



PACIFIC RIM SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

—The Winter Issue 2026—



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YOUR WINDOW INTO OUR SCHOOLS

Welcome to our district newsletter, created to keep families connected with the stories, updates, and celebrations that shape our schools. In this edition, you'll find details about events, district updates, and profiles of the dedicated staff who support our students.

Thank you for being a vital part of our school community. Together, we are creating safe, welcoming, and engaging schools where every student has the opportunity to grow and succeed.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Pacific Rim School District is located on the ḥaḥuuti of the Čišaaʔath (Tseshaht) and Huupačasʔath (Hupacasath) First Nations. We also acknowledge that we have schools located on the ḥaḥuuti of the Huu-ay-aht (Huu-ay-aht), and ʔaʔuukʷiʔath (Tla-o-qui-aht) First Nations and the Yuuʔuʔiʔath (Yuu-cluth-aht) Government.



INSIDE THE DISTRICT



Samantha Clutesi renews the Wizenard Series: Training Camp, a book about young basketball players, as librarian Lucas Anderson smiles in the back. (Nora O'Malley photo)

UCLUELET SECONDARY'S READING FOR PLEASURE

For 30-minutes each week, students in Ucluelet Secondary School's (USS) Reading for Pleasure are whisked away to the library to cozy up with a book and eat healthy snacks. No phones. No social media. The only AI in the room is All Imagination.

"The key is to have books that they actually want to read," said USS librarian and English department chair Lucas Anderson. "A lot of the books were outdated and not connecting with the kids."

Over the span of two years, Anderson got to work "rehoming" hundreds of antiquated books to make space for more accessible and visually appealing reading options like the Spirit of Denendeh by Indigenous author Richard Van Camp and the Diary of a Wimpy Kid novel series.

When USS put a call out to the community to contribute funds, Anderson says they raised \$15,000 for the library in just three weeks. He orders 95 per cent of his books locally from Mermaid Tales Bookshop in Tofino.

"A lot of people came together", he said.

Anderson gave a special note of thanks to Jason Sam, Lucia Lyons and Julie Corlazzoli for all their help and to the Tofino Co-op, Ucluelet Co-op, Long Beach Lodge Resort, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and Coastal Family Resource Coalition for their generous donations.

One semester into the new Reading for Pleasure project, Anderson says the students are "stoked" to request books. "It gets me excited," said the librarian. "We're 100 per cent doing it next semester." The kids seem to love the literacy program too with many of saying they "wish they had more time" to sit in the library and read. "I prefer a book to a screen. I'm actually working on my own (book). Reading on paper seems better," said Grade 8 student Samantha Clutesi.



MEET JEFFREY GOODE

We are pleased to share a feature article highlighting Jeffrey Goode, Assistant Director of Operations for Pacific Rim School District. This profile offers insight into his career path, leadership approach, and the important work happening behind the scenes to support our schools. Click the link below to read the full article in the magazine.

[OPS TALK FALL 2025](#)



MUSICAL AUDITIONS UNDERWAY

Brittney and Jeff Bortal, teachers at École Alberni Elementary, have begun student auditions for their Spring Musical of Disney's "Newsies". Over 50 excited and talented students have auditioned for acting parts as well as tech support and stage set up/take down. Here they pose with Brynn Poirier, Gr 6 French Immersion student, who is always eager and able to support behind the scenes.



INSIDE THE DISTRICT



LEARNING TOGETHER THROUGH PLAY

French Immersion Kindergarten students from Madame Maureen's class at École Alberni Elementary school practice numeracy skills using colourful Play-dough with their Gr 6/7 "big buddies" class.



SCIENCE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Emelie Comtois' Grade 5/6 class partnered with the Raincoast Education Society for science lessons that took students outside to learn on the land within their local biosphere.

From Ms. Comtois:

As a class we were learning and exploring how energy is transferred by living things in the natural environment by getting out to the ocean, forest, and intertidal zone. We started our learning by doing a plankton pull from Crab Dock to explore multicellular organisms & photosynthesis. Our next step was to hike the Rainforest Loop to look at trophic levels on land (& compare to the ocean). Lastly we did a beach seine from the intertidal zone in front of Tofino Sea Kayak to wrap up and see the interconnectedness in the environment with producers and consumers.

From Mrs. Stone:

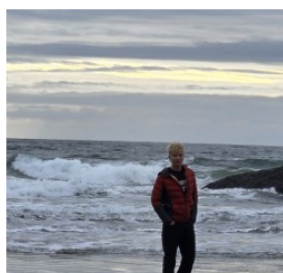
Our partnership with Rain Coast Education Society is a great way for staff to work together with community partners and get our students out learning in our local biosphere. Students get to learn from passionate educators who work collaboratively to plan engaging lessons that directly tie to the curriculum that support real world scenarios. This also helps students and staff find creative ways to showcase our core competency learning and supports our learning community in learning about their role and responsibilities in environmental stewardship in real world ways.

From one of our Grade 6 students Kira Lyons: " Rain Coast Education is so much fun! We get to learn outside and play fun games while learning! I've learned so much from Rain Coast , like how the moon affects the ocean and how to build a tent out of nature!"





INSIDE THE DISTRICT



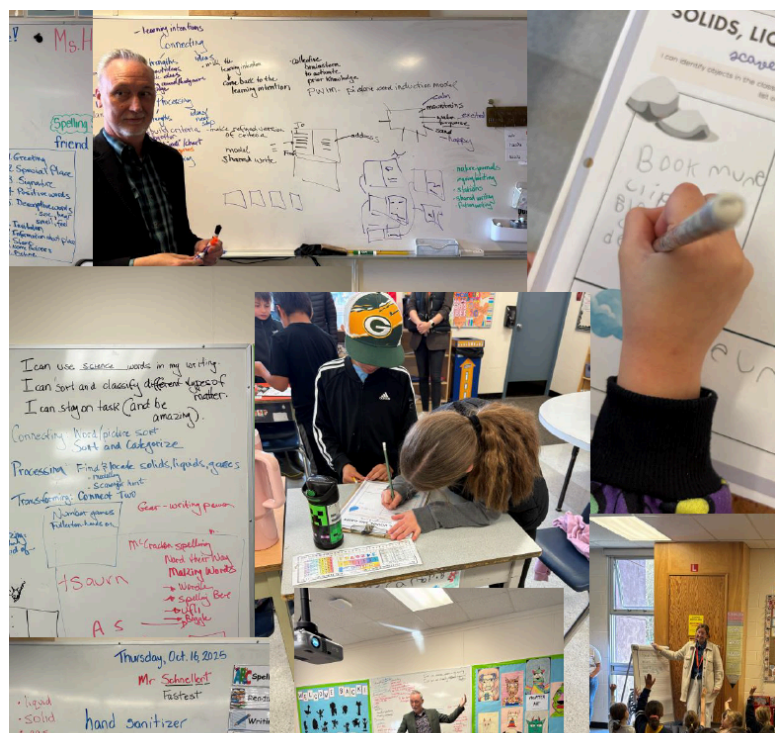
SAYING GOODBYE

As the first semester draws to a close, we'll be saying goodbye to several of our international students who are completing their time with us. While it's always hard to see them go, we hope they leave with lasting memories of their schools, homestay families, and the friendships they've built in our communities. We wish them every success in what comes next and hope our paths cross again in the future.

At the same time, we're excited to be welcoming new international students arriving for the 2nd semester from Germany, Japan, Austria and France. These students bring curiosity, resilience, and fresh perspectives into our classrooms, enriching school life through cultural exchange and shared learning.

International education reminds us of the courage it takes to step outside our comfort zones and to try something new, navigate unfamiliar places, and grow through experience. Our international students model that courage every day, and in doing so, they inspire us all to remain open, curious, and engaged in our ever-changing world.

Looking ahead, we continue to explore new international exchange opportunities and partnerships and will share updates as plans develop.



UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Pacific Rim School District hosted Leyton Schnellert in November for a two-day visit focused on elementary schools, with one day at Wickaninnish Community School and one day at Maquinna Elementary School, along with a special virtual session with Bamfield Community School staff.

Each day, one teacher hosted the preparation, teach, and debrief process. On Day One, 18 teachers participated, and on Day Two, 11 teachers participated. Collaborative planning and support were provided by the Learning Services Division, comprised of six district staff.

An upcoming three-day Leyton Schnellert visit is scheduled for February 18 to 20, with two days focused on secondary schools and one day focused on elementary schools. Alberni District Secondary School, Ucluelet Secondary School, and Wood Elementary School will be host schools in February, and select teachers from each school will attend.



SUPPORTING LITERACY

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR SUPPORT STAFF

District support staff gathered on the November 2025 Professional Development Day for a well-attended professional learning workshop focused on supporting students with literacy. The session brought together Educational Assistants and Indigenous Support Workers to explore practical strategies for building foundational literacy skills that will help strengthen student success with reading.

Participants learned about the components of reading and engaged in hands-on activities that could be used to develop a variety of specific reading skills. At the end of the workshop, participants left with comprehensive literacy toolkits filled with resources and materials to take back to their schools and use with students.



WHAT IS LITERACY?

Literacy involves speaking, reading, writing, listening, understanding and thinking. Developing strong literacy skills helps children to communicate more effectively with others, absorb information and acquire knowledge. Literacy skills enable students to become more active citizens in their classroom, school and community.

Help develop your child's literacy skills in everyday life by:

- Building oral language skills by playing and talking together
- Encouraging them to use speaking to communicate ideas and ask questions
- Practicing turn-taking when having conversations
- Storytelling through the sharing of memories and daily experiences
- Reading environmental print like street signs, business signs, packaging on products, etc.
- Engaging with a variety of texts including fiction and non-fiction texts, graphic novels, poems, novels, articles, etc.
- Using functional literacy skills to read manuals and recipes and to follow instructions





VOICES OF LEADERSHIP

SPOTLIGHT: SAĆUP LEADERSHIP GROUP

The saćup Indigenous Leadership group at École Alberni Elementary is a powerful example of how students can grow into confident, compassionate leaders when given meaningful opportunities to learn and share culture. Students from Kindergarten to Grade 7, in both the English and French Immersion programs have an opportunity to join. The group has evolved over time to include more school-based initiatives as lessons and experiences are guided by student voice. Students have shown dedication, pride, and responsibility as they learn nuučaahúł language, connect with local art, music and Indigenous leaders.

Group members chose the name saćup for their group name as they relate with spring salmon in the river, who are always moving, and always going home. They have a goal and stick with it, no matter what.

Grade 5 member, Madi, reflected on drumming and singing being her favorite activities to do with the saćup Leadership Group. Madi shared that when she gets to do this, she feels a “swish of emotions” and lit up a big smile saying she feels so happy when drumming and singing.

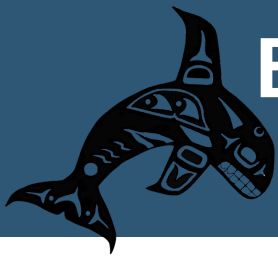
The group also shared that they are proud to be a part of school announcements and share a word of the week on Wednesdays. Sadie, second-year group member, was excited to share that she had just announced the word of the week, which was nuuk (meaning song).

“What inspires me most about the saćup Indigenous Leadership group is how much ownership the students take in their learning and leadership skills. They commit to weekly meetings with Ms Gina, our Indigenous Support Worker, and I, to improve their learning of nuučaahúł culture, and then they

share that knowledge with our whole school. Many of our group members bring previously learned cultural knowledge to the group and take it upon themselves to teach us. I'm always appreciative of that. They are currently taking the lead in choosing and gaining permission to use thirty local Indigenous art pieces and photos to be displayed in our hallways, including works by Tim Paul and Ray Sim. They are also helping to shape ideas for our school mural, which will be painted by Kerry Erickson. Our students are able to open assemblies in three languages: French, English, and nuučaahúł with personal introductions as well as territorial welcome and acknowledgement. Group members speak on announcements to teach the nuučaahúł word of the week, and they are now learning and practicing the district song našukʔaʔin, gifted to the district by Aaron Watts. The bravery it takes to speak in front of close to 400 people...we are so proud of them! Watching group students grow confident enough to teach others has been incredibly powerful, and their leadership has created a stronger sense of belonging, pride, and cultural respect across our school community.”

-Madame Pam Chandler, Indigenous Support Teacher and VP at École Alberni Elementary.





BUILDING CULTURE AND CONNECTION

OTHER UPDATES FROM THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:

Each year, the Indigenous Education Department gets an invitation to the Alberni District Secondary School Leadership class to support the class making gifts for the ADSS Totem Tournament. In a previous year, a mini cedar basket was made with a thank you tag which read in the nuučaʔ language "making every basket count", a quote provided by a nuučaʔ elder, Pat Charleson Sr. This year, District Culture & Language Worker, Shelley Frank, supported students with making beaded wristlet keychains. "There was so much patience and excitement brought from the students in Jennifer Anderson's Junior Leadership Class. The uniqueness and creativity in their beaded wristlet keychain designs were amazing. This opportunity has opened doors to finding a peaceful hobby through Indigenous Culture." – Shelley Frank, District Culture and Language Worker

On the West Coast, in the ʔaḥaḥuuti of ʔaḥuukʔiʔaḥ and yuutuʔiʔaḥ, some of the district busses have been decorated with some new artwork that was commissioned from students for the purpose of bus decal magnets as route identifiers. Students, Nia and Jaysen, from Ucluelet Secondary School created these lovely designs that will now indicate certain bus routes. This has been a wonderfully creative collaboration opportunity between the Operations Department, Indigenous Education Department and Ucluelet Secondary students. ʔuušʔakšʔiʔeʔic Nia, Jaysen and Ms. Shannon McWhinney for your support and involvement in getting these bus decal designs on the busses!



Did you know?

RIBBON SHIRT DAY

Since 2023, National Ribbon Shirt Day has been held every January 4 in honour of Isabella Kulak, ribbon skirts, and Indigenous identity and culture. In 2022, 10-year-old Kulak, from Cote First Nation, faced criticism for wearing a ribbon skirt to a formal school day when a staff member criticized the skirt as not formal enough. After Isabella spoke up and shared her story, a wave of support for her and her ribbon skirt spread across Canada. The response was so strong that Manitoba Senator, Mary Jane McCallum, introduced a bill to observe January 4 as Ribbon Skirt Day, which passed into law December 2022. Ribbon Skirt Day encourages Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people across Canada to wear their traditional regalia to honor their culture and showcase the strength, pride, and identity that these garments symbolize.

National Ribbon Skirt Day, January 4

To connect with the District Indigenous Education Department, contact Michelle Colyn, Manager of Indigenous Language and Culture:
mcolyn@sd70.bc.ca
250-720-2776





CARVING CONNECTION

At the Eighth Avenue Learning Centre traditional Nuu-chah-nulth carving is playing a powerful role in reconnecting youth with learning, culture, and a sense of purpose, as a hands-on carving project is transforming Kristin Russell's classroom into a space of identity and belonging. Through the rhythms of carving—design, measuring, shaping, and storytelling—students are finding renewed motivation to attend school and envision a future grounded in both cultural strength and personal achievement.

Teacher Kristen Russell and her Land Based Learning class are working alongside master carver Gordon Dick, whose commitment to mentorship is shaping the next generation of artists. Gordon says,

"I wanted to give back to the community and mentor youth in art, design, and carving. Connecting with and inspiring the next generation of artists is important to me. Providing a reason for some youth to come to school and find connection is important to me. It is heartwarming to be able to show so many youth how to carve and to help them understand that carving is a part of who we are as a people."

His words reflect a deeper purpose—using art not only as a skill, but as a pathway to identity, pride, and perseverance.

Students from Eighth Avenue Learning Center in Kristin Russell's Land Based Learning classroom have been building toward this carving project for several months, developing the skills and confidence needed to host and participate in a meaningful carving experience. Through art and design-based activities, Russell has woven together learning standards from Language Arts, Social Studies, Art and Design, and BC First Peoples studies, preparing students for the culminating activity of the first semester. Ms. Russell believes, "...this is an incredible opportunity for the students to see their learning connect to real life. The red cedar that the students are carving is a teacher as well. When the wood fractures, the students must pivot. When a design needs to change because something goes wrong, we figure out how to fix it. The project is very exciting, but the process so far has resulted in many different learning opportunities and some great opportunities for my students to develop their sense of pride. Some of my students are so excited about this project that they come to school early!"

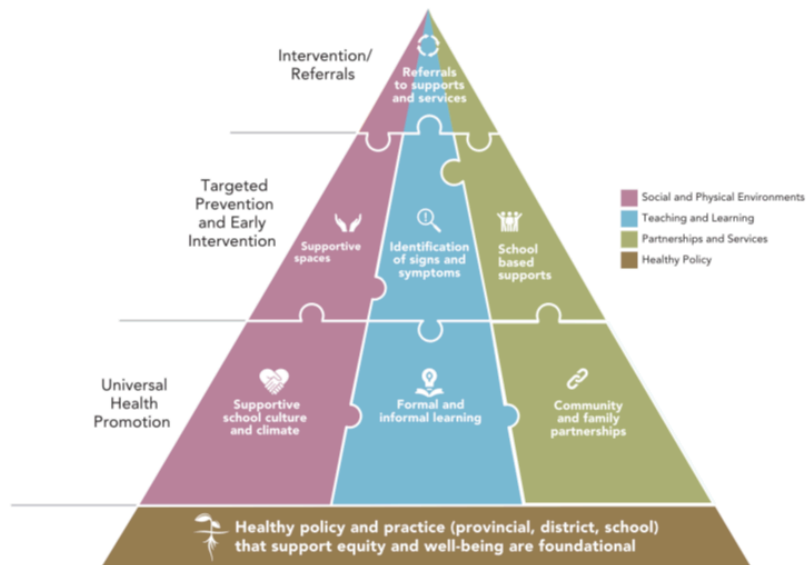
The Eighth Avenue Learning Center carving project will be completed at the end of this semester. Students in Ms. Russell's class will be planning and hosting an unveiling ceremony as part of their action based learning program for semester two.



BC CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL HEALTH PROMOTION & SCHOOLS COACHING

Pacific Rim School District has partnered with the BC Children's Hospital Thriving Schools Coaching Team to take part in a year-long evaluation focused on mental health and wellbeing in Pacific Rim schools.

Mental Health and Well-being in School Communities



ABOUT THE COACHING PARTNERSHIP

This coaching opportunity is led by the district's Manager of Mental Health and Wellness and supported by a small working group.

The action plan for the current year focuses on consulting with a variety of partners, including students and staff, to better understand wellbeing across our schools. The information gathered through this process will be used to develop a district-wide Mental Health Framework. Once completed, the framework will be shared widely and will help guide how mental health resources are allocated over the next several years.

Wellness initiatives continue throughout the year and include Wellness Walks, Lunch-N-Learns, and school-based professional development events. Friday afternoon checkouts at EALC also provide staff with opportunities to connect with mental health supports before the weekend.

In addition, the District Wellness Committee continues to promote and monitor the Aaphii Awards Program, encouraging staff to recognize and nominate colleagues for exceptional work and contributions.





LEARNING TOGETHER AS EDUCATORS

Learning Bursts: Professional Learning for Educators

This year, the District offered a series of Learning Bursts—short, focused professional learning opportunities designed to support teachers in their classroom instruction. These voluntary sessions took place after school and were offered in both in-person and virtual formats, providing flexible access to professional learning.

Learning Bursts focused on literacy and numeracy, with sessions exploring topics such as high-yield math routines, math fact fluency, the power of read-alouds, and literacy strategies for intermediate and middle years classrooms. Each session emphasized practical, classroom-ready ideas that teachers could use right away with their students.

Approximately 50 teachers from across the district participated, reflecting a strong interest in collaborative, meaningful professional learning.

Learning Bursts will continue to be an important way the District supports ongoing teacher learning and strong instructional practices that benefit all students.

Secondary Professional Learning Community

One of the District's key priorities is building strong opportunities for collaboration among our secondary educators. In November and January, teachers from all three secondary schools came together as part of a growing Secondary Professional Learning Community.

Although participants represent a wide range of subject areas, experience levels, and backgrounds, they share a common commitment: working together to support student success. Through collaboration and shared inquiry, educators explored ways to enhance learning experiences and outcomes for students within their unique school contexts.

This professional learning community will continue to meet throughout the year, providing space for secondary educators to learn from one another, explore promising practices, and support one another in their work.

Teachers shared their appreciation for the opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the District, noting the positive energy, enthusiasm, and sense of shared purpose that emerged from working together.



“ I am feeling optimistic and looking forward to sharing ideas with like-minded colleagues. ”



SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM



SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM: EVERYONE BELONGS AT THE TABLE

Across the Pacific Rim School District, the School Meal Program continues to provide students with access to nourishing food each school day. Supported by provincial funding, community partnerships, and local staff, the program helps reduce barriers to learning, supports student well-being, and strengthens school communities. The program is designed to be welcoming and accessible, so students can get food when they need it.

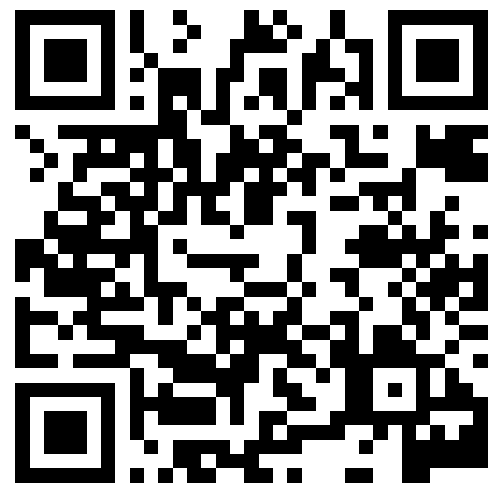
Stay Connected

See what's on the menu and meet the people behind the program. Follow **Pacific Rim School Foodies**

on Instagram and Facebook for photos, updates, and stories from schools across the district.



Learn More



KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FOR 26/27 SCHOOL YEAR
OPENS FEB 2, 26

ALL ABOUT ME

KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION FORM

Help us get to know your child. What you share helps schools welcome your child and support a smooth, caring transition into Kindergarten.

Share your child's interests and strengths

Tell us about their feelings and needs

Quick and easy to complete online!

If your child attends an early care and learning program, an educator may also share info, w/ family consent, to support your child's welcoming start in Kindergarten.

Fill out All About Me form here:
<https://forms.office.com/r/DZdR6rK78d>

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR OPENS FEBRUARY 2, 2026 FOR CHILDREN BORN IN 2021.

The graphic below walks through the steps to register your child, including:

- Registering at your neighbourhood catchment school
- How to get and submit the registration form
- Completing the All About Me form to support your child's transition

You can find full details, links to forms, and support information here:

- 👉 <https://www.pacificrimchildren.ca/kindergarten> and here
- 👉 <https://www.sd70.bc.ca/registration>

If you have questions or would like support with registration, our Early Years team is here to support you. Contact information is available here: <https://www.pacificrimchildren.ca/overview>

All About Me Form:
[All About Me](#)

Pacific Rim School District

Kindergarten Registration opens February 2, 2026

Starting Kindergarten is an important step. Registering early helps us prepare welcoming classrooms and supports.

How to register

1

Catchment School

Register at your neighbourhood catchment school. Use the School Locator if needed found here: sd70.bc.ca/registration Out-of-catchment requests are considered after Feb 28 if space is available.

2

Online or pick up

Registration forms can be found online at: sd70.bc.ca/registration or picked up at your catchment school

3

Email or in person

Email the completed form with a copy of your child's birth certificate, Care Card, and proof of address. Or bring the completed form and documents to your catchment school to register in person.

4

All About Me Form

Families are invited to complete the All About Me form. This helps schools get to know your child and support a smooth, caring transition. Fill it out online here: <https://forms.office.com/r/DZdR6rK78d> or pick up a paper copy when you register in person

FOR
CHILDREN
BORN IN
2021