla, Nisga'a, and Ts'msyen Nations, alongside district leadership, to strengthen collaboration and help shape educational priorities grounded in local knowledge, language, culture, and community.



This first gathering marks the beginning of a meaningful new chapter — one built on partnership, respect, and a shared commitment to equitable learning opportunities for all Indigenous learners across our district. We are deeply grateful to each member of the Council for sharing their voices, wisdom, and guidance. Their experience and connection to the community will continue to inform our work in creating

learning environments that honour Indigenous knowledge, culture, and perspectives.

On November 3rd, the Indigenous Education Council held its annual elections for leadership positions. We are pleased to share that Jericho Collison, representing the Kitselas Nation, was elected Chair, and Kimberly Robinson, representing the Haisla Nation, was elected Vice-Chair.

The district extends heartfelt appreciation to all council members for their ongoing dedication, collaboration, and advocacy for Indigenous learners, and to the outgoing leadership for their contributions and guidance throughout the past school years. Together, the Council's collective efforts strengthen relationships with local Nations and help ensure that all students feel a sense of belonging, pride, and connection in their educational journey.

Introducing IEC Leadership

Jericho Collison, Chair is an experienced educator and dedicated community leader with a deep commitment to fostering growth and empowerment within both the classroom and the broader community. With 19 years of experience as a teacher, Jericho has cultivated a strong passion for education, shaping the lives of students with a focus on inclusion, cultural awareness, and respect for diverse perspectives.

In addition to her work in education, Jericho has served as a respected member of the Kitselas First Nation Council for three terms, where she has been a vocal advocate for the rights and well-being of her people. Her leadership has helped guide the development of initiatives aimed at preserving cultural heritage, enhancing education, and addressing community needs.

Jericho's work is grounded in a deep understanding of the importance of community and education, as well as a steadfast commitment to creating positive, lasting change. Whether in the classroom or through her council service, Jericho strives to build a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

Kimberly Robinson, Vice Chair is a member of the Haisla Nation, currently serving as Deputy Chief Councilor for the Haisla Nation Council.

Through years of experience, Kimberly brings a wealth of leadership, and strategic insight; gained through diverse roles with Coast Mountain School District 82, Haisla Nation, and Yaqwa Development Corporation. She is committed to fostering meaningful collaboration and building strong relationships. As an advocate for education, Kimberly prioritizes the academic success of students and the recognition of their own unique cultural strengths. As we move forward, she sees the importance of having each Nation contribute their own values to the Indigenous Education Council platform, ensuring that learning environments foster pride, belonging and respect among learners.

Indigenous Education Report November 2025

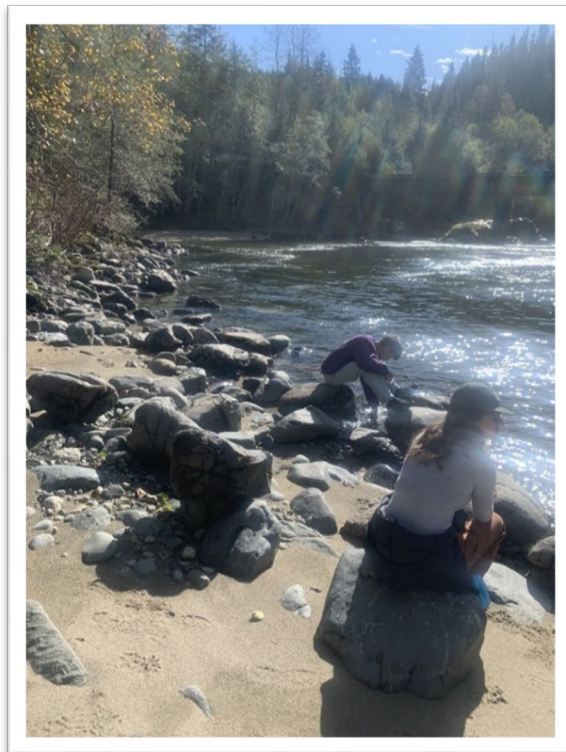
Indigenous Education Council Representatives

Community/Band Council	Representative
Anspayaxw Band (Kispiox)	Sandra Wesley-Olson, Anspayaxw Education Society Administrator Kolin Sutherland-Wilson
Gitwangak Band	Vacant
Gitanmaax Band	Pansy Wright-Simms, Director of Education Jaclyn Whitecotton, Elected Councillor Community Rep
Hagwilget Village	Vacant
Gitanyow Band	Ben Russell, Elected Councillor Lesley McLean, Elected Councillor Jason Derrick, Elected Councillor (Alternate)
Gitsegukla First Nation	Joe Sampare, Education Coordinator Wendy Wesley, Elected Councillor Julia Walker, Elected Councillor (Alternate)
Kitselas First Nation	Jericho Collison, Councillor Kitselas Nation Gerald Nyce, Councillor Kitselas Nation
Kitsumkalum Band	Marian Kotowich-Laval, Education Coordinator Cynthia Bohn, Elected Councillor Kitsumkalum
Haisla Nation	Kimberly Robinson, Elected Deputy Chief Councillor, Haisla Nation Broderick Nyce, Councillor Haisla Nation Kailee Gardiner, Executive Director, Community Services (Alternate)
Nisga'a Lisims Government	Nikki Villeneuve, Gitlaxdax Representative Karen Bright, Gitlaxdax Representative
Sik-E-Dakh (Glen Vowell)	Brandon Campbell, Elected Councillor Leslie Sebastian, Education Coordinator Kathleen Combs, Education Coordinator (Alternate)

Kitimat City High Learning on the Land

Here is a photo capturing one of the beautiful fall days on the Hirsch Creek Trails. The image reflects a meaningful moment between teacher and learner as they take in the breathtaking beauty of nature together. Along the walk, they observed cedar trees and devil's club, engaging in thoughtful discussion about traditional harvesting practices and the importance of respecting and caring for our natural surroundings. This learning experience highlights the value of land-based education and the deep connections that form when students and educators spend time on the land.

Submitted by Debbie Dilg, Indigenous Support Worker



Kitwanga Elementary School Drums

Language and Culture – Grade 2/3/4 Drum Project with Elder Knowledge Holder Barry Sampare

Students in the Grade 2/3/4 class participated in a hands-on Language and Culture project focused on drumming and traditional teachings. Guided by their teacher and supported through Indigenous Education, students explored the cultural significance of the drum and its role in connection, community, and expression.

The learning experience combined cultural understanding with creativity, as students engaged in making and learning about the importance of the drum in Indigenous traditions. These moments helped deepen students' appreciation for Indigenous languages, songs, and protocols that honour the drum's spirit and purpose.



Indigenous Education Report November 2025

Language and Culture – Kindergarten, Grade 1 & 2 Drum Project



Students in the Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 class took part in a Language and Culture drumming project, learning about the importance of the drum in Indigenous traditions and teachings. With guidance from their teacher and Indigenous Education staff, students explored the drum's role in community, communication, and ceremony. This hands-on experience allowed students to connect with culture through rhythm, song, and story, fostering a sense of respect and belonging. The photos highlight moments of learning, joy, and pride as students experienced the power and meaning of the drum.

Hazelton Secondary School Film Makers

Former HSS film students have been invited to share highlights from their film *The Passage* at Buckley Valley Christian School (BVCS) in Smithers during the school's Creativity Theme Day. Students will deliver 20-minute presentations to small groups, speaking about their creative process and the importance of consulting Elders when researching Gitxsan stories. Their presentation emphasizes the vital role of Elders as cultural knowledge keepers within Gitxsan culture.

Submitted by Lee Corneau [The Passage \[HSS Filmmakers\]](#)



Indigenous Education Report November 2025

Caledonia Connections – October Highlights

October was a meaningful month for the Caledonia Connections team as they continued to support student engagement, culture, and belonging in powerful ways. This fall, four new Connection Groups were launched — two Girls' Groups, a School Completion Girls' Group, and a Dudes Group. These groups offer safe and supportive spaces where students can connect, build confidence, and strengthen cultural identity through mentorship and shared experiences.

The school also introduced a Homework Club in collaboration with school counsellors. This targeted academic support provides learners with a welcoming place to receive guidance, build strong study habits, and feel confident in their learning.



Students engaged in rich cultural learning throughout October, including classroom discussions inspired by “The Paper Fence” by Mellissa Moses and participation in the Kitselas Totem Pole Raising, a powerful community event that deepened students’ understanding of culture, story, and local history. The team also hosted the First Annual Indigenous Education Engagement Night, bringing together families, staff, and community partners to celebrate collaboration and shared purpose.

Caledonia Connections is also pleased to welcome Sheena Turgeon to the team. Her experience and commitment to youth will further strengthen the school’s cultural programming and relationships with learners.

Looking Ahead

As the school moves into November, the team is preparing to support Indigenous elements within the school’s Remembrance Day ceremony, honouring Indigenous Veterans and their families through song, land acknowledgment, and student leadership. Ongoing programming — including Girls’, Dudes’, and Drum Groups, as well as support across various classrooms — will continue to provide meaningful cultural learning and connections for students. Caledonia remains deeply grateful for the partnerships and community spirit that make this work possible. Together, they are creating a school grounded in identity, culture, connection, and pride.

Contributed by Stephanie Louie, Indigenous Support Worker (ISW)

Indigenous Education Report November 2025

Cultural Connections – Skeena Middle School



This year, Skeena Middle School introduced a new Cultural Connections Group, led by Indigenous Support Worker Martha Woods. Meeting weekly, the group provides students with opportunities to explore traditional skills and creative expression through Indigenous arts.

In October, students created beaded necklaces and earrings that showcased both creativity and cultural pride. One student, Jade Neasloss, is pictured with her teacher, Ms. Schmidt, proudly sharing her beaded necklace.



These sessions foster meaningful conversations about tradition, respect, and identity, while helping students build confidence and strengthen relationships within the school community.

Submitted by Martha Woods, Indigenous Support Worker

Skeena Middle School Leadership

In their final Exploratory project, Grade 7 Leadership students designed and presented original board games, working collaboratively and demonstrating strong teamwork and leadership skills. Many groups chose to incorporate Indigenous elements—such as artwork, symbols, and storytelling—earning additional credit and showing thoughtful cultural connections. The project was a great example of creativity, collaboration, and respect for Indigenous perspectives.

Submitted by Max Bielavin, Educator



Indigenous Education Report November 2025

Majagaleehl Gali Aks – Gitxsan Immersion K–1 Update

The K–1 Gitxsan Immersion class has been engaged in rich, hands-on language learning this month, strengthening early literacy skills through culturally grounded activities. Students have been practicing their Gitxsan spelling list words — *smax* (bear), *ap* (bee), *hon* (fish), and *wis* (rain). As each new word is introduced, learners sound out each letter, practice pronunciation, and read the word in both Gitxsan and English before moving on to the next.

Under the guidance of Mrs. Lattie, students work carefully on correct spelling, printing on the lines, and using proper finger spacing. She emphasizes letter sounds and pronunciation to support accurate and confident Gitxsan language use.

Students also explored science through a playful hands-on activity: making cloud dough. The dough was then shaped into Gitxsan spelling words using laminated word mats. This activity supports tactile learning while helping students become familiar with seeing and recognizing their Gitxsan list words daily.



In addition, Mrs. Muldon continues supporting early literacy by helping students build their names using sticker activities that strengthen hand-eye coordination. Learners identify each letter in their names, sound them out, and practice using capital letters appropriately.

These engaging language and cultural activities help students build strong foundational skills while nurturing pride, confidence, and connection to the Gitxsan language.

Submitted by Angie Olson

Indigenous Education Report November 2025

Indigenous Perspectives in Remembrance Day Across the District

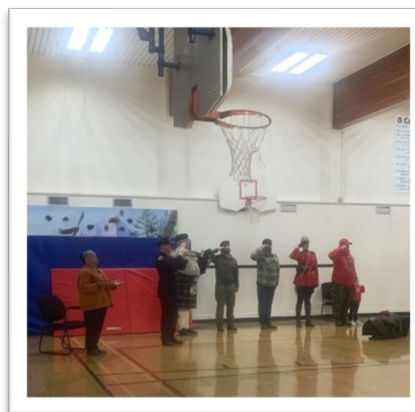
Across the district, schools engaged in meaningful learning, creative expression, and community-building to honour Remembrance Day and National Indigenous Veterans Day. Each school created space to recognize the contributions, sacrifices, and stories of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Veterans, ensuring students understand both the shared history and the unique experiences of Indigenous service members and their families.

Cassie Hall – Remembrance Day

Cassie Hall Elementary honoured Remembrance Day with a thoughtful and meaningful ceremony that recognized the courage, sacrifice, and resilience of those who have served, including Indigenous Veterans and their families. The event brought together students and staff in a moment of reflection and gratitude, creating an opportunity for learning and remembrance grounded in respect.

A special highlight of the day was the participation of Anne McDames, who shared in the ceremony and helped guide students in understanding the importance of honouring all who have served. The accompanying photos capture these touching moments of remembrance and community connection.

Through experiences like this, students are reminded of the importance of gratitude, peace, and the enduring strength of community and culture. *Submitted by Erika Barton*



Indigenous Education Report November 2025

Skeena Middle School Remembrance Day Ceremony



On Monday, November 10, Skeena Middle School held a deeply meaningful Remembrance Day Ceremony, led by the Grade 7, 8, and 9 French Immersion students under the guidance of Mme Carter and Ms. Klassen. The event reflected the care, respect, and leadership of the students and staff who worked together to honour those who have served.



The school was honoured to welcome several special guests, including the Mayor, members of the School Board, local Cadets, RCMP officers, firefighters, members of the Canadian Armed Forces, parents, and special guest and role model Mr. David Wells.

Mr. Wells shared thoughtful words about the importance of remembering, coming together as a community, and honouring the sacrifices made by

Veterans and their families. His message added a powerful and grounding presence to the ceremony.

Students spoke with clarity and confidence in both French and English, reading beautifully throughout the program. Emeline Hanna led the school in *O Canada* alongside the school band, and later performed *In Flanders Fields* during a video presentation, accompanied by Ava Snelling on piano. The ceremony was thoughtful, respectful, and exceptionally well executed — a testament to the dedication of the staff and the leadership, compassion, and maturity of the students at SMS. *Submitted by Tracey Carter*

Indigenous Education Report November 2025

Caledonia Secondary School Remembrance Day Acknowledgement

As part of this year's Remembrance Day observance, Caledonia Secondary School recognized the significance of two important days:

- National Indigenous Veterans Day on *November 8th*
- Remembrance Day on *November 11th*

In the spirit of truth and reconciliation, the school honoured all who served in the Canadian Armed Forces while acknowledging an important truth, that the experiences of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Veterans were often profoundly different, both during their service and upon returning home. By naming and recognizing this disparity, Caledonia affirms its commitment to reconciliation and to ensuring these stories and sacrifices are not forgotten. The ceremony was opened and grounded by Elder David Wells, who joined the school community and offered a warm and meaningful welcome. His presence set a tone of respect, remembrance, and unity, and was deeply appreciated by students, staff, and guests.



Caledonia Secondary also expressed sincere gratitude to the families of local Indigenous Veterans in attendance, recognizing the lasting contributions.

A special thank you was also extended to Kimberley Godfrey for teaching and sharing the Thank You Song, which added a meaningful and culturally grounded element to the ceremony.

Submitted by Toni Craig

Indigenous Education Report November 2025

Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School – Remembrance Day Display

The Indigenous Support Workers at Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School created a powerful and meaningful Remembrance Day bulletin board honouring Indigenous Veterans, with special thanks to ISW Rae for designing and setting up the display. Throughout recess and lunch, students stopped to look through the photos, names, and stories, proudly identifying the relatives and ancestors they are connected to — many of whom they had never met but feel deeply tied to through family and community memory.

This display not only honoured the contributions and sacrifices of Indigenous Veterans but also created a space for students to see themselves, their families, and their history reflected in the school environment. The quiet conversations and moments of recognition shared by students highlighted how important it is to celebrate these legacies and ensure they are remembered.

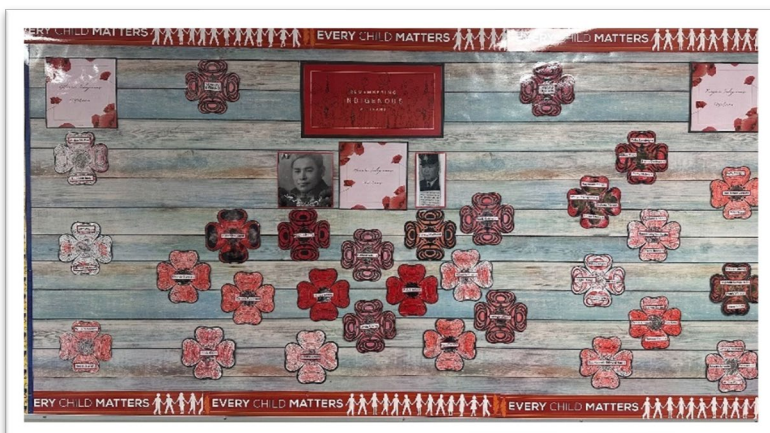


This meaningful contribution by the MEMSS Indigenous Education team supports connection, pride, and intergenerational learning within the school community.

Submitted by Nigel Martyres, Indigenous Support Worker

Nechako Elementary – Honouring Indigenous Veterans

Nechako Elementary students engaged in meaningful and creative projects leading up to Remembrance Day, guided by Indigenous Support Worker Lauren Alex. Small groups from various classes worked together to create a powerful bulletin board honouring Indigenous Veterans from three local Nations: the Haisla, Gitksan, and Nisga'a Nations.



With permission from Yasakw Designs, students selected and coloured Indigenous-themed poppy sheets in their own creative styles. These pieces were mounted on construction paper, and each poppy was paired with the name of an Indigenous Veteran from one of the three Nations. Names were gathered from community posts shared by the Haisla and Nisga'a Nations, and Gitksan names were contributed through a family connection. Once assembled, the artwork was laminated and displayed prominently for the school community to see and reflect upon.

Two additional photos feature a Grade 3 class that includes several Métis students — as well as a Métis teacher — who created two unique Remembrance Day wreaths. One wreath was made entirely with dot-art poppies, while the second used the Yasakw Designs poppies to honour Indigenous service members. These projects offered students meaningful ways to connect with culture, history, and remembrance while honouring the service and sacrifices of Indigenous Veterans from local Nations.

*Submitted by Lauren Alex,
Indigenous Support Worker*



Indigenous Education Report November 2025

1.31 Indigenous Targeted Funded Projects <i>Reviewed and Approved by the Inter-Tribal Education Committee & Indigenous Education Department 2025-2026</i>	
Hazelton Secondary School:	
• 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	
Skeena Middle School	
• Connections Group	
Kitwanga Elementary	
• Orange Shirt Project	
• Cultural Connections Gitanyow Student Teaching Feast	
Suwilaawks Community School	
• Outdoor Learning, Plants and Trees	
New Hazelton Elementary	
• Primary Gitxsan Resources	
• Intermediate Gitxsan Resources	
Parkside Secondary	
• Tumpline Weaving	

Indigenous Education Report November 2025

Elder/Knowledge Holder Role Model Program <i>Reviewed and Approved by the Inter-Tribal Education Committee & Indigenous Education Department 2025-2026</i>		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billy Morrison • Lilian Bramley • Job Daniels • David Wells • Kimberly Godfrey • Erica Davis
Hazelton Secondary	Visual and Oral storytelling English First Peoples 11 and 12 Truth and Reconciliation Speaker Remembrance Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phillip Stewart • Mavis Banek • Archie McRae
Suwilaawks	Local Artist, Clans and Crests Paintings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sabrina Williams
Cassie Hall	Monthly Drumming Sessions Remembrance Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christopher Peal • Roxanne Woods • Anne McDames
Majagaleehl Gali Aks	Language Immersion Elders/Knowledge Language Holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shirley Lattie • Rosie Muldon
Thornhill Primary	Truth And Reconciliation Speaker Drumming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne McDames
Kitwanga Elementary	Drum Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barry Sampare • Norman McLean
Skeena Middle School	Elder in class local culture and History, Social Studies Project. Remembrance Day Archaeologist Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne McDames • David Wells • Anne McDames
Ecole Mountainview	Feasting systems and protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jenine Klein
Kitimat City High	Art and Drums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheila Duncan