

Symbols of democracy intrigue Haida Gwaii students

Learning about government structure, roles and responsibilities from text books can be both daunting and dry for a Grade 7 student, but seeing it first hand, under spacious domes, stained-glass windows and marble and gilt plasterwork brought a sense of wonder to six students from Port Clements Elementary School who travelled from Haida Gwaii to the provincial Capital.

During a special behind-the-scenes tour of the Parliament Buildings, the students got up close and personal to MLAs' desks, the Speaker's Chair and the Clerk's Table, site of the silver and gold mace once the personal weapon of the Sergeant-at-Arms and now serving as the symbol of the House being in full session.



Students and teacher from Port Clements school try out the Speaker's Chair.

Sitting in the ornately-carved wooden Speaker's Chair with its twisted columns and canopy intricately carved with the provincial coat of arms, the Port Clements students learned about the trappings and historic symbols still in use today.

Port Clements is a small, rural school of only 40 students in total, said teacher Chris Bellamy, noting there are 17 children in his Grade 5-7 class.

"We've never taken the kids to Victoria before, largely due to prohibitive travel costs," he said. However, thanks to community fundraising and help from the PCC's student travel subsidy program, a trip to the Capital this year was achievable.