



IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO HOST A FESTIVAL! We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our incredible **garden angels** for their dedication and care in making our school garden flourish—your contributions truly brought the spirit of the harvest to life! Thank you to our **Hot Lunch Coordinator** Rebecca Stauffer and our **Kitchen Kids' Grandmas** for the soup, muffins and cookies. Thank you to **PSS Indigenous Student Advocate** Kristi Rees for bringing some PSS students to volunteer to help serve the food. Finally, we want to send a huge shout out to **Highway 40** for providing the perfect soundtrack to our celebration. Your music added joy, energy and a whole lot of fun to the festival!



At JAE our learning focus includes **Guided Reading & Leveled Literacy Instruction**, which are key components of a differentiated literacy approach designed to support all learners. We offer small group instruction to help students improve their reading fluency, comprehension and accuracy. Our grade 1—3 teachers, Support Services Teacher, Education Assistants and volunteers are providing Guided Reading four times per week. Students receive small group instruction based on their reading level. You can support your child by letting them practice reading at home with you!





We also want to extend our appreciation to everyone who joined us for our **Halloween Family dance!** From the amazing costumes to the fantastic dance moves, your energy and community spirit made the evening truly magical. Special thanks to our **PAC volunteers** for organizing such a fun and festive event—it wouldn't have happened without you. Our gratitude is also extended to the **Princeton Posse** for volunteering to help run the event, and **Mrs. Hodder** for serving as DJ Dia-beats. We are so grateful to be part of such a supportive and spirited school community!

JAE is situated along the river valley, and the fall colours have provided an incredibly beautiful backdrop for our learning. Our students have been outside engaged in learning on the land. Ms. Caron takes her students for weekly nature walks. Ms. Chypyha and Ms. Kemp investigated trees and collected leaves as part of the grade 1 living and non-living unit. They discussed why leaves change color, why they fall down, parts/ features of plants and their jobs, scars on trees and reasons why. Ms. Wilscheck has also been learning about fall changes, and her class gathered rosehips to make tea with Mrs. Unrau and observed plants under the microscope with Mrs. Atkinson.



Exploring Local Treasures: Sanderson Farms Market & The Grist Mill



Our curious Kindergarteners and K-1s had a wonderful time touring the **apple packing facility** at **Sanderson Farms**. They learned how apples are sorted, packed, and prepared for markets near and far. The children tasted a variety of **locally grown apples** and learned about the many types of fruits and vegetables grown right here in our region. Each child picked out their very own **pumpkin** to take home—perfect for fall decorating! The fun continued at the **Grist Mill**, where students explored a piece of history dating back to **1877**. They saw a **water wheel-powered flour mill** in action and discovered how people used to cook using traditional methods. Thank you to all the staff and volunteers who made this trip possible.





HAPPY  HALLOWEEN



Thank You to the Breakfast Club of Canada

We are incredibly grateful to the **Breakfast Club of Canada** for their continued support of **John Allison Elementary School**. Their generous funding helps us provide **nutritious breakfasts** to our students **every morning**, ensuring they start their day ready to learn and thrive. A heartfelt thank you also goes to **Teacher Erin**, who lovingly purchases and prepares the food each morning. Her dedication makes a real difference in the lives of our students.



Did you know that **1 in 5 Canadian children and youth** are at risk of attending school on an empty stomach? With the help of programs like this, we are working to change that—one meal at a time.

As the Breakfast Club of Canada says, we're proud to be part of the mission to provide **"a better start for every child"** and to help **"nourish their potential."** Together, we're making mornings brighter and futures stronger.

Expanding Our School Food Program with BC Feeding Futures



We're excited to share that our school has been receiving support from the **BC Feeding Futures Grant**, a provincial initiative aimed at strengthening student nutrition through funding for school food programs. This grant has allowed us to expand our efforts to ensure that **nutritious meals** are available to students who need them most.

A special thank you goes out to **Rebecca Stauffer**, our dedicated **Hot Lunch Coordinator**, for leading the pilot phase of this program. Her commitment to preparing healthy and delicious meals has made a meaningful impact on our students.

munchalunch.com

Our goal is to offer **hot lunches** with a variety of nutritious options at an affordable cost of approximately **\$5 per day**. As we continue to explore menu choices and manage food costs, we're working toward building a **self-sustaining lunch program** that supports the well-being of our school community. Stay tuned for updates as we grow this initiative!

DONATE: If you would like to sponsor another student's lunch, please reach out to the JAE Office 250-295-6727

Backpack Buddies: Supporting Students Beyond the School Week

We are thrilled to share a new partnership that's helping us support students even after the school bell rings. Thanks to the efforts of **Lisa Nelson-Smith**, our **Healthy Schools Coordinator**, both **VFE** and **JAE** have been connected with **Backpack Buddies**—an incredible organization working to combat weekend hunger for children across British Columbia.

Every **Friday**, Backpack Buddies delivers bags of food to thousands of BC's most vulnerable children, ensuring they have access to **meals and snacks** throughout the weekend when school-based food programs are unavailable.

This initiative is a meaningful step toward ensuring **no child goes hungry**, and we are deeply grateful for the support it brings to our school communities.

To learn more or support this cause, visit: **Backpack Buddies | Feed Children Across BC**



Children Across BC are Hungry

Families are in crisis. The ever-increasing cost of rent, household expenses and childcare has created an affordability crisis for families. One in four children experiences food insecurity. For those that depend on school meal programs to help feed their children, every weekend brings renewed stress to keep food on the table.



147,570

BC children live in poverty



29%

of BC children face food insecurity



47%

Increase in poverty costs since 2020



44%

of children in single-parent families live with food insecurity

Nicola Canford



Student Leadership

Nicola Canford student leadership met this month, reviewed the suggestions in our suggestion box and planned for a K-7 Halloween Dance. Thanks for all your work Student Council. It was a great time for the whole school.

Strong Character

At Nicola Canford we love to celebrate Strong Character with our Strong Character Award. We also hand out the Kac Kac award which is an Ntɛʔkepmxcin word that refers to someone who is always looking to be helpful and make the world a better place.



Wildlife Park



Our PAC arranged to have the Wildlife Park visit our school for a number of presentations this month. What a great learning opportunity.

Pumpkin Patch



A number of our Primary classrooms got to visit the pumpkin patch this October and select their own pumpkin. What a treat for our kids and a great opportunity to be out on the land. Thank you to 3 Bar Farms for hosting us.



SPREADING THE LOVE

Spreading The Love

During the month of October our school focused on the Character Teaching of Love, which is “giving people what they need, not what they deserve”. Some of our classes travelled the school with messages of love for students and staff. What a great way to make our school a welcoming place.

Apple Sauce

A number of our students got to take some of the donated apples to our school and make apple sauce to share. Thank you to Ms. Liz and Ms. Ray for organizing such fun lunch hour activities for our kids. We are looking forward to the leather work and the beading that they have planned in the coming weeks.



Halloween Escape Room

During the Division 4 Halloween Escape Room, students collaborated in teams to complete three problem-solving tasks or cooperative learning tasks. Successful completion of each task earned teams a key, which together unlocked a final treasure box reward.



October At Merritt Bench



We're happy to share that our primary literacy program is now up and running. Bench Grade 1/2 students had a great time exploring science and problem-solving as they built boats out of tin foil. They tested whether their boats could float and hold plastic counters, then revised their designs to improve them — such great hands-on learning!

Grade 3-5 Students enjoyed a presentation by the Fire Department around Fire Prevention week!

Mr. Denton's, Ms. Kane's, and Ms. Jones's classes also enjoyed a wonderful trip to Central Park for a pumpkin hunt. Nearly 60 pumpkins were hidden around the hills, each with a student's name on it. Students searched high and low to find their pumpkins. There was also a 'Pumpkin Roll" where a few pumpkins were rolled down the hill and students made predictions about how far they would travel.

Of course, Halloween brought plenty of excitement too! Costumes, laughter, and creativity filled the school. Students have also been enjoying time outdoors during some of the best fall weather days.







OCTOBER



COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE

Over the past few weeks, students have been engaged in a variety of enriching and hands-on learning experiences across multiple subjects. We completed a unit on baking, where students explored different recipes and techniques. Highlights included baking a variety of muffins and a delicious pumpkin spice loaf. This unit not only taught practical kitchen skills but also emphasized teamwork and creativity.

Outdoor Ed has been full of adventure and discovery. After our tea-picking trip was canceled due to the weather, students learned how to play Lahal and listened to some storytelling. We also enjoyed a scenic hike around Kentucky Lake, where we learned about the medicinal uses of various plants along the trail. A special moment occurred when BC Fisheries workers, who happened to be on the trail, gave us an impromptu lesson about the local fish species—an unexpected and informative bonus!

Our visit to Desert Hills was both educational and fun. Students participated in a scavenger hunt focused on identifying different types of fall vegetables. They also conducted a price comparison between farm produce and market prices, gaining insight into food systems and economics.

To celebrate Halloween, students carved pumpkins and took part in trick-or-treating through SCIDES. It was a festive and creative way to wrap up October, bringing joy and community spirit to our school.

Superintendent's Report

November, 2025

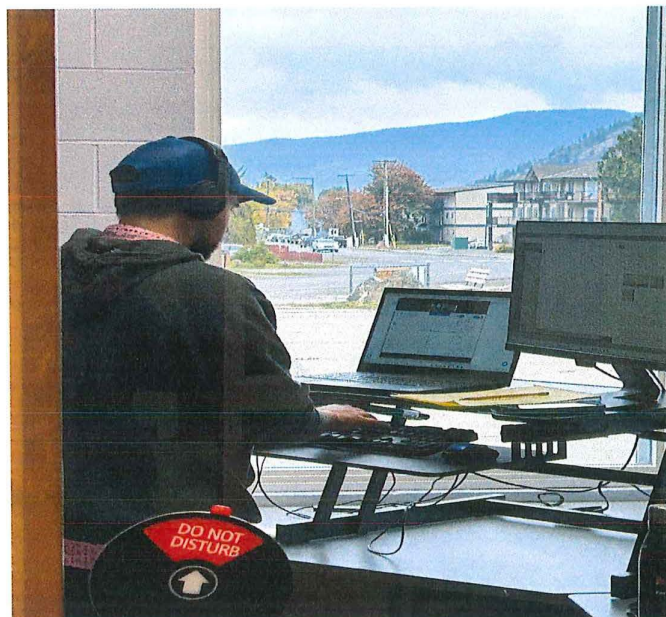
Online Connection

SCIDES teachers connect with their 1500+ online students in a variety of ways, including Teams meetings, emails, phone calls, Facetime, texts etc etc.

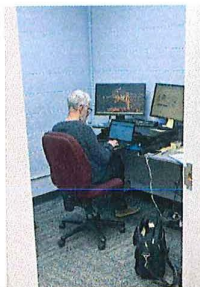
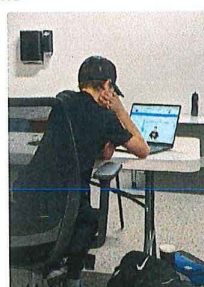
SCIDES

“Connection”

We use Teams, email, phone calls, texts, Facetime etc to stay connected with our 1500+ online learners from around British Columbia.



Phone calls and emails



Face-to-face Connection

We are also very happy to have face-to-face connection with the students and staff from CLC who share CMS with us.



Teachers really enjoyed being visited by the CLC Trick or Treaters on Halloween!

Blended Connection

At our three Academies teachers have the best of both worlds and enjoy a blended connection.



Halloween at The RINK - Kelowna

Halloween at Lions Peak - Burnaby





Merritt Central Elementary School



Celebrating a Wonderful Evening of Community at Our Open House & Book Fair

Thank you to all the families who joined us for our annual Open House and Book Fair! Your presence and enthusiasm helped make the evening a true celebration of connection, learning, and community. We'd like to extend special appreciation to Ms. Morrison for organizing the engaging family scavenger hunt that invited families to explore the school and meet our amazing staff. Thank you to Mrs. Cleaveley for her dedication and extra time hosting the Book Fair. It was a huge hit with students and families alike!

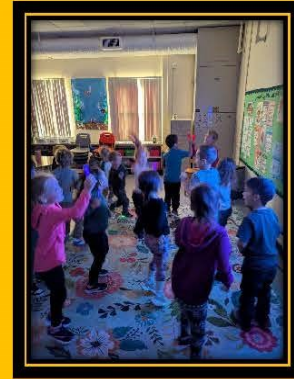
A warm thank-you also goes to Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Martindale for not only organizing our student helpers to prepare the delicious chilli dinner, but also for serving it with care and smiles. We're grateful to Ms. Martha for ensuring we had warm, delicious Bannock to enjoy alongside the meal. We also want to recognize all the staff who came out to connect with students and families. Being there helped build the strong relationships that make our school such a welcoming and supportive place. Thank you for helping us create a night full of warmth, laughter, and learning. We're proud to be part of such a caring school community!

Happy Diwali: Celebrating Culture & Community Through Learning

At our school, we believe that learning about each other's cultures and traditions helps us grow into a more supportive and connected community. Throughout the year, students explore and celebrate the rich diversity within our school through hands-on activities, storytelling, and art. This month, Mrs. Preet's class honoured Diwali, the Festival of Lights, by creating beautiful paper garlands and vibrant firework salt art. These joyful creations sparked meaningful conversations about light, celebration, and the importance of family and tradition. We're proud to be a school where every culture is valued, and where students learn to appreciate the many ways we can come together in understanding and respect.



Mrs. Dunn's Prep Classes Are a Hit!



Mrs. Dunn is doing amazing things in both PHE and science! Her lessons are hands-on, interactive, and always spark curiosity. She sets high expectations and keeps things running smoothly with her calm, confident classroom management. Students love going to Prep whether they're building lung models out of balloons and recycled bottles in science or learning teamwork and spatial awareness in PHE. Her quite problem-solving and thoughtful planning make a big impact, and the glow stick dance party was definitely a highlight! Thank you, Mrs. Dunn, for making learning so fun and meaningful.

Literacy, Curiosity, and Hands-On Learning in Mrs. Preet's Class

Mrs. Preet's students are in full literacy mode, working hard to grow their reading and writing skills every day! With the support of Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Martindale, and Mrs. Michel, students can work in smaller groups, receiving explicit teaching and guided practice that helps build confidence and skill.



Beyond literacy, the class is also exploring the natural world through outdoor learning, investigating how living and non-living things interact in their environment. One of the highlights this month was creating mini ecosystems in jars, where students explored how plants, soil, and water work together to support life and maintain balance.





A big shout-out to Mr. Shea and Mr. Jody for coaching this year's group of volleyball keeners! The students have shown great dedication, teamwork, and sportsmanship, and it's been exciting to see their skills grow with each practice and game.

Mr. Shea is helping both teams build a strong understanding of the game while encouraging resiliency, effort, and respect. His clear expectations and consistent coaching style have earned the respect of our student athletes, and it shows in how they show up and support each other on the court.

Thank you to Mr. Jody for stepping in to support coaching on the days Mr. Shea is with the MSS volleyball teams. His commitment to carrying forward Mr. Shea's coaching ethic and kindness has made a big difference for our players.



Literacy continues to be a strong focus at MCES and MS. Morrison always finds ways to make it fun and engaging



Strong Start

Our Strong Start program continues to be a wonderful space for pre-kindergarten children and their families to connect, learn, and grow together. Led by the caring and dedicated Mrs. Dage, Strong Start offers meaningful opportunities for families to share experiences, build relationships, and engage in early learning. Mrs. Dage works diligently to connect families with community resources and supports, helping ensure that every child and caregiver feels welcomed and supported. One of the highlights this month was a special visit from Kim Hodgson of the Métis Society, who shared stories and cultural learning with our families. It was a beautiful moment of connection and celebration. We're so grateful for the strong foundation Strong Start is building in our school community!





Halloween Fun & Fantastic Costumes!

Halloween was full of excitement and creativity a MCE! We started the day with a costume parade that included all students, even our Strong Start families, giving everyone a chance to show off their fun, spooky, and super creative outfits.

A big thank-you to Mr. Gagliano and his leadership group for organizing the lunch dances and fun activities for our primary students. Their energy and planning made the day extra special! There were so many standout costumes, but the headless man was definitely one of the most creative! We also want to thank our local police officers who stopped by to greet Heath, whose costume was inspired by the hard work of our community police force. It was a meaningful moment. And yes, Ms. Omori and Tyrone stole the show dressed as basketball backboards and hoops. They even played a few rounds together, which brought lots of laughs and smiles!

Leadership in Action!

We're excited to have Mr. Gagliano leading our student leadership program this year! With a large group of enthusiastic students stepping up, leadership is off to a strong start. These students are committed to making our school and community a better place by initiating activities and modeling what it means to be positive, respectful role models.

Their first big project was organizing the Halloween dances for both primary and intermediate students. They created posters, decorated the space, built fun and clean playlists, and even gave up some of their own time to help coordinate activities, lead dance moves, and support supervision during the primary dance.

It's inspiring to see our students take initiative and work together to build a stronger, more connected school community. We're proud of their efforts and excited to see what they take on next!



Fall Fun at MCES



Three Bar Farms

We love celebrating and supporting local traditions, and our annual connection with 3 Bar Farms is always a highlight of the fall season at MCES! Whether classes head out to the farm to explore the pumpkin patch, corn maze, animals, and farm equipment, or the farm comes to us with outdoor and indoor pumpkin-themed activities, it always brings joy to our students and staff.

This year, Mrs. Ferris, Mr. Gagliano, and Ms. Morrison's classes had the chance to dive into the fall spirit with hands-on learning and seasonal fun. The farm's visit is more than just a good time—it's a meaningful way to connect students with local agriculture and community traditions.

Thank you to 3 Bar Farms for continuing to bring smiles and learning to MCES year after year!





Grade 10 Girls volleyball at the Ghost Blockers Tournament

TRU ENGINEERING VISIT



Grade 10 PE having a blast at the arena



OCTOBER 2025





HALLOWEEN FUN



Teachers love Halloween too!



GYM RIOT
SHENANIGANS



Outdoor Education
kayaking at Rock
Ridge



DIAMOND VALE OCTOBER 2025

DIWALI



Mrs. Kaur's Grade 3-4 class learned about the significance of Diwali, which focuses on the values of good, kindness and family togetherness, in a Festival of Lights.

GRADE 7 HOODIES



Our Grade 7 students were happy to receive their new 'Class of 2026' hoodies, which were generously sponsored by the PAC.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Fire Safety

Students in Grade 2-5 attended a special presentation by the local fire department on fire safety.



Community Support

The local community continues to step up to support us with our food programs. We have recently received donations from No Frills, Merritt Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, Merritt Darts and Patrick O'Toole.

Thank you, Merritt!!

Hallowe'en

Always one of the best days at elementary school. Our student and staff were fully into the Hallowe'en spirit.



PUMPKIN PATCH VISITS

Four classes visited Three Bars Farm Pumpkin Patch, enjoyed the time in the fresh air and brought back their own pumpkins to carve.



GRANDFATHER TEACHING

This month we are learning from Bear that **Courage** is not the absence of fear but it is about being afraid and doing the right thing anyway.

Merritt Secondary School



Our Indigenous Student Advocates hosted the Embracing Change Grade 9 Leadership Conference, fostering connection, confidence, and student voice among our newest secondary learners.



In addition, Grade 12 students visited NVIT as part of their post-secondary transition planning, participating in a Career Cruising activity to support future pathway exploration. This growing partnership with NVIT continues to be a valuable initiative that offers meaningful opportunities for our students' educational and career development.



Drama students enjoyed a field trip to the Sagebrush Theatre to watch *Women of the Fur Trade*, a production that connected to curricular themes while inspiring rich classroom discussions.



The Panthers volleyball teams celebrated their graduating athletes with a heartfelt Senior Night at their final regular season home game, recognizing the leadership and commitment of our student-athletes





Collettville Elementary School

Pride ~ Respect ~ Community



Remembrance Day Ceremony

We had a beautiful ceremony - led by our Grade 7 MCs, Travis and Daiya - honouring both Canadian and Indigenous veterans, and featuring meaningful reflections and contributions from each division. Thank you to Joan Shackelly and Nexpetko Joe for opening the ceremony with prayers in both Nt̓e?kəpmxcin (Thompson Language) and nsyilxen (Okanagan Language). Thank you, as well, to Paul Joe and Mme Odegard's Grade 3/4 class for welcoming us with drumming.



First Leadership-Planned Event - Halloween Dance



Well done, Leadership Crew!
Thank you for all the time and effort that went into planning a fun event - it was a great display of School Spirit ...and costumes, of course!





Collettville Elementary School

Pride ~ Respect ~ Community

White Hatter Digital Literacy Program Comes to Collettville



We're excited to share a new initiative — this one made possible through the Mental Health in Schools grant. It focuses on a digital literacy program for students and has the potential to include parent sessions as well. In recent months, several parents have expressed how important digital literacy is and their wish to see more education on this topic in schools - and as a school, we are listening!

This initiative acknowledges the important connection between digital literacy, mental health, and overall well being, and aligns with both our school's Enhancing Learning Goals and District's Strategic Plan.

Triple Ball Season Coming to a Close

As our Triple Ball (Volleyball) season comes to a close, we want to thank all students, community coaches, staff sponsors, and families for your support.

Go Wild Cats!



VERMILION FORKS ELEMENTARY



STEM Focus

Mrs. Cleven's class has been focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) projects in class. Here students needed to build shovels to see who could pick up the most caramels.



School Spirit

Students enjoyed dressing up for Halloween, and staff had fun surprising students with a "Secret Staff Spirit Week" leading up to it. Pictured at top is "Anything but a Cup Day" where staff brought creativity to their beverage containers

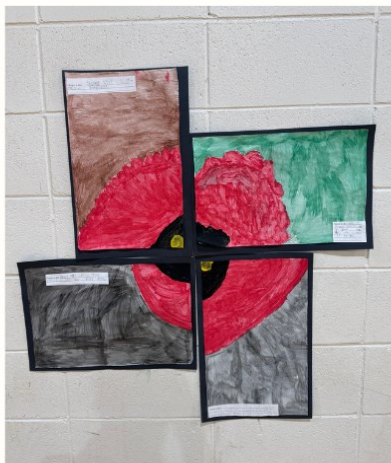


Traditional Teachings

Mrs. Unrah, our Indigenous Student Advocate, brought in special guests to introduce students to traditional medicines.



OCTOBER AT VFE



October was a month of momentum and meaningful connection at VFE. Staff focused on strengthening core instructional routines in literacy and numeracy, using early assessment data to guide goal-setting and targeted support. We successfully launched our hot lunch pilot program, which has seen strong uptake from families and is helping ensure more students have access to nutritious meals during the school day. Grade 6/7 volleyball also kicked off, bringing energy and teamwork to our school community and offering students a chance to build skills and school spirit. Overall, October's work reflected our commitment to creating consistent, supportive learning environments for all learners.