



Superintendent's Report to the Board
November 13, 2024
Dream. Believe. Achieve.

I am pleased to present this month's Superintendent's Report, highlighting key actions moving the District forward in accomplishing the [Board's Strategic Plan](#). A significant highlight this month has been the Remembrance Day Services held by schools. These services provide a profound opportunity for students, staff, and community members to honor the sacrifices of those who have served in the armed forces. By engaging in these commemorative events, we not only pay tribute to our veterans but also promote a sense of historical awareness and gratitude among our students.

Remembrance Day Services align seamlessly with your Strategic Goals of **Student Success**, **Leadership Excellence**, and **Community Connections**. Through these ceremonies, students are encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of history and its impact on our present and future, thereby enhancing their academic and personal growth. Leadership is exemplified as students take active roles in organizing and participating in these events, showcasing their ability to lead with empathy and respect. Furthermore, these services strengthen our community connections by bringing together students, families, veterans, and local organizations in a shared act of remembrance and reflection.



As we continue to strive towards your Vision of ***becoming a community where all are respected, and each person is encouraged to develop their potential***, I would like to acknowledge the work of staff and system leaders who help create the conditions under which learners can flourish. The stories that follow provide evidence of their commitment to nurturing well-rounded, socially responsible, and connected future global citizens.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karla Mitchell
Superintendent of Schools

Student Success

To provide many pathways for all students to pursue and achieve desired outcomes.

Career Programs Update

An enthusiastic and diverse group of students have embarked on their educational journeys in the Trade Sampler, Health Sampler, and Indigenous Early Childhood Education.

Trade Sampler students spend one semester at Okanagan College Vernon exploring different trades and developing foundational skills in areas such as carpentry, piping, and electrical. The enthusiasm and dedication of students are evident as they engage in practical projects and gain valuable insights into potential career paths.



The SD22 Health Sampler Program, a new initiative in collaboration with Okanagan College, offers students an exciting opportunity to explore various health-related fields such as nursing, dental care, social work and health administration. Through a blend of classroom instruction, guest speakers, and hands-on labs, students are gaining valuable insights into labor market needs and the numerous job opportunities within the healthcare industry.

The district is pleased to celebrate the achievements of the students who have enrolled in the Indigenous Early Childhood Education Program. In partnership with Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, SD22 Career Programs offers this unique opportunity to SD22 Indigenous students who will earn a micro-credential in Early Childhood Education upon completion. This program is designed with a strong emphasis on culturally responsive teaching practices. Students are not only acquiring essential skills but also playing a vital role in preserving and promoting Indigenous cultures and traditions. We look forward to supporting students as they continue to hone their skills and pursue their career aspirations.

Student-Led Conferences at Cherryville

Student-led conferences are a powerful tool for enhancing student achievement by promoting empowerment, instilling confidence, developing communication skills, and strengthening relationships between school and families. The involvement of learners, families and teachers in this process creates a supportive network that encourages and sustains student success. Students, teachers, and families recently spent time together at Cherryville setting goals for students during this event which had a 100% family turnout for the conferences!



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Sense of Belonging at Kalamalka Secondary



Establishing a sense of belonging has been evident this fall at Kalamalka Secondary School. Many intentional events such as a welcome night, tour, peer connection and team-building opportunities have all helped to ease anxieties for students new to the school community. Survey results for Grade 8 students show that a large majority report feeling positive at Kal, especially because of their teachers and the extracurricular opportunities. This fall Kal has also hosted a very successful Clubs Day, which encouraged all students to engage in

extracurriculars such as Cheer club, Safe Schools, Kal Allies club, Choir, and many more – resulting in a notable increase in student engagement and inclusion this year.

In October, Kal Leadership Students were key in supporting the Parent-teacher Conferences event by greeting and guiding families around the school. These conferences highlighted Kal's commitment to staying connected to our parent community and ensuring all voices are heard.



Improving Student Engagement at Ellison Elementary

The Ellison school goal for Student Success is *to improve students' engagement in their learning*. This goal aligns with the SD22 Strategic Plan goals of supporting student wellness, improving student voice and choice, and ensuring schools are welcoming places to learn and work.

Some of the specific ways Ellison staff is supporting student engagement this year has been to include opportunities for student leadership, school clubs, teams, and activities that promote a sense of belonging and involvement. Encouraging growth mindset, student ownership of learning, and resiliency have also been areas of focus. Ellison would like to thank their PAC for supporting student engagement and belonging through the recent purchase of a Gaga-pit which was installed this fall.



What's Happening in Early Learning & Child Care?



Supporting children and families on the road to kindergarten is a priority for Early Learning & Child Care (ELCC). There is an exciting calendar of events planned for the 2024-2025 year to enhance early learning experiences for children aged 3 to 5 years.

ELCC is grateful for the financial support from the province of British Columbia, through the Ministry of Education and Child Care's "Ready, Set, Learn" funding, which enables SD22 to provide events that promote positive connections between families, the school system, and local community

agencies.

Over the past month, ELCC hosted two events: a Nature Scavenger Hunt at Coldstream Park and a Magic Book Bus at Civic Memorial Park in downtown Vernon.

It was an honor to have OKIB Knowledge Keeper Marnie Gregoire join ELCC on October 16th to teach children and families how to identify local Indigenous plants and their traditional uses. The children enjoyed learning about the Four Food Chiefs through Marnie's oral storytelling and had fun using magnifying glasses and clipboards to locate a variety of plants around the park.



On October 29th, a School District 22 bus transformed into a "Magic Book Bus," where children and families climbed aboard to enjoy songs and stories with Early Learning Success Teacher Deborah Hay-Marion and Stephanie Thoreson from the Okanagan Regional Library. The atmosphere was joyful as children were warmly greeted by SD22 bus driver Lisa Olsen and then settled in with their family members to enjoy story time. With Halloween only a couple of days away, it was a chance for children (and adults!) to dress up in costumes and take home their very own copy of the book "The Spooky Wheels on the Bus."

Everyone is looking forward to the next ELCC event in November, which will focus on math workshop and counting experiences in early childhood!

Is Hillview Haunted?

At Hillview Elementary, the Student Success Goal focuses on *supporting students to be flexible thinkers, fluent in literacy and numeracy, who can process and use knowledge systematically and critically to communicate their thinking*. During the month of October, the Hillview Heroes have been working hard learning about who they are as learners, setting goals to be successful and demonstrating creative and critical thinking skills. The whole school came together to use critical and creative thinking skills to help plan and design the annual Hillview Haunted Hallway.



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Many different classes helped to create the enormous, creepy, 3D octopuses, fish and jellyfish that were featured throughout. A big “Thank You” to Mrs. Graber and her Grade 2/3 class who designed, planned,



and created the haunted pirate ship. Word has gotten out about this amazingly spooky event at Hillview, which inspired a visit from Silver Star Elementary this year.

Hillview is also implementing Character Strengths school-wide, beginning with all students and staff completing a Character Strength Survey to identify what their top character strengths are. Students are beginning to recognize and understand how these character strengths help them as learners. Hillview is excited to continue exploring how these strengths can be embedded into daily practice.

WL Seaton Secondary School: Laying the Foundation for Student Success

The Middle Years Team at Seaton Secondary has already begun preparing for the 2025-26 school year. Grade 7 groups from feeder schools are already visiting the building for presentations and activities. This strategy, along with a year-long focus on academics and PHE is moving the school forward in *improving middle grade success and transitions to secondary*, as per the SD22 Strategic Plan.

Seaton is also focussed on *supporting student wellness* and *improving student voice and choice and ensuring the school is a welcoming place to learn and work*. With this at the forefront, the WL Seaton Pride Club is hosting a movie night and has invited other secondary students from the district. The club supports student wellness and ensures that all student voices are a part of the Seaton community of learners.

Leadership Excellence

To empower all staff to contribute to organizational excellence in the service of student success.

Planning for Seamless Transitions at Vernon Secondary School

This semester VSS has concentrated on ways to improve the transition to secondary school for Middle Years students with the aim of ensuring a welcoming environment in which students can learn, develop, and grow. Accomplishing this will help reduce student anxiety, improve student wellness, and establish a supportive atmosphere where students feel comfortable. The initial focus has been on building classroom routines, improving student organization and creating some consistency amongst the various subject areas.

Through various consultations and discussions, the school is concentrating next on helping students with their independence and responsibility, by improving their self-advocacy, accountability, and their sense of ownership. This will promote students to recognize their own potential, while realizing that effort and perseverance are some keys to making this goal successful.

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Throughout the following months the Middle Years teachers at VSS will meet with numerous teachers within their family of schools to encourage conversations and collaboration leading to a more seamless transition from elementary to secondary school.

Professional Learning at Harwood Elementary

The Harwood team is committed to promoting a culture of learning and inclusivity. Staff members have been engaged in studying *'The 21 Things You Didn't Know About the Indian Act'* by Bob Joseph during staff meetings in their ongoing efforts to deepen understanding of Indigenous knowledge and practices. This initiative has been crucial in supporting an understanding of the historical context and ongoing ramifications of this act. The Harwood staff has also integrated the 7 Sacred Grandfather Teachings and the Circle of Courage into the school's daily teachings, with a current focus on the teaching of LOVE. These teachings are essential in helping students grow into responsible, kind, and happy individuals, embodying the values that the school aims to instill.



Harwood also successfully hosted a Community Parent Night, featuring district specialists Brad Ogasawara, who presented on Parenting in the Digital Age, and Rhiannon Bruenello, who shared insights on Learning in the Outdoors. Renowned parenting expert and relationship coach Aly Pain, the keynote speaker, also provided valuable tips and strategies for respectful and effective parenting of tweens. I was delighted to be included as an attendee at this event.

Community Connections

To build strong relationships amongst all community members in the service of student success.

What Happens Upstream: OKIB Youth Leadership Council Forum

SD22 was excited to collaborate with and support the OKIB Youth Leadership Council as they hosted their first youth forum on October 22nd. Over a hundred SD22 youth and staff were in attendance to engage in workshops supporting wellness and healthy relationships, a presentation by local RCMP on organized crime, a youth panel discussion and musical presentation. The mission of the OKIB Youth Leadership Council is to engage every corner of their community, fostering collaboration and understanding. They are dedicated to promoting safe environments, providing resources, and ensuring that their cultural values guide their efforts. They believe that by addressing issues upstream, problems are prevented before they arise, ensuring a healthier, more resilient future downstream. I was honored to partner with Director of Instruction, Charity Sakakibara, to support the critical work of the Council.



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Indigenous Education Update

Chantelle Eustache, a proud member of the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB), along with high school students from Seaton, created a delightful “Three Sister Soup” to share with Indigenous students from Alexis Park Elementary and Harwood Elementary. This heartwarming initiative not only brought together different school communities but also celebrated traditional Indigenous cuisine. The soup, made from corn, beans, and squash—the “three sisters”—was complemented by freshly made bannock. This event was a wonderful opportunity for students to learn about and appreciate Indigenous culture and culinary traditions. Additionally, this event provided an opportunity for elementary students to experience their future high school. Transition events like these promote a sense of belonging, ease anxiety, and build community for Indigenous learners.



Innovation and Technology

As SD22 works to refresh devices and keep our technology up to date, we have some devices that have been removed from our system that have a little more life in them and can be used at home by families in need. These devices are distributed to our community based on requests from the schools thereby supporting our equity goal of access to technology for students. Families can reach out to their schools to inquire about these supports.

No Stone Left Alone: Improving Literacy at Seaton

Many Seaton classes will be connecting with the *No Stone Left Alone Project*. Last year numerous students who participated did research on a specific WWI veteran laid to rest in the Pleasant Valley Cemetery using primary documents from the Library and Archives Canada (online) and from the Vernon Museum and Archive. They then prepared an exhibition inviting members of the community to come see their projects and interact with them. There are numerous other ways that our students recognize the contributions of our veterans.



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Community Connections this Fall at Beirsto

Beirsto kicked off the school year with the annual Beirsto Fall Fair, a vibrant event that strengthens community spirit. Families generously contributed items, allowing students to purchase baked goods, flowers, fresh vegetables, books, and toys at affordable prices. Following the fair, the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) hosted a Welcome Back BBQ, featuring face painting, lawn games, and opportunities for students to reconnect with friends. The highlight of the evening was a live performance by The Family Band, led by our Fine Art teacher.

In Beirsto's commitment to inclusivity and reconciliation, two teachers have taken on roles as Truth and Reconciliation Allies, enhancing the school's demonstrated dedication to Truth and Reconciliation education. Inclusive and kindness clubs have also begun lunchtime meetings to promote a welcoming environment.



In addition, the school is enhancing their involvement with Canadian Parents for French, supporting French Immersion learning and community engagement in French language activities.

October concluded at Beirsto with student, parent, and teacher conferences, promoting connections within the school community. This event allowed students to collaborate with families and teachers in setting educational goals, with enthusiastic participation evident as students proudly showcased their school to their important adults.