

# Strategic Priorities: Summary of Process and Progress

June 2021

## 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 haniihitkwahl Nisga'a tgun ahl ts'im-ganwilaak'is, ganwilxo'oskw ganhl kwahlxoosa'anskw sit'aatkwsit wil sgathl hlgutk'ihlkw.

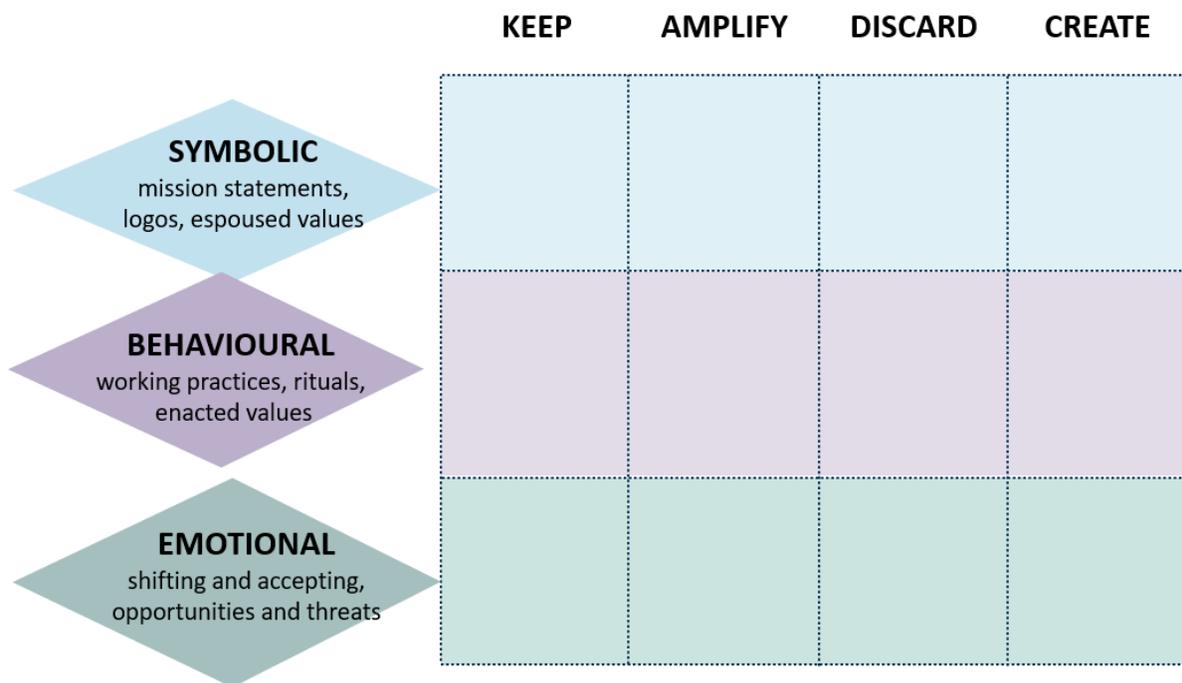
Nisga'a Education is a way to learn and live the principles of life which entails Sayt-K'ílim Goot, Nisga'a Ayuuk and the Yuuhlimk'askw system. Living Sayt-K'ílim-Goot creates a secure foundation that respects a balance between Nisga'a language and wisdom rooted in the land, and the languages and wisdom 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'eexkw) Adopted at Fluent Speakers meeting – June 23, 2010 2:42

The process of thinking strategically about district priorities and direction started in August 2020 as I reviewed 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 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 used the graphic organizer below to structure 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 school meetings.



We held a working session with the Board, further meetings with principals and more school-level meetings in February and March. In April, we invited all staff to a second district-wide meeting where we shared a summary of feedback provided across the district about priorities.

## Upholding the Nisga'a Vision for Education

Examples included:

- Using story to teach & guide (adaawak)
- Celebrating Nisga'a knowledge: recognizing and teaching culture, such as protocols, cultural duties & responsibilities, feasting, practices of the long house, seasonal hunting & gathering (harvesting calendar), preserving and cooking, more community-based learning... (ayuuḵ and yuuhlimḵ'askw)
- Language infusion
- Intergenerational learning from Elders and mentors
- A focus on the arts – dance, drumming, song, music, carving, jewelry, visual arts (of all kinds)
- Building on ceremony
- Nisga'a-focused curriculum K-12; honour and encourage Nisga'a knowledge/ways of knowing. (First Peoples Principles of Learning infused/embedded throughout curriculum)
- Outdoor, place-based learning



### Students at the center/Learner-focused

- Enhanced teaching & learning
  - Quality instruction
  - Options and opportunities for student learning that is focused on student passions and interests
  - Curricular and extracurricular opportunities – travel, teams, clubs, wellness/mental health
  - Graduation pathway plan for every student
  - Connections with post-secondary institutions
  - Breakfast and lunch programs
  - Cross-curricular/interdisciplinary learning
  - Multiple entry points for learning so it is inclusive, equitable & accessible for all learners
  - A focus on identify & pride in self; sense of belonging; honouring individual gifts/talents
- Teaching and learning is reciprocal; meet students where they are at and learn from them
  - Know each student, their interests, aspirations, and passions, and target instruction to encourage development
  - Assessment that informs practice and enhances learning
  - Learning environments that are welcoming, caring, healthy, inclusive and equitable

## Relationships/Building Connections/Working Together



- Collaboration and teamwork; let's work together and build on each other's strengths
- Take care of ourselves, each other, and this place (mindfulness, compassion, etc)
- Cultivate authentic, caring, sustainable connections with students, families, and communities
- Strengthen partnerships to enrich the ways we learn, lead, and work; foster networks to enhance learning (ie. WWNI, CM College, UNBC, VIU...)
- Community engagement

In May, we invited students to share their thoughts about school, what was working for them, what their wishes were, what their career aspirations were, and how they feel about school.

We hope that these priorities can be further synthesized into a visual or symbol that represents Nisga'a education and what we want for our students. We are currently reflecting on the Unity pole, its teachings, its story, its literal and symbolic meaning as an appropriate visual text for this purpose.

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. Every single one of us – students, families, teachers, community members, Elders, EAs, bus drivers, custodians, secretaries, TTOCs, maintenance workers, district office staff, trustees, principals– 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.

A final step for us is to reach out to families and community to ask for your feedback. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey by following the link below. The survey is 20 questions, most of which are multiple choice, and should take approximately 3 – 5 minutes to complete. Thank you for sharing your thoughts!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CFZSBH2>

If you have any questions or wish to share further comments, please speak with your child's school principal or with the superintendent.

**Contact:** Jill Jensen (Superintendent) [jjensen@niscga.bc.ca](mailto:jjensen@niscga.bc.ca) (250)633-2038