

We are grateful to live, work, and play on the unceded, ancestral territories of fourteen First Nations representing the Dakelh, Nedut'en and Wet'suwet'en peoples. We are working diligently towards creating equity for our learners through conscious Acts of Reconciliation.

Hadih/Hadi/Hadeeh and Welcome to Dak'et (FALL)

As we move deeper into the fall, our schools are settling into the rhythm of the academic year. Classrooms are buzzing with learning, and it has been wonderful to see students re-engaging in school sports and clubs. These activities are more than just extracurricular—they are essential to building connection, confidence, and community among our learners. The energy across our schools is a testament to the dedication of our staff and the enthusiasm of our students.

While we celebrate these bright spots, staffing continues to be a challenge. We are actively working to fill key support staff roles, and I want to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of our teams who are navigating these pressures with resilience and creativity. The Board's support in this area remains vital as we strive to maintain safe, inclusive, and well-supported learning environments.

This month also marks the launch of our Strategic Plan update process, a key initiative that will shape our district's direction over the coming years. As part of the Ministry of Education's Framework for Enhancing Student Learning, our Strategic Plan must align with provincial expectations and reflect our commitment to continuous improvement in student outcomes. It serves as a roadmap—setting clear priorities, guiding decision-making, and ensuring accountability to our communities.

To ensure the plan reflects the voices of our rightsholders and stakeholders, we are preparing a comprehensive engagement process. Advertisements will be rolling out shortly with details on how individuals and groups can participate. In-person engagement sessions will be held in Fort St. James, Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake, and Burns Lake, complemented by online face-to-face sessions to increase accessibility. Additionally, online and paper surveys will be available to gather broad input from across the district.

Alongside this work, we are collaborating with the Northern working group to develop an updated Accessibility Plan, reinforcing our commitment to inclusive education and equitable access for all learners. We are also refining our Strategic Workplan for the current school year, which outlines our immediate priorities and actions. Once finalized, this workplan will be posted to our website, alongside our Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Report, which was submitted to the Ministry of Education and Child Care at the end of September. Together, these documents reflect our district's ongoing cycle of planning, action, and reflection in pursuit of excellence for every student.

I look forward to working closely with the Board throughout these important initiatives and appreciate your leadership and guidance as we move forward together in shaping a Strategic Plan that reflects our shared vision for student success.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita McClinton

(she/her)
Superintendent

Strategic Plan Updates: GOAL 1: Honour Diversity

Orange Shirt Day Across Nechako Lakes



DLES Huskies wore orange on Monday, September 29th to honour the children who never made it home from residential schools.

FLESS students posing under their newly hung Nadleh Whut'en flag during their Orange Shirt Day recognition.



Orange Shirt Day at Sinkut View Elementary



In the week leading up to September 29th, our learners teamed up (the gr 4/5/6 class worked with the K/1s) to learn about the significance of Orange Shirt Day and created orange hearts together.

These hearts were put up in the hallway by the water fountain in the entrance:



We started the day on the 29th in a good way with an assembly. We are so grateful that Cecilia John is working here on Monday mornings and she was able to join us. Mrs. John shared some of her personal experience and sang a beautiful song "Four Winds." It was incredibly special!



Students engaged in reflective writing after the assembly and created orange shirts using a template that had been shared by Mrs. John.



Culture and Language at Decker Lake Elementary

DLES huskies have had the pleasure of participating in Culture and Language classes with Helen Michelle and Steven Patrick this fall. Mrs. Michelle is a hereditary chief with the Skin Tye Nation and brings with her many wonder stories about her culture and much knowledge about the Carrier language. Children enjoyed learning about her regalia, drums and walking stick. Huskies also enjoyed making soapberry ice cream and learning the Carrier/ Nedut'en words for local animals. Huskies also had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Jesse Fairley during one of their lessons. Mr. Fairley taught huskies the word for bull moose.



Language and Culture at Francois Lake Elementary



Starting on September 12th and occurring every second Friday, Stephen Patrick (Nee Tahi Buhn) and Helen Michelle (Skin Tyee) visit our school to present Carrier language and culture lessons to the two divisions. During this first lesson, they shared the significance of a talking stick in their culture and reviewed some common phrases with learners. Our school community looks forward to this continued partnership as we dive deeper into the language and cultural significances. Helen and Stephen are passionate about preserving Indigenous language and culture.

Strategic Plan Updates: GOAL 3: Create Student Success

Feeding Futures Food Program

Our school food program continues to grow and experience successes all across the District. Here are some highlights and comments from the past few weeks:

- We are grateful to have a new school meal worker join the staff at FSJSS! One day this week, Corrie cooked up 270 meatballs (6 meatballs per portion), made with Reimers ground beef, and rice for lunch. All portions were served and gone within 6 minutes!
- Today's lunch menu is fresh chicken noodle soup and apple crisp – the aromas in this school are making me hungry!
- The kids like this menu. The jerk chicken was a big hit – there were no leftovers at all.
- Thank you so much – this program is such a huge stress off my plate with all of the cost of groceries being so high. It is a life saver!
- Ordering lunches is so easy now, compared to last year! Thank you again for the opportunity to have subsidized lunches for our kiddos. ❤️



Left: WKE food worker Tracy, Indigenous Education Advocate Rhoda, and Anthony.



Corrie and Crystal – ready to serve FSJSS learners. Chicken noodle soup and apple crisp... delicious!

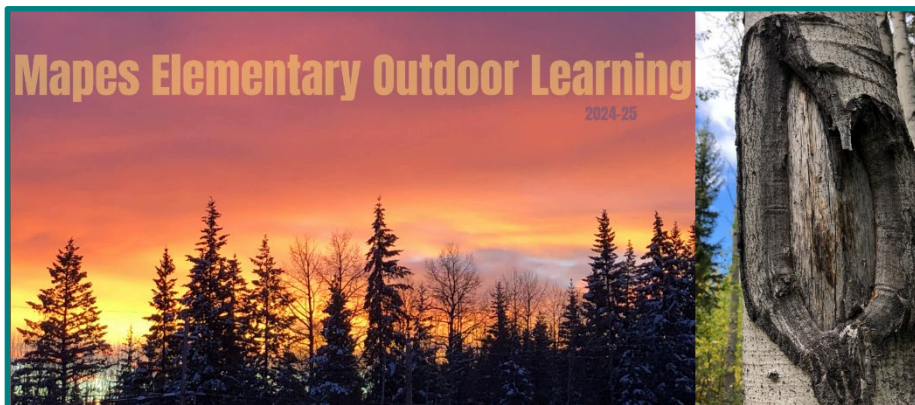
Strategic Plan Updates: GOAL 4: Enhance Connections



Mapes Elementary Outdoor Learning

Mapes Elementary and myNVSS are gearing up for another year of learning and fun on the trails. With the support of SD91 Career & Trades Programs, Networks of Inquiry Indigenous Education (NOIE), and a neighbouring land-owner, we have been hard at work planning trail enhancements and other activities to help students develop leadership, collaboration, and self-regulation skills. This year, Mapes' NOIE project will focus on the Core Competency goal area of Personal and Social and on developing student inquiry skills in multi-age groupings. Students

from myNVSS have several visits planned this fall and we are excited to invite other local elementary schools to visit as well. The progress we have made on this project would not be possible without strong connections between schools and community. From a community member allowing us to use their land, to high school students building our storage shed, to elementary and middle school learners teaming up to build trails, every aspect of this project is a celebration of working together towards our goals of engaging our workforce, enhancing connections, and creating student success.



EBUS Outdoor Learning on Stelat'en Territory



On Friday, October 3rd, EBUS Academy hosted a day of outdoor learning on Stelat'en territory. This is a trip that Nikki Arnold & Marty Floris have organized for the last number of years [this was year #22], and it included a nature scavenger hunt, a salmon dissection, a visit from BC Wildlife & Fisheries, and fresh bannock. This year, we were joined by the 4/5/6 students from Sinkut View. It was especially rewarding for those of us who have been teaching for a while as the teacher, and three parent volunteers from Sinkut View were former students [one of whom was on the same field trip herself when she was in grade 7]. Thanks also go to Dave Mack and Alex Chan, who led students on a nature walk to help out with their scavenger hunts.



Spirit North and RCMP at DLES



Huskies are fortunate to have Spirit North visit our school every Wednesday. Spirit North works to empower all children through sport and play. Spirit North leaders have been biking, trail walking and playing with our huskies.



The kindergarten class enjoyed learning how to do the long jump with the assistance of members from our local RCMP last week.



Sinkut View Elementary Terry Fox Run

We had a great time with learners who started running at lunch time (actually, even in the morning!). They each got a popsicle stick on which we printed their names and gave them a tally mark for each lap around our school yard.

The official run started at 2 pm after our September assembly. Students learnt a bit more about Terry Fox in the assembly, after learning in their classes previously. Some parents attended the assembly as well and we included a celebration of learning by reviewing photos from the month that passed.



The run was supported by Ashley Howe who facilitates the run in the community. She donated swag. We also had PAC setting up a table cooking hotdogs that were left over from a social the week before as well as serving hot chocolate donated by the local Coop.



We ran for approximately 45 minutes, cheering and adding tally marks, singing along to songs we had playing from a speaker and having a great time. It was raining but everyone was in great spirits! Our grade ½ class won with their total of 212 laps. One learner, Brodie Howe in gr 6, ran 50 laps this day! We raised more than \$200.

Community Connections at Francois Lake

The Link, a non-profit organization that provides services that help build community capacity, delivers food purchased through the Feeding Futures initiative and delivers it to Francois Lake Elementary School. Students have opportunities to eat breakfast, snacks, and lunches daily because of this partnership and the hard work of the School Meals Worker, Janice Babych.

Our school community hosted an Open House on September 18th. Families were invited to drop by the school to meet the teachers, administrators, and Trustee, Nyree Hazelton; visit their child's classroom and tour the school. The event concluded in the library with a read aloud by guest Leona Prince, Director of Indigenous Education.



Employee Recognition:

This month, we joined communities around the globe in celebrating World Teachers' Day, a moment to reflect on and honour the incredible work our educators do every single day. Our teachers are the heart of our schools—champions of learning, mentors to our students, and leaders in creating safe, inclusive, and inspiring environments. Their dedication, creativity, and care make a lasting difference in the lives of our learners, and we are deeply grateful for all they do.

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