

INNOVATIVE INKLINGS

Comox Valley School District Newsletter for Innovation
April 22, 2016



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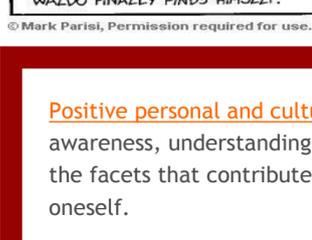
Personal Development Links

Lake Trail's [Mental Health site](#).

Turtle Mountain has a great [overview of RTI](#) and Chris Weber has provided great pro-d and has a good [blog re: RTI](#).

[Destination Imagination](#) provides a program that aligns with our redesigned core competencies and curriculum. This [2:53 video](#) offers a brief taste of the connections.

Feedback is still being sought for the [10-12 redesigned curriculum](#) and the draft document of the [K-7 Applied Design, Skills and Technologies](#) program.



[Positive personal and cultural identity](#) involves the awareness, understanding, and appreciation of all the facets that contribute to a healthy sense of oneself.

"Do something that scares you every day." - re-quoted by Dr.

Kristin Buhr

"There are ten types of people in the world, those that understand binary and those that don't."

Around the District

Innovative events and efforts from around our district

Anxiety

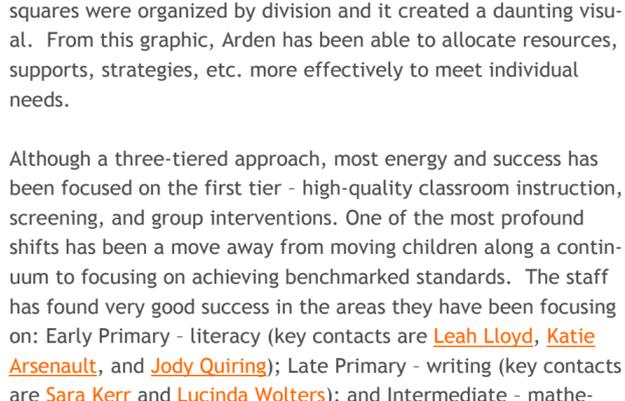
On Monday, April 11 our district committee looking at building resilience brought [Dr. Kristin Buhr](#) to our district to provide three presentations about managing anxiety. She began with a presentation at Navigate's Tsolum campus to 120+ secondary students from around the community. She talked about the importance of normalizing anxiety and the importance it plays in our lives. Most importantly, we need to realize that anxiety is on a continuum for each of us and our goal is to manage where on that continuum it is in given circumstances. She spent some time going through some strategies for managing anxiety including [healthy thinking and self-talk](#), 'chill-out' tools, and facing fears. She finished by talking about some of the foundations we need to help manage our anxiety such as sleep, exercise, and healthy eating.

The student session finished with some excellent, insightful questions from our students. We taped this session so that counsellors can share the talk with students unable to attend.

In the afternoon, Dr. Buhr met with more than two dozen counsellors from around our district and very quickly went through the highlights of the morning session with students, elaborated on many of the management strategies and added some other educator specific ones. She then moved on to [Emotion Dysregulation Problems](#) and students practicing self-harm. One of the key strategies is to build positive associations with schools. She also talked about the importance of supporting parents.

The evening session was co-sponsored with [DPAC](#). Valley View Elementary hosted the even and there were more people than chairs available (more than 180 people). Dr. Buhr went through a very similar presentation as she had in the morning, but spent more time and development on ways to support children struggling with anxiety.

She left all three groups with many valuable resources. Some of the highlights are [Anxiety BC](#), [Mind Shift](#) (it is a portable app), [KidsHealth](#), [Mindcheck](#), and [Mind your mind](#).



Arden Elementary School Review

This week [Arden Elementary School](#) held its school review and from the beginning the theme was clear: the school community takes responsibility for each and every child. Having highly functioning PLC teams, Arden has embarked upon the RTI ([Response to Intervention](#)) journey. RTI is a three tiered approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behaviour needs. As we entered the library we were met by a wall of coloured squares: each one represented a child who had been assessed for Social/Emotional needs and literacy needs. The squares were organized by division and it created a daunting visual. From this graphic, Arden has been able to allocate resources, supports, strategies, etc. more effectively to meet individual needs.

Although a three-tiered approach, most energy and success has been focused on the first tier - high-quality classroom instruction, screening, and group interventions. One of the most profound shifts has been a move away from moving children along a continuum to focusing on achieving benchmarked standards. The staff has found very good success in the areas they have been focusing on: Early Primary - literacy (key contacts are [Leah Lloyd](#), [Katie Arsenault](#), and [Jody Quiring](#)); Late Primary - writing (key contacts are [Sara Kerr](#) and [Lucinda Wolters](#)); and Intermediate - mathematics (key contacts are [Darci Gilmore](#) and [Chris Lamont](#)), but was very quick to point out that they are only at the beginning of a 6-9 year journey.

Throughout the school, as shown via our stellar student ambassadors, we saw copious evidence of student success demonstrating the Successful Learner Traits and the school's PLC work. One of the most colourful displays was a project the intermediate students did creating masks that represent themselves. They were beautiful.

Girls do Code

On a sunny Saturday morning (April 9th), about 55 girls and a handful of boys showed up for the "Girls do Code" event put on by [Navigate](#) and the [Enter program](#). This was an amazing event designed to open girls' eyes to the technology available to them and to show them what they can do. There were five stations to cycle through.

At one station, girls built gravity cars with the help of [Randy Grey](#), Career Programs Coordinator for our district. The girls made their cars using saws and drills and a whole lot of girl power.

At another station, [Roger Vernon](#) showed the girls how to use [Lego Mindstorms](#) robots. They programed the robots on the computer, downloaded the program to the robot, and then tested it out in a maze.

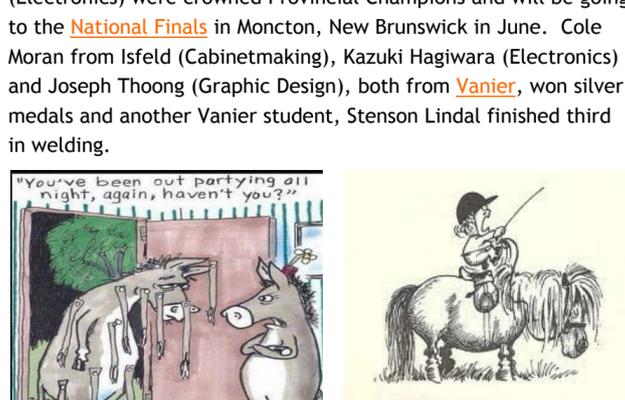
Vivian and Paul Vaillant, owners of [3-D Tech People](#), taught the girls how to create 3-D objects to print and had quite a few 3-D printers available to demonstrate. Vivian opened the girls' eyes to the world of 3-D printing with questions: What if you could build your own house and print it out? Your own car? A prosthetic arm? A human heart? This is all happening right now. Many of our children's jobs will involve technology and at the rate of change in the tech world, who knows what our students will be capable of doing?

At another station [Meiko Matsumoto](#) gave the girls the opportunity to visit [code.org](#) and do the "Hour of Code". Students were creating [Minecraft](#) houses, controlling R2 D2 and helping Elsa and Anna skate using code.

At the last station the girls got to control the [VEX robots](#) that were created by a team of high school students from [Navigate](#). These were the same robots that recently competed in a provincial championship. The girls were able to use the robots to pick up foam balls and shoot baskets.

After that, there were some amazing door prizes and an excellent summary of the [Navigate Enter programs](#). All the girls and the handful of boys left Saturday with dreams and hope for technology in their future.

[Ladies Learning Code](#) are putting on a session for [girls to learn code](#) at NIC tomorrow (Saturday).



Success Beyond Our Walls

One of the goals of our redesigned curriculum is that ["students will get hands-on experience in collaboration, critical thinking and communications—skills they'll need to succeed in college, university, and the workforce."](#)

From Imagination to Innovation, our students do well. On April 9th we had 9 teams from 5 schools travel to the [Destination Imagination](#) Provincial Tournament, leaving here at 3:00 in the morning. Three of our teams came back as Provincial Champions, qualifying them to compete at the [Global Finals](#) in May. DI, as it is most often referred to, challenges students to combine creative and critical thought to innovate while working on diverse teams. Our district has been involved with DI for the past 6 years as it provides a platform for developing the [Core Competencies](#) as well as many curricular goals. Currently we have more than 1,000 students involved in the program from our Strong Start programs through our graduates.

Three teams from our Valley qualified for the Global Finals. The [Grizzly Bears](#) from [Brooklyn Elementary](#), managed by [Sarah Heselgrave](#), placed first at the elementary level in the [Fine Arts Challenge](#). [SQ4D](#) from Highland Secondary, managed by [Greg Kochanuk](#) and DI alumnus Willem Roelants, finished first at the secondary level in the [Structural Challenge](#), creating a musical instrument that weighed 61 grams and held more than 300 kilograms. [Do or DI](#) from Isfeld Secondary, managed by [Catherine Akerley](#), finished first in the [Social Outreach Challenge](#), designing and developing an app to aid students in keeping track of events and activities at school. The last two teams also won Renaissance Awards for their ground breaking ingenuity.

Though the program is far more about the journey than the placings, it is always nice to have some external validation. All 9 of our teams acquitted themselves very, very well and the students had a fabulous experience to finish this season which begins in September.

On Wednesday, April 13th, we had 21 students represent our district at the [Skills Canada Provincial Championships](#) in Abbotsford with [Steve Claassen](#), [Dave Randall](#) and [Nancy Lawrence](#). Six of our students finished in the top three in the province. Matthew Black from [Isfeld](#) (Web Design) and Judd Foster from [Highland](#) (Electronics) were crowned Provincial Champions and will be going to the [National Finals](#) in Moncton, New Brunswick in June. Cole Moran from Isfeld (Cabinetmaking), Kazuki Hagiwara (Electronics) and Joseph Thoong (Graphic Design), both from [Vanier](#), won silver medals and another Vanier student, Stenson Lindal finished third in welding.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and please direct any suggestions, questions, or inquiries to me directly: Gerald.Fussell@sd71.bc.ca