

FOCUS

On Learning

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*View FOL
magazine online!*





Leslie Lambie
Superintendent & CEO

Despite a later than usual start, there has been no shortage of teacher effort to engage students in high quality, relevant and interesting work.

Science students at Tumbler Ridge Secondary have been involved in the real world work of developing a fish farm, integrating the development of science knowledge and processes with the skills required to start and run a successful business. Several teachers and a significant number of students began the first year of an Inquiry Based Learning model at Chetwynd Secondary School.

Several elementary schools have been involved in a pilot to explore the Language of Learning to help students better understand how they learn. They continue to focus on developing the problem solving and communication skills necessary for success in life as well as in school. Visit the District website to view the video about this initiative at Little Prairie Elementary. McLeod, Don Titus, Parkland, Moberly Lake and Rolla are engaged in similar work.

A focus on Career Education continued at secondary schools and many students participated in the Regional Skills Canada competition hosted at Northern Lights College. Grade 7 students were included in a 'Try a Trade' experience. Students at several elementary schools were able to expand horizons thanks to the new Elementary Career Coordinator. A highlight was the Pouce Coupe and Devereaux Elementary go-cart design and construction project, which integrated lots of math and science. This engaging project ended up in a high-energy race day at Devereaux, with a top speed of 27 kms.

We hope this magazine will provide a satisfying peek into the ever-expanding array of opportunities that engage students of all ages!

Leslie Lambie, Superintendent & CEO

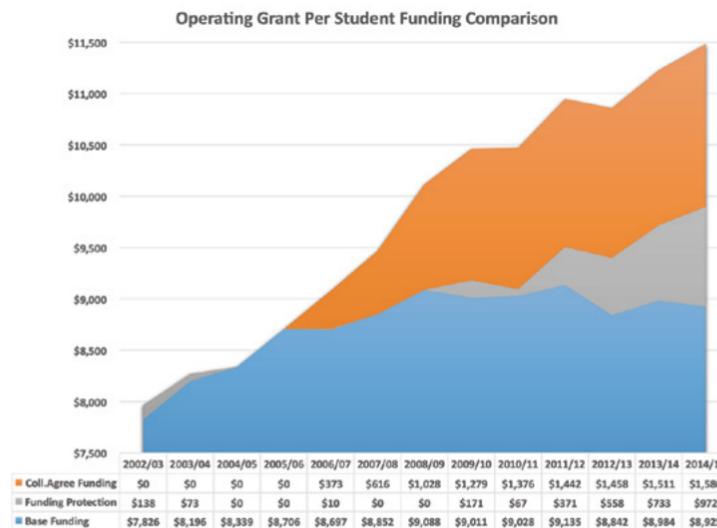
As a graduate of School District No. 59, I am excited to take on my new role as Secretary Treasurer. I obtained my Bachelor of Commerce from Athabasca University and my CA designation with a local accounting office. I appreciate the continued support of our past Secretary Treasurer, Gerry Slykhuis. The learning curve over the last six months has been steep but I continue to look forward to the challenge.

The recent government announcement requiring savings of \$29 million in 2015/16, and a further \$25 million in 2016/17 means School District No. 59 must find savings of \$246,997 in the 2015/16 budget and \$212,928 the following year. We are committed to finding savings that will not impact educational service in the classroom.

With the decline in enrolment, the District has benefited from increased funding protection resulting in an increased per student funding. The extra funding has allowed the District to invest in literacy, Inquiry Based Learning, numeracy and careers projects. However, we are expecting our enrolment to level off resulting in

the loss of funding protection and a funding decrease of \$580,000 per year over the next few years. With the targeted administrative savings, decrease in transportation funding and loss of funding protection the District has some big hurdles ahead. The next few years are sure to be challenging.

Melissa Panoulis, Secretary Treasurer



OUR VISION

Collaborating, outcomes oriented communities of learners.

Expanded learning opportunities for students.

Delivery models based on best knowledge and practice.

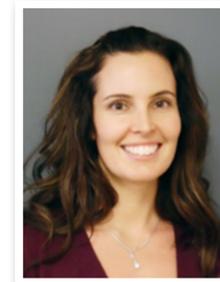
OUR MISSION

To enable each individual to realize his or her full personal potential.

Electoral Area I



Andrea Smith
Chetwynd & Rural Area

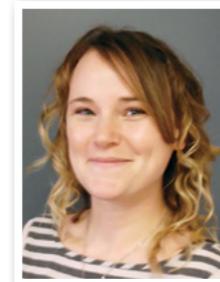


Crystal Hilton
Chetwynd & Rural Area

Electoral Area III



Richard Powell
Board Chair, Dawson Creek



Tamara Ziemer
Board Vice-Chair, Dawson Creek

Electoral Area II



Sherry Berringer
Tumbler Ridge

Electoral Area IV



Wayne Ezeard
Pouce Coupe & Rural Area



Nicole Soontiens
Rural Area Surrounding

While there will be tough decisions facing our Board this term in regards to budget restraints and other provincial factors, we have so much to be proud of and much to look forward to. This past year we have been able to support programs within the District, such as the primary literacy project and the dual credit programs. This will have a lasting positive impact on student outcomes. We continue to see many examples of how our students are engaged

in their learning. We have all of our teachers, support staff and senior staff to thank for their efforts to provide an education that is meaningful and relevant to our students. We are excited to share some of these examples in this issue of Focus on Learning. We look forward to seeing all our new and returning students in the 2015-2016 school year!

Tamara Ziemer, Board Vice-Chair

INFORMED PARENTS HAVE THE STRONGEST VOICE

I get asked a lot "What is a District PAC?" We are the collective voice of all the Parent Advisory Councils (PAC) in School District No. 59 and we meet once a month. This is an excellent opportunity to have open discussions about matters relating to education in the District. We assist parents to form PACs and talk about any concerns the PACs have and how these concerns can be solved. We promote parent education with discussion and informative speakers on the subjects and issues that impact our children; everything from the cleaning supplies to mental health to the Aboriginal Ed program and more. We directly communicate with District personnel and other organisations in our community and province on common interests.

District PAC is a member of the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils. BCCPAC advocates for

the success of all students. Becoming a member of BCCPAC ensures the District PAC has the opportunity to vote on important issues affecting our children's education. For the 2014/2015 school year there was no cost to PACs to join BCCPAC as the District PAC paid the cost for each school. This year District PAC will send two delegates to BCCPAC's AGM. This is the perfect way to give a northern voice to BCCPAC and to network with other districts about our common goals and challenges.

I would like to send a warm and welcoming invitation to all parents to join the conversation by participating in the District PAC.

Kauri Taylor-Cook, District PAC Chair



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 59

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We invite your comments, story ideas, photos and questions.
Please contact Keith Maurer at 250-782-8571.

ON THE COVER:
Xavier Reeve of Pouce Coupe
Elementary tried trades based
skills helping build go-carts for a
Project Based Learning module.



Voice & Choice

Inquiry Based Learning Pilot Takes Off at CSS

If you visit the Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) wing at Chetwynd Secondary School, things don't look all that different from the rest of the school. But take a moment and you will notice some students huddled over large sheets of coloured paper, engaged in an intense discussion. Down the hall another group is maneuvering a homemade machine of some kind as a boy goes by with a tray of fresh baked bread and the sound of someone singing wafts from a room nearby. This wing of the school has access to all the labs—science, foods, carpentry, metal, art—as well as computer labs and classrooms in order to provide the broadest range of tools and resources.

After meetings with parents and students to introduce and educate about Inquiry Based Learning, Chetwynd Secondary School (CSS) started the IBL pilot program in September 2014 with the students who chose to join, about half of those who were eligible.

So what is this IBL? Shari Henry, vice principal at CSS, described it as being "...about learning how to learn. Rather than receiving lessons in the traditional chalk and talk method, students gather, analyse and evaluate information through the process of investigation and questioning, reforming their knowledge as a project and then presenting it. So they are teaching themselves really."

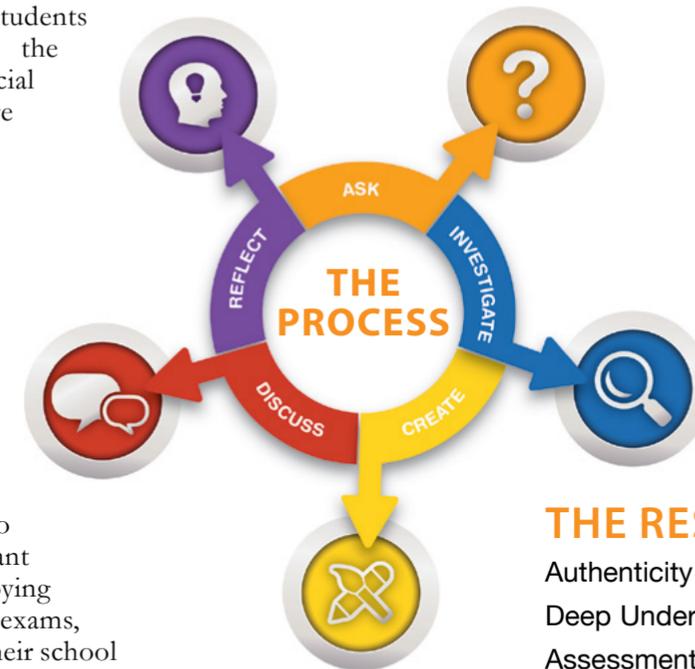
At the heart of the inquiry process is curiosity. It grabs kids' interest and engages them in hands-on, minds-on, research based learning. IBL also fosters critical thinking and problem solving skills, creativity, self-regulation and collaboration, all skills and abilities in high demand in the 21st Century.

"Using the provincial curriculum and outcome requirements, the teacher guides students to create projects that will lead them to the required learning," added Mrs. Henry. "The teacher becomes a guide and mentor as the students come up with a question that will guide their inquiry. They create a project, which requires them to put their new knowledge in their

own words—this takes real understanding and learning—and then present their project to other students and the community and so affirm their learning. We call it voice and choice learning because the students have both a voice and a choice in how they will learn."

It's not for everyone. Some are more comfortable in a traditional setting and for those students that option is still available. After attending the IBL information sessions, about half the Grade 8 and 9 students and their parents chose the IBL approach. English, social studies and sciences are taught in IBL style, while math is still taught in the traditional style. At the end of the pilot year, most of the IBL participants are enthusiastic about carrying on next year, a few look forward to returning to the traditional classroom, and many more are asking to join. Parents are also excited to see their formerly reluctant students engaged, enjoying school, and doing well on exams, some for the first time in their school careers.

For teachers and administrators, IBL is challenging. "It's more work and it's challenging to learn a new way," said Mrs. Henry, "but when you see the kids dive in and take on these projects with such energy, becoming so engaged in learning, it's exactly what we always hoped teaching could be and just what anyone would want for the students—an education experience that feels exciting, interesting and adventurous. The fact that they leave with additional skills that will serve them so well in their lives after school is the icing on the cake." ♦



IBL & PBL

What's the difference?

IBL is a student-centred, active learning approach that focuses on a question, critical thinking and problem solving.

PBL focuses on developing a product or creation that leads students to learn specific outcomes.

The **IBL/PBL** approach has been developed over many decades. Research and observation has shown students learn far more, with more enjoyment and retention when they solve a problem or address an issue that interests and has meaning for them using all their abilities; physical, mental and social.

THE RESULTS

- Authenticity
- Deep Understanding
- Assessment
- Appropriate Use of Technology
- Going Beyond the School
- Connecting with Experts
- Active Exploration
- Performances of Understanding
- Elaborated Communication
- Ethical Citizenship
- Student Successes

KEY COMPONENTS OF PBL

Significant Content: Projects focus on important knowledge and skills that come from the standards and key concepts at the heart of the academic subject.

21st Century Competencies:

Students build skills valuable in today's world, such as problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity and innovation. These skills are explicitly taught and assessed.

In-Depth Inquiry: Students engage in an extended, rigorous process of asking questions, using resources and developing answers.

Driving Question: Projects are focused using an open-ended question that students understand and find intriguing.

Need to Know: Students see the need to gain knowledge, understand concepts and apply skills in order to answer the Driving Question and complete the project.

Voice and Choice: Guided by their teacher, students make choices about the projects, how they will work and how they will use their time.

Critique and Revision: Students give and receive feedback on the quality of their work and may make revisions or take the project further.

Public Audience: Students present their work to people other than their teacher and classmates.

Thanks to the Buck Institute for Education for the Key Components of Project Based Learning.



BECOMING an agent OF CHANGE

PROJECT BASED LEARNING AT CENTRAL CAMPUS

The classroom is abuzz. There are guests in the room and crackers, cheese and fruit have been set out in a welcoming gesture. The walls of Mr. Assigbe's Grade 8 and 9 classroom are lined with groups of students standing in front of stations with large posters on the walls and some with apparatus on the tables as well.

Today is presentation day, one of the key elements in Project Based Learning (PBL). On presentation day, student teams present to their peers and guests, proving their learning by teaching it to others.

The project began weeks ago when the class first discussed the learning outcomes they were aiming for and came up with a question and a project that would get them to the intended outcomes. Students began to research and formulate their projects. For this learning unit, the goal was to look at the value of diversity in society through the lens of special needs along with developing skills for 21st Century learning. The guiding questions were "How can we become an agent of change?" and "Does diversity strengthen or weaken society?"

Student teams chose a special need to focus on and worked together to learn all they could about the issue. They translated their learning into their own words in the form of a pamphlet and illustrated poster about the disability. Each team devised a way of allowing viewers to experience something of what it is like to have a disability such as blindness, deafness or a mental illness.



Top Row: Alex Renneberg, Colby Degrace, Riley Comer, Simon Ramsey, Colby Bumstead, Tyler Chowace, Spencer Newman.
Middle Row: Chloe Shea, Ashley Wangler, Gabriel Tanner.
Bottom Row: Sawyer Strasky, Raeann Batt, Felina Squires, Emma Wendt, Taylor Dutka, Nathan Copeland.

At one station, you were asked to put on a blindfold then given common objects to hold and identify. It was surprising how difficult it was to recognise some of the objects. At another station, you were asked to put on a pair of noise eliminating earphones and then try to follow a conversation. Impossible. Gender identity, depression and other mental illnesses, disabilities of the mind, and learning disabilities were also covered.

Throughout the weeks of discovery and creative thinking, each student kept a journal of their reflections on Project Based Learning—a first time experience

for many in the class—as well as feelings and observations about living with a disability. Many expressed compassion and appreciation for the determination, perseverance and courage those with disabilities need to manage daily activities others take for granted.

The morning swept by, the students were enthusiastic about sharing the things they'd learned and in the end, all agreed that diversity is a benefit to society and we live a better, richer life when we know, work with and understand others who are different from ourselves. ♦

Mike Bernier, MLA for Peace River South



The rapid advancement of technology has changed the way our world operates. The Ministry of Education and School District No.59 are working to ensure our education system keeps up and better meets the needs of all students.

Through initiatives such as Hands On and Project Based Learning, students experience a more flexible, personalized curriculum that gives them the knowledge and competencies to succeed in tomorrow's world. Increased engagement ensures our students develop the skills to use technology effectively, both in school and in life.



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Something Fishy

at Tumbler Ridge Secondary

There's something fishy going on in the Grade 11 science and technology class at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School. Quite literally fishy, as their one and only assignment this year is to raise 1000 goldfish!

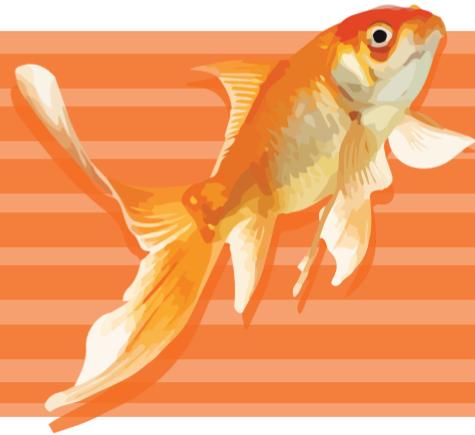
The end goal is to raise healthy fish in the most economical way possible. That means achieving low mortality, a high level of health and a low feed conversion rate. "This is what all fish farms use to measure success," said teacher Mark Deeley. "You put in too much food, you're wasting your money, but if you don't put in enough the fish start to have health problems."

This isn't a typical class project. "This is a new learning experience for students," said Deeley.

you fail a test it just affects you. In this course, if you don't feed the fish and a hundred fish die, it affects the entire farm, just like it would in a company."

Student Nathan Henderson said the concept of working together as a class and not depending on the teacher to give him all the information is one of the biggest things he's going to take away from this class. "I've learned a lot about how to work as a team to solve problems. In other classes, they give you numbers that you just plug into formulae, but here you're learning skills. You're doing things that are required in the real world."

But that's where the business metaphor breaks down, because the ultimate goal is not about producing the fish and selling them for a profit. "The key is



"In a regular class if you fail a test it just affects you. In this course, if you don't feed the fish and a hundred fish die, it affects the entire farm, just like it would in a company."

"It's something they haven't done before. They're going to be working almost as if it's a company. We want full engagement and ownership from the students. It's about real world skills."

"To make sure the fish are growing as quickly as possible", said Deeley, "this will be far more hands-on than just your standard goldfish in a bowl. We have to handle them, weigh them and grade them," he said. "That means we need to sort them by size so all the big fish are in one tank, all the little fish are in another, and all the medium fish are in a third tank. You have to do that several times through the process."

While there are no tests, the kids are certainly going to be measured on how well they perform said Deeley and functioning as part of a team with a set of goals is paramount. "In a regular class if

the kids are learning, thinking for themselves, showing up on time, doing well and being part of a team," said Deeley.

The class started with goldfish as a testing ground, not just to figure out the science and technology behind it, but also to see how well the kids did, and how enthusiastic they were.

And the response? "It's phenomenal," Deeley. "I've got to kick them out of class every day." Members of the general public can also check out how the fish are doing at fishfarm.trss.sd59.bc.ca, though the feed will not be live during school hours. ♦

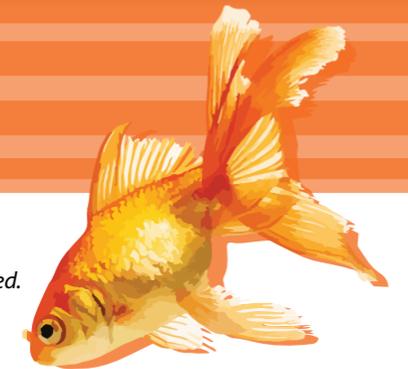
Check out the progress of the fish here



Above: Braiden Chalifoux checks out the goldfish the day after the first batch of fish arrived.

Below Left: Karissa Alyward paints a sign for the fish farm.

Below Right: Braiden and Tianna Proctor measure out wood for a frame.





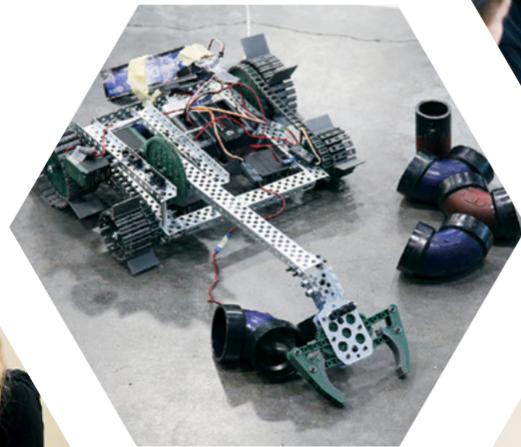
TRY A TRADE

Skills Canada and Women in Trades Day BIG SUCCESS

Hundreds of students, parents and teachers from three school districts plus a few dozen college students and a large contingent of organizers, chaperones and judges filled the Aircraft Maintenance Hangar at Northern Lights College Dawson Creek Campus for the Peace Region Skills Canada Competition. Added to the program this year was Try a Trades Day and an event called Women in Trades for girls in Grades 8, 9 and 10.

The January event was co-hosted by School District No. 59, Northern Lights College and ITA (Industry Training Authority) and included competitions for everyone from Grade 6 to college level in a wide range of trades and technologies. College students competed in carpentry, esthetics and hairdressing. Grade 6 to 9 students took each other on in Lego robotics, gravity vehicle racing and spaghetti bridge building. Grades 10 to 12 students participated in automotive service, cabinetmaking, graphic design, TV/video production, hairdressing, public speaking, job interview, robotics and welding competitions. Young women and other students had the chance to hear from a panel of women professionals representing cosmetology, power engineering, carpentry, electrical, oil and gas operator, commercial transport apprentice, instrumentation technician and baking.

“We brought together students from School Districts Nos. 59, 60 and 81—that’s the South Peace, the North Peace and Fort Nelson—for a day of competition and the chance to learn more about and try their hand at a wide range of trades occupations,” said School District No. 59 teacher and event co-organizer, Jamie Maxwell. “The chance to climb into the small airplanes and helicopters was a popular bonus.” Winners went to Vancouver in April to compete in the provincial competition. ♦



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SKILLS DRILLS

IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

If you ask Mrs. Campbell's class how many trades they have tried this past year the list will impress you. Besides welding, electrical, and agriculture mechanic, her students have tried graphic design, carpentry, painting, auto mechanics and heavy-duty mechanics.

Thanks to funding from the Ministry of Education, Laura Craig, Elementary Career Coordinator, has been working with teachers to introduce elementary students to careers in the trades and technical fields. Ms. Craig has brought skilled trades people as well as professionals in careers such as health care into the schools. She has also helped organise several hands on learning activities and the kids are loving it. "They really enjoy getting their hands on things. They come alive when they're given the chance to use tools and be creative in designing projects," said Ms. Craig.

Throughout the year discussions about careers have been tied into many classroom activities. A Canalta class started the year asking "Who am I?" That question led the class to look at their own personal attributes, their family history, cell structure and DNA. This all led to

a morning with an operating room nurse, a public health nurse and an environmental health care officer.

"I've been so impressed by the professionals who have come to the schools to help us demonstrate and talk to the students about their work and careers," said Ms. Craig. "Everyone is so enthusiastic and helpful. There is a great energy that gets going between the kids and the adults while working together to complete a project."

"Everyone is so enthusiastic and helpful. There is a great energy that gets going between the kids and the adults while working together to complete a project."

Mrs. Campbell's Devereaux Elementary class had the chance to tour the trades facilities at Northern Lights College where staff and college students organised a full day of hands on activities. In addition, they went home with mini-catapults they built in the carpentry shop and a personalised metal nameplate they had welded. Students also got up close and personal with some helicopters and airplanes.

"We're trying to make the connection between the things they are learning—science, math, even social studies and English—and how these lead to, and are part of careers they will choose as young adults," said Craig. "We want them to realize and be thinking about how that thing they love doing, whether that's building a tool box, designing a poster or creating an experiment, can lead to a career they will naturally enjoy." ♦



This Page: Ms. Craig and helpers spent a couple of days at McLeod Elementary assisting students who were building an outdoor classroom for the school.
Top Left: Ayla Dunbar and Jordan Graff with drills, ready and eager to go.
Left: Brook Joyce uses a jigsaw while Elizabeth Benterud and Laura Craig give her a hand.
Right: Shaye Fogarty learns how to use a circular saw while Mr. Booker supervises.



ON YOUR MARK... GET SET... GO-CARTS!

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Scale and Measurement: Students learned the math skills needed to make scale model designs and then measure, cut, drill and assemble a simple machine.

Writing: Teams wrote proposal letters to apply for materials and expenses, and kept a reflective journal throughout the months-long project.

Social Responsiveness: After critiquing each other's concepts and combining ideas, student teams worked together to design and build go-carts.

Planning: Working in teams, students laid out the process of designing and building a go-cart.

Perseverance: Starting with the question, 'How can we show perseverance?' students came up with the idea of a project that would take most of the year to complete. To succeed, they had to stay focused and show perseverance.



Go-carts, the kind without a motor you build at home, were all the rage in the 50s. When the Grade 5, 6 and 7 students at Pouce Coupe and Devereaux Elementary Schools get theirs on the track, there may be a comeback.

But back in the 50s kids weren't building go-carts at school. So what's going on here? It's called Project Based Learning and it is a method of teaching academic subjects together with social and learning skills using hands-on projects.

Making go-carts teaches many things: math for one, as well as creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and even something about future career options through the use of design and woodworking tools

(see side bar). But their starting point was the intention to learn the personal skill of perseverance.

In October, the class decided to devise a project they could use to learn perseverance. They divided into teams and began by drawing the most fabulous go-cart they could imagine. With a single time block per week, it was clear this would be a yearlong project requiring focus and perseverance to complete. Using their sketches, students built prototypes out of fruit, candy, recycled boxes and other stuff, and very quickly figured out what might and might not work. By January, teams had drafted scale drawings to work from and the building began.

It was a cold winter day when Brad Booker, District VP, Careers and Experiential ED, and Laura Craig, Elementary Career Coordinator, arrived at Pouce Coupe Elementary with lumber and tools. With plans in hand and after a safety review, it was no time before teams had transferred their measurements and were operating skill saws and drills. One week later, the gym had been converted to a wood working shop and the teams were ready to assemble their go-carts.

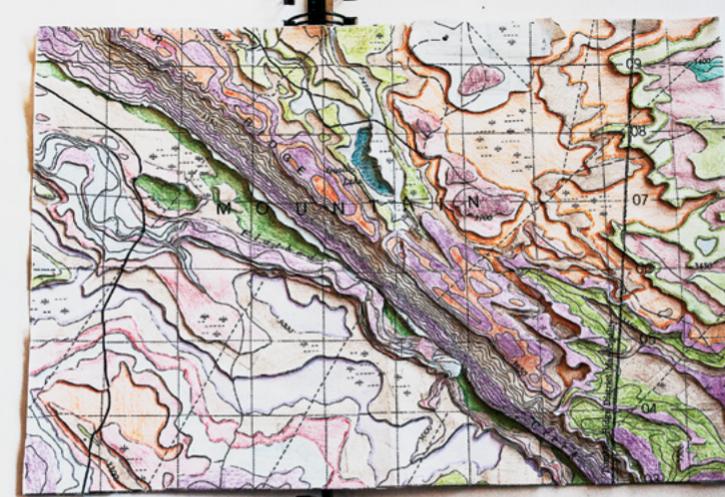
Their carts now complete with wheels and a rope for steering, and after studying hand signals and the rules of the road and taking a written test, team members piloted each other through the cones on the driving range at one end of the gym to earn a licence to operate a go-cart.

Meanwhile, over at Devereaux, the same process, the same outcome and a competition was in the making. Come April, everyone was revving their engines, waiting for the all-clear: good weather and an afternoon of racing. That fine day in April finally arrived. The bus from Pouce Coupe Elementary brought students and go-carts to Devereaux School. The police arrived from Dawson Creek and closed off the road! Helmeted riders mounted their carts and the races were on.

Education provides rewards of many kinds; an understanding of the world and how it works; the means to earn a living; exposure to ideas and other ways of looking at things. And with Project Based Learning, it can provide a lot of fun on a sunny day. ♦



Above: Race day at Devereaux with students from Pouce Coupe Elementary and Devereaux Elementary.
Bottom Left: Payon Lavalee, Alexander Reschny and Inde Baran with Laura Craig operate the drill press.
Bottom Right: Caleb Grant, Brennan Clunk and Dayton Gebhart take their go-cart for a test spin.



“Having the walking path and the creek running through the city gives it a different feel—it’s cool!”



Video
Haven't heard about Project Based Learning? Check out the video, **Learning for Life**. Find out what it's all about.

check out www.sd59.bc.ca

Project Based Learning is Learning for Life

Website
Check our out user-friendly website! Let us know what you think — we'd love to hear from you.

KNOWLEDGE flows through ART

A fresh perspective on the meaning of water

One way to think outside the box is to change how the box is made. Students in the Grade 10 Planning class at Central Campus had the opportunity to do just that by using an art project to learn about water.

Local artist, Tabitha Logan, and teacher, Lorraine Beggs started with a collaborative piece, something that non-artists could easily join in with and make their contribution. The students brainstormed words that related to water and used felt fabric to illustrate the words they then pulled from a hat.

“The group explored one concept where each student added a small piece of felt to a larger collaborative work,” said Logan. “The students were in a circle and as the image changed we moved the students around the circle and asked

how a shift in perspective altered how they understood the work.”

The next step to a completely different perspective was creating an interactive map online. Students mapped the boundaries of the Kiskatinaw watershed and learned what kind of activities were going on in the watershed such as oil and gas, forestry and agriculture. “They were able to use Google maps to zoom in and find where they lived in relation to our watersheds and to reinforce their direct relationship to the watershed,” said Logan.

One of the learning outcomes for this Planning 10 project is to make connections to community and career paths. Chelsea Mottishaw, a Water Technician with the City of Dawson Creek who presented to the class, was a good example of both connection and career.

Above: Aselyn Switzer and Kaleigh Wheeler thought that using art to learn a subject “...allows you to look at things differently. We learned what a watershed was and how it works.”

Previous Page: Journals were an important resource for developing ideas and pushing the boundaries of understanding water.

Top: Sierra Schram beautifully mapped the contours of a watershed.

Bottom Left: Ellie Fraser illustrated relationships with water using portraiture.

Bottom Right: Aselyn Switzer uses a water drop to illustrate all aspects of water.

“Water is life. It plays a crucial role in health and food production, and is important to work and recreation. We are working with youth to help them understand where their tap water comes from, where it goes, and what can they do to positively impact its quality,” said Mottishaw. “This is why the City is focused on working with students to help them better understand their water systems.”

Logan believes that once you build an understanding of a subject the next step is action. “The project becomes about how you relate to issues around water use and how to care for it. Students can then make a choice. Are you just a bystander or do you want to gain some understanding and get involved?”

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KEY WORDS TO LEARN BY:

- Curiosity:** Students are able to use their natural desire to learn as their motivation to complete a project.
- Collaboration:** Students are able to work effectively with diverse groups and exercise flexibility in making compromises to achieve common goals.
- Creativity:** Students are able to generate and improve on original ideas in cooperation with others.
- Communication:** Students are able to communicate effectively across multiple media and for various purposes.
- Critical Thinking:** Students are able to analyze, evaluate and understand complex systems and apply strategies to solve problems.

BUILDING A LADDER TO SUCCESS

The Language of Learning helps create confident learners

It's often easier to take small steps towards learning when you are trying to understand big ideas. At Little Prairie Elementary, a group of Grade 3 and 7 students took huge strides in their learning when they built the steps themselves.

"We worked together on a project to learn how to become 21st Century Learners," said Coach Mentor Dianne Bassendowski. "At Little Prairie we want the kids to take ownership of their learning by using the Language of Learning."

Bassendowski describes 21st Century Learning as a big umbrella. Under that umbrella the kids use key words and ideas found in Language of Learning to guide their learning. "It's about learning how to collaborate, how to communicate, how to use critical thinking, how to use their curiosity and creativity to learn."

"When the class was brainstorming ideas about Language of Learning it helped to

think of each key word or idea as a small step towards learning—so during a lesson one day the kids just shouted, 'let's call it *LOL*—the ladder of learning!'"

"Building the ladder of learning had students talking about and expressing how they learn. Here's where I'm at in my learning and here's where I need to go," said Bassendowski.

The goal is to have students move into Grade 4 and beyond with the skills to use their natural curiosity to come up with a question they are passionate about. They then investigate the question independently or with a group.

"While building the ladder of learning they're thinking and they are talking about their thinking. They're talking about their learning and they're making mistakes and taking risks and they're confident. To me, that's true learning." ♦



Previous Page: Grade 3 and 7 students at Little Prairie Elementary celebrate the completed ladder of learning.

Back left to right: Rainah Green, Nicole Eddy, Michael Deck, Coach Mentor Dianne Bassendowski, Ireland Bassendowski and Lyndon Hillton.

Front left to right: Owen Rowsell, Carter Dunn, Deakon Tower, Teagan Warncke, Aislyn Seib and Charissa Mounsey.

Top Photo: Ireland Bassendowski and Lyndon Hilton present 'collaboration', one of the key words on the steps in the ladder of learning.

Centre Photo: Laura Craig helps Rainah Green and Teagan Warncke use a mitre box and saw to build the ladder.

Bottom Photo: Owen Rowsell, Carter Dunn and Michael Deck work on the fine details with a coping saw.

Check out the video from Mrs. Bassendowski's class and their project.



A fresh way to get the grade

You know you're welcome in your child's classroom but with your job and all the errands, dropping in for reading time is out of the question. And that backpack with all the assignments and updates is a bottomless pit of soggy papers smeared with cheese, so not much useful information comes out of it. But still, you'd love to know how your child's day went.

FreshGrade is a new app that gives parents (grandparents, aunts and uncles too) a window into the classroom. Created by a British Columbia-based software development company, the on-line portfolio app is spreading quickly to schools across North America. Sharlene Weingart, a Kindergarten, Grade 1, 2 teacher at Parkland Elementary is an early adopter.

"I started using Facebook a few years ago, posting photos of the class and notes about our activities. It was really popular; most people are on Facebook anyway so it was an easy way for parents to stay connected," said Weingart. "In addition to our Facebook page, *FreshGrade*



Above: Mavrik Studley proudly shows off his profile on the *FreshGrade* app.

lets me create an e-portfolio specifically for each child so the information is more specific, detailed and personal. Parents are able to check in at their convenience."

Weingart takes photos of class work, pre-test assessments and test results, videos of activities such as reading and art, and posts them to each child's page. Rather than wait until the end of the term, parents can see the activities, how their



"I've seen my students improve more quickly because of it and they are excited to have their work added to their e-portfolios."

child is doing in various areas, know which areas to work on at home with their child and keep up as the year progresses.

"Every parent cares how their child is doing. On *FreshGrade* a parent sees that their child has done really well developing an understanding of numbers using a ten frame or even see a video clip of their child reading to the class. They can talk about the successes and work on areas that are weak. I've seen my students improve more quickly because of it and they are excited to have their work added to their e-portfolios."

"It's another communication tool. Right now, it supplements report cards and makes it easier to prepare them at the end of semester because I have a summary of every student's activities through the entire term, all on a single screen. It's like an interim report that demonstrates a child's growth over time."

Parent response has been positive and more teachers are adopting the new app. Weingart has been sharing her experience with fellow teachers and it could lead to a pilot project at Parkland Elementary in the coming year. ♦

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Let's conserve water now!

City of Dawson Creek monitors water flows in the Kiskatinaw River Watershed.



STAGE 1 Water Conservation Measures from May 1 to September 30

Providing clean water is one of the City's biggest expenses. Daily water use within the City can double during the summer months, due mostly to outdoor watering and vehicle washing.

The City's 4-stage bylaw helps conserve water by designating watering days and times for residents, and working in stages to accommodate hot weather and lack of rain.

- **Even-numbered address** watering days: Wednesdays and Saturdays between 4:00 A.M. and 9:00 A.M., and between 7:00 P.M. and 10:00 P.M.
- **Odd-numbered address** watering days: Thursdays and Sundays between 4:00 A.M. and 9:00 A.M., and between 7:00 P.M. and 10:00 P.M.
- **Hoses for washing** boats and vehicles must have automatic shut-off devices.

LEARN ABOUT YOUR WATER

www.dawsoncreek.ca/water

- The Kiskatinaw Watershed
- Water Treatment & Distribution
- Water Utilities
- Water Conservation

If you have questions or concerns regarding the Kiskatinaw Watershed please contact the City's Watershed Technician at:

Toll Free: 1-855-782-1793 or (250) 782-1793

E-mail: watershed@dawsoncreek.ca

Inquiries about water treatment or distribution contact the Water Resource Manager at:

250-782-3114 or email

jkalinczuk@dawsoncreek.ca



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