

Superintendent's Report to the Board

January 2023



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A Message from the Superintendent

Ama Sah & Happy New Year!

The strategic plan Engage, Ignite, Empower continues to drive the work of the district with focused actions to enhance overall student learning and well-being. Efforts related to teacher recruitment, online dashboard development, planning for increased outdoor learning opportunities, and more stem directly from this year's action plan. Performance indicators are also being put in place to help us measure growth and inform us of progress along the way.

In the month ahead, we will engage students at multiple grade levels in a district wide check-in, gaining insight on their experiences in our schools and classrooms. Student Forums led by District Principal Phillip Barron will see in-person dialogue with students at secondary grades, while both the Middle Years Development and Youth Development Instruments will be surveys used online to hear from learners at Grades 5, 8 and 11. These anonymous surveys focus in on student well-being, their attainment of social and emotional skills, their relationships with peers and adults, and even how they spend their time outside of the school day, providing valuable population level data for community partners. Results from the surveys will be available to schools and the district in the spring.

Registration is now underway for the 2023-24 school year, with online applications being received for StrongStart, Kindergarten, New Students at Grade 1-12 and Cross Boundary. Please visit our website for all the details at <http://cmsd.bc.ca/>.

As noted last month, we are experiencing high levels of seasonal illness in our province in general, and we continue to encourage members of our school communities to stay on top of the advice coming from public health. For more information this month, please visit our partners at Northern Health online at <https://www.northernhealth.ca/health-topics/flu>.

Sincerely,

Aaron Callaghan
Superintendent,
Coast Mountains School District



Upcoming Dates

January 27 – Professional Development Day (No Classes)
February 6 – MDI and YDI Administration Begins
February 15 – Business & Education Committee Meetings
February 20 – BC Family Day (No Classes)
February 22 – Board of Education Meeting (Kitimat)

Coast Mountains School District acknowledges with respect the lands on which we live, work, play and learn as the traditional and unceded territories of the Gitksan, Haisla, Nisga'a & Ts'msyen Peoples.

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Engage, Ignite, Empower – A Focus on the Coast Mountains School District Strategic Plan

Teacher Recruitment Update

The 2022-23 school year has presented a variety of workforce challenges throughout the north, with many school districts specifically facing a shortage of certified classroom and supply teachers. As part of the Coast Mountains School District Action Plan, district staff have been engaged in a variety of initiatives in an effort to secure a full complement of qualified educators for the 2023-24 school year. Participation in both site-specific information sessions and regional recruiting fairs have generated lots of interest from new teacher candidates who want to learn more about the beautiful school communities in the region. Certainly, our district has so much to offer with rich cultural opportunities, small town charm, abundant outdoor pursuits and more!

With 40% of teachers historically coming from outside of British Columbia, to date we have made contact with new teacher candidates from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Collaborations are also happening with Northern local partners to ensure there are opportunities for those living in our communities to become certified teachers.

Student Forums

Led by District Principal Phillip Barron, secondary focused Student Forums ensure student voices are heard at both the school and district level. In person small group conversations with students will create space for students to share their thoughts about what is going well in schools and classrooms, and where there may be opportunities for improvement. Upcoming discussions will focus on student health and well-being, engagement, learning, and school climate.

**Tell me
more about
that...**

K-3 Literacy Strategy

District lead team members have been working to identify those promising evidence-based practices and aligned classroom and school level resources that will best meet the learning needs of all children at Kindergarten to Grade 3. An implementation plan is being drafted, including necessary financial commitments, and is to be shared more widely with teachers and administrators for input on implementation.

School District 82's Indigenous Education Department has undertaken an early literacy learning pilot project at Majagaleehl Gali Aks Elementary in Hazelton and Kitwanga Elementary School which is also informing the district's plan. Read more about this pilot on the next page of this report.

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Early Learning Update

Lots of exciting things are happening for children and families throughout the district related to Early Learning programming. Community and partner group consultations continue to inform the work of the team, as the district strives to understand how we can best serve communities with early learning opportunities.

Earlier this month Coast Mountains launched a Just B4 Preschool Program at Thornhill Primary School while our Seamless Day Kindergarten Program and Just B4 Preschool are getting ready to begin at Cassie Hall Elementary School. In September 2023, Seamless Day Kindergarten program will open at Majagaleehi Gali Aks School. We also anticipate another StrongStart / Just B4 program and 3 more Seamless Day Kindergarten programs will launch within our district in the upcoming school year.

A Focus on Literacy – An Indigenous Education Pilot Project

A small pilot project is underway in Hazelton and Kitwanga focused on early literacy. At Majagaleehi Gali Aks, Sarah Willan's Kindergarten-Grade 1 classroom is participating, and learners are engaging in Joyful Literacy – a research-based literacy framework that emphasizes the need for learning to be joyful, active and skill specific. Learning experiences are explicitly linked to assessment information, targeting specific skill sets for each learner. Children are definitely benefiting from practices that focus on impact. Both Sarah and Jodi Marshall, Indigenous Education Support Worker, see the young learners in these classrooms as quickly developing the skills and practices of effective readers. Children are eager to show what they can do and are proud of their growth.

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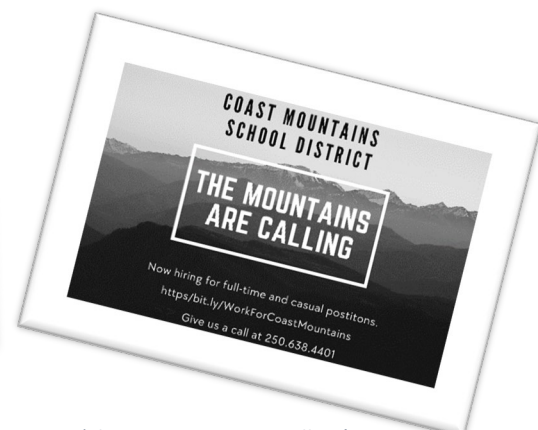
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Misty Rivers Art Gallery in Hazelton recently displayed the artwork of learners from New Hazelton Elementary School.



Learners at Majagaleehi Gali Aks Elementary School in Hazelton engage in focused literacy instruction as part of a pilot project supported by the Indigenous Education Department.



'The Mountains Are Calling' is the theme for the current Coast Mountains School District teacher recruitment efforts.