



Dim luu-ts'ipkw hli gawisit

2021 – 2025

The Nisga'a School District was created on January 1, 1976, the result of 100 years of effort by the Nisga'a people to gain control over their educational destiny and to allow their children to be educated in a bilingual and bicultural environment. Each of the four Nisga'a Villages – Gingolx, Laxgalts'ap, Gitwinksihlkw, and Gitlaxt'aamiks – has their own school. Nisga'a is a sovereign treaty Nation and the majority of students we serve are of Nisga'a ancestry.

In the spirit of **Sayt-K'ilim-Goot**, the Nisga'a Nation is a place where Ayuukw, language and culture are the foundation of identity, and learning is a way of life. *Ts'im gan wilaak'is wil luu sgihl gandidils*. We recognize that education is wholistic and involves all aspects of being – body, heart, mind, and spirit. Families are a child's first and most important teacher and we understand the necessity of creating a positive relationship between home and school in order to best meet the needs of our students. Nisga'a education is a way of life.

The Unity pole stands in front of Nisga'a Elementary Secondary School, where all students attend for grades 8 – 12, and symbolizes Nisga'a education. The teachings embodied in the pole serve to guide how and why we educate, reminding us of what is important. Our vision, affirmations, and actions should all be connected to these teachings. Unless we infuse these teachings in our daily work in schools, the Unity pole exists only symbolically. Community consultation indicates the need and desire for the Unity pole to act as a living tool, symbol, and text to guide our daily practice, to remind us why our district was created.

A cedar tree's roots create a deep and firm foundation, just as education creates a firm foundation for life. The cedar tree was the first gift given to assist, to be transformed, to teach. Cedar in all its possibilities and as carved into the Unity pole, is here to guide our journey and was the inspiration for the name of our district's educational direction: **Dim luu-ts'ipkw hli gawisit** (the roots will be firm). Our story is unfolding. It is a living story...a learning journey that we are on together and one that each of us will contribute to – students, families, teachers, community members, Elders, EAs, bus drivers, custodians, secretaries, TTOCs, maintenance workers, district office staff, trustees, principals. Each one of us has an important role to play in creating our story. What will our story be? How can you contribute to helping us realize the Nisga'a Vision for Education? What role will you play in our story?

Dim daxgat nuum.

We are stronger together.



Nisga'a Vision for Education

Hlaxwhl hli ganwilaak'ilshl Nisga'a, gan wilhl daxgat wil dip hooxhl Sayt-K'ilim-Goot, Yuuhlimk'askw, Ayuukhl Nisga'a ganhl Hawahlkws; nihl haniihitkwhl Nisga'a tgun ahl ts'im-ganwilaak'ils, ganwilxo'oskw ganhl kwhlixoosa'anskw sit'aatkwsit wil sgathl hlgtk'ihlkw.



Nisga'a Education is a way to learn and live the principles of life which entails Sayt-K'ilim Goot, Nisga'a Ayuuk and the Yuuhlimk'askw system. Living Sayt-K'ilim-Goot creates a secure foundation that respects a balance between Nisga'a language and wisdom rooted in the land, and the languages and wisdom of other peoples. Education is a way to learn and live Nisga'a Ayuuk. The Yuuhlimk'askw system guides how to live. Nisga'a Education begins at birth.

Motion to accept: Verna Williams (Ts'aagabin) Seconded by: Alice Azak (K'iigapks) Question: Herb Morven (K'ee'xkw) Adopted at Fluent Speakers meeting – June 23, 2010 2:42.

Our School District is a place we:

- use Nisga'a language and practice Nisga'a culture with pride and confidence.
- listen and communicate respectfully.
- work and learn together, sharing our gifts and honouring the unique gifts of others.
- cultivate wellness and balance in all areas of being – heart, mind, body, and spirit.
- hold children at the heart of all we do. ❤️

We believe that an EDUCATED person models:

Respect
Compassion
Integrity
Patience
Teamwork
Curiosity
Creativity
Sayt-K'ilim-Goot

EVERY CHILD. EVERY DAY.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Board and Senior Leadership Staff of the Nisga'a School District have been transparent and consultative in planning how to move forward to improve achievement for our students/learners. Engagement in this process began more than a year ago as partners were asked for their priorities and wishes for our students. From the surveys and conversations had over many months, priorities surfaced and contributed to the development of our plan.

Staff Consultation

The process of thinking strategically about district priorities and direction started in August 2020 with a review of district documents and history. Throughout the fall, there were a number of discussions with the district team about what our students need. In January we met with all staff from across the district and posed the following questions:

- What do we know about the world?
- What do we know about our learners?
- What do we know about learning?

We then began a conversation around what we want to keep, amplify, discard, and create at both district and school levels. This discussion was followed up with additional discussions at individual schools.

The Board engaged in a working session, and additional dialogue was had with principals and within schools in February and March. In April, we invited all staff to a second district-wide meeting where we shared a summary of feedback collected from across the district. At the end of June, a summary of the engagement process was shared with staff and through a survey all were invited to provide any additional thoughts or suggestions.

Student Consultation

In May, we invited students to share their insights about school, what was working for them, what their wishes were, what their career ambitions were, and how they feel about school. Students were candid about their feelings towards school, what is working for them, and what they would like to see change.

"Sometimes school gives me anxiety or makes me feel really anxious because I'm worried I won't graduate or I'm not good enough. But I do my best. Take one day at a time." (student)

"Most days are good. Other days are not so good. Most days I'm happy. Other days it's just a "meh" :// " (student)

The Unity Pole symbolizes or reflects:

"We are all one with a common goal, we have the ability to create an equitable education system to the rest of the province that is culturally sensitive and promotes Nisga'a culture and traditions."
(community member)

"It doesn't reflect anything if the students aren't reminded or taught what it means or stands for."
(community member)

"With colonization came the western ideology of independence and individual wealth, disrupting our ways of the Wilp and community ... the Unity Pole symbolizes the importance of our cultural teachings of **Sayt-K'ilim Goot...** one heart one path one nation." (community member)

Community Consultation

In June, we requested input from families and community in the form of a survey. We shared the process and feedback received throughout the year and then asked key questions around priorities and aspirations for their children.



Confirmation of Key Focus Areas

The outcome of our consultations was support for the areas identified as priorities. For example, feedback from learning partners indicated strong support for:

- Upholding the Nisga'a Vision for education
- Infusing Nisga'a language and culture across all grades and subjects
- Building relationships and teamwork
- Arts education
- Place-based outdoor learning
- Well-being, sense of belonging and confidence in identity
- An education that balances heart, mind, body, and spirit
- Students graduate prepared for the next part of their life's journey



Areas of Focus

LIP WILA LOOM'

WELL-BEING and IDENTITY come first for students and staff in our district. They are the roots that nurture each person's ability to take care of themselves, each other, and this place. Our aim is to nourish the body, heart, spirit, and mind of each member of our school district community, child and adult, preparing them to be confident, capable leaders who thrive as individuals and who contribute to the well-being of the Nisga'a Nation as a whole.



GOAL: Nurture a sense of belonging, pride, and confidence in identity

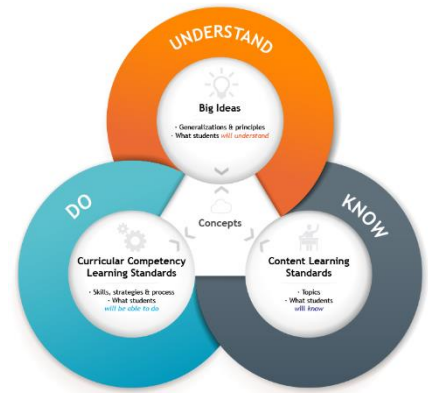
Support and encourage a system that recognizes, celebrates, and honours the gifts of every student.

- Nisga'a language and culture is used throughout the district
- Schools, and district facilities, are spaces of safety, culture, and healing
- All district departments operate wisely and compassionately
- Community partner connections are fostered
- Staff actively engage in professional learning



GANWILAAK'ILS

We support each student in developing their unique gifts on their educational journey. The BC curriculum focuses on students' ability to KNOW, DO, and UNDERSTAND; additionally, we want students to BE and BECOME who they hope to be. We want students to have confidence in their individual strengths and gifts and understand the responsibility of sharing those gifts with others.



GOAL: Enhance student learning and achievement

Nurture school and district cultures that inspire and support powerful teaching, learning, and leading.

Create opportunities for every member of our district team to contribute to student achievement.

- Strengthen graduation pathways
- Grow leaders across the system
- Support schools in reviewing and analyzing evidence of student learning
- Focus on improving the essential skills of literacy and numeracy
- Align school and district planning to support student learning



What will our story be? How can you contribute to helping us realize the Nisga'a Vision for Education? What role will you play?

Dim daxgat n'uum'.

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