

LEARNING TOGETHER

NO.2



NOVEMBER 2023
ISSUE NO.2



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A picture says a thousand words...

LEARNING TOGETHER IN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 (SOUTHEAST KOOTENAY)



We are very excited that the District is resuming the elementary choir this holiday season with all Cranbrook elementary schools. This will be hosted at the Alliance Church on December 6, at 7:00 p.m. Donations will be going to the Salvation Army and profits from the coffee bar will support breakfast programs throughout the District. A big thank you to the dedicated music teachers that are working hard to celebrate the 40th year of the elementary choir.

A key focus for schools this year is Compassionate Systems Leadership and Trauma Informed Schools. These two approaches aim to create supportive and culturally aware environments, to address the diverse needs of individuals, including those who may have experienced trauma. In practice, these approaches often intersect, as Compassionate Systems Leadership can be a foundation philosophy for creating Trauma Informed schools. By integrating both concepts, educational leaders and schools can foster a supportive, empathetic, and adaptable environments that meets the needs of all students. This approach aims to enhance the overall well-being and success of the education system.

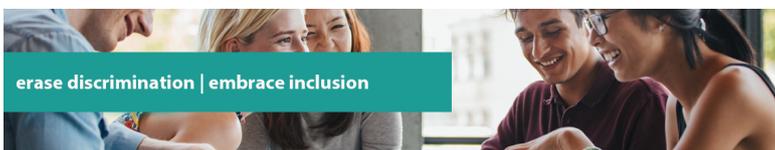
The Ministry of Education and Child Care has mandated school districts to have an anti-racism and accessibility plan. The goal of this work is to develop and implement initiatives aimed at promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. The work will look at our existing policies and administrative procedures to ensure that the District fosters an environment of inclusivity and ensures accessibility (from websites to facilities) for all. Both processes will involve community engagement. More information will be provided as we establish committees to address these important needs.

The District has hosted two engagement events to review the existing catchment boundaries in Cranbrook. As we address enrollment pressures, we want to ensure families have equitable access to programs and supports in all schools. We are looking specifically at the catchment boundaries of Highlands Elementary, Kootenay Orchards Elementary, Steeples Elementary, Parkland Middle and Laurie Middle schools. For more information on catchment boundaries, check out the [website](#).

The District has been working on a new strategic plan. There have been two working sessions to date where Trustees spoke with students directly. Using student voice in the development of the strategic plan is a critical component of the planning process. It ensures that student perspectives, needs, and aspirations continue to be central to the District's educational priorities. This process involves incorporating input from students while reviewing the District's Vision, Mission and Values moving forward.

Lastly, I encourage families to check-out the Ministry's [ERASE](#) (Expect Respect and a Safe Education) site as it has useful information to support students and families from online safety to mental health and wellbeing. There is also a [reporting tool](#) where you can get help or report an issue directly to your [school](#).

Viveka Johnson, Superintendent



Early Learning and Child Care

Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten
Transitions (SEY2KT)

The Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten Transitions (SEY2KT) Group is a collaborative, multi-partner initiative designed to improve early learning experiences and transition processes for children and families in British Columbia.

Comprised of Principals, Vice Principals, District staff, Kindergarten Teachers, community members, Speech and Language Pathologists, Early Childhood Educators, StrongStart facilitators, childcare providers, and school trustees, the program brings together educators from both the District and community settings to design and implement ongoing collaborative programs, based on local resources and needs.

The SEY2KT Group meets six times a year, attending provincial meetings and then meeting in their community group to strengthen relationships across education and the early years sectors. The program is grounded in research on transitions from early childhood to primary school and successful transformations to a learning leadership model (OECD 2015). Moreover, the program is aligned with the revised Early Learning Framework (BC 2019) and is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic excellence and professionalism.

The framework of SEY2KT:

- **Collaborating and Creating Partnerships:** Developing new ways of 'showing up' and interacting with one another
- **Welcoming Families:** Welcoming families into the school community
- **Going out into the community:** Improving accessibility
- **Creating communities of practice:** Developing shared professional learning activities, planning together, engaging in common practices

We are thrilled to witness the SEY2KT initiatives that unite the Sparwood and Elkford communities, aiming to improve continuity for children as they transition from early childhood programs to kindergarten. To learn more about SEY2K, please visit the [SEY2KT Website](#).



"I don't think that kindergarten teachers give themselves credit as really important leaders in a school. They take on things that no one knows about, like kindergarten orientation, and kindergarten interviews. That takes leadership and learning, and that's why the kindergarten world is a community in itself. We have kindergarten conferences and kindergarten networks, and that's something special that you don't see in any other grade...People don't understand the role of kindergarten in schools. Sometimes there are people in your communities who have never been to school; you're accepting families who are brand new both to Canada and to navigating the school system. You are helping families navigate our medical systems and therapy supports right at the beginning. You can be teaching parents about discipline, and bedtime routines. There is so much going on in kindergarten."

Iram Khan

Excerpt from, *Princip(ed)* Magazine Vol 4 Issue 3 June 2023





News from District Teachers



Growing Innovations Project

The goal of the Growing Innovations Project is to facilitate reconciliation by amplifying Indigenous knowledge of ecology through the creation of place-based numeracy tasks that use Nupqu's Native Plant Nursery as a provocation.

Nupqu, associated with Ktunaxa Enterprises Ltd, is proudly First Nation owned. The Nupqu Native Plant Nursery specializes in custom seed collection, cleaning, and propagation to support reclamation and revegetation within the Ktunaxa Territory and beyond.

It is the intention of this project to design tasks that invite different perspectives and ways of knowing.

The experiences will enhance students' relationship with land and will strengthen their identity as mathematicians.



District Numeracy Teacher, Kathy Conlin



Grade 6 Common Assessment

Teachers from across the District gathered to collaboratively assess the strengths and stretches of student thinking on the Grade Six Common Math Assessment. These strengths and stretches will be shared in future newsletters.

Carole Fullerton

Teachers of students in grades five to seven worked with Carole Fullerton for a full day to further develop their content knowledge of proportional reasoning and to further increase their pedagogical knowledge of math instruction.

College of the Rockies

Pre-service teachers and instructors at College of the Rockies learned math lesson structures, growth mindset messaging and standards-based assessment practices. They also participated in a series of lessons from resources available in the District that develop multiplicative thinking in students in grades three through eight.



DISTRICT DESIGN LAB



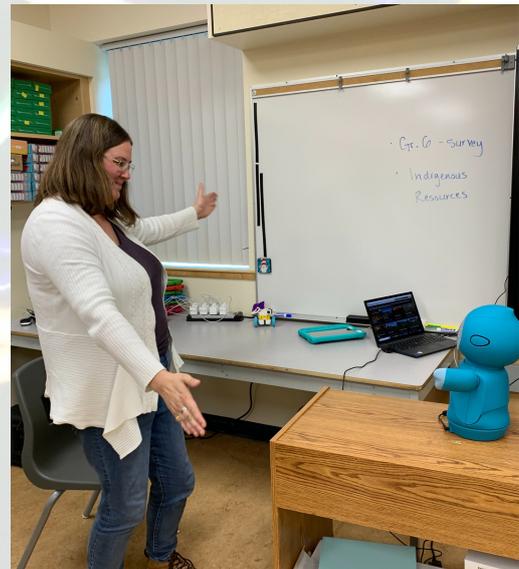
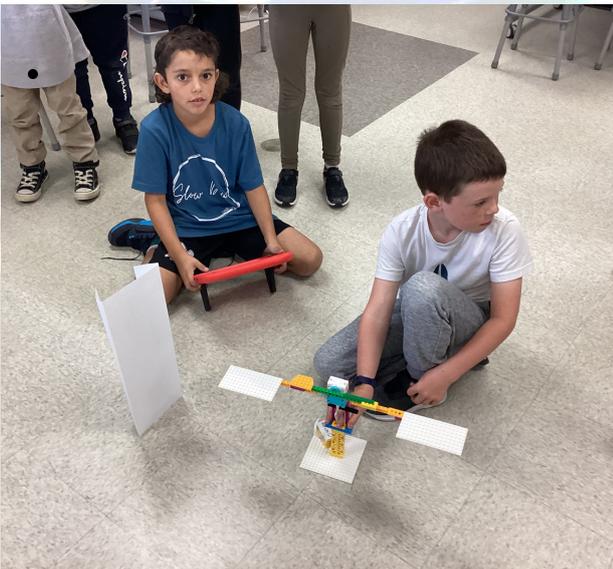
Digital Literacy Update

The Digital Literacy team reviewed key digital literacy resources and data from the past two years to inform our strategies and understanding of technology access, skills, and online activity. The team also set goals for the immediate future such as implementing a classroom focus, conducting a grade six survey in early 2024, and reporting results before the end of June. The future goals to further enhance digital literacy capacity for teachers and students are:

1. **Enhanced Resources:** To update and diversify our book list and resource bins.
2. **Inclusive Digital Literacy:** To continue to incorporate additional Indigenous perspectives in our digital literacy curriculum.
3. **Online Resource Development:** To create and curate online digital literacy resources.
4. **Efficient Communication:** To research and implement better ways to share information with staff.

Science We Cannot See

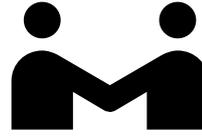
Multiple classes visited the Design Lab to explore science in different ways. Classes learned about gravity, the forces of air and how light acts like a wave and a particle. Students created robotic gravity testing machines, flashlights for light painting, and fans to explore their respective forces.





AROUND THE DISTRICT

Meet the Human Resources Department



Brent Reimer - Director of Instruction - Human Resources

Brent has a Bachelor of Education from UBC and a Master of Education from University of Lethbridge. He has been with the District as a teacher since 1995. He was a Vice Principal from 2000-2004, Principal from 2004-2011 and in his current role since 2011. Brent enjoys golfing, playing squash, going to the theatre and watching the Bucks play hockey when it fits. →*←



Jaslene Atwal - District Vice Principal of Human Resources and Health & Safety

Jaslene was born in Fernie and raised in Sparwood. She holds a Bachelor of Education from the University of Alberta; a Masters and Doctorate from the University of New England. She also holds a Project Management certificate from SAIT and a Human Resources Certificate from Cornell University. Jaslene was a teacher at Sparwood Secondary from 2008-2011. She then worked in health and safety at Suncor before returning to the District as a school administrator at Sparwood Secondary and Frank J Mitchell Elementary in 2018. Jaslene joined the Human Resources team in April 2023. In her free time she loves spending time with her family, exploring the outdoors, going to the theatre, and travelling all around the world! →*←



Jill Macdonald - Executive Assistant

Jill was born and raised in Cranbrook. She has a Bachelor's of Fine Arts from Calgary and Halifax. Jill started with the District in 2012 as the CUPE Payroll & Benefits Coordinator. She joined Human Resources as an Executive Assistant in 2018. In her free time, Jill likes to paint, spend time with family, read, or head for the mountains with her husband and Basset Hound.



Amanda Skene - Human Resources Coordinator

Amanda joined the District in 2020 and transitioned to the Board Office in 2022. As a dedicated nature enthusiast, Amanda finds solace in the outdoors. This passion was nurtured during her childhood summers at Fort Steele. Originally hailing from North Delta, Amanda has deep-rooted connections to the outdoors and has always been drawn to the Southeast Kootenay region. Amanda enjoys family life with her husband. They are busy raising three kids, two dogs and a cat.



Bridget Fix - Stenographer

Bridget went to school to become an accountant and took business administration and then office administration while also working at the Kootenay Advertiser. She ended up staying at the newspaper and learning all of the departments from accounting to proofreading, to editorial and graphic design. She moved over to the graphics department and eventually was the manager of the department where she stayed for 26 years. Bridget has been with the Board Office for almost seven years. Bridget loves animals, especially cats and has four of her own; in addition to taking care of a feral colony in Cranbrook. Her hobbies are baking, reading, gardening and helping her husband at his upholstery shop.



A picture says a thousand words...

