

# SUPERINTENDENT'S MONTHLY UPDATE



## JANUARY 2025

*Happy New Year!*

*As we begin 2025, I'm very pleased to share stories from around the Rocky Mountain School District that highlight the intentional actions being taken to create safe, welcoming and academically rich learning environments that support student success Kindergarten through Grade 12.*

## MARYSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Aligning with their School Success Plan, teachers at Marysville Elementary have been collaborating to create meaningful numeracy tasks for the K-3 classes. The staff have been using Peter Liljedahl's book ['Mathematics Tasks for the Thinking Classroom'](#) as a key resource to support their efforts.

A numeracy task is different than a traditional word problem. Tasks are open ended, have more than one way to solve them, have more than one answer and involve collaboration and communication between students. Thoughtful questioning by the teacher is required to stretch thinking and challenge students as they work through the task.

With the School Success Plan focused on improving understanding through summarizing and justifying, creating and teaching tasks as a collaborative group has been meeting several aspects of the school goal. Staff believe that using tasks improves students' ability to summarize and justify learning (I think \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_), and the focus has given teachers an opportunity to learn more about strategies that improve comprehension in math.

In a few classrooms, MES Principal Stacy DeCosse has modeled the writing, teaching and assessing of numeracy tasks and teachers have spent time observing the task and students. After lessons, teachers debriefed on what they observed, what went well, and what could be improved upon. The group also discussed using the BC Learning Pathways to provide feedback and use as assessment tools.

The staff have enjoyed working and learning together and more collaborative task days are being planned for 2025.



*K-3 students use vertical surfaces to collaborate on rich numeracy tasks at Marysville Elementary School*





## NICHOLSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



*With a focus on the uniqueness of their own brains, students are learning to value diversity at Nicholson Elementary.*

At Nicholson Elementary School, one of the schoolwide goals is for students to learn about themselves as unique individuals and value diversity in themselves and others. With a November focus on Neurodiversity, the theme was ‘Everyone’s Brain Looks Different’. Teachers used a variety of text resources and videos to support their lessons on how our brains are different, leading to rich class discussions about the similarities and differences between our brains.

Over the course of the month, students created a map of their brain that included all the images and words that depicted what they feel and think. In Grade 2/3, students also wrote about how their brain helps them, such as “My brain can help read books and do backflips” and “My brain likes to learn”. Each classroom displayed their diverse brains on the bulletin board in the hallway for the whole school community to view.

The next schoolwide focus will be ‘Family Dynamics’ and students will consider their unique family structure, showing all the family members that support their growth and development.

## STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY



*Rocky Mountain School District has established many partnerships this year in support of food security.*

Within the district’s priority area ‘Stewardship for the Future’, there is a clear emphasis on collaborating with community partners to enhance food security in 2024-25. Significant progress has been made in this regard across the communities of Golden, Invermere, and Kimberly, as well as with regional, provincial, and national organizations. Just some of these partnerships include:

- North Okanagan Land to Table Network & Farm to School BC
- Farm to Cafeteria Canada & Coalition for Healthy School Food
- Seamus Damstrom, Dietitian with Interior Health
- Kevin Morrall, Akisqnuq First Nation
- Golden, Columbia Valley and Kimberley/Cranbrook Food Banks
- Groundswell

RMSD would like to extend a special ‘shout out’ to Kimberley Food Recovery for their support of an exciting pilot program featuring a ‘meal a week’ commencing soon at McKim Middle School!





## SCHOOLWIDE ACTIVITY TIME AT LADY GREY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Schoolwide Activity Time has become a fixture in the Lady Grey Elementary School schedule for the past few years. Time has been built into each week to allow for whole school activities such as assemblies and other opportunities for students and staff to engage in meaningful, fun experiences.

So far this year the school has used this time to honour Orange Shirt Day, discuss the Code of Conduct, and host school wide bingo. There have also been times when students chose from a variety of activities including card games, volleyball, board games, singing, drawing and outdoor activities like ultimate frisbee.

Most recently in December, Lady Grey hosted 'Crafternoon' and students had a choice of 15 different winter crafts to pick from. Parents and guardians were also invited in to make the craft with their child.

These events involve students and staff across all grade levels and provide an opportunity for students to interact with peers from a variety of age groups and social circles. These activities have helped to create a sense of belonging among students and contribute positively to the overall school culture.



*Learners and caregivers participate in a recent Schoolwide Activity Time at Lady Grey Elementary School.*

## DISTRICT STAFF HAVE SOME FUN IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL FOOD BANKS



*Pictured above are Yucki the Sloth and Assistant Superintendent Steve Wyer.*

Many RMSD schools and work sites took the opportunity heading into the Winter Break to give back to the local community in some way.

In an effort to raise funds for local food banks, staff at the District Office 'competed' for one-year guardianship of Yucki the Sloth. 'Winning' the competition was Assistant Superintendent Steve Wyer, who will now have Yucki in his office until December 2026!

Congratulations, Steve, and thank you to everyone who organized and participated in the fundraiser which saw \$470 donated to our three community food banks.





## EARLY LITERACY ENGAGEMENT AT ALEXANDER PARK ELEMENTARY

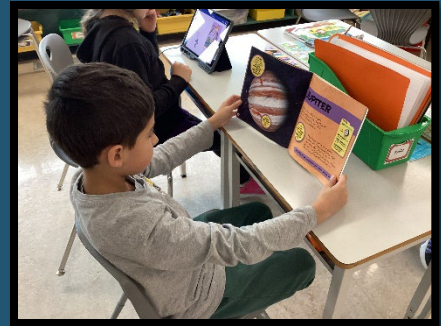
This year District Principal of Early Learning Glenn Goslin has collaborated with schools on the Early Learning Framework and the new Learning in the Primary Years document, emphasizing Pedagogical Narration. This process involves gathering evidence of student learning to make it visible and engage in dialogue about students' knowledge and next steps.

In engaging in this work at Alexander Park Elementary School, Grade 2-3 teacher Melinda Muller is focused on helping students build their metacognition of reading - ensuring they understand what they read, why they choose specific texts, and how they select their reading materials. By supporting students in knowing themselves as readers, it builds their ability to direct their own growth in learning.

In this classroom students are making book choices and reflecting on their reading preferences. Many have shared what they find easy and what they need to improve, while some require prompts for deeper engagement. The teacher implemented “book shopping” time and lessons to support the students’ choices.

Students have begun articulating their reasons for choosing certain books. One stated “I chose this book because I love the pictures, the facts and I can read most of the words”.

This initiative has allowed Ms. Muller to better understand students' strengths and needs in reading. Future steps may include partnering with the Golden Public Library and local bookstores to further develop students' reading interests.



*Learners in Ms. Muller's Grades 2-3 class at Alexander Park Elementary School are developing reading independence.*

## COOKING UP ATOMIC PIZZA AT SELKIRK...

Learners in Mr. Mendez's Chemistry 11 class at Selkirk Secondary School recently engaged in a deep dive into atomic particles. Rather than complete worksheets to demonstrate their learning, Mr. Mendez asked students to create customized pizzas to model the atomic structure!



*Selkirk Chemistry 11 learners demonstrate their learning in the kitchen!*





## OPEN HOUSE HELD AT THE NEW ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHILDCARE

In the fall of 2022, Rocky Mountain School District submitted a ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund application to build a new childcare facility on the grounds of Marysville Elementary School. This application was prepared in partnership with Summit Community Services Society who agreed to be the third-party operator. In December of 2022 the application was approved by the Ministry of Education and Child Care and was supported with a grant from Columbia Basin Trust. On February 2, 2023 a groundbreaking event was held with then Minister of State for Child Care, Grace Lore, attending. Construction on the facility began that fall.



*An Open House was recently held at Rocky Mountain Childcare, adjacent to Marysville Elementary School, to celebrate the completion of the new facility.*



*Pictured at the Open House are Rocky Mountain School District Director of Instruction Crystal MacLeod and Summit Childcare Director Cheryl Anderson.*

On Monday, January 6 the school district proudly hosted an Open House with Summit Community Services Society at the new Rocky Mountain Childcare Centre in Marysville. The purpose of this event was to celebrate the construction completion and share the building with the public. The evening was a huge success with approximately 200 families and community members attending including Mayor Don McCormick, Christine Hoehsmann from Columbia Basin Trust, Trustee Darryl Oakley, and Columbia River-Revelstoke MLA Scott McInnis.

This project would not have been possible without the Rocky Mountain School District Board of Education's approval, the Ministry of Education and Child Care's financial commitment to have an Early Learning and Child Care Lead in each district across the province, and the ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund. Additionally, the partnership with Summit and the time and effort of the school district's Finance Department, Operations Department, and Senior Leadership Team have all been instrumental in bringing this facility to life.

