

Nisga'a School District #92



Enhancing Student Learning Report

September 2023

In Review of Year Two of Dim luu-ts'ipkw hli gawisit 2021 – 2025



Approved by the Board of Education September 12, 2023

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Introduction: District Context

In the spirit of Sayt K'ílim Goot, the Nisga'a Nation is a sovereign treaty nation where Ayuukw, language, adaawak, and culture are the foundation of identity, and learning is a way of life. *Ts'im gan wilaak'ils wil luu sgihl gandidils*. We work together, recognizing that education is holistic and involves all aspects of being – body, heart, mind, and spirit.

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 and as a district we proudly serve approximately 400 students. Our student population is almost entirely Indigenous. The voices of these students, their families, and their communities inform and guide our work. We are here to provide educational opportunities that are uniquely Nisga'a and that prepare our students with the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and abilities to confidently take their place in the world.

Our story honours the past and looks to the future. We are challenging ourselves to be better for our learners. Teaching and learning are symmetrical, reciprocal endeavours that are closely tied to language, culture, and place. A clear, strong, collective vision, created by Nisga'a leaders, guides our learning journey. We recognize that each one of us is responsible for the education of Nisga'a students – family, child, teacher, district staff, local governments. Families are a child's first and most important teachers, and partnership between home and school is important for students to realize their educational goals. *Dim daxgat nuumh*.

While there are endless possibilities for rich learning connected to place and Nisga'a culture, our district has struggled with recruitment and retention of staff. We have faced critical shortages of qualified teaching and support staff for many years, and this impacts student and family engagement and student achievement. This is a reality that we confront daily. In addition to significant staff turnover, our district has faced inconsistency in school and district administration, a lack of adequate programming and explicit instruction, and ongoing intergenerational trauma from the genocide and harms of colonization, including the abuses inflicted at residential and day school, and the entrenched colonial practices that persist in our local, provincial, and global understanding of what a school system ought to be.

We know that classroom teachers have a powerful influence on student well-being, learning, achievement, and positive engagement with school. Having healthy connections with adults is critical to children's wellness. When our adults are engaged, caring, invested learners along with our students, we see more joyful learning experiences and environments. We have been working to build the collective efficacy and capacity of our staff as well as exploring ways to incentivize staff to join our district team and maintain interest in staying. School District No. 92 has the potential to provide exemplary, unique, and sought-after learning experiences for all children.

Section A: Reflecting Back

2022-23 Student Learning Outcomes

Intellectual Development

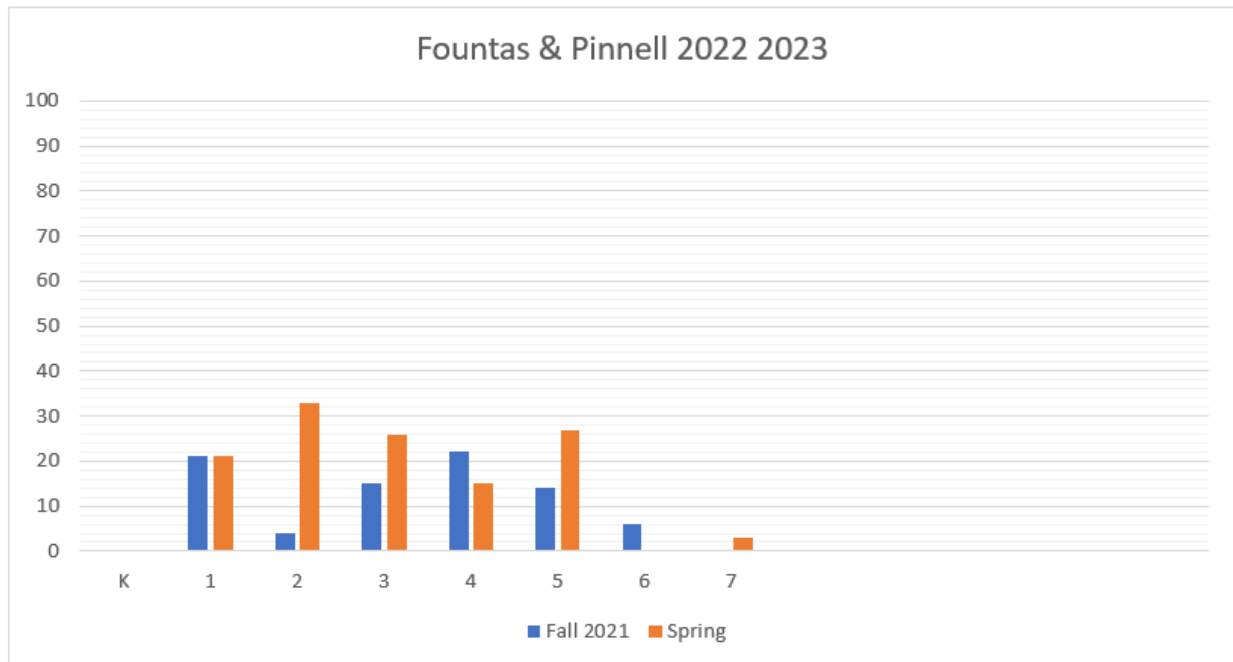
Educational Outcome 1: Literacy

Measure 1: Grade 4 & Grade 7 Literacy Expectations



Reading at Grade Level F&P Assessments 2022 – 2023

Grade	Fall 2022	%	Spring 2023	%
K	0/25	0	0/26	0
1	6/28	21	6/29	21
2	1/26	4	10/30	33
3	4/27	15	7/27	26
4	7/32	22	5/33	15
5	5/35	14	9/34	27
6	1/18	6	0/18	0
7	0/35	0	1/34	3



Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?

Our students, overall, are not yet reading at a satisfactory level of proficiency and reading achievement has been relatively static for many years, comparable to Indigenous students' results across the province who are living on-reserve. Our students' achievement is not improving as substantially as it should. There are several possible reasons for this including attendance, engagement, significant staff turnover, inconsistency and turnover in school and district administration, a lack of adequate programming and explicit instruction, and ongoing intergenerational trauma from the genocide and harms of colonization, including the abuses

inflicted at residential and day school and the entrenched colonial practices that persist in our schooling system.

Our students need to be able to read. Literacy, specifically the skill of reading, is important for several reasons:

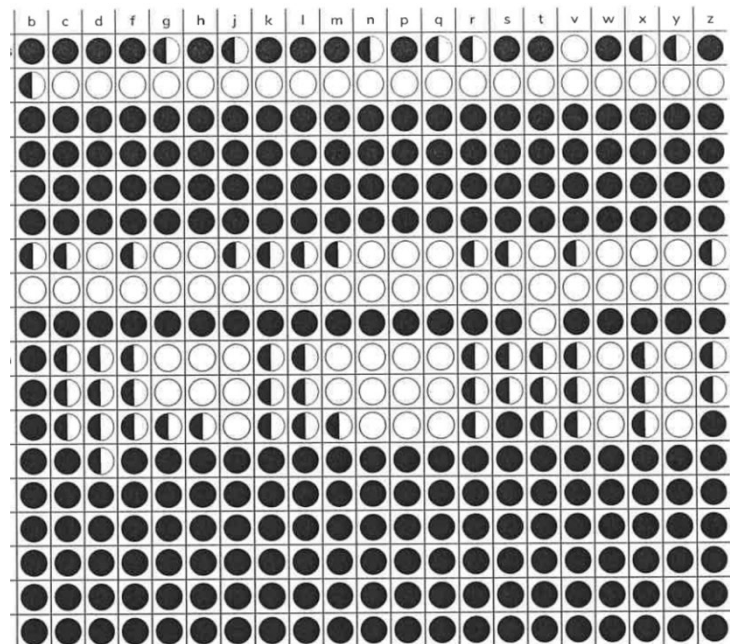
1. Literacy is among the major antidotes for poverty.
2. Literacy makes your life better.
3. Literate people have more choices in their work and personal lives, leading to greater freedom.
4. Literacy is great at teaching you how to think successively – that is, making meaning one step at a time to then build a story.
5. Literacy soon becomes the currency of other learning.

(Visible Learning for Literacy, 2016)

Our students are capable and intelligent, and we (educators) need to make sure our students are acquiring the skills needed to become confident, competent, and fluent readers. We have begun using the Joyful Literacy Framework which tracks each reading skill and supports teacher planning and instruction to ensure student mastery of these skills. We also have some work to do in ensuring that our district assessment, Fountas and Pinnell, is consistently and similarly administered to each student in the fall and spring each year.

Every educator K-12 has responsibility for growing our students' reading proficiency and we are actively engaged in building our capacity as educators to become better teachers of reading. All of us, teachers, and students, can pay more attention to reading strategies (questioning, predicting, connecting, visualizing, inferring) and how they weave through all learning by building critical and creative thinking.

We have noticed a correlation between attendance and the acquisition of reading skills. Those students K-3 who attend school regularly, are developing and growing their reading skills. The example below is from a grade one class in December. The students who have mastered knowledge of lower-case letters and their corresponding sounds, are those students who have been at school regularly. Those students who have missed a significant amount of school have also missed out on learning. Attendance matters.



Educational Outcome 2: Numeracy

Measure 2.1: Grade 4 & Grade 7 Numeracy Expectations



Relevant Additional/Local Data and Evidence

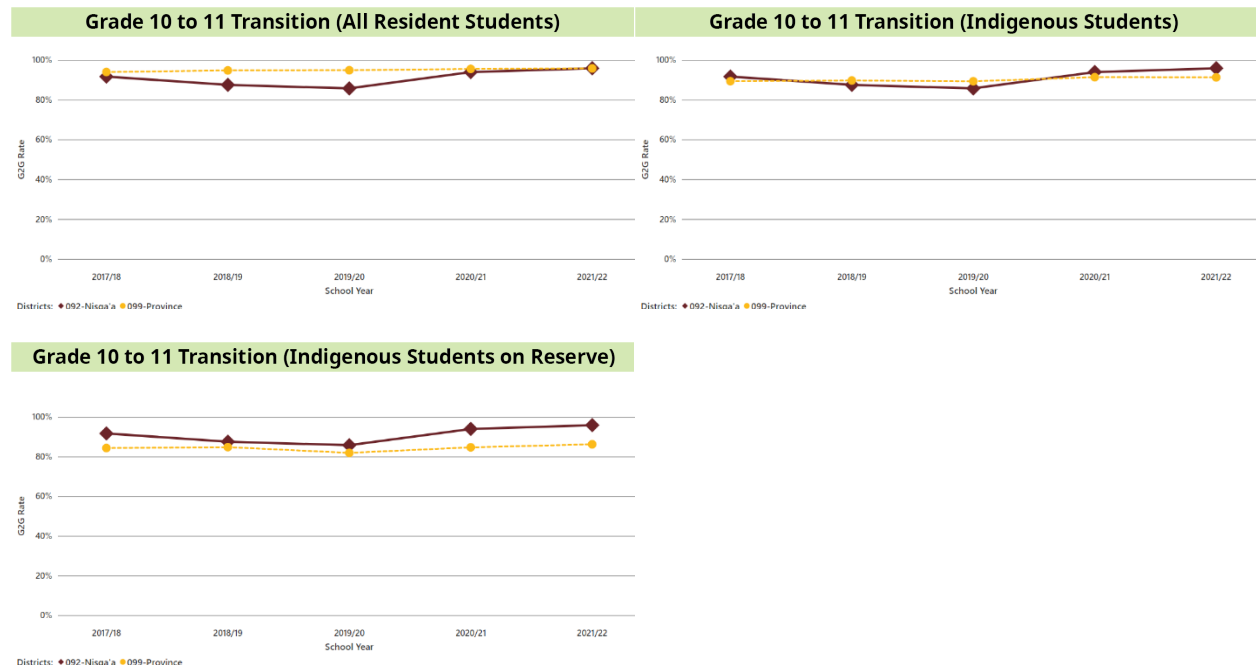
We do not yet have reliable quantitative local data about student numeracy. However, we do know that our students are focused more on the procedural aspects of math rather than the conceptual aspects, as evidenced in our students' limited number sense which "is the foundation

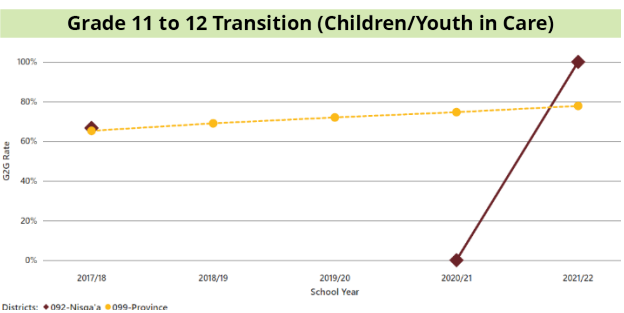
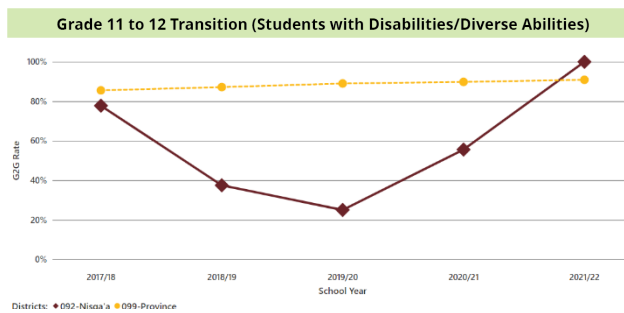
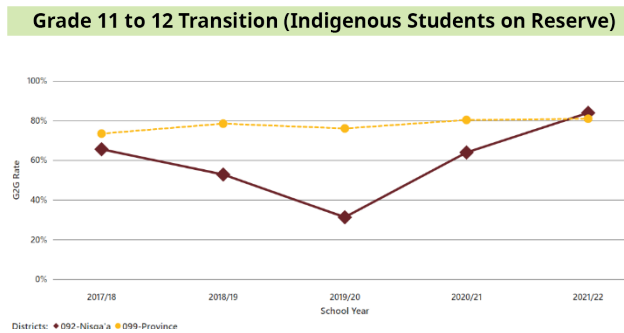
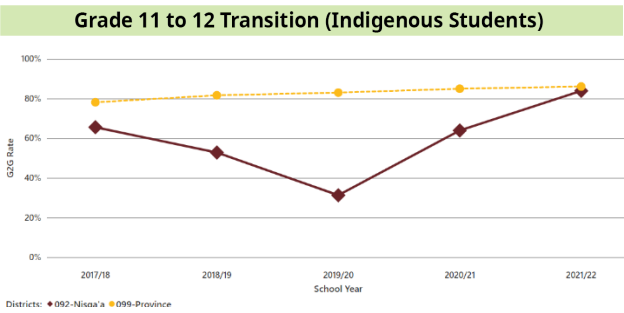
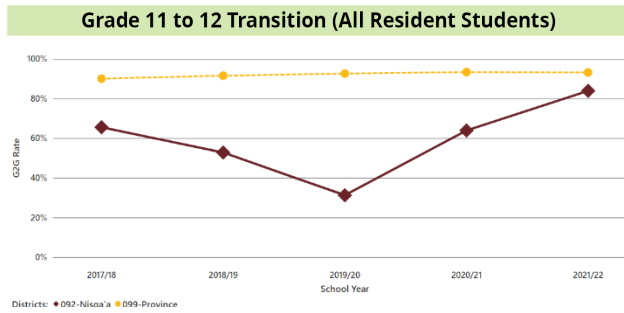
for all higher-level mathematics” (Feikes & Schwingendorf, 2008). It is important that we shift our instruction and assessment practices to focus on growing number sense and our students’ understanding of the conceptual aspect of mathematics. Working with Nikki Lineham, *Educating Now* developer, we are establishing daily number sense routines, conceptual thinking, and assessments that inform instruction.

Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?

For many years our students have struggled to achieve well with mathematics as it has been put forward in the curriculum. Achievement in math has been chronically and consistently low as it has been for on-reserve students across the province. Our current curriculum requires critical and creative thinking, opening space for the importance of mathematical concepts over procedures. As we work to alter this trend, we are working to build the confidence and capacity of our adults who are teaching math. We can no longer teach math the way we were taught math; using worksheets, textbooks (moving through unit by unit), and task completion are insufficient. Number sense, critically important to students’ mathematical development, is inhibited by over-emphasis on the memorization of math facts in classrooms and homes. The more we emphasize memorization to students the less willing they become to think about numbers and their relations and to use and develop number sense (Boaler, 2009). Our students need to have well-developed number sense which is developed through thoughtful, daily number sense routines. The challenges our children are facing will require far more than rote memorization and scoring well on tests.

Measure 2.2: Grade-to-Grade Transitions





Relevant Additional/Local Data and Evidence

Very few of our grade 10 students are fulfilling their grade 10 requirements during their grade 10 year. The result is that few are on-track for graduation five years after entering grade 8. COVID-19 had an impact on student attendance and engagement, and students in our district missed a great deal more school due to COVID than most students across the province. However, our completion rates have been far lower than the provincial average for many years.

Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?

Our students are consistently transitioning from grade to grade until grade twelve. The graduation program takes longer to execute when engagement is limited. That our graduation rates are low, is connected to the fact that grade 10 students are not fulfilling grade 10 graduation requirements in their grade 10 year.

There are several possible reasons for this including attendance, engagement (lack of), attitudes toward reading and math, significant staff turnover, inconsistency and turnover in school and

district administration, a lack of adequate programming and explicit instruction, and ongoing intergenerational trauma from the genocide and harms of colonization, including the abuses inflicted at residential and day school and the entrenched colonial practices that persist in our schooling system.

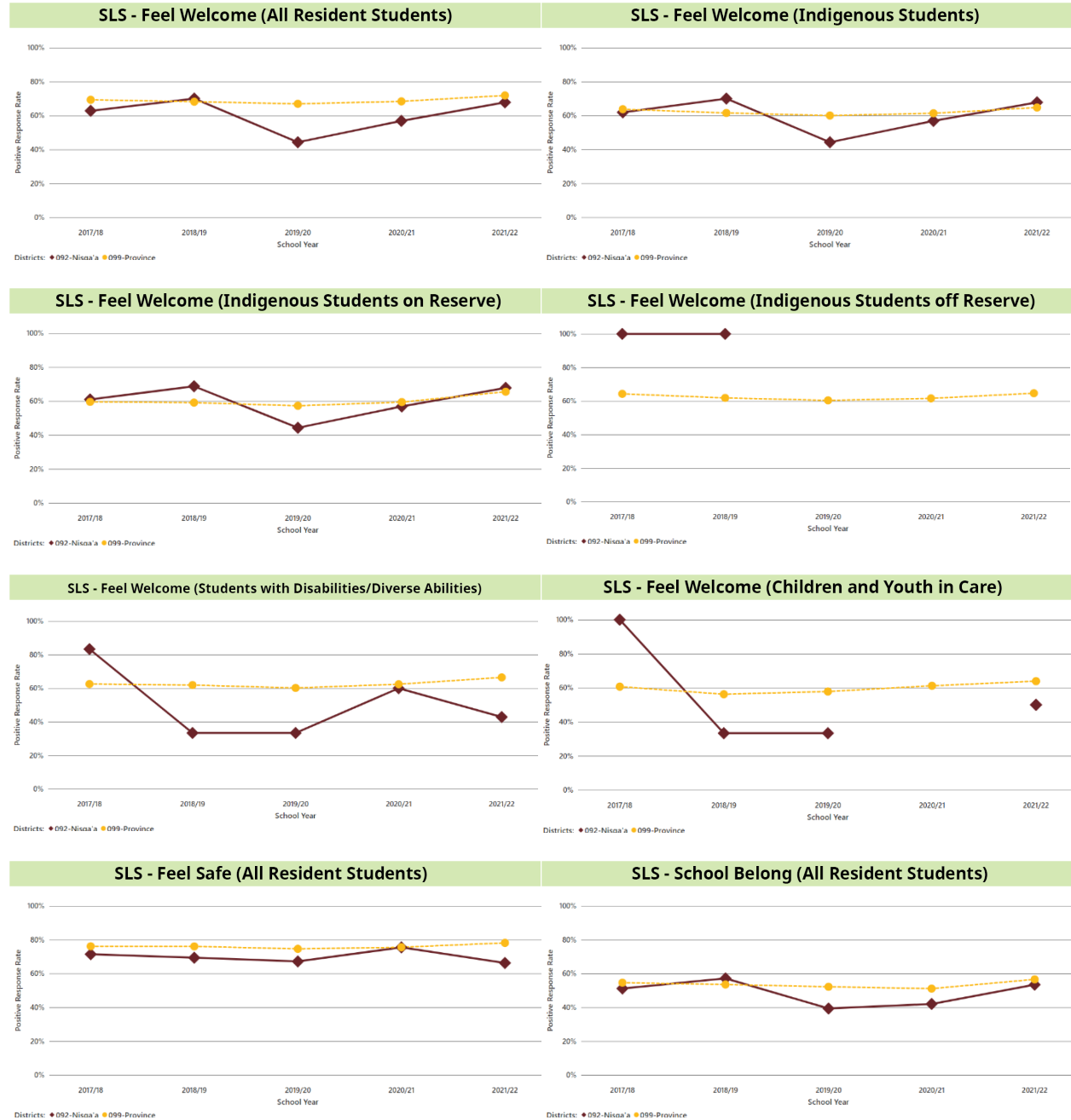
We are exploring ways to be flexible with meeting the requirements of the graduation program, including Board Authorized Courses, independent study, dual credit through Coast Mountain College, work experience, and working with North Island Distance Education to provide a variety of options and experiences for our students.

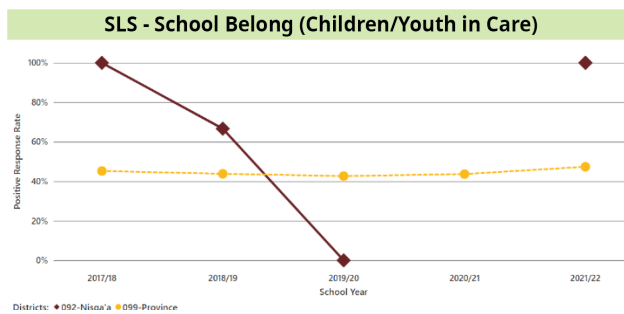
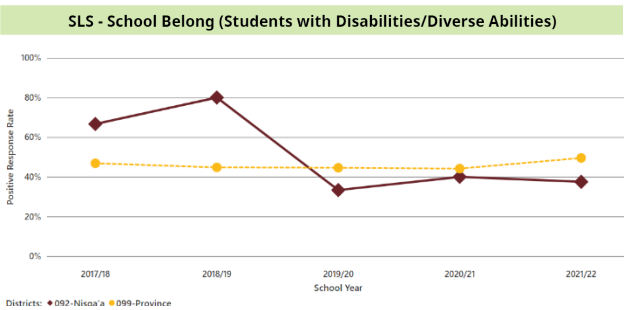
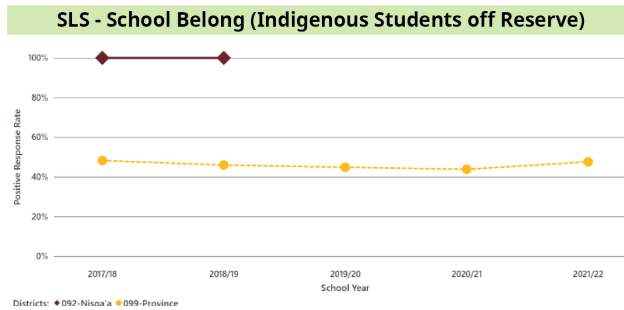
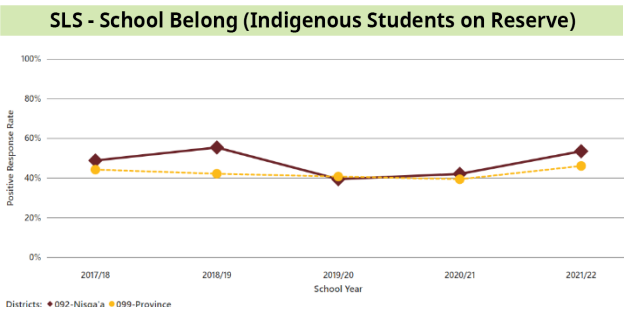
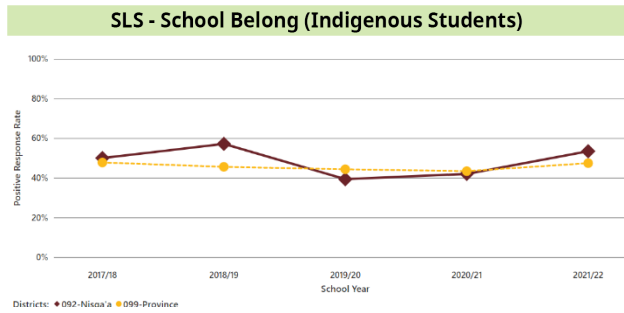


Human and Social Development

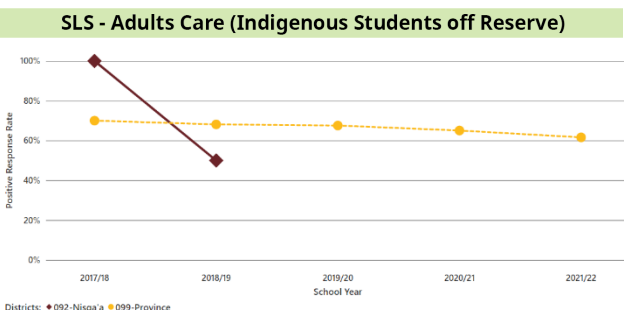
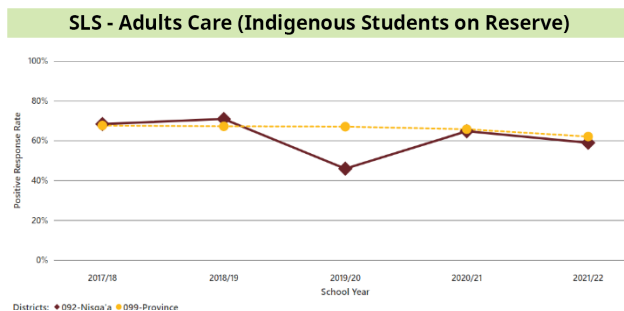
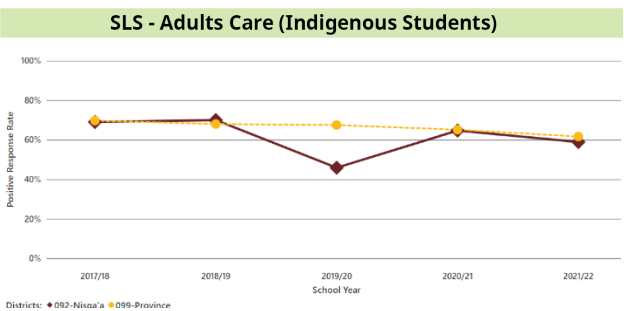
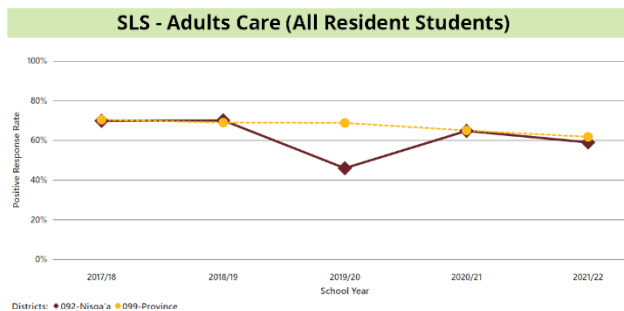
Educational Outcome 3: Students Feel Welcome, Safe, and Connected

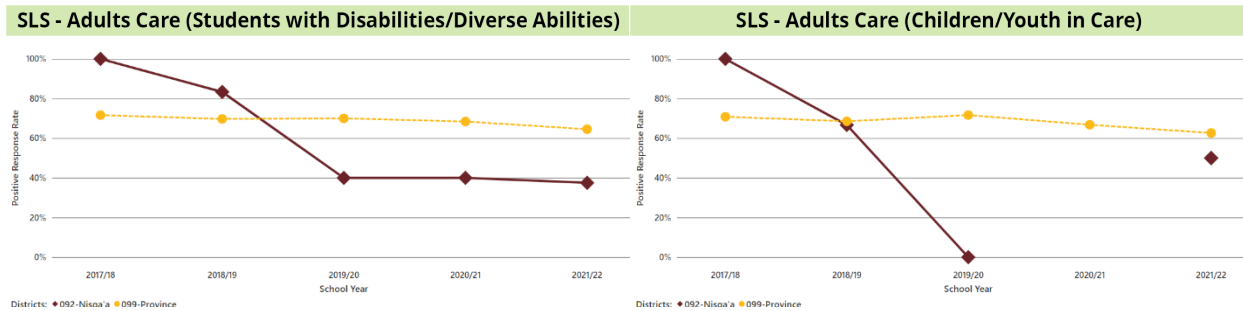
Measure 3.1: Student Sense of Belonging





Measure 3.2: Two or More Adults who Care About Them





Relevant Additional/Local Data and Evidence

EDI (Early Years Developmental Instrument)

Child development is influenced by many individual and contextual elements: from inherited biological and family factors to larger social, economic, and policy contexts. The characteristics of the environments in which children live and grow influence their development and readiness to learn as they enter school for the first time. Decades of HELP’s research reinforces the value of investing more robustly in early childhood development – it is society’s collective responsibility to provide the best possible start for all children.

School District 92 has participated in the EDI for several years and is able to use this data to better understand where our students are at when they arrive to kindergarten.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SUMMARY TABLE

EDI vulnerability rates for participating schools in SD 92 Nisga'a for the 2022/2023 academic year.

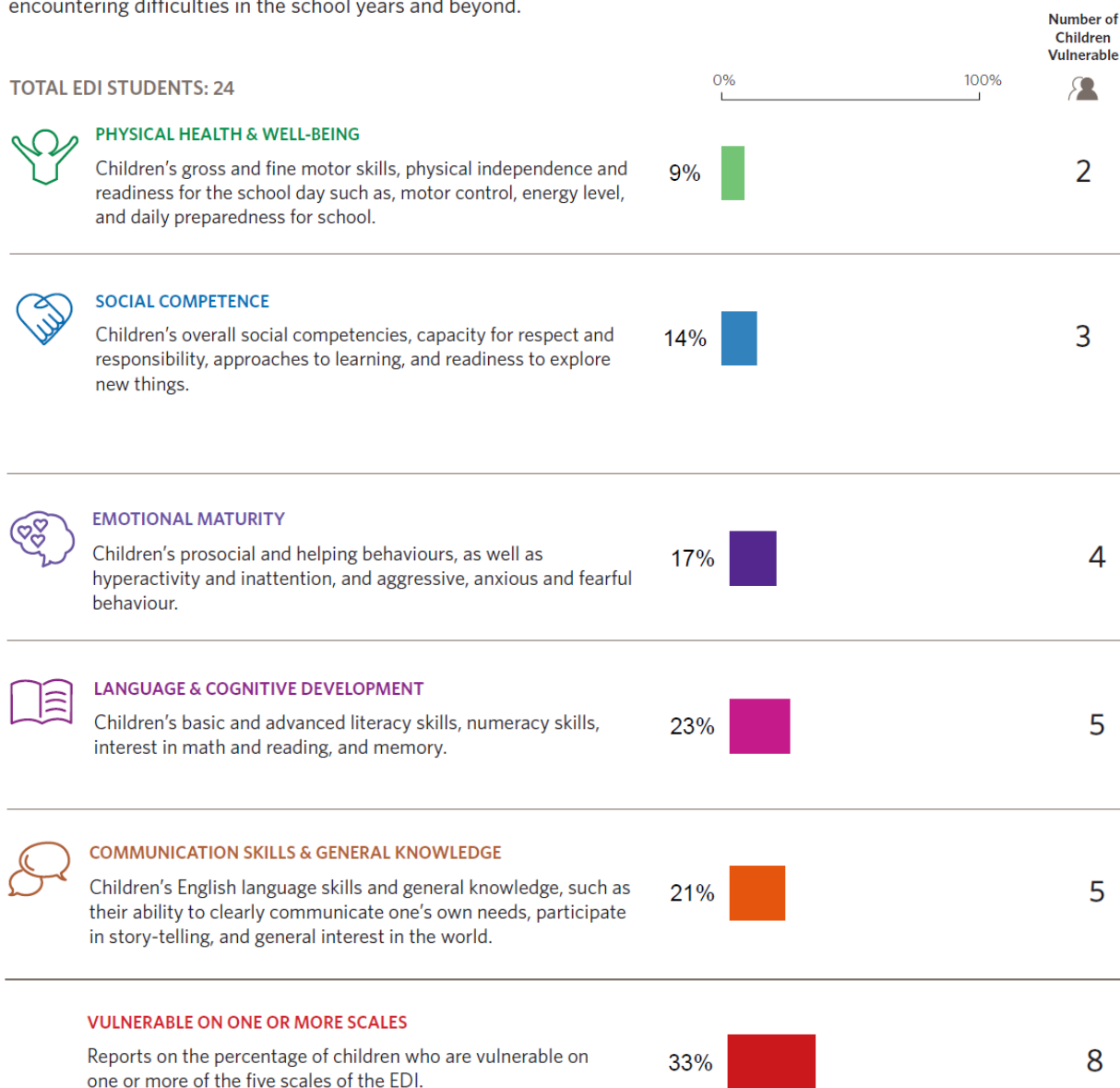
School Name	Total EDI Students	Percent Vulnerable					
		Physical Health & Well-being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language & Cognitive Skills	Communication Skills & General Knowledge	Vulnerable on One or More
Alvin A.McKay Elementary	6	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	17%
Gitwinksihlkw Elementary	3						
Nathan Barton Elementary	4						
Nisga'a K-12	11	0%	9%	9%	27%	9%	27%
Nisga'a	24	9%	14%	17%	23%	21%	33%

MULTIPLE VULNERABILITIES

	NO SCALES	1 SCALE	2 SCALES	3 SCALES	4 SCALES	5 SCALES
# Students	16	4	0	1	3	0
% Students	66.7%	16.7%	0%	4.2%	12.5%	0%

EDI VULNERABILITY RATES BY SCALE

Without additional support or care, children who are vulnerable on the EDI have, on average, an increased risk of encountering difficulties in the school years and beyond.



Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?

Our K-12 students arrive with different experiences and supports in their homes and from their families. We know how important a healthy home environment is and schools can do much to bridge communication and build positive relationships between home and school. We also know



that the environment created in the school and particularly in the classroom, has a significant impact on student welfare and well-being which influences their ability and readiness to learn. Vivian Robinson (2011) reminds us that “when students feel that teachers know and care about them, they feel more connected to the school, and their emotional engagement provides a platform from which teachers can more readily foster their cognitive engagement...”

Opportunities to speak Nisga’a language and live Nisga’a culture as part of school experience makes a difference to our students’ sense of belonging and identity. Connecting to land-based learning, Ayuukw, adaawak - story and story-telling, to traditional, seasonal harvesting, to weaving, carving, drawing, painting, to dance, singing, drumming, and many other cultural practices makes learning experiences engaging for our students. There are many talented community members who work with our students sharing their knowledge and skills. We are working to build

these important partnerships for the benefit and learning of our students as well as for the continuity, and the sustainability and flourishing of Nisga’a knowledge, language, and culture.

We are in the process of developing an assessment tool to track growth of Nisga’a language and the impact of infusing Nisga’a culture throughout our work.



Career Development

Educational Outcome 4: Students will Graduate

Measure 4.1: Achieved Dogwood Within 5 Years



Analysis and Interpretation: What Does this Mean?

Very few of our grade 10s are fulfilling their grade 10 requirements during their grade 10 year. The result is that few are on-track for graduation in five years of entering grade 8. COVID-19 had an impact on student attendance and engagement, and students in our district missed a great deal more school due to COVID than most students across the province (and world). However, our completion rates have been far lower than the provincial average for many years prior to COVID.

As mentioned previously, we are confronting the realities and complexities of our students' lived experiences as well as their families' and communities' experiences post-contact. When we

return to a notion of being – of living in harmony with place and with each other, we grow our ability to live as thriving and flourishing communities. Acknowledging the truth of our history opens hearts and our ability to move forward together in a good way.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act) establishes the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UN Declaration\)](#) as the Province’s framework for reconciliation, as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s [Calls to Action](#).



Operating on sovereign treaty lands, and as the only Indigenous school district in the province, **equity, truth, and reconciliation** are central to our work. We are battling patterns of behaviour and seemingly indomitable structures that make up our “educational” systems, not only in this province, but across the globe. While there is attention given to transformation, and we know it must happen if our children will be prepared to address the challenges we are leaving them, the will to transform and do things differently is glacially slow at best and invisible or non-existent at worst. Our students deserve more.

Some of our barriers include but are certainly not limited to: poor attendance, limited engagement, significant staff turnover, inconsistency and turnover in school and district administration, a lack of adequate programming and explicit instruction, and ongoing intergenerational trauma from the genocide and harms of colonization, including the abuses inflicted at residential and day school and the entrenched colonial practices that persist in our schooling system.

Some of our barriers include but are

Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors.

Dr. Jonas Salk



Section B: Moving Forward

Planning and Adjusting for Continuous Improvement

Current Strategic Plan Priorities

Nisga'a Vision for Education

Hlaxwhl hli ganwilaak'ilshl Nisga'a, gan wilhl daxgat wil dip hooxhl Sayt-K'ílim-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 hlgutk'ihlkw.

Nisga'a Education is a way to learn and live the principles of life which entails Sayt-K'ílim Goot, Nisga'a Ayuuk and the Yuuhlimk'askw system. Living Sayt-K'ílim-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'eeḵkw) Adopted at Fluent Speakers meeting – June 23, 2010

LIP WILA LOOM

WELL-BEING and IDENTITY 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 – children and adults – preparing them to be confident, capable leaders and learners who thrive as individuals and who contribute to the well-being of the Nisga'a Nation as a whole.

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

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 develop and have confidence in their strengths and gifts and understand the responsibility of sharing those gifts with others for the benefit of the community.

Learning involves patience and time.

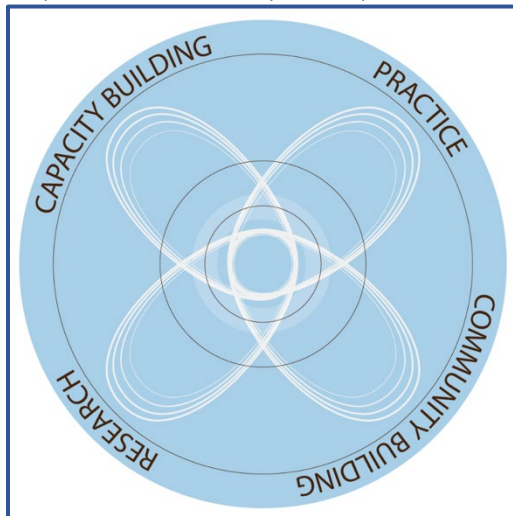
Improving Student Outcomes and Achieving Equity

We are actively working to improve student learning, honour Nisga'a knowledge and worldviews, and build on the vast strengths of our students. They are motivated, intelligent, capable, and creative. Our priority is student well-being. Eurocentric, colonial systems of education have caused harm and have created the current inequities that we continue to confront. We aim to lift Nisga'a knowledge, ways of knowing and worldviews. Language and culture are inseparable, tied intimately to place, and essential to identity and well-being. Infusion of Nisga'a language in all areas of education is essential. "At risk is a vast archive of knowledge and expertise, a catalogue of the imagination, an oral and written literature composed of the memories of countless elders and healers.... In short, the artistic, intellectual and spiritual expression of the full complexity and diversity of the human experience" (Wade Davis) of being Nisga'a. We want our students to be immersed in language, culture, and Nisga'a place-based learning.

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

EQUITY

School District 92 has been involved in the Equity in Action work for two years. It is important work. All of us have been colonized and identifying/recognizing the many tacit ways this is so requires our curiosity and openness to living, doing, and being otherwise. Our current reality is



not serving children or our world and our future. The space between have and have not, wealth and poverty, is growing. Living well together requires dialogue, openness, and listening to all voices, not only those with power, influence, and money/resources.

System-wide planning & Cycle of Review

The theory of change we are using to guide our school and district planning is the mandala for systems change which focuses on capacity building, community building, practice, and research in an ongoing cycle. We use a planning cycle that starts with curiosity about data from a variety of sources. Through collaborative

conversation, reflection, and research (using data), we generate knowledge that informs plans for action which we implement thoughtfully and monitor regularly. We use street, map, and satellite data to inform our plans, and continue to look for culturally appropriate data.

CAPACITY BUILDING

We are providing opportunities for staff to grow their personal understanding and instructional practice around social-emotional literacy and well-being, Nisga'a language and culture, reading, and numeracy. We know that the weaving of language and culture throughout students' daily learning at school contributes to a sense of belonging, well-being, and identity. Specifically, our Nisga'a language teachers and principals will be finding ways to infuse language and culture, explore learning on the land, and inviting Elders, knowledge keepers, artists, and other community experts to share their knowledge with our students and educational team. Ceremony and celebration are additional ways we create belonging.

Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

In efforts to build personal and collective capacity and efficacy, we will focus on the [Core Competencies](#) and [First Peoples Principles of Learning](#) as a lens for instructional planning. Opening and closing gatherings (meetings), assemblies, regular classroom time spent in circle allow everyone to have a voice and participate. We infuse Nisga'a language, drumming, song, and dance, as much as possible to build everyone's knowledge and confidence.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Schools continue to build relationships with families, community, and with Village Governments and Education Coordinators. The Superintendent reports regularly to Nisga'a Lisims Government, and the Program and Services Committee. While relationships with our partners are critical to the success of our children, we need to have strong relationships internally as well. Our school-based leadership team, principals and vice-principals, are central to creating the welcoming, safe, and inclusive school environments we need for learning to take root. They are key to working with school-based staff to create an open, caring, family-like environment where children and adults can thrive and flourish, and where lines between school, home, and community are blurred because everyone is involved and contributes.

PRACTICE

We know that learning is reciprocal. If adults are engaged and learning, children are engaged and learning. We are turning our attention to the adult learning environment. Through Compassionate Systems Awareness and the Deeper Learning Dozen, we will work directly with principals and interested teaching staff to build practices that create space for thinking and learning with each other as interconnected beings. We know it is only when we understand the complexity of systems and implement personal and collective practices that foster awareness of these systems that we can transform and shift. We also know that teaching and learning happens everywhere, not just in classrooms. All our staff – bus drivers, custodians, clerical, principals, finance, educational assistants, teachers, maintenance workers – can contribute to the learning environment. Everyone has knowledge and insights to share. We are in a particularly unique context, as each one of our Nisga'a staff have invaluable cultural and language

knowledge to share, and that will benefit all (adults and children). We need to create spaces for everyone to listen and to learn, spaces to practice new (old) ways of knowing and understanding the world and our connection to it and to each other. As we develop practices that connect us more with ourselves, more with each other, more with place, everyone will be nourished by the result, and we will be able to begin decolonizing some of the practices that have contributed to the inequity we are striving to combat. We need practices that truly complement and support the idea that:

Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.

These are the practices we will be developing and that will allow our students (and adults) to experience enriched learning and engagement.

Celebrating our Successes for the Past Year

Though we struggled with staffing shortages throughout the year, our district lived and experienced many notable and joyful successes.

We had 29 students graduate in June. 23 received their Dogwood and 6 received their Adult Dogwood. This was the largest group of graduates in many years and cause for great celebration. We are proud of all our students for their dedication and determination. It was heartwarming and inspiring to see adults return to complete their Adult Dogwood requirements.

Our work with the Joyful Literacy Framework is beginning to take root and we are seeing increased focus across elementary classrooms, especially our primary classrooms, teaching the essential skills of reading and tracking student progress daily.

We saw more classes than ever heading outdoors for learning and engaging with place-based learning.

We had many elders and knowledge holders working in our schools to share their wisdom, offer support, and help to create safe, caring, welcoming, spaces for our students. We are thrilled to have a district elder in residence. When we are immersed in living Nisga'a culture and speaking Nisga'a language, well-being and healing follows. We see this regularly in our schools.

Growing the capacity of our adults is a priority as we know that learning is symmetrical and reciprocal – if our adults are passionate about learning and actively engaged, our students will be as well. We need to be a learning organization – an organization of learners.

We witnessed the learning of many staff as we participated in Compassionate Systems Awareness training. We now have two Master Practitioners and one more in-training, as well as ten staff and a few Elders who have completed the introductory workshop. As we become more aware of how we show up and how we hold space for each other, we are better able to work

and learn together and better positioned to engage in deep system transformation that can challenge many of the patterns that perpetuate systemic and structural inequities.

In collaboration with post-secondary partners, we are working to provide in-community training for educational assistants and for would-be teachers.

Strategic Engagement

We are in continual dialogue with students, families, staff, and community to revisit our common purpose, values, and direction. In developing [Dim luu-ts'ipkw hli gawisit](#), consultation was done through virtual and in-person meetings as well as with surveys. School and district leaders had discussions throughout the year about priorities and direction. We held meetings with all staff in the district, principals held additional meetings with school staff to continue the conversation, and families were invited to share feedback in the form of a survey. We met with students face-to-face to gather their insights and suggestions. Additionally, the superintendent reports regularly to the Nisga'a Lisims Government, and meets, as invited, with Village Governments. As a district, we are working to build relationships with partners so we can work together for the benefit of children. We know, from our consultation on the strategic plan, that families want their children to be happy, engaged, and be prepared with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge to achieve the goals they set for themselves as contributing members of society.

The focus in all engagement is to provide the best learning experiences possible for children, and to keep children at the heart of all decision making.

Adjustment and Adaptations: Next Steps

Our next step is another step towards our North Star – we want every student in our district to have a sense of belonging and well-being and we want every one of them to be a reader and a critical and creative thinker.

We will continue our focus on students growing the essential skills they need to become readers. We want to get students more connected with place and get outside where they can learn on and from the land. All curricular and core competencies can be taught outside the four walls of a classroom, and we will be growing the confidence and capacity of our adults, so they are comfortable taking students outside for learning. As we connect students and staff to place, to land and culture, we know that Nisga'a language will naturally emerge and develop. Language, culture, and place are intimately connected and cannot be “taught” as discrete and distinct subject. Using the First Peoples Principles of Learning as a lens assists in keeping our focus on Nisga'a perspectives and worldviews.

Working with data to inform planning, instruction, and assessment is an area for continued growth as we work on developing thoughtful, learner-focused school and district plans. The following are questions guide our thinking:

- How's the learning?
- How do you know?
- What are you doing about it?

We want to make sure that we understand the learning that is, or is not, happening for our students, have appropriate tools and strategies for assessing the learning, and then have ideas about how to do better.

There will necessarily be continued focus on recruitment and retention of staff. Teachers make the biggest difference in student success and life chances.

Alignment for Successful Implementation

Our planning for enhancing student learning is aligned with [Dim luu-ts'ipkw hli gawisit](#). Ongoing communication and engagement take place through the creation, implementation, and monitoring of school plans.

With five new trustees, making up an entirely fresh Board of Education, we have spent a significant amount of time on in-service and professional learning to ensure good governance and a continued student-centered focus.



Conclusion

While we continue to face barriers around recruitment, retention, housing, infrastructure, attendance, and engagement, this is not how we want to be defined. School District 92 is uniquely situated to deliver exemplary world class learning experiences for our students. Not only do Indigenous worldviews, knowledge, and perspective hold keys to improved well-being for all, including the planet, this knowledge and way of being is essential for our students, particularly as it relates to Nisga'a knowledge and perspectives. The knowledge that exists in Nisga'a culture, language, and place needs to inform the teaching and learning we engage in in our schools. There is much to be learned from the land, Elders, knowledge holders, and local experts, as well as teachers. There is much that Nisga'a can contribute to our shared knowledge and understanding.

Whether or not it has been acknowledged by the Eurocentric mainstream, Indigenous knowledge has always existed. The recognition and intellectual activation of Indigenous knowledge today is an act of empowerment by Indigenous people. The task for Indigenous academics has been to affirm and activate the holistic paradigm of Indigenous knowledge to reveal the wealth and richness of Indigenous language, worldviews, teachings, and experiences, all of which have been systematically excluded from contemporary educational institutions and from Eurocentric knowledge systems. (Marie Battiste)

We honour the past and look to the future. We are challenging ourselves to be better for our learners. Teaching and learning are symmetrical, reciprocal endeavours that are closely tied to language, culture, and place. A clear, strong, collective vision, created by Nisga'a leaders, guides our learning journey. We recognize that each one of us is responsible for the education of Nisga'a students – family, child, teacher, district staff, local governments. Families are a child's first and most important teachers, and partnership between home and school is important for students to realize their educational goals. There is work to do but we know that we are stronger together.

Dim daxgat huum'.

