

Superintendent's Report to the Board

April 2026



A Message from the Superintendent

Ama Sah / Good Day,

The months of March and April have provided meaningful opportunities for reflection, growth, and continued learning across Coast Mountains School District. Following Spring Break and the Easter holiday, schools have settled back into strong routines as we move into the final months of the school year.

Across the district, students have been actively engaged in a wide range of learning opportunities—from hands-on trades exploration and career pathway programs to cultural learning, athletics, and the arts. Since the last report I had the opportunity to attend a variety of performances during the Dare to Dream Program; the Terrace and Thornhill Parents for Music Society Telethon event and the recent Pacific Northwest Music Festival. It has been wonderful to see the talent, dedication, and confidence demonstrated by the young musicians, including many from Coast Mountains School District. It was especially meaningful to witness the pride and joy students brought to their performances, as well as the support shown by families, staff, and the broader community.

Throughout these past two months, it has been inspiring to see the many ways in which students are engaging in learning that is both relevant and connected to their interests and future goals. For example, I have had the opportunity to attend the Bridge Building and Robotics competitions held in Kitimat, as well as cultural events at Suwilaawks and music at Cassie Hall, where student engagement, creativity, and leadership were clearly evident. Whether through hands-on trades experiences, academic inquiry, cultural learning, or the arts, students are being provided with opportunities to explore, take risks, and develop a strong sense of confidence in their abilities.

This work is made possible through the dedication and collaboration of our staff and community partners, who continue to create supportive and inclusive environments where all students feel a sense of belonging. The strength of these relationships is evident across our schools and plays a critical role in supporting both student well-being and success.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to our staff, community partners, and families for their ongoing support and commitment to student success. The stories shared in this report reflect the care, collaboration, and dedication that continue to make our school communities such positive and supportive places for learning.

With gratitude and appreciation,

Tracey MacMillan
Superintendent



Upcoming Dates:

May 15 – Non-Instructional Day
May 18 – Victoria Day
June 21 – National Indigenous Peoples Day
June 23 – Last Day of School (Students)
June 24 – Administrative Day (Staff)



Music is Alive Across Coast Mountains School District



Music is alive across Coast Mountains School District, and it continues to be a powerful source of connection, creativity, and pride for our learners and communities.

Over the past several months, I have had the privilege of attending a number of performances and events across the district, alongside members of our Board of Education. Each experience has been a reminder of the incredible talent, dedication, and joy that music brings to our schools. Whether in our gymnasiums, theatres, or community spaces, our students are stepping forward with confidence, working together, and sharing their gifts with others.



Dare to Dream: LtoR: Brian Manning (MC), Aron Nenner (Dare to Dream Chairman of the Board); Donna Ziegler (Dare to Dream Founder); Tracey MacMillan (Superintendent of Schools).

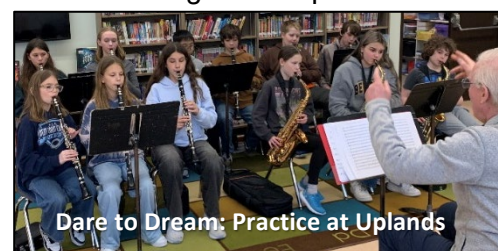
One of the highlights of the year is the **Dare to Dream** music initiative. This is a community-driven initiative that supports music in our schools by bringing together students, guest clinicians, and our own talented music educators. Over several days, students rehearse, refine their skills, and ultimately perform in a culminating concert. Dare to Dream is about more than music; it is about building confidence, fostering teamwork, and creating a sense of belonging. It is inspiring to see students challenge themselves, support one another, and take pride in their accomplishments.



Caledonia Music Teacher Jacquelynne Amendt joins visiting clinicians for a special performance.



The annual telethon, organized by the **Terrace and Thornhill Parents for Music Society**, is another meaningful example of community support for public music education. This year, the telethon celebrated its 30th anniversary, a remarkable milestone reflecting decades of dedication to students and music in our communities.



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While separate from the school district, it plays an important role in supporting opportunities for students in music. I was honoured to be invited to speak alongside our Board Chair, Margaret Warcup, and to witness firsthand the generosity and commitment of the community. The telethon showcases student performances while raising funds that directly support music programming for learners in the Terrace community.



Thank you Amber Zanon (Secretary) and Bobbie Pastershank (Volunteer/CMSD Learner Support Services), Terrace and Thornhill Parents for Music Society.



Telethon Speaker: Margaret Warcup, CMSD School Board Chair

We also celebrate the success of our students through participation in the **Northwest Pacific Music Festival**, where learners have the opportunity to perform, receive feedback, and grow as musicians. Events like this provide valuable experiences that extend beyond the classroom, encouraging perseverance, discipline, and artistic expression.

The photo to the right features Speech Arts performers from Lisa Pushong's class at Thornhill Primary School. Their performances were excellent!

I want to acknowledge and thank our music teachers and school staff, whose passion and commitment make these opportunities possible. Their work is evident in the confidence, skill, and enthusiasm of our students.

I would also like to recognize the strong support of our Board of Education. Trustees continue to champion opportunities for students to engage in music and the arts, recognizing the important role these experiences play in a well-rounded education.



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Finally, we are deeply grateful to our communities. The support of families, volunteers, local organizations, and partners is essential. While provincial funding is directed toward core educational programming, it does not specifically fund music, drama, or fine arts. It is through the generosity and commitment of our communities that these enriched opportunities are able to flourish. Quite simply, this programming would not be possible without you.

The photos included in this report capture many of the groups and moments from these events. They reflect not only musical achievement, but also the joy, collaboration, and sense of belonging that define our district and school community.



Thank you Robin Hollett, Music Teacher at Uplands

Building Strength, Creativity, and Connection: Regional Bridge Building Competition at MEMSS



Thank you, Kimberly Wilkinson!

This April, Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School proudly hosted the regional Bridge Building Competition—an engaging, hands-on learning experience that brought students together from across northern British Columbia.

Organized in partnership with LNG Canada, this full-day event welcomed both elementary and secondary students from a wide range of schools. In the weeks leading up to the competition, students designed and built their bridges in their classrooms, applying their learning in mathematics, science, and design.



Superintendent MacMillan congratulates Nechako Bridge Builders.

On the day of the event, students brought their completed bridges to MEMSS, where each structure was tested using a hydraulic press to determine how many pounds it could withstand. The room was filled with anticipation and excitement as students watched their designs put to the test. Events like this highlight the value of applied, experiential learning—where students can see their ideas come to life while building confidence, problem-solving skills, and a sense of accomplishment. It was also a wonderful opportunity to bring students together from across the region to share in a common challenge.



Khana (Tiffany) Santamaria, Teacher at MEMSS, supports the program.

We extend our sincere thanks to Kim Wilkinson, Math and Physics Teacher at MEMSS, for organizing this event. It was a significant undertaking, and we are grateful for her leadership. We also thank all classroom teachers who guided their students through the design and building process in their schools—your support made this experience possible.



Superintendent MacMillan Congratulating Ms. Chassin's Grade 3 Class at Nechako Elementary. Their bridges were well built!

Thank you as well to LNG Canada for supporting this meaningful learning opportunity for our students.

Building Pathways Through Northwest Trades & Employment Training Centre

The Northwest Trades & Employment Training Centre (NTETC) continues to grow as a vibrant hub for learning, training, and community partnerships. The district is pleased to welcome the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), which will begin renovations in April to support expanded post-secondary programming within the facility. This addition further strengthens NTETC's role as a dynamic, multi-partner environment that supports both students and the broader community.

NTETC is proud to host a diverse group of organizations, including Coast Mountains School District, North Coast Distance Education School, the Piping Industry College, Coast Mountain College, Volunteer Terrace, St. John Ambulance, and the City of Terrace. Together, these partners contribute to a collaborative learning environment that supports education, training, and community engagement.

Student interest in trades programming remains strong, with approximately 80 applications received this year for Dual Credit opportunities in automotive, carpentry, electrical, hairstyling, heavy mechanical, professional cook, piping/plumbing, and welding. In addition to trades pathways, the district continues to explore Academic Dual Credit opportunities in areas such as early childhood education, business, nursing, environmental studies, archaeology, education, criminology, and social work.

As part of this work, the Piping Industry will be offering a *Trades Sampler program at Kitimat City High School (KCH) from April 20th to May 29th*. Fourteen students will have the opportunity to explore a variety of trades, including carpentry, cement masonry, electrical work, plumbing, piping, welding, drywall, painting, and glazing. Programs such as this provide valuable hands-on experience and often spark student interest, helping inform decisions about future career pathways.

Career exploration continues through initiatives such as the *Adventures in Healthcare* program, taking place May 6th to 8th. This three-day experience brings together partners including Rotary, Northern Health, Coast Mountain College, the University of Northern British Columbia, and Coast Mountains School District. With 69 applicants and 36 students selected, the program provides meaningful exposure to a wide range of healthcare careers.

We thank our partners and the Rotary interview panel who worked over 3 days as part of the student selection process.

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Interview Panel, from left to right: Brian Manning (Rotary), Manuela Krisinger (Rotary), Mag Fleming (Rotary), LeeAnne Wilson (Rotary), Brittany Biggs (Interview Lead, Adventures in Healthcare Alumni), Dan Hamel (CMSD).

Career Life Connections 12 Capstone projects also continue to highlight the diverse interests and aspirations of our students. At Caledonia Secondary School, students recently showcased projects that reflected both creativity and future career goals, including the development of a children's book and an exploration of aviation careers. These projects provide meaningful opportunities for students to share their learning and connect their interests to future pathways.

In addition to these programs, a number of upcoming events will continue to support student engagement and career exploration across the district, including career fairs, Maker Days, and industry-focused learning opportunities. These experiences play an important role in connecting students with potential pathways and helping them develop the skills and confidence needed for future success.

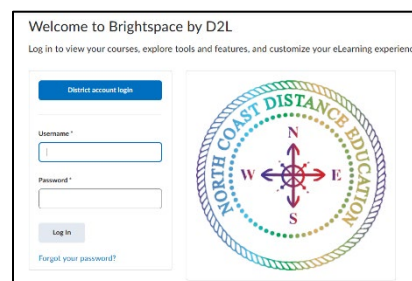
(With appreciation to Dan Hamel, Principal for Northwest Trades & Employment Training Centre / North Coast Distance Education School for this contribution.)

Brightspace Transition with North Coast Distance Education

North Coast Distance Education School (NCDES) has successfully transitioned from Moodle to Brightspace, a provincially supported online learning platform. This transition included the development of a new website and updated application process.

Brightspace provides a consistent platform used by many online schools across British Columbia and supports both online and blended learning environments, offering increased flexibility for students.

(With appreciation to Dan Hamel, Principal for Northwest Trades & Employment Training Centre / North Coast Distance Education School for this contribution.)



Numeracy Focus Group



Teachers from right to left: Shelly Striker (Kildala), Heidi Siebring (Uplands), Olivia Bruce (Nechako), Alastair Beddie (Suwilaawks), Claire O'Neill (Skeena)

The District Numeracy Focus Group has met twice, and both sessions have been highly productive as we begin the important work of developing a District Numeracy Framework. The group includes teachers from a range of grade levels and communities across the district, bringing valuable classroom perspectives and practical experience to the conversation. From the outset, there has been a strong sense of collaboration and enthusiasm for strengthening numeracy instruction and ensuring that all learners develop confidence and competence in mathematics.

During our first two sessions, participants shared examples of effective practices currently taking place in classrooms, along with materials and resources that are supporting numeracy instruction in their schools.

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Teachers brought forward a variety of tools, strategies, and classroom approaches that are helping students develop mathematical thinking and problem-solving skills. These conversations have been valuable in identifying resources that are already making a positive impact and exploring how some of these practices could be shared more broadly across the district.

The group also began exploring the development of a clear scope and sequence for early numeracy, with an initial focus on Kindergarten through Grade 3, recognizing the critical importance of strong foundational skills in the early years. In addition, the group discussed potential professional learning opportunities that could support educators as this work moves forward, including sessions focused on effective numeracy instruction, classroom strategies, and the use of high-quality resources.



Teachers from left to right: Kara Fridriksson (Uplands), Deanna Giguere (New Hazelton), Rebecca Howse (Kildala), Lana Hanna (EMV), Lisa Pushong (TPS)

This work will continue over the coming months as the focus group refines the framework, reviews resources, and identifies opportunities to build teacher capacity across the district. The goal is to develop a framework that is both practical and supportive for educators, while ensuring alignment with the BC curriculum and helping students build the numeracy skills they need for future learning and life beyond school. The thoughtful input and professional expertise of the teachers involved has already made a significant contribution, and we look forward to building on this strong start as the work continues.

We would also like to acknowledge the generous support of LNG Canada, whose commitment to education has helped make this work possible. In particular, we extend our sincere thanks to Morganne von Schleinitz for her support and partnership in helping move this important initiative forward. Their contribution is helping create meaningful opportunities for collaboration and professional learning that will ultimately benefit students across the district.

(With appreciation to Phillip Barron, Director of Instruction, Learning Services, for this contribution.)

Robotics in Action Across the District – Hosted by MEMSS



Students from across Coast Mountains School District 82 recently came together for a regional robotics competition hosted at Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School (MEMSS) in Kitimat. The Zone01 Robotique competition welcomed over 100 students from schools in Terrace and Kitimat and served as a qualifying event for the Zone01 National Finals, providing students with an opportunity to showcase their skills on a larger stage.

In this photo, Julia Jacobs, Principal at MEMSS, and Tom Wilkinson, Teacher at Nechako Elementary, cheer on competitors.

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Students from Mount Elizabeth Middle School (MEMSS)

The competition brought together participants from multiple schools, including MEMSS, Uplands Elementary, Nechako Elementary, and others from across the region. In total, eight schools participated, with even Grade 3 students competing in the 10–12 age category. Throughout the day, students worked collaboratively to design, build, and program robots to complete a variety of challenges. These tasks required creativity, critical thinking, and perseverance as students tested, refined, and adapted their designs in real time.



Students from Uplands

A highlight of the event was the leadership demonstrated by senior students at MEMSS, who stepped into mentorship roles to support and guide elementary teams while also assisting with judging. Their involvement helped foster a welcoming and inclusive environment. The gym was filled with excitement throughout the day, with classes stopping by to observe, learn, and cheer on participants, creating a vibrant and memorable atmosphere for all involved.



Students from Nechako

Students across the district achieved strong results in several events. Uplands Elementary teams earned first- and second-place finishes, along with a Team Spirit Award, reflecting both their skill and positive approach to competition. Nechako Elementary students also demonstrated impressive performance, advancing to the semi-finals in Sumo events and achieving first- and third-place finishes in the highly challenging Meridian competition.

The event was also recognized in local media coverage by the *Northern Sentinel*, highlighting the accomplishments of students from Terrace and Kitimat and underscoring the growing momentum of robotics and technology education in the region. The article can be viewed here: [Northern Sentinel](#).



The success of the event reflects the continued growth of robotics programming across the district. Increasing numbers of students are participating in robotics clubs, classroom activities, and competitive teams, gaining hands-on experience in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Schools such as Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School (MEMSS), Kildala Elementary, Caledonia Secondary, and Skeena Middle School have developed strong robotics programs, while participation continues to expand across additional schools and grade levels.

These programs are supported by dedicated staff sponsors, school teams, and parent volunteers who contribute their time, energy, and expertise to ensure students have access to enriching learning experiences. Appreciation is extended to robotics club leaders, student leaders, and volunteers across the district whose commitment helps these programs flourish.

The continued growth of robotics programming across the district has also been made possible through the generous support of community partners. In particular, the District is grateful for the ongoing support

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from Rio Tinto and LNG Canada, whose contributions have helped schools acquire robotics equipment, materials, and resources that allow students to participate in these engaging programs and competitions.

Events such as the Zone01 competition highlight not only student achievement, but also the importance of collaboration, innovation, and real-world problem-solving. As robotics programming continues to grow across the District, these opportunities are helping to inspire curiosity and open pathways to future learning and careers in science and technology.

(With appreciation to Phillip Barron, Director of Instruction, Learning Services, Stacey Rodriguez, Vice-Principal at MEMSS, David Mills, Principal at Nechako Elementary, and Annette McAlpine, Principal at Uplands Elementary, for these contributions.)

Standing Together: Uplands Elementary Supports Tumbler Ridge

Staff at Uplands Elementary recently showed their support for the Tumbler Ridge community through a thoughtful and generous initiative. After learning about the opportunity to help, staff members came together to purchase community support T-shirts, demonstrating their care and solidarity with those in Tumbler Ridge. It was encouraging to see such a strong response, with many staff eager to participate and contribute in a meaningful way.



This gesture reflects the strong sense of community that exists across our district. By supporting the purchase of these T-shirts, Uplands staff not only helped raise awareness but also showed that communities across the region stand together during challenging times. Their willingness to step forward and support the community in Tumbler Ridge is a wonderful example of compassion, generosity, and the collective spirit that makes our school communities so special.

*(Front row) Michael-Ann Adams, Mary-Anne Barron, Robin Hollett, Kara Charron, Karen Ting, Lori Nead
(Back row) Phillip Barron, Annette McAlpine, Louise Anderson, Kelly Scott, Daphne Heenan, Angie Coolin, Kara Fridriksson*

(With appreciation to Phillip Barron, Director of Instruction, Learning Services, for this contribution.)

The Whole Is Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts

Coast Mountains School District has been a pilot site for the Integrated Child & Youth (ICY) team initiative since 2020. This work focuses on bringing together collaborative support teams to better serve children and youth with complex needs, with school staff playing a vital role in providing insight, consistency, and care.

One school community that has demonstrated exceptional commitment to this work is Cassie Hall Elementary. Under the leadership of Principal, Erika Barton and Vice-Principal, Kendra LeBlonde, the school continues to model a thoughtful and compassionate approach to supporting students.

Kendra and Erika lead by example through their deep understanding of children who may become overwhelmed by the social, emotional, and academic demands of the classroom. Rather than focusing solely on behaviour, they take the time to understand what lies beneath it—responding to underlying needs and supporting each child to show up as their best self.

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LtoR: Erika Barton, Principal; Danielle Plummer; Kendra Leblond, Vice Principal.

Their work reflects the strength of integrated, compassionate support and highlights the impact of strong collaboration between schools and community partners. Their approach continues to make a meaningful difference for students and families.

The following message was shared by Danielle Plummer, Program Lead, Coast Mountain Integrated Child and Youth Team, Northern Health Authority:

“Collaborating with them is both a privilege and an inspiration, and their work exemplifies the power of

integrated, compassionate support. Together, it's clear that the collective effort truly becomes greater than the sum of its parts.”

(With appreciation to Danielle Plummer and Julia Nieckarz, Director of Inclusive Education, for this contribution.)

Learning, Culture, and Community at New Hazelton Elementary

New Hazelton Elementary School (NHE) continues to be a vibrant place to learn, grow, and connect.



Learners are making strong gains in literacy as they strengthen their reading and writing skills, build confidence, and take pride in sharing their work. This progress is supported by a positive school culture that recognizes effort, celebrates success, and helps learners feel motivated and proud to be part of the NHE community.

Throughout the school, students are engaged in rich, hands-on learning that blends creativity, culture, and problem-solving. Recent highlights include art workshops with Gitxsan artist Michelle Stoney and guest artist Willa Lee, geometry exploration through playdoh, geoboards, and blocks, and science learning through bridge-building challenges and investigations of the phases of the moon. Learners have also taken part in meaningful cultural learning through modified basket weaving, language learning, and outdoor educational experiences in collaboration with Gitxsan Language and Culture programming.



This strong sense of community is reflected in the friendships, confidence, and positive classroom environments students experience each day. Learners are also building leadership through initiatives such as school recycling, fundraisers, assemblies, and special events, while programs like After School Sport and Arts Initiative (ASSAI) continue to provide opportunities to connect, create, and grow in confidence.



Community support remains strong, with well-attended parent-teacher interviews and the Scholastic Book Fair raising over \$3,000 for school

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resources. Ongoing partnerships with local First Nations continue to enrich student learning, including opportunities for drumming and dancing with surrounding schools, as well as the Leaners Opportunity Groups Society (LOGS) Book Bus, which brings free books to communities across the Upper Skeena.

(With appreciation to Taylor Murrell, Vice-Principal, New Hazelton Elementary School, for this contribution.)

Active Living, Cultural Learning, and Spring Carnival at Kitwanga Elementary

Students at Kitwanga Elementary have been actively engaged in a wide range of experiences that support physical well-being, cultural learning, and community connection.



Intramural soccer recently wrapped up, with both Kindergarten to Grade 3 and Grade 4 to Grade 7 divisions bringing energy and enthusiasm to the gym each week. Students demonstrated strong teamwork, sportsmanship, and school spirit, whether competing for a win or simply enjoying time with their peers.

The school's run club is now underway, providing students with opportunities to build endurance, set personal goals, and support one another in a positive and encouraging environment.



Students have also been participating in meaningful cultural learning as they explore Gitksan songs, drumming, and dance. Through Language and Culture classes and under the guidance of community members, students are learning to respectfully engage with traditional practices while developing a deeper understanding of Gitksan culture. It has been inspiring to see students participate with focus and care as they build their knowledge and appreciation of these important traditions.



The school community recently came together to celebrate the arrival of Spring with a vibrant Outdoor Spring Carnival and Colour Spirit Day. Students participated in a variety of activity stations, including relays and games, earning tickets that could be exchanged for prizes. These activities also provided opportunities to build numeracy skills as students counted and managed their tickets. With sunny skies and a strong sense of community, the day was a joyful way to welcome the spring season.



Kassia Nameth, Principal of Kitwanga Elementary School

(With appreciation to Kassia Nameth, Principal, Kitwanga Elementary School, for this contribution.)

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Fun and Friendship at Thornhill Primary School



Terrace Peaks Gymnastics

At Thornhill Primary School, students continue to benefit from meaningful and engaging learning opportunities that support both skill development and community connection. For several years, Mrs. Mattheis, Learner Support teacher, has been organizing experiences that allow students to build confidence, develop new skills, and connect with others.

Throughout the year, students have participated in a variety of activities, including regular swimming sessions at the Aquatic Centre and lessons at Terrace Peaks Gymnastics. They have also taken part in learning opportunities at the Northwest

Trades Centre, seasonal craft activities, and a special tea party to thank their educational assistants for their ongoing support.

An especially memorable experience for students was learning how to interact with and care for dogs. Hana Robinson, owner of Ohana K9 Centre, generously volunteered her time to bring her dogs, Dori and Rhonda, to work with the students. Learners developed skills in approaching, grooming, walking, and caring for the animals, and later shared their learning at a whole-school assembly.



Dogs: Dori and Rhonda



Reading Buddies with Caledonia friends.

Students have also benefited from connections with Caledonia Secondary School. Through collaboration with Mr. Smart and Ms. Amendt, secondary students have joined Thornhill learners for activities such as visits to Ferry Island, Hallowe'en crafts, and reading sessions, helping to build meaningful relationships across grade levels.



Walks at Ferry Island with Caledonia Buddies.

These experiences reflect the strong sense of care, connection, and community that exists at Thornhill Primary School. The school is grateful for the continued support of staff, community members, and partners who help make these opportunities possible for students.

(With appreciation to Sandy Kenmuir, Principal, Thornhill Primary School, for this contribution.)

Concours Régional at École Mountainview

Concours Régional was held on April 2, 2026, at École Mountainview, bringing together French Immersion students from across the district for a celebration of French language, public speaking, and critical thinking.

Students in Grades 5–12 were invited to participate in this annual event, and the day showcased an impressive range of thoughtful, well-researched, and confidently delivered presentations. From

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contemporary social issues to global health concerns, students demonstrated not only strong French language skills, but also a depth of understanding and passion for their chosen topics.

This year, one student was selected to represent Coast Mountains School District at the Provincial Concours d'art oratoire, to be held on May 2, 2026, in Surrey, British Columbia. The District provides funding for one student to attend the provincial competition. We extend our congratulations to Natalie Wilson, a student at Caledonia Secondary School.

The successful candidate earned the favour of the judges with a compelling and timely speech entitled *La résurgence de la rougeole au Canada* (The Resurgence of Measles in Canada). Her clear delivery, strong organization, and thoughtful analysis distinguished her presentation and exemplified the high calibre of work presented throughout the day.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our panel of judges for their expertise, time, and thoughtful feedback:

- Renée Syvret, retired administrator (missing from photo)
- Stéphanie Morel, Association franco-colombienne des parents (AFFNO)
- Danielle Waltz, teacher
- Jérémie Diesel, Association franco-colombienne des parents (AFFNO)



A special thank you is also extended to all participating teachers across the district for their dedication to supporting French Immersion students and encouraging excellence in oral communication. We are especially grateful to Catherine Bégin and Steve Wallace for their leadership and organization of this successful event.

The Concours Régional continues to be a highlight of the French Immersion calendar in Coast Mountains School District 82, fostering confidence, cultural pride, and a love of language among students.

Category Winners

Grade 4

- 🇫🇷 Yuha Kim – Kildala Elementary

Grade 5

- 🇫🇷 Thomas Bogaert – Kildala Elementary
- 🇫🇷 Zoé Gendron – Ecole Mountainview
- 🇫🇷 Abigail Bogaert – Kildala Elementary

Grade 6

- 🇫🇷 Dylan Fournier – Kildala Elementary
- 🇫🇷 Leif Nash – Ecole Mountainview
- 🇫🇷 Evelyn Doyle -Ecole Mountainview

Grade 6 Francophone

- 🇫🇷 Manuel Charest – Ecole Mountainview



From Left to Right: River McDonald, Dylan Arsenault, Melanie Leier



From Left to Right: Emmeline Hanna, Natalie Wing, Kate Kharchenko

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Grade 7

- Dylan Arsenault – Skeena Middle School
- River McDonald – Skeena Middle School
- Melanie Leier – Skeena Middle School

Grade 8

- Emmeline Hanna – Skeena Middle School
- Natalie Wing – Skeena Middle School
- Kate Kharchenko – Skeena Middle School

Grade 9

- Jovi Nash– Skeena Middle School
- Brynn Dando– Skeena Middle School

Grade 10

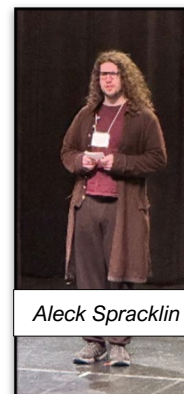
- Natalie Wilson– Caledonia Secondary School
- Audrey Arsenault– Caledonia Secondary School
- Aliah Vesterberg-Gavronsky- Caledonia Secondary School
- Tylee Pacheco – Mount-Elizabeth Middle/Secondary School

Grade 12

- Aleck Spracklin – Mount-Elizabeth Middle/Secondary School



Tylee Pacheco



Aleck Spracklin



Concours Régional Winner:
Natalie Wilson

(With appreciation to Tina McDonald, District Principal, Curriculum Support, for this contribution.)

Pink Shirt Day – February 25, 2026



From Left to Right: Director Rob Schibli, Trustee Karen Jonkman, Executive Assistant Lindsay Harder, Superintendent Tracey MacMillan, Board Chair Margaret Warcup, and Trustee Ed Harrison.

In recognition of **Pink Shirt Day**, members of the Board of Education and District staff wore pink during the February Board Meeting in Kitimat as a visible demonstration of their shared commitment to kindness, inclusion, and the prevention of bullying. Pink Shirt Day serves as an important opportunity to raise awareness about the impact of bullying and to reinforce the responsibility we all share in creating safe, caring, and respectful learning environments. Across Coast Mountains School District, schools and staff continue to promote a culture of respect, empathy, and belonging, ensuring that all students feel supported and valued in their learning communities.

(With appreciation to Lindsay Harder, Executive Assistant, for this contribution.)



Celebrating Student Leadership & Mentorship

We would like to recognize and celebrate an outstanding student from Caledonia Secondary School who has been making a meaningful impact on students across our district. Jacob Liubomudrov has been going above and beyond by mentoring younger students who are d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing, offering encouragement, sharing personal experiences, and helping them build confidence in their own journeys.

This year, through connections with Auditory Outreach, Jacob began connecting with students they support throughout British Columbia. Many of these students are interested in music and learning instruments, and they have been excited to hear Jacob's perspective on how he has learned to play and recognize different pitches while using a cochlear implant. Jacob openly shares his experiences and advice, explaining how learning music takes time, patience, and practice for everyone. He reminds students not to give up on something they are interested in and encourages them to continue exploring their passions.

He often speaks about the importance of listening carefully to recognize when instruments are out of tune and how he has trained his brain to recognize the correct sounds for the instrument he is playing. Younger students who are just beginning their musical journeys have been inspired by his willingness to answer questions and share strategies that have helped him succeed.

Jacob's enthusiasm for trying new instruments and exploring music is contagious, and he consistently encourages students to step outside their comfort zones and try new things. His positive and optimistic attitude has made a lasting impression not only on students within our district but also on youth beyond it. His passion, encouragement, and leadership demonstrate the powerful impact students can have on one another.

In addition to his mentorship, Jacob has shared a personal reflection on his experiences as a hard of hearing student. His words provide meaningful insight into accessibility, awareness, and the importance of shared responsibility in creating inclusive environments.

My Experiences as a Hard of Hearing Person

I often regard being deaf as an invisible disability. While many people—both in school and non-school environments—acknowledge it, they often fail to fully consider its presence or impact. Throughout my life, many individuals have recognized that I am hard of hearing and have been kind and responsive to that fact. However, the real issue arises when acknowledgment does not translate into consistent action. People may say things like, “You want me to speak up when I'm not facing you? Got it!”—yet they often fail to follow through.

I understand that these individuals, including teachers, are trying their best, and I genuinely appreciate that. At the same time, there is a lack of awareness about what being deaf actually entails. I do not hear in the same way others do. Even though my cochlear implants simulate what typical hearing might sound like, they rely on just 30 electrodes to do the work of approximately 15,000 natural hair cells in the cochlea. While I recognize that it is my responsibility to advocate for myself, it can



Jacob Liubomudrov

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become exhausting to repeatedly make the same requests. At some point, doesn't the responsibility need to be shared? Shouldn't both parties make an effort to create an accessible and supportive environment?

This brings me to another point: the underappreciation of the incredible technology that makes hearing possible for people like me. I've encountered individuals online who were born hearing but lost their hearing later in life due to medical conditions. As someone who was born deaf and has only ever heard through cochlear implants, the sound I perceive feels "normal" to me—even if it differs from what others experience. It can be frustrating to see some of these individuals criticize the sound quality they now hear, comparing it unfavorably to their past experiences with natural hearing.

Cochlear implant technology represents the collective effort of thousands of researchers, engineers, and medical professionals over many years. It is, in my view, nothing short of remarkable. So when I see people complain about how it sounds, I sometimes wonder: if you're going to mock the very thing that restored your hearing, then would you have preferred to remain deaf? That may sound harsh, but it reflects my deep respect for the technology and what it enables me to do.

Yes, some people describe the sound produced by cochlear implants as robotic or distorted. Unfortunately, these descriptions often fuel misconceptions within the hearing community. Just because I do not hear in the same way as others does not mean my experience is "unnatural" or "lesser." Think of it this way: different spoken languages sound distinct from one another, but we don't make fun of those differences—unless we are being disrespectful or even discriminatory. It's the same with how I hear. It only sounds "different" because your brain isn't used to it.

Being deaf is not just a personal experience—it is a shared challenge that requires effort and understanding from both the deaf and hearing communities. While I continue to advocate for myself and appreciate those who try to support me, there is still a gap between recognition and true inclusion. Cochlear implants are not perfect, but they are an incredible advancement that deserve more respect and appreciation. Instead of questioning or judging what sounds "normal," we should be open to understanding different ways of experiencing the world. After all, communication and connection aren't just about how we hear—but how we listen."

(With appreciation to Alisha Cameron, District Teacher of the d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Candidate) & Hospital Homebound, and Jacob Liubomudrov for this contribution.)

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Ongoing Considerations: April 2026

In addition to celebrating successes, we also recognize the ongoing areas of growth our district is working through, which are outlined below to provide transparency and context for our shared journey forward.



Student Attendance

Student attendance continues to be an area of focus, with ongoing concerns identified by teachers and school administrators. Regular attendance is an important factor in student success, and we are committed to working collaboratively with families and community partners to better understand and address these challenges.

As part of this work, the district is engaging with education partners, including through the Local Education Agreement (LEA) process, to gather perspectives, data, and shared understanding. This will help inform updated registration and attendance procedures, with the goal of strengthening supports for all students and families.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Work related to Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the district is continuing to move forward. At this time, a working group has been established to build shared understanding and to begin exploring the opportunities and considerations for AI in education.

This initial work will help inform future direction. Information sessions for educational staff and parents are planned for late Spring or Fall to support awareness, understanding, and thoughtful use of AI in our schools.

Recruitment - Update

Recruitment remains an ongoing priority for Coast Mountains School District. As we plan for the upcoming school year, staff continue to attend recruitment fairs across Canada with the goal of attracting qualified educators and reducing the number of teachers working under Letters of Permission (LOP).

While we continue to experience challenges in filling positions, particularly in specialty areas such as Inclusive Education, French Immersion, Counselling, and Trades, we remain committed to proactive recruitment efforts. This includes broad posting of vacancies and ongoing partnerships with post-secondary institutions to support practicum placements as a pathway into the profession.

Our focus remains on building a stable, qualified workforce to best support students, schools, and communities across the district.

Gitksan Language Immersion Program – Majagaleehl Gali Aks Elementary (MGA)

The Gitksan Language Immersion Program at Majagaleehl Gali Aks Elementary continues to be an important and growing part of the district's work in language and culture. Led by Angie Olsen, and supported by Elders and community partners, students are learning through full-day Gitksanimx immersion grounded in authentic, community-connected experiences.

To support the continued growth of this program, the district is actively recruiting for a second Gitksan language teacher. We remain committed to working alongside the Gitanmaax Band, the Gitksan Government Commission, and local partners to build capacity and support future language educators.

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Individuals interested in contributing to this meaningful work are encouraged to connect with the school or District Office. All current employment opportunities are posted on [CMSSD82 | Coast Mountain School District - Jobs](#).

Inclusive Education (Ministry Audit)

The district will be participating in an Inclusive Education Audit in May 2026. In preparation, district and school teams have been working diligently to ensure student files are complete, accurate, and up to date. This includes reviewing documentation for designated students, such as program plans, attendance records, and registration information.

We look forward to the results of the audit, which will help inform future practices and continue to strengthen our support for students across the district.

Early Learning Programs

Early learning continues to be a critical foundation for long-term student success. However, insufficient provincial funding continues to impact program sustainability. The district remains concerned about the reduction of Seamless Day and Just B4 programming and the financial pressures on StrongStart operations. Advocacy for stable and equitable early learning funding remains ongoing.

Numeracy Framework

This year marks the launch of a district-wide Numeracy Framework—an important next step in strengthening student achievement in mathematics. While no Ministry funding has been designated to support this initiative, the district has been notified that LNG Canada has made a substantial contribution to support this work. This external support will enable planning, foundational development, and staff leadership to move forward in a more meaningful and coordinated way.

The district remains committed to stewarding these resources responsibly and to building a numeracy framework that is sustainable, practical, and responsive to the needs of learners across CMSSD.

Literacy Initiative

Our district-wide Literacy Initiative remains a cornerstone of learning improvement across CMSSD. Sustained largely through the generosity of corporate sponsors, this work has enabled the use of research-based resources and professional learning to strengthen early and intermediate literacy outcomes. We continue to seek long-term funding stability to ensure the continuation of this essential work beyond sponsor cycles.

Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School (MEMSS) – Capital Planning Priority

Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School in Kitimat has been on the Board of Education's capital plan submission to the Ministry of Education and Child Care for more than ten years. While the facility remains safe for students and staff, it is an aging building requiring significant renewal.

The Board continues to advocate for major upgrades and/or replacement to ensure the school supports current and future learning needs. This long-standing capital priority has been outlined in previous Ongoing Considerations sections of the Superintendent's Reports.