

LEARNING TOGETHER

NO. 18





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Heritage Fair 2026
Elf Junior at the Key City Theatre

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



As we move through November, I continue to be inspired by the ways our students, staff, and families show care for one another and for our wider community.

This came through in our Remembrance Day ceremonies. Across the District, students did a wonderful job of honouring those who have served and sacrificed. I had the honour of attending Mount Baker Secondary School's service, and it was truly an embodiment of respect and reflection. From the music and readings to the student leadership on display, it was a powerful reminder of the importance of learning our shared history and carrying those lessons forward.

In our elementary schools, parent/teacher interviews have now wrapped up. I want to thank families for taking the time to connect with classroom teachers. Those conversations are an important part of our shared responsibility in supporting each child's growth. Teachers are now turning their attention to communicating student learning, with report cards just around the corner. This is a busy time in schools, and I am grateful for the thoughtful, student-centred work that goes into reporting.

On October 24, the District hosted an incredible professional development day for CUPE staff. The day featured two keynote speakers who addressed timely and important topics: artificial intelligence (AI) and mental health. In the afternoon, participants chose from a range of engaging breakout sessions, with topics spanning from supporting academics to personal wellness. The feedback from the day has been overwhelmingly positive, and it was such a success that we are already planning to expand next year's CUPE professional learning day to include even more CUPE positions across the District. As we all know, when the adults in our system are in a good place, students are better able to thrive. Investing in the learning and wellbeing of our support staff is one of the most impactful ways we can support student success.

Due to the recent BCGEU strike, the Ministry of Education has postponed the fall graduation assessments. The new dates for the assessments are January 12 to 30. These assessments are a requirement for graduation. If you are unsure whether your student has written the required assessments, please check with your student's school, which will be able to confirm what is needed and when.

I am also reminded of our 2024 to 2028 Strategic Plan, particularly our commitment to wellbeing and culture. One of the key ideas in this area is that when we create the conditions for adults to learn, collaborate, and feel well supported, we strengthen the learning environment for every student. The Remembrance Day ceremonies, our recent CUPE professional development day, and the ongoing work around communicating student learning are all living examples of that commitment in action.

Lastly, thank you to all the coaches and volunteers who made this year's volleyball season such a success. I was able to catch a bit of the Junior Boys volleyball zones, and it was wonderful to see the enthusiasm, sportsmanship, and school spirit on display. A huge shout out to everyone who helps make our extra curricular programs possible; your time and dedication create opportunities for students to connect, grow, and excel beyond the classroom.

Thank you for your continued partnership in helping our learners grow, lead, and succeed together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "V. Johnson".

Viveka Johnson,
Superintendent



Indigenous Education

National Indigenous Veterans Day/Remembrance Day Ceremony

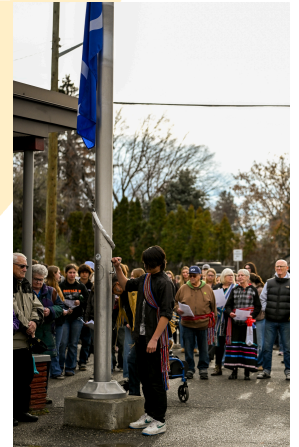
This year Laurie Middle School and ʔaḡamnik' Elementary came together to organize a meaningful ceremony at Rotary Park in honour of National Indigenous Veterans Day and Remembrance Day. The Ceremony featured a trilingual reading of Flanders Fields in Ktunaxa, English and French, symbolizing unity and respect for the diverse cultures that make up our communities.

Maci B. read a poem written by her great aunt Anne Jimmy, honouring the memory of Indigenous veterans and their legacy. Students from ʔaḡamnik' Elementary presented a banner created by Margaret Teneese which displayed photos of local veterans. Student read aloud the veterans' names featured on the banner. To conclude the ceremony, students from both schools laid wreaths at the cenotaph.



Métis Flag Raising at Mount Baker

The Métis flag raising was held on November 13 at Mount Baker Secondary.



JJ Guy and Gordon

Students across the District enjoyed Métis Dance and Music performances by JJ Guy and Gordon.



News from District Teachers

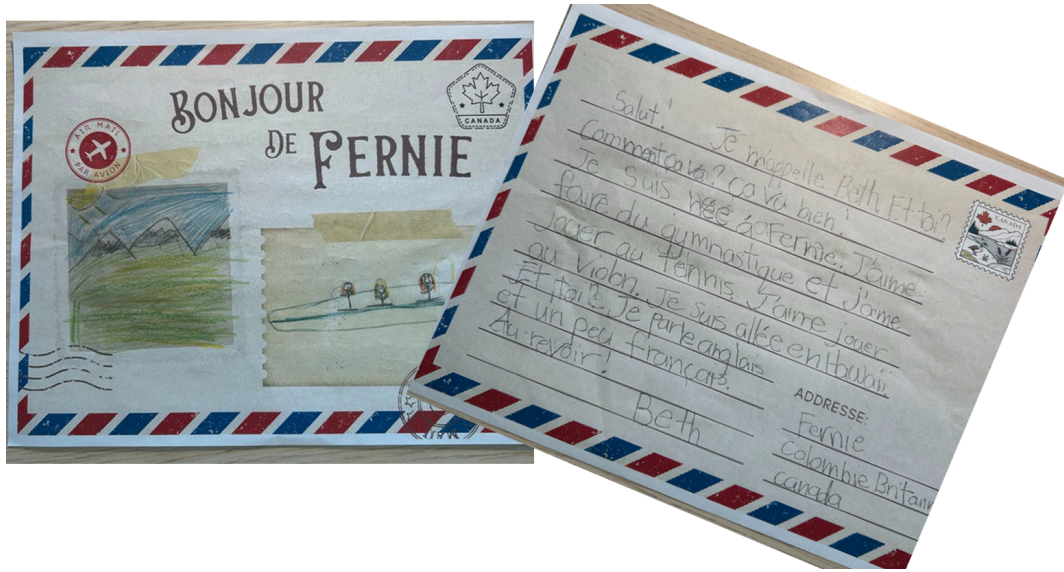


District French Immersion Teacher, Marzia Bottoni

Bonjour!

Here is what has been happening in the wonderful world of French Learning!

In grade 4, **Middle French Immersion (MFI)**, students have been writing to their French pen pals. Students have been writing letters and eagerly awaiting responses from France.



Early FI Literacy

Teaching the essential literacy skills and using data-driven instruction has always been key in our classrooms. Kindergarten to grade two teachers continue training with the Acadience Reading Français literacy screener to help shape instruction and small group intervention for our French students.

Literacy Intervention 5-6

Back in MFI we are piloting a reading diagnostic assessment and push-in support for struggling readers. We are excited to try all the new tools available to us!

Professional Development

Both EFI and MFI teachers are attending workshops to learn how to use the phonics program Son-au-graphe to support students with reading proficiency.



News from District Teachers



District Numeracy Support Teacher, Nicole Fulton

Exploring Math Manipulatives

Over the past month, grade two classrooms across the District have been exploring ways to strengthen early number sense through hands-on learning. One new tool being introduced is the Rekenrek, a simple yet powerful manipulative that helps students build flexible thinking about numbers. At Isabella Dicken Elementary, grade two classes constructed their own Rekenreks and learned to use them to model counting, addition, and subtraction strategies. At Steeples Elementary and Highlands Elementary, students have been using Rekenreks to develop fluency and exploring concept circles to make mathematical connections visible and collaborative.

Research and Alignment

This fall has also included a deeper exploration of the Concrete–Representational–Abstract (CRA) model and the BC K–12 Learning Progressions to help guide numeracy support across the District. The CRA model emphasizes moving from hands-on exploration to visual and symbolic understanding, ensuring that students build meaning before memorization. The Learning Progressions provide a clear continuum of mathematical thinking from kindergarten through grade twelve, highlighting what proficiency looks like across developmental stages. Together, these frameworks are shaping how lessons are planned, how teachers are supported, and how classroom practice aligns with the BC curriculum.

Supporting Teachers

October also included an in-service for new and early-career teachers focused on using manipulatives effectively and incorporating high-yield math routines that support deep mathematical thinking. The session provided time to explore strategies, share classroom examples, and build confidence in using hands-on tools to strengthen number sense. Watch for the upcoming January workshop on division!



News from Learning Services

District Principal, Kaley Wasylowich

Inclusion Calendar

Stories from Our Schools



DIWALI

October 20, 2025

Diwali was recognized in many schools over the morning announcements and Diwali-themed learning activities. Some extended the celebration by connecting outdoor learning with what students explored about Diwali throughout the week.



REMEMBRANCE DAY

November 11, 2025

Staff and students gathered for Remembrance Day assemblies to listen to songs and poems, observe a moment of silence, and reflect on the importance of peace.



ROCK YOUR MOCS!

November 9-15, 2025

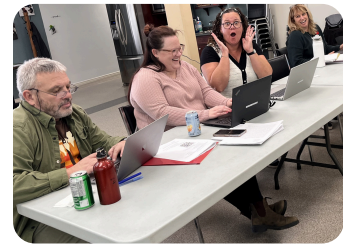
Rock Your Mocs is an annual movement where Indigenous people and supporters wear their moccasins to celebrate culture, identity, and pride.



METIS FLAG-RAISING CEREMONY

November 13, 2025

MBSS held a Metis flag-raising ceremony to recognize, honour, and celebrate Metis people and their heritage, culture, and community.



POPARD

The Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders (POPARD) presented to a number of schools in early November on "How AI Can Work For You".

Learning Services Teachers, Classroom Teachers, and Education Assistants attended sessions in both Fernie and Cranbrook and took some great ideas about AI and inclusion back to their school teams.



DHH Halloween Get Together

Sarah Holmes, Teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, brought students together for a "DHH Halloween Get Together" to build friendships and foster feelings of confidence and pride in their identities. It was a great day of laughter and connecting with peers who share similar experiences.



OUTDOOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



Take Me Outside Day

Take Me Outside Day was enjoyed on October 22 in many schools including École Isabella Dicken Elementary and Kootenay Orchards Elementary.



Mount Baker Secondary Environmental Awareness Program

Students in the Mount Baker Environmental Awareness Program trained for and carried out a very successful 3-day canoe trip on Columbia Lake. Students enjoyed walking and camping near the Spirit trail, hearing the Ktunaxa creation story and seeing pictographs along the trail. The students showed determination and resilience facing wind and rain on the last day of the trip!





IN THE SCHOOLS



News from Schools Across the District

Fernie Secondary Athletic Arts Trip

Fernie Secondary students turned learning into a live, high-flying adventure under the Cirque du Soleil Big Top. In Calgary, grade 10-12 students experienced the mind-blowing Cirque du Soleil: ECHO, watching acrobats launch through the air, aerialists spin by their hair and teeth, and performers balance on impossibly thin wires.

It was a powerful blend of strength, movement, and live performance. It was an unforgettable experiential learning opportunity. This multidisciplinary project grew from a collaboration between the PE and Drama Departments, connecting athletics and the arts. It was the kind of learning experience that stays with students long after the curtain falls.



Exemplary Work

Delilah G at Fernie Secondary created a full diorama of building used by the three estates prior to the French Revolution.



Elementary Volleyball

Congratulations to Pinewood Elementary and Kootenay Orchards Elementary for winning the elementary volleyball tournament at the College of the Rockies..



École Isabella Dicken Elementary Grade Six Cooking Club



A Picture Says a Thousand Words...



East Kootenay Heritage Fair Cranbrook History Centre

May 8-9, 2026



The Heritage Fair is a student-led celebration of Canadian history, designed to foster curiosity, personal connection, and pride in our shared stories. Through participation, students develop essential skills in research, communication, and critical thinking.

The District will provide bussing to the event at Royal Alexandra Hall, making the fair more accessible and ensuring that all learners from every community have the opportunity to participate.

Class registration is now open through January 30, 2026 — at no cost.

cranbrookhistorycentre.com/learn/heritage-fair



MOUNT BAKER WILD THEATRE PRESENTS

ELF Jr

the musical

BOOK BY
THOMAS MEEHAN & BOB
MARTIN

MUSIC BY
MATTHEW SKYLAR

LYRICS BY
CHAD BEGUELIN

*Dec 11th - 13th at 7pm and
Dec 14th at 3pm*

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE KEY CITY
THEATRE BOX OFFICE OR AT
KEYCITYTHEATRE.COM



KEY CITY
THEATRE