

LEARNING TOGETHER

NO. 15





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



As the days grow longer and the sun stretches into spring, we are reminded of the vibrant energy this season brings to our schools. With celebrations, achievements, and new opportunities for connection, April is a time of renewal not only in nature but also in our commitment to enhancing student learning across the District.



This month, I'd like to spotlight an element of our Strategic Plan that hasn't been front and centre in recent conversations but is essential to the work we do every day: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). Our plan challenges us to ensure that every student regardless of background, identity, or circumstance has the opportunity to succeed. EDI work is not about checklists or buzzwords; it is about shaping spaces where students feel seen, valued and supported.



In the spirit of community voice, we have launched the Community Learning Survey and are looking forward to connecting in person at upcoming Community Engagement Nights, scheduled for each of our communities. These evenings are designed to provide highlights around the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning, share how our budgeting process supports learning, and offer space to answer your questions about student achievement and school improvement efforts. We value your input and look forward to these collaborative conversations.

Spring is also staffing season, and I want to acknowledge the questions that often arise during this time of year. Our goal is always to ensure stability and strong leadership in every one of our schools. Staffing and leadership decisions are never taken lightly. We consider multiple factors including school needs, enrollment shifts, and long-term planning when making these choices. While our engagement nights won't focus on individual personnel decisions, I hope this offers some helpful context and assurance that our approach is thoughtful.

As we head into the final stretch of the school year, there's a buzz of excitement in the air. Graduation season is just around the corner, a time of pride, joy, and reflection for students, families, and staff alike. While we celebrate these important milestones, it is also a time to look out for one another. If you are ever concerned about a friend, don't hesitate to connect with a trusted adult; your care and compassion can make a real difference. And for our families, if you are in need of support or guidance, please know that we are here for you. We encourage you to reach out to your school or the District, we are always stronger when we walk this journey together.

Our schools are also buzzing with spring concerts, athletic competitions, and special events. These moments showcase the talents and dedication of our students and staff I encourage everyone to check out what's happening at your local school and join in the celebrations.

A special congratulations goes to Pari Parmar, a Grade 11 student from Fernie Secondary School, who was a winner at the East Kootenay Regional Science Fair and will now represent the District at the Canada-Wide Science Fair in Fredericton. What an amazing accomplishment! I also had the pleasure of attending the Highlands Elementary School Science Fair in April. The joy and excitement on students' faces was absolutely contagious. As a former Science Fair participant myself, I remember how these experiences helped me build confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills that extend far beyond the classroom.

As always, thank you for your ongoing partnership and for being a part of our shared journey in supporting every learner, every day.

V. Johnson

Viveka Johnson,
Superintendent



Supporting Alternate Pathways to Graduation at KDS

Contributed by Scott Bailey, PHE & Humanities Teacher

Kootenay Discovery School (KDS) sees a wide range of high school students from across the District completing their Physical and Health Education 10 (PHED 10) course online each year. This course is a graduation requirement, but for many, it also serves as a key part of an alternate or flexible graduation plan.

Whether students are in traditional high school settings or exploring alternate graduation paths, PHED 10 at KDS offers a flexible and accessible route to success. The online format supports learners who are:

- Balancing work or external training
- Dealing with health or personal commitments
- Learning through alternate or adult education programs



Just like all of other online high school courses with KDS, PHED 10 is delivered through Brightspace. Students start by building a personalized schedule using the MyPacing Tool, giving them control over their timeline and workload. This course supports graduation plans by allowing students to:

- Track 80 hours of physical activity in a way that suits their lifestyle
- Choose learning formats (photovoice video or one-on-one meeting)
- Align activities with work, community involvement, or independent fitness

The structure supports students in alternate education streams, including Independent Directed Studies and Adult Graduation Programs. Students are encouraged to complete at least one project through a meeting with the teacher either online or in person. This ensures the course goes beyond written assignments and focuses on meaningful engagement in physical activity, skill development, and health-related decision-making.

To deepen learning and make it truly experiential, KDS has added new activities such as:

- Trying a healthy eating strategy from the Canada Food Guide and sharing the results
- Creating an Emergency Preparedness Plan using GetPrepared.ca
- Having a conversation with a parent or trusted adult about drug and alcohol awareness using HealthLinkBC



These real-world tasks help students build confidence and competence, while also contributing toward their broader learning goals.

To complete the course, students either create a photovoice project or meet one-on-one to share reflections. They discuss what they've learned and how it will support a lifelong commitment to health. Motivations vary from team sports and solo hiking, to discovering a love of teaching or setting personal fitness goals.

How PHED 10 Supports Alternate Graduation Plans

- Integrates with learning and graduation plans
- Offers flexible, student-paced scheduling
- Accepts physical activity done in work or community settings
- Provides supportive assessments through personalized meetings
- Meets Ministry of Education requirements in a learner-centered format



Whether students are a part of a traditional cohort or charting their own graduation pathway, PHED 10 at KDS ensures they can meet their goals in a flexible, engaging, and supportive environment.

For more information, please contact:

scott.bailey@sd5.bc.ca



Early Learning and Child Care

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



Spring into School: Ready, Set, Learn & Kindergarten Orientation Events This Season!

As the flowers bloom and the days grow longer, it is time to welcome the newest members of our school communities! This spring, schools and community locations across the district are welcoming families for Ready, Set, Learn and Kindergarten Orientation events. These events are special opportunities for young learners and their families to explore, connect, and prepare for an exciting educational journey ahead.

What is Ready, Set, Learn?

Ready, Set, Learn is a welcoming event designed for families with children aged birth – 5 who are not yet in kindergarten. It is a fun and engaging way to introduce children to the school environment, meet early childhood educators, and learn about resources that support early learning at home and in the community. These events often feature story time, hands-on activities, music, crafts, and opportunities to ask questions about the transition into school life.

These events are a partnership between the province, the school district, and the early learning and community partners in the Elkford, Sparwood, Fernie, Jaffray/South Country, and Cranbrook area communities.

Ready Set Learn Dates for Spring 2025

- Sparwood - April 29 at the Sparwood Community Center 10:00 - 11:30
- Elkford - May 12 at Rocky Mountain Elementary 9:30 - 11:15
- Cranbrook - May 15 at Rotary Park 10:00 - 11:30
- Fernie - June 11 at Ecole Isabella Dicken Elementary 10:45 - 12:00



Kindergarten Orientation: A Big Step Made Easy

For children starting kindergarten this fall, Kindergarten Orientation offers a valuable sneak peek into what their first year of school will look like. Families will have a chance to tour classrooms and the school, meet teachers and support staff, and participate in fun, age-appropriate activities. It is also a great time to learn about school routines, bus safety, nutrition programs, and more. These activities are all designed to help ease the transition and build confidence for both students and parents.

Event Highlights

- Meet and greet with school staff and other families
- Explore classrooms and learning spaces
- Learn about daily routines, school readiness, and support services
- Enjoy fun learning stations and take-home resources
- Ask questions and complete any registration needs



Mark Your Calendar! These events will take place throughout April, May, and June.

Check with your local school for specific dates and times. Invitations and event details are also available on school websites and social media pages.

We look forward to welcoming you and your little learner to a wonderful new beginning!

Ready, Set, Learn... and grow with us!



News from the School Food Coordinator

School Food Coordinator, Vince Girimonte



Hot Lunch at Gordon Terrace

Exciting news: the Hot Lunch Wednesday program has expanded to Gordon Terrace. The students were very keen to try the new meals, such as Chicken Pot Pie and Honey Garlic Beef with Noodle Salad. Meals are served on a pay-what-you-can basis every Wednesday and all families are encouraged to sign up. We hope to add more schools to the Hot Lunch Wednesday program in 2025/2026.

College of the Rockies Practicum

Students from College of the Rockies (COTR) Nursing program completed a practicum in the District researching and presenting on how schools can incorporate Indigenous culture and ways into our food programming. Paul and Kyle explored Ktunaxa and other Indigenous foods in the modern context and stressed the importance of building connections through food. Some suggestions presented included building more communal food areas within our schools and pushing for more local sourcing purchasing and preparing of foods distributed to our students.

We are very honoured to be working with COTR through these practicums. They have provided great learning opportunities for our students and staff while providing future health care professionals the valuable opportunity to volunteer in our school community.

Special thanks to staff at Laurie Middle School, TM Roberts Elementary School, Steeples Elementary School, Joe Pierre and Faye O'Neil for guiding COTR students during their practicum.

I love hearing from people in the District and the broader community. Please do not hesitate to get in touch!

vincent.girimonte@sd5.bc.ca
(250) 919-3759



IN THE KITCHEN^{with} TAKE A BITE OF BC!

BCAITC's Chef Randle

BC INSPIRED MINESTRONE SOUP

YIELD: 1.5 litres (6 cups)

- 60 mL (1/4 cup) olive oil
- 120 mL (1/2 cup) BC onion, small dice
- 60 mL (1/4 cup) BC celery, small dice
- 60 mL (1/4 cup) BC carrot, small dice
- 60 mL (1/4 cup) BC butternut squash, small dice
- 3 cloves of BC garlic
- 10 BC green/yellow beans, cut into 1 cm pieces
- 5 mL (1 tsp) dried thyme leaves
- 5 mL (1 tsp) dried oregano leaves
- 150 mL (2/3 cup) tomato paste
- 800 mL (3.5 cups) diced tomato, canned
- 900 mL (3.75 cups) beef stock
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 small yellow skin BC potato, small dice
- 60 mL (1/4 cup) dried orzo pasta (or any small pasta)
- 240 mL (1 cup) kale leaves, sliced
- 60 mL (1/4 cup) beans (pinto, cannellini etc.)
- Salt and pepper to taste



SOUP
BASICS

IN THE KITCHEN^{with} TAKE A BITE OF BC!

BCAITC's Chef Randle

BC INSPIRED MINESTRONE SOUP

YIELD: 1.5 litres (6 cups)

Method

1. Heat oil in a large pot.
2. Add the onion, celery, carrot, squash, garlic and beans. Sautee without browning (sweat) for 10 minutes or until vegetables are soft.
3. Add dried thyme and oregano and stir for 30 seconds.
4. Add tomato paste and stir to combine.
5. Add the diced tomato, beef stock, bay leaf, and potato. Stir the ingredients together.
6. Bring to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
7. Add orzo and simmer 6 minutes more.
8. Stir in kale and beans and season with salt and pepper.
9. Serve with parmesan cheese and focaccia bread.



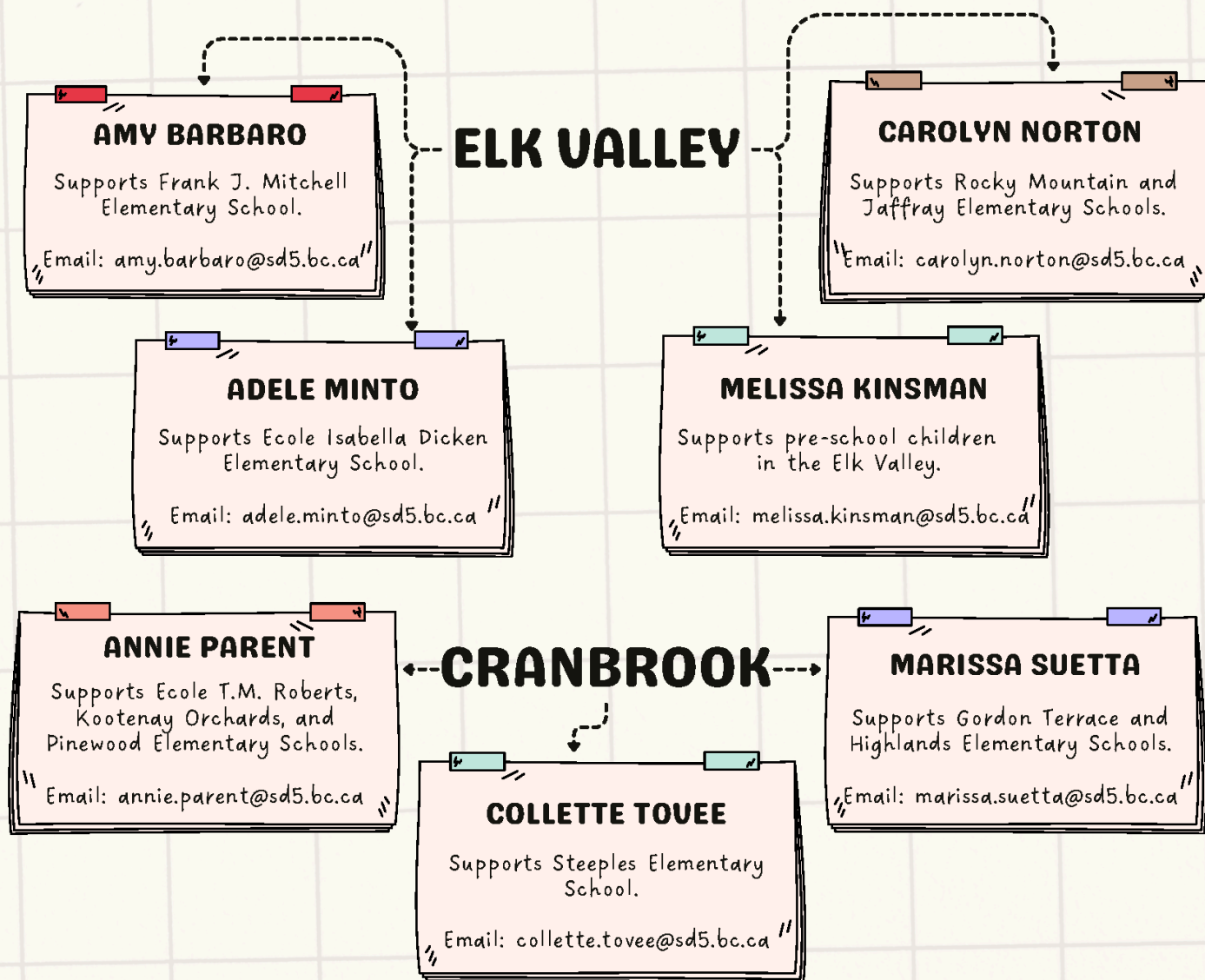
News from Learning Services

District Principal Kaley Wasylowich



SCHOOL DISTRICT 5 SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

*IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S COMMUNICATION, CONTACT
YOUR SCHOOL'S SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST.*

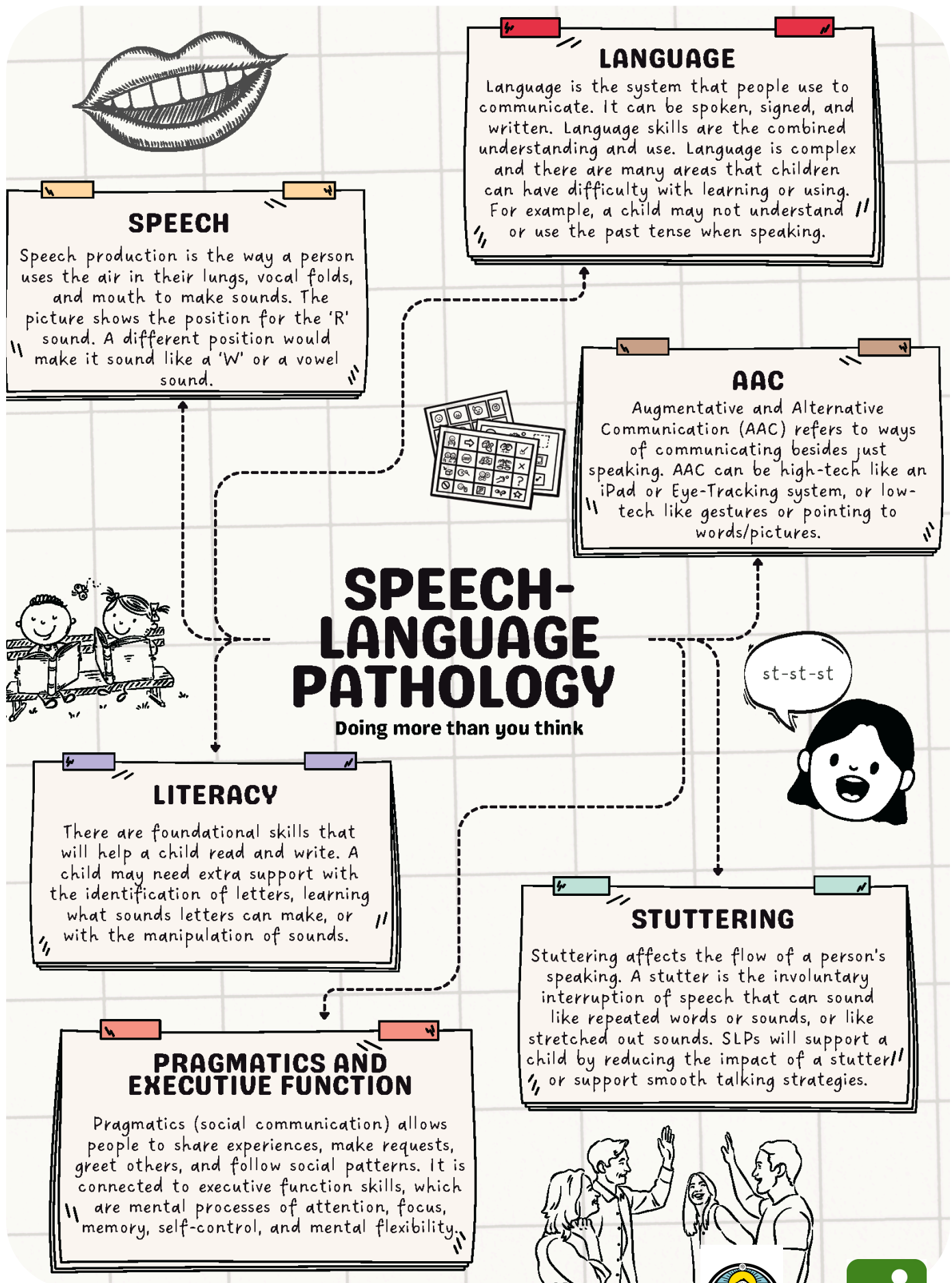


MAY IS SPEECH AND HEARING MONTH IN CANADA. IT IS DEDICATED TO
INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT COMMUNICATION HEALTH.
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS (SLPs) SUPPORT STUDENT'S
COMMUNICATION.

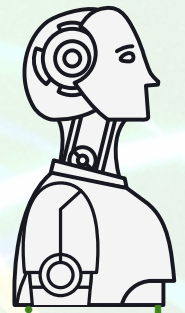


News from Learning Services

District Principal Kaley Wasylowich



DISTRICT DESIGN LABS



Teachers of Transformative Learning Ryan McKenzie and Kim Froehler

Making and Coding in the Design Lab

In April, a group of students from Fernie Secondary visited the Design Lab to work with 3-D pens. They created a variety of original designs, including pendant necklaces, miniature figurines, and even wearable glasses. The activity supported creative thinking and hands-on skill development as students experimented with form and structure.

Robotic Bunnies

Students from École Isabella Dicken Elementary took part in a robotics challenge using LEGO Spike Prime. Students built robotic bunnies and used block-based coding and numeracy skills to program their movement. The goal was to navigate a path and reach a carrot at the end. Programming the robotic bunnies to follow a hand-drawn path presented a unique challenge, as students had to fine-tune their code which required testing and debugging to keep their robots on track toward the carrot.



Inter-District Collaboration on STEM Education

Last week, educators from the District met with colleagues from School District No. 6 at the Cranbrook Design Lab to collaborate on the integration of STEM technologies in the classroom. The meeting focused on sharing current practices, discussing implementation strategies, and exchanging ideas to enhance student engagement through hands-on, technology-focused learning.

The session provided a valuable opportunity to compare implementation models and identify areas for potential collaboration going forward. As both districts continue to expand access to emerging technologies, this kind of professional exchange helps align efforts and strengthen support for students and teachers alike.



OUTDOOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



Kootenay Discovery Students

The middle school blended program at KDS in Fernie worked with the Elk River Alliance to help them meet their goal of harvesting 2,000 cottonwood live stakes to help restore riparian zones along the Elk River. One day a week these students participate in an outdoor learning experience intended to provide them with opportunities to make connections with one another, the community, and the local ecosystems around the Elk Valley.



Fernie Secondary Outdoor Education and Physical Education Classes

This April, students from Outdoor Education and Physical Education 8 have been actively exploring their surroundings during the "shoulder season." They have been investigating local forestry cut blocks and seeking adventure in their own back yard. PE 8 students have also been practicing their disc golf skills on the school course and plan to play on the Bug City course later this month.





IN THE SCHOOLS



News from Schools Across the District

École Isabella Dicken Elementary

A fun and exciting literacy week organized by Mrs. Schacker.

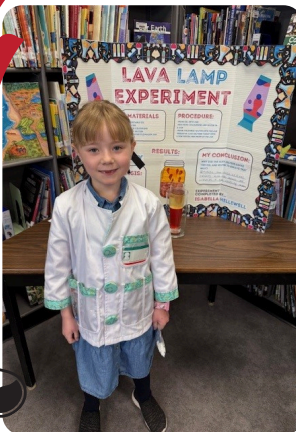
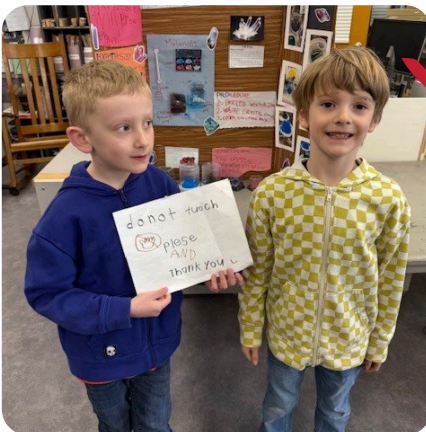


Rocky Mountain Elementary

An amazing reveal of the mosaic at Rocky Mountain. Thank you to local artist, Katherine Russell.

Science Fair at Highlands Elementary

Highlands Elementary hosted a school-wide Science Fair on April 17.




EAST KOOTENAY HERITAGE FAIR

2024-2025

2025 SCHEDULE

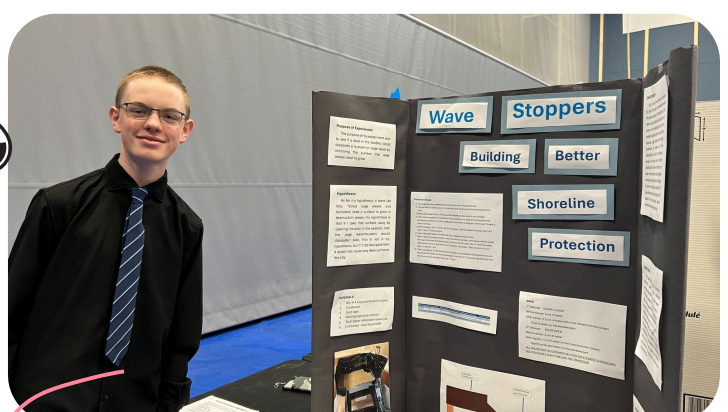
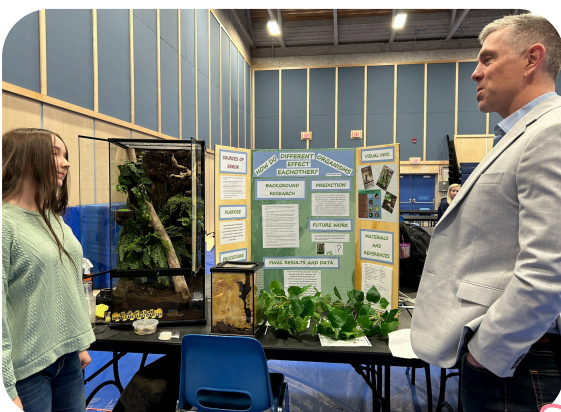
- May 8: Student Set-Up (3-5pm)
- May 9: East Kootenay Regional Fair
Judging & Programming
*select students only
- May 10: Open House (10am) & Award Ceremony (11am)
*open to the public

More Info:
www.cranbrookhistorycentre.com/learn/heritage-fair

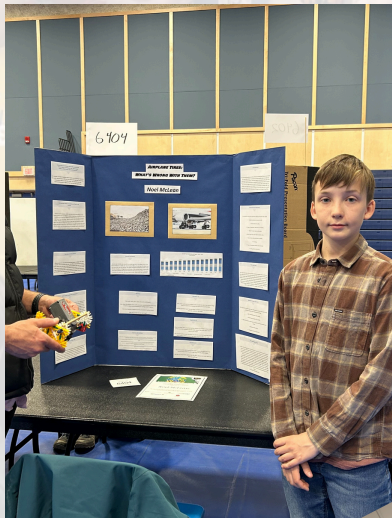
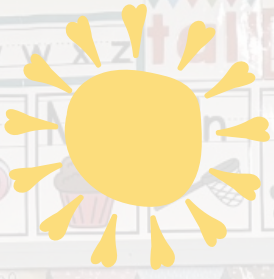
BC HERITAGE SOCIETY | School District 5 SOUTHEAST KOOTENAY | CRANBROOK HISTORY CENTRE

East Kootenay Regional Science Fair

Congratulations to students from the District who competed at the East Kootenay Regional Science Fair on April 11, 2025. The group was small but mighty! Eight students from various schools including Fernie Secondary, Laurie Middle, Parkland Middle received medals, door prizes and scholarships.



A picture says a thousand words...



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 (SOUTHEAST KOOTENAY)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT NIGHTS

MAY 13 - FERNIE

(Ecole Isabella Dicken Elementary)

6:00-7:00 p.m.

MAY 14 - JAFFRAY

(Jaffray School)

5:30-6:30 p.m.

MAY 28 - CRANBROOK
(Mount Baker Secondary)

6:00-7:00 p.m.

JUNE 3 - SPARWOOD
(Sparwood Secondary)

6:00-7:00 p.m.

JUNE 5 - ELKFORD
(Elkford Secondary)

6:00-7:00 p.m.

Reflect

- What will we do differently?

Develop

- What is our focus?

Act

- How will we implement?

Evaluate

- Review, Assess and Update

TOPICS

The Framework for
Enhancing Student
Learning for the District
and the Community

School Growth Plans

Strategic Plan



Open until
April 30

School District No. 5 (Southeast
Kootenay) Community Learning
Survey



Open

