

# Superintendent's Report to the Board

## April 2025



## A Message from the Superintendent

Ama Sah / Good Day,

As we move further into 2025, I continue to be deeply grateful for the partnerships, dedication, and care that define the Coast Mountains' school communities. Our shared commitment to learner success, equity, and wellness is evident in every school visit, classroom conversation, and community event.

Over the past several months, I have had the pleasure of attending several community events, and I am continually impressed by the talents and spirit exhibited by our young people. Most recently, at the Music Festival Finale, I had the opportunity to watch students sing, recite, dance, act, and perform musical pieces with great skill and enthusiasm. In addition to the arts, I have also enjoyed cheering on our student athletes at various sporting events, where their teamwork, determination, and sportsmanship have been truly inspiring.

In this month's report, you'll see a strong connection to the goals outlined in the Coast Mountains School District Strategic Plan. As a system, we are focusing on three key areas: Improving Student Learning, Honouring Culture, Diversity and Inclusion; and Fostering Well-Being. Each story, update, and initiative in the pages that follow directly ties into these priorities.

We recognize that student reading levels need to increase, and that early success in literacy is foundational to a child's confidence and long-term learning. This is why we are preparing to implement a new K-6 Literacy Framework in the Fall—designed in collaboration with educators and rooted in research-informed practice.

Like other districts across British Columbia — particularly in northern and remote regions — we are experiencing ongoing recruitment challenges. At the same time, we're finding solutions. In the pages ahead, you'll read about how we are strengthening relationships with universities and increasing teacher practicum placements, which support both recruitment and quality classroom experiences for students.

We also acknowledge that mental health and well-being continues to be a struggle for many learners. Consequently, we are investing in increased mental health supports and trying novel strategies — from school-based programs to interagency partnerships — to meet the evolving needs of our students and families.

I hope you find this month's report informative, hopeful, and a reflection of the thoughtful and tireless work taking place across Coast Mountains School District. Together, we remain focused on creating inclusive, connected, and supportive learning environments — places where all learners can thrive.

With gratitude and appreciation,

Tracey MacMillan  
Superintendent



### Upcoming Dates:

April 28 – National Day of Mourning  
May 5 – Red Dress Day – Honouring MMIWG2S  
May 13-15 – Student Adventures in Health Care  
May 14 – Business & Education Committee Meetings  
May 16 – Professional Development Day (No Classes)  
May 19 – Victoria Day (No Classes)  
May 28 – School Board Hybrid Meeting (Stewart)  
May 29 – Grade 7 Maker Day (NTETC)

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### CMSD Board Chair Awarded King Charles III Coronation Medal

The Coronation Medal program was created to mark the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. It recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to their community, province, territory, region or community in Canada, or attained an outstanding achievement abroad that brings credit to our country.

On March 30, 2025, MP for Skeena-Bulkley Valley, Taylor Bacharach presented Margaret Warcup, Trustee and Board of Education Chair for Coast Mountains School District, with the King Charles III Coronation Medal for her dedication to long service, leadership and volunteerism for community and region. Margaret's dedication to education, community service and public trust distinguished her as an exemplary candidate for this honour.

MP Bacharach shared that Margaret has done so much for our communities over her 50 years in the Skeena-Bulkley Valley constituency. She has both professionally and through active volunteerism made a profound and lasting impact on community development and education in our communities and region, making her a worthy recipient for the King Charles III Coronation Medal.



*Skeena-Bulkley Valley MP, Taylor Bacharach presents Margaret Warcup, CMSD Trustee and Board of Education Chair with the prestigious King Charles III Coronation Medal on March 30, 2025. Congratulations Margaret!*



Margaret graduated with a Master of Science in Community Health and worked as a Physiotherapist where she helped children live their best lives possible. Margaret worked as a Program Director for the Terrace Child Development Centre, then assumed the role of Executive Director at the Kitimat Child Development Centre which she led for 17 years. Margaret was instrumental in establishing the University of Northern British Columbia through her appointment to the Interim Governing Council.

There are many volunteer roles that Margaret has held and has exemplified honouring the Rotarian motto *Service Above Self*.

***Congratulations Margaret! We celebrate the recognition she received for her dedication and contributions made to our communities and the Northwest region!***

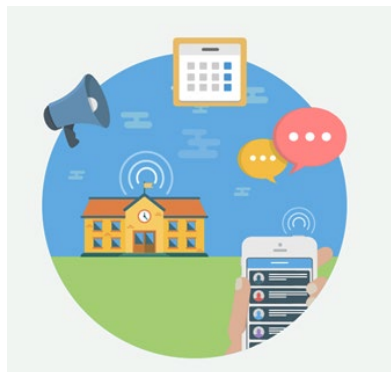


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### Keep Connected with SchoolMessenger



As a school district, we are always striving to improve and enhance communications with our parents, caregivers, and families.

We recognize the importance of keeping parents and caregivers connected with their child's school. Coast Mountains School District (CMSD) will be using SchoolMessenger, a safe and secure communication platform to send automated phone calls and emails to parents for emergencies and attendance. In the future, it may also be used for school updates, bussing updates, newsletters, and district-wide events. Your account is free and an easy way to keep connected.

***We are excited to be rolling out SMS notifications (text messages) effective May 1, 2025 for all schools across the school district.*** This new service will allow your child's school to send important updates, reminders, and emergency notifications directly to your mobile phone.

An SMS message will be extended by SchoolMessenger inviting parents and caregivers to opt in to receive these notifications. Alternatively, you can opt in at any time by texting "Y" to 978338 from your mobile phone by accessing the QR Code displayed to the right. You will receive a confirmation message once your opt-in is successful. Kindly note that you must opt in from each mobile device you wish to receive messages on.



Your contact information will be kept confidential, and you can opt out of SMS communications at any time.

If your child is registered in a CMSD school, then you are already set up to receive emergency and attendance messages by phone or email. However, if you would like to receive other messages such as school updates and newsletters, you must sign up to SchoolMessenger and set your notification preferences. Tell us what news you would like to receive and how you want to be notified.



There is also a free SchoolMessenger App available for both iOS and Android based phones which enables you to receive notifications of school messages. Download the App, set your notification preferences, and move the App to your phone's home screen for easy access!

**To learn more about SchoolMessenger, how to create your SchoolMessenger Account and more, please visit the school district's website at <https://cmsd.bc.ca/schoolmessenger>.**

We extend our appreciation to parents and caregivers for your ongoing support in helping us stay connected and ensuring timely information is received regarding their child's education.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to your School Principal for assistance.

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### UNBC Scholar Recipient from Caledonia Secondary

The University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) Scholars program recognizes Grade 11 students in Northern BC and Yukon for outstanding academic achievement. The scholarship takes the form of a waiver of full tuition to a maximum of 120 credits (or the number of credits required for a bachelor's degree). Students do not apply to be UNBC Scholars. Rather, at the start of their Grade 12 year, each high school in Northern BC and Yukon indicates the student with the highest-grade point average (GPA) based on the student's Grade 11 marks (minimum 80%). The GPA will be calculated on the basis of the highest grade received in English 11 or 12 or English First Peoples 11 or 12, and the highest grade received in Math 11 or 12, and the next four highest marks in Grade 11 courses (to include three academic courses and one elective).

In the 2023-24 school year, Brooklyn Frank was selected as Caledonia Secondary School's nominee for the UNBC Scholar award (displayed to the right in the UNBC Scholar poster). She is currently at UNBC in Prince George, working on a Bachelor of Science degree with the goal of continuing on to medical school. The nominee for 2024-25 school year is Ben Carter. Ben will be attending UNBC in the fall with the financial support of the UNBC Scholar program.



2024 UNBC Scholar from Caledonia Secondary, Brooklyn Frank. Brooklyn chose UNBC because it always places well in the annual Maclean's magazine rankings. As someone going into medicine, smaller classes and personal instructor attention are key to her career success.

### Kildala Elementary hosts Le Concours Régional

Throughout the month of March, Coast Mountains' schools offering French Immersion hosted their local French oral speaking contests. On Saturday, April 5, Kildala Elementary School hosted Le Concours Régional for the school district's Grades 4-12 Immersion students at Kitimat's Mount Elizabeth Theatre. In attendance, 26 students from Terrace, Kitimat, and Hazelton bravely spoke about a topic of interest. These topics varied from hockey themed, science based, life in Terrace, the difference between motivation and discipline, the United Nations, the benefits of French Immersion, and more. It was truly impressive to see how our French Immersion students can not only write eloquently, but can memorize, and present their speeches in front of an auditorium full of students, parents, teachers, and judges.

One candidate from the group of presenting students was selected to represent our school district in Vancouver at Le Concours Provincial on May 3. ***Congratulations to Audrey Arsenault, a Grade 9 Skeena Middle School student, in winning both her category for 9e année (Grade 9) French Immersion and for being selected to represent our school district in Vancouver.*** Audrey presented on Les Nations Unies et les O.D.D. (the United Nations and the O.D.D. international organizations).



Congratulations to Audrey Arsenault, Grade 9 Skeena Middle School student, in winning both in her category at Le Concours Regional on April 5 and also selected to represent our school district in Vancouver at Le Concours Provincial on May 3.



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## Inclusive Education Student Success Stories



Leelynd is pictured in the Trades Program Shop at Coast Mountain College where he hopes to work with heavy machinery in the future. Keep up the good work, Leelynd!

Leelynd has made tremendous progress engaging with his academic program at Parkside Secondary School this year. He has committed himself to the trades program at Coast Mountain College, where he hopes to work with heavy machinery in the future.

In the past, Leelynd has struggled to commit to full attendance and engagement with school. This year, Leelynd has shown himself fully committed to his attendance and participation, acting as a leader to his peers through his actions, and his commitments to his responsibility.

***We are so proud of Leelynd and we can't wait to watch all of his future successes in the trades as he progresses through his program!***

Jesse, a young non-verbal autistic student at Kildala Elementary School, has made remarkable progress this school year, showcasing the power of inclusive education. Initially, he faced significant challenges in engaging with others and often worked independently in a separate space. Through the unwavering dedication of the inclusive education team, his programming has been tailored to support his unique needs, fostering his growth and confidence.



With the introduction of the PECS (Picture Exchange Community System) program, Jesse now communicates with the help of his peers, who actively and enthusiastically support him. PECs is a systematic way to teach a child how to communicate with someone else by handing them a picture of what they want (reference

PECS picture sample above). This program was originally designed for children with autism but can be used for other non-speaking children as well.

This transformation exemplifies what students with complex needs can achieve when surrounded by a compassionate and committed school team. The school's nurturing environment has created a space where diversity is celebrated, and all students feel valued.

***Kildala Elementary School stands as an inspiring example of inclusivity in action, and this student's progress is a testament to the incredible possibilities of collaboration and care.***



Jesse (r) has quite the fan club at recess. Genni Santos, Resource Teacher (l) at Kildala Elementary, shared this was the first time for Jesse using the PECS program being prompted to communicate. By the fourth cracker request, he got it! Jesse now uses the PECS program and does the exchange with no prompting. What an accomplishment for Jesse!

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## University Practicum Students Complete Successful School Placements

Coast Mountains School District hosted university practicum students from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and the University of British Columbia (UBC). Congratulations to each of the practicum students who recently completed their school-based placements, marking a significant milestone in their journey toward becoming professional educators. These practicums are an essential component of teacher education programs, provide aspiring teachers with hands-on experience in real classroom settings under the guidance of experienced mentor teachers.

Throughout their placements, the students actively engaged in lesson planning, classroom management, student assessment, and co-curricular activities. They had the opportunity to apply educational theories in practical contexts, refine their teaching strategies, and build meaningful relationships with students and staff. Teachers and administrators praised the practicum students for their enthusiasm, adaptability, and willingness to learn. Many of the students brought fresh ideas and energy into the classroom, contributing positively to the school community.



*A special shout-out is extended to Sheryl Edwards, UNBC Practicum Placement Coordinator - School of Education (second from the left) for her outstanding coordination and assistance in placing UNBC practicum students with Coast Mountains' schools. Pictured with Sheryl include Phillip Barron, Director of Instruction Learning Services (far left), Superintendent Tracey MacMillan (second from the right), and Julia Nieckarz, Director of Instruction Inclusive Education (far right).*



*UNBC Practicum Student Teacher, Tran Nguyen is pictured (l) during her school-based placement with the Kindergarten Class of Uplands Elementary School with the guidance and assistance of Kindergarten Class Teacher, Mary-Anne Barron (r). A great experience for Tran!*

For the university students, the practicum offered a valuable glimpse into the daily realities of teaching and helped them grow both personally and professionally. It also served as a platform to receive constructive feedback, reflect on their practice, and develop greater confidence in their teaching abilities.

We extend our gratitude and appreciation to the sponsor teachers in our schools for supporting practicum students, to the school leadership teams for their support, and to the faculty advisors from UNBC and UBC for their ongoing support.

***Congratulations again to all practicum students for their hard work, dedication and the meaningful impact they have made during their school placements – their passion for teaching truly shines!***



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### CMSD Hosts Meet & Greet for Practicum Student Teachers

An invitation was extended to Practicum Student Teachers of University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and University of British Columbia (UBC), who recently completed their school-based placements with Coast Mountains School District, to join District Leadership Team members for a “Meet & Greet” held on Wednesday, April 16 at the school district office in Terrace.

The Meet & Greet provided an informal opportunity for Practicum Students to meet with Superintendent Tracey MacMillan, Directors of Instruction Phillip Barron & Julia Nieckarz, the Director and Manager of Human Resources Kiran Bath & Kyla Magnusson, and Sheryl Edwards, UNBC Practicum Placement Coordinator - School of Education. Information was shared on upcoming job positions, how to apply for jobs, mentorship opportunities as well as answers to any questions. The District Leadership Team members took the opportunity to congratulate the Practicum Students on achieving their Bachelor of Education degree – a huge achievement!

It was a great get-together where Practicum Students spoke about their positive experiences in Coast Mountains' schools and their teaching career aspirations. ***We are hoping to welcome the Practicum Students to new teaching positions for the upcoming school year!*** A group photo with the Meet & Greet attendees along with individual presentations with the Practicum Students is shared below. A thank-you gift bag was presented to each practicum student for their hard work, dedication and the meaningful impact they made during their school placements with Coast Mountains School District.



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## Provincial School Outreach Program

Provincial School Outreach (PSO) is a multi-disciplinary team of specialists who provide in-person and virtual support to school districts across the province, including case consultations, professional development sessions, and linking school and school district staff to regional and provincial resources and services. The program prioritizes services and support for school districts in rural and remote regions where unfilled vacancies of specialist personnel may be adversely impacting service delivery to students.

PSO is a program sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Child Care that consists of specialist personnel who serve as outreach consultants to provide in-person and virtual support to students, classrooms, schools, and school districts across British Columbia. The program is funded by the Government of British Columbia and the program is hosted by the North Vancouver School District (SD44). Vince White is the Director of Provincial School Outreach based at SD44.

Provincial School Outreach provides its supports and services in coordination with other provincial outreach and resource programs that are specialized in a wide range of areas that are integral to supporting student success.

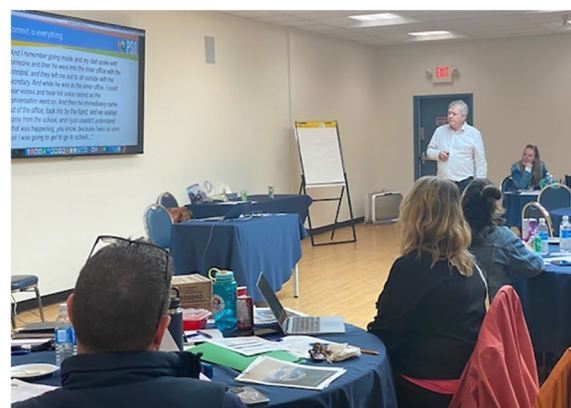
Recently, Coast Mountains School District was fortunate to have Vince attend the Principals & Vice Principals Forum held on April 3 at the Northwest Trades & Employment Training Centre. Vince shared his knowledge on Inclusive Education and balancing perspectives, real life and legislation. Vince is an excellent presenter and provided many thought-provoking topics.



*Julia Nieckarz, Director of Instruction Inclusive Education (I) is pictured with Vince White, Director of the Provincial School Outreach (r) following his presentation on the Provincial School Outreach program at the Principals & Vice Principals Forum held April 3, 2025 at NTETC.*



*Julia Nieckarz (left back), Director of Instruction Inclusive Education welcomes and introduces Vince White (right back), Provincial School Outreach Director to the Principals & Vice Principals Forum held on April 3 in the NTETC Meeting Room.*



*Vince White (right back), Provincial School Outreach Director presents the administrator in-service on Behaviour Related Decision Making: Statutory and Contextual Frameworks for Consideration.*



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### How Porcupine Gets Quills Discovery Activity

While attending the Principals & Vice Principals Forum held on Thursday, April 3 at the Northwest Trades & Employment Centre, we learned of the hands-on student Discovery activity, “How Porcupine Gets Quills”, being taught by Cory Redl, Discovery/Dual Credit Teacher for Janine Hamming’s Grade 3 Class of Thornhill Primary School.

Cory shared that he adapted this Discovery activity from the popular Hedgehog activity that involves the same applied design, skills and technologies (ADST), but changing the story to a porcupine allows him to incorporate Indigenous culture and storytelling. There are no hedgehogs in North America, but the porcupine can be found in every Canadian province. Evidence of their contributions to people and the land can be seen and heard in Indigenous stories all over Turtle Island.



This Discovery activity combines the telling of a seasonal Michif (Métis) story of how the porcupine got its quills, with an ADST woodworking activity where students use a hammer and nails to give a porcupine its quills. In addition to the one-hour activity, participating teachers are provided with optional extension activities that can be done in the classroom.

Cory shared the following comments he has received from teachers of the ten Grade 3-4 classes in the school district that have participated in the Discovery activity this spring.

- *“My students were so engaged. They talked about the activities all of the following day. The cultural connections were very impactful. Trades are not a common visit especially for little ones, we loved the visit.”*
- *“I have never participated in any other program/activity that held the attention of 22 Grade 3 students prior to this activity. Hands down amazing experience for each student and myself. It was uplifting to watch my students create and learn hands-on skills. I would love to do more of these activities in the future. This is what I would call “real” learning.”*
- *“This Discovery program provides the resources and knowledge keeper (expert tradesperson) to give students the opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge in a different way. Students feel a great deal of success when doing hands-on learning and is an essential life skill. Without these resources and experts being provided by this grant, the responsibility to acquire such things is on the teacher and most teachers aren't expert tradespeople. Bottom line is students in CMSD won't have these valuable opportunities if this program ceases to exist.”*



**Cory Redl, NTETC**  
Discovery/Dual Credit  
Teacher is pictured  
teaching the Grade 3 Class  
of Thornhill Primary School  
a Discovery hands-on  
activity, How Porcupine  
Gets Quills, that  
incorporates Indigenous  
culture and storytelling  
for the students' learnings.



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### Zone01 Regional Robotics Competition held April 14



The Zone01 Regional Robotics Competition was held for a full day at Mount Elizabeth Middle/Secondary School (MEMSS) in Kitimat on Monday, April 14. Students from nine different schools competed in three different events, across two age groups.

Most schools had 5-7 teams of students working with two different-purposed robots. It's estimated that 150 students and coaches participated. Coast Mountains School District fielded three Kitimat schools and three Terrace schools. Rio Tinto is the partner host with Zone01 Robotics and kindly provided judges and a large pizza lunch for everyone. Parents and other classes were invited to watch the day's events.

The three robot challenges were:

1. Sumo - build and code a robot capable of finding and pushing out an opponent,
2. Gemstone - build and code a robot capable of collecting gems (some hidden under obstacles) while trying to solve the last-minute surprise rule, and
3. Pollinator - build and code a robot capable of dropping pollen blocks into flowers of different heights while scanning for their location.



MEMSS' Robotics Teacher, Kim Wilkinson has been the organizer and host of the regional competition for five years running.

The overall Gemstone winning team from MEMSS has earned the opportunity to attend the Zone01 National Robotics Competition held in Montreal in May.



**Best wishes are  
extended to the  
MEMSS  
Gemstone Team  
for a great  
experience and  
success at the  
Robotics  
Competition in  
Montreal in  
May!  
Have fun and  
happy coding!**





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## NTETC Happenings during the Month of April

### Hazelton Tour

On April 11, Stephanie Muldoe, Career Life Connections/Careers Coordinator accompanied 18 students from Hazelton Secondary School on a tour of the Piping Industry College (PIC) at the Northwest Trades & Employment Centre (NTETC), Coast Mountain College, and the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) campus. Throughout the day, students explored a range of training facilities focused on trades, healthcare, and social work. They also had the chance to visit the campus salon, dormitories, library, and enjoyed lunch at the Coast Mountain College cafeteria. Many thanks to volunteer, Jordan Muldoe who accompanied the group and drove the bus!

### Trades SAMPLER in Stewart

A Trades SAMPLER program was launched at Bear Valley School in Stewart on April 14, giving students hands-on exposure to a variety of career paths including Carpentry, Culinary Arts, Electrical, Hairstyling, Cement, Heavy Duty, Scaffolding, Piping, and Ironworking.

This valuable opportunity was made possible through the collaboration and support of the Piping Industry College and Coast Mountain College, whose partnership brought the program to life.



*Bear Valley School students, Toryn Hill, Travis Retza, Dylan Burke & Keaton Grober proudly display the bench they created during the Carpentry Trades Sampler held on April 14. Well done!*

### Adventures in Health Care Interviews

During the week of April 14–17, the Rotary Club conducted interviews with students from across the district for a chance to participate in the *Adventures in Health Care* program. This unique opportunity is made possible through a strong partnership between the local Rotary Clubs, UNBC, Coast Mountain College (CMTN), Coast Mountains School District 82, and Northern Health. Selected students will spend three days (May 13-15) in Terrace, engaging in hands-on experiences at CMTN, UNBC, Cedar Coast Dental, and the new Ksyen Regional Hospital. Throughout the program, students will have the chance to explore health care careers and connect directly with professionals in the field.

### Skills Canada Competition in Abbotsford

On April 16, Kim Hoekstra, District Careers Coordinator accompanied four students from our school district to Abbotsford, where they proudly represented us at the Skills Canada Competition. This incredible opportunity was made possible through our continued partnership with Coast Mountain College.

### Trades SAMPLER with PIC in Terrace

Currently, four students from Parkside Secondary School are participating in the Trades SAMPLER program at NTETC.

Additionally, two students who graduated last year from Mount Elizabeth Middle/Secondary School (MEMSS) are commuting daily to take part in the program.



*CMSD students, Thomas Humchitt, Dylan Louttit, Sydney Schulmeister & Parker Graham proudly represented CMSD at the Skills Canada Competition held in Abbotsford on April 16. Graduated students Aaron Barks, Chad Bouvier & Tephilla Finstad and Chaperones/Instructors Bruce Neid & Tamara Edwald (CMTN) & Kim Hoekstra (CMSD) accompanied and supported the students. An incredible and amazing experience!*



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### Caledonia Travel Club's The Grand Tour of Italy

The Caledonia Travel Club grew from a chance sitting of an Education First (EF) booth promoting the 100th Anniversary Tour of Vimy Ridge at a conference in Vancouver. That developed into the first trip in 2017 titled "Canada and the World Wars". Since then, the Caledonia Travel Club have toured "The Ancient Mediterranean", "The British Isles" and "The Grand Tour of Italy". Travel happens every two years and is open to any Caledonia student at the time of travel. Registration is available nearly two years prior to the travel date to spread out the cost of the trip.

The Grand Tour of Italy took place during Spring Break 2025. The group, comprised of forty students and six chaperones flew to Milan, travelled the length of Italy, and flew home from Rome. Over the course of the twelve days, the Caledonia Travel Club visited Milan, Verona, Venice, Florence, Pisa, Assisi, Sorrento, Capri, Naples and Rome. *Photo highlights below include the gondola ride in Venice, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, exploring Assisi, the boat tour of Capri, and, of course, the Colosseum and the Vatican where Indigenous students taking part in the tour wore their regalia for the Vatican walk-through ... empowering reconciliation!*



**Caledonia Travel Club's "The Grand Tour of Italy" during Spring 2025 was an amazing trip with 40 students and 6 chaperones. It was a jam-packed 12-day tour which began in Milan and wound its**

