

STRATEGIC FOCUS

Connecting Our
Priorities



December 2025 Highlights

HOLIDAY MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

As we approach the holiday season and the end of another year, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to each of you.

This year has been marked by significant systemic changes to school configurations. It has also been a year filled with incredible celebration, collaboration, and partnership. To each of you, thank you for your ongoing trust, collaboration, and support. Your partnership strengthens our schools and enriches the learning experiences of our students. Together, we continue to build environments where children and youth are supported to grow, learn, and thrive.

I am always grateful for the commitment, professionalism, and compassion demonstrated by staff across the district who work tirelessly to ensure our schools remain places of learning, belonging, and safety. Their efforts make a meaningful difference in the lives of children and families.

I humbly acknowledge that the holiday season can be a difficult time for some. For families and individuals who continue to heal from loss, illness, or other significant challenges, we hold each of you close in our thoughts and hearts. Our hope is that the holiday season will allow you time to be surrounded by the love of family and friends.

As we look ahead to 2026, we do so with hope. Hope grounded in the resilience of our students, the dedication of our staff, the strength of our partnerships, and the shared commitment to nurturing a future filled with possibility, care, and opportunity for all learners.

On behalf of the Board of Education and the Senior Leadership Team, I wish you a holiday season filled with rest, reflection, and special moments with family and friends. May the coming year bring health, peace, and renewed hope.

Warmest wishes for the holidays and the year ahead.

Donna Kriger, Superintendent of Schools



WELCOME TO THE DECEMBER STRATEGIC FOCUS

As we move into the winter season, we are pleased to bring you the December edition of *Strategic Focus – Connecting Our Priorities*. This publication highlights the meaningful work and learning taking place across our District as we continue to advance the goals outlined in our [Strategic Plan](#). Throughout this edition, you will find updates, celebrations, and important information that reflect our ongoing commitment to supporting every learner in thriving.

Stay connected and informed by visiting our [District website](http://www.sd83.bc.ca) (www.sd83.bc.ca) for important dates, news, and resources.

REMINDERS

December 19	Last day of school before the Winter Break
December 22-January 2	Winter Break
January 12	K-3 and Grade 4-8 Family Math Games Night, Shuswap Middle School at 5:30 pm
January 13	Early French immersion Information Session, Bastion at 5 p.m.
January 14	2026 Kindergarten, French Immersion, Outdoor Learning Registration Opens
January 15	Late French Immersion Meeting and Sign-up, Shuswap Middle School at 6 p.m.
January 27	Semester Turn Around Day

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](#)).



INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

WRITTEN LEARNING UPDATES

On Tuesday, December 16, 2025, your child's (elementary and middle schools) first Written Learning Update for the 2025-26 school year was made available. This first Learning Update primarily focuses on strengths, areas of growth, and next steps in curricular areas (with a focus on Language Arts and Math in Elementary), as well as provides information about your child's engagement in learning, relationships with others, and social/emotional well-being. Also included in your child's Learning Update is a self-reflection of the Core Competencies they focused on this term. The Core Competencies are sets of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need in order to engage in deep, lifelong learning. Specific goal(s) set earlier this fall with your child are also referred to in the Learning Update, as goal setting is a curricular requirement and also an important lifelong skill.

Please review the Learning Update with your child and celebrate all your child's successes to date this year! You may access the Learning Update in the MyEd BC Family Portal: [MyEd BC Family Portal Information](#).

As always, please reach out to your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns about your child's Learning Update.

[Click to access english-communicating-student-learning-information-for-parents-and-caregivers-package.pdf](#)

SUPPORTING EARLY LITERACY WITH THE SD83 ECE TEAM

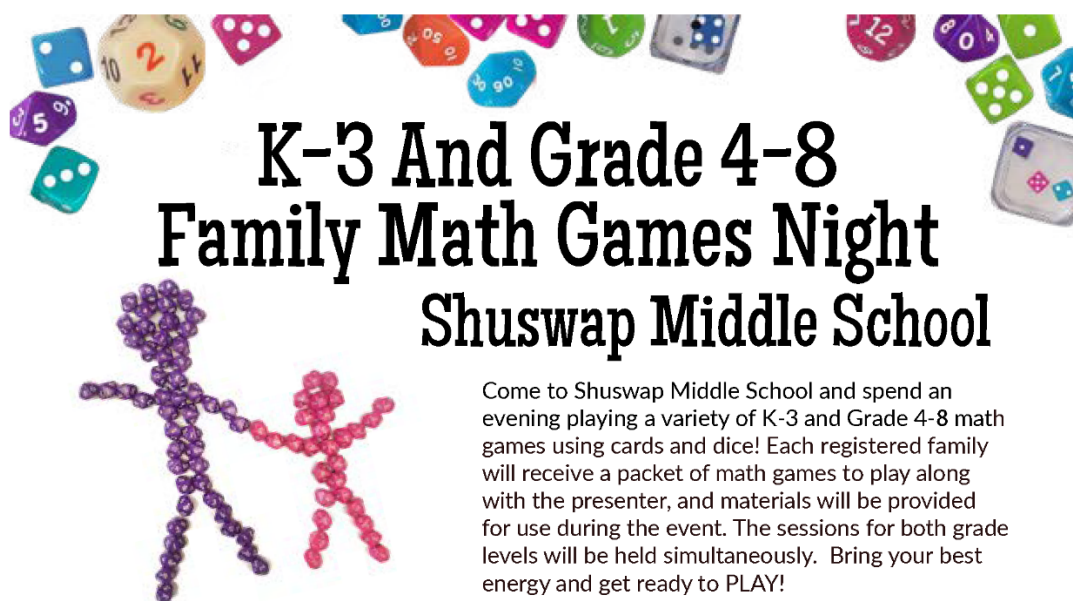
On November 20, 2025, the SD83 Early Childhood Education team came together for an engaging professional learning session focused on Supporting Early Literacy. The session explored key components of effective reading instruction, including:

- Models of Reading and the Science of Reading;
- The Five Pillars of Reading Instruction: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension;
- District resources such as Heggerty and UFLI, along with decodable texts; and,
- Strategies for structured literacy, small group support, and playful ways to support literacy.



K-3 AND GRADE 4-8 FAMILY MATH GAMES NIGHT

This is a fantastic opportunity for Kindergarten to Grade 8 families! Family Math Games Night at Shuswap Middle School on Monday, January 12, 2026, from 5:30 to 6:45 pm. Please RSVP by January 8, 2026, by scanning the QR code.



Benefits for Kids:

Come to Shuswap Middle School and spend an evening playing a variety of K-3 and Grade 4-8 math games using cards and dice! Each registered family will receive a packet of math games to play along with the presenter, and materials will be provided for use during the event. The sessions for both grade levels will be held simultaneously. Bring your best energy and get ready to PLAY!

Games are a fun way to review and strengthen basic math skills at home!

Children who are secure in their math skills will grow in self-esteem and have greater success in school.

Benefits for Parents:

Games are a motivating, simple and economical homework support that reinforce concepts taught in school.

Your presenter will provide you with strategies, tips and tricks to help your child with math fluency

Games Reinforce:

- Counting
- Problem Solving
- Basic Facts: $+$, $-$, \times , \div
- Place Value

WHEN: Monday, January 12th, 2026 5:30-6:45 PM

WHERE: Shuswap Middle School

TO REGISTER: Please Scan the QR code



RSVP By: January 8th, 2026



HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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

MONTHLY MINDFUL MOMENTS



December 2025

Mindful Moments

Brought to you by the Itinerant Counselling Team

Gratitude and empathy are interconnected, with gratitude fostering a sense of appreciation and connection, while empathy allows us to understand and share the emotions of others, leading to increased compassion and stronger relationships. Here is a more detailed look at the relationship between gratitude and empathy.

Gratitude involves recognizing and appreciating the good things in one's life, whether it's material possessions, relationships, or experiences.

Benefits of Gratitude

Increased happiness and well-being: Gratitude is linked to greater happiness, positive emotions, and improved mental health.

Stronger relationships: Practicing gratitude can deepen relationships and foster a sense of connection with others.

Reduced negativity: Gratitude helps shift focus from negative aspects of life to positive ones, improving emotional resilience.

Increased emotional intelligence: When we practice gratitude, we become more aware of our own emotions and the emotions of others, enhancing our emotional intelligence.

How to Practice Gratitude

Keep a gratitude journal: Write down things you are thankful for daily.

Express gratitude to others: Share your appreciation with people who have made a positive impact in your life.

Practice mindfulness: Pay attention to the present moment and appreciate the small things in life.

Create gratitude rituals: Include activities that promote gratitude into your daily routine (e.g., name 3 things you are grateful for each night at dinner time)

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person.

Benefits of Empathy

Stronger relationships: Empathy fosters deeper connections with others and builds trust.

Greater social skills: Empathy is a crucial social skill that allows us to navigate social situations with greater ease and understanding.

Increased compassion: Empathy allows us to see the world from another person's perspective, leading to greater compassion and understanding.

Improved communication: Empathy helps us communicate more effectively and resolve conflicts more peacefully.

How to Practice Gratitude

Listen actively: Pay attention to what others are saying, both verbally and nonverbally.

Try to understand their perspective: Put yourself in their shoes and try to see the world from their point of view - Be curious! (and teach your children to think before they speak/act)

Validate their feelings: Acknowledge and accept their emotions, even if you don't agree with them.

Practice compassion: Extend kindness and understanding to others, even when they are struggling. model random acts of kindness.

The Connection Between Gratitude and Empathy

Gratitude can enhance empathy: When we practice gratitude, we become more aware of the good things in our lives and the good things about others, which can lead to greater empathy.

Empathy can foster gratitude: When we are able to understand and share the feelings of others, we are more likely to appreciate the positive aspects of their lives and our own.

Both are important for well-being: Cultivating both gratitude and empathy can lead to greater happiness, stronger relationships, and a more fulfilling life.

Further Reading: Psychology Today - Gratitude (www.psychologytoday.com/ca/basics/gratitude)
Psychology Today - Empathy (www.psychologytoday.com/ca/basics/empathy)

Did you know that gratitude and empathy go hand in hand? Gratitude helps us appreciate the good in life, while empathy allows us to connect deeply with others. Together, they foster happiness, compassion, and stronger relationships.

Discover more: Visit our [website](#) to read [December Mindful Moments – Gratitude and Empathy](#).

Read Aloud videos by Diane Alber: [A Little Thankful Spot](#) and [A Little Spot of Empathy](#).

DONATIONS TO THE MUSIC THERAPY PROGRAM



Photo: Music Therapist Larry Keat, and Student Naiden Porteous

The Individual Achievement Program at Salmon Arm Secondary is fortunate to offer a Music Therapy Program that supports student growth and well-being. Led by registered Music Therapist Larry Keats, students work one-to-one or in small groups to explore instruments, different styles of music, and self-expression through recording.

Music therapy offers many benefits, including building confidence, communication, emotional expression, focus, and social connection. Most importantly, it gives students a joyful and creative way to engage, feel successful, and connect with others through music.

We are grateful to Music Heals Charitable Foundation for their generous \$4,000 contribution this year, which makes this program possible. Dr. and Mrs. Munro have also shown remarkable generosity by matching this donation, ensuring the program can continue for another school year. Their kindness and commitment, along with the support of Music Heals, truly make a meaningful difference in our students' sense of belonging and joy.

BUILDING BETTER TECH HABITS: A NEW SELF-GUIDED WORKSHOP FOR FAMILIES

[MediaSmarts](https://mediasmarts.ca) (<https://mediasmarts.ca>) has launched a new, free self-guided workshop to help families develop healthier technology and screen-time habits. Building Better Tech Habits provides practical, research-informed strategies for managing family screen use and addressing common digital challenges at all ages.

The workshop is available 24/7 and can be completed at any time, making it easy to fit into busy schedules.

Access the workshop here: [Tutorials & Workshops](#)

Explore more FREE resources: [MediaSmarts Digital Media Literacy](#).



CAREER DEVELOPMENT

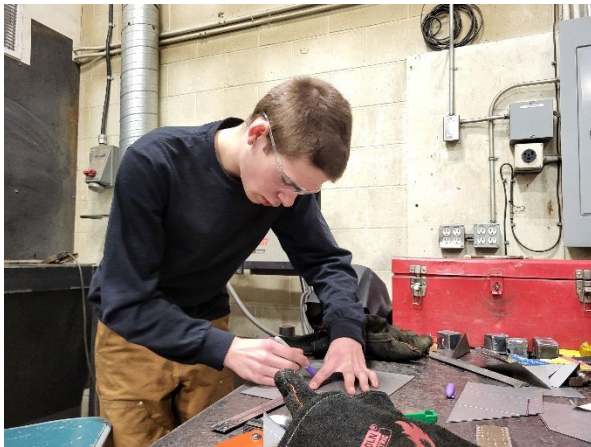
Each student will develop the skills and competencies necessary to be successful in a career or community pathway of their choice.

SD83 / OKANAGAN COLLEGE TRADES SAMPLER PROGRAM



This fall, 16 students successfully completed the SD83/Okanagan College Trades Sampler Program, wrapping up their hands-on learning experience in late November. Throughout the program, students explored a variety of trades while gaining practical skills, industry insight, and confidence in pursuing future career pathways. Many of the graduates are now considering careers in the trades, with several already preparing to take the next step by enrolling in the Youth Train in Trades Program, which they can begin in Grade 11 or 12.

On December 3, 2025, Okanagan College's Trades Campus in Salmon Arm welcomed more than 40 students from all District high schools and Storefront to learn more about the opportunities available through the program. With applications now open, interested Grade 9, 10, and 11 students are encouraged to connect with their school's Career Coordinator to learn how they can participate in this engaging and valuable exploration of the skilled trades.



mapping out sheet metal for a project



cutting pipe for her build



Okanagan College's Salmon Arm Trades Administrator Brent Moffat outlines the program to over 40 students at the Trade Sampler Spotlight

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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

STUDENTS SPREAD CHEER, LAUGHTER, AND...DUCK SOUNDS?

One of the goals of the Individual Achievement Program (IAP) is to be a great community member—and nothing says “community spirit” like helping with the recycling program and chasing kindergarteners around the gym. The IAP teamed up with Ms. Webster’s Bastion Elementary kindergarten class, Mr. Boyd and playful volunteers from his 11/12 PE class, and Mr. Robert with the grade 10 concert band for a collaborative morning of learning and fun.

The day kicked off with gym games where the kindergarteners handily outlasted their teenage counterparts in games like Snakes and Ladders, Islands, and Four-Corner Soccer. (It turns out 5-year-olds have infinite energy. Who knew?) After snacks in the cafeteria, everyone enjoyed a mini-Christmas concert featuring band instrument demos—including some remarkably realistic duck sounds—magic conductor wands, and a highly spirited penguin dance.

A short tour of Salmon Arm Secondary (SAS) wrapped up the morning, complete with a surprise stop at the school shop where Mr. Johnson fielded curious questions. The kindergarteners brought big smiles and contagious joy to SAS, giving our older students—especially those in the IAP—a chance to be role models, share laughter, and help our youngest learners explore and grow.



ARMSTRONG AUXILIARY GENEROSITY TO SOUPER MEALS

We are thrilled to announce that the Souper Meals program has received a generous \$20,000 donation from the Armstrong Spallumcheen Healthcare Auxiliary, the dedicated team behind the Bargain Bin in Armstrong. This incredible contribution will help us continue providing nutritious soup to students in Armstrong, Enderby, and Falkland schools.

"Souper Meals is offered for free to all students because we know registration and payment are barriers to student participation. The aim of this program is to provide an opportunity for students to try new and nourishing foods and share the experience with their friends so that they learn to enjoy them. It is also an investment in our local farmers and producers. For these types of programs to continue to grow and flourish, we will need community support, as food is getting more and more expensive," shared Serena Caner, SD83 School Food Coordinator. If you would like to donate to this program, please visit the online giving page: [Soupermeals | Salmon Arm, BC](#).

Thank you to the Armstrong Spallumcheen Healthcare Auxiliary for helping us nourish minds and bodies—one bowl at a time!



ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Registration for Kindergarten and our programs of choice – French Immersion and Outdoor Learning – **opens at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, January 14, 2026**, and will remain open throughout the school year. We can't wait to welcome you and your child to SD83!



All kindergarten registrations submitted on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, will be treated equally, eliminating the need for line-ups that day. Registrations received after January 14, 2026, will be date and time stamped and processed on a first-come, first-served basis. This information will be used to determine placement if catchment area schools or programs of choice reach full capacity. Priority will be given to students with siblings already registered in a program of choice (French Immersion or Outdoor Learning), should space become limited.

Parents interested in the [Early French Immersion](#) program at Bastion Elementary are invited to attend a parent information session on **January 13, 2026, from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.** at Bastion Elementary.

Parents interested in registering their child in the [South Canoe Outdoor Learning Program](#) are invited to an information session on **January 13, 2026, from 5 – 6 p.m.** at South Canoe School (library). This session is open to parents of children in Kindergarten to Grade 8 who are considering the program, not just kindergarten-aged children.

[Registration](#) must be completed at your child's catchment school, which is determined by your physical address, or at a specialty school such as Bastion for Early French Immersion or South Canoe for Outdoor Learning. To access our catchment School Locator tool or learn more about our specialty schools, visit the [District Registration webpage](#).

Elementary schools include:

[Armstrong Elementary](#) – (250) 546-8778
[Bastion Elementary](#) – includes English Kindergarten & Early French Immersion program – (250) 832-3741
[Carlin Elementary Middle](#) – (250) 835-4520
[Falkland Elementary](#) – (250) 379-2320
[Grindrod Elementary](#) – (250) 838-7579
[Highland Park Elementary](#) – (250) 546-8723
[Hillcrest Elementary](#) – (250) 832-7195
[M.V. Beattie Elementary](#) – (250) 838-6434

[North Canoe Elementary](#) – (250) 832-4950
[North Shuswap Elementary](#) – (250) 955-2214
[Parkview Elementary](#) – (250) 836-2871
[Ranchero Elementary](#) – (250) 832-7018
[Salmon Arm West Elementary](#) – (250) 832-3862
[Silver Creek Elementary](#) – (250) 832-8282
[Sorrento Elementary](#) – (250) 675-2311
[South Broadview](#) – (250) 832-2167
[South Canoe Outdoor Learning](#) – (250) 832-3122

SEPTEMBER 2026 KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION



JANUARY 14, 2026

Please register at your
neighbourhood school
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

Interested in a District program?

EARLY FRENCH IMMERSION

There will be an Information Session on
January 13, 2026, Bastion Elementary at 5 p.m.

OUTDOOR LEARNING PROGRAM

There will be an Information Session on
January 13, 2026, South Canoe School Library at 7 p.m.
Come find out what Outdoor Learning is all about!



For more information visit:

District website: www.sd83.bc.ca/registration

French Immersion Program webpage: www.sd83.bc.ca/french-immersion

South Canoe Outdoor Program website: sca.sd83.bc.ca

LATE FRENCH IMMERSION REGISTRATION

The Late French Immersion Program offers students an opportunity to enter French Immersion at a later age. The District's program is housed at Shuswap Middle School and is going into its 21st year! Late French Immersion represents a joyful, transformational learning opportunity open to all Grade 6 students in SD83. Late French Immersion (LFI) allows Grade 6 students the chance to learn to speak, read, and write French in just one short year. Students do not need to be able to speak or know any French, nor do their parents for that matter. LFI students are motivated, hard-working and determined learners. All subjects are taught in French in Grade 6 and English is reintroduced in Grade 8. LFI students then go on to J.L. Jackson and integrate seamlessly with students from Early French Immersion.

LFI is more than just your average language experience. It is a type of learning experience that supercedes the "norm." Where do you get the chance as a learner to be absorbed into a close-knit community where everyone has chosen to come together for the same goal: learn French, speak French, dream in French? The happiness that emanates from the room in LFI is contagious. They're a team and a family and they work hard to achieve their goal. That doesn't mean that they don't have tough days, because they do. Taking a risk is hard. But in the end, it is always rewarding. Students feel like they have been on this journey together resulting in this beautiful, bilingual landscape that they would have missed out on if they hadn't taken the challenge. LFI is a life-changing program. Few educational programs do what LFI does for students. LFI empowers students in believing that they can do anything and be anything that they choose in life. The best kind of learning is that which transforms the learner. LFI does just that.

MEETING AND REGISTRATION



2026

LATE FRENCH IMMERSION

Essential Meeting

**Thursday, January 15, 2026
at 6 p.m. at
Shuswap Middle School**



PROGRAM GOALS

- To develop language skills enabling students to participate easily in French conversation.
- To provide an insight into the French culture.
- To achieve skills in all subject areas equivalent to those in the English program.
- Ability to take post-secondary education with French as the language of instruction.
- Ability to gain employment using French as the work language.



250-832-3741 - Rita Tedesco, District French Immersion Coordinator
250-832-6031 - Val Edgell at SMS

A parent information evening will be held on **Thursday, January 15, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at Shuswap Middle School** for parents and students who wish to learn more about the program. A sign-up link for the program will be given to parents directly following the meeting, so it is important to attend. The same link will go live on websites shortly after the meeting for those unable to attend on a first come first served basis. If you have any questions, please forward them to Mme Rita Tedesco at Bastion Elementary, 250-832-3741 or Ms. Val Edgell Principal at SMS 250-832-6031.

Rita Tedesco is the District French Programs Coordinator for SD 83.

For more programming details, read the [Late French Immersion Brochure](#).

EARLY FRENCH IMMERSION REGISTRATION



The poster features a blue background with a large, faint image of a hand reaching up. At the top left is the SD83 logo, which includes a circular emblem with a mountain, a river, and a tree, surrounded by the text "Kwiskwānāw ne Secwepemcú'ecw" and "SD83". The main title "EARLY FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM" is in large, bold, yellow capital letters. Below it, the text "Are you interested in registering your child for September 2026?" is in white. A light blue box on the left contains the following text: "There will be an information session for parents on January 13, 2026, from 5-6 p.m. at Bastion Elementary School. This is an opportunity to learn more the program, and consider if this is a program you would be interested in for your Kindergarten child." At the bottom right, there is a circular inset image showing a child pointing at a calendar with French months. At the bottom, the text "Kindergarten registration begins on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 for September 2026" is in yellow.

EARLY FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM

Are you interested in registering your child for September 2026?

There will be an information session for parents on January 13, 2026, from 5-6 p.m. at Bastion Elementary School.

This is an opportunity to learn more the program, and consider if this is a program you would be interested in for your Kindergarten child.

Kindergarten registration begins on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 for September 2026

An information session for Early French Immersion will be held on January 13, 2026, from 5 – 6 p.m. at Bastion Elementary. Please contact Rita Tedesco or Bastion Elementary for further information. For more programming details, read the [Early French Immersion Brochure](#).

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. [AP 130 Automated External Defibrillators](#) has completed the development and review process and is now available on the District website.

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.

BOARD POLICY 110 ACCUMULATED OPERATING SURPLUS

Changes in Ministry requirements need to be reflected in an updated policy. [Policy 4060 Accumulated Operating Surplus \(Reserve\)](#) will be brought forward to be repealed following the completion of the feedback process outlined in Policy 160 Policy Development. [Board Policy 110 Accumulated Operating Surplus](#) received first reading at the November 18, 2025, Regular Board Meeting. The Board invites stakeholders, Rightsholders, partner groups, staff, and members of the public to provide feedback prior to the second and final reading. Please click [here](#) to review the policy and submit your feedback by completing the [feedback form](#) by midnight on Thursday, January 15, 2026.

SCHOOL DISTRICT NAME CHANGE

At the May 2024 Regular Board Meeting, Darrell Jones, who was Chair of the Quelmúcw Education Council at the time, presented a briefing note requesting that the name of the North Okanagan-Shuswap School District be changed to a Secwépemctsín word or phrase. The Board unanimously supported the recommendation and asked the Quelmúcw Education Council to consult with their communities, Secwépemctsín language speakers, and Knowledge Keepers.

At the September 2024 Regular Board Meeting, trustees were honoured to receive the gifted name *Íwsaltktnéws ne Secwepemcú'ecw*, which means that we are all connected (people, animals, land, air, and water) on Secwepemc land. The Board passed a motion approving the change of the District name. In December 2024, Board Chair Corryn Grayston submitted an official notification of the name change to the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

The District recently received verbal confirmation from the Ministry that the name has passed through the legislature. Although we could not previously use the new name or logo on legal documents, we have been using them in public communications. With this confirmation, we can now begin updating legal documents as they are revised.

