

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

It was another busy month in the district with many learning and extracurricular activities in full swing.

Hundreds of students participated in athletics over the past few months, in volleyball, football, rugby, soccer, and cross country running. Several teams won regional tournaments and zones to qualify for provincials. The dedication of the players and coaches is evident given the extensive travel and time required to play sports in rural BC. In addition, school clubs are active in most schools in a variety of activities for students from all backgrounds.

Staff, students, and communities recently reflected and honoured the veterans with Remembrance Day ceremonies at schools and in all communities.

November 8th was a special day for Indigenous veterans, is often overshadowed, but there is a proud tradition of Indigenous contributions from members of the local First Nations.

[Carrier Sekani Tribal Council Celebrates Indigenous Veterans Day - November 8 and Remembrance Day](#)

Remembrance Day is growing ever more important to remember the past to help with our future. The world is rapidly changing, and Remembrance Day stands as a poignant reminder that we all play a role in remembering the past to help our future.



As we look forward to having some snow on the ground for snowshoeing and skiing, it is always a good time to get outside and enjoy the pristine beauty and fresh air our region offers.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Skinner
Interim Superintendent

Strategic Plan Updates: GOAL 1: Honour Diversity



StrongStart BC Pilot in SD91

Child Health BC selected 23 school districts to participate in a new StrongStart BC Pilot Project. SD91 was one of the chosen school districts and we are pleased to share that Brandi Rivard, David Hoy StrongStart facilitator, will be the StrongStart facilitator engaged in this pilot. The Early Development Index (EDI) data was used in helping select districts for this pilot that makes support accessible for all community members in a safe and respectful centre.

This school year, Brandi will use the two key resources: [Appetite to Play](#) and [Feelings First](#) in her StrongStart program. These resources focus on enhancing healthy eating, physical activity, and social emotional development. As part of the pilot project, she will complete some training sessions to implement activities and recipes with parents and caregivers in the community of Fort St James.



This pilot is being led by Child Health BC and supported by the Ministry of Education and Child Care as well as the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. A note of gratitude to Suzanne and Brandi for their support of this project!

Inclusive Education Department

[Inclusive Education](#) means that all students attend and are welcomed at their school in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute, and participate in all aspects of the life of the school.

Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs, and activities so that all students learn and participate together.

Schools are the heart of our communities, and Inclusion BC believes they are essential for a quality inclusive education system. Therefore, we believe it is important to support a public education system in BC.



Benefits of Inclusive Education

All children benefit from inclusive education. It allows them to:

- Develop individual strengths and gifts, with high and appropriate expectations for each child.
- Work on individual goals while participating in the life of the classroom with other students their own age.
- Involve their parents in their education and in the activities of their local schools.

- Foster a school culture of respect and belonging. Inclusive education provides opportunities to learn about and accept individual differences, lessening the impact of harassment and bullying.
- Develop friendships with a wide variety of other children, each with their own individual needs and abilities.
- Positively affect both their school and community to appreciate diversity and inclusion on a broader level.

It is important because we value our diverse communities. Our communities start at school, where all students learn to live alongside peers. They learn together; they play together; they grow and are nurtured together.

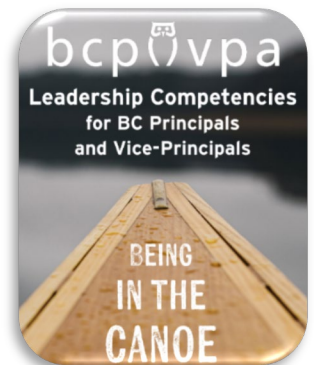
Strategic Plan Updates: GOAL 2: Engage our Workforce



BCPVPA Update Leadership

In 2020, the BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association (BCPVPA) began the process of revising our foundational documents through the lens of equity. The revision team that was formed recognized that they did not represent those with the lived experience to critically revise the documents, so they committed to Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion training. They provided guidance to form a process for gathering diverse voices in the BCPVPA membership that could help guide the work.

Throughout the 2023-2024 year, the BCPVPA's draft Leadership Competencies were field-tested, and various groups provided analysis and feedback. The BCPVPA Professional Learning and Development Advisors and Representatives participated in a design thinking session to operationalize the Professional Growth Plan resources.



New Teachers and LOPs

In September and October, District VP Deb Koehn has actively supported new teachers and Letter of Permission (LOP) teachers. She regularly visits classrooms to connect with teachers hired within the past year and those new to the district. Together, they review the BC curriculum and discuss strategies for creating lesson plans, unit plans, and year-long overviews that align with educational standards.

Deb emphasizes the importance of clear assessment practices by working closely with new teachers on using proficiency scales and establishing transparent learning intentions and criteria. This helps students understand their goals and assessment expectations. She also engages teachers and students in co-designing rubrics to create a collaborative approach to learning and evaluation.



Recognizing the need for mentorship, Deb facilitates time for new teachers to receive guidance from experienced educators and to develop enriching learning opportunities. She assists them in navigating district requirements, connecting with parents, and addressing typical first-year challenges.

Additionally, Deb prioritizes the emotional well-being of these educators by fostering a supportive environment and ensuring principals and vice-principals are aware of new teachers' needs.

Deb's work has provided significant time and resources over the past few years to support the new staff. We will continue to invest in recruitment and retention strategies.

Building Thinking Classrooms

Dr. Judy Larsen from the Building Thinking Classroom Team spent two days at WKE and LDSS in Burns Lake on Oct 21st and 22nd. The workshop included co-planning as well as co-teaching with the involved teachers as well a reflection period each day.

Based on the work of Dr. Peter Liljedahl, the elementary learners engaged in using vertical spaces to develop conceptual understanding around double digit multiplication and visual representations, while the secondary learners (Grade 9) connected proportions and fractions in a local place setting. There will be a virtual follow-up session with teachers on November 27th to reflect on how the implementation of the Building Thinking classroom practices continues to provide a framework for both teacher and learners to build conceptual understanding of curricular concepts



Strategic Plan Updates: GOAL 3: Create Student Success

Student Attendance Focus and Support

School administration and district staff have, as part of the Strategic workplan, been focusing on tracking student attendance and digging deeper into why students are not attending and then providing more support and options to improve school participation. Research and experience tell us that regular school attendance leads to greater success in all aspects of learning. We have many students who have struggles getting to school and the reasons vary, from family commitments, mental health concerns, family stability, peer issues to name a few. The goal in SD 91 is to support each student based on their individual circumstances to find the pathway to better attendance and success.



The Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIIE)



SD91 remains committed to our partnership with NOIIE and recognizes the significant impact of our collaborative efforts. We are currently engaged in four key initiatives: the Literacy and Numeracy Indigenous network, the Social Emotional Learning network, and the newly launched Indigenous Education Impact Initiative inquiry, as well as the regular inquiry studies any school can embark on. We are excited to anticipate the participation of 10-12 school teams this year, reflecting our dedication to fostering positive change in education.

Nechako Lakes has been recognized by NOIIE as a leader in Inquiry initiatives and this is due to the dedication of the Curriculum Services team and the many staff from all the communities who have embarked on this important work. Our district NOIIE team has met and identified two excellent schools looking to examine new ways to improve Indigenous student outcomes.

Jesse Kennedy, principal of BESS, collaborated with Michelle and Roberta last year in the Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Network and we feel his school's current initiatives better align with the NOIIE Indigenous Impact objectives. LDSS in Burns Lake is new to this work, and the new Principal, Cheryl Peterson, is particularly enthusiastic about joining the learning initiative.

Strategic Plan Updates: GOAL 4: Enhance Connections



"Talk About Learning Time"

All schools across the district hosted time in their buildings in late October to meet parents, guardians, and caregivers to discuss learning, resources, and progress reports. This time occurs twice a year and is a great opportunity to meet staff, build relationships and learning more about their child's progress. Schools have reported that the turnout was quite strong, and staff appreciated the time to meet many new families.

University of Victoria/Ministry Bursary Pilot

A recent collaboration between SD91, the Ministry of Education and Child Care, and the University of Victoria through a Northern Pilot Bursary program. Simon came to NVSS in Vanderhoof in mid-September to complete his final practicum for teaching. Under the bursary program, Simon received \$8,000 to support his travel and living costs.

Simon enjoyed his time at NVSS and commented that the support for staff and the district was exceptional and this practicum was a great experience.

SD91 will continue to participate in this pilot program next school year in the hope of attracting and retaining new certified teachers.



The Foundry Building Progress in Burns Lake

Hosted by the Carrier Sekani Family Services agency, Foundry Burns Lake unites multiple partner organizations, including SD91, that will address the health, and wellness needs of young people aged 12 to 24 and their families who live in the Burns Lake area.

The input of youth, caregivers, service providers and the community is needed for the success of Burns Lake Foundry.

Director of Instruction for Inclusive Education, Claire McKay, has been on the Foundry planning team for the past several years and is excited to see the additional service coming to the Burns Lake area in 2025.



Employee Recognition

This month I want to recognize the many staff volunteers that go above and beyond each week to work with children and youth outside of regular work hours. District staff have high rates of volunteerism in all our communities and this in turn helps support the development and growth of youth in a different context for the regular school day.

Sports, clubs and other youth service organizations benefit from the thousands of hours of time each year. Thanks to all the volunteers!



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