

2025-2026

KOOTENAY LAKE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT



School District 8
Kootenay Lake

Acknowledgment



We acknowledge, honor and respect the First Nations on whose traditional territories the Kootenay Lake School District operates, and all Aboriginal people residing within the boundaries of School District No.8.



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As the 2025-2026 school year progresses, the International Education program highlights growth driven by a focus on Western European markets. Students from Germany, France and Spain, choose SD8 for small-town Kootenay charm, welcoming schools, and deep winter powder. The presence of these learners enriches classrooms and strengthens the district connection to global perspectives while keeping the Kootenay experience central.

This year brought strong student integration, solid academic results, and vibrant intercultural learning. The homestay program has become more robust through sustained relationship and community building, supported by long-term homestay contractor partnerships. Positive, engaged students come to enjoy outdoor recreation, build friendships with homestay families, and participate fully in school and community life.

Challenges include limited regular daily flights into the Kootenay Lake region, and competition from rural districts that offer outdoor experiences closer to major international airports. Strategic work can prioritize marketing in Western Europe, deeper partnerships with international agents, and student achievement initiatives that highlight outdoor learning and winter sports. Fee structures and resource allocation will be reviewed to ensure sustainability and value, to prospective students seeking the Kootenay lifestyle.

Appreciation is extended to students, staff, homestay families, and community partners for continued commitment. Together, the program will continue to build on momentum, celebrating diversity while showcasing the unique charm, community spirit, and outdoor adventure environment that sets SD8 apart.



Program Overview



At School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake), the International Education program enriches schools and the community, creating social, cultural, and economic benefits. Recruitment focuses on Western Europe (Germany, France, Spain, Italy) and Asia (China, Korean, Japan, Mongolia) attracting students for small-town Kootenay charm, and deep winter powder. Learners immerse themselves in school life, strengthening interculturalism. A robust homestay model, anchored by long-term contractor partnerships and community relationships, offers stable placements. Students can focus on the Canadian experience, or the B.C. Dogwood Diploma, while embracing outdoor recreation, and friendships with homestay families. The program broadens demographics, brings fresh perspectives, and delivers quality education for all students.

Program Mission

Our mission is to inspire and support each learner to thrive in a caring learning environment.

Strategic Focus

The International Program aims to provide students with engaging experiences, while supporting globally connected, local communities.

1. Culture and Identity Development: Promote interculturalism in schools.
2. Lifelong Learners: Enhance educational experiences for international and local students.
3. Connected Learners: Support social and economic growth through global connections.





Enrollment

Established in 1999 with a small cohort, the International Education Program in School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake) has grown with global trends. The program now welcomes students from Western Europe and Asia, with strong interest from Western Europe for small-town Kootenay charm and deep winter powder. Planning targets a sustainable enrolment of 40 to 50 FTE by the 2027-28 school year, supported by targeted recruitment, agent relationship development, and a robust homestay network that highlights the Kootenay experience. Students fall into three focus study areas:

1. **Graduating:** Students complete all required courses to earn a B.C. Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma).
2. **Co-Validating:** Students (Spain, Mexico, Brazil) meet at course outcomes to earn credit in their home country.
3. **Cultural Experience:** Students focus on cultural immersion and language, completing coursework and maintaining good attendance.

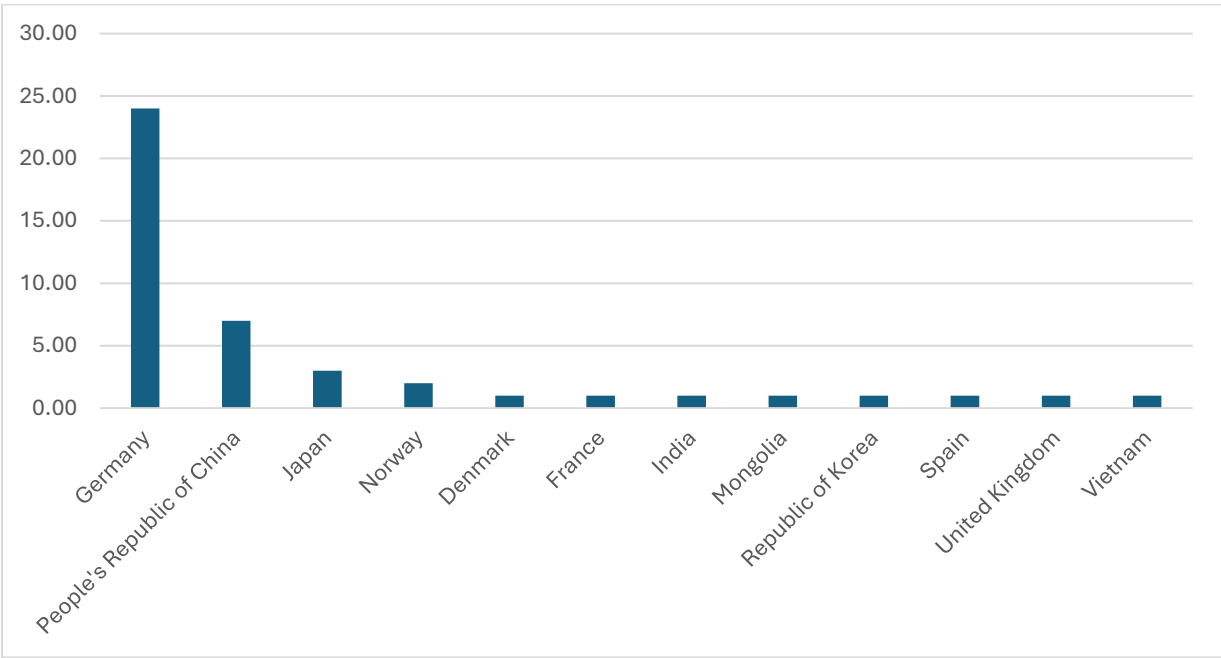
Enrollment (2025–2026)		
	FTE	2025/26 Headcount
Grad Program	11.5	12
Co-Validating	1	1
Culture and Language	21.9	32
Total	34.4	45

Enrollment (2016-2017 - 2025-2026)		
School Year	Number of Students	FTE
2016-2017	99	66.5
2017-2018	148	85.6
2018-2019	167	89.4
2019-2020	120	63.9
2020-2021	34	19.6
2021-2022	86	56.9
2022-2023	89	61.1
2023-2024	66	39.4
2024-2025	46	36.2
2025-2026	45	33.4

Enrollment by Country

Western Europe is the primary source region, led by Germany. About two thirds of students come from Western Europe, drawn by small-town Kootenay charm, deep winter powder, and outdoor learning. About one third come from Asia, mainly Japan and China, providing a steady presence across schools. This balance supports program goals while strengthening classrooms, homestays, and community life.

The chart illustrates the distribution of the program’s international students by country.

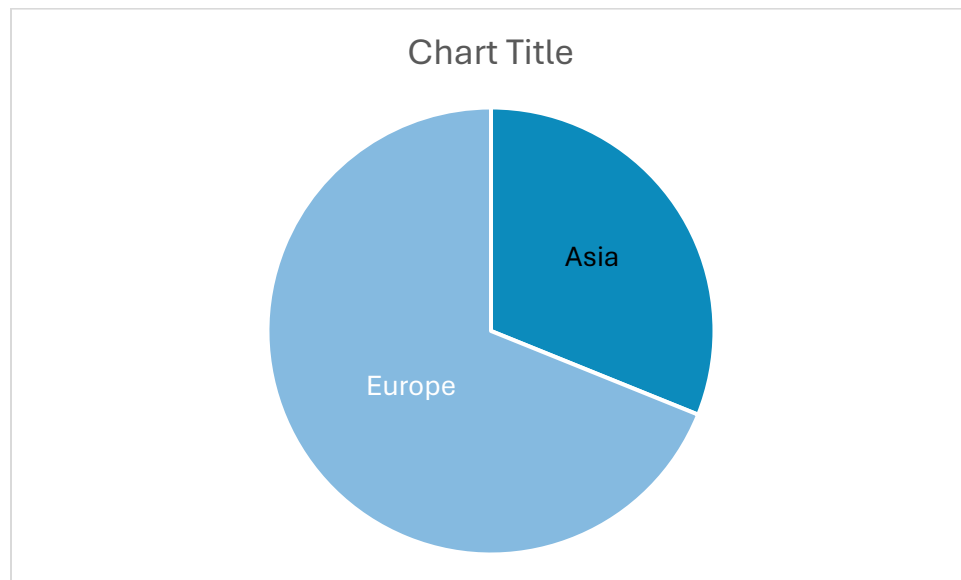


The 2025-2026 chart shows Germany, China, and Japan, leading in international student enrollment, like the previous year.



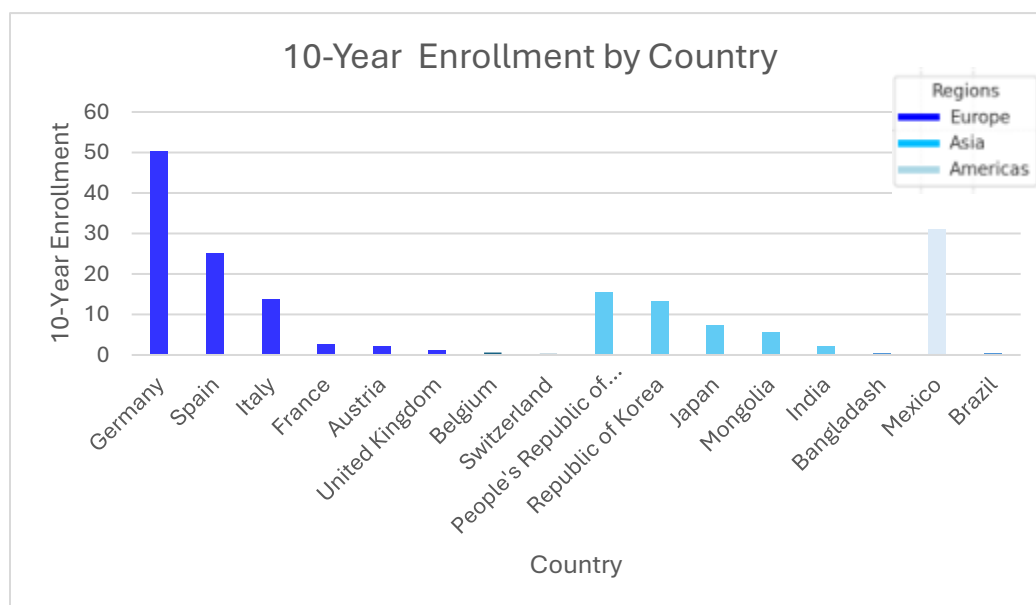
Enrollment by Region

A pie chart below shows the distribution of international student enrollment for 2025-2026 by region (Asia and Europe). This chart highlights Europe as a leading contributor, followed by Asia.



Enrollment by Country and Region (2016 - 2026)

This bar chart below shows the average 10-year enrollment by country



Program Highlights - Achievements



School District 8
Kootenay Lake

1. Cultural Integration

The program fosters a welcoming climate that supports smooth integration in local schools. Students from Western Europe and Asia build friendships with peers and homestay families, strengthen intercultural understanding, and contribute to inclusive classrooms. A robust homestay network, sustained by long-term contractor support and community relationships, reinforces positive student conduct, engagement in outdoor recreation, and the Kootenay experience focused on small-town charm and deep powder.

Monthly Adventures

Monthly activities connect students across schools while showcasing Kootenay Lake culture and landscapes. Typical offerings include skiing and snowboarding, hiking and paddling, arts and heritage visits. These trips draw strong participation, help new arrivals form friendships quickly, and deepen ties with schools, and the wider community.



September



October



November



December



January



February



March



April



May



June

Program Highlights - Achievements



School District 8
Kootenay Lake

Homestay Program

The homestay program supports language and cultural immersion, with Canadian families welcoming students into family homes and daily routines. The experience focuses on the Kootenay lifestyle: small-town charm, outdoor recreation, and strong friendships with homestay families.

Long-term contractor partnerships and steady community relationship building have created a robust, reliable network. Two homestay contractors work closely with the International Education team, to ensure quality placements, and consistent student support. Placement aims to align student interests with family activities, enhancing comfort and engagement.

A district-managed model keeps contractors and program staff in close contact, allowing quick responses and clear communication. Students are placed as close to schools as possible, often within walking distance or on public transit routes. Two homestay managers support about 40 families, many hosting multiple students each year. The result is stable placements, smooth integration for students from Western Europe and Asia, and positive word of mouth that strengthens program reputation across source markets.

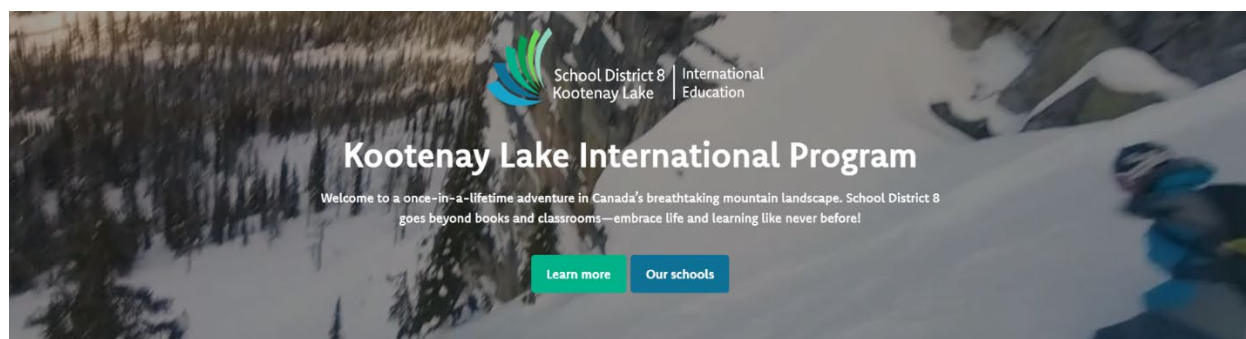


2. Economic and Social Impact

The program contributed a net profit to the district for 2025-2026 school year, and enriched Kootenay Lake’s economic and cultural footprints, as students are active in their local communities.

Updated Website

The website now features a refreshed “winter wonderland” design, updated agent and homestay host resources. A dynamic, live enrolment capacity meter provides real-time availability by school and intake. A new homestay video showcases local hosts, and daily life in the Kootenays, highlighting small-town charm, outdoor recreation, and the International Education program’s appeal.



Homestay Recruitment

Homestay contractors continue to invite new hosts to join the program, seeking local families interested in a rewarding cultural exchange, focuses on the Kootenay experience. Outreach includes a family-friendly campaign at elementary school events, offering free face painting to start conversations and collect contacts. The refreshed website supports recruitment with a host family referral process, a new homestay video featuring hosts and daily life, clear application steps.

Program Highlights - New Projects



School District 8
Kootenay Lake

Monthly Adventures

The adventure program emphasizes skiing. At least two trips are scheduled each winter: one daytime ski trip and one night-ski experience. Additional winter ski activities may be added as conditions and interest allow. Trips welcome all skill levels, with guidance for beginners and options for more advanced students.



Tuition fees

International students contribute funds to the district, supporting programs that benefit all students. The two following tables show 2024-2025 and historical financial results.

Financial Results (2024-2025)	
Total Revenue	\$998,372
Direct Student Expenses	\$464,122
Direct Salaries and Benefits*	\$331,530
Operating Expenses	\$73,071
Total Expenditures	\$868,724
Net Income	\$129,649

Financial Results (2020-2021 - 2024-2025)					
Actuals to June 30					
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total Revenue	\$640,339	\$1,587,238	\$1,697,715	\$1,125,598	\$998,372
Direct Student Expenses	\$302,339	\$633,632	\$711,664	\$459,910	\$464,122
School Allocations	\$5,092	\$64,321	\$139	\$16,926	
Direct Salaries and Benefits	\$440,579	\$424,457	\$448,718	\$409,065	\$331,530
Operating Expenses	\$114,655	\$249,111	\$240,952	\$176,098	\$73,071
Total Expenditures	\$862,665	\$1,371,521	\$1,401,473	\$1,061,999	\$868,724
Net Income	-\$222,326	\$215,717	\$296,242	\$63,599	\$129,649

Program Fees

SD8's International Education Program stipends are set each year to remain competitive. Homestay families receive \$1,200 per month, matching regional rates. Rates are approved two years in advance.

General Fees (2025-26)				
	3 month	4 month	5 month	1 year
Application	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Homestay Hosting	\$3,600	\$4,800	\$6,000	\$12,000
Homestay Support	\$510	\$680	\$850	\$1,700
Tuition	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$8,000	\$15,000
Medical	\$300	\$400	\$500	\$1,000
Total	\$10,660	\$13,130	\$15,600	\$29,950

Potential Revenue

Tuition fees. Remained the same to be competitive with districts offering similar value proposition.

Short-term programs. Three-month and longer study options attract additional students during off-peak intakes and diversify income.

Agency partnerships. New collaborations, outside of Germany, can build a steadier pipeline, improving enrolment consistency, and funding support for the upcoming school year.

Targeted marketing. Focused campaigns in Spain and Japan can expand intake for students seeking to small-town Kootenay appeal, and winter sport opportunities.

Recruitment

The annual recruitment plan focuses on Europe and Asia, targeting large city centers. The goal is to increase enrollment to a sustainable 40 to 50 FTE annual enrollment in the next two years.

Recruitment Positioning

The International Education program blends outdoor adventure with flexible academics in small, inclusive communities. Activities include skiing, ziplining, and canoeing. Focused international enrolment enables personalized services.

English-speaking homestays, supported by long-term contractors, provide full immersion and strong community ties. Positioning highlights outdoor recreation, winter sport access, and clear pathways to academic success.

In addition, the program focuses mainly on outdoor adventure (European draw) and the graduation program (Asian draw), while future consideration can involve cultural experiences in the Americas:

Europe
Outdoor adventure



Asia
Academic success



Americas
Cultural experiences



Recruitment Analysis

An in-depth marketing analysis as part of the program's annual recruitment review, revealed the following:

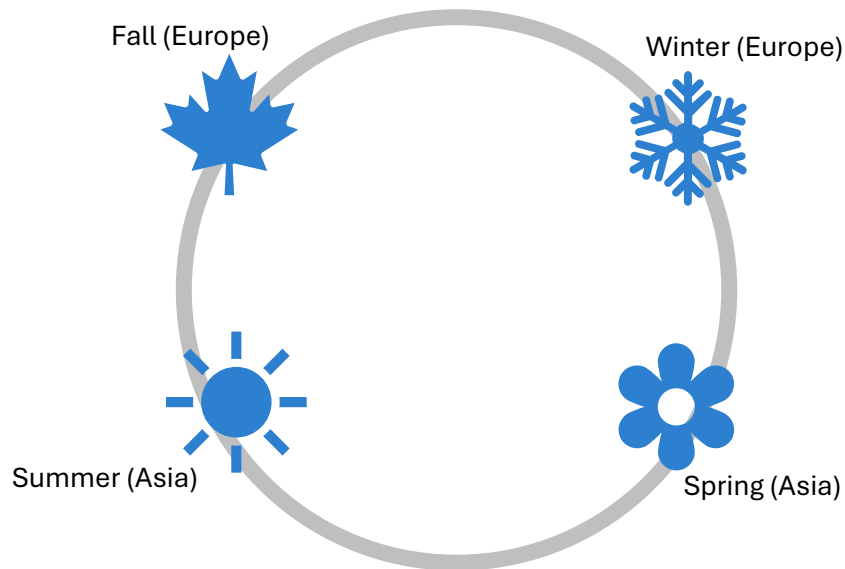
- There are two distinct regions (Europe and Asia)
- Target countries in Europe include Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Belgium
- Target countries in Asia include China, South Korea, Japan, Mongolia
- Germany and Japan are high priority targets since students from these countries appreciate the Kootenay small town atmosphere with skiing options.

Program Recruitment

Recruitment Timeline

The focus is to promote the program's presence in Europe and Asia. By strengthening relationships with existing agents, targeting new agencies, and maintaining a structured and seasonal recruitment approach, SD8 is well positioned for increasing enrollment to a sustainable 40 to 50 FTE.

Recruitment efforts can follow a seasonal approach:



This structure allows for a two-pronged targeted engagement with agents during peak recruitment periods.

Program Outlook

Strategic Direction (2026-27)

The International Education program aims to expand agency connections in Europe and Asia, and continue to strengthen community relationships, and increase enrollment.

Goals

- **Increase Enrollment:** The primary target is a 30 percent enrolment increase, reaching at least 40 FTE, with a ceiling of 50 FTE to maintain sustainability within existing infrastructure.
- **Homestay Building:** Expand the Nelson (LVR), and Slocan Valley (MSS), capacity to provide additional options for students in the Whitewater Resort area.
- **Drive Sustainable Value:** Refined tuition, programming, and operating expenses can improve revenue, supporting program enrollment and improving net margins that can benefit the entire district.

Market Expansion

- **Strengthening Existing Markets:** Continued outreach in Asia and Europe, through virtual and in-person events, to maintain strong enrollment.
- **New Markets:** Recruitment will focus on specific European and Asian countries to amplify student enrollment.





Projects

- **Marketing:** Focus on winter outdoor activities (skiing and snowboarding) as an enrolment draw with winter branding and program development.
- **Homestay:** Run a targeted host recruitment campaign in the Whitewater Resort area.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Develop agreements with agents serving families from Western Europe (Spain, Italy), and Asia (Japan, Mongolia).

The program outlook is bright, with clear goals and new projects, that lay a foundation for sustainable growth, and a richer educational experience in 2026-2027.

