



Armstrong Elementary School

Respect Self, Others, Property and Learning

September 29, 2026

Principal's Message

It's hard to believe that September is nearly over and a new month begins. A huge shout out to the PAC for organizing the Welcome Back BBQ on September 23 and to staff for opening up their classrooms to students and families. There was a buzz of excitement as students showed their families around their learning spaces. It was a great community event with hundreds of hotdogs served. Thank you for making this event a great one!

Learning is in underway as classes have established routines and expectations. This year, we are focusing on literacy and math as foundational skills. In support of these academic goals, we want to continue to have our students to feel connected to two or more adults in the building and will continue to work in support of building student resilience (both academically with a growth mindset, and also the ability to handle disappointment when obstacles are encountered or things don't go the way they would have hoped). Each month, we will update you in the newsletter about what we are working on and how you can support this at home with your child. We hope that these ideas are stress-free and easy to do and will support your child's learning.

Sincerely,

Megan Weir

Principal

School goals:

Writing: This year, we continue to focus on developing student's writing abilities. There are many things that you can do at home to help your child develop their writing skills. There are many ways of supporting writing skills that don't involve actually writing things on paper. A strategy often used in classrooms to get started with writing is to talk about an idea (whether it's what happened on the weekend or earlier in the day or what a person ate for breakfast). Writing often flows from an ability to talk about something (given that writing is the next step of putting our thoughts on paper). To support this, having regular conversations with your child is invaluable. Back-and-forth verbal exchanges between child and adult are powerful for strengthening children's language skills. As you have that back-and-forth conversation with your child, ask lots of questions (Who? What? When? Where? Why?) so that they can tell about it as much as they can. It's important for children to be able to clarify what they are trying to say and add information where they can. This will grow their ideas of things to talk (and write) about and their stamina to tell more. In support of our goal to support student writing, we will have Writing Thinkers challenges for students to participate in every second month (alternating with Math Problem Solvers). Students might participate in class or at home.

Numeracy: Our continued focus this year for developing math skills for all students is on understanding grade-level appropriate critical concepts and the application through problem solving. As part of our schoolwide focus on math we are continuing a problem-solving challenge that will begin this month. Every second month, we will have 3-4 problems for students to solve. Some will solve these in class, and others will be brought home to solve together with family. It is important to note that these problems are designed to make students really think and not rely on generating an equation right away to solve the problem. Most will involve needing to draw a picture or a diagram to support their strategy for figuring out the answer. This is an excellent way to solve problems! Please encourage your child to try these problems, and to draw pictures to help them make sense of what is being asked. This will be an important strategy all the way through the grades. Our challenge this month is to have 100 students solve the problem of the month for October. Please watch for the problems coming home and make a family activity out of solving them!

What did teachers do for the Pro D day?

On September 21, there were different workshops offered throughout the district. Most staff spent time learning about ways to support student growth in Writing; Adrienne Gear, specialist in teaching literacy, gave a session about Powerful Writing that gave meaningful food for thought. There were also learning opportunities related to literacy and numeracy learning and assessments, outdoor learning, and Core Competencies/Career Education. It was a great day of learning!

Communicating Student Learning

While you are always welcome to connect with your child’s teacher if you have questions about their learning, here are some dates for the informal and formal learning updates that you will have this year.

- Oct. 26: Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences
- Dec. 15: Written Learning Update (#1)
- Mar. 9: Written Learning Update (#2)
- April 26-May 6: Informal Learning Updates
- Student Led Conferences: Div 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12
- Student portfolios: Div 2, 3, 10
- June 24: Summary of Learning (#3)

Parent, Teacher, Student Conferences

Monday, October 26 is the official conference day in School District 83. Students do not attend school that day. Instead, teachers will be having conferences with families and students. These conferences are scheduled to be 15 minutes long for each student. Although Monday October 26 is the official conference day, some teachers will be opening up conference times on other days during the week to accommodate families the best they can. Conferences will be in person here at AES but sign up will be done online. We are really excited about these conferences as we see the huge benefits for learning that come when school and homework together to support students.

A link to book your child’s conference will be coming home in the weeks ahead.

Grade 4 Foundational Skills Assessments (in literacy and numeracy):

Each year, students in grades 4, 7, 10 and 12 participate in a provincial assessment called Foundational Skills Assessment (developed by the Ministry of Education and Child Care) that look at students' learning in the areas of Numeracy and Literacy. [CLICK HERE](#) for a very informative brochure for parents on the FSA, what it is, why it's important and how the results are used. For even more information, [CLICK HERE](#) to access the Ministry of Education and Child Care website. The assessment process will occur at AES during October. Students are required to complete a variety of tasks in a booklet and online to assess their skills with comprehension in Literacy and problem solving in Numeracy. This assessment is marked and scored by SD83 Teachers, Principals and Vice Principals. Results are used by SD83 and our school staff to measure progress in Literacy and Numeracy and set direction for the coming years. Results are viewed as a grade cohort and individually to show growth in areas outlined in our School Learning Plan. The student booklet containing individual student results is sent home to parents in December. If you would like to view sample questions, [CLICK HERE](#) to access sample assessments for each grade level and topic assessed. More information can be found [here](#).

School Photos:

Our school photo day is Wednesday Oct 14. Watch for more information coming soon! If you miss photo day, or require re-takes, our retake day is Tuesday November 3.

Fire Prevention Week:

Fire Prevention Week is coming up from October 4-10. The theme this year is "Charge Into Fire Safety: **Safe Charging Is a Superpower.**" This theme aims to educate people about everyday safe charging habits that can help reduce the risk of fires. Please check out the Fire Prevention resources that can be found [here](#). We will also be having a few classes visit the fire station. Be safe!

Criminal Record Checks

If you would like to volunteer in any capacity in the school, you will need to complete a criminal record check online. This is a free process as costs are covered by the school district. Completed criminal record checks are good for five years.

Process:

- 1) Go to <https://justice.gov.bc.ca/criminalrecordcheck>
- 2) Please contact the AES Office for the access code.
- 3) Follow the instructions for completing the online Criminal Record Check.

Further instructions, showing step by step instructions can be found at https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/crime-prevention/criminal-record-check/ecrc_online_service_-_user_guide_2021.pdf

Halloween

Students are welcome to come to school in costume on October 30, but we just wanted to give an early reminder about costumes. For school, please remember that costumes need to be appropriate for our wide variety of students. This includes being culturally sensitive, no weapons (real or fake), and tasteful so that they do not scare or alarm our students. On another note, Halloween can be really scary for those who have food allergies. **Please ensure that any treats that are sent to school, or make their way into lunches, do not contain peanuts or nuts.** We want all students and staff to be safe!

School fees

A reminder to families that school fees are due as soon as possible. We are able to provide a great deal to families with our school doing the bulk purchase, and then we need to collect from families the \$45 supplies fee. There is also a cultural performance fee of \$10 per student which helps to pay for the special performances that happen throughout the year. There is also a \$10 fee for the agenda/planner. Agendas are great communication books between home and school, and also help students learn to become organized. Thank you for paying your fees promptly, and please remember that students do not go without at our school. If your family is not in a position to afford school fees, please contact Megan Weir (principal).

Monday Soup Days!

Our PAC continues to work with Shuswap Food Action Soupermeal program to offer free soup to students every Monday starting on September 28. This is an amazing opportunity for students to enjoy a hot meal at school. Please help us reduce waste and costs of disposable dishes by sending a spoon and a mug or bowl to school for soup days. A HUGE thank you to Shuswap Food Action Society for their sponsorship of this program, and also to our PAC parent volunteers for giving up their time every Monday to serve soup to our students.

Families are asked to register their child so that the program coordinators can ensure the quantity we get is sufficient. That said, regardless of registration, we will do our best to ensure that any child who would like soup can have some. More information is on our AES website [here](#).

Parking

Please do not park in the yellow “no parking” zone.



It makes it difficult for school buses to safely use the bus loop. Thanks for your help with this.

AES the School Where Everyone Belongs