

THE DIVISION DISPATCH

Year 9 | NUMBER 4 | December 5, 2024



SPAIN TRAIN >

Coalbanks students visit Lakie for Spanish collaboration

Back in November, Grade 4 and Grade 5 Spanish Bilingual program students from Coalbanks Elementary School visited G.S. Lakie Middle School.

Students shared in a day of collaboration

through outdoor games, dancing and language instruction, all in an effort to get the elementary students excited about being able to continue their Spanish experience at middle school: [SPANISH](#). ■

LEARNING TO LEAD >

Indigenous Leadership Class a popular option at Winston Churchill High School



This year, students at Winston Churchill High School have the opportunity to join a new Indigenous Leadership Class.

Please see the link below for video that outlines all of the details: [LEADERS](#). ■

HEALTH/SAFETY >

Health and Safety Corner

Aggressive student behaviour

From the May, 2023 OHS safety survey, we asked: What do you feel is your biggest safety concern?

Today's topic provides information related to that concern!

In December, school days are filled with special events, novel activities, colourful displays, sweet treats, joyful music and a different energy.

For many of us, all this excitement is enjoyable, and we look forward to our family's traditions over the two weeks away from school.

However, for our students who rely on, and thrive in, environments based on proactive structure, consistency and predictability, December can be an ongoing assault on the senses accompanied by unmanageable expectations.

This may show up as diminished capacity at school and an increase in aggressive behaviour and meltdowns for our students who



struggle with self-regulation.

Over the next few weeks, it may be helpful to consider intensifying the degree to which effective strategies are implemented. For example, increasing communication by giving as much advance notice to students, support staff and caregivers, of anticipated changes to routine, including what those activities will look like for the students.

Using social stories and visual schedules to help remind everyone of what's coming up and how everyone is expected to engage. Incorporating scheduled low-sensory, mindfulness activities for the whole class while also pre-planning alternative options if a student needs a different choice will ease everyone's mind by knowing there's a plan for "just in case."

And finally, make sure you are actively taking care of yourself to help ease the impact of empathic strain while you take care of others. ■

SUPT. MESSAGE >

Superintendent Mike Nightingale

I can't believe it is already December!

In my mind, I keep thinking December is a long way off, but here it is. Not only is it December, but winter has also shown up in a big way. Thank you to our caretaking and maintenance staff for all you do to deal with the weather and make sure our buildings are safe and warm during this stretch of winter.

You may remember that "Us. Together. Serving," is a theme I've been focused on this year. It is based on the idea we are all working towards the same goal: providing the best experiences possible for our students and school communities. December is a month that really exemplifies the idea of "Us. Together. Serving." Everyone in the organization makes extra effort to connect with others and provide a helping hand to those in need.

The number of events hosted in schools over the coming weeks is a great example of the important role you play in bringing the community



MIKE NIGHTINGALE

together. I also know schools do a lot of work behind the scenes this time of year to support struggling students and families. I want you to know the work you do is vital to our school communities.

Our communities need you in so many ways this time of year; to bring them together, to support them when they are struggling and celebrate them when they succeed. This is incredibly rewarding and impactful work, but I also know December can be a challenging month for staff in schools. There

is so much to do and it seems like you can hardly catch your breath. Please know the work you do is making a difference, even if that isn't always obvious.

I hope you are able to take some time away from the busyness of the season and connect with those that bring you happiness. I hope you have well-deserved break over the holiday season and for those of you who celebrate Christmas, I hope you have a very Merry Christmas. ■



MAKING MUSIC >



Fairbairn students complete CBC musical challenge

Senator Joyce Fairbairn Middle School once again completed CBC Music's Canadian Music Class Challenge 2024.

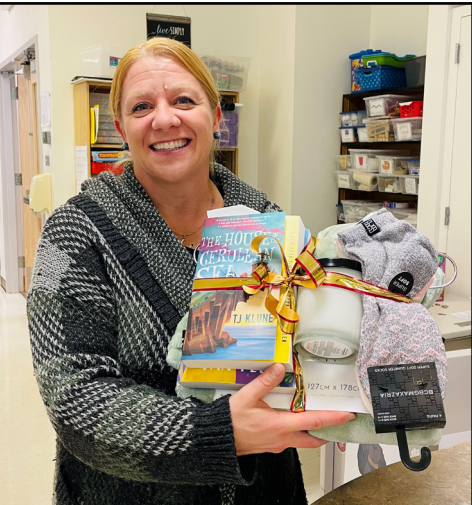
The school won the competition last year and for 2024, Fairbairn

students submitted their version of the song, A Little Bit Happy, by Talk.

See the links below for more information: [CBC SUBMISSION](#) and [CBC CHALLENGE](#). ■

PRIZES!!! >

Read The Dispatch!



Every month, The Division Dispatch delivers valuable information to Division staff.

If this engaging content isn't enough to make you want to read the monthly newsletter, we have another incentive!

When you read The Dispatch, reach out to us to enter your name in a draw for a prize.

Just click here to enter: [CONTEST](#).

The Division Dispatch contest winner for the month of November was Fleetwood's Jamie Westlund. ■



Inkblot



Employee & Family Assistance Plan Services

<https://org.inkblottherapy.com/asebp>

For contract employees with ASEBP benefits, each calendar year you will receive an allotment of hours which include four hours each of individual counselling and couples/family counselling.

Some of the services provided include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental health management• Stress reduction and management• Relationship and family support	Additional reasons to reach out to Inkblot may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work-related issues• Relationship issues• Family conflict• Work life balance• Stress, depression, anxiety• Addiction• Violence/abuse• Loneliness• Burn-out• Youth therapy• Grief/bereavement
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Inkblot EFAP offers you quick and easy access to the mental health supports you need, no matter when or where you need them. And appointments can be booked in 24-72 hours from when you first reach out. **These hours are individual to you. Your dependants (i.e. a spouse or children) will also receive their own allotment of EFAP hours each year.**

One of the many benefits of this EFAP is that once your allotted counselling hours are used, you don't have to stop seeing your chosen practitioner. If you feel that you would benefit from additional sessions, you can continue seeing them and they will simply bill you directly, at a discounted rate (\$110 for in-person session and \$90 for virtual). You can then submit your receipt to ASEBP for reimbursement through your [psychology services benefit](#) and/or [health spending account](#) (if eligible).

Your EFAP offers more than just mental health supports. Through Inkblot's WorkLife Advisory Services, you can also access:

- **Health consultations:** receive advice from a registered nurse or dietitian for things like nutrition support, smoking cessation, etc.
- **Legal advice:** seek advice for things like real estate law, family law, and more.
- **Financial advice:** guidance on managing debt, saving for the future, etc.
- **Career coaching:** get support with making a career change or having difficult discussions with colleagues.
- **Life transitions:** from becoming a new parent to planning for retirement, your EFAP can help with it all.

As a digital-first organization, Inkblot offers the majority of their services online, but phone and in-person services are available too.

ASEBP's dedicated Inkblot web portal also allows you to book appointments (virtual, in-person or over the phone), reach out to your provider between sessions via a secure chat feature, access WorkLife Advisory Services, and read up on the latest wellness news via the Inkblot Wellness .

Your EFAP is completely confidential, voluntary, and accessible at your own convenience.