

We are grateful to live, work, and play on the unceded, ancestral territories of fourteen First Nations representing the Dakelh, Nedut'en and Wet'suwet'en peoples. We are working diligently towards creating equity for our learners through conscious acts of Reconciliation.

Hadih/Hadi/Hadeeh and Welcome to the 23 - 24 School Year!

On September 5th schools opened their doors and welcomed students to the first day of the 2023-2024 school year. The fall always brings a renewed sense of purpose, energy, and optimism - it can be a rather exciting time for adults and children alike. Any new beginning provides opportunities to build positive relationships - ones that support academic achievement in schools that are welcoming, safe, and inclusive of the diverse student population we serve. Now, more than ever, students need to feel a sense of safety and know that there is a network of caring adults who believe in them and will embrace them for who they are. The learners of this district cannot achieve success and well-being without the engagement of staff, community, Trustees, and families - collectively, with each one as a key partner in learning.

This year will bring a focus on knowing each learner as an individual to ensure we are supporting the whole child during their development. This means staff are looking closely at well-being evidence and also at how learners are achieving in literacy and numeracy as part of British Columbia's Core Competencies. The Core Competencies determine where students are headed and are the intellectual, personal, and social/emotional proficiencies that all students need in order to engage in deep, lifelong learning. Along with literacy and numeracy foundations, the Core Competencies are central to British Columbia's K-12 curriculum and assessment plan for learners as they become educated citizens. This curriculum is based on a "Know-Do-Understand" approach. [Curriculum | Building Student Success - B.C. Curriculum \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov2/education/curriculum_framework/building_student_success/B.C._Curriculum_Building_Student_Success.pdf)



This school year, we will also continue to focus on **Honouring People, Land and History**. This value has strong representation in the Board's [2020-2025 SD91 Strategic Plan](#), which is the guiding document supporting learners in reaching their full potential. It is also intended to complement the School Growth Plans that each school focusses on for continual improvement. We are set up for success and I am looking forward to all that this year will bring.

Again, welcome to the 2023-2024 school year!

Respectfully submitted,

(she/her)
Superintendent

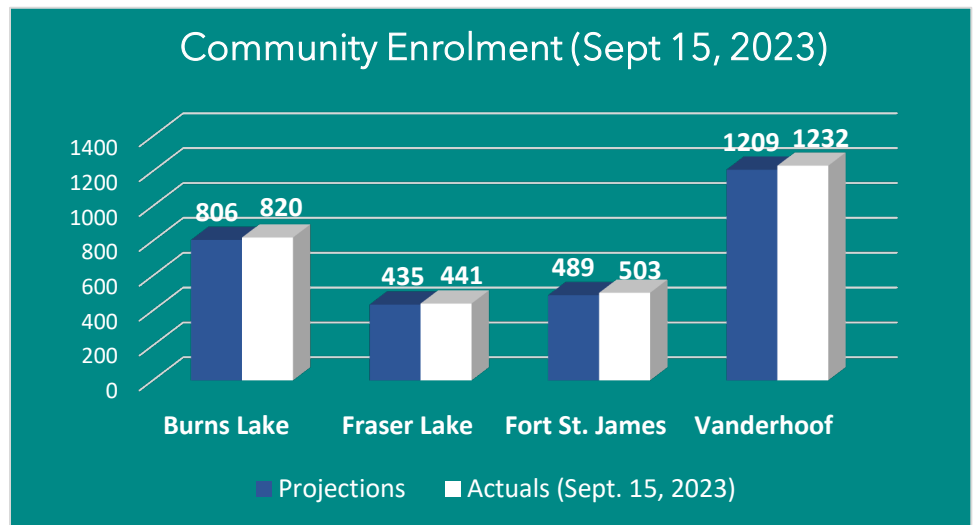
New to the Role

I would like to extend my congratulations to staff who are new to the leadership team in the 2023-24 school year!

LEADER	ROLE	LOCATION
Travis Himmelright	Vice-Principal	Nechako Valley Secondary School
Jesse Kennedy	Principal	Babine Elementary Secondary School
Jesse Fairley	District Principal	Indigenous Education
Cheryl Peterson	District Vice-Principal	School Support
Robyn Turner	School Food Program Manager (Dietician)	District

Student Enrolment Across Communities

Every spring, staff develop student enrolment projections to submit to the Ministry of Education for the upcoming September. This projection is used to predict staffing at the school level. This year, September enrolment across the district is up slightly from the Spring projection with some community-by-community variances. Current overall enrolment across the four communities is 2996. Please refer to the table which outlines Projections versus Actual Enrolment as of Sept. 15, 2023.



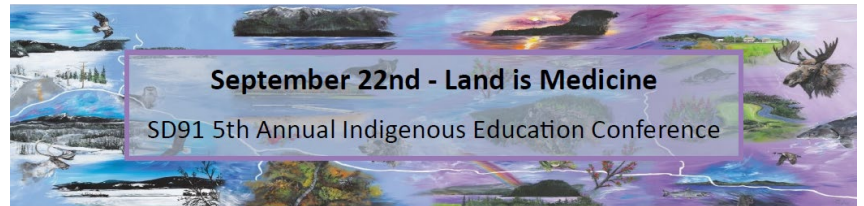
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Strategic Plan Updates: GOAL 1: Honour Diversity



5th Annual Indigenous Education Conference – Sept 22nd

September 22nd marked our District Planning Day which was set aside for all staff to learn more about “Land as Medicine”. We were both excited



and grateful to virtually host [Monique Gray Smith](#), [Robin Wall Kimmerer](#), Carla Lewis and [Richard Van Camp](#) for the day of learning. Mesiy to Director of Instruction for Indigenous Education, [Leona Prince](#) and her staff for organizing such an impactful day of reflection.

Keynote Speakers



Monique Gray Smith



Robin Wall Kimmerer



Richard Van Camp

Strategic Plan Updates: GOAL 2: Engage our Workforce

Professional Learning Planned for 2023-24

In addition to the system-wide Indigenous Education Conference, staff will also have an opportunity to engage in a variety of other professional learning opportunities throughout the year, including:

- Literacy Learning Rounds with Faye Brownlie
- Building Thinking Classrooms with Peter Liljedahl
- Indigenizing Curriculum with Jo Chrona
- Executive Functioning with Sarah Ward
- Compassionate Systems Leadership Network
- Primary Literacy Interventions through the Provincial Outreach Program for Early Years (POPEY)



New Teacher Orientation

A New Teacher Orientation Session which was held on August 30th at Evelyn Dickson Elementary School. New teachers were welcomed with song, story and drumming to the unceded ancestral territory of the Saik’uz people by Elder Maureen Thomas. Board Chair, David Christie, also brought greetings on behalf of the Board. The day was rounded out with an opportunity to receive valuable information about supports, programs and student services through Curriculum Support, Inclusive Education, Indigenous Education, Early Years, the Teachers’ Union, HR, and Finance. Thank you to the Curriculum Support Team for organizing the day.

Strategic Plan Updates: GOAL 3: Create Student Success

Live.It Earth



Our Live.It Earth production this year will highlight the Grease Trail network and will be told from the Cheslatta Carrier Nation perspective. Thank you Chief Corrina Leween for welcoming staff and students into Cheslatta territory and for being such a gracious host.



Some of the production took place at Grassy Plains Elementary with filming the creative and STEM challenges for the November Grease Trails Program. Students were involved in the filming and part of the crew, and some of our students are starring in the challenges.



Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL)

British Columbia's Ministry of Education initiated a reporting process in the 2021-22 school year titled [Framework for Enhancing Student Learning](#) (FESL). This provincial framework brings a formalized approach to the planning and reporting expectations for school districts with a focus on enhancing student learning and success. It combines accountability with evidence-informed decision making and system-wide continuous improvement to support equity of outcomes for all students in the provincial K-12 public system. The Framework also reflects a public commitment by Indigenous peoples, Indigenous rightsholders, education partners and communities to work together to improve student learning and enhance the intellectual, social and career development of all learners.

SD 91's FESL report, can be found in the 'Board' section of our website or at [Enhancing Student Learning Report 22-23](#)

WKE Just B4 Preschool

SD 91 opened a licensed preschool program at WKE in Burns Lake! The WKE Just B4 Preschool provides an engaging and positive early learning experience for 3-and 4-year-olds! The Early Childhood Educator, Jess Shively, shares her energy and enthusiasm with the preschool children two afternoons a week. This class filled up fast and is now at capacity!



Evelyn Dickson Elementary School Child Care Space Creation Project

We are pleased to share that Evelyn Dickson Elementary School has been awarded \$26 400 in funding from the Province's ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund for a child care space creation project! Over the coming month, the school will receive new furniture for a Before and After School Care licensed program of 24 new group child care spaces! We wish to extend our sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the federal Ministry of Families, Children and Social Development for this funding award so we can build these new child care spaces in our community.

'Thinking Classrooms' with Dr. Peter Liljedahl

We are fortunate to be able to continue our work with Dr. Peter Liljedahl for the 2023-24 school year. Dr. Liljedahl engaged Principals, Vice Principals, District staff, as well as new and experienced teachers in several learning sessions at the end of August. Our focus throughout the year will be on integrating the strategies, building tasks with our local content, and moving toward authentic assessment of thinking tasks. More information regarding Dr. Liljedahl's work can be found at the following link [Thinking Classrooms](#).



Literacy with Faye Brownlie

Nechako Lakes educators are excited to have the opportunity to again work with Faye Brownlie, expert BC educator and educational author. This year she will be here in person twice and offer three virtual learning sessions. Her in person visits involve co-teaching with teachers and students, while educators from other schools or other classrooms come to watch and support the lessons. We call these Learning Rounds - professional development that includes student learners!!

This week, educators, and learners in Fraser Lake Elementary Secondary and Nechako Valley Secondary Middle Years participated in a 'co-teaching and learning' experience. The goals of the lessons were to strengthen vocabulary, reading and writing skills in ways that include all learners in a classroom.

At FLESS, Faye co-planned and co-taught lessons in Miranda Federici's Grade 6/7 class, Heather Derkson's Grade 8 English Language Arts class and at NVSS, Dane Philipenko's Grade 8 Humanities and Juven Somcio's Grade 7 classes.



Students engaged in deep thinking discussions, sketching images, and writing responses about topics ranging from hunters and gatherers to identity concepts that involved taking on the perspective of characters in short stories. Educators who came to learn from the strategies Faye used were thrilled to be able to add more ideas to their teaching practices and are very excited for Faye's return in November!

Strategic Plan Updates: GOAL 4: Enhance Connections



Our New Websites Have Launched!

District staff had the opportunity to work with the *Imagine Everything* website provider to update our online presence, enhance connections with community, and most importantly, tell our story. Check us out at [Home - Nechako Lakes School District \(sd91.bc.ca\)](https://www.sd91.bc.ca)

Thank you to Dave Miles, Manager of IT, for his oversight on this project!

Feeding Futures Fund

More children and youth will have access to healthy meals and snacks at school through the Province's new Feeding Futures funding, which invests in building and expanding local school food programs.

The Feeding Futures program will address the immediate need of feeding students and builds on the progress made with the Student and Family Affordability Fund to help reduce the challenges of rising food costs for families who need it most.



Evelyn Dickson Elementary School Before and After School Care Program

Evelyn Dickson Elementary School in Vanderhoof opened its doors to a new Before and After School Care Program! In a spare classroom at EDS, the YMCA has set up a licensed School Age Care Program for children in kindergarten to age 12. The program begins as early as 6:30 am and operates after school until 6 pm. A complimentary SD 91 bus shuttle is available in the mornings and afternoons for Sinkut View and WL McLeod learners. For more information about the YMCA School Age Care Program at EDS, please visit www.nbc.ymca.ca/child-care

Employee Recognition

I would like to recognize the collective efforts of **all staff** in ensuring the school year started off in a student-centred manner. In addition, I want to acknowledge our employees who may not work directly with students - it is their dedication to learners and our District that allows everything to run smoothly, which in turn, contributes greatly to engaging and inclusive learning environments for children. Some staff within these employee groups worked throughout the summer to ensure that schools and their resources were ready to welcome students. I sincerely appreciate these efforts.

SD 91 in the News!

[Burns Lake Youth Nominated](#)



<https://www.omincaexpress.com/news/sd-91-and-stellaten-first-nation-projects-benefit-from-cnc-forest-research-society-grant/>

<https://www.burnslakelakesdistrictnews.com/news/clive-the-therapy-dog-does-school-visits-in-burns-lake/>

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