STRATEGIC FOCUS

Connecting Our Priorities

October 2026 Highlights

WELCOME TO THE OCTOBER STRATEGIC FOCUS

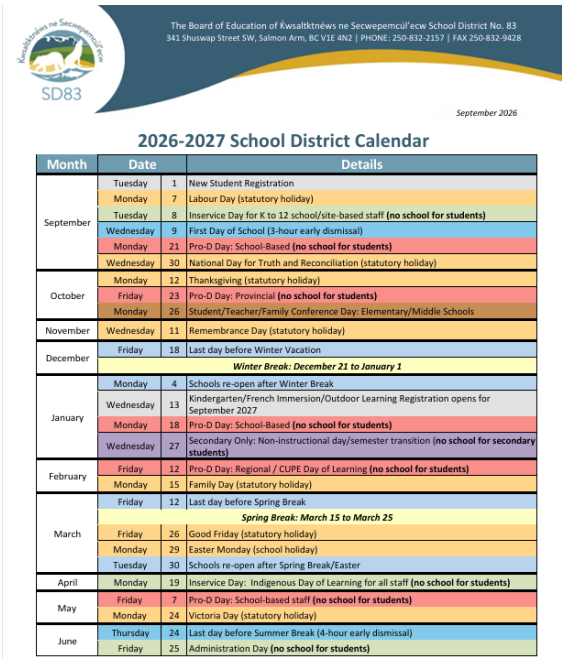
This edition of *Strategic Focus - Connecting Our Priorities* highlights how our schools and departments are advancing the goals of the District Strategic Plan. This publication showcases the collective efforts of our schools, staff, students, and community partners as we continue to bring our Strategic Plan to life. Inside this edition, you will find highlights connected to the following priority areas:

- Intellectual Development – Pro-D Sessions, Media Literacy Week, UFLI at Sorrento Elementary, Communicating Student Learning
- Human & Social Development – Learning About Ḵwsaltktnéws ne Secwepemcúl'ecw at Sorrento Elementary, National Mental Illness Awareness Week, Celebrating Halloween
- Career Development – Exploring Careers in Skilled Trades and Manufacturing, Dual Credit Information
- Community Partnership Development – Sxwetsméllp Outdoor Learning Foundation Celebration
- Organizational Development – Student Accident Insurance Information, Administrive Procedure Updates, School Bus Safety Week, Fire Drill Practise at Grindrod Elementary
- Effective Governance and Leadership – Trustees Elected to the 2026-2030 Board

UPCOMING DATES

November 3	Inaugural Board Meeting, 6 pm
November 7	Sxwetsméllp Village Celebration
November 9-13	Secondary Written Learning (S1)/ Informal Learning Update (Linear)
November 11	Remembrance Day, no school
November 17	Regular Board Meeting, 6 pm

Stay up to date with important dates including holidays, professional development days, and school events (Calendar - Ḵwsaltktnéws ne Secwepemcúl'ecw, 2026-2027-School-District-Calendar).



The Board of Education of Ḵwsaltktnéws ne Secwepemcúl'ecw School District No. 83
341 Shuswap Street SW, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 4N2 | PHONE: 250-832-2157 | FAX 250-832-9428

SD83

September 2026

2026-2027 School District Calendar

Month	Date		Details
September	Tuesday	1	New Student Registration
	Monday	7	Labour Day (statutory holiday)
	Tuesday	8	Inservice Day for K to 12 school/site-based staff **(no school for students)**
	Wednesday	9	First Day of School (3-hour early dismissal)
	Monday	21	Pro-D Day: School-Based **(no school for students)**
	Wednesday	30	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (statutory holiday)
October	Monday	12	Thanksgiving (statutory holiday)
	Friday	23	Pro-D Day: Provincial **(no school for students)**
	Monday	26	Student/Teacher/Family Conference Day: Elementary/Middle Schools
November	Wednesday	11	Remembrance Day (statutory holiday)
December	Friday	18	Last day before Winter Vacation
	Winter Break: December 21 to January 1		
January	Monday	4	Schools re-open after Winter Break
	Wednesday	13	Kindergarten/French Immersion/Outdoor Learning Registration opens for September 2027
	Monday	18	Pro-D Day: School-Based **(no school for students)**
	Wednesday	27	Secondary Only: Non-instructional day/semester transition **(no school for secondary students)**
February	Friday	12	Pro-D Day: Regional / CUPE Day of Learning **(no school for students)**
	Monday	15	Family Day (statutory holiday)
March	Friday	12	Last day before Spring Break
	Spring Break: March 15 to March 25		
	Friday	26	Good Friday (statutory holiday)
	Monday	29	Easter Monday (school holiday)
	Tuesday	30	Schools re-open after Spring Break/Easter
April	Monday	19	Inservice Day: Indigenous Day of Learning for all staff **(no school for students)**
May	Friday	7	Pro-D Day: School-based staff **(no school for students)**
	Monday	24	Victoria Day (statutory holiday)
June	Thursday	24	Last day before Summer Break (4-hour early dismissal)
	Friday	25	Administration Day **(no school for students)**

OUR MISSION Empowering students to become confident, curious, and caring individuals who thrive in their learning, relationships, and community
OUR VISION Preparing students to become educated citizens who contribute positively to a dynamic, sustainable, and diverse world
OUR VALUES Belonging, Respect, Reconciliation, Empathy, Equity, Perseverance

SD83 OCTOBER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SESSIONS

October 1	UFLI Foundations: Explict Phonics Instruction (K-2 Literacy Teachers)
October 21	Session 2 of the Numeracy Learning Series (K-8)
October 23	Foundations for Social-Emotional Learning (K-3 Teachers)
	Intermediate DIBELS 8 (Gr 4-8 Teachers)
	MyBluePrint+ (All Teaching Staff)
	AI In The Classroom (All Teaching Staff)
	MyViewboard (All Teaching Staff)
	Restorative Practices for Educations (All Teaching Staff)
	Indigenous Food Technologies (Gr 8-12 Food Teachers/ADST & Indigneous Ed Workers)
	Word Origins (Gr 3-5 Learning Resource Teachers, Literacy Support Teachers)
	FutureMakers Environmental Education Program (K-12 Teacher Staff)
October 28	Intermediate DIBELS 8 (Gr 4-8 Teachers)

MEDIA LITERACY WEEK

Media Literacy Week took place from October 26 to 30, 2026, and highlighted the importance of helping children and youth develop the skills needed to navigate today's digital world safely and responsibly.

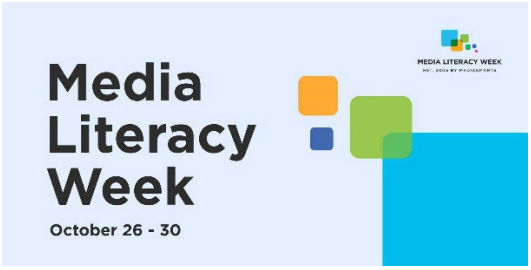
As part of the week, MediaSmarts, Canada's centre for digital media literacy, is sharing free resources for families and educators.

Families looking for support can explore MediaSmarts Parent Central, which offers practical information on topics such as online safety, privacy, screen time, social media, cyberbullying, misinformation, artificial intelligence, and healthy digital habits.

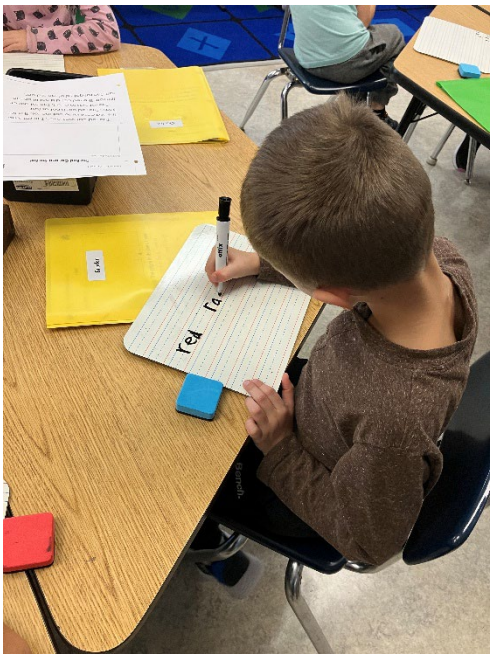
The site includes articles, guides, videos, and conversation starters to help parents and caregivers engage in meaningful discussions about their children's online experiences.

Media Literacy Week also includes Digital Citizen Day on October 28, 2026. What is a digital citizen? If you are online, you are a digital citizen! Being a responsible digital citizen is about navigating and interacting in online spaces respectfully, safely, and with compassion.

To access free parent and educator resources, visit MediaSmarts and explore the materials available through Parent Central.



BUILDING STRONG READERS THROUGH TEAMWORK



At Sorrento Elementary, collaboration, creativity, and a shared commitment to explicit literacy instruction are making a significant difference for students.

Using assessment data from DIBELS, spelling inventories, and benchmark assessments, staff created flexible UFLI groups that cross classroom boundaries, allowing students to receive instruction that best matches their literacy needs. Teachers, Learning Resource staff, the Literacy Support Teacher, Indigenous Education Worker, CEAs, and administration work together to ensure students receive timely feedback, targeted support, and daily opportunities to practice their reading.

What makes this model especially powerful is its responsiveness. As students grow, groups are adjusted, supports are refined, and instruction is tailored to meet individual needs. This flexibility has helped students move confidently between groups while ensuring those who need additional support receive it.

The success of this approach has expanded from Grade 1 and Grade 2 into Grade 3, creating seamless opportunities for students to access learning at the right level. It has also strengthened collaboration among staff, with everyone sharing responsibility for student success.

Making this work requires intentional scheduling. Literacy blocks are protected across grades, with classroom schedules, prep times, and school events carefully planned around daily UFLI instruction whenever possible. This prioritization reflects the staff's collective belief that strong literacy foundations matter.







The success of this work reflects the dedication, flexibility, and collaborative spirit of the Sorrento Elementary staff. By aligning their expertise, resources, and schedules around student needs, the team is creating meaningful opportunities for every learner to build strong literacy skills and experience success as a reader.

This collaborative approach directly supports the District's Strategic Priority of Intellectual Development by fostering the knowledge, skills, and confidence students need to become successful readers, engaged learners, and lifelong learners.

COMMUNICATING STUDENT LEARNING

We know that meaningful and ongoing communication between home and school has a positive impact on student learning and engagement. This year, in-person Student/Teacher/Family Conferences took place on Monday, October 26, 2026, at all Elementary and Middle schools in SD83.

These conferences serve as an informal learning update, offering a chance to share student strengths, areas of growth, and strategies to support learning in literacy, numeracy, and social emotional learning.

SD83 Student/Teacher/Family Conference Guidelines include:

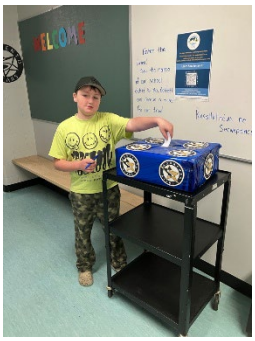
- Minimum 15 minutes in length for each student;
- Held in the student's classroom;
- Only one family at a time in the classroom space during the scheduled time; and,
- During the conference, opportunities were provided to share examples of learning, reflect on areas of strength, identify areas of further growth, and discuss ways to support learning (particularly in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and social emotional learning).

Thank you to the students, families, and staff for their participation in this year's Conferences. By working together and engaging in meaningful conversations about learning, our school communities help create a strong foundation for student success. These important connections between home and school support student growth, strengthen relationships, and contribute to positive learning experiences for all learners.

Thank You!

LEARNING ABOUT ḰWSALTKTNÉWS NE SECWEPEMCÚL'ECW E

Students, staff, and families at Sorrento Elementary recently took part in a fun challenge to learn and celebrate the District's Secwépemc name, Ḱwsaltktnéws ne Secwepemcúl'ecw.



Participants scanned a QR code and practised pronouncing the name before sharing it with Principal Heather Gobbett. Students, parents, and teachers who successfully completed the challenge had their names entered into a draw for some "Sorrento Swag." They also learned about the meaning and significance of the District's name.

One student proudly submits his ballot after successfully completing the challenge. The activity provided a fun and engaging way for the school community to connect with Secwépemc language and culture.



Through this activity, students, families, and staff deepened their understanding of local Secwépemc language and culture, contributing to the District's Human and Social Development priority area and its outcome of advancing Truth and Reconciliation while expanding local Secwépemc perspectives for all.

To learn how to pronounce the District name and understand its meaning, visit the Learn to Say Ḱwsaltktnéws ne Secwepemcúl'ecw webpage (www.sd83.bc.ca/Learning-to-Say-Kwsaltktnews-ne-Secwepemculecw).

NATIONAL MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

October 4-10, 2026, was National Mental Illness Awareness Week. The week was a time to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and encourage open conversations about mental health. Since 1990, the week has highlighted the importance of understanding mental illness, sharing lived experiences, and building hope through greater awareness and support.

Mental health affects us all, and creating caring, supportive communities helps ensure that children, youth, and families know they are not alone.

Parents, caregivers, families, educators, and other professionals are encouraged to continue exploring the resources available through Healthy Minds BC, which provides practical tools and information to support the everyday mental health and well-being of children and youth.

Learn more at Healthy Minds BC (https://healthymindsbc.gov.bc.ca) and visit the Parents and Caregivers resources at (https://healthymindsbc.gov.bc.ca/course/parents-caregivers/).

BRITISH COLUMBIA | Healthy Minds BC

CELEBRATING HALLOWEEN WITH KINDNESS & CREATIVITY

While the District does not have an official policy regarding Halloween costumes, families and students were reminded that costumes were to be respectful, follow dress codes, and did not promote violence, sexism, racism, or appropriation of culture.

Some guidelines for them to consider when selecting costumes that were be worn at school included:

- Students need to be identifiable and visible to ensure safety. Face paint is welcome; full face masks should be left at home or only worn during the costume parade.
- Costumes that are sexual in nature or employ questionable props are not appropriate for a school setting.
- Costumes that depict violence, drugs, or alcohol are not appropriate. Fake weapons should be left at home and saved for Halloween night.
- Choose fun and creative costumes that don't imitate or stereotype races, cultures, genders, heritage, or religions. Costumes that may offend or reinforce harmful stereotypes were not allowed.

Here are a few fun Halloween photos:

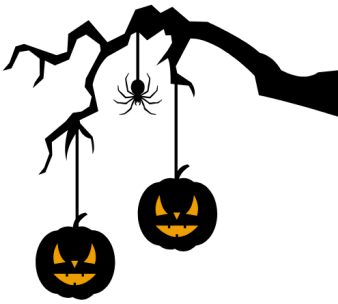








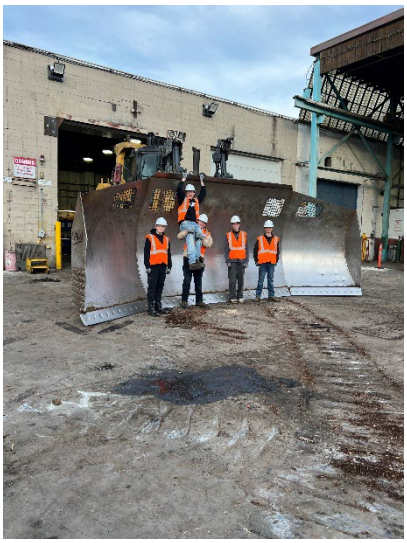


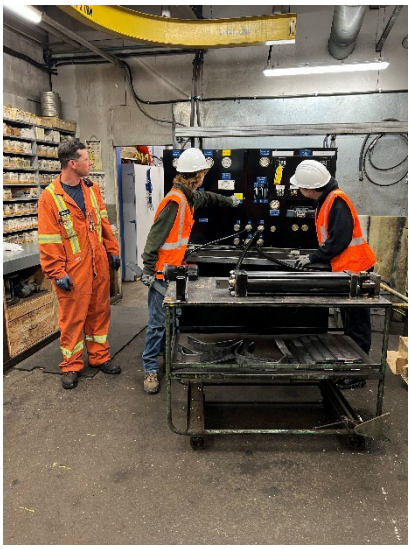
SD83 STUDENTS EXPLORE CAREERS IN SKILLED TRADES AND MANUFACTURING

On October 16, 2026, students from across SD83 had the opportunity to step into the world of skilled trades and manufacturing during a hands-on career exploration event hosted by Tolko Industries.

The experience introduced students to the diverse career pathways available in the forestry and manufacturing sectors, helping them connect classroom learning with real-world opportunities. Throughout the day, students learned about the skills, training, and education required for a variety of in-demand trades and technical careers.







Representatives from Tolko Industries shared information about careers such as millwright, electrician, welder, heavy-duty mechanic, instrumentation technician, and power engineer. Students had the opportunity to meet industry professionals, ask questions about their experiences, explore apprenticeship pathways, and gain a better understanding of the rewarding careers available close to home.

The event highlighted many of the benefits of pursuing a skilled trade, including hands-on work, industry-recognized apprenticeship training, and career opportunities in growing sectors of the economy.

Career exploration experiences like this are an important part of helping students make informed decisions about their future. By connecting directly with employers and skilled professionals, students gain a better understanding of the wide range of pathways available after graduation and the opportunities that exist within the communities where they live.

SD83 extends its appreciation to Tolko Industries for providing students with this meaningful opportunity to learn about skilled trades and manufacturing careers and for supporting the next generation of skilled workers.

DUAL CREDIT INFORMATION NIGHTS

Students and families interested in learning more about dual credit opportunities in SD83 were invited to attend a Dual Credit Information Night at Salmon Arm Secondary and Pleasant Valley Secondary.

These informative evenings were primarily geared toward Grade 9-11 students and their families, but all were welcome to attend. They will have learned about both academic and trades dual credit programs available to students in Grades 10-12, including program offerings, application processes, and the many benefits of earning both high school and post-secondary credits at the same time.

Dual credit programs allow students to get a jump start on their future careers and education by taking post-secondary courses while still enrolled in high school. Students can earn credits toward graduation while also working toward partial or full completion of selected post-secondary programs and credentials. Even better, SD83 covers the tuition costs for students participating in dual credit programs.

The sessions were an excellent opportunity for students and parents to ask questions, discover pathways aligned with career interests, and learn how dual credit programs can help ease the transition to post-secondary education and training.



To learn more about what SD83 has to offer, visit SD83 Career Programs (career.sd83.bc.ca) > What We Offer > Dual Credit Programs (https://career.sd83.bc.ca/dual-credit).

SXWETSMÉLLP OUTDOOR LEARNING FOUNDATION

Sxwetsméllp Outdoor Learning Foundation is the name of the society whose goal it is to revitalize Sxwetsméllp Village, a culturally important village site and trail located on IR3 bordering Salmon Arm. Creating a Secwepemc cultural centre where everyone is welcome was a long-time dream of Elder Dr. Mary Thomas. Her son, Louis Thomas, and granddaughter, Crystal Cox, have taken on leadership in the society to continue her legacy.

In 2026, a three-year plan to re-create Sxwetsméllp Village was established, including the repair and/or construction of pithouses, sweat lodges, a salmon smokehouse, and a community gathering space, all connected by accessible trails. The trail system will see a native plant restoration project, signage, and the creation of places of rest and gathering.

Throughout the revitalization of Sxwetsméllp Village, the public can continue to use the Sxwetsméllp Trail, and educational opportunities are available at the Village site with the guidance of Louis Thomas and Gerry Thomas. It is the hope of the Sxwetsméllp Outdoor Learning Foundation that Sxwetsméllp Village helps build respectful relationships, engaging cultural events and education, and an understanding of Secwepemc ways of knowing, doing and being.

Sxwetsmèllp Outdoor Learning Foundation

SHUSWAP COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Sxwetsmèllp Village Celebration

You are invited to attend a celebration at Sxwetsmèllp Village

Saturday, November 7, 2026 from 1pm to 4pm

3277 - 1 Avenue SW Salmon Arm

Celebrate the completion of the first Sxwetsmèllp Mentorship Program, led by Louis Thomas and Gerry Thomas, who guided Secwepemc youth in traditional building skills and cultural knowledge. The Bannock Booth is open 1pm to 3pm, trail tours from 1:30pm to 3pm, presentations and storytelling from 3pm to 4pm. Everyone is welcome.



Sxwetsmèllp Village has been an important place of land-based learning since Dr. Mary Thomas first envisioned it in the 1990s. Her family continues this legacy by working to rebuild and revitalize the village site, offering traditional Secwepemc structures, events and educational activities, along with the Sxwetsmèllp Trail that is open to the public. The Sxwetsmèllp Outdoor Learning Foundation's goal is to continue offering programs, workshops and tours to the wider community.

This Celebration is generously supported by Shuswap Community Foundation.

Connect with sxwetsmellpvillage@gmail.com for more information or a map to the Village site

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE INFORMATION

The safety and well-being of students is a priority in SD83. While every effort is made to provide a safe learning environment, accidents can happen at school, during extracurricular activities, and while participating in school-sponsored events.

Families are reminded that SD83 does not provide accident insurance coverage for student injuries that occur on school property or during school-related activities. Parents and guardians are encouraged to review their current insurance coverage and consider whether additional accident insurance would be beneficial for their family.

For families interested in obtaining optional student accident insurance, information about the voluntary **insuremykids® Protection Plan** offered through Reliable Life Insurance Company is availalbe on the District website. Coverage options may help with expenses related to accidental injuries and can be tailored to meet individual family needs.

To learn more about student accident insurance and access application information, visit the District's Accident Insurance webpage: www.sd83.bc.ca/accident-insurance.
Participation in any accident insurance plan is entirely voluntary, and coverage is purchased directly by parents or guardians.

Parent Resources:

- Insuremykids Letter to Parents
- Insuremykids Panel Brochure
- Insuremykids Website

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE UPDATES

SD83's Organizational Development goal is to develop and enhance the procedures and practices that support the District in achieving its Strategic Priorities. Administrative procedures are formal processes established by the Superintendent of Schools and the Senior Leadership Team to guide staff and ensure consistency with organizational expectations.

The following administrative procedures (APs) have recently completed the Development and Review process:

- AP 135 Return of School District Property (amended)
- AP 140 Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct (new)
- AP 312 Restraint and Seclusion (new)
- AP 360 Ordinarily Resident Students (amended)
- AP 410 Addressing Staff Concerns and Communication (new)

To review all APs, visit our webpage: Administrative Procedures (www.sd83.bc.ca/administrative-procedures).

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK

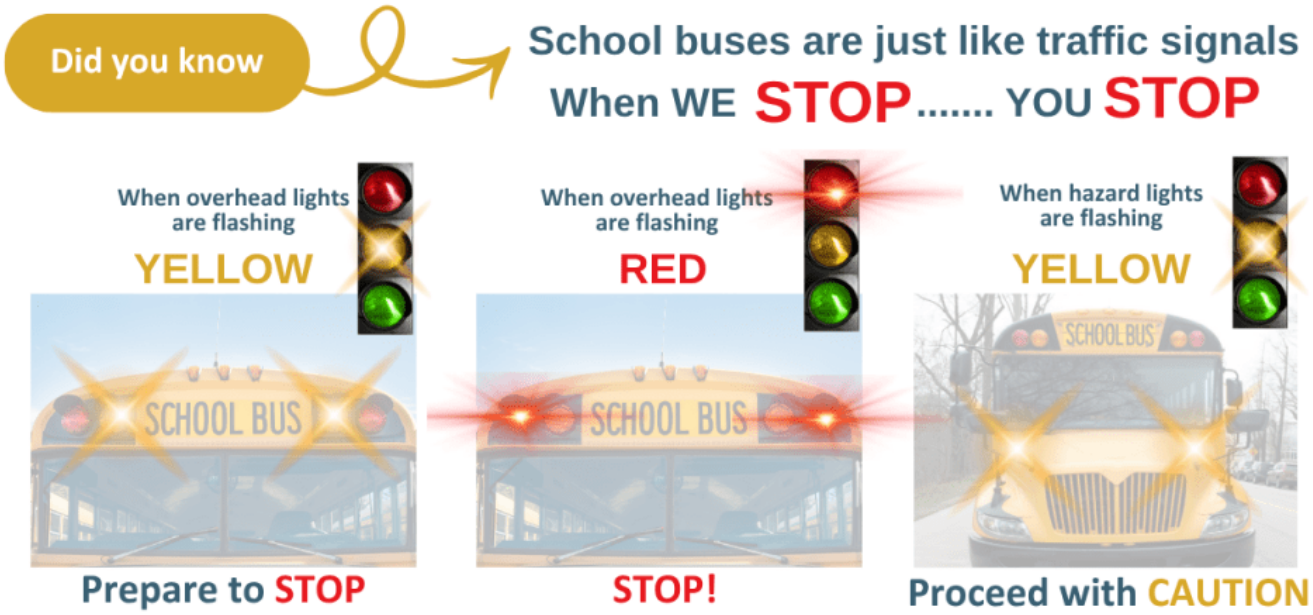
During the week of October 19-12, 2026, SD83 joined schools and communities across the country in recognizing National School Bus Safety Week. This is a time to reflect on the importance of keeping students safe as they travel to and from school.

Every day, our dedicated transportation team safely carries 3,000 students to and from school, and their safety remains our highest priority. As drivers, parents and community members, we each have a responsibility to help protect them.

Please remember: You must stop for school buses displaying flashing red lights. It's not just the law, it's a vital step in ensuring our students arrive safely at their destinations.

Let's work together to keep every student safe, every day.

To learn more about school bus safety and what the flashing lights mean, check out the helpful graphic below and watch the SD73 brake4buses video here.



FIRE DRILL PRACTISE AT GRINDROD ELEMENTARY

Students and staff at Grindrod Elementary School recently participated in a fire drill, providing an opportunity to practise the procedures that help keep everyone safe in the event of an emergency.

When the fire alarm sounded, staff immediately put emergency procedures into action, organizing students for evacuation and guiding classes to their designated exits. Teachers and support staff brought attendance sheets and class lists, escorted students to the school's assembly area, and carefully accounted for every student. Once attendance was confirmed, staff reported their results to the principal or designate and remained ready to provide any additional support required until the drill was officially concluded.

The exercise demonstrated the calm, organized response that takes place whenever an emergency alarm sounds. Regular practice helps students and staff become familiar with procedures, ensuring they can respond quickly and confidently when needed.

School safety drills are an important part of emergency preparedness across School District No. 83. Each year, schools are required to conduct six fire drills, including three in the fall and three in the spring. Schools also participate in a variety of other emergency preparedness activities, including one Drop, Cover and Hold On (earthquake) drill, one lockdown drill, one hold and secure drill, and one first aid drill. Schools may also conduct a shelter-in-place drill as part of their emergency planning.

The recent fire drill at Grindrod Elementary is an example of each school's commitment to maintaining a safe learning environment and ensuring students know what to do in the event of an emergency. Through regular practice and preparation, students and staff continue to build the skills and confidence needed to respond effectively when safety matters most.



Photo: Students and staff gather at the designated assembly area during a recent fire drill at Grindrod Elementary School, where attendance was taken and all students were safely accounted for.

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.

TRUSTEES ELECTED TO THE 2026-2030 BOARD

SD83 congratulates the candidates elected to serve on the Board of Education of School District No. 83 (Ḵwsaltktnéws ne Secwepemcúl'ecw) following the official declaration of results.

Two of the five trustees elected to the Board are returning members, providing continuity in governance and leadership, while three trustees will begin their first term of service.

The Board of Education plays an important role in setting the District's strategic direction through the 2023-2028 District Strategic Plan, approving governance policies and budgets, and advocating for public education on behalf of students, families, and communities across SD83.

The elected trustees are:

- **Roxanne Landry** - Area 1 (acclaimed)
- **Brent Gennings** - Area 2 (acclaimed)
- **Corryn Grayston** - Area 3 (acclaimed)
- **Claire Askew** - Area 4
- **Melissa Parmenter** - Area 4

Following the Inaugural Board Meeting, on November 3, 2026, regular Board of Education meetings will resume at 6:00 p.m. at the District Education Support Centre on the following dates:

- November 17, 2026
- December 15, 2026
- January 19, 2027
- February 16, 2027
- March 9, 2027
- April 20, 2027
- May 18, 2027
- June 15, 2027

To stay informed about Board news, trustee information, and Board meeting agendas and minutes, visit the Board of Education webpage at Board of Education - Ḵwsaltktnéws ne Secwepemcúl'ecw (www.sd83.bc.ca/board-of-education).