



Nicola
Similkameen
School District

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

— SEPTEMBER 2026 —

Welcome Back to School



WELCOME
BACK!
😊

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



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www.nssd.ca



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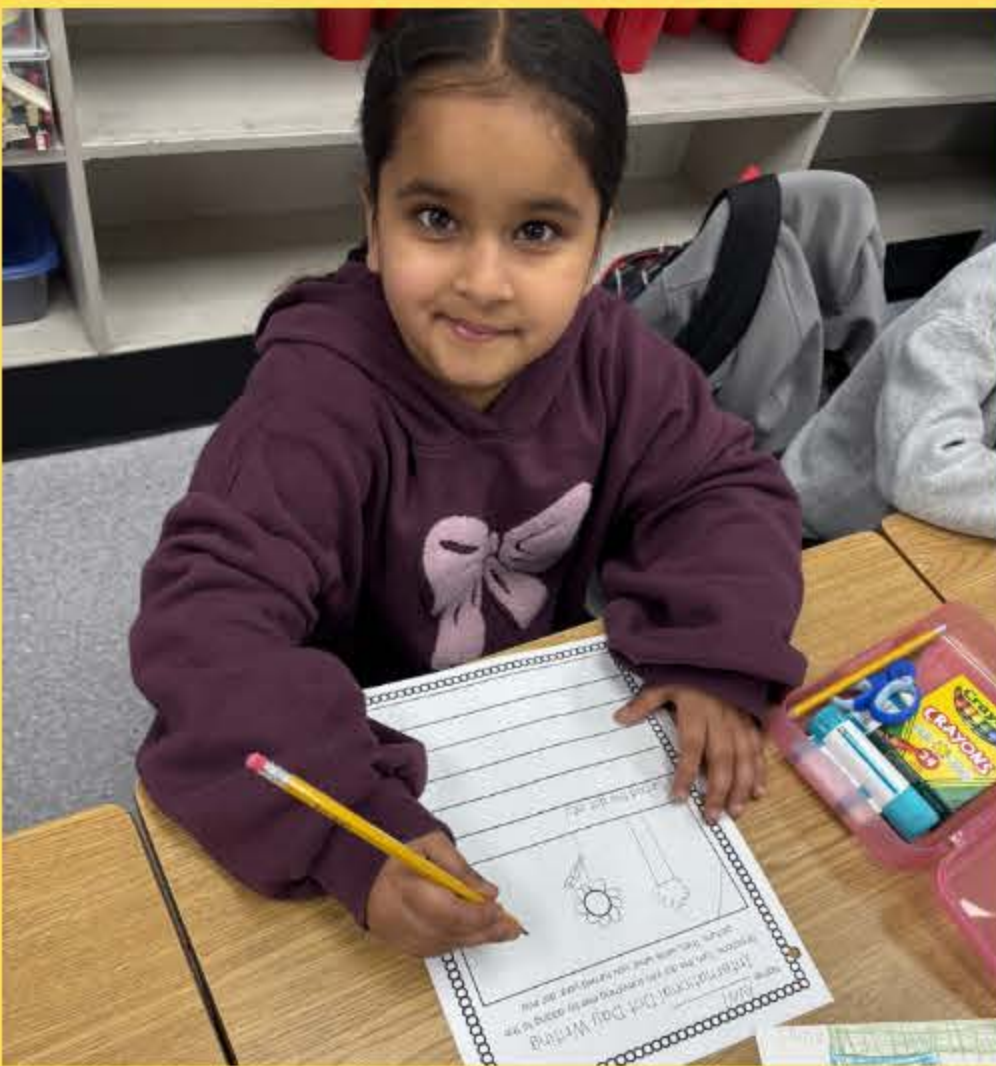




École Merritt Central Elementary

Home of the Hawks!

Welcome Back / Bon retour



Pictured above: Ms. Morrison's Grade 1/2 Class participating in Dot Day, an annual celebration of creativity, courage, and self-expression, inspired by the children's book *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds.

The first week of school always brings excitement and optimism, but this year felt especially unique as we officially brought two school communities together for the first time. Our teachers went above and beyond to prepare classrooms and shared spaces so that students would walk into a school that felt welcoming, organized, and ready for learning.

Mission accomplished!

A big thank-you to our Maintenance Team and District staff for helping make the transition a smooth one.

We extend a warm welcome to new families, as well as new staff, including: Mme Savard, Ms. McComb, and Ms. Ambrose.



MERRITT BENCH SEPTEMBER SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Welcome Back

As we begin another exciting school year at Merritt Bench Elementary, we are focusing on the importance of building strong relationships and creating meaningful connections with students, families, and staff. A positive sense of belonging is at the heart of a successful school community, and we have enjoyed welcoming new families to our school while reconnecting with many returning students.

September has us recognizing upcoming events, including our Terry Fox Run on September 18 at 11:00 a.m. and on September, 29th, we will wear our Orange Shirts in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. We also look forward to welcoming our families into our Merritt Bench Open House on September 22 from 5:00 p.m - 6:30. Families and caregivers are welcome to come to Bench, meet our staff and enjoy hot dogs together.

We are excited for the year ahead and look forward to a wonderful school year filled with learning, collaboration, and success for all students.

MERRITT SECONDARY



September 2026



It was wonderful to welcome students and staff back to Merritt Secondary School for the 2026–27 school year. Even before the first day of classes, our LINK Leaders were busy helping our newest Panthers make the transition to high school, connecting with incoming Grade 8 students through a summer orientation session. The opening days of school continued this focus on connection, with a number of student gatherings designed to welcome students, share important information, and establish expectations for the year ahead.

A highlight of the opening weeks was a well-attended band meeting hosted by our new band teacher, Mrs. Ottens. Students and families came together to learn about plans for the year and opportunities to participate in the program. Mrs. Ottens is excited to continue building the band program at the secondary level, and the strong turnout demonstrated the enthusiasm that already exists among students and families.

The new school year has also brought several exciting changes to MSS. One significant initiative is the launch of a hybrid learning pilot project between Merritt Secondary School and Princeton Secondary School. By connecting students and teachers across the two schools, the pilot is intended to provide greater course variety and choice, particularly in senior academic courses where smaller enrolment numbers can make it challenging to offer classes at each school independently. We are excited to learn from the pilot and explore how technology and collaboration can help expand opportunities for students in both communities.

MSS is also introducing a new point-of-sale system in the school cafeteria. The first phase allows students to use debit as a payment option, with a card-based account system also being introduced. Importantly, the same system can support both family-funded accounts and school-supported meal programs, helping students access food in a consistent and discreet manner. This is a positive step toward making the cafeteria more accessible while supporting dignity and belonging for all students.

DIAMOND VALE SEPTEMBER 2026

• BACK TO SCHOOL - NEW STAFF



We are happy to welcome some new staff members. Miss Jenna Kane, a past student of Diamond Vale, is returning to teach our Grade 3/4 class. Mrs. Alisha Hedrick is covering a leave in our secretarial role, and Mrs. Veronica Decoine is covering the ISA position. With the relocation of Strong Start from Merritt Central, we also welcome Mrs. Marni Gage.

BUILDING COMMUNITY & BELONGING

We have been excited to receive 23 new students which include 15 Kindergarteners and 8 students across Grades 1-7.



For the first three days of learning, students were in multi-age groups, which gave them the opportunity to build connections across the school.

A goal for this year is to increase the number of extra-curricular opportunities available to students. Our student leadership group met today to discuss ideas for clubs they hope to see taking place.



TERRY FOX ASSEMBLY

Our had our first whole school assembly where we celebrated being back together and welcomed new faces. Students learned about the legacy of Terry Fox and were challenged to raise \$262 over coming weeks, the equivalent of a 'Toonie for Terry' each.



UPCOMING EVENTS

21st Sept - Terry Fox Run

21st Sept - Dennis Saddleman Presentation

22nd Sept - Meet the Teacher Night

23rd Sept - School Photos

29th Sept - Orange Shirt Day



Nicola Canford



Circle of Courage

It was so great to spend the last few days with our teaching staff and a number of other district teachers, working through Dr. Martin Brokenleg's Circle of Courage with Mark Freado from the Reclaiming Youth At Risk organization. We are excited to help each of our students to experience and practice Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity this year.

Traditional Calming Space

Kwuk^wsteyp to Mrs Nelson-Smith for joining Mrs. Lytton in re-introducing our students to the traditional calming space and the different traditional regulation activities available to our students.



Why Did The Chicken Go To School?



We were so happy to welcome back our chickens to Nicola Canford this month. This is a great way for kids to learn to care for and co-regulate with an animal here at school.

Parachute



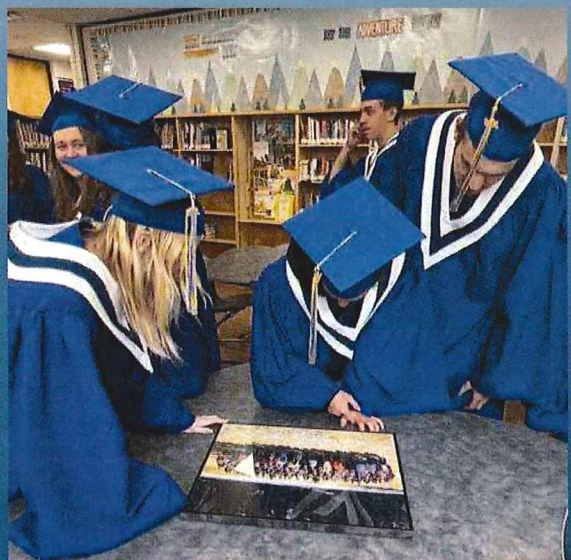
Our Intermediates got to remember what it is like to go back in time and play with the parachute. Thanks to Ms. Pattison for all of the fun.



Princeton Graduating Class of
2026 visiting John Allison
Elementary School
Playing on equipment and
finding their young pictures



JUNE 2026

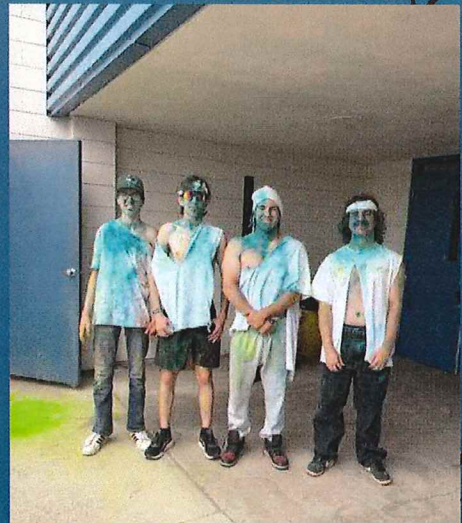


Led by one of our young artists,
students painted a beautiful
mural in our courtyard





Our new "Helping Locker"
at PSS



June Paint Run