

# Grand Forks Secondary School

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*Principal: T. Eccleston | Vice Principal: J. Dowswell*

March 2025

## Principal's Message

Dear Families,

I hope this letter finds you well. As we move into March, I am excited to share with you the latest updates and events happening at Grand Forks Secondary School.

GFSS continues to use the Circle of Courage model to support our students' development. This model focuses on belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. Indigenous Elder-in-Residence Joanie Holmes will be visiting to lead discussions on this important topic.

This past month, we were inspired by Jack Thomas, a talented musician who overcame a significant injury. His story emphasized resilience, mental health, and workplace safety. Our winter sports season concluded with great displays of sportsmanship and team unity. As we transition to spring sports, we look forward to Junior and Senior Ultimate, Golf, Mountain Biking, and Girls Soccer. Stay updated on our GFSS Athletics Facebook page.

We invite parents and guardians to book online appointments for family conferences on March 12th. This is an opportunity to discuss your child's progress and collaborate on their growth.

Our recent Masquerade Dance was a huge success, thanks to the hard work of the GFSS Student Council and the support of our dedicated teachers. It was a night filled with fun and memorable moments. On page 6, I share a new resource from Dr. Hayley Watson to help parents prevent substance use in youth.

Check out the story about our students are constructing framing for the local fire department on page 8 and please participate in the Provincial Student Learning Survey. Your feedback is crucial for our planning and improvement efforts. Course selections for 2025-2026 begins on March 3, don't miss out.



Thank you for your continued support and involvement in our school community. Together, we can ensure a positive and enriching experience for all our students.

*~ Tom Eccleston, Principal*

[link to previous weekly principal's reports and monthly newsletters](#)



## Important Dates

- Mar 3 Course selection begins at school
- Mar 3, 8:30 District Science Fair (gym)
- Mar 3, 9:47 Core Competencies Self-assessment (all students, homerooms)
- Mar 10, 11:17 Grad Scholarship meeting (gr. 12s, auditorium)
- Mar 11, 2:30 Early dismissal
- Mar 11, 6:30 Senior drama talent show (doors open @ 6:00)
- Mar 12, 2:45 Family Conferences ([book online](#))
- Mar 13 Last day before break
- Mar 31 School in session
- Apr 1-2 Grad photo retakes
- Apr 8 Literacy Assessments (gr. 10s)

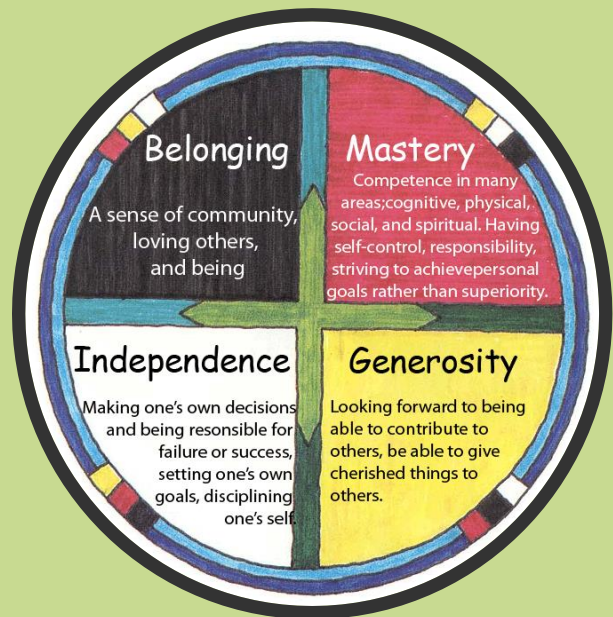
## What is the Circle of Courage?

GFSS uses the [Circle of Courage](#) as a model for meeting the universal needs of our youth (belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity).

Throughout the year and with staff support, students engage with the model as they self-reflect on their holistic, educational journey in a safe and caring way.

Joanie Holmes (Indigenous Elder-in-Residence) will be visiting again this year to lead the discussion.

We revisit the Circle of Courage each year because as students grow, they will understand it on a new level and because as life happens, our balance can change. Self-reflection is a powerful way to learn.



## What's Pink Shirt Day?

GFSS celebrated Pink Shirt Day on Feb 26<sup>th</sup>, as a day dedicated to raising awareness about bullying and promoting kindness at our school. Students and teachers wore pink shirts to show they stand against bullying. We had announcements and activities to educate all of GFSS about the effects of bullying and the importance of kindness and inclusion.

The theme for 2025 was "Let Kindness Grow," encouraging small, everyday acts of kindness. By participating, students helped create a more inclusive and supportive school environment.



## Who is Jack Thomas?

Jack Thomas is an amazingly talented young BC musician who tragically lost most of his arm in a workplace accident when he was 17. After the accident he may have thought his dreams of continuing as a musician would be over. This month GFSS learned from Jack, that there are strategies and ways of thinking we all can learn that help us to manage whatever life throws our way. We can overcome tough challenges, live our dreams, and bring joy to others.



Through his music and story, Jack focused on the importance of helping others who struggle with mental health issues or may have overcome trauma of their own. He showed GFSS what can be possible no matter what happens to us. Jack also stressed the importance of workplace safety, knowing your rights and responsibilities in the workplace.

To make this assembly possible, GFSS gives thanks to the organizing Teachers and two organizations for their generous sponsorship: the GFSS Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and the Boundary District Teachers' Association (BDTA).





## Grand Forks Secondary School

### Athletics

The month of March ends our Winter sports season at GFSS and welcomes our spring sports!

This winter our basketball teams saw such growth in sportsmanship and team unity - the pillars of our programs. We played some hard fought battles, left it all out on the floor in every game and cheered until our voices gave out. School spirit really helped propel our programs and motivate them to keep going. If you had the privilege of attending any of our home games, the drummers were drumming and the chanters were chanting helping our student-athletes on the floor.



It was an incredible experience to see our school come together to support one another and show their pride in being a Wolf.

Spring brings on another busy season of sport. We will be offering Junior and Senior Ultimate, Golf, Mt. Biking and Girls Soccer. Keep your eyes peeled on our [GFSS Athletics Facebook](#) page for all our spring sport information!

Let's go Wolves!

### Family Conferences

As an inclusive public school, we believe parents are partners in the success of our students. This week, we invite parents and guardians to [book online appointments](#) with your child's teachers for a face-to-face (or telephone) informal update. Learn how things are going and share ideas you and teachers have for further growth. Please see [our website for instructions](#) how to register and book conferences.



## Masquerade Dance

Last Wednesday, our high school gymnasium was transformed into a magical wonderland for the Masquerade Dance, organized by the GFSS Student Council. The event was a resounding success, with students donning elaborate masks and elegant attire, creating an atmosphere of mystery and excitement.

The dance floor was packed as students danced the night away to a mix of popular hits and classic tunes, expertly curated by our talented DJ. The decorations, featuring twinkling lights and elegant drapery, added to the enchanting ambiance, making it a night to remember.



The students worked tirelessly to plan and execute this event, and their hard work truly paid off. From the stunning decorations to the delicious refreshments provided by the Drama Club, every detail was thoughtfully considered, making the Masquerade Dance a highlight of the school year.



A special thank you goes out to our dedicated teachers who volunteered as chaperones. Their presence ensured that the event ran smoothly and safely, allowing everyone to enjoy the festivities without a hitch.

We look forward to more exciting events in the future and thank everyone who attended for making the night so special. Until next time, keep those masks handy and your dancing shoes ready!





### GFSS loves math!

On February 26th, around 60 GFSS students participated in the University of Waterloo math contests. These contests challenge students in grades 9-11 to test their numeracy skills against the top competition from Canada and across the globe, with 70,000 high school students participating each year. Students who demonstrate excellence through the contests are eligible for a range of awards, including medals, certificates, cash prizes, and potentially even scholarships. We look forward to recognizing our top mathletes when results are released later this Spring. Thanks to all who participated!



We are so thankful for GFSS teachers, Mr. Holton, Ms. Tarrant, and Mr. Scott for your organization and support of the contests.

Grade 11/12 students interested in challenging the Euclid math contest on April 2nd are encouraged to contact Mr. Houlton or join the Google Classroom (code: 5qtka7h) for more information. Success on this grueling 3-hour test is a valuable asset when applying to Science and Engineering programs across the country and grants, and preferential consideration when applying to STEM programs at the University of Waterloo. The registration deadline is Wednesday March 5th. Good luck!

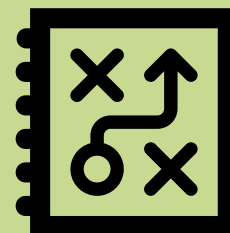
### What can we do about youth substance use prevention?

Substance use is a leading cause of low performance at school for some youth. We wanted to share a [new resource for parents & caregivers](#) for preventing substance use in youth from [openparachute®](#) and Dr Hayley Watson. Additionally, this [60-minute video](#) teaches the **causes** of substance use, the **skills** youth need for prevention, and how parents can **communicate** effectively to build the skills.

### When are Course Selections?

Course selections for the next school year are starting this week (March 3-6). All students will meet with our school counselors in grade classes to request their courses in the coming weeks. If you miss your grade session, please see counsellors Mr. McKaig and Ms. Webster for a make-up session.

Full information about our courses can be found on [our website](#).



## Empowering Future Builders: Framing for Our Local Fire Department

One of GFSS, classes is taking on an exciting and meaningful project: constructing framing for our local fire department's training activities. This initiative not only benefits our community but also provides our students with invaluable hands-on experience in the skilled trades.



We extend our heartfelt thanks to Mr. Thielmann, our dedicated woodwork and trades teacher, for his support and guidance. His expertise and passion for teaching is instrumental in making this project a reality. Thank you for inspiring our students and helping them develop the skills they need for a successful future.

At GFSS, we believe in the importance of career readiness and the value of skilled trades. This project is a testament to our commitment to providing students with practical, real-world experiences that prepare them for the workforce. By participating in this project, our students are not only learning essential construction skills but also understanding the significance of teamwork, responsibility, and community service.

We are proud of our students' hard work and dedication, and we look forward to seeing the positive impact of their efforts on our community. Keep up the great work, everyone.



## The Student Learning Survey 2024-2025

The Provincial Student Learning Survey is unique in its scope, size and usefulness to GFSS. It gathers information from parents/guardians/caregivers, teachers, and students on topics related to school environment, safety, and achievement. The information is used for planning in our school and provides a district and provincial perspective.

We encourage parents/guardians/caregivers to participate in this survey, as the results are important in identifying and celebrating current strengths, as well as determining where the school needs to focus improvement. The surveys contain standard questions for the entire Province.

The survey can be completed electronically and can be accessed on the Internet at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/student-learning-survey>.



# SD51 SCIENCE FAIR 2025

**MARCH 3RD GFSS IN THE GYM 9AM - 12PM**

**MARCH 5TH AT BCSS IN THE GYM 9AM - 12PM**

**JUDGING IS FROM 9AM-11AM BOTH DAYS**

**OPEN HOUSE IS FROM 11-12PM BOTH DAYS**

**SCIENCE FAIR SHIRT REGISTRATION DUE BY JANUARY 30TH 2025**

**PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING LINK:**

**[HTTPS://FORMS.OFFICE.COM/R/2WM3KR3HUM](https://forms.office.com/R/2WM3KR3HUM)**



## How to register

Science Fair Registration (please register no later than 2 weeks prior to the event)  
Please use the following link to register:

<https://forms.office.com/r/2qVX4XuMhh>



## Who can register

Grade 2 to 12  
Individuals/pairs are welcome (same grade preferably). Students will be judged at the higher grade if there is a team with two grade levels.



## After School Club

At Hutton from 3:30pm - 4:30pm every Monday starting on January 13th in the Hub.

At Perley from 3:30pm - 4:30pm every Wednesday starting on January 22nd in the music room.

At CLES from 3:30pm - 4:30pm every Thursday starting on January 16th in the music room.

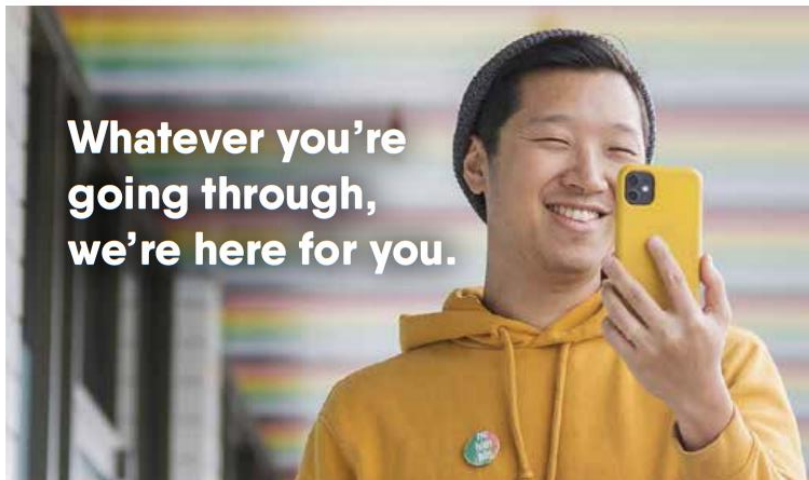


## CONTACT US

Peter Scott  
District Principal of  
Innovation and Technology

250-442-7010  
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Whatever you're  
going through,  
we're here for you.

"I never realized how easy it was to access support through an app on my phone. I accessed Foundry's app from the comfort of my bedroom and spoke with a counsellor the same day. I left my session with resources and a follow-up appointment with a primary care provider. For the first time in a long time, I feel hopeful."

- Youth accessing Foundry Virtual BC services.

## Foundry Virtual BC

We offer free drop-in and scheduled counselling & peer support, substance use services, groups, primary care and employment services for young people ages 12-24 across British Columbia.

All services are free and confidential, no referrals are needed. We offer video, audio and chat options.

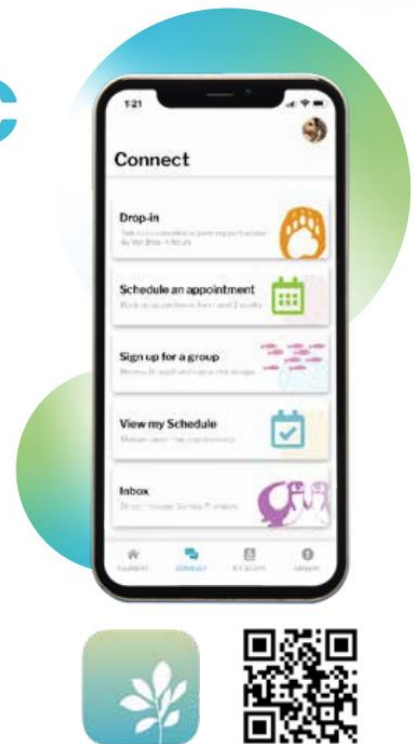
**Drop-in services:** Access same-day counselling and peer support.

**Scheduled appointments:** Book counselling, peer support and other virtual services in advance.

**Group sessions:** Connect with peers, learn coping strategies and life skills.

**Primary Care:** Speak with a nurse practitioner about substance use concerns, sexual health, medication, gender affirming care or other medical/health-related concerns.

**Employment services:** Explore employment opportunities, educational/certification programs or discuss other job or school-related options.



Download the app or  
use in a browser

**Hours:** 7 days/week

1:00pm–9:00pm

**Drop-in hours:** Tues–Thurs

2:00pm–6:00pm

• F O U N D R Y •

To learn more, please call 1-833-308-6379,  
email [online@foundrybc.ca](mailto:online@foundrybc.ca) or visit [www.foundrybc.ca/virtual](http://www.foundrybc.ca/virtual)

Diverse Family Roots Society (est. 2023)  
is the only non-profit, grassroots, parent /  
family-driven support network for families  
with children or family members with  
diverse abilities / disabilities that is  
based in the Kootenays.



## LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX... WITHOUT TALKING ABOUT SEX.

**A PARENT'S EASY GUIDE TO TALKING ABOUT  
SEX, SEXUALITY, GENDER, AND SAFETY  
WITHOUT ACTUALLY TALKING ABOUT THEM**

**JOIN THE DISCUSSION  
WITH RACHEL SKIDMORE**

*February 5  
March 5  
April 2  
April 30  
May 28*

*at 6:00PM*



**REGISTER HERE**

The Board and Members of the Diverse Family Roots Society is grateful to work, play, and raise our families in the territories of the Sinixt, Syilx, Ktunaxa, and Secwépemc peoples. We acknowledge and value the contributions of all Indigenous, Metis, and Inuit who call this place home, and who have stewarded it since time immemorial.



Diverse Family Roots Society (est. 2023) is the only non-profit, grassroots, parent / family-driven support network for families with children or family members with diverse abilities / disabilities that is based in the Kootenays.



# SIBLINGS WITH LORI HOLLOWAY

SIBLINGS - JOIN US AS  
WE GATHER ON  
ZOOM TO SHARE  
WITH ONE ANOTHER  
OUR EXPERIENCES,  
MEMORIES AND  
CHALLENGES WITH  
THOSE LIKE  
OURSELVES.  
PROVIDING SUPPORT  
WITH THOSE WHO  
BEST RELATED AND  
CONNECT TO ONE  
ANOTHER.



FEBRUARY 19  
MARCH 19  
APRIL 16  
MAY 14

6PM PACIFIC  
7PM MOUNTAIN

## REGISTER HERE!

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# **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT WITH:**

**CLBC PROVINCIAL EMPLOYMENT TEAM**



Every person has the right to employment and CLBC strives to support individuals to gain meaningful employment through funding to agencies and communities. The Employment Team also seeks to bring innovation and strategic initiatives forward to expand employment opportunities. These sessions are designed to share information on some of the “hot topics” in our province. There will be time for discussion and dialogue.

- **FEB 26: RIGHTS TO EMPLOYMENT WITH ANNETTE BORROWS**
- **MAR 26: WHAT IS LIFE SERVICE WITH ROBBY JEFFERY**
- **APR 23: DISPELLING THE MYTHS OF ANNUAL EARNING EXEMPTIONS WITH JAY TOWNSEND**
- **MAY 21: PATHWAY TO THE TRADES WITH JAY TOWNSEND**

**REGISTER HERE**

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## YOU GOTTA HAVE FRIENDS



You Gotta Have Friends aims to highlight the vital role that relationships play in enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities. We will explore the emotional, social, and psychological benefits of having strong, supportive friendships, emphasizing how these connections can foster a sense of belonging and community. We will exchange ideas, stories and strategies together (you might even make a friend or two!)

**HOSTED BY SHELLEY NESSMAN**

**FEBRUARY 12  
MARCH 12  
6PM PST, 7PM MST**

**REGISTER HERE**



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