

# Local teachers in running for Premier's Awards

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(File photo/Vernon Matters Staff)

By Pete McIntyre

FOR STAFF WHO GO ABOVE AND BEYOND

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Three teachers from the Vernon School District are among the 30 finalists for this year's Premier's Awards for Excellence in Education.

The awards, which started in 2018, recognize the contributions of public, independent and First Nations school system teachers, principals, vice-principals, school and district leaders, and support staff who go above and beyond to make life better for K-12 students in B.C.

This year, 10 awards will be given, with six honouring teachers, two recognizing school and district leaders, and two honouring support staff members.

"When we open the doors of opportunity for young people, we give them the chance to succeed and our whole province benefits," Premier John Horgan said. "This year's finalists have gone to incredible lengths to help B.C. students inside and outside the classroom. I commend these hard-working education professionals for their leadership, innovation and determination."

Sheila Monroe, a teacher at Okanagan Landing Elementary, and Fulton Secondary teacher Alan Gee are nominated for the Community Engagement Award.

Beirsto Elementary teacher Brendan Robertson is a finalist for the Technology and Innovation Award.

Dorothy Jones, a Indigenous education worker at A.L. Fortune Secondary in Enderby (SD 83) is nominated for Outstanding Support — School Community.

The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in Victoria on Oct. 4, 2019, the day before World Teachers' Day.

Winners will receive a \$3,000 personal bursary for professional learning, a \$2,000 contribution to their school community for professional learning and a commemorative work of art. Runners-up will receive a certificate of recognition signed by the Premier and Minister of Education.

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**Alan Gee**, teacher, Clarence Fulton Secondary school, SD 22 (Vernon) In his 32 years as a teacher, Gee has worked hard to support his students to cultivate both classroom and community connections. Passionate about experiential learning, he has created educational opportunities for his students at both local and global levels. He regularly invites community members into his classroom to share their unique perspectives – a Holocaust survivor, a refugee and a hypnotherapist included. He has created a global education course highlighting civic and global issues and a Japanese language program, as well as organized a canoe project in partnership with the local First Nation. In all his work, Gee challenges his students to be independent thinkers.

**Sheila Monroe**, teacher, Okanagan Landing Elementary School, SD 22 (Vernon) Teaching for more than 30 years, Monroe works hard to bring students, parents, teachers and community members together to be environmental leaders. She has led a number of projects at her school, including the developing a 465 square-metre (5,000-square-foot) butterfly- and pollinator-friendly community garden, has worked to naturalize the grounds behind her school, and has connected students with local organizations to remove invasive species from area parks. An engaging Grades 4 and 5 classroom teacher, her love for both her students and community is evident as she helps her students understand good citizenship by integrating school and civic involvement into classroom learning.

**Brendan Robertson**, teacher, École Beirsto Elementary school, SD 22 (Vernon) A tinkerer at heart, Robertson is a natural fit in his district leadership role as technology innovation co-ordinator as well as a Grade 4 teacher. He is committed to integrating emerging digital technology tools into the classroom to enhance learning and engagement for all students. For example, he has taken students on virtual field trips to a refugee camp in Jordan and to the Museum of Modern Art using virtual reality, has students use augmented reality, has incorporated drones into physics and math classes, and has regularly used coding and robotics. His use of technology in the French immersion setting has given primarily English-speaking parents a unique perspective into the French-language learning that their children do daily. He was also pivotal in early pilot work experimenting with multiple platforms of electronic assessment.

**Dorothy Jones**, Indigenous education worker, A.L. Fortune Secondary school, SD 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap) A passionate, caring and energetic Indigenous education worker, Jones has devoted years of service dedicated to the mental, spiritual and emotional needs of students at her school. Wanting the best for them, she works hard to be inclusive, to ensure their voices are heard and their well-being is put first. Her approach to Indigenous education encourages students to become active participants in traditional teachings, and she creates an exciting, engaging environment for students. Her service highlights include working one-on-one with students academically; teaching Secwepemc language, culture and history; leading afterschool programs, drumming and beading programs, and annual events; as well as fostering relationships between students and families, and the local Indigenous community.

#### **2019 Premier's Awards for Excellence in Education finalists include:**

Community Engagement Award

\* Alan Gee, teacher, Clarence Fulton Secondary school, SD 22 (Vernon)

\* Casey Litton, teacher, Nechako Valley Secondary school, SD 91 (Nechako Lakes)

\* Sheila Monroe, teacher, Okanagan Landing Elementary school, SD 22 (Vernon)

#### Extracurricular Leadership Award

\* Sabha Ghani, teacher, Burnaby South Secondary school, SD 41 (Burnaby)

\* Paul Lilly, teacher, École Chief Dan George Middle school, SD 34 (Abbotsford)

\* Scott Stefanek, teacher, École Brantford Elementary school, SD 41 (Burnaby)

#### Indigenous Education Award

\* Maria Bruneau, teacher, École Dr. Charles Best Secondary school, SD 43 (Coquitlam)

\* Ivy (Qeqeltsin) Chelsea, Indigenous language and culture teacher, Chase Secondary school/Haldane Elementary school, SD 73 (Kamloops/Thompson)

\* Jordan Smith, teacher/program co-ordinator, Twin Rivers Education Centre, SD 73 (Kamloops/Thompson)

#### Outstanding New Teacher Award

\* Grace Broadfoot, teacher, J.V. Humphries Elementary and Secondary school, SD 8 (Kootenay Lake)

\* Robert French, teacher, South Central Interior Distance Education school, SD 58 (Nicola-Similkameen)

\* Prabhjot Grewal, teacher, North Delta Secondary school, SD 37 (Delta)

#### Social Equity and Diversity Award

\* Bryan Gidinski, teacher, Chaffey-Burke Elementary school, SD 41 (Burnaby)

\* Chad Jobe, co-ordinator/teacher, Vast Centre/Learning Alternatives, SD 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)

\* Antony Wilson, Upper School head of global engagement and service learning, Mulgrave School (International School of Vancouver), West Vancouver

#### Technology and Innovation Award

\* Brendan Robertson, teacher, École Beirsto Elementary school, SD 22 (Vernon)

\* Tammy Tomm, grades 6 and 7 teacher, Columbia Park Elementary school, SD 19 (Revelstoke)

\* Denise Underwood, teacher, McGowan Park Elementary school, SD 73 (Kamloops/Thompson)

#### School Leadership Award

\* Carol DeFehr, principal, Juniper Ridge Elementary school, SD 73 (Kamloops/Thompson)

\* Brett Hancock, district principal, learning alternatives, SD 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)

\* Troy White, principal, École Kelowna Secondary school, SD 23 (Central Okanagan)

District Leadership Award

\* Lisa McCullough, superintendent, SD 48 (Sea to Sky)

\* Jordan Kleckner, district principal, learning technology, SD 23 (Central Okanagan)

\* Colleen Minnabarriet, principal, Desert Sands Community School, SD 74 (Gold Trail)

Outstanding Support – School Community

\* Jodi Guy, Indigenous youth care worker, École Phoenix Middle School, SD 72 (Campbell River)

\* Dorothy Jones, Indigenous education worker, A.L. Fortune Secondary School, SD 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap)

\* Wendel Williams, safe school specialist, École Alpha Secondary School, SD 41 (Burnaby)

Outstanding Support – Teaching Assistant

\* Elaine Bayles, educational assistant, Glanford Middle school, SD 61 (Greater Victoria)

\* Sandra Breslin, educational assistant, Prince Charles Elementary school, SD 34 (Abbotsford)

\* Marie Kielpinski, educational assistant, Mount Boucherie Secondary school, SD 23 (Central Okanagan)

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