

# OUR STRATEGIC PLAN: SD58 NICOLA-SIMILIKAMEEN

**Our goals have us creating a learning community with meaning and purpose**

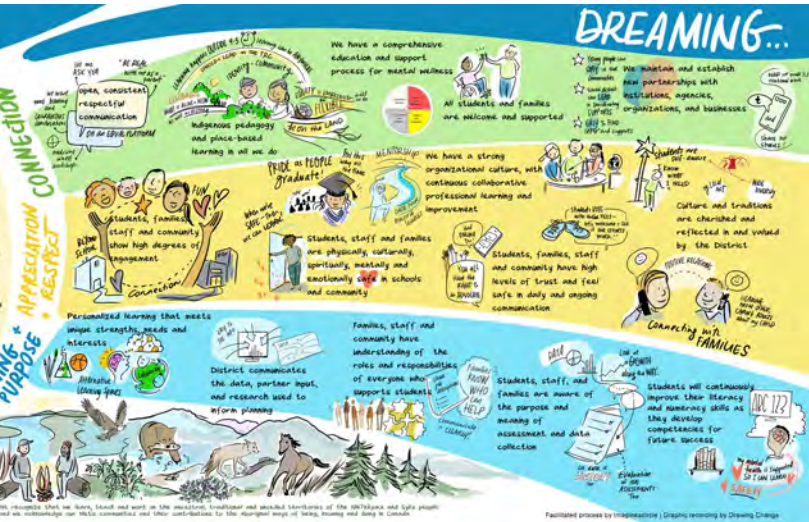
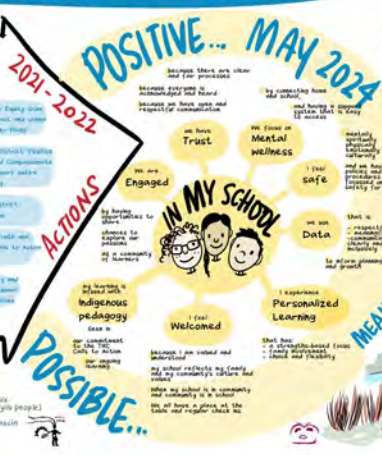
- Appreciation and respect
- Meaningful connections

**WHO NEEDS TO BE A PART OF THE PLAN?**

**OUR FIRST STEPS WILL BE:**

**WELCOME**

**POSSIBLE...**



## Superintendent's Report - February 2026

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

# KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

### Colletville Elementary - Early French Immersion

Please visit our website at [www.nssd.ca](http://www.nssd.ca) for more information.

February 16 to February 27, 2026

Success for ALL Learners ~ Today and Tomorrow

All Schools - Merritt & Princeton

March 2 to March 13, 2026

To register, a child must be 5 years of age on or before December 31, 2026.

- Parents should register their child at their neighbourhood school.
- When registering, you will need your child's Birth Certificate, Care Card and proof of address.
- Parents wishing to enroll their child in the French Immersion Program are required to register at Colletville Elementary.
- Parents interested in a Kindergarten distance education program for their child, can contact the South Central Interior Distance Education School (SCIDES) at 250-378-4245

— February 2026 —

# Community Learning Centre



A special  
**Congratulations**  
goes out to Adam,  
who successfully  
completed all  
coursework  
required for  
graduation. This is a  
tremendous  
accomplishment,  
and we are  
incredibly proud of  
his dedication and  
perseverance.

January was a productive month as students focused on completing coursework and preparing for the start of Semester Two. Academic highlights included a novel study of *My Name is Seepetza*, new challenges in trigonometry, and a variety of hands-on elective projects that showcased students' creativity and effort.





Even with the busy schedule, we made time to enjoy the season before the snow completely disappeared. Students got outdoors for snowshoeing and took part in storytelling sessions led by Nex, creating meaningful cultural and land-based learning moments. They also celebrated their hard work with a fun slime-time activity that brought plenty of smiles and laughter.



To close out the month, students visited NVIT for the Winter Celebration Powwow. They enjoyed watching dancers in their beautiful regalia and listening to live drumming and singing. Many students joined in the intertribal and round dances, making it a memorable and engaging cultural experience.





# Collettsville Elementary School

*Pride ~ Respect ~ Community*

## Celebrating Culture and Community: Carnaval Week 2026



Carnaval Week at Collettsville was a school-wide celebration of Francophone cultures that brought students, staff, and families together.

Across the week, classes participated in a range of activities—including skating, curling, a masked parade, a pancake luncheon, and the tacot competition—building shared experiences and a strong sense of community.

Whole-school events welcomed families into the school, reinforcing pride in Collettsville's French Immersion identity.





# Collettsville Elementary School

*Pride ~ Respect ~ Community*

## Community Knowledge in Action



Students in the Upper Intermediate Girls Group recently learned needle felting through a hands-on session led by Mischelle, the grandmother of one of our students. The experience supported relationship-building through creativity and shared expertise, while students created meaningful artwork.

## Supporting Successful Transitions and Program Continuity



Our Grade 6/7 Teacher, Mme Berthelet, has been working closely with her French Immersion counterpart at Merritt Secondary School to support a smooth transition for students entering high school.

This visit marked the fourth collaborative connection since the start of the school year, helping students build familiarity and confidence while strengthening continuity across the K-12 French Immersion program.

Intentional collaboration like this supports student success and reflects a commitment to long-term program quality.



# John Allison Elementary School

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

Superintendent  
Report

February 2026



Curiosity. Imagination. Critical Thinking.  
[www.scientistsinschool.ca](http://www.scientistsinschool.ca)

Thank you DRAX Foundation for supporting JAE with STEM workshops from Scientists in School. Our Grade 2s learned that "Properties Really Matter!"





Grade 3 students explored owl pellets to discover animal bones to help determine “Hoo’s in the Owl Pellet?”



Scientists in School is a science outreach program dedicated to sparking children's interest in science, technology, engineering, and math through hands-on discovery. Thank you DRAX for offering these scientists to us.

Grade 1 students received a bag full of science materials and explored “Structures, Materials and More.”





# Dress as Your Future Self



## A Bright Start to the Year

What a joyful and inspiring sight it was to welcome our students to school for Dress as Your Future Self Day! Our halls were filled with future doctors, nurses, vets & teachers, grannies, construction workers, a youtuber & a pop star all proudly showing the dreams they hold for their futures.



## Our Journey from “NOT A KITCHEN” to “ALMOST A KITCHEN”

It began last spring with the **Feeding Futures** grant. The governments of Canada and British Columbia reached an agreement on school food that provided “*funding to school districts and independent schools to create or expand school food programs*” which set the ball in motion for the creation of a kitchen. **Hot Lunch** anyone?



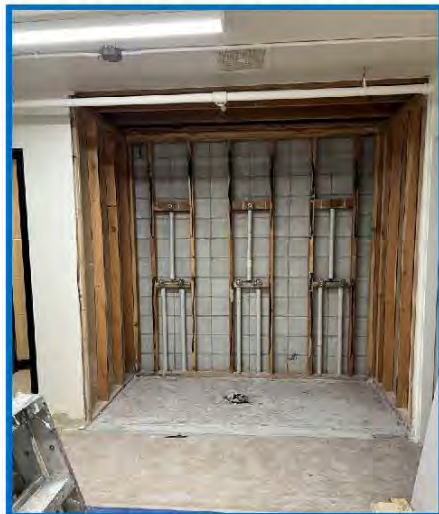
Originally a girl’s change room, now a storage room. Yes, it’s true, elementary teachers can hoard a lot of “good stuff.”



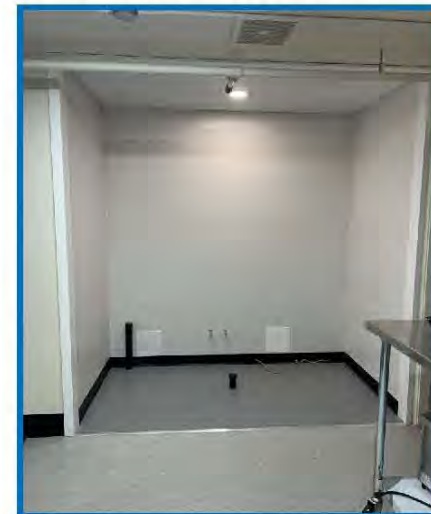
Note the tile, taps and shower heads in the former change room shower. This all will need to be removed in the remodel.



**Phase 1: NOT A KITCHEN.** Several trips to the dump later, some storage reorganization, and we have an empty room.



On July 9, we received the official notification that the **Drax Charity Committee** awarded JAE \$10,000 to renovate the shower and install a sink. A local contractor from Merritt, **Caleo Construction** was hired to remove the existing shower, replace the plumbing, install a light, and replace the walls. Here you can see the shower space down to the original studs.



The shower renovation is complete! Above, we are awaiting the triple sink that was ordered from **Canadian Restaurant Supply**. The triple sink is needed in commercial kitchens to manually wash, rinse and sanitize dishes.

**Phase 2: ALMOST A KITCHEN:** The sink has been installed, we have running water, and the infra-structure grant provided a commercial dishwasher.



Thank you to the SD58 Board members and District staff for ensuring this project got off the ground. We want to specifically acknowledge the contributions of: Jane Kempston, Darrell Finnigan, Misty Sheldon and the maintenance staff. Thank you as well to Lisa Nelson-Smith.

NOTE: More photos that showcase our warming oven, fridge, tables, shelving etc. to follow!

# The Bridge

We take our cooking, crafting and gaming seriously here! Thanks to Kristy for joining us to make dream catchers.



**FRIENDS ARE THE  
PEOPLE WHO MAKE  
YOU SMILE BRIGHTER,  
LAUGH LOUDER  
AND LIVE BETTER.**

# DIAMOND VALE JANUARY 2026

## WINTER CELEBRATION



All students and staff had the opportunity to participate in the School District's Winter Celebration and were entertained by drummers and dancers.

## STUDENT LEADERS



Grade 6/7 students have been stepping up to support with coaching and refereeing of handball practices.

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### Dissecting Owl Pellets

Division 1 students were surprised to find full animal skeletons when they dissected owl pellets.



### Curling

All students in Grades 6 & 7 got to try out curling. We are grateful to the volunteer coaches at the Merritt Curling Centre.



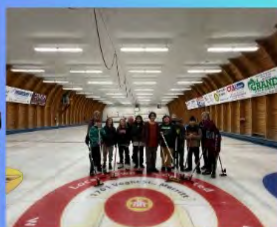
### Buddy Classes

Division 1 & 4 are buddy classes and enjoy spending time reading and doing art activities together.



## CURLING (CONT.)

This committed crew persevered for four weeks. By the end they were playing full curling games.



## GRANDFATHER TEACHING

This past month we have been talking about wisdom and the importance of using our knowledge and gifts wisely.





# Merritt Central Elementary School

## Merritt Central Clubs: A Nest of Activity



We are incredibly fortunate to have a staff who consistently go above and beyond to create interesting, creative, exciting, and meaningful experiences for our students. Their willingness to volunteer their own time truly makes our school a vibrant place to learn and grow. Each week, students benefit from an amazing variety of clubs and activities supported by our awesome team: Ms. Morrison brings creativity to life through Colouring Club; Mrs. Cleaveley sparks curiosity and responsibility through Train Club and Jr. Librarians; and Mrs. Smith builds connection through Board Game Club with the steady support of Mrs. Illingworth. Our youngest learners are uplifted by Mrs. Smiths's Primary Music program, while Mrs. Martindale and Ms. Morrison generously give up their lunch hours to guide budding scientists in Science Fair Club.

We also celebrate Mrs. Preet, who fuels imagination and problem-solving in Lego Club; and even though we don't have photos to share this month, we deeply appreciate the important leadership opportunities Mr. Gagliano provides through School Leadership. We are equally grateful for Ms. Martha's organization of Drum Club alongside Mr. Sheena, a valued community member and knowledge keeper, who enriches our students' cultural learning through music.

On top of all of this, our school continues to thrive thanks to ongoing sports programs and our dedicated Breakfast Club teams (Ms. Omori/Mrs. Sahota- Pancake Monday, Mrs. Preet/Mrs. Ang- Bagel and fruit Tuesday, Ms. Morrison/Mrs. Dixon- Cereal Wednesday, Mrs. Smith/Mrs. Martindale- Smoothie and Scrambled egg Thursday and Mr. Gagliano/Mr. Shea – Muffins, Yogurt and Fruit Fridays) who arrive early every morning to prepare and serve a healthy start to the day.

Every one of these offerings reflects the heart, passion, and generosity of our staff and community partners. We are truly grateful for everything they do to make our school a place where students feel supported, inspired, and excited to belong.



## After School Program

Our six-week After-School Program continues to be a highlight at Merritt Central. This free, school-based program runs multiple sessions in the district throughout the year and MCES is lucky to have it running for 6 weeks during these colder months. The program offers students meaningful opportunities to learn, move, create, and connect.

This session, students had the exciting opportunity to learn taekwondo from a local community instructor from Baek's Taekwondo Academy, building strength, confidence, and discipline through fun, engaging practice. As always, the program focuses on activities that promote healthy living through creative thinking and physical activity while helping students strengthen their sense of belonging with their school, peers, program leaders, and community.

Our program leader, Crystal Klapstein, works closely with Wendy Van Dokkumburg and a team of supportive high school helpers to create a warm, energetic environment for all participants. Healthy snacks are provided each day to fuel learning and play.

We are grateful to our leaders, community partners, and student mentors for helping make this program such a positive and enriching experience for our learners.



## Social Emotional Learning Assemblies



Each month, Merritt Central engages in a schoolwide Character Teaching focus that nurtures students' social-emotional growth. The monthly theme is shared with staff and families through the Week at a Glance, and students encounter these teachings daily through class routines, instructional eating, and cultural lessons offered by our Indigenous Student Advocates, Ms. Martha and Mr. Miller.

Students come together for an interactive, play-based assembly where they learn and practice regulation strategies in fun, meaningful ways. Each week thereafter, one primary and one intermediate class also participate in small-group follow-up sessions, giving students the opportunity to explore these skills more deeply. Intermediate students have been showing remarkable leadership during these sessions, while primary students are benefiting from positive role models and peer mentorship.

At Merritt Central, students are developing the skills to understand and take ownership of their emotions. A consistent, schoolwide language helps them apply strategies in real time, and additional classroom lessons are provided whenever groups of students need further support.

We also take time to recognize and celebrate students who demonstrate bravery, compassion, tolerance, sensibility, friendliness, and good manners. Our students are at the heart of building a caring, emotionally aware school community and we are so proud of the leadership and kindness they show every day.

## Literacy Groups

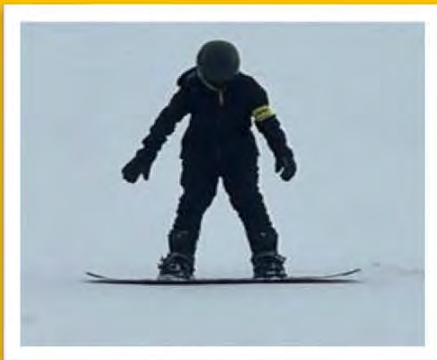
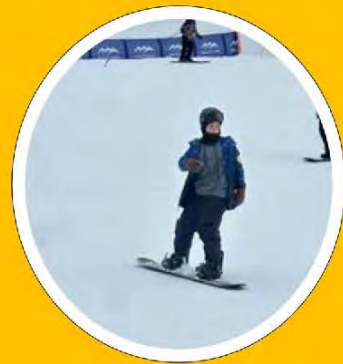
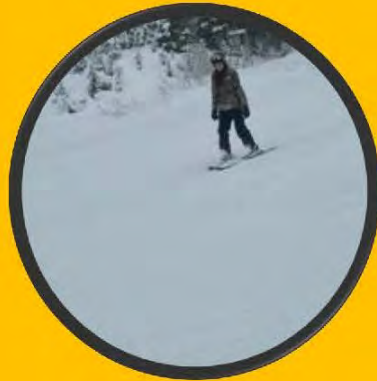


With the support of our district literacy coordinator, Mrs. Kanigan, Merritt Central is excited to offer small-group literacy instruction for both primary and intermediate students. These groups provide students with additional, targeted literacy learning on top of their regular classroom instruction.

A wonderful team of adults is helping make this initiative possible, including local volunteers from Literacy Merritt, parent volunteers, our Indigenous Student Advocates, Education Assistants, classroom teachers, our Student Support Teachers, and the principal. Their collective efforts ensure students receive explicit instruction while also building confidence and a love of reading.

The response from students has been incredibly positive, engagement is high, and students are genuinely excited to attend their groups each week. We are thrilled to see such enthusiasm and growth in our young readers.

# Ski Trip 2026



We are incredibly grateful to Mrs. Tolmie and Mrs. Smith for their hard work, organization, and commitment in making this year's intermediate ski trip another amazing success. This annual event is always a highlight for students and staff, and it would not be possible without their dedication.

This month, our school is focusing on the character trait *Courage*, and the ski trip offered a perfect real-life opportunity for students to practice bravery. Many children faced challenges such as long waits in the rental shop, uncomfortable ski boots, and the unfamiliar feeling of learning a new skill. These moments were genuinely hard, and it's completely understandable, new experiences can feel big and overwhelming.

With patient encouragement, co-regulation from caring adults, and reminders of the strategies they've learned, many students worked through their discomfort and kept going. They showed resilience, tried something new, and ultimately felt proud of themselves. Their success came because they moved through the tough moments, an important reminder that courage grows when we don't remove challenges but help students navigate them.

We are proud of our students for their bravery and grateful for the staff who made this meaningful learning experience possible.

## *Winter Celebration*

We are deeply grateful to live, learn, and grow on the ne?képmx and syilx lands, guided by the wisdom of Knowledge Keepers who have cared for this land since time immemorial. One of the most meaningful learning opportunities for our students is the annual Winter Celebration, now in its second year.

Students were engaged throughout the celebration, especially during the final dances when they were invited to join in. Being welcomed into the circle to participate made the experience memorable and helped them feel connected to the teachings and traditions shared.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Ms. Martha, Mr. Miller, and all the Indigenous Support Advocates across the district for their hard work and dedication in bringing this celebration to life. We are also grateful to NVIT for generously hosting. We look forward to continuing this important and inspiring event for years to come.





# MERRITT BENCH FEB SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT



## Bake and Read

Ms. Kane and Ms. Jones' class had the opportunity to go to the high school and participate in the bake and read event. Students got to decorate muffins and then read with a high school big buddy.



## When I Grow Up...

Students in Ms. Kane's class had the opportunity to explore different career options. They learned about what they want to be and then presented to the class.



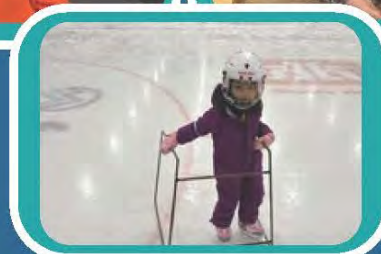
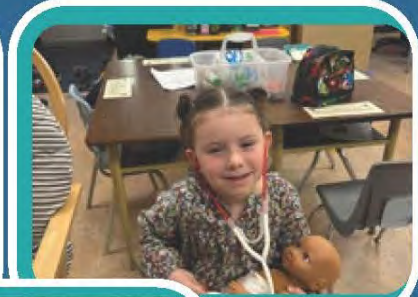
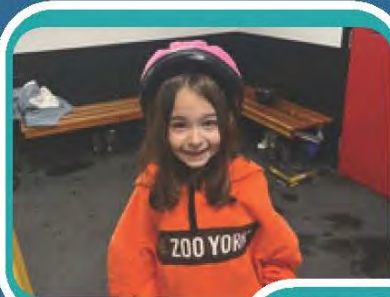
## Career Exploration

Kindergarten students wanted to be everything from a mobile printing business owner to fire fighters, veterinarians, baby doctors, tow truck drivers and more!



## Primary Skating

Mr. Denton, Ms. Jones and Ms. Kane's Classes had the opportunity to Go Skating a few times this month. A good time was had by all.





**JANUARY 2026**

Grade 10 Health class learning to respond to an overdose by administering CPR, giving Naloxone, and using an AED



Secret Staff Spirit Week:  
Monochrome Day, Anything But a Mug Day



**HAPPY RETIREMENT  
MS. BARCHARD & MRS. THOMAS**





Grade 8 Science students dissecting sheep eyes.



# MERRITT SECONDARY

January marked the close of Semester 1 at Merritt Secondary School, bringing with it a variety of culminating activities that showcased student learning, creativity, and achievement across subject areas. As classes wrapped up their final units and projects, students had opportunities to demonstrate their growth in meaningful and engaging ways.

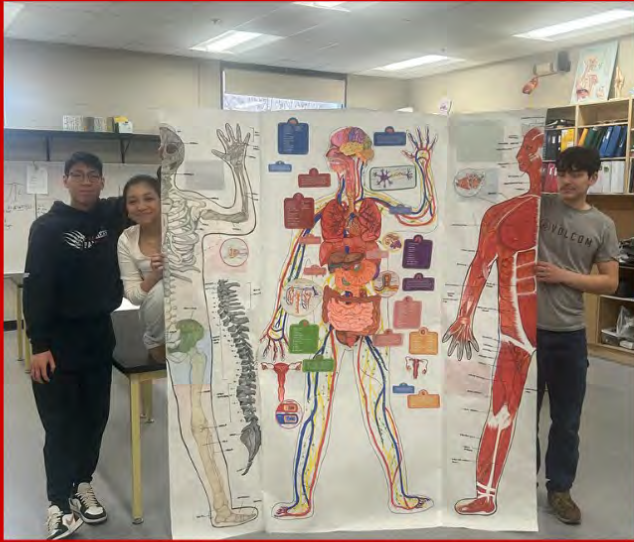
Overall, January was a month that celebrated student learning in all its forms, academic, artistic, and athletic, while closing the semester on a strong and positive note.



A highlight of the month was our annual Artscape celebration, this year featuring a festive “Christmas in January” performance by our band classes, a compelling student production of *The Monkey’s Paw* by the Drama 10–12 class, and an impressive gallery of visual artwork created throughout the first semester. This event brought families, students, and staff together to honour the diverse artistic talents within our school community.



Experiential learning also continued outside the classroom. The Sports Management class participated in a field trip to a Vancouver Canucks game, providing students with firsthand insight into sport event operations, fan engagement, and large-scale venue management. In Biology 12, students completed their “Big Body” final projects, demonstrating their understanding of human anatomy through detailed, student-created diagrams.



January also marked the conclusion of the curling season. MSS is proud to recognize the Panther Boys team, who won the West Zones championship and went on to place third in the Okanagan Valley Playdowns—an outstanding accomplishment reflecting dedication, teamwork, and skill.



# Nicola Canford



## Hot Chocolate Week



It was a full week of hot chocolate themed activities and mindfulness learning in Mrs. Pattisons class. Students worked hard all week leading up to the hot chocolate PJ party on Friday.

## Kæckéc



In Ntə?kəpmxcin, Kæckéc refers to someone who is helpful and looks to see how they can use their energy to make a place better. We are so proud of our students at Nicola Canford and how they strive to make our school a better place!

## Ice Fishing

It was an amazing day for Mrs. Ellingsen and Mrs. Thormoset's classes out at Lac Le Juene Resort in January. Fishing, skating, snowshoeing and snacking made the day great. Kwukwsteyp to Lac Le Juene Resort who went above and beyond to make our time on site welcoming and enjoyable. We cannot say enough about how great the resort was to us. We are looking forward to bringing Mrs. Thomas's class in February.





## Hatching Salmon

Mrs. Pattisons and Mrs. Weatherbie's classes had a salmon egg presentation and delivery last month. These two classes will be tracking the life cycle of Mather salmon over the next few weeks. We are looking forward to the practical learning that the kids will experience and the opportunity to release these salmon in the spring.

## Primary Skating

Primary Skating was a great way to start the year at Nicola Canford. The kids had a great time and many learned to skate for the first time last month! Students were able to visit the rink 3 times over the month and practice their skating skills.



## Winter Celebration

It was great to join the rest of the schools in the district at NVIT today for the School for the District Winter Celebration. The dancers and the drummers were amazing. Kwuk<sup>w</sup>steyp to the district's indigenous student advocates for all of the hard work that went into the planning and running this event. It was great to see Nicola Canford parents sharing their dancing expertise.



# SCIDES - South Central Interior Distance Education School

## SCIDES STEM CLUB grades K-9



### SCIENCE

#### SCIDES STEM CLUB

Grades K-9

Join Teacher-Valerie Grimshire for an Extracurricular Learning Group.

Every Second Friday  
10:00 am - 10:50 am  
Semester 2 Session Dates:  
Feb 6, 20 - Mar 6 - Apr 10,  
24 - May 8, 22



### TECHNOLOGY

We will do a variety of activities together as a group, students will have the opportunity to explore projects at home and share their experiences and results with the group. We will: Think, Build, Create and Learn together in a multigrade club.



### ENGINEERING

Join these sessions on Microsoft Teams:

Meeting ID:  
285 640 006 375 37

Passcode:  
jG6EA7JM



### MATHEMATICS

This is an extracurricular activity and is not required or graded as part of the student's coursework; however, we will explore many aspects of course curriculums and develop many core competency skills.

THANK YOU ALL WHO HAVE JOINED STEM CLUB SO FAR!

We will be continuing into the second half of the school year... same link, NEW DATES!!!

What are we working on now?

DESIGN A ROBOT

Design or invent an idea for a robot that could help you with a daily activity... plan what it would do, how it would work, what it would be made of... Share an idea or drawing!

There were such positive feedback and participation in STEM club in Semester 1 that we will keep it going for the rest of the year.

For more information, email:  
vggrimshire@sd58.bc.ca



Student participation is expected to be supervised by the facilitator or parent

## STEM CLUB K-9

We do a variety of activities; we can explore projects at home and share our experiences and results in virtual meetings.  
We: Think, Build, Create and Learn together in a multigrade club.

A Student working with her friends

Check out Our EGG DROP CHALLENGE...

Outcomes:  
7 eggs broken...  
4 successful egg drop designs...  
MANY trials, errors and new attempts...  
A lot of fun!



At SCIDES, we're all about innovation, learning, and community—no matter where our students are!

Five students participated in the egg drop challenge at their homes.

# Vermilion Forks Elementary



## JANUARY AT VFE

Coming back from a very wet December, January's warm, dry weather was a welcome change for everyone. Students were able to enjoy much more time outside, helped along by our shift to an instructional lunch schedule, which kept the flow of the day calm and productive. Basketball season also kicked off and was a big hit, thanks to the energy and commitment of Ms. Harris-Goodall and our volunteer parent coaches.



## BAND

Our band program, led by Ms. Izon, continues to be a steady highlight for many of our students. All Grade 5s are enrolled, giving every learner a chance to experience instrumental music and build foundational skills. Students in Grades 6 and 7 who want to continue are able to carry on with the program. The mix of beginners and returning players has created a supportive, upbeat learning environment where students can challenge themselves and feel proud of their progress.



## DRUMMING GROUP

This month, our Welcome Room had a great burst of energy as students gathered for our regular drumming session. With our local Elder unable to join us that day, Student Support Teacher Renee Hartwell stepped in to lead the group. She guided students through simple rhythms and created a comfortable space where everyone could participate, try something new, and just enjoy being together. These monthly sessions continue to be a meaningful way for students to connect and build community in a calm, welcoming environment.

## EGYPT

Students in Ms. Kunderman and Ms. Coyne's class have been diving into the history and culture of Ancient Egypt through a creative, hands-on project. The class has been building, researching, and experimenting as they learn about daily life, beliefs, and innovations from this early civilization. It's been great to see how engaged students are when they can explore big ideas in a tangible way, and the project has sparked lots of curiosity and great conversations in the classroom.



# IMPORTANT DATES

February 12, 2026	Thursday	<b>All Schools – Early Dismissal Day</b> – Schools will notify parents of early dismissal times.
February 13, 2026	Friday	<b>Non-Instructional Day</b> (Professional Development Day.)
February 16, 2026	Monday	<b>Family Day.</b>
March 13, 2026	Friday	Merritt, Princeton Elementary Schools and Community Learning Centre Report Cards go home.
March 13, 2026	Friday	Last day of school before Spring Break.
March 16 - 27, 2026		<b>SPRING BREAK.</b>
March 30, 2026	Monday	Schools reopen after the break.



Nicola-Similkameen School District - No. 58



[www.nssd.ca](http://www.nssd.ca)