

**District-Community Literacy Plan, 2009-2010  
School District 92 (Nisga'a)**

**Submitted to  
Ministry of Education and 2010 Legacies Now Society**

**Submitted by  
School District 92 (Nisga'a)**

**July 15, 2009**

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## **Acknowledgements**

School District 92 (Nisga'a) acknowledges, with sincere gratitude, the many people who took part in and contributed to the community meetings held in 2007-2008 and the visioning meetings that took place in 2009. Their many articulate comments about the importance of education provide the foundation for the District-Community Literacy Plan.

The Board of Education provided support and leadership leading up to and during the process. The Steering Committee provided counsel and guidance, and acted as witnesses throughout the community meetings. The Advisory Committee represents all of the communities and the Nisga'a Lisims Government, encouraged and supported community engagement and involvement, and interpreted the comments and opinions of the communities. The Nisga'a Lisims Government provided support throughout the process in many valuable ways. Union leaders, teachers, and administrators helped in organizing community meetings, in welcoming those who attended, and by listening to what the communities were saying.

Most importantly, we'd like to thank the Elders, parents, grandparents, aunties and uncles, students, and other community members who came to the meetings and shared their stories, their beliefs, their understandings, and their advice. It is from these stories that the vision for education in the Nisga'a Nation has emerged.

## Background

School District 92 (Nisga'a) is unique, with almost total Aboriginal population and a dual responsibility to both Nisga'a Lisims Government and to the B.C. Ministry of Education. As such, our school district has the potential to be a lighthouse district for Aboriginal education, with high expectations and endless possibilities for Nisga'a learners.

There is a strong need to articulate a vision and guiding purpose to set in policy and to guide life-long learning in Nisga'a schools and communities. There is also a strong need to plan for and report on learners' achievement in the District Achievement Contract, the District-Community Literacy Plan, the Language and Culture Community Connections Project, School Growth Plans, an Enhancement Agreement, and others.

Building on community meetings held in 2007-2008, the school district initiated a collaborative visioning process that began with community meetings in 2009. The guiding question in these meetings was, "What is the purpose of education in Nisga'a society today and in the future?" What we have learned from these meetings builds on what we learned from earlier meetings that are itemized later in this report.

It is important that the vision and guiding purpose for the school district be developed collaboratively and in unity through community engagement and open dialogue in the four Nisga'a communities, with the village governments, with Nisga'a Lisims Government, and with early childhood and adult learning centres. Through this process, the Board of Education and others can hear, understand, and benefit from community stories, knowledge, and understandings. It is the stories, knowledge, and understandings that provide the foundation for the vision, guiding principles, and long-term plans for Nisga'a learners represented in this District-Community Literacy Plan.

The District-Community Literacy Plan reflects Nisga'a historic priorities and priorities brought forth in many community meetings. It also takes into account these responsibilities and commitments:

- the responsibilities of the School District which is governed by the School Act;
- the responsibilities of Nisga'a Lisims Government, which is empowered under Nisga'a Treaty on Education to make laws which include certain provisions in respect of pre-school to Grade 12 education on Nisga'a Lands of Nisga'a citizens;
- shared commitment among the communities, the school district, and the Ministry of Education to support the goals and directions identified in an Enhancement Agreement.

## History and Context

The Nisga'a people have lived in the Nass River Valley since time immemorial. In the late 1800s, when much of Nisga'a traditional territory was declared Crown land, the Nisga'a people began petitioning government to recognize their connection to and ownership of Nisga'a territory. In 1998, a signing ceremony at New Aiyansh signaled the completion of a quarter century of negotiations and the birth of the *Nisga'a Final Agreement*, British Columbia's first modern treaty.

The Nass River flows through a land of sacred mountains, dense forests, and rugged lava beds on Canada's Pacific Coast. The resources of the Nass River Valley have sustained the Nisga'a people for millennia and have allowed the Nisga'a Nation to develop one of the most sophisticated pre-colonial cultures in North America. Today, the Nisga'a Nation includes over 6200 people belonging to one of four tribes: Laxsgiik (Eagle), Gisk'aast (Killer Whale), Ganada (Raven), and Laxgibuu (Wolf). Nisga'a people reside in the Nass Valley communities of Gingolx, Laxgalts'ap, Gitwinksihlkw, and New Aiyansh, as well as Terrace, Prince Rupert/Port Edward, greater Vancouver, and across North America. In Nisga'a culture, traditional authority and the ability to govern originates from the connection between families and communities, and land and resources.<sup>1</sup>

The communities of New Aiyansh, Gitwinksihlkw, Laxgalts'ap, and Gingolx comprise School District 92 (Nisga'a). These villages are small, geographically distant from each other, and culturally homogeneous. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of students in the school district are First Nations, primarily Nisga'a and other Northwest BC First Nations.

Employment in the Nass Valley is resource-based and government-based. The major resource industries include fishing, logging, and construction. The major government-based employers are Nisga'a Lisims Government, Nisga'a Valley Health Board, School District #92, and the Village Governments in each community. Compared with other communities in the province of BC, the communities in the Nass Valley<sup>2</sup>—

- are more rural
- are more homogeneous: 92% of the population is Aboriginal, compared to 6% provincially

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<sup>1</sup> Nisga'a Lisims Government website

<sup>2</sup> 2001 Census; note that data from the 2006 Census is not yet available for the Nisga'a Lands. Note: this section quoted from SD92 Accountability Contract, 2006-2007

- are younger: 39% are younger than 19 years old compared to 25% provincially; 6.7% are over 65 years old, compared to 13.6% provincially
- have a higher percentage of families with children at home: 85% compared to 60.5% provincially
- have a higher percentage of unemployed youth (ages 15-24): 63.6% compared to 15.8% provincially
- have a higher percentage of families with less than \$30,000 annual income: 38% compared to 22.6% provincially
- have families with more challenging educational experiences: 97% of Nisga'a adults report having family members who attended residential or industrial school.<sup>3</sup>

The history of schooling in the Nass Valley goes back many years and moved from missionary schooling to residential schooling, to Indian Day Schools and Boarding Schools, to public schooling. Throughout this time, there have been major concerns about the quality of education and the failure of these systems to meet the needs of the Nisga'a people. After many years of discussion and lobbying, School District 92 (Nisga'a) became a separate public school district on January 1, 1975.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike other public school districts, First Nations families comprise the majority of the population and communities and schools are grounded in Nisga'a culture. Sixty percent (60%) of adults in the communities report that they understand the Nisga'a language very well or relatively well, while 84% report that they can speak or understand their language to some degree.<sup>5</sup>

It is a priority of both the School District and the Nisga'a Lisims Government that education permeate all aspects and age levels of the four communities and that education be grounded in Nisga'a culture. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the adult population has not yet attained a secondary school certificate<sup>6</sup>, including 11% who do not have a Grade 9 education. School District 92 (Nisga'a), therefore, includes a strong adult education component which has grown each year since 2002. It is a priority of the Nisga'a Lisims Government and the School District that all Nisga'a citizens have a strong knowledge of Nisga'a culture and achieve proficiency in the Nisga'a language.

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<sup>3</sup> 2001 *Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Community Profiles, Adult Highlights and Themes for the Nisga'a Nation*, British Columbia; Statistics Canada.

<sup>4</sup> From various documents and histories of School District 92 (Nisga'a)

<sup>5</sup> 2001 *Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Community Profiles, Adult Highlights and Themes for the Nisga'a Nation*, British Columbia; Statistics Canada.

<sup>6</sup> 2001 Census, cited in *District Performance Data, SD92 (Nisga'a)*; 2001 *Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Community Profiles, Adult Highlights and Themes for the Nisga'a Nation*, British Columbia; Statistics Canada.

## Reclaiming Nisga'a Voice and Vision

During the course of the community literacy sessions held in Spring 2008, the history of education was revisited, including how it was used as an assimilation tool to impose European ideology, which today is still evident in the culture of education. Historically, education has often been utilized as a method of colonization. Many stories were told of personal experiences with rural schools, residential schools, Day Schools, Boarding Schools, and churches. It became evident that communities need to be heard in order for the healing to begin. A concentrated effort on decolonizing education needs to be an on-going focus in literacy discussions.

During the visioning meetings, one participant who had attended Boarding School in Vancouver because there were no secondary schools for Nisga'a students in the Nass Valley, stated: *"When we started the school district [in 1975], the number one vision was to bring us home – home from the places where we didn't have the opportunity to learn our culture. Our parents were there, standing beside us."*

### *Decolonization*

The Nisga'a Nation, as with other Aboriginal Nations, was colonized through education which is now used as a tool for decolonization. Today, research is being done by Aboriginal researchers, academic scholars, and educators to shift the paradigm. Numerous Aboriginal groups are striving to restore their culture and re-establish their children's identity within mainstream education. No longer is it acceptable for marginalizing social constructs to be present in the education of Aboriginal children.

Decolonizing requires and allows reclamation of voice. Through voice, stories, experiences, and healing all contribute toward the process of decolonization. Through the process we gain a stronger sense of subjectivities. The subjectivity of individuals is an articulation process that involves the revitalization of native perspective/voice. Subjectivity means that we are strong in our orientation to the object of study in a unique and personal way.<sup>7</sup> No doubt, decolonization is a multifaceted and multilayered process that requires reclamation of voice and vision. We hope to identify on-going processes within future literacy planning.

The Nisga'a Elders say this about Nisga'a identity: *"The strength of the Nisga'a lies in our own way of life, and in our own language."*

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<sup>7</sup> Aboriginal Education As A Decolonizing Method: The Nisga'a Experience, Michiyo Kiwako Okuma

## **Culturally Responsive Education and Family Literacy**

Discussions about literacy and life-long learning in Nisga'a communities cannot be separated from Nisga'a context and history. The history and context of the Nisga'a Nation requires that we understand, develop, and incorporate a philosophy and vision that is grounded in an understanding of culturally responsive education and of the relationships among language, culture, learning, and literacy in the lives of the people of the Nisga'a Nation.

The urgency of reclaiming Nisga'a language and culture cannot be underestimated. In the visioning process meetings that took place this year, an Elder quoted the late Peter Nyce speaking at Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a (Nisga'a House of Wisdom), "*We are the last generation that will be able to speak Nisga'a, understand it.*"

Reclaiming Nisga'a language and culture is a huge undertaking; discussion includes decolonization, decolonizing education, competing knowledge systems, language and culture needs, community/Elders involvement, leadership development, Nisga'a nationalism, traditional ways, youth engagement, advocacy, a vision for the future, and other major issues.

The School District began community discussions on implementing culturally responsive ways within School District 92 (Nisga'a) during 2007-2008. During this process, the Nisga'a Language and Culture Learning Resource Centre was established as part of the Community Connections partnership and will contribute to this reclamation.

Discussions about literacy and life-long learning in Nisga'a communities also cannot be separated from an understanding of family literacy and the relationship between learning, language, and culture. Family literacy learning takes place every day within the context of people's families and communities and enables people to participate in and contribute to their own and other communities, as they wish. A broad view of literacy is found in the *Community Literacy Planning Guide*:

*"Where once literacy was thought of as encompassing only basic reading and writing, perhaps at a certain grade level, we now accept a more complex and dynamic view of literacy – as enabling participation in family, work and community life. It is made up of essential and transferable social, cultural, and academic practices and understandings, involving not only the communication skills of reading, writing and mathematics, but also problem solving, decision-making, technology and social*

*skills. Literacy enables us to listen, view, communicate, represent and evaluate knowledge in many ways. The more literate we become, the greater our understanding of our world.”<sup>8</sup>*

This understanding of literacy—and the principles of family literacy—permeated the visioning meetings. Many voices spoke of learning that weaves through all aspects of a person’s life, every day, in all settings:

*“We have a big school, Nisga’a Elementary Secondary School, but it isn’t just there that our children learn. God has given us this valley to teach our children. You never stop learning; education is every day.”*

*“My education started when I was very young. My teachers were my parents, grandparents, uncles, aunties, brothers and sisters.”*

*“Unity in the school—this is a vision—to have the matriarchs and chiefs walk through the village with the children on the first day of school and giving the authority to the school to teach the children.”*

Discussions about literacy and learning should also incorporate an understanding of culturally-responsive education. Culturally responsive education is—

*...predicated on the belief that a firm grounding in the heritage language and culture indigenous to a particular place is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of culturally-healthy students and communities associated with that place, and thus is an essential ingredient for identifying the appropriate qualities and practices associated with culturally-responsive educators, curriculum and schools.<sup>9</sup>*

An Elder put this into these words: *“We’re asking for a perfect balance between basics and Nisga’a language and culture.”*

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<sup>8</sup> 2010 Legacies Now, *Community literacy planning guide*

<sup>9</sup> Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools, adopted by the Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, Anchorage, Alaska, February 3, 1998. Published by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998.

Others echoed his thoughts:

*“The original philosophy of the school district—education as a total way of life with Nisga’a determining education.”*

*“Principles behind our tradition remain—we need to bring them into education.”*

At the end of the community meetings for the visioning process, Nelson Leeson, president of Nisga’a Lisims Government stated:

*“We have to accept—each and every one of us—our responsibilities. We all have to do things to bring about positive change. We have the ability and the power to make that change. I assure you that when the recommendations come down that we’ll take action. The potential is just so enormous.”*

## **Community Consultation and Partnerships: The Visioning Process**

In consultation with a number of community partners, we began a visioning process during the 2008-2009 school year. The meetings that took place build on the Literacy Plan meetings that took place in 2007-2008. The process included meetings in all four communities and with secondary students at Nisga'a Elementary Secondary School. In all, 355 people across the Nass Valley and in the secondary school took part. The visioning process supports the ability of the school district to understand and respond to important questions about the meaning of education for Nisga'a people. The goals of the visioning process are to—

- articulate a vision for learning in the Nisga'a School District;
- inform planning for learning;
- enhance relationships between the schools and the communities in the Nass Valley.

Community conversations focused on the question: “What is the purpose of Nisga'a education today and in the future?” The visioning process included many participants, enhanced relationships between the school district and the communities, and is the beginning of articulating responsibilities for the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual well-being of all Nisga'a learners. Consultation will continue through 2009-2010 as we build on the relationships that have been formed, develop policy to support the vision, and work together to plan and implement what we have learned.

The Nisga'a Treaty on Education enables Nisga'a Lisims Government to make laws which include certain provisions in respect to pre-school to Grade 12 education on Nisga'a Lands. The school district and Nisga'a Lisims Government will work together to develop a common understanding based on what people within the communities are saying within the community consultation process and in other venues.

During the visioning process, people's stories have celebrated the strength of Nisga'a language and culture. The process recognizes and honours all Nisga'a learners and their words will become part of the educational plan for the Nisga'a Nation. Following community consultation, the school district, Nisga'a Lisims Government, and the communities will be able to work together to meet shared commitments identified through the process of continued dialogue and engagement.

In addition to the community consultation meetings, the visioning process includes a Steering Committee and an Advisory Group. The responsibility of the Steering Committee is to listen carefully and with respect, and to act as witnesses. The Steering Committee includes—

- Keith Spencer, Superintendent of Education
- Iris O'Watch, Director of Instruction
- Calvin Morven, Maintenance Supervisor
- Sharlene Grandison, Executive Secretary
- Rod Allen, Superintendent of Achievement, Ministry of Education
- Victor Jim, Aboriginal Enhancements Branch, Ministry of Education
- Eric McMahon, Community Dialogue on Education Interpreter
- Dr. Lorna Williams, University of Victoria
- Elizabeth Wilson, Consultant

Sayt K'ilim Goot refers to the Nisga'a spirit of working together in unity, with one heart. This spirit underlies the Advisory Group that guides the process of community consultation and partnership that will result in a vision of learning for the Nisga'a School District and the Nisga'a communities.

The Advisory Group includes membership from many organizations across all four villages. It has contributed to the visioning and consultation process by supporting engagement, partnerships, relationships, dialogue, and collaboration within the communities and among the school district, the Nisga'a Lisims Government, and the village governments.

These partnerships have enabled the school district, the Nisga'a Lisims Government, the village governments, Nisga'a citizens, and others to articulate and reflect on the many perspectives of learning and education for Nisga'a people.

The Advisory Group represents these organizations, agencies, and communities within the Nass Valley:

- Parent Advisory Councils
- Nisga'a Teachers Union

- Canadian Union of Public Employees
- Adult Learning Centres in each village
- Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a (Nisga'a House of Wisdom)
- Village Governments in each village
- Nisga'a Lisims Government
- Nisga'a Elders Council
- Students
- Nisga'a Valley Health
- Village Government Youth
- Superintendent of Achievement, Ministry of Education

The Advisory Group also includes the Superintendent of Education, the Director of Instruction, School District 92 (Nisga'a) Board of Education members, and the principals of the four schools in the school district.

The responsibilities of the Advisory Group include the following—

1. to provide wise counsel, knowledge, advice, and guidance throughout the visioning process
2. to reflect the language, culture, values, and protocols of the Nisga'a Nation
3. to support engagement, collaboration, and connections throughout the visioning process
4. to ensure that the visioning process is responsive to the communities and that community voices are represented in important decisions about Nisga'a learners
5. to contribute to a vision and guiding principles that will make positive changes in the lives of Nisga'a learners
6. to consider ways that the vision and guiding principles can become part of the education plan for the Nisga'a Nation
7. to celebrate successes.

## Current Programs and Initiatives

Early Learning	Primary	Intermediate	Secondary	Adult	Elders
Toddler Program	District Balanced Literacy	Assessment for learning	Counselling Services	Grade 12- Dogwood ABE	Elder's social night
Mother Goose	Talking Tables	Tutoring	School to Work	Tutoring	Annual Elders gathering
After-school program	PWIM	Nisga'a on Wireless	Tutoring	Adult Graduation Program	Sewing club
PALS	Phonological & phonemic awareness	Lexia	Nisga'a on Wireless	Training Preparation	Elders in the classroom
Ready-Set-Learn	PALS	Nisga'a language	Nisga'a language	WWN lifelong literacy program	Elders in early childhood centres
Prenatal make & take	Welcome to Kindergarten	Rec' and Read	MALT program	NWCC partnerships	Elders' society
Nisga'a language	Reading Power	Nisga'a Valley Health Education program	Nisga'a Valley Health Education Program	UNBC partnerships	Cultural activities
Fathers' group	Nisga'a Language	Speech & Language services	Deaf & Hard of Hearing services	Library services through Terrace	Elders' partnerships
Pilates for moms	Nisga'a Valley Health Program	Deaf & Hard of Hearing services	Special Education Services		Library services through Terrace
Rhymes, Giggles & Baby Tickles	Speech & Language Services	Special Education Services	Counselling Services		
Big Buddy reading	Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services	Counselling Services	Alternative Education Program		
Moe the Mouse	Early Learning language support	Library services through Terrace	Library services through Terrace		
Infant development prog.	Special Education services				
Access to Books	Counselling Services				
Supported Child Development	Library services through Terrace				
Speech/Language Svs.					
Training and workshops					
Paraprofessional training: parents and caregivers					
SD92 Collaborative Transitions					
Production: Nisga'a resources					
RCMP Safety					

## **Community Meetings**

Community meetings have taken place several times in each community during the past two years, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009:

### **During the first year, these conversations took place—**

- Discussion at Administration level with Superintendent and Principals
- Discussion at the Nisga'a language meetings and curriculum development working sessions
- Discussion with the Early Learning school district staff and Headstart/Nursery Early Childhood Education staff on English & Nisga'a language development
- Discussion at Community Literacy Planning sessions
- Discussion at the Interagency meetings with village organizations
- Discussion on hosting an Aboriginal Literacy forum next year

### **During the first year, Community Literacy meetings took place as follows:**

- Laxgalts'ap: December 13, 2007
- Gingolx: February 26, 2008
- Gitwinksihlkw: April 17, 2008
- New Aiyansh: May 22, 2008

### **During the first year, Interagency meetings took place as follows:**

- Nisga'a Lisims Government: February 18, 2008
- Nisga'a Elementary Secondary School: March 31, 2008
- Gingolx: May 20, 2008

**During the first year, Early Literacy Partnership meetings took place as follows:**

- January 18, 2008
- February 8, 2008
- March 14, 2008
- June 6, 2008

**During the second year, Community Consultation preliminary meetings took place as follows:**

- Laxgalts'ap and Gingolx: February 16, 2009
- Gitwinksihlkw, New Aiyansh, and Nisga'a Lisims Government: February 17, 2009

**During the second year, Visioning Community Consultation meetings took place as follows:**

- Gingolx: April 27, 2009
- Gitwinksihlkw: April 28 2009
- New Aiyansh: June 1, 2009
- Laxgalts'ap: June 2, 2009

## **Action Plan for 2009-2010**

The partnerships identified throughout the Action Plan are the members of the visioning process Advisory Group. They will guide the planning process and encourage engagement and involvement throughout. The consultation process is still progressing and we have yet to develop the vision and principles that will form the basis of education in the Nisga'a School District.

The Advisory Group will meet in late June 2009 to begin the process of developing the vision and principles. The Advisory Group, which represents many areas of learning within each community, will also guide the School District in determining additional actions and initiatives for 2009-2010. We will be revising this plan during 2009-2010 as we continue to meet with the Advisory Group and as we continue the process of community consultation.

Based on community meetings held in 2009, preliminary trends and patterns that have emerged to date include the following. These will be reflected, over time, in the Action Plan:

- The first priority for literacy and learning in the Nisga'a Nation is Nisga'a language and culture.
- Another significant priority for literacy and learning is to build strength in the schools—in instruction, curriculum, resources, assessment, career counselling, transitions, and other areas.
- A vision for education for the Nisga'a Nation now and in the future requires the involvement of everyone—Elders, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, children—and the support of all organizations and agencies.
- Learning begins at home and should include learning Nisga'a language and culture.

**Goal 1: Continue the community collaboration process**

Actions/Initiatives	Partnerships	Resources	Indicators of Success
<p>Work with the Advisory Group to develop a vision and principles for Nisga’a Education</p> <p>Work with the Advisory Group to consider actions and initiatives for the schools and communities</p> <p>Work with the Advisory Group and the Steering Committee to plan the continuing community collaboration process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Advisory Councils</li> <li>• Nisga’a Teachers Union</li> <li>• Canadian Union of Public Employees</li> <li>• Adult Learning Centres in each village</li> <li>• WWN (Nisga’a House of Wisdom)</li> <li>• Village Governments</li> <li>• Nisga’a Lisims Government</li> <li>• Nisga’a Elders Council</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Nisga’a Valley Health</li> <li>• Village Government Youth</li> </ul>	<p>Advisory Group</p> <p>Steering Committee</p> <p>Board of Education</p> <p>Nisga’a Lisims Government</p> <p>Village Governments</p>	<p>Continued collaboration</p> <p>Vision and Principles for the School District</p> <p>Action Plan reflecting the wishes of the Nisga’a people</p>

**Goal 2: Promote and support Nisga'a language and culture literacy**

Actions/Initiatives	Partnerships	Resources	Indicators of Success
<p>Utilize Elders in literacy initiatives</p> <p>Promote and revitalize the Nisga'a language</p> <p>Support Nisga'a language programs in all four villages</p> <p>Decolonize and reclaim Nisga'a knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Advisory Councils</li> <li>• Nisga'a Teachers Union</li> <li>• Canadian Union of Public Employees</li> <li>• Adult Learning Centres in each village</li> <li>• WWN (Nisga'a House of Wisdom)</li> <li>• Village Governments</li> <li>• Nisga'a Lisims Government</li> <li>• Nisga'a Elders Council</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Nisga'a Valley Health</li> <li>• Village Government Youth</li> </ul>	<p>Elders</p> <p>Parents and Grandparents</p> <p>Students</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>School District</p> <p>Advisory Group</p> <p>Early Learning groups</p> <p>Adult education centres</p> <p>Village Governments</p> <p>Nisga'a Lisims Government</p> <p>Community organizations</p>	<p>Nisga'a language programs for adults in each village</p> <p>Reclamation and decolonization</p>

**Goal 3: Develop effective communication processes about literacy and learning**

Actions/Initiatives	Partnerships	Resources	Indicators of Success
<p>Develop workable methods for communicating about literacy and learning among the communities</p> <p>Identify strategies to reach all families and to include hard-to-reach community members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Advisory Councils</li> <li>• Nisga’a Teachers Union</li> <li>• Canadian Union of Public Employees</li> <li>• Adult Learning Centres in each village</li> <li>• WWN (Nisga’a House of Wisdom)</li> <li>• Village Governments</li> <li>• Nisga’a Lisims Government</li> <li>• Nisga’a Elders Council</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Nisga’a Valley Health</li> <li>• Village Government Youth</li> </ul>	<p>Advisory Group</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>School District</p> <p>Village Governments</p> <p>Nisga’a Lisims Government</p> <p>Community organizations</p>	<p>Understanding of literacy and learning processes and initiatives throughout the communities</p> <p>Effective ways for communities and the school district to communicate with each other</p> <p>Each member of the Nisga’a Nation and others who live in the Nass Valley know about and have access to learning and literacy programs and initiatives</p>

**Goal 4: Support and encourage family involvement in learning and literacy programs**

Actions/Initiatives	Partnerships	Resources	Indicators of Success
<p>Ensure that learning and literacy programs and support are provided and are accessible to families in all four villages</p> <p>Utilize school libraries and the technology department to support family literacy and learning</p> <p>Continue collaboration with communities and strengthen partnerships between schools and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Advisory Councils</li> <li>• Nisga’a Teachers Union</li> <li>• Canadian Union of Public Employees</li> <li>• Adult Learning Centres in each village</li> <li>• WWN (Nisga’a House of Wisdom)</li> <li>• Village Governments</li> <li>• Nisga’a Lisims Government</li> <li>• Nisga’a Elders Council</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Nisga’a Valley Health</li> <li>• Village Government Youth</li> </ul>	<p>Advisory Group</p> <p>Elders</p> <p>Parents and Grandparents</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>School District</p> <p>Village Governments</p> <p>Nisga’a Lisims Government</p> <p>Community organizations</p>	<p>Learning and literacy programs are available, accessible, and utilized by members of each community</p>

**Goal 5: Work with partners to enable students at all levels to make successful transitions.**

Actions/Initiatives	Partnerships	Resources	Indicators of Success
<p>Ensure a successful transition for children entering Kindergarten from the Headstart/Nursery centres</p> <p>Ensure a successful transition for NESS secondary students entering post-secondary institutions</p> <p>Ensure a successful transition for students who leave the Nass Valley and then return</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Advisory Councils</li> <li>• Nisga’a Teachers Union</li> <li>• Canadian Union of Public Employees</li> <li>• Adult Learning Centres in each village</li> <li>• WWN (Nisga’a House of Wisdom)</li> <li>• Village Governments</li> <li>• Nisga’a Lisims Government</li> <li>• Nisga’a Elders Council</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Nisga’a Valley Health</li> <li>• Village Government Youth</li> </ul>	<p>Advisory Group</p> <p>Early Learning groups</p> <p>Parents and Grandparents</p> <p>Elders</p> <p>Students</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>School District</p> <p>Village Governments</p> <p>Nisga’a Lisims Government</p> <p>Community organizations</p>	<p>Students of all ages make successful transitions</p>

## **Implementation**

### **Priorities**

- Continued collaboration
- Nisga'a language and culture
- Accessibility of literacy programs
- Family involvement
- Successful transitions

### **Impact**

- The impact of community meetings and the visioning process has been significant, with a great deal of positive involvement from families, organizations, and governments.
- There is high expectation that there will be positive change in education at all levels throughout the Nass Valley.
- The visioning process will result in changes in policy and processes in the school district.
- Changes will have the combined support of the Nisga'a Lisims Government, the village governments, and the Board of Education.
- We anticipate ongoing collaboration and further involvement during the coming year.

### **Evaluation**

- No evaluation has yet taken place.

### **Coordination**

- There is, as yet, no Literacy Outreach Coordinator hired, although the position has been advertised. This will be a valuable position once it is filled, as it will enable smoother communication and implementation of the plan. It will also enable smaller, ongoing literacy committees representing each village.

### **Collaboration**

- A great deal of collaboration has taken place over the past two years, as mentioned in this report.

### **Resources**

- The resources needed to support the extensive collaboration that has taken place include planning funding and coordination funding from 2010 Legacies Now Society and the Ministry of Education.
- This funding has been greatly supplemented by School District 92 (Nisga'a) to support the meetings, the costs of the Steering Committee, and the costs of the Advisory Committee.

### **Changes**

- Greater communication and collaboration among education community partners
- More coordination and support between schools and early learning centres
- Greater links with Nisga'a Lisims Government around education
- Greatly increased excitement and passion about the future of education in the Nass Valley

### **Challenges and Successes**

- The most significant challenge is the magnitude of making major changes to education throughout the Nass Valley.
- The most significant success is the willingness of all partners to continue the process and move ahead with changes.

## Appendix: Plan for Visioning Process

### Objective 1: Orientation and Connections

Purpose	Activities	Potential Outcomes	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To meet parents and community members</li> <li>• To meet with staff, youth, adult students, and youth and young adults not in school</li> <li>• To introduce the concept of the visioning process</li> <li>• To listen to comments from the villages and gain greater understanding of the questions and issues for the visioning process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School and community visits and meetings throughout the Nass Valley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider how best to conduct the forums and generate community and organizational engagement</li> <li>• To consider how to increase a sense of community ownership for the school</li> <li>• To consider how best to utilize the experience and expertise of the Steering Committee members in the process</li> <li>• To develop specific activities and timelines for the process</li> </ul>	<p>February 15-18, 2009</p>

**Objective 2: Conduct community meetings in each of the four Nisga’a communities**

<b>Purposes</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Potential Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To hear and understand the stories from the people in the communities</li> <li>• To provide a base of information to inform current and future planning for learner achievement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and conduct a series of community and organization meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue and community engagement, to inform vision, policy, and planning</li> <li>• Enhanced school district responsiveness to the understandings and stories of the communities</li> <li>• Enhanced community engagement and a greater sense of community ownership with the schools</li> <li>• Enhanced community responsibility toward the well-being of Nisga’a children and youth</li> </ul>	<p>April 27-29, 2009: Gingolx and Gitwinksihlkw</p> <p>June 1-2, 2009: New Aiyansh and Laxgalts’ap</p>

**Objective 3: Record and analyse the results of the community meetings**

Purposes	Activities	Potential Outcomes	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create meaning from the information and understandings gathered during the community and organizational meetings</li> <li>• To identify patterns and trends that will inform vision, policy, and planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and dialogue with Advisory Community and Steering Committee, using information from community meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A synthesis of important information from the community</li> <li>• Greater understanding of the role of the community in the performance and achievement of learners</li> <li>• Preliminary drafts of vision, policy, and planning for the school district</li> <li>• Planning for coming year</li> </ul>	<p>June 24, 2009</p> <p>Other meetings to be scheduled</p>

**Objective 4: Collect and analyse data and information about curriculum, instruction, and learner performance**

Purposes	Activities	Potential Outcomes	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create meaning from data and information regarding learner achievement and satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enquiry into the impact of culturally responsive curriculum and instruction</li> <li>• Review and analysis of school district and Ministry of Education data</li> <li>• Review student responses through an education evaluation questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater understanding of the impact of curriculum and instructional on learner performance</li> <li>• Greater ability to plan effectively for changes in the school system</li> <li>• Enhanced relationships between the school system and the communities</li> </ul>	<p>Following community and organizational meetings</p>

**Objective 5: Develop the vision, policy, and report**

<b>Purposes</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Potential Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop a vision for learning in the Nisga’a School District</li> <li>• To inform planning for learning</li> <li>• To make recommendations for change</li> <li>• To plan for the coming years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue and discussion with Steering Committee, Advisory Committee, and community partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater understanding among school and community groups of trends and patterns of learners</li> <li>• Development of a common vision for education in the Nisga’a School District</li> <li>• Policy and planning based on firm grounding growing out of the community engagement and dialogue</li> <li>• Recommendations and planning for changes in the school district</li> </ul>	<p>Following community and organizational meetings; following analysis of data</p>