



GATHERING PLACE – Port Hardy Secondary School (Pictured above)

Aboriginal Programs Newsletter

Our new Aboriginal Programs Newsletter is designed to reach out to our parents, community, community partners, stakeholders, etc. to communicate what is happening in School District No.85 in the area of Aboriginal Education. The newsletter will be sent out three times during the school year featuring different projects/events that are taking place within our schools.

Ło'yanx

(December - Leaves falling time)



Port Hardy Secondary

Port Hardy Secondary celebrated the naming of our A'wilgola'elas room last month. Its name means 'gathering place', which is appropriate for the room where students, staff, and community come together to connect, celebrate, share food, and find support. We appreciate all of the family and community members who took the time to join us. We are proud of the leadership shown by our students who planned the event, prepared food, greeted and hosted guests, and took part in speeches, singing, and dancing.

Liam has learned how to use the school CNC router to help promote language throughout the school. He and others around the school have been working with staff, community members, and elders to help with the appropriate translations and spelling. When they are finished making North Island Secondary bilingual with Kwak'wala, they plan on making these types of name plaques available for purchase for other schools in the region with all funds raised supporting student projects within our trades classes. It has been a fun student and staff project that has already led to many students learning Kwak'wala.

- foods (grade 10)
- ecology (grades 11-12)
- Kwak'wala IRP (Introduction to Kwak'wala, grade 11): including activities integrated into daily activities, clamming, and in support of sounds system, writing, listening, speaking, providing activities that enable students to meet curricular expectations in science, ecology, social studies, Indigenous studies, as well as the Kwak'wala IRP.
- encouraging and supporting all staff to utilize key phrases and everyday phrases through the school day.



Eke Me-Xi Learning Centre

The integration of traditional Indigenous knowledge and settings into Kwak'wala and subject area courses provides an effective means to develop Kwak'wala language learning and enhance learning in other subjects situated in traditional knowledge. Activities this year include collaboration with the Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw School and Band Council, and Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw Elders, to develop and implement an integrated curriculum with a focus on traditional Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw clamming activities and language. The integration focuses on:

- science 8 and 9 (wind, tides, moon phases)



AJ Elliott Elementary

The K/1s and Gr 2-4s did a food gathering unit focused on berries starting with reading the book, Berry Magic, making the berry dolls that are in the book (we will be starting dolls with Gr 2-4s next week), weaving berry baskets and sharing some berry leather. We had class discussions about the students' own experience with picking berries, about the seasons, and their favourite vegetables from the garden. The intermediate students are beginning a unit on the talking stick/talking circles and the class is going to make a



North Island Secondary

Liam Nelson has been adding Kwak'wala signs to our rooms throughout North Island Secondary School. As part of his Skills Exploration 10-12 class,



class talking stick. They will have a presentation describing and explaining what they are and how they are made and used. Each student is to bring an item to school to contribute to the making of the class talking stick (feathers, string, leather, fur, shells, etc.). After Christmas cedar weaving is planned.



Sea View Elem. /Jr. Secondary

In the Grade 5-7 class, students are listening to their teacher read aloud "Spirit in the Rainforest" by Eric Wilson. The novel touches on issues of land claims and other local land-based issues. Students are also learning about Canadian government and will be looking at how laws have affected FN people. The Grade 2-4 students are in the midst of a year-long unit that will encompass local landforms, community, and the Kwagiulth, both before and after European contact.

They have also been introduced to Roy Henry Vickers' art and have created their own artwork in his style. Teachers in all classrooms have shared stories written with an aboriginal worldview. Staff are making plans and preparations for a School Community Heritage Fair in February, which will include elements of the diverse cultures represented in our school and community, including local FN culture.



Cheslakees Elementary

Sharon Whonnock has been coming in Tuesday morning for the past two months. She has been teaching students how to sew buttons on a traditional button blanket. Children talk and sew, and Sharon shares stories. When completed, the two child sized blankets, both with the copper symbol on the back, will be used by the children when role-playing in their classrooms. It's always interesting to listen to the questions students ask Sharon, such as, Where did you learn to sew? Who taught you? And our favorite, How do you know so much? We are grateful for her patience, skills and generosity in sharing information with the children.



Eagle View Elementary

It has been a very busy past few months for our First Nations education programs. Students began the school year exploring traditional plants and medicines on our student developed interpretive trail. While exploring the land, we learned where and when to harvest specific traditional medicines and how they are used. As the weather turned wetter and colder, our learning moved indoors with a focus on exploring the history and stories of traditional dances and songs. Students were even given the special opportunity to participate in the preparation of eagle feathers and down for ceremonial purposes. Most recently, we have begun preparations for our regional Lahal tournament Eagle View will be hosting in the New Year.



Alert Bay Elementary

Our school's mission statement the Kwak'wala word "Maya'xala", which means respect. We believe in respecting each other in all aspects of our education and take special care to work as a school community and team to ensure that each and every person in our school feels a sense of belonging, respected and cared for.

Each classroom has a wide range of student abilities, with teachers and staff who are dedicated to meeting each child's needs. Ways of meeting those needs consist of integrating First Nation's content into the curriculum in every way.

Alert Bay School has a Cultural Program dating back several decades that we continue to build on every year. The Cultural Program consisting of learning the language, the dances, and the songs of the Kwak'wala speaking people and surrounding areas. The Enhancement Agreement goals are not only met, but exceeded at our school.



Fort Rupert Elementary

All students at Fort Rupert Elementary experience Kwakwaka'wakw culture and language with the talented Mr. Harold Nelson. Throughout the year, senior students prepare for a cultural ceremony that occurs at the end of the year. Most recently, students learned how to weave a cedar bracelet. Students are reading "The Secret of the Dance" by Andrea Spalding and Alfred Scow and learning about cedar bark ceremonies of the Kwakwaka'wakw.



Sunset Elementary

Aboriginal education and First Nations perspectives are alive and well at Sunset Elementary School. Although we miss the presence of Mr. Alfred, Ms. McKinney has been working in our Culture and Language program and doing a wonderful job engaging our students with cultural teachings and language activities. This month, Ms. McKinney and Elder Eva Dick made bath salts with students to take home for Christmas presents. Ms. Ellis and Ms. McCormack are also valued members of staff and they support classrooms on a regular basis by bringing enriching learning activities to our students. It is not uncommon to find one or the other in the kitchen making jam with students after reading "Red Parka Mary" or weaving Metis "belts" during a math lesson.

This year we are proud that we will begin making regalia in January. Elder Sharon Whonnock is cutting the fabric for vests and aprons. She will guide the students in sewing and design. Once this is complete, Sunset will then have its own treasure chest!



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

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