

NEWSLETTER

Kootenay Discovery School

Feb. 2025

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Spring Break
Count down



Letter from the Vice-Principal



Welcome!!!! to my first school newsletter contribution as a brand new administrator. I am so happy to be here and it has been such a joy getting an opportunity to visit so many members of our community these past few weeks. From the Cranbrook Design Lab to the MBSS counselling offices and support blocks, to the SD5 Board Office, Fernie portable and my first blended PAC meeting; thank you to everyone for extending such a warm welcome. As those closest to me can attest, I can be both ruthlessly action-oriented, and a painful deliberator. Deciding what to write in my first newsletter took more time than I'd like to admit. However, as I reflected on what I've learned from inspiring educational leaders over the last few decades of my time in schools, it became clear to me that the place to start was with the learners. KDS students, in all their varied forms, are at the heart of all hopes, dreams, and aspirations for our online/blended program. So with this month's letter, I wanted to start by highlighting who we are as a small but far-reaching educational program within School District 5.

Kootenay Discovery School is a public online learning school providing full-time and part-time courses to students from kindergarten to adult. As of February 2025, we have 731 enrolled learners from within district, 648 of whom are taking courses with us at the Grade 10-12 level. We also have 83 full-time (and 35 cross-enrolled) students in Grades K-9 taking courses through Cranbrook and Fernie, approximately half participating in blended learning experiences at one of our campuses. The majority of our teachers work part-time only. All of this is relevant because none of it is immediately visible when someone visits one of our locations.

WHO IS TAKING CLASSES AT KDS?

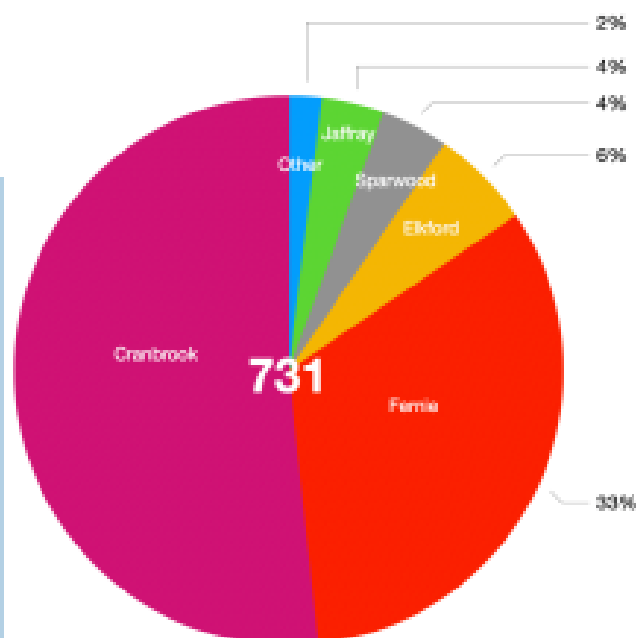
The attached chart provides a quick glimpse at our total number of distinct enrolled students. We are currently serving 731 individual learners from within School District 5. While this chart does not account for whether the learners are full-time with us, or only taking one course, it does represent the far-reaching impact of our programs across all communities within this district.



“The vast majority of KDS staff-student interactions and learning experiences are hidden from public view.”

This can make it really challenging to advocate for, understand, and celebrate the incredible work our school staff is doing to support flexible, equitable, and growth oriented educational opportunities. My goal over the next few months is to make some of the less visible aspects of our work as an online school more visible. And this month, I'm starting with the who. I look forward to taking you all along with me. Happy almost spring!

Deirdre



UPCOMING DATES:

March 7 - No School

March 15-30 - Spring Break



PROVINCIAL ASSESSMENTS

April 7 - Cranbrook

April 8 - Fernie

Please note that KDS will
NOT be hosting
Provincial Assessments
in June.

2025-26 Registration

If you would like your child to continue their enrollment with KDS for the 25-26 school year, or if you or someone you know, would like to have their child(ren) enrolled with us, please note that registration starts Feb. 3/25.

Important Dates:

- SD5 Student Registration: February 3, 2025
- KDS Commitment to Return K-9: March 14, 2025



You can find the necessary forms on our
website at:

www.sd5.bc.ca/kootenaydiscoveryschool

There is a parents section and you can
select returning student and follow the
directions laid out there.

Did you know that PHED10 is one of KDS's biggest courses?

KDS sees a lot of grade 9, 10, 11 and 12 students complete their Physical and Health Education course, a graduation requirement, online with us each year. As the teacher, I can tell you that I get asked a lot... "how do you do PE online!?" (ok, the actual words are usually "online gym" but I'm quick to gently correct that to physical and health education!) Right now, we have 60 students working through the course, and another 30 have already completed it since the fall. I hope that any of those students would tell you that the course has offered them a lot of opportunities to be active and reflect on their skills in a flexible and safe setting.

So how does it all work? Just like all of our other online high school courses, the content is delivered through Brightspace. Students start the course by putting together a self-paced schedule of due dates using our MyPacing Tool. As they prepare that, they are also encouraged to choose at least one project that they will complete through a one-on-one meeting with me (on campus or on zoom). The goal of requiring a presentation is to make sure that online PHED 10 isn't all about creating powerpoints, but experiencing and engaging in different physical activities, skill development and healthy decision making, and then communicating that learning, sharing what each student will take with them from the course.



Task #1 - build yourself a schedule!



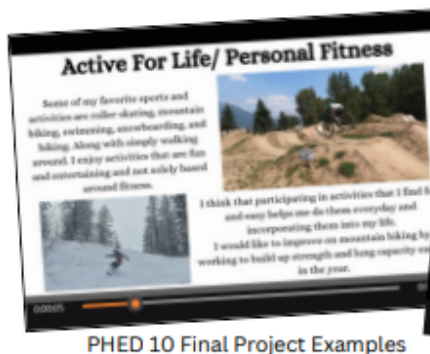
Healthy Eating Assignment



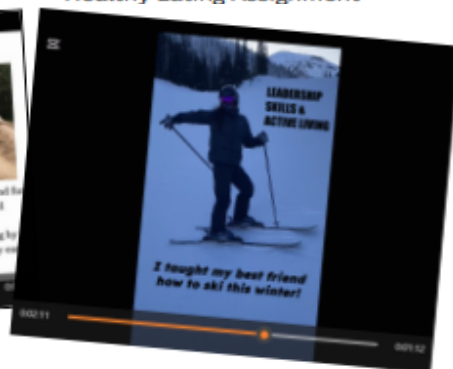
Learning by Doing!

Some new activities that have been added to the course over the last year are designed to be more experiential, for example:

- Trying out one healthy eating strategy from the new Canada Food Guide (e.g. avoiding highly processed ingredients) and sharing what was learned
 - I have seen some really awesome recipes and videos of healthy cooking!
- Creating an Emergency Preparedness Plan using the Government of Canada's online tool at [GetPrepared.ca](https://getprepared.ca)
 - Maybe this has led to a conversation about a plan for your pets in case you ever have to evacuate?
- Connecting with a parent, caregiver or trusted adult to talk through philosophies about drugs and alcohol
 - Ask your students about the resources they accessed and researched as part of this project, like [HealthLinkBC!](https://healthlinkbc.ca)



PHED 10 Final Project Examples



Of course the P (physical) in PE is the core of PHED 10...

Students track 80-hours of activities over their time in the course, and are encouraged to take photos or videos out in action to help them prepare for the final project

Through either a photovoice (short video) or a meeting with me, students share about what they've learned that will help them to be "active for life." I've really been moved by some students' truly profound reflections. Students have learned that they are motivated by being on a team, getting active with one or two good friends, or being out on their own. Some have discovered a passion for teaching and helping others, or that competition or tracking their progress can be really motivating. A few students even discovered a love for curling by coming out to participate in our KDS bonspiels the last two Decembers (also earning double activity time credits!)

The flexibility that online PHED 10 offers (which continues in Active Living 11 and 12 also) allows students to connect with the activities and active lifestyles that are most likely to suit them into adulthood. Keep watching for more course updates focused on increasing the experiential learning opportunities even more!

If you've recently finished PHED 10 with KDS and have some feedback, or if you have any questions about getting started, don't hesitate to reach out!

Scott Bailey
KDS PHE & Humanities Teacher
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FOSTER PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Our
community
NEEDS
caregivers!



Have you considered becoming a Foster Parent?

- Can you provide a loving, supportive, and nurturing environment?
- Do you have patience and are you able to mentor a young person?
- Can you open your home and your heart to a child or teen in need?
- Can you work with the child's family and social worker?

If you answered 'yes' we want to hear from you!

Our program will help connect you to a resource social worker in your area to get your application started. While the requirements vary in each community, there is a need for Foster Parents wanting to work with: children and youth with support needs, babies, youth and sibling groups. Scan the QR code or contact:

James Weir - Network Facilitator - (250) 426-6013
jweir@interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca

YOU
CAN
BE A
FOSTER
PARENT!



Don't rule yourself out because of myths! MYTHS vs REALITY ABOUT FOSTERING A CHILD / YOUTH

MYTH: You have to own your home.

REALITY: Whether you rent or own your home makes no difference to your ability to give a child a safe, secure and nurturing home environment.

MYTH: Only people who are married and have parenting experience can foster.

REALITY: Parenting experience is not a requirement. What matters is that you are willing to attend and learn from foster caregiver training. Single and partnered people are all welcome to apply to become Foster Parents.

MYTH: You have to give up your job if you want to foster.

REALITY: There are many Foster Parents who manage to balance fostering alongside work. It depends on the flexibility of your job and the needs of the children you are caring for.