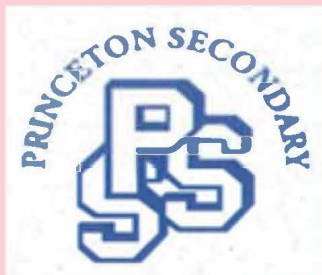


## Superintendent's Report - February 2025



# PRINCETON SECONDARY

Grade 11/12 students participated in a program in conjunction with community services to assist senior citizens with using their cell phones.







## PICKLEBALL



Grade 9 PE classes getting pickleball instructions from the local pickleball club members



## CPR & OPIOID TRAINING

Grade 10 Health students learning CPR and Opioid response training



Justin Young team building with the Grade 9's



Art class doing ceramics



Varsity boys basketball





## Merritt Central Elementary School

**Curling**



Miss Matheson's class recently had the opportunity to try curling at the Merritt Curling Centre, and despite initial hesitations, the students had a fantastic time! Thanks to the encouragement and support from curling club volunteers, parent helpers, and teachers Mrs. Matheson and Mrs. Smith, the students quickly discovered that curling is not only fun but also accessible for everyone, regardless of physical challenges or ability levels. It was inspiring to see some students leave the experience eager to join the community curling team!

**Basketball**



MCES basketball teams are in full swing, thanks to Mr. Shea's commitment to providing extracurricular sports! Coaching two boys' teams and one girls' team, he's offering valuable opportunities for students to get involved in the sport. The boys are passionate about basketball, often playing both during formal practices and their own unstructured outdoor time. For many of the girls, this is their first experience on a school basketball team, and while there's much to learn, their enthusiasm and dedication are shining through. Mr. Shea's leadership continues to strengthen our athletic program, promoting hard work, commitment, and sportsmanship.

**Simple Machines**



Despite growing up in a very different educational environment, Mrs. Preet has mastered the art of inclusive, diverse learning in her science classes. Her engaging, hands-on approach captivates even the most hesitant learners. This month, the grade 4/5 students dove into physics, exploring how things move. They spent several classes building their own simple machines, and every student left with a sense of pride in their accomplishments. Mrs. Preet's ability to create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment continues to inspire and engage all her students.

**Scw'xmx Community Society Services Harm Reduction and Wellness Day**



A huge shout out to Mrs. Nelson-Smith, the district Health Promoting Schools Coordinator, Food Coordinator, and Physical Literacy Lead, as well as the Scw'xmx Community Society Services, for organizing an incredible educational day focused on harm reduction and wellness! The activities were informative, fun, and tailored to each age group, from Kindergarten through Grade 7. Students learned essential life skills, including breathing strategies, stress management techniques, and how to handle different emotions. They also gained important knowledge on the harmful effects of vaping and smoking, and how to spread kindness. The day was a complete success, with all students actively participating and excited to learn!



### Coldwater Parent Meet and Greet



A big thank you to Coldwater Band School for inviting MCES staff and students to their Parent Meet and Greet night! It was a wonderful evening, with several MCES staff members joining their students and families for a meal. The night was filled with fantastic entertainment, including traditional drumming and dancing. Many MCES students proudly showcased their own dancing skills, highlighting the wide variety of Indigenous dance styles they've been diligently practicing. It was a special night that celebrated both community and culture!

### Winter Celebration



A huge thank you to Martha Chillihtiza, Jody John, the district ISA's, and Shelley Oppenheim-Lacerte for the tremendous effort that went into organizing the Winter Celebration! After the Pow Wow was missed last year, this event was a fantastic opportunity for students to reconnect with local traditions. The organization of the Winter Celebration was praised for helping students gain a deeper appreciation for the customs, songs, drumming, and dancing. It was clear from the positive feedback that the event was a success. Students were so inspired by the dancers, particularly the traditional and hoop dancers, that they talked about the experience for days afterward. The hard work behind this event is truly appreciated!

### N'kwala Visit



As part of our commitment to the anti-racism school goal and the "Cultural Language and Storytelling Initiative," MCES is dedicated to fostering inclusivity and representation through diverse languages and storytelling. This month, Mr. Gagliano's class had the opportunity to connect with Mr. Chenoweth's class from N'kwala School. The students visited the Pitt House, where they listened to traditional stories shared by Elder Jonas Manuel and even had the chance to try hand drumming. A special thanks to N'kwala's lunch cook, Judy Chillihtizia, who prepared a delicious wiener roast for all the students. Our MCES students also had a blast playing with their N'kwala peers on their school playground. A big thank you to Principal Cindy for coordinating this wonderful event, making it possible for our students to experience this fantastic learning opportunity. This visit was a fantastic experience for our grade 3/4 students, and it has been wonderful to have several opportunities to collaborate and connect with N'kwala this year.

### Grade 7 Band Join's MSS Art Night



Kudos to Mr. Theiss and the Grade 7 band students for their amazing first concert! Mr. Theiss successfully brought together all the Grade 7 students from across the district, managed to fit in one practice, and then led them to a truly spectacular performance at the MSS Arts Night. The students not only wowed the audience with their performance but also showed great respect and enthusiasm as exceptional audience members during the MSS bands' performance. Their dedication and hard work were on full display, and they should be incredibly proud of their achievement.



**Traditional Sylix Legend Stories**



We are thrilled to have Martha Chillihtzia, our ISA, regularly sharing sylix cultural legend stories with our intermediate classes as part of our "Cultural Language and Storytelling Initiative." Martha's presence as a cultural advocate within our school is invaluable, and it's inspiring to see her pass on her rich knowledge to our students. The respect our students have for Martha is clear, and it's a beautiful thing to witness her teaching and inspiring future generations of leaders. We are so lucky to have her right here within our school walls!

**Science Fair Club**



The Science Fair Club has quickly become a popular lunchtime activity, with Mrs. Martindale and Ms. Morrison leading a large group of future scientists in developing key skills like presentation, organization, time management, and mastering the scientific method. It's been exciting to watch the students dive into their projects and grow in their scientific knowledge. We were also fortunate to have special guest Allison Kuzio join us for a couple of lunchtime sessions, sharing her expertise and inspiring the students even further. It's a fantastic opportunity for our young scientists, and we can't wait to see what they come up with next!

**Merritt Centennials Visit**



MCES is home to many hockey-loving students, and this month, all of our students were thrilled to have a quick visit from our local hockey heroes, the Merritt Centennials! Whether they play hockey or not, the excitement was palpable as the players interacted with the students. A big thank you to the Centennials for offering our students the chance to attend a game, especially for those who may not have had the opportunity otherwise. The free tickets were a huge hit, and our students are grateful for this memorable experience!

**Mental Health**



Mr. Gagliano is dedicated to promoting mental health awareness and supporting our school's goal to enhance student mental health. His classroom is filled with strategies like Open Parachute, Zones of Regulation, Bucketfilling, and Growth Mindset, all designed to build emotional resilience. In this photo, the grade 3/4 class is practicing Starfish breathing, one of many techniques Mr. Gagliano uses to help students manage their emotions and stay calm throughout the day. His consistent focus on mental well-being helps equip students with the tools they need to succeed both academically and emotionally.

## MCES 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ski Trip







The pictures truly speak for themselves! A huge thank you to Mrs. Tolmie and Mrs. Smith for putting so much of their own time and energy into organizing this amazing event. It was such an incredible opportunity for our students to put into practice the Play is the Way strategies we emphasize every day. I absolutely love seeing students "Pursuing their Personal Best" and "Being Brave" in action. The event was a perfect reflection of the values we work to instill in our school community. What a fantastic experience for everyone involved!





# Collettville Elementary School

*Les Chats Sauvages!*

## Carnaval Week



Tacot Races, Sledding, Curling, Skating, Pancake Breakfast, and more - Carnaval Week at Collettville was a huge success!



**CARNAVAL**

## Grade 7 Quebec City Trip

Collettville's Grade 7 students immersed themselves in French-Canadian culture on our annual trip to Quebec City. It was an authentic display of Collettville's values of pride and community!



## FIM Pre-K Events and Kindergarten Registration



**Early French Immersion Kindergarten 2025 Registration**

Our program is designed to help young children develop a strong foundation in French language and culture. Our French Immersion program is a unique opportunity for young children to learn French and develop a strong foundation in French language and culture. Our French Immersion program is a unique opportunity for young children to learn French and develop a strong foundation in French language and culture.

**REGISTRATION SCHEDULE**  
**Monday to Friday: February 17 to February 28, 2025**  
**Time: 9:00 to 11:30 am and 1:00 to 2:30 pm**

To register, a child must be 5 years of age on or before December 31, 2025.

When registering, you will need your child's Birth Certificate, Immunization record, Current and proof of address where registering.

Registration for Kindergarten French Immersion will take place earlier than neighborhood school registration. This will allow for available space and better planning. Collettville Elementary is a school of choice with limited registration, and as a result, if needed, a lottery will take place for determine registration.

**If you have any questions, please contact**  
**Ecole Élémentaire Collettville**  
**250-378-2230**

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

**Success for ALL Learners - Today and Tomorrow**



Registration opens February 17-28  
 Merci Mme Mackay-Smith,  
 Grade 7 Helpers, and Merritt  
 StrongStart Centres for hosting  
 these valuable information sessions!



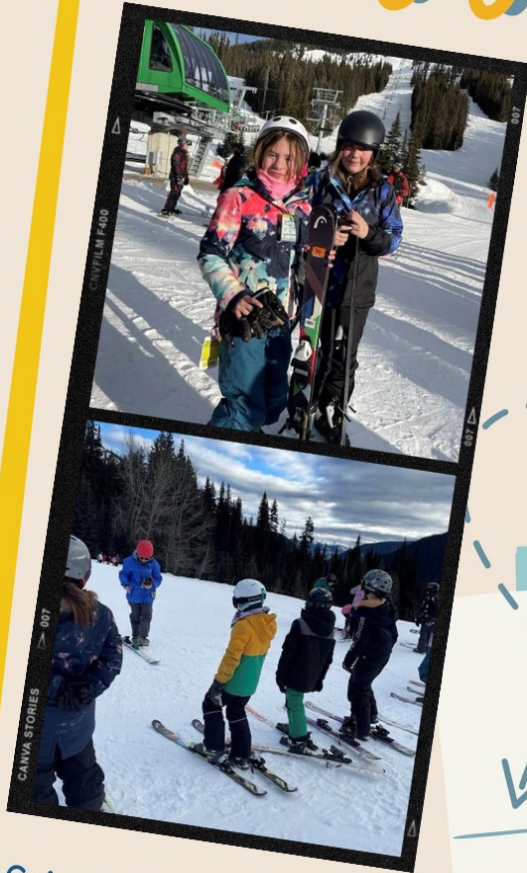
# VERMILION FORKS

## FEBRUARY

STUDENTS AT VFE HAVE BEEN ENJOYING  
A RANGE OF FUN ACTIVITIES

### MANNING PARK DOWNHILL SKIING

Students in all grades  
got to spend a sunny  
day on the slopes  
downhill skiing at  
Manning Park



### "FRISBEE ROB" VISIT

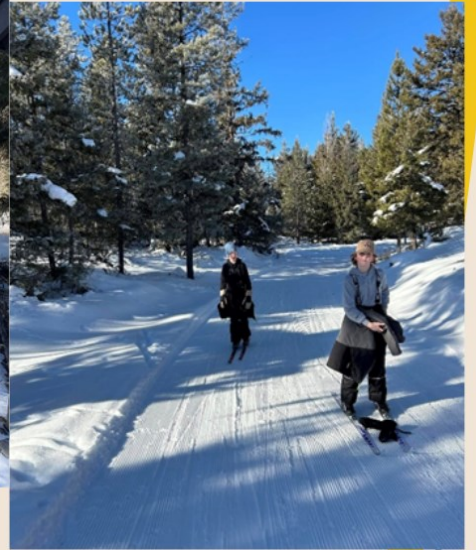
Guinness Book world record holder and  
special guest "Frisbee Rob" spoke to  
students inspiring them to try new  
things and do their best while also  
showing off his impressive frisbee skills.  
After the school presentation, all  
students had the chance to  
participate in a workshop to practice  
some of the tricks and skills Rob  
demonstrated





# CHINA RIDGE TRAILS

CONNECTING WITH THE LAND TO ENJOY SNOWSHOEING AND CROSS-COUNTRY  
SKIING AT CHINA RIDGE TRAILS

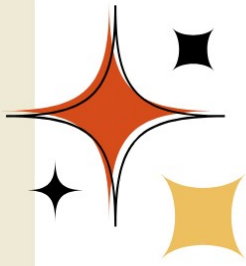


## INDIGENOUS WINTER CELEBRATION

TWO CLASSES ATTENDED THE INDIGENOUS WINTER CELEBRATION IN  
MERRITT AND HAD EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ABOUT CULTURE AND  
CELEBRATION







We have had numerous special events over the past few weeks.

### Winter activities

Division 1 have been attending curling sessions at the Merritt Curling Centre and surprised themselves at how much fun curling could be. Our Grade 4, 5, & 6 students participated in our annual trip to Stake Lake and tried out cross country skiing and snowshoeing through the Ski Skool program.



### Mental Health

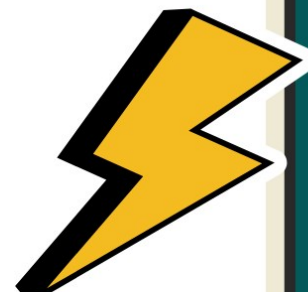
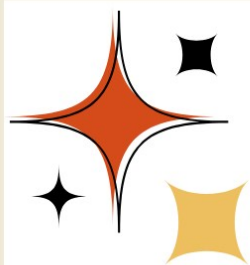
We were grateful for a community partnership with the Scw'exmx, who brought in their wellness team to work through self-regulation stations with students in all grades.



We also hosted presenter and musician Jack Thomas who spoke about mental health, amputee awareness and resilience in the face of adversity. Jack was an engaging and motivational speaker and was treated like a superstar by students, who lined up for autographs at the end.







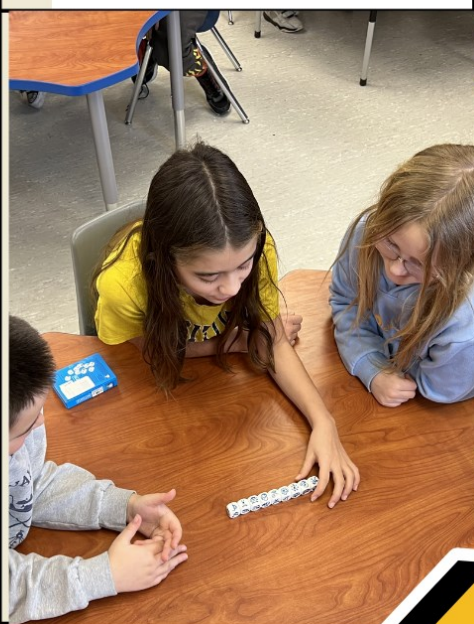
## Classroom

## Seven Grandfather Teachings

We have been grateful for the time Mrs. Bennie has spent with our Grade 3/4 class building stories from 'loose parts' and we are looking forward to continuing this work, to foster imaginations and story writing skills over the coming months.

Our Grade 4/5 class have been responding well to new literacy and numeracy stations seen in photo.

This month our focus is on love and how this can bring a sense of safety and peace. We have specifically focused on self-love, and encouraged students to appreciate their own self-worth, recognizing that paying compliments can help others to find the positive qualities in themselves.



## THE SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS



"We want to take back our education and teach our history, our language and our culture. We have begun to tell our story - our history - and we want to tell it in our own words to the world, so that this will never happen to any of the other nations in the world."

- Shirley Williams, Residential School Survivor

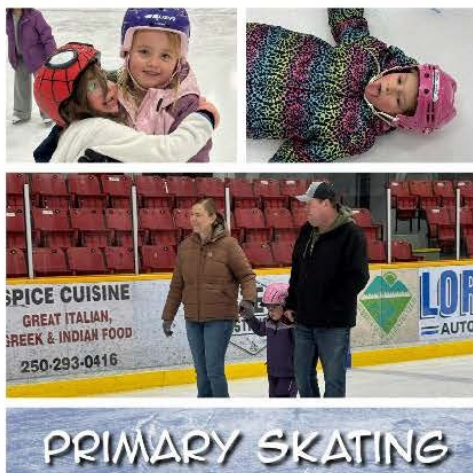


Nicola Canford students had a great time at the District Winter Celebration yesterday. The dancers were amazing. Our district ISA's did a great job organizing as did our master of ceremonies, Derrick Sheena! Kwuk<sup>w</sup>steyp to Velina Peterson and Derrick Sheena for coming to our school and teaching our kids the big drum and hoop dancing in preparation.



Students joined in some Physical Literacy activities in the snow with Mrs. Nelson-Smith. Playing hungry hippos in the snow and beautiful sunshine is a great way to enjoy the winter weather.

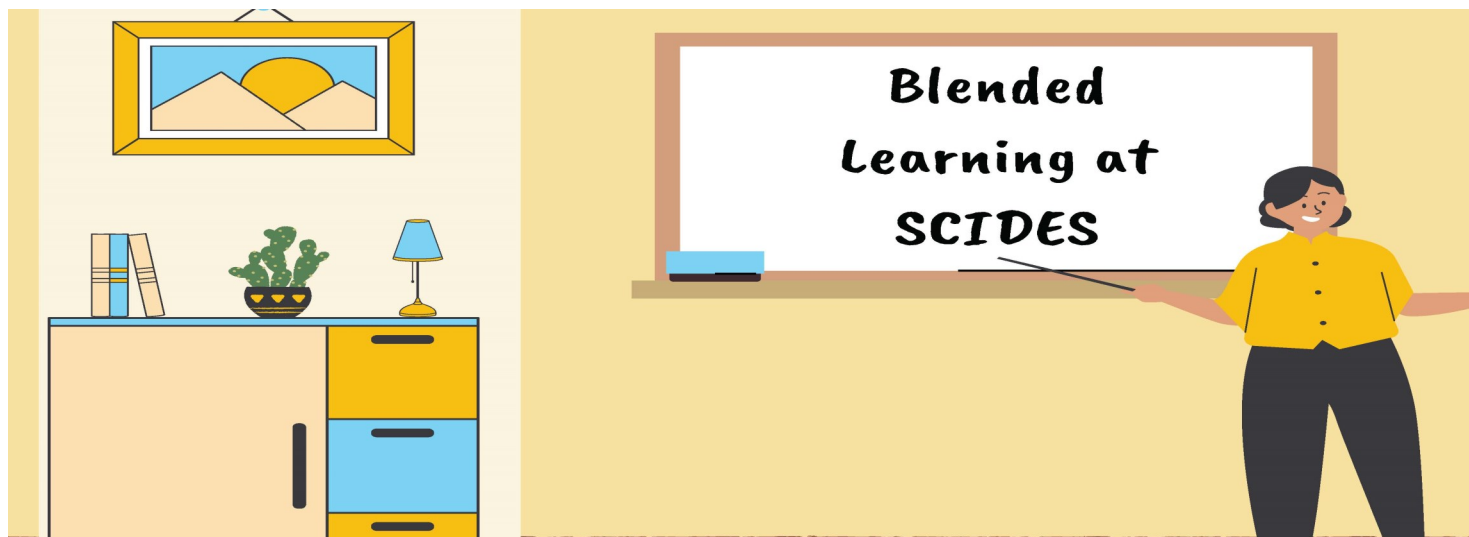
Nicola Canford has been so privileged to have little Baby Riley join us on Wednesdays as our Roots of Empathy baby. Our K/1s got to see Baby Rylee roll over.



Primary Skating was a blast in January. Kwuk<sup>w</sup>steyp to all the parents who came to help support the event.







SCIDES is excited to celebrate two 'blended learning' programs currently operating in this 2024/2025 school year. The two programs, Rink Academy in Kelowna and Lions Peak Academy in Burnaby, offer a unique blend of online and in person learning combined with high performance athletic training. SCIDES online platform is an ideal fit for this alternative school setting. SCIDES teachers Cory Hart (Rink), and Jennifer O'Hearn, Ryan Carignan, and Colleen Patrick (Lions Peak) are doing amazing work with SCIDES blended learners!!!



**SCIDES blended learning at work at Rink Academy (left). Online, paper-based, collaborative, self-directed, all in one photo!**

**SCIDES learners at Rink completed a 'remote' take home baking assignment that combines ADST with Math and Literacy! Learners took photo evidence of the process while creating videos with step by step vocal directions!**







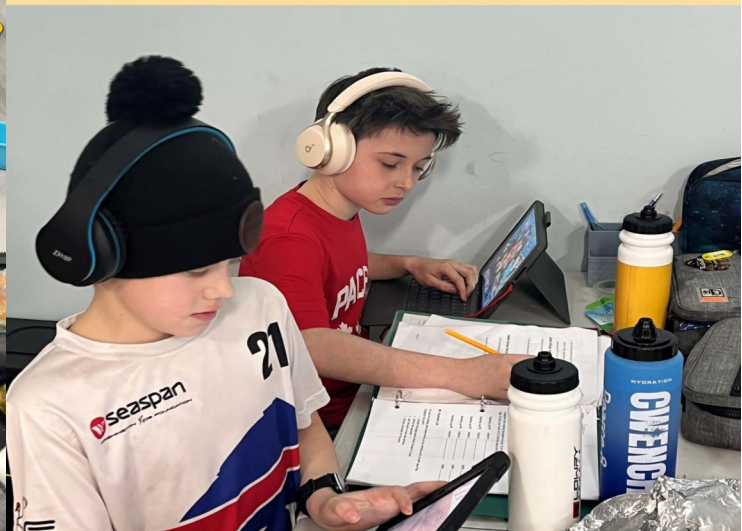
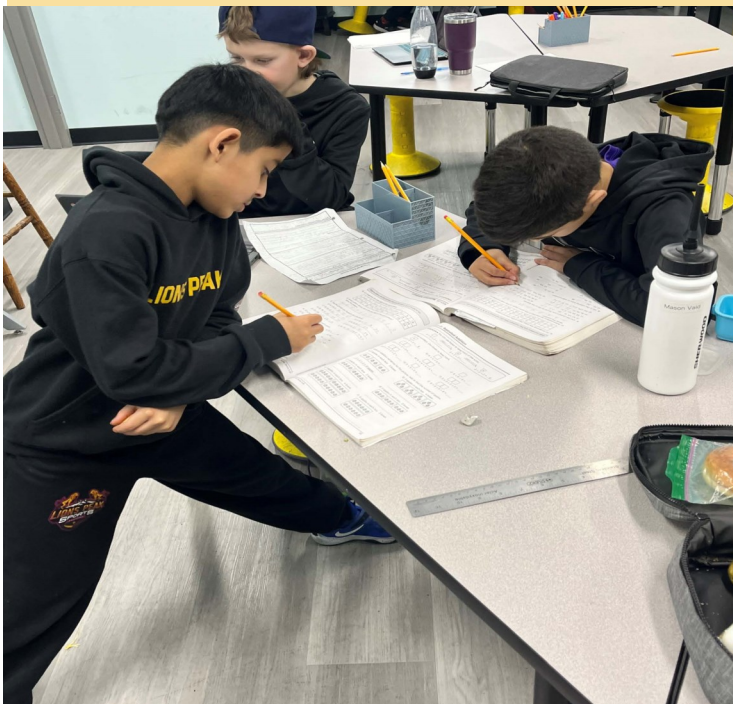
Mr. Hart will have to drive some  
to Merritt!



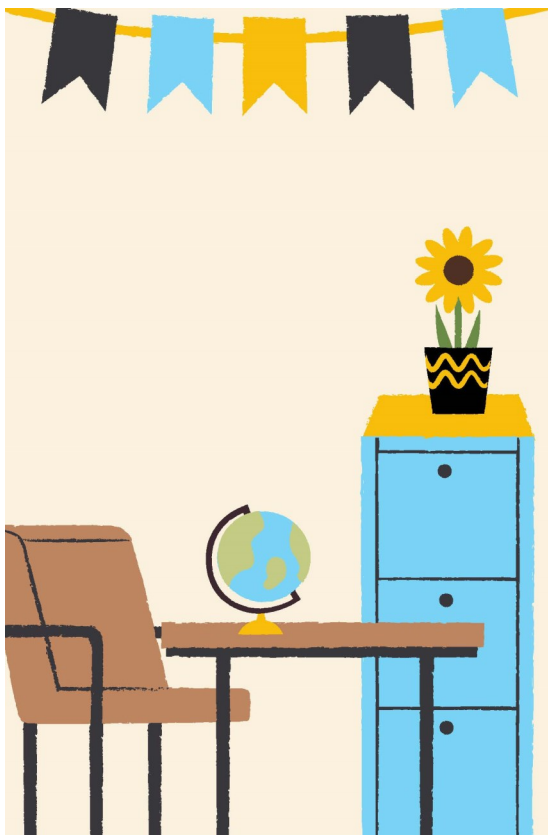
Recently, our SCIDES/Lions Peak blended learners completed a totem pole assignment that combines Art, ADST, Social Studies, and English! Learners considered the significance of the totem pole to the Coast Salish peoples, explored characteristics of spirit animals, and identified and selected personal spirit animals based on individual traits. Learners then completed artwork and wrote an essay connected to their learning.



Lions Peak blended learning in  
action!







## Thank You!

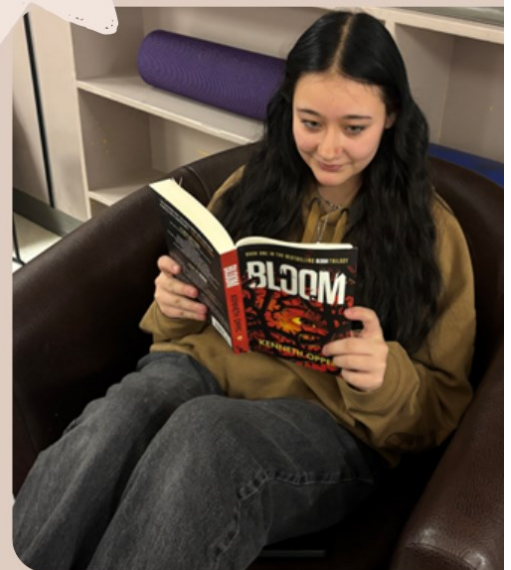
SCIDES blended learning programs offer unique learning experiences and are proving that blended learning is enriching, meaningful, and robust! We want to shout out our team of blended learning teachers and their learners for their amazing work and tireless efforts. We are so thankful!!



# COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE



Students have jumped right back into their studies after the winter break! They've been busy completing their independent novel studies and diving into project-based math activities. It's been exciting to see their creativity shine as they design impressive castles and build innovative mousetrap cars. We are also excited to have welcomed several new students to our classroom community who are fitting in so wonderfully. Recently, we enjoyed a fantastic tour of NVIT, went ice fishing, attended the district winter powwow, and engaged in hands-on workshops to create beautiful ribbon skirts and shirts. A heartfelt thank you to the RCMP for providing our students with an invaluable digital safety session designed to enhance their awareness and understanding of online safety. Lastly, I'm pleased to announce that the graduate hoodies have arrived! Thank you to Dawn Williams for making that happen. With January now under our belts, we look forward to the exciting adventures and learning opportunities that lie ahead.





# MERRITT BENCH ELEMENTARY

February 2025



## Jack Thomas

Jack Thomas performs at MBE. Jack told students his inspirational story about resilience and perseverance. Jack was injured on the job site and persevered through the injury to become a motivational speaker for schools across the province.



## Scw'exmx Community Health

Scw'exmx Community Health—Student workshop for Wellness. Students participated in a variety of stations with the support of Community Health Staff.



## Student Council

Merritt Bench Elementary Student Council—Students have been planning a school-wide multi cultural day and are being guided by Mrs. Ottens and Mrs. Vandenbrink. The student council has planned a variety of activities this year, for example our school dance in the fall, School Spirit Days, and Random Acts of Caring.



## Bench Family Session Night

Mr. McGifford invites MBE families to the school in February—a free event in our school gym that is often well attended. We are looking forward to this upcoming Floor Hockey session.



# MERRITT BENCH ELEMENTARY

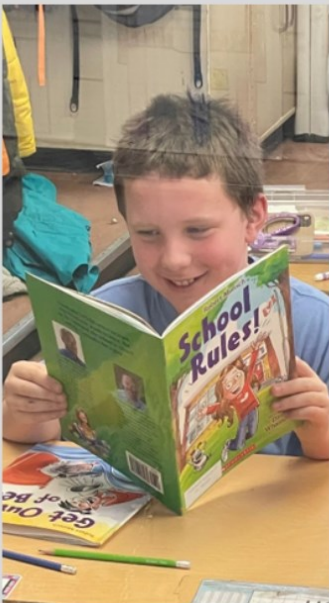


## Primary Class Skating

Primary Classes went Skating at the Nicola Valley Memorial Area in January and February.

One of our primary students found thoroughly enjoying one of my favorite reads..."School Rules!"

Our grade one class see fully immersed in a wonder read— Mrs. Kanigan builds on their literacy skills.



Staff and Students came to the rescue and helped save local wildlife from the extremely cold temperatures in our valley this month. The owl was found unresponsive on our school playground, Mr. McGifford took great care of the owl – and brought it to the wildlife rescue center in Kamloops. Our latest update is that the owl may have had a head injury and is recovering well.







# John Allison Elementary School

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

## UPDATES

January 2025



**Snow Play.** We were able to enjoy the outdoors early in January. Much colder temperatures later in the month meant we had several "indoor days."



We got to go **skating** with the Princeton Posse twice this month! The Junior hockey players volunteer their time to help our kiddos learn to skate. Of course there are always a few races and chases with our seasoned skaters!

Thank you to the BC Ultimate (Frisbee) Society and our JAE PAC for helping us bring **Frisbee Rob** to JAE. After a school wide assembly, Rob led frisbee workshops with each grade level. Of course, all of our students want a frisbee now!

The cold and flu season continues to impact attendance of both the children and the adults at John Allison Elementary School.



#play

#JOY

#learn

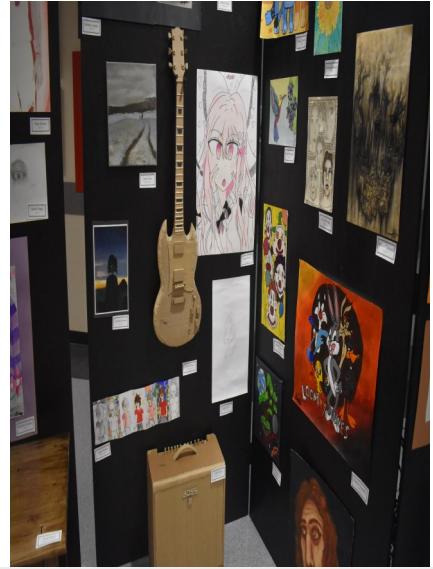


**"Frisbee Rob"** McLeod, world frisbee record holder and motivational speaker, provided an inspiring talk and frisbee workshops for our JAE students. His **"best effort always"** talk inspires **resilience** and promotes **kindness**.



Our Indigenous Student Advocate joins the classes to share The Seven Teachings, a story of a "good way of life" with respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility, truth and love.





As we finished off Semester 1, our students and staff were busy with a variety of exciting activities and accomplishments!

Our first sitting of the Numeracy 10 assessments is now complete, marking off an important graduation requirement for our students.

The first-ever MSS Artscape event was a fantastic showcase of talent, featuring an engaging drama performance, a stunning fine arts display, and an impressive band concert.

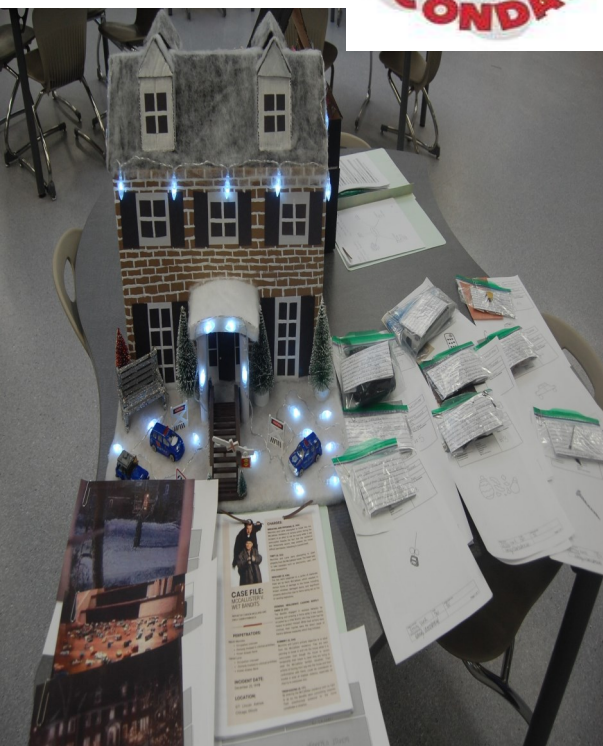
In Law 12, students completed an intriguing project analyzing crimes from movies, bringing a creative twist to legal studies.

We also had the privilege of attending the Winter Celebration, a well-planned event that highlighted the beauty and significance of different types of powwow dancing.

To start the semester, grade meetings provided a great opportunity to introduce our new Vice Principal, revisit the Code of Conduct, and highlight the many extracurricular activities that make our school community thrive.

Over 30 students participated in the ski trip to Sun Peaks which turned out to be a cold, but great day on the hill!

Looking ahead, we are gearing up for course planning and are excited to invite families to our Open House Course Fair on February 20<sup>th</sup> from 5 – 7pm.







# IMPORTANT DATES

February 14, 2025	Friday	<b>Non-Instructional Day</b> (Professional Development Day.)
February 17, 2025	Monday	<b>Family Day.</b>
March 5, 2025	Wed.	All Schools – Shortened day for Parent/Teacher interviews. (Schools close 2 hours early.)
March 14, 2025	Friday	Merritt, Princeton Elementary Schools and Merritt Secondary Grade 8 Report Cards go home.
March 14, 2025	Friday	Community Learning Centre Report Cards go home.
March 14, 2025	Friday	Last day of school before Spring Break.
March 17 - 28, 2025		<b>SPRING BREAK.</b>
March 31, 2025	Monday	Schools reopen after the break.