

# NEWSLETTER

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Kootenay Discovery School | April/May 2025



## ARE YOU IN GRADE 9? THIS IS FOR YOU!

Grade 10 brings exciting changes to your schooling. While there are basic classes you are required to take, you also have some electives. What courses will you take? How long do you have for each course? What are your graduation requirements? Do you have a career objective in mind yet?

Let our counsellors help guide you through these steps. After-all, that's what they're here for!

Students in Cranbrook, please reach out to [Barb Kaufmann](#)  
Those from Jaffray to Elkford, please reach out to [Lindsay Knight](#)

If your plan is to attend a brick and mortar school, here are the links to their registration pages:

[Elkford Registration Page](#)

[Sparwood Contact Information](#)

[Fernie Registration Page](#)

[Jaffray Contact Information](#)

[MBSS Registration Page & Course Selection](#)



# Letter from the Vice-Principal



Hi everyone,

In our last newsletter, I opened with a reflection on who we are at Kootenay Discovery School—a school stretching across multiple communities and demographics from Cranbrook to Elkford. This month, I'd like to continue that thread by exploring **what we do**.

At the end of the 2024-25 school year, we sent out a community survey that was completed by **74 stakeholders**. We heard from students, parents, teachers, support staff, and community members and the feedback was clear - at KDS, learning isn't one-size-fits-all. While at first glance what we do might seem straightforward (we offer flexible, personalized online and blended learning for K-12), as our recent community-wide survey reminded me, there's much more happening beneath the surface—work that is nuanced, adaptive, and attuned to the complex realities of our learners' lives.

So what *do* we do? We create space. For students navigating mental health challenges, social anxiety, or complex family situations. For learners who need time to travel, work, heal, or explore. For parents seeking guidance in their at-home learning facilitation. For students who want to catch up, go deeper, or leap ahead.

## WHAT ARE OUR STUDENTS ARE SAYING?

- "I love that I can work at my own pace. I love that when I can't handle school, I'm not behind when I come back. I love that the teachers are understanding."
- "I get to do my schoolwork when I'm feeling focused, not just when the bell rings."
- "I like that I am developing the ability to understand myself as a learner and how I learn best."
- "I love that I can redo my work if I didn't get it the first time. It's way less stressful and I am able to enjoy learning more."

What are five words that best represent **who we are** as a school community?

**FLEXIBLE**  
**SUPPORTIVE**  
**INCLUSIVE**  
**INNOVATIVE**  
**PERSONALIZED**

**"We craft pathways that are as diverse as our learners themselves."**

We do this through:

- **Flexible pacing** that allows students to work ahead, slow down, or pause when needed.
- **Personalized learning plans** tailored to each student's goals and needs.
- **Blended learning options** that combine online coursework with in-person support, outdoor experiences, and community-based learning in Cranbrook and Fernie.
- **Relational support from teachers** who connect through email, video, or in-person for guidance.

Our survey results also pointed to areas we want to grow: expanding course offerings, improving feedback systems, supporting our teachers to avoid burnout, and building more vibrant in-person hubs for social and experiential learning. We hear you, and we're working toward these aspirations together.

So whether you're logging in from a kitchen table in Elkford, joining a support block in Cranbrook, or collaborating at the portable in Fernie, you're shaping this school every day - just by being here, asking questions, giving feedback, and showing up in your own way. More to come next month, but for now: thank you for being a part of what we do.

*Deirdre*

# Staffing Updates

# WELCOME

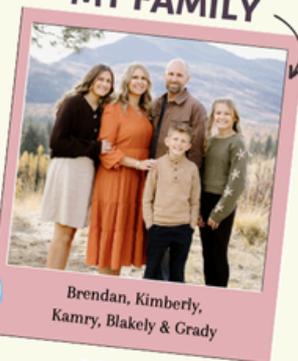
Please join us in welcoming Ms. Kimberly Yuill to the KDS Fernie staff team, and Ms. Ruth Gilchrist to the Cranbrook staff team. Kim will be filling the LST role in Fernie through to the end of the year and Ruth will be teaching Grades 7-12 Sciences from Cranbrook. Please make sure to say hello next time you see them on campus!



Hello, my name is  
**KIMBERLY YUILL**  
and I'm the new Learning Services Teacher at KDS!



## MY FAMILY



Brendan, Kimberly,  
Kamry, Blakely & Grady

I was born and raised in Jaffray and am now raising my own family there. We spend lots of time adventuring in the mountains together.

## ABOUT ME

I'M A BUSY MOM OF THREE AND A RECENT GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA'S BACHELOR OF EDUCATION PROGRAM IN CRANBROOK. MY JOURNEY TOWARD TEACHING BEGAN IN 2021 WHEN MY YOUNGEST STARTED KINDERGARTEN—I REALIZED JUST HOW MUCH I MISSED BEING SURROUNDED BY CHILDREN. THAT SPARK LED ME TO PURSUE TEACHING AND I'M SO GRATEFUL IT BROUGHT ME HERE. I'M EXCITED TO SUPPORT OUR KOOTENAY STUDENTS AND TO CONNECT WITH FAMILIES AND STAFF TO HELP EVERY LEARNER THRIVE. THANK YOU FOR WELCOMING ME INTO YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY!

## MY MOTO

We are a team!

I look forward to meeting you and getting to know your child better.



Please feel free to contact me at [kim.yuill@sd5.bc.ca](mailto:kim.yuill@sd5.bc.ca).

## FUN FACTS:

- ♥ I'M 6 FEET TALL! IT'S GREAT WHEN I'M PLAYING BASKETBALL AND VOLLEYBALL, BUT NOT SO GREAT WHEN I'M SHOPPING FOR PANTS.
- ♥ I LOVE HORSES, SPORTS, FLOWERS, CAMPING AND FAMILY DIRT BIKE RIDES.
- ♥ MY FAVORITE MOVIE IS TOP GUN MAVERICK, AND THE BEST SNACK, IN THE WHOLE WORLD, IS BUTTERED POPCORN.

## HELLO, I'M

**Ruth Gilchrist.**  
I am a new Teacher at KDS in Cranbrook.



## ABOUT ME

- I was born in England and have lived in Canada since 2009.
- I am a mom to 6-year-old Fred and a wife to Mike.
- I have been a teacher for 3 years. Before teaching, I had a career in retail, working as a District Sales Manager at DSW and Senior Manager at Apple Canada.
- I love all things science and consider myself a lifelong learner. I have degrees in Biology, Education, and I am currently pursuing a Master of Education.

I'm so excited to officially join the KDS team for the rest of this school year. I'll be working at the Cranbrook campus, teaching various courses for Grade 7-12 students. Some of you may know me already as I worked in the K to 9 program last year and have been working as a TTOC at KDS this school year.

## THINGS I LOVE

- I love gardening and growing my own veggies.
- I am a keen traveller and love exploring new places and cultures.
- So far, I have visited 30 countries - my favourite trips were SCUBA diving in the Galapagos Islands and living and working in Indonesia as a Dive Instructor.
- I love many outdoor activities such as hiking, mountain biking, and fishing. I learned to ski in 2024 and I am hooked on this winter activity.

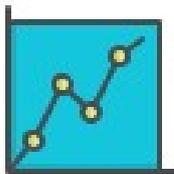
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# Fernie Elementary Updates



Parents of **Kindergarten to Grade 3** students: please ensure that you're uploading evidences of learning to your child's portfolio in Brightspace at least biweekly. With June fast approaching, please check your child's progress towards grade level curriculum by clicking on the 'Class Progress' icon.



Class Progress

Parents of **Grade 4-9** students: please take the time to review your child's progress in their courses to ensure that your child is on track to meet their learning goals this year. You can do this easily through the progress and pacing tool. **CLICK BELOW** for a video tutorial if you need a refresher on how to use this.



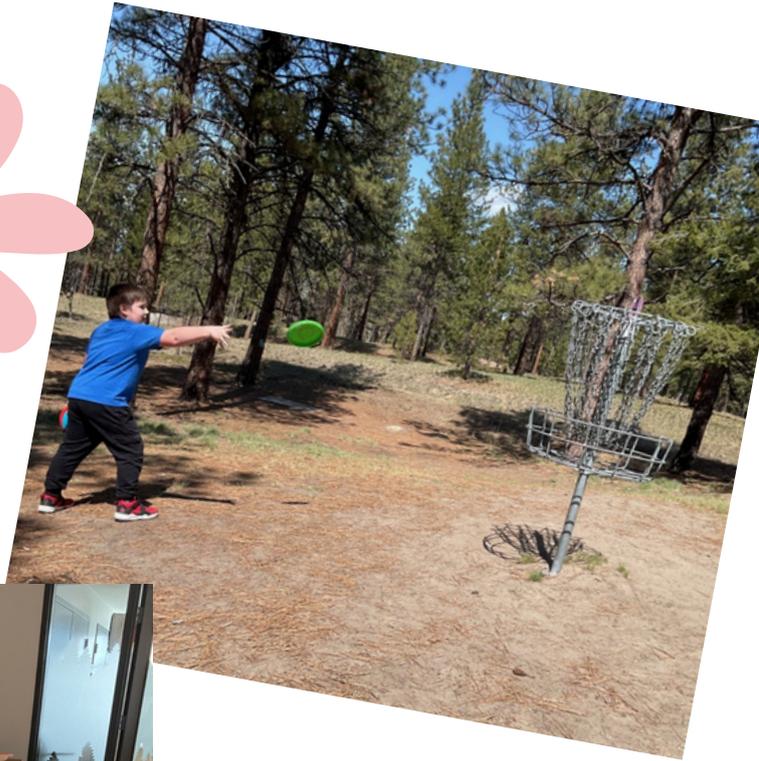
# Fernie Middle Updates

April 2025: our middle school blended learners have had some fun outdoor excursions this month, learning and practicing outdoor cooking skills and also spending a morning with the Elk River Alliance to again support their Cottonwood Restoration efforts along the riverbank. A huge thanks to the KDS PAC for their support in purchasing new camp stoves, pots, pans and more. The middle school students will be sharing the technique and safety skills as well as creative meal planning with their K-6 counterparts at our camping trip in June!



# Cranbrook Updates

April 2025: Our Cranbrook K-9 blended program has been busy trying new sporting and cooking experiences. These include rock climbing at the ARQ Climbing Centre, disk golfing at Idlewild Park, swimming and cooking quesadillas at the East Kootenay Foundry's kitchen. We have a focus on encouraging students to experience new and familiar activities to promote socialization and health.



# Secondary Program Updates

## Important Dates for High School Students!

If you are graduating this year, a reminder that you must have your KDS coursework complete and all assignments submitted/tests written by June 6th in order for your work to appear on your June transcripts. This will allow teachers enough time to mark your work and input grades and comments for your final report card.

**REMINDER**

## SET UP YOUR PACING WIDGETS

Grade 12 students needing their online courses to appear on their transcripts this June, 2025 must submit all required coursework by **JUNE 6, 2025\*** to ensure assessments can be completed in time.

[Click here](#) to review how to set your pacing and progress widgets!

Save the date  
**JUNE 6, 2025**

\*Please note: This only applies to students hoping to graduate this spring. If you are not trying to meet graduation requirements by June, you can continue to work on your courses through the summer!

# Secondary Program Updates

Students, have you been emailing your teachers and support staff with questions or for support? We are here to help you! Many high school courses, assignments, and projects can be completed in various ways, and checking in regularly with your teacher can help ensure you are on track! Check out your course homepages in Brightspace, each teacher has their contact information posted, as well as links to book meetings or exam supervision.

Please connect with your teachers if you have questions or concerns.



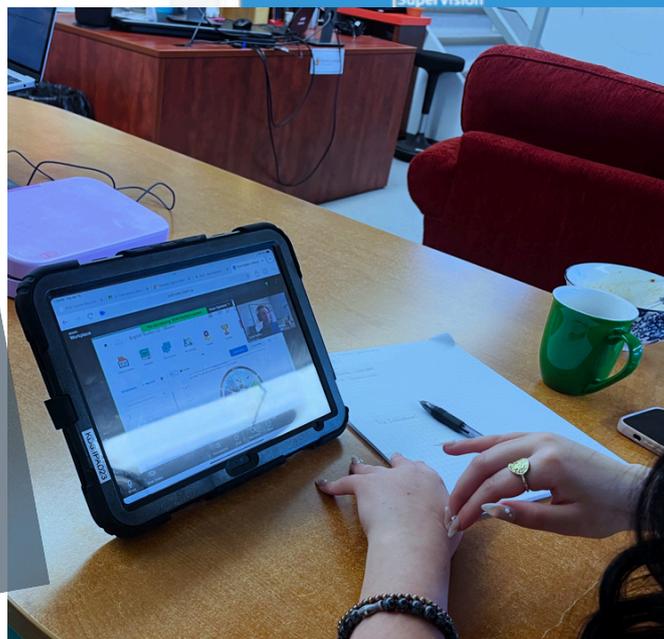
A screenshot of a Brightspace course page. At the top is a banner image of a mountain range with the text 'PHED 10 Physical &amp; Health Education - SBAiley'. Below the banner are two main sections. The left section, titled 'My Pacing', shows a donut chart with 10% completed (green) and 90% off-face (orange). The right section, titled 'Contact your Teacher!', features a blue background with a cartoon character on a laptop. It lists the teacher as Scott Bailey, email as scott.bailey@sd5.bc.ca, and includes a 'Book a Meeting with Me!' button and a link for 'Book online or in-person Exam Supervision'. A pink arrow points from the text 'We want to hear from you!' towards the 'Book a Meeting with Me!' button.



We want to hear from you!

## UPCOMING DATES:

May 16 - No School  
May 19 - STAT No School  
May 20 - PAC Meeting  
May 30 - No School  
June 6 - Deadline to hand in course work for spring transcript



# Secondary Program Updates

“

Is KDS open during the summer?

”

Can I write a test in the summer?

Can I work on my course over the summer?

Is there teacher support during the summer?



# YES!!!

Stay tuned for a summer schedule coming soon!

# Counsellors Updates



Do you enjoy being outdoors? Are you aged 15-18? Interested in training to be a camp counselor?

The Ghost Rider Camp is looking for volunteer Counselors in Training to join its staff for one week of fun, teambuilding and outdoor adventures.

Work alongside trained counselors: receive specific training, accredited for 80 volunteer hours for school/awards whilst having lots of fun.

Gain valuable experience for possible employment next year also looks great on your resume & college applications.

The camp runs for one week at Rock Lake Camp, Elko. Mon 14th – Sun 20th July 2025

If interested, please send a resume & a letter of application to:

[ghostridercamp@gmail.com](mailto:ghostridercamp@gmail.com)

Closing Date: June 1st

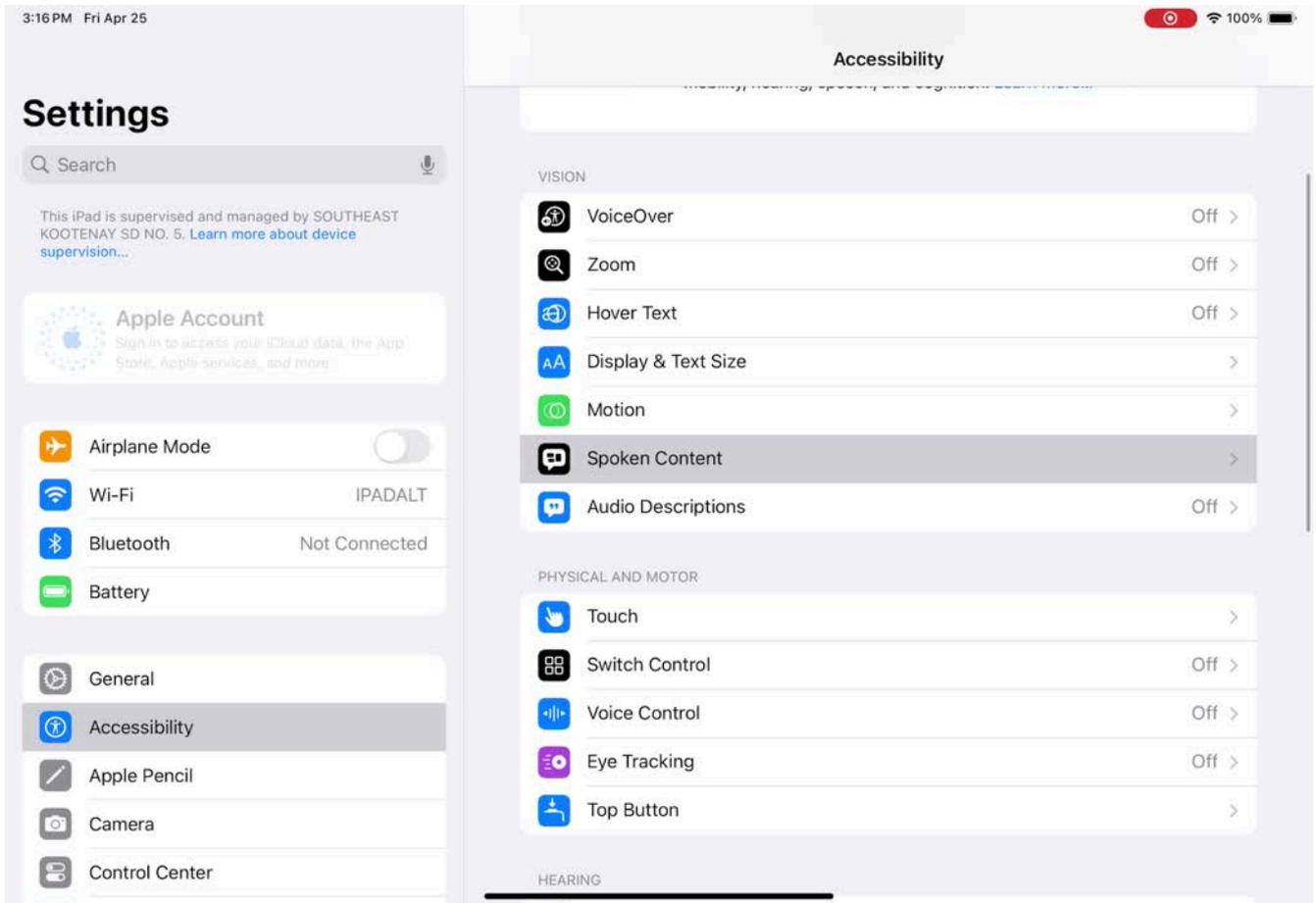


*Did you know - you can receive credit for this type of work in Active Living 11 and 12?*

In our Active Living 11 and 12 courses, KDS students have the opportunity to use certification courses/training and work/volunteer experiences in sport, recreation, and community programs to earn course credit. If you have questions, please connect with Mr. Bailey at [scott.bailey@sd5.bc.ca](mailto:scott.bailey@sd5.bc.ca) to see if this can work for you!

# Learning Services Updates

Did you know that your iPad/iphones have built in readers for accessing text-to-speech functionality in Brightspace? Click the video below to see how. Thanks to Ruth Gilchrist for putting this together for us!



Big thanks to PAWS who have been visiting our Cranbrook campus regularly to support learners with conversations and co-regulation.



KDS end-of-year

*Celebration*

# BBQ PICNIC



19 June  
2025

Surveyor's  
Lake

Parking Lot side  
(by the playground)

Lunch provided  
by KDS PAC  
11:30am-12:45pm

All staff will be attending this celebration of learning and both campuses will be closed. We will recognize full-time Grade 6, 9 & 12 students who are “moving on up” at the end of the lunch and extended family are invited to join. For students, buses will leave Fernie and Cranbrook KDS at 9am and return to the schools at 3pm. Students who are planning to attend are required to RSUP below.

**RSUP: COMPLETE THIS FORM**