

Aboriginal Programs Newsletter

Gwayilelas Kwak'wala Camp

SD85 Aboriginal Programs and Services has partnered with Tsasata Cultural Group to offer four Kwak'wala camps this year for students in grades K-12. The goal of the Gwayilelas ('Our Ways') camp is to create opportunities for First Nations families, Elders, youth, and children to immerse in their languages and cultures through activities that facilitate the transmission of traditional knowledge and values while nurturing the relationship between youth, Elders, and the land. Learning a First Nations language requires learning First Nations Culture and learning First Nations culture requires using language.

The camps provide opportunities for community members (especially youth) to learn the language through language and cultural immersion, along with promoting pride and motivation. Gilakas'la to North Island Secondary and Alert Bay Elementary for being the first to host these camps and to facilitator Andrea Cranmer and our Kwakwaka'wakw Elders who have shared their wisdom to make these camps possible.



Gwayilelas Kwak'wala Camp

'Ma'wa'etlanx

April – time of moving into the Oolichan grounds

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our Language Arts programs, or the stories of food places and traditions, students' interests are peaked when they are able to relate to the subject matter via story. Due to the high impact of story and its' presence in every course, we are continually adding new additions to our story collections and will be showcasing them in the Learning Commons and various classrooms.

We would like to end with a quote from Thomas King, "The truth about stories is, that's all we are."



Port Hardy Secondary

PHSS students in the Shared Understandings class have been busy working with Marilyn Dawson creating button blankets and aprons. These blankets were used for the cultural celebration at PHSS on March 14th.



Eke Me-Xi Learning Centre

Recently Eke Me-Xi and Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School explored land literacy while connecting the two schools during a clam dig at Cluxewe. This important activity not only connected students with traditional land based activities, but has also provided a foundation for students to develop a connection to core competencies that will be used in transitions for success beyond school. Bringing together students, teachers, Elders, and community, this learning experience has helped build a foundation for learners to develop transferrable skills for success in all contexts.

AJ Elliott Elementary

As a school, we are trying to incorporate Aboriginal content in all curriculum areas and highlight the First Peoples Principles of Learning. Many learning opportunities have taken place since the last newsletter. Here are a few highlights:

- ▶ The students have finished their study of food gathering and have begun to study the potlatch.
- ▶ There have been discussions around the potlatch ban and mask repatriation, dances and regalia.
- ▶ All children in the school have been participating in mask making. We are looking forward to a visit from Vera Newman in April.
- ▶ K/1 students incorporate Aboriginal content in their everyday learning. Students recognize their progress when they recognize more words each day for the letter of the week. They enjoy doing arts and crafts that reflect on the local heritage of the place they live and they learn to care for the environment by tidying their work place, as well as helping to keep our outside play area neat and free of litter.



North Island Secondary

The power of story is evident throughout the new curriculum. At NISS, we have seen the positive impact on student engagement when students are immersed in a story in their class. Whether it is an oral traditional story about cedar, the *Gwa'ni* River in Science and Culture classes, the novels explored in



- ▶ The grade 2/3/4 class has been connecting the First Peoples Principles of Learning to their work around the Core Competencies.
- ▶ In the grade 5/6/7 room, successful Aboriginal entrepreneurs (including our First Nations leader) have been studied as the students focus on Entrepreneurship. Students also followed some of the First Nations athletes as they performed in the Olympics.
- ▶ The grade 7 students have begun work on their drums. They have prepared the hides and will soon be ready to start working on their designs.



Sunset Elementary

Students at SES have continued to deepen their understanding of First Nations peoples and culture. Our grade 3/4 class has been learning about residential school and was able to deepen their understanding with a more in-depth visit by Ms. Wilson.

Our grade 3 class has been comparing the Potlatch and the Pow Wow. They had a day-long celebration of Ojibwe culture which included students sharing what they have learned and culminated with a meal of corn, beans, and squash (the three sisters).

We are continuing to make our regalia and are expecting Mrs. Sharon Whonnock to be an ongoing integral part of this. We now have varied sized tunics and sashes sewn and will be adding our designs and buttons this spring. Sunset takes pride in the fact that we are creating our own treasure chest for our students.

Dzunuk'wa is on the minds of some Sunset students. A number of classes are learning about and comparing the stories about her. Some of our younger students are hearing about her for the first time and our older students are re-familiarizing themselves with her legend.

I would also like to take this time to acknowledge our First Nations team. Janice Ellis, Shayla Fraser, and Rosalind McKinnley are an innovative, dedicated team that work collaboratively with classroom teachers to create and support opportunities to embed First Nations learning in our classrooms, and bring aspects of Kwakwaka'wakw culture to life in meaningful ways. Some projects they are working on include developing a Lahal team for an upcoming tournament, a field trip using the Galtam canoe, and a feast hosted by our grade one class.



Sea View Elem. /Jr. Secondary

Sea View School hosted its second School-Community Heritage Fair in February. Students presented their projects on family or Canadian heritage and cultures to the public and in the afternoon, everyone participated in hands-on experiences that included cedar bracelet weaving, origami, Japanese Noh (Theatre) masks, Chinese New Year, and heritage tools for woodworking, laundry, and kitchen preparations. Many thanks to community volunteers who made the learning so engaging!

Eagle View Elementary

A school-wide focus on preparing for our March 15 Gwamyasapa has dominated Aboriginal Programs at Eagle View over the past month. Parents, families, role models, and Elders have all been regularly visible in leading our learning. Students continue practicing singing and dancing each day with an end goal of having all learners participate in our celebration. All members of Eagle View, including students and staff, are extending their learning through creating gifts to give away to guests at our annual gathering. This learning includes cedar weaving, drum making, artistic representations, and others.



Alert Bay Elementary

At ABES we continue to focus on the cultural teachings of Maya'xala which is respect for self, others, and the environment. These teachings connect directly to the POSITIVE PERSONAL & CULTURAL IDENTITY Competency in the New BC Curriculum and is embedded into everything we do at our school. Positive personal and cultural identity is the awareness, understanding, and appreciation that contributes to a healthy sense of oneself. It includes awareness and understanding of one's family background, heritage(s), language(s), beliefs, and perspectives. ABES students are becoming confident individuals who take satisfaction in who they are while also learning what they can do to contribute to their own well-being and to the well-being of their family, community, and society. With the help and support of school staff, families, Elders, and community mentors, students at Alert Bay School are on the path to acknowledging their strengths and abilities and discovering resilience and strategies, which can help them in all aspects of learning and life.



Cheslakees Elementary

Through the winter months, students have been sewing button blankets for their dolls with support from Mrs. Fraser. Our salmon eggs have developed in to alevin. K'utala as a winter food source has been an intricate part of our learning. First Nation content is being infused through literacy, tying in the core competencies of critical thinking and social emotional development. Amongst the favorite books are *Carry Me, Mama*, *Totem Tales* and *Bears*. Spring brings us into a school wide unit on cedar.

Gilakas'la



For more information about our Aboriginal Programs with SD85, please visit our website: http://www.sd85.bc.ca/?page_id=144.

We can also be contacted by phoning 250-949-6618 ext. 2233 for

Irene Isaac, District Principal of Aboriginal Programs or ext. 2231 for

Christine Ley, Secretary of Aboriginal Programs, Student Services, and SBO.





ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT



May 2018 - June 2023

and

NORTH ISLAND SECONDARY 'NAMWIYUT' POLE RAISING CEREMONY



*School District No. 85, North Island Secondary School, and
Aboriginal Programs would like to invite you to our*

Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement Renewal and 'Namwiyut Pole Raising Ceremony

DATE: Thursday, May 17th, 2018

TIME: Beginning at 11 am

LOCATION: North Island Secondary School

2071 McNeill Road

Port McNeill, BC

-There will be a free BBQ lunch to follow for all in attendance-

