

Superintendent's Report to the Board November 2023



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A Message from the Superintendent

Ama Sah,

Over the last few weeks, school communities all around the district commemorated Remembrance Day and Indigenous Veterans Day with solemn ceremonies, many led by students and involving staff, local partners and service groups. These services provided an opportunity for all of us in attendance to reflect on the sacrifices made by so many Canadians over the years, serving in both wars and peacekeeping missions to protect our freedom and values. Hamiyaa to those at Majagaleehl Gali Aks Elementary School for allowing me to attend their ceremony on November 9th, where participants wonderfully incorporated English, French, Gitxsanimx and American Sign Language into the program.

November has been Adoption Awareness Month in British Columbia – a time to both raise awareness of adoption opportunities and celebrate adoptive families who offer care, guidance, and a sense of belonging to thousands of children throughout the province. Many such families live right here in our Northwest communities, and our schools are appreciative of all those who are providing children with permanent, secure and loving homes. For more information about adoption, including support services for families who have or are considering adoption, access The Adoptive Families Association of British Columbia at <https://www.bcadoption.com/>

Finally, with parents and caregivers receiving their first formal report cards of the year this month, I encourage them to reach out and connect with their children's teachers for authentic conversations about their progress towards course and grade level outcomes. A few great conversation starters at any grade level can include 'What skills does my child have under control?', 'What are the areas for growth in the coming few months?' and 'How can I help my child at home?'

Sincerely,

Aaron Callaghan
Superintendent
Coast Mountains School District



Remembrance Day Service at Caledonia Secondary School in Terrace.



Coast Mountains School District is in service to diverse First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners and their caregivers who live, learn, and play on the traditional lands of the Gitxsan, Haisla, Nisga'a and Ts'msyen peoples.

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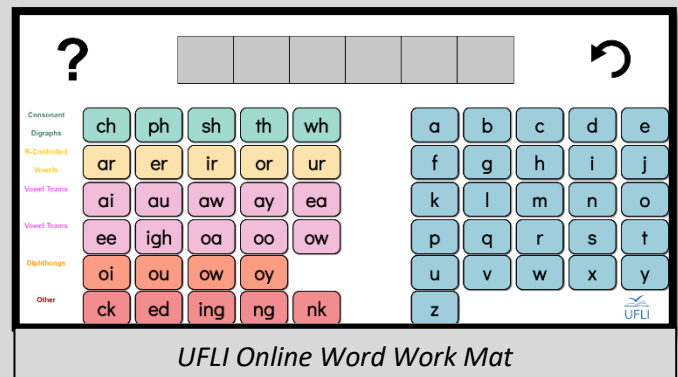


Action Plan Update - What's Happening in K-3?

Efforts to improve academic outcomes across the district are taking root this year with a targeted investment in K-3 programming. Teachers and administrators at these lower elementary grades are participating in common professional learning focused on foundational literacy instruction and assessment.

With the support of district literacy lead Tina McDonald and Literacy Coach Laura Gray, school-based literacy leads are beginning to use Acadience Reading Diagnostic to identify students' skills across a number of key measures including phonological awareness, word reading and fluency among others, so they are better informed and able to target instruction in relation to these foundational skills.

At the same time, through professional learning opportunities, K-3 classroom teachers around the district are becoming more familiar with evidence-based tools and approaches to instruction, including the use of the University of Florida's Literacy Institute (UFLI) Foundations program. UFLI lessons are developed by teachers and combine a great mix of explicit instruction and practice for students to become proficient readers.



“Developing strong literacy skills in the younger years helps children unlock their full learning potential, helping them become lifelong learners” says Tina McDonald.

Much of the literacy work this year in CMSD has resulted from the targeted support of LNG Canada. Thanks to a sponsorship agreement, the district has benefitted from both teacher professional learning and classroom resources that align with structured literacy approaches and foundational skill development.

Parents, caregivers and educators can learn more about Acadience and UFLI online at <https://acadiencelarning.org/acadience-reading/diagnostic/> and <https://ufl.education.ufl.edu/foundations/>.



Upcoming Dates

November 22 & 23 – Early Dismissal Days
November 24 – Professional Development Day (No Classes)
December 6 - Business & Education Committee Meetings
December 8 – All Our Relations Working Group Launch
December 13 – Board Meeting (Terrace / Hybrid Meeting)
December 15 – Last Day Before Winter Break
January 2 – Schools Re-Open



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Looking for Homestay Families

The Coast Mountains School District is actively seeking **Homestay Hosts** for international students for January 2024. Homestay families are the backbone of the International Students Program, providing a caring and friendly home environment to students coming to our Northwest communities to experience Canadian family life. Homestay host families regularly make life-long friendships and grow in their understanding of the world, while being generously compensated monthly to offset expenses. If you would like to learn more about becoming a Homestay Host, connect with Homestay Coordinator Patsy Chant (ISPHomestay@cmsd.bc.ca) or Administrator Joe Dominguez (Joe.Dominguez@cmsd.bc.ca).

Premier's Awards for Excellence in Education

On October 26th three CMSD educators were recognized provincially for their outstanding contributions to their school communities. Local teachers Davy Dosanjh of Caledonia Secondary School, and Melanie Millar and Glenn Barr (retired) of New Hazelton Elementary School, were recognized at this year's Premier's Awards for Excellence in Education. Davy, Melanie and Glenn were among 34 of BC's finest acknowledged for their remarkable efforts in support of learners.

Davy Dosanjh, nominated by colleague Patsy Chant, was a recipient in the School Leadership category, while Melanie Millar and Glenn Barr, nominated by colleague Jan Thorburn, were recipients in the Outstanding Team Collaboration category.

Davy and Melanie were on hand at Government House in Victoria to receive their awards, presented by Premier David Eby, Lieutenant Governor Janet Austin, and Education and Child Care Minister Rachna Singh.



Teacher Recruitment for 2024-25

Aligning with the school district's strategic direction, planning is underway for the recruitment of fully qualified teachers for the 2024-25 school year with a variety of engagements beginning in January. An online marketing strategy is being implemented with our partner Make A Future, and contact is being made with a number of post-secondary institutions to kick-start conversations about the amazing career and life opportunities here in Northwest British Columbia.

The school district's 'The Mountains Are Calling' campaign highlights the beauty of the region, friendly communities, opportunities to experience diverse cultures including that of the local First Nations, and the abundant world-class outdoor experiences around every corner. Learn more at <http://cmsd.bc.ca>.

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This Month On Social Media...



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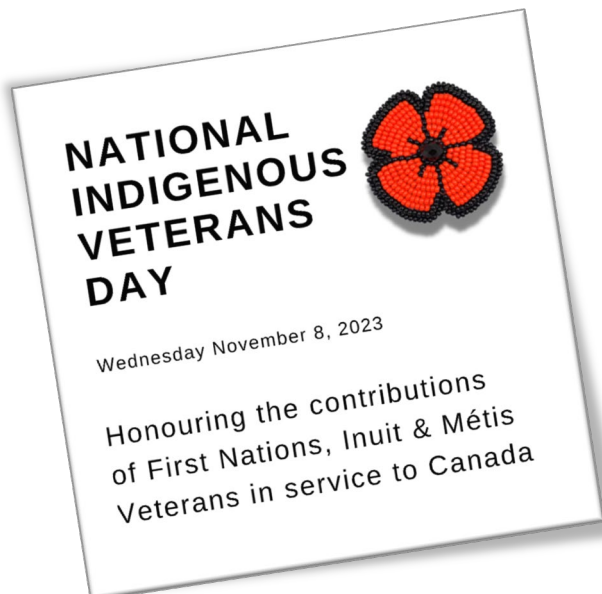
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Premier's Award winner Melanie Millar has a conversation with the Honourable Janet Austin – BC's Lieutenant Governor General.



Ts'winaa / Way to Go! award winners at Majagaleehi Gali Aks Elementary School.



This month all school communities recognized National Indigenous Veterans Day and Remembrance Day with solemn ceremonies. Lest we forget.



Learners at Suwilaawks Community School have fun on the basketball court during lunch hour.