

SUPERINTENDENT'S MONTHLY UPDATE

APRIL 2025

This monthly update features stories of success from schools around the district, as well as highlights related to the implementation and impacts of the Board of Education's Strategic Plan in Rocky Mountain School District.

NUTRITION & CORE COMPETENCIES COLLIDE AT WINDERMERE ELEMENTARY

Across the Windermere Elementary School community, social emotional learning (SEL) is an area of growth as students learn, play, and work both together and individually. Social and emotional proficiencies are included in BC's Core Competencies, skills that allow students to engage in deep, lifelong learning. Students develop competencies when they are engaged in the "doing" within a learning area.

Miss Aldene, Nutrition Lead and Youth Care Worker at Windermere Elementary School, is an important support for students strengthening their core competencies. She has created a strong sense of community and belonging using food as a way to connect with students and families. Using the school kitchen as her learning space, Miss Aldene supports students through the breakfast program, hot lunch, and small group learning/cooking in the kitchen. She also shares tips and healthy recipes with families through the school newsletter, supporting the community with solid foundations in nutrition and wellness.



Windermere Elementary School Nutrition Lead & Youth Care Worker Miss Aldene supports students with a recipe in the school's kitchen.



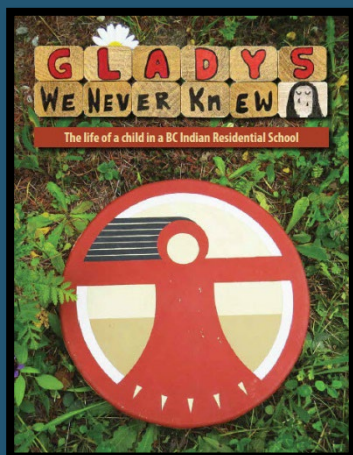
Students too are learning about different cultures and traditions through food. They know the cultural significance of Three Sisters soup, and are becoming increasingly aware of the important role that Indigenous knowledge plays in their community.

Like with many other schools in the district, student growth has also been widely enhanced through the support of external partners. In the case of WES, students have benefited from the service and expertise of many local groups with a focus on food and nutrition, including local First Nations. From greenhouse visits to hosting bees in the school yard, the students at WES are engaging in learning opportunities that are having impact!





STUDENTS ENGAGE IN RECONCILIATION AT EDGEWATER ELEMENTARY



Students in the Gr 4-5 class at Edgewater Elementary recently used the text 'Gladys We Never Knew' to support their learning about BC Residential Schools.

As part of their Truth & Reconciliation journey, Ms. Tegart's grade 4-5 students at Edgewater Elementary recently used the BC Teachers' Federation Resource 'Gladys We Never Knew' to support their learning about BC Residential Schools. In their letters to Gladys' family, students noted their learning about Residential Schools and their understanding of reconciliation. In the family's response to the class, they expressed their gratitude for the children's engagement:

Dear Heather,

On behalf of my family, I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your kind and thoughtful gesture of teaching your class about Gladys. We were deeply touched by the compassion and thought-filled letters the students wrote to our family.

Illuminating this painful part of Canada's history is incredibly important, and we truly appreciate you taking this step to share these caring thoughts from your students. Thank you once again for your kindness and for helping to keep this important history alive through your teaching.

With much respect,

Gail Stromquist (Gladys' niece)

THE POWER OF 'BECAUSE' AT MARYSVILLE ELEMENTARY

Staff at Marysville Elementary this year have been working to improve student meaning making through summarizing and justifying, and students have been encouraged to extend their thinking by including the word "because" in their sentences. This has carried over into their 'Stewardship for the Future' efforts, with students using the sentence frame: "I think it's important to learn outdoors and not only in our classroom because..."

Students have been reflecting on the importance of place-based learning and noticing the different ways they access learning when they are outside on the land. Teachers regularly bring students outdoors for authentic learning experiences, often including community members and in partnership like with "Batty Patty" from Wildschool and HCTF. (Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation), Wildsite BC and others.



Batty Patty (right) is one of many partners supporting authentic learning for MES students.





APRIL 2025

ENHANCING LEARNING AT ALEXANDER PARK ELEMENTARY



Students engage in school-wide square-dancing lessons at Alexander Park Elementary.

Staff at Alexander Park Elementary recognize that student learning is enriched with the active participation of the community. Learning focused on connectedness, reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place are all principles of learning staff are actively striving to achieve.

This year the school has been intentionally deepening their connections to the broader community and celebrating those contributions to learning. They have taken advantage of many diverse opportunities, and several team members have stepped forward to coordinate visits and events.

Special recognition goes to Ms. Linda Poon, the school's Teacher Librarian, who with the support of a grant, worked closely with the Parent Advisory Council to arrange and fund some of the more substantive events this year. These included a drumming program and school-wide square-dancing lessons.

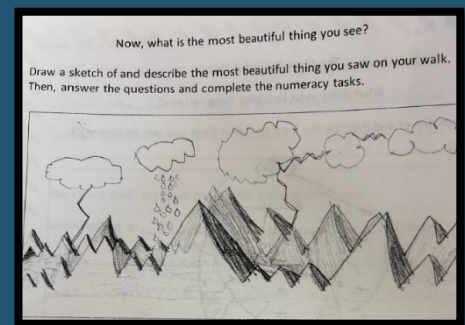
Working together with a common goal, student learning experiences have been enhanced this year at Alexander Park Elementary thanks to collaborative efforts across the school community.

A NUMERACY PEN-PALS PROJECT

Students in Ms. Barrett's (Nicholson) and Ms. Tegart's (Edgewater) classes have participated this year in a unique Numeracy pen-pals project centred around how we view the world. Students have engaged in mathematical thinking, communication and perspective-taking using mentor texts by Indigenous authors Richard Van Camp and Richard Wagamese. Teachers have been supported in their work over the course of the project by Kristin Insull, District Vice Principal of Numeracy.

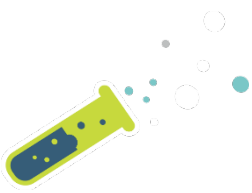
Throughout the project, mathematical concepts were woven into various activities including perspective-taking which encourages spatial awareness and visual estimation. Students will also soon focus on estimation and measurement, comparing dimensions such as height, weight, and distance and verifying their estimates against actual data. Their thinking will be reflected in future letters to their pen-pals, enhancing their ability to communicate mathematical reasoning clearly and more.

Students will also intentionally explore Indigenous perspectives as part of this project, connecting mathematical thinking to historical and cultural contexts.



Students at both Nicholson & Edgewater Elementary Schools make a connection supported by rich numeracy tasks. The pen-pal project will culminate with the creation of a class book and field trip to Lake Enid.





APRIL 2025

CAREER EXPLORATION & DUAL CREDIT

Who doesn't like two for the price of one? Or better yet, two for one with a gift card!! Oddly, this familiar sales pitch describes Academic Dual Credit, an option that allows Gr. 11-12 students to earn credits for a post-secondary course and count them twice: once for post-secondary credential, and again towards their high school diploma. An added advantage: the District pays the tuition!

Darren Danyluk, the district's Dual Credit Enhancement Manager, has worked this year to build capacity and understanding of Dual Credit among our communities. His work, aligning with the priorities of the Strategic Plan, has led to a growing interest among secondary students in Dual Credit opportunities for 25-26.

Two related achievements this Spring include the development of a Dual Credit & Career Education landing page on the district's web site, as well as a comprehensive information package jointly developed with College of the Rockies, inviting students to explore career pathways and expand their academic horizons.



RMSD secondary school students recently attended a Justice Fair at College of the Rockies. The event showcased related career and Academic Dual Credit opportunities.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT ON TRACK



Construction of Invermere's new childcare facility near Eileen Madson Primary School is expected to wrap up in the Fall.

The Rocky Mountain School District Invermere childcare project continues to move forward with many significant aspects of construction now complete including:

- Site services (sewer, water, BC Hydro and Telus)
- Rough grading of the entrance driveway, parking lot and outside play areas
- Electrical and mechanical rough-in inside the building
- Insulation and vapor barrier inside the building

Further elements including exterior siding, drywall, painting, millwork, interior finishing, and landscaping are either currently underway or are expected to kickoff soon.

Lots of work is happening behind the scenes, like procurement of furniture, equipment and supplies, as well as recruitment of staff and preparations of licensing documentation. Windermere Valley Child Care Society, the third-party operator of the facility, will be in a position to arrange for an inspection with Interior Health once construction is complete. Huge thanks are extended to all those involved in this exciting community venture!





KTUNAXA LANGUAGE LEARNING AT MCKIM MIDDLE SCHOOL

An innovative project is underway at McKim Middle School, aligning with the school's strategic goals and serving to strengthen student communication skills.

In preparation for National Indigenous Day, McKim Middle School Indigenous Education Support workers, Jacinta Marina and Indra Stefanek, have been offering Ktunaxa language lessons to students. As part of this initiative, Jacinta and Indra launched a fun and engaging contest with students being challenged to count in Ktunaxa. This activity not only expands students' cultural awareness, but also fosters an environment of respect and inclusion, supporting the school's goal to resolve conflicts and interact with integrity, honesty, and empathy.



McKim Middle School students have been learning the Ktunaxa language in an initiative led by the school's Indigenous Education Support Workers Jacinta Marina & Indra Stefanek. The school anticipates partnering with Ktunaxa Language Learning Facilitator Mara Nelson for some upcoming opportunities.

This initiative ties directly to the staff's inquiry question: *Can we continue to enhance student communication skills by improving conflict resolution and interpersonal relationships?* By integrating Indigenous language and cultural knowledge, staff are enhancing students' understanding of diverse perspectives, which is key to resolving conflicts and building positive relationships.

The fun contest also supports the school's broader strategy of using Indigenous education to enrich cultural and interpersonal awareness. This aligns with McKim's "Stewardship for the Future" goal, where learning beyond the classroom, such as through community partnerships and local Indigenous knowledge, plays a vital role in fostering student self-awareness and supporting their achievement.

In the near future, McKim hopes to expand their students' learning opportunities with the support of Ktunaxa Language Learning Facilitator Mara Nelson, who works closely with Alfred Joseph, teaching the Ktunaxa language through Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN).

