

Superintendent's Report to the Board

May 2024



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A Message from the Superintendent

Ama sah / Good day,

Coast Mountains' schools continue to be busy hubs for community engagement and learning this month. Between May 6-10 and coinciding with Mental Health Week, many schools were fortunate to welcome McCreary Centre Society's Annie Smith and Katie Horton who worked with learners, addressing a number of important topics including mental health, healthy habits and the impacts of vaping. Wellness for students and staff alike is an ongoing focus in schools, and the support of the McCreary Centre Society and many other partners in our local communities is valued and appreciated.



Students participate in an activity led by Annie and Katie of McCreary Centre Society identifying factors impacting their wellbeing.

On May 8, I had the pleasure of attending a gathering of community Elders, Knowledge Holders and Role Models hosted by the Indigenous Education Department. The participants were from all corners of the school district and beyond, and many have been supporting programming in classrooms and on the land over the last number of years. This event served to both demonstrate our collective thanks for their efforts as well as receive from them their thoughts of how programming could evolve in the future to better serve the cultural and spiritual needs of our learners.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the members of the school district Budget Working Committee who have been meeting over the last several weeks as they plan for the 2024-25 school year. During this process, the team is working to ensure resources are allocated appropriately and according to the priorities and needs within our schools and communities, including those identified within the Board's Strategic Plan 'Engage, Ignite, Empower'.

Finally, the school district has been working to operationalize the amendments made to the *School Act* stemming from the passing of Bill 40 in the fall. I'm excited to say that Kitsumkalum First Nation has identified Suwilaawks Community School as their School of Choice for elementary-aged learners attending our public system, while the Ministry of Education and Child Care has just released a Model Local Education Agreement (LEA) for First Nations to implement should they choose. The Indigenous community and school districts are both anticipating more information regarding Indigenous Education Councils (IEC), including terms of reference, to support their important work providing input, advising and approving district level plans that meet the academic and cultural needs of Indigenous children and youth. All components of Bill 40 have great potential, resulting in transformational change for Indigenous learners around the province, and Coast Mountains School District is in full support of the efforts.

I hope you all have a wonderful month ahead.

Sincerely,

Aaron Callaghan
Superintendent



Coast Mountains School District is in service to diverse First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners and their caregivers who live, learn, and play on the traditional lands of the Gitksan, Haisla, Nisga'a and Ts'msyen peoples.

Superintendent's Report to the Board

May 2024



Strategic Plan 23-24 Action Plan Update

Goal - Students Will Realize Their Full Potential

Literacy Stories of Impact - Cassie Hall Elementary (K-3)

After completing the first round of literacy assessments using Acadience Reading in November, Literacy Lead Teacher Laura Gray began to work alongside both a classroom teacher and the principal to support a small group of students who were identified as being below grade level in foundational skill development. Laura provided ongoing instruction using UFLI Foundations, a resource used by many CMSD teachers at K-3 this year, as a Tier 2 Intervention tool. By the second round of Acadience assessments in February, two students from the group had made dramatic progress and were exceeding grade level expectations. With the third and final Acadience assessments now taking place, most of the students in Laura's small Tier 2 intervention group are expected to be on track and either meeting or exceeding grade level expectations!

Literacy Stories of Impact - Cassie Hall Elementary (4-6)

Cassie Hall Elementary was just one of a few schools piloting Empower for Tier 3 intervention this year in Coast Mountains School District. One student, who self-identified early in the year as a non-reader, was identified to receive one-on-one intensive support using Empower with the Learning Resource Teacher. Acadience Reading was used in this instance as a diagnostic to identify areas for growth. It was determined that although the student could successfully identify letter sounds, they struggled with encoding. Along with Empower, Acadience was used to support progress monitoring, and after one month of intervention, the student was exceeding expectations on his progress monitoring chart.

Gitxsan Language Immersion Program Will Launch in September 2024

Coast Mountains School District will be offering Gitxsan Immersion this fall with the introduction of one Kindergarten classroom at Majagaleehl Gali Aks Elementary School. Following a number of community-held information sessions in April, parents and caregivers across the Gitxsan Lax̱yip (territories) have shared their interest in their children's participation in the program at Grade Kindergarten for September.

The school district is incredibly pleased to support the Gitxsan Nation in the launch of this important program. Simalgyax, the Gitxsan language, has been identified by UNESCO as severely endangered, and the new program aims to provide a strong foundation for literacy rooted in the context of Gitxsan language, culture, traditions and protocols.



Superintendent's Report to the Board

May 2024



Local Elders & Knowledge Holders Gather

On May 8, the Indigenous Education Department (IED) hosted an Indigenous Role Model Gathering, with attendees from multiple Northwest communities representing Ts'msyen, Haisla, Gitksan, Nisga'a, and Mohawk Nations. The gathering served to pull current role models together for dialogue along with others who are interested in learning more about becoming role models.

The IED intends to increase access to Indigenous Role Models in schools with opportunities to invite Elders and Knowledge Keepers into the classroom to share their expertise and cultural knowledge. Both table talks and circle sharing exercises provided valuable information related to the Indigenous communities, programs, services and individual skills and abilities available for schools and classrooms to access. A 'blue skies thinking' activity resulted in many creative ideas impacting agency for Indigenous learner identity, learner language and culture skills, access to cultural knowledge of their land, and even land-based resources in their schools. The day was such a success that planning for the next gathering is already in the works!



Elders, knowledge holders and district staff collaborate at recent gathering.

Adventures in Healthcare

Earlier this month students from Terrace and Kitimat schools participated in **Adventures in Healthcare**, a short exploratory program offered in partnership with the Rotary Club, Northern Health, LNG Canada, University of Northern British Columbia, and Coast Mountain College. The goal of the program is to expose youth to a variety of pathways and opportunities leading towards a career in the Healthcare sector. Through hands-on activities and guest presentations, students explored careers related to Nursing, Psychology, Social Work, Density and more. Experiences took place at a variety of Terrace locations including Coast Mountain College, Northern Health, Terrace View Lodge, Cedar Coast Dentist Office and UNBC.



Adventure in Healthcare took place across Terrace between May 1-3.

Thank you to all those educators, volunteers and professionals who supported these amazing experiences for kids!



Upcoming Dates

- May 24 – Professional Development Day (No Classes)
- May 30 – All Our Relations | Equity in Action Meeting
- June 1 – National Indigenous History Month Begins
- June 1 – Pride Month Begins
- June 5 – Business & Education Committee Meetings
- June 19 – Board Meeting

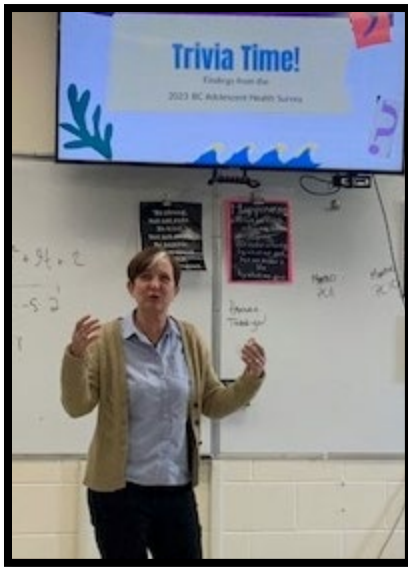
Superintendent's Report to the Board

May 2024



McCreary Centre Society Visit Northwest BC

Between May 6-10, Coast Mountains School District hosted Annie Smith and Katie Horton from McCreary Centre Society, a not-for-profit committed to improving the health of BC Youth through research, evaluation and community-based projects. McCreary's vision is that all youth are supported to be healthy, connected, and committed to honouring the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.



Annie Smith of McCreary Centre Society speaks to students about well-being.

McCreary Centre Society is responsible for the Adolescent Health Survey (AHS), a provincial tool administered to youth in Grade 7 to 12 since 1992. The survey gives an evidence base of youth health trends, emerging issues, and risk and protective factors for healthy development, and CMSD received its report earlier this year.

While in the school district, and with the support of District Principal Phillip Barron, the McCreary team visited 7 schools, spending time with more than 14 classes and leadership groups engaging youth in survey results and workshop activities including interactive trivia games and pyramid building activities. The team's visits were well received by learners and staff alike, and the school district will continue to work closely next year with the McCreary team as they provide opportunities for students related to their research and health programs, as well as their Youth Action Grants.

Learn more by visiting https://www.mcs.bc.ca/youth_engagement.

Erase = Expect Respect & A Safe Education: Resources for Parents & Caregivers

There are a number of provincial resources available through erase to draw to the attention of parents and caregivers:

- Erase – Mental Health & Wellness
<https://bit.ly/erasesmentalhealth>
- Erase – Substance Use
<https://bit.ly/erasesubstanceuse>
- Erase – Bullying
<https://bit.ly/erasebullying>
- Erase – Racism
https://bit.ly/erase_racism
- Erase – Online Safety
<https://bit.ly/eraseonlinesafety>
- Erase – Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity (SOGI)
<https://bit.ly/erasesogi>



Superintendent's Report to the Board May 2024



This Month On Social Media...

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Sunday May 5 was Red Dress Day, and MMIWG2S was a focus of conversation in schools on Friday May 3.



Teacher Shelly Striker supports learners from Kildala Elementary School as they take part in the Zone[01] Robotics Competition at Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School.



Local Gitxsan artist Michelle Stoney, along with a number of secondary learners, complete an amazing mural at Hazelton Secondary School.



Students and staff from Hazelton Secondary School participate in a land-based learning experience in Upper Kispiox.