Superintendent's Report to the Board
October 2026

A Message from the Superintendent



Early Years Fair
Left to Right: *Superintendent MacMillan and Jeff Coroghly, StrongStart Facilitator & Early Childhood Educator.*

Ama Sah / Good Day,

October has been another busy and rewarding month across Coast Mountains School District, filled with opportunities to connect with students, staff, families, and community partners while celebrating the great work happening in our schools.

Throughout the month, our District Education Team has been meeting with school administrative teams to review their School Growth Plans. These conversations allow us to reflect on student achievement, celebrate successes, and discuss priorities for continued growth. A sincere thank you to our principals, vice-principals, teachers, and staff for their thoughtful planning, collaboration, and commitment to student success and well-being.

One of the parts of my role I enjoy most is visiting schools and spending time with students and staff. This month, I have appreciated seeing firsthand the creativity, care, and engaging experiences taking place in classrooms. A special highlight was my visit to Bear Valley School in Stewart, where I enjoyed reading with Ms. Scott's Kindergarten/Grade 1 class. Moments like these are such a lovely reminder of why we do this work! Thank you to the many teachers, students, and school teams who welcome me so warmly during my visits.



Left to Right: *District Principal McDonald and Rachel Gull, StrongStart Facilitator & Early Childhood Educator.*

Our partnerships continue to grow, creating valuable opportunities for students and staff. From recent discussions with UNBC about teacher education and professional learning to the many initiatives highlighted in this report, these relationships are important to the success of our schools.

I also had the pleasure of attending the Early Years Fair at Suwilaawks Community School, where I enjoyed connecting with families and meeting many of the organizations that provide important programs and services for our youngest learners. It was great to see so many people coming together in support of children and families! A special thank you to District Principal Tina McDonald and our Early Learning Team for their contributions, along with the organizers and community partners who helped make this event such a success!

Throughout this month's report, you will find inspiring examples of student creativity, hands-on learning, cultural connections, and acts of kindness and generosity. There is certainly much to celebrate across our district!

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to our staff, students, families, Trustees, First Nations, and community partners for your ongoing support and dedication. Through our collective efforts and strong relationships, we continue to make a positive difference for the learners we serve.

Sincerely,

Tracey MacMillan, Superintendent

Upcoming Dates:
November 8 – Indigenous Veterans Day
November 11 - Remembrance Day
November 18 & 19 – Early Dismissal
November 27 – Pro-D

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Celebrating Our School Administrative Assistants "Thank You!"

We would like to extend special recognition and a sincere thank you to our School Administrative Assistants across the district for the tremendous work they do, particularly behind the scenes in preparation for the opening of school. From new student registrations, MyEducation BC data entry, schedules and class lists, to welcoming families, supporting students who come to the office, and responding to the many questions that arise throughout a busy school day, their role is invaluable.

During my visits to all Stewart, Kitwanga, and Hazelton I witnessed firsthand the warmth, care, organization, and welcoming presence our Administrative Assistants bring to their schools. Often the first person students and families meet when entering a school, they help set the tone for a welcoming school community.

To all of our School Administrative Assistants across the district, please know how much we appreciate you and the important work you do each day!



New Hazelton Elementary School: *Sherril Penfold, Administrative Assistant*



Hazelton Secondary School *(left to right)****:*** *Helene Paranich and Julia Kokelj Administrative Assistants*







Majagaleehl Gali Aks Elementary School: *Jolynn Forsythe, Administrative Assistant*



Kitwanga Elementary School: *Dawn Hippisley, Administrative Assistant*



Bear Valley School: *Lori McKay, Administrative Assistant*

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Culinary Skills in Action at MEMSS

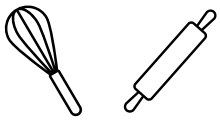
During my recent visit to Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School, I had the pleasure of spending time with teacher Alex Wilson and her Grade 9/10 Foods class as students put their culinary skills to work creating a carefully measured Play-Doh recipe. This hands-on activity provided a practical introduction to working in the Home Economics kitchen, with students applying important skills such as accurate measurement, following procedures, problem-solving, and collaboration.



Alex Wilson (far left), Foods Teacher, and her Grade 9/10 students share their hands-on cooking activity with Superintendent MacMillan (far right).



Alex Wilson, Foods Teacher, with Grade 9/10 students during their hands-on learning in the MEMSS Home Economics room.



It was wonderful to see students engaged in their learning while developing skills they will continue to build upon throughout the course. Thank you to Alex and her students for the warm welcome and for inviting me to be part of their classroom learning!



With Appreciation and a Warm Welcome

We would like to acknowledge Trustees Julia Sundell and Mike Maxim as they conclude their terms on the Board of Education. We thank them for their time serving Coast Mountains School District and wish them both well in their future endeavours.



We would also like to extend a warm welcome to our two new Trustees, Troy Peters (Thornhill) and Bryana Jack (Hazelton). We look forward to getting to know you, working together, and sharing the many wonderful things happening in our schools and communities as we continue to support student learning and success.

Bringing Culture and Education Together – Truth and Reconciliation District In-Service Day

On September 25, Truth and Reconciliation was recognized across Coast Mountains School District, with First Nations taking the lead in planning and facilitating meaningful learning opportunities in partnership with the District. These gatherings provided staff with opportunities to listen, learn, and strengthen relationships with the Nations and communities we serve.



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Left to Right: *Superintendent MacMillan, Duane Grant, Language & Culture Manager for Haisla Nation, Nancy Tormene, Principal of KCH and Trustee Jonkman*

This year, Director Nieckarz and I had the pleasure of joining staff in Kitimat, where we boarded buses and travelled to the Haisla community for a wonderful day of learning hosted by the Haisla Nation.



Left to Right: *Rob Parker, Principal of Haisla Community School, Lissa Sorenson, and Director Nieckarz.*

The day began with an excellent keynote presentation, followed by learning opportunities with Elders, Knowledge Holders, and community educators. We had two wonderful Masters of Ceremonies, including Duane Grant, a former CMSD student, who was welcoming, knowledgeable, and had a terrific sense of humour. It was especially nice to see a former student in this important role!

OneOne of the highlights for us was learning about Haisla feast protocols as the hall was prepared for lunch. I also participated in a cultural learning session where we learned about the importance of shapes and lines in Indigenous art, including ovoids, and how traditional red and black pigments were created using materials from the land. This was a wonderful opportunity to deepen our understanding of the connections between culture, art, and the land, and to appreciate how these teachings can be meaningfully incorporated into classroom learning and the curriculum.



Indigenous Support Workers from Left to Right: *Raeonna Woods, MEMSS and Lauren Alex, Nechako Elementary*

We also enjoyed a walking and learning tour of important cultural artifacts throughout the community. It was a beautiful day to be outdoors, learning about Haisla history, totem poles, and connections to the land.



MEMSS Staff: *Maryka Rypma & Rick Jones*

A sincere thank you to the Haisla Nation, Elders, Knowledge Holders, presenters, and facilitators for welcoming us and generously sharing their knowledge. Special thanks to Annette Sorensen and the Haisla planning team, along with CMSD Director Donna Mortimer, Vanessa Shirey (Administrative Assistant), Indigenous Support Workers and our District team for their work and support. It was a truly terrific day of learning, filled with meaningful conversations, new understandings, and opportunities to strengthen relationship.



Left to Right: *Stacey Rodriguez, Vice Principal of MEMSS & Director Nieckarz*



Experiences like these remind us that reconciliation is an ongoing journey and that what we learn together helps shape the work we do with our students and families.

From Left to Right: *Ana Pires, Counsellor at MEMSS and Trustee Jonkman*

Colton Rand, Vice Principal of MEMSS



Strengthening Partnerships with UNBC – Supporting Future Educators



Left to Right: *Director Barron, Superintendent MacMillan, and Nathan Lachowsky, Dean, Faculty of Human and Health Sciences*

I recently had the opportunity to meet with the Dean of the Faculty of Human and Health Sciences from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), who was visiting Terrace in conjunction with a career fair held at the Northwest Trades and Employment Training Centre (NTETC). Director Barron also joined us for this engaging conversation.

Our productive meeting focused on strengthening our existing partnership with UNBC and exploring opportunities to support teacher recruitment, retention, and professional learning across our district. Over the years, Coast Mountains School District has welcomed UNBC student teachers for practicum placements and hired graduates who have gone on to become part of our school communities.

Of particular interest was the September 2027 intake of the Regional Bachelor of Education program in Terrace, which will introduce a revised hybrid delivery model with increased online coursework, reduced weekly in-person requirements, and additional in-person intensive sessions.

We also discussed opportunities for master's-level programming to support the continued professional growth of our teachers and school administrators. Strengthening these educational pathways is particularly important as we work to recruit and retain qualified educators and reduce our reliance on Letters of Permission (LOPs).

Thank you to UNBC for the engaging conversation and its continued commitment to supporting education in northern communities. We look forward to building upon this valuable partnership!



A Warm Welcome and Wonderful Learning at Bear Valley School!

During my recent visit to Bear Valley School in Stewart, I had the opportunity to spend time with students and staff, visit classrooms, and see firsthand the many

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High School students assist Mr. Ian Wen (middle) with setting up for PE class.

wonderful things happening in this small but vibrant school community. Director Barron joined me for the visit, and we both appreciated the warm welcome we received.

One of the highlights for me was spending time with Ms. Terri Scott's Kindergarten/Grade 1 class, where I enjoyed reading with the students and sharing in their enthusiasm for learning. I also appreciated connecting with secondary students, hearing about their learning experiences, and having conversations with staff about the great work taking place throughout the school.

An important part of our visit was meeting with Principal Jocelynn Drew to review Bear Valley School's Growth Plan. It was a valuable opportunity to discuss school priorities, celebrate successes, and explore strategies to continue supporting student learning and achievement. I also appreciated the opportunity to connect with Board Trustee Wayne Jones, who is always interested in exploring ways to support our district, schools, and student success.



Viewing the new laser engraving machine.
Left to Right: *Director Barron, Eric Drew, Teacher, and Superintendent MacMillan.*

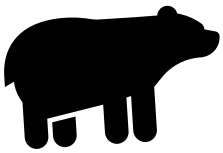


Left to Right: *Trustee Jones & Superintendent MacMillan*

Bear Valley has also introduced some exciting new technology, including a 3D printer and laser engraving machine, providing students with additional opportunities for hands-on learning, creativity, and design. A special thank you to teacher Eric Drew for the thoughtful keepsake, a beautifully laser-engraved stone commemorating our visit!



K-1 students perform 'Five Little Pumpkins'
Left to Right: *Teri Scott, Teacher, Students, and Christina Smith, Education Assistant at Bear Valley*





We thank Principal Drew, the students, and all staff at Bear Valley School for your warm hospitality, positive energy, and the care and dedication you bring to your school community each day. It is always rewarding to visit our schools and see the many ways our staff work together to create welcoming, engaging, and meaningful learning experiences for students!

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Creating Welcoming Spaces and Supporting Students at Kitimat City High

During my recent visit to Kitimat City High, it was wonderful to see the many ways students are being supported. I particularly enjoyed visiting with the Youth Support Worker, Analisa Simpson, who has thoughtfully created a welcoming, comfortable, and engaging office space where students can relax, connect, and feel supported.

I also appreciated the opportunity to meet Rachel Hahn, Child and Youth Mental Health Counsellor from the Haisla Youth Centre, who was connecting with the school principal to discuss ways to strengthen mental health and wellness supports for Haisla students attending Kitimat City High.



Left to Right: *Nancy Tormene, Principal, KCH; Tracey MacMillan, Superintendent, and Rachel Hahn, Child and Youth Mental Health Counsellor from the Haisla Youth Centre*



These are wonderful examples of the caring relationships and partnerships that help students feel a sense of belonging and support their success at school. A special thank you to everyone involved in making a positive difference for students at KCH!

Thank you, Analisa, for the support you provide to learners!

Congratulations to Dan Hamel – Excellence in Collaboration Award!

Congratulations to Dan Hamel, Principal of the Northwest Trades & Employment Training Centre (NTETC) and North Coast Distance Education School (NCDES), on being selected as the 2026 recipient of the Excellence in Collaboration Award by the Career Education Society of British Columbia! This provincial recognition celebrates Dan's leadership and outstanding commitment to building strong partnerships with post-secondary institutions, industry, schools, and community organizations to expand Career Education opportunities for students. Through his collaborative approach, Dan and his team continue to create meaningful, hands-on learning experiences that help students explore and prepare for their future careers. We extend our sincere congratulations to Dan on this well-deserved recognition and thank him and his team for their tremendous contributions to student success across our district!



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Good News at Thornhill Elementary School



We have been working with local Indigenous artist Amanda Hugon to create a unique mural outside our school! Developed with input from our school, the mural is a special representation of our students and community. Every child in the school has their handprint represented in the rainbow, and the crests of the four houses are featured along the bottom, celebrating our connections, culture, and community.



(With appreciation to Kate Doane, Vice-Principal of Thornhill Elementary, for this contribution.)





Left to Right: *Amanda Hugon with Thornhill Elementary Students*

Classroom to Campfire: Foods Learning at Ferry Island

Students at Parkside Secondary recently took their learning beyond the classroom and into the outdoors for an exciting experiential Foods program at Ferry Island! Led by Alisha Cameron, Foods Teacher, and Job Daniels, Indigenous Outreach Worker, students had the opportunity to learn the art of cooking over an open fire while enjoying the beautiful natural surroundings. Through this hands-on experience, students developed practical cooking skills, explored outdoor food preparation techniques, and shared a meal they helped prepare.



The experience emphasized teamwork, relationship building, and meaningful learning through connection to the land. It was a wonderful opportunity to bring together food, outdoor education, and community in a fun and engaging environment. Most importantly, students had an absolute blast! Experiences like these highlight Parkside Secondary's commitment to experiential learning and creating memorable educational opportunities that extend well beyond the traditional classroom.

(With appreciation to Zack Frankel, Principal of Parkside Secondary, for this contribution.)

Skeena Middle School Keeps Terry's Dream Moving

On Monday, September 28th, Skeena Middle School (SMS) participated in the annual Terry Fox Run. We, like many other schools across the district, province, and country participated in the run and other activities to commemorate Terry Fox's run across Canada and raise money for the Terry Fox Foundation to fight cancer. Terry Fox represented the best that Canadians have to offer. He was an example of courage, humility, determination, and perseverance.

As a school community, Skeena Middle School raised close to $1800 through the Terry Fox Foundation's fundraising link at **https://schools.terryfox.ca/SkeenaMiddleSchool** as well as in-school fundraising activities.



Right to Left: *SMS Staff taking a "Pie in the Face" - Shawn Dando, Joy Hill, Caesar Bradford, Joel Ewald, Cory Killoran, Ron Sidey, Ethan Wiebe, James Renwick, Kristine Schmidt, and Kristen Mailhot.*

We ran a "Snack Shack" for a number of days selling nutritional snacks and drinks. All the money raised by the "Snack Shack" will be donated to the Terry Fox Foundation. We also did "Toonies for Terry". This was a fundraiser where students could buy a ticket for $2.00 to enter a draw to throw a pie in the face of a staff member. During our Terry Fox Run Assembly, we had 11 staff members volunteer to take a Pie to the Face in front of all of our students and staff to help raise money for the Terry Fox Foundation. It was an incredibly fun assembly and this is just one activity we do that helps bring our students and staff together and continues to build the positive culture at SMS.

(With appreciation to Cory Killoran, Principal of Skeena Middle, for this contribution.)

Kildala's Terry Fox Run

Kildala Elementary's Terry Fox Run fundraising came with a unique incentive: the more money students raised, the more hair Ms. Klonarakis would cut off! The challenge culminated in a haircut at a school assembly, bringing students and staff together to celebrate their fundraising efforts. It was a memorable way to honour Terry Fox's legacy and show how a school community can make a difference together.



Left to Right: *Charlotte Klonarakis and Joanne Mueller, Teachers at Kildala Elementary School.*

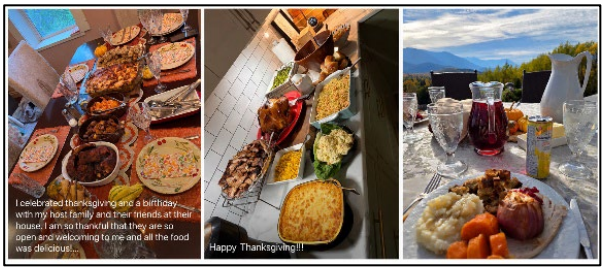
(With appreciation to Chrysta Carreiro, Principal of Kildala Elementary, for this contribution.)



Welcoming International Students to Coast Mountains School District

This year, we welcomed 54 new students from Germany, Brazil, Italy, Spain, Japan, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. It has been a wonderful start, with

students settling into their schools, host families, and communities. We are also excited to welcome another 25 students for the second semester.



Our students have enjoyed experiencing Canadian Thanksgiving and discovering new places throughout our beautiful region. They are happy and making the most of their time here. A few are already looking to extend their stay from one semester to a full year—a lovely reflection of their positive experiences.

International students shared these Thanksgiving photos and personal captions with friends and family back home, offering a glimpse into their experiences with their host families.

Our host families are also enjoying welcoming students into their homes and learning about different cultures. Their kindness and support are such an important part of helping our students feel at home.



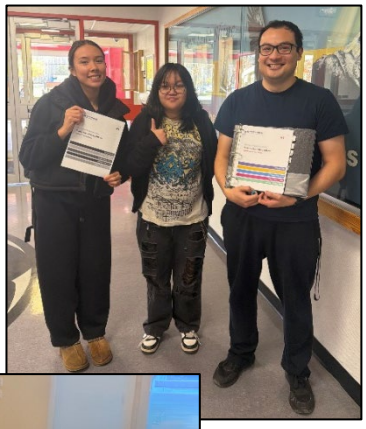
We are delighted with the start of the year and look forward to more wonderful experiences ahead.

(With appreciation to Joe Dominguez, Principal of International Student Program, for this contribution.)

"Youth at the Booth" Hazelton Secondary Students Get Involved



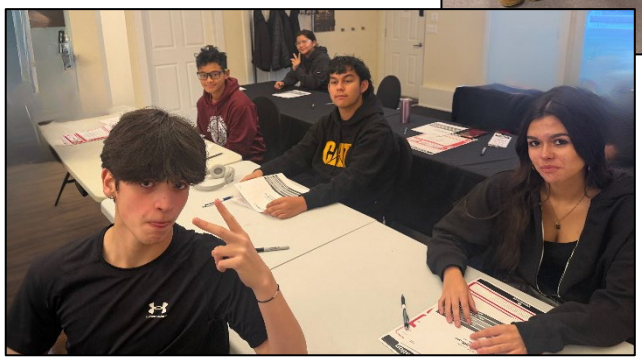
Hazelton Secondary is supporting youth civic engagement through the ***Youth at the Booth*** initiative in partnership with Elections BC. Students have the opportunity to participate in paid training and work as election officials such as Ballot Issuing Officers and Information Officers, gaining valuable work experience and a deeper understanding of the democratic process.



A special thank you to **Gini at Elections BC** (Smithers District Office) for helping make this opportunity possible, and to the **youth who are stepping up to help out**, support voters, and serve their communities!

(With appreciation to Ryan McCann, Vice Principal of Hazelton Secondary, for this contribution.)





Cambria Gold Mines Supports Student Nutrition at Bear Valley School

Bear Valley School is grateful for a generous $5,000 donation from Cambria Gold Mines in support of the school's lunch program.



A healthy lunch is about much more than food. It gives students the energy they need to focus, participate, and make the most of their learning each day. When children have access to nutritious meals, they are better prepared to engage in the classroom, build positive relationships, and achieve their full potential.

The donation will help Bear Valley School continue providing healthy lunches for students throughout the year, ensuring that every child has access to nourishing food at school. For many students, sharing a meal with classmates is also an important part of feeling connected, supported, and ready to learn.

Community partnerships play a vital role in helping schools meet the needs of students, and this contribution will have a meaningful impact on the daily lives of children at Bear Valley School.
The school extends its sincere thanks to Cambria Gold Mines for investing in the well-being of local students and helping ensure that full bellies lead to active minds, engaged learners, and a stronger school community.

Nourished bellies help nourish minds.

(With appreciation to Jocelynn Drew, Principal of Bear Valley, for this contribution.)



A Day in the Life at KSM (Kerr-Sulphurets-Mitchell)



On October 14th and 15th, Grade 11 and 12 students from Bear Valley School joined secondary students from across the district for ***A Day in the Life at KSM***, an immersive career exploration experience at the KSM mine site.

The program was designed to introduce students to the wide range of trades, technical careers, and professional roles required to operate a modern mine. Throughout the two-day experience, students had the opportunity to learn about everything from heavy equipment operation and mechanics to environmental monitoring, safety, logistics, and engineering.

The trip provided a hands-on look at the many career pathways available in the mining industry and gave students valuable insight into the skills, training, and teamwork involved in keeping a large-scale operation running successfully.

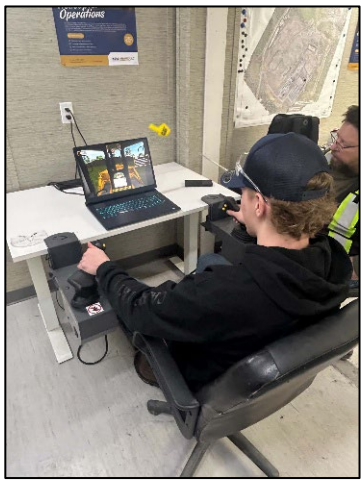


One of the highlights for many students was the opportunity to get up close to the massive CAT equipment used on site. Seeing the machinery in action and learning how it is operated gave students a new appreciation for the scale and complexity of mining operations.

The experience was both educational and exciting, and students returned with a greater understanding of the diverse opportunities available in the resource sector.

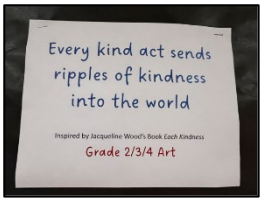
A sincere thank you goes to KSM for hosting this incredible learning opportunity, as well as to the chaperones (*Eric Drew, Teacher at Bear Valley, Dan Hamel, Principal of NTETC, and Louise Omerod, Vice-Principal of Hazelton Secondary*) and volunteer driver (*Alissa Korberg*) who helped make the trip possible. Their support allowed students to participate in a unique experience that connected classroom learning to real-world careers.

(With appreciation to Jocelynn Drew, Principal of Bear Valley, for this contribution.)











Left to Right: *Director Nieckarz, Giuliana Reniero, Speech-Language Pathologist and Bobbie Pastershank, Behaviour Interventionist*

Community and Creativity at Bear Valley School

A visit to Bear Valley School in Stewart is always a pleasure—a small rural school with a wonderful sense of community! Julia Nieckarz, Director of Instruction, recently joined Giuliana Reniero, Speech-Language Pathologist and Bobbie Pastershank, Behaviour Interventionist, to support the school team. Warm welcomes, happy children, and staff thoughtfully responding to students' individual needs made this a rewarding visit.

Building on her virtual support last spring, Bobbie spent time observing students and collaborating with staff on practical strategies. Giuliana completed Kindergarten speech-language screenings and shared visual communication tools to help children express their needs during everyday classroom activities.





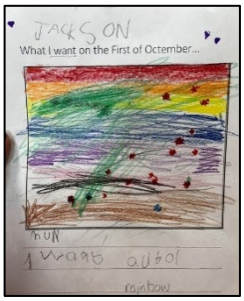


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Jocelynn Drew, Principal, and Students of Bear Valley

The students' beautiful artwork was another highlight. Inspired by children's picture books, the principal encourages students to explore ideas, take creative chances, and let their imaginations shine. Even with the same story as a starting point, every piece reflects its creator's unique personality.



Thank you to the Bear Valley team for your hospitality, collaboration, and the care you bring to your school community!









Left to Right: *Cari Hopkins, Teacher and Giuliana Reniero, Speech-Language Pathologist*

(With appreciation to Juli Nieckarz, Director of Instruction, Inclusive Education, for this contribution.)

Learning with our Administrative Assistants



Administrative Assistants from left to right: *Suzanne Banville, Skeena Middle and Shannon Rupert, Thornhill Elementary*

October 23rd marked a wonderful opportunity for connection, collaboration, and learning as we welcomed Administrative Assistants from schools across Coast Mountains School District for our first joint Clerical Professional Development Day.



This session was made possible through the collaboration of several departments, bringing together colleagues to share knowledge, strengthen communication, and support the important work happening in our schools every day.

Left to Right: *Lynn Lindstrom, MyEd Level 1/Accounts Receivable, Lynda Lang, Manager of Finance, Shelley Smith, Accounting Clerk/Purchaser, and Shawna Wilson, Executive Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer & Communications Officer*



A sincere thank you to everyone who contributed to this collaborative session.

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Left to Right: *Jennifer Connor, Payroll Technician and Lynda Lang, Manager of Finance*

Over the past year in my role as Executive Assistant, one of the most rewarding experiences has been the opportunity to get to know and work alongside so many wonderful people throughout our District. One thing I have come to learn and appreciate even more is just how important our Administrative Assistants are to the success of our schools.



Administrative Assistants from Left to Right: *Kandice McCauley, Thornhill Primary, Christina Gagne, Suwilawwks Community, Nicole Boivin, Parkside Secondary, and Administrative Assistant, Cassie Hall Elementary*

Working in an administrative support role at the Board Office, I understand the many responsibilities, competing priorities, and unexpected challenges that come with being the person others turn to for assistance. Our school Administrative Assistants are often the first welcoming face or friendly voice that students, families, staff, and visitors encounter. The work they do behind the scenes each day is invaluable, and their dedication helps keep our schools running smoothly.



Administrative Assistants from Left to Right: *Renna Marcotte, Uplands Elementary, Shannon McAllister and Amy Unrau from Skeena Middle*

One of the highlights of the day was having the opportunity to connect with colleagues beyond our usual phone calls and emails. It was wonderful to put faces to names, share conversations, and strengthen the relationships that make working together so meaningful.

I am truly grateful to have been part of this first session and hope it is just the beginning of many more opportunities for us to come together, share ideas, learn from one another, and continue building a strong, supportive clerical team across our District.



Left to Right: *Teri Davey, Administrative Assistant for Inclusive Education and Kyla Magnusson, Manager of Human Resources*

Thank you to all our school Administrative Assistants for everything you do. Your work matters, and you are truly appreciated! It was wonderful to have everyone come together for such a meaningful day of learning, connection, and collaboration. Each and every one of you helped make this day special. I look forward to many more opportunities for us to learn, connect, and work TOGETHER!



Administrative Assistants from Left to Right: *Julia Kokelj, Hazelton Secondary, Tanya Duffy and Michelle Anger, Caledonia Secondary, Lori McKay, Bear Valley, and Trisha Stevens, Caledonia Secondary*

(With appreciation to Lindsay Harder, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent & Board, for this contribution.)

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From Paintbrushes to 3D Printers: Creativity at Bear Valley School

Students in Eric Drew's high school class are putting their creativity and problem-solving skills to work as they design cars that will be produced using a 3D printer. The project connects design and technology with hands-on learning, encouraging students to consider how the shape, structure, and features of their cars could influence performance. Superintendent Tracey MacMillan and Director of Instruction Phillip Barron were fortunate to witness this creativity firsthand and were very impressed by the students' thoughtful designs, enthusiasm, and ingenuity.



Left to Right: *Superintendent MacMillan, Students, Eric Drew, Teacher (middle) and Director Barron.*

The excitement will build toward the spring, when students will race their completed cars and see their designs in action. From an initial idea to a finished product, this project offers an engaging opportunity to test ideas, learn through trial and error, and celebrate creativity. Thank you to Eric Drew for providing students with this exciting learning experience!



Left to Right: *Director Barron, Jocelynn Drew, Principal of Bear Valley and Students*

A class of younger students at Bear Valley School recently created beautiful autumn paintings with their Principal, Mrs. Jocelynn Drew. Students did an excellent job listening carefully and following directions while bringing their own creativity to their artwork. Their paintings captured the colors and beauty of the season, with each finished piece reflecting the student's individual ideas and artistic expression.

Students showed care and concentration throughout the activity and were very proud of their finished paintings. It was wonderful to see their confidence and excitement as they admired their own work and celebrated the creations of their classmates. Thank you to Mrs. Drew for sharing this creative learning experience and helping students experience the joy of making art!

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

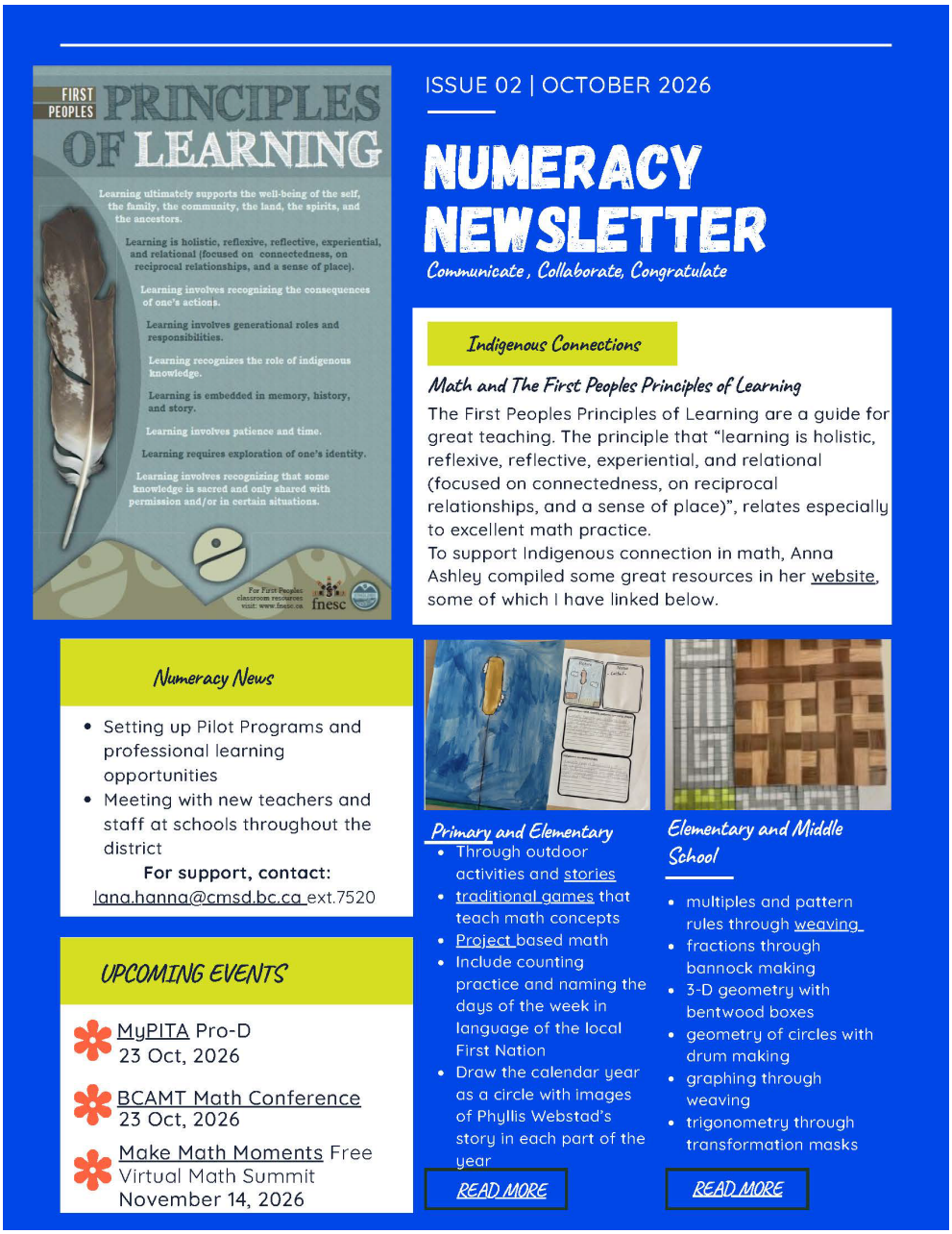
Numeracy

The October Numeracy Newsletter highlights simple ways to make mathematics part of everyday classroom routines, helping students build confidence, strengthen skills, and recognize math in their daily lives. Suggestions include calendar activities, counting and patterning, estimation, number talks, and representing attendance using fractions, ratios, or percentages. The newsletter also shares professional learning opportunities and updates on preparing manipulatives for schools, setting up pilot program

accounts, and arranging workshops. Teachers can connect with Lana Hanna, District Numeracy Lead Teacher or Phillip Barron, Director of Instruction, Learning Services, for support.

Across the district, more than 70 teachers are piloting Mathology and MathUP to explore resources and approaches that strengthen primary and elementary mathematics instruction. The district covers program costs and provides materials, professional learning, and ongoing support. Lana is available to assist participating teachers and other staff across the district, with particular attention to new teachers and those working on Letters of Permission. Teacher feedback throughout the year will help inform future resource decisions and the Numeracy Working Group's ongoing work to build a consistent, sustainable approach to numeracy. We are deeply grateful to LNG Canada for its generous support in making this work possible.

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



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October 2026

French Immersion

Our French Immersion teachers continue to collaborate on the development of the district's **K–9 French Immersion Literacy Framework**. This work focuses on establishing consistent, evidence-based literacy practices aligned with the BC curriculum and the science of reading. The framework will provide teachers with a shared understanding of effective literacy instruction and support continuity in student learning across grade levels.

On October 23, a group of French Immersion teachers attended the **APPIPC conference in Surrey**, providing valuable opportunities for professional learning, networking, and collaboration with French Immersion educators from across the province. These opportunities continue to strengthen instructional practices and build teacher capacity within our district.

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

Early Learning



We are excited to announce the opening of a **new after-school childcare program at Thornhill Primary School**. This expansion provides additional childcare opportunities for families and reflects the district's continued commitment to supporting children and families through accessible, school-based childcare services. We are grateful to Jeff Coroghly, StartStrong Facilitator & Early Childhood Educator, for encouraging us to bring this service to his school community.

The program offers a welcoming, engaging environment where children can participate in play-based learning, creative activities, and social interactions beyond the regular school day. This initiative strengthens our early learning and childcare continuum while responding to the needs of families in our community.







Additionally, the district was pleased to support the **Early Years Fair on Saturday, October 24, from 9:30 a.m. to noon at Suwilaawks Community School**. This community event brings together local organizations and service providers to connect families with valuable early childhood resources, services, and opportunities. Families enjoyed interactive activities while learning about the many supports available within our community.











Left to Right: *Kim Seibel, Public Health Resource Nurse with Northern Health and Superintendent MacMillan*

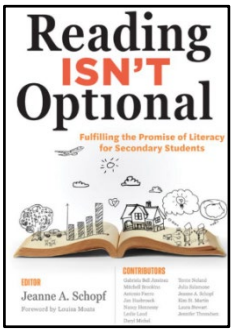
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Superintendent's Report to the Board
October 2026

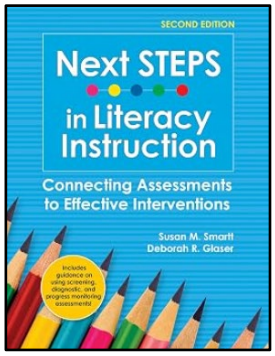
Literacy

The district will conclude its first **Acadience Reading benchmark assessment window on October 28**. We are encouraged by the progress students are demonstrating and look forward to using the assessment results to celebrate student growth, identify areas requiring additional support, and guide responsive literacy instruction across our schools. The continued implementation of evidence-based literacy practices and ongoing progress monitoring remains central to our district literacy initiatives.

Professional learning continues to be a priority as we launch two district-wide literacy book studies designed to strengthen instructional practices across grade levels.



Our **Grades 7–12 book study, *Reading Isn't Optional* by Colleen Schopf**, begins next Wednesday, October 28. This professional learning opportunity will focus on the importance of literacy instruction across all subject areas, emphasizing that developing proficient readers is a shared responsibility among secondary educators. Participants will explore practical strategies to support adolescent literacy, comprehension, and student engagement.



In mid-November, our **K–6 book study, *Next Steps in Literacy Instruction* by Susan Smart and Deborah Glaser**, will begin. This study will deepen teachers' understanding of the science of reading and its application to classroom instruction, with a particular focus on explicit, systematic literacy practices, assessment-informed instruction, and meeting the diverse learning needs of students.

Together, these initiatives reflect our continued commitment to building teacher capacity, strengthening instructional consistency, and improving literacy outcomes for all students across Coast Mountains School District.

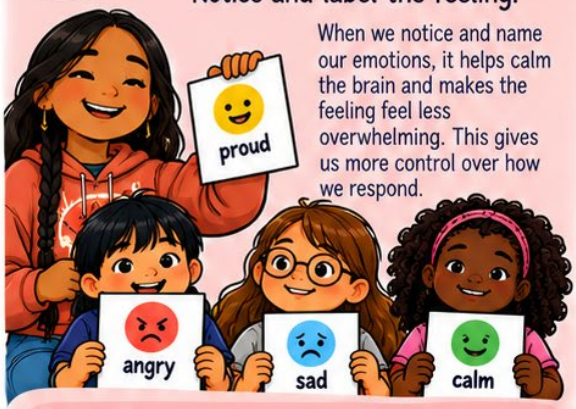
(With appreciation to Tina McDonald, District Principal Curriculum Support, for this contribution.)

Chill Skillz
Emotional Regulation Skills

Practical tools parents can use at home to help children notice, manage, and express their emotions in healthy ways. These skills build calmer minds, stronger relationships, and greater success at school and in life.

1 Name it to Tame it

Notice and label the feeling.



When we notice and name our emotions, it helps calm the brain and makes the feeling feel less overwhelming. This gives us more control over how we respond.

Try saying:

- "I notice you seem ___ (mad, sad, worried, excited, etc.)."
- "It's okay to feel that way. Let's name it together."
- "Big feelings are normal. Naming the feeling helps our brain feel calmer."

2 Breathing

Use slow breathing to calm your body.



Slow, deep breathing helps turn down the body's stress response, slows the heart rate, and helps the brain feel safer and calmer.

Try this:

- Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 counts.
- Hold for 4 counts.
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth for 6 counts.
- Do 3–5 breaths together.

3 Physical Regulation Moves

Use your body to help calm your mind.

Gentle movement and body-based strategies can help release built-up energy, calm the nervous system, and bring your brain back to a more regulated state.

Butterfly Hug



Cross your arms and gently tap your shoulders left and right, like a butterfly.

Tapping



Gently tap your hands, arms, or legs.

Shake It Out



Stand up (or stay seated) and shake your hands, arms, and whole body.

Hand Press



Press your hands together as hard as you can for 5 seconds, then release. Repeat.

4 Think of Your Happy Place

Use your imagination to feel calmer.

Imagining a safe, happy place can help calm the nervous system, reduce worry, and create a sense of safety and peace in your mind and body.



Try saying:

- "Close your eyes and picture a place where you feel safe, happy, and calm."
- "What do you see? What do you hear? What does it feel like?"
- "Take a few deep breaths while you imagine your happy place."

5 Challenging Your Unhelpful Thoughts

Look for a more balanced and helpful thought.

Sometimes our brain has unhelpful thoughts that make us feel worse. Noticing and challenging those thoughts helps us feel calmer, more confident, and better able to solve problems.



Try saying:

- "What's the thought you're having right now?"
- "Is that thought 100% true? What else might be true?"
- "Let's find a more helpful and realistic thought."
- "For example: 'I can't do this' can become 'I 'I can try my best' or 'I can ask for help.'"

Calmer Minds ♡ Stronger Relationships ♡ Brighter Futures

MENTAL HEALTH SPOT LIGHT

October EMOTIONS AND REGULATIONS





Why Mental Health Matters

As school routines settle in and expectations increase, October can bring bigger emotions for children and youth. Learning to recognize, understand, and manage these feelings is an important part of well-being, for both children and adults. When caring adults are aware of their own emotions and practice regulation, they are better able to support children through challenging moments. Together, these skills help build stronger connections, navigate challenges, and create environments where children can thrive and engage in learning.

SPOTLIGHT: Whats happening at Schools:

Cassie Hall Elementary recently held a school-wide Chill Skillz Day! Students rotated through nine interactive stations, exploring different strategies to help them understand emotions, regulate their bodies, and discover tools that work for them.



Students learn ways to express feelings



Students reflect on their happy place

What Can Happent at home:

Students Learn Physical Regulation skills



When big feelings show up, our first instinct can be to fix the problem, reassure, or explain why our child shouldn't feel that way. Instead, think about the 3 R's: Regulate, Relate, Resolve.

Remember, validation doesn't mean agreeing with everything your child says or does. It simply communicates: "Your feelings make sense, and I'm here with you."

Regulate
Take a moment to slow things down and help your child feel calm and safe.

Relate
Connect before trying to solve the problem. Validation is a powerful way to do this. Letting your child know that you hear and understand their experience.

Resolve
Once emotions have settled, you can begin to explore what your child might need or what could happen next.

What you can say:

"That sounds really disappointing..."

- Because you were really hoping to go.
- Because you enjoy spending time with those friends.
- Because it can hurt when you feel like you're missing out on something everyone else gets to do.

"It makes sense that you're feeling frustrated..."

- Because you've been trying really hard.
- Because you want to be able to figure it out on your own.
- Because it's discouraging when something doesn't come as easily as you'd hoped.

Resources for Parents and Families

Supporting Your Child Through Challenges

https://learn.openparachuteschools.com/parent/login?id=CA_Zmz6DRC8&resource=xXNH_Aip73YVzRM46ag8L

When children feel heard and understood, it can be easier for them to move through big emotions and begin thinking about what they need next.

Conversation Starter: "What helps your body feel calm when you're having a tough moment?"

openparachute

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COAST MOUNTAINS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT 82

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Open Parachute provides you with mental health and well-being programs designed to promote resilience in students from K - Grade 12.

openparachute

is a research-based, age-appropriate resource that offers ready-to-use lessons on topics like anxiety, stress, identity, and resilience. It provides a consistent framework that supports student well-being—without requiring teachers to be mental health experts.



Plug and Play

- Learn how to easily navigate the Open Parachute platform
- Explore lesson plans and videos that are ready to use immediately in the classroom
- Gain confidence in delivering content that fosters emotional literacy, empathy, and resilience in students



For User Name and/or Password Reset Contact:
kateri.clay@cmsd.bc.ca
pamella.groves@cmsd.bc.ca

Educator Onboarding

Get started at

https://learn.openparachuteschools.com/

Ongoing Considerations



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.

Expanding Child Care Opportunities on School Grounds

Access to quality, affordable childcare continues to be an important consideration for families across our district. On October 12, we were pleased to open the Seamless Day After School Program at Thornhill Primary School, providing an additional childcare option for families. Building on this positive development, we continue to explore opportunities to expand childcare spaces on school grounds, working with community partners and the Ministry of Education and Child Care to identify potential locations, partnerships and resources that will help increase access to childcare services for families across our district.

Strengthening Local Education Agreements with First Nations

We continue to work collaboratively with First Nations to strengthen the implementation of Local Education Agreements (LEAs) and support the success of Indigenous learners. This year, school administrators are working to establish monthly meetings with their local First Nations Education representatives. These meetings will provide regular opportunities to review student progress, discuss supports, strengthen communication and relationships, and work together to support student success.

Student Attendance and Engagement

Regular student attendance and engagement remain important priorities across the district. Schools and district staff continue to work closely with students, families, First Nations and community partners to strengthen connections, address barriers to attendance, and provide timely supports to help students remain engaged and successful in their learning.

Recruitment and Retention

Recruiting and retaining qualified staff continues to be a challenge, particularly in our northern and remote communities. While we have welcomed many new educators this year, ongoing recruitment efforts remain essential. Over the coming months, our district will be attending university recruitment events across Canada to connect with prospective educators and promote the opportunities available within Coast Mountains School District. We will also continue to focus on mentorship, professional learning, leadership development and creating supportive working environments that encourage staff to build lasting connections with our schools and communities.

Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School (MEMSS) Replacement

The replacement of Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School remains a significant capital priority for Coast Mountains School District. We are encouraged by the progress made in discussions with the Ministry of Education and Child Care and will continue advocating for this important project. Our focus

remains on ensuring that the future facility meets the educational needs of students, staff and the Kitimat community.

Supporting Diverse Student Needs

Meeting the increasingly diverse and complex needs of students continues to require thoughtful planning, collaboration and resources. We remain committed to working alongside school teams, Inclusive Education, Indigenous Education, families and community partners to coordinate supports, strengthen staff capacity and respond effectively to the needs of learners. We will also continue to collaborate with the Board of Education to advocate for increased funding and resources from the Ministry of Education and Child Care to ensure our schools are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of all learners.