

LEARNING TOGETHER

NO. 20





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



As we begin a new year together, I want to take a moment to thank our students, families, staff, and community partners for the care, collaboration, and commitment you show every day across the Southeast Kootenay School District. Our shared vision continues to guide us: students love to learn here, staff love to work here, and families love to gather here.



The District continues to be guided by our Framework for Enhancing Student Learning, which keeps us focused on what matters most. This work supports student success through strong literacy and numeracy learning, fosters schools where students and staff feel welcome, safe, and connected, and ensures every learner is supported as they transition successfully into their future with dignity, purpose, and options.

As we approach the halfway point of the school year, students will also be engaging in graduation assessments. We will also be surveying students in grades five and eight through the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI), and students in grades ten and twelve through the Youth Development Instrument (YDI). These tools support our understanding of student experiences and well-being, helping to inform programs that strengthen belonging and connection. To continue strengthening literacy instruction, we are also offering more training opportunities in UFLI and continuing to use Acadience screening three times per year in kindergarten to grade three classrooms so we can identify needs early and respond with timely support.

Alongside these learning goals, the Board of Education's Strategic Plan helps guide the direction of the District and the decisions we make throughout the year. The plan reflects our shared commitment to academic success for all learners, equity, diversity and inclusion, caring and welcoming schools, community engagement, innovation and choice, technology integration, and responsible stewardship of resources, including the environment.

January also marks the beginning of our planning for the 2026–2027 budget. Each year, the budget process is an important opportunity to ensure our resources are aligned with our values and priorities, and that we are supporting student needs across all of our communities as effectively and responsibly as possible.

As we look ahead, I also want to remind families that kindergarten registration opens Monday, February 2, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. The Southeast Kootenay School District welcomes all children born between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021, and encourages families to register their children at their catchment area school for September 2026 entry. Online registration will once again be available, with the registration link posted on the District and elementary school websites.

Public education offers children a joyful beginning where learning happens through curiosity, play, and connection to the world around them. Our schools are grounded in respect, belonging, and care for every child, and we are committed to reconciliation by honouring Indigenous perspectives, fostering a sense of place, and building inclusive learning environments. Through outdoor learning, creative exploration, technology, and caring student supports, public education in the Southeast Kootenay School District provides a joyful beginning and a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

V. Johnson

Viveka Johnson,
Superintendent



**KINDERGARTEN
REGISTRATION**
OPENS ON FEBRUARY 2, 2026

Children born January 1 to December 31, 2021

- ✓ Register at your catchment area school
- ✓ Online registration also available
- ✓ StrongStart students automatically enrolled*
- ✓ Proof of birth and BC residency required

Indigenous Education



Warriors Leadership at Mount Baker Secondary

The Warriors Leadership Class organized a winter clothing drive for the unhoused in our community. Street Angels were grateful to receive the donation and will distribute the items to people in need. Thank you to all Mount Baker Secondary Elders, staff, and students for your contributions.



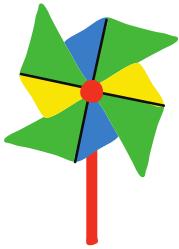
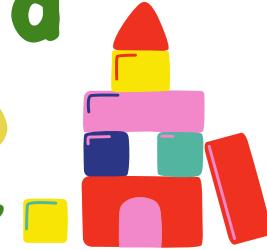
Canning at Laurie Middle School

Students from the Indigenous Leadership group at Laurie Middle had the opportunity to learn how to can and make jam with the Elder in Residence, Winnie Vitaliano. Her techniques were inspirational, and she generously invited students to learn by sharing her knowledge and ways of doing. The jams will be gifted and used at Indigenous related events throughout the school.



Early Learning and Child Care

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



You are invited to celebrate the

GRAND OPENING OF STEEPLES STRONGSTART AND CHILD CARE FACILITY

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

700 24 Avenue North

Cranbrook, BC

9:30 a.m. – Ribbon Cutting and Remarks

9:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. – Facility Tours



StrongStart BC




Cranbrook
Steeple Clubhouse

*StrongStart BC is a free, family-centered early learning program
for children ages 0–5 and their caregivers



News from District Teachers

District French Support Teacher, Marzia Bottoni

Joyeuse nouvelle année!

Happy New Year! Here is an update from the wonderful world of French Learning!



Art at École Isabella Dicken Elementary

Students learned all about the French artist, Claude Monet and then tried impressionist painting!

Digital and Media Literacy in French Immersion

Teachers at Fernie Secondary attended an important workshop in the Fall to learn and teach students how to spot fake news stories. [Learn more here!](#)



Fantastic Learning Resources

Core French students in grade five across the District have been learning from the fantastic resource kits available.



Recruiting French Educators

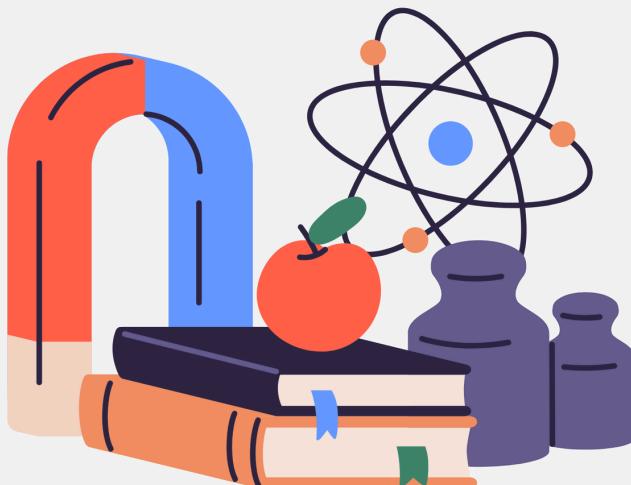
We continue to work with *Make a Future* to recruit French educators.

Embracing courage, determination and joy in our language journey towards bilingualism.



Invent. Experiment. Share!

EAST KOOTENAY SCIENCE FAIR



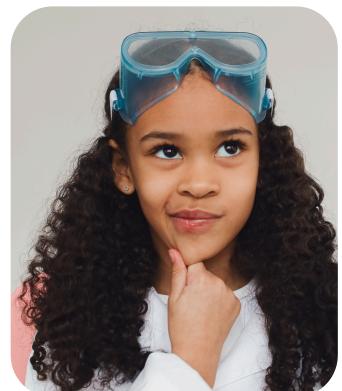
April 10, 2026
9 AM - 4 PM

College of the
Rockies, Cranbrook

WIN CASH PRIZES OR A
TRIP TO THE CANADA-
WIDE SCIENCE FAIR

GET MORE DETAILS, AND REGISTER AT:
www.ekrsf.ca

Coming
SOON!



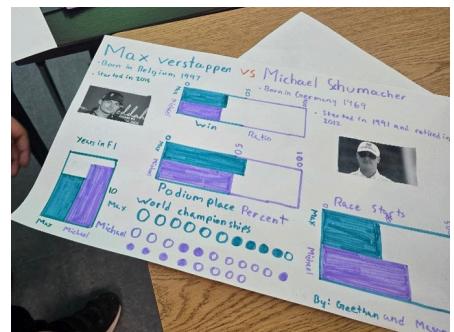
News from District Teachers

District Numeracy Teacher, Nicole Fulton

Sports Data Analytics

In Steven Hammond's grade six class at Steeples Elementary School, students explored a data project focused on sports analytics and basketball. Students were introduced to the growing field of sports analytics and examined how data is used to inform decisions in sport. In class, students learned about different aspects of basketball and then took their learning into gym class, where they are completing their basketball unit. As part of the project, students also watched a thrilling overtime college women's basketball game and analyzed game statistics together.

Students then completed an inquiry project where they chose two athletes from a sport of their choice and used data to compare and justify who they believed to be the "GOAT" (Greatest of All Time). This work supported key numeracy skills such as collecting and analyzing data, creating representations, and clearly communicating mathematical reasoning using evidence.



Prime Factors

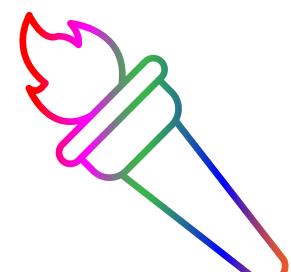
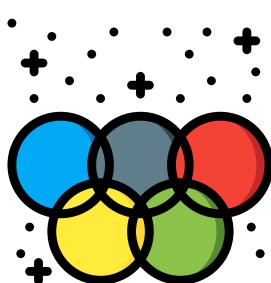
In Jennifer Heath's grade six class at École Isabella Dicken Elementary School, students explored prime factorization in a hands-on way by breaking down the first 100 numbers into their prime factors. They built a "tower city" of numbers based on these prime components, helping students see patterns and relationships between numbers.

This visual approach supported deeper understanding of factors, multiples, and how to determine the lowest common multiple of two numbers.



Looking Ahead

The upcoming Winter Olympics are a great opportunity to incorporate meaningful numeracy tasks in the classroom. Students can track medal counts, create graphs, compare countries, and analyze trends either individually or as a class. There are some helpful resources and ideas to support this in the Olympic Medal Math Project from Byrdseed: <https://www.byrdseed.com/olympic-medal-math-project/>



News from the School Food Coordinator

School Food Coordinator, Vince Girimonte



Check out [Canada's Food Guide](#)! Are you and your family eating a variety of healthy foods each day?

Canada's food guide

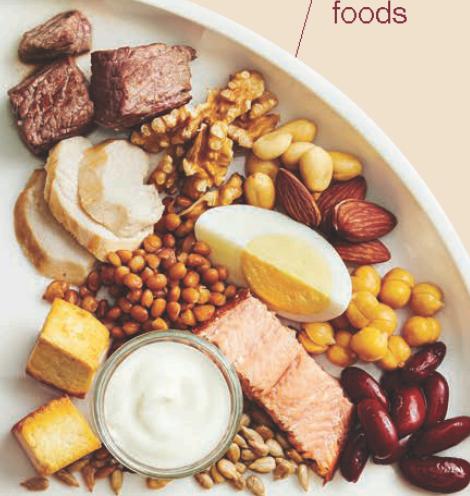
Eat well. Live well.

Eat a variety of healthy foods each day

Have plenty of vegetables and fruits



Eat protein foods



Make water your drink of choice



Choose whole grain foods

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Discover your food guide at

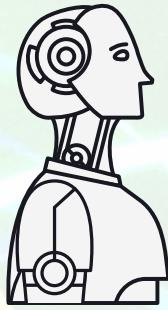
Canada.ca/FoodGuide



Canada



DISTRICT DESIGN LABS



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

Chompsaw Cardboard Cutters

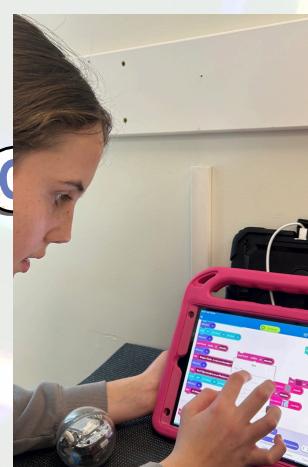
Students from Ms. Kristen's class at Kootenay Discovery School in Fernie embraced their creativity by safely using Chompsaw cardboard cutters to craft a variety of imaginative creations. The excitement didn't stop there; in the afternoon, they collaborated on a community build with Lego Coding Express kits, bringing their ideas to life in vibrant colors and train movement.

Open Design Challenge and Spheros

Ms. Chiasson's students at FJ Mitchell engaged in an Open Design Challenge, designing and building machines capable of pushing or pulling a variety of objects using Ozobot robots and assorted craft materials, which showcased their problem solving skills, creativity, and innovation. Meanwhile, at the Fernie Design Lab, Madame Heath's class from École Isabella Dicken worked with Sphero robots to design zoo maps and program their robots to navigate the routes while communicating in French, creating an engaging and educational experience that combined coding, language learning, and exploration of diverse animal habitats.

Graphic Design

Ms. Lanyon's class from Elkford Secondary visited the Fernie Design Lab, where they explored the world of graphic design. Using Cricut machines, they crafted stylish logos for T-Shirts, cell phone cases, and more, transforming their creative visions into tangible vinyl stickers.



Custom Brands

Creativity and technology came together in Mr. Hammond's class as students learned how to build their personal brand.

Using a variety of digital tools, they explored ways to combine and customize designs, turning ideas into tangible products like decals and keychains. This hands-on project gave students practical experience in digital design and branding, while encouraging innovation and individuality. By mastering these tools, students not only created unique items but also gained valuable skills that connect creativity with real-world applications.





OUTDOOR AND

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Amazing!



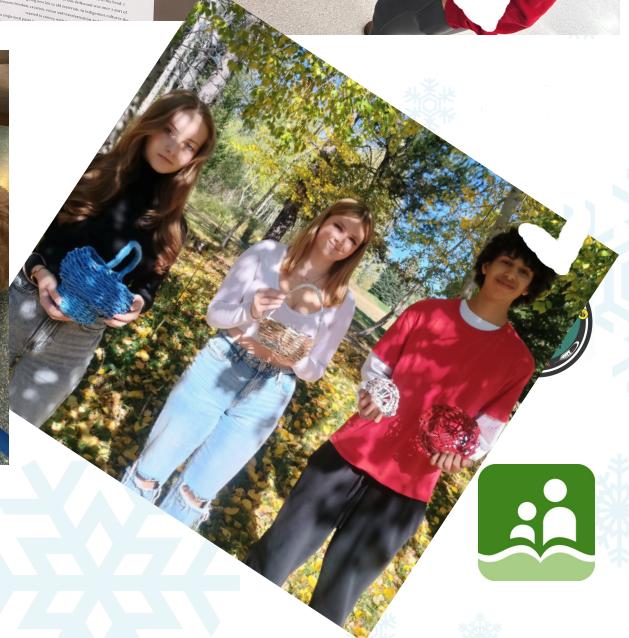
Elk River Gourmet

Students in the Fernie Secondary Outdoor Education 8/9 class proudly participated in the Elk River Gourmet Campfire Cookout after several weeks of preparation.

Throughout the lead up to the event, students built practical outdoor skills by learning British Columbia campfire regulations and fire safety, planning meals, cooking outdoors, building shelters, and strengthening teamwork and problem solving abilities. As a highlight of the experience, some students prepared and cooked elk they had harvested themselves, showcasing confidence, responsibility, and respect for the outdoors.



A Picture Says A Thousand Words...





**THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 (SOUTHEAST KOOTENAY)
seeks**

Public Input into the 2026/2027 Annual Budget

**Monday, February 23, 2026 – Cranbrook (Cranbrook Board Office)
Committee Meeting
3:00 p.m.**

**Tuesday, March 10, 2026 – Fernie (Kootenay Learning Campus)
Public Board Meeting
3:00 p.m.**

**If you wish to make a presentation to the Board, please contact
Jane Nixon by email at jane.nixon@sd5.bc.ca
by 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 11 for presentations at the
Committee Meeting or by 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 25 for
presentations at the Board Meeting.**

The allotted maximum time is 10 minutes per presentation.

Presentations to the Board will be accepted in writing if you are unable to attend or if you do not wish to attend the meeting. You may drop off your requests at the Board office at 940 Industrial Rd 1, Cranbrook, BC V1C 4C6, or email your requests to jane.nixon@sd5.bc.ca.

