

Superintendent's Report - January 2026

We recognize that we learn, teach and work on the ancestral, traditional territories of the Nl̄eʔkepmx and Syilx people and we acknowledge our Metis communities and their contributions to the Aboriginal

Welcome to 2026!

Ye te skicetip (Nleʔkepmxcín) Xast pɬəcyap (Nsylxcən) Miyoona kishkatoohk (Michif)

Winter Weather has arrived!

- Pay attention to weather reports and warnings of freezing weather and winter storms.
 - Stay connected – check our website, Facebook, and emails and phone messages from School Messenger for bus route cancellations and school closure information.
 - Dress warm and prepare for the weather.
 - Parents and guardians can choose to keep children at home if they are concerned about them getting to and from school or to and from buses safely – be sure to notify your school accordingly.

STAY CONNECTED: Follow & Like Nicola-Similkameen School District on Facebook.



Nicola-Similkameen School District-No. 58



Nicola-Similkameen School District

IMPORTANT DATES

January 5, 2026	Monday	Schools reopen after the break.
February 6, 2026	Friday	MSS & PSS Report Cards go home.
February 12, 2026	Thursday	All Schools – Early Dismissal Day – Schools will notify parents of early dismissal times.
February 13, 2026	Friday	Non-Instructional Day (Professional Development Day.)
February 16, 2026	Monday	Family Day.

VERMILION FORKS ELEMENTARY



Damp December

Even after a snowy November, December's rain couldn't dampen their recess fun. From puddle-hopping to big smiles, our learners embraced the weather and the joy of being outdoors together.



Winter Concert

Here is Ms. Williams' Grade 6/7 class, bursting with energy as they showed off for a packed audience at our winter concert. Big smiles from spirited performances and genuine joy made it a memorable celebration of creativity and community.



Literacy and Numeracy Support

Student Support Teacher Renee Hartwell leading a small-group numeracy lesson, building confidence and core skills. We're grateful to our District Numeracy and Literacy Coaches whose guidance helped us establish effective structures to identify needs and deliver timely supports.

DECEMBER AT VFE



December at VFE, we've celebrated learning, creativity, and community. Small-group literacy and numeracy supports now are embedded in our daily routines. Our students lit up the winter concert with spirited performances that showcased confidence and collaboration. Despite a snowy November turning into a wet December, students embraced recess with enthusiasm with rainbows and puddles included. Beyond the school, the VFE Choir shared seasonal cheer by leading carols at Ridgewood Lodge, with appreciation to director Mrs. Wolbeck for her leadership. We rounded out the term with festive spirit days that built connection and joy across grades, reflecting our commitment to strong instruction, student well-being, and a vibrant school community.



Collettville Elementary School

Pride ~ Respect ~ Community

A Lively December at Collettville



Throughout December, Collettville Elementary was animated by the winter concert, a whole-school turkey luncheon, and spirit days—school-wide experiences that strengthened relationships, supported student engagement, and reinforced a sense of belonging within our French Immersion community.





Collettville Elementary School

Pride ~ Respect ~ Community

Learning Through Culture



Students engaged in cultural learning experiences, including drumming and hide scraping, deepening their understanding of Indigenous traditions while building respect, curiosity, and connection through hands-on learning.



Purposeful Practice, Meaningful Engagement



Mme Livesey's hands-on, collaborative approach makes learning visible and engaging, from exploring the Regions of Canada with 3-D models to building literacy skills through creative, game-based experiences with younger students.

Nicola Canford



Winter Solstice

It was great to celebrate Winter Solstice at our school with the Friendship Round Dance. K'wuk'wsteyp to Shale and Snow Diablo for not only leading us with their drumming and singing but also sharing a message about the shared celebration of Winter Solstice across Turtle Island.

Christmas Bonanza

The Nicola Canford Christmas Bonanza was a great success again this year. We are so thankful to the PAC who organize it and the parents who volunteer. We want to say a special thank you to the LNIB Fire Department and the SBO staff who came to help wrap presents.



Grinch day



Mrs. Weatherbie's class enjoyed a fun, engaging week of Grinch-themed learning, culminating in a Grinch movie and snacks. Students participated in Grinch-inspired writing, stories, and math, and enjoyed designing a sleigh for Max to pull.

Santa Visit



Santa visited Strong Start, Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 today at school. He even checked in on his "Shelf Elves" that work at the school. They had



Awards

Many students received Nicola Canford's Strong Character and Kækéč Awards for demonstrating strong character in challenging situations and for working hard to make our school a better place (Kækéč).

Gingerbread

We survived another year of Kindergarten Gingerbread Mayhem. Every year Ms. Fosbery makes gingerbread people and every year she is not careful enough with her magic ingredients and her gingerbread people escape and run wild in the school. Maybe next year she will get the measurements right. Good thing she always has a team of gingerbread hunters on hand to round up those rascally gingerbread people.



New Spirit Wear

Nicola Canford got their new Spirit Wear in Orange with our school logo and the message, "Every Child Matters"





Merritt Bench Elementary School



Merritt Bench students were treated to a Pancake Breakfast and a visit from Santa on December 19th, 2025. Thank you to Santa for taking time out of his busy schedule to come for a visit and a thank-you to all those who helped ensure our Pancake breakfast was a success. Our Winter Concert was held on December 18th, with a dress rehearsal on December 17th. Thank you to Mr. Denton who helps to organize and ensure that the concert runs smoothly. Additional thanks to all staff and students who helped to create such a joyous show for the Merritt Bench Community.





Mrs. Bennie has been opening the gym at lunch for students to come and enjoy a variety of activities – volleyball, hockey, badminton and basketball.

Students enjoyed a variety of spirit days planned by Student Council – including Everything but a backpack day – pictured to the left.

Merritt Secondary School



December at Merritt Secondary School highlighted the strength of everyday teaching and learning happening in classrooms across the school. While the month was rich in hands-on, engaging, and meaningful learning experiences that supported student curiosity, creativity, and connection.

In Art 9, students explored wellness and applied design through a lesson on essential oils, culminating in the creation of handmade bath bombs that students were able to take home. This project blended creativity, practical skills, and personal expression while fostering a calm and focused classroom environment. In the Senior Art program, Ms. Dunn and her students collaborated with Indigenous Student Advocates to design, build, and decorate traditional drums. This work provided students with a meaningful opportunity to learn through relationship, cultural respect, and shared expertise.

Classroom learning across disciplines continued to emphasize active participation and deep thinking. Mrs. Kinchella's Social Studies 8 students reinforced their understanding of historical figures by playing an adapted version of Hedbanz, requiring students to apply content knowledge, ask thoughtful questions, and engage in collaborative problem-solving. In Physics 11, Mrs. de Visser's students designed and constructed popsicle-stick bridges, then tested their structural integrity, bringing theory to life through experimentation, teamwork, and analysis.





John Allison Elementary School
PO Box 40 - 499 Corina Avenue Princeton BC, V0X 1W0
P 250-295-6727 F 250-295-6920

**Superintendent's Report
December 2025**



Let it Snow! Let it Snow! Let it Snow! The snow came down and was fun while it lasted!



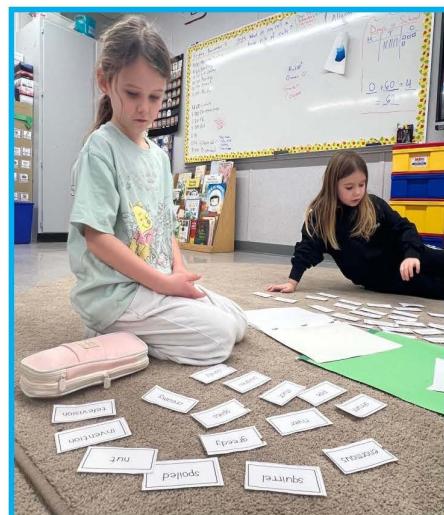
*** PLAY * JOY * LEARN**
PLAYING IN A WINTER WONDERLAND



Ms. Schneider supports her grade 3 students literacy skills with literacy stations. Here they are focused on in fluency and comprehension.

The joy of learning! Students use an interactive guided reading program called *Raz Kids* from *Learning A–Z* to improve their literacy skills.

Students engaged in targeted small-group levelled literacy instruction. At this station they are sorting words alphabetically.



DIAMOND VALE

DECEMBER 2025

'HOME ALONE' PRODUCTION



On December 16th, all students were part of a whole school production of 'Home Alone.' Our students and staff had been working hard for weeks, and it paid off, with a full house attending the event.

DIV 1 - ADST



Students in Mrs. Price's class designed their own games which they then put to the test with some younger students from Ms. Hayward's class.

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Breakfast with Santa

All classes had the opportunity to have breakfast and meet Santa and Mrs. Claus.



Christmas Store

Our PAC organised a Christmas Store for students to purchase gifts for family members.



Spirit Days

December was full of holiday spirit, with Fridays being the days where we had a little fun with outfits and headwear.



READ & BAKE

Mrs. Stead's and Ms. Hayward's classes visited the high school to participate in a 'Read and Bake' activity with some high school students.



GRANDFATHER TEACHING

Mrs. Kaur's class led an assembly to highlight what they had learned about the importance of being honest to themselves and others.



COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE



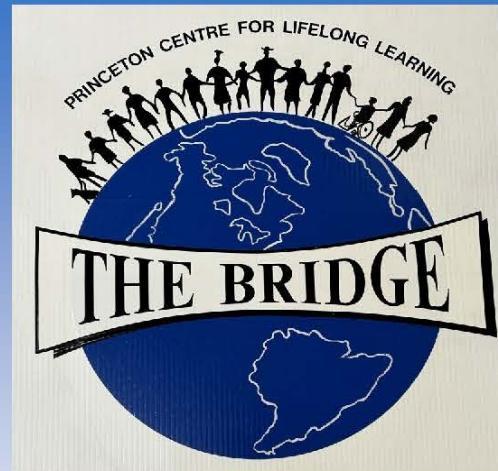
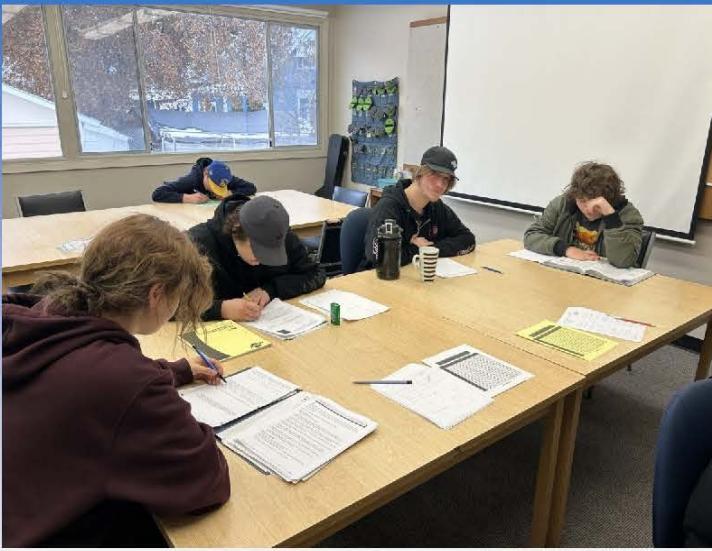
December was full of festive fun and community spirit!

We started the month with an exciting field trip led by Christine from Take a Hike. Students enjoyed leadership games that encouraged teamwork and creativity, and we wrapped up the day around a cozy bonfire with a hot dog roast. Such a great way to connect outdoors!

Our annual Christmas dinner was another highlight. It was wonderful to see CLC students, SCIDES staff, and our Tech crew all gathered together. A big thank you to all the cooks who worked so hard to make the meal delicious and memorable!

Students also showed off their skills in the gingerbread house competition. From baking and building to decorating, the creativity was amazing! Thank you to SCIDES for judging, and congratulations to Adam for his winning design.

The week before the holidays was packed with crafts, games, a cookie exchange, and spirit days to keep everyone energized. We ended on a sweet note with treats from Ms. Lawrence, a day of board games, one last craft, and plenty of laughter and connection. Finally, a special thank you to Tammy Meadows for her incredible support over the past few months. Her kindness and dedication have made a real difference for both staff and students.



This month, our activities will include snowshoeing, cross country skiing, ice skating, and a ton of cooking. We'll also be making a wide variety of soups to keep us warm and well throughout this cold month.



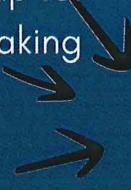
Thanks, MC! We have enjoyed our time in the woodshop!



Ms. Cheung's amazing Art students

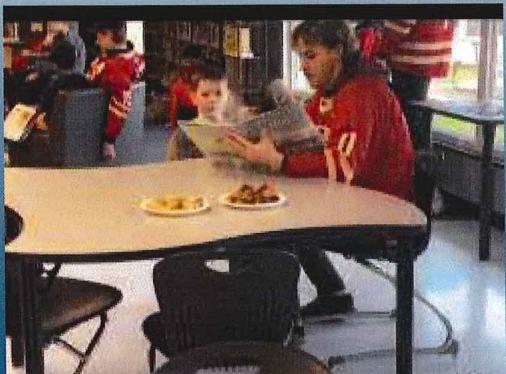


Some activities our Outdoor Ed, Leadership, Environmental Science class has been up to: fire building, and pine needle basket making



DECEMBER 2025

PSS
RAPIDS



Our amazing local hockey players,
Princeton Posse, came to PSS to
bake and read with Ms. Ransome's
Grade 3 class.





Merritt Central Elementary School



Crafternoon

Crafternoon has become a special annual winter celebration event organized by our amazing librarian, Mrs. Cleaveley! During this creative afternoon teachers prepare a fun winter craft for students to enjoy. All students from participating classes get to choose the craft that sparks their interest, then join a group of peers from different grades to create together.

This unique experience brings multi-age groups together, fostering collaboration, creativity, and new friendships. Students not only learn from one another but also build connections with different teachers while making beautiful winter crafts and ornaments. It's a wonderful way to celebrate the season and the joy of learning through creativity!

Grade Sevens Showing off their Grad Hoodies!



Turkey Lunch



One of the most special events at MCES is our Annual Turkey Lunch, and this year was no exception! Organized by the incredible Ms. Martha, this tradition brings our entire school community together. Ms. Martha worked closely with community members, including Chief Kim Wallace from NVIT, Judy Chilhitzia, and our own amazing Hot Lunch Coordinator, Mrs. Dani, to prepare a delicious turkey dinner for every student and staff member.

This event is a true favorite because it's more than just a meal; it's a time for connection. Teachers and students share a "family-style" dinner, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere where conversations flow and relationships deepen. Food has a unique way of bringing people together, and during this lunch, children often open up in ways they might not in the classroom.

Adding to the magic, we had a wonderful visit from Santa, and our district board office staff were incredible servers as always! A great big thank you to everyone who made this event possible again this year. Your efforts help us continue this beloved tradition that celebrates community, gratitude, and togetherness.



Winter Concert

This year, we switched things up by hosting our annual winter concert in the evening instead of the afternoon! To make it easier for out-of-town families and bus students, we started the night with a chili dinner, which was a huge hit. Thank you to Ms. Martha for the idea, Ms. Dani for cooking the delicious chili, and our district staff for serving. It truly takes a team!

The concert was a wonderful success! Our MCs, Comrie and Cash, kept the evening lively, and Ms. Morrison's Grade 1 class opened with a meaningful land acknowledgment. A big thank you to our families for coming out and cheering on their children. You made the night extra special! We're grateful to our EAs for ensuring every learner could participate and to our teachers for creating engaging performances that showcased students' talents. Behind the scenes, Mrs. Martindale and Mrs. Smith worked tirelessly on staging, lights, tech, and decorations. The auditorium looked amazing!





Making Beautiful Music & Wonderful Memories

Our school has been alive with music this season! For the winter concert, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Martindale dedicated countless lunch and recess periods to prepare our talented solo performers. We were treated to incredible piano solos from students across primary and intermediate grades. What a showcase of skill and confidence!

Beyond the concert, Mrs. Smith's lunchtime Music Club has been a wonderful addition to our many lunch clubs, giving students a chance to explore choir and music together. Our Drum Club, led weekly by Derrick Sheena, continues to be a highlight and even opened the winter concert in a good way, setting a tone of respect and celebration.

We're also proud of students who pursue music outside of school. Our teachers love giving them opportunities to shine whether in front of a big audience at the concert or in smaller class performances, like when Justice wowed everyone with his guitar skills during Mr. Shea's class.

Music is truly thriving at Merritt Central, and we couldn't be prouder of the creativity and dedication of our students and staff!



A Marshmallow Snowball Fight!

When the snow falls, the urge to make and throw snowballs is strong but it can also be dangerous. This year, Mr. Shea and Mr. Gandy found a creative solution! They organized an unconventional snowball fight using marshmallows. Students had a blast tossing soft "snowballs" in a fun, safe way that let them burn off energy, enjoy some physical activity, and satisfy that winter urge to throw. It was laughter, movement, and teamwork all rolled into one sweet idea!

Student Leadership Brings the Holiday Spirit!

In the final week before winter break, Mr. Gagliano and Mrs. Tolmie teamed up with our amazing Student Leadership Club to spread cheer throughout the school. This hardworking group organized a series of fun Spirit Days, including *Holidays Around the World Day*, *PJ Day*, *Dress in Your Best Day*, *Holiday Sweater Day*, and *Winter Wonderland Day*.

The team also made sure all non-classroom bulletin boards were festive and bright, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere for everyone. Their efforts truly brought the joy of the season to life, reminding us how much a little creativity and teamwork can make a big difference.

Thank you to our leadership students and staff for making the last week of school so special!



Kindergarten Adventures in Mrs. Ferris' Class

There's always something exciting happening in kindergarten! This month, highlights from Mrs. Ferris' class included giant gingerbread selfies, ice cream Christmas tree literacy snacks, a visit to the public library for stories, art, games, and songs, and building giant STEM creations. Our youngest learners have been busy exploring, creating, and celebrating the season in fun and imaginative ways!



Read and Bake Adventures with MSS!

Mrs. Ferris' class had an exciting opportunity to visit MSS for a special Read and Bake session with Mrs. Riddle's Foods Class and Ms. O'Donovan's English class. Students enjoyed stories and baking activities while connecting with older students who served as wonderful role models. We are so lucky to have these regular connections with the high school. They build leadership skills for the older students and create excitement and inspiration for our younger learners. Experiences like this strengthen our sense of community and show the power of learning together across grades!

MSS Big Buddies Make a Big Difference



We are so grateful to Mrs. Brigden and Mrs. Thompson at MSS who work alongside Mrs. Smith and classroom teachers to organize The Big Buddy Program. This initiative pairs high school students with our younger learners, creating meaningful mentorship opportunities. The high school students have a great impact on our little learners. They model respect, hard work, persistence, and resilience. And of course, they bring the undeniable "cool factor" that inspires and motivates our little learners! This program strengthens relationships, builds confidence, and reminds us of the power of community in education.



Fire Safety Fun in Mr. Gagliano's Class

Mr. Gagliano's class had an amazing learning opportunity when the Merritt Fire Department visited to present an interactive fire safety session. Students were fully engaged as they learned important safety tips in a hands-on, exciting way. A big thank you to our local firefighters for making safety education both fun and memorable!

