

# SUPERINTENDENT'S MONTHLY UPDATE



## FEBRUARY 2025

### EDGEWATER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RELATIONS

‘Stewardship for the Future’ has been a priority for students and staff at Edgewater Elementary School this year, with intentional efforts focused on developing partnerships within the local community and taking the learning beyond the walls of the classroom.

The four principles of stewardship are ownership, responsibility, accountability and reward. With these in mind, a number of ideas were generated early in the year to kickstart this initiative, including engaging in land-based learning, partnering on projects with local service groups, making connections with local seniors, and developing a better understanding of and appreciation for the local community. These plans are now coming to fruition, and students are making strong connections across the curriculum, competencies and community.



*Grade 4-5 students head out to deliver ‘thank you’ cards and flowers to local businesses for their support of Edgewater Elementary School.*



*Members of the Leadership Club connect with local seniors during a visit to Columbia House and Columbia Garden Village retirement homes in Invermere.*

In the Fall, learning beyond the classroom saw students focus on salmon and their importance here in the Columbia Valley. Through this study, students also made connections to language, building relevant vocabulary in Ktunaxa, Secwépemc, Michif and French.

Members of the Leadership Club also made their first of four planned visits to Columbia House and Columbia Garden Village retirement homes in Invermere where they spent the day with local seniors. The students had time to read, play cards, play bingo and simply chat with elders.

Students and staff are excited for this work to continue in the second half of the school year.





# WORKING ALONGSIDE SHUSWAP BAND



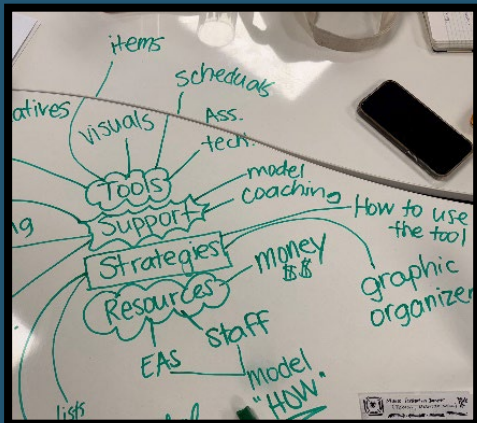
RMSD has entered into an agreement with Shuswap Band in support of student success.

Aligning with the Board’s Strategic Plan priority area of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Rocky Mountain School District has entered into an agreement with Shuswap Band in support of the success of their 40+ learners. The Local Education Agreement (LEA) was implemented effective October 2024, with ongoing implementation efforts being led by a Joint Oversight Team consisting of both school district and Shuswap representatives.

Recently the first round of school-based meetings were held across the Windermere community schools, and an upcoming LEA Celebration is planned for February 20<sup>th</sup> to be held at David Thompson Secondary from 5-7 PM.

District Principal of Indigenous Education and Equity, Jenny Reid, indicated that the school-based meetings have emphasized the exceptional work of the schools in both supporting Shuswap students and collaborating with the Shuswap Band. The schools’ partnership with the Shuswap Student Navigator exemplifies this collaborative approach, ensuring everyone works together effectively to support Shuswap students.

# NEW TEACHER COLLABORATION



New Teacher collaboration took place recently in Invermere with a focus on Inclusion, Curriculum and MyEd.

A second collaboration session for New Teachers took place on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, aligning with the ‘Capacity for Self & Others’ priority area of the Board’s Strategic Plan. Teams continued conversations about the BC curriculum, as well as explored both MyEd and inclusionary classroom practices. School District team members supporting the day included IT’s Karsen Seel, Director Trent Dolgopol and Assistant Superintendent Steve Wyer.

Through discussion teachers addressed questions about what inclusion should look like in today’s classrooms. Top of mind was students’ sense of belonging, seeing themselves in the learning and the use of Universal Designs for Learning (UDL) to normalize supports and tools for inclusion. Success stories centered on the way students feel, connect, and demonstrate agency when they are able to meaningfully participate in classroom learning.

Teams also spent some time talking about ways the BC Learning Pathways can assist in planning for inclusion and student reporting. The BC Learning Pathways provide descriptive language about proficiency in numeracy and literacy, allowing teachers to best meet the differing abilities of students in the classroom.





## DRUMMING IN THE NEW YEAR AT J.A. LAIRD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



A strong arts education benefits all students, communities, and societies by contributing to the development of well-rounded, educated citizens. Students at J. A. Laird Elementary School have had a wonderful start to the new year by participating in weekly drumming workshops hosted by Patrick Carrick from *Rhythm by Nature*. These sessions provide a supplement to the school's Arts curriculum, as students participate in fun, hands-on activities that teach musical concepts such as beat, rhythm, tempo, pitch and dynamics.



In addition, these sessions address many of the Core Competencies as students learn about teamwork, collaboration and cooperation. Each class is working toward a performance piece they will present at the school's Family Assembly scheduled for Tuesday February 11<sup>th</sup>.



Staff and students at J. A. Laird are very grateful to have received a grant from the charitable organization ArtStarts in Schools, as well as funding through the school's Parent Advisory Council, to make this initiative a success. A big shout-out to Patrick Carrick, who provides a fun and engaging environment where every student can experience a sense of success and achievement.

*With a focus on curriculum and competencies, students at J.A. Laird Elementary School participate in weekly drumming sessions with Patrick Carrick. Funding for the initiative has come from ArtStarts in Schools and the school's PAC.*







## OVERCOMING OBSTACLES PROGRAM HAVING IMPACT AT MCKIM MIDDLE SCHOOL

Aligning with the school's goal of fostering a supportive and empathetic environment, the Overcoming Obstacles program has ignited a transformative journey in conflict resolution among students. This month, the Youth Care team crafted powerful lessons focusing on the importance of the language we use in our conversations every day.

Student conversations focused on the importance of empathy. Ms. Justine and Mr. Anders encapsulated this by encouraging them to "put themselves in someone else's shoes." By revisiting earlier discussions on consent and boundaries, they deepened their understanding of interpersonal relationships. The lesson began with reflections on the profound effects of both kind and hurtful words, prompting students to connect emotionally with their own experiences.



*McKim Middle School students consider the power of their words in a lesson as part of the Overcoming Obstacles Program.*



*As part of the work on conflict resolution, students focus on empathy and language, with specific emphasis on kind and hurtful words. Like toothpaste, words can't be put back in the tube!*

To illustrate these concepts, a thought-provoking video was used to highlight the weight of words. This exploration of language culminated in a powerful activity with toothpaste, demonstrating that while unkind words can be easy to say, they often leave lasting impressions, much like trying to put toothpaste back into a tube.

Students left the session with the understanding that their words hold immense power. By prioritizing kindness and empathy, they committed to using language that builds friendships and nurtures a positive community.

The success of this program reaffirms McKim Middle School's dedication to the emotional well-being of its students, paving the way for a generation that values the school mantra 'Good thoughts, good words, and good deeds'.





## LANGUAGE-BASED LEARNING INITIATIVE AT DAVID THOMPSON SECONDARY

This year at DTSS, the staff started strong by gathering together on the land to learn how to identify plants, their Ktunaxa names, and their traditional uses. Alfred Joseph’s Walkabout was the perfect place for the staff to get in sync for the school year. Led by Ktunaxa teacher Martina Escutin (DTSS Class of 2012) and using Alfred’s trail markings, staff trained their ears and strengthened their tongues to pronounce the Ktunaxa plant names. It was a joyful day spent in the forest. Staff was appreciative for Alfred’s work, labeling the plants, and developing and sharing his Walkabout Language Learning guide. This experience taught the staff that “Ktunaxa is all around us”.

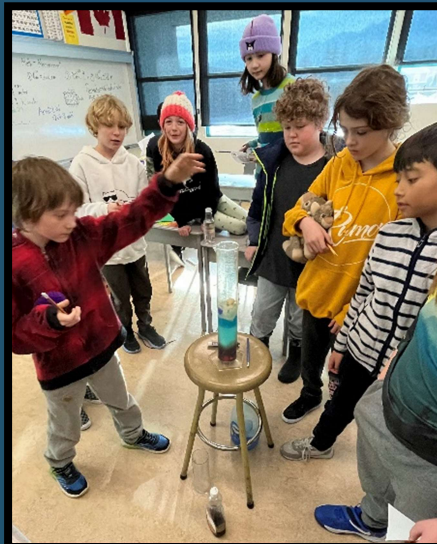
In the Fall, Gr. 8 teachers Mr. Cortes and Ms. Salucop also took their students to experience the walkabout with Alfred as their guide. It was an excellent extension of their August learning. There are plans to continue this initiative by working with students from EMP to label plants from the Walkabout book on a nearby walking trail. This collaborative, community-building plan highlights the commitment to celebrating Indigenous language and knowledge at DTSS.



Staff from David Thompson Secondary School build personal and professional capacity by participating in Alfred Joseph’s Walkabout, learning Ktunaxa language with teacher and former DTSS student Martina Escutin. Ktunaxa is everywhere!



Shuswap Elder Diana Cote works alongside a student at Open Doors Alternate School with a focus on traditional medicines.



Students in Mr. Hein’s class at Lady Grey Elementary participate in a density inquiry.

## SOCIAL MEDIA SNIPPETS

Follow us on [Facebook!](#)

