

APRIL 2026

SPARKS NOTES

Principal's Message

Welcome to spring! It's hard to believe we are already more than two-thirds of the way through the school year. As the weather improves, we look forward to more opportunities for students to learn, connect, and be active outdoors.

Next Thursday, April 9th, we will be hosting our Family Conferences. We encourage all parents and guardians to attend and meet with their child(ren)'s teacher(s) to celebrate progress and plan next steps. As always, we welcome ongoing communication and invite you to reach out anytime.

High school report cards will be available on MyEd and Spaces and will also be sent home with students at the end of the month. Families will be notified by email when they are distributed.

Congratulations to our Senior Boys Basketball team on winning the 'A' Provincial Championships—an outstanding achievement that reflects their hard work, teamwork, and dedication. We are very proud of how they represented our school and community.

The final months of the school year are busy and exciting at SESS, with graduation preparations, planning for next year, and a variety of year-end events and celebrations. We look forward to a strong finish.

A reminder that consistent attendance plays a key role in your child(ren)'s success. Regular attendance helps students stay connected, build confidence, and feel a strong sense of belonging—supporting both their learning and well-being.

Sincerely,
Stacey Smith



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

Important Dates:



April

- 6 Easter Monday -No School
- 7 Gr. 12 Scholarship Meeting @8:35am
- 9 Family Conferences -Early Dismissal
- 10 Early Dismissal @ 12:00
- 14 Gr. 5/6 VIP Presentation
- 14 Skills Canada Provincials
- 15 Gr. 10 VIP Presentation
- 17 District Pow Wow @ SOSS
- 17 End of Term 3
- 20 Sr. Band Trip & Victoria Legislature
- 20 Elementary Class Photos
- 22 Grade 12 Literacy Assessment
- 22 Barcelo Hike for Outdoor Club
- 24 Grade 10 Literacy Assessment
- 29 Inquiry Day -Early Dismissal @ 12:00





Outdoor Adventures



We have had a number of great adventures up at Apex Resort this last month. The elementary students had a ski and snowboarding lesson, and all the elementary students got a beautiful, sunny day tubing. The secondary students had two ski and snowboarding lessons and went on a snowshoeing adventure with an overnight cabin campout. The overnight in the scout's cabin was the benefaction from the grade 9s fall clean-up of the property. After spring break, the Outdoor Ed club is looking at joining the Barcelo Hike in April and planning a wilderness career camp for May. Check out the Outdoor Ed board for upcoming details.





Outdoor Adventures





White Hatter Digital Literacy Presentation

Critical information to protect Grades 5-7 students from challenges they may come across online: hackers, scammers, predators, and cyberbullies etc. Not every bad thing is a criminal police matter. A successful hack or scam may not have easy recovery. Students will learn what the most common challenge are and how they can empower themselves to avoid and overcome difficult or dangerous situations online.



GRADUATION ASSESSMENTS

The BC Graduation Assessments are an important part of our students' journey toward graduation. These assessments help evaluate students' knowledge and skills in key areas, such as literacy and numeracy, ensuring they are ready for the next steps in their education or future careers. The third set of Graduation Assessment dates begin next week. Students scheduled to write these assessments must report to the Computer Lab by 8:45 on the day of their assessment. Please check in with your child to see if they are scheduled to take an assessment.

Literacy 12 - Wednesday, April 22
Literacy 10 - Friday, April 24

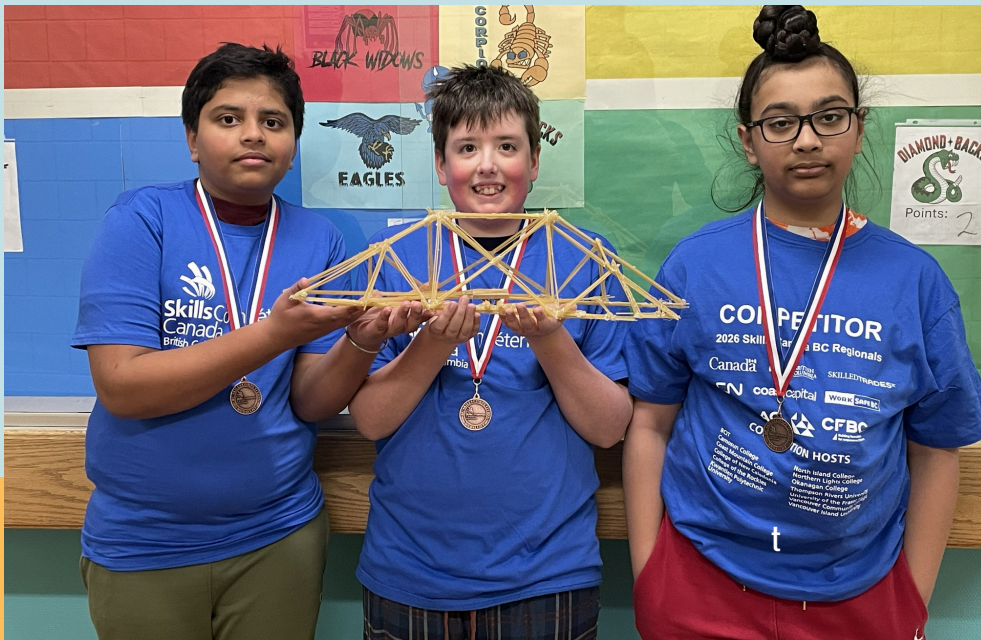
Bus Expectations

As we near the end of the school year, we want to remind students and families that the bus is an extension of the school. This means that the school's Code of Conduct applies to bus rides. If students, are not adhering to safety and behaviour expectations on the bus, they risk losing bus privileges.



SKILLS CANADA

On February 28th, many of our grade 8 and 9 students travelled to Kelowna to participate in the regional Skills Canada Competition. Most of the SESS students competed in the gravity cars challenge. The opportunity to compete against students in other districts was a valuable experience for everyone. Congratulations to Leo Nelson, Andrej Nad, and Sam Fonteyne who qualified for the Provincial Championships in April. We also had two teams of grade 5-7 students compete in the STEM Spaghetti Bridges Challenge. Congrats to Zack Nelson, Partap Brar, and Sukhman Rai who finished third. Thank you to Mr. Toth and Mr. Collins, and Ms. Leroux for their organization and support!



Course Selection

Students in grades 7-11 are in the process of selecting their courses for the 2026-2027 school year. Students have met with Ms. Zakall to receive their course selection sheets. These sheets must be signed by a parent/guardian and were to be returned to the office prior to Spring Break for grade 8-11. If you have any questions regarding course selection, please reach out to szakall@sd53.bc.ca. If you haven't signed a course selection sheet for your student(s), please ask them about it!

Band Bottle Drive

The SESS Band students would like to thank the community for their support last month. With the help of the community the band raised over \$2900 towards their upcoming festival trips.





Family Conferences



Family Conferences are an important opportunity for parents to have a direct update about your child's learning. Interviews for SESS will be held on Thursday, April 9th from 1-3 and 4-6 pm. To meet with teachers, please use the [online booking form](#) to schedule a time. Please note, that Thursday, April 9th and Friday April 10th will be half days and students will be dismissed at noon.

National Child & Youth Mental Health Day

National Child & Youth Mental Health Day is about building caring connections between young people and the caring adults in their lives. We know having caring, connected conversations can have a big impact on the mental health of children and youth.

“I care about you” is our May 7th message. To support this, Family Smart offers events and resources that support conversations and connection between caring adults and young people. For more information see: [May 7th | National Child & Youth Mental Health Day](#)

School Supplies

As we come back from the break, we are noticing that many students have used up their school supplies or have misplaced them. If you are able, please check in with your child(ren) and make sure that they have enough school supplies for the next three months. We appreciate it!



Leadership students are planning a Secondary Spring Dance for April 16th. Tickets will be on sale SOON!

School Dance!

Provincial Champions

So proud of our Sr. Boys Basketball team!







Art Donations

DO YOU HAVE EXTRA ART OR CRAFT SUPPLIES?
Please consider donating to the SESS Art Program.
Drop off at the school office during school hours.

We currently looking for and would greatly appreciate donations of the following supplies:

- Pencil crayons
- Picture Frames
- Magazines (except National Geographic – we have a ton of those already)
- Newspaper
- Paper (all kinds)
- Writing utensils
 - Markers
- Tempera or acrylic paint
 - Craft supplies
 - Scrap wire

Do you have something that you think we could use for art projects but aren't quite sure about?
Send Mrs. Rowe an email at arowe@sd53.bc.ca

Thank you!

ALL DONATIONS TO THE ART PROGRAM WILL BE USED BY SESS ART STUDENTS. THEY WILL NEVER BE SOLD FOR PROFIT.





July 6-10, 2026

For Indigenous students going into Grades 7-9

 UBC Okanagan, Kelowna

**Apply for the 11th annual Indigenous
Summer Scholars Camp now!**

Apply by: Wednesday, May 6 at 4:30 pm



For details, visit: students.ok.ubc.ca/indigenous-summer-camps

 INDG.SUMMERCAMP@UBC.CA

 (250) 807-8699



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Indigenous Programs & Services
Okanagan Campus



INDIGENOUS SUMMER
LEADERSHIP CAMP

July 20-24, 2026

For Indigenous students going into Grades 10-12

 UBC Okanagan, Kelowna

**Apply for the 9th annual Indigenous
Summer Leadership Camp now!**

Apply by: Wednesday, May 6 at 4:30 pm

 For details, visit: students.ok.ubc.ca/indigenous-summer-camps

 INDG.SUMMERCAMP@UBC.CA

 (250) 807-8699



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Indigenous Programs & Services
Okanagan Campus

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Join The National Ballet of Canada's **YOU dance Livestream**

**Wednesday, May 20
at 12:00 pm ET**

Register Here

Please note: If you have previously registered for YOU dance livestreams, you will be required to register again.

About YOU dance

YOU dance (Youth, Outreach and Understanding dance) is the National Ballet's signature education and community engagement programme. Designed to inspire elementary school students and cultivate a deeper understanding of the arts, YOU dance has reached over 390,000 students across Canada since its creation in 2007.

The National Ballet of Canada is pleased to invite you and your students to join us for the YOU dance Livestream.

This **FREE** virtual learning opportunity is open to all grades but is specifically designed for grades 4 to 6 students. The hour-long performance features the National Ballet's RBC Apprentices dancing a diverse repertoire, engaging discussions led by our hosts and opportunities for the entire class to get moving.

Join over 20,000 students from school boards across Canada for the YOU dance Livestream!

Advance registration is required and curriculum-based resources will be available prior to the livestream performance.

If you are unable to join us for the livestream at 12:00 pm ET, a recording of the event will be available from May 20 to June 3 for your students to enjoy. To gain access to the recording, you must register for the event.

Have a question? We're here to help! For more information about The National Ballet of Canada's YOU dance Livestream, please contact education@national.ballet.ca.

The RBC Apprentice Programme is sponsored by RBC.



The National Ballet of Canada's YOU dance programme is made possible thanks to lead philanthropic support by Elizabeth A. Currie & Richard J. Currie, O.C., The Azrieli Foundation, The Lawrence Schafer Foundation, and The Anna McCowan-Johnson Dance Accessibility Fund.

Further generous support is provided by Susanne Boyce & Brendan Mullen, Fatima Laher, Geoff & Catharine Bertram, the Robert & Joan Shatilla Education Fund and Relevé Circle.

2025/26 YOU dance RBC Apprentices. Photo by Karolina Kuras.

Parent, Caregiver & Youth Gathering



Fri, May 22nd . Sat, May 23rd
UBC Okanagan Campus

Door prizes available for Youth, Parents/Caregivers, and Families
Complimentary and limited accommodation is available at UBC Okanagan on Friday, May 22nd
Families will be provided with a

gas card for travel

This engaging and informative event is designed to bring together parents, caregivers, and youth in supporting educational success.

Participants will gain valuable insights and discover helpful resources to enhance both youth and parent/caregiver experiences in education.

The Gathering is geared towards Indigenous youth in Grades 7 -12, but all Indigenous Youth and Parents/Caregivers are welcome to attend.

Contact Ryan Conneely for more info: ryan.conneely@ubc.ca

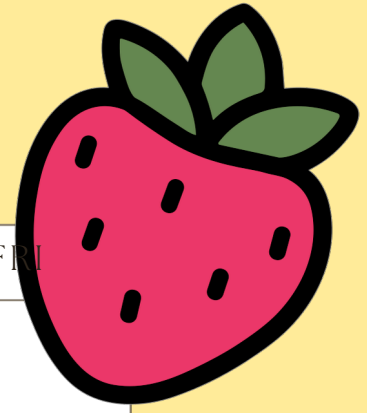
Register here: ubc.ca/qualtrics.com/ife/form/SV_Or2ctll1QRVbHV4



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



april



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
30 Turkey Ranch Wraps	31 Shepherd's Pile	1 Meatball Subs	2 Pizza	3 No School
6 No School	7 Beef Stroganoff	8 Chicken Dinner	9 Early Dismissal	10 Early Dismissal
13 Chicken Club Sandwich	14 Tacos	15 Spaghetti	16 Pizza	17 Chef Special
20 Banh Mi	21 Macn Cheese	22 Hamburgers	23 Beef & Rice Bowls	24 Chef Special
27 TBD	28 TBD	29 TBD	30 TBD	1 TBD

Cafeteria



Career Ed. Newsletter- April 2026

Career Ed. Report

As we return from spring break our spring programs are well underway. We have a few students that did not get break as they started programs all over the province. As part of the Dual Credit Health Care Program initiative, four students have started programs related to the health care field. One student began the Healthcare Assistant program at Okanagan College, another started the Medical Office Assistant program at the College of the Rockies, one began a Psychology degree at Thompson Rivers University, and another started coursework for the Dental Assistant program at Okanagan College

Three of our Youth Work in Trades Apprenticeship students have accumulated enough hours to start their level 1 technical training. These students transitioned to Youth Train in Trades program and will be completing Level 1 trades programs at different institutions. The Welder is at Okanagan College, the Carpenter is at University of the Fraser Valley, and the Electrician is at Camosun.

In late February, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology did a tour for all the CLE 10 classes in School District 53. Our Skills Canada Regional winners have all been registered for provincials taking place April 15 at Tradex in Abbotsford. We are looking for female students interested in trades to go to OC for the Jill of Trades event April 28 in Kelowna.

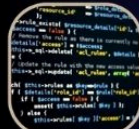
Finally Dual Credit programs for the 26/27 year are being promoted and are starting to fill up. Grade 10 and 11 students and parents are encouraged to contact Mr. Turnbull or Mr. Toth to learn how to get your post-secondary tuition paid!!

Up Coming Events :

Skills Canada Provincials- Tradex	April 15th
OC Jill of Trades Female Trade Event	April 28th
Youth RCMP Academy	April 25-29
Experience Okanagan College Penticton	May 4th
SD53 Wilderness Career Fair Camp Boyle	May 7th

TECHNOLOGY SAMPLER AT OC

Sept - Feb



A 22 week program delving into the rapidly advancing world of information technology and computer science.

Hone your digital literacy and technical proficiency with practical training and industry-relevant learning in two key areas: IT Essentials and Introduction to Coding.

This program is one night online and one night at OC and gives students the opportunity to explore:

- ✓ Hardware/Software/
- ✓ Coding & Programming
- ✓ IT Systems & Networks
- ✓ Cybersecurity/ Data Protection
- ✓ Ethics in Technology
- ✓ Industry Demands & Career Pathways

Ready to Explore Information Technology?

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: btturnbul@sd53.bc.ca



Current Offerings

SEATS ARE AVAILABLE FOR 26/27

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

Please use the link to view information on the Health Care Sampler:

[Health Care Sampler](#)



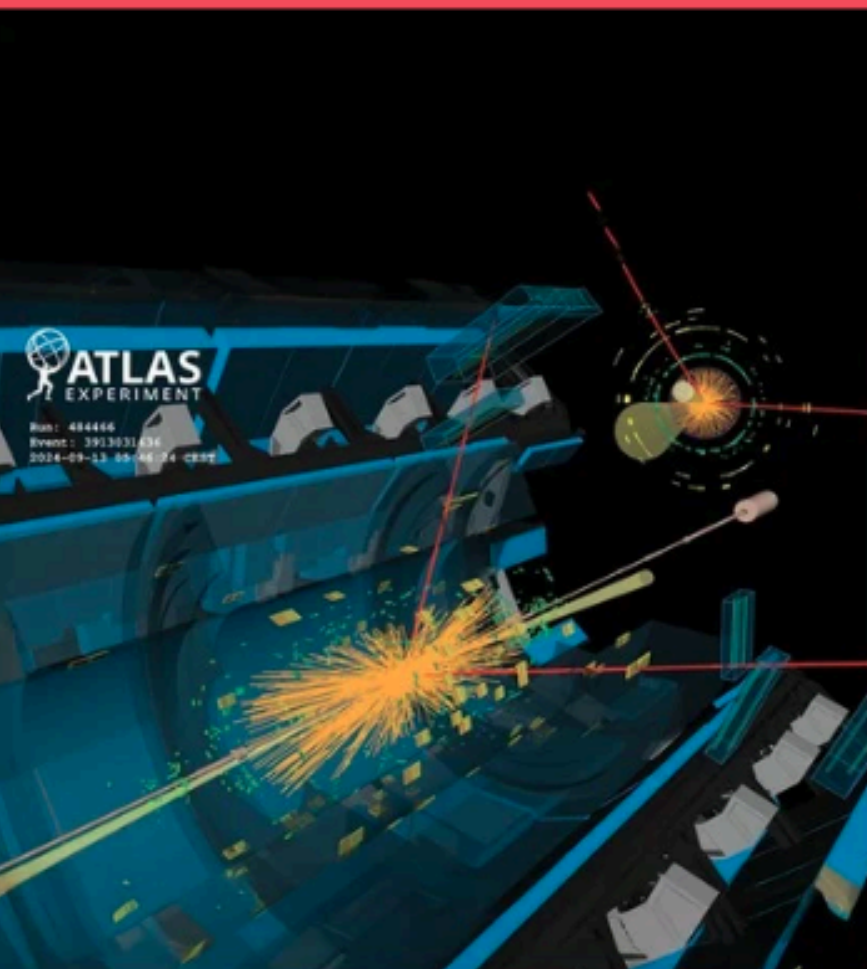
Apply for free
Enter to win a \$500
tuition voucher

OC Spring Open House

Vernon: Wednesday, March 11 | 5 - 6:30 p.m.
Salmon Arm: Tuesday, March 31 | 5 - 6:30 p.m.
Kelowna: Wednesday, April 1 | 5 - 6:30 p.m.
Penticton: Thursday, April 9 | 5 - 6:30 p.m.



OC Okanagan
COLLEGE



Explore the Universe at Okanagan College

A Full-Day Particle Physics
Experience for Grades 11 & 12

What if you could analyze real data from one of the world's largest scientific experiments?

Join us at Okanagan College for an immersive day exploring high energy particle physics using real data from the ATLAS experiment at CERN, which is located on the Large Hadron Collider.

What you'll do:

- Learn about research topics and methods that are fundamental to particle physics
- Meet virtually with a physicist located at CERN and tour the ATLAS control room
- Analyze measurements on real data from the ATLAS particle physics experiment at CERN to look for evidence of the Higgs Boson
- Virtually meet with other high school students and researchers across North America, present your results, and collaborate to create a combined result

Okanagan College, Vernon
Campus, 7000 College Way

Saturday, May 2
8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Lunch provided!

Reserve your spot:
[OCVernonPhysics.eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/OCVernonPhysics)



Intended for grade 11 & 12 students and teachers. Students are encouraged to be enrolled in or have completed Physics 11.

ATLAS
EXPERIMENT

OC Okanagan
COLLEGE



“Celebration Of Traditions”

Pow Wow

April 17th & 18th, 2026

Southern Okanagan Secondary School

6140 Gala St, Oliver, BC, V0H 1T0

School District #53 Indigenous Education Committee Hosting

Host Drum – Smokey Valley

Second Host Drum - High Water

Emcee – Levi Bent

Arena Director – Lawrence Trottier

Admission is Free - Open to the Public

Free Dinner: Friday and Saturday 5:30pm

Free Breakfast: Saturday 9:00 - 11:00am

Friday Schedule: 10:00am - 2:30pm SD#53 students only

Friday Evening: Open to the Public 7:00 - 11:00pm

Saturday Schedule: Open to the public 1:00 - 5:00pm & 7:00 - 11:00pm

Dancers welcome. Please register before Grand Entry

Saturday Afternoon

Tiny Tot Special

By

Heaven N Earth

Native Art

Saturday Evening

Honouring Jemma Louie

Initiation to Jr Girls Category

Special Age 7 - 13

1st Prize \$200, 2nd Prize \$150,

3rd Prize \$100, 4th Prize \$50

All drum groups will receive an Honorarium with a minimum 4 singers and must be registered

Vendors are full - You can unload at the back of school then must move vehicles to the front

Public Parking at the front of SOSS

Elder and handicap parking at the back of school



THIS IS A SMOKE AND VAPE FREE ZONE

Apply for a Bursary!

More than
\$80,000
available



Open to newly graduating and returning
students of all ages from the
South Okanagan Similkameen

Applications accepted from April 1 to May 1, 2026

LEARN MORE AND APPLY ONLINE:
www.cfso.net/apply-for-a-bursary



**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

south okanagan | similkameen