

February 2025

Principal's Message

Dear DDS Families,

Happy February! This month, we're especially focused on kindness. As part of our theme of Friendship, we'll be celebrating Kindness Week from February 10-14. During this week, we'll encourage students to participate in Random Acts of Kindness activities that promote kindness, giving back, and supporting one another.

This year, **Pink Shirt Day** falls on **Wednesday, February 26**, and we encourage all students and staff to wear pink to show their support for kindness, inclusion, and respect.

Pink Shirt Day began in 2007 when a group of students took a stand against bullying after a classmate was targeted for wearing a pink t-shirt. Their simple act of solidarity sparked a global movement to promote kindness and stand up for one another.

Throughout the day, we'll engage students in meaningful conversations about mutual respect and the importance of speaking up. If a student ever feels bullied, we want them to know they can always turn to a friend, parent, teacher, or another trusted adult for support.

Let's wear pink and stand together against bullying!

New Team Members

DDS would also like to extend a warm welcome to a couple new staff members! Mrs. Andrews in grade 5, and our new EA, Nicole Varekamp. You are already making an impact on students and we are happy you are here!

Alberta Education Assurance Survey

Each year, the government distributes surveys to students, parents, and teachers to gather feedback on the quality of education provided by schools. The results help identify areas for improvement and inform education planning. It's survey time again! In February, parents of students in grades 4-12 will begin receiving survey packages from Alberta Education for the 2025 Assurance Survey. Parents can complete the survey online or return the completed paper copy directly to Alberta Education. Your input is invaluable in supporting both local and provincial planning, and we truly appreciate your participation.

Here are a few important details for parents regarding the survey:

1. The survey package will include:
 - A letter from the Minister of Education
 - A Random Access Code for completing the survey online, with instructions for accessing the survey in other languages, if needed. Once you have your Random Access Code, you can begin the survey by visiting this link: <https://public.education.alberta.ca/APOS/>
2. If you have more than one child in the relevant grade levels, you will receive a separate survey package and Random Access Code for each student.

Students in grades 4-6 will complete their surveys during class time.

We're so grateful to our families for their continued support of our school and students, and we're excited to see what February holds for our community!

Yours in learning,
Mrs. McGregor

Kindergarten

Happy New Year from DDS! Wow, what an amazing month we've had in kindergarten! The kiddos have grown so much already, and each day they continue to shine brighter. Here's a look at all the wonderful things we've been working on:

In **Literacy** we have been focusing on our writing journals and formulating ideas about New year's resolutions and our feelings towards certain events such as our practice lock down. For our Phonological **Awareness**, we've been busy exploring the sounds and letters **I, H, and N**. The kids have done a fantastic job recognizing the sounds and identifying words that start with these letters. It's been a fun journey building those early literacy skills!

In **Math**, we've been diving into patterns! We worked on recognizing and creating patterns using **colors** and **shapes** in various formats like **AB, ABAB, ABC, ABBA, and AABC**. The kids have really enjoyed experimenting with different patterns and can't wait to see what comes next. We've also been working hard on counting—making sure not to skip any numbers, and recognizing **bigger and smaller numbers**. Our work with **10-frames, dice, and counting blocks** has helped us practice our counting and simple **addition** and **subtraction**. (Oh boy, we are definitely making progress with those!)

In **Science**, we've been exploring the natural world and learning about colors. We've discovered how mixing two **primary colors** can create new ones. The children have loved experimenting with these colorful lessons!

In **Social Studies**, we learned all about **community heroes**—who they are, what they do, and why they're so important to our communities. The kids have been so inspired by the people such as Officer Sawatzky who help make the world a better place!

In **Physical Education**, we had a blast learning a new tag game called **Colour Monster**. It was a fun way to stay active while practicing teamwork. We've also started practicing our **dribbling skills** with basketballs—such great coordination from the class!

In **Health and Wellness**, we've been talking about feelings and how to handle loneliness. We introduced a new "worry woo" who helps us work through those tough emotions. We've also discussed the importance of **not being a tattletale** and using kind words with our friends. A big focus this month has been on **growing our self-confidence** and building strong relationships with each other.

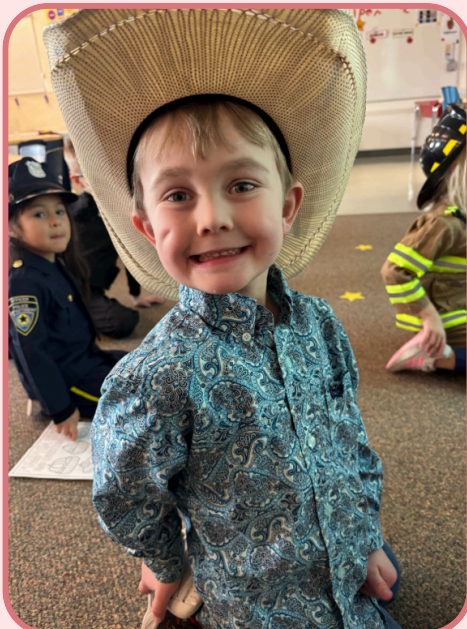
It's been a month full of learning, growth, and lots of fun! I'm so proud of all the progress the kiddos have made and can't wait to see what's next! Don't forget to check their agenda bags for some practice with letter writing and the letter coloring sheet for extra practice with you at home :)

Here's to another great month ahead!

Miss Babe



KINDERGARTEN



Grade One

Grade 1 had an amazing January! You would never know that the students were gone for 2 weeks for the holidays! They all came back ready to go and to continue learning as much as they could! In Literacy, we have been continuing to learn more Secret Stories for various letter combinations to help us read and write. We are starting our second story of the year, which will be about a "snowy day"...I sure hope life doesn't imitate art! Numeracy has us learning lots of different addition and subtraction strategies to help us in the future. In Social Studies, we have been learning all about "Responsible Citizenship" and all the different ways we can be great contributors to our communities. Science has us learning about Earth Systems, so we are learning about the seasons in Alberta, and how other places may not have the same number or types of seasons that we do. We had a great day celebrating HEROES at DDS! It was so awesome to see so many kids dressed as police officers and firefighters! Weird, no one dressed up as Mrs. Nish!!



The Grade 1 students would like to thank all the amazing moms who help with our Hot Lunches, and Miss E. for the super cool hot dogs we get to enjoy! Also, a huge thank you to Miss Allin, Mrs. Takeda and Mrs. Guenter for helping Mrs. Nish and everyone in Grade 1! We are pretty sure that Mrs. Nish would not survive without their help. Thank you as well to all of the parents that let me know that their child is going to be away, or is not on the bus! It is so appreciated to know these kinds of things earlier rather than later!

~Mrs. Nish

January seemed to fly by! We cannot believe we're heading into February already!

In Language Arts, students are writing information books that will be published and shared with classmates. All students have chosen a topic that they are experts on and are writing chapters to teach this information to others. Students are drafting introductions and conclusions, revising to include more information and editing all of their own work. When all of this is completed, students will publish their writing to celebrate with a "gallery share" of our books.

We have spent some time doing guided reading in small groups and will be moving onto a novel study with a focus on character development. The novel we will be working through is BFG by Roald Dahl. We will also continue reading self-selected books to practice our reading strategies. A big congratulations goes out to the following students in 2/3A for finishing their at home January Reading Challenge: Lee, Avery, Max, Cohen, Colby, Sophia, Kingsley and Allison! Bravo, readers!

We have really seen students practicing their words for our weekly spelling assessments and are so proud of the work they are doing. Great job, Grade 2/3s! Putting in a little bit of extra time to practice weekly spelling concepts really makes a big difference!

We finished up our unit on addition and subtraction and have started our patterns unit. We are learning a variety of concepts such as identifying and extending patterns that are increasing or decreasing as well as repeating or non-repeating. In this unit, students will also be writing pattern rules and differentiating between finite and infinite patterns.

In Science we are currently finishing up our unit on earth systems and our next unit has us learning about forces, energy and machines. In Social Studies we are leaving Tunisia to learn about Ukraine.

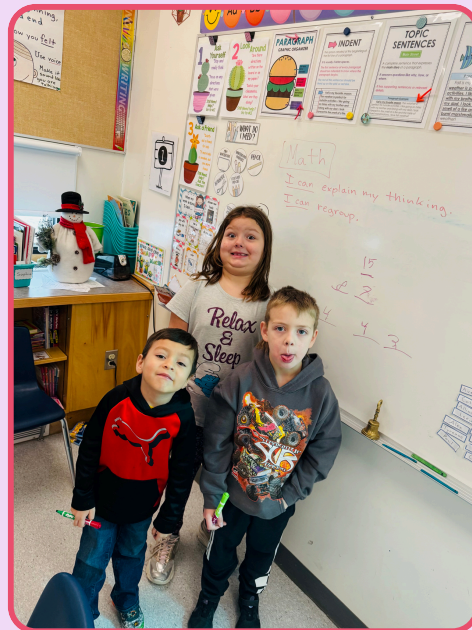
Our class will be celebrating Valentine's Day on February 14 with a little party. If your child is planning on bringing valentines to exchange, we are asking that they bring one for everyone in the class. We will send home a class list so you have all of the names of children in our room. (We will include the other grade 2/3 class as well in case your child wants to bring valentines for both classes.)

Thanks to all parents and families for their continued support. As always, if you ever have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

Mrs. Gurr and Mrs. Vandenberg



Grade 2/3 A



Grade 2/3 B



Grade Four

I hope everyone has had a great start to the New Year! Our classroom is full of personality which makes everyday an adventure. I have really enjoyed getting to know all of the students and I cannot believe we are already half way through the school year. We have had a busy month full of fun activities in and out of the classroom.

In Literacy, we have been writing fictional stories. We have been exploring various mentor texts to incorporate different elements into our own writing. We have been focusing on character development, setting, writing a lead, creating a problem, and developing a solution to our problem. As we continue our fictional stories we will be adding dialogue and descriptive sentences to our stories.

In Numeracy, we have been multiplying and dividing 3-digit numbers by 1-digit numbers. Please ask your child to show you one of the strategies we have learned. It would be a huge help if you would please review multiplication facts with your child each evening.

Our grade 4 class began our Energy unit in Science. While learning about gravity students were asked to create a contraption that would protect an egg when dropped from a specific height. The students were so excited for our egg drop experiment and did a fantastic job! A huge thank you to Adam Griffiths for helping set up a spot in the gym to drop our eggs.

In Social Studies, we are finishing up our research project on the Royal Tyrrell Museum and an animal of our choice. We will culminate this unit with a test next week. Please keep an eye out for the review sheet that will be sent home prior to the test.

We have also been enjoying our time at the Picture Butte Curling Club. It has been such a great experience for our students and so many of the students have really enjoyed learning about this sport. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Ken Johnson, Rory McLeod, and Laurell Greene for donating their time to make this event a success!
THANK YOU!



Grade Four



Grade Five

This last week of January has been filled with fun in Grade 5! Students have enjoyed curling and learned a lot about the sport. Basketball intramurals also started during lunch (12:00-12:20) on Mondays, offering students an exciting opportunity to get active.



In **Language Arts**, we are continuing our Poetry unit. Students have already experimented with Haiku and Cinquain poems, allowing them to be creative and make their work unique. Moving forward, we will focus on lyric poetry, a form that expresses personal thoughts, feelings, and emotions, typically written in the first person. We will explore figurative language in poetry and students will choose a poem that interests them, practicing recitation and possibly singing!

In **Mathematics**, we've begun our Measurement unit, where students use their understanding of length and width to find the perimeter and area of rectangles. Since finding area involves multiplying length and width, fluency with multiplication facts is key. Practicing these at home will help students gain automaticity, making tasks like finding area much easier. We are also reviewing fractions, and I've been impressed with students' ability to represent improper fractions and mixed numbers pictorially, which helps them convert between the two.

In **Social Studies**, we're studying ancient civilizations. Students have worked in groups to create timelines for a civilization, highlighting key events or inventions. We will continue exploring ancient civilizations, focusing on social scientists and map elements before diving into Ancient Egypt.

In **Science**, we are wrapping up our Matter unit, which explored the Particle Model and physical properties of matter. A highlight was a lab where students compared the densities of various liquids and discussed why liquids stack on each other. I challenged them to consider how particle arrangement might explain this phenomenon. Next, we'll explore energy resources, and students will begin a research project to become experts on one type of energy source.



Notes:

- Thank you to all students who are changing into indoor shoes and helping to keep our school clean.
- Thank you to families who encourage reading and multiplication/division fact practice at home - it really helps your child be successful!
- Huge thank you to our volunteers who made our curling lessons possible!
- As always, thank you to Parent Council and the hot lunch volunteers



Grade Six



It's been a great new year so far! We're curling this week, and students are really enjoying the opportunity to learn this very Canadian sport. A big thank you goes out to our volunteer curling instructors, Ken Johnson, Rory McLeod, Lewis Dooper and Laurel Greene for their time and patience with our students. We also enjoyed a visit from Constable Sawatsky who answered every question kids wanted to know about being a police officer. We are coming up to report cards and the Great Cake Baking fundraiser...more information is on the way!

In **Language Arts**, we are studying poetry. We're reading, writing and learning how to analyze poetry. Students have learned to identify figurative language and understand how it lends imagery, mood and theme to poetic pieces. Next, we'll begin our research essay writing unit where students will explore topics of interest such as the Black Plague, the invention of the airplane, the sinking of the Titanic and many other fascinating topics.

In **Mathematics**, students are really demonstrating competence converting mixed numbers into improper fractions, adding and subtracting fractions, determining common denominators, and simplifying fractions using prime factorization. We've been looking into geometry concepts as well including the coordinate grid, congruence and transformations.

In **Science**, we are bringing our Space unit to an end with Designing a New Space Station project. In groups, students are designing a space station to replace the International Space Station which is due to retire in 2030. Students are required to explain their space station's mission, crew complement, design of living and work spaces, and explain how satellites (probes and land rovers) will be used for exploration. Students are drawing blueprints of the layout of their space stations and will present their projects next week.

Democracy is our central topic in Grade 6 **Social Studies**. We are currently studying the birthplace of democracy: Ancient Athens. Students are learning about how city-states arose as a result of the rugged, mountainous geography that separated civilizations. Despite the Athenian evolution of democracy, students are discovering the inequities of the class system of citizens, metics and slaves.

A few Reminders...

- Many Grade 6 students are coming to school in hoodies despite the below zero weather. Please encourage your child to wear a coat.
- Encourage home reading. Leisure reading is one of the most effective ways for students to improve their comprehension in all school subjects.

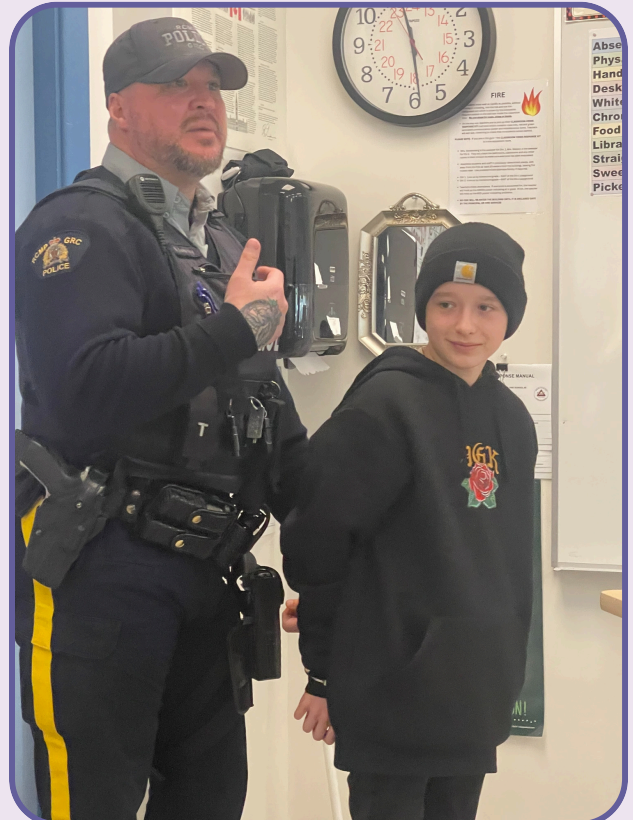
"One kind word can change someone's entire day!"



Happy heart month!
Ms. Milne



GRADE SIX



Music Class News



Where has January gone? I can hardly believe we are nearing Groundhog Day and the anticipation that winter will soon give way to spring!

In January, Kindergarten has continued to focus on keeping a steady beat to music with various partner songs as well as with learning about and playing the boomwhackers for the song Snowman Joe.

The Grade 1 class is learning specific instrument names, families, and “timbres” (sounds) through the orchestrated narrative of “Peter and the Wolf” where each character is assigned a different instrument and theme. We will culminate our learning with a colouring and listening party for this masterpiece by Sergei Prokofiev.

The Grade 2/3 split classes began the much anticipated recorder unit. While I agree that it is not the most pleasant sound at the best of times, this unit is a great introduction to naming notes, counting and reading music, as well as building lung capacity and dexterity. It is also an excellent introduction to woodwind instruments should your child desire to begin a different instrument in the future. The children have quickly discovered how you need to blow gently into the recorder to produce the desired sound.

The Grade 4 class had also been continuing the recorder, reviewing from last year and adding new notes and more difficult songs as we progress. I was very impressed last week with the sound the group produced as a whole...amazing what one year of growth will do! I have been proud of their perseverance and look forward to their continued learning!

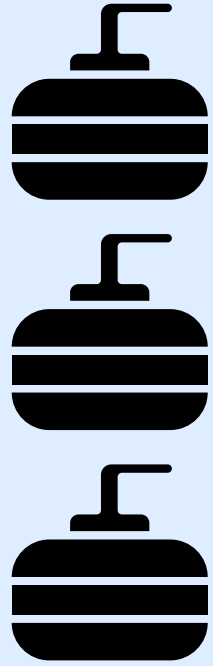
The Grade 5 class has been exploring form (patterns) in music using the “Finale” from Rossini’s famous William Tell Overture. We have learned cup passing patterns, played unpitched percussion instruments and used a parachute! Ask your child where this piece of music has been used in television shows or advertising 😊. They have also begun exploring Blues music and will continue with form in various types of African American music, including Jazz, as we anticipate Black History Month in February.

The Grade 6 class has been given free reign of the instruments in the music room to create a soundscape for the story “Stranger in the Woods” that we hope to perform for the Kindergarten class. It is fun to see their personalities emerge when they are creating!

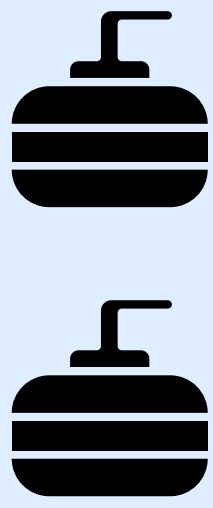
Thanks again to all the assistants who help out in the music room...much appreciated!

Keep Singing!
Mrs. Neufeld





A huge shout out to the volunteers who helped make curling a smashing success! Thank You



STUDENT OF THE WEEK

JANUARY 17, 2025

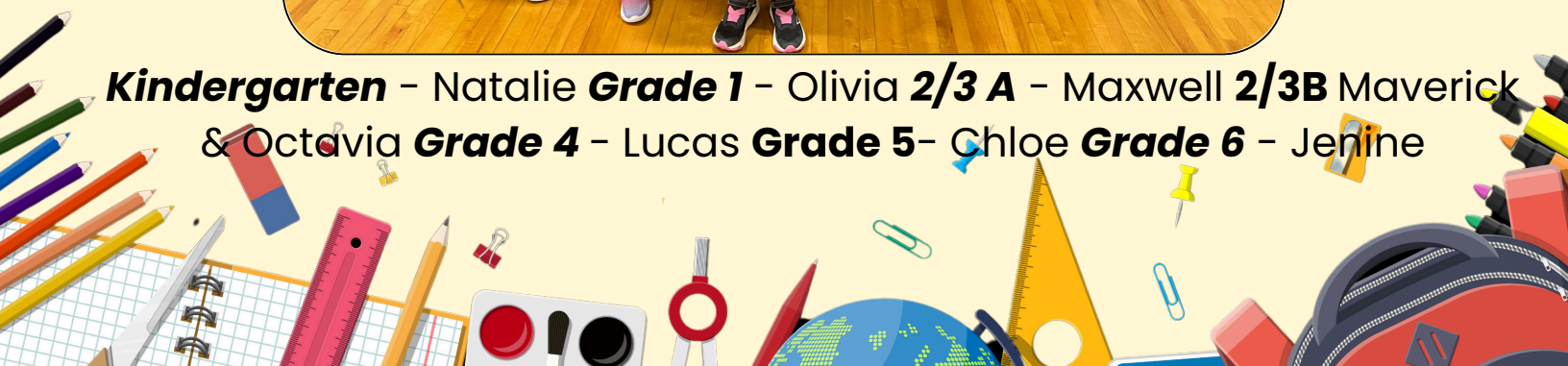


Kindergarten - Vallen & Anastasia, **Grade 1** - Evan, **2/3 A** - Kingsley,
Grade 4 - Rowan & Kensley, **Grade 6** - Valerii

JANUARY 31, 2025



Kindergarten - Natalie **Grade 1** - Olivia **2/3 A** - Maxwell **2/3B** Maverick
& Octavia **Grade 4** - Lucas **Grade 5** - Chloe **Grade 6** - Jenine



Parent Council

Palliser School Division Board of Trustees is seeking feedback from parents and community members to help shape the future of the Division. There are 3 public engagement sessions that you may attend:

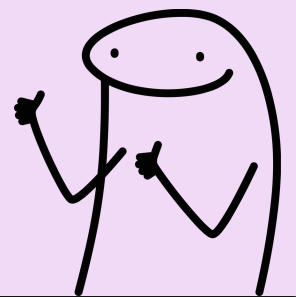
- ♥ February 12, 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM: Vulcan
- ♥ February 13, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM: Coalhurst
- ♥ February 13, 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM: Coaldale

You can sign up for an in-person collaboration session (closing February 4) and participate in a survey found on the Division's website: <https://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/about-us/news/post/help-shape-the-future-of-education-in-palliser-school-division>

Council's next meeting will be on Monday, February 24 at 4pm in the project room. There will be a virtual link for those unable to attend in person. Please reach out to dds.schoolcouncil@gmail.com if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you to our sponsors, **6A Cattle Co** and **Schooten & Sons Feedyards** for continuing to support our hot lunch program. Just a reminder that orders are due by the 15th for the following month to give our team time to organize and shop for the meals. We're always looking to expand our team so if you're able to help shop, meal prep, serve or clean up, please reach out to dds.hotlunch@gmail.com

Watch for
information coming
soon about our
Book Fair in
March!



SCHOLASTIC
BOOK FAIR
Coming Soon!

The Baby-sitters Club: Art © 2012

RAINBOWS FOR ALL CHILDREN



WHAT

In this 8 module program, children, **ages 7-11 years**, will process feelings of grief related to the loss of a parent or guardian due to death, foster care placement, divorce, deployment, or trauma. Children will participate in a variety of structured activities that will help them understand their emotions.

WHEN

February 18, 19, 20, & 21
1:30-3:30 pm

WHERE

Picture Butte FCSS
607 Highway Ave N, Picture Butte

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Deadline February 15, maximum of 6

Gabriela

403-915-8803

Gabriela.Rodriguez@fcss.ca



FEBRUARY 2025

Wellness word of the month:
Friendship/Love



MONDAY

3



TUESDAY

4



WEDNESDAY

5

100 100th Day
celebration in
Grades 1 & 2/3!

THURSDAY

6



Hot Lunch
Beef Stroganoff
6A Cattle Co.

FRIDAY

7

Valentine's
Day
Assembly
Kindergarten



10

17 **Family Day**



24 Home and
School Council
Meeting
4 pm

18



YAY

19



FEBRUARY BREAK
17TH-21ST

20



13 Hot Dog Lunch



21



YAY

25



26



27



Hot Lunch
Sloppy Joes
Schooten
and Sons

28