

# Superintendent's Report to the Board

## January 2025



## A Message from the Superintendent

Ama Sah / Good Day,

**Welcome to 2025!** We wish you all the best for the new year! Over the next couple of months, we are excited to introduce new programming initiatives in collaboration with the Coast Mountains' Northwest Trades & Employment Training Centre (NTETC). These initiatives include:

- **Dual Credit Electrical and Welding program** in Hazelton;
- **Trades Sampler** for Caledonia and Parkside Secondary students;
- **Trades Sampler** in Stewart;
- **Tuition-free Childcare First-Aid & CPR** one-day course;
- **Early Childhood Education (ECE) Work Experience** in Hazelton, Terrace, and Kitimat;
- **ECCE Health, Safety, and Nutrition online evening course** for Dual Credit learners across the District; and
- **Hospital visits** in collaboration with Northern Health.



This is just one of the ways Coast Mountains School District ensures that enhanced programming is offered to all school communities in an equitable manner. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Dan Hamel, NTETC Principal, as well as our school staff, administrative teams, and community partners for their efforts in facilitating these wonderful opportunities for our learners. Please refer to the "Up and Coming Events" section of this report for a more comprehensive list of offerings.

I have also begun my next round of school visits, which provide opportunities to engage with learners, staff, and administrators. These interactions help me stay connected with the realities of daily classroom life. The District Leadership Team continues their visits to support pedagogical initiatives, address the needs of diverse learners, maintain school buildings, and collaborate with Human Resources to plan for upcoming retirements.

This month, I attended my first District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) meeting. I am grateful for DPAC's genuine interest in education and their dedication to supporting their children's learning in such a positive and collaborative manner. I look forward to meeting more parents as we progress through the second term.



Kelley Axelson, Caledonia Secondary Teacher provides a tour of The BC Skeena Qualifier Robotics Competition held at Caledonia Secondary School on January 18.

Last weekend, we had the pleasure of watching students showcase their skills at The BC Skeena Qualifier Robotics Competition held at Caledonia Secondary School. The students were incredible! The intricacy of coding and programming required to build and control the robots was truly impressive. This is just one example of the many program enhancements available throughout Coast Mountains School District. We regularly receive invitations to attend sports events, plays, musicals, cultural activities, and on-the-land learning experiences. None of these programs would be possible without the tireless efforts of our dedicated staff and community volunteers, who give countless hours after school and on weekends. We sincerely thank you!

Throughout the remainder of this report, we are proud to highlight a sampling of program initiatives and enhancements for learners, as well as professional learning opportunities for staff and community partners, that have taken place across Coast Mountains School District this past month.

With gratitude and appreciation,

  
Tracey MacMillan, Superintendent

*Coast Mountains School District is in service to diverse First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners and their caregivers who live, learn and play on the traditional lands of the Gitksan, Haisla, Nisga'a and Ts'msyen peoples.*



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### Addressing the Critical Issue of Human Trafficking

On January 14, Coast Mountains School District, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and Northern Health hosted a community in-service session addressing the critical issue of human trafficking. The goal was to raise awareness about human trafficking and its implications in the northwest region.

Cathy Peters, a prominent advocate from the organization "Be Amazing," was one of the key speakers. She is dedicated to raising awareness about human sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, and child sex trafficking for prostitution. Cathy regularly speaks and presents to politicians, police, and the public to combat these pressing issues.



Speakers and facilitators of the Human Tracking In-Service Session pose for a picture with Superintendent Tracey MacMillan (r) and Julia Nieckarz, Director of Instruction, Inclusive Education (third from the left).



RCMP guest speaker, Lori Foster elaborated on the assistance provided by the RCMP related to human trafficking.

Additionally, Sue Brown, the director of advocacy and a staff lawyer at Justice for Girls, also spoke at the session. With over 15 years of experience as a human rights advocate and practicing lawyer, Sue is dedicated to promoting the health, equality, and dignity of teenage girls and young women living in poverty. Her work focuses on addressing issues such as violence, exploitation, and human trafficking.

Kelly Cates, Community Policing & Media Relations representative from the Terrace RCMP detachment, provided education

on what human trafficking is, who is at risk, information on recruitment tactics used by human traffickers, and the human trafficking laws in Canada. Lori Foster from the RCMP further elaborated on how the RCMP can provide assistance.

The event saw a large variety of community members in attendance, including employees from Northern Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD),



On January 14, Coast Mountains School District, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and Northern Health hosted a community in-service session addressing the critical issue of human trafficking.

Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH), the school district, RCMP members, Foundry, K'san, and many more. We extend our gratitude to Julia Nieckarz, Director of Instruction, Inclusive Education, for her leadership and invaluable contributions to this sensitive and important initiative as the lead representative from Coast Mountains School District.



CMSD District Staff participate in the Human Trafficking In-Service Session held on January 14 at the NTETC meeting room.

Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH), the school district, RCMP members, Foundry, K'san, and many more. We extend our gratitude to Julia Nieckarz, Director of Instruction, Inclusive Education, for her leadership and invaluable contributions to this sensitive and important initiative as the lead representative from Coast Mountains School District.

The event was highly successful, leaving attendees inspired and equipped to take action. Participants are now heading back to their respective organizations with a wealth of knowledge, eager to share information, initiate their own task forces, and drive meaningful change in their communities.



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### Celebrating Nechako Elementary Inclusive Ed Team

It has been such a pleasure getting to work with the Inclusive Education Team at Nechako Elementary School consisting of David Mills, Principal, Rebecca Gray and Monica Rigoni, Teachers, and Elise Borgens, Education Assistant. David, Rebecca, Monica and Elise are working hard together to ensure an inclusive and collaborative learning environment for their students.

Specifically, they have been working to develop the functional communication and transition skills of a limited verbal autistic student who is new to their community. They have leveraged technology to engage this student in Touch Chat to support communication with the help of Guilliana Reniero, our exceptional Speech and Language Pathologist. The team is fluently incorporating visuals and timers to support this student in following adult directions with limited anxiety, opposition, or escalation.



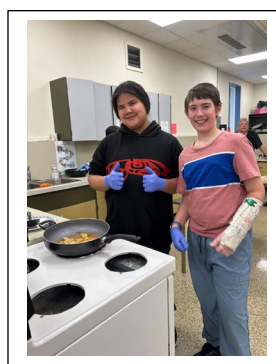
Nechako Elementary School's Inclusive Education Team go above and beyond to help a limited verbal autistic student new to Kitimat. Pictured l-r: Rebecca Gray, Elise Borgens, Monica Rigoni and David Mills.

Nechako Elementary's team has gone above and beyond to collect data to help drive and inform their instructional practices. A special acknowledgement goes to Elise, the Education Assistant supporting the program, who has taken the initiative to collect and analyze data daily in order to reflectively meet the needs of this student and develop the positive rapport required to ensure close and trustful student/teacher relationships.

Nechako Elementary's teamwork, reflection, and collaboration are a wonderful example of how our staff go above and beyond to ensure meaningful learning and positive experiences for our kids with complex needs.

### Students Learn Gardening & Cooking at Kitwanga Elementary

Kitwanga Elementary students have been busy learning to safely prepare meals using the potatoes that all the students planted, grew, and cared for in the school garden last spring and harvested this fall! The Grade 4/5 class made fries/poutines, and the Grade 6/7 class made the whole school a breakfast including making hashbrown patties out of the school potatoes!



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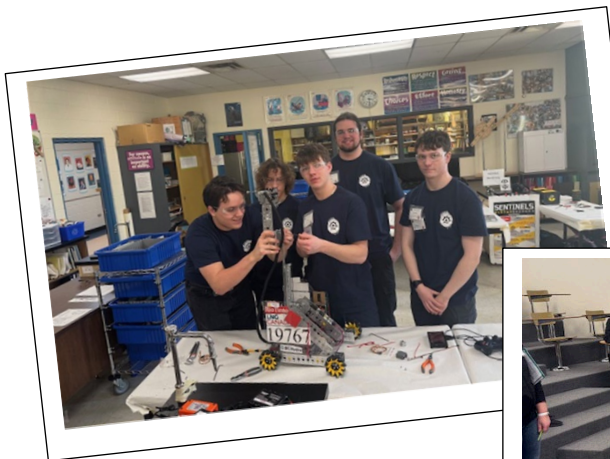
## Robotics Happenings in CMSD



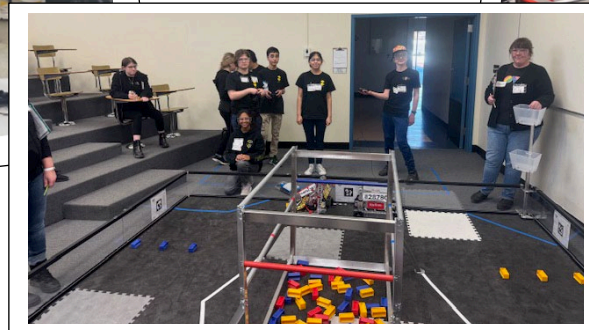
**The BC Skeena Qualifier Robotics Competition**  
On Saturday, January 18, a Robotics event called, “The BC Skeena Qualifier” was held in Terrace at Caledonia Secondary School. This event was the official FIRST qualifier, with one team qualifying for the opportunity to travel to Vancouver and take part in a provincial level of competition. It was very exciting! The focus of this event was to run a qualifying event for the next level of competition but also to gather as like-minded people to build and code robots. Teams from Skeena Middle School, Caledonia Secondary School and Kitimat all participated, with approximately 35 students engaged in the event. Participants would like to express their appreciation for the support from many amazing parent and staff volunteers!



Special thanks to the Caledonia Secondary School and Skeena Middle School Teams, parents and volunteers who helped facilitate this amazing competition.



*The students were incredible! The intricacy of coding and programming required to build and control the robots was truly impressive!*



CMSD teachers gathered at Kildala Elementary School for a hands-on robotics coding training session on January 20 with Dominic Bruneau, Zone01 Leader in preparation for the April 14 Regional Zone01 competition.

**Preparing for Regional Zone01 Robotics Competition**  
CMSD Robotics teachers gathered with Zone01 Leader Dominic Bruneau for hands-on robotics coding at Kildala Elementary School on January 20. Teachers are preparing for the April 14 Regional Zone01 competition. 120 student competitors and robotics teachers are expected at Mount Elizabeth Middle/Secondary School. The winning team is invited to the National Zone01 finals in Montreal. Rio Tinto supports the cost of training and team registration and has agreed to partially fund three more years of robotics support with Zone01.



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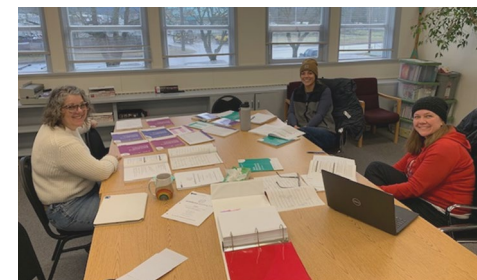
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### Acadience Literacy Update

On January 10, some of Skeena Middle School's teachers came to the Board Office to be trained in Acadience for Grades 7 and 8 as a pilot. Acadience Reading helps teachers identify children at risk for reading difficulties and determine the skills to target for instructional support. Acadience Reading K-8:

- provides universal screening
- detects when students need extra support
- is sensitive to effects of intervention
- supports the response to intervention/multi-tiered model



Skeena Middle School Teachers, Jill Green and Emily George (r), attended a training session with Tina McDonald, District Principal, Curriculum Support (l) on January 10 as a pilot for Acadience Grades 7 and 8.

We will be assessing a couple of grade 7 and 8 classes at Skeena Middle School on January 27 and in May. The goal is to use this resource across the district in order to support our K-8 learners in literacy.



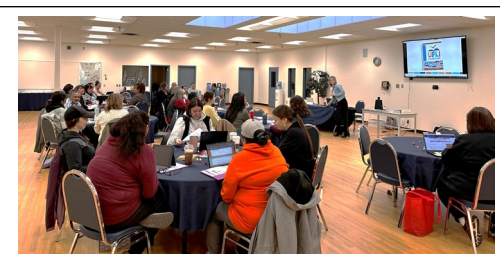
The love of reading for children is a collaborative effort by all ages.

Our second round of Acadience assessments will run from February 3 to 28 in all K-6 schools. We thank Tina McDonald, District Principal, Curriculum Support, Laura Gray, and Hayden Drygas, Literacy Coordinating Teachers for their work supporting schools with Literacy initiatives and these assessments. Upcoming Acadience K-6 Acadience Learning Online (ALO) training sessions are as follows: January 21 – Kitimat City High School, March 5 – Terrace School Board Office, April 1 - Kitimat City High School, April 2 - New Hazelton Elementary School, and June 4 - Terrace School Board Office. Our goal is to ensure that every teacher in K-6 is trained before the start of the next school year. Training sessions in the fall of 2025 will be offered for new teachers or teachers in new roles.

This year, alongside developing a K-6 Framework with the support of our literacy leaders and Teacher Focus Group, we will continue to support our educators in implementing Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and enhancing universal classroom instruction. Additionally, we would like to share and highlight that POPARD has requested to collaborate with CMSD to build educational videos highlighting the structured literacy approach. POPARD is a Ministry of Education and Child Care program providing services to schools in B.C. for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Together, we will showcase the incredible work our district teachers are accomplishing with the University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI), Acadience Progress Monitoring, and Empower Reading programs. We look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with them.

### Literacy In-Service for Indigenous Support Workers

Laura Gray, Literacy Lead Teacher and Tina McDonald, District Principal, Curriculum Support provided training on January 24 in the NTETC meeting room for Indigenous Support Workers on how to use the University of Florida Learning Institute (UFLI) program as an enhancement. We were grateful for the 26 Indigenous Support Workers and Indigenous Education Department staff who attended this presentation. Many excellent questions were generated during the presentation. Indigenous Support Workers demonstrated a keen interest in supporting students with improving their literacy skills. Thank you all for your dedication in supporting learners.



Indigenous Support Workers took part in a Literacy In-Service Session on January 24 on the use of UFLI as an enhancement to support students with improving their literacy skills.

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## Hazelton Secondary Careers & Trades Program

Hazelton Secondary School Careers & Trades Coordinator, Stephanie Muldoe, is a dedicated advocate for students. In her role as a coordinator, she is able to support students with volunteer and work experience, dual credit support, job skills and training, and organize meaningful land-based learning experiences. With the support of the First Nations Education Coordinators, Indigenous Support Workers, community members and staff she has organized opportunities for students to connect with the land, develop practical skills, and engage with Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Building on Hazelton Secondary students' strengths, knowledge and desire to learn, these trips become an essential part of fostering a deep understanding of traditional practices, while also promoting a sense of cultural pride and identity. Through collaboration and knowledge sharing, Stephanie ensures that these experiences are rooted in respect for Indigenous knowledge systems and are tailored to the needs of each student.



The Hazelton Secondary Careers & Trades Program supports students' personal growth and helps build their skills and confidence to succeed in both their academic lives and future planning.



The Hazelton Secondary Careers & Trades Program fosters a deep understanding of traditional practices, while also promoting a sense of cultural pride and identity.

In addition to these learning experiences, Stephanie fosters partnership between the school and Indigenous communities, creating opportunities for students to engage in job training and skill-building initiatives as part of the school curriculum. Through these partnerships, students gain practical knowledge that deepens their connection to their cultural heritage while equipping them with essential tools for future career paths. By integrating education, tradition, and community collaboration, Stephanie plays a vital role in fostering students' personal growth and empowering them with the skills and confidence needed to excel academically and plan for their futures.

Through these partnerships, students are empowered with practical knowledge that not only strengthens their connection to their cultural heritage but also equips them with the tools necessary for future career paths. By weaving together education, tradition, and community collaboration, Stephanie plays a key role in supporting students' personal growth and helping them build the skills and confidence to succeed in both their academic lives and future planning.

## Up and Coming Events

Northwest Trades & Employment Training Centre (NTETC) presents the upcoming opportunities and events with many other ideas in the works, noting this does not include their other programming that is ongoing such as Work Experience, Discovery, Work in Trades, Dual Credit, Distance Learning, or Career Life Connection 12:

- **January** - Coast Mountain College and Piping Industry College of BC (PIC) presentations at middle/high schools (Grades 9-12), talking about next steps, dual credit and career opportunities.
- **February 3** - Dual Credit program in Electrical and Welding begins in Hazelton. Sampler Program at Coast Mountain College begins for Caledonia Secondary and Parkside Secondary Schools students (32 seats). **February 4** - Childcare First-Aid & CPR one day course – tuition free. **February 5** – Early Child Care Education: ECCE 104 - Health, Safety and Nutrition evening course online district wide (Dual Credit). **End of February** – Early Child Care Education: ECCE work experience; we will be placing students into local daycares (includes Hazelton, Terrace & Kitimat).
- **March 11** - Skills Canada Competition at Coast Mountain College.
- **April** - Sampler Program in Stewart begins. Hospital visits (working with Northern Health). Stewart Maker Day (whole school).
- **May 13-15** - Adventures in Healthcare. Adventures in Port of Prince Rupert. **May 29** - Grade 7 Maker Day at NTETC.
- **June 11** - Grade 6/7 Maker Day in Kitimat at Nechako Elementary School.

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## This Month On Social Media...



@CoastMountainsSchoolDistrict



@CoastMountainsSchools



@CoastMtnSD



*Superintendent Tracey MacMillan & Director of Instruction Phillip Barron proudly represented CMSD at Teacher Recruitment Fairs held at UBC and Mount Saint Vincent University. Both events were excellent opportunities to meet the next generation of exceptional educators.*



*Passionate about teaching? Coast Mountains School District in Northwest British Columbia is looking for exceptional educators for 2025-26. Learn more about our district at <https://cmsd.bc.ca>*



### Upcoming Dates

- January 28 – Hybrid Board Meeting (Terrace)
- February 12 – Business Committee Meeting (virtual)
- February 12 – Education Committee Meeting (virtual)
- February 17 – Family Day (schools are not in session)
- February 26 – Hybrid Board Meeting (Kitimat)