

Superintendent's Report to the Board

November 2024



A Message from the Superintendent

Ama sah / Good day,

Over the past few weeks, I've had the privilege of visiting schools across our district and meeting students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. These interactions have been among the most rewarding experiences of my role. I am continually amazed at our students' ability to articulate their learning, share their insights, and engage in meaningful conversations. Their humour, curiosity, and personalities truly brighten the halls of our schools and remind us why we do what we do.



It is evident that our school administrators, teachers, and staff are deeply committed to meeting the diverse needs of our learners. Therefore, I thank everyone — staff, families, and community members — who support our schools in fostering such rich learning experiences. During my school visits, I have witnessed countless examples of innovative and engaging teaching practices:

- **Learning Beyond the Classroom:** Students actively participating in outdoor learning activities, where nature becomes the classroom and sparks curiosity.
- **Hands-On Exploration:** Engaged learners conducting experiments and exploring new concepts through inquiry and discovery.
- **Creative and Artistic Expression:** Classrooms and studios brimming with vibrant art projects and performances that allow students to express themselves in meaningful ways.
- **Skills for the Future:** Shops buzzing with activity, as students build, weld, and develop practical skills that will serve them well in life and future careers.



These moments reflect the extraordinary efforts of our educators, supported by the determination, diligence, and dedication of our district staff. I want to take a moment to sincerely thank all district staff for their unwavering commitment to our students. Your caring and hard work are evident in everything you do, and our learners benefit from your efforts every day.

As we continue through the school year, I look forward to seeing more examples of the approaches that make our schools unique. Together, we will continue to nurture an environment where every learner feels valued and thrives. It is an honour to work with you.

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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CMSD - SOGI Update

We are so lucky to have Bryan Gidinski supporting Coast Mountains School District (CMSD) this year, a Premier award-winning finalist for his work around inclusion and diversity. Bryan will be leading learning around inclusion and diversity with short videos and newsletters for staff each month. Access Bryan's videos, monthly newsletters and more information via the school district's SharePoint Site at [SOGI Resources](#).

CMSD also engages with SOGI 123 provincial resource available at <https://www.sogieducation.org/>. The work with SOGI 123 and Bryan Gidinski empowers educators to make schools safer and more inclusive for all students. These resources equip educators with knowledge, skills, supports and focus on the importance of schools fostering inclusive classroom environments where everyone regardless of race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or ability, is welcome and feels safe.

A proposed Letter of Support for 2SLGBTQIA+ Students, Staff and Families, jointly issued by the Coast Mountain Teachers' Federation, CUPE Local 2052 and CMSD, will be presented to the Board at its November 19, 2024 Regular (Public) Board Meeting for consideration. The proposed letter is included in the agenda package for the Regular Board Meeting.

UNBC Teacher Practicum Placement Program

Sheryl Edwards, the practicum placement coordinator for the School of Education for University of Northern B.C., recently visited Coast Mountains School District.

Sheryl spent time visiting schools and meeting with staff as well as administration, who are currently hosting Teacher candidates. As a district, we have successfully worked with Sheryl to support the placement of thirteen aspiring teachers in our schools. Coaching Teachers in schools will be supporting UNBC Teacher candidates over a four-week period, from November 4 to 29 and will be providing a safe and inclusive classroom for each Teacher candidate to practice their course work and extend their learning in the context of the classroom.

All our Coaching Teachers will be supported by the UNBC Team as well as our School District Team, to help guide every Teacher candidate in their learning journey. We wish all Teacher candidates and Coaching Teachers the very best over the course of the practicum.



Sheryl Edwards, UNBC School of Education Practicum Placement Coordinator recently visited CMSD to support the placement of 13 aspiring teachers in our schools. Picture l-r: Phillip Barron (District Principal), Sheryl Edwards, Tracey MacMillan (Superintendent) & Julia Nieckarz (Director of Instruction, Learner Support).

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New Hazelton Elementary School Celebrates New Outdoor Classroom

A Welcoming Gathering and Celebration of the new outdoor classroom at New Hazelton Elementary School was held on October 23. In its early stages, the outdoor classroom initiative will help build on students' natural curiosity, inventiveness, and desire to create and work in practical ways. Through the dedication and efforts of school staff and parents-caregivers over the past few months, the first stage of the outdoor classroom is now reality as pictured.



A new outdoor classroom, in its early stages, was celebrated with students, school staff, families and guests at New Hazelton Elementary School on October 23.



Students and staff of the Gitanmaax Language Nest and the New Hazelton Elementary Kindergarten-Grade 1 Class perform drumming and singing at the October 23 gathering in celebration of the new outdoor classroom for New Hazelton Elementary School.

Mark Newbery, Principal and Melanie Millar, Resource Teacher of New Hazelton Elementary School welcomed students, families and guests to the gathering and celebration including drumming and singing performed by students and staff of the Gitanmaax Language Nest and the Kindergarten-Grade 1 New Hazelton Elementary Class. An opportunity to visit with staff and students in their classrooms followed the celebration. Trustees and District staff were thrilled with their participation in this special event and creative initiative for students and staff at New Hazelton Elementary School.

French Immersion & Early Learning Update

In French Immersion, a group of our K-6 teachers, Tina McDonald (District Principal, Early Learning and French Immersion) and Lucile Denys (Pedagogist) completed a K-6 assessment tool for French literacy. We will be training our teachers this year to use the tool in spring of 2025. Additionally, we offered our 7-12 French Immersion teachers an opportunity to learn how to support students who struggle in middle/senior high. We were very fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from Lucile during her recent visit to CMSD on October 28-29, 2024. In Early Learning, educators continue to plan with Jillian Lewis from the Ministry of Education and Child Care in CP4YC (Creating Possibilities 4 Young Children). This is the last year the Ministry will send a facilitator to the CMSD82 as they are transitioning the leading of this initiative to Early Learning Child Care (ELCC) leads. Our educators are currently picking their "wonder child" and having conversations with the child's parents on the program and their inquiry-based question. Additionally, our district has applied for the \$10 a Day ChildCare Program. We are hopeful that we will be able to offer our families more savings. We should know in December if we have been selected as a \$10 a Day ChildCare site.



CMSD K-6 Teachers, Tina McDonald (District Principal, French Immersion) and Lucile Denys (Pedagogist) are joined by Superintendent Tracey MacMillan during their work session completing a K-6 assessment tool for French Literacy.

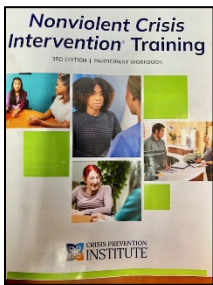
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Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training

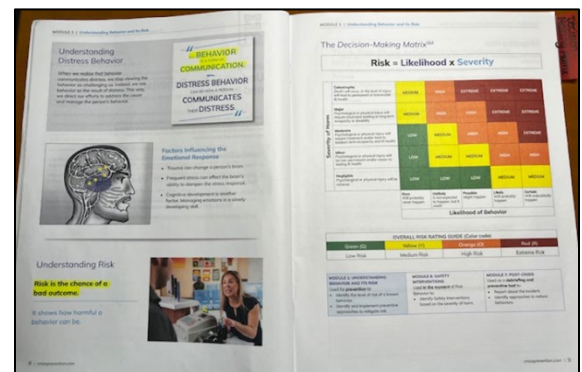
Crisis Prevention Institute's Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training gives participants the skills to build an effective culture of safety within Coast Mountains School District. It is designed to help all staff provide the best possible Care, Welfare, Safety and Security (CPI's guiding philosophy) for individuals presenting a range of crisis behaviours. The purpose of the program is to build on our staff's existing knowledge and skills to recognize, prevent and manage crisis behaviours using person-centered and trauma-informed responses. It provides a common philosophy and framework for our school district's culture of Care Welfare, Safety and Security.



Nici DeCario is our school district's certified CPI Instructor, in addition to her role as Teacher of the Visually Impaired/Integration Support Teacher. Nici is one of 42,000 certified global instructors with the Crisis Prevention Institute. She offers the two-day classroom-based Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training four times each school year. In the course, participants receive and fill out a workbook, learn verbal de-escalation strategies, review case studies, participate in realistic scenarios, and learn safety interventions (disengagement and holding techniques).

Upon successful completion, participants should be able to:

- Use the philosophy of Care, Welfare, Safety and Security and a person-centered and trauma-informed approach when responding to a person in distress.
- Interpret distress behaviours and address the cause of the behaviour to de-escalate the situation.
- Assess risk of behaviour using the Decision-Making Matrix and identify preventative strategies to mitigate risk.
- Identify and respond appropriately to various levels of crisis behaviours.
- Manage your own emotional responses to distress behaviour.
- Use your communication skills to be supportive and strengthen your interventions to de-escalate potential conflict situations.
- Use directive strategies when verbally intervening to de-escalate defensive behaviours.
- Use the Decision-Making Matrix in the moment of Risk Behaviour to determine Safety Interventions that represent a reasonable, proportionate, least restrictive and last-resort course of action.
- Use safety intervention strategies to maximize safety and minimize harm in situations where behaviour presents an imminent or immediate risk of harm to self or others.
- Apply a process for support and learning at the end of a crisis situation.
- Explain how you will consider the Physical Skills Review Framework and key legal and professional considerations when using non-restrictive disengagements and restrictive interventions.
- Describe and demonstrate use of non-restrictive disengagements and restrictive interventions for an individual presenting risk behaviour.



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Lest We Forget

School communities all around the district commemorated Remembrance Day and Indigenous Veterans Day with solemn ceremonies, many led by students and involving staff, local partners and service groups. These services provided an opportunity for all of us in attendance to reflect on the sacrifices made by so many Canadians over the years, serving in both wars and peacekeeping missions to protect our freedom and values. Thank you to the students and staff at Uplands Elementary School and Skeena Middle School and to their honoured guests for allowing me to attend their ceremonies, both meaningful and beautiful tributes to all who served to defend our freedom. Special thanks are extended to Tracey Carter, Grade 7 French Immersion Teacher at Skeena Middle School, and to Robin Hollett, Teacher at Uplands Elementary School for organizing the Remembrance Day Ceremonies.



Uplands Elementary School (top photos) and Skeena Middle School (bottom photos) held meaningful and beautiful tributes to all who served to defend our freedom. Lest we forget ...



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This Month On Social Media...



@CoastMountainsSchoolDistrict



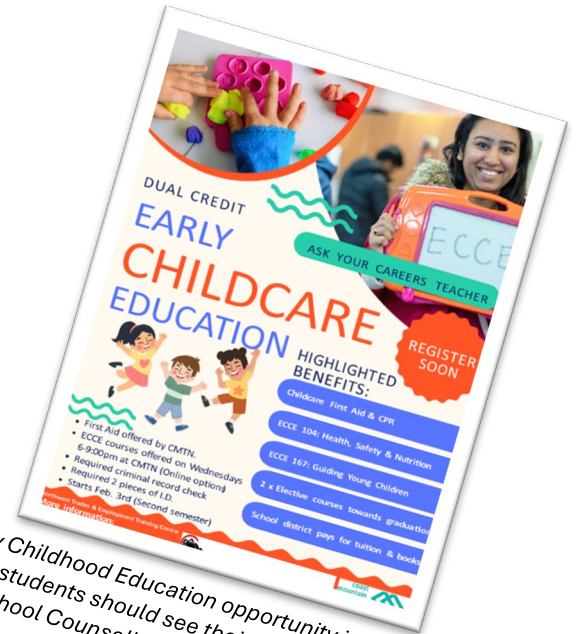
@CoastMountainsSchools



@CoastMtnSD



Congratulations to Hazelton Secondary School runners Ethan Elnar, Parker Prevost, and Alexander MacDuff for their strong representation of the Northwest at the Provincials in Vancouver, November 2.



Early Childhood Education opportunity in CMSD. Interest students should see their Careers Teachers or School Counsellors for more information.



Happy Halloween from Hazelton Secondary School – pictured l-r Superintendent Tracey MacMillan, Principal Louise Ormerod, Vice Principals Taylor Murrell and Jan Thorburn. Great Spirit in CMSD82!



Upcoming Dates

- November 19 – Hybrid Board Meeting (Terrace)
- November 20 & 21 – Early Dismissal
- November 22 – Professional Development Day (non-instructional day)
- December 10 – Business Committee Meeting (virtual)
- December 11 – Education Committee Meeting (virtual)
- December 18 – Hybrid Board Meeting (Terrace)