STRATEGIC FOCUS

Connecting Our Priorities



October 2025 Highlights

As we move forward in the 2025–2026 school year, our District remains deeply committed to the goals outlined in the <u>District Strategic Plan 2023-2028</u>: Intellectual Development, Human and Social Development, Career Development, Organizational Development, Community Partnership Development, Organizational Development, and Effective Governance and Leadership. This publication, *Strategic Focus – Connecting Our Priorities*, highlights the meaningful work happening across our schools and communities that directly supports these strategic pillars.

From enhancing early literacy and numeracy through embedded classroom support, to fostering student well-being and belonging through creative and inclusive activities, each initiative reflects the District's Mission - Empowering students to become confident, curious, and caring individuals who thrive in their learning, relationships, and community.

REMINDERS

November 10 Professional Development Day, no school for students

November 11 Remembrance Day, no school

Stay up to date with important dates including holidays, professional development days, and school events (2025-2026 School District Calendar / 2025-2026 School Year Calendar).

HALLOWEEN FUN ACROSS THE DISTRICT



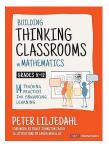


INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Each student will develop their literacy skills, numeracy skills, and competencies to become their most capable self.

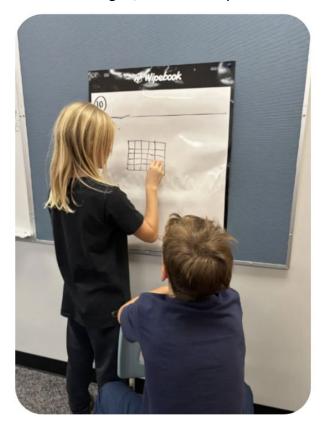
NUMERACY RESIDENCY

The first <u>Numeracy Residency</u> is taking place at Sorrento Elementary School, bringing a collaborative and innovative approach to math instruction. Numeracy Helping Teachers Christine Blacklock and Marlee Penner are working with three Intermediate classrooms, taught by Ange Nitschke, Madison Dickie, and Melissa Green, every Wednesday for eight weeks.



To support this work, vertical whiteboards and flexible learning spaces have been introduced throughout the school. These tools are central to the *Building Thinking Classrooms* framework by Peter Liljedahl, which encourages student engagement, problem-solving, and mathematical discourse.

This initiative supports the Intellectual Development priority in the <u>District Strategic Plan</u>, which focuses on helping students meet or exceed literacy and numeracy expectations while developing the competencies needed to become their most capable selves. By embedding expert support into classrooms and using research-based strategies, the Residency enhances both teacher practice and student learning.











STRENGTHENING EARLY LEARNING

We continue to prioritize early literacy by supporting school teams and enhancing our in-class support model. This approach places Literacy Support Teachers (LSTs) directly into Kindergarten to Grade 2 classrooms across the District, allowing them to work side-by-side with classroom teachers and students. By embedding support within the regular learning environment, students benefit from targeted literacy instruction in-class, making learning more seamless, inclusive, and effective.

This collaborative model ensures that consistent strategies and language are used across settings, helping students build strong foundational skills in reading and writing. To better understand and support individual student growth, LSTs and classroom teachers use Early Literacy Screeners and assessment tools. These tools help identify specific skill gaps and guide the planning of both whole-class instruction and small-group interventions.



We also recognize the vital role families play in literacy development. The Ministry of Education and Child Care has developed a helpful resource (All about early literacy) for families to support early literacy at home. This tool empowers parents and caregivers to reinforce learning in everyday moments, creating a strong home-school connection.

If you have any questions about early literacy support or would like to learn more, please reach out to Jennifer Findlay, Director of Instruction – Early Years & Elementary, or connect with your child's school. Thank you for your continued partnership in building strong literacy foundations for all children.

SCIENTIFIC THINKING



Mrs. Witzke's Core 4 and Core 5 science classes recently put their scientific thinking to the test by experimenting with two different bubble solutions: soap with glycerin and soap with corn syrup. Their goal was to find out which mixture created the strongest, most bouncy bubbles.

After finishing their experiments, each class teamed up with their "little buddy" class to share what they learned. Pictured here, Core 5 and kindergarten buddies for some "hands-on" fun, blowing and bouncing their bubbles together.





COMMUNICATING STUDENT LEARNING

We know that meaningful and ongoing communication between home and school has a positive impact on student learning and engagement. This year, in-person Student/Teacher/Family Conferences took place on Monday, October 20, 2025, at all elementary and middle schools in SD83

These conferences serve as an informal learning update, offering a chance to share student strengths, areas of growth, and strategies to support learning in literacy, numeracy, and social emotional learning. This opportunity is aligned with SD83's Intellectual Development goal: *Each student will develop their literacy skills, numeracy skills, and competencies to become their most capable self*, within the 2023-2028 District Strategic Plan.

SD83 Student/Teacher/Family Conference Guidelines include:

- Minimum 15 minutes in length for each student;
- Held in the student's classroom;
- Only one family at a time in the classroom space during the scheduled time;
- During the conference, opportunities will be provided to share examples of learning, reflect on areas of strength, identify areas of further growth, and discuss ways to support learning (particularly in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and social emotional learning); and,
- All conferences will be scheduled using the Microsoft Bookings tool; all families of elementary and middle students will receive an email from their school with information about how to schedule a conference time.

OCTOBER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SESSIONS

October 14 POPEY: Rock Your Literacy Block! –Session 1
October 21 POPEY: Rock Your Literacy Block! –Session 2

October 24 Literacy Book Club, Teaching Phonics & Word Student in the Intermediate Grades (3-8)

Environments for Well-Being & Learning (PreK-3)

Climate Change Connections in the BC Curriculum (K-3)

October 27 Creating Resilient Classrooms – Embedding Mental Health Support into Every Classroom (3-8)







HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Each student will feel welcome, safe, and connected to peers and adults in their school.

MONTHLY MINDFUL MOMENTS



Whenever you need to talk, we're open.

Text 686868

KidsHelpPhone.ca
Call 1-800-668-6868

Kids Help Phone

The Itinerant Counselling Team's Mindful Moments focus in October was on managing Big Feelings. Visit our website to access the October Mindful Moments





MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

October 5-11, 2025, marked Mental Illness Awareness Week, with World Mental Health Day on Friday, October 10th. This was a time to reflect on the importance of emotional well-being and the power of community support.

Students at A.L. Fortune Secondary, Eagle River Secondary, J.L. Jackson Secondary, Pleasant Valley Secondary, and Salmon Arm Secondary engaged in Fall Wellness Fairs, connecting with local services, and learning about tools for mental health and wellness.







One of the most moving initiatives from last school year is now featured in the Shine A Light art exhibition at the Salmon Arm Art Gallery. Students from Eagle River Secondary were invited to explore the question: "What does anxiety mean to you?" Through small group conversations and individual reflection, they expressed their personal experiences and challenges with anxiety, and shared healthy strategies for coping. Their voices and creativity shine a light on resilience, understanding, and hope.

This year's *Shine a Light on Mental Health* exhibition runs from September 6 – November 19, 2025. It is a collaborative project showcasing the creativity of 12 community groups, each contributing heartfelt work inspired by the theme of *hope*, *help*, *and healing*.





Families looking for support can explore <u>Multi-Language Mental Health Resources for Families</u> from BC Children's Hospital Kelty Mental Health, and the Ministry of Education and Child Care's <u>Language Matters – An Introductory Guide for Understanding Mental Health and Substance Use: A Resource for Families and School Communities</u> guide, which helps communities talk about mental health and substance use with compassion and clarity. Together, these efforts shine a light on resilience, understanding, and the importance of supporting one another.



SALMON ARM URBAN AND RURAL FEEDER SCHOOL RECONFIGURATION

During the 2023-24 school year, the Board of Education directed senior leadership to conduct information and feedback sessions related to the configuration of Salmon Arm urban and rural feeder schools. Upon conclusion of those meetings, which were held during December 2023 to April 2024, the Board of Education passed a motion that Salmon Arm urban and rural feeder schools would move to a K-7, 8-12 grade configuration.

In November 2024, the Board of Education passed a motion to adopt a two secondary school model within the community of Salmon Arm. At that time, the Board directed senior leadership to proceed with work related to catchment boundaries, a transition plan to accomplish the reconfiguration, and a plan outlining the feeder system for each of the two secondary schools.

A common theme has been that the reconfiguration process is complex with no perfect solution. There is agreement that the reduction of school transitions will allow for stronger relationships between students and staff, increase students' sense of belonging, and be beneficial for students with diverse abilities, Children and Youth in Care, and Indigenous students.

The reconfiguration of school catchments and grade transitions is a strategic initiative designed to reduce barriers for students. This work aligns with our <u>District's Strategic Plan</u>, which prioritizes:

- Fewer transitions between schools, allowing students to build stronger relationships with peers and staff;
- Improved sense of belonging, especially for students with diverse abilities, Children and Youth in Care, and Indigenous students; and,
- Supporting academic success and well-being.

The <u>reconfiguration three-year transition plan (2025-28)</u> provides a phased approach for moving to a K-7, 8-12 configuration in the Salmon Arm area between 2025 and 2028. It includes timelines for adjustments to catchments and grade configuration. For more details, visit the <u>Reconfiguration Information</u> webpage (sd83.bc.ca | Board of Education | Reconfiguration Information).

TAKE ME OUTSIDE DAY

It is never hard to celebrate "Take Me Outside Day" at South Canoe Outdoor School. Fall could not have been more beautiful so they have been taking advantage of it. Here are a few pictures from Mrs. Danyluk's beautiful nature art, Ms. Crosson's pumpkin exploration and art, and Mrs. Coady doing a read aloud at her outdoor classroom (with Mrs. Danyluk's students gathered in the background at their stump circle).









PUMPKIN DECORATING FUN AT BASTION ELEMENTARY









Led by the Grade 5 teachers, Bastion Elementary School recently hosted a school-wide pumpkin decorating activity that brought students together in a celebration of imagination, collaboration, and seasonal fun.

Far more than a festive event, this was a meaningful opportunity for students to express themselves artistically, collaborate with peers, and contribute to a vibrant school community. With themes ranging from food and animals to pop culture and spooky Halloween designs, students explored visual storytelling and creative problem-solving in fun and engaging ways.

This activity aligns with the Human and Social Development goal in the <u>District Strategic Plan 2023-2028</u>: "Each student will feel welcome, safe, and connected to peers and adults in their school." Through shared creative experiences, students built relationships, celebrated diverse ideas, and strengthened their sense of belonging and inclusion.

From M&M characters and caterpillars to Pikachu and Elvis, the displays showcased the vibrant spirit and imagination of Bastion's learners. Be sure to check out the amazing pumpkins and see how the students turned this seasonal tradition into a fun and connected learning experience!





SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK – OCTOBER 20-24, 2025

During the week of October 20-24, 2025, we joined schools and communities across the country in recognizing National School Bus Safety Week. This is a time to reflect on the importance of keeping students safe as they travel to and from school.

Every day, our dedicated transportation team safely carries 2,800 students to and from school, and their safety remains our highest priority. As drivers, parents and community members, we each have a responsibility to help protect them.



Please remember: You must stop for school buses displaying flashing red lights. It's not just the law, it's a vital step in ensuring our students arrive safely at their destinations.

Let's work together to keep every student safe, every day. To learn more about school bus safety and what the flashing lights mean, check out the helpful graphic and watch the SD73 brake4buses video here.





CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Each student will develop the skills and competencies necessary to be successful in a career or community pathway of their choice.

CAREER DEPARTMENT UPDATES

In October, the month started off with two full-day field trips in two days. Nearly forty SD83 students got to the root of their curiosity when it came to careers in the region's <u>Agriculture</u> industry as Grade 10-12 students from Salmon Arm, J.L. Jackson and A.L. Fortune secondaries took the day exploring three farms in the region to learn more from local industry people and the careers associated with their businesses. The next day, nearly thirty SD83 students used their hands to explore trades at <u>TA Structures</u> in Sicamous where they spent the day trying out five trades that are performed at the modular home and houseboat construction company.





A couple of weeks later, SD83 Careers hosted its third annual WEX-Dual Credit nights at J.L. Jackson and Pleasant Valley secondaries. Nearly 100 students and parents showed up at the Salmon Arm high school while nearly 40 people came to the Armstrong facility. Parents and students learned more about Careers programs such as Work Experience, Enhanced Work Experience, Post-Secondary Sampler programs and the popular academic, trade and Youth Work in Trades dual credit programs. As well, parents from SD83 and eight other school districts across the southern interior hosted a virtual event with Education Planner BC. Students and parents checked out the career exploration website and learned about post-secondary education, career opportunities, and resources to support students in future planning.

Finally, two events closed out at the end of the month. Over 30 students from the area checked out one of SD83's premier dual credit programs at Pleasant Valley Secondary. Students descended on the school's <a href="https://mx.com/hair_noise.com/

In November, there are three full-day District field trips and two province-wide virtual seminars taking place. If parents and their learners are interested in what's being offered, please go to our <u>SD83 careers website</u> for more information.



HAIRSTYLING DUAL CREDIT PROGRAM

Over 30 students from the area checked out one of SD83's premier dual credit programs at Pleasant Valley Secondary.

Students from School Districts 83 and 22 descended on the school's hair styling program. Students were able to learn more about the application process, the expectations of the Youth Train in Trade program, have a chance to ask questions of the current hairstyling students and try their hand at the trade. This unique program is an authorized training provider for Skilled Trades BC. Students can earn 40 credits towards high school graduation and can obtain their Hairstyling Level 1 certification at the same time.

Program Instructor Jaime Russell is not just a certified high school teacher but a red seal certified hairstylist. She has taught the program now for four years. Russell is proud of the performance of her students as many of the grads outperform other students in other BC programs. "The Skilled Trades BC Standardized Written Exam passing mark is 70 percent. The provincial average on the test is in the mid-70's. For our students, the typical average on the test is in the low '80's," Russell said while addressing students at the event.

The program runs from February to January and this year's cohort has been filled. The next cohort to be filled will start in February 2027. Interested students of SD83 and 22 can apply for the program. Applications open in late November with the deadline set for late February 2026.

If you have more questions about the program, please don't hesitate to reach out to SD83 Trades and Transitions Coordinator Michelle Hall or your community high school career coordinator for more information.



Pleasant Valley Secondary School Grad Jenelle Kalf shows Salmon Arm Secondary Grade 10 students Claire Saloren and Teghan Crowe how to start doing a root retouch on a mannequin.



Salmon Arm Secondary Grad Izzy Torrie demonstrates to three Eagle River Secondary students how to part and section hair before using a Marcel Iron to curl.



Hairstyling Student Hannah Breugem demonstrates some braiding techniques to a few J.L. Jackson students.

NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

November 4 University of BC Faculties of land and Food Systems & Forestry

November 7 Engineering Field Trip

November 27 Massage Therapy Career Event

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We will strengthen existing and develop new strategic partnerships in gap areas.

SOUPER MEALS PROGRAM



October marked the beginning of Souper Meals, a hot lunch program provided by Shuswap Food Action Society. This initiative serves up delicious, homemade soups made from fresh, locally grown ingredients right here in the Shuswap. Prepared in giant steam kettles at Zest Food Hub, the soups are delivered hot to schools, along with buns and an assortment of cut fruits and vegetables. The goal of the program is to provide students with opportunities to try delicious, home-cooked foods alongside their friends and peers.



This year, the program is expanding with a pilot hot entrée program at M.V. Beattie Elementary. "It's great having a nutrition program available to all students. Exposure to new foods is a bonus!" said Sarah, a parent volunteer who helps serve meals through the program.

Thanks to funding from Feeding Futures, Souper Meals is currently offered free of charge to all students. To help keep the program sustainable, parents are invited to contribute online at the Souper Meals - Shuswap Food Action Society website.

Souper Meals is an example of our District's commitment to Community Partnership Development, a priority in the <u>District Strategic Plan</u>. By fostering strong local collaboration, promoting social responsibility, and ensuring equitable access to nutritious meals, the program helps students feel connected, cared for, and ready to learn.

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK – OCTOBER 5-11, 2025



On Wednesday, October 8, 2025, Sicamous Fire Rescue visited Eagle River Secondary for a live grease fire demonstration, showing how quickly fires can ignite and spread – and how to respond safely. The crew used the "Fire Triangle" to highlight the three best ways to suppress a kitchen fire: remove the heat – turn off the burner; remove the oxygen – smother flames with metal lid or baking soda (remember to never use water); and, remove the fuel - keep combustibles like towels and oils away from the stove. Thank you to Fire Chief De Arcangelis, Lieutenant McKellar, and Firefighter Kroeker for providing an engaging demonstration to the students.

KIN CLUB ARMSTRONG DONATIONS

Thank you to the Kin Club Armstrong for their donations towards the Pleasant Valley Secondary School (PVSS) Hawks football team and the breakfast programs at Armstrong Elementary, Len Wood Middle School, and PVSS.













ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We will develop and enhance procedures and practices that will assist in meeting the Strategic Priorities.

WEBSITE UPDATE

In alignment with our Strategic Plan's commitment to enhancing communication and engagement, the District has prioritized improving digital accessibility and user experience. During our annual Enhancing Student Learning Report meeting with the Ministry of Education and Child Care, feedback was received indicating that our current website is not user-friendly. In reponse, the District is moving forward with a refresh of both school and district websites to better serve our students, families, and community stakeholders. The new sites are scheduled to go live by December 2025.

TEACHING PHONICS & WORD STUDY IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

We are excited to offer a three-part professional learning series for Grades 3-8 teachers, based on Wiley Blevins' updated classic Phonics From A to Z. This engaging book club is exploring high-impact routines revised word lists, and strategies for differentiating instruction in whole-group and small-group settings. Participants also received a sample intervention lession and a free copy of the book.

This series is a great opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding of phonics instruction and support literacy growth in their classrooms.

This professional learning opportunity directly supports our <u>Organizational Development</u> priority by enhancing instructional practice through targeted professional development and fosters a culture of support and wellness by offering collaborative learning.



Photo to the right: Engaging Pro-D on October 24th

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Administrative procedures (APs) are established procedures and practices directed by the Superintendent of Schools and Senior Leadership Team. These procedures provide guidance for staff to ensure their work aligns with board policies and meets the organization's expectations or requirements. The following APs have recently completed the development and review process:

- AP 120 Trespassing Maintenance of Order.pdf
- AP 510 Public Use of School Facilities.pdf
- AP 510 Appendix A Rental Fee Structure.pdf

Strategic Plan Report: Connecting Our Priorities



EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The Board of Education will work to represent the interests of all students by actively advocating for student learning and well-being through Strategic Planning Policy and responsible Stewardship.

FACILITY RENTAL FEES 2025-26

The District rents and leases school facilities to various user groups and organizations throughout our communities. The rates that the District currently charges have not been updated since the mid-1990's and do not support proper stewardship of our facilities.

At the October 21, 2025, regular Board Meeting, Acting Secretary-Treasurer Jeremy Hunt presented the revised proposed facility rental fees increase for 2025-26. These fees will take effect on January 1, 2026. Future review and proposed changes to fees will be presented to the Board in June for implementation starting July 1, 2026, to align with the District's fiscal year.

Read the details contained in Acting Secretary-Treasurer Hunt's Facility Rental Fees 2025-26 briefing note.

FIELD TRIP REQUEST – EAGLE RIVER SECONDARY – ALPS & MEDITERRANEAN COAST 2026

Teacher Dakota Mellin and student Rielle Walsh presented details regarding the proposed trip for Grade 10–12 students to Switzerland, Italy, France, and Spain at the October 21, 2025, Regular Board Meeting. The presentation included information about EF Tours, curricular connections, trip costs and funding, and insurance. All relevant documentation is included in the <u>Board agenda package</u>. The Board of Education has approved, in principle, the Eagle River Secondary School International Field Trip scheduled for March 2026.

POLICY COMMITTEE

The Board approved the Policy Committee's recommendation to repeal the Following policies:

- Policy 8060 Education of Indigenous Students the District has renewed the Local Education
 Agreements with the four First Nations on whose territory the school district is located on. The
 Quelmúcw Education Council has also recently constructed a Terms of Reference that outlines the
 scope of and way the Council will conduct its business.
- Policy 10010 Community Similarities and Differences the contents of the policy are covered through <u>Policy 130 – Roles and Responsibilities of the Board</u>, Human Resources Guidelines, and contract language.
- Policy 10020 Parent and Community Involvement and Communications the contents of the policy are covered through <u>Policy 220 - Inquiries and Concerns</u>, <u>Policy 230 – Parent Advisory Councils</u>, and the <u>Communicating with Your School – A Guide for Families document</u>.

FROM THE BOARD REPORT

To access the details from the October 21, 2025, Regular Board meeing, refer to the <u>From the Board Report</u> available on the District website.

