

## 2021-2022 Indigenous Transition Case Study Submission Form

### I. General Information

Main Contact:

Email Address:

School Name: **Charles Hays Secondary School**

School District: **52 Prince Rupert**

School Mailing Address: **201 Prince Rupert Blvd, Prince Rupert, BC V8J 3W1**

Inquiry Team Members (Names and Emails):

Anna Ashley [anna.ashley@sd52.bc.ca](mailto:anna.ashley@sd52.bc.ca)

Amber Mossini [amber.mossini@sd52.bc.ca](mailto:amber.mossini@sd52.bc.ca)

Lori Burger [Lori.burger@sd52.bc.ca](mailto:Lori.burger@sd52.bc.ca)

Coretta O'Brien [coretta.obrien@sd52.bc.ca](mailto:coretta.obrien@sd52.bc.ca)

Carla Rourke [Carla.rourke@sd52.bc.ca](mailto:Carla.rourke@sd52.bc.ca)

Raegan Sawka [raegan.sawka@sd52.bc.ca](mailto:raegan.sawka@sd52.bc.ca)

### II. Inquiry Project Information

Grade Levels Addressed Through Inquiry

- Secondary (8-12)

Curricular Areas Addressed

- Career Education
- Language Arts (Oral, Literacy, Reading, Writing).
- Social Studies
- Science

Focus Addressed

- Indigenous understandings
- First Peoples Principles of Learning
- Community-based learning
- Land, Nature or Place-based learning
- Universal design for learning

### III. Spirals of Inquiry Project Details

Scanning:

- Early in our scanning process we noticed a group of learners in their grade 9 year who expressed not feeling connected to the school community. They couldn't name adults who believed in them, they were not attending school consistently, they were not fully

engaged in their learning. The school team (administrators, Indigenous mentor, educational assistants, teachers and counsellors) flagged these students as requiring a more intentional focus into building connections to feel a sense of belonging at school and positive sense of themselves as learners. We'd recently had success of a four-year supported cohort model, so the school principal, Carla, approached the educational team of Anna, Raegan, and Coretta to consider launching a three-year cohort for grades 10-12. Central to our scanning process was; *How could we build a supportive, cross-curricular experience around the First Peoples Principles of Learning?*

#### Focus:

- We hoped to create an educational environment for two cohorts of learners that offered a real sense of community, support, and authentic engagement into place-based curriculum. The goal is for students to get to know each other and the educational team over three school years, focusing each year on four core academic courses needed for graduation. We envisioned this model lending itself more readily to land-based, community-based learning opportunities. The team could better understand learner strengths, interests, and needs in order to design universal supports so each individual can reach their full potential. With the multi-year model we could also provide continuous learning, taking into account the patience and time many students need at this point in their education.

#### Hunch:

- We wondered at the reasons why these students were finding less success and connection in grade 9. Of course, the pandemic was a factor, but that didn't account for everything. We had a hunch that while this group had various needs/interests that one thing they missed was connection. The duration of each course at the secondary level can be a limiting factor to relationship building and creates constraints on field trips and community involvement. Our hunch was by providing more time to get to know our learners across the grades and through multiple courses that we could better understand what they needed from their educational team. We could go deeper into project-based, cross-curricular learning that met their interests.

#### Professional Learning:

- Each member of the team found professional conversations and the sharing of our knowledge and expertise immensely helpful. The two teachers, Indigenous mentor, and educational assistant have a collective 100 years of educational experience. We have backgrounds in Indigenous education, FPPoL, inclusive education, English, and science.
- Together we attended workshops, resource development committees, read literature from Indigenous authors, and even hosted our own workshops for colleagues on what we were learning from the inquiry project.

#### Taking Action:

- The school team built the supported cohort, two classes of 20-25 grade 10 learners. Each class worked with two team members in the morning (Teacher/Indigenous

mentor), (Teacher/EA) and switched groups for the afternoon. Our school is on a quarter system with two classes a day. The team regularly co-planned projects and field trip experiences. The cohorts came together for activities at least once a week. Each member of the educational team had their unique relationships with the learners. We communicated seamlessly if concerns came up as each of us had a piece of the puzzle and perspective on what was happening for learners. The learning activities were all designed with universal supports in mind. We ensured each learner had an entry point and access to the tools they needed to engage with the curricular content and explore their interests within it. Students help portfolios of learning and we provide formative assessment. Communicating student learning with parents/families was regular and seamless.

#### Checking:

- We had some base-line data of student attendance and performance from the previous school year and during the courses they were not in the cohort form this school year. We had anecdotal data from learning services teachers, parents, and counsellors. Our learners provided insights through multiple points of data collection (questionnaires, writing reflections, and using the four questions) on how they felt the supported cohort worked for them.
- We were incredibly pleased with the outcomes of the first year of the inquiry. Learners all reported they had multiple adults that believed in them, they could go to for help, and encouraged them. Many reported feeling more success this year than in the past several years of school. They felt expectations were high, but they wanted to meet them because they knew the adults were counting on them to be there. Parents/families reported an enthusiasm in their child they hadn't seen for a while. Their child would come home talking about what they were learning, how they were achieving in school, and seemed genuinely excited about school. It was no longer a fight to get them to attend. The parents expressed wanting to see more cohort models like this. Students were keen to ensure they were enrolled for the following years. The counsellors and LSTs checked in with them individually to see that they wished to continue. They did and more students enrolled because they felt it would be a good fit for them.

#### Reflections/Advice:

- We are planning to continue with this model at CHSS. There have been school-wide conversations about planning further cohorts as this team moves to grade 11.
- The key advice we have is to allow teacher/EA teams to opt in if they are genuinely interested and feel they have a compatible educational philosophy. This particular team really works well together. They are fast and efficient in planning and communications. They have a shared vision for their work together and are deeply respectful of each other's opinions. There is a trust to raise any issue and constructive advice is valued. It is a true learning-working collaborative team.

#### IV. Learner Data

Size/Scale: Multi-class

Number of Students: 45

Key Inquiry Question: Yes (Only at end of year)

- During the Scanning Phase: 0
- End of the School Year:
- Total number of students surveyed: 17
- How many Indigenous students did you ask the question, “can you name two adults at the school who believe you will be a success in life?” Total number: 12
- Of these students, how many students provided a response? 12 (all)
- Of these responses, how many students indicated that they have two adults who believe in them?
- Total number: 11

Feedback

- Our inquiry partners walked along side us through this phase with encouragement, support, links to resources, and in celebration.
- Thank you so much to the NOII Transitions Inquiry community for making this opportunity possible for us.