
INTRODUCTION TO ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

Welcome to the Annual Report on Aboriginal Education for School District No. 85, Vancouver Island North. As District Principal of First Nations Education, it is a privilege to report on the District's progress in meeting the goals of our Enhancement Agreement (EA). This year's report marks the fourth year of our progress (2005-2010) as the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement has been in effect since the 2005/2006 school year. Therefore, most of our data for this report begins in the 2004-2005 school year which forms the baseline measure towards building further successes for our Aboriginal students.

Overall, this year has been very exciting as we embark on several new directions with the development of an Integrated Resource Package for the Kwakwaka'wakw Language (grades 5-12), as well as the creation of four Aboriginal Scholarships for graduating Aboriginal students. I would like to acknowledge each of the members of the School Board and the First Nations Education Council for the leadership and direction they have provided this year. Special thanks to Kathleen King-Hunt, our previous District Principal of First Nations Education, for the legacy she has left for our students and our communities.

Gilakasla,
Kaleb Child
District Principal,
First Nations, Early Learning and District Initiatives



District Demographics

Aboriginal Targeted Funding is based upon our Aboriginal student enrolment of 454.5 Full Time Enrolment (FTE) (2008/2009), who are of Aboriginal Ancestry. These funds support both school based and district based initiatives and include 15 positions across 12 schools: 7 In-School Support Workers; 2 Home School Coordinators; 2 Language Cultural Tutors; an Aboriginal Counsellor; and a part-time District Support Teacher position. In addition, the First Nations Resource Library, Aboriginal Role Model Program and other initiatives are also supported through Aboriginal Education and are described further in this report.

Further Information

Community Demographics:

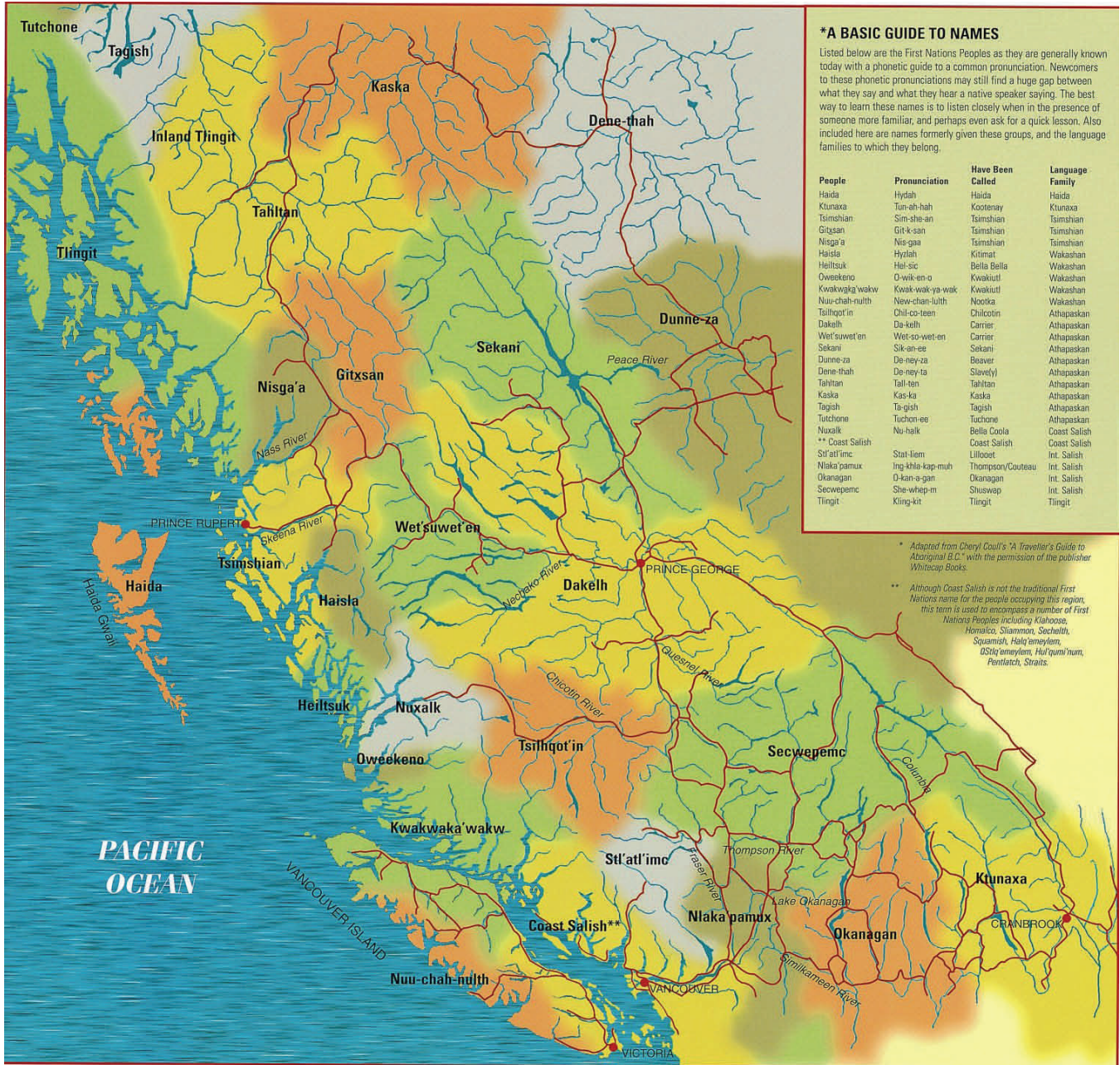
The population of Vancouver Island North is 11,651 (Mount Waddington Regional District 2006 Census). This represents a decline of 1,460 from the 2001 Census.
Aboriginal population is 2,601 (2001 census figures)

2007/08 School District Demographics:

Approximate student population is 1,550
30% Aboriginal ancestry, 490 students
10 elementary schools (K-7):
 including 2 one-room schools, and
 1 elementary junior/secondary school (K-10)
2 secondary schools (8-12) including two off-site alternate programs
2 Strong Start Centers, and 1 Outreach Program

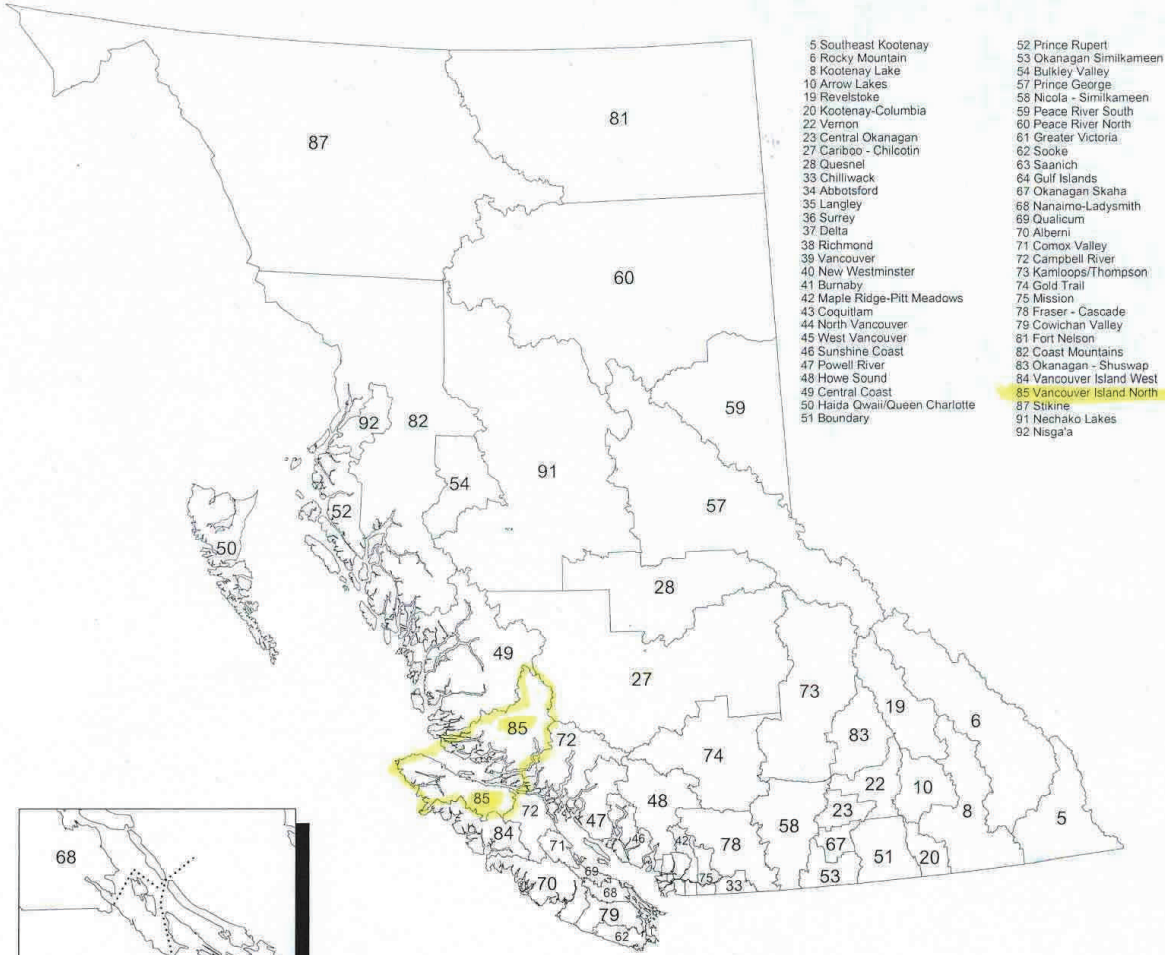
TERRITORIAL MAP OF FIRST NATIONS IN BC

(source: www.bced.gov.bc.ca)

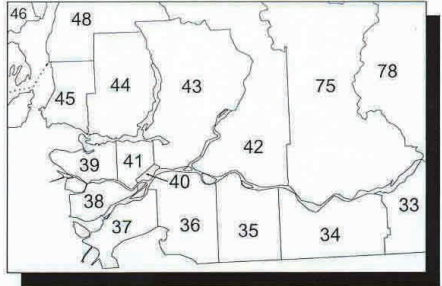
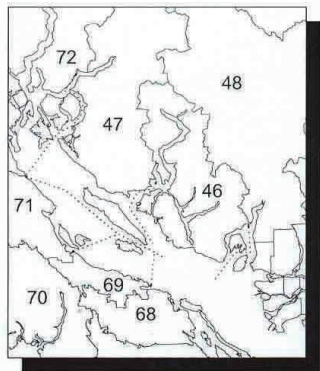
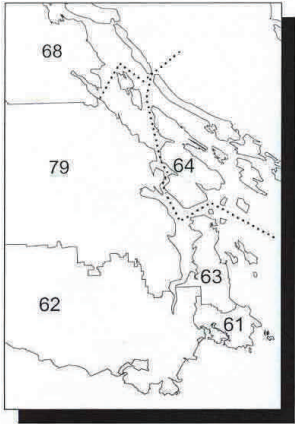


SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 85 AREA MAP

British Columbia School Districts

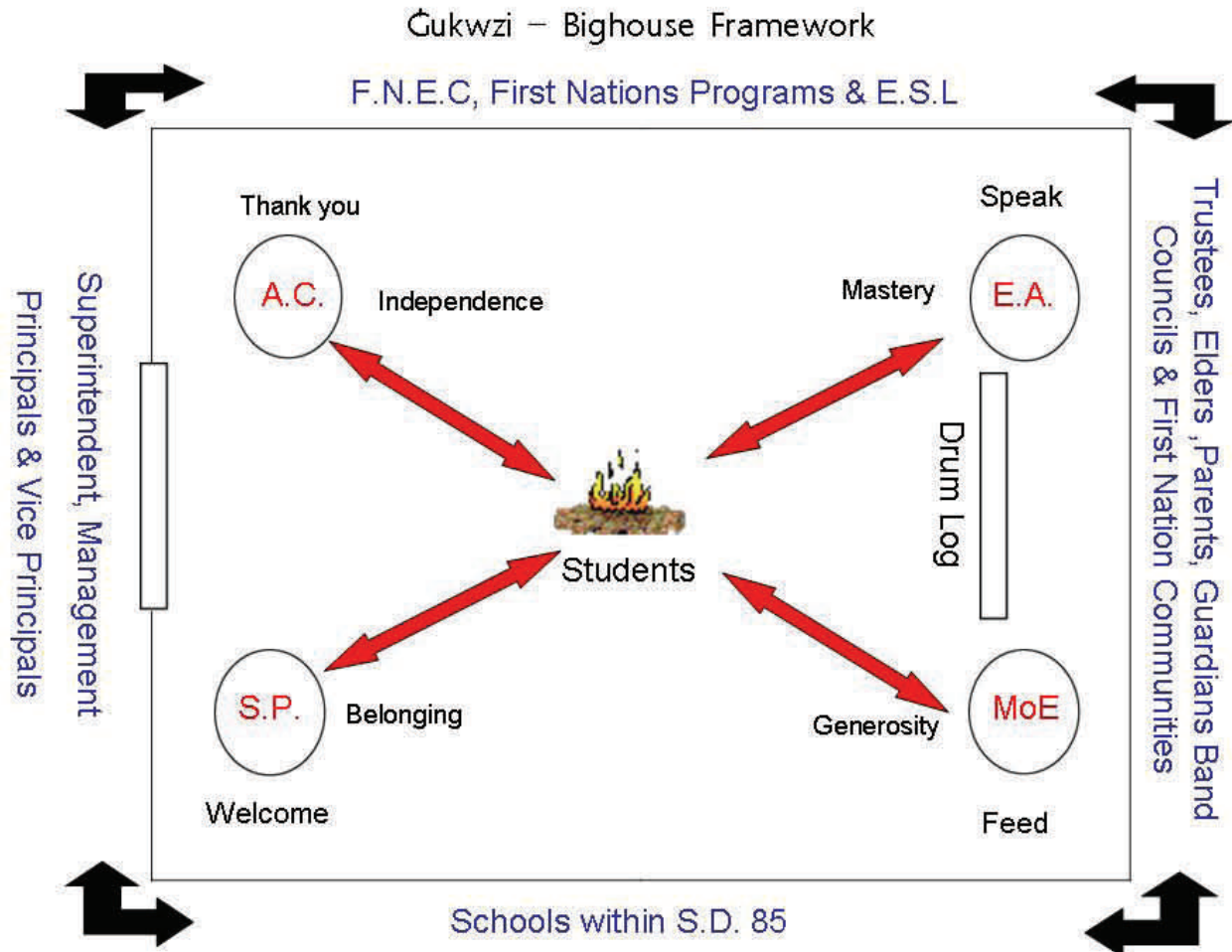


- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 5 Southeast Kootenay | 52 Prince Rupert |
| 6 Rocky Mountain | 53 Okanagan Similkameen |
| 8 Kootenay Lake | 54 Bulkley Valley |
| 10 Arrow Lakes | 57 Prince George |
| 19 Revelstoke | 58 Nicola - Similkameen |
| 20 Kootenay-Columbia | 59 Peace River South |
| 22 Vernon | 60 Peace River North |
| 23 Central Okanagan | 61 Greater Victoria |
| 27 Cariboo - Chilcotin | 62 Sooke |
| 28 Quesnel | 63 Saanich |
| 33 Chilliwack | 64 Gulf Islands |
| 34 Abbotsford | 67 Okanagan Skaha |
| 35 Langley | 68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith |
| 36 Surrey | 69 Qualicum |
| 37 Delta | 70 Alberni |
| 38 Richmond | 71 Comox Valley |
| 39 Vancouver | 72 Campbell River |
| 40 New Westminster | 73 Kamloops/Thompson |
| 41 Burnaby | 74 Gold Trail |
| 42 Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows | 75 Mission |
| 43 Coquitlam | 78 Fraser - Cascade |
| 44 North Vancouver | 79 Cowichan Valley |
| 45 West Vancouver | 81 Fort Nelson |
| 46 Sunshine Coast | 82 Coast Mountains |
| 47 Powell River | 83 Okanagan - Shuswap |
| 48 Howe Sound | 84 Vancouver Island West |
| 49 Central Coast | 85 Vancouver Island North |
| 50 Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte | |
| 51 Boundary | |



Source:
BC STATS

BIGHOUSE FRAMEWORK



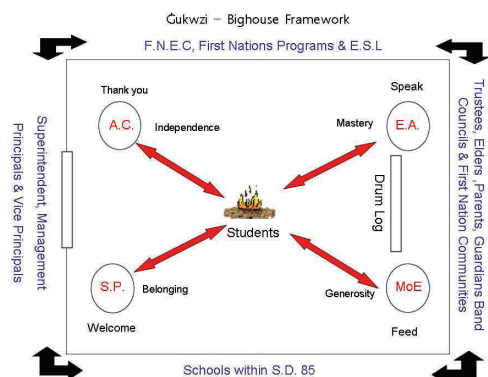
Due to the leadership of our First Nations Education Council (FNEC), this year's report has changed slightly in format to include a holistic summary of qualitative and quantitative data relative to Aboriginal Education in our District. The Big House Model recently developed by the FNEC Enhancement Agreement Committee (07/08) has become the framework for describing our collective vision and responsibility towards enhancing the learning opportunities for our Aboriginal learners.

Within our communities, families, schools, and partner agencies, we each play a collective role in the support and direction of our programs towards further success for our students. It is this philosophy that will guide the format for this report, Gilakasla.

BIGHOUSE FRAMEWORK

Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement Goals– 2005-2010

1. THE STUDENTS WILL FEEL AN INCREASED SENSE OF BELONGING & RESPECT THROUGH THEIR SCHOOL EXPERIENCE..
2. THE NUMBER OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC SUCCESS WILL INCREASE.
3. ALL STUDENTS WILL EXPERIENCE AN ENHANCED ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT AS A RESULT OF ABORIGINAL CONTENT AT ALL LEVELS OF CURRICULUM.



Gukwzi—Big House

The big house continues to play a vital role in our communities. Traditionally, it housed the many events and rites of passage of our people: life, death, marriage, family, education and so forth. All the ceremonies representing each of these events happened in the big house.

In the teaching of our children, structurally no one person was higher than another. We believe that everyone has something to offer and to teach; teachable moments are reciprocated between the old and the young.

Sísíuł—Double Headed Sea Serpent

A symbol of strength and a being of supernatural ability, the Sísíuł (see-see-you-lth) in times past was feared for its power to turn anything that looked at it to stone. In today's world, it is also a symbol to demonstrate our strengths and abilities and what we are capable of as human beings. It speaks to the polarity of the human spirit and all things in the natural world. One side can represent all that is **positive**, and the other can represent the **negative**: **love/hate, give/take, constructive/destructive, happy/sad** and so forth.

Within the Big House Framework, each wall represents a stake holder in the education system and each pole represents a supporting pillar in the education system.

Welcome pole: welcomes all who are a part of the education process and recognizes each for their individuality.

Feeding pole: the one who nurtures, in this case the nurturing of students with the feeding of knowledge.

Speaker pole: speaks on behalf of the host; depending on what stake holder you are, the speaker's views will vary.

Thank you pole: thanks you for your input and wishes you well on your travels.

As you enter the House and "walk around" in the order of the poles you visit the **Welcome, Feeder, Speaker and Thank You Pole**. In between the Feeder and Speaker poles is the drum log. Here singers keep time by beating on it and singing while the dancers dance. This log drum represents the system's effectiveness and its flow. If the singers beat too fast or miss a beat, this throws off the dancers. If there is an "off beat" in the system, or it moves too slow or too fast for those involved then there is confusion which will impact its effectiveness. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that we are in unison at all times for our students.

The fire in the center represents purity and the spirit of our people. Here it represents what is most precious to us, our 'gwigwala'yu' 'our reason for living', our children.

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION COUNCIL

The First Nations Education Council (FNEC) works in full partnership with the School District to support and guide First Nations Education Services. FNEC is made up of delegated representatives from the:

- Kwakiutl Band Council
- Whe-la-la-u Area Council: (Mamalilikala, Tlowitsis, Tlatlasikwala First Nations)
- Danaxwdaxw First Nation
- Musgamagw-Tsawataineuk Tribal Council: (Kwicksutaineuk-Ah-kwa-mish First Nation, 'Namgis First Nation, Tsawataineuk First Nation)
- Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw First Nation
- Quatsino First Nation
- Metis/Off Reserve representative
- and includes School District No. 85 leadership representatives

The following is an excerpt from the Terms of Reference that guide our continuing relationship in our work together:

PURPOSE

The purpose of the First Nations Education Council is to be the voice for First Nations students and families in School District 85. The Council will work in partnership with School District 85 (Vancouver Island North) to ensure the provision of ongoing comprehensive education and support services relevant to the needs of First Nations students, as well as to ensure sensitivity to and respect for First Nations issues.

VALUES

We believe:

- in honouring and respecting all the First Nations Communities as the territorial people and recognize the importance of their leadership role in First Nations Education
- that our children and families are our priority and deserve quality service
- in involving parents at all levels
- in honouring and respecting the uniqueness of the First Nations community and its cultural diversity
- in continuous learning to improve the quality of life
- in the value of promoting the validity of First Nations education for all learners in open and respectful communications at all levels

In 2003, the First Nations Education Council embarked on the two year journey to create the Aboriginal Education Enhancement (EA) Agreement. The first EA report was submitted to the Ministry of Education in 2006 – 2007 following the first year of implementation. The second report was written in collaboration with FNEC members and a working committee beginning in September 2007. On behalf of FNEC, we are once again proud to submit the third report on Aboriginal Education for the 2008 — 2009 academic year.

The format for each report has changed slightly from year to year to reflect our ongoing successes and challenges. This report outlines our actions and recommendations for First Nations programs, schools, FNEC partners, and Aboriginal communities to continue to assist School District No. 85 to improve the successes and achievements of Aboriginal students. It is imperative that school growth plans parallel the goals of the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement.

ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT GOALS

Goal 1:

The students will feel an increased sense of belonging and respect through their school experience.



Goal 2:

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.



Goal 3:

All students will experience an enhanced academic environment as a result of Aboriginal content at all levels of curriculum.



GOAL 1 - DATA

‘The students will feel an increased sense of belonging and respect through their school experience.’

RATIONALE:

Enhance school environment creating an atmosphere of success to increase level of trust and partnerships with parents and communities.

Increase provincial satisfaction survey percentages and results.		
TARGET – To increase the number of Aboriginal parents from 10 participating in the Provincial Satisfaction Survey.		
Provincial Satisfaction Survey – Parent Survey Participation		
Year	No. of parents	Target met
2005 — 2006	10	Baseline year
2006 — 2007	28	Yes, target met by 18 parents
2007 — 2008	23 (new baseline)	Yes, target met by 13 parents
2008 — 2009		
2009 — 2010		

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – a positive increase from 10 to 23 elementary and secondary parents participation.

New target 08/09 - Increase participation of Aboriginal parents by 10 (33 for next year).

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- First Nations staff to follow-up school-by-school and promote the survey.
- Create a promotional poster and include photos of Aboriginal Scholarship recipients.
- Include reminders to families to complete the surveys via school newsletters.

School:

- Continue school incentives for students and parents to complete surveys.
- To encourage parent participation by attaching First Nations staff business cards to survey to support families.

Partner Groups/Communities:

- First Nation Bands to distribute promotional poster and provide incentives at community events.
- Sacred Wolf and other agencies to distribute promotional poster to off-reserve families.

GOAL 1 - DATA

‘The students will feel an increased sense of belonging and respect through their school experience.’

RATIONALE:

Enhance school environment creating an atmosphere of success to increase level of trust and partnerships with parents and communities.

Increase student attendance at the intermediate and secondary level					
NEW TARGET for 2007/08 – To increase the number of elementary grade 6 & 7 with less than 10 absences over the school year.					
(ELEMENTARY)					
Year	Grade 6 <4	Grade 7 <4	Grade 6 ‘0’ absences	Grade 7 ‘0’ absences	
2004 — 2005	83%	75%	32%	27%	Baseline year <10 absences
2005 — 2006	82%	81%	41%	31%	
2006 — 2007	80%*	82%	32%	34%	*Jan., Feb., June, <4 grade 6 absences concern <10 absences
2007 — 2008	39% 17/44	30% 10/33	2% 1/44	6% 2/33	Baseline year, new target <10 absences over the year
2008 — 2009					
2009 — 2010					

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – 39% of grade 6’s and 30% of grade 7’s are missing less than 10 school days per year.

New target 08/09

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- First Nations Support Staff to continue to liaise with families to support student attendance.

Schools:

- Provide ‘book award’ for elementary students who are absent less than 10 days per year.

Partner Groups/Communities:

- First Nations Bands/partner agencies to provide students/families with information session on the value of getting good grades based on consistent attendance.

GOAL 1 - DATA

‘The students will feel an increased sense of belonging and respect through their school experience.’

RATIONALE:

Enhance school environment creating an atmosphere of success to increase level of trust and partnerships with parents and communities.

Increased student attendance at the intermediate and secondary level					
TARGET — To increase the number of secondary student absences to less than 10 per school year.					
(SECONDARY)					
Year	October	January	May	June	
2004 — 2005	53%	39%	36%	47%	Baseline year
2005 — 2006	73%	46%	39%	40%	
2006 — 2007	47%	47%	36%	42%	
2007— 2008	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Baseline year new target
2008 — 2009					
2009 — 2010					

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – Data not available.

New target 08/09

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- First Nations Support Staff to continue to liaise with families to support consistent student attendance.
- First Nations Staff/grade 8 students to visit elementary schools to provide info sessions “What grade 7 students need to know about high school.” Follow up in September via student mentorship program for new grade 8 students.
- Monitor all Aboriginal student attendance regularly and liaise with schools and communities.

Schools:

- Invite grade 7 students to special events at the secondary school. Take a grade 7 to school days!
- Utilize grade 8/9 students as mentors for grade 7 students.
- First Nations support Staff to liaise with teachers and community links position in support of students who are absent.

Partner Groups/Communities

- First Nations Bands/partner agencies to provide students/families with information session on the value of getting good grades based on consistent attendance.
- First Nations Bands/partner agencies to monitor student attendance regularly and liaise with First Nations Programs, schools and families.

GOAL 1 - DATA

‘The students will feel an increased sense of belonging and respect through their school experience.’

RATIONALE:

Enhance school environment creating an atmosphere of success to increase level of trust and partnerships with parents and communities.

Increase results in Social Responsibility S.D. No. 85 ‘Student Survey Results’ in the area of respect for diversity.						
TARGET— To increase the number of elementary students who respond positively by 3% from 2007 – 2008 baseline year.						
(ELEMENTARY)						
Year	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
2003-2004	24.3	37.4	32.6	7.3%	4.1%	Baseline year
2004-2005	27	32	34	4%	3%	
2005-2006	22	30	40	5%	3%	
2006-2007	24	30	37	5%	4%	
2007-2008	83%			17%		New survey baseline data.
2008-2009	87%			13%		
2009-2010						

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – 87% of elementary students responded positively in the area of respect for diversity.

Target Met - Increase of 4%.

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- Utilize First Nations Role Model Program at every school.
- Encourage schools to participate in local events such as Lahal Tournament in Quatsino, Soccer Tournament in Tsulquate, baseball tournament at Fort Rupert Elementary School.

Schools:

- Use anti-racism curriculum or other diversity focussed materials.
- Utilize First Nations Role Model Program throughout the school.
- Showcase Board Race Relations policy poster in several locations in schools.
- Elementary schools to partner and connect with public or band schools practicing language and culture.

District:

- Network of Performance Based Schools (NWPBS) to promote social responsibility projects in the area of respect for each other.

GOAL 1 - DATA

‘The students will feel an increased sense of belonging and respect through their school experience.’

RATIONALE:

Enhance school environment creating an atmosphere of success to increase level of trust and partnerships with parents and communities.

Increase results in Social Responsibility S.D. No. 85 ‘Student Survey Results’ in the area of respect for diversity.						
TARGET— To increase the number of secondary students who respond positively by 5% from baseline year 2007-2008.						
(SECONDARY)						
Year	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
2003-2004	9.4	37.4	28.1	22.8%	15.1%	
2004-2005	8	27	40	18%	7%	
2005-2006	7	27	39	18%	9 %	
2006-2007	6	25	40	18%	11%	Yes, target met.
2007-2008	50%			50%		New survey baseline data.
2008-2009	58%			42%		
2009-2010						

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – 58% of secondary students responded positively in the area of respect for diversity.

Target Met - Increase of 8%.

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- Promote and distribute anti-racism information and materials (ie. ‘Connections’ program, SD 61).

Schools:

- Use anti-racism curriculum or other diversity focussed materials in core courses to support positive results.
- Continue building ‘social responsibility’ utilizing community service providers to promote positive relations with community.
- Utilize British Columbia Teachers Federation, First Nations Education Steering Committee, and other Anti-racism programs and facilitators to provide school based activities and workshops.
- Utilize First Nations Role Model Program throughout the school.
- Showcase Board Race Relations policy poster in several locations in schools.
- Provide all suspension data for secondary non-Aboriginal/Aboriginal students to First Nations Education Council.
- Consider restorative justice models and other alternatives to student suspension practices.

Partner Groups/Communities:

- First Nations Bands and other agencies to continue sharing resources in schools such as Career Fair events, First Nations author visits, youth group events.

GOAL 1 - DATA

‘The students will feel an increased sense of belonging and respect through their school experience.’

RATIONALE:

Enhance school environment creating an atmosphere of success to increase level of trust and partnerships with parents and communities.

Increase retention rates of Aboriginal students in all schools.			
TARGET— To increase grade 10 students entering grade 11 by 10% for Aboriginal students.			
Year	Grade 11 females	Grade 11 males	
2004 — 2005	88%	86%	
2005 — 2006	95%	81%	Yes, for girls
2006 —2007	Not available	Not available	
2007 — 2008	57% 17 of 30	71% 32 of 45	New target/baseline
2008 — 2009			
2009 — 2010			

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – 57% of females and 71% of males made the transition from grade 10 to 11.

New Target: 1701 data used to generate 07/08 results for grade transition to generate new baseline.

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- First Nations Support Team to meet with secondary students to overview course selection, new programs, and why their choices matter.
- First Nations Support Staff to attend course selection events to inform students and families.

Schools:

- Schools and academic advisors ensure students ‘opt-in’ for the best educational courses and counsel those students who ‘opt out’; include consultation with parents.
- Schools to investigate transition issues at the grade 10/11 level and develop interventions to support students.

Partner groups/Communities:

- Education Coordinators from First Nations bands to visit schools and attend course selection events to inform students and families.

GOAL 2 - DATA

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.

RATIONALE:

Maintain high standards for Aboriginal students in all areas of the students' school experience.

To increase the number of Aboriginal students completing the BC graduation with the BC Dogwood diploma.

TARGET— To increase by 5% yearly (BC Dogwood Diploma)

Year	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	
2004 — 2005	46%	84%	Baseline year
2005 — 2006	50%	86%	
2006 — 2007	57%	86%	Yes, target met.
2007 — 2008	58%	79%	
2008 — 2009			
2009 — 2010			

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – 58% of Aboriginal students received Dogwood Diploma.

Target not met.

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- Promote the Ministry of Education and BCTF Aboriginal workshops and/or coursework for teachers.
- Initiate Kwak'wala IRP and First Peoples English 12 course for implementation in schools by 2010.
- Offer professional development opportunities using Kwakwala IRP/English 12 FP for teachers and support staff.
- Continue to offer and support the First Nations Education Council Aboriginal Student Scholarships.

Schools:

- Secondary Schools to bring in Aboriginal professional workshops to promote careers, treaty process, and other best practices to improve performance of Aboriginal students.
- Continue to network and offer in-service opportunities in the area of best practices; (ie. assessment, teaching methods).

Partner Groups/Communities:

- Continue recognizing graduates and hosting events to celebrate the accomplishments of our students.
- Continue to offer incentives to support our students in their school experience.
- Provide tutorial services and homework clubs at the community level.

GOAL 2 - DATA

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.

RATIONALE:

Maintain high standards for Aboriginal students in all areas of the students' school experience.

Increase percentage of Aboriginal students participating in English 12			
TARGET— To increase by 3% yearly participation rate			
Year	Grade 12	Grade 12 %	
2004 — 2005	15	33%	
2005 — 2006	18	45%	
2006 — 2007	17	49%	Yes, target met
2007 — 2008	19	41%	
2008 — 2009			
2009 — 2010			

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – 19 out of 46 grade 12 students enrolled in English 12.

Target not met.

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- First Nations Staff to support students and encourage participation in English 11 and 12.
- First Nations Staff to increase support time in English courses.

Schools:

- Increase the number of Aboriginal students enrolling in English 12 versus Communications 12.
- Offer First Peoples English 12 course.

Partner Groups/Communities:

- Provide tutorial services and homework clubs at the community level.
- Provide information on pre-requisites for access to Post Secondary Programs and INAC Post Secondary National Guidelines.

GOAL 2 - DATA

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.

RATIONALE:

Maintain high standards for Aboriginal students in all areas of the students' school experience.

Increase the number of students completing English 12 with C+ or better			
'NEW' TARGET— To increase performance C+ or better to 50% by 2010.			
Year	Number	Grade 12 %	
2004 — 2005	Not available		
2005 — 2006	Not available		
2006 — 2007	4	24%	Baseline
2007 — 2008	6	32%	
2008 — 2009			
2009 — 2010			

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – 6 students achieved a C+ or better in English 12.

Target ongoing.

Actions:

Schools:

- Continue to implement English strategies and skills across the curriculum at all levels and all subjects.
- Explore support systems to ensure students pass English 12 with C+ by integrating Aboriginal content and seamless integrated support in classrooms.
- Continue to allocate First Nations support staff to English 12 class.
- Offer First Peoples English 12.

GOAL 2 - DATA

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.

RATIONALE:

Maintain high standards for Aboriginal students in all areas of the students' school experience.

Increased percentage of Aboriginal students successfully completing Math 12 .					
TARGET—To increase participation rate in Principles of Math 10 by 5% each year.					
Year	Participants #	Participants %	Pass Rate #	Pass Rate %	
2004 — 2005	13/61	21%	5	38%	Baseline year
2005 — 2006	29/71	40%	18	62%	
2006 — 2007	32	42%	28	88%	Yes, target met.
2007 — 2008	22/57	39%	18/22	82%	
2008 — 2009					
2009 — 2010					

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – 22 students participated in Math 10 Principles.

Target not met, but we achieved a high completion rate.

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- First Nations Staff to support students and encourage participation in Principles of Math.
- First Nations Staff to increase support time in math courses.

Schools:

- Increase the number of Aboriginal Students in Principles of Math 10.

Partner groups/Communities:

- Provide tutorial services and homework clubs at the community level.
- Provide information on pre-requisites for access to Post Secondary Programs and INAC Post Secondary National Guidelines.

GOAL 2 - DATA

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.

RATIONALE:

Maintain high standards for Aboriginal students in all areas of the students' school experience.

Increased Aboriginal student participation and success in senior academic courses.			
TARGET—To increase Communications 12 success rate by 10% from baseline year.			
Year	Percentage		
2005 — 2006	67%	Baseline year	
2006 — 2007	100%		
2007 — 2008	100% completion rate	61% C+ or better	baseline
2008 — 2009			
2009 — 2010			

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – 18 out of 18 students completed Communications 12, 11 out of 18 students received a C+ or better.

Target met.

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- Continue First Nations Support services in class.

Schools:

- Explore support systems to ensure students pass Communications 12 with C+ by integrating Aboriginal content and seamless integrated support in classrooms.
- Continue to allocate First Nations support staff to Communications class.

GOAL 2 - DATA

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.

RATIONALE:

Maintain high standards for Aboriginal students in all areas of the students' school experience.

Increased Aboriginal student participation and success in senior academic courses.		
TARGET—To increase the number of students participating in Biology 11 from 6 students to 10 students.		
2004 — 2005	6	Baseline
2005 — 2006	3	
2006 — 2007	2	
2007 — 2008	16	7/16 in Grade 12
2008 — 2009		
2009 — 2010		

Increased Aboriginal student participation and success in senior academic courses.		
TARGET—To increase the number of students participating in Chemistry 11 from 3 students to 7 students.		
2004 — 2005	3	Baseline
2005 — 2006	2	
2006 — 2007	11	
2007 — 2008	4	
2008 — 2009		
2009 — 2010		

Increased Aboriginal student participation and success in senior academic courses.		
TARGET—To increase the number of students participating in Physics 11 from 3 students to 4 students.		
2004 — 2005	2	Baseline
2005 — 2006	1	
2006 — 2007	n/a	
2007 — 2008	5	2/5 in Grade 12
2008 — 2009		
2009 — 2010		

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

First Nations Programs:

- Schedule First Nations Support Workers support in Sciences.
- All First Nations staff and school counsellors' to advise students that Science 10 is a key to graduation and post secondary entrance to certain career choices.

GOAL 2 - DATA

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.

RATIONALE:

Maintain high standards for Aboriginal students in all areas of the students' school experience.

Increase grade 10 exam baseline student performance details.

TARGET—To increase the **Principles of Math 10** pass rate by 5% from 82% to 87%.

Year	Participants #	Participants %	Pass Rate #	Pass Rate %	
2004 — 2005	13	21%	5	38%	
2005 — 2006	29	40%	18	62%	
2006 — 2007	32/80	40%	28	88%	
2007 — 2008	22/57	39%	18	82%	New Baseline
2008 — 2009					
2009 — 2010					

Increase grade 10 exam baseline student performance details.

TARGET—To increase the participation in **English 10** provincial exam by 7% from 53% to 60%, and to increase the **English 10** pass rate by 5% from 59% to 64%.

Year	Participants #	Participants %	Pass Rate #	Pass Rate %	
2004 — 2005	33	54%	20	61%	
2005 — 2006	44	61%	37	84%	
2006 — 2007			46	92%	
2007 — 2008	34	60%	30	88%	
2008 — 2009					
2009 — 2010					

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – 82% rate for Principles of Math 10, 88% pass rate for English 10.

New target (Math 10), target met for (English 10).

GOAL 2 - DATA

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.

RATIONALE:

Maintain high standards for Aboriginal students in all areas of the students' school experience.

Increase grade 10 exam baseline student performance details.

TARGET—To increase the participation in **Science 10** provincial exam by 10% from 43% to 53%, and to increase the **Science 10** pass rate by 10% from 27% to 37%.

Year	Participants #	Participants %	Pass Rate #	Pass Rate %	
2004 — 2005	27	44%	8	30%	
2005 — 2006	41	57%	18	44%	
2006 — 2007	44/80	55%	45	69%	
2007 — 2008	41/57	72%	39/41	95%	
2008 — 2009					
2009 — 2010					

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – 72% of Science students were aboriginal and 95% achieved a passing grade.

Target met.

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- Provide First Nations Staff support in Science 10; students to attend 'Native Support Program' (PHSS).

Schools:

- Promote grade 11 academic science courses.
- Elementary schools to promote science fairs with Aboriginal themed category; promote participation in the 'Mystic' science program and partner with the band operated schools' science fairs.

Partner groups/Communities:

- Provide tutorial services and homework clubs at the community level.
- Provide information on pre-requisites for access to Post Secondary Programs and INAC Post Secondary National Guidelines.

GOAL 2 - DATA

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.

RATIONALE:

Maintain high standards for Aboriginal students in all areas of the students' school experience.

Grade 8 — Passed.

TARGET—To increase year end grades in all academic areas passed by 5% in grades 8, 9, & 10.

Grade 8	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
English	36/47 77%	31/36 86%	25/33 76%	30/36 83%		
Mathemat- ics	34/45 76%	29/38 76%	24/44 55%	38/44 86%		
Science	50/61 82%	37/45 82%	29/48 60%	41/46 89%		
Social Stud- ies	43/58 74%	38/46 83%	27/43 63%	34/43 79%		

Grade 9 — Passed.

TARGET—To increase year end grades in all academic areas passed by 5% in grades 8, 9, & 10.

Grade 9	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
English	35/53 66%	35/47 74%	33/50 66%	25/32 78%		
Math	20/35 57%	22/40 55%	23/30 77%	13/19 68%		
Science	45/56 80%	42/52 81%	36/52 69%	23/35 66%		
Social Stud- ies	34/56 61%	52/63 83%	38/50 76%	20/25 80%		

Grade 10 — Passed.

TARGET—To increase year end grades in all academic areas passed by 5% in grades 8, 9, & 10.

Grade 10	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
English	27/39 69%	37/50 74%	41/45 91%	15/18 83%		
Math	10/20 50%	21/37 57%	24/37 65%	6/10 60%		
Science	20/33 61%	30/45 67%	25/46 54%	18/26 69%		
Social Stud- ies	34/39 87%	29/37 78%	44/59 75%	22/27 81%		

GOAL 2 - DATA

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS (for Grades 8, 9 & 10):

Actions:

Schools:

- ESD program to be in addition to regular English courses; consider integrated seamless service.
- ESD Helping Teacher and Support Worker to provide support for English classes.
- Teachers to utilize materials and resources to integrate Aboriginal content in all courses.
- Literacy Support Teacher to showcase units on Aboriginal themes for use in classrooms (eg: Oolichan unit).
- Utilize First Nations Role Model Program and other Aboriginal guests in schools.

District:

- Continue Literacy strategies such as BARC (Boys & Aboriginal Reading Comprehension), and DART (District Assessment Reading Team), and continue to provide in-service workshops to teachers.

Partner Groups/Communities:

- Provide tutorial services and homework clubs at the community level.
- Provide information on pre-requisites for access to Post Secondary Programs and INAC Post Secondary National Guidelines.

GOAL 2 - DATA

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.

RATIONALE:

Maintain high standards for Aboriginal students in all areas of the students' school experience.

To increase Aboriginal intermediate level numeracy Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) results.

TARGET—To increase pass rate by 3% yearly in grade 7 FSA numeracy results.

	Participation #	Participation %	Pass Rate #	Pass Rate %
2004 — 05	31	84%	17	63%
2005 — 06	25	64%	14	56%
2006 — 07	29	88%	21	78%
2007 — 08 Baseline	28	93%	15	54%
2008 — 09				
2009 — 10				

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Result – 93% participated, 54% achieved pass rate.

Target not met.

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- First Nations staff to participate in workshops related to Math support for First Nations students.

Schools:

- Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is a new baseline, due to new electronic testing, format, marked in-district.
- Ongoing Math in-service for Teachers (Ray Appel).

Partner groups/Communities:

- Provide tutorial services and homework clubs at the community level.
- Math workshops for parents.

GOAL 2 - DATA

Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success.

RATIONALE:

Maintain high standards for Aboriginal students in all areas of the students' school experience.

Increased 'First Nation Early Literacy' level success rates of PM Benchmark.				
TARGET—To increase overall PM Benchmark gain for both grades to be Level 10 for grade 1; Level 18 for grade 2.				
Colour indicates cohort grades	Grade 1 #	Grade 1 %	Grade 2 #	Grade 2 %
	Level 10 & above		Level 18 & above	
2004 — 05	9/15	60%	17/23	74%
2005 — 06	9/16	56%	12/15	80%
2006 — 07	5/18	30%	6/17	35%
2007 — 08 Baseline	15/27	55%	9/22	41%
2008 — 09				
2009 — 10				

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Target met.

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- Literacy Support Services to implement inclusive model in regular classrooms K-3 at:
Alert Bay Elementary School
Robert Scott Elementary School
Eagle View Elementary School
Fort Rupert Elementary School
- Continue to focus on IRP objectives in Oral Language, traditional storytelling, and comprehension strategies.

Schools:

- Continue to implement six week model at:
Alert Bay Elementary School
Robert Scott Elementary School
Eagle View Elementary School
Fort Rupert Elementary School
- 'Oral language' pilot (K – 3) completed for the Network of Performance Based Schools in June 2009.
- Promote First Nations library at all schools.
- Aboriginal content to be promoted in home reading programs and in all classrooms.

GOAL 3 - DATA

All students will experience an enhanced academic environment as a result of Aboriginal content at all levels of curriculum.

RATIONALE:

Acknowledge Aboriginal content in all curriculum areas which increases respect of Aboriginal cultures, values, history of our local communities and increases Aboriginal student sense of belonging.

Increase BC First Nations Studies 12 participation rates for all students.		
TARGET—To increase the number of students by 15 students.		
BC First Nations Studies 12		
	Aboriginal Participation #	Non-Aboriginal Participation #
2004 — 05	12	-
2005 — 06	18	5
2006 — 07	20	16
2007 — 08	19	14
2008 — 09		
2009 — 10		

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Target met.

Actions:

First Nations Programs:

- Monitor performance data.
- First Nations Studies 12 to be promoted for all students.

Schools:

- Utilize First Nations Role Model program.
- Integrate local Aboriginal content into First Nations Studies 12 and Social Studies 11.

GOAL 3 - DATA

All students will experience an enhanced academic environment as a result of Aboriginal content at all levels of curriculum.

RATIONALE:

Acknowledge Aboriginal content in all curriculum areas which increases respect of Aboriginal cultures, values, history of our local communities and increases Aboriginal student sense of belonging.

Increase year end DART assessment results in grade 3, 6 & 9.					
TARGET —increase by 3% yearly.					
District Assessment Reading Team — DART					
Grade	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Aboriginal Students—minimally meets, fully meets, exceeding expectations.					
Grade 3	89%	91%	86%	79%	
Grade 6	78.5%	80%	79%	67%	
Grade 9	55.5%	59%	83%	59%	

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

Target met.

Actions:

Schools:

- School incentives to include books and literature prizes.
- Teachers to use teaching materials that are culturally relevant at all levels with a focus in grade 9.
- Boys and Aboriginal Reaching Comprehension (BARC) to continue in 2009/10.

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP & ABORIGINAL EDUCATION



Board of Education
School District No. 85 (Vancouver Island North)

The First Nations Education Committee (FNEC) is a partnership between local bands and School District #85, Vancouver Island North. It is a healthy, productive relationship built on trust, understanding, and respect. It has been my privilege to be a member of this committee for more than seven years. Our first Enhancement Agreement was signed in June, 2005. FNEC spent two years consulting with all Bands and many, many individuals. It was time very well spent as the resulting document was truly a reflection of all the things that First Nations were aiming for within the public school system.

The Board showed great foresight when it gave FNEC the responsibility of choosing where targeted Aboriginal funds should be spent. This has provided a solid foundation for the Board and FNEC to build on. One of the outcomes of this decision has been the ongoing emphasis on early learning and literacy, to the benefit of all students, preschool as well as K - 4. Together we have developed many resources: the Village Books, a new run of 'My Elders Tell Me', and currently we are working on a Kwakwaka Integrated Resource Package.

A revision of the Race Relations Policy was undertaken in 2007, with a great deal of the work being done by FNEC. Out of that revision, October was chosen as 'Diversity Month'. Every school in the District has to plan, and put into action, a school-wide activity that recognizes and celebrates our cultural, racial, and religious differences, promoting mutual respect and harmony.

As a District, we are above the Provincial average in Aboriginal students completing a six year dogwood diploma. This does not mean that we are complacent or satisfied with how we are doing. The Board is eager to see wider use of Aboriginal content at all grade levels, and we would like to see the new English 12 First Peoples offered at both of our high schools. As a Board, we will continue to go out of our way to support and enhance learning for all Aboriginal students. To further this end, the Board and FNEC have introduced this year, for the first time, grade 12 Aboriginal student scholarships.

People travel to Canada from all over the world, eager for a glimpse of First Nations culture and history. As a Board, we need to continue to emphasize to all of our students, in every school, how fortunate we all are to have on our doorstep a wealth of history, tradition, and such a rich cultural heritage.



Mrs. Ann Hory
Board of Education
School Trustee and FNEC representative

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP & ABORIGINAL EDUCATION



Kathy Bedard,
Superintendent of Schools



Katherine McIntosh,
Director of Instruction

I am very proud of the work being done by our staff in Aboriginal Education, and of the improving achievement of our students. The leadership of First Nations Education Council, and the continual monitoring of our Enhancement Agreement goals, will bring us to that place where our aboriginal children stand out as confident, knowledgeable and skilled young people, helped to reach their potential because of the opportunities they had to learn and grow in the Vancouver Island North School District.

I acknowledge the wisdom of the people involved in establishing the first Enhancement Agreement goals. The importance of students feeling as if they belong in our schools is paramount; from that all strengths flow. We are guided by the EA as we pay attention to the academic achievement of First Nation students at all levels, and stress the importance of all staff and students in our district learning about the history and culture of the local Kwakwaka'wakw speaking people.

We cannot do this alone. It is essential that we have effective partnerships with First Nation families and communities. It is only by working together that we can ensure our students and schools are strong.

Gilakasla,
Kathy Bedard,
Superintendent of Schools

FIRST NATIONS SUPPORT TEAM



The First Nations Support Team consists of 15 staff:

School Board Office Staff – Port Hardy

Kaleb Child, District Principal, First Nations Programs
Teresa MacKenzie, Secretary, First Nations Programs

Port Hardy Secondary School Staff – Port Hardy

Maggie Sedgemore, Counsellor
Charles Willie, Native Support Program
Shyla Hunt, Literacy Skills Assistant
Jim Jones, First Nations In School Support Worker

North Island Secondary School Staff – Port McNeill

Donna Hunt, First Nations In School Support
Denise Cranmer (Temp.), First Nations In School Support Worker
Pearl Brotchie, First Nations In School Support Worker

Eke Me-Xi Alternate School Staff, Tsulquate Reserve – Port Hardy

Stephanie Nelson, First Nations In School Support Worker

Fort Rupert Elementary School Staff – Port Hardy

Bea Wadhams, Home School Coordinator & Language and Cultural Tutor

Eagle View/Robert Scott Elementary School – Port Hardy

Naomi Allen, First Nations In School Support Worker

Sunset/Cheslakees Elementary School – Port McNeill

Janice Ellis, Home School Coordinator

Alert Bay Elementary School – Alert Bay

Karen Reece, First Nations In School Support Worker
Ernest Alfred, First Nations Language & Cultural Tutor

FIRST NATIONS SUPPORT TEAM



Karen Reece



Pearl Brotchie



Donna Hunt



Shyla Hunt



Janice Ellis



Stephanie Nelson



Naomi Allen



Jim Jones



Kaleb Child



Teresa Mackenzie



Charles Willie



Bea Wadhams



Denise Cranmer



Ernest Alfred



Maggie Sedgemore

ROLE MODEL PROGRAM

The purpose of the Aboriginal Role Model Program is to provide schools with the opportunity to invite elders and other community members into the classroom to share their expertise and knowledge. First Nations Role Models present a large variety of themes and aspects of cultural knowledge and wisdom to enhance the educational experience of students and staff. Role Models engage in direct services to students in the classroom or in a field trip setting. The program is also designed to support and assist teachers in various Aboriginal approaches and methods.



RESOURCE CENTRE/ FIRST NATIONS LIBRARY

School District No. 85 – Resource Centre - First Nations Library

Welcome to the newly re-located First Nations Library in the Resource Centre at School District 85. Most First Nations items are now in our L4U library system on the school district website www.sd85.bc.ca.

Currently there are almost 1,000 items in the First Nations Library consisting of kits, games, books, book bins, posters & professional books. New items are being purchased this year and will be advertised to the schools when they arrive.

Since the First Nations Library has been moved into the Resource Centre I am seeing a renewed interest in our Library from the schools. Items are clearly labelled and displayed in an attractive manner so people are finding things they need easily and quickly.

Please contact me by phone, e-mail and fax or come in and look around. I'd be please to help you search for items you need in your classrooms, home schools, private schools or by students.



Big House Project—NISS—Holly Banico



Open House Celebration—April 2009



Open House Display—April 2009

Danell Greenlees
Resource Clerk
250-949-6618 ext 2242
dgreenlees@sd85.bc.ca

FIRST NATIONS EARLY LITERACY TEACHER



Jen Holme, Early Years Helping Teacher/
First Nations Early Literacy Teacher

The common theme that ties my two positions together is *Early Learning; early development, early intervention, and early literacy.*

In my role as the First Nations Early Literacy Teacher I work in collaboration with classroom teachers to provide an additional layer of literacy support for students in grades one and two. This support is offered in a variety of ways; often I take small groups of students to work on targeted skills, other times I work in the classroom alongside the classroom teacher. Another part of this position includes ensuring that the students and teachers have access to First Nations themed learning materials. Many of the resource packages we currently use are either locally created, or are from the southern end of the island. I am currently working on an Oral Language Unit that focuses on the Oolichan fishery. My aim with this project is to incorporate the teaching of cultural traditions and language with the development of oral language skills.

In the Early Years Helping Teacher position my scope expands to children aged 0-5. It is a multi-faceted role in which I work both at the community level, and in schools. Out in the community I often work in collaboration with the Mount Waddington Family Literacy Society. Together we combine programming such as *Ready, Set, Learn-* a ministry level early learning initiative, with community-based programs like Parent-Child Mother Goose, and the Literacy Bus. These events take place in all of the North Island communities, sometimes even travelling as far as Kingcome. The underlying theme to all of our Early Learning events is **family**; learning together and celebrating each other's knowledge. So whenever possible we welcome contributions from elders and others who are willing to share stories or song. It is important for all learners to experience the cultural richness that exists on the North Island.

It's been a great year thus far; there has been much discussion on the merits of investing in the early years both at a government level and on the local front. As the partnerships continue to grow and strengthen, so will our ability to support families and vulnerable learners. I look forward to continuing this work in the new school year. Be sure to keep an eye out for the 3rd Annual Early Literacy Fair coming up in September. Hope to see you there.

LITERACY SUPPORT TEACHER



DART coding session
Jen Lok (left), Literacy Support Teacher
Rena Sweeney, (right), Vice Principal,
Sunset Elementary School



Jen Lok, Literacy Support Teacher,
Grades 3 — 12

Some of the many aspects of the Literacy Support Teacher's role in promoting Aboriginal students' success are:

- providing literacy strategies for novels and for content areas
- working with teachers, support staff, and in classrooms
- facilitating workshops with First Nation Support Workers
- purchasing resources relevant to teachers' needs and students' interests
- collaborating with all staff to look at students' needs and determine next steps for student success

BARC (Boys' and Aboriginals' Reading Comprehension)

BARC is an initiative that was developed in 2007 after looking at the results of several assessment tools. Two grade levels that needed support (grades 4 and 7) were chosen. Teachers and support staff of each of those grades come together for collaboration, specific strategies, and resources with the purpose to improve the reading comprehension of boys and Aboriginal students. The group meets twice a year, there is a one-on-one visit with the Literacy Support Teacher, and a group observation of student learning using one or more BARC strategies in a classroom. The cohort of students will be followed for three years and then the process will begin again. Forty staff and teachers have participated in the first two years of BARC, with observations in eight classrooms.

DART (District Assessment of Reading Team)

DART is an assessment tool that many districts across the province utilize. It is completed twice a year. In the fall, DART is an assessment for learning, and teachers use the results to identify areas of need and direct their instruction. In the spring, it is an assessment of learning where teachers can see student growth at the end of the school year.

The assessment consists of a piece of text, comprehension questions, and an oral conference. It used by teachers to see how well students read and how much they understand what they read. Trends (strengths and weaknesses) identified in the results can assist teachers, support staff, and the Literacy Support Teacher in their instruction and the support provided.

NUMERACY SUPPORT TEACHER

Numeracy Support within School District No. 85 reaches out to all students within the school district. Manipulatives are encouraged as part of the Math Makes Sense program. Ray Appel was brought into the school district in October 2008 and again in February 2009 to present a “hands on” approach to using math manipulatives and broaden understanding of the Math Makes Sense program. Specifically allocated workshop sessions were scheduled for First Nations Support Workers from both school district and local band schools. Band Schools were also provided with the Numeracy Contact binders given to each of the district schools to help provide fluency in transition when students transfer between schools.



Alana Check,
District Numeracy Teacher,
Grades 3—12

OVERVIEW OF ABORIGINAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

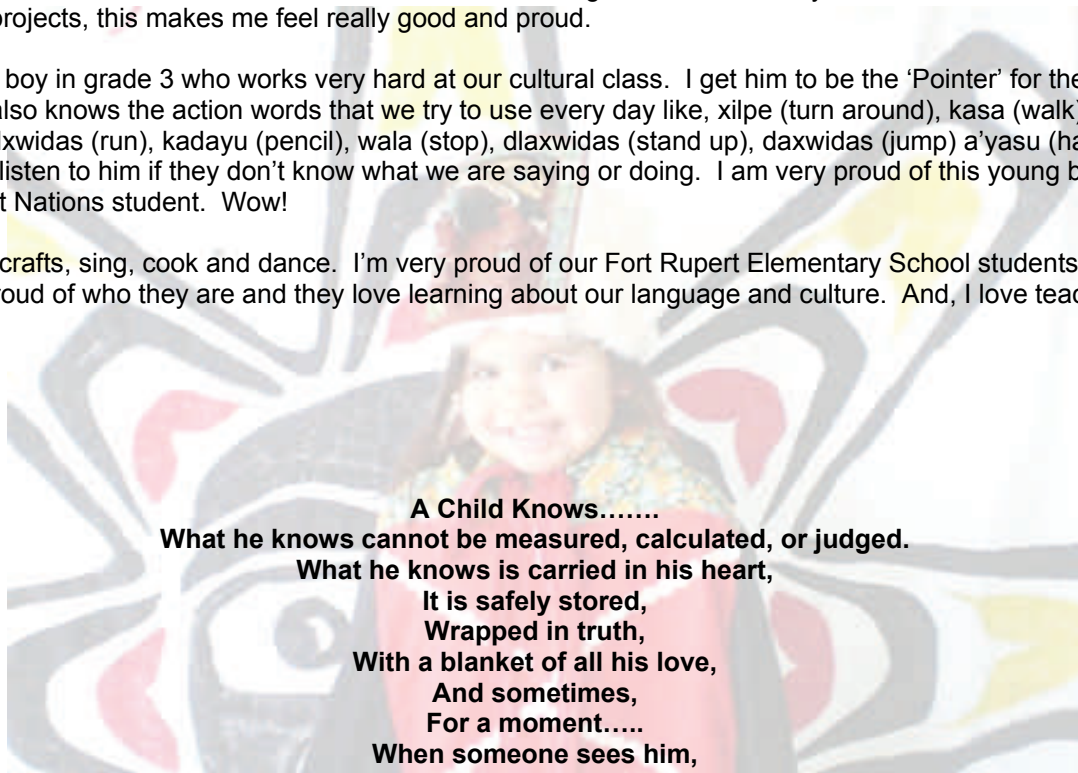
My name is Bea Wadhams, I work at Fort Rupert Elementary School. I've been working with the student as the First Nations Home School Coordinator and the Language & Cultural Tutor.

I started my cultural class in November 2008. It's been a challenge, but fun. When you see how much the students love doing cultural projects, this makes me feel really good and proud.

I have a young boy in grade 3 who works very hard at our cultural class. I get him to be the 'Pointer' for the Kwakwaka alphabet. He also knows the action words that we try to use every day like, xilpe (turn around), kasa (walk), kwaxidas (sit down), dzalxwidas (run), kadayu (pencil), wala (stop), dlaxwidas (stand up), daxwidas (jump) a'yasu (hand), the other students listen to him if they don't know what we are saying or doing. I am very proud of this young boy, as his is not even a First Nations student. Wow!

We also make crafts, sing, cook and dance. I'm very proud of our Fort Rupert Elementary School students. The students are proud of who they are and they love learning about our language and culture. And, I love teaching them.

Gilikasla,



**A Child Knows.....
What he knows cannot be measured, calculated, or judged.
What he knows is carried in his heart,
It is safely stored,
Wrapped in truth,
With a blanket of all his love,
And sometimes,
For a moment.....
When someone sees him,
His heart opens,
His mind opens,
His eyes fill,
His truth speaks,
And he knows,
And then.....
HE LEARNS.**

Bea Wadhams,
Home School Coordinator,
Fort Rupert Elementary School

NORTH ISLAND SECONDARY SCHOOL (PORT MCNEILL)

First Nations Studies 12 continues to be a popular course with students at NISS. This year all of the students successfully completed the course, with 50% of the students receiving a mark of A or B. Well done! As well, we made the First Nations room more inviting and accessible to more students this year.



Students in the anti-racism workshops put on by Marjorie Dumont and Cheryl Child

All staff participated in a BCTF Anti-Racism workshop conducted by Marjorie Dumont and Cheryl Child. A variety of activities took place during the day and staff found it to be very informative. To continue on an anti-racism theme, all students in grades 8-11 participated in student-focussed anti-racism workshops with Marjorie Dumont and Gloria Cole (from Alert Bay). An aboriginal student focus group meeting is held at noon every 4 – 6 weeks. As students make inroads in a healthy lunch of pizza and water, topics of common interest or concern are discussed. Mrs. Deadman and Mr. Bramham are involved in all of the focus group meetings. As a result of these meetings, volunteers were found who were willing to attend an Anti-Racism Youth Forum in North Vancouver in March. Due to conflicts Christina Gullstrom was the only student who was able to attend. We are very grateful to Jamie Hunt from Alert Bay who accompanied Christina. We're looking forward to hearing about Christina's experience at the next focus group meeting. We are especially grateful to Jamie Hunt, Youth Worker for the 'Namgis Band, who has been welcomed at NISS when she visits. Her presence at the school helps the aboriginal students to understand that there is a connection between the adults in Alert Bay and NISS and that people outside of their care about them.

Our aboriginal students at NISS have been actively involved in a number of other workshops and presentations focusing on the medicine wheel model. Donna Hunt, First Nations Support Worker, applied for and received a "Honouring Your Health" grant that helped her to bring in presenters for four workshops. One of the workshops was a presentation about the BC Treaty Commission, and one of the presenters was a member of the Commission. Sergeant Kammali, of the Canadian Armed Forces, came to NISS and spoke to interested students about the Raven, Bold Eagle, and Bear programs that are available to aboriginal students. Approximately 50% of our aboriginal students in grades 8 – 12 participated.

Other items that we're proud of include the acceptance of Curtis Macki Grade 12 at the University of Victoria, the nomination of two senior students to be aboriginal role models, approximately ¾ of our aboriginal students with plans to attend post-secondary educational institutions, and the helpful involvement of NISS aboriginal students as transition leaders helping new students to NISS.

One disappointment was the cancellation of a presentation by Jonathon Redman, First Nations snowboarder on the national snowboarding team. We've asked him to keep us in mind if he is looking at doing future presentations.

What's ahead? A continued focus on positive cross-cultural interactions, more focus group meetings, the graduation of at least 85% of this year's Grade 12 students of aboriginal descent, and a bright future for our students!

Lauren Deadman,
Principal,
North Island Secondary School

PORT HARDY SECONDARY SCHOOL (PORT HARDY)

Port Hardy Secondary School offers a variety of formal and informal supports for our First Nations students. Formally, PHSS has First Nations Counsellor, Maggie Sedgemore; Native Support Program (NSP) – a classroom offering homework and personal support – staffed by Charles Willie; and, a First Nations Support Worker who supports students in classrooms, assigned to Jim Jones. We also have an English Skills Development program (ESD) classroom whose teacher, Debbie Huddleston, will retire in June this year. Debbie has provided many years of dedicated service and she will be missed. Tanya Carlson will be the ESD teacher next school year. The ESD program also has a Support Worker, Shyla Hunt, who supports students in the ESD classroom and around the school. In addition, PHSS has an offsite alternate program on the Gwa'Sala-Nakwaxda'xw Reserve, with teacher Leah Hubbard and teaching assistant, Stephanie Nelson.

Maggie Sedgemore, our First Nations Counsellor, enriches our student's lives in many ways. At PHSS, Soup Day is each Tuesday. Everyone is welcome to Tuesday Soup Day. Maggie also hosts a lunch each month with sponsorship from a variety of supporting partners. Aside from these scheduled meals, hungry students can always get something to eat in Maggie's room, along with a friendly word and emotional support when needed. Eating together is important at PHSS, where sharing food leads to friendship and understanding. Informally, many of our staff members extend food, and emotional support to students. On any day, our kids know they can access a friendly face and physical nourishment within the school, from our breakfast program that runs twice weekly to Maggie's room to several other classrooms within the school.

Formally, the Native Support Program provides students with extra tutorial help with academic classes. Students who are assigned an NSP block meet with Charles who liaises with the student's classroom teacher and who works with the student to ensure concepts are understood and assignments are complete.

Our First Nations Support Worker, Jim Jones, is assigned to particular classes each semester. Jim works with students in class to ensure students understand the daily work, receive help to catch up daily work they may have missed, and generally works with the classroom teacher to provide for student success.

English Skills Development – ESD – is funded by the province under the umbrella of English as a Second Language. Students whose written, reading, and oral language skills need additional support are enrolled in ESD. Many ESD students are enrolled directly in classes with the ESD teacher, while others are supported in other classes with the ESD Support Worker.

Eke Me-Xi is an Alternate High School located on the Gwa'Sala-Nakwaxda'xw Reserve. Eke Me-Xi is a satellite school of PHSS and enrolls twenty students. Leah Hubbard and Stephanie Nelson maintain a family atmosphere at Eke Me-Xi, a place that is ideal for students who have difficulty making the transition directly into PHSS from elementary school. Students at Eke Me-Xi are usually enrolled in grades 8 through 10, and make the transition to PHSS for the graduation program in grades 11 and 12.

Steve Gray,
Principal,
Port Hardy Secondary School

EKE ME-XI ALTERNATE SCHOOL (PORT HARDY)

The Eke Me-Xi Program is an off campus, alternative learning environment for Port Hardy Secondary students located on Tsulquate reserve. Eke Me-Xi has been in operation for eleven years and is a tri-band (Kwakiutl Band, Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw Nation, and Quatsino First Nation) initiative with School District No. 85. Approximately 20 students attend from all three local bands. This program provides a flexible timetable with self paced courses. Eke Me-Xi offers English, Math, Science, and Social Studies for grades 8 to 10. At Eke Me-Xi one will find a supportive setting where students experience social, emotional and academic success. Students attending Eke Me-Xi have access to Port Hardy Secondary facilities and services (ex. counselling, sports teams, workshops).

Goal One: The students will feel an increased sense of belonging & respect through their school experience:

- Provide a safe, welcoming and nurturing environment
- Foster positive relationships with students and parents
- Students work with local Elder Group
- Culture class is offered once a week
- Staff have cultural awareness and use positive reinforcement
- Students and staff cook lunch and invite parents, siblings and grandparents
- Students are free to eat throughout the day
- Class attends community events
- Staff displays continuous respect and support to students
- Students participate in cleaning the outside and inside of school

Goal Two: Increase the number of Aboriginal students with academic success:

- One to one support before, during and after school
- Preparing students for transition to Port Hardy Secondary School
- Offer Aboriginal content in curriculum
- English Skills Development offered
- Daily academic tracking
- Communication with parents regarding attendance and student progress
- Teach and role model life skills
- Provincial exam preparation
- Drive students to exams and school activities
- Set academic short term and long term goals
- Encourage students to take Principles of Math and English versus Essentials of Math and Communications
- Peer support

Goal Three: All students will experience an enhanced academic environment as a result of Aboriginal content at all levels of curriculum:

- Utilize Role Model Program by bringing in local Aboriginal community members to enhance learning experience
- Utilize First Nations Resource Library material
- Provide students with Novels and Short Stories with Aboriginal authors
- Networking with local Band Educational Coordinators, First Nation Support Workers, Counsellors and Youth Programs.

The program staff strives to have students excel and succeed in the school system. It is our goal to have students achieve a sense of self-worth, pride, responsibility, and integrity.

Gila'kasla.

Stephanie Nelson,
First Nations In School Support Worker
Eke Me-Xi School



PORT HARDY SECONDARY SCHOOL (PORT HARDY)

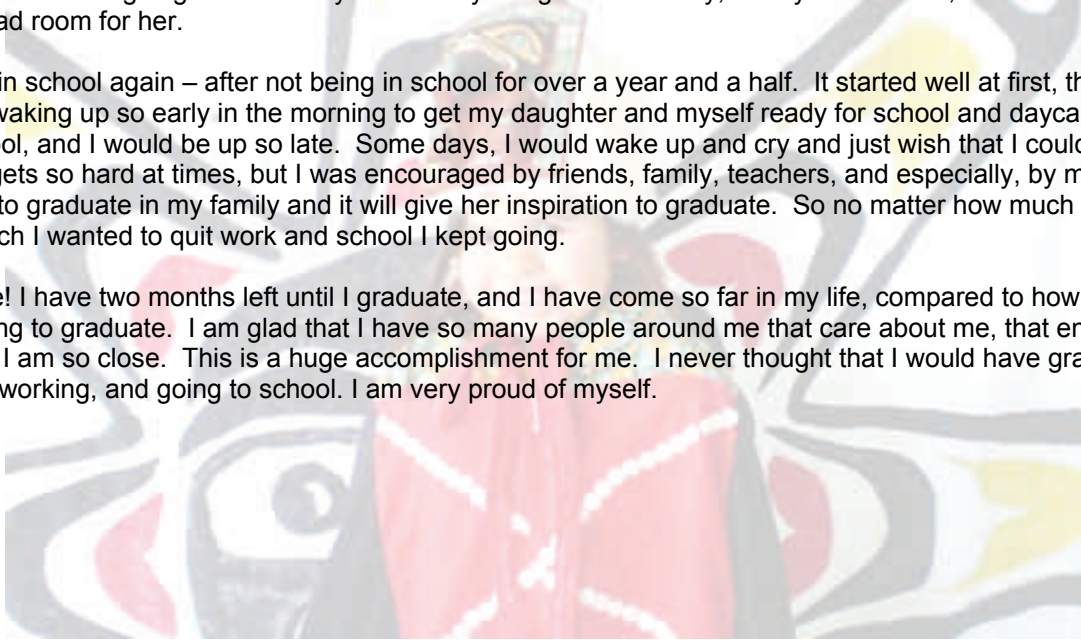
'Back to School'

It was the year 2008, I was 18 and lived on my own, with my daughter, and her father. I had been debating all that summer whether I wanted to go back to school. I had always hated school, and was a horrible student. I caused so much trouble and got kicked out for a year and a half.

My husband talked with me, and told me to see what I could do to get back into school. He said that it would be good for me, and I argued with him. A few days after that, I talked to the Principal of the school, and he said that it was okay if I came back to the school, on the condition that I behaved appropriately, and don't do anything inappropriate to others. I then started looking for daycare that would take my daughter. There were two weeks left until school started, and I didn't think that we were going to find a daycare for my daughter. One day, a lady called from, "Little Amigos" Daycare and said she had room for her.

I then enrolled in school again – after not being in school for over a year and a half. It started well at first, then it got harder. I was waking up so early in the morning to get my daughter and myself ready for school and daycare. I would work after school, and I would be up so late. Some days, I would wake up and cry and just wish that I could quit everything. It gets so hard at times, but I was encouraged by friends, family, teachers, and especially, by my daughter. I will be the first to graduate in my family and it will give her inspiration to graduate. So no matter how much I cried and no matter how much I wanted to quit work and school I kept going.

Now look at me! I have two months left until I graduate, and I have come so far in my life, compared to how I used to be. I have everything to graduate. I am glad that I have so many people around me that care about me, that encourage me to keep going. I am so close. This is a huge accomplishment for me. I never thought that I would have graduated after having a child, working, and going to school. I am very proud of myself.

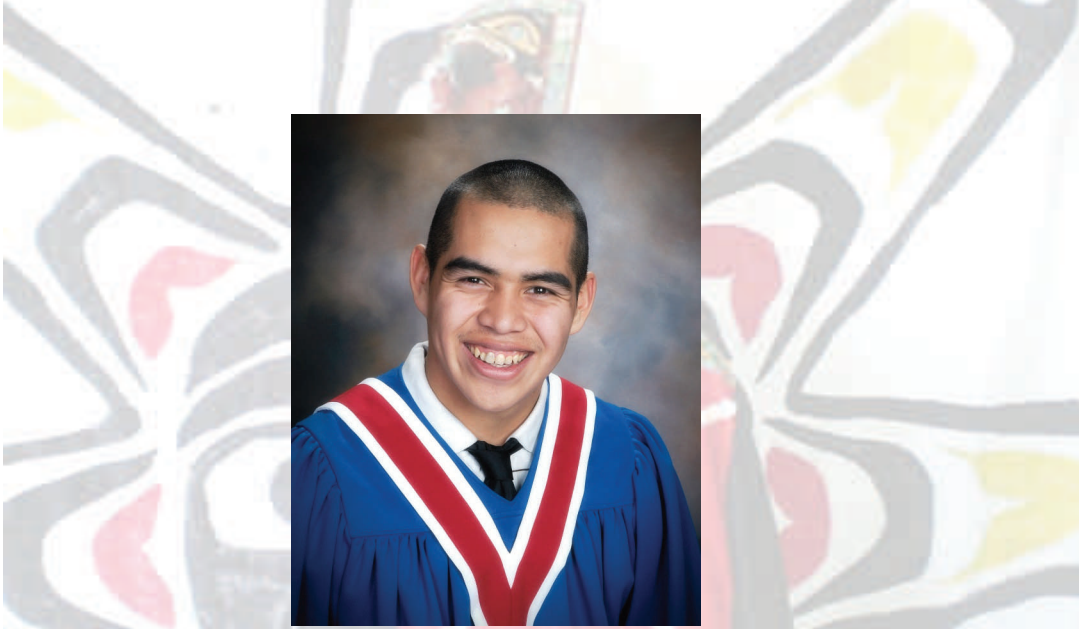


Jessica Davidson,
Grade 12 Student,
Port Hardy Secondary School

PORT HARDY SECONDARY SCHOOL (PORT HARDY)

'My Story'

The reason I came back to PHSS is because I need my education and I also wanted to graduate. I wanted to show everyone who had doubt that I can be a high school graduate and be the second one in my immediate family to grad. I have realized that my education is important for the schools ahead of me, such as college or maybe even university. I am hoping to get into a college or university so it will help me later on in my life. This year I have stumbled a bit but I had pushed myself to do the best I can and move on to what is next in my life. The people who have inspired me to do this would have to be my grandma and my girlfriend and also my girlfriend's family. The main person who has inspired me to pursue my education would have to be my brother, he was telling me how great it feels to get that certificate, he helped me through all my troubles in school and he was always there for me. I want to say thank you for giving me another chance at my education.



Robert Speck,
Grade 12 Student,
Port Hardy Secondary School

PORT HARDY SECONDARY SCHOOL (PORT HARDY)

'Education'

At a young age, I was around drugs and alcohol a fair bit. I sort of started smoking weed when I was maybe 9, just very rarely. Around the age of 14, I was full on the drug.

I went to the high school for my grade 8 not prepared for the size of the school, and I didn't have the same friends, they had stopped talking to me. Around this time in my life I smoked a lot of weed and got addicted to a game on the Internet. With the mixture of the games and smoking I started making up excuses not to go to school and so I would stay home and get stoned with my cousin or friends. It eventually turned into almost an everyday routine. So for about 2 years all I did pretty much is smoke weed and play games. I was very isolated.

Then I started playing hockey and going out more. I eventually quit smoking pot and got bored of gaming and thought to myself I should go to school. Because of being bugged about my weight back in grades 4 to 6 I had a small fear of attending high school. So my Auntie and I looked for alternatives. We found Distance Ed. That did not go so well. The work was too hard. Then we heard about the Young Adult Program at Gwa'Sala and I went there. After the one-on-one help I received from there, I was as ready as I could be to attend high school.

I think I just needed the time off to mature and find myself, and having lots of support during my time at the high school is what I needed. School is what I needed. Thankfully that is what I got from Charles and Jim. Charles is the Native Support Worker and Jim is a Teacher's Aid. Because I got older and matured somewhat, I find myself thinking a lot more on my education, and what I want in life. What it is I want now is a good education and to get there I need lots of help.

The thing that slowed me down the most is big class sizes and not being able to leave class when I wanted to so I could go find a Teacher's Aid or work with Charles in a homework block. Not to pick on my math teacher, but I did not get the help I needed in class time. It was a waste of my time. I would take notes and have to get Charles to go over it with me later anyway. But this was no way my teacher's fault. He was always busy. There must have been 35 students in that small classroom. Sure there are homework nights, but let me ask you this - after you work at your job and say you don't get your job done on time, do you feel like "hey, I'll work after hours with no pay because I fell behind?" If you want kids to work in school and do more it has to be during school hours. This would require more Teachers. Most of the help I got was from teacher aids or my homework block teachers, too many students in the classroom to get the help I needed.



Robert Dixon-Leo
Grade 12 Student,
Port Hardy Secondary School



ALERT BAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (ALERT BAY)

Our grade 5/6/7 class is comprised of 22 students, 19 are of aboriginal decent. All students participate in the Seventh Generation Club. The Seventh Generation Club is an initiative for BC First Nations students. Through fun contests and activities, and with the help of the Club Captain, the Vancouver Canucks, the Club encourages students to make healthy choices, participate in sports in their community, and stay in school. All 22 students received agendas in the beginning of the year and use them to be organized and successful with due dates of assignments. Students have held a Science Day and the whole school visited their event.

All students have access to food if they are hungry. Breakfast and lunch materials are provided through a partnership with the 'Namgis Band. We all know that if you don't feel your best or your tummy is struck with hunger pangs, it's pretty hard to concentrate on your schoolwork.

The library in our school has a section designated specifically for First Nation Content books. This section also includes Duck Soup publications for children to sign out and many local content books from our U'mista Cultural Centre.

This year the Role Model Program was accessed to do an art unit on shapes and drawings, this is leading into a carving unit with the grade 5/6/7 class. Herb Cook, a local artist, worked with the students weekly for a month and a half.

Of our 8 Aboriginal grade 2 students we have 2 students, a boy and a girl reading and comprehending in the grade 3 range. We are very proud of their efforts.

All Aboriginal students participate in the guided reading program. Research has shown us that guided reading practice, and reading books at a child's specific reading level is how you solidly build the reading level of children.

All children in the school participate in the Cultural program. Two days a week our cultural tutor works with students on dancing, singing, learning the meanings and movements of the songs, legends, traditions, protocols, and various other culturally related issues.

All children in the school in grades K-4 take part in the Cultural program language component. When children are in grades 5-7 they have a choice of either French or Kwak'wala. In grade 7 some Aboriginal students choose French because they will have to take French when they go to grade 8. As students in others feeder schools going to high school will have taken French, Alert Bay School students feel they should know some French before they get to grade 8.

At the end of each school year a big Cultural Celebration is held in the Big House for the parents and community. It is a celebration of our learning over the year.

Jill Cook,
Principal,
Alert Bay Elementary School

CHESLAKEES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PORT MCNEILL)

68 students from Kindergarten to grade 5 are enrolled at Cheslakees School and 11 students are of First Nations ancestry. These students receive classroom support 2 mornings each week from a First Nations Support Worker. Other support received in addition to classroom teacher support includes that from our Learning Assistance teachers. We also offer a Guided Reading program 3 days each week for students in grades 2-5. Once students' reading levels are determined, they are placed into same-ability groups to strengthen their reading comprehension and fluency. This benefits all students in the school including First Nations students.

We celebrated Aboriginal Cultural Awareness week in October by inviting Kaleb Child, District Principal of First Nations Programs, to offer drumming, singing and dance activities to every class in the school. One of our senior class First Nations students has been trained to be a member of our school Playground Leader team. Playground Leaders have been trained to help solve disputes that occur between students on the playground. Also, there has been a First Nations curriculum focus in the grades 2/3/4 and 4/5 classroom. Our grade 4/5 students recently made mini button blankets for a gift to their parents.



Kindergarten student using First Nations design for weather at calendar time.

Larry Burroughs,
Principal,
Cheslakees Elementary School

CHESLAKEES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PORT MCNEILL)

Cheslakees School has four classrooms ranging from kindergarten to grade 5. Because of its size, it has a family feel to it. Fortunately for me, I am lucky to work in all four classrooms. The teachers at Cheslakees do a very good job of incorporating First Nations themes into the classroom every day. For example: using First Nations designs for the weather at calendar time, artwork such as making miniature button blankets, reading First Nations stories, etc.

I work two mornings a week at Cheslakees. For the most part, I concentrate on academics and work completion for the students. This usually involves taking a small group, often including non First Nations students, to a quiet place to work. Most of what I do is teacher directed. The teacher usually lets me know what needs to be worked on, and then I take the students to get the assignment finished.

There are other things that I do as well. I make phone calls home when one of 'my students' is absent. There are also times during the year when I am asked to find resources for a particular lesson. But for the most part, my focus is work completion.

I was curious what the students thought my job was at the school, so I asked the question:
"What do we do, when you work with me at school?"

Here are some of the answers that were given:

"D" - grade 1: "We work on journals and we read books. We get lots of work done."

"T" - grade 2: "We go into the library and work. You read with us and help us if we're stuck and help us spell words."

"K" - grade 3: "I am happy when I go with you. We do homework and stuff like spelling, spelling tests, nouns, and we read books together."

"AM" - grade 5: "I get excited when you're here. We go into the LA room and then we do math and whatever I'm behind on."

"A" - grade 5: "I always say 'Can I come with you?' We go out and we do math."

This gives a quick snap shot of my time spent at Cheslakees School. It is a lovely school and I am lucky to work there.



Mrs. Ellis with a small group doing some math.

Janice Ellis,
First Nations Home-School Coordinator,
Cheslakees Elementary School

EAGLE VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PORT HARDY)

An Example of Success in Our First Nations' Room

Two Grade 7 boys have not had much respect for each other for most of the year, one is aboriginal and the one is other non-aboriginal. Since early March the two boys have been in the same timed reading group due to ability. At the Grade 7 level, reading "Out Loud" is something poor readers try to avoid especially in front of their peers. Just last week the Worker asked the non-aboriginal student if he was comfortable reading out loud with the other student present. The non-aboriginal student indicated that he was comfortable with it and the aboriginal student assured the other student that he would not interrupt. The Worker was pleased to be able to report that both boys were successful in their attempts to work productively and respectfully.

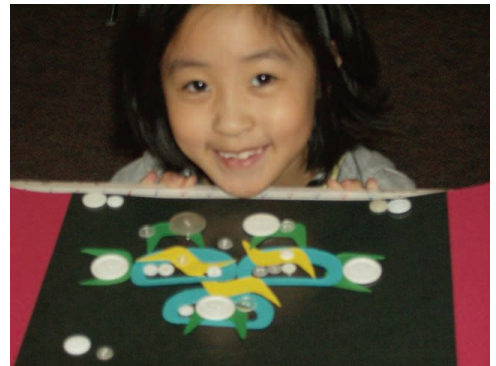
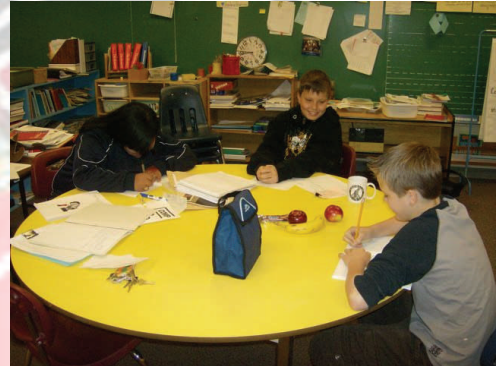
Other examples of cross-cultural activities:

Our school going to the Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School for soccer tournament.

Students going to the annual Lahal tournament hosted by the Quatsino K'ak'ot'lats'i School

Primary classes from the Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw School coming to our school for Rock Soup and to watch our school drama play.

Students making button blankets in art class.



George Markides,
Principal,
Eagle View Elementary School

FORT RUPERT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PORT HARDY)

Of our 55 students registered in April 2009, 36% report Aboriginal ancestry including members of the Kwakiutl, Tlatlasikwala, Gwa'Sala-Nakwaxda'xw, Tsawas and Nimpkish bands and 15% live at nearby Fort Rupert.

Goal 1: *The students will feel an increased sense of belonging and respect through their school experiences.*



Leadership—Antonia Dawson (Grade 5)
Vice-President of Student Council



Earth Day at WaWis Creek (April 2009)

All 55 students in our school went to Fort Rupert Reserve, where 8 of our students live, and took part in the events that were organized by the Kwakiutl Fisheries. Everyone could enjoy the traditional blessing of the salmon fry and creek.



14 Intermediate students visited K'ak'ot'Tats'l School to take part in the Lahal tournament in April 2009.



20 Grade 6/7 students took part in the Indoor Soccer tournament at Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School in November 2008. This was an opportunity to start the transition process for Grade 7's by visiting a band operated school with a strong cultural pride and to meet other students who are moving to secondary school. We invited the Grade 6/7 students from Wagalus School, on Fort Rupert reserve, to join our team



Cultural Week October 2008

We had a day and an assembly in which all students were able to wear their culture with pride. Aboriginal students were evident in their traditional dress and their pride but importantly they were seen to be part of our Canadian cultural heritage.

FORT RUPERT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PORT HARDY)

Goal 2: The number of aboriginal students with academic success will increase.

- All Grade 7 First Nation students—meeting expectations in 2009 FSA's.



Fine Arts—Danielle Dawson (Grade 6)
3rd place in Provincial Royal Canadian
Legions' Remembrance Poster Competi-
tion.



Cameron Wilson (Grade 7) FSA/Exceeds expectations in
Math & Reading.

Quay Louie (Grade 7) FSA/Exceeding expectations in Math.

Goal 3: All students will experience an enhanced academic environment as a result of Aboriginal content at all levels of the curriculum.

All 55 students take part in our Cultural Program – 10% of the learning is allocated to Grades 3 – 7 each week and K-2 has 30 minutes a week. The students learn some Kwak'wala language work and learn how to do traditional crafts and design.



First Nations Home-School Coordinator – 20 hours a week. The coordinator, Bea Wadhams, works with all students but particularly Aboriginal students in class to support them with their learning. She runs a homework club three times a week. She gathers data on the students' progress and will liaise with home and teachers on how to bring about improvements if needed.

English Skills Development Teacher—Seven Aboriginal students work with Holly Williamson once a week on oral language skills.



ROBERT SCOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PORT HARDY)
INCLUDES SAN JOSEF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (HOLBERG)

Our Grade 5/6 teacher introduced her students to a local artist by the name of John Henderson. The class is made up of 29 students, 14 of whom are of First Nations ancestry. Mr. Henderson introduced the students to the primary element of Northwest Coast First Nations artistry—the ovoid. He explained to the class that the ovoid was “the building block” for drawings and paintings and carvings which depict life on the coast.

Many students have continued to practice using the traditional style of the Coastal People outside of the classroom and during Mr. Henderson’s visits. Among the keenest artists are some non-Aboriginal students who have completed several sketches and paintings of bears, wolves, otters, eagles and killer whales. San Josef Elementary School students recently made a field trip to visit the Fort Rupert community. During their visit, they toured the Copper Maker Gallery and the Big House to learn about the carving traditions of totem poles and canoes.

Frank MacLean,
Principal,
Robert Scott Elementary School

Students at our local elementary schools, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, for the most part, present as being average youngsters hoping to succeed in a complex and often confusing world. Living in an impoverished rural area, individuals contend with a multitude of factors impacting their day to day reality. This in mind, the foundation of all work done with students rests on the caring, accepting and respectful relationships formed individually and collectively.

Further to that, attention is paid to assist each student find personal strengths within that will help them succeed on personal, family, community, academic and social realms. Attention is devoted to help students identify key figures in their personal lives available to help them navigate sometimes turbulent waters. In addition, information regarding community based support services is also shared when students and families indicate this may be of benefit.

Staff and administration, with parental and community input, when possible, strive, cooperatively, to enhance every child’s academic and social experience by including local cultural content in many subject areas. On any given day, students may be found listening to an Aboriginal legend, discovering traditional uses of local flora and fauna, considering the life cycle of salmon, or working with a local artist to learn technique and style.

Students, parents and staff are often found perusing the titles in each of the First Nations Support rooms to further complement prior teachings. Comprised of both classic and contemporary Aboriginal writings each resource library expands every year including writings on art, history, education and cultural teachings. It is an exciting time to be following the literary accomplishments of Aboriginal writers in all genres. Our students are fortunate to have access to such diversely rich writings.

Homework Zone, held each day at various times, is a busy and vibrant place welcoming all students within the school population to work on assignments, study for tests, learn research skills, access Aboriginal content resources or simply connect with others in a safe and culturally sensitive atmosphere. In addition, at the direction of the student population, this time and place sometimes develops into opportunity for creative and dramatic expression where students are often found writing, acting or singing. Students, staff, parents and extended family members have an open invitation to drop in at the Homework Zone anytime.

Most recently, as the weather warms, senior students are often outside learning Rediscovery games with a focus on cooperation and communication in addition to environmental and social awareness. Building on these skills, students later share their knowledge with younger students further promoting cultural awareness and learning.

Naomi Allen,
First Nations In School Support Worker,
Eagle View/Robert Scott Elementary Schools

SEA VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PORT ALICE)

Sea View Elementary Junior Secondary school has no First Nations students attending this year. This does not change the importance of teaching First Nations content as per the curriculum guidelines and all classrooms have adhered to this. For example, our grade 3/4 class worked on the history of Canada from a musical viewpoint this year. "How Canada Came to Be" was developed by Rhonda Draper, a music teacher from School District 23, Kelowna, BC. Students were "introduced to songs and narratives that represent the First Nations and the various regions of Canada moving from the east coast to the west and then north allowing students to gain an understanding of how Canada's past connects with its present and future." Outside of the classroom curriculum, our grades 2's and 3's attended an indoor soccer tournament at Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw School last fall and our grade 3/4 's will be joining others at the Big House Celebration in Alert Bay this spring.

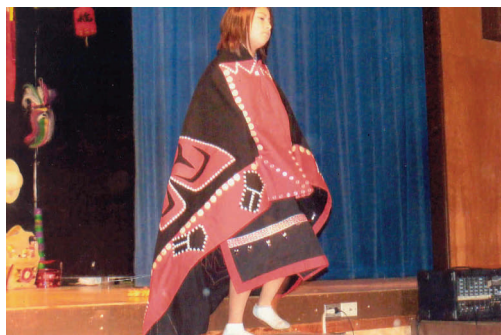


Shannon Shields,
Principal,
Sea View Elementary/Jr. Secondary School

SUNSET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PORT MCNEILL)
INCLUDES AJ ELLIOT (SOINTULA) AND WOSS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

At AJ and Woss we have not done any projects for First Nations outside of using resources in the classroom from the document Shared Resources. It is difficult for small schools to provide all the opportunities without having any assigned time for cultural workers or an administrator on site.

At Sunset we try to provide opportunities through diversity awareness month in October as well as the multicultural fair in the Spring. At both of these events all cultures are celebrated. In June, we try to do an event to celebrate National Aboriginal Day. Last year we had a traditional cooking of Salmon on the fire to allow each student in the school a chance to try it. The First Nation students have a room in the school where they can go and relax or have quiet time at lunch or recess. Again at Sunset most teachers use the Shared Resources document to provide materials as part of their regular Language Arts or Social Studies projects. As part of the Grade 4 First Nations curriculum we are planning a trip to Deer Island in Port Hardy. Next year we have added a First Nations teacher to staff to do the Grade 4 Social Studies curriculum with an emphasis on First Nations history and art.



Canadian Multicultural Fashion Show at Sunset.

Malcolm Fleeton,
Principal,
Sunset Elementary School

SUNSET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PORT MCNEILL)

I was asked to write about my job as the First Nations Home-School Coordinator at Sunset Elementary School. I decided that I would ask my students their opinions on what it is that we do together. Here is what some of them said:

“E” - grade 6: “It depends what I have that day that I haven’t had time to finish-usually math and more math!”

“K” - grade 6: “We work in a quieter room and I like it so I can focus. I usually need to get my spelling or my socials finished.”

“S” - grade 6: “Sometimes we work on math. Sometimes I have to write stories. And sometimes we play games, if we have all our work done.”

“A” - grade 5: “We usually work on social studies and journal in your room. Sometimes you help me find my missing assignments.”

Sunset Elementary has students from kindergarten to grade 7 in attendance. I am fortunate to have my own space in the school. I have photos of each of my students on a display board with a banner that reads “Do you know these superstars?” The room also has a First Nations alphabet and posters of First Nations art. My room is sometimes used as a safe haven for students to have their lunch when they need some alone time. The room also gets used when students need a quiet place to talk. It’s very nice to have my own space to work in. It makes me feel that the program has real importance within our school.

I concentrate on academics and work completion with my students. This requires me to check in with teachers to see what progress is being made for completed assignments. Although my focus is academics, there are times throughout the year when I am asked to help with other duties. In the past, I have helped with the planning of field trips to U’Mista Cultural Centre and to the Big House Events. I have also organized a traditional salmon barbeque for the school for National Aboriginal Day.

I have worked at Sunset for the last ten years and I have enjoyed it immensely. Everyday is fun and challenging at the same time, but that’s what has kept it fresh!



Sunset students in front of photo display of First Nations Students.

Janice Ellis,
First Nations Home-School Coordinator,
Sunset Elementary School