



The Board of Education of  
School District No.5 (Southeast Kootenay)  
**AGENDA - REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING**

January 13, 2026, 3:00 p.m.  
Cranbrook Board Office

**Pages**

**1. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING**

**1.1 Call to Order**

**1.2 Greeting**

Acknowledgement that we are gathered on the Homelands of the Ktunaxa People.

**1.3 Chairperson's Opening Remarks and Recognitions**

**1.4 Opening Round**

Members of the Board, District Management, District Staff and local Union Presidents share a reflection of gratitude.

**1.5 Consideration and Approval of Agenda**

**1.6 Approval of the Minutes**

4

Approval of the minutes from December 9, 2025

**1.7 Receipt of Records of Closed Meetings**

13

**1.8 Business Arising from Previous Minutes**

**1.8.1 Amy Woodland Elementary Update**

**2. RECEIVING OF DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS**

**3. COMMITTEE REPORTS/TRUSTEE REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS**

**3.1 All Committees Public Meeting**

No meeting in December

**3.2 BCSTA /Provincial Council**

3.3	Communications Media Committee	14
3.4	Mount Baker Secondary School Replacement Committee	
3.5	Key City Theatre	15
3.6	Legacy of Learning	16
3.7	French Immersion Update	
3.8	Traffic Safety Committee	
3.9	Trustee Reports	19
4.	<b>SECRETARY TREASURER'S REPORT TO THE BOARD</b>	
	Reporting on (finances/budget, capital projects, facilities, operations/maintenance/transportation)	
4.1	Updates	
	4.1.1 Fernie Elementary School Update	
	4.1.2 Steeples Elementary Child Care	
	4.1.3 Jaffray Elementary Junior Secondary Child Care	
4.2	Recommendations	
5.	<b>SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD</b>	21
5.1	Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL)	
5.2	Updates	
	5.2.1 Child Care	
	5.2.2 Indigenous Education Council	
5.3	Recommendations	
6.	<b>CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT</b>	33
6.1	Updates	
6.2	Recommendations	

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE**

**8.1 January 16 Yellow Friday**

**8.2 January 24 KBB Motion Building Session**

**8.3 January 26 Committee Meetings**

- Irene Bischler
- Sarah Madsen

**8.4 January 27 Semester Change**

**8.5 February 10 Board Meetings**

**8.6 February 19 Board Working Session Budget 2026/27**

**9. QUESTION PERIOD**

**10. CLOSING ROUND**

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

What have we done at this meeting to help our students become more interested in school and to support them in their personal learning journey?



**The Board of Education of  
School District No.5 (Southeast Kootenay)  
MINUTES - REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING**

**December 9, 2025, 3:00 p.m.  
Cranbrook Board Office**

**Present:** Chairperson Doug McPhee  
Trustee Trina Ayling (remotely)  
Trustee Bev Bellina (remotely)  
Trustee Irene Bischler  
Trustee Alysha Clarke  
Trustee Nicole Heckendorf  
Trustee Chris Johns  
Trustee Wendy Turner

**Regrets:** Trustee Sarah Madsen

**Staff Present:** Superintendent Viveka Johnson  
Secretary Treasurer Nick Taylor  
Director of Instruction Human Resources Brent Reimer  
Director of Instruction Curriculum and Assessment Michael Kelly  
Director of Operations Joe Tank  
District Principal Early Learning and Child Care Laura-Lee Phillips  
District Principal of Learning Services Kaley Wasylowich  
District Vice Principal Human Resources and Health & Safety Erin Boehm  
Manager of Board Office & Executive Services (recorder) Jane Nixon

**1. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING**

**1.1 Call to Order**

Chair McPhee called the December 9, 2025, regular public meeting of the Board of Education to order at 3:00 p.m.

**1.2 Greeting**

Chair McPhee acknowledged that we have gathered here in the Homelands of the Ktunaxa People.

**1.3 Chairperson's Opening Remarks and Recognitions**

Chairperson McPhee extended condolences to the family of John Walmsley. Chairperson McPhee acknowledged the Elementary Christmas Choir and the holiday celebrations in the District.

#### **1.4 Opening Round**

Members of the Board, District Management, District Staff and local Union Presidents shared a reflection of gratitude.

#### **1.5 Consideration and Approval of Agenda**

##### **MOTION R-25-170**

Moved/Seconded by Bischler/Clarke:

THAT the agenda for the regular public meeting of the Board of Education of December 9, 2025 be approved as circulated.

**CARRIED**

#### **1.6 Election of Chairperson and Representatives**

##### **1.6.1 Election of Chairperson**

As per Policy 7 – Board Operations (*Section 2 – Inaugural Meetings and Subsequent Annual Meetings*).

Secretary Treasurer Taylor made the call for nominations for the position of Board Chairperson:

Trustee McPhee accepted the nomination as designated by Trustee Johns.

Secretary Treasurer Taylor made a second and final call for nominations then declared that the nominations cease.

Trustee McPhee was elected as Chairperson of the Board of Education.

Chairperson McPhee assumed the chair of the meeting.

There was no election of Vice Chairperson. The Trustees will act as Vice Chairperson on a rotational basis.

##### **1.6.2 Election of BCPSEA Representative and Alternate**

The election of BCPSEA Representative and Alternate will not be held. Chairperson McPhee reminded trustees that at the February in-camera meeting of the Board of Education, the following motion was passed:

##### **Motion I-24-026**

THAT the BCPSEA representative remain in the position for the remainder of the BCTF bargaining period.

**1.6.3 Election of BCSTA Representative and Alternate**

Trustee Bellina was elected as BCSTA Representative and Trustee Clarke was elected as BCSTA Alternate Representative.

**1.6.4 Election of Bargaining Representative – BCTF**

Not required

**1.6.5 Election of Bargaining Representative – CUPE**

Not required

**1.7 Approval of the Minutes**

Minutes of the Public meeting of the Board of Education of November 10, 2025.

**MOTION R-25-171**

Moved/Seconded by Johns/Bellina:

THAT the minutes of the regular public meeting of the Board of Education of November 10, 2025, be approved as circulated.

**CARRIED**

**1.8 Receipt of Records of Closed Meetings**

**MOTION R-25-172**

Moved/Seconded by Heckendorf/Clarke:

THAT the Board accept the closed records of the in-camera meeting of the Board of Education of November 10 and November 24, 2025.

**CARRIED**

**1.9 Business Arising from Previous Minutes**

**1.9.1 Amy Woodland Elementary Update**

Secretary Treasurer Taylor provided an update. Work is ongoing with Berry Architecture. The business case is expected to be submitted to the Ministry by the end of the calendar year.

**2. RECEIVING OF DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS**

Nil

**3. COMMITTEE REPORTS/TRUSTEE REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS**

**3.1 All Committees Public Meeting**

Co-Chair Trustee Turner reviewed the All Committees minutes of November 24, 2025.

**MOTION R-25-173**

Moved/Seconded by Turner/Johns:

THAT the revisions to Policy 22 Provision of Child Care be accepted and approved for posting.

**CARRIED**

**MOTION R-25-174**

Moved/Seconded by Turner/Heckendorf:

THAT a letter of support be written to School District No. 8 to support the Request to Review the Inclusive Education Funding Model.

**CARRIED**

**MOTION R-25-175**

Moved/Seconded by Turner/Johns:

THAT the report of the All Committees be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

**3.2 BCSTA /Provincial Council**

Trustee Bellina requested that trustees who attended the BCSTA Trustee Academy share their professional development experience.

**MOTION R-25-176**

Moved/Seconded by Bellina/Bischler:

THAT the report of the BCSTA Provincial Council be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

**3.3 Communications Media Committee**

Trustee Ayling provided a report.

**MOTION R-25-177**

Moved/Seconded by Ayling/Turner:

THAT the report of the Communications Media Committee be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

**3.4 Mount Baker Secondary School Replacement Committee**

Trustee Johns provided an update.

**MOTION R-25-178**

Moved/Seconded by Johns/Bischler:

THAT the report of the Mount Baker Secondary School Replacement Committee be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

**3.5 Key City Theatre**

**MOTION R-25-179**

Moved/Seconded by Ayling/Clarke:

THAT the report of the Key City Theatre Committee be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

**3.6 Legacy of Learning**

Trustee Johns reviewed the report included in the agenda package.

**MOTION R-25-180**

Moved/Seconded by Johns/Ayling:

THAT the Board accept the Legacy of Learning report.

**CARRIED**

**3.7 French Immersion Update**

Next reporting is in February 2026.

**MOTION R-25-181**

Moved/Seconded by Heckendorf/Bellina:

THAT the report of the French Immersion Committee be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

### **3.8 Traffic Safety Committee**

Trustee Johns reported on the Vision Zero grant application that has been submitted.

#### **MOTION R-25-182**

Moved/Seconded by Johns/Turner:

THAT the report of the Traffic Safety Committee be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

### **3.9 Trustee Reports**

Trustees reported on their activities for the month.

## **4. SECRETARY TREASURER'S REPORT TO THE BOARD**

### **4.1 Updates**

#### **4.1.1 Fernie Elementary School Update**

WSP has submitted the environmental application. Once it is approved, the building permit application can proceed. The project remains on track to break ground in spring 2026.

#### **4.1.2 Steeples Elementary Child Care**

Secretary Treasurer Taylor reviewed the progress update included in the agenda package.

#### **4.1.3 Jaffray Elementary Junior Secondary Child Care**

Secretary Treasurer Taylor reviewed the progress update included in the agenda package.

#### **4.1.4 2026/27 Preliminary Budget Development Timelines**

Secretary Treasurer Taylor reviewed the draft budget timeline included in the agenda package. The Indigenous Education Council will provide input on the preparation of the annual budget.

He also stressed the importance of receiving stakeholder, rightsholders, and union input on the 2026/27 annual budget.

### **4.2 Recommendations**

#### **MOTION R-25-183**

Moved/Seconded by Heckendorf/Johns:

THAT the Secretary Treasurer's report be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

**5. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD**

The Framework for Enhancing Student Learning report can be found on the School District's website at [www.sd5.bc.ca](http://www.sd5.bc.ca).

**5.1 Indigenous Education Council (IEC)**

Superintendent Johnson reported on the hiring of a full-time temporary Indigenous Education Support Worker at École Isabella Dicken Elementary.

**5.2 Updates**

**5.2.1 Child Care**

District Principal Phillips reviewed the report included in the agenda package.

**5.3 Framework for Enhancing Student Learning**

Director Kelly provided an update on recent professional development sessions related to Artificial Intelligence.

Superintendent Johnson discussed the Principals and Vice Principals' meeting held on December 4, 2025. The keynote speaker was Dr. Sean Lassard, and the main topics were Amplifying Voices and Transforming Systems. Superintendent Johnson noted that the meeting reflected a powerful collaboration among rightsholders, staff, and students.

**5.4 Recommendations**

**MOTION R-25-184**

Moved/Seconded by Heckendorf/Johns:

THAT the Superintendent's Report be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

**6. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

**6.1 Updates**

District Principal Wasylowich provided an update on the educational assistant time increase at Steeples Elementary and Highlands Elementary and also shared an update on accessibility efforts across the District.

Trustee Turner acknowledged the work of Chairperson McPhee. Chairperson McPhee provided a brief update on the Trustee Academy held in November 2025. Chairperson McPhee acknowledged the school tours prior to the board meeting on December 9, 2025.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

### **MOTION R-25-185**

Moved/Seconded by Bischler/Clarke:

THAT the Chairperson's report be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

## **7. NEW BUSINESS**

Nil

## **8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE**

**8.1 Winter Concerts**

**8.2 December 11 Board Office Festive Pot Luck**

**8.3 December 12 Schools Not In Session**

**8.4 December 22-January 4 Winter Break**

**8.5 January 26 Committee**

**8.6 Letter from Minister Lisa Beare**

## **9. QUESTION PERIOD**

Nil

## **10. CLOSING ROUND**

Trustees, District Management and local Union Presidents were offered an opportunity to share a final comment on the meeting.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

### **MOTION R-25-186**

Moved/Seconded by Bischler/Johns:

THAT the December 9, 2025, regular public meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 4:05 p.m.

*What have we done at this meeting to help our students become more interested in school and to support them in their personal learning journey?*

---

Doug McPhee, Chairperson

---

Nick Taylor, Secretary Treasurer

DRAFT



## 1.7. RECEIPT OF RECORDS OF CLOSED MEETINGS

### **In-camera Meetings:**

#### **December 9, 2025**

- Secretary Treasurer's Report
  - Personnel
  - Land
  - Legal
  - Matters if in the opinion of the Board the public interest requires consideration in camera

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Taylor'.

Nick Taylor  
Secretary Treasurer

## **Summary for January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Board Meeting**

### **Trustee Media Report**

Letters sent to:

Comox Valley School District (SD71) re: Gender Based Violence; letter of support and invitation to collaborate on BCSTA AGM motions.

Kootenay Lake School District (SD8) re: Inclusive Education Funding Model; letter of support.

## **Summary for January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Board Meeting**

### **Key City Theatre Society (KCTS) Report**

Was flying home from Kelowna at the time of the meeting. Will provide a report at February's meeting.



# Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History

## Legacy of Learning Report – January 6, 2026

	Vol.	SD#5	BCRTA/CRTA
-Aboriginal Education Youth Leadership research –			
Staff – 3 hours @ \$25			\$ 75.00
Volunteer – 4 hours @ \$17.85			\$ 71.40
-Cranbrook Retired Teachers meeting/report prep & follow-up			
Staff – 3 hours @ \$25			\$ 75.00
Volunteer – 9 hours @ \$17.85			\$160.65
-prep work on Cranbrook Tri-School Bugle Band display –			
volunteer - 7 hours @ \$17.85			\$124.95
-app development work			
Staff – 5 hours @ \$25			\$125.00
-NTT (Name That Teacher) teacher volunteer work			
Volunteer – 12 hours @ \$17.85			\$214.20
-NTT work on uploading identified SD#5 photos			
Staff – 15 hours @ \$25			\$375.00
Volunteer – 20 hours @ \$17.85			\$357.00
-prepared new SD#5 material for NTT re-start 01-14-2026			
Volunteer – 22 hours @\$17.85			\$392.70
		Sub-totals	\$1320.90      \$450.00
			\$200.00
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1970.90</b>



## Looking Back – No Bull

Cranbrook Herald, April 11, 1924

Music in the Schools – Mr. G.E. Bower Appointed Musical Instructor; Concerts Will Help Defray Costs.

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Friday evening last all the trustees being in attendance. Following the adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting several agenda related matters were managed.

Trustee Henderson reported that Principal Porter had passed as very satisfactory the work of Mr. Norgrove in renovating one of the blackboards at the high school. The other blackboards will be done later.

Mr. Agland, janitor of the South Ward school, will be given a bonus of \$25 to work done during the winter months.

Mr. A.B. Smith addressed the board and read a resolution passed by the Farmers' Institute in which they were asking the minister of lands to have the entire school district declared a closed area for bulls. Mr. Smith asked that the school board endorse their resolution. After discussion, a resolution by trustees Henderson and Miles was passed in favour.

Mr. G.E. Bowers addressed the board with reference to instruction in music at the schools, dealing at some length with the work that is being done, and suggested that he be placed on the regular school payroll and that future concerts similar to the one held in February be conducted under the auspices of the school board, the proceeds to go to the board towards the defraying of the expense of his salary.

The following motion by trustees Miles and Jackson was passed unanimously by the board. "That Mr. Bower be engaged as musical instructor in all the schools under the authority of the school board at a salary of \$400 per year, payable \$40.00 monthly, for ten months the same as teachers. Salary to be effective from April 1<sup>st</sup> and with the understanding that he



Columbia Basin Institute  
*of* Regional History

put on once concert during the winter months as formerly and that the proceeds go to the school board.”

A letter was read from E.N. Myer & Co., saying that they would reimburse the school board for the damage done two of the school blackboards through faulty crating.

The consideration of correspondence from Nelson and Fernie re teachers’ salaries was held over for another month.

## Summary for January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Board Meeting

### TRUSTEE REPORT

Dec 9	S	SD5 Board meetings
Jan 7		TMRES PAC meeting
Jan 7		CDTA Executive meeting (?)
Jan 11		Sell 50/50 tickets for KCT Oliver matinee

# Trustee Report – Bev Bellina

November 10<sup>th</sup> - Remembrance Day Service for FJMES and SSS

- Board of Education Meeting
- FJMES PAC Meeting

November 11<sup>th</sup> - Remembrance Day laying of the SD5 wreath

November 17<sup>th</sup> - Ktunaxa Level 2 Language Course

November 19<sup>th</sup> - SSS PAC Meeting

November 29<sup>th</sup> - Annual District of Sparwood Tree Lighting - FJMES choir

November 24<sup>th</sup> - Ktunaxa Level 2 Language Course

December 8<sup>th</sup> - FJMES PAC Meeting

- Ktunaxa Level 2 Language Course

December 9<sup>th</sup> - Capstone Project Judging - SSS

- Board of Education Meeting

December 15<sup>th</sup> - Ktunaxa Level 2 Language Course

December 17<sup>th</sup> - SSS PAC Meeting

January 5<sup>th</sup> - Contacting schools following winter break





# CONTENTS

# NO. 19

## PAGE 3

Learning Together

---

## PAGES 4-5

Early Learning and Child Care  
Indigenous Education

---

## PAGES 6-7

News from District Teachers  
District Design Labs

---

## PAGES 8-10

Outdoor and Environmental Education  
'Tis the Season Around the District

---

## PAGE 11

A picture says a thousand words...

---

## PAGE 12

Happy Holidays

---

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



Southeast Kootenay School District is alive with celebration as we move into the festive season. Across our communities, students and staff are preparing concerts, winter festivals and special events that highlight the remarkable talent and creativity found in every school. December brings a special kind of energy to education, and this year our classrooms and performance spaces have been filled with anticipation, music and joy. 

One of the most treasured traditions in our region is the annual mass choir performance, known today as the Cranbrook Children's Christmas Choir. This longstanding community event takes place on the first Wednesday of December each year, and its roots reach back to the 1960's.

The format familiar to us today has been in place since 1971. The origins of the choir reflect a meaningful story of cultural exchange. When Roy Barnett, principal of Amy Woodland School, arrived from England, he brought with him the idea of a school-based mass choir, a tradition common in English schools. Working alongside dedicated educators, including the father, Brian Lutz, of current second-generation music teacher Kim Lutz, Barnett helped bring the vision to life. What began as a shared idea has grown into a multi-generational tradition that continues to unite our community. Today, more than 300 students from nine schools join together, supported by music teachers who collaborate to select songs, coordinate conducting roles and manage the many logistics involved in preparing young performers for such an important evening. For students, the performance is always a night to remember, and for families and staff, it remains a joyful reminder of the power of community. 

Throughout the fall and early winter, Trustees have been engaging directly with schools across the District. Their visits provide valuable opportunities to connect with staff and students, observe classroom learning and gain insight into the initiatives and experiences that shape daily life in our schools. These connections continue to strengthen relationships and deepen our collective understanding of the work happening across the District.

This season, we are also reflecting on a key element of our 2024 to 2028 Strategic Plan, which calls  us to amplify student voices and transform systems so that every learner is supported, included and empowered. This focus was at the heart of our professional learning day on December 4, when principals, vice principals, itinerant teachers, district leaders and community partners gathered for a full day of learning inspired by the work of Dr. Sean Lessard. Together, participants explored how systems shift when we listen deeply, build relationships and honour the diverse experiences of students and families. This work is guiding the District as we move forward thoughtfully and intentionally.

With report cards now distributed and Foundational Skills Assessments complete, we enter a period of reflection on student learning. In assessing how we are doing as a district, we look to triangulated data that combines provincial, district and school-based evidence. These measures help identify trends and shape future goals. Yet data alone never tells the full story. Every student has a unique background, a personal set of experiences and individual strengths that numbers cannot fully capture. Understanding these stories is essential to providing meaningful support. Evidence informed practice combined with relationship centred understanding remains at the heart of our work in the Southeast Kootenay District.

As we celebrate the holiday season, we remain mindful that this time of year can be challenging for  many students and families. If support is needed, please reach out to your school. Staff and community partners are ready to help ensure that every child and family feels cared for and connected.

As we close the year, we extend our thanks to students, families, staff and community members for the care, dedication and spirit they bring to the District. May your holidays be filled with warmth, connection and rest. We look forward to continuing to learn together in the new year.

  
Superintendent



# Early Learning and Child Care

District Principal of Early Learning and Child Care and District Literacy, Laura-Lee Phillips



NEWS



## New Shared Early Learning Space Opening in January

We are excited to share an update about a wonderful new development at Steeples Elementary. Beginning in January, our brand-new shared early learning space will officially open, offering several valuable programs for children and families in our community.

This new area has been designed as a welcoming, flexible environment that will support a variety of programs throughout the day. It will be home to:



### StrongStart Early Learning Program

StrongStart will run Monday through Thursday, offering free, play-based early learning for children aged birth to five and their parents/caregivers. Families can look forward to engaging activities, circle time, hands-on learning, and wonderful opportunities to connect with others. Mondays through Thursdays from 9:00 am - 11:30 am and 12:15 pm - 2:45 pm.

Please visit the office prior to or the morning of with your child's birth certificate and proof of residency to register for StrongStart. If you have registered online, please email [cbal.ngreen@sd5.bc.ca](mailto:cbal.ngreen@sd5.bc.ca) with your registration, birth certificate, and proof of residency.

### Steeles Clubhouse After-School Care

The Cranbrook Boys and Girls Club will provide after-school care from the new space each afternoon. This partnership will support many families by offering convenient, on-site child care at the end of the school day. Beginning in September, we also hope to expand this service to include before-school care to further support our families' needs.

[BGC Cranbrook Website](#) and [steeples@bgccranbrook.ca](mailto:steeples@bgccranbrook.ca)

Contact information: Christine Harvey [christine@bgccranbrook.ca](mailto:christine@bgccranbrook.ca)

### Steeles Elementary Classroom Use

During the school day on Fridays, Steeples teachers and students will also use the space. This flexible learning area will give classes additional opportunities for small-group work, exploration, and hands-on learning experiences.

Throughout December, our teams have been busy setting up materials, completing licensing requirements, and ensuring everything is ready for a smooth start after winter break. The shared space is coming together beautifully, and we can't wait to welcome children and families in the new year.

We want to extend our appreciation to our families and community partners for their support as we bring this exciting project to life. This shared space will offer wonderful opportunities for learning, care, and connection.

## StrongStart - Cranbrook



- A free, parent-accompanied play and learning program for children ages 0-5.
- Snacks provided.
- Play-based and learning activities facilitated by a qualified early childhood educator.

Monday-Thursday  
9:00-11:30 and 12:15-2:45  
\*Follows school calendar\*

Steeles Elementary  
School  
250-426-0430  
[cbal.ngreen@sd5.bc.ca](mailto:cbal.ngreen@sd5.bc.ca)



StrongStartBC

Play  
Connect  
Learn

We gratefully acknowledge the financial contribution of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Education and Child Care.



# Indigenous Education

## Ktunaxa Pine Needle Baskets

The Contemporary Indigenous Studies class at Sparwood Secondary had the opportunity to study and learn the traditional Ktunaxa art of making pine needle baskets. Thank you to Faye and Dianne for teaching us about this tradition! The class also created mitten-shaped Christmas tree decorations inspired by traditional Indigenous art, incorporating meaningful patterns and symbols. Students learned about the cultural significance of these artistic traditions and the stories they carry, fostering respect, understanding, and connection.



## Waçkna

Kase J went hunting, harvested a deer and generously brought in some of the meat. With their contribution, the Laurie Middle Alternative Learning Class helped prepare, cut, and smoke the meat in the school smoker.

Everyone got to enjoy some delicious waçkna (beef jerky).

## Ktunaxa Language Class

Ktunaxa Language Class is held every Friday at Laurie Middle School when school is in session. In December, Ms. Juanita taught students how to write and say "Merry Christmas" in Ktunaxa. Students created Christmas Cards for their families and learned several Ktunaxa words connected with the holiday season.

## KusmukusaꞤ ꞤxamaꞤiꞤ



# News from District Teachers



## District Numeracy Teacher, Nicole Fulton

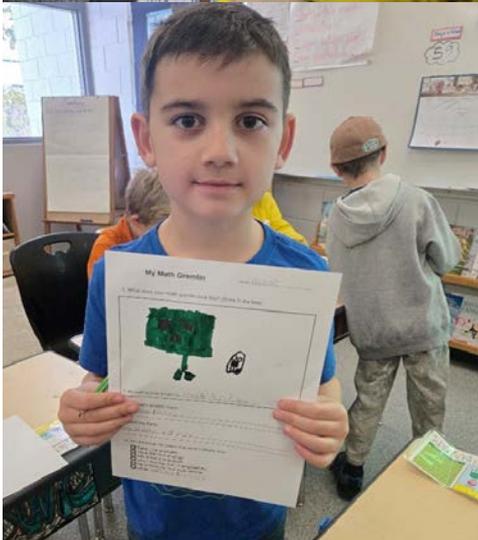
This month the District Numeracy Teacher worked with staff at TM Roberts Elementary to explore how manipulatives can strengthen number sense across the grades. They looked at how consistent use of hands-on tools helps students build on previous learning as they move from kindergarten to grade 6. Time was also spent on the BC Learning Pathways and how they can support shared language around mathematical thinking and proficiency.

The Coast Metro Elementary Math Project website (<https://coastmetro.ca/elementary-math-project/>) was another valuable resource, especially the spiraled year plans that allow teachers to revisit key ideas throughout the year.

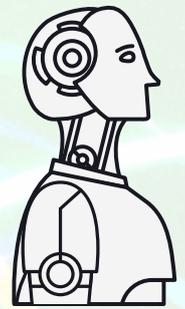
At Highlands Elementary, grades two and three students took part in a lesson on math identity inspired by research from Liesl McConchie. Students drew their “math gremlins,” externalizing unhelpful thoughts instead of internalizing them, and wrote positive affirmations to talk back to their gremlins. Learn more here: <https://www.edutopia.org/article/developing-student-math-identity/>

Rekenrek building was shared with grade one classes across the District including Steeples, Frank J. Mitchell, and Isabella Dicken, giving students a visual and tactile tool to model counting and early operations.

As the District moves into winter, we are looking forward to continuing to work with teachers and students. If you would like to explore manipulatives, learning pathways, or math identity in your school, please reach out.



# DISTRICT DESIGN LABS



Teachers of Transformative Learning **Ryan McKenzie and Kim Froehler**

## Lights and Robotics

Students from Ms. Spergel's grade one class explored the concepts of lights and robotics by building coloured flashlights. They took the flashlights outside to observe the interplay of different colours reflecting on the snow.



## Sweater Ornaments

Ms. Bisson's class from Rocky Mountain Elementary enjoyed a field trip to the Design Lab in Fernie, where they designed and created ugly sweater ornaments using 3D pens.



## Digital Tools Across the District

This year, students and teachers across the District are embracing digital platforms to enhance learning and communication. Over 750 students have joined Typing Pal and Tap'Touche, boosting their digital literacy skills in both English and French. Seesaw continues to thrive, with more than 40 classes and nearly 1,000 students sharing their learning and connecting with families. As high school teachers transition to Microsoft Teams, the Transformative Learning Team (TLT) has stepped up to support by meeting educators in schools, online, and helping with account setup to ensure a smooth shift into modern learning environments.



## Do You Cross Country Ski?



Students from Mrs. Porter's class at Steeples enjoyed an exciting hands-on visit focused on creativity and problem-solving. The day began with a brainstorming session about what cross-country skiers feel, see, and say, sparking imaginative ideas for a ski-themed environment. Using LEGO, cardboard, and ChompSaws, students built a dynamic ski area complete with jumps, mountains, hills, trees, and even animals. After constructing and customizing LEGO cross-country skiers, the fun continued as students programmed their skiers to navigate the obstacles they had created. This engaging activity combined design, technology, and teamwork, giving students a chance to bring their ideas to life in a playful and interactive way.

## Corrugated Costumes

Students in Mr. Flegel's class recently brought their imaginations to life through a hands-on design challenge using Chompsaws, a student friendly cardboard table saw and MakeDo kits, school friendly reusable screws and tools. Their cardboard creations included a sophisticated penguin, a remote control and TV, and a whimsical unicorn. Before building, students used an AI image generator to visualize their ideas, supported by a teacher to help them plan the scale and structure of each costume. This process also sparked thoughtful discussions about the limitations of AI-generated designs, as students identified which elements were realistic and which needed to be adapted for the physical world.





# OUTDOOR AND



# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

**Michael Kelly, Director**

## Sparwood Secondary Winter Survival Skills

The Sparwood Secondary Outdoor Education class had to change their plans when severe weather forced them to cancel their off-site trip, so they hosted an adapted version of their Winter Survival Skills Olympics at school instead.

Students raced across the field on their handmade emergency snowshoes, laughing as they tested their creations on the snowy ground. They also built emergency shelters using whatever materials were available, turning the change of plans into a creative and memorable challenge.



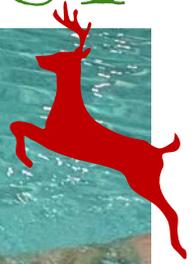
## Mount Baker Environmental Awareness Program

Mount Baker Secondary's EAP 12 students worked hard during November gaining new skills and knowledge to help them be successful winter camping for three nights at Kootenay Pass. It was their final overnight trip of the semester and it was a joy to see the students take on leadership roles, guiding each other on our day hike, taking on jobs around camp like water making, wood chopping and leading our awesome nightly debriefs.

A highlight for students was all the snow that fell and building and sleeping in snow shelters! Students were so well prepared for the trip and that was a huge part of the success.



# 'TIS THE SEASON AROUND THE DISTRICT



Peyton has been enjoying going swimming and loved trying out the swim chair. The swim chair allowed her to be independent in her movements, and she was able to experience the waves for the first time!



The Human Resources Department attended a Career Fair at the University of Lethbridge in December.



School Based Teams have been collaborating across the District.



Congratulations to Zoey from Parkland for winning second prize in the Remembrance Day Poetry contest.

Pictured: Michelle Bannister, Zoey, Cynthia Stuart and Brenda Tyson.



Dr. Sean Lassard presented at the Principals and Vice Principals' Leadership session on December 4. Participants explored how systems shift when we listen deeply, build relationships and honour the diverse experiences of students and families.



# 'TIS THE SEASON AROUND THE DISTRICT



École Isabella Dicken Elementary School grade two and three students celebrated their annual Elf Day! They filled the community with holiday spirit. Dressed as cheerful elves, the students led a toy drive, with local firefighters stopping by to collect the donations and deliver them to the Snow Valley Christmas Cheer Society. The young elves also visited local senior homes, sharing handmade cards and singing festive carols to brighten residents' days. This beloved tradition ties directly into the students' learning about citizenship, giving them hands-on opportunities to show kindness, generosity, and care for their community. Elf Day continues to be a highlight of the season.



Frank J Mitchell Elementary celebrated with red and green holiday sweaters. 



The annual Board Office Potluck was December 11. This annual event is filled with laughter, joy and great food!



The Hearing Loss clinic donated Christmas gifts to PES and TMRES. Caem was one of the lucky recipients.



# A picture says a thousand words...





Happy Holidays

*from the Southeast Kootenay School  
District*

Schools will be closed for  
Winter Break from  
December 22, 2025 to  
January 2, 2026



# Chairperson's Report

---

## *From the Province:*

---

December is a short, but busy month. One of the recent highlights at the provincial level has been the Trustee Academy held November 27-29 in Vancouver BC. The focus of the academy is to bring together the trustees from the 60 school board in BC and build on their collective and individual strengths which will better serve their role in advocating for equitable and quality education in all corners of BC

*“School trustees are essential to the health of our public education system,” said Tracy Loffler, President of the BCSTA. “As the only locally elected officials solely focused on education, trustees ensure that the voices of parents, students, and communities are heard in decisions that affect BC schools. The BCSTA Trustee Academy creates public education champions by providing trustees with the professional learning opportunities they need to serve and lead their communities effectively.”*

*As the new election cycle approaches in October 2026, discussion about encouraging individuals who are compassionate about education, compassionate about equitable services and compassionate about the communities they live in, to consider running in the election. The first step in any race is to be certain where and when the race begins. There is a wealth of information on the BCSTA website and the SD5 websites which may better inform those who are considering this worthwhile contribution.*

---

## *From the District*

---

*December is about concerts, food collections and great turkey feasts. For those who had the opportunity to attend the Mass Choir presentation, it was truly amazing, again. Students from each school introduced the pieces to be sung and the music teacher conducting that selection engage dall of the students in a coordinated presentation. Students from each school often get the opportunity to compete in organized sports events. This is, by design, was not a competition. Everyone wins, including the audience.*

---

## *Work of the Board of Education – Public Meeting December 9, 2025*

---

- *Inaugural Meeting*

*Part of the Public Agenda for the Board held each December is allocated to the election of the one year positions of special responsibility. Following the Procedural Bylaws, the election process for the position of Chairperson is conducted by the Secretary Treasurer. The newly elected or acclaimed Chairperson conducts the process for the remaining positions. The results are as follows:*

*Chairperson: Doug McPhee*

*BCPSEA Representative and Alternate (Public Sector Employees Association):*

*Trina Ayling and Irene Bishler*

*BCSTA Representative and Alternate (School Trustees Association):*

*Bev Bellina and Alysha Clarke*

*Bargaining Representatives:*

*Trina Ayling and Irene Bishler*

*Thank you for the good work and for the valued contributions of all trustees serving on standing committees, ad hoc committees, provincial committees and representing the School Board during PAC meetings and community engagements.*

*• Revisions to Policy 22 Provisions of Child Care*

*Policy 22 provides guidance as to "how the Board will promote the use of Board property for the provision of child care programs by either the Board or third party licensees". SD5 has been very active in advocating for child care opportunities. As we collectively move forward, the programs that put into place have to serve the needs of the community and create no additional financial obligations which would compromise current educational funding allocations.*

*•SD5 is in support of a request submitted by SD8 asking the Ministry of Education to review the Funding Model associated with Inclusive Education.*

*SD5 is in full support of Inclusive Education, providing meaningful access to education for all children, all students, all abilities and capabilities. The funding allocation, unfortunately has not kept pace with the costs associated with Inclusive Education. When there has been an opportunity to present to the Select Standing Committee on Budget-related issues associated with Education, the impact of budget shortfalls and allocations in Student Services has been one of the key concerns.*

---

*Other Items:*

---

Prior to the Board Meeting, the trustee and district management who could attend were taken on a tour of some of the elementary schools in the Cranbrook community. Of particular note was the new day care facility at Steeples Elementary. It is very impressive and with all of the finishing touches completed in the near future, a warm and welcoming space for children.

Discussions and planning are still in the works for the Amy Woodland replacement, Fernie Elementary and Day Care, Mountain View Elementary renovations in Sparwood and the housing project designs in Elkford and if it can fit on Santa's list, Mount Baker Secondary replacement.

*Doug McPhee had the opportunity to attend the meeting of the Heritage Fair Committee. The Heritage Fair supports student presentations along to the themes of local and family history. Not unlike a Science Fair, the presentations encourage student skills in researching history and the public-*

*speaking aspect of presenting their discoveries to fellow students, the school and the public. Registration starts in January and the event is held during the first week of May.*

---

*Events:*

---

There are a number of concerts and presentations. Please refer to your neighbourhood school for times and opportunities

*Winter Break: December 22 to January 4, 2026*

*On behalf of the Staff and Trustees for School District 5 (Southeast Kootenay), have a safe and restful Winter Break. We will look forward to a great 2026 full of opportunity for all students.*