



School District No. 50
Haida Gwaii

Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement 2012-2017



School District 50 (Haida Gwaii)
Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (2012-2017)



“In reclaiming our culture we gain strength. We gain a solid foundation from which to grow. In reclaiming our culture, we reclaim our identity. We have many threads connecting us to the past. My grandparents’ generation was one of those threads, and when these threads come together, they form a thick rope. It is that thick rope that connects us to our culture and the values that we are reclaiming. We are living in a very powerful time: a time when we know we can determine our own direction. We have the power, the education, the strength, the knowledge to take back the reins. You hold the power to improve our formal education, to bring it back to the land, and to work with us to make it culturally relevant. Let’s take this next step together.” Robert Davidson



1. Preamble

The purpose of an Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement is to enhance the educational success of Aboriginal students. It is the belief of all the partners to this agreement that enhancing the achievement of Aboriginal students requires changes that will benefit all students in the district. It is our vision that we must prepare the next generations to adapt to, live in, and flourish in a rapidly changing world, of which our students must be an integral part. Indeed, they are truly our future: while 29% of the British Columbia population (2006) is under 25, in the northwest region the aboriginal number is in excess of 46%. Our commitment is to make whatever changes are needed so that these benefits can be enjoyed by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students alike. This Enhancement Agreement acknowledges and honours the Haida Nation as the First People of these islands.



2. Partnerships

Collaborative decision making occurs with our communities and stakeholders on all issues of importance, including the development of this document. The partners to this agreement include School District No. 50 (Haida Gwaii), the Old Massett Village Council, the Skidegate Band Council, the Council of the Haida Nation, and the Ministry of Education. Many other partners have been involved in making this Agreement a reality: Literacy Haida Gwaii, which leads a variety of community literacy initiatives; Community Futures, which plays a key role in on-island adult education and career development; Swan Bay and Lepas Bay Rediscovery, along with Mount Moresby Adventure Camp, which offer on-the-land educational opportunities for young people; the various PACs and DPAC throughout the School District; and Simon Fraser University & the University of British Columbia, which have been involved in long-term research partnerships with Haida Gwaii communities.

Consultation has occurred on the EA since 2003. Collaborative meetings have occurred in Old Massett, Massett, Skidegate, and Queen Charlotte. They have involved the parties noted above as well as parents, elders, and community members at large. They have been hosted in a variety of formats, but most commonly as a general discussion to generate ideas and opinions on the development of the EA.

Figure 1 January-March 1955 Skidegate Inlet United School Register-note comment on absence and school closure.


 “Knowledge can be
 encoded genetically”
 Woodrow Morrison



Many community members expressed a desire to see students learning more about the language, places where they live, Haida history and culture, and economic and ecological issues that will shape the future of the islands’ communities. Progress in this area was seen as important for its own sake, as well as a potential means of increasing students’ engagement with school and hence academic success and graduation rates. On the part of school staff, the view was widely shared that many resources available on the islands are not used adequately in the schools. Staff new to the district indicated that it was not easy to familiarise themselves with the range of materials, people, and places that might be relevant to their teaching. Experienced staff recalled times when the district placed a greater emphasis on

outdoor education, the integration of Haida content, or in-classroom demonstrations of new resources. There was a shared belief that too much depends at present on the initiative of individual staff. This has led to an emphasis on ‘Culturally Responsive Education’ intertwining Science, Math, Social Studies and Language Arts with the language, history, culture, and ecology of Haida Gwaii, in an effort to embrace and embed Haida culture in our actions and instruction, so as to not perpetuate the assimilative model that informed educational practise back to the days of residential schools.

3. The Past

(Please see the timeline in the appendix for further information). The history of education and First Nations peoples begins with relationships. Skills, values, and stories were taught by elders and parents, and, in the Haida tradition, most especially by uncles and aunts. Education was also experiential and relevant to the child and the community.



It was recommended that more use be made of material gathered on Haida Studies and local history. Queen Charlotte Education Survey, Special Meeting, January 28, 1976



The arrival of European education undermined, but did not extinguish, these traditions. Damage was done to these practices by the utilisation of Residential Schools, most particularly Alert Bay, Port Alberni, Coqualeetza in Chilliwack, and in Edmonton, the four primary schools for Haida children. Disease, displacement, racism and colonisation all impacted Haida traditions and language, but they survived resiliently.



By the mid twentieth century, Haida Gwaii merged from two school districts to one, Queen Charlotte. The only opportunity for a grade twelve education was in Massett; access to a full education only came in the late 1970s. Prior to this, many students' education did not extend to the senior secondary level before leaving

school.

Also in the 1970s were the beginnings of the Haida cultural awareness coming after the raising of poles in the late 60s in Old Massett. Resurgent interest in Haida Language, art, and traditions began to take root in the community and in our schools, while the old taboos around expressing cultural interest waned.



“There’s good things in this world yet and the best thing that could ever happen is to have a little kid as a friend, they are the best friends in the world. That’s what teaching should be about.”

John Yeltatzie



If we accept a ‘status quo’ we accept the decline of the language. At present, Haida is taught at our four larger schools, and there are

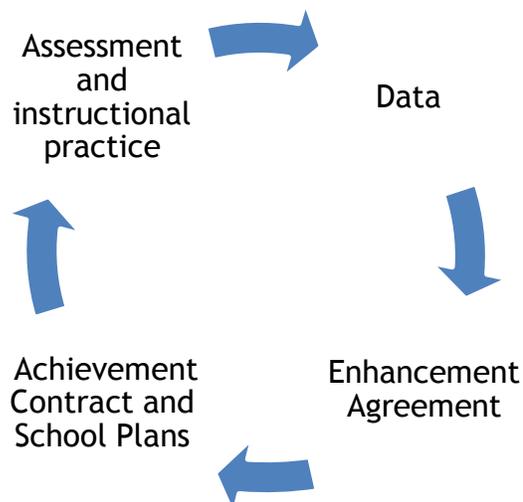
on-going efforts to continue to support the integration of Haida and Aboriginal materials and expertise in school curriculum. In most years, we provide additional funding for curriculum development and language revitalisation.

A timeline of events was established for this document based on feedback from stakeholders at various meetings. This had the added benefit of making us all connect the past to the present.

4. Principles

The goal areas selected for enhancement are those where there is assurance that:

- Data can be tracked with integrity and can be effectively used to implement intervention.
- Goals are related to School District No. 50's Achievement Contract, which is focused on the success of aboriginal students. The AC can be retrieved at <http://sd50.bc.ca/district/accountability-cycle/achievement-contract-2011-2012-4/>
- The Enhancement Agreement will be reviewed annually by the Haida Education Council. Changes in goals, as with other endeavours, will be through consultation and mutual agreement.
- School plans and Achievement Contracts are developed in accordance with the Enhancement Agreement.
- Old Masset Village Council, Skidegate Band Council and the Council of the Haida Nation will ensure that their own educational initiatives are planned to complement and strengthen the measures outlined in the Agreement.



I really like Mr. ___ and Mr. ___; they are just really funny but they get people to work and can be awesome at the same time.” Student, GMD



5. The Future: Goal Areas

For each goal area, a brief summary is provided.

Goal Area 1

That students develop a strong sense of belonging to their learning environment and community.

We strongly believe that our students know who they are and where they come from, but we continue to improve our capacity in reinforcing this. We are also seeking to improve support and intervention for students experiencing difficulties, whether personal or academic.



This was an area of great concern for both community members and district staff. Students describe their favourite teachers as those that “get it”. Those most engaged at school have broad support from family, community and staff to succeed. Community members were concerned that the students in greatest need of academic support were often placed with learning assistants or teaching assistants who lacked the specialized knowledge needed to help them. Staff expressed a desire for lower student-teacher ratios and for more professional counselling for students. We recognise that aboriginal learners of other Nations will also be supported.

Indicators of Success:

- Survey/interview of Secondary Students on their school connectedness;
- Early Leaver’s Data;
- Improved School Attendance.

Commitments:

- We believe that our students will benefit from a strong connection to their school and that teachers will benefit from an increased awareness of Haida traditional knowledge and language, utilising strategies ranging from Culturally Responsive Education to aboriginally oriented Early Childhood Education programming.
- We will ensure on-going cultural enrichment not only for our students but our staff as a whole.

Goal Area 2

Improve grade transition rates and school completion rates, with enhanced academic performance in key meaningful high school subjects (English, math, science, social studies).

This was affirmed as a key goal area in the engaged consultation process. Community members are aware that many Aboriginal youth fail to complete high school. This goal is the basis our District's Achievement Contract, and District staff shares this goal and are aware of the complex challenges involved in raising graduation rates and academic performance. Progress in Goal Area 2 is therefore likely to come about as a result of many separate initiatives, not all of which involve the high schools directly. For example, in October 2010 the Haida Child and Family Services hosted a symposium at which the youth of Haida Gwaii signed a Haida Nation Children and Youth Declaration outlining their rights and responsibilities. An on-going conversation will be held with HEC and other partners as defining what success looks like for aboriginal students, and to continue to explore what barriers our students face.



"After a few years, I realised they were teaching me more than I was teaching them."

Teacher, QCSS



Indicators of Success in Goal Area 2:

- Improving Six-year completion rates, and specifically dogwood graduation;
- Successful Grade-to-grade transition rates;
- Required Provincial exam scores and participation in Grades 10, 11 and 12;
- Improving Foundations Skills Assessment, Vancouver Island Math Assessment and Writing Sample results; and
- Tracking of Post-Secondary Success.

Commitments:

- To giving our students and families the information, courses and learning experiences they need to be successful on their learning journey.



"The Haida Nation is the rightful heir to Haida Gwaii. Our culture, our heritage is the child of respect and intimacy with the land and the sea. Like forests the roots of our people are intertwined such that the greatest troubles cannot overcome us.

We owe our existence to Haida Gwaii. The living generation accepts the responsibility to insure that our heritage is passed on to following generations.

On these islands our ancestors lived and died and here too we will make our homes until called away to join them in the great beyond." Haida Proclamation, Section C of the Haida Constitution of the Council of the Haida Nation



6. Reporting

An annual report will be provided to stakeholders regarding the progress of the Enhancement Agreement.



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“We are connected to the earth, that’s straight and simple; we’re connected to all living things and that’s straight and simple; we have respect and care take all that there is around us and that’s pretty straight and simple; it’s to survive for living generations and improve on as time goes on”. John Yeltatzie

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Haida Gwaii Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement

Dated in _____ on the _____ of February, 2012

ON BEHALF OF:

OLD MASSETT VILLAGE COUNCIL

Ken Rea, Chief Councillor

Florence Lockyer, Education Administrator

SKIDEGATE BAND COUNCIL

Robert Mills, Chief Councillor

Barbara Stevens, Band Manager

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 50 (HAIDA GWAI)

Elizabeth Condrotte, Board Chair

Angus Wilson, Superintendent

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Rod Allen, Superintendent of Achievement





Appendix: Timeline

Compiled by Angus Wilson & Joanne Yovanovich

In the beginning of time Haida Gwaii is created.

1785 Chief Skidegate invites part of Rose spit people to settle in his village

1800 Haida begin to adopt European dress

1825 Europeans were buying variety of items from Haidas such as fur seals, marten, bearskin, fish and potatoes

1860 Trading Post established in Masset by an American, later sold to Hudson's Bay Co.

1853-1863 QCI called "Colony of the Queen Charlotte islands"

1862 Small pox ravages coastal communities in BC

1867 Aboriginal Education becomes a federal responsibility with the BNA Act. Indian Day Schools are established.

1876 Indian Act Passed.

1878 George M Dawson completes a survey of Haida Gwaii, including photographs and sketches of Haida people and villages

1879 Nicholas Flood Davin report noted that "The industrial school is the principal feature of the policy known as that of 'aggressive civilization' ...Indian culture is a contradiction in terms...they are uncivilized...the aim of education is to destroy the Indian.

1880 Indian Act amended; any Indian who finished a university degree lost his/her status

1884 Potlach ban begins

1892 Residential Schools established in Canada; English only policy utilised

1895-1924 CF Newcombe bought at least 50 poles and shipped them off as far away as Australia; he also sketched many village sites, and took photographs of various monuments

1900 Prospectors and loggers swarm Haida Gwaii; by 1914 8 townships were surveyed

1909 Queen Charlotte Hospital opens

1909 School in Masset situated on a log float house style, pencils would roll off the desks at high tide.

1910 Canoe production virtually ceases after introduction of gasoline powered boats

1912 First light houses at Cape St. James & North Island (Langara)

1914 Hospital opens in Masset

c. 1920 “It is readily acknowledged that Indian children lose their natural resistance to illness by habituation so closely in the residential schools and that they die at a much higher rate than in villages. But this does not justify a change in the policy of this Department which is geared towards a final solution of our Indian problem.” Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs

1920 Education is compulsory for children between 7 and 15. Parents who refuse to send their children to school are punished under a change made to the Indian Act.

1915 School in Sandspit opens

1920 School in Port Clements opens

1920s Old Massett Day School

1928 12 mile log plank road connects island communities to Port Clements (no road to Massett this road took 8 years to build)

1931 George Brown of Skidegate was the first All Indian School Olympiad in BC

1939 Aboriginal population of BC is 22 000- the lowest point recorded. Was approximately 100 000 a century earlier

1945 School District 50, an amalgam of Queen Charlotte and Massett, is formed

1946-48 almost all aboriginal representatives reject the underlying goal of assimilation of both day and residential schools. Many call for greater aboriginal control of schools.

1946 Air plane service to Islands begins

1947 Canadian Pacific Airlines begins regular daily air service to Sandspit

1947 Rough wagon road between Skidegate & Tlell gets improved

1948 Earthquake hits Haida Gwaii at 8.1 on the Richter scale

1950 Massett offering Grade 12, Miss Emily Davidson 1st Native to graduate from Massett High School

1950's (Early 50's) Hydro in Skidegate, Sandspit, Queen Charlotte & Massett

1951 Potlatch ban dropped

1951 Native and non-native students allowed attending school together

1951 Gravel road completed from Tlell to Port Clements replacing the plank road. No road to Massett until 1958

1952 Indian children were admitted to the Provincial School in New Massett from Grade 6 & up. New arrangement also included assistance to build new school in Massett & opened in the fall for Grade 1-12. Today this is GMD High School Gr.8-12

Skidegate Inlet United school enrolment increased from 38 to 65 students in Grade 1-9 with the influx of students from Skidegate.

Skidegate Indian School was a 2 room school, Grade 1-3 in one room & Grade 4-6 in the other room.

1953 A new 2 room school opened in Queen Charlotte

1953 CBC first broadcasting system in North America to show complete film of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth on TV, within 4 hours of the end of the ceremony in London, England.

1955 Queen Charlotte School District was returned to Prince Rupert District. Prince Rupert was responsible for the 6 Island schools 2 schools were Elem/Sec, 2 Elem. Schools, 2 Indian Day Schools

1957 1st Celebrated Grade 12 Graduation Ceremonies in Masset

1957 Totem Poles removed from Skung Gwaii, Ninstints (Anthony Island)

1958 Gravel road to Masset now connecting all island communities

1960 March Trustee reports Parents a problem with integration of Indian students

1960 Sept. School opened @Moresby Logging Camp

1961 School opened @Jedway Mining Camp

1963 Skidegate Basketball team attends the All Native Basketball Tournament in Prince Rupert and continues to send teams to the tournament.

1964 June, Indian Day school in Skidegate closed, students all attend Queen Charlotte School in Sept. 1965

1961 TV on Haida Gwaii

1965-1995 Military Base in Masset is operational

1965 Port Clements enrolment 65 students

1965 Sept No Haida students would be enrolled in Masset School - construction of a new 4 room school in Old Masset for Sept. 1966

1965 George Brown awarded belated "Tommy Longboat" trophy for BC for Outstanding Native Athlete in Canada

1966 Graham Island roads paved from Skidegate Mission to Port Clements

1960's late Tasu (Mining Camp) & Sewell Inlet (Logging Camp) schools open, Jedway School closes

1968 Queen Charlotte Elem/Junior School opened in Queen Charlotte

1969 July 20 Astronaut Neil Armstrong takes mankind's first step on the moon.

1969 Dept. of National Defence expands the Masset base to over 100 families

1969 Federal "white paper" on Indian Policy rejects aboriginal claim

1969 Robert Davidson raises a pole in Old Masset; the first pole since the potlatch ban approx. 100 years prior

1970 Tahayghen Elementary Opens; Masset Secondary re-named George M Dawson

1973 Haida culture course offered at GMD

1974 Council of Haida Nation formed

1975 Bill Reid & Bill Stevens assist in the removal of old Haida Totem poles @ Skung Gwaii for the Provincial Museum of Victoria

1975 Grade 11 offered for the first time at Queen Charlotte Elem. Sec. School

1976 Jan. Nursery school in Skidegate opens for 4 year olds.

1976 Grade 12 offered for the first time at Queen Charlotte Elem. Sec. School

1976 Grade 1-11 Haida studies kits created & stored at School District Resource Centre developed by Kathy Bedard, Cliff Armstrong

1976 Queen Charlotte Elementary Secondary begins to offer Haida classes with Diane Brown & Ada Yovanovich, others to later teach were: Duncan White & Russ Jones

1976 Skidegate opens museum at First Beach

1976 Oct. Northland Prince Freighter makes its last call to Massett

1977 First Grade 12 Graduation class & ceremony @ Queen Charlotte Elem. Sec

1978 Skidegate Band opens a new longhouse & totem pole created by Bill Reid this was the first pole raised in Skidegate in over 100 years.

1980 Nov. 20 BC Ferries offered its first passenger and car voyage from Prince Rupert to Skidegate Landing

1983 Haida language classes offered at Tahaygen Elem. School

1985 QCI Readers Series Developed 12 readers & teacher resource manual

1985 November Lyell Island Standoff

1985-86 Bill Reid and others create Loo Taas canoe, 1st Haida canoe built for many years since 1910.

1987 Sullivan Commission on Education

1987 Skidegate 1st Haida Button Blanket Graduation Ceremony

1987 As a result of the Lyell Island standoff Haida Nation designated it a Haida Heritage site

1987 Morris White & sons of Old Massett launch a 35' Haida canoe

1988 Government of Canada designated Gwaii Haanas a National Park Reserve

1989 Haida Language Curriculum developed by David Stevenson, Golie Hans,

Eleanor Russ, Joanne Yovanovich

1990 Claude & Sarah Davidson's Shark House 2 (Long house) opens in Old Massett

1991 Oct. Pole raised in front of Shark House 2 in Old Massett

1991-92 Vision Quest Kits developed by Jenny White & Haida Community members

1993 Haida Government Resource Book developed by Gladys Gladstone & Kevin Borserio

1994 The funds negotiated from the Lyell Island standoff formed the Gwaii Trust Society to monitor and distribute funds to local community projects.

1994-95 Chief Matthew's School opens in Old Massett, Grade K-4

1995-99 John Kelly & Wendy Campbell develop Haida language Curriculum with Haida Elders & Community members



1998 SHIP (Skidegate Haida Immersion Program) formed in Skidegate created a Haida language glossary containing 500 words

1999 Jim Hart Pole Raised in Old Massett

1999 Sk'aadgaa Naay Elementary opens; one of very few on Reserve public schools

2001 6 New Totem Poles raised at the site of the proposed Heritage Centre

2005 Vocabulary Picture Flashcard set created by Jenny White, SHIP, Parks Canada

2005 Morris White Memorial Pole raised in Old Massett

2005 Christian White's Longhouse Opens in Old Massett

2007 Islands of the people Resource Curriculum, by Dr. Mark Fettes of SFU

2007 Aboriginal Children's Library opened in Skidegate

2007 Local Picture & Vocabulary Project illustrations by Judy Hilgemann, Jenny White compiled the vocabulary lists in English, Haida & French language.

2007 Chief Matthews School Haida Language Curriculum developed for Nursery & Kindergarten grades, developed by Marianne Ignace & Rhonda Bell & Haida Elders, Nina Williams, Stephen Brown, Claude Jones, Gertie White

2008 New school in Port Clements in a community multiplex building.

2008 Queen Charlotte Secondary receives Haida name "Gidgalang Kuuyas Naay"

2008 K'aay Centre opens at First Beach merging the museum & cultural centre and launched 3 new Haida canoes

2008 New Hospital opens in Old Massett

2010 "Haida Gwaii Our Home" booklet published, Judy Hilgemann illustrations used with the stories created by students in School district #50

2010 Red Cedar Gala hosted Haida Author Amanda Reid Stevens sharing her book "The canoe he called Loo Taas"

2010 SHIP glossary contains approximately 16, 000 words

2010 6 Haida Totem Poles were raised in the communities of Old Massett & Massett

Acknowledgements

School District 50 Haida Gwaii recognises the efforts and contributions of many, many individuals and groups in the creation of this document over the past decade. Community members from all our villages provided their thoughts through a series of meetings over several years. Elders were informed and listened to as the process went forward. The Haida Education Council, and by extension, the Band Councils, provided their ideas from the beginning through the very end of this document's process and growth. The Trustees, Principals, teachers and staff of SD 50 also participated in developing the document and providing feedback as ideas were drawn from other sources. Experts at the Ministry and Post-Secondary institutions helped guide the very shape of the Agreement. Quotes not otherwise identified in this text come from the 1997 film Voices from the Talking Stick. Finally, the staff of SD 50 wrote, rewrote, and revised this Agreement numerous times to hone it to what it has become today.

Haawa to you all!