

FEBRUARY 2026

SPARKS NOTES

Similkameen Elementary Secondary

Principal's Message:

Dear SESS Families,

What a warm winter it's been! We are enjoying the return of the light as the days slowly grow longer. It's hard to believe we are already more than halfway through the school year.

Our secondary students have completed their first semester and are off to a strong start in new courses. First-semester report cards will be sent home this Friday — a great opportunity to celebrate learning and growth.

There are many wonderful activities underway that support healthy, active, and joyful choices. Basketball season is in full swing, and the Outdoors Club is looking forward to ski, snowboard, and tubing days at Apex. Elementary students are also enjoying a new round of electives, exploring interests like cooking, yoga, fine arts, and more. We are so grateful to our community volunteers and families for the ongoing support that makes these opportunities possible.

As we head toward the brighter days of spring, we feel excited about a positive and productive second half of the year.

We also want to remind families that strong partnerships between home and school make a tremendous difference in student success. We encourage you to stay connected, reach out to your child's teachers, and engage with the school. Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions, ideas, or insights — your voice matters, and working together helps us support every learner in the best way possible.

Thank you for being such an important part of our school community.

Warm regards,
Stacey Smith

Principal: S. Smith ssmith@sd53.bc.ca
Vice-principal: K. Anderson kanderso@sd53.bc.ca
Phone: (250) 499-2727
www.sess.sd53.bc.ca

Important Dates:

February

- 3 Elementary Ski & Board @ Apex
- 4 Gr 7s to Okanagan Symphony
- 5 Gr 8s to Okanagan Symphony
- 5-6 Grad Photos
- 12 Elem Science World Presentation
- 12-14 Sr. Girl's BBall Valleys (Kelowna)
- 13 Pro-D Day (No School)
- 16 Family Day (No School)
- 17 Secondary Ski & Board @ Apex
- 19 Gr. 9 Immunizations
- 19-21 Sr. Boy's BBall Valleys (SESS)
- 20 Skills Canada Regionals @ OC
- 23 Elem District Bball Tournament
- 24 Elem Tubing @ Apex
- 25 Early Dismissal Inquiry Day
- 25 Pink Shirt Day



Grad 2026 Update

The Grads would like to thank our community for their support for the grad bottle drive last month. A reminder to all grads that graduation photos are February 5 & 6. Make sure you have signed up for a time slot online.

A few Grad CLC projects were presented at the end of semester one and those that presented did a great job! The rest of the presentations will take place the after spring break. Please see Ms. Davidson with any CLC questions.

Internal scholarship packages will be handed out in March.



CELL PHONE POLICY

As we have start our second semester of the school year we wanted to remind families of the cell phone policy at SESS. Starting in September of 2024, SESS has had an updated personal device policy. These restrictions are in accordance with the amended Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order from the Ministry of Education and Child Care and apply to Board Policy E3, Technology Access and Use.

The policy includes the following key points:

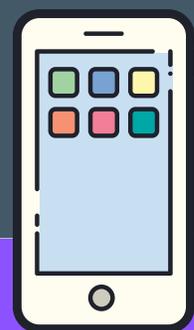
1. Device Restrictions: Students will not be allowed to use personal digital devices during instructional hours unless explicitly permitted by a teacher for educational purposes.
2. Accessibility and Accommodations: Exceptions can be made in consultation with administration or case manager for students with specific accessibility or medical needs, ensuring that all students have the support they require.

This order's main goals are to promote online safety and create a more focused learning environment for our students.

At school, this means:

Secondary students: no cell phones, smart watched, or ear buds during class time.

Elementary students: no cell phones BELL to BELL.





Student Health & Wellness

January and February are some of the darkest and toughest months of the year. It is important to know that there is help available for those who may be struggling. We have compiled a [list of resources and contacts on our website](#). Please take a look if your child is highly stressed or in need of mental health support. Students can also be referred to one of our school counsellors or an Indigenous support counsellor.



DRAMA:

This year's drama class is going to be putting on a play and we are already starting to work on it. SESS has not put on a secondary school play in close to a decade, so this promises to be quite the undertaking. In an effort to not overwhelm our small cast and crew, we are reaching out to ask for your support. Our drama program is looking to collect **larger pieces of cardboard in good condition, large Styrofoam sheets, lumber planks for supports, mini lights in any colour, and artificial flowers/plants/light up trees** (can be returned after performance). All of this will go towards building our set for the play. Items can be dropped off at the office, or email jdavidso@sd53.bc.ca to arrange a drop off or pick up!



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS!

At SESS, we are incredibly fortunate to have a community of dedicated volunteers who step up to make a difference in our students' lives. Your generosity, kindness, and willingness to share your time and talents enrich our school in countless ways, and we want to take a moment to say—thank you!

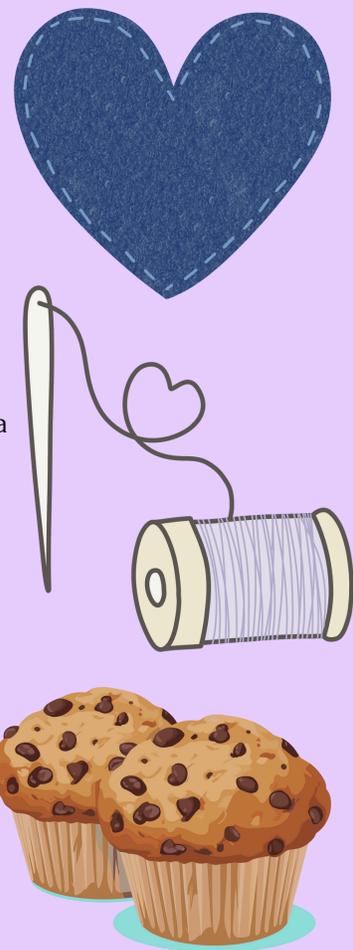
Each week, volunteers bring enthusiasm, expertise, and a sense of fun to a variety of activities that help our students grow, learn, and discover new passions. Whether you're leading a fly-tying session, guiding young hands through a stitching project, or sparking curiosity in our elementary electives or lunch hour clubs, you are helping to shape the learning experience in a meaningful way.

To our muffin-making volunteers, thank you for bringing warmth and comfort through the joy of baking.

To those who coach teams and teach our PE students archery, thank you for teaching patience, precision, and confidence. Watching students develop new skills, set goals, and celebrate their achievements is a direct reflection of your encouragement and mentorship.

Whether you're in the classroom, the gym, or the kitchen—every moment you spend with our students matters. Your time and effort help create a school environment where children feel supported, inspired, and excited to learn.

On behalf of our students, staff, and families, we sincerely thank you for your dedication. Our school is stronger because of you, and we are so grateful for all that you do!





SESS TO HOST VALLEY CHAMPIONSHIPS!



Our Senior Boy's Basketball team will be hosting the Valley's at SESS on February 19-21. Be sure to come out to watch the boys in their Championship tournament! Go Sparks, go!



Communicating Afterschool Plans

Things get busy at SESS just before and after the end of the day. Please ensure that you have communicated any changes in afterschool travel plans with the office prior to 1:00 so that we can ensure that students have clear directions for how they are getting home.



Course Selection 2026-2027

Over the next month, students in grades 7-11 will be choosing their courses for next year. Students will be bringing home a form for parents to sign to make sure they are aware of their child's selections.



Breakfast Club

The SESS breakfast program continues to offer a varied and healthy breakfast every morning! All students in grades 5-12 are welcome to drop by for a free breakfast. The program is organized by staff and community volunteers.



★ Sparks of the Month





Pink Shirt Day

FEBRUARY 25

Pink Shirt Day is a meaningful reminder in British Columbia to stand up against bullying and to lead with kindness and respect. What began here in our province has grown into a movement that encourages all of us to speak up when something isn't right. On Pink Shirt Day, students and staff are invited to wear pink as a simple but powerful way to show support for safe, inclusive school communities. Every act of kindness helps make our school a place where everyone belongs.

Report Card Communication

Secondary Report cards will be going home this week. Please tear off the attached form and **return to the school**. Each form returned will be entered into a draw to win a \$50 gift certificate to BuyLow!

Dear Parents, Guardians and Care Givers,

AFTER READING YOUR CHILD'S REPORT CARD, PLEASE SIGN AND TEAR OFF THIS SHEET TO SEND BACK TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD. If you would like a specific teacher to reach out to you regarding this report card, please indicate below.

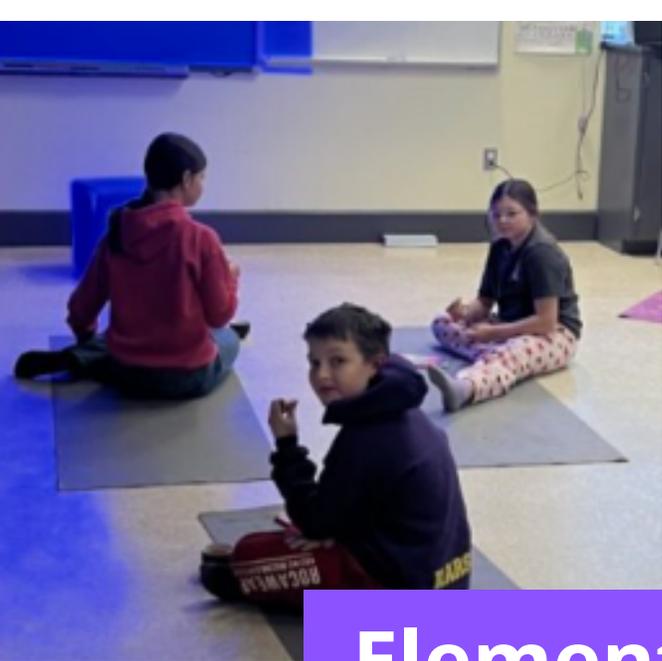
Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Please have (teacher name) reach out to me: _____

Please choose one of the options below:

- I prefer digital report cards **ONLY** for my child
- I prefer paper report cards (still available digitally) for my child



Elementary Electives





Elementary House Activity



Circle of Connection

A welcoming space for caregivers & children

Circle of Connection is an informal, relationship-based gathering for caregivers who are interested in connection, reflection, and building strong relationships with their children.

Inspired by *Circle of Security* principles, this group is open to:

- ♥ Caregivers curious about *secure attachment*
- ♥ Families looking for *connection and peer support*
- ♥ Those who have completed *Circle of Security Parenting (COSP)*
- ♥ Caregivers interested in attending a *future COSP program*

Together, we explore everyday parenting moments through shared conversation:

- ♥ Understanding children's cues and behaviour
- ♥ Staying emotionally available
- ♥ Repairing relationships when things feel hard
- ♥ Building confidence in your parenting instincts

♥ *Come as you are*

♥ *Babies & children welcome*

♥ *No pressure – no "right way" – just connection*

 4:00–7:00pm | Once a month on Mondays

♥ *Dinner included*

Call or text to register
250-502-5633

You do not need to have taken Circle of Security to attend.

Career Ed. Newsletter- February 2026

Career Ed. Report

As we wind down semester one, WEX students and Youth Work in Trades students are finishing hours and completing final assignments. While Train in Trades students continue to work in their programs at OC.

With Semester 2 approaching School District 53, has 21 students starting trade programs at Okanagan College, Camosun College and UFV, as well as 5 students starting academic dual credit programs for the winter semester at OC, TRU and College of the Rockies. The success that SD53 students are having in post-secondary dual credit courses can be attributed to having support through their transition from secondary to post-secondary.

Trades programs throughout the province fill up quickly so if the school district needs to secure more than our priority seats it is important that students interested in dual credit programs apply when applications open.

Skills Canada Regionals is just around the corner on February 20, 2026. All three secondary schools have students competing in a variety of skills.

Finally, our dedicated careers team and CLE and CLC teachers will be attending the Career Educator Society's interior mini conference.

Up Coming Events :

Interior Health Career Exploration
February 10th

Career Education Society Interior Conference
February 13th

Skills Canada Regionals
February 20th

Check out this link for more information about the ECE program:
[Early Childhood Education-Okanagan College](#)

WORK EXPERIENCE



Work Experience prepares students transitioning from secondary school to the world of work. It consists of 100 hours of work at a work site, combined with 20 hours of related career and work experience assignments.

The Goals of Work Experience

- Students have the opportunity to observe and practice generic employability skills required in the workplace, as well as technical and applied skills relating to occupations or industries.
- Connect what they learn in the classroom with the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed in the workplace to be successful
- Develop job readiness skills for specific occupations and careers
- Understand the similarities and differences in behavior standards between the workplace and school



What does the course consist of?

- Unpaid work meant to gain employability skills, many students turn their placements into paid jobs.
- Provide work to an employer with a Placement Agreement in place, ensuring that students are covered by the Ministry of Education's Workers Compensation plan- The School District will handle any WCB claim.
- Students must complete all safety assignments and provide documentation prior to commencing work experience at the placement



READY TO EXPLORE CAREER EDUCATION WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM?

Scan the QR Code and a staff member from the SD53 Careers Department will get in touch with you

Have a question? Email Mr. Turnbull at: bturnbul@sd53.bc.ca



Current Offerings

SEATS ARE AVAILABLE FOR 26/27

Early Childhood Educator,
Refrigeration & Air Conditioning
Mechanic,
Welding,
Automotive Service Technician,
Heavy Duty Mechanics,
Health Care Aid,
Business Administration,
Technology Sampler,
Carpentry
Plumbing
Aircraft Maintenance Engineering
Structures,
Electrician,
Professional Cook,
Trades Sampler,
Health Sampler,
Engineering Sampler,
Academic Dual Credit,
Office Administration,
Nail Technician,
Hairdressing,
Leadership in Action,



Circle of Security Parenting™

Eight week workshop series for parents and caregivers

THIS FREE PROGRAM WILL RUN ON WEDNESDAYS FROM MARCH 4TH, 2026 TO APRIL 22ND, 2026 FROM 4:00-7:00 PM
Location: Ambrosia Building

Parenting can sometimes feel like navigating in the dark—trying to understand what your child truly needs. Circle of Security® Parenting offers a guiding map to help you recognize your child’s cues and respond with clarity, confidence, and compassion.

The Circle of Security Parenting™ (COSP) program offers just that—a structured, video-based, research-grounded approach that helps caregivers understand the balance between a child's need to explore and their need for comfort.

Over eight sessions, experienced facilitators guide parents through reflection, discussion, and visualization using the “Circle”—a powerful tool rooted in attachment theory—to help deepen security and connection between you and your child.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: JOCELYN REAUME

1-250-502-5633
capc@scss.com

Limited spaces available



Light dinner and refreshments provided
Childminding available



←--To sign up use your camera app to scan QR code. OR call 250-502-5633



February

Events

FEB
3 
Elementary Ski & Board @ Apex

FEB
5-6 
Grad Photos

FEB
13
NO SCHOOL
ProD Day - No School

FEB
16
NO SCHOOL
Family Day

FEB
17 
Secondary Ski & Board @ Apex

FEB
19
Gr. 9 Immunizations

FEB
19-21
@ SESS
Sr. Boys Basketball Host Valleys!

FEB
23 
Elementary District Basketball Tournament

FEB
24
@ APEX
Elementary Tubing Day

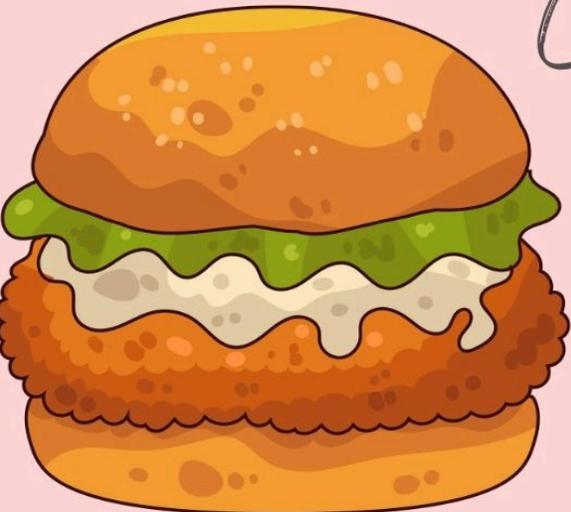
FEB
25
EARLY DISMISSAL
Inquiry Day



February

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
2 Chicken Bacon Club Sandwich	3 Penne Alfredo	4 Meatball Subs	5 Pizza	6 Chef Special
9 Quesadillas	10 Roast Beef	11 Chicken Burgers	12 Mac n' Cheese	13 No School
16 No School	17 Chicken Wraps	18 Special Fried Rice	19 Pizza	20 Chef Special
23 Deli Subs	24 Tacos	25 early dismissal	26 Chili on Rice	27 Chef Special

Cafeteria





SIMILKAMEEN

Makers Hub

FEBRUARY

AFTER SCHOOL

Workshops



FEB
5

WATERCOLOUR BOOK TRACKER

Create a unique chart to keep track of the books that you read this year! We will use watercolour and creativity to make tracking your reading fun!

FEB
19

GRUNGE BOOKS

There are NO RULES to making grunge books! It's like making a scrapbook inspired and limited only by your creativity!

FEB
12

VALENTINES CRAFTS

We're going to have fun making some valentines themed crafts to put a little extra love in your hearts!

FEB
26

ART CARDS

Art cards are like trading cards. You'll make some cards to trade with your friends and leave inspired to make more!

DETAILS:

2:45 - 4:00PM \$25/ DAY AGES 10+

PRE-REGISTER BY EMAILING:

SIMMAKERSHUB@GMAIL.COM

623 7TH AVE (MAIN ST) KEREMEOS

