



Volume 2025/26-7

March 2026

Principal: Ms. Eleanor Giesbrecht

Admin. Assistant: Mrs. Heather Paulson

# Decker Lake Elementary School

Office Hours: 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM & 1:15 PM to 3 PM

Phone: 250-698-7301 Fax: 250-698-7349

## Principal's Message

Dear Husky Families,

Spring is right around the corner and so is Spring Break! Hooray!

We had the pleasure of listening to Mischa Oak speak to us during *Share the Love Days* last week. Mischa delivered a very sweet message to our beautiful children about kindness, the joys of being kind, spreading joy in our lives and that each child is a gift.

Learning Updates and Core Competency Reflections are going home today. Please read each over carefully. *Talk About Learning* conferences are scheduled for Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> from 2 – 6 PM. Please make an appointment to discuss your child's progress with their teacher.

Grade 4 and 7 students will be completing the Student Learning Survey next week. This survey asks questions about belonging and school experiences.

We will have a lockdown drill on March 10<sup>th</sup> with the RCMP present. We will follow the protocols laid out in the emergency plans located in our *DLES Parent Handbook*. We are required to have two lockdown drills a year and this will be our second and last one until the fall.

Wishing all of you a wonderful Spring Break.

With much gratitude,

Ms. Giesbrecht

Principal - DLES

## DLES Shares with Parents...

### Mark your Calendar

#### March

- 5 Learning Updates go home
- 10 Lockdown Drill
- 10 Talk about Learning Event & Early Dismissal 11:47 am
- 11 Ski Fest @ Omineca Gr. 4-7
- 12 Indoor Sports Meet
- 16-27 **Spring Break-No School**

#### April

- 3 **Good Friday—No School**
- 6 **Easter Monday—No School**
- 13 PAC Meeting @ 6pm
- 20 Norman Foote (entertainer)
- 24 **Zone Pro-D—No School**
- 25 Ms. Vivian's Service – Topley

### No School

March 16—27, 2026

**SPRING BREAK!**

### No School

Easter Monday,  
April 6, 2026

### No School

Good Friday,  
April 3, 2026

### No School

Monday,  
April 6, 2026  
Pro-D Day





**PRESS RELEASE**  
March 2, 2026

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### **Upcoming Retirements of Long-Serving District Staff**

Nechako Lakes will have two long-serving and highly respected leaders, Mike Skinner and Mark Gauthier, retire this summer.

Both staff members have served the Nechako Lakes school district for decades. As they retire, their commitment to students, staff, communities, and the district's Strategic Plan has advanced education, equity, and inclusion.

Mike has spent his entire career with the district, beginning in 1993 as a teacher at Grassy Plains School. Two years later, he moved to Lakes District Secondary School, where he served for 20 years as a teacher, guidance counsellor, vice principal, and, for seven years, as principal. Mike subsequently joined the Board Office serving as Director of Instruction and in 2018 was appointed Assistant Superintendent, continuing the focus on Human Resources and Leadership. The Board was grateful that Mike also successfully stepped in as Acting Superintendent for many months in 2024. His years of knowledge, dedication, and supportive leadership have been influential to district planning and growth.

Mark began his educational career in 1991, initially serving in Bella Coola before joining School District 91 as a teacher at Eugene Joseph School in Tl'azt'en Nation. He subsequently transferred to Fort St. James and taught at Sowchea Elementary School. Later, he relocated to Vanderhoof where he taught at an alternative education program at Nechako Valley Secondary School and later served as a guidance counsellor. Mark advanced to vice-principal and principal positions in both Fraser Lake and Vanderhoof, including a nine-year tenure as principal of Evelyn Dickson Elementary School. In 2020, he was appointed Director of Instruction – Curriculum Services supporting key initiatives aligned with the Board's Strategic Plan. His steady, collaborative leadership and dedication to instructional excellence have contributed significantly to the district.

Mike and Mark would like to acknowledge the invaluable support provided by the countless staff members who significantly contributed to their professional development and learning. They are grateful to their families and spouses for their unwavering support, noting that they would not be who they are without them.

As they look ahead to retirement, Mike is eager to spend more time with his two sons and extended family, including his new granddaughter, to travel to some bucket-list destinations, and to continue exploring the beautiful outdoors this country offers. Mark looks forward to enjoying time with family and the outdoors, including time at the cabin, mountain biking and flyfishing across British Columbia.

The District and Board of Education extend their deepest gratitude to Mike Skinner and Mark Gauthier for more than six decades of combined service to Nechako Lakes. Their extraordinary knowledge, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to students, staff, and communities have left a lasting impact on the district. Through their leadership, mentorship, and passion for public education, Mike and Mark have shaped countless lives and strengthened our schools in ways that will be felt for many years to come. The Board also wishes to express that it has been an absolute pleasure working with both gentlemen, and that through their leadership Nechako Lakes has been able to advance public education across the district. While their contributions will be deeply missed, we wish them every happiness and fulfillment as they begin this well-earned next chapter.

Superintendent Anita McClinton will provide additional information regarding postings in the coming weeks.

- 30 -

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For further information, please contact:

Darlene Tuner  
Secretary Treasurer  
dtuner@sd91.bc.ca



### Feeding Futures – Nechako Lakes: February Update

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The *Feeding Futures* – Nechako Lakes food program continues to grow and improve. At present, about 11,000 lunches are prepared and served over an entire month! The number is increasing each month as more students engage more frequently in the food program available at each school. Students are seeing the positive changes, commenting the breakfast and lunch program at their school has improved over the last few years!



The food programs happen with much thanks to the hard work of each school meal worker. In addition, the support of the entire school community. From PACs to local businesses, teachers, parents, caregivers, Indigenous partners and principals, thank you for being part of the daily effort it takes to get nourishing meals to the students.

That said, there are challenges. Food costs are continuing to rise, and there are supply chain challenges. Products from programs like *Fresh for Kids* have been shorted due to weather challenges. Where possible, alternative options are being purchased to continue to have food available at school. Grants, like Adopt-A-School and Farm Credit Canada, have contributed additional funds to help purchase snack items for all schools.

In January, there was a K-12 focused food show for school food coordinators and managers. This event featured various food vendors that are producing food in the province of British Columbia. There are some products of interest such as dried fruit chips, pasta sauce and a yummy butter chicken sauce. Work is underway to explore options of accessing these items to add into the school district food program.

Kind regards,

Robyn Turner-Klopper, RD

Food Programs Manager, School District 91 – Nechako Lakes

#### In Focus - Feeding Futures Guiding Principle

*Feeding Futures* has five guiding principles. Each newsletter will focus on one. The focus this time is:

*“Students have access to nutritious and culturally preferred foods to support healthy development and learning.”*

- Each school has a breakfast program, some offer plates of food in the classroom, others have breakfast carts or breakfast rooms. Items include cereal, toasted waffles or bagels, boiled eggs, smoothies, muffins, yogurt, pumpkin seed packs, and cut-up fruit.



- Snacks are offered in bowls, central fridges, classrooms, it varies from school-to-school. Commonly a selection of fruit, vegetables, yogurt, packs of a seed-based trail mix and cheese strings may be found.



- Lunch programs:
  - 9 schools have pre-plated lunch programs
    - Meals can vary from salmon wraps to chicken chow mein to butter chicken, mac and cheese and the favourite tomato soup with grilled cheese sandwiches. Sides may be offered and include a salad, cut-up fruit and/or vegetables, a homemade biscuit, or rice.
  - 1 school offers a salad bar lunch daily
  - 5 schools offer food to students on need basis
    - For example, students may sign up in the morning if they need a lunch that day.
    - Items served may include a sandwich or wrap, granola bar, cut-up fruit and vegetables, yogurt and/or cheese string

#### Other items

Schools are always looking for new recipes and meal ideas. If you have one, please share. Recipes of interest include: salmon recipes, pasta dishes, stir-fries, and vegetarian options.



DLES PAC would love for you to look us up & join us on Facebook!

“Decker Lake Elementary School Parent Group”



### PAC Meeting

Monday,

April 13, 2026

6:00 pm— 7:00 pm

In the DLES Library



Instagram

Decker Lake Elementary

is on Instagram!!!

Our new Instagram account is:

**dles\_huskies**

Our Instagram account is

private.

Followers will need to be

given access to join.

### Talk About Learning Conferences

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Please make an appointment through the office @ 250-698-7301 to schedule an interview with your child’s teacher.

Reminder: **Early Dismissal** that day @ 11:47 am. Buses will run 3 hours earlier.



# LITERACY SUPPORT



At Burns Lake Public Library

**PILOT PROGRAM**

Support for children and adults in reading, writing, schoolwork, paperwork and applications



**Ellie Jones**

- Community Literacy Outreach Coordinator
- Certified Level 1 Orton-Gillingham Structured Literacy Tutor (Learning Differences Centre of BC)

Availability: 2-5pm  
 March 6 & 20  
 April 10 & 24  
 May 8 & 22  
 June 5 & 19

Cost: Free

## LEARN MORE & BOOK A TIME

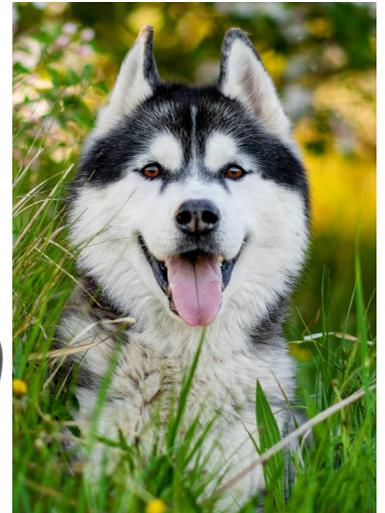
- 250-251-7424
- LOC@LakesLiteracy.ca
- LakesLiteracy.ca

## Out-of-Catchment Applications

Will be accepted

**March 9– May 15, 2026**

If your child has already been approved in the past for out-of-catchment with DLES, that student is already approved and you will not need to submit again.



## Board Biz...



### School Board Meeting

**Monday, March 30, 2026  
 6:30 pm**

**Room TBD @ FLESS  
 Fraser Lake, BC**

#### Important Public Attendance Notice:

Members of the public are invited to attend Regular Meetings of the Board of Education. Due to limited space and seating availability, please request your seat in advance if you wish to attend in person.

Alternatively, members of the public may attend this meeting virtually through Microsoft Teams. To take advantage of this online attendance option, please visit [www.sd91.bc.ca/meeting-information](http://www.sd91.bc.ca/meeting-information) for the Teams link.

To view the meeting agenda, please visit [www.sd91.bc.ca/board-agendas-and-minutes](http://www.sd91.bc.ca/board-agendas-and-minutes).

Contact:

Heather Silver  
 Executive Assistant to the Superintendent  
 250-567-2284 ext. 9003  
[hsilver@sd91.bc.ca](mailto:hsilver@sd91.bc.ca)

# Learning about Light

at the Buck Creek Hatchery and Nature Centre

\$40 per day or \$180 for all 5 days (\$36/day) per child

Join us for a week of day camps over spring break where we will explore the changes in daylight we are experiencing, astronomy, Northern Lights, and other ways light shows up in the natural world.

Schedule:  
 Monday: Hours of Daylight  
 Tuesday: Northern Lights  
 Wednesday: Astronomy  
 Thursday: The Moon  
 Friday: Harnessing the Sun

**Ages 8-12  
 March 23-27, 2026  
 9-3**

Scan the QR code to reserve your child's spot



Contact Marisa at [marisa.chambers@arocha.ca](mailto:marisa.chambers@arocha.ca)



### Superintendent's Report to the Board

Superintendent Anita McClinton presented her [Monthly Report](#) at the Regular School Board Meeting on Monday, February 23, 2026.

You may find it under the Latest News heading at [www.sd91.bc.ca](http://www.sd91.bc.ca) or on our [Board of Education Updates](#) page.



### Proposed Policy Update

The following draft policy is currently open for public feedback until 4:30 p.m. on Friday, April 10, 2026.

[Policy 101.1.1 – Trustee Elections – Bylaw](#)

Members of the public are welcome to review all the information, including how to provide feedback, on the [SD91 Policies and Regulations webpage](#).

# Pink Shirt Day!!!



A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions & the roots spring up & make new trees ~ Amelia Earheart

# ONLINE GAMING



## FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS



THE WHITE HATTER

Our programs are designed to empower parents and caregivers with the knowledge and tools needed to help keep their children safer online. It covers key aspects of digital literacy, including understanding popular apps and platforms, recognizing online risks like cyberbullying and exploitation, setting healthy digital boundaries, and promoting responsible technology use.



Wednesday, March 4  
6:30PM - 8:30PM

ATTEND VIRTUAL LIVE PRESENTATION

Link : <https://app.sli.do/event/1pfLoVmoKTNRFFoTSegRQo>  
Password: 7701

### SAVE THE DATE

- March 12: Monitoring, Filtering & Online Tools
- March 19 : Supporting Youth Being Targeted by Cyberbullying/Online Aggression
- April 8 : Online Toxicity
- April 15 : Sexting, Nudes, Intimate Images & The Law



SPONSORED BY:



RioTinto

FOR MORE INFO : WWW.THEWHITEHATTER.CA

## When Visiting DLES

When visiting our school, please remember that all doors are locked except for the front door. Please sign in and out at the office. Please do not go to classrooms without checking in at the office first.

## Grades 4-7

### DLES Science Fair

### Certificates

#### Grade 4

- 1st: Sylar Abietkoff & Holden Cardinal
- 2nd: Eli Pelletier & Shep Konkin
- 3rd: Norah Dell & Sophie Payne

#### Grade 5

- 1st: Kylan O'Connell & James Morken
- 2nd: Dennis Ahlbrand & Kikkan Paulson
- 3rd: River Cutsforth & Daxtin Baker

#### Grade 6

- Demonstration
- 1st: Andrew Dell & Lucas Magel
- Experimentation
- 1st: Zander Wilson & Brogan Wilson
- 2nd: Victoria Brand & Lariah Keeler
- 3rd: Logan Matson & Chris Waters

#### Grade 7

- 1st: Benson Anderson & Olivia Bens
- 2nd: Chiara O'Connell
- 3rd: Anna Roberts & Adley Garneau

MAY TO GO!

**PROUD TO BE MCLEOD PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS:**  
**OUR 17<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PRODUCTION**

**DREAMWORKS**  
**MADAGASCAR**  
**A MUSICAL ADVENTURE JR. 2026**

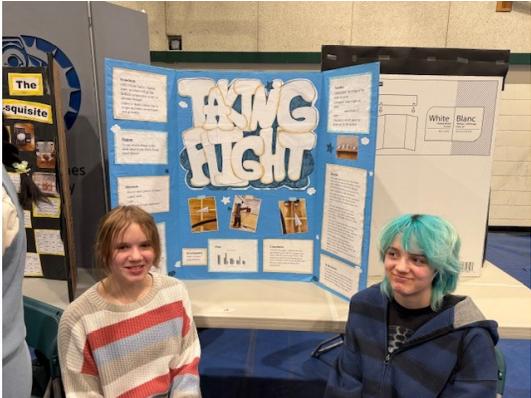
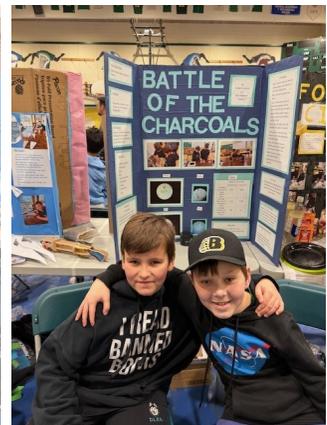
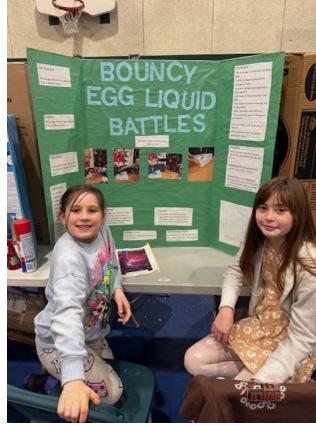
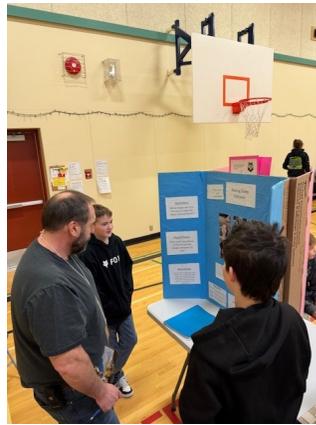
**SHOWTIMES**  
THURSDAY, APRIL 23<sup>RD</sup> - 7 P.M.  
FRIDAY, APRIL 24<sup>TH</sup> - 7 P.M.  
SATURDAY APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup> - 1 P.M.  
SATURDAY APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup> - 7 P.M.

**TICKETS**  
\$5 EACH OR \$20 FOR A FAMILY OF 4 OR MORE.  
TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE AT: WALLACE STUDIOS, QUILTER'S CORNER, W.L MCLEOD OFFICE & AT THE DOOR.  
PLEASE PURCHASE THE FAMILY OF 4 OR MORE AT THE MCLEOD OFFICE  
CASH ONLY AT ALL LOCATIONS PLEASE

Madagascar - A Musical Adventure Jr. is presented through special arrangement with... and all not listed materials are supplied by... Music Theatre International, New York, NY (212) 642-8888 mtidna.com

## DLES Science Fair

Our school Science Fair was on Friday, February 27th. Grades 4 -7 students worked hard on their projects and were able to present their findings to several judges. Thank you to Mrs. Benoit and Miss England for organizing!!!



## DLES Science Fair (Continued)



The students below placed at our fair and moved on to the District Science Fair in Fraser Lake. For names and placings, please see page 6.



We had 4 students that placed at the District Science Fair in Fraser Lake!!! They are as follows:

2nd place—Brogan Wilson &

Zander Wilson

3rd place—Holden Cardinal &

Sylar Abietkoff

These students are moving on to the Central Interior Fair in Prince George!!!

# CONGRATULATIONS!!!

