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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education and Child Care

### **Safer school with tsunami tower welcomes students**

MASSET – Students of Masset are now learning in a safer school that includes Canada’s first-ever tsunami evacuation tower to better protect the community.

“Every family deserves to know their children will be safe at school, especially in coastal, remote communities like Masset,” said Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care. “Our government’s Seismic Mitigation Program is investing in schools and communities throughout our province, and I’m proud that this one-of-a-kind project will protect the health and safety of the school community for decades to come.”

The Province provided more than \$16 million for seismic upgrades and a tsunami evacuation tower at Daaxiigan Sk’adáa Née Secondary school. The Haida Gwaii Board of Education provided \$250,000.

The school is now home to Daaxiigan Sk’adáa Née Secondary school and Tahaygen Elementary students as a single-site K-12 facility, which will serve Masset families for generations.

“Masset is a unique community, which is why our local families need a unique school to ensure students can be successful and safe, especially if a major disaster were to occur,” said Jennifer Rice, MLA for North Coast and Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health. “This collaboration with the Haida Gwaii Board of Education will benefit this community and provide a safer learning environment for students.”

In addition to safety improvements, the project includes renovations to ensure the school is suitable for students in every grade. That includes the addition of a new main entrance, a special-education room and the creation of a secondary Xaad Kil Haida language-learning space.

The new tsunami evacuation tower, the first of its kind in Canada, is a 10-metre tall steel structure built on school property that includes storage for emergency supplies. This is a significant improvement, as the former evacuation safe zone was more than 10 kilometres from the school.

“The board of education for the Haida Gwaii School District is excited to open the doors on the newly renovated and renamed school, Daaxiigan Sk’adáa Née,” said Roeland Denooij, board vice-chair, Haida Gwaii School District. “As the first K-12 school in the district, we look forward to seeing the positive results for student achievement as our staffing and resources are all in one building for the communities of northern Haida Gwaii. Haawa to all the people who have made this project a reality.”

A single, amalgamated school will also allow the district to save nearly \$350,000 in annual

operating costs, so more resources can be put into classrooms to support student success.

Since September 2017, the B.C. government has approved more than \$5 billion for new and improved schools, and land purchases for schools in the province. This has resulted in 37,000 new student spaces and more than 38,000 seismically safer seats at B.C. schools.

**Learn More:**

To learn more about the Haida Gwaii School District, visit: <https://sd50.bc.ca/>

For more information about major public school capital projects underway, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/capital/major-capital-projects>

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