

Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School Newsletter

Strong Together In All We Do



January 2026

Gilakas'la,

As we begin a new year, we do so with heavy hearts. January has brought significant loss to the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw community, and many of our families, staff, and students are grieving. Several of those we have lost were deeply connected to our school — including a long-time staff member who dedicated many years of service to our students, as well as two respected Elders who generously shared their time, knowledge, and stories with our children. Their presence shaped our school in meaningful ways, and they will be greatly missed.

In moments like these, school can play an important role. Beyond academics, our school is a place of routine, connection, and care — a safe and familiar space where children are surrounded by trusted adults and friends. For many students, the structure of the school day, shared learning, and time spent together provide comfort and stability when the world feels uncertain.

We are continually inspired by the compassion shown by our students and staff. Through kind words, patience, and looking out for one another, our school community reflects the strength and values of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw people. We recognize that grief looks different for everyone, and we remain committed to meeting students and families with understanding and flexibility during this time.

We thank our families for their trust and partnership, and our staff for their care and dedication. Together, we will continue to support one another and ensure our school remains a steady, welcoming place for our children as we move forward.

Reed Allen - Principal



News from Karen

Happy New Year!

January has been a hard month for many, and our hearts go out to all the community members who have had a loss. At the same time, the month has flown by, and we are well into our routines and lots of learning.

We are excited to share that the following students had perfect attendance for the past two months:

December:

Mason, Mavrick, Alfred, Emelia, Nova, Easton, Lola, Nova, Phoenix C, Celenia, Kwol, Landon, Cristian, Silva, Nickolas, Perry

January

Rudy, Layne, Mavrick, Charlie, Jayce, Nathaniel, San'yas, Lola, Merrill, Calai, Landon, Christian, Silva, and Carey.

Congratulations! Each student will receive a \$10.00 Co-op Card.



As we begin a new month, we want to highlight how much a good night's sleep can make a difference. Well-rested kids are happier, healthier, and more ready to learn. Thank you for helping your child get plenty of sleep so they can shine at school each day.

School Assessment Update:

We have had 198 surveys completed! As a school staff, we have reviewed the programs and opportunities available to our students and will now focus on creating goals. Once these goals are established, we will share them with the community.

Lyam's Grade 6/7 Class

Gilakas'la,

I would like to warmly welcome everyone back. I also wish to extend my sincere condolences to all the families who are grieving at this time, with special thoughts for Granny Marion and Gertie's families. Our hearts are with you during this difficult period.

Over the past month, we had the opportunity to travel out to Cluxewe for clam digging, which was a meaningful and enriching experience for our students. In the classroom, we have continued to focus on strengthening our reading and writing skills, and it has been encouraging to see the students' ongoing growth and engagement.

As we look ahead to the coming month, we are excited about the activities and learning opportunities planned. Please continue to monitor our Facebook page, as I will be sharing a date for an upcoming meeting to discuss our school field trip as well as fundraising plans. Thank you for your continued support and involvement.



Allyson's Grade 5/6 Class

Happy New Year! January has been a busy and engaging month in our classroom. We ended the month building shelters and digging for gawakananam, where students explored the beach, practiced teamwork, and connected their learning to the natural environment around us. Karder taught us how to know if a clam is big enough to dig up. In Science, we continued learning about the human body, focusing on the lungs and the digestive system and how these systems work together to keep us healthy. Students have also been exploring the Olympics, learning about its history, events, and the values of perseverance, respect, and fair play. We have been having our own Olympic kick off challenges each morning and students are fantastic participants. We are supporting student well-being through the Open Parachute program, building skills around emotions, resilience, and positive connections. In Language Arts, we are reading *Song for a Whale*, a novel about a whale whose song is at such a high hertz that other whales cannot hear him and the girl who wants to decipher his song. This story has sparked thoughtful discussions about communication, empathy, and feeling different. *Gilakas'la*, we are looking forward to all the learning ahead!



Deb's Grade 4/5 Class



I hope families had a wonderful and relaxing Christmas break. Students returned to class refreshed, focused, and ready to learn. We were excited to welcome a new student, **Gary**, into our class. Students worked together to help Gary feel included and supported as he settled into our classroom community.

We launched the new year with Science by exploring the Big Ideas related to Earth history and change over time. Students learned about the bering land bridge and the Ice Age, and were introduced to palaeontology—the scientific study of fossils, plants, and animals. Through inquiry-based learning, students asked questions, shared ideas, and made connections to what they already knew. Our class enjoyed a field trip to the local museum, where students were excited to discover real fossils on display. We also took advantage of cool but sunny days to explore and photograph our local beaches, strengthening our observational skills and connecting learning to our local environment.

In Literacy, students explored informational texts and research skills by learning about Ice Age animals. They practised reading for understanding, gathering information from different sources, and sharing their learning through discussion and writing, supporting the BC curriculum competencies in communication and critical thinking.



Jen's Grade 2/3/4 Class

Meet the Wolves



Terry, Denise, Naiomi, and Willis

Meet the Hurricanes



Merrill, Ryker, Lola, Easton (Missing Novah)

Meet the Canadian Eagles



Corey, Ezra, Spruce, Jenna, and Phoenix

Happy New Year! So happy to be back with the ganganam after the break! We started our year creating learning teams. These teams work collaboratively throughout our learning day, guiding, teaching, and encouraging each other. Students learn how to be active listeners, learn to appreciate others and their ideas, and have a mutual respect for each other. I look forward to see the ideas and activities these teams come up with for our 2026 learning year!

My sincere condolences to all families who have lost a loved one this month. We all at the school will miss them dearly.



Students working together to make their team posters.



Jackie's Grade 2/3 Class



“There is nothing better than curling up with a good book on a cold winter evening.”

It has been a busy and exciting month of exploration and creativity! Our students enjoyed visits to several local beaches, where they discovered all sorts of treasures – including the molted shell of a horseshoe crab. We learned that these fascinating creatures aren't actually related to crabs at all, but to spiders and scorpions, and have existed for over 300 million years—long before the dinosaurs! Back in the classroom, students have been busy building and designing in ADST. Using just a cup full of LEGO pieces, they created imaginative structures and inventions. We also explored the stories behind famous constellations and then crafted our own versions using marshmallows and toothpicks. It truly has been a wonderful month of curiosity, creativity, and hands-on learning!

ADST



Cluxewe and Airport Beaches



Melanie's Grade 1 Class

I love this time in Grade 1! We are back from the break, well rested, and ready to continue our learning. The students have jumped right back into their routines, and it has been wonderful to see so much growth in all areas of school. We are now writing small stories and reading so many books! We have also just finished our science unit on animals in winter. Ask your child about hibernation, migration, and adaptations—they are experts! Soon, we will wrap up our skating program for the year, and it has been amazing to witness the growth in the students' skills. They should all be very proud!

Here in Grade 1, we're incredibly excited to continue building meaningful memories in 2026.

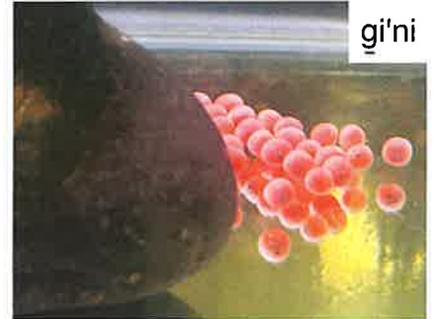


Sheri-An's Kindergarten Class

Gilakas'la, This has been a difficult month for many. We acknowledge the passing of beloved Elders and community members. Their presence and shared wisdom will be remembered with gratitude and love. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones affected by these losses. We also celebrate the arrival of 4 baby siblings, a reminder of hope and new beginnings. We honour both the lives we remember and the new lives we welcome. This month we have been learning about winter changes. We received our Cluxewe river coho eggs which have just hatched into alevin. The kiddos love observing their changes. The same day our gi'ni hatched our class guppies also had babies. Before spring break we will release our salmon fry into the Cluxewe River. We have also been observing kwikw Jackie and Shadow who are incubating kalxa'mina. February will be filled with lessons and activities of love and friendship in anticipation for Valentine's Day.



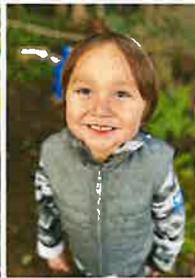
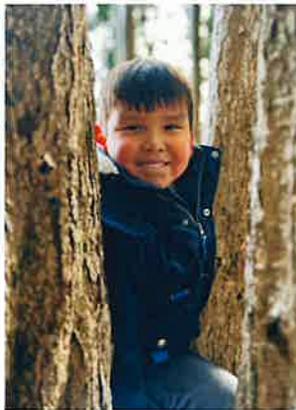
observing gi'ni



gi'ni



skating fun



Kwikw Jackie and Shadow



Gawikanam teachings from Uncle Johnny.



a'tli buddies

Michelle's Pre-K Class: January

In January, we focused on the theme of togetherness for our class and the community. With the loss of one of our dear Pre-K elders, Granny Gertie, we read and talked about how we can all be connected by an "invisible string", even when we are apart from the ones we love. Thank you to Nina for sharing the Japanese art of shuuji, "writing practice." Special birthday cheers to Joey, our first student to turn five!

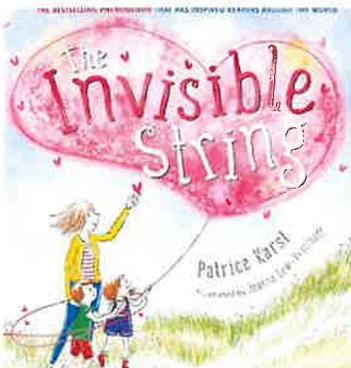
Happy New Year! Best Wishes for 2026.



origami



iceberg play



Robin's Bakwamkala Class

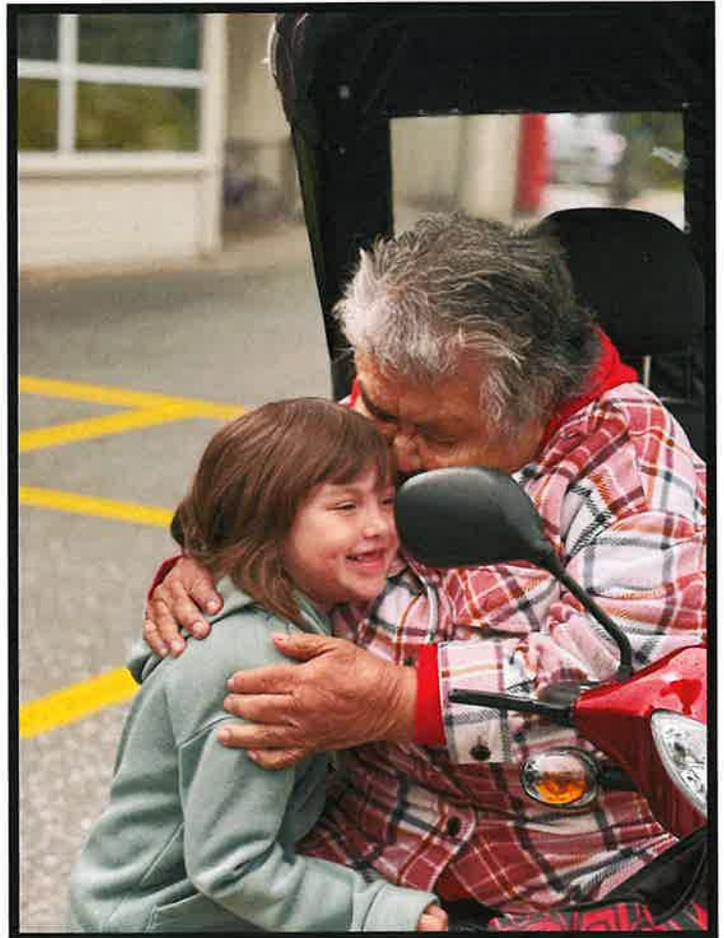
Gilakasda'xw'la!

January has been a very difficult and heavy month for our community. We have experienced significant losses, and our hearts are carrying a lot of grief as we continue to show up for one another with care, love, and strength.

This month, I want to take time to honour Gertie, a fluent and proud speaker of Nakwala. Gertie contributed to our school in many meaningful ways. She played an important role in helping to develop curriculum and was a strong advocate for her dialect to be taught, spoken, and shared with our young ones. Her pride in her language was something she carried openly and generously. Gertie spent time in our school working with the little ones, visiting classrooms, and sharing teachings about family connections, homelands, traditions, and language. Her visits were always special, and they left a lasting impact on our students and staff. We loved having her with us, and we are deeply grateful for the knowledge and care she shared.

To honour Gertie, we will continue to carry forward the lessons she left with us. We will proudly speak our language, share it with our children, and ensure her teachings live on in our classrooms and community. Her voice, her pride, and her love for Nakwala will continue to guide us.

We hold Gertie and all those we have lost this month close in our hearts. May we continue to support one another and move forward together.

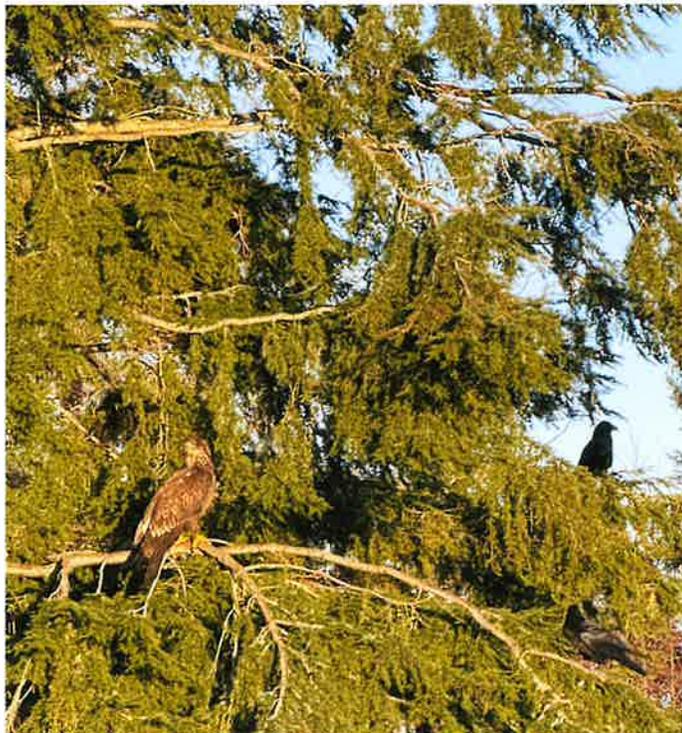


Latisha's Culture Class

Gilakasda'xw'la Łi'laḡwaj!

In culture, we have been practicing and uplifting the teaching of being *saltala*, *being still* and taking extra care of each other; our *noke* (hearts) and *bakwine'* (spirits). With the tremendous losses within our community, school, families and loved ones, we put a pause to our regular routines in culture. Although the *gangananam* missed singing and dancing, we shared a lot of time together playing language games to strengthen our *bakwamkala* and connections to each other. We also had a few mini art projects in between to keep our hands busy as well as our hearts and minds creative! The *gangananam* get out on the *Awinakola* every Monday and Wednesday, this is where we've focused on language surrounding the *Pipatumas* (bird kingdom).

Sending comfort, strength, and love to you and your family.



Sara's P.E. Class



Training has begun in the gym and our students are getting **STRONG** and confident! Students will be prepped and prepared for different Olympic Games and activities. It's so exciting to see the talent surface during our challenging obstacles. The climbing ropes and the peg board are proving themselves to be tiring but rewarding! Some students are able to reach high heights and swing very impressive distances.

We shared our gym with a travelling dance group called Grupo America. Kids and adults alike were mesmerized by the skill, costumes and music. It inspired many people to work on their rhythm.

Top left: "Super Calai" swinging on the rope!
Top right: Landon consistently practicing and growing stronger every day on the peg board!
Bottom right: Tyla showing off her fabulous hair!
Bottom middle: Jenna feeling proud of herself on the ropes.



News from Heather

Happy February!!!

I am welcoming back the longer days and enjoying the currently balmy temperatures!
I hope you take some time to pamper yourselves and your loved ones during this month that emphasizes LOVE and KINDNESS and HEALTHY LIVING!!
LIFE IS SWEETER WITH YOU IN IT!!!

Valentine's Day

WORD BANK

- cupid
- February
- arrow
- love
- rose
- candy
- mine
- conversation
- chocolate
- fourteenth
- heart
- red
- teddy bear

Across:

4. heart candles with phrases on them
5. the month of Valentine's Day
8. kisses or candy in a box
10. Valentine's Day is a day of _____
11. stuffed animals given as gifts
13. expression said on Valentine's Day "Be _____"

Down:

1. symbol of love
2. Valentine's Day is February _____
3. a sweet gift given on Valentine's Day
6. favorite Valentine's Day color
7. the darts that Cupid shoots at people
9. shoots arrows at people
12. a favorite flower for the holiday

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News from Chef Sharon

Welcome Back!

Happy New Year! We are excited to welcome the students back after winter break. During the colder months, our menu features: warm, comforting meals for cold days. Fresh fruits and vegetables. Also students favourites alongside healthy choices.

We are always encouraging students to try new foods, sometimes that all it takes is a little encouragement to change their minds about certain foods.

Thank you to all our families for supporting our school nutrition program.

Cheers!
Sharon



School Activities

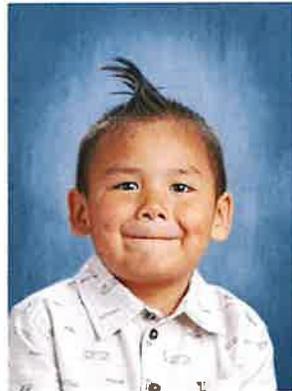


LEARNING
COMES IN
MANY
FORMS



January Birthdays

Happy January Birthdays to: Alice, Joey, Nickolas, Novah,
Alfred and Naiomi!



**Be
kind.**



PiNK SHiRT DAY²⁰
FEB 25²⁶

NO SCHOOL



PRO-D DAY

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13



LITERACY NIGHT

JOIN US FOR A FUN FAMILY EVENING!

Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School

Wednesday, February 18

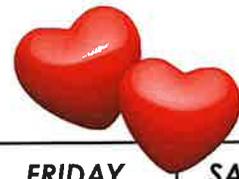
5:00-7:00 PM

Dinner Provided





FEBRUARY 2026



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Div 1 Lyam Div 2 Allyson Div 3 Deb Div 4 Jen Div 5 Jackie Div 6 Melanie Div 7 Sheri-An Div 8 Michelle</p>						
1	<p>Happy Groundhog Day!</p>  <p>Div. 1 & 2 & 5 Outdoor Learning PM</p> <p>Happy Birthday Arabella Walkus</p>	3	4	5	6	7
<p>Happy Birthday Teacher Jen and Teacher Deb</p>		<p>Swimming Div 8 and 9 in PM</p>	<p>Div. 7/8 Skating PM</p>	<p>Fire Drill</p>	<p>Swimming Grade K-7</p> <p>Happy Birthday Amelia Charlie-Galis</p>	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	<p>Div. 1 & 2 Outdoor Learning PM</p> <p>Happy Birthday Starlitta Moon-George</p>	<p>Swimming Div 8 and 9 in PM</p>	<p>Div. 3/4 Outdoor Learning PM</p>	<p>School Spirit - Dress In Red</p>	<p>pro-d day</p>  <p>NO CLASSES</p>	<p>HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!</p> 
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	<p>Happy Family Day</p>  <p>No School</p>	<p>Swimming Div 8 and 9 in PM</p>	<p>Div. 7/8 Skating PM</p> <p>Literacy Evening 5-7</p>	<p>Ala'xwa Tournament @ Civic Centre</p>	<p>Swimming Grade K-7</p>	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	<p>Mt. Cain Skiing</p> <p>Div. 5 Outdoor Learning All Day</p> <p>Happy Birthday Kevin Conroy-Tallio</p>	<p>Swimming Div 8 and 9 in PM</p>	<p>PINK SHIRT DAY</p>  <p>Div. 3/4 Outdoor Learning PM</p> <p>Grade 7 Transition Day - PHSS</p>	<p>Earthquake Drill</p>	<p>Swimming Grade K-7</p>	